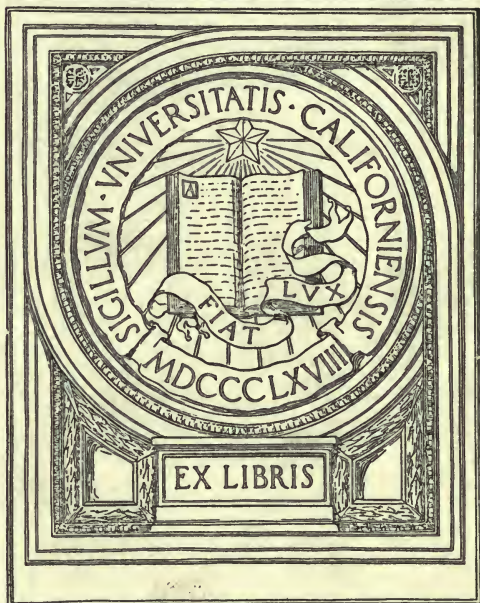
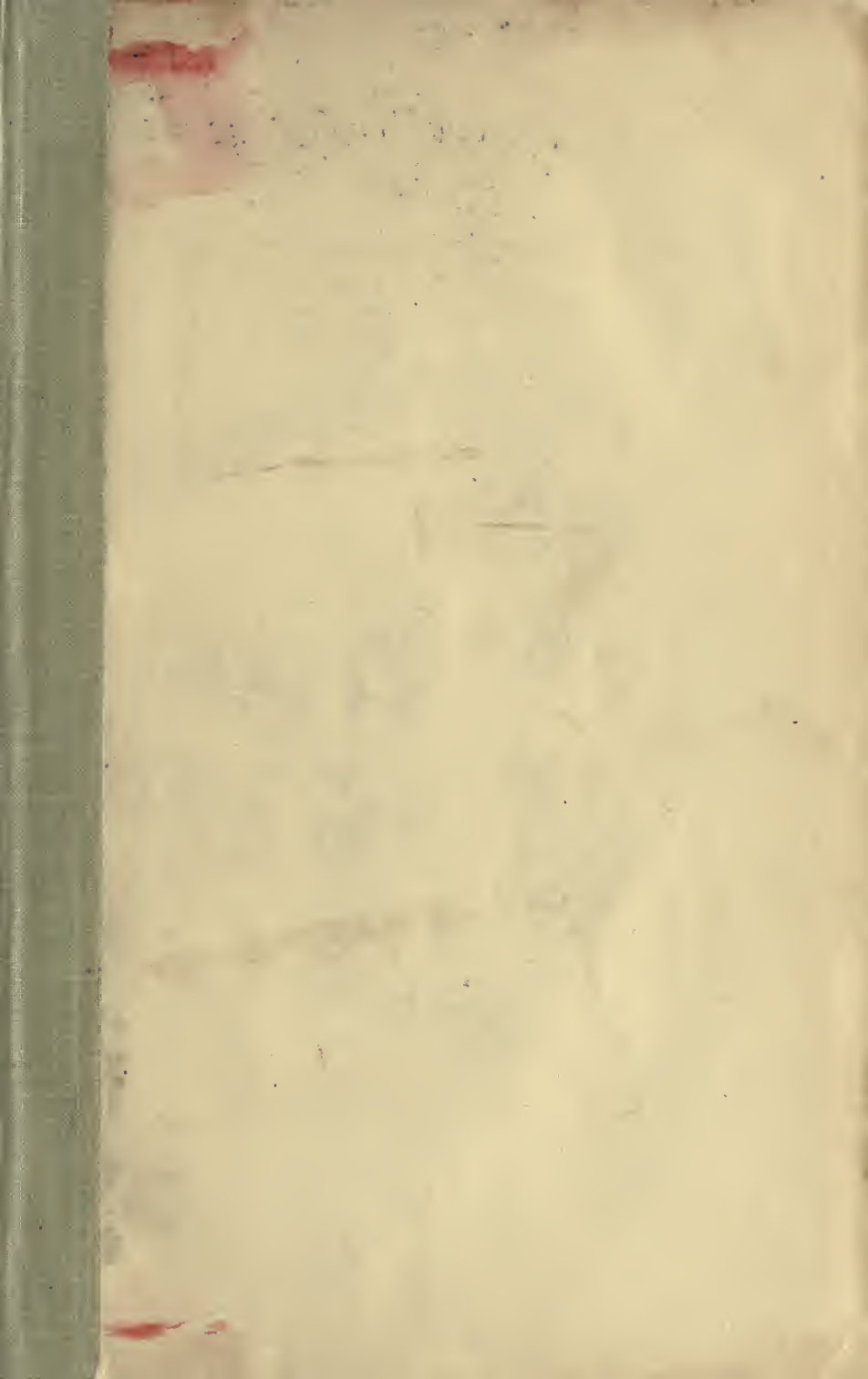


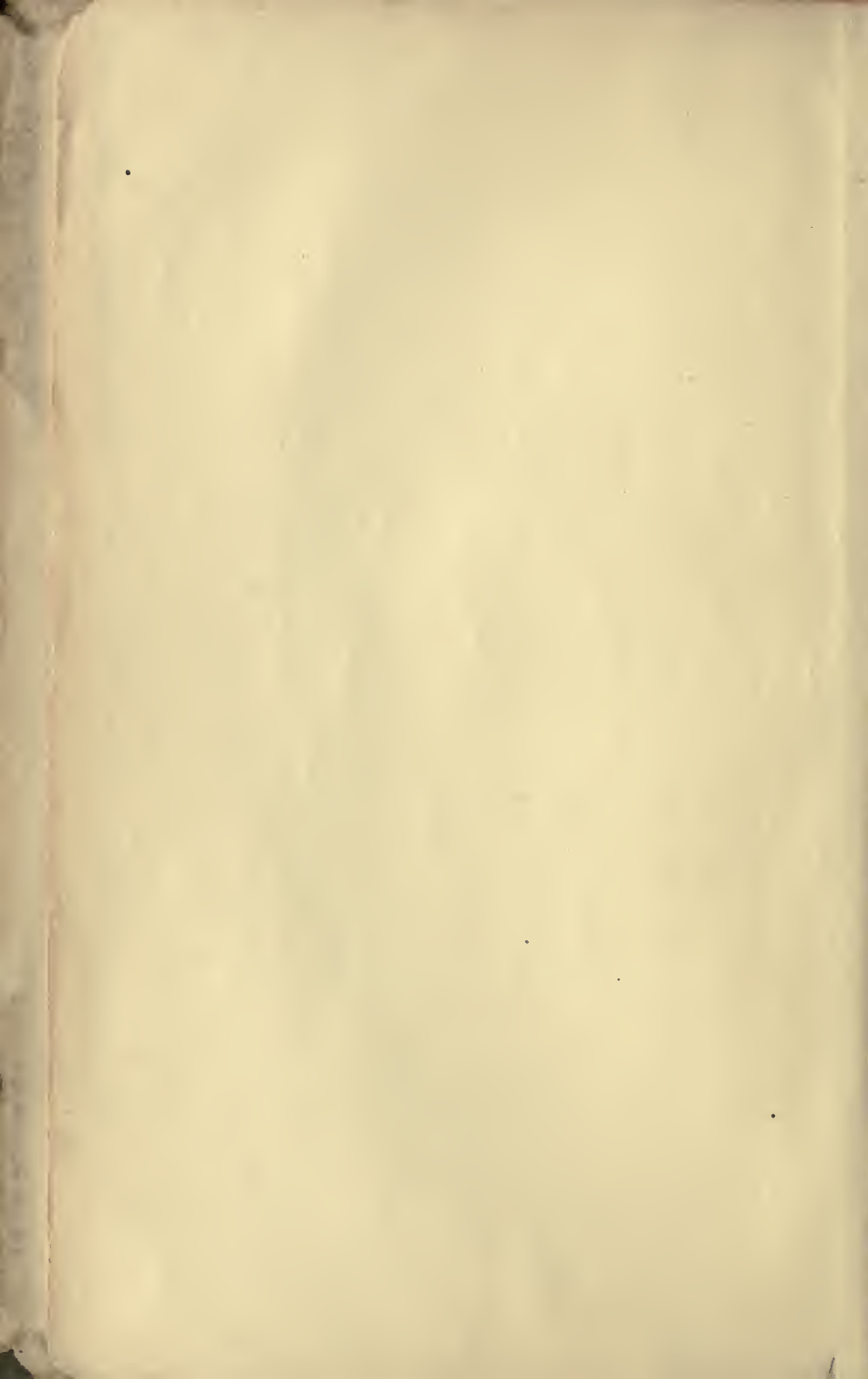


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Illustrated Sterling Edition

THE ABBOT
—
KENILWORTH

BY
SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.



UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA

BOSTON
DANA ESTES & COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

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LETTER OF TRANSMISSION

The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been appointed to the various positions in the Department of the Interior, and who have taken the oath of office and qualification.

DEPARTMENT

TO THE
ADMINISTRATOR

The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been appointed to the various positions in the Department of the Interior, and who have taken the oath of office and qualification.

INTRODUCTION TO THE ABBOT

FROM what is said in the Introduction to the *Monastery*, it must necessarily be inferred that the Author considered that romance as something very like a failure. It is true, the booksellers did not complain of the sale, because, unless on very felicitous occasions, or on those which are equally the reverse, literary popularity is not gained or lost by a single publication. Leisure must be allowed for the tide both to flow and ebb. But I was conscious that, in my situation, not to advance was in some degree to recede, and being naturally unwilling to think that the principle of decay lay in myself, I was at least desirous to know of a certainty whether the degree of discountenance which I had incurred was now owing to an ill-managed story or an ill-chosen subject.

I was never, I confess, one of those who are willing to suppose the brains of an author to be a kind of milk, which will not stand above a single creaming, and who are eternally harping to young authors to husband their efforts, and to be chary of their reputation, lest it grow hackneyed in the eyes of men. Perhaps I was, and have always been, the more indifferent to the degree of estimation in which I might be held as an author because I did not put so high a value as many others upon what is termed literary reputation in the abstract, or at least upon the species of popularity which had fallen to my share; for though it were worse than affectation to deny that my vanity was satisfied at my success in the department in which chance had in some measure enlisted me, I was, nevertheless, far from thinking that the novelist or romance-writer stands high in the ranks of literature. But I spare the reader farther egotism on this subject, as I have expressed my opinion very fully in the Introductory Epistle to the *Fortunes of Nigel*, and, although it be composed in an imaginary character, it is as sincere and candid as if it had been written "without my gown and band."

In a word, when I considered myself as having been unsuccessful in the *Monastery*, I was tempted to try whether

I could not restore, even at the risk of totally losing my so-called reputation by a new hazard. I looked round my library, and could not but observe that, from the time of Chaucer to that of Byron, the most popular authors had been the most prolific. Even the aristarch Johnson allowed that the quality of readiness and profusion had a merit in itself, independent of the intrinsic value of the composition. Talking of Churchill, I believe, who had little merit in his prejudiced eyes, he allowed him that of fertility, with some such qualification as this—"A crab-apple can bear but crabs after all; but there is a great difference in favor of that which bears a large quantity of fruit, however indifferent, and that which produces only a few."

Looking more attentively at the patriarchs of literature, whose career was as long as it was brilliant, I thought I perceived that in the busy and prolonged course of exertion there were no doubt occasional failures, but that still those who were favorites of their age triumphed over these miscarriages. By the new efforts which they made, their errors were obliterated, they became identified with the literature of their country, and after having long received law from the critics, came in some degree to impose it. And when such a writer was at length called from the scene, his death first made the public sensible what a large share he had occupied in their attention. I recollected a passage in Grimm's *Correspondence*, that, while the unexhausted Voltaire sent forth tract after tract, to the very close of a long life, the first impression made by each as it appeared was that it was inferior to its predecessor—an opinion adopted from the general idea that the Patriarch of Ferney must at last find the point from which he was to decline. But the opinion of the public finally ranked in succession the last of Voltaire's *Essays* on the same footing with those which had formerly charmed the French nation. The inference from this and similar facts seemed to me to be that new works were often judged of by the public, not so much from their own intrinsic merit, as from extrinsic ideas which readers had previously formed with regard to them, and over which a writer might hope to triumph by patience and by exertion. There is a risk in the attempt:

If he fall in, good-night, or sink or swim.

But this is a chance incident to every literary attempt, and by which men of a sanguine temper are little moved.

I may illustrate what I mean by the feelings of most men in traveling. If we have found any stage particularly tedious or in an especial degree interesting, particularly short or much longer than we expected, our imaginations are so apt to exaggerate the original impression that, on repeating the journey, we usually find that we have considerably overrated the predominating quality, and the road appears to be duller or more pleasant, shorter or more tedious, than what we expected, and, consequently, than what is the actual case. It requires a third or fourth journey to enable us to form an accurate judgment of its beauty, its length, or its other attributes.

In the same manner, the public, judging of a new work, which it receives perhaps with little expectation, if surprised into applause, becomes very often ecstatic, gives a great deal more approbation than is due, and elevates the child of its immediate favor to a rank which, as it affects the author, it is equally difficult to keep and painful to lose. If, on this occasion, the author trembles at the height to which he is raised, and becomes afraid of the shadow of his own renown, he may indeed retire from the lottery with the prize which he has drawn, but, in future ages, his honor will be only in proportion to his labors. If, on the contrary, he rushes again into the lists, he is sure to be judged with severity proportioned to the former favor of the public. If he be daunted by a bad reception on this second occasion, he may again become a stranger to the arena. If, on the contrary, he can keep his ground, and stand the shuttlecock's fate, of being struck up and down, he will probably, at length, hold with some certainty the level in public opinion which he may be found to deserve; and he may perhaps boast of arresting the general attention, in the same manner as the Bachelor Samson Carrasco of fixing the weathercock La Giralda of Seville for weeks, months, or years, that is, for as long as the wind shall uniformly blow from one quarter. To this degree of popularity the Author had the hardihood to aspire, while, in order to attain it, he assumed the daring resolution to keep himself in the view of the public by frequent appearances before them.

It must be added, that the Author's incognito gave him the greater courage to renew his attempts to please the public, and an advantage similar to that which Jack the Giant-killer received from his coat of darkness. In sending the *Abbot* forth so soon after the *Monastery*, he had used the well-known practise recommended by Bassanio :

In my school-days, when I had lost one shaft,
I shot another of the self-same flight,
The self-same way, with more advised watch,
To find the other forth.

And, to continue the simile, his shafts, like those of the Lesser Ajax, were discharged more readily than the archer was as inaccessible to criticism, personally speaking, as the Grecian archer under his brother's sevenfold shield.

Should the reader desire to know upon what principles the *Abbot* was expected to amend the fortune of the *Monastery*, I have first to request his attention to the Introductory Epistle addressed to the imaginary Captain Clutterbuck—a mode by which, like his predecessors in this walk of fiction, the real Author makes one of his *dramatis personæ* the means of communicating his own sentiments to the public, somewhat more artificially than by a direct address to the readers. A pleasing French writer of fairy tales, Monsieur Pajon, author of the *History of Prince Soly*, has set a diverting example of the same machinery, where he introduces the presiding Genius of the land of Romance conversing with one of the personages of the tale.

In this Introductory Epistle, the Author communicates, in confidence, to Captain Clutterbuck his sense that the White Lady had not met the taste of the times, and his reason for withdrawing her from the scene. The Author did not deem it equally necessary to be candid respecting another alteration. The *Monastery* was designed, at first, to have contained some supernatural agency, arising out of the fact that Melrose had been the place of deposit of the great Robert Bruce's heart. The writer shrunk, however, from filling up, in this particular, the sketch as it was originally traced; nor did he venture to resume, in the continuation, the subject which he had left unattempted in the original work. Thus, the incident of the discovery of the heart, which occupies the greater part of the Introduction to the *Monastery*, is a mystery unnecessarily introduced, and which remains at last very imperfectly explained. In this particular, I was happy to shroud myself by the example of the author of *Caleb Williams*, who never condescends to inform us of the actual contents of that iron chest which makes such a figure in his interesting work, and gives the name to Mr. Colman's drama.

The public had some claim to inquire into this matter, but it seemed indifferent policy in the Author to give the explanation. For, whatever praise may be due to the in-

genuity which brings to a general combination all the loose threads of a narrative, like the knitter at the finishing of her stocking, I am greatly deceived if in many cases a superior advantage is not attained by the air of reality which the deficiency of explanation attaches to a work written on a different system. In life itself, many things befall every mortal of which the individual never knows the real cause or origin: and were we to point out the most marked distinction between a real and a fictitious narrative, we would say, that the former, in reference to the remote causes of the events it relates, is obscure, doubtful, and mysterious; whereas, in the latter case, it is a part of the author's duty to afford satisfactory details upon the causes of the separate events he has recorded, and, in a word, to account for everything. The reader, like Mungo in the *Padlock*, will not be satisfied with hearing what he is not made fully to comprehend.

I omitted, therefore, in the Introduction to the *Abbot*, any attempt to explain the previous story or to apologize for unintelligibility.

Neither would it have been prudent to have endeavored to proclaim, in the Introduction to the *Abbot*, the real spring by which I hoped it might attract a greater degree of interest than its immediate predecessor. A taking title, or the announcement of a popular subject, is a recipe for success much in favor with booksellers, but which authors will not always find efficacious. The cause is worth a moment's examination.

There occur in every country some peculiar historical characters, which are, like a spell or a charm, sovereign to excite curiosity and attract attention, since every one in the slightest degree interested in the land which they belong to has heard much of them, and longs to hear more. A tale turning on the fortunes of Alfred or Elizabeth in England, or Wallace or Bruce in Scotland, is sure by the very announcement to excite public curiosity to a considerable degree and ensure the publisher's being relieved of the greater part of an impression, even before the contents of the work are known. This is of the last importance to the bookseller, who is at once to use a technical phrase, "brought home," all his outlay being repaid. But it is a different case with the author, since it cannot be denied that we are apt to feel least satisfied with the works of which we have been induced, by titles and laudatory advertisements, to entertain exaggerated expectation. The in-

tention of the work has been anticipated, and **misconceived** or misrepresented, and although the difficulty of executing the work again reminds us of Hotspur's task of "o'erwalking a current roaring loud," yet the adventurer must look for more ridicule if he fails than applause if he executes his undertaking.

Notwithstanding a risk which should make authors pause ere they adopt a theme which, exciting general interest and curiosity, is often the preparative for disappointment, yet it would be an injudicious regulation which should deter the poet or painter from attempting to introduce historical portraits merely from the difficulty of executing the task in a satisfactory manner. Something must be trusted to the generous impulse, which often thrusts an artist upon feats of which he knows the difficulty, while he trusts courage and exertion may afford the means of surmounting it.

It is especially when he is sensible of losing ground with the public that an author may be justified in using with address such selection of subject or title as is most likely to procure a rehearing. It was with these feelings of hope and apprehension that I ventured to awaken, in a work of fiction, the memory of Queen Mary, so interesting by her wit, her beauty, her misfortunes, and the mystery which still does, and probably always will, overhang her history. In doing so, I was aware that failure would be a conclusive disaster, so that my task was something like that of an enchanter who raises a spirit over whom he is uncertain of possessing an effectual control; and I naturally paid attention to such principles of composition as I conceived were best suited to the historical novel.

Enough has been already said to explain the purpose of composing the *Abbot*. The historical references are, as usual, explained in the notes. That which relates to Queen Mary's escape from Lochleven Castle is a more minute account of that romantic adventure than is to be found in the histories of the period.

ABBOTSFORD, 1st January, 1831.

INTRODUCTORY EPISTLE

FROM

THE AUTHOR OF *WAVERLEY*

TO

CAPTAIN CLUTTERBUCK,

OF HIS MAJESTY'S — REGIMENT OF INFANTRY

DEAR CAPTAIN—

I am sorry to observe, by your last favor, that you disapprove of the numerous retrenchments and alterations which I have been under the necessity of making on the Manuscript of your friend, the Benedictine, and I willingly make you the medium of apology to many who have honored me more than I deserve.

I admit that my retrenchments have been numerous, and leave gaps in the story, which, in your original manuscript, would have run well-nigh to a fourth volume, as my printer assures me. I am sensible besides, that, in consequence of the liberty of curtailment you have allowed me, some parts of the story have been huddled up without the necessary details. But, after all, it is better that the travelers should have to step over a ditch than to wade through a morass: that the reader should have to suppose what may easily be inferred than be obliged to creep through pages of dull explanation. I have struck out, for example, the whole machinery of the White Lady, and the poetry by which it is so ably-supported in the original manuscript. But you must allow that the public taste gives little encouragement to those legendary superstitions which formed alternately the delight and the terror of our predecessors. In like manner, much is omitted illustrative of the impulse of enthusiasm in favor of the ancient religion in Mother Magdalen and the abbot. But we do not feel deep sympathy at this period with what was once the most powerful and animating principle in Europe, with the exception

of that of the Reformation, by which it was successfully opposed.

You rightly observe that these retrenchments have rendered the title no longer applicable to the subject, and that some other would have been more suitable to the work in its present state than that of the abbot, who made so much greater figure in the original, and for whom your friend, the Benedictine, seems to have inspired you with a sympathetic respect. I must plead guilty to this accusation, observing, at the same time, in manner of extenuation, that though the objection might have been easily removed by giving a new title to the work, yet, in doing so, I should have destroyed the necessary cohesion between the present history and its predecessor the *Monastery*, which I was unwilling to do, as the period and several of the personages were the same.

After all, my good friend, it is of little consequence what the work is called, or on what interest it turns, provided it catches the public attention; for the quality of the wine, could we but insure it, may according to the old proverb, render the bush unnecessary or of little consequence.

I congratulate you upon your having found it consistent with prudence to establish your tilbury, and approve of the color, and of your boy's livery (subdued green and pink). As you talk of completing your descriptive poem on the *Ruins of Kennaquhair, with Notes by an Antiquary*, I hope you have procured a steady horse.

I remain, with compliments to all friends, dear Captain, very much

Yours, etc. etc.etc.,

THE AUTHOR OF *WAVERLEY*.

THE ABBOT

CHAPTER I

Domum mansit, lanam fecit.

ANCIENT ROMAN EPITAPH.

She keptit close the hous, and birlit at the quhele.

GAWAIN DOUGLAS.

THE time which passes over our heads so imperceptibly makes the same gradual change in habits, manners, and character as in personal appearance. At the revolution of every five years we find ourselves another, and yet the same: there is a change of views, and no less of the light in which we regard them, a change of motives as well as of actions. Nearly twice that space had glided away over the head of Halbert Glendinning and his lady betwixt the period of our former narrative, in which they played a distinguished part, and the date at which our present tale commences.

Two circumstances only had embittered their union, which was otherwise as happy as mutual affection could render it. The first of these was indeed the common calamity of Scotland, being the distracted state of that unhappy country, where every man's sword was directed against his neighbor's bosom. Glendinning had proved what Murray expected of him, a steady friend, strong in battle and wise in council, adhering to him, from motives of gratitude, in situations where by his own unbiassed will he would either have stood neuter or have joined the opposite party. Hence, when danger was near—and it was seldom far distant—Sir Halbert Glendinning, for he now bore the rank of knighthood, was perpetually summoned to attend his patron on distant expeditions, or on perilous enterprises, or to assist him with his counsel in the doubtful intrigues of a half barbarous court. He was thus frequently, and for a long space, absent from his castle and from his lady; and to this ground of regret we must add, that their union had not been blessed with children, to occupy the attention of the Lady of Avenel while she was thus deprived of her husband's domestic society.

On such occasions she lived almost entirely secluded from the world, within the walls of her paternal mansion. Visiting amongst neighbors was a matter entirely out of the question, unless on occasions of solemn festival, and then it was chiefly confined to near kindred. Of these the Lady of Avenel had none who survived, and the dames of the neighboring barons affected to regard her less as the heiress of the house of Avenel than as the wife of a peasant, the son of a church-vassal, raised up to mushroom eminence by the capricious favor of Murray.

This pride of ancestry, which rankled in the bosom of the ancient gentry, was more openly expressed by their ladies, and was, moreover, embittered not a little by the political feuds of the time, for most of the Southron chiefs were friends to the authority of the Queen, and very jealous of the power of Murray. The Castle of Avenel was, therefore, on all these accounts, as melancholy and solitary a residence for its lady as could well be imagined. Still it had the essential recommendation of great security. The reader is already aware that the fortress was built upon an islet in a small lake, and was only accessible by a causeway, intersected by a double ditch, defended by two drawbridges, so that, without artillery, it might in those days be considered as impregnable. It was only necessary, therefore, to secure against surprise, and the service of six able men within the castle was sufficient for that purpose. If more serious danger threatened, an ample garrison was supplied by the male inhabitants of a little hamlet which, under the auspices of Halbert Glendinning, had arisen on a small piece of level ground, betwixt the lake and the hill, nearly adjoining to the spot where the causeway joined the mainland. The Lord of Avenel had found it an easy matter to procure inhabitants, as he was not only a kind and beneficent overlord, but well qualified, both by his experience in arms, his high character for wisdom and integrity, and his favor with the powerful Earl of Murray, to protect and defend those who dwelt under his banner. In leaving his castle for any length of time, he had, therefore, the consolation to reflect that this village afforded, on the slightest notice, a band of thirty stout men, which was more than sufficient for its defense; while the families of the villagers, as was usual on such occasions, fled to the recesses of the mountains, drove their cattle to the same places of shelter, and left the enemy to work their will on their miserable cottages.

One guest only resided generally, if not constantly, at

the Castle of Avenel. This was Henry Warden, who now felt himself less able for the stormy task imposed on the Reforming clergy; and having by his zeal given personal offense to many of the leading nobles and chiefs, did not consider himself as perfectly safe unless when within the walls of the strong mansion of some assured friend. He ceased not, however, to serve his cause as eagerly with his pen as he had formerly done with his tongue, and had engaged in a furious and acrimonious contest concerning the sacrifice of the mass, as it was termed, with the Abbot Eustatius, formerly the sub-prior of Kennaquhair. Answers, replies, duplies, triplies, quadruples followed thick upon each other, and displayed, as is not unusual in controversy, fully as much zeal as Christian charity. The disputation very soon became as celebrated as that of John Knox and the Abbot of Crossraguel, raged nearly as fiercely, and, for aught I know, the publications to which it gave rise may be as precious in the eyes of bibliographers.* But the engrossing nature of his occupation rendered the theologian not the most interesting companion for a solitary female; and his grave, stern, and absorbed deportment, which seldom showed any interest except in that which concerned his religious profession, made his presence rather add to than diminish the gloom which hung over the Castle of Avenel. To superintend the tasks of numerous female domestics was the principal part of the lady's daily employment; her spindle and distaff, her Bible, and a solitary walk upon the battlements of the castle, or upon the causeway, or occasionally, but more seldom, upon the banks of the little lake, consumed the rest of the day. But so great was the insecurity of the period that, when she ventured to extend her walk beyond the hamlet, the warder on the watch-tower was directed to keep a sharp lookout in every direction, and four or five men held themselves in readiness to mount and sally forth from the castle on the slightest appearance of alarm.

Thus stood affairs at the castle, when, after an absence of several weeks, the Knight of Avenel, which was now the title most frequently given to Sir Halbert Glendinning, was daily expected to return home. Day after day, however, passed away, and he returned not. Letters in those days

* The tracts which appeared in the disputation between the Scottish Reformer and Quentin Kennedy, Abbot of Crossraguel, are among the scarcest in Scottish bibliography. See M'Crie's *Life of Knox*, p. 258.

were rarely written, and the knight must have resorted to a secretary to express his intentions in that manner ; besides, intercourse of all kinds was precarious and unsafe, and no man cared to give any public intimation of the time and direction of a journey, since, if his route were publicly known, it was always likely he might, in that case meet with more enemies than friends upon the road. The precise day, therefore, of Sir Halbert's return was not fixed, but that which his lady's fond expectation had calculated upon in her own mind had long since passed, and hope delayed began to make the heart sick.

It was upon the evening of a sultry summer's day, when the sun was half-sunk behind the distant western mountains of Liddesdale, that the lady took her solitary walk on the battlements of a range of buildings, which formed the front of the castle, where a flat roof of flagstones presented a broad and convenient promenade. The level surface of the lake, undisturbed except by the occasional dipping of a teal-duck or coot, was gilded with the beams of the setting luminary, and reflected, as if in a golden mirror, the hills amongst which it lay embosomed. The scene, otherwise so lonely, was occasionally enlivened by the voices of the children in the village, which, softened by distance, reached the ear of the lady in her solitary walk, or by the distant call of the herdsman, as he guided his cattle from the glen in which they had pastured all day, to place them in greater security for the night in the immediate vicinity of the village. The deep lowing of the cows seemed to demand the attendance of the milk-maidens, who, singing shrilly and merrily, strolled forth, each with her pail on her head, to attend to the duty of the evening. The Lady of Avenel looked and listened ; the sounds which she heard reminded her of former days, when her most important employment, as well as her greatest delight, was to assist Dame Glendinning and Tibb Tacket in milking the cows at Glendearg. The thought was fraught with melancholy.

"Why was I not," she said, "the peasant girl which in all men's eyes I seemed to be ! Halbert and I had then spent our life peacefully in his native glen, undisturbed by the phantoms either of fear or ambition. His greatest pride had then been to show the fairest herd in the halidome ; his greatest danger to repel some pilfering snatcher from the Border ; and the utmost distance which would have divided us would have been the chase of some out-lying deer. But, alas ! what avails the blood which Halbert has shed, and

the dangers which he encounters, to support a name and rank, dear to him because he has it from me, but which we shall never transmit to our posterity? With me the name of Avenel must expire."

She sighed as these reflections arose, and, looking towards the shore of the lake, her eye was attracted by a group of children of various ages, assembled to see a little ship, constructed by some village artist, perform its first voyage on the water. It was launched amid the shouts of tiny voices and the clapping of little hands, and shot bravely forth on its voyage with a favoring wind, which promised to carry it to the other side of the lake. Some of the bigger boys ran round to receive and secure it on the farther shore, trying their speed against each other as they sprang like young fawns along the shingly verge of the lake. The rest, for whom such a journey seemed too arduous, remained watching the motions of the fairy vessel from the spot where it had been launched. The sight of their sports pressed on the mind of the childless Lady of Avenel.

"Why are none of these prattlers mine?" she continued, pursuing the tenor of her melancholy reflections. "Their parents can scarce find them the coarsest food; and I, who could nurse them in plenty—I am doomed never to hear a child call me mother!"

The thought sunk on her heart with a bitterness which resembled envy, so deeply is the desire of offspring implanted in the female breast. She pressed her hands together as if she were wringing them in the extremity of her desolate feeling, as one whom Heaven had written childless. A large staghound of the greyhound species approached at this moment, and, attracted perhaps by the gesture, licked her hands and pressed his large head against them. He obtained the desired caress in return, but still the sad impression remained.

"Wolf," she said, as if the animal could have understood her complaints, "thou art a noble and beautiful animal; but, alas! the love and affection that I long to bestow is of a quality higher than can fall to thy share, though I love thee much."

And, as if she were apologizing to Wolf for withholding from him any part of her regard, she caressed his proud head and crest, while, looking in her eyes, he seemed to ask her what she wanted, or what he could do to show his attachment. At this moment a shriek of distress was heard on the shore, from the playful group which had been lately

so jovial. The lady looked, and saw the cause with great agony.

The little ship, the object of the children's delighted attention, had struck among some tufts of the plant which bears the water-lily, that marked a shoal in the lake about an arrow-flight from the shore. A hardy little boy, who had taken the lead in the race round the margin of the lake, did not hesitate a moment to strip off his "wylie-coat," plunge into the water, and swim towards the object of their common solicitude. The first movement of the lady was to call for help; but she observed that the boy swam strongly and fearlessly, and as she saw that one or two villagers, who were distant spectators of the incident, seemed to give themselves no uneasiness on his account, she supposed that he was accustomed to the exercise, and that there was no danger. But whether, in swimming, the boy had struck his breast against a sunken rock, or whether he was suddenly taken with cramp, or whether he had over-calculated his own strength, it so happened that, when he had disembarrassed the little plaything from the flags in which it was entangled and sent it forward on its course, he had scarce swam a few yards in his way to the shore, when he raised himself suddenly from the water and screamed aloud, clapping his hands at the same time with an expression of fear and pain.

The Lady of Avenel, instantly taking the alarm, called hastily to the attendants to get the boat ready. But this was an affair of some time. The only boat permitted to be used on the lake was moored within the second cut which intersected the canal, and it was several minutes ere it could be unmoored and got under way. Meantime, the Lady of Avenel, with agonizing anxiety, saw that the efforts which the poor boy made to keep himself afloat were now exchanged for a faint struggling, which would soon have been over, but for aid equally prompt and unhopèd-for. Wolf, who, like some of that large species of greyhound, was a practised water-dog, had marked the object of her anxiety, and, quitting his mistress's side, had sought the nearest point from which he could with safety plunge into the lake. With the wonderful instinct which these noble animals have so often displayed in the like circumstances, he swam straight to the spot where his assistance was so much wanted, and seizing the child's under-dress in his mouth, he not only kept him afloat, but towed him towards the causeway. The boat, having put off with a couple of men, met the dog half-way,

and relieved him of his burden. They landed on the causeway, close by the gate of the castle, with their yet lifeless charge, and were there met by the Lady of Avenel, attended by one or two of her maidens, eagerly waiting to administer assistance to the sufferer.

He was borne into the castle, deposited upon a bed, and every mode of recovery resorted to which the knowledge of the times, and the skill of Henry Warden, who professed some medical science, could dictate. For some time it was all in vain, and the lady watched with unspeakable earnestness the pallid countenance of the beautiful child. He seemed about ten years old. His dress was of the meanest sort; but his long curled hair, and the noble cast of his features, partook not of that poverty of appearance. The proudest noble in Scotland might have been yet prouder could he have called that child his heir. While, with breathless anxiety, the Lady of Avenel gazed on his well-formed and expressive features, a slight shade of color returned gradually to the cheek; suspended animation became restored by degrees, the child sighed deeply, opened his eyes, which to the human countenance produces the effect of light upon the natural landscape, stretched his arms toward the lady, and muttered the word "Mother"—that epithet of all others which is dearest to the female ear.

"God, madam," said the preacher, "has restored the child to your wishes; it must be yours so to bring him up that he may not one day wish that he had perished in his innocence."

"It shall be my charge," said the lady; and again throwing her arms around the boy, she overwhelmed him with kisses and caresses, so much was she agitated by the terror arising from the danger in which he had been just placed, and by joy at his unexpected deliverance.

"But you are not my mother," said the boy, recovering his recollection, and endeavoring, though faintly, to escape from the caresses of the Lady of Avenel—"you are not my mother. Alas! I have no mother—only I have dreamed that I have one."

"I will read the dream for you, my love," answered the Lady of Avenel; "and I will be myself your mother. Surely God has heard my wishes, and in his own marvelous manner hath sent me an object on which my affections may expand themselves." She looked toward Warden as she spoke. The preacher hesitated what he should reply to a burst of passionate feeling which, perhaps, seemed to him more enthus-

iastic than the occasion demanded. In the mean while, the large staghound, Wolf, which, dripping wet as he was, had followed his mistress into the apartment, and had sate by the bedside, a patient and quiet spectator of all the means used for resuscitation of the being whom he had preserved, now became impatient of remaining any longer unnoticed, and began to, whine and fawn upon the lady with his great rough paws.

“Yes,” she said, “good Wolf, and you shall be remembered also for your day’s work; and I will think the more of you for having preserved the life of a creature so beautiful.”

But Wolf was not quite satisfied with the share of attention which he thus attracted: he persisted in whining and pawing upon his mistress, his caresses rendered still more troublesome by his long shaggy hair being so much and thoroughly wetted, till she desired one of the domestics with whom he was familiar, to call the animal out of the apartment. Wolf resisted every invitation to this purpose, until his mistress positively commanded him to be gone in an angry tone; when turning towards the bed on which the boy still lay, half-awake to sensation, half-drowned in the meanders of a fluctuating delirium, he uttered a deep and savage growl, curled up his nose and lips, showing his full range of white and sharpened teeth, which might have matched those of an actual wolf, and then, turning round, sullenly followed the domestic out of the apartment.

“It is singular,” said the lady, addressing Warden; “the animal is not only so good-natured to all, but so particularly fond of children. What can ail him at the little fellow whose life he has saved?”

“Dogs,” replied the preacher, “are but too like the human race in their foibles, though their instinct be less erring than the reason of poor mortal man when relying upon his own unassisted powers. Jealousy, my good lady, is a passion not unknown to them, and they often evince it, not only with respect to the preferences which they see given by their masters to individuals of their own species, but even when their rivals are children. You have caressed that child much and eagerly, and the dog considers himself as a discarded favorite.”

“It is a strange instinct,” said the lady; “and from the gravity with which you mention it, my reverend friend, I would almost say that you supposed this singular jealousy of

my favorite, Wolf, was not only well founded but justifiable. But perhaps you speak in jest?"

"I seldom jest," answered the preacher; "life was not lent to us to be expended in that idle mirth which resembles the crackling of thorns under the pot. I would only have you derive, if it so please you, this lesson from what I have said, that the best of our feelings, when indulged to excess, may give pain to others. There is but one in which we may indulge to the utmost limit of vehemence of which our bosom is capable, secure that excess cannot exist in the greatest intensity to which it can be excited: I mean the love of our Maker."

"Surely," said the Lady of Avenel, "we are commanded by the same authority to love our neighbor?"

"Ay, madam," said Warden, "but our love to God is to be unbounded; we are to love Him with our whole heart, our whole soul, and our whole strength. The love which the precept commands us to bear to our neighbor has affixed to it a direct limit and qualification: we are to love our neighbor as ourself; as it is elsewhere explained by the great commandment, that we must do unto him as we would that he should do unto us. Here there is a limit and a bound even to the most praiseworthy of our affections, so far as they are turned upon sublunary and terrestrial objects. We are to render to our neighbor, whatever be his rank or degree, that corresponding portion of affection with which we could rationally expect we should ourselves be regarded by those standing in the same relation to us. Hence, neither husband nor wife, neither son nor daughter, neither friend nor relation, are lawfully to be made the objects of our idolatry. The Lord our God is a jealous God, and will not endure that we bestow on the creature that extremity of devotion which He who made us demands as His own share. I say to you, lady, that even in the fairest and purest and most honorable feelings of our nature there is that original taint of sin which ought to make us pause and hesitate ere we indulge them to excess."

"I understand not this, reverend sir," said the lady; "nor do I guess what I can have now said or done to draw down on me an admonition which has something a taste of reproof."

"Lady," said Warden, "I crave your pardon if I have urged aught beyond the limits of my duty. But consider whether, in the sacred promise to be not only a protectress but a mother to this poor child, your purpose may meet the

wishes of the noble knight your husband. The fondness which you have lavished on the unfortunate, and, I own, most lovely, child has met something like a reproof in the bearing of your household dog. Displease not your noble husband. Men, as well as animals, are jealous of the affections of those they love."

"This is too much, reverend sir," said the Lady of Avenel, greatly offended. "You have been long our guest, and have received from the Knight of Avenel and myself that honor and regard which your character and profession so justly demand. But I am yet to learn that we have at any time authorized your interference in our family arrangements, or placed you as a judge of our conduct towards each other. I pray this may be forborne in future."

"Lady," replied the preacher, with the boldness peculiar to the clergy of his persuasion at that time, "when you weary of my admonitions, when I see that my services are no longer acceptable to you and the noble knight your husband, I shall know that my Master wills me no longer to abide here; and, praying for a continuance of His best blessings on your family, I will then, were the season the depth of winter, and the hour midnight, walk out on yonder waste, and travel forth through these wild mountains, as lonely and unaided, though far more helpless, than when I first met your husband in the valley of Glendearg. But while I remain here, I will not see you err from the true path, no, not a hair's-breadth, without making the old man's voice and remonstrance heard."

"Nay, but," said the lady, who both loved and respected the good man, though sometimes a little offended at what she conceived to be an exuberant degree of zeal, "we will not part this way, my good friend. Women are quick and hasty in their feelings; but, believe me, my wishes and my purposes towards this child are such as both my husband and you will approve of."

The clergyman bowed, and retreated to his own apartment.

CHAPTER II

How steadfastly he fix'd his eyes on me—
His dark eyes shining through forgotten tears—
Then stretch'd his little arms, and call'd me mother !
What could I do? I took the bantling home ;
I could not tell the imp he had no mother.

Count Basil.

WHEN Warden had left the apartment, the Lady of Avenel gave way to the feelings of tenderness which the sight of the boy, his sudden danger, and his recent escape had inspired ; and no longer awed by the sternness, as she deemed it, of the preacher, heaped with caresses the lovely and interesting child. He was now in some measure recovered from the consequences of his accident, and received passively, though not without wonder, the tokens of kindness with which he was thus loaded. The face of the lady was strange to him, and her dress different and far more sumptuous than any he remembered. But the boy was naturally of an undaunted temper ; and indeed children are generally acute physiognomists, and not only pleased by that which is beautiful in itself, but peculiarly quick in distinguishing and replying to the attentions of those who really love them. If they see a person in company, though a perfect stranger, who is by nature fond of children, the little imps seem to discover it by a sort of freemasonry, while the awkward attempts of those who make advances to them for the purpose of recommending themselves to the parents usually fail in attracting their reciprocal attention. The little, boy therefore, appeared in some degree sensible of the lady's caresses, and it was with difficulty she withdrew herself from his pillow to afford him leisure for necessary repose.

“To whom belongs our little rescued varlet ?” was the first question which the Lady of Avenel put to her handmaiden Liliás, when they had retired to the hall.

“To an old woman in the hamlet,” said Liliás, “who is even now come so far as the porter's lodge to inquire concerning his safety. Is it your pleasure that she be admitted ?”

“Is it my pleasure!” said the Lady of Avenel, echoing the question with a strong accent of displeasure and surprise; “can you make any doubt of it? What woman but must pity the agony of the mother whose heart is throbbing for the safety of a child so lovely!”

“Nay, but, madam,” said Liliás, “this woman is too old to be the mother of the child; I rather think she must be his grandmother, or some more distant relation.”

“Be she who she will, Liliás,” replied the lady, “she must have an aching heart while the safety of a creature so lovely is uncertain. Go instantly and bring her hither. Besides, I would willingly learn something concerning his birth.”

Liliás left the hall, and presently afterwards returned, ushering in a tall female very poorly dressed, yet with more pretension to decency and cleanliness than was usually combined with such coarse garments. The Lady of Avenel knew her figure the instant she presented herself. It was the fashion of the family that, upon every Sabbath, and on two evenings in the week besides, Henry Warden preached or lectured in the chapel at the castle. The extension of the Protestant faith was, upon principle, as well as in good policy, a primary object with the Knight of Avenel. The inhabitants of the village were therefore invited to attend upon the instructions of Henry Warden, and many of them were speedily won to the doctrine which their master and protector approved. These sermons, homilies, and lectures had made a great impression on the mind of the Abbot Eustace, or Eustatius, and were a sufficient spur to the severity and sharpness of his controversy with his old fellow-collegiate; and, ere Queen Mary was dethroned, and while the Catholics still had considerable authority in the Border provinces, he more than once threatened to levy his vassals, and assail and level with the earth that stronghold of heresy, the Castle of Avenel. But notwithstanding the abbot's impotent resentment, and notwithstanding also the disinclination of the country to favor the new religion, Henry Warden proceeded without remission in his labors, and made weekly converts from the faith of Rome to that of the Reformed church. Amongst those who gave most earnest and constant attendance on his ministry was the aged woman, whose form, tall, and otherwise too remarkable to be forgotten, the lady had of late observed frequently as being conspicuous amongst the little audience. She had indeed more than once desired to know who that stately-looking

woman was, whose appearance was so much above the poverty of her vestments. But the reply had always been that she was an Englishwoman, who was tarrying for a season at the hamlet, and that no one knew more concerning her. She now asked her after her name and birth.

"Magdalen Græme is my name," said the woman; "I come of the Græmes of Heathergill, in Nicol Forest, a people of ancient blood."

"And what make you," continued the lady, "so far distant from your home?"

"I have no home," said Magdalen Græme: "it was burned by your Border riders; my husband and my son were slain; there is not a drop's blood left in the veins of any one which is of kin to mine."

"That is no uncommon fate in these wild times, and in this unsettled land," said the lady; "the English hands have been as deeply dyed in our blood as ever those of Scotsmen have been in yours."

"You have right to say it, lady," answered Magdalen Græme; "for men tell of a time when this castle was not strong enough to save your father's life, or to afford your mother and her infant a place of refuge. And why ask ye me, then, wherefore I dwell not in mine own home, and with mine own people?"

"It was indeed an idle question," answered the lady, "where misery so often makes wanderers; but wherefore take refuge in a hostile country?"

"My neighbors were Popish and mass-mongers," said the old woman; "it has pleased Heaven to give me a clearer sight of the Gospel, and I have tarried here to enjoy the ministry of that worthy man Henry Warden, who, to the praise and comfort of many, teacheth the Evangel in truth and in sincerity."

"Are you poor?" again demanded the Lady of Avenel.

"You hear me ask alms of no one," answered the Englishwoman.

Here there was a pause. The manner of the woman was if not disrespectful, at least much less than gracious; and she appeared to give no encouragement to farther communication. The Lady of Avenel renewed the conversation on a different topic.

"You have heard of the danger in which your boy has been placed?"

"I have, lady, and how by an especial providence he was

rescued from death. May Heaven make him thankful, and me !”

“What relation do you bear to him ?”

“I am his grandmother, lady, if it so please you ; the only relation he hath left upon earth to take charge of him.”

“The burden of his maintenance must necessarily be grievous to you in your deserted situation ?” pursued the lady.

“I have complained of it to no one,” said Magdalen Græme, with the same unmoved, dry, and unconcerned tone of voice in which she had answered all the former questions.

“If,” said the Lady of Avenel, “your grandchild could be received into a noble family, would it not advantage both him and you ?”

“Received into a noble family !” said the old woman, drawing herself up, and bending her brows until her forehead was wrinkled into a frown of unusual severity ; “and for what purpose, I pray you ?—to be my lady’s page, or my lord’s jack-man, to eat broken victuals, and contend with other menials for the remnants of the master’s meal ? Would you have him to fan the flies from my lady’s face while she sleeps, to carry her train while she walks, to hand her trencher when she feeds, to ride before her on horseback, to walk after her on foot, to sing when she lists, and to be silent when she bids ?—a very weathercock, which though furnished in appearance with wings and plumage, cannot soar into the air—cannot fly from the spot where it is perched, but receives all its impulses, and performs all its revolutions, obedient to the changeful breath of a vain woman ? When the eagle of Helvellyn perches on the tower of Lanercost, and turns and changes his place to show how the wind sits, Roland Græme shall be what you would make him.”

The woman spoke with a rapidity and vehemence which seemed to have in it a touch of insanity ; and a sudden sense of the danger to which the child must necessarily be exposed in the charge of such a keeper increased the lady’s desire to keep him in the castle, if possible.

“You mistake me, dame,” she said, addressing the old woman in a soothing manner ; “I do not wish your boy to be in attendance on myself, but upon the good knight, my husband. Were he himself the son of a belted earl, he could not better be trained to arms, and all that befits a

gentleman, than by the instructions and discipline of Sir Halbert Glendinning."

"Ay," answered the old woman, in the same style of bitter irony, "I know the wages of that service—a curse when the corselet is not sufficiently brightened, a blow when the girth is not tightly drawn; to be beaten because the hounds are at fault; to be reviled because the foray is unsuccessful; to stain his hands for the master's bidding in the blood alike of beast and of man; to be a butcher of harmless deer, a murderer and defacer of God's own image, not at his own pleasure, but at that of his lord; to live a brawling ruffian, and a common stabber—exposed to heat, to cold, to want of food, to all the privations of an anchorite, not for the love of God, but for the service of Satan; to die by the gibbet, or in some obscure skirmish; to sleep out his brief life in carnal security, and to awake in the eternal fire which is never quenched."

"Nay," said the Lady of Avenel, "but to such unhallowed course of life your grandson will not be here exposed. My husband is just and kind to those who live under his banner; and you yourself well know that youth have here a strict as well as a good preceptor in the person of our chaplain."

The old woman appeared to pause.

"You have named," she said, "the only circumstance which can move me. I must soon onward, the vision has said it: I must not tarry in the same spot—I must on—I must on, it is my weird. Swear, then, that you will protect the boy as if he were your own, until I return hither and claim him, and I will consent for a space to part with him. But especially swear, he shall not lack the instruction of the godly man who hath placed the Gospel truth high above those idolatrous shavelings, the monks and friars."

"Be satisfied, dame," said the Lady of Avenel; "the boy shall have as much care as if he were born of my own blood. Will you see him now?"

"No," answered the old woman, sternly; "to part is enough. I go forth on my own mission. I will not soften my heart by useless tears and wailings, as one that is not called to a duty."

"Will you not accept of something to aid you in your pilgrimage?" said the Lady of Avenel, putting into her hand two crowns of the sun. The old woman flung them down on the table.

"Am I of the race of Cain," she said, "proud lady, that you offer me gold in exchange for my own flesh and blood?"

“I had no such meaning,” said the lady, gently; “nor am I the proud woman you term me. Alas! my own fortunes might have taught me humility, even had it not been born with me.”

The old woman seemed somewhat to relax her tone of severity.

“You are of gentle blood,” she said, “else we had not parleyed thus long together. You are of gentle blood, and to such,” she added, drawing up her tall form as she spoke, “pride is as graceful as is the plume upon the bonnet. But for these pieces of gold, lady, you must needs resume them. I need not money. I am well provided; and I may not care for myself, nor think how, or by whom, I shall be sustained. Farewell, and keep your word. Cause your gates to be opened and your bridges to be lowered. I will set forward this very night. When I come again I will demand from you a strict account, for I have left with you the jewel of my life! Sleep will visit me but in snatches, food will not refresh me, rest will not restore my strength, until I see Roland Græme. Once more, farewell.”

“Make your obeisance, dame,” said Lilius to Magdalen Græme, as she retired—“make your obeisance to her ladyship, and thank her for her goodness, as is but fitting and right.”

The old woman turned short round on the officious waiting-maid. “Let her make her obeisance to me then, and I will return it. Why should I bend to her?—is it because her kirtle is of silk, and mine of blue lockeram? Go to, my lady’s waiting-woman. Know that the rank of the man rates that of the wife, and that she who marries a churl’s son, were she a king’s daughter, is but a peasant’s bride.”

Lilius was about to reply in great indignation, but her mistress imposed silence on her, and commanded that the old woman should be safely conducted to the mainland.

“Conduct her safe!” exclaimed the incensed waiting-woman, while Magdalen Græme left the apartment; “I say, duck her in the loch, and then we will see whether she is witch or not, as everybody in the village of Lochside will say and swear. I marvel your ladyship could bear so long with her insolence.”

But the commands of the lady were obeyed, and the old dame dismissed from the castle, was committed to her fortune. She kept her word, and did not long abide in that place, leaving the hamlet on the very night succeeding the interview, and wandering no one asked whither. The Lady

of Avenel inquired under what circumstances she had appeared among them, but could only learn that she was believed to be the widow of some man of consequence among the Grames who then inhabited the Debateable Land, a name given to a certain portion of territory which was the frequent subject of dispute betwixt Scotland and England; that she had suffered great wrong in some of the frequent forays by which that unfortunate district was wasted, and had been driven from her dwelling-place. She had arrived in the hamlet no one knew for what purpose, and was held by some to be a witch, by others a zealous Protestant, and by others again a Catholic devotee. Her language was mysterious, and her manners repulsive; and all that could be collected from her conversation seemed to imply that she was under the influence either of a spell, or of a vow—there was no saying which, since she talked as one who acted under a powerful and external agency.

Such were the particulars which the lady's inquiries were able to collect concerning Magdalen Grame, being far too meager and contradictory to authorize any satisfactory deduction. In truth, the miseries of the time, and the various turns of fate incidental to a frontier country, were perpetually chasing from their habitations those who had not the means of defense or protection. These wanderers in the land were too often seen to excite much attention or sympathy. They received the cold relief which was extorted by general feelings of humanity; a little excited in some breasts, and perhaps rather chilled in others, by the recollection that they who gave the charity to-day might themselves want it to-morrow. Magdalen Grame, therefore, came and departed like a shadow from the neighborhood of Avenel Castle.

The boy whom Providence, as she thought, had thus strangely placed under her care, was at once established a favorite with the lady of the castle. How could it be otherwise? He became the object of those affectionate feelings which, finding formerly no object on which to expand themselves, had increased the gloom of the castle, and embittered the solitude of its mistress. To teach him reading and writing as far as her skill went, to attend to his childish comforts, to watch his boyish sports, became the lady's favorite amusement. In her circumstances, where the ear only heard the lowing of the cattle from the distant hills, or the heavy step of the warder as he walked upon his post, or the half-ennivied laugh of her maiden as she turned her wheel, the ap-

pearance of the blooming and beautiful boy gave an interest which can hardly be conceived by those who live amid gayer or busier scenes. Young Roland was to the Lady of Avenel what the flower which occupies the window of some solitary captive is to the poor wight by whom it is nursed and cultivated—something which at once excited and repaid her care ; and in giving the boy her affection, she felt, as it were, grateful to him for releasing her from the state of dull apathy in which she had usually found herself during the absence of Sir Halbert Glendinning.

But even the charms of this blooming favorite were unable to chase the recurring apprehensions which arose from her husband's procrastinated return. Soon after Roland Græme became a resident at the castle, a groom, despatched by Sir Halbert, brought tidings that business of importance still delayed the knight at the court of Holyrood. The more distant period which the messenger had assigned for his master's arrival at length glided away, summer melted into autumn, and autumn was about to give place to winter, and yet he came not.

CHAPTER III

The waning harvest-moon shone broad and bright,
The warder's horn was heard at dead of night,
And while the folding portals wide were flung,
With trampling hoofs the rocky pavement rung.

LEYDEN.

“AND you, too, would be a soldier, Roland?” said the Lady of Avenel to her young charge, while, seated on a stone chair at one end of the battlements, she saw the boy attempt with a long stick to mimic the motions of the warder as he alternately shouldered, or ported, or sloped pike.

“Yes, lady,” said the boy, for he was now familiar, and replied to her questions with readiness and alacrity—“a soldier will I be; for there ne'er was gentleman but who belted him with brand.”

“Thou a gentleman!” said Liliás, who, as usual, was in attendance; “such a gentleman as I would make of a bean-cod with a rusty knife.”

“Nay, chide him not, Liliás,” said the Lady of Avenel, “for, beshrew me, but I think he comes of gentle blood; see how it musters in his face at your injurious reproof.”

“Had I my will, madam,” answered Liliás, “a good birchen wand should make his color muster to better purpose still.”

“On my word, Liliás,” said the lady, “one would think you had received harm from the poor boy; or is he so far on the frosty side of your favor because he enjoys the sunny side of mine?”

“Over Heaven's forbode, my lady!” answered Liliás; “I have lived too long with gentles, I praise my star for it, to fight with either follies or fantasies, whether they relate to beast, bird, or boy.”

Liliás was a favorite in her own class, a spoiled domestic, and often accustomed to take more license than her mistress was at all times willing to encourage. But what did not please the Lady of Avenel she did not choose to hear, and thus it was on the present occasion. She resolved to look more close and sharply after the boy, who had hitherto been

committed chiefly to the management of Liliás. He must, she thought be born of gentle blood; it were shame to think otherwise of a form so noble and features so fair; the very wildness in which he occasionally indulged, his contempt of danger and impatience of restraint, had in them something noble: assuredly the child was born of high rank. Such was her conclusion, and she acted upon it accordingly. The domestics around her, less jealous or less scrupulous than Liliás, acted as servants usually do, following the bias, and flattering for their own purposes, the humor of the lady; and the boy soon took on him those airs of superiority which the sight of habitual deference seldom fails to inspire. It seemed, in truth, as if to command were his natural sphere, so easily did he use himself to exact and receive compliance with his humors. The chaplain, indeed, might have interposed to check the air of assumption which Roland Græme so readily indulged, and most probably would have willingly rendered him that favor; but the necessity of adjusting with his brethren some disputed points of church discipline had withdrawn him for some time from the castle, and detained him in a distant part of the kingdom.

Matters stood thus in the Castle of Avenel, when a winded bugle sent its shrill and prolonged notes from the shore of the lake, and was replied to cheerily by the signal of the warder. The Lady of Avenel knew the sounds of her husband, and rushed to the window of the apartment in which she was sitting. A band of about thirty spearmen, with a pennon displayed before them, winded along the indented shores of the lake, and approached the causeway. A single horseman rode at the head of the party, his bright arms catching a glance of the October sun as he moved steadily along. Even at that distance, the lady recognized the lofty plume, bearing the mingled colors of her own liveries and those of Glendonwyne, blended with the holly-branch; and the firm seat and dignified demeanor of the rider, joined to the stately motion of the dark brown steed, sufficiently announced Halbert Glendinning.

The lady's first thought was that of rapturous joy at her husband's return: her second was connected with a fear which had sometimes intruded itself, that he might not altogether approve the peculiar distinction with which she had treated her orphan ward. In this fear there was implied a consciousness that the favor she had shown him was excessive; for Halbert Glendinning was at least as gentle and indulgent as he was firm and rational in the intercourse

of his household ; and to her, in particular, his conduct had ever been most affectionately tender.

Yet she did fear that, on the present occasion, her conduct might incur Sir Halbert's censure ; and hastily resolving that she would not mention the anecdote of the boy until the next day, she ordered him to be withdrawn from the apartment by Liliás.

"I will not go with Liliás, madam," answered the spoiled child, who had more than once carried his point by perseverance, and who, like his betters, delighted in the exercise of such authority—"I will not go to Liliás's gousty room ; I will stay and see that brave warrior who comes riding so gallantly along the drawbridge,"

"You must not stay, Roland," said the lady, more positively than she usually spoke to her little favorite.

"I will," reiterated the boy, who had already felt his consequence, and the probable chance of success.

"You *will*, Roland !" answered the lady ; "what manner of word is that ? I tell you, you must go."

"Will," answered the forward boy, "is a word for a man, and 'must' is no word for a lady."

"You are saucy, sirrah," said the lady. "Liliás, take him with you instantly."

"I always thought," said Liliás, smiling, as she seized the reluctant boy by the arm, "that my young master must give place to my old one."

"And you too are malapert, mistress," said the lady. "Hath the moon changed, that ye all of you thus forget yourselves ?"

Liliás made no reply, but led off the boy, who too proud to offer unavailing resistance, darted at his benefactress a glance which intimated plainly how willingly he would have defied her authority had he possessed the power to make good his point.

The Lady of Avenel was vexed to find how much this trifling circumstance had discomposed her at the moment when she ought naturally to have been entirely engrossed by her husband's return. But we do not recover composure by the mere feeling that agitation is mistimed. The glow of displeasure had not left the lady's cheek, her ruffled deportment was not yet entirely composed, when her husband, unhelmeted, but still wearing the rest of his arms, entered the apartment. His appearance banished the thoughts of everything else ; she rushed to him, clasped his iron-sheathed frame in her arms, and kissed his martial and

manly face with an affection which was at once evident and sincere. The warrior returned her embrace and her caress with the same fondness ; for the time which had passed since their union had diminished its romantic ardor, perhaps, but it had rather increased its rational tenderness, and Sir Halbert Glendinning's long and frequent absences from his castle had prevented affection from degenerating by habit into indifference.

When the first eager greetings were paid and received, the lady gazed fondly on her husband's face as she remarked—"You are altered, Halbert : you have ridden hard and far to-day, or you have been ill ?"

"I have been well, Mary," answered the knight—"passing well have I been ; and a long ride is to me, thou well knowest, but a thing of constant custom. Those who are born noble may slumber out their lives within the walls of their castles and manor-houses ; but he who hath achieved nobility by his own deeds must ever be in the saddle, to show that he merits his advancement."

While he spoke thus, the lady gazed fondly on him, as if endeavoring to read his inmost soul ; for the tone in which he spoke was that of melancholy depression."

Sir Halbert Glendinning was the same, yet a different person from what he had appeared in his early years. The fiery freedom of the aspiring youth had given place to the steady and stern composure of the approved soldier and skilful politician. There were deep traces of care on those noble features, over which each emotion used formerly to pass like light clouds across a summer sky. That sky was now, not perhaps clouded, but still and grave, like that of the sober autumn evening. The forehead was higher and more bare than in early youth, and the locks which still clustered thick and dark on the warrior's head were worn away at the temples, not by age, but by the constant pressure of the steel cap, or helmet. His beard, according to the fashion of the times, grew short and thick, and was turned into mustachois on the upper lip, and peaked at the extremity. The cheek, weatherbeaten and embrowned, had lost the glow of youth, but showed the vigorous complexion of active and confirmed manhood. Halbert Glendinning was, in a word, a knight to ride at a king's right hand, to bear his banner in war, to be his counselor in time of peace ; for his looks expressed the considerate firmness which can resolve wisely and dare boldly. Still, over these noble features there now spread an air of dejection, of which, per-

haps, the owner was not conscious, but which did not escape the observation of his anxious and affectionate partner.

"Something has happened, or is about to happen," said the Lady of Avenel; "this sadness sits not on your brow without cause—misfortune, national or particular must needs be at hand."

"There is nothing new that I wot of," said Halbert Glendinning; "but there is little of evil which can befall a kingdom that may not be apprehended in this unhappy and divided realm."

"Nay, then," said the lady, "I see there has really been some fatal work on foot. My Lord of Murray has not so long detained you at Holyrood, save that he wanted your help in some weighty purpose."

"I have not been at Holyrood, Mary," answered the knight; "I have been several weeks abroad."

"Abroad! and sent me no word!" replied the lady.

"What would the knowledge have availed, but to have rendered you unhappy, my love?" replied the knight; "your thoughts would have converted the slightest breeze that curled your own lake into a tempest raging in the German Ocean."

"And have you then really crossed the sea?" said the lady, to whom the very idea of an element which she had never seen conveyed notions of terror and of wonder—"really left your own native land and trodden distant shores, where the Scottish tongue is unheard and unknown?"

"Really, and really," said the knight, taking her hand in affectionate playfulness, "I have done this marvelous deed—have rolled on the ocean for three days and three nights, with the deep green waves dashing by the side of my pillow, and but a thin plank to divide me from it."

"Indeed, my Halbert," said the lady, "that was a tempting of Divine Providence. I never bade you unbuckle the sword from your side, or lay the lance from your hand; I never bade you sit still when your honor called you to rise and ride; but are not blade and spear dangers enough for one man's life, and why would you trust rough winds and raging seas?"

"We have in Germany and in the Low Countries, as they are called," answered Glendinning, "men who are united with us in faith, and with whom it is fitting we should unite in alliance. To some of these I was despatched on business as important as it was secret. I went in safety, and I returned in security: there is more danger to a man's

life betwixt this and Holyrood than in all the seas that wash the lowlands of Holland."

"And the country, my Halbert, and the people," said the lady, "are they like our kindly Scots? or what bearing have they to strangers?"

"They are a people, Mary, strong in their wealth, which renders all other nations weak, and weak in those arts of war by which other nations are strong."

"I do not understand you," said the lady.

"The Hollander and the Fleming, Mary, pour forth their spirit in trade, and not in war; their wealth purchases them the arms of foreign soldiers, by whose aid they defend it. They erect dikes on the sea-shore to protect the land which they have won, and they levy regiments of the stubborn Switzers and hardy Germans to protect the treasures which they have amassed. And thus they are strong in their weakness; for the very wealth which tempts their masters to destroy them arms strangers in their behalf."

"The slothful hinds!" exclaimed Mary, thinking and feeling like a Scotswoman of the period; "have they hands, and fight not for the land which bore them? They should be notched off at the elbow."

"Nay, that were but hard justice," answered her husband; "for their hands serve their country, though not in battle, like ours. Look at these barren hills, Mary, and at that deep winding vale by which the cattle are even now returning from their scanty browse. The hand of the industrious Fleming would cover these mountains with wood, and raise corn where we now see a starved and scanty sward of heath and ling. It grieves me, Mary, when I look on that land, and think what benefit it might receive from such men as I have lately seen—men who seek not the idle fame derived from dead ancestors, or the bloody renown won in modern broils, but tread along the land as preservers and improvers, not as tyrants and destroyers."

"These amendments would here be but a vain fancy, my Halbert," answered the Lady of Avenel: "the trees would be burned by the English foeman ere they ceased to be shrubs, and the grain that you raised would be gathered in by the first neighbor that possessed more riders than follow your train. Why should you repine at this? The fate that made you Scotsman by birth, gave you head, and heart, and hand to uphold the name as it must needs be upheld."

"It gave *me* no name to uphold," said Halbert, pacing the floor slowly; "my arm has been foremost in every strife,

my voice has been heard in every council, nor have the wisest rebuked me. The crafty Lethington, the deep and dark Morton, have held secret council with me, and Grange and Lindsay have owned that in the field I did the devoir of a gallant knight; but let the emergence be passed when they need my head and hand, and they only know me as son of the obscure portioner of Glendearg."

This was a theme which the lady always dreaded; for the rank conferred on her husband, the favor in which he was held by the powerful Earl of Murray, and the high talents by which he vindicated his right to that rank and that favor, were qualities which rather increased than diminished the envy which was harbored against Sir Halbert Glendinning among a proud aristocracy, as a person originally of inferior and obscure birth, who had risen to his present eminence solely by his personal merit. The natural firmness of his mind did not enable him to despise the ideal advantages of a higher pedigree, which were held in such universal esteem by all with whom he conversed; and so open are the noblest minds to jealous inconsistencies, that there were moments in which he felt mortified that his lady should possess those advantages of birth and high descent which he himself did not enjoy, and regretted that his importance as the proprietor of Avenel was qualified by his possessing it only as the husband of the heiress. He was not so unjust as to permit any unworthy feelings to retain permanent possession of his mind, but yet they recurred from time to time, and did not escape his lady's anxious observation.

"Had we been blessed with children," she was wont on such occasions to say to herself—"had our blood been united in a son who might have joined my advantages of descent with my husband's personal worth, these painful and irksome reflections had not disturbed our union even for a moment. But the existence of such an heir, in whom our affections, as well as our pretensions, might have centered, has been denied to us."

With such mutual feelings, it cannot be wondered that it gave the lady pain to hear her husband verging towards this topic of mutual discontent. On the present, as on other similar occasions, she endeavored to divert the knight's thoughts from this painful channel.

"How can you," she said, "suffer yourself to dwell upon things which profit nothing? Have you indeed no name to uphold? You the good and the brave, the wise in council and the strong in battle, have you not to support the reputa-

tion your own deeds have won—a reputation more honorable than mere ancestry can supply? Good men love and honor you, the wicked fear and the turbulent obey you; and is it not necessary you should exert yourself to ensure the endurance of that love, that honor, that wholesome fear, and that necessary obedience?”

As she thus spoke, the eye of her husband caught from hers courage and comfort, and it lightened as he took her hand and replied, “It is most true, my Mary, and I deserve thy rebuke, who forget what I am, in repining because I am not what I cannot be. I am now what the most famed ancestors of those I envy were, the mean man raised into eminence by his own exertions; and sure it is a boast as honorable to have those capacities which are necessary to the foundation of a family as to be descended from one who possessed them some centuries before. The Hay of Luncarty who bequeathed his bloody yoke to his lineage, the “dark gray man” who first founded the house of Douglas, had yet less of ancestry to boast than I have. For thou knowest, Mary, that my name derives itself from a line of ancient warriors, although my immediate forefathers preferred the humble station in which thou didst first find them; and war and counsel are not less proper to the house of Glendonwyne,* even in its most remote descendants, than to the proudest of their baronage.”

He strode across the hall as he spoke; and the lady smiled internally to observe how much his mind dwelt upon the prerogatives of birth, and endeavored to establish his claims, however remote, to a share in them, at the very moment when he affected to hold them in contempt. It will easily be guessed, however, that she permitted no symptom to escape her that could show she was sensible of the weakness of her husband—a perspicacity which perhaps his proud spirit could not very easily have brooked.

As he returned from the extremity of the hall, to which he had stalked while in the act of vindicating the title of the house of Glendonwyne in its most remote branches to the full privileges of aristocracy, “Where,” he said, “is Wolf? I have not seen him since my return, and he was usually the first to welcome my home-coming.”

“Wolf,” said the lady, with a slight degree of embarrassment, for which, perhaps, she would have found it difficult to assign any reason even to herself—“Wolf is chained up for the present. He hath been surly to my page.”

* See Note 1.



“ ‘Roland, go kiss the hand of the noble Knight.’ ”

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“Wolf chained up—and Wolf surly to your page!” answered Sir Albert Glendinning. “Wolf never was surly to any one; and the chain will either break his spirit or render him savage. So ho, there—set Wolf free directly.”

He was obeyed; and the huge dog rushed into the hall, disturbing by his unwieldy and boisterous gambols the whole economy of reels, rocks, and distaffs with which the maidens of the household were employed, when the arrival of their lord was a signal to them to withdraw, and extracting from Lilius, who was summoned to put them again in order, the natural observation, “That the laird’s pet was as troublesome as the lady’s page.”

“And who is this page, Mary?” said the knight, his attention again called to the subject by the observation of the waiting-woman—“who is this page, whom every one seems to weigh in the balance with my old friend and favorite, Wolf? When did you aspire to the dignity of keeping a page, or who is the boy?”

“I trust, my Halbert,” said the lady, not without a blush, “you will not think your wife entitled to less attendance than other ladies of her quality.”

“Nay, Dame Mary,” answered the knight, “it is enough you desire such an attendant. Yet I have never loved to nurse such useless menials. A lady’s page—it may well suit the proud English dames to have a slender youth to bear their trains from bower to hall, fan them when they slumber, and touch the lute for them when they please to listen; but our Scottish matrons were wont to be above such vanities, and our Scottish youth ought to be bred to the spear and the stirrup.”

“Nay, but, my husband,” said the lady, “I did but jest when I called this boy my page; he is in sooth a little orphan whom we saved from perishing in the lake, and whom I have since kept in the castle out of charity. Lilius, bring little Roland hither.”

Roland entered accordingly, and, flying to the lady’s side, took hold of the plaits of her gown, and then turned round and gazed with an attention, not unmingled with fear, upon the stately form of the knight. “Roland,” said the lady, “go kiss the hand of the noble knight, and ask him to be thy protector.” But Roland obeyed not, and, keeping his station, continued to gaze fixedly and timidly on Sir Halbert Glendinning. “Go to the knight, boy,” said the lady; “what dost thou fear, child? Go kiss Sir Halbert’s hand.”

“I will kiss no hand save yours, lady,” answered the boy.

“Nay, but do as you are commanded, child,” replied the lady. “He is dashed by your presence,” she said, apologizing to her husband; “but is he not a handsome boy?”

“And so is Wolf,” said Sir Halbert, as he patted his huge four-footed favorite, “a handsome dog; but he has this double advantage over your new favorite, that he does what he is commanded, and hears not when he is praised.”

“Nay, now you are displeased with me,” replied the lady; “and yet why should you be so? There is nothing wrong in relieving the distressed orphan, or in loving that which is in itself lovely and deserving of affection. But you have seen Mr. Warden at Edinburgh, and he has set you against the poor boy.”

“My dear Mary,” answered her husband, “Mr. Warden better knows his place than to presume to interfere either in your affairs or in mine. I neither blame your relieving this boy nor your kindness for him. But I think, considering his birth and prospects, you ought not to treat him with injudicious fondness, which can only end in rendering him unfit for the humble situation to which Heaven has designed him.”

“Nay, but, my Halbert, do but look at the boy,” said the lady, “and see whether he has not the air of being intended by Heaven for something nobler than a mere peasant. May he not be designed, as others have been, to rise out of a humble situation into honor and eminence?”

Thus far had she proceeded, when the consciousness that she was treading upon delicate ground at once occurred to her, and induced her to take the most natural but the worst of all courses on such occasions, whether in conversation or in an actual bog, namely, that of stopping suddenly short in the illustration which she had commenced. Her brow crimsoned, and that of Sir Halbert Glendinning was slightly overcast. But it was only for an instant; for he was incapable of mistaking his lady’s meaning or supposing that she meant intentional disrespect to him.

“Be it as you please, my love,” he replied; “I owe you too much to contradict you in aught which may render your solitary mode of life more endurable. Make of this youth what you will, and you have my full authority for doing so; but remember he is your charge, not mine. Remember he hath limbs to do man’s service, a soul and a tongue to worship God; breed him, therefore, to be true to his country and to Heaven; and for the rest, dispose of him as you list. It is, and shall rest, your own matter.”

This conversation decided the fate of Roland Græme, who from thenceforward was little noticed by the master of the mansion of Avenel, but indulged and favored by its mistress.

This situation led to many important consequences, and, in truth, tended to bring forth the character of the youth in all its broad lights and deep shadows. As the knight himself seemed tacitly to disclaim alike interest and control over the immediate favorite of his lady, young Roland was, by circumstances, exempted from the strict discipline to which, as the retainer of a Scottish man of rank, he would otherwise have been subjected, according to all the rigor of the age. But the steward, or master of the household—such was the proud title assumed by the head domestic of each petty baron—deemed it not advisable to interfere with the favorite of the lady, and especially since she had brought the estate into the present family. Master Jasper Wingate was a man experienced, as he often boasted, in the ways of great families, and knew how to keep the steerage even, when wind and tide chanced to be in contradiction.

This prudent personage winked at much, and avoided giving opportunity for further offense, by requesting little of Roland Græme beyond the degree of attention which he was himself disposed to pay; rightly conjecturing that, however lowly the place which the youth might hold in the favor of the Knight of Avenel, still to make an evil report of him would make an enemy of the lady, without securing the favor of her husband. With these prudential considerations, and doubtless not without an eye to his own ease and convenience, he taught the boy as much, and only as much, as he chose to learn, readily admitting whatever apology it pleased his pupil to allege in excuse for idleness or negligence. As the other persons in the castle to whom such tasks were delegated readily imitated the prudential conduct of the major-domo, there was little control used towards Roland Græme, who, of course, learned no more than what a very active mind, and a total impatience of absolute idleness, led him to acquire upon his own account, and by dint of his own exertions. The latter were especially earnest when the lady herself condescended to be his tutoress or to examine his progress.

It followed also, from his quality as my lady's favorite, that Roland was viewed with no peculiar good-will by the followers of the knight, many of whom, of the same age, and apparently similar origin, with the fortunate page, were

subjected to severe observance of the ancient and rigorous discipline of a feudal retainer. To these, Roland Græme was, of course, an object of envy, and, in consequence, of dislike and detraction; but the youth possessed qualities which it was impossible to depreciate. Pride and a sense of early ambition did for him what severity and constant instruction did for others. In truth, the youthful Roland displayed that early flexibility both of body and mind which renders exercise, either mental or bodily, rather matter of sport than of study; and it seemed as if he acquired accidentally, and by starts, those accomplishments which earnest and constant instruction, enforced by frequent reproof and occasional chastisement, had taught to others. Such military exercises, such lessons of the period, as he found it agreeable or convenient to apply to, he learned so perfectly as to confound those who were ignorant how often the want of constant application is compensated by vivacity of talent and ardent enthusiasm. The lads, therefore, who were more regularly trained to arms, to horsemanship, and to other necessary exercises of the period, while they envied Roland Græme the indulgence or negligence with which he seemed to be treated, had little reason to boast of their own superior acquirements: a few hours, with the powerful exertion of the most energetic will, seemed to do for him more than the regular instruction of weeks could accomplish for others.

Under these advantages, if, indeed, they were to be termed such, the character of young Roland began to develop itself. It was bold, peremptory, decisive, and overbearing; generous if neither withstood nor contradicted; vehement and passionate if censured or opposed. He seemed to consider himself as attached to no one, and responsible to no one, except his mistress; and even over her mind he had gradually acquired that species of ascendancy which indulgence is so apt to occasion. And although the immediate followers and dependants of Sir Halbert Glendinning saw his ascendancy with jealousy, and often took occasion to mortify his vanity, there wanted not those who were willing to acquire the favor of the Lady of Avenel by humoring and taking part with the youth whom she protected; for although a favorite, as the poet assures us, has no friend, he seldom fails to have both followers and flatterers.

The partisans of Roland Græme were chiefly to be found amongst the inhabitants of the little hamlet on the shore of the lake. These villagers, who were sometimes tempted to

compare their own situation with that of the immediate and constant followers of the knight, who attended him on his frequent journeys to Edinburgh and elsewhere, delighted in considering and representing themselves as more properly the subjects of the Lady of Avenel than of her husband. It is true, her wisdom and affection on all occasions discountenanced the distinction which was here implied ; but the villagers persisted in thinking it must be agreeable to her to enjoy their peculiar and undivided homage, or at least in acting as if they thought so ; and one chief mode by which they evinced their sentiments was by the respect they paid to young Roland Græme, the favorite attendant of the descendant of their ancient lords. This was a mode of flattery too pleasing to encounter rebuke or censure ; and the opportunity which it afforded the youth to form, as it were, a party of his own within the limits of the ancient barony of Avenel, added not a little to the audacity and decisive tone of a character which was by nature bold, impetuous, and incontrollable.

Of the two members of the household who had manifested an early jealousy of Roland Græme, the prejudices of Wolf were easily overcome ; and in process of time the noble dog slept with Bran, Luath, and the celebrated hounds of ancient days. But Mr. Warden, the chaplain, lived, and retained his dislike to youth. That good man, single-minded and benevolent as he really was, entertained rather more than a reasonable idea of the respect due to him as a minister, and exacted from the inhabitants of the castle more deference than the haughty young page, proud of his mistress's favor, and petulant from youth and situation, was at all times willing to pay. His bold and free demeanor, his attachment to rich dress and decoration, his inaptitude to receive instruction, and his hardening himself against rebuke, were circumstances which induced the good old man, with more haste than charity, to set the forward page down as a vessel of wrath, and to presage that the youth nursed that pride and haughtiness of spirit which goes before ruin and destruction. On the other hand, Roland evinced at times a marked dislike, and even something like contempt, of the chaplain. Most of the attendants and followers of Sir Halbert Glendinning entertained the same charitable thoughts as the reverend Mr. Warden ; but while Roland was favored by their lady, and endured by their lord, they saw no policy in making their opinions public.

Roland Græme was sufficiently sensible of the unpleasant situation in which he stood ; but in the haughtiness of his

heart he retorted upon the other domestics the distant, cold, and sarcastic manner in which they treated him, assumed an air of superiority which compelled the most obstinate to obedience, and had the satisfaction at least to be dreaded, if he was heartily hated.

The chaplain's marked dislike had the effect of recommending him to the attention of Sir Halbert's brother, Edward, who now, under the conventional appellation of Father Ambrose, continued to be one of the few monks who, with the Abbot Eustatius, had, notwithstanding the nearly total downfall of their faith under the regency of Murray, been still permitted to linger in the cloisters at Kennaquhair. Respect to Sir Halbert had prevented their being altogether driven out of the abbey, though their order was now in a great measure suppressed, and they were interdicted the public exercise of their ritual, and only allowed for their support a small pension out of their once splendid revenues. Father Ambrose, thus situated, was an occasional, though very rare, visitant at the Castle of Avenel, and was at such times observed to pay particular attention to Roland Græme, who seemed to return it with more depth of feeling than consisted with his usual habits.

Thus situated, years glided on, during which the knight of Avenel continued to act a frequent and important part in the convulsions of his distracted country; while young Græme anticipated, both in wishes and personal accomplishments, the age which should enable him to emerge from the obscurity of his present situation.

CHAPTER IV

Amid their cups that freely flow'd,

Their revelry and mirth,

A youthful lord tax'd Valentine

With base and doubtful birth.

Valentine and Orson.

WHEN Roland Græme was a youth about seventeen years of age, he chanced one summer morning to descend to the mew in which Sir Halbert Glendinning kept his hawks, in order to superintend the training of an eyas, or young hawk, which he himself, at the imminent risk of neck and limbs, had taken from a celebrated eyrie in the neighborhood, called Gledsraig. As he was by no means satisfied with the attention which had been bestowed on his favorite bird, he was not slack in testifying his displeasure to the falconer's lad, whose duty it was to have attended upon it.

"What, ho! sir knave," exclaimed Roland, "is it thus you feed the eyas with unwashed meat as if you were gorging the foul brancher of a worthless hoodie-crow? By the mass, and thou hast neglected its castings also for these two days! Think'st thou I ventured my neck to bring the bird down from the crag that thou shouldst spoil her by thy neglect?" And to add force to his remonstrances, he conferred a cuff or two on the negligent attendant of the hawks, who, shouting rather louder than was necessary under all the circumstances, brought the master falconer to his assistance.

Adam Woodcock, the falconer of Avenel, was an Englishman by birth, but so long in the service of Glendinning that he had lost much of his national attachment in that which he had formed to his master. He was a favorite in his department, jealous and conceited of his skill, as masters of the game usually are; for the rest of his character, he was a jester and a parcel poet (qualities which by no means abated his natural conceit), a jolly fellow, who, though a sound Protestant, loved a flagon of ale better than a long sermon, a stout man of his hands when need required, true to his master, and a little presuming on his interest with him.

Adam Woodcock, such as we have described him, by no means relished the freedom used by young Græme in chastising his assistant. "Hey, hey, my lady's page," said he, stepping between his own boy and Roland, "fair and softly, an it like your gilt jacket—hands off is fair play—if my boy has done amiss, I can beat him myself, and then you may keep your hands soft."

"I will beat him and thee too," answered Roland, without hesitation, "an ye look not better after your business. See how the bird is cast away between you. I found the careless lurdane feeding her with unwashed flesh, and she an eyas."*

"Go to," said the falconer, "thou art but an eyas thyself, child Roland. What knowest thou of feeding? I say that the eyas should have her meat unwashed until she becomes a brancher: 'twere the ready way to give her the frounce, to wash her meat sooner, and so knows every one who knows a gled from a falcon."

"It is thine own laziness, thou false English blood, that dost nothing but drink and sleep," retorted the page, "and leaves that lither lad to do the work, which he minds as little as thou."

"And am I so idle then," said the falconer, "that have three cast of hawks to look after, at perch and mew, and to fly them in the field to boot?—and is my lady's page so busy a man that he must take me up short?—and am I of false English blood? I marvel what blood thou art—neither Englander nor Scot—fish nor flesh—a bastard from the Debateable Land, without either kith, kin, or ally! Marry, out upon thee, foul kite, that would fain be a tercel gentle!"

The reply to this sarcasm was a box on the ear, so well applied that it overthrew the falconer into the cistern in which water was kept for the benefit of the hawks. Up started Adam Woodcock, his wrath nowise appeased by the cold immersion, and seizing on a truncheon which stood by, would have soon requited the injury he had received, had not Roland laid his hand on his poniard, and sworn by all that was sacred that, if he offered a stroke towards him, he would sheath the blade in his bowels. The noise was now so great that more than one of the household came in, and amongst others the major-domo, a grave personage, already

* There is a difference amongst authorities how long the nestling hawk should be fed with flesh which has previously been washed.

mentioned, whose gold chain and white wand intimated his authority. At the appearance of this dignitary, the strife was for the present appeased. He embraced, however, so favorable an opportunity to read Roland Græme a shrewd lecture on the impropriety of his deportment to his fellow-menials, and to assure him that, should he communicate this fray to his master (who, though now on one of his frequent expeditions, was speedily expected to return), which but for respect to his lady he would most certainly do, the residence of the culprit in the Castle of Avenel would be but of brief duration. "But, however," added the prudent master of the household, "I will report the matter first to my lady."

"Very just—very right, Master Wingate," exclaimed several voices together; "my lady will consider if daggers are to be drawn on us for every idle word, and whether we are to live in a well-ordered household, where there is the fear of God, or amongst drawn dirks and sharp knives."

The object of this general resentment darted an angry glance around him, and suppressing with difficulty the desire which urged him, to reply in furious or in contemptuous language, returned his dagger into the scabbard, looked disdainfully around upon the assembled menials, turned short upon his heel, and pushing aside those who stood betwixt him and the door, left the apartment.

"This will be no tree for my nest," said the falconer, "if this cock-sparrow is to crow over us as he seems to do."

"He struck me with his switch yesterday," said one of the grooms, "because the tail of his worship's gelding was not trimmed altogether so as suited his humor."

"And I promise you," said the laundress, "my young master will stick nothing to call an honest woman 'slut' and 'quean' if there be but a speck of shoot upon his band-collar."

"If Master Wingate do not his errand to my lady," was the general result, "there will be no tarrying in the same house with Roland Græme."

The master of the household heard them all for some time, and then, motioning for universal silence, he addressed them with all the dignity of Malvolio himself.—"My masters—not forgetting you, my mistresses—do not think the worse of me that I proceed with as much care as haste in this matter. Our master is a gallant knight, and will have his sway at home and abroad, in wood and field, in hall and bower, as the saying is. Our lady, my benison upon her! is also a

noble person of long descent, and rightful heir of this place and barony, and she also loves her will; as for that matter, show me the woman who doth not. Now, she hath favored, doth favor, and will favor this jackanapes, for what good part about him I know not, save that as one noble lady will love a messan dog, and another a screaming popinjay, and a third a barbary ape, so doth it please our noble dame to set her affections upon this stray elf of a page, for nought that I can think of, save that she was the cause of his being saved—the more's the pity—from drowning." And here Master Wingate made a pause.

"I would have been his caution for a gray goat, against salt water or fresh," said Roland's adversary, the falconer; "marry, if he crack not a rope for stabbing or for snatching, I will be content never to hood hawk again."

"Peace, Adam Woodcock," said Wingate, waving his hand—"I prithee, peace, man. Now, my lady, liking this sprigald, as aforesaid, differs therein from my lord, who loves never a bone in his skin. Now, is it for me to stir up strife betwixt them, and put as 'twere my finger betwixt the bark and the tree, on account of a pragmatikal youngster, whom, nevertheless, I would willingly see whipped forth of the barony? Have patience, and this boil will break without our meddling. I have been in service since I wore a beard on my chin, till now that that beard is turned gray, and I have seldom known any one better themselves even by taking the lady's part against the lord's; but never one who did not dirk himself if he took the lord's against the lady's."

"And so," said Lilius, "we are to be crowed over, every one of us, men and women, cock and hen, by this little upstart? I will try titles with him first, I promise you. I fancy, Master Wingate, for as wise as you look, you will be pleased to tell what you have seen to-day, if my lady commands you?"

"To speak the truth when my lady commands me," answered the prudential major-domo, "is in some measure my duty, Mistress Lilius; always providing for and excepting those cases in which it cannot be spoken without breeding mischief and inconvenience to myself or my fellow-servants; for the tongue of a tale-bearer breaketh bones as well as a Jeddart staff."

"But this imp of Satan is none of your friends or fellow-servants," said Lilius; "and I trust you mean not to stand up for him against the whole family besides?"

"Credit me, Mrs. Lilius," replied the senior, "should I

see the time fitting, I would with right good-will give him a lick with the rough side of my tongue."

"Enough said, Master Wingate," answered Lilius; "then trust me, his song shall soon be laid. X If my mistress does not ask me what is the matter below stairs before she be ten minutes of time older, she is no born woman, and my name is not Lilius Bradbourne."

In pursuance of her plan, Mistress Lilius failed not to present herself before her mistress with all the exterior of one who is possessed of an important secret—that is, she had the corners of her mouth turned down, her eyes raised up, her lips pressed as fast together as if they had been sewed up, to prevent her blabbing, and an air of prim mystical importance diffused over her whole person and demeanor, which seemed to intimate, "I know something which I am resolved not to tell you!"

Lilius had rightly read her mistress's temper, who, wise and good as she was, was yet a daughter of grandame Eve, and could not witness this mysterious bearing on the part of her waiting-woman without longing to ascertain the secret cause. For a space, Mrs. Lilius was obdurate to all inquiries, sighed, turned her eyes up higher yet to Heaven, hoped for the best, but had nothing particular to communicate. All this, as was most natural and proper, only stimulated the lady's curiosity; neither was her importunity to be parried with—"Thank God, I am no makebate—no tale-bearer—thank God, I never envied any one's favor, or was anxious to propale their misdemeanor—only, thank God, there has been no bloodshed and murder in the house—that is all."

"Bloodshed and murder!" exclaimed the lady, "what does the quean mean? If you speak not plain out, you shall have something you will scarce be thankful for."

"Nay, my lady," answered Lilius, eager to disburden her mind, or, in Chaucer's phrase, to "unbuckle her mail," "if you bid me speak out the truth, you must not be moved with what might displease you: Roland Græme has dirked Adam Woodcock—that is all."

"Good Heaven!" said the lady, turning pale as ashes, "is the man slain?"

"No, madam," replied Lilius, "but slain he would have been if there had not been ready help; but maybe it is your lady ship's pleasure that this young esquire shall poniard the servants, as well as switch and baton them?"

"Go to, minion," said the lady, "you are saucy; tell the master of the household to attend me instantly."

Lilias hastened to seek out Mr. Wingate, and hurry him to his lady's presence, speaking as a word in season to him on the way, "I have set the stone a-trowling, look that you do not let it stand still."

The steward, too prudential a person to commit himself otherwise, answered by a sly look and a nod of intelligence, and presently after stood in the presence of the Lady of Avenel, with a look of great respect for his lady, partly real, partly affected, and an air of great sagacity, which inferred no ordinary conceit of himself.

"How is this, Wingate," said the lady, "and what rule do you keep in the castle, that the domestics of Sir Halbert Glendinning draw the dagger on each other as in a cavern of thieves and murderers? Is the wounded man much hurt? and what—what hath become of the unhappy boy?"

"There is no one wounded as yet, madam," replied he of the golden chain; "it passes my poor skill to say how many may be wounded before Pasche, if some rule be not taken with this youth; not but the youth is a fair youth," he added, correcting himself, "and able at his exercise; but somewhat too ready with the ends of his fingers, the butt of his riding-switch, and the point of his dagger."

"And whose fault is that," said the lady, "but yours, who should have taught him better discipline than to brawl or to draw his dagger?"

"If it please your ladyship so to impose the blame on me," answered the steward, "it is my part, doubtless, to bear it; only I submit to your consideration that, unless I nailed his weapon to the scabbard, I could no more keep it still than I could fix quicksilver, which defied even the skill of Raymond Lullius."

"Tell me not of Raymond Lullius," said the lady, losing patience, "but send me the chaplain hither. You grow all of you too wise for me during your lord's long and repeated absence. I would to God his affairs would permit him to remain at home and rule his own household, for it passes my wit and skill!"

"God forbid, my lady!" said the old domestic, "that you should sincerely think what you are now pleased to say: your old servants might well hope that, after so many years' duty, you would do their service more justice than to distrust their gray hairs, because they cannot rule the peevish humor of a green head, which the owner carries, it may be, a brace of inches higher than becomes him."

"Leave me," said the lady; "Sir Halbert's return must

now be expected daily, and he will look into these matters himself—leave me, I say, Wingate, without saying more of it. I know you are honest, and I believe the boy is petulant; and yet I think it is my favor which hath set all of you against him.”

The steward bowed and retired, after having been silenced in a second attempt to explain the motives on which he acted.

The chaplain arrived; but neither from him did the lady receive much comfort. On the contrary, she found him disposed, in plain terms, to lay to the door of her indulgence all the disturbances which the fiery temper of Roland Græme had already occasioned, or might hereafter occasion, in the family. “I would,” he said, “honored lady, that you had deigned to be ruled by me in the outset of this matter, sith it is easy to stem evil in the fountain, but hard to struggle against it in the stream. You honored madam—a word which I do not use according to the vain forms of this world, but because I have ever loved and honored you as an honorable and an elect lady—you, I say, madam, have been pleased, contrary to my poor but earnest counsel, to raise this boy from his station into one approaching to your own.”

“What mean you, reverend sir?” said the lady. “I have made this youth a page; is there aught in my doing so that does not become my character and quality?”

“I dispute not, madam,” said the pertinacious preacher, “your benevolent purpose in taking charge of this youth, or your title to give him this idle character of page, if such was your pleasure; though what the education of a boy in the train of a female can tend to, save to ingraft foppery and effeminacy on conceit and arrogance, it passes my knowledge to discover. But I blame you more directly for having taken little care to guard him against the perils of his condition, or to tame and humble a spirit naturally haughty, overbearing, and impatient. You have brought into your bower a lion’s cub; delighted with the beauty of his fur, and the grace of his gambols, you have bound him with no fetters befitting the fierceness of his disposition. You have let him grow up as unawed as if he had been still a tenant of the forest, and now you are surprised, and call out for assistance, when he begins to ramp, rend, and tear, according to his proper nature.”

“Mr. Warden,” said the lady, considerably offended, “you are my husband’s ancient friend, and I believe your love sincere to him and to his household. Yet let me say, that when I asked you for counsel, I expected not this asperity of rebuke.

If I have done wrong in loving this poor orphan lad more than others of his class, I scarce think the error merited such severe censure ; and if stricter discipline were required to keep his fiery temper in order, it ought, I think, to be considered that I am a woman, and that, if I have erred in this matter, it becomes a friend's part rather to aid than to rebuke me. I would these evils were taken order with before my lord's return. He loves not domestic discord or domestic brawls ; and I would not willingly that he thought such could arise from one whom I have favored. What do you counsel me to do ?”

“Dismiss this youth from your service, madam,” replied the preacher.

“You cannot bid me do so,” said the lady—“you cannot, as a Christian and a man of humanity, bid me turn away an unprotected creature against whom my favor—my injudicious favor, if you will—has reared up so many enemies.”

“It is not necessary you should altogether abandon him, though you dismiss him to another service, or to a calling better suiting his station and character,” said the preacher ; “elsewhere he may be an useful and profitable member of the common-weal ; here he is but a makebate and a stumbling-block of offense. The youth has snatches of sense and of intelligence, though he lacks industry. I will myself give him letters commendatory to Olearius Schinderhausen, a learned professor at the famous university of Leyden, where they lack an under-janitor ; where, besides gratis instruction, if God give him the grace to seek it, he will enjoy five marks by the year, and the professor's cast-off suit, which he disparts with biennially.”

“This will never do, good Mr. Warden,” said the lady, scarce able to suppress a smile ; “we will think more at large upon this matter. In the meanwhile, I trust to your remonstrances with this wild boy and with the family for restraining these violent and unseemly jealousies and bursts of passion ; and I entreat you to press on him and them their duty in this respect towards God and towards their master.”

“You shall be obeyed, madam,” said Warden. “On the next Thursday I exhort the family, and will, with God's blessing, so wrestle with the demon of wrath and violence which hath entered into my little flock that I trust to hound the wolf out of the fold, as if he were chased away with bandogs.”

This was the part of the conference from which Mr. Warden derived the greatest pleasure. The pulpit was at

that time the same powerful engine for affecting popular feeling which the press has since become, and he had been no unsuccessful preacher, as we have already seen. It followed as a natural consequence that he rather over-estimated the powers of his own oratory, and, like some of his brethren about the period, was glad of an opportunity to handle any matters of importance, whether public and private, the discussion of which could be dragged into his discourse. In that rude age the delicacy was unknown which prescribed time and place to personal exhortations; and as the court preacher often addressed the king individually, and dictated to him the conduct he ought to observe in matters of state, so the nobleman himself, or any of his retainers, were in the chapel of the feudal castle, often incensed or appalled, as the case might be, by the discussion of their private faults in the evening exercise, and by spiritual censures directed against them specifically, personally, and by name.

The sermon by means of which Henry Warden proposed to restore concord and good order to the Castle of Avenel bore for text the well-known words, "He who striketh with the sword shall perish by the sword," and was a singular mixture of good sense and powerful oratory with pedantry and bad taste. He enlarged a good deal on the word "striketh," which he assured his hearers comprehended blows given with the point as well as with the edge, and more generally shooting with hand-gun, cross-bow or long-bow, thrusting with a lance, or doing anything whatever by which death might be occasioned to the adversary. In the same manner, he proved satisfactorily that the word "sword" comprehended all descriptions, whether backsword or basket-hilt, cut-and-thrust or rapier, falchion or scimitar. "But if," he continued, with still greater animation, "the text includeth in its anathema those who strike with any of those weapons which man hath devised for the exercise of his open hostility, still more doth it comprehend such as from their form and size are devised rather for the gratification of privy malice by treachery than for the destruction of an enemy prepared and standing upon his defense. Such," he proceeded, looking sternly at the place where the page was seated on a cushion at the feet of his mistress, and wearing in his crimson belt a gay dagger with a gilded hilt—"such, more especially, I hold to be those implements of death which, in our modern and fantastic times, are worn not only by thieves and cut-throats, to whom they most

properly belong, but even by those who attend upon women, and wait in the chambers of honorable ladies. Yes, my friends, every species of this unhappy weapon, framed for all evil and for no good, is comprehended under this deadly denunciation : whether it be a stilet, which we have borrowed from the treacherous Italian, or a dirk, which is borne by the savage Highlandmen, or a whinger, which is carried by our own Border thieves and cut-throats, or a dudgeon-dagger, all are alike engines invented by the devil himself, for ready implements of deadly wrath, sudden to execute, and difficult to be parried. Even the common sword-and-buckler brawler despises the use of such a treacherous and malignant instrument, which is therefore fit to be used, not by men or soldiers, but by those who, trained under female discipline, become themselves effeminate hermaphrodites, having female spite and female cowardice added to the infirmities and evil passions of their masculine nature."

The effect which this oration produced upon the assembled congregation of Avenel cannot very easily be described. The lady seemed at once embarrassed and offended ; the menials could hardly contain, under an affectation of deep attention, the joy with which they heard the chaplain launch his thunders at the head of the unpopular favorite, and the weapon which they considered as a badge of affectation and finery. Mrs. Liliastrop crested and drew up her head with all the deep-felt pride of gratified resentment ; while the steward, observing a strict neutrality of aspect, fixed his eyes upon an old scutcheon on the opposite side of the wall, which he seemed to examine with the utmost accuracy, more willing, perhaps, to incur the censure of being inattentive to the sermon than that of seeming to listen with marked approbation to what appeared so distasteful to his mistress.

The unfortunate subject of the harangue, whom nature had endowed with passions which had hitherto found no effectual restraint, could not disguise the resentment which he felt at being thus directly held up to the scorn, as well as the censure, of the assembled inhabitants of the little world in which he lived. His brow grew red—his lip grew pale—he set his teeth—he clenched his hand, and then with mechanical readiness grasped the weapon of which the clergyman had given so hideous a character ; and at length, as the preacher heightened the coloring of his invective, he felt his rage become so ungovernable that, fearful of being hurried into some deed of desperate violence, he rose up, traversed the chapel with hasty steps, and left the congregation.

The preacher was surprised into a sudden pause, while the fiery youth shot across him like a flash of lightning, regarding him as he passed, as if he had wished to dart from his eyes the same power of blighting and of consuming. But no sooner had he crossed the chapel, and shut with violence behind him the door of the vaulted entrance by which it communicated with the castle, than the impropriety of his conduct supplied Warden with one of those happier subjects for eloquence, of which he knew how to take advantage for making a suitable impression on his hearers. He paused for an instant, and then pronounced, in slow and solemn voice, the deep anathema: "He hath gone out from us because he was not of us: the sick man hath been offended at the wholesome bitter of the medicine—the wounded patient hath flinched from the friendly knife of the surgeon—the sheep hath fled from the sheepfold and delivered himself to the wolf, because he could not assume the quiet and humble conduct demanded of us by the great Shepherd. Ah! my brethren, beware of wrath—beware of pride—beware of the deadly and destroying sin which so often shows itself to our frail eyes in the garments of light! What is our earthly honor? Pride, and pride only. What our earthly gifts and graces? Pride and vanity. Voyagers speak of Indian men who deck themselves with shells, and anoint themselves with pigments, and boast of their attire as we do of our miserable carnal advantages. Pride could draw down the morning-star from Heaven even to the verge of the pit. Pride and self-opinion kindled the flaming sword which waves us off from Paradise. Pride made Adam mortal, and a weary wanderer on the face of the earth which he had else been at this day the immortal lord of. Pride brought amongst us sin, and doubles every sin it has brought. It is the outpost which the devil and the flesh most stubbornly maintain against the assaults of grace; and until it be subdued, and its barriers leveled with the very earth, there is more hope of a fool than of the sinner. Rend then, from your bosoms this accursed shoot of the fatal apple: tear it up by the roots, though it be twisted with the chords of your life. Profit by the example of the miserable sinner that has passed from us, and embrace the means of grace while it is called to-day—ere your conscience is seared as with a firebrand, and your ears deafened like those of the adder, and your heart hardened like the nether millstone. Up, then, and be doing: wrestle and overcome; resist, and the enemy shall flee from you. Watch and pray, lest ye fall into temptation, and let the

stumbling of others be your warning and your example. Above all, rely not on yourselves, for such self-confidence is even the worst symptom of the disorder itself. The Pharisee perhaps deemed himself humble while he stooped in the Temple, and thanked God that he was not as other men, and even as the publican. But while his knees touched the marble pavement, his head was as high as the topmost pinnacle of the Temple. Do not therefore deceive yourselves, and offer false coin, where the purest you can present is but as dross: think not that such will pass the assay of Omnipotent Wisdom. Yet shrink not from the task because, as is my bounden duty, I do not disguise from you its difficulties. Self-searching can do much—meditation can do much—grace can do all.”

And he concluded with a touching and animating exhortation to his hearers to seek Divine grace, which is perfected in human weakness.

The audience did not listen to this address without being considerably affected; though it might be doubted whether the feelings of triumph excited by the disgraceful retreat of the favorite page did not greatly qualify in the minds of many the exhortations of the preacher to charity and to humility. And, in fact, the expression of their countenances much resembled the satisfied, triumphant air of a set of children, who, having just seen a companion punished for a fault in which they had no share, con their task with double glee, both because they themselves are out of the scrape and because the culprit is in it.

With very different feelings did the Lady of Avenel seek her own apartment. She felt angry at Warden having made a domestic matter, in which she took a personal interest, the subject of such public discussion. But this she knew the good man claimed as a branch of his Christian liberty as a preacher, and also that it was vindicated by the universal custom of his brethren. But the self-willed conduct of her *protégé* afforded her yet deeper concern. That he had broken through, in so remarkable a degree, not only the respect due to her presence, but that which was paid to religious admonition in those days with such peculiar reverence, argued a spirit as untameable as his enemies had represented him to possess. And yet, so far as he had been under her own eye, she had seen no more of that fiery spirit than appeared to her to become his years and his vivacity. This opinion might be founded in some degree on partiality; in some degree, too, it might be owing to the kindness and indul-

gence which she had always extended to him ; but still she thought it impossible that she could be totally mistaken in the estimate she had formed of his character. The extreme of violence is scarce consistent with a course of continued hypocrisy (although Lilius charitably hinted that in some instances they were happily united), and therefore she could not exactly trust the report of others against her own experience and observation. The thoughts of this orphan boy clung to her heartstrings with a fondness for which she herself was unable to account. He had seemed to have been sent to her by Heaven to fill up those intervals of languor and vacuity which deprived her of much enjoyment. Perhaps he was not less dear to her because she well saw that he was a favorite with no one else, and because she felt that to give him up was to afford the judgment of her husband and others a triumph over her own—a circumstance not quite indifferent to the best of spouses of either sex.

In short, the Lady of Avenel formed the internal resolution that she would not desert her page while her page could be rationally protected ; and, with the view of ascertaining how far this might be done, she caused him to be summoned to her presence.

[The following text is extremely faint and largely illegible due to fading and bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. It appears to be a dialogue or a narrative continuation.]

CHAPTER V

In the wild storm,
The seaman hews his mast down, and the merchant
Heaves to the billows wares he once deem'd precious ;
So prince and peer' 'mid popular contentions,
Cast off their favorites.

Old Play.

It was some time ere Roland Græme appeared. The messenger (his old friend Liliás) had at first attempted to open the door of his little apartment, with the charitable purpose, doubtless, of enjoying the confusion, and marking the demeanor, of the culprit. But an oblong bit of iron, yecept a bolt, was passed across the door on the inside, and prevented her benign intentions. Liliás knocked, and called at intervals, "Roland—Roland Græme—*Master* Roland Græme (an emphasis on the word "Master"), will you be pleased to undo the door? What ails you?—are you at your prayers in private, to complete the devotion which you left unfinished in public? Surely we must have a screened seat for you in the chapel, that your gentility may be free from the eyes of common folks!" Still no whisper was heard in reply. "Well, Master Roland," said the waiting-maid, "I must tell my mistress that, if she would have an answer, she must either come herself or send those on errand to you who can beat the door down."

"What says your lady?" inquired the page from within.

"Marry, open the door and you shall hear," answered the waiting-maid. "I trow it becomes my lady's message to be listened to face to face; and I will not, for your idle pleasure, whistle it through a keyhole."

"Your mistress's name," said the page, opening the door, "is too fair a cover for your impertinence. What says my lady?"

"That you will be pleased to come to her directly, in the withdrawing-room," answered Liliás. "I presume she has some directions for you concerning the forms to be observed in leaving chapel in future."

"Say to my lady that I will directly wait on her," said

the page ; and, returning into his own apartment, he once more locked the door in the face of the waiting-maid.

“Rare courtesy !” muttered Lilius ; and, returning to her mistress, acquainted her that Roland Græme would wait on her when it suited his convenience.

“What ! is that his phrase or your own addition, Lilius ?” said the lady, coolly.

“Nay, madam,” replied the attendant, not directly answering the question, “he looked as if he could have said much more impertinent things than that, if I had been willing to hear them. But here he comes to answer for himself.”

Roland Græme entered the apartment with a loftier mien and somewhat a higher color than his wont ; there was embarrassment in his manner, but it was neither that of fear nor of penitence.

“Young man,” said the lady, “what trow you am I to think of your conduct this day ?”

“If it has offended you, madam, I am deeply grieved,” said the youth.

“To have offended me alone,” said the lady, “were but little. You have been guilty of conduct which will highly offend your master—of violence to your fellow-servants, and of disrespect to God Himself, in the person of His ambassador.”

“Permit me again to reply,” said the page, “that, if I have offended my only mistress, friend, and benefactress, it includes the sum of my guilt, and deserves the sum of my penitence. Sir Halbert Glendinning calls me not servant, nor do I call him master : he is not entitled to blame me for chastising an insolent groom ; nor do I fear the wrath of Heaven for treating with scorn the unauthorized interference of a meddling preacher.”

The Lady of Avenel had before this seen symptoms in her favorite of boyish petulance and of impatience of censure or reproof. But his present demeanor was of a graver and more determined character, and she was for a moment at a loss how she should treat the youth, who seemed to have at once assumed the character not only of a man, but of a bold and determined one. She paused an instant, and then assuming the dignity which was natural to her, she said, “Is it to me, Roland, that you hold this language ? Is it for the purpose of making me repent the favor I have shown you that you declare yourself independent both of an earthly and a Heavenly master ? Have you forgotten what you were,

and to what the loss of my protection would speedily again reduce you ?”

“Lady,” said the page, “I have forgot nothing : I remember but too much. I know that, but for you, I should have perished in yon blue waves,” pointing, as he spoke, to the lake, which was seen through the window, agitated by the western wind. “Your goodness has gone farther, madam : you have protected me against the malice of others, and against my own folly. You are free, if you are willing, to abandon the orphan you have reared. You have left nothing undone by him, and he complains of nothing. And yet, lady, do not think I have been ungrateful : I have endured something on my part, which I would have borne for the sake of no one but my benefactress.”

“For my sake !” said the lady ; “and what is it that I can have subjected you to endure, which can be remembered with other feelings than those of thanks and gratitude ?”

“You are too just, madam, to require me to be thankful for the cold neglect with which your husband has uniformly treated me—neglect not unmingled with fixed aversion. You are too just, madam, to require me to be grateful for the constant and unceasing marks of scorn and malevolence with which I have been treated by others, or for such a homily as that with which your reverend chaplain has, at my expense, this very day regaled the assembled household.”

“Heard mortal ears the like of this !” said the waiting-maid, with her hands expanded, and her eyes turned up to Heaven ; “he speaks as if he were son of an earl, or of a belted knight the least penny !”

The page glanced on her a look of supreme contempt, but vouchsafed no other answer. His mistress, who began to feel herself seriously offended, and yet sorry for the youth’s folly, took up the same tone.

“Indeed, Roland, you forget yourself so strangely,” said she, “that you will tempt me to take serious measures to lower you in your own opinion by reducing you to your proper station in society.”

“And that,” added Lilius, “would be best done by turning him out the same beggar’s brat that your ladyship took him in.”

“Lilius speaks too rudely,” continued the lady, “but she has spoken the truth, young man ; nor do I think I ought to spare that pride which hath so completely turned your head. You have been tricked up with fine garments, and

treated like the son of a gentleman, until you have forgot the fountain of your churlish blood."

"Craving your pardon, most honorable madam, Liliashath *not* spoken truth, nor does your ladyship know aught of my descent which should entitle you to treat it with such decided scorn. I am no beggar's brat: my grandmother begged from no one, here nor elsewhere; she would have perished sooner on the bare moor. We were harried out and driven from our home—a chance which has happed elsewhere, and to others. Avenel Castle, with its lake and its towers, was not at all times able to protect its inhabitants from want and desolation."

"Hear but his assurance!" said Liliash; "he upbraids my lady with the distresses of her family!"

"It had indeed been a theme more gratefully spared," said the lady, affected nevertheless with the allusion.

"It was necessary, madam, for my vindication," said the page, "or I had not even hinted at a word that might give you pain. But believe, honored lady, I am of no churl's blood. My proper descent I know not; but my only relation has said, and my heart has echoed it back and attested the truth, that I am sprung of gentle blood, and deserve gentle usage."

"And upon an assurance so vague as this," said the lady, "do you propose to expect all the regard, all the privileges, befitting high rank and distinguished birth, and become a contender for concessions which are only due to the noble? Go to, sir, know yourself, or the master of the household shall make you know you are liable to the scourge as a mal-apert boy. You have tasted too little the discipline fit for your age and station."

"The master of the household shall taste of my dagger ere I taste of his discipline," said the page, giving way to his restrained passion. "Lady, I have been too long the vassal of a pantoufle, and the slave of a silver whistle. You must henceforth find some other to answer your call; and let him be of birth and spirit mean enough to brook the scorn of your menials and to call a church vassal his master."

"I have deserved this insult," said the lady, coloring deeply, "for so long enduring and fostering your petulance. Begone, sir. Leave this castle to-night. I will send you the means of subsistence till you find some honest mode of support, though I fear your imaginary grandeur will be above all others save those of rapine and violence. Begone, sir, and see my face no more."

The page threw himself at her feet in an agony of sorrow. "My dear and honored mistress——" he said, but was unable to bring out another syllable.

"Arise, sir," said the lady, "and let go my mantle: hypocrisy is a poor cloak for ingratitude."

"I am incapable of either, madam," said the page, springing up with the hasty start of passion which belonged to his rapid and impetuous temper. "Think not I meant to implore permission to reside here; it has been long my determination to leave Avenel, and I will never forgive myself for having permitted you to say the word 'begone' ere I said, 'I leave you.' I did but kneel to ask your forgiveness for an ill-considered word used in the height of displeasure, but which ill-became my mouth as addressed to you. Other grace I asked not; you have done much for me, but I repeat, that you better know what you yourself have done than what I have suffered."

"Roland," said the lady, somewhat appeased, and relenting towards her favorite, "you had me to appeal to when you were aggrieved. You were neither called upon to suffer wrong nor entitled to resent it when you were under my protection."

"And what," said the youth, "if I sustained wrong from those you loved and favored, was I to disturb your peace with idle tale-bearings and eternal complaints? No, madam; I have borne my own burden in silence, and without disturbing you with murmurs; and the respect which you accuse me of wanting furnishes the only reason why I have neither appealed to you nor taken vengeance at my own hand in a manner far more effectual. It is well, however, that we part. I was not born to be a stipendiary, favored by his mistress until ruined by the calumnies of others. May Heaven multiply its choicest blessings on your honored head; and, for your sake, upon all that are dear to you!"

He was about to leave the apartment, when the lady called upon him to return. He stood still, while she thus addressed him: "It was not my intention, nor would it be just, even in the height of my displeasure, to dismiss you without the means of support: take this purse of gold."

"Forgive me, lady," said the boy, "and let me go hence with the consciousness that I have not been degraded to the point of accepting alms. If my poor services can be placed against the expense of my apparel and my maintenance, I only remain debtor to you for my life, and that alone is a

debt which I can never repay ; put up then that purse, and only say instead that you do not part from me in anger."

"No, not in anger," said the lady, "in sorrow rather for your wilfulness ; but take the gold—you cannot but need it,"

"May God evermore bless you for the kind tone and the kind word, but the gold I cannot take. I am able of body, and do not lack friends so wholly as you may think ; for the time may come that I may yet show myself more thankful than by mere words." He threw himself on his knees, kissed the hand which she did not withdraw, and then hastily left the apartment.

Lilias for a moment or two kept her eye fixed on her mistress, who looked so unusually pale that she seemed about to faint ; but the lady instantly recovered herself, and declining the assistance which her attendant offered her, walked to her own apartment.

CHAPTER VI

Thou hast each secret of the household, Francis.
I dare be sworn thou hast been in the buttery
Steeping thy curious humor in fat ale
And in the butler's tattle—ay, or chatting
With the glib waiting-woman o'er her comfits—
These bear the key to each domestic mystery

Old Play

UPON the morrow succeeding the scene we have described, the disgraced favorite left the castle; and, at breakfast-time the cautious old steward and Mrs. Liliias sat in the apartment of the latter personage, holding grave converse on the important event of the day, sweetened by a small treat of comfits, to which the providence of Mr. Wingate had added a little flask of racy canary.

“He is gone at last,” said the abigail, sipping her glass; “and here is to his good journey.”

“Amen,” answered the steward, gravely; “I wish the poor deserted lad no ill.”

“And he is gone like a wild duck, as he came,” continued Mrs. Liliias; “no lowering of drawbridges or pacing along causeways for him. My master has pushed off in the boat which they call the ‘Little Herod’ (more shame to them for giving the name of a Christian to wood and iron), and has rowed himself by himself to the further side of the loch, and off and away with himself, and left all his finery strewed about his room. I wonder who is to clean his trumpery out after him—though the things are worth lifting too.”

“Doubtless, Mrs. Liliias,” answered the master of the household; “in the which case I am free to think they will not long cumber the floor.”

“And now tell me, Mr. Wingate,” continued the damsel. “do not the very cockles of your heart rejoice at the house being rid of this upstart whelp, that flung us all into shadow?”

“Why, Mrs. Liliias,” replied Wingate, “as to rejoicing—those who have lived as long in great families as has been my lot will be in no hurry to rejoice at anything. And for Roland Græme, though he may be a good riddance in the

main, yet what says the very sooth proverb, 'Seldom comes a better.'

"Seldom comes a better, indeed!" echoed Mrs. Liliass. "I say, never can come a worse, or one half so bad. He might have been the ruin of our poor dear mistress (here she used her kerchief), body and soul, and estate too; for she spent more coin on his apparel than on any four servants about the house."

"Mrs. Liliass," said the sage steward, "I do opine that our mistress requireth not this pity at our hands, being in all respects competent to take care of her own body, soul, and estate into the bargain."

"You would not mayhap have said so," answered the waiting-woman, "had you seen how like Lot's wife she looked when young master took his leave. My mistress is a good lady, and a virtuous, and a well-doing lady, and a well-spoken of—but I would not Sir Halbert had seen her last evening for two and a plack."

"Oh, foy! foy! foy!" reiterated the steward; "servants should hear and see, and say nothing. Besides that, my lady is utterly devoted to Sir Halbert, as well she may, being, as he is, the most renowned knight in these parts."

"Well—well," said the abigail, "I mean no more harm; but they that seek least renown abroad are most apt to find quiet at home, that's all; and my lady's lonesome situation is to be considered, that made her fain to take up with the first beggar's brat that a dog brought her out of the loch."

"And, therefore," said the steward, "I say, rejoice not too much or too hastily, Mrs. Liliass; for if your lady wished a favorite to pass away the time, depend upon it, the time will not pass lighter now that he is gone. So she will have another favorite to choose for herself, and be assured, if she wishes such a toy, she will not lack one."

"And where should she choose one, but among her own tried and faithful servants," said Mrs. Liliass, "who have broken her bread and drank her drink for so many years? I have known many a lady as high as she that never thought either of a friend or favorite beyond their own waiting-woman—always having a proper respect, at the same time, for their old and faithful master of the household, Mr. Wingate."

"Truly, Mrs. Liliass," replied the steward, "I do partly see the mark at which you shoot, but I doubt your bolt will fall short. Matters being with our lady as it likes you to suppose it will neither be your crimped pinner, Mrs. Liliass

—speaking of them with due respect—nor my silver hair or golden chain, that will fill up the void which Roland Græme must needs leave in our lady's leisure. There will be a learned young divine with some new doctrine; a learned leech with some new drug; a bold cavalier, who will not be refused the favor of wearing her colors at a running at the ring; a cunning harper that could harp the heart out of a woman's breast, as they say Signor David Rizzio did to our poor Queen—these are the sort of folk who supply the loss of a well-favored favorite, and not an old steward or a middle-aged waiting-woman."

"Well," replied Lilius, "you have experience, Master Wingate, and truly I would my master would leave off his pricking hither and thither, and look better after the affairs of his household. There will be a Papistrie among us next, for what should I see among master's clothes but a string of gold beads? I promise you, *aves* and *credos* both! I seized on them like a falcon."

"I doubt it not,—I doubt it not," said the steward, sagaciously nodding his head; "I have often noticed that the boy had strange observances which savored of Popery, and that he was very jealous to conceal them. But you will find the Catholic under the Presbyterian cloak as often as the knave under the friar's hood—what then? we are all mortal. Right proper beads they are," he added, looking attentively at them, "and may weigh four ounces of fine gold."

"And I will have them melted down presently," she said, "before they be the misguiding of some poor blinded soul."

"Very cautious, indeed, Mrs. Lilius," said the steward, nodding his head in assent.

"I will have them made," said Mrs. Lilius, "into a pair of shoe-buckles; I would not wear the Pope's trinkets, or whatever has once borne the shape of them, one inch above my instep, were they diamonds instead of gold. But this is what has come of Father Ambrose coming about the castle, as demure as a cat that is about to steal cream."

"Father Ambrose is our master's brother," said the steward, gravely.

"Very true, Master Wingate," replied the dame; "but is that a good reason why he should pervert the king's liege subjects to Papistrie?"

"Heaven forbid, Mrs. Lilius," answered the sententious major-domo; "but yet there are worse folk than the Papists."

"I wonder where they are to be found," said the waiting-woman, with some asperity; "but I believe, Master Wingate,

if one were to speak to you about the devil himself, you would say there were worse people than Satan."

"Assuredly I might say so," replied the steward, "supposing that I saw Satan standing at my elbow."

The waiting-woman started, and having exclaimed, "God bless us!" added, "I wonder, Mr. Wingate, you can take pleasure in frightening one thus."

"Nay, Mrs. Liliias, I had no such purpose," was the reply; "but look you here—the Papists are put down for the present, but who knows how long this word 'present' will last? There are two great Popish earls in the north of England that abominate the very word 'Reformation': I mean the Northumberland and Westmoreland earls, men of power enough to shake any throne in Christendom. Then, though our Scottish King be, God bless him, a true Protestant, yet he is but a boy; and here is his mother that was our Queen—I trust there is no harm to say God bless her too—and she is a Catholic; and many begin to think she has had but hard measure, such as the Hamiltons in the west, and some of our Border clans here, and the Gordons in the north, who are all wishing to see a new world; and if such a new world should chance to come up, it is like that the Queen will take back her own crown, and that the mass and the cross will come up, and then down go pulpits, Geneva gowns, and black silk skull-caps."

"And have you, Mr. Jasper Wingate, who have heard the Word, and listened unto pure and precious Mr. Henry Warden—have you, I say, the patience to speak, or but to think, of Poperly coming down on us like a storm, or of the woman Mary again making the royal seat of Scotland a throne of abomination? No marvel that you are so civil to the cowed monk, Father Ambrose, when he comes hither with his downcast eyes that he never raises to my lady's face, and with his low sweet-toned voice, and his *benedicites*, and his benisons; and who so ready to take them kindly as Mr. Wingate?"

"Mrs. Liliias," replied the butler, with an air which was intended to close the debate, "there are reasons for all things. If I received Father Ambrose debonairly, and suffered him to steal a word now and then with this same Roland Græme, it was not that I cared a brass boddle for his benison or malison either, but only because I respected my master's blood. And who can answer, if Mary come in again, whether he may not be as stout a tree to lean to as ever his brother hath proved to us? For down goes the Earl of Murray when

the Queen comes by her own again; and good is his luck if he can keep the head on his own shoulders. And down goes our knight with the Earl, his patron; and who so like to mount into his empty saddle as this same Father Ambrose? The Pope of Rome can soon dispense with his vows, and then we should have Sir Edward the soldier, instead of Ambrose the priest."

(Anger and astonishment kept Mrs. Lilius silent, while her old friend, in his self-complacent manner, was making known to her his political speculations. At length her resentment found utterance in words of great ire and scorn. "What, Master Wingate! have you eaten my mistress's bread, to say nothing of my master's, so many years, that you could live to think of her being dispossessed of her own Castle of Avenel by a wretched monk who is not a drop's blood to her in the way of relation? I, that am but a woman, would try first whether my rock or his cowl were the better metal. Shame on you, Master Wingate! If I had not held you as so old an acquaintance, this should have gone to my lady's ears, though I had been called pickthank and tale-pyot for my pains, as when I told of Roland Græme shooting the wild swan."

Master Wingate was somewhat dismayed at perceiving that the details which he had given of his far-sighted political views had produced on his hearer rather suspicion of his fidelity than admiration of his wisdom, and endeavored as hastily as possible to apologize and to explain, although internally extremely offended at the unreasonable view, as he deemed it, which it had pleased Mistress Lilius Bradbourne to take of his expressions; and mentally convinced that her disapprobation of his sentiments arose solely out of the consideration that, though Father Ambrose, supposing him to become the master of the castle, would certainly require the services of a steward, yet those of a waiting-woman would, in the supposed circumstances, be altogether superfluous.

After this explanation had been received as explanations usually are, the two friends separated; Lilius to attend the silver whistle which called her to her mistress's chamber, and the sapient major-domo to the duties of his own department. They parted with less than their usual degree of reverence and regard; for the steward felt that his worldly wisdom was rebuked by the more disinterested attachment of the waiting-woman, and Mistress Lilius Bradbourne was compelled to consider her old friend as something little better than a time-saver.

time server?

CHAPTER VII

When I hae a saxpence under my thumb,
Then I get credit in ilka town ;
But when I am poor, they bid me gae by.
O poverty parts good company !

Old Song.

WHILE the departure of the page afforded subject for the conversation which we have detailed in our last chapter, the late favorite was far advanced on his solitary journey, without well knowing what was its object, or what was likely to be its end. He had rowed the skiff in which he left the castle to the side of the lake most distant from the village, with the desire of escaping from the notice of the inhabitants. His pride whispered that he would be, in his discarded state, only the subject of their wonder and compassion ; and his generosity told him that any mark of sympathy which his situation should excite might be unfavorably reported at the castle. A trifling incident convinced him he had little to fear for his friends on the latter score. He was met by a young man some years older than himself, who had on former occasions been but too happy to be permitted to share in his sports in the subordinate character of his assistant. Ralph Fisher approached to greet him with all the alacrity of an humble friend.

“What, Master Roland, abroad on this side, and without either hawk or hound ?”

“Hawk or hound,” said Roland, “I will never perhaps halloo to again. I have been dismissed—that is, I have left the castle.”

Ralph was surprised. “What ! you are to pass into the knight’s service, and take the black-jack and the lance ?”

“Indeed,” replied Roland Græme, “I am not ; I am now leaving the service of Avenel forever.”

“And whither are you going then ?” said the young peasant.

“Nay, that is a question which it craves time to answer : I have that matter to determine yet,” replied the disgraced favorite.

“Nay, nay,” said Ralph, “I warrant you it is the same to

you which way you go : my lady would not dismiss you till she had put some lining into the pouches of your doublet."

"Sordid slave !" said Roland Græme, "dost thou think I would have accepted a boon from one who was giving me over a prey to detraction and to ruin, at the instigation of a canting priest and a meddling serving-woman ? The bread that I had bought with such an alms would have choked me at the first mouthful."

Ralph looked at his quondam friend with an air of wonder not unmixed with contempt. "Well," he said at length, "no occasion for passion—each man knows his own stomach best ; but, were I on a black moor at this time of day, not knowing whither I was going, I should be glad to have a broad piece or two in my pouch, come by them as I could. But perhaps you will go with me to my father's—that is, for a night, for to-morrow we expect my uncle Menelaus and all his folk ; but, as I said, for one night——"

The cold-blooded limitation of the offered shelter to one night only, and that tendered most unwillingly, offended the pride of the discarded favorite.

"I would rather sleep on the fresh heather, as I have done many a night on less occasion," said Roland Græme, "than in the smoky garret of your father, that smells of peat-smoke and usquebaugh like a Highlander's plaid."

"You may choose, my master, if you are so nice," replied Ralph Fisher ; "you may be glad to smell a peat-fire, and usquebaugh too, if you journey long in the fashion you propose. You might have said 'God-a-mercy for your proffer,' though ; it is not every one will put themselves in the way of ill-will by harboring a discarded serving-man."

"Ralph," said Roland Græme, "I would pray you to remember that I have switched you before now, and this is the same riding-wand which you have tasted."

Ralph, who was a thickset clownish figure, arrived at his full strength, and conscious of the most complete personal superiority, laughed contemptuously at the threats of the slight-made stripling.

"It may be the same wand," he said, "but not the same hand ; and that is as good rhyme as if it were in a ballad. Look you, my lady's page that was, when your switch was up, it was no fear of you, but of your betters, that kept mine down ; and I wot not what hinders me from clearing old scores with this hazel rung, and showing you it was your lady's livery-coat which I spared, and not your flesh and blood, Master Roland."

In the midst of his rage, Roland Græme was just wise enough to see that, by continuing this altercation, he would subject himself to very rude treatment from the boor, who was so much older and stronger than himself; and while his antagonist, with a sort of jeering laugh of defiance, seemed to provoke the contest, he felt the full bitterness of his own degraded condition, and burst into a passion of tears, which he in vain endeavored to conceal with both his hands.

Even the rough churl was moved with the distress of his quondam companion.

“Nay, Master Roland,” he said, “I did but as ’twere jest with thee; I would not harm thee, man, were it but for old acquaintance sake. But ever look to a man’s inches ere you talk of switching; why, thine arm, man, is but like a spindle compared to mine. But hark, I hear old Adam Woodcock hallooing to his hawk. Come along, man, we will have a merry afternoon, and go jollily to my father’s, in spite of the peat-smoke and usquebaugh to boot. Maybe we may put you into some honest way of winning your bread, though it’s hard to come by in these broken times.”

The unfortunate page made no answer, nor did he withdraw his hands from his face, and Fisher continued in what he imagined a suitable tone of comfort.

“Why, man, when you were my lady’s minion, men held you proud, and some thought you a Papist, and I wot not what; and so, now that you have no one to bear you out, you must be companionable and hearty, and wait on the minister’s examinations, and put these things out of folks’ heads; and if he says you are in fault, you must joust your head to the stream; and if a gentleman, or a gentleman’s gentleman, gives you a rough word, or a light blow, you must only say, ‘Thank you for dusting my doublet,’ or the like, as I have done by you. But hark to Woodcock’s whistle again. Come, and I will teach you all the trick on’t as we go on.”

“I thank you,” said Roland Græme, endeavoring to assume an air of indifference and of superiority; “but I have another path before me, and were it otherwise, I could not tread in yours.”

“Very true, Master Roland,” replied the clown; “and every man knows his own matters best, and so I will not keep you from the path, as you say. Give us a grip of your hand, man, for auld lang syne. What! not clap palms ere we part?—well, so be it—a wilful man will have his way, and so farewell, and the blessing of the morning to you.”

“ Good-morrow—good-morrow,” said Roland, hastily ; and the clown walked lightly off, whistling as he went, and glad, apparently, to be rid of an acquaintance whose claims might be troublesome, and who had no longer the means to be serviceable to him.

Roland Græme compelled himself to walk on while they were within sight of each other, that his former intimate might not augur any vacillation of purpose, or uncertainty of object, from his remaining on the same spot ; but the effort was a painful one. He seemed stunned, as it were and giddy ; the earth on which he stood felt as if unsound, and quaking under his feet like the surface of a bog ; and he had once or twice nearly fallen, though the path he trode was of firm greensward. He kept resolutely moving forward, in spite of the internal agitation to which these symptoms belonged, until the distant form of his acquaintance disappeared behind the slope of a hill, when his heart failed at once ; and, sitting down on the turf, remote from human ken, he gave way to the natural expressions of wounded pride, grief, and fear, and wept with unrestrained profusion and unqualified bitterness.

When the first violent paroxysm of his feelings had subsided, the deserted and friendless youth felt that mental relief which usually follows such discharges of sorrow. The tears continued to chase each other down his cheeks, but they were no longer accompanied by the same sense of desolation ; an afflicting yet milder sentiment was awakened in his mind by the recollection of his benefactress, of the unwearied kindness which had attached her to him, in spite of many acts of provoking petulance, now recollected as offenses of a deep dye, which had protected him against the machinations of others, as well as against the consequences of his own folly, and would have continued to do so, had not the excess of his presumption compelled her to withdraw her protection.

“ Whatever indignity I have borne,” he said, “ has been the just reward of my own ingratitude. And have I done well to accept the hospitality, the more than maternal kindness, of my protectress, yet to detain from her the knowledge of my religion ? But she shall know that a Catholic has as much gratitude as a Puritan ; that I have been thoughtless, but not wicked ; that in my wildest moments I have loved, respected, and honored her ; and that the orphan boy might indeed be heedless, but was never ungrateful !”

He turned, as these thoughts passed through his mind,

and began hastily to retread his footsteps towards the castle. But he checked the first eagerness of his repentant haste when he reflected on the scorn and contempt with which the family were likely to see the return of the fugitive, humbled, as they must necessarily suppose him, into a supplicant, who requested pardon for his fault, and permission to return to his service. He slackened his pace, but he stood not still.

"I care not," he resolutely determined; "let them wink, point, nod, sneer, speak of the conceit which is humbled, of the pride which has had a fall—I care not; it is a penance due to my folly, and I will endure it with patience. But if she also, my benefactress—if she also should think me sordid and weak-spirited enough to beg, not for her pardon alone, but for a renewal of the advantages which I derived from her favor—*her* suspicion of my meanness I cannot—I will not brook."

He stood still, and his pride, rallying with constitutional obstinacy against his more just feeling, urged that he would incur the scorn of the Lady of Avenel rather than obtain her favor by following the course which the first ardor of his repentant feelings had dictated to him.

"If I had but some plausible pretext," he thought—"some ostensible reason for my return, some excuse to allege which might show I came not as a degraded supplicant or a discarded menial, I might go thither; but as I am, I cannot: my heart would leap from its place and burst."

As these thoughts swept through his mind, something passed in the air so near him as to dazzle his eyes, and almost to brush the plume in his cap. He looked up—it was the favorite falcon of Sir Halbert, which, flying around his head, seemed to claim his attention, as that of a well-known friend. Roland extended his arm, and gave the accustomed whoop, and the falcon instantly settled on his wrist, and began to prune itself, glancing at the youth from time to time an acute and brilliant beam of its hazel eye, which seemed to ask why he caressed it not with his usual fondness.

"Ah, Diamond!" he said, as if the bird understood him, "thou and I must be strangers henceforward. Many a gallant stoop have I seen thee make, and many a brave heron strike down; but that is all gone and over, and there is no hawking more for me!"

"And why not, Master Roland," said Adam Woodcock, the falconer, who came at that instant from behind a few alder bushes which had concealed him from view—"why

should there be no more-hawking for you? Why, man, what were our life without our sports? Thou know'st the jolly old song—

And rather would Allan in dungeon lie,
Than live at large where the falcon cannot fly;
And Allan would rather lie in sexton's pound,
Than live where he follow'd not the merry hawk and hound."

The voice of the falconer was hearty and friendly, and the tone in which he half-sung, half-recited his rude ballad implied honest frankness and cordiality. But remembrance of their quarrel, and its consequences, embarrassed Roland, and prevented his reply. The falconer saw his hesitation, and guessed the cause.

"What now," said he, "Master Roland? do you, who are half an Englishman, think that I, who am a whole one, would keep up anger against you, and you in distress? That were like some of the Scots—my master's reverence always excepted—who can be fair and false, and wait their time, and keep their mind, as they say, to themselves, and touch pot and flagon with you, and hunt and hawk with you, and, after all, when time serves, pay off some old feud with the point of the dagger. Canny Yorkshire has no memory for such old sores. Why, man, an you had hit me a rough blow, maybe I would rather have taken it from you than a rough word from another; for you have a good notion of falconry, though you stand up for washing the meat for the eyases. So give us your hand, man, and bear no malice."

Roland, though he felt his proud blood rebel at the familiarity of honest Adam's address, could not resist its downright frankness. Covering his face with the one hand, he held out the other to the falconer, and returned with readiness his friendly grasp.

"Why, this is hearty now," said Woodcock; "I always said you had a kind heart, though you have a spice of the devil in your disposition, that is certain. I came this way with the falcon on purpose to find you, and yon half-bred lubbard told me which way you took flight. You ever thought too much of that kestril-kite, Master Roland, and he knows naught of sport, after all, but what he caught from you. I saw how it had been betwixt you, and I sent him out of my company with a wanion; I would rather have a rifler on my perch than a false knave at my elbow. And now, Master Roland, tell me what way wing ye?"

"That is as God pleases," replied the page, with a sigh which he could not suppress.

“Nay, man, never droop a feather for being cast off,” said the falconer; “who knows but you may soar the better and fairer flight for all this yet? Look at Diamond there; ’tis a noble bird, and shows gallantly with his hood and bells and jesses; but there is many a wild falcon in Norway that would not change properties with him. And that is what I would say of you. You are no longer my lady’s page, and you will not clothe so fair, or feed so well, or sleep so soft, or show so gallant. What of all that? if you are not her page, you are your own man, and may go where you will, without minding whoop or whistle. The worst is the loss of the sport, but who knows what you may come to? They say that Sir Halbert himself—I speak with reverence—was once glad to be the abbot’s forester, and now he has hounds and hawks of his own, and Adam Woodcock for a falconer to the boot.”

“You are right, and say well, Adam,” answered the youth, the blood mantling in his cheeks: “the falcon will soar higher without his bells than with them, though the bells be made of silver.”

“That is cheerily spoken,” replied the falconer; “and whither now?”

“I thought of going to the Abbey of Kennaquhair,” answered Roland Græme, “to ask the counsel of Father Ambrose.”

“And joy go with you,” said the falconer, “though it is likely you may find the old monks in some sorrow: they say the commons are threatening to turn them out of their cells, and make a devil’s mass of it in the old church, thinking they have forborne that sport too long; and troth I am clear of the same opinion.”

“Then will Father Ambrose be the better of having a friend beside him!” said the page, manfully.

“Ay, but, my young fearnaught,” replied a falconer, “the friend will scarce be the better of being beside Father Ambrose: he may come by the redder’s lick, and that is ever the worst of the battle.”

“I care not for that,” said the page; “the dread of a lick should not hold me back; but I fear I may bring trouble between the brothers by visiting Father Ambrose. I will tarry to-night at St. Cuthbert’s cell, where the old priest will give me a night’s shelter; and I will send to Father Ambrose to ask his advice before I go down to the convent.”

“By Our Lady,” said the falconer, “and that is a likely plan! And now,” he continued, changing his frankness of

manner for a sort of awkward embarrassment, as if he had somewhat to say that he had no ready means to bring out—“and now, you wot well that I wear a pouch for my hawks’ meat,* and so forth, but wot ye what it is lined with, Master Roland?”

“With leather, to be sure,” replied Roland, somewhat surprised at the hesitation with which Adam Woodcock asked a question apparently so simple.

“With leather, lad?” said Woodcock; “ay, and with silver to the boot of that. See here,” he said, showing a secret slit in the lining of his bag of office—“here they are, thirty good Harry groats as ever were struck in bluff old Hal’s time, and ten of them are right heartily at your service; and now the murder is out.”

Roland’s first idea was to refuse this assistance; but he recollected the vows of humility which he had just taken upon him, and it occurred that this was the opportunity to put his new-formed resolution to the test. Assuming a strong command of himself, he answered Adam Woodcock with as much frankness as his nature permitted him to wear, in doing what was so contrary to his inclinations, that he accepted thankfully of his kind offer, while to soothe his own reviving pride, he could not help adding, “He hoped soon to requite the obligation.”

“That as you list—that as you list, young man,” said the falconer, with glee, counting out and delivering to his young friend the supply he had so generously offered, and then adding with great cheerfulness—“Now you may go through the world; for he that can back a horse, wind a horn, halloo a greyhound, fly a hawk, and play at sword and buckler, with a whole pair of shoes, a green jacket, and ten lily-white groats in his pouch, may bid Father Care hang himself in his own jesses. Farewell, and God be with you!”

So saying, and as if desirous to avoid the thanks of his companion, he turned hastily round, and left Roland Græme to pursue his journey alone.

* See Bag for Hawks’ Meat. Note 2.

CHAPTER VIII

The sacred tapers' lights are gone,
Gray moss has clad the altar stone,
The holy image is o'erthrown,
The bell has ceased to toll.
The long ribb'd aisles are burst and shrunk,
The holy shrines to ruin sunk,
Departed is the pious monk,
God's blessing on his soul!

Rediviva.

THE cell of St. Cuthbert, as it was called, marked, or was supposed to mark, one of those resting-places which that venerable saint was pleased to assign to his monks, when his convent, being driven from Lindisfern by the Danes, became a peripatetic society of religionists, and, bearing their patron's body on their shoulders, transported him from place to place through Scotland and the borders of England, until he was pleased at length to spare them the pain of carrying him farther, and to choose his ultimate place of rest in the lordly towers of Durham. The odor of his sanctity remained behind him at each place where he had granted the monks a transient respite from their labors; and proud were those who could assign as his temporary resting-place any spot within their vicinity. There were few cells more celebrated and honored than that of St. Cuthbert, to which Roland Græme now bent his way, situated considerably to the northwest of the great Abbey of Kennaquhair, on which it was dependant. In the neighborhood were some of those recommendations which weighed with the experienced priesthood of Rome in choosing their sites for places of religion.

There was a well, possessed of some medicinal qualities, which, of course, claimed the saint for its guardian and patron, and occasionally produced some advantage to the recluse who inhabited his cell, since none could reasonably expect to benefit by the fountain who did not extend their bounty to the saint's chaplain. A few roods of fertile land afforded the monk his plot of garden ground; an eminence well clothed with trees rose behind the cell, and sheltered it from

the north and the east, while the front, opening to the southwest, looked up a wild but pleasant valley, down which wandered a lively brook, which battled with every stone that interrupted its passage.

The cell itself was rather plainly than rudely constructed—a low Gothic building with two small apartments, one of which served the priest for his dwelling-place, the other for his chapel. As there were few of the secular clergy who durst venture to reside so near the Border, the assistance of this monk in spiritual affairs had not been useless to the community while the Catholic religion retained the ascendancy, as he could marry, christen, and administer the other sacraments of the Roman Church. Of late, however, as the Protestant doctrines gained ground, he had found it convenient to live in close retirement, and to avoid, as much as possible, drawing upon himself observation or animadversion. The appearance of his habitation, however, when Roland Græme came before it in the close of the evening, plainly showed that his caution had been finally ineffectual.

The page's first movement was to knock at the door, when he observed, to his surprise, that it was open, not from being left unlatched, but because, beat off its upper hinge, it was only fastened to the door-post by the lower, and could therefore no longer perform its functions. Somewhat alarmed at this, and receiving no answer when he knocked and called, Roland began to look more at leisure upon the exterior of the little dwelling, before he ventured to enter it. The flowers, which had been trained with care against the walls, seemed to have been recently torn down, and trailed their dishonored garlands on the earth; the latticed window was broken and dashed in. The garden, which the monk had maintained by his constant labor in the highest order and beauty, bore marks of having been lately trod down and destroyed by the hoofs of animals and the feet of men.

The sainted spring had not escaped. It was wont to rise beneath a canopy of ribbed arches, with which the devotion of elder times had secured and protected its healing waters. These arches were now almost entirely demolished, and the stones of which they were built were tumbled into the well, as if for the purpose of choking up and destroying the fountain, which, as it had shared in other days the honor of the saint, was, in the present, doomed to partake his unpopularity. Part of the roof had been pulled down from the house itself, and an attempt had been made with crow

and levers upon one of the angles, by which several large corner-stones had been forced out of their place; but the solidity of ancient masonwork had proved too great for the time or patience of the assailants, and they had relinquished their task of destruction. Such dilapidated buildings, after the lapse of years, during which nature has gradually covered the effects of violence with creeping plants and with weather-stains, exhibit, amid their decay, a melancholy beauty. But when the visible effects of violence appear raw and recent there is no feeling to mitigate the sense of devastation with which they impress the spectators; and such was now the scene on which the youthful page gazed, with the painful feelings it was qualified to excite.

When his first momentary surprise was over, Roland Græme was at no loss to conjecture the cause of these ravages. The destruction of the Popish edifices did not take place at once throughout Scotland, but at different times, and according to the spirit which actuated the Reformed clergy, some of whom instigated their hearers to these acts of demolition, and others, with better taste and feelings, endeavored to protect the ancient shrines, while they desired to see them purified from the objects which had attracted idolatrous devotion. From time to time, therefore, the populace of the Scottish towns and villages, when instigated either by their own feelings of abhorrence for Popish superstition or by the doctrines of the more zealous preachers, resumed the work of destruction, and exercised it upon some sequestered church, chapel, or cell, which had escaped the first burst of their indignation against the religion of Rome. In many places, the vices of the Catholic clergy, arising out of the wealth and the corruption of that tremendous hierarchy, furnished too good an apology for wreaking vengeance upon the splendid edifices which they inhabited; and of this an old Scottish historian gives a remarkable instance.

“Why mourn ye,” said an aged matron, seeing the discontent of some of the citizens while a stately convent was burnt by the multitude—“why mourn ye for its destruction? If you knew half the flagitious wickedness which had been perpetrated within that house, you would rather bless the Divine judgment which permits not even the senseless walls that screened such profligacy any longer to cumber Christian ground!”

But although, in many instances, the destruction of the Roman Catholic buildings might be, in the matron's way of judging, an act of justice, and in others an act of policy,

there is no doubt that the humor of demolishing monuments of ancient piety and munificence, and that in a poor country like Scotland, where there was no chance of their being replaced, was both useless, mischievous, and barbarous.

In the present instance, the unpretending and quiet seclusion of the monk of St Cuthbert's had hitherto saved him from the general wreck; but it would seem ruin had now at length reached him. Anxious to discover if he had at least escaped personal harm, Roland Græme entered the half-ruined cell.

The interior of the building was in a state which fully justified the opinion he had formed from its external injuries. The few rude utensils of the solitary's hut were broken down, and lay scattered on the floor, where it seemed as if a fire had been made with some of the fragments to destroy the rest of his property, and to consume, in particular, the rude old image of St. Cuthbert, in its episcopal habit, which lay on the hearth, like Dagon of yore, shattered with the ax and scorched with the flames, but only partially destroyed. In the little apartment which served as a chapel, the altar was overthrown, and the four huge stones of which it had been once composed lay scattered around the floor. The large stone crucifix which occupied the niche behind the altar, and fronted the supplicant while he paid his devotion there, had been pulled down, and dashed by its own weight into three fragments. There were marks of sledge-hammers on each of these; yet the image had been saved from utter demolition by the size and strength of the remaining fragments, which, though much injured, retained enough of the original sculpture to show what it had been intended to represent.*

Roland Græme, secretly nursed in the tenets of Rome, saw with horror the profanation of the most sacred emblem, according to his creed, of our holy religion.

"It is the badge of our redemption," he said, "which the felons have dared to violate; would to God my weak strength were able to replace it—my humble reverence to atone for the sacrilege!"

He stooped to the task he first meditated, and with a sudden, and to himself almost an incredible, exertion of power he lifted up the one extremity of the lower shaft of the cross, and rested it upon the edge of the large stone which served for its pedestal. Encouraged by this success, he applied his

* See Cell of St. Cuthbert. Note 3.

force to the other extremity, and, to his own astonishment, succeeded so far as to erect the lower end of the limb into the socket, out of which it had been forced, and to place this fragment of the image upright.

While he was employed in this labor, or rather at the very moment when he had accomplished the elevation of the fragment, a voice; in thrilling and well-known accents, spoke behind him these words: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant! Thus would I again meet the child of my love—the hope of my aged eyes."

Roland turned round in astonishment, and the tall commanding form of Magdalen Græme stood beside him. She was arrayed in a sort of loose habit, in form like that worn by penitents in Catholic countries, but black in color, and approaching as near to a pilgrim's cloak as it was safe to wear in a country where the suspicion of Catholic devotion in many places endangered the safety of those who were suspected of attachment to the ancient faith. Roland Græme threw himself at her feet. She raised and embraced him, with affection indeed, but not unmixed with gravity which amounted almost to sternness.

"Thou has kept well," she said, "the bird in thy bosom.* As a boy, as a youth, thou hast held fast thy faith amongst heretics: thou hast kept thy secret and mine own amongst thine enemies. I wept when I parted from you—I, who seldom weep, then shed tears, less for thy death than for thy spiritual danger. I dared not even see thee to bid thee a last farewell; my grief—my swelling grief had betrayed me to these heretics. But thou hast been faithful; down—down on thy knees before the holy sign, which evil men injure and blaspheme—down and praise saints and angels for the grace they have done thee, in preserving thee from the leprous plague which cleaves to the house in which thou wert nurtured!"

"If, my mother—so I must ever call you," replied Græme—"if I am returned such as thou wouldst wish me, thou must thank the care of the pious Father Ambrose, whose instructions confirmed your early precepts, and taught me at once to be faithful and to be silent."

"Be he blessed for it!" said she—"blessed in the cell and in the field, in the pulpit and at the altar! The saints rain blessings on him! They are just, and employ his pious care

* An expression, used by Sir Ralph Percy, slain in the battle of Hedgely Moor in 1464, when dying, to express his having preserved unstained his fidelity to the house of Lancaster.

to counteract the evils which his detested brother works against the realm and the church. But he knew not of thy lineage?"

"I could not myself tell him that," answered Roland. "I knew but darkly from your words that Sir Halbert Glendinning holds mine inheritance, and that I am of blood as noble as runs in the veins of any Scottish baron; these are things not to be forgotten, but for the explanation I must now look to you."

"And when time suits thou shalt not ask for it in vain. But men say, my son, that thou art bold and sudden; and those who bear such tempers are not lightly to be trusted with what will strongly move them."

"Say rather, my mother," returned Roland Græme, "that I am laggard and cold-blooded; what patience or endurance can you require of which *he* is not capable who for years has heard his religion ridiculed and insulted, yet failed to plunge his dagger into the blasphemer's bosom!"

"Be contented, my child," replied Magdalen Græme; "the time which then and even now demands patience, will soon ripen to that of effort and action; great events are on the wing, and thou—thou shalt have thy share in advancing them. Thou hast relinquished the service of the Lady of Avenel?"

"I have been dismissed from it, my mother—I have lived to be dismissed, as if I were the meanest of the train."

"It is the better, my child," replied she; "thy mind will be the more hardened to undertake that which must be performed."

"Let it be nothing, then, against the Lady of Avenel," said the page, "as thy look and words seem to imply. I have eaten her bread—I have experienced her favor; I will neither injure nor betray her."

"Of that hereafter, my son," said she; "but learn this, that it is not for thee to capitulate in thy duty, and to say this will I do, and that will I leave undone. No, Roland! God and man will no longer abide the wickedness of this generation. Seest thou these fragments—knowest thou what they represent?—and canst thou think it is for thee to make distinctions amongst a race so accused by Heaven that they renounce, violate, blaspheme, and destroy whatsoever we are commanded to believe in, whatsoever we are commanded to reverence?"

As she spoke, she bent her head towards the broken image, with a countenance in which strong resentment and zeal were

mingled with an expression of ecstatic devotion ; she raised her left hand aloft as in the act of making a vow, and thus proceeded : “ Bear witness for me, blessed symbol of our salvation—bear witness, holy saint, within whose violated temple we stand, that as it is not for vengeance of my own that my hate pursues these people, so neither, for any favor or earthly affection towards any amongst them, will I withdraw my hand from the plow, when it shall pass through the devoted furrow ! Bear witness, holy saint, once thyself a wanderer and a fugitive as we are now—bear witness, Mother of Mercy, Queen of Heaven—bear witness, saints and angels ! ”

In this high strain of enthusiasm she stood, raising her eyes through the fractured roof of the vault to the stars which now began to twinkle through the pale twilight, while the long gray tresses which hung down over her shoulders waved in the night-breeze, which the chasm and fractured windows admitted freely.

Roland Græme was too much awed by early habits, as well as by the mysterious import of her words, to ask for further explanation of the purpose she obscurely hinted at. Nor did she farther press him on the subject ; for, having concluded her prayer or obtestation, by clasping her hands together with solemnity, and then signing herself with the cross, she again addressed her grandson, in a tone more adapted to the ordinary business of life.

“ Thou must hence,” she said, “ Roland—thou must hence, but not till morning. And now, how wilt thou shift for thy night’s quarters ? Thou hast been more softly bred than when we were companions in the misty hills of Cumberland and Liddesdale.”

“ I have at least preserved, my good mother, the habits which I then learned—can lie hard, feed sparingly, and think it no hardship. Since I was a wanderer with thee on the hills, I have been a hunter, and fisher, and fowler, and each of these is accustomed to sleep freely in a worse shelter than sacrilege has left us here.”

“ Than sacrilege has left us here ! ” said the matron, repeating his words, and pausing on them. “ Most true, my son ; and God’s faithful children are now worst sheltered when they lodge in God’s own house and the demesne of His blessed saints. We shall sleep cold here under the night-wind, which whistles through the breaches that heresy has made. They shall lie warmer who made them—ay, and through a long hereafter ! ”

Notwithstanding the wild and singular expression of this

female, she appeared to retain towards Roland Græme, in a strong degree, that affectionate and sedulous love which women bear to their nurslings, and the children dependent on their care. It seemed as if she would not permit him to do aught for himself which in former days her attention had been used to do for him, and that she considered the tall stripling before her as being equally dependent on her careful attention as when he was the orphan child who had owed all to her affectionate solicitude.

“What hast thou to eat now?” she said, as, leaving the chapel, they went into the deserted habitation of the priest; “or what means of kindling a fire, to defend thee from this raw and inclement air? Poor child! thou hast made slight provision for a long journey; nor hast thou skill to help thyself by wit when means are scanty. But Our Lady has placed by thy side one to whom want, in all its forms, is as familiar as plenty and splendor have formerly been. And with want, Roland, come the arts of which she is the inventor.”

With an active and officious diligence, which strangely contrasted with her late abstracted and high tone of Catholic devotion, she set about her domestic arrangements for the evening. A pouch, which was hidden under her garment, produced a flint and steel, and from the scattered fragments around (those pertaining to the image of St. Cuthbert scrupulously excepted) she obtained splinters sufficient to raise a sparkling and cheerful fire on the hearth of the deserted cell.

“And now,” she said, “for needful food.”

“Think not of it, mother,” said Roland, “unless you yourself feel hunger. It is a little thing for me to endure a night’s abstinence, and a small atonement for the necessary transgression of the rules of the church upon which I was compelled during my stay in the castle.”

“Hunger for myself!” answered the matron. “Know, youth, that a mother knows not hunger till that of her child is satisfied.” And with affectionate inconsistency, totally different from her usual manner, she added, “Roland, you must not fast; you have dispensation; you are young, and to youth food and sleep are necessaries not to be dispensed with. Husband your strength, my child; your sovereign, your religion, your country require it. Let age macerate by fast and vigil a body which can only suffer; let youth, in these active times, nourish the limbs and the strength which action requires.”

While she thus spoke, the scrip, which had produced the means of striking fire, furnished provisions for a meal; of which she herself scarce partook, but anxiously watched her charge, taking a pleasure, resembling that of an epicure, in each morsel which he swallowed, with a youthful appetite which abstinence had rendered unusually sharp. Roland readily obeyed her recommendations, and ate the food which she so affectionately and earnestly placed before him. But she shook her head when invited by him in return to partake of the refreshment her own cares had furnished; and when his solicitude became more pressing, she refused him in a loftier tone of rejection.

“Young man,” she said, “you know not to whom, or of what, you speak. They to whom Heaven declares its purpose must merit its communication by mortifying the senses; they have that within which requires not the superfluity of earthly nutriment, which is necessary to those who are without the sphere of the Vision. To them the watch spent in prayer is a refreshing slumber, and the sense of doing the will of Heaven is a richer banquet than the tables of monarchs can spread before them! But do thou sleep soft, my son,” she said, relapsing from the tone of fanaticism into that of maternal affection and tenderness—“do thou sleep sound while life is but young with thee, and the cares of the day can be drowned in the slumbers of the evening. Different is thy duty and mine, and as different the means by which we must qualify and strengthen ourselves to perform it. From thee is demanded strength of body—from me strength of soul.”

When she thus spoke, she prepared with ready address a pallet-couch, composed partly of the dried leaves which had once furnished a bed to the solitary, and the guests who occasionally received his hospitality, and which, neglected by the destroyers of his humble cell, had remained little disturbed in the corner allotted for them. To these her care added some of the vestures which lay torn and scattered on the floor. With a zealous hand she selected all such as appeared to have made any part of the sacerdotal vestments, laying them aside as sacred from ordinary purposes, and with the rest she made, with dexterous promptness, such a bed as a weary man might willingly stretch himself on; and during the time she was preparing it, rejected, even with acrimony, any attempt which the youth made to assist her, or any entreaty which he urged that she should accept of the place of rest for her own use. “Sleep thou,” said she,

“Roland Græme—sleep thou—the persecuted, the disinherited orphan—the son of an ill-fated mother—sleep thou ! I go to pray in the chapel beside thee.”

The manner was too enthusiastically earnest, too obstinately firm, to permit Roland Græme to dispute her will any farther. Yet he felt some shame in giving way to it. It seemed as if she had forgotten the years that had passed away since their parting ; and expected to meet, in the tall, indulged, and wilful youth whom she had recovered, the passive obedience of the child whom she had left in the Castle of Avenel. This did not fail to hurt her grandson’s characteristic and constitutional pride. He obeyed, indeed, awed into submission by the sudden recurrence of former subordination, and by feelings of affection and gratitude. Still, however, he felt the yoke.

“Have I relinquished the hawk and the hound,” he said, “to become the pupil of her pleasure, as if I were still a child ? I, whom even my envious mates allowed to be superior in those exercises which they took most pains to acquire, and which came to me naturally, as if a knowledge of them had been my birthright ? This may not, and must not be. I will be no reclaimed sparrow-hawk, who is carried hooded on a woman’s wrist, and has his quarry only shown to him when his eyes are uncovered for his flight. I will know her purpose ere it is proposed to me to aid it.”

These and other thoughts streamed through the mind of Roland Græme ; and, although wearied with the fatigues of the day, it was long ere he could compose himself to rest.

CHAPTER IX

**Kneel with me—swear it—'tis not in words I trust,
Save when they're fenced with an appeal to Heaven.**

Old Play.

AFTER passing the night in that sound sleep for which agitation and fatigue had prepared him, Roland was awakened by the fresh morning air, and by the beams of the rising sun. His first feeling was that of surprise; for, instead of looking forth from a turret window on the waters of the lake of Avenel, which was the prospect his former apartment afforded, an unlatticed aperture gave him the view of the demolished garden of the banished anchorite. He sat up on his couch of leaves, and arranged in his memory, not without wonder, the singular events of the preceding day, which appeared the more surprising the more he considered them. He had lost the protectress of his youth, and, in the same day, he had recovered the guide and guardian of his childhood. The former deprivation he felt ought to be matter of unceasing regret, and it seemed as if the latter could hardly be the subject of unmixed self-congratulation. He remembered this person, who had stood to him in the relation of a mother, as equally affectionate in her attention and absolute in her authority. A singular mixture of love and fear attended upon his early remembrances as they were connected with her; and the fear that she might desire to resume the same absolute control over his motions—a fear which her conduct of yesterday did not tend much to dissipate—weighed heavily against the joy of this second meeting.

“She cannot mean,” said his rising pride, “to lead and direct me as a pupil, when I am at the age of judging of my own actions?—this she cannot mean, or meaning it, will feel herself strangely deceived.”

A sense of gratitude towards the person against whom his heart thus rebelled checked this course of feeling. He resisted the thoughts which involuntarily arose in his mind, as he would have resisted an actual instigation of the foul fiend; and to aid him in his struggle, he felt for his beads.

But, in his hasty departure from the Castle of Avenel, he had forgotten and left them behind him.

"This is yet worse," he said; "but two things I learned of her under the most deadly charge of secrecy—to tell my beads, and to conceal that I did so; and I have kept my word till now; and when she shall ask me for the rosary, I must say I have forgotten it! Do I deserve she should believe me when I say I have kept the secret of my faith, when I set so light by its symbol?"

He paced the floor in anxious agitation. In fact, his attachment to his faith was of a nature very different from that which animated the enthusiastic matron, but which, notwithstanding, it would have been his last thought to relinquish.

The early charges impressed on him by his grandmother had been instilled into a mind and memory of a character peculiarly tenacious. Child as he was, he was proud of the confidence reposed in his discretion, and resolved to show that it had not been rashly entrusted to him. At the same time, his resolution was no more than that of a child, and must, necessarily, have gradually faded away under the operation both of precept and example, during his residence at the Castle of Avenel, but for the exhortations of Father Ambrose, who, in his late estate, had been called Edward Glendinning. This zealous monk had been apprised, by an unsigned letter placed in his hand by a pilgrim, that a child educated in the Catholic faith was now in the Castle of Avenel, perilously situated (so was the scroll expressed) as ever the three children who were cast into the fiery furnace of persecution. The letter threw upon Father Ambrose the fault should this solitary lamb, unwillingly left within the demesnes of the prowling wolf, become his final prey. There needed no farther exhortation to the monk than the idea that a soul might be endangered, and that a Catholic might become an apostate; and he made his visits more frequent than usual to the Castle of Avenel, lest, through want of the private encouragement and instruction which he always found some opportunity of dispensing, the church should lose a proselyte, and, according to the Romish creed, the devil acquire a soul.

Still these interviews were rare; and though they encouraged the solitary boy to keep his secret and hold fast his religion, they were neither frequent nor long enough to inspire him with anything beyond a blind attachment to the observances which the priest recommended. He adhered to

the forms of his religion, rather because he felt it would be dishonorable to change that of his fathers than from any rational conviction or sincere belief of its mysterious doctrines. It was a principal part of the distinction which, in his own opinion, singled him out from those with whom he lived, and gave him an additional, though an internal and concealed, reason for contemning those of the household who showed an undisguised dislike of him, and for hardening himself against the instructions of the chaplain, Henry Warden.

“The fanatic preacher,” he thought within himself, during some one of the chaplain’s frequent discourses against the Church of Rome, “he little knows whose ears are receiving his profane doctrine, and with what contempt and abhorrence they hear his blasphemies against the holy religion by which kings have been crowned and for which martyrs have died!”

But in such proud feelings of defiance of heresy, as it was termed, and of its professors, which associated the Catholic religion with a sense of generous independence, and that of the Protestants with the subjugation of his mind and temper to the direction of Mr. Warden, began and ended the faith of Roland Græme, who, independently of the pride of singularity, sought not to understand, and had no one to expound to him, the peculiarities of the tenets which he professed. His regret, therefore, at missing the rosary which had been conveyed to him through the hands of Father Ambrose was rather the shame of a soldier who has dropped his cockade, or badge of service, than that of a zealous votary who had forgotten a visible symbol of his religion.

His thoughts, on the subject, however, were mortifying, and the more so from apprehension that his negligence must reach the ears of his relative. He felt it could be no one but her who had secretly transmitted these beads to Father Ambrose for his use, and that his carelessness was but an indifferent requital of her kindness.

“Nor will she omit to ask me about them,” said he to himself; “for hers is a zeal which age cannot quell; and if she has not quitted her wont, my answer will not fail to incense her.”

While he thus communed with himself, Magdalen Græme entered the apartment. “The blessing of the morning on your youthful head, my son,” she said, with a solemnity of expression which thrilled the youth to the heart, so sad and

earnest did the benediction flow from her lips, in a tone where devotion was blended with affection. "And thou hast started thus early from thy couch to catch the first breath of the dawn? But it is not well, my Roland. Enjoy slumber while thou canst; the time is not far behind when the waking eye must be thy portion as well as mine."

She uttered these words with an affectionate and anxious tone, which showed that, devotional as were the habitual exercises of her mind, the thoughts of her nursling yet bound her to earth with the cords of human affection and passion.

But she abode not long in a mood which she probably regarded as a momentary dereliction of her imaginary high calling. "Come," she said, "youth, up and be doing. It is time that we leave this place."

"And whither do we go?" said the young man; "or what is the object of our journey?"

The matron stepped back, and gazed on him with surprise, not unmingled with displeasure.

"To what purpose such a question?" she said; "is it not enough that I lead the way? Hast thou lived with heretics till thou hast learned to instal the vanity of thine own private judgment in the place of due honor and obedience?"

"The time," thought Roland Græme within himself, "is already come when I must establish my freedom or be a willing thrall forever. I feel that I must speedily look to it."

She instantly fulfilled his foreboding, by recurring to the theme by which her thoughts seemed most constantly engrossed, although, when she pleased, no one could so perfectly disguise her religion.

"Thy beads, my son—hast thou told thy beads?"

Roland Græme colored high; he felt the storm was approaching, but scorned to avert it by a falsehood.

"I have forgotten my rosary," he said, "at the Castle of Avenel."

"Forgotten thy rosary!" she exclaimed; "false both to religion and to natural duty, hast thou lost what was sent so far, and at such a risk, a token of the truest affection, that should have been, every bead of it, as dear to thee as thine eyeballs?"

"I am grieved it should have so chanced, mother," replied the youth, "and much did I value the token, as coming from you. For what remains, I trust to win gold enough, when I push my way in the world; and till then beads of black oak, or a rosary of nuts, must serve the turn."

"Hear him!" said his grandmother; "young as he is, he

hath learned already the lessons of the devil's school! The rosary consecrated by the Holy Father himself, and sanctified by his blessings, is but a few knobs of gold, whose value may be replaced by the wages of his profane labor, and whose virtue may be supplied by a string of hazel nuts! This is heresy. Sir Henry Warden, the wolf who ravages the flock of the Shepherd, hath taught thee to speak and to think."

"Mother," said Roland Græme, "I am no heretic: I believe and I pray according to the rules of our church. This misfortune I regret, but I cannot amend it."

"Thou canst repent it, though," replied his spiritual directress—"repent it in dust and ashes, atone for it by fasting, prayer, and penance, instead of looking on me with a countenance as light as if thou hadst lost but a button from thy cap."

"Mother," said Roland, "be appeased; I will remember my fault in the next confession which I have space and opportunity to make, and will do whatever the priest may require of me in atonement. For the heaviest fault I can do no more. But, mother," he added, after a moment's pause, "let me not incur your farther displeasure, if I ask whither our journey is bound, and what is its object. I am no longer a child, but a man, and at my own disposal, with down upon my chin and a sword by my side; I will go to the end of the world with you to do your pleasure, but I owe it to myself to inquire the purpose and direction of our travels."

"You owe it to yourself, ungrateful boy!" replied his relative, passion rapidly supplying the color which age had long chased from her features. "To yourself you owe nothing—you can owe nothing; to me you owe everything—your life when an infant—your support when a child—the means of instruction and the hopes of honor; and, sooner than thou shouldst abandon the noble cause to which I have devoted thee, would I see thee lie a corpse at my feet!"

Roland was alarmed at the vehement agitation with which she spoke, and which threatened to overpower her aged frame; and he hastened to reply—"I forget nothing of what I owe to you, my dearest mother; show me how my blood can testify my gratitude, and you shall judge if I spare it. But blindfold obedience has in it as little merit as reason."

"Saints and angels!" replied Magdalen, "and do I hear these words from the child of my hopes, the nursling by whose bed I have kneeled, and for whose weal I have wearied every saint in Heaven with prayers? Roland, by obedience only canst thou show thy affection and thy gratitude. What

avails it that you might perchance adopt the course I propose to thee, were it to be fully explained? Thou wouldst not then follow my command, but thine own judgment; thou wouldst not do the will of Heaven, communicated through thy best friend, to whom thy owest thine all; but thou wouldst observe the blinded dictates of thine own imperfect reason. Hear me, Roland! a lot calls thee—solicits thee—demands thee—the proudest to which man can be destined, and it uses the voice of thine earliest—thy best—thine only friend. Wilt thou resist it? Then go thy way—leave me here; my hopes on earth are gone and withered. I will kneel me down before yonder profaned altar, and when the raging heretics return, they shall dye it with the blood of a martyr!”

“But, my dearest mother,” said Roland Græme, whose early recollections of her violence were formidably renewed by these wild expressions of reckless passion, “I will not forsake you—I will abide with you: worlds shall not force me from your side. I will protect—I will defend you; I will live with you, and die for you!”

“One word, my son, were worth all these; say only, ‘I will obey you.’”

“Doubt it not, mother,” replied the youth, “I will, and that with all my heart; only——”

“Nay, I receive no qualifications of thy promise,” said Magdalen Græme, catching at the word, “the obedience which I require is absolute; and a blessing on thee, thou darling memory of my beloved child, that thou hast power to make a promise so hard to human pride! Trust me well, that in the design in which thou dost embark thou hast for thy partners the mighty and the valiant, the power of the church, and the pride of the noble. Succeed or fail, live or die, thy name shall be among those with whom success or failure is alike glorious, death or life alike desirable. Forward then—forward! life is short, and our plan is laborious. Angels, saints, and the whole blessed host of Heaven have their eyes even now on this barren and blighted land of Scotland. What say I? On Scotland? Their eye is on *us*, Roland—on the frail woman, on the inexperienced youth, who, amidst the ruins which sacrilege hath made in the holy place, devote themselves to God’s cause, and that of their lawful sovereign. Amen, so be it! The blessed eyes of saints and martyrs, which see our resolve, shall witness the execution; or their ears, which hear our vow, shall hear our death-groan drawn in the sacred cause!”

While thus speaking, she held Ronald Græme firmly with one hand, while she pointed upward with the other, to leave him, as it were, no means of protest against the obstetation to which he was thus made a party. When she had finished her appeal to Heaven, she left him no leisure for farther hesitation, or for asking any explanation of her purpose; but, passing with the same ready transition as formerly to the solicitous attentions of an anxious parent, overwhelmed him with questions concerning his residence in the Castle of Avenel, and the qualities and accomplishments he had acquired.

"It is well," she said, when she had exhausted her inquiries: "my gay goss-hawk* hath been well trained, and will soar high; but those who bred him will have cause to fear as well as to wonder at his flight. Let us now," she said, "to our morning meal, and care not though it be a scanty one. A few hours' walk will bring us to more friendly quarters."

They broke their fast accordingly on such fragments as remained of their yesterday's provision, and immediately set out on their farther journey. Magdalen Græme led the way, with a firm and active step much beyond her years, and Roland Græme followed, pensive and anxious, and far from satisfied with the state of dependence to which he seemed again to be reduced.

"Am I forever," he said to himself, "to be devoured with the desire of independence and free agency, and yet to be forever led on by circumstances to follow the will of others?"

* See Note 4.

CHAPTER X

She dwelt unnoticed and alone,
Beside the springs of Dove—
A maid whom there was none to praise,
And very few to love.

WORDSWORTH.

IN the course of their journey the travelers spoke little to each other. Magdalen Græme chanted, from time to time, in a low voice, a part of some one of those beautiful old Latin hymns which belong to the Catholic service, muttered an ave or a credo, and so passed on, lost in devotional contemplation. The meditations of her grandson were more bent on mundane matters ; and many a time, as a moorfowl arose from the heath and shot along the moor, uttering his bold crow of defiance, he thought of the jolly Adam Woodcock and his trusty gross-hawk ; or, as they passed a thicket where the low trees and bushes were intermingled with tall fern, furze, and broom, so as to form a thick and intricate cover, his dreams were of a roebuck and a brace of gazehounds. But frequently his mind returned to the benevolent and kind mistress whom he had left behind him offended justly, and unreconciled by any effort of his.

“ My step would be lighter,” he thought, “ and so would my heart, could I but have returned to see her for one instant, and to say, ‘ Lady, the orphan boy was wild, but not ungrateful ! ’ ”

Traveling in these divers moods, about the hour of noon they reached a small straggling village, in which, as usual, were seen one or two of those predominating towers, or peel-houses, which, for reasons of defense elsewhere detailed, were at that time to be found in every Border hamlet. A brook flowed beside the village, and watered the valley in which it stood. There was also a mansion at the end of the village and a little way separated from it, much dilapidated and in very bad order, but appearing to have been the abode of persons of some consideration. The situation was agreeable, being an angle formed by the stream, bearing three or four large sycamore-trees, which were in full leaf, and served

to relieve the dark appearance of the mansion, which was built of a deep-red stone. The house itself was a large one, but was now obviously too big for the inmates; several windows were built up, especially those which opened from the lower story; others were blockaded in a less substantial manner. The court before the door, which had once been defended with a species of low outer wall, now ruinous, was paved, but the stones were completely covered with long gray nettles, thistles, and other weeds, which, shooting up betwixt the flags, had displaced many of them from their level. Even matters demanding more peremptory attention had been left neglected, in a manner which argued sloth or poverty in the extreme. The stream, undermining a part of the bank near an angle of the ruinous wall, had brought it down, with a corner turret, the ruins of which lay in the bed of the river. The current, interrupted by the ruins which it had overthrown, and turned yet nearer to the site of the tower, had greatly enlarged the breach it had made, and was in the process of undermining the ground on which the house itself stood, unless it were speedily protected by sufficient bulwarks.

All this attracted Roland Græme's observation, as they approached the dwelling by a winding path, which gave them, at intervals, a view of it from different points.

"If we go to yonder house," he said to his [grand-] mother, "I trust it is but for a short visit. It looks as if two rainy days from the northwest would send the whole into the brook."

"You see but with the eyes of the body," said the old woman; "God will defend His own, though it be forsaken and despised of men. Better to dwell on the sand, under His law, than fly to the rock of human trust."

As she thus spoke, they entered the court before the old mansion, and Roland could observe that the front of it had formerly been considerably ornamented with carved work, in the same dark-colored freestone of which it was built. But all these ornaments had been broken down and destroyed, and only the shattered vestiges of niches and entablatures now strewed the place which they had once occupied. The larger entrance in front was walled up, but a little footpath, which, from its appearance, seemed to be rarely trodden, led to a small wicket, defended by a door well clenched with iron-headed nails, at which Magdalen Græme knocked three times, pausing betwixt each knock, until she heard an answering tap from within. At the last knock, the wicket was

opened by a pale thin female, who said, '*Benedicti qui veniunt in nomine Domini.*' They entered, and the portress hastily shut behind them the wicket, and made fast the massive fastenings by which it was secured.

The female led the way through a narrow entrance, into a vestibule of some extent, paved with stone, and having benches of the same solid material ranged around. At the upper end was an oriel window, but some of the intervals formed by the stone shafts and mullions were blocked up, so that the apartment was very gloomy.

Here they stopped, and the mistress of the mansion, for such she was, embraced Magdalen Græme, and greeting her by the title of sister, kissed her, with much solemnity, on either side of the face.

"The blessing of Our Lady be upon you, my sister," were her next words; and they left no doubt upon Roland's mind respecting the religion of their hostess, even if he could have suspected his venerable and zealous guide of resting elsewhere than in the habitation of an orthodox Catholic. They spoke together a few words in private, during which he had leisure to remark more particularly the appearance of his grandmother's friend.

Her age might be betwixt fifty and sixty; her looks had a mixture of melancholy and unhappiness that bordered on discontent, and obscured the remains of beauty which age had still left on her features. Her dress was of the plainest and most ordinary description, of a dark color, and, like Magdalen Græme's, something approaching to a religious habit. Strict neatness and cleanliness of person seemed to intimate that, if poor, she was not reduced to squalid or heart-broken distress, and that she was still sufficiently attached to life to retain a taste for its decencies, if not its elegancies. Her manner, as well as her features and appearance, argued an original condition and education far above the meanness of her present appearance. In short, the whole figure was such as to excite the idea, "That female must have had a history worth knowing." While Roland Græme was making this very reflection, the whispers of the two females ceased, and the mistress of the mansion, approaching him, looked on his face and person with much attention, and, as it seemed, some interest.

"This, then," she said, addressing his relative, "is the child of thine unhappy daughter, Sister Magdalen; and him, the only shoot from your ancient tree, you are willing to devote to the good cause?"

"Yes, by the rood," answered Magdalen Græme, in her

usual tone of resolved determination, "to the good cause I devote him, flesh and fell, sinew and limb, body and soul!"

"Thou art a happy woman, Sister Magdalen," answered her companion, "that, lifted so high above human affection and human feeling, thou canst bind such a victim to the horns of the altar. Had I been called to make such sacrifice—to plunge a youth so young and fair into the plots and bloodthirsty dealings of the time, not the patriarch Abraham, when he led Isaac up the mountain, would have rendered more melancholy obedience."

She then continued to look at Roland with a mournful aspect of compassion, until the intentness of her gaze occasioned his color to rise, and he was about to move out of its influence, when he was stopped by his grandmother with one hand, while with the other she divided the hair upon his forehead, which was now crimson with bashfulness, while she added, with a mixture of proud affection and firm resolution—"Ay, look at him well, my sister, for on a fairer face thine eye never rested. I too, when first I saw him, after a long separation, felt as the worldly feel, and was half shaken in my purpose. But no wind can tear a leaf from the withered tree which has long been stripped of its foliage, and no mere human casualty can awaken the mortal feelings which have long slept in the calm of devotion."

While the old woman thus spoke, her manner gave the lie to her assertions, for the tears rose to her eyes while she added, "But the fairer and the more spotless the victim, is it not, my sister, the more worthy of acceptance?" She seemed glad to escape from the sensations which agitated her, and instantly added, "He will escape, my sister: there will be a ram caught in the thicket, and the hand of our revolted brethren shall not be on the youthful Joseph. Heaven can defend its own rights, even by means of babes and sucklings, of women and beardless boys."

"Heaven hath left us," said the other female: "for our sins and our father's the succors of the blessed saints have abandoned this accursed land. We may win the crown of martyrdom, but not that of earthly triumph. One, too, whose prudence was at this deep crisis so indispensable, has been called to a better world. The Abbot Eustatius is no more."

"May his soul have mercy!" said Magdalen Græme, "and may Heaven, too, have mercy upon us, who linger behind in this bloody land! His loss is indeed a perilous blow to our enterprise; for who remains behind possessing his far-fetched experience, his self-devoted zeal, his consum-

mate wisdom, and his undaunted courage ! He hath fallen with the church's standard in his hand, but God will raise up another to lift the blessed banner. Whom have the chapter elected in his room ?”

“It is rumored no one of the few remaining brethren dare accept the office. The heretics have sworn that they will permit no future election, and will heavily punish any attempt to create a new abbot of St. Mary's. *Conjuraverunt inter se principes, dicentes, Projiciamus laqueos ejus.*”

“*Quousque, Domine?*” ejaculated Magdalen. “This, my sister, were indeed a perilous and fatal breach in our band ; but I am firm in my belief that another will arise in the place of him so untimely removed. Where is thy daughter Catherine ?”

“In the parlor,” answered the matron, “but——” She looked at Roland Græme, and muttered something in the ear of her friend.

“Fear it not,” answered Magdalen Græme, “it is both lawful and necessary ; fear nothing from him : I would he were as well grounded in the faith by which alone comes safety as he is free from thought, deed, or speech of villainy. Therein is the heretics' discipline to be commended, my sister, that they train up their youth in strong morality, and choke up every inlet to youthful folly.”

“It is but a cleansing of the outside of the cup,” answered her friend—“a whitening of the sepulcher ; but he shall see Catherine, since you, sister, judge it safe and meet. Follow us, youth,” she added, and led the way from the apartment with her friend. These were the only words which the matron had addressed to Roland Græme, who obeyed them in silence. As they paced through several winding passages and waste apartments with a very slow step, the young page had leisure to make some reflection on his situation—reflections of a nature which his ardent temper considered as specially disagreeable. It seemed he had now got two mistresses, or tutoresses instead of one, both elderly women, and both, it would seem, in league to direct his motions according to their own pleasure, and for the accomplishment of plans to which he was no party. This, he thought was too much ; arguing, reasonably enough, that whatever right his grandmother and benefactress had to guide his motions, she was neither entitled to transfer her authority or to divide it with another, who seemed to assume, without ceremony, the same tone of absolute command over him.

“But it shall not long continue thus,” thought Roland ;

“I will not be all my life the slave of a woman’s whistle, to go when she bids, and come when she calls. No, by St. Andrew! the hand that can hold the lance is above the control of the distaff. I will leave them the slipped collar in their hands on the first opportunity, and let them execute their own devices by their own proper force. It may save them both from peril, for I guess what they meditate is not likely to prove either safe or easy: the Earl of Murray, and his heresy are too well rooted to be grubbed up by two old women.”

As he thus resolved, they entered a low room, in which a third female was seated. This apartment was the first he had observed in the mansion which was furnished with moveable seats, and with a wooden table, over which was laid a piece of tapestry. A carpet was spread on the floor, there was a grate in the chimney, and, in brief, the apartment had the air of being habitable and inhabited.

But Roland’s eyes found better employment than to make observations on the accommodations of the chamber; for this second female inhabitant of the mansion seemed something very different from anything he had yet seen there. At his first entry she had greeted with a silent and low obeisance the two aged matrons, then glancing her eyes towards Roland, she adjusted a veil which hung back over her shoulders so as to bring it over her face—an operation which she performed with much modesty, but without either affected haste or embarrassed timidity.

During this maneuver, Roland had time to observe that the face was that of a girl apparently not much past sixteen, and that the eyes were at once soft and brilliant. To these very favorable observations was added the certainty that the fair object to whom they referred possessed an excellent shape bordering perhaps on *embonpoint*, and therefore rather that of a Hebe than of a sylph, but beautifully formed, and shown to great advantage by the close jacket and petticoat which she wore after a foreign fashion, the last not quite long enough absolutely to conceal a very pretty foot, which rested on a bar of the table at which she sate; her round arms and taper fingers very busily employed in repairing the piece of tapestry which was spread on it, which exhibited several deplorable fissures, enough to demand the utmost skill of the most expert seamstress.

It is to be remarked, that it was by stolen glances that Roland Græme contrived to ascertain these interesting particulars; and he thought he could once or twice, notwith-

standing the texture of the veil, detect the damsel in the act of taking similar cognizance of his own person. The matrons in the meanwhile continued their separate conversation, eyeing from time to time the young people, in a manner which left Roland in no doubt that they were the subject of their conversation. At length he distinctly heard Magdalen Græme say these words—"Nay, my sister, we must give them opportunity to speak together, and to become acquainted; they must be personally known to each other, or how shall they be able to execute what they are entrusted with?"

It seemed as if the matron, not fully satisfied with her friend's reasoning, continued to offer some objections; but they were borne down by her more dictatorial friend.

"It must be so," she said, "my dear sister; let us therefore go forth on the balcony to finish our conversation. And do you," she added, addressing Roland and the girl, "become acquainted with each other."

With this she stepped up to the young woman, and raising her veil, discovered features which, whatever might be their ordinary complexion, were now covered with a universal blush.

"*Licitum sit*," said Magdalen, looking at the other matron.

"*Vix licitum*," replied the other, with reluctant and hesitating acquiescence; and again adjusting the veil of the blushing girl, she dropped it so as to shade, though not to conceal, her countenance, and whispered to her, in a tone loud enough for the page to hear, "Remember, Catherine, who thou art, and for what destined."

The matron then retreated with Magdalen Græme through one of the casements of the apartment, that opened on a large broad balcony, which, with its ponderous balustrade, had once run along the whole south front of the building which faced the brook, and formed a pleasant and commodious walk in the open air. It was now in some places deprived of the balustrade, in others broken and narrowed; but, ruinous as it was, could still be used as a pleasant promenade. Here then walked the two ancient dames, busied in their private conversation; yet not so much so but that Roland could observe the matrons, as their thin forms darkened the casement in passing or repassing before it dart a glance into the apartment, to see how matters were going on there.

CHAPTER XI

Life hath its May, and it is mirthful then :
The woods are vocal, and the flowers all odor :
Its very blast has mirth in't—and the maidens,
The while they don their cloaks to skreen their kirtles,
Laugh at the rain that wets them.

Old Play.

CATHERINE was at the happy age of innocence and buoyancy of spirit when, after the first moment of embarrassment was over, a situation of awkwardness like that in which she was suddenly left to make acquaintance with a handsome youth, not even known to her by name, struck her; in spite of herself, in a ludicrous point of view. She bent her beautiful eyes upon the work with which she was busied; and with infinite gravity sate out the two first turns of the matrons upon the balcony; but then glancing her deep blue eyes a little towards Roland, and observing the embarrassment under which he labored, now shifting on his chair, and now dangling his cap, the whole man evincing that he was perfectly at a loss how to open the conversation, she could keep her composure no longer, but, after a vain struggle, broke out into a sincere, though a very involuntary, fit of laughing, so richly accompanied by the laughter of her merry eyes, which actually glanced through the tears which the effort filled them with, and by the waving of her rich tresses, that the goddess of smiles herself never looked more lovely than Catherine at that moment. A court page would not have left her long alone in her mirth; but Roland was country-bred, and, besides, having some jealousy, as well as bashfulness, he took it into his head that he was himself the object of her inextinguishable laughter. His endeavors to sympathize with Catherine, therefore, could carry him no farther than a forced giggle, which had more of displeasure than of mirth in it, and which so much enhanced that of the girl that it seemed to render it impossible for her ever to bring her laughter to an end, with whatever anxious pains she labored to do so. For every one has felt that when a paroxysm of laughter has seized him, at a mis-

becoming time and place, the efforts which he makes to suppress it, nay, the very sense of the impropriety of giving way to it, tend only to augment and prolong the irresistible impulse.

It was undoubtedly lucky for Catherine, as well as for Roland, that the latter did not share in the excessive mirth of the former. For seated as she was, with her back to the casement, Catherine could easily escape the observation of the two matrons during the course of their promenade; whereas Græme was so placed, with his side to the window, that his mirth, had he shared that of his companion, would have been instantly visible, and could not have failed to give offense to the personages in question. He sate, however, with some impatience, until Catherine had exhausted either her power or her desire of laughing, and was returning with good grace to the exercise of her needle, and then he observed with some dryness, that "There seemed no great occasion to recommend to them to improve their acquaintance, as it seemed that they were already tolerably familiar."

Catherine had an extreme desire to set off upon a fresh score, but she repressed it strongly, and fixing her eyes on her work, replied by asking his pardon, and promising to avoid future offense.

Roland had sense enough to feel that an air of offended dignity was very much misplaced, and that it was with a very different bearing he ought to meet the deep blue eyes which had borne such a hearty burden in the laughing scene. He tried, therefore, to extricate himself as well as he could from his blunder, by assuming a tone of corresponding gaiety, and requesting to know of the nymph, "How it was, her pleasure that they should proceed in improving the acquaintance which had commenced so merrily."

"That," she said, "you must yourself discover; perhaps I have gone a step too far in opening our interview."

"Suppose," said Roland Græme, "we should begin as in a tale-book, by asking each other's names and histories."

"It is right well imagined," said Catherine, "and shows an argute judgment. Do you begin, and I will listen, and only put in a question or two at the dark parts of the story. Come, unfold then your name and history, my new acquaintance."

"I am called Roland Græme, and that tall old woman is my grandmother."

"And your tutoress? Good. Who are your parents?"

"They are both dead," replied Roland.

"Ay, but who were they? You *had* parents, I presume?"

"I suppose so," said Roland, "but I have never been able to learn much of their history. My father was a Scottish knight, who died gallantly in his stirrups; my mother was a Græme of Heathergill in the Debateable Land; most of her family were killed when the Debateable country was burned by the Lord Maxwell and Herries of Caerlaverock."

"Is it long ago?" said the damsel.

"Before I was born," answered the page.

"That must be a great while since," said she, shaking her head gravely; "look you, I cannot weep for them."

"It needs not," said the youth, "they fell with honor."

"So much for your lineage, fair sir," replied his companion, "of whom I like the living specimen (a glance at the casement) far less than those that are dead. Your much honored grandmother looks as if she could make one weep in sad earnest. And now, fair sir, for your own person; if you tell not the tale faster, it will be cut short in the middle: Mother Bridget pauses longer and longer every time she passes the window, and with her there is as little mirth as in the grave of your ancestors."

"My tale is soon told. I was introduced into the Castle of Avenel to be page to the lady of the mansion."

"She is a strict Huguenot, is she not?" said the maiden.

"As strict as Calvin himself. But my grandmother can play the Puritan when it suits her purpose, and she had some plan of her own for quartering me in the castle; it would have failed, however, after we had remained several weeks at the hamlet, but for an unexpected master of ceremonies——"

"And who was that?" said the girl.

"A large black dog, Wolf by name, who brought me into the castle one day in his mouth like a hurt wild duck, and presented me to the lady."

"A most respectable introduction, truly," said Catherine; "and what might you learn at this same castle? I love dearly to know what my acquaintances can do at need."

"To fly a hawk, halloo to a hound, back a horse, and wield lance, bow, and brand."

"And to boast of all this when you have learned it," said Catherine, "which, in France at least, is the surest accomplishment of a page. But proceed, fair sir; how came your Huguenot lord and your no less Huguenot lady to receive

and keep in the family so perilous a person as a Catholic page?"

"Because they knew not that part of my history, which from infancy I had been taught to keep secret; and because my grand-dame's former zealous attendance on their heretic chaplain had laid all this suspicion to sleep, most fair Calipolis," said the page, and in so saying he edged his chair towards the seat of the fair querist.

"Nay, but keep your distance, most gallant sir," answered the blue-eyed maiden, "for, unless I greatly mistake, these reverend ladies will soon interrupt our amicable conference if the acquaintance they recommend shall seem to proceed beyond a certain point; so, fair sir, be pleased to abide by your station, and reply to my questions. By what achievements did you prove the qualities of a page, which you had thus happily acquired?"

Roland, who began to enter into the tone and spirit of the damsel's conversation, replied to her with becoming spirit.

"In no feat, fair gentlewoman, was I found inexpert, wherein there was mischief implied. I shot swans, hunted cats, frightened serving-women, chased the deer, and robbed the orchard. I say nothing of tormenting the chaplain in various ways, for that was my duty as a good Catholic."

"Now, as I am a gentlewoman," said Catherine, "I think these heretics have done Catholic penance in entertaining so all-accomplished a serving-man! And what, fair sir, might have been the unhappy event which deprived them of an inmate altogether so estimable?"

"Truly, fair gentlewoman," answered the youth, "your real proverb says that the longest lane will have a turning, and mine was more—it was, in fine, a turning off."

"Good!" said the merry young maiden, "it is an apt play on the word. And what occasion was taken for so important a catastrophe? Nay, start not for my learning, I do know the schools—in plain phrase, why were you sent from service?"

The page shrugged his shoulders while he replied, "A short tale is soon told, and a short horse soon curried. I made the falconer's boy taste of my switch; the falconer threatened to make me brook his cudgel. He is a kindly clown as well as a stout, and I would rather have been cudgelled by him than any man in Christendom to choose; but I knew not his qualities at that time, so I threatened to make him brook the stab, and my lady made me brook the 'Begone'; so adieu to the page's office and the fair Castle

of Avenel. I had not traveled far before I met my venerable parent. And so tell your tale, fair gentlewoman, for mine is done."

"A happy grandmother," said the maiden, "who had the luck to find the stray page just when his mistress had slipped his leash, and a most lucky page that has jumped at once from a page to an old lady's gentleman-usher!"

"All this is nothing of your history," answered Roland Græme, who began to be much interested in the congenial vivacity of this facetious young gentlewoman—"tale for tale is fellow-travelers' justice."

"Wait till we are fellow-travelers, then," replied Catherine.

"Nay, you escape me not so," said the page; "if you deal not justly by me, I will call out to Dame Bridget, or whatever your dame be called, and proclaim you for a cheat."

"You shall not need," answered the maiden. "My history is the counterpart of your own; the same words might almost serve, change but dress and name. I am called Catherine Seyton, and I also am an orphan."

"Have your parents been long dead?"

"That is the only question," said she, throwing down her fine eyes with a sudden expression of sorrow—"that is the only question I cannot laugh at."

"And Dame Bridget is your grandmother?"

The sudden cloud passed away like that which crosses for an instant the summer sun, and she answered, with her usual lively expression, "Worse by twenty degrees—Dame Bridget is my maiden aunt."

"Over God's forbode!" said Roland. "Alas! that you have such a tale to tell! And what horror comes next?"

"Your own history, exactly. I was taken upon trial for service——"

"And turned off for pinching the duenna, or affronting my lady's waiting-woman?"

"Nay, our history varies there," said the damsel. "Our mistress broke up house, or had her house broke up, which is the same thing, and I am a free woman of the forest."

"And I am as glad of it as if any one had lined my doublet with cloth of gold," said the youth.

"I thank you for your mirth," said she, "but the matter is not likely to concern you."

"Nay, but go on," said the page, "for you will be presently interrupted; the two good dames have been soaring

yonder on the balcony, like two old hooded crows, and their croak grows hoarser as night comes on; they will wing to roost presently. This mistress of yours, fair gentlewoman, who was she, in God's name?"

"O, she has a fair name in the world," replied Catherine Seyton. "Few ladies kept a fairer house, or held more gentlewomen in her household; my aunt Bridget was one of her housekeepers. We never saw our mistress's blessed face, to be sure, but we heard enough of her; were up early and down late, and were kept to long prayers and light food."

"Out upon the penurious old beldam!" said the page.

"For Heaven's sake, blaspheme not!" said the girl, with an expression of fear. "God pardon us both! I mean no harm. I speak of our blessed St. Catherine of Sienna!—may God forgive me that I spoke so lightly, and made you do a great sin and a great blasphemy! This was her nunnery, in which there were twelve nuns and an abbess. My aunt was the abbess, till the heretics turned all adrift."

"And where are your companions?" asked the youth.

"With the last year's snow," answered the maiden—"east, north, south, and west: some to France, some to Flanders, some, I fear, into the world and its pleasures. We have got permission to remain, or rather our remaining has been connived at, for my aunt has great relations among the Kerrs, and they have threatened a death-feud if any one touches us; and bow and spear are the best warrants in these times."

"Nay, then, you sit under a sure shadow," said the youth; "and I suppose you wept yourself blind when St. Catherine broke up housekeeping before you had taken arles in her service?"

"Hush! for Heaven's sake," said the damsel, crossing herself, "no more of that! But I have not quite cried my eyes out," said she, turning them upon him, and instantly again bending them upon her work. It was one of those glances which would require the threefold plate of brass around the heart, more than it is needed by the mariners of whom Horace recommends it. Our youthful page had no defense whatever to offer.

"What say you, Catherine," he said, "if we two, thus strangely turned out of service at the same time, should give our two most venerable duennas the torch to hold, while we walk a merry measure with each other over the floor of this weary world?"

“A goodly proposal, truly,” said Catherine, “and worthy the madcap brain of a discarded page! And what shifts does your worship propose we should live by?—by singing ballads, cutting purses, or swaggering on the highway? for there, I think, you will find your most productive exchequer.”

“Choose, you proud peat!” said the page, drawing off in huge disdain at the calm and unembarrassed ridicule with which his wild proposal was received. And as he spoke the words, the casement was again darkened by the forms of the matrons; it opened, and admitted Magdalen Græme and the mother abbess, so we must now style her, into the apartment

[The following text is extremely faint and largely illegible due to the quality of the scan. It appears to be a continuation of the narrative, possibly describing the interactions between the characters in the apartment.]

CHAPTER XII

**Nay, hear me, brother ; I am elder, wiser,
And holier than thou. And age, and wisdom,
And holiness, have peremptory claims,
And will be listen'd to.**

Old Play.

WHEN the matrons re-entered, and put an end to the conversation which we have detailed in the last chapter, Dame Magdalen Græine thus addressed her grandson and his pretty companion : “ Have you spoke together, my children. Have you become known to each other as fellow-travelers on the same dark and dubious road, whom chance hath brought together, and who study to learn the tempers and dispositions of those by whom their perils are to be shared ? ”

It was seldom the light-hearted Catherine could suppress a jest, so that she often spoke when she would have acted more wisely in holding her peace.

“ Your grandson admires the journey which you propose so very greatly that he was even now preparing for setting out upon it instantly.”

“ This is to be too forward, Roland,” said the dame, addressing him, “ as yesterday you were over slack ; the just mean lies in obedience, which both waits for the signal to start and obeys it when given. But once again, my children, have you so perused each other’s countenances that, when you meet, in whatever disguise the times may impose upon you, you may recognize each in the other the secret agent of the mighty work in which you are to be leagued ? Look at each other, know each line and lineament of each other’s countenance. Learn to distinguish by the step, by the sound of the voice, by the motion of the hand, by the glance of the eye, the partner whom Heaven hath sent to aid in working its will. Wilt thou know that maiden, whensoever or wheresoever you shall again meet her, my Roland Græime ? ”

As readily as truly did Roland answer in the affirmative.

“ And thou, my daughter, wilt thou again remember the features of this youth ? ”

“ Truly, mother,” replied Catherine Seyton, “ I have not seen so many men of late that I should immediately forget

your grandson, though I mark not much about him that is deserving of special remembrance."

"Join hands, then, my children," said Magdalen Græme; but, in saying so, was interrupted by her companion, whose conventual prejudices had been gradually giving her more and more uneasiness, and who could remain acquiescent no longer.

"Nay, my good sister, you forget," said she to Magdalen, "Catherine is the betrothed bride of Heaven; these intimacies cannot be."

"It is in the cause of Heaven that I command them to embrace," said Magdalen, with the full force of her powerful voice; "the end, sister, sanctifies the means we must use."

"They call me lady abbess, or mother at the least, who address me," said Dame Bridget, drawing herself up, as if offended at her friend's authoritative manner; "the Lady of Heathergill forgets that she speaks to the abbess of St. Catherine."

"When I was what you call me," said Magdalen, "you indeed were the abbess of St. Catherine; but both names are now gone, with all the rank that the world and that the church gave to them; and we are now, to the eye of human judgment, two poor, despised, oppressed women, dragging our dishonored old age to a humble grave. But what are we in the eye of Heaven? Ministers, sent forth to work His will, in whose weakness the strength of the church shall be manifested, before whom shall be humbled the wisdom of Murray and the dark strength of Morton. And to such wouldst thou apply the narrow rules of thy cloistered seclusion? or hast thou forgotten the order which I showed thee from thy superior, subjecting thee to me in these matters?"

"On thy head, then, be the scandal and the sin," said the abbess, sullenly.

"On mine be they both," said Magdalen. "I say, embrace each other, my children."

But Catherine, aware, perhaps, how the dispute was likely to terminate, had escaped from the apartment, and so disappointed the grandson at least as much as the old matron.

"She is gone," said the abbess, "to provide some little refreshment. But it will have little savor to those who dwell in the world; for I, at least, cannot dispense with the rules to which I am vowed, because it is the will of wicked men to break down the sanctuary in which they wont to be observed."

“It is well, my sister,” replied Magdalen, “to pay each even the smallest tithes of mint and cummin which the church demands, and I blame not thy scrupulous observance of the rules of thine order. But they were established by the church, and for the church’s benefit; and reason it is that they should give way when the salvation of the church herself is at stake.”

The abbess made no reply.

One more acquainted with human nature than the inexperienced page might have found amusement in comparing the different kinds of fanaticism which these two females exhibited. The abbess, timid, narrow-minded, and discontented, clung to ancient usages and pretensions which were ended by the Reformation, and was in adversity, as she had been in prosperity, scrupulous, weak-spirited, and bigoted; while the fiery and more lofty spirit of her companion suggested a wider field of effort, and would not be limited by ordinary rules in the extraordinary schemes which were suggested by her bold and irregular imagination. But Roland Græme, instead of tracing these peculiarities of character in the two old dames, only waited with great anxiety for the return of Catherine, expecting probably that the proposal of the fraternal embrace would be renewed, as his grandmother seemed disposed to carry matters with a high hand.

His expectations, or hopes, if we may call them so, were, however, disappointed; for, when Catherine re-entered on the summons of the abbess, and placed on the table an earthen pitcher of water, and four wooden platters, with cups of the same materials, the Dame of Heathergill, satisfied with the arbitrary mode in which she had borne down the opposition of the abbess, pursued her victory no farther—a moderation for which her grandson, in his heart, returned her but slender thanks.

In the mean while, Catherine continued to place upon the table the slender preparations for the meal of a recluse, which consisted almost entirely of colewort, boiled, and served up in a wooden platter, having no better seasoning than a little salt, and no better accompaniment than some coarse barley-bread in very moderate quantity. The water-pitcher already mentioned furnished the only beverage. After a Latin grace, delivered by the abbess, the guests sat down to their spare entertainment. The simplicity of the fare appeared to produce no distaste in the females, who ate of it moderately, but with the usual appearance of appetite. But Roland Græme had been used to better cheer. Sir Halbert Glendin-

ning, who affected even an unusual degree of nobleness in his housekeeping, maintained it in a style of genial hospitality which rivaled that of the northern barons of England. He might think, perhaps, that by doing so he acted yet more completely the part for which he was born—that of a great baron and a leader. Two bullocks and six sheep weekly were the allowance when the baron was at home, and the number was not greatly diminished during his absence. A boll of malt was weekly brewed into ale, which was used by the household at discretion. Bread was baked in proportion for the consumption of his domestics and retainers; and in this scene of plenty had Roland Græme now lived for several years. It formed a bad introduction to lukewarm greens and spring water; and probably his countenance indicated some sense of the difference, for the abbess observed, “It would seem, my son, that the tables of the heretic baron, whom you have so long followed, are more daintily furnished than those of the suffering daughters of the church; and yet, not upon the most solemn nights of festival, when the nuns were permitted to eat their portion at mine own table, did I consider the cates which were then served up as half so delicious as these vegetables and this water, on which I prefer to feed, rather than do aught which may derogate from the strictness of my vow. It shall never be said that the mistress of this house made it a house of feasting when days of darkness and of affliction were hanging over the Holy Church, of which I am an unworthy member.”

“Well hast thou said, my sister,” replied Magdalen Græme; “but now it is not only time to suffer in the good cause, but to act in it. And since our pilgrim’s meal is finished, let us go apart to prepare for our journey of tomorrow, and to advise on the manner in which these children shall be employed, and what measures we can adopt to supply their thoughtlessness and lack of discretion.”

Notwithstanding his indifferent cheer, the heart of Roland Græme bounded high at this proposal, which he doubted not would lead to another *tête-à-tête* betwixt him and the pretty novice. But he was mistaken. Catherine, it would seem, had no mind so far to indulge him; for, moved either by delicacy or caprice, or some of those indescribable shades betwixt the one or the other with which women love to tease, and at the same time to captivate, the ruder sex, she reminded the abbess that it was necessary she should retire for an hour before vespers; and, receiving the ready and approving nod of her superior, she arose to withdraw. But,

before leaving the apartment, she made obeisance to the matrons, bending herself till her hands touched her knees, and then made a lesser reverence to Roland, which consisted in a slight bend of the body and gentle depression of the head. This she performed very demurely; but the party on whom the salutation was conferred thought he could discern in her manner an arch and mischievous exultation over his secret disappointment. "The devil take the saucy girl," he thought in his heart, though the presence of the abbess should have repressed all such profane imaginations, "she is as hard-hearted as the laughing hyæna that the story-books tell of; she has a mind that I shall not forget her this night at least."

The matrons now retired also, giving the page to understand that he was on no account to stir from the convent, or to show himself at the windows, the abbess assigning as a reason the readiness with which the rude heretics caught at every occasion of scandalizing the religious orders.

"This is worse than the rigor of Mr. Henry Warden himself," said the page, when he was left alone; "for, to do him justice, however strict in requiring the most rigid attention during the time of his homilies, he left us to the freedom of our own wills afterwards; ay, and would take a share in our pastimes, too, if he thought them entirely innocent. But these old women are utterly wrapt up in gloom, mystery, and self-denial. Well, then, if I must neither stir out of the gate nor look out at window, I will at least see what the inside of the house contains that may help to pass away one's time; peradventure I may light on that blue-eyed laugher in some corner or other."

Going, therefore, out of the chamber by the entrance opposite to that through which the two matrons had departed (for it may be readily supposed that he had no desire to intrude on *their* privacy), he wandered from one chamber to another, through the deserted edifice, seeking with boyish eagerness some source of interest or amusement. Here he passed through a long gallery, opening on either hand into the little cells of the nuns, all deserted, and deprived of the few trifling articles of furniture which the rules of the order admitted.

"The birds are flown," thought the page; "but whether they will find themselves worse off in the open air than in these damp narrow cages, I leave my lady abbess and my venerable relative to settle betwixt them. I think the wild young lark whom they have left behind them would like best to sing under God's free sky."

A winding stair, strait and narrow, as if to remind the nuns of their duties of fast and maceration, led down to a lower suite of apartments, which occupied the ground story of the house. These rooms were even more ruinous than those which he had left; for, having encountered the first fury of the assailants by whom the nunnery had been wasted, the windows had been dashed in, the doors broken down, and even the partitions betwixt the apartments in some places destroyed. As he thus stalked from desolation to desolation, and began to think of returning from so uninteresting a research to the chamber which he had left, he was surprised to hear the low of a cow very close to him. The sound was so unexpected at the time and place that Roland Græme started as if it had been the voice of a lion, and laid his hand on his dagger, while at the same moment the light and lovely form of Catherine Seyton presented itself at the door of the apartment from which the sound had issued.

"Good even to you, valiant champion!" said she; "since the days of Guy of Warwick, never was one more worthy to encounter a dun cow."

"Cow!" said Roland Græme, "by my faith, I thought it had been the devil that roared so near me. Who ever heard of a convent containing a cow-house?"

"Cow and calf may come hither now," answered Catherine, "for we have no means to keep out either. But I advise you, kind sir, to return to the place from whence you came."

"Not till I see your charge, fair sister," answered Ronald, and made his way into the apartment, in spite of the half-serious, half-laughing remonstrances of the girl.

The poor solitary cow, now the only severe recluse within the nunnery, was quartered in a spacious chamber, which had once been the refectory of the convent. The roof was graced with groined arches, and the wall with niches, from which the images had been pulled down. These remnants of architectural ornaments were strangely contrasted with the rude crib constructed for the cow in one corner of the apartment, and the stack of fodder which was piled beside it for her food.*

"By my faith," said the page, "Crombie is more lordly lodged than any one here!"

"You had best remain with her," said Catherine, "and supply by your filial attentions the offspring she has had the ill-luck to lose."

* See Nunnery of St. Bridget. Note 5.

“I will remain, at least, to help you to prepare her night’s lair, pretty Catherine,” said Ronald, seizing upon a pitchfork.

“By no means,” said Catherine; “for, besides that you know not in the least how to do her that service, you will bring a chiding my way, and I get enough of that in the regular course of things.”

“What! for accepting my assistance?” said the page—“for accepting *my* assistance, who am to be your confederate in some deep matter of import? That were altogether unreasonable; and, now I think on it, tell me, if you can, what is this mighty emprise to which I am destined?”

“Robbing a bird’s nest, I should suppose,” said Catherine, “considering the champion whom they have selected.”

“By my faith,” said the youth, “and he that has taken a falcon’s nest in the scaurs of Polmoodie has done something to brag of, my fair sister. But that is all over now: a murrain on the nest, and the eyases and their food, washed or unwashed, for it was all anon of cramming these worthless kites that I was sent upon my present travels. Save that I have met with you, pretty sister, I could eat my dagger-hilt for vexation at my own folly. But, as we are to be fellow-travelers——”

“Fellow-laborers, not fellow-travelers,” answered the girl; “for to your comfort be it known, that the lady abbess and I set out earlier than you and your respected relative to-morrow, and that I partly endure your company at present because it may be long ere we meet again.”

“By St. Andrew, but it shall not, though,” answered Roland; “I will not hunt at all unless we are to hunt in couples.”

“I suspect, in that and in other points, we must do as we are bid,” replied the young lady. “But hark! I hear my aunt’s voice.”

The old lady entered in good earnest, and darted a severe glance at her niece, while Roland had the ready wit to busy himself about the halter of the cow.

“The young gentleman,” said Catherine, gravely, “is helping me to tie the cow up faster to her stake, for I find that last night, when she put her head out of window and lowed, she alarmed the whole village; and we shall be suspected of sorcery among the heretics if they do not discover the cause of the apparition, or lose our cow if they do.”

“Relieve yourself of that fear,” said the abbess, somewhat ironically; “the person to whom she is now sold comes for the animal presently.”

“ Good night, then, my poor companion,” said Catherine, patting the animal’s shoulders ; “ I hope thou hast fallen into kind hands, for my happiest hours of late have been spent in tending thee. I would I had been born to no better task !”

“ Now, out upon thee, mean-spirited wench !” said the abbess ; “ is that a speech worthy of the name of Seyton, or of the mouth of a sister of this house, treading the path of election ; and to be spoken before a stranger youth, too ! Go to my oratory, minion ; there read your *Hours* till I come thither, when I will read you such a lecture as shall make you prize the blessings which you possess.”

Catherine was about to withdraw in silence, casting a half-sorrowful, half-comic glance at Roland Græme, which seemed to say, “ You see to what your untimely visit has exposed me,” when, suddenly changing her mind, she came forward to the page, and extended her hand as she bid him good evening. Their palms had pressed each other ere the astonished matron could interfere, and Catherine had time to say, “ Forgive me, mother ; it is long since we have seen a face that looked with kindness on us. Since these disorders have broken up our peaceful retreat all has been gloom and malignity. I bid this youth kindly farewell, because he has come hither in kindness, and because the odds are great that we may never again meet in this world. I guess better than he that the schemes on which you are rushing are too mighty for your management, and that you are now setting the stone a-rolling which must surely crush you in its descent. I bid farewell,” she added, “ to my fellow-victim !”

This was spoken with a tone of deep and serious feeling, altogether different from the usual levity of Catherine’s manner, and plainly showed that, beneath the giddiness of extreme youth and total inexperience, there lurked in her bosom a deeper power of sense and feeling than her conduct had hitherto expressed.

The abbess remained a moment silent after she had left the room. The proposed rebuke died on her tongue, and she appeared struck with the deep and foreboding tone in which her niece had spoken her good even. She led the way in silence to the apartment which they had formerly occupied, and where there was prepared a small refection, as the abbess termed it, consisting of milk and barley-bread. Magdalen Græme, summoned to take share in this collation, appeared from an adjoining apartment ; but Catherine was seen no more. There was little said during the hasty meal, and **after it was finished** Roland Græme was dismissed to the

nearest cell, where some preparations had been made for his repose.

The strange circumstances in which he found himself had their usual effect in preventing slumber from hastily descending on him, and he could distinctly hear, by a low but earnest murmuring in the apartment which he had left, that the matrons continued in deep consultation to a late hour. As they separated, he heard the abbess distinctly express herself thus: "In a word, my sister, I venerate your character and the authority with which my superiors have invested you; yet it seems to me that, ere entering on this perilous course, we should consult some of the fathers of the church."

"And how and where are we to find a faithful bishop or abbot at whom to ask counsel? The faithful Eustatius is no more: he is withdrawn from a world of evil, and from the tyranny of heretics. May Heaven and Our Lady assoilzie him of his sins, and abridge the penance of his mortal infirmities! Where shall we find another with whom to take counsel?"

"Heaven will provide for the church," said the abbess; "and the faithful fathers who yet are suffered to remain in the house of Kennaquhair will proceed to elect an abbot. They will not suffer the staff to fall down, or the miter to be unfilled, for the threats of heresy."

"That will I learn to-morrow," said Magdalen Græme; "yet who now takes the office of an hour, save to partake with the spoilers in their work of plunder? To-morrow will tell us if one of the thousand saints who are sprung from the house of St. Mary's continues to look down on it in its misery. Farewell, my sister, we meet at Edinburgh."

"*Benedicite!*" answered the abbess, and they parted.

"To Kennaquhair and to Edinburgh we bend our way," thought Roland Græme. "That information have I purchased by a sleepless hour: it suits well with my purpose. At Kennaquhair I shall see Father Ambrose; at Edinburgh I shall find the means of shaping my own course through this bustling world, without burdening my affectionate relation; at Edinburgh, too, I shall see again the witching novice, with her blue eyes and her provoking smile." He fell asleep, and it was to dream of Catherine Seyton.

CHAPTER XIII

What, Dagon up again ! I thought we had hurl'd him
Down on the threshold never to rise.
Bring wedge and ax ; and, neighbors, lend your hands,
And rive the idol into winter fagots !
Athelstane, or the Converted Dane.

ROLAND GREME slept long and sound, and the sun was high over the horizon when the voice of his companion summoned him to resume their pilgrimage ; and when, hastily arranging his dress, he went to attend her call, the enthusiastic matron stood already at the threshold, prepared for her journey. There was in all the deportment of this remarkable woman a promptitude of execution, and a sternness of perseverance, founded on the fanaticism which she nursed so deeply, and which seemed to absorb all the ordinary purposes and feelings of mortality. One only human affection gleamed through her enthusiastic energies, like the broken glimpses of the sun through the rising clouds of a storm. It was her maternal fondness for her grandson—a fondness carried almost to the verge of dotage in circumstances where the Catholic religion was not concerned, but which gave way instantly when it chanced either to thwart or come in contact with the more settled purpose of her soul, and the more devoted duty of her life. Her life she would willingly have laid down to save the earthly object of her affection ; but that object itself she was ready to hazard, and would have been willing to sacrifice, could the restoration of the Church of Rome have been purchased with his blood. Her discourse by the way, excepting on the few occasions in which her extreme love of her grandson found opportunity to display itself in anxiety for his health and accommodation, turned entirely on the duty of raising up the fallen honors of the church, and replacing a Catholic sovereign on the throne. There were times at which she hinted, though very obscurely and distantly, that she herself was foredoomed by Heaven to perform a part in this important task ; and that she had more than mere human warranty for the zeal with which she engaged in it. But on this subject she expressed herself in such general language that it was not easy to

decide whether she made any actual pretensions to a direct and supernatural call, like the celebrated Elizabeth Barton, commonly called the Nun of Kent;* or whether she only dwelt upon the general duty which was incumbent on all Catholics of the time, and the pressure of which she felt in an extraordinary degree.

Yet, though Magdalen Græme gave no direct intimation of her pretensions to be considered as something beyond the ordinary class of mortals, the demeanor of one or two persons amongst the travelers whom they occasionally met, as they entered the more fertile and populous part of the valley, seemed to indicate their belief in her superior attributes. It is true that two clowns, who drove before them a herd of cattle; one or two village wenches, who seemed bound for some merry-making; a strolling soldier, in a rusted morion; and a wandering student, as his threadbare black cloak and his satchel of books proclaimed him, passed our travelers without observation, or with a look of contempt; and, moreover, that two or three children, attracted by the appearance of a dress so nearly resembling that of a pilgrim, joined in hooting and calling, "Out upon the old mass-monger!" But one or two, who nourished in their bosoms respect for the downfallen hierarchy, casting first a timorous glance around, to see that no one observed them, hastily crossed themselves, bent their knee to Sister Magdalen, by which name they saluted her, kissed her hand, or even the hem of her dalmatique, received with humility the *benedicite* with which she repaid their obeisance; and then, starting up, and again looking timidly round to see that they had been unobserved, hastily resumed their journey. Even while within sight of persons of the prevailing faith, there were individuals bold enough, by folding their arms and bending their head, to give distant and silent intimation that they recognized Sister Magdalen, and honored alike her person and her purpose.

She failed not to notice to her grandson these marks of honor and respect which from time to time she received. "You see," she said, "my son, that the enemies have been unable altogether to suppress the good spirit, or to root out the true seed. Amid heretics and schismatics, spoilers of the church's lands, and scoffers at sacraments, there is left a remnant."

"It is true, my mother," said Roland Græme; "but methinks they are of a quality which can help us but little.

* See Note 6.

See you not all those who wear steel at their side, and bear marks of better quality, ruffle past us as they would pass the meanest beggars? for those who give us any marks of sympathy are the poorest of the poor, and most outcast of the needy, who have neither bread to share with us, nor swords to defend us, nor skill to use them if they had. That poor wretch that last kneeled to you with such deep devotion, and who seemed emaciated by the touch of some wasting disease within, and the grasp of poverty without—that pale, shivering, miserable caitiff, how can he aid the great schemes you meditate?”

“Much, my son,” said the matron, with more mildness than the page perhaps expected. “When that pious son of the church returns from the shrine of St. Ringan, whither he now travels by my counsel, and by the aid of good Catholics—when he returns healed of his wasting malady, high in health and strong in limb, will not the glory of his faithfulness, and its miraculous reward, speak louder in the ears of this besotted people of Scotland than the din which is weekly made in a thousand heretical pulpits?”

“Ay, but, mother, I fear the saint’s hand is out. It is long since we have heard of a miracle performed at St. Ringan’s.”

The matron made a dead pause, and, with a voice tremulous with emotion, asked, “Art thou so unhappy as to doubt the power of the blessed saint?”

“Nay, mother,” the youth hastened to reply, “I believe as the Holy Church commands, and doubt not St. Ringan’s power of healing; but, be it said with reverence, he hath not of late showed the inclination.”

“And has this land deserved it?” said the Catholic matron, advancing hastily while she spoke, until she attained the summit of a rising ground, over which the path led, and then standing again still. “Here,” she said, “stood the cross, the limits of the halidome of St. Mary’s—here, on this eminence, from which the eye of the holy pilgrim might first catch a view of that ancient monastery, the light of the land, the abode of saints, and the grave of monarchs. Where is now that emblem of our faith? It lies on the earth a shapeless block, from which the broken fragments have been carried off, for the meanest uses, till now no semblance of its original form remains. Look towards the east, my son, where the sun was wont to glitter on stately spires, from which crosses and bells have now been hurled, as if the land had been invaded once more by barbarous heathens—look at

yonder battlements, of which we can, even at this distance, descry the partial demolition ; and ask if this land can expect from the blessed saints, whose shrines and whose images have been profaned, any other miracles but those of vengeance ? How long," she exclaimed, looking upward—"how long shall it be delayed ?" She paused, and then resumed with enthusiastic rapidity, "Yes, my son, all on earth is but for a period : joy and grief, triumph and desolation, succeed each other like cloud and sunshine ; the vineyard shall not be forever trodden down, the gaps shall be amended, and the fruitful branches once more dressed and trimmed. Even this day—ay, even this hour, I trust to hear news of importance. Dally not—let us on ; time is brief, and judgment is certain."

She resumed the path which led to the abbey—a path which, in ancient times, was carefully marked out by posts and rails, to assist the pilgrim in his journey ; these were now torn up and destroyed. An half-hour's walk placed them in front of the once splendid monastery, which, although the church was as yet entire, had not escaped the fury of the times. The long range of cells and of apartments for the use of the brethren, which occupied two sides of the great square, were almost entirely ruinous, the interior having been consumed by fire, which only the massive architecture of the outward walls had enabled them to resist. The abbot's house, which formed the third side of the square, was, though injured, still inhabited, and afforded refuge to the few brethren who yet, rather by connivance than by actual authority, were permitted to remain at Kennaquhair. Their stately offices, their pleasant gardens, the magnificent cloisters constructed for their recreation, were all dilapidated and ruinous ; and some of the building materials had apparently been put into requisition by persons in the village and in the vicinity, who, formerly vassals of the monastery, had not hesitated to appropriate to themselves a part of the spoils. Roland saw fragments of Gothic pillars, richly carved, occupying the place of door-posts to the meanest huts ; and here and there a mutilated statue, inverted or laid on its side, made the door-post or threshold of a wretched cow-house. The church itself was less injured than the other buildings of the monastery. But the images which had been placed in the numerous niches of its columns and buttresses, having all fallen under the charge of idolatry, to which the superstitious devotion of the Papists had justly exposed them, had been broken and thrown down, without

much regard to the preservation of the rich and airy canopies and pedestals on which they were placed ; nor, if the devastation had stopped short at this point, could we have considered the preservation of these monuments of antiquity as an object to be put in the balance with the introduction of the Reformed worship.

Our pilgrims saw the demolition of these sacred and venerable representations of saints and angels—for as sacred and venerable they had been taught to consider them—with very different feelings. The antiquary may be permitted to regret the necessity of the action, but to Magdalen Græme it seemed a deed of impiety, deserving the instant vengeance of Heaven—a sentiment in which her relative joined for the moment as cordially as herself. Neither, however, gave vent to their feelings in words, and uplifted hands and eyes formed their only mode of expressing them. The page was about to approach the great eastern gate of the church, but was prevented by his guide. “That gate,” she said, “has long been blockaded, that the heretical rabble may not know there still exist among the brethren of St. Mary’s men who dare worship where their predecessors prayed while alive, and were interred when dead ; follow me this way, my son.”

Roland Græme followed accordingly ; and Magdalen, casting a hasty glance to see whether they were observed (for she had learned caution from the danger of the times), commanded her grandson to knock at a little wicket which she pointed out to him. “But knock gently,” she added, with a motion expressive of caution. After a little space, during which no answer was returned, she signed to Roland to repeat his summons for admission ; and the door at length partially opening, discovered a glimpse of the thin and timid porter, by whom the duty was performed, skulking from the observation of those who stood without, but endeavoring at the same time to gain a sight of them without being himself seen. How different from the proud consciousness of dignity with which the porter of ancient days offered his important brow and his goodly person to the pilgrims who repaired to Kennaquhair ! His solemn “*Intrate, mei filii,*” was exchanged for a tremulous “You cannot enter now : the brethren are in their chambers.” But when Magdalen Græme asked, in an under tone of voice, “Hast thou forgotten me, my brother ?” he changed his apologetic refusal to “Enter, my honored sister—enter speedily, for evil eyes are upon us.”

They entered accordingly, and having waited until the porter had, with jealous haste, barred and bolted the wicket were conducted by him through several dark and winding passages. As they walked slowly on, he spoke to the matron in a subdued voice, as if he feared to trust the very walls with the avowal which he communicated.

“Our fathers are assembled in the chapter-house, worthy sister—yes, in the chapter-house—for the election of an abbot. Ah, *benedicite!* there must be no ringing of bells—no high mass—no opening of the great gates now, that the people might see and venerate their spiritual father! Our fathers must hide themselves rather like robbers who choose a leader than godly priests who elect a mitred abbot.”

“Regard not that, my brother,” answered Magdalen Græme; “the first successors of St. Peter himself were elected, not in sunshine, but in tempest; not in the halls of the Vatican, but in the subterranean vaults and dungeons of heathen Rome; they were not gratulated with shouts and salvos of cannon-shot and of musketry, and the display of artificial fire—no, my brother, but by the hoarse summons of lictors and prætors, who came to drag the fathers of the church to martyrdom. From such adversity was the church once raised, and by such will it now be purified. And mark me, brother! not in the proudest days of the mitred abbey was a superior ever chosen whom his office shall so much honor as *he* shall be honored who now takes it upon him in these days of tribulation. On whom, my brother, will the choice fall?”

“On whom can it fall—or, alas! who would dare to reply to the call—save the worthy pupil of the sainted Eustatius, the good and valiant Father Ambrose?”

“I know it,” said Magdalen; “my heart told me, long ere your lips had uttered his name. Stand forth, courageous champion, and man the fatal breach! Rise, bold and experienced pilot, and seize the helm while the tempest rages! Turn back the battle, brave raiser of the fallen standard! Wield crook and sling, noble shepherd of a scattered flock.”

“I pray you, hush, my sister!” said the porter, opening a door which led into the great church, “the brethren will be presently here to celebrate their election with a solemn mass; I must marshal them the way to the high altar: all the offices of this venerable house have now devolved on one poor decrepit old man.”

He left the church, and Magdalen and Roland remained

alone in that great vaulted space, whose style of rich yet chaste architecture referred its origin to the early part of the 14th century, the best period of Gothic building. But the niches were stripped of their images in the inside as well as the outside of the church; and in the pell-mell havoc the tombs of warriors and of princes had been included in the demolition of the idolatrous shrines. Lances and swords of antique size, which had hung over the tombs of mighty warriors of former days, lay now strewn among relics with which the devotion of pilgrims had graced those of their peculiar saints; and the fragments of the knights and dames, which had once lain recumbent, or kneeled in an attitude of devotion, where their mortal relics were reposed, were mingled with those of the saints and angels of the Gothic chisel which the hand of violence had sent headlong from their stations.

The most fatal symptom of the whole appeared to be that, though this violence had now been committed for many months, the fathers had lost so totally all heart and resolution that they had not adventured even upon clearing away the rubbish, or restoring the church to some decent degree of order. This might have been done without much labor. But terror had overpowered the scanty remains of a body once so powerful, and, sensible they were only suffered to remain in this ancient seat by connivance and from compassion, they did not venture upon taking any step which might be construed into an assertion of their ancient rights, contenting themselves with the secret and obscure exercise of their religious ceremonial, in as unostentatious a manner as was possible.

Two or three of the more aged brethren had sunk under the pressure of the times, and the ruins had been partly cleared away to permit their interment. One stone had been laid over Father Nicolas, which recorded of him in special that he had taken the vows during the incumbency of Abbot Ingelram, the period to which his memory so frequently recurred. Another flagstone, yet more recently deposited, covered the body of Philip the sacristan, eminent for his aquatic excursion with the phantom of Avenel; and a third, the most recent of all, bore the outline of a miter, and the words *Hic jacet Eustatius Abbas*; for no one dared to add a word of commendation in favor of his learning and strenuous zeal for the Roman Catholic faith.

Magdalen Græme looked at and perused the brief records of these monuments successively, and paused over that of

Father Eustace. "In a good hour for thyself," she said, "but oh! in an evil hour for the church, wert thou called from us. Let thy spirit be with us, holy man; encourage thy successor to tread in thy footsteps; give him thy bold and inventive capacity, thy zeal, and thy discretion; even *thy* piety exceeds not his." As she spoke, a side door, which closed a passage from the abbot's house into the church, was thrown open, that the fathers might enter the choir, and conduct to the high altar the superior whom they had elected.

In former times, this was one of the most splendid of the many pageants which the hierarchy of Rome had devised to attract the veneration of the faithful. The period during which the abbacy remained vacant was a state of mourning, or, as their emblematical phrase expressed it, of widowhood—a melancholy term, which was changed into rejoicing and triumph when a new superior was chosen. When the folding doors were on such solemn occasions thrown open, and the new abbot appeared on the threshold in full-blown dignity, with ring and miter, and dalmatique and crosier, his hoary standard-bearers and his juvenile dispensers of incense-preceding him, and the venerable train of monks behind him, with all besides which could announce the supreme authority to which he was now raised, his appearance was a signal for the magnificent *Jubilate* to rise from the organ and music-loft, and to be joined by the corresponding bursts of *Alleluiah* from the whole assembled congregation. Now all was changed. In the midst of rubbish and desolation, seven or eight old men, bent and shaken, as much by grief and fear as by age, shrouded hastily in the proscribed dress of their order, wandered like a procession of specters from the door which had been thrown open, up through the encumbered passage to the high altar, there to install their elected superior a chief of ruins. It was like a band of bewildered travelers choosing a chief in the wilderness of Arabia; or a shipwrecked crew electing a captain upon the barren island on which fate has thrown them.

They who, in peaceful times, are most ambitious of authority among others, shrink from the competition at such eventful periods, when neither ease nor parade attend the possession of it, and when it gives only a painful pre-eminence both in danger and in labor, and exposes the ill-fated chieftain to the murmurs of his discontented associates, as well as to the first assault of the common enemy. But he on whom the offices of the Abbot of St. Mary's was now

conferred had a mind fitted for the situation to which he was called. Bold and enthusiastic, yet generous and forgiving; wise and skilful, yet zealous and prompt, he wanted but a better cause than the support of a decaying superstition to have raised him to the rank of a truly great man. But as the end crowns the work, it also forms the rule by which it must be ultimately judged; and those who, with sincerity and generosity, fight and fall in an evil cause, posterity can only compassionate as victims of a generous but fatal error. Amongst these we must rank Ambrosius, the last abbot of Kennaquhair, whose designs must be condemned, as their success would have riveted on Scotland the chains of antiquated superstition and spiritual tyranny; but whose talents commanded respect, and whose virtues, even from the enemies of his faith, extorted esteem.

The bearing of the new abbot served of itself to dignify a ceremonial which was deprived of all other attributes of grandeur. Conscious of the peril in which they stood, and recalling, doubtless, the better days they had seen, there hung over his brethren an appearance of mingled terror, and grief, and shame, which induced them to hurry over the office in which they were engaged, as something at once degrading and dangerous.

But not so Father Ambrose. His features, indeed, expressed a deep melancholy, as he walked up the center aisle, amid the ruin of things which he considered as holy, but his brow was undejected, and his step firm and solemn. He seemed to think that the dominion which he was about to receive depended in no sort upon the external circumstances under which it was conferred; and if a mind so firm was accessible to sorrow or fear, it was not on his own account, but on that of the church to which he had devoted himself.

At length he stood on the broken steps of the high altar, barefooted, as was the rule, and holding in his hand his pastoral staff, for the gemmed ring and jeweled miter had become secular spoils. No obedient vassals came, man after man, to make their homage and to offer the tribute which should provide their spiritual superior with palfrey and trappings. No bishop assisted at the solemnity, to receive into the higher ranks of the church nobility a dignitary whose voice in the legislature was as potential as his own. With hasty and maimed rites, the few remaining brethren stepped forward alternately to give their new abbot the kiss of peace, in token of fraternal affection and spiritual homage. Mass was then hastily performed, but in such precipitation

as if it had been hurried over rather to satisfy the scruples of a few youths, who were impatient to set out on a hunting party,* than as if it made the most solemn part of a solemn ordination. The officiating priest faltered as he spoke the service, and often looked around, as if he expected to be interrupted in the midst of his office; and the brethren listened as to that which, short as it was, they wished yet more abridged.

These symptoms of alarm increased as the ceremony proceeded, and, as it seemed, were not caused by mere apprehension alone; for, amid the pauses of the hymn, there were heard without sounds of a very different sort, beginning faintly and at a distance, but at length approaching close to the exterior of the church, and stunning with dissonant clamor those engaged in the service. The winding of horns, blown with no regard to harmony or concert; the jangling of bells, the thumping of drums, the squeaking of bagpipes, and the clash of cymbals; the shouts of a multitude, now as in laughter, now as in anger; the shrill tones of female voices, and of those of children, mingling with the deeper clamors of men, formed a Babel of sounds, which first drowned, and then awed into utter silence, the official hymns of the convent. The cause and result of this extraordinary interruption will be explained in the next chapter.

*See Hunting Mass. Note 7.

CHAPTER XIV

Not the wild billow, when it breaks its barrier,
Not the wild wind, escaping from its cavern,
Not the wild fiend, that mingles both together,
And pours their rage upon the ripening harvest,
Can match the wild freaks of this mirthful meeting—
Comic, yet fearful; droll, and yet destructive.

The Conspiracy.

THE monks ceased their song, which, like that of the choristers in the legend of the Witch of Berkley, died away in a quaver of consternation; and like a flock of chickens disturbed by the presence of the kite, they at first made a movement to disperse and fly in different directions, and then, with despair rather than hope, huddled themselves around their new abbot; who, retaining the lofty and undismayed look which had dignified him through the whole ceremony, stood on the higher step of the altar, as if desirous to be the most conspicuous mark on which danger might discharge itself, and to save his companions by his self-devotion, since he could afford them no other protection.

Involuntarily, as it were, Magdalen Græme and the page stepped from the station which hitherto they had occupied unnoticed, and approached to the altar, as desirous of sharing the fate which approached the monks, whatever that might be. Both bowed reverently low to the abbot; and while Magdalen seemed about to speak, the youth, looking towards the main entrance, at which the noise now roared most loudly, and which was at the same time assailed with much knocking, laid his hand upon his dagger.

The abbot motioned to both to forbear. "Peace, my sister," he said, in a low tone, but which, being in a different key from the tumultuary sounds without, could be distinctly heard even amidst the tumult—"peace," he said, "my sister; let the new superior of St. Mary's himself receive and reply to the grateful acclamations of the vassals who come to celebrate his installation. And thou, my son, forbear, I charge thee, to touch thy earthly weapon: if it is

the pleasure of our protectress that her shrine be this day desecrated by deeds of violence, and polluted by blood-shedding, let it not, I charge thee, happen through the deed of a Catholic son of the church."

The noise and knocking at the outer gate became now every moment louder, and voices were heard impatiently demanding admittance. The abbot, with dignity, and with a step which even the emergency of danger rendered neither faltering nor precipitate, moved towards the portal, and demanded to know, in a tone of authority, who it was that disturbed their worship, and what they desired."

There was a moment's silence, and then a loud laugh from without. At length a voice replied, "We desire entrance into the church; and when the door is opened you will soon see who we are."

"By whose authority do you require entrance?" said the father.

"By authority of the right reverend Lord Abbot of Unreason," * replied the voice from without; and, from the laugh which followed, it seemed as if there was something highly ludicrous crouched under this reply.

"I know not, and seek not to know, your meaning," replied the abbot, "since it is probably a rude one. But be gone, in the name of God, and leave His servants in peace. I speak this as having lawful authority to command here."

"Open the door," said another rude voice, "and we will try titles with you, sir monk, and show you a superior we must all obey."

"Break open the doors if he dallies any longer," said a third, "and down with the carrion monks who would bar us of our privilege! A general shout followed. Ay, ay, our privilege!—our privilege! Down with the doors, and with the lurdane monks if they make opposition!"

The knocking was now exchanged for blows with great hammers, to which the doors, strong as they were, must soon have given way. But the abbot, who saw resistance would be vain, and who did not wish to incense the assailants by an attempt at offering it, besought silence earnestly, and with difficulty obtained a hearing. "My children," said he, "I will save you from committing a great sin. The porter will presently undo the gate—he is gone to fetch the keys; meantime I pray you to consider with yourselves if you are in a state of mind to cross the holy threshold."

"Tillyvalley for your Papistry!" was answered from with-

* See Note 8.



“The appearance of the crowd was grotesque in the extreme.”

TO THE
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out; "we are in the mood of the monks when they are merriest, and that is when they sup beef-brewis for lenten-kail. So, if your porter hath not the gout, let him come speedily, or we heave away readily. Said I well, comrades?"

"Bravely said, and it shall be as bravely done," said the multitude; and had not the keys arrived at that moment, and the porter in hasty terror performed his office, throwing open the great door, the populace would have saved him the trouble. The instant he had done so, the affrighted janitor fled, like one who has drawn the bolts of a flood-gate, and expects to be overwhelmed by the rushing inundation. The monks, with one consent, had withdrawn themselves behind the abbot, who alone kept his station, about three yards from the entrance, showing no signs of fear or perturbation. His brethren, partly encouraged by his devotion, partly ashamed to desert him, and partly animated by a sense of duty, remained huddled close together at the back of their superior. There was a loud laugh and huzza when the doors were opened; but, contrary to what might have been expected, no crowd of enraged assailants rushed into the church. On the contrary, there was a cry of "A halt!—a halt! to order, my masters! and let the two reverend fathers greet each other, as beseems them."

The appearance of the crowd who were thus called to order was grotesque in the extreme. It was composed of men, women, and children, ludicrously disguised in various habits, and presenting groups equally diversified and grotesque. Here one fellow with a horse's head painted before him, and a tail behind, and the whole covered with a long foot-cloth, which was supposed to hide the body of the animal, ambled, caracoled, pranced, and plunged, as he performed the celebrated part of the hobby-horse,* so often alluded to in our ancient drama, and which still flourishes on the stage in the battle that concludes Bayes's tragedy. To rival the address and agility displayed by this character, another personage advanced, in the more formidable character of a huge dragon, with gilded wings, open jaws, and a scarlet tongue, cloven at the end, which made various efforts to overtake and devour a lad, dressed as the lovely Sabæa, daughter of the King of Egypt, who fled before him; while a martial St. George, grotesquely armed with a goblet for a helmet and a spit for a lance, ever and anon interfered, and compelled the monster to relinquish his prey. A bear, a wolf, and one or two other wild animals, played their parts with the discretion of

* See Note 9.

Snug the joiner ; for the decided preference which they gave to the use of their hind legs was sufficient, without any formal annunciation, to assure the most timorous spectators that they had to do with habitual bipeds. There was a group of outlaws, with Robin Hood and Little John at their head*—the best representation exhibited at the time ; and no great wonder, since most of the actors were, by profession, the banished men and thieves whom they presented. Other masqueraders there were, of a less marked description. Men were disguised as women, and women as men ; children wore the dress of aged people, and tottered with crutch-sticks in their hands, furred gowns on their little backs, and caps on their round heads ; while grandsires assumed the infantine tone as well as the dress of children. Besides these, many had their faces painted, and wore their shirts over the rest of their dress ; while colored pasteboard and ribbons furnished out decorations for others. Those who wanted all these properties, blacked their faces, and turned their jackets inside out ; and thus the transmutation of the whole assembly into a set of mad grotesque mummers was at once completed.

The pause which the masqueraders made, waiting apparently for some person of the highest authority amongst them, gave those within the abbey church full time to observe all these absurdities. They were at no loss to comprehend their purpose and meaning.

Few readers can be ignorant that, at an early period, and during the plenitude of her power, the Church of Rome not only connived at, but even encouraged, such saturnalian licenses as the inhabitants of Kennaquhair and the neighborhood had now in hand, and that the vulgar, on such occasions, were not only permitted but encouraged, by a number of gambols, sometimes puerile and ludicrous, sometimes immoral and profane, to indemnify themselves for the privations and penances imposed on them at other seasons. But, of all other topics for burlesque and ridicule, the rites and ceremonial of the church itself were most frequently resorted to ; and, strange to say, with the approbation of the clergy themselves.

While the hierarchy flourished in full glory, they do not appear to have dreaded the consequences of suffering the people to become so irreverently familiar with things sacred : they then imagined the laity to be much in the condition of a laborer's horse, which does not submit to the bridle and

* See Note 10.

the whip with greater reluctance because, at rare intervals, he is allowed to frolic at large in his pasture, and fling out his heels in clumsy gambols at the master who usually drives him. But, when times changed—when doubt of the Roman Catholic doctrine, and hatred of their priesthood, had possessed the Reformed party—the clergy discovered, too late, that no small inconvenience arose from the established practise of games and merry-makings, in which they themselves, and all they held most sacred, were made the subject of ridicule. It then became obvious to duller politicians than the Romish churchmen, that the same actions have a very different tendency when done in the spirit of sarcastic insolence and hatred, than when acted merely in exuberance of rude and uncontrollable spirits. They, therefore, though of the latest, endeavored, where they had any remaining influence, to discourage the renewal of these indecorous festivities. In this particular, the Catholic clergy were joined by most of the Reformed preachers, who were more shocked at the profanity and immorality of many of these exhibitions than disposed to profit by the ridiculous light in which they placed the Church of Rome and her observances. But it was long ere these scandalous and immoral sports could be abrogated: the rude multitude continued attached to their favorite pastimes; and, both in England and Scotland, the miter of the Catholic, the rocket of the Reformed bishop, and the cloak and band of the Calvinistic divine, were, in turn, compelled to give place to those jocular personages, the Pope of Fools, the Boy Bishop, and the Abbot of Unreason.*

It was the latter personage who now, in full costume, made his approach to the great door of the church of St. Mary's, accoutered in such a manner as to form a caricature, or practical parody, on the costume and attendants of the real superior, whom he came to beard on the very day of his installation, in the presence of his clergy, and in the chancel of his church. The mock dignitary was a stout-made, under-sized fellow, whose thick squab form had been rendered grotesque by a supplemental paunch, well stuffed. He wore a miter of leather, with the front like a grenadier's cap, adorned with mock embroidery and trinkets of tin. This surmounted a visage the nose of which was the most prominent feature, being of unusual size, and at least as richly gemmed as his head-gear. His robe was of buckram, and his cope of canvas, curiously painted, and cut into open

* From the interesting novel entitled *Anastasius*. it seems the same burlesque ceremonies were practised in the Greek Church.

work. On one shoulder was fixed the painted figure of an owl; and he bore in the right hand his pastoral staff, and in the left a small mirror having a handle to it, thus resembling a celebrated jester, whose adventures, translated into English, were whilom extremely popular, and which may still be procured in black letter for about one sterling pound per leaf.

The attendants of this mock dignity had their proper dresses and equipage, bearing the same burlesque resemblance to the officers of the convent which their leader did to the superior. They followed their leader in regular procession, and the motley characters, which had waited his arrival, now crowded into the church in his train, shouting as they came—“A hall—a hall! for the venerable Father Howleglas, the learned Monk of Misrule, and the Right Reverend Abbot of Unreason!”

The discordant minstrelsy of every kind renewed its din: the boys shrieked and howled, and the men laughed and hallooed, and the women giggled and screamed, and the beasts roared, and the dragon walloped and hissed, and the hobby-horse neighed, pranced, and capered, and the rest frisked and frolicked, clashing their hobnailed shoes against the pavement, till it sparkled with the marks of their energetic caprioles.

It was, in fine, a scene of ridiculous confusion, that deafened the ear, made the eyes giddy, and must have altogether stunned any indifferent spectator; the monks, whom personal apprehension and a consciousness that much of the popular enjoyment arose from the ridicule being directed against them, were, moreover, little comforted by the reflection that, bold in their disguise, the mummers who whooped and capered around them might, on slight provocation, turn their jest into earnest, or at least proceed to those practical pleasantries which at all times arise so naturally out of the frolicsome and mischievous disposition of the populace. They looked to their abbot amid the tumult, with such looks as landsmen cast upon the pilot when the storm is at the highest—looks which express that they are devoid of all hope arising from their own exertions, and not very confident in any success likely to attend those of their Palinurus.

The abbot himself seemed at a stand; he felt no fear, but he was sensible of the danger of expressing his rising indignation, which he was scarcely able to suppress. He made a gesture with his hand as if commanding silence, which was at first only replied to by redoubled shouts, and peals of wild

laughter. When, however, the same motion, and as nearly in the same manner, had been made by Howleglas, it was immediately obeyed by his riotous companions, who expected fresh food for mirth in the conversation betwixt the real and mock abbot, having no small confidence in the vulgar wit and impudence of their leader. Accordingly, they began to shout, "To it, fathers—to it!" "Fight monk, fight madcap: abbot against abbot is fair play, and so is reason against unreason, and malice against monkery!"

"Silence, my mates!" said Howleglas; "cannot two learned fathers of the church hold communing together, but you must come here with your beer-garden whoop and halloo, as if you were hounding forth a mastiff upon a mad bull? I say, silence! and let this learned father and me confer touching matters affecting our mutual state and authority."

"My children——" said Father Ambrose.

"My children too—and happy children they are!" said his burlesque counterpart; "many a wise child knows not its own father, and it is well they have two to choose betwixt."

"If thou hast aught in thee, save scoffing and ribaldry," said the real abbot, "permit me, for thine own soul's sake, to speak a few words to these misguided men."

"Augh! me but scoffing, say'st thou?" retorted the Abbot of Unreason; "why, reverend brother, I have all that becomes mine office at this time a-day: I have beef, ale, and brandy-wine, with other condiments not worth mentioning; and for speaking, man—why, speak away, and we will have turn about, like honest fellows."

During this discussion the wrath of Magdalen Græme had risen to the uttermost; she approached the abbot, and, placing herself by his side, said in a low and yet distinct tone—"Wake and arouse thee, father; the sword of St. Peter is in thy hand—strike and avenge St. Peter's patrimony! Bind them in the chains, which, being riveted by the church on earth, are riveted in Heaven——"

"Peace, sister!" said the abbot; "let not their madness destroy our discretion—I pray thee, peace, and let me do mine office. It is the first, peradventure it may be the last, time I shall be called on to discharge it."

"Nay, my holy brother!" said Howleglas, "I rede you, take the holy sister's advice: never throve convent without woman's counsel."

"Peace, vain man!" said the abbot; "and you, my brethren——"

"Nay, nay!" said the Abbot of Unreason, "no speaking

to the lay people until you have conferred with your brother of the cowl. I swear by bell, book, and candle that not one of my congregation shall listen to one word you have to say; so you had as well address yourself to me who will."

To escape a conference so ludicrous, the abbot again attempted an appeal to what respectful feelings might yet remain amongst the inhabitants of the halidome, once so devoted to their spiritual superiors. Alas! the Abbot of Unreason had only to flourish his mock crosier, and the whooping, the hallooing, and the dancing were renewed with a vehemence which would have defied the lungs of Stentor.

"And now, my mates," said the Abbot of Unreason, "once again dight your gabs and be hushed; let us see if the cock of Kennaquhair will fight or flee the pit."

There was again a dead silence of expectation, of which Father Ambrose availed himself to address his antagonist, seeing plainly that he could gain an audience on no other terms. "Wretched man!" said he, "hast thou no better employment for thy carnal wit than to employ it in leading these blind and helpless creatures into the pit of utter darkness?"

"Truly, my brother," replied Howleglas, "I can see little difference betwixt your employment and mine, save that you make a sermon of a jest and I make a jest of a sermon."

"Unhappy being," said the abbot, "who hast no better subject of pleasantry than that which should make thee tremble, no sounder jest than thine own sins, and no better objects for laughter than those who can absolve thee from the guilt of them!"

"Verily, my reverend brother," said the mock abbot, "what you say might be true, if, in laughing at hypocrites, I meant to laugh at religion. O, it is a precious thing to wear a long dress, with a girdle and a cowl: we become a holy pillar of Mother Church, and a boy must not play at ball against the walls for fear of breaking a painted window!"

"And will you, my friends," said the abbot, looking round and speaking with a vehemence which secured him a tranquil audience for some time—"will you suffer a profane buffoon, within the very church of God, to insult His ministers? Many of you—all of you, perhaps—have lived under my holy predecessors, who were called upon to rule in this church where I am called upon to suffer. If you have worldly goods, they are their gift; and, when you scorned not to accept better gifts—the mercy and forgive-

ness of the church—were they not ever at your command?—did we not pray while you were jovial, wake while you slept?”

“Some of the good wives of the halidome were wont to say so,” said the Abbot of Unreason; but his jest met in this instance but slight applause, and Father Ambrose, having gained a moment’s attention, hastened to improve it.

“What!” said he; “and is this grateful—is it seemly—is it honest—to assail with scorn a few old men, from whose predecessors you hold all, and whose only wish is to die in peace among these fragments of what was once the light of the land, and whose daily prayer is, that they may be removed ere that hour comes when the last spark shall be extinguished, and the land left in the darkness which it has chosen rather than light? We have not turned against you the edge of the spiritual sword, to revenge our temporal persecution; the tempest of your wrath hath despoiled us of land, and deprived us almost of our daily food, but we have not repaid it with the thunders of excommunication; we only pray your leave to live and die within the church which is our own, invoking God, Our Lady, and the holy saints to pardon your sins, and our own, undisturbed by scurril buffoonery and blasphemy.”

This speech, so different in tone and termination from that which the crowd had expected, produced an effect upon their feelings unfavorable to the prosecution of their frolic. The morrice-dancers stood still, the hobby-horse surceased his capering, pipe and tabor were mute, and “silence, like a heavy cloud,” seemed to descend on the late noisy rabble. Several of the beasts were obviously moved to compunction: the bear could not restrain his sobs, and a huge fox was observed to wipe his eyes with his tail. But in especial the dragon, lately so formidably rampant, now relaxed the terror of his claws, uncoiled his tremendous rings, and grumbled out of his fiery throat in a repentant tone, “By the mass, I thought no harm in exercising our old pastime, but an I had thought the good father would have taken it so to heart I would as soon have played your devil as your dragon.”

In this momentary pause, the abbot stood amongst the miscellaneous and grotesque forms by which he was surrounded, triumphant as St. Anthony, in Callot’s Temptations; but Howleglas would not so resign his purpose.

“And how now, my masters!” said he; “is this fair play or no? Have you not chosen me Abbot of Unreason, and is it lawful for any of you to listen to common-sense to-day?”

Was I not formally elected by you in solemn chapter, held in Luckie Martin's change-house, and will you now desert me, and give up your old pastime and privilege? Play out the play; and he that speaks the next word of sense or reason, or bids us think or consider, or the like of that, which befits not the day, I will have him solemnly ducked in the mill-dam!"

The rabble, mutable as usual, huzzaed, the pipe and tabor struck up, the hobby-horse pranced, the beasts roared, and even the repentant dragon began again to coil up his spires and prepare himself for fresh gambols. But the abbot might have still overcome, by his eloquence and his entreaties, the malicious designs of the revelers, had not Dame Magdalen Græme given loose to the indignation which she had long suppressed.

"Scoffers," she said, "and men of Belial—blasphemous heretics and truculent tyrants——"

"Your patience, my sister, I entreat and I command you!" said the abbot; "let me do my duty: disturb me not in mine office."

But Dame Magdalen continued to thunder forth her threats in the name of popes and councils, and in the name of every saint from St. Michael downward.

"My comrades!" said the Abbot of Unreason, "this good dame hath not spoke a single word of reason, and therein may esteem herself free from the law. But what she spoke was meant for reason, and, therefore, unless she confesses and avouches all which she has said to be nonsense, it shall pass for such, so far as to incur the penalty of our statutes. Wherefore, holy dame, pilgrim, or abbess, or whatever thou art, be mute with thy mummerly or beware the mill-dam. We will have neither spiritual nor temporal scolds in our diocese of Unreason!"

As he spoke thus, he extended his hand towards the old woman, while his followers shouted, "A doom—a doom!" and prepared to second his purpose, when lo! it was suddenly frustrated. Roland Græme had witnessed with indignation the insults offered to his old spiritual preceptor, but yet had wit enough to reflect he could render him no assistance, but might well, by ineffective interference, make matters worse. But when he saw his aged relative in danger of personal violence, he gave way to the natural impetuosity of his temper, and, stepping forward, struck his poniard into the body of the Abbot of Unreason, whom the blow instantly prostrated on the pavement.

CHAPTER XV

As when in tumults rise the ignoble crowd,
Mad are their motions, and their tongues are loud,
And stones and brands in rattling furies fly,
And all the rustic arms which fury can supply—
Then if some grave and pious man appear,
They hush their noise, and lend a listening ear.

DRYDEN'S *Virgil*.

A DREADFUL shout of vengeance was raised by the revelers, whose sport was thus so fearfully interrupted ; but, for an instant, the want of weapons amongst the multitude, as well as the inflamed features and brandished poniard of Roland Græme, kept them at bay, while the abbot, horror-struck at the violence, implored, with uplifted hands, pardon for bloodshed committed within the sanctuary. Magdalene Græme alone expressed triumph in the blow her descendant had dealt to the scoffer, mixed, however, with a wild and anxious expression of terror for her grandson's safety. "Let him perish," she said, "in his blasphemy—let him die on the holy pavement which he has insulted !"

But the rage of the multitude, the grief of the abbot, the exultation of the enthusiastic Magdalen, were all mistimed and unnecessary. Howleglas, mortally wounded as he was supposed to be, sprung alertly up from the floor, calling aloud, "A miracle—a miracle, my masters ! as brave a miracle as ever was wrought in the kirk of Kennaquhair. And I charge you, my masters, as your lawfully chosen abbot, that you touch no one without my command: You, wolf and bear, will guard this pragmatic youth, but without hurting him. And you reverend brother, will, with your comrades, withdraw to your cells ; for our conference has ended like all conferences, leaving each of his own mind, as before ; and if we fight, both you, and your brethren, and the kirk, will have the worst on't. Wherefore, pack up your pipes and begone."

The hubbub was beginning again to awaken, but still Father Ambrose hesitated, as uncertain to what path his duty called him, whether to face out the present storm or to reserve himself for a better moment. His brother of Unrea-

son observed his difficulty, and said, in a tone more natural and less affected than that with which he had hitherto sustained his character. "We came hither, my good sir, more in mirth than in mischief: our bark is worse than our bite; and, especially, we mean you no personal harm; wherefore, draw off while the play is good; for it is ill whistling for a hawk when she is once on the soar, and worse to snatch the quarry from the ban-dog. Let these fellows once begin their brawl, and it will be too much for madness itself, let alone the Abbot of Unreason, to bring them back to the lure."

The brethren crowded around Father Ambrosius, and joined in urging him to give place to the torrent. The present revel was, they said, an ancient custom which his predecessors had permitted, and old Father Nicolas himself had played the dragon in the days of the Abbot Ingelram.

"And we now reap the fruit of the seed which they have so unadvisedly sown," said Ambrosius: "they taught men to make a mock of what is holy, what wonder that the descendants of scoffers become robbers and plunderers? But be it as you list, my brethren—move towards the dortour. And you, dame, I command you, by the authority which I have over you, and by your respect for that youth's safety, that you go with us without farther speech. Yet, stay—what are your intentions towards that youth whom you detain prisoner? Wot ye," he continued, addressing Howleglas in a stern tone of voice, "that he bears the livery of the house of Avenel? They who fear not the anger of Heaven may at least dread the wrath of man."

"Cumber not yourself concerning him," answered Howleglas, "we know right well who and what he is."

"Let me pray," said the abbot, in a tone of entreaty, "that you do him no wrong for the rash deed which he attempted in his imprudent zeal."

"I say, trouble not yourself about it, father," answered Howleglas; "but move off with your train, male and female, or I will not undertake to save yonder she-saint from the ducking-stool. And as for bearing of malice, my stomach has no room for it; it is," he added, clapping his hand on his portly belly, "too well bumbasted out with straw and buckram; gramercy to them both—they kept out that madcap's dagger as well as a Milan corslet could have done."

In fact, the home-driven poniard of Roland Græme had lighted upon the stuffing of the fictitious paunch, which the Abbot of Unreason wore as a part of his characteristic dress.

and it was only the force of the blow which had prostrated that reverend person on the ground for a moment.

Satisfied in some degree by this man's assurance, and compelled to give way to superior force, the Abbot Ambrosius retired from the church at the head of the monks, and left the court free for the revelers to work their will. But wild and wilful as these rioters were, they accompanied the retreat of the religionists with none of those shouts of contempt and derision with which they had at first hailed them. The abbot's discourse had affected some of them with remorse, others with shame, and all with a transient degree of respect. They remained silent until the last monk had disappeared through the side-door which communicated with their dwelling-place, and even then it cost some exhortations on the part of Howleglas, some caprioles of the hobby-horse, and some wallops of the dragon, to rouse once more the rebuked spirit of revelry.

“And how now, my masters?” said the Abbot of Unreason; “and wherefore look on me with such blank Jack-a-Lent visages? Will you lose your old pastime for an old wife's tale of saints and purgatory? Why, I thought you would have made all split long since. Come, strike up, tabor and harp—strike up, fiddle and rebeck; dance and be merry to-day, and let care come to-morrow! Bear and wolf, look to your prisoner; prance hobby; hiss dragon, and halloo, boys; we grow older every moment we stand idle, and life is too short to be spent in playing mumchance.”

This pithy exhortation was attended with the effect desired. They fumigated the church with burnt wood and feathers instead of incense, put foul water into the holy-water basins, and celebrated a parody on the church service, the mock abbot officiating at the altar; they sang ludicrous and indecent parodies to the tunes of church hymns; they violated whatever vestments or vessels belonging to the abbey they could lay their hands upon; and, playing every freak which the whim of the moment could suggest to their wild caprice, at length they fell to more lasting deeds of demolition, pulled down and destroyed some carved woodwork, dashed out the painted windows which had escaped former violence, and, in their rigorous search after sculpture dedicated to idolatry, began to destroy what ornaments yet remained entire upon the tombs and around the cornices of the pillars.

The spirit of demolition, like other tastes, increases by indulgence: from these lighter attempts at mischief, the more tumultuous part of the meeting began to meditate destruc-

tion on a more extended scale. "Let us heave it down altogether, the old crow's nest," became a general cry among them; "it has served the Pope and his rooks too long"; and up they struck a ballad which was then popular among the lower classes:

"The Paip, that pagan full of pride,
Hath blinded us ower lang,
For where the blind the blind doth lead,
No marvel baith gae wrang,
Like prince and king,
He led the ring
Of all iniquity.
Sing hay trix, trim-go-trix,
Under the greenwood tree.

The bishop rich, he could not preach
For sporting with the lasses;
The silly friar behoved to fleech
For awmous as he passes;
The curate his creed
He could not read—
Shame fa' the company!
Sing hay trix, trim-go-trix,
Under the greenwood tree."*

Thundering out this chorus of a notable hunting song, which had been pressed into the service of some polemical poet, the followers of the Abbot of Unreason were turning every moment more tumultuous, and getting beyond the management of even that reverend prelate himself, when a knight in full armor, followed by two or three men-at-arms, entered the church and in a stern voice commanded them to forbear their riotous mummery.

His visor was up, but, if it had been lowered, the cognizance of the holly-branch sufficiently distinguished Sir Halbert Glendinning, who, on his homeward road, was passing through the village of Kennaquhair; and, moved perhaps by anxiety for his brother's safety, had come directly to the church on hearing of the uproar.

"What is the meaning of this," he said, "my masters? Are ye Christian men, and the king's subjects, and yet waste and destroy church and chancel like so many heathens?"

All stood silent, though doubtless there were several disappointed and surprised at receiving chiding instead of thanks from so zealous a Protestant.

The dragon, indeed, did at length take upon him to be

* See "The Paip, that Pagan." Note 11.

spokesman, and growled from the depth of his painted maw, that they did but sweep Popery out of the church with the besom of destruction.

“What! my friends,” replied Sir Halbert Glendinning, “think you this mumming and masquing has not more of Popery in it than have these stone walls? Take the leprosy out of your flesh before you speak of purifying stone walls: abate your insolent license, which leads but to idle vanity and sinful excess; and know, that what you now practise is one of the profane and unseemly sports introduced by the priests of Rome themselves, to mislead and to brutify the souls which fell into their net.”

“Marry come up—are you there with your bears?” muttered the dragon, with a draconic sullenness which was in good keeping with his character; “we had as good have been Romans still, if we are to have no freedom in our pastimes!”

“Dost thou reply to me so?” said Sir Halbert Glendinning; “or is there any pastime in groveling on the ground there like a gigantic kail-worm? Get out of thy painted case, or, by my knighthood, I will treat you like the beast and reptile you have made yourself.”

“Beast and reptile!” retorted the offended dragon; “setting aside your knighthood, I hold myself as well a born man as thyself.”

The knight made no answer in words, but bestowed two such blows with the butt of his lance on the petulant dragon, that, had not the hoops which constituted the ribs of the machine been pretty strong, they would hardly have saved those of the actor from being broken. In all haste the masquer crept out of his disguise, unwilling to abide a third buffet from the lance of the enraged knight. And when the ex-dragon stood on the floor of the church, he presented to Halbert Glendinning the well-known countenance of Dan of the Howlethirst, an ancient comrade of his own; ere fate had raised him so high above the rank to which he was born. The clown looked sulkily upon the knight, as if to upbraid him for his violence towards an old acquaintance, and Glendinning’s own good-nature reproached him for the violence he had acted upon him.

“I did wrong to strike thee, Dan,” he said; “but in truth I knew thee not: thou wert ever a mad fellow. Come to Avenel Castle, and we shall see how my hawks fly.”

“And if we show him not falcons that will mount as merrily as rockets,” said the abbot of Unreason, “I would

your honor laid as hard on my bones as you did on his even now."

"How now, sir knave," said the knight, "and what has brought you hither?"

The abbot, hastily ridding himself of the false nose which mystified his physiognomy, and the supplementary belly which made up his disguise, stood before his master in his real character of Adam Woodcock, the falconer of Avenel.

"How, varlet!" said the knight; "hast thou dared to come here, and disturb the very house my brother was dwelling in?"

"And it was even for that reason, craving your honor's pardon, that I came hither; for I heard the country was to be up to choose an Abbot of Unreason, and 'Sure,' thought I, 'I that can sing, dance, leap backwards over a broadsword, and am as good a fool as ever sought promotion, have all chance of carrying the office; and if I gain my election, I may stand his honor's brother in some stead, supposing things fall roughly out at the kirk of St. Mary's.'"

"Thou art but a cogging knave," said Sir Halbert, "and well I wot that love of ale and brandy, besides the humor of riot and frolic, would draw thee a mile, when love of my house would not bring thee a yard. But, go to—carry thy roisterers elsewhere—to the alehouse if they list, and there are crowns to pay your charges; make out the day's madness without doing more mischief, and be wise men to-morrow; and hereafter learn to serve a good cause better than by acting like buffoons or ruffians."

Obedient to his master's mandate, the falconer was collecting his discouraged followers, and whispering into their ears—"Away, away—*tace* is Latin for a candle. Never mind the good knight's Puritanism—we will play the frolic out over a stand of double ale in Dame Martin the brewster's barn-yard. Draw off, harp and tabor, bagpipe and drum, num till you are out of the churchyard, then let the welkin ring again; move on, wolf and bear—keep the hind legs till you cross the kirk-stile, and then show yourselves beasts of mettle; what devil sent him here to spoil our holiday! But anger him not, my hearts; his lance is no goose-feather, as Dan's ribs can tell."

"By my soul," said Dan, "had it been another than my ancient comrade, I would have made my father's old fox fly about his ears!"

"Hush!—hush! man," replied Adam Woodcock, "not a word that way, as you value the safety of your bones; what,

man! we must take a clink as it passes, so it is not bestowed in downright ill-will."

"But I will take no such thing," said Dan of the Howlethirst, sullenly resisting the efforts of Woodcock, who was dragging him out of the church; when, the quick military eye of Sir Halbert Glendinning detecting Roland Græme betwixt his two guards, the knight exclaimed, "So ho! falconer—Woodcock—knave, hast thou brought my lady's page in mine own livery to assist at this hopeful revel of thine, with your wolves and bears? Since you were at such mummings, you might, if you would, have at least saved the credit of my household by dressing him up as a jackanapes. Bring him hither, fellows!"

Adam Woodcock was too honest and downright to permit blame to light upon the youth when it was undeserved. "I swear," he said, "by St. Martin of Bullions——"

"And what hast thou to do with St. Martin?"

"Nay, little enough, sir, unless when he sends such rainy days that we cannot fly a hawk; but I say to your worshipful knighthood that, as I am a true man——"

"As you are a false varlet, had been the better obtestation."

"Nay, if your knighthood allows me not to speak," said Adam, "I can hold my tongue; but the boy came not hither by my bidding, for all that."

"But to gratify his own malapert pleasure, I warrant me," said Sir Halbert Glendinning. "Come hither, young springald, and tell me whether you have your mistress's license to be so far absent from the castle, or to dishonor my livery by mingling in such a May-game?"

"Sir Halbert Glendinning," answered Roland Græme, with steadiness, "I have obtained the permission, or rather the commands, of your lady to dispose of my time hereafter according to my own pleasure. I have been a most unwilling spectator of this May-game, since it is your pleasure so to call it; and I only wear your livery until I can obtain clothes which bear no such badge of servitude."

"How am I to understand this, young man?" said Sir Halbert Glendinning; "speak plainly, for I am no reader of riddles. That my lady favored thee, I know. What hast thou done to disoblige her, and occasion thy dismissal?"

"Nothing to speak of," said Adam Woodcock, answering for the boy; "a foolish quarrel with me, which was more foolishly told over again to my honored lady, cost the poor boy his place. For my part, I will say freely that I was wrong

from beginning to end, except about the washing of the eyes's meat. There I stand to it that I was right."

With that, the good-natured falconer repeated to his master the whole history of the squabble which had brought Roland Græme into disgrace with his mistress, but in a manner so favorable for the page that Sir Halbert could not but suspect his generous motive."

"Thou art a good-natured fellow," he said, "Adam Woodcock."

"As ever had falcon upon fist," said Adam; "and, for that matter, so is Master Roland; but, being half a gentleman by his office, his blood is soon up, and so is mine."

"Well," said Sir Halbert, "be it as it will, my lady has acted hastily, for this was no great matter of offense to discard the lad whom she had trained up for years; but he, I doubt not, made it worse by his prating; it jumps well with a purpose, however, which I had in my mind. Draw off these people, Woodcock; and you, Roland Græme, attend me."

The page followed him in silence into the abbot's house, where, stepping into the first apartment which he found open, he commanded one of his attendants to let his brother, Master Edward Glendinning, know that he desired to speak with him. The men-at-arms went gladly off to join their comrade, Adam Woodcock, and the jolly crew whom he had assembled at Dame Martin's, the hostler's wife, and the page and knight were left alone in the apartment. Sir Halbert Glendinning paced the floor for a moment in silence, and then thus addressed his attendant:

"Thou mayest have remarked, stripling, that I have but seldom distinguished thee by much notice—I see thy color rises, but do not speak till thou hearest me out. I say, I have never much distinguished thee, not because I did not see that in thee which I might well have praised, but because I saw something blamable, which such praises might have made worse. Thy mistress, dealing according to her pleasure in her own household, as no one hath better reason or title, had picked thee from the rest, and treated thee more like a relation than a domestic; and if thou didst show some vanity and petulance under such distinction, it were injustice not to say that thou hast profited both in thy exercises and in thy breeding, and hast shown many sparkles of a gentle and manly spirit. Moreover, it were ungenerous, having bred thee up freakish and fiery, to dismiss thee to want or wandering for showing that very peevishness and impatience of dis-

ipline which arose from thy too delicate nurture. Therefore, and for the credit of my own household, I am determined to retain thee in my train, until I can honorably dispose of thee elsewhere, with a fair prospect of thy going through the world with credit to the house that brought thee up."

If there was something in Sir Halbert Glendinning's speech which flattered Roland's pride, there was also much that, according to his mode of thinking, was an alloy to the compliment. And yet his conscience instantly told him that he ought to accept, with grateful deference, the offer which was made him by the husband of his kind protectress; and his prudence, however slender, could not but admit he should enter the world under very different auspices as a retainer of Sir Halbert Glendinning, so famed for wisdom, courage, and influence, from those under which he might partake the wanderings, and become an agent in the visionary schemes—for such they appeared to him—of Magdalen, his relative. Still, a strong reluctance to re-enter a service from which he had been dismissed with contempt almost counterbalanced these considerations.

Sir Halbert looked on the youth with surprise, and resumed: "You seem to hesitate, young man. Are your own prospects so inviting that you should pause ere you accept those which I offer to you? or must I remind you that, although you have offended your benefactress, even to the point of her dismissing you, yet I am convinced, the knowledge that you have gone unguided on your own wild way, into a world so disturbed as ours of Scotland, cannot, in the upshot, but give her sorrow and pain; from which it is, in gratitude, your duty to preserve her, no less than it is in common wisdom your duty to accept my offered protection, for your own sake, where body and soul are alike endangered should you refuse it."

Roland Græme replied in a respectful tone, but at the same time with some spirit, "I am not ungrateful for such countenance as has been afforded me by the Lord of Avenel, and I am glad to learn, for the first time, that I have not had the misfortune to be utterly beneath his observation, as I had thought. And it is only needful to show me how I can testify my duty and my gratitude towards my early and constant benefactress with my life's hazard, and I will gladly peril it." He stopped.

"These are but words, young man," answered Glendinning; "large protestations are often used to supply the place

of effectual service. I know nothing in which the peril of your life can serve the Lady of Avenel ; I can only say, she will be pleased to learn you have adopted some course which may ensure the safety of your person and the weal of your soul. What ails you, that you accept not that safety when it is offered you ?”

“ My only relative who is alive,” answered Roland—“ at least the only relative whom I have ever seen, has rejoined me since I was dismissed from the Castle of Avenel, and I must consult with her whether I can adopt the line to which you now call me, or whether her increasing infirmities, or the authority which she is entitled to exercise over me, may not require me to abide with her.”

“ Where is this relation ?” said Sir Halbert Glendinning.

“ In this house,” answered the page.

“ Go, then, and seek her out,” said the Knight of Avenel ; “ more than meet it is that thou shouldst have her approbation, yet worse than foolish would she show herself in denying it.”

Roland left the apartment to seek for his grandmother, and as he retreated the abbot entered.

The two brothers met as brothers who love each other fondly, yet meet rarely together. Such indeed was the case. Their mutual affection attached them to each other ; but in every pursuit, habit, or sentiment connected with the discords of the times the friend and counselor of Murray stood opposed to the Roman Catholic priest ; nor, indeed, could they have held very much society together without giving cause of offense and suspicion to their confederates on each side. After a close embrace on the part of both, and a welcome on that of the abbot, Sir Halbert Glendinning expressed his satisfaction that he had come in time to appease the riot raised by Howleglas and his tumultuous followers.

“ And yet,” he said, “ when I look on your garments, brother Edward, I cannot help thinking there still remains an Abbot of Unreason within the bounds of the monastery.”

“ And wherefore carp at my garments, brother Halbert ?” said the abbot, “ it is the spiritual armor of my calling, and, as such, beseems me as well as breastplate and baldric become your own bosom,”

“ Ay, but there were small wisdom, methinks, in putting on armor where we have no power to fight : it is but a dangerous temerity to defy the foe whom we cannot resist.”

“ For that, my brother, no one can answer,” said the

abbot, "until the battle be fought; and, were it even as you say, methinks a brave man, though desperate of victory, would rather desire to fight and fall than to resign sword and shield on some mean and dishonorable composition with his insulting antagonist. But let us not, dear Halbert, make discord of a theme on which we cannot agree, but rather stay and partake, though a heretic, of my admission feast. You need not fear, my brother, that your zeal for restoring the primitive discipline of the church will on this occasion, be offended with the rich profusion of a conventual banquet. The days of our old friend Abbot Boniface are over; and the superior of St. Mary's has neither forests nor fishings, woods nor pastures, nor cornfields; neither flocks nor herds, bucks nor wild-fowl, granaries of wheat nor storehouses of oil and wine, of ale and of mead. The refectioner's office is ended; and such a meal as a hermit in romance can offer to a wandering knight is all we have to set before you. But, if you will share it with us, we shall eat it with a cheerful heart, and thank you, my brother, for your timely protection against these rude scoffers."

"My dearest Edward," said the knight, "it grieves me deeply I cannot abide with you; but it would sound ill for us both were one of the Reformed congregation to sit down at your admission feast; and, if I can ever have the satisfaction of affording you effectual protection, it will be much owing to my remaining unsuspected of countenancing or approving your religious rites and ceremonies. It will demand whatever consideration I can acquire among my own friends to shelter the bold man who, contrary to law and the edicts of parliament, has dared to take up the office of abbot of St. Mary's."

"Trouble not yourself with the task, my brother," replied Father Ambrosius. "I would lay down my dearest blood to know that you defended the church for the church's sake; but, while you remain unhappily her enemy, I would not that you endangered your own safety, or diminished your own comfort, for the sake of my individual protection. But who comes hither to disturb the few minutes of fraternal communication which our evil fate allows us?"

"The door of the apartment opened as the abbot spoke, and Dame Magdalen entered.

"Who is this woman?" said Sir Halbert Glendinning, somewhat sternly, "and what does she want?"

"That you know me not," said the matron, "signifies little; I come by your own order, to give my free consent

that the stripling, Roland Græme, return to your service; and, having said so, I cumber you no longer with my presence. Peace be with you!" She turned to go away, but was stopped by the inquiries of Sir Halbert Glendinning.

"Who are you?—what are you?—and why do you not await to make me answer?"

"I was," she replied, "while yet I belonged to the world, a matron of no vulgar name; now I am Magdalen, a poor pilgrimer, for the sake of Holy Kirk."

"Yea," said Sir Halbert, "art thou a Catholic? I thought my dame said that Roland Græme came of Reformed kin."

"His father," said the matron, "was a heretic, or rather one regarded neither orthodoxy nor heresy—neither the temple of the church or of antichrist. I, too—for the sins of the times make sinners—have seemed to conform to your unhallowed rites; but I had my dispensation and my absolution."

"You see, brother," said Sir Halbert, with a smile of meaning towards the abbot, "that we accuse you not altogether without grounds of mental equivocation."

"My brother, you do us injustice," replied the abbot; "this woman, as her bearing may of itself warrant you, is not in her perfect mind. Thanks, I must needs say, to the persecution of your marauding barons and of your latitudinarian clergy."

"I will not dispute the point," said Sir Halbert; "the evils of the time are unhappily so numerous that both churches may divide them and have enow to spare." So saying, he leaned from the window of the apartment and winded his bugle.

"Why do you sound your horn, my brother?" said the abbot; "we have spent but few minutes together."

"Alas!" said the elder brother, "and even these few have been sullied by disagreement. I sound to horse, my brother, the rather that, to avert the consequences of this day's rashness on your part requires hasty efforts on mine. Dame, you will oblige me by letting your young relative know that we mount instantly. I intend not that he shall return to Avenel with me; it would lead to new quarrels betwixt him and my household; at least, to taunts which his proud heart could ill brook, and my wish is to do him kindness. He shall, therefore, go forward to Edinburgh with one of my retinue, whom I shall send back to say what

has chanced here. You seem rejoiced at this?" he added, fixing his eyes keenly on Magdalen Græme, who returned his gaze with calm indifference.

"I would rather," she said, "that Roland, a poor and friendless orphan, were the jest of the world at large than of the menials at Avenel."

"Fear not, dame, he shall be scorned by neither," answered the knight.

"It may be," she replied—"it may well be; but I will trust more to his own bearing than to your countenance." She left the room as she spoke.

The knight looked after her as she departed, but turned instantly to his brother, and expressing, in the most affectionate terms, his wishes for his welfare and happiness, craved his leave to depart. "My knaves," he said, "are too busy at the ale-stand to leave their revelry for the empty breath of a bugle-horn."

"You have freed them from higher restraint, Halbert," answered the abbot, "and therein taught them to rebel against your own."

"Fear not that, Edward," exclaimed Halbert, who never gave his brother his monastic name of Ambrosius; "none obey the command of real duty so well as those who are free from the observance of slavish bondage."

He was turning to depart, when the abbot said, "Let us not yet part, my brother; here comes some light refreshment. Leave not the house which I must now call mine, till force expel me from it, until you have at least broken bread with me."

The poor lay brother, the same who acted as porter, now entered the apartment, bearing some simple refreshment and a flask of wine. "He had found it," he said with officious humility, "by rummaging through every nook of the cellar."

The knight filled a small silver cup, and, quaffing it off, asked his brother to pledge him, observing, the wine was Bacharac, of the first vintage, and great age.

"Ay," said the poor lay brother, "it came out of the nook which old Brother Nicolas—may his soul be happy!—was wont to call Abbot Ingelram's corner; and Abbot Ingelram was bred at the convent of Würzburg, which I understand to be near where that choice wine grows."

"True, my reverend sir," said Sir Halbert; "and therefore I entreat my brother, and you to pledge me in a cup of this orthodox vintage."

The thin old porter looked with a wishful glance towards the abbot. "*Do veniam,*" said his superior; and the old man seized, with a trembling hand, a beverage to which he had been long unaccustomed, drained the cup with protracted delight, as if dwelling on the flavor and perfume, and set it down with a melancholy smile and shake of the head, as if bidding adieu in future to such delicious potations. The brothers smiled. But when Sir Halbert motioned to the abbot to take up his cup and do him reason, the abbot, in turn, shook his head, and replied, "This is no day for the abbot of St. Mary's to eat the fat and drink the sweet. In water from Our Lady's well," he added, filling a cup with the limpid element, "I wish you, my brother, all happiness, and, above all, a true sight of your spiritual errors."

"And to you, my beloved Edward," replied Glendinning, "I wish the free exercise of your own free reason, and the discharge of more important duties than are connected with the idle name which you have so rashly assumed."

The brothers parted with deep regret; and yet each, confident in his opinion, felt somewhat relieved by the absence of one whom he respected so much, and with whom he could agree so little.

Soon afterwards the sound of the Knight of Avenel's trumpets was heard, and the abbot went to the top of a tower, from whose dismantled battlements he could soon see the horsemen ascending the rising ground in the direction of the drawbridge. As he gazed, Magdalen Græme came to his side.

"Thou art come," he said, "to catch the last glimpse of thy grandson, my sister. Yonder he wends, under the charge of the best knight in Scotland, his faith ever excepted."

"Thou canst bear witness, my father, that it was no wish either of mine or of Roland's," replied the matron, "which induced the Knight of Avenel, as he is called, again to entertain my grandson in his household. Heaven, which confounds the wise with their own wisdom, and the wicked with their own policy, hath placed him where, for the service of the church, I would most wish him to be."

"I know not what you mean, my sister," said the abbot.

"Reverend father," replied Magdalen, "hast thou never heard that there are spirits powerful to rend the walls of a castle asunder when once admitted, which yet cannot enter the house unless they are invited, nay, dragged over the

threshold? * Twice hath Roland Græme been thus drawn into the household of Avenel by those who now hold the title. Let them look to the issue."

So saying, she left the turret; and the abbot, after pausing a moment on her words, which he imputed to the unsettled state of her mind, followed down the winding stair to celebrate his admission to his high office by fast and prayer, instead of reveling and thanksgiving.

* See Inability of Evil Sprits to enter a House uninvited. Note 12

CHAPTER XVI

Youth ! thou wear'st to manhood now,
Darker lip and darker brow,
Statelier step, more pensive mien,
In thy face and gait are seen :
Thou must now brook midnight watches,
Take thy food and sport by snatches !
For the gambol and the jest,
Thou wert wont to love the best,
Graver follies must thou follow,
But as senseless, false, and hollow.

Life, a Poem.

YOUNG Roland Græme now trotted gaily forward in the train of Sir Halbert Glendinning. He was relieved from his most galling apprehension—the encounter of the scorn and taunt which might possibly hail his immediate return to the Castle of Avenel. “There will be a change ere they see me again,” he thought to himself ; “I shall wear the coat of plate, instead of the green jerkin, and the steel morion for the bonnet and feather. They will be bold that may venture to break a gibe on the man-at-arms for the follies of the page ; and I trust that, ere we return, I shall have done something more worthy of note than hallooing a hound after a deer, or scrambling a crag for a kite’s nest.” He could not, indeed, help marveling that his grandmother, with all her religious prejudices leaning, it would seem, to the other side, had consented so readily to his re-entering the service of the house of Avenel ; and yet more at the mysterious joy with which she took leave of him at the abbey.

“Heaven,” said the dame, as she kissed her young relation, and bade him farewell, “works its own work, even by the hands of those of our enemies who think themselves the strongest and the wisest. Thou, my child, be ready to act upon the call of thy religion and country ; and remember, each earthly bond which thou canst form is, compared to the ties which bind thee to them, like the loose flax to the twisted cable. Thou hast not forgot the face or form of the damsel Catherine Seyton ?”

Roland would have replied in the negative, but the word

seemed to stick in his throat; and Magdalen continued her exhortations.

“Thou must not forget her, my son; and here I entrust thee with a token, which I trust thou wilt speedily find an opportunity of delivering with care and secrecy into her own hand.”

She put here into Roland's hand a very small packet, of which she again enjoined him to take the strictest care, and to suffer it to be seen by no one save Catherine Seyton, who, she again (very unnecessarily) reminded him, was the young maiden he had met on the preceding day. She then bestowed on him her solemn benediction, and bade God speed him.

There was something in her manner and her conduct which implied mystery; but Roland Græme was not of an age or temper to waste much time in endeavoring to decipher her meaning. All that was obvious to his perception in the present journey promised pleasure and novelty. He rejoiced that he was traveling towards Edinburgh, in order to assume the character of a man, and lay aside that of a boy. He was delighted to think that he would have an opportunity of rejoining Catherine Seyton, whose bright eyes and lively manners had made so favorable an impression on his imagination; and, as an inexperienced yet high-spirited youth, entering for the first time upon active life, his heart bounded at the thought that he was about to see all those scenes of courtly splendor and warlike adventures of which the followers of Sir Halbert used to boast on their occasional visits to Avenel, to the wonderment and envy of those who, like Roland, knew courts and camps only by hearsay, and were condemned to the solitary sports and almost monastic seclusion of Avenel, surrounded by its lonely lake, and embosomed among its pathless mountains. “They shall mention my name,” he said to himself, “if the risk of my life can purchase me opportunities of distinction, and Catherine Seyton's saucy eye shall rest with more respect on the distinguished soldier than that with which she laughed to scorn the raw and inexperienced page.” There was wanting but one accessory to complete the sense of rapturous excitation, and he possessed it by being once more mounted on the back of a fiery and active horse, instead of plodding along on foot, as had been the case during the preceding days.

Impelled by the liveliness of his own spirits, which so many circumstances tendered naturally to exalt, Roland Græme's voice and his laughter were soon distinguished

amid the trampling of the horses of the retinue, and more than once attracted the attention of their leader, who remarked with satisfaction that the youth replied with good-humored raillery to such of the train as jested with him on his dismissal and return to the service of the house of Avenel.

"I thought the holly-branch in your bonnet had been blighted, Master Roland?" said one of the men-at-arms.

"Only pinched with half an hour's frost; you see it flourishes as green as ever."

"It is too grave a plant to flourish on so hot a soil as that head-piece of thine, Master Roland Græme," retorted the other, who was an old equerry of Sir Halbert Glendinning.

"If it will not flourish alone," said Roland, "I will mix it with the laurel and the myrtle; and I will carry them so near the sky that it shall make amends for their stunted growth."

Thus speaking, he dashed his spurs into his horse's sides, and, checking him at the same time, compelled him to execute a lofty caracole. Sir Halbert Glendinning looked at the demeanor of his new attendant with that sort of melancholy pleasure with which those who have long followed the pursuits of life, and are sensible of their vanity, regard the gay, young, and buoyant spirits to whom existence as yet is only hope and promise.

In the mean while, Adam Woodcock, the falconer, stripped of his masquing habit, and attired, according to his rank and calling, in the green jerkin, with a hawking-bag on the one side and a short hanger on the other, a glove on his left hand which reached half-way up his arm, and a bonnet and feather upon his head, came after the party as fast as his active little Galloway nag could trot, and immediately entered into parley with Roland Græme.

"So, my youngster, you are once more under shadow of the holly-branch?"

"And in case to repay you, my good friend," answered Roland, "your ten groats of silver."

"Which, but an hour since," said the falconer, "you had nearly paid me with ten inches of steel. On my faith, it is written in the book of our destiny that I must brook your dagger, after all."

"Nay, speak not of that, my good friend," said the youth, "I would rather have broached my own bosom than yours; but who could have known you in the mumming dress you wore?"

“Yes,” the falconer resumed, for both as a poet and actor he had his own professional share of self-conceit, “I think I was as good an Howleglas as ever played part at a Shrovetide revelry, and not a much worse Abbot of Unreason. I defy the Old Enemy to unmasque me when I choose to keep my vizard on. What the devil brought the knight on us before we had the game out? You would have heard me halloo my own new ballad with a voice should have reached to Berwick. But I pray you, Master Roland, be less free of cold steel on slight occasions; since, but for the stuffing of my reverend doublet, I had only left the kirk to take my place in the kirkyard.”

“Nay, spare me that feud,” said Roland Græme, “we shall have no time to fight it out; for, by our lord’s command, I am bound for Edinburgh.”

“I know it,” said Adam Woodcock, “and even therefore we shall have time to solder up this rent by the way, for Sir Halbert has appointed me your companion and guide.”

“Ay? and with what purpose?” said the page.

“That,” said the falconer, “is a question I cannot answer; but I know that, be the food of the eyases washed or unwashed, and, indeed, whatever becomes of perch and mew, I am to go with you to Edinburgh, and see you safely delivered to the Regent at Holyrood.”

“How, to the Regent?” said Roland, in surprise.

“Ay, by my faith, to the Regent,” replied Woodcock; “I promise you that, if you are not to enter his service, at least you are to wait upon him in the character of a retainer of our Knight of Avenel.”

“I know no right,” said the youth, “which the Knight of Avenel hath to transfer my service, supposing that I owe it to himself.”

“Hush—hush!” said the falconer; “that is a question I advise no one to stir in until he has the mountain or the lake, or the march of another kingdom, which is better than either, betwixt him and his feudal superior.”

“But Sir Halbert Glendinning,” said the youth, “is not my feudal superior; nor has he aught of authority——”

“I pray you, my son, to rein your tongue,” answered Adam Woodcock; “my lord’s displeasure, if you provoke it, will be worse to appease than my lady’s. The touch of his least finger were heavier than her hardest blow. And, by my faith, he is a man of steel, as true and as pure, but as hard and as pitiless. You remember the Cock of Capperlaw, whom he hanged over his gate for a mere mistake—

a poor yoke of oxen taken in Scotland, when he thought he was taking them in English land? I loved the Cock of Capperlaw; the Kerrs had not an honest man in their clan, and they have had men that might have been a pattern to the Border—men that would not have lifted under twenty cows at once, and would have held themselves dishonored if they had taken a drift of sheep or the like, but always managed their raids in full credit and honor. But see, his worship halts, and we are close by the bridge. Ride up—ride up; we must have his last instructions.”

It was as Adam Woodcock said. In the hollow way descending towards the bridge, which was still in the guardianship of Peter Bridge-Ward, as he was called, though he was now very old, Sir Halbert Glendinning halted his retinue, and beckoned to Woodcock and Græme to advance to the head of the train.

“Woodcock,” said he, “thou knowest to whom thou art to conduct this youth. And thou, young man, obey discreetly and with diligence the orders that shall be given thee. Curb thy vain and peevish temper. Be just, true, and faithful; and there is in thee that which may raise thee many a degree above thy present station. Neither shalt thou—always supposing thine efforts to be fair and honest—want the protection and countenance of Avenel.”

Leaving them in front of the bridge, the center tower of which now began to cast a prolonged shade upon the river, the Knight of Avenel turned to the left, without crossing the river, and pursued his way towards the chain of hills within whose recesses are situated the Lake and Castle of Avenel. There remained behind, the falconer, Roland Græme, and a domestic of the knight, of inferior rank, who was left with them to look after their horses while on the road, to carry their baggage, and to attend to their convenience.

So soon as the more numerous body of riders had turned off to pursue their journey westward, those whose route lay across the river, and was directed towards the north, summoned the bridge-ward, and demanded a free passage.

“I will not lower the bridge,” answered Peter, in a voice querulous with age and ill-humor. “Come Papist, come Protestant, ye are all the same. The Papists threatened us with purgatory, and fleeced us with pardons; the Protestant mints at us with the sword, and cuttles us with the liberty of conscience; but never a one of either says, Peter, there is your penny.” I am well tired of all this, and for no

man shall the bridge fall that pays me not ready money; and I would have you know I care as little for Geneva as for Rome, as little for homilies as for pardons; and the silver pennies are the only passports I will hear of."

"Here is a proper old chuff!" said Woodcock to his companion; then raising his voice, he exclaimed, "Hark thee, dog—bridge-ward—villain, dost thou think we have refused thy namesake Peter's pence to Rome, to pay thine at the bridge of Kennaquhair? Let thy bridge down instantly to the followers of the house of Avenel, or by the hand of my father, and that handled many a bridle rein, for he was a bluff Yorkshireman—I say, by my father's hand, our knight will blow thee out of thy solan-goose's nest there in the middle of the water, with the light falconet which we are bringing southward from Edinburgh to-morrow."

The bridge-ward heard, and muttered, "A plague on falcon and falconet, on cannon and demi-cannon, and all the barking bull-dogs whom they halloo against stone and lime in these our days! It was a merry time when there was little besides handy blows, and it may be a flight of arrows that harmed an ashler wall as little as so many hailstones. But we must jouk and let the jaw gang by." Comforting himself in his state of diminished consequence with this pithy old proverb, Peter Bridge-Ward lowered the drawbridge, and permitted them to pass over. At the sight of his white hair, albeit it discovered a visage equally peevish through age and misfortune, Roland was inclined to give him an alms, but Adam Woodcock prevented him. "E'en let him pay the penalty of his former churlishness and greed," he said; "the wolf, when he has lost his teeth, should be treated no better than a cur."

Leaving the bridge-ward to lament the alteration of times which sent domineering soldiers and feudal retainers to his place of passage, instead of peaceful pilgrims, and reduced him to become the oppressed, instead of playing the extortioner, the travelers turned them northward; and Adam Woodcock, well acquainted with that part of the country, proposed to cut short a considerable portion of the road by traversing the little vale of Glendearg, so famous for the adventures which befell therein during the earlier part of the Benedictine's Manuscript. With these, and with the thousand commentaries, representations and misrepresentations to which they had given rise, Roland Græme was, of course, well acquainted; for in the Castle of Avenel, as well as in other great establishments, the inmates talked of noth-

ing so often, or with such pleasure, as of the private affairs of their lord and lady. But while Roland was viewing with interest these haunted scenes, in which things were said to have passed beyond the ordinary laws of nature, Adam Woodcock was still regretting in his secret soul the unfinished revel and the unsung ballad, and kept every now and then breaking out with some such verses as these :

“The friars of Fail drank berry-brown ale,
The best that e'er was tasted ;
The monks of Melrose made gude kale
On Fridays, when they fasted.
St. Monance' sister,
The gray priest kist her—
Friend save the company !
Sing hay trix, trim-go-trix,
Under the greenwood tree !”

“By my hand, friend Woodcock,” said the page, “though I know you for a hardy Gospeller, that fear neither saint nor devil, yet, if I were you, I would not sing your profane songs in this valley of Glendearg, considering what has happened here before our time.”

“A straw for your wandering spirits !” said Adam Woodcock ; “I mind them no more than an earn cares for a string of wild geese ; they have all fled since the pulpits were filled with honest men, and the people's ears with sound doctrine. Nay, I have a touch at them in my ballad, an I had but had the good luck to have sung it to end ; and again he set off in the same key :

“From haunted spring and grassy ring
Troop goblin, elf, and fairy ;
And the kelpie must flit from the black bog-pit
And the brownie must not tarry ;
To Limbo lake
Their way they take,
With scarce the pith to flee
Sing hay trix, trim-go-trix,
Under the greenwood tree !

I think,” he added, “that, could Sir. Halbert's patience have stretched till we came that length, he would have had a hearty laugh, and that is what he seldom enjoys.”

“If it be all true that men tell of his early life,” said Roland, “he has less right to laugh at goblins than most men.”

“Ay, *if* it be all true,” answered Adam Woodcock ; “but who can ensure us of that ? Moreover, these were but tales

the monks used to gull us simple laymen withal ; they knew that fairies and hobgoblins brought aves and paternosters into repute ; but now we have given up worship of images in wood and stone, methinks it were no time to be afraid of bubbles in the water or shadows in the air."

"However," said Roland Græme, "as the Catholics say they do not worship wood or stone, but only as emblems of the holy saints, and not as things holy in themselves——"

"Pshaw ! pshaw !" answered the falconer ; "a rush for their prating. They told us another story when these baptized idols of theirs brought pike-staves and sandaled shoon from all the four winds, and whillied the old women out of their corn and their candle-ends, and their butter, bacon, wool, and cheese, and when not so much as a gray goat escaped tithing."

Roland Græme had been long taught, by necessity, to consider his form of religion as a profound secret, and to say nothing whatever in its defense when assailed, lest he should draw on himself the suspicion of belonging to the unpopular and exploded church. He therefore suffered Adam Woodcock to triumph without farther opposition, marveling in his own mind whether any of the goblins, formerly such active agents, would avenge his rude railery before they left the valley of Glendearg. But no such consequences followed. They passed the night quietly in a cottage in the glen, and the next day resumed their route to Edinburgh.

CHAPTER XVII

Edina ! Scotia's darling seat,
All hail thy palaces and towers,
Where once, beneath a monarch's feet,
Sate legislation's sovereign powers !

BURNS.

"THIS, then, is Edinburgh?" said the youth, as the fellow-travelers arrived at one of the heights to the southward, which commanded a view of the great northern capital—"this is that Edinburgh of which we have heard so much?"

"Even so," said the falconer; "yonder stands Auld Reekie; you may see the smoke hover over her at twenty miles' distance, as the goss-hawk hangs over a plump of young wild ducks; ay, yonder is the heart of Scotland, and each throb that she gives is felt from the edge of Solway to Duncansby Head. See, yonder is the old Castle; and see to the right, on yon rising ground, that is the Castle of Craigmillar, which I have known a merry place in my time."

"Was it not there," said the page in a low voice, "that the Queen held her court?"

"Ay, ay," replied the falconer—"Queen she was then, though you must not call her so now. Well, they may say what they will—many a true heart will be sad for Mary Stuart, e'en if all be true men say of her; for look you, Master Roland, she was the loveliest creature to look upon that I ever saw with eye, and no lady in the land liked better the fair flight of a falcon. I was at the great match on Roslin Moor betwixt Bothwell—he was a black sight to her that Bothwell—and the Baron of Roslin, who could judge a hawk's flight as well as any man in Scotland: a butt of Rhenish and a ring of gold was the wager, and it was flown as fairly for as ever was red gold and bright wine. And to see her there on her white palfrey, that flew as if it scorned to touch more than the heather blossom; and to hear her voice, as clear and sweet as the mavis's whistle, mix among our jolly whooping and whistling; and to mark all the nobles dashing round her—happiest he who got a

word or a look—tearing through moss and hag, and venturing neck and limb to gain the praise of a bold rider, and the blink of a bonny queen's bright eye! She will see little hawking where she lies now; ay, ay, pomp and pleasure pass away as speedily as the wap of a falcon's wing."

"And where is this poor queen now confined?" said Roland Græme, interested in the fate of a woman whose beauty and grace had made so strong an impression even on the blunt and careless character of Adam Woodcock.

"Where is she now imprisoned?" said honest Adam; "why, in some castle in the north, they say. I know not where, for my part, nor is it worth while to vex one's self anent what cannot be mended. An she had guided her power well whilst she had it she had not come to so evil a pass. Men say she must resign her crown to this little baby of a prince, for that they will trust her with it no longer. Our master has been as busy as his neighbors in all this work. If the Queen should come to her own again, Avenal Castle is like to smoke for it, unless he makes his bargain all the better."

"In a castle in the north Queen Mary is confined?" said the page.

"Why, ay—they say so, at least. In a castle beyond that great river which comes down yonder, and looks like a river; but it is a branch of the sea, and as bitter as brine."

"And amongst all her subjects," said the page, with some emotion, "is there none that will adventure anything for her relief?"

"That is a kittle question," said the falconer; "and if you ask it often, Master Roland, I am fain to tell you that you will be mewed up yourself in some of those castles, if they do not prefer twisting your head off, to save farther trouble with you. Adventure anything! Lord, why, Murray has the wind in his poop now, man, and flies so high and strong that the devil a wing of them can match him. No, no; there she is, and there she must lie, till Heaven send her deliverance, or till her son has the management of all. But Murray will never let her loose again, he knows her too well. And hark thee, we are now bound for Holyrood, where thou will find plenty of news and of courtiers to tell it. But, take my counsel, and keep a calm sough, as the Scots say: hear every man's counsel, and keep your own. And if you hap to learn any news you like, leap not up as if you were to put on armor direct in the cause. Our old Mr. Wingate says—and he knows court cattle well—that if you are told old King

Coul is come alive again, you should turn it off with, 'And is he, in truth? I heard not of it,' and should seem no more moved than if one told you, by way of novelty, that old King Coul was dead and buried. Wherefore, look well to your bearing, Master Roland, for I promise you, you come among a generation that are keen as a hungry hawk. And never be dagger out of sheath at every wry word you hear spoken; for you will find as hot blades as yourself, and then will be letting of blood without advice either of leach or almanack."

"You shall see how staid I will be, and how cautious, my good friend," said Græme; "but, blessed Lady, what goodly house is that which is lying all in ruins so close to the city? Have they been playing at the Abbot of Unreason here, and ended the gambol by burning the church?"

"There again now," replied his companion, "you go down the wind like a wild haggard, that minds neither lure nor beck; that is a question you should have asked in as low a tone as I shall answer it."

"If I stay here long," said Roland Græme, "it is like I shall lose the natural use of my voice; but what are the ruins then?"

"The Kirk of Field", said the falconer, in a low and impressive whisper, laying at the same time his finger on his lip; "ask no more about it; somebody got foul play, and somebody got the blame of it; and the game began there which perhaps may not be played out in our time. Poor Henry Darnley! to be an ass, he understood somewhat of a hawk! but they sent him on the wing through the air himself one bright moonlight night."

The memory of this catastrophe was so recent that the page averted his eyes with horror from the scathed ruins in which it had taken place; and the accusations against the Queen, to which it had given rise, came over his mind with such strength as to balance the compassion he had begun to entertain for her present forlorn situation.

It was, indeed, with that agitating state of mind which arises partly from horror, but more from anxious interest and curiosity, that young Græme found himself actually traversing the scene of those tremendous events the report of which had disturbed the most distant solitudes in Scotland, like the echoes of distant thunder rolling among the mountains.

"Now," he thought—"now or never shall I become a man, and bear my part in those deeds which the simple inhabitants of our hamlets repeat to each other as if they were

wrought by beings of a superior order to their own ! I will know now wherefore the Knight of Avenel carries his crest so much above those of the neighboring baronage, and how it is that men, by valor and wisdom, work their way from the hodden-gray coat to the cloak of scarlet and gold. Men say I have not much wisdom to recommend me ; and if that be true, courage must do it ; for I will be a man amongst living men, or a dead corpse amongst the dead."

From these dreams of ambition he turned his thoughts to those of pleasure, and began to form many conjectures when and where he should see Catherine Seyton, and in what manner their acquaintance was to be renewed. With such conjectures he was amusing himself, when he found that they had entered the city, and all other feelings were suspended in the sensation of giddy astonishment with which an inhabitant of the country is affected when, for the first time, he finds himself in the streets of a large and populous city, an unit in the midst of thousands.

The principal street of Edinburgh was then, as now, one of the most spacious in Europe. The extreme height of the houses, and the variety of Gothic gables, and battlements, and balconies, by which the sky-line on each side was crowned and terminated, together with the width of the street itself, might have struck with surprise a more practised eye than that of young Græme. The population, close packed within the walls of the city, and at this time increased by the number of the lords of the King's party who had thronged to Edinburgh to wait upon the Regent Murray, absolutely swarmed like bees on the wide and stately street. Instead of the shop-windows, which are now calculated for the display of goods, the traders had their open booths projecting on the street, in which, as in the fashion of the modern bazars, all was exposed which they had upon sale. And though the commodities were not of the richest kinds, yet Græme thought he beheld the wealth of the whole world in the various bales of Flanders cloths and the specimens of tapestry ; and at other places the display of domestic utensils and pieces of plate struck him with wonder. The sight of cutlers' booths, furnished with swords and poniards, which were manufactured in Scotland, and with pieces of defensive armor, imported from Flanders, added to his surprise ; and at every step he found so much to admire and to gaze upon that Adam Woodcock had no little difficulty in prevailing on him to advance through such a scene of enchantment.

The sight of the crowds which filled the streets was equally a subject of wonder. Here a gay lady, in her muffler, or silken veil, traced her way delicately, a gentleman-usher making way for her, a page bearing up her train, and a waiting gentlewoman carrying her Bible, thus intimating that her purpose was towards the church. There he might see a group of citizens bending the same way, with their short Flemish cloaks, wide trousers, and high-caped doublets—a fashion to which, as well as to their bonnet and feather, the Scots were long faithful. Then, again, came the clergyman himself, in his black Geneva cloak and band, lending a grave and attentive ear to the discourse of several persons who accompanied him, and who were doubtless holding serious converse on the religious subject he was about to treat of. Nor did there lack passengers of a different class and appearance.

At every turn, Roland Græme might see a gallant ruffie along in the newer or French mode, his doublet slashed, and his points of the same colors with the lining, his long sword on one side, and his poniard on the other, behind him a body of stout serving-men, proportioned to his estate and quality, all of whom walked with the air of military retainers, and were armed with sword and buckler, the latter being a small round shield, not unlike the Highland target, having a steel spike in the center. Two of these parties, each headed by a person of importance, chanced to meet in the very center of the street, or, as it was called, “the crown of the causeway”—a post of honor as tenaciously asserted in Scotland as that of giving or taking the wall used to be in the more southern part of the island. The two leaders being of equal rank, and, most probably, either animated by political dislike or by recollection of some feudal enmity, marched close up to each other, without yielding an inch to the right or the left; and neither showing the least purpose of giving way, they stopped for an instant, and then drew their swords. Their followers imitated their example; about a score of weapons at once flashed in the sun; and there was an immediate clatter of swords and bucklers, while the followers on either side cried their master’s name: the one shouting, “Help, a Leslie!—a Leslie!” while the others answered with shouts of “Seyton!—Seyton!” with the additional punning slogan, “Set on—set on; bear the knaves to the ground!”

If the falconer found difficulty in getting the page to go forward before, it was now perfectly impossible. He reined



“A Seyton! A Seyton! Set on! Set on!”

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up his horse, clapped his hands, and, delighted with the fray, cried and shouted as fast as any of those who were actually engaged in it.

The noise and cries thus arising on the Highgate, as it was called, drew into the quarrel two or three other parties of gentlemen and their servants, besides some single passengers, who, hearing a fray betwixt these two distinguished names, took part in it, either for love or hatred.

The combat became now very sharp, and although the sword-and-buckler men made more clatter and noise than they did real damage, yet several good cuts were dealt among them; and those who wore rapiers—a more formidable weapon than the ordinary Scottish sword—gave and received dangerous wounds. Two men were already stretched on the causeway, and the party of Seyton began to give ground, being much inferior in number to the other, with which several of the citizens had united themselves, when young Roland Græme, beholding their leader, a noble gentleman, fighting bravely, and hard pressed with numbers, could withhold no longer. “Adam Woodcock,” he said, “an you be a man, draw, and let us take part with the Seyton.” And without waiting a reply, or listening to the falconer’s earnest entreaty that he would leave alone a strife in which he had no concern, the fiery youth sprung from his horse, drew his short sword, and shouting like the rest, “A Seyton!—a Seyton! Set on!—set on!” thrust forward into the throng, and struck down one of those who was pressing hardest upon the gentleman whose cause he espoused. This sudden reinforcement gave spirit to the weaker party, who began to renew the combat with much alacrity, when four of the magistrates of the city, distinguished by their velvet cloaks and gold chains, came up with a guard of halberdiers and citizens, armed with long weapons, and well accustomed to such service, thrust boldly forward, and compelled the swordsmen to separate, who immediately retreated in different directions, leaving such of the wounded on both sides as had been disabled in the fray lying on the street.

The falconer, who had been tearing his beard for anger at his comrade’s rashness, now rode up to him with the horse, which he had caught by the bridle, and accosted him with “Master Roland—master goose—master madcap—will it please you to get on horse, and budge? or will you remain here to be carried to prison, and made to answer for this pretty day’s work?”

The page, who had begun his retreat along with the Sey-

tons, just as if he had been one of their natural allies, was by this unceremonious application made sensible that he was acting a foolish part ; and, obeying Adam Woodcock, with some sense of shame, he sprung actively on horseback, and upsetting with the shoulder of the animal a city-officer who was making towards him, he began to ride smartly down the street, along with his companion, and was quickly out of the reach of the hue and cry. In fact, rencounters of the kind were so common in Edinburgh at that period that the disturbance seldom excited much attention after the affray was over, unless some person of consequence chanced to have fallen, an incident which imposed on his friends the duty of avenging his death on the first convenient opportunity. So feeble, indeed, was the arm of the police, that it was not unusual for such skirmishes to last for hours, where the parties were numerous and well matched. But at this time the Regent, a man of great strength of character, aware of the mischief which usually arose from such acts of violence, had prevailed with the magistrates to keep a constant guard on foot, for preventing or separating such affrays as had happened in the present case.

The falconer and his young companion were now riding down the Canongate, and had slackened their pace to avoid attracting attention, the rather that there seemed to be no appearance of pursuit. Roland hung his head as one who was conscious his conduct had been none of the wisest, while his companion thus addressed him :

“ Will you be pleased to tell me one thing, Master Roland Græme, and that is, whether there be a devil incarnate in you or no ? ”

“ Truly, Master Adam Woodcock,” answered the page, “ I would fain hope there is not.”

“ Then,” said Adam, “ I would fain know by what other influence or instigation you are perpetually at one end or the other of some bloody brawl ? What, I pray, had you to do with these Seytons and Leslies, that you had never heard the names of in your life before ? ”

“ You are out there, my friend,” said Roland Græme, “ I have my own reasons for being a friend to the Seytons.”

“ They must have been very secret reasons, then,” answered Adam Woodcock, “ for I think I could have wagered you had never known one of the name ; and I am apt to believe still that it was your unhallowed passion for that clashing of cold iron, which has as much charm for you as the clatter of a brass pan hath for a hive of bees, rather than any

care either for Seyton or for Leslie, that persuaded you to thrust your fool's head into a quarrel that nowise concerned you. But take this for a warning, my young master, that if you are to draw sword with every man who draws swords on the Highgate here, it will be scarce worth your while to sheath bilbo again for the rest of your life, since, if I guess rightly, it will scarce endure on such terms for many hours—all which I leave to your serious consideration."

"By my word, Adam, I honor your advice; and I promise you that I will practise by it as faithfully as if I were sworn apprentice to you, to the trade and mystery of bearing myself with all wisdom and safety through the new paths of life that I am about to be engaged in."

"And therein you will do well," said the falconer, "and I do not quarrel with you, Master Roland, for having a grain over much spirit, because I know one may bring to the hand a wild hawk, which one never can a dunghill hen; and so betwixt two faults you have the best side on't. But, besides your peculiar genius for quarreling and lugging out your side companion, my dear Master Roland, you have also the gift of peering under every woman's muffler and screen, as if you expected to find an old acquaintance. Though, were you to spy one, I should be as much surprised at it, well wotting how few you have seen of these same wild-fowl, as I was at your taking so deep an interest even now in the Seyton."

"Tush, man! nonsense and folly," answered Roland Græme; "I but sought to see what eyes these gentle hawks have got under their hood."

"Ay, but it's a dangerous subject of inquiry," said the falconer; "you had better hold out your bare wrist for an eagle to perch upon. Look you, Master Roland, these pretty wild geese cannot be hawked at without risk: they have as many divings, boltings, and volleyings as the most gamesome quarry that falcon ever flew at. And besides, every woman of them is manned with her husband, or her kind friend, or her brother, or her cousin, or her sworn servant at the least. But you heed me not, Master Roland, though I know the game so well: your eye is all on that pretty damsel who trips down the gate before us; by my certes, I will warrant her a blythe dancer either in reel or revel—a pair of silver morisco bells would become these pretty ankles as well as the jesses would suit the fairest Norway hawk."

"Thou art a fool, Adam," said the page, "and I care not a button about the girl or her ankles. But, what the foul fiend, one must look at something!"

“Very true, Master Roland Græme,” said his guide, “but let me pray you to choose your objects better. Look you, there is scarce a woman walks this Highgate with a silk screen or a pearlin muffer, but, as I said before, she has either gentleman-usher before her, or kinsman, or lover, or husband, at her elbow, or it may be a brace of stout fellows with sword and buckler, not so far behind but what they can follow close. But you heed me no more than a goss-hawk minds a yellow-yoldring.”

“O yes, I do—I do mind you indeed,” said Roland Græme; “but hold my nag a bit—I will be with you in the exchange of a whistle.” So saying, and ere Adam Woodcock could finish the sermon which was dying on his tongue, Roland Græme, to the falconer’s utter astonishment, threw him the bridle of his jennet, jumped off horseback, and pursued down one of the closes or narrow lanes, which opening under a vault, terminate upon the main street, the very maiden to whom his friend had accused him of showing so much attention, and who had turned down the pass in question.

“St. Mary—St. Magdalen—St. Benedict—St. Barnabas!” cried the poor falconer, when he found himself thus suddenly brought to a pause in the midst of the Canongate, and saw his young charge start off like a madman in quest of a damsel whom he had never, as Adam supposed, seen in his life before—“St. Satan and St. Beelzebub—for this would make one swear saint and devil—what can have come over the lad with a wanion! And what shall I do the whilst? He will have his throat cut, the poor lad, as sure as I was born at the foot of Roseberry Topping. Could I find some one to hold the horses! But they are as sharp here north-way as in canny Yorkshire herself, and quit bridle, quit titt, as we say. An I could but see one of our folks now, a holly-sprig were worth a gold tassel; or could I but see one of the Regent’s men; but to leave the horses to a stranger, that I cannot; and to leave the place while the lad is in jeopardy, that I wonot.”

We must leave the falconer, however, in the midst of his distress, and follow the hot-headed youth who was the cause of his perplexity.

The latter part of Adam Woodcock’s sage remonstrance had been in a great measure lost upon Roland, for whose benefit it was intended; because, in one of the female forms which tripped along the streets, muffled in a veil of striped silk, like the women of Brussels at this day, his eye had discerned something which closely resembled the exquisite

shape and spirited bearing of Catherine Seyton. During all the grave advice which the falconer was dinning into his ear, his eye continued intent upon so interesting an object of observation; and at length, as the damsel, just about to dive under one of the arched passages which afforded an outlet to the Canongate from the houses beneath (a passage graced by a projecting shield of arms, supported by two huge foxes of stone), had lifted her veil for the purpose perhaps of descrying who the horseman was who for some time had eyed her so closely, young Roland saw, under the shade of the silken plaid, enough of the bright azure eyes, fair locks, and blythe features to induce him, like an inexperienced and rash madcap, whose wilful ways had never been traversed by contradiction, nor much subjected to consideration, to throw the bridle of his horse into Adam Woodcock's hand, and leave him to play the waiting gentleman, while he dashed down the paved court after Catherine Seyton—all as aforesaid.

Women's wits are proverbially quick, but apparently those of Catherine suggested no better expedient than fairly to betake herself to speed of foot, in hopes of baffling the page's vivacity; by getting safely lodged before he could discover where. But a youth of eighteen, in pursuit of a mistress, is not so easily outstripped. Catherine fled across a paved court, decorated with large formal vases of stone, in which yews, cypresses, and other evergreens vegetated in somber sullenness, and gave a correspondent degree of solemnity to the high and heavy building in front of which they were placed as ornaments, aspiring towards a square portion of the blue hemisphere, corresponding exactly in extent to the quadrangle in which they were stationed, and all around which rose huge black walls, exhibiting windows in rows of five stories, with heavy architraves over each, bearing armorial and religious devices.

Through this court Catherine Seyton flashed like a hunted doe, making the best use of those pretty legs which had attracted the commendation even of the reflective and cautious Adam Woodcock. She hastened towards a large door in the center of the lower front of the court, pulled the bobbin till the latch flew up, and esconced herself in the ancient mansion. But, if she fled like a doe, Roland Grame followed with the speed and ardor of a youthful staghound, loosed for the first time on his prey. He kept her in view in spite of her efforts; for it is remarkable what an advantage in such a race the gallant who desires to see possesses over the

maiden who wishes not to be seen—an advantage which I have known counterbalance a great start in point of distance. In short, he saw the waving of her screen, or veil, at one corner, heard the tap of her foot, light as that was, as it crossed the court, and caught a glimpse of her figure just as she entered the door of the mansion.

Roland Græme, inconsiderate and headlong as we have described him, having no knowledge of real life but from the romances which he had read, and not an idea of checking himself in the midst of an eager impulse, possessed, besides, of much courage and readiness, never hesitated for a moment to approach the door through which the object of his search had disappeared. He too pulled the bobbin, and the latch, though heavy and massive, answered to the summons, and rose. The page entered with the same precipitation which had marked his whole proceeding, and found himself in a large gloomy hall, or vestibule, dimly enlightened by latticed casements of painted glass, and rendered yet dimmer through the exclusion of the sunbeams, owing to the height of the walls of those buildings by which the courtyard was inclosed. The walls of the hall were surrounded with suits of ancient and rusted armor, interchanged with huge and massive stone scutcheons, bearing double tressures, fleured and counter-fleured, wheat-sheaves, coronets, and so forth—things which Roland Græme gave not a moment's attention.

In fact, he only deigned to observe the figure of Catherine Seyton, who, deeming herself safe in the hall, had stopped to take breath after her course, and was reposing herself for a moment on a large oaken settle which stood at the upper end of the hall. The noise of Roland's entrance at once disturbed her; she startled up with a faint scream of surprise, and escaped through one of the several folding-doors which opened into this apartment as a common center. This door, which Roland Græme instantly approached, opened on a large and well-lighted gallery, at the upper end of which he could hear several voices and the noise of hasty steps approaching towards the hall, or vestibule. A little recalled to sober thought by an appearance of serious danger, he was deliberating whether he should stand fast or retire, when Catherine Seyton re-entered from a side door, running towards him with as much speed as a few minutes since she had fled from him.

“O, what mischief brought you hither?” she said. “Fly—fly, or you are a dead man; or stay—they come—flight is impossible; say you came to ask for Lord Seyton.”

She sprung from him and disappeared through the door by which she had made her second appearance ; and, at the same instant, a pair of large folding-doors at the upper end of the gallery flew open with vehemence, and six or seven young gentlemen, richly dressed, pressed forward into the apartment, having for the greater part, their swords drawn.

“ Who is it,” said one, “ dare intrude on us in our own mansion ? ”

“ Cut him to pieces,” said another ; “ let him pay for this day’s insolence and violence ; he is some follower of the Rothés.”

“ No, by St. Mary,” said another ; “ he is a follower of the arch-fiend and ennobled clown, Halbert Glendinning, who takes the style of Avenel—once a church-vassal, now a pilager of the church.”

“ It is so,” said a fourth ; “ I know him by the holly-sprig, which is their cognizance. Secure the door ; he must answer for this insolence.”

Two of the gallants, hastily drawing their weapons, passed on to the door by which Roland had entered the hall, and stationed themselves there as if to prevent his escape. The others advanced on Græme, who had just sense enough to perceive that any attempt at resistance would be alike fruitless and imprudent. At once, and by various voices, none of which sounded amicably, the page was required to say who he was, whence he came, his name, his errand, and who sent him hither. The number of the questions demanded of him at once afforded a momentary apology for his remaining silent, and ere that brief truce had elapsed a personage entered the hall, at whose appearance those who had gathered fiercely around Roland fell back with respect.

This was a tall man, whose dark hair was already grizzled, though his eye and haughty features retained all the animation of youth. The upper part of his person was undressed to his Holland shirt whose ample folds were stained with blood. But he wore a mantle of crimson, lined with rich fur, cast around him, which supplied the deficiency of his dress. On his head he had a crimson velvet bonnet, looped up on one side with a small golden chain of many links, which, going thrice round the hat, was fastened by a medal, agreeable to the fashion amongst the grandees of the time.

“ Whom have you here, sons and kinsmen,” said he, “ around whom you crowd thus roughly ? Know you not that the shelter of this roof should secure every one fair treat-

ment who shall come hither either in fair peace or in open and manly hostility?"

"But here, my lord," answered one of the youths, "is a knave who comes on treacherous espial!"

"I deny the charge," said Roland Græme, boldly; "I came to inquire after my Lord Seyton."

"A likely tale," answered his accusers, "in the mouth of a follower of Glendinning."

"Stay young man," said the Lord Seyton, for it was that nobleman himself, "let me look at this youth. By Heaven, it is the very same who came so boldly to my side not very many minutes since, when some of my own knaves bore themselves with more respect to their own worshipful safety than to mine! Stand back from him, for he well deserves honor and a friendly welcome at your hands, instead of this rough treatment."

They fell back on all sides, obedient to Lord Seyton's commands, who, taking Roland Græme by the hand, thanked him for his prompt and gallant assistance, adding, that he nothing doubted "the same interest which he had taken in his cause in the affray brought him hither to inquire after his hurt."

Roland bowed low in acquiescence.

"Or is there anything in which I can serve you, to show my sense of your ready gallantry?"

But the page, thinking it best to abide by the apology for his visit which the Lord Seyton had so aptly himself suggested replied, "That to be assured of his lordship's safety had been the only cause of his intrusion. He judged," he added, "he had seen him receive some hurt in the affray."

"A trifle," said Lord Seyton; "I had but stripped my doublet, that the chirurgeon might put some dressing on the paltry scratch, when these rash boys interrupted us with their clamor."

Roland Græme, making a low obeisance, was now about to depart, for, relieved from the danger of being treated as a spy, he began next to fear that his companion, Adam Woodcock, whom he had so unceremoniously quitted, would either bring him into some farther dilemma by venturing into the hotel in quest of him, or ride off and leave him behind altogether. But Lord Seyton did not permit him to escape so easily. "Tarry," he said, "young man, and let me know thy rank and name. The Seyton has of late been more wont to see friends and followers shrink from his side than to re-

ceive aid from strangers; but a new world may come round, in which he may have the chance of rewarding his well-wishers."

"My name is Roland Græme, my lord," answered the youth, "a page, who for the present is in the service of Sir Halbert Glendinning."

"I said so from the first," said one of the young men; "my life I will wager that this is a shaft out of the heretic's quiver—a stratagem from first to last, to injeer into your confidence some espial of his own. They know how to teach both boys and women to play the intelligencers."

"That is false, if it be spoken of me," said Roland; "no man in Scotland should teach me such a foul part!"

"I believe thee, boy," said Lord Seyton, "for thy strokes were too fair to be dealt upon an understanding with those that were to receive them. Credit me, however, I little expected to have help at need from one of your master's household; and I would know what moved thee in my quarrel, to thine own endangering?"

"So please you, my lord," said Ronald, "I think my master himself would not have stood by and seen an honorable man borne to earth by odds, if his single arm could help him. Such at least is the lesson we were taught in chivalry at the Castle of Avenel."

"The good seed hath fallen into good ground, young man," said Seyton; "but, alás! if thou practise such honorable war in these dishonorable days, when right is everywhere borne down by mastery, thy life, my poor boy, will be but a short one."

"Let it be short, so it be honorable," said Roland Græme; "and permit me now, my lord, to commend me to your grace, and to take my leave. A comrade waits with my horse in the street."

"Take this, however, young man," said Lord Seyton,* undoing from his bonnet the golden chain and medal, "and wear it for my sake."

With no little pride Ronald Græme accepted the gift, which he hastily fastened around his bonnet, as he had seen gallants wear such an ornament, and, renewing his obeisance to the baron, left the hall, traversed the court, and appeared in the strêet, just as Adam Woodcock, vexed and anxious at his delay, had determined to leave the horses to their fate and go in quest of his youthful comrade. "Whose barn hast thou broken next?" he exclaimed, greatly relieved by

* See Note 13.

his appearance, although his countenance indicated that he had passed through an agitating scene.

"Ask me no questions," said Ronald, leaping gaily on his horse; "but see how short time it takes to win a chain of gold," pointing to that which he now wore.

"Now, God forbid that thou hast either stolen it or reft it by violence," said the falconer; "for, otherwise, I wot not how the devil thou couldst compass it. I have been often here, ay, for months at an end, and no one gave me either chain or medal."

"Thou seest I have got one on shorter acquaintance with the city," answered the page; "but set thine honest heart at rest: that which is fairly won and freely given is neither reft nor stolen."

"Marry, hang thee, with thy fanfarona* about thy neck!" said the falconer; "I think water will not drown nor hemp strangle thee. Thou hast been discarded as my lady's page, to come in again as my lord's squire; and, for following a noble young damsel into some great household, thou getst a chain and medal, where another would have had the baton across his shoulders, if he missed having the dirk in his body. But here we come in front of the old abbey. Bear thy good luck with you when you cross these paved stones, and, by Our Lady, you may brag Scotland."

As he spoke, they checked their horses, where the huge old vaulted entrance to the Abbey or Palace of Holyrood crossed the termination of the street down which they had proceeded. The courtyard of the palace opened within this gloomy porch, showing the front of an irregular pile of monastic buildings, one wing of which is still extant, forming a part of the modern palace, erected in the days of Charles I.

At the gate of the porch the falconer and page resigned their horses to the serving-man in attendance; the falconer commanding him, with an air of authority, to carry them safely to the stables. "We follow," he said, "the Knight of Avenel. We must bear ourselves for what we are here," said he in a whisper to Ronald, "for every one here is looked on as they demean themselves; and he that is too modest must to the wall, as the proverb says; therefore, cock thy bonnet, man, and let us brook the causeway bravely."

Assuming, therefore, an air of consequence corresponding to what he supposed to be his master's importance and quality, Adam Woodcock led the way into the courtyard of the Palace of Holyrood.

* See Note 14.

CHAPTER XVIII

The sky is clouded, Gaspard,
And the vex'd ocean sleeps a troubled sleep,
Beneath a lurid gleam of parting sunshine.
Such slumber hangs o'er discontented lands,
While factions doubt, as yet, if they have strength
To front the open battle.

Albion, a Poem.

THE youthful page paused on the entrance of the courtyard, and implored his guide to give him a moment's breathing-space. "Let me but look around me, man," said he; "you consider not I have never seen such a scene as this before. And this is Holyrood—the resort of the gallant and gay, and the fair, and the wise, and the powerful!"

"Ay, marry, is it!" said Woodcock; "but I wish I could hood thee as they do the hawks, for thou startest as wildly as if you sought another fray or another Sanfaron. I would I had thee safely housed, for thou lookest wild as a goss-hawk."

It was indeed no common sight to Roland, the vestibule of a palace, traversed by its various groups—some radiant with gaiety, some pensive, and apparently weighed down by affairs concerning the state or concerning themselves. Here the hoary statesman, with his cautious yet commanding look, his furred cloak and sable pantoufles; there the soldier, in buff and steel, his long sword jarring against the pavement, and his whiskered upper lip and frowning brow looking a habitual defiance of danger which perhaps was not always made good; there again passed my lord's serving-man, high of heart and bloody of hand, humble to his master and his master's equals, insolent to all others. To these might be added, the poor suitor, with his anxious look and depressed mien; the officer, full of his brief authority, elbowing his betters, and possibly his benefactors, out of the road; the proud priest, who sought a better benefice; the proud baron, who sought a grant of church lands; the robber chief, who came to solicit a pardon for the injuries he had inflicted on his neighbors; the plundered franklin, who came to seek vengeance for that which he had himself received. Besides, there was the mus-

tering and disposition of guards and soldiers; the despatching of messengers, and the receiving them; the trampling and neighing of horses without the gate; the flashing of arms, and rustling of plumes, and jingling of spurs, within it. In short, it was that gay and splendid confusion in which the eye of youth sees all that is brave and brilliant, and that of experience much that is doubtful, deceitful, false, and hollow—hopes that will never be gratified, promises which will never be fulfilled, pride in the disguise of humility, and insolence in that of frank and generous bounty.

As, tired of the eager and enraptured attention which the page gave to a scene so new to him, Adam Woodcock endeavored to get him to move forward, before his exuberance of astonishment should attract the observation of the sharp-witted denizens of the court, the falconer himself became an object of attention to a gay menial in a dark-green bonnet and feather, with a cloak of a corresponding color, laid down, as the phrase then went, by six broad bars of silver lace, and welted with violet and silver. The words of recognition burst from both at once. "What! Adam Woodcock at court!" and "What! Michael Wing-the-Wind—and how runs the hackit greyhound bitch now?"

"The waur for the wear, like ourselves, Adam,—eight years this grass—no four legs will carry a dog forever; but we keep her for the breed, and so she 'scapes Border doom. But why stand you gazing there? I promise you, my lord has wished for you and asked for you."

"My Lord of Murray asked for me, and he Regent of the kingdom too!" said Adam. "I hunger and thirst to pay my duty to my good lord; but I fancy his good lordship remembers the day's sport on Carnwath Moor; and my Drummelzier falcon, that beat the hawks from the Isle of Man, and won his lordship a hundred crowns from the Southern baron whom they called Stanley."

"Nay, not to flatter thee, Adam," said his court friend, "he remembers nought of thee, or of thy falcon either. He hath flown many a higher flight since that, and struck his quarry too. But come—come hither away; I trust we are to be good comrades on the old score."

"What!" said Adam, "you would have me crush a pot with you? but I must first dispose of my eyas, where he will neither have girl to chase nor lad to draw sword upon."

"Is the youngster such a one?" said Michael.

"Ay, by my hood, he flies at all game," replied Woodcock.

“Then had he better come with us,” said Michael Wing-the-Wind; “for we cannot have a proper carouse just now, only I would wet my lips, and so must you. I want to hear the news from St. Mary’s before you see my lord, and I will let you know how the wind sits up yonder.”

While he thus spoke, he led the way to a side door which opened into the court; and threading several dark passages with the air of one who knew the most secret recesses of the palace, conducted them to a small matted chamber, where he placed bread and cheese and a foaming flagon of ale before the falconer and his young companion, who immediately did justice to the latter in a hearty draught, which nearly emptied the measure. Having drawn his breath, and dashed the froth from his whiskers, he observed, that his anxiety for the boy had made him deadly dry.

“Mend your draught,” said his hospitable friend, again supplying the flagon from a pitcher which stood beside. “I know the way to the buttery-bar. And now, mind what I say. This morning the Earl of Morton came to my lord in a mighty chafe.”

“What! they keep the old friendship, then?” said Woodcock.

“Ay, ay, man, what else?” said Michael; “one hand must scratch the other. But in a mighty chafe was my Lord of Morton, who, to say truth, looketh on such occasions altogether uncanny, and, as it were, fiendish; and he says to my lord—for I was in the chamber taking orders about a cast of hawks that are to be fetched from Darnaway; they match your long-winged falcons, friend Adam.”

“I will believe that when I see them fly as high a pitch,” replied Woodcock, this professional observation forming a sort of parenthesis.

“However,” said Michael, pursuing his tale, “my Lord of Morton, in a mighty chafe, asked my Lord Regent whether he was well dealt with—‘For my brother,’ said he, ‘should have had a gift to be commendator of Kennaquhair, and to have all the temporalities erected into a lordship of regality for his benefit; and here,’ said he, ‘the false monks have had the insolence to choose a new abbot to put his claim in my brother’s way; and, moreover, the rascality of the neighborhood have burned and plundered all that was left in the abbey, so that my brother will not have a house to dwell in when he hath ousted the lazy hounds of priests.’ And my lord, seeing him chafed, said mildly to him, ‘These are shrewd tidings, Douglas, but I trust they be not true; for

Halbert Glendinning went southward yesterday with a band of spears, and assuredly, had either of these chances happened, that the monks had presumed to choose an abbot, or that the abbey had been burnt, as you say, he had taken order on the spot for the punishment of such insolence, and had despatched us a messenger.' And the Earl of Morton replied— Now I pray you, Adam, to notice that I say this out of love to you and your lord, and also for old comradeship ; and also because Sir Halbert hath done me good, and may again ; and also because I love not the Earl of Morton, as indeed more fear than like him—so then it were a foul deed in you to betray me.—' But,' said the Earl to the Regent, ' take heed, my lord, you trust not this Glendinning too far : he comes of churl's blood, which was never true to the nobles.' By St. Andrew, these were his very words. ' And besides,' he said, ' he hath a brother a monk in St. Mary's, and walks all by his guidance, and is making friends on the Border with Buccleuch and with Fernieherst,* and will join hand with them, were there likelihood of a new world.' And my lord answered like a free noble lord as he is : ' Tush ! my Lord of Morton, I will be warrant for Glendinning's faith ; and for his brother, he is a dreamer, that thinks of naught but book and breviary ; and if such hap have chanced as you tell of, I look to receive from Glendinning the cowl of a hanged monk, and the head of a riotous churl, by way of sharp and sudden justice.' And my Lord of Morton left the place, and, as it seemed to me, somewhat malcontent. But since that time my lord has asked me more than once whether there has arrived no messenger from the Knight of Avenel. And all this I have told you, that you may frame your discourse to the best purpose, for it seems to me that my lord will not be well pleased if aught has happened like what my Lord of Morton said, and if your lord hath not ta'en strict orders with it."

There was something in this communication which fairly blanked the bold visage of Adam Woodcock, in spite of the reinforcement which his natural hardihood had received from the berry-brown ale of Holyrood.

" What was it he said about a churl's head, that grim Lord of Morton ? " said the disconcerted falconer to his friend.

" Nay, it was my Lord Regent, who said that he expected, if the abbey was injured, your knight would send him the head of the ringleader among the rioters."

* Both these Border chieftains were great friends of Queen Mary.

“Nay, but is this done like a good Protestant,” said Adam Woodcock, “or a true Lord of the Congregation? We used to be their white-boys and darlings when we pulled down the convents in Fife and Perthshire.”

“Ay, but that,” said Michael, “was when old mother Rome held her own, and her [the] great folks were determined she should have no shelter for her head in Scotland. But, now that the priests are fled in all quarters, and their houses and lands are given to our grandees, they cannot see that we are working the work of reformation in destroying the palaces of zealous Protestants.”

“But I tell you St. Mary’s is not destroyed!” said Woodcock, in increasing agitation; “some trash of painted windows there were broken—things that no nobleman could have brooked in his house; some stone saints were brought on their marrow-bones, like old Widdrington at Chevy Chase; but as for fire-raising, there was not so much as a lighted lunt amongst us, save the match which the dragon had to light the burning tow withal, which he was to spit against St. George; nay, I had caution of that.”

“How! Adam Woodcock,” said his comrade, “I trust thou hadst no hand in such a fair work? Look you, Adam, I were loth to terrify you, and you just come from a journey; but I promise you, Earl Morton hath brought you down a ‘maiden’ from Halifax, you never saw the like of her; and she’ll clasp you round the neck, and your head will remain in her arms.”

“Pshaw!” answered Adam, “I am too old to have my head turned by any maiden of them all. I know my Lord of Morton will go as far for a buxom lass as any one; but what the devil took him to Halifax all the way? and if he has got a gamester there, what hath she to do with my head?”

“Much—much!” answered Michael. “Herod’s daughter, who did such execution with her foot and ankle, danced not men’s heads off more cleanly than this maiden of Morton.* ’Tis an ax, man—an ax which falls of itself like a sash window, and never gives the headsman the trouble to wield it.”

“By my faith, a shrewd device,” said Woodcock; “Heaven keep us free on’t!”

The page, seeing no end to the conversation between these two old comrades, and anxious, from what he had heard, concerning the fate of the abbot, now interrupted their conference.

* See Note 15.

“Methinks,” he said, “Adam Woodcock; thou hadst better deliver thy master’s letter to the Regent; questionless he hath therein stated what has chanced at Kennaquhair, in the way most advantageous for all concerned.”

“The boy is right,” said Michael Wing-the-Wind, “my lord will be very impatient.”

“The child hath wit enough to keep himself warm,” said Adam Woodcock, producing from his hawking-bag his lord’s letter, addressed to the Earl of Murray, “and for that matter so have I. So, Master Roland, you will e’en please to present this yourself to the Lord Regent; his presence will be better graced by a young page than by an old falconer.”

“Well said, canny Yorkshire!” replied his friend; “and but now you were so earnest to see our good lord! Why, wouldst thou put the lad into the noose that thou mayst slip tether thyself? or dost thou think the maiden will clasp his fair young neck more willingly than thy old sunburnt weasand?”

“Go to,” answered the falconer; “thy wit towers high an it could strike the quarry. I tell thee, the youth has naught to fear: he had nothing to do with the gambol. A rare gambol it was, Michael, as madcaps ever played; and I had made as rare a ballad, if we had had the luck to get it sung to an end. But mum for that—*tace*, as I said before; is Latin for a candle. Carry the youth to the presence, and I will remain here, with bridle in hand, ready to strike the spurs up to the rowel-heads, in case the hawk flies my way. I will soon put Soltra Edge, I trow, betwixt the Regent and me, if he means me less than fair play.”

“Come on then, my lad,” said Michael, “since thou must needs take the spring before canny Yorkshire.” So saying, he led the way through winding passages, closely followed by Roland Græme, until they arrived at a large winding stone stair, the steps of which were so long and broad, and at the same time so low, as to render the ascent uncommonly easy. When they had ascended about the height of one story, the guide stepped aside, and pushed open the door of a dark and gloomy ante-chamber; so dark, indeed, that his youthful companion stumbled, and nearly fell down upon a low step, which was awkwardly placed on the very threshold.

“Take heed,” said Michael Wing-the-Wind, in a very low tone of voice, and first glancing cautiously round to see if any one listened—“take heed, my young friend, for those who fall on these boards seldom rise again. Seest thou

that," he added, in a still lower voice, pointing to some dark crimson stains on the floor, on which a ray of light, shot through a small aperture, and traversing the general gloom of the apartment, fell with mottled radiance—"seest thou that, youth? Walk warily, for men have fallen here before you."

"What mean you?" said the page, his flesh creeping, though he scarce knew why. "Is it blood?"

"Ay, ay," said the domestic, in the same whispering tone, and dragging the youth on by the arm. "Blood it is—but this is no time to question, or even to look at it. "Blood it is, foully and fearfully shed, as foully and fearfully avenged. The blood," he added, in a still more cautious tone, "of Seignor David."

Roland Grame's heart throbbed when he found himself so unexpectedly in the scene of Rizzio's slaughter—a catastrophe which had chilled with horror all even in that rude age, which had been the theme of wonder and pity through every cottage and castle in Scotland, and had not escaped that of Avenel. But his guide hurried him forward, permitting no further question, and with the manner of one who has already tampered too much with a dangerous subject. A tap which he made at a low door at one end of the vestibule was answered by a huissier, or usher, who, opening it cautiously, received Michael's intimation that a page waited the Regent's leisure, who brought letters from the Knight of Avenel.

"The council is breaking up," said the usher; "but give me the packet; his Grace the Regent will presently see the messenger."

"The packet," replied the page, "must be delivered into the Regent's own hands; such were the orders of my master."

The usher looked at him from head to foot, as if surprised at his boldness, and then replied, with some asperity, "Say you so, my young master? Thou crowest loudly to be but a chicken, and from a country barnyard too."

"Were it a time or place," said Roland, "thou shouldst see I can do more than crow; but do your duty, and let the Regent know I wait his pleasure."

"Thou art but a pert knave to tell me of my duty," said the courtier in office; "but I will find a time to show you you are out of yours; meanwhile, wait there till you are wanted." So saying, he shut the door in Roland's face.

Michael Wing-the-Wind, who had shrunk from his youth-

ful companion during this altercation, according to the established maxim of courtiers of all ranks, and in all ages, now transgressed their prudential line of conduct so far as to come up to him once more. "Thou art a hopeful young springald," said he, "and I see right well old Yorkshire had reason in his caution. Thou hast been five minutes in the court, and hast employed thy time so well as to make a powerful and a mortal enemy of the usher of the council-chamber. Why, man, you might almost as well have offended the deputy butler!"

"I care not what he is," said Roland Græme; "I will teach whomever I speak with to speak civilly to me in return. I did not come from Avenel to be browbeaten in Holyrood."

"Bravo, my lad!" said Michael; "it is a fine spirit if you can hold it; but see, the door opens."

The usher appeared, and, in a more civil tone of voice and manner, said that his Grace the Regent would receive the Knight of Avenel's message; and accordingly marshaled Roland Græme the way into the apartment, from which the council had been just dismissed, after finishing their consultations. There was in the room a long oaken table, surrounded by stools of the same wood, with a large elbow-chair, covered with crimson velvet at the head. Writing materials and papers were lying there in apparent disorder; and one or two of the privy-councilors who had lingered behind, assuming their cloaks, bonnets, and swords, and bidding farewell to the Regent, were departing slowly by a large door, on the opposite side to that through which the page entered. Apparently the Earl of Murray had made some jest, for the smiling countenances of the statesmen expressed that sort of cordial reception which is paid by courtiers to the condescending pleasantries of a prince.

The Regent himself was laughing heartily as he said, "Farewell, my lords, and hold me remembered to the Cock of the North."

He then turned slowly round towards Roland Græme, and the marks of gaiety, real or assumed, disappeared from his countenance as completely as the passing bubbles leave the dark mirror of a still profound lake into which a traveler has cast a stone; in the course of a minute his noble features had assumed their natural expression of deep and even melancholy gravity.

This distinguished statesman, for as such his worst enemies acknowledged him, possessed all the external dignity, as well as almost all the noble qualities, which could grace the power

that he enjoyed ; and had he succeeded to the throne as his legitimate inheritance, it is probable he would have been recorded as one of Scotland's wisest and greatest kings. But that he held his authority by the deposition and imprisonment of his sister and benefactress was a crime which those only can excuse who think ambition an apology for ingratitude. He was dressed plainly in black velvet, after the Flemish fashion, and wore in his high-crowned hat a jeweled clasp, which looped up on one side, and formed the only ornament of his apparel. He had his poniard by his side, and his sword lay on the council table.

Such was the personage before whom Roland Græme now presented himself, with a feeling of breathless awe, very different from the usual boldness and vicacity of his temper. In fact, he was, from education and nature, forward, but not impudent, and was much more easily controlled by the moral superiority, arising from the elevated talents and renown of those with whom he conversed, than by pretensions founded only on rank or external show. He might have braved with indifference the presence of an earl, merely distinguished by his belt and coronet ; but he felt overawed in that of the eminent soldier and statesman, the wielder of a nation's power, and the leader of her armies. The greatest and wisest are flattered by the deference of youth, so graceful and becoming in itself ; and Murray took, with much courtesy, the letter from the hands of the abashed and blushing page, and answered with complaisance to the imperfect and half-muttered greeting which he endeavored to deliver to him on the part of Sir Halbert of Avenel. He even paused a moment ere he broke the silk with which the letter was secured, to ask the page his name, so much he was struck with his very handsome features and form.

"Roland Graham," he said, repeating the words after the hesitating page, "what, of the Grahams of Lennox ?"

"No, my lords," replied Roland ; "my parents dwelt in the Debateable Land."

Murray made no farther inquiry ; but proceeded to read his despatches, during the perusal of which his brow began to assume a stern expression of displeasure, as that of one who found something which at once surprised and disturbed him. He sate down on the nearest seat, frowned till his eyebrows almost met together, read the letter twice over, and was then silent for several minutes. At length, raising his head, his eye encountered that of the usher, who in vain endeavored to exchange the look of eager and curious observa-

tion with which he had been perusing the Regent's features for that open and unnoticing expression of countenance which, in looking at all, seems as if it saw and marked nothing—a cast of look which may be practised with advantage by all those, of whatever degree, who are admitted to witness the familiar and unguarded hours of their superiors. Great men are as jealous of their thoughts as the wife of King Candaules was of her charms, and will as readily punish those who have, however involuntarily, beheld them in mental dishabille and exposure.

“Leave the apartment, Hyndman,” said the Regent, sternly, “and carry your observation elsewhere. You are too knowing, sir, for your post, which, by special order, is destined for men of blunter capacity. So! now you look more like a fool than you did (for Hyndman, as may easily be supposed, was not a little disconcerted by this rebuke); keep that confused stare, and it may keep your office. Begone, sir!”

The usher departed in dismay, not forgetting to register, amongst his other causes of dislike to Roland Græme, that he had been the witness of this disgraceful chiding. When he had left the apartment, the Regent again addressed the page.

“Your name you say is Armstrong?”

“No,” replied Roland, “my name is Græme, so please you—Roland Græme, whose forbears were designated of Heather-gill, in the Debateable Land.”

“Ay, I knew it was a name from the Debateable Land. Hast thou any acquaintances here in Edinburgh?”

“My lord,” replied Roland, willing rather to evade this question than to answer it directly, for the prudence of being silent with respect to Lord Seyton's adventure immediately struck him, “I have been in Edinburgh scarce an hour, and that for the first time in my life.”

“What! and thou Sir Halbert Glendinning's page?” said the Regent.

“I was brought up as my lady's page,” said the youth, “and left Avenel Castle for the first time in my life—at least since my childhood—only three days since.”

“My lady's page!” repeated the Earl of Murray, as if speaking to himself; “it was strange to send his lady's page on a matter of such deep concernment. Morton will say it is of a piece with the nomination of his brother to be abbot; and yet in some sort an inexperienced youth will best serve the turn. What hast thou been taught, young man, in thy doubtful apprenticeship!”

“To hunt, my lord, and to hawk,” said Roland Græme.

“To hunt coney, and to hawk at ouzels ? said the Regent, smiling ; “for such are the sports of ladies and their followers.”

Græme’s cheek reddened deeply as he replied, not without some emphasis, “To hunt red-deer of the first head, and to strike down herons of the highest soar, my lord, which, in Lothian speech, may be termed, for aught I know, coney and ouzels ; also, I can wield a brand and couch a lance, according to our Border meaning ; in inland speech these may be termed water-flags and bulrushes.”

“Thy speech rings like metal,” said the Regent, “and I pardon the sharpness of it for the truth. Thou knowest, then, what belongs to the duty of a man-at-arms ?”

“So far as exercise can teach it, without real service in the field,” answered Roland Græme ; “but our knight permitted none of his household to make raids, and I never had the good fortune to see a stricken field.”

“The good fortune !” repeated the Regent, smiling somewhat sorrowfully ; “take my word, young man, war is the only game from which both parties rise losers.”

“Not always, my lord,” answered the page, with his characteristic audacity, “if fame speaks truth.”

“How, sir ?” said the Regent, coloring in his turn, and perhaps suspecting an indiscreet allusion to the height which he himself had attained by the hap of civil war.

“Because, my lord,” said Roland Græme, without change of tone, “he who fights well must have fame in life or honor in death ; and so war is a game from which no one can rise a loser.”

The Regent smiled and shook his head, when at that moment the door opened, and the Earl of Morton presented himself.

“I come somewhat hastily,” he said, “and I enter unannounced, because my news are of weight. It is as I said : Edward Glendinning is named abbot, and——”

“Hush, my lord !” said the Regent, “I know it, but——”

“And perhaps you knew it before I did, my Lord of Murray,” answered Morton, his dark red brow growing darker and redder as he spoke.

“Morton,” said Murray, “suspect me not—touch not mine honor ; I have to suffer enough from the calumnies of foes, let me not have to contend with the unjust suspicions of my friends. We are not alone,” said he, recollecting himself “or I could tell thee more.”

He led Morton into one of the deep embrasures which the windows formed in the massive wall, and which afforded a retiring-place for their conversing apart. In this recess, Roland observed them speak together with much earnestness, Murray appearing to be grave and earnest, and Morton having a jealous and offended air, which seemed gradually to give way to the assurances of the Regent.

As their conversation grew more earnest, they became gradually louder in speech, having perhaps forgotten the presence of the page, the more readily as his position in the apartment placed him out of sight, so that he found himself unwillingly privy to more of their discourse than he cared to hear. For, page though he was, a mean curiosity after the secrets of others had never been numbered amongst Roland's failings; and, moreover, with all his natural rashness, he could not but doubt the safety of becoming privy to the secret discourse of these powerful and dreaded men. Still, he could neither stop his ears nor with propriety leave the apartment; and while he thought of some means of signifying his presence, he had already heard so much that to have produced himself suddenly would have been as awkward, and perhaps as dangerous, as in quiet to abide the end of their conference. What he overheard, however, was but an imperfect part of their communication; and although a more expert politician, acquainted with the circumstances of the times, would have had little difficulty in tracing the meaning, yet Ronald Græme could only form very general and vague conjectures as to the import of their discourse.

"All is prepared," said Murray, "and Lindesay is setting forward. She must hesitate no longer; thou seest I act by thy counsel, and harden myself against softer considerations."

"True, my lord," replied Morton, "in what is necessary to gain power you do not hesitate, but go boldly to the mark. But are you as careful to defend and preserve what you have won? Why this establishment of domestics around her? Has not your sister men and maidens enough to tend her, but you must consent to this superfluous and dangerous retinue?"

"For shame, Morton! a princess, and my sister, could I do less than allow her due tendance?"

"Ay," replied Morton, "even thus fly all your shafts—smartly enough loosened from the bow, and not unskilfully aimed, but a breath of foolish affection ever crosses in the mid volley, and sways the arrow from the mark."

"Say not so, Morton!" replied Murray; "I have both dared and done——"

“Yes, enough to gain, but not enough to keep; reckon not that she will think and act thus. You have wounded her deeply both in pride and in power; it signifies nought that you would tent now the wound with unavailing salves: as matters stand with you, you must forfeit the title of an affectionate brother, to hold that of a bold and determined statesman.”

“Morton!” said Murray, with some impatience, “I brook not these taunts; what I have done I have done; what I must farther do, I must and will; but I am not made of iron like thee, and I cannot but remember. Enough of this—my purpose holds.”

“And I warrant me,” said Morton, “the choice of these domestic consolations will rest with——”

Here he whispered names which escaped Roland Græme’s ear. Murray replied in a similar tone, but so much raised towards the conclusion of the sentence that the page heard these words—“And of him I hold myself secure, by Glendinning’s recommendation.”

“Ay, which may be as much trustworthy as his late conduct at the Abbey of St. Mary’s: you have heard that his brother’s election has taken place. Your favorite Sir Halbert, my Lord of Murray, has as much fraternal affection as yourself.”

“By Heaven, Morton, that taunt demanded an unfriendly answer, but I pardon it, for your brother also is concerned; but this election shall be annulled. I tell you, Earl of Morton, while I hold the sword of state in my royal nephew’s name, neither lord nor knight in Scotland shall dispute my authority; and if I bear with insults from my friends, it is only while I know them to be such, and forgive their follies for their faithfulness.”

Morton muttered what seemed to be some excuse, and the Regent answered him in a milder tone, and then subjoined, “Besides, I have another pledge than Glendinning’s recommendation for this youth’s fidelity: his nearest relative has placed herself in my hands as his security, to be dealt withal as his doings shall deserve.”

“That is something,” replied Morton: “but yet, in fair love and good-will, I must still pray you to keep on your guard. The foes are stirring again, as horse-flies and hornets become busy so soon as the storm-blast is over. George of Seyton was crossing the causeway this morning with a score of men at his back, and had a ruffle with my friends of the house of Leslie; they met at the Tron, and

were fighting hard, when the provost, with his guard of partizans, came in thirdsman, and staved them asunder with their halberds, as men part dog and bear."

"He hath my order for such interference," said the Regent. "Has any one been hurt?"

"George of Seyton himself, by black Ralph Leslie; the devil take the rapier that ran not through from side to side! Ralph has a bloody coxcomb, by a blow from a messan page whom nobody knew; Dick Seyton of Windygowl is run through the arm; and two gallants of the Leslies have suffered phlebotomy. This is all the gentle blood which has been spilled in the revel; but a yeoman or two on both sides have had bones broken and ears cropped. The hostler-wives, who are like to be the only losers by their miscarriage, have dragged the knaves off the street, and are crying a drunken coronach over them."

"You take it lightly, Douglas," said the Regent; "these broils and feuds would shame the capital of the Great Turk, let alone that of a Christian and Reformed state. But, if I live, this gear shall be amended; and men shall say, when they read my story, that if it were my cruel hap to rise to power by the dethronement of a sister, I employed it, when gained, for the benefit of the commonweal."

"And of your friends," replied Morton; "wherefore I trust for your instant order annulling the election of this lurdane abbot, Edward Glendinning."

"You shall be presently satisfied," said the Regent, and, stepping forward, he began to call, "So ho, Hyndman!" when suddenly his eye lighted on Roland Græme. "By my faith, Douglas," said he, turning to his friend, "here have been three at counsel!"

"Ay, but only two can keep counsel," said Morton; "the galliard must be disposed of."

"For shame, Morton—an orphan boy! Hearken thee, my child. Thou hast told me some of thy accomplishments—canst thou speak truth?"

"Ay, my lord, when it serves my turn," replied Græme.

"It shall serve thy turn now," said the Regent; "and falsehood shall be thy destruction. How much hast thou heard or understood of what we two have spoken together?"

"But little, my lord," replied Roland Græme, boldly, "which met my apprehension, saving that it seemed to me as if in something you doubted the faith of the Knight of Avenel, under whose roof I was nurtured."

"And what hast thou to say on that point, young man?"

continued the Regent, bending his eyes upon him with a keen and strong expression of observation.

"That," said the page, "depends on the quality of those who speak against his honor whose bread I have long eaten. If they be my inferiors, I say they lie, and will maintain what I say with my baton ; if my equals, still I say they lie, and will do battle in the quarrel, if they list, with my sword ; if my superiors——" he paused.

"Proceed boldly," said the Regent. "What if thy superiors said aught that nearly touched your master's honor ?"

"I would say," replied Græme, "that he did ill to slander the absent, and that my master was a man who could render an account of his actions to any one who should manfully demand it of him to his face."

"And it were manfully said," replied the Regent. "What thinkest thou, my Lord of Morton ?"

"I think," replied Morton, "that if the young galliard resemble a certain ancient friend of ours as much in the craft of his disposition as he does in eye and in brow, there may be a wide difference betwixt what he means and what he speaks."

"And whom meanest thou that he resembles so closely ?" said Murray.

"Even the true and trusty Julian Avenel," replied Morton.

"But this youth belongs to the Debateable Land," said Murray.

"It may be so ; but Julian was an outlying striker of venison, and made many a far cast when he had a fair doe in chase."

"Pshaw !" said the Regent, "this is but idle talk. Here, thou Hyndman—thou curiosity," calling to the usher, who now entered, "conduct this youth to his companion. You will both," he said to Græme, "keep yourselves in readiness to travel on short notice." And then motioning to him courteously to withdraw, he broke up the interview.

CHAPTER XIX

It is and is not—'tis the thing I sought for.
Have kneel'd for, pray'd for, risk'd my fame and life for,
And yet it is not—no more than the shadow
Upon the hard, cold, flat, and polish'd mirror
Is the warm, graceful, rounded, living substance
Which it presents in form and lineament.

Old Play.

THE usher, with gravity which ill concealed a jealous scowl, conducted Roland Græme to a lower apartment, where he found his comrade, the falconer. The man of office then briefly acquainted them that this would be their residence till his Grace's further orders; that they were to go to the pantry, to the buttery, to the cellar, and to the kitchen, at the usual hours, to receive the allowances becoming their station—instructions which Adam Woodcock's old familiarity with the court made him perfectly understand. "For your beds," he said, "you must go to the hostelry of St. Michael's, in respect the palace is now full of the domestics of the greater nobles."

No sooner was the usher's back turned than Adam exclaimed, with all the glee of eager curiosity, "And now, Master Roland, the news—the news; come, unbutton thy pouch and give us thy tidings. What says the Regent? Asks he for Adam Woodcock? And is all soldered up, or must the Abbot of Unreason strap for it?"

"All is well in that quarter," said the page; "and for the rest—— But, hey-day, what! have you taken the chain and medal off from my bonnet?"

"And meet time it was, when yon usher, vinegar-faced rogue that he is, began to inquire what Popish trangam you were wearing. By the mass, the metal would have been confiscated for conscience, sake, like your other rattle-trap yonder at Avenel, which Mrs. Liliars bears about on her shoes in the guise of a pair of shoe-buckles. This comes of carrying Popish nicknackets about you."

"The jade!" exclaimed Roland Græme, "has she melted down my rosary into buckles for her clumsy hoofs, which will set off such a garnish nearly as well as a cow's might?"

But, hang her, let her keep them ; many a dog's trick have I played old Liliass, for want of having something better to do, and the buckles will serve for a remembrance. Do you remember the verjuice I put into the comfits, when old Wingate and she were to breakfast together on Easter morning ? ”

“ In troth do I, Master Roland ; the major-domo's mouth was as crooked as a hawk's beak for the whole morning afterwards, and any other page in your room would have tasted the discipline of the porter's lodge for it. But my lady's favor stood between your skin and many a jerking. Lord send you may be the better for her protection in such matters ! ”

“ I am at least grateful for it, Adam ; and I am glad you put me in mind of it. ”

“ Well, but the news, my young master, ” said Woodcock—“ spell me the tidings ; what are we to fly at next ? What did the Regent say to you ? ”

“ Nothing that I am to repeat again, ” said Roland Græme, shaking his head.

“ Why, hey-day, ” said Adam, “ how prudent we are become all of a sudden ! You have advanced rarely in brief space, Master Roland. You have wellnigh had your head broken, and you have gained your gold chain, and you have made an enemy, Master Usher to wit, with his two legs like hawks' perches, and you have had audience of the first man in the realm, and bear as much mystery in your brow as if you had flown in the court-sky ever since you were hatched. I believe in my soul you would run with a piece of egg-shell on your head like the curlews, which—I would we were after them again—we used to call whaups in the halidome and its neighborhood. But sit thee down, boy ; Adam Woodcock was never the lad to seek to enter into forbidden secrets—sit thee down, and I will go fetch the vivers ; I know the butler and the pantler of old. ”

The good-natured falconer set forth upon his errand, busying himself about procuring their refreshment ; and during his absence Roland Græme abandoned himself to the strange, complicated, and yet heart-stirring reflections to which the events of the morning had given rise. Yesterday he was of neither mark nor likelihood, a vagrant boy, the attendant on a relative of whose sane judgment he himself had not the highest opinion ; but now he had become, he knew not why, or wherefore, or to what extent, the custodier, as the Scottish phrase went, of some important state

secret, in the safe keeping of which the Regent himself was concerned. It did not diminish from, but rather added to, the interest of a situation so unexpected that Roland himself did not perfectly understand wherein he stood committed by the state secrets in which he had unwittingly become participator. On the contrary, he felt like one who looks on a romantic landscape, of which he sees the features for the first time, and then obscured with mist and driving tempest. The imperfect glimpse which the eye catches of rocks, trees, and other objects around him adds double dignity to these shrouded mountains and darkened abysses, of which the height, depth, and extent are left to imagination.

But mortals, especially at the well-appetized age which precedes twenty years, are seldom so much engaged either by real or conjectural subjects of speculation but that their earthly wants claim their hour of attention. And with many a smile did our hero, so the reader may term him if he will, hail the reappearance of his friend Adam Woodcock, bearing on one wooden platter a tremendous portion of boiled beef, and on another a plentiful allowance of greens, or rather what the Scotch call lang-kale. A groom followed with bread, salt, and the other means of setting forth a meal; and when they had both placed on the oaken table what they bore in their hands, the falconer observed that, since he knew the court; it had got harder and harder every day to the poor gentlemen and yeomen retainers, but that now it was an absolute flaying of a flea for the hide and tallow. Such thronging to the wicket, and such churlish answers, and such bare beef-bones, such a shouldering at the buttery-hatch, and cellarage, and nought to be gained beyond small insufficient single ale, or at best with a single "straike" of malt to counterbalance a double allowance of water. "By the mass, though, my young friend," said he, while he saw the food disappearing fast under Roland's active exertions, "it is not so well to lament for former times as to take the advantage of the present, else we are like to lose on both sides."

So saying, Adam Woodcock drew his chair towards the table, unsheathed his knife (for every one carried that minister of festive distribution for himself), and imitated his young companion's example, who for the moment had lost his anxiety for the future in the eager satisfaction of an appetite sharpened by youth and abstinence.

In truth; they made, though the materials were sufficiently ample, a very respectable meal at the expense of the royal

allowance ; and Adam Woodcock, notwithstanding the deliberate censure which he had passed on the household beer of the palace, had taken the fourth deep draught of the black-jack ere he remembered him that he had spoken in its dispraise. Then, flinging himself jollily and luxuriously back in an old Danske elbow-chair, and looking with careless glee towards the page, extending at the same time his right leg, and stretching the other easily over it, he reminded his companion that he had not yet heard the ballad which he had made for the Abbot of Unreason's revel. And accordingly he struck merrily up with

“The Pope, that pagan full of pride,
Has blinded us full lang—”

Roland Græme, who felt no great delight, as may be supposed, in the falconer's satire, considering its subject, began to snatch up his mantle and fling it around his shoulders, an action which instantly interrupted the ditty of Adam Woodcock.

“Where the vengeance are you going now,” he said, “thou restless boy ? Thou hast quicksilver in the veins of thee to a certainty, and canst no more abide any douce and sensible communing than a hoodless hawk would keep perched on my wrist !”

“Why, Adam,” replied the page, “if you must needs know, I am about to take a walk and look at this fair city. One may as well be still mewed up in the old castle of the lake, if one is to sit the livelong night between four walls, and hearken to old ballads.”

“It is a new ballad, the Lord help thee !” replied Adam, “and that one of the best that ever was matched with a rousing chorus.”

“Be it so,” said the page, “I will hear it another day, when the rain is dashing against the windows, and there is neither steed stamping, nor spur jingling, nor feather waving in the neighborhood, to mar my marking it well. But, even now, I want to be in the world, and to look about me.”

“But the never a stride shall you go without me,” said the falconer, “until the Regent shall take you whole and sound off my hand ; and so, if you will, we may go the hostelry of St. Michael's, and there you will see company enough, but through the casement, mark you me ; for as to rambling through the street to seek Seytons and Leslies, and having a dozen holes rifted in your new jacket with rapier and poniard, I will yield no way to it.”

“To the hostelry of St. Michael’s, then, with all my heart,” said the page; and they left the palace accordingly, rendered to the sentinels at the gate, who had now taken their posts for the evening, a strict account of their names and business, were dismissed through a small wicket of the close-barred portal, and soon reached the inn or hostelry of St. Michael, which stood in a large courtyard, off the main street, close under the descent of the Calton Hill. The place, wide, waste, and uncomfortable, resembled rather an Eastern caravansary, where men found shelter indeed, but were obliged to supply themselves with everything else, than one of our modern inns—

Where not one comfort shall to those be lost,
Who never ask, or never feel, the cost.

But still, to the inexperienced eye of Roland Græme, the bustle and confusion of this place of public resort furnished excitement and amusement. In the large room, into which they had rather found their own way than been ushered by mine host, travelers and natives of the city entered and departed, met and greeted, gamed or drank together, forming the strongest contrast to the stern and monotonous order and silence with which matters were conducted in the well-ordered household of the Knight of Avenel. Altercation of every kind, from brawling to jesting, was going on among the groups around them, and yet the noise and mingled voices seemed to disturb no one, and indeed to be noticed by no others than by those who composed the group to which the speaker belonged.

The falconer passed through the apartment to a projecting latticed window, which formed a sort of recess from the room itself; and having here esconced himself and his companion, he called for some refreshments; and a tapster, after he had shouted for the twentieth time, accommodated him with the remains of a cold capon and a neat’s tongue, together with a pewter stoup of weak French *vin-de-pays*. “Fetch a stoup of brandy-wine, thou knave. We will be jolly to-night, Master Roland,” said he, when he saw himself thus accommodated, “and let care come to-morrow.”

But Roland had eaten too lately to enjoy the good cheer; and feeling his curiosity much sharper than his appetite, he made it his choice to look out of the lattice, which overhung a large yard surrounded by the stables of the hostelry, and fed his eyes on the busy sight beneath; while Adam Wood-

cock, after he had compared his companion to the Laird of MacFarlane's geese, who liked their play better than their meat,* disposed of his time with the aid of cup and trencher, occasionally humming the burden of his birth-strangled ballad, and beating time to it with his fingers on the little round table. In this exercise he was frequently interrupted by the exclamations of his companion, as he saw something new in the yard beneath to attract and interest him.

It was a busy scene, for the number of gentlemen and nobles who were now crowded into the city had filled all spare stables and places of public reception with their horses and military attendants. There were some score of yeomen dressing their own or their masters' horses in the yard—whistling, singing, laughing, and upbraiding each other, in a style of wit which the good order of Avenel Castle rendered strange to Roland Græme's ears. Others were busy repairing their own arms, or cleaning those of their masters. One fellow, having just bought a bundle of twenty spears, was sitting in a corner, employed in painting the white staves of the weapons with yellow and vermilion. Other lackeys led large staghounds, or wolf-dogs, of noble race, carefully muzzled to prevent accidents to passengers. All came and went, mixed together and separated, under the delighted eye of the page, whose imagination had not even conceived a scene so gaily diversified with the objects he had most pleasure in beholding; so that he was perpetually breaking the quiet reverie of honest Woodcock, and the mental progress which he was making in his ditty, by exclaiming, "Look here, Adam—look at the bonny bay horse; St. Anthony, what a gallant forehand he hath got! And see the goodly gray, which yonder fellow in the frieze jacket is dressing as awkwardly as if he had never touched aught but a cow; I would I were nigh him to teach him his trade! And lo you, Adam, the gay Milan armor that the yeoman is scouring, all steel and silver, like our knight's prime suit, of which old Wingate makes such account. And see to yonder pretty wench, Adam, who comes tripping through them all with her milk-pail; I warrant me she has had a long walk from the loaning; she has a stammel waistcoat, like your favorite Cicely Sunderland, Master Adam!"

"By my hood, lad," answered the falconer, "it is well for thee thou wert brought up where grace grew. Even in the Castle of Avenel thou wert a wild-blood enough; but hadst thou been nurtured here, within a flight-shot of the court,

* [See *The Monastery*. Note 10, p. 441].

thou hadst been the veriest crack-hemp of a page that ever wore feather in thy bonnet or steel by thy side; truly, I wish it may end well with thee."

"Nay, but leave thy senseless humming and drumming, old Adam, and come to the window ere thou hast drenched thy senses in the pint-pot there. See, here comes a merry minstrel with his crowd, and a wench with him, that dances with bells at her ankles; and see, the yeomen and pages leave their horses and the armor they were cleaning, and gather round, as is very natural, to hear the music. Come, old Adam, we will thither too."

"You shall call me 'cut' if I do go down," said Adam; "you are near as good minstrelsy as the stroller can make, if you had but the grace to listen to it."

"But the wench in the stammel waistcoat is stopping too, Adam; by Heaven, they are going to dance! Frieze jacket wants to dance with stammel waistcoat, but she is coy and recusant."

Then suddenly changing his tone of levity into one of deep interest and surprise, he exclaimed, "Queen of Heaven! what is it that I see?" and then remained silent.

The sage Adam Woodcock, who was in a sort of languid degree amused with the page's exclamations, even while he professed to despise them, became at length rather desirous to set his tongue once more a-going, that he might enjoy the superiority afforded by his own intimate familiarity with all the circumstances which excited in his young companion's mind so much wonderment.

"Well, then," he said at last, "what is it you do see, Master Roland, that you have become mute all of a sudden?"

Roland returned no answer.

"I say, Master Roland Græme," said the falconer, "it is manners in my country for a man to speak when he is spoken to."

Roland Græme remained silent.

"The murrain is in the boy," said Adam Woodcock, "he has stared out his eyes and talked his tongue to pieces, I think!"

The falconer hastily drank off his can of wine, and came to Roland, who stood like a statue, with his eyes eagerly bent on the courtyard, though Adam Woodcock was unable to detect amongst the joyous scene which it exhibited aught that could deserve such devoted attention.

"The lad is mazed!" said the falconer to himself.

But Roland Græme had good reasons for his surprise,

though they were not such as he could communicate to his companion.

The touch of the old minstrel's instrument, for he had already begun to play, had drawn in several auditors from the street, when one entered the gate of the yard whose appearance exclusively arrested the attention of Roland Græme. He was of his own age, or a good deal younger, and from his dress and bearing might be of the same rank and calling, having all the air of coxcombry and pretension which accorded with a handsome, though slight and low, figure and an elegant dress, in part hid by a large purple cloak. As he entered, he cast a glance up towards the windows, and, to his extreme astonishment, under the purple velvet bonnet and white feather, Roland recognized the features so deeply impressed on his memory, the bright and clustered tresses, the laughing full blue eyes, the well-formed eyebrows, the nose with the slightest possible inclination to be aquiline, the ruby lip, of which an arch and half-suppressed smile seemed the habitual expression—in short, the form and face of Catherine Seyton; in man's attire, however, and mimicking, as it seemed not unsuccessfully, the bearing of a youthful but forward page.

“St. George and St. Andrew!” exclaimed the mazed Roland Græme to himself, “was there ever such an audacious quean! She seems a little ashamed of her mummery too, for she holds the lap of her cloak to her face, and her color is heightened; but, Sancta Maria, how she threads the throng, with as firm and bold a step as if she had never tied petticoat round her waist! Holy saints! she holds up her riding-rod as if she would lay it about some of their ears that stand most in her way; by the hand of my father! she bears herself like the very model of pagehood. Hey! what! sure she will not strike frieze jacket in earnest?” But he was not long left in doubt; for the lout whom he had before repeatedly noticed, standing in the way of the bustling page, and maintaining his place with clownish obstinacy or stupidity, the advanced riding-rod was, without a moment's hesitation, sharply applied to his shoulders, in a manner which made him spring aside, rubbing the part of the body which had received so unceremonious a hint that it was in the way of his betters. The party injured growled forth an oath or two of indignation, and Roland Græme began to think of flying downstairs to the assistance of the translated Catherine; but the laugh of the yard was against frieze jacket, which indeed had, in those days, small chance of

fair play in a quarrel with velvet and embroidery ; so that the fellow, who was a menial in the inn, slunk back to finish his task of dressing the bonny gray, laughed at by all, but most by the wench in the stammel waistcoat, his fellow-servant, who, to crown his disgrace, had the cruelty to cast an applauding smile upon the author of the injury, while, with a freedom more like the milkmaid of the town than she of the plains, she accosted him with—"Is there any one you want here, my pretty gentleman, that you seem in such haste?"

"I seek a slip of a lad," said the seeming gallant, "with a sprig of holly in his cap, black hair and black eyes, green jacket, and the air of a country coxcomb ; I have sought him through every close and alley in the Canongate—the fiend gore him!"

"Why, God-a-mercy, nun!" muttered Roland Græme, much bewildered.

"I will inquire him presently out for your fair young worship," said the wench of the inn.

"Do," said the gallant squire, "and if you bring me to him you shall have a groat to-night, and a kiss on Sunday when you have on a cleaner kirtle."

"Why, God-a-mercy, nun!" again muttered Roland, "this is a note above E La."

In a moment after the servant entered the room, and ushered in the object of his surprise.

While the disguised vestal looked with unabashed brow, and bold and rapid glance of her eye, through the various parties in the large old room, Roland Græme, who felt an internal awkward sense of bashful confusion, which he deemed altogether unworthy of the bold and dashing character to which he aspired, determined not to be browbeaten and put down by this singular female, but to meet her with a glance of recognition so sly, so penetrating, so expressively humorous, as should show her at once he was in possession of her secret and master of her fate, and should compel her to humble herself towards him, at least into the look and manner of respectful and deprecating observance.

This was extremely well planned ; but, just as Roland had called up the knowing glance, the suppressed smile, the shrewd intelligent look which was to insure his triumph, he encountered the bold, firm, and steady gaze of his brother or sister page, who, casting on him a falcon glance, and recognizing him at once as the object of his search, walked up with the most unconcerned look, the most free and undaunted

composure, and hailed him with, "You, sir holly-top, I would speak with you."

The steady coolness and assurance with which these words were uttered, although the voice was the very voice he had heard at the old convent, and although the features more nearly resembled those of Catherine when seen close than when viewed from a distance, produced, nevertheless, such a confusion in Roland's mind that he became uncertain whether he was not still under a mistake from the beginning; the knowing shrewdness which should have animated his visage faded into a sheepish bashfulness, and the half-suppressed but most intelligible smile became the senseless giggle of one who laughs to cover his own disorder of ideas.

"Do they understand a Scotch tongue in thy country, holly-top?" said this marvelous specimen of metamorphosis. "I said I would speak with thee."

"What is your business with my comrade, my young chick of the game?" said Adam Woodcock, willing to step in to his companion's assistance, though totally at a loss to account for the sudden disappearance of all Roland's usual smartness and presence of mind.

"Nothing to you, my old cock of the perch," replied the gallant; "go mind your hawk's castings. I guess by your bag and your gauntlet that you are squire of the body to a sort of kites."

He laughed as he spoke, and the laugh reminded Roland so irresistibly of the hearty fit of risibility in which Catherine had indulged at his expense when they first met in the old nunnery, that he could scarce help exclaiming, "Catherine Seyton, by Heavens!" He checked the exclamation, however, and only said, "I think, sir, we two are not totally strangers to each other."

"We must have met in our dreams, then," said the youth; "and my days are too busy to remember what I think on at nights."

"Or apparently to remember upon one day those whom you may have seen on the preceding eve," said Roland Græme.

The youth in his turn cast on him a look of some surprise, as he replied, "I know no more of what you mean than does the horse I ride on; if there be offense in your words, you shall find me as ready to take it as any lad in Lothian."

"You know well," said Roland, "though it pleases you to use the language of a stranger, that with you I can have no purpose to quarrel."

“Let me do mine errand, then, and be rid of you,” said the page. “Step hither this way, out of that old leathern fist’s hearing.”

They walked into the recess of the window, which Roland had left upon the youth’s entrance into the apartment. The messenger then turned his back on the company, after casting a hasty and sharp glance around to see if they were observed. Roland did the same, and the page in the purple mantle thus addressed him, taking at the same time from under his cloak a short, but beautifully-wrought sword, with the hilt and ornaments upon the sheath of silver, massively chased and over-gilded: “I bring you this weapon from a friend, who gives it you under the solemn condition that you will not unsheathe it until you are commanded by your rightful sovereign. For your warmth of temper is known, and the presumption with which you intrude yourself into the quarrels of others; and, therefore, this is laid upon you as a penance by those who wish you well, and whose hand will influence your destiny for good or for evil. This is what I was charged to tell you. So if you will give a fair word for a fair sword, and pledge your promise, with hand and glove, good and well; and if not, I will carry back Caliburn to those who sent it.”

“And may I not ask who these are?” said Roland Græme, admiring at the same time the beauty of the weapon thus offered him.

“My commission in no way leads me to answer such a question,” said he of the purple mantle.

“But if I am offended,” said Roland, “may I not draw to defend myself?”

“Not *this* weapon,” answered the sword-bearer; “but you have your own at command, and, besides, for what do you wear your poniard?”

“For no good,” said Adam Woodcock, who had now approached close to them, “and that I can witness as well as any one.”

“Stand back, fellow,” said the messenger; “thou hast an intrusive, curious face, that will come by a buffet if it is found where it has no concern.”

“A buffet, my young Master Malapert?” said Adam, drawing back, however; “best keep down fist, or, by Our Lady, buffet will beget buffet!”

“Be patient, Adam Woodcock,” said Roland Græme; “and let me pray you, fair sir, since by such addition you choose for the present to be addressed, may I not barely un-

sheathe this weapon, in pure simplicity of desire to know whether so fair a hilt and scabbard are matched with a befitting blade?"

"By no manner of means," said the messenger; "at a word, you must take it under the promise that you never draw it until you receive the commands of your lawful sovereign, or you must leave it alone."

"Under that condition, and coming from your friendly hand, I accept of the sword," said Roland, taking it from his hand; "but credit me, that if we are to work together in any weighty emprise, as I am induced to believe, some confidence and openness on your part will be necessary to give the right impulse to my zeal. I press for no more at present, it is enough that you understand me."

"I understand you!" said the page, exhibiting the appearance of unfeigned surprise in his turn. "Renounce me if I do! Here you stand jiggling, and sniggling, and looking cunning, as if there were some mighty matter of intrigue and common understanding betwixt you and me, whom you never set your eyes on before!"

"What!" said Roland Græme, "will you deny that we have met before?"

"Marry that I will, in any Christian court," said the other page.

"And will you also deny," said Roland, "that it was recommended to us to study each other's features well, that, in whatever disguise the time might impose upon us, each should recognize in the other the secret agent of a mighty work? Do not you remember that Sisters Magdalen and Dame Bridget——"

The messenger here interrupted him, shrugging up his shoulders with a look of compassion—"Bridget and Magdalen! why, this is madness and dreaming! Hark ye, Master Hollytop, your wits are gone on wool-gathering; comfort yourself with a caudle, thatch your brain-sick noddle with a woollen nightcap, and so God be with you!"

As he concluded this polite parting address, Adam Woodcock, who was again seated by the table on which stood the now empty can, said to him, "Will you drink a cup, young man, in the way of courtesy, now you have done your errand, and listen to a good song?" and without waiting for an answer, he commenced his ditty—

"The Pope, that pagan full of pride
Hath blinded us full long——"

It is probable that the good wine had made some innovation in the falconer's brain, otherwise he would have recollected the danger of introducing anything like political or polemical pleasantries into a public assemblage, at a time when men's minds were in a state of great irritability. To do him justice, he perceived his error, and stopped short so soon as he saw that the word "Pope" had at once interrupted the separate conversations of the various parties which were assembled in the apartment; and that many began to draw themselves up, bridle, look big, and prepare to take part in the impending brawl; while others, more decent and cautious persons, hastily paid down their lawing, and prepared to leave the place ere bad should come to worse.

And to worse it was soon likely to come; for no sooner did Woodcock's ditty reach the ear of the stranger page, than, uplifting his riding-rod, he exclaimed, "He who speaks irreverently of the Holy Father of the church in my presence is the cub of a heretic wolf-bitch, and I will switch him as I would a mongrel cur!"

"And I will break thy young pate," said Adam, "if thou darest to lift a finger to me." And then, in defiance of the young Drawcansir's threats, with a stout heart and dauntless accent, he again uplifted the stave,

"The Pope, that pagan full of pride,
Hath blinded——"

But Adam was able to proceed farther, being himself unfortunately blinded by a stroke of the impatient youth's switch across his eyes. Enraged at once by the smart and the indignity, the falconer started up, and darkling as he was—for his eyes watered too fast to permit his seeing anything—he would soon have been at close grips with his insolent adversary, had not Roland Græme, contrary to his nature, played for once the prudent man and the peacemaker, and thrown himself betwixt them, imploring Woodcock's patience "You know not," he said, "with whom you have to do. And thou," addressing the messenger, who stood scornfully laughing at Adam's rage, "get thee gone, whoever thou art; if thou be'st what I guess thee, thou well knowest there are earnest reasons why thou shouldst."

"Thou hast hit it right for once, holly-top," said the gallant, "though I guess you drew your bow at a venture. Here, host, let this yeoman have a bottle of wine to wash the smart out of his eyes, and there is a French crown for him."

So saying, he threw the piece of money on the table, and left the apartment with a quick but steady pace, looking firmly at right and left, as if to defy interruption, and snapping his fingers at two or three respectable burghers, who, declaring it was a shame that any one should be suffered to rant and ruffle in defense of the Pope, were laboring to find the hilts of their swords, which had got for the present unhappily entangled in the folds of their cloaks. But, as the adversary was gone ere any of them had reached his weapon, they did not think it necessary to unsheathe cold iron, but merely observed to each other, "This is more than masterful violence, to see a poor man stricken in the face just for singing a ballad against the Whore of Babylon! If the Pope's champions are to be bangsters in our very change-houses, we shall soon have the old shavelings back again."

"The provost should look to it," said another, "and have some five or six armed with partisans, to come in upon the first whistle, to teach these gallants their lesson. For, look you, neighbor Logleather, it is not for decent householders like ourselves to be brawling with the godless grooms and pert pages of the nobles, that are bred up to little else save bloodshed and blasphemy."

"For all that, neighbor," said Logleather, "I would have carried that youngster as properly as ever I carried a lamb's hide, had not the hilt of my bilbo been for the instant beyond my grasp; and before I could turn my girde, gone was my master!"

"Ay," said the others, "the devil go with him, and peace abide with us; I give my rede, neighbors, that we pay the lawing, and be stepping homeward, like brother and brother; for old St. Giles's is tolling curfew, and the street grows dangerous at night."

With that the good burghers adjusted their cloaks and prepared for their departure, while he that seemed the briskest of the three, laying his hand on his Andrea Ferrara, observed, "That they that spoke in praise of the Pope on the Highgate of Edinburgh had best bring the sword of St. Peter to defend them."

While the ill humor excited by the insolence of the young aristocrat was thus evaporating in empty menace, Roland Græme had to control the far more serious indignation of Adam Woodcock. "Why man, it was but a switch across the mazzard; blow your nose, dry your eyes, and you will see all the better for it."

"By this light, which I cannot see," said Adam Woodcock,

"thou hast been a false friend to me, young man, neither taking up my rightful quarrel nor letting me fight it out myself."

"Fy, for shame, Adam Woodcock," replied the youth, determined to turn the tables on him, and become in turn the counselor of good order and peaceable demeanor—"I say, fy for shame! Alas; that you will speak thus! Here are you sent with me, to prevent an innocent youth getting into snares——"

"I wish your innocent youth were cut short with a halter, with all my heart!" said Adam, who began to see which way the admonition tended.

—"And instead of setting before me," continued Roland, "an example of patience and sobriety becoming the falconer of Sir Halbert Glendenning, you quaff me off I know not how many flagons of ale, besides a gallon of wine, and a full measure of strong waters!"

"It was but one small pottle," said poor Adam, whom consciousness of his own indiscretion now reduced to a merely defensive warfare.

"It was enough to pottle you handsomely, however," said the page. "And then instead of going to bed to sleep off your liquor, you must sit singing your roisterous songs about popes and pagans, till you have got your eyes almost switched out of your head; and but for my interference, whom your drunken ingratitude accuses of deserting you, yon galliard would have cut your throat, for he was whipping out a whinger as broad as my hand and as sharp as a razor. And these are lessons for an inexperienced youth! Oh, Adam! out upon you!—out upon you!"

"Marry, amen, and with all my heart," said Adam; "out upon my folly for expecting anything but impertinent raiery from a page like thee, that, if he saw his father in a scrape, would laugh at him, instead of lending him aid!"

"Nay, but I will lend you aid," said the page, still laughing; "that is, I will lend thee aid to thy chamber, good Adam, where thou shalt sleep off wine and ale, ire and indignation, and awake the next morning with as much fair wit as nature has blessed thee withal. Only one thing I will warn thee, good Adam, that henceforth and forever, when thou railest at me for being somewhat hot at hand, and rather too prompt to out with poniard or so, thy admonition shall serve as a prologue to the memorable adventure of the switching of St. Michael's."

With such condoling expressions he got the crestfallen

falconer to his bed, and then retired to his own pallet, where it was some time ere he could fall asleep. If the messenger whom he had seen were really Catherine Seyton, what a masculine virago and termagant must she be ! and stored with what an inimitable command of insolence and assurance ! The brass on her brow would furbish the front of twenty pages ; “and I should know,” thought Roland, “what that amounts to. And yet, her features, her look, her light gait, her laughing eye, the art with which she disposed the mantle to show no more of her limbs than needs must be seen—I am glad she had at least that grace left—the voice, the smile—it must have been Catherine Seyton, or the devil in her likeness ! One thing is good, I have silenced the eternal predictions of that ass, Adam Woodcock, who has set up for being a preacher and a governor over me, so soon as he has left the hawk’s mew behind him.”

And with this comfortable reflection, joined to the happy indifference which youth hath for the events of the morrow, Roland Græme fell fast asleep.

13

[The following text is extremely faint and largely illegible, appearing to be bleed-through or a very light print. It seems to contain a chapter heading and several paragraphs of text.]

CHAPTER XX

Now have you reft me from my staff, my guide,
Who taught my youth, as men teach untamed falcons,
To use my strength discreetly—I am reft
Of comrade and of counsel!

Old Play.

In the gray of the next morning's dawn there was a loud knocking at the gate of the hostelry, and those without, proclaiming that they came in the name of the Regent were instantly admitted. A moment or two afterwards, Michael Wing-the-Wind stood by the bedside of our travelers.

"Up!—up!" he said, "there is no slumber where Murray hath work ado."

Both sleepers sprung up, and began to dress themselves.

"You, old friend," said Wing-the-Wind to Adam Woodcock, "must to horse instantly, with this packet to the monks of Kennaquhair, and with this," delivering them as he spoke, "to the Knight of Avenel."

"As much as commanding the monks to annul their election, I'll warrant me, of an abbot," quoth Adam Woodcock, as he put the packets into his bag, "and charging my master to see it done. To hawk at one brother with another is less than fair play, methinks."

"Fash not thy beard about it, old boy," said Michael, "but betake thee to the saddle presently; for if these orders are not obeyed there will be bare walls at the kirk of St. Mary's, and it may be at the Castle of Avenel to boot; for I heard my Lord of Morton loud with the Regent, and we are at a pass that we cannot stand with him anent trifles."

"But," said Adam, "touching the Abbot of Unreason—what say they to that outbreak? An they be shrewishly disposed, I were better pitch the packets to Satan, and take the other side of the Border for my field."

"O, that was passed over as a jest, since there was little harm done. But hark thee, Adam," continued his comrade, "if there were a dozen vacant abbacies in your road, whether of jest or earnest, reason or unreason, draw thou never one of their miters over thy brows. The time is not fitting,

man ; besides, our maiden longs to clip the neck of a fat churchman."

"She shall never sheer mine in that capacity," said the falconer, while he knotted the kerchief in two or three double folds around his sunburnt bull-neck, calling out at the same time, "Master Roland—Master Roland, make haste ! we must back to perch and mew, and, thank Heaven more than our own wit, with our bones whole, and without a stab in the stomach."

"Nay, but," said Wing-the-Wind, "the page goes not back with you : the Regent has other employment for him."

"Saints and sorrows !" exclaimed the falconer. "Master Roland Græme to remain here, and I to return to Avenel ! Why, it cannot be : the child cannot manage himself in this wide world without me, and I question if he will stoop to any other whistle than mine own ; there are times I myself can hardly bring him to my lure."

It was at Roland's tongue's end to say something concerning the occasion they had for using mutually each other's prudence ; but the real anxiety which Adam evinced at parting with him took away his disposition to such ungracious railery. The falconer did not altogether escape, however, for, in turning his face towards the lattice, his friend Michael caught a glimpse of it, and exclaimed, "I prithee, Adam Woodcock, what hast thou been doing with these eyes of thine ? They are swelled to the starting from the socket !"

"Nought in the world," said he, after casting a deprecating glance at Roland Græme, "but the effect of sleeping in this d——d truckle without a pillow."

"Why, Adam Woodcock, thou must be grown strangely dainty," said his old companion ; "I have known thee sleep all night with no better pillow than a bush of ling, and start up with the sun as gleg as a falcon ; and now thine eyes resemble——"

"Tush man, what signifies how mine eyes look now ?" said Adam. "Let us but roast a crab-apple, pour a pottle of ale on it, and bathe our throats withal, thou shalt see a change in me."

"And thou wilt be in heart to sing thy jolly ballad about the Pope ?" said his comrade.

"Ay, that I will," replied the falconer, "that is, when we have left this quiet town five miles behind us, if you will take your hobby and ride so far on my way."

"Nay, that I may not," said Michael ; "I can but stop

to partake your morning's draught, and see you fairly to horse ; I will see that they saddle them, and toast the crab for thee, without loss of time."

During his absence the falconer took the page by the hand. "May I never hood hawk again," said the good-natured fellow, "if I am not as sorry to part with you as if you were a child of mine own, craving pardon for the freedom ; I cannot tell what makes me love you so much, unless it be for the reason that I loved the vicious devil of a brown Galloway nag, whom my master the knight called Satan, till Master Warden changed his name to Seyton ; for he said it was over boldness to call a beast after the King of Darkness——"

"And," said the page, "it was over boldness in him, I trow, to call a vicious brute after a noble family."

"Well," proceeded Adam, "Seyton or Satan, I loved that nag over every other horse in the stable. There was no sleeping on his back : he was forever fidgeting, bolting, rearing, biting, kicking, and giving you work to do, and maybe the measure of your back on the heather to the boot of it all. And I think I love you better than any lad in the castle for the self-same qualities."

"Thanks—thanks, kind Adam. I regard myself bound to you for the good estimation in which you hold me."

"Nay, interrupt me not," said the falconer ; "Satan was a good nag. But, I say, I think I shall call the two eyases after you—the one Roland and the other Græme ; and, while Adam Woodcock lives, be sure you have a friend. Here is to thee, my dear son."

Roland most heartily returned the grasp of the hand, and Woodcock, having taken a deep draught, continued his farewell speech.

"There are three things I warn you against, Roland, now that you are to tread this weary world without my experience to assist you. In the first place, never draw dagger on slight occasion : every man's doublet is not so well stuffed as a certain abbot's that you wot of. Secondly, fly not at every pretty girl, like a merlin at a thrush ; you will not always win a gold chain for your labor ; and, by the way, here I return to you your fanfarona ; keep it close, it is weighty, and may benefit you at a pinch more ways than one. Thirdly, and to conclude, as our worthy preacher says, beware of the pottle-pot : it has drenched the judgment of wiser men than you. I could bring some instances of it, but I daresay it needeth not ; for if you should forget your

own mishaps, you will scarce fail to remember mine. And so farewell, my dear son."

Roland returned his good wishes, and failed not to send his humble duty to his kind lady, charging the falconer at the same time to express his regret that he should have offended her, and his determination so to bear him in the world that she would not be ashamed of the generous protection she had afforded him.

The falconer embraced his young friend, mounted his stout, round-made, trotting nag, which the serving-man who had attended him held ready at the door, and took the road to the southward. A sullen and heavy sound echoed from the horse's feet, as if indicating the sorrow of the good-natured rider. Every hoof-tread seemed to tap upon Roland's heart as he heard his comrade withdraw with so little of his usual alert activity, and felt that he was once more alone in the world.

He was roused from his reverie by Michael Wing-the-Wind, who reminded him that it was necessary they should instantly return to the palace, as my Lord Regent went to the sessions early in the morning. They went thither accordingly, and Wing-the-Wind, a favorite old domestic, who was admitted nearer to the Regent's person and privacy than many whose posts were more ostensible, soon introduced Græme into a small matted chamber, where he had an audience of the present head of the troubled state of Scotland. The Earl of Murray was clad in a sad-colored morning-gown, with a cap and slippers of the same cloth; but, even in this easy dishabille, held his sheathed rapier in his hand—a precaution which he adopted when receiving strangers, rather in compliance with the earnest remonstrances of his friends and partizans than from any personal apprehensions of his own. He answered with a silent nod the respectful obeisance of the page, and took one or two turns through the small apartment in silence, fixing his keen eye on Roland, as if he wished to penetrate into his very soul. At length he broke silence.

"Your name is, I think, Julian Græme?"

"Roland Græme, my lord—not Julian," replied the page.

"Right—I was misled by some trick of my memory. Roland Græme, from the Debateable Land. Roland, thou knowest the duties which belong to a lady's service?"

"I should know them, my lord," replied Roland, "having been bred so near the person of my Lady of Avenel; but

I trust never more to practise them, as the knight hath promised——”

“Besilent, young man,” said the Regent; “I am to speak, and you to hear and obey. It is necessary that, for some space at least, you shall again enter into the service of a lady, who in rank hath no equal in Scotland; and this service accomplished, I give thee my word as knight and prince that it shall open to you a course of ambition such as may well gratify the aspiring wishes of one whom circumstances entitle to entertain much higher views than thou. I will take thee into my household and near to my person, or at your own choice, I will give you the command of a foot-company; either is a preferment which the proudest laird in the land might be glad to insure for a second son.”

“May I presume to ask, my lord,” said Roland, observing the Earl paused for a reply, “to whom my poor services are in the first place destined?”

“You will be told hereafter,” said the Regent; and then, as if overcoming some internal reluctance to speak further himself, he added, “or why should I not myself tell you that you are about to enter into the service of a most illustrious—most unhappy, lady—into the service of Mary of Scotland.”

“Of the Queen, my lord?” said the page, unable to repress his surprise.

“Of her who was the Queen!” said Murray, with a singular mixture of displeasure and embarrassment in his tone of voice. “You must be aware, young man, that her son reigns in her stead.”

He sighed from an emotion partly natural, perhaps, and partly assumed.

“And am I to attend upon her Grace in her place of imprisonment, my lord?” again demanded the page, with a straightforward and hardy simplicity which somewhat disconcerted the sage and powerful statesman.

“She is not imprisoned,” answered Murray, angrily, “God forbid she should: she is only sequestered from state affairs, and from the business of the public, until the world be so effectually settled that she may enjoy her natural and uncontrolled freedom, without her royal disposition being exposed to the practises of wicked and designing men. It is for this purpose,” he added, “that, while she is to be furnished, as right is, with such attendance as may befit her present secluded state, it becomes necessary that those placed around her are persons on whose prudence I can have reliance.

You see, therefore, you are at once called on to discharge an office most honorable in itself, and so to discharge it that you may make a friend of the Regent of Scotland. Thou art, I have been told, a singularly apprehensive youth; and I perceive by thy look that thou dost already understand what I would say on this matter. In this schedule your particular points of duty are set down at length; but the sum required of you is fidelity—I mean fidelity to myself and to the state. You are, therefore, to watch every attempt which is made, or inclination displayed, to open any communication with any of the lords who have become banders in the west—with Hamilton, Seyton, with Fleming, or the like. It is true that my gracious sister, reflecting upon the ill chances that have happened to the state of this poor kingdom, from evil counselors who have abused her royal nature in time past, hath determined to sequester herself from state affairs in future. But it is our duty, as acting for and in the name of our infant nephew, to guard against the evils which may arise from any mutation or vacillation in her royal resolutions. Wherefore, it will be thy duty to watch, and report to our lady mother, whose guest our sister is for the present, whatever may infer a disposition to withdraw her person from the place of security in which she is lodged, or to open communication with those without. If, however, your observation should detect anything of weight, and which may exceed mere suspicion, fail not to send notice by an especial messenger to me directly, and this ring shall be thy warrant to order horse and man on such service. And now begone. If there be half the wit in thy head that there is apprehension in thy look, thou fully comprehendest all that I would say. Serve me faithfully, and sure as I am belted earl thy reward shall be great.”

Roland Græme made an obeisance, and was about to depart.

The Earl signed to him to remain. “I have trusted thee deeply,” he said, “young man, for thou art the only one of her suite who has been sent to her by my own recommendation. Her gentlewomen are of her own nomination: it were too hard to have barred her that privilege, though some there were who reckoned it inconsistent with sure policy. Thou art young and handsome. Mingle in their follies, and see they cover not deeper designs under the appearance of female levity; if they do mine, do thou countermine. For the rest, bear all decorum and respect to the person of thy mistress: she is a princess, though a most unhappy one, and hath been

a queen, though now, alas! no longer such. Pay, therefore, to her all honor and respect consistent with thy fidelity to the King and me. And now, farewell! Yet stay—you travel with Lord Lindesay, a man of the old world, rough and honest, though untaught; see that thou offend him not, for he is not patient of raillery, and thou, I have heard, art a crack-halter." This he said with a smile; then added, "I could have wished the Lord Lindesay's mission had been entrusted to some other and more gentle noble."

"And wherefore should you wish that, my lord?" said Morton, who even then entered the apartment; "the council have decided for the best; we have had but too many proofs of this lady's stubbornness of mind, and the oak that resists the sharp steel ax must be riven with the rugged iron wedge. And this is to be her page? My Lord Regent hath doubtless instructed you, young man, how you shall guide yourself in these matters; I will add but a little hint on my part. You are going to the castle of a Douglas, where treachery never thrives: the first moment of suspicion will be the last of your life. My kinsman, William Douglas, understands no raillery, and if he once have cause to think you false, you will waver in the wind from the castle battlements ere the sun set upon his anger. And is the lady to have an almoner withal?"

"Occasionally, Douglas," said the Regent; "it were hard to deny the spiritual consolation which she thinks essential to her salvation."

"You are ever too soft-hearted, my lord. What! a false priest to communicate her lamentations, not only to our un-friends in Scotland, but to the Guises, to Rome, to Spain, and I know not where!"

"Fear not," said the Regent, "we will take such order that no treachery shall happen."

"Look to it, then," said Morton; "you know my mind respecting the wench you have consented she shall receive as a waiting-woman—one of a family which, of all others, has ever been devoted to her and inimical to us. Had we not been wary, she would have been purveyed of a page as much to her purpose as her waiting-damsel. I hear a rumor that an old mad Romish pilgrimer, who passes for at least half a saint among them, was employed to find a fit subject."

"We have escaped that danger at least," said Murray, "and converted it into a point of advantage by sending this boy of Glendinning's; and for her waiting-damsel, you



“Is this the jackanape page for whom we have waited thus long?”

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cannot grudge her one poor maiden instead of her four noble Maries and all their silken train?"

"I care not so much for the waiting-maiden," said Morton, "but I cannot brook the almoner: I think priests of all persuasions are much like each other. Here is John Knox, who made such a noble puller-down, is ambitious of becoming a setter-up, and a founder of schools and colleges out of the abbey lands, and bishops' rents, and other spoils of Rome, which the nobility of Scotland have won with their sword and bow, and with which he would now endow new wives to sing the old drone."

"John is a man of God," said the Regent, "and his scheme is a devout imagination."

The sedate smile with which this was spoken left it impossible to conjecture whether the words were meant in approbation or in derision of the plan of the Scottish Reformer. Turning then to Roland Græme, as if he thought he had been long enough a witness of this conversation, he bade him get him presently to horse, since my Lord of Lindsay was already mounted. The page made his reverence, and left the apartment.

Guided by Michael Wing-the-Wind, he found his horse ready saddled and prepared for the journey in front of the palace porch, where hovered about a score of men-at-arms, whose leader showed no small symptoms of surly impatience.

"Is this the jackanape page for whom we have waited thus long?" said he to Wing-the-Wind. "And my Lord Ruthven will reach the castle long before us!"

Michael assented, and added that the boy had been detained by the Regent to receive some parting instructions. The leader made an inarticulate sound in his throat, expressive of sullen acquiescence, and calling to one of his domestic attendants, "Edward," said he, "take the gallant into your charge, and let him speak with no one else."

He then addressed, by the title of Sir Robert, an elderly and respectable-looking gentleman, the only one of the party who seemed above the rank of a retainer or domestic, and observed that they must get to horse with all speed.

During this discourse, and while they were riding slowly along the street of the suburb, Roland had time to examine more accurately the looks and figure of the baron who was at their head.

Lord Lindsay of the Byres was rather touched than stricken with years. His upright stature and strong limbs still showed him fully equal to all the exertions and fatigues

of war. His thick eyebrows, now partially grizzled, lowered over large eyes full of dark fire, which seemed yet darker from the uncommon depth at which they were set in his head. His features, naturally strong and harsh, had their sternness exaggerated by one or two scars received in battle. These features, naturally calculated to express the harsher passions, were shaded by an open steel cap, with a projecting front, but having no visor, over the gorget of which fell the black and grizzled beard of the grim old baron, and totally hid the lower part of his face. The rest of his dress was a loose buff-coat, which had once been lined with silk and adorned with embroidery, but which seemed much stained with travel and damaged with cuts, received probably in battle. It covered a corslet which had once been of polished steel, fairly gilded, but was now somewhat injured with rust. A sword of antique make and uncommon size, framed to be wielded with both hands, a kind of weapon which was then beginning to go out of use, hung from his neck in a baldric, and was so disposed as to traverse his whole person, the huge hilt appearing over his left shoulder, and the point reaching well-nigh to the right heel, and jarring against his spur as he walked. This unwieldy weapon could only be unsheathed by pulling the handle over the left shoulder, for no human arm was long enough to draw it in the usual manner. The whole equipment was that of a rude warrior, negligent of his exterior even to misanthropical sullenness; and the short, harsh, haughty tone which he used towards his attendants belonged to the same unpolished character.

The personage who rode with Lord Lindesay at the head of the party was an absolute contrast to him in manner, form, and features. His thin and silky hair was already white, though he seemed not above forty-five or fifty years old. His tone of voice was soft and insinuating; his form thin, spare, and bent by an habitual stoop; his pale cheek was expressive of shrewdness and intelligence; his eye was quick though placid, and his whole demeanor mild and conciliatory. He rode an ambling nag, such as were used by ladies, clergymen, or others of peaceful professions; wore a riding habit of black velvet, with a cap and feather of the same hue, fastened up by a golden medal; and for show, and as a mark of rank rather than for use, carried a walking sword (as the short light rapiers were called), without any other arms, offensive or defensive.

The party had now quitted the town, and proceeded, at

a steady trot, towards the west. As they prosecuted their journey, Roland Græme would gladly have learned something of its purpose and tendency, but the countenance of the personage next to whom he had been placed in the train discouraged all approach to familiarity. The baron himself did not look more grim and inaccessible than his feudal retainer, whose grisly beard fell over his mouth like the portcullis before the gate of the castle, as if for the purpose of preventing the escape of any word of which absolute necessity did not demand the utterance. The rest of the train seemed under the same taciturn influence, and journeyed on without a word being exchanged amongst them, more like a troop of Carthusian friars than a party of military retainers. Roland Græme was surprised at this extremity of discipline; for even in the household of the Knight of Avenel, though somewhat distinguished for the accuracy with which decorum was enforced, a journey was a period of license, during which jest and song, and everything within the limits of becoming mirth and pastime, was freely permitted. This unusual silence was, however, so far acceptable that it gave him time to bring any shadow of judgment which he possessed to council on his own situation and prospects, which would have appeared to any reasonable person in the highest degree dangerous and perplexing.

It was quite evident that he had, through various circumstances not under his own control, formed contradictory connections with both the contending factions by whose strife the kingdom was distracted, without being properly an adherent of either. It seemed also clear that the same situation in the household of the deposed Queen, to which he was now promoted by the influence of the Regent, had been destined to him by his enthusiastic grandmother, Magdalèn Græme; for on this subject the words which Morton had dropped had been a ray of light; yet it was no less clear that these two persons, the one the declared enemy, the other the enthusiastic votary, of the Catholic religion; the one at the head of the King's new government, the other, who regarded that government as a criminal usurpation, must have required and expected very different services from the individual whom they had thus united in recommending. It required very little reflection to foresee that these contradictory claims on his service might speedily place him in a situation where his honor as well as his life might be endangered. But it was not in Roland Græme's nature to anticipate evil before it came, or to prepare to combat difficulties be-

fore they arrived. "I will see this beautiful and unfortunate Mary Stuart," he said, "of whom we have heard so much, and then there will be time enough to determine whether I will be kingsman or queensman. None of them can say I have given word or promise to either of their factions; for they have led me up and down like a blind Billy, without giving me any light into what I was to do. But it was lucky that grim Douglas came into the Regent's closet this morning, otherwise I had never got free of him without plighting my troth to do all the Earl would have me, which seemed, after all, but foul play to the poor imprisoned lady, to place her page as an espial on her."

Skipping thus lightly over a matter of such consequence, the thoughts of the hare-brained boy went a-wool-gathering after more agreeable topics. Now he admired the Gothic towers of Barnbougle, rising from the sea-beaten rock, and overlooking one of the most glorious landscapes in Scotland; and now he began to consider what notable sport for the hounds and the hawks must be afforded by the variegated ground over which they travelled; and now he compared the steady and dull trot at which they were then prosecuting their journey with the delight of sweeping over hill and dale in pursuit of his favorite sports. As, under the influence of these joyous recollections, he gave his horse the spur, and made him execute a gambade, he instantly incurred the censure of his grave neighbor, who hinted to him to keep the pace, and move quietly and in order, unless he wished such notice to be taken of his eccentric movements as was likely to be very displeasing to him.

The rebuke and the restraint under which the youth now, found himself brought back to his recollection his late good-humored and accommodating associate and guide, Adam Woodcock; and from that topic his imagination made a short flight to Avenel Castle, to the quiet and unconfined life of its inhabitants, the goodness of his early protectress, not forgetting the denizens of its stables, kennels, and hawk-mews. In a brief space, all these subjects of meditation gave way to the remembrance of that riddle of womankind, Catherine Seyton, who appeared before the eye of his mind now in her female form, now in her male attire, now in both at once, like some strange dream, which presents to us the same individual under two different characters at the same instant. Her mysterious present also recurred to his recollection—the sword which he now wore at his side, and which he was not to draw, save by command of his legitimate

sovereign ! But the key of this mystery he judged he was likely to find in the issue of his present journey.

With such thoughts passing through his mind, Roland Græme accompanied the party of Lord Lindesay to the Queen's Ferry, which they passed in vessels that lay in readiness for them. They encountered no adventure whatever in their passage, excepting one horse being lamed in getting into the boat—an incident very common on such occasions, until a few years ago, when the ferry was completely regulated. What was more peculiarly characteristic of the olden age was the discharge of a culverin at the party from the battlements of the old castle of Rosythe, on the north side of the ferry, the lord of which happened to have some public or private quarrel with the Lord Lindesay, and took this mode of expressing his resentment. The insult, however, as it was harmless, remained unnoticed and unavenged, nor did anything else occur worth notice until the band had come where Lochleven spread its magnificent sheet of waters to the beams of a bright summer sun.

The ancient castle, which occupies an island nearly in the center of the lake, recalled to the page that of Avenel, in which he had been nurtured. But the lake was much larger, and adorned with several islets besides that on which the fortress was situated ; and instead of being embosomed in hills like that of Avenel, had upon the southern side only a splendid mountainous screen, being the descent of one of the Lomond hills and on the other was surrounded by the extensive and fertile plain of Kinross. Roland Græme looked with some degree of dismay on the water-girdled fortress, which then, as now, consisted only of one large donjon-keep, surrounded with a courtyard, with two round flanking towers at the angles, which contained within its circuit some other buildings of inferior importance. A few old trees, clustered together near the castle, gave some relief to the air of desolate seclusion ; but yet the page, while he gazed upon a building so sequestered, could not but feel for the situation of a captive princess doomed to dwell there, as well as for his own. "I must have been born," he thought, "under the star that presides over ladies and lakes of water, for I cannot by any means escape from the service of the one or from dwelling in the other." But if they allow me not the fair freedom of my sport and exercise, they shall find it as hard to confine a wild drake as a youth who can swim like one.

The band had now reached the edge of the water, and one

of the party advancing displayed Lord Lindsay's pennon, waving it repeatedly to and fro, while that baron himself blew a clamorous blast on his bugle. A banner was presently displayed from the roof of the castle in reply to these signals, and one or two figures were seen busied as if unmooring a boat which lay close to the islet.

"It will be some time ere they can reach us with the boat," said the companion of the Lord Lindsay; "should we not do well to proceed to the town, and array ourselves in some better order, ere we appear before——"

"You may do as you list, Sir Robert," replied Lindsay, "I have neither time nor temper to waste on such vanities. She has cost me many a hard ride, and must not now take offense at the threadbare cloak and soiled doublet that I am arrayed in. It is the livery to which she has brought all Scotland."

"Do not speak so harshly," said Sir Robert; "if she hath done wrong, she hath dearly abeyed it; and in losing all real power, one would not deprive her of the little external homage due at once to a lady and a princess."

"I say to you once more, Sir Robert Melville," replied Lindsay, "do as you will; for me, I am now too old to dink myself as a gallant to grace the bower of dames."

"The bower of dames, my lord!" said Melville, looking at the rude old tower: "is it yon dark and grated castle, the prison of a captive queen, to which you give so gay a name?"

"Name it as you list," replied Lindsay; "had the Regent desired to send an envoy capable to speak to a captive queen, there are many gallants in his court who would have courted the occasion to make speeches out of *Amadis of Gaul* or the *Mirror of Knighthood*. But when he sent blunt old Lindsay, he knew he would speak to a misguided woman, as her former misdoings and her present state render necessary. I sought not this employment: it has been thrust upon me; and I will not cumber myself with more form in the discharge of it than needs must be tacked to such an occupation."

So saying, Lord Lindsay threw himself from horseback, and, wrapping his riding-cloak around him, lay down at lazy length upon the sward, to await the arrival of the boat, which was now seen rowing from the castle towards the shore. Sir Robert Melville, who had also dismounted, walked at short turns to and fro upon the bank, his arms crossed on his breast, often looking to the castle, and displaying in his countenance a mixture of sorrow and of anxiety. The rest of the party sate like statues on horseback, without moving

so much as the points of their lances, which they held upright in the air.

As soon as the boat approached a rude quay or landing-place near to which they had stationed themselves, Lord Lindesay started up from his recumbent posture, and asked the person who steered why he had not brought a larger boat with him to transport his retinue.

“So please you,” replied the boatman, “because it is the order of our lady that we bring not to the castle more than four persons.”

“Thy lady is a wise woman,” said Lindesay, “to suspect me of treachery! Or, had I intended it, what is to hinder us from throwing you and your comrades into the lake and filling the boat with my own fellows?”

The steersman, on hearing this, made a hasty signal to his men to back their oars, and hold off from the shore which they were approaching.

“Why, thou ass,” said Lindesay, “thou didst not think that I meant thy fool’s head serious harm? Hark thee, friend, with fewer than three servants I will go no whither; Sir Robert Melville will require at least the attendance of one domestic; and it will be at your peril and your lady’s to refuse us admission, come hither as we are on matters of great national concern.”

The steersman answered with firmness, but with great civility of expression, that his orders were positive to bring no more than four into the island, but he offered to row back to obtain a revisal of his instructions.

“Do so, my friend,” said Sir Robert Melville, after he had in vain endeavored to persuade his stubborn companion to consent to a temporary abatement of his train: “row back to the castle, sith it will be no better, and obtain thy lady’s orders to transport the Lord Lindesay, myself, and our retinue thither.”

“And hearken,” said Lord Lindesay, “take with you this page, who comes as an attendant on your lady’s guest. Dis-mount, sirrah,” said he, addressing Roland, “and embark with them in that boat.”

“And what is to become of my horse?” said Græme; “I am answerable for him to my master.”

“I will relieve you of the charge,” said Lindesay; “thou wilt have little enow to do with horse, saddle, or bridle for ten years to come. Thou mayst take the halter an thou wilt: it may stand thee in a turn.”

“If I thought so,” said Roland—

But he was interrupted by Sir Robert Melville, who said to him, good-humoredly, "Dispute it not, young friend: resistance can do no good, but may well run thee into danger."

Roland Græme felt the justice of what he said, and, though neither delighted with the matter nor manner of Lindesay's address, deemed it best to submit to necessity, and to embark without further remonstrance. The men plied their oars. The quay, with the party of horse stationed near it, receded from the page's eyes, the castle and the islet seemed to draw near in the same proportion, and in a brief space he landed under the shadow of a huge old tree which overhung the landing-place. The steersman and Græme leaped ashore; the boatmen remained lying on their oars ready for further service.

The steersman, on hearing his master's orders, started to look back over his shoulder, and then turned round to look forward.

"What a fine day!" said Lindesay, "the air is just what we need; and the water is so calm, that I should like to see you sail on it for ever."

"Sir Robert Melville's will be done," said Lindesay, "and it will be your duty to see that it is done. You will find the boatmen ready to do your bidding, and the horses ready to do your bidding."

The steersman answered with a shrug, but with an air of resignation, that his orders were ready to be obeyed. Lindesay then turned to Roland Græme, and said, "You will find the boatmen ready to do your bidding, and the horses ready to do your bidding."

"Do not mind me," said Sir Robert Melville, "I am only in the way of your business. You will find the boatmen ready to do your bidding, and the horses ready to do your bidding."

"The boatmen," said Lord Lindesay, "are all well, and the horses are all well. You will find the boatmen ready to do your bidding, and the horses ready to do your bidding."

"And what is to become of my horse?" said Lindesay.

"I will leave him to my care," said Lindesay, "and I will see that he is well cared for. You will find the boatmen ready to do your bidding, and the horses ready to do your bidding."

"I'll be bound for it," said Lindesay.

CHAPTER XXI

Could valor aught avail or people's love,
France had not wept Navarre's brave Henry slain ;
If wit or beauty could compassion move,
The Rose of Scotland had not wept in vain.

LEWIS, *Elegy in a Royal Mausoleum.*

At the gate of the courtyard of Lochleven appeared the stately form of the Lady of Lochleven, a female whose early charms had captivated James V., by whom she became mother of the celebrated Regent Murray. As she was of noble birth, being a daughter of the house of Mar, and of great beauty, her intimacy with James did not prevent her being afterwards sought in honorable marriage by many gallants of the time, among whom she had preferred Sir William Douglas of Lochleven. But well has it been said,—

Our pleasant vices
Are made the whips to scourge us.

The station which the Lady of Lochleven now held as the wife of a man of high rank and interest, and the mother of a lawful family, did not prevent her nourishing a painful sense of degradation, even while she was proud of the talents, the power, and the station of her son, now prime ruler of the state, but still a pledge of her illicit intercourse. "Had James done to her," she said in her secret heart, "the justice he owed her, she had seen in her son, as a source of unmixed delight and of unchastened pride, the lawful monarch of Scotland, and one of the ablest who ever swayed the scepter. The house of Mar, not inferior in antiquity or grandeur to that of Drummond, would then have also boasted a queen among its daughters, and escaped the stain attached to female frailty, even when it has a royal lover for its apology." While such feelings preyed on a bosom naturally proud and severe, they had a corresponding effect on her countenance, where with the remains of great beauty, were mingled traits indicative of inward discontent and peevish melancholy. It perhaps contributed to increase this habitual temperament, that the Lady Lochleven had adopted uncommonly rigid and severe views of religion, imitating in her ideas of Reformed

faith the very worst errors of the Catholics, in limiting the benefit of the Gospel to those who profess their own speculative tenets.

In every respect, the unfortunate Queen Mary, now the compulsory guest, or rather prisoner, of this sullen lady, was obnoxious to her hostess. Lady Lochleven disliked her as the daughter of Mary of Guise, the legal possessor of those rights over James's heart and hand of which she conceived herself to have been injuriously deprived; and yet more so as the professor of a religion which she detested worse than paganism.

Such was the dame who, with stately mien, and sharp yet handsome features, shrouded by her black velvet coif, interrogated the domestic who steered her barge to the shore, what had become of Lindesay and Sir Robert Melville. The man related what had passed, and she smiled scornfully as she replied, "Fools must be flattered, not foughten with Row back—make thy excuse as thou canst—say Lord Ruthven hath already reached this castle, and that he is impatient for Lord Lindesay's presence. Away with thee, Randal—yet stay, what galopin is that thou hast brought hither?"

"So please you, my lady, he is the page who is to wait upon——"

"Ay, the new male minion," said the Lady Lochleven; "the female attendant arrived yesterday. I shall have a well-ordered house with this lady and her retinue; but I trust they will soon find some others to undertake such a charge. Begone, Randal; and you (to Roland Græme), follow me to the garden."

She led the way with a slow and stately step to the small garden, which, inclosed by a stone wall ornamented with statues, and an artificial fountain in the center, extended its dull parterres on the side of the courtyard, with which it communicated by a low and arched portal. Within the narrow circuit of its formal and limited walks, Mary Stuart was now learning to perform the weary part of a prisoner, which, with little interval, she was doomed to sustain during the remainder of her life. She was followed in her slow and melancholy exercise by two female attendants; but in the first glance which Roland Græme bestowed upon one so illustrious by birth, so distinguished by her beauty, accomplishments, and misfortunes, he was sensible of the presence of no other than the unhappy Queen of Scotland.

Her face, her form, have been so deeply impressed upon the imagination that, even at the distance of nearly three

centuries, it is unnecessary to remind the most ignorant and uninformed reader of the striking traits which characterize that remarkable countenance, which seems at once to combine our idea of the majestic, the pleasing, and the brilliant, leaving us to doubt whether they express most happily the queen, the beauty, or the accomplished woman. Who is there that, at the very mention of Mary Stuart's name, has not her countenance before him, familiar as that of the mistress of his youth, or the favorite daughter of his advanced age? Even those who feel themselves compelled to believe all, or much, of what her enemies laid to her charge, cannot think without a sigh upon a countenance expressive of anything rather than the foul crimes with which she was charged when living, and which still continue to shade, if not to blacken, her memory. That brow, so truly open and regal; those eyebrows, so regularly graceful, which yet were saved from the charge of regular insipidity by the beautiful effect of the hazel eyes which they overarched, and which seem to utter a thousand histories; the nose, with all its Grecian precision of outline; the mouth, so well-proportioned, so sweetly formed as if designed to speak nothing but what was delightful to hear; the dimpled chin; the stately, swan-like neck—form a countenance the like of which we know not to have existed in any other character moving in that high class of life where the actresses as well as the actors command general and undivided attention. It is in vain to say that the portraits which exist of this remarkable woman are not like each other; for, amidst their discrepancy, each possesses general features which the eye at once acknowledges as peculiar to the vision which our imagination has raised while we read her history for the first time, and which has been impressed upon it by the numerous prints and pictures which we have seen. Indeed, we cannot look on the worst of them, however deficient in point of execution, without saying that it is meant for Queen Mary; and no small instance it is of the power of beauty, that her charms should have remained the subject not merely of admiration, but of warm and chivalrous interest, after the lapse of such a length of time. We know that by far the most acute of those who, in latter days, have adopted the unfavorable view of Mary's character, longed, like the executioner before his dreadful task was performed, to kiss the fair hand of her on whom he was about to perform so horrible a duty.

Dressed, then, in a deep mourning robe, and with all those charms of face, shape, and manner with which faithful

tradition has made each reader familiar, Mary Stewart advanced to meet the Lady of Lochleven, who, on her part, endeavored to conceal dislike and apprehension under the appearance of respectful indifference. The truth was, that she had experienced repeatedly the Queen's superiority in that species of disguised yet cutting sarcasm with which women can successfully avenge themselves for real and substantial injuries. It may be well doubted whether this talent was not as fatal to its possessor as the many others enjoyed by that highly gifted, but most unhappy, female; for, while it often afforded her a momentary triumph over her keepers, it failed not to exasperate their resentment; and the satire and sarcasm in which she had indulged were frequently retaliated by the deep and bitter hardships which they had the power of inflicting. It is well known that her death was at length hastened by a letter which she wrote to Queen Elizabeth, in which she treated her jealous rival and the Countess of Shrewsbury with the keenest irony and ridicule.

As the ladies met together, the Queen said, bending her head at the same time in return to the obeisance of the Lady Lochleven—"We are this day fortunate: we enjoy the company of our amiable hostess at an unusual hour, and during a period which we have hitherto been permitted to give to our private exercise. But our good hostess knows well she has at all times access to our presence, and need not observe the useless ceremony of requiring our permission."

"I am sorry my presence is deemed an intrusion by your Grace," said the Lady of Lochleven. "I came but to announce the arrival of an addition to your train," motioning with her hand towards Roland Græme, "a circumstance to which ladies are seldom indifferent."

"O! I crave your ladyship's pardon; and am bent to the earth with obligations for the kindness of my nobles—or my sovereigns, shall I call them?—who have permitted me such a respectable addition to my personal retinue."

"They have indeed studied, madam," said the Lady of Lochleven, "to show their kindness toward your Grace something at the risk perhaps of sound policy, and I trust their doings will not be misconstrued."

"Impossible!" said the Queen; "the bounty which permits the daughter of so many kings, and who yet is queen of the realm, the attendance of two waiting-women and a boy, is a grace which Mary Stuart can never sufficiently

acknowledge. Why! my train will be equal to that of any country dame in this your kingdom of Fife, saving but the lack of a gentleman-usher and a pair or two of blue-coated serving-men. But I must not forget, in my selfish joy, the additional trouble and charges to which this magnificent augmentation of our train will put our kind hostess and the whole house of Lochleven. It is this prudent anxiety, I am aware, which clouds your brows, my worthy lady. But be of good cheer: the crown of Scotland has many a fair manor, and your affectionate son, and my no less affectionate brother, will endow the good knight your husband with the best of them, ere Mary should be dismissed from this hospitable castle from your ladyship's lack of means to support the charges."

"The Douglasses of Lochleven, madam," answered the lady, "have known for ages how to discharge their duty to the state, without looking for reward, even when the task was both irksome and dangerous."

"Nay! but, my dear Lochleven," said the Queen, "you are over-scrupulous; I pray you accept of a goodly manor; what should support the Queen of Scotland, in this her princely court, saving her own crown-lands; and who should minister to the wants of a mother, save an affectionate son like the Earl of Murray, who possesses so wonderfully both the power and inclination? Or said you it was the danger of the task which clouded your smooth and hospitable brow? No doubt, a page is a formidable addition to my body-guard of females; and I bethink me it must have been for that reason that my Lord of Lindesay refused even now to venture within the reach of a foe so formidable, without being attended by a competent retinue."

The Lady Lochleven started, and looked something surprised; and Mary, suddenly changing her manner from the smooth, ironical affectation of mildness to an accent of austere command, and drawing up at the same time her fine person, said, with the full majesty of her rank, "Yes! Lady of Lochleven, I know that Ruthven is already in the castle, and that Lindesay waits on the bank the return of your barge to bring him hither along with Sir Robert Melville. For what purpose do these nobles come? and why am I not in ordinary decency apprised of their arrival?"

"Their purpose, madam," replied the Lady of Lochleven, "they must themselves explain; but a formal annunciation were needless, where your Grace hath attendants who can play the espial so well."

“Alas! poor Fleming,” said the Queen, turning to the elder of the female attendants, “thou wilt be tried, condemned, and gibbeted for a spy in the garrison, because thou didst chance to cross the great hall while my good Lady of Lochleven was parleying at the full pitch of her voice with her pilot Randal. Put black wool in thy ears, girl, as you value the wearing of them longer. Remember, in the Castle of Lochleven, ears and tongues are matters not of use, but for show merely. Our good hostess can hear, as well as speak for us all. We excuse your further attendance, my lady hostess,” she said, once more addressing the object of her resentment, “and retire to prepare for an interview with our rebel lords. We will use the ante-chamber of our sleeping apartment as our hall of audience. You, young man,” she proceeded, addressing Roland Græme, and at once softening the ironical sharpness of her manner into good-humored raillery—“you, who are all our male attendance, from our Lord High Chamberlain down to our least galopin, follow us to prepare our court.”

She turned, and walked slowly towards the castle. The Lady of Lochleven folded her arms, and smiled in bitter resentment, as she watched her retiring steps.

“Thy whole male attendance!” she muttered, repeating the Queen’s last words, “and well for thee had it been had thy train never been larger;” then turning to Roland, in whose way she had stood while making this pause, she made room for him to pass, saying at the same time, “Art thou already eavesdropping? follow thy mistress, minion, and, if thou wilt, tell her what I have now said.”

Roland Græme hastened after his royal mistress and her attendants, who had just entered a postern gate communicating betwixt the castle and the small garden. They ascended a winding stair as high as the second story, which was in a great measure occupied by a suite of three rooms, opening into each other, and assigned as the dwelling of the captive princess. The outermost was a small hall or ante-room, within which opened a large parlor, and from that again the Queen’s bedroom. Another small apartment, which opened into the same parlor, contained the beds of the gentlewomen in waiting.

Roland Græme stopped, as became his station, in the outermost of these apartments, there to await such orders as might be communicated to him. From the grated window of the room he saw Lindesay, Melville, and their followers disembark; and observed that they were met at the castle gate by a third noble, to whom Lindesay exclaimed, in his

loud harsh voice, "My Lord of Ruthven, you have the start of us!"

At this instant the page's attention was called to a burst of hysterical sobs from the inner apartment, and to the hurried ejaculations of the terrified females, which led him almost instantly to hasten to their assistance. When he entered, he saw that the Queen had thrown herself into the large chair which stood nearest the door, and was sobbing for breath in a strong fit of hysterical affection. The elder female supported her in her arms, while the younger bathed her face with water and with tears alternately.

"Hasten, young man!" said the elder lady, in alarm—"fly—call in assistance; she is swooning!"

But the Queen ejaculated in a faint and broken voice, "Stir not, I charge you!—call no one to witness; I am better—I shall recover instantly." And, indeed, with an effort which seemed like that of one struggling for life, she sate up in her chair and endeavored to resume her composure, while her features yet trembled with the violent emotion of body and mind which she had undergone. "I am ashamed of my weakness, girls," she said, taking the hands of her attendants; "but it is over—and I am Mary Stuart once more. The savage tone of that man's voice—my knowledge of his insolence—the name which he named—the purpose for which they come, may excuse a moment's weakness, and it shall be a moment's only." She snatched from her head the curch, or cap, which had been disordered during her hysterical agony; shook down the thick clustered tresses of dark brown which had been before veiled under it; and, drawing her slender fingers across the labyrinth which they formed, she arose from the chair, and stood like the inspired image of a Grecian prophetess, in a mood which partook at once of sorrow and pride, of smiles and of tears. "We are ill appointed," she said, "to meet our rebel subjects; but, as far as we may, we will strive to present ourselves as becomes their queen. Follow me, my maidens," she said; "what says thy favorite song, my Fleming?—

My maids, come to my dressing-bower,
And deck my nut-brown hair;
Where'er ye laid a plait before,
Look ye lay ten times mair.

Alas!" she added, when she had repeated with a smile these lines of an old ballad, "violence has already robbed me of the ordinary decorations of my rank; and the few

that nature gave me have been destroyed by sorrow and by fear." Yet, while she spoke thus, she again let her slender fingers stray through the wilderness of the beautiful tresses which veiled her kingly neck and swelling bosom, as if, in her agony of mind, she had not altogether lost the consciousness of her unrivaled charms. Roland Græme, on whose youth, inexperience, and ardent sense of what was dignified and lovely, the demeanor of so fair and high-born a lady wrought like the charm of a magician, stood rooted to the spot with surprise and interest, longing to hazard his life in a quarrel so fair as that which Mary Stuart's must needs be. She had been bred in France—she was possessed of the most distinguished beauty—she had reigned a queen, and a Scottish queen, to whom knowledge of character was as essential as the use of vital air. In all these capacities Mary was, of all women on the earth, most alert at perceiving and using the advantages which her charms gave her over almost all who came within the sphere of their influence. She cast on Roland a glance which might have melted a heart of stone. "My poor boy," she said, with a feeling partly real, partly politic, "thou art a stranger to us, sent to this doleful captivity from the society of some tender mother, or sister, or maiden, with whom you had freedom to tread a gay measure round the Maypole. I grieve for you; but you are the only male in my limited household—wilt thou obey my orders?"

"To the death, madam," said Græme, in a determined tone.

"Then keep the door of mine apartment," said the Queen—"keep it till they offer actual violence, or till we shall be fitly arrayed to receive the intrusive visitors."

"I will defend it till they pass over my body," said Roland Græme, any hesitation which he had felt concerning the line of conduct he ought to pursue being completely swept away by the impulse of the moment.

"Not so, my good youth," answered Mary—"not so, I command thee. If I have one faithful subject beside me, much need, God wot, I have to care for his safety. Resist them but till they are put to the shame of using actual violence, and then give way, I charge you. Remember my commands." And, with a smile expressive at once of favor and of authority, she turned from him, and, followed by her attendants, entered the bedroom.

The youngest paused for half a second ere she followed her companion, and made a signal to Roland Græme with

her hand. He had been already long aware that this was Catherine Seyton—a circumstance which could not much surprise a youth of quick intellect, who recollected the sort of mysterious discourse which had passed betwixt the two matrons at the deserted nunnery, and on which his meeting with Catherine in this place seemed to cast so much light. Yet, such was the engrossing effect of Mary's presence, that it surmounted for the moment even the feelings of a youthful lover ; and it was not until Catherine Seyton had disappeared that Roland began to consider in what relation they were to stand to each other. "She held up her hand to me in a commanding manner," he thought ; "perhaps she wanted to confirm my purpose for the execution of the Queen's commands ; for I think she could scarce purpose to scare me with the sort of discipline which she administered to the groom in the frieze jacket and to poor Adam Woodcock. But we will see to that anon ; meantime, let us do justice to the trust reposed in us by this unhappy Queen. I think my Lord of Murray will himself own that it is the duty of a faithful page to defend his lady against intrusion on her privacy."

Accordingly, he stepped to the little vestibule, made fast, with lock and bar, the door which opened from thence to the large staircase, and then sat himself down to attend the result. He had not long to wait : a rude and strong hand first essayed to lift the latch, then pushed and shook the door with violence, and, when it resisted his attempt to open it, exclaimed, "Undo the door there, you within !"

"Why, and at whose command," said the page, "am I to undo the door of the apartments of the Queen of Scotland ?"

Another vain attempt, which made hinge and bolts jingle, showed that the impatient applicant without would willingly have entered altogether regardless of his challenge ; but at length an answer was returned.

"Undo the door, on your peril : the Lord Lindesay comes to speak with the Lady Mary of Scotland."

"The Lord Lindesay, as a Scottish noble," answered the page, "must await his sovereign's leisure."

An earnest altercation ensued amongst those without, in which Roland distinguished the remarkably harsh voice of Lindesay in reply to Sir Robert Melville, who appeared to have been using some soothing language—"No ! no ! no ! I tell thee no ! I will place a petard against the door rather than be baulked by a profligate woman, and bearded by an insolent footboy."

“Yet, at least,” said Melville, “let me try fair means in the first instance. Violence to a lady would stain your scutcheon forever. Or await till my Lord Ruthven comes.”

“I will await no longer,” said Lindesay; “it is high time the business were done, and we on our return to the council. But thou mayst try thy fair play, as thou callest it, while I cause my train to prepare the petard. I came hither provided with as good gunpowder as blew up the Kirk of Field.”

“For God’s sake, be patient,” said Melville; and, approaching the door, he said, as speaking to those within, “Let the Queen know that I, her faithful servant, Robert Melville, do entreat her, for her own sake, and to prevent worse consequences, that she will undo the door, and admit Lord Lindesay, who brings a mission from the council of state.”

“I will do your errand to the Queen,” said the page, “and report to you her answer.”

He went to the door of the bedchamber, and, tapping against it gently, it was opened by the elder lady to whom he communicated his errand, and returned with directions from the Queen to admit Sir Robert Melville and Lord Lindesay. Roland Græme returned to the vestibule, and opened the door accordingly, into which the Lord Lindesay strode, with the air of a soldier who has fought his way into a conquered fortress; while Melville, deeply dejected, followed him more slowly.

“I draw you to witness and to record,” said the page to this last, “that, save for the especial commands of the Queen, I would have made good the entrance, with my best strength and my best blood, against all Scotland.”

“Be silent, young man,” said Melville, in a tone of grave rebuke: “add not brands to fire; this is no time to make a flourish of thy boyish chivalry.”

“She has not appeared even yet,” said Lindesay, who had now reached the midst of the parlor or audience-room; “how call you this trifling?”

“Patience, my lord,” replied Sir Robert, “time presses not; and Lord Ruthven hath not as yet descended.”

At this moment the door of the inner apartment opened, and Queen Mary presented herself, advancing with an air of peculiar grace and majesty, and seeming totally untroubled, either by the visit or by the rude manner in which it had been enforced. Her dress was a robe of black velvet; a small ruff, open in front, gave a full view of her beauti-

fully formed chin and neck, but veiled the bosom. On her head she wore a small cap of lace, and a transparent white veil hung from her shoulders over the long black robe, in large loose folds, so that it could be drawn at pleasure over the face and person. She wore a cross of gold around her neck, and had her rosary of gold and ebony hanging from her girdle. She was closely followed by her two ladies, who remained standing behind her during the conference. Even Lord Lindesay, though the rudest noble of that rude age, was surprised into something like respect by the unconcerned and majestic mien of her whom he had expected to find frantic with impotent passion, or dissolved in useless and vain sorrow, or overwhelmed with the fears likely in such a situation to assail fallen royalty.

"We fear we have detained you, my Lord of Lindesay," said the Queen, while she courtesied with dignity in answer to his reluctant obeisance; "but a female does not willingly receive her visitors without some minutes spent at the toilet. Men, my lord, are less dependent on such ceremonies."

Lord Lindesay, casting his eye down on his own travel-stained and disordered dress, muttered something of a hasty journey, and the Queen paid her greeting to Sir Robert Melville with courtesy, and even, as it seemed, with kindness. There was then a dead pause, during which Lindesay looked towards the door, as if expecting with impatience the colleague of their embassy. The Queen alone was entirely unembarrassed, and, as if to break the silence, she addressed Lord Lindesay, with a glance at the large and cumbrous sword which he wore, as already mentioned, hanging from his neck.

"You have there a trusty and a weighty traveling companion, my lord. I trust you expected to meet with no enemy here, against whom such a formidable weapon could be necessary? It is, methinks, somewhat a singular ornament for a court, though I am, as I was need to be, too much of a Stuart to fear a sword."

"It is not the first time, madam," replied Lindesay, bringing around the weapon so as to rest its point on the ground, and leaning one hand on the huge cross-handle—"it is not the first time that this weapon has intruded itself into the presence of the house of Stuart."

"Possibly, my lord," replied the Queen, "it may have done service to my ancestors. Your ancestors were men of loyalty."

"Ay, madam," replied he, "service it hath done; but such as kings love neither to acknowledge nor to reward. It was the service which the knife renders to the tree when trimming it to the quick, and depriving it of the superfluous growth of rank and unfruitful suckers, which rob it of nourishment."

"You talk riddles, my lord," said Mary; "I will hope the explanation carries nothing insulting with it."

"You shall judge, madam," answered Lindsay. "With this good sword was Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, girded on the memorable day when he acquired the name of Bell-the-Cat, for dragging from the presence of your great-grandfather, the third James of the race, a crew of minions, flatterers, and favorites, whom he hanged over the bridge of Lauder, as a warning to such reptiles how they approach a Scottish throne. With this same weapon, the same inflexible champion of Scottish honor and nobility slew at one blow Spens of Kilspindie, a courtier of your grandfather, James the Fourth, who had dared to speak lightly of him in the royal presence. They fought near the brook of Fala; and Bell-the-Cat, with this blade, sheared through the thigh of his opponent, and lopped the limb as easily as a shepherd's boy slices a twig from a sapling."

"My lord," replied the Queen, reddening, "my nerves are too good to be alarmed even by this terrible history. May I ask how a blade so illustrious passed from the house of Douglas to that of Lindsay? Methinks it should have been preserved as a consecrated relic by a family who have held all that they could do against their king to be done in favor of their country."

"Nay, madam," said Melville, anxiously interfering, "ask not that question of Lord Lindsay. And you, my lord, for shame—for decency, forbear to reply to it."

"It is time that this lady should hear the truth," replied Lindsay.

"And be assured," said the Queen, "that she will be moved to anger by none that you can tell her, my lord. There are cases in which just scorn has always the mastery over just anger."

"Then know," said Lindsay, "that upon the field of Carberry Hill, when that false and infamous traitor and murderer, James, sometime Earl of Bothwell, and nicknamed Duke of Orkney, offered to do personal battle with any of the associated nobles who came to drag him to justice, I accepted his challenge, and was by the noble Earl of

Morton gifted with his good sword that I might therewith fight it out. Ah! so help me Heaven, had his presumption been one grain more, or his cowardice one grain less, I should have done such work with this good steel on his traitorous corpse that the hounds and carrion-crows should have found their morsels daintily carved to their use!"

The Queen's courage wellnigh gave way at the mention of Bothwell's name—a name connected with such a train of guilt, shame, and disaster. But the prolonged boast of Lindesay gave her time to rally herself, and to answer with an appearance of cold contempt—"It is easy to slay an enemy who enters not the lists. But had Mary Stuart inherited her father's sword as well as his scepter, the boldest of her rebels should not upon that day have complained that they had no one to cope withal. Your lordship will forgive me if I abridge this conference. A brief description of a bloody fight is long enough to satisfy a lady's curiosity; and unless my Lord of Lindesay has something more important to tell us than of the deeds which old Bell-the-Cat achieved, and how he would himself have emulated them, had time and tide permitted, we will retire to our private apartment; and you, Fleming, shall finish reading to us yonder little treatise *Des Rodomontades Espagnoles*."

"Tarry, madam," said Lindesay, his complexion reddening in his turn; "I know your quick wit too well of old to have sought an interview that you might sharpen its edge at the expense of my honor. Lord Ruthven and myself, with Sir Robert Melville as a concurrent, come to your Grace on the part of the secret council, to tender to you what much concerns the safety of your own life and the welfare of the state."

"The secret council!" said the Queen. "By what powers can it subsist or act, while I, from whom it holds its character, am here detained under unjust restraint? But it matters not: what concerns the welfare of Scotland shall be acceptable to Mary Stuart, come from whatever quarter it will; and for what concerns her own life, she has lived long enough to be weary of it, even at the age of twenty-five. Where is your colleague, my lord; why tarries he?"

"He comes, madam," said Melville, and Lord Ruthven entered at the instant, holding in his hand a packet. As the Queen returned his salutation, she became deadly pale, but instantly recovered herself by dint of strong and sudden resolution, just as the noble, whose appearance seemed to excite such emotions in her bosom, entered the apartment

in company with George Douglas, the youngest son of the Knight of Lochleven, who, during the absence of his father and brethren, acted as seneschal of the castle, under the direction of the elder Lady Lochleven, his father's mother.

[The following text is extremely faint and illegible, appearing to be bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.]

CHAPTER XXII

I give this heavy weight from off my head,
And this unwieldy scepter from my hand ;
With mine own tears I wash away my balm,
With my own hand I give away my crown,
With mine own tongue deny my sacred state,
With mine own breath release all duteous oaths.

Richard II.

LORD RUTHVEN had the look and bearing which became a soldier and a statesman, and the martial cast of his form and features procured him the popular epithet of Greystil, by which he was distinguished by his intimates, after the hero of a metrical romance then generally known. His dress, which was a buff coat embroidered, had a half-military character, but exhibited nothing of the sordid negligence which distinguished that of Lindesay. But the son of an ill-fated sire, and the father of a yet more unfortunate family, bore in his look that cast of inauspicious melancholy by which the physiognomists of that time pretended to distinguish those who were predestined to a violent and unhappy death.

The terror which the presence of this nobleman impressed on the Queen's mind arose from the active share he had borne in the slaughter of David Rizzio ; his father having presided at the perpetration of that abominable crime, although so weak from long and wasting illness that he could not endure the weight of his armor, having arisen from a sick-bed to commit a murder in the presence of his sovereign. On that occasion his son also had attended and taken an active part. It was little to be wondered at that the Queen, considering her condition when such a deed of horror was acted in her presence, should retain an instinctive terror for the principal actors in the murder. She returned, however, with grace the salutation of Lord Ruthven, and extended her hand to George Douglas, who kneeled and kissed it with respect—the first mark of a subject's homage which Roland Græme had seen any of them render to the captive sovereign. She returned his greeting in silence, and there was a brief pause, during which the steward of the castle, a man of a sad brow and a severe eye, placed, under George Douglas's directions,

a table and writing materials ; and the page, obedient to his mistress's dumb signal, advanced a large chair to the side on which the Queen stood, the table thus forming a sort of bar which divided the Queen and her personal followers from her unwelcome visitors. The steward then withdrew, after a low reverence. When he had closed the door behind him, the Queen broke silence. "With favor, my lords, I will sit ; my walks are not indeed extensive enough at present to fatigue me greatly, yet I find repose something more necessary than usual."

She sat down accordingly, and, shading her cheek with her beautiful hand, looked keenly and impressively at each of the nobles in turn. Mary Fleming applied her kerchief to her eyes, and Catherine Seyton and Roland Græme exchanged a glance, which showed that both were too deeply engrossed with sentiments of interest and commiseration for their royal mistress to think of anything which regarded themselves.

"I wait the purpose of your mission, my lords," said the Queen, after she had been seated for about a minute without a word being spoken—"I wait your message from those you call the secret council. I trust it is a petition of pardon, and a desire that I will resume my rightful throne, without using with due severity my right of punishing those who have dispossessed me of it?"

"Madam," replied Ruthven, "it is painful for us to speak harsh truths to a princess who has long ruled us. But we come to offer, not to implore, pardon. In a word, madam, we have to propose to you, on the part of the secret council, that you sign these deeds, which will contribute greatly to the pacification of the state, the advancement of God's Word, and the welfare of your own future life."

"Am I expected to take these fair words on trust, my lord ? or may I hear the contents of these reconciling papers ere I am asked to sign them ?"

"Unquestionably, madam ; it is our purpose and wish you should read what you are required to sign," replied Ruthven.

"Required ?" replied the Queen, with some emphasis ; "but the phrase suits well the matter. Read, my lord."

The Lord Ruthven proceeded to read a formal instrument running in the Queen's name, and setting forth that she had been called, at an early age, to the administration of the crown and realm of Scotland, and had toiled diligently therein, until she was in body and spirit so wearied out and

disgusted that she was unable any longer to endure the travail and pain of state affairs; and that, since God had blessed her with a fair and hopeful son, she was desirous to ensure to him, even while she yet lived, his succession to the crown, which was his by right of hereditary descent. "Wherefore," the instrument proceeded, "we, of the motherly affection we bear to our said son, have renounced and demitted, and, by these our letters of free good-will, renounce and demit, the crown, government, and guiding of the realm of Scotland, in favor of our said son, that he may succeed to us as native prince thereof, as much as if we had been removed by disease, and not by our own proper act. And that this dismissal of our royal authority may have the more full and solemn effect, and none pretend ignorance, we give, grant, and commit full and free and plain power to our trusty cousins, Lord Lindesay of the Byres and William Lord Ruthven, to appear in our name before as many of the nobility, clergy, and burgesses as may be assembled at Stirling, and there, in our name and behalf, publicly, and in their presence, to renounce the crown, guidance, and government of this our kingdom of Scotland."

The Queen here broke in with an air of extreme surprise.

"How is this, my lords?" she said. "Are my ears turned rebels, that they deceive me with sounds so extraordinary? And yet it is no wonder that, having conversed so long with rebellion, they should now force its language upon my understanding. Say I am mistaken, my lords—say, for the honor of yourselves and the Scottish nobility, that my right trusty cousins of Lindesay and Ruthven, two barons of warlike fame and ancient line, have not sought the prison-house of their kind mistress for such a purpose as these words seem to imply. Say, for the sake of honor and loyalty, that my ears have deceived me."

"No, madam," said Ruthven, gravely, "your ears do *not* deceive you; they deceived you when they were closed against the preachers of the Evangel, and the honest advice of your faithful subjects; and when they were ever open to flattery of pickthanks and traitors, foreign cubiculars and domestic minions. The land may no longer brook the rule of one who cannot rule herself; wherefore I pray you to comply with the last remaining wish of your subjects and counselors, and spare yourself and us the further agitation of matters so painful."

"And is this *all* my loving subjects require of me, my lord?" said Mary, in a tone of bitter irony. "Do they

really stint themselves to the easy boon that I should yield up the crown, which is mine by birthright, to an infant which is scarcely more than a year old; fling down my scepter, and take up a distaff? O no! it is too little for them to ask. That other roll of parchment contains something harder to be compiled with, and which may more highly tax my readiness to comply with the petitions of my lieges."

"This parchment," answered Ruthven, in the same tone of inflexible gravity, and unfolding the instrument as he spoke, "is one by which your Grace constitutes your nearest in blood, and the most honorable and trustworthy of your subjects, James Earl of Murray, regent of the kingdom during the minority of the young King. He already holds the appointment from the secret council."

The Queen gave a sort of shriek, and clapping her hands together, exclaimed, "Comes the arrow out of his quiver?—out of my brother's bow? Alas! I looked for his return from France as my sole, at least my readiest, chance of deliverance. And yet, when I heard that he had assumed the government, I guessed he would shame to wield it in my name."

"I must pray your answer, madam," said Lord Ruthven, "to the demand of the council."

"The demand of the council!" said the Queen; "say rather the demand of a set of robbers, impatient to divide the spoil they have seized. To such a demand, and sent by the mouth of a traitor, whose scalp, but for my womanish mercy, should long since have stood on the city gates, Mary of Scotland has no answer."

"I trust, madam," said Lord Ruthven, "my being unacceptable to your presence will not add to your obduracy of resolution. It may become you to remember that the death of the minion, Rizzio, cost the house of Ruthven its head and leader. My father, more worthy than a whole province of such vile sycophants, died in exile, and broken-hearted."

The Queen clasped her hands on her face, and, resting her arms on the table, stooped down her head and wept so bitterly that the tears were seen to find their way in streams between the white and slender fingers with which she endeavored to conceal them.

"My lords," said Sir Robert Melville, "this is too much rigor. Under your lordships' favor, we came hither, not to revive old griefs, but to find the mode of avoiding new ones."

“ Sir Robert Melville,” said Ruthven, “ we best know for what purpose we were delegated hither, and wherefore you were somewhat unnecessarily sent to attend us.”

“ Nay, by my hand,” said Lord Lindesay, “ I know not why we were cumbered with the good knight, unless he comes in place of the lump of sugar which pothicars put into their wholesome but bitter medicaments, to please a froward child—a needless labor, methinks, where men have the means to make them swallow the physic otherwise.”

“ Nay, my lords,” said Melville, “ ye best know your own secret instructions. I conceive I shall best obey mine in striving to mediate between her Grace and you.”

“ Be silent, Sir Robert Melville,” said the Queen, arising, and her face still glowing with agitation as she spoke. “ My kerchief, Fleming ; I shame that traitors should have power to move me thus. Tell me, proud lords,” she added, wiping away the tears as she spoke, “ by what earthly warrant can liege subjects pretend to challenge the rights of an anointed sovereign, to throw off the allegiance they have vowed, and to take away the crown from the head on which Divine warrant had placed it ?”

“ Madam,” said Ruthven, “ I will deal plainly with you. Your reign, from the dismal field of Pinkie Cleuch, when you were a babe in the cradle, till now that ye stand a grown dame before us, hath been such a tragedy of losses, disasters, civil dissensions, and foreign wars that the like is not to be found in our chronicles. The French and English have, with one consent, made Scotland the battlefield on which to fight out their own ancient quarrel. For ourselves, every man’s hand hath been against his brother, nor hath a year passed over without rebellion and slaughter, exile of nobles, and oppressing of the commons. We may endure it no longer ; and, therefore, as a prince to whom God hath refused the gift of hearkening to wise counsel, and on whose dealings and projects no blessing hath ever descended, we pray you to give way to other rule and governance of the land, that a remnant may yet be saved to this distracted realm.”

“ My lord,” said Mary, “ it seems to me that you fling on my unhappy and devoted head those evils which, with far more justice, I may impute to your own turbulent, wild, and untamable dispositions : the frantic violence with which you, the magnates of Scotland, enter into feuds against each other, sticking at no cruelty to gratify your wrath, taking deep revenge for the slightest offenses, and setting at defi-

ance those wise laws which your ancestors made for stanching of such cruelty, rebelling against the lawful authority, and bearing yourselves as if there were no king in the land, or rather as if each were king in his own premises. And now you throw the blame on me,—on me, whose life has been embittered—whose sleep has been broken—whose happiness has been wrecked, by your dissensions. Have I not myself been obliged to traverse wilds and mountains, at the head of a few faithful followers, to maintain peace and to put down oppression? Have I not worn harness on my person, and carried pistols at my saddle; fain to lay aside the softness of a woman, and the dignity of a queen, that I might show an example to my followers?”

“We grant, madam,” said Lindesay, “that the affrays occasioned by your misgovernment may sometimes have startled you in the midst of a masque or galliard; or it may be that such may have interrupted the idolatry of the mass, or the Jesuitical counsels of some French ambassador. But the longest and severest journey which your Grace has taken in my memory was from Hawick to Hermitage Castle; and whether it was for the weal of the state, or for your own honor, rests with your Grace’s conscience.”

The Queen turned to him with inexpressible sweetness of tone and manner, and that engaging look which Heaven had assigned her, as if to show that the choicest arts to win men’s affections may be given in vain. “Lindesay,” she said, “you spoke not to me in this stern tone, and with such scurril taunt, yon fair summer evening, when you and I shot at the butts against the Earl of Mar and Mary Livingstone, and won of them the evening’s collation, in the privy garden of St. Andrews. The Master of Lindesay was then my friend, and vowed to be my soldier. How I have offended the Lord of Lindesay I know not, unless honors have changed manners.”

Hard-hearted as he was, Lindesay seemed struck with this unexpected appeal, but almost instantly replied, “Madam, it is well known that your Grace could in those days make fools of whomever approached you. I pretend not to have been wiser than others. But gayer men and better courtiers soon jostled aside my rude homage, and I think your Grace cannot but remember times when my awkward attempts to take the manners that pleased you were the sport of the court popinjays, the Maries and the Frenchwomen.”

“My lord, I grieve if I have offended you through idle gaiety,” said the Queen, “and can but say it was most unwit-

tingly done. You are fully revenged ; for through gaiety," she said with a sigh, "will I never offend any one more."

"Our time is wasting, madam," said Lord Ruthven ; "I must pray your decision on this weighty matter which I have submitted to you."

"What, my lord !" said the Queen, "upon the instant, and without a moment's time to deliberate ? Can the council, as they term themselves, expect this of me ?"

"Madam," replied Ruthven, "the council hold the opinion that, since the fatal term which passed betwixt the night of King Henry's murder and the day of Carberry Hill, your Grace should have held you prepared for the measure now proposed, as the easiest escape from your numerous dangers and difficulties."

"Great God !" exclaimed the Queen ; "and is it as a boon that you propose to me, what every Christian king ought to regard as a loss of honor equal to the loss of life ! You take from me my crown, my power, my subjects, my wealth, my state. What, in the name of every saint, can you offer, or do you offer, in requital of my compliance ?"

"We give you pardon," answered Ruthven, sternly ; "we give you space and means to spend your remaining life in penitence and seclusion ; we give you time to make your peace with Heaven, and to receive the pure Gospel, which you have ever rejected and persecuted."

The Queen turned pale at the menace which this speech, as well as the rough and inflexible tones of the speaker, seemed distinctly to infer. "And if I do not comply with your request so fiercely urged, my lord, what then follows ?"

She said this in a voice in which female and natural fear was contending with the feelings of insulted dignity. There was a pause, as if no one cared to return to the question a distinct answer. At length Ruthven spoke. "There is little need to tell to your Grace, who are well read both in the laws and in the chronicles of the realm, that murder and adultery are crimes for which ere now queens themselves have suffered death."

"And where, my lord, or how, found you an accusation so horrible against her who stands before you ?" said Queen Mary. "The foul and odious calumnies which have poisoned the general mind of Scotland, and have placed me a helpless prisoner in your hands, are surely no proof of guilt ?"

"We need look for no further proof," replied the stern Lord Ruthven, "than the shameless marriage betwixt the widow of the murdered and the leader of the band of mur-

derers ! They that joined hands in the fated month of May had already united hearts and counsel in the deed which preceded that marriage but a few brief weeks."

"My lord—my lord," said the Queen, eagerly, "remember well there were more consents than mine to that fatal union—that most unhappy act of a most unhappy life. The evil steps adonted by sovereigns are often the suggestion of bad counselors ; but these counselors are worse than fiends who tempt and betray, if they themselves are the first to call their unfortunate princes to answer for the consequences of their own advice. Heard ye never of a bond by the nobles, my lords, recommending that ill-fated union to the ill-fated Mary ? Methinks, were it carefully examined, we should see that the names of Morton, and of Lindesay, and of Ruthven may be found in that bond, which pressed me to marry that unhappy man. Ah ! stout and loyal Lord Herries, who never knew guile or dishonor, you bent your noble knee to me in vain, to warn me of my danger, and wert yet the first to draw thy good sword in my cause when I suffered for neglecting thy counsel ! Faithful knight and true noble, what a difference betwixt thee and those counselors of evil who now threaten my life for having fallen into the snares they spread for me !"

"Madam," said Ruthven, "we know that you are an orator ; and perhaps for that reason the council has sent hither men whose converse hath been more with the wars than with the language of the schools or the cabals of state. We but desire to know if, on assurance of life and honor, ye will demit the rule of this kingdom of Scotland ?"

"And what warrant have I," said the Queen, "that ye will keep that treaty with me, if I should barter my kingly estate for seclusion and leave to weep in secret ?"

"Our honor and our word, madam," answered Ruthven.

"They are too slight and unsolid pledges, my lord," said the Queen ; "add at least a handful of thistle-down to give them weight in the balance."

"Away, Ruthven," said Lindesay ; "she was ever deaf to counsel, save of slaves and sycophants : let her remain by her refusal, and abide by it !"

"Stay, my lord," said Sir Robert Melville, "or rather permit me to have but a few minutes' private audience with her Grace. If my presence with you could avail aught, it must be as a mediator ; do not, I conjure you, leave the castle, or break off the conference, until I bring you word how her Grace shall finally stand disposed."

“We will remain in the hall,” said Lindesay, “for half an hour’s space; but in despising our words and our pledge of honor, she has touched the honor of my name: let her look herself to the course she has to pursue. If the half-hour should pass away without her determining to comply with the demands of the nation, her career will be brief enough.”

With little ceremony the two nobles left the apartment, traversed the vestibule, and descended the winding stairs, the clash of Lindesay’s huge sword being heard as it rang against each step in his descent. George Douglas followed them, after exchanging with Melville a gesture of surprise and sympathy.

As soon as they were gone, the Queen, giving way to grief, fear, and agitation, threw herself into the seat, wrung her hands, and seemed to abandon herself to despair. Her female attendants, weeping themselves, endeavored yet to pray her to be composed, and Sir Robert Melville, kneeling at her feet, made the same entreaty. After giving way to a passionate burst of sorrow, she at length said to Melville, “Kneel not to me, Melville—mock me not with the homage of the person, when the heart is far away. Why stay you behind with the deposed—the condemned?—her who has but few hours perchance to live? You have been favored as well as the rest; why do you continue the empty show of gratitude and thankfulness any longer than they?”

“Madam,” said Sir Robert Melville, “so help me Heaven at my need, my heart is as true to you as when you were in your highest place.”

“True to me!—true to me!” repeated the Queen, with some scorn; “tush, Melville, what signifies the truth which walks hand in hand with my enemies’ falsehood? Thy hand and thy sword have never been so well acquainted that I can trust thee in aught where manhood is required. O, Seyton, for thy bold father, who is both wise, true, and valiant!”

Roland Græme could withstand no longer his earnest desire to offer his services to a princess so distressed and so beautiful. “If one sword,” he said, “madam, can do anything to back the wisdom of this grave counselor, or to defend your rightful cause, here is my weapon, and here is my hand ready to draw and use it.” And raising his sword with one hand, he laid the other upon the hilt.

As he thus held up the weapon, Catherine Seyton exclaimed, “Methinks I see a token from my father, madam;”

and immediately crossing the apartment, she took Roland Græme by the skirt of the cloak, and asked him earnestly whence he had that sword.

“The page answered with surprise, “Methinks this is no presence in which to jest. Surely, damsel, you yourself best know whence and how I obtained the weapon.”

“Is this a time for folly?” said Catherine Seyton. “Unsheathe the sword instantly!”

“If the Queen commands me,” said the youth, looking towards his royal mistress.

“For shame, maiden!” said the Queen; “wouldst thou instigate the poor boy to enter into useless strife with the two most approved soldiers in Scotland?”

“In your Grace’s cause,” replied the page, “I will venture my life upon them!” And as he spoke he drew his weapon partly from the sheath, and a piece of parchment, rolled around the blade, fell out and dropped on the floor.

Catherine Seyton caught it up with eager haste. “It is my father’s handwriting,” she said, “and doubtless conveys his best duteous advice to your Majesty; I knew that it was prepared to be sent in this weapon, but I expected another messenger.”

“By my faith, fair one,” thought Roland, “and if you knew not that I had such a secret missive about me, I was yet more ignorant.”

The Queen cast her eye upon the scroll, and remained a few minutes wrapped in deep thought. “Sir Robert Melville,” she at length said, “this scroll advises me to submit myself to necessity, and to subscribe the deeds these hard men have brought with them, as one who gives way to the natural fear inspired by the threats of rebels and murderers. You, Sir Robert, are a wise man, and Seyton is both sagacious and brave. Neither, I think, would mislead me in this matter.”

“Madam,” said Melville, “if I have not the strength of body of the Lords Herries or Seyton, I will yield to neither in zeal for your Majesty’s service. I cannot fight for you like these lords, but neither of them is more willing to die for your service.”

“I believe it, my old and faithful counselor,” said the Queen, “and believe me, Melville, I did thee but a moment’s injustice. Read what my Lord Seyton hath written to us, and give us thy best counsel.”

He glanced over the parchment, and instantly replied, “O! my dear and royal mistress, only treason itself could give you

other advice than Lord Seyton has here expressed. He, Herries, Huntly, the English ambassador Throgmorton, and others, your friends, are all alike of opinion that whatever deeds or instruments you execute within these walls must lose all force and effect, as extorted from your Grace by duress, by sufferance of present evil, and fear of men, and harm to ensue on your refusal. Yield, therefore, to the tide, and be assured that, in subscribing what parchments they present to you, you bind yourself to nothing, since your act of signature wants that which alone can make it valid, the free will of the grantor."

"Ay, so says my Lord Seyton," replied Mary; "yet methinks, for the daughter of so long a line of sovereigns to resign her birthright, because rebels press upon her with threats, argues little of royalty, and will read ill for the fame of Mary in future chronicles. Tush! Sir Robert Melville, the traitors may use black threats and bold words, but they will not dare to put their hands forth on our person?"

"Alas! madam, they have already dared so far, and incurred such peril by the lengths which they have gone, that they are but one step from the worst and uttermost."

"Surely," said the Queen, her fears again predominating, "Scottish nobles would not lend themselves to assassinate a helpless woman?"

"Bethink you, madam," he replied, "what horrid spectacles have been seen in our day; and what act is so dark that some Scottish hand has not been found to dare it? Lord Lindesay, besides his natural sullenness and hardness of temper, is the near kinsman of Henry Darnley, and Ruthven has his own deep and dangerous plans. The council, besides, speak of proofs by writ and word, of a casket with letters—of I know not what."

"Ah! good Melville," answered the Queen, "were I as sure of the even-handed integrity of my judges as of my own innocence—and yet——"

"Oh! pause, madam," said Melville; "even innocence must sometimes for a season stoop to injurious blame. Besides, you are here——"

He looked round and paused.

"Speak out, Melville," said the Queen, "never one approached my person who wished to work me evil; and even this poor page, whom I have to-day seen for the first time in my life, I can trust safely with your communication."

"Nay, madam," answered Melville, "in such emergence, and he being the bearer of Lord Seyton's message, I will

venture to say before him and these fair ladies, whose truth and fidelity I dispute not—I say, I will venture to say, that there are other modes besides that of open trial by which deposed sovereigns often die ; and that, as Machiavel saith, there is but one step betwixt a king's prison and his grave."

"Oh ! were it but swift and easy for the body," said the unfortunate princess, "were it but a safe and happy change for the soul, the woman lives not that would take the step so soon as I ! But, alas ! Melville, when we think of death, a thousand sins, which we have trod as worms beneath our feet, rise up against us as flaming serpents. Most injuriously do they accuse me of aiding Darnley's death ; yet, blessed Lady ! I afforded too open occasion for the suspicion ; I espoused Bothwell."

"Think not of that now, madam," said Melville, "think rather of the immediate mode of saving yourself and son. Comply with the present unreasonable demands, and trust that better times will shortly arrive."

"Madam," said Roland Græme, "if it pleases you that I should do so, I will presently swim through the lake, if they refuse me other conveyance to the shore ; I will go to the courts successively of England, France, and Spain, and will show you have subscribed these vile instruments from no stronger impulse than the fear of death, and I will do battle against them that say otherwise."

The Queen turned her round, and with one of those sweet smiles which, during the era of life's romance, overpay every risk, held her hand towards Roland, but without speaking a word. He kneeled reverently and kissed it, and Melville again resumed his plea.

"Madam," he said, "time presses, and you must not let those boats, which I see they are even now preparing, put forth on the lake. Here are enough of witnesses—your ladies—this bold youth—myself, when it can serve your cause effectually, for I would not hastily stand committed in this matter ; but even without me here is evidence enough to show that you have yielded to the demands of the council through force and fear, but from no sincere and unconstrained assent. Their boats are already manned for their return ; oh ! permit your old servant to recall them !"

"Melville," said the Queen, "thou art an ancient courtier ; when didst thou ever know a sovereign prince recall to his presence subjects who had parted from him on such terms as those on which these envoys of the council left us, and who yet were recalled without submission or apology ? Let it

cost me both life and crown, I will not again command them to my presence."

"Alas! madam, that empty form should make a barrier! If I rightly understand, you are not unwilling to listen to real and advantageous counsel; but your scruple is saved, I hear them returning to ask your final resolution. O! take the advice of the noble Seyton, and you may once more command those who now usurp a triumph over you. But hush! I hear them in the vestibule."

As he concluded speaking, George Douglas opened the door of the apartment, and marshaled in the two noble envoys.

"We come, madam," said the Lord Ruthven, "to request your answer to the proposal of the council."

"Your final answer," said Lord Lindesay; "for with a refusal you must couple the certainty that you have precipitated your fate, and renounced the last opportunity of making peace with God, and ensuring your longer abode in the world."

"My lords," said Mary, with inexpressible grace and dignity, "the evils we cannot resist we must submit to: I will subscribe these parchments with such liberty of choice as my condition permits me. Were I on yonder shore, with a fleet jennet and ten good and loyal knights around me, I would subscribe my sentence of eternal condemnation as soon as the resignation of my throne. But here, in the Castle of Lochleven, with deep water around me, and you, my lords, beside me, I have no freedom of choice. Give me the pen, Melville, and bear witness to what I do, and why I do it."

"It is our hope your Grace will not suppose yourself compelled, by any apprehensions from us," said the Lord Ruthven, "to execute what must be your own voluntary deed."

The Queen had already stooped towards the table, and placed the parchment before her, with the pen between her fingers, ready for the important act of signature. But when Lord Ruthven had done speaking, she looked up, stopped short, and threw down the pen. "If," she said, "I am expected to declare I give away my crown of free will, or otherwise than because I am compelled to renounce it by the threat of worse evils to myself and my subjects, I will not put my name to such an untruth—not to gain full possession of England, France, and Scotland! all once my own, in possession, or by right."

"Beware, madam," said Lindesay, and, snatching hold of the Queen's arm with his own gauntleted hand, he pressed it, in the rudeness of his passion, more closely, perhaps, than

he was himself aware of—"beware how you contend with those who are the stronger, and have the mastery of your fate!"

He held his grasp on her arm, bending his eyes on her with a stern and intimidating look, till both Ruthven and Melville cried "Shame!" and Douglas, who had hitherto remained in a state of apparent apathy, had made a stride from the door, as if to interfere. The rude baron then quitted his hold, disguising the confusion which he really felt at having indulged his passion to such an extent under a sullen and contemptuous smile.

The Queen immediately began, with an expression of pain, to bare the arm which he had grasped, by drawing up the sleeve of her gown, and it appeared that his gripe had left the purple marks of his iron fingers upon her flesh. "My lord," she said, "as a knight and a gentleman, you might have spared my frail arm so severe a proof that you have the greater strength on your side, and are resolved to use it. But I thank you for it—it is the most decisive token of the terms on which this day's business is to rest. I draw you to witness, both lords and ladies," she said, showing the marks of the grasp on her arm, "that I subscribe these instruments in obedience to the sign-manual of my Lord of Lindesay, which you may see imprinted on mine arm." *

Lindesay would have spoken, but was restrained by his colleague Ruthven, who said to him, "Peace, my Lord. Let the Lady Mary of Scotland ascribe her signature to what she will, it is our business to procure it, and carry it to the council. Should there be debate hereafter on the manner in which it was adhibited, there will be time enough for it."

Lindesay was silent accordingly, only muttering within his beard. "I meant not to hurt her; but I think women's flesh be as tender as new-fallen snow."

The Queen meanwhile subscribed the rolls of parchment with a hasty indifference, as if they had been matters of slight consequence, or of mere formality. When she had performed this painful task, she arose, and, having courtesied to the lords, was about to withdraw to her chamber. Ruthven and Sir Robert Melville made, the first a formal reverence, the second an obeisance, in which his desire to acknowledge his sympathy was obviously checked by the fear of appearing in the eyes of his colleagues too partial to his former mistress. But Lindesay stood motionless, even when they were preparing to withdraw. At length, as if moved by a sudden im-

* See The Resignation of Queen Mary. Note 16.

pulse, he walked round the table which had hitherto been betwixt them and the Queen, kneeled on one knee, took her hand, kissed it, let it fall, and arose. "Lady," he said, "thou art a noble creature, even though thou hast abused God's choicest gifts. I pay that devotion to thy manliness of spirit which I would not have paid to the power thou hast long undeservedly wielded: I kneel to Mary Stuart, not to the Queen."

"The Queen and Mary Stuart pity thee alike, Lindesay," said Mary—"alike they pity, and they forgive thee. An honored soldier hadst thou been by a king's side; leagued with rebels, what art thou but a good blade in the hands of a ruffian? Farewell, my Lord Ruthven, the smoother but the deeper traitor. Farewell, Melville. Mayst thou find masters that can understand state policy better, and have the means to reward it more richly, than Mary Stuart! Farewell, George of Douglas; make your respected grand-dame comprehend that we would be alone for the remainder of the day, God wot, we have need to collect our thoughts."

All bowed and withdrew; but scarce had they entered the vestibule ere Ruthven and Lindesay were at variance. "Chide not with me, Ruthven," Lindesay was heard to say in answer to something more indistinctly urged by his colleague—"chide not with me, for I will not brook it! You put the hangman's office on me in this matter, and even the very hangman hath leave to ask some pardon of those on whom he does his office. I would I had as deep cause to be this lady's friend as I have to be her enemy: thou shouldst see if I spared limb and life in her quarrel."

"Thou art a sweet minion," said Ruthven, "to fight a lady's quarrel, and all for a brent brow and a tear in the eye! Such toys have been out of thy thoughts this many a year."

"Do me right, Ruthven," said Lindesay. "You are like a polished corslet of steel: it shines more gaudily, but it is not a whit softer—nay, it is five times harder—than a Glasgow breast-plate of hammered iron. Enough. We know each other."

They descended the stairs, were heard to summon their boats, and the Queen signed to Roland Græme to retire to the vestibule, and leave her with her female attendants.

CHAPTER XXIII

Give me a morsel on the greensward rather,
Coarse as you will the cooking. Let the fresh spring
Bubble beside my napkin, and the free birds,
Twittering and chirping, hop from bough to bough,
To claim the crumbs I leave for perquisites ;
Your prison-feasts I like not.

The Woodsman, a Drama.

A RECESS in the vestibule was enlightened by a small window, at which Roland Græme stationed himself to mark the departure of the lords. He could see their followers mustering on horseback under their respective banners, the western sun glancing on their corslets and steel caps as they moved to and fro, mounted or dismounted, at intervals. On the narrow space betwixt the castle and the water, the Lords Ruthven and Lindesay were already moving slowly to their boats, accompanied by the Lady of Lochleven, her grandson, and their principal attendants. They took a ceremonious leave of each other, as Roland could discern by their gestures, and the boats put off from their landing-place ; the boatmen stretched to their oars, and they speedily diminished upon the eye of the idle gazer, who had no better employment than to watch their motions. Such seemed also the occupation of the Lady Lochleven and George Douglas, who, returning from the landing-place, looked frequently back to the boats, and at length stopped, as if to observe their progress, under the window at which Roland Græme was stationed. As they gazed on the lake, he could hear the lady distinctly say, "And she has bent her mind to save her life at the expense of her kingdom?"

"Her life, madam!" replied her son; "I know not who would dare to attempt it in the castle of my father. Had I dreamt that it was with such purpose that Lindesay insisted on bringing his followers hither, neither he nor they should have passed the iron gate of Lochleven Castle."

"I speak not of private slaughter, my son, but of open trial, condemnation, and execution; for with such she has been threatened, and to such threats she has given way. Had she not more of the false Guisian blood than of the royal

race of Scotland in her veins, she had bidden them defiance to their teeth. But it is all of the same complexion, and meanness is the natural companion of profligacy. I am discharged, forsooth, from intruding on her gracious presence this evening. Gó thou, my son, and render the usual service of the meal to this unqueened queen."

"So please you, lady mother," said Douglas, "I care not greatly to approach her presence."

"Thou art right, my son; and therefore I trust thy prudence, even because I have noted thy caution. She is like an isle on the ocean, surrounded with shelves and quicksands: its verdure fair and inviting to the eye, but the wreck of many a goodly vessel which had approached it too rashly. But for thee, my son, I fear nought; and we may not, with our honor, suffer her to eat without the attendance of one of us. She may die by the judgment of Heaven, or the fiend may have power over her in her despair; and then we would be touched in honor to show that, in our house, and at our table, she had had all fair play and fitting usage."

Here Roland was interrupted by a smart tap on the shoulders reminding him sharply of Adam Woodcock's adventure of the preceding evening. He turned round, almost expecting to see the page of St. Michael's hostelry. He saw, indeed, Catherine Seyton; but she was in female attire, differing, no doubt, a great deal in shape and materials from that which she had worn when they first met, and becoming her birth as the daughter of a great baron, and her rank as the attendant on a princess. "So, fair page," said she, "eavesdropping is one of your page-like qualities, I presume?"

"Fair sister," answered Roland, in the same tone, "if some friends of mine be as well acquainted with the rest of our mystery as they are with the arts of swearing, swaggering, and switching, they need ask no page in Christendom for further insight into his vocation."

"Unless that pretty speech infer that you have yourself had the discipline of the switch since we last met, the probability whereof I nothing doubt, I profess, fair page, I am at a loss to conjecture your meaning. But there is no time to debate it now—they come with the evening meal. Be pleased, sir page, to do your duty."

Four servants entered bearing dishes, preceded by the same stern old steward whom Roland had already seen, and followed by George Douglas, already mentioned as the grandson of the Lady of Lochleven, and who, acting as seneschal, represented upon this occasion his father, the lord of the castle.

He entered with his arms folded on his bosom, and his looks bent on the ground. With the assistance of Roland Græme, a table was suitably covered in the next or middle apartment, on which the domestics placed their burdens with great reverence, the steward and Douglas bending low when they had seen the table properly adorned, as if their royal prisoner had sat at the board in question. The door opened, and Douglas, raising his eyes hastily cast them again on the earth, when he perceived it was only the Lady Mary Fleming who entered.

“Her Grace,” she said, “will not eat to-night.”

“Let us hope she may be otherwise persuaded,” said Douglas; “meanwhile, madam, please to see our duty performed.”

A servant presented bread and salt on a silver plate, and the old steward carved for Douglas a small morsel in succession from each of the dishes presented, which he tasted, as was then the custom at the tables of princes, to which death was often suspected to find its way in the disguise of food.

“The Queen will not then come forth to-night?” said Douglas.

“She has so determined,” replied the lady.

“Our further attendance then is unnecessary: we leave you to your supper, fair ladies, and wish you good even.”

He retired slowly as he came, and with the same air of deep dejection, and was followed by the attendants belonging to the castle. The two ladies sate down to their meal, and Roland Græme, with ready alacrity, prepared to wait upon them. Catherine Seyton whispered to her companion, who replied with the question, spoken in a low tone, but looking at the page—“Is he of gentle blood and well nurtured?”

The answer which she received seemed satisfactory, for she said to Roland, “Sit down, young gentleman, and eat with your sisters in captivity.”

“Permit me rather to perform my duty in attending them,” said Roland, anxious to show he was possessed of the high tone of deference prescribed by the rules of chivalry towards the fair sex, and especially to dames and maidens of quality.

“You will find, sir page,” said Catherine, “you will have little time allowed you for your meal; waste it not in ceremony, or you may rue your politeness ere to-morrow morning.”

“Your speech is too free, maiden,” said the elder lady; “the modesty of the youth may teach you more fitting

fashions towards one whom to-day you have seen for the first time."

Catherine Seyton cast down her eyes, but not till she had given a single glance of inexpressible archness towards Roland, whom her more grave companion now addressed in a tone of protection.

"Regard her not, young gentleman; she knows little of the world, save the forms of a country nunnery; take thy place at the board-end, and refresh thyself after thy journey."

Roland Græme obeyed willingly, as it was the first food he had that day tasted; for Lindesay and his followers seemed regardless of human wants. Yet, notwithstanding the sharpness of his appetite, a natural gallantry of disposition, the desire of showing himself a well-nurtured gentleman in all courtesies towards the fair sex, and, for aught I know, the pleasure of assisting Catherine Seyton, kept his attention awake, during the meal, to all those nameless acts of duty and service which gallants of that age were accustomed to render. He carved with neatness and decorum, and selected duly whatever was most delicate to place before the ladies. Ere they could form a wish, he sprung from the table ready to comply with it—poured wine—tempered it with water—removed and exchanged trenchers, and performed the whole honors of the table, with an air at once of cheerful diligence, profound respect, and graceful promptitude.

When he observed that they had finished eating, he hastened to offer to the elder lady the silver ewer, basin, and napkin, with the ceremony and gravity which he would have used towards Mary herself. He next, with the same decorum, having supplied the basin with fair water, presented it to Catherine Seyton. Apparently she was determined to disturb his self-possession if possible; for, while in the act of bathing her hands, she contrived, as it were by accident, to flirt some drops of water upon the face of the assiduous assistant. But if such was her mischievous purpose she was completely disappointed; for Roland Græme, internally piquing himself on his self-command, neither laughed nor was discomposed; and all that the maiden gained by her frolic was a severe rebuke from her companion, taxing her with mal-address and indecorum. Catherine replied not, but sat pouting, something in the humor of a spoilt child, who watches the opportunity of wreaking upon some one or other its resentment for a deserved reprimand.

The Lady Mary Fleming, in the meanwhile, was naturally well pleased with the exact and reverent observance of the page, and said to Catherine, after a favorable glance at Roland Græme, "You might well say, Catherine, our companion in captivity was well born and gently nurtured. I would not make him vain by my praise, but his services enable us to dispense with those which George Douglas condescends not to afford us, save when the Queen is herself in presence."

"Umph! I think hardly," answered Catherine. "George Douglas is one of the most handsome gallants in Scotland, and 'tis pleasure to see him even still, when the gloom of Lochleven Castle has shed the same melancholy over him that it has done over everything else. When he was at Holyrood, who would have said the young sprightly George Douglas would have been contented to play the locksmith here in Lochleven, with no gayer amusement than that of turning the key on two or three helpless women? A strange office for a knight of the bleeding heart; why does he not leave it to his father or his brothers?"

"Perhaps, like us, he has no choice," answered the Lady Fleming. "But, Catherine, thou hast used thy brief space at court well, to remember what George Douglas was then."

"I used mine eyes, which I suppose was what I was designed to do, and they were worth using there. When I was at the nunnery, they were very useless appurtenances; and now I am at Lochleven, they are good for nothing, save to look over that eternal work of embroidery."

"You speak thus, when you have been but a few brief hours amongst us: was this the maiden who would live and die in a dungeon, might she but have permission to wait on her gracious queen?"

"Nay, if you chide in earnest, my jest is ended," said Catherine Seyton. "I would not yield in attachment to my poor godmother to the gravest dame that ever had wise saws upon her tongue, and a double-starched ruff around her throat—you know I would not, Dame Mary Fleming, and it is putting shame on me to say otherwise."

"She will challenge the other court lady," thought Roland Græme—"she will to a certainty fling down her glove, and if Dame Mary Fleming hath but the soul to lift it, we may have a combat in the lists!" But the answer of Lady Mary Fleming was such as turns away wrath.

"Thou art a good child," she said, "my Catherine, and a faithful; but Heaven pity him who shall have one day a

creature so beautiful to delight him, and a thing so mischievous to torment him : thou art fit to drive twenty husbands stark mad."

"Nay," said Catherine, resuming the full career of her careless good-humor, "he must be half-witted beforehand that gives me such an opportunity. But I am glad you are not angry with me in sincerity," casting herself as she spoke into the arms of her friend, and continuing, with a tone of apologetic fondness, while she kissed her on either side of the face—"You know, my dear Fleming, that I have to contend with both my father's lofty pride and with my mother's high spirit. God bless them ! they have left me these good qualities, having small portion to give besides, as times go ; and so I am wilful and saucy ; but let me remain only a week in this castle, and O, my dear Fleming, my spirit will be as chastised and as humble as thine own."

Dame Mary Fleming's sense of dignity, and love of form, could not resist this affectionate appeal. She kissed Catherine Seyton in her turn affectionately ; while, answering the last part of her speech, she said, "Now, Our Lady forbid, dear Catherine, that you should lose aught that is befitting of what becomes so well your light heart and lively humor. Keep but your sharp wit on this side of madness, and it cannot but be a blessing to us. But let me go, mad wench—I hear her Grace touch her silver call." And, extricating herself from Catherine's grasp, she went towards the door of Queen Mary's apartment, from which was heard the low tone of a silver whistle, which, now only used by the boatswains in the navy, was then, for want of bells, the ordinary mode by which ladies, even of the very highest rank, summoned their domestics. When she had made two or three steps towards the door, however, she turned back, and advancing to the young couple whom she left together, she said, in a very serious though a low tone, "I trust it is impossible that we can, any of us, or in any circumstances, forget that, few as we are, we form the household of the Queen of Scotland ; and that, in her calamity, all boyish mirth and childish jesting can only serve to give a great triumph to her enemies, who have already found their account in objecting to her the lightness of every idle folly that the young and the gay practised in her court." So saying, she left the apartment.

Catherine Seyton seemed much struck with this remonstrance. She suffered herself to drop into the seat which she had quitted when she went to embrace Dame Mary Fleming, and for some time rested her brow upon her hands ;

while Roland Græme looked at her earnestly, with a mixture of emotions which perhaps he himself could neither have analyzed nor explained. As she raised her face slowly from the posture to which a momentary feeling of self-rebuke had depressed it, her eyes encountered those of Roland, and became gradually animated with their usual spirit of malicious drollery, which not unnaturally excited a similar expression in those of the equally volatile page. They sat for the space of two minutes, each looking at the other with great seriousness on their features, and much mirth in their eyes, until at length Catherine was the first to break silence.

"May I pray you, fair sir," she began, very demurely, "to tell me what you see in my face to arouse looks so extremely sagacious and knowing as those with which it is your worship's pleasure to honor me? It would seem as there were some wonderful confidence and intimacy betwixt u, fair sir, if one is to judge from your extremely cunning looks; and so help me, Our Lady, as I never saw you but twice in my life before."

"And where were those nappy occasions," said Roland, "if I may be bold enough to ask the question?"

"At the nunnery of St. Catherine's," said the damsel, "in the first instance; and, in the second, during five minutes of a certain raid or foray which it was your pleasure to make into the lodging of my lord and father, Lord Seyton, from which, to my surprise, as probably to your own, you returned with a token of friendship and favor instead of broken bones, which were the more probable reward of your intrusion, considering the prompt ire of the house of Seyton. I am deeply mortified," she added, ironically, "that your recollection should require refreshment on a subject so important; and that my memory should be stronger than yours on such an occasion is truly humiliating."

"Your own memory is not so exactly correct, fair mistress," answered the page, "seeing you have forgotten meeting the third, in the hostelry of St. Michael's when it pleased you to lay your switch across the face of my comrade, in order, I warrant, to show that, in the house of Seyton, neither the prompt ire of its descendants, nor the use of the doublet and hose, are subject to Salique law, or confined to the use of the males."

"Fair sir," answered Catherine, looking at him with great steadiness and some surprise, "unless your fair wits have forsaken you, I am at a loss what to conjecture of your meaning."

“By my troth, fair mistress,” answered Roland, “and were I as wise a warlock as Michael Scott, I could scarce riddle the dream you read me. Did I not see you last night in the hostelry of St. Michael’s? Did you not bring me this sword, with command not to draw it save at the command of my native and rightful sovereign? And have I not done as you required me? Or is the sword a piece of lath, my word a bulrush, my memory a dream, and my eyes good for nought—espials which corbies might pick out of my head?”

“And if your eyes serve you not more truly on other occasions than in your vision of St. Michael,” said Catherine, “I know not, the pain apart, that the corbies would do you any great injury in the deprivation. But hark, the bell; hush, for God’s sake, we are interrupted——”

The damsel was right; for no sooner had the dull toll of the castle bell begun to resound through the vaulted apartment than the door of the vestibule flew open, and the steward with his severe countenance, his gold chain, and his white rod, entered the apartment, followed by the same train of domestics who had placed the dinner on the table, and who now, with the same ceremonious formality began to remove it.

The steward remained motionless as some old picture, while the domestics did their office; and when it was accomplished, everything removed from the table, and the board itself taken from its tressels and disposed against the wall, he said aloud, without addressing any one in particular, and somewhat in the tone of a herald reading a proclamation, “My noble lady, Dame Margaret Erskine, by marriage Douglas, lets the Lady Mary of Scotland and her attendants to wit, that a servant of the true Evangel, her reverend chaplain, will to-night, as usual, expound, lecture, and catechise, according to the forms of the congregation of Gospellers.”

“Hark you, my friend, Mr. Dryfesdale,” said Catherine, “I understand this announcement is a nightly form of yours. Now, I pray you to remark, that the Lady of Fleming and I—for I trust your insolent invitation concerns us only—have chosen St. Peter’s pathway to Heaven; so I see no one whom your godly exhortation, catechise, or lecture can benefit, excepting this poor page, who, being in Satan’s hand as well as yourself, had better worship with you than remain to cumber our better advised devotions.”

The page was wellnigh giving a round denial to the assertions which this speech implied, when, remembering what

had passed betwixt him and the Regent, and seeing Catherine's finger raised in a monitory fashion, he felt himself, as on former occasions at the Castle of Avenel, obliged to submit to the task of dissimulation, and followed Dryfesdale down to the castle chapel, where he assisted in the devotions of the evening.

The chaplain was named Elias Henderson. He was a man in the prime of life, and possessed of good natural parts, carefully improved by the best education which those times afforded. To these qualities were added a faculty of close and terse reasoning, and, at intervals, a flow of happy illustration and natural eloquence. The religious faith of Roland Græme, as we have already had opportunity to observe, rested on no secure basis, but was entertained rather in obedience to his grandmother's behests, and his secret desire to contradict the chaplain of Avenel Castle, than from any fixed or steady reliance which he placed on the Romish creed. His ideas had been of late considerably enlarged by the scenes he had passed through; and feeling that there was shame in not understanding something of those political disputes betwixt the professors of the ancient and of the Reformed faith, he listened, with more attention than it had hitherto been in his nature to yield on such occasions, to an animated discussion of some of the principal points of difference betwixt the churches.

So passed away the first day in the Castle of Lochleven; and those which followed it were, for some time, of a very monotonous and uniform tenor.

CHAPTER XXIV

'Tis a weary life this
Vaults overhead, and grates and bars around me,
And my sad hours spent with as sad companions,
Whose thoughts are brooding o'er their own mischances,
Far, far too deeply to take part in mine.

The Woodsman.

THE course of life to which Mary and her little retinue were doomed was in the last degree secluded and lonely, varied only as the weather permitted or rendered impossible the Queen's usual walk in the garden or on the battlements. The greater part of the morning she wrought with her ladies at those pieces of needlework many of which still remain, proofs of her indefatigable application. At such hours the page was permitted the freedom of the castle and islet; nay, he was sometimes invited to attend George Douglas when he went a-sporting upon the lake or on its margin—opportunities of diversion which were only clouded by the remarkable melancholy which always seemed to brood on that gentleman's brow, and to mark his whole demeanor—a sadness so profound that Roland never observed him to smile, or to speak any word unconnected with the immediate object of their exercise.

The most pleasant part of Roland's day was the occasional space which he was permitted to pass in personal attendance on the Queen and her ladies, together with the regular dinner-time, which he always spent with Dame Mary Fleming and Catherine Seyton. At these periods, he had frequent occasion to admire the lively spirit and inventive imagination of the latter damsel, who was unwearied in her contrivances to amuse her mistress, and to banish, for a time at least, the melancholy which preyed on her bosom. She danced, she sung, she recited tales of ancient and modern times, with that heartfelt exertion of talent of which the pleasure lies not in the vanity of displaying it to others, but in the enthusiastic consciousness that we possess it ourselves. And yet these high accomplishments were mixed with an air of rusticity and hare-brained vivacity which seemed rather to belong to some village maid, the coquette of the ring

around the Maypole, than to the high-bred descendant of an ancient baron. A touch of audacity, altogether short of effrontery, and far less approaching to vulgarity, gave, as it were, a wildness to all that she did; and Mary, while defending her from some of the occasional censures of her grave companion, compared her to a trained singing-bird escaped from a cage, which practises in all the luxuriance of freedom, and in full possession of the greenwood bough, the airs which it had learned during its earlier captivity.

The moments which the page was permitted to pass in the presence of this fascinating creature danced so rapidly away that, brief as they were, they compensated the weary dulness of all the rest of the day. The space of indulgence, however, was always brief, nor were any private interviews betwixt him and Catherine permitted, or even possible. Whether it were some special precaution respecting the Queen's household, or whether it were her general ideas of propriety, Dame Fleming seemed particularly attentive to prevent the young people from holding any separate correspondence together, and bestowed, for Catherine's sole benefit in this matter, the full stock of prudence and experience which she had acquired when mother of the Queen's maidens of honor, and by which she had gained their hearty hatred. Casual meetings, however, could not be prevented, unless Catherine had been more desirous of shunning, or Roland Græme less anxious in watching for them. A smile, a gibe, a sarcasm, disarmed of its severity by the arch look with which it was accompanied, was all that time permitted to pass between them on such occasions. But such passing interviews neither afforded means nor opportunity to renew the discussion of the circumstances attending their earlier acquaintance, nor to permit Roland to investigate more accurately the mysterious apparition of the page in the purple velvet cloak at the hostelry of St. Michael's.

The winter months slipped heavily away, and spring was already advanced, when Roland Græme observed a gradual change in the manners of his fellow-prisoners. Having no business of his own to attend to, and being, like those of his age, education, and degree, sufficiently curious concerning what passed around, he began by degrees to suspect, and finally to be convinced, that there was something in agitation among his companions in captivity to which they did not desire that he should be privy. Nay, he became almost certain that, by some means unintelligible to him, Queen Mary held correspondence beyond the walls and waters which

surrounded her prison-house, and that she nourished some secret hope of deliverance or escape. In the conversations betwixt her and her attendants at which he was necessarily present, the Queen could not always avoid showing that she was acquainted with the events which were passing abroad in the world, and which he only heard through her report. He observed that she wrote more and worked less than had been her former custom, and that, as if desirous to lull suspicion asleep, she changed her manner towards the Lady Lochleven into one more gracious, and which seemed to express a resigned submission to her lot. "They think I am blind," he said to himself, "and that I am unfit to be trusted because I am so young, or it may be because I was sent hither by the Regent. Well! be it so; they may be glad to confide in me in the long run; and Catherine Seyton, for as saucy as she is, may find me as safe a confidant as that sullen Douglas, whom she is always running after. It may be they are angry with me for listening to Master Elias Henderson, but it was their own fault for sending me there; and if the man speaks truth and good sense, and preaches only the Word of God, he is as likely to be right as either Pope or councils."

It is probable that in this last conjecture Roland Græme had hit upon the real cause why the ladies had not entrusted him with their counsels. He had of late had several conferences with Henderson on the subject of religion, and had given him to understand that he stood in need of his instructions, although he had not thought there was either prudence or necessity for confessing that hitherto he had held the tenets of the Church of Rome.

Elias Henderson, a keen propagator of the Reformed faith, had sought the seclusion of Lochleven Castle with the express purpose and expectation of making converts from Rome amongst the domestics of the dethroned Queen, and confirming the faith of those who already held the Protestant doctrines. Perhaps his hopes soared a little higher, and he might nourish some expectation of a proselyte more distinguished, in the person of the deposed Queen. But the pertinacity with which she and her female attendants refused to see or listen to him rendered such hope, if he nourished it, altogether abortive.

The opportunity, therefore, of enlarging the religious information of Roland Græme, and bringing him to a more due sense of his duties to Heaven, was hailed by the good man as a door opened by Providence for the salvation of a sinner.

He dreamed not, indeed, that he was converting a Papist, but such was the ignorance which Roland displayed upon some material points of the Reformed doctrine, that Master Henderson, while praising his docility to the Lady Lochleven and her grandson, seldom failed to add, that his venerable brother, Henry Warden, must be now decayed in strength and in mind, since he found a catechumen of his flock so ill-grounded in the principles of his belief. For this, indeed, Roland Græme thought it was unnecessary to assign the true reason, which was his having made it a point of honor to forget all that Henry Warden taught him, as soon as he was no longer compelled to repeat it over as a lesson acquired by rote. The lessons of his new instructor, if not more impressively delivered, were received by a more willing ear and a more awakened understanding, and the solitude of Lochleven Castle was favorable to graver thoughts than the page had hitherto entertained. He wavered yet, indeed, as one who was almost persuaded; but his attention to the chaplain's instructions procured him favor even with the stern old dame herself; and he was once or twice, but under great precaution, permitted to go to the neighboring village of Kinross, situated on the mainland, to execute some ordinary commission of his unfortunate mistress.

For some time Roland Græme might be considered as standing neuter betwixt the two parties who inhabited the water-girdled Tower of Lochleven; but, as he rose in the opinion of the lady of the castle and her chaplain, he perceived, with great grief, that he lost ground in that of Mary and her female allies.

He came gradually to be sensible that he was regarded as a spy upon their discourse, and that, instead of the ease with which they had formerly conversed in his presence, without suppressing any of the natural feelings of anger, of sorrow, or mirth which the chance topic of the moment happened to call forth, their talk was now guardedly restricted to the most indifferent subjects, and a studied reserve observed even in the mode of treating these. This obvious want of confidence was accompanied with a correspondent change in their personal demeanor towards the unfortunate page. The Queen, who had at first treated him with marked courtesy, now scarce spoke to him, save to convey some necessary command for her service. The Lady Fleming restricted her notice to the most dry and distant expressions of civility; and Catherine Seyton became bitter in her pleasantries, and shy, cross, and pettish in any intercourse they

had together. What was yet more provoking, he saw, or thought he saw, marks of intelligence betwixt George Douglas and the beautiful Catherine Seyton; and, sharpened by jealousy, he wrought himself almost into a certainty that the looks which they exchanged conveyed matters of deep and serious import. "No wonder," he thought, "if, courted by the son of a proud and powerful baron, she can no longer spare a word or look to the poor fortuneless page."

In a word, Roland Græme's situation became truly disagreeable, and his heart naturally enough rebelled against the injustice of this treatment, which deprived him of the only comfort which he had received for submitting to a confinement in other respects irksome. He accused Queen Mary and Catherine Seyton (for concerning the opinion of Dame Fleming he was indifferent) of inconsistency in being displeased with him on account of the natural consequences of an order of their own. Why did they send him to hear this overpowering preacher? The Abbot Ambrosius, he recollected, understood the weakness of their Popish cause better, when he enjoined him to repeat within his own mind aves, and credos, and paters all the while old Henry Warden preached or lectured, that so he might secure himself against lending even a momentary ear to his heretical doctrine. "But I will endure this life no longer," said he to himself, manfully; "do they suppose I would betray my mistress, because I see cause to doubt of her religion? That would be a serving, as they say, the devil for God's sake. I will forth into the world; he that serves fair ladies may at least expect kind looks and kind words; and I bear not the mind of a gentleman, to submit to cold treatment and suspicion, and a life-long captivity besides. I will speak to George Douglas to-morrow when we go out a-fishing."

A sleepless night was spent in agitating this magnanimous resolution, and he arose in the morning not perfectly decided in his own mind whether he should abide by it or not. It happened that he was summoned by the Queen at an unusual hour, and just as he was about to go out with George Douglas. He went to attend her commands in the garden; but, as he had his angling-rod in his hand, the circumstance announced his previous intention, and the Queen, turning to the Lady Fleming, said, "Catherine must devise some other amusement for us, *ma bonne amie*: our discreet page has already made his party for the day's pleasure."

"I said from the beginning," answered the Lady Fleming, "that your Grace ought not to rely on being favored

with the company of a youth who has so many Huguenot acquaintances, and has the means of amusing himself far more agreeably than with us."

"I wish," said Catherine, her animated features reddening with mortification, "that his friends would sail away with him for good, and bring us in return a page—if such a thing can be found—faithful to his Queen and to his religion."

"One part of your wishes may be granted, madam," said Roland Græme, unable any longer to restrain his sense of the treatment which he received on all sides; and he was about to add, "I heartily wish you a companion in my room, if such can be found, who is capable of enduring women's caprices without going distracted." Luckily, he recollected the remorse which he had felt at having given way to the vivacity of his temper upon a similar occasion; and closing his lips, imprisoned, until it died on his tongue, a reproach so misbecoming the presence of majesty.

"Why do you remain there," said the Queen, "as if you were rooted to the parterre?"

"I but attend your Grace's commands," said the page.

"I have none to give you. Begone, sir!"

As he left the garden to go to the boat, he distinctly heard Mary upbraid one of her attendants in these words: "You see to what you have exposed us!"

This brief scene at once determined Roland Græme's resolution to quit the castle, if it were possible, and to impart his resolution to George Douglas without loss of time. That gentleman, in his usual mood of silence, sate in the stern of the little skiff which they used on such occasions, trimming his fishing-tackle, and, from time to time, indicating by signs to Græme, who pulled the oars, which way he should row. When they were a furlong or two from the castle, Roland rested on the oars, and addressed his companion somewhat abruptly—"I have something of importance to say to you, under your pleasure, fair sir."

The pensive melancholy of Douglas's countenance at once gave way to the eager, keen, and startled look of one who expects to hear something of deep and alarming import.

"I am wearied to the very death of this Castle of Lochleven," continued Roland.

"Is that all?" said Douglas; "I know none of its inhabitants who are much better pleased with it."

"Ay—but I am neither a native of the house nor a prisoner in it, and so I may reasonably desire to leave it."

“You might desire to quit it with equal reason,” answered Douglas, “if you were both the one and the other.”

“But,” said Roland Græme, “I am not only tired of living in Lochleven Castle, but I am determined to quit it.”

“That is a resolution more easily taken than executed,” replied Douglas.

“Not if yourself, sir, and your lady [grand-] mother choose to consent,” answered the page.

“You mistake the matter, Roland,” said Douglas: “you will find that the consent of two other persons is equally essential—that of the Lady Mary, your mistress, and that of my uncle the Regent, who placed you about her person, and who will not think it proper that she should change her attendants so soon.”

“And must I then remain whether I will or no?” demanded the page, somewhat appalled at a view of the subject which would have occurred sooner to a person of more experience.

“At least,” said George Douglas, “you must will to remain till my uncle consents to dismiss you.”

“Frankly,” said the page, “and speaking to you as a gentleman who is incapable of betraying me, I will confess that, if I thought myself a prisoner here, neither walls nor water should confine me long.”

“Frankly,” said Douglas, “I could not much blame you for the attempt; yet, for all that, my father, or uncle, or the earl, or any of my brothers, or, in short, any of the King’s lords into whose hand you fell, would in such a case hang you like a dog, or like a sentinel who deserts his post; and I promise you that you will hardly escape them. But row towards St. Serf’s Island: there is a breeze from the west, and we shall have sport, keeping to windward of the isle, where the ripple is strongest. We will speak more of what you have mentioned when we have had an hour’s sport.”

Their fishing was successful, though never did two anglers pursue even that silent and unsocial pleasure with less of verbal intercourse.

When their time was expired, Douglas took the oars in his turn, and by his order Roland Græme steered the boat, directing her course upon the landing-place at the castle. But he also stopped in the midst of his course, and, looking around him, said to Græme, “There is a thing which I could mention to thee; but it is so deep a secret that even here, surrounded as we are by waves and sky, without the

possibility of a listener, I cannot prevail on myself to speak it out."

"Better leave it unspoken, sir," answered Roland Græme, "if you doubt the honor of him who alone can hear it."

"I doubt not your honor," replied George Douglas; "but you are young, imprudent, and changeful."

"Young," said Roland, "I am, and it may be imprudent. but who hath informed you that I am changeful?"

"One that knows you, perhaps, better than you know yourself," replied Douglas.

"I suppose you mean Catherine Seyton," said the page, his heart rising as he spoke; "but she is herself fifty times more variable in her humor than the very water which we are floating upon."

"My young acquaintance," said Douglas, "I pray you to remember that Catherine Seyton is a lady of blood and birth, and must not be lightly spoken of."

"Master George of Douglas," said Græme, "as that speech seemed to be made under the warrant of something like a threat, I pray you to observe that I value not the threat at the estimation of a fin of one of these dead trouts; and, moreover, I would have you to know that the champion who undertakes the defense of every lady of blood and birth whom men accuse of change of faith and of fashion is like to have enough of work on his hands."

"Go to," said the seneschal, but in a tone of good-humor, "thou art a foolish boy, unfit to deal with any matter more serious than the casting of a net or the flying of a hawk."

"If your secret concerns Catherine Seyton," said the page, "I care not for it, and so you may tell her if you will. I wot she can shape you opportunity to speak with her, as she has ere now."

The flush which passed over Douglas's face made the page aware that he had lighted on a truth when he was, in fact, speaking at random; and the feeling that he had done so was like striking a dagger into his own heart. His companion, without further answer, resumed the oars, and pulled lustily till they arrived at the island and the castle. The servants received the product of their sport, and the two fishers, turning from each other in silence, went each to his several apartment.

Roland Græme had spent about an hour in grumbling against Catherine Seyton, the Queen, the Regent, and the whole house of Lochleven, with George Douglas at the head of it, when the time approached that his duty called him to

attend the meal of Queen Mary. As he arranged his dress for this purpose, he grudged the trouble, which on similar occasions he used, with boyish foppery, to consider as one of the most important duties of his day ; and when he went to take his place behind the chair of the Queen, it was with an air of offended dignity which could not escape her observation, and probably appeared to her ridiculous enough, for she whispered something in French to her ladies, at which the Lady Fleming laughed, and Catherine appeared half diverted and half disconcerted. This pleasantry, of which the subject was concealed from him, the unfortunate page received, of course, as a new offense, and called an additional degree of sullen dignity into his mien, which might have exposed him to farther railery, but that Mary appeared disposed to make allowance for and compassionate his feelings.

With the peculiar tact and delicacy which no woman possessed in greater perfection, she began to soothe by degrees the vexed spirit of her magnanimous attendant. The excellence of the fish which he had taken in his expedition, the high flavor and beautiful red color of the trouts, which have long given distinction to the lake, led her first to express her thanks to her attendant for so agreeable an addition to her table, especially upon a *jour de jeune* ; and then brought on inquiries into the place where the fish had been taken, their size, their peculiarities, the times when they were in season, and a comparison between the Lochleven trouts and those which are found in the lakes and rivers of the south of Scotland. The ill-humor of Roland Græme was never of an obstinate character. It rolled away like mist before the sun, and he was easily engaged in a keen and animated dissertation about Lochleven trout, and sea trout, and river trout, and bull trout, and char, which never rise to a fly, and par which some suppose infant salmon, and "herlings," which frequent the Nith and "vendisses," which are only found in the Castle Loch of Lochmaben ; and he was hurrying on with the eager impetuosity and enthusiasm of a young sportsman, when he observed that the smile with which the Queen at first listened to him died languidly away, and that, in spite of her efforts to suppress them, tears rose to her eyes. He stopped suddenly short, and, distressed in his turn, asked, "If he had had the misfortune unwittingly to give displeasure to her Grace ?"

"No, my poor boy," replied the Queen ; "but, as you numbered up the lakes and rivers of my kingdom, imagination cheated me, as it will do, and snatched me from these dreary walls away to the romantic streams of Nithsdale and

the royal towers of Lochmaben. O land, which my fathers have so long ruled! of the pleasures which you extend so freely your Queen is now deprived, and the poorest beggar, who may wander free from one landward town to another, would scorn to change fates with Mary of Scotland!"

"Your Highness," said the Lady Fleming, "will do well to withdraw."

"Come with me then, Fleming," said the Queen: "I would not burden hearts so young as these are with the sight of my sorrows."

She accompanied these words with a look of melancholy compassion towards Roland and Catherine, who were now left alone together in the apartment.

The page found his situation not a little embarrassing; for as every reader has experienced who may have chanced to be in such a situation, it is extremely difficult to maintain the full dignity of an offended person in the presence of a beautiful girl, whatever reason we may have for being angry with her. Catherine Seyton, on her part, sat still like a lingering ghost, which, conscious of the awe which its presence imposes, is charitably disposed to give the poor confused mortal whom it visits time to recover his senses, and comply with the grand rule of demonology by speaking first. But as Roland seemed in no hurry to avail himself of her condescension, she carried it a step farther, and herself opened the conversation.

"I pray you, fair sir, if it may be permitted me to disturb your august reverie by a question so simple, what may have become of your rosary?"

"It is lost, madam—lost some time since," said Roland, partly embarrassed and partly indignant.

"And may I ask farther, sir," said Catherine, "why you have not replaced it with another? I have half a mind," she said, taking from her pocket a string of ebony beads adorned with gold, "to bestow one upon you, to keep for my sake, just to remind you of former acquaintance."

There was a little tremulous accent in the tone with which these words were delivered, which at once put to flight Roland Græme's resentment, and brought him to Catherine's side; but she instantly resumed the bold and firm accent which was more familiar to her. "I did not bid you," she said, "come and sit so close by me; for the acquaintance that I spoke of has been stiff and cold, dead and buried, for this many a day."

"Now Heaven forbid!" said the page, "it has only

slept; and now that you desire it should awake, fair Catherine, believe me that a pledge of your returning favor——”

“Nay, nay,” said Catherine, withholding the rosary, towards which, as he spoke, he extended his hand, “I have changed my mind on better reflection. What should a heretic do with these holy beads, that have been blessed by the Father of the church himself?”

Roland winced grievously, for he saw plainly which way the discourse was now likely to tend, and felt that it must at all events be embarrassing. “Nay, but,” he said, “it was as a token of your own regard that you offered them.”

“Ay, fair sir, but that regard attended the faithful subject, the loyal and pious Catholic, the individual who was so solemnly devoted at the same time with myself to the same grand duty; which, you must now understand, was to serve the church and Queen. To such a person, if you ever heard of him, was my regard due, and not to him who associates with heretics, and is about to become a renegado.”

“I should scarce believe, fair mistress,” said Roland, indignantly, “that the vane of your favor turned only to a Catholic wind, considering that it points so plainly to George Douglas, who, I think, is both kingsman and Protestant.”

“Think better of George Douglas,” said Catherine, “than to believe——” and then checking herself, as if she had spoken too much, she went on, “I assure you, fair Master Roland, that all who wish you well are sorry for you.”

“Their number is very few, I believe,” answered Roland, “and their sorrow, if they feel any, not deeper than ten minutes’ time will cure.”

“They are more numerous, and think more deeply concerning you, than you seem to be aware,” answered Catherine. “But perhaps they think wrong. You are the best judge in your own affairs; and if you prefer gold and church lands to honor and loyalty, and the faith of your fathers, why should you be hampered in conscience more than others?”

“May Heaven bear witness for me,” said Roland, “that if I entertain any difference of opinion—that is, if I nourish any doubts in point of religion, they have been adopted on the conviction of my own mind, and the suggestion of my own conscience!”

“Ay, ay, your conscience—your conscience!” repeated she with satiric emphasis—“your conscience is the scape-goat; I warrant it an able one: it will bear the burden of one of the best manors of the Abbey of St. Mary of Kenna-

quhair, lately forfeited to our noble Lord the King by the abbot and community thereof, for the high crime of fidelity to their religious vows, and now to be granted by the High and Mighty Traitor, and so forth, James Earl of Murray, to the good squire of dames, Roland Græme, for his loyal and faithful service as under-espial and deputy-turnkey for securing the person of his lawful sovereign, Queen Mary."

"You misconstrue me cruelly," said the page—"yes, Catherine, most cruelly. God knows I would protect this poor lady at the risk of my life, or with my life; but what can I do—what can any one do for her?"

"Much may be done—enough may be done—all may be done—if men will be but true and honorable, as Scottish men were in the days of Bruce and Wallace. O, Roland, from what an enterprise you are now withdrawing your heart and hand, through mere fickleness and coldness of spirit!"

"How can I withdraw," said Roland, "from an enterprise which has never been communicated to me? Has the Queen, or have you, or has any one, communicated with me upon anything for her service which I have refused? Or have you not, all of you, held me at such a distance from your counsels as if I were the most faithless spy since the days of Ganelon?"*

"And who," said Catherine Seyton, "would trust the sworn friend, and pupil, and companion of the heretic preacher Henderson? Ay, a proper tutor you have chosen, instead of the excellent Ambrosius, who is now turned out of house and homestead, if indeed he is not languishing in a dungeon, for withstanding the tyranny of Morton, to whose brother the temporalities of that noble house of God have been gifted away by the Regent."

"Is it possible?" said the page; "and is the excellent Father Ambrose in such distress?"

"He would account the news of your falling away from the faith of your fathers," answered Catherine, "a worse mishap than aught that tyranny can inflict on himself."

"But why," said Roland, very much moved—"why should you suppose that—that—that it is with me as you say?"

"Do you yourself deny it?" replied Catherine; "do you not admit that you have drunk the poison which you should have dashed from your lips? Do you deny that it now ferments in your veins, if it has not altogether corrupted the springs of life? Do you deny that you have your doubts, as you proudly term them, respecting what popes and coun-

*See Note 17.

cils have declared it unlawful to doubt of? Is not your faith wavering, if not overthrown? Does not the heretic preacher boast his conquest? Does not the heretic woman of this prison-house hold up thy example to others? Do not the Queen and the Lady Fleming believe in thy falling away? And is there any except one—yes, I will speak it out, and think as lightly as you please of my good-will—is there one except myself that holds even a lingering hope that you may yet prove what we once all believed of you?”

“I know not,” said our poor page, much embarrassed by the view which was thus presented to him of the conduct he was expected to pursue, and by a person in whom he was not the less interested that so long a residence in Lochleven Castle, with no object so likely to attract his undivided attention, had taken place since they had first met—“I know not what you expect of me, or fear from me. I was sent hither to attend Queen Mary, and to her I acknowledge the duty of a servant through life and death. If any one had expected service of another kind, I was not the party to render it. I neither avow nor disclaim the doctrines of the Reformed Church. Will you have truth? It seems to me that the profligacy of the Catholic clergy has brought this judgment on their own heads, and, for aught I know, it may be for their reformation. But, for betraying this unhappy Queen, God knows I am guiltless of the thought. Did I even believe worse of her than as her servant I wish—as her subject I dare—to do, I would not betray her; far from it—I would aid her in aught which could tend to a fair trial of her cause.”

“Enough!—enough!” answered Catherine, clasping her hands together; “then thou wilt not desert us if any means are presented by which, placing our royal mistress at freedom, this case may be honestly tried betwixt her and her rebellious subjects?”

“Nay, but, fair Catherine,” replied the page, “hear but what the Lord of Murray said when he sent me hither——”

“Hear but what the devil said,” replied the maiden, “rather than what a false subject, a false brother, a false counselor, a false friend said! A man raised from a petty pensioner on the crown’s bounty to be the counselor of majesty, and the prime distributor of the bounties of the state; one with whom rank, fortune, title, consequence, and power all grew up like a mushroom by the mere warm good-will of the sister whom, in requital, he hath mew’d up in this place of melancholy seclusion; whom, in further re-

quital, ne has deposed ; and whom, if he dared, he would murder !”

“I think not so ill of the Earl of Murray,” said Roland Græme ; “and sooth to speak,” he added, with a smile, “it would require some bribe to make me embrace, with firm and deperate resolution, either one side or the other.”

“Nay, if that is all,” replied Catherine Seyton, in a tone of enthusiasm, “you shall be guerdoned with prayers from oppressed subjects—from dispossessed clergy—from insulted nobles—with immortal praise by future ages—with eager gratitude by the present—with fame on earth and with felicity in Heaven ! Your country will thank you—your Queen will be debtor to you—you will achieve at once the highest from the lowest degree in chivalry—all men will honor, all women will love you—and I, sworn with you so early to the accomplishment of Queen Mary’s freedom, will—yes, I will love you better than—ever sister loved brother !”

“Say on—say on !” whispered Roland, kneeling on one knee, and taking her hand, which, in the warmth of exhortation, Catherine held towards him.

“Nay,” said she, pausing, “I have already said too much—far too much if I prevail not with you, far too little if I do. But I prevail,” she continued, seeing that the countenance of the youth she addressed returned the enthusiasm of her own—“I prevail ; or rather the good cause prevails through its own strength—thus I devote thee to it.” And as she spoke she approached her finger to the brow of the astonished youth, and, without touching it, signed the cross over his forehead ; stooped her face towards him, and seemed to kiss the empty space in which she had traced the symbol ; then starting up, and extricating herself from his grasp, darted into the Queen’s apartment.

Roland Græme remained as the enthusiastic maiden had left him, kneeling on one knee, with breath withheld, and with eyes fixed upon the space which the fairy form of Catherine Seyton had so lately occupied. If his thoughts were not of unmixed delight, they at least partook of that thrilling and intoxicating, though mingled, sense of pain and pleasure, the most overpowering which life offers in its blended cup. He rose and retired slowly ; and although the chaplain, Mr. Henderson, preached on that evening his best sermon against the errors of Popery, I would not engage that he was followed accurately through the train of his reasoning by the young proselyte, with a view to whose especial benefit he had handled the subject.

CHAPTER XXV

And when Love's torch hath set the heart in flame,
Comes Seignor Reason, with his saws and cautions,
Giving such aid as the old gray-beard sexton,
Who from the church-vault drags his crazy engine,
To ply its dribbling ineffectual streamlet
Against a conflagration.

Old Play.

IN a musing mood, Roland Græme upon the ensuing morning betook himself to the battlements of the castle, as a spot where he might indulge the course of his thick-coming fancies with least chance of interruption. But his place of retirement was in the present case ill chosen, for he was presently joined by Mr. Elias Henderson.

"I sought you young man," said the preacher, "having to speak of something which concerns you nearly."

The page had no pretense for avoiding the conference which the chaplain thus offered, though he felt that it might prove an embarrassing one.

"In teaching thee, as far as my feeble knowledge hath permitted, thy duty towards God," said the chaplain, "there are particulars of your duty towards man upon which I was unwilling long or much to insist. You are here in the service of a lady, honorable as touching her birth, deserving of all compassion as respects her misfortunes, and garnished with even but too many of those outward qualities which win men's regard and affection. Have you ever considered your regard to this Lady Mary of Scotland in its true light and bearing?"

"I trust, reverend sir," replied Roland Græme, "that I am well aware of the duties a servant in my condition owes to his royal mistress, especially in her lowly and distressed state."

"True," answered the preacher; "but it is even that honest feeling which may, in the Lady Mary's case, carry thee into great crime and treachery."

"How so, reverend sir?" replied the page; "I profess I understand you not."

"I speak to you not of the crimes of this ill-advised lady,"

said the preacher; "they are not subjects for the ears of her sworn servant. But it is enough to say that this unhappy person hath rejected more offers of grace, more hopes of glory, than ever were held out to earthly princes; and that she is now, her day of favor being passed, sequestered in this lonely castle, for the commonweal of the people of Scotland, and it may be for the benefit of her own soul."

"Reverend sir," said Roland, somewhat impatiently, "I am but too well aware that my unfortunate mistress is imprisoned, since I have the misfortune to share in her restraint myself, of which, to speak sooth, I am heartily weary."

"It is even of that which I am about to speak," said the chaplain, mildly; "but first, my good Roland, look forth on the pleasant prospect of yonder cultivated plain. You see, where the smoke arises, yonder village standing half-hidden by the trees, and you know it to be the dwelling-place of peace and industry. From space to space, each by the side of its own stream, you see the gray towers of barons, with cottages interspersed; and you know that they also, with their household, are now living in unity—the lance hung upon the wall and the sword resting in its sheath. You see, too, more than one fair church where the pure waters of life are offered to the thirsty and where the hungry are refreshed with spiritual food. What would he deserve who should bring fire and slaughter into so fair and happy a scene—who should bear the swords of the gentry and turn them against each other—who should give tower and cottage to the flames, and slake the embers with the blood of the indwellers? What would he deserve who should lift up again that ancient Dagon of superstition whom the worthies of the time have beaten down, and who should once more make the churches of God the high places of Baal?"

"You have limned a frightful picture, reverend sir," said Roland Græme; "yet I guess not whom you would charge with the purpose of effecting a change so horrible."

"God forbid," replied the preacher, "that I should say to thee, thou art the man. Yet beware, Roland Græme, that thou, in serving thy mistress, hold fast the still higher service which thou owest to the peace of thy country and the prosperity of her inhabitants; else, Roland Græme, thou mayst be the very man upon whose head will fall the curses and assured punishment due to such work. If thou art won by the song of these sirens to aid that unhappy lady's escape from this place of penitence and security, it is over with the peace of Scotland's cottages and with the prosperity of her

palaces ; and the babe unborn shall curse the name of the man who gave inlet to the disorder which will follow the war betwixt the mother and the son."

"I know of no such plan, reverend sir," answered the page, "and therefore can aid none such. My duty towards the Queen has been simply that of an attendant ; it is a task of which, at times, I would willingly have been freed ; nevertheless——"

"It is to prepare thee for the enjoyment of something more of liberty," said the preacher, "that I have endeavored to impress upon you the deep responsibility under which your office must be discharged. George Douglas hath told the Lady Lochleven that you are weary of this service, and my intercession hath partly determined her good ladyship that, as your discharge cannot be granted, you shall, instead, be employed in certain commissions on the mainland, which have hitherto been discharged by other persons of confidence. Wherefore, come with me to the lady, for even to-day such duty will be imposed on you."

"I trust you will hold me excused, reverend sir," said the page, who felt that an increase of confidence on the part of the lady of the castle and her family would render his situation in a moral view doubly embarrassing, "one cannot serve two masters ; and I much fear that my mistress will not hold me excused for taking employment under another."

"Fear not that," said the preacher ; "her consent shall be asked and obtained. I fear she will yield it but too easily, as hoping to avail herself of your agency to maintain correspondence with her friends, as those falsely call themselves who would make her name the watchward for civil war."

"And thus," said the page, "I shall be exposed to suspicion on all sides ; for my mistress will consider me as a spy placed on her by her enemies, seeing me so far trusted by them ; and the Lady Lochleven will never cease to suspect the possibility of my betraying her, because circumstances put it into my power to do so ; I would rather remain as I am."

There followed a pause of one or two minutes, during which Henderson looked steadily in Roland's countenance, as if desirous to ascertain whether there was not more in the answer than the precise words seemed to imply. He failed in this point, however ; for Roland, bred a page from childhood, knew how to assume a sullen, pettish cast of countenance, well enough calculated to hide all internal emotions.

"I understand thee not, Roland," said the preacher, "or rather thou thinkst on this matter more deeply than I apprehended to be in thy nature. Methought the delight of going on shore with thy bow, or thy gun, or thy angling-rod, would have borne away all other feelings."

"And so it would," replied Roland, who perceived the danger of suffering Henderson's half-raised suspicions to become fully awake—"I would have thought of nothing but the gun and the oar, and the wild water-fowl that tempt me by sailing among the sedges yonder so far out of flight-shot, had you not spoken of my going on shore as what was to occasion burning of town and tower, the downfall of the Evangel, and the upsetting of the mass."

"Follow me, then," said Henderson, "and we will seek the Lady Lochleven."

They found her at breakfast with her grandson George Douglas. "Peace be with your ladyship!" said the preacher, bowing to his patroness; "Ronald Græme awaits your order."

"Young man," said the lady, "our chaplain hath warranted for thy fidelity, and we are determined to give you certain errands to do for us in our town of Kinross."

"Not by my advice," said Douglas, coldly.

"I said not that it was," answered the lady, something sharply. "The mother of thy father may, I should think, be old enough to judge for herself in a matter so simple. Thou wilt take the skiff, Roland, and two of my people, whom Dryfesdale or Randal will order out, and fetch off certain stuff of plate and hangings which should last night be lodged at Kinross by the wains from Edinburgh."

"And give this packet," said George Douglas, "to a servant of ours, whom you will find in waiting there. It is the report to my father," he added, looking towards his grandmother, who acquiesced by bending her head.

"I have already mentioned to Master Henderson," said Roland Græme, "that, as my duty requires my attendance on the Queen, her Grace's permission for my journey ought to be obtained before I can undertake your commission."

"Look to it, my son," said the old lady, "the scruple of the youth is honorable."

"Craving your pardon, madam, I have no wish to force myself on her presence thus early," said Douglas in an indifferant tone; "it might displease her, and were no way agreeable to me."

"And I," said the Lady Lochleven, "although her temper

hath been more gentle of late, have no will to undergo, without necessity, the rancor of her wit."

"Under your permission, madam," said the chaplain, "I will myself render your request to the Queen. During my long residence in this house she hath not deigned to see me in private, or to hear my doctrine; yet so may Heaven prosper my labors, as love for her soul, and desire to bring her into the right path, was my chief motive for coming hither."

"Take care, Master Henderson," said Douglas, in a tone which seemed almost sarcastic, "lest you rush hastily on an adventure to which you have no vocation; you are learned, and know the adage, *Ne accesseris in consilium nisi vocatus*. Who hath required this at your hand?"

"The Master to whose service I am called," answered the preacher, looking upward—"He who hath commanded me to be earnest in season and out of season."

"Your acquaintance hath not been much, I think, with courts or princes," continued the young esquire.

"No, sir," replied Henderson, "but, like my master Knox, I see nothing frightful in the fair face of a pretty lady."

"My son," said the Lady of Lochleven, "quench not the good man's zeal: let him do the errand to this unhappy princess."

"With more willingness than I would do it myself," said George Douglas. Yet something in his manner appeared to contradict his words.

The minister went accordingly, followed by Roland Græme, and, demanding an audience of the imprisoned princess, was admitted. He found her with her ladies engaged in the daily task of embroidery. The Queen received him with that courtesy which, in ordinary cases, she used towards all who approached her, and the clergyman, in opening his commission, was obviously somewhat more embarrassed than he had expected to be. "The good Lady of Lochleven, may it please your Grace——"

He made a short pause, during which Mary said, with a smile, "My Grace would, in truth, be well pleased were the Lady of Lochleven our *good* lady; but go on—what is the will of the good Lady of Lochleven?"

"She desires, madam," said the chaplain, "that your Grace will permit this young gentleman, your page, Roland Græme, to pass to Kinross, to look after some household stuff and hangings sent hither for the better furnishing of your Grace's apartments."

“The Lady of Lochleven,” said the Queen, “uses needless ceremony, in requesting our permission for that which stands within her own pleasure. We well know that this young gentleman’s attendance on us had not been so long permitted were he not thought to be more at the command of that good lady than at ours. But we cheerfully yield consent that he shall go on her errand ; with our will we would doom no living creature to the captivity which we ourselves must suffer.”

“Ay, madam,” answered the preacher, “and it is doubtless natural for humanity to quarrel with its prison-house. Yet there have been those who have found that time spent in the house of temporal captivity may be so employed as to redeem us from spiritual slavery.”

“I apprehend your meaning, sir,” replied the Queen, “but I have heard your apostle—I have heard Master John Knox ; and were I to be perverted, I would willingly resign to the ablest and most powerful of heresiarchs the poor honor he might acquire by overcoming my faith and my hope.”

“Madam,” said the preacher, “it is not to the talents or skill of the husbandman that God gives the increase : the words which were offered in vain by him whom you justly call our apostle, during the bustle and gaiety of a court, may yet find better acceptance during the leisure for reflection which this place affords. God knows, lady, that I speak in singleness of heart, as one who would as soon compare himself to the immortal angels as to the holy man whom you have named. Yet would you but condescend to apply to their noblest use those talents and that learning which all allow you to be possessed of—would you afford us but the slightest hope that you would hear and regard what can be urged against the blinded superstition and idolatry in which you were brought up, sure am I, that the most powerfully gifted of my brethren, that even John Knox himself, would hasten hither, and account the rescue of your single soul from the nets of Romish error——”

“I am obliged to you and to them for their charity,” said Mary ; “but as I have at present but one presence-chamber, I would reluctantly see it converted into a Huguenot synod.”

“At least, madam, be not thus obstinately blinded in your errors ! Hear one who has hungered and thirsted, watched and prayed, to undertake the good work of your conversion, and who would be content to die the instant that a work so advantageous for yourself and so beneficial to Scotland were accomplished. Yes, lady, could I but shake

the remaining pillar of the heathen temple in this land—and that permit me to term your faith in the delusions of Rome—I could be content to die overwhelmed in the ruins!”

“I will not insult your zeal, sir,” replied Mary, “by saying you are more likely to make sport for the Philistines than to overwhelm them: your charity claims my thanks, for it is warmly expressed, and may be truly purposed. But believe as well of me as I am willing to do of you, and think that I may be as anxious to recall you to the ancient and only road as you are to teach me your new bye-ways to Paradise.”

“Then, madam, if such be your generous purpose,” said Henderson, eagerly, “what hinders that we should dedicate some part of that time unhappily now too much at your Grace’s disposal to discuss a question so weighty? You by report of all men are both learned and witty; and I, though without such advantages, am strong in my cause as in a tower of defense. Why should we not spend some space in endeavoring to discover which of us hath the wrong side in this important matter?”

“Nay,” said Queen Mary, “I never alleged my force was strong enough to accept of a combat *en champ clos* with a scholar and a polemic. Besides, the match is not equal. You, sir, might retire when you felt the battle go against you, while I am tied to the stake, and have no permission to say the debate wearies me. I would be alone.”

She courtesied low to him as she uttered these words; and Henderson, whose zeal was indeed ardent, but did not extend to the neglect of delicacy, bowed in return, and prepared to withdraw.

“I would,” he said, “that my earnest wish, my most zealous prayer, could procure to your Grace any blessing or comfort, but especially that in which alone blessing or comfort is, as easily as the slightest intimation of your wish will remove me from your presence.”

He was in the act of departing, when Mary said to him with much courtesy, “Do me no injury in your thoughts, good sir; it may be, that if my time here be protracted longer—as surely I hope it will not, trusting that either my rebel subjects will repent of their disloyalty, or that my faithful lieges will obtain the upper hand—but if my time be here protracted, it may be I shall have no displeasure in hearing one who seems so reasonable and compassionate as yourself, and I may hazard your contempt by endeavoring to recollect and repeat the reasons which schoolmen and

councils give for the faith that is in me, although I fear that, God help me! my Latin has deserted me with my other possessions. This must, however, be for another day. Meanwhile, sir, let the Lady of Lochleven employ my page as she lists; I will not afford suspicion by speaking a word to him before he goes. Roland Græme, my friend, lose not an opportunity of amusing thyself: dance, sing, run, and leap—all may be done merrily on the mainland; but he must have more than quicksilver in his veins who would frolic here."

"Alas! madam," said the preacher, "to what is it you exhort the youth, while time passes and eternity summons! Can our salvation be insured by idle mirth, or our good work wrought out without fear and trembling?"

"I cannot fear or tremble," replied the Queen: "to Mary Stuart such emotions are unknown. But, if weeping and sorrow on my part will atone for the boy's enjoying an hour of boyish pleasure, be assured the penance shall be duly paid."

"Nay, but, gracious lady," said the preacher, "in this you greatly err: our tears and our sorrows are all too little for our own faults and follies, nor can we transfer them, as your church falsely teaches, to the benefit of others."

"May I pray you, sir," answered the Queen, "with as little offense as such a prayer may import, to transfer yourself elsewhere? We are sick at heart, and may not now be disturbed with further controversy; and thou, Roland, take this little purse"—then turning to the divine, she said, showing its contents,—“Look, reverend sir, it contains only these two or three gold testoons—a coin which, though bearing my own poor features, I have ever found more active against me than on my side, just as my subjects take arms against me, with my own name for their summons and signal. Take this purse that thou mayst want no means of amusement. Fail not—fail not to bring me back news from Kinross; only let it be such as, without suspicion or offense, may be told in the presence of this reverend gentleman, or of the good Lady Lochleven herself.”

The last hint was too irresistible to be withstood; and Henderson withdrew, half-mortified, half-pleased with his reception; for Mary, from long habit and the address which was natural to her, had learned, in an extraordinary degree, the art of evading discourse which was disagreeable to her feelings or prejudices, without affronting those by whom it was proffered.

Roland Græme retired with the chaplain at a signal from his lady ; but it did not escape him that, as he left the room, stepping backwards and making the deep obeisance due to royalty, Catherine Seyton held up her slender forefinger, with a gesture which he alone could witness, and which seemed to say, "Remember what has passed betwixt us."

The young page had now his last charge from the Lady of Lochleven. "There are revels," she said, "this day at the village. My son's authority is, as yet, unable to prevent these continued workings of the ancient leaven of folly which the Romish priests have kneaded into the very souls of the Scottish peasantry. I do not command thee to abstain from them—that would be only to lay a snare for thy folly, or to teach thee falsehood ; but enjoy these vanities with moderation ; and mark them as something thou must soon learn to renounce and contemn. Our chamberlain at Kinross, Luke Lundin—Doctor, as he foolishly calleth himself—will acquaint thee what is to be done in the matter about which thou goest. Remember thou art trusted ; show thyself, therefore, worthy of trust."

When we recollect that Roland Græme was not yet nineteen, and that he had spent his whole life in the solitary Castle of Avenel, excepting the few hours he had passed in Edinburgh, and his late residence at Lochleven, the latter period having very little served to enlarge his acquaintance with the gay world, we cannot wonder that his heart beat high with hope and curiosity at the prospect of partaking the sport even of a country wake. He hastened to his little cabin, and turned over the wardrobe with which, in every respect becoming his station, he had been supplied from Edinburgh, probably by order of the Earl of Murray. By the Queen's command he had hitherto waited upon her in mourning, or at least in sad-colored raiment. Her condition, she said, admitted of nothing more gay. But now he selected the gayest dress his wardrobe afforded, composed of scarlet, slashed with black satin—the royal colors of Scotland ; combed his long curled hair ; disposed his chain and medal round a beaver hat of the newest block ; and with the gay falchion which had reached him in so mysterious a manner hung by his side in an embroidered belt, his apparel, added to his natural frank mien and handsome figure, formed a most commendable and pleasing specimen of the young gallant of the period. He sought to make his parting reverence to the Queen and her ladies, but old Dryfesdale hurried him to the boat.

“We will have no private audiences,” he said, “my master ; since you are to be trusted with somewhat, we will try at least to save thee from the temptation of opportunity. God help thee, child,” he added, with a glance of contempt at his gay clothes, “an the bear-ward be yonder from St. Andrews, have a care thou go not near him.”

“And wherefore, I pray you ?” said Roland.

“Lest he take thee for one of his runaway jackanapes,” answered the steward, smiling sourly.

“I wear not my clothes at thy cost,” said Roland, indignantly.

“Nor at thine own either, my son,” replied the steward, “else would thy garb more nearly resemble thy merit and thy station.”

Roland Græme suppressed with difficulty the repartee which arose to his lips; and, wrapping his scarlet mantle around him, threw himself into the boat, which two rowers, themselves urged by curiosity to see the revels, pulled stoutly towards the west end of the lake. As they put off, Roland thought he could discover the face of Catherine Seyton, though carefully withdrawn from observation, peeping from a loophole to view his departure. He pulled off his hat, and held it up as a token that he saw and wished her adieu. A white kerchief waved for a second across the window, and for the rest of the little voyage the thoughts of Catherine Seyton disputed ground in his breast with the expectations excited by the approaching revel. As they drew nearer and nearer the shore, the sounds of mirth and music, the laugh, the halloo, and the shout came thicker upon the ear, and in a trice the boat was moored, and Roland Græme hastened in quest of the chamberlain, that, being informed what time he had at his own disposal, he might lay it out to the best advantage.

CHAPTER XXVI

Room for the master of the ring, ye swains,
Divide your crowded ranks; before him march
The rural minstrelsy, the rattling drum,
The clamorous war-pipe, and far-echoing horn.

SOMERVILLE, *Rural Sports*.

No long space intervened ere Roland Græme was able to discover among the crowd of revelers, who gamboled upon the open space which extends betwixt the village and the lake, a person of so great importance as Doctor Luke Lundin upon whom devolved officially the charge of representing the lord of the land, and who was attended for support of his authority by a piper, a drummer, and four sturdy clowns armed with rusty halberds, garnished with parti-colored ribbons—myrmidons who, early as the day was, had already broken more than one head in the awful names of the Laird of Lochleven and his chamberlain.*

As soon as this dignitary was informed that the castle skiff had arrived, with a gallant, dressed like a lord's son at the least, who desired presently to speak to him, he adjusted his ruff and his black coat, turned round his girdle till the garnished hilt of his long rapier became visible, and walked with due solemnity towards the beach. Solemn indeed he was entitled to be, even on less important occasions, for he had been bred to the venerable study of medicine, as those acquainted with the science very soon discovered from the aphorisms which ornamented his discourse. His success had not been equal to his pretensions; but as he was a native of the neighboring kingdom of Fife, and bore distant relation to, or dependence upon, the ancient family of Lundin of that ilk, who were bound in close friendship with the house of Lochleven, he had, through their interest, got planted comfortably enough in his present station upon the banks of that beautiful lake. The profits of his chamberlainship being moderate, especially in those unsettled times, he had eked it out a little with some practise in his original profession; and it was said that the inhabitants of the vil-

* See Scottish Fairs. Note 18.

lage and barony of Kinross were not more effectually thirled (which may be translated enthralled) to the baron's mill than they were to the medical monopoly of the chamberlain. Wo betide the family of the rich boor who presumed to depart this life without a passport from Dr. Luke Lundin! for if his representatives had aught to settle with the baron, as it seldom happened otherwise, they were sure to find a cold friend in the chamberlain. He was considered enough, however, gratuitously to help the poor out of their ailments, and sometimes out of all their other distresses at the same time.

Formal, in a double proportion, both as a physician and as a person in office, and proud of the scraps of learning which rendered his language almost universally unintelligible, Dr. Luke Lundin approached the beach, and hailed the page as he advanced towards him. "The freshness of the morning to you, fair sir. You are sent, I warrant me, to see if we observe here the regimen which her good ladyship hath prescribed, for eschewing all superstitious ceremonies and idle anilities in these our revels. I am aware that her good ladyship would willingly have altogether abolished and abrogated them. But as I had the honor to quote to her from the works of the learned Hercules of Saxony, *omnis curatio est vel canonica vel coacta*—that is, fair sir—for silk and velvet have seldom their Latin *ad unguem*—every cure must be wrought either by art and induction of rule or by constraint; and the wise physician chooseth the former. Which argument her ladyship being pleased to allow well of, I have made it my business so to blend instruction and caution with delight—*flat mixtio*, as we say—that I can answer that the vulgar mind will be defecated and purged of anile and Popish fooleries by the medicament adhibited, so that the *primæ viæ* being cleansed, Master Henderson, or any other able pastor, may at will throw in tonics, and effectuate a perfect moral cure, *tuto, cito, jucunde*."

"I have no charge, Doctor Lundin," replied the page—

"Call me not doctor," said the chamberlain, "since I have laid aside my furred gown and bonnet, and retired me into this temporality of chamberlainship."

"O, sir," said the page, who was no stranger by report to the character of this original, "the cowl makes not the monk, neither the cord the friar: we have all heard of the cures wrought by Doctor Lundin."

"Toys, young sir—trifles," answered the leech with grave disclamation of superior skill; "the hit-or-miss practise of

a poor retired gentleman, in a short cloak and doublet. Marry, Heaven sent its blessing; and this I must say, better fashioned mediciners have brought fewer patients through—*lunga roba cortá scienza*, saith the Italian—ha, fair sir, you have the language?”

Roland Græme did not think it necessary to expound to this learned Theban whether he understood him or no; but, leaving that matter uncertain, he told him he came in quest of certain packages which should have arrived at Kinross and been placed under the chamberlain's charge the evening before.

“Body o' me!” said Doctor Lundin, “I fear our common carrier, John Auchtermuchty, hath met with some mischance, that he came not up last night with his wains: bad land this to journey in, my master; and the fool will travel by night too, although—besides all maladies, from your *tussis* to your *pestis*, which walk abroad in the night air—he may well fall in with half a dozen swashbucklers, who will ease him at once of his baggage and his earthly complaints. I must send forth to inquire after him, since he hath stuff of the honorable household on hand; and, by Our Lady, he hath stuff of mine too—certain drugs sent me from the city for composition of my alexipharmics; this gear must be looked to. Hodge,” said he, addressing one of redoubted bodyguard, “do thou and Toby Telford take the mickle brown aver and the black cut-tailed mare, and make out towards the Keiry Craigs,* and see what tidings you can have of Auchtermuchty and his wains; I trust it is only the medicine of the pottlepot—being the only *medicamentum* which the beast useth—which has caused him to tarry on the road. Take the ribbons from your halberds, ye knaves, and get on your jacks, plate-sleeves, and knapskulls, that your presence may work some terror if you meet with opposers.” He then added, turning to Roland Græme, “I warrant me we shall have news of the wains in brief season. Meantime it will please you to look upon the sports; but first to enter my poor lodging and take your morning's cup. For what saith the school of Salerno—

Poculum, name haustum,
Resturat naturam exhaustam?”

“Your learning is too profound for me,” replied the page; “and so would your draught be likewise, I fear.”

“Not a whit, fair sir: a cordial cup of sack, impregnated

* See Note 19.

with wormwood, is the best anti-pestilential draught; and, to speak truth, the pestilential miasmata are now very rife in the atmosphere. We live in a happy time, young man," continued he, in a tone of grave irony, "and have many blessings unknown to our fathers. Here are two sovereigns in the land, a regnant and a claimant; that is enough of one good thing, but, if any one wants more, he may find a king in every peel-house in the country; so, if we lack government, it is not for want of governors. Then have we a civil war to phlebotomize us every year, and to prevent our population from starving for want of food; and for the same purpose we have the plague proposing us a visit, the best of all recipes for thinning a land, and converting younger brothers into elder ones. Well, each man in his vocation. You young fellows of the sword desire to wrestle, fence, or so forth with some expert adversary; and for my part, I love to match myself for life or death against that same plague."

As they proceeded up the street of the little village towards the doctor's lodgings, his attention was successively occupied by the various personages whom he met, and pointed out to the notice of his companion.

"Do you see that fellow with the red bonnet, the blue jerkin, and the great rough baton in his hand? I believe that clown hath the strength of a tower: he has lived fifty years in the world, and never encouraged the liberal sciences by buying one pennyworth of medicaments. But see you that man with the *facies Hippocratica*?" said he, pointing out to a thin peasant, with swelled legs, and a most cadaverous countenance; "that I call one of the worthiest men in the barony: he breakfasts, luncheons, dines, and sups by my advice, and not without my medicine; and, for his own single part, will go farther to clear out a moderate stock of pharmaceuticals than half the country besides. How do you, my honest friend?" said he to the party in question, with a tone of condolence.

"Very weakly, sir, since I took the electuary," answered the patient; "it neighbored ill with the two spoonfuls of pease-porridge and the kirn-milk."

"Pease-porridge and kirn-milk! Have you been under medicine these ten years, and keep your diet so ill? The next morning take the electuary by itself, and touch nothing for six hours." The poor object bowed and limped off.

The next whom the doctor deigned to take notice of was

a lame fellow, by whom the honor was altogether undeserved, for at sight of the mediciner he began to shuffle away in the crowd as fast as his infirmities would permit.

“There is an ungrateful hound for you,” said Doctor Lundin: “I cured him of the gout in his feet, and now he talks of the chargeableness of medicine, and makes the first use of his restored legs to fly from his physician. His *podagra* hath become a *chiragra*, as honest Martial hath it: the gout has got into his fingers, and he cannot draw his purse. Old saying and true—

Præmia cum poscit medicus, Sathan est.

We are angels when we come to cure, devils when we ask payment; but I will administer a purgation to his purse, I warrant him. There is his brother too, a sordid chuff. So ho, there! Saunders Dartlet! you have been ill, I hear?”

“Just got the turn, as I was thinking to send to your honor, and I am brawly now again; it was nae great thing that ailed me.”

“Hark you, sirrah,” said the doctor, “I trust you remember your owing to the laird four stones of barley-meal and a bow of oats; and I would have you send no more such kain-fowls as you sent last season, that looked as wretchedly as patients just dismissed from a plague-hospital; and there is hard money owing besides.”

“I was thinking, sir,” said the man, *more Scotico*, that is, returning no direct answer on the subject on which he was addressed, “my best way would be to come down to your honor, and take your advice yet, in case my trouble should come back.”

“Do so then, knave,” replied Lundin, “and remember what Ecclesiasticus saith—‘Give place to the physician: let him not go from thee, for thou hast need of him.’”

His exhortation was interrupted by an apparition which seemed to strike the doctor with as much horror and surprise as his own visage inflicted upon sundry of those persons whom he had addressed.

The figure which produced this effect on the Esculapius of the village was that of a tall old woman, who wore a high-crowned hat and muffler. The first of these habiliments added apparently to her stature, and the other served to conceal the lower part of her face, and as the hat itself was slouched, little could be seen besides two brown cheek-bones, and the eyes of swarthy fire, that gleamed from under two

shaggy gray eyebrows. She was dressed in a long dark colored robe of unusual fashion, bordered at the skirts and on the stomacher with a sort of white trimming resembling the Jewish phylacteries, on which was wrought the characters of some unknown language. She held in her hand a walking-staff of black ebony.

“By the soul of Celsus,” said Doctor Luke Lundin, “it is old Mother Nicneven herself; she hath come to beard me within mine own bounds, and in the very execution of mine office! ‘Have at thy coat, old woman,’ as the song says. Hob Anster, let her presently be seized and committed to the tolboth; and if there are any zealous brethren here who would give the hag her deserts, and duck her, as a witch, in the loch, I pray let them in no way be hindered.”

But the myrmidons of Doctor Lundin showed in this case no alacrity to do his bidding. Hob Anster even ventured to remonstrate in the name of himself and his brethren. “To be sure he was to do his honor’s bidding; and for a’ that folk said about the skill and witcheries of Mother Nicneven, he would put his trust in God, and his hand on her collar, without dreadour. But she was no common spae-wife, this Mother Nicneven, like Jean Jopp that lived in the Brierie Baulk. She had lords and lairds that would ruffle for her. There was Moncrieff of Tippermalloch, that was Popish, and the laird of Carslogie, a kenn’d queensman, were in the fair, with wha kenn’d how mony swords and bucklers at their back; and they would be sure to make a break-out if the officers meddled with the auld Popish witch-wife, who was sae weel friended; mair especially as the laird’s best men, such as were not in the castle, were in Edinburgh with him, and he doubted his honor the doctor would find ower few to make a good backing if blades were bare.”

The doctor listened unwillingly to this prudential counsel, and was only comforted by the faithful promise of his satellite that “The old woman should,” as he expressed it, “be ta’en canny the next time she trespassed on the bounds.”

“And in that event,” said the doctor to his companion, “fire and fagot shall be the best of her welcome.”

This he spoke in hearing of the dame herself, who even then, and in passing the doctor, shot towards him from under her gray eyebrows a look of the most insulting and contemptuous superiority.

“This way,” continued the physician—“this way,” marshaling his guest into his lodging; “take care you stumble

not over a retort, for it is hazardous for the ignorant to walk in the ways of art."

The page found all reason for the caution; for, besides stuffed birds, and lizards, and bottled snakes, and bundles of simples made up, and other parcels spread out to dry, and all the confusion, not to mention the mingled and sickening smells, incidental to a druggist's stock-in-trade, he had also to avoid heaps of charcoal, crucibles, bolt-heads, stoves, and the other furniture of a chemical laboratory.

Amongst his other philosophical qualities, Doctor Lundin failed not to be a confused sloven, and his old housekeeper, whose life, as she said, was spent in "redding him up," had trotted off to the mart of gaiety with other and younger folks. Much clattering and jangling therefore there was among jars, and bottles, and phials, ere the doctor produced the salutiferous potion which he recommended so strongly, and a search equally long and noisy followed among broken cans and cracked pipkins ere he could bring forth a cup out of which to drink it. Both matters being at length achieved, the doctor set the example to his guest, by quaffing off a cup of the cordial, and smacking his lips with approbation as it descended his gullet. Roland, in turn, submitted to swallow the potion which his host so earnestly recommended, but which he found so insufferably bitter that he became eager to escape from the laboratory in search of a draught of fair water to expel the taste. In spite of his efforts, he was nevertheless detained by the garrulity of his host, till he gave him some account of Mother Nicneven.

"I care not to speak of her," said the doctor, "in the open air, and among the throng of people: not for fright, like yon cowardly dog, Anster, but because I would give no occasion for a fray, having no leisure to look to stabs, slashes, and broken bones. Men call the old hag a prophetess; I do scarce believe she could foretell when a brood of chickens will chip the shell. Men say she reads the heavens; my black bitch knows as much of them when she sits baying the moon. Men pretend the ancient wretch is a sorceress, a witch, and what not; *inter nos*, I will never contradict a rumor which may bring her to the stake which she so richly deserves, but neither will I believe that the tales of witches which they din into our ears are aught but knavery, cozenage, and old women's fables."

"In the name of Heaven, what is she then," said the page, "that you make such a stir about her?"

"She is one of those cursed old women," replied the

doctor, "who take currently and impudently upon themselves to act as advisers and curers of the sick, on the strength of some trash of herbs, some rhyme of spells, some julep or diet, drink or cordial."

"Nay, go no farther," said the page; "if they brew cordials, evil be their lot and all their partakers!"

"You say well, young man," said Doctor Lundin; "for mine own part, I know no such pests to the commonwealth as these old incarnate devils, who haunt the chambers of the brain-sick patients, that are mad enough to suffer them to interfere with, disturb, and let the regular progress of a learned and artificial cure, with their syrups, and their juleps, and diascordium, and mithridate, and my Lady What-shall-call'um's powder, and worthy Dame Trashem's pill; and thus make widows and orphans, and cheat the regular and well-studied physician, in order to get the name of wise women and skeely neighbors, and so forth. But no more on't. Mother Nicneven* and I will meet one day, and she shall know there is danger in dealing with the doctor."

"It is a true word, and many have found it," said the page; "but, under your favor, I would fain walk abroad for a little and see these sports."

"It is well moved," said the doctor, "and I too should be showing myself abroad. Moreover, the play waits us, young man; to-day, *totus mundus agit histrionem*." And they sallied forth accordingly into the mirthful scene.

* See Note 20.

CHAPTER XXVII

See on yon verdant lawn, the gathering crowd
Thickens amain ; the buxom nymphs advance,
Usher'd by jolly clowns ; distinctions cease,
Lost in the common joy, and the bold slave
Leans on his wealthy master unproved.

SOMERVILLE, *Rural Sports.*

THE reappearance of the dignified chamberlain on the street of the village was eagerly hailed by the revelers, as a pledge that the play, or dramatic representation, which had been postponed owing to his absence, was now full surely to commence. Anything like an approach to this most interesting of all amusements was of recent origin in Scotland, and engaged public attention in proportion. All other sports were discontinued. The dance around the Maypole was arrested, the ring broken up and dispersed, while the dancers, each leading his partner by the hand, tripped off to the sylvan theater. A truce was in like manner achieved betwixt a huge brown bear and certain mastiffs, who were tugging and pulling at his shaggy coat, under the mediation of the bearward and half a dozen butchers and yeomen, who, by dint of "staving and tailing," as it was technically termed, separated the unfortunate animals, whose fury had for an hour past been their chief amusement. The itinerant minstrel found himself deserted by the audience he had collected, even in the most interesting passage of the romance which he recited, and just as he was sending about his boy, with bonnet in hand, to collect their oblations. He indignantly stopped short in the midst of *Rosewal and Lilian*, and, replacing his three-stringed fiddle, or rebeck, in its leathern case, followed the crowd, with no good-will, to the exhibition which had superseded his own. The juggler had ceased his exertions of emitting flame and smoke, and was content to respire in the manner of ordinary mortals rather than to play gratuitously the part of a fiery dragon. In short, all other sports were suspended, so eagerly did the revelers throng towards the place of representation.

They would err greatly who should regulate their ideas of this dramatic exhibition upon those derived from a modern

theater ; for the rude shows of Thespis were far less different from those exhibited by Euripides on the stage of Athens, with all its magnificent decorations and pomp of dresses and of scenery. In the present case there were no scenes, no stage, no machinery, no pit, box, and gallery, no box-lobby ; and, what might in poor Scotland be some consolation for other negations, there was no taking of money at the door. As in the devices of the magnanimous Bottom, the actors had a greensward plot for a stage, and a hawthorn bush for a greenroom and tiring-house ; the spectators being accommodated with seats on the artificial bank which had been raised around three-fourths of the playground, the remainder being left open for the entrance and exit of the performers. Here sate the uncritical audience, the chamberlain in the center, as the person highest in office—all alive to enjoyment and admiration, and all therefore dead to criticism.

The characters which appeared and disappeared before the amused and interested audience were those which fill the earlier stage in all nations—old men, cheated by their wives and daughters, pillaged by their sons, and imposed on by their domestics, a braggadocio captain, a knavish pardoner or quæstionary, a country bumpkin, and a wanton city dame. Amid all these, and more acceptable than almost the whole put together, was the all-licensed fool, the Gracioso of the Spanish drama, who, with his cap fashioned into the resemblance of a coxcomb, and his bauble, a truncheon terminated by a carved figure, wearing a fool's cap, in his hand, went, came, and returned, mingling in every scene of the piece, and interrupting the business, without having any share himself in the action, and ever and anon transferring his gibes from the actors on the stage to the audience who sat around, prompt to applaud the whole.

The wit of the piece, which was not of the most polished kind, was chiefly directed against the superstitious practises of the Catholic religion ; and the stage artillery had on this occasion been leveled by no less a person than Doctor Lundin, who had not only commanded the manager of the entertainment to select one of the numerous satires which had been written against the Papists (several of which were cast in a dramatic form), but had even, like the Prince of Denmark, caused them to insert, or, according to his own phrase, to infuse, here and there, a few pleasantries of his own penning, on the same inexhaustible subject, hoping thereby to mollify the rigor of the Lady of Lochleven towards pastimes of this description. He failed not to jog Roland's

elbow, who was sitting in state behind him, and recommend to his particular attention those favorite passages. As for the page, to whom the very idea of such an exhibition, simple as it was, was entirely new, he beheld it with the undiminished and ecstatic delight with which men of all ranks look for the first time on dramatic representation, and laughed, shouted, and clapped his hands as the performance proceeded. An incident at length took place which effectually broke off his interest in the business of the scene.

One of the principal personages in the comic part of the drama was, as we have already said, a quæstionary or pardoner, one of those itinerants who hawked about from place to place relics, real or pretended, with which he excited the devotion at once and the charity of the populace, and generally deceived both the one and the other. The hypocrisy, impudence, and profligacy of these clerical wanderers had made them the subject of satire from the time of Chaucer down to that of Heywood. Their present representative failed not to follow the same line of humor, exhibiting pig's bones for relics, and boasting the virtues of small tin crosses, which had been shaken in the holy porringer at Loretto, and of cockle-shells, which had been brought from the shrine of St. James of Compostella, all which he disposed of to the devout Catholics at nearly as high a price as antiquaries are now willing to pay for the baubles of similar intrinsic value. A length the pardoner pulled from his scrip a small phial of clear water, of which he vaunted the quality in the following verses :—

“ Listneth, gode people, everiche one,
 For in the londe of Babylone,
 Far eastward I wot it lyeth,
 And is the first londe the sonne espieth,
 Ther, as he cometh fro out the sé ;
 In this ilk londe, as thinketh me,
 Right as holie legendes tell,
 Snottreth from a roke a well,
 And falleth into ane bath of ston,
 Wher chast Susanne, in times long gon
 Was wont to wash her bodie and lim.
 Mickle virtue hath that streme,
 As ye shall se er that ye pas,
 Ensample by this little glas.
 Through nightés cold and dayés hote,
 Hiderward I have it brought ;
 Hath a wife made slip or slide,
 Or a maiden stepp'd aside,
 Putteth this water under her nese,
 Wold she nold she, she shall snese.”

The jest, as the reader skilful in the antique language of the drama must at once perceive, turned on the same pivot as in the old minstrel tales of the *Drinking-Horn of King Arthur* and the *Mantle made Amiss*. But the audience were neither learned nor critical enough to challenge its want of originality. The potent relic was, after such grimace and buffoonery as befitted the subject, presented successively to each of the female personages of the drama, not one of whom sustained the supposed test of discretion; but, to the infinite delight of the audience, sneezed much louder and longer than perhaps they themselves had counted on. The jest seemed at last worn threadbare, and the pardoner was passing on to some new pleasantry, when the jester or clown of the drama, possessing himself secretly of the phial which contained the wondrous liquor, applied it suddenly to the nose of a young woman, who, with her black silk muffler, or screen, drawn over her face, was sitting in the foremost rank of the spectators, intent apparently upon the business of the stage. The contents of the phial, well calculated to sustain the credit of the pardoner's legend, set the damsel a-sneezing violently, an admission of frailty which was received with shouts of rapture by the audience. These were soon, however, renewed at the expense of the jester himself, when the insulted maiden extricated, ere the paroxysm was well over, one hand from the folds of her mantle, and bestowed on the wag a buffet, which made him reel fully his own length from the pardoner, and then acknowledge the favor by instant prostration.

No one pities a jester overcome in his vocation, and the clown met with little sympathy when, rising from the ground and whimpering forth his complaints of harsh treatment, he invoked the assistance and sympathy of the audience. But the chamberlain, feeling his own dignity insulted, ordered two of his halberdiers to bring the culprit before him. When these official persons first approached the virago, she threw herself into an attitude of firm defiance, as if determined to resist their authority; and from the sample of strength and spirit which she had already displayed, they showed no alacrity at executing their commission. But on half a minute's reflection, the damsel changed totally her attitude and manner, folded her cloak around her arms in modest and maiden-like fashion, and walked of her own accord to the presence of the great man, followed and guarded by the two manful satellites. As she moved across the vacant space, and more especially as she stood at the footstool of the doe-

tor's judgment-seat, the maiden discovered that lightness and elasticity of step, and natural grace of manner, which connoisseurs in female beauty know to be seldom divided from it. Moreover, her neat russet-colored jacket, and short petticoat of the same color, displayed a handsome form and a pretty leg. Her features were concealed by the screen; but the doctor, whose gravity did not prevent his pretensions to be a connoisseur of the school we have hinted at, saw enough to judge favorably of the piece by the sample.

He began, however, with considerable austerity of manner. "And how now, saucy quean!" said the medical man of office; "what have you to say why I should not order you to be ducked in the loch for lifting your hand to the man in my presence?"

"Marry," replied the culprit, "because I judge that your honor will not think the cold bath necessary for my complaints."

"A pestilent jade," said the doctor, whispering to Roland Græme, "and I'll warrant her a good one: her voice is as sweet as sirup. But, my pretty maiden," said he, "you show us wonderful little of that countenance of yours; be pleased to throw aside your muffler."

"I trust your honor will excuse me till we are more private," answered the maiden; "for I have acquaintance, and I should like ill to be known in the country as the poor girl whom that scurvy knave put his jest upon."

"Fear nothing for thy good name, my sweet little modicum of candied manna!" replied the doctor; "for I protest to you, as I am chamberlain of Lochleven, Kinross, and so forth, that the chaste Susanna herself could not have snuffed that elixir without sternutation, being in truth a curious distillation of rectified *acetum*, or vinegar of the sun, prepared by mine own hands. Wherefore, as thou sayest thou wilt come to me in private, and express thy contrition for the offense whereof thou hast been guilty, I command that all for the present go forward as if no such interruption of the prescribed course had taken place."

The damsel courtesied and tripped back to her place. The play proceeded, but it no longer attracted the attention of Roland Græme.

The voice, the figure, and what the veil permitted to be seen of the neck and tresses, of the village damsel bore so strong a resemblance to those of Catherine Seyton that he felt like one bewildered in the mazes of a changeful and stupifying dream. The memorable scene of the hostelry

rushed on his recollection, with all its doubtful and marvelous circumstances. Were the tales of enchantment which he had read in romances realized in this extraordinary girl? Could she transport herself from the walled and guarded Castle of Lochleven, moated with its broad lake (towards which he cast back a look as if to ascertain it was still in existence), and watched with such scrupulous care as the safety of a nation demanded. Could she surmount all these obstacles, and make such careless and dangerous use of her liberty as to engage herself publicly in a quarrel in a village fair? Roland was unable to determine whether the exertions which it must have cost her to gain her freedom or the use to which she had put it rendered her the most unaccountable creature.

Lost in these meditations, he kept his gaze fixed on the subject of them; and in every casual motion discovered, or thought he discovered, something which reminded him still more strongly of Catherine Seyton. It occurred to him more than once, indeed, that he might be deceiving himself by exaggerating some casual likeness into absolute identity. But then the meeting at the hostelry of St. Michael's returned to his mind, and it seemed in the highest degree improbable that, under such various circumstances, mere imagination should twice have found opportunity to play him the self-same trick. This time, however, he determined to have his doubts resolved, and for this purpose he sate during the rest of the play like a greyhound in the slip, ready to spring upon the hare the instant that she was started. The damsel, whom he watched attentively lest she should escape in the crowd when the spectacle was closed, sate as if perfectly unconscious that she was observed. But the worthy doctor marked the direction of his eyes, and magnanimously suppressed his own inclination to become the Theseus to this Hippolyta, in deference to the rights of hospitality, which enjoined him to forbear interference with the pleasurable pursuits of his young friend. He passed one or two formal gibes upon the fixed attention which the page paid to the unknown, and upon his own jealousy; adding, however, that if both were to be presented to the patient at once, he had little doubt she would think the younger man the sounder prescription. "I fear me," he added, "we shall have no news of the knave Auchtermuchty for some time, since the vermin whom I sent after him seem to have proved corbie-messengers. So you have an hour or two on your hands, Master Page; and as the minstrels are beginning to

strike up, now that the play is ended, why, an you incline for a dance, yonder is the green, and there sits your partner. I trust you will hold me perfect in my diagnostics, since I see with half an eye what disease you are sick of, and have administered a pleasing remedy.

Discernit sapiens res (as Chambers hath it) quas confundit asellus."

The page hardly heard the end of the learned adage, or the charge which the chamberlain gave him to be within reach, in case of the wains arriving suddenly, and sooner than expected, so eager was he at once to shake himself free of his learned associate and to satisfy his curiosity regarding the unknown damsel. Yet, in the haste which he made towards her, he found time to reflect that, in order to secure an opportunity of conversing with her in private, he must not alarm her at first accosting her. He therefore composed his manner and gait, and advancing with becoming self-confidence before three or four country-fellows who were intent on the same design, but knew not so well how to put their request into shape, he acquainted her that he, as the deputy of the venerable chamberlain, requested the honor of her hand as a partner.

"The venerable chamberlain," said the damsel, frankly, reaching the page her hand, "does very well to exercise this part of his privilege by deputy; and I suppose the laws of the revels leave me no choice but to accept of his faithful delegate."

"Provided, fair damsel," said the page, "his choice of a delegate is not altogether distasteful to you."

"Of that, fair sir," replied the maiden, "I will tell you more when we have danced the first measure."

Catherine Seyton had admirable skill in gestic lore, and was sometimes called on to dance for the amusement of her royal mistress. Roland Græme had often been a spectator of her skill, and sometimes, at the Queen's command, Catherine's partner on such occasions. He was, therefore, perfectly acquainted with Catherine's mode of dancing; and observed that his present partner, in grace, in agility, in quickness of ear, and precision of execution, exactly resembled her, save that the Scottish jig which he now danced with her required a more violent and rapid motion, and more rustic agility, than the stately pavens, lavoltas, and courantoes which he had seen her execute in the chamber of Queen Mary. The active duties of the dance left him little

time for reflection, and none for conversation; but when their *pas de deux* was finished, amidst the acclamations of the villagers, who had seldom witnessed such an exhibition, he took an opportunity, when they yielded up the green to another couple, to use the privilege of a partner, and enter into conversation with the mysterious maiden whom he still held by the hand.

“Fair partner, may I not crave the name of her who has graced me thus far?”

“You may,” said the maiden; “but it is a question whether I shall answer you.”

“And why?” asked Roland.

“Because nobody gives anything for nothing, and you can tell me nothing in return which I care to hear.”

“Could I not tell you my name and lineage, in exchange for yours?” returned Roland.

“No!” answered the maiden, “for you know little of either.”

“How?” said the page, somewhat angrily.

“Wrath you not for the matter,” said the damsel; “I will show you in an instant that I know more of you than you do of yourself.”

“Indeed!” answered Græme; “for whom then do you take me?”

“For the wild falcon,” answered she, “whom a dog brought in his mouth to a certain castle, when he was but an unfledged eyas; for the hawk whom men dare not let fly, lest he should check at game and pounce on carrion; whom folk must keep hooded till he has the proper light of his eyes, and can discover good from evil.”

“Well—be it so,” replied Roland Græme; “I guess at a part of your parable, fair mistress mine; and perhaps I know as much of you as you do of me, and can well dispense with the information which you are so niggard in giving.”

“Prove that,” said the maiden, “and I will give you credit for more penetration than I judged you to be gifted withal.”

“It shall be proved instantly,” said Roland Græme. “The first letter of your name is S and the last N.”

“Admirable!” said his partner; “guess on.”

“It pleases you to-day,” continued Roland, “to wear the snood and kirtle, and perhaps you may be seen to-morrow in hat and feather, hose and doublet.”

“In the clout!—in the clout! you have hit the very white,” said the damsel, suppressing a great inclination to laugh.

“You can switch men’s eyes out of their heads, as well as the hearts out of their bosoms.”

These last words were uttered in a low and tender tone, which, to Roland’s great mortification, and somewhat to his displeasure, was so far from allaying that it greatly increased, his partner’s disposition to laughter. She could scarce compose herself while she replied, “If you had thought my hand so formidable,” extricating it from his hold, “you would not have grasped it so hard; but I perceive you know me so fully that there is no occasion to show you my face.”

“Fair Catherine,” said the page, “he were unworthy ever to have seen you, far less to have dwelt so long in the same service, and under the same roof with you, who could mistake your air, your gesture, your step in walking or in dancing, the turn of your neck, the symmetry of your form: none could be so dull as not to recognize you by so many proofs; but for me, I could swear even to that tress of hair that escapes from under your muffler.”

“And to the face, of course, which that muffler covers,” said the maiden, removing her veil, and in an instant endeavoring to replace it. She showed the features of Catherine; but an unusual degree of petulant impatience inflamed them when, from some awkwardness in her management of the muffler, she was unable again to adjust it with that dexterity which was a principal accomplishment of the coquettes of the time.

“The fiend rive the rag to tatters!” said the damsel, as the veil fluttered about her shoulders, with an accent so earnest and decided that it made the page start. He looked again at the damsel’s face, but the information which his eyes received was to the same purport as before. He assisted her to adjust her muffler, and both were for an instant silent. The damsel spoke first, for Roland Græme was overwhelmed with surprise at the contrarieties which Catherine Seyton seemed to include in her person and character.

“You are surprised,” said the damsel to him, “at what you see and hear. But the times which make females men are least of all fitted for men to become women; yet you yourself are in danger of such a change.”

“I in danger of becoming effeminate!” said the page.

“Yes, you for all the boldness of your reply,” said the damsel. “When you should hold fast your religion, because it is assailed on all sides by rebels, traitors, and here-

tics, you let it glide out of your breast like water grasped in the hand. If you are driven from the faith of your fathers from fear of a traitor, is not that womanish? If you are cajoled by the cunning arguments of a trumpeter of heresy, or the praises of a Puritanic old woman, is not that womanish? If you are bribed by the hope of spoil and preferment, is not that womanish? And when you wonder at my venting a threat or an execration, should you not wonder at yourself, who, pretending to a gentle name, and aspiring to knighthood, can be at the same time cowardly, silly, and self-interested?"

"I would that a man would bring such a charge!" said the page; "he should see, ere his life was a minute older, whether he had cause to term me coward or no."

"Beware of such big words," answered the maiden; "you said but anon that I sometimes wear hose and doublet."

"But remain still Catherine Seyton, wear what you list," said the page, endeavoring again to possess himself of her hand.

"You indeed are pleased to call me so," replied the maiden, evading his intention, "but I have many other names besides."

"And will you not reply to that," said the page, "by which you are distinguished beyond every other maiden in Scotland?"

The damsel, unallured by his praises, still kept aloof, and sung with a gaiety a verse from an old ballad—

"O some do call me Jack, sweet love,
And some do call me Gill;
But when I ride to Holyrood,
My name is Wilful Will."

"Wilful Will!" exclaimed the page, impatiently; "say rather Will o' the Wisp—Jack with the Lantern, for never was such a deceitful or wandering meteor!"

"If I be such," replied the maiden, "I ask no fools to follow me. If they do so, it is at their own pleasure, and must be on their own proper peril."

"Nay, but, dearest Catherine," said Roland Græme, "be for one instant serious."

"If you will call me your dearest Catherine, when I have given you so many names to choose upon," replied the damsel, "I would ask you how, supposing me for two or three hours of my life escaped from yonder tower, you have the

eruelty to ask me to be serious during the only merry moments I have seen perhaps for months?"

"Ay, but, fair Catherine, there are moments of deep and true feeling which are worth ten thousand years of the liveliest mirth; and such was that of yesterday, when you so nearly——"

"So nearly what?" demanded the damsel, hastily.

"When you approached your lips so near to the sign you had traced on my forehead."

"Mother of Heaven!" exclaimed she, in a yet fiercer tone, and with a more masculine manner than she had yet exhibited. "Catherine Seyton approached her lips to a man's brow, and thou that man! Vassal, thou liest!"

The page stood astonished; but, conceiving he had alarmed the damsel's delicacy by alluding to the enthusiasm of a moment, and the manner in which she had expressed it, he endeavored to falter forth an apology. His excuses, though he was unable to give them any regular shape, were accepted by his companion, who had indeed suppressed her indignation after its first explosion. "Speak no more on't," she said. "And now let us part; our conversation may attract more notice than is convenient for either of us."

"Nay, but allow me at least to follow you to some sequestered place."

"You dare not," replied the maiden.

"How," said the youth, "dare not? where is it you dare go, where I dare not follow?"

"You fear a will o' the wisp," said the damsel; "how would you face a fiery dragon, with an enchantress mounted on its back?"

"Like Sir Eger, Sir Grime, or Sir Greysteil," said the page; "but be there such toys to be seen here?"

"I go to Mother Nicneven's," answered the maid; "and she is witch enough to rein the horned devil, with a red silk thread for a bridle, and a rowan-tree switch for a whip."

"I will follow you," said the page.

"Let it be at some distance," said the maiden.

And wrapping her mantle round her with more success than on her former attempt, she mingled with the throng; and walked towards the village, heedfully followed by Roland Græme at some distance, and under every precaution which he could use to prevent his purpose from being observed.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Yes, it is she whose eyes look'd on thy childhood,
And watch'd with trembling hope thy dawn of youth,
That now, with these same eyeballs dimm'd with age,
And dimmer yet with tears, see thy dishonor.

Old Play.

At the entrance of the principal, or indeed, so to speak, the only, street in Kinross the damsel, whose steps were pursued by Roland Græme, cast a glance behind her, as if to be certain he had not lost trace of her, and then plunged down a very narrow lane which ran betwixt two rows of poor and ruinous cottages. She paused for a second at the door of one of those miserable tenements, again cast her eye up the lane towards Roland, then lifted the latch, opened the door, and disappeared from his view.

With whatever haste the page followed her example, the difficulty which he found in discovering the trick of the latch, which did not work quite in the usual manner, and in pushing open the door, which did not yield to his first effort, delayed for a minute or two his entrance into the cottage. A dark and smoky passage led, as usual, betwixt the exterior wall of the house and the "hallan," or clay wall, which served as a partition betwixt it and the interior. At the end of this passage, and through the partition, was a door leading into the "ben," or inner chamber of the cottage, and when Roland Græme's hand was upon the latch of this door, a female voice pronounced, "*Benedictus qui veniat in nomine Domini, damnandus qui in nomine inimici.*" On entering the apartment, he perceived the figure which the chamberlain had pointed out to him as Mother Nicneven, seated beside the lowly hearth. But there was no other person in the room. Roland Græme gazed around in surprise at the disappearance of Catherine Skyton, without paying much regard to the supposed sorceress, until she attracted and riveted his regard by the tone in which she asked him—
"What seekest thou here?"

"I seek," said the page, with much embarrassment—"I seek——"

But his answer was cut short when the old woman, drawing her huge gray eyebrows sternly together, with a frown which knitted her brow into a thousand wrinkles, arose, and erecting herself up to her full natural size, tore the kerchief from her head, and seizing Roland by the arm, made two strides across the floor of the apartment to a small window through which the light fell full on her face, and showed the astonished youth the countenance of Magdalen Græme.

“Yes, Roland,” she said, “thine eyes deceive thee not: they show thee truly the features of her whom thou hast thyself deceived, whose wine thou hast turned into gall, her bread of joyfulness into bitter poison, her hope into the blackest despair. It is she who now demands of thee, what seekest thou here?—she whose heaviest sin towards Heaven hath been, that she loved thee even better than the weal of the whole church, and could not without reluctance surrender thee even in the cause of God—she now asks you, what seekest thou here?”

While she spoke, she kept her broad black eye riveted on the youth’s face, with the expression with which the eagle regards his prey ere he tears it to pieces. Roland felt himself at the moment incapable either of reply or evasion. This extraordinary enthusiast had preserved over him in some measure the ascendancy which she had acquired during his childhood; and, besides, he knew the violence of her passions and her impatience of contradiction, and was sensible that almost any reply which he could make was likely to throw her into an ecstasy of rage. He was therefore silent; and Magdalen Græme proceeded with increasing enthusiasm in her apostrophe—“Once more, what seek’st thou, false boy?—seek’st thou the honor thou hast renounced, the faith thou hast abandoned, the hopes thou hast destroyed? Or didst thou seek me, the sole protectress of thy youth, the only parent whom thou hast known, that thou mayest trample on my gray hairs, even as thou hast already trampled on the best wishes of my heart?”

“Pardon me, mother,” said Roland Græme; “but, in truth and reason, I deserve not your blame. I have been treated amongst you—even by yourself, my revered parent, as well as by others—as one who lacked the common attributes of freewill and human reason, or was at least deemed unfit to exercise them. A land of enchantment have I been led into, and spells have been cast around me—every one has met me in disguise—every one has spoken to me in parables—I have been like one who walks in a weary and bewildered

ing dream ; and now you blame me that I have not the sense, and judgment, and steadiness of a waking, and a disenchanting, and a reasonable man, who knows what he is doing, and wherefore he does it ! If one must walk with masks and specters, who waft themselves from place to place as it were in vision rather than reality, it might shake the soundest faith and turn the wisest head. I sought, since I must needs avow my folly, the same Catherine Seyton with whom you made me first acquainted, and whom I most strangely find in this village of Kinross, gayest among the revelers, when I had but just left her in the well-guarded Castle of Lochleven, the sad attendant of an imprisoned Queen. I sought her, and in her place I find you, my mother, more strangely disguised than even she is."

"And what hadst thou to do with Catherine Seyton ?" said the matron, sternly ; "is this a time or a world to follow maidens, or to dance around a Maypole ? When the trumpet summons every true-hearted Scotsman around the standard of the true sovereign, shalt thou be found loitering in a lady's bower ?"

"No, by Heaven, nor imprisoned in the rugged walls of an island castle !" answered Roland Græme. "I would the blast were to sound even now, for I fear that nothing less loud will dispel the chimerical visions by which I am surrounded."

"Doubt not that it will be winded," said the matron, "and that so fearfully loud, that Scotland will never hear the like until the last and loudest blast of all shall announce to mountain and to valley that time is no more. Meanwhile, be thou but brave and constant. Serve God, and honor thy sovereign. Abide by thy religion. I cannot—I will not—I dare not ask thee the truth of the terrible surmises I have heard touching thy falling away—perfect not that accursed sacrifice ; and yet, even at this late hour, thou mayst be what I have hoped for, the son of my dearest hope. What say I ? The son of *my* hope ? Thou shalt be the hope of Scotland, her boast and her honor ! Even thy wildest and most foolish wishes may perchance be fulfilled. I might blush to mingle meaner motives with the noble guerdon I hold out to thee. It shames me, being such as I am, to mention the idle passions of youth, save with contempt and the purpose of censure. But we must bribe children to wholesome medicine by the offer of cates, and youth to honorable achievement with the promise of pleasure. Mark me, therefore, Roland. The love of Catherine Seyton will follow him only who shall

achieve the freedom of her mistress : and believe, it may be one day in thine own power to be that happy lover. Cast, therefore, away doubt and fear, and prepare to do what religion calls for, what thy country demands of thee, what thy duty as a subject and as a servant alike require at your hand ; and be assured, even the idlest or wildest wishes of thy heart will be most readily attained by following the call of thy duty."

As she ceased speaking, a double knock was heard against the inner door. The matron, hastily adjusting her muffler and resuming her chair by the hearth, demanded who was there.

"*Salve in nomine sancto,*" was answered from without.

"*Salvete et vos,*" answered Magdalen Græme.

And a man entered in the ordinary dress of a nobleman's retainer, wearing at his girdle a sword and buckler. "I sought you," said he, "my mother, and him whom I see with you." Then addressing himself to Roland Græme, he said to him, "Hast thou not a packet from George Douglas?"

"I have," said the page, suddenly recollecting that which had been committed to his charge in the morning, "but I may not deliver it to any one without some token that they have a right to ask it."

"You say well," replied the serving-man, and whispered into his ear, "The packet which I ask is the report to his father, will this token suffice?"

"It will," replied the page, and taking the packet from his bosom, gave it to the man.

"I will return presently," said the serving-man, and left the cottage.

Roland had now sufficiently recovered his surprise to accost his relative in turn, and request to know the reason why he found her in so precarious a disguise, and a place so dangerous. "You cannot be ignorant," he said, "of the hatred that the Lady of Lochleven bears to those of your—that is of our religion ; your present disguise lays you open to suspicions of a different kind, but inferring no less hazard ; and whether as a Catholic, or as a sorceress, or as a friend to the unfortunate Queen, you are in equal danger, if apprehended within the bounds of the Douglas ; and in the chamberlain who administers their authority you have, for his own reasons, an enemy, and a bitter one."

"I know it," said the matron, her eyes kindling with triumph ; "I know that, vain of his schoolcraft and carnal

wisdom, Luke Lundin views with jealousy and hatred the blessings which the saints have conferred on my prayers, and on the holy relics, before the touch, nay, before the bare presence, of which disease and death have so often been known to retreat. I know he would rend and tear me : but there is a chain and a muzzle on the ban-dog that shall restrain his fury, and the Master's servant shall not be offended by him until the Master's work is wrought. When that hour comes, let the shadows of the evening descend on me in thunder and in tempest : the time shall be welcome that relieves my eyes from seeing guilt, and my ears from listening to blasphemy. Do thou but be constant ; play thy part as I have played and will play mine ; and my release shall be like that of a blessed martyr whose ascent to Heaven angels hail with psalm and song, while earth pursues him with hiss and with execration."

As she concluded, the serving-man again entered the cottage, and said, "All is well ! the time holds for to-morrow night."

"What time ? what holds ?" exclaimed Roland Græme. "I trust I have given the Douglas's packet to no wrong——"

"Content yourself, young man," answered the serving-man ; "thou hast my word and token."

"I know not if the token be right," said the page ; "and I care not much for the word of a stranger."

"What," said the matron, "although thou mayst have given a packet delivered to thy charge by one of the Queen's rebels into the hand of a loyal subject—there were no great mistake in that, thou hot-brained boy !"

"By St. Andrew, there were foul mistake, though," answered the page ; "it is the very spirit of my duty, in this first stage of chivalry, to be faithful to my trust ; and had the devil given me a message to discharge, I would not—so I had plighted my faith to the contrary—betray his counsel to an angel of light."

"Now, by the love I once bore thee," said the matron, "I could slay thee with mine own hand, when I hear thee talk of a dearer faith being due to rebels and heretics than thou owest to thy church and thy prince !"

"Be patient, my good sister," said the serving-man ; "I will give him such reasons as shall counterbalance the scruples which beset him : the spirit is honorable, though now it may be mistimed and misplaced. Follow me, young man."

“Ere I go to call this stranger to a reckoning,” said the page to the matron, “is there nothing I can do for your comfort and safety?”

“Nothing,” she replied—“nothing, save what will lead more to thy own honor : the saints who have protected me thus far will lend me succor as I need it. Tread the path of glory that is before thee, and only think of me as the creature on earth who will be most delighted to hear of thy fame. Follow the stranger ; he hath tidings for you that you little expect.”

That stranger remained on the threshold as if waiting for Roland, and as soon as he saw him put himself in motion he moved on before at a quick pace. Diving still deeper down the lane, Roland perceived that it was now bordered by buildings upon the one side only, and that the other was fenced by a high old wall, over which some trees extended their branches. Descending a good way farther, they came to a small door in the wall. Roland’s guide paused, looked around for an instant to see if any one were within sight, then taking a key from his pocket, opened the door and entered, making a sign to Roland Græme to follow him. He did so, and the stranger locked the door carefully on the inside. During this operation the page had a moment to look around, and perceived that he was in a small orchard very trimly kept.

The stranger led him through an alley or two, shaded by trees loaded with summer-fruit, into a pleached arbor, where, taking the turf-seat which was on the one side, he motioned to Roland to occupy that which was opposite to him, and, after a momentary silence, opened the conversation as follows : “You have asked a better warrant than the word of a mere stranger to satisfy you that I have the authority of George of Douglas for possessing myself of the packet entrusted to your charge?”

“It is precisely the point on which I demand reckoning of you,” said Roland. “I fear I have acted hastily ; if so, I must redeem my error as I best may.”

“You hold me then as a perfect stranger ?” said the man.

“Look at my face more attentively, and see if the features do not resemble those of a man much known to you formerly.”

Roland gazed attentively ; but the ideas recalled to his mind were so inconsistent with the mean and servile dress of the person before him that he did not venture to express the opinion which he was irresistibly induced to form.

“Yes, my son,” said the stranger, observing his embarrassment, “you do indeed see before you the unfortunate Father Ambrosius, who once accounted his ministry crowned in your preservation from the snares of heresy, but who is now condemned to lament thee as a castaway!”

Roland Græme’s kindness of heart was at least equal to his vivacity of temper: he could not bear to see his ancient and honored master and spiritual guide in a situation which inferred a change of fortune so melancholy, but, throwing himself at his feet, grasped his knees and wept aloud.

“What mean these tears, my son?” said the abbot; “if they are shed for your own sins and follies, surely they are gracious showers, and may avail thee much; but weep not, if they fall on my account. You indeed see the superior of the community of St. Mary’s in the dress of a poor swarder, who gives his master the use of his blade and buckler, and, if needful, of his life, for a coarse livery coat, and four marks by the year. But such a garb suits the time, and, in the period of the church militant, as well becomes her prelates as staff, miter, and crosier in the days of the church’s triumph.”

“By what fate,” said the page—“and yet why,” added he, checking himself, “need I ask? Catherine Seyton in some sort prepared me for this. But that the change should be so absolute, the destruction so complete!”

“Yes, my son,” said the Abbot Ambrosius, “thine own eyes beheld, in my unworthy elevation to the abbot’s stall, the last especial act of holy solemnity which shall be seen in the church of St. Mary’s, until it shall please Heaven to turn back the captivity of the church. For the present, the shepherd is smitten—ay, wellnigh to the earth, the flocks are scattered, and the shrines of saints and martyrs, and pious benefactors to church, are given to the owls of night and the satyrs of the desert.”

“And your brother, the Knight of Avenel—could he do nothing for your protection?”

“He himself hath fallen under the suspicion of the ruling powers,” said the abbot, “who are as unjust to their friends as they are cruel to their enemies. I could not grieve at it, did I hope it might estrange him from his course; but I know the soul of Halbert, and I rather fear it will drive him to prove his fidelity to their unhappy cause by some deed which may be yet more destructive to the church, and more offensive to Heaven. Enough of this; and now to the business of our meeting. I trust you will hold it sufficient if I

pass my word to you, that the packet of which you were lately the bearer was designed for my hands by George of Douglas ?”

“Then,” said the page, “is George of Douglas——”

“A true friend to his Queen, Roland ; and will soon, I trust, have his eyes opened to the errors of his—miscalled—church.”

“But what is he to his father, and what to the Lady of Lochleven, who has been as a mother to him ?” said the page, impatiently.

“The best friend to both, in time and through eternity,” said the abbot, “if he shall prove the happy instrument for redeeming the evil they have wrought, and are still working.”

“Still,” said the page, “I like not that good service which begins in breach of trust.”

“I blame not thy scruples, my son,” said the abbot ; “but the time which has wrenched asunder the allegiance of Christians to the church, and of subjects of their king, has dissolved all the lesser bonds of society ; and, in such days, mere human ties must no more restrain our progress than the brambles and briars, which catch hold of his garments, should delay the path of a pilgrim who travels to pay his vows.”

“But, my father——” said the youth, and then stopped short in a hesitating manner.

“Speak on, my son,” said the abbot—“speak without fear.”

“Let me not offend you, then,” said Roland, “when I answer, that it is even this which our adversaries charge against us, when they say that, shaping the means according to the end, we are willing to commit great moral evil in order that we may work out eventual good.”

“The heretics have played their usual arts on you, my son,” said the abbot ; “they would willingly deprive us of the power of acting wisely and secretly, though their possession of superior force forbids our contending with them on the terms of equality. They have reduced us to a state of exhausted weakness, and now would fain proscribe the means by which weakness, through all the range of nature, supplies the lack of strength, and defends itself against its potent enemies. As well might the hound say to the hare, ‘Use not these wily turns to escape me, but contend with me in pitched battle,’ as the armed and powerful heretic demand of the down-trodden and oppressed Catholic to lay

aside the wisdom of the serpent, by which alone they may again hope to raise up the Jerusalem over which they weep, and which it is their duty to rebuild. But more of this hereafter. And now, my son, I command thee on thy faith to tell me truly and particularly what has chanced to thee since we parted, and what is the present state of thy conscience. Thy relation, our sister Magdalen, is a woman of excellent gifts, blessed with a zeal which neither doubt nor danger can quench ; but yet it is not a zeal altogether according to knowledge ; wherefore, my son, I would willingly be myself thy interrogator and the counselor in these days of darkness and stratagem."

With the respect which he owed to his first instructor, Roland Græme went rapidly through the events which the reader is acquainted with ; and while he disguised not from the prelate the impression which had been made on his mind by the arguments of the preacher Henderson, he accidentally, and almost involuntarily, gave his father confessor to understand the influence which Catherine Seyton had acquired over him.

"It is with joy I discover, my dearest son," replied the abbot, "that I have arrived in time to arrest thee on the verge of the precipice to which thou wert approaching. These doubts of which you complain are the weeds which naturally grow up in a strong soil, and require the careful hand of the husbandman to eradicate them. Thou must study a little volume, which I will impart to thee in fitting time, in which, by Our Lady's grace, I have placed in somewhat a clearer light than heretofore the points debated betwixt us and these heretics, who sow among the wheat the same tares which were formerly privily mingled with the good seed by the Albigenses and the Lollards. But it is not by reason alone that you must hope to conquer these insinuations of the enemy. It is sometimes by timely resistance, but oftener by timely flight. You must shut your ears against the arguments of the heresiarch, when circumstances permit you not to withdraw the foot from his company. Anchor your thoughts upon the service of Our Lady, while he is expending in vain his heretical sophistry. Are you unable to maintain your attention on Heavenly objects, think rather on thine own earthly pleasures than tempt Providence and the saints by giving an attentive ear to the erring doctrine : think of thy hawk, thy hound, thine angling-rod, thy sword and buckler—think even of Catherine Seyton, rather than give thy soul to the lessons of the

tempter. Alas! my son, believe not that, worn out with woes, and bent more by affliction than by years, I have forgotten the effect of beauty over the heart of youth. Even in the watches of the night, broken by thoughts of an imprisoned queen, a distracted kingdom, a church laid waste and ruinous, come other thoughts than these suggest, and feelings which belonged to an earlier and happier course of life. Be it so—we must bear our load as we may; and not in vain are these passions implanted in our breast, since, as now in thy case, they may come in aid of resolutions founded upon higher grounds. Yet beware, my son—this Catherine Seyton is the daughter of one of Scotland's proudest, as well as most worthy barons; and thy state may not suffer thee, as yet, to aspire so high. But thus it is—Heaven works its purposes through human folly; and Douglas's ambitious affection as well as thine shall contribute alike to the desired end."

"How, my father," said the page, "my suspicions are then true! Douglas loves——"

"He does; and with a love as much misplaced as thine own; but beware of him—cross him not—thwart him not."

"Let him not cross or thwart me," said the page; "for I will not yield him an inch of way, had he in his body the soul of every Douglas that has lived since the time of the Dark Gray Man."*

"Nay, have patience, idle boy, and reflect that your suit can never interfere with his. But a truce with these vanities, and let us better employ the little space which still remains to us to spend together. To thy knees, my son, and resume the long-interrupted duty of confession, that, happen what may, the hour may find in thee a faithful Catholic, relieved from the guilt of his sins by authority of the Holy Church. Could I but tell thee, Roland, the joy with which I see thee once more put thy knee to its best and fittest use! *Quid dicis, mi fili?*"

"*Culpas meas,*" answered the youth; and, according to the ritual of the Catholic Church, he confessed and received absolution, to which was annexed the condition of performing certain enjoined penances.

When this religious ceremony was ended, an old man, in the dress of a peasant of the better order, approached the arbor and greeted the abbot. "I have waited the conclusion of your devotions," he said, "to tell you the youth is sought after by the chamberlain, and it were well he should

* See Note 21.

appear without delay. Holy St. Francis, if the halberdiers were to seek him here, they might sorely wrong my garden-plot: they are in office, and reck not where they tread, were each step on jessamine and clove-gillyflowers."

"We will speed him forth, my brother," said the abbot; "but, alas! is it possible that such trifles should live in your mind at a crisis so awful as that which is now impending?"

"Reverend father," answered the proprietor of the garden, for such he was, "how oft shall I pray you to keep your high counsel for high minds like your own? What have you required of me, that I have not granted unresistingly, though with an aching heart?"

"I would require of you to be yourself, my brother," said the Abbot Ambrosius: "to remember what you were, and to what your early vows have bound you."

"I tell thee, Father Ambrosius," replied the gardener, "the patience of the best saint that ever said paternoster would be exhausted by the trials to which you have put mine. What I have been, it skills not to speak at present: no one knows better than yourself, father, what I renounced, in hopes to find ease and quiet during the remainder of my days; and no one better knows how my retreat has been invaded, my fruit-trees broken, my flower-beds trodden down, my quiet frightened away, and my very sleep driven from my bed, since ever this poor Queen, God bless her! hath been sent to Lochleven. I blame her not: being a prisoner, it is natural she should wish to get out from so vile a hold, where there is scarcely any place even for a tolerable garden, and where the water-mists, as I am told, blight all the early blossoms—I say, I cannot blame her for endeavoring for her freedom; but why I should be drawn into the scheme; why my harmless arbors, that I planted with my own hands, should become places of privy conspiracy; why my little quay, which I built for my own fishing-boat, should have become a haven for secret embarkations; in short, why I should be dragged into matters where both heading and hanging are like to be the issue, I profess to you, reverend father, I am totally ignorant."

"My brother," answered the abbot, "you are wise, and ought to know——"

"I am not—I am not—I am not wise," replied the horticulturist, pettishly, and stopping his ears with his fingers; "I was never called wise, but when men wanted to engage me in some action of notorious folly."

"But, my good brother," said the abbot——

“I am not good, neither,” said the peevish gardener—“I am neither good nor wise. Had I been wise, you would not have been admitted here; and were I good, methinks I should send you elsewhere to hatch plots for destroying the quiet of the country. What signifies disputing about queen or king, when men may sit at peace *sub umbra vitis sui*? And so would I do, after the precept of Holy Writ, were I, as you term me, wise or good. But such as I am, my neck is in the yoke, and you make me draw what weight you list. Follow me, youngster. This reverend father, who makes in his jackman’s dress nearly as reverend a figure as I myself, will agree with me in one thing at least, and that is, that you have been long enough here.”

“Follow the good father, Roland,” said the abbot, “and remember my words—a day is approaching that will try the temper of all true Scotsmen; may thy heart prove faithful as the steel of thy blade!”

The page bowed in silence, and they parted; the gardener, notwithstanding his advanced age, walking on before him very briskly, and muttering as he went, partly to himself, partly to his companion, after the manner of old men of weakened intellects. “When I was great,” thus ran his maundering, “and had my mule and my ambling palfrey at command, I warrant you I could have as well flown through the air as have walked at this pace. I had my gout and my rheumatics, and an hundred things besides, that hung fetters on my heels; and now, thanks to Our Lady and honest labor, I can walk with any good man of my age in the kingdom of Fife. Fy upon it, that experience should be so long in coming!”

As he was thus muttering, his eye fell upon the branch of a pear-tree which drooped down for want of support, and at once forgetting his haste, the old man stopped and set seriously about binding it up. Roland Græme hath both readiness, neatness of hand, and good-nature in abundance: he immediately lent his aid, and in a minute or two the bough was supported, and tied up in a way perfectly satisfactory to the old man, who looked at it with a great complaisance. “They are bergamots,” he said, “and if you will come ashore in autumn, you shall taste of them; the like are not in Lochleven Castle. The garden there is a poor pinfold, and the gardener, Hugh Houkham, hath little skill of his craft: so come ashore, Master Page, in autumn, when you would eat pears. But what am I thinking of? ere that time come, they may have given thee sour pears for plums. Take

an old man's advice, youth, one who hath seen many days, and sat in higher places than thou canst hope for : bend thy sword into a pruning-hook, and make a dibble of thy dagger—thy days should be the longer, and thy health the better for it—and come to aid me in my garden, and I will teach thee the real French fashion of 'imping,' which the South-ron call grafting. Do this, and do it without loss of time, for there is a whirlwind coming over the land, and only those shall escape who lie too much beneath the storm to have their boughs broken by it."

So saying, he dismissed Roland Græme through a different door from that by which he had entered, signed a cross and pronounced a *benedicite* as they parted, and then, still muttering to himself, retired into the garden, and locked the door on the inside.

CHAPTER XXIX

Pray God she prove not masculine ere long !

King Henry IV.

DISMISSED from the old man's garden, Roland Græme found that a grassy paddock, in which sauntered two cows, the property of the gardener, still separated him from the village. He paced through it, lost in meditation upon the words of the abbot. Father Ambrosius had, with success enough, exerted over him that powerful influence which the guardians and instructors of our childhood possess over our more mature youth. And yet, when Roland looked back upon what the father had said, he could not but suspect that he had rather sought to evade entering into the controversy betwixt the churches than to repel the objections and satisfy the doubts which the lectures of Henderson had excited. "For this he had no time," said the page to himself, "neither have I now calmness and learning sufficient to judge upon points of such magnitude. Besides, it were base to quit my faith while the wind of fortune sets against it, unless I were so placed that my conversion, should it take place, were free as light from the imputation of self-interest. I was bred a Catholic—bred in the faith of Bruce and Wallace—I will hold that faith till time and reason shall convince me that it errs. I will serve this poor Queen as a subject should serve an imprisoned and wronged sovereign. They who placed me in her service have to blame themselves: they sent me hither, a gentleman trained in the paths of loyalty and honor, when they should have sought out some truckling, coggling, double-dealing knave, who would have been at once the observant page of the Queen and the obsequious spy of her enemies. Since I must choose betwixt aiding and betraying her, I will decide as becomes her servant and her subject; but Catherine Seyton—Catherine Seyton, beloved by Douglas, and holding me on or off as the intervals of her leisure or caprice will permit—how shall I deal with the coquette? By Heaven, when I next have an opportunity, she shall render me some reason for her conduct, or I will break with her forever!"

As he formed this doughty resolution, he crossed the stile which led out of the little inclosure, and was almost immediately greeted by Dr. Luke Lundin.

“Ha! my most excellent young friend,” said the doctor, “from whence come you?—but I note the place. Yes, neighbor Blinkhoolie’s garden is a pleasant rendezvous, and you are of the age when lads look after a bonny lass with one eye and a dainty plum with another. But hey! you look subtriste and melancholic: I fear the maiden has proved cruel, or the plums unripe; and surely, I think neighbor Blinkhoolie’s damsons can scarcely have been well preserved throughout the winter—he spares the saccharine juice on his confects. But courage, man, there are more Kates in Kinross; and for the immature fruit, a glass of my double distilled *aqua mirabilis! probatum est.*”

The page darted an ireful glance at the facetious physician; but presently recollecting that the name “Kate,” which had provoked his displeasure, was probably but introduced for the sake of alliteration, he suppressed his wrath, and only asked if the wains had been heard of.

“Why, I have been seeking for you this hour, to tell you that the stuff is in your boat, and that the boat waits your pleasure. Auchtermuchty had only fallen into company with an idle knave like himself, and a stoup of aquavitæ between them. Your boatmen lie on their oars, and there have already been made two wefts from the warder’s turret, to intimate that those in the castle are impatient for your return. Yet there is time for you to take a slight repast; and, as your friend and physician, I hold it unfit you should face the water-breeze with an empty stomach.”

Roland Græme had nothing for it but to return, with such cheer as he might, to the place where his boat was moored on the beach, and resisted all offer of refreshment, although the doctor promised that he should prelude the collation with a gentle appetizer—a decoction of herbs, gathered and distilled by himself. Indeed, as Roland had not forgotten the contents of his morning cup, it is possible that the recollection induced him to stand firm in his refusal of all food to which such an unpalatable preface was the preliminary. As they passed towards the boat (for the ceremonious politeness of the worthy chamberlain would not permit the page to go thither without attendance), Roland Græme, amidst a group who seemed to be assembled around a party of wandering musicians, distinguished, as he thought, the dress of Catherine Seyton. He shook himself clear from his attend-

ant, and at one spring was in the midst of the crowd, and at the side of the damsel. "Catherine," he whispered, "is it well for you to be still here?—will you not return to the castle?"

"To the devil with your Catherines and your castles!" answered the maiden, snappishly; "have you not had time enough already to get rid of your follies? Begone! I desire not your farther company, and there will be danger in thrusting it upon me."

"Nay, but if there be danger, fairest Catherine," replied Roland, "why will you not allow me to stay and share it with you?"

"Intruding fool," said the maiden, "the danger is all on thine own side: the risk is, in plain terms, that I strike thee on the mouth with the hilt of my dagger." So saying, she turned haughtily from him, and moved through the crowd, who gave way in some astonishment at the masculine activity with which she forced her way among them.

As Roland, though much irritated, prepared to follow, he was grappled on the other side by Doctor Luke Lundin, who reminded him of the loaded boat, of the two wefts, or signals with the flag, which had been made from the tower, of the danger of the cold breeze to an empty stomach, and of the vanity of spending more time upon coy wenches and sour plums. Roland was thus, in a manner, dragged back to his boat, and obliged to launch her forth upon his return to Lochleven Castle.

That little voyage was speedily accomplished, and the page was greeted at the landing-place by the severe and caustic welcome of old Dryfesdale. "So, young gallant, you are come at last, after a delay of six hours, and after two signals from the castle? But, I warrant, some idle junketing had occupied you too deeply to think of your service or your duty. Where is the note of the plate and household stuff? Pray Heaven it hath not been diminished under the sleeveless care of so heedless a gadabout!"

"Diminished under my care, sir steward?" retorted the page, angrily; "say so in earnest, and by Heaven your gray hair shall hardly protect your saucy tongue!"

"A truce with your swaggering, young esquire," returned the steward; "we have bolts and dungeons for brawlers. Go to my lady and swagger before her, if thou darest; she will give thee proper cause of offense, for she has waited for thee long and impatiently."

"And where then is the Lady of Lochleven?" said the page; "for I conceive it is of her thou speakest."

“Ay, of whom else?” replied Dryfesdale; “or who besides the Lady of Lochleven hath a right to command in this castle!”

“The Lady of Lochleven is thy mistress,” said Roland Græme; “but mine is the Queen of Scotland.”

The steward looked at him fixedly for a moment, with an air in which suspicion and dislike were ill concealed by an affectation of contempt. “The bragging cock-chicken,” he said, “will betray himself by his rash crowing. I have marked thy altered manner in the chapel of late—ay, and your changing of glances at meal-time with a certain idle damsel, who, like thyself, laughs at all gravity and goodness. There is something about you, my master, which should be looked to. But, if you would know whether the Lady of Lochleven or that other lady hath right to command thy service, thou wilt find them together in the Lady Mary’s ante-room.”

Roland hastened thither, not unwilling to escape from the ill-natured penetration of the old man, and marveling at the same time what peculiarity could have occasioned the Lady of Lochleven’s being in the Queen’s apartment at this time of the afternoon, so much contrary to her usual wont. His acuteness instantly penetrated the meaning. “She wishes,” he concluded, “to see the meeting betwixt the Queen and me on my return, that she may form a guess whether there is any private intelligence or understanding betwixt us. I must be guarded.”

With this resolution he entered the parlor, where the Queen, seated in her chair, with the Lady Fleming leaning upon the back of it, had already kept the Lady of Lochleven standing in her presence for the space of nearly an hour, to the manifest increase of her very visible bad-humor. Roland Græme, on entering the apartment, made a deep obeisance to the Queen, and another to the lady, and then stood still as if to await their further question. Speaking almost together, the Lady of Lochleven said, “So, young man, you are returned at length?” And then stopped indignantly short, while the Queen went on without regarding her—“Roland, you are welcome home to us; you have proved the true dove and not the raven. Yet I am sure I could have forgiven you if, once dismissed from this water-circled ark of ours, you had never again returned to us. I trust you have brought back an olive branch, for our kind and worthy hostess has chafed herself much on account of your long

absence, and we never needed more some symbol of peace and reconciliation."

"I grieve I should have been detained, madam," answered the page; "but, from the delay of the person entrusted with the matters for which I was sent, I did not receive them till late in the day."

"See you there now," said the Queen to the Lady Lochleven; "we could not persuade you, our dearest hostess, that your household goods were in all safe keeping and surety. True it is, that we can excuse your anxiety, considering that these august apartments are so scantily furnished that we have not been able to offer you even the relief of a stool during the long time you have afforded us the pleasure of your society."

"The will, madam," said the lady—"the will to offer such accommodation was more wanting than the means."

"What!" said the Queen, looking round, and affecting surprise, "there are then stools in this apartment—one, two—no less than four, including the broken one—a royal garniture! We observed them not; will it please your ladyship to sit?"

"No, madam, I will soon relieve you of my presence," replied the Lady Lochleven; "and, while with you, my aged limbs can still better brook fatigue than my mind stoop to accept of constrained courtesy."

"Nay, Lady of Lochleven, if you take it so deeply," said the Queen, rising and motioning to her own vacant chair, "I would rather you assumed my seat; you are not the first of your family who has done so."

The Lady of Lochleven courtesied a negative, but seemed with much difficulty to suppress the angry answer which rose to her lips.

During this sharp conversation, the page's attention had been almost entirely occupied by the entrance of Catherine Seyton, who came from the inner apartment, in the usual dress in which she attended upon the Queen, and with nothing in her manner which marked either the hurry or confusion incident to a hasty change of disguise or the conscious fear of detection in a perilous enterprise. Roland Græme ventured to make her an obeisance as she entered, but she returned it with an air of the utmost indifference, which, in his opinion, was extremely inconsistent with the circumstances in which they stood towards each other. "Surely," he thought, "she cannot in reason expect to bully me out of the belief due to mine own eyes, as she tried to do con-

cerning the apparition in the hostelry of St. Michael's. I will try if I cannot make her feel that this will be but a vain task, and that confidence in me is the wiser and safer course to pursue."

These thoughts had passed rapidly through his mind, when the Queen, having finished her altercation with the lady of the castle, again addressed him—"What of the revels at Kinross, Roland Græme? Methought they were gay, if I may judge from some faint sounds of mirth and distant music which found their way so far as these grated windows, and died when they entered them, as all that is mirthful must. But thou lookest as sad as if thou hadst come from a conventicle of the Huguenots!"

"And so perchance he hath, madam," replied the Lady of Lochleven, at whom this side-shaft was launched. "I trust, amid yonder idle fooleries, there wanted not some pouring forth of doctrine to a better purpose than that vain mirth which, blazing and vanishing like the crackling of dry thorns, leaves to the fools who love it nothing but dust and ashes."

"Mary Fleming," said the Queen, turning round and drawing her mantle about her, "I would that we had the chimney-grate supplied with a fagot or two of these same thorns which the Lady of Lochleven describes so well. Methinks the damp air from the lake, which stagnates in these vaulted rooms, renders them deadly cold."

"Your Grace's pleasure shall be obeyed," said the Lady of Lochleven; "yet may I presume to remind you that we are now in summer?"

"I thank you for the information, my good lady," said the Queen; "for prisoners better learn their calendar from the mouth of their jailer than from any change they themselves feel in the seasons. Once more, Roland Græme, what of the revels?"

"They were gay, madam," said the page, "but of the usual sort, and little worth your Highness's ear."

"O, you know not," said the Queen, "how very indulgent my ear has become to all that speaks of freedom and the pleasures of the free. Methinks I would rather have seen the gay villagers dance their ring round the Maypole than have witnessed the most stately masques within the precincts of a palace. The absence of stone walls, the sense that the green turf is under the foot which may tread it free and unrestrained, is worth all that art or splendor can add to more courtly revels."

“I trust,” said the Lady Lochleven, addressing the page in her turn, “there were amongst these follies none of the riots or disturbances to which they so naturally lead?”

Roland gave a slight glance to Catherine Seyton, as if to bespeak her attention, as he replied, “I witnessed no offense, madam, worthy of marking—none indeed of any kind, save that a bold damsel made her hand somewhat too familiar with the cheek of a player-man, and ran some risk of being ducked in the lake.”

As he uttered these words he cast a hasty glance at Catherine; but she sustained, with the utmost serenity of manner and countenance, the hint which he had deemed could not have been thrown out before her without exciting some fear and confusion.

“I will cumber your Grace no longer with my presence,” said the Lady of Lochleven, “unless you have aught to command me.”

“Nought, our good hostess,” answered the Queen, “unless it be to pray you, that on another occasion you deem it not needful to postpone your better employment to wait so long upon us.”

“May it please you,” added the Lady Lochleven, “to command this your gentleman to attend us, that I may receive some account of these matters which have been sent hither for your Grace’s use?”

“We may not refuse what you are pleased to require, madam,” answered the Queen. “Go with the lady, Roland, if our commands be indeed necessary to thy doing so. We will hear to-morrow the history of thy Kinross pleasures. For this night we dismiss thy attendance.”

Roland Græme went with the Lady of Lochleven, who failed not to ask him many questions concerning what had passed at the sports, to which he rendered such answers as were most likely to lull asleep any suspicions which she might entertain of his disposition to favor Queen Mary, taking especial care to avoid all allusion to the apparition of Magdalen Græme and of the Abbot Ambrosius. At length, after undergoing a long and somewhat close examination, he was dismissed with such expressions as, coming from the reserved and stern Lady of Lochleven, might seem to express a degree of favor and countenance.

His first care was to obtain some refreshment, which was more cheerfully afforded him by a good-natured pantler than by Dryfesdale, who was, on this occasion, much disposed to abide by the fashion of Pudding-burn House, where

They who came not the first call
 Gat no more meat till the next meal.

When Roland Græme had finished his repast, having his dismissal from the Queen for the evening, and being little inclined for such society as the castle afforded, he stole into the garden, in which he had permission to spend his leisure time, when it pleased him. In this place, the ingenuity of the contriver and disposer of the walks had exerted itself to make the most of little space, and by screens, both of stone ornamented with rude sculpture and hedges of living green, had endeavored to give as much intricacy and variety as the confined limits of the garden would admit.

Here the young man walked sadly, considering the events of the day, and comparing what had dropped from the abbot with what he had himself noticed of the demeanor of George Douglas. "It must be so," was the painful but inevitable conclusion at which he arrived—"it must be by his aid that she is thus enabled, like a phantom, to transport herself from place to place, and to appear at pleasure on the mainland or on the islet. It must be so," he repeated once more; "with him she holds a close, secret, and intimate correspondence, altogether inconsistent with the eye of favor which she has sometimes cast upon me, and destructive to the hopes which she must have known these glances have necessarily inspired." And yet (for love will hope where reason despairs) the thought rushed on his mind that it was possible she only encouraged Douglas's passion so far as might serve her mistress's interest, and that she was of too frank, noble, and candid a nature to hold out to himself hopes which she meant not to fulfil. Lost in these various conjectures, he seated himself upon a bank of turf, which commanded a view of the lake on the one side, and on the other of that front of the castle along which the Queen's apartments were situated.

The sun had now for some time set, and the twilight of May was rapidly fading into a serene night. On the lake, the expanded water rose and fell, with the slightest and softest influence of a southern breeze, which scarcely dimpled the surface over which it passed. In the distance was still seen the dim outline of the island of St. Serf, once visited by many a sandaled pilgrim, as the blessed spot trodden by a man of God; now neglected or violated, as the refuge of lazy priests, who had with justice been compelled to give place to the sheep and the heifers of a Protestant baron.

As Roland gazed on the dark speck, amid the lighter blue

of the waters which surrounded it, the mazes of polemical discussion again stretched themselves before the eye of his mind. Had these men justly suffered their exile as licentious drones, the robbers, at once, and disgrace of the busy hive; or had the hand of avarice and rapine expelled from the temple not the ribalds who polluted, but the faithful priests who served, the shrine in honor and fidelity? The arguments of Henderson, in this contemplative hour, rose with double force before him, and could scarcely be parried by the appeal which the Abbot Ambrosius had made from his understanding to his feelings—an appeal which he had felt more forcibly amid the bustle of stirring life than now when his reflections were more undisturbed. It required an effort to divert his mind from this embarrassing topic; and he found that he best succeeded by turning his eyes to the front of the tower, watching where a twinkling light still streamed from the casement of Catherine Seyton's apartment, obscured by times for a moment, as the shadow of the fair inhabitant passed betwixt the taper and the window. At length the light was removed or extinguished, and that object of speculation was also withdrawn from the eyes of the meditative lover. Dare I confess the fact, without injuring his character forever as a hero of romance? These eyes gradually became heavy; speculative doubts on the subject of religious controversy, and anxious conjectures concerning the state of his mistress's affections, became confusedly blended together in his musings; the fatigues of a busy day prevailed over the harassing subjects of contemplation which occupied his mind, and he fell fast asleep.

Sound were his slumbers, until they were suddenly dispelled by the iron tongue of the castle bell, which sent its deep and sullen sounds wide over the bosom of the lake, and awakened the echoes of Bennarty, the hill which descends steeply on its southern bank. Roland started up, for this bell was always tolled at ten o'clock, as the signal for locking the castle gates, and placing the keys under the charge of the seneschal. He therefore hastened to the wicket by which the garden communicated with the building, and had the mortification, just as he reached it, to hear the bolt leave its sheath with a discordant crash, and enter the stone groove of the door-lintel.

"Hold—hold," cried the page, "and let me in ere you lock the wicket."

The voice of Dryfesdale replied from within, in his usual tone of embittered sullenness, "The hour is past, fair mas-

ter; you like not the inside of these walls; even make it a complete holiday, and spend the night as well as the day out of bounds."

"Open the door," exclaimed the indignant page, "or by St. Giles I will make thy gold chain smoke for it!"

"Make no alarm here," retorted the impenetrable Dryfesdale, "but keep thy sinful oaths and silly threats for those that regard them. I do mine office, and carry the keys to the seneschal. Adieu, my young master! the cool night air will advantage your hot blood."

The steward was right in what he said; for the cooling breeze was very necessary to appease the feverish fit of anger which Roland experienced, nor did the remedy succeed for some time. At length, after some hasty turns made through the garden, exhausting his passion in vain vows of vengeance, Roland Græme began to be sensible that his situation ought rather to be held as matter of laughter than of serious resentment. To one bred a sportsman, a night spent in the open air had in it little of hardship, and the poor malice of the steward seemed more worthy of his contempt than his anger. "I would to God," he said, "that the grim old man may always have contented himself with such sportive revenge. He often looks as he were capable of doing us a darker turn." Returning, therefore, to the turf-seat which he had formerly occupied, and which was partially sheltered by a trim fence of green holly, he drew his mantle around him, stretched himself at length on the verdant settle, and endeavored to resume that sleep which the castle bell had interrupted to so little purpose.

Sleep, like other earthly blessings, is niggard of its favors when most courted. The more Roland invoked her aid, the further she fled from his eyelids. He had been completely awakened, first by the sounds of the bell, and then by his own aroused vivacity of temper, and he found it difficult again to compose himself to slumber. At length, when his mind was wearied out with a maze of unpleasing meditation, he succeeded in coaxing himself into a broken repose. This was again dispelled by the voices of two persons who were walking in the garden, the sound of whose conversation, after mingling for some time in the page's dreams, at length succeeded in awaking him thoroughly. He raised himself from his reclining posture in the utmost astonishment, which the circumstance of hearing two persons at that late hour conversing on the outside of the watchfully guarded Castle of Lochleven was so well calculated to excite. His first

thought was of supernatural beings; his next, upon some attempt on the part of Queen Mary's friends and followers; his last was that George of Douglas, possessed of the keys, and having the means of ingress and egress at pleasure, was availing himself of his office to hold a rendezvous with Catherine Seyton in the castle garden. He was confirmed in this opinion by the tone of the voice which asked in a low whisper "Whether all was ready?"

[The following text is extremely faint and largely illegible due to fading and bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. It appears to be a continuation of the narrative.]

CHAPTER XXX

In some breasts passion lies conceal'd and silent,
Like war's swart powder in a castle vault,
Until occasion, like the linstock, lights it ;
Then comes at once the lightning and the thunder,
And distant echoes tell that all is rent asunder.

Old Play.

ROLAND GRÆME, availing himself of a breach in the holly screen, and of the assistance of the full moon, which was now arisen, had a perfect opportunity, himself unobserved, to reconnoiter the persons and the motions of those by whom his rest had been thus unexpectedly disturbed ; and his observations confirmed his jealous apprehensions. They stood together in close and earnest conversation within four yards of the place of his retreat, and he could easily recognize the tall form and deep voice of Douglas, and the no less remarkable dress and tone of the page at the hostelry of St. Michael's.

"I have been at the door of the page's apartment," said Douglas, "but he is not there, or he will not answer. It is fast bolted on the inside, as is the custom, and we cannot pass through it ; and what his silence may bode I know not."

"You have trusted him too far," said the other—"a feather-headed coxcomb, upon whose changeable mind and hot brain there is no making an abiding impression."

"It was not I who was willing to trust him," said Douglas ; "but I was assured he would prove friendly when called upon, for—" Here he spoke so low that Roland lost the tenor of his words, which was the more provoking as he was fully aware that he was himself the subject of their conversation.

"Nay," replied the stranger, more aloud, "I have on my side put him off with fair words, which make fools fain ; but now, if you distrust him at the push, deal with him with your dagger, and so make open passage."

"That was too rash," said Douglas ; "and besides, as I told you, the door of his apartment is shut and bolted. I will essay again to waken him."

Græme instantly comprehended that the ladies, having been somehow made aware of his being in the garden, had

secured the door of the outer room in which he usually slept, as a sort of sentinel upon that only access to the Queen's apartments. But then, how came Catherine Seyton to be abroad, if the Queen and the other lady were still within their chambers, and the access to them locked and bolted? "I will be instantly at the bottom of these mysteries," he said, "and then thank Mrs. Catherine, if this be really she, for the kind use which she exhorted Douglas to make of his dagger; they seek me, as I comprehend, and they shall not seek me in vain."

Douglas had by this time re-entered the castle by the wicket, which was now open. The stranger stood alone in the garden walk, his arms folded on his breast, and his eyes cast impatiently up to the moon, as if accusing her of betraying him by the magnificence of her luster. In a moment Roland Græme stood before him. "A goodly night," he said, "Mrs. Catherine, for a young lady to stray forth in disguise, and to meet with men in an orchard!"

"Hush!" said the stranger page—"hush, thou foolish patch, and tell us in a word if thou art friend or foe."

"How should I be friend to one who deceives me by fair words, and who would have Douglas deal with me with his poniard?" replied Roland.

"The fiend receive George of Douglas and thee too, thou born madcap and sworn marplot!" said the other; "we shall be discovered, and then death is the word."

"Catherine," said the page, "you have dealt falsely and cruelly with me, and the moment of explanation is now come; neither it nor you shall escape me."

"Madman!" said the stranger, "I am neither Kate nor Catherine: the moon shines bright enough surely to know the hart from the hind."

"That shift shall not serve you, fair mistress," said the page, laying hold on the lap of the stranger's cloak; "this time, at least, I will know with whom I deal."

"Unhand me," said she, endeavoring to extricate herself from his grasp; and in a tone where anger seemed to contend with a desire to laugh, "Use you so little discretion towards a daughter of Seyton?"

But as Roland, encouraged perhaps by her risibility to suppose his violence was not unpardonably offensive, kept hold on her mantle, she said, in a sterner tone of unmixed resentment, "Madman, let me go! there is life and death in this moment. I would not willingly hurt thee, and yet beware!"

As she spoke, she made a sudden effort to escape, and in

doing so a pistol which she carried in her hands or about her person went off.

This warlike sound instantly awakened the well-warded castle. The warder blew his horn, and began to toll the castle bell, crying out at the same time, "Fy, treason! treason! cry all!—cry all!"

The apparition of Catherine Seyton, which the page had let loose in the first moment of astonishment, vanished in darkness, but the plash of oars was heard, and in a second or two five or six harquebusses and a falconet were fired from the battlements of the castle successively, as if leveled at some object on the water. Confounded with these incidents, no way for Catherine's protection (supposing her to be in the boat which he had heard put from the shore) occurred to Roland, save to have recourse to George of Douglas. He hastened for this purpose towards the apartment of the Queen, whence he heard loud voices and much trampling of feet. When he entered, he found himself added to a confused and astonished group, which, assembled in that apartment, stood gazing upon each other. At the upper end of the room stood the Queen, equipped as for a journey, and attended not only by the Lady Fleming, but by the omnipresent Catherine Seyton, dressed in the habit of her own sex, and bearing in her hand the casket, in which Mary kept such jewels as she had been permitted to retain. At the other end of the hall was the Lady of Lochleven, hastily dressed, as one startled from slumber by the sudden alarm, and surrounded by domestics, some bearing torches, others, holding naked swords, partizans, pistols, or such other weapons as they had caught up in the hurry of a night alarm. Betwixt these two parties stood George of Douglas, his arms folded on his breast, his eyes bent on the ground, like a criminal who knows not how to deny, yet continues unwilling to avow, the guilt in which he had been detected.

"Speak George of Douglas," said the Lady of Lochleven—"speak, and clear the horrid suspicion which rests on thy name. Say, 'A Douglas was never faithless to his trust, and I am a Douglas.' Say this, my dearest son, and it is all I ask thee to say to clear thy name, even under such a foul charge. Say it was but the wile of these unhappy women and this false boy which plotted an escape so fatal to Scotland, so destructive to thy father's house."

"Madam," said old Dryfesdale, the steward, "this much do I say for this silly page, that he could not be accessory to unlocking the doors, since I myself this night bolted him out

of the castle. Whoever limned this night-piece, the lad's share in it seems to have been small."

"Thou liest, Dryfesdale," said the lady, "and wouldst throw the blame on thy master's house, to save the worthless life of a gipsy boy."

"His death were more desirable to me than his life," answered the steward, sullenly; "but the truth is the truth."

At these words, Douglas raised his head, drew up his figure to its full height, and spoke boldly and sedately, as one whose resolution was taken. "Let no life be endangered for me. I alone——"

"Douglas," said the Queen, interrupting him, "art thou mad? Speak not, I charge you."

"Madam," he replied, bowing with the deepest respect, "gladly would I obey your commands, but they must have a victim, and let it be the true one. Yes, madam," he continued, addressing the Lady of Lochleven, "I alone am guilty in this matter. If the word of a Douglas has yet any weight with you, believe me that this boy is innocent; and on your conscience I charge you, do him no wrong; nor let the Queen suffer hardship for embracing the opportunity of freedom which sincere loyalty—which a sentiment yet deeper—offered to her acceptance.—Yes! I had planned the escape of the most beautiful, the most persecuted of women; and far from regretting that I, for a while, deceived the malice of her enemies, I glory in it, and am most willing to yield up life itself in her cause."

"Now, may God have compassion on my age," said the Lady of Lochleven, "and enable me to bear their load of affliction! O Princess! born in a luckless hour, when will you cease to be the instrument of seduction and of ruin to all who approach you? O ancient house of Lochleven, famed so long for birth and honor, evil was the hour which brought the deceiver under thy roof!"

"Say not so, madam," replied her grandson; "the old honors of the Douglas line will be outshone when one of its descendants dies for the most injured of queens—for the most lovely of women."

"Douglas," said the Queen, "must I at this moment—ay, even at this moment, when I may lose a faithful subject forever—hide thee for forgetting what is due to me as thy queen?"

"Wretched boy," said the distracted Lady of Lochleven, "hast thou fallen even thus far into the snare of this Moab-

itish woman?—hast thou bartered thy name, thy allegiance, thy knightly oath, thy duty to thy parents, thy country, and thy God, for a feigned tear, or a sickly smile, from lips which flattered the infirm Francis—lured to death the idiot Darnley—read luscious poetry with the minion Chastelar—mingled in the lays of love which were sung by the beggar Rizzio—and which were joined in rapture to those of the foul and licentious Bothwell?”

“Blaspheme not, madam!” said Douglas; “nor you, fair Queen, and virtuous as fair, chide at this moment the presumption of thy vassal! Think not that the mere devotion of a subject could have moved me to the part I have been performing. Well you deserve that each of your lieges should die for you; but I have done more—have done that to which love alone could compel a Douglas: I have dissembled. Farewell, then, queen of all hearts, and empress of that of Douglas! When you are freed from this vile bondage—as freed you shall be, if justice remains in Heaven—and when you load with honors and titles the happy man who shall deliver you, cast one thought on him whose heart would have despised every reward for a kiss of your hand—cast one thought on his fidelity, and drop one tear on his grave.” And throwing himself at her feet, he seized her hand, and pressed it to his lips.

“This before my face!” exclaimed the Lady of Lochleven—“wilt thou court thy adulterous paramour before the eyes of a parent? Tear them asunder, and put him under strict ward! Seize him, upon your lives!” she added, seeing that her attendants looked on each other with hesitation.

“They are doubtful,” said Mary. “Save thyself, Douglas, I command thee!”

He started up from the floor, and only exclaiming, “My life or death are yours, and at your disposal!” drew his sword, and broke through those who stood betwixt him and the door. The enthusiasm of his onset was too sudden and too lively to have been resisted by anything short of the most decided opposition; and as he was both loved and feared by his father’s vassals, none of them would offer him any actual injury.

The Lady of Lochleven stood astonished at his sudden escape. “Am I surrounded,” she said, “by traitors? Upon him, villains!—pursue, stab, cut him down!”

“He cannot leave the island, madam,” said Dryfesdale, interfering: “I have the key of the boat-chain.”

But two or three voices of those who pursued from curiosity

or command of their mistress exclaimed from below, that he had cast himself into the lake.

“Brave Douglas still!” exclaimed the Queen. “O, true and noble heart, that prefers death to imprisonment!”

“Fire upon him!” said the Lady of Lochleven: “if there be here a true servant of his father, let him shoot the runagate dead, and let the lake cover our shame!”

The report of a gun or two was heard, but they were probably shot rather to obey the lady than with any purpose of hitting the mark; and Randal immediately entering, said that Master George had been taken up by a boat from the castle, which lay at a little distance.

“Man a barge and pursue them!” said the lady.

“It were quite vain,” said Randal; “by this time they are half-way to shore, and a cloud has come over the moon.”

“And has the traitor then escaped?” said the lady, pressing her hands against her forehead with a gesture of despair; “the honor of our house is forever gone, and all will be deemed accomplices in this base treachery!”

“Lady of Lochleven,” said Mary, advancing towards her, “you have this night cut off my fairest hopes: you have turned my expected freedom into bondage, and dashed away the cup of joy in the very instant I was advancing it to my lips; and yet I feel for your sorrow the pity that you deny to mine. Gladly would I comfort you if I might; but as I may not, I would at least part from you in charity.”

“Away, proud woman!” said the lady; “who ever knew so well as thou to deal the deepest wounds under the pretense of kindness and courtesy? Who, since the great traitor, could ever so betray with a kiss?”

“Lady Douglas of Lochleven,” said the Queen, “in this moment thou canst not offend me—no, not even by thy coarse and unwomanly language, held to me in the presence of menials and armed retainers. I have this night owed so much to one member of the house of Lochleven as to cancel whatever its mistress can do or say in the wildness of her passion.”

“We are bounden to you, Princess,” said Lady Lochleven, putting a strong constraint on herself, and passing from her tone of violence to that of bitter irony; “our poor house hath been but seldom graced with royal smiles, and will hardly, with my choice, exchange their rough honesty for such court honor as Mary of Scotland has now to bestow.”

“They,” replied Mary, “who knew so well how to take

may think themselves excused from the obligation implied in receiving. And that I have now little to offer is the fault of the Douglasses and their allies."

"Fear nothing, madam," replied the Lady of Lochleven, in the same bitter tone, "you retain an exchequer which neither your own prodigality can drain nor your offended country deprive you of. While you have fair words and delusive smiles at command, you need no other bribes to lure youth to folly."

The Queen cast a not ungratified glance on a large mirror, which, hanging on one side of the apartment, and illuminated by the torch-light, reflected her beautiful face and person. "Our hostess grows complaisant," she said, "my Fleming; we had not thought that grief and captivity had left us so well stored with that sort of wealth which ladies prize most dearly."

"Your Grace will drive this severe woman frantic," said Fleming, in a low tone. "On my knees I implore you to remember she is already dreadfully offended, and that we are in her power."

"I will not spare her, Fleming," answered the Queen; "it is against my nature. She returned my honest sympathy with insult and abuse, and I will gall her in return. If her words are too blunt for answer, let her use her poniard if she dare!"

"The Lady Lochleven," said the Lady Fleming aloud, "would surely do well now to withdraw and to leave her Grace to repose."

"Ay," replied the lady, "or to leave her Grace and her Grace's minions to think what silly fly they may next wrap their meshes about. My eldest son is a widower—were he not more worthy the flattering hopes with which you have seduced his brother [son]? True, the yoke of marriage has been already thrice fitted on; but the Church of Rome calls it a sacrament, and its votaries may deem it one in which they cannot too often participate."

"And the votaries of the Church of Geneva," replied Mary, coloring with indignation, "as they deem marriage *no* sacrament, are said at times to dispense with the holy ceremony." Then, as if afraid of the consequences of this home allusion to the errors of Lady Lochleven's early life, the Queen added, "Come, my Fleming, we grace her too much by this altercation: we will to our sleeping-apartment. If she would disturb us again to-night, she must cause the door to be forced." So saying, she retired to her

bedroom, followed by her two women. Lady Lochleven, stunned as it were by this last sarcasm, and not the less deeply incensed that she had drawn it upon herself, remained like a statue on the spot which she had occupied when she received an affront so flagrant. Dryfesdale and Randal endeavored to rouse her to recollection by questions.

“What is your honorable ladyship’s pleasure in the premises?”

“Shall we not double the sentinels, and place one upon the boats and another in the garden?” said Randal.

“Would you that despatches were sent to Sir William at Edinburgh, to acquaint him with what has happened?” demanded Dryfesdale; “and ought not the place of Kinross to be alarmed, lest there be force upon the shores of the lake?”

“Do all as thou wilt,” said the lady, collecting herself, and about to depart. “Thou hast the name of a good soldier, Dryfesdale, take all precautions. Sacred Heaven! that I should be thus openly insulted!”

“Would it be your pleasure,” said Dryfesdale, hesitating, “that this person—this lady—be more severely restrained?”

“No, vassal!” answered the lady, indignantly, “my revenge stoops not to so low a gratification. But I will have more worthy vengeance, or the tomb of my ancestors shall cover my shame!”

“And you shall have it, madam,” replied Dryfesdale. “Ere two suns go down, you shall term yourself amply revenged.”

The lady made no answer, perhaps did not hear his words, as she presently left the apartment. By the command of Dryfesdale, the rest of the attendants were dismissed, some to do the duty of guard, others to their repose. The steward himself remained after they had all departed; and Roland Græme, who was alone in the apartment, was surprised to see the old soldier advance towards him with an air of greater cordiality than he had ever before assumed to him, but which sat ill on his scowling features.

“Youth,” he said, “I have done thee some wrong: it is thine own fault, for thy behavior hath seemed as light to me as the feather thou wearest in thy hat; and surely thy fantastic apparel, and idle humor of mirth and folly, have made me construe thee something harshly. But I saw this night from my casement, as I looked out to see how thou hadst disposed of thyself in the garden—I saw, I say, the true efforts which thou didst make to detain the companion of

the perfidy of him who is no longer worthy to be called by his father's name, but must be cut off from his house like a rotten branch. I was just about to come to thy assistance when the pistol went off; and the warder—a false knave, whom I suspect to be bribed for the nonce—was himself forced to give the alarm, which, perchance, till then he had wilfully withheld. To atone, therefore, for my injustice towards you, I would willingly render you a courtesy, if you would accept of it from my hands.”

“May I first crave to know what it is?” replied the page.

“Simply to carry the news of this discovery to Holyrood, where thou mayst do thyself much grace, as well with the Earl of Morton and the Regent himself as with Sir William Douglas, seeing thou hast seen the matter from end to end, and borne faithful part therein. The making thine own fortune will be thus lodged in thine own hand, when I trust thou wilt estrange thyself from foolish vanities, and learn to walk in this world as one who thinks upon the next.”

“Sir steward,” said Roland Græme, “I thank you for your courtesy, but I may not do your errand. I pass that I am the Queen's sworn servant, and may not be of counsel against her. But, setting this apart, methinks it were a bad road to Sir William of Lochleven's favor to be the first to tell him of his son's defection; neither would the Regent be over well pleased to hear the infidelity of his vassal, nor Morton to learn the falsehood of his kinsman.”

“Um!” said the steward, making that inarticulate sound which expresses surprise mingled with displeasure. “Nay, then, even fly where ye list; for, giddy-pated as ye may be, you know how to bear you in the world.”

“I will show you my system is less selfish than ye think for,” said the page; “for I hold truth and mirth to be better than gravity and cunning—ay, and in the end to be a match for them. You never loved me less, sir steward, than you do at this moment. I know you will give me no real confidence, and I am resolved to accept no false protestations as current coin. Resume your old course: suspect me as much and watch me as closely as you will, I bid you defiance. You have met with your match.”

“By Heaven, young man,” said the steward, with a look of bitter malignity, “if thou darest to attempt any treachery towards the house of Lochleven, thy head shall blacken in the sun from the warder's turret!”

“He cannot commit treachery who refuses trust,” said the

page ; " and for my head, it stands as securely on mine own shoulders as on any turret that ever mason built."

" Farewell, thou prating and speckled pie," said Dryfesdale, " thou art so vain of thine idle tongue and variegated coat ! Beware trap and lime-twig "

" And fare thee well, thou hoarse old raven," answered the page ; " thy solemn flight, sable hue, and deep croak are no charms against bird-bolt or hail-shot, and that thou mayst find. It is open war betwixt us, each for the cause of our mistress, and God show the right ! "

" Amen, and defend His own people ! " said the steward. " I will let my mistress know what addition thou hast made to this mess of traitors. Good night, Monsieur Featherpate. "

" Good night, Seignior Sowersby," replied the page ; and when the old man departed, he betook himself to rest.

The steward, who had been waiting for the page's return, and who had seen him go, was now sitting in his study, and was looking at a letter which he had just received from the Countess. The letter was from the Countess's private secretary, and contained a copy of a letter which the Countess had just written to the King. The steward was reading the letter with great interest, and was looking at the Countess's signature with a look of admiration. He was thinking of the Countess's power, and of the influence which she had over the King. He was also thinking of the page, and of the part which he had played in the Countess's scheme. The steward was a man of a high opinion of himself, and he was looking at the page with a look of contempt. He was thinking of the page's insolence, and of the part which he had played in the Countess's scheme. The steward was a man of a high opinion of himself, and he was looking at the page with a look of contempt. He was thinking of the page's insolence, and of the part which he had played in the Countess's scheme.

At the ordinary hour of breakfast he was awakened by the steward with his usual form, who was now sitting on the board in the inner apartment, and who was looking at the Countess's signature with a look of admiration. He was thinking of the Countess's power, and of the influence which she had over the King. He was also thinking of the page, and of the part which he had played in the Countess's scheme. The steward was a man of a high opinion of himself, and he was looking at the page with a look of contempt. He was thinking of the page's insolence, and of the part which he had played in the Countess's scheme.

CHAPTER XXXI

Poison'd—ill fare! dead, forsook, cast off!

King John.

HOWEVER weary Roland Græme might be of the Castle of Lochleven, however much he might wish that the plan for Mary's escape had been perfected, I question if he ever awoke with more pleasing feelings than on the morning after George Douglas's plan for accomplishing her deliverance had been frustrated. In the first place, he had the clearest conviction that he had misunderstood the innuendo of the abbot, and that the affections of Douglas were fixed, not on Catherine Seyton, but on the Queen; and in the second place from the sort of explanation which had taken place betwixt the steward and him, he felt himself at liberty, without any breach of honor towards the family of Lochleven, to contribute his best aid to any scheme which should in future be formed for the Queen's escape; and, independently of the good-will which he himself had to the enterprise, he knew he could find no surer road to the favor of Catherine Seyton. He now sought but an opportunity to inform her that he had dedicated himself to this task, and fortune was propitious in affording him one which was unusually favorable.

At the ordinary hour of breakfast, it was introduced by the steward with his usual forms, who, as soon as it was placed on the board in the inner apartment, said to Roland Græme, with a glance of sarcastic import, "I leave you, my young sir, to do the office of sewer; it has been too long rendered to the Lady Mary by one belonging to the house of Douglas."

"Were it the prime and principal who ever bore the name," said Roland, "the office were an honor to him."

The steward departed without replying to this bravade, otherwise than by a dark look of scorn. Græme, thus left alone, busied himself, as one engaged in a labor of love, to imitate, as well as he could, the grace and courtesy with which George of Douglas was wont to render his ceremonial service at meals to the Queen of Scotland. There was more than youthful vanity, there was a generous devotion, in the feeling with which he took up the task, as a brave soldier

assumes the place of a comrade who has fallen in the front of battle. "I am now," he said, "their only champion; and, come weal, come wo, I will be, to the best of my skill and power, as faithful, as trustworthy, as brave, as any Douglas of them all could have been."

At this moment Catherine Seyton entered alone, contrary to her custom; and not less contrary to her custom, she entered with her kerchief at her eyes. Roland Grème approached her with beating heart and with downcast eyes, and asked her in a low and hesitating voice whether the Queen were well.

"Can you suppose it?" said Catherine; "think you her heart and body are framed of steel and iron, to endure the cruel disappointment of yestereven, and the infamous taunts of yonder Puritanic hag? Would to God that I were a man, to aid her more effectually!"

"If those who carry pistols, and batous, and poniards," said the page, "are not men, they are at least Amazons, and that is as formidable."

"You are welcome to the flash of your wit, sir," replied the damsel; "I am neither in spirits to enjoy or to reply to it."

"Well, then," said the page, "list to me in all serious truth. And, first, let me say, that the gear last night had been smoother had you taken me into your counsels."

"And so we meant; but who could have guessed that Master Page should choose to pass all night in the garden, like some moon-stricken knight in a Spanish romance, instead of being in his bedroom, when Douglas came to hold communication with him on our project?"

"And why," said the page, "defer to so late a moment so important a confidence?"

"Because your communications with Henderson, and—with pardon—the natural impetuosity and fickleness of your disposition, made us dread to entrust you with a secret of such consequence till the last moment?"

"And why at the last moment?" said the page, offended at this frank avowal—"why at that or any other moment, since I had the misfortune to incur so much suspicion?"

"Nay, now you are angry again," said Catherine; "and to serve you aright I should break off this talk; but I will be magnanimous, and answer your question. Know, then, our reason for trusting you was twofold. In the first place, we could scarce avoid it, since you slept in the room through which we had to pass. In the second place——"

“Nay,” said the page, “you may dispense with a second reason, when the first makes your confidence in me a case of necessity.”

“Good now, hold thy peace,” said Catherine. “In the second place, as I said before, there is one foolish person among us who believes that Roland Græme’s heart is warm, though his head is giddy; that his blood is pure, though it boils too hastily; and that his faith and honor are true as the loadstar, though his tongue sometimes is far less than discreet.”

This avowal Catherine repeated in a low tone, with her eyes fixed on the floor, as if she shunned the glance of Roland while she suffered it to escape her lips. “And this single friend,” exclaimed the youth in rapture—“this only one who would do justice to the poor Roland Græme, and whose own generous heart taught her to distinguish between follies of the brain and faults of the heart—will you not tell me, dearest Catherine, to whom I owe my most grateful, my most heartfelt thanks?”

“Nay,” said Catherine, with her eyes still fixed on the ground, “if your own heart tell you not——”

“Dearest Catherine!” said the page, seizing upon her hand, and kneeling on one knee.

“If your own heart, I say, tell you not,” said Catherine, gently disengaging her hand, “it is very ungrateful; for since the maternal kindness of the Lady Fleming——”

The page started on his feet. “By Heaven, Catherine, your tongue wears as many disguises as your person! But you only mock me, cruel girl. You know the Lady Fleming has no more regard for any one than hath the forlorn princess who is wrought into yonder piece of old figured court-tapestry.”

—“It may be so,” said Catherine Seyton, “but you should not speak so loud.”

“Pshaw!” answered the page, but at the same time lowering his voice, “she cares for no one but herself and the Queen. And you know, besides, there is no one of you whose opinion I value, if I have not your own. No—not that of Queen Mary herself.”

“The more shame for you, if it be so,” said Catherine, with great composure.

“Nay, but, fair Catherine,” said the page, “why will you thus damp my ardor, when I am devoting myself, body and soul, to the cause of your mistress?”

“It is because in doing so,” said Catherine, “you debase

a cause so noble by naming along with it any lower or more selfish motive. Believe me," she said, with kindling eyes, and while the blood mantled on her cheek, "they think vilely and falsely of women—I mean of those who deserve the name—who deem that they love the gratification of their vanity, or the mean purpose of engrossing a lover's admiration and affection better than they love the virtue and honor of the man they may be brought to prefer. He that serves his religion, his prince, and his country with ardor and devotion need not plead his cause with the commonplace rant of romantic passion: the woman whom he honors with his love becomes his debtor, and her corresponding affection is engaged to repay his glorious toil."

"You hold a glorious prize for such toil," said the youth, bending his eyes on her with enthusiasm.

"Only a heart which knows how to value it," said Catherine. "He that should free this injured princess from these dungeons, and set her at liberty among her loyal and warlike nobles, whose hearts are burning to welcome her—where is the maiden in Scotland whom the love of such a hero would not honor, were she sprung from the blood royal of the land, and he the offspring of the poorest cottager that ever held a plow!"

"I am determined," said Roland, "to take the adventure. Tell me first, however, fair Catherine, and speak it as if you were confessing to the priest—this poor Queen, I know she is unhappy—but, Catherine, do you hold her innocent? She is accused of murder."

"Do I hold the lamb guilty, because it is assailed by the wolf?" answered Catherine. "Do I hold yonder sun polluted, because an earth-damp sullies his beams?"

The page sighed and looked down. "Would my conviction were as deep as thine! But one thing is clear, that in this captivity she hath wrong. She rendered herself up on a capitulation, and the terms have been refused her. I will embrace her quarrel to the death!"

"Will you—will you, indeed?" said Catherine, taking his hand in her turn. "O be but firm in mind, as thou art bold in deed and quick in resolution; keep but thy plighted faith, and after ages shall honor thee as the saviour of Scotland!"

"But when I have toiled successfully to win that Leah, honor, thou wilt not, my Catherine," said the page, "condemn me to a new term of service for that Rachel, love?"

"Of that," said Catherine, again extricating her hand from

his grasp, "we shall have full time to speak; but honor is the elder sister, and must be won the first."

"I may not win her," answered the page; "but I will venture fairly for her, and man can do no more. And know, fair Catherine—for you shall see the very secret thought of my heart—that not honor only, not only that other and fairer sister, whom you frown on me for so much as mentioning, but the stern commands of duty also, compel me to aid the Queen's deliverance."

"Indeed!" said Catherine; "you were wont to have doubts on that matter."

"Ay, but her life was not then threatened," replied Roland.

"And is it now more endangered than heretofore?" asked Catherine Seyton, in anxious terror.

"Be not alarmed," said the page; "but you heard the terms on which your royal mistress parted with the Lady of Lochleven?"

"Too well—but too well," said Catherine; "alas! that she cannot rule her princely resentment, and refrain from encounters like these!"

"That hath passed betwixt them," said Roland, "for which woman never forgives woman. I saw the lady's brow turn pale, and then black, when, before all the menzie, and in her moment of power, the Queen humbled her to the dust by taxing her with her shame. And I heard the oath of deadly resentment and revenge which she muttered in the ear of one who, by his answer, will, I judge, be but too ready an executioner of her will."

"You terrify me," said Catherine.

"Do not so take it up; call up the masculine part of your spirit; we will counteract and defeat her plans, be they dangerous as they may. Why do you look upon me thus, and weep?"

"Alas!" said Catherine, "because you stand there before me a living and breathing man, in all the adventurous glow and enterprise of youth, yet still possessing the frolic spirits of childhood—there you stand, full alike of generous enterprise and childish recklessness; and if to-day, to-morrow, or some such brief space, you lie a mangled and lifeless corpse upon the floor of these hateful dungeons, who but Catherine Seyton will be the cause of your brave and gay career being broken short as you start from the goal? Alas! she whom you have chosen to twine your wreath may too probably have to work your shroud!"

"And be it so, Catherine," said the page, in the full glow

of youthful enthusiasm ; “and *do* thou work my shroud ! and if thou grace it with such tears as fall now at the thought, it will honor my remains more than an earl’s mantle would my living body. But shame on this faintness of heart ! the time craves a firmer mood. Be a woman, Catherine, or rather be a man ; thou canst be a man if thou wilt.”

Catherine dried her tears, and endeavored to smile.

“You must not ask me,” she said, “about that which so much disturbs your mind ; you shall know all in time—nay, you should know all now, but that—— Hush ! here comes the Queen.”

Mary entered from her apartment, paler than usual, and apparently exhausted by a sleepless night, and by the painful thoughts which had ill supplied the place of repose ; yet the languor of her looks was so far from impairing her beauty that it only substituted the frail delicacy of the lovely woman for the majestic grace of the Queen. Contrary to her wont, her toilette had been very hastily despatched, and her hair, which was usually dressed by Lady Fleming with great care, escaping from beneath the head-tire, which had been hastily adjusted, fell, in long and luxuriant tresses of nature’s own curling, over a neck and bosom which were somewhat less carefully veiled than usual.

As she stepped over the threshold of her apartment, Catherine, hastily drying her tears, ran to meet her royal mistress, and having first kneeled at her feet and kissed her hand, instantly rose, and placing herself on the other side of the Queen, seemed anxious to divide with the Lady Fleming the honor of supporting and assisting her. The page, on his part, advanced and put in order the chair of state, which she usually occupied, and having placed the cushion and footstool for her accommodation, stepped back, and stood ready for service in the place usually occupied by his predecessor, the young seneschal. Mary’s eye rested an instant on him, and could not but remark the change of persons. Hers was not the female heart which could refuse compassion, at least, to a gallant youth who had suffered in her cause, although he had been guided in his enterprise by a too presumptuous passion, and the words “Poor Douglas !” escaped from her lips, perhaps unconsciously, as she leant herself back in her chair, and put the kerchief to her eyes.

“Yes, gracious madam,” said Catherine, assuming a cheerful manner, in order to cheer her sovereign, “our gallant knight is indeed banished—the adventure was not reserved for him ; but he has left behind him a youthful

esquire as much devoted to your Grace's service, and who, by me, makes you tender of his hand and sword."

"If they may in aught avail your Grace," said Roland Græme, bowing profoundly.

"Alas!" said the Queen, "what needs this, Catherine?—why prepare new victims to be involved in, and overwhelmed by, my cruel fortune? Were we not better cease to struggle, and ourselves sink in the tide without further resistance, than thus drag into destruction with us every generous heart which makes an effort in our favor? I have had but too much of plot and intrigue around me, since I was stretched an orphan child in my very cradle, while contending nobles strove which should rule in the name of the unconscious innocent. Surely time it were that all this busy and most dangerous coil should end. Let me call my prison a convent, and my seclusion a voluntary sequestration of myself from the world and its ways!"

"Speak not thus, madam, before your faithful servants," said Catherine, "to discourage their zeal at once and to break their hearts. Daughter of kings, be not in this hour so unkingly. Come, Roland, and let us, the youngest of her followers, show ourselves worthy of her cause: let us kneel before her footstool, and implore her to be her own magnanimous self." And leading Roland Græme to the Queen's seat, they both kneeled down before her. Mary raised herself in her chair, and sat erect, while, extending one hand to be kissed by the page, she arranged with the other the clustering locks which shaded the bold yet lovely brow of the high-spirited Catherine.

"Alas! *ma mignonne*," she said, for so in fondness she often called her young attendant, "that you should thus desperately mix with my unhappy fate the fortune of your young lives! Are they not a lovely couple, my Fleming? and is it not heart-rending to think that I must be their ruin?"

"Not so," said Roland Græme; "it is we, gracious sovereign, who will be your deliverers."

"*Ex oribus parvulorum!*" said the Queen, looking upward; "if it is by the mouth of these children that Heaven calls me to resume the stately thoughts which become my birth and my rights, Thou wilt grant them Thy protection, and to me the power of rewarding their zeal!" Then turning to Fleming, she instantly added, "Thou knowest, my friend, whether to make those who have served me happy was not ever Mary's favorite pastime. When I have been

rebuked by the stern preachers of the Calvinistic heresy; when I have seen the fierce countenances of my nobles averted from me, has it not been because I mixed in the harmless pleasures of the young and gay, and, rather for the sake of their happiness than my own, have mingled in the masque, the song, or the dance, with the youth of my household? Well, I repent not of it, though Knox termed it sin, and Morton degradation. I was happy, because I saw happiness around me; and woe betide the wretched jealousy that can extract guilt out of the overflowings of an unguarded gaiety! Fleming, if we are restored to our throne, shall we not have one blythesome day at a blythesome bridal, of which we must now name neither the bride nor the bridegroom? But that bridegroom shall have the barony of Blairgowrie, a fair gift even for a queen to give, and that bride's chaplet shall be twined with the fairest pearls that ever were found in the depths of Loch Lomond; and thou thyself, Mary Fleming, the best dresser of tresses that ever busked the tresses of a queen, and who would scorn to touch those of any women of lower rank—thou thyself shalt, for my love, twine them into the bride's tresses. Look my Fleming, suppose them such clustered locks as those of our Catherine, they would not put shame upon thy skill."

So saying, she passed her hand fondly over the head of her youthful favorite, while her more aged attendant replied despondently, "Alas! madam, your thoughts stray far from home."

"They do, my Fleming," said the Queen; "but is it well or kind in you to call them back? God knows, they have kept the perch this night but too closely. Come, I will recall the gay vision, were it but to punish them. Yes, at that blythesome bridal Mary herself shall forget the weight of sorrows and the toil of state, and herself once more lead a measure. At whose wedding was it that we last danced, my Fleming? I think care has troubled my memory—yet something of it I should remember; canst thou not aid me? I know thou canst."

"Alas! madam," replied the lady—

"What!" said Mary, "wilt thou not help us so far? This is a peevish adherence to thine own graver opinion, which holds our talk as folly. But thou art court-bred, and wilt well understand me when I say, the Queen *commands* Lady Fleming to tell her where she led the last "branle."'

With a face deadly pale, and a mien as if she were about to sink into the earth, the court-bred dame, no longer daring

to refuse obedience, faltered out—"Gracious lady—if my memory err not—it was at a masque in Holyrood—at the marriage of Sebastian."

The unhappy Queen, who had hitherto listened with a melancholy smile, provoked by the reluctance with which the Lady Fleming brought out her story, at this ill-fated word interrupted her with a shriek so wild and loud that the vaulted apartment rang, and both Roland and Catherine sprang to their feet in the utmost terror and alarm. Meantime, Mary seemed, by the train of horrible ideas thus suddenly excited, surprised not only beyond self-command, but for the moment beyond the verge of reason.

"Traitor!" she said to the Lady Fleming, "thou wouldst slay thy sovereign. Call my French guards—*à moi!—à moi! mes Français!* I am beset with traitors in mine own palace—they have murdered my husband. Rescue!—rescue! for the Queen of Scotland!" She started up from her chair; her features, late so exquisitely lovely in their paleness, now inflamed with the fury of frenzy, and resembling those of a Bellona. "We will take the field ourself," she said; "warn the city—warn Lothian and Fife—saddle our Spanish barb and bid French Paris see our petronel be charged! Better to die at the head of our brave Scotsmen, like our grandfather at Floddan, than of a broken heart like our ill-starred father."

"Be patient—be composed, dearest sovereign!" said Catherine; and then addressing Lady Fleming angrily, she added, "How can you say aught that reminded her of her husband?"

The word reached the ear of the unhappy princess, who caught it up, speaking with great rapidity. "Husband!—What husband? Not his most Christian Majesty; he is ill at ease—he cannot mount on horseback. Not him of the Lennox; but it was the Duke of Orkney thou wouldst say."

"For God's love, madam, be patient!" said the Lady Fleming.

"But the Queen's excited imagination could by no entreaty be diverted from its course. "Bid him come hither to our aid," she said, "and bring with him his lambs, as he calls them—Bowton, Hay of Talla, Black Ormiston, and his kinsman Hob. Fie! how swart they are, and how they smell of sulphur! What! closeted with Morton? Nay, if the Douglas and the Hepburn hatch the complot together, the bird, when it breaks the shell, will scare Scotland. Will it not, my Fleming?"

“She grows wilder and wilder,” said Fleming; “we have too many hearers for these strange words.”

“Roland,” said Catherine, “in the name of God begone! You cannot aid us here. Leave us to deal with her alone: away—away!”

She thrust him to the door of the ante-room; yet even when he had entered that apartment and shut the door, he could still hear the Queen talk in a loud and determined tone, as if giving forth orders, until at length the voice died away in a feeble and continued lamentation.

At this crisis Catherine entered the ante-room. “Be not too anxious,” she said, “the crisis is now over; but keep the door fast—let no one enter until she is more composed.”

“In the name of God, what does this mean?” said the page; “or what was there in the Lady Fleming’s words to excite so wild a transport?”

“O, the Lady Fleming—the Lady Fleming,” said Catherine, repeating the words impatiently—the Lady Fleming is a fool: she loves her mistress, yet knows so little how to express her love that, were the Queen to ask her for very poison, she would deem it a point of duty not to resist her commands. I could have torn her starched head-tire from her formal head. The Queen should have as soon had the heart out of my body as the word ‘Sebastian’ out of my lips. That that piece of weaved tapestry should be a woman, and yet not have wit enough to tell a lie!”

“And what was this story of Sebastian?” said the page. “By Heaven, Catherine, you are all riddles alike.”

“You are as great a fool as Fleming,” returned the impatient maiden. “Know ye not, that on the night of Henry Darnley’s murder, and at the blowing up of the Kirk of Field, the Queen’s absence was owing to her attending on a masque at Holyrood, given by her to grace the marriage of this same Sebastian, who, himself a favored servant, married one of her female attendants, who was near to her person?”

“By St. Giles,” said the page, “I wonder not at her passion, but only marvel by what forgetfulness it was that she could urge the Lady Fleming with such a question.”

“I cannot account for it,” said Catherine; “but it seems as if great and violent grief or horror sometimes obscure the memory, and spread a cloud, like that of an exploding cannon, over the circumstances with which they are accompanied. But I may not stay here, where I came not to moralize with your wisdom, but simply to cool my resentment against that unwise Lady Fleming, which I think hath now some-

what abated, so that I shall endure her presence without any desire to damage either her church or vasquine. Meanwhile, keep fast that door: I would not for my life that any of these heretics saw her in the unhappy state which, brought on her as it has been by the success of their own diabolical plotting, they would not stick to call, in their snuffing cant, the judgment of Providence."

She left the apartment just as the latch of the outward door was raised from without. But the bolt, which Roland had drawn on the inside, resisted the efforts of the person desirous to enter.

"Who is there?" said Græme aloud.

"It is I," replied the harsh and yet low voice of the steward Dryfesdale.

"You cannot enter now," returned the youth.

"And wherefore?" demanded Dryfesdale, "seeing I come but to do my duty, and inquire what mean the shrieks from the apartment of the Moabitish woman. Wherefore, I say, since such is mine errand, can I not enter?"

"Simply," replied the youth, "because the bolt is drawn, and I have no fancy to undo it. I have the right side of the door to-day, as you had last night."

"Thou art ill-advised, thou malapert boy," replied the steward, "to speak to me in such a fashion; but I shall inform my lady of thine insolence."

"The insolence," said the page, "is meant for thee only, in fair guerdon of thy discourtesy to me. For thy lady's information, I have answer more courteous: you may say that the Queen is ill at ease, and desires to be disturbed neither by visits nor messages."

"I conjure you, in the name of God," said the old man, with more solemnity in his tone than he had hitherto used, "to let me know if her malady really gains power on her!"

"She will have no aid at your hand or at your lady's; wherefore, begone, and trouble us no more: we neither want, nor will accept of, aid at your hands."

With this positive reply, the steward, grumbling and dissatisfied, returned downstairs.

CHAPTER XXXII

It is the curse of kings to be attended
By slaves, who take their humors for a warrant
To break into the bloody house of life,
And on the winking of authority
To understand a law.

King John.

THE Lady of Lochleven sat alone in her chamber, endeavoring with sincere but imperfect zeal to fix her eyes and her attention on the black-letter Bible which lay before her, bound in velvet and embroidery, and adorned with massive silver clasps and knops. But she found her utmost efforts unable to withdraw her mind from the resentful recollection of what had last night passed betwixt her and the Queen, in which the latter had with such bitter taunt reminded her of her early and long-repented transgression.

“Why,” she said, “should I resent so deeply that another reproaches me with that which I have never ceased to make matter of blushing to myself? And yet, why should this woman, who reaps—at least, has reaped—the fruits of my folly, and has jostled my son aside from the throne—why should she, in the face of all my domestics and of her own, dare to upbraid me with my shame? Is she not in my power? Does she not fear me? Ha! wily tempter, I will wrestle with thee strongly, and with better suggestions than my own evil heart can supply!”

She again took up the sacred volume, and was endeavoring to fix her attention on its contents, when she was disturbed by a tap at the door of her room. It opened at her command, and the steward Dryfesdale entered, and stood before her with a gloomy and perturbed expression on his brow.

“What has chanced, Dryfesdale, that thou lookest thus?” said his mistress. “Have there been evil tidings of my son or of my grandchildren?”

“No, lady,” replied Dryfesdale, “but you were deeply insulted last night, and I fear me thou art as deeply avenged this morning. Where is the chaplain?”

“What mean you by hints so dark, and a question so

sudden? The chaplain, as you well know, is absent at Perth upon an assembly of the brethren."

"I care not," answered the steward; "he is but a priest of Baal."

"Dryfesdale," said the lady, sternly, "what meanest thou? I have ever heard that in the Low Countries thou didst herd with the Anabaptist preachers—those boars which tear up the vintage. But the ministry which suits me and my house must content my retainers."

"I would I had good ghostly counsel, though," replied the steward, not attending to his mistress's rebuke, and seeming to speak to himself. "This woman of Moab——"

"Speak of her with reverence," said the lady: "she is a king's daughter."

"Be it so," replied Dryfesdale; "she goes where there is little difference betwixt her and a beggar's child. Mary of Scotland is dying."

"Dying, and in my castle!" said the lady, starting up in alarm; "of what disease, or by what accident?"

"Bear patience, lady. The ministry was mine."

"Thine, villain and traitor! how didst thou dare——"

"I heard you insulted, lady—I heard you demand vengeance; I promised you should have it, and I promised you should have it, and I now bring tidings of it."

"Dryfesdale, I trust thou ravest?" said the lady.

"I rave not," replied the steward. "That which was written of me a million of years ere I saw the light must be executed by me. She hath that in her veins that, I fear me, will soon stop the springs of life."

"Cruel villain," exclaimed the lady, "thou hast not poisoned her?"

"And if I had," said Dryfesdale, "what does it so greatly merit? Men bane vermin; why not rid them of their enemies so? In Italy they will do it for a cruizedor."

"Cowardly ruffian, begone from my sight!"

"Think better of my zeal, lady," said the steward, "and judge not without looking around you. Lindsay, Ruthven, and your kinsmen Morton poniarded Rizzio, and yet you now see no blood on their embroidery; the Lord Semple stabbed the Lord of Sanguhar—does his bonnet sit a jot more awry on his brow? What noble lives in Scotland who has not had a share, for policy or revenge, in some such dealing? And who imputes it to them? Be not cheated with names: a dagger or a draught work to the same end, and are little unlike—a glass phial imprisons the one, and a

leathern sheath the other ; one deals with the brain, the other sluices the blood. Yet, I say not I gave aught to this lady."

"What dost thou mean by thus dallying with me?" said the lady; "as thou wouldst save thy neck from the rope it merits, tell me the whole truth of this story; thou hast long been known a dangerous man."

"Ay, in my master's service I can be cold and sharp as my sword. Be it known to you that, when last on shore, I consulted with a woman of skill and power, called Nicneven, of whom the country has rung for some brief time past. Fools asked for her charms to make them beloved, misers for means to increase their store; some demanded to know the future—an idle wish, since it cannot be altered; others would have an explanation of the past—idler still, since it cannot be recalled. I heard their queries with scorn, and demanded the means of avenging myself of a deadly enemy, for I grow old, and may trust no longer to Bilboa blade. She gave me a packet. 'Mix that,' said she, 'with any liquid, and thy vengeance is complete.'"

"Villain! and you mixed it with the food of this imprisoned lady, to the dishonor of thy master's house?"

"To redeem the insulted honor of my master's house, I mixed the contents of the packet with the jar of succory water. They seldom fail to drain it, and the woman loves it over all."

"It was a work of hell," said the Lady Lochleven, "both the asking and the granting. "Away, wretched man let us see if aid be yet too late!"

"They will not admit us, madam, save we enter by force. I have been twice at the door, but can obtain no entrance."

"We will beat it level with the ground, if needful. And hold—summon Randal hither instantly. Randal, here is a foul and evil chance befallen; send off a boat instantly to Kinross—the chamberlain Luke Lundin is said to have skill. Fetch off, too, that foul witch Nicneven; she shall first counteract her own spell, and then be burned to ashes in the island of St. Serf. Away—away. Tell them to hoist sail and ply oar, as ever they would have good of the Douglas's hand!"

"Mother Nicneven will not be lightly found, or fetched hither on these conditions," answered Dryfesdale.

"Then grant her full assurance of safety. Look to it, for thine own life must answer for this lady's recovery."

"I might have guessed that," said Dryfesdale, sullenly; "but it is my comfort I have avenged mine own cause as

well as yours. She hath scoffed and scripped at me, and encouraged her saucy minion of a page to ridicule my stiff gait and slow speech. I felt it borne in upon me that I was to be avenged on them."

"Go to the western turret," said the lady, "and remain there in ward until we see how this gear will terminate. I know thy resolved disposition : thou wilt not attempt escape."

"Not were the walls of the turret of egg-shells, and the lake sheeted with ice," said Dryfesdale. "I am well taught, and strong in belief that man does nought of himself ; he is but the foam on the billow, which rises, bubbles, and bursts, not by its own effort, but by the mightier impulse of fate which urges him. Yet, lady, if I may advise, amid this zeal for the life of the Jezebel of Scotland, forget not what is due to thine own honor, and keep the matter secret as you may."

So saying, the gloomy fatalist turned from her, and stalked off with sullen composure to the place of confinement allotted to him.

His lady caught at his last hint, and only expressed her fear that the prisoner had partaken of some unwholesome food, and was dangerously ill. The castle was soon alarmed and in confusion. Randal was despatched to the shore to fetch off Lundin, with such remedies as could counteract poison ; and with farther instructions to bring Mother Nicneven, if she could be found, with full power to pledge the Lady of Lochleven's word for her safety.

Meanwhile, the Lady of Lochleven herself held parley at the door of the Queen's apartment, and in vain urged the page to undo it.

"Foolish boy !" she said, "thine own life and thy lady's are at stake. Open, I say, or we will cause the door to be broken down."

"I may not open the door without my royal mistress's orders," answered Roland. "She has been very ill, and now she slumbers ; if you wake her by using violence, let the consequence be on you and your followers."

"Was ever woman in a strait so fearful !" exclaimed the Lady of Lochleven. "At least, thou rash boy, beware that no one tastes the food, but especially the jar of succory water."

She then hastened to the turret, where Dryfesdale had composedly resigned himself to imprisonment. She found him reading, and demanded of him, "Was thy fell potion of speedy operation ?"

"Slow," answered the steward. "The hag asked me which I chose ; I told her I loved a slow and sure revenge.

‘Revenge,’ said I, ‘is the highest-flavor draught which man tastes upon earth, and he should sip it by little and little, not drain it up greedily at once.’”

“Against whom, unhappy man, couldst thou nourish so fell a revenge?”

“I had many objects, but the chief was that insolent page.”

“The boy! thou inhuman man,” exclaimed the lady; “what could he do to deserve thy malice?”

“He rose in your favor, and you graced him with your commissions—that was one thing. He rose in that of George Douglas also—that was another. He was the favorite of the Calvinistic Henderson, who hated me because my spirits disowns a separate priesthood. The Moabitish Queen held him dear—winds from each opposing point blew in his favor; the old servitor of your house was held lightly among ye; above all, from the first time I saw his face, I longed to destroy him.”

“What fiend have I nurtured in my house!” replied the lady. “May God forgive me the sin of having given thee food and raiment!”

“You might not choose, lady,” answered the steward. “Long ere this castle was builded—ay, long ere the islet which sustains it reared its head above the blue water—I was destined to be your faithful slave, and you to be my ungrateful mistress. Remember you not when I plunged amid the victorious French, in the time of this lady’s mother, and brought off your husband, when those who had hung at the same breasts with him dared not attempt the rescue? Remember how I plunged into the lake when your grandson’s skiff was overtaken by the tempest, boarded, and steered her safe to the land. Lady, the servant of a Scottish baron is he who regards not his own life or that of any other, save his master. And, for the death of the woman, I had tried the potion on her sooner, had not Master George been her taster. Her death—would it not be the happiest news that Scotland ever heard? Is she not of the bloody Guisian stock, whose sword was so often red with the blood of God’s saints? Is she not the daughter of the wretched tyrant James, whom Heaven cast down from his kingdom and his pride, even as the king of Babylon was smitten?”

“Peace, villain!” said the lady, a thousand varied recollections thronging on her mind at the mention of her royal lover’s name—“peace, and disturb not the ashes of the dead—of the royal, of the unhappy dead. Read thy Bible; and

may God grant thee to avail thyself better of its contents than thou hast yet done !” She departed hastily, and as she reached the next apartment, the tears rose to her eyes so hastily that she was compelled to stop and use her kerchief to dry them. “I expected not this,” she said, “no more than to have drawn water from the hard flint, or sap from a withered tree. I saw with a dry eye the apostacy and shame of George Douglas—the hope of my son’s house, the child of my love ; and yet I now weep for him who has so long lain in his grave—for him, to whom I owe it that his daughter can make a scoffing and a jest of my name ! But she is *his* daughter ; my heart, hardened against her for so many causes, relents when a glance of her eye places her father unexpectedly before me ; and as often her likeness to that true daughter of the house of Guise, her detested mother, has again confirmed my resolution. But she must not—must not die in my house, and by so foul a practise. Thank God, the operation of the potion is slow, and may be counteracted ! I will to her apartment once more. But O ! that hardened villain, whose fidelity we held in such esteem, and had such high proofs of ! What miracle can unite so much wickedness and so much truth in one bosom !”

The Lady of Lochleven was not aware how far minds of a certain gloomy and determined cast by nature may be warped by a keen sense of petty injuries and insults, combining with the love of gain, and sense of self-interest, and amalgamated with the crude, wild, and indigested fanatical opinions which this man had gathered among the crazy sectaries of Germany ; or how far the doctrines of fatalism, which he had embraced so decidedly, sear the human conscience, by representing our actions as the result of inevitable necessity.

During her visit to the prisoner, Roland had communicated to Catherine the tenor of the conversation he had had with her at the door of the apartment. The quick intelligence of that lively maiden instantly comprehended the outline of what was believed to have happened, but her prejudices hurried her beyond the truth.

“They meant to have poisoned us,” she exclaimed in horror, “and there stands the fatal liquor which should have done the deed ! Ay, as soon as Douglas ceased to be our taster, our food was likely to be fatally seasoned. Thou, Roland, who should have made the essay, wert readily doomed to die with us. O, dearest Lady Fleming, pardon—pardon for the injuries I said to you in my anger : your words were prompted by Heaven to save our lives, and especially that of

the injured Queen. But what have we now to do? That old crocodile of the lake will be presently back to shed her hypocritical tears over our dying agonies. Lady Fleming, what shall we do?"

"Our Lady help us in our need!" she replied; "how should I tell, unless we were to make our plaint to the Regent?"

"Make our plaint to the devil," said Catherine, impatiently, "and accuse his dam at the foot of his burning throne! The Queen still sleeps; we must gain time. The poisoning hag must not know her scheme has miscarried; the old envenomed spider has but too many ways of mending her broken web. The jar of succory water," said she—"Roland, if thou be'st a man, help me: empty the jar on the chimney or from the window; make such waste among the viands as if we had made our usual meal, and leave the fragments on cup and porringer, but taste nothing as thou lovest thy life. I will sit by the Queen, and tell her, at her waking, in what a fearful pass we stand. Her sharp wit and ready spirit will teach us what is best to be done. Meanwhile, till farther notice, observe, Roland, that the Queen is in a state of torpor; that Lady Fleming is indisposed—that character (speaking in a lower tone) will suit her best, and save her wits some labor in vain. I am not so much indisposed, thou understandest."

"And I," said the page.

"You!" replied Catherine, "you are quite well; who thinks it worth while to poison puppy-dogs or pages?"

"Does this levity become the time?" asked the page.

"It does—it does," answered Catherine Seyton. "If the Queen approves, I see plainly how this disconcerted attempt may do us good service."

She went to work while she spoke, eagerly assisted by Roland. The breakfast-table soon displayed the appearance as if the meal had been eaten as usual; and the ladies retired as softly as possible into the Queen's sleeping-apartment. At a new summons of the Lady Lochleven, the page undid the door, and admitted her into the ante-room, asking her pardon for having withstood her, alleging in excuse that the Queen had fallen into a heavy slumber since she had broken her fast.

"She has eaten and drunken, then?" said the Lady of Lochleven.

"Surely," replied the page, "according to her grace's ordinary custom, unless upon the fasts of the church."

“The jar,” she said, hastily examining it, “it is empty ; drank the Lady Mary the whole of this water ?”

“A large part, madam ; and I heard the Lady Catherine Seyton jestingly upbraid the Lady Mary Fleming with having taken more than a just share of what remained, so that but little fell to her own lot.”

“And are they well in health ?” said the Lady of Lochleven.

“Lady Fleming,” said the page, “complains of lethargy, and looks duller than usual ; and the Lady Catherine of Seyton feels her head somewhat more giddy than is her wont.”

He raised his voice a little as he said these words, to apprise the ladies of the part assigned to each of them, and not, perhaps, without the wish of conveying to the ears of Catherine the page-like jest which lurked in the allotment.

“I will enter the Queen’s chamber,” said the Lady Lochleven ; “my business is express.”

As she advanced to the door, the voice of Catherine Seyton was heard from within. “No one can enter here ; the Queen sleeps.”

“I will not be controled, young lady,” replied the Lady of Lochleven ; “there is, I wot, no inner bar, and I will enter in your despite.”

“There is, indeed, no inner bar,” answered Catherine, firmly, “but there are the staples where that bar should be ; and into those staples have I thrust mine arm, like an ancestress of your own, when, better employed than the Douglasses of our days, she thus defended the bedchamber of her sovereign against murderers. Try your force, then, and see whether a Seyton cannot rival in courage a maiden of the house of Douglas.”

“I dare not attempt the pass at such risk,” said the Lady of Lochleven. “Strange, that this princess, with all that justly attaches to her as blameworthy, should preserve such empire over the minds of her attendants ! Damsel, I give thee my honor that I come for the Queen’s safety and advantage. Awake her, if thou lovest her, and pray her leave that I may enter. I will retire from the door the whilst.”

“Thou wilt not awaken the Queen ?” said the Lady Fleming.

“What choice have we ?” said the ready-witted maiden, “unless you deem it better to wait till the Lady Lochleven herself plays lady of the bedchamber. Her fit of patience will not last long, and the Queen must be prepared to meet her.”

“But thou wilt bring back her Grace’s fit by thus disturbing her.”

“Heaven forbid!” replied Catherine; “but if so, it must pass for an effect of the poison. I hope better things, and that the Queen will be able when she wakes to form her own judgment in this terrible crisis. Meanwhile, do thou, dear Lady Fleming, practise to look as dull and heavy as the alertness of thy spirit will permit.”

Catherine kneeled by the side of the Queen’s bed, and, kissing her hand repeatedly, succeeded at last in awakening without alarming her. She seemed surprised to find that she was ready dressed, but sate up in her bed, and appeared so perfectly composed that Catherine Seyton, without farther preamble, judged it safe to inform her of the predicament in which they were placed. Mary turned pale, and crossed herself again and again, when she heard the imminent danger in which she had stood. But, like the Ulysses of Homer—

Hardly waking yet,
Sprung in her mind the momentary wit,

and she at once understood her situation, with the dangers and advantages that attended it.

“We cannot do better,” she said, after her hasty conference with Catherine, pressing her at the same time to her bosom, and kissing her forehead—“we cannot do better than to follow the scheme so happily devised by thy quick wit and bold affection. Undo the door to the Lady Lochleven. She shall meet her match in art, though not in perfidy. Fleming, draw close the curtain, and get thee behind it—thou art a better tire-woman than an actress; do but breathe heavily, and, if thou wilt, groan slightly, and it will top thy part. Hark! they come. Now, Catherine of Medicis, may thy spirit inspire me, for a cold northern brain is too blunt for this scene!”

Ushered by Catherine Seyton, and stepping as light as she could, the Lady Lochleven was shown into the twilight apartment, and conducted to the side of the couch, where Mary, pallid and exhausted from a sleepless night and the subsequent agitation of the morning, lay extended so listlessly as might well confirm the worst fears of her hostess.

“Now, God forgive us our sins!” said the Lady of Lochleven, forgetting her pride, and throwing herself on her knees by the side of her bed; “it is too true—she is murdered!”

“Who is in the chamber?” said Mary, as if awaking from

a heavy sleep. "Seyton, Fleming, where are you? I heard a strange voice. Who waits? Call Courcelles."

"Alas! her memory is at Holyrood, though her body is at Lochleven. Forgive, madam," continued the lady, "if I call your attention to me. I am Margaret Erskine, of the house of Mar, by marriage Lady Douglas of Lochleven."

"O, our gentle hostess," answered the Queen, "who hath such care of our lodgings and of our diet. We cumber you too much and too long, good Lady of Lochleven; but we now trust your task of hospitality is wellnigh ended."

"Her words go like a knife through my heart," said the Lady of Lochleven. "With a breaking heart, I pray your Grace to tell me what is your ailment, that aid may be had, if there be yet time?"

"Nay, my ailment," replied the Queen, "is nothing worth telling, or worth a leech's notice: my limbs feel heavy—my heart feels cold—a prisoner's limbs and heart are rarely otherwise. Fresh air, methinks, and freedom would soon revive me; but as the estates have ordered it, death alone can break my prison doors."

"Were it possible, madam," said the lady, "that your liberty could restore your perfect health, I would myself encounter the resentment of the Regent—of my son, Sir William—of my whole friends, rather than you should meet your fate in this castle!"

"Alas! madam," said the Lady Fleming, who conceived the time propitious to show that her own address had been held too lightly of; "it is but trying what good freedom may work upon us; for myself, I think a free walk on the greensward would do me much good at heart."

The Lady of Lochleven rose from the bedside, and darted a penetrating look at the elder valetudinary. "Are you so evil-disposed, Lady Fleming?"

"Evil-disposed indeed, madam," replied the court dame, "and more especially since breakfast."

"Help!—help!" exclaimed Catherine, anxious to break off a conversation which boded her schemes no good—"help! I say—help! the Queen is about to pass away. Aid her, Lady Lochleven, if you be a woman!"

The lady hastened to support the Queen's head, who, turning her eyes towards her with an air of great languor, exclaimed, "Thanks; my dearest Lady of Lochleven; notwithstanding some passages of late, I have never misconstrued or misdoubted your affection to our house. It was proved, as I have heard, before I was born."

The Lady Lochleven sprung from the floor, on which she had again knelt, and having paced the apartment in great disorder, flung open the lattice, as if to get air:

“Now, Our Lady forgives me!” said Catherine to herself; “how deep must the love of sarcasm be implanted in the breasts of us women, since the Queen, with all her sense, will risk ruin rather than rein in her wit!” She then adventured, stooping over the Queen’s person, to press her arm with her hand, saying, at the same time, “For God’s sake, madam, restrain yourself!”

“Thou art too forward, maiden,” said the Queen; but immediately added, in a low whisper, “Forgive me, Catherine: but when I felt the hag’s murderous hands busy about my head and neck, I felt such disgust and hatred that I must have said something or died. But I will be schooled to better havior, only see that thou let her not touch me.”

“Now, God be praised!” said the Lady of Lochleven, withdrawing her head from the window, “the boat comes as fast as sail and oar can send wood through water. It brings the leech and a female—certainly, from the appearance, the very person I was in quest of. Were she but well out of this castle, with our honor safe, I would that she were on the top of the wildest mountain in Norway; or I would I had been there myself, ere I had undertaken this trust!”

While she thus expressed herself, standing apart at one window, Roland Græme, from the other, watched the boat bursting through the waters of the lake, which glided from its side in ripple and in foam. He, too, became sensible that at the stern was seated the medical chamberlain, clad in his black velvet cloak; and that his own relative, Magdalen Græme, in her assumed character of Mother Nicneven, stood in the bow, her hands clasped together, and pointed towards the castle, and her attitude, even at that distance, expressing enthusiastic eagerness to arrive at the landing-place. They arrived there accordingly; and while the supposed witch was detained in a room beneath, the physician was ushered to the Queen’s apartment, which he entered with all due professional solemnity. Catherine had, in the meanwhile, fallen back from the Queen’s bed, and taken an opportunity to whisper to Roland, “Methinks, from the information of the threadbare velvet cloak and the solemn beard, there would be little trouble in haltering yonder ass. But thy grandmother, Roland—thy grandmother’s zeal will ruin us, if she get not a hint to dissemble.”

Roland, without reply, glided towards the door of the apart-

ment, crossed the parlor, and safely entered the ante-chamber; but when he attempted to pass farther, the word "Back! Back!" echoed from one to the other by two men armed with carabines, convinced him that the Lady of Lochleven's suspicions had not, even in the midst of her alarms, been so far lulled to sleep as to omit the precaution of stationing sentinels on her prisoners. He was compelled, therefore, to return to the parlor, or audience-chamber, in which he found the lady of the castle in conference with her learned leech.

"A truce with your cant phrase and your solemn foppery, Lundin," in such terms she accosted the man of art, "and let me know instantly, if thou canst tell, whether this lady hath swallowed aught that is less than wholesome."

"Nay, but good lady—honored patroness—to whom I am alike bondsman in my medical and official capacity, deal reasonably with me. If this, mine illustrious patient, will not answer a question, saving with sighs and moans; if that other honorable lady will do nought but yawn in my face when I inquire after the diagnostics; and if that other young damsel, who I profess is a comely maiden——"

"Talk not to me of comeliness or of damsels," said the Lady of Lochleven; "I say, are they evil-disposed? In one word, man, have they taken poison—ay or no?"

"Poisons, madam," said the learned leech, "are of various sorts. There is your animal poison, as the *Lepus marinus*, as mentioned by Dioscorides and Galen; there are mineral and semi-mineral poisons, as those compounded of sublimate, regulus of antimony, vitriol, and the arsenical salts; there are your poisons from herbs and vegetables, as the aqua cymbalariae, opium, aconitum, cantharides, and the like; there are also——"

"Now, out upon thee for a learned fool! And I myself am no better for expecting an oracle from such a log," said the lady.

"Nay, but if your ladyship will have patience. If I knew what food they have partaken of, or could see but the remnants of what they have last eaten; for as to the external and internal symptoms, I can discover nought like; for, as Galen saith in his second book *De Antidotis*——"

"Away, fool!" said the lady; "send me that hag hither; she shall avouch what it was that she hath given to the wretch Dryfesdale, or the pilniewinks and thumbikins shall wrench it out of her finger-joints!"

"Art hath no enemy unless the ignorant," said the morti

fied doctor; veiling, however, his remark under the Latin version, and stepping apart into a corner to watch the result.

In a minute or two Magdalen Græme entered the apartment, dressed as we have described her at the revel, but with her muffler thrown back, and all affectation of disguise. She was attended by two guards, of whose presence she did not seem even to be conscious, and who followed her with an air of embarrassment and timidity, which was probably owing to their belief in her supernatural power, coupled with the effect produced by her bold and undaunted demeanor. She confronted the Lady of Lochleven, who seemed to endure with high disdain the confidence of her air and manner.

“Wretched woman!” said the lady, after essaying for a moment to bear her down, before she addressed her, by the stately severity of her look, “what was that powder which thou didst give to a servant of this house, by name Jasper Dryfesdale, that he might work out with it some slow and secret vengeance? Confess its nature and properties, or, by the honor of Douglas, I give thee to fire and stake before the sun is lower!”

“Alas!” said Magdalen Græme in reply, “and when became a Douglas or a Douglas’s man so unfurnished of his means of revenge that he should seek them at the hands of a poor and solitary woman? The towers in which your captives pine away into unpitied graves yet stand fast on their foundations; the crimes wrought in them have not yet burst their vaults asunder; your men have still their cross-bows, pistolets, and daggers; why need you seek to herbs or charms for the execution of your revenges?”

“Hear me, foul hag,” said the Lady of Lochleven—“but what avails speaking to thee? Bring Dryfesdale hither, and let them be confronted together.”

“You may spare your retainers the labor,” replied Magdalen Græme. “I came not here to be confronted with a base groom, nor to answer the interrogatories of James’s heretical leman. I came to speak with the Queen of Scotland. Give place there!”

And while the Lady of Lochleven stood confounded at her boldness, and at the reproach she had cast upon herself, Magdalen Græme strode past her into the bedchamber of the Queen, and, kneeling on the floor, made a salutation as if, in the Oriental fashion, she meant to touch the earth with her forehead.

“Hail, Princess!” she said—“hail, daughter of many a king, but graced above them all in that thou art called to

suffer for the true faith!—hail to thee, the pure gold of whose crown has been tried in the seven-times-heated furnace of affliction—hear the comfort which God and Our Lady send thee by the mouth of thy unworthy servant. But first——” and stooping her head she crossed herself repeatedly, and, still upon her knees, appeared to be rapidly reciting some formula of devotion.

“Seize her and drag her to the massymore! To the deepest dungeon with the sorceress, whose master, the devil, could alone have inspired her with boldness enough to insult the mother of Douglas in his own castle!” Thus spoke the incensed Lady of Lochleven.

But the physician presumed to interpose. “I pray of you, honored madam, she be permitted to take her course without interruption. Peradventure we shall learn something concerning the nostrum she hath ventured, contrary to law and the rules of art, to adhibit to these ladies, through the medium of the steward Dryfesdale.”

“For a fool,” replied the Lady of Lochleven, “thou hast counseled wisely. I will bridle my resentment till their conference be over.”

“God forbid, honored lady,” said Doctor Lundin, “that you should suppress it longer—nothing may more endanger the frame of your honored body; and truly, if there be witchcraft in this matter, it is held by the vulgar, and even by solid authors on demonology, that three scruples of the ashes of the witch, when she hath been well and carefully burned at a stake, is a grand catholicon in such matter, even as they prescribe *crinis canis rabidi*—a hair of the dog that bit the patient—in cases of hydrophobia. I warrant neither treatment, being out of the regular practise of the schools; but, in the present case, there can be little harm in trying the conclusion upon this old necromancer and quacksalver: *fiat experimentum*, as we say, *in corpore vili*.”

“Peace, fool!” said the lady, “she is about to speak.”

At that moment Magdalen Græme arose from her knees, and turned her countenance on the Queen, at the same time advancing her foot, extending her arm, and assuming the mien and attitude of a sybil in frenzy. As her gray hair floated back from beneath her coil, and her eye gleamed fire from under its shaggy eyebrow, the effect of her expressive, though emaciated, features was heightened by an enthusiasm approaching to insanity, and her appearance struck with awe all who were present. Her eyes for a time glanced wildly around, as if seeking for something to aid her in

collecting her powers of expression, and her lips had a nervous and quivering motion, as those of one who would fain speak, yet rejects as inadequate the words which present themselves. Mary herself caught the infection as if by a sort of magnetic influence, and raising herself from her bed, without being able to withdraw her eyes from those of Magdalen, waited as if for the oracle of a pythoness. She waited not long; for no sooner had the enthusiast collected herself than her gaze became intensely steady, her features assumed a determined energy, and when she began to speak, the words flowed from her with a profuse fluency which might have passed for inspiration, and which, perhaps, she herself mistook for such.

“Arise,” she said, “Queen of France and of England! Arise, lioness of Scotland, and be not dismayed, though the nets of the hunters have encircled thee! Stoop not to feign with the false ones, whom thou shalt soon meet in the field. The issue of battle is with the God of armies, but by battle thy cause shall be tried. Lay aside, then, the arts of lower mortals, and assume those which become a queen! True defender of the only true faith, the armory of Heaven is open to thee! Faithful daughter of the church, take the keys of St. Peter, to bind and to loose! Royal Princess of the land, take the sword of St. Paul, to smite and to shear! There is darkness in thy destiny; but not in these towers, not under the rule of their haughty mistress, shall that destiny be closed. In other lands the lioness may crouch to the power of the tigress; but not in her own: not in Scotland shall the Queen of Scotland long remain captive; nor is the fate of the royal Stuart in the hands of the traitor Douglas. Let the Lady of Lochleven double her bolts and deepen her dungeons, they shall not retain thee. Each element shall give thee its assistance ere thou shalt continue captive: the land shall lend its earthquakes, the water its waves, the air its tempests, the fire its devouring flames, to desolate this house, rather than it shall continue the place of thy captivity. Hear this and tremble, all ye who fight against the light, for she says it to whom it hath been assured!”

She was silent, and the astonished physician said, “If there was ever an *energumène*, or possessed demoniac, in our days, there is a devil speaking with that woman’s tongue!”

“Practise,” said the Lady of Lochleven, recovering her surprise—“here is all practise and imposture. To the dungeon with her!”

“Lady of Lochleven,” said Mary, arising from her bed, and coming forward with her wonted dignity, “ere you make arrest on any one in our presence, hear me but one word. I have done you some wrong : I believed you privy to the murderous purpose of your vassal, and I deceived you in suffering you to believe it had taken effect. I did you wrong, Lady of Lochleven, for I perceive your purpose to aid me was sincere. We tasted not of the liquid, nor are we now sick, save that we languish for our freedom.”

“It is avowed like Mary of Scotland,” said Magdalen Græme ; “and know, besides, that had the Queen drained the draught to the dregs, it was harmless as the water from a sainted spring. Trow ye, proud woman,” she added, addressing herself to the Lady of Lochleven, “that I—I—would have been the wretch to put poison in the hands of a servant or vassal of the house of Lochleven, knowing whom that house contained ? as soon would I have furnished drug to slay my own daughter !”

“Am I thus bearded in mine own castle ?” said the lady ; “to the dungeon with her ! She shall abide what is due to the vender of poisons and practiser of witchcrafts.”

“Yet hear me for an instant, Lady of Lochleven,” said Mary : “and do you,” to Magdalen, “be silent at my command. Your steward, lady, has by confession attempted my life and those of my household, and this woman hath done her best to save them, by furnishing him with what was harmless, in place of the fatal drugs which he expected. Methinks I propose to you but a fair exchange when I say I forgive your vassal with all my heart, and leave vengeance to God and to his conscience, so that you also forgive the boldness of this woman in your presence ; for we trust you do not hold it as a crime that she substituted an innocent beverage for the mortal poison which was to have drenched our cup !”

“Heaven forefend, madam,” said the lady, “that I should account that a crime which saved the house of Douglas from a foul breach of honor and hospitality ! We have written to our son touching our vassal’s delict, and he must abide his doom, which will most likely be death. Touching this woman, her trade is damnable by Scripture, and is mortally punished by the wise laws of our ancestry : she also must abide her doom.”

“And have I then,” said the Queen, “no claim on the house of Lochleven for the wrong I have so nearly suffered within their walls ? I ask but in requital the life of a frail

and aged woman, whose brain, as yourself may judge, seems somewhat affected by years and suffering."

"If the Lady Mary," replied the inflexible Lady of Lochleven, "hath been menaced with wrong in the house of Douglas, it may be regarded as some compensation that her complots have cost that house the exile of a valued son."

"Plead no more for me, my gracious sovereign," said Magdalen Græme, "nor abase yourself to ask so much as a gray hair of my head at her hands. I knew the risk at which I served my church and my queen, and was ever prompt to pay my poor life as the ransom. It is a comfort to think that in slaying me, or in restraining my freedom, or even in injuring that single gray hair, the house whose honor she boasts so highly will have filled up the measure of their shame by the breach of their solemn written assurance of safety." And taking from her bosom a paper, she handed it to the Queen.

"It is a solemn assurance of safety in life and limb," said Queen Mary, "with space to come and go, under the hand and seal of the chamberlain of Kinross, granted to Magdalen Græme, commonly called Mother Nicneven, in consideration of her consenting to put herself, for the space of twenty-four hours, if required, within the iron gate of the Castle of Lochleven."

"Knave!" said the lady, turning to the chamberlain, "how dared you grant her such a protection?"

"It was by your ladyship's orders, transmitted by Randal, as he can bear witness," replied Doctor Lundin; "nay, I am only like the pharmacoplist, who compounds the drugs after the order of the mediciner."

"I remember—I remember," answered the lady; "but I meant the assurance only to be used in case, by residing in another jurisdiction, she could not have been apprehended under our warrant."

"Nevertheless," said the Queen, "the Lady of Lochleven is bound by the action of her deputy in granting the assurance."

"Madam," replied the lady, "the house of Douglas have never broken their safe-conduct, and never will: too deeply did they suffer by such a breach of trust, exercised on themselves, when your Grace's ancestor, the second James, in defiance of the rights of hospitality, and of his own written assurance of safety, poniarded the brave Earl of Douglas with his own hand, and within two yards of the social board at

which he had just before sat the King of Scotland's honored guest."

"Methinks," said the Queen, carelessly, "in consideration of so very recent and enormous a tragedy, which I think only chanced some six-score years ago, the Douglasses should have shown themselves less tenacious of the company of their sovereigns than you, Lady of Lochleven, seem to be of mine."

"Let Randal," said the lady, "take the hag back to Kinross, and set her at full liberty, discharging her from our bounds in future, on peril of her head. And let your wisdom (to the chamberlain) keep her company. And fear not for your character, though I send you in such company; for, granting her to be a witch, it would be a waste of fagots to burn you for a wizard."

The crestfallen chamberlain was preparing to depart; but Magdalen Græme, collecting herself, was about to reply, when the Queen interposed, saying, "Good mother, we heartily thank you for your unfeigned zeal towards our person, and pray you, as our liege woman, that you abstain from whatever may lead you into personal danger; and, further, it is our will that you depart without a word of farther parley with any one in this castle. For thy present guerdon, take this small reliquary; it was given to us by our uncle the Cardinal, and hath had the benediction of the Holy Father himself; and now depart in peace and in silence. For you, learned sir," continued the Queen, advancing to the doctor, who made his reverence in a manner doubly embarrassed, by the awe of the Queen's presence, which made him fear to do too little, and by the apprehension of his lady's displeasure, in case he should chance to do too much—"for you, learned sir, as it was not your fault though surely our own good fortune, that we did not need your skill at this time, it would not become us, however circumstanced, to suffer our leech to leave us without such guerdon as we can offer."

With these words, and with the grace which never forsook her, though, in the present case, there might lurk under it a little gentle ridicule, she offered a small embroidered purse to the chamberlain, who, with extended hand and arched back, his learned face stooping until a physiognomist might have practised the metoposcopical science upon it, as seen from behind betwixt his gambadoes, was about to accept of the professional recompense offered by so fair as well as illustrious an hand. But the lady interposed, and, regard-

ing the chamberlain, said aloud, "No servant of our house, without instantly relinquishing that character, and incurring withal our highest displeasure, shall dare receive any gratuity at the hand of the Lady Mary."

Sadly and slowly the chamberlain raised his depressed stature into the perpendicular attitude, and left the apartment dejectedly, followed by Magdalen Græme, after, with mute but expressive gesture, she had kissed the reliquary with which the Queen had presented her, and raising her clasped hands and uplifted eyes towards Heaven, had seemed to entreat a benediction upon the royal dame. As she left the castle, and went towards the quay where the boat lay, Roland Græme, anxious to communicate with her if possible, threw himself in her way, and might have succeeded in exchanging a few words with her, as she was guarded only by the dejected chamberlain and his halberdiers, but she seemed to have taken, in its most strict and literal acceptation, the command to be silent which she had received from the Queen; for, to the repeated signs of her grandson, she only replied by laying her finger on her lip.

Dr. Lundin was not so reserved. Regret for the handsome gratuity, and for the compulsory task of self-denial imposed on him, had grieved the spirit of that worthy officer and learned mediciner. "Even thus, my friend," said he, squeezing the page's hand as he bade him farewell, "is merit rewarded. I came to cure this unhappy lady; and I profess she well deserves the trouble, for, say what they will of her, she hath a most winning manner, a sweet voice, a gracious smile, and a most majestic wave of her hand. If she was not poisoned, say, my dear Master Roland, was that fault of mine, I being ready to cure her if she had? and now I am denied the permission to accept my well-earned honorarium. O Galen! O Hippocrates! is the graduate's cap and doctor's scarlet brought to this, pass? *Frustra fatigamus remediis ægros!*"

He wiped his eyes, stepped on the gunwale, and the boat pushed off from the shore, and went merrily across the lake, which was dimpled by the summer wind.*

* See Supposed Conspiracy against the Life of Mary. Note 22.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Death distant? No, alas! he's ever with us,
And shakes the dart at us in all our actings;
He lurks within our cup, while we're in health;
Sits by our sick-bed, mocks our medicines;
We cannot walk, or sit, or ride, or travel,
But Death is by to seize us when he lists.

The Spanish Father.

FROM the agitating scene in the Queen's presence-chamber, the Lady of Lochleven retreated to her own apartment, and ordered the steward to be called before her.

"Have they not disarmed thee, Dryfesdale?" she said, on seeing him enter, accoutered, as usual, with sword and dagger.

"No!" replied the old man; "how should they? Your ladyship, when you commanded me to ward, said nought of laying down my arms; and, I think, none of your menials, without your order or your son's, dare approach Jasper Dryfesdale for such a purpose. Shall I now give up my sword to you? It is worth little now, for it has fought for your house till it is worn down to old iron, like the pantler's old chipping knife."

"You have attempted a deadly crime—poison under trust."

"Under trust—hem! I know not what your ladyship thinks of it, but the world without thinks the trust was given you even for that very end; and you would have been well off had it been so ended as I proposed, and you neither the worse nor the wiser."

"Wretch!" exclaimed the lady, "and fool as well as villain, who could not even execute the crime he had planned!"

"I bid as fair for it as man could," replied Dryfesdale. "I went to a woman—a witch and a Papist. If I found not poison, it was because it was otherwise predestined. I tried fair for it; but the half-done job may be clouted, if you will."

"Villain! I am even now about to send off an express messenger to my son, to take order how thou shouldst be disposed of. Prepare thyself for death, if thou canst."

“He that looks on death, lady,” answered Dryfesdale, “as that which he may not shun, and which has its own fixed and certain hour, is ever prepared for it. He that is hanged in May will eat no flaunes in midsummer—so there is the moan made for the old serving-man. But whom, pray I, send you on so fair an errand?”

“There will be no lack of messengers,” answered his mistress.

“By my hand, but there will,” replied the old man: “your castle is but poorly manned, considering the watches that you must keep, having this charge. There is the warder and two others whom you discarded for tampering with Master George; then for the warder’s tower, the bailie, the donjon—five men mount each guard, and the rest must sleep for the most part in their clothes. To send away another man were to harass the sentinels to death—unthrifty misuse for a household. To take in new soldiers were dangerous, the charge requiring tried men. I see but one thing for it: I will do your errand to Sir William Douglas myself.”

“That were indeed a resource! And on what day within twenty years would it be done?” said the lady.

“Even with the speed of man and horse,” said Dryfesdale; “for though I care not much about the latter days of an old serving-man’s life, yet I would like to know as soon as may be whether my neck is mine own or the hangman’s.”

“Holdest thou thy own life so lightly?” said the lady.

“Else I had recked more of that of others,” said the predestinarian. “What is death? it is but ceasing to live. And what is living? a weary return of light and darkness, sleeping and waking, being hungered and eating. Your dead man needs neither candle nor can, neither fire nor feather-bed; and the joiner’s chest serves him for an eternal frieze jerkin.”

“Wretched man! believest thou not that after death comes the judgment?”

“Lady,” answered Dryfesdale, “as my mistress, I may not dispute your words; but, as spiritually speaking, you are still but a burner of bricks in Egypt, ignorant of the freedom of the saints; for, as was well shown to me by that gifted man, Nicolaus Schöfferbach, who was martyred by the bloody Bishop of Münster, he cannot sin who doth but execute that which is predestined, since——”

“Silence!” said the lady, interrupting him. “Answer me not with thy bold and presumptuous blasphemy, but hear me. Thou hast been long the servant of our house——”

“The born servant of the Douglas; they have had the best of me: I served them since I left Lockerbie. I was then ten years old, and you may soon add the threescore of it.”

“Thy foul attempt has miscarried, so thou art guilty only in intention. It were a deserved deed to hang thee on the warder’s tower; and yet, in thy present mind, it were but giving a soul to Satan. I take thine offer, then. Go hence; here is my packet; I will add to it but a line, to desire him to send me a faithful servant or two to complete the garrison. Let my son deal with you as he will. If thou art wise, thou wilt make for Lockerbie so soon as thy foot touches dry land, and let the packet find another bearer; at all rates, look it miscarries not.”

“Nay, madam,” replied he, “I was born, as I said, the Douglas’s servant, and I will be no corbie-messenger in mine old age; your message to your son shall be done as truly by me as if it concerned another man’s neck. I take my leave of your honor.”

The lady issued her commands, and the old man was ferried over to the shore, to proceed on his extraordinary pilgrimage. It is necessary the reader should accompany him on his journey, which Providence had determined should not be of long duration.

On arriving at the village, the steward, although his disgrace had transpired, was readily accommodated with a horse, by the chamberlain’s authority; and the roads being by no means esteemed safe, he associated himself with Auchtermuchty, the common carrier, in order to travel in his company to Edinburgh.

The worthy wagoner, according to the established custom of all carriers, stage-coachmen, and other persons in such public authority, from the earliest days to the present, never wanted good reasons for stopping upon the road as often as he would; and the place which had most captivation for him as a resting-place was a change-house, as it was termed, not very distant from a romantic dell, well known by the name of Keiry Craigs. Attractions of a kind very different from those which arrested the progress of John Auchtermuchty and his wains still continue to hover round this romantic spot, and none has visited its vicinity without a desire to remain long and to return soon.

Arrived near its favorite “howff,” not all the authority of Dryfesdale, much diminished indeed by the rumors of his disgrace, could prevail on the carrier, obstinate as the brutes

which he drove, to pass on without his accustomed halt, for which the distance he had traveled furnished little or no pretense. Old Keltie, the landlord, who had bestowed his name on a bridge in the neighborhood of his quondam dwelling, received the carrier with his usual festive cordiality, and adjourned with him into the house, under pretense of important business, which, I believe, consisted in their emptying together a muchkin stoup of usquebaugh. While the worthy host and his guest were thus employed, the discarded steward, with a double portion of moroseness in his gesture and look, walked discontentedly into the kitchen of the place, which was occupied but by one guest. The stranger was a slight figure, scarce above the age of boyhood, and in the dress of a page, but bearing an air of haughty aristocratic boldness, and even insolence, in his look and manner that might have made Dryfesdale conclude he had pretensions to superior rank, had not his experience taught him how frequently these airs of superiority were assumed by the domestics and military retainers of the Scottish nobility. "The pilgrim's morning to you, old sir," said the youth; "you come, as I think, from Lochleven Castle. What news of our bonny Queen? A fairer dove was never pent up in so wretched a dovecot!"

"They that speak of Lochleven, and of those whom its walls contain," answered Dryfesdale, "speak of what concerns the Douglas; and they who speak of what concerns the Douglas do it at their peril."

"Do you speak from fear of them, old man, or would you make a quarrel for them? I should have deemed your age might have cooled your blood."

"Never, while there are empty-pated coxcombs at each corner to keep it warm."

"The sight of thy gray hairs keeps mine cold," said the boy, who had risen up and now sat down again.

"It is well for thee, or I had cooled it with this holly rod," replied the steward. "I think thou be'st one of those swash-bucklers, who brawl in ale-houses and taverns; and who, if words were pikes, and oaths were Andrew Ferraras, would soon place the religion of Babylon in the land once more, and the woman of Moab upon the throne."

"Now, by St. Bennet of Seyton," said the youth, "I will strike thee on the face, thou foul-mouthed old railing heretic!"

"St. Bennet of Seyton!" echoed the steward; "a proper warrant is St. Bennet's, and for a proper nest of wolf-birds

like the Seytons! I will arrest thee as a traitor to King James and the good Regent. Ho! John Auchtermuchty, raise aid against the king's traitor!"

So saying, he laid his hand on the youth's collar, and drew his sword. John Auchtermuchty looked in, but, seeing the naked weapon, ran faster out than he entered. Keltie, the landlord, stood by and helped neither party, only exclaiming, "Gentlemen!—gentlemen! for the love of Heaven!" and so forth. A struggle ensued, in which the young man, chafed at Dryfesdale's boldness, and unable, with the ease he expected, to extricate himself from the old man's determined grasp, drew his dagger, and, with the speed of light, dealt him three wounds in the breast and body, the least of which was mortal. The old man sunk on the ground with a deep groan, and the host set up a piteous exclamation of surprise.

"Peace! ye bawling hound!" said the wounded steward; "are dagger-stabs and dying men such rarities in Scotland that you should cry as if the house were falling? Youth, I do not forgive thee, for there is nought betwixt us to forgive. Thou hast done what I have done to more than one; and I suffer what I have seen them suffer: it was all ordained to be thus and not otherwise. But if thou wouldst do me right, thou wilt send this packet safely to the hands of Sir William of Douglas; and see that my memory suffer not, as if I would have loitered on mine errand for fear of my life."

The youth, whose passion had subsided the instant he had done the deed, listened with sympathy and attention, when another person, muffled in his cloak, entered the apartment, and exclaimed—"Good God! Dryfesdale, and expiring!"

"Ay, and Dryfesdale would that he had been dead," answered the wounded man, "rather than that his ears had heard the words of the only Douglas that ever was false; but yet it is better as it is. Good my murderer, and the rest of you, stand back a little and let me speak with this unhappy apostate. Kneel down by me, Master George. You have heard that I failed in my attempt to take away that Moabitish stumbling-block and her retinue? I gave them that which I thought would have removed the temptation out of thy path; and this, though I had other reasons to show to thy mother and others, I did chiefly purpose for love of thee."

"For the love of me, base poisoner!" answered Douglas,

“wouldst thou have committed so horrible, so unprovoked a murder, and mentioned my name with it?”

“And wherefore not, George of Douglas?” answered Dryfesdale. “Breath is now scarce with me, but I would spend my last gasp on this argument. Hast thou not, despite the honor thou owest to thy parents, the faith that is due to thy religion, the truth that is due to thy king, been so carried away by the charms of this beautiful sorceress, that thou wouldst have helped her to escape from her prison-house, and lent her thine arm again to ascend the throne, which she had made a place of abomination? Nay, stir not from me—my hand, though fast stiffening, has yet force enough to hold thee. What dost thou aim at—to wed this witch of Scotland? I warrant thee, thou mayst succeed: her heart and hand have been oft won at a cheaper rate than thou, fool that thou art, would think thyself happy to pay. But, should a servant of thy father’s house have seen thee embrace the fate of the idiot Darnley, or of the villain Bothwell—the fate of the murdered fool, or of the living pirate—while an ounce of ratsbane would have saved thee?”

“Think on God, Dryfesdale,” said George Douglas, “and leave the utterance of those horrors. Repent if thou canst; if not, at least be silent. Seyton, aid me to support this dying wretch, that he may compose himself to better thoughts, if it be possible.”

“Seyton!” answered the dying man—“Seyton! Is it by a Seyton’s hand that I fall at last? There is something of retribution in that, since the house had nigh lost a sister by my deed.’ Fixing his fading eyes on the youth, he added, “He hath her very features and presence! Stoop down, youth, and let me see thee closer: I would know thee when we meet in yonder world, for homicides will herd together there, and I have been one.” He pulled Seyton’s face, in spite of some resistance, closer to his own, looked at him fixedly, and added, “Thou hast begun young; thy career will be the briefer—ay, thou wilt be met with, and that anon: a young plant never throve that was watered with an old man’s blood. Yet why blame I thee? Strange turns of fate,” he muttered, ceasing to address Seyton, “I designed what I could not do, and he has done what he did not perchance design. Wondrous, that our will should ever oppose itself to the strong and uncontrollable tide of destiny—that we should strive with the stream when we might drift with the current! My brain will serve me to question it no farther. I would Schöfferbach were here. Yet why?

I am on a course which the vessel can hold without a pilot. Farewell, George of Douglas; I die true to thy father's house." He fell into convulsions at these words and shortly after expired.

Seyton and Douglas stood looking on the dying man, and when the scene was closed, the former was the first to speak. "As I live, Douglas, I meant not this, and am sorry; but he laid hands on me, and compelled me to defend my freedom, as I best might, with my dagger. If he were ten times thy friend and follower, I can but say that I am sorry."

"I blame thee not, Seyton," said Douglas, "though I lament the chance. There is an overruling destiny above us, though not in the sense in which it was viewed by that wretched man, who beguiled by some foreign mystagogues, used the awful word as the ready apology for whatever he chose to do. We must examine the packet."

They withdrew into an inner room, and remained deep in consultation, until they were disturbed by the entrance of Keltie, who, with an embarrassed countenance, asked Master George Douglas's pleasure respecting the disposal of the body. "Your honor knows," he added, "that I make my bread by living men, not by dead corpses; and old Mr. Dryfesdale, who was but a sorry customer while he was alive, occupies my public room now that he is deceased, and can neither call for ale nor brandy."

"Tie a stone round his neck," said Seyton, "and when the sun is down, have him to the Loch of Ore, heave him in, and let him alone for finding out the bottom."

"Under your favor, sir," said George Douglas, "it shall not be so. Keltie, thou art a true fellow to me, and thy having been so shall advantage thee. Send or take the body to the chapel at Scotland Well, or to the church of Ballingry, and tell what tale thou wilt of his having fallen in a brawl with some unruly guests to thine. Auchtermuchty knows not else, nor are the times so peaceful as to admit close looking into such accounts."

"Nay, let him tell the truth," said Seyton, "so as it harms out our scheme. Say that Henry Seyton met with him, my good fellow. I care not a brass boddle for the feud."

"A feud with the Douglas was ever to be feared, however," said George, displeasure mingling with his natural deep gravity of manner.

"Not when the best of the name is on my side," replied Seyton.

"Alas! Henry, if thou meanest me, I am but half a

Douglas in this emprise—half head, half heart, and half hand. But I will think on one who can never be forgotten, and be all or more than any of my ancestors was ever. Keltie, say it was Henry Seyton did the deed; but beware, not a word of me! Let Auchtermuchty carry this packet (which he had resealed with his own signet) to my father at Edinburgh; and here is to pay for the funeral expenses and thy loss of custom.”

“And the washing of the floor,” said the landlord, “which will be an extraordinary job; for blood, they say, will scarcely ever cleanse out.”

“But as for your plan,” said George of Douglas, addressing Seyton, as if in continuation of what they had been before treating of, “it has a good face; but, under your favor, you are yourself too hot and too young, besides other reasons which are most against your playing the part you propose.”

“We will consult the father abbot upon it,” said the youth. “Do you ride to Kinross to-night?”

“Ay, so I purpose,” answered Douglas; “the night will be dark, and suits a muffled man.* Keltie, I forgot, there should be a stone laid on that man’s grave, according his name, and his only merit, which was being a faithful servant to the Douglas.”

“What religion was the man of?” said Seyton; “he used words which made me fear I have sent Satan a subject before his time.”

“I can tell you little of that,” said George Douglas; “he was noted for disliking both Rome and Geneva, and spoke of lights he had learned among the fierce sectaries of Lower Germany; an evil doctrine it was, if we judge by the fruits. God keep us from presumptuously judging of Heaven’s secrets!”

“Amen!” said the young Seyton, “and from meeting any encounter this evening.”

“It is not thy wont to pray so,” said George Douglas.

“No! I leave that to you,” replied the youth, “when you are seized with scruples of engaging with your father’s vassals. But I would fain have this old man’s blood off these hands of mine ere I shed more. I will confess to the abbot to-night, and I trust to have light penance for ridding the earth of such a miscreant. All I sorrow for is, that he was not a score of years younger. He drew steel first, however, that is one comfort.”

* See Note 23.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Ay, Pedro. Come you here with mask and lantern,
Ladder of ropes and other moonshine tools?
Why, youngster, thou mayst cheat the old duenna,
Flatter the waiting woman, bribe the valet;
But know, that I her father play the gryphon,
Tameless and sleepless, proof to fraud or bribe,
And guard the hidden treasure of her beauty.

The Spanish Father.

THE tenor of our tale carries us back to the Castle of Lochleven, where we take up the order of events on the same remarkable day on which Dryfesdale had been dismissed from the castle. It was past noon, the usual hour of dinner, yet no preparations seemed made for the Queen's entertainment. Mary herself had retired into her own apartment, where she was closely engaged in writing. Her attendants were together in the presence-chamber, and much disposed to speculate on the delay of the dinner; for it may be recollected that their breakfast had been interrupted. "I believe in my conscience," said the page, "that, having found the poisoning scheme miscarry, by having gone to the wrong merchant for their deadly wares, they are now about to try how famine will work upon us."

Lady Fleming was somewhat alarmed at this surmise, but comforted herself by observing, that the chimney of the kitchen had reeked that whole day in a manner which contradicted the supposition. Catherine Seyton presently exclaimed, "They were bearing the dishes across the court, marshaled by the Lady Lochleven herself, dressed out in her highest and stiffest rug, with her partlet and sleeves of cyprus, and her huge old-fashioned farthingale of crimson velvet."

"I believe, on my word," said the page, approaching the window also, "it was in that very farthingale that she captivated the heart of gentle King Jamie, which procured our poor Queen her precious bargain of a brother."

"That may hardly be, Master Roland," answered the Lady Fleming, who was a great recorder of the changes of fashion, "since the farthingales came first in when the Queen Regent went to St. Andrews, after the battle of Pinkie, and were then called *vertu-gardins*——"

She would have proceeded farther in this important discussion, but was interrupted by the entrance of the Lady of Lochleven, who preceded the servants bearing the dishes, and formally discharged the duty of tasting each of them. Lady Fleming regretted, in courtly phrase, that the Lady of Lochleven should have undertaken so troublesome an office.

“After the strange incident of this day, madam,” said the lady, “it is necessary for my honor and that of my son that I partake whatever is offered to my involuntary guest. Please to inform the Lady Mary that I attend her commands.”

“Her Majesty,” replied Lady Fleming, with due emphasis on the word, “shall be informed that the Lady Lochleven waits.”

Mary appeared instantly, and addressed her hostess with courtesy, which even approached to something more cordial. “This is nobly done, Lady Lochleven,” she said; “for, though we ourselves apprehend no danger under your roof, our ladies have been much alarmed by this morning’s chance, and our meal will be the more cheerful for your presence and assurance. Please you to sit down.”

The Lady Lochleven obeyed the Queen’s commands, and Roland performed the office of carver and attendant as usual. But, notwithstanding what the Queen had said, the meal was silent and unsocial; and every effort which Mary made to excite some conversation died away under the solemn and chill replies of the Lady of Lochleven. At length it became plain that the Queen, who had considered these advances as a condescension on her part, and who piqued herself justly on her powers of pleasing, became offended at the repulsive conduct of her hostess. After looking with a significant glance at Lady Fleming and Catherine, she slightly shrugged her shoulders and remained silent. A pause ensued, at the end of which the Lady Douglas spoke—“I perceive, madam, I am a check on the mirth of this fair company. I pray you to excuse me; I am a widow—alone here in a most perilous charge, deserted by my grandson, betrayed by my servant; I am little worthy of the grace you do me in offering me a seat at your table, where I am aware that wit and pastime are usually expected from the guests.”

“If the Lady Lochleven is serious,” said the Queen, “we wonder by what simplicity she expects our present meals to be seasoned with mirth. If she is a widow, she lives honored and uncontrolled at the head of her late husband’s household. But I know at least of one widowed woman in the world before whom the words ‘desertion’ and ‘betrayal’

ought never to be mentioned, since no one has been made so bitterly acquainted with their import."

"I meant not, madam, to remind you of your misfortunes by the mention of mine," answered the Lady Lochleven, and there was again a deep silence.

Mary at length addressed Lady Fleming. "We can commit no deadly sins here, *ma bonne*, where we are so well warded and looked to; but if we could, this Carthusian silence might be useful as a kind of penance. If thou hast adjusted my wimple amiss, my Fleming, or if Catherine hath made a wry stitch in her broidery when she was thinking of something else than her work, or if Roland Græme hath missed a wild duck on the wing, and broke a quarrell-pane of glass in the turret window, as chanced to him a week since, now is the time to think on your sins and to repent of them."

"Madam, I speak with all reverence," said the Lady Lochleven; "but I am old, and claim the privilege of age. Methinks your followers might find fitter subjects for repentance than the trifles you mention, and so mention—once more, I crave your pardon—as if you jested with sin and repentance both."

"You have been our taster, Lady Lochleven," said the Queen, "I perceive you would eke out your duty with that of our father confessor; and since you choose that our conversation should be serious, may I ask you why the Regent's promise—since your son so styles himself—has not been kept to me in that respect? From time to time this promise has been renewed, and as constantly broken. Methinks those who pretend themselves to so much gravity and sanctity should not debar from others the religious succors which their consciences require."

"Madam, the Earl of Murray was indeed weak enough," said the Lady Lochleven, "to give so far way to your unhappy prejudices, and a religioner of the Pope presented himself on his part at our town of Kinross. But the Douglas is lord of his own castle, and will not permit his threshold to be darkened, no, not for a single moment, by an emissary belonging to the Bishop of Rome."

"Methinks it were well, then," said Mary, "that my Lord Regent would send me where there is less scruple and more charity."

"In this, madam," answered the Lady Lochleven, "you mistake the nature both of charity and of religion. Charity giveth to those who are in delirium the medicaments which

may avail their health, but refuses those enticing cates and liquors which please the palate but augment the disease."

"This your charity, Lady Lochleven, is pure cruelty under the hypocritical disguise of friendly care. I am oppressed amongst you as if you meant the destruction both of my body and soul; but Heaven will not endure such iniquity forever, and they who are the most active agents in it may speedily expect their reward."

At this moment Randal entered the apartment, with a look so much perturbed that the Lady Fleming uttered a faint scream, the Queen was obviously startled, and the Lady of Lochleven, though too bold and proud to evince any marked signs of alarm, asked hastily what was the matter.

"Dryfesdale has been slain, madam," was the reply—"murdered as soon as he gained the dry land by young Master Henry Seyton,"

It was now Catherine's turn to start and grow pale. "Has the murderer of the Douglas's vassal escaped?" was the lady's hasty question.

"There was none to challenge him but old Keltie and the carrier Auchtermuchty," replied Randal, "unlikely men to stay one of the frackest youths in Scotland of his years, and who was sure to have friends and partakers at no great distance."

"Was the deed completed?" said the lady.

"Done, and done thoroughly," said Randal: "a Seyton seldom strikes twice. But the body was not despoiled, and your honor's packet goes forward to Edinburgh by Auchtermuchty, who leaves Keltie Bridge early to-morrow; marry, he has drunk two bottles of aquavitæ to put the fright out of his head, and now sleeps them off beside his cart-avers."

There was a pause when this fatal tale was told. The Queen and Lady Douglas looked on each other, as if each thought how she could best turn the incident to her own advantage in the controversy which was continually kept alive betwixt them. Catherine Seyton kept her kerchief at her eyes and wept.

"You see, madam, the bloody maxims and practise of the deluded Papists," said Lady Lochleven.

"Nay, madam," replied the Queen, "say rather you see the deserved judgment of Heaven upon a Calvinistical poisoner."

"Dryfesdale was not of the Church of Geneva or of Scotland," said the Lady Lochleven, hastily.

“He was a heretic, however,” replied Mary. “There is but one true and unerring guide: the others lead alike into error.”

“Well, madam, I trust it will reconcile you to your retreat that this deed shows the temper of those who might wish you at liberty. Bloodthirsty tyrants and cruel man-quellers are they all, from the Clan Ranald and Clan Tosach in the north to the Fernieherst and Buccleuch in the south, the murdering Seytons in the east, and——”

“Methinks, madam, you forget that I am a Seyton?” said Catherine, withdrawing her kerchief from her face, which was now colored with indignation.

“If I had forgot it, fair mistress, your forward bearing would have reminded me,” said Lady Lochleven.

“If my brother has slain the villain that would have poisoned his sovereign and his sister,” said Catherine, “I am only so far sorry that he should have spared the hangman his proper task. For aught further, had it been the best Douglas in the land, he would have been honored in falling by the Seyton’s sword.”

“Farewell, gay mistress,” said the Lady of Lochleven, rising to withdraw; “it is such maidens as you who make giddy-fashioned revelers and deadly brawlers. Boys must needs rise, forsooth, in the grace of some sprightly damsel, who thinks to dance through life as through a French galliard.” She then made her reverence to the Queen, and added, “To you also, madam, fare you well till curfew time, when I will make, perchance, more bold than welcome in attending upon your supper board. Come with me, Randal, and tell me more of this cruel fact.”

“’Tis an extraordinary chance,” said the Queen, when she had departed; “and, villain as he was, I would this man had been spared time for repentance. We will cause something to be done for his soul, if we ever attain our liberty, and the church will permit such grace to an heretic. But, tell me, Catherine, *ma mignonne*—this brother of thine, who is so ‘frack,’ as the fellow called him, bears he the same wonderful likeness to thee as formerly?”

“If your Grace means in temper, you know whether I am so frack as the serving-man spoke him.”

“Nay, thou art prompt enough in all reasonable conscience,” replied the Queen; “but thou art my own darling notwithstanding. But I meant, is this thy twin-brother as like thee in form and features as formerly? I remember thy dear mother alleged it as a reason for destining thee to

the veil that, were ye both to go at large, thou wouldst surely get the credit of some of thy brother's mad pranks."

"I believe, madam," said Catherine, "there are some unusually simple people even yet who can hardly distinguish betwixt us, especially when, for diversion's sake, my brother hath taken a female dress," and, as she spoke, she gave a quick glance at Roland Græme, to whom this conversation conveyed a ray of light welcome as ever streamed into the dungeon of a captive through the door which opened to give him freedom.

"He must be a handsome cavalier this brother of thine, if he be so like you," replied Mary. "He was in France, I think, for these late years, so that I saw him not at Holyrood."

"His looks, madam, have never been much found fault with," answered Catherine Seyton; "but I would he had less of that angry and heady spirit which evil times have encouraged amongst our young nobles. God knows, I grudge not his life in your Grace's quarrel, and love him for the willingness with which he labors for your rescue. But wherefore should he brawl with an old ruffianly serving-man, and stain at once his name with such a broil and his hands with the blood of an old and ignoble wretch?"

"Nay, be patient, Catherine; I will not have thee traduce my gallant young knight. With Henry for my knight, and Roland Græme for my trusty squire, methinks I am like a princess of romance, who may shortly set at defiance the dungeons and the weapons of all wicked sorcerers. But my head aches with the agitation of the day. Take me *La Mer des Histoires*, and resume where we left off on Wednesday. Our Lady help thy head, girl, or rather may she help thy heart! I asked thee for the *Sea of Histoires*, and thou hast brought *La Cronique d'Amour*!"

Once embarked upon the *Sea of Histoires*, the Queen continued her labors with her needle, while Lady Fleming and Catherine read to her alternately for two hours.

As to Roland Græme, it is probable that he continued in secret intent upon the *Chronicle of Love*, notwithstanding the censure which the Queen seemed to pass upon that branch of study. He now remembered a thousand circumstances of voice and manner, which, had his own prepossession been less, must surely have discriminated the brother from the sister; and he felt ashamed that, having as it were by heart every particular of Catherine's gestures, words, and manners, he should have thought her, notwithstanding her

spirits and levity, capable of assuming the bold step, loud tones, and forward assurance which accorded well enough with her brother's hasty and masculine character. He endeavored repeatedly to catch a glance of Catherine's eye, that he might judge how she was disposed to look upon him since he had made the discovery, but he was unsuccessful; for Catherine, when she was not reading herself, seemed to take so much interest in the exploits of the Teutonic Knights against the heathens of Esthonia and Livonia, that he could not surprise her eye even for a second. But when, closing the book, the Queen commanded their attendance in the garden, Mary, perhaps of set purpose (for Roland's anxiety could not escape so practised an observer), afforded him a favorable opportunity of accosting his mistress. The Queen commanded them to a little distance, while she engaged Lady Fleming in a particular and private conversation; the subject whereof, we learn from another authority, to have been the comparative excellence of the high standing ruff and the falling band. Roland must have been duller and more sheepish than ever was youthful lover if he had not endeavored to avail himself of this opportunity.

"I have been longing this whole evening to ask of you, fair Catherine," said the page, "how foolish and unapprehensive you must have thought me, in being capable to mistake betwixt your brother and you?"

"The circumstance does indeed little honor to my rustic manners," said Catherine, "since those of a wild young man were so readily mistaken for mine. But I shall grow wiser in time; and with that view I am determined not to think of your follies, but to correct my own."

"It will be the lighter subject of meditation of the two," said Roland.

"I know not that," said Catherine, very gravely; "I fear we have been both unpardonably foolish."

"I have been mad," said Roland—"unpardonably mad. But you, lovely Catherine——"

"I," said Catherine, in the same tone of unusual gravity, "have too long suffered you to use such expressions towards me. I fear I can permit it no longer, and I blame myself for the pain it may give you."

"And what can have happened so suddenly to change our relation to each other, or alter, with such sudden cruelty, your whole deportment to me?"

"I can hardly tell," replied Catherine, "unless it is that the events of the day have impressed on my mind the neces-

sity of our observing more distance to each other. A chance similar to that which betrayed to you the existence of my brother may make known to Henry the terms you have used to me ; and, alas ! his whole conduct, as well as his deed this day, makes me too justly apprehensive of the consequences."

"Nay, fear nothing for that, fair Catherine," answered the page, "I am well able to protect myself against risks of that nature."

"That is to say," replied she, "that you would fight with my twin-brother to show your regard for his sister ? I have heard the Queen say, in her sad hours, that men are, in love or in hate, the most selfish animals of creation ; and your carelessness in this matter looks very like it. But be not so much abashed ; you are no worse than others."

"You do me injustice, Catherine," replied the page, "I thought but of being threatened with a sword, and did not remember in whose hand your fancy had placed it. If your brother stood before me, with his drawn weapon in his hand, so like as he is to you in word, person, and favor, he might shed my life's blood ere I could find in my heart to resist him to his injury."

"Alas !" said she, "it is not my brother alone. But you remember only the singular circumstances in which we have met in equality, and I may say in intimacy. You think not that, whenever I re-enter my father's house, there is a gulf between us you may not pass but with the peril of your life. Your only known relative is of wild and singular habits, of a hostile and broken clan, the rest of your lineage unknown ; forgive me that I speak what is the undeniable truth."

"Love, my beautiful Catherine, despises genealogies," answered Roland Græme.

"Love may, but so will not the Lord Seyton," rejoined the damsel.

"The Queen, thy mistress and mine, she will intercede. O ! drive me not from you at the moment I thought myself most happy ! And if I shall aid her deliverance, said not yourself that you and she would become my debtors ?"

"All Scotland will become your debtors," said Catherine. "But for the active effects you might hope from our gratitude, you must remember I am wholly subjected to my father ; and the poor Queen is, for a long time, more likely to be dependent on the pleasure of the nobles of her party than possessed of power to control them."

"Be it so," replied Roland ; "my deeds shall control prejudice itself : it is a bustling world, and I will have my share.

The Knight of Avenel, high as he now stands, rose from as obscure an origin as mine."

"Ay," said Catherine, "there spoke the doughty knight of romance, that will cut his way to the imprisoned princess through fiends and fiery dragons!"

"But if I can set the princess at large, and procure her the freedom of her own choice," said the page, "where, dearest Catherine, will that choice alight?"

"Release the princess from duress, and she will tell you," said the damsel; and, breaking off the conversation abruptly, she joined the Queen so suddenly that Mary exclaimed, half-aloud—

"No more tidings of evil import—no dissension, I trust, in my limited household?" Then looking on Catherine's blushing cheek and Roland's expanded brow and glancing eye—"No—no," she said, "I see all is well. *Ma petite mignonne*, go to my apartment and fetch me down—let me see—ay, fetch my pomander box."

And having thus disposed of her attendant in the manner best qualified to hide her confusion, the Queen added, speaking apart to Roland, "I should at least have two grateful subjects of Catherine and you; for what sovereign but Mary would aid true love so willingly? Ay, you lay your hand on your sword—your *petite flamberge à rien* there. Well, short time will show if all the good be true that is protested to us. I hear them toll curfew from Kinross. To our chamber; this old dame hath promised to be with us again at our evening meal. Were it not for the hope of speedy deliverance, her presence would drive me distracted. But I will be patient."

"I profess," said Catherine, who just then entered, "I would I could be Henry, with all a man's privileges, for one moment: I long to throw my plate at that confect of pride, and formality, and ill-nature!"

The Lady Fleming reprimanded her young companion for this explosion of impatience, the Queen laughed, and they went to the presence-chamber, where almost immediately entered supper and the lady of the castle. The Queen, strong in her prudent resolutions, endured her presence with great fortitude and equanimity, until her patience was disturbed by a new form, which had hitherto made no part of the ceremonial of the castle. When the other attendant had retired, Randal entered, bearing the keys of the castle fastened upon a chain, and, announcing that the watch was set and the gates locked, delivered the keys with all reverence to the Lady of Lochleven.

The Queen and her ladies exchanged with each other a look of disappointment, anger, and vexation; and Mary said aloud, "We cannot regret the smallness of our court, when we see our hostess discharge in person so many of its offices. In addition to her charges of principal steward of our household and grand almoner, she has to-night done duty as captain of our guard."

"And will continue to do so in future, madam," answered the Lady Lochleven, with much gravity; "the history of Scotland may teach me how ill the duty is performed which is done by an accredited deputy. We have heard, madam, of favorites of later date, and as little merit, as Oliver Sinclair."

"O, madam," replied the Queen, "my father had his female as well as his male favorites: there were the Ladies Sandilands and Olifaunt,* and some others, methinks; but their names cannot survive in the memory of so grave a person as you."

The Lady Lochleven looked as if she could have slain the Queen on the spot, but commanded her temper, and retired from the apartment, bearing in her hand the ponderous bunch of keys.

"Now God be praised for that woman's youthful frailty!" said the Queen. "Had she not that weak point in her character, I might waste my words on her in vain. But that stain is the very reverse of what is said of the witch's mark: I can make her feel there, though she is otherwise insensible all over. But how say you, girls—here is a new difficulty. How are these keys to be come by? There is no deceiving or bribing this dragon, I trow."

"May I crave to know," said Roland, "whether, if your Grace were beyond the walls of the castle, you could find means of conveyance to the firm land, and protection when you are there?"

"Trust us for that, Roland," said the Queen; "for to that point our scheme is indifferent well laid."

"Then, if your Grace will permit me to speak my mind, I think I could be of some use in this matter."

"As how, my good youth? Speak on," said the Queen, "and fearlessly."

"My patron, the Knight of Avenel, used to compel the youth educated in his household to learn the use of ax and hammer, and working in wood and iron; he used to speak

* The names of these ladies, and a third frail favorite of James, are preserved in an epigram too *gaillard* for quotation.

of old northern champions who forged their own weapons, and of the Highland captain, Donald nan Ord, or Donald of the Hammer, whom he himself knew, and who used to work at the anvil with a sledge-hammer in each hand. Some said he praised this art because he was himself of churl's blood. However, I gained some practise in it, as the Lady Catherine Seyton partly knows; for since we were here I wrought her a silver brooch."

"Ay," replied Catherine, "but you should tell her Grace that your workmanship was so indifferent that it broke to pieces next day, and I flung it away."

"Believe her not, Roland," said the Queen; "she wept when it was broken, and put the fragments into her bosom. But for your scheme—could your skill avail to forge a second set of keys?"

"No, madam, because I know not the wards. But I am convinced I could make a set so like that hateful bunch which the lady bore off even now, that, could they be exchanged against them by any means, she would never dream she was possessed of the wrong."

"And the good dame, thank Heaven, is somewhat blind," said the Queen; "but then for a forge, my boy, and the means of laboring unobserved?"

"The armorer's forge, at which I used sometimes to work with him, is the round vault at the bottom of the turret; he was dismissed with the warder for being supposed too much attached to George Douglas. The people are accustomed to see me busy there, and I warrant I shall find some excuse that will pass current with them for putting bellows and anvil to work."

"The scheme has a promising face," said the Queen; "about it, my lad, with all speed, and beware the nature of your work is not discovered."

"Nay, I will take the liberty to draw the bolt against chance visitors, so that I will have time to put away what I am working upon before I undo the door."

"Will not that of itself attract suspicion, in a place where it is so current already?" said Catherine.

"Not a whit," replied Roland; "Gregory the armorer, and every good hammerman, locks himself in when he is about some masterpiece of craft. Besides, something must be risked."

"Part we then to-night," said the Queen, "and God bless you, my children! If Mary's head ever rises above water, you shall all rise along with her."

CHAPTER XXXV

It is a time of danger, not of revel;
When churchmen turn to masquers.

Spanish Father.

THE enterprise of Roland Græme appeared to prosper. A trinket or two, of which the work did not surpass the substance (for the materials were silver, supplied by the Queen), were judiciously presented to those most likely to be inquisitive into the labors of the forge and anvil, which they thus were induced to reckon profitable to others and harmless in itself. Openly, the page was seen working about such trifles. In private he forged a number of keys resembling so nearly in weight and in form those which were presented every evening to the Lady Lochleven, that, on a slight inspection, it would have been difficult to perceive the difference. He brought them to the dark rusty color by the use of salt and water; and, in the triumph of his art, presented them at length to Queen Mary in her presence-chamber, about an hour before the tolling of the curfew. She looked at them with pleasure, but at the same time with doubt. "I allow," she said, "that the Lady Lochleven's eyes, which are not of the clearest, may be well deceived, could we pass those keys on her in place of the real implements of her tyranny. But how is this to be done, and which of my little court dare attempt this *tour de jongleur* with any chance of success? Could we but engage her in some earnest matter of argument! but those which I hold with her always have been of a kind which make her grasp her keys the faster, as if she said to herself—'Here I hold what sets me above your taunts and reproaches.' And even for her liberty, Mary Stuart could not stoop to speak the proud heretic fair. What shall we do? Shall Lady Fleming try her eloquence in describing the last new head-tire from Paris? Alas! the good dame has not changed the fashion of her head-gear since Pinkie field, for aught that I know. Shall my *mignonne* Catherine sing to her one of those touching airs which draw the very souls out of me and Roland Græme? Alas! Dame Margaret Douglas would rather

hear a Huguenot psalm of Clément Marot, sung to the tune of *Réveillez-vous, belle endormie*. Cousins and liege counselors, what is to be done, for our wits are really astray in this matter? Must our man-at-arms and the champion of our body, Roland Græme, manfully assault the old lady, and take the keys from her *par voie du fait*?"

"Nay! with your Grace's permission," said Roland, "I do not doubt being able to manage the matter with more discretion; for though, in your Grace's service, I do not fear——"

"A host of old women," interrupted Catherine, "each armed with rock and spindle; yet he has no fancy for pikes and partizans, which might rise at the cry of 'Help! a Douglas—a Douglas!'"

"They that do not fear fair ladies' tongues," continued the page, "need dread nothing else. But, gracious liege, I am wellnigh satisfied that I could pass the exchange of these keys on the Lady Lochleven; but I dread the sentinel who is now planted nightly in the garden, which, by necessity, we must traverse."

"Our last advices from our friend on the shore have promised us assistance in that matter," replied the Queen.

"And is your Grace well assured of the fidelity and watchfulness of those without?"

"For their fidelity I will answer with my life, and for their vigilance I will answer with my life. I will give thee instant proof, my faithful Roland, that they are ingenuous and trusty as thyself. Come hither. Nay, Catherine, attend us; we carry not so deft a page into our private chamber alone. Make fast the door of the parlor, Fleming, and warn us if you hear the least step—or stay, go thou to the door, Catherine (in a whisper), thy ears and thy wits are both sharper. Good Fleming, attend us thyself. (And again she whispered) Her reverend presence will be as safe a watch on Roland as thine can, so be not jealous, *mignonne*."

Thus speaking, they were lighted by the Lady Fleming into the Queen's bedroom, a small apartment enlightened by a projecting window.

"Look from that window, Roland," she said; "see you amongst the several lights which begin to kindle, and to glimmer palely through the gray of the evening from the village of Kinross—seest thou, I say, one solitary spark apart from the others, and nearer it seems to the verge of the water? It is no brighter at this distance than the torch of the poor glow-worm, and yet, my good youth, that light is

more dear to Mary Stuart than every star that twinkles in the blue vault of heaven. By that signal, I know that more than one true heart is plotting my deliverance; and without that consciousness, and the hope of freedom it gives me, I had long since stooped to my fate and died of a broken heart. Plan after plan has been formed and abandoned; but still the light glimmers, and while it glimmers my hope lives. O! how many evenings have I sat musing in despair over our ruined schemes, and scarce hoping that I should again see that blessed signal; when it has suddenly kindled, and, like the lights of St. Elmo in a tempest, brought hope and consolation where there was only dejection and despair!"

"If I mistake not," answered Roland, "the candle shines from the house of Blinkhoolie, the mail-gardener."

"Thou hast a good eye," said the Queen; "it is there where my trusty lieges—God and the saints pour blessings on them!—hold consultation for my deliverance. The voice of a wretched captive would die on these blue waters long ere it could mingle in their council, and yet I can hold communication—I will confide the whole to thee—I am about to ask those faithful friends if the moment for the great attempt is nigh. Place the lamp in the window, Fleming."

She obeyed, and immediately withdrew it. No sooner had she done so than the light in the cottage of the gardener disappeared.

"Now, count," said Queen Mary, "for my heart beats so thick that I cannot count myself."

The Lady Fleming began deliberately to count one, two, three, and when she had arrived at ten the light on the shore again showed its pale twinkle.

"Now, Our Lady be praised!" said the Queen; "it was but two nights since that the absence of the light remained while I could tell thirty. The hour of deliverance approaches. May God bless those who labor in it with such truth to me!—alas! with such hazard to themselves—and bless you too, my children! Come, we must to the audience-chamber again. Our absence might excite suspicion, should they serve supper."

They returned to the presence-chamber, and the evening concluded as usual.

The next noon, at dinner-time, an unusual incident occurred. While Lady Douglas of Lochleven performed her daily duty of assistant and taster at the Queen's table, she was told a man-at-arms had arrived, recommended by her

son, but without any letter or other token than what he brought by word of month.

“Hath he given you that token?” demanded the lady.

“He reserved it, as I think, for your ladyship’s ear,” replied Randal.

“He doth well,” said the lady; “tell him to wait in the hall. But no—with your permission, madam (to the Queen)—let him attend me here.”

“Since you are pleased to receive your domestics in my presence,” said the Queen, “I cannot choose——”

“My infirmities must plead my excuse, madam,” replied the lady; “the life I must lead here ill suits with the years which have passed over my head, and compels me to waive ceremonial.”

“O, my good lady,” replied the Queen, “I would there were nought in this your castle more strongly compulsive than the cobweb chains of ceremony; but bolts and bars are harder matters to contend with.”

As she spoke, the person announced by Randal entered the room, and Roland Græme at once recognized in him the Abbot Ambrosius.

“What is your name, good fellow?” said the lady.

“Edward Glendinning,” answered the abbot, with a suitable reverence.

“Art thou of the blood of the Knight of Avenel?” said the Lady of Lochleven.

“Ay, madam, and that nearly,” replied the pretended soldier.

“It is likely enough,” said the lady, “for the knight is the son of his own good works, and has risen from obscure lineage to his present high rank in the estate. But he is of sure truth and approved worth, and his kinsman is welcome to us. You hold, unquestionably, the true faith?”

“Do not doubt of it, madam,” said the disguised churchman.

“Hast thou a token to me from Sir William Douglas?” said the lady.

“I have, madam,” replied he; “but it must be said in private.”

“Thou art right,” said the lady, moving towards the recess of a window; “say in what does it consist?”

“In the words of an old bard,” replied the abbot.

“Repeat them,” answered the lady; and he uttered, in a low tone, the lines from an old poem called *The Howlet**—

“O, Douglas! Douglas!
Tender and true.”

“Trusty Sir John Holland!” said the Lady Douglas, apostrophizing the poet, “a kinder heart never inspired a rhyme, and the Douglas’s honor was ever on thy harp-string! We receive you among our followers, Glendinning. But, Randal, see that he keep the outer ward only, till we shall hear more touching him from our son. Thou fearest not the night air, Glendinning?”

“In the cause of the lady before whom I stand, I fear nothing, madam,” answered the disguised abbot.

“Our garrison, then, is stronger by one trustworthy soldier,” said the matron. “Go to the buttery, and let them make much of thee.”

When the Lady Lochleven had retired, the Queen said to Roland Græme, who was now almost constantly in her company, “I spy comfort in that stranger’s countenance; I know not why it should be so, but I am well persuaded he is a friend.”

“Your Grace’s penetration does not deceive you,” answered the page; and he informed her that the abbot of St. Mary’s himself played the part of the newly-arrived soldier.

The Queen crossed herself, and looked upward. “Unworthy sinner that I am,” she said, “that for my sake a man so holy, and so high in spiritual office, should wear the garb of a base sworder, and run the risk of dying the death of a traitor!”

“Heaven will protect its own servant, madam,” said Catherine Seyton; “his aid would bring a blessing on our undertaking, were it not already blest for its own sake.”

“What I admire in my spiritual father,” said Roland, “was the steady front with which he looked on me, without giving the least sign of former acquaintance. I did not think the like was possible, since I have ceased to believe that Henry was the same person with Catherine.”

“But marked you not how astuciously the good father,” said the Queen, “eluded the questions of the woman Lochleven, telling her the very truth, which yet she received not as such?”

Roland thought in his heart that, when the truth was spoken for the purpose of deceiving, it was little better than a lie in disguise. But it was no time to agitate such questions of conscience.

“And now for the signal from the shore!” exclaimed Catherine; “my bosom tells me we shall see this night two

lights instead of one gleam from that garden of Eden. And then, Roland, do you play your part manfully, and we will dance on the greensward like midnight fairies !”

Catherine’s conjecture misgave not, nor deceived her. In the evening two beams twinkled from the cottage, instead of one ; and the page heard, with beating heart, that the new retainer was ordered to stand sentinel on the outside of the castle. When he intimated this news to the Queen she held her hand out to him ; he knelt, and when he raised it to his lips in all dutiful homage, he found it was damp and cold as marble. “ For God’s sake, madam, droop not now—sink not now !”

“ Call upon Our Lady, my liege,” said the Lady Fleming—“ call upon your tutelar saint.”

“ Call the spirits of the hundred kings you are descended from !” exclaimed the page ; “ in this hour of need, the resolution of a monarch were worth the aid of a hundred saints.”

“ O ! Roland Græme,” said Mary, in a tone of deep despondency, “ be true to me ; many have been false to me. Alas ! I have not always been true to myself. My mind misgives me that I shall die in bondage, and that this bold attempt will cost all our lives. It was foretold me by a soothsayer in France that I should die in prison, and by a violent death, and here comes the hour. O, would to God it found me prepared !”

“ Madam,” said Catherine Seyton, “ remember you are a queen. Better we all died in bravely attempting to gain our freedom than remained here to be poisoned, as men rid them of the noxious vermin that haunt old houses.”

“ You are right, Catherine,” said the Queen ; “ and Mary will bear her like herself. But, alas ! your young and buoyant spirit can ill spell the causes which have broken mine. Forgive me, my children, and farewell for a while ; I will prepare both mind and body for this awful venture.”

They separated, till again called together by the tolling of the curfew. The Queen appeared grave, but firm and resolved ; the Lady Fleming, with the art of an experienced courtier, knew perfectly how to disguise her inward tremors ; Catherine’s eye was fired, as if with the boldness of the project, and the half-smile which dwelt upon her beautiful mouth seemed to contemn all the risk and all the consequences of discovery ; Roland, who felt how much success depended on his own address and boldness, summoned together his whole presence of mind, and if he found his spirits

flag for a moment, cast his eye upon Catherine, whom he thought he had never seen look so beautiful. "I may be foiled," he thought, "but, with this reward in prospect, they must bring the devil to aid them ere they cross me." Thus resolved, he stood like a greyhound in the slips, with hand heart, and eye intent upon making and seizing opportunity for the execution of their project.

The keys had, with the wonted ceremonial, been presented to the Lady Lochleven. She stood with her back to the casement, which, like that of the Queen's apartment, commanded a view of Kinross, with the church, which stands at some distance from the town, and nearer to the lake, then connected with the town by straggling cottages. With her back to the casement, then, and her face to the table, on which the keys lay for an instant while she tasted the various dishes which were placed there, stood the Lady of Lochleven, more provokingly intent than usual—so at least it seemed to her prisoners—upon the huge and heavy bunch of iron, the implements of their restraint. Just when, having finished her ceremony as taster of the Queen's table, she was about to take up the keys, the page, who stood beside her, and had handed her the dishes in succession, looked sidewise to the churchyard, and exclaimed he saw corpse-candles in the vault. The Lady of Lochleven was not without a touch, though a slight one, of the superstitions of the time: the fate of her sons made her alive to omens, and a corpse-light, as it was called, in the family burial-place boded death. She turned her head towards the casement—saw a distant glimmering—forgot her charge for one second, and in that second were lost the whole fruits of her former vigilance. The page held the forged keys under his cloak, and with great dexterity exchanged them for the real ones. His utmost address could not prevent a slight clash as he took up the latter bunch. "Who touches the keys?" said the lady; and while the page answered that the sleeve of his cloak had stirred them, she looked round, possessed herself of the bunch which now occupied the place of the genuine keys, and again turned to gaze at the supposed corpse-candles.

"I hold these gleams," she said, after a moment's consideration, "to come, not from the churchyard, but from the hut of the old gardener Blinkhoolie. I wonder what thrift that churl drives, that of late he hath ever had light in his house till the night grew deep. I thought him an industrious, peaceful man. If he turns resetter of idle companions and night-walkers, the place must be rid of him."

“He may work his baskets, perchance,” said the page, desirous to stop the train of her suspicion.

“Or nets, may he not?” answered the lady.

“Ay, madam,” said Roland, “for trout and salmon.”

“Or for fools and knaves,” replied the lady; “but this shall be looked after to-morrow. I wish your Grace and your company a good evening. Randal, attend us.” And Randal, who waited in the ante-chamber after having surrendered his bunch of keys, gave his escort to his mistress as usual, while, leaving the Queen’s apartments, she retired to her own.

“To-morrow!” said the page, rubbing his hands with glee as he repeated the lady’s last words; “fools look to to-morrow, and wise folk use to-night. May I pray you, my gracious liege, to retire for one half-hour, until all the castle is composed to rest? I must go and rub with oil these blessed implements of our freedom. Courage and constancy, and all will go well, provided our friends on the shore fail not to send the boat you spoke of.”

“Fear them not,” said Catherine, “they are true as steel—if our dear mistress do but maintain her noble and royal courage.”*

“Doubt not me, Catherine,” replied the Queen; “a while since I was overborne, but I have recalled the spirit of my earlier and more sprightly days, when I used to accompany my armed nobles, and wish to be myself a man, to know what life it was to be in the fields with sword and buckler, jack and knapsack!”

“O, the lark lives not a gayer life, nor sings a lighter and gayer song, than the merry soldier,” answered Catherine. “Your Grace shall be in the midst of them soon, and the look of such a liege sovereign will make each of your host worth three in the hour of need. But I must to my task.”

“We have but brief time,” said Queen Mary: “one of the two lights in the cottage is extinguished; that shows the boat is put off.”

“They will row very slow,” said the page, “or kent where depth permits, to avoid noise. To our several tasks. I will communicate with the good father.”

At the dead hour of midnight, when all was silent in the castle, the page put the key into the lock of the wicket which opened into the garden, and which was at the bottom of a staircase that descended from the Queen’s apartment. “Now, turn smooth and softly, thou good bolt,” said he,

* See Demeanor of Queen Mary. Note 25.

“if ever oil softened rust!” and his precautions had been so effectual that the bolt revolved with little or no sound of resistance. He ventured not to cross the threshold, but exchanging a word with the disguised abbot, asked if the boat were ready.

“This half-hour,” said the sentinel. “She lies beneath the wall, too close under the islet to be seen by the warder; but I fear she will hardly escape his notice in putting off again.”

“The darkness,” said the page, “and our profound silence, may take her off unobserved, as she came in. Hildebrand has the watch on the tower—a heavy-headed knave, who holds a can of ale to be the best head-piece upon a night-watch. He sleeps for a wager.”

“Then bring the Queen,” said the abbot, “and I will call Henry Seyton to assist them to the boat.”

On tiptoe, with noiseless step and suppressed breath, trembling at every rustle of their own apparel, one after another the fair prisoners glided down the winding stair, under the guidance of Roland Græme, and were received at the wicket-gate by Henry Seyton and the churchman. The former seemed instantly to take upon himself the whole direction of the enterprise. “My lord abbot,” he said, “give my sister your arm; I will conduct the Queen, and that youth will have the honor to guide Lady Fleming.”

This was no time to dispute the arrangement, although it was not that which Roland Græme would have chosen. Catherine Seyton, who well knew the garden path, tripped on before like a sylph, rather leading the abbot than receiving assistance; the Queen, her native spirit prevailing over female fear and a thousand painful reflections, moved steadily forward, by the assistance of Henry Seyton; while the Lady Fleming encumbered with her fears and her helplessness Roland Græme, who followed in the rear, and who bore under the other arm a packet of necessaries belonging to the Queen. The door of the garden, which communicated with the shore of the islet, yielded to one of the keys of which Roland had possessed himself, although not until he had tried several—a moment of anxious terror and expectation. The ladies were then partly led, partly carried, to the side of the lake, where a boat with six rowers attended them, the men couched along the bottom to secure them from observation. Henry Seyton placed the Queen in the stern; the abbot offered to assist Catherine, but she was seated by the Queen’s side before he could utter his proffer of help; and

Roland Græme was just lifting Lady Fleming over the boat-side when a thought suddenly occurred to him, and exclaiming, "Forgotten—forgotten! wait for me but one half minute," he replaced on the shore the helpless lady of the bed-chamber, threw the Queen's packet into the boat, and sped back through the garden with the noiseless speed of a bird on the wing.

"By Heaven, he is false at last!" said Seyton; "I ever feared it!"

"He is as true," said Catherine, "as Heaven itself, and that I will maintain."

"Be silent, minion," said her brother, "for shame, if not for fear. Fellows, put off, and row for your lives!"

"Help me—help me on board!" said the deserted Lady Fleming, and that louder than prudence warranted,

"Put off—put off!" cried Henry Seyton; "leave all behind, so the Queen is safe."

"Will you permit this, madam?" said Catherine, imploringly; "you leave your deliverer to death."

"I will not," said the Queen. "Seyton, I command you to stay at every risk."

"Pardon me, madam, if I disobey," said the intractable young man; and with one hand lifting in Lady Fleming, he began himself to push off the boat.

She was two fathoms' length from the shore, and the rowers were getting her head round, when Roland Græme, arriving, bounded from the beach, and attained the boat, overturning Seyton, on whom he lighted. The youth swore a deep but suppressed oath, and stopping Græme as he stepped towards the stern, said, "Your place is not with high-born dames; keep at the head and trim the vessel. Now give way—give way. Row, for God and the Queen!"

The rowers obeyed, and began to pull vigorously.

"Why did you not muffle the oars?" said Roland Græme; "the dash must awaken the sentinel. Row, lads, and get out of reach of shot; for had not old Hildebrand, the warder, supped upon poppy-porridge, this whispering must have waked him."

"It was all thine own delay," said Seyton; "thou shalt reckon with me hereafter for that and other matters."

But Roland's apprehension was verified too instantly to permit him to reply. The sentinel, whose slumbering had withstood the whispering, was alarmed by the dash of the oars. His challenge was instantly heard. "A boat—a boat! bring to, or I shoot!" And, as they continued to ply their

oars, he called aloud, "Treason!—treason!" rung the bell of the castle, and discharged his harquebuss at the boat. The ladies crowded on each other like startled wild-fowl, at the flash and report of the piece, while the men urged the rowers to the utmost speed. They heard more than one ball whiz along the surface of the lake, at no great distance from their little bark; and from the lights, which glanced like meteors from window to window, it was evident the whole castle was alarmed, and their escape discovered.

"Pull!" again exclaimed Seyton; "stretch to your oars, or I will spur you to the task with my dagger; they will launch a boat immediately."

"That is cared for," said Roland; "I locked gate and wicket on them when I went back, and no boat will stir from the island this night, if doors of good oak and bolts of iron can keep men within stone walls. And now I resign my office of porter of Lochleven, and give the keys to the Kelpie's keeping."

As the heavy keys plunged in the lake, the abbot, who till then had been repeating his prayers, exclaimed, "Now, bless thee, my son! for thy ready prudence puts shame on us all."*

"I knew," said Mary, drawing her breath more freely, as they were now out of reach of the musketry—"I knew my squire's truth, promptitude, and sagacity. I must have him dear friends with my no less true knights, Douglas and Seyton; but where, then, is Douglas?"

"Here, madam," answered the deep and melancholy voice of the boatman who sat next her, and who acted as steersman.

"Alas! was it you who stretched your body before me," said the Queen, "when the balls were raining around us?"

"Believe you," said he, in a low tone, "that Douglas would have resigned to any one the chance of protecting his Queen's life with his own?"

The dialogue was here interrupted by a shot or two from one of those small pieces of artillery called falconets, then used in defending castles. The shot was too vague to have any effect, but the broader flash, the deeper sound, the louder return which was made by the midnight echoes of Bennarty terrified and imposed silence on the liberated prisoners. The boat was alongside of a rude quay or landing-place, running out from a garden of considerable extent, ere any of them again attempted to speak. They landed, and while the

* See Escape of Queen Mary from Lochleven. Note 26.

abbot returned thanks aloud to Heaven, which had thus far favored their enterprise, Douglas enjoyed the best reward of his desperate undertaking, in conducting the Queen to the house of the gardener. Yet, not unmindful of Roland Græme, even in that moment of terror and exhaustion, Mary expressly commanded Seyton to give his assistance to Fleming, while Catherine voluntarily, and without bidding, took the arm of the page. Seyton presently resigned Lady Fleming to the care of the abbot, alleging he must look after their horses; and his attendants, disencumbering themselves of their boat-cloaks, hastened to assist him.

While Mary spent in the gardener's cottage the few minutes which were necessary to prepare the steeds for their departure, she perceived in a corner the old man to whom the garden belonged, and called him to approach. He came as it were with reluctance.

"How, brother," said the abbot, "so slow to welcome thy royal Queen and mistress to liberty and to her kingdom!"

The old man, thus admonished, came forward, and, in good terms of speech, gave her Grace joy of her deliverance.

The Queen returned him thanks in the most gracious manner, and added, "It will remain to us to offer some immediate reward for your fidelity, for we wot well your house has been long the refuge in which our trusty servants have met to concert measures for our freedom." So saying, she offered gold, and added, "We will consider your services more fully hereafter."

"Kneel, brother," said the abbot—"kneel instantly, and thank her Grace's kindness."

"Good brother, that wert once a few steps under me, and art still very many years younger," replied the gardener, pettishly, "let me do mine acknowledgments in my own way. Queens have knelt to me ere now, and in truth my knees are too old and stiff to bend even to this lovely-faced lady. May it please your Grace, if your Grace's servants have occupied my house, so that I could not call it mine own; if they have trodden down my flowers in the zeal of their midnight comings and goings, and destroyed the hope of the fruit season by bringing their war-horses into my garden; I do but crave of your Grace in requital that you will choose your residence as far from me as possible. I am an old man, who would willingly creep to my grave as easily as I can, in peace, goodwill, and quiet labor."

"I promise you fairly, good man," said the Queen, "I will not make yonder castle my residence again, if I can help it.

But let me press on you this money; it will make some amends for the havoc we have made in your little garden and orchard."

"I thank your Grace, but it will make me not the least amends," said the old man. "The ruined labors of a whole year are not so easily replaced to him who has perchance but that one year to live; and, besides, they tell me I must leave this place, and become a wanderer in mine old age—I that have nothing on earth saving these fruit-trees, and a few old parchments and family secrets not worth knowing. As for gold, if I had loved it, I might have remained lord abbot of St. Mary's; and yet I wot not, for if Abbot Boniface be but the poor peasant Blinkhoolie, his successor, the Abbot Ambrosius, is still transmitted for the worse into the guise of a sword-and-buckler-man."

"Ha! Is this indeed the Abbot Boniface of whom I have heard?" said the Queen. "It is indeed I who should have bent the knee for your blessing, good father!"

"Bend no knee to me, lady! The blessing of an old man, who is no longer an abbot, go with you over dale and down. I hear the trampling of your horses."

"Farewell, father," said the Queen. "When we are once more seated at Holyrood, we will neither forget thee nor thine injured garden."

"Forget us both," said the Ex-Abbot Boniface, "and may God be with you!"

As they hurried out of the house, they heard the old man talking and muttering to himself, as he hastily drew bolt and bar behind them.

"The revenge of the Douglasses will reach the poor old man," said the Queen. "God help me, I ruin every one whom I approach!"

"His safety is cared for," said Seyton; "he must not remain here, but will be privately conducted to a place of greater security. But I would your Grace were in the saddle. To horse!—to horse!"

The party of Seyton and of Douglas were increased; to about ten by those attendants who had remained with the horses. The Queen and her ladies, with all the rest who came from the boat, were instantly mounted; and holding aloof from the village, which was already alarmed by the firing from the castle, with Douglas acting as their guide, they soon reached the open ground, and began to ride as fast as was consistent with keeping together in good order.

CHAPTER XXXVI

He mounted himself on a coal-black steed,
And her on a freckled gray,
With a bugelet horn hung down from his side,
And roundly they rode away.

Old Ballad.

THE influence of the free air, the rushing of the horses over high and low, the ringing of the bridles, the excitation at once arising from a sense of freedom and of rapid motion, gradually dispelled the confused and dejected sort of stupefaction by which Queen Mary was at first overwhelmed. She could not at last conceal the change of her feelings to the person who rode at her rein, and who she doubted not was the Father Ambrosius ; for Seyton, with all the heady impetuosity of a youth, proud, and justly so, of his first successful adventure, assumed all the bustle and importance of commander of the little party, which escorted, in the language of the time, the Fortune of Scotland. He now led the van, now checked his bounding steed till the rear had come up, exhorted the leaders to keep a steady, though rapid, pace, and commanded those who were hindmost of the party to use their spurs, and allow no interval to take place in their line of march ; and anon he was beside the Queen or her ladies, inquiring how they brooked the hasty journey, and whether they had any commands for him. But while Seyton thus busied himself in the general cause with some advantage to the regular order of the march, and a good deal of personal ostentation, the horseman who rode beside the Queen gave her his full and undivided attention, as if he had been waiting upon some superior being. When the road was rugged and dangerous, he abandoned almost entirely the care of his own horse, and kept his hand constantly upon the Queen's bridle ; if a river or larger brook traversed their course, his left arm retained her in the saddle, while his right held her palfrey's rein.

"I had not thought, reverend father," said the Queen, when they reached the other bank, "that the convent bred such good horsemen." The person she addressed sighed, but made no other answer. "I know not how it is," said Queen

Mary, "but either the sense of freedom, or the pleasure of my favorite exercise, from which I have been so long debarred, or both combined, seem to have given wings to me: no fish ever shot through the water, no bird through the air, with the hurried feeling of liberty and rapture with which I sweep through this night-wind, and over these wolds. Nay, such is the magic of feeling myself once more in the saddle, that I could almost swear I am at this moment mounted on my own favorite Rosabelle, who was never matched in Scotland for swiftness, for ease of motion, and for sureness of foot."

"And if the horse which bears so dear a burden could speak," answered the deep voice of the melancholy George of Douglas, "would she not reply, who but Rosabelle ought at such an emergence as this to serve her beloved mistress, or who but Douglas ought to hold her bridle-rein?"

Queen Mary started; she foresaw at once all the evils like to arise to herself and him from the deep enthusiastic passion of this youth; but her feelings as a woman, grateful at once and compassionate, prevented her assuming the dignity of a Queen, and she endeavored to continue the conversation in an indifferent tone.

"Methought," she said, "I heard that, at the division of my spoils, Rosabelle had become the property of Lord Morton's paramour and lady-love, Alice."

"The noble palfrey had indeed been destined to so base a lot," answered Douglas. "She was kept under four keys, and under the charge of a numerous crew of grooms and domestics; but Queen Mary needed Rosabelle, and Rosabelle is here."

"And was it well, Douglas," said Queen Mary, "when such fearful risks of various kinds must needs be encountered, that you should augment their perils to yourself for a subject of so little moment as a palfrey?"

"Do you call that of little moment," answered Douglas, "which has afforded you a moment's pleasure? Did you not start with joy when I first said you were mounted on Rosabelle? And to purchase you that pleasure, though it were to last no longer than the flash of lightning doth, would not Douglas have risked his life a thousand times?"

"O, peace, Douglas—peace," said the Queen, "this is unfitting language; and, besides, I would speak," said she, recollecting herself, "with the abbot of St. Mary's. Nay, Douglas, I will not let you quit my rein in displeasure."

"Displeasure, lady!" answered Douglas; "alas! sorrow

is all that I can feel for your well-warranted contempt. I should be as soon displeased with Heaven for refusing the wildest wish which mortal can form."

"Abide by my rein, however," said Mary, "there is room for my lord abbot on the other side; and, besides, I doubt if his assistance would be so useful to Rosabelle and me as yours has been, should the road again require it."

The abbot came up on the other side, and she immediately opened a conversation with him on the topic of the state of parties, and the plan fittest for her to pursue in consequence of her deliverance. In this conversation Douglas took little share, and never but when directly applied to by the Queen, while, as before, his attention seemed entirely engrossed by the care of Mary's personal safety. She learned, however, she had a new obligation to him, since, by his contrivance, the abbot, whom he had furnished with the family password, was introduced into the castle as one of the garrison.

Long before daybreak they ended their hasty and perilous journey before the gates of Niddrie, a castle in West Lothian, belonging to Lord Seyton. When the Queen was about to alight, Henry Seyton, preventing Douglas, received her in his arms, and, kneeling down, prayed her Majesty to enter the house of his father, her faithful servant.

"Your Grace," he added, "may repose yourself here in perfect safety: it is already garrisoned with good men for your protection; and I have sent a post to my father, whose instant arrival, at the head of five hundred men, may be looked for. Do not dismay yourself, therefore, should your sleep be broken by the trampling of horse; but only think that here are some scores more of the saucy Seytons come to attend you."

"And by better friends than the saucy Seytons a Scottish queen cannot be guarded," replied Mary. "Rosabelle went fleet as the summer breeze, and well-nigh as easy; but it is long since I have been a traveler, and I feel that repose will be welcome. Catherine, *ma mignone*, you must sleep in my apartment to-night, and bid me welcome to your noble father's castle. Thanks—thanks to all my kind deliverers; thanks, and a good-night is all I can now offer; but if I climb once more to the upper side of Fortune's wheel I will not have her bandage. Mary Stuart will keep her eyes open, and distinguish her friends. Seyton, I need scarcely recommend the venerable abbot, the Douglas, and my page to your honorable care and hospitality."

Henry Seyton bowed, and Catherine and Lady Fleming

attended the Queen to her apartment; where, acknowledging to them that she should have found it difficult in that moment to keep her promise of holding her eyes open, she resigned herself to repose, and awakened not till the morning was advanced.

Mary's first feeling when she awoke was the doubt of her freedom; and the impulse prompted her to start from bed, and hastily throwing her mantle over her shoulders, to look out at the casement of her apartment. O sight of joy! instead of the crystal sheet of Lochleven, unaltered save by the influence of the wind, a landscape of wood and moorland lay before her, and the park around the castle was occupied by the troops of her most faithful and most favorite nobles.

"Rise—rise, Catherine," cried the enraptured Princess—"arise and come hither! Here are swords and spears in true hands, and glittering armor on loyal breasts. Here are banners, my girl, floating in the wind, as lightly as summer cloud. Great God! what pleasure to my weary eyes to trace their devices—thine own brave father's—the princely Hamilton's—the faithful Fleming's. See—see—they have caught a glimpse of me, and throng towards the window!"

She flung the casement open, and with her bare head, from which the tresses flew back loose and disheveled, her fair arm, slenderly veiled by her mantle, returned by motion and sign the exulting shouts of the warriors, which echoed for many a furlong around. When the first burst of ecstatic joy was over she recollected how lightly she was dressed, and, putting her hands to her face, which was covered with blushes at the recollection, withdrew abruptly from the window. The cause of her retreat was easily conjectured, and increased the general enthusiasm for the princess who had forgotten her rank in her haste to acknowledge the services of her subjects. The unadorned beauties of the lovely woman, too, moved the military spectators more than the highest display of her regal state might; and what might have seemed too free in her mode of appearing before them was more than atoned for by the enthusiasm of the moment, and by the delicacy evinced in her hasty retreat. Often as the shouts died away, as often were they renewed, till wood and hill rung again; and many a deep oath was made that morning on the cross of the sword, that the hand should not part with the weapon till Mary Stuart was restored to her rights. But what are promises, what the hopes of mortals?

In ten days the gallant and devoted votaries were slain, were captives, or had fled.

Mary flung herself into the nearest seat, and still blushing, yet half-smiling, exclaimed, "*Ma mignonne*, what will they think of me?—to show myself to them with my bare feet hastily thrust into my slippers—only this loose mantle about me—my hair loose on my shoulders—my arms and neck so bare. O, the best they can suppose is, that her abode in yonder dungeon has turned their Queen's brain! But my rebel subjects saw me exposed when I was in the depth of affliction, why should I hold colder ceremony with these faithful and loyal men? Call Fleming, however; I trust she has not forgotten the little mail with my apparel. We must be as brave as we can, *mignonne*."

"Nay, madam, our good Lady Fleming was in no case to remember anything."

"You jest, Catherine," said the Queen, somewhat offended; "it is not her nature, surely, to forget her duty so far as to leave us without a change of apparel?"

"Roland Græme, madam, took care of that," answered Catherine; "for he threw the mail with your Highness's clothes and jewels into the boat, ere he ran back to lock the gate. I never saw so awkward a page as that youth: the packet wellnigh fell on my head."

"He shall make thy heart amends, my girl," said Queen Mary, laughing, "for that and all other offenses given. But call Fleming, and let us put ourselves into apparel to meet our faithful lords."

Such had been the preparations, and such was the skill of Lady Fleming, that the Queen appeared before her assembled nobles in such attire as became, through it could not enchain, her natural dignity. With the most winning courtesy, she expressed to each individual her grateful thanks, and dignified not only every noble, but many of the lesser barons, by her peculiar attention.

"And whither now, my lords?" she said; "what way do your counsels determine for us?"

"To Draphane Castle," replied Lord Arbroath, "if your Majesty is so pleased, and thence to Dunbarton, to place your Grace's person in safety, after which we long to prove if these traitors will abide us in the field."

"And when do we journey?"

"We propose," said Lord Seyton, "if your Grace's fatigue will permit, to take horse after the morning's meal."

"Your pleasure, my lords, is mine," replied the Queen.

“we will rule our journey by your wisdom now, and hope hereafter to have the advantage of governing by it our kingdom. You will permit my ladies and me, my good lords, to break our fast along with you ; we must be half soldiers ourselves, and set state apart.”

Low bowed many a helmeted head at this gracious proffer, when the Queen, glancing her eyes through the assembled leaders, missed both Douglas and Roland Græme, and inquired for them in a whisper to Catherine Seyton.

“They are in yonder oratory, madam, sad enough,” replied Catherine, and the Queen observed that her favorite’s eyes were red with weeping.

“This must not be,” said the Queen. “Keep the company amused. I will seek them, and introduce them myself.”

She went into the oratory, where the first she met was George Douglas, standing, or rather reclining, in the recess of a window, his back rested against the wall and his arms folded on his breast. At the sight of the Queen he started, and his countenance showed, for an instant, an expression of intense delight, which was instantly exchanged for his usual deep melancholy.

“What means this ?” she said. “Douglas, why does the first deviser and bold executor of the happy scheme for our freedom shun the company of his fellow-nobles, and of the sovereign whom he has obliged ?”

“Madam,” replied Douglas, “those whom you grace with your presence bring followers to aid your cause, wealth to support your state—can offer you halls in which to feast, and impregnable castles for your defense. I am a houseless and landless man—disinherited by my [grand-] mother, and laid under her malediction—disowned by my name and kindred—who bring nothing to your standard but a single sword, and the poor life of its owner.”

“Do you mean to upbraid me, Douglas,” replied the Queen, “by showing what you have lost for my sake ?”

“God forbid, madam !” interrupted the young man, eagerly ; “were it to do again, and had I ten times as much rank and wealth, and twenty times as many friends to lose, my losses would be overpaid by the first step you made, as a free princess, upon the soil of your native kingdom.”

“And what then ails you, that you will not rejoice with those who rejoice upon the same joyful occasion ?” said the Queen.

“Madam,” replied the youth, “though exheridated and disowned, I am yet a Douglas : with most of yonder nobles

my family have been in feud for ages—a cold reception amongst them were an insult, and a kind one yet more humiliating.”

“For shame, Douglas,” replied the Queen, “shake off this unmanly gloom! I can make thee match for the best of them in title and fortune, and, believe me, I will. Go then amongst them, I command you.”

“That word,” said Douglas, “is enough. I go. This only let me say, that not for wealth or title would I have done that which I have done. Mary Stuart will not, and the Queen cannot, reward me.”

So saying, he left the oratory, mingled with the nobles, and placed himself at the table. The Queen looked after him, and put her kerchief to her eyes.

“Now, Our Lady pity me,” she said, “for no sooner are my prison cares ended than those which beset me as a woman and a queen again thicken around me. Happy Elizabeth! to whom political interest is everything, and whose heart never betrays thy head. And now must I seek this other boy, if I would prevent daggers-drawing betwixt him and the young Seyton.”

Roland Græme was in the same oratory, but at such a distance from Douglas, that he could not overhear what passed betwixt the Queen and him. He also was moody and thoughtful, but cleared his brow at the Queen’s question, “How now, Roland? you are negligent in your attendance this morning. Are you so much overcome with your night’s ride?”

“Not so, gracious madam,” answered Græme; “but I am told the page of Lochleven is not the page of Niddrie Castle; and so Master Henry Seyton hath in a manner been pleased to supersede my attendance.”

“Now, Heaven forgive me,” said the Queen, “how soon these cock-chickens begin to spar! With children and boys, at least, I may be a queen. I will have you friends. Some one send me Henry Seyton hither.” As she spoke the last words aloud, the youth whom she had named entered the apartment. “Come hither,” she said, “Henry Seyton. I will have you give your hand to this youth, who so well aided in the plan of my escape.”

“Willingly, madam,” answered Seyton, “so that the youth will grant me, as a boon, that he touch not the hand of another Seyton whom he knows of. My hand has passed current for hers with him before now; and to win my friendship, he must give up thoughts of my sister’s love.”

“Henry Seyton,” said the Queen, “does it become you to add any condition to my command?”

“Madam,” said Henry, “I am the servant of your Grace’s throne, son to the most loyal man in Scotland. Our goods, our castles, our blood, are yours; our honor is in our own keeping. I could say more, but——”

“Nay, speak on, rude boy,” said the Queen; “what avails it that I am released from Lochleven, if I am thus enthralled under the yoke of my pretended deliverers, and prevented from doing justice to one who has deserved as well of me as yourself?”

“Be not in this distemperature of me, sovereign lady,” said Roland, “this young gentleman, being the faithful servant of your Grace, and the brother of Catherine Seyton, bears that about him which will charm down my passion at the hottest.”

“I warn thee once more,” said Henry Seyton, haughtily, “that you make no speech which may infer that the daughter of Lord Seyton can be aught to thee beyond what she is to every churl’s blood in Scotland.”

The Queen was again about to interfere, for Roland’s complexion rose, and it became somewhat questionable how long his love for Catherine would suppress the natural fire of his temper. But the interposition of another person, hitherto unseen, prevented Mary’s interference. There was in the oratory a separate shrine, inclosed with a high screen of pierced oak, within which was placed an image of St. Bennet, of peculiar sanctity. From this recess, in which she had been probably engaged in her devotions, issued suddenly Magdalen Græme, and addressed Henry Seyton in reply to his last offensive expression—“And of what clay, then, are they molded, these Seytons, that the blood of the Græmes may not aspire to mingle with theirs? Know, proud boy, that when I called this youth my daughter’s child, I affirm his descent from Malise Earl of Strathern, called Malsie with the Bright Brand; and I trow the blood of your house springs from no higher source.”

“Good mother,” said Seyton, “methinks your sanctity should make you superior to these worldly vanities; and indeed it seems to have rendered you somewhat oblivious touching them, since, to be of gentle descent, the father’s name and lineage must be as well qualified as the mother’s.”

“And if I say he comes of the blood of Avenel by the father’s side,” replied Magdalen Græme, “name I not blood as richly colored as thine own?”

“Of Avenel!” said the Queen; “is my page descended of Avenel?”

“Ay, gracious Princess, and the last male heir of that ancient house. Julian Avenel was his father, who fell in the battle against the Southron.”

“I have heard the tale of sorrow,” said the Queen; “it was thy daughter, then, who followed that unfortunate baron to the field, and died on his body? Alas! how many ways does woman’s affection find to work out her own misery! The tale has oft been told and sung in hall and bower. And thou, Roland, art that child of misfortune, who was left among the dead and dying? Henry Seyton, he is thine equal in blood and birth.”

“Scarcely so,” said Henry Seyton, “even were he legitimate; but if the tale be told and sung aright, Julian Avenel was a false knight, and his leman a frail and credulous maiden.”

“Now, by Heaven, thou liest!” said Roland Græme, and laid his hand on his sword. The entrance of Lord Seyton, however, prevented violence.

“Save me, my lord,” said the Queen; “and separate these wild and untamed spirits.”

“How, Henry!” said the baron, “are my castle and the Queen’s presence no check on thy insolence and impetuosity? And with whom art thou brawling? Unless my eyes spell that token false, it is with the very youth who aided me so gallantly in the skirmish with the Leslies. Let me look, fair youth, at the medal which thou wearest in thy cap. By St. Bennet, it is the same! Henry, I command thee to forbear him, as thou lovest my blessing——”

“And as you honor my command,” said the Queen; “good service hath he done me.”

“Ay, madam,” replied young Seyton, “as when he carried the billet, inclosed in the sword-sheath, to Lochleven. Marry, the good youth knew no more than a pack-horse what he was carrying.”

“But I, who dedicated him to this great work,” said Magdalen Græme—“I, by whose advice and agency this just heir hath been unloosed from her thralldom—I, who spared not the last remaining hope of a falling house in this great action—I, at least, knew and counseled; and what merit may be mine, let the reward, most gracious Queen, descend upon this youth. My ministry here is ended: you are free—a sovereign princess at the head of a gallant army, surrounded by valiant barons. My service could avail you no farther,

but might well prejudice you ; your fortune now rests upon men's hearts and men's swords. May they prove as trusty as the faith of women !”

“ You will not leave us, mother,” said the Queen—“ you whose practises in our favor were so powerful, who dared so many dangers, and wore so many disguises, to blind our enemies and to confirm our friends—you will not leave us in the dawn of our reviving fortunes, ere we have time to know and to thank you ?”

“ You cannot know her,” answered Magdalen Græme, “ who knows not herself : there are times when, in this woman's frame of mine, there is the strength of him of Gath ; in this overtoiled brain, the wisdom of the most sage counselor ; and again the mist is on me, and my strength is weakness, my wisdom folly. I have spoken before princes and cardinals—ay, noble Princess, even before the princess of thine own house of Lorraine—and I know not whence the words of persuasion came which flowed from my lips, and were drunk in by their ears. And now, even when I most need words of persuasion, there is something which chokes my voice and robs me of utterance.”

“ If there be aught in my power to do thee pleasure,” said the Queen, “ the barely naming it shall avail as well as all thine eloquence.”

“ Sovereign lady,” replied the enthusiast, “ it shames me that at this high moment something of human frailty should cling to one whose vows the saints have heard, whose labors in the rightful cause Heaven has prospered. But it will be thus, while the living spirit is shrined in the clay of mortality. I will yield to the folly,” she said, weeping as she spoke, “ and it shall be the last.” Then seizing Roland's hand, she led him to the Queen's feet, kneeling herself upon one knee, and causing him to kneel on both. “ Mighty Princess,” she said, “ look on this flower—it was found by a kindly stranger on a bloody field of battle, and long it was ere my anxious eyes saw, and my arms pressed, all that was left of my only daughter. For your sake, and for that of the holy faith we both profess, I could leave this plant, while it was yet tender, to the nurture of strangers—ay, of enemies, by whom, perchance, his blood would have been poured forth as wine, had the heretic Glendinning known that he had in his house the heir of Julian Avenel. Since then I have seen him only in a few hours of doubt and dread, and now I part with the child of my love—forever—forever ! O, for every weary step I have made in your

rightful cause, in this and in foreign lands, give protection to the child whom I must no more call mine !”

“ I swear to you, mother,” said the Queen, deeply affected, “ that, for your sake and his own, his happiness and fortune shall be our charge !”

“ I thank you, daughter of princes,” said Magdalen, and pressed her lips, first to the Queen’s hand, then to the brow of her grandson. “ And now,” she said, drying her tears, and rising with dignity, “ earth has had its own, and Heaven claims the rest. Lioness of Scotland, go forth and conquer ! and if the prayers of a devoted votaress can avail thee, they will rise in many a land, and from many a distant shrine. I will glide like a ghost from land to land, from temple to temple ; and where the very name of my country is unknown, the priests shall ask who is the queen of that distant northern clime, for whom the aged pilgrim was so fervent in prayer. Farewell ! Honor be thine, and earthly prosperity, if it be the will of God ; if not, may the penance thou shalt do here ensure thy happiness hereafter ! Let no one speak or follow me—my resolution is taken—my vow cannot be canceled.”

She glided from their presence as she spoke, and her last look was upon her beloved grandchild. He would have risen and followed, but the Queen and Lord Seyton interfered.

“ Press not on her now,” said Lord Seyton, “ if you would not lose her forever. Many a time have we seen the sainted mother, and often at the most needful moment ; but to press on her privacy, or to thwart her purpose, is a crime which she cannot pardon. I trust we shall yet see her at her need—a holy woman she is for certain, and delicately wholly to prayer and penance ; and hence the heretics hold her as one distracted, while true Catholics deem her a saint.”

“ Let me then hope,” said the Queen, “ that you, my lord, will aid me in the execution of her last request.”

“ What ! in the protection of my young second ?—cheerfully—that is, in all that your Majesty can think it fitting to ask of me.” Henry, give thy hand upon the instant to Roland Avenel, for so I presume he must now be called.”

“ And shall be lord of the barony,” said the Queen, “ if God prosper our rightful arms.”

“ It can only be to restore it to my kind protectress, who now holds it,” said young Avenel. “ I would rather be landless all my life than she lost a rood of ground by me.”

“Nay,” said the Queen, looking to Lord Seyton, “his mind matches his birth. Henry, thou hast not yet given thy hand.”

“It is his,” said Henry, giving it with some appearance of courtesy, but whispering Roland at the same time, “For all this thou hast not my sister’s.”

“May it please your Grace,” said Lord Seyton, “now that these passages are over, to honor our poor meal. Time it were that our banners were reflected in the Clyde. We must to horse with as little delay as may be.”

[The following text is extremely faint and largely illegible, appearing to be bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.]

CHAPTER XXXVII

Ay, sir—our ancient crown, in these wild times,
Oft stood upon a cast; the gamester's ducat,
So often staked, and lost, and then regain'd,
Scarce knew so many hazards.

The Spanish Father.

It is not our object to enter into the historical part of the reign of the ill-fated Mary, or to recount how, during the week which succeeded her flight from Lochleven, her partisans mustered around her with their followers, forming a gallant army, amounting to six thousand men. So much light has been lately thrown on the most minute details of the period by Mr. Chalmers, in his valuable *History of Queen Mary*, that the reader may be safely referred to it for the fullest information which ancient records afford concerning that interesting time. It is sufficient for our purpose to say, that while Mary's headquarters were at Hamilton, the Regent and his adherents had, in the King's name, assembled a host at Glasgow, inferior indeed to that of the Queen in numbers, but formidable from the military talents of Murray, Morton, the Laird of Grange, and others, who had been trained from their youth in foreign and domestic wars.

In these circumstances, it was the obvious policy of Queen Mary to avoid a conflict, secure that, were her person once in safety, the number of her adherents must daily increase; whereas, the forces of those opposed to her must, as had frequently happened in the previous history of her reign, have diminished, and their spirits become broken. And so evident was this to her counselors, that they resolved their first step should be to place the Queen in the strong castle of Dunbarton, there to await the course of events, the arrival of succors from France, and the levies which were made by her adherents in every province in Scotland. Accordingly, orders were given that all men should be on horseback or on foot, appareled in their armor, and ready to follow the Queen's standard in array of battle, the avowed determination being to escort her to the castle of Dunbarton in defiance of her enemies.

The muster was made upon Hamilton Moor, and the march

commenced in all the pomp of feudal times. Military music sounded, banners and pennons waved, armor glittered far and wide, and spears glanced and twinkled like stars in a frosty sky. The gallant spectacle of warlike parade was on this occasion dignified by the presence of the Queen herself, who, with a fair retinue of ladies and household attendants, and a special guard of gentlemen, amongst whom young Seyton and Roland were distinguished, gave grace at once and confidence to the army, which spread its ample files before, around, and behind her. Many churchmen also joined the cavalcade, most of whom did not scruple to assume arms, and declare their intention of wielding them in defense of Mary and the Catholic faith. Not so the abbot of St. Mary's. Roland had not seen this prelate since the night of their escape from Lochleven, and he now beheld him, robed in the dress of his order, assume his station near the Queen's person. Roland hastened to pull off his basnet, and beseech the abbot's blessing.

"Thou hast it, my son!" said the priest; "I see thee now under thy true name, and in thy rightful garb. The helmet with the holly-branch befits your brows well. I have long waited for the hour thou shouldest assume it."

"Then you knew of my descent, my good father?" said Roland.

"I did so, but it was under seal of confession from thy grandmother; nor was I at liberty to tell the secret till she herself should make it known."

"Her reason for such secrecy, my father?" said Roland Avenel.

"Fear, perchance, of my brother—a mistaken fear, for Halbert would not, to ensure himself a kingdom, have offered wrong to an orphan; besides that your title, in quiet times, even had your father done your mother that justice which I well hope he did, could not have competed with that of my brother's wife, the child of Julian's elder brother."

"They need fear no competition from me," said Avenel.

"Scotland is wide enough, and there are many manors to win, without plundering my benefactor. But prove to me, my reverend father, that my father was just to my mother; show me that I may call myself a legitimate Avenel, and make me your bounden slave forever!"

"Ay," replied the abbot, "I hear the Seytons hold thee cheap for that stain on thy shield. Something, however, I have learnt from the late Abbot Boniface, which, if it prove sooth, may redeem that reproach."

“Tell me that blessed news,” said Roland, “and the future service of my life——”

“Rash boy!” said the abbot, “I should but madden thine impatient temper by exciting hopes that may never be fulfilled, and is this a time for them? Think on what perilous march we are bound, and if thou hast a sin unconfessed, neglect not the only leisure which Heaven may perchance afford thee for confession and absolution.”

“There will be time enough for both, I trust, when we reach Dunbarton,” answered the page.

“Ay,” said the abbot, “thou crowest as loudly as the rest; but we are not yet at Dunbarton, and there is a lion in the path.”

“Mean you Murray, Morton, and the other rebels at Glasgow, my reverend father? Tush! they dare not look on the royal banner.”

“Even so,” replied the abbot, “speak many of those who are older, and should be wiser, than thou. I have returned from the southern shires, where I left many a chief of name arming in the Queen’s interest. I left the lords here wise and considered men; I find them madmen on my return: they are willing, for mere pride and vainglory, to brave the enemy, and to carry the Queen, as it were in triumph, past the walls of Glasgow, and under the beards of the adverse army. Seldom does Heaven smile on such mistimed confidence. We shall be encountered, and that to the purpose.”

“And so much the better,” replied Roland; “the field of battle was my cradle.”

“Beware it be not thy dying-bed,” said the abbot. “But what avails it whispering to young wolves the dangers of the chase? You will know, perchance, ere this day is out, what yonder men are, whom you hold in rash contempt.”

“Why, what are they?” said Henry Seyton, who now joined them. “Have they sinews of wire and flesh of iron? Will lead pierce and steel cut them? If so, reverend father, we have little to fear.”

“They are evil men,” said the abbot, “but the trade of war demands no saints. Murray and Morton are known to be the best generals in Scotland. No one ever saw Lindsay’s or Ruthven’s back. Kirkcaldy of Grange was named by the Constable Montmorency the first soldier in Europe. My brother, too good a name for such a cause, has been far and wide known for a leader.”

“The better—the better!” said Seyton, triumphantly; “we shall have all these traitors of rank and name in a fair

field before us. Our cause is the best, our numbers are the strongest, our hearts and limbs match theirs. St. Bennet, and set on !”

The abbot made no reply, but seemed lost in reflection ; and his anxiety in some measure communicated itself to Roland Avenel, who ever, as their line of march led over a ridge or an eminence, cast an anxious look towards the towers of Glasgow, as if he expected to see symptoms of the enemy issuing forth. It was not that he feared the fight, but the issue was of such deep import to his country and to himself that the natural fire of his spirit burned with a less lively, though with a more intense, glow. Love, honor, fame, fortune, all seemed to depend on the issue of one field, rashly hazarded perhaps, but now likely to become unavoidable and decisive.

When, at length, their march came to be nearly parallel with the city of Glasgow, Roland became sensible that the high grounds before them were already in part occupied by a force, showing, like their own, the royal banner of Scotland, and on the point of being supported by columns of infantry and squadrons of horse, which the city gates had poured forth, and which hastily advanced to sustain those troops who already possessed the ground in front of the Queen's forces. Horseman after horseman galloped in from the advanced guard, with tidings that Murray had taken the field with his whole army ; that his object was to intercept the Queen's march, and his purpose unquestionable to hazard a battle. It was now that the tempers of men were subjected to a sudden and a severe trial ; and that those who had too presumptuously concluded that they should pass without combat were something disconcerted, when, at once, and with little time to deliberate, they found themselves placed in front of a resolute enemy. Their chiefs immediately assembled around the Queen, and held a hasty council of war. Mary's quivering lip confessed the fear which she endeavored to conceal under a bold and dignified demeanor. But her efforts were overcome by painful recollections of the disastrous issue of her last appearance in arms at Carberry Hill ; and, when she meant to have asked them their advice for ordering the battle, she involuntarily inquired whether there were no means of escaping without an engagement ?

“ Escaping !” answered the Lord Seyton. “ When I stand as one to ten of your Highness's enemies, I may think of escape, but never while I stand with three to two !”

“ Battle !—battle !” exclaimed the assembled lords ; “ we

will drive the rebels from their vantage ground, as the hound turns the hare on the hillside."

"Methinks, my noble lords," said the abbot, "it were as well to prevent his gaining that advantage. Our road lies through yonder hamlet on the brow, and whichever party hath the luck to possess it, with its little gardens and inclosures, will attain a post of great defense."

"The reverend father is right," said the Queen. "O, haste thee, Seyton—haste, and get thither before them; they are marching like the wind."

Seyton bowed low, and turned his horse's head. "Your Highness honors me," he said; "I will instantly press forward and seize the pass."

"Not before me, my lord, whose charge is the command of the vanguard," said the Lord of Arbroath.

"Before you, or any Hamilton in Scotland," said the Seyton, "having the Queen's command. Follow me, gentlemen, my vassals and kinsmen. St. Bennet, and set on!"

"And follow me," said Arbroath, "my noble kinsmen and brave men-tenants; we will see which will first reach the post of danger. For God and Queen Mary!"

"Ill-omened haste and most unhappy strife," said the abbot, who saw them and their followers rush hastily and emulously to ascend the height, without waiting till their men were placed in order. "And you, gentlemen," he continued, addressing Roland and Seyton, who were each about to follow those who hastened thus disorderly to the conflict, "will you leave the Queen's person unguarded?"

"O, leave me not, gentlemen!" said the Queen—"Roland and Seyton, do not leave me; there are enough of arms to strike in this fell combat—withdraw not those to whom I trust for my safety!"

"We may not leave her Grace," said Roland, looking at Seyton, and turning his horse.

"I ever looked when thou wouldst find out that," rejoined the fiery youth.

Roland made no answer, but bit his lip till the blood came, and spurring his horse up to the side of Catherine Seyton's palfrey, he whispered in a low voice, "I never thought to have done aught to deserve you; but this day I have heard myself upbraided with cowardice, and my sword remained still sheathed, and all for the love of you."

"There is madness among us all," said the damsel: "my father, my brother, and you are all alike bereft of reason. Ye should think only of this poor Queen, and you are all

inspired by your own absurd jealousies. The monk is the only soldier and man of sense amongst you all. My lord abbot," she cried aloud, "were it not better we should draw to the westward, and wait the event that God shall send us, instead of remaining here in the highway, endangering the Queen's person, and cumbering the troops in their advance?"

"You say well, my daughter," replied the abbot; "had we but one to guide us where the Queen's person may be in safety! Our nobles hurry to the conflict, without casting a thought on the very cause of the war."

"Follow me," said a knight, or man-at-arms, well mounted, and accoutred completely in black armor, but having the visor of his helmet closed, and bearing no crest on his helmet, or device upon his shield.

"We will follow no stranger," said the abbot, "without some warrant of his truth."

"I am a stranger and in your hands," said the horseman; "if you wish to know more of me, the Queen herself will be your warrant."

The Queen had remained fixed to the spot, as if disabled by fear, yet mechanically smiling, bowing, and waving her hand, as banners were lowered and spears depressed before her, while, emulating the strife betwixt Seyton and Arbroath, band on band pressed forward their march towards the enemy. Scarce, however, had the black rider whispered something in her ear, than she assented to what he said; and when he spoke aloud, and with an air of command, "Gentlemen, it is the Queen's pleasure that you should follow me," Mary uttered, with something like eagerness, the word "Yes."

All were in motion in an instant; for the black horseman, throwing off a sort of apathy of manner which his first appearance indicated, spurred his horse, to and fro, making him take such active bounds and short turns as showed the rider master of the animal; and getting the Queen's little retinue in some order for marching, he led them to the left, directing his course towards a castle, which, crowning a gentle yet commanding eminence, presented an extensive view over the country beneath, and, in particular, commanded a view of those heights which both armies hastened to occupy, and which it was now apparent must almost instantly be the scene of struggle and dispute.

"Yonder towers," said the abbot, questioning the sable horseman, "to whom do they belong? and are they now in the hands of friends?"

“They are untenanted,” replied the stranger, “or, at least, they have no hostile inmates. But urge these youths, sir abbot, to make more haste; this is but an evil time to satisfy their idle curiosity, by peering out upon the battle in which they are to take no share.”

“The worse luck mine,” said Henry Seyton, who overheard him; “I would rather be under my father’s banner at this moment than be made chamberlain of Holyrood, for this my present duty of peaceful ward well and patiently discharged.”

“Your place under your father’s banner will shortly be right dangerous,” said Roland Avenel, who, pressing his horse towards the westward, had still his look reverted to the armies; “for I see yonder body of cavalry which presses from the eastward will reach the village ere Lord Seyton can gain it.”

“They are but cavalry,” said Seyton, looking attentively; “they cannot hold the village without shot of harquebuss.”

“Look more closely,” said Roland; “you will see that each of these horsemen who advance so rapidly from Glasgow carries a footman behind him.”

“Now, by Heaven, he speaks well!” said the black cavalier; “one of you two must go carry the news to Lord Seyton and Lord Arbroath, that they hasten not their horsemen on before the foot, but advance more regularly.”

“Be that my errand,” said Roland, “for I first marked the stratagem of the enemy.”

“But, by your leave,” said Seyton, “yonder is my father’s banner engaged, and it best becomes me to go to the rescue.”

“I will stand by the Queen’s decision,” said Roland Avenel.

“What new appeal?—what new quarrel?” said Queen Mary. “Are there not in yonder dark host enemies enough to Mary Stuart, but must her very friends turn enemies to each other?”

“Nay, madam,” said Roland, “the young Master of Seyton and I did but dispute who should leave your person to do a most needful message to the host. He thought his rank entitled him, and I deemed that the person of least consequence, being myself, were better periled——”

“Not so,” said the Queen; “if one must leave me, be it Seyton.”

Henry Seyton bowed till the white plumes on his helmet mixed with the flowing mane of his gallant war-horse, then placed himself firm in his saddle, shook his lance aloft with an air of triumph and determination, and striking his horse

with the spurs, made towards his father's banner, which was still advancing up the hill, and dashed his steed over every obstacle that occurred in his headlong path.

"My brother! my father!" exclaimed Catherine, with an expression of agonized apprehension—"they are in the midst of peril, and I in safety!"

"Would to God," said Roland, "that I were with them, and could ransom every drop of their blood by two of mine!"

"Do I not know thou dost wish it?" said Catherine. "Can a woman say to a man what I have well-nigh said to thee, and yet think that he could harbor fear or faintness of heart? There is that in yon distant sound of approaching battle that pleases me even while it affrights me. I would I were a man, that I might feel that stern delight without the mixture of terror!"

"Ride up—ride up, Lady Catherine Seyton," cried the abbot, as they still swept on at a rapid pace, and were now close beneath the walls of the castle—"ride up, and aid Lady Fleming to support the Queen—she gives way more and more."

They halted and lifted Mary from the saddle, and were about to support her towards the castle, when she said faintly, "Not there—not there: these walls will I never enter more!"

"Be a queen, madam," said the abbot, "and forget that you are a woman."

"O, I must forget much—much more," answered the unfortunate Mary, in an undertone, "ere I can look with steady eyes on these well-known scenes! I must forget the days which I spent here as the bride of the lost—the murdered——"

"This is the castle of the Crookstone," said the Lady Fleming, "in which the Queen held her first court after she was married to Darnley."

"Heaven," said the abbot, "Thy hand is upon us! Bear yet up, madam; your foes are the foes of Holy Church, and God will this day decide whether Scotland shall be Catholic or heretic."

A heavy and continued fire of cannon and musketry bore a tremendous burden to his words, and seemed far more than they to recall the spirits of the Queen.

"To yonder tree," she said, pointing to a yew-tree which grew on a small mount close to the castle; "I know it well—from thence you may see a prospect wide as from the peaks of Schehallion."

And freeing herself from her assistants, she walked with a determined, yet somewhat wild, step up to the stem of the noble yew. The abbot, Catherine, and Roland Avenel followed her, while Lady Fleming kept back the inferior persons of her train. The black horseman also followed the Queen, waiting on her as closely as the shadow upon the light, but ever remaining at the distance of two or three yards; he folded his arms on his bosom, turned his back to the battle, and seemed solely occupied by gazing on Mary through the bars of his closed visor. The Queen regarded him not, but fixed her eyes upon the spreading yew.

"Ay, fair and stately tree," she said, as if at the sight of it she had been rapt away from the present scene, and had overcome the horror which had oppressed her at the first approach to Crookstone, "there thou standest, gay and goodly as ever, though thou hearest the sounds of war instead of the vows of love. All is gone since I last greeted thee—love and lover—vows and vower—king and kingdom. How goes the field, my lord abbot? with us, I trust; yet what but evil can Mary's eyes witness from this spot?"

Her attendants eagerly bent their eyes on the field of battle, but could discover nothing more than that it was obstinately contested. The small inclosures and cottage gardens in the village, of which they had a full and commanding view, and which shortly before lay, with their lines of sycamore and ash-trees, so still and quiet in the mild light of a May sun, were now each converted into a line of fire, canopied by smoke; and the sustained and constant report of the musketry and cannon, mingled with the shouts of the meeting combatants, showed that as yet neither party had given ground.

"Many a soul finds its final departure to heaven or hell in these awful thunders," said the abbot; "let those that believe in the Holy Church join me in orisons for victory in this dreadful combat."

"Not here—not here," said the unfortunate Queen—"pray not here, father, or pray in silence; my mind is too much torn between the past and the present to dare to approach the Heavenly throne. Or, if ye will pray, be it for one whose fondest affections have been her greatest crimes, and who has ceased to be a queen only because she was a deceived and a tender-hearted woman."

"Were it not well," said Roland, "that I rode somewhat nearer the hosts, and saw the fate of the day?"

"Do so, in the name of God," said the abbot, "for if our

friends are scattered, our flight must be hasty ; but beware thou approach not too nigh the conflict : there is more than thine own life depends on thy safe return."

" O, go not too nigh," said Catherine ; " but fail not to see how the Seytons fight, and how they bear themselves."

" Fear nothing, I will be on my guard," said Roland Avenel ; and without waiting further answer, rode towards the scene of conflict, keeping, as he rode, the higher and uninclosed ground, and ever looking cautiously around him, for fear of involving himself in some hostile party. As he approached, the shots rung sharp and more sharply on his ear, the shouts came wilder and wilder, and he felt that thick beating of the heart, that mixture of natural apprehension, intense curiosity, and anxiety for the dubious event, which even the bravest experience when they approach alone to a scene of interest and of danger.

At length he drew so close that, from a bank, screened by bushes and underwood, he could distinctly see where the struggle was most keenly maintained. This was in a hollow way, leading to the village, up which the Queen's vanguard had marched, with more hasty courage than well-advised conduct, for the purpose of possessing themselves of that post of advantage. They found their scheme anticipated, and the hedges and inclosures already occupied by the enemy, led by the celebrated Kirkcaldy of Grange and the Earl of Morton ; and not small was the loss which they sustained while struggling forward to come to close with the men-at-arms on the other side. But, as the Queen's followers were chiefly noblemen and barons, with their kinsmen and followers, they had pressed onward, contemning obstacles and danger, and had, when Roland arrived on the ground, met hand to hand at the gorge of the pass with the Regent's vanguard, and endeavored to bear them out of the village at the spear-point ; while their foes, equally determined to keep the advantage which they had attained, struggled with the like obstinacy to drive back the assailants.

Both parties were on foot, and armed in proof ; so that, when the long lances of the front ranks were fixed in each other's shields, corslets, and breastplates, the struggle resembled that of two bulls, who, fixing their frontlets hard against each other, remain in that posture for hours, until the superior strength or obstinacy of the one compels the other to take to flight, or bears him down to the earth. Thus locked together in the deadly struggle, which swayed slowly to and fro, as one or other party gained the advantage,

those who fell were trampled on alike by friends and foes ; those whose weapons were broken retired from the front ranks, and had their place supplied by others ; while the rearward ranks, unable otherwise to take share in the combat, fired their pistols, and hurled their daggers, and the points and truncheons of the broken weapons, like javelins against the enemy.

“ God and the Queen ! ” resounded from the one party ; “ God and the King ! ” thundered from the other ; while, in the name of their sovereign, fellow-subjects on both sides shed each other’s blood, and, in the name of their Creator, defaced His image. Amid the tumult was often heard the voices of the captains shouting their commands, of leaders and chiefs crying their gathering words, of groans and shrieks from the falling and the dying.

The strife had lasted nearly an hour. The strength of both parties seemed exhausted ; but their rage was unabated, and their obstinacy unsubdued, when Roland, who turned eye and ear to all around him, saw a column of infantry, headed by a few horsemen, wheel round the base of the bank where he had stationed himself, and, leveling their long lances, attack the flank of the Queen’s vanguard, closely engaged as they were in conflict on their front. The very first glance showed him that the leader who directed this movement was the Knight of Avenel, his ancient master ; and the next convinced him that its effect would be decisive. The result of the attack of fresh and unbroken forces upon the flank of those already wearied with a long and obstinate struggle was, indeed, instantaneous.

The column of the assailants, which had hitherto shown one dark, dense, and united line of helmets, surmounted with plumage, was at once broken and hurled in confusion down the hill which they had so long endeavored to gain. In vain were the leaders heard calling upon their followers to stand to the combat, and seen personally resisting when all resistance was evidently vain. They were slain, or felled to the earth, or hurried backwards by the mingled tide of flight and pursuit. What were Roland’s thoughts on beholding the rout, and feeling that all that remained for him was to turn bridle, and endeavor to insure the safety of the Queen’s person ! Yet, keen as his grief and shame might be, they were both forgotten when, almost close beneath the bank which he occupied, he saw Henry Seyton forced away from his own party in the tumult, covered with dust and blood, and defending himself desperately against several of

the enemy who had gathered around him, attracted by his gay armor. Roland paused not a moment, but pushing his steed down the bank, leaped him amongst the hostile party, dealt three or four blows amongst them, which struck down two and made the rest stand aloof, then reaching Seyton his hand, he exhorted him to seize fast hold on his horse's mane.

"We live or die together this day," said he; "keep but fast hold till we are out of the press, and then my horse is yours."

Seyton heard, and exerted his remaining strength, and, by their joint efforts, Roland brought him out of danger, and behind the spot from whence he had witnessed the disastrous conclusion of the fight. But no sooner were they under shelter of the trees than Seyton let go his hold, and, in spite of Roland's efforts to support him, fell at length on the turf. "Trouble yourself no more with me," he said, "this is my first and my last battle, and I have already seen too much of it to wish to see the close. Hasten to save the Queen—and commend me to Catherine; she will never more be mistaken for me nor I for her—the last sword-stroke has made an eternal distinction."

"Let me aid you to mount my horse," said Roland, eagerly, "and you may yet be saved. I can find my own way on foot. Turn but my horse's head westward, and he will carry you fleet and easy as the wind."

"I will never mount steed more," said the youth; "farewell! I love thee better dying than ever I thought to have done while in life. I would that old man's blood were not on my hand! *Sancte Benedicte ora pro me!* Stand not to look on a dying man, but haste to save the Queen!"

These words were spoken with the last effort of his voice, and scarce were they uttered ere the speaker was no more. They recalled Roland to the sense of the duty which he had well-nigh forgotten, but they did not reach his ears only.

"The Queen—where is the Queen?" said Sir Halbert Glendinning, who, followed by two or three horsemen, appeared at this instant. Roland made no answer, but turning his horse, and confiding in his speed, gave him at once rein and spur, and rode over height and hollow towards the Castle of Crookstone. More heavily armed, and mounted upon a horse of less speed, Sir Halbert Glendinning followed with couched lance, calling out as he rode, "Sir with the holly-branch, halt, and show your right to bear that badge: fly not thus cowardly, nor dishonor the cognizance thou

deservest not to wear! Halt, sir coward, or, by Heaven, I will strike thee with my lance on the back, and slay thee like a dastard. I am the Knight of Avenel—I am Sir Halbert Glendinning.”

But Roland, who had no purpose of encountering his old master, and who, besides, knew the Queen’s safety depended on his making the best speed he could, answered not a word to the defiances and reproaches which Sir Halbert continued to throw out against him; but making the best use of his spurs, rode yet harder than before, and had gained about a hundred yards upon his pursuer, when, coming near to the yew-tree where he had left the Queen, he saw them already getting to horse, and cried out as loud as he could, “Foes!—foes! Ride for it, fair ladies. Brave gentlemen, do your devoir to protect them!”

So saying, he wheeled his horse, and avoiding the shock of Sir Halbert Glendinning, charged one of that knight’s followers, who was nearly on a line with him, so rudely with his lance that he overthrew horse and man. He then drew his sword and attacked the second, while the black man-at-arms, throwing himself in the way of Glendinning, they rushed on each other so fiercely that both horses were overthrown, and the riders lay rolling on the plain. Neither was able to arise, for the black horseman was pierced through with Glendinning’s lance, and the Knight of Avenel, oppressed with the weight of his own horse, and sorely bruised besides, seemed in little better plight than he whom he had mortally wounded.

“Yield thee, Sir Knight of Avenel, rescue or no rescue,” said Roland, who had put a second antagonist out of condition to combat, and hastened to prevent Glendinning from renewing the conflict.

“I may not choose but yield,” said Sir Halbert, “since I can no longer fight; but it shames me to speak such a word to a coward like thee!”

“Call me not coward,” said Roland, lifting his visor, and helping his prisoner to rise, “since but for old kindness at thy hand, and yet more at thy lady’s, I had met thee as a brave man should.”

“The favorite page of my wife!” said Sir Halbert, astonished. “Ah! wretched boy, I have heard of thy treason at Lochleven.”

“Reproach him not, my brother,” said the abbot, “he was but an agent in the hands of Heaven.”

“To horse—to horse!” said Catherine Seyton; “mount

and be gone, or we are all lost. I see our gallant army flying for many a league. To horse, my lord abbot! To horse, Roland! My gracious liege, to horse! Ere this, we should have ridden a mile."

"Look on these features," said Mary, pointing to the dying knight, who had been unhelmed by some compassionate hand—"look there, and tell me if she who ruins all who love her ought to fly a foot farther to save her wretched life!"

The reader must have long anticipated the discovery which the Queen's feelings had made before her eyes confirmed it. It was the features of the unhappy George Douglas, on which death was stamping his mark.

"Look—look at him well," said the Queen, "thus has it been with all that loved Mary Stuart! The royalty of Francis, the wit of Chastelar, the power and gallantry of the gay Gordon, the melody of Rizzio, the portly form and youthful grace of Darnley, the bold address and courtly manners of Bothwell, and now the deep-devoted passion of the noble Douglas—naught could save them: they looked on the wretched Mary, and to have loved her was crime enough to deserve early death! No sooner had the victim formed a kind thought of me than the poisoned cup, the ax and block, the dagger, the mine were ready to punish them for casting away affection on such a wretch as I am! Importune me not: I will fly no farther. I can die but once, and I will die here."

While she spoke, her tears fell fast on the face of the dying man, who continued to fix his eyes on her with an eagerness of passion which death itself could hardly subdue. "Mourn not for me," he said faintly, "but care for your own safety. I die in mine armor as a Douglas should, and I die pitied by Mary Stuart!"

He expired with these words, and without withdrawing his eyes from her face; and the Queen, whose heart was of that soft and gentle mold which in domestic life, and with a more suitable partner than Darnley, might have made her happy, remained weeping by the dead man, until recalled to herself by the abbot, who found it necessary to use a style of unusual remonstrance. "We also, madam," he said—"we, your Grace's devoted followers, have friends and relatives to weep for. I leave a brother in imminent jeopardy—the husband of the Lady Fleming—the father and brother of the Lady Catherine, are all in yonder bloody field, slain, it is to be feared, or prisoners. We forget the fate of our

own nearest and dearest to wait on our Queen, and she is too much occupied with her own sorrows to give one thought to ours."

"I deserve not your reproach, father," said the Queen, checking her tears; "but I am docile to it. Where must we go? what must we do?"

"We must fly, and that instantly," said the abbot; "whither is not so easily answered, but we may dispute it upon the road. Lift her to her saddle, and set forward."*

They set off accordingly. Roland lingered a moment to command the attendants of the Knight of Avenel to convey their master to the Castle of Crookstone, and to say that he demanded from him no other condition of liberty than his word that he and his followers would keep secret the direction in which the Queen fled. As he turned his rein to depart, the honest countenance of Adam Woodcock stared upon him with an expression of surprise which, at another time, would have excited his hearty mirth. He had been one of the followers who had experienced the weight of Roland's arm, and they now knew each other, Roland having put up his visor, and the good yeoman having thrown away his barret-cap, with the iron bars in front, that he might the more readily assist his master. Into this barret-cap, as it lay on the ground, Roland forgot not to drop a few gold pieces (fruits of the Queen's liberality), and with a signal of kind recollection and enduring friendship, he departed at full gallop to overtake the Queen, the dust raised by her train being already far down the hill.

"It is not fairy money," said honest Adam, weighing and handling the gold. "And it was Master Roland himself, that is a certain thing." The same open hand, and by Our Lady! (shrugging his shoulders) the same ready fist! My lady will hear of this gladly, for she mourns for him as if he were her son. And to see how gay he is! But these light lads are as sure to be uppermost as the froth to be on the top of the quart-pot. Your man of solid parts remains ever a falconer." So saying, he went to aid his comrades, who had now come up in greater numbers, to carry his master into the Castle of Crookstone.

* See Battle of Langside. Note 27.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

My native land, good-night !

BYRON.

MANY a bitter tear was shed during the hasty flight of Queen Mary, over fallen hopes, future prospects, and slaughtered friends. The deaths of the brave Douglas and of the fiery but gallant young Seyton seemed to affect the Queen as much as the fall from the throne, on which she had so nearly been again seated. Catherine Seyton devoured in secret her own grief, anxious to support the broken spirits of her mistress ; and the abbot, bending his troubled thoughts upon futurity, endeavored in vain to form some plan which had a shadow of hope. The spirit of young Roland—for he also mingled in the hasty debates held by the companions of the Queen's flight—continued unchecked and unbroken.

"Your Majesty," he said, "has lost a battle. Your ancestor Bruce lost seven successively, ere he sat triumphant on the Scottish throne, and proclaimed with the voice of a victor, in the field of Bannockburn, the independence of his country. Are not these heaths, which we may traverse at will, better than the locked, guarded, and lake-moated Castle of Lochleven ? We are free ; in that one word there is comfort for all our losses."

He struck a bold note, but the heart of Mary made no response.

"Better," she said, "I had still been in Lochleven than seen the slaughter made by rebels among the subjects who offered themselves to death for my sake. Speak not to me of further efforts ; they would only cost the lives of you, the friends who recommend them ! I would not again undergo what I felt when I saw from yonder mount the swords of the fell horsemen of Morton raging among the faithful Seytons and Hamiltons, for their loyalty to their Queen ; I would not again feel what I felt when Douglas's life-blood stained my mantle for his love to Mary Stuart—not to be empress of all that Britain's seas inclose. Find for me some place where I can hide my unhappy head, which brings destruction on all

who love it ; it is the last favor that Mary asks of her faithful followers."

In this dejected mood, but still pursuing her flight with unabated rapidity, the unfortunate Mary, after having been joined by Lord Herries and a few followers, at length halted, for the first time, at the Abbey of Dundrennan, nearly sixty miles distant from the field of battle. In this remote corner of Galloway, the reformation not having yet been strictly enforced against the monks, a few still lingered in their cells unmolested ; and the prior, with tears and reverence, received the fugitive Queen at the gate of his convent.

"I bring you ruin, my good father," said the Queen, as she was lifted from her palfrey.

"It is welcome," said the prior, "if it comes in the train of duty."

Placed on the ground, and supported by her ladies, the Queen looked for an instant at her palfrey, which, jaded and drooping its head, seemed as if it mourned the distresses of its mistress.

"Good Roland," said the Queen, whispering, "let Rosabelle be cared for : ask thy heart, and it will tell thee why I make this trifling request even in this awful hour."

She was conducted to her apartment, and in the hurried consultation of her attendants the fatal resolution of the retreat to England was finally adopted. In the morning it received her approbation, and a messenger was despatched to the English warden, to pray him for safe conduct and hospitality, on the part of the Queen of Scotland. On the next day, the Abbot Ambrose walked in the garden of the abbey with Roland, to whom he expressed his disapprobation of the course pursued. "It is madness and ruin," he said : "better commit herself to the savage Highlanders or wild Bordermen than to the faith of Elizabeth. A woman to a rival woman a presumptive successor to the keeping of a jealous and—childless queen ! Roland, Herries is true and loyal, but his counsel has ruined his mistress."

"Ay, ruin follows us everywhere," said an old man, with a spade in his hand, and dressed like a lay-brother, of whose presence, in the vehemence of his exclamation, the abbot had not been aware. "Gaze not on me with such wonder ! I am he who was the Abbot Boniface at Kennaquhair, who was the gardener Blinkhoolie at Lochleven, hunted round to the place in which I served my novice, and now ye are come to rouse me up again ! A weary life I have had, for one to whom peace was ever the dearest blessing !"

“We will soon rid you of our company, good father,” said the abbot; “and the Queen will, I fear, trouble your retreat no more.”

“Nay, you said as much before,” said the querulous old man, “and yet I was put forth from Kinross, and pillaged by troopers on the road. They took from me the certificate that you wot of—that of the baron; ay, he was a moss-trooper like themselves. You asked me of it, and I could never find it, but they found it; it showed the marriage of—of—my memory fails me. Now see how men differ! Father Nicolas would have told you an hundred tales of the Abbot Ingelram, on whose soul God have mercy! He was, I warrant you, fourscore and six, and I am not more than—let me see—”

“Was not ‘Avenel’ the name you seek, my good father?” said Roland, impatiently, yet moderating his tone for fear of alarming or offending the infirm old man.

“Ay, right—Avenel—Julian Avenel. You are perfect in the name. I kept all the special confessions, judging it held with my vow to do so. I could not find it when my successor, Ambrosius, spoke on’t; but the troopers found it, and the knight who commanded the party struck his breast till his hauberk clattered like an empty watering-can.”

“St. Mary!” said the abbot, “in whom could such a paper excite such interest? What was the appearance of the knight, his arms, his colors?”

“Ye distract me with your questions. I dared hardly look at him; they charged me with bearing letters for the Queen, and searched my mail. This was all along of your doings at Lochleven.”

“I trust in God,” said the abbot to Roland, who stood beside him, shivering and trembling with impatience; “the paper has fallen into the hands of my brother. I heard he had been with his followers on the scout betwixt Stirling and Glasgow. Bore not the knight a holly-bough in his helmet? Canst thou not remember?”

“O, remember—remember,” said the old man, pettishly; “count as many years as I do, if your plots will let you, and see what, and how much, you remember. Why, I scarce remember the pearmain which I grafted here with my own hands some fifty years since.”

At this moment a bugle sounded loudly from the beach.

“It is the death-blast to Queen Mary’s royalty!” said Ambrosius: “the English warden’s answer has been received—favorable, doubtless, for when was the door of the trap

closed against the prey which it was set for? Droop not, Roland, this matter shall be shifted to the bottom; but we must not now leave the Queen. Follow me; let us do our duty, and trust the issue with God. Farewell, good father; I will visit thee again soon."

He was about to leave the garden, followed by Roland, with half-reluctant steps. The ex-abbot resumed his spade. "I could be sorry for these men," he said, "ay, and for that poor queen, but what avail earthly sorrows to a man of fourscore? and it is a rare dropping morning for the early colewort."

"He is stricken with age," said Ambrosius, as he dragged Roland down to the sea-beach; "we must let him take his time to collect himself. Nothing now can be thought on but the fate of the Queen."

They soon arrived where she stood, surrounded by her little train, and by her side the sheriff of Cumberland, a gentleman of the house of Lowther, richly dressed, and accompanied by soldiers. The aspect of the Queen exhibited a singular mixture of alacrity and reluctance to depart. Her language and gestures spoke hope and consolation to her attendants, and she seemed desirous to persuade even herself that the step she adopted was secure, and that the assurance she had received of kind reception was altogether satisfactory; but her quivering lip and unsettled eye betrayed at once her anguish at departing from Scotland and her fears of confiding herself to the doubtful faith of England.

"Welcome, my lord abbot," she said, speaking to Ambrosius, "and you, Roland Avenel, we have joyful news for you: our loving sister's officer proffers us, in her name, a safe asylum from the rebels who have driven us from our own; only it grieves me we must here part from you for a short space."

"Part from us, madam!" said the abbot. "Is your welcome in England, then, to commence with the abridgement of your train and dismissal of your counselors?"

"Take it not thus, good father," said Mary; "the warden and the sheriff, faithful servants of our royal sister, deem it necessary to obey her instructions in the present case, even to the letter, and can only take upon them to admit me with my female attendants. An express will instantly be despatched from London, assigning me a place of residence; and I will speedily send to all of you whenever my court shall be formed."

"Your court formed in England! and while Elizabeth

lives and reigns?" said the abbot; "that will be when we shall see two suns in one heaven!"

"Do not think so," replied the Queen; "we are well assured of our sister's good faith. Elizabeth loves fame; and not all that she has won by her power and her wisdom will equal that which she will acquire by extending her hospitality to a distressed sister; not all that she may hereafter do of good, wise, and great, would blot out the reproach of abusing our confidence. Farewell, my page—now my knight—farewell for a brief season. I will dry the tears of Catherine, or I will weep with her till neither of us can weep longer." She held out her hand to Roland, who, flinging himself on his knees, kissed it with much emotion. He was about to render the same homage to Catherine, when the Queen, assuming an air of sprightliness, said, "Her lips thou foolish boy! and, Catherine, coy it not; these English gentlemen should see that, even in our cold clime, beauty knows how to reward bravery and fidelity!"

"We are not now to learn the force of Scottish beauty, or the mettle of Scottish valor," said the sheriff of Cumberland, courteously. "I would it were in my power to bid these attendants upon her who is herself the mistress of Scottish beauty as welcome to England as my poor cares would make them. But our Queen's orders are positive in case of such an emergence, and they must not be disputed by her subject. May I remind your Majesty that the tide ebbs fast?"

The sheriff took the Queen's hand, and she had already placed her foot on the gangway by which she was to enter the skiff, when the abbot, starting from a trance of grief and astonishment at the words of the sheriff, rushed into the water, and seized upon her mantle.

"She foresaw it!—she foresaw it!" he exclaimed—"she foresaw your flight into her realm; and, foreseeing it, gave orders you should be thus received. Blinded, deceived, doomed princess! your fate is sealed when you quit this strand. Queen of Scotland thou shalt not leave thine heritage!" he continued, holding a still firmer grasp upon her mantle; "true men shall turn rebels to thy will, that they may save thee from captivity or death. Fear not the bills and bows whom that gay man has at his beck: we will withstand him by force. O, for the arm of my warlike brother! Roland Avenel, draw thy sword!"

The Queen stood irresolute and frightened—one foot upon the plank, the other on the sand of her native shore, which she was quitting forever.

“What needs this violence, sir priest?” said the sheriff of Cumberland. “I came hither at your Queen’s command, to do her service; and I will depart at her least order, if she rejects such aid as I can offer. No marvel is it if our Queen’s wisdom foresaw that such chance as this might happen amidst the turmoils of yon unsettled state; and, while willing to afford fair hospitality to her royal sister, deemed it wise to prohibit the entrance of a broken army of her followers into the English frontier.”

“You hear,” said Queen Mary, gently unloosing her robe from the abbot’s grasp, “that we exercise full liberty of choice in leaving this shore; and, questionless, the choice will remain free to us in going to France, or returning to our own dominions, as we shall determine. Besides, it is too late. Your blessing, father, and God speed thee!”

“May He have mercy on thee, Princess, and speed thee also!” said the abbot, retreating. “But my soul tells me I look on thee for the last time!”

The sails were hoisted, the oars were plied, the vessel went freshly on her way through the firth, which divides the shores of Cumberland from those of Galloway; but not till the vessel diminished to the size of a child’s frigate did the doubtful, and dejected, and dismissed followers of the Queen cease to linger on the sands; and long, long could they discern the kerchief of Mary, as she waved the oft-repeated signal of adieu to her faithful adherents and to the shores of Scotland.

If good tidings of a private nature could have consoled Roland for parting with his mistress, and for the distresses of his sovereign, he received such comfort some days subsequent to the Queen’s leaving Dundrennan. A breathless post—no other than Adam Woodcock—brought despatches from Sir Halbert Glendinning to the abbot, whom he found with Roland, still residing at Dundrennan, and in vain torturing Boniface with fresh interrogations. The packet bore an earnest invitation to his brother to make Avenel Castle for a time his residence. “The clemency of the Regent,” said the writer, “has extended pardon both to Roland and to you, upon condition of your remaining a time under my wardship. And I have that to communicate respecting the parentage of Roland which not only you will willingly listen to, but which will be also found to afford me, as the husband of his nearest relative, some interest in the future course of his life.”

The abbot read this letter, and paused, as if considering what were best for him to do. Meanwhile, Woodcock took Roland aside, and addressed him as follows: "Now look, Master Roland, that you do not let any Papistrie nonsense lure either the priest or you from the right quarry. See you, you ever bore yourself as a bit of a gentleman. Read that, and thank God that threw old Abbot Boniface in our way, as two of the Seyton's men were conveying him towards Dundrennan here. We searched him for intelligence concerning that fair exploit of yours at Lochleven, that has cost many a man his life, and me a set of sore bones, and we found what is better for your purpose than ours."

The paper which he gave was, indeed, an attestation by Father Philip, subscribing himself unworthy sacristan and brother of the house of St. Mary's, stating, "That under a vow of secrecy he had united, in the holy sacrament of marriage, Julian Avenel and Catherine Græme; but that Julian having repented of his union, he, Father Philip, had been sinfully prevailed on by him to conceal and disguise the same according to a complot devised betwixt him and the said Julian Avenel, whereby the poor damsel was induced to believe that the ceremony had been performed by one not in holy orders, and having no authority to that effect; which sinful concealment the undersigned conceived to be the cause why he was abandoned to the misguiding of a water fiend, whereby he had been under a spell, which obliged him to answer every question, even touching the most solemn matters, with idle snatches of old songs, besides being sorely afflicted with rheumatic pains ever after. Wherefore he had deposited this testificate and confession, with the day and date of the said marriage, with his lawful superior, Boniface, abbot of St. Mary's, *sub sigillo confessionis*."

It appeared by a letter from Julian, folded carefully up with the certificate, that the Abbot Boniface had, in effect, bestirred himself in the affair, and obtained from the baron a promise to avow his marriage; but the death of both Julian and his injured bride, together with the abbot's resignation, his ignorance of the fate of their unhappy offspring, and, above all, the good father's listless and inactive disposition, had suffered the matter to become totally forgotten, until it was recalled by some accidental conversation with the Abbot Ambrosius concerning the fortunes of the Avenel family. At the request of his successor, the quondam abbot made search for it; but, as he would receive no assistance in looking among the few records of spiritual experiences and im-

portant confessions which he had conscientiously treasured, it might have remained forever hidden amongst them but for the more active researches of Sir Halbert Glendinning.

“So that you are like to be heir of Avenel at last, Master Roland, after my lord and lady have gone to their place,” said Adam; “and as I have but one boon to ask, I trust you will not nick me with nay.”

“Not if it be in my power to say ‘yes,’ my trusty friend.”

“Why then, I must needs, if I live to see that day, keep on feeding the eyases with unwashed flesh,” said Woodcock, sturdily, yet as if doubting the reception that his request might meet with.

“Thou shalt feed them with what you list for me,” said Roland, laughing; “I am not many months older than when I left the castle, but I trust I have gathered wit enough to cross no man of skill in his own vocation.”

“Then I would not change places with the King’s falconer,” said Adam Woodcock, “nor with the Queen’s neither; but they say she will be mew’d up, and never need one. I see it grieves you to think of it, and I could grieve for company; but what help for it? Fortune will fly her own flight, let a man halloo himself hoarse.”

The abbot and Roland journeyed to Avenel, where the former was tenderly received by his brother, while the lady went for joy to find that in her favorite orphan she had protected the sole surviving branch of her own family. Sir Halbert Glendinning and his household were not a little surprised at the change which a brief acquaintance with the world had produced in their former inmate, and rejoiced to find in the pettish, spoiled, and presuming page a modest and unassuming young man, too much acquainted with his own expectations and character to be hot or petulant in demanding the consideration which was readily and voluntarily yielded to him. The old major-domo Wingate was the first to sing his praises, to which Mrs. Liliac bore a loud echo, always hoping that God would teach him the true Gospel.

To the true Gospel the heart of Roland had secretly long inclined, and the departure of the good abbot for France, with the purpose of entering into some house of his order in that kingdom, removed his chief objection to renouncing the Catholic faith. Another might have existed in the duty which he owed to Magdalen Græme, both by birth and from gratitude. But he learned, ere he had been long a resident in Avenel, that his grandmother had died at Cologne, in the performance of a penance too severe for her age, which she

had taken upon herself in behalf of the Queen and Church of Scotland, so soon as she heard of the defeat at Langside. The zeal of the Abbot Ambrosius was more regulated ; but he retired into the Scottish convent of——, and so lived there that the fraternity were inclined to claim for him the honors of canonisation. But he guessed their purpose, and prayed them on his death-bed to do no honors to the body of one as sinful as themselves ; but to send his body and his heart to be buried in Avenel burial-aisle, in the Monastery of St. Mary's, that the last abbot of that celebrated house of devotion might sleep among its ruins.*

Long before that period arrived, Roland Avenel was wedded to Catherine Seyton, who, after two years' residence with her unhappy mistress, was dismissed, upon her being subjected to closer restraint than had been at first exercised. She returned to her father's house and as Roland was acknowledged for the successor and lawful heir of the ancient house of Avenel, greatly increased as the estate was by the providence of Sir Halbert Glendinning, there occurred no objections to the match on the part of her family. Her mother was recently dead when she first entered the convent ; and her father, in the unsettled times which followed Queen Mary's flight to England, was not averse to an alliance with a youth who, himself loyal to Queen Mary, still held some influence, through means of Sir Halbert Glendinning, with the party in power.

Roland and Catherine, therefore, were united, spite of their differing faiths ; and the White Lady, whose apparition had been infrequent when the house of Avenel seemed verging to extinction, was seen to sport by her haunted well, with a zone of gold around her bosom as broad as the baldrick of an earl.

* See Burial of the Abbot's Heart in the Avenel Aisle. Note 28.

NOTES TO THE ABBOT

NOTE 1.—GLEDONWYNE OF GLEDONWYNE, p. 26

THIS was a house of ancient descent and superior consequence, including persons who fought at Bannockburn and Otterburn, and closely connected by alliance and friendship with the great Earls of Douglas. The knight in the story argues as most Scotsmen would do in his situation, for all of the same clan are popularly considered as descended from the same stock, and as having a right to the ancestral honor of the chief branch. This opinion, though sometimes ideal, is so strong, even at this day of innovation, that it may be observed as a national difference between my countrymen and the English. If you ask an Englishman of good birth whether a person of the same name be connected with him, he answers, if *in dubio*, "No, he is a mere namesake." Ask a similar question of a Scot—I mean a Scotsman—he replies, "He is one of our clan; I daresay there is a relationship, though I do not know how distant." The Englishman thinks of discountenancing a species of rivalry in Society; the Scotsman's answer is grounded on the ancient idea of strengthening the clan.

NOTE 2.—BAG FOR HAWKS' MEAT, p. 64

THIS same bag, like everything belonging to falconry, was esteemed an honorable distinction, and worn often by the nobility and gentry. One of the Somervilles of Camnethan was called Sir John with the Red Bag, because it was his wont to wear his hawking-pouch covered with satin of that color.

NOTE 3.—CELL of ST. CUTHBERT, p. 68

I may here observe, that this is entirely an ideal scene. St. Cuthbert, a person of established sanctity, had, no doubt, several places of worship on the Borders, where he flourished whilst living; but Tilmouth Chapel is the only one which bears some resemblance to the hermitage described in the text. It has, indeed, a well, famous for gratifying three wishes for every worshiper who shall quaff the fountain with sufficient belief in its efficacy. At this spot the saint is said to have landed in his stone coffin, in which he sailed down the Tweed from Melrose, and here the stone coffin long lay, in evidence of the fact. The late Sir Francis Blake Delaval is said to have taken the exact measure of the coffin, and to have ascertained, by hydrostatic principles, that it might have actually swum. A profane farmer in the neighborhood announced his intention of converting this last bed of the saint into a trough for his swine; but the profanation was rendered impossible, either by the saint or by some pious votary in his behalf, for on the following morning the stone sarcophagus was found broken in two fragments.

Tilmouth Chapel, with these points of resemblance, lies, however, in exactly the opposite direction as regards Melrose which the supposed cell of St. Cuthbert is said to have borne towards Kennaquhair.

NOTE 4.—GOSS-HAWK, p. 81

THE comparison is taken from some beautiful verses in an old ballad, entitled "Fause Foodrage," published in the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. A deposed queen, to preserve her infant son from the traitors who have slain his father, exchanges him with the female offspring of a faithful friend, and goes on to direct the education of the children, and the private signals by which the parents are to hear news each of her own offspring.

And ye maun learn my gay goss-hawk
Right weel to breast a steed ;
And I sall learn your turtle dow,
As weel to write and read.

And ye maun learn my gay goss-hawk
To wield both bow and brand ;
And I sall learn your turtle dow,
To lay gowd wi' her hand.

At kirk and market when we meet,
We'll dare make nae avowe,
But, " Dame, how does my gay goss-hawk ! "
" Madame, how does my dow ? "

NOTE 5.—NUNNERY OF ST. BRIDGET, p. 101

This, like the cell of St. Cuthbert, is an imaginary scene ; but I took one or two ideas of the desolation of the interior from a story told me by my father. In his youth—it may be near eighty years since, as he was born in 1729—he had occasion to visit an old lady who resided in a Border castle of considerable renown. Only one very limited portion of the extensive ruins sufficed for the accommodation of the inmates, and my father amused himself by wandering through the part that was untenanted. In a dining apartment, having a roof richly adorned with arches and drops, there was deposited a large stack of hay, to which calves were helping themselves from opposite sides. As my father was scaling a dark, ruinous turnpike staircase, his greyhound ran up before him, and probably was the means of saving his life, for the animal fell through a trap-door, or aperture, in the stair, thus warning the owner of the danger of the ascent. As the dog continued howling from a great depth, my father got the old butler, who alone knew most of the localities about the castle, to unlock a sort of stable, in which Killbuck was found safe and sound, the place being filled with the same commodity which littered the stalls of Augeas, and which had rendered the dog's fall an easy one.

NOTE 6.—NUN OF KENT, p. 106

A fanatic nun, called the Holy Maid of Kent, who pretended to the gift of prophecy and power of miracles. Having denounced the doom of speedy death against Henry VIII. for his marriage with Anne Boleyn, the prophetess was attainted in Parliament, and executed, with her accomplices. Her imposture was for a time so successful that even Sir Thomas More was disposed to be a believer

NOTE 7.—HUNTING MASS, p. 114

In Catholic countries, in order to reconcile the pleasures of the great with the observances of religion, it was common, when a party was bent for the chase, to celebrate mass, abridged and maimed of its rites, called a hunting mass, the brevity of which was designed to correspond with the impatience of the audience.

NOTE 8.—ABBOT OF UNREASON, p. 116.

We learn, from no less authority than that of Napoleon Bonaparte, that there is but a single step between the sublime and ridiculous ; and it is a transition from one extreme to another so very easy that the vulgar of every degree are peculiarly captivated with it. Thus the inclination to laugh becomes uncontrollable when the solemnity and gravity of time, place, and circumstances render it peculiarly improper. Some species of general license, like that which inspired the ancient Saturnalia, or the modern Carnival, has been commonly indulged to the people at all times, and in almost all countries. But it was, I think, peculiar to the Roman Catholic Church that, while they studied how to render their church rites imposing and magnificent, by all that pomp, music, architecture, and external display could add to them, they nevertheless connived, upon special occasions, at the frolics of the rude vulgar, who, in almost all Catholic countries, enjoyed, or at least assumed, the privilege of making some lord of the revels, who, under the name of the Abbot of Unreason, the Boy Bishop, or the President of Fools, occupied the churches, profaned the holy places by a mock imitation of the sacred rites, and sung indecent parodies on hymns of the church. The indifference of the clergy, even when their power was greatest, to the indecent exhibitions which they always tolerated, and some

times encouraged, forms a strong contrast to the sensitiveness with which they regarded any serious attempt, by preaching or writing, to impeach any of the doctrines of the church. It could only be compared to the singular apathy with which they endured, and often admired, the gross novels which Chaucer, Dunbar, Boccaccio, Bandello, and others composed upon the bad morals of the clergy. It seems as if the churchmen in both instances had endeavored to compromise with the laity, and allowed them occasionally to gratify their coarse humor by indecent satire, provided they would abstain from any grave question concerning the foundation of the doctrines on which was erected such an immense fabric of ecclesiastical power.

But the sports thus licensed assumed a very different appearance so soon as the Protestant doctrines began to prevail; and the license which their forefathers had exercised in mere gaiety of heart, and without the least intention of dishonoring religion by their frolics, was now persevered in by the common people as a mode of testifying their utter disregard for the Roman priesthood and its ceremonies.

I may observe, for example, the case of an apparitor sent to Borthwick from the Primate of St. Andrews, to cite the lord of that castle, who was opposed by an Abbot of Unreason, at whose command the officer of the spiritual court was appointed to be ducked in a mill-dam, and obliged to eat up his parchment citation.

The reader may be amused with the following whimsical details of this incident, which took place in the castle of Borthwick, in the year 1547. It appears that, in consequence of a process betwixt Master George Hay de Minzeane and the Lord Borthwick, letters of excommunication had passed against the latter, on account of the contumacy of certain witnesses. William Langlands, an apparitor or macer (*bacularius*) of the see of St. Andrews, presented these letters to the curate of the church of Borthwick, requiring him to publish the same at the service of high mass. It seems that the inhabitants of the castle were at this time engaged in the favorite sport of enacting the Abbot of Unreason, a species of high jinks, in which a mimic prelate was elected, who, like the Lord of Misrule in England, turned all sort of lawful authority, and particularly the church ritual, into ridicule. This frolicsome person, with his retinue, notwithstanding of the apparitor's character, entered the church, seized upon the Primate's officer without hesitation, and, dragging him to the mill-dam on the south side of the castle, compelled him to leap into the water. Not contented with this partial immersion, the Abbot of Unreason pronounced that Mr. William Langlands was not yet sufficiently bathed, and therefore caused his assistants to lay him on his back in the stream, and duck him in the most satisfactory and perfect manner. The unfortunate apparitor was then conducted back to the church, where, for his refreshment after his bath, the letters of excommunication were torn to pieces, and steeped in a bowl of wine; the mock abbot being probably of opinion that a tough parchment was but dry eating, Langlands was compelled to eat the letters and swallow the wine, and dismissed by the Abbot of Unreason, with the comfortable assurance that, if any more such letters should arrive during the continuance of his office, "they should a' gang the same gate," i. e. go the same road.

A similar scene occurs betwixt a sumner of the Bishop of Rochester and Harpool, the servant of Lord Cobham, in the old play of *Sir John Oldcastle*, when the former compels the church-officer to eat his citation. The dialogue contains most of the jests which may be supposed appropriate to such an extraordinary occasion.

Harpool. Marry, sir, is this process parchment?

Sumner. Yes, marry is it.

Harpool. And this seal wax?

Sumner. It is so.

Harpool. If this be parchment, and this be wax, eat you this parchment and wax, or I will make parchment of your skin, and beat your brains into wax. Sirrah Sumner, despatch—devour, sirrah, devour.

Sumner. I am my Lord of Rochester's sumner; I came to do my office, and thou shalt answer it.

Harpool. Sirrah, no railing, but betake thyself to thy teeth. Thou shalt eat no worse than thou bringest with thee. Thou bringest it for my lord; and wilt thou bring my lord worse than thou wilt eat thyself?

Sumner. Sir, I brought it not my lord to eat.

Harpool. O, do you Sir me now? All's one for that; I'll make you eat it for bringing it.

Sumner. I cannot eat it.

Harpool. Can you not? 'Sblood, I'll beat you till you have a stomach!

[Beats him.]

Sumner. Oh, hold, hold, good Mr. Serving-man; I will eat it.

Harpool. Be champing, be chewing, sir, or I will chew you, you rogue. Tough wax is the purest of the honey.

Sumner. The purest of the honey! O Lord, sir! oh! oh!

Harpool. Feed, feed; 'tis wholesome, rogue—wholesome. Cannot you, like an honest sumner, walk with the devil your brother, to fetch in your balliff's rents, but you must come to a nobleman's house with process? If the seal were as broad as the lead which covers Rochester Church, thou shouldst eat it.

Sumner. Oh, I am almost choked—I am almost choked!

Harpool. Who's within there? will you shame my lord? is there no beer in the house? Butler, I say.

Enter BUTLER.

Butler. Here—here.

Harpool. Give him beer. Tough old sheep-skin's but dry meat.

First Part of Sir John Oldcastle, Act ii. Scene 1.

NOTE 9.—THE HOBBY-HORSE, p. 117

This exhibition, the play-mare of Scotland, stood high among holiday gambols. It must be carefully separated from the wooden chargers which furnish out our nurseries. It gives rise to Hamlet's ejaculation—

But oh, but oh, the hobby-horse is forgot!

There is a very comic scene in Beaumont and Fletcher's play of *Women Pleas'd*, where Hope-on-high Bomby, a Puritan cobbler, refuses to dance with the hobby-horse. There was much difficulty and great variety in the motions which the hobby-horse was expected to exhibit.

The learned Mr. Douce, who has contributed so much to the illustration of our theatrical antiquities, has given us a full account of this pageant, and the burlesque horsemanship which it practised.

"The hobby-horse," says Mr. Douce, "was represented by a man equipped with as much pasteboard as was sufficient to form the head and hinder parts of a horse, the quadrupedal defects being concealed by a long mantle or foot-cloth that nearly touched the ground. The performer, on this occasion, exerted all his skill in burlesque horsemanship. In Sampson's play of the *Vow-breaker*, 1636, a miller personates the hobby-horse, and being angry that the mayor of the city is put in competition with him, exclaims, "Let the major [mayor] play the hobby-horse among his brethren. an he will; I hope our town-lads cannot want a hobby-horse. Have I practised my reins, my careers, my pranckers, my ambles, my false trots, my smooth ambles, and Canterbury paces, and shall master major put me besides the hobby-horse? Have I borrowed the forehorse bells, his plumes, his braveries; nay, had his mane new shorn and frizzled, and shall the major put me besides the hobby-horse?"—Douce's *Illustrations*, vol. ii. p. 468.

NOTE 10.—REPRESENTATION OF ROBIN HOOD AND LITTLE JOHN, p. 118

The representation of Robin Hood was the darling May-game both in England and Scotland, and doubtless the favorite personification was often revived, when the Abbot of Unreason, or other pretenses of frolic, gave an unusual degree of license.

The Protestant clergy, who had formerly reaped advantage from the opportunities which these sports afforded them of directing their own satire and the ridicule of the lower orders against the Catholic Church, began to find that, when these purposes were served, their favorite pastimes deprived them of the wish to attend divine worship, and disturbed the frame of mind in which it can be attended to advantage. The celebrated Bishop Latimer gives a very naive account of the manner in which, bishop as he was, he found himself compelled to give place to Robin Hood and his followers.

"I came once myself to a place riding on a journey homeward from London, and I sent word over night into the towne that I would preach there in the morning, because it was holiday, and methought it was a holidayes worke. The church stood in my way, and I tooke my horse and my company, and went thither (I thought I should have found a great company in the church), and when I came there the church doore was fast locked. I tarried there halfe an houre and more. At last the key was found, and one of the parish comes to me, and says, "Sir, this is a busie day with us, we cannot heare you; it is Robin Hood's day. The parish are gone abroad to gather for Robin Hood. I pray you let them not." I was faine there to give place to Robin Hood. I thought my rochet should have been regarded though I was not but it would not serve, it was faine to give place to Robin Hood's men. It is no laughing matter, my friends; it is weeping matter, a heavy matter—a heavy matter. Under the pretense for gathering for Robin

Hood, a traytour and a theafe, to put out a preacher, to have his office lesse esteemed, to preferre Robin Hood before the ministracion of God's Word; and all this hath come of unpreaching prelates. This realme hath been ill provided for, that it hath had such corrupt judgments in it, to preferre Robin Hood to God's Word."—*Bishop Latimer's Sixth Sermon before King Edward VI.*

While the English Protestants thus preferred the outlaw's pageant to the preaching of their excellent bishop, the Scottish Calvinistic clergy, with the celebrated John Knox at their head, and backed by the authority of the magistrates of Edinburgh, who had of late been chosen exclusively from this party, found it impossible to control the rage of the populace, when they attempted to deprive them of the privilege of presenting their pageant of Robin Hood.

(1561). "Vpon the xxi day of Julij Archibalde Dowglas of Killspindie, Provest of Edr., David Symmer and Adame Fullartoun, bailies of the samyne, causit ane cordinare servant, callit James Gillioun [or Killone], takin of befor, for playing in Edr. with Robene Hude, to wnderly the law, and put him to the knowlege of ane assyze, qik yaij haid electit of yair favoraris, quha with schort deliberatioun condemnit him to be hangit for ye said cryme. And the deaconis of ye craftisman, fearing vproare, maid great solistatiouns at ye handis of ye said provest and bailies, and als requirit John Knox, minister, for eschewing of tumult, to superceid ye executioun of him, vnto ye tyme yai suld advertise my Lord Duke yairof. And yan, if it wes his mynd and will yat he should be disponit vpon, ye said deaconis and craftisman sould convey him yaire; quha answerit, yat yai culd na way stope ye executioun of justice. Quhan ye time of ye said pouer mans hanging approcht, and yat he hangman wes cum to ye jibbat with ye ledder, vpoune ye qik ye said cordinare should have bene hangit, ane certaine and remanent craftschilder, quha wes put to ye horne with ye said Gillione, ffor ye said Robene Hiude's *playes*, and vyris yair assistaris and favoraris, past to wappnis, and yai brak down ye said jibbat, and yan chacit ye said provest, bailies, and Alexr. Guthrie, in ye said Alexander's writing-buith, and held yame yairin; and yairefter past to ye tolbuyt, and becaus the samyne wes steikit, and onnawayes culd get the keyes thairof, thai brake the said tolbuyth dore with foure hamberis per force (the said provest and bailies luikand thairon), and not onlie put thar the said Gillone to fredome and libertie, and brocht him furth of the said tolbuit, bot alsua the remanent presonar is being thairintill. And this done, the said craftismen's servands, with the said condemnit cordonar, past don to the Nethrbow, to have past furth thairit; bot becaus the samyne on thair coming thairto wes closit, thai past vp agane the Hie Streit of the said bourghe to the Castell hill, and in this menetyme the saidis provest and bailies and thair assistaris being in the writting-buith of the said Alexr. Guthrie, past and enterit in the said tolbuyt, and in the said servandis passage vp the Hie Streit, then schote furth thairof at thame ane dog, and hvrt ane servand of the said childer. This being done, thair wes nathing vthir but the one partie schuteand out and castand stanis furth of the said tolbuyt, and the vther partie schuteand hagbuttis in the same agane. And sua the craftismen's servandis, abone written, held and inclost the said provest and bailies contnewallie in the said tolbuyth, frae three houris efernone quhil aught houris at even, and na man of the said town preusit [sterit] to relieve thair said provest and bailies. And than thai send to the maisters of the Castell [craftismen], to caus thaim if thai mycht stay the said servandis, quha maid ane maner to doe the same, bot thai could not bring the same to ane finall end, ffor the said servand wold on nowayes stay fra, quhill thai had revengit the hurting of ane of them; and thairefter the constable of the Castell come down thairfra, and he with the said maisters treatit betwix the said pties in this maner:—That the said provest and bailies sall reniit [discharge] to the said craftschilder all actioun, cryme, and offens that thai had committit aganes thame in any tyme bygane; and band oblast thame nevir to pussew them thairfor; and als comandit thair maisters to resaueth them agane in thair services, as thai did befor. And this being proclamit at the mercat crow, thai scalit, and the said provest and bailies come furth of the same tolbuyth," etc. etc. etc.

John Knox, who writes at large upon this tumult, informs us it was inflamed by the deacons of crafts, who, resenting the superiority assumed over them by the magistrates, would yield no assistance to put down the tumult. "They will be magistrates alone," said the recusant deacons, "e'en let them rule the populace alone"; and accordingly they passed quietly to take their "four-hours penny," and left the magistrates to help themselves as they could. Many persons were excommunicated for this outrage, and not admitted to church ordinances till they had made satisfaction.

NOTE 11.—"THE PAIP, THAT PAGAN," p. 128

These rude rhymes are taken, with trifling alterations, from a ballad called "Trim-go-trix." It occurs in a singular collection, entitled *Ane Compendious*

Booke of Godly and Spirituall Songs, Collectit out of Sundrie Parts of the Scripture, with Sundrie of other Ballates Changed out of Prophaine Sanges, for Avojdng of Sinne and Harlotrie, with Augmentation of Sundrie Gude and Godly Ballates. Edinburgh, printed by Andro Hart. This curious collection has been reprinted in Mr. John Graham Dalyell's *Scottish Poems of the 16th Century*. Edin. 1801.

NOTE 12.—INABILITY OF EVIL SPIRITS TO ENTER A HOUSE UNINVITED, p. 144

There is a popular belief respecting evil spirits, that they cannot enter an inhabited house unless invited, nay, dragged over the threshold. There is an instance of the same superstition in the *Tales of the Genii*, where an enchanter is supposed to have intruded himself into the divan of the sultan.

"Thus," said the illustrious Misnar, "let the enemies of Mahomet be dismayed! but inform me, O ye sages! under the semblance of which of your brethren did that foul enchanter gain admittance here?" "May the lord of my heart," answered Bahilu, the hermit of the faithful from Queda, "triumph over all his foes! As I travelled on the mountains from Queda, and saw neither the footsteps of beasts, nor the flights of birds, behold, I chanced to pass through a cavern, in whose hollow sides I found this accursed sage, to whom I unfolded the invitation of the Sultan of India, and we, joining, journeyed toward the divan; but ere we entered, he said unto me, 'Put thy hand forth, and pull me toward thee into the divan, calling on the name of Mahomet, for the evil spirits are on me, and vex me.'"

I have understood that many parts of these fine tales, and in particular that of the Sultan Misnar, were taken from genuine Oriental sources by the editor, Mr. James Ridley.

But the most picturesque use of this popular belief occurs in Coleridge's beautiful and tantalizing fragment of *Christabel*. Has not our own imaginative poet cause to fear that future ages will desire to summon him from his place of rest, as Milton longed

To call up him, who left half told
The story of Cambuscan bold?

The verses I refer to are when Christabel conducts into her father's castle a mysterious and malevolent being, under the guise of a distressed female stranger

They cross'd the moat, and Christabel
Took the key that fitted well;
A little door she open'd straight,
All in the middle of the gate;
The gate that was iron'd within and without,
Where an army in battle array had march'd out.

The lady sank, belike thro' pain,
And Christabel with might and main
Lifted her up, a weary weight,
Over the threshold of the gate:
Then the lady rose again,
And moved as she were not in pain.

So free from danger, free from fear,
They cross'd the court:—right glad they were,
And Christabel devoutly cried
To the lady by her side:

"Praise we the Virgin, all divine,
Who hath rescued thee from thy distress."

"Alas, alas!" said Geraldine,

"I cannot speak for weariness."

So free from danger, free from fear,
They cross'd the court:—right glad they were.

NOTE 13.—SEYTON, OR SETON, p. 161

George, fifth Lord Seyton, was immovably faithful to Queen Mary during all the mutabilities of her fortune. He was grand master of the household, in which capacity he had a picture painted of himself with his official baton, and the following motto:

In adversitate patiens;
In prosperitate benevolus.
Hazard, yet forward.

On various parts of his castle he inscribed, as expressing his religious and political creed, the legend

UN DIEU, UN FOY, UN ROY, UN LOY.

He declined to be promoted to an earldom, which Queen Mary offered him at the same time when she advanced her natural brother to be Earl of Mar, and afterwards of Murray.

On his refusing this honor, Mary wrote, or caused to be written, the following lines in Latin and French :—

Sunt comites; ducesque alii, sunt denique reges ;
Sethoni dominum sit satis esse mihi.

Il y a des comptes, des roys, des ducs ; ainsi
C'est assez pour moy d'estre Seigneur de Seton.

Which may be thus rendered :—

Earl, duke, or king, be thou that list to be ;
Seton, thy lordship is enough for me.

This distich reminds us of the "pride which aped humility" in the motto of the house of Couci :

Je suis ni roy, ni prince aussi ;
Je suis le Seigneur de Coucy.

After the battle of Langside, Lord Seton was obliged to retire abroad for safety, and was an exile for two years, during which he was reduced to the necessity of driving a wagon in Flanders for his subsistence. He rose to favor in James VI.'s reign, and resuming his paternal property, had himself painted in his wagoner's dress, and in the act of driving a wain with four horses, on the north end of a stately gallery at Seton Castle. He appears to have been fond of the arts ; for there exists a beautiful family-piece of him in the center of his family. Mr. Pinkerton, in his *Scottish Iconographia* [1797], published an engraving of this curious portrait. The original is the property of Lord Somerville, nearly connected with the Seton family, and is at present at his lordship's fishing-villa of the Pavilion, near Melrose.

NOTE 14.—FANFARONA, p. 162

A name given to the gold chains worn by the military men of the period. It is of Spanish origin ; for the fashion of wearing these costly ornaments was much followed amongst the conquerors of the New World.

NOTE 15.—MAIDEN OF MORTON, p. 167

A species of guillotine which the Regent Morton brought down from Halifax, certainly at a period considerably later than intimated in the tale. He was himself the first that suffered by the engine.—

This instrument, which is preserved in the Antiquarian Museum of Edinburgh, was brought to Scotland several years earlier than popular tradition assigns, and is said to have been used for the execution of criminals about twenty years before the Earl of Morton was beheaded, in 1582 (*Laing*).

NOTE 16.—THE RESIGNATION OF QUEEN MARY, p. 226

The details of this remarkable event are, as given in chapter xxii., imaginary ; but the outline of the events is historical. Sir Robert Lindesay [Melville], brother to the author of the *Memoirs*, was at first entrusted with the delicate commission of persuading the imprisoned Queen to resign her crown. As he flatly refused to interfere, they determined to send the Lord Lindesay, one of the rudest and most violent of their own faction, with instructions, first to use fair persuasions, and if these did not succeed, to enter into harder terms. Knox associates Lord Ruthven with Lindesay in this alarming commission. He was the son of that Lord Ruthven who was prime agent in the murder of Rizzio ; and little mercy was to be expected from his conjunction with Lindesay.

The employment of such rude tools argued a resolution on the part of those who had the Queen's person in their power to proceed to the utmost extremities, should they find Mary obstinate. To avoid this pressing danger, Sir Robert Melville was despatched by them to Lochleven, carrying with him, concealed in the

scabbard of his sword, letters to the Queen from the Earl of Athole, Maitland of Lethington, and even from Throgmorton, the English ambassador, who was then favorable to the unfortunate Mary, conjuring her to yield to the necessity of the times, and to subscribe such deeds as Lindsay should lay before her, without being startled by their tenor; and assuring her that her doing so, in the state of captivity under which she was placed, would neither, in law, honor, or conscience, be binding upon her when she should obtain her liberty. Submitting, by the advice of one part of her subjects, to the menace of the others, and learning that Lindsay was arrived in a boasting, that is, threatening, humor, the Queen, "with some reluctance, and with tears," saith Knox, subscribed one deed resigning her crown to her infant son, and another establishing the Earl of Murray regent. It seems agreed by historians that Lindsay behaved with great brutality on the occasion. The deeds were signed 24th July 1569.

NOTE 17.—GANELON, p. 258

Gan, Gano, or Ganelon of Mayence, is, in the romances on the subject of Charlemagne and his Paladins, always represented as the traitor by whom the Christian champion are betrayed.

NOTE 18.—SCOTTISH FAIRS, p. 271

At Scottish fairs, the baillie, or magistrate, deputed by the lord in whose name the meeting is held, attends the fair with his guard, decides trifling disputes, and punishes on the spot any petty delinquencies. His attendants are usually armed with halberds, and, sometimes at least, escorted by music. Thus, in the *Life and Death of Habbie Simpson*, we are told of that famous minstrel—

At fairs he play'd before the spear-men,
And gaily graithed in their gear-men;—
Steel bonnets, jacks, and swords shone clear then,
Like ony bead.
Now wha shall play before sic weir-men,
Since Habbie's dead!

NOTE 19.—KIERY CRAIGS, p. 273

Lord Chief-Commissioner Adam, in the year 1817, formed what was called a Blair-Adam Club, consisting of Sir Walter Scott and a few other friends, who assembled once a-year at Blair-Adam House, near the shores of Lochleven. In his *Reminiscences*, the Lord Chief-Commissioner, when referring to the anonymous publication of the Waverley Novels, records the following anecdote:—"What confirmed, and was certainly meant to disclose to me the author, was the mention of the Kiery Craigs, a picturesque piece of scenery in the grounds of Blair-Adam, as being in the vicinity of Kelty Bridge, the *howf* of Auchtermuchty, the Kinross carrier. It was only an intimate friend of the family . . . who could know anything of the Kiery Craigs or its name; and both the scenery and the name had attractions for Sir Walter.

"At our first meeting after the publication of the *Abbot*, when the party was assembled on the top of the rock, the Chief-Baron Shepherd, looking Sir Walter full in the face, and stamping his staff on the ground, said, 'Now, Sir Walter, I think we be upon the top of the Kiery Craigs.' Sir Walter preserved profound silence; but there was a conscious looking down, and a considerable elongation of his upper lip."—*Blair-Adam Tracts*, 1834, p. xxxv., and *Lockhart's Life of Scott*, vol. vi. p. 264 (*Laing*).

NOTE 20.—MOTHER NICNEVEN, p. 278

This was the name given to the grand Mother Witch, the very Hecate of Scottish popular superstition. Her name was bestowed, in one or two instances, upon sorceresses, who were held to resemble her by their superior skill in "Hell's black grammar."

NOTE 21.—DARK GREY MAN, p. 299

By an ancient, though improbable, tradition the Douglasses are said to have derived their name from a champion who had greatly distinguished himself in an action. When the king demanded by whom the battle had been won, the attendants are said to have answered, "Sholto Douglas, sir;" which is said to mean, "Yonder dark gray man." But the name is undoubtedly territorial, and taken from Douglas river and dale.

NOTE 22.—SUSPECTED CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE LIFE OF MARY, p. 353

A romancer, to use a Scottish phrase, wants but a hair to make a tethor of. The whole detail of the steward's supposed conspiracy against the life of Mary is grounded upon an expression in one of her letters, which affirms that Jasper Dryfesdale [James Drysdale], one of the Laird of Lochleven's servants, had threatened to murder William Douglas (for his share in the Queen's escape), and averred that he would plant a dagger in Mary's own heart.—*Chalmers's Life of Queen Mary* [1822], vol. i. p. 278

NOTE 23.—MUFFLED MAN, p. 361

Generally a diguised man; originally one who wears his cloak or mantle muffled round the lower part of the face to conceal his countenance. I have on an ancient piece of iron the representation of a robber thus accoutred, endeavoring to make his way into a house, and opposed by a mastiff, to whom he in vain offers food. The motto is *Spernit dona fides*. It is part of a fire-grate said to have belonged to Archbishop Sharp.

NOTE 24.—THE HOWLET, p. 376

Sir John Holland's poem of *The Howlet* is known to collectors by the beautiful edition presented to the Bannatyne Club by Mr. David Laing.—

The preface contains remarks by Sir Walter Scott, who was president of the club. The poem was composed about the middle of the 15th century, and has generally been supposed to be a satire on James II. of Scotland (*Laing*).

NOTE 25.—DEMEANOR OF QUEEN MARY, p. 380

In the dangerous expedition to Aberdeenshire, Randolph, the English ambassador, gives Cecil the following account of Queen Mary's demeanor:—

"In all these garboiles, I assure you, I never saw her [the Queen] merrier, never dismayed; nor never thought that so much to be in her that I find. She repented nothing but, when the lords and others, at Inverness, came in the morning from the watch, that she was not a man to know what life it was to lie all night in the fields, or to walk on the causeway with a jack and a knapschalle, a Glasgow buckler, and a broadsword."—*RANDOLPH to CECIL, September 18, 1562.*

The writer of the above letter seems to have felt the same impression which Catherine Seyton, in the text, considered as proper to the Queen's presence among her armed subjects.

"Though we neither thought nor looked for other than on that day to have fought or never—what desperate blows would not have been given, when every man should have fought in the sight of so noble a queen, and so many fair ladies, our enemies to have taken them from us, and we to save our honors, not to be reft of them, your honor can easily judge!"—*The same to the same* [condensed], *September 23, 1562.*

NOTE 26.—ESCAPE OF QUEEN MARY FROM LOCHLEVEN, p. 388

It is well known that the escape of Queen Mary from Lochleven was effected by George Douglas, the youngest brother of Sir William Douglas, the lord of the castle; but the minute circumstances of the event have been a good deal confused, owing to two agents having been concerned in it who bore the same name. It has been always supposed that George Douglas was induced to abet Mary's escape by the ambitious hope that, by such service, he might merit her hand. But his purpose was discovered by his brother Sir William, and he was expelled from the castle. He continued, notwithstanding, to hover in the neighborhood, and maintain a correspondence with the royal prisoner and others in the fortress.

If we believe the English ambassador Drury, the Queen was grateful to George Douglas, and even proposed a marriage with him—a scheme which could hardly be serious, since she was still the wife of Bothwell, but which, if suggested at all, might be with a purpose of gratifying the Regent Murray's ambition, and propitiating his favor; since he was, it must be remembered, the brother uterine of George Douglas, for whom such high honor was said to be designed.

The proposal, if seriously made, was treated as inadmissible, and Mary again resumed her purpose of escape. Her failure in her first attempt has some picturesque particulars, which might have been advantageously introduced in fictitious narrative. Drury sends Cecil the following account of the matter:—

"But after, upon the 25th of the last (April 1567), she enterprised an escape, and was the rather nearer effect, through her accustomed long lying in bed all the

morning. The manner of it was thus : there cometh in to her the laundress early as other times before she was wonted, and the Queen according to such a secret practise putteth on her the weed of the laundress, and so with the fardel of cloathes and her muffler upon her face, passeth out and entreth the boat to pass the loch ; which, after some space, one of them that rowed said merrily, " Let us see what manner of dame this is," and therewith offered to pull down her muffler, which, to defend, she put up her hands, which they spied to be very fair and white ; wherewith they entered into suspicion whom she was, beginning to wonder at her enterprise. Whereat she was little dismayed, but charged them, upon danger of their lives, to row her over to the shore, which they nothing regarded, but eftsoons rowed her back again, promising her that it should be secreted, and especially from the lord of the house, under whose guard she lyeth. It seemeth she knew her refuge, and where to have found it if she had once landed ; for there did, and yet do linger, at a little village called Kinross, hard at the loch side, the same George Douglas, one Sempil, and one Beton, the which two were sometime her trusty servants, and, as yet appeareth, they mind her no less affection."—Bishop Keith's *History of the Affairs of Church and State in Scotland*, p. 470.

Notwithstanding this disappointment, little spoke of by historians, Mary renewed her attempts to escape. There was in the Castle of Lochleven a lad named William Douglas, some relation probably of the baron, and about eighteen years old. This youth proved as accessible to Queen Mary's prayers and promises as was the brother of his patron, George Douglas, from whom this William must be carefully kept distinct. It was young William who played the part commonly assigned to his superior, George,—stealing the keys of the castle from the table on which they lay, while his lord was at supper. He let the Queen and a waiting-woman out of the apartment where they were secured, and out of the tower itself, embarked with them in a small skiff, and rowed them to the shore. To prevent instant pursuit, he, for precaution's sake, locked the iron grated door of the tower, and threw the keys into the lake. They found George Douglas and the Queen's servant, Beaton [Betoun], waiting for them, and Lord Seyton and James Hamilton of Orbieston in attendance, at the head of a party of faithful followers, with whom they fled to Niddrie Castle, and from thence to Hamilton.

In narrating this romantic story, both history and tradition confuse the two Douglasses together, and confer on George the successful execution of the escape from the castle, the merit of which belongs in reality to the boy called William, or, more frequently, the Little Douglas, either from his youth or his slight stature. The reader will observe, that in the romance the part of the Little Douglas has been assigned to Roland Græme. In another case, it would be tedious to point out in a work of amusement such minute points of historical fact ; but the general interest taken in the fate of Queen Mary renders everything of consequence which connects itself with her misfortunes.

NOTE 27.—BATTLE OF LANGSIDE, p. 412

I am informed in the most polite manner by D. MacVean, Esq., of Glasgow, that I have been incorrect in my locality, in giving an account of the battle of Langside. Crookstone Castle, he observes, lies four miles west from the field of battle, and rather in the rear of Murray's army. The real place from which Mary saw the rout of her last army was Cathcart Castle, which, being a mile and a half east from Langside, was situated in the rear of the Queen's own army. I was led astray in the present case by the authority of my deceased friend, James Grahame, the excellent and amiable author of the *Sabbath*, in his drama on the subject of Queen Mary ; and by a traditionary report of Mary having seen the battle from the Castle of Crookstone, which seemed so much to increase the interest of the scene that I have been unwilling to make, in this particular instance, the fiction give way to the fact, which last is undoubtedly in favor of Mr. MacVean's system.

It is singular how tradition, which is sometimes a sure guide to truth, is, in other cases, prone to mislead us. In the celebrated field of battle at Killiecrankie, the traveler is struck with one of those rugged pillars of rough stone, which indicate the scenes of ancient conflict. A friend of the Author, well acquainted with the circumstances of the battle, was standing near this large stone, and looking on the scene around, when a Highland shepherd hurried down from the hill to offer his services as cicerone, and proceeded to inform him that Dundee was slain at that stone, which was raised to his memory. " Fle, Donald," answered my friend, " how can you tell such a story to a stranger ? I am sure you know well enough that Dundee was killed at a considerable distance from this place, near the house of Fascally, and that this stone was here long before the battle, in 1688." " Oich !—oich !" said Donald, no way abashed, " and your honor's in the right, and I see you ken a' about it. And he wasna killed on the spot neither, but lived till the next morning ; but a' the Saxon gentlemen like best to hear he was

killed at the great stane." It is on the same principle of pleasing my readers that I retain Crookstone Castle instead of Cathcart.

If, however, the Author has taken a liberty in removing the actual field of battle somewhat to the eastward, he has been tolerably strict in adhering to the incidents of the engagement, as will appear from a comparison of events in the novel with the following account from an old writer.

"The Regent was out on foot and all his company, except the Laird of Grange, Alexander Hume of Manderston, and some Borderers to the number of two hundred. The Laird of Grange had already viewed the ground, and with all imaginable diligence caused every horseman to take behind him a footman of the Regent's, to guard behind them, and rode with speed to the head of the Langside Hill, and set down the sett footmen with their culverings at the head of a strait lane, where there were some cottage houses and yards of great advantage. Which soldiers with their continual shot killed divers of the vaunt-guard, led by the Hamiltouns, who, courageously and fiercely ascending up the hill, were already out of breath, when the Regent's vaunt-guard joined with them. Where the worthy Lord Hume fought on foot with his pike in his hand very manfully, assisted by the Laird of Cesfoord, his brother-in-law, who helped him up again when he was stricken to the ground by many stroaks upon his face, by the throwing pistols at him after they had been discharged. He was also wounded with staves, and had many stroaks of spears through his legs; for he and Grange, at the joining, cried to let their adversaries first lay down their spears, to bear up theirs; which spears were so thick fixed in the others' jacks, that some of the pistols and great staves that were thrown by them which were behind, might be seen lying upon the spears.

"Upon the Queen's side the Earl of Arguile commanded the battle, and the Lord of Arbroth the vaunt-guard. But the Regent committed to the Laird of Grange the special care, as being an experimented captain, to oversee every danger, and to ride to every wing, to encourage and make help where greatest need was. He perceived, at the first joining, the right wing of the Regent's vaunt-guard put back, and like to fly, whereof the greatest part were commons of the barony of Renfrew; whereupon he rode to them, and told them that their enemy was already turning their backs, requesting them to stay and debate till he should bring them fresh men forth of the battle. Whither at full speed he did ride alone, and told the Regent that the enemy were shaken and flying away behind the little village, and desired a few number of fresh men to go with him. Where he found enough willing, as the Lord Lindesay, the Laird of Lochleven, Sir James Balfour, and all the Regent's servants, who followed him with diligence, and reinforced that wing which was beginning to fly; which fresh men with their loose weapons struck the enemies in their flanks and faces, which forced them incontinent to give place and turn back after long fighting and pushing others to and fro with their spears. There were not many horsemen to pursue after them, and the Regent cried to save and not to kill, and Grange was never cruel, so that there were few slain and taken. And the only slaughter was at the first encounter by the shot of the soldiers, which Grange had planted at the lane-head behind some dikes."

It is remarkable that, while passing through the small town of Renfrew, some partizans, adherents of the house of Lennox, attempting to arrest Queen Mary and her attendants, were obliged to make way for her, not without slaughter.—

The Castle of Rutherglen was demolished immediately after the battle by the Regent's party.

The suburban district of Glasgow towards the south, named Cathcart, takes its name from the old castle, and, owing to the growth of the city in this direction, the site of the battle of Langside is brought contiguous to the southeast side of the Queen's Park. On the west of this park the site of the Regent Murray's camp is commemorated by the "Camp Hill," and at the village of Langside there is a cottage which goes by the name of "Queen Mary's Cottage." The Queen's Park is in a direct line with Glasgow Bridge, from which it is three miles distant in a straight line (*Laing*).

NOTE 28.—BURIAL OF THE ABBOT'S HEART IN THE AVENEL AISLE, p. 421

This was not the explanation of the incident of searching for the heart, mentioned in the introduction to the tale, which the Author originally intended. It was designed to refer to the heart of Robert Bruce. It is generally known that that great monarch, being on his death-bed, bequeathed to the good Lord James of Douglas the task of carrying his heart to the Holy Land, to fulfil in a certain degree his own desire to perform a crusade. Upon Douglas's death, fighting against the Moors in Spain, a sort of military *hors d'œuvre* to which he could have

pleaded no regular call of duty, his followers brought back the Bruce's heart, and deposited it in the abbey church of Melrose, the Kennaquhair of the tale.

This abbey had been always particularly favored by the Bruce. We have already seen his extreme anxiety that each of the reverend brethren should be daily supplied with a service of boiled almonds, rice and milk, pease, or the like, to be called the "king's mess," and that without the ordinary service of their table being either disturbed in quantity or quality. But this was not the only mark of the benignity of good King Robert towards the monks of Melrose, since, by a charter of the date 29th May 1326, he conferred on the Abbot of Melrose the sum of £2000 sterling, for rebuilding the Church of St. Mary's, ruined by the English; and there is little or no doubt that the principal part of the remains which now display such exquisite specimens of Gothic architecture, at its very purest period, had their origin in this munificent donation. The money was to be paid out of crown lands, estates forfeited to the King, and other property or demesnes of the crown.

A very curious letter, written to his son about three weeks before his death, has been pointed out to me by my friend Mr. Thomas Thomson, Deputy-Register for Scotland. It enlarges so much on the love of the royal writer to the community of Melrose, that it is well worthy of being inserted in a work connected in some degree with Scottish history.

LITERA DOMINI REGIS ROBERTI AD FILIUM SUUM DAVID

"Robertus dei gratia rex Scottorum, David precordialissimo filio suo, ac ceteris successoribus suis, Salutem, et sic ejus precepta tenere, ut cum sua benedictione possint regnare. Fili carissime, digne censeri videtur filius, qui, paternos in bonis mores imitans, piam ejus nititur exequi voluntatem, nec proprie sibi sumit nomen heredis, qui salubribus predecessoris affectibus non adherit; cupientes igitur, ut piam affectionem et cinerum dilectionem, quam erga monasterium de Melros, ubi cor nostrum ex speciali devotione disposuimus tumulandum, et erga religiosos ibidem Deo servientes, ipsorum vita sanctissima nos ad hoc excitante, concepimus; tu ceterique successores mei pia sinceritate prosequamini, ut, ex vestre dilectionis affectu dictis religiosi nostri causa post mortem nostram ostenso, ipsi pro nobis ad orandum fervencius et forcius animentur. Vobis precipimus quantum possumus, instanter supplicamus, et ex toto corde injungimus, quatinus assignacionibus quas eisdem viris religiosi et fabrica ecclesie sue de novo fecimus ac etiam omnibus aliis donacionibus nostris, ipsos libere gaudere permittans, easdem potius si necesse fuerit augmentantes quam diminuentes, ipsorum petitiones auribus benevolis admittentes, ac ipsos contra suos invasores et emulos pia defensione protegentes. Hanc autem exhortacionem supplicacionem et preceptum tu, fili ceterique successores nostri, prestanti animo complere curetis, si nostram benedictionem habere velitis, ut a cum benedictione filii summi regis, qui filios docuit patrum voluntates in bono perficere, asserens in mundum se venisse non ut suam voluntatem faceret sed paternam. In testimonium autem nostre devotionis erga locum predictum sic a nobis dilectum et electum concepte, presentem literam religiosi predicti dimittimus, nostris successoribus in posterum ostendendam. Data apud Cardros, undecimo die Maij, anno regni nostri vicessimo quarto."

If this charter be altogether genuine, and there is no appearance of forgery, it gives rise to a curious doubt in Scottish history. The letter announces that the King had already destined his heart to be deposited at Melrose. The resolution to send it to Palestine, under the charge of Douglas, must have been adopted betwixt 11th May 1329, the date of the letter, and 7th June of the same year, when the Bruce died; or else we must suppose that the commission of Douglas extended not only to taking the Bruce's heart to Palestine, but to bring it safe back to its final place of deposit in the Abbey of Melrose.

It would not be worth inquiring by what caprice the Author was induced to throw the incident of the Bruce's heart entirely out of the story, save merely to say, that he found himself unable to fill up the canvas he had sketched, and indisposed to prosecute the management of the supernatural machinery with which his plan, when it was first rough-hewn, was concerted and combined.

GLOSSARY

OF

WORDS, PHRASES, AND ALLUSIONS

- A by, a bye**, to suffer, endure
- Ad unguem, at the fingers' ends**
- Alexipharmics**, antidotes to poisons, etc.
- A moi! mes Français!** Hither! my French guard
- Anastasius, or Memoirs of a Greek written at the Close of the Eighteenth Century** (1819), by Thomas Hope, a member of a wealthy Anglo-Dutch family
- Andrea Ferrara**, a Scottish broadsword
- Anilities**, old women's follies, acts of dotage
- Aqua**, etc. (p. 304), wonderful water! it has been proved
- Argute**, sharp, acute
- Aristarch**, a severe critic, after Aristarchus the most celebrated critic of antiquity, who lived at Alexandria before and after 200 B. C.
- Arles**, earnest money
- Atrouling**, a-rolling
- Aver**, a draught horse
- Awmous**, alms
- Bacharac, or Bacharach**, on the Rhine, in the wine-growing region. It is nearly 100 miles W. of Würzburg
- Bachelor Samson Carasco**. See *Don Quixote*, Pt. II. chap. xiv.
- Back-sword**, sword with only one sharp edge
- Bailie, or Bailey**, the outer courtyard of a feudal castle
- Banders**, confederates
- Bangsters**, bullies, disorderly persons
- Barnbougle**, a ruined castle in Dalmeny Park, on the Firth of Forth, belonging to the Earl of Rosebery; it was rebuilt in 1880
- Bayes's tragedy, The Rehearsal** (1672), by George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, Bayes being a character in the piece intended to satirize Dryden. The play (a comedy) concludes with a battle between soldiers and hobby-horses
- Bears are you there with**, a proverbial expression indicative of the repetition of an annoyance. A man, disliking a sermon on Elisha and the bears, went the next Sunday to a different church, but there the sermon was from the same text, and he exclaimed, "Are you there again with your bears?"
- Beef-brewis**, beef-broth
- Bellona**, the ancient Romans' goddess of war
- Benedicite**, bless you! a blessing
- Benedicti**, etc. (p. 84), Blessed are they who come in the name of the Lord
- Benedictus**, etc. (p. 290), Blessed be he who comes in the name of the Lord, condemned he who comes in the name of the enemy
- Bield**, shelter, refuge
- Bilbo, bilboa**, a sword made at Bilboa in North Spain
- Birlit**, made a whirring noise, spun away
- Black-jack**, a drinking-vessel or ale-pitcher made of waxed leather
- Black Ormiston**, concerned in the murder of Darnley
- Bleeding heart**, the badge of the Douglas family, from Good Earl James having carried Bruce's heart to Palestine
- Bodle**, a small copper coin — 1-6th of a penny
- English**
- Boll, or bow**, a dry measure — 6 bushels
- Bolt head**, a hollow glass globe with a long neck, used in distillation
- Border doom**, hanging
- Bow, boll**, an old Scotch measure — 6 bushels
- Bowton, Hepburn of**, a relative of Bothwell, an agent in the murder of Darnley
- Brag**, proudly defy, challenge
- Bran**, the dog of Fingal in *Ossian's Poems*
- Brancher**, a young bird able to leave the nest and hop about on the branches
- Brandy-wine**, brandy
- Branle**, dance
- Bravade**, boast
- Brent brow**, smooth, high forehead
- Broken clan**, one that had no chief able to find security for their good behaviour, as the Grames of the Debateable Land
- Brownie**, a gnome. See *Elshie* in the *Black Dwarf*
- Bumbasted, or bombasted**, stuffed with cotton-wool, etc.
- Caleb Williams** (1794), by William Godwin, father of Shelley's wife
- Caliburn**, the sword of King Arthur
- Calipolis**, wife of the Moorish prince in Peele's play *The Battle of Alcazar*
- Callot's Temptations**, the masterpiece of Jacques Callot, a 17th century

- engraver of Nancy, whose plates witness to a most fantastic and grotesque imagination
- Calm sough*, a quiet tongue
- Cambuscan*, king of Sarra in Tartary, the model of kindly virtues, figures in Chaucer's *Squire's Tale* and in Spenser's *Faërie Queene*, Bk. iv.
- Cantharides*, Spanish flies, used to raise blisters—an animal not a vegetable poison
- Cardinal* (p. 352). See *Uncle the Cardinal*
- Carrasco Bachelor Samson*. See *Bachelor Samson Carrasco*
- Carstogie, laird of*, the head of the Clephane family; the house stands 11-2 miles from Cupar in Fife
- Cates*, delicacies, fancy confectionery
- Catholicion*, universal remedy
- Celsus*, a physician of the 1st century A. D., wrote in Latin a history of medicine as practised in ancient Alexandria
- Change-house*, alehouse
- Chiragra*, gout in the hand
- Christian Majesty*, Francis II., king of France; His Very Christian Majesty was the usual title-designate of the king of France
- Churchill*, a satiric poet of the 18th century. See *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, under the year 1763
- Clout*, a mark in the very middle of the target
- Clouted*, mended
- Cock of the North*, Earl of Huntly
- Cog*, to cheat, deceive, wheedle
- Coif*, woman's cap or covering for the head
- Colewort*, any kind of greens
- Colman's drama*, *The Iron Chest*, a three-act drama founded on Godwin's *Caleb Williams*, was written by George Colman, junior, and produced in 1796
- Commendator*, lay holder of a benefice
- Conjuraverunt*, etc. (p. 87). The princes have conspired among themselves, saying, Let us cast His cords from us
- Corbie*, raven; *corbie-messenger*, one that returns too late or not at all, an allusion to Noah's raven
- Cordinare*, cordwainer, shoemaker, leather-worker
- Coronach*, dirge
- Couranto*, a lively, rapid dance
- Courcelles*, French ambassador in Scotland, 1536-87
- Crack-hemp, crack-halter*, one fated to come to the gallows
- Craftschilder*, servants, etc., of craftsmen, artisans
- Crowd*, a fiddle
- Crown of the sun*, old French gold coin of Louis XI. and Charles VIII., with the sun shown above the crown — 14s.
- Cruizedor*, or *cruzade d'or*, a Portuguese gold coin worth about half-a-crown
- Cubicular*, groom of the bedchamber, chamberlain
- Cuittle*, to tickle, wheedle
- Culpas meas*, my sins
- Curch*, woman's cap
- Cut*, a gelding, a term of reproach
- Cyprus*, thin black stuff
- Dalmatique*, a loose, long ecclesiastical robe, with wide sleeves
- Danske*, Danish
- Dark Grey Man* (Douglas). See Note 21, p. 430
- Darnaway (Castle)*, the seat of the Earl of Murray, near Forres in Elginshire
- Debateable Land*, between the rivers Sark and Esk, on the borders of Cumberland and Dumfries
- Des Rodomontades Espagnolles*, a collection of tales, anecdotes, etc., of Spanish boasting, taken from various authors by Jacques Gautier, or Gaultier (Rouen, 1612)
- Diascordium*, confection of scordium, the water germander
- Dight your gabs*, wipe your mouths, be silent
- Dink*, to deck, adorn
- Discernit*, etc. (p. 285). The wise man discriminates things which the fool confounds
- Disponit upon*, disposed of
- Doom*, judgment, verdict
- Dortour*, a dormitory
- Douce*, sober, sedate
- Douglas lady of the house of* (p. 342). Catherine Douglas endeavored to keep out the murderers of James I. of Scotland by thrusting her arm through the staple of the door (1437)
- Do veniam*, I give you leave
- Dow*, dove
- Draphane*, or *Draffan*, a castle belonging to the Hamiltons in Fifeshire; but Mary proceeded to Hamilton Park when she left Niddrie Castle
- Drawncansir*, a blustering braggart in *The Rehearsal* (1672), by G. Villiers Duke of Buckingham
- Dreadour*, dread, fear
- Dudgeon-dagger*, a small dagger with an ornamental wooden haft
- Duenna*, an old woman who watches that a younger observes the rules of decorum
- Duke of Orkney*, James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell
- Duncansbay Head*, in the extreme north of Scotland
- Earn*, or *erne*, an eagle
- Electuary*, a medical confection or paste
- En champ clos*, in an inclosed field
- Erne*, or *earn*, eagle
- Everiche*, every
- Exheridated*, or *exheredated*, disinherited
- Ex oribus parvulorum*, Out of the mouths of babes
- Facies hippocratica*, hippocratic or sickly countenance
- Farthingale*, a hoop petticoat
- Fash*, trouble, concern
- Fell*, skin; cruel
- Fiat experimentum*, etc. (p. 348). Let the experiment be made upon a common body
- Flaunes*, or *flams*, pancakes
- Fleech*, to flatter, cajole
- Four-hammer*, sledgehammer
- Four-hours' penny*, four o'clock meal—a phrase used by Knox

- Fox**, an old-fashioned broadsword
- Frack**, bold, prompt and resolute
- French Paris**, or *Nicholas Hubert*, a servant of Bothwell, sometime also of Mary, assisted in the murder of Darnley
- Frounce**, a distemper in hawks
- Frustra**, etc. (p. 353), In vain we vex the sick with remedies
- Gaillard**, wanton
- Galliurd**, a lively dance; a gay youth
- Galloway nag**, a small strong breed of Galloway, the south-west extremity of Scotland
- Galopin**, scullion, cook's boy
- Gambade**, gambol, leap, spring
- Gambadoes**, gaiters, leggings
- Garboiles**, broils, confusions
- Gazehound**, a hound that pursues by sight, greyhound
- Gear**, matter, business
- Gear-men**, men in armor
- Gestic lore**, knowledge of dancing
- Gled**, a kite
- Gleg**, quick, sharp, keen
- GorCon, Sir John**, fourth son of the Earl of Huntly, and one of Queen Mary's lovers, was beheaded at Aberdeen for treason in 1562
- Gospellers**, Reformers
- Gousty**, dreary, desolate
- Gowd**, to lay, to embroider in gold
- Grathed**, equipped, decked
- Graysteil, Sir Greysteil**, a metrical romance in which are narrated the exploits of a brave knight, Sir Greysteil. To call a man by this title, as James V. did Archibald Douglas of Kilsplindie, was esteemed a choice compliment. See Sir Eger
- Guises**, Mary's mother was of this powerful French (Lorraine) family
- Guy of Warwick**, the hero of a mediæval romance, slew a fierce Dun Cow on Dunsmore Heath, near Rugby
- Hackit**, or *hawkit*, white-faced
- Hagg**, or *hag*, a pit or break in a morass
- Haggard**, a wild hawk that has been tamed
- Halidome**, land held under a religious house
- Harquebuss**, an ancient firelock
- Harry groat**, a groat—4d., of Henry VIII.
- Hawick to Hermitage Castle**. Mary rode in one day from Jedburgh (not Hawick) to Hermitage Castle, near the Border, and back, a total distance of 40 miles, to visit the Earl of Bothwell, who had been wounded in a Border fight
- Hay of Luncarty**, the ancestor of three noble Scottish families—Errol, Tweeddale, and Kinnoul—was originally a peasant, who saved the Scottish army from defeat by the Danes shortly before the year 994
- Hay of Talla**, a Borderer, concerned in the murder of Darnley
- Herling**, young of the sea-trout
- Heywood, Thomas**, dramatist and actor of the first half of the 17th century
- Hic jacet**, etc. (p. 111), Here lies Abbot Eustace
- Hob (Ormiston)**, uncle of the Black Laird of Ormiston, concerned in the murder of Darnley
- Hobby**, a strong, active nag
- Hodden-grey**, rough cloth, the natural color of the wool
- Holyrood Palace** was rebuilt in the reign of Charles II., not Charles I., namely, between 1671 and 1679
- Hoodie**, or *hooded*, crow, the carrion crow
- Horn, put to**. See Put to horn
- Hors d'œuvre**, digression.
- Hours**, a Roman Catholic book of prayers for private devotions
- Howff**, a haunt, resort
- Howlet**, the owl
- Ilk**, the same; *ilka*, every
- In adversitate**, etc. (p. 428), Patient in adversity, benevolent in prosperity
- In dubio**, in doubt
- Injeer**, or *ingere*, to insinuate, force oneself in insidiously
- "In my school-days,"** etc. (p. xii). See *Merchant of Venice*, Act i. sc. 1
- Inter nos**, between ourselves
- Intrate, mei filii**, Enter my sons
- Jack-a-lent visages**, long, serious faces, like penitents in Lent
- Jeddart staff**, a species of battle-axe formerly used by the men of Jedburgh or Jeddart
- Jerking**, a beating, whipping
- Jesses**, straps fastened round the legs of a hawk
- Jester, celebrated**, (p. 120). Howleglass, the German Till Eulenspiegel (i.e. Owl-Glass)
- Je suis**, etc. (p. 429), I am neither king nor prince; I am the Lord of Coucy
- Jibbat**, gibbet
- Jiggeting**, behaving in an affected manner, flaunting
- Jouk**, stoop, duck down; *jouk and let the jaw gang by*, stoop and let the wave pass
- Jour de jeune**, a fast-day
- Julep**, a sweet drink, cordial
- Kail**, colewort, cabbage
- Kain-fowls**, fowls paid as part of rent
- Kelpie**, a water-spirit
- Kent**, to propel a boat by pushing a long pole against the bottom of the lake
- Kerrs**, of Cessford and Fernieherst, powerful Border chieftains, Catholics and supporters of Mary Queen of Scots
- King Candaules**, of ancient Lydia in Asia Minor, who exposed his wife to Gyges, in the 6th century B.C. The lady persuaded Gyges to slay her husband, and then married the slayer
- Kirn-milk**, butter-milk
- Kittle**, ticklish, difficult
- Knapsap knapschalle**, or *knapskull*, head-piece or helmet
- Ladies Sandilands and Olyfaunt**. The third dame of the trio was named Weir. See Allan Ramsay's *Evergreen* (1724), vol. 1.
- La Mer des Histoires**, a

- universal history or chronicle, translated (1848) from the *Mare Historiarum* of John Colonna, Dominican, who in 1255 was made Archbishop of Messina, Sicily
- Landward town*, rural, inland farmstead
- Lanercost*, an ancient abbey in Cumberland, close beside the Roman Wall
- Lavolta*, a lively dance with a leaping step
- Laving*, tavern-bill
- Least penny*, a worthless person
- Lennox*, a former county of Scotland, embracing Dumbarton and parts of Stirling, Perth, and Renfrew
- Lennox, him of the*, Henry Darnley, eldest son of the Earl of Lennox
- Lenten-kail*, broth made without meat
- Let*, retard, hinder
- Licium sit*, It may be allowed
- Lictor*, an ancient Roman executive officer
- Limbo lake*, where unbaptized children and good heathens were believed by the Roman Catholic Church to spend their eternity
- Ling*, thin, long grass; heather
- Lither*, lazy
- Loaning*, lane, meadow
- Lockeram*, coarse linen
- Lords of the Congregation*, leaders of the Reformation in Scotland
- Loretto*, on the Italian coast of the Adriatic, 15 miles from Ancona; a church there contains the (reputed) house in which the Virgin Mary lived at Nazareth
- Luath*, the dog of Cuthullin, in *Ossian's Poems*: "Fingal"
- Lungaroba corta scienza*, Long robe but little knowledge
- Lunt*, lighted match, torch
- Lurdane*, worthless fellow, blockhead
- Mail*, baggage
- Mail-gardener*, one who cultivates fruit, etc., on land for which he pays rent
- Mair*, more
- Malvolio*, the steward in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*
- Ma mignonne*, my darling
- Marries, four*, young ladies of noble birth, attendants of the Queen—Mary Livingstone, Mary Fleming, Mary Seatoun, and Mary Beatoun
- Mark*, a Scotch coin—1s. 11d.; a Dutch coin—about 1s. 6d.
- Marot, Clement*, poet, translated the Psalms into French verse (1541), which were very popular at court, and usually sung to secular airs
- Massy Moore*, a duncheon, a word of Moorish origin, introduced probably during the crusading era
- Mazzard* the head, skull
- Medicamentum*, medicine
- Menzie*, the entire establishment
- Merat crow*, market cross
- Messan*, a small dog, lap-dog; *messan-page*, cur of a page
- Metoposcopical*, physiological
- Mew*, to confine; cage for hawks
- Mickle*, great, big
- Minion* a favorite; pert, saucy woman
- Mint*, to aim at
- Mirror of Knighthood*, with fuller title, *The Mirror of Princely Deeds and Knighthood etc.* translated out of the Spanish by Margaret Tyler and R. P. (1585-1601)
- Mithridate*, an antidote to poison
- More Scotico*, in Scotch fashion
- Morisco bells*, used in a morris dance
- Mumchance*, an old game at cards or dice, in which silence was absolutely necessary
- Mungo in the Padlock*, a play (1768) by Isaac Bickerstaffe, the plot being based upon Cervantes's novel *The Jealous Husband*
- Munster, Bishop of*, suppressed with violence the fanatic and impious proceedings of the Anabaptists in Münster, the capital of Westphalia, in 1535
- Mutchkin*, a liquid measure—3-4 pint
- My rebel subjects saw me*, etc. (p. 396), an allusion to the condition in which Mary was led into Edinburgh after the battle of Carberry Hill, and the scenes that followed in the Provost's house
- Mystagogue*, interpreter of mysteries
- Ne accesseris*, etc. (p. 265), Go not into the council-chamber unless invited
- Neighbored ill*, agreed ill, disagreed
- Nick with nay*, disappoint by denying
- Nicol Forest*, a Border district of Cumberland
- Oblast*, obliged, engaged to
- Over Heaven's forbode*, Heaven forbid; *over God's forbode*, God forbid
- Pairmain*, a variety of apple
- Pajon, Henri*, a Parisian lawyer. *Prince Soly* was published in 1740
- Palinurus*, the steersman of Æneas. See Virgil's *Æneid*, v.
- Pantler*, keeper of pantry, one in charge of provisions
- Pantoufle*, slipper
- Parcel poet*, a bit of a poet, indifferent poet
- Parent*, relative
- Partlet*, a portion of dress, as a kerchief, for a lady's neck and shoulders
- Par voie du fait*, by violence, actual force
- Pasche*, Easter
- Patch*, paltry fellow, fool
- Paven*, or *pavan*, a slow, stately dance
- Pearlin muffler*, a lace veil
- Peel-house*, a small square tower of refuge
- Pestis*, the plague
- Petite Flamberge à rien*, useless little sword
- Petronel*, horseman's large pistol
- Pickthank*, an officious intermeddler, toady
- Pie*, magpie
- Pilniewinks*, instruments for torturing the fingers
- Plack*, a small copper coin—1-3 of a penny English
- Pleach*, to interweave, plash
- Poculum mane*, etc. (p. 273), A cup drained in the morning restores exhausted nature

- Podagra**, gout in the foot
Pomander-box, a box of perfume
Popinjay, parrot
Portioner, one possessing or inheriting part of a property
Pottle, *pottle-pot*, a vessel holding 2 quarts, tankard
Præmia cum, etc. (p. 275). The doctor is the devil when he asks for his fees
Prætor, a Roman magistrate
Pragmatic, meddling, officious
Propale, to publish
Proud peat, a person of insufferable pride
Pudding-burn House, a stronghold of the Armstrongs in Liddesdale. See the circumstances alluded to in Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*: "Dick o' the Cow," vol. ii. pp. 63-75
Puir, poor
Put to horn, publicly call upon one to pay a debt under claim of being proclaimed guilty of treason
Pyet, magpie
Quarrel-pane, a diamond-shaped pane, formed like a quarrel, the head of the arrow of a cross-bow
Queen, wench
Queen Regent, Mary of Guise (or Lorraine), mother of Mary Queen of Scots
Quhele, wheel
Quhill, till
Quid dicis, mi fili, What dost thou say, my son?
Quousque Domine? how long, O Lord?
Raymond Lullius, a 13th century philosopher, a native of Majorca, who invented a system of mechanical logic with which he tried to convert the Mohammedans to Christianity
Redder's lick, the blow that so often falls on one who interferes in a quarrel
Reed up, tidy, put in order
Rede, to counsel, advise; advice
Regality, *lord of*, one holding territorial jurisdiction conferred by the king
Resetter, one who harbors loose characters and criminals
Réveillez-vous, etc. (p. 374). Awake, fair sleeper
Rifler, a hawk that catches its prey by the feathers only
Rive, to rend, tear
Rock, distaff
Roke, a rock
Roseberry Topping, a conspicuous hill in Cleveland, North Riding of Yorkshire
Roseval and Lilian, a popular metrical romance that was still sung in the streets of Edinburgh as late as 1770. See Laing, *Early Metrical Tales* (1826)
Rowan-tree, in popular superstition a charm against witches
Ruffle, to play the bully, quarrel
Rung, club, cudgel
Sabœa, properly Sabra, daughter of Ptolemy, king of Egypt, the maiden who was rescued from the Dragon by St. George
St. James of Compostella, a celebrated resort of pilgrims, at Santiago, 30 miles from Corunna, in the north of Spain
St. Martin of Bullions, the St. Swithin or weeping saint of Scotland. If his festival (4th, i.e. 15th, July) prove wet, forty days of rain are expected
Salerno, school of, ranked as the first medical school in Europe during the early Middle Ages
Salve in nomine sancto, Hail in the holy name; *Salvete et vos*, Hail also to you
Sampson's VOW-BREAKER, or *the Fair Maid of Clifton* (1636), by William Sampson
Samyne, same
Sancte Benedicte, ora pro me, St. Benet, pray for me
Scalil, dispersed, separated
Scaur, a precipitous bank or rock
Scott, Michael, the magician, who figures in *Scott's Lay of the Last Minstrel*
Scrip, to mock, gibe
Sexion's pound, the grave *Sinclair, Oliver*, an unworthy favorite of James V.
Sir Eger one of the heroes of the popular 16th century Scottish romance *Sir Eger, Sir Grahame, and Sir Greystil*, or *Sir Edgar and Sir Grime*
Sir Grime. See *Sir Eger*
Skeely, skilful, cunning in simples, etc.
Sniggling, smirking
Snood, a fillet with which a maiden binds her hair
Snottreth, bubbles
Snug the joiner, a character in *Midsommer Night's Dream*
Soltra Edge, or *Soutra Hill*, the westernmost ridge of the Lammermoor Hills in Lothian
Spae-wife, fortune-teller
Spennit dona fides, the faithful (dog) despises bribes
Springald, a stripling
Squab, short and thick, squat
Stammel, red linsey-woolsey
Staving and tailing, striking the bear with a staff and pulling the dog by the tail
Steikit, shut
Stentor, the Greek herald in the Trojan War, whose voice was equal to those of any fifty men
Stoop (of a falcon), swoop, darting down on its prey
Stoup, a vessel or measure for liquids
Sub sigillo confessionis, under the seal of confession
Subtriste, somewhat sad
Sub umbra vitis sui, under the shade of his own vine
Succory, chicory
Superceid, to suspend, postpone
Tace is Latin for a candle, silence is the word
Tale-Pyot, a tell-tale
Tent, attend, tend
Tercel gentle, a trained male falcon
Testificate, certificate
Testoon, or *teston*, a silver coin = 1s.
Theban, learned, a learned man—a Shakspearian

phrase (*Lear*, Act iii. sc. 4)
Thespis, the originator of the ancient Greek drama
Thumbikins, thumb-screws, instrument of torture
Tilbury, a gig
Tillyvalley, nonsense ! a fig for—
To call up him, etc. (p. 428), from Milton's *Il Penseroso*
Tolbooth, jail
Totus mundus, etc. (p. 278), The whole world acts the player
Tour de jongleur, juggler's trick
Trangam, or *trangram*, a trinket, trumpery ornament
Tron, a church on the High Street of Edinburgh
Tussis, a cough
Tuto, cito, jucunde, safely, quickly, pleasantly
Two and a plack, two Scotch pennies and a plack = 1-2. English

Uncle the Cardinal.

Uncle the Cardinal, a title of honor given to a cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church, who is usually the head of the church in a particular country. The title is derived from the Latin word *cardinalis*, which means "pertaining to the cardinal points of the church." The cardinal is one of the highest ranks in the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, and is responsible for the administration of the church in his own diocese. The title of *Uncle the Cardinal* is often used in a humorous or affectionate way to refer to a cardinal who is known for his worldly and ambitious nature.

Charles of Guise, brother to Mary's mother, was the real ruler of France during the reign of Mary's first husband, the feeble Francis II.
Un Dieu, etc. (p. 429), one God, one faith, one king, one law
Usquebaugh, whisky
Vasquine, or *basquine*, gown or petticoat, worn by Basque and Spanish women
Vendisse, or *vendace*, a rare kind of white fish, whose flesh is accounted a great delicacy
Vertu-gardin, a hoop petticoat
Vin-de-pays, the common wine of the country
Vivers, victuals
Vix licitum, scarcely allowable
Wanion, with a, with a vengeance, the devil !
Wap, flap, stroke of a wing
Warlock, a wizard

Waur, worse
Weft, or *waft*, a waving, beckoning, signaling
Weird, fate, destiny
Weir-men, war-men, soldiers
Welled, furnished with a hem or border
Whaup, curlew
Whilly, to gull, wheedle
White-boy, petted favorite, darling
Wimple, a veil
Wine and bush. Vintners and tavern-keepers used in the Middle Ages to hang out a bush or bunch of ivy to indicate that their house was an inn ; hence the proverb, " Good wine needs no bush "
Witch of Berkley. See Southey's ballad *The Old Woman of Berkeley*
Wonot, will not
Wrath you not, do not get wroth
Wylie-coat, under vest
Yoldring, or *yorlin*, a yellow-hammer, bird

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INTRODUCTION TO KENILWORTH.

A CERTAIN degree of success, real or supposed, in the delineation of Queen Mary, naturally induced the Author to attempt something similar respecting "her sister and her foe," the celebrated Elizabeth. He will not, however, pretend to have approached the task with the same feelings; for the candid Robertson himself confesses having felt the prejudices with which a Scottishman is tempted to regard the subject; and what so liberal a historian avows, a poor romance-writer dares not disown. But he hopes the influence of a prejudice almost as natural to him as his native air will not be found to have greatly affected the sketch he has attempted of England's Elizabeth. I have endeavored to describe her as at once a high-minded sovereign and a female of passionate feelings, hesitating betwixt the sense of her rank and the duty she owed her subjects on the one hand, and on the other her attachment to a nobleman who, in external qualifications at least, amply merited her favor. The interest of the story is thrown upon that period when the sudden death of the first Countess of Leicester seemed to open to the ambition of her husband the opportunity of sharing the crown of his sovereign.

It is possible that slander, which very seldom favors the memories of persons in exalted stations, may have blackened the character of Leicester with darker shades than really belonged to it. But the almost general voice of the times attached the most foul suspicions to the death of the unfortunate countess, more especially as it took place so very opportunely for the indulgence of her lover's ambition. If we can trust Ashmole's "Antiquities of Berkshire," there was but too much ground for the traditions which charge Leicester with the murder of his wife. In the following extract of the passage the reader will find the authority I had for the story of the romance:

At the west end of the church is the ruins of a manor, anciently belonging (as a cell, or place of removal, as some report) to the monks of Abington. At the Dissolution, the said manor, or lordship, was conveyed to one — Owen (I believe), the possessor of Godstow then.

In the hall, over the chimney, I find Abington arms cut in stone, viz.

a patonce between four martlets; and also another escotcheon, viz. a lion rampant, and several miters cut in stone about the house. There is also in the said house a chamber called Dudley's chamber, where the Earl of Leicester's wife was murdered, of which this is the story following:—

Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, a very goodly personage, and singularly well featured, being a great favourite to Queen Elizabeth, it was thought, and commonly reported, that, had he been a bachelor or widower, the Queen would have made him her husband; to this end, to free himself of all obstacles, he commands, or perhaps, with fair, flattering intreaties, desires his wife to repose herself here at his servant Anthony Forster's house, who then lived in the aforesaid manor-house; and also prescribed to Sir Richard Varney (a prompter to this design), at his coming hither, that he should first attempt to poison her, and if that did not take effect, then by any other way whatsoever to dispatch her. This, it seems, was proved by the report of Dr. Walter Bayly, sometime fellow of New College, then living in Oxford, and professor of physic in that university; who, because he would not consent to take away her life by poison, the earl endeavoured to displace him from the court. This man, it seems, reported for most certain that there was a practice in Cumnor among the conspirators to have poisoned this poor innocent lady a little before she was killed, which was attempted after this manner:—They seeing the good lady sad and heavy (as one that well knew by her other handling that her death was not far off), began to perswade her that her present disease was abundance of melancholy and other humours, etc., and therefore would needs counsel her to take some potion, which she absolutely refusing to do, as still suspecting the worst; whereupon they sent a messenger on a day (unawares to her) for Dr. Bayly, and intreated him to perswade her to take some little potion by his direction, and they would fetch the same at Oxford; meaning to have added something of their own for her comfort, as the doctor upon just cause and consideration did suspect, seeing their great importunity, and the small need the lady had of physic, and therefore he peremptorily denied their request; misdoubting (as he afterwards reported) least, if they had poisoned her under the name of his potion, he might after have been hanged for a colour of their sin, and the doctor remained still well assured that, this way taking no effect, she would not long escape their violence, which afterwards happened thus. For Sir Richard Varney above-said (the chief projector in this design), who, by the earl's order, remained that day of her death alone with her, with one man only and Forster, who had that day forcibly sent away all her servants from her to Abington market, about 3 miles distant from this place—they (I say, whether first stifling her or else strangling her) afterwards flung her down a pair of stairs and broke her neck, using much violence upon her; but, however, though it was vulgarly reported that she by chance fell downstairs (but yet without hurting her hood that was upon her head), yet the inhabitants will tell you there that she was conveyed from her usual chamber where she lay to another where the bed's head of the chamber stood close to a privy postern door, where they in the night came and stifled her in her bed, bruised her head very much, broke her neck, and at length flung her downstairs, thereby believing the world would have thought it a mischance, and so have blinded their villany. But behold the mercy and justice of God in revenging and discovering this lady's murder, for one of the persons that was a coadjutor in this murder was afterwards taken for a felony in the marches of Wales, and offering to publish the manner of the aforesaid murder, was privately made away in the prison by the earl's appointment; and Sir Richard Varney, the other, dying about the same time in London, cried miserably, and blasphemed God, and said to a person of note (who hath related the same to others since), not long before his death, that all the devils in hell did tear him in pieces. Forster, likewise, after this fact, being a man formerly addicted to hospitality, company, mirth, and music, was afterwards observed to forsake all this, [and] with much melancholy and pensiveness (some say with madness) pined and drooped away. The wife also of Bald Butter, kinsman to the earl, gave out the whole fact a little before her death. Neither are these following passages to be forgotten, that as soon as ever she was murdered, they made great haste to bury her before the coroner had given

in his inquest (which the earl himself condemned as not done advisedly), which her father, or Sir John Robertsett (as I suppose), hearing of, came with all speed hither, caused her corps to be taken up, the coroner to sit upon her, and further inquiry to be made concerning this business to the full; but it was generally thought that the earl stopped his mouth, and made up the business betwixt them; and the good earl, to make plain to the world the great love he bare to her while alive, what a grief the loss of so virtuous a lady was to his tender heart, caused (though the thing, by these and other means, was beaten into the heads of the principal men of the University of Oxford) her body to be reburied in St. Maries church in Oxford with great pomp and solemnity. It was remarkable, when Dr. Babington (the earl's chaplain) did preach the funeral sermon, he tript once or twice in his speech, by recommending to their memories that virtuous lady so *pitiſſfully murdered*, instead of saying *pitiſſfully slain*. This earl, after all his murders and poisonings, was himself poisoned by that which was prepared for others (some say by his wife) at Cornbury Lodge before mentioned (though Baker in his chronicle would have it at Killingworth), anno 1588.*

The same accusation has been adopted and circulated by the author of "Leicester's Commonwealth," a satire † written directly against the Earl of Leicester, which loaded him with the most horrid crimes, and, among the rest, with the murder of his first wife. It was alluded to in the "Yorkshire Tragedy," a play erroneously ascribed to Shakspeare, where a baker, who determines to destroy all his family, throws his wife downstairs, with this allusion to the supposed murder of Leicester's lady:

The only way to charm a woman's tongue
Is, break her neck—a politician did it.

The reader will find I have borrowed several incidents as well as names ‡ from Ashmole and the more early authorities; but my first acquaintance with the history was through the more pleasing medium of verse. There is a period in youth when the mere power of numbers has a more strong effect on ear and imagination than in more advanced life. At this season of immature taste the Author was greatly delighted with the poems of Mickle and Langhorne, poets who, though by no means deficient in the higher branches of their art, were eminent for their powers of verbal melody above most who have practiced this department of poetry. One of those pieces of Mickle, which the Author was particularly

* Ashmole's "Antiquities of Berkshire," vol. i. p. 149. The tradition as to Leicester's death was thus communicated by Ben Jonson to Drummond of Hawthornden: "The Earl of Leicester gave a bottle of liquor to his lady, which he willed her to use in any faintness, which she, after his return from court, not knowing it was poison, gave him, and so he died."—Ben Jonson's "Information to Drummond of Hawthornden," MS. Sir Robert Sibbald's copy.

† This satire was written by the notorious Jesuit, Robert Parsons, and was largely copied by Ashmole in his "Antiquities." These authorities were perhaps too much relied upon by the Author.—*Laing*.

‡ See Lockhart's "Life of Scott," vol. vi. pp. 266, 294.

The death-bell thrice was heard to ring,
 An aerial voice was heard to call,
 And thrice the raven flapp'd its wing
 Around the towers of Cumnor Hall.

The mastiff howl'd at village door,
 The oaks were shatter'd on the green;
 Woe was the hour—for never more
 That hapless countess e'er was seen!

And in that manor now no more
 Is cheerful feast and sprightly ball;
 For ever since that dreary hour
 Have spirits haunted Cumnor Hall.

The village maids, with fearful glance,
 Avoid the ancient moss-grown wall;
 Nor ever lead the merry dance,
 Among the groves of Cumnor Hall.

Full many a traveler oft hath sigh'd,
 And pensive wept the countess' fall,
 As wand'ring onwards they've espied
 The haunted towers of Cumnor Hall.

ABBOTSFORD, 1st March, 1831.

KENILWORTH.

CHAPTER I.

**I am an innkeeper, and know my grounds,
And study them—brain o' man, I study them.
I must have jovial guests to drive my plows,
And whistling boys to bring my harvest home,
Or I shall hear no flails thwack.**

—*The New Inn.*

It is the privilege of tale-tellers to open their story in an inn, the free rendezvous of all travelers, and where the humor of each displays itself without ceremony or restraint. This is specially suitable when the scene is laid during the old days of merry England, when the guests were in some sort not merely the inmates, but the messmates and temporary companions, of mine host, who was usually a personage of privileged freedom, comely presence, and good humor. Patronized by him, the characters of the company were placed in ready contrast; and they seldom failed, during the emptying of a six-hooped pot, to throw off reserve, and present themselves to each other and to their landlord with the freedom of old acquaintance.

The village of Cumnor, within three or four miles of Oxford, boasted, during the eighteenth of Queen Elizabeth, an excellent inn of the old stamp, conducted, or rather ruled, by Giles Gosling, a man of a goodly person and of somewhat round belly, fifty years of age and upwards, moderate in his reckonings, prompt in his payments, having a cellar of sound liquor, a ready wit, and a pretty daughter. Since the days of old Harry Baillie of the Tabard in Southwark, no one had excelled Giles Gosling in the power of pleasing his guests of every description; and so great was his fame, that to have been in Cumnor without wetting a cup at the bonny Black Bear would have been to avouch one's self utterly indifferent to reputation as a traveler. A country fellow might as well return from London without looking in the face of majesty. The men of Cumnor were proud of their host, and their host was proud of his house, his liquor, his daughter, and himself.

It was in the courtyard of the inn which called this honest fellow landlord that a traveler alighted in the close of the evening, gave his horse, which seemed to have made a long journey, to the hostler, and made some inquiry, which produced the following dialogue betwixt the myrmidons of the bonny Black Bear:

“What, ho! John Tapster.”

“At hand, Will Hostler,” replied the man of the spigot, showing himself in his costume of loose jacket, linen breeches, and green apron, half within and half without a door, which appeared to descend to an outer cellar.

“Here is a gentleman asks if you draw good ale,” continued the hostler.

“Beshrew my heart else,” answered the tapster, “since there are but four miles betwixt us and Oxford. Marry, if my ale did not convince the heads of the scholars, they would soon convince my pate with the pewter flagon.”

“Call you that Oxford logic?” said the stranger, who had now quitted the rein of his horse, and was advancing toward the inn door, when he was encountered by the goodly form of Giles Gosling himself.

“Is it logic you talk of, sir guest?” said the host; “why, then, have at you with a downright consequence:

“The horse to the rack,
And to fire with the sack.”

“Amen! with all my heart, my good host,” said the stranger; “let it be a quart of your best Canaries, and give me your good help to drink it.”

“Nay, you are but in your accidence yet, sir traveler, if you call on your host for help for such a sipping matter as a quart of sack; were it a gallon, you might lack some neighborly aid at my hand, and yet call yourself a toper.”

“Fear me not,” said the guest, “I will do my devoir as becomes a man who finds himself within five miles of Oxford; for I am not come from the field of Mars to discredit myself amongst the followers of Minerva.”

As he spoke thus, the landlord, with much semblance of hearty welcome, ushered his guest into a large low chamber, where several persons were seated together in different parties—some drinking, some playing at cards, some conversing, and some, whose business called them to be early risers on the morrow, concluding their evening meal, and conferring with the chamberlain about their night’s quarters.

The entrance of a stranger procured him that general and careless sort of attention which is usually paid on such occasions, from which the following results were deduced: The guest was one of those who, with a well-made person, and features not in themselves unpleasing, are nevertheless so far from handsome that, whether from the expression of their features, or the tone of their voice, or from their gait and manner, there arises, on the whole, a disinclination to their society. The stranger's address was bold, without being frank, and seemed eagerly and hastily to claim for him a degree of attention and deference, which he feared would be refused, if not instantly vindicated as his right. His attire was a riding-cloak, which, when open, displayed a handsome jerkin overlaid with lace, and belted with a buff girdle, which sustained a broadsword and a pair of pistols.

"You ride well provided, sir," said the host, looking at the weapons as he placed on the table the mulled sack which the traveler had ordered.

"Yes, mine host; I have found the use on't in dangerous times, and I do not, like your modern grandees, turn off my followers the instant they are useless."

"Aye, sir?" said Giles Gosling; "then you are from the Low Countries, the land of pike and caliver?"

"I have been high and low, my friend, broad and wide, far and near. But here is to thee in a cup of thy sack; fill thyself another to pledge me; and, if it is less than superlative, e'en drink as you have brewed."

"Less than superlative!" said Giles Gosling, drinking off the cup, and smacking his lips with an air of ineffable relish—"I know nothing of superlative, nor is there such a wine at the Three Cranes, in the Vintry, to my knowledge; but if you find better sack than that in the Sheres, or in the Canaries either, I would I may never touch either pot or penny more. Why, hold it up betwixt you and the light, you shall see the little motes dance in the golden liquor like dust in the sun-beam. But I would rather draw wine for ten clowns than one traveler. I trust your honor likes the wine?"

"It is neat and comfortable, mine host; but to know good liquor you should drink where the vine grows. Trust me, your Spaniard is too wise a man to send you the very soul of the grape. Why, this now, which you account so choice, were counted but as a cup of bastard at the Groyne or at Port St. Mary's. You should travel, mine host, if you would be deep in the mysteries of the butt and pottle-pot."

"In troth, Signor Guest," said Giles Gosling, "if I were to travel only that I might be discontented with that which I can get at home, methinks I should go but on a fool's errand. Besides, I warrant you, there is many a fool can turn his nose up at good drink without ever having been out of the smoke of Old England; and so ever gramercy mine own fireside."

"This is but a mean mind of yours, mine host," said the stranger. "I warrant me, all your townsfolk do not think so basely. You have gallants among you, I dare undertake, that have made the Virginia voyage, or taken a turn in the Low Countries at least. Come, cudgel your memory. Have you no friends in foreign parts that you would gladly have tidings of?"

"Troth, sir, not I," answered the host, "since ranting Robin of Drysandford was shot at the siege of the Brill. The devil take the caliver that fired the ball, for a blither lad never filled a cup at midnight! But he is dead and gone, and I know not a soldier, or a traveler, who is a soldier's mate, that I would give a peeled codling for."

"By the mass, that is strange. What! so many of our brave English hearts are abroad, and you, who seem to be a man of mark, have no friend, no kinsman, among them?"

"Nay, if you speak of kinsmen," answered Gosling, "I have one wild slip of a kinsman, who left us in the last year of Queen Mary; but he is better lost than found."

"Do not say so, friend, unless you have heard ill of him lately. Many a wild colt has turned out a noble steed. His name, I pray you?"

"Michael Lambourne," answered the landlord of the Black Bear, "a son of my sister's; there is little pleasure in recollecting either the name or the connection."

"Michael Lambourne!" said the stranger, as if endeavoring to recollect himself, "what, no relation to Michael Lambourne, the gallant cavalier who behaved so bravely at the siege of Venlo that Grave Maurice thanked him at the head of the army? Men said he was an English cavalier, and of no high extraction."

"It could scarcely be my nephew," said Giles Gosling, "for he had not the courage of a hen-partridge for aught but mischief."

"Oh, many a man finds courage in the wars," replied the stranger.

"It may be," said the landlord; "but I would have thought our Mike more likely to lose the little he had."

"The Michael Lambourne whom I knew," continued the traveler, "was a likely fellow: went always gay and well-attired, and had a hawk's eye after a pretty wench."

"Our Michael," replied the host, "had the look of a dog with a bottle at its tail, and wore a coat every rag of which was bidding good-day to the rest."

"Oh, men pick up good apparel in the wars," replied the guest.

"Our Mike," answered the landlord, "was more like to pick it up in a frippery warehouse, while the broker was looking another way; and, for the hawk's eye you talk of, his was always after my stray spoons. He was tapster's boy here in this blessed house for a quarter of a year; and between misreckonings, miscarriages, mistakes, and misdemeanors, had he dwelt with me for three months longer, I might have pulled down sign, shut up house, and given the devil the key to keep."

"You would be sorry, after all," continued the traveler, "were I to tell you poor Mike Lambourne was shot at the head of his regiment at the taking of a sconce near Maestricht?"

"Sorry! it would be the blithest news I ever heard of him, since it would insure me he was not hanged. But let him pass, I doubt his end will never do such credit to his friends; were it so, I should say [taking another cup of sack], 'Here's God rest him,' with all my heart."

"Tush, man," replied the traveler, "never fear but you will have credit by your nephew yet; especially if he be the Michael Lambourne whom I knew and loved very nearly, or altogether, as well as myself. Can you tell me no mark by which I could judge whether they be the same?"

"Faith, none that I can think of," answered Giles Gosling, "unless that our Mike had the gallows branded on his left shoulder for stealing a silver caudle-cup from Dame Snort of Hogsditch."

"Nay, there you lie like a knave, uncle," said the stranger, slipping aside his ruff, and turning down the sleeve of his doublet from his neck and shoulder; "by this good day, my shoulder is as unscarred as thine own."

"What, Mike, boy—Mike!" exclaimed the host; "and is it thou in good earnest? Nay, I have judged so for this half-hour, for I knew no other person would have ta'en half the interest in thee. But, Mike, an thy shoulder be unscathed as thou sayest, thou must own that Goodman Thong, the hang-

man, was merciful in his office, and stamped thee with a cold iron."

"Tush, uncle, truce with your jests. Keep them to season your sour ale, and let us see what hearty welcome thou wilt give a kinsman who has rolled the world around for eighteen years; who has seen the sun set where it rises, and has traveled till the west has become the east."

"Thou hast brought back one traveler's gift with thee, Mike, as I well see; and that was what thou least didst need to travel for. I remember well, among thine other qualities, there was no crediting a word which came from thy mouth."

"Here's an unbelieving pagan for you, gentlemen!" said Michael Lambourne, turning to those who witnessed this strange interview betwixt uncle and nephew, some of whom, being natives of the village, were no strangers to his juvenile wildness. "This may be called slaying a Cumnor fatted calf for me with a vengeance. But, uncle, I come not from the husks and the swine-trough; and I care not for thy welcome or no welcome; I carry that with me will make me welcome, wend where I will."

So saying, he pulled out a purse of gold, indifferently well filled, the sight of which produced a visible effect upon the company. Some shook their heads, and whispered to each other, while one or two of the less scrupulous speedily began to recollect him as a school-companion, a townsman, or so forth. On the other hand, two or three grave, sedate-looking persons shook their heads, and left the inn, hinting that, if Giles Gosling wished to continue to thrive, he should turn his thriftless, godless nephew adrift again as soon as he could. Gosling demeaned himself as if he were much of the same opinion; for even the sight of the gold made less impression on the honest gentleman than it usually doth upon one of his calling.

"Kinsman Michael," he said, "put up thy purse. My sister's son shall be called to no reckoning in my house for supper or lodging; and I reckon thou wilt hardly wish to stay longer, where thou art e'en but too well known."

"For that matter, uncle," replied the traveler, "I shall consult my own needs and conveniences. Meantime, I wish to give the supper and sleeping-cup to those good townsmen who are not too proud to remember Mike Lambourne, the tapster's boy. If you will let me have entertainment for my money, so; if not, it is but a short two minutes' walk to the

Hare and Tabor, and I trust our neighbors will not grudge going thus far with me."

"Nay, Mike," replied his uncle, "as eighteen years have gone over thy head, and I trust thou art somewhat amended in thy conditions, thou shalt not leave my house at this hour, and shalt e'en have whatever in reason you list to call for. But I would I knew that that purse of thine, which thou vaporest of, were as well come by as it seems well filled."

"Here is an infidel for you, my good neighbors!" said Lambourne, again appealing to the audience. "Here's a fellow will rip up his kinsman's follies of a good score of years' standing. And for the gold, why, sirs, I have been where it grew, and was to be had for the gathering. In the New World have I been, man—in the Eldorado, where urchins play at cherry-pit with diamonds, and country wenches thread rubies for necklaces, instead of rowan-tree berries; where the pantiles are made of pure gold, and the paving-stones of virgin silver."

"By my credit, friend Mike," said young Laurence Goldthred, the cutting mercer of Abingdon, "that were a likely coast to trade to. And what may lawns, cypruses, and ribands fetch where gold is so plenty?"

"Oh, the profit were unutterable," replied Lambourne, "especially when a handsome young merchant bears the pack himself; for the ladies of that clime are bona-robas, and being themselves somewhat sunburnt, they catch fire like tinder at a fresh complexion like thine, with a head of hair inclining to be red."

"I would I might trade thither," said the mercer, chuckling.

"Why, and so thou mayst," said Michael; "that is, if thou art the same brisk boy who was partner with me at robbing the abbot's orchard: 'tis but a little touch of alchemy to decoct thy house and land into ready money, and that ready money into a tall ship, with sails, anchors, cordage, and all things conforming; then clap thy warehouse of goods under hatches, put fifty good fellows on deck, with myself to command them, and so hoist topsails, and hey for the New World!"

"Thou hast taught him a secret, kinsman," said Giles Gosling, "to decoct, an that be the word, his pound into a penny, and his webs into a thread. Take a fool's advice, neighbor Goldthred. Tempt not the sea, for she is a devourer. Let cards and cockatrices do their worst, thy father's bales may bide a banging for a year or two, ere thou comest to the spital;

but the sea hath a bottomless appetite: she would swallow the wealth of Lombard Street in a morning as easily as I would a poached egg and a cup of clary; and for my kinsman's Eldorado, never trust me if I do not believe he has found it in the pouches of some such gulls as thyself. But take no snuff in the nose about it; fall to and welcome, for here comes the supper, and I heartily bestow it on all that will take share, in honor of my hopeful nephew's return, always trusting that he has come home another man. In faith, kinsman, thou art as like my poor sister as ever was son to mother."

"Not quite so like old Benedict Lambourne her husband, though," said the mercer, nodding and winking. "Dost thou remember, Mike, what thou saidst when the schoolmaster's ferule was over thee for striking up thy father's crutches? 'It is a wise child,' saidst thou, 'that knows its own father.' Dr. Bricham laughed till he cried again, and his crying saved yours."

"Well, he made it up to me many a day after," said Lambourne; "and how is the worthy pedagogue?"

"Dead," said Giles Gosling, "this many a day since."

"That he is," said the clerk of the parish; "I sat by his bed the whilst. He passed away in a blessed frame, '*Morior—mortuus sum vel fui—mori*'—these were his latest words, and he just added, 'My last verb is conjugated.'"

"Well, peace be with him," said Mike, "he owes me nothing."

"No, truly," replied Goldthred; "and every lash which he laid on thee, he always was wont to say, he spared the hangman a labor."

"One would have thought he left him little to do then," said the clerk; "and yet Goodman Thong had no sinecure of it with our friend, after all."

"*Voto a Dios!*" exclaimed Lambourne, his patience appearing to fail him, as he snatched his broad slouched hat from the table and placed it on his head, so that the shadow gave the sinister expression of a Spanish bravo to eyes and features which naturally boded nothing pleasant. "Harkee, my masters, all is fair among friends, and under the rose, and I have already permitted my worthy uncle here, and all of you, to use your pleasure with the frolics of my nonage. But I carry sword and dagger, my good friends, and can use them lightly too upon occasion. I have learned to be dangerous upon points of honor ever since I served the Spaniard, and I would not have you provoke me to the degree of falling foul."

"Why, what would you do?" said the clerk.

"Aye, sir, what would you do?" said the mercer, bustling up on the other side of the table.

"Slit your throat and spoil your Sunday's quavering, sir clerk," said Lambourne fiercely; "cudgel you, my worshipful dealer in flimsy sarsenets, into one of your own bales."

"Come—come," said the host, interposing, "I will have no swaggering here. Nephew, it will become you best to show no haste to take offense; and you, gentlemen, will do well to remember that, if you are in an inn, still you are the inn-keeper's guests, and should spare the honor of his family. I protest your silly broils make me as oblivious as yourself; for yonder sits my silent guest, as I call him, who hath been my two days' inmate, and hath never spoken a word, save to ask for his food and his reckoning; gives no more trouble than a very peasant; pays his shot like a prince royal; looks but at the sum total of the reckoning, and does not know what day he shall go away. Oh, 'tis a jewel of a guest! and yet, hang-dog that I am, I have suffered him to sit by himself like a castaway in yonder obscure nook, without so much as asking him to take bite or sup along with us. It were but the right guerdon of my incivility were he to set off to the Hare and Tabor before the night grows older."

With his white napkin gracefully arranged over his left arm, his velvet cap laid aside for the moment, and his best silver flagon in his right hand, mine host walked up to the solitary guest whom he mentioned, and thereby turned upon him the eyes of the assembled company.

He was a man aged betwixt twenty-five and thirty, rather above the middle size, dressed with plainness and decency, yet bearing an air of ease which almost amounted to dignity, and which seemed to infer that his habit was rather beneath his rank. His countenance was reserved and thoughtful, with dark hair and dark eyes—the last, upon any momentary excitement, sparkled with uncommon luster, but on other occasions had the same meditative and tranquil cast which was exhibited by his features. The busy curiosity of the little village had been employed to discover his name and quality, as well as his business at Cumnor; but nothing had transpired on either subject which could lead to its gratification. Giles Gosling, head-borough of the place, and a steady friend to Queen Elizabeth and the Protestant religion, was at one time inclined to suspect his guest of being a Jesuit, or seminary priest, of whom Rome and Spain sent at this time so

many to grace the gallows in England. But it was scarce possible to retain such a prepossession against a guest who gave so little trouble, paid his reckoning so regularly, and who proposed, as it seemed, to make a considerable stay at the bonny Black Bear.

"Papists," argued Giles Gosling, "are a pinching, close-fisted race, and this man would have found a lodging with the wealthy squire at Bessellsley, or with the old knight at Wootton, or in some other of their Roman dens, instead of living in a house of public entertainment, as every honest man and good Christian should. Besides, on Friday, he stuck by the salt beef and carrot, though there were as good spitchcocked eels on the board as ever were ta'en out of the Isis."

Honest Giles, therefore, satisfied himself that his guest was no Roman, and with all comely courtesy besought the stranger to pledge him in a draught of the cool tankard, and honor with his attention a small collation which he was giving to his nephew in honor of his return, and, as he verily hoped, of his reformation. The stranger at first shook his head as if declining the courtesy; but mine host proceeded to urge him with arguments founded on the credit of his house, and the construction which the good people of Cumnor might put upon such an unsocial humor.

"By my faith, sir," he said, "it touches my reputation that men should be merry in my house, and we have ill tongues amongst us at Cumnor—as where be there not?—who put an evil mark on men who pull their hat over their brows as if they were looking back to the days that are gone, instead of enjoying the blithe sunshiny weather which God has sent us in the sweet looks of our sovereign mistress, Queen Elizabeth, whom Heaven long bless and preserve!"

"Why, mine host," answered the stranger, "there is no treason, sure, in a man's enjoying his own thoughts under the shadow of his own bonnet? You have lived in the world twice as long as I have, and you must know there are thoughts that will haunt us in spite of ourselves, and to which it is in vain to say, 'Begone, and let me be merry.'"

"By my sooth," answered Giles Gosling, "if such troublesome thoughts haunt your mind, and will not get them gone for plain English, we will have one of Father Bacon's pupils from Oxford to conjure them away with logic and with Hebrew. Or, what say you to laying them in a glorious red sea of claret, my noble guest? Come, sir, excuse my freedom. I am an old host, and must have my talk. This peevish hu-

mor of melancholy sits ill upon you: it suits not with a sleek boot, a hat of a trim block, a fresh cloak, and a full purse. A pize on it! send it off to those who have their legs swathed with a haywisp, their heads thatched with a felt bonnet, their jerkin as thin as a cobweb, and their pouch without ever a cross to keep the fiend Melancholy from dancing in it. Cheer up, sir! or, by this good liquor, we will banish thee from the joys of blithesome company into the mists of melancholy and the land of little-ease. Here be a set of good fellows willing to be merry; do not scowl on them like the devil looking over Lincoln."

"You say well, my worthy host," said the guest, with a melancholy smile, which, melancholy as it was, gave a very pleasant expression to his countenance—"you say well, my jovial friend; and they that are moody like myself should not disturb the mirth of those who are happy. I will drink a round with your guests with all my heart, rather than be termed a mar-feast."

So saying, he arose and joined the company, who, encouraged by the precept and example of Michael Lambourne, and consisting chiefly of persons much disposed to profit by the opportunity of a merry meal at the expense of their landlord, had already made some inroads upon the limits of temperance, as was evident from the tone in which Michael inquired after his old acquaintances in the town, and the bursts of laughter with which each answer was received. Giles Gosling himself was somewhat scandalized at the obstreperous nature of their mirth, especially as he involuntarily felt some respect for his unknown guest. He paused, therefore, at some distance from the table occupied by these noisy revelers, and began to make a sort of apology for their license.

"You would think," he said, "to hear these fellows talk, that there was not one of them who had not been bred to live by 'Stand and deliver'; and yet to-morrow you will find them a set of as painstaking mechanics, and so forth, as ever cut an inch short of measure, or paid a letter of change in light crowns over a counter. The mercer there wears his hat awry, over a shagged head of hair, that looks like a curly water-dog's back, goes unbraced, wears his cloak on one side, and affects a ruffianly, vapping humor; when in his shop at Abingdon, he is, from his flat cap to his glistening shoes, as precise in his apparel as if he was named for mayor. He talks of breaking parks, and taking the highway, in such fashion that you would think he haunted every night betwixt

Hounslow and London, when in fact he may be found sound asleep on his feather-bed, with a candle placed beside him on one side, and a Bible on the other, to fright away the goblins."

"And your nephew, mine host—this same Michael Lambourne, who is lord of the feast—is he too such an would-be ruffler as the rest of them?"

"Why, there you push me hard," said the host; "my nephew is my nephew, and though he was a desperate Dick of yore, yet Mike may have mended like other folks, you wot. And I would not have you think all I said of him even now was strict gospel: I knew the wag all the while, and wished to pluck his plumes from him. And now, sir, by what name shall I present my worshipful guest to these gallants?"

"Marry, mine host," replied the stranger, "you may call me Tressilian."

"Tressilian!" answered mine host of the Bear, "a worthy name, and, as I think, of Cornish lineage; for what says the south proverb:

"By Pol, Tre, and Pen,
You may know the Cornish men.

Shall I say the worthy Mr. Tressilian of Cornwall?"

"Say no more than I have given you warrant for, mine host, and so shall you be sure you speak no more than is true. A man may have one of those honorable prefixes to his name, yet be born far from St. Michael's Mount."

Mine host pushed his curiosity no farther, but presented Mr. Tressilian to his nephew's company, who, after exchange of salutations, and drinking to the health of their new companion, pursued the conversation in which he found them engaged, seasoning it with many an intervening pledge.

CHAPTER II.

Talk you of young Master Lancelot ?
—*Merchant of Venice.*

AFTER some brief interval, Master Goldthred, at the earnest instigation of mine host, and the joyous concurrence of his guests, indulged the company with the following morsel of melody:

“Of all the birds on bush or tree,
Commend me to the owl,
Since he may best ensample be
To those the cup that trowl.
For when the sun hath left the west,
He chooses the tree that he loves the best,
And he whoops out his song, and he laughs at his jest ;
Then though hours be late, and weather foul,
We'll drink to the health of the bonny, bonny owl.

“The lark is but a bumpkin fowl,
He sleeps in his nest till morn ;
But my blessing upon the jolly owl,
That all night blows his horn.
Then up with your cup till you stagger in speech,
And match me this catch till you swagger and screech,
And drink till you wink, my merry men each ;
For though hours be late, and weather be foul,
We'll drink to the health of the bonny, bonny owl.”

“There is savor in this, my hearts,” said Michael, when the mercer had finished his song, “and some goodness seems left among you yet; but what a bead-roll you have read me of old comrades, and to every man’s name tacked some ill-omened motto! And so Swashing Will of Wallingford hath bid us good-night?”

“He died the death of a fat buck,” said one of the party, “being shot with a cross-bow bolt, by old Thatcham, the Duke’s stout park-keeper at Donnington Castle.”

“Aye, aye, he always loved venison well,” replied Michael, “and a cup of claret to boot; and so here’s one to his memory. Do me right, my masters.”

When the memory of this departed worthy had been duly honored, Lambourne proceeded to inquire after Prance of Padworth.

“Pranced off—made immortal ten years since,” said the

mercier; "marry, sir, Oxford Castle and Goodman Thong, and a tenpenny-worth of cord, best know how."

"What, so they hung poor Prance high and dry? So much for loving to walk by moonlight! A cup to his memory, my masters; all merry fellows like moonlight. What has become of Hal with the Plume? he who lived near Yattendon, and wore the long feather—I forget his name."

"What, Hal Hempseed?" replied the mercier, "why, you may remember he was a sort of a gentleman, and would meddle in state matters, and so he got into the mire about the Duke of Norfolk's affair these two or three years since, fled the country with a pursuivant's warrant at his heels, and has never since been heard of."

"Nay, after these balks," said Michael Lambourne, "I need hardly inquire after Tony Foster; for when ropes, and cross-bow shafts, and pursuivants' warrants, and such-like gear were so rife, Tony could hardly 'scape them."

"Which Tony Foster mean you?" said the innkeeper.

"Why, he they called Tony Fire-the-Fagot, because he brought a light to kindle the pile round Latimer and Ridley, when the wind blew out Jack Thong's torch, and no man else would give him light for love or money."

"Tony Foster lives and thrives," said the host. "But, kinsman, I would not have you call him Tony Fire-the-Fagot. if you would not brook the stab."

"How! is he grown ashamed on't?" said Lambourne, "why, he was wont to boast of it, and say he liked as well to see a roasted heretic as a roasted ox."

"Aye, but, kinsman, that was in Mary's time," replied the landlord, "when Tony's father was reeve here to the abbot of Abingdon. But since that, Tony married a pure precisian, and is as good a Protestant, I warrant you, as the best."

"And looks grave, and holds his head high, and scorns his old companions," said the mercier.

"Then he hath prospered, I warrant him," said Lambourne; "for ever when a man hath got nobles of his own he keeps out of the way of those whose exchequers lie in other men's purchase."

"Prospered, quotha!" said the mercier; "why, you remember Cumnor Place, the old mansion-house beside the church-yard?"

"By the same token, I robbed the orchard three times—what of that? It was the old abbot's residence when there was plague or sickness at Abingdon."

“Aye,” said the host, “but that has been long over; and Anthony Foster hath a right in it, and lives there by some grant from a great courtier, who had the church lands from the crown; and there he dwells, and has as little to do with any poor wight in Cumnor as if he were himself a belted knight.”

“Nay,” said the mercer, “it is not altogether pride in Tony neither: there is a fair lady in the case, and Tony will scarce let the light of day look on her.”

“How!” said Tressilian, who now for the first time interfered in their conversation, “did ye not say this Foster was married, and to a precisian?”

“Married he was, and to as bitter a precisian as ever eat flesh in Lent; and a cat-and-dog life she led with Tony, as men said. But she is dead, rest be with her, and Tony hath but a slip of a daughter; so it is thought he means to wed this stranger, that men keep such a coil about.”

“And why so? I mean, why do they keep a coil about her?” said Tressilian.

“Why, I wot not,” answered the host, “except that men say she is as beautiful as an angel, and no one knows whence she comes, and everyone wishes to know why she is kept so closely mewed up. For my part, I never saw her; you have, I think, Master Goldthred?”

“That I have, old boy,” said the mercer. “Look you, I was riding hither from Abingdon—I passed under the east oriel windows of the old mansion, where all the old saints and histories and such-like are painted. It was not the common path I took, but one through the park; for the postern door was upon the latch, and I thought I might take the privilege of an old comrade to ride across through the trees, both for shading, as the day was somewhat hot, and for avoiding of dust, because I had on my peach-colored doublet, pinked out with cloth of gold.”

“Which garment,” said Michael Lambourne, “thou wouldst willingly make twinkle in the eyes of a fair dame. Ah, villain! thou wilt never leave thy old tricks.”

“Not so—not so,” said the mercer, with a smirking laugh—“not altogether so; but curiosity, thou knowest, and a strain of compassion withal, for the poor young lady sees nothing from morn to even but Tony Foster, with his scowling black brows, his bull’s head, and his bandy legs.”

“And thou wouldst willingly show her a dapper body, in a silken jerkin; a limb like a short-legged hen’s, in a cordovan

boot; and a round, simpering, what-d'ye lack sort of a countenance, set off with a velvet bonnet, a Turkey feather, and a gilded brooch? Ah, jolly mercer! they who have good wares are fond to show them! Come, gentles, let not the cup stand—here's to long spurs, short boots, full bonnets, and empty skulls!"

"Nay, now you are jealous of me, Mike," said Goldthred; "and yet my luck was but what might have happened to thee, or any man."

"Marry, confound thine impudence," retorted Lambourne; "thou wouldst not compare thy pudding face and sarsenet manners to a gentleman and a soldier?"

"Nay, my good sir," said Tressilian, "let me beseech you will not interrupt the gallant citizen; methinks he tells his tale so well, I could hearken to him till midnight."

"It's more of your favor than of my desert," answered Master Goldthred; "but since I give you pleasure, worthy Master Tressilian, I shall proceed, mauger all the gibes and quips of this valiant soldier, who, peradventure, hath had more cuffs than crowns in the Low Countries. And so, sir, as I passed under the great painted window, leaving my rein loose on my ambling palfrey's neck, partly for mine ease, and partly that I might have the more leisure to peer about, I hears me the lattice open; and never credit me, sir, if there did not stand there the person of as fair a woman as ever crossed mine eyes; and I think I have looked on as many pretty wenches, and with as much judgment, as other folks."

"May I ask her appearance, sir?" said Tressilian.

"Oh, sir," replied Master Goldthred, "I promise you, she was in gentlewoman's attire—a very quaint and pleasing dress, that might have served the Queen herself; for she had a forepart with body and sleeves, of ginger-colored satin, which, in my judgment, must have cost by the yard some thirty shillings, lined with murrey taffeta, and laid down and guarded with two broad laces of gold and silver. And her hat, sir, was truly the best-fashioned thing that I have seen in these parts, being of tawny taffeta, embroidered with scorpions of Venice gold, and having a border garnished with gold fringe—I promise you, sir, an absolute and all-surpassing device. Touching her skirts, they were in the old pass-devant fashion."

"I did not ask you of her attire, sir," said Tressilian, who had shown some impatience during this conversation, "but of her complexion, the color of her hair, her features."

"Touching her complexion," answered the mercer, "I am not so special certain; but I marked that her fan had an ivory handle, curiously inlaid; and then, again, as to the color of her hair, why, I can warrant, be its hue what it might, that she wore above it a net of green silk, parcel twisted with gold."

"A most mercer-like memory," said Lambourne: "the gentleman asks him of the lady's beauty, and he talks of her fine clothes!"

"I tell thee," said the mercer, somewhat disconcerted, "I had little time to look at her; for just as I was about to give her the good time of day, and for that purpose had puckered my features with a smile——"

"Like those of a jackanape simpering at a chestnut," said Michael Lambourne.

—"Up started of a sudden," continued Goldthred, without heeding the interruption, "Tony Foster himself, with a cudgel in his hand——"

"And broke thy head across, I hope, for thine impertinence," said his entertainer.

"That were more easily said than done," answered Goldthred, indignantly; "no, no—there was no breaking of heads; it's true, he advanced his cudgel, and spoke of laying on, and asked why I did not keep the public road, and such-like; and I would have knocked him over the pate handsomely for his pains, only for the lady's presence, who might have swooned, for what I know."

"Now, out upon thee for a faint-spirited slave!" said Lambourne; "what adventurous knight ever thought of the lady's terror when he went to thwack giant, dragon, or magician in her presence, and for her deliverance? But why talk to thee of dragons, who would be driven back by a dragon-fly? There thou hast missed the rarest opportunity!"

"Take it thyself then, bully Mike," answered Goldthred. "Yonder is the enchanted manor, and the dragon, and the lady, all at thy service, if thou darest venture on them."

"Why, so I would for a quartern of sack," said the soldier. "Or, stay—I am foully out of linen—wilt thou bet a piece of Hollands against these five angels that I go not to the hall to-morrow and force Tony Foster to introduce me to his fair guest?"

"I accept your wager," said the mercer; "and I think, though thou hadst even the impudence of the devil, I shall gain on thee this bout. Our landlord here shall hold stakes, and I will stake down gold till I send the linen."

"I will hold stakes on no such matter," said Gosling. "Good now, my kinsman, drink your wine in quiet, and let such ventures alone. I promise you, Master Foster hath interest enough to lay you up in lavender in the castle at Oxford, or to get your legs made acquainted with the town-stocks."

"That would be but renewing an old intimacy; for Mike's shins and the town's wooden pincfold have been well known to each other ere now," said the mercer; "but he shall not budge from his wager, unless he means to pay forfeit."

"Forfeit!" said Lambourne; "I scorn it. I value Tony Foster's wrath no more than a shelled pea-cod; and I will visit his Lindabrides, by St. George, be he willing or no!"

"I would gladly pay your halves of the risk, sir," said Tressilian, "to be permitted to accompany you on the adventure."

"In what would that advantage you, sir?" answered Lambourne.

"In nothing, sir," said Tressilian, "unless to mark the skill and valor with which you conduct yourself. I am a traveler, who seeks for strange rencounters and uncommon passages, as the knights of yore did after adventures and feats of arms."

"Nay, if it pleasures you to see a trout tickled," answered Lambourne, "I care not how many witness my skill. And so here I drink success to my enterprise; and he that will not pledge me on his knees is a rascal, and I will cut his legs off by the garters!"

The draught which Michael Lambourne took upon this occasion had been preceded by so many others that reason tottered on her throne. He swore one or two incoherent oaths at the mercer, who refused, reasonably enough, to pledge him to a sentiment which inferred the loss of his own wager.

"Wilt thou chop logic with me," said Lambourne, "thou knave, with no more brains than are in a skein of raveled silk? By Heaven, I will cut thee into fifty yards of galloon lace!"

But, as he attempted to draw his sword for this doughty purpose, Michael Lambourne was seized upon by the tapster and the chamberlain, and conveyed to his own apartment, there to sleep himself sober at his leisure.

The party then broke up, and the guests took their leave; much more to the contentment of mine host than of some of the company, who were unwilling to quit good liquor, when

it was to be had for free cost, so long as they were able to sit by it. They were, however, compelled to remove; and go at length they did, leaving Gosling and Tressilian in the empty apartment.

“By my faith,” said the former; “I wonder where our great folks find pleasure, when they spend their means in entertainments, and in playing mine host without sending in a reckoning. It is what I but rarely practice; and whenever I do, by St. Julian, it grieves me beyond measure. Each of these empty stoups now, which my nephew and his drunken comrades have swilled off, should have been a matter of profit to one in my line, and I must set them down a dead loss. I cannot, for my heart, conceive the pleasure of noise, and nonsense, and drunken freaks, and drunken quarrels, and smut, and blasphemy, and so forth, when a man loses money instead of gaining by it. And yet many a fair estate is lost in upholding such an useless course, and that greatly contributes to the decay of publicans; for who the devil do you think would pay for drink at the Black Bear, when he can have it for nothing at my lord’s or the squire’s?”

Tressilian perceived that the wine had made some impression even on the seasoned brain of mine host, which was chiefly to be inferred from his declaiming against drunkenness. As he himself had carefully avoided the bowl, he would have availed himself of the frankness of the moment to extract from Gosling some further information upon the subject of Anthony Foster, and the lady whom the mercer had seen in his mansion-house; but his inquiries only set the host upon a new theme of declamation against the wiles of the fair sex, in which he brought, at full length, the whole wisdom of Solomon to re-enforce his own. Finally, he turned his admonitions, mixed with much objurgation, upon his tapsters and drawers, who were employed in removing the relics of the entertainment and restoring order to the apartment; and at length, joining example to precept, though with no good success, he demolished a salver with half a score of glasses, in attempting to show how such service was done at the Three Cranes, in the Vintry, then the most topping tavern in London. This last accident so far recalled him to his better self that he retired to his bed, slept sound, and awoke a new man in the morning.

CHAPTER III.

Nay, I'll hold touch, the game shall be play'd out;
It ne'er shall stop for me, this merry wager.
That which I say when gamesome, I'll avouch
In my most sober mood, ne'er trust me else.

—*The Hazard Table.*

“AND how doth your kinsman, good mine host?” said Tressilian, when Giles Gosling first appeared in the public room, on the morning following the revel which we described in the last chapter. “Is he well, and will he abide by his wager?”

“For well, sir, he started two hours since, and has visited I know not what purlieus of his old companions; hath but now returned, and is at this instant breakfasting on new-laid eggs and muscadine; and for his wager, I caution you as a friend to have little to do with that, or indeed with aught that Mike proposes. Wherefore, I counsel you to a warm breakfast upon a culiss, which shall restore the tone of the stomach; and let my nephew and Master Goldthred swagger about their wager as they list.”

“It seems to me, mine host,” said Tressilian, “that you know not well what to say about this kinsman of yours; and that you can neither blame nor commend him without some twinge of conscience.”

“You have spoken truly, Master Tressilian,” replied Giles Gosling. “There is natural affection whimpering into one ear, ‘Giles—Giles, why wilt thou take away the good name of thy own nephew? Wilt thou defame thy sister’s son, Giles Gosling?—wilt thou defoul thine own nest, dishonor thine own blood?’ And then, again, comes justice, and says, ‘Here is a worthy guest as ever came to the bonny Black Bear; one who never challenged a reckoning—as I say to your face you never did, Master Tressilian—not that you have had cause—one who knows not why he came, so far as I can see, or when he is going away; and wilt thou, being a publican, having paid scot and lot these thirty years in the town of Cumnor, and being at this instant head-borough—wilt thou suffer this guest of guests, this man of men, this six-hooped pot, as I may say, of a traveler, to fall into the meshes of thy

nephew, who is known for a swasher and a desperate Dick, a carder and a dicer, a professor of the seven damnable sciences, if ever man took degrees in them?' No, by Heaven! I might wink, and let him catch such a small butterfly as Goldthred; but thou, my guest, shalt be forewarned, so thou wilt but listen to thy trusty host."

"Why, mine host, thy counsel shall not be cast away," replied Tressilian; "however, I must uphold my share in this wager, having once passed my word to that effect. But lend me, I pray, some of thy counsel. This Foster, who or what is he, and why makes he such mystery of his female inmate?"

"Troth," replied Gosling, "I can add but little to what you heard last night. He was one of Queen Mary's Papists, and now he is one of Queen Elizabeth's Protestants; he was an onhanger of the abbot of Abingdon, and now he lives as master of the manor-house. Above all, he was poor and is rich. Folk talk of private apartments in his old waste mansion-house bedizened fine enough to serve the Queen, God bless her! Some men think he found a treasure in the orchard, some that he sold himself to the devil for treasure, and some say that he cheated the abbot out of the church plate which was hidden in the old manor-house at the Reformation. Rich, however, he is, and God and his conscience, with the devil perhaps, besides, only know how he came by it. He has sulky ways too, breaking off intercourse with all that are of the place, as if he had either some strange secret to keep or held himself to be made of another clay than we are. I think it likely my kinsman and he will quarrel, if Mike thrust his acquaintance on him; and I am sorry that you, my worthy Master Tressilian, will still think of going in my nephew's company."

Tressilian again answered him, that he would proceed with great caution, and that he should have no fears on his account; in short, he bestowed on him all the customary assurances with which those who are determined on a rash action are wont to parry the advice of their friends.

Meantime, the traveler accepted the landlord's invitation, and had just finished the excellent breakfast which was served to him and Gosling by pretty Cicely, the beauty of the bar, when the hero of the preceding night, Michael Lambourne, entered the apartment. His toilet had apparently cost him some labor, for his clothes, which differed from those he wore on his journey, were of the newest fashion, and put on with great attention to the display of his person.

“By my faith, uncle,” said the gallant, “you made a wet night of it, and I feel it followed by a dry morning. I will pledge you willingly in a cup of bastard. How, my pretty coz, Cicely! why, I left you but a child in the cradle, and there thou stand’st in thy velvet waistcoat, as tight a girl as England’s sun shines on. Know thy friends and kindred, Cicely, and come hither, child, that I may kiss thee, and give thee my blessing.”

“Concern not yourself about Cicely, kinsman,” said Giles Gosling, “but e’en let her go her way, a’ God’s name; for although your mother were her father’s sister, yet that shall not make you and her cater-cousins.”

“Why, uncle,” replied Lambourne, “think’st thou I am an infidel, and would harm those of mine own house?”

“It is for no harm that I speak, Mike,” answered his uncle, “but a simple humor of precaution which I have. True, thou art as well gilded as a snake when he casts his old slough in the spring time; but for all that, thou creepest not into my Eden. I will look after mine Eve, Mike, and so content thee. But how brave thou be’st, lad! To look on thee now, and compare thee with Master Tressilian here, in his sad-colored riding-suit, who would not say that thou wert the real gentleman and he the tapster’s boy?”

“Troth, uncle,” replied Lambourne, “no one would say so but one of your country-breeding, that knows no better. I will say, and I care not who hears me, there is something about the real gentry that few men come up to that are not born and bred to the mystery. I wot not where the trick lies; but although I can enter an ordinary with as much audacity, rebuke the waiters and drawers as loudly, drink as deep a health, swear as round an oath, and fling my gold as freely about as any of the jingling spurs and white feathers that are around me; yet hang me if I can ever catch the true grace of it, though I have practiced an hundred times. The man of the house sets me lowest at the board, and carves to me the last; and the drawer says, ‘Coming, friends,’ without any more reverence or regardful addition. But, hang it, let it pass; care killed a cat. I have gentry enough to pass the trick on Tony Fire-the-Fagot, and that will do for the matter in hand.”

“You hold your purpose, then, of visiting your old acquaintance?” said Tressilian to the adventurer.

“Aye, sir,” replied Lambourne: “When stakes are made, the game must be played; that is gamester’s law all over the

world. You, sir, unless my memory fails me, for I did steep it somewhat too deeply in the sack-butt, took some share in my hazard?"

"I propose to accompany you in your adventure," said Tressilian, "if you will do me so much grace as to permit me; and I have staked my share of the forfeit in the hands of our worthy host."

"That he hath," answered Giles Gosling, "in as fair Harry nobles as ever were melted into sack by a good fellow. So, luck to your enterprise, since you will needs venture on Tony Foster; but, by my credit, you had better take another draught before you depart, for your welcome at the hall yonder will be somewhat of the driest. And if you do get into peril, beware of taking to cold steel; but send for me, Giles Gosling, the head-borough, and I may be able to make something out of Tony yet, for as proud as he is."

The nephew dutifully obeyed his uncle's hint, by taking a second powerful pull at the tankard, observing, that his wit never served him so well as when he had washed his temples with a deep morning's draught; and they set forth together for the habitation of Anthony Foster.

The village of Cumnor is pleasantly built on a hill, and in a wooded park closely adjacent was situated the ancient mansion occupied at this time by Anthony Foster, of which the ruins may be still extant. The park was then full of large trees, and in particular of ancient and mighty oaks, which stretched their giant arms over the high wall surrounding the demesne, thus giving it a melancholy, secluded, and monastic appearance. The entrance to the park lay through an old-fashioned gateway in the outer wall, the door of which was formed of two huge oaken leaves, thickly studded with nails, like the gate of an old town.

"We shall be finely helped up here," said Michael Lambourne, looking at the gateway and gate, "if this fellow's suspicious humor should refuse us admission altogether, as it is like he may, in case this linsey-wolsey fellow of a mercer's visit to his premises has disquieted him. But, no," he added, pushing the huge gate, which gave way, "the door stands invitingly open; and here we are within the forbidden ground, without other impediment than the passive resistance of a heavy oak door, moving on rusty hinges."

They stood now in an avenue overshadowed by such old trees as we have described, and which had been bordered at one time by high hedges of yew and holly. But these, hav-

ing been untrimmed for many years, had run up into great bushes, or rather dwarf trees, and now encroached, with their dark and melancholy boughs, upon the road which they once had screened. The avenue itself was grown up with grass, and in one or two places interrupted by piles of withered brushwood, which had been lopped from the trees cut down in the neighboring park, and was here stacked for drying. Formal walks and avenues, which, at different points, crossed this principal approach, were in like manner choked up and interrupted by piles of brushwood and billets, and in other places by underwood and brambles. Besides the general effect of desolation which is so strongly impressed, whenever we behold the contrivances of man wasted and obliterated by neglect and witness the marks of social life effaced gradually by the influence of vegetation, the size of the trees and the outspreading extent of their boughs diffused a gloom over the scene, even when the sun was at the highest, and made a proportional impression on the mind of those who visited it. This was felt even by Michael Lambourne, however alien his habits were to receiving any impressions, excepting from things which addressed themselves immediately to his passions.

"This wood is as dark as a wolf's mouth," said he to Tressilian, as they walked together slowly along the solitary and broken approach, and had just come in sight of the monastic front of the old mansion, with its shafted windows, brick walls overgrown with ivy and creeping shrubs, and twisted stalks of chimneys of heavy stonework. "And yet," continued Lambourne, "it is fairly done on the part of Foster too; for, since he chooses not visitors, it is right to keep his place in a fashion that will invite few to trespass upon his privacy. But had he been the Anthony I once knew him, these sturdy oaks had long since become the property of some honest woodmonger, and the manor-close here had looked lighter at midnight than it now does at noon, while Foster played fast and loose with the price in some cunning corner in the purlieu of Whitefriars."

"Was he then such an unthrift?" asked Tressilian.

"He was," answered Lambourne, "like the rest of us, no saint, and no saver. But what I liked worst of Tony was, that he loved to take his pleasure by himself, and grudged, as men say, every drop of water that went past his own mill. I have known him deal with such measures of wine when he was alone as I would not have ventured on with aid of the best

toper in Berkshire; that, and some sway toward superstition, which he had by temperament, rendered him unworthy the company of a good fellow. And now he has earthed himself here in a den just befitting such a sly fox as himself."

"May I ask you, Master Lambourne," said Tressilian, "since your old companion's humor jumps so little with your own, wherefore you are so desirous to renew acquaintance with him?"

"And may I ask you, in return, Master Tressilian," answered Lambourne, "wherefore you have shown yourself so desirous to accompany me on this party?"

"I told you my motive," said Tressilian, "when I took share in your wager: it was simple curiosity."

"La you there now!" answered Lambourne. "See how you civil and discreet gentlemen think to use us who live by the free exercise of our wits! Had I answered your question by saying that it was simple curiosity which led me to visit my old comrade, Anthony Foster, I warrant you had set it down for an evasion and a turn of my trade. But any answer, I suppose, must serve my turn."

"And wherefore should not bare curiosity," said Tressilian, "be a sufficient reason for my taking this walk with you?"

"Oh, content yourself, sir," replied Lambourne; "you cannot put the change on me so easy as you think, for I have lived among the quick-stirring spirits of the age too long to swallow chaff for grain. You are a gentleman of birth and breeding—your bearing makes it good; of civil habits and fair reputation—your manners declare it, and my uncle avouches it; and yet you associate yourself with a sort of scant-of-grace, as men call me; and, knowing me to be such, you make yourself my companion in a visit to a man whom you are a stranger to—and all out of mere curiosity, forsooth! The excuse, if curiously balanced, would be found to want some scruples of just weight or so."

"If your suspicions were just," said Tressilian, "you have shown no confidence in me to invite or deserve mine."

"Oh, if that be all," said Lambourne, "my motives lie above water. While this gold of mine lasts," taking out his purse, chucking it into the air, and catching it as it fell, "I will make it buy pleasure, and when it is out, I must have more. Now, if this mysterious Lady of the Manor—this fair Lindabrides of Tony Fire-the-Fagot—be so admirable a piece as men say, why, there is chance that she may aid me to melt my nobles into goats; and, again, if Anthony be so wealthy

a chuff as report speaks him, he may prove the philosopher's stone to me, and convert my groats into fair rose nobles again."

"A comfortable proposal truly," said Tressilian; "but I see not what chance there is of accomplishing it."

"Not to-day, or perchance to-morrow," answered Lambourne: "I expect not to catch the old jack till I have disposed my ground-baits handsomely. But I know something more of his affairs this morning than I did last night, and I will so use my knowledge that he shall think it more perfect than it is. Nay, without expecting either pleasure or profit, or both, I had not stepped a stride within this manor, I can tell you; for I promise you I hold our visit not altogether without risk. But here we are, and we must make the best on't."

While he thus spoke, they had entered a large orchard which surrounded the house on two sides, though the trees, abandoned by the care of man, were overgrown and mossy, and seemed to bear little fruit. Those which had been formerly trained as espaliers had now resumed their natural mode of growing, and exhibited grotesque forms, partaking of the original training which they had received. The greater part of the ground, which had once been parterres and flower gardens, was suffered in like manner to run to waste, excepting a few patches which had been dug up, and planted with ordinary pot herbs. Some statues, which had ornamented the garden in its days of splendor, were now thrown down from their pedestals and broken in pieces, and a large summer house, having a heavy stone front, decorated with carving, representing the life and actions of Samson, was in the same dilapidated condition.

They had just traversed this garden of the sluggard, and were within a few steps of the door of the mansion, when Lambourne had ceased speaking—a circumstance very agreeable to Tressilian, as it saved him the embarrassment of either commenting upon or replying to the frank avowal which his companion had just made of the sentiments and views which induced him to come hither. Lambourne knocked roundly and boldly at the huge door of the mansion, observing, at the same time, he had seen a less strong one upon a county jail. It was not until they had knocked more than once that an aged, sour-visaged domestic reconnoitered them through a small square hole in the door, well secured with bars of iron, and demanded what they wanted.

“To speak with Master Foster instantly, on pressing business of the state,” was the ready reply of Michael Lambourne.

“Methinks you will find difficulty to make that good,” said Tressilian in a whisper to his companion, while the servant went to carry the message to his master.

“Tush,” replied the adventurer; “no soldier would go on were he always to consider when and how he should come off. Let us once obtain entrance, and all will go well enough.”

In a short time the servant returned, and drawing with a careful hand both bolt and bar, opened the gate, which admitted them through an archway into a square court, surrounded by buildings. Opposite to the arch was another door, which the serving-man in like manner unlocked, and thus introduced them into a stone-paved parlor, where there was but little furniture, and that of the rudest and most ancient fashion. The windows were tall and ample, reaching almost to the roof of the room, which was composed of black oak; those opening to the quadrangle were obscured by the height of the surrounding buildings, and, as they were traversed with massive shafts of solid stonework, and thickly painted with religious devices and scenes taken from Scripture history, by no means admitted light in proportion to their size; and what did penetrate through them partook of the dark and gloomy tinge of the stained glass.

Tressilian and his guide had time enough to observe all these particulars, for they waited some space in the apartment ere the present master of the mansion at length made his appearance. Prepared as he was to see an inauspicious and ill-looking person, the ugliness of Anthony Foster considerably exceeded what Tressilian had anticipated. He was of middle stature, built strongly, but so clumsily as to border on deformity, and to give all his motions the ungainly awkwardness of a left-legged and left-handed man. His hair, in arranging which men at that time, as at present, were very nice and curious, instead of being carefully cleaned and disposed into short curls, or else set up on end, as is represented in old paintings, in a manner resembling that used by fine gentlemen of our own day, escaped in sable negligence from under a furred bonnet, and hung in elf-locks, which seemed strangers to the comb, over his rugged brows, and around his very singular and unprepossessing countenance. His keen dark eyes were deep set beneath broad and shaggy eyebrows, and as they were usually bent on the ground, seemed as if they were themselves ashamed of the expression natural to them,

and were desirous to conceal it from the observation of men. At times, however, when, more intent on observing others, he suddenly raised them, and fixed them keenly on those with whom he conversed, they seemed to express both the fiercer passions and the power of mind which could at will suppress or disguise the intensity of inward feeling. The features which corresponded with these eyes and this form were irregular, and marked so as to be indelibly fixed on the mind of him who had once seen them. Upon the whole, as Tressilian could not help acknowledging to himself, the Anthony Foster who now stood before them was the last person, judging from personal appearance, upon whom one would have chosen to intrude an unexpected and undesired visit. His attire was a doublet of russet leather, like those worn by the better sort of country folk, girt with a buff belt, in which was stuck on the right side a long knife, or dudgeon dagger, and on the other a cutlass. He raised his eyes as he entered the room, and fixed a keenly penetrating glance upon his two visitors, then cast them down as if counting his steps, while he advanced slowly into the middle of the room, and said, in a low, smothered tone of voice, "Let me pray you, gentlemen, to tell me the cause of this visit."

He looked as if he expected the answer from Tressilian; so true was Lambourne's observation, that the superior air of breeding and dignity shone through the disguise of an inferior dress. But it was Michael who replied to him, with the easy familiarity of an old friend, and a tone which seemed unembarrassed by any doubt of the most cordial reception.

"Ha! my dear friend and ingle, Tony Foster!" he exclaimed, seizing upon the unwilling hand, and shaking it with such emphasis as almost to stagger the sturdy frame of the person whom he addressed; "how fares it with you for many a long year? What! have you altogether forgotten your friend, gossip, and playfellow, Michael Lambourne?"

"Michael Lambourne!" said Foster, looking at him a moment; then dropping his eyes, and with little ceremony extricating his hand from the friendly grasp of the person by whom he was addressed—"are you Michael Lambourne?"

"Aye, sure as you are Anthony Foster," replied Lambourne.

"'Tis well," answered his sullen host; "and what may Michael Lambourne expect from his visit hither?"

"*Voto a Dios,*" answered Lambourne, "I expected a better welcome than I am like to meet, I think."

"Why, thou gallows-bird—thou jail-rat—thou friend of

the hangman and his customers," replied Foster, "hast thou the assurance to expect countenance from anyone whose neck is beyond the compass of a Tyburn tippet?"

"It may be with me as you say," replied Lambourne; "and suppose I grant it to be so for argument's sake, I were still good enough society for mine ancient friend Anthony Fire-the-Fagot, though he be, for the present, by some indescribable title, the master of Cumnor Place."

"Hark you, Michael Lambourne," said Foster; "you are a gambler now, and live by the counting of chances. Compute me the odds that I do not, on this instant, throw you out of that window into the ditch there."

"Twenty to one that you do not," answered the sturdy visitor.

"And wherefore, I pray you?" demanded Anthony Foster, setting his teeth and compressing his lips, like one who endeavors to suppress some violent internal emotion.

"Because," said Lambourne coolly, "you dare not for your life lay a finger on me. I am younger and stronger than you, and have in me a double portion of the fighting devil, though not, it may be, quite so much of the undermining fiend, that finds an underground way to his purpose, who hides halters under folks' pillows, and who puts ratsbane into their porridge, as the stage-play says."

Foster looked at him earnestly, then turned away, and paced the room twice, with the same steady and considerate pace with which he had entered it; then suddenly came back, and extended his hand to Michael Lambourne, saying, "Be not wroth with me, good Mike; I did but try whether thou hadst parted with aught of thine old and honorable frankness, which your enviers and backbiters called saucy impudence."

"Let them call it what they will," said Michael Lambourne, "it is the commodity we must carry through the world with us. Uds daggers! I tell thee, man, mine own stock of assurance was too small to trade upon: I was fain to take in a ton or two more of brass at every port where I touched in the voyage of life; and I started overboard what modesty and scruples I had remaining, in order to make room for the stowage."

"Nay, nay," replied Foster, "touching scruples and modesty, you sailed hence in ballast. But who is this gallant, honest Mike? Is he a Corinthian—a cutter like thyself?"

"I prithee, know Master Tressilian, bully Foster," replied Lambourne, presenting his friend in answer to his friend's

CHAPTER IV.

Not serve two masters? Here's a youth will try it—
Would fain serve God, yet give the devil his due;
Says grace before he doth a deed of villainy,
And returns his thanks devoutly when 'tis acted.
—*Old Play.*

THE room into which the master of Cumnor Place conducted his worthy visitant was of greater extent than that in which they had at first conversed, and had yet more the appearance of dilapidation. Large oaken presses, filled with shelves of the same wood, surrounded the room, and had, at one time, served for the arrangement of a numerous collection of books, many of which yet remained, but torn and defaced, covered with dust, deprived of their costly clasps and bindings, and tossed together in heaps upon the shelves, as things altogether disregarded, and abandoned to the pleasure of every spoiler. The very presses themselves seemed to have incurred the hostility of those enemies of learning, who had destroyed the volumes with which they had been heretofore filled. They were, in several places, dismantled of their shelves, and otherwise broken and damaged, and were, moreover, mantled with cobwebs and covered with dust.

“The men who wrote these books,” said Lambourne, looking round him, “little thought whose keeping they were to fall into.”

“Nor what yeoman’s service they were to do me,” quoth Anthony Foster: “the cook hath used them for scouring his pewter, and the groom hath had nought else to clean my boots with this many a month past.”

“And yet,” said Lambourne, “I have been in cities where such learned commodities would have been deemed too good for such offices.”

“Pshaw—pshaw,” answered Foster, “they are Popish trash every one of them—private studies of the mumping old abbot of Abingdon. The nineteenthly of a pure Gospel sermon were worth a cartload of such rakings of the kennel of Rome.”

“Gad-a-mercy, Master Tony Fire-the-Fagot!” said Lambourne, by way of reply.

Foster scowled darkly at him, as he replied, “Hark ye,

friend Mike; forget that name, and the passage which it relates to, if you would not have our newly-revived comradeship die a sudden and a violent death."

"Why," said Michael Lambourne, "you were wont to glory in the share you had in the death of the two old heretical bishops."

"That," said his comrade, "was while I was in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, and applies not to my walk or my ways now that I am called forth into the lists. Mr. Melchisedek Maultext compared my misfortune in that matter to that of the Apostle Paul, who kept the clothes of the witnesses who stoned St. Stephen. He held forth on the matter three Sabbaths past, and illustrated the same by the conduct of an honorable person present, meaning me."

"I prithee peace, Foster," said Lambourne; "for, I know not how it is, I have a sort of creeping comes over my skin when I hear the devil quote Scripture; and besides, man, how couldst thou have the heart to quit that convenient old religion, which you could slip off or on as easily as your glove? Do I not remember how you were wont to carry your conscience to confession, as duly as the month came round? and when thou hadst it scoured and burnished, and whitewashed by the priest, thou wert ever ready for the worst villainy which could be devised, like a child who is always readiest to rush into the mire when he has got his Sunday's clean jerkin on."

"Trouble not thyself about my conscience," said Foster, "it is a thing thou canst not understand, having never had one of thine own. But let us rather to the point, and say to me, in one word, what is thy business with me, and what hopes have drawn thee hither?"

"The hope of bettering myself; to be sure," answered Lambourne, "as the old woman said, when she leapt over the bridge at Kingston. Look you, this purse has all that is left of as round a sum as a man would wish to carry in his slop-pouch. You are here well established, it would seem, and, as I think, well befriended, for men talk of thy being under some special protection; nay, stare not like a pig that is stuck, man, thou canst not dance in a net and they not see thee? Now I know such protection is not purchased for nought: you must have services to render for it, and in these I propose to help thee."

"But how if I lack no assistance from thee, Mike? I think thy modesty might suppose that were a case possible."

"That is to say," retorted Lambourne, "that you would engross the whole work rather than divide the reward; but be not over-greedy, Anthony. Covetousness bursts the sack and spills the grain. Look you, when the huntsman goes to kill a stag, he takes with him more dogs than one. He has the stanch lyme-hound to track the wounded buck over hill and dale, but he hath also the fleet gaze-hound to kill him at view. Thou art the lyme-hound, I am the gaze-hound, and thy patron will need the aid of both, and can well afford to requite it. Thou hast deep sagacity, an unrelenting purpose, a steady, long-breathed malignity of nature, that surpasses mine. But then I am the bolder, the quicker, the more ready, both at action and expedient. Separate, our properties are not so perfect; but unite them, and we drive the world before us. How sayst thou, shall we hunt in couples?"

"It is a currish proposal, thus to thrust thyself upon my private matters," replied Foster; "but thou wert ever an ill-nurtured whelp."

"You shall have no cause to say so, unless you spurn my courtesy," said Michael Lambourne; "but if so, keep thee well from me, sir knight, as the romance has it. I will either share your counsels or traverse them; for I have come here to be busy, either with thee or against thee."

"Well," said Anthony Foster, "since thou dost leave me so fair a choice, I will rather be thy friend than thine enemy. Thou art right: I *can* prefer thee to the service of a patron who has enough of means to make us both and an hundred more. And, to say truth, thou art well qualified for his service. Boldness and dexterity he demands—the justice-books bear witness in thy favor; no starting at scruples in his service—why, who ever suspected thee of a conscience? an assurance he must have who would follow a courtier—and thy brow is as impenetrable as a Milan visor. There is but one thing I would fain see amended in thee."

"And what is that, my most precious friend Anthony?" replied Lambourne; "for I swear by the pillow of the Seven Sleepers, I will not be slothful in amending it."

"Why, you gave a sample of it even now," said Foster. "Your speech twangs too much of the old stamp, and you garnish it ever and anon with singular oaths, that savor of Papistry. Besides, your exterior man is altogether too deboshed and irregular to become one of his lordship's followers, since he has a reputation to keep up in the eye of the world. You must somewhat reform your dress, upon a more

grave and composed fashion; wear your cloak on both shoulders, and your falling band unrumped and well starched. You must enlarge the brim of your beaver, and diminish the superfluity of your trunk-hose; go to church, or, which will be better, to meeting, at least once a month; protest only upon your faith and conscience; lay aside your swashing look, and never touch the hilt of your sword but when you would draw the carnal weapon in good earnest."

"By this light, Anthony, thou art mad," answered Lambourne, "and hast described rather the gentleman-usher to a Puritan's wife than the follower of an ambitious courtier! Yes, such a thing as thou wouldst make of me should wear a book at his girdle instead of a poniard, and might just be suspected of manhood enough to squire a proud dame-citizen to the lecture at St. Antonlin's, and quarrel in her cause with any flat-capp'd threadmaker that would take the wall of her. He must ruffle it in another sort that would walk to court in a nobleman's train."

"Oh, content you, sir," replied Foster, "there is a change since you knew the English world; and there are those who can hold their way through the boldest courses, and the most secret, and yet never a swaggering word, or an oath, or a profane word in their conversation."

"That is to say," replied Lambourne, "they are in a trading copartnery to do the devil's business without mentioning his name in the firm? Well, I will do my best to counterfeit, rather than lose ground in this new world, since thou sayest it is grown so precise. But, Anthony, what is the name of this nobleman, in whose service I am to turn hypocrite?"

"Aha, Master Michael! are you there with your bears?" said Foster, with a grim smile; "and is this the knowledge you pretend of my concernments? How know you now there is such a person *in rerum natura*, and that I have not been putting a jape upon you all this time?"

"Thou put a jape on me, thou sodden-brained gull?" answered Lambourne, nothing daunted; "why, dark and muddy as thou think'st thyself, I would engage in a day's space to see as clear through thee and thy concernments, as thou call'st them, as through the filthy horn of an old stable lantern."

At this moment their conversation was interrupted by a scream from the next apartment.

"By the holy cross of Abingdon," exclaimed Anthony

Foster, forgetting his Protestantism in his alarm, "I am a ruined man!"

So saying, he rushed into the apartment whence the scream issued, followed by Michael Lambourne. But to account for the sounds which interrupted their conversation it is necessary to recede a little way in our narrative.

It has been already observed that, when Lambourne accompanied Foster into the library, they left Tressilian alone in the ancient parlor. His dark eye followed them forth of the apartment with a glance of contempt, a part of which his mind instantly transferred to himself, for having stooped to be even for a moment their familiar companion. "These are the associates, Amy"—it was thus he communed with himself—"to which thy cruel levity, thine unthinking and most unmerited falsehood, has condemned him of whom his friends once hoped far other things, and who now scorns himself, as he will be scorned by others, for the baseness he stoops to for the love of thee! But I will not leave the pursuit of thee, once the object of my purest and most devoted affection, though to me thou canst henceforth be nothing but a thing to weep over. I will save thee from thy betrayer and from thyself. I will restore thee to thy parents—to thy God. I cannot bid the bright star again sparkle in the sphere it has shot from, but——"

A slight noise in the apartment interrupted his reverie; he looked round, and in the beautiful and richly-attired female who entered at that instant by a side door he recognized the object of his search. The first impulse arising from this discovery urged him to conceal his face with the collar of his cloak, until he should find a favorable moment of making himself known. But his purpose was disconcerted by the young lady (she was not above eighteen years old), who ran joyfully toward him, and, pulling him by the cloak, said playfully, "Nay, my sweet friend, after I have waited for you so long, you come not to my bower to play the masquer. You are arraigned of treason to true love and fond affection; and you must stand up at the bar and answer it with face uncovered—how say you, guilty or not?"

"Alas, Amy!" said Tressilian, in a low and melancholy tone, as he suffered her to draw the mantle from his face. The sound of his voice, and still more the unexpected sight of his face, changed in an instant the lady's playful mood. She staggered back, turned as pale as death, and put her hands before her face. Tressilian was himself for a moment much

overcome, but seeming suddenly to remember the necessity of using an opportunity which might not again occur, he said in a low tone, "Amy, fear me not."

"Why should I fear you?" said the lady, withdrawing her hands from her beautiful face, which was now covered with crimson—"why should I fear you, Mr. Tressilian? or wherefore have you intruded yourself into my dwelling, uninvited, sir, and unwished for?"

"Your dwelling, Amy!" said Tressilian. "Alas! is a prison your dwelling?—a prison guarded by one of the most sordid of men, but not a greater wretch than his employer!"

"This house is mine," said Amy—"mine while I choose to inhabit it. If it is my pleasure to live in seclusion, who shall gainsay me?"

"Your father, maiden," answered Tressilian—"your broken-hearted father, who dispatched me in quest of you with that authority which he cannot exert in person. Here is his letter, written while he blessed his pain of body which somewhat stunned the agony of his mind."

"The pain! is my father then ill?" said the lady.

"So ill," answered Tressilian, "that even your utmost haste may not restore him to health; but all shall be instantly prepared for your departure the instant you yourself will give consent."

"Tressilian," answered the lady, "I cannot—I must not—I dare not leave this place. Go back to my father; tell him I will obtain leave to see him within twelve hours from hence. Go back, Tressilian; tell him I am well, I am happy—happy could I think he was so; tell him not to fear that I will come, and in such a manner that all the grief Amy has given him shall be forgotten—the poor Amy is now greater than she dare name. Go, good Tressilian; I have injured thee too, but believe me I have power to heal the wounds I have caused: I robbed you of a childish heart, which was not worthy of you, and I can repay the loss with honors and advancement."

"Do you say this to me, Amy? Do you offer me pageants of idle ambition for the quiet peace you have robbed me of? But be it so—I came not to upbraid, but to serve and to free you. You cannot disguise it from me—you are a prisoner. Otherwise your kind heart—for it was once a kind heart—would have been already at your father's bedside. Come, poor, deceived, unhappy maiden. All shall be forgot—all shall be forgiven. Fear not my importunity for what regarded our contract; it was a dream, and I have awaked.

But come; your father yet lives. Come, and one word of affection—one tear of penitence, will efface the memory of all that has passed.”

“Have I not already said, Tressilian,” replied she, “that I will surely come to my father, and that without farther delay than is necessary to discharge other and equally binding duties? Go, carry him the news. I come as sure as there is light in heaven—that is, when I obtain permission.”

“Permission!—permission to visit your father on his sick bed, perhaps on his death bed!” repeated Tressilian impatiently; “and permission from whom? From the villain who, under disguise of friendship, abused every duty of hospitality, and stole thee from thy father’s roof!”

“Do him no slander, Tressilian! He whom thou speakest of wears a sword as sharp as thine—sharper, vain man; for the best deeds thou hast ever done in peace or war were as unworthy to be named with his as thy obscure rank to match itself with the sphere he moves in. Leave me! Go, do mine errand to my father, and when he next sends to me, let him choose a more welcome messenger.”

“Amy,” replied Tressilian calmly, “thou canst not move me by thy reproaches. Tell me one thing, that I may bear at least one ray of comfort to my aged friend. This rank of his which thou dost boast—dost thou share it with him, Amy? Does he claim a husband’s right to control thy motions?”

“Stop thy base, unmannered tongue!” said the lady; “to no question that derogates from my honor do I deign an answer.”

“You have said enough in refusing to reply,” answered Tressilian; “and mark me, unhappy as thou art, I am armed with thy father’s full authority to command thy obedience, and I will save thee from the slavery of sin and of sorrow, even despite of thyself, Amy.”

“Menace no violence here!” exclaimed the lady, drawing back from him, and alarmed at the determination expressed in his look and manner: “threaten me not, Tressilian, for I have means to repel force.”

“But not, I trust, the wish to use them in so evil a cause?” said Tressilian. “With thy will—thine uninfluenced, free, and natural will, Amy, thou canst not choose this state of slavery and dishonor: thou hast been bound by some spell—entrapped by some deceit—art now detained by some compelled vow. But thus I break the charm: Amy, in the name

of thine excellent, thy broken-hearted father, I command thee to follow me!"

As he spoke, he advanced and extended his arm, as with the purpose of laying hold upon her. But she shrunk back from his grasp, and uttered the scream which, as we before noticed, brought into the apartment Lambourne and Foster.

The latter exclaimed, as soon as he entered, "Fire and fagot! what have we here?" Then addressing the lady, in a tone betwixt entreaty and command, he added, "Uds precious! madam, what make you here out of bounds? Retire—retire; there is life and death in this matter. And you, friend, whoever you may be, leave this house: out with you, before my dagger's hilt and your costard become acquainted. Draw, Mike, and rid us of the knave!"

"Not I, on my soul," replied Lambourne; "he came hither in my company, and he is safe from me by cutter's law, at least till we meet again. But hark ye, my Cornish comrade, you have brought a Cornish flaw of wind with you hither—a hurricanoe as they call it in the Indies. Make yourself scarce—depart—vanish, or we'll have you summoned before the Mayor of Halgaver, and that before Dudman and Ram-head meet."

"Away, base groom!" said Tressilian. "And you, madam, fare you well; what life lingers in your father's bosom will leave him at the news I have to tell."

He departed, the lady saying faintly as he left the room, "Tressilian, be not rash—say no scandal of me."

"Here is proper gear," said Foster. "I pray you go to your chamber, my lady, and let us consider how this is to be answered; nay, tarry not."

"I move not at your command, sir," answered the lady.

"Nay, but you must, fair lady," replied Foster; "excuse my freedom, but, by blood and nails, this is no time to strain courtesies—you *must* go to your chamber. Mike, follow that meddling coxcomb, and, as you desire to thrive, see him safely clear of the premises, while I bring this headstrong lady to reason. Draw thy tool, man, and after him."

"I'll follow him," said Michael Lambourne, "and see him fairly out of Flanders. But for hurting a man I have drunk my morning's draught withal, 'tis clean against my conscience." So saying, he left the apartment.

Tressilian, meanwhile, with hasty steps, pursued the first path which promised to conduct him through the wild and overgrown park in which the mansion of Foster was situated.

Haste and distress of mind led his steps astray, and, instead of taking the avenue which led toward the village, he chose another, which, after he had pursued it for some time with a hasty and reckless step, conducted him to the other side of the demesne, where a postern door opened through the wall, and led into the open country.

Tressilian paused an instant. It was indifferent to him by what road he left a spot now so odious to his recollections; but it was probable that the postern door was locked, and his retreat by that pass rendered impossible.

"I must make the attempt, however," he said to himself; "the only means of reclaiming this lost—this miserable—this still most lovely and most unhappy girl—must rest in her father's appeal to the broken laws of his country; I must haste to apprise him of this heart-rending intelligence."

As Tressilian, thus conversing with himself, approached to try some means of opening the door, or climbing over it, he perceived there was a key put into the lock from the outside. It turned round, the bolt revolved, and a cavalier, who entered, muffled in his riding-cloak, and wearing a slouched hat with a drooping feather, stood at once within four yards of him who was desirous of going out. They exclaimed at once, in tones of resentment and surprise, the one "Varney!" the other "Tressilian!"

"What make you here?" was the stern question put by the stranger to Tressilian, when the moment of surprise was past—"what make you here, where your presence is neither expected nor desired?"

"Nay, Varney," replied Tressilian, "what make *you* here? Are you come to triumph over the innocence you have destroyed, as the vulture or carrion crow comes to batten on the lamb, whose eyes it has first plucked out? Or are you come to encounter the merited vengeance of an honest man? Draw, dog, and defend thyself!"

Tressilian drew his sword as he spoke; but Varney only laid his hand on the hilt of his own, as he replied, "Thou art mad, Tressilian. I own appearances are against me, but by every oath a priest can make, or a man can swear, Mistress Amy Robsart hath had no injury from me; and in truth I were somewhat loath to hurt you in this cause. Thou know'st I can fight."

"I have heard thee say so, Varney," replied Tressilian; "but now, methinks, I would fain have some better evidence than thine own word."

“That shall not be lacking, if blade and hilt be but true to me,” answered Varney; and drawing his sword with the right hand, he threw his cloak around his left, and attacked Tressilian with a vigor which, for a moment, seemed to give him the advantage of the combat. But this advantage lasted not long. Tressilian added to a spirit determined on revenge a hand and eye admirably well adapted to the use of the rapier; so that Varney, finding himself hard pressed in his turn, endeavored to avail himself of his superior strength, by closing with his adversary. For this purpose, he hazarded the receiving one of Tressilian’s passes in his cloak, wrapt as it was around his arm, and ere his adversary could extricate his rapier thus entangled, he closed with him, shortening his own sword at the same time, with the purpose of dispatching him. But Tressilian was on his guard, and, unsheathing his poniard, parried with the blade of that weapon the homethrust which would otherwise have finished the combat, and, in the struggle which followed, displayed so much address as might have confirmed the opinion that he drew his origin from Cornwall, whose natives are such masters in the art of wrestling as, were the games of antiquity revived, might enable them to challenge all Europe to the ring. Varney, in his ill-advised attempt, received a fall so sudden and violent that his sword flew several paces from his hand, and ere he could recover his feet that of his antagonist was pointed to his throat.

“Give me the instant means of relieving the victim of thy treachery,” said Tressilian, “or take the last look of your Creator’s blessed sun!”

And while Varney, too confused or too sullen to reply, made a sudden effort to arise, his adversary drew back his arm, and would have executed his threat, but that the blow was arrested by the grasp of Michael Lambourne, who, directed by the clashing of swords, had come up just in time to save the life of Varney.

“Come—come, comrade,” said Lambourne, “here is enough done, and more than enough; put up your fox, and let us be jogging. The Black Bear growls for us.”

“Off, abject!” said Tressilian, striking himself free of Lambourne’s grasp; “darest thou come betwixt me and mine enemy?”

“Abject—abject!” repeated Lambourne: “that shall be answered with cold steel whenever a bowl of sack has washed out memory of the morning’s draught that we had together.



“The blow was arrested by the grasp of Michael Lambourne.”

NO. 1000
ANGOSTILLA

In the meanwhile, do you see, shog—tramp—begone; we are two to one."

He spoke truth, for Varney had taken the opportunity to regain his weapon, and Tressilian perceived it was madness to press the quarrel farther against such odds. He took his purse from his side, and taking out two gold nobles, flung them to Lambourne: "There, caitiff, is thy morning wage: thou shalt not say thou hast been my guide unhired. Varney, farewell; we shall meet where there are none to come betwixt us." So saying, he turned round, and departed through the postern door.

Varney seemed to want the inclination, or perhaps the power, for his fall had been a severe one, to follow his retreating enemy. But he glared darkly as he disappeared, and then addressed Lambourne—"Art thou a comrade of Foster's, good fellow?"

"Sworn friends, as the haft is to the knife," replied Michael Lambourne.

"Here is a broad piece for thee; follow yonder fellow, and see where he takes earth, and bring me word up to the mansion house here. Cautious and silent, thou knave, as thou valuest thy throat."

"Enough said," replied Lambourne; "I can draw on a scent as well as a sleuth-hound."

"Begone then," said Varney, sheathing his rapier; and, turning his back on Michael Lambourne, he walked slowly toward the house.

Lambourne stopped but an instant to gather the nobles which his late companion had flung toward him so unceremoniously, and muttered to himself, while he put them up in his purse along with the gratuity of Varney, "I spoke to yonder gulls of Eldorado. By St. Anthony, there is no Eldorado for men of our stamp equal to bonny Old England! It rains nobles, by Heaven; they lie on the grass as thick as dewdrops; you may have them for gathering. And if I have not my share of such glittering dewdrops, may my sword melt like an icicle!"

CHAPTER V.

He was a man
Versed in the world as pilot in his compass.
The needle pointed ever to that interest
Which was his loadstar, and he spread his sails
With vantage to the gale of others' passion.

—*The Deceiver, a Tragedy.*

ANTHONY FOSTER was still engaged in debate with his fair guest, who treated with scorn every entreaty and request that she would retire to her own apartment, when a whistle was heard at the entrance door of the mansion.

"We are fairly sped now," said Foster; "yonder is thy lord's signal, and what to say about the disorder which has happened in this household, by my conscience, I know not. Some evil fortune dogs the heels of that unchanged rogue Lambourne, and he has 'scaped the gallows against every chance, to come back and be the ruin of me!"

"Peace, sir," said the lady, "and undo the gate to your master. My lord!—my dear lord!" she then exclaimed, hastening to the entrance of the apartment; then added, with a voice expressive of disappointment, "Pooh! it is but Richard Varney."

"Aye, madam," said Varney, entering and saluting the lady with a respectful obeisance, which she returned with a careless mixture of negligence and of displeasure, "it is but Richard Varney; but even the first gray cloud should be acceptable, when it lightens in the east, because it announces the approach of the blessed sun."

"How! comes my lord hither to-night?" said the lady, in joyful yet startled agitation; and Anthony Foster caught up the word, and echoed the question. Varney replied to the lady, that his lord purposed to attend her, and would have proceeded with some compliment, when, running to the door of the parlor, she called aloud, "Janet—Janet, come to my tiring-room instantly." Then returning to Varney, she asked if her lord sent any farther commendations to her.

"This letter, honored madam," said he, taking from his bosom a small parcel wrapt in scarlet silk, "and with it a token to the queen of his affections." With eager speed the

lady hastened to undo the silken string which surrounded the little packet, and failing to unloose readily the knot with which it was secured, she again called loudly on Janet—"Bring me a knife—scissors—aught that may undo this envious knot!"

"May not my poor poniard serve, honored madam," said Varney, presenting a small dagger of exquisite workmanship, which hung in his Turkey-leather sword-belt.

"No, sir," replied the lady, rejecting the instrument which he offered. "Steel poniard shall cut no true-love knot of mine."

"It has cut many, however," said Anthony Foster, half-aside, and looking at Varney. By this time the knot was disentangled without any other help than the neat and nimble fingers of Janet—a simply-attired, pretty maiden, the daughter of Anthony Foster, who came running at the repeated call of her mistress. A necklace of orient pearl, the companion of a perfumed billet, was now hastily produced from the packet. The lady gave the one, after a slight glance, to the charge of her attendant, while she read, or rather devoured, the contents of the other.

"Surely, lady," said Janet, gazing with admiration at the neck-string of pearls, "the daughters of Tyre wore no fairer neck-jewels than these. And then the posy, 'For a neck that is fairer'—each pearl is worth a freehold."

"Each word in this dear paper is worth the whole string, my girl. But come to my tiring-room, girl; we must be brave, my lord comes hither to-night. He bids me grace you, Master Varney, and to me his wish is a law. I bid you to a collation in my bower this afternoon, and you, too, Master Foster. Give orders that all is fitting, and that suitable preparations be made for my lord's reception to-night." With these words she left the apartment.

"She takes state on her already," said Varney, "and distributes the favor of her presence, as if she were already the partner of his dignity. Well, it is wise to practice beforehand the part which fortune prepares us to play: the young eagle must gaze at the sun, ere he soars on strong wing to meet it."

"If holding her head aloft," said Foster, "will keep her eyes from dazzling, I warrant you the dame will not stoop her crest. She will presently soar beyond reach of my whistle, Master Varney. I promise you, she holds me already in slight regard."

"It is thine own fault, thou sullen, uninventive companion," answered Varney, "who know'st no mode of control, save downright brute force. Canst thou not make home pleasant to her with music and toys? Canst thou not make the out-of-doors frightful to her, with tales of goblins? Thou livest here by the churchyard, and hast not even wit enough to raise a ghost, to scare thy females into good discipline."

"Speak not thus, Master Varney," said Foster; "the living I fear not, but I trifle not nor toy with my dead neighbors of the churchyard. I promise you, it requires a good heart to live so near it; worthy Master Holdforth, the afternoon's lecturer of St. Antonlin's, had a sore fright there the last time he came to visit me."

"Hold thy superstitious tongue," answered Varney; and while thou talk'st of visiting, answer me, thou paltering knave, how came Tressilian to be at the postern door?"

"Tressilian!" answered Foster, "what know I of Tressilian? I never heard his name."

"Why, villain, it was the very Cornish chough to whom old Sir Hugh Robsart destined his pretty Amy, and hither the hot-brained fool has come to look after his fair runaway. There must be some order taken with him, for he thinks he hath wrong, and is not the mean hind that will sit down with it. Luckily he knows naught of my lord, but thinks he has only me to deal with. But how, in the fiend's name, came he hither?"

"Why, with Mike Lambourne, an you must know," answered Foster.

"And who is Mike Lambourne?" demanded Varney. "By Heaven! thou wert best set up a bush over thy door, and invite every stroller who passes by to see what thou shouldst keep secret even from the sun and air."

"Aye! aye! this is a court-like requital of my service to you, Master Richard Varney," replied Foster. "Didst thou not charge me to seek out for thee a fellow who had a good sword and an unscrupulous conscience? and was I not busying myself to find a fit man—for, thank Heaven, my acquaintance lies not amongst such companions—when, as Heaven would have it, this tall fellow, who is in all his qualities the very flashing knave thou didst wish, came hither to fix acquaintance upon me in the plenitude of his impudence, and I admitted his claim, thinking to do you a pleasure; and now see

what thanks I get for disgracing myself by converse with him!"

"And did he," said Varney, "being such a fellow as thyself, only lacking, I suppose, thy present humor of hypocrisy, which lies as thin over thy hard ruffianly heart as gold lacquer upon rusty iron—did he, I say, bring the saintly, sighing Tressilian in his train?"

"They came together, by Heaven!" said Foster; "and Tressilian—to speak Heaven's truth—obtained a moment's interview with our pretty moppet while I was talking apart with Lambourne."

"Improvident villain! we are both undone," said Varney. "She has of late been casting many a backward look to her father's halls, whenever her lordly lover leaves her alone. Should this preaching fool whistle her back to her old perch, we were but lost men."

"No fear of that, my master," replied Anthony Foster; "she is in no mood to stoop to his lure, for she yelled out on seeing him as if an adder had stung her."

"That is good. Canst thou not get from thy daughter an inkling of what passed between them, good Foster?"

"I tell you plain, Master Varney," said Foster, "my daughter shall not enter our purposes or walk in our paths. They may suit me well enough, who know how to repent of my misdoings; but I will not have my child's soul committed to peril either for your pleasure or my lord's. I may walk among snares and pitfalls myself, because I have discretion, but I will not trust the poor lamb among them."

"Why, thou suspicious fool, I were as averse as thou art that thy baby-faced girl should enter into my plans, or walk to Hell at her father's elbow. But indirectly thou mightst gain some intelligence of her?"

"And so I did, Master Varney," answered Foster; "and she said her lady called out upon the sickness of her father."

"Good!" replied Varney; "that is a hint worth catching, and I will work upon it. But the country must be rid of this Tressilian. I would have cumbered no man about the matter, for I hate him like strong poison—his presence is hemlock to me—and this day I had been rid of him, but that my foot slipped, when, to speak truth, had not thy comrade yonder come to my aid, and held his hand, I should have known by this time whether you and I have been treading the path to Heaven or Hell."

"And you can speak thus of such a risk!" said Foster.

"You keep a stout heart, Master Varney; for me, if I did not hope to live many years, and to have time for the great work of repentance, I would not go forward with you."

"Oh! thou shalt live as long as Methuselah," said Varney, "and amass as much wealth as Solomon; and thou shalt repent so devoutly that thy repentance shall be more famous than thy villainy—and that is a bold word. But for all this, Tressilian must be looked after. Thy ruffian yonder is gone to dog him. It concerns our fortunes, Anthony."

"Aye—aye," said Foster sullenly, "this it is to be leagued with one who knows not even so much of Scripture as that the laborer is worthy of his hire. I must, as usual, take all the trouble and risk."

"Risk! and what is the mighty risk, I pray you?" answered Varney. "This fellow will come prowling again about your demesne or into your house, and if you take him for a house-breaker or a park-breaker, is it not most natural you should welcome him with cold steel or hot lead? Even a mastiff will pull down those who come near his kennel; and who shall blame him?"

"Aye, I have a mastiff's work and a mastiff's wage among you," said Foster. "Here have you, Master Varney, secured a good freehold estate out of this old superstitious foundation; and I have but a poor lease of this mansion under you, voidable at your honor's pleasure."

"Aye, and thou wouldst fain convert thy leasehold into a copyhold; the thing may chance to happen, Anthony Foster, if thou dost good service for it. But softly, good Anthony; it is not the lending a room or two of this old house for keeping my lord's pretty paroquet—nay, it is not the shutting thy doors and windows to keep her from flying off, that may deserve it. Remember, the manor and tithes are rated at the clear annual value of seventy-nine pounds five shillings and fivepence halfpenny, besides the value of the wood. Come—come, thou must be conscionable; great and secret service may deserve both this and a better thing. And now let thy knave come and pluck off my boots. Get us some dinner, and a cup of thy best wine. I must visit this mavis, brave in apparel, unruffled in aspect, and gay in temper."

They parted, and at the hour of noon, which was then that of dinner, they again met at their meal, Varney gayly dressed like a courtier of the time, and even Anthony Foster improved in appearance, as far as dress could amend an exterior so unfavorable.

This alteration did not escape Varney. When the meal was finished, the cloth removed, and they were left to their private discourse—"Thou art gay as a goldfinch, Anthony," said Varney, looking at his host; "methinks, thou wilt whistle a jig anon; but I crave your pardon, that would secure your ejection from the congregation of the zealous botchers, the pure-hearted weavers, and the sanctified bakers of Abingdon, who let their ovens cool while their brains get heated."

"To answer you in the spirit, Master Varney," said Foster, "were—excuse the parable—to fling sacred and precious things before swine. So I will speak to thee in the language of the world, which he who is King of the World hath taught thee to understand, and to profit by in no common measure."

"Say what thou wilt, honest Tony," replied Varney; "for be it according to thine absurd faith, or according to thy most villainous practice, it cannot choose but be rare matter to qualify this cup of Alicant. Thy conversation is relishing and poignant, and beats caviare, dried neat's-tongue, and all other provocatives that give savor to good liquor."

"Well, then, tell me," said Anthony Foster, "is not our good lord and master's turn better served, and his ante-chamber more suitably filled, with decent, God-fearing men, who will work his will and their own profit quietly, and without worldly scandal, than that he should be manned, and attended, and followed by such open debauchers and ruffianly swordsmen as Tidesly, Killigrew, this fellow Lambourne, whom you have put me to seek out for you, and other such, who bear the gallows in their face and murder in their right hand—who are a terror to peaceable men, and a scandal to my lord's service?"

"Oh, content you, good Master Anthony Foster," answered Varney; "he that flies at all manner of game must keep all kinds of hawks, both short and long-winged. The course my lord holds is no easy one, and he must stand provided at all points with trusty retainers to meet each sort of service. He must have his gay courtier, like myself, to ruffle it in the presence-chamber, and to lay hand on hilt when any speaks in disparagement of my lord's honor——"

"Aye," said Foster, "and to whisper a word for him into a fair lady's ear, when he may not approach her himself."

"Then," said Varney, going on without appearing to notice the interruption, "he must have his lawyers—deep, subtle pioneers—to draw his contracts, his pre-contracts, and his post-contracts, and to find the way to make the most of grants

of church lands, and commons, and licenses for monopoly. And he must have physicians who can spice a cup or a caudle. And he must have his cabalists, like Dee and Allan, for conjuring up the devil. And he must have ruffling swordsmen, who would fight the devil when he is raised and at the wildest. And above all, without prejudice to others, he must have such godly, innocent, Puritanic souls as thou, honest Anthony, who defy Satan, and do his work at the same time."

"You would not say, Master Varney," said Foster, "that our good lord and master, whom I hold to be fulfilled in all nobleness, would use such base and sinful means to rise as thy speech points at?"

"Tush, man," said Varney, "never look at me with so sad a brow; you trap me not, nor am I in your power, as your weak brain may imagine, because I name to you freely the engines, the springs, the screws, the tackle, and braces, by which great men rise in stirring times. Sayest thou our good lord is fulfilled of all nobleness? Amen, and so be it; he has the more need to have those about him who are unscrupulous in his service, and who, because they know that his fall will overwhelm and crush them, must wager both blood and brain, soul and body, in order to keep him aloft; and this I tell thee, because I care not who knows it."

"You speak truth, Master Varney," said Anthony Foster: "he that is head of a party is but a boat on a wave, that raises not itself, but is moved upward by the billow which it floats upon."

"Thou art metaphorical, honest Anthony," replied Varney: "that velvet doublet hath made an oracle of thee; we will have thee to Oxford to take the degrees in the arts. And, in the meantime, hast thou arranged all the matters which were sent from London, and put the western chambers into such fashion as may answer my lord's humor?"

"They may serve a king on his bridal day," said Anthony; "and I promise you that Dame Amv sits in them yonder as proud and gay as if she were the Queen of Sheba."

"'Tis the better, good Anthony," answered Varney; "we must found our future fortunes on her good liking."

"We build on sand then," said Anthony Foster; "for, supposing that she sails away to court in all her lord's dignity and authority, how is she to look back upon me, who am her jailer as it were, to detain her here against her will, keeping her a caterpillar on an old wall, when she would fain be a painted butterfly in a court garden?"

"Fear not her displeasure, man," said Varney. "I will show her that all thou hast done in this matter was good service, both to my lord and her; and when she chips the egg-shell and walks alone, she shall own we have hatched her greatness."

"Look to yourself, Master Varney," said Foster, "you may misreckon foully in this matter. She gave you but a frosty reception this morning, and, I think, looks on you, as well as me, with an evil eye."

"You mistake her, Foster—you mistake her utterly. To me she is bound by all the ties which can secure her to one who has been the means of gratifying both her love and ambition. Who was it that took the obscure Amy Robsart, the daughter of an impoverished and dotard knight, the destined bride of a moonstruck, moping enthusiast like Edmund Tressilian, from her lowly fates, and held out to her in prospect the brightest fortune in England, or perchance in Europe? Why, man, it was I—as I have often told thee—that found opportunity for their secret meetings. It was I who watched the wood while he beat for the deer. It was I who, to this day, am blamed by her family as the companion of her flight, and were I in their neighborhood, would be fain to wear a shirt of better stuff than Holland linen, lest my ribs should be acquainted with Spanish steel. Who carried their letters? I. Who amused the old knight and Tressilian? I. Who planned her escape? It was I. It was I, in short, Dick Varney, who pulled this pretty little daisy from its lowly nook, and placed it in the proudest bonnet in Britain."

"Aye, Master Varney," said Foster, "but it may be she thinks that, had the matter remained with you, the flower had been stuck so slightly into the cap that the first breath of a changeable breeze of passion had blown the poor daisy to the common."

"She should consider," said Varney, smiling, "the true faith I owed my lord and master prevented me at first from counseling marriage; and yet I did counsel marriage when I saw she would not be satisfied without the—the sacrament, or the ceremony—which callest thou it, Anthony?"

"Still she has you at feud on another score," said Foster; "and I tell it you that you may look to yourself in time. She would not hide her splendor in this dark lantern of an old monastic house, but would fain shine a countess amongst countesses."

"Very natural, very right," answered Varney; "but what

have I to do with that? She may shine through horn or through crystal at my lord's pleasure, I have naught to say against it."

"She deems that you have an oar upon that side of the boat, Master Varney," replied Foster, "and that you can pull it or no, at your good pleasure. In a word, she ascribes the secrecy and obscurity in which she is kept to your secret counsel to my lord, and to my strict agency; and so she loves us both as a sentenced man loves his judge and his jailer."

"She must love us better ere she leave this place, Anthony," answered Varney. "If I have counseled for weighty reasons that she remain here for a season, I can also advise her being brought forth in the full blow of her dignity. But I were mad to do so, holding so near a place to my lord's person, were she mine enemy. Bear this truth in upon her as occasion offers, Anthony, and let me alone for extolling you in her ear, and exalting you in her opinion. Ka me, ka thee—it is a proverb all over the world. The lady must know her friends, and be made to judge of the power they have of being her enemies; meanwhile, watch her strictly, but with all the outward observance that thy rough nature will permit. 'Tis an excellent thing that sullen look and bull-dog humor of thine; thou shouldst thank God for it, and so should my lord, for when there is aught harsh or hard-natured to be done, thou dost it as if it flowed from thine own natural doggedness, and not from orders, and so my lord escapes the scandal. But, hark—someone knocks at the gate. Look out at the window; let no one enter: this were an ill night to be interrupted."

"It is he whom we spoke of before dinner," said Foster, as he looked through the casement—"it is Michael Lambourne."

"Oh, admit him, by all means," said the courtier; "he comes to give some account of his guest: it imports us much to know the movements of Edmund Tressilian. Admit him, I say, but bring him not hither. I will come to you presently in the abbot's library."

Foster left the room, and the courtier, who remained behind, paced the parlor more than once in deep thought, his arms folded on his bosom, until at length he gave vent to his meditations in broken words, which we have somewhat enlarged and connected, that his soliloquy may be intelligible to the reader.

"'Tis true," he said, suddenly stopping, and resting his

right hand on the table at which they had been sitting, "this base churl hath fathomed the very depth of my fear, and I have been unable to disguise it from him. She loves me not; I would it were as true that I loved not her! Idiot that I was, to move her in my own behalf, when wisdom bade me be a true broker to my lord! And this fatal error has placed me more at her discretion than a wise man would willingly be at that of the best piece of painted Eve's flesh of them all. Since the hour that my policy made so perilous a slip, I cannot look at her without fear, and hate, and fondness so strangely mingled that I know not whether, were it at my choice, I would rather possess or ruin her. But she must not leave this retreat until I am assured on what terms we are to stand. My lord's interest—and so far it is mine own, for if he sinks I fall in his train—demands concealment of this obscure marriage; and, besides, I will not lend her my arm to climb to her chair of state, that she may set her foot on my neck when she is fairly seated. I must work an interest in her either through love or through fear; and who knows but I may yet reap the sweetest and best revenge for her former scorn?—that were indeed a masterpiece of court-like art! Let me but once be her counsel-keeper; let her confide to me a secret, did it but concern the robbery of a linnet's nest, and, fair countess, thou art mine own!" He again paced the room in silence, stopped, filled and drank a cup of wine, as if to compose the agitation of his mind; and muttering, "Now for a close heart and an open and unruffled brow," he left the apartment.

CHAPTER VI.

The dews of summer night did fall,
The moon, sweet regent of the sky,
Silver'd the walls of Cumnor Hall,
And many an oak that grew thereby *

—MICKLE.

FOUR apartments, which occupied the western side of the old quadrangle at Cumnor Place, had been fitted up with extraordinary splendor. This had been the work of several days prior to that on which our story opened. Workmen sent from London, and not permitted to leave the premises until the work was finished, had converted the apartments in that side of the building from the dilapidated appearance of a dissolved monastic house into the semblance of a royal palace. A mystery was observed in all these arrangements: the workmen came thither and returned by night, and all measures were taken to prevent the prying curiosity of the villagers from observing or speculating upon the changes which were taking place in the mansion of their once indigent, but now wealthy, neighbor Anthony Foster. Accordingly, the secrecy desired was so far preserved that nothing got abroad but vague and uncertain reports, which were received and repeated, but without much credit being attached to them.

On the evening of which we treat, the new and highly decorated suite of rooms were for the first time illuminated, and that with a brilliancy which might have been visible half a dozen miles off had not oaken shutters, carefully secured with bolt and padlock, and mantled with long curtains of silk and of velvet, deeply fringed with gold, prevented the slightest gleam of radiance from being seen without.

The principal apartments, as we have seen, were four in number, each opening into the other. Access was given to them by a large scale staircase, as they were then called, of unusual length and height, which had its landing-place at the door of an ante-chamber, shaped somewhat like a gallery. This apartment the abbot had used as an occasional council-room, but it was now beautifully wainscoted with dark for-

* This verse is the commencement of the ballad already quoted as what suggested the novel.

eign wood of a brown color, and bearing a high polish, said to have been brought from the Western Indies, and to have been wrought in London with infinite difficulty, and much damage to the tools of the workmen. The dark color of this finishing was relieved by the number of lights in silver sconces which hung against the walls, and by six large and richly-framed pictures by the first masters of the age. A massy oaken table, placed at the lower end of the apartment, served to accommodate such as chose to play at the then fashionable game of shovel-board; and there was at the other end an elevated gallery for the musicians or minstrels, who might be summoned to increase the festivity of the evening.

From this ante-chamber opened a banqueting-room of moderate size, but brilliant enough to dazzle the eyes of the spectator with the richness of its furniture. The walls, lately so bare and ghastly, were now clothed with hangings of sky-blue velvet and silver; the chairs were of ebony, richly carved, with cushions corresponding to the hangings; and the place of the silver sconces which enlightened the ante-chamber was supplied by a huge chandelier of the same precious metal. The floor was covered with a Spanish foot-cloth, or carpet, on which flowers and fruits were represented in such glowing and natural colors that you hesitated to place the foot on such exquisite workmanship. The table, of old English oak, stood ready covered with the finest linen, and a large portable court-cupboard was placed with the leaves of its embossed folding-doors displayed, showing the shelves within, decorated with a full display of plate and porcelain. In the midst of the table stood a salt-cellar of Italian workmanship—a beautiful and splendid piece of plate about two feet high, molded into a representation of the giant Briareus, whose hundred hands of silver presented to the guest various sorts of spices, or condiments, to season their food withal.

The third apartment was called the withdrawing-room. It was hung with the finest tapestry, representing the fall of Phaeton; for the looms of Flanders were now much occupied on classical subjects. The principal seat of this apartment was a chair of state, raised a step or two from the floor, and large enough to contain two persons. It was surmounted by a canopy, which, as well as the cushions, side-curtains, and the very foot-cloth, was composed of crimson velvet, embroidered with seed-pearl. On the top of the canopy were two coronets, resembling those of an earl and countess. Stools covered with velvet, and some cushions disposed in the

Moorish fashion, and ornamented with Arabesque needlework, supplied the place of chairs in this apartment, which contained musical instruments, embroidery frames, and other articles for ladies' pastime. Besides lesser lights, the withdrawing-room was illuminated by four tall torches of virgin wax, each of which was placed in the grasp of a statue, representing an armed Moor, who held in his left arm a round buckler of silver, highly polished, interposed betwixt his breast and the light, which was thus brilliantly reflected as from a crystal mirror.

The sleeping-chamber belonging to this splendid suite of apartments was decorated in a taste less showy, but not less rich, than had been displayed in the others. Two silver lamps, fed with perfumed oil, diffused at once a delicious odor and a trembling twilight-seeming shimmer through the quiet apartment. It was carpeted so thick that the heaviest step could not have been heard; and the bed, richly heaped with down, was spread with an ample coverlet of silk and gold, from under which peeped forth cambric sheets, and blankets as white as the lambs which yielded the fleece that made them. The curtains were of blue velvet, lined with crimson silk, deeply festooned with gold, and embroidered with the loves of Cupid and Psyche. On the toilet was a beautiful Venetian mirror, in a frame of silver filigree, and beside it stood a gold posset-dish to contain the night-draught. A pair of pistols and a dagger, mounted with gold, were displayed near the head of the bed, being the arms for the night, which were presented to honored guests, rather, it may be supposed, in the way of ceremony than from any apprehension of danger. We must not omit to mention, what was more to the credit of the manners of the time, that in a small recess, illuminated by a taper, were disposed two hassocks of velvet and gold, corresponding with the bed furniture, before a desk of carved ebony. This recess had formerly been the private oratory of the abbot, but the crucifix was removed, and instead there were placed on the desk two Books of Common Prayer, richly bound and embossed with silver. With this enviable sleeping-apartment, which was so far removed from every sound, save that of the wind sighing among the oaks of the park, that Morpheus might have coveted it for his own proper repose, corresponded two wardrobes, or dressing-rooms, as they are now termed, suitably furnished, and in a style of the same magnificence which we have already described. It ought to be added, that a part of the building in

the adjoining wing was occupied by the kitchen and its offices, and served to accommodate the personal attendants of the great and wealthy nobleman for whose use these magnificent preparations had been made.

The divinity for whose sake this temple had been decorated was well worthy the cost and pains which had been bestowed. She was seated in the withdrawing-room which we have described, surveying with the pleased eye of natural and innocent vanity the splendor which had been so suddenly created, as it were, in her honor. For, as her own residence at Cumnor Place formed the cause of the mystery observed in all the preparations for opening these apartments, it was sedulously arranged that, until she took possession of them, she should have no means of knowing what was going forward in that part of the ancient building, or of exposing herself to be seen by the workmen engaged in the decorations. She had been, therefore, introduced on that evening to a part of the mansion which she had never yet seen, so different from all the rest that it appeared, in comparison, like an enchanted palace. And when she first examined and occupied these splendid rooms, it was with the wild and unrestrained joy of a rustic beauty, who finds herself suddenly invested with a splendor which her most extravagant wishes had never imagined, and at the same time with the keen feeling of an affectionate heart, which knows that all the enchantment that surrounds her is the work of the great magician Love.

The Countess Amy, therefore—for to that rank she was exalted by her private but solemn union with England's proudest earl—had for a time flitted hastily from room to room, admiring each new proof of her lover and her bridegroom's taste, and feeling that admiration enhanced, as she recollected that all she gazed upon was one continued proof of his ardent and devoted affection. "How beautiful are these hangings! How natural these paintings, which seem to contend with life! How richly wrought is that plate, which looks as if all the galleons of Spain had been intercepted on the broad seas to furnish it forth! And oh, Janet!" she exclaimed repeatedly to the daughter of Anthony Foster, the close attendant, who, with equal curiosity, but somewhat less ecstatic joy, followed on her mistress' footsteps—"Oh, Janet! how much more delightful to think that all these fair things have been assembled by his love, for the love of me! and that this evening,—this very evening,—which grows darker every instant, I shall thank him more for the love that has created

such an unimaginable paradise than for all the wonders it contains."

"The Lord is to be thanked first," said the pretty Puritan, "who gave thee, lady, the kind and courteous husband whose love has done so much for thee. I, too, have done my poor share; but if you thus run wildly from room to room, the toil of my crisping and my curling pins will vanish like the frost-work on the window when the sun is high."

"Thou sayest true, Janet," said the young and beautiful countess, stopping suddenly from her tripping race of enraptured delight, and looking at herself from head to foot in a large mirror, such as she had never before seen, and which, indeed, had few to match it even in the Queen's palace—"thou sayest true, Janet!" she answered, as she saw, with pardonable self-applause, the noble mirror reflect such charms as were seldom presented to its fair and polished surface; "I have more of the milkmaid than the countess, with these cheeks flushed with haste, and all these brown curls, which you labored to bring to order, straying as wild as the tendrils of an unpruned vine. My falling ruff is chafed too, and shows the neck and bosom more than is modest and seemly. Come, Janet, we will practice state—we will go to the withdrawing-room, my good girl, and thou shalt put these rebel locks in order, and imprison within lace and cambric the bosom that beats too high."

They went to the withdrawing-apartment accordingly, where the countess playfully stretched herself upon the pile of Moorish cushions, half-sitting, half-reclining, half-wrapt in her own thoughts, half-listening to the prattle of her attendant.

While she was in this attitude, and with a corresponding expression betwixt listlessness and expectation on her fine and intelligent features, you might have searched sea and land without finding anything half so expressive or half so lovely. The wreath of brilliants which mixed with her dark brown hair did not match in luster the hazel eye which a light brown eyebrow, penciled with exquisite delicacy, and long eyelashes of the same color, relieved and shaded. The exercise she had just taken, her excited expectation and gratified vanity, spread a glow over her fine features, which had been sometimes censured (as beauty as well as art has her minute critics) for being rather too pale. The milk-white pearls of the necklace which she wore, the same which she had just received as a true-love token from her husband, were excelled in purity by

her teeth, and by the color of her skin, saving where the blush of pleasure and self-satisfaction had somewhat stained the neck with a shade of light crimson. "Now, have done with these busy fingers, Janet," she said to her handmaiden, who was still officiously employed in bringing her hair and her dress into order—"have done, I say; I must see your father ere my lord arrives, and also Master Richard Varney, whom my lord has highly in his esteem—but I could tell that of him would lose him favor."

"Oh, do not do so, good my lady!" replied Janet: "leave him to God, who punishes the wicked in His own time; but do not you cross Varney's path, for so thoroughly hath he my lord's ear, that few have thriven who have thwarted his courses."

"And from whom had you this, my most righteous Janet?" said the countess; "or why should I keep terms with so mean a gentleman as Varney, being, as I am, wife to his master and patron?"

"Nay, madam," replied Janet Foster, "your ladyship knows better than I. But I have heard my father say he would rather cross a hungry wolf than thwart Richard Varney in his projects. And he has often charged me to have a care of holding commerce with him."

"Thy father said well, girl, for thee," replied the lady, "and I dare swear meant well. It is a pity, though, his face and manner do little match his true purpose, for I think his purpose may be true."

"Doubt it not, my lady," answered Janet—"doubt not that my father purposes well, though he is a plain man, and his blunt looks may belie his heart."

"I will not doubt it, girl, were it only for thy sake; and yet he has one of those faces which men tremble when they look on. I think even thy mother, Janet—nay, have done with that poking-iron—could hardly look upon him without quaking."

"If it were so, madam," answered Janet Foster, "my mother had those who could keep her in honorable countenance. Why, even you, my lady, both trembled and blushed when Varney brought the letter from my lord."

"You are bold, damsel," said the countess, rising from the cushions on which she sate half-reclined in the arms of her attendant. "Know, that there are causes of trembling which have nothing to do with fear. But, Janet," she added, immediately relapsing into the good-natured and familiar tone

which was natural to her, "believe me, I will do what credit I can to your father, and the rather that you, sweetheart, are his child. Alas! alas!" she added, a sudden sadness passing over her fine features and her eyes filling with tears, "I ought the rather to hold sympathy with thy kind heart that my own poor father is uncertain of my fate, and they say lies sick and sorrowful for my worthless sake! But I will soon cheer him: the news of my happiness and advancement will make him young again. And that I may cheer him the sooner"—she wiped her eyes as she spoke—"I must be cheerful myself. My lord must not find me insensible to his kindness, or sorrowful when he snatches a visit to his recluse, after so long an absence. Be merry, Janet: the night wears on, and my lord must soon arrive. Call thy father hither, and call Varney also. I cherish resentment against neither; and though I may have some room to be displeased with both, it shall be their own fault if ever a complaint against them reaches the ear through my means. Call them hither, Janet."

Janet Foster obeyed her mistress; and in a few minutes after, Varney entered the withdrawing-room with the graceful ease and unclouded front of an accomplished courtier, skilled, under the veil of external politeness, to disguise his own feelings and to penetrate those of others. Anthony Foster plodded into the apartment after him, his natural gloomy vulgarity of aspect seeming to become yet more remarkable from his clumsy attempt to conceal the mixture of anxiety and dislike with which he looked on her over whom he had hitherto exercised so severe a control, now so splendidly attired, and decked with so many pledges of the interest which she possessed in her husband's affections. The blundering reverence which he made, rather *at* than *to* the countess, had confession in it. It was like the reverence which the criminal makes to the judge, when he at once owns his guilt and implores mercy, which is at the same time an impudent and embarrassed attempt at defense or extenuation, a confession of a fault, and an entreaty for lenity.

Varney, who, in right of his gentle blood, had pressed into the room before Anthony Foster, knew better what to say than he, and said it with more assurance and a better grace. The countess greeted him indeed with an appearance of cordiality, which seemed a complete amnesty for whatever she might have to complain of. She rose from her seat and advanced two steps toward him, holding forth her hand as she said, "Master Richard Varney, you brought me this morning

such welcome tidings that I fear surprise and joy made me neglect my lord and husband's charge to receive you with distinction. We offer you our hand, sir, in reconciliation."

"I am unworthy to touch it," said Varney, dropping on one knee, "save as a subject honors that of a prince."

He touched with his lips those fair and slender fingers, so richly loaded with rings and jewels; then rising, with graceful gallantry, was about to hand her to the chair of state, when she said, "No, good Master Richard Varney, I take not my place there until my lord himself conducts me. I am for the present but a disguised countess, and will not take dignity on me until authorized by him whom I derive it from."

"I trust, my lady," said Foster, "that in doing the commands of my lord your husband, in your restraint and so forth, I have not incurred your displeasure, seeing that I did but my duty toward your lord and mine; for Heaven, as Holy Writ saith, hath given the husband supremacy and dominion over the wife—I think it runs so, or something like it."

"I receive at this moment so pleasant a surprise, Master Foster," answered the countess, "that I cannot but excuse the rigid fidelity which secluded me from these apartments until they had assumed an appearance so new and so splendid."

"Aye, lady," said Foster, "it hath cost many a fair crown; and that more need not be wasted than is absolutely necessary, I leave you till my lord's arrival with good Master Richard Varney, who, as I think, hath somewhat to say to you from your most noble lord and husband. Janet, follow me, to see that all be in order."

"No, Master Foster," said the countess, "we will your daughter remains here in our apartment; out of ear-shot, however, in case Varney hath aught to say to me from my lord."

Foster made his clumsy reverence and departed, with an aspect that seemed to grudge the profuse expense which had been wasted upon changing his house from a bare and ruinous grange to an Asiatic palace. When he was gone, his daughter took her embroidery frame and went to establish herself at the bottom of the apartment, while Richard Varney, with a profoundly humble courtesy, took the lowest stool he could find, and placing it by the side of the pile of cushions on which the countess had now again seated herself, sat with his eyes for a time fixed on the ground, and in profound silence.

"I thought, Master Varney," said the countess, when she saw he was not likely to open the conversation, "that you had

something to communicate from my lord and husband; so at least I understood Master Foster, and therefore I removed my waiting-maid. If I am mistaken, I will recall her to my side; for her needle is not so absolutely perfect in tent and cross-stitch but what my superintendence is advisable."

"Lady," said Varney, "Foster was partly mistaken in my purpose. It was not *from* but *of* your noble husband, and my approved and most noble patron, that I am led, and indeed bound to speak."

"The theme is most welcome, sir," said the countess, "whether it be of or from my noble husband. But be brief, for I expect his hasty approach."

"Briefly, then, madam," replied Varney, "and boldly, for my argument requires both haste and courage—you have this day seen Tressilian?"

"I have, sir, and what of that?" answered the lady, somewhat sharply.

"Nothing that concerns me, lady," Varney replied with humility. "But, think you, honored madam, that your lord will hear it with equal equanimity?"

"And wherefore should he not? To me alone was Tressilian's visit embarrassing and painful, for he brought news of my good father's illness."

"Of your father's illness, madam!" answered Varney. "It must have been sudden then—very sudden; for the messenger whom I dispatched, at my lord's instance, found the good knight on the hunting-field, cheering his beagles with his wonted jovial field-cry. I trust Tressilian has but forged this news. He hath his reasons, madam, as you well know, for disquieting your present happiness."

"You do him injustice, Master Varney," replied the countess, with animation—"you do him much injustice. He is the freest, the most open, the most gentle heart that breathes. My honorable lord ever excepted, I know not one to whom falsehood is more odious than to Tressilian."

"I crave your pardon, madam," said Varney, "I meant the gentleman no injustice—I knew not how nearly his cause affected you. A man may, in some circumstances, disguise the truth for fair and honest purpose; for were it to be always spoken, and upon all occasions, this were no world to live in."

"You have a courtly conscience, Master Varney," said the countess, "and your veracity will not, I think, interrupt your preferment in the world, such as it is. But touching Tres-

silian—I must do him justice, for I have done him wrong, as none knows better than thou: Tressilian's conscience is of other mold. The world thou speakest of has not that which could bribe him from the way of truth and honor; and for living in it with a soiled fame, the ermine would as soon seek to lodge in the den of the foul polecat. For this my father loved him. For this I would have loved him—if I could. And yet in this case he had what seemed to him, unknowing alike of my marriage and to whom I was united, such powerful reasons to withdraw me from this place, that I well trust he exaggerated much of my father's indisposition, and that thy better news may be the truer."

"Believe me they are, madam," answered Varney. "I pretend not to be a champion of that same naked virtue called truth to the very outrance. I can consent that her charms be hidden with a veil, were it but for decency's sake. But you must think lower of my head and heart than is due to one whom my noble lord deigns to call his friend, if you suppose I could willfully and unnecessarily palm upon your ladyship a falsehood, so soon to be detected, in a matter which concerns your happiness."

"Master Varney," said the countess, "I know that my lord esteems you, and holds you a faithful and a good pilot in those seas in which he has spread so high and so venturous a sail. Do not suppose, therefore, I meant hardly by you when I spoke the truth in Tressilian's vindication. I am, as you well know, country-bred, and like plain rustic truth better than courtly compliment; but I must change my fashions with my sphere, I presume."

"True, madam," said Varney, smiling, "and though you speak now in jest, it will not be amiss that in earnest your present speech had some connection with your real purpose. A court dame—take the most noble—the most virtuous—the most unimpeachable, that stands around our Queen's throne—would, for example, have shunned to speak the truth, or what she thought such, in praise of a discarded suitor, before the dependant and confidant of her noble husband."

"And wherefore," said the countess, coloring impatiently, "should I not do justice to Tressilian's worth before my husband's friend—before my husband himself—before the whole world?"

"And with the same openness," said Varney, "your ladyship will this night tell my noble lord your husband that Tressilian has discovered your place of residence, so anxiously

concealed from the world, and that he has had an interview with you?"

"Unquestionably," said the countess. "It will be the first thing I tell him, together with every word that Tressilian said, and that I answered. I shall speak my own shame in this, for Tressilian's reproaches, less just than he esteemed them, were not altogether unmerited—I will speak, therefore, with pain, but I will speak, and speak all."

"Your ladyship will do your pleasure," answered Varney; "but methinks it were as well, since nothing calls for so frank a disclosure, to spare yourself this pain, and my noble lord the disquiet, and Master Tressilian, since belike he must be thought of in the matter, the danger which is like to ensue."

"I can see naught of all these terrible consequences," said the lady composedly, "unless by imputing to my noble lord unworthy thoughts, which I am sure never harbored in his generous heart."

"Far be it from me to do so," said Varney. And then, after a moment's silence, he added, with a real or affected plainness of manner very different from his usual smooth courtesy—"Come, madam, I will show you that a courtier dare speak truth as well as another, when it concerns the weal of those whom he honors and regards, aye, and although it may infer his own danger." He waited as if to receive commands, or at least permission, to go on, but as the lady remained silent, he proceeded, but obviously with caution. "Look around you," he said, "noble lady, and observe the barriers with which this place is surrounded, the studious mystery with which the brightest jewel that England possesses is secluded from the admiring gaze. See with what rigor your walks are circumscribed, and your movements restrained at the beck of yonder churlish Foster. Consider all this, and judge for yourself what can be the cause."

"My lord's pleasure," answered the countess; "and I am bound to seek no other motive."

"His pleasure it is indeed," said Varney; "and his pleasure arises out of a love worthy of the object which inspires it. But he who possesses a treasure, and who values it, is oft anxious, in proportion to the value he puts upon it, to secure it from the depredations of others."

"What needs all this talk, Master Varney?" said the lady, in reply. "You would have me believe that my noble lord is jealous? Suppose it true, I know a cure for jealousy."

"Indeed, madam!" said Varney.

"It is," replied the lady, "to speak the truth to my lord at all times, to hold up my mind and my thoughts before him as pure as that polished mirror; so that when he looks into my heart he shall only see his own features reflected there."

"I am mute, madam," answered Varney; "and as I have no reason to grieve for Tressilian, who would have my heart's blood were he able, I shall reconcile myself easily to what may befall the gentleman in consequence of your frank disclosure of his having presumed to intrude upon your solitude. You, who know my lord so much better than I, will judge if he be likely to bear the insult unavenged."

"Nay, if I could think myself the cause of Tressilian's ruin," said the countess—"I who have already occasioned him so much distress, I might be brought to be silent. And yet what will it avail, since he was seen by Foster, and I think by someone else? No, no, Varney, urge it no more. I will tell the whole matter to my lord; and with such pleading for Tressilian's folly as shall dispose my lord's generous heart rather to serve than to punish him."

"Your judgment, madam," said Varney, "is far superior to mine, especially as you may, if you will, prove the ice before you step on it, by mentioning Tressilian's name to my lord, and observing how he endures it. For Foster and his attendant, they know not Tressilian by sight, and I can easily give them some reasonable excuse for the appearance of an unknown stranger."

The lady paused for an instant, and then replied, "If, Varney, it be indeed true that Foster knows not as yet that the man he saw was Tressilian, I own I were unwilling he should learn what nowise concerns him. He bears himself already with austerity enough, and I wish him not to be judge or privy-councilor in my affairs."

"Tush," said Varney, "what has the surly groom to do with your ladyship's concerns? No more, surely, than the ban-dog which watches his courtyard. If he is in aught distasteful to your ladyship, I have interest enough to have him exchanged for a seneschal that shall be more agreeable to you."

"Master Varney," said the countess, "let us drop this theme: when I complain of the attendants whom my lord has placed around me, it must be to my lord himself. Hark! I hear the trampling of a horse. He comes!—he comes!" she exclaimed, jumping up in ecstasy.

"I cannot think it is he," said Varney, "or that you can

hear the tread of his horse through the closely mantled casements."

"Stop me not, Varney; my ears are keener than thine—it is he!"

"But, madam!—but, madam!" exclaimed Varney anxiously, and still placing himself in her way, "I trust that what I have spoken in humble duty and service will not be turned to my ruin. I hope that my faithful advice will not be betrayed to my prejudice. I implore that——"

"Content thee, man—content thee!" said the countess, "and quit my skirt: you are too bold to detain me. Content thyself, I think not of thee."

At this moment the folding-doors flew wide open, and a man of majestic mien, muffled in the folds of a long dark riding-cloak, entered the apartment.

CHAPTER VII.

This is he
Who rides on the court gale, controls its tides,
Knows all their secrets shoals and fatal eddies,
Whose frown abases, and whose smile exalts.
He shines like a rainbow—and, perchance,
His colours are as transient.

—*Old Play.*

THERE was some little displeasure and confusion on the countess' brow, owing to her struggle with Varney's pertinacity; but it was exchanged for an expression of the purest joy and affection, as she threw herself into the arms of the noble stranger who entered, and clasping him to her bosom, exclaimed, "At length—at length thou art come!"

Varney discreetly withdrew as his lord entered, and Janet was about to do the same, when her mistress signed to her to remain. She took her place at the farther end of the apartment, and continued standing, as if ready for attendance.

Meanwhile the earl, for he was of no inferior rank, returned his lady's caress with the most affectionate ardor, but affected to resist when she strove to take his cloak from him.

"Nay," she said, "but I will unmantle you. I must see if you have kept your word to me, and come as the great earl men call thee, and not, as heretofore, like a private cavalier."

"Thou art like the rest of the world, Amy," said the earl, suffering her to prevail in the playful contest: "the jewels, and feathers, and silk are more to them than the man whom they adorn: many a poor blade looks gay in a velvet scabbard."

"But so cannot men say of thee, thou noble earl," said his lady, as the cloak dropped on the floor, and showed him dressed as princes when they ride abroad; "thou art the good and well-tried steel, whose inly worth deserves, yet disdains, its outward ornaments. Do not think Amy can love thee better in this glorious garb than she did when she gave her heart to him who wore the russet-brown cloak in the woods of Devon."

"And thou too," said the earl, as gracefully and majestically he led his beautiful countess toward the chair of state which was prepared for them both—"thou too, my love, hast donned a dress which becomes thy rank, though it cannot improve thy beauty. What think'st thou of our court taste?"

The lady cast a sidelong glance upon the great mirror as they passed it by, and then said, "I know not how it is, but I think not of my own person while I look at the reflection of thine. Sit thou there," she said, as they approached the chair of state, "like a thing for men to worship and to wonder at."

"Aye, love," said the earl, "if thou wilt share my state with me."

"Not so," said the countess; "I will sit on this footstool at thy feet, that I may spell over thy splendor, and learn, for the first time, how princes are attired."

And with a childish wonder which her youth and rustic education rendered not only excusable but becoming, mixed as it was with a delicate show of the most tender conjugal affection, she examined and admired from head to foot the noble form and princely attire of him who formed the proudest ornament of the court of England's Maiden Queen, renowned as it was for splendid courtiers, as well as for wise counselors. Regarding affectionately his lovely bride, and gratified by her unrepressed admiration, the dark eye and noble features of the earl expressed passions more gentle than the commanding and aspiring look which usually sate upon his broad forehead and in the piercing brilliancy of his dark eye; and he smiled at the simplicity which dictated the questions she put to him concerning the various ornaments with which he was decorated:

"The embroidered strap, as thou callest it, around my knee," he said, "is the English Garter—an ornament which kings are proud to wear. See, here is the star which belongs to it, and here the Diamond George, the jewel of the order. You have heard how King Edward and the Countess of Salisbury——"

"Oh, I know all that tale," said the countess, slightly blushing, "and how a lady's garter became the proudest badge of English chivalry."

"Even so," said the earl; "and this most honorable order I had the good hap to receive at the same time with three most noble associates—the Duke of Norfolk, the Marquis of Northampton, and the Earl of Rutland. I was the lowest of the four in rank; but what then? he that climbs a ladder must begin at the first round."

"But this other fair collar, so richly wrought, with some jewel like a sheep hung by the middle attached to it, what," said the young countess, "does that emblem signify?"

"This collar," said the earl, "with its double fusilles interchanged with these knobs, which are supposed to present flint-stones, sparkling with fire, and sustaining the jewel you inquire about, is the badge of the noble order of the Golden Fleece, once appertaining to the house of Burgundy. It hath high privileges, my Amy, belonging to it, this most noble order; for even the king of Spain himself, who hath now succeeded to the honors and demesnes of Burgundy, may not sit in judgment upon a knight of the Golden Fleece, unless by assistance and consent of the great chapter of the order."

"And is this an order belonging to the cruel king of Spain?" said the countess. "Alas, my noble lord! that you will defile your noble English breast by bearing such an emblem! Bethink you of the most unhappy Queen Mary's days, when this same Philip held sway with her in England, and of the piles which were built for our noblest, and our wisest, and our most truly sanctified prelates and divines. And will you, whom men call the standard-bearer of the true Protestant faith, be contented to wear the emblem and mark of such a Romish tyrant as he of Spain?"

"Oh, content you, my love," answered the earl; "we who spread our sails to gales of court favor cannot always display the ensigns we love the best, or at all times refuse sailing under colors which we like not. Believe me, I am not the less good Protestant that for policy I must accept the honor offered me by Spain, in admitting me to this his highest order of knighthood. Besides, it belongs properly to Flanders; and Egmont, Orange, and others have pride in seeing it displayed on an English bosom."

"Nay, my lord, you know your own path best," replied the countess. "And this other collar, to what country does this fair jewel belong?"

"To a very poor one, my love," replied the earl: "this is the order of St. Andrew, revived by the last James of Scotland. It was bestowed on me when it was thought the young widow of France and Scotland would gladly have wedded an English baron; but a free coronet of England is worth a crown matrimonial held at the humor of a woman, and owning only the poor rocks and bogs of the north."

The countess paused, as if what the earl last said had excited some painful but interesting train of thought; and, as she still remained silent, her husband proceeded.

"And now, loveliest, your wish is gratified, and you have seen your vassal in such of his trim array as accords with rid-

ing vestments; for robes of state and coronets are only for princely halls."

"Well, then," said the countess, "my gratified wish has, as usual, given rise to a new one."

"And what is it thou canst ask that I can deny?" said the fond husband.

"I wished to see my earl visit this obscure and secret bower," said the countess, "in all his princely array; and now, methinks, I long to sit in one of his princely halls, and see him enter dressed in sober russet, as when he won poor Amy Robsart's heart."

"That is a wish easily granted," said the earl; "the sober russet shall be donned to-morrow, if you will."

"But shall I," said the lady, "go with you to one of your castles, to see how the richness of your dwelling will correspond with your peasant habit?"

"Why, Amy," said the earl, looking around, "are not these apartments decorated with sufficient splendor? I gave the most unbounded order, and, methinks, it has been indifferently well obeyed; but if thou canst tell me aught which remains to be done, I will instantly give direction."

"Nay, my lord, now you mock me," replied the countess; "the gayety of this rich lodging exceeds my imagination as much as it does my desert. But shall not your wife, my love—at least one day soon—be surrounded with the honor which arises neither from the toils of the mechanic who decks her apartment nor from the silks and jewels with which your generosity adorns her, but which is attached to her place among the matronage, as the avowed wife of England's noblest earl?"

"One day!" said her husband. "Yes, Amy, my love, one day this shall surely happen; and, believe me, thou canst not wish for that day more fondly than I. With what rapture could I retire from labors of state, and cares and toils of ambition, to spend my life in dignity and honor on my own broad domains, with thee, my lovely Amy, for my friend and companion! But, Amy, this cannot yet be; and these dear but stolen interviews are all I can give to the loveliest and the best beloved of her sex."

"But *why* can it not be?" urged the countess, in the softest tones of persuasion. "Why can it not immediately take place—this more perfect, this uninterrupted union, for which you say you wish, and which the laws of God and man alike command? Ah! did you but desire it half as much as you

say, mighty and favored as you are, who or what should bar your attaining your wish?"

The earl's brow was overcast.

"Amy," he said, "you speak of what you understand not. We that toil in courts are like those who climb a mountain of loose sand: we dare make no halt until some projecting rock afford us a secure footing and resting-place; if we pause sooner, we slide down by our weight, an object of universal derision. I stand high, but I stand not secure enough to follow my own inclination. To declare my marriage were to be the artificer of my own ruin. But, believe me, I will reach a point, and that speedily, when I can do justice to thee and to myself. Meantime, poison not the bliss of the present moment by desiring that which cannot at present be. Let me rather know whether all here is managed to thy liking. How does Foster bear himself to you? in all things respectful, I trust, else the fellow shall dearly rue it."

"He reminds me sometimes of the necessity of this privacy," answered the lady, with a sigh; "but that is reminding me of your wishes, and therefore I am rather bound to him than disposed to blame him for it."

"I have told you the stern necessity which is upon us," replied the earl. "Foster is, I note, somewhat sullen of mood, but Varney warrants to me his fidelity and devotion to my service. If thou hast aught, however, to complain of the mode in which he discharges his duty, he shall abye it."

"Oh, I have naught to complain of," answered the lady, "so he discharges his task with fidelity to you; and his daughter Janet is the kindest and best companion of my solitude, her little air of precision sits so well upon her!"

"Is she indeed?" said the earl; "she who gives you pleasure must not pass unrewarded. Come hither, damsel."

"Janet," said the lady, "come hither to my lord."

Janet, who, as we already noticed, had discreetly retired to some distance, that her presence might be no check upon the private conversation of her lord and lady, now came forward; and as she made her reverential courtesy, the earl could not avoid smiling at the contrast which the extreme simplicity of her dress, and the prim demureness of her looks, made with a very pretty countenance and a pair of black eyes, that laughed in spite of their mistress' desire to look grave.

"I am bound to you, pretty damsel," said the earl, "for the contentment which your service hath given to this lady." As he said this, he took from his finger a ring of some price,

and offered it to Janet Foster, adding, "Wear this, for her sake and for mine."

"I am well pleased, my lord," answered Janet demurely, "that my poor service hath gratified my lady, whom no one can draw nigh to without desiring to please; but we of the precious Master Holdforth's congregation seek not, like the gay daughters of this world, to twine gold around our fingers, or wear stones upon our necks, like the vain women of Tyre and of Sidon."

"Oh, what! you are a grave professor of the precise sisterhood, pretty Mrs. Janet," said the earl, "and I think your father is of the same congregation in sincerity. I like you both the better for it; for I have been prayed for, and wished well to, in your congregations. And you may the better afford the lack of ornament, Mrs. Janet, because your fingers are slender and your neck white. But here is what neither Papist nor Puritan, latitudinarian nor precisian, ever boggles or makes mouths at. E'en take it, my girl, and employ it as you list."

So saying, he put into her hand five broad gold pieces of Philip and Mary.

"I would not accept this gold neither," said Janet, "but that I hope to find a use for it which will bring a blessing on us all."

"Even please thyself, pretty Janet," said the earl, "and I shall be well satisfied. And I prithee let them hasten the evening collation."

"I have bidden Master Varney and Master Foster to sup with us, my lord," said the countess, as Janet retired to obey the earl's commands; "has it your approbation?"

"What you do ever must have so, my sweet Amy," replied her husband; "and I am the better pleased thou hast done them this grace, because Richard Varney is my sworn man, and a close brother of my secret council; and for the present I must needs repose much trust in this Anthony Foster."

"I had a boon to beg of thee, and a secret to tell thee, my dear lord," said the countess, with a faltering accent.

"Let both be for to-morrow, my love," replied the earl. "I see they open the folding-doors into the banqueting-parlor, and, as I have ridden far and fast, a cup of wine will not be unacceptable."

So saying, he led his lovely wife into the next apartment, where Varney and Foster received them with the deepest reverences, which the first paid after the fashion of the court,

and the second after that of the congregation. The earl returned their salutation with the negligent courtesy of one long used to such homage; while the countess repaid it with a punctilious solicitude which showed it was not quite so familiar to her.

The banquet at which the company seated themselves corresponded in magnificence with the splendor of the apartment in which it was served up, but no domestic gave his attendance. Janet alone stood ready to wait upon the company; and, indeed, the board was so well supplied with all that could be desired that little or no assistance was necessary. The earl and his lady occupied the upper end of the table, and Varney and Foster sat beneath the salt, as was the custom with inferiors. The latter, overawed perhaps by society to which he was altogether unused, did not utter a single syllable during the repast; while Varney, with great tact and discernment, sustained just so much of the conversation as, without the appearance of intrusion on his part, prevented it from languishing, and maintained the good-humor of the earl at the highest pitch. This man was indeed highly qualified by nature to discharge the part in which he found himself placed, being discreet and cautious on the one hand, and on the other quick, keen-witted, and imaginative; so that even the countess, prejudiced as she was against him on many accounts, felt and enjoyed his powers of conversation, and was more disposed than she had ever hitherto found herself to join in the praises which the earl lavished on his favorite. The hour of rest at length arrived, the earl and countess retired to their apartment, and all was silent in the castle for the rest of the night.

Early on the ensuing morning, Varney acted as the earl's chamberlain as well as his master of horse, though the latter was his proper office in that magnificent household, where knights and gentlemen of good descent were well contented to hold such menial situations as nobles themselves held in that of the sovereign. The duties of each of these charges were familiar to Varney, who, sprung from an ancient but somewhat decayed family, was the earl's page during his earlier and more obscure fortunes, and faithful to him in adversity, had afterward contrived to render himself no less useful to him in his rapid and splendid advance to fortune; thus establishing in him an interest resting both on present and past services, which rendered him an almost indispensable sharer of his confidence.

“Help me to do on a plainer riding-suit, Varney,” said the earl, as he laid aside his morning-gown, flowered with silk and lined with sables, “and put these chains and fetters there [pointing to the collars of the various orders which lay on the table] into their place of security; my neck last night was well-nigh broke with the weight of them. I am half of the mind that they shall gall me no more. They are bonds which knaves have invented to fetter fools. How think’st thou, Varney?”

“Faith, my good lord,” said his attendant, “I think fetters of gold are like no other fetters: they are ever the weightier the welcomer.”

“For all that, Varney,” replied his master, “I am well-nigh resolved they shall bind me to the court no longer. What can further service and higher favor give me, beyond the rank and large estate which I have already secured? What brought my father to the block, but that he could not bound his wishes within right and reason? I have, you know, had mine own ventures and mine own escapes; I am well-nigh resolved to tempt the sea no farther, but sit me down in quiet on the shore.”

“And gather cockle-shells, with Dan Cupid to aid you,” said Varney.

“How mean you by that, Varney?” said the earl, somewhat hastily.

“Nay, my lord,” said Varney, “be not angry with me. If your lordship is happy in a lady so rarely lovely that, in order to enjoy her company with somewhat more freedom, you are willing to part with all you have hitherto lived for, some of your poor servants may be sufferers; but your bounty hath placed me so high, that I shall ever have enough to maintain a poor gentleman in the rank befitting the high office he has held in your lordship’s family.”

“Yet you seem discontented when I propose throwing up a dangerous game, which may end in the ruin of both of us.”

“I, my lord!” said Varney; “surely I have no cause to regret your lordship’s retreat. It will not be Richard Varney who will incur the displeasure of majesty, and the ridicule of the court, when the stateliest fabric that ever was founded upon a prince’s favor melts away like a morning frost-work. I would only have you yourself be assured, my lord, ere you take a step which cannot be retracted, that you consult your fame and happiness in the course you propose.”

“Speak on, then, Varney,” said the earl; “I tell thee I

have determined nothing, and will weigh all considerations on either side."

"Well, then, my lord," replied Varney, "we will suppose the step taken, the frown frowned, the laugh laughed, and the moan moaned. You have retired, we will say, to some one of your most distant castles, so far from court that you hear neither the sorrow of your friends nor the glee of your enemies. We will suppose, too, that your successful rival will be satisfied—a thing greatly to be doubted—with abridging and cutting away the branches of the great tree which so long kept the sun from him, and that he does not insist upon tearing you up by the roots. Well, the late prime favorite of England, who wielded her general's staff and controlled her parliaments, is now a rural baron, hunting, hawking, drinking fat ale with country esquires, and mustering his men at the command of the high sheriff——"

"Varney, forbear!" said the earl.

"Nay, my lord, you must give me leave to conclude my picture. Sussex governs England, the Queen's health fails, the succession is to be settled—a road is opened to ambition more splendid than ambition ever dreamed of. You hear all this as you sit by the hob, under the shade of your hall chimney. You then begin to think what hopes you have fallen from, and what insignificance you have embraced, and all that you might look babies in the eyes of your fair wife oftener than once a fortnight."

"I say, Varney," said the earl, "no more of this. I said not that the step, which my own ease and comfort would urge me to, was to be taken hastily, or without due consideration to the public safety. Bear witness to me, Varney; I subdue my wishes of retirement, not because I am moved by the call of private ambition, but that I may preserve the position in which I may best serve my country at the hour of need. Order our horses presently. I will wear, as formerly, one of the livery cloaks, and ride before the portmantle. Thou shalt be master for the day, Varney; neglect nothing that can blind suspicion. We will to horse ere men are stirring. I will but take leave of my lady, and be ready. I impose a restraint on my own poor heart, and wound one yet more dear to me; but the patriot must subdue the husband."

Having said this in a melancholy but firm accent, he left the dressing apartment.

"I am glad thou art gone," thought Varney, "or, practiced as I am in the follies of mankind, I had laughed in the very

face of thee! Thou mayst tire as thou wilt of thy new bauble, thy pretty piece of painted flesh there, I will not be thy hindrance. But of thine old bauble, ambition, thou shalt not tire, for as you climb the hill, my lord, you must drag Richard Varney up with you; and if he can urge you to the ascent he means to profit by, believe me he will spare neither whip nor spur. And for you, my pretty lady, that would be countess outright, you were best not thwart my courses, lest you are called to an old reckoning on a new score. 'Thou shalt be master,' did he say? By my faith, he may find that he spoke truer than he is aware of. And thus he, who, in the estimation of so many wise-judging men, can match Burleigh and Walsingham in policy, and Sussex in war, becomes pupil to his own menial; and all for a hazel eye and a little cunning red and white, and so falls ambition. And yet, if the charms of mortal woman could excuse a man's politic pate for becoming bewildered, my lord had the excuse at his right hand on this blessed evening that has last passed over us. Well, let things roll as they may, he shall make me great, or I will make myself happy; and for that softer piece of creation, if she speak not out her interview with Tressilian, as well I think she dare not, she also must traffic with me for concealment and mutual support in spite of all this scorn. I must to the stables. Well, my lord, I order your retinue now; the time may soon come that *my* master of the horse shall order mine own. What was Thomas Cromwell but a smith's son, and he died 'my lord'—on a scaffold, doubtless, but that, too, was in character. And what was Ralph Sadler but the clerk of Cromwell, and he has gazed eighteen fair lordships,—*via!* I know my steerage as well as they."

So saying, he left the apartment.

In the meanwhile the earl had re-entered the bedchamber, bent on taking a hasty farewell of the lovely countess, and scarce daring to trust himself in private with her, to hear requests again urged which he found it difficult to parry, yet which his recent conversation with his master of horse had determined him not to grant.

He found her in a white cymar of silk lined with furs, her little feet unstockinged and hastily thrust into slippers, her unbraided hair escaping from under her midnight coif—with little array but her own loveliness, rather augmented than diminished by the grief which she felt at the approaching moment of separation.

"Now, God be with thee, my dearest and loveliest!" said

the earl, scarce tearing himself from her embrace, yet again returning to fold her again and again in his arms, and again bidding farewell, and again returning to kiss and bid adieu once more. "The sun is on the verge of the blue horizon—I dare not stay. Ere this I should have been ten miles from hence."

Such were the words with which at length he strove to cut short their parting interview.

"You will not grant my request, then?" said the countess. "Ah, false knight! did ever lady, with bare foot in slipper, seek boon of a brave knight, yet return with denial?"

"Anything, Amy—anything thou canst ask I will grant," answered the earl; "always excepting," he said, "that which might ruin us both."

"Nay," said the countess, "I urge not my wish to be acknowledged in the character which would make me the envy of England—as the wife, that is, of my brave and noble lord, the first as the most fondly beloved of English nobles. Let me but share the secret with my dear father! Let me but end his misery on my unworthy account; they say he is ill, the good old kind-hearted man!"

"*They say?*" asked the earl hastily; "who says? Did not Varney convey to Sir Hugh all we dare at present tell him concerning your happiness and welfare? And has he not told you that the good old knight was following, with good heart and health, his favorite and wonted exercise? Who has dared put other thoughts into your head?"

"Oh, no one, my lord—no one," said the countess, something alarmed at the tone in which the question was put; "but yet, my lord, I would fain be assured by mine own eyesight that my father is well."

"Be contented, Amy; thou canst not now have communication with thy father or his house. Were it not a deep course of policy to commit no secret unnecessarily to the custody of more than must needs be, it were sufficient reason for secrecy that yonder Cornishman—yonder Trevanion, or Tressilian, or whatever his name is—haunts the old knight's house, and must necessarily know whatever is communicated there."

"My lord," answered the countess, "I do not think it so. My father has been long noted a worthy and honorable man; and for Tressilian, if we can pardon ourselves the ill we have wrought him, I will wager the coronet I am to share with you one day that he is incapable of returning injury for injury."

"I will not trust him, however, Amy," said her husband—"by my honor, I will not trust him. I would rather the foul fiend intermingle in our secret than this Tressilian!"

"And why, my lord?" said the countess, though she shuddered slightly at the tone of determination in which he spoke; "let me but know why you think thus hardly of Tressilian?"

"Madam," replied the earl, "my will ought to be a sufficient reason. If you desire more, consider how this Tressilian is leagued, and with whom. He stands high in the opinion of this Ratcliffe, this Sussex, against whom I am barely able to maintain my ground in the opinion of our suspicious mistress; and if he had me at such advantage, Amy, as to become acquainted with the tale of our marriage before Elizabeth were fitly prepared, I were an outcast from her grace forever—a bankrupt at once in favor and in fortune, perhaps, for she hath in her a touch of her father Henry—a victim, and it may be a bloody one, to her offended and jealous resentment."

"But why, my lord," again urged his lady, "should you deem thus injuriously of a man of whom you know so little? What you do know of Tressilian is through me, and it is I who assure you that in no circumstances will he betray your secret. If I did him wrong in your behalf, my lord, I am now the more concerned you should do him justice. You are offended at my speaking of him; what would you say had I actually myself seen him?"

"If you had," replied the earl, "you would do well to keep that interview as secret as that which is spoken in a confessional. I seek no one's ruin; but he who thrusts himself on my secret privacy were better look well to his future walk. The bear * brooks no one to cross his awful path."

"Awful, indeed!" said the countess, turning very pale.

"You are ill, my love," said the earl, supporting her in his arms; "stretch yourself on your couch again; it is but early day for you to leave it. Have you aught else, involving less than my fame, my fortune, and my life, to ask of me?"

"Nothing, my lord and love," answered the countess faintly; "something there was that I would have told you, but your anger has driven it from my recollection."

"Reserve it till our next meeting, my love," said the earl fondly, and again embracing her; "and barring only those requests which I cannot and dare not grant, thy wish must be

* The Leicester cognizance was the ancient device adopted by his father, when Earl of Warwick, the bear and ragged staff.

more than England and all its dependencies can fulfill if it is not gratified to the letter."

Thus saying, he at length took farewell. At the bottom of the staircase he received from Varney an ample livery cloak and slouched hat, in which he wrapped himself so as to disguise his person and completely conceal his features. Horses were ready in the courtyard for himself and Varney; for one or two of his train, intrusted with the secret so far as to know or guess that the earl intrigued with a beautiful lady at that mansion, though her name and quality were unknown to them, had already been dismissed over night.

Anthony Foster himself had in hand the rein of the earl's palfrey, a stout and able nag for the road; while his old serving-man held the bridle of the more showy and gallant steed which Richard Varney was to occupy in the character of master.

As the earl approached, however, Varney advanced to hold his master's bridle, and to prevent Foster from paying that duty to the earl which he probably considered as belonging to his own office. Foster scowled at an interference which seemed intended to prevent his paying his court to his patron, but gave place to Varney; and the earl, mounting without farther observation, and forgetting that his assumed character of a domestic threw him into the rear of his supposed master, rode pensively out of the quadrangle, not without waving his hand repeatedly in answer to the signals which were made by the countess with her kerchief from the windows of her apartment.

While his stately form vanished under the dark archway which led out of the quadrangle, Varney muttered, "There goes fine policy—the servant before the master!" then, as he disappeared, seized the moment to speak a word with Foster. "Thou look'st dark on me, Anthony," he said, "as if I had deprived thee of a parting nod of my lord; but I have moved him to leave thee a better remembrance for thy faithful service. See here! a purse of as good gold as ever chinked under a miser's thumb and forefinger. Aye, count them, lad," said he, as Foster received the gold with a grim smile, "and add to them the goodly remembrance he gave last night to Janet."

"How's this!—how's this!" said Anthony Foster hastily; "gave he gold to Janet?"

"Aye, man, wherefore not? does not her service to his fair lady require gerdon?"

"She shall have none on't," said Foster: "she shall return it. I know his dotage on one face is as brief as it is deep. His affections are as fickle as the moon."

"Why, Foster, thou art mad; thou dost not hope for such good fortune as that my lord should cast an eye on Janet? Who, in the fiend's name, would listen to the thrush when the nightingale is singing?"

"Thrush or nightingale, all is one to the fowler; and, Master Varney, you can sound the quail-pipe most daintily to wile wantons into his nets. I desire no such devil's preferment for Janet as you have brought many a poor maiden to. Dost thou laugh? I will keep one limb of my family, at least, from Satan's clutches, that thou mayst rely on. She shall restore the gold."

"Aye, or give it to thy keeping, Tony, which will serve as well," answered Varney; "but I have that to say which is more serious. Our lord is returning to court in an evil humor for us."

"How meanest thou?" said Foster. "Is he tired already of his pretty toy—his plaything yonder? He has purchased her at a monarch's ransom, and I warrant me he rues his bargain."

"Not a whit, Tony," answered the master of the horse; "he dotes on her, and will forsake the court for her; then down go hopes, possessions, and safety: church lands are resumed, Tony, and well if the holders be not called to account in Exchequer."

"That were ruin," said Foster, his brow darkening with apprehensions; "and all this for a woman! Had it been for his soul's sake, it were something; and I sometimes wish I myself could fling away the world that cleaves to me, and be as one of the poorest of our church."

"Thou art like enough to be so, Tony," answered Varney; "but I think the devil will give thee little credit for thy compelled poverty, and so thou lovest on all hands. But follow my counsel, and Cumnor Place shall be thy copyhold yet. Say nothing of this Tressilian's visit—not a word until I give thee notice."

"And wherefore, I pray you?" asked Foster suspiciously.

"Dull beast!" replied Varney; "in my lord's present humor it were the ready way to confirm him in his resolution of retirement, should he know that his lady was haunted with such a specter in his absence. He would be for playing the dragon himself over his golden fruit, and then, Tony, thy

occupation is ended. A word to the wise. Farewell—I must follow him.”

He turned his horse, struck him with the spurs, and rode off under the archway in pursuit of his lord.

“Would thy occupation were ended, or thy neck broken, damned pander!” said Anthony Foster. “But I must follow his beck, for his interest and mine are the same, and he can wind the proud earl to his will. Janet shall give me those pieces though; they shall be laid out in some way for God’s service, and I will keep them separate in my strong chest till I can fall upon a fitting employment for them. No contagious vapor shall breathe on Janet: she shall remain pure as a blessed spirit, were it but to pray God for her father. I need her prayers, for I am at a hard pass. Strange reports are abroad concerning my way of life. The congregation look cold on me, and when Master Holdforth spoke of hypocrites being like a whited sepulcher, which within was full of dead men’s bones, methought he looked full at me. The Romish was a comfortable faith, Lambourne spoke true in that. A man had but to follow his thrift by such ways as offered—tell his beads—hear a mass—confess, and be absolved. These Puritans tread a harder and a rougher path; but I will try—I will read my Bible for an hour ere I again open mine iron chest.”

Varney, meantime, spurred after his lord, whom he found waiting for him at the postern gate of the park.

“You waste time, Varney,” said the earl, “and it presses. I must be at Woodstock before I can safely lay aside my disguise, and till then I journey in some peril.”

“It is but two hours’ brisk riding, my lord,” said Varney; “for me, I only stopped to enforce your commands of care and secrecy on yonder Foster, and to inquire about the abode of the gentleman whom I would promote to your lordship’s train in the room of Trevors.”

“Is he fit for the meridian of the ante-chamber, think’st thou?” said the earl.

“He promises well, my lord,” replied Varney; “but if your lordship were pleased to ride on, I could go back to Cumnor, and bring him to your lordship at Woodstock before you are out of bed.”

“Why, I am asleep there, thou knowest, at this moment,” said the earl; “and I pray you not to spare horse-flesh, that you may be with me at my levee.”

So saying, he gave his horse the spur, and proceeded on his

journey, while Varney rode back to Cumnor by the public road, avoiding the park. The latter alighted at the door of the bonny Black Bear, and desired to speak with Master Michael Lambourne. That respectable character was not long of appearing before his new patron, but it was with downcast looks.

"Thou hast lost the scent," said Varney, "of thy comrade Tressilian. I know it by thy hang-dog visage. Is this thy alacrity, thou impudent knave?"

"Cog's wounds!" said Lambourne, "there was never a trail so finely hunted. I saw him to earth at mine uncle's here—stuck to him like beeswax—saw him at supper—watched him to his chamber, and presto—he is gone next morning, the very hostler knows not where!"

"This sounds like practice upon me, sir," replied Varney; "and if it prove so, by my soul you shall repent it!"

"Sir, the best hound will be sometimes at fault," answered Lambourne; "how should it serve me that this fellow should have thus evanished? You may ask mine host, Giles Gosling—ask the tapster and hostler—ask Cicely, and the whole household, how I kept eyes on Tressilian while he was on foot. On my soul, I could not be expected to watch him like a sick-nurse, when I had seen him fairly a-bed in his chamber. That will be allowed me, surely."

Varney did, in fact, make some inquiry among the household, which confirmed the truth of Lambourne's statement. Tressilian, it was unanimously agreed, had departed suddenly and unexpectedly, betwixt night and morning.

"But I will wrong no one," said mine host; "he left on the table in his lodging the full value of his reckoning, with some allowance to the servants of the house, which was the less necessary that he saddled his own gelding, as it seems, without the hostler's assistance."

Thus satisfied of the rectitude of Lambourne's conduct, Varney began to talk to him upon his future prospects, and the mode in which he meant to bestow himself, intimating that he understood from Foster he was not disinclined to enter into the household of a nobleman.

"Have you," said he, "ever been at court?"

"No," replied Lambourne; "but ever since I was ten years old I have dreamt once a week that I was there, and made my fortune."

"It may be your own fault if your dream comes not true," said Varney. "Are you needy?"

"Um!" replied Lambourne; "I love pleasure."

"That is a sufficient answer, and an honest one," said Varney. "Know you aught of the requisites expected from the retainer of a rising courtier?"

"I have imagined them to myself, sir," answered Lambourne; "as, for example, a quick eye, a close mouth, a ready and bold hand, a sharp wit, and a blunt conscience."

"And thine, I suppose," said Varney, "has had its edge blunted long since?"

"I cannot remember, sir, that its edge was ever over keen," replied Lambourne. "When I was a youth, I had some few whimsies, but I rubbed them partly out of my recollection on the rough grindstone of the wars, and what remained I washed out in the broad waves of the Atlantic."

"Thou hast served, then, in the Indies?"

"In both East and West," answered the candidate for court service, "by both sea and land; I have served both the Portugal and the Spaniard, both the Dutchman and the Frenchman, and have made war on our own account with a crew of jolly fellows who held there was no peace beyond the Line."*

"Thou mayst do me, and my lord, and thyself, good service," said Varney, after a pause. "But observe, I know the world, and answer me truly, canst thou be faithful?"

"Did you not know the world," answered Lambourne, "it were my duty to say 'aye,' without further circumstance, and to swear to it with life and honor, and so forth. But as it seems to me that your worship is one who desires rather honest truth than politic falsehood, I reply to you that I can be faithful to the gallows' foot, aye, to the loop that dangles from it, if I am well used and well recompensed—not otherwise."

"To thy other virtues thou canst add, no doubt," said Varney, in a jeering tone, "the knack of seeming serious and religious, when the moment demands it?"

"It would cost me nothing," said Lambourne, "to say 'yes,' but to speak on the square I must needs say 'no.' If you want a hypocrite, you may take Anthony Foster, who, from his childhood, had some sort of phantom haunting him, which he called religion, though it was that sort of godliness which always ended in being great gain. But I have no such knack of it."

* Sir Francis Drake, Morgan, and many a bold buccaneer of those days, were, in fact, little better than pirates.

"Well," replied Varney, "if thou hast no hypocrisy, hast thou not a nag here in the stable?"

"Aye, sir," said Lambourne, "that shall take hedge and ditch with my lord duke's best hunters. When I made a little mistake on Shooter's Hill, and stopped an ancient grazier whose pouches were better lined than his brain-pan, the bonny bay nag carried me sheer off, in spite of the whole hue and cry."

"Saddle him then, instantly, and attend me," said Varney. "Leave thy clothes and baggage under charge of mine host, and I will conduct thee to a service in which, if thou do not better thyself, the fault shall not be fortune's, but thine own."

"Brave and hearty!" said Lambourne, "and I am mounted in an instant. Knave hostler, saddle my nag without the loss of one second, as thou dost value the safety of thy noddle. Pretty Cicely, take half this purse to comfort thee for my sudden departure."

"Gogsnouns!" replied the father, "Cicely wants no such token from thee. Go away, Mike, and gather grace if thou canst, though I think thou goest not to the land where it grows."

"Let me look at this Cicely of thine, mine host," said Varney; "I have heard much talk of her beauty."

"It is a sunburnt beauty," said mine host, "well qualified to stand out rain and wind, but little calculated to please such critical gallants as yourself. She keeps her chamber, and cannot encounter the glance of such sunny-day courtiers as my noble guest."

"Well, peace be with her, my good host," answered Varney; "our horses are impatient, we bid you good day."

"Does my nephew go with you, so please you?" said Gosling.

"Aye, such is his purpose," answered Richard Varney.

"You are right—fully right," replied mine host—"you are, I say, fully right, my kinsman. Thou hast got a gay horse, see thou light not unaware upon a halter; or, if thou wilt needs be made immortal by means of a rope, which thy purpose of following this gentleman renders not unlikely, I charge thee to find a gallows as far from Cumnor as thou conveniently mayst; and so I commend you to your saddle."

The master of the horse and his new retainer mounted accordingly, leaving the landlord to conclude his ill-omened

farewell to himself and at leisure; and set off together at a rapid pace, which prevented conversation until the ascent of a steep sandy hill permitted them to resume it.

"You are contented, then," said Varney to his companion, "to take court service?"

"Aye, worshipful sir, if you like my terms as well as I like yours."

"And what are your terms?" demanded Varney.

"If I am to have a quick eye for my patron's interest, he must have a dull one toward my faults," said Lambourne.

"Aye," said Varney, "so they lie not so grossly open that he must needs break his shins over them."

"Agreed," said Lambourne. "Next, if I run down game, I must have the picking of the bones."

"That is but reason," replied Varney, "so that your betters are served before you."

"Good," said Lambourne; "and it only remains to be said, that if the law and I quarrel, my patron must bear me out, for that is a chief point."

"Reason again," said Varney, "if the quarrel hath happened in your master's service."

"For the wage and so forth, I say nothing," proceeded Lambourne; "it is the secret guerdon that I must live by."

"Never fear," said Varney; "thou shalt have clothes and spending money to ruffle it with the best of thy degree, for thou goest to a household where you have gold, as they say, by the eye."

"That jumps all with my humor," replied Michael Lambourne; "and it only remains that you tell me my master's name."

"My name is Master Richard Varney," answered his companion.

"But I mean," said Lambourne, "the name of the noble lord to whose service you are to prefer me."

"How, knave, art thou too good to call *me* master?" said Varney hastily; "I would have thee bold to others, but not saucy to me."

"I crave your worship's pardon," said Lambourne; "but you seemed familiar with Anthony Foster; now I am familiar with Anthony myself."

"Thou art a shrewd knave, I see," replied Varney. "Mark me—I do indeed propose to introduce thee into a nobleman's household; but it is upon my person thou wilt chiefly wait, and upon my countenance that thou wilt depend. I am his

master of horse. Thou wilt soon know his name; it is one that shakes the council and wields the state."

"By this light, a brave spell to conjure with," said Lambourne, "if a man would discover hidden treasures!"

"Used with discretion, it may prove so," replied Varney; "but mark—if thou conjure with it at thine own hand, it may raise a devil who will tear thee in fragments."

"Enough said," replied Lambourne; "I will not exceed my limits."

The travelers then resumed the rapid rate of traveling which their discourse had interrupted, and soon arrived at the royal park of Woodstock. This ancient possession of the crown of England was then very different from what it had been when it was the residence of the fair Rosamond, and the scene of Henry the Second's secret and illicit amours; and yet more unlike to the scene which it exhibits in the present day, when Blenheim House commemorates the victory of Marlborough, and no less the genius of Vanburgh, though decried in his own time by persons of taste far inferior to his own. It was, in Elizabeth's time, an ancient mansion in bad repair, which had long ceased to be honored with the royal residence, to the great impoverishment of the adjacent village. The inhabitants, however, had made several petitions to the Queen to have the favor of the sovereign's countenance occasionally bestowed upon them; and upon this very business, ostensibly at least, was the noble lord whom we have already introduced to our readers a visitor at Woodstock.

Varney and Lambourne galloped without ceremony into the courtyard of the ancient and dilapidated mansion, which presented on that morning a scene of bustle which it had not exhibited for two reigns. Officers of the earl's household, liverymen and retainers, went and came with all the insolent fracas which attaches to their profession. The neigh of horses and the baying of hounds were heard; for my lord, in his occupation of inspecting and surveying the manor and demesne, was of course provided with the means of following his pleasure in the chase or park, said to have been the earliest that was inclosed in England, and which was well stocked with deer that had long roamed there unmolested. Several of the inhabitants of the village, in anxious hope of a favorable result from this unwonted visit, loitered about the courtyard, and awaited the great man's coming forth. Their attention was excited by the hasty arrival of Varney, and a murmur ran amongst them, "The earl's master of the

horse!" while they hurried to bespeak favor by hastily unbonneting and proffering to hold the bridle and stirrup of the favored retainer and his attendant.

"Stand somewhat aloof, my masters!" said Varney haughtily, "and let the domestics do their office."

The mortified citizens and peasants fell back at the signal; while Lambourne, who had his eye upon his superior's deportment, repelled the services of those who offered to assist him with yet more discourtesy—"Stand back, Jack peasant, with a murrain to you, and let these knave footmen do their duty!"

While they gave their nags to the attendants of the household, and walked into the mansion with an air of superiority which long practice and consciousness of birth rendered natural to Varney, and which Lambourne endeavored to imitate as well as he could, the poor inhabitants of Woodstock whispered to each other "Well-a-day—God save us from all such misproud princoxes! An the master be like the men, why, the fiend may take all, and yet have no more than his due."

"Silence, good neighbors!" said the bailiff, "keep tongue betwixt teeth; we shall know more by and by. But never will a lord come to Woodstock so welcome as bluff old King Harry! He would horsewhip a fellow one day with his own royal hand, and then fling him an handful of silver groats, with his own broad face on them, to 'noint the sore withal."

"Aye, rest be with him!" echoed the auditors; "it will be long ere this Lady Elizabeth horsewhip any of us."

"There is no saying," answered the bailiff. "Meanwhile, patience, good neighbors, and let us comfort ourselves by thinking that we deserve such notice at her Grace's hands."

Meanwhile, Varney, closely followed by his new dependent, made his way to the hall, where men of more note and consequence than those left in the courtyard awaited the appearance of the earl, who as yet kept his chamber. All paid court to Varney, with more or less deference, as suited their own rank, or the urgency of the business which brought them to his lord's levee. To the general question of, "When comes my lord forth, Master Varney?" he gave brief answers, as, "See you not my boots? I am but just returned from Oxford, and know nothing of it," and the like, until the same query was put in a higher tone by a personage of more importance. "I will inquire of the chamberlain, Sir Thomas Copely," was the reply. The chamberlain, distinguished by his silver key, answered, that the earl only awaited Master

Varney's return to come down, but that he would first speak with him in his private chamber. Varney, therefore, bowed to the company, and took leave, to enter his lord's apartment.

There was a murmur of expectation which lasted a few minutes, and was at length hushed by the opening of the folding-doors at the upper end of the apartment, through which the earl made his entrance, marshaled by his chamberlain and the steward of his family, and followed by Richard Varney. In his noble mien and princely features men read nothing of that insolence which was practiced by his dependents. His courtesies were, indeed, measured by the rank of those to whom they were addressed, but even the meanest person present had a share of his gracious notice. The inquiries which he made respecting the condition of the manor, of the Queen's rights there, and of the advantages and disadvantages which might attend her occasional residence at the royal seat of Woodstock, seemed to show that he had most earnestly investigated the matter of the petition of the inhabitants, and with a desire to forward the interest of the place.

"Now the Lord love his noble countenance," said the bailiff, who had thrust himself into the presence-chamber; "he looks somewhat pale. I warrant him he hath spent the whole night in perusing our memorial. Master Toughyarn, who took six months to draw it up, said it would take a week to understand it; and see if the earl hath not knocked the marrow out of it in twenty-four hours!"

The earl then acquainted them that he should move their sovereign to honor Woodstock occasionally with her residence during her royal progresses, that the town and its vicinity might derive from her countenance and favor the same advantages as from those of her predecessors. Meanwhile, he rejoiced to be the expounder of her gracious pleasure, in assuring them that, for the increase of trade and encouragement of the worthy burgesses of Woodstock, her Majesty was minded to erect the town into a staple for wool.

This joyful intelligence was received with the acclamations not only of the better sort who were admitted to the audience-chamber, but of the commons who awaited without.

The freedom of the corporation was presented to the earl upon knee by the magistrates of the place, together with a purse of gold pieces, which the earl handed to Varney, who, on his part, gave a share to Lambourne, as the most acceptable earnest of his new service.

The earl and his retinue took horse soon after to return to court, accompanied by the shouts of the inhabitants of Woodstock, who made the old oaks ring with re-echoing, "Long live Queen Elizabeth and the noble Earl of Leicester!" The urbanity and courtesy of the earl even threw a gleam of popularity over his attendants, as their haughty deportment had formerly obscured that of their master; and men shouted, "Long life to the earl and to his gallant followers!" as Varney and Lambourne, each in his rank, rode proudly through the streets of Woodstock.

CHAPTER VIII.

Host. I will hear you, Master Fenton ;
And I will, at least, keep your counsel.

—*Merry Wives of Windsor.*

It becomes necessary to return to the detail of those circumstances which accompanied, and indeed occasioned, the sudden disappearance of Tressilian from the sign of the Black Bear at Cumnor. It will be recollected that this gentleman, after his rencounter with Varney, had returned to Giles Gosling's caravansary, where he shut himself up in his own chamber, demanded pen, ink, and paper, and announced his purpose to remain private for the day. In the evening he appeared again in the public room, where Michael Lambourne, who had been on the watch for him, agreeably to his engagement to Varney, endeavored to renew his acquaintance with him, and hoped he retained no unfriendly recollection of the part he had taken in the morning scuffle.

But Tressilian repelled his advances firmly, though with civility. "Master Lambourne," he said, "I trust I have recompensed to your pleasure the time you have wasted on me. Under the show of wild bluntness which you exhibit, I know you have sense enough to understand me when I say frankly, that the object of our temporary acquaintance having been accomplished, we must be strangers to each other in future."

"*Voto!*" said Lambourne, twirling his whiskers with one hand, and grasping the hilt of his weapon with the other; "if I thought that this usage was meant to insult me——"

"You would bear it with discretion, doubtless," interrupted Tressilian, "as you must do at any rate. You know too well the distance that is betwixt us to require me to explain myself farther. Good evening."

So saying, he turned his back upon his former companion, and entered into discourse with the landlord. Michael Lambourne felt strongly disposed to bully; but his wrath died away in a few incoherent oaths and ejaculations, and he sank unresistingly under the ascendancy which superior spirits possess over persons of his habits and description. He remained moody and silent in a corner of the apartment, paying

the most marked attention to every motion of his late companion, against whom he began now to nourish a quarrel on his own account, which he trusted to avenge by the execution of his new master Varney's directions. The hour of supper arrived, and was followed by that of repose, when Tressilian, like others, retired to his sleeping-apartment.

He had not been in bed long, when the train of sad reveries, which supplied the place of rest in his disturbed mind, was suddenly interrupted by the jar of a door on its hinges, and a light was seen to glimmer in the apartment. Tressilian, who was as brave as steel, sprang from his bed at this alarm, and had laid hand upon his sword, when he was prevented from drawing it by a voice which said, "Be not too rash with your rapier, Master Tressilian. It is I, your host, Giles Gosling."

At the same time, unshrouding the dark lantern, which had hitherto only emitted an indistinct glimmer, the goodly aspect and figure of the landlord of the Black Bear was visibly presented to his astonished guest.

"What mummery is this, mine host?" said Tressilian. "Have you supped as jollily as last night, and so mistaken your chamber? or is midnight a time for masquerading it in your guest's lodging?"

"Master Tressilian," replied mine host, "I know my place and my time as well as e'er a merry landlord in England. But here has been my hang-dog kinsman watching you as close as ever cat watched a mouse; and here have you, on the other hand, quarreled and fought, either with him or with some other person, and I fear that danger will come of it."

"Go to, thou art but a fool, man," said Tressilian; "thy kinsman is beneath my resentment; and, besides, why shouldst thou think I had quarreled with anyone whomsoever?"

"Oh, sir!" replied the innkeeper, "there was a red spot on thy very cheek-bone, which boded of a late brawl, as sure as the conjunction of Mars and Saturn threatens misfortune; and when you returned, the buckles of your girdle were brought forward, and your step was quick and hasty, and all things showed your hand and your hilt had been lately acquainted."

"Well, good mine host, if I have been obliged to draw my sword," said Tressilian, "why should such a circumstance fetch thee out of thy warm bed at this time of night? Thou seest the mischief is all over."

"Under favor, that is what I doubt. Anthony Foster is a dangerous man, defended by strong court patronage, which

hath borne him out in matters of very deep concernment. And then my kinsman—why, I have told you what he is; and if these two old cronies have made up their old acquaintance, I would not, my worshipful guest, that it should be at thy cost. I promise you, Mike Lambourne has been making very particular inquiries at my hostler, when and which way you ride. Now, I would have you think, whether you may not have done or said something for which you may be waylaid and taken at disadvantage.”

“Thou art an honest man, mine host,” said Tressilian, after a moment’s consideration, “and I will deal frankly with thee. If these men’s malice is directed against me—as I deny not but it may—it is because they are the agents of a more powerful villain than themselves.”

“You mean Master Richard Varney, do you not?” said the landlord; “he was at Cumnor Place yesterday, and came not thither so private but what he was espied by one who told me.”

“I mean the same, mine host.”

“Then, for God’s sake, worshipful Master Tressilian,” said honest Gosling, “look well to yourself. This Varney is the protector and patron of Anthony Foster, who holds under him, and by his favor, some lease of yonder mansion and the park. Varney got a large grant of the lands of the abbacy of Abingdon, and Cumnor Place amongst others, from his master, the Earl of Leicester. Men say he can do everything with him, though I hold the earl too good a nobleman to employ him as some men talk of. And then the earl can do anything—that is, anything right or fitting—with the Queen, God bless her! so you see what an enemy you have made to yourself.”

“Well, it is done, and I cannot help it,” answered Tressilian.

“Uds precious, but it must be helped in some manner,” said the host. “Richard Varney—why, what between his influence with my lord, and his pretending to so many old and vexatious claims in right of the abbot here, men fear almost to mention his name, much more to set themselves against his practices. You may judge by our discourses the last night. Men said their pleasure of Tony Foster, but not a word of Richard Varney, though all men judge him to be at the bottom of yonder mystery about the pretty wench. But perhaps you know more of that matter than I do, for women, though they wear not swords, are occasion for many a blade’s

exchanging a sheath of neat's leather for one of flesh and blood."

"I do indeed know more of that poor unfortunate lady than thou dost, my friendly host; and so bankrupt am I, at this moment, of friends and advice, that I will willingly make a counselor of thee, and tell thee the whole history, the rather that I have a favor to ask when my tale is ended."

"Good Master Tressilian," said the landlord, "I am but a poor innkeeper, little able to adjust or counsel such a guest as yourself. But as sure as I have risen decently above the world by giving good measure and reasonable charges, I am an honest man; and as such, if I may not be able to assist you, I am, at least, not capable to abuse your confidence. Say away, therefore, as confidently as if you spoke to your father; and thus far at least be certain, that my curiosity, for I will not deny that which belongs to my calling, is joined to a reasonable degree of discretion."

"I doubt it not, mine host," answered Tressilian; and while his auditor remained in anxious expectation, he meditated for an instant how he should commence his narrative. "My tale," he at length said, "to be quite intelligible, must begin at some distance back. You have heard of the battle of Stoke, my good host, and perhaps of old Sir Roger Robsart, who, in that battle, valiantly took part with Henry VII., the Queen's grandfather, and routed the Earl of Lincoln, Lord Geraldin and his wild Irish, and the Flemings whom the Duchess of Burgundy had sent over, in the quarrel of Lambert Simnel?"

"I remember both one and the other," said Giles Gosling, "it is sung of a dozen times a week on my ale-bench below. Sir Roger Robsart of Devon—Oh, aye, 'tis him of whom minstrels sing to this hour:

He was the flower of Stoke's red field
When Martin Swart on ground lay slain;
In raging rout he never reel'd,
But like a rock did firm remain.

Aye, and then there was Martin Swart I have heard my grandfather talk of, and of the jolly Almain whom he commanded, with their slashed doublets and quaint hose, all fringed with ribbons above the nether-stocks. Here's a song goes of Martin Swart, too, an I had but memory for it:

Martin Swart and his men,
Saddle them, saddle them;
Martin Swart and his men,
Saddle them well." *

* See Martin Swart. Note 3.

“True, good mine host—the day was long talked of; but, if you sing so loud, you will awake more listeners than I care to commit my confidence unto.”

“I crave pardon, my worshipful guest,” said mine host, “I was oblivious. When an old song comes across us merry old knights of the spigot, it runs away with our discretion.”

“Well, mine host, my grandfather, like some other Cornishmen, kept a warm affection to the house of York, and espoused the quarrel of this Simnel, assuming the title of Earl of Warwick, as the county afterward, in great numbers, countenanced the cause of Perkin Warbeck, calling himself the Duke of York. My grandsire joined Simnel’s standard, and was taken fighting desperately at Stoke, where most of the leaders of that unhappy army were slain in their harness. The good knight to whom he rendered himself, Sir Roger Robsart, protected him from the immediate vengeance of the king, and dismissed him without ransom. But he was unable to guard him from other penalties of his rashness, being the heavy fines by which he was impoverished, according to Henry’s mode of weakening his enemies. The good knight did what he might to mitigate the distresses of my ancestor; and their friendship became so strict that my father was bred up as the sworn brother and intimate of the present Sir Hugh Robsart, the only son of Sir Roger, and the heir of his honest, and generous, and hospitable temper, though not equal to him in martial achievements.”

“I have heard of good Sir Hugh Robsart,” interrupted the host, “many a time and oft. His huntsman and sworn servant, Will Badger, hath spoke of him an hundred times in this very house—a jovial knight he is, and hath loved hospitality and open housekeeping more than the present fashion, which lays as much gold lace on the seams of a doublet as would feed a dozen of tall fellows with beef and ale for a twelvemonth, and let them have their evening at the ale-house once a week, to do good to the publican.”

“If you have seen Will Badger, mine host,” said Tressilian, “you have heard enough of Sir Hugh Robsart; and therefore I will but say, that the hospitality you boast of hath proved somewhat detrimental to the estate of his family, which is perhaps of the less consequence, as he has but one daughter to whom to bequeath it. And here begins my share in the tale. Upon my father’s death, now several years since, the good Sir Hugh would willingly have made me his constant companion.

There was a time, however, at which I felt the kind knight's excessive love for field-sports detained me from studies by which I might have profited more; but I ceased to regret the leisure which gratitude and hereditary friendship compelled me to bestow on these rural avocations. The exquisite beauty of Mistress Amy Robsart, as she grew up from childhood to woman, could not escape one whom circumstances obliged to be so constantly in her company. I loved her, in short, mine host, and her father saw it."

"And crossed your true loves, no doubt?" said mine host. "It is the way in all such cases; and I judge it must have been so in your instance, from the heavy sigh you uttered even now."

"The case was different, mine host. My suit was highly approved by the generous Sir Hugh Robsart; it was his daughter who was cold to my passion."

"She was the more dangerous enemy of the two," said the innkeeper. "I fear me your suit proved a cold one."

"She yielded me her esteem," said Tressilian, "and seemed not unwilling that I should hope it might ripen into a warmer passion. There was a contract of future marriage executed betwixt us, upon her father's intercession; but, to comply with her anxious request, the execution was deferred for a twelvemonth. During this period, Richard Varney appeared in the country, and, availing himself of some distant family connection with Sir Hugh Robsart, spent much of his time in his company, until, at length, he almost lived in the family."

"That could bode no good to the place he honored with his residence," said Gosling.

"No, by the rood!" replied Tressilian. "Misunderstanding and misery followed his presence, yet so strangely, that I am at this moment at a loss to trace the gradations of their encroachment upon a family which had, till then, been so happy. For a time Amy Robsart received the attentions of this man Varney with the indifference attached to common courtesies; then followed a period in which she seemed to regard him with dislike, and even with disgust; and then an extraordinary species of connection appeared to grow up betwixt them. Varney dropped those airs of pretension and gallantry which had marked his former approaches; and, Amy, on the other hand, seemed to renounce the ill-disguised disgust with which she had regarded them. They seemed to have more of privacy and confidence together than I fully

liked; and I suspected that they met in private, where there was less restraint than in our presence. Many circumstances, which I noticed but little at the time—for I deemed her heart as open as her angelic countenance—have since arisen on my memory, to convince me of their private understanding. But I need not detail them—the fact speaks for itself. She vanished from her father's house—Varney disappeared at the same time; and this very day I have seen her in the character of his paramour, living in the house of his sordid dependent Foster, and visited by him, muffled; and by a secret entrance.”

“And this, then, is the cause of your quarrel? Methinks, you should have been sure that the fair lady either desired or deserved your interference.”

“Mine host,” answered Tressilian, “my father, such I must ever consider Sir Hugh Robsart, sits at home struggling with his grief, or, if so far recovered, vainly attempting to drown, in the practice of his field-sports, the recollection that he had once a daughter—a recollection which ever and anon breaks from him under circumstances the most pathetic. I could not brook the idea that he should live in misery and Amy in guilt; and I endeavored to seek her out, with the hope of inducing her to return to her family. I have found her, and when I have either succeeded in my attempt or have found it altogether unavailing, it is my purpose to embark for the Virginia voyage.”

“Be not so rash, good sir,” replied Giles Gosling; “and cast not yourself away because a woman—to be brief—is a woman, and changes her lovers like her suit of ribbons, with no better reason than mere fantasy. And ere we probe this matter further, let me ask you what circumstances of suspicion directed you so truly to this lady's residence, or rather to her place of concealment?”

“The last is the better chosen word, mine host,” answered Tressilian; “and touching your question, the knowledge that Varney held large grants of the demesnes formerly belonging to the monks of Abingdon directed me to this neighborhood; and your nephew's visit to his old comrade Foster gave me the means of conviction on the subject.”

“And what is now your purpose, worthy sir?—excuse my freedom in asking the question so broadly.”

“I purpose, mine host,” said Tressilian, “to renew my visit to the place of her residence to-morrow, and to seek a more detailed communication with her than I have had to-

day. She must indeed be widely changed from what she once was if my words make no impression upon her."

"Under your favor, Master Tressilian," said the landlord, "you can follow no such course. The lady, if I understand you, has already rejected your interference in the matter."

"It is but too true," said Tressilian; "I cannot deny it."

"Then, marry, by what right or interest do you propose a compulsory interference with her inclination, disgraceful as it may be to herself and to her parents? Unless my judgment gulls me, those under whose protection she has thrown herself would have small hesitation to reject your interference, even if it were that of a father or brother; but as a discarded lover you expose yourself to be repelled with the strong hand, as well as with scorn. You can apply to no magistrate for aid or countenance; and you are hunting, therefore, a shadow in water, and will only—excuse my plainness—come by ducking and danger in attempting to catch it."

"I will appeal to the Earl of Leicester," said Tressilian, "against the infamy of his favorite. He courts the severe and strict sect of Puritans. He dare not, for the sake of his own character, refuse my appeal, even although he were destitute of the principles of honor and nobleness with which fame invests him. Or I will appeal to the Queen herself."

"Should Leicester," said the landlord, "be disposed to protect his dependent, as indeed he is said to be very confidential with Varney, the appeal to the Queen may bring them both to reason. Her Majesty is strict in such matters, and—if it be not treason to speak it—will rather, it is said, pardon a dozen courtiers for falling in love with herself than one for giving preference to another woman. Corragio then, my brave guest! for, if thou layest a petition from Sir Hugh at the foot of the throne, bucklered by the story of thine own wrongs, the favorite earl dared as soon leap into the Thames at the fullest and deepest as offer to protect Varney in a cause of this nature. But to do this with any chance of success you must go formally to work; and, without staying here to tilt with the master of horse to a privy-councilor, and expose yourself to the dagger of his camaradoes, you should hie you to Devonshire, get a petition drawn up for Sir Hugh Robsart, and make as many friends as you can to forward your interest at court."

"You have spoken well, mine host," said Tressilian, "and I will profit by your advice, and leave you to-morrow early."

"Nay, leave me to-night, sir, before to-morrow comes,"

said the landlord. "I never prayed for a guest's arrival more eagerly than I do to have you safely gone. My kinsman's destiny is most like to be hanged for something, but I would not that the cause were the murder of an honored guest of mine. 'Better ride safe in the dark,' says the proverb, 'than in daylight with a cut-throat at your elbow.' Come, sir, I move you for your own safety. Your horse and all is ready, and here is your score."

"It is somewhat under a noble," said Tressilian, giving one to the host; "give the balance to pretty Cicely, your daughter, and the servants of the house."

"They shall taste of your bounty, sir," said Gosling, "and you should taste of my daughter's lips in grateful acknowledgment, but at this hour she cannot grace the porch to greet your departure."

"Do not trust your daughter too far with your guests, my good landlord," said Tressilian.

"Oh, sir, we will keep measure; but I wonder not that you are jealous of them all. May I crave to know with what aspect the fair lady at the Place yesterday received you?"

"I own," said Tressilian, "it was angry as well as confused, and affords me little hope that she is yet awakened from her unhappy delusion."

"In that case, sir, I see not why you should play the champion of a wench that will none of you, and incur the resentment of a favorite's favorite, as dangerous a monster as ever a knight adventurer encountered in the old story-books."

"You do me wrong in the supposition, mine host—gross wrong," said Tressilian; "I do not desire that Amy should ever turn thought upon me more. Let me but see her restored to her father, and all I have to do in Europe—perhaps in the world—is over and ended."

"A wiser resolution were to drink a cup of sack, and forget her," said the landlord. "But five-and-twenty and fifty look on those matters with different eyes, especially when one case of peepers is set in the skull of a young gallant and the other in that of an old publican. I pity you, Master Tressilian, but I see not how I can aid you in the matter."

"Only thus far, mine host," replied Tressilian. "Keep a watch on the motions of those at the Place, which thou canst easily learn without suspicion, as all men's news fly to the ale-bench; and be pleased to communicate the tidings in writing to such person, and to no other, who shall bring you this ring

as a special token; look at it—it is of value, and I will freely bestow it on you.”

“Nay, sir,” said the landlord, “I desire no recompense; but it seems an unadvised course in me, being in a public line, to connect myself in a matter of this dark and perilous nature. I have no interest in it.”

“You and every father in the land, who would have his daughter released from the snares of shame, and sin, and misery, have an interest deeper than aught concerning earth only could create.”

“Well, sir,” said the host, “these are brave words; and I do pity from my soul the frank-hearted old gentleman, who has minished his estate in good housekeeping for the honor of his country, and now has his daughter, who should be the stay of his age, and so forth, whisked up by such a kite as this Varney. And though your part in the matter is somewhat of the wildest, yet I will e’en be a madcap for company, and help you in your honest attempt to get back the good man’s child, so far as being your faithful intelligencer can serve. And as I shall be true to you, I pray you to be trusty to me, and keep my secret; for it were bad for the custom of the Black Bear, should it be said the bear-warder interfered in such matters. Varney has interest enough with the justices to dismount my noble emblem from the post on which he swings so gallantly, to call in my license, and ruin me from garret to cellar.”

“Do not doubt my secrecy, mine host,” said Tressilian; “I will retain besides, the deepest sense of thy service, and of the risk thou dost run; remember the ring is my sure token. And now, farewell; for it was thy wise advice that I should tarry here as short a time as may be.”

“Follow me, then, sir guest,” said the landlord, “and tread as gently as if eggs were under your foot instead of deal boards. No man must know when or how you departed.”

By the aid of his dark lantern he conducted Tressilian, as soon as he had made himself ready for his journey, through a long intricacy of passages, which opened to an outer court, and from thence to a remote stable, where he had already placed his guest’s horse. He then aided him to fasten on the saddle the small portmanteau which contained his necessaries, opened a postern door, and with a hearty shake of the hand, and a reiteration of his promise to attend to what went on at Cumnor Place, he dismissed his guest to his solitary journey.

CHAPTER IX.

Far in the lane a lonely hut he found,
No tenant ventured on the unwholesome ground:
Here smokes his forge, he bares his sinewy arm,
And early strokes the sounding anvil warm;
Around his shop the steely sparkles flew,
As for the steed he shaped the bending shoe.

—GAY'S *Trivia*.

As it was deemed proper by the traveler himself, as well as by Giles Gosling, that Tressilian should avoid being seen in the neighborhood of Cumnor by those whom accident might make early risers, the landlord had given him a route, consisting of various byways and lanes, which he was to follow in succession, and which, all the turns and short-cuts duly observed, was to conduct him to the public road to Marlborough.

But, like counsel of every other kind, this species of direction is much more easily given than followed; and what betwixt the intricacy of the way, the darkness of the night, Tressilian's ignorance of the country, and the sad and perplexing thoughts with which he had to contend, his journey proceeded so slowly that morning found him only in the Vale of Whitehorse, memorable for the defeat of the Danes in former days, with his horse deprived of a forefoot shoe—an accident which threatened to put a stop to his journey by laming the animal. The residence of a smith was his first object of inquiry, in which he received little satisfaction from the dullness or sullenness of one or two peasants, early bound for their labor, who gave brief and indifferent answers to his questions on the subject. Anxious at length that the partner of his journey should suffer as little as possible from the unfortunate accident, Tressilian dismounted, and led his horse in the direction of a little hamlet, where he hoped either to find or hear tidings of such an artificer as he now wanted. Through a deep and muddy lane, he at length waded on to the place, which proved only an assemblage of five or six miserable huts, about the doors of which one or two persons, whose appearance seemed as rude as that of their dwellings, were beginning the toils of the day. One cottage, however, seemed of rather superior aspect, and the old dame, who was sweeping her threshold, appeared something less rude than

her neighbors. To her Tressilian addressed the oft-repeated question, whether there was a smith in this neighborhood, or any place where he could refresh his horse? The dame looked him in the face with a peculiar expression, as she replied, "Smith! aye, truly is there a smith; what wouldst ha' wi' un, mon?"

"To shoe my horse, good dame," answered Tressilian; "you may see that he has thrown a forefoot shoe."

"Master Holiday!" exclaimed the dame, without returning any direct answer—"Master Herasmus Holiday, come and speak to mon, and please you."

"*Favete linguis,*" answered a voice from within; "I cannot now come forth, Gammer Sludge, being in the very sweetest bit of my morning studies."

"Nay, but, good now, Master Holiday, come ye out, do ye. Here's a mon would to Wayland Smith, and I care not to show him way to devil; his horse hath cast shoe."

"*Quid mihi cum caballo?*" replied the man of learning from within; "I think there is but one wise man in the hundred, and they cannot shoe a horse without him!"

And forth came the honest pedagogue, for such his dress bespoke him. A long, lean, shambling, stooping figure was surmounted by a head thatched with lank black hair somewhat inclining to gray. His features had the cast of habitual authority, which I suppose Dionysius carried with him from the throne to the schoolmaster's pulpit, and bequeathed as a legacy to all of the same profession. A black buckram cassock was gathered at his middle with a belt, at which hung, instead of knife or weapon, a goodly leathern pen-and-ink-case. His ferula was stuck on the other side, like harlequin's wooden sword; and he carried in his hand the tattered volume which he had been busily perusing.

On seeing a person of Tressilian's appearance, which he was better able to estimate than the country folks had been, the schoolmaster unbonneted, and accosted him with, "Salve, domine. *Intelligisne linguam Latinam?*"

Tressilian mustered his learning to reply, "*Linguae Latinae haud penitus ignarus, venia tua, domine eruditissime, vernaculam libentius loquor.*"

The Latin reply had upon the schoolmaster the effect which the mason's sign is said to produce on the brethren of the trowel. He was at once interested in the learned traveler. listened with gravity to his story of a tired horse and a lost shoe, and then replied with solemnity, "It may appear a

simple thing, most worshipful, to reply to you that there dwells, within a brief mile of these 'tuguria,' the best 'faber ferrarius,' the most accomplished blacksmith, that ever nailed iron upon horse. Now, were I to say so, I warrant me you would think yourself 'compos voti,' or, as the vulgar have it, a made man."

"I should at least," said Tressilian, "have a direct answer to a plain question, which seems difficult to be obtained in this country."

"It is a mere sending of a sinful soul to the evil un," said the old woman, "the sending a living creature to Wayland Smith."

"Peace, Gammer Sludge!" said the pedagogue; "'pauca verba,' Gammer Sludge; look to the furmity, Gammer Sludge; 'curetur jentaculum,' Gammer Sludge; this gentleman is none of thy gossips." Then turning to Tressilian, he resumed his lofty tone, "And so, most worshipful, you would really think yourself 'felix bis terque' should I point out to you the dwelling of this same smith?"

"Sir," replied Tressilian, "I should in that case have all that I want at present, a horse fit to carry me forward—out of hearing of your learning." The last words he muttered to himself.

"'Oh, cæca mens mortalium!'" said the learned man; "well was it sung by Junius Juvenalis, 'numinibus vota exaudita malignis!'"

"Learned magister," said Tressilian, "your erudition so greatly exceeds my poor intellectual capacity, that you must excuse my seeking elsewhere for information which I can better understand."

"There again now," replied the pedagogue, "how fondly you fly from him that would instruct you! Truly said Quintilian——"

"I pray, sir, let Quintilian be for the present, and answer, in a word and in English, if your learning can condescend so far, whether there is any place here where I can have opportunity to refresh my horse, until I can have him shod?"

"Thus much courtesy, sir," said the schoolmaster, "I can readily render you, that, although there is in this poor hamlet—'nostra paupera regna'—no regular 'hospitium,' as my namesake Erasmus calleth it, yet, forasmuch as you are somewhat embued, or at least tinged, as it were, with good letters, I will use my interest with the good woman of the house to accommodate you with a platter of furmity—an wholesome

food for which I have found no Latin phrase—your horse shall have a share of the cow-house, with a bottle of sweet hay, in which the good woman Sludge so much abounds that it may be said of her cow, 'fœnum habet in cornu'; and if it please you to bestow on me the pleasure of your company, the banquet shall cost you 'ne semissem quidem,' so much is Gammer Sludge bound to me for the pains I have bestowed on the top and bottom of her hopeful heir Dickie, whom I have painfully made to travel through the accidentence."

"Now God yield ye for it, Master Herasmus," said the good Gammer, "and grant that little Dickie may be the better for his accident! and, for the rest, if the gentleman list to stay, breakfast shall be on the board in the wringing of a dish-clout; and for horse-meat and man's meat, I bear no such base mind as to ask a penny."

Considering the state of his horse, Tressilian, upon the whole, saw no better course than to accept the invitation thus learnedly made and hospitably confirmed, and take chance that, when the good pedagogue had exhausted every topic of conversation, he might possibly condescend to tell him where he could find the smith they spoke of. He entered the hut accordingly, and sat down with the learned Magister Erasmus Holiday, partook of his furmity, and listened to his learned account of himself for a good half-hour, ere he could get him to talk upon any other topic. The reader will readily excuse our accompanying this man of learning into all the details with which he favored Tressilian, of which the following sketch may suffice.

He was born at Hogsnorton, where, according to popular saying, the pigs play upon the organ—a proverb which he interpreted allegorically, as having reference to the herd of Epicurus, of which litter Horace confessed himself a porker. His name of Erasmus he derived partly from his father having been the son of a renowned washerwoman, who had held that great scholar in clean linen all the while he was at Oxford—a task of some difficulty, as he was only possessed of two shirts, "the one," as she expressed herself, "to wash the other." The vestiges of one of these 'camicæ,' as Master Holiday boasted, were still in his possession, having fortunately been detained by his grandmother to cover the balance of her bill. But he thought there was a still higher and overruling cause for his having had the name of Erasmus conferred on him, namely, the secret presentiment of his mother's mind that, in the babe to be christened, was a hidden

genius, which should one day lead him to rival the fame of the great scholar of Amsterdam. The schoolmaster's surname led him as far into dissertation as his Christian appellation. He was inclined to think that he bore the name of Holiday "quasi lucus a non lucendo," because he gave such few holidays to his school. "Hence," said he, "the schoolmaster is termed, classically, 'ludi magister,' because he deprives boys of their play." And yet, on the other hand, he thought it might bear a very different interpretation, and refer to his own exquisite art in arranging pageants, morris-dances, Mayday festivities, and such-like holiday delights, for which he assured Tressilian he had positively the purest and the most inventive brain in England; insomuch, that his cunning in framing such pleasures had made him known to many honorable persons both in country and court, and especially to the noble Earl of Leicester. "And although he may now seem to forget me," he said, "in the multitude of state affairs, yet I am well assured that, had he some pretty pastime to array for entertainment of the Queen's Grace, horse and man would be seeking the humble cottage of Erasmus Holiday. 'Parvo contentus,' in the meanwhile, I hear my pupils parse and construe, worshipful sir, and drive away my time with the aid of the Muses. And I have at all times, when in correspondence with foreign scholars, subscribed myself Erasmus ab Die Fausto, and have enjoyed the distinction due to the learned under that title; witness the erudite Diedrichus Buckerschockius, who dedicated to me, under that title, his treatise on the letter tau. In fine, sir, I have been a happy and distinguished man."

"Long may it be so, sir!" said the traveler; "but permit me to ask, in your own learned phrase, 'Quid hoc ad Iphycli boves'—what has all this to do with the shoeing of my poor nag?"

"'Festina lente,'" said the man of learning, "we will presently come to that point. You must know that, some two or three years past, there came to these parts one who called himself Dr. Doboobie, although it may be he never wrote even 'magister artium,' save in right of his hungry belly. Or it may be that, if he had any degrees, they were of the devil's giving, for he was what the vulgar call a white witch, a cunning man, and such-like. Now, good sir, I perceive you are impatient; but if a man tell not his tale his own way, how have you warrant to think that he can tell it in yours?"

"Well, then, learned sir, take your way," answered Tres-

silian; "only let us travel at a sharper pace, for my time is somewhat of the shortest."

"Well, sir," resumed Erasmus Holiday, with the most provoking perseverance, "I will not say that this same Demetrius, for so he wrote himself when in foreign parts, was an actual conjurer, but certain it is, that he professed to be a brother of the mystical order of the Rosy Cross, a disciple of Geber, 'ex nomine cujus venit verbum vernaculum,' gibberish. He cured wounds by salving the weapon instead of the sore, told fortunes by palmistry, discovered stolen goods by the sieve and shears, gathered the right maddow and the male fern seed, through use of which men walk invisible, pretended some advances toward the panacea or universal elixir, and affected to convert good lead into sorry silver."

"In other words," said Tressilian, "he was a quacksalver and common cheat; but what has all this to do with my nag and the shoe which he has lost?"

"With your worshipful patience," replied the diffusive man of letters, "you shall understand that presently; 'patientia' then, right worshipful, which word, according to our Marcus Tullius, is 'difficilium rerum diurna perpressio.' This same Demetrius Doboobie, after dealing with the country, as I have told you, began to acquire fame 'inter magnates,' among the prime men of the land, and there is likelihood he might have aspired to great matters, had not, according to vulgar fame—for I aver not the thing as according with my certain knowledge—the devil claimed his right one dark night, and flown off with Demetrius, who was never seen or heard of afterward. Now here comes the 'medulla,' the very marrow, of my tale. This Dr. Doboobie had a servant, a poor snake, whom he employed in trimming his furnace, regulating it by just measure, compounding his drugs, tracing his circles, cajoling his patients, 'et sic de cæteris.' Well, right worshipful, the doctor being removed thus strangely, and in a way which struck the whole country with terror, this poor zany thinks to himself, in the words of Maro, 'Uno avulso, non deficit alter'; and, even as a tradesman's apprentice set himself up in his master's shop when he is dead, or hath retired from business, so doth this Wayland assume the dangerous trade of his defunct master. But although, most worshipful sir, the world is ever prone to listen to the pretensions of such unworthy men, who are, indeed, mere 'saltim banqui' and 'charlatani,' though usurping the style and skill of doctors of medicine, yet the pretensions of this poor zany, this Wayland, were too

gross to pass on them, nor was there a mere rustic, a villager, who was not ready to accost him in the sense of Persius, though in their own rugged words:

Diluis helleborum, certo compescere puncto
Nescius examen? vetat hoc natura medendi;

which I have thus rendered in a poor paraphrase of mine own:

Wilt thou mix hellebore, who doth not know
How many grains should to the mixture go?
The art of medicine this forbids, I trow.

Moreover, the evil reputation of the master, and his strange and doubtful end, or at least sudden disappearance, prevented any, excepting the most desperate of men, to seek any advice or opinion from the servant; wherefore, the poor vermin was likely at first to swarf for very hunger. But the devil that serves him, since the death of Demetrius or Doboobie, put him on a fresh device. This knave, whether from the inspiration of the devil or from early education, shoes horses better than e'er a man betwixt us and Iceland; and so he gives up his practice on the bipeds, the two-legged and unfledged species called mankind, and betakes him entirely to shoeing of horses.

"Indeed! and where does he lodge all this time?" said Tressilian. "And does he shoe horses well? Show me his dwelling presently."

The interruption pleased not the magister, who exclaimed, "'Oh, cæca mens mortalium!' though, by the way, I used that quotation before. But I would the classics could afford me any sentiment of power to stop those who are so willing to rush upon their own destruction. Hear but, I pray you, the conditions of this man," said he, in continuation, "ere you are so willing to place yourself within his danger——"

"A' takes no money for a's work," said the dame, who stood by, enraptured as it were with the fine words and learned apothegms which glided so fluently from her erudite inmate, Master Holiday. But this interruption pleased not the magister more than that of the traveler.

"Peace," said he, "Gammer Sludge; know your place, if it be your will. 'Sufflamina,' Gammer Sludge, and allow me to expound this matter to our worshipful guest. Sir," said he, again addressing Tressilian, "this old woman speaks true, though in her own rude style, for certainly this 'faber ferriarius,' or blacksmith, takes money of no one."

"And that is a sure sign he deals with Satan," said Dame

Sludge; "since no good Christian would ever refuse the wages of his labor."

"The old woman hath touched it again," said the pedagogue; "'rem acu tetigit'—she hath pricked it with her needle's point. This Wayland takes no money indeed, nor doth he show himself to anyone."

"And can this madman, for such I hold him," said the traveler, "know aught like good skill of his trade?"

"Oh, sir, in that let us give the devil his due. Mulciber himself, with all his Cyclops, could hardly amend him. But assuredly there is little wisdom in taking counsel or receiving aid from one who is but too plainly in league with the author of evil."

"I must take my chance of that, good Master Holiday," said Tressilian, rising; "and as my horse must now have eaten his provender, I must needs thank you for your good cheer, and pray you to show me this man's residence, that I may have the means of proceeding on my journey."

"Aye—aye, do ye show him, Master Herasmus," said the old dame, who was, perhaps, desirous to get her house freed of her guest; "a' must needs go when the devil drives."

"Do manus," said the magister—"I submit, taking the world to witness that I have possessed this honorable gentleman with the full injustice which he has done, and shall do, to his own soul if he becomes thus a trinketer with Satan. Neither will I go forth with our guest myself, but rather send my pupil. 'Ricarde! adsis, nebulo.'"

"Under your favor, not so," answered the old woman; "you may peril your own soul, if you list, but my son shall budge on no such errand; and I wonder at you, Dominie Doctor, to propose such a piece of service for little Dickie."

"Nay, my good Gammer Sludge," answered the preceptor, "Ricardus shall go but to the top of the hill, and indicate with his digit to the stranger the dwelling of Wayland Smith. Believe not that any evil can come to him, he having read this morning, fasting, a chapter of the Septuagint, and, moreover, having had his lesson in the Greek Testament."

"Aye," said his mother, "and I have sewn a sprig of witch's elm in the neck of un's doublet, ever since that foul thief has begun his practices on man and beast in these parts."

"And as he goes oft, as I hugely suspect, toward this conjurer for his own pastime he may for once go thither or near him to pleasure us, and to assist this stranger. 'Ergo heus, Ricarde! adsis, quæso, mi didasculæ.'"

The pupil, thus affectionately invoked, at length came stumbling into the room—a queer, shambling, ill-made urchin, who, by his stunted growth, seemed about twelve or thirteen years old, though he was probably, in reality, a year or two older, with a carroty pate in huge disorder, a freckled, sunburnt visage, with a snub nose, a long chin, and two peery gray eyes, which had a droll obliquity of vision, approaching to a squint, though perhaps not a decided one. It was impossible to look at the little man without some disposition to laugh, especially when Gammer Sludge, seizing upon and kissing him, in spite of his struggling and kicking in reply to her caresses, termed him her own precious pearl of beauty.

“‘Ricarde,’” said the preceptor, “you must forthwith, which is ‘profecto,’ set forth so far as the top of the hill, and show this man of worship Wayland Smith’s workshop.”

“A proper errand of a morning,” said the boy, in better language than Tressilian expected; “and who knows but the devil may fly away with me before I come back?”

“Aye, marry, may un,” said Dame Sludge, “and you might have thought twice, Master Dominie, ere you sent my dainty darling on arrow such errand. It is not for such doings I feed your belly and clothe your back, I warrant you!”

“Pshaw! ‘nugæ,’ good Gammer Sludge,” answered the preceptor; “I ensure you that Satan, if there be Satan in the case, shall not touch a thread of his garment; for Dickie can say his pater with the best, and may defy the foul fiend—‘Eumenides, Stygiumque nefas.’”

“Aye, and I, as I said before, have sewed a sprig of the mountain-ash into his collar,” said the good woman, “which will avail more than your clerkship, I wus; but for all that, it is ill to seek the devil or his mates either.”

“My good boy,” said Tressilian, who saw, from a grotesque sneer on Dickie’s face, that he was more likely to act upon his own bottom than by the instruction of his elders, “I will give thee a silver groat, my pretty fellow, if you will but guide me to this man’s forge.”

The boy gave him a knowing side-look, which seemed to promise acquiescence, while at the same time he exclaimed, “I be your guide to Wayland Smith’s! Why, man, did I not say that the devil might fly off with me, just as the kite there [looking to the window] is flying off with one of grandame’s chicks?”

“The kite!—the kite!” exclaimed the old woman in return, and forgetting all other matters in her alarm, hastened

to the rescue of her chicken as fast as her old legs could carry her.

"Now for it," said the urchin to Tressilian; "snatch your beaver, get out your horse, and have at the silver groat you spoke of."

"Nay, but tarry—tarry," said the preceptor, "' Sufflamina, Ricarde!'"

"Tarry yourself," said Dickie, "and think what answer you are to make to granny for sending me post to the devil."

The teacher, aware of the responsibility he was incurring, bustled up in great haste to lay hold of the urchin, and to prevent his departure; but Dickie slipped through his fingers, bolted from the cottage, and sped him to the top of a neighboring rising-ground; while the preceptor, despairing, by well-taught experience, of recovering his pupil by speed of foot, had recourse to the most honeyed epithets the Latin vocabulary affords to persuade his return. But to "mi anime, corculum meum," and all such classical endearments, the truant turned a deaf ear, and kept frisking on the top of the rising-ground like a goblin by moonlight, making signs to his new acquaintance, Tressilian, to follow him.

The traveler lost no time in getting out his horse, and departing to join his elvish guide, after half-forcing on the poor deserted teacher a recompense for the entertainment he had received, which partly allayed the terror he had for facing the return of the old lady of the mansion. Apparently this took place soon afterward; for ere Tressilian and his guide had proceeded far on their journey they heard the screams of a cracked female voice, intermingled with the classical objurgations of Master Erasmus Holiday. But Dickie Sludge, equally deaf to the voice of maternal tenderness and of magisterial authority, skipped on unconsciously before Tressilian, only observing that, "If they cried themselves hoarse, they might go lick the honey-pot, for he had eaten up all the honey-comb himself on yesterday even."

CHAPTER X.

There entering in, they found the goodman self
Full busylie unto his work ybent,
Who was to weet a wretched wearish elf,
With hollow eyes and rawbone cheeks forspent,
As if he had been long in prison pent.

—*The Faëry Queen.*

“ARE we far from the dwelling of this smith, my pretty lad?” said Tressilian to his young guide.

“How is it you call me?” said the boy, looking askew at him with his sharp gray eyes.

“I call you my pretty lad—is there any offense in that, my boy?”

“No, but were you with my grandame and Dominie Holiday, you might sing chorus to the old song of

We three
Tom-fools be.”

“And why so, my little man?” said Tressilian.

“Because,” answered the ugly urchin, “you are the only three ever called me pretty lad. Now my grandame does it because she is parcel blind by age, and whole blind by kindred; and my master, the poor dominie, does it to curry favor, and have the fullest platter of furmity, and the warmest seat by the fire. But what *you* call me pretty lad for, you know best yourself.”

“Thou art a sharp wag at least, if not a pretty one. But what do thy playfellows call thee?”

“Hobgoblin,” answered the boy, readily; “but for all that I would rather have my own ugly viznomy than any of their jolterheads, that have no more brains in them than a brickbat.”

“Then you fear not this smith, whom you are going to see?”

“Me fear him!” answered the boy; “if he were the devil folk think him, I would not fear him; but though there is something queer about him, he’s no more a devil than you are, and that’s what I would not tell to everyone.”

“And why do you tell it to me, then, my boy?” said Tressilian.

“Because you are another-guess gentleman than those we

see here every day," replied Dickie; "and though I am as ugly as sin, I would not have you think me an ass, especially as I may have a boon to ask of you one day."

"And what is that, my lad, whom I must not call pretty?" replied Tressilian.

"Oh, if I were to ask it just now," said the boy, "you would deny it me; but I will wait till we meet at court."

"At court, Richard! are you bound for court?" said Tressilian.

"Aye—aye, that's just like the rest of them," replied the boy; "I warrant me you think, what should such an ill-favored, scrambling urchin do at court? But let Richard Sludge alone; I have not been cock of the roost here for nothing. I will make sharp wit mend foul feature."

"But what will your grandame say, and your tutor, Dominic Holiday?"

"E'en what they like," replied Dickie; "the one has her chickens to reckon, and the other has his boys to whip. I would have given them the candle to hold long since, and shown this trumpery hamlet a fair pair of heels, but that dominie promises I should go with him to bear share in the next pageant he is to set forth, and they say there are to be great revels shortly."

"And whereabouts are they to be held, my little friend?" said Tressilian.

"Oh, at some castle far in the north," answered his guide—"a world's breadth from Berkshire. But our old dominie holds that they cannot go forward without him; and it may be he is right, for he has put in order many a fair pageant. He is not half the fool you would take him for, when he gets to work he understands; and so he can spout verses like a play-actor, when, God wot, if you set him to steal a goose's egg, he would be drubbed by the gander."

"And you are to play a part in his next show?" said Tressilian, somewhat interested by the boy's boldness of conversation and shrewd estimate of character.

"In faith," said Richard Sludge, in answer, "he hath so promised me; and if he break his word it will be the worse for him; for let me take the bit between my teeth, and turn my head down hill, and I will shake him off with a fall that may harm his bones. And I should not like much to hurt him neither," said he, "for the tiresome old fool has painfully labored to teach me all he could. But enough of that; here are we at Wayland Smith's forge door."

"You jest, my little friend," said Tressilian; "here is nothing but a bare moor, and that ring of stones, with a great one in the midst, like a Cornish barrow."

"Aye, and that great flat stone in the midst, which lies across the top of these uprights," said the boy, "is Wayland Smith's counter, that you must tell down your money upon."

"What do you mean by such folly?" said the traveler, beginning to be angry with the boy, and vexed with himself for having trusted such a hare-brained guide.

"Why," said Dickie, with a grin, "you must tie your horse to that upright stone that has the ring in't, and then you must whistle three times, and lay me down your silver groat on that other flat stone, walk out of the circle, sit down on the west side of that little thicket of bushes, and take heed you look neither to right nor to left for ten minutes, or so long as you shall hear the hammer clink, and whenever it ceases say your prayers for the space you could tell a hundred, or count over a hundred, which will do as well, and then come into the circle; you will find your money gone and your horse shod."

"My money gone to a certainty!" said Tressilian; "but as for the rest—— Hark ye, my lad, I am not your school-master; but if you play off your waggery on me, I will take a part of his task off his hands, and punish you to purpose."

"Aye, when you can catch me!" said the boy; and presently took to his heels across the heath, with a velocity which baffled every attempt of Tressilian to overtake him, loaded as he was with his heavy boots. Nor was it the least provoking part of the urchin's conduct that he did not exert his utmost speed, like one who finds himself in danger or who is frightened, but preserved just such a rate as to encourage Tressilian to continue the chase, and then darted away from him with the swiftness of the wind, when his purser supposed he had nearly run him down, doubling at the same time, and winding, so as always to keep near the place from which he started.

This lasted until Tressilian, from very weariness, stood still, and was about to abandon the pursuit with a hearty curse on the ill-favored urchin who had engaged him in an exercise so ridiculous. But the boy, who had, as formerly, planted himself on the top of a hillock close in front, began to clap his long thin hands, point with his skinny fingers, and twist his wild and ugly features into such an extravagant ex-

pression of laughter and derision, that Tressilian began half to doubt whether he had not in view an actual hobgoblin.

Provoked extremely, yet at the same time feeling an irresistible desire to laugh, so very odd were the boy's grimaces and gesticulations, the Cornishman returned to his horse, and mounted him with the purpose of pursuing Dickie at more advantage.

The boy no sooner saw him mount his horse than he hallooed out to him that, rather than he should spoil his white-footed nag, he would come to him, on condition he would keep his fingers to himself.

"I will make no conditions with thee, thou ugly varlet!" said Tressilian; "I will have thee at my mercy in a moment."

"Aha, Master Traveler!" said the boy, "there is a marsh hard by would swallow all the horses of the Queen's Guard; I will into it, and see where you will go then. You shall hear the bittern bump and the wild drake quack ere you get hold of me without my consent, I promise you."

Tressilian looked out, and, from the appearance of the ground behind the hillock, believed it might be as the boy said, and accordingly determined to strike up a peace with so light-footed and ready-witted an enemy. "Come down," he said, "thou mischievous brat! Leave thy mopping and mowing, and come hither; I will do thee no harm, as I am a gentleman."

The boy answered his invitation with the utmost confidence, and danced down from his stance with a galliard sort of step, keeping his eye at the same time fixed on Tressilian's, who, once more dismounted, stood with his horse's bridle in his hand, breathless and half-exhausted with his fruitless exercise, though not one drop of moisture appeared on the freckled forehead of the urchin, which looked like a piece of dry and discolored parchment, drawn tight across the brow of a fleshless skull.

"And tell me," said Tressilian, "why you use me thus, thou mischievous imp? or what your meaning is by telling me so absurd a legend as you wished but now to put on me? Or rather show me, in good earnest, this smith's forge, and I will give thee what will buy thee apples through the whole winter."

"Were you to give me an orchard of apples," said Dickie Sludge, "I can guide thee no better than I have done. Lay down the silver token on the flat stone, whistle three times; then come sit down on the western side of the thicket of

gorse. I will sit by you, and give you free leave to wring my head off, unless you hear the smith at work within two minutes after we are seated."

"I may be tempted to take thee at thy word," said Tressilian, "if you make me do aught half so ridiculous for your own mischievous sport; however, I will prove your spell. Here, then, I tie my horse to this upright stone. I must lay my silver groat here, and whistle three times sayst thou?"

"Aye, but thou must whistle louder than an unfledged ouzel," said the boy, as Tressilian, having laid down his money, and half-ashamed of the folly he practiced, made a careless whistle. "You must whistle louder than that, for who knows where the smith is that you call for? He may be in the King of France's stables for what I know."

"Why, you said but now he was no devil," replied Tressilian.

"Man or devil," said Dickie, "I see that I must summon him for you;" and therewithal he whistled sharp and shrill, with an acuteness of sound that almost thrilled through Tressilian's brain. "That is what I call whistling," said he, after he had repeated the signal thrice; "and now to cover—to cover, or Whitefoot will not be shod this day."

Tressilian, musing what the upshot of this mummerly was to be, yet satisfied there was to be some serious result, by the confidence with which the boy had put himself in his power, suffered himself to be conducted to that side of the little thicket of gorse and brushwood which was farthest from the circle of stones, and there sat down; and, as it occurred to him that, after all, this might be a trick for stealing his horse, he kept his hand on the boy's collar, determined to make him hostage for its safety.

"Now, hush and listen," said Dickie, in a low whisper; "you will soon hear the tack of a hammer that was never forged of earthly iron, for the stone it was made of was shot from the moon." And in effect Tressilian did immediately hear the light stroke of a hammer, as when a farrier is at work. The singularity of such a sound, in so very lonely a place, made him involuntarily start; but looking at the boy, and discovering, by the arch, malicious expression of his countenance, that the urchin saw and enjoyed his slight tremor, he became convinced that the whole was a concerted stratagem, and determined to know by whom, or for what purpose, the trick was played off.

Accordingly, he remained perfectly quiet all the time that

the hammer continued to sound, being about the space usually employed in fixing a horse-shoe. But the instant the sound ceased, Tressilian, instead of interposing the space of time which his guide had required, started up with his sword in his hand, ran round the thicket, and confronted a man in a farrier's leathern apron, but otherwise fantastically attired in a bear-skin dressed with the fur on, and a cap of the same, which almost hid the sooty and begrimed features of the wearer. "Come back—come back!" cried the boy to Tressilian, "or you will be torn to pieces—no man lives that looks on him." In fact, the invisible smith (now fully visible) heaved up his hammer, and showed symptoms of doing battle.

But when the boy observed that neither his own entreaties nor the menaces of the farrier appeared to change Tressilian's purpose, but that, on the contrary, he confronted the hammer with his drawn sword, he exclaimed to the smith in turn, "Wayland, touch him not, or you will come by the worst! the gentleman is a true gentleman, and a bold."

"So thou hast betrayed me, Flibbertigibbet?" said the smith; "it shall be the worse for thee!"

"Be who thou wilt," said Tressilian, "thou art in no danger from me, so thou tell me the meaning of this practice, and why thou drivest thy trade in this mysterious fashion."

The smith, however, turning to Tressilian, exclaimed, in a threatening tone, "Who questions the Keeper of the Crystal Castle of Light, the Lord of the Green Lion, the Rider of the Red Dragon? Hence! avoid thee, ere I summon Talpeck with his fiery lance to quell, crush, and consume!" These words he uttered with violent gesticulation, mouthing and flourishing his hammer.

"Peace, thou vile cozener, with thy gypsy cant!" replied Tressilian scornfully, "and follow me to the next magistrate, or I will cut thee over the pate."

"Peace, I pray thee, good Wayland!" said the boy; "credit me, the swaggering vein will not pass here; you must cut boon whids."

"I think, worshipful sir," said the smith, sinking his hammer, and assuming a more gentle and submissive tone of voice, "that when so poor a man does his day's job, he might be permitted to work it out after his own fashion. Your horse is shod and your farrier paid. What need you cumber yourself further than to mount and pursue your journey?"

"Nay, friend, you are mistaken," replied Tressilian; "every man has a right to take the mask from the face of a

cheat and a juggler; and your mode of living raises suspicion that you are both."

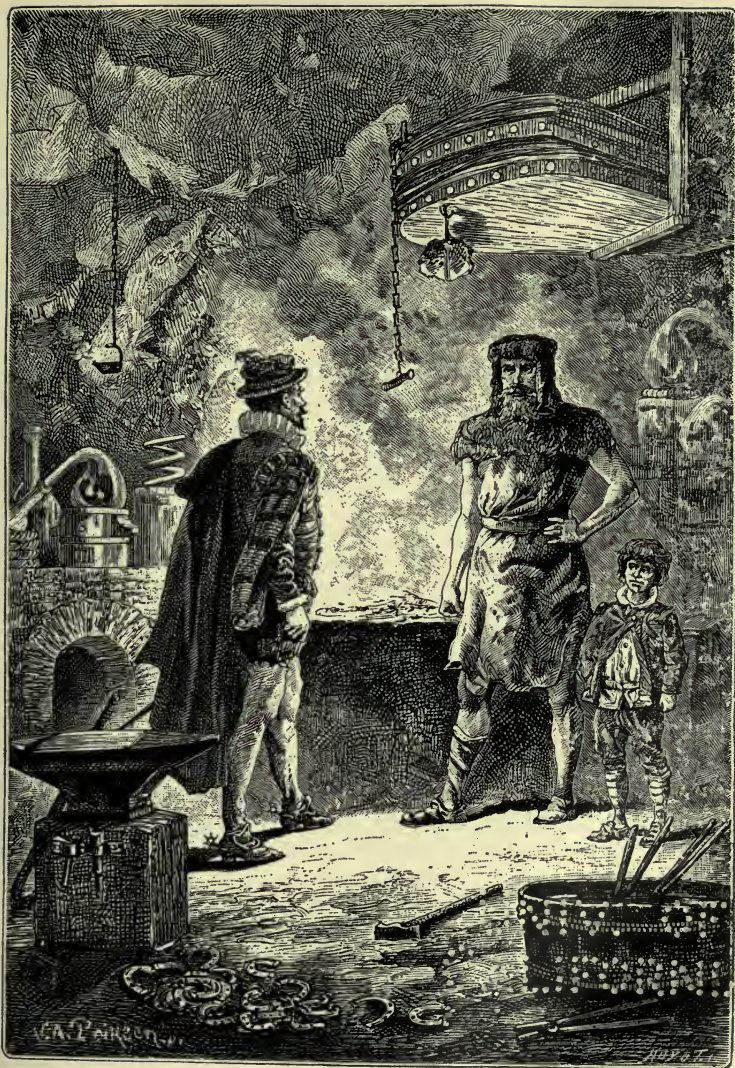
"If you are so determined, sir," said the smith, "I cannot help myself save by force, which I were unwilling to use toward you, Master Tressilian; not that I fear your weapon but because I know you to be a worthy, kind, and well-accomplished gentleman, who would rather help than harm a poor man that is in a strait."

"Well said, Wayland," said the boy, who had anxiously awaited the issue of their conference. "But let us to thy den, man, for it is ill for thy health to stand here talking in the open air."

"Thou art right, Hobgoblin," replied the smith; and going to the little thicket of gorse on the side nearest to the circle, and opposite to that at which his customer had so lately couched, he discovered a trap-door curiously covered with bushes, raised it, and, descending into the earth, vanished from their eyes. Notwithstanding Tressilian's curiosity, he had some hesitation at following the fellow into what might be a den of robbers, especially when he heard the smith's voice, issuing from the bowels of the earth, call out, "Flibbertigibbet, do you come last, and be sure to fasten the trap!"

"Have you seen enough of Wayland Smith now?" whispered the urchin to Tressilian with an arch sneer, as if marking his companion's uncertainty.

"Not yet," said Tressilian firmly; and shaking off his momentary irresolution he descended into the narrow staircase to which the entrance led and was followed by Dickie Sludge, who made fast the trap-door behind him, and thus excluded every glimmer of daylight. The descent, however, was only a few steps and led to a level passage of a few yards' length, at the end of which appeared the reflection of a lurid and red light. Arrived at this point, with his drawn sword in his hand, Tressilian found that a turn to the left admitted him and Hobgoblin, who followed closely, into a small square vault containing a smith's forge glowing with charcoal, the vapor of which filled the apartment with an oppressive smell, which would have been altogether suffocating, but that by some concealed vent the smithy communicated with the upper air. The light afforded by the red fuel, and by a lamp suspended in an iron chain, served to show that, besides an anvil, bellows, tongs, hammers, a quantity of ready-made horse-shoes, and other articles proper to the profession of a farrier, there were also stoves, alembics, crucibles, retorts, and other instruments



The Farrier's Cavern.

THE
MUSEUM
OF
COMPARATIVE ZOOLOGY
AND ANATOMY
OF
THE
MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
OF
THE
CITY OF BOSTON

of alchemy. The grotesque figure of the smith, and the ugly but whimsical features of the boy, seen by the gloomy and imperfect light of the charcoal fire and the dying lamp, accorded very well with all this mystical apparatus, and in that age of superstition would have made some impression on the courage of most men.

But nature had endowed Tressilian with firm nerves, and his education, originally good, had been too sedulously improved by subsequent study to give way to any imaginary terrors; and after giving a glance around him, he again demanded of the artist who he was, and by what accident he came to know and address him by his name.

"Your worship cannot but remember," said the smith, "that about three years since, upon St. Lucy's Eve, there came a traveling juggler to a certain hall in Devonshire, and exhibited his skill before a worshipful knight and a fair company. I see from your worship's countenance, dark as this place is, that my memory has not done me wrong."

"Thou hast said enough," said Tressilian, turning away, as wishing to hide from the speaker the painful train of recollections which his discourse had unconsciously awakened.

"The juggler," said the smith, "played his part so bravely that the clowns and clown-like squires in the company held his art to be little less than magical; but there was one maiden of fifteen or thereby, with the fairest face I ever looked upon, whose rosy cheek grew pale, and her bright eyes dim, at the sight of the wonders exhibited."

"Peace, I command thee—peace!" said Tressilian.

"I mean your worship no offense," said the fellow; "but I have cause to remember how, to relieve the young maiden's fears, you condescended to point out the mode in which these deceptions were practiced, and to baffle the poor juggler by laying bare the mysteries of his art, as ably as if you had been a brother of his order. She was indeed so fair a maiden that, to win a smile of her, a man might well——"

"Not a word more of her, I charge thee!" said Tressilian. "I do well remember the night you speak of—one of the few happy evenings my life has known."

"She is gone, then," said the smith, interpreting after his own fashion the sigh with which Tressilian uttered these words—"she is gone, young, beautiful, and beloved as she was! I crave your worship's pardon, I should have hammered on another thome—I see I have unwarily driven the nail to the quick."

This speech was made with a mixture of rude feeling which inclined Tressilian favorably to the poor artisan, of whom before he was inclined to judge very harshly. But nothing can so soon attract the unfortunate as real or seeming sympathy with their sorrows.

"I think," proceeded Tressilian, after a minute's silence, "thou wert in those days a jovial fellow, who could keep a company merry by song, and tale, and rebeck, as well as by thy juggling tricks; why do I find thee a laborious handicraftsman, plying thy trade in so melancholy a dwelling, and under such extraordinary circumstances?"

"My story is not long," said the artist; "but your honor had better sit while you listen to it." So saying, he approached to the fire a three-footed stool, and took another himself, while Dickie Sludge, or Flibbertigibbet, as he called the boy, drew a cricket to the smith's feet, and looked up in his face with features which, as illuminated by the glow of the forge, seemed convulsed with intense curiosity. "Thou too," said the smith to him, "shalt learn, as thou well deservest at my hand, the brief history of my life, and, in troth, it were as well tell it thee as leave thee to ferret it out, since nature never packed a shrewder wit into a more ungainly casket. Well, sir, if my poor story may pleasure you, it is at your command. But will you not taste a stoup of liquor? I promise you that even in this poor cell I have some in store."

"Speak not of it," said Tressilian, "but go on with thy story, for my leisure is brief."

"You shall have no cause to rue the delay," said the smith, "for your horse shall be better fed in the meantime than he hath been this morning, and made fitter for travel."

With that the artist left the vault, and returned after a few minutes' interval. Here, also, we pause, that the narrative may commence in another chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

I say, my lord can such a subtilty
(But all his craft ye must not wot of me,
And somewhat help I yet to his working),
That all the ground on which we ben riding,
Till that we come to Canterbury town,
He can all clean turnen so up so down,
And pave it all of silver and of gold.

—*The Canon's Yeoman's Prologue—Canterbury Tales.*

THE artist commenced his narrative in the following terms:

"I was bred a blacksmith, and knew my art as well as e'er a black-thumb'd, leathern-apron'd, swart-faced knave of that noble mystery. But I tired of ringing hammer-tunes on iron stithies, and went out into the world, where I became acquainted with a celebrated juggler, whose fingers had become rather too stiff for legerdemain, and who wished to have the aid of an apprentice in his noble mystery. I served him for six years, until I was master of my trade. I refer myself to your worship, whose judgment cannot be disputed, whether I did not learn to ply the craft indifferently well?"

"Excellently," said Tressilian; "but be brief."

"It was not long after I had performed at Sir Hugh Robsart's, in your worship's presence," said the artist, "that I took myself to the stage, and have swaggered with the bravest of them all, both at the Black Bull, the Globe, the Fortune, and elsewhere; but I know not how, apples were so plenty that year that the lads in the twopenny gallery never took more than one bite out of them, and threw the rest of the pippin at whatever actor chanced to be on the stage. So I tired of it, renounced my half-share in the company, gave my foil to my comrade, my buskins to the wardrobe, and showed the theater a clean pair of heels."

"Well, friend, and what," said Tressilian, "was your next shift?"

"I became," said the smith, "half-partner, half-domestic, to a man of much skill and little substance, who practiced the trade of a physicianer."

"In other words," said Tressilian, "you were Jack Pudding to a quacksalver."

"Something beyond that, let me hope, my good Master Tressilian," replied the artist; "and yet, to say truth, our

practice was of an adventurous description, and the pharmacy which I had acquired in my first studies for the benefit of horses was frequently applied to our human patients. But the seeds of all maladies are the same; and if turpentine, tar, pitch, and beef-suet, mingled with turmeric, gum-mastic, and one head of garlick can cure the horse that hath been grieved with a nail, I see not but what it may benefit the man that hath been pricked with a sword. But my master's practice, as well as his skill, went far beyond mine, and dealt in more dangerous concerns. He was not only a bold, adventurous practitioner in physics, but also, if your pleasure so chanced to be, an adept, who read the stars, and expounded the fortunes of mankind, genethliacally, as he called it, or otherwise. He was a learned distiller of simples, and a profound chemist—made several efforts to fix mercury, and judged himself to have made a fair hit at the philosopher's stone. I have yet a programme of his on that subject, which, if your honor understandeth, I believe you have the better, not only of all who read, but also of him who wrote it."

He gave Tressilian a scroll of parchment, bearing at top and bottom, and down the margin, the signs of the seven planets, curiously intermingled with talismanical characters, and scraps of Greek and Hebrew. In the midst were some Latin verses from a cabalistical author, written out so fairly, that even the gloom of the place did not prevent Tressilian from reading them. The tenor of the original ran as follows:

"Si fixum solvas, faciasque volare solutum,
Et volucrem figas, facient te vivere tutum;
Si pariat ventum, valet auri pondere centum;
Ventus ubi vult spirat—capiat qui capere potest."

"I protest to you," said Tressilian, "all I understand of this jargon is, that the last words seem to mean 'Catch who catch can.'"

"That," said the smith, "is the very principle that my worthy friend and master, Dr. Doboobie, always acted upon; until, being besotted with his own imaginations, and conceited of his high chemical skill, he began to spend, in cheating himself, the money which he had acquired in cheating others, and either discovered or built for himself, I could never know which, this secret elaboratory, in which he used to seclude himself both from patients and disciples, who doubtless thought his long and mysterious absences from his ordinary residence in the town of Farringdon were occasioned by his progress in the mystic sciences, and his intercourse

with the invisible world. Me also he tried to deceive; but, though I contradicted him not, he saw that I knew too much of his secrets to be any longer a safe companion. Meanwhile, his name waxed famous or rather infamous, and many of those who resorted to him did so under persuasion that he was a sorcerer. And yet his supposed advance in the occult sciences drew to him the secret resort of men too powerful to be named, for purposes too dangerous to be mentioned. Men cursed and threatened him, and bestowed on me, the innocent assistant of his studies, the nickname of the Devil's foot-post, which procured me a volley of stones as soon as ever I ventured to show my face in the street of the village. At length my master suddenly disappeared, pretending to me that he was about to visit his laboratory in this place, and forbidding me to disturb him till two days were past. When this period had elapsed, I became anxious, and resorted to this vault, where I found the fires extinguished and the utensils in confusion, with a note from the learned Doboobius, as he was wont to style himself, acquainting me that we should never meet again, bequeathing me his chemical apparatus and the parchment which I have just put into your hands, advising me strongly to prosecute the secret which it contained, which would infallibly lead me to the discovery of the grand magisterium."

"And didst thou follow this sage advice?" said Tressilian.

"Worshipful sir, no," replied the smith; "for being by nature cautious, and suspicious from knowing with whom I had to do, I made so many perquisitions before I ventured even to light a fire, that I at length discovered a small barrel of gunpowder, carefully hid beneath the furnace, with the purpose, no doubt, that, as soon as I should commence the grand work of the transmutation of metals, the explosion should transmute the vault and all in it into a heap of ruins, which might serve at once for my slaughter-house and my grave. This cured me of alchemy, and fain would I have returned to the honest hammer and anvil; but who would bring a horse to be shod by the Devil's post? Meantime, I had won the regard of my honest Flibbertigibbet here, he being then at Farringdon with his master, the sage Erasmus Holiday, by teaching him a few secrets, such as please youth at his age; and after much counsel together we agreed that, since I could get no practice in the ordinary way, I should try how I could work out business among these ignorant boors by practicing upon their silly fears; and, thanks to Flibberti-

gibbet, who hath spread my renown, I have not wanted custom, but it is won at too great risk, and I fear I shall be at length taken up for a wizard; so that I seek but an opportunity to leave his vault when I can have the protection of some worshipful person against the fury of the populace, in case they chance to recognize me."

"And art thou," said Tressilian, "perfectly acquainted with the roads in this country?"

"I could ride them every inch by midnight," answered Wayland Smith, which was the name this adept had assumed.

"Thou hast no horse to ride upon," said Tressilian.

"Pardon me," replied Wayland, "I have as good a tit as ever yeoman bestrode; and I forgot to say it was the best part of the mediciner's legacy to me, excepting one or two of the choicest of his medical secrets, which I picked up without his knowledge and against his will."

"Get thyself washed and shaved, then," said Tressilian; "reform thy dress as well as thou canst, and fling away these grotesque trappings; and, so thou wilt be secret and faithful, thou shalt follow me for a short time, till thy pranks here are forgotten. Thou hast, I think, both address and courage, and I have matter to do that may require both."

Wayland Smith eagerly embraced the proposal, and protested his devotion to his new master. In a very few minutes he had made so great an alteration in his original appearance, by change of dress, trimming his beard and hair, and so forth, that Tressilian could not help remarking, that he thought he would stand in little need of a protector, since none of his old acquaintance were likely to recognize him.

"My debtors would not pay me money," said Wayland, shaking his head; "but my creditors of every kind would be less easily blinded. And, in truth, I hold myself not safe, unless under the protection of a gentleman of birth and character, as is your worship."

So saying, he led the way out of the cavern. He then called loudly for Hobgoblin, who, after lingering for an instant, appeared with the horse furniture, when Wayland closed, and sedulously covered up, the trap-door, observing, it might again serve him at his need, besides that the tools were worth somewhat. A whistle from the owner brought to his side a nag that fed quietly on the common, and was accustomed to the signal. While he accoutered him for the journey, Tressilian drew his own girths tighter, and in a few minutes both were ready to mount.

At this moment Sludge approached to bid them farewell.

"You are going to leave me, then, my old playfellow," said the boy; "and there is an end of all our game at bo-peep with the cowardly lubbards whom I brought hither to have their broad-footed nags shod by the devil and his imps?"

"It is even so," said Wayland Smith; "the best friends must part, Flibbertigibbet; but thou, my boy, art the only thing in the Vale of Whitehorse which I shall regret to leave behind me."

"Well, I bid thee not farewell," said Dickie Sludge, "for you will be at these revels, I judge, and so shall I; for if Dominie Holiday take me not thither, by the light of day, which we see not in yonder dark hole, I will take myself there!"

"In good time," said Wayland; "but I pray you to do naught rashly."

"Nay, now you would make a child—a common child of me, and tell me of the risk of walking without leading-strings. But before you are a mile from these stones you shall know by a sure token that I have more of the hobgoblin about me than you credit; and I will so manage that, if you take advantage, you may profit by my prank."

"What dost thou mean, boy?" said Tressilian; but Flibbertigibbet only answered with a grin and a caper, and bidding both of them farewell, and at the same time exhorting them to make the best of their way from the place, he set them the example by running homeward with the same uncommon velocity with which he had baffled Tressilian's former attempts to get hold of him.

"It is in vain to chase him," said Wayland Smith; "for, unless your worship is expert in lark-hunting, we should never catch hold of him; and, besides, what would it avail? Better make the best of our way hence, as he advises."

They mounted their horses accordingly, and began to proceed at a round pace, as soon as Tressilian had explained to his guide the direction in which he desired to travel.

After they had trotted nearly a mile, Tressilian could not help observing to his companion, that his horse felt more lively under him than even when he mounted in the morning.

"Are you avised of that?" said Wayland Smith, smiling. "That is owing to a little secret of mine. I mixed that with an handful of oats which shall save your worship's heels the trouble of spurring these six hours at least. Nay, I have not studied medicine and pharmacy for naught."

"I trust," said Tressilian, "your drugs will do my horse no harm?"

"No more than the mare's milk which foaled him," answered the artist; and was proceeding to dilate on the excellence of his recipe, when he was interrupted by an explosion as loud and tremendous as the mine which blows up the rampart of a beleaguered city. The horses started, and the riders were equally surprised. They turned to gaze in the direction from which the thunder-clap was heard, and beheld, just over the spot they had left so recently, a huge pillar of dark smoke rising high into the clear blue atmosphere. "My habitation is gone to wreck," said Wayland, immediately conjecturing the cause of the explosion. "I was a fool to mention the doctor's kind intentions toward my mansion before that limb of mischief Flibbertigibbet: I might have guessed he would long to put so rare a frolic into execution. But let us hasten on, for the sound will collect the country to the spot."

So saying, he spurred his horse, and Tressilian also quickening his speed, they rode briskly forward.

"This, then, was the meaning of the little imp's token which he promised us?" said Tressilian; "had we lingered near the spot, we had found it a love-token with a vengeance."

"He would have given us warning," said the smith; "I saw him look back more than once to see if we were off—'tis a very devil for mischief, yet not an ill-natured devil either. It were long to tell your honor how I became first acquainted with him, and how many tricks he played me. Many a good turn he did me too, especially in bringing me customers; for his great delight was to see them sit shivering behind the bushes when they heard the click of my hammer. I think Dame Nature, when she lodged a double quantity of brains in that misshapen head of his, gave him the power of enjoying other people's distresses as she gave them the pleasure of laughing at his ugliness."

"It may be so," said Tressilian; "those who find themselves severed from society by peculiarities of form, if they do not hate the common bulk of mankind, are at least not altogether indisposed to enjoy their mishaps and calamities."

"But Flibbertigibbet," answered Wayland, "hath that about him which may redeem his turn for mischievous frolic; for he is as faithful when attached as he is tricky and malignant to strangers; and, as I said before, I have cause to say so."

Tressilian pursued the conversation no farther; and they

continued their journey toward Devonshire without farther adventure, until they alighted at an inn in the town of Marlborough, since celebrated for having given title to the greatest general (excepting one) whom Britain ever produced. Here the travelers received, in the same breath, an example of the truth of two old proverbs, namely, that Ill news fly fast, and that Listeners seldom hear a good tale of themselves.

The innyard was in a sort of combustion when they alighted; insomuch, that they could scarce get man or boy to take care of their horses, so full were the whole household of some news which flew from tongue to tongue, the import of which they were for some time unable to discover. At length, indeed, they found it respected matters which touched them nearly.

"What is the matter, say you, master?" answered, at length, the head hostler, in reply to Tressilian's repeated questions. "Why, truly, I scarce know myself. But here was a rider but now, who says that the devil hath flown away with him they called Wayland Smith, that won'd about three miles from the Whitehorse of Berkshire, this very blessed morning, in a flash of fire and a pillar of smoke, and rooted up the place he dwelt in, near that old cockpit of upright stones, as cleanly as if it had all been delved up for a cropping."

"Why, then," said an old farmer, "the more is the pity; for that Wayland Smith—whether he was the devil's crony or no I skill not—had a good notion of horse diseases, and it's to be thought the bots will spread in the country far and near, an Satan has not gien un time to leave his secret behind un."

"You may say that, Gaffer Grimesby," said the hostler in return; "I have carried a horse to Wayland Smith myself, for he passed all farriers in this country."

"Did you see him?" said Dame Alison Crane, mistress of the inn bearing that sign, and deigning to term 'husband' the owner thereof, a mean-looking hop-o'-my-thumb sort of person, whose halting gait, and long neck, and meddling, henpecked insignificance are supposed to have given origin to the celebrated old English tune of "My Dame hath a lame tame Crane."

On this occasion he chirped out a repetition of his wife's question, "Didst see the devil, Jack Hostler, I say?"

"And what if I did see un, Master Crane?" replied Jack Hostler, for, like all the rest of the household, he paid as little respect to his master as his mistress herself did.

"Nay, naught, Jack Hostler," replied the pacific Master

Crane, "only if you saw the devil, methinks I would like to know what un's like?"

"You will know that one day, Master Crane," said his help-mate, "an ye mend not your manners and mind your business, leaving off such idle palabras. But truly, Jack Hostler, I should be glad to know myself what like the fellow was."

"Why, dame," said the hostler, more respectfully, "as for what he was like I cannot tell, nor no man else, for why I never saw un."

"And how didst thou get thine errand done," said Gaffer Grimesby, "if thou seedst him not?"

"Why, I had schoolmaster to write down ailment o' nag," said Jack Hostler; "and I went wi' the ugliest slip of a boy for my guide as ever man cut out o' lime-tree root to please a child withal."

"And what was it? and did it cure your nag, Jack Hostler?" was uttered and echoed by all who stood around.

"Why, how can I tell you what it was?" said the hostler; "simply it smelled and tasted—for I did make bold to put a pea's substance into my mouth—like hartshorn and savin mixed with vinegar; but then no hartshorn and savin ever wrought so speedy a cure. And I am dreading that, if Wayland Smith be gone, the bots will have more power over horse and cattle."

The pride of art, which is certainly not inferior in its influence to any other pride whatever, here so far operated on Wayland Smith that, notwithstanding the obvious danger of his being recognized, he could not help winking to Tressilian, and smiling mysteriously, as if triumphing in the undoubted evidence of his veterinary skill. In the meanwhile, the discourse continued.

"E'en let it be so," said a grave man in black, the companion of Gaffer Grimesby—"e'en let us perish under the evil God sends us, rather than the devil be our doctor."

"Very true," said Dame Crane; "and I marvel at Jack Hostler that he would peril his own soul to cure the bowels of a nag."

"Very true, mistress," said Jack Hostler, "but the nag was my master's; and had it been yours, I think ye would ha' held me cheap enow an I had feared the devil when the poor beast was in such a taking. For the rest, let the clergy look to it. Every man to his craft, says the proverb—the parson to the prayer-book and the groom to his currycomb."

"I vow," said Dame Crane, "I think Jack Hostler speaks

like a good Christian and a faithful servant, who will spare neither body nor soul in his master's service. However, the devil has lifted him in time, for a constable of the hundred came hither this morning to get old Gaffer Pinniewinks, the trier of witches, to go with him to the Vale of Whitehorse to comprehend Wayland Smith, and put him to his probation. I helped Pinniewinks to sharpen his pincers and his poking-awl, and I saw the warrant from Justice Blindas."

"Pooh—pooh, the devil would laugh both at Blindas and his warrant, constable and witch-finder to boot," said old Dame Crank, the Papist laundress; "Wayland Smith's flesh would mind Pinniewinks's awl no more than a cambric ruff minds a hot piccadilloe needle. But tell me, gentlefolks, if the devil ever had such a hand among ye, as to snatch away your smiths and your artists from under your nose, when the good abbots of Abingdon had their own? By Our Lady, no! they had their hallowed tapers, and their holy water, and their relics, and what not, could send the foulest fiends a-packing. Go ask a heretic parson to do the like. But ours were a comfortable people."

"Very true, Dame Crank," said the hostler; "so said Simpkins of Simonburn when the curate kissed his wife—'They are a comfortable people,' said he."

"Silence, thou foul-mouthed vermin," said Dame Crank; "is it fit for a heretic horse-boy like thee to handle such a text as the Catholic clergy?"

"In troth no, dame," replied the man of oats; "and as you yourself are now no text for their handling, dame, whatever may have been the case in your day, I think we had e'en better leave un alone."

At this last exchange of sarcasm, Dame Crank set up her throat, and began a horrible exclamation against Jack Hostler, under cover of which Tressilian and his attendant escaped into the house.

They had no sooner entered a private chamber, to which Goodman Crane himself had condescended to usher them, and dispatched their worthy and obsequious host on the errand of procuring wine and refreshment, than Wayland Smith began to give vent to his self-importance.

"You see, sir," said he, addressing Tressilian, "that I nothing fabled in asserting that I possessed fully the mighty mystery of a farrier, or mareschal, as the French more honorably term us. These dog-hostlers, who, after all, are the better judges in such a case, know what credit they should

attach to my medicaments. I call you to witness, worshipful Master Tressilian, that naught, save the voice of calumny and the hand of malicious violence, hath driven me forth from a station in which I held a place alike useful and honored."

"I bear witness, my friend, but will reserve my listening," answered Tressilian, "for a safer time; unless, indeed, you deem it essential to your reputation to be translated, like your late dwelling, by the assistance of a flash of fire. For you see your best friends reckon you no better than a mere sorcerer."

"Now, Heaven forgive them," said the artist, "who confound learned skill with unlawful magic! I trust a man may be as skillful, or more so, than the best chirurgeon ever meddled with horse-flesh and yet may be upon the matter little more than other ordinary men, or at the worst no conjurer."

"God forbid else!" said Tressilian. "But be silent just for the present, since here comes mine host with an assistant, who seems something of the least."

Everybody about the inn, Dame Crank [Crane] herself included, had been indeed so interested and agitated by the story they had heard of Wayland Smith, and by the new, varying, and more marvelous editions of the incident, which arrived from various quarters, that mine host, in his righteous determination to accommodate his guests, had been able to obtain the assistance of none of his household, saving that of a little boy, a junior tapster, of about twelve years old, who was called Sampson.

"I wish," he said, apologizing to his guests, as he set down a flagon of sack, and promised some food immediately—"I wish the devil had flown away with my wife and my whole family instead of this Wayland Smith, who, I dare say, after all said and done, was much less worthy of the distinction which Satan has done him."

"I hold opinion with you, good fellow," replied Wayland Smith; "and I will drink to you upon that argument."

"Not that I would justify any man who deals with the devil," said mine host, after having pledged Wayland in a rousing draught of sack, "but that—saw ye ever better sack, my masters?—but that, I say, a man had better deal with a dozen cheats and scoundrel fellows, such as this Wayland Smith, than with a devil incarnate, that takes possession of house and home, bed and board."

The poor fellow's detail of grievances was here interrupted by the shrill voice of his helpmate, screaming from the kitchen, to which he instantly hobbled, craving pardon of his

guests. He was no sooner gone than Wayland Smith expressed, by every contemptuous epithet in the language, his utter scorn for a nincompoop who stuck his head under his wife's apron string; and intimated that, saving for the sake of the horses, which required both rest and food, he would advise his worshipful Master Tressilian to push on a stage farther, rather than pay a reckoning to such a mean-spirited, crow-trodden, hen-pecked coxcomb as Gaffer Crane.

The arrival of a large dish of good cow-heel and bacon something soothed the asperity of the artist, which wholly vanished before a choice capon so delicately roasted that "the lard frothed on it," said Wayland, "like May-dew on a lily"; and both Gaffer Crane and his good dame became, in his eyes, very painstaking, accommodating, obliging persons.

According to the manners of the times, the master and his attendant sat at the same table, and the latter observed, with regret, how little attention Tressilian paid to his meal. He recollected, indeed, the pain he had given by mentioning the maiden in whose company he had first seen him; but, fearful of touching upon a topic too tender to be tampered with, he chose to ascribe his abstinence to another cause.

"This fare is perhaps too coarse for your worship," said Wayland, as the limbs of the capon disappeared before his own exertions; "but had you dwelt as long as I have done in yonder dungeon, which Flibbertigibbet has translated to the upper element, a place where I dared hardly broil my food, lest the smoke be seen without, you would think a fair capon a more welcome dainty."

"If you are pleased, friend," said Tressilian, "it is well. Nevertheless, hasten thy meal if thou canst, for this place is unfriendly to thy safety, and my concerns crave traveling."

Allowing, therefore, their horses no more rest than was absolutely necessary for them, they pursued their journey by a forced march as far as Bradford, where they reposed themselves for the night.

The next morning found them early travelers. And, not to fatigue the reader with unnecessary particulars, they traversed without adventure the counties of Wiltshire and Somerset, and, about noon of the third day after Tressilian's leaving Cumnor, arrived at Sir Hugh Robsart's seat, called Lidcote Hall, on the frontiers of Devonshire.

CHAPTER XII.

Ah me! the flower and blossom of your house,
The wind hath blown away to other towers.

—JOANNA BAILLIE'S *Family Legend*.

THE ancient seat of Lidcote Hall was situated near the village of the same name, and adjoined the wild and extensive forest of Exmoor, plentifully stocked with game, in which some ancient rights belonging to the Robsart family entitled Sir Hugh to pursue his favorite amusement of the chase. The old mansion was a low, venerable building, occupying a considerable space of ground, which was surrounded by a deep moat. The approach and drawbridge were defended by an octagonal tower, of ancient brickwork, but so clothed with ivy and other creepers that it was difficult to discover of what materials it was constructed. The angles of this tower were each decorated with a turret, whimsically various in form and in size, and, therefore, very unlike the monotonous stone pepper-boxes which, in modern Gothic architecture, are employed for the same purpose. One of these turrets was square, and occupied as a clock-house. But the clock was now standing still—a circumstance peculiarly striking to Tressilian, because the good old knight, among other harmless peculiarities, had a fidgety anxiety about the exact measurement of time, very common to those who have a great deal of that commodity to dispose of, and find it lie heavy upon their hands—just as we see shopkeepers amuse themselves with taking an exact account of their stock at the time there is least demand for it.

The entrance to the courtyard of the old mansion lay through an archway, surmounted by the foresaid tower, but the drawbridge was down, and one leaf of the iron-studded folding-doors stood carelessly open. Tressilian hastily rode over the drawbridge, entered the court, and began to call loudly on the domestics by their names. For some time he was only answered by the echoes and the howling of the hounds, whose kennel lay at no great distance from the mansion, and was surrounded by the same moat. At length Will Badger, the old and favorite attendant of the knight, who acted alike as squire of his body and superintendent of his

sports, made his appearance. The stout weather-beaten for-ester showed great signs of joy when he recognized Tressilian.

"Lord love you," he said, "Master Edmund, be it thou in flesh and fell? Then thou mayst do some good on Sir Hugh, for it passes the wit of man—that is, of mine own, and the curate's, and Master Mumblazen's—to do aught wi'un."

"Is Sir Hugh then worse since I went away, Will?" demanded Tressilian.

"For worse in body—no, he is much better," replied the domestic; "but he is clean mazed as it were—eats and drinks as he was wont, but sleeps not, or rather wakes not, for he is ever in a sort of twilight, that is neither sleeping nor waking. Dame Swineford thought it was like the dead palsy. 'But no—no, dame,' said I, 'it is the heart—it is the heart.'"

"Can ye not stir his mind to any pastimes?" said Tressilian.

"He is clean and quite off his sports," said Will Badger; "hath neither touched backgammon or shovel-board, nor looked on the big book of harrowtry wi' Master Mumblazen. I let the clock run down, thinking the missing the bell might somewhat move him, for you know, Master Edmund, he was particular in counting time; but he never said a word on't, so I may e'en set the old chime a-towling again. I made bold to tread on Bungay's tail too, and you know what a round rating that would ha' cost me once a day; but he minded the poor tyke's whine no more than a madge-howlet whooping down the chimney: so the case is beyond me."

"Thou shalt tell me the rest within doors, Will. Meanwhile, let this person be ta'en to the buttery, and used with respect. He is a man of art."

"White art or black art, I would," said Will Badger, "that he had any art which could help us. Here, Tom Butler, look to the man of art; and see that he steals none of thy spoons, lad," he added in a whisper to the butler, who showed himself at a low window, "I have known as honest a faced fellow have art enough to do that."

He then ushered Tressilian into a low parlor, and went, at his desire, to see in what state his master was, lest the sudden return of his darling pupil, and proposed son-in-law, should affect him too strongly. He returned immediately, and said that Sir Hugh was dozing in his elbow-chair, but that Master Mumblazen would acquaint Master Tressilian the instant he awaked.

"But it is chance if he knows you," said the huntsman,

“for he has forgotten the name of every hound in the pack. I thought about a week since he had gotten a favorable turn. ‘Saddle me old Sorrel,’ said he, suddenly, after he had taken his usual night-draught out of the great silver grace-cup, ‘and take the hounds to Mount Hazelhurst to-morrow.’ Glad men were we all, and out we had him in the morning, and he rode to cover as usual, with never a word spoken but that the wind was south and the scent would lie. But ere we had uncoupled the hounds he began to stare round him, like a man that wakes suddenly out of a dream—turns bridle and walks back to hall again, and leaves us to hunt at leisure by our selves, if we listed.”

“You tell a heavy tale, Will,” replied Tressilian; “but God must help us—there is no aid in man.”

“Then you bring us no news of young Mistress Amy? But what need I ask—your brow tells the story. Ever I hoped that, if any man could or would track her, it must be you. All’s over and lost now. But if ever I have that Varney within reach of a flight-shot, I will bestow a forked shaft on him; and that I swear by salt and bread.”

As he spoke, the door opened, and Master Mumblazen appeared—a withered, thin, elderly gentleman, with a cheek like a winter apple, and his gray hair partly concealed by a small high hat, shaped like a cone, or rather like such a strawberry-basket as London fruiterers exhibit at their windows. He was too sententious a person to waste words on mere salutation; so, having welcomed Tressilian with a nod and a shake of the hand, he beckoned him to follow to Sir Hugh’s great chamber, which the good knight usually inhabited. Will Badger followed, unasked, anxious to see whether his master would be relieved from his state of apathy by the arrival of Tressilian.

In a long low parlor, amply furnished with implements of the chase, and with silvan trophies, by a massive stone chimney, over which hung a sword and suit of armor, somewhat obscured by neglect, sat Sir Hugh Robsart of Lidcote, a man of large size, which had been only kept within moderate compass by the constant use of violent exercise. It seemed to Tressilian that the lethargy under which his old friend appeared to labor had, even during his few weeks’ absence, added bulk to his person; at least it had obviously diminished the vivacity of his eye, which, as they entered, first followed Master Mumblazen slowly to a large oaken desk, on which a ponderous volume lay open, and then rested, as if in uncer-

tainty, on the stranger who had entered along with him. The curate, a gray-headed clergyman, who had been a confessor in the days of Queen Mary, sat with a book in his hand in another recess in the apartment. He, too, signed a mournful greeting to Tressilian, and laid his book aside, to watch the effect his appearance should produce on the afflicted old man.

As Tressilian, his own eyes filling fast with tears, approached more and more nearly to the father of his betrothed bride, Sir Hugh's intelligence seemed to revive. He sighed heavily, as one who awakens from a state of stupor, a slight convulsion passed over his features, he opened his arms without speaking a word, and, as Tressilian threw himself into them, he folded him to his bosom.

"There is something left to live for yet," were the first words he uttered; and while he spoke, he gave vent to his feelings in a paroxysm of weeping, the tears chasing each other down his sunburnt cheeks and long white beard.

"I ne'er thought to have thanked God to see my master weep," said Will Badger; "but now I do, though I am like to weep for company."

"I will ask thee no questions," said the old knight—"no questions—none, Edmund; thou hast not found her, or so found her that she were better lost."

Tressilian was unable to reply, otherwise than by putting his hands before his face.

"It is enough—it is enough. But do not thou weep for her, Edmund. I have cause to weep, for she was my daughter; thou hast cause to rejoice, that she did not become thy wife. Great God! Thou knowest best what is good for us. It was my nightly prayer that I should see Amy and Edmund wedded; had it been granted, it had now been gall added to bitterness."

"Be comforted, my friend," said the curate, addressing Sir Hugh, "it cannot be that the daughter of all our hopes and affections is the vile creature you would bespeak her."

"Oh, no," replied Sir Hugh impatiently, "I were wrong to name broadly the base thing she is become; there is some new court name for it, I warrant me. It is honor enough for the daughter of an old De'nshire clown to be the leman of a gay courtier—of Varney too—of Varney, whose grandsire was relieved by my father, when his fortune was broken, at the battle of—the battle of—where Richard was slain; out on my memory! and I warrant none of you will help me——"

"The battle of Bosworth," said Master Mumblazen,

“stricken between Richard Crookback and Henry Tudor, grandsire of the Queen that now is, ‘primo Henrici Septimi,’ and in the year one thousand four hundred and eighty-five ‘post Christum natum.’”*

“Aye, even so,” said the old knight, “every child knows it. But my poor head forgets all it should remember, and remembers only what it would most willingly forget. My brain has been at fault, Tressilian, almost ever since thou hast been away and even yet it hunts counter.”

“Your worship,” said the good clergyman, “had better retire to your apartment and try to sleep for a little space: the physician left a composing draught, and our Great Physician has commanded us to use earthly means, that we may be strengthened to sustain the trials He sends us.”

“True—true, old friend,” said Sir Hugh, “and we will bear our trials manfully. We have lost but a woman. See, Tressilian”—he drew from his bosom a long ringlet of glossy hair—“see this lock! I tell thee, Edmund, the very night she disappeared, when she bid me good-even, as she was wont, she hung about my neck and fondled me more than usual; and I, like an old fool, held her by this lock, until she took her scissors, severed it, and left it in my hand—as all I was ever to see more of her!”

Tressilian was unable to reply, well judging what a physician left a composing draught, and our Great Happy fugitive at that cruel moment. The clergyman was about to speak, but Sir Hugh interrupted him.

“I know what you would say, Master Curate—after all, it is but a lock of woman’s tresses, and by woman shame, and sin, and death came into an innocent world. And learned Master Mumblazen, too, can say scholarly things of their inferiority.”

“‘C’est l’homme,’” said Master Mumblazen, “‘qui se bast, et qui conseille.’”

“True,” said Sir Hugh, “and we will bear us, therefore, like men who have both mettle and wisdom in us. Tressilian, thou art as welcome as if thou hadst brought better news. But we have spoken too long dry-lipped. Amy, fill a cup of wine to Edmund and another to me.” Then instantly recollecting that he called upon her who could not hear, he shook his head, and said to the clergyman, “This grief is to my bewildered mind what the church of Lidcote is to our park: we may lose ourselves among the briars and thickets for

* [Compare p. 91, where the battle of Stoke is spoken of.]

a little space, but from the end of each avenue we see the old gray steeple and the grave of my forefathers. I would I were to travel that road to-morrow!"

Tressilian and the curate joined in urging the exhausted old man to lay himself to rest, and at length prevailed. Tressilian remained by his pillow till he saw that slumber at length sunk down on him, and then returned to consult with the curate what steps should be adopted in these unhappy circumstances.

They could not exclude from these deliberations Master Michael Mumblazen; and they admitted him the more readily that, besides what hopes they entertained from his sagacity, they knew him to be so great a friend to taciturnity that there was no doubt of his keeping counsel. He was an old bachelor of good family, but small fortune, and distantly related to the house of Robsart; in virtue of which connection, Lidcote Hall had been honored with his residence for the last twenty years. His company was agreeable to Sir Hugh, chiefly on account of his profound learning, which, though it only related to heraldry and genealogy, with such scraps of history as connected themselves with these subjects, was precisely of a kind to captivate the good old knight; besides the convenience which he found in having a friend to appeal to, when his own memory, as frequently happened, proved infirm, and played him false concerning names and dates, which, and all similar deficiencies, Master Michael Mumblazen supplied with due brevity and discretion. And, indeed, in matters concerning the modern world, he often gave, in his enigmatical and heraldic phrase, advice which was well worth attending to, or, in Will Badger's language, started the game while others beat the bush.

"We have had an unhappy time of it with the good knight, Master Edmund," said the curate. "I have not suffered so much since I was torn away from my beloved flock, and compelled to abandon them to the Romish wolves."

"That was in 'tertio Mariæ,'" said Master Mumblazen.

"In the name of Heaven," continued the curate, "tell us, has your time been better spent than ours, or have you any news of that unhappy maiden, who, being for so many years the principal joy of this broken-down house, is now proved our greatest unhappiness? Have you not at least discovered her place of residence?"

"I have," replied Tressilian. "Know you Cumnor Place, near Oxford?"

“Surely,” said the clergyman; “it was a house of removal for the monks of Abingdon.”

“Whose arms,” said Master Michael, “I have seen over a stone chimney in the hall—a cross patoncee betwixt four martlets.”

“There,” said Tressilian, “this unhappy maiden resides, in company with the villain Varney. But for a strange mishap, my sword had revenged all our injuries, as well as hers, on his worthless head.”

“Thank God, that kept thine hand from blood-guiltiness, rash young man!” answered the curate. ‘Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, and I will repay it.’ It were better study to free her from the villain’s nets of infamy.”

“They are called, in heraldry, ‘laquei amoris,’ or ‘lacs d’amour,’” said Mumblazen.

“It is in that I require your aid, my friends,” said Tressilian; “I am resolved to accuse this villain, at the very foot of the throne, of falsehood, seduction, and breach of hospitable laws. The Queen shall hear me, though the Earl of Leicester, the villain’s patron, stood at her right hand.”

“Her Grace,” said the curate, “hath set a comely example of continence to her subjects, and will doubtless do justice on this inhospitable robber. But wert thou not better apply to the Earl of Leicester, in the first place, for justice on his servant? If he grants it, thou dost save the risk of making thyself a powerful adversary, which will certainly chance if, in the first instance, you accuse his master of the horse and prime favorite before the Queen.”

“My mind revolts from your counsel,” said Tressilian. “I cannot brook to plead my noble patron’s cause—the unhappy Amy’s cause—before anyone save my lawful sovereign. Leicester, thou wilt say, is noble; be it so, he is but a subject like ourselves, and I will not carry my plaint to him, if I can do better. Still, I will think on what thou hast said; but I must have your assistance to persuade the good Sir Hugh to make me his commissioner and fiduciary in this matter, for it is in his name I must speak, and not in my own. Since she is so far changed as to dote upon this empty profligate courtier, he shall at least do her the justice which is yet in his power.”

“Better she died ‘cœlebs’ and ‘sine prole,’” said Mumblazen, with more animation than he usually expressed, “than part, ‘per pale,’ the noble coat of Robsart with that of such a miscreant!”

"If it be your object, as I cannot question," said the clergyman, "to save, as much as is yet possible, the credit of this unhappy young woman, I repeat, you should apply in the first instance, to the Earl of Leicester. He is as absolute in his household as the Queen in her kingdom, and if he expresses to Varney that such is his pleasure, her honor will not stand so publicly committed."

"You are right—you are right," said Tressilian eagerly, "and I thank you for pointing out what I overlooked in my haste. I little thought ever to have besought grace of Leicester; but I could kneel to the proud Dudley, if doing so could remove one shade of shame from this unhappy damsel. You will assist me, then, to procure the necessary powers from Sir Hugh Robsart?"

The curate assured him of his assistance and the herald nodded assent.

"You must hold yourselves also in readiness to testify, in case you are called upon, the open-hearted hospitality which our good patron exercised toward this deceitful traitor, and the solicitude with which he labored to seduce his unhappy daughter."

"At first," said the clergyman, "she did not, as it seemed to me, much affect his company, but latterly I saw them often together."

"'Seiant' in the parlor," said Michael Mumblazen, "and 'passant' in the garden."

"I once came on them by chance," said the priest, "in the South wood in a spring evening; Varney was muffled in a russet cloak, so that I saw not his face; they separated hastily, as they heard me rustle amongst the leaves, and I observed she turned her head and looked long after him."

"With neck 'reguardant,'" said the herald; "and on the day of her flight, and that was on St. Austen's Eve, I saw Varney's groom, attired in his liveries, hold his master's horse and Mistress Amy's palfrey, bridled and saddled proper, behind the wall of the churchyard."

"And now is she found mew'd up in his secret place of retirement," said Tressilian. "The villain is taken in the manner, and I well wish he may deny his crime, that I may thrust conviction down his false throat! But I must prepare for my journey. Do you gentlemen, dispose my patron to grant me such powers as are needful to act in his name."

So saying, Tressilian left the room.

"He is too hot," said the curate; "and I pray to God that

He may grant him the patience to deal with Varney as is fitting."

"Patience and Varney," said Mumblazen, "is worse heraldry than metal upon metal. He is more false than a siren, more rapacious than a griffin, more poisonous than a wyvern, and more cruel than a lion rampant."

"Yet I doubt much," said the curate, "whether we can with propriety ask from Sir Hugh Robsart, being in his present condition, any deed deputing his paternal right in Mistress Amy to whomsoever——"

"Your reverence need not doubt that," said Will Badger, who entered as he spoke, "for I will lay my life he is another man when he wakes than he has been these thirty days past."

"Aye, Will," said the curate, "hast thou then so much confidence in Dr. Diddleum's draught?"

"Not a whit," said Will, "because master ne'er tasted a drop on't, seeing it was emptied out by the housemaid. But here's a gentleman, who came attending on Master Tressilian, has given Sir Hugh a draught that is worth twenty of yon un. I have spoken cunningly with him, and a better farrier, or one who hath a more just notion of horse and dog ailment, I have never seen; and such a one would never be unjust to a Christian man."

"A farrier! you saucy groom. And by whose authority, pray?" said the curate, rising in surprise and indignation; "or who will be warrant for this new physician?"

"For authority, an it like your reverence, he had mine; and for warrant, I trust I have not been five-and-twenty years in this house without having right to warrant the giving of a draught to beast or body—I who can gie a drench, and a ball, and bleed, or blister, if need, to my very self."

The counselors of the house of Robsart thought it meet to carry this information instantly to Tressilian, who as speedily summoned before him Wayland Smith, and demanded of him (in private, however), by what authority he had ventured to administer any medicine to Sir Hugh Robsart.

"Why," replied the artist, "your worship cannot but remember that I told you I had made more progress into my master's—I mean the learned Dr. Doboobie's—mystery than he was willing to own; and, indeed, half of his quarrel and malice against me was that, besides that I got something too deep into his secrets, several discerning persons, and particularly a buxom young widow of Abingdon, preferred my prescriptions to his."

"None of thy buffoonery, sir," said Tressilian sternly. "If thou hast trifled with us—much more, if thou hast done aught that may prejudice Sir Hugh Robsart's health—thou shalt find thy grave at the bottom of a tin mine."

"I know too little of the great 'arcanum' to convert the ore to gold," said Wayland firmly. "But truce to your apprehensions, Master Tressilian. I understood the good knight's case, from what Master William Badger told me; and I hope I am able enough to administer a poor dose of mandragora, which, with the sleep that must needs follow, is all that Sir Hugh Robsart requires to settle his distraught brains."

"I trust thou dealest fairly with me, Wayland?" said Tressilian.

"Most fairly and honestly, as the event shall show," replied the artist. "What would it avail me to harm the poor old man for whom you are interested?—you, to whom I owe it that Gaffer Pinniewinks is not even now rending my flesh and sinews with his accursed pincers and probing every mole in my body with his sharpened awl—a murrain on the hands which forged it!—in order to find out the witch's mark? I trust to yoke myself as a humble follower to your worship's train, and I only wish to have my faith judged of by the result of the good knight's slumbers."

Wayland Smith was right in his prognostication. The sedative draught which his skill had prepared, and Will Badger's confidence had administered, was attended with the most beneficial effects. The patient's sleep was long and healthful; and the poor old knight awoke, humbled indeed in thought, and weak in frame, yet a much better judge of whatever was subjected to his intellect than he had been for some time past. He resisted for a while the proposal made by his friends that Tressilian should undertake a journey to court, to attempt the recovery of his daughter, and the redress of her wrongs, in so far as they might yet be repaired. "Let her go," he said; "she is but a hawk that goes down the wind; I would not bestow even a whistle to reclaim her." But though he for some time maintained this argument, he was at length convinced it was his duty to take the part to which natural affection inclined him, and consent that such efforts as could yet be made should be used by Tressilian in behalf of his daughter. He subscribed, therefore, a warrant of attorney, such as the curate's skill enabled him to draw up; for

in those simple days the clergy were often the advisers of their flock in law as well as in Gospel.

All matters were prepared for Tressilian's second departure within twenty-four hours after he had returned to Lidcote Hall; but one material circumstance had been forgotten, which was first called to the remembrance of Tressilian by Master Mumblazen. "You are going to court, Master Tressilian," said he; "you will please remember that your blazonry must be 'argent' and 'or'; no other tinctures will pass current." The remark was equally just and embarrassing. To prosecute a suit at court, ready money was as indispensable even in the golden days of Elizabeth as at any succeeding period; and it was a commodity little at the command of the inhabitants of Lidcote Hall. Tressilian was himself poor; the revenues of good Sir Hugh Robsart were consumed, and even anticipated, in his hospitable mode of living; and it was finally necessary that the herald, who started the doubt, should himself solve it. Master Michael Mumblazen did so by producing a bag of money, containing nearly three hundred pounds in gold and silver of various coinage, the savings of twenty years; which he now, without speaking a syllable upon the subject, dedicated to the service of the patron whose shelter and protection had given him the means of making this little hoard. Tressilian accepted it without affecting a moment's hesitation, and a mutual grasp of the hand was all that passed betwixt them, to express the pleasure which the one felt in dedicating his all to such a purpose, and that which the other received from finding so material an obstacle to the success of his journey so suddenly removed, and in a manner so unexpected.

While Tressilian was making preparations for his departure early the ensuing morning, Wayland Smith desired to speak with him; and, expressing his hope that he had been pleased with the operation of his medicine in behalf of Sir Hugh Robsart, added his desire to accompany him to court. This was indeed what Tressilian himself had several times thought of; for the shrewdness, alertness of understanding, and variety of resource which this fellow had exhibited during the time they had traveled together, had made him sensible that his assistance might be of importance. But then Wayland was in danger from the grasp of law; and of this Tressilian reminded him, mentioning something, at the same time, of the pincers of Pinniewinks and the warrant of Master Justice Blindas. Wayland Smith laughed both to scorn.

“See you sir!” said he, “I have changed my garb from that of a farrier to a serving-man; but were it still as it was, look at my mustachios; they now hang down, I will but turn them up, and dye them with a tincture that I know of, and the devil would scarce know me again.”

He accompanied these words with the appropriate action; and in less than a minute, by setting up his mustachios and his hair, he seemed a different person from him that had but now entered the room. Still, however, Tressilian hesitated to accept his services, and the artist became proportionably urgent.

“I owe you life and limb,” he said, “and I would fain pay a part of the debt, especially as I know from Will Badger on what dangerous service your worship is bound. I do not, indeed, pretend to be what is called a man of mettle—one of those ruffling tear-cats, who maintain their master’s quarrel with sword and buckler. Nay, I am even one of those who hold the end of a feast better than the beginning of a fray. But I know that I can serve your worship better in such quest as yours than any of these sword-and-dagger men, and that my head will be worth an hundred of their hands.”

Tressilian still hesitated. He knew not much of this strange fellow, and was doubtful how far he could repose in him the confidence necessary to render him an useful attendant upon the present emergency. Ere he had come to a determination, the trampling of a horse was heard in the courtyard and Master Mumblazen and Will Badger both entered hastily into Tressilian’s chamber, speaking almost at the same moment.

“Here is a serving-man on the bonniest gray tit I ever see’d in my life,” said Will Badger, who got the start;—“having on his arm a silver cognizance, being a fire-drake holding in his mouth a brick-bat, under a coronet of an earl’s degree,” said Master Mumblazen, “and bearing a letter sealed of the same.”

Tressilian took the letter, which was addressed “To the worshipful Master Edmund Tressilian, our loving kinsman—These—ride, ride, ride—for thy life, for thy life, for thy life.” He then opened it, and found the following contents:

“MASTER TRESSILIAN, OUR GOOD FRIEND AND COUSIN:

“We are at present so ill at ease, and otherwise so unhappily circumstanced, that we are desirous to have around us those of our friends on whose loving-kindness we can most

especially repose confidence; amongst whom we hold our good Master Tressilian one of the foremost and nearest, both in good will and good ability. We therefore pray you, with your most convenient speed, to repair to our poor lodging at Say's Court, near Deptford, where we will treat farther with you of matters which we deem it not fit to commit unto writing. And so we bid you heartily farewell, being your loving kinsman to command.

“RATCLIFFE, EARL OF SUSSEX.”

“Send up the messenger instantly, Will Badger,” said Tressilian; and as the man entered the room he exclaimed, “Ah, Stevens, is it you? how does my good lord?”

“Ill, Master Tressilian,” was the messenger's reply, “and having therefore the more need of good friends around him.”

“But what is my lord's malady?” said Tressilian anxiously. “I heard nothing of his being ill.”

“I know not, sir,” replied the man; “he is very ill at ease. The leeches are at a stand, and many of his household suspect foul practice—witchcraft, or worse.”

“What are the symptoms?” said Wayland Smith, stepping forward hastily.

“Anan?” said the messenger, not comprehending his meaning.

“What does he ail?” said Wayland; “where lies his disease?”

The man looked at Tressilian, as if to know whether he should answer these inquiries from a stranger, and receiving a sign in the affirmative, he hastily enumerated gradual loss of strength, nocturnal perspiration, and loss of appetite, faintness, etc.

“Joined,” said Wayland, “to a gnawing pain in the stomach, and a low fever?”

“Even so,” said the messenger, somewhat surprised.

“I know how the disease is caused,” said the artist, “and I know the cause. Your master has eaten of the manna of St. Nicholas. I know the cure too: my master shall not say I studied in his laboratory for nothing.”

“How mean you?” said Tressilian, frowning: “we speak of one of the first nobles of England. Bethink you, this is no subject for buffoonery.”

“God forbid!” said Wayland Smith. “I say that I know his disease, and can cure him. Remember what I did for Sir Hugh Robsart.”

“We will set forth instantly,” said Tressilian. “God calls us.”

Accordingly, hastily mentioning this new motive for his instant departure, though without alluding to either the suspicions of Stevens or the assurances of Wayland Smith, he took the kindest leave of Sir Hugh and the family at Lidcote Hall, who accompanied him with prayers and blessings, and, attended by Wayland and the Earl of Sussex's domestic, traveled with the utmost speed toward London.

CHAPTER XIII.

Ay, I know you have arsenic,
Vitriol, sal-tartre, argaile, alkaly,
Cinoper : I know all. This fellow, Captain,
Will come in time to be a great distiller,
And give a say, I will not say directly,
But very near, at the philosopher's stone.

—*The Alchemist.*

TRESSILIAN and his attendants pressed their route with all dispatch. He had asked the smith, indeed, when their departure was resolved on, whether he would not rather choose to avoid Berkshire, in which he had played a part so conspicuous? But Wayland returned a confident answer. He had employed the short interval they passed at Lidcote Hall in transforming himself in a wonderful manner. His wild and overgrown thicket of beard was now restrained to two small mustachios on the upper lip, turned up in a military fashion. A tailor from the village of Lidcote (well paid) had exerted his skill, under his customer's directions, so as completely to alter Wayland's outward man, and take off from his appearance almost twenty years of age. Formerly, besmeared with soot and charcoal, overgrown with hair, and bent double with the nature of his labor, disfigured, too, by his odd and fantastic dress, he seemed a man of fifty years old. But now, in a handsome suit of Tressilian's livery, with a sword by his side, and a buckler on his shoulder, he looked like a gay ruffling serving-man, whose age might be betwixt thirty and thirty-five, the very prime of human life. His loutish, savage-looking demeanor seemed equally changed into a forward, sharp, and impudent alertness of look and action.

When challenged by Tressilian, who desired to know the cause of a metamorphosis so singular and so absolute, Wayland only answered by singing a stave from a comedy, which was then new, and was supposed, among the more favorable judges, to augur some genius on the part of the author. We are happy to preserve the couplet, which ran exactly thus:

“ Ban—ban, Ca—Caliban !
Get a new master ; be a new man.”

Although Tressilian did not recollect the verses, yet they reminded him that Wayland had once been a stage-player, a cir-

cumstance which, of itself, accounted indifferently well for the readiness with which he could assume so total a change of personal appearance. The artist himself was so confident of his disguise being completely changed, or of his having completely changed his disguise, which may be the more correct mode of speaking, that he regretted they were not to pass near his old place of retreat.

"I could venture," he said, "in my present dress, and with your worship's backing, to face Master Justice Blindas, even on a day of quarter sessions; and I would like to know what is become of Hobgoblin, who is like to play the devil in the world, if he can once slip the string and leave his granny and his dominie. Aye, and the scathed vault!" he said—"I would willingly have seen what havoc the explosion of so much gunpowder has made among Dr. Demetrius Doboobie's retorts and vials. I warrant me, my fame haunts the Vale of the Whitehorse long after my body is rotten; and that many a lout ties up his horse, lays down his silver groat, and pipes like a sailor whistling in a calm, for Wayland Smith to come and shoe his tit for him. But the horse will catch the founders ere the smith answers the call."

In this particular, indeed, Wayland proved a true prophet; and so easily do fables rise, that an obscure tradition of his extraordinary practice in farriery prevails in the Vale of Whitehorse even unto this day; and neither the tradition of Alfred's victory nor of the celebrated Pusey horn are better preserved in Berkshire than the wild legend of Wayland Smith.*

The haste of the travelers admitted their making no stay upon their journey; save what the refreshment of the horses required; and as many of the places through which they passed were under the influence of the Earl of Leicester, or persons immediately dependent on him, they thought it prudent to disguise their names and the purpose of their journey. On such occasions the agency of Wayland Smith (by which name we shall continue to distinguish the artist, though his real name was Lancelot Wayland) was extremely serviceable. He seemed, indeed, to have a pleasure in displaying the alertness with which he could baffle investigation, and amuse himself by putting the curiosity of tapsters and innkeepers on a false scent. During the course of their brief journey, three different and inconsistent reports were circulated by him on their account; namely, first, that Tressilian was the Lord

* See Note 4.

Deputy of Ireland, come over in disguise to take the Queen's pleasure concerning the great rebel Rory Oge MacCarthy MacMahon; secondly, that the said Tressilian was an agent of Monsieur, coming to urge his suit to the hand of Elizabeth; thirdly, that he was the Duke of Medina, come over, incognito, to adjust the quarrel betwixt Philip and that princess.

Tressilian was angry and expostulated with the artist on the various inconveniences, and, in particular, the unnecessary degree of attention, to which they were subjected by the figments he thus circulated; but he was pacified (for who could be proof against such an argument?) by Wayland's assuring him that a general importance was attached to his own (Tressilian's) striking presence, which rendered it necessary to give an extraordinary reason for the rapidity and secrecy of his journey.

At length they approached the metropolis, where, owing to the more general recourse of strangers, their appearance excited neither observation nor inquiry, and finally they entered London itself.

It was Tressilian's purpose to go down directly to Deptford, where Lord Sussex resided, in order to be near the court, then held at Greenwich, the favorite residence of Elizabeth, and honored as her birthplace. Still, a brief halt in London was necessary; and it was somewhat prolonged by the earnest entreaties of Wayland Smith, who desired permission to take a walk through the city.

"Take thy sword and buckler, and follow me, then," said Tressilian; "I am about to walk myself, and we will go in company."

This he said, because he was not altogether so secure of the fidelity of his new retainer as to lose sight of him at this interesting moment, when rival factions at the court of Elizabeth were running so high. Wayland Smith willingly acquiesced in the precaution, of which he probably conjectured the motive, but only stipulated that his master should enter the shops of such chemists or apothecaries as he should point out in walking through Fleet Street, and permit him to make some necessary purchases. Tressilian agreed, and, obeying the signal of his attendant, walked successively into more than four or five shops, where he observed that Wayland purchased in each only one single drug, in various quantities. The medicines which he first asked for were readily furnished, each in succession, but those which he afterward required were less easily supplied; and Tressilian observed that Wayland

more than once, to the surprise of the shopkeeper, returned the gum or herb that was offered to him and compelled him to exchange it for the right sort, or else went on to seek it elsewhere. But one ingredient, in particular, seemed almost impossible to be found. Some chemists plainly admitted they had never seen it, others denied that such a drug existed excepting in the imagination of crazy alchemists, and most of them attempted to satisfy their customers by producing some substitute which when rejected by Wayland as not being what he had asked for, they maintained possessed, in a superior degree, the self-same qualities. In general, they all displayed some curiosity concerning the purpose for which he wanted it. One old meager chemist, to whom the artist put the usual question, in terms which Tressilian neither understood nor could recollect, answered frankly, there was none of that drug in London, unless Yoglan the Jew chanced to have some of it upon hand.

"I thought as much," said Wayland. And as soon as they left the shop, he said to Tressilian, "I crave your pardon, sir, but no artist can work without his tools. I must needs go to this Yoglan's; and I promise you that, if this detains you longer than your leisure seems to permit, you shall, nevertheless, be well repaid by the use I will make of this rare drug. Permit me," he added, "to walk before you, for we are now to quit the broad street, and we will make double speed if I lead the way."

Tressilian acquiesced, and, following the smith down a lane which turned to the left hand toward the river, he found that his guide walked on with great speed, and apparently perfect knowledge of the town, through a labyrinth of by-streets, courts, and blind alleys, until at length Wayland paused in the midst of a very narrow lane, the termination of which showed a peep of the Thames looking misty and muddy, which background was crossed saltier-ways as Mr. Mumblazen might have said, by the masts of two lighters that lay waiting for the tide. The shop under which he halted had not, as in modern days, a glazed window; but a paltry canvas screen surrounded such a stall as a cobbler now occupies, having the front open, much in the manner of a fishmonger's booth of the present day. A little old smock-faced man, the very reverse of a Jew in complexion, for he was very soft-haired as well as beardless, appeared, and with many courtesies asked Wayland what he pleased to want. He had no sooner named the drug than the Jew started and looked sur-

prised. "And vat might your vorship vant vith that drug, which is not named, mein God, in forty years as I have been chemist here?"

"These questions it is no part of my commission to answer," said Wayland; "I only wish to know if you have what I want, and having it, are willing to sell it?"

"Aye, mein God, for having it, that I have, and for selling it, I am a chemist, and sell every drug." So saying, he exhibited a powder, and then continued, "But it will cost much moneys. Vat I 'ave cost its weight in gold—aye, gold well-refined—I vill say six times. It comes from Mount Sinai, where we had our blessed Law given forth, and the plant blossoms but once in one hundred year."

"I do not know how often it is gathered on Mount Sinai," said Wayland, after looking at the drug offered him with great disdain, "but I will wager my sword and buckler against your gaberdine that this trash you offer me, instead of what I asked for, may be had for gathering any day of the week in the castle ditch of Aleppo."

"You are a rude man," said the Jew; "and, besides, I 'ave no better than that; or, if I 'ave, I will not sell it without order of a physician, or without you tell me vat you make of it."

The artist made brief answer in a language of which Tressilian could not understand a word, and which seemed to strike the Jew with the utmost astonishment. He stared upon Wayland like one who has suddenly recognized some mighty hero or dreaded potentate in the person of an unknown and unmarked stranger. "Holy Elias!" he exclaimed, when he had recovered the first stunning effects of his surprise; and then, passing from his former suspicious and surly manner to the very extremity of obsequiousness, he cringed low to the artist, and besought him to enter his poor house, to bless his miserable threshold by crossing it.

"Vill you not taste a cup vith the poor Jew, Zacharias Yoglan? Vill you Tokay 'ave?—vill you Lachrymæ taste?—vill you——"

"You offend in your proffers," said Wayland; "minister to me in what I require of you, and forbear further discourse."

The rebuked Israelite took his bunch of keys, and opening with circumspection a cabinet which seemed more strongly secured than the other cases of drugs and medicines amongst which it stood, he drew out a little secret drawer, having a glass lid, and containing a small portion of a black powder.

This he offered to Wayland, his manner conveying the deepest devotion toward him, though an avaricious and jealous expression, which seemed to grudge every grain of what his customer was about to possess himself, disputed ground in his countenance with the obsequious deference which he desired it should exhibit.

“Have you scales?” said Wayland.

The Jew pointed to those which lay ready for common use in the shop, but he did so with a puzzled expression of doubt and fear which did not escape the artist.

“They must be other than these,” said Wayland sternly; “know you not that holy things lose their virtue if weighed in an unjust balance?”

The Jew hung his head, took from a steel-plated casket a pair of scales beautifully mounted, and said, as he adjusted them for the artist’s use—“With these I do mine own experiment; one hair of the high-priest’s beard would turn them.”

“It suffices,” said the artist; and weighed out two drams for himself of the black powder, which he very carefully folded up and put into his pouch with the other drugs. He then demanded the price of the Jew, who answered, shaking his head and bowing:

“No price—no, nothing at all from such as you. But you will see the poor Jew again?—you will look into his laboratory, where, God help him, he hath dried himself to the substance of the withered gourd of Jonah, the holy prophet? You vill ’ave pity on him, and show him one little step on the great road?”

“Hush!” said Wayland, laying his finger mysteriously on his mouth, “it may be we shall meet again: thou hast already the ‘schahmajm,’ as thine own rabbis call it—the general creation; watch, therefore, and pray, for thou must attain the knowledge of Alchahest Elixir Samech ere I may commune farther with thee.” Then returning with a slight nod the reverential congees of the Jew, he walked gravely up the lane, followed by his master, whose first observation on the scene he had just witnessed was, that Wayland ought to have paid the man for his drug, whatever it was.

“I pay him!” said the artist. “May the foul fiend pay me if I do! Had it not been that I thought it might displease your worship, I would have had an ounce or two of gold out of him, in exchange of the same just weight of brick-dust.”

“I advise you to practice no such knavery while waiting upon me,” said Tressilian.

“Did I not say,” answered the artist, “that for that reason alone I forbore him for the present? Knavery, call you it? Why, yonder wretched skeleton hath wealth sufficient to pave the whole lane he lives in with dollars, and scarce miss them out of his own iron chest; yet he goes mad after the philosopher’s stone; and, besides, he would have cheated a poor serving-man, as he thought me at first, with trash that was not worth a penny. ‘Match for match,’ quoth the devil to the collier: if his false medicine was worth my good crowns, my true brick-dust is as well worth his good gold.”

“It may be so for aught I know,” said Tressilian, “in dealing amongst Jews and apothecaries; but understand that to have such tricks of legerdemain practiced by one attending on me diminishes my honor, and that I will not permit them. I trust thou hast made up thy purchases?”

“I have, sir,” replied Wayland; “and with these drugs will I, this very day, compound the true orvietan,* that noble medicine which is so seldom found genuine and effective within these realms of Europe, for want of that most rare and precious drug which I got but now from Yoglan.”

“But why not have made all your purchases at one shop?” said his master; “we have lost nearly an hour in running from one pounder of simples to another.”

“Content you, sir,” said Wayland. “No man shall learn my secret; and it would not be mine long were I to buy all my materials from one chemist.”

They now returned to their inn, the famous Bell-Savage, and while the Lord Sussex’s servant prepared the horses for their journey, Wayland, obtaining from the cook the service of a mortar, shut himself up in a private chamber, where he mixed, pounded, and amalgamated the drugs which he had bought, each in its due proportion, with a readiness and address that plainly showed him well practiced in all the manual operations of pharmacy.

By the time Wayland’s electuary was prepared the horses were ready, and a short hour’s riding brought them to the present habitation of Lord Sussex, an ancient house called Say’s Court,† near Deptford, which had long pertained to a family of that name, but had for upwards of a century been possessed by the ancient and honorable family of Evelyn. The present representative of that ancient house

* See Note 5.

† The court has now entirely disappeared, and its site is occupied by a workhouse.—*Loing.*

took a deep interest in the Earl of Sussex, and had willingly accommodated both him and his numerous retinue in his hospitable mansion. Say's Court was afterward the residence of the celebrated Mr. Evelyn,* whose "Silva" is still the manual of British planters; and whose life, manners, and principles, as illustrated in his "Memoirs," ought equally to be the manual of English gentlemen.

* Evelyn's name has also become familiar through his *Memoirs*, comprising a Diary from 1641 to 1705, and a Selection of Familiar Letters, published from his MSS., discovered at Say's Court in 1818.—*Laing*.

CHAPTER XIV.

**This is rare news thou tell'st me, my good fellow ;
There are two bulls fierce battling on the green
For one fair heifer ; if the one goes down,
The dale will be more peaceful, and the herd,
Which have small interest in their brulziement,
May pasture there in peace.**

—*Old Play.*

SAY'S COURT was watched like a beleaguered fort; and so high rose the suspicions of the time, that Tressilian and his attendants were stopped and questioned repeatedly by sentinels, both on foot and horseback, as they approached the abode of the sick earl. In truth, the high rank which Sussex held in Queen Elizabeth's favor, and his known and avowed rivalry of the Earl of Leicester, caused the utmost importance to be attached to his welfare; for, at the period we treat of, all men doubted whether he or the Earl of Leicester might ultimately have the higher rank in her regard.

Elizabeth, like many of her sex, was fond of governing by factions, so as to balance two opposing interests, and reserve in her own hand the power of making either predominate, as the interest of the state, or perhaps as her own female caprice, for to that foible even she was not superior, might finally determine. To finesse, to hold the cards, to oppose one interest to another, to bridle him who thought himself highest in her esteem by the fears he must entertain of another equally trusted, if not equally beloved, were arts which she used throughout her reign, and which enabled her, though frequently giving way to the weakness of favoritism, to prevent most of its evil effects on her kingdom and government.

The two nobles who at present stood as rivals in her favor possessed very different pretensions to share it; yet it might be in general said that the Earl of Sussex had been most serviceable to the queen, while Leicester was most dear to the woman. Sussex was, according to the phrase of the times, a martialist: had done good service in Ireland and in Scotland, and especially in the great northern rebellion, in 1569, which was quelled, in a great measure, by his military talents. He was, therefore, naturally surrounded and looked up to by those who wished to make arms their road to distinction.

The Earl of Sussex, moreover, was of more ancient and honorable descent than his rival, uniting in his person the representation of the Fitz-Walters, as well as of the Ratcliffes, while the scutcheon of Leicester was stained by the degradation of his grandfather, the oppressive minister of Henry VII., and scarce improved by that of his father, the unhappy Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, executed on Tower Hill, August 22, 1553. But in person, features, and address, weapons so formidable in the court of a female sovereign, Leicester had advantages more than sufficient to counterbalance the military services, high blood, and frank bearing of the Earl of Sussex; and he bore in the eye of the court and kingdom the higher share in Elizabeth's favor, though (for such was her uniform policy) by no means so decidedly expressed as to warrant him against the final preponderance of his rival's pretensions. The illness of Sussex therefore happened so opportunely for Leicester as to give rise to strange surmises among the public; while the followers of the one earl were filled with the deepest apprehensions, and those of the other with the highest hopes of its probable issue. Meanwhile—for in that old time men never forgot the probability that the matter might be determined by length of sword—the retainers of each noble flocked around their patron, appeared well armed in the vicinity of the court itself, and disturbed the ear of the sovereign by their frequent and alarming debates, held even within the precincts of her palace. This preliminary statement is necessary to render what follows intelligible to the reader.*

On Tressilian's arrival at Say's Court, he found the place filled with the retainers of the Earl of Sussex, and of the gentlemen who came to attend their patron in his illness. Arms were in every hand, and a deep gloom on every countenance, as if they had apprehended an immediate and violent assault from the opposite faction. In the hall, however, to which Tressilian was ushered by one of the earl's attendants, while another went to inform Sussex of his arrival, he found only two gentlemen in waiting. There was a remarkable contrast in their dress, appearance, and manners. The attire of the elder gentleman, a person, as it seemed, of quality, and in the prime of life, was very plain and soldierlike, his stature low, his limbs stout, his bearing ungraceful, and his features of that kind which express sound common sense, without a grain of vivacity or imagination. The younger, who seemed about

* See Leicester and Sussex. Note 6.

twenty or upward, was clad in the gayest habit used by persons of quality at the period, wearing a crimson velvet cloak richly ornamented with lace and embroidery, with a bonnet of the same, encircled with a gold chain turned three times round it and secured by a medal. His hair was adjusted very nearly like that of some fine gentleman of our own time—that is, it was combed upward, and made to stand as it were on end; and in his ears he wore a pair of silver earrings, having each a pearl of considerable size. The countenance of this youth, besides being regularly handsome and accompanied by a fine person, was animated and striking in a degree that seemed to speak at once the firmness of a decided and the fire of an enterprising character, the power of reflection and the promptitude of determination.

Both these gentlemen reclined nearly in the same posture on benches near each other; but each seeming engaged in his own meditations, looked straight upon the wall which was opposite to them, without speaking to his companion. The looks of the elder were of that sort which convinced the beholder that, in looking on the wall, he saw no more than the side of an old hall hung around with cloaks, antlers, bucklers, old pieces of armor, partizans, and the similar articles which were usually the furniture of such a place. The look of the younger gallant had in it something imaginative; he was sunk in reverie, and it seemed as if the empty space of air betwixt him and the wall were the stage of a theater on which his fancy was mustering his own “*dramatis personæ*,” and treating him with sights far different from those which his awakened and earthly vision could have offered.

At the entrance of Tressilian both started from their musing and bade him welcome; the younger, in particular, with great appearance of animation and cordiality.

“Thou art welcome, Tressilian,” said the youth; “thy philosophy stole thee from us when this household had objects of ambition to offer: it is an honest philosophy, since it returns thee to us when there are only dangers to be shared.”

“Is my lord, then, so greatly indisposed?” said Tressilian.

“We fear the very worst,” answered the elder gentleman, “and by the worst practice.”

“Fy!” replied Tressilian, “my Lord of Leicester is honorable.”

“What doth he with such attendants, then, as he hath about him?” said the younger gallant. “The man who

raises the devil may be honest, but he is answerable for the mischief which the fiend does, for all that."

"And is this all of you, my mates," inquired Tressilian, "that are about my lord in his utmost straits?"

"No—no," replied the elder gentleman, "there are Tracy, Markham, and several more; but we keep watch here by two at once, and some are weary and are sleeping in the gallery above."

"And some," said the young man, "are gone down to the dock yonder at Deptford, to look out such a hulk as they may purchase by clubbing their broken fortunes; and so soon as all is over we will lay our noble lord in a noble green grave, have a blow at those who have hurried him thither, if opportunity suits, and then sail for the Indies with heavy hearts and light purses."

"It may be," said Tressilian, "that I will embrace the same purpose, so soon as I have settled some business at court."

"Thou business at court!" they both exclaimed at once; "and thou make the Indian voyage!"

"Why, Tressilian," said the younger man, "art thou not wedded, and beyond these flaws of fortune that drive folks out to sea when their bark bears fairest for the haven? What has become of the lovely Indamira that was to match my Amoret for truth and beauty?"

"Speak not of her!" said Tressilian, averting his face.

"Aye, stands it so with you?" said the youth, taking his hand very affectionately; "then, fear not I will again touch the green wound. But it is strange as well as sad news. Are none of our fair and merry fellowship to escape shipwreck of fortune and happiness in this sudden tempest? I had hoped thou wert in harbor, at least, my dear Edmund. But truly says another dear friend of thy name:

"What man that sees the ever whirling wheel
Of change, the which all mortal things doth sway,
But that thereby doth find and plainly feel,
How mutability in them doth play
Her cruel sports to many men's decay."

The elder gentleman had risen from his bench, and was pacing the hall with some impatience, while the youth, with much earnestness and feeling, recited these lines. When he had done, the other wrapped himself in his cloak, and again stretched himself down, saying, "I marvel, Tressilian, you will feed the lad in this silly humor. If there were aught to draw a judgment upon a virtuous and honorable household

like my lord's, renounce me if I think not it were this piping, whining, childish trick of poetry, that came among us with Master Walter Wittypate here and his comrades, twisting into all manner of uncouth and incomprehensible forms of speech the honest, plain English phrase which God gave us to express our meaning withal."

"Blount believes," said his comrade, laughing, "the devil woo'd Eve in rhyme, and that the mystic meaning of the Tree of Knowledge refers solely to the art of clashing rhymes and meting out hexameters."*

At this moment the earl's chamberlain entered, and informed Tressilian that his lord required to speak with him.

He found Lord Sussex dressed, but unbraced and lying on his couch, and was shocked at the alteration disease had made in his person. The earl received him with the most friendly cordiality, and inquired into the state of his courtship. Tressilian evaded his inquiries for a moment, and turning his discourse on the earl's own health, he discovered, to his surprise, that the symptoms of his disorder corresponded minutely with those which Wayland had predicted concerning it. He hesitated not, therefore, to communicate to Sussex the whole history of his attendant, and the pretensions he set up to cure the disorder under which he labored. The earl listened with incredulous attention until the name of Demetrius was mentioned, and then suddenly called to his secretary to bring him a certain casket which contained papers of importance. "Take out from thence," he said, "the declaration of the rascal cook whom we had under examination, and look heedfully if the name of Demetrius be not there mentioned."

The secretary turned to the passage at once, and read, "And said declarant, being examined, saith, That he remembers having made the sauce to the said sturgeon-fish, after eating of which the said noble lord was taken ill; and he put the usual ingredients and condiments therein, namely——"

"Pass over his trash," said the earl, "and see whether he had not been supplied with his materials by a herbalist called Demetrius."

"It is even so," answered the secretary. "And he adds, he hath not since seen the said Demetrius."

"This accords with thy fellow's story, Tressilian," said the earl; "call him hither."

On being summoned to the earl's presence, Wayland Smith told his former tale with firmness and consistency.

* See Sir Walter Raleigh. Note 7.

"It may be," said the earl, "thou art sent by those who have begun this work, to end it for them; but bethink, if I miscarry under thy medicine, it may go hard with thee."

"That were severe measure," said Wayland, "since the issue of medicine, and the end of life, are in God's disposal. But I will stand the risk. I have not lived so long under ground to be afraid of a grave."

"Nay, if thou be'st so confident," said the Earl of Sussex, "I will take the risk too, for the learned can do nothing for me. Tell me how this medicine is to be taken."

"That will I do presently," said Wayland; "but allow me to condition that, since I incur all the risk of this treatment, no other physician shall be permitted to interfere with it."

"That is but fair," replied the earl; "and now prepare your drug."

While Wayland obeyed the earl's commands, his servants, by the artist's direction, undressed their master and placed him in bed.

"I warn you," he said, "that the first operation of this medicine will be to produce a heavy sleep, during which time the chamber must be kept undisturbed, as the consequences may otherwise be fatal. I myself will watch by the earl, with any of the gentlemen of his chamber."

"Let all leave the room save Stanley and this good fellow," said the earl.

"And saving me also," said Tressilian. "I too am deeply interested in the effects of this potion."

"Be it so, good friend," said the earl; "and now for our experiment; but first call my secretary and chamberlain."

"Bear witness," he continued, when these officers arrived—"bear witness for me, gentlemen, that our honorable friend Tressilian is in no way responsible for the effects which this medicine may produce upon me, the taking it being my own free action and choice, in regard I believe it to be a remedy which God has furnished me by unexpected means to recover me of my present malady. Commend me to my noble and princely mistress; and say that I live and die her true servant, and wish to all about her throne the same singleness of heart and will to serve her, with more ability to do so than hath been assigned to poor Thomas Ratcliffe."

He then folded his hands, and seemed for a second or two absorbed in mental devotion, then took the potion in his hand, and, pausing, regarded Wayland with a look that seemed

designed to penetrate his very soul, but which caused no anxiety or hesitation in the countenance or manner of the artist.

"Here is nothing to be feared," said Sussex to Tressilian and swallowed the medicine without farther hesitation.

"I am now to pray your lordship," said Wayland, "to dispose yourself to rest as commodiously as you can; and of you, gentlemen, to remain as still and mute as if you waited at your mother's death-bed."

The chamberlain and secretary then withdrew, giving orders that all doors should be bolted, and all noise in the house strictly prohibited. Several gentlemen were voluntary watchers in the hall, but none remained in the chamber of the sick earl, save his groom of the chamber, the artist, and Tressilian. Wayland Smith's predictions were speedily accomplished, and a sleep fell upon the earl so deep and sound that they who watched his bedside began to fear that, in his weakened state, he might pass away without awakening from his lethargy. Wayland Smith himself appeared anxious, and felt the temples of the earl slightly from time to time, attending particularly to the state of his respiration, which was full and deep, but at the same time easy and uninterrupted.

CHAPTER XV.

You loggerheaded and unpolish'd grooms,
What, no attendance, no regard, no duty?
Where is the foolish knave I sent before?

—*Taming of the Shrew.*

THERE is no period at which men look worse in the eyes of each other, or feel more uncomfortable, than when the first dawn of daylight finds them watchers. Even a beauty of the first order, after the vigils of a ball are interrupted by the dawn, would do wisely to withdraw herself from the gaze of her fondest and most partial admirers. Such was the pale, inauspicious, and ungrateful light which began to beam upon those who kept watch all night in the hall at Say's Court, and which mingled its cold, pale, blue diffusion with the red, yellow, and smoky beams of expiring lamps and torches. The young gallant whom we noticed in our last chapter had left the room for a few minutes, to learn the cause of a knocking at the outward gate, and on his return was so struck with the forlorn and ghastly aspects of his companions of the watch, that he exclaimed, "Pity of my heart, my masters, how like owls you look! Methinks, when the sun rises, I shall see you flutter off with your eyes dazzled, to stick yourselves into the next ivy-tod or ruined steeple."

"Hold thy peace, thou gibing fool," said Blount—"hold thy peace. Is this a time for jeering, when the manhood of England is perchance dying within a wall's breadth of thee?"

"There thou liest," replied the gallant.

"How, lie!" exclaimed Blount, starting up—"lie! and to me?"

"Why, so thou didst, thou peevish fool," answered the youth; "thou didst lie on that bench even now, didst thou not? But art thou not a hasty coxcomb, to pick up a wry word so wrathfully? Nevertheless, loving and honoring my lord as truly as thou, or anyone, I do say that, should Heaven take him from us, all England's manhood dies not with him."

"Aye," replied Blount, "a good portion will survive with thee, doubtless."

"And a good portion with thyself, Blount, and with stout Markham here, and Tracy, and all of us. But I am he will best employ the talent Heaven has given to us all."

"As how, I prithee?" said Blount: "tell us your mystery of multiplying."

"Why, sirs," answered the youth, "ye are like goodly land, which bears no crop because it is not quickened by manure; but I have that rising spirit in me which will make my poor faculties labor to keep pace with it. My ambition will keep my brain at work, I warrant thee."

"I pray to God it does not drive thee mad," said Blount; "for my part, if we lose our noble lord, I bid adieu to the court and to the camp both. I have five hundred fowl acres in Norfolk, and thither will I, and change the court pantoufle for the country hobnail."

"Oh, base transmutation!" exclaimed his antagonist; "thou hast already got the true rustic slouch: thy shoulders stoop, as if thine hands were at the stilts of the plow, and thou hast a kind of earthy smell about thee, instead of being perfumed with essence, as a gallant and courtier should. On my soul, thou hast stolen out to roll thyself on a hay mow! Thy only excuse will be to swear by thy hilts that the farmer had a fair daughter."

"I pray thee, Walter," said another of the company, "cease thy raillery, which suits neither time nor place, and tell us who was at the gate just now."

"Dr. Masters, physician to her Grace in ordinary, sent by her especial orders to inquire after the earl's health," answered Walter.

"Ha! what!" exclaimed Tracy, "that was no slight mark of favor; if the earl can but come through, he will match with Leicester yet. Is Masters with my lord at present?"

"Nay," replied Walter, "he is halfway back to Greenwich by this time, and in high dudgeon."

"Thou didst not refuse him admittance?" exclaimed Tracy.

"Thou wert not, surely, so mad?" ejaculated Blount.

"I refused him admittance as flatly, Blount, as you would refuse a penny to a blind beggar; as obstinately, Tracy, as thou didst ever deny access to a dun."

"Why, in the fiend's name, didst thou trust him to go to the gate?" said Blount to Tracy.

"It suited his years better than mine," answered Tracy; "but he has undone us all now thoroughly. My lord may live or die, he will never have a look of favor from her Majesty again."

"Nor the means of making fortunes for his followers," said the young gallant, smiling contemptuously; "there lies

the sore point that will brook no handling. My good sirs, I sounded my lamentations over my lord somewhat less loudly than some of you; but when the point comes of doing him service, I will yield to none of you. Had this learned leech entered, thinkst thou not there had been such a coil betwixt him and Tressilian's mediciner that not the sleeper only, but the very dead, might have awakened? I know what larum belongs to the discord of doctors."

"And who is to take the blame of opposing the Queen's orders?" said Tracy; "for, undeniably, Dr. Masters came with her Grace's positive commands to cure the earl."

"I, who have done the wrong, will bear the blame," said Walter.

"Thus, then, off fly the dreams of court favor thou hast nourished," said Blount; "and despite all thy boasted art and ambition, Devonshire will see thee shine a true younger brother, fit to sit low at the board, carve turn-about with the chaplain, look that the hounds be fed, and see the squire's girths drawn when he goes a-hunting."

"Not so," said the young man, coloring, "not while Ireland and the Netherlands have wars, and not while the sea hath pathless waves. The rich West hath lands undreamed of, and Britain contains bold hearts to venture on the quest of them. Adieu for a space, my masters. I go to walk in the court and look to the sentinels."

"The lad hath quicksilver in his veins, that is certain," said Blount, looking at Markham.

"He hath that both in brain and blood," said Markham, "which may either make or mar him. But, in closing the door against Masters, he hath done a daring and loving piece of service; for Tressilian's fellow hath ever averred that to wake the earl were death, and Masters would wake the Seven Sleepers themselves, if he thought they slept not by the regular ordinance of medicine."

Morning was well advanced, when Tressilian, fatigued and over-watched, came down to the hall with the joyful intelligence that the earl had awakened of himself, that he found his internal complaints much mitigated, and spoke with a cheerfulness, and looked round with a vivacity, which of themselves showed a material and favorable change had taken place. Tressilian at the same time commanded the attendance of one or two of his followers, to report what had passed during the night, and to relieve the watchers in the earl's chamber.

When the message of the Queen was communicated to the Earl of Sussex, he at first smiled at the repulse which the physician had received from his zealous young follower, but instantly recollecting himself, he commanded Blount, his master of the horse, instantly to take boat and go down the river to the Palace of Greenwich, taking young Walter and Tracy with him, and make a suitable compliment, expressing his grateful thanks to his sovereign, and mentioning the cause why he had not been enabled to profit by the assistance of the wise and learned Dr. Masters.

"A plague on it," said Blount, as he descended the stairs. "had he sent me with a cartel to Leicester, I think I should have done his errand indifferently well. But to go to our gracious sovereign, before whom all words must be lacquered over either with gilding or with sugar, is such a confectionery matter as clean baffles my poor old English brain. Come with me, Tracy; and come you too, Master Walter Wittypate, that art the cause of our having all this ado. Let us see if thy neat brain, that frames so many flashy fireworks, can help out a plain fellow at need with some of thy shrewd devices."

"Never fear—never fear," exclaimed the youth, "it is I will help you through; let me but fetch my cloak."

"Why, thou hast it on thy shoulders," said Blount: "the lad is mazed."

"No, no, this is Tracy's old mantle," answered Walter; "I go not with thee to court unless as a gentleman should."

"Why," said Blount, "thy braveries are like to dazzle the eyes of none but some poor groom or porter."

"I know that," said the youth; "but I am resolved I will have my own cloak—aye, and brush my doublet to boot—ere I stir forth with you."

"Well—well," said Blount, "here is a coil about a doublet and a cloak; get thyself ready, a' God's name!"

They were soon launched on the princely bosom of the broad Thames, upon which the sun now shone forth in all its splendor.

"There are two things scarce matched in the universe," said Walter to Blount—"the sun in heaven, and the Thames on the earth."

"The one will light us to Greenwich well enough," said Blount, "and the other would take us there a little faster if it were ebb tide."

"And this is all thou think'st—all thou carest—all thou

deem'st the use of the king of elements and the king of rivers, to guide three such poor caitiffs as thyself, and me, and Tracy upon an idle journey of courtly ceremony!"

"It is no errand of my seeking, faith," replied Blount. "and I could excuse both the sun and the Thames the trouble of carrying me where I have no great mind to go, and where I expect but dog's wages for my trouble; and by my honor," he added, looking out from the head of the boat, "it seems to me as if our message were a sort of labor in vain; for see, the Queen's barge lies at the stairs, as if her Majesty were about to take water."

It was even so. The royal barge, manned with the Queen's watermen, richly attired in the regal liveries, and having the banner of England displayed, did indeed lie at the great stairs which ascended from the river, and along with it two or three other boats for transporting such part of her retinue as were not in immediate attendance on the royal person. The yeomen of the guard, the tallest and most handsome men whom England could produce, guarded with their halberds the passage from the palace gate to the river-side, and all seemed in readiness for the Queen's coming forth, although the day was yet so early.

"By my faith, this bodes us no good," said Blount: "it must be some perilous cause puts her Grace in motion thus untimeously. By my counsel, we were best put back again, and tell the earl what we have seen."

"Tell the earl what we have seen!" said Walter; "why, what have we seen but a boat, and men with scarlet jerkins, and halberds in their hands? Let us do his errand, and tell him what the Queen says in reply."

So saying, he caused the boat to be pulled toward a landing-place at some distance from the principal one, which it would not, at that moment, have been thought respectful to approach, and jumped on shore, followed, though with reluctance, by his cautious and timid companions. As they approached the gate of the palace, one of the sergeant porters told them they could not at present enter, as her Majesty was in the act of coming forth. The gentlemen used the name of the Earl of Sussex; but it proved no charm to subdue the officer, who alleged in reply, that it was as much as his post was worth to disobey in the least tittle the commands which he had received.

"Nay, I told you as much before," said Blount; "do, I pray you, my dear Walter, let us take boat and return."

"Not till I see the Queen come forth," returned the youth, composedly.

"Thou art mad—stark mad, by the mass!" answered Blount.

"And thou," said Walter, "art turned coward of the sudden. I have seen thee face half a score of shag-headed Irish kernes to thy own share of them, and now thou wouldst blink and go back to shun the frown of a fair lady!"

At this moment the gates opened, and ushers began to issue forth in array, preceded and flanked by the band of gentlemen pensioners. After this, amid a crowd of lords and ladies, yet so disposed around her that she could see and be seen on all sides, came Elizabeth herself, then in the prime of womanhood, and in the full glow of what in a sovereign was called beauty, and who would in the lowest rank of life have been truly judged a noble figure, joined to a striking and commanding physiognomy. She leant on the arm of Lord Hunsdon, whose relation to her by her mother's side often procured him such distinguished marks of Elizabeth's intimacy.

The young cavalier we have so often mentioned had probably never yet approached so near the person of his sovereign, and he pressed forward as far as the line of warders permitted, in order to avail himself of the present opportunity. His companion, on the contrary, cursing his imprudence, kept pulling him backward, till Walter shook him off impatiently, and letting his rich cloak drop carelessly from one shoulder—a natural action, which served, however, to display to the best advantage his well-proportioned person—unbonneting at the same time he fixed his eager gaze on the Queen's approach with a mixture of respectful curiosity and modest yet ardent admiration, which suited so well with his fine features, that the warders, struck with his rich attire and noble countenance, suffered him to approach the ground over which the Queen was to pass somewhat closer than was permitted to ordinary spectators. Thus the adventurous youth stood full in Elizabeth's eye—an eye never indifferent to the admiration which she deservedly excited among her subjects, or to the fair proportions of external form which chanced to distinguish any of her courtiers. Accordingly, she fixed her keen glance on the youth, as she approached the place where he stood, with a look in which surprise at his boldness seemed to be unmingled with resentment, while a trifling accident happened which attracted her attention toward him yet more



“The gallant, throwing his cloak from his shoulders, laid it on the miry spot.”



strongly. The night had been rainy, and, just where the young gentleman stood, a small quantity of mud interrupted the Queen's passage. As she hesitated to pass on, the gallant, throwing his cloak from his shoulders, laid it on the miry spot, so as to insure her stepping over it dry-shod. Elizabeth looked at the young man, who accompanied this act of devoted courtesy with a profound reverence, and a blush that overspread his whole countenance. The Queen was confused, and blushed in her turn, nodded her head, hastily passed on, and embarked in her barge without saying a word.

"Come along, sir coxcomb," said Blount; "your gay cloak will need the brush to-day, I wot. Nay, if you had meant to make a foot-cloth of your mantle, better have kept Tracy's old 'drab-de-bure,' which despises all colors."

"This cloak," said the youth, taking it up and folding it, "shall never be brushed while in my possession."

"And that will not be long, if you learn not a little more economy: we shall have you 'in cuerpo' soon, as the Spaniard says."

Their discourse was here interrupted by one of the band of pensioners.

"I was sent," said he, after looking at them attentively, "to a gentleman who hath no cloak, or a muddy one. You, sir, I think," addressing the younger cavalier, "are the man; you will please to follow me."

"He is in attendance on me," said Blount—"on me, the noble Earl of Sussex's master of horse."

"I have nothing to say to that," answered the messenger; "my orders are directly from her Majesty, and concern this gentleman only."

So saying, he walked away, followed by Walter, leaving the others behind, Blount's eyes almost starting from his head with the excess of his astonishment. At length he gave vent to it in an exclamation—"Who the goodjere would have thought this!" And shaking his head with a mysterious air, he walked to his own boat, embarked, and returned to Deptford.

The young cavalier was, in the meanwhile, guided to the water-side by the pensioner, who showed him considerable respect—a circumstance which, to persons in his situation, may be considered as an augury of no small consequence. He ushered him into one of the wherries which lay ready to attend the Queen's barge, which was already proceeding up the river, with the advantage of that flood-tide of which, in the

course of their descent, Blount had complained to his associates.

The two rowers used their oars with such expedition, at the signal of the gentleman pensioner, that they very soon brought their little skiff under the stern of the Queen's boat, where she sate beneath an awning, attended by two or three ladies and the nobles of her household. She looked more than once at the wherry in which the young adventurer was seated, spoke to those around her, and seemed to laugh. At length one of the attendants, by the Queen's order apparently, made a sign for the wherry to come alongside, and the young man was desired to step from his own skiff into the Queen's barge, which he performed with graceful agility at the fore part of the boat, and was brought aft to the Queen's presence, the wherry at the same time dropping into the rear. The youth underwent the gaze of majesty not the less gracefully that his self-possession was mingled with embarrassment. The muddled cloak still hung upon his arm, and formed the natural topic with which the Queen introduced the conversation.

"You have this day spoiled a gay mantle in our behalf, young man. We thank you for your service, though the manner of offering it was unusual, and something bold."

"In a sovereign's need," answered the youth, "it is each liege-man's duty to be bold."

"God's pity! that was well said, my lord," said the Queen, turning to a grave person who sate by her, and answered with a grave inclination of the head and something of a mumbled assent. "Well, young man, your gallantry shall not go unrewarded. Go to the wardrobe-keeper, and he shall have orders to supply the suit which you have cast away in our service. Thou shalt have a suit, and that of the newest cut, I promise thee, on the word of a princess."

"May it please your Grace," said Walter, hesitating, "it is not for so humble a servant of your Majesty to measure out your bounties; but if it became me to choose——"

"Thou wouldst have gold, I warrant me?" said the Queen, interrupting him. "Fy, young man! I take shame to say that, in our capital, such and so various are the means of thriftless folly, that to give gold to youth is giving fuel to fire, and furnishing them with the means of self-destruction. If I live and reign, these means of unchristian excess shall be abridged. Yet thou mayst be poor," she added, "or thy

parents may be. It shall be gold, if thou wilt, but thou shalt answer to me for the use on't."

Walter waited patiently until the Queen had done, and then modestly assured her that gold was still less in his wish than the raiment her Majesty had before offered.

"How, boy!" said the Queen, "neither gold nor garment! What is it thou wouldst have of me, then?"

"Only permission, madam—if it is not asking too high an honor—permission to wear the cloak which did you this trifling service."

"Permission to wear thine own cloak, thou silly boy!" said the Queen.

"It is no longer mine," said Walter; "when your Majesty's foot touched it, it became a fit mantle for a prince, but far too rich a one for its former owner."

The Queen again blushed; and endeavored to cover, by laughing, a slight degree of not unpleasing surprise and confusion.

"Heard you ever the like, my lords? The youth's head is turned with reading romances. I must know something of him, that I may send him safe to his friends. What art thou?"

"A gentleman of the household of the Earl of Sussex, so please your Grace, sent hither with his master of horse upon a message to your Majesty."

In a moment the gracious expression which Elizabeth's face had hitherto maintained gave way to an expression of haughtiness and severity.

"My Lord of Sussex," she said, "has taught us how to regard his messages, by the value he places upon ours. We sent but this morning the physician in ordinary of our chamber, and that at no usual time, understanding his lordship's illness to be more dangerous than we had before apprehended. There is at no court in Europe a man more skilled in this holy and most useful science than Dr. Masters, and he came from us to our subject. Nevertheless, he found the gate of Say's Court defended by men with culverins, as if it had been on the Borders of Scotland, not in the vicinity of our court; and when he demanded admittance in our name, it was stubbornly refused. For this slight of a kindness, which had but too much of condescension in it, we will receive, at present at least, no excuse; and some such we suppose to have been the purport of my Lord of Sussex's message."

This was uttered in a tone, and with a gesture, which made

Lord Sussex's friends who were within hearing tremble. He to whom the speech was addressed, however, trembled not; but with great deference and humility, as soon as the Queen's passion gave him an opportunity, he replied—"So please your most gracious Majesty, I was charged with no apology from the Earl of Sussex."

"With what were you then charged, sir?" said the Queen, with the impetuosity which, amid nobler qualities, strongly marked her character; "was it with a justification? or, God's death! with a defiance?"

"Madam," said the young man, "my Lord of Sussex knew the offense approached toward treason, and could think of nothing save of securing the offender, and placing him in your Majesty's hands, and at your mercy. The noble earl was fast asleep when your most gracious message reached him, a potion having been administered to that purpose by his physician; and his lordship knew not of the ungracious repulse your Majesty's royal and most comfortable message had received until after he awoke this morning."

"And which of his domestics, then, in the name of Heaven, presumed to reject my message, without even admitting my own physician to the presence of him whom I sent him to attend?" said the Queen, much surprised.

"The offender, madam, is before you," replied Walter, bowing very low: "the full and sole blame is mine; and my lord has most justly sent me to abye the consequences of a fault of which he is as innocent as a sleeping man's dreams can be of a waking man's actions."

"What! was it thou?—thou thyself, that repelled my messenger and my physician from Say's Court?" said the Queen. "What could occasion such boldness in one who seems devoted—that is, whose exterior bearing shows devotion—to his sovereign?"

"Madam," said the youth, who, notwithstanding an assumed appearance of severity, thought that he saw something in the Queen's face that resembled not implacability, "we say in our country that the physician is for the time the liege sovereign of his patient. Now, my noble master was then under dominion of a leech, by whose advice he hath greatly profited, who had issued his commands that his patient should not that night be disturbed, on the very peril of his life."

"Thy master hath trusted some false varlet of an empiric," said the Queen.

"I know not, madam, but by the fact that he is now, this

very morning, awakened much refreshed and strengthened, from the only sleep he hath had for many hours."

The nobles looked at each other, but more with the purpose to see what each thought of this news than to exchange any remarks on what had happened. The Queen answered hastily, and without affecting to disguise her satisfaction, "By my word, I am glad he is better. But thou wert over bold to deny the access of my Dr. Masters. Know'st thou not the Holy Writ saith, 'In the multitude of counsel there is safety'?"

"Aye, Madam," said Walter, "but I have heard learned men say that the safety spoken of is for the physicians, not for the patient."

"By my faith, child, thou hast pushed me home," said the Queen, laughing; "for my Hebrew learning does not come quite at a call. How say you, my Lord of Lincoln? Hath the lad given a just interpretation of the text?"

"The word 'safety,' most gracious madam," said the Bishop of Lincoln, "for so hath been translated, it may be somewhat hastily, the Hebrew word, being——"

"My lord," said the Queen, interrupting him, "we said we had forgotten our Hebrew. But for thee, young man, what is thy name and birth?"

"Raleigh is my name, most gracious Queen—the youngest son of a large but honorable family of Devonshire."

"Raleigh!" said Elizabeth, after a moment's recollection; "have we not heard of your service in Ireland?"

"I have been so fortunate as to do some service there, madam," replied Raleigh; "scarce, however, of consequence sufficient to reach your Grace's ears."

"They hear farther than you think of," said the Queen, graciously, "and have heard of a youth who defended a ford in Shannon against a whole band of wild Irish rebels, until the stream ran purple with their blood and his own."

"Some blood I may have lost," said the youth, looking down, "but it was where my best is due, and that is in your Majesty's service."

The Queen paused, and then said hastily, "You are very young to have fought so well and to speak so well. But you must not escape your penance for turning back Masters. The poor man hath caught cold on the river; for our order reached him when he was just returned from certain visits in London, and he held it matter of loyalty and conscience instantly to set forth again. So hark ye, Master Raleigh, see

thou fail not to wear thy muddy cloak, in token of penitence, till our pleasure be farther known. And here," she added, giving him a jewel of gold in the form of a chessman, "I give thee this to wear at the collar."

Raleigh, to whom nature had taught intuitively, as it were, those courtly arts which many scarce acquire from long experience, knelt, and, as he took from her hand the jewel, kissed the fingers which gave it. He knew, perhaps, better than almost any of the courtiers who surrounded her, how to mingle the devotion claimed by the Queen with the gallantry due to her personal beauty; and in this, his first attempt to unite them, he succeeded so well as at once to gratify Elizabeth's personal vanity and her love of power.*

His master, the Earl of Sussex, had the full advantage of the satisfaction which Raleigh had afforded Elizabeth on their first interview.

"My lords and ladies," said the Queen, looking around to the retinue by whom she was attended, "methinks, since we are upon the river, it were well to renounce our present purpose of going to the city, and surprise this poor Earl of Sussex with a visit. He is ill, and suffering doubtless under the fear of our displeasure, from which he hath been honestly cleared by the frank avowal of this malapert boy. What think ye? Were it not an act of charity to give him such consolation as the thanks of a queen, much bound to him for his loyal service, may perchance best minister?"

It may be readily supposed that none to whom this speech was addressed ventured to oppose its purport.

"Your Grace," said the Bishop of Lincoln, "is the breath of our nostrils." The men of war averred that the face of the sovereign was a whetstone to the soldier's sword; while the men of state were not less of opinion that the light of the Queen's countenance was a lamp to the paths of her counsellors; and the ladies agreed with one voice that no noble in England so well deserved the regard of England's royal mistress as the Earl of Sussex—the Earl of Leicester's right being reserved entire, so some of the more politic worded their assent—an exception to which Elizabeth paid no apparent attention. The barge had, therefore, orders to deposit its royal freight at Deptford, at the nearest and most convenient point of communication with Say's Court, in order that the Queen might satisfy her royal and maternal solicitude by making personal inquiries after the health of the Earl of Sussex.

* See Court Favor of Sir Walter Raleigh. Note 8.

Raleigh, whose acute spirit foresaw and anticipated important consequences from the most trifling events, hastened to ask the Queen's permission to go in the skiff, and announce the royal visit to his master; ingeniously suggesting that the joyful surprise might prove prejudicial to his health, since the richest and most generous cordials may sometimes be fatal to those who have been long in a languishing state.

But whether the Queen deemed it too presumptuous in so young a courtier to interpose his opinion unasked, or whether she was moved by a recurrence of the feeling of jealousy, which had been instilled into her by reports that the earl kept armed men about his person, she desired Raleigh, sharply, to reserve his counsel till it was required of him, and repeated her former orders to be landed at Deptford, adding, "We will ourselves see what sort of household my Lord of Sussex keeps about him."

"Now the Lord have pity on us!" said the young courtier to himself. "Good hearts the earl hath many a one round him, but good heads are scarce with us; and he himself is too ill to give direction. And Blount will be at his morning meal of Yarmouth herrings and ale; and Tracy will have his beastly black puddings and Rhenish; those thorough-paced Welshmen, Thomas ap Rice and Evan Evans, will be at work on their leek porridge and toasted cheese; and she detests, they say, all coarse meats, evil smells, and strong wines. Could they but think of burning some rosemary in the great hall! but 'vogue la galère,' all must now be trusted to chance. Luck hath done indifferent well for me this morning, for I trust I have spoiled a cloak and made a court fortune. May she do as much for my gallant patron!"

The royal barge soon stopped at Deptford, and, amid the loud shouts of the populace, which her presence never failed to excite, the Queen, with a canopy borne over her head, walked, accompanied by her retinue, toward Say's Court, where the distant acclamations of the people gave the first notice of her arrival. Sussex, who was in the act of advising with Tressilian how he should make up the supposed breach in the Queen's favor, was infinitely surprised at learning her immediate approach—not that the Queen's custom of visiting her more distinguished nobility, whether in health or sickness, could be unknown to him; but the suddenness of the communication left no time for those preparations with which he well knew Elizabeth loved to be greeted, and the rudeness and confusion of his military household, much increased by his

late illness, rendered him altogether unprepared for her reception.

Cursing internally the chance which thus brought her gracious visitation on him unaware, he hastened down with Tressilian, to whose eventful and interesting story he had just given an attentive ear.

"My worthy friend," he said, "such support as I can give your accusation of Varney, you have a right to expect, alike from justice and gratitude. Chance will presently show whether I can do aught with our sovereign, or whether, in very deed, my meddling in your affair may not rather prejudice than serve you."

Thus spoke Sussex, while hastily casting around him a loose robe of sables, and adjusting his person in the best manner he could to meet the eye of his sovereign. But no hurried attention bestowed on his apparel could remove the ghastly effects of long illness on a countenance which nature had marked with features rather strong than pleasing. Besides, he was low of stature, and, though broad-shouldered, athletic, and fit for martial achievements, his presence in a peaceful hall was not such as ladies love to look upon—a personal disadvantage which was supposed to give Sussex, though esteemed and honored by his sovereign, considerable disadvantage when compared with Leicester, who was alike remarkable for elegance of manners and for beauty of person.

The earl's utmost dispatch only enabled him to meet the Queen as she entered the great hall, and he at once perceived there was a cloud on her brow. Her jealous eye had noticed the martial array of armed gentlemen and retainers with which the mansion-house was filled, and her first words expressed her disapprobation—"Is this a royal garrison, my Lord of Sussex, that it holds so many pikes and calivers? Or have we by accident overshot Say's Court, and landed at our Tower of London?"

Lord Sussex hastened to offer some apology.

"It needs not," she said. "My lord, we intend speedily to take up a certain quarrel between your lordship and another great lord of our household and at the same time to reprehend this uncivilized and dangerous practice of surrounding yourselves with armed and even with ruffianly followers, as if, in the neighborhood of our capital, nay, in the very verge of our royal residence, you were preparing to wage civil war with each other. We are glad to see you so well recovered, my lord, though without the assistance of the learned physician

whom we sent to you. Urge no excuse; we know how that matter fell out, and we have corrected for it the wild slip, young Raleigh. By the way, my lord, we will speedily relieve your household of him, and take him into our own. Something there is about him which merits to be better nurtured than he is like to be amongst your very military followers."

To this proposal Sussex, though scarce understanding how the Queen came to make it, could only bow and express his acquiescence. He then entreated her to remain till refreshment could be offered, but in this he could not prevail. And, after a few compliments of a much colder and more commonplace character than might have been expected from a step so decidedly favorable as a personal visit the Queen took her leave of Say's Court, having brought confusion thither along with her, and leaving doubt and apprehension behind.

CHAPTER XVI.

Then call them to our presence. Face to face,
And frowning brow to brow, ourselves will hear
The accuser and accused freely speak ;
High-stomach'd are they both and full of ire,
In rage deaf as the sea, hasty as fire.

—Richard II.

“I AM ordered to attend court to-morrow,” said Leicester, speaking to Varney, “to meet, as they surmise, my Lord of Sussex. The Queen intends to take up matters betwixt us. This comes of her visit to Say’s Court, of which you must needs speak so lightly.”

“I maintain it was nothing,” said Varney; “nay, I know from a sure intelligencer who was within ear-shot of much that was said, that Sussex has lost rather than gained by that visit. The Queen said, when she stepped into the boat, that Say’s Court looked like a guard-house, and smelt like an hospital. ‘Like a cook’s shop in Ram’s Alley, rather,’ said the Countess of Rutland, who is ever your lordship’s good friend. And then my lord of Lincoln must needs put in his holy oar, and say, that my Lord of Sussex must be excused for his rude and old-world housekeeping, since he had as yet no wife.”

“And what said the Queen?” asked Leicester hastily.

“She took him up roundly,” said Varney, “and asked what my Lord of Sussex had to do with a wife, or my lord bishop to speak on such a subject. ‘If marriage is permitted,’ she said, ‘I nowhere read that it is enjoined.’”

“She likes not marriages, or speech of marriage, among churchmen,” said Leicester.

“Nor among courtiers neither,” said Varney; but, observing that Leicester changed countenance, he instantly added, “That all the ladies who were present had joined in ridiculing Lord Sussex’s housekeeping, and in contrasting it with the reception her Grace would have assuredly received at my Lord of Leicester’s.”

“You have gathered much tidings,” said Leicester, “but you have forgotten or omitted the most important of all. She hath added another to those dangling satellites whom it is her pleasure to keep revolving around her.”

“Your lordship meaneth that Raleigh, the Devonshire

youth," said Varney—"the Knight of the Cloak, as they call him at court?"

"He may be Knight of the Garter one day, for aught I know," said Leicester, "for he advances rapidly. She hath cap'd verses with him, and such fooleries. I would gladly abandon, of my own free will, the part I have in her fickle favor; but I will not be elbowed out of it by the clown Sussex or this new upstart. I hear Tressilian is with Sussex also, and high in his favor. I would spare him for considerations, but he will thrust himself on his fate. Sussex, too, is almost as well as ever in his health."

"My lord," replied Varney, "there will be rubs in the smoothest road, specially when it leads up-hill. Sussex's illness was to us a god-send, from which I hoped much. He has recovered, indeed, but he is not now more formidable than ere he fell ill, when he received more than one foil in wrestling with your lordship. Let not your heart fail you, my lord, and all shall be well."

"My heart never failed me, sir," replied Leicester.

"No, my lord," said Varney; "but it has betrayed you right often. He that would climb a tree, my lord, must grasp by the branches, not by the blossom."

"Well—well—well!" said Leicester impatiently, "I understand thy meaning. My heart shall neither fail me nor seduce me. Have my retinue in order; see that their array be so splendid as to put down not only the rude companions of Ratcliffe, but the retainers of every other nobleman and courtier. Let them be well armed withal, but without any outward display of their weapons, wearing them as if more for fashion's sake than for use. Do thou thyself keep close to me, I may have business for you."

The preparations of Sussex and his party were not less anxious than those of Leicester.

"Thy supplication, impeaching Varney of seduction," said the earl to Tressilian, "is by this time in the Queen's hand. I have sent it through a sure channel. Methinks your suit should succeed, being, as it is, founded in justice and honor, and Elizabeth being the very muster of both. But, I wot not how, the gypsy [so Sussex was wont to call his rival, on account of his dark complexion] hath much to say with her in these holiday times of peace. Were war at the gates, I should be one of her whiteboys; but soldiers, like their bucklers and Bilboa blades, get out of fashion in peace time, and satin

sleeves and walking rapiers bear the bell. Well, we must be gay, since such is the fashion. Blount, hast thou seen our household put into their new braveries? But thou know'st as little of these toys as I do; thou wouldst be ready now at disposing a stand of pikes."

"My good lord," answered Blount, "Raleigh hath been here, and taken that charge upon him. Your train will glitter like a May morning. Marry, the cost is another question. One might keep an hospital of old soldiers at the charge of ten modern lackeys."

"We must not count cost to-day, Nicholas," said the earl in reply. "I am beholden to Raleigh for his care; I trust, though, he has remembered that I am an old soldier, and would have no more of these follies than needs must."

"Nay, I understand naught about it," said Blount; "but here are your honorable lordship's brave kinsmen and friends coming in by scores to wait upon you to court, where, methinks, we shall bear as brave a front as Leicester, let him ruffle it as he will."

"Give them the strictest charges," said Sussex, "that they suffer no provocation short of actual violence to provoke them into quarrel: they have hot bloods, and I would not give Leicester the advantage over me by any imprudence of theirs."

The Earl of Sussex ran so hastily through these directions, that it was with difficulty Tressilian at length found opportunity to express his surprise, that he should have proceeded so far in the affair of Sir Hugh Robsart as to lay his petition at once before the Queen. "It was the opinion of the young lady's friends," he said, "that Leicester's sense of justice should be first appealed to, as the offense had been committed by his officer and so he had expressly told to Sussex."

"This could have been done without applying to me," said Sussex, somewhat haughtily. "I, at least, ought not to have been a counselor when the object was a humiliating reference to Leicester; and I am surprised that you, Tressilian, a man of honor, and my friend, would assume such a mean course. If you said so, I certainly understood you not in a matter which sounded so unlike yourself."

"My lord," said Tressilian, "the course I would prefer, for my own sake, is that you have adopted; but the friends of this most unhappy lady——"

"Oh, the friends—the friends," said Sussex, interrupting him; "they must let us manage this cause in the way which

seems best. This is the time and the hour to accumulate every charge against Leicester and his household, and yours the Queen will hold a heavy one. But at all events she hath the complaint before her."

Tressilian could not help suspecting that, in his eagerness to strengthen himself against his rival, Sussex had purposely adopted the course most likely to throw odium on Leicester, without considering minutely whether it were the mode of proceeding most likely to be attended with success. But the step was irrevocable, and Sussex escaped from farther discussing it by dismissing his company with the command, "Let all be in order at eleven o'clock; I must be at court and in the presence by high noon precisely."

While the rival statesmen were thus anxiously preparing for their approaching meeting in the Queen's presence, even Elizabeth herself was not without apprehension of what might chance from the collision of two such fiery spirits, each backed by a strong and numerous body of followers, and dividing betwixt them, either openly or in secret, the hopes and wishes of most of her court. The band of gentlemen pensioners were all under arms, and a re-enforcement of the yeomen of the guard was brought down the Thames from London. A royal proclamation was sent forth, strictly prohibiting nobles, of whatever degree, to approach the palace with retainers or followers, armed with shot or with long weapons; and it was even whispered that the high sheriff of Kent had secret instructions to have a part of the array of the county ready on the shortest notice.

The eventful hour, thus anxiously prepared for on all sides, at length approached, and each followed by his long and glittering train of friends and followers, the rival earls entered the palace-yard of Greenwich at noon precisely.

As if by previous arrangement, or perhaps by intimation that such was the Queen's pleasure, Sussex and his retinue came to the palace from Deptford by water, while Leicester arrived by land; and thus they entered the courtyard from opposite sides. This trifling circumstance gave Leicester a certain ascendancy in the opinion of the vulgar, the appearance of his cavalcade of mounted followers showing more numerous and more imposing than those of Sussex's party, who were necessarily upon foot. No show or sign of greeting passed between the earls, though each looked full at the other, both expecting, perhaps, an exchange of courtesies, which

neither was willing to commence. Almost in the minute of their arrival the castle bell tolled, the gates of the palace were opened, and the earls entered, each numerously attended by such gentlemen of their train whose rank gave them that privilege. The yeomen and inferior attendants remained in the courtyard, where the opposite parties eyed each other with looks of eager hatred and scorn, as if waiting with impatience for some cause of tumult, or some apology for mutual aggression. But they were restrained by the strict commands of their leaders, and overawed, perhaps, by the presence of an armed guard of unusual strength.

In the meanwhile, the more distinguished persons of each train followed their patrons into the lofty halls and ante-chambers of the royal palace, flowing on in the same current, like two streams which are compelled into the same channel, yet shun to mix their waters. The parties arranged themselves, as it were instinctively, on the different sides of the lofty apartments, and seemed eager to escape from the transient union which the narrowness of the crowded entrance had for an instant compelled them to submit to. The folding-doors at the upper end of the long gallery were immediately afterward opened, and it was announced in a whisper that the Queen was in her presence-chamber, to which these gave access. Both earls moved slowly and stately toward the entrance—Sussex followed by Tressilian, Blount, and Raleigh, and Leicester by Varney. The pride of Leicester was obliged to give way to court forms, and, with a grave and formal inclination of the head, he paused until his rival, a peer of older creation than his own, passed before him. Sussex returned the reverence with the same formal civility, and entered the presence-room. Tressilian and Blount offered to follow him, but were not permitted, the Usher of the Black Rod alleging in excuse, that he had precise orders to look to all admissions that day. To Raleigh, who stood back on the repulse of his companions, he said, "You, sir, may enter," and he entered accordingly.

"Follow me close, Varney," said the Earl of Leicester, who had stood aloof for a moment to mark the reception of Sussex; and, advancing to the entrance, he was about to pass on, when Varney, who was close behind him, dressed out in the utmost bravery of the day, was stopped by the usher, as Tressilian and Blount had been before him. "How is this, Master Bowyer?" said the Earl of Leicester. "Know you who I am, and that this is my friend and follower?"

"Your lordship will pardon me," replied Bowyer stoutly; "my orders are precise, and limit me to a strict discharge of my duty."

"Thou art a partial knave," said Leicester, the blood mounting to his face, "to do me this dishonor, when you but now admitted a follower of my Lord of Sussex."

"My lord," said Bowyer, "Master Raleigh is newly admitted a sworn servant of her Grace, and to him my orders did not apply."

"Thou art a knave—an ungrateful knave," said Leicester; "but he that hath done can undo: thou shalt not prank thee in thy authority long!"

This threat he uttered aloud, with less than his usual policy and discretion, and having done so, he entered the presence-chamber, and made his reverence to the Queen, who, attired with even more than her usual splendor, and surrounded by those nobles and statesmen whose courage and wisdom have rendered her reign immortal, stood ready to receive the homage of her subjects. She graciously returned the obeisance of the favorite earl, and looked alternately at him and at Sussex as if about to speak, when Bowyer, a man whose spirit could not brook the insult he had so openly received from Leicester, in the discharge of his office, advanced with his black rod in his hand, and knelt down before her.

"Why, how now, Bowyer?" said Elizabeth, "thy courtesy seems strangely timed!"

"My liege sovereign," he said, while every courtier around trembled at his audacity, "I come but to ask whether, in the discharge of mine office, I am to obey your Highness's commands or those of the Earl of Leicester, who has publicly menaced me with his displeasure, and treated me with disparaging terms, because I denied entry to one of his followers, in obedience to your Grace's precise orders?"

The spirit of Henry VIII. was instantly aroused in the bosom of his daughter, and she turned on Leicester with a severity which appalled him, as well as all his followers.

"God's death! my lord," such was her emphatic phrase, "what means this? We have thought well of you, and brought you near to our person; but it was not that you might hide the sun from our other faithful subjects. Who gave you license to contradict our orders or control our officers? I will have in this court, aye, and in this realm, but one mistress, and no master. Look to it that Master Bowyer sustains no harm for his duty to me faithfully discharged; for, as I

am Christian woman and crowned Queen, I will hold you dearly answerable. Go, Bowyer, you have done the part of an honest man and a true subject. We will brook no mayor of the palace here."

Bowyer kissed the hand which she extended toward him, and withdrew to his post, astonished at the success of his own audacity. A smile of triumph pervaded the faction of Sussex; that of Leicester seemed proportionally dismayed, and the favorite himself, assuming an aspect of the deepest humility, did not even attempt a word in his own exultation.

He acted wisely; for it was the policy of Elizabeth to humble, not to disgrace him, and it was prudent to suffer her, without opposition or reply, to glory in the exertion of her authority. The dignity of the Queen was gratified, and the woman began soon to feel for the mortification which she had imposed on her favorite. Her keen eye also observed the secret looks of congratulation exchanged amongst those who favored Sussex, and it was no part of her policy to give either party a decisive triumph.

"What say to my Lord of Leicester," she said, after a moment's pause, "I say also to you, my Lord of Sussex. You also must needs ruffle in the court of England at the head of a faction of your own."

"My followers, gracious princess," said Sussex, "have indeed ruffled in your cause in Ireland, in Scotland, and against yonder rebellious earls in the north. I am ignorant that——"

"Do you bandy looks and words with me, my lord?" said the Queen, interrupting him; "methinks you might learn of my Lord of Leicester the modesty to be silent, at least, under our censure. I say, my lord, that my grandfather and my father, in their wisdom, debarred the nobles of this civilized land from traveling with such disorderly retinues; and think you that, because I wear a coif, their scepter has in my hand been changed into a distaff? I tell you, no king in Christendom will less brook his court to be cumbered, his people oppressed, and his kingdom's peace disturbed, by the arrogance of overgrown power, than she who now speaks with you. My Lord of Leicester, and you, my Lord of Sussex, I command you both to be friends with each other; or, by the crown I wear, you shall find an enemy who will be too strong for both of you!"

"Madam," said the Earl of Leicester, "you, who are yourself the fountain of honor, know best what is due to mine. I place it at your disposal, and only say, that the terms on

which I have stood with my Lord of Sussex have not been of my seeking; nor had he cause to think me his enemy until he had done me gross wrong."

"For me, madam," said the Earl of Sussex, "I cannot appeal from your sovereign pleasure; but I were well content my Lord of Leicester should say in what I have, as he terms it, wronged him, since my tongue never spoke the word that I would not willingly justify either on foot or horseback."

"And for me," said Leicester, "always under my gracious sovereign's pleasure, my hand shall be as ready to make good my words as that of any man who ever wrote himself Ratcliffe."

"My lords," said the Queen, "these are no terms for this presence; and if you cannot keep your temper, we will find means to keep both that and you close enough. Let me see you join hands, my lords, and forget your idle animosities."

The two rivals looked at each other with reluctant eyes, each unwilling to make the first advance to execute the Queen's will.

"Sussex," said Elizabeth, "I entreat—Leicester, I command you."

Yet, so were her words accented, that the entreaty sounded like command and the command like entreaty. They remained still and stubborn, until she raised her voice to a height which argued at once impatience and absolute command.

"Sir Henry Lee," she said to an officer in attendance, "have a guard in present readiness, and man a barge instantly. My Lords of Sussex and Leicester, I bid you once more to join hands—and, God's death! he that refuses shall taste of our Tower fare ere he see our face again. I will lower your proud hearts ere we part, and that I promise, on the word of a queen!"

"The prison," said Leicester, "might be borne, but to lose your Grace's presence were to lose light and life at once. Here, Sussex, is my hand."

"And here," said Sussex, "is mine in truth and honesty; but——"

"Nay, under favor, you shall add no more," said the Queen. "Why, this is as it should be," she added, looking on them more favorably, "and when you, the shepherds of the people, unite to protect them, it shall be well with the flock we rule over. For, my lords, I tell you plainly, your follies and your brawls lead to strange disorders among your servants. My

Lord of Leicester, you have a gentleman in your household called Varney?"

"Yes, gracious madam," replied Leicester; "I presented him to kiss your royal hand when you were last at Non-such."

"His outside was well enough," said the Queen, "but scarce so fair, I should have thought, as to have caused a maiden of honorable birth and hopes to barter her fame for his good looks, and become his paramour. Yet so it is: this fellow of yours hath seduced the daughter of a good old Devonshire knight, Sir Hugh Robsart of Lidcote Hall, and she hath fled with him from her father's house like a castaway. My Lord of Leicester, are you ill, that you look so deadly pale?"

"No, gracious madam," said Leicester, and it required every effort he could make to bring forth these few words.

"You are surely ill, my lord?" said Elizabeth, going toward him with hasty speech and hurried step, which indicated the deepest concern. "Call Masters—call our surgeon in ordinary. Where be these loitering fools? We lose the pride of our court through their negligence. Or is it possible, Leicester," she continued, looking on him with a very gentle aspect—"can fear of my displeasure have wrought so deeply on thee? Doubt not for a moment, noble Dudley, that we could blame *thee* for the folly of thy retainer—thee, whose thoughts we know to be far otherwise employed! He that would climb the eagle's nest, my lord, cares not who are catching linnets at the foot of the precipice."

"Mark you that?" said Sussex, aside to Raleigh. "The devil aids him surely! for all that would sink another ten fathom deep seems but to make him float the more easily. Had a follower of mine acted thus——"

"Peace, my good lord," said Raleigh—"for God's sake, peace! Wait the change of the tide; it is even now on the turn."

The acute observation of Raleigh, perhaps, did not deceive him; for Leicester's confusion was so great, and, indeed, for the moment, so irresistibly overwhelming, that Elizabeth, after looking at him with a wondering eye, and receiving no intelligible answer to the unusual expressions of grace and affection which had escaped from her, shot her quick glance around the circle of courtiers, and reading, perhaps, in their faces something that accorded with her own awakened suspicions, she said suddenly, "Or is there more in this than we

see, or than you, my lord, wish that we should see? Where is this Varney? Who saw him?"

"An it please your Grace," said Bowyer, "it is the same against whom I this instant closed the door of the presence-room."

"An it please me!" repeated Elizabeth sharply, not at that moment in the humor of being pleased with anything. "It does not please me that he should pass saucily into my presence, or that you should exclude from it one who came to justify himself from an accusation."

"May it please you," answered the perplexed usher, "if I knew, in such case, how to bear myself, I would take heed——"

"You should have reported the fellow's desire to us, Master Usher, and taken our directions. You think yourself a great man, because but now we chid a nobleman on your account; yet, after all, we hold you but as the lead-weight that keeps the door fast. Call this Varney hither instantly; there is one Tressilian also mentioned in this petition; let them both come before us."

She was obeyed, and Tressilian and Varney appeared accordingly. Varney's first glance was at Leicester, his second at the Queen. In the looks of the latter there appeared an approaching storm, and in the downcast countenance of his patron he could read no directions in what way he was to trim his vessel for the encounter; he then saw Tressilian, and at once perceived the peril of the situation in which he was placed. But Varney was as bold-faced and ready-witted as he was cunning and unscrupulous—a skillful pilot in extremity, and fully conscious of the advantages which he would obtain, could he extricate Leicester from his present peril, and of the ruin that yawned for himself should he fail in doing so.

"Is it true, sirrah," said the Queen, with one of those searching looks which few had the audacity to resist, "that you have seduced to infamy a young lady of birth and breeding, the daughter of Sir Hugh Robsart of Lidcote Hall?"

Varney kneeled down, and replied, with a look of the most profound contrition—"There had been some love passages betwixt him and Mistress Amy Robsart."

Leicester's flesh quivered with indignation as he heard his dependent make this avowal, and for one moment he manned himself to step forward, and, bidding farewell to the court and the royal favor, confess the whole mystery of the secret marriage. But he looked at Sussex, and the idea of the tri-

umphant smile which would clothe his cheek upon hearing the avowal sealed his lips. "Not now, at least," he thought, "or in this presence, will I afford him so rich a triumph." And pressing his lips close together, he stood firm and collected, attentive to each word which Varney uttered, and determined to hide to the last the secret on which his court favor seemed to depend. Meanwhile, the Queen proceeded in her examination of Varney.

"Love passages!" said she, echoing his last words; "what passages, thou knave? and why not ask the wench's hand from her father, if thou hadst any honesty in thy love for her?"

"An it please your Grace," said Varney, still on his knees, "I dared not do so, for her father had promised her hand to a gentleman of birth and honor—I will do him justice, though I know he bears me ill-will—one Master Edmund Tressilian, whom I now see in the presence."

"Soh!" replied the Queen; "and what was your right to make the simple fool break her worthy father's contract, through your love passages, as your conceit and assurance terms them?"

"Madam," replied Varney, "it is in vain to plead the cause of human frailty before a judge to whom it is unknown, or that of love to one who never yields to the passion—" he paused an instant, and then added, in a very low and timid tone—"which she inflicts upon all others."

Elizabeth tried to frown, but smiled in her own despite, as she answered, "Thou art a marvelously impudent knave. Art thou married to the girl?"

Leicester's feelings became so complicated and so painfully intense, that it seemed to him as if his life was to depend on the answer made by Varney, who, after a moment's real hesitation, answered, "Yes."

"Thou false villain!" said Leicester, bursting forth into rage, yet unable to add another word to the sentence which he had begun with such emphatic passion.

"Nay, my lord," said the Queen, "we will, by your leave, stand between this fellow and your anger. We have not yet done with him. Knew your master, my Lord of Leicester, of this fair work of yours? Speak truth, I command thee, and I will be thy warrant from danger on every quarter."

"Gracious madam," said Varney, "to speak Heaven's truth, my lord was the cause of the whole matter."

"Thou villain, wouldst thou betray me?" said Leicester.

"Speak on," said the Queen hastily, her cheek coloring and her eyes sparkling as she addressed Varney—"speak on; here no commands are heard but mine."

"They are omnipotent, gracious madam," replied Varney; "and to you there can be no secrets. Yet I would not," he added, looking around him, "speak of my master's concerns to other ears."

"Fall back, my lords," said the Queen to those who surrounded her, "and do you speak on. What hath the earl to do with this guilty intrigue of thine? See, fellow, that thou beliest him not!"

"Far be it from me to traduce my noble patron," replied Varney; "yet I am compelled to own that some deep, overwhelming, yet secret feeling hath of late dwelt in my lord's mind, hath abstracted him from the cares of the household, which he was wont to govern with such religious strictness, and hath left us opportunities to do follies, of which the shame, as in this case, partly falls upon our patron. Without this, I had not had means or leisure to commit the folly which has drawn on me his displeasure, the heaviest to endure by me which I could by any means incur—saving always the yet more dreaded resentment of your Grace."

"And in this sense, and no other, hath he been accessory to thy fault?" said Elizabeth.

"Surely, madam, in no other," replied Varney; "but, since somewhat hath chanced to him, he can scarce be called his own man. Look at him, madam, how pale and trembling he stands—how unlike his usual majesty of manner; yet what has he to fear from aught I can say to your Highness? Ah! madam, since he received that fatal packet!"

"What packet, and from whence?" said the Queen eagerly.

"From whence, madam, I cannot guess; but I am so near to his person that I know he has ever since worn, suspended around his neck and next to his heart, that lock of hair which sustains a small golden jewel shaped like a heart. He speaks to it when alone; he parts not from it when he sleeps. No heathen ever worshiped an idol with such devotion."

"Thou art a prying knave to watch thy master so closely," said Elizabeth, blushing, but not with anger; "and a tattling knave to tell over again his fooleries. What color might the braid of hair be that thou pratest of?"

Varney replied, "A poet, madam, might call it a thread from the golden web wrought by Minerva; but, to my think-

ing, it was paler than even the purest gold—more like the last parting sunbeam of the softest day of spring.”

“Why, you are a poet yourself, Master Varney,” said the Queen, smiling; “but I have not genius quick enough to follow your rare metaphors. Look round these ladies—is there [she hesitated, and endeavored to assume an air of great indifference]—is there here, in this presence, any lady, the color of whose hair reminds thee of that braid? Methinks, without prying into my Lord of Leicester’s amorous secrets, I would fain know what kind of locks are like the thread of Minerva’s web, or the—what was it?—the last rays of the May-day sun.”

Varney looked round the presence-chamber, his eye traveling from one lady to another, until at length it rested upon the Queen herself, but with an aspect of the deepest veneration. “I see no tresses,” he said, “in this presence, worthy of such similes, unless where I dare not look on them.”

“How, sir knave,” said the Queen, “dare you intimate——”

“Nay, madam,” replied Varney, shading his eyes with his hand, “it was the beams of the May-day sun that dazzled my weak eyes.”

“Go to—go to,” said the Queen, “thou art a foolish fellow,” and turning quickly from him, she walked up to Leicester.

Intense curiosity, mingled with all the various hopes, fears, and passions which influence court faction, had occupied the presence-chamber during the Queen’s conference with Varney, as if with the strength of an Eastern talisman. Men suspended every, even the slightest, external motion, and would have ceased to breathe, had Nature permitted such an intermission of her functions. The atmosphere was contagious, and Leicester, who saw all around wishing or fearing his advancement or his fall, forgot all that love had previously dictated, and saw nothing for the instant but the favor or disgrace which depended on the nod of Elizabeth and the fidelity of Varney. He summoned himself hastily, and prepared to play his part in the scene which was like to ensue, when, as he judged from the glances which the Queen threw toward him, Varney’s communications, be they what they might, were operating in his favor. Elizabeth did not long leave him in doubt; for the more than favor with which she costed him decided his triumph in the eyes of his rival, and of the assembled court of England. “Thou hast a prating

servant of this same Varney, my lord," she said; "it is lucky you trust him with nothing that can hurt you in our opinion, for, believe me, he would keep no counsel."

"From your Highness," said Leicester, dropping gracefully on one knee, "it were treason he should. I would that my heart itself lay before you, barer than the tongue of any servant could strip it."

"What, my lord," said Elizabeth, looking kindly upon him, "is there no one little corner over which you would wish to spread a veil? Ah! I see you are confused at the question, and your Queen knows she should not look too deeply into her servants' motives for their faithful duty, lest she see what might, or at least ought to, displease her."

Relieved by these last words, Leicester broke out into a torrent of expressions of deep and passionate attachment, which perhaps, at that moment, were not altogether fictitious. The mingled emotions which had at first overcome him, had now given way to the energetic vigor with which he had determined to support his place in the Queen's favor; and never did he seem to Elizabeth more eloquent, more handsome, more interesting, than while, kneeling at her feet, he conjured her to strip him of all his power, but to leave him the name of her servant. "Take from the poor Dudley," he exclaimed, "all that your bounty has made him, and bid him be the poor gentleman he was when your Grace first shone on him; leave him no more than his cloak and his sword, but let him still boast he has—what in word or deed he never forfeited—the regard of his adored Queen and mistress!"

"No, Dudley!" said Elizabeth, raising him with one hand, while she extended the other that he might kiss it; "Elizabeth hath not forgotten that, whilst you were a poor gentleman, despoiled of your hereditary rank, she was as poor a princess, and that in her cause you then ventured all that oppression had left you—your life and honor. Rise, my lord, and let my hand go. Rise, and be what you have ever been, the grace of our court and the support of our throne. Your mistress may be forced to chide your misdemeanors, but never without owning your merits. And so help me God," she added, turning to the audience, who, with various feelings, witnessed this interesting scene—"so help me God, gentlemen, as I think never sovereign had a truer servant than I have in this noble earl!"

A murmur of assent rose from the Leicestrian faction,

which the friends of Sussex dared not oppose. They remained with their eyes fixed on the ground, dismayed as well as mortified by the public and absolute triumph of their opponents. Leicester's first use of the familiarity to which the Queen had so publicly restored him was to ask her commands concerning Varney's offense. "Although," he said, "the fellow deserves nothing from me but displeasure, yet, might I presume to intercede——"

"In truth, we had forgotten his matter," said the Queen; "and it was ill done of us, who owe justice to our meanest as well as to our highest subject. We are pleased, my lord, that you were the first to recall the matter to our memory. Where is Tressilian, the accuser? let him come before us."

Tressilian appeared, and made a low and beseeching reverence. His person, as we have elsewhere observed, had an air of grace, and even of nobleness, which did not escape Queen Elizabeth's critical observation. She looked at him with attention, as he stood before her unabashed, but with an air of the deepest dejection.

"I cannot but grieve for this gentleman," she said to Leicester. "I have inquired concerning him, and his presence confirms what I heard, that he is a scholar and a soldier, well accomplished both in arts and arms. We women, my lord, are fanciful in our choice: I had said now, to judge by the eye, there was no comparison to be held betwixt your follower and this gentleman. But Varney is a well-spoken fellow, and, to speak truth, that goes far with us of the weaker sex. Look you, Master Tressilian, a bolt lost is not a bow broken. Your true affection, as I will hold it to be, hath been, it seems, but ill requited; but you have scholarship, and you know there have been false Cressidas to be found, from the Trojan war downward. Forget, good sir, this lady light o' love; teach your affection to see with a wiser eye. This we say to you more from the writings of learned men than our own knowledge, being, as we are, far removed by station and will from the enlargement of experience in such idle toys of humorous passion. For this dame's father, we can make his grief the less by advancing his son-in-law to such station as may enable him to give an honorable support to his bride. Thou shalt not be forgotten thyself, Tressilian; follow our court, and thou shalt see that a true Troilus hath some claim on our grace. Think of what that arch-knave Shakspeare says—a plague on him, his toys come into my head when I should think of other matters! Stay, how goes it?"

Cressid was yours, tied with the bonds of heaven ;
 These bonds of heaven are slipt, dissolved, and loosed,
 And with another knot five fingers tied,
 The fragments of her faith are bound to Diomed.

You smile, my Lord of Southampton! Perchance I make your player's verse halt through my bad memory; but let it suffice: let there be no more of this mad matter."

And as Tressilian kept the posture of one who would willingly be heard, though, at the same time, expressive of the deepest reverence, the Queen added with some impatience—"What would the man have? The wench cannot wed both of you? She has made her election—not a wise one perchance, but she is Varney's wedded wife."

"My suit should sleep there, most gracious sovereign," said Tressilian, "and with my suit my revenge. But I hold this Varney's word no good warrant for the truth."

"Had that doubt been elsewhere urged," answered Varney, "my sword——"

"Thy sword!" interrupted Tressilian scornfully; "with her Grace's leave, my sword shall show——"

"Peace, you knaves—both!" said the Queen; "know you where you are? This comes of your feuds, my lords," she added, looking toward Leicester and Sussex: "your followers catch your own humor, and must bandy and brawl in my court, and in my very presence, like so many Matamoros. Look you, sirs, he that speaks of drawing swords in any other quarrel than mine or England's, by mine honor, I'll bracelet him with iron both on wrist and ankle!" She then paused a minute, and resumed in a milder tone, "I must do justice betwixt the bold and mutinous knaves notwithstanding. My Lord of Leicester, will you warrant with your honor—that is, to the best of your belief—that your servant speaks truth in saying he hath married this Amy Robsart?"

This was a home-thrust, and had nearly staggered Leicester. But he had now gone too far to recede, and answered, after a moment's hesitation, "To the best of my belief—indeed, on my certain knowledge—she is a wedded wife."

"Gracious madam," said Tressilian, "may I yet request to know when, and under what circumstances, this alleged marriage——"

"Out, sirrah," answered the Queen—"alleged marriage! Have you not the word of this illustrious earl to warrant the truth of what his servant says? But thou art a loser—think'st thyself such at least—and thou shalt have indul-

gence; we will look into the matter ourself more at leisure. My Lord of Leicester, I trust you remember we mean to taste the good cheer of your Castle of Kenilworth on this week ensuing; we will pray you to bid our good and valued friend the Earl of Sussex to hold company with us there."

"If the noble Earl of Sussex," said Leicester, bowing to his rival with the easiest and with the most graceful courtesy, "will so far honor my poor house, I will hold it an additional proof of the amicable regard it is your Grace's desire we should entertain toward each other."

Sussex was more embarrassed. "I should," said he, "madam, be but a clog on your gayer hours, since my late severe illness."

"And have you been indeed so very ill?" said Elizabeth, looking on him with more attention than before; "you are in faith strangely altered, and deeply am I grieved to see it. But be of good cheer; we will ourselves look after the health of so valued a servant, and to whom we owe so much. Masters shall order your diet; and that we ourselves may see that he is obeyed, you must attend us in this progress to Kenilworth."

This was said so peremptorily, and at the same time with so much kindness, that Sussex, however unwilling to become the guest of his rival, had no resource but to bow low to the Queen in obedience to her commands, and to express to Leicester, with blunt courtesy, though mingled with embarrassment, his acceptance of his invitation. As the earls exchanged compliments on the occasion, the Queen said to her high treasurer, "Methinks, my lord, the countenances of these our two noble peers resemble those of the two famed classic streams, the one so dark and sad, the other so fair and noble. My old Master Ascham would have chid me for forgetting the author. It is Cæsar, as I think. See what majestic calmness sits on the brow of the noble Leicester, while Sussex seems to greet him as if he did our will indeed, but not willingly."

"The doubt of your Majesty's favor," answered the lord treasurer, "may perchance occasion the difference, which does not—as what does?—escape your Grace's eye."

"Such doubt were injurious to us, my lord," replied the Queen. "We hold both to be near and dear to us, and will with impartiality employ both in honorable service for the weal of our kingdom. But we will break their farther conference at present. My Lords of Sussex and Leicester, we

have a word more with you. Tressilian and Varney are near your persons; you will see that they attend you at Kenilworth. And as we shall then have both Paris and Menelaus within our call, so we will have the same fair Helen also whose fickleness has caused this broil. Varney, thy wife must be at Kenilworth, and forthcoming at my order. My Lord of Leicester, we expect you will look to this."

The earl and his follower bowed low, and raised their heads, without daring to look at the Queen or at each other; for both felt at the instant as if the nets and toils which their own falsehood had woven were in the act of closing around them. The Queen, however, observed not their confusion, but proceeded to say, "My Lords of Sussex and Leicester, we require your presence at the privy council to be presently held, where matters of importance are to be debated. We will then take the water for our divertisement, and you, my lords, will attend us. And that reminds us of a circumstance. Do you, Sir Squire of the Soiled Cassock [distinguishing Raleigh by a smile], fail not to observe that you are to attend us on our progress. You shall be supplied with suitable means to reform your wardrobe."

And so terminated this celebrated audience, in which, as throughout her life, Elizabeth united the occasional caprice of her sex with that sense and sound policy in which neither man nor woman ever excelled her.

CHAPTER XVII.

Well then—our course is chosen, spread the sail,
Heave off the lead and mark the soundings well,
Look to the helm, good master ; many a shoal
Marks this stern coast, and rocks, where sits the Siren,
Who, like ambition, lures men to their ruin.

—*The Shipwreck.*

DURING the brief interval that took place betwixt the dismissal of the audience and the sitting of the privy council, Leicester had time to reflect that he had that morning sealed his own fate. "It was impossible for him now," he thought, "after having, in the face of all that was honorable in England, pledged his truth (though in an ambiguous phrase) for the statement of Varney, to contradict or disavow it without exposing himself not merely to the loss of court favor, but to the highest displeasure of the Queen, his deceived mistress, and to the scorn and contempt at once of his rival and of all his compeers." This certainty rushed at once on his mind, together with all the difficulties which he would necessarily be exposed to in preserving a secret which seemed now equally essential to his safety, to his power, and to his honor. He was situated like one who walks upon ice, ready to give way around him, and whose only safety consists in moving onward by firm and unvacillating steps. The Queen's favor, to preserve which he had made such sacrifices, must now be secured by all means and at all hazards: it was the only plank which he could cling to in the tempest. He must settle himself, therefore, to the task of not only preserving, but augmenting, the Queen's partiality. He must be the favorite of Elizabeth, or a man utterly shipwrecked in fortune and in honor. All other considerations must be laid aside for the moment, and he repelled the intrusive thoughts which forced on his mind the image of Amy, by saying to himself, there would be time to think hereafter how he was to escape from the labyrinth ultimately, since the pilot who sees a Scylla under his bows must not for the time think of the more distant dangers of Charybdis.

In this mood, the Earl of Leicester that day assumed his chair at the council-table of Elizabeth; and when the hours of business were over, in this same mood did he occupy an hon-

ored place near her during her pleasure-excursion on the Thames. And never did he display to more advantage his powers as a politician of the first rank, or his parts as an accomplished courtier.

It chanced that in that day's council matters were agitated touching the affairs of the unfortunate Mary, the seventh year of whose captivity in England was now in doleful currency. There had been opinions in favor of this unhappy princess laid before Elizabeth's council, and supported with much strength of argument by Sussex and others, who dwelt more upon the law of nations and the breach of hospitality than, however softened or qualified, was agreeable to the Queen's ear. Leicester adopted the contrary opinion with great animation and eloquence, and described the necessity of continuing the severe restraint of the Queen of Scots, as a measure essential to the safety of the kingdom, and particularly of Elizabeth's sacred person, the lightest hair of whose head, he maintained, ought, in their lordships' estimation, to be matter of more deep and anxious concern than the life and fortunes of a rival, who, after setting up a vain and unjust pretense to the throne of England, was now, even while in the bosom of her country, the constant hope and theme of encouragement to all enemies to Elizabeth, whether at home or abroad. He ended by craving pardon of their lordships if, in the zeal of speech, he had given any offense, but the Queen's safety was a theme which hurried him beyond his usual moderation of debate.

Elizabeth chid him, but not severely, for the weight which he attached unduly to her personal interests; yet she owned that, since it had been the pleasure of Heaven to combine those interests with the weal of her subjects, she did only her duty when she adopted such measures of self-preservation as circumstances forced upon her; and if the council in their wisdom should be of opinion that it was needful to continue some restraint on the person of her unhappy sister of Scotland, she trusted they would not blame her if she requested of the Countess of Shrewsbury to use her with as much kindness as might be consistent with her safe keeping. And with this intimation of her pleasure, the council was dismissed.

Never was more anxious and ready way made for "my Lord of Leicester" than as he passed through the crowded anterooms to go toward the river-side, in order to attend her Majesty to her barge; never was the voice of the ushers louder, to "Make room—make room for the noble earl"; never were

these signals more promptly and reverently obeyed; never were more anxious eyes turned on him to obtain a glance of favor, or even of mere recognition, while the heart of many a humble follower throbbed betwixt the desire to offer his congratulations and the fear of intruding himself on the notice of one so infinitely above him. The whole court considered the issue of this day's audience, expected with so much doubt and anxiety, as a decisive triumph on the part of Leicester, and felt assured that the orb of his rival satellite, if not altogether obscured by his luster, must revolve hereafter in a dimmer and more distant sphere. So thought the court and courtiers, from high to low, and they acted accordingly.

On the other hand, never did Leicester return the general greeting with such ready and condescending courtesy, or endeavor more successfully to gather, in the words of one who at that moment stood at no great distance from him, "golden opinions from all sorts of men."

For all the favorite earl had a bow, a smile at least, and often a kind word. Most of these were addressed to courtiers, whose names have long gone down the tide of oblivion; but some to such as sound strangely in our ears, when connected with the ordinary matters of human life, above which the gratitude of posterity has long elevated them. A few of Leicester's interlocutory sentences ran as follows:

"Poynings, good morrow, and how does your wife and fair daughter? Why come they not to court? Adams, your suit is naught: the Queen will grant no more monopolies; but I may serve you in another matter. My good Alderman Aylford, the suit of the city, affecting Queenhithe, shall be forwarded as far as my poor interest can serve. Master Edmund Spencer, touching your Irish petition, I would willingly aid you, from my love to the Muses; but thou hast nettled the lord treasurer."

"My lord," said the poet, "were I permitted to explain——"

"Come to my lodging, Edmund," answered the earl—"not to-morrow or next day, but soon. Ha, Will Shakspeare—wild Will! thou hast given my nephew, Philip Sidney, love-powder: he cannot sleep without thy 'Venus and Adonis' under his pillow! We will have thee hanged for the veriest wizard in Europe. Hark thee, mad wag, I have not forgotten thy matter of the patent and of the bears."

The *player* bowed, and the earl nodded and passed on—so that age would have told the tale; in ours, perhaps, we

might say the immortal had done homage to the mortal. The next whom the favorite accosted was one of his own zealous dependents.

"How now, Sir Francis Denning," he whispered, in answer to his exulting salutation, "that smile hath made thy face shorter by one-third than when I first saw it this morning. What, Master Bowyer, stand you back, and think you I bear malice? You did but your duty this morning; and if I remember aught of the passage betwixt us, it shall be in thy favor."

Then the earl was approached, with several fantastic congees, by a person quaintly dressed in a doublet of black velvet, curiously slashed and pinked with crimson satin. A long cock's feather in the velvet bonnet which he held in his hand, and an enormous ruff, stiffened to the extremity of the absurd taste of the times, joined with a sharp, lively, conceited expression of countenance, seemed to body forth a vain, hare-brained coxcomb and small wit; while the rod he held, and an assumption of formal authority, appeared to express some sense of official consequence which qualified the natural pertness of his manner. A perpetual blush, which occupied rather the sharp nose than the thin cheek of this personage, seemed to speak more of "good life," as it was called, than of modesty; and the manner in which he approached to the earl confirmed that suspicion.

"Good-even to you, Master Robert Laneham," said Leicester, and seemed desirous to pass forward without farther speech.

"I have a suit to your noble lordship," said the figure, boldly following him.

"And what is it, good master keeper of the council-chamber door?"

"*Clerk* of the council-chamber door," said Master Robert Laneham, with emphasis, by way of reply and of correction.

"Well, qualify thine office as thou wilt, man," replied the earl; "what wouldst thou have with me?"

"Simply," answered Laneham, "that your lordship would be, as heretofore, my good lord, and procure me license to attend the summer progress unto your lordship's most beautiful and all-to-be unmatched Castle of Kenilworth."

"To what purpose, good Master Laneham?" replied the earl; "bethink you, my guests must needs be many."

"Not so many," replied the petitioner, "but that your nobleness will willingly spare your old servitor his crib and

his mess. Bethink^s you, my lord, how necessary is this rod of mine to fright away all those listeners who else would play at bo-peep with the honorable council, and be searching for key-holes and crannies in the door of the chamber, so as to render my staff as needful as a fly-flap in a butcher's shop."

"Methinks you have found out a fly-blown comparison for the honorable council, Master Laneham," said the earl; "but seek not about to justify it. Come to Kenilworth, if you list; there will be store of fools there besides, and so you will be fitted."

"Nay, an there be fools, my lord," replied Laneham, with much glee, "I warrant I will make sport among them; for no greyhound loves to cote a hare as I to turn and course a fool. But I have another singular favor to beseech of your honor."

"Speak it, and let me go," said the earl; "I think the Queen comes forth instantly."

"My very good lord, I would fain bring a bed-fellow with me."

"How, you irreverent rascal!" said Leicester.

"Nay, my lord, my meaning is within the canons," answered his unblushing, or rather his ever-blushing, petitioner. "I have a wife as curious as her grandmother, who eat the apple. Now, take her with me I may not, her Highness' orders being so strict against the officers bringing with them their wives in a progress, and so lumbering the court with womankind. But what I would crave of your lordship is, to find room for her in some mummery or pretty pageant, in disguise, as it were, so that, not being known for my wife, there may be no offense."

"The foul fiend seize ye both!" said Leicester, stung into uncontrollable passion by the recollections which this speech excited. "Why stop you me with such follies?"

The terrified clerk of the chamber door, astonished at the burst of resentment he had so unconsciously produced, dropped his staff of office from his hand, and gazed on the incensed earl with a foolish face of wonder and terror, which instantly recalled Leicester to himself.

"I meant but to try if thou hadst the audacity which befits thine office," said he hastily. "Come to Kenilworth, and bring the devil with thee if thou wilt."

"My wife, sir, hath played the devil ere now, in a mystery, in Queen Mary's time; but we shall want a trifle for properties."

"Here is a crown for thee," said the earl; "make me rid of thee—the great bell rings."

Master Robert Laneham * stared a moment at the agitation which he had excited, and then said to himself as he stooped to pick up his staff of office, "The noble earl runs wild humors to-day; but they who give crowns expect us witty fellows to wink at their unsettled starts; and, by my faith, if they paid not for mercy, we would finger them tightly!"

Leicester moved hastily on, neglecting the courtesies he had hitherto dispensed so liberally, and hurrying through the courtly crowd, until he paused in a small withdrawing-room, into which he plunged to draw a moment's breath unobserved and in seclusion.

"What am I now," he said to himself, "that am thus jaded by the words of a mean, weather-beaten, goose-brained gull! Conscience, thou art a bloodhound, whose growl wakes as readily at the paltry stir of a rat or mouse as at the step of a lion. Can I not quit myself, by one bold stroke, of a state so irksome, so unhonored? What if I kneel to Elizabeth, and, owning the whole, throw myself on her mercy?"

As he pursued this train of thought, the door of the apartment opened, and Varney rushed in.

"Thank God, my lord, that I have found you!" was his exclamation.

"Thank the devil, whose agent thou art," was the earl's reply.

"Thank whom you will, my lord," said Varney; "but hasten to the water-side. The Queen is on board, and asks for you."

"Go, say I am taken suddenly ill," replied Leicester; "for, by Heaven, my brain can sustain this no longer!"

"I may well say so," said Varney, with bitterness of expression, "for your place, aye, and mine, who, as your master of the horse, was to have attended your lordship, is already filled up in the Queen's barge. The new minion, Walter Raleigh, and our old acquaintance, Tressilian, were called for to fill our places just as I hastened away to seek you."

"Thou art a devil, Varney," said Leicester hastily; "but thou hast the mastery for the present: I follow thee."

Varney replied not, but led the way out of the palace, and toward the river, while his master followed him as if mechanically; until, looking back, he said in a tone which savored of familiarity at least, if not of authority, "How is this, my lord? your cloak hangs on one side, your hose are unbraced; permit me——"

* See Note 9.

“Thou art a fool, Varney, as well as a knave,” said Leicester, shaking him off, and rejecting his officious assistance; “we are best thus, sir: when we require you to order our person, it is well, but now we want you not.”

So saying, the earl resumed at once his air of command, and with it his self-possession, shook his dress into yet wilder disorder, passed before Varney with the air of a superior and master, and in his turn led the way to the river-side.

The Queen’s barge was on the very point of putting off; the seat allotted to Leicester in the stern, and that to his master of the horse on the bow, of the boat being already filled up. But on Leicester’s approach there was a pause, as if the barge-men anticipated some alteration in their company. The angry spot was, however, on the Queen’s cheek, as, in that cold tone with which superiors endeavor to veil their internal agitation, while speaking to those before whom it would be derogation to express it, she pronounced the chilling words—“We have waited, my Lord of Leicester.”

“Madam and most gracious princess,” said Leicester, “you who can pardon so many weaknesses which your own heart never knows, can best bestow your commiseration on the agitations of the bosom, which, for a moment, affect both head and limbs. I came to your presence a doubting and an accused subject; your goodness penetrated the clouds of defamation, and restored me to my honor, and, what is yet dearer, to your favor—is it wonderful, though for me it is most unhappy, that my master of the horse should have found me in a state which scarce permitted me to make the exertion necessary to follow him to this place, when one glance of your Highness, although, alas! an angry one, has had power to do that for me in which Esculapius might have failed?”

“How is this?” said Elizabeth hastily, looking at Varney; “hath your lord been ill?”

“Something of a fainting fit,” answered the ready-witted Varney, “as your Grace may observe from his present condition. My lord’s haste would not permit me leisure even to bring his dress into order.”

“It matters not,” said Elizabeth, as she gazed on the noble face and form of Leicester, to which even the strange mixture of passions by which he had been so lately agitated gave additional interest; “make room for my noble lord. Your place, Master Varney, has been filled up; you must find a seat in another barge.”

Varney bowed and withdrew.

“And you, too, our young Squire of the Cloak,” added she, looking at Raleigh, “must, for the time, go to the barge of our ladies of honor. As for Tressilian, he hath already suffered too much by the caprice of women that I should aggrieve him by my change of plan, so far as he is concerned.”

Leicester seated himself in his place in the barge, and close to the sovereign; Raleigh rose to retire, and Tressilian would have been so ill-timed in his courtesy as to offer to relinquish his own place to his friend, had not the acute glance of Raleigh himself, who seemed now in his native element, made him sensible that so ready a disclamation of the royal favor might be misinterpreted. He sate silent, therefore, whilst Raleigh, with a profound bow and a look of the deepest humiliation, was about to quit his place.

A noble courtier, the gallant Lord Willoughby, read, as he thought, something in the Queen's face which seemed to pity Raleigh's real or assumed semblance of mortification.

“It is not for us old courtiers,” he said, “to hide the sunshine from the young ones. I will, with her Majesty's leave, relinquish for an hour that which her subjects hold dearest, the delight of her Highness' presence, and mortify myself by walking in starlight, while I forsake for a brief season the glory of Diana's own beams. I will take place in the boat which the ladies occupy, and permit this young cavalier his hour of promised felicity.”

The Queen replied, with an expression betwixt mirth and earnest, “If you are so willing to leave us, my Lord, we cannot help the mortification. But, under favor, we do not trust you—old and experienced as you may deem yourself—with the care of our young ladies of honor. Your venerable age, my lord,” she continued, smiling, “may be better assorted with that of my lord treasurer, who follows in the third boat, and whose experience even my Lord Willoughby's may be improved by.”

Lord Willoughby hid his disappointment under a smile; laughed, was confused, bowed, and left the Queen's barge to go on board my Lord Burleigh's. Leicester, who endeavored to divert his thoughts from all internal reflection by fixing them on what was passing around, watched this circumstance among others. But when the boat put off from the shore, when the music sounded from a barge which accompanied them, when the shouts of the populace were heard from the shore, and all reminded him of the situation in which he was placed, he abstracted his thoughts and feelings

by a strong effort from everything but the necessity of maintaining himself in the favor of his patroness, and exerted his talents of pleasing captivity with such success that the Queen, alternately delighted with his conversation and alarmed for his health, at length imposed a temporary silence on him, with playful yet anxious care, lest his flow of spirits should exhaust him.

"My lords," she said, "having passed for a time our edict of silence upon our good Leicester, we will call you to counsel on a gamesome matter, more fitted to be now treated of, amidst mirth and music, than in the gravity of our ordinary deliberations. Which of you, my lords," said she, smiling, "know aught of a petition from Orson Pinnit, the keeper, as he qualifies himself, of our royal bears? Who stands godfather to his request?"

"Marry, with your Grace's good permission, that do I," said the Earl of Sussex. "Orson Pinnit was a stout soldier before he was so mangled by the skenes of the Irish clan Mac-Donough, and I trust your Grace will be, as you always have been, good mistress to your good and trusty servants."

"Surely," said the Queen, "it is our purpose to be so, and in especial to our poor soldiers and sailors, who hazard their lives for little pay. We would give," she said, with her eyes sparkling, "yonder royal palace of ours to be an hospital for their use, rather than they should call their mistress ungrateful. But this is not the question," she said, her voice, which had been awakened by her patriotic feelings, once more subsiding into the tone of gay and easy conversation; "for this Orson Pinnit's request goes something farther. He complains that, amidst the extreme delight with which men haunt the play-houses, and in especial their eager desire for seeing the exhibitions of one Will Shakspeare—whom, I think, my lords, we have all heard something of—the manly amusement of bear-baiting is falling into comparative neglect; since men will rather throng to see these roguish players kill each other in jest than to see our royal dogs and bears worry each other in bloody earnest. What say you to this, my Lord of Sussex?"

"Why, truly, gracious madam," said Sussex, "you must expect little from an old soldier like me in favor of battles in sport, when they are compared with battles in earnest; and yet, by my faith, I wish Will Shakspeare no harm. He is a stout man at quarter-staff and single falchion, though, as I am told, a halting fellow; and he stood, they say, a tough fight

with the rangers of old Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecot, when he broke his deer-park and kissed his keeper's daughter."

"I cry you mercy, my Lord of Sussex," said Queen Elizabeth, interrupting him; "that matter was heard in council, and we will not have this fellow's offense exaggerated: there was no kissing in the matter, and the defendant hath put the denial on record. But what say you to his present practice, my lord, on the stage? for there lies the point, and not in any ways touching his former errors, in breaking parks or the other follies you speak of."

"Why, truly, madam," replied Sussex, "as I said before, I wish the gamesome, mad fellow no injury. Some of his whoreson poetry—I crave your Grace's pardon for such a phrase—has rung in mine ears as if the lines sounded to boot and saddle. But then it is all froth and folly—no substance or seriousness in it, as your Grace has already well touched. What are half a dozen knaves, with rusty foils and tattered targets, making but a mere mockery of a stout fight, to compare to the royal game of bear-baiting, which hath been graced by your Highness' countenance, and that of your royal predecessors, in this your princely kingdom, famous for matchless mastiffs and bold bear-wards over all Christendom? Greatly is it to be doubted that the race of both will decay, if men should throng to hear the lungs of an idle player belch forth nonsensical bombast, instead of bestowing their pence in encouraging the bravest image of war that can be shown in peace, and that is the sports of the bear-garden. There you may see the bear lying at guard with his red pinky eyes, watching the onset of the mastiff, like a wily captain, who maintains his defense that an assailant may be tempted to venture within his danger. And then comes sir mastiff, like a worthy champion, in full career at the throat of his adversary; and then shall sir bruin teach him the reward for those who, in their over-courage, neglect the policies of war, and, catching him in his arms, strain him to his breast like a lusty wrestler, until rib after rib crack like the shot of a pistolet. And then another mastiff, as bold, but with better aim and sounder judgment, catches sir bruin by the nether lip, and hangs fast, while he tosses about his blood and slaver, and tries in vain to shake Sir Talbot from his hold. And then——"

"Nay, by my honor, my lord," said the Queen, laughing, "you have described the whole so admirably that, had we never seen a bear-baiting, as we have beheld many, and hope,

with Heaven's allowance, to see many more, your words were sufficient to put the whole bear-garden before our eyes. But come, who speaks next in this case? My Lord of Leicester, what say you?"

"Am I then to consider myself as unmuzzled, please your Grace?" replied Leicester.

"Surely, my lord—that is, if you feel hearty enough to take part in our game," answered Elizabeth; "and yet, when I think of your cognizance of the bear and ragged staff, methinks we had better hear some less partial orator."

"Nay, on my word, gracious princess," said the earl, "though my brother Ambrose of Warwick and I do carry the ancient cognizance your Highness deigns to remember, I nevertheless desire nothing but fair play on all sides; or, as they say, 'Fight dog, fight bear.' And in behalf of the players, I must needs say that they are witty knaves, whose rants and jests keep the minds of the commons from busying themselves with state affairs, and listening to traitorous speeches, idle rumors, and disloyal insinuations. When men are agape to see how Marlowe, Shakspeare, and other play artificers work out their fanciful plots, as they call them, the mind of the spectators is withdrawn from the conduct of their rulers."

"We would not have the mind of our subjects withdrawn from the consideration of our own conduct, my lord," answered Elizabeth; "because, the more closely it is examined, the true motives by which we are guided will appear the more manifest."

"I have heard, however, madam," said the Dean of St. Asaph's, an eminent Puritan, "that these players are wont, in their plays, not only to introduce profane and lewd expressions, tending to foster sin and harlotry, but even to bellow out such reflections on government, its origin and its object, as tend to render the subject discontented, and shake the solid foundations of civil society. And it seems to be, under your Grace's favor, far less than safe to permit these naughty, foul-mouthed knaves to ridicule the godly for their decent gravity, and in blaspheming Heaven, and slandering its earthly rulers, to set at defiance the laws both of God and man."

"If we could think this were true, my lord," said Elizabeth, "we should give sharp correction for such offenses. But it is ill arguing against the use of anything from its abuse. And touching this Shakspeare, we think there is that in his

plays that is worth twenty bear-gardens; and that this new undertaking of his Chronicles, as he calls them, may entertain, with honest mirth, mingled with useful instruction, not only our subjects, but even the generation which may succeed to us."

"Your Majesty's reign will need no such feeble aid to make it remembered to the latest posterity," said Leicester. "And yet, in his way, Shakspeare hath so touched some incidents of your Majesty's happy government as may countervail what has been spoken by his reverence the Dean of St. Asaph's. There are some lines, for example—I would my nephew, Philip Sidney, were here, they are scarce ever out of his mouth—they are spoken in a mad tale of fairies, love-charms, and I wot not what besides; but beautiful they are, however short they may and must fall of the subject to which they bear a bold relation, and Philip murmurs them, I think, even in his dreams."

"You tantalize us, my lord," said the Queen. "Master Philip Sidney is, we know, a minion of the Muses, and we are pleased it should be so. Valor never shines to more advantage than when united with the true taste and love of letters. But surely there are some others among our young courtiers who can recollect what your lordship has forgotten amid weightier affairs. Master Tressilian, you are described to me as a worshiper of Minerva—remember you aught of these lines?"

Tressilian's heart was too heavy, his prospects in life too fatally blighted, to profit by the opportunity which the Queen thus offered to him of attracting her attention, but he determined to transfer the advantage to his more ambitious young friend; and, excusing himself on the score of want of recollection, he added, that he believed the beautiful verses of which my Lord of Leicester had spoken were in the remembrance of Master Walter Raleigh.

At the command of the Queen, that cavalier repeated, with accent and manner which even added to their exquisite delicacy of tact and beauty of description, the celebrated vision of Oberon:

"That very time I saw (but thou couldst not),
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid, all arm'd; a certain aim he took
At a fair vestal, throned by the west;
And loos'd his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts.
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon;
And the imperial vot'ress passed on,
In maiden meditation, fancy free."

The voice of Raleigh, as he repeated the last lines, became a little tremulous, as if diffident how the sovereign to whom the homage was addressed might receive it, exquisite as it was. If this diffidence was affected, it was good policy; but if real, there was little occasion for it. The verses were not probably new to the Queen, for when was ever such elegant flattery long in reaching the royal ear to which it was addressed? But they were not the less welcome when repeated by such a speaker as Raleigh. Alike delighted with the matter, the manner, and the graceful form and animated countenance of the gallant young reciter, Elizabeth kept time to every cadence with look and with finger. When the speaker had ceased, she murmured over the last lines as if scarce conscious that she was overheard, and as she uttered the words,

"In maiden meditation, fancy free."

she dropt into the Thames the supplication of Orson Pinnit, keeper of the royal bears, to find more favorable acceptance at Sheerness, or wherever the tide might waft it.

Leicester was spurred to emulation by the success of the young courtier's exhibition, as the veteran racer is roused when a high-mettled colt passes him on the way. He turned the discourse on shows, banquets, pageants, and on the character of those by whom these gay scenes were then frequented. He mixed acute observation with light satire, in that just proportion which was free alike from malignant slander and insipid praise. He mimicked with ready accent the manners of the affected or the clownish, and made his own graceful tone and manner seem doubly such when he resumed it. Foreign countries—their customs, their manners, the rules of their courts, the fashions, and even the dress, of their ladies, were equally his theme; and seldom did he conclude without conveying some compliment, always couched in delicacy and expressed with propriety, to the Virgin Queen, her court, and her government. Thus passed the conversation during this pleasure voyage, seconded by the rest of the attendants upon the royal person, in gay discourse, varied by remarks upon ancient classics and modern authors, and enriched by maxims of deep policy and sound morality by the statesmen and sages who sate around, and mixed wisdom with the lighter talk of a female court.

When they returned to the palace, Elizabeth accepted, or rather selected, the arm of Leicester to support her from the stairs where they landed to the great gate. It even seemed to

him (though that might arise from the flattery of his own imagination) that, during this short passage, she leaned on him somewhat more than the slippiness of the way necessarily demanded. Certainly her actions and words combined to express a degree of favor which, even in his proudest days, he had not till then attained. His rival, indeed, was repeatedly graced by the Queen's notice; but it was in a manner that seemed to flow less from spontaneous inclination than as extorted by a sense of his merit. And, in the opinion of many experienced courtiers, all the favor she showed him was overbalanced by her whispering in the ear of the Lady Derby, that "Now she saw sickness was a better alchemist than she before wotted of, seeing it had changed my Lord of Sussex's copper nose into a golden one."

The jest transpired, and the Earl of Leicester enjoyed his triumph, as one to whom court favor had been both the primary and the ultimate motive of life, while he forgot in the intoxication of the moment the perplexities and dangers of his own situation. Indeed, strange as it may appear, he thought less at that moment of the perils arising from his secret union than of the marks of grace which Elizabeth from time to time showed to young Raleigh. They were indeed transient, but they were conferred on one accomplished in mind and body with grace, gallantry, literature, and valor. An accident occurred in the course of the evening which riveted Leicester's attention to this object.

The nobles and courtiers who had attended the Queen on her pleasure expedition were invited, with royal hospitality, to a splendid banquet in the hall of the palace. The table was not, indeed, graced by the presence of the sovereign; for, agreeable to her idea of what was at once modest and dignified, the Maiden Queen on such occasions was wont to take in private, or with one or two favorite ladies, her light and temperate meal. After a moderate interval, the court again met in the splendid gardens of the palace; and it was while thus engaged that the Queen suddenly asked a lady, who was near to her both in place and favor, what had become of the young Squire Lack-Cloak.

The Lady Paget answered, "She had seen Master Raleigh but two or three minutes since, standing at the window of a small pavilion or pleasure-house which looked out on the Thames, and writing on the glass with a diamond ring."

"That ring," said the Queen, "was a small token I gave him, to make amends for his spoiled mantle. Come, Paget,

let us see what use he has made of it, for I can see through him already. He is a marvelously sharp-witted spirit."

They went to the spot, within sight of which, but at some distance, the young cavalier still lingered, as the fowler watches the net which he has set. The Queen approached the window, on which Raleigh had used her gift to inscribe the following line:

"Fain would I climb, but that I fear to fall."

The Queen smiled, read it twice over, once with deliberation to Lady Paget, and once again to herself. "It is a pretty beginning," she said, after the consideration of a moment or two; "but methinks the muse hath deserted the young wit at the very outset of his task. It were good-natured, were it not, Lady Paget, to complete it for him? Try your rhyming faculties."

Lady Paget, prosaic from her cradle upward, as ever any lady of the bedchamber before or after her, disclaimed all possibility of assisting the young poet.

"Nay, then, we must sacrifice to the Muses ourselves," said Elizabeth.

"The incense of no one can be more acceptable," said Lady Paget; "and your Highness will impose such obligation on the ladies of Parnassus——"

"Hush, Paget," said the Queen, "you speak sacrilege against the immortal Nine; yet, virgins themselves, they should be exorable to a virgin Queen; and, therefore, let me see how runs his verse:

" 'Fain would I climb, but that I fear to fall.'

Might not the answer, for fault of a better, run thus:

"If thy mind fail thee, do not climb at all?"

The dame of honor uttered an exclamation of joy and surprise at so happy a termination; and certainly a worse has been applauded, even when coming from a less distinguished author.

The Queen, thus encouraged, took off a diamond ring, and saying, "We will give this gallant some cause of marvel, when he finds his couplet perfected without his own interference," she wrote her own line beneath that of Raleigh.

The Queen left the pavilion; but, retiring slowly, and often looking back, she could see the young cavalier steal, with the flight of a lapwing, toward the place where he had seen her make a pause. "She stayed but to observe," as she said, "that

her train had taken"; and then, laughing at the circumstance with the Lady Paget, she took the way slowly toward the palace. Elizabeth, as they returned, cautioned her companion not to mention to anyone the aid which she had given to the young poet, and Lady Paget promised scrupulous secrecy. It is to be supposed that she made a mental reservation in favor of Leicester, to whom her ladyship transmitted without delay an anecdote so little calculated to give him pleasure.

Raleigh, in the meanwhile, stole back to the window, and read, with a feeling of intoxication, the encouragement thus given him by the Queen in person to follow out his ambitious career, and returned to Sussex and his retinue, then on the point of embarking to go up the river, his heart beating high with gratified pride and with hope of future distinction.

The reverence due to the person of the earl prevented any notice being taken of the reception he had met with at court, until they had landed, and the household were assembled in the great hall at Say's Court; while that lord, exhausted by his late illness and the fatigues of the day, had retired to his chamber, demanding the attendance of Wayland, his successful physician. Wayland, however, was nowhere to be found; and, while some of the party were, with military impatience, seeking him, and cursing his absence, the rest flocked around Raleigh to congratulate him on his prospects of court favor.

He had the good taste and judgment to conceal the decisive circumstance of the couplet, to which Elizabeth had deigned to find a rhyme; but other indications had transpired which plainly intimated that he had made some progress in the Queen's favor. All hastened to wish him joy on the mended appearance of his fortune—some from real regard; some, perhaps, from hopes that his preferment might hasten their own; and most from a mixture of these motives, and a sense that the countenance shown to any one of Sussex's household was, in fact, a triumph to the whole. Raleigh returned the kindest thanks to them all, disowning, with becoming modesty, that one day's fair reception made a favorite, any more than one swallow a summer. But he observed that Blount did not join in the general congratulation, and, somewhat hurt at his apparent unkindness, he plainly asked him the reason.

Blount replied with equal sincerity—"My good Walter, I wish thee as well as do any of these chattering gulls, who are whistling and whooping gratulations in thine ear, because it

seems fair weather with thee. But I fear for thee, Walter [and he wiped his honest eye]—I fear for thee with all my heart. These court tricks, and gambols, and flashes of fine women's favor, are the tricks and trinkets that bring fair fortunes to farthings, and fine faces and witty coxcombs to the acquaintance of dull block and sharp axes."

So saying, Blount arose and left the hall, while Raleigh looked after him with an expression that blanked for a moment his bold and animated countenance.

Stanley just then entered the hall, and said to Tressilian, "My lord is calling for your fellow Wayland, and your fellow Wayland is just come hither in a sculler, and is calling for you, nor will he go to my lord till he sees you. The fellow looks as he were mazed, methinks. I would you would see him immediately."

Tressilian instantly left the hall, and causing Wayland Smith to be shown into a withdrawing-apartment, and lights placed, he conducted the artist thither, and was surprised when he observed the emotion of his countenance.

"What is the matter with you, Smith?" said Tressilian; "have you seen the devil?"

"Worse, sir—worse," replied Wayland, "I have seen a basilisk. Thank God, I saw him first, for, being so seen, and seeing not me, he will do the less harm."

"In God's name, speak sense," said Tressilian, "and say what you mean!"

"I have seen my old master," said the artist. "Last night, a friend whom I had acquired took me to see the palace clock, judging me to be curious in such works of art. At the window of a turret next to the clock-house I saw my old master."

"Thou must needs have been mistaken," said Tressilian.

"I was not mistaken," said Wayland. "He that once hath his features by heart would know him amongst a million. He was anticly habited; but he cannot disguise himself from me, God be praised! as I can from him. I will not, however, tempt Providence by remaining within his ken. Tarleton the player himself could not so disguise himself but that, sooner or later, Doboobie would find him out. I must away to-morrow; for, as we stand together, it were death to me to remain within reach of him."

"But the Earl of Sussex?" said Tressilian.

"He is in little danger from what he has hitherto taken, provided he swallow the matter of a bean's size of the orvietan every morning fasting; but let him beware of a relapse."

“And how is that to be guarded against?” said Tressilian.

“Only by such caution as you would use against the devil,” answered Wayland. “Let my lord’s clerk of the kitchen kill his lord’s meat himself, and dress it himself, using no spice but what he procures from the surest hands. Let the sewer serve it up himself, and let the master of my lord’s household see that both clerk and sewer taste the dishes which the one dresses and the other serves. Let my lord use no perfumes which come not from well accredited persons—no unguents—no pomades. Let him, on no account, drink with strangers, or eat fruit with them, either in the way of nooning or otherwise. Especially, let him observe such caution if he goes to Kenilworth: the excuse of his illness, and his being under diet, will, and must, cover the strangeness of such practice.”

“And thou,” said Tressilian, “what dost thou think to make of thyself?”

“France, Spain, either India, East or West, shall be my refuge,” said Wayland, “ere I venture my life by residing within ken of Doboobie, Demetrius, or whatever else he calls himself for the time.”

“Well,” said Tressilian, “this happens not inopportunely. I had business for you in Berkshire, but in the opposite extremity to the place where thou art known; and ere thou hadst found out this new reason for living private, I had settled to send thee thither upon a secret embassy.”

The artist expressed himself willing to receive his commands, and Tressilian, knowing he was well acquainted with the outline of his business at court, frankly explained to him the whole, mentioned the agreement which subsisted betwixt Giles Gosling and him, and told what had that day been averred in the presence-chamber by Varney, and supported by Leicester.

“Thou seest,” he added, “that, in the circumstances in which I am placed, it behoves me to keep a narrow watch on the motions of these unprincipled men, Varney and his complices, Foster and Lambourne, as well as on those of my Lord Leicester himself, who, I suspect, is partly a deceiver, and not altogether the deceived in that matter. Here is my ring, as a pledge to Giles Gosling; here is, besides, gold, which shall be trebled if thou serve me faithfully. Away down to Cumnor, and see what happens there.”

“I go with double good-will,” said the artist, “first, because I serve your honor, who has been so kind to me, and then, that I may escape my old master, who, if not an abso-

lute incarnation of the devil, has, at least, as much of the demon about him, in will, word, and action, as ever polluted humanity. And yet let him take care of me. I fly him now, as heretofore; but if, like the Scottish wild cattle,* I am vexed by frequent pursuit, I may turn on him in hate and desperation. Will your honor command my nag to be saddled? I will but give the medicine to my lord, divided in its proper proportions, with a few instructions. His safety will then depend on the care of his friends and domestics: for the past he is guarded, but let him beware of the future."

Wayland Smith accordingly made his farewell visit to the Earl of Sussex, dictated instructions as to his regimen and precautions concerning his diet, and left Say's Court without waiting for morning.

* See Note 10.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The moment comes—
It is already come—when thou must write
The absolute total of thy life's vast sum.
The constellations stand victorious o'er thee,
The planets shoot good fortune in fair junctions,
And tell thee, 'Now's the time.'

—SCHILLER'S *Wallenstein*, by COLERIDGE.

WHEN Leicester returned to his lodging, after a day so important and so harassing, in which, after riding out more than one gale, and touching on more than one shoal, his bark had finally gained the harbor with banner displayed, he seemed to experience as much fatigue as a mariner after a perilous storm. He spoke not a word while his chamberlain exchanged his rich court-mantle for a furred night-robe, and when this officer signified that Master Varney desired to speak with his lordship, he replied only by a sullen nod. Varney, however, entered, accepting this signal as a permission, and the chamberlain withdrew.

The earl remained silent and almost motionless in his chair, his head reclined on his hand, and his elbow resting on the table which stood beside him, without seeming to be conscious of the entrance or of the presence of his confidant. Varney waited for some minutes until he should speak, desirous to know what was the finally predominant mood of a mind through which so many powerful emotions had that day taken their course. But he waited in vain, for Leicester continued still silent, and the confidant saw himself under the necessity of being the first to speak. "May I congratulate your lordship," he said, "on the deserved superiority you have this day attained over your most formidable rival?"

Leicester raised his head, and answered sadly, but without anger, "Thou, Varney, whose ready invention has involved me in a web of most mean and perilous falsehood, knowest best what small reason there is for gratulation on the subject."

"Do you blame me, my lord," said Varney, "for not betraying, on the first push, the secret on which your fortune depended, and which you have so oft and so earnestly recommended to my safe keeping? Your lordship was present in

person, and might have contradicted me and ruined yourself by an avowal of the truth; but surely it was no part of a faithful servant to have done so without your commands."

"I cannot deny it, Varney," said the earl, rising and walking across the room; "my own ambition has been traitor to my love."

"Say, rather, my lord, that your love has been traitor to your greatness, and barred you from such a prospect of honor and power as the world cannot offer to any other. To make my honored lady a countess, you have missed the chance of being yourself——"

He paused, and seemed unwilling to complete the sentence.

"Of being myself what?" demanded Leicester; "speak out thy meaning, Varney——"

"Of being yourself a KING, my lord," replied Varney; "and King of England to boot! It is no treason to our Queen to say so. It would have chanced by her obtaining that which all true subjects wish her—a lusty, noble, and gallant husband."

"Thou ravest, Varney," answered Leicester. "Besides, our times have seen enough to make men loathe the crown matrimonial which men take from their wives' lap. There was Darnley of Scotland."

"He!" said Varney—"a gull, a fool, a thrice-sodden ass, who suffered himself to be fired off into the air like a rocket on a rejoicing-day. Had Mary had the hap to have wedded the noble earl once destined to share her throne, she had experienced a husband of different metal; and her husband had found in her a wife as complying and loving as the mate of the meanest squire, who follows the hounds a-horseback, and holds her husband's bridle as he mounts."

"It might have been as thou sayst, Varney," said Leicester, a brief smile of self-satisfaction passing over his anxious countenance. "Henry Darnley knew little of women. With Mary, a man who knew her sex might have had some chance of holding his own; but not with Elizabeth, Varney; for I think God, when He gave her the heart of a woman, gave her the head of a man to control its follies. No, I know her. She will accept love-tokens—aye, and requite them with the like; put sugared sonnets in her bosom—aye, and answer them too; push gallantry to the very verge where it becomes exchange of affection; but she writes 'nil ultra' to all which is to follow, and would not barter one iota of her own supreme power for all the alphabet of both Cupid and Hymen."

“The better for you, my lord,” said Varney, “that is, in the case supposed, if such be her disposition; since you think you cannot aspire to become her husband. Her favorite you are, and may remain, if the lady at Cumnor Place continues in her present obscurity.”

“Poor Amy!” said Leicester, with a deep sigh; “she desires so earnestly to be acknowledged in presence of God and man!”

“Aye, but, my lord,” said Varney, “is her desire reasonable? that is the question. Her religious scruples are solved: she is an honored and beloved wife, enjoying the society of her husband at such times as his weightier duties permit him to afford her his company. What would she more? I am right sure that a lady so gentle and so loving would consent to live her life through in a certain obscurity—which is, after all, not dimmer than when she was at Lidcote Hall—rather than diminish the least jot of her lord’s honors and greatness by a premature attempt to share them.”

“There is something in what thou say’st,” said Leicester; “and her appearance here were fatal. Yet she must be seen at Kenilworth: Elizabeth will not forget that she has so appointed.”

“Let me sleep on that hard point,” said Varney; “I cannot else perfect the device I have on the stithy, which I trust will satisfy the Queen and please my honored lady, yet leave this fatal secret where it is now buried. Has your lordship further commands for the night?”

“I would be alone,” said Leicester. “Leave me, and place my steel casket on the table. Be within summons.”

Varney retired; and the earl, opening the window of his apartment, looked out long and anxiously upon the brilliant host of stars which glimmered in the splendor of a summer firmament. The words burst from him as at unawares—“I had never more need that the heavenly bodies should befriend me, for my earthly path is darkened and confused.”

It is well known that the age reposed a deep confidence in the vain predictions of judicial astrology, and Leicester, though exempt from the general control of superstition, was not in this respect superior to his time; but, on the contrary, was remarkable for the encouragement which he gave to the professors of this pretended science. Indeed, the wish to pry into futurity, so general among the human race, is peculiarly to be found amongst those who trade in state mysteries, and the dangerous intrigues and cabals of courts. With heedful

precaution to see that it had not been opened, or its locks tampered with, Leicester applied a key to the steel casket, and drew from it, first, a parcel of gold pieces, which he put into a silk purse; then a parchment inscribed with planetary signs, and the lines and calculations used in framing horoscopes, on which he gazed intently for a few moments; and, lastly, took forth a large key, which, lifting aside the tapestry, he applied to a little concealed door in the corner of the apartment, and, opening it, disclosed a stair constructed in the thickness of the wall.

"Alasco," said the earl, with a voice raised, yet no higher raised than to be heard by the inhabitant of the small turret to which the stair conducted—"Alasco, I say, descend."

"I come, my lord," answered a voice from above. The foot of an aged man was heard slowly descending the narrow stair, and Alasco entered the earl's apartment. The astrologer was a little man, and seemed much advanced in age, for his beard was long and white, and reached over his black doublet down to his silken girdle. His hair was of the same venerable hue. But his eyebrows were as dark as the keen and piercing black eyes which they shaded, and this peculiarity gave a wild and singular cast to the physiognomy of the old man. His cheek was still fresh and ruddy, and the eyes we have mentioned resembled those of a rat in acuteness, and even fierceness, of expression. His manner was not without a sort of dignity; and the interpreter of the stars, though respectful, seemed altogether at his ease, and even assumed a tone of instruction and command in conversing with the prime favorite of Elizabeth.

"Your prognostications have failed, Alasco," said the earl, when they had exchanged salutations. "He is recovering."

"My son," replied the astrologer, "let me remind you, I warranted not his death; nor is there any prognostication that can be derived from the heavenly bodies, their aspects, and their conjunctions, which is not liable to be controlled by the will of Heaven. 'Astra regunt homines, sed regit astra Deus.'"

"Of what avail, then, is your mystery?" inquired the earl.

"Of much, my son," replied the old man, "since it can show the natural and probable course of events, although that course moves in subordination to an Higher Power. Thus, in reviewing the horoscope which your lordship subjected to my skill, you will observe that Saturn, being in the sixth house in opposition to Mars, retrograde in the House of Life,

cannot but denote long and dangerous sickness, the issue whereof is in the will of Heaven, though death may probably be inferred. Yet, if I knew the name of the party, I would erect another scheme."

"His name is a secret," said the earl; "yet, I must own, thy prognostication hath not been unfaithful. He has been sick, and dangerously so—not, however, to death. But hast thou again cast my horoscope, as Varney directed thee, and art thou prepared to say what the stars tell of my present fortune?"

"My art stands at your command," said the old man; "and here, my son, is the map of thy fortunes, brilliant in aspect as ever beamed from those blessed signs whereby our life is influenced, yet not unchecked with fears, difficulties, and dangers."

"My lot were more than mortal were it otherwise," said the earl; "proceed, father, and believe you speak with one ready to undergo his destiny in action and in passion as may be seem a noble of England."

"Thy courage to do and to suffer must be wound up yet a strain higher," said the old man. "The stars intimate yet a prouder title, yet an higher rank. It is for thee to guess their meaning, not for me to name it."

"Name it, I conjure you—name it, I command you," said the earl, his eyes brightening as he spoke.

"I may not, and I will not," replied the old man. "The ire of princes is as the wrath of the lion. But mark, and judge for thyself. Here Venus, ascendant in the House of Life, and conjoined with Sol, showers down that flood of silver light, blent with gold, which promises power, wealth, dignity, all that the proud heart of man desires, and in such abundance, that never the future Augustus of that old and mighty Rome heard from his 'haruspices' such a tale of glory as from this rich text my lore might read to my favorite son."

"Thou dost but jest with me, father," said the earl, astonished at the strain of enthusiasm in which the astrologer delivered his prediction.

"Is it for him to jest who hath his eye on heaven, who hath his foot in the grave?" returned the old man solemnly.

The earl made two or three strides through the apartment, with his hand outstretched, as one who follows the beckoning signal of some phantom, waving him on to deeds of high import. As he turned, however, he caught the eye of the

astrologer fixed on him, while an observing glance of the most shrewd penetration shot from under the penthouse of his shaggy dark eyebrows. Leicester's haughty and suspicious soul at once caught fire; he darted toward the old man from the further end of the lofty apartment, only standing still when his extended hand was within a foot of the astrologer's body.

"Wretch!" he said, "if you dare to palter with me, I will have your skin stripped from your living flesh! Confess thou hast been hired to deceive and to betray me—that thou art a cheat, and I thy silly prey and booty!"

The old man exhibited some symptoms of emotion, but not more than the furious deportment of his patron might have extorted from innocence itself.

"What means this violence, my lord?" he answered, "or in what can I have deserved it at your hand?"

"Give me proof," said the earl vehemently, "that you have not tampered with mine enemies."

"My lord," replied the old man, with dignity, "you can have no better proof than that which you yourself elected. In that turret I have spent the last twenty-four hours, under the key which has been in your custody. The hours of darkness I have spent in gazing on the heavenly bodies with these dim eyes, and during those of light I have toiled this aged brain to complete the calculation arising from their combinations. Earthly food I have not tasted—earthly voice I have not heard. You are yourself aware I had no means of doing so; and yet I tell you—I who have been thus shut up in solitude and study—that within these twenty-four hours your star has become predominant in the horizon, and either the bright book of heaven speaks false or there must have been a proportionate revolution in your fortunes upon earth. If nothing has happened within that space to secure your power or advance your favor, then am I indeed a cheat, and the divine art, which was first devised in the plains of Chaldea, is a foul imposture."

"It is true," said Leicester, after a moment's reflection, "thou wert closely immured, and it is also true that the change has taken place in my situation which thou say'st the horoscope indicates."

"Wherefore this distrust, then, my son?" said the astrologer, assuming a tone of admonition; "the celestial intelligences brook not diffidence, even in their favorites."

"Peace, father," answered Leicester, "I have erred in

doubting thee. Not to mortal man, nor to celestial intelligence—under that which is supreme—will Dudley's lips say more in condescension or apology. Speak rather to the present purpose. Amid these bright promises, thou hast said there was a threatening aspect. Can thy skill tell whence, or by whose means, such danger seems to impend?"

"Thus far only," answered the astrologer, "does my art enable me to answer your query. The infortune is threatened by the malignant and adverse aspect, through means of a youth, and, as I think, a rival; but whether in love or in prince's favor, I know not; nor can I give farther indication respecting him, save that he comes from the western quarter."

"The western—ha!" replied Leicester, "it is enough; the tempest does indeed brew in that quarter. Cornwall and Devon—Raleigh and Tressilian—one of them is indicated; I must beware of both. Father, if I have done thy skill injustice, I will make thee a lordly recompense."

He took a purse of gold from the strong casket which stood before him. "Have thou double the recompense which Varney promised. Be faithful—be secret—obey the directions thou shalt receive from my master of the horse, and grudge not a little seclusion or restraint in my cause; it shall be richly considered. Here, Varney, conduct this venerable man to thine own lodging; tend him heedfully in all things, but see that he holds communication with no one."

Varney bowed, and the astrologer kissed the earl's hand in token of adieu, and followed the master of the horse to another apartment, in which were placed wine and refreshments for his use.

The astrologer sat down to his repast, while Varney shut two doors with great precaution, examined the tapestry, lest any listener lurked behind it; and then sitting down opposite to the sage, began to question him.

"Saw you my signal from the court beneath?"

"I did," said Alasco, for by such name he was at present called, "and shaped the horoscope accordingly."

"And it passed upon the patron without challenge?" continued Varney.

"Not without challenge," replied the old man, "but it did pass; and I added, as before agreed, danger from a discovered secret and a western youth."

"My lord's fear will stand sponsor to the one and his conscience to the other of these prognostications," replied Var-

ney. "Sure, never man chose to run such a race as his, yet continued to retain those silly scruples! I am fain to cheat him to his own profit. But touching your matters, sage interpreter of the stars, I can tell you more of your own fortune than plan or figure can show. You must be gone from hence forthwith."

"I will not," said Alasco peevishly. "I have been too much hurried up and down of late—immured for day and night in a desolate turret-chamber; I must enjoy my liberty, and pursue my studies, which are of more import than the fate of fifty statesmen and favorites, that rise and burst like bubbles in the atmosphere of a court."

"At your pleasure," said Varney, with a sneer which habit had rendered familiar to his features, and which forms the principal characteristic that painters have assigned to those of Satan—"at your pleasure," he said; "you may enjoy your liberty and your studies until the daggers of Sussex's followers are clashing within your doublet, and against your ribs." The old man turned pale, and Varney proceeded. "Wot you not he hath offered a reward for the arch-quack and poison-vender, Demetrius, who sold certain precious spices to his lordship's cook? What! turn you pale, old friend? Does Hali already see an infortune in the House of Life? Why, hark thee, we will have thee down to an old house of mine in the country, where thou shalt live with a hobnailed slave, whom thy alchemy may convert into ducats, for to such conversion alone is thy art serviceable."

"It is false, thou foul-mouthed railer," said Alasco, shaking with impotent anger: "it is well known that I have approached more nearly to projection than any hermetic artist who now lives. There are not six chemists in the world who possess so near an approximation to the grand arcanum——"

"Come—come," said Varney, interrupting him, "what means this, in the name of Heaven? Do we not know one another? I believe thee to be so perfect—so very perfect, in the mystery of cheating, that, having imposed upon all mankind, thou hast at length, in some measure, imposed upon thyself; and without ceasing to dupe others, hast become a species of dupe to thine own imagization. Blush not for it, man; thou art learned, and shalt have classical comfort:

"Ne quisquam Ajacem possit superare nisi Ajax.

No one but thyself could have gulled thee, and thou hast gulled the whole brotherhood of the Rosy Cross beside—none

so deep in the mystery as thou. But hark thee in thine ear: had the seasoning which spiced Sussex's broth wrought more surely, I would have thought better of the chemical science thou dost boast so highly."

"Thou art an hardened villain, Varney," replied Alasco; "many will do those things, who dare not speak of them."

"And many speak of them who dare not do them," answered Varney; "but be not wroth—I will not quarrel with thee. If I did, I were fain to live on eggs for a month, that I might feed without fear. Tell me at once, how came thine art to fail thee at this great emergency?"

"The Earl of Sussex's horoscope intimates," replied the astrologer, "that the sign of the ascendant being in combustion——"

"Away with your gibberish," replied Varney; "think'st thou it is the patron thou speak'st with?"

"I crave your pardon," replied the old man, "and swear to you, I know but one medicine that could have saved the earl's life; and as no man living in England knows that antidote save myself, moreover, as the ingredients, one of them in particular, are scarce possible to be come by, I must needs suppose his escape was owing to such a constitution of lungs and vital parts as was never before bound up in a body of clay."

"There was some talk of a quack who waited on him," said Varney, after a moment's reflection. "Are you sure there is no one in England who has this secret of thine?"

"One man there was," said the doctor, "once my servant, who might have stolen this of me, with one or two other secrets of art. But content you, Master Varney, it is no part of my policy to suffer such interlopers to interfere in my trade. He pries into no mysteries more, I warrant you; for, as I well believe, he hath been wafted to heaven on the wing of a fiery dragon. Peace be with him! But in this retreat of mine, shall I have the use of mine laboratory?"

"Of a whole workshop, man," said Varney; "for a reverend father abbot, who was fain to give place to bluff King Hal and some of his courtiers a score of years since, had a chemist's complete apparatus, which he was obliged to leave behind him to his successors. Thou shalt there occupy, and melt, and puff, and blaze, and multiply, until the green dragon become a golden goose, or whatever the newer phrase of the brotherhood may testify."

"Thou art right, Master Varney," said the alchemist, set-

ting his teeth close and grinding them together—"thou art right, even in thy very contempt of right and reason. For what thou say'st in mockery may in sober verity chance to happen ere we meet again. If the most venerable sages of ancient days have spoken the truth; if the most learned of our own have rightly received it; if I have been accepted wherever I traveled, in Germany, in Poland, in Italy, and in the farther Tartary, as one to whom nature has unveiled her darkest secrets; if I have acquired the most secret signs and passwords of the Jewish Cabala, so that the grayest beard in the synagogue would brush the steps to make them clean for me—if all this is so, and if there remains but one step—one little step—betwixt my long, deep, and dark, and subterranean progress and that blaze of light which shall show nature watching her richest and her most glorious productions in the very cradle—one step betwixt dependence and the power of sovereignty—one step betwixt poverty and such a sum of wealth as earth, without that noble secret, cannot minister from all her mines in the old or the new-found world—if this be all so, is it not reasonable that to this I dedicate my future life, secure, for a brief period of studious patience, to rise above the mean dependence upon favorites and their favorites by which I am now enthralled?"

"Now, bravo!—bravo! my good father," said Varney, with the usual sardonic expression of ridicule on his countenance; "yet all this approximation to the philosopher's stone wringeth not one single crown out of my Lord Leicester's pouch, and far less out of Richard Varney's. We must have earthly and substantial services, man, and care not whom else thou canst delude with thy philosophical charlatanry."

"My son Varney," said the alchemist, "the unbelief, gathered around thee like a frost-fog, hath dimmed thine acute perception to that which is a stumbling-block to the wise, and which yet, to him who seeketh knowledge with humility, extends a lesson so clear that he who runs may read. Hath not art, think'st thou, the means of completing nature's imperfect concoctions in her attempts to form the precious metals, even as by art we can perfect those other operations, of incubation, distillation, fermentation, and similar processes of an ordinary description, by which we extract life itself out of a senseless egg, summon purity and vitality out of muddy dregs, or call into vivacity the inert substance of a sluggish liquid?"

"I have heard all this before," said Varney, "and my heart is proof against such cant ever since I sent twenty good gold

pieces—marry, it was in the nonage of my wit—to advance the grand magisterium, all which, God help the while, vanished 'in fumo.' Since that moment, when I paid for my freedom, I defy chemistry, astrology, palmistry, and every other occult art, were it as secret as hell itself, to unloose the stricture of my purse-strings. Marry, I neither defy the manna of St. Nicholas nor can I dispense with it. Thy first task must be to prepare some when thou get'st down to my little sequestered retreat yonder; and then make as much gold as thou wilt."

"I will make no more of that dose," said the alchemist, resolutely.

"Then," said the master of the horse, "thou shalt be hanged for what thou hast made already, and so were the great secret forever lost to mankind. Do not humanity this injustice, good father, but e'en bend to thy destiny, and make us an ounce or two of this same stuff, which cannot prejudice above one or two individuals, in order to gain lifetime to discover the universal medicine, which shall clear away all mortal diseases at once. But cheer up, thou grave, learned, and most melancholy jackanapes! Hast thou not told me that a moderate portion of thy drug hath mild effects, no ways ultimately dangerous to the human frame, but which produces depression of spirits, nausea, headache, an unwillingness to change of place—even such a state of temper as would keep a bird from flying out of a cage were the door left open?"

"I have said so, and it is true," said the alchemist; "this effect will it produce, and the bird who partakes of it in such proportion shall sit for a season drooping on her perch, without thinking either of the free blue sky or of the fair greenwood, though the one be lighted by the rays of the rising sun and the other ringing with the newly awakened song of all the feathered inhabitants of the forest."

"And this without danger to life?" said Varney, somewhat anxiously.

"Aye, so that proportion and measure be not exceeded; and so that one who knows the nature of the manna be ever near to watch the symptoms, and succor in case of need."

"Thou shalt regulate the whole," said Varney; "thy reward shall be princely, if thou keep'st time and touch, and exceedest not the due proportion, to the prejudice of her health; otherwise thy punishment shall be as signal."

"The prejudice of *her* health!" repeated Alasco; "it is, then, a woman I am to use my skill upon?"

“No, thou fool,” replied Varney; “said I not it was a bird—a reclaimed linnet, whose pipe might soothe a hawk when in mid stoop? I see thine eye sparkle, and I know thy beard is not altogether so white as art has made it: that, at least, thou hast been able to transmute to silver. But mark me, this is no mate for thee. This caged bird is dear to one who brooks no rivalry, and far less such rivalry as thine, and her health must over all things be cared for. But she is in the case of being commanded down to yonder Kenilworth revels; and it is most expedient—most needful—most necessary that she fly not thither. Of these necessities and their causes it is not needful that she should know aught, and it is to be thought that her own wish may lead her to combat all ordinary reasons which can be urged for her remaining a house-keeper.”

“That is but natural,” said the alchemist, with a strange smile, which yet bore a greater reference to the human character than the uninterested and abstracted gaze which his physiognomy had hitherto expressed, where all seemed to refer to some world distant from that which was existing around him.

“It is so,” answered Varney: “you understand women well, though it may have been long since you were conversant amongst them. Well, then, she is not to be contradicted, yet she is not to be humored. Understand me—a slight illness, sufficient to take away the desire of removing from thence, and to make such of your wise fraternity as may be called in to aid recommend a quiet residence at home, will, in one word, be esteemed good service, and remunerated as such.”

“I am not to be asked to affect the House of Life?” said the chemist.

“On the contrary, we will have thee hanged if thou dost,” replied Varney.

“And I must,” added Alasco, “have opportunity to do my turn, and all facilities for concealment or escape, should there be detection?”

“All—all, and everything, thou infidel in all but the impossibilities of alchemy. Why, man, for what dost thou take me?”

The old man rose, and taking a light, walked toward the end of the apartment, where was a door that led to the small sleeping-room destined for his reception during the night. At the door he turned round, and slowly repeated Varney’s

question ere he answered it. "For what do I take thee, Richard Varney? Why, for a worse devil than I have been myself. But I am in your toils, and I must serve you till my term be out."

"Well—well," answered Varney hastily, "be stirring with gray light. It may be we shall not need thy medicine. Do naught till I myself come down. Michael Lambourne shall guide you to the place of your destination."*

When Varney heard the adept's door shut and carefully bolted within, he stepped toward it, and with similar precaution carefully locked it on the outside, and took the key from the lock, muttering to himself, "Worse than thee, thou poisoning quacksalver and witch-monger, who, if thou art not a bounden slave to the devil, it is only because he disdains such an apprentice! I am a mortal man, and seek by mortal means the gratification of my passions and advancement of my prospects. Thou art a vassal of hell itself. So ho, Lambourne!" he called at another door, and Michael made his appearance, with a flushed cheek and an unsteady step.

"Thou art drunk, thou villain!" said Varney to him.

"Doubtless, noble sir," replied the unabashed Michael, "we have been drinking all even to the glories of the day, and to my noble Lord of Leicester, and his valiant master of the horse. Drunk! odds blades and poniards, he that would refuse to swallow a dozen healths on such an evening is a base besognio and a puckfist, and shall swallow six inches of my dagger!"

"Hark ye, scoundrel," said Varney, "be sober on the instant, I command thee. I know thou canst throw off thy drunken folly, like a fool's coat, at pleasure; and if not, it were the worse for thee."

Lambourne drooped his head, left the apartment, and returned in two or three minutes with his face composed, his hair adjusted, his dress in order, and exhibiting as great a difference from his former self as if the whole man had been changed.

"Art thou sober now, and dost thou comprehend me?" said Varney sternly.

Lambourne bowed in acquiescence.

"Thou must presently down to Cumnor Place with the reverend man of art who sleeps yonder in the little vaulted chamber. Here is the key, that thou mayst call him betimes. Take another trusty fellow with you. Use him well on the

* See Dr. Julio. Note 11.

journey, but let him not escape you; pistol him if he attempt it, and I will be your warrant. I will give thee letters to Foster. The doctor is to occupy the lower apartments of the eastern quadrangle, with freedom to use the old elaboratory and its implements. He is to have no access to the lady but such as I shall point out—only she may be amused to see his philosophical jugglery. Thou wilt await at Cumnor Place my farther orders; and, as thou livest, beware of the ale-bench and the aquavitæ flask. Each breath drawn in Cumnor Place must be kept severed from common air.”

“Enough, my lord—I mean my worshipful master—soon, I trust, to be my worshipful knightly master. You have given me my lesson and my license; I will execute the one and not abuse the other. I will be in the saddle by day-break.”

“Do so, and deserve favor. Stay—ere thou goest, fill me a cup of wine; not out of that flask, sirrah,” as Lambourne was pouring out from that which Alasco had left half finished, “fetch me a fresh one.”

Lambourne obeyed, and Varney, after rinsing his mouth with the liquor, drank a full cup, and said, as he took up a lamp to retreat to his sleeping-apartment, “It is strange—I am as little the slave of fancy as anyone, yet I never speak for a few minutes with this fellow Alasco, but my mouth and lungs feel as if soiled with the fumes of calcined arsenic—pah!”

So saying, he left the apartment. Lambourne lingered, to drink a cup of the freshly opened flask. “It is from St. John’s Berg!” he said, as he paused on the draught to enjoy its flavor, “and has the true relish of the violet. But I must forbear it now, that I may one day drink it at my own pleasure.” And he quaffed a goblet of water to quench the fumes of the Rhenish wine, retired slowly toward the door, made a pause, and then, finding the temptation irresistible, walked hastily back, and took another long pull at the wine-flask, without the formality of a cup.

“Were it not for this accursed custom,” he said, “I might climb as high as Varney himself. But who can climb when the room turns round with him like a parish-top? I would the distance were greater, or the road rougher, betwixt my hand and mouth! But I will drink nothing to-morrow save water—nothing save fair water.”

CHAPTER XIX.

Pistol. And tidings do I bring, and lucky joys,
And happy news of price.

Falstaff. I prithee now, deliver them like to a man of this world.

Pistol. A foutra for the world, and worldings base!
I speak of Africa, and golden joys.

—Henry IV. Part II.

THE public room of the Black Bear at Cumnor, to which the scene of our story now returns, boasted, on the evening which we treat of, no ordinary assemblage of guests. There had been a fair in the neighborhood, and the cutting mercer of Abingdon, with some of the other personages whom the reader has already been made acquainted with, as friends and customers of Giles Gosling, had already formed their wonted circle around the evening fire, and were talking over the news of the day.

A lively, bustling, arch fellow, whose pack and oaken ellwand, studded duly with brass points, denoted him to be of Autolykus' profession, occupied a good deal of the attention, and furnished much of the amusement of the evening. The peddlers of those days, it must be remembered, were men of far greater importance than the degenerate and degraded hawkers of our modern times. It was by means of these peripatetic venders that the country trade, in the finer manufactures used in female dress particularly, was almost entirely carried on; and if a merchant of this description arrived at the dignity of traveling with a pack-horse, he was a person of no small consequence, and company for the most substantial yeoman or franklin whom he might meet in his wanderings.

The peddler of whom we speak bore, accordingly, an active and unrebuked share in the merriment to which the rafters of the bonny Black Bear of Cumnor resounded. He had his smile with pretty Mistress Cicely, his broad laugh with mine host, and his jest upon dashing Master Goldthred, who, though indeed without any such benevolent intention on his own part, was the general butt of the evening. The peddler and he were closely engaged in a dispute upon the preference due to the Spanish nether-stocks over the black Gascoigne hose, and mine host had just winked to the guests around him, as who should say, "You will have mirth presently, my mas-

ters,' when the trampling of horses was heard in the courtyard, and the hostler was loudly summoned, with a few of the newest oaths then in vogue to add force to the invocation. Out tumbled Will Hostler, John Tapster, and all the militia of the inn, who had slunk from their posts in order to collect some scattered crumbs of the mirth which was flying about among the customers. Out into the yard sallied mine host himself also, to do fitting salutation to his new guests; and presently returned, ushering into the apartment his own worthy nephew, Michael Lambourne, pretty tolerably drunk, and having under his escort the astrologer. Alasco, though still a little old man, had, by altering his gown to a riding-dress, trimming his beard and eyebrows, and so forth, struck at least a score of years from his apparent age, and might now seem an active man of sixty, or little upward. He appeared at present exceedingly anxious, and had insisted much with Lambourne that they should not enter the inn, but go straight forward to the place of their destination. But Lambourne would not be controlled. "By Cancer and Capricorn," he vociferated, "and the whole heavenly host—besides all the stars that these blessed eyes of mine have seen sparkle in the southern heavens, to which these northern blinkers are but farthing candles—I will be unkindly for no one's humor—I will stay and salute my worthy uncle here. Chesu! that good blood should ever be forgotten betwixt friends! A gallon of your best, uncle, and let it go round to the health of the noble Earl of Leicester! What! shall we not collogue together, and warm the cockles of our ancient kindness? Shall we not collogue, I say?"

"With all my heart, kinsman," said mine host, who obviously wished to be rid of him; "but are you to stand shot to all this good liquor?"

This is a question has quelled many a jovial toper, but it moved not the purpose of Lambourne's soul. "Question my means, nuncle?" he said, producing a handful of mixed gold and silver pieces—"question Mexico and Peru—question the Queen's exchequer—God save her Majesty! She is my good lord's good mistress."

"Well, kinsman," said mine host, "it is my business to sell wine to those who can buy it. So, Jack Tapster, do me thine office. But I would I knew how to come by money as lightly as thou dost, Mike."

"Why, uncle," said Lambourne, "I will tell thee a secret. Dost see this little old fellow here? as old and withered a

chip as ever the devil put into his porridge; and yet, uncle, between you and me, he hath Potosi in that brain of his. 'Sblood! he can coin ducats faster than I can vent oaths."

"I will have none of his coinage in my purse though, Michael," said mine host; "I know what belongs to falsifying the Queen's coin."

"Thou art an ass, uncle, for as old as thou art. Pull me not by the skirts, doctor, thou art an ass thyself to boot; so, being both asses, I tell ye I spoke but metaphorically."

"Are you mad?" said the old man; "is the devil in you? Can you not let us begone without drawing all men's eyes on us?"

"Sayst thou?" said Lambourne. "Thou art deceived now—no man shall see you an. I give the word. By Heavens, masters, an anyone dare to look on this old gentleman, I will slash the eyes out of his head with my poniard! So sit down, old friend, and be merry; these are mine ingles—mine ancient inmates, and will betray no man."

"Had you not better withdraw to a private apartment, nephew," said Giles Gosling. "You speak strange matter," he added, "and there be intelligencers everywhere."

"I care not for them," said the magnanimous Michael. "Intelligencers! pshaw! I serve the noble Earl of Leicester. Here comes the wine. Fill round, Master Skinker, a carouse to the health of the flower of England, the noble Earl of Leicester! I say, the noble Earl of Leicester! He that does me not reason is a swine of Sussex, and I'll make him kneel to the pledge, if I should cut his hams and smoke them for bacon."

None disputed a pledge given under such formidable penalties; and Michael Lambourne, whose drunken humor was not of course diminished by this new potation, went on in the same wild way, renewing his acquaintance with such of the guests as he had formerly known, and experiencing a reception in which there was now something of deference, mingled with a good deal of fear; for the least servitor of the favorite earl, especially such a man as Lambourne, was, for very sufficient reasons, an object both of the one and of the other.

In the meanwhile, the old man, seeing his guide in this uncontrollable humor, ceased to remonstrate with him, and sitting down in the most obscure corner of the room, called for a small measure of sack, over which he seemed, as it were, to slumber, withdrawing himself as much as possible from general observation, and doing nothing which could recall his

existence to the recollection of his fellow-traveler, who by this time had got into close intimacy with his ancient comrade, Goldthred of Abingdon.

"Never believe me, bully Mike," said the mercer, "if I am not as glad to see thee as ever I was to see a customer's money! Why, thou canst give a friend a sly place at a mask or a revel now, Mike; aye, or, I warrant thee, thou canst say in my lord's ear, when my honorable lord is down in these parts, and wants a Spanish ruff or the like—thou canst say in his ear, 'There is mine old friend, young Laurence Goldthred of Abingdon, has as good wares, lawn, tiffany, cambric, and so forth—aye, and is as pretty a piece of man's flesh, too, as is in Berkshire, and will ruffle it for your lordship with any man of his inches'; and thou mayst say——"

"I can say a hundred d——d lies besides, mercer," answered Lambourne; "what, one must not stand upon a good word for a friend!"

"Here is to thee, Mike, with all my heart," said the mercer; "and thou canst tell one the reality of the new fashions too. Here was a rogue peddler but now was crying up the old-fashioned Spanish nether-stocks over the Gascoigne hose, although thou seest how well the French hose set off the leg and knee, being adorned with parti-colored garters and gar-niture in conformity."

"Excellent—excellent," replied Lambourne; "why, thy limber bit of a thigh, thrust through that bunch of slashed buckram and tiffany, shows like a housewife's distaff when the flax is half spun off!"

"Said I not so?" said the mercer, whose shallow brain was now overflowed in his turn; "where, then—where be this rascal peddler?—there was a peddler here but now, methinks. Mine host, where the foul fiend is this peddler?"

"Where wise men should be, Master Goldthred," replied Giles Gosling: "even shut up in his private chamber, telling over the sales of to-day, and preparing for the custom of to-morrow."

"Hang him, a mechanical chuff!" said the mercer; "but for shame, it were a good deed to ease him of his wares—a set of peddling knaves, who stroll through the land, and hurt the established trader. There are good fellows in Berkshire yet, mine host; your peddler may be met withal on Maiden Castle."

"Aye," replied mine host, laughing, "and he who meets him may meet his match: the peddler is a tall man."

"Is he?" said Goldthred.

"Is he!" replied the host; "aye, by cock and pie, is he—the very peddler he who raddled Robin Hood so tightly, as the song says:

"Now Robin Hood drew his sword so good,
The peddler drew his brand,
And he hath raddled him Robin Hood,
'Till he neither could see nor stand."

"Hang him, foul scroyle, let him pass," said the mercer; "if he be such a one, there were small worship to be won upon him. And now tell me, Mike—my honest Mike, how wears the hollands you won of me?"

"Why, well, as you may see, Master Goldthred," answered Mike; "I will bestow a pot on thee for the handsel. Fill the flagon, Master Tapster."

"Thou wilt win no more hollands, I think, on such wager, friend Mike," said the mercer; "for the sulky swain, Tony Foster, rails at thee all to naught, and swears you shall ne'er darken his doors again, for that your oaths are enough to blow the roof off a Christian man's dwelling."

"Doth he say so, the mincing, hypocritical miser?" vociferated Lambourne. "Why, then, he shall come down and receive my commands here, this blessed night, under my uncle's roof! And I will ring him such a black sanctus that he shall think the devil hath him by the skirts for a month to come, for barely hearing me."

"Nay, now the pottle-pot is uppermost, with a witness!" said the mercer. "Tony Foster obey thy whistle! Alas! good Mike, go sleep—go sleep."

"I tell thee what, thou thin-faced gull," said Michael Lambourne, in high chafe, "I will wager thee fifty angels against the first five shelves of thy shop, numbering upward from the false light, with all that is on them, that I make Tony Foster come down to this public-house before we have finished three rounds."

"I will lay no bet to that amount," said the mercer, something sobered by an offer which intimated rather too private a knowledge, on Lambourne's part, of the secret recesses of his shop—"I will lay no such wager," he said; "but I will stake five angels against thy five, if thou wilt, that Tony Foster will not leave his own roof, or come to alehouse after prayer time, for thee or any man."

"Content," said Lambourne. "Here, uncle, hold stakes and let one of your infant tapsters trip presently up to the

Place, and give this letter to Master Foster, and say that I, his ingle, Michael Lambourne, pray to speak with him at mine uncle's castle here, upon business of grave import. Away with thee, child, for it is now sundown, and the wretch goeth to bed with the birds, to save mutton-suet—faugh!”

Shortly after this messenger was dispatched—an interval which was spent in drinking and buffoonery—he returned with the answer that Master Foster was coming presently.

“Won—won!” said Lambourne, darting on the stakes.

“Not till he comes, if you please,” said the mercer, interfering.

“Why, 'sblood, he is at the threshold,” replied Michael. “What said he, boy?”

“If it please your worship,” answered the messenger, “he looked out of window, with a musketoon in his hand, and when I delivered your errand, which I did with fear and trembling, he said, with a vinegar aspect, that your worship might be gone to the infernal regions.”

“Or to hell, I suppose,” said Lambourne; “it is there he disposes of all that are not of the congregation.”

“Even so,” said the boy; “I used the other phrase as being the more poetical.”

“An ingenious youth,” said Michael; “shalt have a drop to wet thy poetical whistle. And what said Foster next?”

“He called me back,” answered the boy, “and bid me say, you might come to him, if you had aught to say to him.”

“And what next?” said Lambourne.

“He read the letter, and seemed in a fluster, and asked if your worship was in drink; and I said you were speaking a little Spanish, as one who had been in the Canaries.”

“Out, you diminutive pint-pot, whelped of an overgrown reckoning!” replied Lambourne—“out! But what said he then?”

“Why,” said the boy, “he muttered, that if he came not, your worship would bolt out what were better kept in; and so he took his old flat cap and threadbare blue cloak, and, as I said before, he will be here incontinent.”

“There is truth in what he said,” replied Lambourne, as if speaking to himself. “My brain has played me its old dog's trick; but corragio—let him approach! I have not rolled about in the world for many a day, to fear Tony Foster, be I drunk or sober. Bring me a flagon of cold water, to christen my sack withal.”

While Lambourne, whom the approach of Foster seemed to

have recalled to a sense of his own condition, was busied in preparing to receive him, Giles Gosling stole up to the apartment of the peddler, whom he found traversing the room in much agitation.

"You withdrew yourself suddenly from the company," said the landlord to the guest.

"It was time, when the devil became one among you," replied the peddler.

"It is not courteous in you to term my nephew by such a name," said Gosling, "nor is it kindly in me to reply to it; and yet, in some sort, Mike may be considered as a limb of Satan."

"Pooh, I talk not of the swaggering ruffian," replied the peddler; "it is of the other, who, for aught I know—— But when go they? or wherefore come they?"

"Marry, these are questions I cannot answer," replied the host. "But look you, sir, you have brought me a token from worthy Master Tressilian—a pretty stone it is." He took out the ring, and looked at it, adding, as he put it into his purse again, that it was too rich a guerdon for anything he could do for the worthy donor. He was, he said, in the public line, and it ill became him to be too inquisitive into other folks' concerns; he had already said that he could hear nothing but that the lady lived still at Cumnor Place, in the closest seclusion, and, to such as by chance had a view of her, seemed pensive, and discontented with her solitude. "But here," he said, "if you are desirous to gratify your master, is the rarest chance that hath occurred for this many a day. Tony Foster is coming down hither, and it is but letting Mike Lambourne smell another wine-flask, and the Queen's command would not move him from the ale-bench. So they are fast for an hour or so. Now, if you will don your pack, which will be your best excuse, you may, perchance, win the ear of the old servant, being assured of the master's absence, to let you try to get some custom of the lady, and then you may learn more of her condition than I or any other can tell you."

"True—very true," answered Wayland, for he it was; "an excellent device, but methinks something dangerous; for, say Foster should return?"

"Very possible indeed," replied the host.

"Or say," continued Wayland, "the lady should render me cold thanks for my exertions?"

"As is not unlikely," replied Giles Gosling. "I marvel

Master Tressilian will take such heed of her that cares not for him."

"In either case I were foully sped," said Wayland; "and therefore I do not, on the whole, much relish your device."

"Nay, but take me with you; good master serving-man," replied mine host, "this is your master's business and not mine; you best know the risk to be encountered, or how far you are willing to brave it. But that which you will not yourself hazard, you cannot expect others to risk."

"Hold—hold," said Wayland; "tell me but one thing. Goes yonder old man up to Cumnor?"

"Surely, I think so," said the landlord; "their servant said he was to take their baggage thither, but the ale-tap has been as potent for him as the sack-spigot has been for Michael."

"It is enough," said Wayland, assuming an air of resolution—"I will thwart that old villain's projects; my affright at his baleful aspect begins to abate, and my hatred to arise. Help me on with my pack, good mine host. And look to thyself, old Albumazar: there is a malignant influence in thy horoscope, and it gleams from the constellation Ursa Major."

So saying, he assumed his burden, and, guided by the landlord through the postern gate of the Black Bear, took the most private way from thence up to Cumnor Place.

CHAPTER XX.

Clown. You have of these peddlers, that have more in 'em than you'd think,
sister. — *Winter's Tale*, Act iv. Scene 3.

IN his anxiety to obey the earl's repeated charges of secrecy, as well as from his own unsocial and miserly habits, Anthony Foster was more desirous, by his mode of housekeeping, to escape observation than to resist intrusive curiosity. Thus, instead of a numerous household, to secure his charge and defend his house, he studied, as much as possible, to elude notice by diminishing his attendants; so that, unless when there were followers of the earl or of Varney in the mansion, one old male domestic and two aged crones, who assisted in keeping the countess' apartments in order, were the only servants of the family.

It was one of these old women who opened the door when Wayland knocked, and answered his petition to be admitted to exhibit his wares to the ladies of the family with a volley of vituperation, couched in what is there called the "jowring" dialect. The peddler found the means of checking this vociferation by slipping a silver groat into her hand, and intimating the present of some stuff for a coif, if the lady would buy of his wares.

"God ield thee, for mine is aw in littocks. Slocket with thy pack into gharn, mon. Her walks in gharn." Into the garden she ushered the peddler accordingly, and pointing to an old ruinous garden-house, said, "Yonder be's her, mon—yonder be's her. Zhe will buy changes an zhe loikes stuffs."

"She has left me to come off as I may," thought Wayland, as he heard the hag shut the garden door behind him. "But they shall not beat me, and they dare not murder me for so little trespass, and by this fair twilight. Hang it, I will on—a brave general never thought of his retreat till he was defeated. I see two females in the old garden-house yonder; but how to address them? Stay—Will Shakspeare, be my friend in need! I will give them a taste of Autolycus." He then sung with a good voice, and becoming audacity, the popular playhouse ditty:

"Lawn as white as driven snow,
Cyprus black as e'er was crow,
Gloves as sweet as damask roses,
Masks for faces and for noses."

“What hath fortune sent us here for an unwonted sight, Janet?” said the lady.

“One of those merchants of vanity called peddlers,” answered Janet, demurely, “who utters his light wares in lighter measures. I marvel old Dorcas let him pass.”

“It is a lucky chance, girl,” said the countess; “we lead a heavy life here, and this may while off a weary hour.”

“Aye, my gracious lady,” said Janet; “but my father?”

“He is not my father, Janet, nor, I hope, my master,” answered the lady. “I say, call the man hither; I want some things.”

“Nay,” replied Janet, “your ladyship has but to say so in the next packet, and if England can furnish them they will be sent. There will come mischief on’t. Pray, dearest lady, let me bid the man begone!”

“I will have thee bid him come hither,” said the countess; “or stay, thou terrified fool, I will bid him myself, and spare thee a chiding.”

“Ah! well-a-day, dearest lady, if that were the worst,” said Janet, sadly, while the lady called to the peddler, “Good fellow, step forward—undo thy pack; if thou hast good wares, chance has sent thee hither for my convenience and thy profit.”

“What may your ladyship please to lack?” said Wayland, unstrapping his pack, and displaying its contents with as much dexterity as if he had been bred to the trade. Indeed, he had occasionally pursued it in the course of his roving life, and now commended his wares with all the volubility of a trader, and showed some skill in the main art of placing prices upon them.

“What do I please to lack?” said the lady; “why, considering I have not for six long months bought one yard of lawn or cambric, or one trinket, the most inconsiderable, for my own use, and at my own choice, the better question is, what hast thou got to sell? Lay aside for me that cambric partlet and pair of sleeves; and those roundells of gold fringe, drawn out with cyprus; and that short cloak of cherry-colored fine cloth, garnished with gold buttons and loops. Is it not of an absolute fancy, Janet?”

“Nay, my lady,” replied Janet, “if you consult my poor judgment, it is, methinks, over gaudy for a graceful habit.”

“Now, out upon thy judgment, if it be no brighter, wench,” said the countess; “thou shalt wear it thyself for penance sake; and I promise thee the gold buttons, being somewhat



“What may your ladyship please to lack?” said Wayland.

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massive, will comfort thy father, and reconcile him to the cherry-colored body. See that he snap them not away, Janet, and send them to bear company with the imprisoned angels which he keeps captive in his strong box."

"May I pray your ladyship to spare my poor father!" said Janet.

"Nay, but why should anyone spare him that is so sparing of his own nature?" replied the lady. "Well, but to our gear. That head garniture for myself, and that silver bodkin, mounted with pearl; and take off two gowns of that russet cloth for Dorcas and Alison, Janet, to keep the old wretches warm against winter comes. And stay, hast thou no perfumes and sweet bags, or any handsome casting-bottles of the newest mode?"

"Were I a peddler in earnest, I were a made merchant," thought Wayland, as he busied himself to answer the demands which she thronged one on another, with the eagerness of a young lady who has been long secluded from such a pleasing occupation. "But how to bring her to a moment's serious reflection?" Then, as he exhibited his choicest collection of essences and perfumes, he at once arrested her attention by observing, that these articles had almost risen to double value, since the magnificent preparations made by the Earl of Leicester to entertain the Queen and court at his princely Castle of Kenilworth.

"Ha!" said the countess hastily; "that rumor then is true, Janet."

"Surely, madam," answered Wayland; "and I marvel it hath not reached your noble ladyship's ears. The Queen of England feasts with the noble earl for a week during the summer's progress; and there are many who will tell you England will have a king, and England's Elizabeth—God save her!—a husband, ere the progress be over."

"They lie like villains!" said the countess, bursting forth impatiently.

"For God's sake, madam, consider," said Janet, trembling with apprehension; "who would cumber themselves about peddler's tidings?"

"Yes, Janet!" exclaimed the countess; "right, thou hast corrected me justly. Such reports, blighting the reputation of England's brightest and noblest peer, can only find currency amongst the mean, the abject, and the infamous!"

"May I perish, lady," said Wayland Smith, observing that her violence directed itself toward him, "if I have done any-

thing to merit this strange passion! I have said but what many men say."

By this time the countess had recovered her composure, and endeavored, alarmed by the anxious hints of Janet, to suppress all appearance of displeasure. "I were loath," she said, "good fellow, that our Queen should change the virgin style, so dear to us her people—think not of it." And then, as if desirous to change the subject, she added, "And what is this paste, so carefully put up in the silver box?" as she examined the contents of a casket in which drugs and perfumes were contained in separate drawers.

"It is a remedy, madam, for a disorder of which I trust your ladyship will never have reason to complain. The amount of a small Turkey bean, swallowed daily for a week, fortifies the heart against those black vapors which arise from solitude, melancholy, unrequited affection, disappointed hope——"

"Are you a fool, friend?" said the countess sharply; "or do you think, because I have good-naturedly purchased your trumpery goods at your roguish prices, that you may put any gullery you will on me? Who ever heard that affections of the heart were cured by medicines given to the body?"

"Under your honorable favor," said Wayland, "I am an honest man, and I have sold my goods at an honest price. As to this most precious medicine, when I told its qualities, I asked you not to purchase it, so why should I lie to you? I say not it will cure a rooted affection of the mind, which only God and time can do; but I say, that this restorative relieves the black vapors which are engendered in the body of that melancholy which broodeth on the mind. I have relieved many with it, both in court and city, and of late one Master Edmund Tressilian, a worshipful gentleman in Cornwall, who, on some slight, received, it was told me, where he had set his affections, was brought into that state of melancholy which made his friends alarmed for his life."

He paused, and the lady remained silent for some time, and then asked with a voice which she strove in vain to render firm and indifferent in its tone, "Is the gentleman you have mentioned perfectly recovered?"

"Passably, madam," answered Wayland: "he hath at least no bodily complaint."

"I will take some of the medicine, Janet," said the countess. "I too have sometimes that dark melancholy which overclouds the brain."

"You shall not do so, madam," said Janet; "who shall answer that this fellow vends what is wholesome?"

"I will myself warrant my good faith," said Wayland; and, taking a part of the medicine, he swallowed it before them. The countess now bought what remained, a step to which Janet, by farther objections, only determined her the more obstinately. She even took the first dose upon the instant, and professed to feel her heart lightened and her spirits augmented—a consequence which, in all probability, existed only in her own imagination. The lady then piled the purchases she had made together, flung her purse to Janet, and desired her to compute the amount and to pay the peddler; while she herself, as if tired of the amusement she at first found in conversing with him, wished him good evening, and walked carelessly into the house, thus depriving Wayland of every opportunity to speak with her in private. He hastened, however, to attempt an explanation with Janet.

"Maiden," he said, "thou hast the face of one who should love her mistress. She hath much need of faithful service."

"And well deserves it at my hands," replied Janet; "but what of that?"

"Maiden, I am not altogether what I seem," said the peddler, lowering his voice.

"The less like to be an honest man," said Janet.

"The more so," answered Wayland, "since I am no peddler."

"Get thee gone then instantly, or I will call for assistance," said Janet; "my father must ere this be returned."

"Do not be so rash," said Wayland; "you will do what you may repent of. I am one of your mistress' friends; and she had need of more, not that thou shouldst ruin those she hath."

"How shall I know that?" said Janet.

"Look me in the face," said Wayland Smith, "and see if thou dost not read honesty in my looks."

And in truth, though by no means handsome, there was in his physiognomy the sharp, keen expression of inventive genius and prompt intellect which, joined to quick and brilliant eyes, a well-formed mouth, and an intelligent smile, often gives grace and interest to features which are both homely and irregular. Janet looked at him with the sly simplicity of her sect, and replied, "Notwithstanding thy boasted honesty, friend, and although I am not accustomed to read and pass judgment on such volumes as thou hast sub-

mitted to my perusal, I think I see in thy countenance something of the peddler—something of the picaroon.”

“On a small scale, perhaps,” said Wayland Smith, laughing. “But this evening, or to-morrow, will an old man come hither with thy father, who has the stealthy step of the cat, the shrewd and vindictive eye of the rat, the fawning wile of the spaniel, the determined snatch of the mastiff; of him beware, for your own sake, and that of your mistress. See you, fair Janet, he brings the venom of the aspic under the assumed innocence of the dove. What precise mischief he meditates toward you I cannot guess; but death and disease have ever dogged his footsteps. Say naught of this to thy mistress: my art suggests to me that in her state the fear of evil may be as dangerous as its operation. But see that she take my specific, for [he lowered his voice, and spoke low but impressively in her ear] it is an antidote against poison. Hark, they enter the garden!”

In effect, a sound of noisy mirth and loud talking approached the garden door, alarmed by which, Wayland Smith sprang into the midst of a thicket of overgrown shrubs, while Janet withdrew to the garden-house that she might not incur observation, and that she might at the same time conceal, at least for the present, the purchases made from the supposed peddler, which lay scattered on the floor of the summer-house.

Janet, however, had no occasion for anxiety. Her father, his old attendant, Lord Leicester's domestic, and the astrologer entered the garden in tumult and in extreme perplexity, endeavoring to quiet Lambourne, whose brain had now become completely fired with liquor, and who was one of those unfortunate persons who, being once stirred with the vinous stimulus, do not fall asleep like other drunkards but remain partially influenced by it for many hours, until at length, by successive draughts, they are elevated into a state of uncontrollable frenzy. Like many men in this state also, Lambourne neither lost the power of motion, speech, or expression; but, on the contrary, spoke with unwonted emphasis and readiness, and told all that at another time he would have been most desirous to keep secret.

“What!” ejaculated Michael, at the full extent of his voice, “am I to have no welcome—no carouse, when I have brought fortune to your old ruinous dog-house in the shape of a devil's ally, that can change slate-shivers into Spanish dollars? Here, you Tony Fire-the-Fagot, Papist, Puritan, hypocrite,

miser, profligate, devil, compounded of all men's sins, bow down and reverence him who has brought into thy house the very mammon thou worshipest!"

"For God's sake," said Foster, "speak low; come into the house; thou shalt have wine, or whatever thou wilt."

"No, old puckfist, I will have it here," thundered the inebriated ruffian—"here, 'al fresco,' as the Italian hath it. No—no, I will not drink with that poisoning devil within doors, to be choked with the fumes of arsenic and quicksilver; I learned from villain Varney to beware of that."

"Fetch him wine, in the name of all the fiends!" said the alchemist.

"Aha! and thou wouldst spice it for me, old Truepenny, wouldst thou not? Aye, I should have copperas, and hellebore, and vitriol, and aquafortis, and twenty devilish materials, bubbling in my brain-pan, like a charm to raise the devil in a witch's caldron. Hand me the flask thyself, old Tony Fire-the-Fagot—and let it be cool; I will have no wine mulled at the pile of the old burnt bishops. Or stay, let Leicester be king if he will—good—and Varney, villain Varney, grand vizier—why, excellent! And what shall I be, then? Why, emperor—Emperor Lambourne! I will see this choice piece of beauty that they have walled up here for their private pleasures; I will have her this very night to serve my wine-cup and put on my nightcap. What should a fellow do with two wives, were he twenty times an earl? Answer me that, Tony boy, you old reprobate, hypocritical dog, whom God struck out of the book of life, but tormented with the constant wish to be restored to it. You old bishop-burning, blasphemous fanatic, answer me that."

"I will stick my knife to the haft in him," said Foster, in a low tone, which trembled with passion.

"For the love of Heaven, no violence!" said the astrologer. "It cannot but be looked closely into. Here, honest Lambourne, wilt thou pledge me to the health of the noble Earl of Leicester and Master Richard Varney?"

"I will, mine old Albumazar—I will, my trusty vender of ratsbane. I would kiss thee, mine honest infractor of the Lex Julia, as they said at Leyden, didst thou not flavor so damnably of sulphur and such fiendish apothecaries' stuff. Here goes it, 'up sey es'—to Varney and Leicester! Two more noble, mounting spirits, and more dark-seeking, deep-diving, high-flying, malicious, ambitious miscreants—well, I

say no more, but I will whet my dagger on his heart-spone that refuses to pledge me! And so, my masters——”

Thus speaking, Lambourne exhausted the cup which the astrologer had handed to him, and which contained not wine, but distilled spirits. He swore half an oath, dropped the empty cup from his grasp, laid his hand on his sword without being able to draw it, reeled, and fell without sense or motion into the arms of the domestic, who dragged him off to his chamber and put him to bed.

In the general confusion, Janet regained her lady's chamber unobserved, trembling like an aspen leaf, but determined to keep secret from the countess the dreadful surmises which she could not help entertaining from the drunken ravings of Lambourne. Her fears, however, though they assumed no certain shape, kept pace with the advice of the peddler; and she confirmed her mistress in her purpose of taking the medicine which he had recommended, from which it is probable she would otherwise have dissuaded her.

Neither had these intimations escaped the ears of Wayland, who knew much better how to interpret them. He felt much compassion at beholding so lovely a creature as the countess, and whom he had first seen in the bosom of domestic happiness, exposed to the machinations of such a gang of villains. His indignation, too, had been highly excited by hearing the voice of his old master, against whom he felt, in equal degree, the passions of hatred and fear. He nourished also a pride in his own art and resources; and, dangerous as the task was, he that night formed a determination to attain the bottom of the mystery, and to aid the distressed lady, if it were yet possible. From some words which Lambourne had dropped among his ravings, Wayland now, for the first time, felt inclined to doubt that Varney had acted entirely on his own account in wooing and winning the affections of this beautiful creature. Fame asserted of this zealous retainer that he had accommodated his lord in former love intrigues; and it occurred to Wayland Smith that Leicester himself might be the party chiefly interested. Her marriage with the Earl he could not suspect; but even the discovery of such a passing intrigue with a lady of Mistress Amy Robsart's rank was a secret of the deepest importance to the stability of the favorite's power over Elizabeth. “If Leicester himself should hesitate to stifle such a rumor by very strange means,” said he to himself, “he has those about him who would do him that favor without waiting for his consent. If I would

meddle in this business, it must be in such guise as my old master uses when he compounds his manna of Satan, and that is with a close mask on my face. So I will quit Giles Gosling to-morrow, and change my course and place of residence as often as a hunted fox. I should like to see this little Puritan, too, once more. She looks both pretty and intelligent, to have come of such a caitiff as Anthony Fire-the-Fagot."

Giles Gosling received the adieus of Wayland rather joyfully than otherwise. The honest publican saw so much peril in crossing the course of the Earl of Leicester's favorite, that his virtue was scarce able to support him in the task, and he was well pleased when it was likely to be removed from his shoulders; still, however, professing his good-will and readiness, in case of need, to do Master Tressilian or his emissary any service, in so far as consisted with his character of a publican.

CHAPTER XXI.

Vaulting ambition, that o'erleaps itself,
And falls on t'other side.

—*Macbeth.*

THE splendor of the approaching revels at Kenilworth was now the conversation through all England; and everything was collected at home or from abroad which could add to the gayety or glory of the prepared reception of Elizabeth at the house of her most distinguished favorite. Meantime, Leicester appeared daily to advance in the Queen's favor. He was perpetually by her side in council, willingly listened to in the moments of courtly recreation, favored with approaches even to familiar intimacy, looked up to by all who had aught to hope at court, courted by foreign ministers with the most flattering testimonies of respect from their sovereigns—the "alter ego," as it seemed, of the stately Elizabeth, who was now very generally supposed to be studying the time and opportunity for associating him, by marriage, into her sovereign power.

Amid such a tide of prosperity, this minion of fortune and of the Queen's favor was probably the most unhappy man in the realm which seemed at his devotion. He had the Fairy King's superiority over his friends and dependents, and saw much which they could not. The character of his mistress was intimately known to him: it was his minute and studied acquaintance with her humors, as well as her noble faculties, which, joined to his powerful mental qualities and his eminent external accomplishments, had raised him so high in her favor; and it was that very knowledge of her disposition which led him to apprehend at every turn some sudden and overwhelming disgrace. Leicester was like a pilot possessed of a chart, which points out to him all the peculiarities of his navigation, but which exhibits so many shoals, breakers, and reefs of rocks that his anxious eye reaps little more from observing them than to be convinced that his final escape can be little else than miraculous.

In fact, Queen Elizabeth had a character strangely compounded of the strongest masculine sense with those foibles which are chiefly supposed proper to the female sex. Her subjects had the full benefit of her virtues, which far pre-

dominated over her weaknesses; but her courtiers and those about her person had often to sustain sudden and embarrassing turns of caprice and the sallies of a temper which was both jealous and despotic. She was the nursing-mother of her people, but she was also the true daughter of Henry VIII.; and though early sufferings and an excellent education had repressed and modified, they had not altogether destroyed, the hereditary temper of that "hard-ruled king." "Her mind," says her witty godson, Sir John Harrington, who had experienced both the smiles and the frowns which he describes, "was ofttime like the gentle air, that cometh from the westerly point in a summer's morn: 'twas sweet and refreshing to all around her. Her speech did win all affections. . . Again, she could put forth such alterations, when obedience was lacking, as left no doubting whose daughter she was. . . When she smiled, it was a pure sunshine, that everyone did choose to bask in, if they could; but anon came a storm, from a sudden gathering of clouds, and the thunder fell in wondrous manner on all alike." *

This variability of disposition, as Leicester well knew, was chiefly formidable to those who had a share in the Queen's affections, and who depended rather on her personal regard than on the indispensable services which they could render to her councils and her crown. The favor of Burleigh or of Walsingham, of a description far less striking than that by which he was himself upheld, was founded, as Leicester was well aware, on Elizabeth's solid judgment, not on her partiality; and was, therefore, free from all those principles of change and decay necessarily incident to that which chiefly arose from personal accomplishments and female predilection. These great and sage statesmen were judged of by the Queen only with reference to the measures they suggested, and the reasons by which they supported their opinions in council; whereas the success of Leicester's course depended on all those light and changeable gales of caprice and humor which thwart or favor the progress of a lover in the favor of his mistress, and she, too, a mistress who was ever and anon becoming fearful lest she should forget the dignity, or compromise the authority, of the queen while she indulged the affections of the woman. Of the difficulties which surrounded his power, "too great to keep or to resign," Leicester was fully sensible; and, as he looked anxiously round for the

* *Nugæ Antiquæ*, Letter of Sir J. Harrington to Mr. Robert Markham, 1606.

means of maintaining himself in his precarious situation, and sometimes contemplated those of descending from it in safety, he saw but little hope of either. At such moments, his thoughts turned to dwell upon his secret marriage and its consequences; and it was in bitterness against himself, if not against his unfortunate countess, that he ascribed to that hasty measure, adopted in the ardor of what he now called inconsiderate passion, at once the impossibility of placing his power on a solid basis and the immediate prospect of its precipitate downfall.

“Men say,” thus ran his thoughts, in these anxious and repentant moments, “that I might marry Elizabeth, and become King of England. All things suggest this. The match is caroled in ballads, while the rabble throw their caps up. It has been touched upon in the schools—whispered in the presence-chamber—recommended from the pulpit—prayed for in the Calvinistic churches abroad—touched on by statistis in the very council at home. These bold insinuations have been rebutted by no rebuke, no resentment, no chiding, scarce even by the usual female protestation that she would live and die a virgin princess. Her words have been more courteous than ever, though she knows such rumors are abroad—her actions more gracious—her looks more kind: naught seems wanting to make me King of England, and place me beyond the storms of court favor, excepting the putting forth of mine own hand to take that crown imperial which is the glory of the universe! And when I might stretch that hand out most boldly, it is fettered down by a secret and inextricable bond! And here I have letters from Amy,” he would say, catching them up with a movement of peevishness, “persecuting me to acknowledge her openly—to do justice to her and to myself—and I wot not what. Methinks I have done less than justice to myself already. And she speaks as if Elizabeth were to receive the knowledge of this matter with the glee of a mother hearing of the happy marriage of a hopeful son! She, the daughter of Henry, who spared neither man in his anger nor woman in his desire—she to find herself tricked, drawn on with toys of passion to the verge of acknowledging her love to a subject, and he discovered to be a married man! Elizabeth to learn that she had been dallied with in such fashion, as a gay courtier might trifle with a country wench. We should then see to our ruin ‘*furens quid foemina!*’”

He would then pause, and call for Varney, whose advice



“‘Men say,’ thus ran his thoughts . . . ‘that I might marry Elizabeth.’”

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was now more frequently resorted to than ever, because the earl remembered the remonstrances which he had made against his secret contract. And their consultation usually terminated in anxious deliberation how, or in what manner, the countess was to be produced at Kenilworth. These communings had for some time ever ended in a resolution to delay the progress from day to day. But at length a peremptory decision became necessary.

"Elizabeth will not be satisfied without her presence," said the earl; "whether any suspicion hath entered her mind, as my own apprehensions suggest, or whether the petition of Tressilian is kept in her memory by Sussex or some other secret enemy, I know not; but amongst all the favorable expressions which she uses to me, she often recurs to the story of Amy Robsart. I think that Amy is the slave in the chariot, who is placed there by my evil fortune to dash and to confound my triumph, even when at the highest. Show me thy device, Varney, for solving the inextricable difficulty. I have thrown every such impediment in the way of these accursed revels as I could propound even with a shade of decency, but to-day's interview has put all to a hazard. She said to me kindly but peremptorily, 'We will give you no farther time for preparations, my lord, lest you should altogether ruin yourself. On Saturday, the 9th of July, we will be with you at Kenilworth. We pray you to forget none of our appointed guests and suitors, and in especial this light o' love, Amy Robsart. We would wish to see the woman who could postpone yonder poetical gentleman, Master Tressilian, to your man, Richard Varney.' Now, Varney, ply thine invention, whose forge hath availed us so often; for sure as my name is Dudley, the danger menaced by my horoscope is now darkening around me."

"Can my lady be by no means persuaded to bear for a brief space the obscure character which circumstances impose on her?" said Varney, after some hesitation.

"How, sirrah! my countess term herself thy wife! that may neither stand with my honor nor with hers."

"Alas! my lord," answered Varney, "and yet such is the quality in which Elizabeth now holds her; and to contradict this opinion is to discover all."

"Think of something else, Varney," said the earl, in great agitation; "this invention is naught. If I could give way to it, she would not; for I tell thee, Varney, if thou know'st it not, that not Elizabeth on the throne has more pride than the

daughter of this obscure gentleman of Devon. She is flexible in many things, but where she holds her honor brought in question she hath a spirit and temper as apprehensive as lightning, and as swift in execution."

"We have experienced that, my lord, else had we not been thus circumstanced," said Varney. "But what else to suggest I know not. Methinks she whose good fortune in becoming your lordship's bride gives rise to the danger should do somewhat toward parrying it."

"It is impossible," said the earl, waving his hand: "I know neither authority nor entreaties would make her endure thy name for an hour."

"It is somewhat hard, though," said Varney, in a dry tone; and, without pausing on that topic, he added, "Suppose someone were found to represent her? Such feats have been performed in the courts of as sharp-eyed monarchs as Queen Elizabeth."

"Utter madness, Varney," answered the earl; "the counterfeited would be confronted with Tressilian, and discovery become inevitable."

"Tressilian might be removed from court," said the unhesitating Varney.

"And by what means?"

"There are many," said Varney, "by which a statesman in your situation, my lord, may remove from the scene one who pries into your affairs, and places himself in perilous opposition to you."

"Speak not to me of such policy, Varney," said the earl, hastily; "which, besides, would avail nothing in the present case. Many others there be at court to whom Amy may be known; and besides, on the absence of Tressilian, her father or some of her friends would be instantly summoned hither. Urge thine invention once more."

"My lord, I know not what to say," answered Varney; "but were I myself in such perplexity, I would ride post down to Cumnor Place and compel my wife to give her consent to such measures as her safety and mine required."

"Varney," said Leicester, "I cannot urge her to aught so repugnant to her noble nature as a share in this stratagem: it would be a base requital for the love she bears me."

"Well, my lord," said Varney, "your lordship is a wise and an honorable man, and skilled in those high points of romantic scruple which are current in Arcadia, perhaps, as your nephew, Philip Sidney, writes. I am your humble ser-

vitor—a man of this world, and only happy that my knowledge of it and its ways is such as your lordship has not scorned to avail yourself of. Now I would fain know whether the obligation lies on my lady or on you in this fortunate union; and which has most reason to show complaisance to the other, and to consider that other's wishes, conveniences, and safety?"

"I tell thee, Varney," said the earl, "that all it was in my power to bestow upon her was not merely deserved, but a thousand times overpaid, by her own virtue and beauty; for never did greatness descend upon a creature so formed by nature to grace and adorn it."

"It is well, my lord, you are so satisfied," answered Varney, with his usual sardonic smile, which even respect to his patron could not at all times subdue; "you will have time enough to enjoy undisturbed the society of one so gracious and beautiful—that is, so soon as such confinement in the Tower be over as may correspond to the crime of deceiving the affections of Elizabeth Tudor. A cheaper penalty, I presume, you do not expect?"

"Malicious fiend!" answered Leicester, "do you mock me in my misfortune? Manage it as thou wilt."

"If you are serious, my lord," said Varney, "you must set forth instantly and post for Cumnor Place."

"Do thou go thyself, Varney: the devil has given thee that sort of eloquence which is most powerful in the worst cause. I should stand self-convicted of villainy were I to urge such a deceit. Begone, I tell thee. Must I entreat thee to mine own dishonor!"

"No, my lord," said Varney; "but, if you are serious in intrusting me with the task of urging this most necessary measure, you must give me a letter to my lady as my credentials, and trust to me for backing the advice it contains with all the force in my power. And such is my opinion of my lady's love for your lordship, and of her willingness to do that which is at once to contribute to your pleasure and your safety, that I am sure she will condescend to bear, for a few brief days, the name of so humble a man as myself, especially since it is not inferior in antiquity to that of her own paternal house."

Leicester seized on writing-materials, and twice or thrice commenced a letter to the countess, which he afterward tore into fragments. At length he finished a few distracted lines, in which he conjured her, for reasons nearly concerning his

life and honor, to consent to bear the name of Varney for a few days, during the revels at Kenilworth. He added, that Varney would communicate all the reasons which rendered this deception indispensable; and having signed and sealed these credentials, he flung them over the table to Varney, with a motion that he should depart, which his adviser was not slow to comprehend and to obey.

Leicester remained like one stupefied, till he heard the trampling of the horses, as Varney, who took no time even to change his dress, threw himself into the saddle, and, followed by a single servant, set off for Berkshire. At the sound, the earl started from his seat and ran to the window, with the momentary purpose of recalling the unworthy commission with which he had intrusted one of whom he used to say, he knew no virtuous property save affection to his patron. But Varney was already beyond call; and the bright starry firmament, which the age considered as the Book of Fate, lying spread before Leicester when he opened the casement, diverted him from his better and more manly purpose.

“There they roll, on their silent but potential course,” said the earl, looking around him, “without a voice which speaks to our ear, but not without influences which affect, at every change, the indwellers of this vile earthly planet. This, if astrologers fable not, is the very crisis of my fate! The hour approaches of which I was taught to beware—the hour, too, which I was encouraged to hope for. A king was the word—but how? The crown matrimonial—all hopes of that are gone; let them go. The rich Netherlands have demanded me for their leader, and would Elizabeth consent, would yield to me their crown. And have I not such a claim, even in this kingdom? That of York, descending from George of Clarence to the house of Huntingdon, which, this lady failing, may have a fair chance—Huntingdon is of my house. But I will plunge no deeper in these high mysteries. Let me hold my course in silence for a while, and in obscurity, like a subterranean river: the time shall come that I will burst forth in my strength, and bear all opposition before me.”

While Leicester was thus stupefying the remonstrances of his own conscience by appealing to political necessity for his apology, or losing himself amidst the wild dreams of ambition, his agent left town and tower behind him, on his hasty journey to Berkshire. He also nourished high hope. He had brought Lord Leicester to the point which he had desired, of committing to him the most intimate recesses of his

breast, and of using him as the channel of his most confidential intercourse with his lady. Henceforward it would, he foresaw, be difficult for his patron either to dispense with his services or refuse his requests, however unreasonable. And if this disdainful dame, as he termed the countess, should comply with the request of her husband, Varney, her pretended husband, must needs become so situated with respect to her that there was no knowing where his audacity might be bounded; perhaps not till circumstances enabled him to obtain a triumph which he thought of with a mixture of fiendish feelings, in which revenge for her previous scorn was foremost and predominant. Again he contemplated the possibility of her being totally intractable, and refusing obstinately to play the part assigned to her in the drama at Kenilworth.

“Alasco must then do his part,” he said. “Sickness must serve her Majesty as an excuse for not receiving the homage of Mrs. Varney—aye, and a sore and a wasting sickness it may prove, should Elizabeth continue to cast so favorable an eye on my Lord of Leicester. I will not forego the chance of being favorite of a monarch for want of determined measures, should these be necessary. Forward, good horse—forward: ambition, and haughty hope of power, pleasure, and revenge; strike their stings as deep through my bosom as I plunge the rowels in thy flanks. On, good horse—on: the devil urges us both forward.”

CHAPTER XXII.

Say that my beauty was but small,
Among court ladies all despised,
Why didst thou rend it from that hall,
Where, scornful earl, 'twas dearly prized?

No more thou com'st with wonted speed,
Thy once beloved bride to see;
But be she alive, or be she dead,
I fear, stern earl, 's the same to thee.

—*Cumnor Hall*, by WILLIAM JULIUS MICKLE.

THE ladies of fashion of the present, or of any other, period must have allowed that the young and lovely Countess of Leicester had, besides her youth and beauty, two qualities which entitled her to a place amongst women of rank and distinction. She displayed, as we have seen in her interview with the peddler, a liberal promptitude to make unnecessary purchases, solely for the pleasure of acquiring useless and showy trifles, which ceased to please as soon as they were possessed; and she was, besides, apt to spend a considerable space of time every day in adorning her person, although the varied splendor of her attire could only attract the half-satirical praise of the precise Janet, or an approving glance from the bright eyes which witnessed their own beams of triumph reflected from the mirror.

The Countess Amy had, indeed, to plead for indulgence in those frivolous tastes, that the education of the times had done little or nothing for a mind naturally gay and averse to study. If she had not loved to collect finery and to wear it, she might have woven tapestry or sewed embroidery, till her labors spread in gay profusion all over the walls and seats at Lidcote Hall; or she might have varied Minerva's labors with the task of preparing a mighty pudding against the time that Sir Hugh Robsart returned from the greenwood. But Amy had no natural genius either for the loom, the needle, or the receipt-book. Her mother had died in [Amy's] infancy; her father contradicted her in nothing, and Tressilian, the only one that approached her who was able or desirous to attend to the cultivation of her mind, had much hurt his interest with her by assuming too eagerly the task of a preceptor; so that he was regarded by the lively, indulged, and idle girl with some fear and much respect, but with little or nothing of that

softer emotion which it had been his hope and his ambition to inspire. And thus her heart lay readily open, and her fancy became easily captivated by the noble exterior and graceful deportment and complacent flattery of Leicester, even before he was known to her as the dazzling minion of wealth and power.

The frequent visits of Leicester at Cumnor during the earlier part of their union had reconciled the countess to the solitude and privacy to which she was condemned; but when these visits became rarer and more rare, and when the void was filled up with letters of excuse, not always very warmly expressed, and generally extremely brief, discontent and suspicion began to haunt those splendid apartments which love had fitted up for beauty. Her answers to Leicester conveyed these feelings too bluntly, and pressed more naturally than prudently that she might be relieved from this obscure and secluded residence by the earl's acknowledgment of their marriage; and in arranging her arguments, with all the skill she was mistress of, she trusted chiefly to the warmth of the entreaties with which she urged them. Sometimes she even ventured to mingle reproaches, of which Leicester conceived he had good reason to complain.

"I have made her countess," he said to Varney; "surely she might wait till it consisted with my pleasure that she should put on the coronet?"

The Countess Amy viewed the subject in directly an opposite light.

"What signifies," she said, "that I have rank and honor in reality, if I am to live an obscure prisoner, without either society or observance, and suffering in my character as one of dubious or disgraced reputation? I care not for all those strings of pearls which you fret me by warping into my tresses, Janet. I tell you that, at Lidcote Hall, if I put but a fresh rose-bud among my hair, my good father would call me to him that he might see it more closely; and the kind old curate would smile, and Master Mumblazen would say something about roses gules; and now I sit here, decked out like an image with gold and gems, and no one to see my finery but you, Janet. There was the poor Tressilian, too; but it avails not speaking of him."

"It doth not indeed, madam," said her prudent attendant; "and verily you make me sometimes wish you would not speak of him so often or so rashly."

"It signifies nothing to warn me, Janet," said the impa-

tient and incorrigible countess; "I was born free, though I am now mewed up like some fine foreign slave, rather than the wife of an English noble. I bore it all with pleasure while I was sure he loved me; but now my tongue and heart shall be free, let them fetter these limbs as they will. I tell thee, Janet, I love my husband—I will love him till my latest breath—I cannot cease to love him, even if I would, or if he—which, God knows, may chance—should cease to love me. But I will say, and loudly, I would have been happier than I now am to have remained in Lidcote Hall, even although I must have married poor Tressilian, with his melancholy look, and his head full of learning, which I cared not for. He said, if I would read his favorite volumes, there would come a time that I should be glad of having done so. I think it is come now."

"I bought you some books, madam," said Janet, "from a lame fellow who sold them in the market-place, and who stared something boldly at me, I promise you."

"Let me see them, Janet," said the countess; "but let them not be of your own precise cast. How is this, most righteous damsel? 'A Pair of Snuffers for the Golden Candlestick'—'A Handful of Myrrh and Hyssop to put a Sick Soul to Purgation'—'A Draught of Water from the Valley of Baca'—'Foxes and Firebrands.' What gear call you this, maiden?"

"Nay, madam," said Janet, "it was but fitting and seemly to put grace in your ladyship's way; but an you will none of it, there are play-books and poet-books, I trow."

The countess proceeded carelessly in her examination, turning over such rare volumes as would now make the fortune of twenty retail booksellers. Here was a "Boke of Cookery, imprinted by Richard Lant," and Skelton's "Books"—"The Passtime of the People"—"The Castle of Knowledge," etc. But neither to this lore did the countess' heart incline, and joyfully did she start up from the listless task of turning over the leaves of the pamphlets, and hastily did she scatter them through the floor, when the rapid clatter of horses' feet heard in the courtyard, called her to the window, exclaiming, "It is Leicester!—it is my noble earl!—it is my Dudley! Every stroke of his horse's hoofs sounds like a note of lordly music!"

There was a brief bustle in the mansion, and Foster, with his downward look and sullen manner, entered the apartment to say, "That Master Richard Varney was arrived from my

lord, having ridden all night, and craved to speak with her ladyship instantly."

"Varney!" said the disappointed countess; "and to speak with me!—pshaw! But he comes with news from Leicester, so admit him instantly."

Varney entered her dressing-apartment, where she sat arrayed in her native loveliness, adorned with all that Janet's art, and a rich and tasteful undress, could bestow. But the most beautiful part of her attire was her profuse and luxuriant light-brown locks, which floated in such rich abundance around a neck that resembled a swan's, and over a bosom heaving with anxious expectation, which communicated a hurried tinge of red to her whole countenance.

Varney entered the room in the dress in which he had waited on his master that morning to court, the splendor of which made a strange contrast with the disorder arising from hasty riding during a dark night and foul ways. His brow bore an anxious and hurried expression, as one who has that to say of which he doubts the reception, and who hath yet posted on from the necessity of communicating his tidings. The countess' anxious eye at once caught the alarm as she exclaimed, "You bring news from my lord, Master Varney? Gracious Heaven! is he ill?"

"No, madam, thank Heaven!" said Varney. "Compose yourself, and permit me to take breath ere I communicate my tidings."

"No breath, sir," replied the lady, impatiently; "I know your theatrical arts. Since your breath hath sufficed to bring you hither, it may suffice to tell your tale, at least briefly, and in the gross."

"Madam," answered Varney, "we are not alone, and my lord's message was for your ear only."

"Leave us, Janet, and Master Foster," said the lady; "but remain in the next apartment, and within call."

Foster and his daughter retired, agreeably to the Lady Leicester's commands, into the next apartment, which was the withdrawing-room. The door which led from the sleeping-chamber was then carefully shut and bolted, and the father and daughter remained both in a posture of anxious attention, the first with a stern, suspicious, lowering cast of countenance, and Janet with folded hands, and looks which seemed divided betwixt her desire to know the fortunes of her mistress and her prayers to Heaven for her safety. Anthony Foster seemed himself to have some idea of what was passing

through his daughter's mind, for he crossed the apartment and took her anxiously by the hand, saying, "That is right: pray, Janet—pray; we have all need of prayers, and some of us more than others. Pray, Janet; I would pray myself, but I must listen to what goes on within: evil has been brewing, love—evil has been brewing. God forgive our sins; but Varney's sudden and strange arrival bodes us no good."

Janet had never before heard her father excite or even permit her attention to anything which passed in their mysterious family, and now that he did so, his voice sounded in her ear—she knew not why—like that of a screech-owl denouncing some deed of terror and of woe. She turned her eyes fearfully toward the door, almost as if she expected some sounds of horror to be heard, or some sight of fear to display itself.

All, however, was as still as death, and the voices of those who spoke in the inner chamber were, if they spoke at all, carefully subdued to a tone which could not be heard in the next. At once, however, they were heard to speak fast, thick, and hastily; and presently after the voice of the countess was heard exclaiming, at the highest pitch to which indignation could raise it, "Undo the door, sir, I command you! Undo the door! I will have no other reply!" she continued, drowning with her vehement accents the low and muttered sounds which Varney was heard to utter betwixt whiles. "What ho! without there!" she persisted, accompanying her words with shrieks, "Janet, alarm the house. Foster, break open the door. I am detained here by a traitor. Use ax and lever, Master Foster—I will be your warrant."

"It shall not need, madam," Varney was at length distinctly heard to say. "If you please to expose my lord's important concerns and your own to the general ear, I will not be your hindrance."

The door was unlocked and thrown open, and Janet and her father rushed in, anxious to learn the cause of these reiterated exclamations.

When they entered the apartment, Varney stood by the door grinding his teeth, with an expression in which rage, and shame, and fear, had each their share. The countess stood in the midst of her apartment like a juvenile pythoress, under the influence of the prophetic fury. The veins in her beautiful forehead started into swollen blue lines through the hurried impulse of her articulation, her cheek and neck glowed like scarlet, her eyes were like those of an imprisoned

eagle, flashing red lightning on the foes whom it cannot reach with its talons. Were it possible for one of the Graces to have been animated by a Fury, the countenance could not have united such beauty with so much hatred, scorn, defiance, and resentment. The gesture and attitude corresponded with the voice and looks, and altogether presented a spectacle which was at once beautiful and fearful; so much of the sublime had the energy of passion united with the Countess Amy's natural loveliness. Janet, as soon as the door was open, ran to her mistress; and more slowly, yet with more haste than he was wont, Anthony Foster went to Richard Varney.

"In the Truth's name, what ails your ladyship?" said the former.

"What, in the name of Satan, have you done to her?" said Foster to his friend.

"Who, I?—nothing," answered Varney, but with sunken head and sullen voice—"nothing but communicated to her her lord's commands, which, if the lady list not to obey, she knows better how to answer it than I may pretend to do."

"Now, by Heaven, Janet," said the countess, "the false traitor lies in his throat! He must needs lie, for he speaks to the dishonor of my noble lord; he must needs lie doubly, for he speaks to gain ends of his own, equally execrable and unattainable."

"You have misapprehended me, lady," said Varney, with a sulky species of submission and apology; "let this matter rest till your passion be abated, and I will explain all."

"Thou shalt never have an opportunity to do so," said the countess. "Look at him, Janet. He is fairly dressed, hath the outside of a gentleman, and hither he came to persuade me it was my lord's pleasure—nay, more, my wedded lord's commands—that I should go with him to Kenilworth, and before the Queen and nobles, and in presence of my own wedded lord, that I should acknowledge him—*him* there, that very cloak-brushing, shoe-cleaning fellow—*him* there, my lord's lackey, for my liege lord and husband; furnishing against myself, great God! whenever I was to vindicate my right and my rank, such weapons as would hew my just claim from the root, and destroy my character to be regarded as an honorable matron of the English nobility!"

"You hear her, Foster, and you, young maiden, hear this lady," answered Varney, taking advantage of the pause which

the countess had made in her charge, more for lack of breath than for lack of matter—"you hear that her heat only objects to me the course which our good lord, for the purpose to keep certain matters secret, suggests in the very letter which she holds in her hands."

Foster here attempted to interfere with a face of authority, which he thought became the charge intrusted to him. "Nay, lady, I must needs say you are over hasty in this. Such deceit is not utterly to be condemned when practiced for a righteous end; and thus even the patriarch Abraham feigned Sarah to be his sister when they went down to Egypt."

"Aye, sir," answered the countess; "but God rebuked that deceit even in the father of His chosen people, by the mouth of the heathen Pharaoh. Out upon you, that will read Scripture only to copy those things which are held out to us as warnings, not as examples!"

"But Sarah disputed not the will of her husband, an it be your pleasure," said Foster, in reply; "but did as Abraham commanded, calling herself his sister, that it might be well with her husband for her sake, and that his soul might live because of her beauty."

"Now, so Heaven pardon me my useless anger," answered the countess, "thou art as daring a hypocrite as yonder fellow is an impudent deceiver! Never will I believe that the noble Dudley gave countenance to so dastardly, so dishonorable a plan. Thus I tread on his infamy, if indeed it be, and thus destroy its remembrance forever!"

So saying, she tore in pieces Leicester's letter, and stamped in the extremity of impatience, as if she would have annihilated the minute fragments into which she had rent it.

"Bear witness," said Varney, collecting himself, "she hath torn my lord's letter, in order to burden me with the scheme of his devising; and although it promises naught but danger and trouble to me, she would lay it to my charge, as if I had any purpose of mine own in it."

"Thou liest, thou treacherous slave!" said the countess, in spite of Janet's attempts to keep her silent, in the sad foresight that her vehemence might only furnish arms against herself. "Thou liest!" she continued. "Let me go, Janet. Were it the last word I have to speak, he lies: he had his own foul ends to seek; and broader he would have displayed them, had my passion permitted me to preserve the silence which at first encouraged him to unfold his vile projects."

“Madam,” said Varney, overwhelmed in spite of his effrontery, “I entreat you to believe yourself mistaken.”

“As soon will I believe light darkness,” said the enraged countess. “Have I drank of oblivion? Do I not remember former passages, which, known to Leicester, had given thee the preferment of a gallows, instead of the honor of his intimacy? I would I were a man but for five minutes! It were space enough to make a craven like thee confess his villainy. But go—begone! Tell thy master that, when I take the foul course to which such scandalous deceits as thou hast recommended on his behalf must necessarily lead me, I will give him a rival something worthy of the name. He shall not be supplanted by an ignominious lackey, whose best fortune is to catch a gift of his master’s last suit of clothes ere it is threadbare, and who is only fit to seduce a suburb wench by the bravery of new roses in his master’s old pantoufles. Go—begone, sir; I scorn thee so much that I am ashamed to have been angry with thee.”

Varney left the room with a mute expression of rage, and was followed by Foster, whose apprehension, naturally slow, was overpowered by the eager and abundant discharge of indignation which, for the first time, he had heard burst from the lips of a being who had seemed till that moment too languid and too gentle to nurse an angry thought or utter an intemperate expression. Foster, therefore, pursued Varney from place to place, persecuting him with interrogatories, to which the other replied not until they were in the opposite side of the quadrangle, and in the old library, with which the reader has already been made acquainted. Here he turned round on his persevering follower, and thus addressed him, in a tone tolerably equal; that brief walk having been sufficient to give one so habituated to command his temper time to rally and recover his presence of mind.

“Tony,” he said, with his usual sneering laugh, “it avails not to deny it—the woman and the devil, who, as thine oracle Holdforth will confirm to thee, cheated man at the beginning, have this day proved more powerful than my discretion. Yon termagant looked so tempting, and had the art to preserve her countenance so naturally, while I communicated my lord’s message, that, by my faith, I thought I might say some little thing for myself. She thinks she hath my head under her girdle now, but she is deceived. Where is Dr. Alasco?”

“In his laboratory,” answered Foster; “it is the hour he is not spoken withal; we must wait till noon is past, or spoil his

important—— What said I, important? I would say, interrupt his divine studies.”

“Aye, he studies the devil’s divinity,” said Varney; “but when I want him one hour must suffice as well as another. Lead the way to his pandemonium.”

So spoke Varney, and with hasty and perturbed steps followed Foster, who conducted him through private passages, many of which were well-nigh ruinous, to the opposite side of the quadrangle, where, in a subterranean apartment, now occupied by the chemist Alasco, one of the abbots of Abingdon, who had a turn for the occult sciences, had, much to the scandal of his convent, established a laboratory, in which, like other fools of the period, he spent much precious time, and money besides, in the pursuit of the grand arcanum.

Anthony Foster paused before the door, which was scrupulously secured within, and again showed a marked hesitation to disturb the sage in his operations. But Varney, less scrupulous, roused him, by knocking and voice, until at length, slowly and reluctantly, the inmate of the apartment undid the door. The chemist appeared, with his eyes bleared with the heat and vapors of the stove or alembic over which he brooded, and the interior of his cell displayed the confused assemblage of heterogeneous substances and extraordinary implements belonging to his profession. The old man was muttering, with spiteful impatience, “Am I forever to be recalled to the affairs of earth from those of heaven?”

“To the affairs of hell,” answered Varney, “for that is thy proper element. Foster, we need thee at our conference.”

Foster slowly entered the room. Varney, following, barred the door, and they betook themselves to secret council.

In the meanwhile, the countess traversed the apartment, with shame and anger contending on her lovely cheek.

“The villain,” she said—“the cold-blooded, calculating slave! But I unmasked him, Janet—I made the snake uncoil all his folds before me, and crawl abroad in his naked deformity. I suspended my resentment, at the danger of suffocating under the effort, until he had let me see the very bottom of a heart more foul than hell’s darkest corner. And thou, Leicester, is it possible thou couldst bid me for a moment deny my wedded right in thee, or thyself yield it to another! But it is impossible: the villain has lied in all. Janet, I will not remain here longer. I fear him—I fear thy

father; I grieve to say it, Janet, but I fear thy father, and, worst of all, this odious Varney. I will escape from Cumnor."

"Alas! madam, whither would you fly, or by what means will you escape from these walls?"

"I know not, Janet," said the unfortunate young lady, looking upward and clasping her hands together—"I know not where I shall fly, or by what means; but I am certain the God I have served will not abandon me in this dreadful crisis, for I am in the hands of wicked men."

"Do not think so, dear lady," said Janet; "my father is stern and strict in his temper, and severely true to his trust; but yet——"

At this moment, Anthony Foster entered the apartment bearing in his hand a glass cup and a small flask. His manner was singular; for, while approaching the countess with the respect due to her rank, he had till this time suffered to become visible, or had been unable to suppress, the obdurate sulkiness of his natural disposition, which, as is usual with those of his unhappy temper, was chiefly exerted toward those over whom circumstances gave him control. But at present he showed nothing of that sullen consciousness of authority which he was wont to conceal under a clumsy affectation of civility and deference, as a ruffian hides his pistols and bludgeon under his ill-fashioned gaberdine. And yet it seemed as if his smile was more in fear than courtesy, and as if, while he pressed the countess to taste of the choice cordial, which should refresh her spirits after her late alarm, he was conscious of meditating some farther injury. His hand trembled also, his voice faltered, and his whole outward behavior exhibited so much that was suspicious, that his daughter Janet, after she had stood looking at him in astonishment for some seconds, seemed at once to collect herself to execute some hardy resolution, raised her head, assumed an attitude and gait of determination and authority, and walking slowly betwixt her father and her mistress, took the salver from the hand of the former, and said in a low, but marked and decided tone, "Father, I will fill for my noble mistress, when such is her pleasure."

"Thou, my child?" said Foster, eagerly and apprehensively; "no, my child, it is not *thou* shalt render the lady this service."

"And why, I pray you," said Janet, "if it be fitting that the noble lady should partake of the cup at all?"

“Why—why?” said the seneschal, hesitating, and then bursting into passion as the readiest mode of supplying the lack of all other reason. “Why, because it is my pleasure, minion, that you shall not! Get you gone to the evening lecture.”

“Now, as I hope to hear lecture again,” replied Janet, “I will not go thither this night, unless I am better assured of my mistress’ safety. Give me that flask, father”; and she took it from his reluctant hand, while he resigned it as if conscience-struck. “And now,” she said, “father, that which shall benefit my mistress cannot do *me* prejudice. Father, I drink to you.”

Foster, without speaking a word, rushed on his daughter and wrested the flask from her hand; then, as if embarrassed by what he had done, and totally unable to resolve what he should do next, he stood with it in his hand, one foot advanced and the other drawn back, glaring on his daughter with a countenance in which rage, fear, and convicted villainy formed a hideous combination.

“This is strange, my father,” said Janet, keeping her eye fixed on his, in the manner in which those who have the charge of lunatics are said to overawe their unhappy patients; “will you neither let me serve my lady nor drink to her myself?”

The courage of the countess sustained her through this dreadful scene, of which the import was not the less obvious that it was not even hinted at. She preserved even the rash carelessness of her temper, and though her cheek had grown pale at the first alarm, her eye was calm and almost scornful. “Will *you* taste this rare cordial, Master Foster? Perhaps you will not yourself refuse to pledge us, though you permit not Janet to do so. Drink, sir, I pray you.”

“I will not,” answered Foster.

“And for whom, then, is the precious beverage reserved, sir?” said the countess.

“For the devil who brewed it!” answered Foster; and, turning on his heel, he left the chamber.

Janet looked at her mistrees with a countenance expressive in the highest degree of shame, dismay, and sorrow.

“Do not weep for me, Janet,” said the countess kindly.

“No, madam,” replied her attendant, in a voice broken by sobs, “it is not for you I weep, it is for myself—it is for that unhappy man. Those who are dishonored before man, those who are condemned by God, have cause to mourn. not

those who are innocent! Farewell, madam!" she said, hastily assuming the mantle in which she was wont to go abroad.

"Do you leave me, Janet?" said her mistress—"desert me in such an evil strait?"

"Desert you, madam!" exclaimed Janet; and, running back to her mistress, she imprinted a thousand kisses on her hand—"desert you! may the Hope of my trust desert me when I do so! No, madam; well you said the God you serve will open you a path for deliverance. There is a way of escape; I have prayed night and day for light, that I might see how to act betwixt my duty to yonder unhappy man and that which I owe to you. Sternly and fearfully that light has now dawned, and I must not shut the door which God opens. Ask me no more. I will return in brief space."

So speaking, she wrapped herself in her mantle, and saying to the old woman whom she passed in the outer room that she was going to evening prayer, she left the house.

Meanwhile, her father had reached once more the laboratory, where he found the accomplices of his intended guilt.

"Has the sweet bird sipped?" said Varney, with half a smile; while the astrologer put the same question with his eyes, but spoke not a word.*

"She has not, nor she shall not from my hands," replied Foster; "would you have me do murder in my daughter's presence?"

"Wert thou not told, thou sullen and yet faint-hearted slave," answered Varney, with bitterness, "that no *murder*, as thou call'st it, with that staring look and stammering tone, is designed in the matter? Wert thou not told that a brief illness, such as woman puts on in very wantonness, that she may wear her nightgear at noon, and lie on a settle when she should mind her domestic business, is all here aimed at? Here is a learned man will swear it to thee, by the key of the Castle of Wisdom."

"I swear it," said Alasco, "that the elixir thou hast there in the flask will not prejudice life! I swear it by that immortal and indestructible quintessence of gold which pervades every substance in nature, though its secret existence can be traced by him only to whom Trismegistus renders the key of the Cabala."

"An oath of force," said Varney. "Foster, thou wert worse than a pagan to disbelieve it. Believe me, moreover, who swear by nothing but by my own word, that, if you be not conformable, there is no hope—no, not a glimpse of hope—

that this thy leasehold may be transmuted into a copyhold. Thus, Alasco will leave your pewter artillery untransmigrated, and I, honest Anthony, will still have thee for my tenant."

"I know not, gentlemen," said Foster, "where your designs tend to; but in one thing I am bound up, that, fall back fall edge, I will have one in this place that may pray for me, and that one shall be my daughter. I have lived ill, and the world has been too weighty with me; but she is as innocent as ever she was when on her mother's lap, and she, at least, shall have her portion in that happy City whose walls are of pure gold, and the foundations garnished with all manner of precious stones."

"Aye, Tony," said Varney, "that were a paradise to thy heart's content. Debate the matter with him, Dr. Alasco; I will be with you anon."

So speaking, Varney arose, and, taking the flask from the table, he left the room.

"I tell thee, my son," said Alasco to Foster as soon as Varney had left them, "that, whatever this bold and profligate railer may say of the mighty science in which, by Heaven's blessing, I have advanced so far, that I would not call the wisest of living artists my better or my teacher—I say, howsoever yonder reprobate may scoff at things too holy to be apprehended by men merely of carnal and evil thoughts, yet believe, that the city beheld by St. John, in that bright vision of the Christian Apocalypse, that New Jerusalem of which all Christian men hope to partake, sets forth typically the discovery of the GRAND SECRET, whereby the most precious and perfect of nature's works are elicited out of her basest and most crude productions; just as the light and gaudy butterfly, the most beautiful child of the summer's breeze, breaks forth from the dungeon of a sordid chrysalis."

"Master Holdforth said naught of this exposition," said Foster doubtfully; "and moreover, Dr. Alasco, the Holy Writ says that the gold and precious stones of the Holy City are in no sort for those who work abomination or who frame lies."

"Well, my son," said the doctor, "and what is your inference from thence?"

"That those," said Foster, "who distill poisons, and administer them in secrecy, can have no portion in those unspeakable riches."

"You are to distinguish, my son," replied the alchemist,

“betwixt that which is necessarily evil in its progress and in its end also, and that which, being evil, is nevertheless capable of working forth good. If, by the death of one person, the happy period shall be brought nearer to us in which all that is good shall be attained by wishing its presence, all that is evil escaped by desiring its absence; in which sickness, and pain, and sorrow shall be the obedient servants of human wisdom, and made to fly at the slightest signal of a sage; in which that which is now richest and rarest shall be within the compass of everyone who shall be obedient to the voice of wisdom; when the art of healing shall be lost and absorbed in the one universal medicine; when sages shall become monarchs of the earth, and death itself retreat before their frown—if this blessed consummation of all things can be hastened by the slight circumstance that a frail earthly body, which must needs partake corruption, shall be consigned to the grave a short space earlier than in the course of nature, what is such a sacrifice to the advancement of the holy millennium?”

“Millennium is the reign of the saints,” said Foster, somewhat doubtfully.

“Say it is the reign of the sages, my son,” answered Alasco; “or rather the reign of Wisdom itself.”

“I touched on the question with Master Holdforth last exercising night,” said Foster; “but he says your doctrine is heterodox, and a damnable and false exposition.”

“He is in the bonds of ignorance, my son,” answered Alasco, “and as yet burning bricks in Egypt; or, at best, wandering in the dry desert of Sinai. Thou didst ill to speak to such a man of such matters. I will, however, give thee proof, and that shortly, which I will defy that peevish divine to confute, though he should strive with me as the magicians strove with Moses before King Pharaoh. I will do projection in thy presence, my son—in thy very presence, and thine eyes shall witness the truth.”

“Stick to that, learned sage,” said Varney, who at this moment entered the apartment; “if he refuse the testimony of thy tongue, yet how shall he deny that of his own eyes?”

“Varney!” said the adept—“Varney already returned! Hast thou——” He stopped short.

“Have I done mine errand, thou wouldst say?” replied Varney. “I have. And thou,” he added, showing more symptoms of interest than he had hitherto exhibited—“art thou sure thou hast poured forth neither more nor less than the just measure?”

"Aye," replied the alchemist, "as sure as men can be in these nice proportions; for there is diversity of constitutions."

"Nay, then," said Varney, "I fear nothing. I know thou wilt not go a step farther to the devil than thou art justly considered for. Thou wert paid to create illness, and wouldst esteem it thriftless prodigality to do murder at the same price. Come, let us each to our chamber. We shall see the event to-morrow."

"What didst thou do to make her swallow it?" said Foster, shuddering.

"Nothing," answered Varney, "but looked on her with that aspect which governs madmen, women, and children. They told me, in St. Luke's Hospital, that I have the right look for overpowering a refractory patient. The keepers made me their compliments on't; so I know how to win my bread when my court favor fails me."

"And art thou not afraid," said Foster, "lest the dose be disproportioned?"

"If so," replied Varney, "she will but sleep the sounder, and the fear of that shall not break my rest. Good-night, my masters."

Anthony Foster groaned heavily, and lifted up his hands and eyes. The alchemist intimated his purpose to continue some experiment of high import during the greater part of the night, and the others separated to their places of repose.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Now God be good to me in this wide pilgrimage!
All hope in human aid I cast behind me.
Oh, who would be a woman?—who that fool,
A weeping, pining, faithful, loving woman!
She hath hard measure still where she hopes kindest,
And all her bounties only make ingrates.'

—*Love's Pilgrimage.*

THE summer evening was closed, and Janet, just when her longer stay might have occasioned suspicion and inquiry in that jealous household, returned to Cumnor Place, and hastened to the apartment in which she had left her lady. She found her with her head resting on her arms, and these crossed upon a table which stood before her. As Janet came in, she neither looked up nor stirred.

Her faithful attendant ran to her mistress with the speed of lightning, and rousing her at the same time with her hand, conjured the countess, in the most earnest manner, to look up and say what thus affected her. The unhappy lady raised her head accordingly, and looking on her attendant with a ghastly eye, and cheek as pale as clay, "Janet," she said, "I have drank it."

"God be praised!" said Janet hastily. "I mean, God be praised that it is no worse: the potion will not harm you. Rise, shake this lethargy from your limbs and this despair from your mind.

"Janet," repeated the countess again, "disturb me not—leave me at peace—let life pass quietly—I am poisoned."

"You are not, my dearest lady," answered the maiden, eagerly; "what you have swallowed cannot injure you, for the antidote has been taken before it, and I hastened hither to tell you that the means of escape are open to you."

"Escape!" exclaimed the lady, as she raised herself hastily in her chair, while light returned to her eye and life to her cheek; "but ah! Janet, it comes too late."

"Not so, dearest lady. Rise, take mine arm, walk through the apartment. Let not fancy do the work of poison! So; feel you not now that you are possessed of the full use of your limbs?"

"The torpor seems to diminish," said the countess, as, supported by Janet, she walked to and fro in the apartment;

"but is it then so, and have I not swallowed a deadly draught? Varney was here since thou wert gone, and commanded me, with eyes in which I read my fate, to swallow yon horrible drug. Oh, Janet! it must be fatal: never was harmless draught served by such a cupbearer!"

"He did not deem it harmless, I fear," replied the maiden; "but God confounds the devices of the wicked. Believe me, as I swear by the dear Gospel in which we trust, your life is safe from his practice. Did you not debate with him?"

"The house was silent," answered the lady, "thou gone, no other but he in the chamber, and he capable of every crime. I did but stipulate he would remove his hateful presence, and I drank whatever he offered. But you spoke of escape, Janet; can I be so happy?"

"Are you strong enough to bear the tidings and make the effort?" said the maiden.

"Strong!" answered the countess—"ask the hind, when the fangs of the deer-hound are stretched to gripe her, if she is strong enough to spring over a chasm. I am equal to every effort that may relieve me from this place."

"Hear me, then," said Janet. "One, whom I deem an assured friend of yours, has shown himself to me in various disguises, and sought speech of me, which—for my mind was not clear on the matter until this evening—I have ever declined. He was the peddler who brought you goods, the itinerant hawker who sold me books; whenever I stirred abroad I was sure to see him. The event of this night determined me to speak with him. He waits even now at the postern gate of the park with means for your flight. But have you strength of body? Have you courage of mind? Can you undertake the enterprise?"

"She that flies from death," said the lady, "finds strength of body; she that would escape from shame lacks no strength of mind. The thoughts of leaving behind me the villain who menaces both my life and honor would give me strength to rise from my death-bed."

"In God's name, then, lady," said Janet, "I must bid you adieu, and to God's charge I must commit you!"

"Will you not fly with me, then, Janet?" said the countess, anxiously. "Am I to lose thee? Is this thy faithful service?"

"Lady, I would fly with you as willingly as bird ever fled from cage, but my doing so would occasion instant discovery and pursuit. I must remain, and use means to disguise the

truth for some time. May Heaven pardon the falsehood because of the necessity!"

"And am I then to travel alone with this stranger?" said the lady. "Bethink thee, Janet, may not this prove some deeper and darker scheme to separate me perhaps from you, who are my only friend?"

"No, madam, do not suppose it," answered Janet readily; "the youth is an honest youth in his purpose to you; and a friend to Master Tressilian, under whose direction he is come hither."

"If he be a friend of Tressilian," said the countess, "I will commit myself to his charge as to that of an angel sent from Heaven; for than Tressilian never breathed mortal man more free of whatever was base, false, or selfish. He forgot himself whenever he could be of use to others. Alas! and how was he requited!"

With eager haste they collected the few necessaries which it was thought proper the countess should take with her, and which Janet, with speed and dexterity, formed into a small bundle, not forgetting to add such ornaments of intrinsic value as came most readily in her way, and particularly a casket of jewels, which she wisely judged might prove of service in some future emergency. The Countess of Leicester next changed her dress for one which Janet usually wore upon any brief journey, for they judged it necessary to avoid every external distinction which might attract notice. Ere these preparations were fully made, the moon had arisen in the summer heaven, and all in the mansion had betaken themselves to rest, or at least to the silence and retirement of their chambers.

There was no difficulty anticipated in escaping, whether from the house or garden, provided only they could elude observation. Anthony Foster had accustomed himself to consider his daughter as a conscious sinner might regard a visible guardian angel, which, notwithstanding his guilt, continued to hover around him, and therefore his trust in her knew no bounds. Janet commanded her own motions during the daytime, and had a master-key which opened the postern door of the park, so that she could go to the village at pleasure, either upon the household affairs, which were entirely confided to her management, or to attend her devotions at the meeting-house of her sect. It is true, the daughter of Foster was thus liberally intrusted under the solemn condition that she should not avail herself of these privileges to do

anything inconsistent with the safe-keeping of the countess; for so her residence at Cumnor Place had been termed, since she began of late to exhibit impatience of the restrictions to which she was subjected. Nor is there reason to suppose that anything short of the dreadful suspicions which the scene of that evening had excited could have induced Janet to violate her word or deceive her father's confidence. But from what she had witnessed, she now conceived herself not only justified, but imperatively called upon, to make her lady's safety the principal object of her care, setting all other considerations aside.

The fugitive countess, with her guide, traversed with hasty steps the broken and interrupted path, which had once been an avenue, now totally darkened by the boughs of spreading trees which met above their head, and now receiving a doubtful and deceiving light from the beams of the moon, which penetrated where the ax had made openings in the wood. Their path was repeatedly interrupted by felled trees, or the large boughs which had been left on the ground till time served to make them into fagots and billets. The inconvenience and difficulty attending these interruptions, the breathless haste of the first part of their route, the exhausting sensations of hope and fear, so much affected the countess' strength that Janet was forced to propose that they should pause for a few minutes to recover breath and spirits. Both, therefore, stood still beneath the shadow of a huge old gnarled oak-tree, and both naturally looked back to the mansion which they had left behind them, whose long dark front was seen in the gloomy distance, with its huge stacks of chimneys, turrets, and clockhouse, rising above the line of the roof, and definedly visible against the pure azure blue of the summer sky. One light only twinkled from the extended and shadowy mass, and it was placed so low that it rather seemed to glimmer from the ground in front of the mansion than from one of the windows. The countess' terror was awakened. "They follow us!" she said, pointing out to Janet the light which thus alarmed her.

Less agitated than her mistress, Janet perceived that the gleam was stationary, and informed the countess, in a whisper, that the light proceeded from the solitary cell in which the alchemist pursued his occult experiments. "He is of those," she added, "who sit up and watch by night that they may commit iniquity. Evil was the chance which sent hither a man whose mixed speech of earthly wealth and unearthly

or superhuman knowledge hath in it what does so especially captivate my poor father. Well spoke the good Master Holdforth, and, methought, not without meaning that those of our household should find therein a practical use. 'There be those,' he said, 'and their number is legion, who will rather, like the wicked Ahab, listen to the dreams of the false prophet Zedekiah than to the words of him by whom the Lord has spoken.' And he further insisted—'Ah, my brethren, there be many Zedekiahs among you—men that promise you the light of their carnal knowledge, so you will surrender to them that of your Heavenly understanding. What are they better than the tyrant Naas, who demanded the right eye of those who were subjected to him?' And farther, he insisted——"

It is uncertain how long the fair Puritan's memory might have supported her in the recapitulation of Master Holdforth's discourse; but the countess interrupted her, and assured her she was so much recovered that she could now reach the postern without the necessity of a second delay.

They set out accordingly, and performed the second part of their journey with more deliberation, and of course more easily, than the first hasty commencement. This gave them leisure for reflection; and Janet now, for the first time, ventured to ask her lady which way she proposed to direct her flight. Receiving no immediate answer—for, perhaps, in the confusion of her mind, this very obvious subject of deliberation had not occurred to the countess—Janet ventured to add, "Probably to your father's house, where you are sure of safety and protection?"

"No, Janet," said the lady mournfully, "I left Lidcote Hall while my heart was light and my name was honorable and I will not return thither till my lord's permission and public acknowledgment of our marriage restore me to my native home with all the rank and honor which he has bestowed on me."

"And whither will you, then, madam?" said Janet.

"To Kenilworth, girl," said the countess, boldly and freely. "I will see these revels—these princely revels—the preparation for which makes the land ring from side to side. Methinks, when the Queen of England feasts within my husband's halls, the Countess of Leicester should be no unbecoming guest."

"I pray God you may be a welcome one!" said Janet hastily.

“You abuse my situation, Janet,” said the countess angrily, “and you forget your own.”

“I do neither, dearest madam,” said the sorrowful maiden; “but have you forgotten that the noble earl has given such strict charges to keep your marriage secret that he may preserve his court favor? and can you think that your sudden appearance at his castle at such a juncture, and in such a presence, will be acceptable to him?”

“Thou thinkest I would disgrace him?” said the countess; “nay, let go my arm, I can walk without aid, and work without counsel.”

“Be not angry with me, lady,” said Janet meekly, “and let me still support you; the road is rough, and you are little accustomed to walk in darkness.”

“If you deem me not so mean as may disgrace my husband,” said the countess, in the same resentful tone, “you suppose my Lord of Leicester capable of abetting, perhaps of giving aim and authority to, the base proceedings of your father and Varney, whose errand I will do to the good earl.”

“For God’s sake, madam, spare my father in your report,” said Janet; “let my services, however poor, be some atonement for his errors!”

“I were most unjust, dearest Janet, were it otherwise,” said the countess, resuming at once the fondness and confidence of her manner toward her faithful attendant. “No, Janet, not a word of mine shall do your father prejudice. But thou seest, my love, I have no desire but to throw myself on my husband’s protection. I have left the abode he assigned for me, because of the villainy of the persons by whom I was surrounded; but I will disobey his commands in no other particular. I will appeal to him alone; I will be protected by him alone. To no other than at his pleasure have I or will I communicate the secret union which combines our hearts and our destinies. I will see him, and receive from his own lips the directions for my future conduct. Do not argue against my resolution, Janet; you will only confirm me in it. And to own the truth, I am resolved to know my fate at once, and from my husband’s own mouth, and to seek him at Kenilworth is the surest way to attain my purpose.”

While Janet hastily revolved in her mind the difficulties and uncertainties attendant on the unfortunate lady’s situation, she was inclined to alter her first opinion, and to think, upon the whole, that, since the countess had withdrawn her-

self from the retreat in which she had been placed by her husband, it was her first duty to repair to his presence, and possess him with the reasons of such conduct. She knew what importance the earl attached to the concealment of their marriage, and could not but own that, by taking any step to make it public without his permission, the countess would incur, in a high degree, the indignation of her husband. If she retired to her father's house without an explicit avowal of her rank, her situation was likely greatly to prejudice her character; and if she made such an avowal, it might occasion an irreconcilable breach with her husband. At Kenilworth, again, she might plead her cause with her husband himself, whom Janet, though distrusting him more than the countess did, believed incapable of being accessory to the base and desperate means which his dependents, from whose power the lady was now escaping, might resort to, in order to stifle her complaints of the treatment she had received at their hands. But at the worst, and were the earl himself to deny her justice and protection, still at Kenilworth, if she chose to make her wrongs public, the countess might have Tressilian for her advocate, and the Queen for her judge; for so much Janet had learned in her short conference with Wayland. She was, therefore, on the whole, reconciled to her lady's proposal of going toward Kenilworth, and so expressed herself; recommending, however, to the countess the utmost caution in making her arrival known to her husband.

"Hast thou thyself been cautious, Janet?" said the countess: "this guide, in whom I must put my confidence, hast thou not intrusted to him the secret of my condition?"

"From me he has learned nothing," said Janet; "nor do I think that he knows more than what the public in general believe of your situation."

"And what is that?" said the lady.

"That you left your father's house—but I shall offend you again if I go on," said Janet, interrupting herself.

"Nay, go on," said the countess; "I must learn to endure the evil report which my folly has brought upon me. They think, I suppose, that I have left my father's house to follow lawless pleasure. It is an error which will soon be removed—indeed it shall, for I will live with spotless fame or I shall cease to live. I am accounted, then, the paramour of my Leicester?"

"Most men say of Varney," said Janet; "yet some call him only the convenient cloak of his master's pleasures; for re-

ports of the profuse expense in garnishing yonder apartments have secretly gone abroad, and such doings far surpass the means of Varney. But this latter opinion is little prevalent; for men dare hardly even hint suspicion when so high a name is concerned, lest the Star Chamber should punish them for scandal of the nobility."

"They do well to speak low," said the countess, "who would mention the illustrious Dudley as the accomplice of such a wretch as Varney. We have reached the postern. Ah! Janet, I must bid thee farewell! Weep not, my good girl," said she, endeavoring to cover her own reluctance to part with her faithful attendant under an attempt at playfulness, "and against we meet again, reform me, Janet, that precise ruff of thine for an open rabatine of lace and cut-work, that will let men see thou hast a fair neck; and that kirtle of Philippine cheney, with that bugle lace which befits only a chambermaid, into three-piled velvet and cloth of gold: thou wilt find plenty of stuffs in my chamber, and I freely bestow them on you. Thou must be brave, Janet; for though thou art now but the attendant of a distressed and errant lady, who is both nameless and fameless, yet, when we meet again, thou must be dressed as becomes the gentlewoman nearest in love and in service to the first countess in England!"

"Now, may God grant it, dear lady!" said Janet—"not that I may go with gayer apparel, but that we may both wear our kirtles over lighter hearts."

By this time the lock of the postern door had, after some hard wrenching, yielded to the master-key; and the countess, not without internal shuddering, saw herself beyond the walls which her husband's strict commands had assigned to her as the boundary of her walks. Waiting with much anxiety for their appearance, Wayland Smith stood at some distance, shrouding himself behind a hedge which bordered the high-road.

"Is all safe?" said Janet to him, anxiously, as he approached them with caution.

"All," he replied; "but I have been unable to procure a horse for the lady. Giles Gosling, the cowardly hilding, refused me one on any terms whatever; lest, forsooth, he should suffer—but no matter. She must ride on my palfrey, and I must walk by her side until I come by another horse. There will be no pursuit, if you, pretty Mistress Janet, forget not thy lesson."

"No more than the wise widow of Tekoa forgot the words

which Joab put into her mouth," answered Janet. "To-morrow, I say that my lady is unable to rise."

"Aye, and that she hath aching and heaviness of the head, a throbbing at the heart, and lists not to be disturbed. Fear not; they will take the hint, and trouble thee with few questions: they understand the disease."

"But," said the lady, "my absence must be soon discovered, and they will murder her in revenge. I will rather return than expose her to such danger."

"Be at ease on my account, madam," said Janet; "I would you were as sure of receiving the favor you desire from those to whom you must make appeal, as I am that my father, however angry, will suffer no harm to befall me."

The countess was now placed by Wayland upon his horse, around the saddle of which he had placed his cloak, so folded as to make her a commodious seat.

"Adieu, and may the blessing of God wend with you!" said Janet, again kissing her mistress' hand, who returned her benediction with a mute caress. They then tore themselves asunder, and Janet, addressing Wayland, exclaimed, "May Heaven deal with you at your need, as you are true or false to this most injured and most helpless lady!"

"Amen! dearest Janet," replied Wayland; "and believe me, I will so acquit myself of my trust, as may tempt even your pretty eyes, saint-like as they are, to look less scornfully on me when we next meet."

The latter part of this adieu was whispered into Janet's ear; and, although she made no reply to it directly, yet her manner, influenced no doubt by her desire to leave every motive in force which could operate toward her mistress' safety, did not discourage the hope which Wayland's words expressed. She re-entered the postern door, and locked it behind her, while, Wayland taking the horse's bridle in his hand and walking close by its head, they began in silence their dubious and moonlight journey.

Although Wayland Smith used the utmost dispatch which he could make, yet this mode of traveling was so slow that, when morning began to dawn through the eastern mist, he found himself no farther than about ten miles distant from Cumnor. "Now, a plague upon all smooth-spoken hosts!" said Wayland, unable longer to suppress his mortification and uneasiness. "Had the false loon, Giles Gosling, but told me plainly two days since that I was to reckon naught upon him, I had shifted better for myself. But your hosts have such a

custom of promising whatever is called for, that it is not till the steed is to be shod you find they are out of iron. Had I but known, I could have made twenty shifts; nay, for that matter, and in so good a cause, I would have thought little to have prigged a prancer from the next common—it had but been sending back the brute to the head-borough. The farcy and the founders confound every horse in the stables of the Black Bear!”

The lady endeavored to comfort her guide, observing, that the dawn would enable him to make more speed.

“True, madam,” he replied; “but then it will enable other folk to take note of us, and that may prove an ill beginning of our journey. I had not cared a spark from anvil about the matter had we been farther advanced on our way. But this Berkshire has been notoriously haunted ever since I knew the country with that sort of malicious elves who sit up late and rise early for no other purpose than to pry into other folks’ affairs. I have been endangered by them ere now. But do not fear,” he added, “good madam; for wit, meeting with opportunity, will not miss to find a salve for every sore.”

The alarms of her guide made more impression on the countess’ mind than the comfort which he judged fit to administer along with it. She looked anxiously around her, and as the shadows withdrew from the landscape, and the heightening glow of the eastern sky promised the speedy rise of the sun, expected at every turn that the increasing light would expose them to the view of the vengeful pursuers, or present some dangerous and insurmountable obstacle to the prosecution of their journey. Wayland Smith perceived her uneasiness, and, displeased with himself for having given her cause of alarm, strode on with affected alacrity, now talking to the horse as one expert in the language of the stable, now whistling to himself low and interrupted snatches of tunes, and now assuring the lady there was no danger; while at the same time he looked sharply around to see that there was nothing in sight which might give the lie to his words while they were issuing from his mouth. Thus did they journey on, until an unexpected incident gave them the means of continuing their pilgrimage with more speed and convenience.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Richard. A horse!—a horse!—my kingdom for a horse!
Catesby.— My lord, I'll help you to a horse.

—*Richard III.*

OUR travelers were in the act of passing a small thicket of trees close by the roadside, when the first living being presented himself whom they had seen since their departure from Cumnor Place. This was a stupid lout, seemingly a farmer's boy, in a gray jerkin, with his head bare, his hose about his heels, and huge startups upon his feet. He held by the bridle what of all things they most wanted—a palfrey, namely, with a side-saddle and all other garniture for a woman's mounting; and he hailed Wayland Smith with, "Zur, ye be zure the party?"

"Aye, that I be, my lad," answered Wayland, without an instant's hesitation, and it must be owned that consciences trained in a stricter school of morality might have given way to an occasion so tempting. While he spoke, he caught the rein out of the boy's hand, and almost at the same time helped down the countess from his own horse, and aided her to mount on that which chance had thus presented for her acceptance. Indeed, so naturally did the whole take place, that the countess, as it afterward appeared, never suspected but that the horse had been placed there to meet them by the precaution of the guide or some of his friends.

The lad, however, who was thus hastily dispossessed of his charge, began to stare hard, and scratch his head, as if seized with some qualms of conscience for delivering up the animal on such brief explanation. "I be right zure thou be'st the party," said he, muttering to himself, "but thou shouldst ha zaid 'Beans,' thou know'st."

"Aye—aye," said Wayland, speaking at a venture; "and thou 'Bacon,' thou know'st."

"Noa—noa," said the lad; "bide ye—bide ye; it was 'Pease' a should ha said."

"Well—well," answered Wayland, "'Pease' be it, a God's name! though 'Bacon' were the better password."

And being by this time mounted on his own horse, he caught the rein of the palfrey from the uncertain hold of the

hesitating young boor, flung him a small piece of money, and made amends for lost time by riding briskly off without farther parley. The lad was still visible from the hill up which they were riding, and Wayland, as he looked back, beheld him standing with his fingers in his hair as immovable as a guide-post, and his head turned in the direction in which they were escaping from him. At length, just as they topped the hill, he saw the clown stoop to lift up the silver groat which his benevolence had imparted. "Now this is what I call a God-send," said Wayland: "this is a bonny well-riden bit of a going thing, and it will carry us so far till we get you as well mounted, and then we will send it back time enough to satisfy the hue and cry."

But he was deceived in his expectations; and fate, which seemed at first to promise so fairly, soon threatened to turn the incident which he thus gloried in into the cause of their utter ruin.

They had not ridden a short mile from the place where they left the lad before they heard a man's voice shouting on the wind behind them, "Robbery!—robbery! Stop thief!" and similar exclamations, which Wayland's conscience readily assured him must arise out of the transaction to which he had been just accessory.

"I had better have gone barefoot all my life," he said: "it is the hue and cry, and I am a lost man. Ah! Wayland—Wayland, many a time thy father said horse-flesh would be the death of thee. Were I once safe among the horse-courers in Smithfield or Turnball Street, they should have leave to hang me as high as St. Paul's if I e'er meddled more with nobles, knights, or gentlewomen!"

Amidst these dismal reflections, he turned his head repeatedly to see by whom he was chased, and was much comforted when he could only discover a single rider, who was, however, well mounted, and came after them at a speed which left them no chance of escaping, even had the lady's strength permitted her to ride as fast as her palfrey might have been able to gallop.

"There may be fair play betwixt us, sure," thought Wayland, "where there is but one man on each side; and yonder fellow sits on his horse more like a monkey than a cavalier. Pshaw! if it come to the worst, it will be easy unhorsing him. Nay, 'snails! I think his horse will take the matter in his own hand, for he has the bridle betwixt his teeth. Oons, what care I for him?" said he, as the pursuer drew yet nearer; "it

is but the little animal of a mercer from Abingdon, when all is over."

Even so it was, as the experienced eye of Wayland had descried at a distance. For the valiant mercer's horse, which was a beast of mettle, feeling himself put to his speed, and discerning a couple of horses riding fast, at some hundred yards' distance before him, betook himself to the road with such alacrity as totally deranged the seat of his rider, who not only came up with, but passed at full gallop, those whom he had been pursuing, pulling the reins with all his might, and ejaculating, "Stop!—stop!" an interjection which seemed rather to regard his own palfrey than what seamen call "the chase." With the same involuntary speed, he shot ahead, to use another nautical phrase, about a furlong ere he was able to stop and turn his horse, and then rode back toward our travelers, adjusting, as well as he could, his disordered dress, resettling himself in the saddle, and endeavoring to substitute a bold and martial frown for the confusion and dismay which sate upon his visage during his involuntary career.

Wayland had just time to caution the lady not to be alarmed, adding, "This fellow is a gull, and I will use him as such."

When the mercer had recovered breath and audacity enough to confront them, he ordered Wayland, in a menacing tone, to deliver up his palfrey.

"How?" said the smith, in King Cambyses' vein, "are we commanded to stand and deliver on the king's highway? Then out, Excaliber, and tell this knight of prowess that dire blows must decide between us!"

"Haro and help, and hue and cry, every true man!" said the mercer, "I am withstood in seeking to recover mine own!"

"Thou swear'st thy gods in vain, foul paynim," said Wayland, "for I will through with mine purpose, were death at the end on't. Nevertheless, know, thou false man of frail cambric and ferrateen, that I am he, even the peddler, whom thou didst boast to meet on Maiden Castle Moor and despoil of his pack; wherefore betake thee to thy weapons presently."

"I spoke but in jest, man," said Goldthred; "I am an honest shopkeeper and citizen, who scorns to leap forth on any man from behind a hedge."

"Then, by my faith, most puissant mercer," answered Wayland, "I am sorry for my vow, which was that, wherever I met thee, I would despoil thee of thy palfrey and bestow it

upon my leman, unless thou couldst defend it by blows of force. But the vow is passed and registered; and all I can do for thee is to leave the horse at Donnington, in the nearest hostelry."

"But I tell thee, friend," said the mercer, "it is the very horse on which I was this day to carry Jane Thackham of Shottesbrook as far as the parish church yonder, to become Dame Goldthred. She hath jumped out of the shot-window of old Gaffer Thackham's grange; and lo ye, yonder she stands at the place where she should have met the palfrey, with her camlet riding-cloak and ivory-handled whip, like a picture of Lot's wife. I pray you, in good terms, let me have back the palfrey."

"Grieved am I," said Wayland, "as much for the fair damsel as for thee, most noble imp of muslin. But vows must have their course; thou wilt find the palfrey at the Angel yonder at Donnington. It is all I may do for thee with a safe conscience."

"To the devil with thy conscience!" said the dismayed mercer. "Wouldst thou have a bride walk to church on foot?"

"Thou mayst take her on thy crupper, Sir Goldthred," answered Wayland; "it will take down thy steed's mettle."

"And how if you—if you forget to leave my horse, as you propose?" said Goldthred, not without hesitation, for his soul was afraid within him.

"My pack shall be pledged for it; yonder it lies with Giles Gosling, in his chamber with the damask'd leathern hangings, stuffed full with velvet—single, double, triple-piled—rash, taffeta and paropa, shag, damask, and mockado, plush and gogram——"

"Hold!—hold!" exclaimed the mercer; "nay, if there be, in truth and sincerity, but the half of these wares—but if ever I trust bumpkin with bonny Bayard again!"

"As you list for that, good Master Goldthred, and so good morrow to you—and well parted," he added, riding on cheerfully with the lady, while the discountenanced mercer rode back much slower than he came, pondering what excuse he should make to the disappointed bride, who stood waiting for her gallant groom in the midst of the king's highway.

"Methought," said the lady as they rode on, "yonder fool stared at me as if he had some remembrance of me; yet I kept my muffler as high as I might."

"If I thought so," said Wayland, "I would ride back and

cut him over the pate: there would be no fear of harming his brains, for he never had so much as would make pap to a sucking gosling. We must now push on, however, and at Donnington we will leave the oaf's horse, that he may have no farther temptation to pursue us, and endeavor to assume such a change of shape as may baffle his pursuit, if he should persevere in it."

The travelers reached Donnington without farther alarm, where it became matter of necessity that the countess should enjoy two or three hours' repose, during which Wayland disposed himself, with equal address and alacrity, to carry through those measures on which the safety of their future journey seemed to depend.

Exchanging his peddler's gaberdine for a smock-frock, he carried the palfrey of Goldthred to the Angel Inn, which was at the other end of the village from that where our travelers had taken up their quarters. In the progress of the morning, as he traveled about his other business, he saw the steed brought forth and delivered to the cutting mercer himself, who, at the head of a valorous posse of the hue and cry, came to rescue, by force of arms, what was delivered to him without any other ransom than the price of a huge quantity of ale, drunk out by his assistants, thirsty, it would seem, with their walk, and concerning the price of which Master Goldthred had a fierce dispute with the head-borough, whom he had summoned to aid him in raising the country.

Having made this act of prudent, as well as just, restitution, Wayland procured such change of apparel for the lady, as well as himself, as gave them both the appearance of country people of the better class; it being farther resolved that, in order to attract the less observation, she should pass upon the road for the sister of her guide. A good, but not a gay horse, fit to keep pace with his own, and gentle enough for a lady's use, completed the preparations for the journey; for making which, and for other expenses, he had been furnished with sufficient funds by Tressilian. And thus, about noon, after the countess had been refreshed by the sound repose of several hours, they resumed their journey, with the purpose of making the best of their way to Kenilworth, by Coventry and Warwick. They were not, however, destined to travel far without meeting some cause of apprehension.

It is necessary to premise, that the landlord of the inn had informed them that a jovial party, intended, as he understood, to present some of the masques or mummeries which made a

part of the entertainment with which the Queen was usually welcomed on the royal progresses, had left the village of Donnington an hour or two before them, in order to proceed to Kenilworth. Now it had occurred to Wayland that, by attaching themselves in some sort to this group, as soon as they should overtake them on the road, they would be less likely to attract notice than if they continued to travel entirely by themselves. He communicated his idea to the countess, who, only anxious to arrive at Kenilworth without interruption, left him free to choose the manner in which this was to be accomplished. They pressed forward their horses, therefore, with the purpose of overtaking the party of intended revelers, and making the journey in their company; and had just seen the little party, consisting partly of riders, partly of people on foot, crossing the summit of a gentle hill, at about half a mile's distance, and disappearing on the other side, when Wayland, who maintained the most circumspect observation of all that met his eye in every direction, was aware that a rider was coming up behind them on a horse of uncommon action, accompanied by a serving-man, whose utmost efforts were unable to keep up with his master's trotting hackney, and who, therefore, was fain to follow him at a hand-gallop. Wayland looked anxiously back at the horsemen, became considerably disturbed in his manner, looked back again, and became pale, as he said to the lady—"That is Richard Varney's trotting gelding: I would know him among a thousand nags; this is a worse business than meeting the mercer."

"Draw your sword," answered the lady, "and pierce my bosom with it, rather than I should fall into his hands!"

"I would rather by a thousand times," answered Wayland, "pass it through his body, or even mine own. But to say truth, fighting is not my best point, though I can look on cold iron like another when needs must be. And, indeed, as for my sword—put on, I pray you—it is a poor provant rapier, and I warrant you he has a special Toledo. He has a serving-man, too, and I think it is the drunken ruffian Lambourne, upon the horse on which men say—I pray you heartily to put on—he did the great robbery of the west country grazier. It is not that I fear either Varney or Lambourne in a good cause—your palfrey will go yet faster if you urge him—but yet—nay, I pray you let him not break off into the gallop, lest they should see we fear them, and give chase; keep him only at the full trot—but yet, though I fear them not, I would we

were well rid of them, and that rather by policy than by violence. Could we once reach the party before us, we may herd among them, and pass unobserved, unless Varney be really come in express pursuit of us, and then, happy man be his dole!"

While he thus spoke, he alternately urged and restrained his horse, desirous to maintain the fleetest pace that was consistent with the idea of an ordinary journey on the road, but to avoid such rapidity of movement as might give rise to suspicion that they were flying.

At such a pace, they ascended the gentle hill we have mentioned, and, looking from the top, had the pleasure to see that the party which had left Donnington before them were in the little valley or bottom on the other side, where the road was traversed by a rivulet, beside which was a cottage or two. In this place they seemed to have made a pause, which gave Wayland the hope of joining them, and becoming a part of their company, ere Varney should overtake them. He was the more anxious, as his companion, though she made no complaints and expressed no fear, began to look so deadly pale that he was afraid she might drop from her horse. Notwithstanding this symptom of decaying strength, she pushed on her palfrey so briskly that they joined the party in the bottom of the valley ere Varney appeared on the top of the gentle eminence which they had descended.

They found the company to which they meant to associate themselves in great disorder. The women, with disheveled locks and looks of great importance, ran in and out of one of the cottages, and the men stood around holding the horses, and looking silly enough, as is usual in cases where their assistance is not wanted.

Wayland and his charge paused, as if out of curiosity, and then gradually, without making any inquiries, or being asked any questions, they mingled with the group, as if they had always made part of it.

They had not stood there above five minutes, anxiously keeping as much to the side of the road as possible, so as to place the other travelers betwixt them and Varney, when Lord Leicester's master of the horse, followed by Lambourne, came riding fiercely down the hill, their horses' flanks and the rowels of their spurs showing bloody tokens of the rate at which they traveled. The appearance of the stationary group around the cottages, wearing their buckram suits in order to protect their masking dresses, having their light cart

for transporting their scenery, and carrying various fantastic properties in their hands for the more easy conveyance, let the riders at once into the character and purpose of the company.

"You are revelers," said Varney, "designing for Kenilworth?"

"Recte quidem, Domine spectatissime," answered one of the party.

"And why the devil stand you here," said Varney, "when your utmost dispatch will but bring you to Kenilworth in time? The Queen dines at Warwick to-morrow, and you loiter here, ye knaves!"

"In very truth, sir," said a little diminutive urchin, wearing a vizard with a couple of sprouting horns of an elegant scarlet hue, having moreover a black serge jerkin drawn close to his body by lacing, garnished with red stockings, and shoes so shaped as to resemble cloven feet—"in very truth, sir, and you are in the right on't. It is my father the devil, who, being taken in labor, has delayed our present purpose, by increasing our company with an imp too many."

"The devil he has!" answered Varney, whose laugh, however, never exceeded a sarcastic smile.

"It is even as the juvenal hath said," added the masquer who spoke first: "our major devil—for this is but our minor one—is even now at 'Lucina fer opem,' within that very 'tugurium.'"

"By St. George, or rather by the Dragon, who may be a kinsman of the fiend in the straw, a most comical chance!" said Varney. "How sayst thou, Lambourne, wilt thou stand godfather for the nonce? If the devil were to choose a gossip, I know no one more fit for the office."

"Saving always when my betters are in presence," said Lambourne, with the civil impudence of a servant who knows his services to be so indispensable that his jest will be permitted to pass muster.

"And what is the name of this devil or devil's dam who has timed her turns so strangely?" said Varney. "We can ill afford to spare any of our actors."

"Gaudet nomine Sibyllæ," said the first speaker: "she is called Sibyl Laneham, wife of Master Richard [Robert] Laneham—"

"Clerk of the council-chamber door," said Varney; "why, she is inexcusable, having had experience how to have ordered her matters better. But who were those, a man and a woman,

I think, who rode so hastily up the hill before me even now? Do they belong to your company?"

Wayland was about to hazard a reply to this alarming inquiry, when the little diabolin again thrust in his oar.

"So please you," he said, coming close up to Varney, and speaking so as not to be overheard by his companions, "the man was our devil major, who has tricks enough to supply the lack of a hundred such as Dame Laneham; and the woman, if you please, is the sage person whose assistance is most particularly necessary to our distressed comrade."

"Oh, what, you have got the wise woman, then?" said Varney. "Why, truly, she rode like one bound to a place where she was needed. And you have a spare limb of Satan, besides, to supply the place of Mrs. Laneham?"

"Aye, sir," said the boy, "they are not so scarce in this world as your honor's virtuous eminence would suppose. This master-fiend shall spit a few flashes of fire and eruct a volume or two of smoke on the spot, if it will do you pleasure: you would think he had *Ætna* in his abdomen."

"I lack time just now, most hopeful imp of darkness, to witness his performance," said Varney; "but here is something for you all to drink the lucky hour; and so, as the play says, 'God be with your labor!'"

Thus speaking, he struck his horse with the spurs, and rode on his way.

Lambourne tarried a moment or two behind his master, and rummaged his pouch for a piece of silver, which he bestowed on the communicative imp, as he said, for his encouragement on his path to the infernal regions, some sparks of whose fire, he said, he could discover flashing from him already. Then, having received the boy's thanks for his generosity, he also spurred his horse, and rode after his master as fast as the fire flashes from flint.

"And now," said the wily imp, sidling close up to Wayland's horse, and cutting a gambol in the air, which seemed to vindicate his title to relationship with the prince of that element, "I have told them who *you* are, do you in return tell me who *I* am?"

"Either Flibbertigibbet," answered Wayland Smith, "or else an imp of the devil in good earnest."

"Thou hast hit it," answered Dickie Sludge; "I am thine own Flibbertigibbet, man; and I have broken forth of bounds, along with my learned preceptor, as I told thee I would do, whether he would or not. But what lady hast thou got with

thee? I saw thou wert at fault the first question was asked, and so I drew up for thy assistance. But I must know all who she is, dear Wayland."

"Thou shalt know fifty finer things, my dear ingle," said Wayland; "but a truce to thine inquiries just now; and since you are bound for Kenilworth, thither will I too, even for the love of thy sweet face and waggish company."

"Thou shouldst have said my waggish face and sweet company," said Dickie; "but how wilt thou travel with us—I mean in what character?"

"E'en in that thou hast assigned me, to be sure—as a juggler; thou know'st I am used to the craft," answered Wayland.

"Aye, but the lady?" answered Flibbertigibbet; "credit me, I think she is one, and thou art in a sea of troubles about her at this moment, as I can perceive by thy fidgeting."

"Oh, she, man!—she is a poor sister of mine," said Wayland. "She can sing and play o' the lute, would win the fish out o' the stream."

"Let me hear her instantly," said the boy. "I love the lute rarely—I love it of all things, though I never heard it."

"Then how canst thou love it, Flibbertigibbet?" said Wayland.

"As knights love ladies in old tales," answered Dickie, "on hearsay."

"Then love it on hearsay a little longer, till my sister is recovered from the fatigue of her journey," said Wayland, muttering afterward betwixt his teeth, "The devil take the imp's curiosity! I must keep fair weather with him, or we shall fare the worse."

He then proceeded to state to Master Holiday his own talents as a juggler, with those of his sister as a musician. Some proof of his dexterity was demanded, which he gave in such a style of excellence that, delighted at obtaining such an accession to their party, they readily acquiesced in the apology which he offered when a display of his sister's talents was required. The newcomers were invited to partake of the refreshments with which the party were provided; and it was with some difficulty that Wayland Smith obtained an opportunity of being apart with his supposed sister during the meal, of which interval he availed himself to entreat her to forget for the present both her rank and her sorrows, and condescend, as the most probable chance of remaining concealed, to mix in the society of those with whom she was to travel.

The countess allowed the necessity of the case, and when

they resumed their journey, endeavored to comply with her guide's advice by addressing herself to a female near her, and expressing her concern for the woman whom they were thus obliged to leave behind them.

"Oh, she is well attended, madam," replied the dame whom she addressed, who, from her jolly and laughter-loving demeanor, might have been the very emblem of the Wife of Bath; "and my gossip Laneham thinks as little of these matters as anyone. By the ninth day, an the revels last so long, we shall have her with us at Kenilworth, even if she should travel with her bantling on her back."

There was something in this speech which took away all desire on the Countess of Leicester's part to continue the conversation; but having broken the charm by speaking to her fellow-traveler first, the good dame, who was to play Rare Gillian of Croydon in one of the interludes, took care that silence did not again settle on the journey, but entertained her mute companion with a thousand anecdotes of revels, from the days of King Harry downward, with the reception given them by the great folk, and all the names of those who played the principal characters, but ever concluding with "They would be nothing to the princely pleasures of Kenilworth."

"And when shall we reach Kenilworth?" said the countess, with an agitation which she in vain attempted to conceal.

"We that have horses may, with late riding, get to Warwick to-night, and Kenilworth may be distant some four or five miles; but then we must wait till the foot-people come up; although it is like my good Lord of Leicester will have horses or light carriages to meet them, and bring them up without being travel-toiled, which last is no good preparation, as you may suppose, for dancing before your betters. And yet, Lord help me, I have seen the day I would have tramped five leagues of lea-land, and turned on my toe the whole evening after, as a juggler spins a pewter platter on the point of a needle. But age has clawed me somewhat in his clutch, as the song says; though, in I like the tune and like my partner, I'll dance the hays yet with any merry lass in Warwickshire that writes that unhappy figure four with a round O after it."

If the countess was overwhelmed with the garrulity of this good dame, Wayland Smith, on his part, had enough to do to sustain and parry the constant attacks made upon him by the indefatigable curiosity of his old acquaintance, Richard Sludge. Nature had given that arch youngster a prying cast of disposition, which matched admirably with his sharp wit;

the former inducing him to plant himself as a spy on other people's affairs, and the latter quality leading him perpetually to interfere, after he had made himself master of that which concerned him not. He spent the livelong day in attempting to peer under the countess' muffler, and apparently what he could there discern greatly sharpened his curiosity.

"That sister of thine, Wayland," he said, "has a fair neck to have been born in a smithy, and a pretty taper hand to have been used for twirling a spindle; faith, I'll believe in your relationship when the crow's egg is hatched into a cygnet."

"Go to," said Wayland, "thou art a prating boy, and should be breeched for thine assurance."

"Well," said the imp, drawing off, "all I say is, remember you have kept a secret from me, and if I give thee not a Rowland for thine Oliver, my name is not Dickon Sludge!"

This threat, and the distance at which Hobgoblin kept from him for the rest of the way, alarmed Wayland very much, and he suggested to his pretended sister that, on pretext of weariness she should express a desire to stop two or three miles short of the fair town of Warwick, promising to rejoin the troop in the morning. A small village inn afforded them a resting-place; and it was with secret pleasure that Wayland saw the whole party, including Dickon, pass on, after a courteous farewell, and leave them behind.

"To-morrow, madam," he said to his charge, "we will, with your leave, again start early, and reach Kenilworth before the rout which are to assemble there."

The countess gave assent to the proposal of her faithful guide; but, somewhat to his surprise, said nothing farther on the subject, which left Wayland under the disagreeable uncertainty whether or no she had formed any plan for her own future proceedings, as he knew her situation demanded circumspection, although he was but imperfectly acquainted with all its peculiarities. Concluding, however, that she must have friends within the castle, whose advice and assistance she could safely trust, he supposed his task would be best accomplished by conducting her thither in safety, agreeably to her repeated commands.

CHAPTER XXV.

Hark, the bells summon and the bugle calls,
But she the fairest answers not; the tide
Of nobles and of ladies throngs the halls,
But she the loveliest must in secret hide.
What eyes were thine, proud prince, which in the gleam
Of yon gay meteors lost that better sense,
That o'er the glow-worm doth the star esteem,
And merit's modest blush o'er courtly insolence?

—*The Glass Slipper.*

THE unfortunate Countess of Leicester had, from her infancy upward, been treated by those around her with indulgence as unbounded as injudicious. The natural sweetness of her disposition had saved her from becoming insolent and ill-humored; but the caprice which preferred the handsome and insinuating Leicester before Tressilian, of whose high honor and unalterable affection she herself entertained so firm an opinion—that fatal error, which ruined the happiness of her life, had its origin in the mistaken kindness that had spared her childhood the painful, but most necessary, lesson of submission and self-command. From the same indulgence, it followed that she had only been accustomed to form and to express her wishes, leaving to others the task of fulfilling them; and thus, at the most momentous period of her life, she was alike destitute of presence of mind and of ability to form for herself any reasonable or prudent plan of conduct.

These difficulties pressed on the unfortunate lady with overwhelming force, on the morning which seemed to be the crisis of her fate. Overlooking every intermediate consideration, she had only desired to be at Kenilworth, and to approach her husband's presence; and now, when she was in the vicinity of both, a thousand considerations arose at once upon her mind, startling her with accumulated doubts and dangers, some real, some imaginary, and all exalted and exaggerated by a situation alike helpless and destitute of aid and counsel.

A sleepless night rendered her so weak in the morning that she was altogether unable to attend Wayland's early summons. The trusty guide became extremely distressed on the lady's account, and somewhat alarmed on his own, and was on the point of going alone to Kenilworth, in the hope of discovering Tressilian, and intimating to him the lady's ap-

proach, when about nine in the morning he was summoned to attend her. He found her dressed, and ready for resuming her journey, but with a paleness of countenance which alarmed him for her health. She intimated her desire that the horses might be got instantly ready, and resisted with impatience her guide's request that she would take some refreshment before setting forward. "I have had," she said, "a cup of water: the wretch who is dragged to execution needs no stronger cordial, and that may serve me which suffices for him; do as I command you." Wayland Smith still hesitated. "What would you have?" said she. "Have I not spoken plainly?"

"Yes, madam," answered Wayland; "but may I ask what is your farther purpose? I only desire to know, that I may guide myself by your wishes. The whole country is afloat, and streaming toward the Castle of Kenilworth. It will be difficult traveling thither, even if we had the necessary passports for safe-conduct and free admittance. Unknown and unfriended, we may come by mishap. Your ladyship will forgive my speaking my poor mind. Were we not better try to find out the maskers, and again join ourselves with them?" The countess shook her head, and her guide proceeded, "Then I see but one other remedy."

"Speak out, then," said the lady, not displeased, perhaps, that he should thus offer the advice which she was ashamed to ask; "I believe thee faithful—what wouldst thou counsel?"

"That I should warn Master Tressilian," said Wayland, "that you are in this place. I am right certain he would get to horse with a few of Lord Sussex's followers, and insure your personal safety."

"And is it to *me* you advise," said the countess, "to put myself under the protection of Sussex, the unworthy rival of the noble Leicester?" Then, seeing the surprise with which Wayland stared upon her, and afraid of having too strongly intimated her interest in Leicester, she added, "And for Tressilian, it must not be: mention not to him, I charge you, my unhappy name; it would but double *my* misfortunes, and involve *him* in dangers beyond the power of rescue." She paused; but when she observed that Wayland continued to look on her with that anxious and uncertain gaze which indicated a doubt whether her brain was settled, she assumed an air of composure, and added, "Do thou but guide me to Kenilworth Castle, good fellow, and thy task is ended, since I will then judge what farther is to be done. Thou hast yet

been true to me; here is something that will make thee rich amends."

She offered the artist a ring, containing a valuable stone. Wayland looked at it, hesitated a moment, and then returned it. "Not," he said, "that I am above your kindness, madam, being but a poor fellow, who have been forced, God help me! to live by worse shifts than the bounty of such a person as you. But, as my old master the farrier used to say to his customers, 'No cure, no pay.' We are not yet in Kenilworth Castle, and it is time enough to discharge your guide, as they say, when you take your boots off. I trust in God your ladyship is as well assured of fitting reception when you arrive as you may hold yourself certain of my best endeavors to conduct you thither safely. I go to get the horses; meantime, let me pray you once more, as your poor physician as well as guide, to take some sustenance."

"I will—I will," said the lady hastily. "Begone—begone instantly! It is in vain I assume audacity," said she, when he left the room; "even this poor groom sees through my affectation of courage, and fathoms the very ground of my fears."

She then attempted to follow her guide's advice by taking some food, but was compelled to desist, as the effort to swallow even a single morsel gave her so much uneasiness as amounted well-nigh to suffocation. A moment afterward the horses appeared at the latticed window; the lady mounted, and found that relief from the free air and change of place which is frequently experienced in similar circumstances.

It chanced well for the countess' purpose that Wayland Smith, whose previous wandering and unsettled life had made him acquainted with almost all England, was intimate with all the by-roads, as well as direct communications, through the beautiful county of Warwick. For such and so great was the throng which flocked in all directions toward Kenilworth, to see the entry of Elizabeth into that splendid mansion of her prime favorite, that the principal roads were actually blocked up and interrupted, and it was only by circuitous by-paths that the travelers could proceed on their journey.

The Queen's purveyors had been abroad, sweeping the farms and villages of those articles usually exacted during a royal progress, and for which the owners were afterward to obtain a tardy payment from the Board of Green Cloth. The Earl of Leicester's household officers had been scouring the country for the same purpose; and many of his friends and

allies, both near and remote, took this opportunity of ingratiating themselves by sending large quantities of provisions and delicacies of all kinds, with game in huge numbers, and whole tuns of the best liquors, foreign and domestic. Thus the highroads were filled with droves of bullocks, sheep, calves, and hogs, and choked with loaded wains, whose axle-trees cracked under their burdens of wine-casks and hogsheads of ale, and huge hampers of grocery goods, and slaughtered game, and salted provisions, and sacks of flour. Perpetual stoppages took place as these wains became entangled; and their rude drivers, swearing and brawling till their wild passions were fully raised, began to debate precedence with their wagon whips and quarter-staves, which occasional riots were usually quieted by a purveyor, deputy-marshal's-man, or some other person in authority, breaking the heads of both parties.

Here were, besides, players and mummers, jugglers and showmen, of every description, traversing in joyous bands the paths which led to the Palace of Princely Pleasure; for so the traveling minstrels had termed Kenilworth in the songs which already had come forth in anticipation of the revels which were there expected.* In the midst of this motley show, mendicants were exhibiting their real or pretended miseries, forming a strange, though common, contrast betwixt the vanities and the sorrows of human existence. All these floated along with the immense tide of population, whom mere curiosity had drawn together; and where the mechanic, in his leathern apron, elbowed the dink and dainty dame, his city mistress; where clowns, with hobnailed shoes, were treading on the kibes of substantial burghers and gentlemen of worship; and where Joan of the dairy, with robust pace, and red, sturdy arms, rowed her way onward, amongst those prim and pretty moppets whose sires were knights and squires.

The throng and confusion was, however, of a gay and cheerful character. All came forth to see and to enjoy, and all laughed at the trifling inconveniences which at another time might have chafed their temper. Excepting the occasional brawls which we have mentioned among that irritable race the carmen, the mingled sounds which arose from the multitude were those of light-hearted mirth and tiptoe jollity. The musicians preluded on their instruments, the minstrels hummed their songs, the licensed jester whooped betwixt

* See Pilgrims to Kenilworth. Note 12.

mirth and madness as he brandished his bauble, the merridancers jangled their bells, the rustics hallooed and whistled, men laughed loud, and maidens giggled shrill, while many a broad jest flew like a shuttlecock from one party, to be caught in the air and returned from the opposite side of the road by another, at which it was aimed.

No infliction can be so distressing to a mind absorbed in melancholy as being plunged into a scene of mirth and revelry, forming an accompaniment so dissonant from its own feelings. Yet, in the case of the Countess of Leicester, the noise and tumult of this giddy scene distracted her thoughts, and rendered her this sad service, that it became impossible for her to brood on her own misery, or to form terrible anticipations of her approaching fate. She traveled on, like one in a dream, following implicitly the guidance of Wayland, who, with great address, now threaded his way through the general throng of passengers, now stood still until a favorable opportunity occurred of again moving forward, and frequently turning altogether out of the direct road, followed some circuitous by-path, which brought them into the highway again, after having given them the opportunity of traversing a considerable way with greater ease and rapidity.

It was thus he avoided Warwick, within whose castle (that fairest monument of ancient and chivalrous splendor which yet remains uninjured by time) Elizabeth had passed the previous night, and where she was to tarry until past noon, at that time the general hour of dinner throughout England, after which repast she was to proceed to Kenilworth. In the meanwhile, each passing group had something to say in the sovereign's praise, though not absolutely without the usual mixture of satire which qualifies more or less our estimate of our neighbors, especially if they chance to be also our betters.

"Heard you," said one, "how graciously she spoke to Master Bailiff and the Recorder, and to good Master Griffin, the preacher, as they kneeled down at her coach window?"

"Aye, and how she said to little Aglionby, 'Master Recorder, men would have persuaded me that you were afraid of me, but truly I think, so well did you reckon up to me the virtues of a sovereign, that I have more reason to be afraid of you.' And then with what grace she took the fair-wrought purse with the twenty gold sovereigns, seeming as though she would not willingly handle it, and yet taking it withal."

"Aye—aye," said another, "her fingers closed on it pretty willingly, methought, when all was done; and methought, too, she weighed them for a second in her hand, as she would say, 'I hope they be avoirdupois.'"

"She needed not, neighbor," said a third; "it is only when the corporation pay the accounts of a poor handicraft like me that they put him off with clipt coin. Well, there is a God above all. Little Master Recorder, since that is the word, will be greater now than ever."

"Come, good neighbor," said the first speaker, "be not envious. She is a good queen, and a generous. She gave the purse to the Earl of Leicester."

"I envious? beshrew thy heart for the word!" replied the handicraft. "But she will give all to the Earl of Leicester anon, methinks."

"You are turning ill, lady," said Wayland Smith to the Countess of Leicester, and proposed that she should draw off from the road, and halt till she recovered. But, subduing her feelings at this and different speeches to the same purpose which caught her ear as they passed on, she insisted that her guide should proceed to Kenilworth with all the haste which the numerous impediments of their journey permitted. Meanwhile, Wayland's anxiety at her repeated fits of indisposition and her obvious distraction of mind, was hourly increasing, and he became extremely desirous that, according to her reiterated requests, she should be safely introduced into the castle, where, he doubted not, she was secure of a kind reception, though she seemed unwilling to reveal on whom she reposed her hopes.

"An I were once rid of this peril," thought he, "and if any man shall find me playing squire of the body to a damosel-errant, he shall have leave to beat my brains out with my own sledge-hammer!"

At length the princely castle appeared, upon improving which, and the domains around, the Earl of Leicester had, it is said, expended sixty thousand pounds sterling, a sum equal to half a million of our present money.

The outer wall of this splendid and gigantic structure inclosed seven acres, a part of which was occupied by extensive stables, and by a pleasure garden, with its trim arbors and parterres, and the rest formed the large base-court, or outer yard, of the noble castle. The lordly structure itself, which rose near the center of this spacious inclosure, was composed of a huge pile of magnificent castellated buildings,

apparently of different ages, surrounding an inner court, and bearing, in the names attached to each portion of the magnificent mass, and in the armorial bearings which were there blazoned, the emblems of mighty chiefs who had long passed away, and whose history, could Ambition have lent ear to it, might have read a lesson to the haughty favorite who had now acquired, and was augmenting, the fair domain. A large and massive keep, which formed the citadel of the castle, was of uncertain though great antiquity. It bore the name of *Cæsar*, perhaps from its resemblance to that in the Tower of London so called. Some antiquaries ascribe its foundation to the time of *Kenelph*, from whom the castle had its name, a Saxon king of *Mercia*, and others to an early era after the Norman Conquest. On the exterior walls frowned the scutcheon of the *Clintons*, by whom they were founded in the reign of *Henry I.*, and of the yet more redoubted *Simon de Montfort*, by whom, during the *Barons' Wars*, *Kenilworth* was long held out against *Henry III.* Here *Mortimer*, Earl of *March*, famous alike for his rise and his fall, had once gayly reveled in *Kenilworth*, while his dethroned sovereign, *Edward II.*, languished in its dungeons. Old *John of Gaunt*, "time-honored *Lancaster*," had widely extended the castle, erecting that noble and massive pile which yet bears the name of *Lancaster's Buildings*; and *Leicester* himself had outdone the former possessors, princely and powerful as they were, by erecting another immense structure, which now lies crushed under its own ruins, the monument of its owner's ambition. The external wall of this royal castle was, on the south and west sides, adorned and defended by a lake partly artificial, across which *Leicester* had constructed a stately bridge, that *Elizabeth* might enter the castle by a path hitherto untrodden, instead of the usual entrance to the northward, over which he had erected a gate-house, or *barbican*, which still exists, and is equal in extent, and superior in architecture, to the baronial castle of many a northern chief.

Beyond the lake lay an extensive chase, full of red deer, fallow deer, roes, and every species of game, and abounding with lofty trees, from amongst which the extended front and massive towers of the castle were seen to rise in majesty and beauty. We cannot but add, that of this lordly palace, where princes feasted and heroes fought, now in the bloody earnest of storm and siege, and now in the games of chivalry, where beauty dealt the prize which valor won, all is now desolate.

The bed of the lake is but a rushy swamp; and the massive ruins of the castle only serve to show what their splendor once was, and to impress on the musing visitor the transitory value of human possessions, and the happiness of those who enjoy a humble lot in virtuous contentment.

It was with far different feelings that the unfortunate Countess of Leicester viewed those gray and massive towers, when she first beheld them rise above the embowering and richly shaded woods, over which they seemed to preside. She, the undoubted wife of the great earl, of Elizabeth's minion and England's mighty favorite, was approaching the presence of her husband and that husband's sovereign under the protection, rather than the guidance, of a poor juggler; and though unquestioned mistress of that proud castle, whose lightest word ought to have had force sufficient to make its gates leap from their massive hinges to receive her, yet she could not conceal from herself the difficulty and peril which she must experience in gaining admission into her own halls.

The risk and difficulty, indeed, seemed to increase every moment, and at length threatened altogether to put a stop to her farther progress, at the great gate leading to a broad and fair road, which, traversing the breadth of the chase for the space of two miles, and commanding several most beautiful views of the castle and lake, terminated at the newly constructed bridge, to which it was an appendage, and which was destined to form the Queen's approach to the castle on that memorable occasion.

Here the countess and Wayland found the gate at the end of this avenue, which opened on the Warwick road, guarded by a body of the Queen's mounted yeomen of the guard, armed in corslets richly carved and gilded, and wearing morions instead of bonnets, having their carabines resting with the butt-end on their thighs. These guards, distinguished for strength and stature, who did duty wherever the Queen went in person, were here stationed under the direction of a pursuivant, graced with the bear and ragged staff on his arm, as belonging to the Earl of Leicester, and peremptorily refused all admittance, excepting to such as were guests invited to the festival, or persons who were to perform some part in the mirthful exhibitions which were proposed.

The press was of consequence great around the entrance, and persons of all kinds presented every sort of plea for admittance; to which the guards turned an inexorable ear,

pleading in return to fair words, and even to fair offers, the strictness of their orders, founded on the Queen's well-known dislike to the rude pressing of a multitude. With those whom such reasons did not serve, they dealt more rudely, repelling them without ceremony by the pressure of their powerful barbed horses, and good round blows from the stock of their carabines. These last maneuvers produced undulations amongst the crowd which rendered Wayland much afraid that he might perforce be separated from his charge in the throng. Neither did he know what excuse to make in order to obtain admittance, and he was debating the matter in his head with great uncertainty, when the earl's pursuivant, having cast an eye upon him, exclaimed, to his no small surprise, "Yeomen, make room for the fellow in the orange-tawny cloak. Come forward, sir coxcomb, and make haste. What, in the fiend's name, has kept you waiting? Come forward with your bale of woman's gear."

While the pursuivant gave Wayland this pressing yet uncourteous invitation, which, for a minute or two, he could not imagine was applied to him, the yeomen speedily made a free passage for him, while, only cautioning his companion to keep the muffler close around her face, he entered the gate leading her palfrey, but with such a drooping crest, and such a look of conscious fear and anxiety, that the crowd, not greatly pleased at any rate with the preference bestowed upon them, accompanied their admission with hooting and a loud laugh of derision.

Admitted thus within the chase, though with no very flattering notice or distinction, Wayland and his charge rode forward, musing what difficulties it would be next their lot to encounter, through the broad avenue, which was sentineled on either side by a long line of retainers, armed with swords and partizans, richly dressed in the Earl of Leicester's liveries and bearing his cognizance of the bear and ragged staff, each placed within three paces of his comrade, so as to line the whole road from the entrance into the park to the bridge. And, indeed, when the lady obtained the first commanding view of the castle, with its stately towers rising from within a long sweeping line of outward walls, ornamented with battlements, and turrets, and platforms at every point of defense, with many a banner streaming from its walls, and such a bustle of gay crests and waving plumes disposed on the terraces and battlements, and all the gay and gorgeous scene, her heart, unaccustomed to such splendor, sank as if it died

within her, and for a moment she asked herself what she had offered up to Leicester to deserve to become the partner of this princely splendor. But her pride and generous spirit resisted the whisper which bade her despair.

"I have given him," she said, "all that woman has to give. Name and fame, heart and hand, have I given the lord of all this magnificence at the altar, and England's Queen could give him no more. He is my husband; I am his wife. Whom God hath joined, man cannot sunder. I will be bold in claiming my right; even the bolder, that I come thus unexpected, and thus forlorn. I know my noble Dudley well! He will be something impatient at my disobeying him; but Amy will weep, and Dudley will forgive her."

These meditations were interrupted by a cry of surprise from her guide Wayland, who suddenly felt himself grasped firmly round the body by a pair of long thin black arms, belonging to someone who had dropped himself out of an oak tree upon the croup of his horse, amidst the shouts of laughter which burst from the sentinels.

"This must be the devil or Flibbertigibbet again!" said Wayland, with a vain struggle to disengage himself and unhorse the urchin who clung to him. "Do Kenilworth oaks bear such acorns?"

"In sooth do they, Master Wayland," said his unexpected adjunct, "and many others too hard for you to crack, for as old as you are, without my teaching you. How would you have passed the pursuivant at the upper gate yonder, had not I warned him our principal juggler was to follow us? And here have I waited for you, having clambered up into the tree from the top of our wain, and I suppose they are all mad for want of me by this time."

"Nay, then, thou art a limb of the devil in good earnest," said Wayland. "I give thee way, good imp, and will walk by thy counsel; only, as thou art powerful, be merciful."

As he spoke, they approached a strong tower, at the south extremity of the long bridge we have mentioned, which served to protect the outer gateway of the Castle of Kenilworth.

Under such disastrous circumstances, and in such singular company, did the unfortunate Countess of Leicester approach for the first time the magnificent abode of her almost princely husband.*

* See Amy Robsart at Kenilworth. Note 13.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Snug. Have you the lion's part written? Pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow to study.

Quince. You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

—*Midsummer Night's Dream.*

WHEN the Countess of Leicester arrived at the outer gate of the Castle of Kenilworth, she found the tower, beneath which its ample portal arch opened, guarded in a singular manner. Upon the battlements were placed gigantic warders, with clubs, battle-axes, and other implements of ancient warfare, designed to represent the soldiers of King Arthur; those primitive Britons by whom, according to romantic tradition, the castle had been first tenanted, though history carried back its antiquity only to the times of the Heptarchy. Some of these tremendous figures were real men, dressed up with vizards and buskins; others were mere pageants composed of pasteboard and buckram, which, viewed from beneath, and mingled with those that were real, formed a sufficiently striking representation of what was intended. But the gigantic porter who waited at the gate beneath, and actually discharged the duties of warder, owed none of his terrors to fictitious means. He was a man whose huge stature, thews, sinews, and bulk in proportion, would have enabled him to enact Colbrand, Ascapart, or any other giant of romance, without raising himself nearer to heaven even by the altitude of a chopin.* The legs and knees of this son of Anak were bare, as were his arms, from a span below the shoulder; but his feet were defended with sandals, fastened with cross straps of scarlet leather, studded with brazen knobs. A close jerkin of scarlet velvet, looped with gold, with short breeches of the same, covered his body and a part of his limbs; and he wore on his shoulders, instead of a cloak, the skin of a black bear. The head of this formidable person was uncovered, except by his shaggy black hair, which descended on either side around features of that huge, lumpish, and heavy cast which are often annexed to men of very uncommon size, and which, notwithstanding some distinguished exceptions, have created a general prejudice against giants, as being a dull and

* See Note 14.

sullen kind of persons. This tremendous warder was appropriately armed with a heavy club spiked with steel. In fine, he represented excellently one of those giants of popular romance who figure in every fairy tale or legend of knight-errantry.

The demeanor of this modern Titan, when Wayland Smith bent his attention to him, had in it something arguing much mental embarrassment and vexation; for sometimes he sat down for an instant on a massive stone bench, which seemed placed for his accommodation beside the gateway, and then ever and anon he started up, scratching his huge head, and striding to and fro on his post, like one under a fit of impatience and anxiety. It was while the porter was pacing before the gate in this agitated manner that Wayland, modestly, yet as a matter of course (not, however, without some mental misgiving), was about to pass him and enter the portal arch. The porter, however, stopped his progress, bidding him, in a thundering voice, "Stand back!" and enforcing his injunction by heaving up his steel-shod mace, and dashing it on the ground before Wayland's horse's nose with such vehemence that the pavement flashed fire and the archway rang to the clamor. Wayland, availing himself of Dickie's hint, began to state that he belonged to a band of performers to which his presence was indispensable, that he had been accidentally detained behind, and much to the same purpose. But the warder was inexorable, and kept muttering and murmuring something betwixt his teeth, which Wayland could make little of; and addressing betwixt whiles a refusal of admittance, couched in language which was but too intelligible. A specimen of his speech might run thus: "What, how now, my masters? (To himself) Here's a stir—here's a coil. (Then to Wayland) You are a loitering knave, and shall have no entrance. (Again to himself) Here's a throng—here's a thrusting. I shall ne'er get through with it. Here's a—humph—ha. (To Wayland) Back from the gate, or I'll break the pate of thee. (Once more to himself) Here's a—no, I shall never get through it."

"Stand still," whispered Flibbertigibbet into Wayland's ear; "I know where the shoe pinches, and will tame him in an instant."

He dropped down from the horse, and skipping up to the porter, plucked him by the tail of the bearskin, so as to induce him to decline his huge head, and whispered something in his ear. Not at the command of the lord of some Eastern talis-

man did ever Afrite change his horrid frown into a look of smooth submission more suddenly than the gigantic porter of Kenilworth relaxed the terrors of his look at the instant Flibbertigibbet's whisper reached his ears. He flung his club upon the ground and caught up Dickie Sludge, raising him to such a distance from the earth as might have proved perilous had he chanced to let him slip.

"It is even so," he said, with a thundering sound of exultation—"it is even so, my little dandieprat. But who the devil could teach it thee?"

"Do not thou care about that," said Flibbertigibbet; "but——" he looked at Wayland and the lady, and then sunk what he had to say in a whisper, which needed not be a loud one, as the giant held him for his convenience close to his ear. The porter then gave Dickie a warm caress, and set him on the ground with the same care which a careful housewife uses in replacing a cracked china cup upon her mantelpiece, calling out at the same time to Wayland and the lady, "In with you—in with you; and take heed how you come too late another day when I chance to be porter."

"Aye—aye, in with you," added Flibbertigibbet; "I must stay a short space with mine honest Philistine, my Goliath of Gath here; but I will be with you anon, and at the bottom of all your secrets, were they as deep and dark as the castle dungeon."

"I do believe thou wouldst," said Wayland; "but I trust the secret will be soon out of my keeping, and then I shall care the less whether thou or anyone knows it."

They now crossed the entrance tower, which obtained the name of the Gallery Tower from the following circumstance: The whole bridge, extending from the entrance to another tower on the opposite side of the lake, called Mortimer's Tower, was so disposed as to make a spacious tilt-yard, about one hundred and thirty yards in length and ten in breadth, strewed with the finest sand, and defended on either side by strong and high palisades. The broad and fair gallery, destined for the ladies who were to witness the feats of chivalry presented on this area, was erected on the northern side of the outer tower to which it gave name. Our travelers passed slowly along the bridge or tilt-yard, and arrived at Mortimer's Tower, at its farthest extremity, through which the approach led into the outer or base court of the castle. Mortimer's Tower bore on its front the scutcheon of the Earl of March, whose daring ambition overthrew the throne of Edward II.,

and aspired to share his power with the "She-wolf of France," to whom the unhappy monarch was wedded. The gate which opened under this ominous memorial was guarded by many warders in rich liveries; but they offered no opposition to the entrance of the countess and her guide, who, having passed by license of the principal porter at the Gallery Tower, were not, it may be supposed, liable to interruption from his deputies. They entered accordingly, in silence, the great outward court of the castle, having then full before them that vast and lordly pile, with all its stately towers, each gate open, as if in sign of unlimited hospitality, and the apartments filled with noble guests of every degree, besides dependents, retainers, domestics of every description and all the appendages and promoters of mirth and revelry.

Amid this stately and busy scene, Wayland halted his horse, and looked upon the lady, as if waiting her commands what was next to be done, since they had safely reached the place of destination. As she remained silent, Wayland, after waiting a minute or two, ventured to ask her, in direct terms, what were her next commands. She raised her hand to her forehead, as if in the act of collecting her thoughts and resolution, while she answered him in a low and suppressed voice, like the murmurs of one who speaks in a dream. "Commands! I may indeed claim right to command, but who is there will obey me?"

Then suddenly raising her head, like one who has formed a decisive resolution, she addressed a gayly dressed domestic, who was crossing the court with importance and bustle in his countenance. "Stop, sir," she said, "I desire to speak with the Earl of Leicester."

"With whom, an it please you?" said the man, surprised at the demand; and then looking upon the mean equipage of her who used toward him such a tone of authority, he added, with insolence, "Why, what Bess of Bedlam is this, would ask to see my lord on such a day as the present?"

"Friend," said the countess, "be not insolent; my business with the earl is most urgent."

"You must get someone else to do it, were it thrice as urgent," said the fellow. "I should summon my lord from the Queen's royal presence to do *your* business, should I? I were like to be thanked with a horse-whip. I marvel our old porter took not measure of such ware with his club, instead of giving them passage; but his brain is addled with getting his speech by heart."

Two or three persons stopped, attracted by the fleeing way in which the serving-man expressed himself; and Wayland, alarmed both for himself and the lady, hastily addressed himself to one who appeared the most civil, and thrusting a piece of money into his hand, held a moment's counsel with him on the subject of finding a place of temporary retreat for the lady. The person to whom he spoke, being one in some authority, rebuked the others for their incivility, and commanding one fellow to take care of the strangers' horses, he desired them to follow him. The countess retained presence of mind sufficient to see that it was absolutely necessary she should comply with his request; and, leaving the rude lackeys and grooms to crack their brutal jests about light heads, light heels, and so forth, Wayland and she followed in silence the deputy-usher, who undertook to be their conductor.

They entered the inner court of the castle by the great gateway, which extended betwixt the principal keep, or donjon, called Cæsar's Tower, and a stately building which passed by the name of King Henry's Lodging, and were thus placed in the center of the noble pile, which presented on its different fronts magnificent specimens of every species of castellated architecture, from the Conquest to the reign of Elizabeth, with the appropriate style and ornaments of each.

Across this inner court also they were conducted by their guide to a small but strong tower, occupying the northeast angle of the building adjacent to the great hall, and filling up a space betwixt the immense range of kitchens and the end of the great hall itself. The lower part of this tower was occupied by some of the household officers of Leicester, owing to its convenient vicinity to the places where their duty lay; but in the upper story, which was reached by a narrow winding stair, was a small octangular chamber, which, in the great demand for lodgings, had been on the present occasion fitted up for the reception of guests, though generally said to have been used as a place of confinement for some unhappy person who had been there murdered. Tradition called this prisoner Mervyn, and transferred his name to the tower. That it had been used as a prison was not improbable; for the floor of each story was arched, the walls of tremendous thickness, while the space of the chamber did not exceed fifteen feet in diameter. The window, however, was pleasant, though narrow, and commanded a delightful view of what was called the Pleasance—a space of ground inclosed and decorated with

arches, trophies, statues, fountains, and other architectural monuments, which formed one access from the castle itself into the garden. There was a bed in the apartment, and other preparations for the reception of a guest, to which the countess paid but slight attention, her notice being instantly arrested by the sight of writing-materials, placed on the table (not very commonly to be found in the bedrooms of those days), which instantly suggested the idea of writing to Leicester, and remaining private until she had received his answer.

The deputy-usher, having introduced them into this commodious apartment, courteously asked Wayland, whose generosity he had experienced, whether he could do anything farther for his service. Upon receiving a gentle hint that some refreshment would not be unacceptable, he presently conveyed the smith to the buttery-hatch, where dressed provisions of all sorts were distributed, with hospitable profusion, to all who asked for them. Wayland was readily supplied with some light provisions, such as he thought would best suit the faded appetite of the lady, and did not omit the opportunity of himself making a hasty but hearty meal on more substantial fare. He then returned to the apartment in the turret, where he found the countess, who had finished her letter to Leicester; and, in lieu of a seal and silken thread, had secured it with a braid of her own beautiful tresses, fastened by what is called a true-love knot.

"Good friend," said she to Wayland, "whom God hath sent to aid me at my utmost need, I do beseech thee, as the last trouble you shall take for an unfortunate lady, to deliver this letter to the noble Earl of Leicester. Be it received as it may," she said, with features agitated betwixt hope and fear, "thou, good fellow, shalt have no more cumber with me. But I hope the best; and if ever lady made a poor man rich, thou hast surely deserved it at my hand, should my happy days ever come round again. Give it, I pray you, into Lord Leicester's own hand, and mark how he looks on receiving it." Wayland, on his part, readily undertook the commission, but anxiously prayed the lady, in his turn, to partake of some refreshment; in which he at length prevailed, more through importunity, and her desire to see him begone on his errand, than from any inclination the countess felt to comply with his request. He then left her, advising her to lock her door on the inside, and not to stir from her little apartment, and went to seek an opportunity of discharging her errand, as well as

of carrying into effect a purpose of his own which circumstances had induced him to form.

In fact, from the conduct of the lady during the journey, her long fits of profound silence, the irresolution and uncertainty which appeared to pervade all her movements, and the obvious incapacity of thinking and acting for herself, under which she seemed to labor, Wayland had formed the not improbable opinion that the difficulties of her situation had in some degree affected her understanding.

When she had escaped from the seclusion of Cumnor Place, and the dangers to which she was there exposed, it would have seemed her most rational course to retire to her father's or elsewhere, at a distance from the power of those by whom these dangers had been created. When, instead of doing so, she demanded to be conveyed to Kenilworth, Wayland had been only able to account for her conduct, by supposing that she meant to put herself under the tutelage of Tressilian, and to appeal to the protection of the Queen. But now, instead of following this natural course, she intrusted him with a letter to Leicester, the patron of Varney, and within whose jurisdiction at least, if not under his express authority, all the evils she had already suffered were inflicted upon her. This seemed an unsafe, and even a desperate, measure, and Wayland felt anxiety for his own safety, as well as that of the lady, should he execute her commission before he had secured the advice and countenance of a protector. He therefore resolved, before delivering the letter to Leicester, that he would seek out Tressilian, and communicate to him the arrival of the lady at Kenilworth, and thus at once rid himself of all farther responsibility and devolve the task of guiding and protecting this unfortunate lady upon the patron who had at first employed him in her service.

"He will be a better judge than I am," said Wayland, "whether she is to be gratified in this humor of appeal to my Lord of Leicester, which seems like an act of insanity; and, therefore, I will turn the matter over in his hands, deliver him the letter, receive what they list to give me by way of guerdon, and then show the Castle of Kenilworth a pair of light heels; for, after the work I have been engaged in, it will be, I fear, neither a safe nor wholesome place of residence; and I would rather shoe colts on the coldest common in England than share in their gayest revels."

CHAPTER XXVII.

In my time I have seen a boy do wonders.
Robin, the red tinker, had a boy
Would ha' run through a cat-hole.

—*The Cozcomb.*

AMID the universal bustle which filled the castle and its environs, it was no easy matter to find out any individual; and Wayland was still less likely to light upon Tressilian, whom he sought so anxiously, because, sensible of the danger of attracting attention, in the circumstances in which he was placed, he dared not make general inquiries among the retainers or domestics of Leicester. He learned, however, by indirect questions, that, in all probability, Tressilian must have been one of a large party of gentlemen in attendance on the Earl of Sussex, who had accompanied their patron that morning to Kenilworth, when Leicester had received them with marks of the most formal respect and distinction. He farther learned that both earls, with their followers, and many other nobles, knights, and gentlemen, had taken horse, and gone toward Warwick several hours since, for the purpose of escorting the Queen to Kenilworth.

Her Majesty's arrival, like other great events, was delayed from hour to hour; and it was now announced by a breathless post that, her Majesty being detained by her gracious desire to receive the homage of her lieges who had thronged to wait upon her at Warwick, it would be the hour of twilight ere she entered the castle. The intelligence released for a time those who were upon duty in the immediate expectation of the Queen's appearance, and ready to play their part in the solemnities with which it was to be accompanied; and Wayland, seeing several horsemen enter the castle, was not without hopes that Tressilian might be of the number. That he might not lose an opportunity of meeting his patron in the event of this being the case, Wayland placed himself in the base-court of the castle, near Mortimer's Tower, and watched everyone who went or came by the bridge, the extremity of which was protected by that building. Thus stationed, nobody could enter or leave the castle without his observation, and most anxiously did he study the garb and countenance of every horseman, as, passing from under the oppo-

site Gallery Tower, they paced slowly, or curveted, along the tilt-yard, and approached the entrance of the base-court.

But while Wayland gazed thus eagerly to discover him whom he saw not, he was pulled by the sleeve by one by whom he himself would not willingly have been seen.

This was Dickie Sludge, or Flibbertigibbet, who, like the imp whose name he bore, and whom he had been accoutered in order to resemble, seemed to be ever at the ear of those who thought least of him. Whatever were Wayland's internal feelings, he judged it necessary to express pleasure at their unexpected meeting.

"Ha? is it thou, my minikin—my miller's thumb—my prince of cacodemons—my little mouse?"

"Aye," said Dickie, "the mouse which gnawed asunder the toils, just when the lion who was caught in them began to look wonderfully like an ass."

"Why, thou little hop-the-gutter, thou art as sharp as vinegar this afternoon! But tell me, how didst thou come off with yonder jolter-headed giant, whom I left thee with? I was afraid he would have stripped thy clothes, and so swallowed thee, as men peel and eat a roasted chestnut."

"Had he done so," replied the boy, "he would have had more brains in his guts than ever he had in his noddle. But the giant is a courteous monster, and more grateful than many other folk whom I have helped at a pinch, Master Wayland Smith."

"Beshrew me, Flibbertigibbet," replied Wayland, "but thou art sharper than a Sheffield whittle! I would I knew by what charm you muzzled yonder old bear."

"Aye, that is in your own manner," answered Dickie: "you think fine speeches will pass muster instead of good-will. However, as to this honest porter, you must know that, when we presented ourselves at the gate yonder, his brain was overburdened with a speech that had been penned for him, and which proved rather an overmatch for his gigantic faculties. Now this same pithy oration had been indited, like sundry others, by my learned magister, Erasmus Holiday, so I had heard it often enough to remember every line. As soon as I heard him blundering and floundering, like a fish upon dry land, through the first verse, and perceived him at a stand, I knew where the shoe pinched, and helped him to the next word, when he caught me up in an ecstasy, even as you saw but now. I promised, as the price of your admission, to hide me under his bearish gaberdine and prompt him in the hour

of need. I have just now been getting some food in the castle, and am about to return to him."

"That's right—that's right, my dear Dickie," replied Wayland; "haste thee, for Heaven's sake! else the poor giant will be utterly disconsolate for want of his dwarfish auxiliary. Away with thee, Dickie!"

"Aye—aye!" answered the boy. "Away with Dickie, when we have got what good of him we can. You will not let me know the story of this lady, then, who is as much sister of thine as I am?"

"Why, what good would it do thee, thou silly elf?" said Wayland.

"Oh, stand ye on these terms?" said the boy. "Well, I care not greatly about the matter; only, I never smell out a secret, but I try to be either at the right or the wrong end of it, and so good-evening to ye."

"Nay, but, Dickie," said Wayland, who knew the boy's restless and intriguing disposition too well not to fear his enmity—"stay, my dear Dickie: part not with old friends so shortly! Thou shalt know all I know of the lady one day."

"Aye," said Dickie; "and that day may prove a nigh one. Fare thee well, Wayland; I will to my large-limbed friend, who, if he have not so sharp a wit as some folk, is at least more grateful for the service which other folk render him. And so again, good-evening to ye."

So saying, he cast a somerset through the gateway, and, lighting on the bridge, ran, with the extraordinary agility which was one of his distinguishing attributes, toward the Gallery Tower, and was out of sight in an instant.

"I would to God I were safe out of this castle again!" prayed Wayland, internally; "for now that this mischievous imp has put his finger in the pie, it cannot but prove a mess fit for the devil's eating. I would to Heaven Master Tressilian would appear!"

Tressilian, whom he was thus anxiously expecting in one direction, had returned to Kenilworth by another access. It was indeed true, as Wayland had conjectured, that, in the earlier part of the day, he had accompanied the earls on their cavalcade toward Warwick, not without hope that he might in that town hear some tidings of his emissary. Being disappointed in this expectation, and observing Varney amongst Leicester's attendants, seeming as if he had some purpose of advancing to and addressing him, he conceived, in the present

circumstances, it was wisest to avoid the interview. He therefore left the presence-chamber when the high-sheriff of the county was in the very midst of his dutiful address to her Majesty; and, mounting his horse, rode back to Kenilworth by a remote and circuitous road, and entered the castle by a small sally-port in the western wall, at which he was readily admitted as one of the followers of the Earl of Sussex, toward whom Leicester had commanded the utmost courtesy to be exercised. It was thus that he met not Wayland, who was impatiently watching his arrival, and whom he himself would have been, at least, equally desirous to see.

Having delivered his horse to the charge of his attendant, he walked for a space in the Pleasance and in the garden, rather to indulge in comparative solitude his own reflections than to admire those singular beauties of nature and art which the magnificence of Leicester had there assembled. The greater part of the persons of condition had left the castle for the present, to form part of the earl's cavalcade; others, who remained behind, were on the battlements, outer walls, and towers, eager to view the splendid spectacle of the royal entry. The garden, therefore, while every other part of the castle resounded with the human voice, was silent, but for the whispering of the leaves, the emulous warbling of the tenants of a large aviary, with their happier companions who remained denizens of the free air, and the plashing of the fountains, which, forced into the air from sculptures of fantastic and grotesque forms, fell down with ceaseless sound into the great basins of Italian marble.

The melancholy thoughts of Tressilian cast a gloomy shade on all the objects with which he was surrounded. He compared the magnificent scenes which he here traversed with the deep woodland and wild moorland which surrounded Lidcote Hall, and the image of Amy Robsart glided like a phantom through every landscape which his imagination summoned up. Nothing is perhaps more dangerous to the future happiness of men of deep thought and retired habits than the entertaining an early, long, and unfortunate attachment. It frequently sinks so deep into the mind that it becomes their dream by night and their vision by day, mixes itself with every source of interest and enjoyment; and, when blighted and withered by final disappointment, it seems as if the springs of the spirit were dried up along with it. This aching of the heart, this languishing after a shadow which has lost all the gayety of its coloring, this dwelling on the re-

membrance of a dream from which we have been long roughly awakened, is the weakness of a gentle and generous heart, and it was that of Tressilian.

He himself at length became sensible of the necessity of forcing other objects upon his mind; and for this purpose he left the Pleasance, in order to mingle with the noisy crowd upon the walls, and view the preparation for the pageants. But as he left the garden, and heard the busy hum, mixed with music and laughter, which floated around him, he felt an uncontrollable reluctance to mix with society whose feelings were in a tone so different from his own, and resolved, instead of doing so, to retire to the chamber assigned him, and employ himself in study until the tolling of the great castle bell should announce the arrival of Elizabeth.

Tressilian crossed accordingly by the passage betwixt the immense range of kitchens and the great hall, and ascended to the third story of Mervyn's Tower, and applying himself to the door of the small apartment which had been allotted to him, was surprised to find it was locked. He then recollected that the deputy-chamberlain had given him a master-key, advising him, in the present confused state of the castle, to keep his door as much shut as possible. He applied this key to the lock, the bolt revolved, he entered, and in the same instant saw a female form seated in the apartment, and recognized that form to be Amy Robsart. His first idea was, that a heated imagination had raised the image on which it doted into visible existence; his second, that he beheld an apparition; the third and abiding conviction, that it was Amy herself, paler, indeed, and thinner than in the days of heedless happiness, when she possessed the form and hue of a wood-nymph, with the beauty of a sylph; but still Amy, unequalled in loveliness by aught which had ever visited his eyes.

The astonishment of the countess was scarce less than that of Tressilian, although it was of shorter duration, because she had heard from Wayland that he was in the castle. She had started up at his first entrance, and now stood facing him, the paleness of her cheeks having given way to a deep blush.

"Tressilian," she said, at length, "why come you here?"

"Nay, why come *you* here, Amy," returned Tressilian, "unless it be at length to claim that aid which, as far as one man's heart and arm can extend, shall instantly be rendered to you?"

She was silent a moment, and then answered in a sorrowful rather than an angry tone—"I require no aid, Tressilian, and

would rather be injured than benefited by any which your kindness can offer me. Believe me, I am near one whom law and love oblige to protect me."

"The villain, then, hath done you the poor justice which remained in his power," said Tressilian; "and I behold before me the wife of Varney?"

"The wife of Varney!" she replied, with all the emphasis of scorn. "With what base name, sir, does your boldness stigmatize the—the—the——" She hesitated, dropped her tone of scorn, looked down, and was confused and silent; for she recollected what fatal consequences might attend her completing the sentence with "the Countess of Leicester," which were the words that had naturally suggested themselves. It would have been a betrayal of the secret, on which her husband had assured her that his fortunes depended, to Tressilian, to Sussex, to the Queen, and to the whole assembled court. "Never," she thought, "will I break my promised silence. I will submit to every suspicion rather than that."

The tears rose to her eyes as she stood silent before Tressilian; while, looking on her with mingled grief and pity, he said, "Alas! Amy, your eyes contradict your tongue. That speaks of a protector, willing and able to watch over you; but these tell me you are ruined, and deserted by the wretch to whom you have attached yourself."

She looked on him, with eyes in which anger sparkled through her tears, but only repeated the word "wretch!" with a scornful emphasis.

"Yes, *wretch!*" said Tressilian; "for were he aught better, why are you here, and alone in my apartment? Why was not fitting provision made for your honorable reception?"

"In your apartment?" repeated Amy—"in *your* apartment? It shall instantly be relieved of my presence." She hastened toward the door; but the sad recollection of her deserted state at once pressed on her mind, and, pausing on the threshold, she added, in a tone unutterably pathetic, "Alas! I had forgot; I know not where to go——"

"I see—I see it all," said Tressilian, springing to her side, and leading her back to the seat, on which she sunk down. "You *do* need aid—you *do* need protection, though you will not own it; and you shall not need it long. Leaning on my arm, as the representative of your excellent and broken-hearted father, on the very threshold of the castle gate, you shall meet Elizabeth; and the first deed she shall do in the

halls of Kenilworth shall be an act of justice to her sex and her subjects. Strong in my good cause and in the Queen's justice, the power of her minion shall not shake my resolution. I will instantly seek Sussex."

"Not for all that is under heaven!" said the countess, much alarmed, and feeling the absolute necessity of obtaining time, at least, for consideration. "Tressilian, you were wont to be generous. Grant me one request, and believe, if it be your wish to save me from misery and from madness, you will do more by making me the promise I ask of you than Elizabeth can do for me with all her power!"

"Ask me anything for which you can allege reason," said Tressilian; "but demand not of me——"

"Oh, limit not your boon, dear Edmund!" exclaimed the countess,—“you once loved that I should call you so,—limit not your boon to reason! for my case is all madness, and frenzy must guide the counsels which alone can aid me.”

"If you speak thus wildly," said Tressilian, astonishment again overpowering both his grief and his resolution, "I must believe you indeed incapable of thinking or acting for yourself."

"Oh, no!" she exclaimed, sinking on one knee before him, "I am not mad. I am but a creature unutterably miserable, and, from circumstances the most singular, dragged on to a precipice by the arm of him who thinks he is keeping me from it—even by yours, Tressilian—by yours, whom I have honored, respected, all but loved—and yet loved, too—loved, too, Tressilian, though not as you wished me."

There was an energy—a self-possession—an abandonment in her voice and manner—a total resignation of herself to his generosity, which, together with the kindness of her expressions to himself, moved him deeply. He raised her, and in broken accents entreated her to be comforted.

"I cannot," she said, "I will not be comforted till you grant me my request! I will speak as plainly as I dare. I am now awaiting the commands of one who has a right to issue them. The interference of a third person—of you in especial, Tressilian—will be ruin—utter ruin to me. Wait but four-and-twenty hours, and it may be that the poor Amy may have the means to show that she values, and can reward, your disinterested friendship—that she is happy herself, and has the means to make you so. It is surely worth your patience, for so short a space?"

Tressilian paused, and weighing in his mind the various

probabilities which might render a violent interference on his part more prejudicial than advantageous, both to the happiness and reputation of Amy; considering also that she was within the walls of Kenilworth, and could suffer no injury in a castle honored with the Queen's residence, and filled with her guards and attendants, he conceived, upon the whole, that he might render her more evil than good service by intruding upon her his appeal to Elizabeth in her behalf. He expressed his resolution cautiously, however, doubting naturally whether Amy's hopes of extricating herself from her difficulties rested on anything stronger than a blinded attachment to Varney, whom he supposed to be her seducer.

"Amy," he said, while he fixed his sad and expressive eyes on hers, which, in her ecstasy of doubt, terror, and perplexity, she cast up toward him, "I have ever remarked that, when others called thee girlish and willful, there lay under that external semblance of youthful and self-willed folly deep feeling and strong sense. In this I will confide, trusting your own fate in your own hands for the space of twenty-four hours, without my interference by word or act."

"Do you promise me this, Tressilian?" said the countess. "Is it possible you can yet repose so much confidence in me? Do you promise, as you are a gentleman and a man of honor, to intrude in my matters, neither by speech nor action, whatever you may see or hear that seems to you to demand your interference? Will you so far trust me?"

"I will, upon my honor," said Tressilian; "but when that space is expired——"

"When that space is expired," she said, interrupting him, "you are free to act as your judgment shall determine."

"Is there naught besides which I can do for you, Amy?" said Tressilian.

"Nothing," said she, "save to leave me; that is, if—I blush to acknowledge my helplessness by asking it—if you can spare me the use of this apartment for the next twenty-four hours."

"This is most wonderful!" said Tressilian; "what hope or interest can you have in a castle where you cannot command even an apartment?"

"Argue not, but leave me," she said; and added, as he slowly and unwillingly retired, "Generous Edmund; the time may come when Amy may show she deserved thy noble attachment."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

What, man, ne'er lack a draught, when the full can
Stands at thine elbow, and craves emptying !
Nay, fear not me, for I have no delight
To watch men's vices, since I have myself
Of virtue nought to boast of. I'm a striker,
Would have the world strike with me, pell-mell, all.

—*Pandemonium.*

TRESSILIAN, in strange agitation of mind, had hardly stepped down the first two or three steps of the winding staircase, when, greatly to his surprise and displeasure, he met Michael Lambourne, wearing an impudent familiarity of visage, for which Tressilian felt much disposed to throw him downstairs; until he remembered the prejudice which Amy, the only object of his solicitude, was likely to receive from his engaging in any act of violence at that time and in that place.

He, therefore, contented himself with looking sternly upon Lambourne, as upon one whom he deemed unworthy of notice, and attempted to pass him in his way downstairs without any symptom of recognition. But Lambourne, who, amidst the profusion of that day's hospitality, had not failed to take a deep, though not an overpowering, cup of sack, was not in the humor of humbling himself before any man's looks. He stopped Tressilian upon the staircase without the least bashfulness or embarrassment, and addressed him as if they had been on kind and intimate terms—"What, no grudge between us, I hope, upon old scores, Master Tressilian? Nay, I am one who remember former kindness rather than later feud. I'll convince you that I meant honestly and kindly, aye, and comfortably by you."

"I desire none of your intimacy," said Tressilian; "keep company with your mates."

"Now, see how hasty he is!" said Lambourne; "and how these gentles, that are made questionless out of the porcelain clay of the earth, look down upon poor Michael Lambourne! You would take Master Tressilian now for the most maid-like, modest, simpering squire of dames that ever made love when candles were long i' the stuff—snuff—call you it? Why, you would play the saint on us, Master Tressilian, and forget that even now thou hast a commodity in thy very bed-

chamber, to the shame of my lord's castle—ha! ha! ha! Have I touched you, Master Tressilian?"

"I know not what you mean," said Tressilian, inferring, however, too surely that this licentious ruffian must have been sensible of Amy's presence in his apartment; "but if," he continued, "thou art varlet of the chambers, and lackest a fee, there is one to leave mine unmolested."

Lambourne looked at the piece of gold, and put it in his pocket, saying, "Now, I know not but you might have done more with me by a kind word than by this chiming rogue. But after all, he pays well that pays with gold; and Mike Lambourne was never a make-bate, or a spoil-sport, or the like. E'en live and let others live, that is my motto; only, I would not let some folks cock their beaver at me neither, as if they were made of silver ore and I of Dutch pewter." So, if I keep your secret, Master Tressilian, you may look sweet on me at least; and were I to want a little backing or countenance, being caught, as you see the best of us may be, in a sort of peccadillo—why, you owe it me; and so e'en make your chamber serve you and that same bird in bower beside—it's all one to Mike Lambourne."

"Make way, sir," said Tressilian, unable to bridle his indignation; "you have had your fee."

"Um!" said Lambourne, giving place, however, while he sulkily muttered between his teeth, repeating Tressilian's words—"Make way"—and 'you have had your fee'; but it matters not. I will spoil no sport, as I said before; I am no dog in the manger, mind that."

He spoke louder and louder, as Tressilian, by whom he felt himself overawed, got farther and farther out of hearing.

"I am no dog in the manger; but I will not carry coals neither, mind that; my Master Tressilian; and I will have a peep at this wench, whom you have quartered so commodiously in your old haunted room, afraid of ghosts, belike, and not too willing to sleep alone. If I had done this now in a strange lord's castle, the word had been—'The porter's lodge for the knave!' and 'Have him flogged; trundle him downstairs like a turnip!' Ayé, but your virtuous gentlemen take strange privileges over us, who are downright servants of our senses. Well, I have my Master Tressilian's head under my belt by this lucky discovery, that is one thing certain; and I will try to get a sight of this Lindabrides of his, that is another."

CHAPTER XXIX.

Now fare the well, my master ; if true service
Be guerdon'd with hard looks, e'en cut the tow-line,
And let our barks across the pathless flood
Hold different courses.

—*Shipwreck.*

TRESSILIAN walked into the outer yard of the castle, scarce knowing what to think of his late strange and most unexpected interview with Amy Robsart, and dubious if he had done well, being intrusted with the delegated authority of her father, to pass his word so solemnly to leave her to her own guidance for so many hours. Yet how could he have denied her request, dependent as she had too probably rendered herself upon Varney? Such was his natural reasoning. The happiness of her future life might depend upon his not driving her to extremities, and since no authority of Tressilian's could extricate her from the power of Varney, supposing he was to acknowledge Amy to be his wife, what title had he to destroy the hope of domestic peace which might yet remain to her by setting enmity betwixt them? Tressilian resolved, therefore, scrupulously to observe his word pledged to Amy, both because it had been given, and because, as he still thought, while he considered and reconsidered that extraordinary interview, it could not with justice or propriety have been refused.

In one respect he had gained much toward securing effectual protection for this unhappy and still beloved object of his early affection. Amy was no longer mewed up in a distant and solitary retreat, under the charge of persons of doubtful reputation. She was in the Castle of Kenilworth, within the verge of the royal court for the time, free from all risk of violence, and liable to be produced before Elizabeth on the first summons. These were circumstances which could not but assist greatly the efforts which he might have occasion to use in her behalf.

While he was thus balancing the advantages and perils which attended her unexpected presence in Kenilworth, Tressilian was hastily and anxiously accosted by Wayland, who, after ejaculating, "Thank God, your worship is found at last!" proceeded with breathless caution to pour into his ear

the intelligence that the lady had escaped from Cumnor Place.

"And is at present in this castle," said Tressilian; "I know it, and I have seen her. Was it by her own choice she found refuge in my apartment?"

"No," answered Wayland; "but I could think of no other way of safely bestowing her, and was but too happy to find a deputy-usher who knew where you were quartered—in jolly society truly, the hall on the one hand and the kitchen on the other!"

"Peace, this is no time for jesting," answered Tressilian, sternly.

"I wot that but too well," said the artist, "for I have felt these three days as if I had an halter round my neck. This lady knows not her own mind; she will have none of your aid—commands you not to be named to her—and is about to put herself into the hands of my Lord Leicester. I had never got her safe into your chamber, had she known the owner of it."

"Is it possible?" said Tressilian. "But she may have hopes the earl will exert his influence in her favor over his villainous dependent."

"I know nothing of that," said Wayland; "but I believe, if she is to reconcile herself with either Leicester or Varney, the side of the Castle of Kenilworth which will be safest for us will be the outside, from which we can fastest fly away. It is not my purpose to abide an instant after delivery of the letter to Leicester, which waits but your commands to find its way to him. See, here it is; but no—a plague on it—I must have left it in my dog-hole, in the hayloft yonder, where I am to sleep."

"Death and fury!" said Tressilian, transported beyond his usual patience; "thou hast not lost that on which may depend a stake more important than a thousand such lives as thine?"

"Lost it!" answered Wayland readily; "that were a jest indeed! No, sir, I have it carefully put up with my night-sack, and some matters I have occasion to use. I will fetch it in an instant."

"Do so," said Tressilian; "be faithful, and thou shalt be well rewarded. But if I have reason to suspect thee, a dead dog were in better case than thou!"

Wayland bowed, and took his leave with seeming confidence and alacrity; but, in fact, filled with the utmost dread and confusion. The letter was lost, that was certain, not-

withstanding the apology which he had made to appease the impatient displeasure of Tressilian. It was lost; it might fall into wrong hands; it would then, certainly, occasion a discovery of the whole intrigue in which he had been engaged; nor, indeed, did Wayland see much prospect of its remaining concealed in any event. He felt much hurt, besides, at Tressilian's burst of impatience.

"Nay, if I am to be paid in this coin for services where my neck is concerned, it is time I should look to myself. Here have I offended, for aught I know, to the death the lord of this stately castle, whose word were as powerful to take away my life as the breath which speaks it to blow out a farthing candle. And all this for a mad lady and a melancholy gallant, who, on the loss of a four-nooked bit of paper, has his hand on his poignado, and swears death and fury! Then there is the doctor and Varney—I will save myself from the whole mess of them. Life is dearer than gold: I will fly this instant, though I leave my reward behind me."

These reflections naturally enough occurred to a mind like Wayland's, who found himself engaged far deeper than he had expected in a train of mysterious and unintelligible intrigue, in which the actors seemed hardly to know their own course. And yet, to do him justice, his personal fears were, in some degree, counterbalanced by his compassion for the deserted state of the lady.

"I care not a groat for Master Tressilian," he said; "I have done more than bargain by him, and have brought his errant-damozel within his reach, so that he may look after her himself; but I fear the poor thing is in much danger amongst these stormy spirits. I will to her chamber, and tell her the fate which has befallen her letter, that she may write another if she list. She cannot lack a messenger, I trow, where there are so many lackeys that can carry a letter to their lord. And I will tell her also that I leave the castle, trusting her to God, her own guidance, and Master Tressilian's care and looking after. Perhaps she may remember the ring she offered me; it was well earned, I trow. But she is a lovely creature, and—marry hang the ring! I will not bear a base spirit for the matter. If I fare ill in this world for my good-nature, I shall have better chance in the next. So now for the lady, and then for the road."

With the stealthy step and jealous eye of the cat that steals on her prey, Wayland resumed the way to the countess' chamber, sliding along by the side of the courts and passages,

alike observant of all around him and studious himself to escape observation. In this manner he crossed the outward and inward castle-yard, and the great arched passage, which, running betwixt the range of kitchen offices and the hall, led to the bottom of the little winding stair that gave access to the chambers of Mervyn's Tower.

The artist congratulated himself on having escaped the various perils of his journey, and was in the act of ascending by two steps at once, when he observed that the shadow of a man, thrown from a door which stood ajar, darkened the opposite wall of the staircase. Wayland drew back cautiously, went down into the inner courtyard, spent about a quarter of an hour, which seemed at least quadruple its usual duration, in walking from place to place, and then returned to the tower, in hopes to find that the lurker had disappeared. He ascended as high as the suspicious spot—there was no shadow on the wall; he ascended a few yards farther—the door was still ajar, and he was doubtful whether to advance or retreat, when it was suddenly thrown wide open, and Michael Lambourne bolted out upon the astonished Wayland. "Who the devil art thou? and what seek'st thou in this part of the castle? March into that chamber, and be hanged to thee!"

"I am no dog, to go at every man's whistle," said the artist, affecting a confidence which was belied by a timid shake in his voice.

"Say'st thou me so? Come hither, Laurence Staples."

A huge, ill-made and ill-looking fellow, upward of six feet high, appeared at the door, and Lambourne proceeded: "If thou be'st so fond of this tower, my friend, thou shalt see its foundations, good twelve feet below the bed of the lake, and tenanted by certain jolly toads, snakes, and so forth, which thou wilt find mighty good company. Therefore, once more I ask you in fair play who thou art, and what thou seek'st here?"

"If the dungeon-grate once clashes behind me," thought Wayland, "I am a gone man." He therefore answered submissively, "He was the poor juggler whom his honor had met yesterday in Weatherly Bottom."

"And what juggling trick art thou playing in this tower? Thy gang," said Lambourne, "lie over against Clinton's Buildings."

"I came here to see my sister," said the juggler, "who is in Master Tressilian's chamber, just above."

"Aha!" said Lambourne, smiling, "here be truths! Upon

my honor, for a stranger, this same Master Tressilian makes himself at home among us, and furnishes out his cell handsomely with all sorts of commodities. This will be a precious tale of the sainted Master Tressilian, and will be welcome to some folks, as a purse of broad pieces to me. Hark ye, fellow," he continued, addressing Wayland, "thou shalt not give puss a hint to steal away: we must catch her in her form. So, back with that pitiful sheep-biting visage of thine, or I will fling thee from the window of the tower, and try if your juggling skill can save your bones."

"Your worship will not be so hard-hearted, I hope," said Wayland; "poor folk must live. I trust your honor will allow me to speak with my sister?"

"Sister on Adam's side, I warrant," said Lambourne; "or, if otherwise, the more knave thou. But sister or no sister, thou diest on point of fox; if thou comest a-prying to this tower once more. And now I think of it—uds daggers and death!—I will see thee out of the castle, for this is a more main concern than thy jugglery."

"But, please your worship," said Wayland, "I am to enact Arion in the pageant upon the lake this very evening."

"I will act it myself, by St. Christopher!" said Lambourne. "Orion, call'st thou him? I will act Orion, his belt and his seven stars to boot. Come along, for a rascal knave as thou art; follow me! Or stay; Laurence, do thou bring him along."

Laurence seized by the collar of the cloak the unresisting juggler, while Lambourne, with hasty steps, led the way to that same sally-port, or secret postern, by which Tressilian had returned to the castle, and which opened in the western wall, at no great distance from Mervyn's Tower.

While traversing with a rapid foot the space betwixt the tower and the sally-port, Wayland in vain racked his brain for some device which might avail the poor lady, for whom, notwithstanding his own imminent danger, he felt deep interest. But when he was thrust out of the castle, and informed by Lambourne, with a tremendous oath, that instant death would be the consequence of his again approaching it, he cast up his hands and eyes to heaven, as if to call God to witness he had stood to the uttermost in defense of the oppressed; then turned his back on the proud towers of Kenilworth, and went his way to seek a humbler and safer place of refuge.

Laurence and Lambourne gazed a little while after Way-

land, and then turned to go back to their tower, when the former thus addressed his companion: "Never credit me, Master Lambourne, if I can guess why thou hast driven this poor caitiff from the castle, just when he was to bear a part in the show that was beginning, and all this about a wench."

"Ah, Laurence," replied Lambourne, "thou art thinking of Black Joan Jugges of Slingdon, and hast sympathy with human frailty. But corragio, most noble Duke of the Dungeon and Lord of Limbo, for thou art as dark in this matter as thine own dominions of Little Ease. My most reverend Signior of the Low Countries of Kenilworth, know that our most notable master, Richard Varney, would give as much to have a hole in this same Tressilian's coat as would make us some fifty midnight carousals, with the full leave of bidding the steward go snick up, if he came to startle us too soon from our goblets."

"Nay, an that be the case, thou hast right," said Laurence Staples, the upper-warder; or, in common phrase, the first jailer of Kenilworth Castle, and of the liberty and honor belonging thereto; "but how will you manage when you are absent at the Queen's entrance, Master Lambourne; for me-thinks thou must attend thy master there?"

"Why, thou, mine honest prince of prisons, must keep ward in my absence. Let Tressilian enter if he will, but see thou let no one come out. If the damsel herself would make a break, as 'tis not unlikely she may, scare her back with rough words; she is but a paltry player's wench after all."

"Nay, for that matter," said Laurence, "I might shut the iron wicket upon her, that stands without the double door, and so force per force she will be bound to her answer without more trouble."

"Then Tressilian will not get access to her," said Lambourne, reflecting a moment. "But 'tis no matter; she will be detected in his chamber, and that is all one. But confess, thou old bat's-eyed dungeon-keeper, that you fear to keep awake by yourself in that Mervyn's Tower of thine?"

"Why, as to fear, Master Lambourne," said the fellow, "I mind it not the turning of a key; but strange things have been heard and seen in that tower. You must have heard, for as short time as you have been in Kenilworth, that it is haunted by the spirit of Arthur ap Mervyn, a wild chief taken by fierce Lord Mortimer, when he was one of the Lords Marchers of Wales, and murdered, as they say, in that same tower which bears his name?"

“Oh, I have heard the tale five hundred times,” said Lambourne, “and how the ghost is always most vociferous when they boil leeks and stirabout, or fry toasted cheese, in the culinary regions. Santo Diavolo, man, hold thy tongue, I know all about it!”

“Aye, but thou dost not, though,” said the turnkey, “for as wise as thou wouldst make thyself. Ah, it is an awful thing to murder a prisoner in his ward! You, that may have given a man a stab in a dark street, know nothing of it. To give a mutinous fellow a knock on the head with the keys, and bid him be quiet, that’s what I call keeping order in the ward; but to draw weapon and slay him, as was done to this Welsh lord, *that* raises you a ghost that will render your prison-house untenable by any decent captive for some hundred years. And I have that regard for my prisoners, poor things, that I have put good squires and men of worship, that have taken a ride on the highway, or slandered my Lord of Leicester, or the like, fifty feet under ground, rather than I would put them into that upper chamber yonder that they call Mervyn’s Bower. Indeed, by good St. Peter of the Fetters, I marvel my noble lord or Master Varney could think of lodging guests there; and if this Master Tressilian could get anyone to keep him company, and in especial a pretty wench, why, truly, I think he was in the right on’t.”

“I tell thee,” said Lambourne, leading the way into the turnkey’s apartment, “thou art an ass. Go bolt the wicket on the stair, and trouble not thy noddle about ghosts. Give me the wine-stoup, man; I am somewhat heated with chafing with yonder rascal.”

While Lambourne drew a long draught from a pitcher of claret, which he made use of without any cup, the warder went on vindicating his own belief in the supernatural.

“Thou hast been few hours in this castle, and hast been for the whole space so drunk, Lambourne, that thou art deaf, dumb, and blind. But we should hear less of your bragging, were you to pass a night with us at full moon, for then the ghost is busiest; and more especially when a rattling wind sets in from the northwest, with some sprinkling of rain, and now and then a growl of thunder. Body o’ me, what cracklings and clashing, what groanings, and what howlings, will there be at such times in Mervyn’s Bower, right as it were over our heads, till the matter of two quarts of distilled waters has not been enough to keep my lads and me in some heart!”

“Pshaw, man!” replied Lambourne, on whom his last

draught, joined to repeated visitations of the pitcher upon former occasions, began to make some innovation, "thou speak'st thou know'st not what about spirits. No one knows justly what to say about them; and, in short, least said may in that matter be soonest amended. Some men believe in one thing, some in another: it is all matter of fancy. I have known them of all sorts, my dear Laurence Lock-the-Door, and sensible men, too. There's a great lord—we'll pass his name, Laurence—he believes in the stars and the moon, the planets and their courses, and so forth, and that they twinkle exclusively for his benefit; when, in sober, or rather drunken truth, Laurence, they are only shining to keep honest fellows like me out of the kennel. Well, sir, let his humor pass; he is great enough to indulge it. Then look ye, there is another—a very learned man, I promise you, and can vent Greek and Hebrew as fast as I can thieves' Latin—he has an humor of sympathies and antipathies, of changing lead into gold, and the like; why, *via*, let that pass, too, and let him pay those in transmigrated coin who are fools enough to let it be current with them. Then here comest thou thyself, another great man, though neither learned nor noble, yet full six feet high, and thou, like a purblind mole, must needs believe in ghosts and goblins, and such-like. Now, there is, besides, a great man—that is, a great little man, or a little great man, my dear Laurence—and his name begins with V, and what believes he? Why, nothing, honest Laurence—nothing in earth, heaven, or hell; and for my part, if I believe there is a devil, it is only because I think there must be someone to catch our aforesaid friend by the back 'when soul and body sever,' as the ballad says; for your antecedent will have a consequent—*raro antecedentem*, as Dr. Bricham was wont to say. But this is Greek to you now, honest Laurence, and in sooth learning is dry work. Hand me the pitcher once more."

"In faith, if you drink more, Michael," said the warder, "you will be in sorry case either to play Arion or to wait on your master on such a solemn night; and I expect each moment to hear the great bell toll for the muster at Mortimer's Tower to receive the Queen."

While Staples remonstrated, Lambourne drank; and then setting down the pitcher, which was nearly emptied, with a deep sigh, he said in an undertone, which soon rose to a high one as his speech proceeded, "Never mind, Laurence; if I be drunk, I know that shall make Varney uphold me sober. But, as I said, never mind, I can carry my drink discreetly.

Moreover, I am to go on the water as Orion, and shall take cold unless I take something comfortable beforehand. Not play Orion! Let us see the best roarer that ever strained his lungs for twelve pence out-mouth me! What if they see me a little disguised? Wherefore should any man be sober to-night? Answer me that. It is matter of loyalty to be merry; and I tell thee, there are those in the castle who, if they are not merry when drunk, have little chance to be merry when sober. I name no names, Laurence. But your pottle of sack is a fine shoeing-horn to pull on a loyal humor and a merry one. Huzza for Queen Elizabeth!—for the noble Leicester!—for the worshipful Master Varney!—and for Michael Lambourne, that can turn them all round his finger!”

So saying, he walked downstairs, and across the inner court. The warder looked after him, shook his head, and, while he drew close and locked a wicket, which, crossing the staircase, rendered it impossible for anyone to ascend higher than the story immediately beneath Mervyn's Bower, as Tressilian's chamber was named, he thus soliloquized with himself—“It's a good thing to be a favorite. I well-nigh lost mine office because, one frosty morning, Master Varney thought I smelled of aquavitæ; and this fellow can appear before him drunk as a wine-skin, and yet meet no rebuke. But then he is a pestilent clever fellow withal, and no one can understand above one-half of what he says.”

XXX.

Now bid the steeple rock ; she comes—she comes !
Speak for us, bells—speak for us, shrill tongued tuckets.
Stand to thy linstock, gunner ; let thy cannon
Play such a peal, as if a paynim foe
Came stretch'd in turban'd ranks to storm the ramparts.
We will have pageants too ; but that craves wit,
And I'm a rough-hewn soldier.

—*The Virgin Queen, a Tragi-Comedy.*

TRESSILIAN, when Wayland had left him, as mentioned in the last chapter, remained uncertain what he ought next to do, when Raleigh and Blount came up to him arm in arm, yet, according to their wont, very eagerly disputing together. Tressilian had no great desire for their society in the present state of his feelings, but there was no possibility of avoiding them; and indeed he felt that, bound by his promise not to approach Amy, or take any step in her behalf, it would be his best course at once to mix with general society, and to exhibit on his brow as little as he could of the anguish and uncertainty which sat heavy at his heart. He therefore made a virtue of necessity, and hailed his comrades with, “All mirth to you, gentlemen. Whence come ye?”

“From Warwick, to be sure,” said Blount; “we must needs home to change our habits, like poor players, who are fain to multiply their persons to outward appearance by change of suits; and you had better do the like, Tressilian.”

“Blount is right,” said Raleigh; “the Queen loves such marks of deference, and notices, as wanting in respect, those who, not arriving in her immediate attendance, may appear in their soiled and ruffled riding dress. But look at Blount himself, Tressilian, for the love of laughter, and see how his villainous tailor hath appareled him—in blue, green, and crimson, with carnation ribands, and yellow roses in his shoes!”

“Why, what wouldst thou have?” said Blount. “I told the cross-legged thief to do his best, and spare no cost; and methinks these things are gay enough—gayer than thine own. I’ll be judged by Tressilian.”

“I agree—I agree,” said Walter Raleigh. “Judge betwixt us, Tressilian, for the love of Heaven!”

Tressilian, thus appealed to, looked at them both, and was

immediately sensible at a single glance that honest Blount had taken upon the tailor's warrant the pied garments which he had chosen to make, and was as much embarrassed by the quantity of points and ribands which garnished his dress as a clown is in his holiday clothes; while the dress of Raleigh was a well-fancied and rich suit, which the wearer bore as a garb too well adapted to his elegant person to attract particular attention. Tressilian said, therefore, "That Blount's dress was finest, but Raleigh's the best fancied."

Blount was satisfied with his decision. "I knew mine was finest," he said; "if that knave Doublestich had brought me home such a simple doublet as that of Raleigh's, I would have beat his brains out with his own pressing-iron. Nay, if we must be fools, ever let us be fools of the first head, say I."

"But why gettest thou not on thy braveries, Tressilian?" said Raleigh.

"I am excluded from my apartment by a silly mistake," said Tressilian, "and separated for the time from my baggage. I was about to seek thee, to beseech a share of thy lodging."

"And welcome," said Raleigh; "it is a noble one. My Lord of Leicester has done us that kindness, and lodged us in princely fashion. If his courtesy be extorted reluctantly, it is at least extended far. I would advise you to tell your strait to the earl's chamberlain: you will have instant redress."

"Nay, it is not worth while, since you can spare me room," replied Tressilian; "I would not be troublesome. Has anyone come hither with you?"

"Oh, aye," said Blount; "Varney, and a whole tribe of Leicestrians, besides about a score of us honest Sussex folk. We are all, it seems, to receive the Queen at what they call the Gallery Tower, and witness some fooleries there; and then we're to remain in attendance upon the Queen in the great hall—God bless the mark!—while those who are now waiting upon her Grace get rid of their slough, and doff their riding-suits. Heaven help me, if her Grace should speak to me, I shall never know what to answer!"

"And what has detained them so long at Warwick?" said Tressilian, unwilling that their conversation should return to his own affairs.

"Such a succession of fooleries," said Blount, "as were never seen at Bartholomew Fair. We have had speeches and players, and dogs and bears, and men making monkeys, and

women moppets, of themselves. I marvel the Queen could endure it. But ever and anon came in something of 'the lovely light of her gracious countenance,' or some such trash. Ah! vanity makes a fool of the wisest. But, come, let us on to this same Gallery Tower, though I see not what thou, Tressilian, canst do with thy riding-dress and boots."

"I will take my station behind thee, Blount," said Tressilian, who saw that his friend's unusual finery had taken a strong hold of his imagination; "thy goodly size and gay dress will cover my defects."

"And so thou shalt, Edmund," said Blount. "In faith, I am glad thou think'st my garb well-fancied, for all Mr. Witty-pate here; for when one does a foolish thing, it is right to do it handsomely."

So saying, Blount cocked his beaver, threw out his leg, and marched manfully forward, as if at the head of his brigade of pikemen, ever and anon looking with complaisance on his crimson stockings and huge yellow roses which blossomed on his shoes. Tressilian followed, wrapt in his own sad thoughts, and scarce minding Raleigh, whose quick fancy, amused by the awkward vanity of his respectable friend, vented itself in jests, which he whispered into Tressilian's ear.

In this manner they crossed the long bridge, or tilt-yard, and took their station, with other gentlemen of quality, before the outer gate of the gallery, or entrance-tower. The whole amounted to about forty persons, all selected as of the first rank under that of knighthood, and were disposed in double rows on either side of the gate, like a guard of honor, within the close hedge of pikes and partizans, which was formed by Leicester's retainers, wearing their liveries. The gentlemen carried no arms save their swords and daggers. These gallants were as gayly dressed as imagination could devise; and as the garb of the time permitted a great display of expensive magnificence, naught was to be seen but velvet and cloth of gold and silver, ribands, feathers, gems, and golden chains. In spite of his more serious subjects of distress, Tressilian could not help feeling that he, with his riding-suit, however handsome it might be, made rather an unworthy figure among these "fierce vanities," and the rather because he saw that his dishabille was the subject of wonder among his own friends and of scorn among the partizans of Leicester.

We could not suppress this fact, though it may seem something at variance with the gravity of Tressilian's character;

but the truth is, that a regard for personal appearance is a species of self-love from which the wisest are not exempt, and to which the mind clings so instinctively, that not only the soldier advancing to almost inevitable death, but even the doomed criminal who goes to certain execution, shows an anxiety to array his person to the best advantage. But this is a digression.

It was the twilight of a summer night (9th July, 1575), the sun having for some time set, and all were in anxious expectation of the Queen's immediate approach. The multitude had remained assembled for many hours, and their numbers were still rather on the increase. A profuse distribution of refreshments, together with roasted oxen, and barrels of ale set a-broach in different places of the road, had kept the populace in perfect love and loyalty toward the Queen and her favorite, which might have somewhat abated had fasting been added to watching. They passed away the time, therefore, with the usual popular amusements of whooping, hallooing, shrieking, and playing rude tricks upon each other, forming the chorus of discordant sounds usual on such occasions. These prevailed all through the crowded roads and fields, and especially beyond the gate of the chase, where the greater number of the common sort were stationed; when, all of a sudden, a single rocket was seen to shoot into the atmosphere, and, at the instant, far heard over the flood and field, the great bell of the castle tolled.

Immediately there was a pause of dead silence, succeeded by a deep hum of expectation, the united voice of many thousands, none of whom spoke above their breath; or, to use a singular expression, the whisper of an immense multitude.

"They come now, for certain," said Raleigh. "Tressilian, that sound is grand. We hear it from this distance, as mariners, after a long voyage, hear, upon their night-watch, the tide rush upon some distant and unknown shore."

"Mass!" answered Blount, "I hear it rather as I used to hear mine own kine lowing from the close of Wittens Westlowe."

"He will assuredly graze presently," said Raleigh to Tressilian: "his thought is all of fat oxen and fertile meadows; he grows little better than one of his own beeves, and only becomes grand when he is provoked to pushing and goring."

"We shall have him at that presently," said Tressilian, "if you spare not your wit."

"Tush, I care not," answered Raleigh; "but thou, too,

Tressilian, hast turned a kind of owl, that flies only by night; hast exchanged thy songs for screechings, and good company for an ivy-tod."

"But what manner of animal art thou thyself, Raleigh," said Tressilian, "that thou holdest us all so lightly?"

"Who, I?" replied Raleigh. "An eagle am I, that never will think of dull earth while there is a heaven to soar in and a sun to gaze upon."

"Well bragged, by St. Barnaby!" said Blount; "but, good Master Eagle, beware the cage, and beware the fowler. Many birds have flown as high, that I have seen stuffed with straw, and hung up to scare kites. But hark, what a dead silence hath fallen on them at once!"

"The procession pauses," said Raleigh, "at the gate of the chase, where a sibyl, one of the *Fatidicæ*, meets the Queen, to tell her fortune. I saw the verses; there is little savor in them, and her Grace has been already crammed full with such poetical compliments. She whispered to me during the Recorder's speech yonder, at Ford Mill, as she entered the liberties of Warwick, how she was '*pertæsa barbaræ loquelæ*.'"

"The Queen whispered to *him!*" said Blount, in a kind of soliloquy. "Good God, to what will this world come!"

His farther meditations were interrupted by a shout of applause from the multitude, so tremendously vociferous that the country echoed for miles round. The guards, thickly stationed upon the road by which the Queen was to advance, caught up the acclamation, which ran like wildfire to the castle, and announced to all within that Queen Elizabeth had entered the royal chase of Kenilworth. The whole music of the castle sounded at once, and a round of artillery, with a salvo of small-arms, was discharged from the battlements; but the noise of drums and trumpets, and even of the cannon themselves, was but faintly heard amidst the roaring and reiterating welcomes of the multitude.

As the noise began to abate, a broad glare of light was seen to appear from the gate of the park, and, broadening and brightening as it came nearer, advanced along the open and fair avenue that led toward the Gallery Tower; which, as we have already noticed, was lined on either hand by the retainers of the Earl of Leicester. The word was passed along the line, "The Queen! The Queen! Silence, and stand fast!" Onward came the cavalcade illuminated by two hundred thick waxen torches, in the hands of as many horse-

men, which cast a light like that of broad day all around the procession, but especially on the principal group, of which the Queen herself, arrayed in the most splendid manner, and blazing with jewels, formed the central figure. She was mounted on a milk-white horse, which she reined with peculiar grace and dignity; and in the whole of her stately and noble carriage you saw the daughter of an hundred kings.

The ladies of the court, who rode beside her Majesty, had taken especial care that their own external appearance should not be more glorious than their rank and the occasion altogether demanded, so that no inferior luminary might appear to approach the orbit of royalty. But their personal charms, and the magnificence by which, under every prudential restraint, they were necessarily distinguished, exhibited them as the very flower of a realm so far famed for splendor and beauty. The magnificence of the courtiers, free from such restraints as prudence imposed on the ladies, was yet more unbounded.

Leicester, who glittered like a golden image with jewels and cloth of gold, rode on her Majesty's right hand, as well in quality of her host as of her master of the horse. The black steed which he mounted had not a single white hair on his body, and was one of the most renowned chargers in Europe, having been purchased by the earl at large expense for this royal occasion. As the noble animal chafed at the slow pace of the procession, and, arching his stately neck, champed on the silver bits which restrained him, the foam flew from his mouth and specked his well-formed limbs, as if with spots of snow. The rider well became the high place which he held and the proud steed which he bestrode; for no man in England, or perhaps in Europe, was more perfect than Dudley in horsemanship and all other exercises belonging to his quality. He was bare-headed, as were all the courtiers in the train; and the red torchlight shone upon his long curled tresses of dark hair, and on his noble features, to the beauty of which even the severest criticism could only object the lordly fault, as it may be termed, of a forehead somewhat too high. On that proud evening, those features wore all the grateful solicitude of a subject to show himself sensible of the high honor which the Queen was conferring on him, and all the pride and satisfaction which became so glorious a moment. Yet, though neither eye nor feature betrayed aught but feelings which suited the occasion, some of the earl's personal attendants remarked that he was unusually pale, and

they expressed to each other their fear that he was taking more fatigue than consisted with his health.

Varney followed close behind his master, as the principal esquire in waiting, and had charge of his lordship's black velvet bonnet, garnished with a clasp of diamonds and surmounted by a white plume. He kept his eye constantly on his master; and, for reasons with which the reader is not unacquainted, was, among Leicester's numerous dependents, the one who was most anxious that his lord's strength and resolution should carry him successfully through a day so agitating. For, although Varney was one of the few—the very few—moral monsters who contrive to lull to sleep the remorse of their own bosoms, and are drugged into moral insensibility by atheism, as men in extreme agony are lulled by opium, yet he knew that in the breast of his patron there was already awakened the fire that is never quenched, and that his lord felt, amid all the pomp and magnificence we have described, the gnawing of the worm that dieth not. Still, however, assured as Lord Leicester stood, by Varney's own intelligence, that his countess labored under an indisposition which formed an unanswerable apology to the Queen for her not appearing at Kenilworth, there was little danger, his wily retainer thought, that a man so ambitious would betray himself by giving way to any external weakness.

The train, male and female, who attended immediately upon the Queen's person were, of course, of the bravest and the fairest—the highest born nobles and the wisest counselors of that distinguished reign, to repeat whose names were but to weary the reader. Behind came a long crowd of knights and gentlemen, whose rank and birth, however distinguished, were thrown into the shade, as their persons into the rear of a procession whose front was of such august majesty.

Thus marshaled, the cavalcade approached the Gallery Tower, which formed, as we have often observed, the extreme barrier of the castle.

It was now the part of the huge porter to step forward; but the lubbard was so overwhelmed with confusion of spirit—the contents of one immense black-jack of double ale, which he had just drank to quicken his memory, having treacherously confused the brain it was intended to clear—that he only groaned piteously, and remained sitting on his stone seat; and the Queen would have passed on without greeting, had not the gigantic warder's secret ally, Flibberti-

gibbet, who lay perdue behind him, thrust a pin into the rear of the short femoral garment which we elsewhere described.

The porter uttered a sort of a yell, which came not amiss into his part, started up with his club, and dealt a sound douse or two on each side of him; and then, like a coach-horse pricked by the spur, started off at once into the full career of his address, and, by dint of active prompting on the part of Dickie Sludge, delivered, in sounds of gigantic intonation, a speech which may be thus abridged, the reader being to suppose that the first lines were addressed to the throng who approached the gateway; the conclusion, at the approach of the Queen, upon sight of whom, as struck by some Heavenly vision, the gigantic warder dropped his club, resigned his keys, and gave open way to the goddess of the night and all her magnificent train:

“What stir, what turmoil, have we for the nones?
Stand back, my masters, or beware your bones!
Sirs, I'm a warder, and no man of straw,
My voice keeps order, and my club gives law.

Yet soft—nay, stay—what vision have we here?
What dainty darling's this—what peerless peer?
What loveliest face, that loving ranks enfold,
Like brightest diamond chased in purest gold?
Dazzled and blind, mine office I forsake,
My club, my key, my knee, my homage take.
Bright paragon, pass on in joy and bliss;—
Beshrew the gate that opes not wide at such a sight as this! *

Elizabeth received most graciously the homage of the Herculean porter, and, bending her head to him in requital, passed through his guarded tower, from the top of which was poured a clamorous blast of warlike music, which was replied to by other bands of minstrelsy placed at different points on the castle walls, and by others again stationed in the chase; while the tones of the one, as they yet vibrated on the echoes, were caught up and answered by new harmony from different quarters.

Amidst these bursts of music, which, as if the work of enchantment, seemed now close at hand, now softened by distance space, now wailing so low and sweet as if that distance were gradually prolonged until only the last lingering strains could reach the ear, Queen Elizabeth crossed the Gallery Tower, and came upon the long bridge which extended from thence to Mortimer's Tower, and which was already as light as day, so many torches had been fastened to the palisades on either side. Most of the nobles here alighted, and

* See Imitation of Gascongne. Note 15.

sent their horses to the neighboring village of Kenilworth, following the Queen on foot, as did the gentlemen who had stood in array to receive her at the Gallery Tower.

On this occasion, as at different times during the evening, Raleigh addressed himself to Tressilian, and was not a little surprised at his vague and unsatisfactory answers; which, joined to his leaving his apartment without any assigned reason, appearing in an undress when it was likely to be offensive to the Queen, and some other symptoms of irregularity which he thought he discovered, led him to doubt whether his friend did not labor under some temporary derangement.

Meanwhile, the Queen had no sooner stepped on the bridge than a new spectacle was provided; for, as soon as the music gave signal that she was so far advanced, a raft, so disposed as to resemble a small floating island, illuminated by a great variety of torches, and surrounded by floating pageants formed to represent sea-horses, on which sat Tritons, Nereids, and other famous deities of the seas and rivers, made its appearance upon the lake, and, issuing from behind a small heronry where it had been concealed, floated gently toward the farther end of the bridge.

On the islet appeared a beautiful woman, clad in a watchet-colored silken mantle, bound with a broad girdle, inscribed with characters like the phylacteries of the Hebrews. Her feet and arms were bare, but her wrists and ankles were adorned with gold bracelets of uncommon size. Amidst her long silky black hair she wore a crown or chaplet of artificial mistletoe, and bore in her hand a rod of ebony tipped with silver. Two nymphs attended on her, dressed in the same antique and mystical guise.

The pageant was so well managed, that this Lady of the Floating Island, having performed her voyage with much picturesque effect, landed at Mortimer's Tower, with her two attendants, just as Elizabeth presented herself before that outwork. The stranger then, in a well-penned speech, announced herself as that famous Lady of the Lake, renowned in the stories of King Arthur, who had nursed the youth of the redoubted Sir Lancelot, and whose beauty had proved too powerful both for the wisdom and the spells of the mighty Merlin. Since that early period, she had remained possessed of her crystal dominions, she said, despite the various men of fame and might by whom Kenilworth had been successively tenanted. The Saxons, the Danes, the Normans, the

Saintlowes, the Clintons, the Montforts, the Mortimers, the Plantagenets, great though they were in arms and magnificence, had never, she said, caused her to raise her head from the waters which hid her crystal palace. But a greater than all these great names had now appeared, and she came in homage and duty to welcome the peerless Elizabeth to all sport which the castle and its environs, which lake or land, could afford.

The Queen received this address also with great courtesy, and made answer in raillery, "We thought this lake had belonged to our own dominions, fair dame, but since so famed a lady claims it for hers, we will be glad at some other time to have further communing with you touching our joint interests."

With this gracious answer, the Lady of the Lake vanished, and Arion, who was amongst the maritime deities, appeared upon his dolphin. But Lambourne, who had taken upon him the part in the absence of Wayland, being chilled with remaining immersed in an element to which he was not friendly, having never got his speech by heart, and not having, like the porter, the advantage of a prompter, paid it off with impudence, tearing off his vizard, and swearing, "Cog's bones! he was none of Arion or Orion either, but honest Mike Lambourne, that had been drinking her Majesty's health from morning till midnight, and was come to bid her heartily welcome to Kenilworth Castle."

This unpremeditated buffoonery answered the purpose probably better than the set speech would have done. The Queen laughed heartily, and swore, in her turn, that he had made the best speech she had heard that day. Lambourne, who instantly saw his jest had saved his bones, jumped ashore, gave his dolphin a kick, and declared he would never meddle with fish again, except at dinner.

At the same time that the Queen was about to enter the castle, that memorable discharge of fireworks by water and land took place, which Master Laneham, formerly introduced to the reader, has strained all his eloquence to describe.

"Such," says the clerk of the council-chamber door, "was the blaze of burning darts, the gleams of stars coruscant, the streams and hail of fiery sparks, lightnings of wildfire, and flight-shot of thunderbolts, with continuance, terror, and vehemency, that the heavens thundered, the waters surged, and the earth shook; and for my part, hardy as I am, it made me very vengeably afraid." *

* See Festivities at Kenilworth. Note 16.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Nay, this is matter for the month of March,
When hares are maddest. Either speak in reason,
Giving cold argument the wall of passion,
Or I break up the court.

—BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

It is by no means our purpose to detail minutely all the princely festivities of Kenilworth, after the fashion of Master Robert Laneham, whom we quoted in the conclusion of the last chapter. It is sufficient to say that, under discharge of the splendid fireworks, which we have borrowed Laneham's eloquence to describe, the Queen entered the base-court of Kenilworth, through Mortimer's Tower, and moving on through pageants of heathen gods and heroes of antiquity, who offered gifts and compliments on the bended knee, at length found her way to the great hall of the castle, gorgeously hung for her reception with the richest silken tapestry, misty with perfumes, and sounding to strains of soft and delicious music. From the highly carved oaken roof hung a superb chandelier of gilt bronze, formed like a spread eagle, whose outstretched wings supported three male and three female figures, grasping a pair of branches in each hand. The hall was thus illuminated by twenty-four torches of wax. At the upper end of the splendid apartment was a state canopy, overshadowing a royal throne, and beside it was a door, which opened to a long suite of apartments, decorated with the utmost magnificence for the Queen and her ladies, whenever it should be her pleasure to be private.

The Earl of Leicester having handed the Queen up to her throne and seated her there, knelt down before her, and kissing the hand which she held out, with an air in which romantic and respectful gallantry was happily mingled with the air of loyal devotion, he thanked her, in terms of the deepest gratitude, for the highest honor which a sovereign could render to a subject. So handsome did he look when kneeling before her, that Elizabeth was tempted to prolong the scene a little longer than there was, strictly speaking, necessity for; and ere she raised him, she passed her hand over his head, so near as almost to touch his long curled and perfumed hair, and with a movement of fondness, that

seemed to intimate she would, if she dared, have made the motion a slight caress.*

She at length raised him; and, standing beside the throne, he explained to her the various preparations which had been made for her amusement and accommodation, all of which received her prompt and gracious approbation. The earl then prayed Her Majesty for permission that he himself, and the nobles who had been in attendance upon her during the journey, might retire for a few minutes, and put themselves into a guise more fitting for dutiful attendance, during which space, those gentlemen of worship (pointing to Varney, Blount, Tressilian, and others), who had already put themselves into fresh attire, would have the honor of keeping her presence-chamber.

“Be it so, my lord,” answered the Queen; “you could manage a theater well, who can thus command a double set of actors. For ourselves, we will receive your courtesies this evening but clownishly, since it is not our purpose to change our riding attire, being in effect something fatigued with a journey which the concourse of our good people hath rendered slow, though the love they have shown our person hath, at the same time, made it delightful.”

Leicester, having received this permission, retired accordingly, and was followed by those nobles who had attended the Queen to Kenilworth in person. The gentlemen who had preceded them, and were of course dressed for the solemnity, remained in attendance. But being most of them of rather inferior rank, they remained at an awful distance from the throne which Elizabeth occupied. The Queen’s sharp eye soon distinguished Raleigh amongst them, with one or two others who were personally known to her, and she instantly made them a sign to approach, and accosted them very graciously. Raleigh, in particular, the adventure of whose cloak, as well as the incident of the verses, remained on her mind, was very graciously received; and to him she most frequently applied for information concerning the names and rank of those who were in presence. These he communicated concisely, and not without some traits of humorous satire, by which Elizabeth seemed much amused. “And who is yonder clownish fellow?” she said, looking at Tressilian, whose soiled dress on this occasion greatly obscured his good mien.

“A poet, if it please your Grace,” replied Raleigh.

* See Elizabeth and Leicester. Note 17.

"I might have guessed that from his careless garb," said Elizabeth. "I have known some poets so thoughtless as to throw their cloaks into gutters."

"It must have been when the sun dazzled both their eyes and their judgment," answered Raleigh.

Elizabeth smiled, and proceeded—"I asked that slovenly fellow's name, and you only told me his profession."

"Tressilian is his name," said Raleigh, with internal reluctance, for he foresaw nothing favorable to his friend from the manner in which she took notice of him.

"Tressilian!" answered Elizabeth. "Oh, the Menelaus of our romance. Why, he has dressed himself in a guise that will go far to exculpate his fair and false Helen. And where is Farnham, or whatever his name is—my Lord of Leicester's man, I mean—the Paris of this Devonshire tale?"

With still greater reluctance, Raleigh named and pointed out to her Varney, for whom the tailor had done all that art could perform in making his exterior agreeable; and who, if he had not grace, had a sort of tact and habitual knowledge of breeding which came in place of it.

The Queen turned her eye from one to the other. "I doubt," she said, "this same poetical Master Tressilian, who is too learned, I warrant me, to remember what presence he was to appear in, may be one of those of whom Geoffrey Chaucer says wittily, the wisest clerks are not the wisest men. I remember that Varney is a smooth-tongued varlet. I doubt this fair runaway hath had reasons for breaking her faith."

To this Raleigh durst make no answer, aware how little he should benefit Tressilian by contradicting the Queen's sentiments, and not at all certain, on the whole, whether the best thing that could befall him would not be that she should put an end at once by her authority to this affair, upon which it seemed to him Tressilian's thoughts were fixed with unavailing and distressing pertinacity. As these reflections passed through his active brain, the lower door was opened, and Leicester, accompanied by several of his kinsmen and of the nobles who had embraced his faction, re-entered the castle hall.

The favorite earl was now appareled all in white, his shoes being of white velvet; his understocks, or stockings, of knit silk; his upper stocks of white velvet, lined with cloth of silver, which was shown at the slashed part of the middle thigh; his doublet of cloth of silver, the close jerkin of white

velvet, embroidered with silver and seed-pearl, his girdle and the scabbard of his sword of white velvet with golden buckles; his poniard and sword hilted and mounted with gold; and over all, a rich loose robe of white satin, with a border of golden embroidery a foot in breadth. The collar of the Garter, and the azure Garter itself around his knee, completed the appointments of the Earl of Leicester; which were so well matched by his fair stature, graceful gesture, fine proportion of body, and handsome countenance, that at that moment he was admitted by all who saw him as the goodliest person whom they had ever looked upon. Sussex and the other nobles were also richly attired; but, in point of splendor and gracefulness of mien, Leicester far exceeded them all.

Elizabeth received him with great complacency. "We have one piece of royal justice," she said, "to attend to. It is a piece of justice, too, which interests us as a woman, as well as in the character of mother and guardian of the English people."

An involuntary shudder came over Leicester, as he bowed low, expressive of his readiness to receive her royal commands; and a similar cold fit came over Varney, whose eyes (seldom during that evening removed from his patron) instantly perceived, from the change in his looks, slight as that was, of what the Queen was speaking. But Leicester had wrought his resolution up to the point which, in his crooked policy, he judged necessary; and when Elizabeth added—"It is of the matter of Varney and Tressilian we speak: is the lady in presence, my lord?" His answer was ready—"Gracious madam, she is not."

Elizabeth bent her brows and compressed her lips. "Our orders were strict and positive, my lord," was her answer.

"And should have been obeyed, good my liege," replied Leicester, "had they been expressed in the form of the lightest wish. But—Varney, step forward—this gentleman will inform your Grace of the cause why the lady [he could not force his rebellious tongue to utter the words "his wife"] cannot attend on your royal presence."

Varney advanced, and pleaded with readiness, what indeed he firmly believed, the absolute incapacity of the party (for neither did he dare, in Leicester's presence, term her his wife) to wait on her Grace.

"Here," said he, "are attestations from a most learned physician, whose skill and honor are well known to my good Lord of Leicester; and from an honest and devout Protestant,

a man of credit and substance, one Anthony Foster, the gentleman in whose house she is at present bestowed, that she now labors under an illness which altogether unfits her for such a journey as betwixt this castle and the neighborhood of Oxford."

"This alters the matter," said the Queen, taking the certificates in her hands, and glancing at their contents. "Let Tressilian come forward. Master Tressilian, we have much sympathy for your situation, the rather that you seem to have set your heart deeply on this Amy Robsart or Varney. Our power, thanks to God and the willing obedience of a loving people, is worth much, but there are some things which it cannot compass. We cannot, for example, command the affections of a giddy young girl, or make her love sense and learning better than a courtier's fine doublet; and we cannot control sickness, with which it seems this lady is afflicted, who may not, by reason of such infirmity, attend our court here, as we had required her to do. Here are the testimonials of the physician who hath her under his charge, and the gentleman in whose house she resides, so setting forth."

"Under your Majesty's favor," said Tressilian hastily, and, in his alarm for the consequence of the imposition practiced on the Queen, forgetting, in part at least, his own promise to Amy, "these certificates speak not the truth."

"How, sir!" said the Queen. "Impeach my Lord of Leicester's veracity! But you shall have a fair hearing. In our presence the meanest of our subjects shall be heard against the proudest, and the least known against the most favored; therefore you shall be heard fairly, but beware you speak not without a warrant! Take these certificates in your own hand; look at them carefully, and say manfully if you impugn the truth of them, and upon what evidence."

As the Queen spoke, his promise and all its consequences rushed on the mind of the unfortunate Tressilian, and while it controlled his natural inclination to pronounce that a falsehood which he knew from the evidence of his senses to be untrue, gave an indecision and irresolution to his appearance and utterance, which made strongly against him in the mind of Elizabeth, as well as of all who beheld him. He turned the papers over and over, as if he had been an idiot, incapable of comprehending their contents. The Queen's impatience began to become visible. "You are a scholar, sir," she said, "and of some note, as I have heard; yet you seem wondrous

slow in reading text-hand. How say you, are these certificates true or no?"

"Madam," said Tressilian, with obvious embarrassment and hesitation, anxious to avoid admitting evidence which he might afterward have reason to confute, yet equally desirous to keep his word to Amy, and to give her, as he had promised, space to plead her own cause in her own way—"madam—madam, your Grace calls on me to admit evidence which ought to be proved valid by those who found their defense upon it."

"Why, Tressilian, thou art critical as well as poetical," said the Queen, bending on him a brow of displeasure; "methinks these writings, being produced in the presence of the noble earl to whom this castle pertains, and his honor being appealed to as the guarantee of their authenticity, might be evidence enough for thee. But since thou lists to be so formal—Varney, or rather my Lord of Leicester, for the affair becomes yours [these words, though spoken at random, thrilled through the earl's marrow and bones]—what evidence have you as touching these certificates?"

Varney hastened to reply, preventing Leicester—"So please your Majesty, my young Lord of Oxford, who is here in presence, knows Master Anthony Foster's hand and his character."

The Earl of Oxford, a young unthrift, whom Foster had more than once accommodated with loans on usurious interest, acknowledged, on this appeal, that he knew him as a wealthy and independent franklin, supposed to be worth much money, and verified the certificate produced to be his handwriting.

"And who speaks to the doctor's certificate?" said the Queen. "Alasco, methinks, is his name."

Masters, her Majesty's physician (not the less willingly that he remembered his repulse from Say's Court, and thought that his present testimony might gratify Leicester, and mortify the Earl of Sussex and his faction), acknowledged he had more than once consulted with Dr. Alasco, and spoke of him as a man of extraordinary learning and hidden acquirements, though not altogether in the regular course of practice. The Earl of Huntingdon, Lord Leicester's brother-in-law, and the old Countess of Rutland, next sang his praises, and both remembered the thin, beautiful Italian hand in which he was wont to write his receipts, and which corresponded to the certificate produced as his.

“And now, I trust, Master Tressilian, this matter is ended,” said the Queen. “We will do something ere the night is older to reconcile old Sir Hugh Robsart to the match. You have done your duty something more than boldly; but we were no woman had we not compassion for the wounds which true love deals; so we forgive your audacity, and your uncleansed boots withal, which have well-nigh overpowered my Lord of Leicester’s perfumes.”

So spoke Elizabeth, whose nicety of scent was one of the characteristics of her organization, as appeared long afterwards when she expelled Essex from her presence on a charge against his boots similar to that which she now expressed against those of Tressilian.

But Tressilian had by this time collected himself, astonished as he had at first been by the audacity of the falsehood so feasilily supported, and placed in array against the evidence of his own eyes. He rushed forward, kneeled down, and caught the Queen by the skirt of her robe. “As you are Christian woman,” he said, “madam, as you are crowned queen, to do equal justice among your subjects—as you hope yourself to have fair hearing—which God grant you—at that last bar at which we must all plead, grant me one small request! Decide not this matter so hastily. Give me but twenty-four hours’ interval, and I will, at the end of that brief space, produce evidence which will show to demonstration that these certificates, which state this unhappy lady to be now ill at ease in Oxfordshire, are false as hell!”

“Let go my train, sir!” said Elizabeth, who was startled at his vehemence, though she had too much of lion in her to fear. “The fellow must be distraught; that witty knave, my godson Harrington, must have him into his rhymes of ‘Orlando Furioso’! And yet, by this light, there is something strange in the vehemence of his demand. Speak, Tressilian; what wilt thou do if, at the end of these four-and-twenty hours, thou canst not confute a fact so solemnly proved as this lady’s illness?”

“I will lay down my head on the block,” answered Tressilian.

“Pshaw!” replied the Queen. “God’s light! thou speak’st like a fool. What head falls in England but by just sentence of English law? I ask thee, man—if thou hast sense to understand me—wilt thou, if thou shalt fail in this improbable attempt of thine, render me a good and sufficient reason why thou dost undertake it?”

Tressilian paused, and again hesitated; because he felt convinced that if, within the interval demanded, Amy should become reconciled to her husband, he would in that case do her the worst of offices by again ripping up the whole circumstances before Elizabeth, and showing how that wise and jealous princess had been imposed upon by false testimonials. The consciousness of this dilemma renewed his extreme embarrassment of look, voice, and manner; he hesitated, looked down, and on the Queen repeating her question with a stern voice and flashing eye, he admitted with faltering words, "That it might be—he could not positively—that is, in certain events—explain the reasons and grounds on which he acted."

"Now, by the soul of King Henry," said the Queen, "this is either moonstruck madness or very knavery! Seest thou, Raleigh, thy friend is far too Pindaric for this presence. Have him away, and make us quit of him, or it shall be the worse for him; for his flights are too unbridled for any place but Parnassus or St. Luke's Hospital. But come back instantly thyself, when he is placed under fitting restraint. We wish we had seen the beauty which could make such havoc in a wise man's brain."

Tressilian was again endeavoring to address the Queen, when Raleigh, in obedience to the orders he had received, interfered, and, with Blount's assistance, half led, half forced him out of the presence-chamber, where he himself indeed began to think his appearance did his cause more harm than good.

When they had attained the ante-chamber, Raleigh entreated Blount to see Tressilian safely conducted into the apartments allotted to the Earl of Sussex's followers, and, if necessary, recommend that a guard should be mounted on him.

"This extravagant passion," he said, "and, as it would seem, the news of the lady's illness, has utterly wrecked his excellent judgment. But it will pass away if he be kept quiet. Only let him break forth again at no rate; for he is already far in her Highness' displeasure, and should she be again provoked, she will find for him a worse place of confinement and sterner keepers."

"I judged as much as that he was mad," said Nicholas Blount, looking down upon his own crimson stockings and yellow roses, "whenever I saw him wearing yonder damned boots, which stunk so in her nostrils. I will but see him

stowed, and be back with you presently. . But, Walter, did the Queen ask who I was? Methought she glanced an eye at me."

"Twenty—twenty eye-glances she sent, and I told her all how thou wert a brave soldier, and a—— But, for God's sake, get off Tressilian!"

"I will—I will," said Blount; "but methinks this court-haunting is no such bad pastime, after all. We shall rise by it, Walter, my brave lad. Thou said'st I was a good soldier, and a—— What besides, dearest Walter?"

"An all unutterable—cod's-head. For God's sake, be-gone!"

Tressilian, without farther resistance or expostulation, followed, or rather suffered himself to be conducted by Blount to Raleigh's lodgings, where he was formally installed into a small truckle-bed, placed in a wardrobe and designed for a domestic. He saw but too plainly that no remonstrances would avail to procure the help or sympathy of his friends, until the lapse of the time for which he had pledged himself to remain inactive should enable him either to explain the whole circumstances to them, or remove from him every pretext or desire of farther interference with the fortunes of Amy, by her having found means to place herself in a state of reconciliation with her husband.

With great difficulty, and only by the most patient and mild remonstrances with Blount, he escaped the disgrace and mortification of having two of Sussex's stoutest yeomen quartered in his apartment. At last, however, when Nicholas had seen him fairly deposited in his truckle-bed, and had bestowed one or two hearty kicks, and as hearty curses, on the boots, which, in his lately acquired spirit of foppery, he considered as a strong symptom, if not the cause, of his friend's malady, he contented himself with the modified measure of locking the door on the unfortunate Tressilian, whose gallant and disinterested efforts to save a female who had treated him with ingratitude thus terminated, for the present, in the displeasure of his sovereign, and the conviction of his friends that he was little better than a madman.

CHAPTER XXXII.

The wisest sovereigns err like private men,
And royal hand has sometimes laid the sword
Of chivalry upon a worthless shoulder,
Which better had been branded by the hangman,
What then? Kings do their best; and they and we
Must answer for the intent, and not the event.

—*Old Play.*

“It is a melancholy matter,” said the Queen, when Tresilian was withdrawn, “to see a wise and learned man’s wit thus pitifully unsettled. Yet this public display of his imperfection of brain plainly shows us that his supposed injury and accusation were fruitless; and therefore, my Lord of Leicester, we remember your suit formerly made good to us in behalf of your faithful servant Varney, whose gifts and fidelity, as they are useful to you, ought to have due reward from us, knowing well that your lordship, and all you have, are so earnestly devoted to our service. And we render Varney the honor more especially that we are a guest, and we fear a chargeable and troublesome one, under your lordship’s roof; and also for the satisfaction of the good old knight of Devon, Sir Hugh Robsart, whose daughter he hath married; and we trust the especial mark of grace which we are about to confer may reconcile him to his son-in-law. Your sword, my Lord of Leicester.”

The earl unbuckled his sword, and, taking it by the point, presented on bended knee the hilt to Elizabeth.

She took it slowly, drew it from the scabbard, and while the ladies who stood around turned away their eyes with real or affected shuddering, she noted with a curious eye the high polish and rich damasked ornaments upon the glittering blade.

“Had I been a man,” she said, “methinks none of my ancestors would have loved a good sword better. As it is with me, I like to look on one, and could, like the fairy of whom I have read in some Italian rhymes—were my godson Harrington here, he could tell me the passage*—even trim my hair and arrange my head-gear in such a steel mirror as this is. Richard Varney, come forth and kneel down. In the

* See Italian Poetry. Note 18.

name of God and St. George, we dub thee knight! Be faithful, brave, and fortunate. Arise, Sir Richard Varney."

Varney arose and retired, making a deep obeisance to the sovereign who had done him so much honor.

"The buckling of the spur, and what other rites remain," said the Queen, "may be finished to-morrow in the chapel; for we intend Sir Richard Varney a companion in his honors. And as we must not be partial in conferring such distinction, we mean on this matter to confer with our cousin of Sussex."

That noble earl, who, since his arrival at Kenilworth, and indeed since the commencement of this progress, had found himself in a subordinate situation to Leicester, was now wearing a heavy cloud on his brow—a circumstance which had not escaped the Queen, who hoped to appease his discontent, and to follow out her system of balancing policy, by a mark of peculiar favor, the more gratifying as it was tendered at a moment when his rival's triumph appeared to be complete.

At the summons of Queen Elizabeth, Sussex hastily approached her person; and being asked on which of his followers, being a gentleman and of merit, he wished the honor of knighthood to be conferred, he answered, with more sincerity than policy, that he would have ventured to speak for Tressilian, to whom he conceived he owed his own life, and who was a distinguished soldier and scholar, besides a man of unstained lineage, "only," he said, "he feared the events of that night——" And then he stopped.

"I am glad your lordship is thus considerate," said Elizabeth; "the events of this night would make us, in the eyes of our subjects, as mad as this poor brain-sick gentleman himself—for we ascribe his conduct to no malice—should we choose this moment to do him grace."

"In that case," said the Earl of Sussex, somewhat discountenanced, "your Majesty will allow me to name my master of the horse, Master Nicholas Blount, a gentleman of fair estate and ancient name, who has served your Majesty both in Scotland and Ireland, and brought away bloody marks on his person, all honorably taken and requited."

The Queen could not help shrugging her shoulders slightly even at this second suggestion; and the Duchess of Rutland, who read in the Queen's manner that she had expected Sussex would have named Raleigh, and thus would have enabled her to gratify her own wish while she honored his recommendation, only waited the Queen's assent to what he had proposed, and then said, that she hoped, since these

two high nobles had been each permitted to suggest a candidate for the honors of chivalry, she, in behalf of the ladies in presence, might have a similar indulgence.

"I were no woman to refuse you such a boon," said the Queen, smiling.

"Then," pursued the duchess, "in the name of these fair ladies present, I request your Majesty to confer the rank of knighthood on Walter Raleigh, whose birth, deeds of arms, and promptitude to serve our sex with sword or pen, deserve such distinction from us all."

"Gramercy, fair ladies," said Elizabeth, smiling, "your boon is granted, and the gentle squire Lack-Cloak shall become the good knight Lack-Cloak at your desire. Let the two aspirants for the honor of chivalry step forward."

Blount was not as yet returned from seeing Tressilian, as he conceived, safely disposed of; but Raleigh came forth, and, kneeling down, received at the hand of the Virgin Queen that title of honor, which was never conferred on a more distinguished or more illustrious object.

Shortly afterward, Nicholas Blount entered, and, hastily apprised by Sussex, who met him at the door of the hall, of the Queen's gracious purpose regarding him, he was desired to advance toward the throne. It is a sight sometimes seen, and it is both ludicrous and pitiable, when an honest man of plain common sense is surprised, by the coquetry of a pretty woman or any other cause, into those frivolous fopperies which only sit well upon the youthful, the gay, and those to whom long practice has rendered them a second nature. Poor Blount was in this situation. His head was already giddy from a consciousness of unusual finery, and the supposed necessity of suiting his manners to the gayety of his dress; and now this sudden view of promotion altogether completed the conquest of the newly inhaled spirit of foppery over his natural disposition, and converted a plain, honest, awkward man into a coxcomb of a new and most ridiculous kind.

The knight expectant advanced up the hall, the whole length of which he had unfortunately to traverse, turning out his toes with so much zeal that he presented his leg at every step with its broad side foremost, so that it greatly resembled an old-fashioned table-knife with a curved point, when seen sideways. The rest of his gait was in correspondence with this unhappy amble; and the implied mixture of bashful fear and self-satisfaction was so unutterably ridicu-

lous that Leicester's friends did not suppress a titter, in which many of Sussex's partisans were unable to resist joining, though ready to eat their nails with mortification. Sussex himself lost all patience and could not forbear whispering into the ear of his friend, "Curse thee! canst thou not walk like a man and a soldier?" an interjection which only made honest Blount start and stop, until a glance at his yellow roses and crimson stockings restored his self-confidence, when on he went at the same pace as before.

The Queen conferred on poor Blount the honor of knighthood with a marked sense of reluctance. That wise princess was fully aware of the propriety of using great circumspection and economy in bestowing these titles of honor, which the Stuarts, who succeeded to her throne, distributed with an imprudent liberality which greatly diminished their value. Blount had no sooner arisen and retired than she turned to the Duchess of Rutland. "Our woman wit," she said, "dear Rutland, is sharper than that of those proud things in doublet and hose. Seest thou, out of these three knights, thine is the only true metal to stamp chivalry's imprint upon?"

"Sir Richard Varney, surely—the friend of my Lord of Leicester—surely *he* has merit," replied the duchess.

"Varney has a sly countenance and a smooth tongue," replied the Queen. "I fear me, he will prove a knave; but the promise was of ancient standing. My Lord of Sussex must have lost his own wits, I think, to recommend to us first a madman like Tressilian and then a clownish fool like this other fellow. I protest, Rutland, that while he sat on his knees before me, mopping and mowing as if he had scalding porridge in his mouth, I had much ado to forbear cutting him over the pate, instead of striking his shoulder."

"Your Majesty gave him a smart accolade," said the duchess; "we who stood behind heard the blade clatter on his collar-bone, and the poor man fidgeted too as if he felt it."

"I could not help it, wench," said the Queen, laughing; "but we will have this same Sir Nicholas sent to Ireland or Scotland, or somewhere, to rid our court of so antic a chevalier; he may be a good soldier in the field, though a preposterous ass in a banqueting-hall."

The discourse became then more general, and soon after there was a summons to the banquet.

In order to obey this signal, the company were under the necessity of crossing the inner court of the castle, that they

might reach the new buildings, containing the large banqueting-room, in which preparations for supper were made upon a scale of profuse magnificence corresponding to the occasion.

The livery cupboards were loaded with plate of the richest description, and the most varied; some articles tasteful, some perhaps grotesque, in the invention and decoration, but all gorgeously magnificent, both from the richness of the work and value of the materials. Thus the chief table was adorned by a salt, ship-fashion, made of mother-of-pearl, garnished with silver and divers warlike ensigns, and other ornaments, anchors, sails, and sixteen pieces of ordnance. It bore a figure of Fortune, placed on a globe, with a flag in her hand. Another salt was fashioned of silver, in the form of a swan in full sail. That chivalry might not be omitted amid this splendor, a silver St. George was presented, mounted and equipped in the usual fashion in which he bestrides the dragon. The figures were molded to be in some sort useful. The horse's tail was managed to hold a case of knives, while the breast of the dragon presented a similar accommodation for oyster knives.*

In the course of the passage from the hall of reception to the banqueting-room, and especially in the courtyard, the new-made knights were assailed by the heralds, pursuivants, minstrels, etc., with the usual cry of "Largesse—largesse, chevaliers très hardis!" an ancient invocation, intended to awaken the bounty of the acolytes of chivalry toward those whose business it was to register their armorial bearings, and celebrate the deeds by which they were illustrated. The call was, of course, liberally and courteously answered by those to whom it was addressed. Varney gave his largesse with an affectation of complaisance and humility. Raleigh bestowed his with the graceful ease peculiar to one who has attained his own place, and is familiar with its dignity. Honest Blount gave what his tailor had left him of his half-year's rent, dropping some pieces in his hurry, then stooping down to look for them, and then distributing them amongst the various claimants with the anxious face and mien of the parish beadle dividing a dole among paupers.

These donations were accepted with the usual clamor and *vivats* of applause common on such occasions; but, as the parties gratified were chiefly dependents of Lord Leicester, it was Varney whose name was repeated with the loudest

* See Furniture of Kenilworth. Note 19.

acclamations. Lambourne, especially, distinguished himself by his vociferations of "Long life to Sir Richard Varney! Health and honor to Sir Richard! Never was a more worthy knight dubbed——" Then, suddenly sinking his voice, he added—"since the valiant Sir Pandarus of Troy"—a winding-up of his clamorous applause which set all men a-laughing who were within hearing of it.

It is unnecessary to say anything farther of the festivities of the evening, which were so brilliant in themselves, and received with such obvious and willing satisfaction by the Queen, that Leicester retired to his own apartment with all the giddy raptures of successful ambition. Varney, who had changed his splendid attire, and now waited on his patron in a very modest and plain undress, attended to do the honors of the earl's *coucher*.

"How! Sir Richard," said Leicester, smiling, "your new rank scarce suits the humility of this attendance."

"I would disown that rank, my lord," said Varney, "could I think it was to remove me to a distance from your lordship's person."

"Thou art a grateful fellow," said Leicester; "but I must not allow you to do what would abate you in the opinion of others."

While thus speaking, he still accepted, without hesitation, the offices about his person, which the new-made knight seemed to render as eagerly as if he had really felt, in discharging the task, that pleasure which his words expressed.

"I am not afraid of men's misconstruction," he said, in answer to Leicester's remark, "since there is not—permit me to undo the collar—a man within the castle who does not expect very soon to see persons of a rank far superior to that which, by your goodness, I now hold, rendering the duties of the bed-chamber to you, and accounting it an honor."

"It might, indeed, so have been," said the earl, with an involuntary sigh; and then presently added, "My gown, Varney—I will look out on the night. Is not the moon near to the full?"

"I think so, my lord, according to the calendar," answered Varney.

There was an abutting window, which opened on a small projecting balcony of stone, battlemented as is usual in Gothic castles. The earl undid the lattice, and stepped out into the open air. The station he had chosen commanded an

extensive view of the lake and woodlands beyond, where the bright moonlight rested on the clear blue waters and the distant masses of oak and elm trees. The moon rode high in the heavens, attended by thousands and thousands of inferior luminaries. All seemed already to be hushed in the nether world, excepting occasionally the voice of the watch, for the yeomen of the guard performed that duty wherever the Queen was present in person, and the distant baying of the hounds, disturbed by the preparations amongst the grooms and the prickers for a magnificent hunt, which was to be the amusement of the next day.

Leicester looked out on the blue arch of heaven, with gestures and a countenance expressive of anxious exultation, while Varney, who remained within the darkened apartment, could, himself unnoticed, with a secret satisfaction, see his patron stretch his hands with earnest gesticulation toward the heavenly bodies.

"Ye distant orbs of living fire," so ran the muttered invocation of the ambitious earl, "ye are silent while you wheel your mystic rounds, but Wisdom has given to you a voice. Tell me, then, to what end is my high course destined! Shall the greatness to which I have aspired be bright, pre-eminent, and stable as your own; or am I but doomed to draw a brief and glittering train along the nightly darkness, and then to sink down to earth, like the base refuse of those artificial fires with which men emulate your rays?"

He looked on the heavens in profound silence for a minute or two longer, and then again stepped into the apartment, where Varney seemed to have been engaged in putting the earl's jewels into a casket.

"What said Alasco of my horoscope?" demanded Leicester. "You already told me, but it has escaped me, for I think but lightly of that art."

"Many learned and great men have thought otherwise," said Varney; "and, not to flatter your lordship, my own opinion leans that way."

"Aye, Saul among the prophets!" said Leicester. "I thought thou wert skeptical in all such matters as thou couldst neither see, hear, smell, taste, or touch, and that thy belief was limited by thy senses."

"Perhaps, my lord," said Varney, "I may be misled on the present occasion by my wish to find the predictions of astrology true. Alasco says that your favorite planet is culminating and that the adverse influence—he would not use

a plainer term—though not overcome, was evidently combusted, I think he said, or retrograde.”

“It is even so,” said Leicester, looking at an abstract of astrological calculations which he had in his hand: “the stronger influence will prevail, and, as I think, the evil hour pass away. Lend me your hand, Sir Richard, to doff my gown; and remain an instant, if it is not too burdensome to your knighthood, while I compose myself to sleep. I believe the bustle of this day has fevered my blood, for it streams through my veins like a current of molten lead—remain an instant, I pray you: I would fain feel my eyes heavy ere I closed them.”

Varney officiously assisted his lord to bed, and placed a massive silver night-lamp, with a short sword, on a marble table which stood close by the head of the couch. Either in order to avoid the light of the lamp or to hide his countenance from Varney, Leicester drew the curtain, heavy with entwined silk and gold, so as completely to shade his face. Varney took a seat near the bed, but with his back toward his master, as if to intimate that he was not watching him, and quietly waited till Leicester himself led the way to the topic by which his mind was engrossed.

“And so, Varney,” said the earl, after waiting in vain till his dependent should commence the conversation, “men talk of the Queen’s favor toward me?”

“Aye, my good lord,” said Varney; “of what can they else, since it is so strongly manifested?”

“She is indeed my good and gracious mistress,” said Leicester, after another pause; “but it is written, ‘Put not thy trust in princes.’”

“A good sentence and a true,” said Varney, “unless you can unite their interest with yours so absolutely that they must needs sit on your wrist like hooded hawks.”

“I know what thou meanest,” said Leicester, impatiently, “though thou art to-night so prudentially careful of what thou sayst to me. Thou wouldst intimate, I might marry the Queen if I would?”

“It is your speech, my lord, not mine,” answered Varney; “but whosoever be the speech, it is the thought of ninety-nine out of an hundred men throughout broad England.”

“Aye, but,” said Leicester, turning himself in his bed, “the hundredth man knows better. Thou, for example, knowest the obstacle that cannot be overleaped.”

"It must, my lord, if the stars speak true," said Varney, composedly.

"What! talk'st thou of them," said Leicester, "that believest not in them or in aught else?"

"You mistake, my lord, under your gracious pardon," said Varney: "I believe in many things that predict the future. I believe, if showers fall in April, that we shall have flowers in May; that if the sun shines, grain will ripen; and I believe in much natural philosophy to the same effect, which, if the stars swear to me, I will say the stars speak the truth. And in like manner, I will not disbelieve that which I see wished for and expected on earth, solely because the astrologers have read it in the heavens."

"Thou art right," said Leicester, again tossing himself on his couch—"earth does wish for it. I have had advices from the Reformed Churches of Germany, from the Low Countries, from Switzerland, urging this as a point on which Europe's safety depends. France will not oppose it. The ruling party in Scotland look to it as their best security. Spain fears it, but cannot prevent it. And yet thou knowest it is impossible."

"I know not that, my lord," said Varney: "the countess is indisposed."

"Villain!" said Leicester, starting up on his couch, and seizing the sword which lay on the table beside him, "go thy thoughts that way? Thou wouldst not do murder!"

"For whom or what do you hold me, my lord?" said Varney, assuming the superiority of an innocent man subjected to unjust suspicion. "I said nothing to deserve such a horrid imputation as your violence infers. I said but that the countess was ill. And countess though she be—lovely and beloved as she is, surely your lordship must hold her to be mortal? She may die, and your lordship's hand become once more your own."

"Away!—away!" said Leicester, "let me have no more of this."

"Good-night, my lord," said Varney, seeming to understand this as a command to depart; but Leicester's voice interrupted his purpose.

"Thou 'scapest me not thus, sir fool," said he; "I think thy knighthood has addled thy brains. Confess thou hast talked of impossibilities as of things which may come to pass."

"My lord, long live your fair countess," said Varney; "but

neither your love nor my good wishes can make her immortal. But God grant she live long to be happy herself, and to render you so! I see not but you may be King of England notwithstanding."

"Nay, now, Varney, thou art stark mad," said Leicester.

"I would I were myself within the same nearness to a good estate of freehold," said Varney. "Have we not known in other countries, how a left-handed marriage might subsist betwixt persons of differing degree?—aye, and be no hindrance to prevent the husband from conjoining himself afterward with a more suitable partner?"

"I have heard of such things in Germany," said Leicester.

"Aye, and the most learned doctors in foreign universities justify the practice from the Old Testament," said Varney. "And, after all, where is the harm? The beautiful partner whom you have chosen for true love has your secret hours of relaxation and affection. Her fame is safe; her conscience may slumber securely. You have wealth to provide royally for your issue, should Heaven bless you with offspring. Meanwhile, you may give to Elizabeth ten times the leisure, and ten thousand times the affection, that ever Don Philip of Spain spared to her sister Mary; yet you know how she doted on him though so cold and neglectful. It requires but a close mouth and an open brow, and you keep your Eleanor and your fair Rosamond far enough separate. Leave me to build you a bower to which no jealous queen shall find a clew."

Leicester was silent for a moment, then sighed and said, "It is impossible. Good-night, Sir Richard Varney; yet stay— Can you guess what meant Tressilian by showing himself in such careless guise before the Queen to-day? To strike her tender heart, I should guess, with all the sympathies due to a lover abandoned by his mistress, and abandoning himself."

Varney, smothering a sneering laugh, answered, "He believed Master Tressilian had no such matter in his head."

"How!" said Leicester, "what meanest thou? There is ever knavery in that laugh of thine, Varney."

"I only meant, my lord," said Varney, "that Tressilian has taken the sure way to avoid heart-breaking. He hath had a companion—a female companion—a mistress—a sort of player's wife or sister, as I believe—with him in Mervyn's Bower, where I quartered him for certain reasons of my own."

"A mistress! mean'st thou a paramour?"

"Aye, my lord; what female else waits for hours in a gentleman's chamber?"

"By my faith, time and space fitting, this were a good tale to tell," said Leicester. "I ever distrusted those bookish, hypocritical, seeming-virtuous scholars. Well, Master Tressilian makes somewhat familiar with my house; if I look it over, he is indebted for it to certain recollections. I would not harm him more than I can help. Keep eye on him, however, Varney."

"I lodged him for that reason," said Varney, "in Mervyn's Tower, where he is under the eye of my very vigilant, if he were not also my very drunken, servant, Michael Lambourne, whom I have told your Grace of."

"Grace!" said Leicester; "what mean'st thou by that epithet?"

"It came unawares, my lord; and yet it sounds so very natural that I cannot recall it."

"It is thine own preferment that hath turned thy brain," said Leicester, laughing; "new honors are as heady as new wine."

"May your lordship soon have cause to say so from experience," said Varney; and, wishing his patron good-night, he withdrew.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Here stands the victim ; there the proud betrayer,
E'en as the hind pull'd down by strangling dogs
Lies at the hunter's feet, who courteous proffers
To some high dame, the Dian of the chase,
To whom he looks for guerdon, his sharp blade,
To gash the sobbing throat.

—*The Woodsman.*

WE are now to return to Mervyn's Bower, the apartment, or rather the prison, of the unfortunate Countess of Leicester, who for some time kept within bounds her uncertainty and her impatience. She was aware that, in the tumult of the day, there might be some delay ere her letter could be safely conveyed to the hands of Leicester, and that some time more might elapse ere he could extricate himself from the necessary attendance on Elizabeth, to come and visit her in her secret bower. "I will not expect him," she said, "till night: he cannot be absent from his royal guest, even to see me. He will, I know, come earlier if it be possible, but I will not expect him before night." And yet all the while she did expect him; and, while she tried to argue herself into a contrary belief, each hasty noise, of the hundred she heard, sounded like the hurried step of Leicester on the staircase, hastening to fold her in his arms.

The fatigue of body which Amy had lately undergone, with the agitation of mind natural to so cruel a state of uncertainty, began by degrees strongly to affect her nerves, and she almost feared her total inability to maintain the necessary self-command through the scenes which might lie before her. But, although spoiled by an over-indulgent system of education, Amy had naturally a mind of great power, united with a frame which her share in her father's woodland exercises had rendered uncommonly healthy. She summoned to her aid such mental and bodily resources; and not unconscious how much the issue of her fate might depend on her own self-possession, she prayed internally for strength of body and for mental fortitude, and resolved, at the same time, to yield to no nervous impulse which might weaken either.

Yet, when the great bell of the castle, which was placed in Cæsar's Tower, at no great distance from that called Mervyn's, began to send its pealing clamor abroad, in signal of the

arrival of the royal procession, the din was so painfully acute to ears rendered nervously sensitive by anxiety, that she could hardly forbear shrieking with anguish in answer to every stunning clash of the relentless peal.

Shortly afterward, when the small apartment was at once enlightened by the shower of artificial fires with which the air was suddenly filled, and which crossed each other like fiery spirits, each bent on his own separate mission, or like salamanders executing a frolic dance in the region of the sylphs, the countess felt at first as if each rocket shot close by her eyes and discharged its sparks and flashes so nigh that she could feel a sense of heat. But she struggled against these fantastic terrors, and compelled herself to arise, stand by the window, look out, and gaze upon a sight which at another time would have appeared to her at once captivating and fearful. The magnificent towers of the castle were enveloped in garlands of artificial fire, or shrouded with tiaras of pale smoke. The surface of the lake glowed like molten iron, while many fireworks (then thought extremely wonderful, though now common), whose flame continued to exist in the opposing element, dived and rose, hissed and roared, and spouted fire, like so many dragons of enchantment sporting upon a burning lake.

Even Amy was for a moment interested by what was to her so new a scene. "I had thought it magical art," she said, "but poor Tressilian taught me to judge of such things as they are. Great God! and may not these idle splendors resemble my own hoped-for happiness—a single spark, which is instantly swallowed up by surrounding darkness—a precarious glow, which rises but for a brief space in the air, that its fall may be the lower? O Leicester! after all—all that thou hast said—hast sworn—that Amy was thy love, thy life, can it be that thou art the magician at whose nod these enchantments arise, and that she sees them as an outcast, if not a captive?"

The sustained, prolonged, and repeated bursts of music from so many different quarters, and at so many varying points of distance, which sounded as if not the Castle of Kenilworth only, but the whole country around, had been at once the scene of solemnizing some high national festival, carried the same oppressive thought still closer to her heart, while some notes would melt in distant and falling tones, as if in compassion for her sorrows, and some burst close and near upon her, as if mocking her misery, with all the insolence of unlimited mirth. "These sounds," she said, "are mine—

mine because they are HIS; but I cannot say, 'Be still, these loud strains suit me not'; and the voice of the meanest peasant that mingles in the dance would have more power to modulate the music than the command of her who is mistress of all!"

By degrees the sounds of revelry died away, and the countess withdrew from the window at which she had sat listening to them. It was night, but the moon afforded considerable light in the room, so that Amy was able to make the arrangement which she judged necessary. There was hope that Leicester might come to her apartment as soon as the revel in the castle had subsided; but there was also risk she might be disturbed by some unauthorized intruder. She had lost confidence in the key, since Tressilian had entered so easily, though the door was locked on the inside; yet all the additional security she could think of was to place the table across the door that she might be warned by the noise should anyone attempt to enter. Having taken these necessary precautions, the unfortunate lady withdrew to her couch, stretched herself down on it, mused in anxious expectation, and counted more than one hour after midnight, till exhausted nature proved too strong for love, for grief, for fear, nay, even for uncertainty, and she slept.

Yes, she slept. The Indian sleeps at the stake in the intervals between his tortures; and mental torments, in like manner, exhaust by long continuance the sensibility of the sufferer, so that an interval of lethargic repose must necessarily ensue ere the pangs which they inflict can again be renewed.

The countess slept, then, for several hours, and dreamed that she was in the ancient house at Cumnor Place, listening for the low whistle with which Leicester often used to announce his presence in the courtyard, when arriving suddenly on one of his stolen visits. But on this occasion, instead of a whistle, she heard the peculiar blast of a bugle-horn, such as her father used to wind on the fall of the stag, and which huntsmen then called a "mort." She ran, as she thought, to a window that looked into the courtyard, which she saw filled with men in mourning garments. The old curate seemed about to read the funeral service. Mumblazen, tricked out in an antique dress, like an ancient herald, held aloft a scutcheon, with its usual decorations of skulls, cross-bones, and hour-glasses, surrounding a coat-of-arms, of which she could only distinguish that it was surmounted with an earl's coronet.

The old man looked at her with a ghastly smile, and said, "Amy, are they not rightly quartered?" Just as he spoke the horns again poured on her ear the melancholy yet wild strain of the mort, or death-note, and she awoke.

The countess awoke to hear a real bugle note, or rather the combined breath of many bugles, sounding not the mort, but the jolly reveille, to remind the inmates of the Castle of Kenilworth that the pleasures of the day were to commence with a magnificent stag-hunting in the neighboring chase. Amy started up from her couch, listened to the sound, saw the first beams of the summer morning already twinkle through the lattice of her window, and recollected, with feelings of giddy agony, where she was, and how circumstanced.

"He thinks not of *me*," she said—"he will not come nigh me! A queen is his guest, and what cares he in what corner of his huge castle a wretch like me pines in doubt, which is fast fading into despair?" At once a sound at the door, as of someone attempting to open it softly, filled her with an ineffable mixture of joy and fear; and, hastening to remove the obstacle she had placed against the door, and to unlock it, she had the precaution to ask, "Is it thou, my love?"

"Yes, my countess," murmured a whisper in reply.

She threw open the door, and exclaiming, "Leicester!" flung her arms around the neck of the man who stood without, muffled in his cloak.

"No—not quite Leicester," answered Michael Lambourne, for he it was, returning the caress with vehemence—"not quite Leicester, my lovely and most loving duchess, but as good a man."

With an exertion of force of which she would at another time have thought herself incapable, the countess freed herself from the profane and profaning grasp of the drunken debauchee, and retreated into the midst of her apartment, where despair gave her courage to make a stand.

As Lambourne, on entering, dropped the lap of his cloak from his face, she knew Varney's profligate servant, the very last person, excepting his detested master, by whom she would have wished to be discovered. But she was still closely muffled in her traveling dress, and as Lambourne had scarce ever been admitted to her presence at Cumnor Place, her person, she hoped, might not be so well known to him as his was to her, owing to Janet's pointing him frequently out as he crossed the court, and telling stories of his wickedness. She might have had still greater confidence in her disguise had her

experience enabled her to discover that he was much intoxicated; but this could scarce have consoled her for the risk which she might incur from such a character, in such a time, place, and circumstances.

Lambourne flung the door behind him as he entered, and folding his arms, as if in mockery of the attitude of distraction into which Amy had thrown herself, he proceeded thus: "Hark ye, most fair Calipolis,—or most lovely countess of clouts, and divine duchess of dark corners,—if thou takest all that trouble of skewering thyself together, like a trussed fowl, that there may be more pleasure in the carving, even save thyself the labor. I love thy first frank manner the best; like thy present as little [he made a step toward her, and staggered]—as little as—such a damned uneven floor as this, where a gentleman may break his neck, if he does not walk as upright as a posture-master on the tight-rope."

"Stand back!" said the countess: "do not approach nearer to me on thy peril!"

"My peril! and stand back! Why, how now, madam? Must you have a better mate than honest Mike Lambourne? I have been in America, girl, where the gold grows, and have brought off such a load on't——"

"Good friend," said the countess in great terror at the ruffian's determined and audacious manner, "I prithee begone, and leave me."

"And so I will, pretty one, when we are tired of each other's company, not a jot sooner." He seized her by the arm, while, incapable of further defense, she uttered shriek upon shriek. "Nay, scream away if you like it," said he, still holding her fast; "I have heard the sea at the loudest, and I mind a squalling woman no more than a miauling kitten. Damn me! I have heard fifty or a hundred screaming at once, when there was a town stormed."

The cries of the countess, however, brought unexpected aid, in the person of Laurence Staples, who had heard her exclamations from his apartment below, and entered in good time to save her from being discovered, if not from more atrocious violence. Laurence was drunk also from the debauch of the preceding night; but fortunately his intoxication had taken a different turn from that of Lambourne.

"What the devil's noise is this in the ward?" he said. "What! man and woman together in the same cell! that is against rule. I will have decency under my rule, by St. Peter of the Fetters."

"Get thee downstairs, thou drunken beast," said Lambourne; "seest thou not the lady and I would be private?"

"Good sir—worthy sir," said the countess, addressing the jailer, "do but save me from him, for the sake of mercy!"

"She speaks fairly," said the jailer, "and I will take her part. I love my prisoners; and I have as good prisoners under my key as they have had in Newgate or the Compter. And so, being one of my lambkins, as I say, no one shall disturb her in her penfold. So, let go the woman, or I'll knock your brains out with my keys."

"I'll make a blood-pudding of thy midriff first," answered Lambourne, laying his left hand on his dagger, but still detaining the countess by the arm with his right. "So have at thee, thou old ostrich, whose only living is upon a bunch of iron keys!"

Laurence raised the arm of Michael, and prevented him from drawing his dagger; and as Lambourne struggled and strove to shake him off, the countess made a sudden exertion on her side, and slipping her hand out of the glove on which the ruffian still kept hold, she gained her liberty and, escaping from the apartment, ran downstairs; while, at the same moment, she heard the two combatants fall on the floor with a noise which increased her terror. The outer wicket offered no impediment to her flight, having been opened for Lambourne's admittance; so that she succeeded in escaping down the stair, and fled into the Pleasance, which seemed to her hasty glance the direction in which she was most likely to avoid pursuit.

Meanwhile, Laurence and Lambourne rolled on the floor of the apartment, closely grappled together. Neither had, happily, opportunity to draw their daggers; but Laurence found space enough to dash his heavy keys across Michael's face, and Michael, in return, grasped the turnkey so felly by the throat that the blood gushed from nose and mouth; so that they were both gory and filthy spectacles, when one of the other officers of the household, attracted by the noise of the fray, entered the room, and with some difficulty effected the separation of the combatants.

"A murrain on you both," said the charitable mediator, "and especially on you, Master Lambourne! What the fiend lie you here for, fighting on the floor, like two butchers' curs in the kennel of the shambles?"

Lambourne arose, and, somewhat sobered by the interposition of a third party, looked with something less than his

usual brazen impudence of visage. "We fought for a wench, an thou must know," was his reply.

"A wench! Where is she?" said the officer.

"Why, vanished, I think," said Lambourne, looking around him; "unless Laurence hath swallowed her. That filthy paunch of his devours as many distressed damsels and oppressed orphans as e'er a giant in King Arthur's history: they are his prime food; he worries them body, soul, and substance."

"Aye—aye! It's no matter," said Laurence, gathering up his huge ungainly form from the floor; "but I have had your betters, Master Michael Lambourne, under the little turn of my forefinger and thumb; and I shall have thee, before all's done, under my hatches. The impudence of thy brow will not always save thy shin-bones from iron, and thy foul, thirsty gullet from a hempen cord." The words were no sooner out of his mouth when Lambourne again made at him.

"Nay, go not to it again," said the sewer, "or I will call for him shall tame you both, and that is Master Varney—Sir Richard, I mean; he is stirring, I promise you: I saw him cross the court just now."

"Didst thou, by G——?" said Lambourne, seizing on the basin and ewer which stood in the apartment. "Nay, then, element, do thy work. I thought I had enough of thee last night, when I floated about for Orion, like a cork on a fermenting cask of ale."

So saying, he fell to work to cleanse from his face and hands the signs of the fray, and get his apparel into some order.

"What hast thou done to him?" said the sewer, speaking aside to the jailer; "his face is fearfully swelled."

"It is but the imprint of the key of my cabinet, too good a mark for his gallows-face. No man shall abuse or insult my prisoners; they are my jewels; and I lock them in safe casket accordingly. And so, mistress, leave off your wailing. Hey! why, surely there was a woman here!"

"I think you are all mad this morning," said the sewer. "I saw no woman here, nor no man neither in a proper sense, but only two beasts rolling on the floor."

"Nay, then, I am undone," said the jailer: "the prison's broken, that is all. Kenilworth prison is broken," he continued, in a tone of maudlin lamentation, "which was the strongest jail betwixt this and the Welsh marches—aye, and a house that has had knights, and earls, and kings sleeping in it,

as secure as if they had been in the Tower of London. It is broken, the prisoners fled, and the jailer in much danger of being hanged!"

So saying, he retreated down to his own den to conclude his lamentations, or to sleep himself sober. Lambourne and the sewer followed him close, and it was well for them, since the jailer, out of mere habit, was about to lock the wicket after him; and had they not been within the reach of interfering, they would have had the pleasure of being shut up in the turret-chamber, from which the countess had been just delivered.

That unhappy lady, as soon as she found herself at liberty, fled, as we have already mentioned, into the Pleasance. She had seen this richly ornamented space of ground from the window of Mervyn's Tower; and it occurred to her, at the moment of her escape, that, among its numerous arbors, bowers, fountains, statues, and grottoes, she might find some recess in which she could lie concealed until she had an opportunity of addressing herself to a protector, to whom she might communicate as much as she dared of her forlorn situation, and through those means she might supplicate an interview with her husband.

"If I could see my guide," she thought, "I would learn if he had delivered my letter. Even did I but see Tressilian, it were better to risk Dudley's anger, by confiding my whole situation to one who is the very soul of honor, than to run the hazard of farther insult among the insolent menials of this ill-ruled place. I will not again venture into an inclosed apartment. I will wait—I will watch; amidst so many human beings, there must be some kind heart which can judge and compassionate what mine endures."

In truth, more than one party entered and traversed the Pleasance. But they were in joyous groups of four or five persons together, laughing and jesting in their own fullness of mirth and lightness of heart.

The retreat which she had chosen gave her the easy alternative of avoiding observation. It was but stepping back to the farthest recess of a grotto, ornamented with rustic work and moss-seats, and terminated by a fountain, and she might easily remain concealed, or at her pleasure discover herself to any solitary wanderer whose curiosity might lead him to that romantic retirement. Anticipating such an opportunity, she looked into the clear basin which the silent fountain held up to her like a mirror, and felt shocked at her own appear-

ance, and doubtful at the same time, muffled and disfigured as her disguise made her seem to herself, whether any female (and it was from the compassion of her own sex that she chiefly expected sympathy) would engage in conference with so suspicious an object. Reasoning thus like a woman, to whom external appearance is scarcely in any circumstances a matter of unimportance, and like a beauty, who had some confidence in the power of her own charms, she laid aside her traveling cloak and capotaine hat, and placed them beside her, so that she could assume them in an instant, ere one could penetrate from the entrance of the grotto to its extremity, in case the intrusion of Varney or of Lambourne should render such disguise necessary. The dress which she wore under these vestments was somewhat of a theatrical cast, so as to suit the assumed personage of one of the females who was to act in the pageant. Wayland had found the means of arranging it thus upon the second day of their journey, having experienced the service arising from the assumption of such a character on the preceding day. The fountain, acting both as a mirror and ewer, afforded Amy the means of a brief toilet, of which she availed herself as hastily as possible; then took in her hand her small casket of jewels, in case she might find them useful intercessors, and retiring to the darkest and most sequestered nook, sat down on a seat of moss, and awaited till fate should give her some chance of rescue or of propitiating an intercessor.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Have you not seen the partridge quake,
Viewing the hawk approaching nigh?
She cuddles close beneath the brake,
Afraid to sit, afraid to fly.

—PRIOR.

It chanced, upon that memorable morning, that one of the earliest of the huntress train who appeared from her chamber in full array for the chase was the princess for whom all these pleasures were instituted, England's Maiden Queen. I know not if it were by chance, or out of the befitting courtesy due to a mistress by whom he was so much honored, that she had scarcely made one step beyond the threshold of her chamber ere Leicester was by her side, and proposed to her, until the preparations for the chase had been completed, to view the Pleasance and the gardens which it connected with the castle yard.

To this new scene of pleasures they walked, the earl's arm affording his sovereign the occasional support which she required, where flights of steps, then a favorite ornament in a garden, conducted them from terrace to terrace and from parterre to parterre. The ladies in attendance, gifted with prudence, or endowed perhaps with the amiable desire of acting as they would be done by, did not conceive their duty to the Queen's person required them, though they lost not sight of her, to approach so near as to share, or perhaps disturb, the conversation betwixt the Queen and the earl, who was not only her host, but also her most trusted, esteemed, and favored servant. They contented themselves with admiring the grace of this illustrious couple, whose robes of state were now exchanged for hunting-suits, almost equally magnificent.

Elizabeth's silvan dress, which was of a pale blue silk, with silver lace and *aiguillettes*, approached in form to that of the ancient Amazons; and was, therefore, well suited at once to her height and to the dignity of her mien, which her conscious rank and long habits of authority had rendered in some degree too masculine to be seen to the best advantage in ordinary female weeds. Leicester's hunting-suit of Lincoln green, richly embroidered with gold, and crossed by the gay baldric, which sustained a bugle-horn, and a wood-knife instead of a

sword, became its master, as did his other vestments of court or of war. For such were the perfections of his form and mien, that Leicester was always supposed to be seen to the greatest advantage in the character and dress which for the time he represented or wore.

The conversation of Elizabeth and the favorite earl has not reached us in detail. But those who watched at some distance (and the eyes of courtiers and court ladies are right sharp) were of opinion that on no occasion did the dignity of Elizabeth, in gesture and motion, seem so decidedly to soften away into a mien expressive of indecision and tenderness. Her step was not only slow, but even unequal, a thing most unwonted in her carriage; her looks seemed bent on the ground, and there was a timid disposition to withdraw from her companion, which external gesture in females often indicates exactly the opposite tendency in the secret mind. The Duchess of Rutland, who ventured nearest, was even heard to aver that she discerned a tear in Elizabeth's eye and a blush on her cheek; and still farther, "She bent her looks on the ground to avoid mine," said the duchess; "she who, in her ordinary mood, could look down a lion." To what conclusion these symptoms led is sufficiently evident; nor were they probably entirely groundless. The progress of a private conversation betwixt two persons of different sexes is often decisive of their fate, and gives it a turn very different perhaps from what they themselves anticipated. Gallantry becomes mingled with conversation, and affection and passion come gradually to mix with gallantry. Nobles, as well as shepherd swains, will, in such a trying moment, say more than they intended; and queens, like village maidens, will listen longer than they should.

Horses in the meanwhile neighed and champed the bits with impatience in the base-court; hounds yelled in their couples, and yeomen, rangers, and prickers lamented the exhaling of the dew, which would prevent the scent from lying. But Leicester had another chase in view, or, to speak more justly toward him, had become engaged in it without premeditation, as the high-spirited hunter which follows the cry of the hounds that have crossed his path by accident. The Queen, an accomplished and handsome woman—the pride of England, the hope of France and Holland, and the dread of Spain—had probably listened with more than usual favor to that mixture of romantic gallantry with which she always loved to be addressed; and the earl had, in vanity, in ambition,

or in both, thrown in more and more of that delicious ingredient, until his importunity became the language of love itself.

“No, Dudley,” said Elizabeth, yet it was with broken accents—“no, I must be the mother of my people. Other ties, that make the lowly maiden happy, are denied to her sovereign. No, Leicester, urge it no more. Were I as others, free to seek my own happiness, then, indeed—but it cannot—cannot be. Delay the chase—delay it for half an hour—and leave me, my lord.”

“How, leave you, madam?” said Leicester. “Has my madness offended you?”

“No, Leicester, not so!” answered the queen hastily; “but it is madness, and must not be repeated. Go, but go not far from hence; and meantime let no one intrude on my privacy.”

While she spoke thus, Dudley bowed deeply, and retired with a slow and melancholy air. The Queen stood gazing after him, and murmured to herself, “Were it possible—were it *but* possible! But no—no; Elizabeth must be the wife and mother of England alone.”

As she spoke thus, and in order to avoid someone whose step she heard approaching, the Queen turned into the grotto in which her hapless, and yet but too successful rival lay concealed.

The mind of England’s Elizabeth, if somewhat shaken by the agitating interview to which she had just put a period, was of that firm and decided character which soon recovers its natural tone. It was like one of those ancient druidical monuments called rocking-stones. The figure of Cupid, boy as he is painted, could put her feelings in motion, but the power of Hercules could not have destroyed their equilibrium. As she advanced with a slow pace toward the inmost extremity of the grotto, her countenance, ere she had proceeded half the length, had recovered its dignity of look and her mien its air of command.

It was then the Queen became aware that a female figure was placed beside, or rather partly behind, an alabaster column, at the foot of which arose the pellucid fountain, which occupied the inmost recess of the twilight grotto. The classical mind of Elizabeth suggested the story of Numa and Egeria, and she doubted not that some Italian sculptor had here represented the naïd whose inspirations gave the laws to Rome. As she advanced, she became doubtful whether she beheld a statue or a form of flesh and blood. The unfortu-

nate Amy, indeed, remained motionless, betwixt the desire which she had to make her condition known to one of her own sex and her awe for the stately form which approached her, and which, though her eyes had never before beheld, her fears instantly suspected to be the personage she really was. Amy had arisen from her seat with the purpose of addressing the lady who entered the grotto alone, and, as she at first thought, so opportunely. But when she recollected the alarm which Leicester had expressed at the Queen's knowing aught of their union, and became more and more satisfied that the person whom she now beheld was Elizabeth herself, she stood with one foot advanced and one withdrawn, her arms, head, and hands perfectly motionless, and her cheek as pallid as the alabaster pedestal against which she leaned. Her dress was of pale sea-green silk, little distinguished in that imperfect light, and somewhat resembled the drapery of a Grecian nymph, such an antique disguise having been thought the most secure, where so many masquers and revelers were assembled; so that the Queen's doubt of her being a living form was well justified by all contingent circumstances, as well as by the bloodless cheek and the fixed eye.

Elizabeth remained in doubt, even after she had approached within a few paces, whether she did not gaze on a statue so cunningly fashioned that by the doubtful light it could not be distinguished from reality. She stopped, therefore, and fixed upon this interesting object her princely look with so much keenness that the astonishment which had kept Amy immovable gave way to awe, and she gradually cast down her eyes and drooped her head under the commanding gaze of the sovereign. Still, however, she remained in all respects, saving this slow and profound inclination of the head, motionless and silent.

From her dress, and the casket which she instinctively held in her hand, Elizabeth naturally conjectured that the beautiful but mute figure which she beheld was a performer in one of the various theatrical pageants which had been placed in different situations to surprise her with their homage, and that the poor player, overcome with awe at her presence, had either forgot the part assigned her or lacked courage to go through it. It was natural and courteous to give her some encouragement; and Elizabeth accordingly said, in a tone of condescending kindness, "How now, fair nymph of this lovely grotto, art thou spell-bound and struck with dumbness by the charms of the wicked enchanter whom men term fear? We are his

sworn enemy, maiden, and can reverse his charm. Speak, we command thee."

Instead of answering her by speech, the unfortunate countess dropped on her knee before the Queen, let her casket fall from her hand, and clasping her palms together, looked up in the Queen's face with such a mixed agony of fear and supplication that Elizabeth was considerably affected.

"What may this mean?" she said; "this is a stronger passion than befits the occasion. Stand up, damsel; what wouldst thou have with us?"

"Your protection, madam," faltered forth the unhappy petitioner.

"Each daughter of England has it while she is worthy of it," replied the Queen; "but your distress seems to have a deeper root than a forgotten task. Why, and in what, do you crave our protection?"

Amy hastily endeavored to recall what she were best to say, which might secure herself from the imminent dangers that surrounded her, without endangering her husband; and plunging from one thought to another, amidst the chaos which filled her mind, she could at length, in answer to the Queen's repeated inquiries in what she sought protection, only falter out, "Alas! I know not."

"This is folly, maiden," said Elizabeth impatiently; for there was something in the extreme confusion of the suppliant which irritated her curiosity, as well as interested her feelings. "The sick man must tell his malady to the physician, nor are we accustomed to ask questions so oft without receiving an answer."

"I request—I implore," stammered forth the unfortunate countess—"I beseech your gracious protection—against—against one Varney." She choked well-nigh as she uttered the fatal word, which was instantly caught up by the Queen.

"What Varney? Sir Richard Varney—the servant of Lord Leicester? What, damsel, are you to him, or he to you?"

"I—I—was his prisoner—and he practiced on my life—and I broke forth to—to——"

"To throw thyself on my protection, doubtless," said Elizabeth. "Thou shalt have it—that is, if thou art worthy; for we will sift this matter to the uttermost. Thou art," she said, bending on the countess an eye which seemed designed to pierce her very inmost soul—"thou art Amy, daughter of Sir Hugh Robsart of Lidcote Hall?"

"Forgive me—forgive me, most gracious princess!" said

Amy, dropping once more on her knee, from which she had arisen.

"For what should I forgive thee, silly wench?" said Elizabeth; "for being the daughter of thine own father? Thou art brain-sick surely. Well, I see I must wring the story from thee by inches. Thou didst deceive thine old and honored father—thy look confesses it; cheated Master Tressilian—thy blush avouches it; and married this same Varney?"

Amy sprung on her feet, and interrupted the Queen eagerly, with, "No, madam—no; as there is a God above us, I am not the sordid wretch you would make me! I am not the wife of that contemptible slave—of that most deliberate villain! I am not the wife of Varney! I would rather be the bride of destruction!"

The Queen, overwhelmed in her turn by Amy's vehemence, stood silent for an instant, and then replied, "Why, God ha' mercy, woman! I see thou canst talk fast enough when the theme likes thee. Nay, tell me, woman," she continued, for to the impulse of curiosity was now added that of an undefined jealousy that some deception had been practiced on her—"tell me, woman—for, by God's day, I WILL know—whose wife, or whose paramour, art thou? Speak out, and be speedy. Thou wert better dally with a lioness than with Elizabeth."

Urged to this extremity, dragged as it were by irresistible force to the verge of the precipice, which she saw but could not avoid, permitted not a moment's respite by the eager words and menacing gestures of the offended Queen, Amy at length uttered in despair, "The Earl of Leicester knows it all."

"The Earl of Leicester!" said Elizabeth, in utter astonishment. "The Earl of Leicester!" she repeated, with kindling anger. "Woman, thou art set on to this—thou dost belie him: he takes no keep of such things as thou art. Thou art suborned to slander the noblest lord and the truest-hearted gentleman in England! But were he the right hand of our trust, or something yet dearer to us, thou shalt have thy hearing, and that in his presence. Come with me—come with me instantly!"

As Amy shrunk back with terror, which the incensed Queen interpreted as that of conscious guilt, Elizabeth rapidly advanced, seized on her arm, and hastened with swift and long steps out of the grotto, and along the principal alley of the Pleasance, dragging with her the terrified countess, whom she

still held by the arm, and whose utmost exertions could but just keep pace with those of the indignant Queen.

Leicester was at this moment the center of a splendid group of lords and ladies, assembled together under an arcade, or portico, which closed the alley. The company had drawn together in that place to attend the commands of her Majesty when the hunting-party should go forward, and their astonishment may be imagined when, instead of seeing Elizabeth advance toward them with her usual measured dignity of motion, they beheld her walking so rapidly that she was in the midst of them ere they were aware; and then observed, with fear and surprise, that her features were flushed betwixt anger and agitation, that her hair was loosened by her haste of motion, and that her eyes sparkled as they were wont when the spirit of Henry VIII. mounted highest in his daughter. Nor were they less astonished at the appearance of the pale, extenuated, half-dead, yet still lovely, female whom the Queen upheld by main strength with one hand, while with the other she waved aside the ladies and nobles who pressed toward her, under the idea that she was taken suddenly ill. "Where is my Lord of Leicester?" she said in a tone that thrilled with astonishment all the courtiers who stood around. "Stand forth, my Lord of Leicester!"

If, in the midst of the most serene day of summer, when all is light and laughing around, a thunderbolt were to fall from the clear blue vault of heaven, and rend the earth at the very feet of some careless traveler, he could not gaze upon the smoldering chasm which so unexpectedly yawned before him with half the astonishment and fear which Leicester felt at the sight that so suddenly presented itself. He had that instant been receiving, with a political affectation of disavowing and misunderstanding their meaning, the half-uttered, half-intimated congratulations of the courtiers upon the favor of the Queen, carried apparently to its highest pitch during the interview of that morning; from which most of them seemed to augur that he might soon arise from their equal in rank to become their master. And now, while the subdued yet proud smile with which he disclaimed those inferences was yet curling his cheek, the Queen shot into the circle, her passions excited to the uttermost; and, supporting with one hand, and apparently without an effort, the pale and sinking form of his almost expiring wife, and pointing with the finger of the other to her half-dead features, demanded in a voice that sounded to the ears of the astounded statesman like the last dread

trumpet-call, that is to summon body and spirit to the judgment-seat, "Knowest thou this woman?"

As, at the blast of that last trumpet, the guilty shall call upon the mountains to cover them, Leicester's inward thoughts invoked the stately arch which he had built in his pride to burst its strong conjunction and overwhelm them in its ruins. But the cemented stones, architrave and battlement, stood fast; and it was the proud master himself who, as if some actual pressure had bent him to the earth, kneeled down before Elizabeth, and prostrated his brow to the marble flagstones on which she stood.

"Leicester," said Elizabeth, in a voice which trembled with passion, "could I think thou hast practiced on me—on me thy sovereign—on me thy confiding; thy too partial mistress, the base and ungrateful deception which thy present confusion surmises—by all that is holy, false lord, that head of thine were in as great peril as ever was thy father's!"

Leicester had not conscious innocence, but he had pride, to support him. He raised slowly his brow and features, which were black and swoln with contending emotions, and only replied, "My head cannot fall but by the sentence of my peers; to them I will plead, and not to a princess who thus requites my faithful service."

"What! my lords," said Elizabeth, looking around, "we are defied, I think—defied in the castle we have ourselves bestowed on this proud man! My Lord Shrewsbury, you are marshal of England, attach him of high treason!"

"Whom does your Grace mean!" said Shrewsbury, much surprised, for he had that instant joined the astonished circle.

"Whom should I mean but that traitor, Dudley Earl of Leicester! Cousin of Hunsdon, order out your band of gentlemen pensioners, and take him into instant custody. I say, villain, make haste!"

Hunsdon, a rough old noble, who, from his relationship to the Boleyns, was accustomed to use more freedom with the Queen than almost any other dared to do, replied bluntly, "And it is like your Grace might order me to the Tower to-morrow for making too much haste. I do beseech you to be patient."

"Patient! God's life!" exclaimed the Queen, "name not the word to me; thou know'st not of what he is guilty!"

Amy, who had by this time in some degree recovered herself, and who saw her husband, as she conceived, in the utmost danger from the rage of an offended sovereign, instantly (and

alas! how many women have done the same) forgot her own wrongs and her own danger in her apprehensions for him, and throwing herself before the Queen, embraced her knees, while she exclaimed, "He is guiltless, madam—he is guiltless: no one can lay aught to the charge of the noble Leicester!"

"Why, minion," answered the Queen, "didst not thou thyself say that the Earl of Leicester was privy to thy whole history?"

"Did I say so?" repeated the unhappy Amy, laying aside every consideration of consistency and of self-interest. "Oh, if I did, I foully belied him. May God so judge me, as I believe he was never privy to a thought that would harm me!"

"Woman!" said Elizabeth, "I will know who has moved thee to this; or my wrath—and the wrath of kings is a flaming fire—shall wither and consume thee like a weed in the furnace."

As the Queen uttered this threat, Leicester's better angel called his pride to his aid, and reproached him with the utter extremity of meanness which would overwhelm him forever if he stooped to take shelter under the generous interposition of his wife, and abandoned her, in return for her kindness, to the resentment of the Queen. He had already raised his head, with the dignity of a man of honor, to avow his marriage, and proclaim himself the protector of his countess, when Varney, born, as it appeared, to be his master's evil genius, rushed into the presence, with every mark of disorder on his face and apparel.

"What means this saucy intrusion?" said Elizabeth.

Varney, with the air of a man altogether overwhelmed with grief and confusion, prostrated himself before her feet, exclaiming, "Pardon, my liege—pardon! or at least let your justice avenge itself on me, where it is due; but spare my noble, my generous, my innocent patron and master!"

Amy, who was yet kneeling, started up as she saw the man whom she deemed most odious place himself so near her, and was about to fly toward Leicester, when, checked at once by the uncertainty and even timidity which his looks had reassumed as soon as the appearance of his confidant seemed to open a new scene, she hung back, and uttering a faint scream, besought of her Majesty to cause her to be imprisoned in the lowest dungeon of the castle—to deal with her as the worst of criminals—"but spare," she exclaimed, "my sight and hearing what will destroy the little judgment I have left—the sight of that unutterable and most shameless villain!"

"And why, sweetheart?" said the Queen, moved by a new impulse; "what hath he, this false knight, since such thou accountest him, done to thee?"

"Oh, worse than sorrow, madam, and worse than injury: he has sown dissension where most there should be peace. I shall go mad if I look longer on him!"

"Beshrew me, but I think thou art distraught already," answered the Queen. "My Lord Hunsdon, look to this poor distressed young woman, and let her be safely bestowed and in honest keeping till we require her to be forthcoming."

Two or three of the ladies in attendance, either moved by compassion for a creature so interesting or by some other motive, offered their services to look after her; but the Queen briefly answered, "Ladies, under favor, no. You have all, give God thanks! sharp ears and nimble tongues; our kinsman Hunsdon has ears of the dullest, and a tongue somewhat rough, but yet of the slowest. Hunsdon, look to it that none have speech of her."

"By Our Lady!" said Hunsdon, taking in his strong, sinewy arms the fading and almost swooning form of Amy, "she is a lovely child; and though a rough nurse, your Grace hath given her a kind one. She is safe with me as one of my own ladybirds of daughters."

So saying, he carried her off, unresistingly and almost unconsciously; his war-worn locks and long gray beard mingling with her light-brown tresses, as her head reclined on his strong square shoulder. The queen followed them with her eye; she had already, with that self-command which forms so necessary a part of a sovereign's accomplishments, suppressed every appearance of agitation, and seemed as if she desired to banish all traces of her burst of passion from the recollection of those who had witnessed it. "My Lord of Hunsdon says well," she observed; "he is indeed a rough nurse for so tender a babe."

"My Lord of Hunsdon," said the Dean of St. Asaph's, "I speak it not in defamation of his more noble qualities, hath a broad license in speech, and garnishes his discourse somewhat too freely with the cruel and superstitious oaths, which savor both of profaneness and of old Papistrie."

"It is the fault of his blood, Mr. Dean," said the Queen, turning sharply round upon the reverend dignitary as she spoke; "and you may blame mine for the same distemperature. The Boleyns were ever a hot and plain-spoken race, more hasty to speak their mind than careful to choose their

expressions. And, by my word,—I hope there is no sin in that affirmation?—I question if it were much cooled by mixing with that of Tudor.”

As she made this last observation, she smiled graciously, and stole her eyes almost insensibly round to seek those of the Earl of Leicester, to whom she now began to think she had spoken with hasty harshness upon the unfounded suspicion of a moment.

The Queen's eye found the earl in no mood to accept the implied offer of conciliation. His own looks had followed, with late and rueful repentance, the faded form which Hunsdon had just borne from the presence; they now reposed gloomily on the ground, but more—so at least it seemed to Elizabeth—with the expression of one who has received an unjust affront than of him who is conscious of guilt. She turned her face angrily from him, and said to Varney, “Speak, Sir Richard, and explain these riddles; thou hast sense and the use of speech, at least, which elsewhere we look for in vain.”

As she said this, she darted another resentful glance toward Leicester, while the wily Varney hastened to tell his own story.

“Your Majesty's piercing eye,” he said, “has already detected the cruel malady of my beloved lady; which, unhappy that I am, I would not suffer to be expressed in the certificate of her physician, seeking to conceal what has now broken out with so much the more scandal.”

“She is then distraught?” said the Queen; “indeed, we doubted not of it: her whole demeanor bears it out. I found her moping in a corner of yonder grotto; and every word she spoke—which indeed I dragged from her as by the rack—she instantly recalled and forswore. But how came she hither? Why had you her not in safe-keeping?”

“My gracious liege,” said Varney, “the worthy gentleman under whose charge I left her, Master Anthony Foster, has come hither but now, as fast as man and horse can travel, to show me of her escape, but she managed with the art peculiar to many who are afflicted with this malady. He is at hand for examination.”

“Let it be for another time,” said the Queen. “But, Sir Richard, we envy you not your domestic felicity: your lady railed on you bitterly, and seemed ready to swoon at beholding you.”

“It is the nature of persons in her disorder, so please your

Grace," answered Varney, "to be ever most inveterate in their spleen against those whom, in their better moments, they hold nearest and dearest."

"We have heard so, indeed," said Elizabeth, "and give faith to the saying."

"May your Grace then be pleased," said Varney, "to command my unfortunate wife to be delivered into the custody of her friends?"

Leicester partly started; but, making a strong effort, he subdued his emotion, while Elizabeth answered sharply, "You are something too hasty, Master Varney; we will have first a report of the lady's health and state of mind from Masters, our own physician, and then determine what shall be thought just. You shall have license, however, to see her, that if there be any matrimonial quarrel betwixt you—such things we have heard do occur, even betwixt a loving couple—you may make it up, without further scandal to our court or trouble to ourselves."

Varney bowed low, and made no other answer.

Elizabeth again looked toward Leicester, and said, with a degree of condescension which could only arise out of the most heartfelt interest, "Discord, as the Italian poet says, will find her way into peaceful convents, as well as into the privacy of families; and we fear our own guards and ushers will hardly exclude her from courts. My Lord of Leicester, you are offended with us, and we have right to be offended with you. We will take the lion's part upon us, and be the first to forgive."

Leicester smoothed his brow, as by an effort, but the trouble was too deep-seated that its placidity should at once return. He said, however, that which fitted the occasion, "That he could not have the happiness of forgiving, because she who commanded him to do so could commit no injury toward him."

Elizabeth seemed content with this reply, and intimated her pleasure that the sports of the morning should proceed. The bugles sounded—the hounds bayed—the horses pranced; but the courtiers and ladies sought the amusement to which they were summoned with hearts very different from those which had leaped to the morning's reveille. There was doubt, and fear, and expectation on every brow, and surmise and intrigue in every whisper.

Blount took an opportunity to whisper into Raleigh's ear, "This storm came like a levanter in the Mediterranean."

“‘*Varium et mutabile,*’” answered Raleigh, in a similar tone.

“Nay, I know naught of your Latin,” said Blount; “but I thank God Tressilian took not the sea during that hurricano. He could scarce have missed shipwreck, knowing as he does so little how to trim his sails to a court gale.”

“Thou wouldst have instructed him?” said Raleigh.

“Why, I have profited by my time as well as thou, Sir Walter,” replied honest Blount. “I am knight as well as thou, and of the earlier creation.”

“Now, God further thy wit,” said Raleigh; “but for Tressilian, I would I knew what were the matter with him. He told me this morning he would not leave his chamber for the space of twelve hours or thereby, being bound by promise. This lady’s madness, when he shall learn it, will not, I fear, cure his infirmity. The moon is at the fullest, and men’s brains are working like yeast. But hark! they sound to mount. Let us to horse, Blount: we young knights must deserve our spurs.”

CHAPTER XXXV.

Sincerity,
Thou first of virtues, let no mortal leave
The onward path, although the earth should gape,
And from the gulf of hell destruction cry,
To take dissimulation's winding way.

—Douglas.

IT was not till after a long and successful morning's sport, and a prolonged repast which followed the return of the Queen to the castle, that Leicester at length found himself alone with Varney, from whom he now learned the whole particulars of the countess' escape, as they had been brought to Kenilworth by Foster, who, in his terror for the consequences, had himself posted thither with the tidings. As Varney, in his narrative, took especial care to be silent concerning those practices on the countess' health which had driven her to so desperate a resolution, Leicester, who could only suppose that she had adopted it out of jealous impatience to attain the avowed state and appearance belonging to her rank, was not a little offended at the levity with which his wife had broken his strict commands, and exposed him to the resentment of Elizabeth.

"I have given," he said, "to this daughter of an obscure Devonshire gentleman the proudest name in England. I have made her sharer of my bed and of my fortunes. I ask but of her a little patience, ere she launches forth upon the full current of her grandeur, and the infatuated woman will rather hazard her own shipwreck and mine, will rather involve me in a thousand whirlpools, shoals, and quicksands, and compel me to a thousand devices which shame me in mine own eyes, than tarry for a little space longer in the obscurity to which she was born. So lovely, so delicate, so fond, so faithful, yet to lack in so grave a matter the prudence which one might hope from the veriest fool—it puts me beyond my patience."

"We may post it over yet well enough," said Varney, "if my lady will be but ruled, and take on her the character which the time commands."

"It is but too true, Sir Richard," said Leicester, "there is indeed no other remedy. I have heard her termed thy wife

in my presence, without contradiction. She must bear the title until she is far from Kenilworth."

"And long afterward, I trust," said Varney; then instantly added, "for I cannot but hope it will be long after ere she bear the title of Lady Leicester: I fear me it may scarce be with safety during the life of this Queen. But your lordship is best judge, you alone knowing what passages have taken place betwixt Elizabeth and you."

"You are right, Varney," said Leicester; "I have this morning been both fool and villain; and when Elizabeth hears of my unhappy marriage, she cannot but think herself treated with that premeditated slight which women never forgive. We have once this day stood upon terms little short of defiance; and to those, I fear, we must again return."

"Is her resentment, then, so implacable?" said Varney.

"Far from it," replied the earl; "for, being what she is in spirit and in station, she has even this day been but too condescending, in giving me opportunities to repair what she thinks my faulty heat of temper."

"Aye," answered Varney; "the Italians say right: in lovers' quarrels the party that loves most is always most willing to acknowledge the greater fault. So then, my lord, if this union with the lady could be concealed, you stand with Elizabeth as you did?"

Leicester sighed, and was silent for a moment, ere he replied.

"Varney, I think thou art true to me, and I will tell thee all. I do *not* stand where I did. I have spoken to Elizabeth—under what mad impulse I know not—on a theme which cannot be abandoned without touching every female feeling to the quick, and which yet I dare not and cannot prosecute. She can never, never forgive me for having caused and witnessed those yieldings to human passion."

"We must do something, my lord," said Varney, "and that speedily."

"There is naught to be done," answered Leicester, despondingly; "I am like one that has long toiled up a dangerous precipice, and when he is within one perilous stride of the top, finds his progress arrested when retreat has become impossible. I see above me the pinnacle which I cannot reach, beneath me the abyss into which I must fall, as soon as my relaxing grasp and dizzy brain join to hurl me from my present precarious stance."

"Think better of your situation, my lord," said Varney;

“let us try the experiment in which you have but now acquiesced. Keep we your marriage from Elizabeth’s knowledge, and all may yet be well. I will instantly go to the lady myself. She hates me, because I have been earnest with your lordship, as she truly suspects, in opposition to what she terms her rights. I care not for her prejudices. She *shall* listen to me; and I will show her such reasons for yielding to the pressure of the times, that I doubt not to bring back her consent to whatever measures these exigences may require.”

“No, Varney,” said Leicester; “I have thought upon what is to be done, and I will myself speak with Amy.”

It was now Varney’s turn to feel, upon his own account, the terrors which he affected to participate solely on account of his patron. “Your lordship will not yourself speak with the lady?”

“It is my fixed purpose,” said Leicester; “fetch me one of the livery cloaks; I will pass the sentinel as thy servant. Thou art to have free access to her.”

“But, my lord——”

“I will have no ‘buts,’” replied Leicester; “it shall be even thus, and not otherwise. Hunsdon sleeps, I think, in Saintlowe’s Tower. We can go thither from these apartments by the private passage, without risk of meeting anyone. Or what if I do meet Hunsdon? he is more my friend than enemy, and thick-witted enough to adopt any belief that is thrust on him. Fetch me the cloak instantly.”

Varney had no alternative save obedience. In a few minutes Leicester was muffled in the mantle, pulled his bonnet over his brows, and followed Varney along the secret passage of the castle which communicated with Hunsdon’s apartments, in which was scarce a chance of meeting any inquisitive person, and hardly light enough for any such to have satisfied their curiosity. They emerged at a door where Lord Hunsdon had, with military precaution, placed a sentinel, one of his own northern retainers as it fortunèd, who readily admitted Sir Richard Varney and his attendant, saying only, in his northern dialect, “I would, man, thou couldst make the mad lady be still yonder; for her moans do sae dirl through my head that I would rather keep watch on a snow-drift in the wastes of Catlowdie.”

They hastily entered, and shut the door behind them.

“Now, good devil, if there be one,” said Varney, within himself, “for once help a votary at a dead pinch, for my boat is amongst the breakers!”

The Countess Amy, with her hair and her garments disheveled, was seated upon a sort of couch, in an attitude of the deepest affliction, out of which she was startled by the opening of the door. She turned hastily round, and, fixing her eye on Varney, exclaimed, "Wretch! art thou come to frame some new plan of villainy?"

Leicester cut short her reproaches by stepping forward and dropping his cloak, while he said, in a voice rather of authority than of affection, "It is with me, madam, you have to commune, not with Sir Richard Varney."

The change effected on the countess' look and manner was like magic. "Dudley!" she exclaimed—"Dudley! and art thou come at last?" And with the speed of lightning she flew to her husband, clung around his neck, and, unheeding the presence of Varney, overwhelmed him with caresses, while she bathed his face in a flood of tears; muttering, at the same time, but in broken and disjointed monosyllables, the fondest expressions which love teaches his votaries.

Leicester, as it seemed to him, had reason to be angry with his lady for transgressing his commands, and thus placing him in the perilous situation in which he had that morning stood. But what displeasure could keep its ground before these testimonies of affection from a being so lovely that even the negligence of dress, and the withering effects of fear, grief, and fatigue, which would have impaired the beauty of others, rendered hers but the more interesting! He received and repaid her caresses with fondness, mingled with melancholy, the last of which she seemed scarcely to observe, until the first transport of her own joy was over; when, looking anxiously in his face, she asked if he was ill.

"Not in my body, Amy," was his answer.

"Then I will be well, too. Oh, Dudley! I have been ill!—very ill, since we last met!—for I call not this morning's horrible vision a meeting. I have been in sickness, in grief, and in danger. But thou art come, and all is joy, and health, and safety!"

"Alas! Amy," said Leicester, "thou hast undone me!"

"I, my lord!" said Amy, her cheek at once losing its transient flush of joy; "how could I injure that which I love better than myself?"

"I would not upbraid you, Amy," replied the earl; "but are you not here contrary to my express commands; and does not your presence here endanger both yourself and me?"

"Does it—does it indeed?" she exclaimed, eagerly; "then

why am I here a moment longer? Oh, if you knew by what fears I was urged to quit Cumnor Place! But I will say nothing of myself, only that, if it might be otherwise, I would not willingly return *thither*; yet if it concern your safety——”

“We will think, Amy, of some other retreat,” said Leicester; “and you shall go to one of my northern castles, under the personage—it will be but needful, I trust, for a very few days—of Varney’s wife.”

“How, my Lord of Leicester!” said the lady, disengaging herself from his embraces; “is it to your wife you give the dishonorable counsel to acknowledge herself the bride of another—and of all men, the bride of that Varney?”

“Madam, I speak it in earnest. Varney is my true and faithful servant, trusted in my deepest secrets. I had better lose my right hand than his service at this moment. You have no cause to scorn him as you do.”

“I could assign one, my lord,” replied the countess; “and I see he shakes even under that assured look of his. But he that is necessary as your right hand to your safety is free from any accusation of mine. May he be true to you; and that he may be true, trust him not too much or too far. But it is enough to say, that I will not go with him unless by violence, nor would I acknowledge him as my husband were all——”

“It is a temporary deception, madam,” said Leicester, irritated by her opposition, “necessary for both our safeties, endangered by you through female caprice, or the premature desire to seize on a rank to which I gave you title only under condition that our marriage, for a time, should continue secret. If my proposal disgust you, it is yourself has brought it on both of us. There is no other remedy: you must do what your own impatient folly hath rendered necessary—I command you.”

“I cannot put your commands, my lord,” said Amy, “in balance with those of honor and conscience. I will not, in this instance, obey you. You may achieve your own dishonor, to which these crooked policies naturally tend; but I will do naught that can blemish mine. How could you again, my lord, acknowledge me as a pure and chaste matron, worthy to share your fortunes, when, holding that high character, I had strolled the country the acknowledged wife of such a profligate fellow as your servant Varney?”

“My lord,” said Varney, interposing, “my lady is too

much prejudiced against me, unhappily, to listen to what I can offer; yet it may please her better than what she proposes. She has good interest with Master Edmund Tressilian, and could doubtless prevail on him to consent to be her companion to Lidcote Hall, and there she might remain in safety until time permitted the development of this mystery."

Leicester was silent, but stood looking eagerly on Amy, with eyes which seemed suddenly to glow as much with suspicion as displeasure.

The countess only said, "Would to God I were in my father's house! When I left it, I little thought I was leaving peace of mind and honor behind me."

Varney proceeded with a tone of deliberation. "Doubtless this will make it necessary to take strangers into my lord's counsels; but surely the countess will be warrant for the honor of Master Tressilian and such of her father's family——"

"Peace, Varney," said Leicester; "by Heaven I will strike my dagger into thee, if again thou namest Tressilian as a partner of my counsels!"

"And wherefore not?" said the countess; "unless they be counsels fitter for such as Varney than for a man of stainless honor and integrity. My lord—my lord, bend no angry brows on me; it is the truth, and it is I who speak it. I once did Tressilian wrong for your sake; I will not do him the further injustice of being silent when his honor is brought in question. I can forbear," she said, looking at Varney, "to pull the mask off hypocrisy, but I will not permit virtue to be slandered in my hearing."

There was a dead pause. Leicester stood displeased, yet undetermined, and too conscious of the weakness of his cause; while Varney, with a deep and hypocritical affectation of sorrow, mingled with humility, bent his eyes on the ground.

It was then that the Countess Amy displayed, in the midst of distress and difficulty, the natural energy of character which would have rendered her, had fate allowed, a distinguished ornament of the rank which she held. She walked up to Leicester with a composed step, a dignified air, and looks in which strong affection essayed in vain to shake the firmness of conscious truth and rectitude of principle. "You have spoke your mind, my lord," she said, "in these difficulties, with which, unhappily, I have found myself unable

to comply. This gentleman—this person, I would say—has hinted at another scheme, to which I object not but as it displeases you. Will your lordship be pleased to hear what a young and timid woman, but your most affectionate wife, can suggest in the present extremity?"

Leicester was silent, but bent his head toward the countess, as an intimation that she was at liberty to proceed.

"There hath been but one cause for ail these evils, my lord," she proceeded, "and it resolves itself into the mysterious duplicity with which you have been induced to surround yourself. Extricate yourself at once, my lord, from the tyranny of these disgraceful trammels. Be like a true English gentleman, knight, and earl, who holds that truth is the foundation of honor, and that honor is dear to him as the breath of his nostrils. Take your ill-fated wife by the hand; lead her to the footstool of Elizabeth's throne; say that, 'In a moment of infatuation, moved by supposed beauty, of which none perhaps can now trace even the remains, I gave my hand to this Amy Robsart.' You will then have done justice to me, my lord, and to your own honor; and should law or power require you to part from me, I will oppose no objection, since I may then with honor hide a grieved and broken heart in those shades from which your love withdrew me. Then—have but a little patience, and Amy's life will not long darken your brighter prospects."

There was so much of dignity, so much of tenderness, in the countess' remonstrance that it moved all that was noble and generous in the soul of her husband. The scales seemed to fall from his eyes, and the duplicity and tergiversation of which he had been guilty stung him at once with remorse and shame.

"I am not worthy of you, Amy," he said, "that could weigh aught which ambition has to give against such a heart as thine! I have a bitter penance to perform, in disentangling, before sneering foes and astounded friends, all the meshes of my own deceitful policy. And the Queen—but let her take my head, as she has threatened."

"Your head, my lord!" said the countess; "because you used the freedom and liberty of an English subject in choosing a wife? For shame; it is this distrust of the Queen's justice, this apprehension of danger, which cannot but be imaginary, that, like scarecrows, have induced you to forsake the straightforward path, which, as it is the best, is also the safest."

“Ah, Amy, thou little knowest!” said Dudley; but, instantly checking himself, he added, “Yet she shall not find in me a safe or easy victim of arbitrary vengeance. I have friends—I have allies—I will not, like Norfolk, be dragged to the block as a victim to sacrifice. Fear not, Amy; thou shalt see Dudley bear himself worthy of his name. I must instantly communicate with some of those friends on whom I can best rely; for, as things stand, I may be made prisoner in my own castle.”

“Oh, my good lord,” said Amy, “make no faction in a peaceful state! There is no friend can help us so well as our own candid truth and honor. Bring but these to our assistance, and you are safe amidst a whole army of the envious and malignant. Leave these behind you, and all other defense will be fruitless. Truth, my noble lord, is well painted unarmed.”

“But wisdom, Amy,” answered Leicester, “is arrayed in panoply of proof. Argue not with me on the means I shall use to render my confession—since it must be called so—as safe as may be; it will be fraught with enough of danger, do what we will. Varney, we must hence. Farewell, Amy, whom I am to vindicate as mine own at an expense and risk of which thou alone couldst be worthy! You shall soon hear farther from me.”

He embraced her fervently, muffled himself as before, and accompanied Varney from the apartment. The latter, as he left the room, bowed low, and, as he raised his body, regarded Amy with a peculiar expression, as if he desired to know how far his own pardon was included in the reconciliation which had taken place betwixt her and her lord. The countess looked upon him with a fixed eye, but seemed no more conscious of his presence than if there had been nothing but vacant air on the spot where he stood.

“She has brought me to the crisis,” he muttered. “She or I are lost. There was something—I wot not if it was fear or pity—that prompted me to avoid this fatal crisis. It is now decided. She or I must *perish*.”

While he thus spoke, he observed, with surprise, that a boy, repulsed by the sentinel, made up to Leicester and spoke with him. Varney was one of those politicians whom not the slightest appearances escape without inquiry. He asked the sentinel what the lad wanted with him, and received for answer, that the boy had wished him to transmit a parcel to the mad lady, but that he cared not to take charge of it,

such communication being beyond his commission. His curiosity satisfied in that particular, he approached his patron, and heard him say, "Well, boy, the packet shall be delivered."

"Thanks, good Master Serving-man," said the boy, and was out of sight in an instant.

Leicester and Varney returned with hasty steps to the earl's private apartment by the same passage which had conducted them to Saintlowe's Tower.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

I have said
This is an adulteress, I have said with whom--
More, she's a traitor, and Camillo is
A federary with her, and one that knows
What she should shame to know herself

— *Winter's Tale.*

THEY were no sooner in the earl's cabinet than, taking his tablets from his pocket, he began to write, speaking partly to Varney and partly to himself: "There are many of them close bounden to me, and especially those in good estate and high office; many who, if they look back toward my benefits, or forward toward the perils which may befall themselves, will not, I think, be disposed to see me stagger unsupported. Let me see—Knollis is sure, and through his means Guernsey and Jersey. Horsey commands in the Isle of Wight. My brother-in-law, Huntingdon, and Pembroke have authority in Wales. Through Bedford I lead the Puritans, with their interest, so powerful in all the boroughs. My brother of Warwick is equal, well-nigh, to myself in wealth, followers, and dependencies. Sir Owen Hopton is at my devotion; he commands the Tower of London, and the national treasure deposited there. My father and grandfather needed never to have stooped their heads to the block had they thus forecast their enterprises. Why look you so sad, Varney? I tell thee, a tree so deep-rooted is not easily to be torn up by the tempest."

"Alas! my lord," said Varney, with well-acted passion, and then resumed the same look of despondency which Leicester had before noted.

"Alas!" repeated Leicester, "and wherefore alas, Sir Richard? Doth your new spirit of chivalry supply no more vigorous ejaculation when a noble struggle is impending? Or, if 'alas' means thou wilt flinch from the conflict, thou mayst leave the castle, or go join mine enemies, whichever thou thinkest best."

"Not so, my lord," answered his confidant; "Varney will be found fighting or dying by your side. Forgive me if, in love to you, I see more fully than your noble heart permits you to do the inextricable difficulties with which you are sur-

rounded. You are strong, my lord, and powerful; yet, let me say it without offense, you are so only by the reflected light of the Queen's favor. While you are Elizabeth's favorite you are all, save in name, like an actual sovereign. But let her call back the honors she has bestowed, and the prophet's gourd did not wither more suddenly. Declare against the Queen, and I do not say that in the wide nation, or in this province alone, you would find yourself instantly deserted and outnumbered; but I will say, that even in this very castle, and in the midst of your vassals, kinsmen, and dependents, you would be a captive, nay, a sentenced captive, should she please to say the word. Think upon Norfolk, my lord—upon the powerful Northumberland—the splendid Westmoreland—think on all who have made head against this sage princess. They are dead, captive, or fugitive. This is not like other thrones, which can be overturned by a combination of powerful nobles: the broad foundations which support it are in the extended love and affections of the people. You might share it with Elizabeth, if you would; but neither yours nor any other power, foreign or domestic, will avail to overthrow or even to shake it."

He paused, and Leicester threw his tablets from him with an air of reckless despite. "It may be as thou say'st," he said; "and, in sooth, I care not whether truth or cowardice dictate thy forebodings. But it shall not be said I fell without a struggle. Give orders that those of my retainers who served under me in Ireland be gradually drawn into the main keep, and let our gentlemen and friends stand on their guard, and go armed, as if they expected an onset from the followers of Sussex. Possess the townspeople with some apprehension; let them take arms and be ready, at a signal given, to overpower the pensioners and yeomen of the guard."

"Let me remind you, my lord," said Varney, with the same appearance of deep and melancholy interest, "that you have given me orders to prepare for disarming the Queen's guard. It is an act of high treason, but you shall nevertheless be obeyed."

"I care not," said Leicester, desperately—"I care not. Shame is behind me, ruin before me; I must on."

Here there was another pause, which Varney at length broke with the following words—"It is come to the point I have long dreaded. I must either witness, like an ungrateful beast, the downfall of the best and kindest of masters,

or I must speak what I would have buried in the deepest oblivion, or told by any other mouth than mine."

"What is that thou sayst, or wouldst say?" replied the earl; "we have no time to waste on words, when the time calls us to action."

"My speech is soon made, my lord—would to God it were as soon answered! Your marriage is the sole cause of the threatened breach with your sovereign, my lord, is it not?"

"Thou knowest it is!" replied Leicester. "What needs so fruitless a question?"

"Pardon me, my lord," said Varney; "the use lies here. Men will wager their lands and lives in defense of a rich diamond, my lord; but were it not first prudent to look if there is no flaw in it?"

"What means this?" said Leicester, with eyes sternly fixed on his dependent: "of whom dost thou dare to speak?"

"It is—of the Countess Amy, my lord, of whom I am unhappily bound to speak; and of whom I *will* speak, were your lordship to kill me for my zeal."

"Thou mayst happen to deserve it at my hand," said the earl; "but speak on, I will hear thee."

"Nay, then, my lord, I will be bold. I speak for my own life as well as for your lordship's. I like not this lady's tampering and trickstering with this same Edmund Tressilian. You know him, my lord. You know he had formerly an interest in her, which it cost your lordship some pains to supersede. You know the eagerness with which he has pressed on the suit against me in behalf of this lady, the open object of which is to drive your lordship to an avowal of what I must ever call your most unhappy marriage, the point to which my lady also is willing, at any risk, to urge you."

Leicester smiled constrainedly. "Thou meanest well, good Sir Richard, and wouldst, I think, sacrifice thine own honor, as well as that of any other person, to save me from what thou think'st a step so terrible. But remember"—he spoke these words with the most stern decision—"you speak of the Countess of Leicester."

"I do, my lord," said Varney; "but it is for the welfare of the Earl of Leicester. My tale is but begun. I do most strongly believe that this Tressilian has, from the beginning of his moving in her cause, been in connivance with her ladyship the countess."

"Thou speak'st wild madness, Varney, with the sober face

of a preacher. Where or how could they communicate together?"

"My lord," said Varney, "unfortunately I can show that but too well. It was just before the supplication was presented to the Queen, in Tressilian's name, that I met him, to my utter astonishment, at the postern gate which leads from the demesne at Cumnor Place."

"Thou met'st him, villain! and why didst thou not strike him dead?" exclaimed Leicester.

"I drew on him, my lord, and he on me; and had not my foot slipped, he would not, perhaps, have been again a stumbling-block in your lordship's path."

Leicester seemed struck dumb with surprise. At length he answered, "What other evidence hast thou of this, Varney, save thine own assertion? for, as I will punish deeply, I will examine coolly and warily. Sacred Heaven! but no—I will examine coldly and warily—coldly and warily." He repeated these words more than once to himself, as if in the very sound there was a sedative quality; and again compressing his lips, as if he feared some violent expression might escape from them, he asked again, "What farther proof?"

"Enough, my lord," said Varney, "and to spare. I would it rested with me alone, for with me it might have been silenced forever. But my servant, Michael Lambourne, witnessed the whole, and was, indeed, the means of first introducing Tressilian into Cumnor Place; and therefore I took him into my service, and retained him in it, though something of a debauched fellow, that I might have his tongue always under my own command." He then acquainted Lord Leicester how easy it was to prove the circumstance of their interview true, by evidence of Anthony Foster, with the corroborative testimonies of the various persons at Cumnor, who had heard the wager laid, and had seen Lambourne and Tressilian set off together. In the whole narrative, Varney hazarded nothing fabulous, excepting that, not indeed by direct assertion, but by inference, he led his patron to suppose that the interview betwixt Amy and Tressilian at Cumnor Place had been longer than the few minutes to which it was in reality limited.

"And wherefore was I not told of all this?" said Leicester, sternly. "Why did all of ye—and in particular thou, Varney—keep back from me such material information?"

"Because, my lord," replied Varney, "the countess pretended to Foster and to me that Tressilian had intruded him-

self upon her; and I concluded their interview had been in all honor, and that she would at her own time tell it to your lordship. Your lordship knows with what unwilling ears we listen to evil surmises against those whom we love; and I thank Heaven I am no make-bate or informer, to be the first to sow them."

"You are but too ready to receive them, however, Sir Richard," replied his patron. "How know'st thou that this interview was not in all honor, as thou hast said? Methinks the wife of the Earl of Leicester might speak for a short time with such a person as Tressilian without injury to me or suspicion to herself."

"Questionless, my lord," answered Varney; "had I thought otherwise, I had been no keeper of the secret. But here lies the rub—Tressilian leaves not the place without establishing a correspondence with a poor man, the landlord of an inn in Cumnor, for the purpose of carrying off the lady. He sent down an emissary of his, whom I trust soon to have in right sure keeping under Mervyn's Tower. Killigrew and Lambsbey are scouring the country in quest of him. The host is rewarded with a ring for keeping counsel; your lordship may have noted it on Tressilian's hand—here it is. This fellow, this agent, makes his way to the Place as a peddler, holds conference with the lady, and they make their escape together by night; rob a poor fellow of a horse by the way, such was their guilty haste; and at length reach this castle, where the Countess of Leicester finds refuge—I dare not say in what place."

"Speak, I command thee," said Leicester—"speak, while I retain sense enough to hear thee."

"Since it must be so," answered Varney, "the lady resorted immediately to the apartment of Tressilian, where she remained many hours, partly in company with him and partly alone. I told you Tressilian had a paramour in his chamber. I little dreamed that paramour was——"

"Amy, thou wouldst say," answered Leicester; "but it is false—false as the smoke of hell! Ambitious she may be—fickle and impatient—'tis a woman's fault; but false to me! never, never! The proof—the proof of this!" he exclaimed,

"Carrol, the deputy-marshal, ushered her thither by her own desire on yesterday afternoon; Lambourne and the warder both found her there at an early hour this morning."

"Was Tressilian there with her?" said Leicester in the same hurried tone.

"No, my lord. You may remember," answered Varney, "that he was that night placed with Sir Nicholas Blount, under a species of arrest."

"Did Carrol, or the other fellows, know who she was?" demanded Leicester.

"No, my lord," replied Varney. "Carrol and the warder had never seen the countess, and Lambourne knew her not in her disguise; but, in seeking to prevent her leaving the cell, he obtained possession of one of her gloves, which, I think, your lordship may know."

He gave the glove, which had the bear and ragged staff, the earl's impress, embroidered upon it in seed-pearls.

"I do—I do recognize it," said Leicester. "They were my own gift. The fellow of it was on the arm which she threw this very day around my neck!" He spoke this with violent agitation.

"Your lordship," said Varney, "might yet further inquire of the lady herself respecting the truth of these passages."

"It needs not—it needs not," said the tortured earl: "it is written in characters of burning light, as if they were branded on my very eyeballs! I see her infamy—I can see naught else; and—gracious Heaven!—for this vile woman was I about to commit to danger the lives of so many noble friends—shake the foundation of a lawful throne—carry the sword and torch through the bosom of a peaceful land—wrong the kind mistress who made me what I am, and would, but for that hell-framed marriage, have made me all that man can be! All this I was ready to do for a woman who trinkets and traffics with my worst foes! And thou, villain, why didst thou not speak sooner?"

"My lord," said Varney, "a tear from my lady would have blotted out all I could have said. Besides, I had not these proofs until this very morning, when Anthony Foster's sudden arrival, with the examinations and declarations which he had extorted from the innkeeper Gosling and others, explained the manner of her flight from Cumnor Place, and my own researches discovered the steps which she had taken here."

"Now, may God be praised for the light He has given! so full, so satisfactory, that there breathes not a man in England who shall call my proceeding rash or my revenge unjust. And yet, Varney, so young, so fair, so fawning, and so false! Hence, then, her hatred to thee, my trusty, my well-

beloved servant, because you withstood her plots and endangered her paramour's life!"

"I never gave her any other cause of dislike, my lord," replied Varney; "but she knew that my counsels went directly to diminish her influence with your lordship, and that I was, and have been, ever ready to peril my life against your enemies."

"It is too, too apparent," replied Leicester; "yet, with what an air of magnanimity she exhorted me to commit my head to the Queen's mercy rather than wear the veil of falsehood a moment longer! Methinks the angel of truth himself can have no such tones of high-souled impulse. Can it be so, Varney? Can falsehood use thus boldly the language of truth? Can infamy thus assume the guise of purity? Varney, thou hast been my servant from a child; I have raised thee high—can raise thee higher. Think—think for me! Thy brain was ever shrewd and piercing. May she not be innocent? Prove her so, and all I have yet done for thee shall be as nothing—nothing—in comparison of thy recompense!"

The agony with which his master spoke had some effect even on the hardened Varney, who, in the midst of his own wicked and ambitious designs, really loved his patron as well as such a wretch was capable of loving anything; but he comforted himself, and subdued his self-reproaches, with the reflection that, if he inflicted upon the earl some immediate and transitory pain, it was in order to pave his way to the throne, which, were this marriage dissolved by death or otherwise, he deemed Elizabeth would willingly share with his benefactor. He therefore persevered in his diabolical policy; and, after a moment's consideration, answered the anxious queries of the earl with a melancholy look, as if he had in vain sought some exculpation for the countess; then suddenly raising his head, he said, with an expression of hope, which instantly communicated itself to the countenance of his patron—"Yet wherefore, if guilty, should she have periled herself by coming hither? Why not rather have fled to her father's or elsewhere?—though that, indeed, might have interfered with her desire to be acknowledged as Countess of Leicester."

"True—true—true!" exclaimed Leicester, his transient gleam of hope giving way to the utmost bitterness of feeling and expression; "thou art not fit to fathom a woman's depth of wit, Varney. I see it all. She would not quit the estate and title of the wittol who had wedded her. Aye, and if in

my madness I had started into rebellion, or if the angry Queen had taken my head, as she this morning threatened, the wealthy dower which law would have assigned to the Countess Dowager of Leicester had been no bad windfall to the beggarly Tressilian. Well might she goad me on to danger, which could not end otherwise than profitably to her. Speak not for her, Varney; I will have her blood!"

"My lord," replied Varney, "the wildness of your distress breaks forth in the wildness of your language."

"I say, speak not for her," replied Leicester; "she has dishonored me—she would have murdered me; all ties are burst between us. She shall die the death of a traitress and adulteress, well merited both by the laws of God and man! And—what is this casket," he said, "which was even now thrust into my hand by a boy, with the desire I would convey it to Tressilian, as he could not give it to the countess? By Heaven! the words surprised me as he spoke them, though other matters chased them from my brain; but now they return with double force. It is her casket of jewels! Force it open, Varney—force the hinges open with thy poniard."

"She refused the aid of my dagger once," thought Varney, as he unsheathed the weapon, "to cut the string which bound a letter, but now it shall work a mightier ministry in her fortunes."

With this reflection, by using the three-cornered stiletto-blade as a wedge, he forced open the slender silver hinges of the casket. The Earl no sooner saw them give way than he snatched the casket from Sir Richard's hand, wrenched off the cover, and tearing out the splendid contents, flung them on the floor in a transport of rage, while he eagerly searched for some letter or billet which should make the fancied guilt of his innocent countess yet more apparent. Then stamping furiously on the gems, he exclaimed, "Thus I annihilate the miserable toys for which thou hast sold thyself, body and soul, consigned thyself to an early and timeless death, and me to misery and remorse forever! Tell me not of forgiveness, Varney. She is doomed!"

So saying, he left the room, and rushed into an adjacent closet, the door of which he locked and bolted.

Varney looked after him, while something of a more human feeling seemed to contend with his habitual sneer. "I am sorry for his weakness," he said, "but love has made him a child. He throws down and treads on these costly toys; with the same vehemence would he dash to pieces this frailest toy

of all, of which he used to rave so fondly. But that taste also will be forgotten when its object is no more. Well, he has no eye to value things as they deserve, and that nature has given to Varney. When Leicester shall be a sovereign, he will think as little of the gales of passion through which he gained that royal port as ever did sailor in harbor of the perils of a voyage. But these tell-tale articles must not remain here: they are rather too rich vails for the drudges who dress the chamber."

While Varney was employed in gathering together and putting them into a secret drawer of a cabinet that chanced to be unlocked, he saw the door of Leicester's closet open, the tapestry pushed aside, and the earl's face thrust out, but with eyes so dead, and lips and cheeks so bloodless and pale, that he started at the sudden change. No sooner did his eyes encounter the earl's than the latter withdrew his head and shut the door of the closet. This maneuver Leicester repeated twice, without speaking a word, so that Varney began to doubt whether his brain was not actually affected by his mental agony. The third time, however, he beckoned, and Varney obeyed the signal. When he entered, he soon found his patron's perturbation was not caused by insanity, but by the fellness of purpose which he entertained contending with various contrary passions. They passed a full hour in close consultation; after which the Earl of Leicester, with an incredible exertion, dressed himself and went to attend his royal guest.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

You have displaced the mirth, broke the good meeting
With most admired disorder.

—*Macbeth.*

It was afterward remembered that, during the banquets and revels which occupied the remainder of this eventful day, the bearings of Leicester and of Varney were totally different from their usual demeanor. Sir Richard Varney had been held rather a man of counsel and of action than a votary of pleasure. Business, whether civil or military, seemed always to be his proper sphere; and while in festivals and revels, although he well understood how to trick them up and present them, his own part was that of a mere spectator; or, if he exercised his wit, it was in a rough, caustic, and severe manner, rather as if he scoffed at the exhibition and the guests than shared the common pleasure.

But upon the present day his character seemed changed. He mixed among the younger courtiers and ladies, and appeared for the moment to be actuated by a spirit of light-hearted gayety which rendered him a match for the liveliest. Those who had looked upon him as a man given up to graver and more ambitious pursuits, a bitter sneerer and passer of sarcasms at the expense of those who, taking life as they find it, were disposed to snatch at each pastime it presents, now perceived with astonishment that his wit could carry as smooth an edge as their own, his laugh be as lively, and his brow as unclouded. By what art of damnable hypocrisy he could draw this veil of gayety over the black thoughts of one of the worst of human bosoms must remain unintelligible to all but his compeers, if any such ever existed; but he was a man of extraordinary powers, and those powers were unhappily dedicated in all their energy to the very worst of purposes.

It was entirely different with Leicester. However habituated his mind usually was to play the part of a good courtier, and appear gay, assiduous, and free from all care but that of enhancing the pleasure of the moment, while his bosom internally throbbed with the pangs of unsatisfied ambition, jealousy, or resentment, his heart had now a yet more dreadful guest, whose workings could not be overshadowed or sup-

pressed; and you might read in his vacant eye and troubled brow that his thoughts were far absent from the scenes in which he was compelling himself to play a part. He looked, moved, and spoke as if by a succession of continued efforts; and it seemed as if his will had in some degree lost the promptitude of command over the acute mind and goodly form of which it was the regent. His actions and gestures, instead of appearing the consequence of simple volition, seemed, like those of an automaton, to wait the revolution of some internal machinery ere they could be performed; and his words fell from him piecemeal, interrupted, as if he had first to think what he was to say, then how it was to be said, and as if, after all, it was only by an effort of continued attention that he completed a sentence without forgetting both the one and the other.

The singular effects which these distractions of mind produced upon the behavior and conversation of the most accomplished courtier of England, as they were visible to the lowest and dullest menial who approached his person, could not escape the notice of the most intelligent princess of the age. Nor is there the least doubt that the alternate negligence and irregularity of his manner would have called down Elizabeth's severe displeasure on the Earl of Leicester, had it not occurred to her to account for it by supposing that the apprehension of that displeasure which she had expressed toward him with such vivacity that very morning was dwelling upon the spirits of her favorite, and, spite of his efforts to the contrary, distracted the usual graceful tenor of his mien and the charms of his conversation. When this idea, so flattering to female vanity, had once obtained possession of her mind, it proved a full and satisfactory apology for the numerous errors and mistakes of the Earl of Leicester; and the watchful circle around observed with astonishment that, instead of resenting his repeated negligence and want of even ordinary attention, although these were points on which she was usually extremely punctilious, the Queen sought, on the contrary, to afford him time and means to recollect himself, and deigned to assist him in doing so, with an indulgence which seemed altogether inconsistent with her usual character. It was clear, however, that this could not last much longer, and that Elizabeth must finally put another and more severe construction on Leicester's uncourteous conduct, when the earl was summoned by Varney to speak with him in a different apartment.

After having had the message twice delivered to him, he rose, and was about to withdraw, as it were, by instinct; then stopped, and, turning round, entreated permission of the Queen to absent himself for a brief space upon matters of pressing importance.

"Go, my lord," said the Queen; "we are aware our presence must occasion sudden and unexpected occurrences, which require to be provided for on the instant. Yet, my lord, as you would have us believe ourself your welcome and honored guest, we entreat you to think less of our good cheer, and favor us with more of your good countenance than we have this day enjoyed; for, whether prince or peasant be the guest, the welcome of the host will always be the better part of the entertainment. Go, my lord; and we trust to see you return with an unwrinkled brow and those free thoughts which you are wont to have at the disposal of your friends."

Leicester only bowed low in answer to this rebuke, and retired. At the door of the apartment he was met by Varney, who eagerly drew him apart, and whispered in his ear, "All is well!"

"Has Masters seen her?" said the earl.

"He has, my lord; and as she would neither answer his queries nor allege any reason for her refusal, he will give full testimony that she labors under mental disorder, and may be best committed to the charge of her friends. The opportunity is therefore free to remove her as we proposed."

"But Tressilian?" said Leicester.

"He will not know of her departure for some time," replied Varney; "it shall take place this very evening, and to-morrow he shall be cared for."

"No, by my soul," answered Leicester; "I will take vengeance on him with mine own hand!"

"You, my lord, and on so inconsiderable a man as Tressilian! No, my lord, he hath long wished to visit foreign parts. Trust him to me: I will take care he returns not hither to tell tales."

"Not so, by Heaven, Varney!" exclaimed Leicester. "Inconsiderable do you call an enemy that hath had power to wound me so deeply that my whole after life must be one scene of remorse and misery? No; rather than forego the right of doing myself justice with my own hand on that accursed villain, I will unfold the whole truth at Elizabeth's footstool, and let her vengeance descend at once on them and on myself."

Varney saw with great alarm that his lord was wrought up to such a pitch of agitation that, if he gave not way to him, he was perfectly capable of adopting the desperate resolution which he had announced, and which was instant ruin to all the schemes of ambition which Varney had formed for his patron and himself. But the earl's rage seemed at once uncontrollable and deeply concentrated; and while he spoke his eyes shot fire, his voice trembled with excess of passion, and the light foam stood on his lip.

His confidant made a bold and successful effort to obtain the mastery of him even in this hour of emotion. "My lord," he said, leading him to a mirror, "behold your reflection in that glass, and think if these agitated features belong to one who, in a condition so extreme, is capable of forming a resolution for himself."

"What, then, wouldst thou make me?" said Leicester, struck at the change in his own physiognomy, though offended at the freedom with which Varney made the appeal. "Am I to be thy ward, thy vassal—the property and subject of my servant?"

"No, my lord," said Varney firmly, "but be master of yourself and of your own passion. My lord, I, your born servant, am ashamed to see how poorly you bear yourself in the storm of fury. Go to Elizabeth's feet, confess your marriage, impeach your wife and her paramour of adultery, and avow yourself, amongst all your peers, the wittol who married a country girl, and was cozened by her and her book-learned gallant. Go, my lord; but first take farewell of Richard Varney, with all the benefits you ever conferred on him. He served the noble, the lofty, the high-minded Leicester, and was more proud of depending on him than he would be of commanding thousands. But the abject lord who stoops to every adverse circumstance, whose judicious resolves are scattered like chaff before every wind of passion, him Richard Varney serves not. He is as much above him in constancy of mind as beneath him in rank and fortune."

Varney spoke thus without hypocrisy, for, though the firmness of mind which he boasted was hardness and impenetrability, yet he really felt the ascendancy which he vaunted; while the interest which he actually felt in the fortunes of Leicester gave unusual emotion to his voice and manner.

Leicester was overpowered by his assumed superiority; it seemed to the unfortunate earl as if his last friend was about to abandon him. He stretched his hand toward Varney as

he uttered the words, "Do not leave me. What wouldst thou have me do?"

"Be thyself, my noble master," said Varney, touching the earl's hand with his lips, after having respectfully grasped it in his own—"be yourself, superior to those storms of passion which wreck inferior minds. Are you the first who has been cozened in love? The first whom a vain and licentious woman has cheated into an affection which she has afterward scorned and misused? And will you suffer yourself to be driven frantic, because you have not been wiser than the wisest men whom the world has seen? Let her be as if she had not been—let her pass from your memory as unworthy of ever having held a place there. Let your strong resolve of this morning, which I have both courage, zeal, and means enough to execute, be like the fiat of a superior being, a passionless act of justice. She hath deserved death—let her die!"

While he was speaking, the earl held his hand fast, compressed his lips hard, and frowned, as if he labored to catch from Varney a portion of the cold, ruthless, and dispassionate firmness which he recommended. When he was silent, the earl still continued to grasp his hand, until, with an effort at calm decision, he was able to articulate, "Be it so—she dies! But one tear might be permitted."

"Not one, my lord," interrupted Varney, who saw by the quivering eye and convulsed cheek of his patron that he was about to give way to a burst of emotion, "not a tear—the time permits it not. Tressilian must be thought of——"

"That indeed is a name," said the earl, "to convert tears into blood. Varney, I have thought on this, and I have determined—neither entreaty nor argument shall move me—Tressilian shall be my own victim."

"It is madness, my lord; but you are too mighty for me to bar your way to your revenge. Yet resolve at least to choose fitting time and opportunity, and to forbear him until those shall be found."

"Thou shalt order me in what thou wilt," said Leicester, "only thwart me not in this."

"Then, my lord," said Varney, "I first request of you to lay aside the wild, suspected, and half-frenzied demeanor which hath this day drawn the eyes of all the court upon you; and which, but for the Queen's partial indulgence, which she hath extended towards you in a degree far beyond her nature, she had never given you the opportunity to atone for."

“Have I indeed been so negligent?” said Leicester, as one who awakes from a dream. “I thought I had colored it well; but fear nothing, my mind is now eased—I am calm. My horoscope shall be fulfilled; and that it may be fulfilled, I will tax to the highest every faculty of my mind. Fear me not, I say. I will to the Queen instantly; not thine own looks and language shall be more impenetrable than mine. Hast thou aught else to say?”

“I must crave your signet-ring,” said Varney gravely, “in token to those of your servants whom I must employ that I possess your full authority in commanding their aid.”

Leicester drew off the signet-ring which he commonly used and gave it to Varney with a haggard and stern expression of countenance, adding only, in a low, half-whispered tone, but with terrific emphasis, the words, “What thou dost, do quickly.”

Some anxiety and wonder took place, meanwhile, in the presence-hall at the prolonged absence of the noble lord of the castle, and great was the delight of his friends when they saw him enter as a man from whose bosom, to all human seeming, a weight of care had been just removed. Amply did Leicester that day redeem the pledge he had given to Varney, who soon saw himself no longer under the necessity of maintaining a character so different from his own as that which he had assumed in the earlier part of the day, and gradually relapsed into the same grave, shrewd, caustic observer of conversation and incident which constituted his usual part in society.

With Elizabeth, Leicester played his game as one to whom her natural strength of talent, and her weakness in one or two particular points, were well known. He was too wary to exchange on a sudden the sullen personage which he had played before he retired with Varney; but, on approaching her, it seemed softened into a melancholy, which had a touch of tenderness in it, and which, in the course of conversing with Elizabeth, and as she dropped in compassion one mark of favor after another to console him, passed into a flow of affectionate gallantry the most assiduous, the most delicate, the most insinuating, yet at the same time the most respectful, with which a queen was ever addressed by a subject. Elizabeth listened as in a sort of enchantment; her jealousy of power was lulled asleep; her resolution to forsake all social or domestic ties, and dedicate herself exclusively to the care of her people, began to be shaken, and once more the star of Dudley culminated in the court horizon.

But Leicester did not enjoy this triumph over nature and over conscience without its being embittered to him, not only by the internal rebellion of his feelings against the violence which he exercised over them, but by many accidental circumstances, which, in the course of the banquet, and during the subsequent amusements of the evening, jarred upon that nerve the least vibration of which was agony.

The courtiers were, for example, in the great hall, after having left the banqueting-room, awaiting the appearance of a splendid masque, which was the expected entertainment of this evening, when the Queen interrupted a wild career of wit which the Earl of Leicester was running against Lord Willoughby, Raleigh, and some other courtiers, by saying, "We will impeach you of high treason, my lord, if you proceed in this attempt to slay us with laughter. And here comes a thing may make us all grave at his pleasure, our learned physician Masters, with news belike of our poor suppliant, Lady Varney; nay, my lord, we will not have you leave us, for this being a dispute betwixt married persons, we do not hold our own experience deep enough to decide thereon, without good counsel. How now, Masters, what think'st thou of the runaway bride?"

The smile with which Leicester had been speaking when the Queen interrupted him remained arrested on his lips, as if it had been carved there by the chisel of Michael Angelo or of Chantrey; and he listened to the speech of the physician with the same immovable cast of countenance.

"The Lady Varney, gracious sovereign," said the court physician Masters, "is sullen, and would hold little conference with me touching the state of her health, talking wildly of being soon to plead her own cause before your own presence, and of answering no meaner person's inquiries."

"Now, the Heavens forefend!" said the Queen; "we have already suffered from the misconstructions and broils which seem to follow this poor brain-sick lady wherever she comes. Think you not so, my lord?" she added, appealing to Leicester, with something in her look that indicated regret, even tenderly expressed, for their disagreement of that morning. Leicester compelled himself to bow low. The utmost force he could exert was inadequate to the farther effort of expressing in words his acquiescence in the Queen's sentiment.

"You are vindictive," she said, "my lord; but we will find time and place to punish you. But once more to this

same trouble-mirth—this Lady Varney. What of her health, Masters?”

“She is sullen, madam, as I already said,” replied Masters, “and refuses to answer interrogatories or be amenable to the authority of the mediciner. I conceive her to be possessed with a delirium, which I incline to term rather *hypochondria* than *phrenesis*; and I think she were best cared for by her husband in his own house, and removed from all this bustle of pageants, which disturbs her weak brain with the most fantastic phantoms. She drops hints as if she were some great person in disguise—some countess or princess perchance. God help them, such are often the hallucinations of these infirm persons!”

“Nay, then,” said the Queen, “away with her with all speed. Let Varney care for her with fitting humanity; but let them rid the castle of her forthwith. She will think herself lady of all, I warrant you. It is pity so fair a form, however, should have an infirm understanding. What think you, my lord?”

“It is pity indeed,” said the earl, repeating the words like a task which was set him.

“But, perhaps,” said Elizabeth, “you do not join with us in our opinion of her beauty; and indeed we have known men prefer a statelier and more Juno-like form to that drooping, fragile one, that hung its head like a broken lily. Aye, men are tyrants, my lord, who esteem the animation of the strife above the triumph of an unresisting conquest, and, like sturdy champions, love best those women who can wage contest with them. I could think with you, Rutland, that, give my Lord of Leicester such a piece of painted wax for a bride, he would have wished her dead ere the end of the honeymoon.”

As she said this, she looked on Leicester so expressively that, while his heart revolted against the egregious falsehood, he did himself so much violence as to reply in a whisper, that Leicester’s love was more lowly than her Majesty deemed, since it was settled where he could never command, but must ever obey.

The Queen blushed, and bid him be silent; yet looked as if she expected that he would not obey her commands. But at that moment the flourish of trumpets and kettle-drums from a high balcony which overlooked the hall announced the entrance of the masquers, and relieved Leicester from the horrible state of constraint and dissimulation in which the result of his own duplicity had placed him.

The masque which entered consisted of four separate bands, which followed each other at brief intervals, each consisting of six principal persons and as many torch-bearers, and each representing one of the various nations by which England had at different times been occupied.

The aboriginal Britons, who first entered, were ushered in by two ancient Druids, whose hoary hair was crowned with a chaplet of oak, and who bore in their hands branches of mistletoe. The masquers who followed these venerable figures were succeeded by two bards, arrayed in white, and bearing harps, which they occasionally touched, singing at the same time certain stanzas of an ancient hymn to Belus, or the Sun. The aboriginal Britons had been selected from amongst the tallest and most robust young gentlemen in attendance on the court. Their masks were accommodated with long shaggy beards and hair; their vestments were of the hides of wolves and bears; while their legs, arms, and the upper parts of their bodies, being sheathed in flesh-colored silk, on which were traced in grotesque lines representations of the heavenly bodies, and of animals and other terrestrial objects, gave them the lively appearance of our painted ancestors, whose freedom was first trenched upon by the Romans.

The sons of Rome, who came to civilize as well as to conquer, were next produced before the princely assembly; and the manager of the revels had correctly imitated the high crest and military habits of that celebrated people, accommodating them with the light yet strong buckler; and the short two-edged sword, the use of which had made them victors of the world. The Roman eagles were borne before them by two standard bearers, who recited a hymn to Mars, and the classical warriors followed them with the grave and haughty step of men who aspired at universal conquest.

The third quadrille represented the Saxons, clad in the bearskins which they had brought with them from the German forests, and bearing in their hands the redoubtable battle-axes which made such havoc among the natives of Britain. They were preceded by two scalds, who chanted the praises of Odin.

Last came the knightly Normans, in their mail-shirts and hoods of steel, with all the panoply of chivalry, and marshaled by two minstrels, who sung of war and ladies' love.

These four bands entered the spacious hall with the utmost order, a short pause being made that the spectators might satisfy their curiosity as to each quadrille before the appear-

ance of the next. They then marched completely round the hall, in order the more fully to display themselves, regulating their steps to organs, shalms, hautboys, and virginals, the music of the Lord Leicester's household. At length the four quadrilles of masquers, ranging their torch-bearers behind them, drew up in their several ranks on the two opposite sides of the hall, so that the Romans confronting the Britons, and the Saxons the Normans, seemed to look on each other with eyes of wonder, which presently appeared to kindle into anger, expressed by menacing gestures. At the burst of a strain of martial music from the gallery, the masquers drew their swords on all sides, and advanced against each other in the measured steps of a sort of Pyrrhic or military dance, clashing their swords against their adversaries' shields, and clattering them against their blades as they passed each other in the progress of the dance. It was a very pleasant spectacle to see how the various bands, preserving regularity amid motions which seemed to be totally irregular, mixed together, and then disengaging themselves resumed each their own original rank as the music varied.

In this symbolical dance were represented the conflicts which had taken place among the various nations which had anciently inhabited Britain.

At length, after many mazy evolutions, which afforded great pleasure to the spectators, the sound of a loud-voiced trumpet was heard, as if it blew for instant battle or for victory won. The masquers instantly ceased their mimic strife, and collecting themselves under their original leaders, or presenters, for such was the appropriate phrase, seemed to share the anxious expectation which the spectators experienced concerning what was next to appear.

The doors of the hall were thrown wide, and no less a person entered than the fiend-born Merlin, dressed in a strange and mystical attire, suited to his ambiguous birth and magical power. About him and behind him fluttered or gambled many extraordinary forms, intended to represent the spirits who waited to do his powerful bidding; and so much did this part of the pageant interest the menials and others of the lower class then in the castle, that many of them forgot even the reverence due to the Queen's presence so far as to thrust themselves into the lower part of the hall.

The Earl of Leicester, seeing his officers had some difficulty to repel these intruders, without more disturbance than was fitting where the Queen was in presence, arose and went him-

self to the bottom of the hall; Elizabeth, at the same time, with her usual feeling for the common people, requesting that they might be permitted to remain undisturbed to witness the pageant. Leicester went under this pretext; but his real motive was to gain a moment to himself, and to relieve his mind, were it but for one instant, from the dreadful task of hiding, under the guise of gayety and gallantry, the lacerating pangs of shame, anger, remorse, and thirst for vengeance. He imposed silence by his look and sign upon the vulgar crowd at the lower end of the apartment; but, instead of instantly returning to wait on her Majesty, he wrapped his cloak around him, and mixing with the crowd, stood in some degree an undistinguished spectator of the progress of the masque.

Merlin, having entered and advanced into the midst of the hall, summoned the presenters of the contending bands around him by a wave of his magical rod, and announced to them, in a poetical speech, that the Isle of Britain was now commanded by a royal maiden, to whom it was the will of fate that they should all do homage, and request of her to pronounce on the various pretensions which each set forth to be esteemed the pre-eminent stock from which the present natives, the happy subjects of that angelical princess, derived their lineage.

In obedience to this mandate, the bands, each moving to solemn music, passed in succession before Elizabeth; doing her, as they passed, each after the fashion of the people whom they represented, the lowest and most devotional homage, which she returned with the same gracious courtesy that had marked her whole conduct since she came to Kenilworth.

The presenters of the several masques, or quadrilles, then alleged, each in behalf of his own troop, the reason which they had for claiming pre-eminence over the rest; and when they had been all heard in turn, she returned them this gracious answer: "That she was sorry she was not better qualified to decide upon the doubtful question which had been propounded to her by the direction of the famous Merlin, but that it seemed to her that no single one of these celebrated nations could claim pre-eminence over the others as having most contributed to form the Englishman of her own time, who unquestionably derived from each of them some worthy attribute of his character. Thus," she said, "the Englishman had from the ancient Briton his bold and tameless spirit of freedom; from the Roman his disciplined courage in war, with his love of letters and civilization in time of peace; from

the Saxon his wise and equitable laws; and from the chivalrous Norman his love of honor and courtesy, with his generous desire for glory."

Merlin answered with readiness, that it did indeed require that so many choice qualities should meet in the English as might render them in some measure the muster of the perfections of other nations, since that alone could render them in some degree deserving of the blessings they enjoyed under the reign of England's Elizabeth.

The music then sounded, and the quadrilles, together with Merlin and his assistants, had begun to remove from the crowded hall, when Leicester, who was, as we have mentioned, stationed for the moment near the bottom of the hall, and consequently engaged in some degree in the crowd, felt himself pulled by the cloak, while a voice whispered in his ear, "My lord, I do desire some instant conference with you."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

How is't with me, when every noise appalls me?

—*Macbeth.*

“I DESIRE some conference with you.” The words were simple in themselves, but Lord Leicester was in that alarmed and feverish state of mind when the most ordinary occurrences seem fraught with alarming import; and he turned hastily round to survey the person by whom they had been spoken. There was nothing remarkable in the speaker’s appearance, which consisted of a black silk doublet and short mantle, with a black vizard on his face; for it appeared he had been among the crowd of masks who had thronged into the hall in the retinue of Merlin, though he did not wear any of the extravagant disguises by which most of them were distinguished.

“Who are you, or what do you want with me?” said Leicester, not without betraying, by his accents, the hurried state of his spirits.

“No evil, my lord,” answered the mask, “but much good and honor, if you will rightly understand my purpose. But I must speak with you more privately.”

“I can speak with no nameless stranger,” answered Leicester, dreading he knew not precisely what from the request of the stranger; “and those who are known to me must seek another and a fitter time to ask an interview.”

He would have hurried away, but the mask still detained him.

“Those who talk to your lordship of what your own honor demands have a right over your time, whatever occupations you may lay aside in order to indulge them.”

“How! my honor! Who dare impeach it?” said Leicester.

“Your own conduct alone can furnish grounds for accusing it, my lord, and it is that topic on which I would speak with you.”

“You are insolent,” said Leicester, “and abuse the hospitable license of the time, which prevents me from having you punished. I demand your name?”

“Edmund Tressilian of Cornwall,” answered the mask.

“My tongue has been bound by a promise for four-and-twenty hours; the space is passed—I now speak, and do your lordship the justice to address myself first to you.”

The thrill of astonishment which had penetrated to Leicester's very heart at hearing that name pronounced by the voice of the man he most detested, and by whom he conceived himself so deeply injured, at first rendered him immovable, but instantly gave way to such a thirst for revenge as the pilgrim in the desert feels for the water-brooks. He had but sense and self-government enough left to prevent his stabbing to the heart the audacious villain who, after the ruin he had brought upon him, dared, with such unmoved assurance, thus to practice upon him farther. Determined to suppress for the moment every symptom of agitation in order to perceive the full scope of Tressilian's purpose, as well as to secure his own vengeance, he answered in a tone so altered by restrained passion as scarce to be intelligible—“And what does Master Edmund Tressilian require at my hand?”

“Justice, my lord,” answered Tressilian, calmly but firmly.

“Justice,” said Leicester, “all men are entitled to. You, Master Tressilian, are peculiarly so, and be assured you shall have it.”

“I expect nothing less from your nobleness,” answered Tressilian; “but time presses, and I must speak with you to-night. May I wait on you in your chamber?”

“No,” answered Leicester sternly, “not under a roof, and that roof mine own. We will meet under the free cope of heaven.”

“You are discomposed or displeased, my lord,” replied Tressilian; “yet there is no occasion for distemperature. The place is equal to me, so you allow me one half-hour of your time uninterrupted.”

“A shorter time will, I trust, suffice,” answered Leicester. “Meet me in the Pleasance, when the Queen has retired to her chamber.”

“Enough,” said Tressilian, and withdrew; while a sort of rapture seemed for the moment to occupy the mind of Leicester.

“Heaven,” he said, “is at last favorable to me, and has put within my reach the wretch who has branded me with this deep ignominy—who has inflicted on me this cruel agony. I will blame fate no more, since I am afforded the means of tracing the wiles by which he means still farther to practice on me, and then of at once convicting and punishing his

villainy. To my task—to my task! I will not sink under it now, since midnight, at farthest, will bring me vengeance.”

While these reflections thronged through Leicester's mind, he again made his way amid the obsequious crowd, which divided to give him passage, and resumed his place, envied and admired, beside the person of his sovereign. But, could the bosom of him thus admired and envied have been laid open before the inhabitants of that crowded hall, with all its dark thoughts of guilty ambition, blighted affection, deep vengeance, and conscious sense of meditated cruelty crossing each other like specters in the circle of some foul enchantress, which of them, from the most ambitious noble in the courtly circle down to the most wretched menial who lived by shifting of trenchers, would have desired to change characters with the favorite of Elizabeth and the Lord of Kenilworth!

New tortures awaited him as soon as he had rejoined Elizabeth.

“You come in time, my lord,” she said, “to decide a dispute between us ladies. Here has Sir Richard Varney asked our permission to depart from the castle with his infirm lady, having, as he tells us, your lordship's consent to his absence, so he can obtain ours. Certes, we have no will to withhold him from the affectionate charge of this poor young person; but you are to know, that Sir Richard Varney hath this day shown himself so much captivated with these ladies of ours, that here is our Duchess of Rutland says, he will carry his poor insane wife no farther than the lake, plunge her in, to tenant the crystal palaces that the enchanted nymph told us of, and return a jolly widower, to dry his tears and to make up the loss among our train. How say you, my lord? We have seen Varney under two or three different guises; you know what are his proper attributes—think you he is capable of playing his lady such a knave's trick?”

Leicester was confounded, but the danger was urgent, and a reply absolutely necessary. “The ladies,” he said, “think too lightly of one of their own sex in supposing she could deserve such a fate, or too ill of ours, to think it could be inflicted upon an innocent female.”

“Hear him, my ladies,” said Elizabeth; “like all his sex, he would excuse their cruelty by imputing fickleness to us.”

“Say not *us*, madam,” replied the earl; “we say that meaner women, like the lesser lights of heaven, have revolutions and phases, but who shall impute mutability to the sun or to Elizabeth?”

The discourse presently afterward assumed a less perilous tendency, and Leicester continued to support his part in it with spirit, at whatever expense of mental agony. So pleasing did it seem to Elizabeth, that the castle bell had sounded midnight ere she retired from the company, a circumstance unusual in her quiet and regular habits of disposing of time. Her departure was, of course, the signal for breaking up the company, who dispersed to their several places of repose, to dream over the pastimes of the day or to anticipate those of the morrow.

The unfortunate lord of the castle, and founder of the proud festival, retired to far different thoughts. His direction to the valet who attended him was to send Varney instantly to his apartment. The messenger returned after some delay, and informed him that an hour had elapsed since Sir Richard Varney had left the castle by the postern gate, with three other persons, one of whom was transported in a horse-litter.

"How came he to leave the castle after the watch was set?" said Leicester. "I thought he went not till daybreak."

"He gave satisfactory reasons, as I understand," said the domestic, "to the guard, and, as I hear, showed your lordship's signet——"

"True—true," said the earl; "yet he has been hasty. Do any of his attendants remain behind?"

"Michael Lambourne, my lord," said the valet, "was not to be found when Sir Richard Varney departed, and his master was much incensed at his absence. I saw him but now saddling his horse to gallop after his master."

"Bid him come hither instantly," said Leicester; "I have a message to his master."

The servant left the apartment, and Leicester traversed it for some time in deep meditation. "Varney is over zealous," he said— "over pressing. He loves me, I think; but he hath his own ends to serve, and he is inexorable in pursuit of them. If I rise he rises, and he hath shown himself already but too eager to rid me of this obstacle which seems to stand betwixt me and sovereignty. Yet I will not stoop to bear this disgrace. She shall be punished, but it shall be more advisedly. I already feel, even in anticipation, that over-haste would light the flames of hell in my bosom. No; one victim is enough at once, and that victim already waits me."

He seized upon writing-materials, and hastily traced these words:—"Sir Richard Varney, we have resolved to defer the

matter intrusted to your care, and strictly command you to proceed no farther in relation to our countess until our further order. We also command your instant return to Kenilworth, as soon as you have safely bestowed that with which you are intrusted. But if the safe-placing of your present charge shall detain you longer than we think for, we command you, in that case, to send back our signet-ring by a trusty and speedy messenger, we having present need of the same. And requiring your strict obedience in these things, and commending you to God's keeping, we rest your assured good friend and master,

“ R. LEICESTER.

“ Given at our Castle of Kenilworth, the tenth of July, in the year of salvation one thousand five hundred and seventy-five.”

As Leicester had finished and sealed this mandate, Michael Lambourne, booted up to mid-thigh, having his riding-cloak girthed around him with a broad belt, and a felt cap on his head, like that of a courier, entered his apartment, ushered in by the valet.

“ What is thy capacity of service? ” said the earl.

“ Equerry to your lordship's master of the horse, ” answered Lambourne, with his customary assurance.

“ Tie up thy saucy tongue, sir, ” said Leicester; “ the jests that may suit Sir Richard Varney's presence suit not mine. How soon wilt thou overtake thy master? ”

“ In one hour's riding, my lord, if man and horse hold good, ” said Lambourne, with an instant alteration of demeanor from an approach to familiarity to the deepest respect. The earl measured him with his eye from top to toe.

“ I have heard of thee, ” he said: “ men say thou art a prompt fellow in thy service, but too much given to brawling and to wassail to be trusted with things of moment. ”

“ My lord, ” said Lambourne, “ I have been soldier, sailor, traveler, and adventurer; and these are all trades in which men enjoy to-day because they have no surety of to-morrow. But though I may misuse mine own leisure, I have never neglected the duty I owe my master. ”

“ See that it be so in this instance, ” said Leicester, “ and it shall do thee good. Deliver this letter speedily and carefully into Sir Richard Varney's hands. ”

"Does my commission reach no farther?" said Lambourne.

"No," answered Leicester; "but it deeply concerns me that it be carefully as well as hastily executed."

"I will spare neither care nor horse-flesh," answered Lambourne, and immediately took his leave.

"So this is the end of my private audience, from which I hoped so much!" he muttered to himself, as he went through the long gallery and down the back staircase. "Cog's bones! I thought the earl had wanted a cast of mine office in some secret intrigue, and it all ends in carrying a letter! Well, his pleasure shall be done, however, and, as his lordship well says, it may do me good another time. The child must creep ere he walk, and so must your infant courtier. I will have a look into this letter, however, which he hath sealed so sloven-like." Having accomplished this, he clapped his hands together in ecstasy, exclaiming, "The countess—the countess! I have the secret that shall make or mar me. But come forth, Bayard," he added, leading his horse into the courtyard, "for your flanks and my spurs must be presently acquainted."

Lambourne mounted accordingly, and left the castle by the postern gate, where his free passage was permitted, in consequence of a message to that effect left by Sir Richard Varney.

As soon as Lambourne and the valet had left the apartment, Leicester proceeded to change his dress for a very plain one, threw his mantle around him, and, taking a lamp in his hand, went by the private passage of communication to a small secret postern door which opened into the courtyard, near to the entrance of the Pleasance. His reflections were of a more calm and determined character than they had been at any late period, and he endeavored to claim, even in his own eyes, the character of a man more sinned against than sinning.

"I have suffered the deepest injury," such was the tenor of his meditations, "yet I have restricted the instant revenge which was in my power, and have limited it to that which is manly and noble. But shall the union which this false woman has this day disgraced remain an abiding fetter on me, to check me in the noble career to which my destinies invite me? No—there are other means of disengaging such ties, without unloosing the cords of life. In the sight of God, I am no longer bound by the union she has broken. Kingdoms shall divide us—oceans roll betwixt us, and their waves, whose abysses have swallowed whole navies, shall be the sole depositories of the deadly mystery."

By such a train of argument did Leicester labor to reconcile his conscience to the prosecution of plans of vengeance so hastily adopted, and of schemes of ambition which had become so woven in with every purpose and action of his life that he was incapable of the effort of relinquishing them; until his revenge appeared to him to wear a face of justice, and even of generous moderation.

In this mood, the vindictive and ambitious earl entered the superb precincts of the Pleasance, then illumined by the full moon. The broad yellow light was reflected on all sides from the white freestone of which the pavement, balustrades, and architectural ornaments of the place were constructed, and not a single fleecy cloud was visible in the azure sky, so that the scene was nearly as light as if the sun had but just left the horizon. The numerous statues of white marble glimmered in the pale light, like so many sheeted ghosts just arisen from their sepulchers, and the fountains threw their jets into the air, as if they sought that their waters should be brightened by the moonbeams, ere they fell down again upon their basins in showers of sparkling silver. The day had been sultry, and the gentle night breeze, which sighed along the terrace of the Pleasance, raised not a deeper breath than the fan in the hand of youthful beauty. The bird of summer night had built many a nest in the bowers of the adjacent garden, and the tenants now indemnified themselves for silence during the day by a full chorus of their own unrivaled warblings, now joyous, now pathetic, now united, now responsive to each other, as if to express their delight in the placid and delicious scene to which they poured their melody.

Musing on matters far different from the fall of waters, the gleam of moonlight, or the song of the nightingale, the stately Leicester walked slowly from the one end of the terrace to the other, his cloak wrapped around him, and his sword under his arm, without seeing anything resembling the human form.

"I have been fooled by my own generosity," he said, "if I have suffered the villain to escape me—aye, and perhaps to go to the rescue of the adulteress, who is so poorly guarded."

These were his thoughts, which were instantly dispelled when, turning to look back toward the entrance, he saw a human form advancing slowly from the portico, and darkening the various objects with its shadow, as passing them successively, in its approach toward him.

"Shall I strike ere I again hear his detested voice?" was

Leicester's thought, as he grasped the hilt of the sword. "But no! I will see which way his vile practice tends. I will watch, disgusting as it is, the coils and mazes of the loathsome snake, ere I put forth my strength and crush him."

His hand quitted the sword-hilt, and he advanced slowly toward Tressilian, collecting, for their meeting, all the self-possession he could command, until they came front to front with each other.

Tressilian made a profound reverence, to which the earl replied with a haughty inclination of the head, and the words, "You sought secret conference with me, sir; I am here, and attentive."

"My lord," said Tressilian, "I am so earnest in that which I have to say, and so desirous to find a patient, nay, a favorable, hearing, that I will stoop to exculpate myself from whatever might prejudice your lordship against me. You think me your enemy?"

"Have I not some apparent cause?" answered Leicester, perceiving that Tressilian paused for a reply.

"You do me wrong, my lord. I am a friend, but neither a dependent nor partisan, of the Earl of Sussex, whom courtiers call your rival; and it is some considerable time since I ceased to regard either courts or court intrigues as suited to my temper or genius."

"No doubt, sir," answered Leicester, "there are other occupations more worthy a scholar, and for such the world holds Master Tressilian: love has his intrigues as well as ambition."

"I perceive, my lord," replied Tressilian, "you give much weight to my early attachment for the unfortunate young person of whom I am about to speak, and perhaps think I am prosecuting her cause out of rivalry more than a sense of justice."

"No matter for my thoughts, sir," said the earl; "proceed. You have as yet spoken of yourself only—an important and worthy subject doubtless, but which, perhaps, does not altogether so deeply concern me that I should postpone my repose to hear it. Spare me farther prelude, sir, and speak to the purpose, if indeed you have aught to say that concerns me. When you have done, I, in my turn, have something to communicate."

"I will speak, then, without farther prelude, my lord," answered Tressilian; "having to say that which, as it concerns your lordship's honor, I am confident you will not

think your time wasted in listening to. I have to request an account from your lordship of the unhappy Amy Robsart, whose history is too well known to you. I regret deeply that I did not at once take this course, and make yourself judge between me and the villain by whom she is injured. My lord, she extricated herself from an unlawful and most perilous state of confinement, trusting to the effects of her own remonstrance upon her unworthy husband, and extorted from me a promise that I would not interfere in her behalf until she had used her own efforts to have her rights acknowledged by him."

"Ha!" said Leicester, "remember you to whom you speak?"

"I speak of her unworthy husband, my lord," repeated Tressilian, "and my respect can find no softer language. The unhappy young woman is withdrawn from my knowledge, and sequestered in some secret place of this castle—if she be not transferred to some place of seclusion better fitted for bad designs. This must be reformed, my lord—I speak it as authorized by her father—and this ill-fated marriage must be avouched and proved in the Queen's presence, and the lady placed without restraint and at her own free disposal. And, permit me to say, it concerns no one's honor that these most just demands of mine should be complied with so much as it does that of your lordship."

The earl stood as if he had been petrified, at the extreme coolness with which the man, whom he considered as having injured him so deeply, pleaded the cause of his criminal paramour, as if she had been an innocent woman, and he a disinterested advocate; nor was his wonder lessened by the warmth with which Tressilian seemed to demand for her the rank and situation which she had disgraced, and the advantages of which she was doubtless to share with the lover who advocated her cause with such effrontery. Tressilian had been silent for more than a minute ere the earl recovered from the excess of his astonishment; and, considering the prepossessions with which his mind was occupied, there is little wonder that his passion gained the mastery of every other consideration. "I have heard you, Master Tressilian," said he, "without interruption, and I bless God that my ears were never before made to tingle by the words of so frontless a villain. The task of chastising you is fitter for the hangman's scourge than the sword of a nobleman, but yet—
Villain, draw and defend thyself!"

As he spoke the last words, he dropped his mantle on the ground, struck Tressilian smartly with his sheathed sword, and instantly drawing his rapier, put himself into a posture of assault. The vehement fury of his language at first filled Tressilian, in his turn, with surprise equal to what Leicester had felt when he addressed him. But astonishment gave rise to resentment, when the unmerited insults of his language were followed by a blow, which immediately put to flight every thought save that of instant combat. Tressilian's sword was instantly drawn, and though perhaps somewhat inferior to Leicester in the use of the weapon, he understood it well enough to maintain the contest with great spirit, the rather that of the two he was for the time the more cool, since he could not help imputing Leicester's conduct either to actual frenzy or to the influence of some strong delusion.

The rencontre had continued for several minutes, without either party receiving a wound, when of a sudden voices were heard beneath the portico, which formed the entrance of the terrace, mingled with the steps of men advancing hastily. "We are interrupted," said Leicester to his antagonist; "follow me."

At the same time a voice from the portico said, "The jackanape is right: they are tilting here."

Leicester, meanwhile, drew off Tressilian into a sort of recess behind one of the fountains, which served to conceal them, while six of the yeomen of the Queen's guard passed along the middle walk of the Pleasance, and they could hear one say to the rest, "We shall never find them to-night amongst all these squirting funnels, squirrel-cages, and rabbit-holes; but if we light not on them before we reach the farther end, we will return, and mount a guard at the entrance, and so secure them till morning."

"A proper matter," said another, "the drawing of swords so near the Queen's presence, aye, and in her very palace as 'twere! Hang it, they must be some poor drunken gamecocks fallen to sparring; 'twere pity almost we should find them—the penalty is chopping off a hand, is it not? 'Twere hard to lose hand for handling a bit of steel, that comes so natural to one's gripe."

"Thou art a brawler thyself, George," said another; "but take heed, for the law stands as thou sayest."

"Aye," said the first, "an the act be not mildly construed; for thou know'st 'tis not the Queen's palace, but my Lord of Leicester's."

“Why, for that matter, the penalty may be as severe,” said another; “for an our gracious mistress be queen, as she is, God save her, my Lord of Leicester is as good as king.”

“Hush! thou knave!” said a third; “how know’st thou who may be within hearing?”

They passed on, making a kind of careless search, but seemingly more intent on their own conversation than bent on discovering the persons who had created the nocturnal disturbance.

They had no sooner passed forward along the terrace than Leicester, making a sign to Tressilian to follow him, glided away in an opposite direction, and escaped through the portico undiscovered. He conducted Tressilian to Mervyn’s Tower, in which he was now again lodged; and then, ere parting with him, said these words, “If thou hast courage to continue and bring to an end what is thus broken off, be near me when the court goes forth to-morrow; we shall find a time, and I will give you a signal when it is fitting.”

“My lord,” said Tressilian, “at another time I might have inquired the meaning of this strange and furious inveteracy against me. But you have laid that on my shoulder which only blood can wash away; and were you as high as your proudest wishes ever carried you, I would have from you satisfaction for my wounded honor.”

On these terms they parted, but the adventures of the night were not yet ended with Leicester. He was compelled to pass by Saintlowe’s Tower in order to gain the private passage which led to his own chamber, and in the entrance thereof he met Lord Hunsdon half-clothed and with a naked sword under his arm.

“Are you awakened, too, with this ’larum, my Lord of Leicester?” said the old soldier. “’Tis well. By gog’s nails, the nights are as noisy as the day in this castle of yours. Some two hours since, I was waked by the screams of that poor brain-sick Lady Varney, whom her husband was forcing away. I promise you, it required both your warrant and the Queen’s to keep me from entering into the game, and cutting that Varney of yours over the head; and now there is a brawl down in the Pleasance, or what call you the stone terrace-walk, where all yonder gimcracks stand?”

The first part of the old man’s speech went through the earl’s heart like a knife; to the last he answered that he himself had heard the clash of swords, and had come down to

take order with those who had been so insolent so near the Queen's presence.

"Nay, then," said Hunsdon, "I will be glad of your lordship's company."

Leicester was thus compelled to turn back with the rough old lord to the Pleasance, where Hunsdon heard from the yeomen of the guard, who were under his immediate command, the unsuccessful search they had made for the authors of the disturbance; and bestowed for their pains some round dozen of curses on them, as lazy knaves and blind whoresons. Leicester also thought it necessary to seem angry that no discovery had been effected; but at length suggested to Lord Hunsdon that, after all, it could only be some foolish young men who had been drinking healths pottle-deep, and who would be sufficiently scared by the search which had taken place after them. Hunsdon, who was himself attached to his cup, allowed that a pint-flagon might cover many of the follies which it had caused. "But," he added, "unless your lordship will be less liberal in your housekeeping, and restrain the overflow of ale, and wine, and wassail, I foresee it will end in my having some of these good fellows into the guard-house, and treating them to a dose of the strappado. And with this warning, good-night to you."

Joyful at being rid of his company, Leicester took leave of him at the entrance of his lodging, where they had first met, and entering the private passage, took up the lamp which he had left there, and by its expiring light found the way to his own apartment.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Room! room! for my horse will wince
If he comes within so many yards of a prince;
For to tell you true, and in rhyme,
He was foal'd in Queen Elizabeth's time;
When the great Earl of Lester
In his castle did feast her.

—BEN JONSON, *Masque of Owls*.

THE amusement with which Elizabeth and her court were next day to be regaled was an exhibition by the true-hearted men of Coventry, who were to represent the strife between the English and the Danes, agreeably to a custom long preserved in their ancient borough, and warranted for truth by old histories and chronicles. In this pageant, one party of the townfolk presented the Saxons and the other the Danes, and set forth, both in rude rhymes and with hard blows, the contentions of these two fierce nations, and the Amazonian courage of the English women, who, according to the story, were the principal agents in the general massacre of the Danes, which took place at Hocktide, in the year of God 1012. This sport, which had been long a favorite pastime of the men of Coventry, had, it seems, been put down by the influence of some zealous clergyman of the more precise cast, who chanced to have considerable influence with the magistrates. But the generality of the inhabitants had petitioned the Queen that they might have their play again, and be honored with permission to represent it before her Highness. And when the matter was canvassed in the little council which usually attended the Queen for dispatch of business, the proposal, although opposed by some of the stricter sort, found favor in the eyes of Elizabeth, who said that such toys occupied, without offense, the minds of many who, lacking them, might find worse subjects of pastime; and that their pastors, however commendable for learning and godliness, were somewhat too sour in preaching against the pastimes of their flocks; and so the pageant was permitted to proceed.

Accordingly, after a morning repast, which Master Laneham calls an ambrosial breakfast, the principal persons of the court, in attendance upon her Majesty, pressed to the Gallery Tower, to witness the approach of the two contending parties of English and Danes; and after a signal had been

given, the gate which opened into the circuit of the chase was thrown wide to admit them. On they came, foot and horse; for some of the more ambitious burghers and yeomen had put themselves into fantastic dresses, imitating knights, in order to resemble the chivalry of the two different nations. However, to prevent fatal accidents, they were not permitted to appear on real horses, but had only license to accouter themselves with those hobby-horses, as they are called, which anciently formed the chief delight of a morrice-dance, and which still are exhibited on the stage, in the grand battle fought at the conclusion of Mr. Bayes' tragedy. The infantry followed in similar disguises. The whole exhibition was to be considered as a sort of anti-masque, or burlesque of the more stately pageants, in which the nobility and gentry bore part in the show, and, to the best of their knowledge, imitated with accuracy the personages whom they represented. The Hocktide play was of a different character, the actors being persons of inferior degree, and their habits the better fitted for the occasion the more incongruous and ridiculous that they were in themselves. Accordingly, their array, which the progress of our tale allows us no time to describe, was ludicrous enough, and their weapons, though sufficiently formidable to deal sound blows, were long alder-poles instead of lances, and sound cudgels for swords; and for fence, both cavalry and infantry were well equipped with stout head-pieces and targets, both made of thick leather.

Captain Coxe, that celebrated humorist of Coventry, whose library of ballads, almanacks, and penny histories, fairly wrapped up in parchment, and tied round for security with a piece of whipcord, remains still the envy of antiquaries, being himself the ingenious person under whose direction the pageant had been set forth, rode valiantly on his hobby-horse before the bands of English, high-trussed, saith Laneham, and brandishing his long sword, as became an experienced man of war, who had fought under the Queen's father, bluff King Henry, at the siege of Bologne. This chieftain was, as right and reason craved, the first to enter the lists, and, passing the gallery at the head of his myrmidons, kissed the hilt of his sword to the Queen, and executed at the same time a gambade, the like whereof had never been practiced by two-legged hobby-horse. Then passing on with all his followers of cavalry and infantry, he drew them up with martial skill at the opposite extremity of the bridge, or tilt-yard, until his antagonists should be fairly prepared for the onset.

This was no long interval; for the Danish cavalry and infantry, no way inferior to the English in number, valor, and equipment, instantly arrived, with the northern bagpipe blowing before them in token of their country, and headed by a cunning master of defense, only inferior to the renowned Captain Coxe, if to him, in the discipline of war. The Danes, as invaders, took their station under the Gallery Tower, and opposite to that of Mortimer; and, when their arrangements were completely made, a signal was given for the encounter.

Their first charge upon each other was rather moderate, for either party had some dread of being forced into the lake. But as re-enforcements came up on either side, the encounter grew from a skirmish into a blazing battle. They rushed upon one another, as Master Laneham testifies, like rams inflamed by jealousy, with such furious encounter that both parties were often overthrown, and the clubs and targets made a most horrible clatter. In many instances that happened which had been dreaded by the more experienced warriors who began the day of strife. The rails which defended the ledges of the bridge had been, perhaps on purpose, left but slightly fastened, and gave way under the pressure of those who thronged to the combat, so that the hot courage of many of the combatants received a sufficient cooling. These incidents might have occasioned more serious damage than became such an affray, for many of the champions who met with this mischance could not swim, and those who could were encumbered with their suits of leathern and of paper armor; but the case had been provided for, and there were several boats in readiness to pick up the unfortunate warriors and convey them to the dry land, where, dripping and dejected, they comforted themselves with the hot ale and strong waters which were liberally allowed to them, without showing any desire to re-enter so desperate a conflict.

Captain Coxe alone, that paragon of black-letter antiquaries, after twice experiencing, horse and man, the perilous leap from the bridge into the lake, equal to any extremity to which the favorite heroes of chivalry, whose exploits he studied in an abridged form, whether Amadis, Belianis, Bevis, or his own Guy of Warwick, had ever been subjected to—Captain Coxe, we repeat, did alone, after two such mischances, rush again into the heat of conflict, his bases and the foot-cloth of his hobby-horse dropping water, and twice reanimated by voice and example the drooping spirits of the English; so that at length their victory over the Danish invaders

became, as was just and reasonable, complete and decisive. Worthy he was to be rendered immortal by the pen of Ben Jonson, who, fifty years afterward, deemed that a masque, exhibited at Kenilworth, could be ushered in by none with so much propriety as by the ghost of Captain Coxe, mounted upon his redoubted hobby-horse.

These rough rural gambols may not altogether agree with the reader's preconceived idea of an entertainment presented before Elizabeth, in whose reign letters revived with such brilliancy, and whose court, governed by a female whose sense of propriety was equal to her strength of mind, was no less distinguished for delicacy and refinement than her councils for wisdom and fortitude. But whether from the political wish to seem interested in popular sports, or whether from a spark of old Henry's rough masculine spirit, which Elizabeth sometimes displayed, it is certain the Queen laughed heartily at the imitation, or rather burlesque, of chivalry which was presented in the Coventry play. She called near her person the Earl of Sussex and Lord Hunsdon, partly perhaps to make amends to the former for the long and private audiences with which she had indulged the Earl of Leicester, by engaging him in conversation upon a pastime which better suited his taste than those pageants that were furnished forth from the stores of antiquity. The disposition which the Queen showed to laugh and jest with her military leaders gave the Earl of Leicester the opportunity he had been watching for withdrawing from the royal presence, which to the court around, so well had he chosen his time, had the graceful appearance of leaving his rival free access to the Queen's person, instead of availing himself of his right as her landlord to stand perpetually betwixt others and the light of her countenance.

Leicester's thoughts, however, had a far different object from mere courtesy; for no sooner did he see the Queen fairly engaged in conversation with Sussex and Hunsdon, behind whose back stood Sir Nicholas Blount, grinning from ear to ear at each word which was spoken, than, making a sign to Tressilian, who, according to appointment, watched his motions at a little distance, he extricated himself from the press, and walking toward the chase, made his way through the crowds of ordinary spectators, who, with open mouth, stood gazing on the battle of the English and the Danes. When he had accomplished this, which was a work of some difficulty, he shot another glance behind him to see that Tressilian had

been equally successful, and as soon as he saw him also free from the crowd, he led the way to a small thicket, behind which stood a lackey with two horses ready saddled. He flung himself on the one, and made signs to Tressilian to mount the other, who obeyed without speaking a single word.

Leicester then spurred his horse, and galloped without stopping until he reached a sequestered spot, environed by lofty oaks, about a mile's distance from the castle, and in an opposite direction from the scene to which curiosity was drawing every spectator. He there dismounted, bound his horse to a tree, and only pronouncing the words, "Here there is no risk of interruption," laid his cloak across his saddle, and drew his sword.

Tressilian imitated his example punctually, yet could not forbear saying, as he drew his weapon, "My lord, as I have been known to many as one who does not fear death, when placed in balance with honor, methinks I may without derogation ask, wherefore, in the name of all that is honorable, your lordship has dared to offer me such a mark of disgrace as places us on these terms with respect to each other?"

"If you like not such marks of my scorn," replied the earl, "betake yourself instantly to your weapon, lest I repeat the usage you complain of."

"It shall not need, my lord," said Tressilian. "God judge betwixt us! and your blood, if you fall, be on your own head."

He had scarcely completed the sentence when they instantly closed in combat.

But Leicester, who was a perfect master of defense, among all other exterior accomplishments of the time, had seen, on the preceding night, enough of Tressilian's strength and skill to make him fight with more caution than heretofore, and prefer a secure revenge to a hasty one. For some minutes they fought with equal skill and fortune, till, in a desperate lounge which Leicester successfully put aside, Tressilian exposed himself at disadvantage; and, in a subsequent attempt to close, the earl forced his sword from his hand and stretched him on the ground. With a grim smile, he held the point of his rapier within two inches of the throat of his fallen adversary, and placing his foot at the same time upon his breast, bid him confess his villainous wrongs toward him, and prepare for death.

"I have no villainy nor wrong toward thee to confess," answered Tressilian, "and am better prepared for death than

thou! Use thine advantage as thou wilt, and may God forgive you! I have given you no cause for this."

"No cause!" exclaimed the earl—"no cause! But why parley with such a slave? Die a liar, as thou hast lived!"

He had withdrawn his arm for the purpose of striking the fatal blow, when it was suddenly seized from behind.

The earl turned in wrath to shake off the unexpected obstacle, but was surprised to find that a strange-looking boy had hold of his sword-arm, and clung to it with such tenacity of grasp that he could not shake him off without a considerable struggle, in the course of which Tressilian had opportunity to rise and possess himself once more of his weapon. Leicester again turned toward him with looks of unabated ferocity, and the combat would have recommenced with still more desperation on both sides, had not the boy clung to Lord Leicester's knees, and in a shrill tone implored him to listen one moment ere he prosecuted this quarrel.

"Stand up and let me go," said Leicester, "or, by Heaven, I will pierce thee with my rapier! What hast thou to do to bar my way to revenge?"

"Much—much!" exclaimed the undaunted boy; "since my folly has been the cause of these bloody quarrels between you, and perchance of worse evils. O, if you would ever again enjoy the peace of an innocent mind, if you hope again to sleep in peace and unhaunted by remorse, take so much leisure as to peruse this letter, and then do as you list."

While he spoke in this eager and earnest manner, to which his singular features and voice gave a goblin-like effect, he held up to Leicester a packet, secured with a long tress of woman's hair, of a beautiful light-brown color. Enraged as he was, nay, almost blinded with fury to see his destined revenge so strangely frustrated, the Earl of Leicester could not resist this extraordinary supplicant. He snatched the letter from his hand, changed color as he looked on the superscription, undid, with faltering hand, the knot which secured it, glanced over the contents, and, staggering back, would have fallen, had he not rested against the trunk of a tree, where he stood for an instant, his eyes bent on the letter, and his sword-point turned to the ground, without seeming to be conscious of the presence of an antagonist toward whom he had shown little mercy, and who might in turn have taken him at advantage. But for such revenge Tressilian was too noble-minded; he also stood still in surprise, waiting the issue of this strange fit of passion, but holding his weapon ready to

defend himself, in case of need, against some new and sudden attack on the part of Leicester, whom he again suspected to be under the influence of actual frenzy. The boy, indeed, he easily recognized as his old acquaintance Dickon, whose face, once seen, was scarcely to be forgotten; but how he came thither at so critical a moment, why his interference was so energetic, and, above all, how it came to produce so powerful an effect upon Leicester, were questions which he could not solve.

But the letter was of itself powerful enough to work effects yet more wonderful. It was that which the unfortunate Amy had written to her husband, in which she alleged the reasons and manner of her flight from Cumnor Place, informed him of her having made her way to Kenilworth to enjoy his protection, and mentioned the circumstances which had compelled her to take refuge in Tressilian's apartment, earnestly requesting he would, without delay, assign her a more suitable asylum. The letter concluded with the most earnest expressions of devoted attachment and submission to his will in all things, and particularly respecting her situation and place of residence, conjuring him only that she might not be placed under the guardianship or restraint of Varney.

The letter dropped from Leicester's hand when he had perused it. "Take my sword," he said, "Tressilian, and pierce my heart, as I would but now have pierced yours!"

"My lord," said Tressilian, "you have done me great wrong; but something within my breast ever whispered that it was by egregious error."

"Error indeed!" said Leicester, and handed him the letter; "I have been made to believe a man of honor a villain, and the best and purest of creatures a false profligate. Wretched boy, why comes this letter now, and where has the bearer lingered?"

"I dare not tell you, my lord," said the boy, withdrawing, as if to keep beyond his reach; "but here comes one who was the messenger."

Wayland at the same moment came up; and, interrogated by Leicester, hastily detailed all the circumstances of his escape with Amy, the fatal practices which had driven her to flight, and her anxious desire to throw herself under the instant protection of her husband, pointing out the evidence of the domestics of Kenilworth, "who could not," he observed, "but remember her eager inquiries after the Earl of Leicester on her first arrival."

"The villains!" exclaimed Leicester; "but O, that worst of villains, Varney! and she is even now in his power!"

"But not, I trust in God," said Tressilian, "with any commands of fatal import?"

"No—no—no!" exclaimed the earl hastily. "I said something in madness; but it was recalled—fully recalled—by a hasty messenger; and she is now—she must now be safe."

"Yes," said Tressilian, "she *must* be safe, and I *must* be assured of her safety. My own quarrel with you is ended, my lord; but there is another to begin with the seducer of Amy Robsart, who has screened his guilt under the cloak of the infamous Varney."

"The *seducer* of Amy!" replied Leicester, with a voice like thunder; "say her husband!—her misguided, blinded, most unworthy husband! She is as surely Countess of Leicester as I am belted earl. Nor can you, sir, point out that manner of justice which I will not render her at my own free will. I need scarce say, I fear not your compulsion."

The generous nature of Tressilian was instantly turned from consideration of anything personal to himself, and centered at once upon Amy's welfare. He had by no means undoubting confidence in the fluctuating resolutions of Leicester, whose mind seemed to him agitated beyond the government of calm reason; neither did he, notwithstanding the assurances he had received, think Amy safe in the hands of his dependents. "My lord," he said calmly, "I mean you no offense, and am far from seeking a quarrel. But my duty to Sir Hugh Robsart compels me to carry this matter instantly to the Queen, that the countess' rank may be acknowledged in her person."

"You shall not need, sir," replied the earl haughtily; "do not dare to interfere. No voice but Dudley's shall proclaim Dudley's infamy. To Elizabeth herself will I tell it, and then for Cumnor Place with the speed of life and death!"

So saying, he unbound his horse from the tree, threw himself into the saddle, and rode at full gallop toward the castle.

"Take me before you, Master Tressilian," said the boy, seeing Tressilian mount in the same haste; "my tale is not all told out, and I need your protection."

Tressilian complied, and followed the earl, though at a less furious rate. By the way the boy confessed, with much contrition, that in resentment at Wayland's evading all his inquiries concerning the lady, after Dickon conceived he had in various ways merited his confidence, he had purloined from

him, in revenge, the letter with which Amy had intrusted him for the Earl of Leicester. His purpose was to have restored it to him that evening, as he reckoned himself sure of meeting with him, in consequence of Wayland's having to perform the part of Arion in the pageant. He was indeed something alarmed when he saw to whom the letter was addressed; but he argued that, as Leicester did not return to Kenilworth until that evening, it would be again in the possession of the proper messenger as soon as, in the nature of things, it could possibly be delivered. But Wayland came not to the pageant, having been in the interim expelled by Lambourne from the castle, and the boy, not being able to find him, or to get speech of Tressilian, and finding himself in possession of a letter addressed to no less a person than the Earl of Leicester, became much afraid of the consequences of his frolic. The caution, and indeed the alarm, which Wayland had expressed respecting Varney and Lambourne, led him to judge that the letter must be designed for the earl's own hand, and that he might prejudice the lady by giving it to any of the domestics. He made an attempt or two to obtain an audience with Leicester, but the singularity of his features and the meanness of his appearance occasioned his being always repulsed by the insolent menials whom he applied to for that purpose. Once, indeed, he had nearly succeeded, when, in prowling about, he found in the grotto the casket which he knew to belong to the unlucky countess, having seen it on her journey, for nothing escaped his prying eye. Having strove in vain to restore it either to Tressilian or the countess, he put it into the hands, as we have seen, of Leicester himself, but unfortunately he did not recognize him in his disguise.

At length the boy thought he was on the point of succeeding, when the earl came down to the lower part of the hall; but just as he was about to accost him, he was prevented by Tressilian. As sharp in ear as in wit, the boy heard the appointment settled betwixt them to take place in the Pleasance, and resolved to add a third to the party, in hopes that, either in coming or in returning, he might find an opportunity of delivering the letter to Leicester; for strange stories began to flit among the domestics, which alarmed him for the lady's safety. Accident, however, detained Dickon a little behind the earl, and, as he reached the arcade, he saw them engaged in combat; in consequence of which he hastened to alarm the guard, having little doubt that what bloodshed

took place betwixt them might arise out of his own frolic. Continuing to lurk in the portico, he heard the second appointment which Leicester, at parting, assigned to Tressilian, and was keeping them in view during the encounter of the Coventry men, when, to his surprise, he recognized Wayland in the crowd, much disguised, indeed, but not sufficiently so to escape the prying glance of his old comrade. They drew aside out of the crowd to explain the situation to each other. The boy confessed to Wayland what we would have above told, and the artist, in return, informed him that his deep anxiety for the fate of the unfortunate lady had brought him back to the neighborhood of the castle, upon his learning that morning at a village about ten miles distant that Varney and Lambourne, whose violence he dreaded, had both left Kenilworth over-night.

While they spoke, they saw Leicester and Tressilian separate themselves from the crowd, dogged them until they mounted their horses, when the boy, whose speed of foot has been before mentioned, though he could not possibly keep up with them, yet arrived, as we have seen, soon enough to save Tressilian's life. The boy had just finished his tale when they reached the Gallery Tower.

CHAPTER XL.

High o'er the eastern steep the sun is beaming,
And darkness flies with her deceitful shadows;
So truth prevails o'er falsehood.

—*Old Play.*

As Tressilian rode along the bridge lately the scene of so much riotous sport, he could not but observe that men's countenances had singularly changed during the space of his brief absence. The mock fight was over, but the men, still habited in their masking suits, stood together in groups, like the inhabitants of a city who have been just startled by some strange and alarming news.

When he reached the base-court, appearances were the same: domestics, retainers, and under officers stood together and whispered, bending their eyes toward the windows of the great hall, with looks which seemed at once alarmed and mysterious.

Sir Nicholas Blount was the first person of his own particular acquaintance Tressilian saw, who left him no time to make inquiries, but greeted him with, "God help thy heart, Tressilian, thou art fitter for a clown than a courtier: thou canst not attend, as becomes one who follows her Majesty. Here you are called for, wished for, waited for—no man but you will serve the turn; and hither you come with a misbegotten brat on thy horse's neck, as if thou wert dry nurse to some sucking devil, and wert just returned from airing."

"Why, what is the matter?" said Tressilian, letting go the boy, who sprung to ground like a feather, and himself dismounting at the same time.

"Why, no one knows the matter," replied Blount: "I cannot smell it out myself, though I have a nose like other courtiers. Only, my Lord of Leicester has galloped along the bridge, as if he would have rode over all in his passage, demanded an audience of the Queen, and is closeted even now with her and Burleigh and Walsingham; and you are called for; but whether the matter be treason or worse, no one knows."

"He speaks true, by Heaven!" said Raleigh, who that instant appeared; "you must immediately to the Queen's presence."

"Be not rash, Raleigh," said Blount, "remember his boots."

For Heaven's sake, go to my chamber, dear Tressilian, and don my new bloom-colored silken hose; I have worn them but twice."

"Pshaw!" answered Tressilian; "do thou take care of this boy, Blount; be kind to him, and look he escapes you not—~~much~~ depends on him."

So saying, he followed Raleigh hastily, leaving honest Blount with the bridle of his horse in one hand and the boy in the other.

Blount gave a long look after him. "Nobody," he said, "calls me to these mysteries; and he leaves me here to play horse-keeper and child-keeper at once. I could excuse the one, for I love a good horse naturally; but to be plagued with a bratchet whelp! Whence come ye, my fair-favored little gossip?"

"From the Fens," answered the boy.

"And what didst thou learn there, forward imp?"

"To catch gulls, with their webbed feet and yellow stockings," said the boy.

"Umph!" said Blount, looking down on his own immense roses. "Nay, then, the devil take him asks thee more questions."

Meantime, Tressilian traversed the full length of the great hall, in which the astonished courtiers formed various groups, and were whispering mysteriously together, while all kept their eyes fixed on the door which led from the upper end of the hall into the Queen's withdrawing-apartment. Raleigh pointed to the door. Tressilian knocked, and was instantly admitted. Many a neck was stretched to gain a view into the interior of the apartment; but the tapestry which covered the door on the inside was dropped too suddenly to admit the slightest gratification of curiosity.

Upon entrance, Tressilian found himself, not without a strong palpitation of heart, in the presence of Elizabeth, who was walking to and fro in a violent agitation, which she seemed to scorn to conceal, while two or three of her most sage and confidential counselors exchanged anxious looks with each other, but delayed speaking till her wrath had abated. Before the empty chair of state in which she had been seated, and which was half pushed aside by the violence with which she had started from it, knelt Leicester, his arms crossed and his brows bent on the ground, still and motionless as the effigies upon a sepulcher. Beside him stood the Lord Shrewsbury, then Earl Marshal of England, holding his baton

of office; the earl's sword was unbuckled, and lay before him on the floor.

"Ho, sir," said the Queen, coming close up to Tressilian, and stamping on the floor with the action and manner of Henry himself; "*you* knew of this fair work—*you* are an accomplice in this deception which has been practiced on us—*you* have been a main cause of our doing injustice?" Tressilian dropped on his knee before the Queen, his good sense showing him the risk of attempting any defense at that moment of irritation. "Art dumb, sirrah?" she continued; "thou know'st of this affair, dost thou not?"

"Not, gracious madam, that this poor lady was Countess of Leicester."

"Nor shall anyone know her for such," said Elizabeth. "Death of my life! Countess of Leicester! I say Dame Amy Dudley; and well if she have not cause to write herself widow of the traitor Robert Dudley."

"Madam," said Leicester, "do with me what it may be your will to do, but work no injury on this gentleman; he hath in no way deserved it."

"And will he be the better for thy intercession," said the Queen, leaving Tressilian, who slowly arose, and rushing to Leicester, who continued kneeling—"the better for *thy* intercession, thou doubly false—thou doubly forsworn—of thy intercession, whose villainy hath made me ridiculous to my subjects and odious to myself? I could tear out mine eyes for their blindness!"

Burleigh here ventured to interpose.

"Madam," he said, "remember that you are a queen—Queen of England—mother of your people. Give not way to this wild storm of passion."

Elizabeth turned round to him, while a tear actually twinkled in her proud and angry eye. "Burleigh," she said, "thou art a statesman; thou dost not, thou canst not, comprehend half the scorn, half the misery, that man has poured on me!"

With the utmost caution, with the deepest reverence, Burleigh took her hand at the moment he saw her heart was at the fullest, and led her aside to an oriel window, apart from the others.

"Madam," he said, "I am a statesman, but I am also a man—a man already grown old in your councils, who have not, and cannot have, a wish on earth but your glory and happiness; I pray you to be composed."

"Ah, Burleigh," said Elizabeth, "thou little knowest——" Here her tears fell over her cheeks in despite of her.

"I do—I do know, my honored sovereign. Oh, beware that you lead not others to guess that which they know not!"

"Ha!" said Elizabeth, pausing as if a new train of thought had suddenly shot across her brain. "Burleigh, thou art right—thou art right—anything but disgrace—anything but a confession of weakness—anything rather than seem the cheated—sighted—— 'Sdeath! to think on it is distraction!"

"Be but yourself, my Queen," said Burleigh; "and soar far above a weakness which no Englishman will ever believe his Elizabeth could have entertained, unless the violence of her disappointment carries a sad conviction to his bosom."

"What weakness, my lord?" said Elizabeth haughtily; "would you too insinuate that the favor in which I held yonder proud traitor derived its source from aught——" But here she could no longer sustain the proud tone which she had assumed, and again softened as she said, "But why should I strive to deceive even thee, my good and wise servant?"

Burleigh stooped to kiss her hand with affection, and—rare in the annals of courts—a tear of true sympathy dropped from the eye of the minister on the hand of his sovereign.

It is probable that the consciousness of possessing this sympathy aided Elizabeth in supporting her mortification and suppressing her extreme resentment; but she was still more moved by fear that her passion should betray to the public the affront and the disappointment which, alike as a woman and a queen, she was so anxious to conceal. She turned from Burleigh, and sternly paced the hall till her features had recovered their usual dignity and her mien its wonted stateliness of regular motion.

"Our sovereign is her noble self once more," whispered Burleigh to Walsingham; "mark what she does, and take heed you thwart her not."

She then approached Leicester, and said, with calmness, "My Lord Shrewsbury, we discharge you of your prisoner. My Lord of Leicester, rise and take up your sword; a quarter of an hour's restraint, under the custody of our marshal, my lord, is, we think, no high penance for months of falsehood practiced upon us. We will now hear the progress of this affair." She then seated herself in her chair, and said, "You, Tressilian, step forward and say what you know."

Tressilian told his story generously, suppressing as much as he could what affected Leicester, and saying nothing of their having twice actually fought together. It is very probable that, in doing so, he did the earl good service; for had the Queen at that instant found anything on account of which she might vent her wrath upon him, without laying open sentiments of which she was ashamed, it might have fared hard with him. She paused when Tressilian had finished his tale.

"We will take that Wayland," she said, "into our own service, and place the boy in our secretary office for instruction, that he may in future use discretion toward letters. For you, Tressilian, you did wrong in not communicating the whole truth to us, and your promise not to do so was both imprudent and undutiful. Yet, having given your word to this unhappy lady, it was the part of a man and a gentleman to keep it; and, on the whole, we esteem you for the character you have sustained in this matter. My Lord of Leicester, it is now your turn to tell us the truth, an exercise to which you seem of late to have been too much a stranger."

Accordingly, she extorted, by successive questions, the whole history of his first acquaintance with Amy Robsart—their marriage—his jealousy—the causes on which it was founded, and many particulars besides. Leicester's confession, for such it might be called, was wrenched from him piecemeal, yet was upon the whole accurate, excepting that he totally omitted to mention that he had, by implication or otherwise, assented to Varney's designs upon the life of his countess. Yet the consciousness of this was what at that moment lay nearest to his heart; and although he trusted in great measure to the very positive counter-orders which he had sent by Lambourne, it was his purpose to set out for Cumnor Place in person as soon as he should be dismissed from the presence of the Queen, who, he concluded, would presently leave Kenilworth.

But the earl reckoned without his host. It is true, his presence and his communications were gall and wormwood to his once partial mistress. But, barred from every other and more direct mode of revenge, the Queen perceived that she gave her false suitor torture by these inquiries, and dwelt on them for that reason, no more regarding the pain which she herself experienced than the savage cares for the searing of his own hands by grasping the hot pincers with which he tears the flesh of his captive enemy.

At length, however, the haughty lord, like a deer that turns to bay, gave intimation that his patience was failing. "Madam," he said, "I have been much to blame, more than even your just resentment has expressed. Yet, madam, let me say, that my guilt, if it be unpardonable, was not unprovoked; and that, if beauty and condescending dignity could seduce the frail heart of a human being, I might plead both as the causes of my concealing this secret from your Majesty."

The Queen was so much struck by this reply, which Leicester took care should be heard by no one but herself, that she was for the moment silenced, and the ear had the temerity to pursue his advantage. "Your Grace, who has pardoned so much, will excuse my throwing myself on your royal mercy for those expressions which were yester-morning accounted but a light offense."

The Queen fixed her eyes on him while she replied, "Now, by Heaven, my lord, thy effrontery passes the bounds of belief as well as patience! But it shall avail thee nothing. What, ho! my lords, come all and hear the news. My Lord of Leicester's stolen marriage has cost me a husband and England a king. His lordship is patriarchal in his tastes: one wife at a time was insufficient, and he designed us the honor of his left hand. Now, is not this too insolent—that I could not grace him with a few marks of court favor, but he must presume to think my hand and crown at his disposal? You, however, think better of me; and I can pity this ambitious man, as I could a child whose bubble of soap has burst between his hands. We go to the presence-chamber. My Lord of Leicester, we command your close attendance on us."

All was eager expectation in the hall, and what was the universal astonishment when the Queen said to those next her, "The revels of Kenilworth are not yet exhausted, my lords and ladies: we are to solemnize the noble owner's marriage."

There was an universal expression of surprise.

"It is true, on our royal word," said the Queen; "he hath kept this a secret even from us, that he might surprise us with it at this very place and time. I see you are dying of curiosity to know the happy bride. It is Amy Robsart, the same who, to make up the May-game yesterday, figured in the pageant as the wife of his servant Varney."

"For God's sake, madam," said the earl, approaching her with a mixture of humility, vexation, and shame in his countenance, and speaking so low as to be heard by no one else,

“take my head, as you threatened in your anger, and spare me these taunts! Urge not a falling man—tread not on a crushed worm.”

“A worm, my lord!” said the Queen, in the same tone; “nay, a snake is the nobler reptile, and the more exact similitude—the frozen snake you wot of, which was warmed in a certain bosom——”

“For your own sake—for mine, madam,” said the earl—“while there is yet some reason left in me——”

“Speak aloud, my lord,” said Elizabeth, “and at farther distance, so please you; your breath thaws our ruff. What have you to ask of us?”

“Permission,” said the unfortunate earl humbly, “to travel to Cumnor Place.”

“To fetch home your bride belike? Why, aye, that is but right, for, as we have heard, she is indifferently cared for there. But, my lord, you go not in person: we have counted upon passing certain days in this castle of Kenilworth, and it were slight courtesy to leave us without a landlord during our residence here. Under your favor, we cannot think to incur such disgrace in the eyes of our subjects. Tressilian shall go to Cumnor Place instead of you, and with him some gentleman who hath been sworn of our chamber, lest my Lord of Leicester should be again jealous of his old rival. Whom wouldst thou have to be in commission with thee, Tressilian?”

Tressilian, with humble deference, suggested the name of Raleigh.

“Why, aye,” said the Queen; “so God ha’ me, thou hast made a good choice. He is a young knight besides, and to deliver a lady from prison is an appropriate first adventure. Cumnor Place is little better than a prison, you are to know, my lords and ladies. Besides, there are certain faitours there whom we would willingly have in fast keeping. You will furnish them, Master Secretary, with the warrant necessary to secure the bodies of Richard Varney and the foreign Alasco, dead or alive. Take a sufficient force with you, gentlemen; bring the lady here in all honor; lose no time, and God be with you!”

They bowed, and left the presence.

Who shall describe how the rest of that day was spent at Kenilworth? The Queen, who seemed to have remained there for the sole purpose of mortifying and taunting the Earl of Leicester, showed herself as skillful in that female art

of vengeance as she was in the science of wisely governing her people. The train of state soon caught the signal, and, as he walked among his own splendid preparations, the Lord of Kenilworth, in his own castle, already experienced the lot of a disgraced courtier, in the slight regard and cold manners of alienated friends, and the ill-concealed triumph of avowed and open enemies. Sussex, from his natural military frankness of disposition, Burleigh and Walsingham, from their penetrating and prospective sagacity, and some of the ladies, from the compassion of their sex, were the only persons in the crowded court who retained toward him the countenance they had borne in the morning.

So much had Leicester been accustomed to consider court favor as the principal object of his life, that all other sensations were, for the time, lost in the agony which his haughty spirit felt at the succession of petty insults and studied neglects to which he had been subjected; but when he retired to his own chamber for the night, that long fair tress of hair which had once secured Amy's letter fell under his observation, and, with the influence of a counter-charm, awakened his heart to nobler and more natural feelings. He kissed it a thousand times; and while he recollected that he had it always in his power to shun the mortifications which he had that day undergone, by retiring into a dignified and even prince-like seclusion with the beautiful and beloved partner of his future life, he felt that he could rise above the revenge which Elizabeth had condescended to take.

Accordingly, on the following day, the whole conduct of the earl displayed so much dignified equanimity; he seemed so solicitous about the accommodations and amusements of his guests, yet so indifferent to their personal demeanor toward him; so respectfully distant to the Queen, yet so patient of her harassing displeasure, that Elizabeth changed her manner to him, and, though cold and distant, ceased to offer him any direct affront. She intimated also, with some sharpness, to others around her, who thought they were consulting her pleasure in showing a neglectful conduct to the earl, that, while they remained at Kenilworth, they ought to show the civility due from guests to the lord of the castle. In short, matters were so far changed in twenty-four hours that some of the more experienced and sagacious courtiers foresaw a strong possibility of Leicester's restoration to favor, and regulated their demeanor toward him, as those who might one day claim merit for not having deserted him in adversity. It

is time, however, to leave these intrigues, and follow Tressilian and Raleigh on their journey.

The troop consisted of six persons; for, besides Wayland, they had in company a royal pursuivant and two stout serving-men. All were well armed, and traveled as fast as it was possible with justice to their horses, which had a long journey before them. They endeavored to procure some tidings as they rode along of Varney and his party, but could hear none, as they had traveled in the dark. At a small village about twelve miles from Kenilworth, where they gave some refreshment to their horses, a poor clergyman, the curate of the place, came out of a small cottage, and entreated any of the company who might know aught of surgery to look in for an instant on a dying man.

The empiric Wayland undertook to do his best, and as the curate conducted him to the spot, he learned that the man had been found on the highroad, about a mile from the village, by laborers, as they were going to their work on the preceding morning, and the curate had given him shelter in his house. He had received a gun-shot wound which seemed to be obviously mortal, but whether in a brawl or from robbers they could not learn, as he was in a fever, and spoke nothing connectedly. Wayland entered the dark and lowly apartment, and no sooner had the curate drawn aside the curtain than he knew in the distorted features of the patient the countenance of Michael Lambourne. Under pretense of seeking something which he wanted, Wayland hastily apprised his fellow-travelers of this extraordinary circumstance; and both Tressilian and Raleigh, full of boding apprehensions, hastened to the curate's house to see the dying man.

The wretch was by this time in the agonies of death, from which a much better surgeon than Wayland could not have rescued him, for the bullet had passed clear through his body. He was sensible, however, at least in part, for he knew Tressilian, and made signs that he wished him to stoop over his bed. Tressilian did so, and after some inarticulate murmurs, in which the names of Varney and Lady Leicester were alone distinguishable, Lambourne bade him "Make haste, or he would come too late." It was in vain Tressilian urged the patient for farther information; he seemed to become in some degree delirious, and when he again made a signal to attract Tressilian's attention, it was only for the purpose of desiring him to inform his uncle, Giles Gosling of the Black Bear, "That he had died without his shoes after all." A convul-

sion verified his words a few minutes after, and the travelers derived nothing from having met with him save the obscure fears concerning the fate of the countess which his dying words were calculated to convey, and which induced them to urge their journey with the utmost speed, pressing horses in the Queen's name when those which they rode became unfit for service.

The countess, however, was not so fortunate as to escape the fate which she had so justly deserved. She was seized by the Duke of Burgundy, who had been informed of her flight, and was carried to a castle in the mountains, where she was kept in confinement for several months. During this time she was treated with great cruelty, and her health was gradually declining. At length she died, and was buried in a vault in the castle.

The Duke of Burgundy, however, was not satisfied with this. He had a great desire to see the countess, and he sent a messenger to the castle to inquire of her. The messenger returned with the news that she was still alive, and that she was in a state of great weakness. The Duke was very much surprised at this, and he sent a messenger to the castle to bring her to him. The messenger returned with the news that she was dead, and that she had been buried in a vault in the castle.

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CHAPTER XLI.

The death-bell thrice was heard to ring,
And aerial voice was heard to call ;
Thrice the raven flapp'd its wing
Around the towers of Cumnor Hall.

—MICKLE.

WE are now to return to that part of the story where we intimated that Varney, possessed of the authority of the Earl of Leicester, and of the Queen's permission to the same effect, hastened to secure himself against discovery of his perfidy by removing the countess from Kenilworth Castle. He had proposed to set forth early in the morning; but reflecting that the earl might relent in the interim, and seek another interview with the countess, he resolved to prevent, by immediate departure, all chance of what would probably have ended in his detection and ruin. For this purpose he called for Lambourne, and was exceedingly incensed to find that his trusty attendant was abroad on some ramble in the neighboring village or elsewhere. As his return was expected, Sir Richard commanded that he should prepare himself for attending him on an immediate journey, and follow him in case he returned after his departure.

In the meanwhile, Varney used the ministry of a servant called Robin Tider, one to whom the mysteries of Cumnor Place were already in some degree known, as he had been there more than once in attendance on the earl. To this man, whose character resembled that of Lambourne, though he was neither quite so prompt nor altogether so profligate, Varney gave command to have three horses saddled and to prepare a horse-litter, and have them in readiness at the postern gate. The natural enough excuse of his lady's insanity, which was now universally believed, accounted for the secrecy with which she was to be removed from the castle, and he reckoned on the same apology in case the unfortunate Amy's resistance or screams should render such necessary. The agency of Anthony Foster was indispensable, and that Varney now went to secure.

This person, naturally of a sour, unsocial disposition, and somewhat tired, besides, with his journey from Cumnor to Warwickshire, in order to bring the news of the countess'

escape, had early extracted himself from the crowd of wassailers, and betaken himself to his chamber, where he lay asleep, when Varney, completely equipped for traveling, and with a dark-lantern in his hand, entered his apartment. He paused an instant to listen to what his associate was murmuring in his sleep, and could plainly distinguish the words, "Ave Maria, ora pro nobis"; no—it runs not so. Deliver us from evil—aye, so it goes."

"Praying in his sleep," said Varney, "and confounding his old and new devotions. He must have more need of prayer ere I am done with him. What ho! holy man—most blessed penitent! Awake—awake! The devil has not discharged you from service yet."

As Varney at the same time shook the sleeper by the arm, it changed the current of his ideas, and he roared out, "Thieves!—thieves! I will die in defense of my gold—my hard-won gold, that has cost me so dear. Where is Janet? Is Janet safe?"

"Safe enough, thou bellowing fool!" said Varney; "art thou not ashamed of thy clamor?"

Foster by this time was broad awake, and, sitting up in his bed, asked Varney the meaning of so untimely a visit. "It augurs nothing good," he added.

"A false prophecy, most sainted Anthony," returned Varney: "it augurs that the hour is come for converting thy leasehold into copyhold. What say'st thou to that?"

"Hadst thou told me this in broad day," said Foster, "I had rejoiced; but at this dead hour, and by this dim light, and looking on thy pale face, which is a ghastly contradiction to thy light words, I cannot but rather think of the work that is to be done than the guerdon to be gained by it."

"Why, thou fool, it is but to escort thy charge back to Cumnor Place."

"Is that indeed all?" said Foster; "thou look'st deadly pale, and thou art not moved by trifles—is that indeed all?"

"Aye, that—and maybe a trifle more," answered Varney.

"Ah, that trifle more!" said Foster; "still thou look'st paler and paler."

"Heed not my countenance," said Varney, "you see it by this wretched light. Up and be doing, man. Think of Cumnor Place, thine own proper copyhold. Why, thou mayst find a weekly lectureship, besides endowing Janet like a baron's daughter. Seventy pounds and odd."

“Seventy-nine pounds, five shillings, and fivepence half-penny, besides the value of the wood,” said Foster; “and I am to have it all as copyhold?”

“All, man—squirrels and all: no gypsy shall cut the value of a broom, no boy so much as take a bird’s nest, without paying thee a quittance. Aye, that is right—don thy matters as fast as possible; horses and everything are ready, all save that accursed villain Lambourne, who is out on some infernal gambol.”

“Aye, Sir Richard,” said Foster, “you would take no advice. I ever told you that drunken profligate would fail you at need. Now, I could have helped you to a sober young man.”

“What, some slow-spoken, long-breathed brother of the congregation? Why, we shall have use for such also, man. Heaven be praised, we shall lack laborers of every kind. Aye, that is right—forget not your pistols. Come now, and let us away.”

“Whither?” said Anthony.

“To my lady’s chamber, and, mind, she *must* along with us. Thou art not a fellow to be startled by a shriek?”

“Not if Scripture reason can be rendered for it; and it is written, ‘Wives, obey your husbands.’ But will my lord’s commands bear us out if we use violence?”

“Tush, man! here is his signet,” answered Varney; and having thus silenced the objections of his associate, they went together to Lord Hunsdon’s apartments, and, acquainting the sentinel with their purpose, as a matter sanctioned by the Queen and the Earl of Leicester, they entered the chamber of the unfortunate countess.

The horror of Amy may be conceived when, starting from a broken slumber, she saw at her bedside Varney, the man on earth she most feared and hated. It was even a consolation to see that he was not alone, though she had so much reason to dread his sullen companion.

“Madam,” said Varney, “there is no time for ceremony. My Lord of Leicester, having fully considered the exigencies of the time, sends you his orders immediately to accompany us on our return to Cumnor Place. See, here is his signet, in token of his instant and pressing commands.”

“It is false!” said the countess; “thou hast stolen the warrant—thou, who art capable of every villainy, from the blackest to the basest!”

“It is TRUE, madam,” replied Varney; “so true, that if you

do not instantly arise and prepare to attend us, we must compel you to obey our orders."

"Compel! thou dardest not put it to that issue, base as thou art," exclaimed the unhappy countess.

"That remains to be proved, madam," said Varney, who had determined on intimidation as the only means of subduing her high spirit; "if you put me to it, you will find me a rough groom of the chamber."

It was at this threat that Amy screamed so fearfully that, had it not been for the received opinion of her insanity, she would quickly have had Lord Hunsdon and others to her aid. Perceiving, however, that her cries were vain, she appealed to Foster in the most affecting terms, conjuring him, as his daughter Janet's honor and purity was dear to him, not to permit her to be treated with unwomanly violence.

"Why, madam, wives must obey their husbands—there's Scripture warrant for it," said Foster; "and if you will dress yourself and come with us patiently, there's no one shall lay finger on you while I can draw a pistol-trigger."

Seeing no help arrive, and comforted even by the dogged language of Foster, the countess promised to arise and dress herself, if they would agree to retire from the room. Varney at the same time assured her of all safety and honor while in their hands, and promised that he himself would not approach her, since his presence was so displeasing. Her husband, he added, would be at Cumnor Place within twenty-four hours after they reached it.

Somewhat comforted by this assurance, upon which, however, she saw little reason to rely, the unhappy Amy made her toilet by the assistance of the lantern, which they left with her when they quitted the apartment.

Weeping, trembling, and praying, the unfortunate lady dressed herself—with sensations how different from the days in which she was wont to decorate herself in all the pride of conscious beauty! She endeavored to delay the completing of her dress as long as she could, until, terrified by the impatience of Varney, she was obliged to declare herself ready to attend them.

When they were about to move, the countess clung to Foster with such an appearance of terror at Varney's approach, that the latter protested to her, with a deep oath, that he had no intention whatever of even coming near her. "If you do but consent to execute your husband's will in quietness, you shall," he said, "see but little of me. I will

leave you undisturbed to the care of the usher whom your good taste prefers."

"My husband's will!" she exclaimed. "But it is the will of God, and let that be sufficient to me. I will go with Master Foster as unresistingly as ever did a literal sacrifice. He is a father at least, and will have decency if not humanity. For thee, Varney, were it my latest word, thou art an equal stranger to both."

Varney replied only, she was at liberty to choose, and walked some paces before them to show the way; while, half leaning on Foster and half carried by him, the countess was transported from Saintlowe's Tower to the postern gate, where Tider waited with the litter and horses.

The countess was placed in the former without resistance. She saw with some satisfaction that, while Foster and Tider rode close by the litter, which the latter conducted, the dreaded Varney lingered behind, and was soon lost in the darkness. A little while she strove, as the road wended round the verge of the lake, to keep sight of those stately towers which called her husband lord, and which still, in some places, sparkled with lights, where wassailers were yet reveling. But when the direction of the road rendered this no longer possible, she drew back her head, and, sinking down in the litter, recommended herself to the care of Providence.

Besides the desire of inducing the countess to proceed quietly on her journey, Varney had it also in view to have an interview with Lambourne, by whom he every moment expected to be joined, without the presence of any witnesses. He knew the character of this man—prompt, bloody, resolute, and greedy—and judged him the most fit agent he could employ in his farther designs. But ten miles of their journey had been measured ere he heard the hasty clatter of horse's hoofs behind him, and was overtaken by Michael Lambourne.

Fretted as he was with his absence, Varney received his profligate servant with a rebuke of unusual bitterness. "Drunken villain," he said, "thy idleness and debauched folly will stretch a halter ere it be long; and, for me, I care not how soon!"

This style of objurgation, Lambourne, who was elated to an unusual degree, not only by an extraordinary cup of wine, but by the sort of confidential interview he had just had with the earl, and the secret of which he had made himself master, did not receive with his wonted humility. "He would

take no insolence of language," he said, "from the best knight that ever wore spurs. Lord Leicester had detained him on some business of import, and that was enough for Varney, who was but a servant like himself."

Varney was not a little surprised at his unusual tone of insolence; but, ascribing it to liquor, suffered it to pass as if unnoticed, and then began to tamper with Lambourne touching his willingness to aid in removing out of the Earl of Leicester's way an obstacle to a rise which would put it in his power to reward his trusty followers to their utmost wish. And upon Michael Lambourne's seeming ignorant what was meant, he plainly indicated "the litter-load, yonder," as the impediment which he desired should be removed.

"Look you, Sir Richard, and so forth," said Michael, "some are wiser than some, that is one thing, and some are worse than some, that's another. I know my lord's mind on this matter better than thou, for he hath trusted me fully in the matter. Here are his mandates, and his last words were, 'Michael Lambourne'—for his lordship speaks to me as a gentleman of the sword, and useth not the words 'drunken villain,' or such-like phrases of those who know not how to bear new dignities—'Varney,' says he, 'must pay the utmost respect to my countess. I trust to you for looking to it, Lambourne,' says his lordship, 'and you must bring back my signet from him peremptorily.'"

"Aye," replied Varney, "said he so indeed? You know all, then?"

"All—all, and you were as wise to make a friend of me while the weather is fair betwixt us."

"And was there no one present," said Varney, "when my lord so spoke?"

"Not a breathing creature," replied Lambourne. "Think you my lord would trust anyone with such matters save an approved man of action like myself?"

"Most true," said Varney; and, making a pause, he looked forward on the moonlight road. They were traversing a wide and open heath. The litter, being at least a mile before them, was both out of sight and hearing. He looked behind, and there was an expanse, lighted by the moonbeams, without one human being in sight. He resumed his speech to Lambourne: "And will you turn upon your master, who has introduced you to this career of court-like favor—whose apprentice you have been, Michael—who has taught you the depths and shallows of court intrigue?"

“Michael not me!” said Lambourne; “I have a name will brook a *master* before it as well as another; and as to the rest, if I have been an apprentice, my indenture is out, and I am resolute to set up for myself.”

“Take thy quittance first, thou fool!” said Varney; and with a pistol, which he had for some time held in his hand, shot Lambourne through the body.

The wretch fell from his horse without a single groan; and Varney, dismounting, rifled his pockets, turning out the lining, that it might appear he had fallen by robbers. He secured the earl's packet, which was his chief object, but he also took Lambourne's purse, containing some go'd pieces, the relics of what his debauchery had left him, and from a singular combination of feelings, carried it in his hand only the length of a small river which crossed the road, into which he threw it as far as he could fling. Such are the strange remnants of conscience which remain after she seems totally subdued, that this cruel and remorseless man would have felt himself degraded had he pocketed the few pieces belonging to the wretch whom he had thus ruthlessly slain.

The murderer reloaded his pistol, after cleansing the lock and barrel from the appearances of late explosion, and rode calmly after the litter, satisfying himself that he had so adroitly removed a troublesome witness to many of his intrigues, and the bearer of mandates which he had no intention to obey, and which, therefore, he was desirous it should be thought had never reached his hand.

The remainder of the journey was made with a degree of speed which showed the little care they had for the health of the unhappy countess. They paused only at places where all was under their command, and where the tale they were prepared to tell of the insane Lady Varney would have obtained ready credit had she made an attempt to appeal to the compassion of the few persons admitted to see her. But Amy saw no chance of obtaining a hearing from any to whom she had an opportunity of addressing herself, and, besides, was too terrified for the presence of Varney to violate the implied condition under which she was to travel free from his company. The authority of Varney, often so used during the earl's private journeys to Cumnor, readily procured relays of horses where wanted, so that they approached Cumnor Place upon the night after they left Kenilworth.

At this period of the journey, Varney came up to the rear

of the litter, as he had done before repeatedly during their progress, and asked, "What does she?"

"She sleeps," said Foster. "I would we were home; her strength is exhausted."

"Rest will restore her," answered Varney. "She shall soon sleep sound and long; we must consider how to lodge her in safety."

"In her own apartments, to be sure," said Foster. "I have sent Janet to her aunt's, with a proper rebuke, and the old women are truth itself, for they hate this lady cordially."

"We will not trust them, however, friend Anthony," said Varney; "we must secure her in that stronghold where you keep your gold."

"My gold!" said Anthony, much alarmed; "why, what gold have I? God help me, I have no gold—I would I had."

"Now, marry hang thee, thou stupid brute, who thinks of, or cares for, thy gold? If I did, could I not find an hundred better ways to come at it? In one word, thy bedchamber, which thou hast fenced so curiously, must be her place of seclusion; and thou, thou hind, shalt press her pillows of down. I dare say the earl will never ask after the rich furniture of these four rooms."

This last consideration rendered Foster tractable; he only asked permission to ride before, to make matters ready, and, spurring his horse, he posted before the litter, while, Varney falling about threescore paces behind, it remained only attended by Tider.

When they had arrived at Cumnor Place, the countess asked eagerly for Janet, and showed much alarm when informed that she was no longer to have the attendance of that amiable girl.

"My daughter is dear to me, madam," said Foster gruffly; "and I desire not that she should get the court tricks of lying and 'scaping; somewhat too much of that has she learned already, an it please your ladyship."

The countess, much fatigued and greatly terrified by the circumstances of her journey, made no answer to this insolence, but mildly expressed a wish to retire to her chamber.

"Aye—ave," muttered Foster, "'tis but reasonable, but under favor, you go not to your gew-gaw toy-house yonder; you will sleep to-night in better security."

"I would it were in my grave," said the countess, "but that mortal feelings shiver at the idea of soul and body parting."

"You, I guess, have no chance to shiver at that," replied

Foster. "My lord comes hither to-morrow and doubtless you will make your own ways good with him."

"But does he comes hither?—does he indeed, good Foster?"

"O aye, good Foster!" replied the other. "But what Foster shall I be to-morrow, when you speak of me to my lord; though all I have done was to obey his own orders?"

"You shall be my protector—a rough one indeed, but still a protector," answered the countess. "O that Janet were but here!"

"She is better where she is," answered Foster, "one of you is enough to perplex a plain head; but will you taste any refreshment?"

"O no—no; my chamber—my chamber. I trust," she said, apprehensively, "I may secure it on the inside?"

"With all my heart," answered Foster, "so I may secure it on the outside"; and taking a light, he led the way to a part of the building where Amy had never been, and conducted her up a stair of great height, preceded by one of the old women with a lamp. At the head of the stair, which seemed of almost immeasurable height, they crossed a short wooden gallery, formed of black oak, and very narrow, at the farther end of which was a strong oaken door, which opened and admitted them into the miser's apartment, homely in its accommodations in the very last degree, and, except in name, little different from a prison room.

Foster stopped at the door and gave the lamp to the countess, without either offering or permitting the attendance of the old woman who had carried it. The lady stood not on ceremony, but taking it hastily, barred the door, and secured it with the ample means provided on the inside for that purpose.

Varney, meanwhile, had lurked behind on the stairs, but hearing the door barred, he now came up on tiptoe, and Foster, winking to him, pointed with self-complacence to a piece of concealed machinery in the wall, which, playing with much ease and little noise, dropped a part of the wooden gallery, after the manner of a drawbridge, so as to cut off all communication between the door of the bedroom, which he usually inhabited, and the landing-place of the high winding stair which ascended to it. The rope by which this machinery was wrought was generally carried within the bed-chamber, it being Foster's object to provide against invasion from without; but now that it was intended to secure the pris-

oner within, the cord had been brought over to the landing-place, and was there made fast, when Foster, with much complacency, had dropped the unsuspected trap-door.

Varney looked with great attention at the machinery, and peeped more than once down the abyss which was opened by the fall of the trap-door. It was dark as pitch, and seemed profoundly deep, going, as Foster informed his confederate in a whisper, nigh to the lowest vault of the castle. Varney cast once more a fixed and long look down into this sable gulf, and then followed Foster to the part of the manor-house most usually inhabited.

When they arrived in the parlor which we have mentioned, Varney requested Foster to get them supper and some of the choicest wine. "I will seek Alasco," he added; "we have work for him to do, and we must put him in good heart."

Foster groaned at this intimation, but made no remonstrance. The old woman assured Varney that Alasco had scarce eaten or drunken since her master's departure, living perpetually shut up in the laboratory, and talking as if the world's continuance depended on what he was doing there.

"I will teach him that the world hath other claims on him," said Varney, seizing a light and going in quest of the alchemist. He returned, after a considerable absence, very pale, but yet with his habitual sneer on his cheek and nostril. "Our friend," he said, "has exhaled."

"How! what mean you?" said Foster. "Run away—fled with my forty pounds, that should have been multiplied a thousandfold? I will have hue and cry!"

"I will tell thee a surer way," said Varney.

"How! which way?" exclaimed Foster. "I will have back my forty pounds—I deemed them as surely a thousand times multiplied—I will have back my in-put, at the least."

"Go hang thyself, then, and sue Alasco in the Devil's Court of Chancery, for thither he has carried the cause."

"How! What dost thou mean—is he dead?"

"Aye, truly is he," said Varney; "and properly swoln already in the face and body. He had been mixing some of his devil's medicines, and the glass mask which he used constantly had fallen from his face, so that the subtle poison entered the brain and did its work."

"*Sancta Maria!*" said Foster—"I mean, God in His mercy preserve us from covetousness and deadly sin! Had he not had projection, think you? Saw you no ingots in the crucibles?"

"Nay, I looked not but at the dead carrion," answered Varney—"an ugly spectacle: he was swoln like a corpse three days exposed on the wheel. Pah! give me a cup of wine."

"I will go," said Foster, "I will examine myself——" He took the lamp and hastened to the door, but there hesitated and paused. "Will you not go with me?" said he to Varney.

"To what purpose?" said Varney; "I have seen and smelled enough to spoil my appetite. I broke the window, however, and let in the air; it reeked of sulphur and such-like suffocating steams, as if the very devil had been there."

"And might it not be the act of the demon himself?" said Foster, still hesitating; "I have heard he is powerful at such times, and with such people."

"Still, if it *were* that Satan of thine," answered Varney, "who thus jades thy imagination, thou art in perfect safety, unless he is a most unconscionable devil indeed. He hath had two good sops of late."

"How, *two* sops—what mean you?" said Foster—"what mean you?"

"You will know in time," said Varney. "And then this other banquet; but thou wilt esteem her too choice a morsel for the fiend's tooth: she must have her psalms, and harps, and seraphs."

Anthony Foster heard, and came slowly back to the table: "God! Sir Richard, and must that then be done?"

"Aye, in very truth, Anthony, or there comes no copyhold in thy way," replied his inflexible associate.

"I always foresaw it would land there!" said Foster; "but how, Sir Richard—how? for not to win the world would I put hands on her."

"I cannot blame thee," said Varney; "I should be reluctant to do that myself; we miss Alasco and his manna sorely—aye, and the dog Lambourne."

"Why, where tarries Lambourne?" said Anthony.

"Ask no questions," said Varney, "thou wilt see him one day, if thy creed is true. But to our graver matter. I will teach thee a springe, Tony, to catch a pewit; yonder trap-door—yonder gimcrack of thine, will remain secure in appearance, will it not, though the supports are withdrawn beneath?"

"Aye, marry, will it," said Foster; "so long as it is not trodden on."

"But were the lady to attempt an escape over it," replied Varney, "her weight would carry it down?"

"A mouse's weight would do it," said Foster.

"Why, then, she dies in attempting her escape, and what could you or I help it, honest Tony? Let us to bed; we will adjust our project to-morrow."

On the next day, when evening approached, Varney summoned Foster to the execution of their plan. Tider and Foster's old manservant were sent on a feigned errand down to the village, and Anthony himself, as if anxious to see that the countess suffered no want of accommodation, visited her place of confinement. He was so much staggered at the mildness and patience with which she seemed to endure her confinement, that he could not help earnestly recommending to her not to cross the threshold of her room on any account whatever until Lord Leicester should come, "Which," he added, "I trust in God, will be very soon." Amy patiently promised that she would resign herself to her fate, and Foster returned to his hardened companion with his conscience half-eased of the perilous load that weighed on it. "I have warned her," he said; "surely in vain is the snare set in the sight of any bird!"

He left, therefore, the countess' door unsecured on the outside, and, under the eye of Varney, withdrew the supports which sustained the falling trap, which, therefore, kept its level position merely by a slight adhesion. They withdrew to wait the issue on the ground-floor adjoining, but they waited long in vain. At length Varney, after walking long to and fro, with his face muffled in his cloak, threw it suddenly back, and exclaimed, "Surely never was a woman fool enough to neglect so fair an opportunity of escape!"

"Perhaps she is resolved," said Foster, "to await her husband's return."

"True!—most true," said Varney, rushing out, "I had not thought of that before."

In less than two minutes, Foster, who remained behind, heard the tread of a horse in the courtyard, and then a whistle similar to that which was the earl's usual signal; the instant after the door of the countess' chamber opened, and in the same moment the trap-door gave way. There was a rushing sound—a heavy fall—a faint groan—and all was over.

At the same instant, Varney called in at the window, in an accent and tone which was an indescribable mixture betwixt

horror and raillery—"Is the bird caught?—is the deed done?"

"O God, forgive us!" replied Anthony Foster.

"Why, thou fool," said Varney, "thy toil is ended, and thy reward secure. Look down into the vault—what seest thou?"

"I see only a heap of white clothes, like a snowdrift," said Foster. "O God, she moves her arm!"

"Hurl something down on her—thy gold chest, Tony—it is an heavy one."

"Varney, thou art an incarnate fiend!" replied Foster. "There needs nothing more—she is gone!"

"So pass our troubles," said Varney, entering the room. "I dreamed not I could have mimicked the earl's call so well."

"Oh, if there be judgment in Heaven, thou hast deserved it," said Foster, "and wilt meet it! Thou hast destroyed her by means of her best affections. It is a seething of the kid in the mother's milk!"

"Thou art a fanatical ass," replied Varney. "Let us now think how the alarm should be given; the body is to remain where it is."

But their wickedness was to be permitted no longer; for, even while they were at this consultation, Tressilian and Raleigh broke in upon them, having obtained admittance by means of Tider and Foster's servant, whom they had secured at the village.

Anthony Foster fled on their entrance; and, knowing each corner and pass of the intricate old house, escaped all search. But Varney was taken on the spot; and, instead of expressing compunction for what he had done, seemed to take a fiendish pleasure in pointing out to them the remains of the murdered countess, while at the same time he defied them to show that he had any share in her death. The despairing grief of Tressilian, on viewing the mangled and yet warm remains of what had lately been so lovely and so beloved, was such that Raleigh was compelled to have him removed from the place by force, while he himself assumed the direction of what was to be done.

Varney, upon a second examination, made very little mystery either of the crime or of its motives; alleging, as a reason for his frankness, that though much of what he confessed could only have attached to him by suspicion, yet such suspicion would have been sufficient to deprive him of Leicester's

confidence, and to destroy all his towering plans of ambition. "I was not born," he said, "to drag on the remainder of life a degraded outcast; nor will I so die that my fate shall make a holiday to the vulgar herd."

From these words it was apprehended he had some design upon himself, and he was carefully deprived of all means by which such could be carried into execution. But, like some of the heroes of antiquity, he carried about his person a small quantity of strong poison, prepared probably by the celebrated Demetrius Alasco. Having swallowed this potion over-night, he was found next morning dead in his cell; nor did he appear to have suffered much agony, his countenance presenting, even in death, the habitual expression of sneering sarcasm which was predominant while he lived. "The wicked man," saith Scripture, "hath no bonds in his death."

The fate of his colleague in wickedness was long unknown. Cumnor Place was deserted immediately after the murder; for, in the vicinity of what was called the Lady Dudley's chamber, the domestics pretended to hear groans, and screams, and other supernatural noises. After a certain length of time, Janet, hearing no tidings of her father, became the uncontrolled mistress of his property, and conferred it with her hand upon Wayland, now a man of settled character, and holding a place in Elizabeth's household. But it was after they had been both dead for some years, that their eldest son and heir, in making some researches about Cumnor Hall, discovered a secret passage, closed by an iron door, which, opening from behind the bed in the Lady Dudley's chamber, descended to a sort of cell, in which they found an iron chest containing a quantity of gold, and a human skeleton stretched above it. The fate of Anthony Foster was now manifest. He had fled to this place of concealment, forgetting the key of the spring-lock; and being barred from escape by the means he had used for preservation of that gold for which he had sold his salvation, he had there perished miserably. Unquestionably the groans and screams heard by the domestics were not entirely imaginary, but were those of this wretch, who, in his agony, was crying for relief and succor.

The news of the countess' dreadful fate put a sudden period to the pleasures of Kenilworth. Leicester retired from court, and for a considerable time abandoned himself to his remorse. But as Varney, in his last declaration, had been studious to spare the character of his patron, the earl was the object rather of compassion than resentment. The Queen

at length recalled him to court; he was once more distinguished as a statesman and favorite, and the rest of his career is well known to history. But there was something retributive in his death, if, according to an account very generally received, it took place from his swallowing a draught of poison which was designed by him for another person.*

Sir Hugh Robsart died very soon after his daughter, having settled his estate on Tressilian. But neither the prospect of rural independence nor the promises of favor which Elizabeth held out to induce him to follow the court, could remove his profound melancholy. Wherever he went, he seemed to see before him the disfigured corpse of the early and only object of his affection. At length, having made provision for the maintenance of the old friends and old servants who formed Sir Hugh's family at Lidcote Hall, he himself embarked with his friend Raleigh for the Virginia expedition, and, young in years but old in grief, died before his day in that foreign land.

Of inferior persons it is only necessary to say, that Blount's wit grew brighter as his yellow roses faded; that, doing his part as a brave commander in the wars, he was much more in his element than during the short period of his following the court; and that Flibbertigibbet's acute genius raised him to favor and distinction in the employment both of Burleigh and Cecil.

* See Death of the Earl of Leicester. Note 20.

NOTES TO KENILWORTH.

NOTE 1.—CUMNOR HALL, p. vi.

IN a valuable work, by Mr. Adlard, on "Amy Robsart, the Earl of Leicester, and Kenilworth," 8vo, London, 1870, the author says [pp. 24, 25] that Cumnor Place was originally one of the country seats of the abbots of Abingdon, and that, on the dissolution of the monasteries, it was granted by Henry VIII. to his physician, George Owen. At Owen's death in 1561 it was bought by Anthony Forster, and was occupied by him for several years; and at his demise it passed into the hands of the Earl of Leicester. The Place ultimately became the property of Lord Abingdon.

"For a long period," says Mr. Adlard, "Cumnor was deserted; the recollection of Amy Dudley's melancholy end was revived amongst the ignorant villagers, whose imaginations conjured up forms and horrors before unheard of, and hence arose the legendary tales that have descended to the present day. Decay followed fast on desertion, and, with the aid of the wanton and mischievous, before a century had rolled away it had become almost a ruin.

"A few fine elms scattered here and there are all that is left to aid in realizing the former picturesque appearance of this retreat, where we are privileged to sympathize with suffering innocence and blighted affection."

The ballad of "Cumnor Hall," as stated in the Introduction, appeared, "now first printed," in Evans' "Collection of Old Ballads," vol. iv. p. 130, 1784; and the new edition (the editor discarding the antique mode of spelling), vol. iv. p. 94, 1810. In this form it is given above. The author, William Julius Mickle, was a son of the minister of Langholm, in Dumfriesshire, where he was born in 1734, and died at London in 1788. He is now chiefly known by his translation from Camoens of the *Lusiad*.—*Laing*.

NOTE 2.—FOSTER, LAMBOURNE, AND THE BLACK BEAR, p. 30.

If faith is to be put in epitaphs, Anthony Foster was something the very reverse of the character represented in the novel. Ashmole gives this description of his tomb—I copy from the "Antiquities of Berkshire," vol. i. p. 143.

"In the north wall of the chancel [at Cumnor Church] is a monument of grey marble, whereon, in brass plates, are engraved a man in armour, and his wife in the habit of her times, both kneeling before a fald-stoole, together with the figures of three sons kneeling behind their mother. Under the figure of the man is this inscription:

ANTONIUS FORSTER, generis generosa propago,
Cumneræ Dominus Bercheriensis erat.
Armiger, Armigero prognatus patre Ricardo,
Qui quondam Iphlethæ Salopiensis erat.
Quatuor ex isto fluxerunt stemmate nati,
Ex isto Antonius stemmate quartus erat.

Mente sagax, animo precellens, corpore promptus,
Eloquii dulcis, ore disertus erat.
In factis probitas, fuit in sermone venustus,
In vultu gravitas, religione fides,
In patriam pietas, in egenos grata voluntas,
Accedunt reliquis annumeranda bonis.
Si quod cuncta rapit, rapuit non omnia Lethum,
Si quod Mors rapuit, vivida fama dedit.

"These verses following are writ at length, two by two, in praise of him :

Argute resonas Cithare pretendere chordas
 Novit, et Aonia concrepisse Lyra.
 Gaudebat terre teneras deſignere plantas ;
 Et mira pulchras conſtruere arte domos,
 Compoſita varias lingua formare loquelas
 Doctus, et edocta ſcribere multa manu.

"The arms over it thus :

Quart. { I. 3 *Hunter's horns* stringed.
 II. 3 *Pinions* with their points upwards.

"The crest is a *stag couchant*, vulnerated through the neck by a broad arrow ; on his side is a *martlett* for a difference."

From this monumental inscription it appears that Anthony Forster, instead of being a vulgar, low-bred, Puritanical churl was in fact a gentleman of birth and consideration, distinguished for his skill in the arts of music and horticulture, as also in languages. In so far, therefore, the Anthony Foster of the romance has nothing but the name in common with the real individual. But, notwithstanding the charity, benevolence, and religious faith imputed by the monument of grey marble to its tenant, tradition, as well as secret history, name him as the active agent in the death of the countess ; and it is added that, from being a jovial and convivial gallant, as we may infer from some expressions in the epitaph, he sunk, after the fatal deed, into a man of gloomy and retired habits, whose looks and manners indicated that he suffered under the pressure of some atrocious secret.

The name of Lambourne is still known in the vicinity, and it is said some of the clan partake the habits, as well as name, of the Michael Lambourne of the romance. A man of this name lately murdered his wife, outdoing Michael in this respect, who only was concerned in the murder of the wife of another man.

I have only to add that the jolly Black Bear has been restored to his pre-dominance over bowl and bottle, in the village of Cumnor.

NOTE 3.—MARTIN SWART, p. 92.

The first verse, or something similar, occurs in a long ballad, or poem, on Flodden Field, reprinted by the late Henry Weber.

See Weber's Notes in the above volume, p. 182.—*Laing*.

The second verse, from an old song, *actually* occurs in an old play, where the singer boasts—

Courteously I can both counter and knack
 Of Martin Swart and all his merry-men.

NOTE 4.—LEGEND OF WAYLAND SMITH, p. 143.

The great defeat given by Alfred to the Danish invaders is said, by Mr. Gough, to have taken place near Ashdown, in Berkshire. "The burial-place of Baccseg, the Danish chief, who was slain in this fight, is distinguished by a parcel of stones, less than a mile from the hill, set on edge, inclosing a piece of ground somewhat raised. On the east side of the southern extremity stand three squarish flat stones, of about four or five feet over either way, supporting a fourth . . . and now called by the vulgar *Wayland Smith*, from an idle tradition about an invisible smith replacing lost horse-shoes here."—Gough's Edition of Camden's "*Britannia*," vol. i. p. 221.

The popular belief still retains memory of this wild legend, which, connected as it is with the site of a Danish sepulcher, may have arisen from some legend concerning the northern Duerger, who resided in the rocks, and were cunning workers in steel and iron. It was believed that Wayland Smith's fee was sixpence, and that, unlike other workmen, he was offended if more was offered. Of late his offices have again been called to memory ; but fiction has in this, as in other cases, taken the liberty to pillage the stores of oral tradition. This monument must be very ancient, for it has been kindly

pointed out to me that it is referred to in an ancient Saxon charter as a landmark. The monument has been of late cleared out, and made considerably more conspicuous.

The Vale of the Whitehorse derives its name from the figure of a horse which has been described on the hillside at this place, the turf having been removed from the chalky soil in such a way as to show at a distance the form of a white horse. This figure is supposed to have been cut out during the Saxon period to celebrate some victory. On certain occasions the white horse is "scoured" or repaired by the peasantry of the neighbourhood, who turn out in large numbers and remove any turf that may have settled itself on the figure of the horse.—*Laing*.

NOTE 5.—ORVIETAN, p. 148.

Orvietan, or Venice treacle, as it was sometimes called, was understood to be a sovereign remedy against poison; and the reader must be contented, for the time he peruses these pages, to hold the same opinion, which was once universally received by the learned as well as the vulgar.

NOTE 6.—LEICESTER AND SUSSEX, p. 151.

Naunton gives us numerous and curious particulars of the jealous struggle which took place between Ratcliffe, Earl of Sussex, and the rising favorite Leicester. The former, when on his death-bed, predicted to his followers that after his death, the gypsy (so he called Leicester, from his dark complexion) would prove too many for them.

NOTE 7.—SIR WALTER RALEIGH, p. 154.

Among the attendants and adherents of Sussex, we have ventured to introduce the celebrated Raleigh, in the dawn of his court favor.

In Aubrey's "Correspondence" there are some curious particulars of Sir Walter Raleigh. "He was a tall, handsome, and bold man; but his nœve was that he was damnably proud. Old Sir Robert Harley of Brampton Bryan Castle, who knew him, would say, 'twas a great question who was the proudest, Sir Walter or Sir Thomas Overbury; but the difference that was judged on Sir Thomas's side. . . . In the great parlour at Downton, at Mr. Raleigh's, is a good piece, an original of Sir Walter, in a white satin doublet, all embroidered with rich pearls, and a mighty rich chain of great pearls about his neck. The old servants have told me that the [real] pearls were near as big as the painted ones. He had a most remarkable aspect, an exceeding high forehead, long-faced, and sour-eyelidded. A rebus is added, to this purpose:

"The enemy to the stomach, and the word of disgrace,
Is the name of the gentleman with a bold face."

Sir Walter Raleigh's beard turned up naturally, which gave him an advantage over the gallants of the time, whose mustachios received a touch of the barber's art to give them the air then most admired.—See vol. ii. part ii. pp. 509-512 [ed. 1813].

NOTE 8.—COURT FAVOR OF SIR WALTER RALEIGH, p. 168.

The gallant incident of the cloak is the traditional account of this celebrated statesman's rise at court. None of Elizabeth's courtiers knew better than he how to make his court to her personal vanity, or could more justly estimate the quantity of flattery which she could condescend to swallow. Being confined in the Tower for some offense, and understanding the Queen was about to pass to Greenwich in her barge, he insisted on approaching the window, that he might see, at whatever distance, the queen of his affections, the most beautiful object which the earth bore on its surface. The lieutenant of the Tower (his own particular friend) threw himself between his prisoner and the window: while Sir Walter, apparently inflamed with a fit of unstrainable passion, swore he would not be debarred from seeing his light, his life, his goddess! A scuffle ensued, *got up* for effect's sake, in which the lieutenant and his captive grappled and struggled with fury, tore each other's

hair, and at length drew daggers and were only separated by force. The Queen being informed of this scene exhibited by her frantic adorer, it wrought, as was to be expected, much in favor of the captive Paladin. There is little doubt that his quarrel with the lieutenant was entirely contrived for the purpose which it produced.

NOTE 9.—ROBERT LANEHAM, p. 195.

Little is known of Robert Laneham, save in his curious letter to a friend in London, giving an account of Queen Elizabeth's entertainments at Kenilworth, written in a style of the most intolerable affectation, both in point of composition and orthography. He describes himself as a *bon vivant*, who was wont to be jolly and dry in the morning, and by his good-will would be chiefly in the company of the ladies. He was, by the interest of Lord Leicester, clerk of the council-chamber door, and also keeper of the same. "When council sits," says he, "I am at hand. If any makes a babbling, 'Peace,' say I. If I see a listener or a pryer in at the chinks or lockhole. I am presently at the bones of him. If a friend comes, I make him sit down by me on a form or chest. The rest may walk, a God's name!" There has been seldom a better portrait of the pragmatic conceit and self-importance of a small man in office. [Compare Note 16.]

NOTE 10.—SCOTTISH WILD CATTLE, p. 208.

A remnant of the wild cattle of Scotland are preserved at Chillingham Castle, near Wooler, in Northumberland, the seat of Lord Tankerville. They fly before strangers; but if disturbed and followed, they turn with fury on those who persist in annoying them. [See also "Bride of Lammermoor," chap. v., and note to "Castle Dangerous."]

NOTE 11.—DR. JULIO, p. 221.

The Earl of Leicester's Italian physician, Julio, was affirmed by his contemporaries to be a skillful compounder of poisons, which he applied with such frequency that the Jesuit Parsons extols ironically the marvelous good luck of this great favorite in the opportune deaths of those who stood in the way of his wishes. There is a curious passage on the subject:

"Long after this, he fell in love with the Lady Sheffield, whom I signified before, and then also had he the same fortune to have her husband die quickly, with an extreme reume in his head (as it was given out), but as other say, of an artificiall catarre, that stopped his breath. The like good chance had he in the death of my Lord of Essex (as I have said before), and that at a time most fortunate for his purpose; for when he was coming home from Ireland, with intent to revenge himself upon my Lord of Leycester for begetting his wife with childe in his absence (the childe was a daughter, and brought up by the Lady Shandoies, W. Knooles his wife), my Lord of Ley. hearing thereof, wanted not a friend or two to accompany the deputy, as among other a couple of the Earles owne servants, Crompton (if I misse not his name), yeoman of his bottels, and Lloid his secretary, entertained afterward by my Lord of Leycester, and so he died in the way of an extreme flux, caused by an Italian recipe, as all his friends are well assured, the maker whereof was a surgion (as is believed) that then was newly come to my Lord from Italy—a cunning man and sure in operation, with whom, if the good Lady had bene sooner acquainted, and used his helpe, she should not have needed to have sitten so pensive at home, and fearefull of her husband's former returne out of the same country. . . Neither must you marvaile though all these died in divers manners of outward diseases, for this is the excellency of the Italian art, for which this surgion and Dr. Julio were entertained so carefully, who can make a man die in what manner or shew of sicknesse you will; by whose instructions no doubt but his lordship is now cunning, especially adding also to these the counsell of his Doctor Bayly, a man also not a little studied (as he seemeth) in his art; for I heard him once myselfe, in publique act in Oxford (and that in presence of my Lord of Leycester if I be not deceived), maintaine that poison might so be tempered and given as it should not appeare presently, and yet

should kill the party afterward, at what time should be appointed; which argument belike pleased well his lordship, and therefore was chosen to be discussed in his audience, if I be not deceived of his being that day present. So, though one die of a flux, and another of a catarre, yet this importeth little to the matter, but sheweth rather the great cunning and skill of the artificer."—Parsons' "Leicester's Commonwealth," pp. 23, 24.

It is unnecessary to state the numerous reasons why the earl is represented in the tale as being rather the dupe of villains than the unprincipled author of their atrocities. In the latter capacity, which a part at least of his contemporaries imputed to him, he would have made a character too disgustingly wicked to be useful for the purposes of fiction.

I have only to add, that the union of the poisoner, the quacksalver, the alchemist, and the astrologer in the same person was familiar to the pretenders to the mystic sciences.

NOTE 12.—PILGRIMS TO KENILWORTH, p. 288.

Dr. Beattie, in his "Castles of England" [vol. i. p. 214, 1844], says, "The romance of 'Kenilworth,' it is probable, has brought within the last fifteen years more pilgrims to this town and neighborhood than ever resorted to its ancient shrine of the Virgin, more knights and dames than ever figured in its tilts and tournaments."—*Laing*.

NOTE 13.—AMY ROBSART AT KENILWORTH, p. 294.

The historical critic will recognize an obvious anachronism in the author's account of Amy's visit to Kenilworth Castle. The festivities there took place in July, 1575, several years after the death of the real Amy Dudley. It may be mentioned, however, that during these festivities the Earl of Leicester was living in secret wedlock with Lady Sheffield.

With reference to these historical liberties, see the conclusion to the "Monastery."—*Laing* [vol. x. p. 374, of this edition].

NOTE 14.—CHOPIN, p. 295.

The old traveler Coryat, in his amusing work called "Crudities" [vol. ii. p. 36], 1611, says the chopin is a thing "so common in Venice, that no woman whatsoever goeth without it, either in her house or abroad—a thing made of wood, and covered with leather of sundry colors, some with white, some redde, some yellow. It is called a 'chapiney,' which they wear under their shoes. . . . There are many of these chapineys of a great height, even half a yard high, which maketh many of their women that are very short seeme much taller than the tallest women we have in England."—*Laing*.

NOTE 15.—IMITATION OF GASCOIGNE, p. 328.

This is an imitation of Gascoigne's verses spoken by the herculean porter, as mentioned in the text. The original may be found in the republication of the "Princely Pleasures of Kenilworth," by the same author, in the "History of Kenilworth," Chiswick, 1821.

NOTE 16.—FESTIVITIES AT KENILWORTH, p. 330.

See Laneham's "Account of the Queen's Entertainment at Killingworth Castle" in 1575, a very diverting tract, written by as great a coxcomb as ever blotted paper. [See Note 9 above.] The original is extremely rare, but it has been twice reprinted; once in Mr. Nichols' very curious and interesting collection of the "Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth," vol. i.; and more lately in a beautiful antiquarian publication termed "Kenilworth Illustrated," printed at Chiswick for Merridew of Coventry and Radclyffe of Birmingham [1821]. It contains reprints of Laneham's "Letter," Gascoigne's "Princely Progress," and other scarce pieces, annotated with accuracy and ability. The author takes the liberty to refer to this work as his authority for the account of the festivities.

NOTE 17.—ELIZABETH AND LEICESTER, p. 332.

To justify what may be considered as a high-colored picture, the author quotes the original of the courtly and shrewd Sir James Melville, being then Queen Mary's envoy at the Court of London :

"I was required," says Sir James, "to stay till I had seen him made Earl of Leicester and Baron of Denbigh, with great solemnity at Westminster; herself (Elizabeth) helping to put on his ceremonial, he sitting upon his knees before her, keeping a great gravity and discreet behaviour; but she could not refrain from putting her hand in his neck to kittle (*i. e.*, tickle) him, smilingly, the French ambassador and I standing beside her."—"Memoirs," Banatyne ed., p. 120.

NOTE 18.—ITALIAN POETRY, p. 340.

The incident alluded to occurs in the poem of "Orlando Innamorato" of Boiardo, libro ii. canto 4, stanza 26.

Non si ritrova, etc.

It may be rendered thus :

As then, perchance, unguarded was the tower,
So enter'd free Anglante's dauntless knight.
No monster and no giant guard the bower
In whose recess reclined the fairy light,
Robed in a loose cymar of lily white,
And on her lap a sword of breadth and might,
In whose broad blade, as in a mirror bright,
Like maid that trims her for a festal night,
The fairy deck'd her hair and placed her coronet aright.

Elizabeth's attachment to the Italian school of poetry was singularly manifested on a well-known occasion. Her godson, Sir John Harrington, having offended her delicacy by translating some of the licentious passages of the "Orlando Furioso," she imposed on him, as a penance, the task of rendering the *whole* poem into English.

NOTE 19.—FURNITURE OF KENILWORTH, p. 344.

In revising this work for the present edition, I have had the means of making some accurate additions to my attempt to describe the princely pleasures of Kenilworth, by the kindness of my friend William Hamper, Esq., who had the goodness to communicate to me an inventory of the furniture of Kenilworth in the days of the magnificent Earl of Leicester. I have adorned the text with some of the splendid articles mentioned in the inventory, but antiquaries, especially, will be desirous to see a more full specimen than the story leaves room for.

EXTRACTS FROM KENILWORTH INVENTORY, A. D. 1584.

A salte, ship-fashion, of the mother of perle, garnished wth silver and divers workes, warlike 'ensignes, and ornaments, with xvj peeces of ordinance, whereof ij on wheles, two anckers on the foreparte, and on the stearne the image of Dame Fortune standing on a globe with a flag in her hand. Pois xxxij oz.

A gilte salte like a swann, mother of perle. Pois xxx oz. iij q'ters.

A George on horseback, of wood, painted and gilt, with a case for knives in the tayle of the horse, and a case for oyster knives in the brest of the dragon.

A green barge-cloth, embrother'd wth white lions and beares.

A perfuming pann, of silver. Pois xix oz.

In the halle. Tabells, long and short, vj. Formes, long and short, xiiij.

HANGINGS.

These are minutely specified, and consisted of the following subjects, in tapestry and gilt and red leather :

Flowers, beasts, and pillars arched. Forest worke. Historie. Storie of Susanna, the Prodigall Childe, Saule, Tobie, Hercules, Lady Fame, Hawking

and Hunting, Jezabell, Judith and Holofernes, David, Abraham, Sampson, Hippolitus, Alexander the Great, Naaman the Assyrian, Jacob, etc.

BEDSTEDS, WITH THEIR FURNITURE.

These are magnificent and numerous. I shall copy, verbatim, the description of what appears to have been one of the best :

A bedsted of walnut-tree, toppe fashion, the pillers redd and varnished, the ceelor, tester, and single vallance of crimson sattin, paned with a broad border of bone lace of golde and silver. The tester richlie embrothered with my Lo : armes in a garland of hopped, roses, and pomegranetts, and lyned with bucke-rom. Fyve curteins of crimson sattin to the same bedsted, striped downe with a bone lace of gold and silver, garnished with buttons and loops of crimson silk and golde, containing xiiij bredths of sattin, and one yarde iij q'ters deepe. The celor, vallance, and curteins lyned with crymson taffata sarsenet.

A crymson sattin counterpointe, quilted and embr : with a golde twiste, and lyned with redd sarsenet, being in length iij yards good, and in breadth iij scant.

A chaise of crymson sattin, suteable.

A fayre quilte of crymson sattin, vj breadths, iij yardes 3 q'ters naile deepe, all lozenged over with silver twiste, in the midst a cinquefoile within a garland of ragged staves, fringed rounde aboute with a small fringe of crymson silke, lyned throughge with white fustian.

Fyve plumes of cooleed feathers, garnished with bone lace and spangells of goulde and silver, standing in cups * knitt all over with goulde, silver, and crymson silke.

A carpett for a cupboarde of crymson sattin, embrothered with a border of goulde twiste, aboute iij parts of it fringed with silke and goulde, lyned with bridges sattin, in length ij yards, and ij bredths of sattin.

There were eleven down beds and ninety feather beds, besides thirty-seven mattresses.

CHAYRES, STOOLS, AND CUSHENS.

These were equally splendid with the beds, etc. I shall here copy that which stands at the head of the list :

A chaiser of crimson velvet, the seate and backe partlie embrothered with R. L. in clothe of goulde, the beare and ragged staffe in clothe of silver, garnished with lace and fringe of goulde, silver, and crimson silck. The frame covered with velvet, bounde aboute the edge with goulde lace, and studded with gilte nailes.

A square stoole and a foote stoole, of crimson velvet, fringed and garnished suteable.

A long cushion of crimson velvet, embr : with the ragged staffe in a wreath of goulde, with my Lo : posie "Droyte et Loyall" written in the same, and the lres R. L. in clothe of goulde, being garnished with lace, fringe, buttons, and tassells, of gold, silver, and crimson silck, lyned with crimson taff : , being in length 1 yard q'ter.

A square cushion, of the like velvet, embr : suteable to the long cushion.

CARPETS.

There were 10 velvet carpets for tables and windows, 49 Turkey carpets for floors, and 32 cloth carpets. One of each I will now specify :

A carpett of crimson velvet, richlie embr : with my Lo : posie, beares and ragged staves, etc., of clothe of goulde and silver, garnished upon the seames and aboute with golde lace, fringed accordinglie, lyned with crimson taffata sarsenett, being 3 breadths of velvet, one yard 3 q'ters long.

A great Turquoy carpett, the grownde blew, with a list of yelloe at each end, being in length x yards, in bredthe iiij yards and q'ter.

* Probably on the center and four corners of the bedstead. Four beares and ragged staves occupied a similar position on another of these sumptuous pieces of furniture.

A long carpett of blew clothe, lyned with bridges sattin, fringed with blew silck and goulde, in length vj yards lack a q'ter, the whole bredth of the clothe.

PICTURES.

Chiefly described as having curtains.

The Queene's Majestie (2 great tables). 3 of my Lord. St. Jerome. Lo: of Arundell. Lord Mathevers. Lord of Pembroke. Counte Egmond. The Queene of Scotts. King Philip. The Baker's Daughters. The Duke of Feria. Alexander Magnus. Two Yonge Ladies. Pompæa Sabina. Fred: D. of Saxony. Empr. Charles. K. Philip's Wife. Prince of Orange and his Wife. Marq: of Berges and his Wife. Counte de Horne. Count Holstrate. Monsr. Brederode. Duke Alva. Cardinal Grandville. Duches of Parma. Henrie E. of Pembroke and his young Countess. Countis of Essex. Occacon and Repentance. Lord Mowntacute. Sir Ja^s. Crofts. Sir Wr. Mildmay. Sr. W^m Pickering. Edwin Abp. of York.

A tabell of an historie of men, women, and children, molden in wax.

A little foulding table of ebanie, garnished with white bone, wherein are written verses with l^{res} of goulde.

A table of my Lord's armes.

Fyve of the plannetts, painted in frames.

Twentie-three cardes, or maps of countries.

INSTRUMENTS.

I shall give two specimens.

An instrument of organs, regalls, and virginals, covered with crimson velvet, and garnished with goulde lace.

A fair pair of double virginals.

CABONETTS.

A cabonett of crimson sattin, richlie embr: with a device of hunting the stagg, in goulde, silver, and silck with iij glasses in the topp thereof, xvj cupps of flowers made of golde, silver, and silck, in a case of leather, lyned with greene sattin of bridges.

An^r of purple velvet. A desk of red leather.

A chess borde of ebanie, with checkars of christall and other stones, layed with silver, garnished with beares and ragged staves, and cinquefoiles of silver. The xxxij men likewyse of christall and other stones sett, the one sorte in silver white, the other gilte, in a case gilded and lyned with green cotton.

An^r of bone and ebanie. A pair of tabells of bone.

A great brason candlestick to hang in the rooffe of the howse, verie fayer and curioslye wrought, with xx^{ti}ij branches, xij greate and xij of lesser size, 6 rowlers and ij wings for the spreade eagle, xxiiij socketts for candells, xij greater and xij of a lesser sorte, xxiiij sawcers, or candle-cupps, of like propor^{on} to putt under the socketts, iij images of men and iij of weomen, of brass, verie finely and artificiallie done.

These specimens of Leicester's magnificence may serve to assure the reader that it scarce lay in the power of a modern author to exaggerate the lavish style of expense displayed in the princely pleasures of Kenilworth.

NOTE 20.—DEATH OF THE EARL OF LEICESTER, p. 449.

In a curious manuscript copy of the information given by Ben Jonson to Drummond of Hawthornden, as abridged by Sir Robert Sibbald, Leicester's death is ascribed to poison administered as a cordial by his countess, to whom he had given it, representing it to be a restorative in any faintness, in the hope that she herself might be cut off by using it. We have already quoted Jonson's account of this merited stroke of retribution (see note on p. ix. of

Introduction). It may be here added, that the following satirical epitaph on Leicester occurs in Drummond's "Collections," but is evidently not of his composition :—

EPITAPH ON THE ERLE OF LEISTER.

Here lies a valiant warrior,
Who never drew a sword ;
Here lies a noble courtier,
Who never kept his word ;
Here lies the Earle of Leister,
Who govern'd the estates,
Whom the earth could never living love,
And the just Heaven now hates.—

See "Archæologia Scotica," vol. iv. ; and the volume published by the Shakespeare Society, "Notes on Ben Jonson's Conversations," p. 24, 1842.
—*Laing.*

GLOSSARY

OF

WORDS, PHRASES, AND ALLUSIONS

- ABYE**, suffer for.
- ACCOLADE**, the light touch made with the sword on the shoulder of one who is knighted.
- AFRITE**, an evil demon in Mahomedan mythology.
- AIGUILLETTE**, lace tag.
- ALBUMAZAR**, a famous Arabian astronomer, born in Persia near close of 8th century A. D., wrote "Flores Astrologici" (Augsburg, 1488), and other works on astrology.
- ALICANT**, Spanish wine.
- ALLAN**, or **ALLEN**, **THOMAS**, mathematician (1542-1632), regarded by the vulgar as a magician.
- ALMAINS**, Germans.
- ALTER EGO**, second self.
- AMORET**, the beau-ideal of female beauty in the "Færic Queene," Bk. iii.
- AMSTERDAM**, GREAT SCHOLAR OF. ERASMUS was a native, not of Amsterdam, but of Rotterdam.
- ANAN**, I beg your pardon? presently.
- ANGEL**, gold coin=10s. in Elizabeth's reign.
- ANOTHER-GUESS**, another sort of, kind of.
- ANTICLY**, grotesquely.
- ARCANUM**, the great secret of the conversion of base metals into gold.
- ARGENT**, silver.
- ARION**, ancient Greek poet, who, when driven into the sea by envious sailors, was carried to land on a dolphin's back.
- ARROW**, e'er a, ever a.
- ASCAPART**, a giant overcome by Sir Bevis of Hampton (Southampton).
- ASCHAM**, **ROGER**, tutor to Elizabeth, and royal secretary to Edward VI., Mary, and Elizabeth.
- ASPIC**, the asp.
- ASTRA REGUNT**, etc., (p. 212), The stars rule men, but God rules the stars.
- A-TOWLING**, a-tolling.
- AUTOLYCUS**, a crafty pedlar in "The Winter's Tale."
- AVE MARIA**, ORA PRO NOBIS, Hail, Mary, pray for us.
- AVISED OF**, aware of.
- BABIES**, TO LOOK, small images of one's self reflected in the eyes of another.
- BAILLIE**, **HARRY**, OF THE **TABARD**, mine host of the Tabard Inn in Southwark, where Chaucer's Canterbury Pilgrims assembled.
- BARTHOLOMEW FAIR**, held at West Smithfield, London, on 24th August (3d September from 1753), a great cloth market and pleasure fair, illustrated in Ben Jonson's play, "Bartholomew Fair."
- BASE**, a plaited skirt, sometimes imitated in mailed armor.
- BASTARD**, a sweet Spanish wine, resembling Muscadel.
- BEARS**, ARE YOU THERE WITH YOUR. A man, disliking a sermon on Elisha and the bears, went on the following Sunday to another church; but the sermon was on the same subject, leading him to utter this exclamation.
- BEAR THE BELL**, take the first place: *comp.* the bellwether, that guides the flock.
- BELIANIS**, hero of the chivalric romance, "Don Belianis of Greece."
- BELL SAVAGE**, or **BELLE SAUVAGE**, inn in Ludgate Hill, London. *See Spectator*, No. 28.
- BELOS**, **BEL**, or **BAAL**, the sun-god of the Assyrians and Babylonians.
- BESOGNIO**, worthless fellow.
- BITERN BUMP**, the deep trumpet-like boom of the bittern or butter-bump.
- BLACK BULL**, perhaps the Red Bull, in St. John's Street, Smithfield; perhaps the Bull in Bishops-gate Street, both theaters.
- BLACK-JACK**, a large jug of waxed leather, for holding ale.
- BLACK SANCTUS**, a burlesque of the Sanctus of the Roman missal.
- BOARD OF GREEN CLOTH**, a committee of the royal household, formerly charged with the duties of purveyance.
- BONA-ROBA**, a wench, a showy wanton.
- BOON WHIDS**, CUT, give good words.
- BOTCHER**, a cobbler, a tailor who does repairs.
- BRATCHET**, a little brat.
- BRIAREUS**, the hundred-armed giant in ancient Greek mythology.
- BRIDGES SATTIN**, satin made at Bruges, in Flanders.
- BRILL**, or **BRIEL**, captured in 1572 by the patriotic "Beggars of the Sea," who shortly after were in their turn besieged there by the Spaniards.
- BURLEIGH** AND **CECIL**, Elizabeth's great statesman William Cecil, Lord Burleigh, and his son, Sir Robert Cecil, whom Elizabeth made Secretary of State in 1596.
- BUSH OVER THE DOOR**, a sign that the house so adorned was an inn.
- CABALA**, a mystic system of mingled philosophy, theology, and magic that originated amongst the

- Jews of the Middle Ages; CABALISTS, alchemists, dealers in magic.
- CACODEMON, an evil spirit.
- CALIPOLIS, wife of the Moorish prince in Peele's play, "The Battle of Alcazar."
- CALIVER, 16th century musket.
- CAMERADOES, comrades.
- CAMICIE, shirts.
- CAPOTAINE, or CAPOTE, close-fitting hat.
- CARDES, charts, maps.
- CASTING BOTTLE, bottle for sprinkling perfumed waters.
- CATER-COUSIN, on terms of close intimacy.
- CATLOWDIE, or CATLOWDY, a village in the extreme north of Cumberland.
- CEELOR, or CELURE, bed-hangings, a canopy covering a bed.
- C'EST L'HOMME QUI, etc. (p. 133), 'Tis the man who does the fighting and gives counsel.
- CHARLATANI, charlatans.
- CHERRY-PIZ, a game in which cherry-stones are thrown into a hole in the ground.
- CHOPIN, a high-soled shoe, worn in Spain and Italy about 1600.
- CLARY, a mixture of wine, honey, and spices.
- COCKATRICES, prostitutes.
- COD'S-HEAD, fool.
- CŒLEBS, unwed.
- COG'S WOUNDS, God's wounds, a form of oath.
- COIF, a lady's head-dress.
- COIL, HERE'S A, 'here's a to-do, pother; KEEP A COIL, make a fuss, ado, about.
- COLBRAND, a Danish giant slain by Sir Guy of Warwick.
- COMBUST, astrological term applied to a planet when it is so near to the sun as to be almost burnt up or extinguished.
- COMPOS VOTI, having accomplished your wish.
- COMPTER, a prison for debtors. London had two in the 16th century, one in the Poultry, the other in Wood Street.
- CORDOVAN, Spanish leather.
- CORINTHIAN, a bully, adventurer.
- CORRAGIO, courage.
- COSTARD, the head.
- COTE, pass, overtake.
- COUCHER, going to bed.
- CRICKET, a small, low stool.
- CROSS, silver coin marked with a cross.
- CULLISS, or CULLIS, broth of boiled meat strained.
- CURETUR JENTACULUM, Look after the breakfast.
- CUT BOON WHIDS, give good words.
- CUTTER, bully, sharper; CUTTER'S LAW, thieves' law; CUTTING, swaggering.
- CYCLOPS, or CYCLOPES, the assistants of Vulcan, who labored in his workshops in Etna and other volcanoes.
- CYMAR, a loose, light robe.
- CYPRUS, CYPRESS, or CIPRUS, a thin, transparent kind of crape.
- DAN, a complimentary title, equivalent to Master, sir, common with the old poets.
- DANDIEPRAT, dwarf, urchin.
- DEBOESHED, debauched.
- DEE, DR. JOHN, a London alchemist, who lived in the reigns from Edward VI. to James I.
- DEVIL LOOKING OVER LINCOLN, a phrase referring to one of the following—a gargoyle, shaped like a diabolic figure on a witch's back, near the south porch of the cathedral; a figure of Satan at the east end of the south chapel of the nave; a figure of the devil on the top of Lincoln College, Oxford.
- DIABLOTIN, little devil, mischievous young imp.
- DIED WITHOUT HIS SHOES, *i. e.* in bed.
- DIFICILUM, etc. (p. 103), endurance of hardships from day to day.
- DINK, trim, tidy.
- DIONYSIUS, the Younger, tyrant of Syracuse, retired after his second expulsion in 343 B. C. to Corinth, where he is said to have earned his living as a schoolmaster.
- DIRL, thrill, vibrate.
- DOLE. *See* Happy man be his dole.
- DOUSE, blow, stroke.
- DRAP-DE-BURE, or BURE, coarse woolen stuff.
- DUDMAN AND RAMHEAD, two capes, 20 miles apart, on the Cornish coast, which of course can never meet.
- DUERGAR, or DVERGER, the dwarfs of Scandinavian mythology and folklore.
- DUKE OF NOIFOLK'S AFFAIR, Thomas Howard, 4th Duke, was beheaded in 1572 for treasonable plotting in behalf of Mary Queen of Scots and the Roman Catholic interest.
- ELECTUARY, a medicine, consisting of powders, etc., mixed with honey or syrup, and licked by the patient.
- ELL-WAND, measuring-rod an ell long.
- ERASMUS AB DIE FAUSTO, Erasmus de Holiday.
- ERGO HUES, etc. (p. 106), So ho there, Richard, my pupil, come hither, I pray thee.
- ET SIO DE CÆTERIS, and so on with the rest.
- EUMENIDES, STYGIUMQUE NEFAS, the Furies and the Stygian monster.
- EXCALIBUR, famous sword of King Arthur.
- EX NOMINE, etc. (p. 103), From whose name is derived the common word "gibberish."
- EYE, BY THE, in abundance.
- FABER FERRARIUS, blacksmith.
- FAITOUR, rogue, hypocrite.
- FALD-STOOLE, a folding stool or chair, camp-stool.
- FALL BACK, FALL EDGE, come what may.
- FARCY, a disease of horses.
- FATICIDÆ, those who predict fate.
- FAVETE LINGUIS, keep silence.
- FELIX BIS TERQUE, twice yea, three times fortunate.
- FERRATEEN, perhaps FERRANDIN, a kind of poplin; perhaps HARRATEEN, a coarse woolen cloth.
- FESTINALENTE, make haste slowly, don't be impatient.
- FLAW, a sudden and violent wind-storm.
- FLIGHT-SHOT, bow-shot.
- FŒNUM HABET IN CORNU, It has hay wrapped about its horns—a proverbial expression for a dangerous fellow.
- FORTUNE, THE, a theater in Aldersgate, London, opened about 1600, after the time of this novel.
- FOUR-NOOKED, four-cornered.

- FOX**, an old name for the broadsword.
- "FOXES AND FIREBRANDS, or a Specimen of the Danger and Harmony of Popery and Separation"** (1682), in verse, author not positively known.
- FRIPPERY**, old clothes.
- FURENS QUID FEMINA**, what a frenzied woman (can do).
- FURMITY**, hulled wheat or rice boiled in milk, and seasoned with currants, raisins, etc.
- FUSILLE, or FUSIL**, an elongated lozenge, term in heraldry.
- GALLIARD**, lively, jaunty.
- GALLOON**, worsted lace.
- GAMBADE**, gambol, curvet.
- GAUDET NOMINE SIBYLLE**, She rejoices in the name of Siblyl.
- GAZE**, to look attentively upon.
- GAZE-HOUND**, greyhound.
- GEAR**, affair, thing, business.
- GEBER**, a famous Arabian alchemist of the 8th century.
- GENETHLIACALLY**, by calculating nativities.
- GILLIAN, RARE**. See Rare Gillian of Croydon.
- GLOBE, THE**, a theater on the south bank of the Thames between London and Blackfriars Bridges.
- GOGSNOUNS**, a similar corruption to Cog's wounds (*g. v.*).
- GOLD BY THE EYE**, money in plenty, gold in abundance.
- GOLDEN OPINIONS, etc.** (p. 193), quoted from "Macbeth," Act. I. sc. 7; Shakespeare is therefore alluded to.
- GOODJERE, or GOUJEERS**, a coarse expletive, the poet Maurice of Nassau, second son and successor of William of Orange as Governor of the Netherlands.
- GROAT**, silver coin worth 4d.
- GROGRAM, or GROGRAIN**, a texture of silk and mohair or silk and wool, stiffened with gum.
- GROYNE (THE)**, old name for Corunna in Spain.
- HALGAYER, MAYOR OF**. See Mayor of Halgaver.
- HALL, or ALI BEN ABEN-RAGEL**, an Arab astrologer of the eleventh century, wrote "De Judiciis Astrorum" (Venice, 1485).
- HANSEL**, earnest-money of a bargain.
- HAPPY MAN BE HIS DOLE**, may his lot be that of a happy man.
- HARO**, an old Norman cry for help.
- HARROWTRY**, heraldry.
- HARRY NOBLE**. See Noble.
- HARUSPICES**, soothsayers, diviners.
- HAYS, or HAY**, a country dance, danced in a ring.
- HEAD-BOROUGH**, head of a borough, petty constable.
- HEART-SPONE**, the depression in the breast-bone; the breast-bone.
- HERMETIC**, relating to alchemy, astrology, magic.
- HILDING**, a mean, worthless wretch.
- HOCKTIDE**, second Tuesday after Easter day.
- HOISE**, to hoist, lift.
- HOLPED UP**, embarrassed, in a pickle.
- HORSE-COURSEER**, dealer in horses.
- HOSPITIUM**, inn, tavern.
- HUNSDON, LORD**, was Elizabeth's first cousin, being the son of her mother's sister.
- INCONTINENT**, immediately.
- IN CUERPO**, in plain dress, without cloak, naked.
- INDAMIRA**, more correctly **INDAMORA**, the heroine of Dryden's tragedy "Aurungzebe."
- IN FUMO**, in smoke.
- INGLE**, favorite, intimate.
- IN RERUM NATURA**, as an actual fact.
- IPHYCLUS**, one of the Argonauts, and owner of large herds of cattle; **QUID HOC, etc.** (p. 102), is a proverbial phrase of uncertain origin.
- IVY-TOD, ivy-bush**.
- JAPE**, jest, trick.
- JOWRING**, scolding, cursing.
- JUVENAL**, a youth.
- KA ME, KA THEE**, Help me, and I'll help you.
- KEEP A COIL**. See Coil.
- KENNEL**, the gutter.
- KERNES**, light-armed foot-soldiers.
- KING CAMBYSES' VEIN, &c.**, blistering and bullying.
- The original character figures in Elkanah Settle's "Cambyse, King of Persia" (1671).
- LACHRYMÆ (CHRISTI)**, red Italian wine, grown on the slopes of Mt. Vesuvius.
- LACS D'AMOUR, LAQUEI AMORIS**, love snares.
- LARGESSE, etc.** (p. 344), Your gifts, your gifts, bold knights.
- LEFT-HANDED**, morganatic.
- LEVANTER**, easterly Mediterranean wind.
- LEX JULIA**, law of the Roman Emperor Augustus, designed to promote marriage and punish adultery.
- LIMBER**, supple, pliant.
- LINDABRIDES**, heroine in the Spanish romance of "The Mirror of Knighthood"; a kept mistress.
- LINGUÆ LATINÆ, etc.** (p. 99). Though not altogether ignorant of Latin, most learned sir, I prefer to speak in my mother tongue.
- LIST (of yellowe)**, edge, border.
- LITTOCKS**, rags and tatters.
- LOON**, fellow.
- LUCINA FER OPEM, Lucina**, give thine aid. Lucina was the goddess who presided over childbirth.
- LUDI MAGISTER**, master of the school; also master of children's play, hence holiday-master.
- LYME-HOUND**, sporting dog, that hunts by scent.
- MADDOU, RIGHT**, in all probability mead-wort or meadow-sweet is meant, which, if gathered on the right day, St. John's Day, will reveal a thief.
- MADGE-HOWLET**, the barn-owl.
- MÆSTRICHT**, besieged and sacked by the Spanish forces under Alexander of Palma in 1579.
- MAGISTER ARTIUM**, the degree of M. A.
- MAGISTERIUM**, the philosopher's stone.
- MANDRAGORA**, mandrake, plant believed to possess magic qualities.
- MANNA OF ST. NICHOLAS (OF BARI)**, the clear, tasteless poison sold by the infamous hag Toffania of Naples in the beginning of the 18th century.

- MARCUS TULLIUS, i. e.**, Cicero, the Roman orator.
- MARO, i. e.**, Vergil, the Roman poet.
- MARTIN SWART.** The old song in which the second verse (p. 92) occurs is Skelton's "Against a Comely Coystrowne."
- MATAMOROS, or MATAMORE,** the conventional boaster of Spanish comedy, the name signifying "Slayer of Moors."
- 'MATCH FOR MATCH,' QUOTH THE DEVIL TO THE COLLIER,** in the old farce "The Collier of Croydon."
- MAYOR OF HALGAVER,** an imaginary potentate, similar to the Mayor of Garrat, who enforced offenses against the unwritten laws of popular opinion—a Cornish proverb.
- MI ANIME, CORCULUM MEUM,** my life, my little heart.
- MINIKIN MINION,** a little darling.
- MOCKADO,** a mixture of silk and wool, or of either with flax, and resembling velvet.
- MONSIEUR, the Duke of Anjou,** youngest son of Henry II. of France, a courtier and a suitor of Queen Elizabeth.
- MOPPET,** pretty young girl.
- MORIOR, etc. (p. 8),** I die, I have died, to die.
- MOUNTAIN-ASH, or ROWAN-TREE,** was regarded as a safeguard against witchcraft."
- MR. BAYES'S TRAGEDY,** "The Rehearsal (1671), by George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, Bayes being the name of the hero.
- MULCBER,** Vulcan, the ancient Roman god of fire.
- MURREY,** mulberry-colored.
- MUSCADINE,** a rich sweet wine.
- MUSQUETON,** light, short hand-gun.
- MUSTER,** pattern.
- NAAS, THE TYRANT, or NAHASH,** king of the Ammonites. See Sam. xi.
- NAUNTON, SIR ROBERT,** author of "The Court of Queen Elizabeth" (1641) and "Fragmenta Regalia" (1642).
- NE QUISQUAM, etc. (p. 216),** No one but Ajax can conquer Ajax.
- NE SEMISSEM QUIDEM,** not a single groat.
- NETHER-STOCKS, stockings.**
- NIL ULTRA,** nothing beyond.
- NOBLE,** a gold coin=6s. 8d.; HARRY NOBLE, a noble coined in the region of Henry VIII.; ROSE NOBLE, noble bearing representation of a rose, first coined under Edward VI., and worth 10s.
- NONSUCH,** a royal castle, 3 or 4 miles from Epsom in Surrey.
- NOONING,** rest and repast at noon.
- NOSTRA PAUPERA REGNA,** our poor domains.
- NUGÆ,** trifles.
- NUMINIBUS, etc. (p. 100),** prayers heard by unfriendly deities.
- OBERON, VISION OF,** from "Midsummer Night's Dream," which was not acted until 1600. Shakespeare himself was only a boy at the date of this romance.
- O CÆCA MENS MORTALIUM,** O darkened mind of man.
- OR,** gold.
- ORDINARY,** eating-house.
- ORION,** a gigantic hunter of handsome appearance; see Homer's "Odyssey," Bks. v. and xi.
- PALABRAS,** talk, palaver.
- PANTOUFLE,** slipper.
- PARCEL,** partly.
- PAROPA,** a kind of textile material. See Taylor (Water-Poet), "Praise of Hempseed."
- PARTLET,** covering for a woman's neck, and shoulders, kerchief.
- PARVO CONTENTUS,** content with little.
- PASSANT,** walking—term in heraldry.
- PASS-DEVANT,** a fashionable dress, a dress worn at dances.
- PASTIME OF THE PEOPLE,** a rare chronicle (1529) by John Rastell.
- PATIENTIA,** patience.
- PAUCA VERBA, (say) few words,** have done.
- PERDUE,** hidden, in concealment.
- PER PALE,** by a vertical line; said of an escutcheon.
- PETRESA BARBARÆ LOQULE,** heartily sick of a language not her own.
- PEWIT,** the lapwing.
- PHÆTON,** the charioteer of the Sun.
- PHILIPPINE CHENEY,** that is PHILIP AND CHENEY (i. e., China), some kind of worsted or woollen stuff. "Philip and Cheney" is an early equivalent of "Dick, Tom, and Harry."
- PHRENESIS,** violent madness, frenzy.
- PICAROOON,** one who lives by his wife; a rogue.
- PICCADILLOE,** sort of deep stiff collar.
- PIZE,** term of mild execration.
- PLACE OF REMOVAL,** cell or place of confinement.
- POKING-AWL,** rod for curling the ruff, sometimes used as a stiletto.
- PORTMANTLE, portmanteau**
- PORT ST. MARY'S,** town in the bay of Cadiz, Spain.
- PORT CHRISTUM NATUM,** after the birth of Christ, A.D.
- POTOSI,** a town in South America (Bolivia) with rich silver mines, famous since the Spanish conquest.
- PRECIPIAN,** Puritan.
- PRIMO HENRICI SEPTIMI,** in the first year of Henry VII.'s reign.
- PRINCOX, or PRINCOCK,** a cockcomb.
- PROFECTO,** literally so.
- PROJECTION,** the process of transmuting metals, especially the actual fusing of the metals in the crucible.
- PROVANT RAPIER,** army sword.
- PUCKFIST,** a niggardly person.
- PUSEY HORN.** The manor of Pusey in Berkshire is held by virtue of an ox-horn, presented to the Pusey family by Canute the Great.
- QUASI LUCUS A NON LUENDO,** for the reverse of the most obvious reason, for an absurd reason.
- QUID MIHI OUM CABALLO?** What have I to do with the nag?
- QUINTILIAN,** celebrated Roman grammarian and teacher of rhetoric of the 1st century A.D.

- RABATINE**, broad collar.
- RADDLE**, thrash, beat.
- RAM'S ALLEY**, off Fleet Street, and near Whitefriars, a resort of thieves and bad characters, and noted for its dirty cookshops; now called Hare Place.
- RARE GILLIAN OF CROYDON**, if the old farce, "The Collier of Croydon," is meant, for Gillian read Marian.
- RARO ANTECEDENTEM**, an allusion to a passage in Horace's "Odes," iii. 2, in which punishment is said nearly always to dog the heels of the evil-doer.
- RASH**, species of inferior silk.
- RATCLIFFE, OR RADCLIFFE, EARL OF SUSSEX**, was Robert, not Thomas.
- RECTE QUIDEM**, etc. (p. 280), Assuredly we are, most worthy sir.
- REEVE**, steward.
- REGALLS, OR REGAL**, a small portable organ.
- REGUARDANT**, turned to look back.
- RICARDE, ADSIS, NEBULO**, Richard, you idle scamp, come hither.
- ROBERTSON, WILLIAM**, Scottish historian, died in 1793.
- ROSY CROSS, ORDER OF, OR ROSICRUCIANS**, mystical philosophers, who professed the transmutation of metals, alchemy, magic, etc.; flourished principally in 17th and 18th centuries.
- ROUNDELL**, anything round, an article of feminine attire.
- RUFFLER**, bully, swaggerer.
- SADLER, SIR RALPH**, whom Elizabeth employed in her dealings with Scotland; he was educated under Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex.
- ST. ANTONLIN'S** or rather **ST. ANTHOLIN'S**, a church (pulled down, 1874) in Watling Street, London, where in 1599 the Puritans began to hold very early morning services.
- ST. AUSTEN'S EVE**, St. Augustine's (Austen's) Day was 28th August.
- ST. BARNABY, OR BARNABAS**, the companion of St. Paul.
- ST. JOHN'S BERG**, the Rhine wine known as Johannisberger.
- ST. JULIAN**, patron saint of travelers and hospitality.
- ST. LUCY'S EVE**, 18th September. St. Lucy was the "daughter to a king of the Scots," lived in solitude beside the river Meuse in France, and died in 1090.
- ST. LUKE'S HOSPITAL**, Asylum in Moorfields, London.
- ST. MICHAEL'S MOUNT**, rock off the Cornish coast, near Penzance.
- ST. PETER OF THE FETERS**, best explained by a reference to Acts xii. The chains with which the Apostle was bound were, it is said, carried to Rome by Eudocia, wife of Theodosius the Younger, in 439, and from that time regarded with almost idolatrous veneration.
- SALTIM BANQUI**, quacks, mountebanks.
- SALVE DOMINE**, etc. (p. 99.) Hail, sir, dost thou understand Latin.
- SALVING THE WEAPON**, etc. (p. 103), as for instance with Sir Kenelm Digby's sympathetic powder.
- SANTO DIAVOLO**, St. Satan.
- SARSENET**, thin soft woven silk.
- SAVIN**, oil of juniper.
- SCHOLAR, GREAT, OF AMSTERDAM**, should be, of Rotterdam, where Erasmus was born.
- SCONCE**, a fort, detached outwork.
- SCOT AND LOT**, rates and taxes.
- SCROYLE**, a mean fellow, wretch.
- SEILANT**, sitting, a term in heraldry.
- SEVEN SLEEPERS**, martyrs of Ephesus, who, according to the legend, slept nearly two hundred years in a cave, from the reign of the Emperor Decius to that of Theodosius II.
- SHAG**, sort of rough cloth.
- SHERES**, Jeres, town in Spain, famous for its wine (sherry).
- SHE-WOLF OF FRANCE**, Isabella, daughter of Philip V., king of France.
- SHOOTER'S HILL**, near Greenwich, a favorite haunt of highwaymen.
- SHOT-WINDOW**, window projecting from a wall, used for defense.
- SHOVEL-BOARD**, in which the players pushed pieces of money or counters on to certain lines and squares on a board.
- SHREWSBURY, COUNTESS OF**, Queen Mary was at this time in the custody of the Earl of Shrewsbury.
- SIDNEY, PHILIP**, the gallant poet and soldier who fell before Zutphen in Holland in 1580.
- SIEVE AND SHEARS**, divination by means of a sieve and a pair of shears.
- SI FIXUM SOLVAS**, etc. (p. 118), If you dissolve a fixed substance and make the solution fly, and then fix it again, being volatile, you will live safe and sound; if the process causes a wind, it is worth a hundred pieces of gold. The wind blows where it lists. Catch who catch can.
- SINE PROLE**, childless.
- SIR PANDARUS OF TROY**, chief of the Lycians in the Trojan War, but degraded in the romances of chivalry to a pimp or procurer.
- SIR TALBOT**, a dog's name.
- SKELTON'S, "Books,"** or fuller, "Certaine Bokes compiled by Master Skelton, Poet Laureat," of various contents.
- SKENE**, short sword, knife.
- SKINKER**, a tapster.
- SLEUTH-HOUND**, bloodhound.
- SLOCKET**, to convey things privately out of the house.
- SLOP**, sort of trousers; a long loose outer sack-like garment.
- SMOCK-FACED**, of girlish face or complexion.
- SNAILS**, an oath, corrupted from Christ's (God's) nails, with which His hands and feet were pierced.
- SNICK UP**, go, go and be hanged; "Snick up," or "snack up," is possibly a corruption of "his neck up."
- SPITAL**, hospital.
- SPITCHCOOKED**, split and broiled.
- STAND AND DELIVER**, the formula of highwaymen.
- STARTUP**, high-topped shoe, buskin.

- STIRABOUT**, oatmeal and dripping stirred together in a frying pan-whilest cooking.
- STOUP**, a drinking-vessel, liquid measure.
- STRAPPADO**, a military punishment; the offender was drawn to a considerable height and suddenly let fall.
- SUFFLAMINA**, be silent.
- SWAEF**, faint, swoon.
- SWASHING**, bullying, bragging.
- TAFFETA**, silk stuff.
- TARLETON, THE PLAYER**, was Richard Tarlton (died 1588), a comic actor and jester, patronized by Leicester.
- TAU, LETTER**, from the Greek alphabet, corresponds to "t."
- TENT STITCH**, single stitch in worsted work and embroidery.
- TERTIO MARIE**, the third year of Mary's reign, 1556.
- THREE CRANES IN THE VINTRY**, a celebrated tavern in Upper Thames Street, between London Bridge and Blackfriars Bridge.
- TRISMEGISTUS**, the name given in the early Christian ages to the Egyptian god, Thoth, whom the ancient Greeks identified with their god Hermes. Trismegistus was regarded by the alchemists as a father of their art.
- TROWL**, to pass round.
- TRUEPENNY**, the name Hamlet applies to his Father's Ghost in Act i. sc. 5.
- TUGURIA**, huts, cottages.
- TURNBALL, or TURNBULL, STREET**, now Turnmill Street, near Clerkenwell, formerly a resort of bullies and low characters.
- TWIN STREAMS** (p. 188), the Rhone and the Saône. See Cæsar, "De Bell. Gall." Bk. i.
- TYBURN TIPPET**, halter.
- TYKE**, a dog.
- UNO AVULSO**, etc. (p. 103), when one has been torn off, another grows in its place.
- UNTIMEOUSLY**, untimely.
- UP SEY ES**, a corrupted Dutch or German phrase, meaning toss it off! here it goes!
- VAILS**, a windfall, tip, gratuity given to servants.
- VANBRUGH, SIR JOHN**, dramatist and architect of Queen Anne's reign.
- VARIUM ET MUTABILE**, changeful and capricious.
- VENLO**, was besieged, but unsuccessfully, by the Spaniards in November, 1578.
- VIA I AWAY!**
- VIRGINAL**, small harp-
- sichord or old-fashioned piano without legs.
- VOGUE LA GALÈRE**, come what may.
- VOTO A DIOS**, Spanish oath of menace, By God!
- WASSAIL**, spiced ale or wine.
- WATCHET**, pale blue.
- "WHAT MAN THAT SEES,"** etc. (p. 153), from Spenser's Cantos on Mutability, a fragment of the "Faërie Queene."
- WHITEBOY**, pet, darling, a term of endearment.
- WHITE WITCH**, wizard or witch of beneficent disposition.
- WHITTLE**, a large knife, generally one carried in the girdle.
- WIFE OF BATH**, one of Chaucer's Canterbury Pilgrims.
- WILLOUGHBY, LORD**, Peregrine Bertie, Lord Willoughby de Eresby, a distinguished soldier, hero of the ballad of "The Brave Lord Willoughby."
- WITCH'S ELM**, or rather rowan-tree, as in the passage a few paragraphs lower down (p. 106).
- WITCH'S MARK**, a wart or mark, insensible to pain, made by the devil on his vassals.
- WON'D, DWELT**.
- WUS, KNOW**.
- WYVERN**, a winged dragon, a heraldic term.

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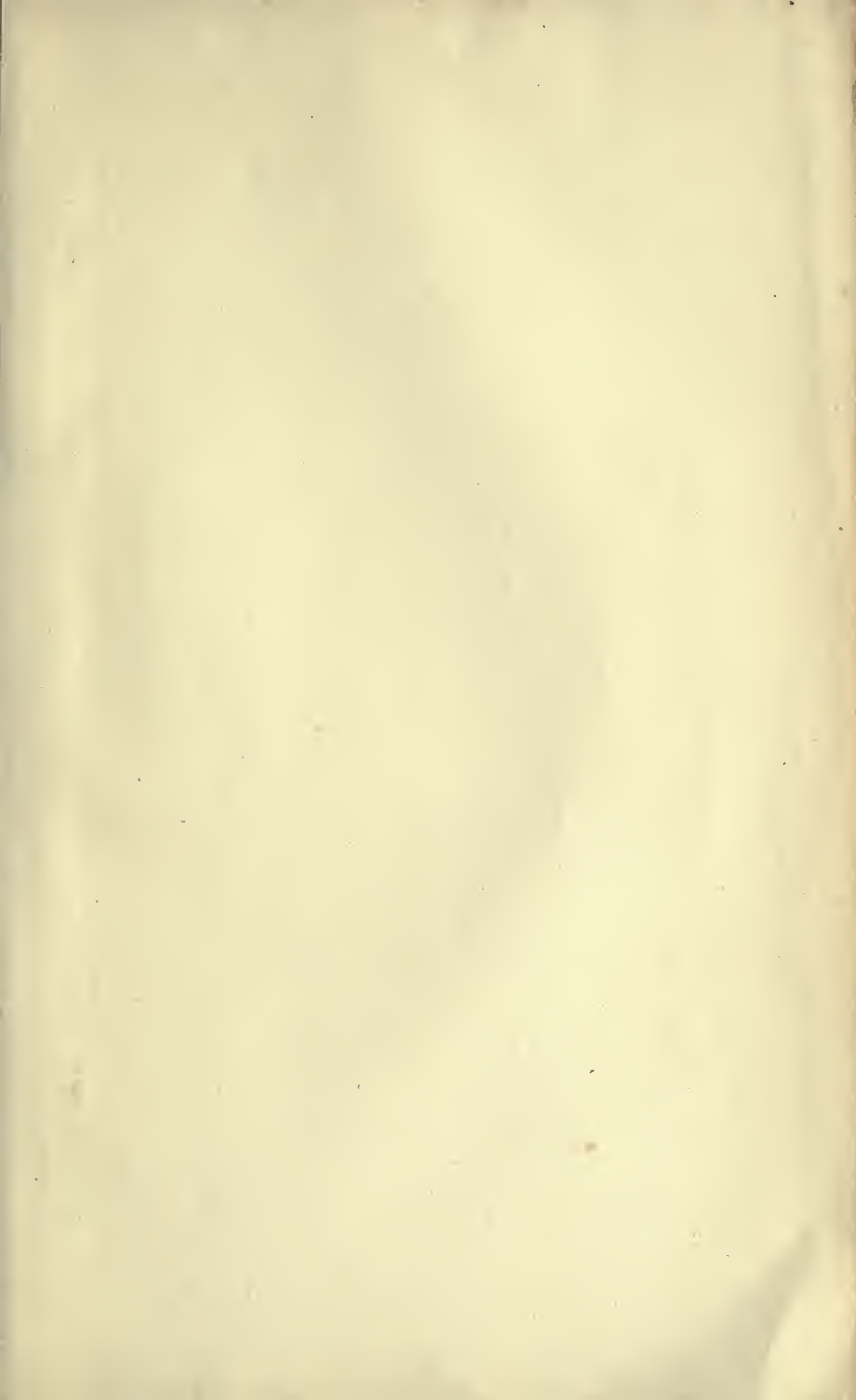
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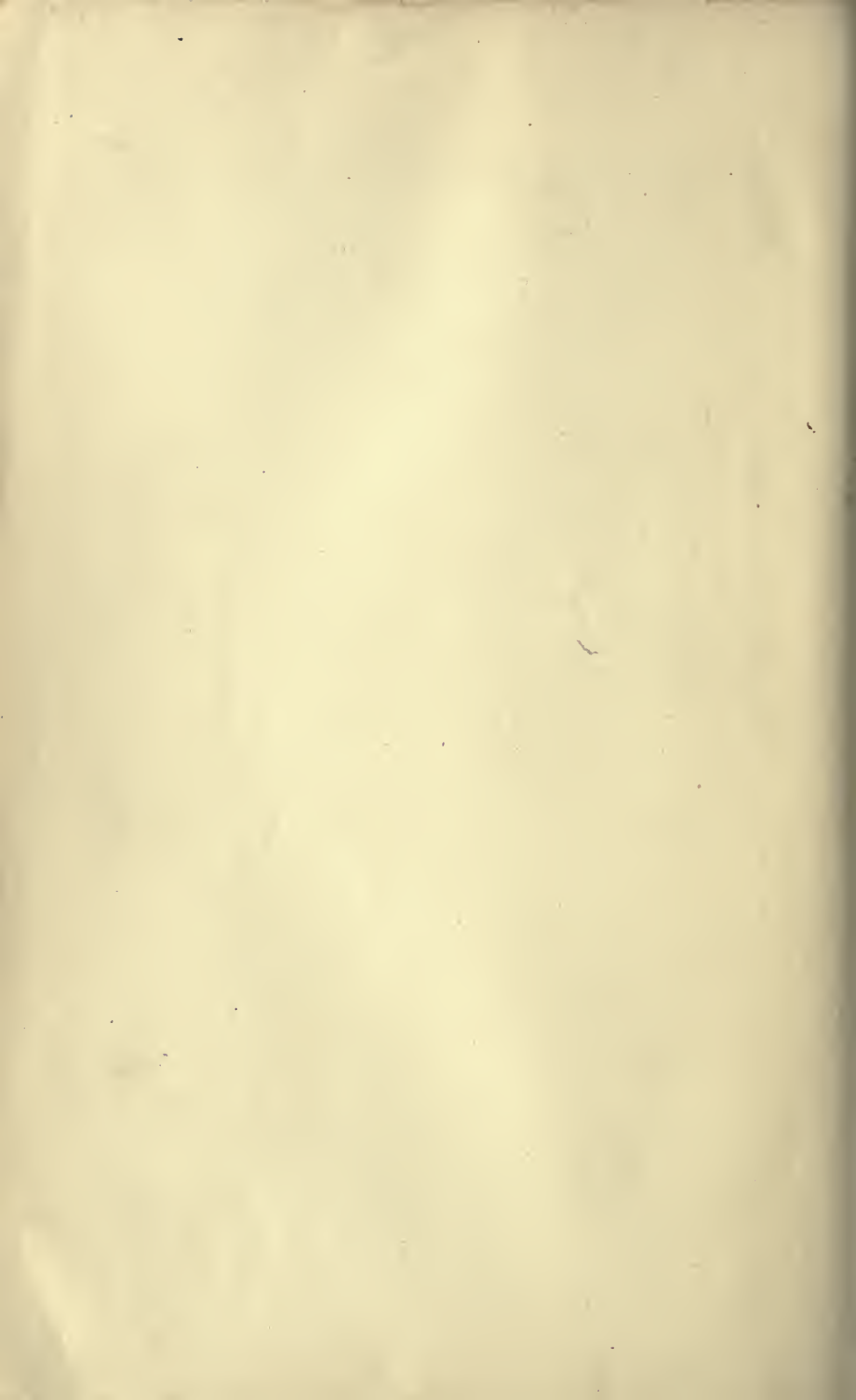
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