NOVELS;

HISTORICAL, LEGENDA

AND

ROMANTIC.

BY MRS. BRAY.

"Fierce war and faithful love
And truth severe by fairy fiction drest."

GRAY.

VOL. IV.

THE WHITE HOODS.

LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER AND CO., CORNHILL.

THE

WHITE HOODS;

An Historical Romance.

By Mrs. BRAY.

"Be brave then: for your captain is brave,
And vows reformation.———

There shall be no money: all shall eat
And drink on my score; and I will apparel them
All in one livery. that they may agree like brothers,
And worship me their lord." SHAKSPEARE

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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THE WHITE HOODS.

CHAPTER I.

WHILST Lewis de Male was Earl of Flanders, and Charles the Fifth occupied the throne of France (that King being lord paramount, to whom the Earl owed homage for his dominions), the whole country of Flanders was in the highest state of wealth and prosperity; and, for commerce, it might then be justly deemed the emporium of the world. For more than a century this had been gradually increasing, till at length it had arrived at that point when all rivalry ceased, and the Low Countries were looked upon as the mart of traffic, and the treasure house of riches.

In consequence of the imperfect state of navigation at that period, a voyage from the north to the Mediterranean could not be accomplished in

one summer. It was found expedient, therefore, to fix upon some large towns to be used as vast storehouses, half way between the commercial cities of the north, and those of the south. Bruges and Ghent (but more especially the former) were selected for this purpose. And to a choice so fortunate for the prosperity of the country must be attributed the immense influx of wealth, which at this period was so widely and universally diffused throughout the Netherlands, that poverty became almost unknown, even to the humblest members of the community. The commodities of the various trading cities of all Europe found their circulation through the hands of the merchants of Flanders; and there was not at this period a commercial town of any import but had its separate company and warehouses either at Ghent or Bruges.

The merchants and chief citizens of the Low Countries lived in a state of splendour that emulated and often successfully rivalled the nobles and princes of France. Their cathedrals, churches, town-halls, and other public edifices, were of the most magnificent description. No

expence was spared in the external or internal decorations of these buildings. And the streets of Ghent and Bruges presented at every turn such a combination of fine Gothic structures, the dwellings of private inhabitants, that some of them now remaining may be considered as models of beauty and elegance in the domestic architecture of that era.

The splendour of Bruges was indeed unrivalled. In that town alone there were not less than twenty palaces erected for the consuls or masters of the different trades; and the citizens, with their wives and families, were in the habit of wearing such costly stuffs, gold, and jewels, that it was commonly said the value of a royal dower might sometimes be seen upon their backs. A well-known anecdote strikingly illustrates this fact; for when Joanna of Navarre, the queen of Philip le Bel, visited Bruges, she was so surprised at the magnificent attire of the ladies of that city, that she exclaimed, "I thought that I had been the only queen in Bruges, but here I find all are such."

Notwithstanding the vast trade of Flanders,

it had in some measure been injured by the jealousies and quarrels of the two rival towns, Ghent and Bruges. These, unsatisfied in their commercial transactions with a state of prosperity which no other cities in the world then possessed, were perpetually disagreeing with each other, in the hope to gain the pre-eminence. Such jealousies and civil strife (for the Flemings were often at variance with their lords) had in some measure injured their opulence during the lifetime of the father of Lewis de Male, the late Earl; till their commerce and prosperity once more revived under the wise administration of Jacob Von Artaveld. But Jacob was now dead, and Lewis remained the undisturbed possessor of the dominions of the Low Countries. Once more their trade flourished, and their citizens revelled in the pride of luxury and of unbounded wealth.

The beautiful city of Ghent, which, like Venice, might almost be termed a city of the waters, stood upon twenty-six small islands, on the conflux of the rivers Lis, Scheldt, Moeze, and Lieve, divided and intersected by a number

of minor streams formed by canals. The streets were of commodious construction, ornamented by various public edifices, besides churches. The castle (where the good Queen Phillippa of England had brought into the world her son John, who took his surname from his birth-place,) was a vast and massive building of the thirteenth century. It stood within the walls of the town, guarded by many a strong gate and heavy tower. The houses in Ghent were lofty, and exhibited that style of structure so peculiar to the Gothic ages, wherein taste and stability became united. Their material often consisted of small bricks of a fine texture, and of a grey colour, which were so well put together, and so well combined with the various ornaments of the edifices, that they could scarcely be considered inferior to stone.

The cathedral of St. Bavon, then newly finished, exhibited all the magnificence that wealth and talent could supply as an offering to the superstitions of the Romish church; whilst the towers and grey walls of St. Nicholas looked even then venerable from their antiquity.

The communication from one street to another was facilitated by a number of swing bridges, boats, and small craft. The town was entirely walled throughout the whole of its vast circumference. And so strong were these defences, that even at the present time the remains of these walls and towers seem impregnable to the beholder.

All was busy — all in motion. Every thing bespoke the thriving activity of commercial wealth. Here were seen vessels unloading the wool transported from England, or the timber from Norway. There a Spanish galleon, so heavily laden that her gunwale was almost under water, brought the rich wines of Andalusia, and ingots of gold and silver, to the universal mart. The gay pendants of the light Italian felucca streamed in the air, as the pilot stood at the helm, and thought, as he passed down the many canals of Ghent, how great was their inferiority to the channels of his own city, that rose from the bosom of the Adriatic; whilst, as the doge proceeded to claim the latter as his bride, her white and marble domes looked

as if they were formed for the palaces of Neptune, and the sea nymphs of his train. Whilst the Venetian thus carolled his lively song, the Frenchman talked, laughed, and danced upon the deck of his vessel, as if his spirits, light, sparkling, and brisk as the wines of his native country, must necessarily find a vent, or would burst by an excited fermentation. Here the heavy Dutchman calculated the value of his butter and cheese, and the difference of the exchange, whether it were now in favour of the Holland gelder or of the Flemish "old crown." The Dane looked surly, and drank brandy, as he unloaded his stores of dried stock-fish, hides, and furs; and the Englishman cursed the Flemings for cowardly rascals, who could never find spirit enough to quarrel with any country but their own.

In one of the streets of Ghent, near the market place, stood a house of more than ordinary beauty in its structure. It was ascended by a flight of steps that terminated beneath a vaulted porch, having two lateral apertures or arches, richly decorated with Gothic carvings in stone. Above

the oaken door it sheltered stood within a niche the image of the Virgin Mary, formed of wood, painted and gilt, and holding the model of a ship in her hands. Underneath was this inscription, emblazoned in golden letters, in the Flemish tongue:—

"Sir Simon de Bête, knight, master of the very worshipful the company of goldsmiths, and burgomaster of Ghent, caused me to be made, in honour of our blessed Lady the Virgin Mary, in memory of her great delivery of his good ship the Cockatrice, when laden with ingots of gold, and in peril of the waters: for which service, I am but one of those three hundred images vowed by the worshipful Sir Simon to our Lady of deliverance, whereof that in gold stands in the church of the Holy Virgin of this town."

The house of this "worshipful Sir Simon" stood facing one of those clear streams or canals that watered the city; opposite were objects, which, though not the most picturesque a painter could desire, afforded the fairest prospect the eyes of a goldsmith would desire to look upon—the offices, the warehouse, and the workshops of

his craft. Sir Simon, it is probable, would not have exchanged these objects for the finest in nature; and it might perhaps have been the sight of the high tower of the church dedicated to the Virgin, which was seen peering above their slanting roofs in the back ground, that first inspired him with the idea of that pious vow recorded upon his door; a vow made when he felt some alarm for the safety of his Cockatrice, whose stores he longed to see deposited within the halcyon precincts of his own warehouse, far from the peril of those waters, which, like prodigals and spendthrifts as they are, make no more account of the golden lading of a vessel, than they do of the ballast in her hold.

It was upon the close of an autumnal day, when the artisans of the various trades of Ghent had already retired to their homes, and all was gradually subsiding into silence and repose, that the great town-bell rang the signal, which bade all who were desirous of passing the night in the city to hasten within its walls before the gates were closed. The evening was mild and beautiful; the canals, no longer disturbed by the busy

passage of vessels of burthen, (which, during the day, had either unloaded their stores on the quays and wharfs, or were passing out to commence their navigation down the Scheldt,) looked at this hour calm, smooth, and clear, and reflected upon their surface, like a thousand mirrors, many a Gothic building, together with the fretted ornaments and lofty spires of the surrounding churches and monasteries.

It was now that a little boat, containing but one person besides the boatman, was seen to glide gently down one of these canals, and made towards the steps that formed a landing place opposite to the habitation of Sir Simon de Bête. The passenger, on quitting the boat, dismissed it, and with a slow pace ascended the steps, and for some time walked up and down the street. He seemed to be about fifty years old, his aspect was peculiar, and his features bore the traces of thought and care. His dress indicated the man of substance rather than superfluity : it was good, respectable, but not ostentatious. He was habited in a suit of black velvet. The mantle, tight around the throat, with two immense sleeves,

through which the arms found their way at the elbow (the rest of the sleeve falling almost to the ground), was lined with scarlet brocade, and trimmed with fur. The jerkin, or underdress, was simply of black velvet; and the pouch or almonier, which hung on the right side, and served the purpose of a pocket as well as of a purse, was suspended by a plain leathern belt, fastened by a buckle of gold. Upon his head he wore a hood of black velvet, and about his neck, suspended by a purple ribband, appeared a small cross, also of gold.

His countenance was pallid, and his brows, which projected considerably beyond a pair of keen grey eyes, were knit into somewhat of an habitual frown. The mouth was large and conspicuous, as the beard was only suffered to grow, like a fringe, around the lower part of the chin and face. He at length ascended the steps before the house of Sir Simon de Bête. He knocked upon the door with his ebony walking staff; and a boy opened to him the portal, who, from his dress of many colours, his light hair and complexion, with a certain heavy look and inaptitude to any

motion of activity, was doubtless a Flemish varlet of the true breed.

The person who knocked at the door, having addressed the enquiry if Sir Simon might yet be returned home, was answered in the affirmative with a "*Yaw, mynheer,*" of the most sluggish indifference. "Then tell him," said the enquirer, "that Master John Lyon waits without, and would speak with him." The varlet drawled out another "*Yaw, mynheer,*" and went to do his errand as slowly as if his feet which carried him were clogged; and, whilst he is gone to inform his master of the arrival of John Lyon, whom he left in the hall to await his return, (for there was too much consequence about the worshipful Sir Simon, who was one of the chief burgomasters of the city, to admit an unceremonious introduction of any person into his presence,) we shall take the opportunity of making our reader acquainted with the master of the goldsmiths company of Ghent.

Sir Simon de Bête was a little, fat, heavy man, whose whole person did not present one angle or straight line. Indeed there was such a profusion

of rotundity, that we can find within the compass of our brain no other apt comparison for him, than to say that he resembled one of those tubs or firkins in which the merchants of Amsterdam are wont to transport their butter. His face was broad and ruddy, with two little bright eyes that twinkled from out the surrounding furrows of fat like the small lighted wicks of two such huge candles as may be seen to decorate the altars of the catholic saints.

There was altogether a monied air about the little goldsmith, both in his person and manners. He walked like a man well to do in the world, with a certain strut, as if his legs carried a burthen of some consequence. His shoes creeked, and his mantle rustled. He was wont seldom to doff his cap to any one, and he talked loud, and generally gave opinions in an affirmative manner, like oracles from which there is no appeal. He would enter the exchange of merchants at Ghent as the man upon whose smile or frown the fate of its fluctuation must depend, and his refusal to credit a rising trader was a certain signal that he

was not, in our commercial phrase, *a good man*, or a man of substance.

As a burgomaster no one was more important. Not Solon or Lycurgus could have ever laid down the laws they instituted with greater force or persistance than did Sir Simon de Bête, when seated in the high-backed oaken chair of the town-hall of Ghent, (with his little legs dangling down because they could not reach the footstool,) supported on the right hand by a jurat bearing a silver mace, and on the left by the sheriff of the bourg with the keys of the city.

Sir Simon was a great stickler for the franchises of his native town; and any proposal in the shape of innovation, alteration, or accommodation, was sure to meet his decided opposition, unless it had been submitted to his approval in private, before it was presumed to be broached in public debate.

Yet there was no want of good-nature about the little goldsmith; for, in truth, he liked to seem the great man rather than actually to be such. His dignity was generally put on or laid

aside with his official gown and staff; and he frequently made himself uncomfortable by the endeavour to keep up the grandeur of his assumed character, when he would rather have left public pomp for the comfort of a snug fireside, and the unaffected convivial sociability of a friendly gossip over a flagon of wine. In fact, Sir Simon might be compared to a man who accustoms himself to walk the streets on tip-toe, merely for the sake of looking taller, but who longs again to tread upon sole and heel, where he may seem less, but can move with ease, within the privacy of his own chamber.

Yet great as he was, he was not paramount; for there were those (one person at least in the world) who had the power to overawe the burgomaster, as much as others were overawed by him. Sir Simon de Bête was this evening dressed in a rich suit of crimson velvet, lined with minevar. His circular cap was ornamented in front with a clasp of jewels. This cap, when not upon the head, hung pendant over the shoulder by a long band that fell down in front, and was ornamented with a border, the band being called the *tippet*,

and the cap the *chaperon.* The broach or fermail which fastened his mantle was also of jewels; and a chain, heavy with massive gold, and of the finest Antwerp workmanship, hung round his neck. His pouch and long dagger were suspended by a girdle of gold and jewels. And although the long dagger was sometimes inconvenient from getting between his little short legs, so as nearly to upset the equilibrium of their motion, yet being a knight, Sir Simon never forgot that part of his attire, to proclaim he was such.

The apartment in which the burgomaster was seated was low roofed, but extensive in its dimensions; the floor was of oak, and so highly polished that it might have served the purpose of a mirror. A piece of Persian carpetting was spread in the centre of the room; for the commodities and rarities of eastern nations had, even at this period, found their way to the opulent traders of the Low Countries. A woollen cloth of the brightest colours, curiously interwoven, and manufactured at Bruges, covered a table, and hung as low as the ground. The chairs and benches were of

carved ebony, some inlaid with ivory, with cushions of velvet fringed with gold. A buffet having but one shelf stood opposite the windows at the lower end of the room, and was filled with plate of chased gold and silver of the finest workmanship.

The chimney, which was large enough to admit several persons within its ample sides, was entirely lined with small tiles of earthenware, each bearing some pictorial device, principally from Scripture. The dogs that decorated the hearth were of silver, with the arms of Ghent on a shield, as the finishing ornament, at their top. The apartment was hung with tapestry from the famous looms of Bruges. It represented several subjects from Holy Writ; and amongst them appeared that of the return of the prodigal son, who, dressed like a Dutch skipper, very ragged, yet very plump, was seen coming to his rejoicing father, followed by a couple of pigs. The father, habited as a burgomaster, appeared directing the roasting of the fatted calf to entertain him within the kitchen of a Flemish inn; having all the accompaniments of flagons, long glasses, tubs, brass pans, and pewter

platters; and the rejoicing of Heaven over the penitent sinner was emblematically expressed by two pottle-bellied angels in the Flemish costume, who played upon the rebec and fiddle.

The fireplace (a luxury which the wealth of Sir Simon had enabled him to introduce, in preference to the common stove of his country,) was decorated above by an oaken shelf, upon which were placed some of those figures, carved in wood, that were then, as they are now, manufactured in Germany, but commonly known in England by the name of Dutch toys. Those which ornamented the shelf of the goldsmith were of a pious as well as commercial order. Saints, martyrs, merchants, with the instruments of their sufferings, or the emblems of their traffic, in their hands, all stood indiscriminately ranged together; whilst here and there was intermixed some Indian or Chinese toy, such as a pagoda curiously carved in ivory, or the model of a Hindoo god. A Venetian mirror, moreover, which hung opposite, added, by its reflection, to the confusion of this heterogeneous assemblage of persons and things.

The most beautiful as well as the most pre-

cious ornament of the room was a fine picture, the subject from Holy Writ, executed by that great but now little-known artist John Hemling, who not many years after this period actually ended his days from poverty within the hospital of St. John at Bruges. The arts, even at this time, had begun to flourish in Flanders; and for beauty of colouring, richness, exquisite finish, a faithful delineation of nature just as she appeared before him, (but without any imparted grace from the painter himself,) the works of John Hemling have never been exceeded by any artist, even of the days of Leo X. And to prove the truth of this assertion, we could wish all our readers, who may chance to travel into Flanders, to visit the hospital of St. John at Bruges, where they will behold that astonishing production of his pencil, the marriage of St. Catharine, with the decollation of St. John.*

To return to our subject. Sir Simon was seated at the table in the apartment just de-

* For some account of the works of John Hemling, at Bruges, see Memoirs of the Life of the late C. A. Stothard, F. S. A.

scribed, partaking of some refreshment after his return home; and whilst he took a slice from the capon that was before him, and filled out a cup of wine, he seemed to be glancing his eye upon the rich-chased workmanship of the silver dish in which it was served up, with all the critical acumen of a goldsmith. Scarcely had he finished his first cup of wine, when the boy opened the door, and announced the arrival of Master John Lyon. "What," exclaimed Sir Simon, "my very good friend Master John Lyon, the deacon of the pilots! why do you make him wait? why did you not bring him hither at once?" Sir Simon probably forgot, in the good-natured feeling which the announcement of his friend's arrival had excited, his own express order, that all persons, before appearing in his presence, should be duly announced.

The boy, who knew perfectly well both his own duty and the dignity of his master, made no reply, but hastened to conduct into the chamber the deacon of the pilots. Sir Simon kept his seat, till Master John Lyon had seated himself in one of the heavy ebony chairs, which the boy

with some difficulty managed to bring from the side of the room, and placed opposite his master. He then retired; and as soon as the door was closed, no third person being any longer present to witness the condescension, Sir Simon rose up, and stepping forward, his little round legs brought him speedily to John Lyon, whom he saluted with a hearty shake of the hand. "How do you do, deacon?" said Sir Simon; "very glad to see you — have not seen you since I left Ghent — am just come home — much news stirring? how do you — very glad to see you — take a cup of wine — and how does pretty Mistress Anna, your sweet daughter?" Sir Simon here stopt short in his speech, as if he all at once remembered he was indulging himself in a too great familiarity of manner; not as towards his friend, but too free considering what the *habit* of his manners ought to be. He therefore added, in somewhat a more grave air; "We have some things of importance, Master John Lyon, which we, who are the burgomasters of this good town of Ghent, must discuss in the town-hall, where time, place, and circumstances

may more befit the consequence of our own persons, and the honour of the magistracy of the bourg."

John Lyon made no reply to this speech, which was intended as a dignified opening to some communication Sir Simon was desirous to make relative to the business of the city. But John did not ask what it was, and only answered with that slight notice of the matter people use, who feel they must make some reply to a subject to which they are perfectly indifferent.

Sir Simon was a little mortified, and thrust his hand into his pouch, and there played with some of the old crowns with which it was well stored; an action he was apt to use in moments of peculiar dignity. He was preparing a yet more pompous speech, when his keen eyes, which twinkled with self consequence, happened to glance upon the deacon, and he was so struck with the melancholy cast of John's features, that he quite forgot the importance of knight, master of the goldsmiths' company, and burgomaster, in a kind-hearted feeling for his friend. "Why," he immediately exclaimed, "Why John Lyon,

man, what is this? you look as dull and as comfortless as if some evil had befallen you. I hope pretty Mistress Anna is well, and not in her low spirits again."

"She is well," answered John.

"Why then what ails thee man?" said Sir Simon; "why you look as if the Scheld was blocked up, and all the pilots turned adrift to steer without a rudder."

"And so they are or will be for me," replied the deacon, "and your words are but too true; for *us*, at least, the Scheld *is* blocked up. I am," continued John with energy, as he arose from his chair and paced the room, "I am a ruined man."

"A ruined man, John!" exclaimed Sir Simon, "You a ruined man! why this is inconceivable, you surely cannot mean to say so."

"It is but too true," answered John, "and it was to tell you of it, that I sought you."

"I had rather you had not told me then, deacon," said the good-natured burgomaster, with an expression of unfeigned concern; "for to hear of the ruin of my friends is the last piece of intelli-

gence that could give me pleasure. But since I know the worst, tell me all the matter of it. I hope things are not so bad as to be beyond all remedy. You a ruined man! and yet *you* deacon of the pilots of Ghent, and chief favourite of the Earl of Flanders, his bosom counsellor and friend!"

"I *was* all you say," answered John; "but I am neither now."

"How!" again exclaimed Sir Simon in the utmost astonishment, "*not* deacon of the pilots! *not* the Earl's favourite! why what in the name of all the saints does this mean? I am more and more bewildered. Say, what has happened in Ghent since I have been absent in Amsterdam? I am but this day returned home; I knew nothing of all this. But it is ever so; no sooner do *I* leave the city, than some change, some trouble, some calamity, is sure to arise. Things never go well when I am away; in fact, a town without the head or chief ruler is like a chain with a link broken, it soon becomes good for nothing, it will fall to the ground, it will be lost, or disordered, though of the purest gold."

"It is true, most worthy burgher," replied John Lyon; "but yet I do not see how your being here could have prevented what has befallen me. I am ruined by the machinations of that accursed Gilbert Matthew."

"I know him, I know the rascal," said Sir Simon; "a sly double-dealing rogue, who outwitted me in the affair of the ingots and ducats. They might have been had by the per-centage of ten crowns the less from the commander of the San Jago, but for his cunning. Yet how can Gilbert Matthew, with all his brotherhood to back him, have injured you?"

"I will tell you," answered John Lyon; "for hither I came not only to tell you of my grievance, but to consult with you on matters that concern us all. Our franchises are invaded, shaken, and endangered."

"What!" exclaimed the little burgomaster, as he started from his seat, "do you say this to me, and whilst I hold my office in the good city of Ghent? No, not a franchise shall be touched; or woe be to the innovator. I will shew to

all Ghent, and to all the world, who and what I am."

Sir Simon raised his head, as he shook his uplifted hand, at these words, and seemed some inches taller, at least in his own conceit. The liberties of Ghent, dear as they really were to this zealous citizen, did not at this moment, perhaps, so much engross his thoughts, as the sense of his own importance; and, although he had but an instant before felt the utmost anxiety to learn what were the misfortunes which had befallen his friend, he was now most desirous to hear what those innovations were likely to be, which might call his own personal influence into action to repel them. John Lyon, who knew perfectly well the character of the goldsmith, saw he had lighted the spark that was likely to burst into a flame; and, being resolved to obtain a hearing, he somewhat unceremoniously stopt his friend in the midst of an harangue on the value of general, personal, and individual liberty; and begged him to resume his seat, as he could not long remain with him.

Sir Simon complied, and John Lyon once more continued. "I must be brief," he said; "but first are the doors made fast? we must have no listeners."

"Listeners in my house!" exclaimed Sir Simon; "No, the rogues dare not come so much as without the threshold of this chamber uncalled for whilst *I* am in it. You may speak without fear Master Deacon; that is, deacon that hath been; for I think you said you were no longer such; so ran the theme of your discourse."

"It did so," replied John Lyon, "and I must open the matter by telling you how I came to be dispossessed of my office. There has, you know, long subsisted an ancient enmity between my family and that of the Matthews. But I have endeavoured to live in peace with them; till Gilbert, some two years since, asked my daughter Anna for his wife, as the means of ending our family discords. This I positively refused, to the great comfort of my damsel, who could never endure him. But this refusal renewed the old quarrel between us; so that from

that hour to the present, he has sought in every way to molest me, and to injure me in the favour of the Earl. Now the devil, who never rests, but walks abroad to do what mischief he can devise, at length put it into the head of Gilbert Matthew to propose to the Earl of Flanders an increase to his revenue. making me the instrument, as deacon of the pilots, by levying a tax on the navigation of the rivers Scheld and Lis. I knew how hard this would fall upon our mariners, and discouraged the idea. What then does Gilbert Matthew, but persuade our lord to insist at least upon my making the experiment? There was a time when the Earl would never have imposed such a task on me; but there had lately been some private circumstances between my lord and me, that had somewhat lessened my influence with him."

"Indeed," said Sir Simon, "and what were they? Yet I think, John Lyon, I can give a shrewd guess at them. I will not, however, say more just now, but attend to your statement of this business. Had I been in Ghent, Gilbert

Matthew would never have dared to propose such a levy, without the sanction of the chief burgomaster of the city."

"You forget," said John Lyon, "that I told you he was supported in his measures by the Earl; and that himself and his seven brethren being all wealthy pilots of the navigation, their influence could overrule the humble and poorer class of the mariners. I was obliged at last to propose the tax at the meeting of our pilots; when Gilbert Matthew, by his secret machinations and intrigues, caused those brothers, and the other pilots, with one voice to refuse a compliance with the very measure he had himself first suggested to the Earl."

"Just like him! Gilbert Matthew to the letter!" exclaimed Sir Simon; "always double dealing, turning and twisting, and putting on a false shew; like the Antwerp Jews, who give to base metals the colour of gold."

"After this meeting, I informed the Earl of the refusal of the pilots to submit to an impost either on their own body, or to consent to its being levied on the foreign traders; as it must

eventually injure the navigation of the Scheld. The Earl was displeased; and some other circumstances soon after occurring to offend him in our private intercourse, I was displaced from my office; and Gilbert Matthew nominated as deacon of the pilots."

"The artful, intriguing scoundrel!" said Sir Simon; "but when was this? and what induced the Earl to make him deacon?"

"I have since learnt," replied John Lyon, "that Gilbert persuaded the Earl I had failed in fixing the tax upon the pilots from a wilful mismanagement of the cause; and so well had he instructed his brothers how to act, that no sooner was he made deacon, than what with bribing some, cajoling others, and threatening more, he brought them all round; the tax is fixed upon the pilots; and thus begins the first innovation of the ancient franchises of Ghent. A levy is now talked of to be laid on all metals, from the finest gold to the basest lead."

"What!" exclaimed Sir Simon, "an impost on gold! it shall never be; no, never, whilst I, Sir Simon de Bête, knight, master of the

company of worshipful goldsmiths, and one of the burgomasters of Ghent; whilst I have a voice to raise against it, a crown to spend, or a weapon to draw, Ghent shall hold her franchises. The liberty of the citizen, represented in my person, shall find her determined assertor. And all the world shall see that whilst Sir Simon de Bête sat in the council chamber of this town, neither earl, nor Gilbert Matthew, nor lord, nor all the powers combined, could make him yield one scruple of that liberty he values more than life, and will maintain with it."

Whilst Sir Simon made this eloquent speech in a raised tone of voice, a noise was suddenly heard in the passage leading to the chamber. John Lyon did not particularly notice it, but Sir Simon, who seemed to have a perfect comprehension of what the noise implied, suddenly lowered his voice, and although he finished his speech, the word *liberty* was pronounced in somewhat a faltering tone. Steps now advanced towards the door; Sir Simon quietly dropt into his chair; but who it was that came, or of what

kind was that noise, which thus acted like a sudden shock of electricity, to surprise and discompose the nerves of the Flemish champion of liberty, must be told in the next chapter.

CHAP. II.

It is surprising, by a habit of attention to minute sounds, to what a degree of nicety the organ which conveys them to the mind can discover the difference between the smallest, or least apparently various movements, knocks, whispers, words, steps, and, in short, sounds of all kinds and descriptions. Thus the servants of people of fashion, in our days, can pronounce by the very knock upon the door, to whom their masters or mistresses will or will not be at home; the thundering rap of nobility being easily distinguished from the less imposing rat-a-tat of middling life. And the masters and mistresses themselves are often perfect judges between the small slight knock of a soliciting tradesman, and the confident, clamorous ring of an importunate dun.

In the same manner may the sounds that proceed from the lips or the feet be distinguished.

The *no* which means *yes* may be confidently transposed in the mind of the hearer, if the first monosyllable be pronounced with a slight and hesitating accentuation; a sort of *no* that hangs upon the lips as if unwilling to depart from them; and the determined straight-forward tread of an angry person, which scarcely turns aside from any impediment that may arise in the way, can be distinguished from the sober pace of the unimpassioned, or the light brisk step of the gay and good-humoured.

Sir Simon, by long habit, had become an adept in discriminating between sounds; and the slightest word or movement which proceeded from the Lady Judith was as perfectly comprehended by him, even through the barriers of closed doors or windows, as if no such obstacles had existed. He knew her mood by her step; he could tell the degree of her anger by the least word; and the blood-heat of her wrath, or the freezing point of her severity, were as well known to Sir Simon, by a certain acquaintance with small but sure indications, as if he had possessed an actual thermometer of her temper;

which was more liable to change and variation, than even the climate of our own charming little island in the west.

It so happened that Lady Judith was one of those persons who, feeling a sense of their own uncommon value, modestly think that all this round world was assuredly made for no other than themselves, and that all things in it should submit to their pleasure. Yet as there are bounds set to every thing terrestrial, even to the flight of the winds, and the raging of the ocean, that they shall go so far and no farther, so likewise there are, fortunately, bounds fixed, beyond which the raging of human passions cannot extend. Thus there never was yet known a tyrant who could carry his tyranny over *all* the earth; and a she-tyrant of private life, whatever may be her desires, can seldom find opportunity to extend her despotism beyond the precincts of her own house. But as waters when dammed up are oft-times but the more terrible when they burst their confines, even so Lady Judith, from having but a small sphere of action, poured out the sluices of her wrath with but the greater violence on the unfor-

tunate hen-pecked little goldsmith, whenever she was resolved to discharge her burthen of conceit, consequence, or ill-humour. And, like all persons who unite with a despotic temper a high opinion of their own powers and abilities, she could not endure that any thing should go forward in her house without herself being at the head of it. Whatever was done, and however well done, unless this had been the case, was sure to meet with her decided displeasure.

Lady Judith was about as tall in stature for a woman, as Sir Simon was little for a man. Her hair and eyes were of the deepest shade of black, which we have generally observed to be a sure indication of a violent temper. Her lips were thin and pale; whilst a more than ordinary profusion of red was spread about her cheeks, and encroached even upon the promontory of her nose, which turned up as if in scorn of the less glowing and more delicate hue of her mouth. A good set of white teeth adorned the latter, and as Lady Judith was by no means insensible to the value of this pleasing addition to the attractions of the human countenance, she was rather fond

of displaying it, and had therefore contracted a habit of opening wide her mouth, grinning, and hanging down her lower lip, which, when angry, produced such a distorted expression, that she might sometimes be compared to a snarling dog, that shews its teeth before it bites.

We have noticed, in the conclusion of our last chapter, that some slight sound or noise occurred, which, although it passed unnoticed by John Lyon, was perfectly understood by Sir Simon, who, upon hearing it, dropt quietly into his chair. Scarcely had he done so, when the door of the apartment was thrown open to its utmost extent, and the Lady Judith walked in to give her husband a welcome home. The nature of this welcome was already anticipated by the little champion of the liberties of Ghent, who, although a great man without doors, yet in his own house scarcely dared to say that his soul was his own, at least in the presence of his wife.

When Lady Judith entered the room, she threw a quick glance all around. Her husband and his friend were both seated, (for the latter

had scarcely had the time to rise up, and the former was too much surprised and confounded to think of it,) this the lady remarked, as well as the capon and the flagons upon the table, and the sight of the good cheer conveyed to her active imagination the idea, that Sir Simon and his companion had committed the offence of enjoying themselves during her absence. There are tempers so soured by their own perverseness, that they cannot endure to witness in another that social tranquillity to which they are themselves strangers. Of this temper was the burgomaster's wife. It seemed, therefore, that the suspicion, that her husband, who had never been allowed one comfortable hour in her presence, should dare to find it when she was absent, added fuel to fire; and the first exclamation, of "So, Sir Simon, you are at your cups, I see," which passed the lips of his spouse, pointed out to the worthy observer of sounds, words, and signs, that her wrath was already at a very high point, with every probability of rising to a degree still higher.

"And so, Sir Simon," continued the Lady

Judith, whilst she just noticed John Lyon by a slight inclination of the head, "you have made a pretty business of it, indeed, to go jaunting after your own foolish speculations at Amsterdam, and leave me to extricate you from such a difficulty as your own negligence has brought upon you."

"What difficulty, my lady," said Sir Simon, "I—I—I do not know of any," he added, in a stammering voice, as if afraid to profess he was even ignorant of having done wrong. John Lyon, in the meantime, had risen to offer his chair to the mistress of the house.

"You may keep your seat, Master John Lyon," said the incensed lady; "but do you, Sir Simon, get up, that is my place; get up, and give me the foot cushion, for I am weary."

There is no situation, perhaps, more disagreeable for a third person, than to be present during a squabble between man and wife, especially if he should be appealed to by either to give an opinion, which would oblige him to depart from his neutral ground of non-interference, and thus necessarily offend one or both of the parties by

so doing. John Lyon knew this, and arose to depart; but being earnestly solicited to stay where he was, especially by Sir Simon, who felt his courage to face the wrath of his wife would even yet more desert him if left alone with her, John remained, and resolving to observe a strict silence during whatever scene might ensue, he placed himself as near as he could to the window, that his attention might seem to be engrossed by objects without doors.

"And so," continued Lady Judith, (when she had seated herself in the chair which her husband had vacated, to sneak away and place himself upon a bench somewhat in the background, as if desirous of getting off as far as possible from his ungentle spouse), "and so you have made a rare business of it, with your stupidity and your neglects, and here have I been going to and fro, for the last three days, upon an errand that would disgrace the lowest frow in Ghent, and wholly unbecoming the dignity of the wife of one of its chief magistrates."

The lady, who never thought upon the dignity of her husband's station, excepting when any

addition to her own could be derived from the mention of it, pronounced the last sentence in a very high tone; and the words *dignity* and *magistrate* meeting the ear of Sir Simon, and acting upon him with mechanical impulse, he started up, and ventured to waddle nearer, and to take another seat by the table; "I hope," said he, "that my wife would never stoop to any thing unworthy of either her or myself, nor can I see how I could be the occasion."

"But I can see and know it too," answered his wife, "for what but your own stupidity could have allowed the finest chain of gold that was ever yet worked at Antwerp, expressly for the Earl of Flanders, and ordered by him of you, to be sold to that bold impudent Italian Bianca, the mistress of your swaggering young burgher Philip Von Artaveld."

"I," said Sir Simon, "I sell the gold chain bespoke by the most noble the Earl of Flanders, to the beautiful Italian stranger, I never did any such thing; I —"

"Hold your peace," exclaimed Lady Judith peremptorily, "hold your peace, it were better

you did so than to be prating about Italian wantons. What do you know about beautiful, indeed? You might keep your eyes, if you cannot your feet, at home, I think," continued the shrew, as she looked up, and gave a glance towards the Venetian mirror that stood on the opposite side, and reflected the tall lank person and the fine dress of the Lady Judith.

"I am sure, my dear," replied Sir Simon, "I only said so of Bianca, because all the town talks about her beauty. No man respects virtue in your sex more than I do; and as for beauty, I am sure I never thought about such vanities when I chose you, Lady Judith, but only your good name."

"You are a fool," hastily exclaimed his wife, who was by no means pleased at this compliment made to her virtue at the expence of her beauty; "once more hold your tongue and let me go on, and as for Bianca, she has more of fine clothes and Italian airs to set her off than real beauty — a little thing as she is, scarcely up to my shoulder."

"And yet," said Sir Simon, "if all be true

that I have heard, the situation of Bianca, however she may now be sunk in guilt, was originally deserving pity."

"We do not want to talk about her," replied the wife, "for she and you, Sir Simon, who never do any thing without my advice but what ends in folly, had like to have got us all into a fine scrape; for no sooner had you departed on that silly speculation to Amsterdam, than the earl sends a command to have the gold chain he bespoke conveyed to him immediately; he designed it as a gift to some one as a mark of peculiar favour. The chain was not to be found. When I, knowing it was for a prince, condescended to give myself some trouble to inquire about it. I then found it had been bought, but not paid for, by Philip Von Artaveld, for his mistress. The earl was in a great rage because the chain did not appear at his command. Bianca declared it was her's; and Philip Von Artaveld, so far from insisting upon its return, offered the money to pay for it. The earl threatened us, and you, Sir Simon, with your wise dealings in prince's concerns, you he espe-

cially threatened with all the chastisement your folly deserved. So I this day took advantage of Philip Von Artaveld's being absent from Ghent, and sought the house of the wicked, where I soon made Mistress Bianca, with all her assurance, yield up the chain to me; and there it is," continued Lady Judith, as she took it from under her gown, and threw it upon the table; "but now, Sir Simon, call the varlet; bid him bring me water to wash, for my very hands seem polluted at having touched a thing that came from the wanton's neck; pha, they are quite impure; 'for who shall touch pitch and not be defiled.' Call the varlet, Sir Simon, I say, and bid him bring me a ewer of water."

Sir Simon obeyed as he was wont to do, and she, with many compliments to her own virtue, and many severe strictures upon all vices, and all vicious persons, washed her hands, and vowed she would not touch the chain again, even if the Earl of Flanders would bestow it upon her.

Lady Judith was one of those outrageously virtuous persons, who never find one touch of pity or of mercy for the sinner; and who, being

either too acrimonious, or too disagreeable, ever to have been tempted beyond the sins which arise from their own vituperative humours, consider themselves as patterns of excellence, and miracles of virtue, upon which foundation they build their own authority for abusing, censuring, and condemning all the less immaculate part of mankind.

Sir Simon de Bête, who wished for nothing so much as a fair opportunity to be clear of the presence of his wife, eagerly snatched at that which now presented itself; and, saying he would lose no time in sending the gold chain by a sure hand to the Earl of Flanders, with an explanation that it had in the first instance been sold by mistake, whilst he was at Amsterdam, the little goldsmith arose to depart, and John Lyon took leave of Lady Judith and followed him. Sir Simon whispered in the ear of his friend, as soon as the chamber-door was closed upon them, that they might now finish the evening at the Moon, an inn in Ghent where strangers and citizens were wont to assemble to pass away a convivial hour.

CHAP. III.

THE Inn, which was known in Ghent by the appellation of the Hotel of the Moon, (having a large painted sign of that planet hanging over the door-way of the ancient Gothic edifice, where a bush also denoted wine was sold within,) stood in the market-place, and was alike frequented by strangers and citizens. The inns of the period of our narrative widely differed from the like public receptacles of the present time; since they could not then, as they may be now, classed in the positive, comparative, and superlative degrees. They were places of rest alike for the traveller of high or low degree, and afforded a bench and a flagon, both to the chief citizen and the humble mechanic, without much distinction.

The Hotel of the Moon was one of the largest and most frequented in Ghent, whose host and hostess, Gerard and Martha Van Dredgger, took especial care, that the good repute of the

house should not suffer for want of attention. The husband, it is true, like most Flemish husbands of the lower order, suffered his wife to ply the labouring oar, whilst he did little else in the way of business than market for the wines, the corn and oats, spending the rest of his time, like a landlord who knew well his calling, by setting a proper example to his guests, to prove the goodness of the wines, or the true relish of his Dutch and French liqueurs, by drinking of them as hard and as long as he could, which Gerard often contrived to do at the expence of his guests, who repaid his communications in the way of city gossip, chit-chat, and politics, by making their host the sharer of their flagon.

Dame Martha Van Dredgger was in herself the perfect representative and epitome of all good housewives in Flanders. She was a little, tidy, plump woman, with not one part of her figure differing from another, either in shape or circumference; all was equally round and protuberant. There was nothing about her of the long compressed waist of modern times, which, considering that so small a span is seen

between the projection of the person above and below, makes us compare the figures of many of our fair countrywomen, of the present day, to that mischievous little insect called a wasp.

Dame Van Dredgger fully supplied whatever deficiencies might exist on the part of her husband in industry and management; she bustled everywhere, and rested nowhere. The guests were sure of a well-cooked dinner, a good bed, with tables, cloths, and platters as clean or as white as the drifted snow, in the accommodations afforded them by the hostess of the Moon; who, dressed in a petticoat of blue cloth, with a red jacket and bodice trimmed with fur, was always ready to appear before her customers, and her plump fair face looked, as it shone with soap and smiles, very pleasant, and very civil, from beneath a cap of milk-white linen, whose chief ornament consisted of a broad piece of gold, which crossed the forehead, and covered either side the temples. A pair of long gold ear-rings that fell as low as the bosom, and a string of beads finished by a cross of the same material, hung round the neck, and shewed

that in this wealthy country, the precious metal, which excites the hopes of all, and the madness of many, was commonly worn even by the less opulent ranks of society. A large bunch of keys, a rosary, and divers small useful implements, such as scissars, a sheathed knife, &c., depended from the leathern girdle, which alone formed the indication that Martha Van Dredgger could be said to have any one part of her person which might be called the waist.

The apartment, in which the guests generally found both their welcome and their entertainment, was the spacious kitchen, a vaulted room supported by columns, and of such extensive dimensions, that it served all culinary purposes, without interfering, even in the smallest degree, with the space necessary for the comfort of the guests, whose olfactory nerves were rather regaled than offended by the rich perfumes which ascended from the chimney, stoves, and ovens; and to many of the Flemish or Dutch nation, this perfume was doubtless as acceptable as the savory smell of the flesh-pots of Camacho to the hungry Sancho Panza, whose scum of geese and

capons that worthy pattern of squires to all knights-errant ladelled out with so much gastronomic alacrity.

The kitchen of Dame Van Dredgger formed the territory, the sphere, and the glory of that busy and notable housewife. Beneath the clean white tables and dressers was seen, arranged in the utmost order upon the tiled pavement of the room, a whole armoury of brass pans, copper pots, and other vessels, whose brilliant surface, from the frequent scrubbing and scouring of the Flemish maidens, had at length assumed the clearness and polish of so many mirrors. Upon one shelf, apart from the rest, appeared a few silver cups and flagons, intermixed with long drinking glasses of a white and green colour, and beneath was seen the vessels of pewter, which emulated in their polish even those of the rarer metal. A vast quantity of venison, game, dried fish, with ropes of onions and flasks of oil, hung from the ceiling in that part of the kitchen nearest to the entry; and at the other extremity stood the chimney, where, with four or five spits, the one placed above the other, the

cooks were busy in preparations for the evening repast. A stove of considerable size stood in the centre of the room, around which the guests were wont to assemble in cold weather. A basket-worked cradle in one corner, with a go-cart, and a low chair fixed upon a rocking bottom, formed like a boat, proclaimed that the worthy hostess of the Moon was a mother.

On the evening in which our narration commenced, Gerald Van Dredgger, and a few of the mechanics of Ghent, were sitting in this kitchen, and enjoying themselves over the delights of a flagon of good liquor, whilst engaged in settling the politics of the city; for as that great help to getting through the leisure hours of an evening, tobacco smoking, was then unknown in Europe, social parties could not then occupy themselves in doing nothing, with their neighbours to help them. They could not then whiff and sit silent, in the midst of a cloud of rolling smoke, till their persons, like their ideas, became dim and misty, through the obscurity occasioned by drink and tobacco.

Whilst Gerald was thus pleasantly engaged,

he heard the well-known jingle of the large bunch of keys, which, like the bells of a waggon, constantly announced the approach of his spouse. "What, Gerald, what man," said his better half, as she bustled up towards him, "do you sit there tippling and talking, whilst there is a stranger at the door, who wants some one to bid him in, and to look after his horse; get up, take the beast to the stable yourself, or call the boy to do it, and I will see to the gentleman myself."

So saying, the hostess smoothed down her clothes, and, as she hastily passed by one of the long dressers, just paused to give a glance at herself in a piece of a broken mirror that stood by the side of an old comb, and a few crooked pins, upon one of the shelves. We suppose the glance was satisfactory, for Dame Van Dredgger looked uncommonly pleased as she smiled and courtsied, and courtsied and smiled, and ushered in the stranger to the kitchen or common hall of the inn.

"You are welcome to Ghent, sir, welcome to the Moon," said the hostess; "pray, sit down,

sir; we have good beds, a table at eleven o'clock forenoons, stables, a tennis court, butts for archery, and every thing comfortable a gentleman may desire. What would you please to take, sir? a cup of Rhenish, or of Piment? or perhaps you would like, sir, to taste our Amsterdam liqueurs; we have them fresh imported, floating in the bottle, as clear as crystal, as bright as gold — the very best thing, they say, a gentleman can take after a long ride; and perhaps you may have come from some distance, sir, for your boots and your horse are covered with dust."

This salutation of the hostess of the Moon was so rapidly given, that the stranger could not edge in a word in reply, and indeed he seemed to be very sparing of words when he did reply to it, as he very briefly told the hostess, that his stay would not be long, and that he wished to be private. The stranger was a young man of a fine person, and easy address, yet his attire was rather plain for such a wearer, since it consisted of nothing more than a green cloth riding suit, with a hood instead of a chaperon upon the

head, which the traveller, contrary to the usual custom, did not remove upon coming within doors; indeed he seemed desirous to shun observation, and his hood was drawn much closer than ordinary about the head and face.

Now whether these circumstances, or the fine tall person and noble manner of the stranger, or the brevity of his speech, or all of them together, with no small share of that curiosity which is said to be inherent in the gentler sex, excited in the bosom of Martha Van Dredgger a desire to know who her guest might be, or not, we cannot determine, but certain it is she tried all her simple arts, in the way of civility, to find him out. "She hoped he was not tired, as, if he had come from Oudenarde or Courtray, the ways were rough."

The stranger answered "No."

She wondered how the people had got on at Bruges in the late dry weather, since there was no river in that town, nor fountains, and only the water brought by pipes from a distance.*

* Martha was quite right, since the fine canal which now runs from Ghent to Bruges, and waters that town, was not made till 1613.

The stranger could not tell.

Again, "She wondered how the people of Lille liked the Earl of Flanders living so much near Ghent as he had done since the death of his countess, instead of staying in their city."

The stranger was unable to determine.

"She would like to know if the late Jacob Von Artaveld was quite forgotten at Tournay; or if they ever spoke of his son who was in Ghent?"

Any news of the deceased father at Tournay, or of the living son at Ghent, were both equally unknown to the stranger. In short, after as many traps and baits as the hostess of the Moon could, consistent with civility, lay abroad to catch her guest in some acknowledgment of who he was, or where he came from, her curiosity was all at once silenced by his desiring that she would shew him into some private chamber, where he might that night have a bed, as he expected his varlet would soon follow with another horse and the baggage.

The words *varlet* and *baggage* brought to the

mind of the hostess an additional sense of the consequence of her guest, and she even thought that she might have been a little too free, and have talked a little too much, but instantly obeying his command, she led the way up a circular staircase that stood near the side of the kitchen, and led to a railed gallery that looked down upon it, and crossed the whole apartment near the vaulted roof. Having conducted her guest along this gallery, she opened a door at the extremity which led to a passage, giving access to the various sleeping rooms in the inn. Into one of these the stranger entered.

The hostess then busied herself in putting several little things to rights in the room that needed no such attention, till the stranger, pulling out a pocket-book with blank leaves, and an inkhorn, sat down to a table as if to write, and civilly dismissed his landlady.

"An odd sort of a stranger this," murmured Martha, as she descended the stairs; "a comely youth though, for all that, but close as oak, and no more inclined to talk than my good man

is when fuddled with an extra pint or so; but the varlet will be here soon, and I will get it all out of him."

Scarcely had Martha reached the kitchen, when a smart, spruce, young man came into it, and inquired if a stranger, habited in a green cloth riding suit, was already arrived. The hostess answered in the affirmative; "and the stranger in the green riding suit," she added, "I take to be your master, friend."

"It is very possible," replied the young man, carelessly.

"Humph! very possible," muttered Martha. "A queer answer; like master like man, I take it. Your master seems to be tired with his journey, friend; he has come a long way, I suppose," added the inquisitive hostess aloud.

"Just as far as his horse's legs carried him," said the varlet; "please to prepare us a good supper; let your capon be sauced with Dutch oysters: put a flagon of Rhenish on the table; see that our horses be taken care of; and whilst this is doing, shew me the way to the gentleman in the green riding suit."

"A pretty way of ordering one about, indeed, (and for a varlet too,)" again muttered Martha, and then added aloud — "I am no hostler, friend; you must talk to my husband about brute beasts and cattle. And I am not used to wait upon serving varlets as if they were their masters; if you want your's, you may find him by walking up those stairs, cross the gallery, and the first door on the left hand is his room."

Scarcely had the busy hostess dismissed this second impenetrable stranger, and ordered the supper, when Gilbert Matthew, the new deacon of the pilots, his brother Stephen, and Peter their kinsman, entered the inn. The hostess who was well aware (from the news that every day circulated in her house) of the late changes, and that John Lyon was displaced from his lucrative station of deacon, and Gilbert appointed to succeed him, now made up to the new court favourite, with a curtesy and a smile set between every word of civility and welcome, and immediately conducted him to the large high-backed chair near the stove, which was held to be the most honourable seat in the com-

mon hall. Martha was, indeed, doubly busied in making her new guest welcome, since she knew well how bright was the face of his fortunes at the present time. Thus does prosperity, like a summer sun, make all surrounding objects smile upon it, whilst adversity, like the nipping frost, often gives birth only to chilling looks and biting coldness. Gilbert Matthew, his brother, and their kinsman, drank their wine without noticing any one present, and seemed engaged in earnest conference, whilst they looked over some papers that Gilbert had taken from his pocket. Gerard, the host, returned to his flagon and his companions; and Dame Martha busied herself in alternately scolding the cooks, in a small sharp under-voice, lest she should disturb her company, and in watching Gilbert, to see if she could offer any officious civility. Things were in this position when the door of the inn was swung open with some bustle, and the burgomaster, Sir Simon de Bête, followed by John Lyon, entered the kitchen.

Sir Simon, who had been accustomed to receive the utmost deference and civility of treat-

ment, both from the host and hostess and their company, was rather an inopportune visitor at the present moment, for the chair of state, which from time immemorial had been considered as his own in this house, was already disposed of to Gilbert Matthew, and the hostess (who knew exactly how to deal out her proportions of attention and civility to persons in place, and to persons out of place,) was most anxious to cultivate the good-will of Gilbert, whilst she was now grown rather careless towards John Lyon; and Sir Simon's bringing with him a man upon whom all wise people had now begun to turn their backs, (for most disgraced court favourites are apt to grow better acquainted with the shoulders than with the faces of their sun-shine friends,) was a circumstance which put the conduct of the worthy hostess upon her very nicest tact.

She wanted to shew to Gilbert Matthew that she cared not the value of a brass pan if John Lyon ever tasted wine again in her house or not, yet she wished to preserve the favour of such a wealthy and important personage as Sir Simon;

and wholly to neglect *his* friend and companion was not the way to do this. She therefore resolved to steer a middle course, and to keep both sides in view.

Yet still not daring to displace Gilbert Matthew, who took no notice of the entrance of the last guests, and being fearful to offend Sir Simon by offering him any less honourable seat than that of the great high-backed chair, she prudently resolved to forget to offer him any at all, and to leave the knight to seat himself as he could. Stepping, therefore, briskly up to him, she assured him, "how glad she was to see him look so well; what would he like to take? what could she get for him?" And as the politic hostess was within the hearing of Gilbert, she resolved to place her notice of John Lyon solely to the score of his coming with Sir Simon; "any body," she said, "that *he* was pleased to bring with him must be welcome to her house, let them be who they would, or what they would, she was sure Sir Simon's friends ought to have every civility for Sir Simon's sake."

"And pray, dame," cried the knight, who

saw which way she steered, as plainly as the mariner can tell when a ship at sea is making her tack to catch a side-wind, "and pray, dame, why may not Master John Lyon be here welcome for his *own* sake, he is no such stranger to the Moon, I think. And you, Gilbert Matthew, must have learned before now the seat that belongs to one of the chief magistrates of Ghent. Please to get up, young man; there are stools high enough, and large enough, to contain the green honours of a new sprig just planted in his office."

Sir Simon had been much offended at the want of the usual respect with which he was accustomed to be received, and as he was not a man to desert a friend because fortune had turned her back upon him, he felt very bitter against Gilbert for his conduct towards John Lyon. And it must also be confessed, that his having been so lately turned out of his own seat at home, made him yet more tenacious of retaining his right and privilege over the high-backed chair at the Moon; for feeling how much he suffered from the despotism of his own wife,

he was wont, as a sort of remuneration towards his own self-respect, to exact from others abroad that passive obedience he was obliged to yield to the tyranny of petticoat government at home.

Gilbert Matthew, who to a large share of cunning united a spirit of subserviency to his superiors, when he could profit by it, and of insolence to his inferiors, and even to his equals, when he had nothing to fear from them, saw well enough that Sir Simon's notice of John Lyon would do him no good with the court party at this time; he scrupled not, therefore, to indulge the insolence of his temper, by shewing disrespect towards Sir Simon himself. And his new station of deacon of the pilots had helped to swell out his pride, (which had hitherto, in his humbler fortunes, shewn itself but capable of inflation,) in the same way that a sudden strong wind fills and swells out the sails of a vessel, which till it arose had only fluttered in the breeze.

Gilbert Matthew kept his seat, and looking boldly and stedfastly in Sir Simon's face, as if he scarcely knew him, and had not even a cor-

rect remembrance of his name, (so true is it, "that new-made honour doth forget men's names,") he said, "Sir Timothy de Bête, be you magistrate or not in Ghent, I care not, this seat I took before you entered the room, and this seat I shall keep till I depart from it; the stools you speak of may suit the length of your legs better than they do mine."

There is nothing more galling to self-consequence than any reflection upon disadvantages of person. Sir Simon reddened with wrath at this scoff cast upon the diminutive size of the supporters of his dignity. His words burst from his lips in a torrent of anger, as he again commanded Gilbert to rise and give up the seat. Gilbert answered with yet greater insolence; and John Lyon could no longer forbear taking part with his insulted friend. "Gilbert Matthew," said he, "if you have no respect for the worthy Sir Simon de Bête, who all Ghent knows to be a good man —"

"Aye," exclaimed Sir Simon, "as good and as substantial as any one who walks the exchange of Ghent, Bruges, or Antwerp to boot."

"Gilbert," continued John Lyon, "give up the seat, if it be only from that respect which is due to a burgomaster. And your kinsman there, Peter Matthew, might as well doff his cap, for when did a burgher keep it on before his town magistrate, if he knew what breeding was."

"I shall doff my cap, or keep on my cap," replied Peter, as he raised his hand and clapt it upon the crown of his cap, "to whom I please, and before whom I please. You had better, John Lyon, teach manners to those two strangers who are just come down the stairs, and are leaving the hall; the one in the green riding dress, I mean, and his companion."

"They know better manners than you do, Peter," answered John Lyon, "for they bowed their heads to the company, although they did not doff their caps as they passed out."

"You had better call them back to hear your comment, Master *Deacon-turned-out*," said Peter, insolently; "that, as they are travellers, they may know you are now a man at large, with nothing else to do than teach courtesies to

strangers, for it will not do to begin the trade with us citizens."

John Lyon was not a man without passions, any more than his friend, and a war of words now hotly ensued between all parties; for Stephen Matthew had by this time also joined in the quarrel, till Sir Simon quite lost temper, and made a desperate effort fairly to pull Gilbert out of the chair, whilst, at the same moment, John Lyon attempted to knock Peter Matthew's cap off his head. In the scuffle the little goldsmith was upset, and, rolling like a ball some paces forward, a table was overturned, which, amongst other things, contained a flask of oil, whose contents found their way over the face, beard, and dress of the worshipful burgomaster, and whilst John Lyon went to help him up, Peter came behind him and tripped up the heels of the ex-deacon, who shared the fate of his fallen friend. No sooner had they once more found their feet, than they both united in the effort to turn their adversaries out of the room, and called upon Gerard and his companions for assistance.

The confusion was now general; some came to the help of Sir Simon, some stood up for Gilbert Matthew, and a few remained neuter, staring in silent wonder at what passed; whilst the hostess crossed herself, and blessed herself, to think such a fray should happen in her house. The noise of what was going forward had alarmed every one within doors, and a boy who had been below doing something in a cellar, that communicated with the kitchen by a steep flight of stone steps, upon hearing the bustle came up to witness it, and left the cellar door open after him.

"Out with them," cried Sir Simon, as he laid about him several smart blows with his little stout fists.

"Out with them — turn the rascals out," re-echoed John Lyon, "I will not see my friend insulted by the proudest upstart in Ghent."

"Call the round," exclaimed the hostess, "call the city watch, or there will be murder done amongst them; go, boy, call the watch, they must be on by this time; go, bring them hither."

"Respect the burgomaster — do not strike a magistrate, Gilbert," said the host.

"He has not honour enough to respect any one," exclaimed John Lyon, who was now attempting to free Sir Simon from the hold of Peter, as he came to the help of Gilbert.

"Talk about your own honour, John Lyon," said Peter; "but I fancy you put that in pawn for a bag of old crowns, when you sold your daughter's to the Earl of Flanders."

"Insolent villain!" exclaimed John Lyon; "I sell my daughter's honour, or my own! it is a lie as foul as the mouth that spoke it; say but such another word, and I will knock you down, though you should die by the blow."

"I say it, and I know it too," answered Peter.

"Take that then," said John Lyon, and he struck Peter a powerful blow upon the head. Peter, who at this moment unfortunately stood near the opening of the door above the steps which led to the cellar, staggered, and in doing so pushed against Sir Simon de Bête; who,

thinking it intentional, slipt aside before Peter could recover his equilibrium, and he fell backwards down the steep flight of stone steps. The noise occasioned by his sudden and dreadful fall, was followed by a deep groan that struck with terror upon the ear of the enraged disputants, whose wrath being suddenly and effectually subdued by this horrid and unexpected conclusion of their quarrel, they rushed down the steps with one accord to see if Peter were alive or dead.

What followed may be briefly told. In a few minutes, Peter was brought up into the apartment, and after many efforts being made to restore life, they were found to be useless, the vital spark was extinct, for the wretched man having fallen backwards, the neck was dislocated by the shock he had received.

By this time the city watch had arrived. John Lyon and Simon de Bête, who, whilst they deeply regretted the fatal issue of the quarrel, and knew themselves to be innocent of the *intentional* death of their adversary; yet, at the same time, they feared that with such persons

to deal with as Stephen and Gilbert Matthew, the consequences of the present affray might be fatal to themselves. John Lyon, therefore, who had been the unhappy instrument of this sad catastrophe, now whispered in the ear of Sir Simon, that he would endeavour to slip out, and either take sanctuary in the church of St. Nicholas hard by, or seek shelter with a friend, who, he knew, could conceal him for the present: and Sir Simon, who, with all his importance, thought, "the better part of valour was discretion," resolved to follow his example, and to steal away as fast as he could, and trust his future and entire acquittal in this affair, both to his own innocence, and to his character and consequence in the city.

The body soon afterwards was removed into an adjoining chamber; where a barber surgeon, who was called in, thought he might as well exercise a little practice in pretending to recover life, which, as he knew the man was really dead, could do no harm to him, and might put a crown into his own pocket. Whilst this was doing, John Lyon quietly slipt out of the house

just as the watch was bustling into it, and got clear off into the street. But when Sir Simon de Bête made an attempt to follow his example, his unwieldy bulk prevented any very active effort to seize upon a lucky opportunity; so that before he could reach the threshold, he was espied by Gilbert, who had returned to the kitchen, seized by the collar, and dragged back into the apartment, whilst the new deacon loudly accused him of being one of the murderers of his kinsman.

"I a murderer of your kinsman! I," cried Sir Simon, who, between the fear of his present situation, and the indignation he felt that all personal respect towards himself should be laid aside, presented in his own person the most ludicrous combination of fear and importance, "I am as innocent as the babe unborn," continued he; "for the love of mercy let me go; I say, let me go, or you shall know to your cost who and what I am."

"We know that already," said Gilbert, "for you are both accessory, aye and principal too, in the murder of my kinsman; you are my prisoner,

and on my accusation. Which of these men is the watch for the city?"

"That am I," said Timothy Vanderblast, a glass-blower of Ghent, who now stept forward; "that am I; what may be your pleasure?"

"That you take in charge the prisoner, and receive my brief deposition, upon which your authority will rest for his imprisonment this night."

Timothy Vanderblast, who knew perfectly well Sir Simon de Bête, and had sometimes been accustomed to appear before him in his official capacity in the town-hall, and who there looked up to him as little less than the Earl of Flanders himself in rank and dignity, seemed now absolutely petrified at the words which met his ear; and turning towards Gilbert Matthew, he asked him, "What he wished him to do?"

"That you do your duty," replied Gilbert, "and apprehend the prisoner on my charge of murder."

"What!" said the city watch, "apprehend the worshipful Sir Simon de Bête! the burgomaster of our ward! The saints forbid. I have

not been in my office so many years, and know no better than that, either."

"It is your duty, as the watch," replied Gilbert, "to apprehend all persons charged with crime."

"Is it the law?" inquired the host.

"It is the law," answered Gilbert.

"No doubt, no doubt," said Timothy, "for rogues and *conflicted* malefactors; but not law, I think, to meddle with magistrates upon. I thank you, Master Gilbert, for teaching me my calling."

"Fellow!" exclaimed Gilbert, "do your duty, or the Earl shall hear what sort of an officer he has."

"Fellow, indeed!" said Vanderblast, who felt encouraged in his proceeding by the nods, winks, and approving jogs of the elbow which he received from time to time from Sir Simon, who stood near him; "no more a fellow than yourself, Master Matthew, but as sober and as honest a man as any one of his calling in Ghent; and not a man to be dictated to by you, Master Gilbert, nor to be blown up by such a puff as

you would send through his good name. The Earl of Flanders, forsooth! The Earl's officer, I would have you to know, knows how to respect persons as well as the Earl himself."

"You are a fool," said Gilbert; "but I insist, and I call upon every one here present to bear witness that I insist, upon your receiving my deposition."

"And mine," said Stephen, "or you shall be whipped out of your office for shewing favour in despite of justice."

"God forbid!" answered Vanderblast, "but that favour and justice should be properly represented in my person, both being things pertaining to the law — the one being special with the judges, and the other with the hangman: and 'tis most fitting justice should always come by favour, as all other of God's graces do. I will, therefore, take all your *dispositions*, for the sake of justice, which may be condemned therein."

Timothy Vanderblast being accordingly seated in the high-backed chair, which had originally occasioned the dispute so tragically terminated, proceeded in the business in an official manner,

according to his notion of that term. "And now, Sir Simon," said Timothy, "be so good as to tell your own story?"

"What," cried Gilbert, "hear the prisoner first! He is the accused person — let me speak."

"Peace!" said Vanderblast; "peace! I know what belongs to a judge — respect of persons. Respect of persons is a part of the law. Sir Simon, being your better, shall speak first, prisoner or no prisoner: and while he disposes his own cause, do you please, Master Gilbert, to walk into the other chamber, for the law sunders the witnesses for the sake of its jurisprudence; therefore the accused and the accuser must be held apart, and the accused shall speak first, if it were only for the love of justice; as 'tis hard to bear down a falling man, and most specially if he be a knight and a magistrate."

Gilbert Matthew, who saw the folly of the procedure, and that it was vain to hold debate with ignorance and obstinacy combined, now whispered something in the ear of his brother Stephen, who immediately departed from the

inn, and before Timothy Vanderblast could hear out the assertions made by Sir Simon of his perfect innocence, in respect of the charge laid against him, Stephen returned with the chief constable of the city watch, and the guard.

The affair was now speedily settled; and notwithstanding all the efforts made by Sir Simon to declare his innocence, or to procure a cessation of measures till the next morning, when he promised to give security for his appearance before his peers in the town-hall, he was carried off, and by the order of Gilbert Matthew (who, as a new court favourite, had much influence with the chief constable,) Sir Simon was that night secured within the prisons of the Earl of Flanders: so many and so various are the tricks by which fortune humbles the pride of the wealthy, and confounds innocence with guilt.

CHAP. IV.

HAVING seen the unfortunate little burgomaster, Sir Simon de Bête, placed within the prisons of the Earl of Flanders, and John Lyon secured for the present by his escape from the vengeance of Gilbert Matthew and his brothers, we shall now leave them for a while, in order to introduce to our reader Anna, the only child of John Lyon, with whom it is time he should become acquainted.

Anna was about nineteen years old, and although born in Ghent, had been educated in France, under the care of an aunt, who had taken upon herself the maternal functions, when her niece was deprived, by the early death of her mother, of that care and superintendence which no other person can so well bestow upon infancy.

This worthy relative resided about two leagues from St. Omer's, where she had brought up her

niece in the utmost seclusion; for, excepting the priest who instructed her in reading and writing, and an old minstrel who was allowed to teach her to play upon the rebec and the lute, for many years she had scarcely seen a living creature, saving her aunt, their few domestics, a single friend, and now and then a peasant of the neighbouring village, or a poor person who came to ask alms at their door.

Within the last two years John Lyon, who considered his daughter's education (which was very superior for the time) must be now complete, desired the solace of her company, and therefore recalled her home to Ghent: and feeling anxious she should know something of that world to which she had hitherto been such an entire stranger, with all a father's pride John had introduced her to many of the families of the chief citizens of Ghent, as well as to the court of the Earl of Flanders, and to the Earl's mother, Margaret Countess of Artois; for at the period of our narrative, the chief citizens of the Low Countries had access to the courts of their lords as well as the nobility, so great was their

opulence, and so important that commercial character by which the country was supported.

Anna was everywhere received with marked respect and admiration. The uncommon beauty of her person, her few but rare accomplishments, united with the sweetness of her temper, and the artless simplicity of her manners, procured her so much affection and regard, that she became an object of envy and jealousy with many of the more nobly born, but less nobly endowed ladies of the court. Anna was of a light and delicate figure, gracefully formed, and exactly proportioned. Her hair and complexion, like those of the generality of her countrywomen, were of the palest brown, and of the fairest hue, and the regular life which she had hitherto led in the country, whilst it had confirmed her health, had also given to her beautiful countenance that bloom and animation, which nothing else can so perfectly bestow. Her features were small and regular; her eyes, of the deepest blue, expressed the tender character of her disposition, and whenever she smiled, it shewed so pretty a dimple in one of her cheeks, that, if we

were inclined to be poetical, we should say, it looked as if it had been there imprinted by the finger of love to mark her for his own.

Such was the casket in which it had pleased Heaven to place the rare jewel of her mind. Anna was naturally good, open-hearted, and tender, with a more than ordinary share of timidity, which had been fostered by the secluded manner of her education. But what might have been deemed an advantage to most females in early life, entire seclusion, with her perhaps had been prejudicial; since it had fostered not only her timidity, but an uncommonly imaginative turn of mind: and as all persons endowed with that finer quality of the soul, are invariably prone to romance, or the *beau ideal* of things, her imagination, uncorrected by an intercourse with the world, (which is perhaps the most certain remedy against the charming dreams it creates,) had led her to expect human life and its events to be modelled after the manner in which her vivid conception had presented them to her mind; where romance had thrown around her an existence all sunshine, beauty, and inno-

cence. She suspected no one of guile, she thought no one capable of treachery, and, almost unconscious of the motive, she resolved to look upon the world, and all things in it, such as her fancy had delighted to pourtray.

Such was Anna at the time she returned to her father's house at Ghent. The first mortification she experienced, which somewhat interfered with her visionary schemes of happiness, was to find the character of her father so different to what she had thought it would be. She had imagined to herself all the reciprocal tenderness, open confidence, and mutually noble and disinterested feelings existing between father and daughter, the one all condescension and kindness, the other all piety and filial obedience. How, therefore, was poor Anna mortified, when she found her own father proud of her, but as the means to assist his ambitious and daring aims, without much tenderness in any other view; wholly withdrawing his confidence from her, mysterious in his manners, and treating all those fine imaginations and sensations of her mind, (which to her were the life of life,) as

follies, dreams, and only worthy the ridicule of a sensible man. This was a death-blow to the ingenuous feelings of Anna. Kindness would have made her heart open as the eye of the morning to welcome and reflect the first beams of the sun; but coldness and ridicule awakened the timidity of her character, chilled and closed her confidence; and, finding she had feelings which could not be understood, the pride of human nature, which exists even in the best heart, made her keep locked within her own bosom the thoughts that were answered but with contempt. Anna loved and reverenced John Lyon as her father; but she was too much awed by the sternness and severity of his nature to make him her friend.

Upon the eventful evening, which has hitherto occupied the previous chapters, Anna was seated in an apartment of her father's house in Ghent, which John Lyon had exclusively appropriated for his daughter, and which in our times would be called by a lady her *boudoir*. Her lute and rebec lay upon a table, near which a few manuscript volumes, that formed her library, were

placed within a fine cabinet of Indian manufacture. These volumes consisted of the lives of some of the most eminent catholic saints, a book of songs, virelays and roundelays, a few of the Italian poets, (for Anna was not ignorant of their language,) and a little illuminated book, which she prized more than all the rest, as it contained the songs and poems of a friend who had written them out for her, and had caused the work to be thus illustrated to enhance the value of the gift. A crucifix, with a missal lying near its base, was seen in a small recess of the chamber, and a frame containing a piece of tapestry, upon which the taste and industry of the fair Anna was exercised, stood near the grated window.

The lovely mistress of the chamber sat in a thoughtful posture, with her arm that supported her head resting upon the table, and in her hand she held a letter, which she had just been reading with attention.

Anna was attired in a gown of black velvet, embroidered with gold, yet simple in its fashion. It had only the tight sleeves as low as the wrist,

without the incumbrance of those long and hanging ones, which sometimes served the ladies for the purpose of a pocket, as well as a part of ornamental dress. The gown, set close to her shape, and terminating just above the bosom, left the neck bare, whose clear and transparent hue was finely contrasted by the deep rich black of the velvet. Her hair, parted in front, turned up, and bound together at the back of the head, (whose form was perfectly seen by this simple fashion,) was covered by a thin veil of silver tissue, and encircled with a fillet, or chaplet, of pearls.

Anna again opened and read her letter. She mused, and after a time started from her seat, and seemed listening as if to catch some sound she anxiously expected to hear. Again she sighed, and returned to her seat; but still restless and uneasy, she now paced the chamber, now walked towards the windows, and again listened at the door. At length she exclaimed, "Yes, I am sure I heard footsteps below! — Yes, they are coming this way, it is — it must be ——" Her hands, as she held them pressed

together, trembled with emotion, and scarcely able to support herself, she leaned against the chair she had but just quitted, when the door of her apartment opened, and a tall comely youth, habited in a green riding dress, entered.

"Henry!" ejaculated Anna, in a faint voice; "Henry! why, why do you seek me again, when you know——" Her agitation was too great to allow her to finish the sentence, and she only added the words "my father."

"I know," replied Henry, "I know all you would urge; that I am to hope nothing from you, without the approval of your father; I ask nothing of you, but to see me. I arrived but an hour since in Ghent, when I wrote you that letter from the inn, that I might not too much surprise you by my presence. Jaques delivered it with all the caution necessary. You have granted me this interview; hear me then, I beseech you."

"I fear," said Anna mournfully, "I fear I have already heard too much; leave me, Henry, leave me, I conjure you."

"Never," replied the youth, whom she ad-

dressed; "I will never leave you, till I have some assurance, that two years of absence, (and of misery they have been to me,) has not entirely effaced from your remembrance those delightful hours we passed together in the woods of St. Omer's, when Anna would come to meet me under the old oak tree in the evening, as kind, as innocent, and as affectionate ——"

"Oh! do not name the past," said Anna, interrupting him; "all things are changed now. I then knew nothing of the world; I met you by chance in the forest, when I was but a mere girl; you managed to gain access to my aunt; you were a student of St. Omer's, and she loved you for your learning, and thought, kind and simple as she was, that your society could benefit me; but she knew not how dangerous to future happiness are such friendships and such meetings, or you would never have been admitted, as you were, to us. And now my father ——"

"Has recalled you home, Anna, and you refuse to hear me till I shall have gained his approval; is it not so?"

"It is indeed, Henry; I cannot hide the

truth. If you had his consent, you know you have mine already; but you have never even sought my father; you are as unknown to him as you are mysterious to me."

"Nor must I see your father for the present," replied the lover: "there are circumstances, which I cannot explain to you, that render it necessary for his sake, for your own, and for mine, that I should preserve, what you too justly term, the mystery of my character. I am sincere to you, and I await but time, with the occasion, to overcome these circumstances, when I will openly ask, nay, claim you of your father as my wife."

"How am I to trust you," said Anna, "when to me, in whom you might surely confide, you refuse to trust the plain and open truth, or to explain what these extraordinary circumstances are, so dangerous in their nature. When I was a girl, I knew you but as Henry de Cassel, a student of St. Omer's. As such you came to our house; but even then with caution and mystery. Your only attendant was your servant, and beyond your name we knew nothing of your

family. I was too young, and my aunt too simple, to suspect you, till before I left her I begged you, as I was to return to my father's house, that you would ask me of him, wishing that a parent's will might confirm our affection. You said you dared not do it *then;* that *your* family must not be known to *him;* then you talked about the future, just as you do now. I have learnt something of the world since my father took me to court — I have always found courtiers fond of mystery, and I have no cause to think them on this account the best people. I would have told my father the truth, but that I so much fear him, that when I would speak to him I cannot find the heart to say your name. And my father, too,——"

"What of him?" hastily inquired the lover, who took alarm at the manner in which she pronounced the last words; for lovers, like cowards, are frighted at a shadow.

"Nay, Henry," said Anna, "I may have *my* mystery as well as you may have yours, and you cannot expect a confidence from me which you refuse to return. But know this — that I have

reasons for thinking my father would not grant his consent, even did you ask it, as you one day hope to do. Do not, therefore, deceive your own heart, and thus render me doubly unhappy by keeping alive your own vain hopes. I have learnt since we parted what a dreamer imagination is, and I now begin to think hope no better than a flatterer, who deceives us to our ruin."

"Tell me, I beseech you," said Henry, "tell me what has chanced; do not torture me with this suspense; tell me all, and why you are thus changed?"

"I am not changed towards you," replied Anna, "but I am towards myself. I begin to suspect that this world is not either quite so happy, nor quite so good, as I once thought it. I have no mystery with you, Henry, about *myself*, or as far as I am concerned, but I must not, even to you, reveal that which would betray some affairs especially connected with my father. His confidence, however limited to me, I will never betray, although it induces me to think you would have little or nothing to hope from him."

"But I will hope, Anna, until I am convinced you no longer feel an interest in my fate. Hear me. Circumstances of the most imperative nature exist, that for the present render it impossible I should be explicit, even to you: I will conquer them, or I will die in the attempt. Your father's day of prosperity is past, he is disgraced with the Earl of Flanders, I know it is so; he is ruined by the machinations of Gilbert Matthew; it may be in my power to serve and to save your father, for Gilbert's malice will not stop at its present pass; and the Countess of Artois, who rules her son the earl with as much despotism as if he were still a boy, is no friend either to your father or to yourself."

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed Anna, "why, who are you? whence come you? you know all our affairs, and yet it is two years since I have seen you, and you are but now arrived in Ghent. What does this mean? you alarm me."

"Be not alarmed; it means nothing more, my sweet Anna, than this, that although I have been compelled to remain at St. Omer's till the present time, I have not been unheedful of what

has passed in Ghent, when it contained my greatest treasure in yourself. I have had those in this city who have made known to me some things, of which even you were ignorant. But think you, that a miser when he parts from his treasure, though but for a while, would not place a guard over it to give him intelligence when danger might hover near it? No, I have not been careless, nor in ignorance of what concerns you or your father. I heard of his disgrace, and hither am I come in the hope to serve him, although not openly. And notwithstanding you are so silent, Anna, it is not unknown to me, that the Countess of Artois is chiefly displeased with John Lyon, and angered with yourself, because the world whisper that her son, the Earl of Flanders, has more than once thought his coronet an incumbrance, since it prevented his offering his hand to the daughter of a burgher of Ghent — a little creature who wins alike the hearts of princes and of students."

Anna blushed and looked down, but did not reply.

" I have no absolute fears of the rivalry of the

Earl of Flanders," added Henry; "he could not wed you, Anna, without the risk of forfeiting his dominions, and you have too much honour, as well as your father, to yield to a lawless suit; and, indeed, the disgrace of your father, I have heard — but we will speak no more of this. When shall I see you again, and where? Here I dare not stay long. Jaques is amusing your old housekeeper; she thinks me some one from your aunt at St. Omer's, but I must be gone before your father's return. When shall I see you again?"

"Never," said Anna; "you still refuse to ask me of my father, and I will not consent to the disgrace of clandestine meetings. I was but a child when we wandered together in the woods of St. Omer's, but time, that has given me many a heart-ache, with its lessons of experience, has also taught me it is dangerous to trust to our feelings."

"Nay," replied Henry, "it is useless thus to deny me; I shall be near Ghent, and I will see you in spite of yourself. I have no thought but does you honour; the time will come when I

shall both claim and receive you from your father. Why then should I be made a needless sufferer during the intermediate space? Besides, your father's safety, even, may require that we should sometimes meet; do not refuse me."

"My father's safety," said Anna, "can never be insured by his daughter's disobedience. Leave me, I beseech you; he will soon return. Your letter took me by surprise — I had not time for reflection — I granted hastily *this* interview, before he could return home, but here and now it must end."

"Then it shall end, indeed," exclaimed Henry, extremely hurt by the resolute manner in which Anna dismissed him. "I see how it is: you are changed, time, new objects, or perhaps the court, has taught you to be indifferent towards me. And is this, Anna, the end of all your vows — of all your assurances of a mutual and faithful love? Oh! how different are your feelings from mine! I am ready to risk every danger, to encounter every difficulty, only to see you, rather than again endure the misery, the suspense of absence. And can you so easily

part from me? and for an unlimited period? this is not duty, but coldness. But I see how it is, I have flattered myself with false hopes, by judging of the measure of your love by my own."

Anna blushed, hesitated, but her imagination now only pictured to her the sufferings of absence; and unable to restrain her tears, she wept bitterly, and again assured Henry that he judged of her unkindly, as her heart was entirely his own. Delighted at receiving these renewed assurances of affection, he warmly thanked her for them; and with all the sudden fluctuation of a lover's feelings, which can this moment give birth to angry reproaches, when hurt by some slight and often unintentional cause of offence, and can now rejoice upon the least shadow of hope, though but the shadow, Henry again urged permission sometimes to see her, if but for a few minutes, at any place she would appoint, and Anna, with evident reluctance, continued to deny her consent, but with a less firm and determined manner. The rectitude of her principles taught her, that it would

be wrong to consent to this without the sanction of her father; but when she looked upon the distressed state of Henry, and saw his manly countenance bedewed with tears, as he urged his past sufferings in mitigation of her future resolves, she could scarcely find it in her heart to give an absolute denial.

"Anna," said Henry, "I have numbered the days and the weeks since last we parted, and with me one idea has been present at all times, in all places. I have thought upon you; I have watched the sun as it set in the west, and recollected the time when we both did so at the same hour, and when our thoughts might be said to mingle in community. I have haunted the spot where we have so often passed hours together in the woods of St. Omer's, and I have wandered and thought again and again of you, till even to the senseless trees I have spoken of my Anna. And how often has your image disturbed my slumbers! and I have awoke feverish and unrefreshed, to begin another day of dreadful suspense, of doubtful anxiety. Do not, then, I beseech you — can you — can you have the

heart again to make me suffer so much misery?"

Thus did Henry, with the sincerest affection, continue to urge his suit, and Anna, doubtful and wavering between love and duty, now listening to the dictates of her reason, and now again giving herself up to the power of affection, replied she scarcely knew what, and had neither resolution absolutely to deny or to grant his request.

Whilst this conversation was passing between the lovers, Jaques, the varlet of Henry de Cassel, was engaged in amusing old Catharine, the housekeeper of John Lyon. Jaques was a light French spirit of the brightest order, and whose wits had been sharpened by poverty and necessity, and refined beyond his station by more of education than usually belonged to his class. His master had found it absolutely necessary to trust some one with the secret of his passion for the beautiful Anna, and confiding in the fidelity of his varlet (of whose address he had also a high opinion), Jaques became the useful, confidential friend of his master, in an affair where a breach

of trust might have been most fatal to all concerned. Jaques had not been thus long the agent of two lovers, without knowing that a meeting between them, after a long absence, seems so short, that though it should last out the whole evening, it would still appear "brief as any dream." Old Catharine talked of expecting her master home, Jaques feared it, and longed to give the lovers some hint that it was time to part; but not daring to betray his uneasiness to Catharine, he was obliged to sit still, internally chewing the cud of his own impatience. But as Jaques was one of those people, who, notwithstanding a gay spirit, have some share of common sense, he plainly foresaw that his agency, now his master had arrived in Ghent, would not be suffered to slumber; he therefore judged it as well to make use of the present opportunity to form a sort of acquaintance with old Catharine for the facility of his future affairs.

Jaques knew the world very well in his own sphere, and no one could be a better judge of the weakest point in the heart of a waiting-maid, or of the most vulnerable in that of a cook. It

is true his experience had hitherto principally lain with the younger part of the sex, but being so great a master of the art, he disdained not to shew his skill even with the elder. Jaques was aware that the generality of mankind, be they men or women, have some leading trait of character, which, if found out, the knowledge of it may be applied either for the purpose of soothing or of irritating the mind. He also knew that human vanity is never insensible to flattery, yet even with the vainest, the dose must be given with some appearance of its being applicable to their case. Thus he never complimented an *old* woman on her beauty, lest the absurdity of his flattery should prevent its taking effect. But with a *young* woman, though her face should be formed in one of those moulds, as if nature in a frolic had been making a mask, he would congratulate her upon the grace and the expression of her countenance; and he often made fools of the *old* by complimenting them upon their wisdom. Indeed Jaques was so used to the cunning of flattery, that he had actually flattered *himself*, and mistaken his own impudence of temper

(which was often successful by its very boldness) for wit of the first quality.

"And so, young man," said old Catharine to this busy varlet, as, in pursuance of his plan, he officiously assisted her in renewing the kitchen fire, "you are come from our lady's aunt with messages. It is a pity you came when John Lyon was out, for your master up stairs seems to have a wond'rous long message to deliver. Pray, friend, do you know what it is about?"

"No, dame, not exactly," replied Jaques, "although I think I could give a shrewd guess; but you know serving varlets must keep the secrets of their masters, unless, indeed, a young man might hope to gain counsel for the sake of his betters, by telling it to such a sensible, discreet person as you seem to be."

"You are a very civil, well-spoken young man," said old Catharine, "and seem to have as pretty a notion about what belongs to your duty as ever I met with. Pray do me the favour to take a cup of wine; it is bad talking with a dry throat, and apt to give the phthisic. I never

talk so well myself as when I have tasted a cup of mulled wine."

The housekeeper busied herself accordingly in getting some refreshment for Jaques, who proceeded to amuse her with an idle tale, and as many lies and compliments as he could string together. Whilst old Catharine was thus falling into the snares laid for her by the cunning varlet, a knock upon the door summoned her to it, and she returned saying, that a person who seemed a good deal fluttered and hurried, and did not look like a varlet, wanted to give a letter to her young mistress into her own hands.

"Which you, of course, will deliver yourself, dame," said Jaques (who had no mind his master should be abruptly disturbed by the presence of a stranger); "you will not let this person interrupt your mistress whilst she is receiving the message from her aunt; such a thing your good sense and discretion will not admit."

"Certainly not," replied old Catharine; "and so I will insist upon the letter being given up to me."

"And as my legs are rather younger than yours," said Jaques, "I will save you the trouble, dame, of carrying it up to your mistress, and in the meantime you had better mull another cup of wine, and think what reward it would be proper for such a sensible, discreet person as yourself to expect for the trouble we have given you this evening."

The last hint effectually upset whatever small portion of common sense old Catharine might retain; it was all lost in the speculation of an unlooked-for gratuity; and having obtained the letter from the stranger, Jaques bounded up to his master, gave in the paper for mistress Anna, and conjured Henry de Cassel to lose no time, but to leave the house immediately. Henry promised to depart in a few minutes; Jaques returned to taste the other cup with the housekeeper; and no sooner was he gone than Anna opened the letter. She read the contents in the utmost agitation, and exclaimed, "Gracious Heaven! what can this mean?"

"Speak," said Henry; "I cannot bear to see you thus alarmed; what is in that paper?"

"My father," replied Anna, "writes to me to bid me throw on my mantle, and conceal myself as well as I can; to ask no questions, but to follow the bearer of this letter, who will bring me directly to him, as he must see me on an affair of import, but cannot come to me himself. What can this mean?"

Henry de Cassel was alarmed at such an extraordinary message; but it must be supposed was as much surprised and as ignorant as Anna herself could be, as to the meaning of John Lyon's order. His daughter, astonished and alarmed, yet fearing she knew not what, hastened to obey her father's commands, slipt on her mantle, drew the hood over her face, bid a hasty adieu to Henry, and followed the stranger as she was directed from the house.

CHAP. V.

We must now return to John Lyon, who, we before noticed, had managed to steal out of the inn without interruption, after the fatal fray; and by so doing had escaped the immediate wrath of Gilbert Matthew, and a share of that imprisonment which had fallen to the lot of the good-natured and important little burgomaster, Sir Simon de Bête.

Under cover of the evening, which every moment darkened more and more each surrounding object, John Lyon pursued his way without observation through many of the intricate windings of the city. These were well known to him; and crossing several canals, he at length diverged towards an ancient Gothic house, which stood insulated, although within the walls of the town. This house, surrounded by a small garden, was so watered with canals on either side that swept nearly round it, that

it seemed peculiarly sequestered, notwithstanding the precincts of a commercial town.

John crossed a little drawbridge leading towards the entrance of the mansion, and knocked, but not loudly, upon a huge pair of folding gates, which opened into an inner court. The knock was answered by an ancient domestic, who, with much apparent caution, let fall the bars of a wicket within the great gates, and admitted John Lyon, who was well known to the varlet thus acting as porter. Whilst this passed, both John Lyon and the domestic observed a profound silence, excepting when the former had just mentioned his name in a low voice; nor did either party break this silence till the wicket was again secured. It was then John ventured to ask in an earnest manner, "If Peter du Bois might be seen?"

"Aye," said the domestic, "and he has expected you for more than an hour; it is well you are here, or he would, I doubt not, have sallied out to meet you. But stay, we will not enter the house by the door of the hall; come round the back way; some persons are

with him now; and perhaps," added the varlet, in a lower voice, "you might wish to see him first in private."

"It is absolutely necessary that I should do so," answered John Lyon, "and I must see him instantly."

"I will manage it," replied his conductor, with a most intelligent look. "He knows the sign; he will understand that you are here without a word being spoken. Step into this room; I will leave you the lamp; here you may abide his coming."

So saying, the varlet threw open a door, and ushered John Lyon into a room panelled with oak, so dark from age, that the lamp, which spread its long beams through the apartment, failed to dissipate the darkness, and nothing could be distinctly seen excepting a glittering towards the extremity of the chamber, which seemed to be a reflected light from some polished substances, as they caught the streaming rays of the lamp.

When the domestic retired, and closed the door, John Lyon, as he looked around upon the

dismal aspect of the place, could not help fancying it was but an emblem of his own fate, an emblem of that dungeon to which he knew all the energies of the Matthews would now be exerted to consign him. Whilst he was busied in these melancholy thoughts — now pondering on the best means to secure his acquittal, his escape, or his safety, and again rejecting every plan as hopeless, which presented itself to his imagination, the door opened, and a young man entered the room, whose features bore a strong resemblance to those of John Lyon, but the character of the countenance had more of boldness, had a quicker glance of the eye, and more energy of expression. There was, too, a tincture of sarcasm which shewed itself in the play of the mouth, and an undefined something in the whole countenance, calculated to raise fear in a timid mind.

"You are here, then, at last," said the young man; "I have anxiously expected you, but are you *alone* — quite alone? have you failed? I had hoped you would have brought ——"

"Do not speak of that now," replied John

Lyon; "I have other and more important business."

"Other business you may have, uncle," said the young man, "but more important you cannot have. But you look strangely moved, and there is much disorder about you. Your mantle is rent, and your cheek is bloody: what has happened?"

"Murder," answered John Lyon, and he struck his hand upon his forehead with the most hurried action as he uttered the word.

"Thank God for it," said the nephew; "then there is a hope that we must begin to act as well as to threaten; but tell me what murder? Whose blood has been the hansel of your steel? Oh, may it soon run in such a deluge through this miserable city, that our canals may need no other element but the life-blood that has issued from the carcases that float upon the surface! Who have you struck with that good hand?"

"No one, Peter du Bois," said his uncle.

"No one! Did you not speak but now of murder?"

"I did," answered John Lyon; "and my life

is at this moment in the utmost peril of the law; you must conceal me as well as you possibly can, till I can either find a means of escape or some way to settle this matter; I ——"

"Escape!" exclaimed Peter du Bois, "Escape! *you* leave us, uncle, and at such a time! at such a crisis! no, never, it would be the ruin of our plans. Philip Von Artaveld is not yet won over to join the enterprize, and if *you* fail us before it is ripe, all goes to ruin. No, I would rather throw open my gates to give you up to the law, than shelter you only till you could abandon our cause."

"You are hot and rash, nephew," said John Lyon. "Hear me tell my tale, and then judge for me; you shall know all."

Peter du Bois betrayed considerable impatience, but the request was obviously too reasonable to bear denial; he listened, therefore, with much effort, till John Lyon had completed the narration of the events of the evening, and their fatal termination in the death of Peter Matthew. When he had concluded, his nephew seemed greatly vexed and embarrassed, but did not ex-

press one sympathising feeling for the present danger which threatened his uncle from such an offence to the law. Du Bois paced the room impatiently, and at length threw himself into a chair, when he spoke in such a manner that it would be difficult to say, if his discourse was principally addressed to his uncle or to himself.

"This is, indeed, most unfortunate," said Peter. "At a time when we needed the most active stir, you dare not shew your head abroad. Philip Von Artaveld must be won; and that old fool, too, that Sir Simon, we wanted him, for he has gold — stores of lusty ingots I would we could melt his fat sides into broad pieces — and he is a prisoner? Gold we must have; we are not yet ripe for action; and to move before all our engines are ready, would but break our machinery piece-meal, for want of combination; their powers act not alone, each is the adjunct to the other. What can be done? We must delay our measures yet."

Here Peter du Bois paused, stood with his head reclined, and his hand pressed upon his forehead, and then starting in a moment, as if at

once awakened from his reverie by a shock of electric force, he suddenly exclaimed, "I have it, I have it; this very fray of yours, though it delay our purpose in the onset, shall yet but strengthen our cause,—it shall help to stir up the sluggish citizens. Hear me, uncle, you must be free, you must be safe, happen what may; for the pilots will not rise without their old deacon to head them. And as for this Sir Simon, this golden calf, who has just wisdom enough to know that his worship lies in the value of his metal, let him rest in the Earl's prisons, if he be there; not an effort must be made, not a thing attempted to release him. I will make *his* detention a fire-brand to light up the embers of wrath in those formal old citizens of Ghent, by beating it into their brains, that to detain one of their burgomasters in prison is a breach of their franchises, since no magistrate can be committed but by the warrant of his fellows. They will be apt enough to stir at this; they shall go so far, that they shall quarrel with the Earl, and so for their own safety join with us, from the very fear of what they have already done. But for you,

uncle, I repeat it, you must be free — safe, too, by the Earl's pardon; this will lull him into security, he will have no suspicion; for all depends upon our first measures, that they may find the Earl unprepared. You and Lewis de Male were good friends once; you must be so again."

"It is impossible," said John Lyon; "you know too well the cause that first estranged me from the Earl's affections. And Gilbert Matthew but seized an opportunity, so favourable to his purposes, to work the ruin that has fallen upon me."

"I know it all," replied Peter; "and you would repair that ruin from the fragments of the great wreck of the Earl's tyrannic government — it shall be so, but we must lull him into security; and the very cause which bred that estrangement in his regard to you, must now, in some measure at least, restore it."

"What mean you," said John Lyon, with considerable agitation; "it cannot be. You know my mind; to what then do you point?"

"To your daughter," answered Du Bois, calmly.

"My daughter!" exclaimed John Lyon, as his eye flashed with an angry glance upon his nephew. "My daughter's fame stands fair and unpolluted as her own innocent nature, and it shall never suffer dishonour for me, or for our cause."

"It shall not, uncle, whilst I wear a sword," replied Peter; "but yet, methinks, in a cause like ours, some temporizing, some expediency, were no dishonour."

"Hear me, nephew," said John Lyon, in a firm and authoritative tone. "No man in Ghent has been so deeply injured by the Earl as I have. I am sworn to revenge my own wrongs; I am devoted to the public cause. To restore our violated rights, our broken franchises, I will peril my life, all I have, to aid you; but my child shall not share the general ruin, if ruin should fall upon us."

"You cannot save her, whether it does or not," replied Peter; "think you if our plots are discovered, if our enterprize fails, that when our heads blacken in the sun, whilst they stand to feed the birds of the air, perched on these old

city walls; thinkest thou that any man would then dare to step forward to protect thy pretty Anna, the daughter of a rebel, from the power of the Earl? her safety rests with our success."

"It does, indeed," said John Lyon, mournfully. "What is it you would have me do? yet speak not of my daughter; I cannot again place her within the gaze of a prince, whose lawless passion may be fatal to her."

"You were not always thus prudent, uncle," said Peter, with a sarcastic smile: "there was a time when the love of Lewis de Male, the merry, widowed Earl of Flanders, seemed no such fatal passion in your eyes. When it chose for its object the daughter of Lewis's favourite, a simple burgher of Ghent, my pretty cousin Anna was then allowed to amuse the leisure of a prince."

John Lyon received this sarcastic speech of his nephew with a look of stern resentment. "What," he exclaimed, "to me! is it to me you speak thus insolently? But you are safe, for I am in your power, and thus you abuse it. Hear me then, and learn more than I have yet imparted to you or any one. To crush at once

this bold suspicion of my honour, I will tell you more than you have dared even to think. I knew of the Earl's suit to my daughter — I encouraged it — I gave it growth and opportunity; but not, as you would insinuate, to make her the wanton of a prince. The Earl would have married Anna, but ——"

"Oh, would that he had married her," exclaimed Peter du Bois; "all Flanders would have openly murmured, and perhaps rebelled. France would have shaken off her disgraced vassal Earl, and the rule of Ghent, long ere this, had been modelled after our own will. But how came the Earl to lose the honour of becoming son-in-law to the deacon of his pilots."

Again John Lyon frowned resentfully at the sarcastic insolence of his nephew, as he replied, "The Countess of Artois, his despotic mother, who rules the Earl as if he were still fettered by his leading-strings, she discovered the affair, and I suspect by the means of Gilbert Matthew. She acted her usual part, ruled the prince by her authority, and made her factions threaten him with a breach with France, and declared she

would disinherit him as her heir in Artois if he persisted. Thus was he wrought upon to change his purpose, and from an honourable became a lawless suitor to my daughter. Induced, therefore, by my own feelings to preserve her innocence, and urged by the entreaties of my child, I withdrew her from the court, and have since kept her almost a prisoner within my own house in Ghent. Anna never loved the Earl, even when I hoped to place a coronet upon her brows; but fear for my life prevented her rejecting his suit, whilst it was honourable."

"And fear for your life must now make her obtain your pardon from the Earl: she must solicit him," said Du Bois; "and this will give you present safety, and afford us time for action Send for your daughter on the instant."

"No," replied John Lyon, "I have solemnly sworn to redress my own wrongs by the fall of Lewis de Male, to revenge the affront he cast upon my honour, in his lawless pursuit of my child; and I will neither owe my life to his mercy, nor shall Anna do an act disgraceful to us both."

"If such are your resolves," said Du Bois, "then hear mine. I will not shelter you, to bring upon us all the fury of Gilbert Matthew's vengeance, till we are ready to meet it; nor will I tamely yield my own neck to the headsman or to the hangman; I will make one desperate effort. In our present circumstances it is most likely to fail, but at least we shall die bravely, sword in hand; and when we are gone, Anna is left unprotected to the mercy of the gay Earl, who will spare a pretty wench, though the daughter of a rebel, for the sake of her blue eyes and lily cheeks."

Du Bois followed up this speech with the most artful arguments, to induce his uncle to allow Anna to solicit the Earl for his pardon, and to appear for a time to countenance Lewis's lawless suit. John Lyon, whilst his nephew thus addressed him, paced the room in a state of the greatest agitation, till overpowered by arguments he could neither find resolution nor courage to resist, he complied with the proposal, and wrote the letter before mentioned to summon his daughter's attendance, which Peter du Bois

forwarded immediately by one of his own people.

The reader is already aware, that upon receiving the letter Anna hastened to obey her father's commands. She followed the messenger with a palpitating heart—her anxious mind tortured by a thousand vague apprehensions for her father's safety, yet without knowing what she had to fear, for John Lyon had never, even indirectly, communicated to his daughter the desperate schemes in which he had for some time been engaged, and with men as desperate. Still, Anna was not ignorant of the enmity which subsisted between her father and the Matthews, and that the loss of his lucrative station, as deacon of the pilots, had been brought about by their intrigues. She had also remarked her father's silent and abstracted manner when with herself, his frequent absence from home at extraordinary hours, sometimes during half the night; that his nephew Peter du Bois was often closeted with him; and that now and then some strange and ruffian-looking fellow came and went as a messenger between them. Anna had once or twice

ventured to notice these circumstances to her father, but the severe manner in which he chid her for observing in him what he would gladly conceal — the mystery of his character — had effectually silenced all farther enquiries.

It may well be supposed that her mind now reverted to these things, and that she could not help connecting them with the present summons she had received, and an alarm for her parent's safety. But, obedient to his directions, she forbore to make any enquiry of her guide, who conducted her, by many windings and bye streets, in silence, with the utmost caution, to the house of Peter du Bois; of which, in addition to what has been already said, it may be noticed, that it was an ancient and solitary mansion, which had for many years stood neglected and empty for want of repair, but which Peter, since the commencement of his desperate plans, had thought proper to occupy, for the purpose of carrying on his schemes as remote as he possibly could from public observation. The house, too, afforded many chances for security in case of a pursuit, since there was in it more than one secret pas-

sage and chamber; for it had been built at a time when Flanders was disturbed by civil strife, and was thus constructed for the security of personal property.

When Anna followed the guide into the inner court; and heard the falling of the heavy iron bars to secure the door after their entrance, an involuntary shudder came over her whole frame; she could not help thinking that the door had closed upon her with an evil portent, and that she was now within the vortex of some dreadful current, whose force she should be unable to resist. Her fears, perhaps, were not the less, because they had no defined cause; for her imagination, at all times vivid, raised up at this moment a thousand terrible images to connect them with her own or her father's fate.

On being conducted to the chamber before noticed, Anna gave a faint shriek as she entered, for the first object that met her view was her father, sitting in a chair by the table; the lamp stood on it, the light streamed full upon his face, and shewed it pale, haggard, and marked with blood, his dress soiled and disordered, and

his mantle, that had been rent in the fray, hanging tattered upon his shoulders, whilst Peter du Bois looked flushed with angry passions, which seemed to have been excited by the vehemence of his discourse.

Anna, pale, trembling, and almost sinking with apprehension, rushed towards John Lyon, and exclaimed, "Holy Virgin! what has happened. Oh! are you hurt, my father? my dear father!" Unable to add another word, she burst into tears, and sunk nearly lifeless into his arms. It was some time before Anna was sufficiently composed to know that her father was really not materially hurt, and that the blood upon his cheek was solely occasioned by the skin having been torn in a fray.

Peter du Bois resolved to strike whilst the iron was hot: he witnessed the tender feelings, and the agitation of Anna; he saw this was the proper moment to work upon her mind, and to induce her to consent to solicit the Earl for her father's life, when she had recently been so seriously alarmed for its preservation. Peter therefore conjured his cousin to compose her-

selt, and to hear the tale he had to tell, as her father's safety, his very life, would depend upon herself. Anna needed no other motive to overcome her feelings, yet so great was her agitation, that she could only beg Peter to speak out, and assuring him she was composed, promised attention; but her pale cheek and her trembling hands, as she fixed her anxious eyes upon the speaker, seemed to contradict the first assertion.

Peter du Bois then related the whole circumstance of the fray with the Matthews, and its fatal consequence, and added, that as there could be no doubt Sir Simon de Bête was taken and secured, the Matthews would never rest till John Lyon should be also a prisoner; and that she must herself be aware nothing short of his life would satisfy the malice and the vengeance of Gilbert.

Anna, whose sense was as lively as her imagination, needed to hear no more. In a moment she saw all the real danger which threatened her father, and guessed in what manner she was to be employed to avert it. Shocked and overcome by the dreadful prospect of her father's

death, or her own ruin, in the agony of her feelings she clasped her hands together with fearful energy, looked up, and exclaimed, "Oh, Heaven save and protect me from this most dreadful trial! — yet my father, my poor father!"

At this instant the door of the chamber burst open, and the domestic who acted as porter rushed in and hastily said, "Save yourselves; do what you can for shelter; the city watch and a strong guard are without the gates; they demand to search the house for John Lyon, who is accused of murder, and supposed to have taken shelter here."

The confusion and distress of all present at the moment, upon hearing this intelligence, may be readily conceived. Anna started up, and clasping Peter du Bois by the arm, she said, distractedly, "Oh, save him! save him! Is there no way to save him? I will do all you wish — I will do any thing, only save my father."

"I can, I will save him," replied Du Bois; "follow me on the instant, but as you value

your father's life, be silent. I must take you where you will find some things that may surprise and shock a woman. Beware then. Utter but one word, one cry, and your father's body, ere to-morrow morning, will hang upon the provost's tree, to feed the ravens. Follow in silence — not a moment is to be lost. Here, fellow," he added, turning to the domestic, "take up the lamp, and lead the way; *you* know what to do. John Lyon support your daughter; let her draw her mantle about her head; we must to the council chamber."

"Must my daughter go there?" said John. "I will follow you. Let her abide here; the officers of justice will not harm her."

"What!" exclaimed Du Bois, "leave her to ruin us all! No; if they find the young bird, they will know well enough the old one lies near the bush. Happen what may, she must descend with us. Have no fears, my pretty cousin, only be silent. Your father's life, your own, is at stake; for I must take you where there are those whose poignards follow the

slightest cause of suspicion. And mark me, whatever you may see or hear, it must find its grave in your bosom: remember your father's life."

"Say no more, say no more," cried Anna, eagerly; "I will follow as patient as the victim to the altar, only save him; but oh, let us hasten, I heard a noise; surely they strike upon the gates."

"They do, indeed," said Du Bois; "hasten, or we are lost." So saying, he hastily led the way down a flight of dark stone stairs into a lower and ruinous apartment. Partly filled with billets of wood, straw, and empty casks, it seemed as if this place was only used as a receptacle for rubbish.

"Be quick," said Peter to the servant; "remove that pile of wood, and fail not to replace it the moment we have descended; then leave open the door of this chamber, that there may be no appearance of concealment; and do you hasten back, and conduct the officers into every place in the house and garden. If they ask for

me, say I am not yet returned from Bruges. So, now descend; give me the lamp. Your hand, my cousin; I will lead you down."

Whilst Peter had been speaking, the servant had removed the wood, and raised a trap-door it had concealed; this door opened upon what now appeared a dark pit or gulph below; but when Du Bois held up the lamp as he descended a few steps, the trembling Anna saw that they had a flight of winding stairs yet to descend. She gave her hand to Peter, and summoning all her fortitude to her aid, followed in silence. John Lyon remained a moment behind them, and closed the trap-door after him; Anna remarked this, and thought it was a proof he must be familiar with its secret spring. She heard the servant replace the wood upon it above, and then his retiring footsteps died away in silence.

"Stalpert is a churl," said Du Bois, softly, "but he is tried, cunning, and faithful; he will manage well enough with the officers; yet follow me, we are nearly descended." Anna again gave him her hand, for she had quitted her hold for a moment to look back at her father. Du

Bois at length led her through a narrow passage, which was terminated by a door. Here Peter stopt a moment; he raised the lamp, so as to let its light fall upon the countenance of Anna.

"You are very pale, my pretty cousin," he said, looking stedfastly upon her; "draw your mantle closer; now, now is your moment of trial; take your father's arm; enter by yonder door when I shall bid you; but remember that a word of fear, but one word of distrust, doubt, or even of curiosity, may cost you life. Stay here for a few minutes; I must go in first to prepare ——"

"No, Du Bois," said John Lyon, "let her not enter that chamber. I will go with you; let us leave my child here."

"I dare not do it," replied Peter; "should it be known that I brought any one so near them, and conceal it too, that person would not be suffered to leave this place alive; she must pass in with you, but I will prepare them, never fear."

So saying, Du Bois gave the lamp to his

uncle, passed on to the extremity of the passage, and opened the door; he entered, and instantly closed it. Anna heard a confused murmur of voices from within the chamber; but after Peter's entrance the murmur decreased, and at length there was a total silence. John Lyon, during this interval, seemed wholly abstracted; he looked upon his daughter with a countenance in which a calm, fixed, and serious purpose appeared depicted, but he spoke not. At length his nephew returned, and made a sign to them, with his hand, to follow him into the adjoining chamber.

CHAP. VI.

During the late scene, Anna felt convinced that her father was engaged in some mysterious, and, she feared, dreadful enterprise, of which she had hitherto been kept in ignorance. She now thought that it might be quite as dangerous to him, perhaps, as the consequences of the late fray, which had involved him in a charge of murder. She summoned, therefore, all her resolution of mind to her aid. Her own innocence gave her some degree of courage; and, conscious that a desire to save her father, if possible, from the perils that surrounded him, must be an acceptable motive in the eye of Heaven, she determined to observe whatever might pass, to obey the injunctions laid upon her, neither to betray fear nor curiosity, and hoped, by so doing, to obtain a more complete knowledge of these dark proceedings, with the view that she might ultimately prove of service to her parent.

It was fortunate for Anna that she had possessed this interval of time, which, by a few minutes reflection, enabled her to form these resolutions before she followed Peter du Bois into the chamber of midnight council; otherwise her courage might have forsaken her, in the feelings of astonishment and dismay that filled her whole heart, upon the first view of the inmates of the chamber.

The apartment she now entered was a low vaulted room, built entirely of stone, with walls of massive thickness; the door was of iron, with bars and chains to secure it, for the place had once been used to conceal both persons and treasure, during the dangers of a civil war. A long oak table stood in the midst, surrounded by a bench and some old chairs. From the centre of the groined arch of the ceiling hung an iron lamp, which flamed high, and threw a red glare upon every thing around.

When Peter du Bois entered with John Lyon and his daughter, the most profound silence reigned amongst the inmates of this subterranean chamber, for no one dared speak whilst the

officers of justice were known to be searching the house above, lest the least sound should betray this place of refuge and security. Anna cast a hurried and a terrified glance around, and as if overpowered by the fearful objects that met her eyes, she closed them for a moment, and sunk her head upon the arm of her father. Indeed such a groupe, and so assembled, had never before presented itself to a young woman, whose early life had been passed in rural retirement, and latterly within the precincts of a court, and in the midst of an opulent city.

At the head of the oak table, there was seated a man, whose aspect seemed stamped with the image of his mind; he looked fit for rapine or for murder. A meagre figure, dressed in black, sat next to him, whose bones seemed starting through a dry and shrivelled skin, the living representative of poverty and famine. Others there were of bold, hardy, and ferocious countenances. Two or three, even in this abyss of concealment, sat muffled in cloaks, as if fearful of the glance of their very companions. Some, by the wretched and negligent state of their apparel, looked

beggared in fortune; but all were armed with more than one weapon, which, since the late alarm, communicated by Du Bois, many had unsheathed, as if prepared for defence. Upon the table lay several papers; and amongst the party was seen a monk, who, it appeared, by the inkhorn and pens that stood before him, acted the part of secretary to the council.

"Good God!" thought Anna, as she once more raised her head, and stole another fearful glance around her, "Can my father be the associate of wretches like these? a monk too! Oh, can religion mingle itself with men who look like midnight assassins."

In the stern and ruffian aspect of each man assembled round the table, a deep and attentive anxiety was depicted—no one spoke—no one moved; their very respiration seemed as much as possible subdued; but silence added yet a greater horror to the scene, since it left but leisure for the imagination to fill up the void, with that voice which is never stronger than when it speaks to the mind in moments of fear. John Lyon and his daughter still kept their

near them, now looking upon the assembly, and now at Anna, with a mixture of doubt and apprehension. Anna thought he might fear that she had forgotten his injunctions, and in order to re-assure him, she stood as erect and firm as her trembling frame would let her.

This profound silence continued for more than half an hour, during which, even in this dark recess, the sounds and noise of persons passing above, as in tumult, could be distinctly heard. At length they gradually died away, and all again was stillness, yet no one spoke: all was hushed and calm; but to the terrified imagination of Anna, it seemed only like that deep, dead stillness, which sometimes precedes the coming storm, and is at length broken by the low and distant thunder, gathering force as it rolls nearer and nearer onward, till it bursts at once with all its accumulated fury. And so was it now; for no sooner had a shrill whistle from above met the ears of the assembly below, (as the signal from the trusty Stalpert that the officers had departed, *and all was safe*,) than

instantly they burst out into tumultuous exclamations of anger and resentment against Peter du Bois.

"How is this," said the ruffian who occupied the head of the table; "is this your accursed policy, to bring a woman amongst us, to carry all our heads to the provost marshal by one slip of her tongue? You have betrayed us, Du Bois!"

Peter advanced to speak, when John Lyon, in a manner peculiarly authoritative, stept forward, and thus addressed the assembly: "No, my friends, Du Bois has not betrayed you; nor are you in any danger from the presence of this simple maiden. Du Bois, I conclude, has told you all of my peril; I was pursued. Had the officers of justice found my daughter, the child of your persecuted leader, in this house, be sure of it, the discovery of you all would have followed as the certain consequence; to satisfy their own suspicion, that I lurked near her, they would have left a strong guard in this place. There was no way but to bring her to this chamber. To save you, and not to betray

you, she is here, and now the signal is given, she shall retire, and intrude no longer."

"The fiends of hell shall hold her first," exclaimed the man who had before spoken, "ere she goes from this place to tell what she has seen in it. No, no, John Lyon, we will trust *you*, but no prating wench, though she be your daughter."

"Friends," replied John Lyon, willing to conciliate the murmuring assembly, "Friends, I will answer for my daughter's silence with my own life. I solemnly pledge you my word, that she knows nothing of your councils, nor of mine; take heed, then, that you do not betray them yourselves—let the maiden pass."

"She shall not pass," said the ruffian; "by all the saints of heaven, or devils in hell, I swear she shall not go hence to betray us. You have brought her here, and here she shall remain, till we are in action and secure."

"No, no, she shall not pass," exclaimed a young man of the council; "we will have no woman to spoil our work, with a curious eye and a busy tongue; you pass not out, young

mistress, excepting through my dagger's point." And with these words he placed himself between Anna and the door, and so violently seized her by the arm, that her mantle fell back in the struggle, and exhibited her pale, affrighted, but beautiful countenance, to the assembly. "She is a fair wench, this daughter of thine, John," continued the young man, who had placed himself as guard over the door; "and if she is to be a prisoner in this chamber, I will even take the ward of her myself."

"Wretch!" exclaimed John Lyon, as he suddenly removed Anna from her detainer's grasp, "unhand my child,—she is no mate for thee; and either give her present liberty, or I renounce you and your cause for ever: be the peril on your own head."

The young man, to whom this speech was addressed, answered it by a scornful laugh, "Why, what canst thou do, John Lyon," he said; "desert us if thou wilt, aye, go raise the town, and yell of treason and traitors in the very ears of Lewis himself—he will but grant thee a precedency in hanging, if we but thrust

thee out of these doors. I say it, and I swear it, thy girl is as pretty a wench as ever man need have to console him in such a dungeon as this cursed damp vault; she shall abide in it, and in my keeping."

At these words, John Lyon lost his temper, and endeavoured to assail with violence the insolent conspirator; he was prevented by the interference of Peter du Bois. The confusion now became general; Anna faintly implored for pity and mercy, and promised silence; Du Bois tried to pacify his uncle; all spoke, and no one listened, till the aged wretch, who looked like the image of death just started from the grave, arose from his seat, stretched forth his bony hand, and exclaimed, in a voice whose shrill tones startled the ear upon which they grated, "Hear me! hear me!" The assembly looked towards him. "Hear me!" repeated the living spectre. "Let John Lyon give in a thousand pieces of gold; let him add to it that circle of pearls that binds the maiden's locks, and what golden trinkets may be about her; make her swear upon the cross, the most blessed cross, to be secret, and

let her go hence. Gold, pearls, and oaths made on sacred things, are of more security than her father's promises, and we shall be rid of the charge of keeping and maintaining a damsel, who looks too frightened to tell tales."

"Oh, take all I have," said Anna; "take, take the pearls, the gold, anything, so you but let me go."

"Open the door," exclaimed John Lyon; "give us passage, or by the living God I swear, that the first man who opposes, shall taste the temper of this steel;" he drew forth a dagger as he spoke; "my daughter shall give nothing; my word is pledged for her silence; who dares doubt it; do you, Arnoul le Clerc, or you, La Nuitee?"

The conspirators looked for a moment at each other, as if overawed by the authoritative tone and manner of their leader. John Lyon now stood near the door, supporting his almost fainting child upon one arm, and holding in the other his brandished dagger: no one had a mind to be the first person to try its temper; and John was known to be of a determined purpose. There

was a momentary silence. The monk now advanced — "John Lyon," he said, "hear me; I would speak with you and yonder maiden apart from the rest; my holy calling may command some respect."

"Thy holy calling!" said the young man, Arnoul le Clerc, "aye, who would doubt it? thou art to lead stray souls to thy master's house, and most of them will find their way through a road fiery enough, if they follow thee. But no women and priests caballing together; so, master secretary of the cowl and petticoat, stand back, and let all the assembly hear what you have to say."

The monk darted an angry glance upon Arnoul le Clerc, but did not reply to him. "I know something of this maiden," he said; "I have often seen her at the mass; she is devout and fervent in her prayers; I know how to secure her silence; there shall be no need of threats. Here, damsel," he continued, turning to Anna, "swear upon this cross, (and your own father's life be the bond of your fidelity,) swear, that what you have this night seen or heard within this chamber, shall never pass

your lips to mortal creature; swear by the Blessed Virgin; kiss the cross."

"Swear, swear," repeated Du Bois eagerly to Anna, in a low voice; "swear a dozen oaths if necessary, and we are safe, at the price of a little breath."

Anna involuntarily shuddered at the idea, that she was thus to become sworn to keep secret the meetings of such a band of lawless ruffians; but overcome with fear, and scarcely capable of utterance, she cast a timid look upon her father — that look sufficed, "Yes," she thought, "if I am free, I may yet save him;" and eagerly kissing the cross that was extended to her, she repeated almost unconsciously the oath enjoined her by the monk, word for word, as he dictated.

John Lyon and his daughter were then allowed to withdraw. Peter du Bois conducted them back to the chamber, bade Stalpert make such preparations as he could to accommodate them for the night, and hastened back to the council, which, he said, he must again attend ere they broke up, and that he would make John Lyon's final peace with the assembly.

No sooner was he gone than Anna threw herself before her father's feet, clasped his knees and sobbed aloud, and then raising her eyes towards him, with outstretched hands, she conjured him, in the tenderest and most emphatic manner, to quit the dangerous, the dreadful society of those profligate and wretched men.

"Anna," said her father, "I cannot speak of them to you: remember your oath. They are not what you think them. Although not fitting for the company of women, they are noble spirits, who would wager life for liberty and honour."

"Rather say for rapine and plunder," replied Anna. "Oh, my father, can honour dwell with men who would, even but now, turn upon (what I shudder to think you called yourself) their *leader*. Of what worth can liberty be to those, who would use it but to curse and brawl amongst themselves? Oh, my father, I would peril my life if it could aid you. Let us leave all we have — let us fly together from this miserable city. I can work for you; nay, I am not too proud, I could beg for you, so we were

innocent. These hands shall labour for your daily bread, so you were safe in soul and body. Leave, then, this fatal place; we will fly this instant; let me, let me save you."

"You can, you shall save me," said John Lyon, who appeared greatly moved by his daughter's affectionate and impassioned address. "But flight would be madness; the vengeance of Gilbert Matthew will leave no place of safety for me; I should be discovered, imprisoned, and led to death. For this night, perhaps, I am secure, by the officers having already searched the house; but beyond this night, so help me Heaven, I have no hope for one hour's safety, unless——"

"What! my father," exclaimed Anna; "speak, oh speak; do not torture me with this suspense."

John advanced towards his daughter, took her hand, and essayed to speak, but suddenly casting it from him, he paced the room in considerable agitation, whilst his downcast looks had in them an expression of shame; he felt abashed, even before his own child, at the thoughts of

what he was about to propose to her. At length he made an effort to overcome these last struggles of better feeling, and with a look of despair strongly imprinted upon every feature, he asked Anna "if she would do one act to save him from death."

"One act!" said Anna, "oh, a thousand; name it, but name it, and if it be only at the peril of my life — you gave me life, and it shall be spent to save you. I fear nothing. From God I received my spirit, and to him I will commit it."

"My child," replied John Lyon, "there is but one way, and that I cannot name to you; you will think it dishonour, yet it will not be such — not actual dishonour — only ——. In fine, the Earl of Flanders might by your means consent — that is, at your solicitation, he might be induced to grant me a free pardon, if ——"

"If I would yield to his lawless pursuit," added Anna. "No, my father; I can die with you, but never, never will I do an act that may save your body from peril to lose your immortal soul. You shall not give your child to guilt."

"I will not — I mean it not," eagerly answered John Lyon; "it is only this, Anna, I would ask of you, that you would solicit the Earl for me — that you would not vehemently reject his professions of affection — in short, that you would patiently listen to what Lewis may urge in behalf of his suit; for, I fear, on no other terms would he grant the pardon."

"What!" said Anna, "you would have me temporise! appear to encourage a disgraceful passion, which my very soul abhors. Oh, my father, is it not written in the book of life, that man shall do no ill that good may come of it? How then can I practise such deceit? How can I hold out hopes that I may become infamous, without the danger of falling into the very snare my own guile would spread for another. No — this I cannot do. But I will seek the Earl — I will boldly throw myself at his feet. For your sake, I would humble myself to the dust before him. I will beg his mercy for my father, and promise him the prayers, the blessing of a poor girl, as the only honest guerdon she can give in return for a father's life."

"That would be useless," said John Lyon. "I know the Earl; you shall not solicit him only to meet a denial. Farewell, Anna — all is over — it is needless to seek farther concealment. Farewell for ever. When you shall hear the castle bell toll the death note for your father's execution, you may be sorry — you may lament, perhaps, that you had wanted but a little patience to hear a tale every court gallant repeats to a fair maid, and no harm done. It is but so. Farewell."

"Stay, stay. Oh, whither do you go, my father?" cried Anna, distractedly.

"To yield myself to justice," replied John. "This, perhaps, may save me from the wheel; an axe is a sharp, but a less painful death."

"Stay — do not go," exclaimed Anna; "the wheel! the axe! Oh, go not — go not;" and her voice sounded loud and shrill from the agony she felt, as she rushed forward and hung upon her father's mantle. "No," she continued, "I will not spill your blood, I will not be the murderer of my father. I will do all you wish — yes, I will kneel to the Earl, and bid him kill me —

in pity kill me. I will hear all his love, and save you, save you."

John Lyon folded his daughter in his arms, whilst a tear of parental affection bedewed his cheek, and so contradictory are the feelings and the wishes of the human mind, that at this moment he almost repented the arts, and the terrific arguments, he had used to wring from her a compliance to adopt measures for his safety, which her own ingenuous character abhorred.

The voice of nature spoke loudly within his bosom, but that bosom was too cold, too selfish, to yield implicitly to its dictates. John had succeeded in his efforts to work on the mind of Anna, and he now endeavoured to console himself, and to quiet his own conscience with the hope that no ultimate ruin would fall upon his daughter. "For, after all," thought he, "it is but to amuse the Earl with a few hopes for the present — my life will be preserved till we are ripe for action, and then will I take such a revenge on Lewis de Male, that he shall no longer rule in Ghent or Flanders, but his life —

I will endeavour to spare his life when that hour comes, if he now grants mine."

Such were the reflections of John Lyon, as he slowly paced the room, for Anna, exhausted by the late scenes she had witnessed, and distracted with the contest of violent and conflicting feelings, had sunk into a chair, where she sat like a statue of monumental sorrow, so still, so mute, so motionless was her whole aspect and demeanor. The contest *was* past — she had resolved to comply, and a deep feeling of melancholy, which accompanied the settled purpose of her mind, had now succeeded to the violence of her former emotions.

Peter du Bois at length returned, and Anna, who could not bear to converse upon the purpose she was the next day to put in practice, was glad to retire to a chamber in the hope to obtain some rest. She took leave of her father and of her cousin for the night, received the blessing of the former, and, retiring, left them to their secret councils.

CHAP. VII.

When Anna retired to the chamber that had been allotted to her in the house of Peter du Bois, she threw herself upon her knees, and fervently prayed to Heaven to grant her that support and protection so necessary for her in this most painful time of trouble and distress. The fervour of devotion, whilst it animated her trust in Providence, and elevated her feelings beyond the anxieties of this terrestrial world, gave her courage to undertake, and patience to endure, the difficulties with which her situation was surrounded. She arose from her devotions in a calmer and a firmer frame of mind than she had yet experienced since the events of the day; and before she retired to her bed, she determined to consider in what manner it would be most advisable to execute her plan of soliciting from the Earl of Flanders a pardon for her father.

She knew well how vehemently Lewis de Male

had expressed his affection for her, that but for state reasons, he would have married her; and when this became incompatible with the prince, he had still pressed his suit as the lover. She also knew that her father's having discountenanced these lawless addresses was the primary cause of the ruin that had fallen upon him, and that Gilbert Matthew had only seized upon a favourable opportunity to complete the work. Gilbert was the determined enemy both of her father and of herself, since he, too, was a rejected suitor, and she had cause to believe that he had so far poisoned the mind of the haughty Countess of Artois, as to make her think that Anna fostered the passion of the Countess's son Lewis, in the hope to use the influence love might give her over his feelings, and induce him to marry her. This was a suspicion false as it was painful. Anna, therefore, was aware that however innocently she might now renew a connection with the Earl, merely to solicit her father's pardon, that such an act on her part would be liable to the most cruel misconstruction, should it become known to the Countess of Artois, and

that Gilbert would rejoice in such an opportunity to blacken her fame, and to work her ruin.

The Earl of Flanders, she endeavoured to persuade herself, was the person she had the least to fear in the court, for although a prince, who, like most princes of his time, indulged in the profligacy of unlawful pleasures, yet she knew there was in his character a considerable share of chivalrous feeling. So that, notwithstanding he had attempted every means to seduce her, he had always expressed an ardent desire to achieve his purpose by gaining an interest in her affections, rather than by any exertion of his power; for scarcely would Lewis have valued Anna as his mistress, unless he felt convinced love had induced her to submit to the degradation of being such. Still she was certain the Earl deeply resented her father's interference in this unhappy business, and she could neither flatter nor deceive her own mind with the expectation that Lewis would grant a pardon on any consideration, unless he was allowed to hope for some ultimate success in her affections.

These were melancholy and terrible reflections, for she now remembered that she had heard that the Earl was become more profligate in his manners, and it was evident, by all that had happened, that no lingering feeling of pity for herself had checked Lewis's desire to injure her father. What, then, could she expect? — And to hold out hopes that the time might come, however distant, when she would be induced to sanction the Prince's dishonourable passion, was an act of deception against which her whole soul revolted.

Yet her father's life, his very life, was at stake; and Anna, too, hoped that should she succeed in obtaining this pardon, she might be able to withdraw him from an intercourse with those wretches, in whose association she was convinced there must be danger, guilt, and ruin. This last thought operated strongly upon her mind, and she resolved, cost what it would to her own feelings, that she would attempt all to save him from such a vortex of wickedness; for, however ignorant Anna might be of the world, she had both seen and heard enough this night to be

convinced the desperate men thus assembled could be only concerned in some evil plans against their country, and its existing government.

Her mind, distracted by these reflections, prevented her desire to seek immediate repose, and walking towards the window of her apartment, she threw open the casement, in the hope to revive her sinking spirits. It was now past midnight. The moon rode high in the heavens, keeping on her tranquil course amidst thousands of glittering fires; and the milky way shone like a veil of brightest silver upon the deep blue ether. All was hushed and still, and the lofty spires of the churches and convents in Ghent looked, as they were illumined by the radiant light that streamed upon them, like marble of the whitest hue.

Anna (whose mind was finely sensible to the poetic and religious feelings which a view of nature is so capable of inspiring,) felt at this moment all their effects; her heart responded to the harmony without, for it was innocent; no guilty act, no base passions, had in her breast

blunted that lively sensibility towards God and his created works, which is too often destroyed in the bosom where worldly and degenerate feelings rule.

Anna cast her eyes towards the Heavens, and thought upon HIM whose word had formed them out of nothing: "let there be light, and it was so," said Anna. "Oh, merciful, great, and benign Creator of Good, how wonderful are thy works! how inscrutable thy ways! It is thou, and thou only, who canst guide man in safety; and when he turns to his own paths, and forsakes thine, his road is as doubtful and dangerous as the path of the wanderer whilst he strays in the desert, when those fires, which thy word has created and sustained, are shrouded in clouds and in total darkness. To thy guidance, then, will I submit myself in all things. I will mean no ill, act no ill; I will trust in thee, and thy light shall be to me the way and the life; thy rod and thy staff shall sustain me. To adore thee do I now contemplate thy works, and not as too many erring mortals do, who only look upon those bright stars to read with presump-

tion their own future course, as if thou wouldst permit the creatures of thy will to reveal to man the destiny which thou hast said he shall never find by searching out; and thou wilt render to him the future for good or evil, as his own acts deserve."

Anna retired from the window, closed the casement, and prepared to take some rest; yet as she slowly took off her apparel, and unbraided her tresses, her mind continued to dwell upon the subject nearest to her heart, and more than once did she think upon Henry de Cassel. What would be his opinion of her? his suspicions, perhaps, of her conduct, should he find that she had sought the Earl? These thoughts she endeavoured to dismiss as busy intruders, that were likely to interfcre with what she deemed to be her duty.

Still anxious to serve her father, and yet to preserve as much as possible the native sincerity of her character, an idea struck her that she hoped would prove favourable to the virtuous feelings with which she should solicit her father's pardon. "Yes," said Anna, "I will solicit the

Earl as he passes into the cathedral to attend the mass; that will be a proper time to beg a father's life; for however profligate Lewis may be, the sanctity of the place, the office in which he is about to engage, they may, they must inspire him with some pure, some holy feelings. He cannot, he would not dare think improperly of me at such a moment, nor can his own guilty passion obtrude itself in such a place. It is at the cathedral, then, I will meet him. Yet I must be cautious; the Countess of Artois often accompanies her son to mass, and should she or Gilbert Matthew recognise me, it may ruin all. What must I do then?"

Anna mused for a moment, and stood motionless, holding a long braid of her fair hair in her hand, whilst the total abstraction of her mind had interrupted the occupation of the toilette. At length she continued — "Yes, there is one way: I will muffle myself in my mantle, and cast a veil about my head; I will mingle with the crowd of mendicants who surround the church door to receive an alms of the Earl as he enters; and when he stretches out his hand to

give me an alms, I will then put into it a paper that shall move him to grant my father's life. Hence, then, every feeling of pride! let me pass for a beggar! If that lowly guise can secure my honour, I would rather be an actual beggar all my life, than live without virtue, could I be seated on a throne. And to preserve a father's life, and Henry's good opinion," she added, almost unconsciously, "no appearance can be too humble or too mean. It shall be so; I will write the paper before I rest. There are always materials in this chamber, for Du Bois occupies it when I am not here; and then I will endeavour to sleep."

Anna again threw on a part of the apparel which she had taken off, sat down, and prepared for her task. She wrote slowly, for, though well educated for her time, she was little accustomed to the art of composition, so that at the best she was but an indifferent writer. She now indited two or three papers, which she successively tore up, and at length she resolved to write as she felt. "For nature," thought Anna, "after all, is the best advocate, and one needs not

to be a great clerk to know what one feels, or to express it." Having come to this determination, she wrote a short petition to the Earl, in which she asserted, with truth, that her father had not *intentionally* occasioned the death of Gilbert Matthew's kinsman. She begged the Earl, therefore, to grant him a free pardon, with all the energy filial piety could dictate, and with all the eloquence of Christian feeling.

Satisfied in some degree with her own plans and intentions, Anna retired to her bed, and, notwithstanding the anxious state of her mind, exhausted by the hurry and troubles of the day, soon found those tranquil slumbers which are the peculiar blessing of health and innocence — that peace which passeth all understanding, and which the world can neither give nor take away.

CHAP. VIII.

When Anna arose the next morning, she prepared with an anxious heart to put her plan in execution; and having only communicated it in part to her father, lest he should oppose a project, of whose success she entertained the most flattering hope, she bid him farewell, concealed her person as well as she was able, by drawing her mantle of black silk close about her, threw a white veil over her head, and set out on her way to St. Bavon, in order that she might place herself at the door of the cathedral, to be near the Earl as he passed in to the mass. It would be needless to say with how much anxiety on the part of Anna, with how many hopes and fears, the interval (between her taking her station at the door and the arrival of the Earl) was filled up.

At length she heard the sounds of minstrelsy, and the movement of the crowd, which the

public attendance of Lewis at the mass never failed to collect, assured her that he was actually coming towards the church. Anna now drew as near as possible to the space which was kept free by his attendants for his entrance, and exerted all her efforts to avoid being forced back by several of the mendicants, who were eager to catch the eye of the Earl, in order to solicit an alms. Some of these people were real objects of charity, and others only used poverty as an excuse for idleness and vice. The most bold and importunate held in their hands a small brass box, with a slit in the lid, in order to drop into it whatever eleemosynary donations they might receive. And their usual method, of calling upon the charity of a passenger, was by shaking and rattling their boxes as he passed along, sometimes accompanying the action with a blessing, or a demand on his purse; or at others without a hint being given, save by the action itself, a practice still in use amongst several of the Flemish mendicants even at the present time.

The music drew nearer and nearer; and the

minstrels that preceded the Earl, with many of his household, passed directly into the cathedral, where the former continued playing their sprightly airs, although within the walls of the sacred edifice itself.

The Earl approached; and Anna was grieved to observe that his mother, Margaret, Countess of Artois, was leaning upon his arm, and on the same side of the pathway where she had taken her station. Gilbert Matthew too, she remarked, followed in the rear; and near him walked a person who wore a hood, and not the chaperon, so put on as to shade the face from observation. Who this man was, she could not see; but the proximity of his station to Gilbert in the procession, induced her to believe he must be one of his seven brothers; for the family of the Matthews kept much together, when in public or in private. Sir Roger d'Auterme, the high bailiff of Ghent, was also in the retinue with his nephew, Oliver, and John de Faucille.

Whilst Anna cast her eyes upon the Earl, as he slowly advanced, a flattering hope stole into

her bosom that she should succeed in the object of her petition, for the countenance of the Lord Lewis of Flanders might be said always to possess an expression calculated to inspire hope in a suppliant, since the dignity of the prince was blended with an air of kindness and affability. Perhaps too, Anna's anxious hopes to find him all she wished, assisted the favourable view in which he now appeared to her.

His step was unaffected, though slow and majestic, and he returned the greetings of the crowd with manly courtesy. Whilst his tall and noble figure (attired in a suit of blue velvet, embroidered with gold, decorated with jewels, and surmounted by a rich mantle, lined with ermine) attracted the admiration of all beholders.

The Countess leaned upon the arm of her son; her features were of the same handsome contour, and, from their regularity, retained some claims to beauty; yet there was a repelling, a haughty character, in her aspect, that destroyed the favourable effect the courtesy of her manners would otherwise have produced.

She condescended to return the respectful greetings of the people, but in doing so the expression of her countenance shewed she felt it to be a condescension, and neither the sight of age, poverty, sickness, nor innocence, could unbend her brow, or create one kindly look of sympathy or feeling. Her alms she bestowed as a thing she did not value herself, nor heeded the benefit they might afford to others. She coldly scattered them around her, indiscriminately, from the almonier that hung suspended from her girdle, as children would throw away a handful of stones, about which they cared nothing. Her full and intelligent eyes glanced every where around, but fixed no where with any expression of interest. Her attire was magnificent; it shone with jewels and embroidery; her hanging sleeves fell almost to the ground, whilst the train of the crimson velvet mantle was supported by a young page. Her forehead, smooth and white, was bound by a circle or coronet of jewels, placed above a coverchief of the finest silver tissue.

As the Earl advanced along the space that

was cleared for him by the chamberlains and marshals, he every now and then stopt, as it were, a moment, whilst, with more grace and good-nature than was exhibited by his mother, he dispensed an alms to some aged or suffering mendicant, a custom usual with princes when they passed on to attend the public mass.

"He is drawing near," thought Anna; "oh if I could but catch his eye! I will cry *largesse*—and then I will slip the paper into his hand as he gives me an alms. But he sees me not; oh that I could but catch his eye. I will venture to step beyond the line; if it is but a little, he must see me."

She did so; and the quick glance of the Earl was instantly arrested, and turned upon her alone. Her dress, although plain, and even homely, was *not* that of a mendicant; and notwithstanding her mantle wrapped close about her, and the veil that covered her face, there was a grace in the figure of Anna, which, like that found in those models of beauty, the statues of antiquity, shewed itself, however covered it might be with drapery. The arm too, which

she extended (as she held the paper, ready to be presented, in her hand), was finely turned, and delicately white. These observations in a moment attracted an eye like that of Lewis de Male, critically nice in beauty. His curiosity was excited; there was something altogether extraordinary in the circumstance.

"This," said the Earl, as he turned and addressed Gilbert Matthew, who was now near him, "this is the strangest, and I will warrant the fairest beggar that ever yet asked an alms. She may, too, be the most unfortunate of all mendicants, perhaps a distressed gentlewoman; I will give her gold."

"Or, perhaps," replied Gilbert, "she may be some artful wanton, who displays her white hand, and a decent mantle, to excite curiosity, and a new kind of sympathy, since rags, the proper habiliments of alms-takers, are now too common to raise much pity."

"Be she what she may," said the Earl, "she shall not extend that pretty arm to me in vain; nay, I will speak to her."

As Lewis advanced a few paces to do so, the

gold piece of coin, designed for Anna, glittered in his hand, and at the very moment he was about to speak to her, an aged woman, of a wretched and haggard countenance, (in which an expression of frenzy seemed to contend with that of malice for pre-eminence,) who was habited with nothing remarkable, save a *white hood* about her head, rushed before Anna, and rudely thrust her back, as she exclaimed aloud to Lewis de Male, " To me, to me — the gold to me, not to yon muffled trickster."

Anna alarmed, shrunk back in the crowd, and the Earl, incensed and disappointed at the probability of losing sight of her in the press, pushed back the hag with some violence, as he exclaimed " Hence, thou cursed white hood, how darest thou to interfere."

" Curse not the white hood, curse it not, proud Earl," replied the aged woman, with the utmost audacity; " take heed, Lewis, take heed — no man, be he prince or beggar, shall ban me unrequited: hark thee, thy curse shall fall upon thyself; and mark my words," she continued, as she stretched forth her dry and shrivelled arm,

bent it, and pointed with her finger to her own head; "the white hood thou hast this day cursed shall cover thine own with confusion. Remember it is I who say it — farewell."

"My son," said the Countess of Artois to the Earl, in a low and agitated voice, "my son, give her the gold. It is Ursula; give her gold."

"Give her gold!" replied the Earl; "the wretched old crone — I will give her nothing but the cucking-stool or the stocks; her tricks prevail not with me."

"Stop her then," cried a young man of Lewis's train; "stop her; she has publicly insulted our prince."

"She is some madwoman," observed Gilbert Matthew. "Better let her pass; she is not worth notice."

"It is Ursula," again repeated the Countess of Artois. "I would, my son, that you had given her the gold; her curses never fall in vain — she is most powerful — she is a sorceress."

"Say rather a cheat, mother," replied the Earl. "She seems one of those bold beggars, who would make the donor of an alms loosen his

purse strings by exciting terror. Notwithstanding the edict, Ghent still harbours many such hags and witches. A curse upon her tongue, she has affrighted away that poor girl. I would have relieved her but for the old white hood's brawling, and now I do not see her in the crowd. Did you mark which way she went, Gilbert?"

"No, my lord," answered the new deacon of the pilots; "I only saw her shrink back when the old woman thrust herself before you: the girl seemed frighted, and perhaps is gone."

"It is most likely," answered the Earl. "Let us forward to the mass."

Whilst this brief conversation passed, the woman with the white hood had retired sulkily from the press. As she went on, no one dared to stop her. Indeed, all made way for her, as they would for a being whose will no one cared to cross, since, in fact, she was looked upon by the multitude as a creature possessed of powers and knowledge more than human. Anna also had retired; for when she heard the hag denounce her as a "*muffled trickster*," she felt so

alarmed lest a discovery should be the consequence, that abandoning her purpose of presenting the letter to the Earl at the church door, she immediately shrunk back, and endeavoured to make her way through the crowd; but her escape could not be so easily accomplished as that of Ursula, since no one feared Anna, therefore no one made way for her; and in struggling to free herself from the press, her veil caught, and was pulled off her head. She regained it as speedily as possible, and replaced it, but not till many eyes had thus obtained an opportunity of gazing on her, and of calling up a crimson flood into her cheeks.

After this accident, Anna felt still more eager to escape; she again struggled to pass the crowd, and just as she was on the point of succeeding, some one came softly behind her, laid a hand gently upon her shoulder, and whispered in her ear, "Take no notice of me — do not look round for the world, but go into the cathedral — pass to the Lady Chapel — stay there till I come. I will help you." The astonishment of Anna was only equalled by her agitation, for she

knew too well the slightest accents of the voice of Henry de Cassel, to be deceived in thinking these words had been uttered by himself.

Anna's spirits were now so much weakened by a succession of alarms, that the least thing filled her with nervous apprehension, even Henry's sudden presence made her tremble, yet she obeyed him, and forbore to look back; but she could not help fancying, by the movement of the crowd about her, that they made way for him readily enough, although they had not stirred an inch to accommodate herself. She now waited a short time, almost without moving from the spot where Henry had thus mysteriously addressed her. At length, perceiving the mob dispersing in all directions, she ventured to steal into the cathedral, by a side door of one of the aisles, and made her way into the Lady Chapel.

The Lady Chapel was a small lateral building dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and decorated with a profusion of the finest Gothic carvings, paintings, and devices; the altar being literally covered with the rich offerings of devotees to her shrine. Anna devoutly kneeled before the image

of the Holy Virgin, that stood, in sculptured pomp and jewelled splendour, within a niche above the altar, and, after repeating an *Ave Maria*, she sunk upon a cushion, anxiously to await the arrival of Henry; but how he could possibly assist her, or how he should even guess his assistance could be wanting, seemed to her inexplicable mysteries.

She was not, however, long kept in suspense, for Henry soon appeared, and closing the door of the little chapel with some caution as he entered, he ran towards Anna and greeted her with the warmest burst of impassioned feeling — indeed, he seemed not to think for what purpose he came thither, and to forget all in the remembrance that he was near her.

Anna, at length fixed her eyes imploringly upon him, and conjured him to lose no time in affording her the promised assistance; "for, I suppose," added she, "you must know something of what now presses so much on my mind, else how could you have offered to aid me."

"I have heard much, indeed, Anna," replied

Henry, "since I saw you last night; for on my return to the hotel of the Moon, I there learnt the fatal effects of the fray with the Matthews, and that your father's life was in the utmost peril. I knew you to-day, in spite of your mantle and veil; for, remember Anna, how often you have worn that simple dress in the woods of St. Omer. I observed, too, a paper in your hand: no eye was so fixed upon you as mine, since no heart was so much interested for you. To me it appeared evident you wished to present that paper to the Earl of Flanders. I could easily then guess upon what anxious subject you would solicit him, when I knew that justice was in arms against your father's life."

"And where, then, were you?" enquired Anna. "I saw you not. But, Holy Virgin! how changed, Henry, is your attire! Are you, too, of the court?"

"I have been there to-day," replied Henry, "and followed in my lord's train to the cathedral. But come, let us speak of your business, that is more important — and I dare not stay.

Tell me, would you wish to solicit the Earl for your father's pardon — to free him from the consequences of this charge of murder."

"It is the first wish of my soul to obtain his pardon," said Anna; "but I was disappointed in my plan; and should the Countess of Artois or Gilbert Matthew discover me within the palace, before I could see the Earl, they would ruin my chance of success, and drive me thence with scorn."

"They shall do neither," answered Henry. "I can and will serve you. You shall see the Earl in safety to yourself. But," he added, with considerable emotion, "but I know too well the Earl's former disgraceful passion for you, not to fear this interview. Oh, Anna, your virtue I can trust, but not your experience. You know nothing of the arts of men when they abandon principle for profligacy. You — young, innocent, and beautiful, trusting others, as you are yourself worthy to be trusted — I tremble when I think into what dangers, what deceptions, nay, what temptations, you may fall. Lewis de Male is vehement in all his feelings:

I fear the sight of you will awake his slumbering passion; but I conjure you, let not even your father's safety induce you to listen to his vows of love."

"I will not," said Anna, "I will not encourage them."

"You must not hear them," replied Henry; "for should you but listen to his protestations, he may hope hereafter to win you on his own terms, and should he do so, be sure of it, ruin and misery must overwhelm both you and me. The vengeance of Lewis would be fearful, as his power absolute. Take no token from him, promise him nothing, or at least nothing but gratitude, in requital for your father's life. Remember my words. May God prosper you!"

Anna was so overcome by the subject of this address, which kept pace with her own fears, that she could only faintly answer, "she would be prudent;" for the scene of the previous night (that had so acted upon her feelings as to determine her at all events to obtain her father's pardon, in the hope to win him from his associates,) she was sworn to keep secret.

Henry then drew a ring from his finger, and placed it upon one of her's, and directed her to proceed to the Earl's palace of Andrighien as soon as the mass should be over. "Go," said he, "to the garden entrance towards the south; the warder of that entrance is well known to me, indeed he is in some measure indebted to me. Shew him that ring, he will know it for mine, and bid him conduct you where you may obtain a private audience of the Earl. Go thither one hour after the mass; do simply what I tell you, but hold no discourse with the warder. Shew him but the ring; and in the mean time I will endeavour to apprize him of your coming, and instruct him what to do. Farewell, my beloved Anna! I must leave you. Remember my counsel — one hour after mass. Adieu! I shall see you again when you least expect me."

Anna promised to observe all his directions, bade him farewell, and resumed her station in the Lady Chapel, thinking it better to continue there till the mass was over, as she should be less observed in her way to Andrighien, when the crowd had entirely dispersed.

CHAP. IX.

When the great bell of St. Bavon struck the hour that was to be the signal of Anna's departure for the palace of Andrighien, she started from her seat, and once more addressing a prayer to the Virgin to prosper her enterprise, she quitted the Lady Chapel, and set out upon her way, avoiding as much as possible the most public streets in her passage through Ghent, and at length passed the city gates without meeting any interruption.

The new and beautiful palace of Andrighien, which Lewis de Male had erected at an immense cost, stood about one mile distant from the walls of Ghent, in the midst of a fertile, though flat country, and surrounded by delightful pleasure grounds and gardens. It was here the Earl had chiefly resided since the death of his wife, and it was here that he was frequently visited by his mother the Countess of Artois, whose supe-

rior abilities for state matters and state intrigues, induced her to keep a wary eye upon her less politic son, over whom she still retained a power and an authority Lewis had vainly endeavoured to shake off; for the wisdom of her counsels, and the decision of her conduct, had really been of the utmost service to him in moments of emergency. His mother was also Countess of Artois in her own right, with the privilege to bestow that county upon whomsoever she pleased at her death. She had considerable influence at the court of France, and could command the Duke of Burgundy in almost any matter connected with her son's interest or her own, since, by her means, the Duke had espoused the only child of Lewis de Male by his deceased Countess, a girl but fourteen years of age.

The Earl himself had been married, for reasons of state policy, when very young, so that he had become a widower, and his only child a wife, when he was but yet thirty-six years old.

Anna implicitly obeyed the directions of Henry de Cassel, and bent her steps towards the south entrance of the palace garden, where

a tower which flanked a part of the boundary walls was inhabited by the warder of whom Henry had made mention. Anna, upon shewing him the ring, obtained instant admittance, and requested him, as she had been directed, to afford her the means of a private interview with the Earl. Whilst she made this request she blushed, ashamed to express, even to a domestic, her desire for an interview liable to the most cruel misconstruction.

Yet at the sight of the ring, the warder addressed her with the most marked respect, and saying that the Earl usually walked in the garden about noon, if she would place herself in a little Gothic pleasure-house which stood near the tower, he doubted not she would have an opportunity of seeing him alone. Lewis de Male, who, it may be right to apprize the reader, was both a patron and a lover of learning, generally past an hour or two there each day; for he made it his private study.

"But," said Anna, in a hesitating manner, "may not the Countess come with him, or Gilbert Matthew? or ——"

"No," replied the warder, "not this morning, since neither the Countess nor Gilbert are yet returned from the city, and I saw my lord in the garden but now, alone, after parting with his kinsman, Sir Walter D'Anghien; besides," continued the warder, "when the Lord Lewis passes my post, I will tell him that a fair lady awaits to see him in the pleasure-house, and at such a hearing he will not delay to go to it."

Anna again blushed, but forbore to make any farther enquiry, for she remembered the injunctions of Henry, to avoid discoursing with the warder; and, beyond what seemed necessary to be said, the man himself appeared to be as little disposed to communicate with her. She followed him, therefore, in silence to the pleasure-house, where the Earl delighted to pass his private hours, and where he occasionally cultivated talents which, but for his profligate manners, would have reflected honour upon his country.

The pleasure-house was admirably adapted as a place for study, since it stood sequestered, surrounded by trees, and watered by a small stream that ran near it, whose low murmurs

were calculated to soothe and compose the mind. In the apartment where Anna was conducted, she observed several manuscripts, and writing materials, with loose parchments and papers, that lay scattered upon a table in the centre of the room.

A blue velvet mantle, lined with ermine, was carelessly lying upon a chair; it seemed by this circumstance that the Earl had already been in the room, and had, most probably, for the day was sultry, cast off the mantle of state in which he had appeared at the mass. Anna paused to think in what manner she should address him, and as her mind was thus engaged, she drew from her bosom the paper she had intended to present that morning, and re-perused the contents; thinking perhaps she had better give it to the Earl at once, and thus spare herself the pain of first breaking the subject to him by words.

Whilst Anna was thus absorbed in thought, holding the paper with her eyes fixed upon it, the door opened, and Lewis de Male suddenly stood before her. Abashed, affrighted, and surprised, Anna lost her presence of mind, and

letting fall the paper, she clasped her hands together, and cast a wild and disordered glance upon the Earl; still too much agitated to speak, she sank upon her knees before him, and could only, in a supplicating manner, look up in his face.

"Anna!" said Lewis. "Rise, fairest Anna, and tell me, I beseech you, what chance has brought hither the daughter of John Lyon?"

"She is here to implore you that she may still be a daughter," replied Anna, trembling as she spoke, "and not the orphan of a beloved father. Oh, my lord, if ever you hope to enjoy peace on earth, or happiness in heaven, read over this paper." (She took it from the ground and offered it to Lewis.) "I — I wrote it, but I am now too much agitated to plead, as I would do, my own cause; read, then — read the paper."

There was such an energy in the manner in which Anna urged her request, such an agonised anxiety depicted in her countenance, that Lewis could not refuse her; he took the paper from

her hand in silence, and immediately read it with attention.

"Is this really so?" said he. "Was John Lyon, then, but the *involuntary* agent of this man's death? I was told otherwise."

"Oh, it was false! most false! whoever told you so," replied Anna. "My father is innocent. You can, my lord — oh, you will — you will save his life."

"And how, Anna," answered the Earl, "how can I save a man who has injured me in the tenderest point; who has withdrawn from my court, and secreted from my view, the treasure, the joy, of my life — yourself, Anna?"

"My lord," said the trembling girl, as she blushed deeply, "do not, I conjure you, blame my father. In what he did, it was to comply with my request; and oh! forgive me when I say, that in justice you cannot blame him; he but disobeyed your commands as an earthly prince, to observe those of the King of Heaven."

"And what," said the Earl, "what am I now to hope, if I grant this pardon?"

"For the prayers," answered Anna, "of her you will have saved from the sorrows of the fatherless — prayers that never knock at Heaven's gates in vain. The gratitude, the heartfelt gratitude, of one who will daily bless your name; and as she begs Heaven's choicest gifts to fall upon your head, will think of her prince as the guardian and the father of his people."

"And will return the obligation," replied Lewis, "by shunning the presence of that prince who adores her, even as she would shun the society of the lowest and most worthless vassal of his dominions. No, Anna, your father has deceived me once, but he shall never do so more. If my passion is hateful to you, you have to thank him for its birth. It was your father who first brought you to me; it was your father who fanned the infant flame with hope; he did so to gratify a vain ambition, and now he must suffer, or you must abide its consequence."

"Is there no other way?" said Anna, greatly distressed. Sinking again upon her knees, she caught his hand, and with a mixture of boldness and tender feeling in her manner, spoke to him,

not with that distance she would observe to the prince, but as calling upon the pity of a fellow-creature: "Oh, my lord, say not thus; do not violate the filial piety of a daughter, by making a thing so holy the instrument of guilt, lest it fall with bitter retribution on your own head; you are yourself a *father;* think but upon that, and nature, who never pleads in vain, will speak to your heart, and tell you, that however human frailty may err in seeking the good of a child, the error should be looked upon with mercy. A child, remember, that has been cradled in a parent's arms in helpless infancy, is dear, dear beyond every thing on earth; and that to save a daughter's innocence, a father would brave every peril, even to the death."

"Your father has deserved to die," said the Earl, "for he has deceived me; yet for your sake, Anna, I would do much; I would have done all that man can do for woman's love; I would have married you, but for that curse which binds princes to wed for state occasions."

"My lord," replied Anna, modestly, "such a marriage would have been beyond my desires

or my degree. The circle of high-born honour would be as unseemly upon the brows of a poor burgher's daughter, as to call her wife would be beneath the dignity of a prince. All things seek their order and their kind. The lion, lord of the forest that he ranges, mates not with the kid; nor could the eagle stoop from the crested rock, or leave to gaze upon the sun, and seek to pair with the lowlier tenant of the woods. I could never have been your equal, my lord, how then could I become your wife? I should but have disgraced the mantle of state by my homely bearing."

"You would have honoured it by your beauty and your worth," replied the Earl; "but that cannot be. Hear me, Anna; as a prince, as a judge, your father's life is in my absolute power. You are also in my power, for did I need a pretext to detain you, the law of Ghent would give it me — I could find it, by holding you as the near kindred of a man so charged, and so suspected. But know, I will not stoop to force; it is that heart, that mind, I value in you — it is there I would gain an interest, and by your own free

will. Without your heart to accompany the gift, you, Anna, would be of little worth to Lewis."

"And of still less with it," replied Anna, "when that heart became corrupted. Oh, do not, my prince, so far debase your noble nature, to use the power you hold but as God's steward here on earth, to abuse a simple maiden. Here," added Anna, and she went towards the table, and took up a blank paper that lay upon it; "here, my lord, do an act of mercy — write but your gracious pardon for my father, and every word shall find its register in Heaven to bless you. Nay, I can write the pardon, so you will but sign it — put but your name to the paper, and he shall live, and I will daily breathe that name in my prayers to listening angels."

The Earl hesitated — he walked towards the table, and laid his hand upon the paper: whilst Anna, exulting in the hopes which this action gave her, her cheeks flushed, her hands pressed together in all the breathless anxiety of suspended expectation, stood mute and motionless. The Earl looked upon her, and, struck by the

matchless beauty of her countenance, (now animated by every feeling of her soul, through the anxious circumstances of her fate,) he could not resist the moment of temptation. He ceased, therefore, to make the effort, and his better purpose entirely forsook him.

"No, Anna," he exclaimed, "no, on one condition only will I grant the pardon. It is, that you will see me — that you will hear me — that I may hope to gain by my devoted love some place in your affections. Do *this* — give me but the slightest hope, and your father lives. And that you really do so, accept some token of my love. "Here," added the Earl, as he drew a magnificent chain of massive gold (the same manufactured by the master of the goldsmiths) from his neck, "wear this, my Anna; it was designed as a gift to a dear kinsman, Sir Walter D'Anghien, but no one can be so dear to Lewis as yourself. Wear it, and let me hope."

Anna, who stood like one pursued to the verge of a precipice, who fears alike to go forward or

to draw back, dreaded to incense the Earl by a violent opposition to his wishes, and yet she could not so far dissemble as to give her assent to the proposal. To accept the token would be to encourage Lewis's hopes; she endeavoured, therefore, and in her case it was a pardonable subterfuge, to waive the proposal altogether. "My lord," she said, "I dare not wear the token: think how fatal to me might be the consequence, should the Countess of Artois view your gift upon my neck. She would know again a thing so precious, and that it must have come from you."

Even the Earl appeared for a moment embarrassed by this objection, for he really feared his mother: "She need not know it," replied he; "you may say the chain was the gift of the old rich Baroness, who loved you so well, and quitted our court to end her days as a nun."

"No, my lord," replied Anna, "I cannot so dissimulate; and, believe me, truth will more adorn my mind than the finest chain of gold could my person, when it must be suspended by

falsehood round my neck. I cannot take the token; for if I did, the world should know it to be yours."

"Nay, but you shall," said the Earl; "I will fear no mother, either for you or for myself. I will act freely, in spite of the Countess of Artois. Mark me, Anna, I will not now urge you to speak all I could wish to hear. Only be silent, and I will fancy your very silence as favourable to my hopes. Wear that token, and as long as it hangs about your neck, I will continue to hope for the future; it shall be the sign of a compact between us; and I will grant the pardon."

"No, my lord, no," eagerly cried Anna, "I cannot; I will not even silently assent to my own shame; never will I do so; keep your gift, and leave me innocent."

"Aye, and fatherless," replied the artful Lewis. "Adieu, Anna! our conference is ended. The provost marshal is already in possession of the warrant to authorize your father's death the moment he is taken. Gilbert Matthew procured it last night, ere search was made for him."

The Earl turned to depart. Anna rushed between him and the door, and seizing him by his vest, as her countenance changed to ashy whiteness, she exclaimed, in a voice of agony, "Stay, yet stay; grant me the pardon, and I will wear the token." Lewis eagerly assisted her to rise, pressed her in his embrace, and threw the chain of gold about her neck. "But oh!" she added, as she looked upon it, "how gladly would I exchange these golden links, for chains of iron, in the deepest dungeon, so I might save my father, and yet——"

"Peace, Anna, peace," cried the Earl, "do not make me once more revoke my mercy; remember our compact; aye, it is a compact. Here," he continued, as he hastily wrote the paper, "here is your father's pardon: but remember! once remove that chain from your neck by your own act, refuse to see me, or to give me hope, and look to Heaven as your only father; for I swear, by all that I believe on earth, by all that I may hope or dread hereafter, from that moment he shall die; I leave you now to think upon it. Farewell."

The Earl departed, exulting in his success of having engaged Anna to wear a chain of gold, as a love-token, about her neck; for Lewis, notwithstanding his superior talents and sense, believed in a superstition common to his country and his time, which considered, that so long as such a token should be worn with the consent of the wearer, it would act as a spell or charm to bind the beloved object to the giver of the pledge.

Anna carefully deposited the pardon within her bosom, and hastened to depart from the pleasure-house. As she quitted the little pathway, which wound amidst the trees that surrounded this sequestered spot, she heard a rustling amongst their leaves, and turning a hasty glance in that direction, she espied, in part, the figure of a man, who seemed to be lurking near. Alarmed at the circumstance, and wishing to avoid observation, she now quickened her pace, hastened towards the tower by which she had entered, and departed with all speed, and once more found herself safe in the road to Ghent.

And now that her object was achieved, now that she no longer felt apprehensions for her father's life, the difficulties of her own situation, the involuntary, and yet acquiescing, part she had taken in the Earl's proposal, weighed heavily upon her mind. The tumult of suspended expectation and fluctuating hope had subsided, but it was succeeded by a deep and melancholy presage of coming evil; and the horrible scene she had witnessed on the previous night, a scene she was sworn to conceal, awakened apprehensions that made her think the pardon she now carried to her father, might soon, perhaps, be revoked, or prove of little essential benefit to him.

These reflections rapidly succeeded each other, as she bent her steps towards Ghent; and at length, after many efforts, she brought her mind to the pious resolution, to endeavour to banish for a time all fears upon her own account; if possible, to forget herself, in the efforts she determined to make to withdraw her father from his desperate associates.

Anna entered within the city gates without

interruption, and, eager to convey to John Lyon the good news of her successful mission, she determined now to take the direct way, and not to lengthen her walk circuitously for the purpose of concealment. She turned down a handsome street, therefore, near the walls of the city, where a few houses, belonging to some of the wealthy merchants, or more opulent burghers of Ghent, had small enclosed gardens in front of them.

But scarcely had she entered the street, when her ears were assailed with loud and tumultuous shouts, and she soon perceived that a large body of men were passing up this very street in the order of a procession, accompanied by a multitude, or rather mob, composed of the lower order of the people, and all the idle boys of the place. Greatly alarmed, and fearing lest any unfortunate accident might occasion her loss of the pardon (notwithstanding it was secured within her bosom), she hesitated a moment what to do. She could not hope to make her way through such a crowd, and she saw plainly it was not

a religious procession. If she retreated, she might be forced along with the advancing multitude—she might be insulted. What to do, she knew not; and for a moment stood still, irresolute how to act.

In this emergency, she heard a citizen, who was looking on, say to his companion near him, "There they go; it is the deputation. They are going to Andrighien, to demand from the Earl Sir Simon de Bête; for Lewis has secured in his prison of Ecclo one of the burgomasters of Ghent, an act which even his authority cannot lawfully accomplish, without a warrant from the city magistrates to commit their fellow officer. It is a breach of their franchises that may cost the Earl a world of trouble, if he does not give Sir Simon liberty upon their demand."

This at once explained to Anna the nature of the procession, and accounted for the tumultuous manner of the mob, which now advanced nearer and nearer, till Anna found herself almost surrounded by the crowd, and forced against the gate of one of those small gardens in front of

the houses before noticed. Her fears made her bold, and she no longer hesitated to pass within the gate to seek temporary shelter; and, indeed, she needed it, for her mantle, which she had carefully wrapped about her on leaving the palace, had been so violently pulled back by the sudden rush of the people, that the clasp had given way and was broken, and the dress she wore beneath, with the splendid chain of gold upon her neck, could not but be visible to all.

She retreated, therefore, into the little garden, and observing a lady standing in that part of it nearest to the house, as if looking on to witness the bustle in the street, Anna had no doubt this lady was the mistress of the house, and immediately advanced towards her, to ask a temporary shelter, and to explain the cause of her intrusion.

The lady she addressed was a young woman of extraordinary beauty. Her figure was of the middling stature, and finely formed. Her eyes and hair were of a dark colour, the former brilliant and expressive. Her complexion, though

brown, was exquisitely clear and transparent; and her mouth, of the liveliest carnation, might have rivalled in grace and symmetry that of the finest antique statue. Her air was so noble, and her dress so rich, that had Anna seen her at Andrighien, she would have taken the fair stranger for a woman of the highest birth. Yet the fashion of her attire was not such as Anna would herself have adopted; it was something too gay, too liberal, in displaying the person of the wearer, which, beautiful as it was, might have found a more attractive grace, had modesty cast a veil over charms thus exposed, that seemed to proclaim a consciousness of their beauty, but an indelicacy as to the sense of their effect.

Whilst the stranger looked at Anna with such fixed attention as almost made the bashful girl tremble, a shade of anger seemed to steal over her dark and beautiful brow. When she spoke, which she did fluently and well, her accent proclaimed her to be a *foreigner*. She replied, to Anna's excuse for her intrusion, with a slight assurance that she was welcome to remain where she was till the crowd had past; and she added,

with a sarcastic sneer, that curled her lip as she spoke, "You may also adjust your mantle before you depart; since I suppose you would not willingly walk through the public streets tricked out with such a chain as that about your neck, that every one may know you have assumed the golden shackles of a prince, to grace a burgher's daughter."

Anna, surprised, shocked, and embarrassed by this speech, neither knew how to reply to it, nor what to think. She stood, with a countenance alternately changing from red to white, absolutely mute with astonishment. She had but that instant returned from Andrighien — no person had followed her — no one had been present when the Earl threw the chain about her neck, and no one could possibly even have seen it upon her, till her mantle was almost torn from her as she entered the gate.

Anna was not superstitious; that is, not for the age in which she lived, when superstition was a part of religious faith. A belief, however, in the agency of familiar spirits, in charms and spells, with a dark and presumptuous enquiry

into futurity, which was likewise characteristic of the age, were things wholly disregarded by Anna. She did not, therefore, suppose the stranger was indebted to any such means for her extraordinary knowledge of the circumstances connected with the chain, and felt but the more alarmed by this want of credulity; since any other maiden in Ghent but herself would have set it down to the score of witchcraft.

Anna was too innocent to frame falsehoods, and even in excuses she was but an awkward practitioner. She knew not how to answer the stranger, but still she felt that stranger had no right to enquire into her affairs. She, therefore, said nothing in reply, but hastily re-adjusted her mantle, with an air of confusion and embarrassment. Still the stranger seemed to fix her thoughts upon the chain.

"I know it well," said she; "it is of no common workmanship. But I will not enquire. I have no right to ask it of you. But come, I will fasten your mantle — your hand trembles so, you can scarcely do it yourself. Stay a little —

there, closer, draw it closer, to hide those golden links. Why, aye, maiden, that will do; and now they are as much concealed from sight, beneath thy garment, as one day will be the sorrow, the deep pangs of remorse, within thy bosom, which now is thus adorned. Take heed — the gifts of princes to young maids are but like the nets of the fowler, surely set and baited, that tempt poor birds to come within them, but they never depart thence till their plumage is rifled, and their life is gone." The stranger paused a moment, and looking sternly upon Anna, added, in an angry tone, "So may it be with you; for why should I wish it otherwise; and you will not escape if Lewis de Male spreads the snare. So now begone — the crowd is dispersed — leave my presence; you have tarried here too long already."

There was such a tone of displeasure, such an air of command in the stranger, when she pronounced these last words, that Anna, not knowing what to think, and greatly alarmed, needed no other intimation to be gone. She bowed her head to the ungentle lady, and walking away as

fast as her agitated limbs would bear her, regained the street, and in a short time she had the happiness of clasping her father's neck, as she sobbed with joy, and gave the pardon into his hands.

CHAP. X.

We must now leave Anna to rejoice, as she did sincerely, in having procured the pardon for her father, and to make her repeated, but fruitless, attempts to withdraw him from his dangerous associates, whilst we say something about the lady in whose garden she had taken a temporary shelter, and from whose presence she was so ungraciously dismissed.

The reader will probably recollect the affair concerning a gold chain, mentioned in the second chapter of this narrative, and that the chain had been made by Sir Simon de Bête, at the express command of the Earl of Flanders, but sold, from mistake, during the absence of the little goldsmith, to Philip Von Artaveld, who presented it to his Italian mistress, the beautiful Bianca. He must also be aware, that upon discovering the mistake, the termagant wife of Sir Simon had regained possession of the chain, which at length

found its way into the hands of the person by whom it was bespoke — the Earl of Flanders.

Having thus briefly recapitulated these circumstances, the reader will no longer feel surprised that the foreign lady, who was no other than Bianca herself, should so readily recognise the chain, and give a shrewd guess by whom it had been bestowed upon the daughter of John Lyon.

Bianca had before seen Anna in public, and knew who she was, although Anna had never before observed her. Thus the remarks which the Italian addressed to her, however mysterious they might seem to Anna, were easily accounted for; since Lewis's admiration of the daughter of the late deacon of the pilots, and her subsequent retreat from the court, had furnished forth a plentiful harvest, to be reaped and gathered in alike by courtiers and gossips, who, each viewing the subject agreeably to their own fancy or disposition, gave birth to the usual variety of reports, which, having circulated their due round, died away and were forgotten, as fresh subjects of scandal and novelty occurred.

All these reports were remembered by Bianca, but the sight of that particular chain upon Anna's neck aroused in her bosom feelings that induced her, as soon as Anna had departed, to resolve upon an immediate visit to no less a person than Ursula, the reputed sorceress, who so boldly solicited an alms, and cursed the Earl of Flanders at the church-door.

At the period of our narrative a belief in sorcery, witchcraft, and astrology, was so universally diffused and encouraged throughout Europe, that, notwithstanding the severe laws enacted against persons dealing in such arts, there was neither country, city, nor town, but possessed some one who had the reputation of possessing such supernatural powers; and the study of magic was considered as much a science as that of mathematics in the present day. Although the regular professors of the black art sometimes suffered the severest penalties of the law, for their real or supposed offences, yet they were more frequently winked at, and allowed to go on in their course, by the very persons whose duty it was to suppress them. For this conniving toler-

ation the professors were, no doubt, indebted to the supposed services they might occasionally render to the tolerators themselves, by withdrawing the veil from futurity; and sometimes by the convenient agency of making them the instruments of doing an ill turn to an enemy, without the danger of detection, or even of suspicion as to the original instigators of so dark and secure a mode of revenge. The chronicles of the olden time exhibit many examples of this description, and particularly in Flanders, where no plot was carried on, no bad design put in execution, without the advice, and even co-operation, of some celebrated witch or magician.*

* Froissart relates a curious story of an enchanter, who promised the Duke of Anjou that he would, by the power of his art, cause the castle of an enemy to surrender to him. "I can," said the sorcerer, "make the air so thick over the sea, that those in the castle shall think it a large bridge, on which ten men may march in front; and when they see this bridge, they will be so frightened they will surrender themselves to you, lest, if you attack them, they be taken by storm." The Duke of Anjou, astonished at what he heard, called his knights, to whom he related what the enchanter had just told him. They were very much surprised, but seemed willing to give him faith for it. See Johnes's Froissart, vol. vi, page 41.

It may readily be supposed that a trade which inspired a mingled feeling of fear and reverence, that was productive of profit, and, by the very mystery of its character, afforded an excellent screen to falsehood and fraud, could never be wanting either in disciples or professors, in fools to believe, and rogues to teach. Hence it arose, that whenever a worthless character, or a vagabond, possessed sufficient craft and abilities to delude the more simple of their fellow-creatures by acquiring a few mysterious tricks, that were calculated to impose upon the senses, they set up the trade of astrologers or witches, and assumed a language which, from its ambiguity, was capable of the utmost latitude of interpretation; whilst their mysterious predictions, often fashioned, by the weak-witted mortals to whom they were addressed, to agree with their own peculiar circumstances, appeared to the mind thus prepossessed, to be literally fulfilled, and were considered as devoutly true.

It is by no means improbable that many of these wretched traffickers in the black art, commenced with deluding others, and ended with

deluding themselves; and, from a constant excitement of the imagination, brought upon themselves a degree of madness, till they at length believed they were actually endowed with the powers they assumed. By constantly dwelling upon one idea, of their own preternatural endowments, of spells, invocations, and diabolical assistance, they at last became as wicked in their own nature as the very devils, whom they fancied were obedient to their controul.

Having said thus much upon the general practice and belief in witchcraft as it existed at the period of this narrative, the reader must now be introduced to one of its professors, who, like many of the tribe to which she belonged, was tinctured both with malice and with frenzy. She considered herself a being of the elements, and though a dweller upon earth, claimed affinity with the spirits of the deep, and the powers of the air. Ursula was an Italian by birth, and now resided in a small house of one of the obscure streets in Ghent, near the market-place, where, to her ordinary functions of fearful import, as an interpreter of the stars, she added

some skill in the knowledge of herbs, medicinal compounds, and, though last, not least, of *poisons*, a knowledge for which many of her country were so celebrated, that it is said they could administer a dose that should produce death at a certain and specific distance of time from the hour it was taken, either more or lessli ngering, agreeably to the wish of the destroyer — a property particularly assigned to that poison bearing the name of the *aqna-tofana.*

It was to this woman's habitation Bianca now bent her steps, after the interview she had just had with the innocent and unoffending Anna. The apartment into which Bianca entered, was entirely suited to the profession of its occupant, and presented a combination of such objects as were calculated to impose awe upon the vulgar, and to awaken terror in the weak or timid mind. Bianca was of neither, and she entered the cabin of her ancient countrywoman with a firm step, and a haughty, though disturbed, mien.

Yet the scene which she beheld was really calculated to raise at least disgust, if not alarm, in a female bosom less occupied than Bianca's

with its own tumultuous feelings. The room in which Ursula held her accustomed orgies, although spacious enough, received its light from a single casement, which was somewhat obscured by wreaths of yew and cypress that were partly suspended before it; the apartment, therefore, at mid-day, partook of the gloom of night, so that, notwithstanding every thing could be seen within it, nothing was *distinctly* visible; there was a dusky obscurity in which the imagination might parcel out shapes and things agreeably to the mood of horror with which the hag might be desirous to inspire her followers.

Over the old oak chimney sat an owl, who, familiar with its mistress, would stoop its head towards her, as it roosted above, with its large eyes glittering even through the darkness. By the side of this chimney hung a collection of bones, whilst a variety of skulls, an entire skeleton, with a string of human hearts completely withered, a hand and arm wrapped in cere-cloths, with other strange combinations of fearful preparation, were hung around the apartment, to raise the awe and wonder of such unhappy or

shallow-witted persons as sought the witch within her unhallowed sanctuary.

There was also a heterogeneous mixture, an unnatural alliance, of living creatures. The wolf-dog lay extended upon the hearth, and snarled and shewed his white fangs, as he raised his shaggy head to survey the stranger, ready to fly at his throat, should Ursula but give the sign. A rat, trained to be fearless of a large and fierce black cat, with which it was familiar, crept around the apartment; an ape gambolled and gibbered around, as a raven flapped her wings in anger, and seemed desirous to break her chain to avenge herself on the intruder.

At the time Bianca entered the apartment, it appeared that Ursula had been engaged in some of her mystic rites, since the charmed circle was formed in the centre of the room. This consisted of a red line or circle marked upon the floor, with nothing placed upon it but a small glass case, in which were several living adders, that made a hissing noise as they twisted and crawled about within their narrow prison. In the very centre of the circle was seen an ancient

stone coffin, most probably the spoil of some ruined and pillaged church, during the former disturbances of Ghent, when many graves of the mitred abbots and opulent clergy were opened, in order to plunder their mouldering remains of the golden ornaments or jewels that had been placed about their vestments at the time of interment. A single torch burnt by the side of this coffin, and upon it was placed a white hood, and a bough of the yew tree.

The ancient priestess of this unholy cell, with a wild and malicious expression in her countenance, stood, at the moment Bianca entered, with a book in one hand, and in the other she held a rod or wand, the usual appendage of her trade. This wand was twined about with the skin of a serpent, and finished at the top by the horn of a ram. Her gown was of black woollen, and from her girdle hung a pouch. It also exhibited, stuck within the belt, a knife, that, for form and size, would have suited as an instrument for the sacrifices of old. Her hair, thin and grey, hung in loose disorder down her back; and her dark and swarthy countenance,

lean and withered, possessed a character that seemed not of this earth, but of the lower world of guilt and terror.

When Bianca entered this chamber of destiny and death, the hag fixed her eye upon her with a look of fierce delight, as she said, in a voice shrill and discordant, "You are welcome, daughter, at the hour of a fearful rite."

"And fearlessly is my mind prepared to meet it," replied Bianca. "Is your charm accepted? or must I await your leisure?"

"The charm is accepted," said the witch; "but the white hood must rest on the coffin of the dead, till the torch is burnt out; then all is finished. What would you with me?"

"I come," answered Bianca, sternly, "not to reproach you, for well do I know that were vain. You would heed my railing as heeds the rock the chafing of the ocean that beats against its base. No; I come not to reproach you, wretched woman, but to tell you that I fear you not, and, therefore, I will speak."

"Your words are dark, Bianca," said the hag; "speak plainly, for the mother of the

mystic spell, the sovereign of spirits and of elements, wastes not her moments in an idle bandy of words with a mortal creature."

"You have broken faith with me," replied Bianca, as her brow darkened, and angry feelings seemed to swell within her bosom. "You promised me revenge, a deep and ample revenge, for all my wrongs. You promised me that ruin and misery should fall upon the cause, and that a deadly hatred should succeed to the love which the Earl Lewis entertained for the daughter of John Lyon; but you have broken faith."

"It is false!" said Ursula; "it is most false! Had the fiend who serves me so accused me, I would have held him bound in double torments. Yes, I would have tortured by keeping him from the great work of mischief. Your revenge, and my desire for universal misery, thrives, prospers, and soon will fall upon all the wretched children of sin and clay who inhabit this detested city. The father and the daughter shall both become my victims."

"It cannot be," replied Bianca. "The Earl is once more in pursuit of Anna — that detested

woman, for whose sake Lewis discarded me. I saw her but this day, and upon her neck she wore one of those love-tokens the Earl is wont to bind about his favourites — a chain of gold. I know it to have been his. May the worst plagues that ever gnawed the heart of woman go with it! Lewis loves Anna — seeks her; she has accepted him; it is plain, it must be so; and all my dear-bought hopes of vengeance are no more. I shall live to see her succeed to that place in his affections, which was once held by the credulous, and now the discarded, Bianca."

The hag replied to this complaint with a ghastly smile, and said, "Patience, daughter, patience — the work is not yet done."

"Patience!" exclaimed Bianca, with fury in her looks, as she turned towards the aged sorceress. "Is it *you*, Ursula, *you*, who dare speak of patience? and to *me!* To you I owe my ruin. I was a girl when you came to our convent to teach your art of medicine. And what did you, but foster the discontents of the poor novice who longed to look upon that world from which she was shut out; you promised her

golden dreams of pride and happiness; talked to her of her beauty, that might raise her to rank and honour; you persuaded her to steal from her convent, and with you."

"And was not the golden dream of pride fulfilled?" replied Ursula. Bianca heeded not her interruption, but continued her complaint.

"And what did you then? Fearful of detection, you brought me from my native country, dazzled my young mind with visions of pleasure, placed me within the vortex of temptation, and gave me up a prey to vice and folly; *you*, Ursula, *you* did this; you *sold* me to the Earl of Flanders."

"I could not have done it," replied Ursula, "had not your own will helped to seal our compact."

"Aye, there it is," said Bianca; "I loved Lewis; I gave him all I had to give — heart, faith, fame, and affection, all were his; for his sake I bore the insults of men, and the wrath of Heaven; but while he loved me, I could bear it; and he — he abandoned me — discarded me, for the sake of another, for the love of Anna. And

now think you, wretched woman, that I who hate, loathe, curse you as the foul author of all my misery; think you, that I would bear with you but to gratify my revenge? No; I would have spurned your hellish arts; I would have plunged my dagger in your bosom, and sent you howling, unshriven, and without remorse, to him whose services you do on earth. *I* would have done this, but that I know your mind, dark as the grave, and wicked as the soul of him who dreamed of the first murder, delights in mischief; can look on an evil work, and, for its own sake, act it. For *this* I spare you, for *this* I use you, and for *this* I stoop to ally myself with such a thing, a loathsome thing, as you are."

"Have you done," said the hag, "or will you ban me farther? I heed not your words, for you have been my victim. And the pangs you daily suffer, that hourly gnaw and rankle within your heart, till they shall consume the life blood, they may claim for you the allowance to curse, even before me. I can hear with indifference the wordy mood of a weak woman.

Yet you owe me something, look at your attire; that silk might robe a countess; who gave it you, but your present paramour; and who made you known to him, to Von Artaveld, when the Earl discarded you?—it was Ursula. Von Artaveld loves and protects you, else had you rotted in the very streets of Ghent, like a fallen and a worthless weed, torn from its bed and cast abroad, that every man who passes by might trample beneath his foot."

"It is true," replied Bianca; "but no thanks to thee; but for the generous Von Artaveld, I must have perished, or have become the most abandoned of my sex. Philip saved me from want; he has been to me kind in affection, and could I but have brought him innocence for my dower, he would have married me. I cannot love Von Artaveld as I did my princely seducer, but I can serve him and honour him; he has my gratitude. Nay, laugh not, wretched creature, it is true; but gratitude is a virtue that such a breast as thine can never know."

"I laugh to hear you speak of any virtue," said Ursula; "you, who thirst for blood and

misery. Leave this vain prating; and if you will have your desires satisfied, till your heart shall take its fill of vengeance, till your body shall be steeped in the red tide of human life up to your very ears, hear me, and mark my words, for you must help the work of your own will."

"Speak, then," said Bianca; "I will not flinch to hear or to act. Give me but an ample vengeance for all my wrongs, and I will pardon your part in my ruin, and I will bid you draw your knife, which never yet was vainly drawn by you, and plunge it into my heart; for revenge once satisfied, life and I have no concernment with each other. I shall have no farther work to do on earth."

"This is the proper spirit for my purpose," replied Ursula, exultingly. "Hear me, then. There is in this city a set of miscreants of men, who, desperate in their own fortunes and their hopes, would upset the present state of rule, would embroil their fellow-citizens in blood and outrage, to shape their own course, and raise their ambitious hopes upon the spoils of the

general wreck. They have formed such a plot as shall consign to ruin, misery, and death, thousands of living souls. I have already paced the ground where their slaughtered bodies shall blacken, whilst they feed the ravens and the worm. I have trampled on the earth that lies ready to receive them; and, in the foresight of that coming time, I have already thought that I could snuff the smell of blood around me."

"And what have I to do with this?" enquired Bianca. "In what new mischief am I required to act?"

"This plot," said Ursula, "if it goes on, will do your work of vengeance fully and completely, upon John Lyon, his accursed daughter, and Lewis the betrayer. Will that pleasure you?"

"Not the death of Lewis," replied Bianca, mournfully; "I would not harm his life; for although he has misused and abandoned me, I could not see him dead. Yet I would have him suffer in soul as I have suffered; I would have him behold the new object of his love a mangled and disfigured corpse at his feet; I would pluck

him from his high place, and then leave him to obscurity and sorrow, a ruined fortune, and a worthless fame."

"Thy vengeance is good, proud woman," said Ursula; "it is such as fiends devise, and triumph to enact. It spares the life for a time, to wring the soul with agony, like the executioner who tears limb by limb upon the rack, before he gives the blow of grace and death. Thy purpose *shall* be satisfied. Now hear what part you have to play in this great work. The men of whom I spoke want some leader, whose name, whose talents, whose authority may influence the better class of citizens to join in their deep plans. Philip Von Artaveld is the man upon whom all eyes are turned; his very name is a spell, for his father, Jacob Von Artaveld, ruled like a king in Ghent, raised the opulence of the city, confirmed its franchises, and by his wisdom and his courage made Flanders honoured, respected, feared, that even the proud monarch, Edward the Third of England, sought his alliance and his friendship."

"And the ungrateful citizens of Ghent,"

replied Bianca, "requited Jacob for his pains as you would have had them; for, in a moment of tumult and discontent, they murdered him; and this cruel circumstance has made Philip, his son, wary how he deals with them, and hitherto he has shunned a public station."

"Aye," said Ursula, "but Philip has a high, proud, and daring spirit, and could he but once be taught to hope that he might rise to the height his father had ascended to serve his country, he would not be backward to join in such a cause. I know the intention of these conspirators; they will endeavour to win him over to their plans. Do *you* in the interval work upon his mind with all your arts, lead him to expect the crown of success to his ambition, fan the embers of that hidden fire that lurks within his breast, into a living and a sudden flame, and all will prove successful. Von Artaveld once gained, thousands of our citizens will follow *his* example, and rise at once, for Lewis is little loved."

"I will, I will do so," exclaimed Bianca; "I will use every means, every argument that may prevail, and I know his temper. He is

sudden and fiery, even as he is generous and brave; we will succeed or perish."

"In the mean time," said Ursula, "I shall be busy with these men; for all of them, more or less, seek me. Some, that I may foretell to them the future; others, that I may aid them in the work. It is Ursula, too, who renders their mailed coats proof against the sword or axe, by the potency of her spells. It is Ursula who tempers the hard steel of their daggers point in poisons, that remain to fret and anger even to death the slightest wound they make. From various causes, all seek me, but most of all from fear; lest, wanting my connivance, my sanction of their scheme, it should fail them; for I am dreaded and fawned upon by the base herd, even as worldly princes are; and like the great ones of the earth, I can use them and cast them off at pleasure."

"And what are now your plans?" enquired Bianca.

"You shall know all in time," said Ursula; "for I shall need you. I have a device that shall stir up these men to madness; and the

curse that the Earl dared to vent on me shall fall upon his own head in awful retribution. Now begone, follow my instructions; be but patient, and the storm, though it gathers slowly, shall burst fearfully. Leave me for the present, for I have that to do which craves my utmost care; go then, and may the fiend of discord be with your steps, and prosper your design. Look!" exclaimed Ursula, exultingly. "He hears me! he awaits me! the torch expires — the charm is complete — the White Hood, the White Hood, shall do his work and mine."

CHAP. XI.

THE course of our narrative now obliges us to speak of the affairs of Ghent, and of those plots that had been so secretly and so artfully carried on by Peter du Bois, John Lyon, Arnoul le Clerc, and other malcontents, who all, actuated by private views and passions, hoped to satisfy their revenge, to aid their ambition, or to raise their fortunes upon the subversion of the existing state of government.

A venerable chronicler of the time affords a most copious detail of these affairs. Here, therefore, it would be needless to attempt giving an account of them at large, since they will be found so amply stated in his own manner of prolix but interesting description. Still, however, it is necessary that such a general view of the subject should be given, that the reader (if unacquainted with that minute historian)

may be able to comprehend the steps by which those important results were brought about that must hereafter be mentioned in these pages.

For some time the conspirators carried on their meetings in the utmost privacy, and with the greatest caution; but as their party strengthened they became less circumspect, and often openly assembled at the houses of each other, since a general discontent now prevailed, even amongst the more respectable and opulent class of the citizens. The Earl was impolitic, and, without himself designing to injure his "good town of Ghent," he allowed too much power to his officers and deputies, who abused it beyond whatever could have happened had Lewis de Male taken that active part in securing the public welfare which his station required of him.

The deputation that had been sent from Ghent, to demand the freedom of its citizen, proved unsuccessful, and his detention was a breach of a most important franchise, which the citizens had always considered the security of

their general and individual liberty; for the Earl, instead of taking the affair into his own hands, contented himself with referring the deputation to his high bailiff of Ghent, Roger d'Auterme. The bailiff was, therefore, solicited to give freedom to the citizen; but he only answered, "If my prisoner were ten times as rich as the one I have in ward, I would never set him out of prison without an order from the Earl. I have powers to arrest, but none to set free."

This answer, which in fact spoke but the truth, was busily circulated through Ghent with an evil intention by the conspirators, so that many of the chief citizens began to murmur, and to say it was a breach of their privileges that ought not to be suffered; and that if this act should be allowed to pass, "all the franchises of Ghent, which were so noble, would be lost."

Another incident also occurred at this time to forward the views of the malcontents, and to stir up strife in the city. Ghent and Bruges had long contended in jealous rivalry, so that the slightest advantage granted to the one was viewed with an envious and suspicious eye by

the other; and to such a height was this jealousy for pre-eminence carried, that the rival cities looked upon each other more as avowed enemies, than as the people of the same government and country. Bruges had risen to great opulence; but there was one advantage which, notwithstanding all its riches, must ever have given the superiority to Ghent. This arose from the former city having neither river nor canals to facilitate its commerce; whilst the latter enjoyed the benefit of numerous canals, and the rivers Scheld and Lis.

To form such a canal as would afford Bruges the advantage of the river Lis, had long been the aim of its inhabitants. All were anxious for it; all would have contributed towards the necessary sums for executing the work with promptitude and effect, could they have but once secured the sanction of the Earl for such an undertaking, in order that it might be carried on, undisturbed by the jealous vigilance of the men of Ghent.

But the citizens of Ghent were a fierce and a warlike body: Lewis feared them; for too well

did he remember the latter times, when Jacob Von Artaveld had usurped the authority of the lawful prince in Flanders. He remained, therefore, undecided, till the people of Bruges, by various intrigues, at length obtained from him the sanction necessary to carry on their work. The whole affair had been conducted with the utmost secrecy and caution; still vague reports of it were whispered abroad, and made another subject of complaint by the malcontents, who aimed at nothing more earnestly than so to embroil the town of Ghent with the Earl and the people of Bruges, that a general insurrection of the citizens would be the consequence.

Another great cause of dissatisfaction arose from the power of Gilbert Matthew and his brothers, who, it was openly said, sold at their own price all the offices and places in the state, and filled their pockets with bribes, ere they would allow any suit to find its way to the Earl.

The tax that had been laid upon the pilots and foreign merchants was found so grievous, that many of the latter talked of giving up their

commerce with Ghent—a thing which threatened ruin to that city; so that it was now publicly said every franchise would be worth nothing, unless some one stood boldly forward in their support. Thus did the discontents of the people gradually spread through the city, to the great joy of the more artful insurgents, whose least wish was to see these grievances corrected, lest peace, instead of rebellion, should ensue.

The Earl, who sometimes visited Bruges and Lille, was artfully kept in ignorance of much that had become a subject of complaint, and although he heard that a disaffected party actually existed in Ghent, yet he was deceived as to its number and extent, and was made to think it could be at any time easily put down, should there arise a serious cause to sanction the exertion of his own power. It appears, from the train of events which occurred, that the Earl was really the most aggrieved person, although he cannot escape the charge of negligence in the first instance, nor did he resort to any violent measures, till compelled to do so by the conduct of the people of Ghent.

Such was the state of things at that period. We now resume the thread of our narrative. The leaders of the malcontents were anxious to obtain all the support they could from persons of the more opulent classes, since the greater part of their *avowed* followers consisted of the most worthless of the people. Peter du Bois, whose sagacity and cunning enabled him to look beyond the present time, felt anxious to attach to his interest some citizen, who might act as a chief in the rebellion, whose influence was powerful with his compeers, and upon whom Du Bois might throw the odium of any measures that might hereafter fail, without the danger of Peter himself suffering in the opinion of his own party, since whatever he should suggest, he must still be but a second, and not a principal in the measure, — the responsibility would rest with another.

Guided by this artful policy, he resolved to make a bold attempt to engage Philip Von Artaveld in the cause. He knew, by means of his agent Ursula, that Philip's mind had been worked upon by Bianca, and that it needed but

some sudden and striking circumstance to make the thoughtless but bold Von Artaveld declare himself of the insurgent party. "I must win him at once," said Du Bois to Ursula; "he must not be allowed time for deliberate reflection; and if you execute your plan adroitly, he will become ours without the possibility of recantation." Ursula assured Du Bois that she was prepared, and waited but the proper hour to act with effect, when not only Von Artaveld, but thousands of the disaffected, she had no doubt, would rise in open rebellion.

The malcontents had arranged that every thing necessary should be ready, to enable them to declare publicly their purpose at the approaching festival of archery. This was yearly held in the neighbourhood of Ghent, since no city in Europe was more famed for the skill of its archers, either in the cross or long bow; and it had long been foreseen that the occasion of the festival would give the malcontents a fair opportunity for uniting themselves into armed bands, under pretext of being thus assembled

to practise with warlike weapons, merely for their sport.

All was now prepared, yet with so much care, silence, and precaution, that the dangerous plots which threatened ruin to the Earl and his adherents might be compared to a secret mine of gunpowder, which lies still, but ready — unsuspected, yet certain — and which explodes with a terrible convulsion on the slightest spark being set to the train. On this occasion it was Peter du Bois who had laid that train, and Ursula, his infamous agent and accomplice, held the match ready in her hand. In what manner she used the lighted brand will hereafter appear.

Actuated by the motives before named, Peter du Bois, on the morning of the festival, waited upon Philip Von Artaveld, (having previously seen Bianca at the house of Ursula, where all things were settled between them,) in order to make that last and bold attempt, so long meditated. Philip entered the room, where Du Bois awaited him, examining a long bow which he held in his hand, and gaily singing a stanza of an old Flemish ballad, not unlike our own ballads

in celebration of the archery of "Merry Sherwood."

"The bowman bent his bow so strong,
And aimed him at the clout;
Swift flew the arrow, straight and long,
While all the people shout.

"The clout is struck, the prize is won,
So true the shaft was sent;
Oh! well has your good bowman done,
Ye merry men of Ghent."

Philip Von Artaveld, who carolled this old air with as light a heart as ever beat within the bosom of a thoughtless young man, was of a tall and comely person. His countenance, frank and open, expressive of a gay and animated temper, still possessed the stamp of superior intellect. The forehead was high, and the brow projecting; and the eyes would flash fire whenever his feelings were aroused by any high-minded purpose or discourse. Philip greeted Peter du Bois as one young man greets another with whom he is on a familiar footing, without ceremony or observance, and proceeded to speak on the topic of the day, the festival of archery.

"We shall have brave sport," said Von Artaveld. "The knights of St. Sebastian against the knights of St. George; Ghent against all Flanders; not a man of them but has practised, and brought down his bird."

"There is other and more worthy game," replied Du Bois, "for men like you and me, Von Artaveld. Before you repair to the field, I would seriously speak with you."

"What, to-day?" said Philip. "In sooth, I was never less in the mood for any thing but the flight of a grey goose wing. Only look abroad, Du Bois. See what weather we have; not a breath of air stirs to swerve an arrow from its aim. And see what a quiver I have, of the right true kind. The shafts all of ash, fine, smooth, and taper; the heads pointed to a hair; and every feather plucked the second of a choice grey goose pinion. Of all fletchers, give me Hans Van Eche; he is the man to make you an arrow to hit the clout at four hundred yards. I have," continued the gay Philip, as he shewed Du Bois his bow, with an air of uncommon interest and satisfaction, "I have, too, as fine a

long bow as even an English archer could desire; aye, and a cross bow besides, fit for a Genoese count. The prizes to-day are a gold medallion, a flagon of silver chased at Antwerp, with an arrow of the like material, headed with gold. And if an eye like a hawk, and a hand dextrous and steady, can win a prize to give to thee, Bianca, Von Artaveld will this day gain it."

"I doubt not your skill," replied Bianca, "to win any prize you think worth the attempt, were it of the highest order."

"You are a little flatterer," said Von Artaveld, as he smiled, and looked pleased, upon Bianca; "but I will do my best. Are you for the sports, Peter du Bois, or do you mean to sit there all this goodly day, looking like a man under penance, when there are young gallants, strong bows, an open field, and fair eyes to witness the contest and the prize."

"I am for the field," replied Du Bois, "but not for such sports as yours, Philip. But I pray you give me but a short audience ere you depart; I have matter of moment for your ear."

"No doubt," said Von Artaveld, "some of

your crazy schemes to root out old grievances, in order to bring in new ones; but I will hear you. Bianca, how does this jerkin look? It is made after the true fashion of a knight of St. Sebastian — a bright green cloth, close and trim, and the quiver hung right athwart the back, that scholars may think upon a Cupid when they see it. The cap smart, swaggering, and *debonair;* the bracer well set, and every tassel as it should be. Are the ——?"

"I conjure you, Philip," said Peter, "give up this vain mood, and hear me: let us talk like men."

"Why, so we do," replied Von Artaveld, "when we speak of those braveries that chiefly delight women. Your archer is nothing, unless he is set in full trim to catch a bright eye, and to win a soft heart. This bow is well bent," he continued, again examining it, "and the string of double-twisted silk, and the nock in every arrow bound over with the same." And then Von Artaveld raised his bow, drew the string close up to his ear, and let it smartly loose, as he sang again,

"The clout is struck, the prize is won," &c.

"Bianca, fairest," he added, "you will be in the field, and my bow shall make you the mistress of the revels, for I am determined to win a prize."

"Aye, and a great one it shall be," answered Bianca. "Philip, I conjure you to be serious, and hear Du Bois; time presses, and you must soon be g one. You know what I have already urged; hear Du Bois, then, I beseech you."

"I will, Bianca, I will," replied Von Artaveld, "so Peter will but leave that abominable, snarling, doleful look of his, and speak like a gentle squire of dames, and not with that croaking tone, like some grieved monk who solicits my lord abbot to eat butter during lent, lest oil should turn upon his stomach."

"Nay, but hear him seriously," said Bianca; "you know not of how much importance may be this one hour."

"I will hear him, then, with perfect gravity," replied Von Artaveld, "to pleasure you, sweet; and rather than such a sad brow should appear on the face of my Bianca, I would be serious as death."

"Aye, it is of death I would speak," said Du Bois — "the death of our liberty. This day is to seal the ruin of our ancient franchises. You know what is already done; and in order to prevent the possibility of the citizens guarding their own rights, this festival is to be the *last* of our archery; for henceforth no man is to be allowed to carry arms without a licence from the court. It is shrewdly suspected that we are indebted to Gilbert Matthew for the suggestion of this measure."

At these words Von Artaveld started as from a dream: all levity in a moment forsook his countenance, and he seemed another creature; for his follies were those of temper, they had no connection with his understanding. His mind, on the contrary, improved by education and a habit of thinking for himself, (which he really possessed, notwithstanding his light mood,) promised a character far beyond the ordinary race of men, and one that emulated the energies of his celebrated and deceased father.

"This would be indeed the death of liberty," answered Von Artaveld; "and it is such a

shameless innovation of our dearest rights as citizens, that every man, aye, every boy in Ghent, who can but draw a bow-string, will let fly an arrow, with a curse for its impetus, at the head of Gilbert Matthew, rather than yield to such dishonour. What! are we slaves? are we beasts? that we must have our claws cut, lest they should tear our masters, who worry, misuse, oppress us — and all in very wantonness. I *will* join you."

"Nay, now you are over-hasty," said Du Bois. "Hear first what I would say, and then choose your own course; we, the aggrieved citizens of Ghent, at this moment want a leader — one whose name shall rouse all hearts to follow him; and your name, Philip, is *Von Artaveld!* Your father's spirit shall once more breathe in you. It shall awake the slumbering energies of this oppressed city — it shall stir up our very children to resistance, so you will but bear our banner, and call upon all men to save their sinking country."

"I will," exclaimed Von Artaveld, with enthusiasm; "I will swear to do it. Ghent, my

birth-place, the nurse of my father's honour, and the sad witness of his murder — Ghent shall find that his son lives to revenge his death. What would you more, Du Bois? You look as if still dissatisfied. Call me to a purpose of energy — to one of noble bearing — the public good our aim, with no dark passions and selfish views to debase it: call me to *this*, and say, if Philip would not freely sacrifice his life in the cause, that he is unworthy the name of Von Artaveld."

"You will add yet a greater glory to that name," replied Peter, "and I am satisfied. I have heard men say, that when an infant you were carried to the church of St. Peter's in Ghent to be baptized; that there the good Queen Philippa, consort of Edward of England, stood sponsor to you at the font; and in compliment to her you received the name by which you are a Christian. I have heard, too, that whilst the royal matron held you in her arms, you wept as you looked up at the priest; but when Sir Walter Woodland, to soothe you after a soldier's fashion, held up the handle of his bright sword,

you caught at it and laughed, and King Edward swore '*by God's teeth, the boy would prove a lusty soldier.*' You shall fulfil the royal prophecy — you shall be our leader. The craft of a chief may soon be learned, if you will but listen to my advice — to my counsels."

"I need them not," said Philip, impatiently. "I see the whole plan — it is to hold ourselves in arms till we have obtained a redress of our grievances, and a restoration of our franchises. And if this is denied to us, to resist even to the death. To remove from our lord, the Earl of Flanders, all his base favourites, and to give him, with a set of new counsellors, a lesson how to behave towards his citizens in time to come."

"Nay, this is not all," replied Du Bois; "you must learn how to govern the base multitude you will lead on to the work. No levity, no follies — all should be stern and ruthless. The mob must be ruled by fear; can you be cruel and proud? for you will have to deal with those who, like beasts of burthen, must be driven with the goad. To render docile the senseless herd, you must be their master as well

as their leader; often renowned for cruelty, but never suspected of weakness — such weakness as men call mercy. It is thus our Flemish swine must be ruled; and the life of a man should be no more valued than the swallow or the lark that we slay for the spit."

"By my troth," answered Philip, "should I need a tutor, you, Peter, will prove one of a most ready eloquence, to teach me the law of ruling. However, all shall go well; I will teach the rascal mob to follow at my heels, as dogs attend their master, or I will whip, hang, and slay to thy heart's content. Oh, that I had but thy countenance, Peter du Bois, to begin this trade with; it would save a hangman's fees, and kill the varlets with the poison of a most villainous aspect. Come, shall we forward to the field? I know thy friends, Peter, will be there. I am prepared. Ghent shall have her freedom, or I will find a grave. Farewell, Bianca; you will be a witness of our sports. Stay, Peter, I had forgot my new green mantle; it is curiously cut of the last French fashion, and falls gracefully as I loose a shaft."

And thus, in a strange and mixed mood of extreme levity of manner, yet serious purpose of action, Von Artaveld set off with Du Bois to join the archers. Bianca, who, since her interview with Ursula, had daily worked on his mind to induce him to become a rebel, now hastened to inform the sorceress of her success. Ursula resolved that the brand thus lighted should not be suffered to expire.

CHAP. XII.

When Philip Von Artaveld and Peter du Bois left the house of the former, to join the bands of archers who were preparing to set out on their way towards the fields in which the sports were held, they found the whole town in commotion, and all the people eagerly pressing forward, with that hilarity of spirit which public exhibitions of this kind seldom fail to excite.

The place appointed for the trial of skill in the cross and long bow, was a large plain near Ghent, which commanded a full view of the city, surrounded by its massive walls, and rising above them in clustered towers and spires. The rivers Scheldt and Lis rolled silently on, reflecting in their clear surface the passing cloud, or here and there disturbed by the stately march of some vessel of burthen, or by the light ripple of the feathering oar, as the boats passed busily

along, freighted with the gallant concourse of the young and the gay.

The usual tumult of a great commercial city seemed this day to have sunk into repose, as the gates of Ghent appeared to have poured out her inhabitants in one torrent towards the plain. All the companies of the different trades, headed by their masters and deacons, walked in procession; and Gilbert Matthew and his brothers (who, at an early hour, had stationed themselves in different parts to observe what was going forward,) saw with dismay that nearly all these men were armed — a thing the more extraordinary on account of their being chiefly mechanics, who were seldom known to accustom themselves to the use of any weapon. Gilbert immediately sent intelligence of this circumstance to Lewis de Male, and begged him to abstain from the sports, lest these symptoms of preparation for assault should augur danger to his person; for as Gilbert depended entirely upon the Earl for the continuance of his own prosperity, he was cautious to keep all danger as far as possible from the person of his prince.

A mound of earth, upon which was elevated a sort of platform of wood, stood in the centre of the plain, and upon this platform a shaft was also elevated, by some skilfully adjusted scaffolding, to a height equal to that of the steeple of the cathedral. Upon the very top of this shaft was affixed a bird, carved in wood, to transfix which was to gain the chief prize of the day. The mound was also covered with various other shafts; these were lower in height than that already mentioned, but each had a wooden bird fixed at the top, and each was to confer some prize upon the archer who struck it.

On the opposite side of the plain, near the spot where the archers took their stand, appeared three pavilions, or tents, of crimson silk, embroidered and fringed with gold, bearing on their fronts the arms of Flanders (a sable lion langue d'or,) richly worked upon a ground of blue and silver. Within the centre pavilion was placed, under a canopy, the chief prizes of the day — a gold medallion, a silver flagon, and an arrow of the same metal. The tent was left open in front, that these prizes should be seen by the

people. The other two pavilions contained the minor prizes, such as small medallions, bows and arrows, &c. All these tents were appropriated to the use of the Earl of Flanders, his principal attendants, and his court; but on this day, in consequence of the information received from Gilbert Matthew, neither the Earl nor his chief courtiers appeared, a circumstance that added to the universal discontent of the aggrieved party; since, ripe to take offence from every occurrence, they construed it into a mistrust of their good faith, and an indifference shewn towards their skill in arms, and their amusements.

Near the tents spacious galleries had been constructed. These were gaily decorated with tapestry of the finest work; for the looms of Flanders, at the period of our narrative, were unrivalled in the beauty and excellence of their manufacture. Below the galleries, the heralds, the minstrels, and the trumpeters, took their stand. And at intervals, between the occupation of the sports, the minstrels played lively airs — whilst the trumpets alone announced the appear-

ance of a new candidate for the prize, and blew the shout of triumph whenever his aim was crowned with success.

The galleries were filled with ladies, dressed in all the costly and gorgeous attire the wives and daughters of the wealthy citizens of Ghent were so fond of displaying. Jewels and gold hung as thickly about their heads, their arms, and necks, as icicles hang sparkling about the boughs upon a frosty morning. On the back rows of the galleries were seated those citizens who, by age, or inaptitude to martial sports, were rendered unfit to share actively in the amusements of the day. These citizens were now present merely as spectators; and whilst they looked upon the gay throng assembled around, many an eye of pride did they cast upon the banner of their own city, which, formed of silk, and embroidered entirely with gold and pearls, hung streaming in the air above their heads.

With the conspirators, this day was marked as one of fearful import. They had been indefatigable in the arrangement of their plans.

Day and night had the leaders toiled in their exertions; and a general understanding, a general agreement, had taken place, that upon *this day* they would strike the blow; upon this day they would rouse all hearts, and animate all feelings, to procure the redress of their grievances, and the subversion of the present state of things: so that many who had hitherto continued neuter, or only wavering between submission or insurrection, should, in spite of themselves, be forced to take some active part.

Such was the concerted plot, yet it was farther arranged, that, if possible, no blood was on this day to be shed; a contest was not to take place by way of arms, till intimidation had failed of success, or till the more wealthy burghers had so mixed themselves up with the acts of the malcontents, that they should be driven on to desperate measures for their own security. These plans had been digested and agreed to by all the chief insurgents, and the more willingly, as it was thought prudent not violently to shock, at the first onset, the feelings of the more moderate and merciful of their party.

John Lyon, Peter du Bois, Arnoul le Clerc, La Nuitée, and other leaders, had directed their several parties to come into the field in armed companies, by hundreds, and fifties together. All the mechanics of the different trades, who had any share in the general discontent, were also privately directed to come armed, some on pretence of the field sports, but far the greater number as men who resolved to adhere to their old franchises, and to wear arms whenever they thought proper to do so, for their own defence.

These orders were punctually obeyed; and Gilbert Matthew and his brothers, notwithstanding they knew of discontented parties in the city, till now had no idea of their number and extent, when they appeared at once publicly, and with a gravity and resolution imprinted on each countenance, sufficient to alarm the deacon and his friends. The brothers looked with dismay upon each other, yet, conscious that if any ill were particularly aimed against themselves, flight would now be vain, since the field was covered on all sides with these people, they resolved to dissemble all suspicion, and to act

with the frankness of men who rely upon the good faith of their neighbours, trusting that neither the Earl nor the court would venture unprepared into a scene that threatened so much danger. The dark and angry appearance that surrounded them might indeed be compared to a mass of black and heavy thunder clouds, which, although not a drop of rain falls, nor a sound is heard to whisper around to disturb the air, yet threatens every moment a violent combustion.

Such was the state of things when the young men forming the two chosen bands of archers, called, by way of distinction, the Knights of St. George, and of St. Sebastian, entered the plain, in order to form into a regular line on either side of the pavilions. The knights of St. George (so called, originally, after the tutelary saint of England, as a compliment to Edward the Third during the time he visited Ghent,) were gaily attired in bright scarlet cloth, each man wearing a plume of white feathers in his archer's cap, and having around his neck a gold chain and medallion; upon the latter the battle of the saint with the dragon was

represented in high relief. Their quivers, gaily covered with embroidered silk, hung upon their shoulders; and each bore a long or a cross bow (according to his skill in either weapon) in his hand. The herald of the band walked before them, displaying their embroidered banner, and followed by minstrels and trumpets, that made all the plain ring with their loud harmony.

The knights of St. Sebastian were attired in green, and wore also a medallion, with their saint represented upon it, transfixed with arrows. This band was headed by Philip Von Artaveld, whose high and martial spirit, and excellence in arms, had rendered him exceedingly popular with all the young men of Ghent.

It may well be supposed that the appearance of two such companies of archers, all picked and chosen for their skill and agility, the very flower of the youth of the city, was calculated to produce a feeling of universal interest, as they marched forward, their looks animated with the fervour of hope and emulation, and their steps measured to the sounds of music.

Yet on the present occasion, there was such

an universal chill, such a feeling of general interest of a more vital character, such a sense of suppressed expectation, that had been excited in the bosoms of all present by the formidable appearance of the armed bodies, headed by the conspirators, that the sports seemed to be scarcely a matter of interest; and the shouts of universal greeting, which at any other period would have shook the vault of Heaven, as these gallant bands appeared, now burst but partially forth, and soon died away in low murmurs. "It is well it should be so," said Peter du Bois to Von Artaveld, who noticed this want of the usual acclamations. "Since this is to be the last festival of archery, since our sports are to be put down, till it pleases the court to give us leave again to draw a bow, we ought not to expect rejoicing and acclamations over our expiring honour; and this day is marked for the death of our archery."

"It shall be first marked with my own death," replied Von Artaveld, in a whisper, to Du Bois; "I can bear much as a citizen, rather than disturb public tranquillity, but there is a point

beyond which no man ought to use forbearance. We will never tamely witness the death of our franchises, one by one, till we have lost them all, and are reduced to slaves. But come — our men prepare for the sports; if this is to be the last of them, at least we will shew, that if they allow us not the bird for the bolt, we know how to aim surely, and at better marks, if they provoke us."

The young men now severally stood forward to display their skill in archery. These principally consisted of the knights of St. George and St. Sebastian, but others, not belonging to either party, were allowed to mingle with the sports, and to loose a shaft, although few availed themselves of the indulgence, since all the most skilful had enrolled themselves in one or other of these celebrated bands; and it was rarely seen that any youth had the hardihood, or the skill, to venture rivalry with such practised bowmen. So excellent, indeed, was their skill, that scarcely was there an archer of St. George, or St. Sebastian, but he struck a bird on the lower shafts, for the highest was yet unattempted; and though

all would have rejoiced to strike it, and thus to gain the chief prize, yet the fear of failure deterred many from the attempt, so that the contest seemed reserved for a few of the most experienced on either side.

To strike the bird fixed on the highest shaft was an honour that conferred upon the successful candidate the rank of master of the festival; and he was treated with a deference due to a victor during the rest of the day, heading the procession on its return to Ghent, and offering up public thanks for his success at the high altar of St. Bavon, where he heard mass, and paid his duty, attended by all the archers of the different companies, before he proceeded to the town-hall, to receive the prize, which was publicly conferred upon him, accompanied with the most interesting ceremonies. These were circumstances of honour sufficient to raise emulation in every youthful breast, and had greatly contributed towards that eager desire for excellence in archery, which so much distinguished the young men of Ghent.

Peter du Bois now took his station to try for

the first prize, and the trumpet sounded as he prepared to shoot. Peter slowly and deliberately aimed at the mark before him, held the arrow some time in his hand when drawn to the head, and let it hang upon the bow-string before it made its swift flight through the air. The shaft failed of striking the bird, yet it passed within a quarter of a yard's breadth of the mark. No trumpet sounded, for Peter was unsuccessful.

"Come," said Von Artaveld, "now give place to me. That shaft failed because you looked at the head of the arrow instead of the mark, when you took your aim. I will teach you better, Peter."

"Stay, Philip Von Artaveld," exclaimed a citizen, who acted as marshal of the bowmen, "stay, you must not loose a shaft yet, since your superiors are come into the field. Here is Sir Walter d'Anghien, and two or three others of the court; they are this moment arrived, and would try their fortunes. Let them shoot first."

"They shall not, by St. Sebastian, whose badge I wear; they shall not," cried the youth, with much warmth. "They are late comers;

and better would it be had they not come at all, since their lord, the Earl of Flanders, disdains us and our sports. He does not visit the field, and why should any of his court step in, and think to carry off the prize from us who are citizens, and despised by them? It is my turn to loose an arrow; and, by all the saints of Heaven, if any one dares to intercept my right, the shaft shall have other aim than yonder bird."

So saying, Von Artaveld lost not a moment to make good his claim; he instantly stept forward, stood firmly and uprightly, raised the bow, fixed the shaft, and then drew the bow-string quite up to his ear, and the arrow to its head, looked for a moment stedfastly at the mark, and smartly letting slip the shaft, by withdrawing his fingers, it whizzed through the air with such velocity that the eye could not keep pace with its flight, struck the bird, and remained fixed in the mark. The trumpet instantly sounded, and loud and reiterated shouts from the knights of St. Sebastian proclaimed the triumph of their party.

Sir Walter d'Anghien, a fine young man, who was both the nephew and the ward of the Earl of Flanders, now advanced, desirous to take some share in the sports, and to loose a shaft. But murmurs arose on every side as he approached, not from any personal enmity towards himself, for he was yet scarcely known to the people of Ghent, but the circumstance of his belonging to the court, and his near kindred to the Earl, at this moment rendered him obnoxious to the people; who, glad of an opportunity to shew how much they resented the supposed affront Lewis de Male had put upon them, by absenting himself from the sports, now were unanimous in treating with contempt one of the Earl's family and court.

The leaders of the disaffected bands observed this with secret exultation, and they hailed the murmurs of disrespect vented against Sir Walter d'Anghien as the proper signal to begin their intended disturbance. Peter du Bois hastened to join John Lyon, and whispered to him, "Now, now, let us forward to the work — all is ready — our men will join the cry, and this field

of sports we will turn to one of confusion. Remember the charge we are to make against the court; Sir Walter is here — let us begin by turning the tide of wrath against him."

"Forward then," answered John Lyon; "all is indeed prepared, and our measures will take every one by surprise — they will intimidate our enemies; for after what we have already done, we must drive it on to extremities. Peace, however sealed, would spare neither your head nor mine, Peter; we have done too much for that already."

"On, then, in the devil's name," said Du Bois; and turning to his own band, he continued, "Follow me, my masters, for you all know I lead you on that you may all find justice." Without farther parley, he snatched up a bugle that hung at his breast, blew thrice a shrill blast, which was echoed and answered in like manner by the bugles of all the captains and leaders of the insurgents. This was the signal, and in a few minutes all their bands rushed forward. "Seize them, seize Sir Walter d'Anghien and the Matthews," exclaimed Du

Bois; "they come, my fellow-citizens, deputed by the Earl of Flanders, to put down your ancient sports — to proclaim that henceforth no man of Ghent shall carry arms, even for his own defence, save by a licence from the court. Will you suffer this? Will you thus tamely yield franchise after franchise, till your liberties are lost for ever?"

"Never, never," shouted a thousand voices at once; "we will have our franchises — we will be righted." "Down with the Matthews; no innovations." "Restore our citizen; we will have him from the Earl's prison." "We will have our rights." "We will avenge our wrongs." These and a thousand other tumultuous shouts burst from all sides at once.

The leaders of the insurgents each addressed various companies of the citizens, in different parts of the field, stirring up their minds to violence and rebellion. Sir Walter d'Anghien, his companions, and the Matthews, were suddenly assaulted by Du Bois's band; and seeing how vain would be all opposition against such

numbers, they could do nothing but submit in silence.

In the mean time, John Lyon, Arnoul le Clerc, and others, hastened from place to place in the field, using every argument to inflame the minds of the people; and especially setting before them, in the worst light, the breach of their liberties, by the Earl's detaining in prison one of their own citizens, Sir Simon de Bête, an act contrary to law, unless sanctioned by their own warrant. The purposed suppression of the sports, the impost on the pilots, the tax on the navigation of the Scheldt, with every cause of offence, real or supposed, was at this moment brought forward to stir up the assembled multitude to open rebellion.

The train had been already long prepared, and now that the match was laid to it, the fire ran swiftly through the whole line, and exploded in a violent and general conflagration; for such a train had been the machinations of the artful Du Bois. The citizens shouted for redress, they hailed the leaders of the insurgents

with heart and soul, some shook them by the hand, others greeted them as the deliverers of their country, all were unanimous in support of their cause. The mob joined the general cry. The different trades rallied round their banners, and as they waved backwards and forwards in the air, declared their willingness to die under them, or to regain their rights. The mariners and pilots hailed their old deacon, and once more declared for John Lyon, avowing they would no longer pay imposts to Gilbert Matthew or his brethren.

To describe the universal tumult, which at this moment prevailed, throughout an extensive plain where thousands were assembled, would be impossible: it had now risen to such a height that every one spoke or shouted, whilst no one listened; and a mingled uproar of sounds, that resembled a chaos of noise from violent spirits, broke loose from the depths of perdition, and contending for the mastery, alone indicated that the purpose of insurrection was now universal.

In vain did the leaders endeavour to procure silence to address the people, till Peter du Bois,

after shouting till he was hoarse, alternately begging and commanding attention, at length so far succeeded as to be able to make the citizens and insurgents comprehend, that whatever measures they might wish to adopt, it was absolutely necessary they should first begin by the election of a *chief*, who would guide them on with courage and wisdom to recover their franchises and establish their liberty.

Scarcely had he done speaking, when a voice, elevated with passion, loud and discordant in its tones, burst from the multitude, crying, "A chief! a chief! aye, your ancient chief, Von Artaveld! His spirit lives, moves, still breathes in his son, Von Artaveld, Von Artaveld." At these words, a woman rushed forward; and holding a white hood extended in one hand, and a large knife brandished in the other, Ursula stood in view of the multitude.

Thousands looked upon her sudden presence, and the prophetic tone in which she pronounced the name of Von Artaveld, as an augury of high import — as the voice of destiny proclaiming a chief. With the lower orders

the presence of Ursula had a peculiar influence; they beheld her with fear, but such a fear as carried with it the most absolute belief of her supernatural powers, and entire submission to her authority. The leaders of the insurgents, who before suspected, and now witnessed what a powerful effect her presence would produce to assist their cause, encouraged the impression she made upon the multitude, and assuming an air of the most absolute attention, appeared ready to obey her behests.

Ursula, at this moment, had placed herself upon that platform, near the pavilions that had been raised for the archers, from which they had aimed at the mark. Philip Von Artaveld was still upon the spot. Ursula now stood in a firm and raised attitude; her hair streaming in the wind; her looks wild, disordered, and enthusiastic; whilst her eye gazed upwards, fixed on the vacant space, as if contemplating something beyond the vision of mere mortal creatures. She raised her arm, extended the white hood, and, in a voice of deep intonation, assumed her prophetic strain. "To thee, to thee, Von

Artaveld, thy father's spirit descends; he calls thee to follow his footsteps; he calls thee to deliver thy country. And be *this*," she said, as she placed the white hood upon the head of Von Artaveld; " be *this* the ensign of your cause. The white hood that was cursed, shall curse the prince who scorned it. Let not a man of you grasp a dagger, or draw a sword, till a white hood covers his brow. For it is Ursula, the prophetess — Ursula, the sovereign of the elements, the mistress of spirits — she who can move upon the floods, or sail along the air; Ursula, who can ope the book of fate, though hidden in the lowest depths of hell; it is she who now unfolds that dark and terrible volume, to tell you that the white hood shall prevail — the white hood shall be the restorer of your liberties, pure and free from stain, as its own unblemished hue, whilst it covers the heads of your oppressors with the blood of tyrants. Ye men of Ghent, then lift up your voice with one accord, and let your cry be Von Artaveld! The White Hoods for liberty! the White Hoods for Ghent!

The multitude in an instant caught the spirit of enthusiasm which her wild eloquence diffused around, and "The White Hoods for Von Artaveld!" "The White Hoods for liberty!" "The White Hoods for Ghent!" was shouted, echoed, and repeated from mouth to mouth, and band to band.

Whilst Ursula addressed the crowd, and whilst their thundering exclamations still rent the air in reiterated clamour, several persons prepared for the occasion came forward, and, as in a moment, a thousand white hoods were distributed amongst the parties of the chief insurgents, and others of the discontented citizens, who now openly joined them. And this their sudden distribution was devoutly attributed by the vulgar to a miracle, wrought by the supernatural power of Ursula. But the artful plan of the hag, supported and carried on by the connivance of her employer, Peter du Bois, may sufficiently account for the miracle of the white hoods. It had been the aim of Du Bois, that some peculiar mark of distinction should be worn as the uniform badge of his mixed followers, in order to render their persons so known and conspicuous,

that the danger to themselves, of deserting his cause, would outweigh that of adhering to it. All the necessary preparations, therefore, for thus distributing the white hoods, had been previously made at no small expence, and with the utmost diligence and secrecy.

When the tumult had in some measure subsided from its first loud burst, the knights of St. Sebastian, delighted that in the election of a chief the choice had fallen upon their own captain, Philip Von Artaveld, now hailed him as their leader in the public cause, and, with unfeigned joy, promised to support him at all times and through all dangers. Philip essayed to speak, but it was some time before he could obtain a hearing; for the murmurs and acclamations of the multitude still continued, whilst the bands of the insurgents, like the restless billows of the ocean, moved backward and forward with unceasing agitation, as the enthusiasm of party spirit rose or fell.

Philip, at length, succeeded in obtaining attention, and having previously called to his side the Lord de Harzelle, who held a high office in Ghent, and John de Faucille, a prudent

and wealthy citizen, he thus addressed the people; "Citizens, you have this day chosen me as your chief, from the honour and affection in which you hold the memory of my father, who, you are all unanimous in avowing, devoted himself to the good of your city, raised your opulence, and confirmed your franchises. You expect much from me, my fellow-citizens, who have neither his judgment, nor his experience, to steer the public bark through a sea so tempestuous as that of these stormy times. My father saved you all from sinking in a like peril, and you requited the debt by murdering him! What then will be my security, should I accept the rule you now offer me? If my father's fate is to be mine, it will be but a miserable recompence."

"No, no, you are safe — you are secure — your father was allied with England. He gave our revenues to King Edward; but you are safe. Your father was murdered by a party, by a traitor." These expressions burst forth from several who stood near Von Artaveld. He resumed his address: —

"I do accept the election. You have named me to be your chief — I accept it, not from private motives, or any desire of personal advancement, but from the love I bear my native city, and from a wish that the opulence and liberties my father secured to her with so much labour, and sealed with his death, should not be lost for the want of a chief who will maintain your franchises. But I demand a council to act with me."

"You shall have a council," said Peter du Bois; "a council composed of the leaders of our people, and the principal citizens, and you shall propose our first measure."

"Let it be one of reason, justice, and moderation," replied Von Artaveld; "let it ——"

"Who talks of moderation?" exclaimed Ursula, as she once more stept forward on the platform. "Is it you, Von Artaveld? when these eyes of mine, but yesterday, beheld the most accursed sight they ever looked upon — a thing that threatens the total ruin of your city. For but yesterday did I behold the people of Bruges toiling at that work which is to turn the

course of the river Lis from your good town of Ghent, to ruin all your commerce."

This intelligence, that the canal at Bruges was actually begun, spread like wildfire, and once more roused the people to madness. They would have instant redress; they would march in a body towards Bruges, and the first act of the White Hoods should be to destroy the work, even though in so doing they destroyed the workers. Philip Von Artaveld again addressed the multitude.

"My fellow-citizens," he exclaimed, "I am chosen by you as your chief, and for your advantage I am to act in concert with your leaders. I am ready to do all that is necessary, and all that is daring, to obtain the redress of your grievances; but let me counsel you before you resort to hostile measures, before you shed the blood of those who, born in the same land, are ruled by the same prince as yourselves, before you commence a bloody war upon your country, I conjure you to hear my proposal. Let an honourable deputation, composed of such persons as you choose to name, wait upon the Earl; let

our clerks, learned in the laws, and our citizens, valiant in supporting them, — let them represent to Lewis de Male all our grievances, and demand redress. And, as a pledge of the Earl's good faith towards Ghent, let them solicit him to bring back with them Sir Simon de Bête, who now lies a prisoner at Ecclo."

"Von Artaveld has spoken well; we will have it so; he shall head the deputation. Let the Earl give up our citizen; we will have him out of prison." These and many other exclamations again burst from the surrounding crowd.

"In the mean time, my friends," continued Von Artaveld, "I, as your chief, command that Sir Walter d'Anghien and his companions, against whom we have no charge, be set at liberty. Sir Walter has not injured us, nor can he in reason be responsible for the conduct of his uncle; and you have no right to detain him as a hostage, till you are driven to commence a war by a refusal of redress. Sir Walter, you and your noble friends are free to return to Andrighien. Our knights of St. Sebastian

shall conduct you thither in safety, if you need an escort. For you, Gilbert Matthew, and your brothers, our citizens, in a fitting time and place, have much to charge against you all, but you must also be liberated. Von Artaveld will suffer no prisoners to be made of unarmed men, nor of any but such as may be ours in war, if all our efforts to obtain redress should fail us."

This proposal was loudly seconded by John de Faucille, the lord of Harzelle, and several of the more respectable class of citizens. Even the artful leaders of the insurgents could find no just pretext to oppose against it. Von Artaveld was accordingly named as the head of the deputation to wait upon the Earl. Peter du Bois and John Lyon, who caught at every opportunity to mortify and embroil the Matthews in difficulties, now artfully proposed, that as Gilbert Matthew, and his brother Stephen, were both citizens of Ghent by birth, they should also join in the deputation. In their present situation Du Bois well knew they dared not refuse; and he proposed the measure with a view that, in in case an answer should be returned of an

offensive nature from the Earl, he might seize the occasion for throwing the blame of mismanagement upon Gilbert Matthew — a circumstance that, in all probability, would render the new deacon alike obnoxious to his master and to the people. All was now arranged; and Philip Von Artaveld, instead of returning as victor of the archers into Ghent, set off, at the head of the deputation, to wait upon the Earl of Flanders at Andrighien.

John Lyon and Peter du Bois, desirous of a private conference, returned with their bands towards the city. The mob now began to disperse, and the graver and elder class of citizens walked, alarmed and discontented, towards their own homes; whilst the different leaders and captains of the White Hoods, having received their secret orders from Du Bois, commanded that their men should be held in such a state of preparation that they might be ready for action at a moment's notice.

In a few hours the plain was completely cleared of the multitude; but still, here and there, were seen stragglers who lingered near it,

anxious for the return of the deputation. The streets of Ghent, which in general exhibited groups of people busied in commerce, as they thronged and jostled each other, each individual intent upon some personal duty or concern, now presented a very different aspect to the stirring occupations of traffic. Here were men seen strolling up and down with arms in their hands, a feeling of stern expectation imprinted on each countenance. At times they spoke together in an earnest, but mysterious, manner. And elsewhere might be observed other citizens collected into small parties — some vehemently talking, whilst their neighbours only listened, and shrugged up their shoulders in silence. Even the idle were now active, but for mischief; and the very women joined the mob, and, casting off all the decorum of their sex, railed louder than the men against the times, and helped to stir up rebellion.

The shops of armourers, smiths, and fletchers, were literally thronged with people desirous to provide themselves with arms, either to join the insurrection, or to guard their own property

against its violent effects. Some houses were closed up, whilst others were opened; and every hotel in Ghent was crowded with persons who came to hear the news, or to learn what had passed, or to settle what was to be done: in short, each man to talk politics more boldly than he had dared to do of late, and each to settle public affairs after his own way.

It may well be supposed that this was a busy time with Martha Van Dredgger, and her husband Gerard, the host and hostess of the Moon, whose common hall was now filled to overflow, with citizens, mechanics, and artisans, of all descriptions, besides divers of the more important members of the White Hoods. "Here!" cried Gerard, "here! a flagon of the best ale for Peter la Nuitée, the captain of the worshipful company of the glass-men." "A stool there, for Master Vanderblast, banner-bearer of the same." "And do ye hear, wife! bring a trencher and a knife for David Oxhead, the butcher, one of our strongest supporters of liberty, who will knock you down a courtier like a calf, if he dare but touch so much as the tip of the horn of a fran-

chise. Worthy citizens!" continued the host, who, like most men of his calling, constantly chimed in with the popular feeling of his guests, "worthy citizens! I drink this cup to the success of the White Hoods of Ghent; fill up to the brim, and drink to me the same."

This example was eagerly followed by the guests, and "Success to the White Hoods of Ghent!" echoed through the apartment, as they roared it out with much spirit and good will; and Gerard lost no time in chalking up the score of flagons that had washed it down their throats. Gerard now determined that the spirits of his guests should not expire for want of fuel to keep them in a blaze: he bustled every where, and set the drawers at full work, whilst his particular instructions were reserved for the ear of his no less bustling little spouse. "Here, wife! here, Martha!" said he, "run down to the cellars, and tell the boys to broach all the casks of stale beer; the citizens are getting warm; Vanderblast is making them a speech; they are all so hot-headed and dry-mouthed, that bad beer will go down as well as the best, and we

shall get cleared of the old stock. And do you mix the sour wine with the clary; they will never find it out; they talk so much about the sweets of liberty, that it would be strange, indeed, if it did not sweeten their cups. Brisk, brisk, I say; go and do as I bid you; I must be stirring here. Save us, all the saints! how Vanderblast gets on; he talks like a judge in any court, and shouts out speeches like an ass braying against rainy weather! Well, these are strange times; every one to his business, and mine is to make the most of them."

Vanderblast, already known to the reader as having acted in the capacity of the city watch on the night of the arrest of Sir Simon de Bête, was, indeed, at this moment exerting all the powers of his eloquence in laying down the law, and in asserting the justice of the cause he had so warmly espoused. Timothy Vanderblast had long been the oracle of the ale-bench at the Moon; and to a most insufferable conceit of his own wisdom, he united an attempt at a style of discourse superior to his station, a piece of presumption he had originally contracted by having,

in early life, acted as turn-spit in the kitchens of the public college at Liege, before he was promoted to the station of a glassman's apprentice at Ghent, for which promotion he quitted his former honourable employ in the service of that learned body. But Timothy brought to Ghent all the learning he could pick up second-hand from the varlets of the students at Liege; when upon his migration to this city, his abuse of hard words, and constant habit of talking about what he did not understand, procured for him the pre-eminence above noticed. On the present occasion his oracular wisdom had displayed itself in a speech, as his auditory of mechanics and apprentices sat gazing, open-mouthed, in silent astonishment, around him.

At length David Oxhead, the butcher, declared, as he gave Vanderblast a hearty slap on the back, "By the blessed Saint Nicholas! brother Timothy, you have made as good a speech as the Earl himself could have done, had he turned rebel to upset his own rule; and I say that Master Vanderblast shall be voted spokes-

man of the company, for he has a throat like a bull, and a heart like an ox."

"And the brains of a calf," said Gerard, with a chuckle, for he loved to pop in a bit of his own wit.

"I thank you, neighbour," replied Vanderblast to Oxhead, "I thank you for your good will. You are pleased to say so of me; and I believe that I may have some trick of the schools, for I can write my name, or blow a glass bottle, with any man in Ghent. And as for the arts, my mother used to say that when I was a boy, I sucked them in like mother's milk, so that I could count from one to fourscore before I was fourteen years old, which made me take my manhood a year before the usual time.* And for the sciences, I was always specially fond of the law."

"Well," said Jeremy Von Stitchen, a jerkin-maker of Ghent, "I say it, and I don't care who

* When the son of a burgher above twelve years of age could count from one to fourscore, he was considered old enough for commerce, and said to take his manhood.

knows it, that Master Vanderblast can give reasons for things as well as a priest. And as I, to be a neighbourly man and a good citizen, would not desert my fellows, but am willing to join the rebellion in a peaceable way, I should like to know reasons for what we are going to fight about; and therefore, as I hear it is to hold up the liberty of the franchises of Ghent, be so good, Master Vanderblast, as to give us some reasons, out of the arts and sciences, for what a franchise may mean."

"I understand you," replied Vanderblast, with a significant wink of much satisfaction; "you would know what the word imputes, what it comes from; or, as we of the school say, the *chronology* of the word franchise?"

"Justly so," answered Von Stitchen, "and most aptly taken."

Vanderblast looked wise, held up his head, hemmed, and with a most provokingly instructive air, thus expounded: "A franchise, Master Jeremy Von Stitchen, is a thing specially pertaining to the law, and by it upheld for us citizens, for the benefit of us and our *predecessors*,

to the latest generation. It is the citizen's good name, his boast, and his *extinction*. In short, a franchise is a franchise, and means a restraint to do all things according to law, whereupon we found our grounds of rebellion. A franchise allows of seeking for justice in our own way, without being cheated by the lawyers to help us to it. It gives us liberty to put up whom we please, and to put down whom we please, when things go wrong in the state; and to hang all the nobles, who are no better than they should be. It extinguishes all that is profitable, and smashes earls, governments, and princes with as much ease as if they were made of glass. This is the meaning of the word franchise, and for this we will live or die like loyal rebels, and magnanimous conspirators."

"That we will," said Oxhead; "and rather than brook tyrants and tyranny, we will turn this city into the slaughter-house of justice, and kill and knock down every beast of them all, without favour or distinction."

"But what I am most thinking about," said a mariner of the Scheld, "is, how the devil that

old woman could make the White Hoods fly about so fast as they did to-day. Why, they came as thick about our ears as sea-gulls drive on shore before stormy weather; the witch raised them as fast, and with as much ease, as she would the old one himself."

"She raised them with more ease, I take it," said the host, "than she could put them down again, so long as they leave us a head to wear them upon."

"What! do *you* talk of wearing a white hood, man," said Oxhead to the host, "and *your* house so specially in favour with my lord's great man, Gilbert Matthew? Your ears will pay for it."

"May be not," answered Gerard, "for my ears are always open to a customer, and my tongue too. Us of the public vocation, Master Oxhead, must live for the public, as we live by the public; and though I wish well to every White Hood of you all, I have no ill-will towards my lord or his people, for they are good friends to the spigot and flagon; and a man must live by his friends. So I see no harm, in drinking this cup, to say,

Heaven bless the Earl, and the White Hoods to boot."

This comical mixture of a spirit of loyalty and treason, so openly avowed by the simple Gerard, produced more mirth than anger, and the whole party resumed their politics, and seasoned each discussion with so many flagons, drawn from the cellars of the host, that it was confidently averred, when Martha Van Dredgger next attended mass, and offered up a lighted candle to the shrine of her favourite saint, she accompanied the offering with a petition, that the rebellion of the White Hoods might especially be suffered to prevail, for the good of the Moon.

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would neither satisfy the resentment of the one, nor improve the bankrupt estate of the other.

Still, neither John Lyon nor Peter du Bois were yet so far gone in guilt as to be wholly reckless of their deeds. They began by hoping to achieve their object without the commission of actual cruelty upon others. How far they afterwards increased in crime, as their evil propensities gathered strength by indulgence, will be seen in the sequel.

John Lyon, upon meeting Du Bois, appeared thoughtful and moody, and there was something of indifference in his manner that surprised the nephew, for he did not enter warmly into what was their usual subject of discussion. "You are but in bad spirits this evening, uncle," said Peter; "what has happened, may I ask, thus to affect you?"

"To speak truth," replied John Lyon, "I have this day been much moved by the earnest remonstrances of my daughter; she fears our plans will end badly, and, timid as she used to be towards me, she has now cast it off, and is grown as bold in argument almost as ourselves.

She has had the audacity to urge — in short, she has plainly told me, I am nothing better than a traitor to my prince, who so lately spared my life, when my own party had not strength enough to guard me from the laws. She threatened me with the vengeance of Heaven if I persisted, and then, with so many tears, with such an affectionate importunity, conjured me to abandon my false friends, as she termed them, that I was nearly shaken in my purpose. However, at length I succeeded in getting rid of her supplications, by sending her to pray for me at the vespers of St. Nicholas."

"And can this move a man engaged in plots like ours?" said Du Bois, sneeringly. "If such things affect you, uncle, you should not have gone thus far in matters of deep moment. My pretty cousin, Anna, means well; but she knows nothing of our affairs, nor shall she. Women should keep the house, and mind their toys and their prayers, and not interfere with things beyond their sense; nor should the cry of a petted girl move the spirit of a man, who looks to overturn a country. Fie, fie, out upon it —

it is unworthy of you. But I have news that will demand our utmost vigilance, to prevent its fatal effects to our cause. You must act this night, or all is over."

"What do you mean, Peter," exclaimed John Lyon. "This must be news, indeed."

"Aye, and such news," replied Du Bois, "as we little thought to hear. Could I have foreseen what has chanced, I would rather have chosen the devil for a chief than Von Artaveld. Would you think it; he so harangued my Lord of Flanders, that Lewis called him a brave spirit, overwhelmed him with commendations, and has promised to take off the tax on the navigation of the Scheld; to prevent the canal going on at Bruges; and, as a warrant for his farther good intentions towards Ghent, resolved to set Sir Simon de Bête at liberty; and to-morrow the foolish old goldsmith intends to gratify his ridiculous pomp, by making a public entry into the city. And what think you is the condition stipulated as *our* part of the performance, in requital for these condescensions of my lord?"

"Perhaps to pay some yearly levy, of our own naming," said John Lyon.

"No," replied Du Bois; "we are required to tear off our white hoods; to lay down our arms; and that your head and mine, as the instigators of revolt, shall be at the *mercy* of Lewis de Male."

"That is as much as to say," said the uncle, "that they may be taken off so soon as Gilbert Matthew bids the provost raise the axe, and he will not tarry in the bidding."

"That will be the end of it," answered Du Bois; "though Von Artaveld protests he has expressly stipulated no danger shall fall upon our heads, and that the Earl, having the power to do so, will dismiss us with a reprimand."

"I will not trust to it, however," said John Lyon; "something must instantly be done; we must gain over all our parties, and the several trades, to determine upon keeping on their white hoods; they must promise to stand by us and uphold our acts, before my ancient friend, Sir Simon de Bête, can be known to be set free from prison. If *he* appears, as the pledge of the

Earl's good faith, ere the people are secured — are our own — all will be lost, indeed."

"Leave me to deal with Sir Simon," said Du Bois; "I have a trap ready to catch the old fox; he shall not be at liberty to do us mischief. He sends me word, that the Earl has graciously communicated his intention of liberating him, and that he could wish me to meet him without the walls of Ghent, that I may marshal him to the market-place, where he will surprise the citizens with such an address upon his captivity and restoration, as they never yet heard. Look, here is Sir Simon's letter; and the old goldsmith writes with as much importance as if the world itself had stopped on its wheels since he was confined, and could only be set going again when he was once more free."

"His wife, the Lady Judith, I understand," said John Lyon, "has been most violent in her complaints to our burgomasters, in consequence of his detention."

"She has, indeed," answered Du Bois. "The shrew missed her husband too much, to be long without him; she wanted Sir Simon for

the exercise of her tongue, to rail at its accustomed object. Doubtless the dame has laid up stores of wrath to welcome the good man, who now escapes a prison to return to a worse thraldom. But the varlets and the waiting damsels will rejoice, since, beside their own storms, they have lately endured those that would otherwise have been showered on Sir Simon."

Whilst Du Bois made these remarks, in his usual tone of sarcastic observation, John Lyon walked slowly towards the upper end of the room, and suddenly pausing, he turned about, and said to Du Bois, "Nephew, I have bethought me of a plan which can be executed to save us. Yet we must not trust Von Artaveld with all our measures. He is young, brave, and of a noble spirit. It is well we have chosen him for our chief, since he has an unlimited influence with our more sober citizens; and his name acts, even like a spell of Ursula's, to rouse and animate our people. But though I grant all this, Von Artaveld is neither politic nor secret; he will do every thing in the open light of day; and, however bold and useful he might

be in the execution of our schemes, he would do them rashly; we, perhaps, have been rash, too, in choosing him so soon. But still *we* are the leaders of our *own* bands; we can command *them* without *his* concurrence. First tell me *when* is it that the Earl of Flanders will send to demand that the white hoods should be cast off, and that your head and mine shall attend upon his mercy and his will?"

"I have not positively learnt the time," answered Du Bois. "But some say that his bailiff will appear in the square of the market-place to-morrow, and there issue the proclamation."

"Then," said John Lyon, "will I be busy this night. Let all our men, each wearing his white hood, and fully armed, be assembled at an early hour to-morrow morning. We will then march them in a body to the market-place. I have not time to communicate my further purpose at present. But, at any rate, Sir Simon must not be suffered to harangue the people, and his being at liberty for the present must rest unknown, else the citizens may so far rely upon

the promises of the Earl, seeing one fulfilled, that they may patch up a peace with Lewis on easy terms; this shall not be done, and we must force them to do something that shall render peace more dangerous than war."

"Your orders shall be punctually fulfilled," replied Du Bois. "Why now, uncle, you are yourself again, and speak and act as a man. Away, then, with women and folly; think no more of your daughter, and leave the house without bidding her farewell, or you will turn again by her breath, like the vane on the town steeple. Arnoul le Clerc shall head our people, and conduct them wherever you will join them. And as for Sir Simon, I, and a body of my chosen friends, will deal with him before sunrise to-morrow, for he leaves his prison to-night. He shall make no public speeches, I warrant you. But there is one thing essential — we want *money*. I bestowed our last bag of crowns amongst our rascals, upon the morning of the archery. We have yet committed no public outrage; actual hostilities are not yet begun, so

that we cannot yet help ourselves from the bags of others, and our men must have money to secure them ours; they thirst for more of that dross, for which they would sell both body and soul to the highest bidder."

"This is a hard point," said John Lyon. "I have little left. Gilbert Matthew deprived me of my office, and since then, gold, land, jewels, all I had, has been spent in forwarding our cause. My fortune is almost as broken as your own. Unless we begin to act soon, I shall be little better than a beggar."

"If things, then, are so desperate with you, we must look for gold elsewhere," answered Peter; "for gold must be had, and this night too. Let me see; what can be done? We cannot ask Von Artaveld, since he must not know of our present scheme. But I know one who *has* the means; and I will gain it, if possible by fair words, and if not——" Du Bois stopt short, and struck forcibly the haft of his sword, as he grasped it and half drew it from its sheath.

"Of whom do you speak?" said John Lyon, who did not choose to notice the action, though he remarked it.

"I speak," replied Peter, "of that wretched old dotard, Bernard Goldthrift, the Antwerp usurer, who joined us, because the Earl of Flanders laughed at his threats for bond debts, and Gilbert Matthew paid back the principal, and purloined the interest for his own benefit; a treasurer worthy of his master. I will see old Goldthrift. The wretch has stores of wealth, yet dies daily in the fear of want, whilst age and misery lead him by a protracted torture to that grave which soon must hold his wretched body — a mere anatomy that will scarcely fatten a worm."

"You will never get a crown from him," said John Lyon, "unless your securities were as substantial as a prince could offer."

"I will try, however," answered Du Bois; "and, in the mean time, do you prepare every thing for to-morrow; I will meet you again before I rest, but not here. In my own house, this night, we will once again hold a conference with

Arnoul le Clerc and our friends, in our usual council chamber."

"I will meet you there at midnight," said John Lyon; "till then, farewell."

With this agreement the uncle and the nephew parted. John Lyon lost no time in directing his bands of White Hoods what to do, and Peter du Bois went in quest of Bernard Goldthrift, who now resided in Ghent, and whom the reader may remember as forming one of the secret conclave, whose presence so much shocked Anna, at the house of Peter du Bois.

When Du Bois entered the habitation of the wretched usurer, he was shewn into an inner apartment, where every thing seemed to speak the mind and the manners of the owner. The room was large, gloomy, and ancient; the windows, placed near the ceiling, were guarded, like a prison, with iron bars; and not only was every arrangement in the house devoid of the elegance which wealth can supply, but an appearance of poverty and meanness seemed studiously adopted; for comfort or convenience were things that had never been found within the dwelling of old

Bernard. The walls of the room, black from time and the accumulated dust of ages, reeked with damp; here nothing seemed to thrive but the spiders, which, large in size and numerous in their generation, had made their webs of hanging festoons from cornice to cornice in undisturbed security.

A stove was fixed in one corner of the apartment. A rough hewn oak table stood in the centre, and near to it a chair of great antiquity, and probably of German manufacture, since three of the legs represented, in rude carving, animals common to the forest. The fourth had been a repair of old Bernard's, cut out of common deal. In a niche was a crucifix, and near it a second table, containing a vast quantity of brown and dusty parchments, with a variety of miscellaneous articles, that seemed to have been collected together without any purpose of utility. These had most likely been saved by the miser from the rubbish of his less thrifty acquaintance; for *that nothing should be lost, or could be useless*, was a maxim which Goldthrift had all his life

observed. He was a great collector, therefore, of whatever he could get for nothing; and, like many other collectors, he had stores of relics, whose only character was their uselessness, and whose only value might be their age.

The room was hung with tapestry of the old Flemish school, which represented the austerities of several celebrated saints; some were flaying their backs for the honour of the church, whilst others, the woeful apparitions of abstinence and superstition, looked almost as bare-boned as the skeleton, which was introduced as an emblem of death, at their feet. It was not at all improbable that the images thus constantly presented to the eyes of the usurer, might act upon his mind as a subject of encouragement and emulation in his own habits of self-denial; for meagre living had wasted every muscle of Goldthrift's body, and had consumed the very skin upon his bones. His eyes sunk in their sockets, and yet (from contrast with his hollow cheeks,) seemingly almost starting from his head, rendered him altogether so ghastly an object, that had a painter

desired a study, personally to embody the idea of famine, Bernard Goldthrift would have been the model of his choice.

The door had been opened to Du Bois by a girl of about twelve years old; her countenance was thin and sickly. The child having the misfortune to be the orphan niece of old Bernard, was at once his companion, his drudge, and his housekeeper — assisted occasionally in her domestic duties by an old man, who, from mere habit rather than gratitude, continued to afford some slight service to the usurer, as he doled out to him a paltry pittance under the name of charity.

Peter told the child he had business of importance with her uncle, and much desired to see him; but the little girl declared he was not at home, in a manner that convinced Du Bois she spoke the truth. "And where is he gone, my dainty damsel?" said Peter, "and when will he return again?"

"He is gone to the market, I believe," replied the child, "for we are hungry, and uncle never buys meat but at evenings, because he then

picks up the bits that are left from the morning cheap, and he wont let me go, for fear I should give as much as people might ask me for them; and I wish he was come home, for I want some supper."

"Sordid wretch!" muttered Du Bois. "But he must help us; I will not leave the house till he does so." Peter then told the girl he would await her uncle's return, as his business could not brook delay; and the child, desiring him to stay in the room where he was, shut the door, and returned to her accustomed drudgery in the kitchen.

Peter threw himself into the old chair, and his own busy thoughts for some time afforded him ample employment, till, growing impatient, he began to think of retreating for the present, to call again at a later hour. He was about to rise from the chair, when, all at once, he thought he heard a strange sound under the flooring at the farthest end of the room; he listened, and the noise was repeated. Peter sat quite still, determined to ascertain the cause; and his own figure was tolerably well concealed by the dusk

of the evening, which had nearly closed in since his arrival at the house.

Du Bois fixed his eyes upon the spot whence the sounds had seemed to issue, and at length he observed a secret trap-door suddenly drop down. In the next minute the wretched figure of Bernard Goldthrift slowly and cautiously ascended, his eyes glistening with an expression of internal satisfaction, as a lamp which he carried in his hand shewed plainly the haggard and ghastly features of the miser. Bernard put down the lamp upon the ground, and then secured the trap-door that led to the idol of his worship, the object of his hopes and fears — his *gold.*

When he had secured the trap by its secret spring, he again took the lamp in his hand, rose up, and turned towards the table. The first object he beheld was — Peter du Bois, sitting quietly in the old chair, with his eyes attentively fixed on himself! But what words can describe his dismay at such an unexpected sight? Terror and despair seemed to struggle for the mastery in the expression of his countenance, whilst, old,

weak, and helpless, he appeared ready to sink into the earth from the shock of so sudden an alarm. His senses seemed bewildered; and prudence, though not cunning, forsook him, as he exclaimed, in a shrill scream of apprehension, "I am betrayed! ruined! robbed! murdered! but I have no gold there (pointing to the trap-door), no gold there; it is only a place I visit for penance, and to mortify my sins."

"Is it so, old Bernard?" said Du Bois, sarcastically, as he quitted his seat. "I should have thought you go thither to contemplate wealth which might give you comfort, whilst you are daily consuming in misery. But you need not fear me. I have discovered your secret, (Bernard shook his head); nay, you know I *have* discovered it, and by your own folly! The child thought you were from home; she desired me to wait here."

"Aye, aye," replied the miser, in a tone tremulous with age and infirmity; but, cautious from habitual suspicion, he added, with a significant look, "Girls are thoughtless; girls will prate; so I never let my niece know when I

descend from the light of day to practise mortifications in the bowels of the earth. I tell her I am going out, and send her away to do her duties in my household. But how came it, I wonder, that I should forget to-day to lock this room door, that nobody might disturb my hour of meditation?"

"Why, because it was fated," said Peter, "that I should come in by it. Never mind, man, you are safe, for I am neither robber nor murderer. But these excuses will not serve with me. Do you think I cannot fathom you, old Goldthrift? *Thou* at thy meditations! Yes, to glut thy eyes upon bond securities, bags of gold, chests of ingots, and caskets of rich jewels. Such were *thy* meditations in yonder cave of iniquity, where the groans of the sufferer, from whom you have wrested their last acre of land, never reach you; where widows tears and orphans sighs can never come to blot the writings, or to waft away the last pledge of hard necessity; where thy meditations calculate upon the next spendthrift who hastes to complete his ruin under thy auspices; and where thou canst

number the rogues and fools who will all fly to thee for help, and curse thee while they take it."

"Why, how now, Peter?" said old Bernard, trembling with fear, as his eye glanced upon Du Bois with a look of astonishment and suspicion. "Why, how is this?" and he added, with a strange exclamation that terror involuntarily provoked, and which the miser checked and endeavoured to turn into a laugh of good fellowship, "We are comrades, and must not rate each other."

Peter saw the uncommon advantage he had gained in having discovered the secret of Bernard's treasure; and well knowing he could turn it to account by alarming the fears of the coward who stood before him, he again spoke in a rough and determined manner. "I know you have wealth, Bernard, and *now* I know where it lies concealed — useless, worthless as its master. Yet it may do much good, if properly employed. Dost thou ever consider, Goldthrift, that there it shall remain, till it is first opened to pay the man who shall do Ghent the service of putting that miserable carcase of

thine within a coffin and a grave? Dost thou ever think of this?"

"Why, aye, yes, yes," answered Bernard, greatly affrighted, "I do think upon it sometimes, when I mortify for my sins; but I am not dead yet, Peter, and I never had much to do with the leeches, and so I hope to live yet to see you as great a man as you hope to be."

"And live you may for me," said Du Bois; "and as for my greatness, *you* must help me to that — *you* must serve me."

"Certainly," replied Goldthrift, "any thing in reason, any thing within my poor power and means. I would serve you, Peter," continued the cunning old rogue, who now thought Du Bois was coming round to a better humour, "I would serve you, as I would my dearest friends."

"I hope not," replied Du Bois, "for I should be loth to loose daylight in company with thy bags and ingots yonder. Your service to me must begin by an act of liberation."

"Any thing," said the usurer, who now shuffled towards the table of parchments, think-

ing Du Bois came to borrow money; "any thing within reason, and such as a poor old man like me may do without offence to his conscience."

"Conscience!" exclaimed Peter, laughing — "no, no, I will not make you offend against conscience, by forcing you to lend money without exacting interest. All I want is, a gift — a free and generous gift, to help to carry on our cause with some of your imprisoned crowns."

If the reader has ever chanced to see any human creature whose whole soul, and even body, has suddenly undergone the most violent opposition of feeling from joy to dismay, from hope to despair, he may have some idea of the look and manner of old Bernard at this moment, yet it would be difficult to describe it, so perfectly astonished, and even stupified, was the miser at the proposal of a *gift*, that he only stared in silence at the audacity of Du Bois, as he alternately raised and let fall his hands in amazement. At length avarice and indignation got the better even of fear itself, and Bernard found the use of his tongue to vent curses upon

Peter for his impudent demand — curses too shocking for repetition.

Du Bois for some time let the storm rage, and then very calmly said, "Bernard, I give you a fair warning. I have no interest to keep the secret of the entrance to your cavern there, and our White Hoods have an eye as keen as yours for gold, with stronger arms and younger feet to gain access to it. *They* shall pay their respects to you."

"They, they," replied old Goldthrift; "they cannot, they would not harm me; I am their comrade, one of their leaders."

"And therefore they would share with you," said Du Bois. "But it so happens, that you, being as you yourself admit, one of their leaders, is at this moment a thing of such peril, that unless you comply with my request before to-morrow, that very circumstance will devote *your* head to the provost marshal. The Earl has agreed to redress all the grievances of the citizens, on condition that every leader of the White Hoods shall be given up to justice. Your death and mine is certain, unless we can this night

find gold (aye *gold*, old Bernard), to make our people keep on their white hoods, and stand by us who are their leaders; to keep our heads upon their shoulders."

"And must I, must I," said the miser, in a tone of voice which expressed the most acute anguish of mind, "must I part with all that is dear to me on earth? Is it," he continued, wringing his hands, "is it for this that I have toiled day and night, denied myself comfort and rest? Is it for this that I have been cursed and hated all my life long, and now in my old age to have my heart broken, to —— I cannot, I cannot do it. The Earl is merciful; the provost cannot act without his sanction; he may relent. Think of some other way ——"

"There is no other way," said Du Bois, "that can save you, for you are especially obnoxious to Gilbert Matthew, and he has sworn to take vengeance upon you the first opportunity. You refused him the thousand crowns he wanted before he obtained the new office; and can you now hope, unless our White Hoods are supported *by* us, that they will support *us* — can

you hope, I say, long to keep that venerable head of yours upon your shoulders, most worthy Bernard? Come, think it is to save your own life; open, then, your bags, and set the coins free; they can give you no comfort in the tomb; for remember, as your only delight is now to look upon them, your eyes then will be closed in darkness."

Thus with threats and arguments did Peter du Bois continue to act upon the mind of the usurer, who at length was so alarmed by the exaggerated picture which Du Bois drew of his danger, that he consented to advance a sum of money from his secret store. Having reluctantly done this, Goldthrift prepared to descend once more into his den alone; but this Peter would not admit. "No, no, Bernard," said he, "I will go with you; the especial value which I feel for your neck will not allow me to trust to your conscience the counting out the sum that must be used to save it. We must not spare the gold, to hang the master of the bags. Come, I'll go with you; open the trap-door, and give me the lamp."

Goldthrift, with evident reluctance, complied. Had he been descending the steps of that dungeon, with which Du Bois had threatened him, he could scarcely have done so with a slower pace, or with a more ghastly expression of countenance. His spirit writhed within him, and gave vent to its secret agonies by sundry deep sighs and groans, which accompanied the turn of the keys, as he opened a chest of iron.

"Come," said Du Bois, "let me spare you the painful office of giving liberty to these prisoners. I will take them out, and begin from that bag, that large leathern bag."

"No, no; not that," exclaimed the miser, eagerly; "not that; those are florins, all of pure gold, and not wanting one grain in weight. Here, take fifty silver crowns of Flemish money."

"Fifty crowns!" cried Du Bois, "that is nothing: fifty crowns amongst our bands! Are you mad to offer it? Give gold, fair gold, every coin full, round, and heavy, stamped with an image that might bribe the devil himself to

worship it. Besides, we can carry a larger sum in gold pieces in a smaller space."

"Nay, but it must do; fifty crowns must do," answered Bernard, with a groan. "I cannot bring my heart to touch the florins for such a purpose."

"But the provost will touch thy throat, then, old Goldthrift," said Peter; "and as I now bethink me that he is a man accessible to some feeling of pity in his way, perhaps you may like to keep those florins, in order to use them as a bribe with him, to procure you the grace of hanging, or the axe, instead of being broken on the wheel."

"Take fifty florins, then," cried the alarmed miser, as, with a terrified countenance, he forced himself to use a desperate effort to subdue his own avarice, and thrust his hand into the bag.

"Not so," replied Peter; "we shall lose some precious moments in the telling of them out; give me the bag."

"I cannot — I will not," said the miser. "A curse upon thee, Du Bois; would you have me tear out my heart to give you?"

"No," replied Du Bois, "only the gold. The provost, Goldthrift; think upon the provost."

"Take a hundred pieces," said Bernard, "but not all."

"Hanging or beheading," continued Peter; "the provost, the provost, Master Goldthrift."

"Take the bag, then, and may the curse of Gehazi go with it," exclaimed the usurer, as he threw the bag of florins upon the ground, suddenly shut down the lid of the chest, and placed himself upon it. "And now, Du Bois," said the wretch, "be satisfied; for I will not yield one florin more, though it were to save both life and soul. You shall steep your hands in my blood, and trample me under foot, before you again so much as look into the chest."

"Well," replied Du Bois, "for the present I will be satisfied; and as for thy blood! I would not soil the bright blade of a good sword by dipping it into such pollution. It would be too honourable a death for thee, old Goldthrift; for thou wert certainly born to starve with thy own rats, and die amongst them, or else to make thy last leap from the hangman's tree."

Peter, well satisfied with the sum he had obtained, immediately departed, leaving the miser to deplore its loss; and after an interview with Ursula, he hastened to meet the leaders and captains of his own bands at the chamber of midnight council, where John Lyon was expected finally to settle every desperate plan, which, it was agreed, should be executed on the following morning.

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