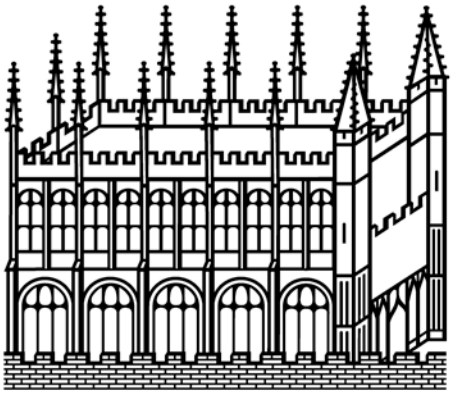

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# ST JOHNSTOUN;

OR,

# JOHN, EARL OF GOWRIE.

Whichsoever of these opposite systems we embrace; whether we impute the intention of murder to Gowrie, or to the King; insuperable difficulties arise, and we are involved in darkness, mystery, and contradictions.'

ROBERTSON'S *History of Scotland.*

Out of Scotland we hear that there is no good agreement, but rather an open diffidence, betwixt the King and his wife, and many are of opinion that the discovery of some affection between her and the Earl of Gowrie's brother, who was killed with him, was the truest cause and motive of that tragedy.

*Sir* RALPH WINWOOD'S *Memoirs.*

# ST JOHNSTOUN;

OR,

# JOHN, EARL OF GOWRIE.

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Shall crimes and tyrants cease but with the world?
CAMPBELL.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

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# ST JOHNSTOUN;

OR,

# JOHN, EARL OF GOWRIE.

## CHAPTER I.

For as the soul doth rule the earthly mass,
And all the service of the body frame;
So love of soul doth love of body pass,
No less than perfect gold surmounts the meanest brass.

SPENSER.

LADY AGNES found, on reaching her apartment, that it still wanted a quarter of an hour to the time when, as mentioned by Father Leonard, she was to meet her guide, and she approached a window to observe the night. All was serene and still. The tops of the trees immediately beneath her window, which looked out upon the

park, were slightly waved by a light breeze, and rendered refulgent by the clear beams of the moon, which silvered their branches, and poured upon them a flood of light, made brighter from the contrast formed by the profound mass of shade on Arthur's Seat, the magnificent outline of which, strongly marked on the pure blue sky, shewed its rocky summit terminating in a point seven hundred feet from its base.

There was a sublimity in this dark and stupendous object, which affected the mind of Agnes in strong contrast with the tinselled scene she had just quitted. It was, in a manner, as time compared with eternity, and inspired her with a feeling of awe, which, in these lonely moments, made her dwell with remorse on the recollection of the little reluctance she had felt in listening to those arguments of Gowrie, which tended to sap the very foundation of her faith.

"Alas!" thought she, "weak and wicked that I am! the same words from any other

mouth had failed to move me for a moment, and I had despised their futility. How often did my dear mother, and good Father Leonard, warn me against the wiles and snares of the tempter! Never could he have assumed a form so dangerous. But it must not, and shall not be thus; I will not listen till I am charmed into eternal destruction."—She sought her rosary, and prayed devoutly for assistance in this struggle. "And is it not even now granted? she said, as the great clock of the palace sounded the hour of ten from its turret, which rose near her window, "Does not the holy Father now wait for me? And this night, when my heart shall, as I hope, be laid open before him, with all its errors, will his counsel quickly dispel these gathering clouds of doubt and fear." As the clock struck, her attendant entered her room, with a large black mantle, which she wrapt round her mistress, and brought over her head, so as to conceal her entirely from view, while she kept calling on all her favourite Saints

to protect her lady, and expressing an earnest wish that she might be allowed to accompany her; for Agnes had entrusted her with the secret of her appointment with the Father. This young woman had lived with her for some years before the death of her mother, and was much regarded by her for her faithfulness and prudence. She was also a Catholic, and she and her young mistress were united in a great measure by similarity of remembrances, of hopes, and of sufferings in the same cause.

"Look out into the gallery, Alice," said Lady Agnes, "and see that no one is there." Alice did so, and made a favourable report; upon which Agnes, followed by the watchful eyes of her handmaiden, advanced quickly along the gallery, and descending the private stair, reached the passage at the bottom, where she observed a man walking toward her. She paused till he came close up.

"The lady of whom the holy Father spoke, is it not?" said he.

"It is," replied Agnes; "but you must pronounce my name before we proceed."

"The Lady Agnes Somerdale," rejoined the man, in a low voice.

"Go forward, then," said she, "and I will follow."

Lady Agnes observed, on passing a lamp which hung in the passage, that her guide was nearly as well concealed as herself, being enveloped in a large watch-cloak of the King's livery; and she had also noticed, that he spoke in a constrained and disguised voice. But her implicit confidence in the good Father Leonard prevented her feeling the slightest alarm, as she made these observations. She, however, felt relieved from the fears she had entertained of being prevented by any unlucky accident from meeting the Father, as she emerged from the Palace by a small door that led into one of the outer courts, and which her guide having reconnoitred for a moment, motioned her to go round on the side where the shade of the building pre-

vented a possibility of their being seen, to a door in the outward wall, which admitted them into the Park. Lady Agnes now felt herself released from all fear of detection, and followed her guide with a light step, who hurried on without taking the least notice of her, except when any ruggedness or difficulty occurred in their path, after they began to ascend the hill toward St Anthony's Chapel, which he now told her was the spot where the Father awaited her. This chapel was then in ruins, its conspicuous situation having prevented its escaping the fury of the populace during their rage for demolishing the Romish places of worship. At a short distance from the chapel was a small cell, which had served as a hermitage to many a holy man, who, detached from the world, had here meditated on its vanities. There being little in this place to destroy, it still remained much in its former condition, except that its door was torn from its hinges, and lay on the ground.

Lady Agnes was accosted near the entrance of the cell by Father Leonard, who advanced from it to meet her, and where her guide, saying a few words to the Father, disappeared in the direction of the ruined chapel.

"Welcome, my dear daughter," said the Father, "doubly welcome—since this is a proof that the heretics have not prevailed in darkening thine understanding. Thou art, indeed, highly favoured, for whose welfare the Sacred Head of the Church on earth hath been moved, and for whose sake a holy and pious saint hath left a haven of rest, once more to visit and mingle with a sinful world."

"What mean you, holy father?" said Agnes, all astonishment at this mysterious address. "Surely there are few more bereft than I am of the counsel and care of friends."

"Daughter," said Father Leonard, solemnly, "adore God for the counsel and protection he hath vouchsafed to send thee

in the person of thy mother's sister,—who, leaving alike her exalted station, and the peace which dwells within the walls consecrated to God, hath performed a pilgrimage of more than a thousand miles, in a severe season of the year, that she may separate thee forever from a deluded people, and present thee in thy yet spotless innocence to Him, whom to serve is peace.—Come then, my daughter, I will lead you to the embraces of her of whom I speak, who now awaits you within that cell." So saying, the father took her hand, and they entered together. The hermitage had a stone bench which ran round it on one side, and joined a small square block of stone at the further end, which had formerly served as the pedestal of a cross of the same material, but which having been displaced and thrown down, now lay in fragments on the ground.

Agnes no sooner entered, than she observed the Abbess by the light of a lantern, with which the Father had provided this gloomy recess, and whose dark side was

turned to the door-way. She was seated on the bench, and leaning on the square stone, apparently engaged in prayer, for her eyes were lifted up, and her hands clasped.

Agnes, who was seized with an overwhelming sense of all she owed to the affectionate zeal of this pious woman, was at her feet in an instant, clasping her knees, and looking up in her face with an expression of tender homage.

The Abbess remained calm and dignified, while her countenance assumed an expression of melting benignity. Laying her hands upon the head of Agnes, from which the mantle had fallen back, leaving the bright luxuriance of her fine hair to fall in ringlets over her neck and shoulders, she pronounced upon her a long and fervent benediction; and, raising her from her knees, embraced her, and placed her by her side. "There is now no time," said she, "daughter of my beloved sister, for us to give vent to the affection that is swelling in both our hearts; for we are in a land

where the privileges of the faithful are circumscribed within narrow bounds. Tell me, then, art thou ready to depart from it, so soon as a vessel I am in expectation of, arrives to convey us hence? Art thou anxious, my daughter, to fulfil thy departed mother's dying wish, and renounce this world, that thou may'st procure thy admission into a better?" At these questions, put to her so earnestly by the Abbess, a chilling tremour ran through the veins of Agnes, her heart seemed to cease its pulsation, and a deadly paleness overspread her countenance.

"O! my aunt," said she, "allow me to confess myself to Father Leonard, and I shall then be more able to answer as I ought, these momentous questions."

The Abbess turned upon her a look of disappointment, mingled with sorrowful reproach.—"I had hoped," she said, "that the precepts of thy mother had sunk into thy soul, and that her example, fraught with fearful lessons of the misery occasioned by the indulgence of self, would have made

thee anxious to resign a sinful world. But if I am deceived in this, and thou art already entangled in its false allurements, my sorrow will indeed be great."

Agnes was heart-stricken by the look of anguish which accompanied these last words, and she answered—

"Fear me not, I will yet do all you wish; but I beseech you to grant my request, that I may first speak with the holy Father, for at this moment I cannot collect my scattered thoughts sufficiently to answer as I ought."

"Be it so, then," replied the Abbess, softened by the assurance conveyed in the first part of her speech; "but, my child, thou art too much discomposed at present to enter on so important a duty, nor is this a place befitting it, and when a proper opportunity may occur, it is impossible to determine; for I need not suggest to thee how much caution is requisite in our proceedings, or inform thee that it will be proper for me to depart, so soon as the vessel I have men-

tioned arrives, and of which I am in daily expectation."

This last urgent reason for decision struck again like a death-knell to the heart of Agnes, and she became so faint that she could hardly sit upright.

This was observed both by Father Leonard and the Abbess; and they proposed, as the night was uncommonly mild, that they should all sit down on the outside of the cell, that she might be revived by the air.

The moon was nearly at the full, riding in splendid majesty through a cloudless sky, and their view from the spot which they had chosen for their seat was indeed magnificent.

The ancient and picturesque city was seen from it, with all its remarkable features, at once so noble and diversified; its tall edifices rising, as piled on the roof of one another, till they reached their termination in her lofty fortress; while their lights and shades, and the inequalities of the ground on which they stood, gave them an

indescribable and fantastic charm, similar to that framed by fancy, when the deceived vision rests for a moment upon a mass of clouds, that, broken and separated, take, as though touched by the wand of an enchanter, the semblance of lofty towers, and stately castles. At some distance below the city, lay the town of Leith, just discernible as the abode of man; while the broad and undulating waters of the Frith were every here and there studded with the white sails of vessels stealing along, and conspicuous in the moon-light from the reflection returned by the tranquil bosom of the sea,—the island of Inchkeith appearing as a black speck on its surface, and the bold hills on the opposite shores of Fife merely visible, like a distant mist. As they sat gazing for a few minutes in silence on this captivating scene, bursts of music, faintly heard at intervals, arose from the palace of Holyrood, which lay below illuminated in all its numerous casements, rendering the whole vast pile distinctly visible.

"That abode of royalty," said Father Leonard, stretching his hand toward it, "has, even during the short period of my life, furnished in its inhabitants some of the greatest moral lessons on the instability of human grandeur and happiness, that have ever been taught to erring and presumptuous mortals. Who that saw the young, the beautiful, and royal Mary, on the day she landed from France, surrounded by the Scottish nobility—gazed on as not of earthly mould,—fascinating by her wit and innocence the old and stern, and leading captive by her transcendent loveliness, the young and enthusiastic—Who could then, I say, have divined that she was destined to years of captivity and sorrow; and that these very same men, forgetting alike their loyalty and their manhood, should traffic with her enemies, till her beauteous head was bowed to the block? —Alas!" said the old man, whose voice was almost choaked with emotion, "dearly beloved mistress! can I ever forget thee and thy wrongs?—No! the chilling hand of time

itself hath failed to efface from this aged brain what thou wert, when humbling thyself before the higher majesty of the church, thou didst disclose the inmost recesses of thy guileless soul to the frail being who is now rendering this poor tribute to thy worth; and who hath so often, on this sacred spot, lifted up his hands in fervent supplication for thy eternal happiness, which as a martyr thou didst at length purchase, by pouring out thy blood. Worlds would I have given to have seen and bestowed holy consolation on thy wounded spirit while in captivity; but that was too great a boon for thy subtle enemy, and the enemy of thy holy faith, to grant!—But, dear daughter," he said, laying his hand on the arm of Agnes, and speaking in the impressive tone of earnest affection, "whilst thou remainest an inmate in her former abode, let her fate be ever present to thy remembrance—let its warning voice ever sound in thine ears. Say to thyself,—'on this very spot, she too listened to the sound of the harp and the viol,

and hearkened, it may be, but too much, to the hollow blandishments of flattery ;'—and then reflect, that though born to empire, endowed with perfect beauty, and a highly-gifted mind—all that at last remained to console her, was the faith from which no temptation had ever power for a moment to make her swerve. And oh! above all, beware of him who, professing a different religion, would seek to persuade thee that happiness can exist in an union with a heretic. But I am persuaded," he continued, after a short pause, " that I may spare this admonition—few have had a better opportunity than thou, my daughter, of witnessing the futility of such a deceitful hope."

" I have, indeed, holy Father," replied Agnes, " seen the unutterable sufferings caused by it, which brought my beloved mother to her grave.—And now," she continued, deeply moved by the recollections which the Father had thus intentionally revived, " let me assure you, my dear aunt, in the presence of Father Leonard, that it is

my fixed determination to depart with you, and renounce the world for ever."

"Well hast thou spoken, my child," said the Abbess; "thou hast relieved my heart from much sorrow.—The blessing of the holy Virgin descend upon thee!"

Agnes, forcibly struck and penetrated with all that the Abbess had done and suffered on her account, experienced for the time such a degree of grateful enthusiasm, mingled with the satisfaction of obeying her mother's wishes, that she believed she was only complying with an imperious call of duty in giving this promise. Yet it had no sooner passed her lips, than she felt that she had irrevocably pronounced her own doom, which nothing now could alter, and she instantly gave way to deep despair. In silence she listened to the words of Father Leonard and the Abbess, without knowing what they said.

The Father, who had felt somewhat alarmed at the behaviour of Agnes on being at

first urged to depart with the Abbess, now again addressed her.

"I highly approve," he said, "my daughter, of thy desire to confess thyself, and have been thinking of a way in which I can gain access to thee through the interference of him who this night conducted thee here, and who, I make no doubt, will at a convenient season admit me to the Chapel of the Holy-rood, where thou canst meet me, while he takes such precautions as may prevent my being discovered.—But," he continued, "we must now separate, and I go to summon thy guide."

While the Father was absent, Agnes learned from her aunt the particulars of her abode in Scotland, with the place of her present dwelling, and part of Euphan's story, whom the Abbess mentioned with much feeling, as well as gratitude for the kindness she had shewn her.

When Father Leonard approached with her guide, Agnes addressed him,—"May

I not know, holy Father, to whom I am so much indebted for my safe conduct to this spot?"

"Content thee, my daughter," returned the Father, "with my assurance, that he is of the same faith with ourselves, and that his fidelity may be depended on. But he is in the service of his Majesty, and it were ruin to us all should he be discovered; I have, therefore, promised not even to name him to thee."

"Enough, Father," said Agnes, "I seek not to know aught which your prudence bids you conceal." She then embraced her aunt, and was about to depart, when Father Leonard informed her that her guide had promised he should see her in the Chapel on the morning of the day following the next.

"Thou wilt, therefore, meet me there," said he, "as soon as the light dawns, that there may be fewer chances of interruption. —And now, farewell, dear lady, and peace be with thee!"

Agnes and her aunt now separated; the

Abbess and Father Leonard taking their way to the abode of Euphan, while Agnes and her guide retraced their steps to Holyrood, where they quickly arrived at the gate in the Park wall, which the man unlocked, while Agnes remained on the outside, till he had ascertained that all was still within; and which having done, he returned and motioned her to follow, till they reached the door that opened into the passage through which she had before passed, where, using the same precaution he had done at the park gate, they entered. The man accompanied Agnes to the foot of the private staircase, where she expressed her thanks for his assistance. They were only replied to by a low bend of the head, and she ascended. All was silent in the gallery, as when she had left it, but she still heard a distant sound of revelry from the royal apartments. She was met at the door of her chamber by Alice, who expressed her joy at her safe return. Agnes answered, however, with difficulty, to the affectionate inquiries of her attend-

ant; and throwing herself into a chair, tried to reason on all that she had felt, and all that had happened within the last two hours.

"My fate is then fixed," she thought, "and all that I have now to do with the world is to look upon it as an enemy, from whose power I am about to be released. And, alas! I have already suffered so much in it, that it ought rather to become an object of terror. Yet, would to God that I had been removed before my heart felt the value of him, who alone could touch it! He has, however, set me a noble example; for have I not seen and felt that I am dear to him, and yet has he ever allowed his attachment to conquer his duty? shall I not then emulate his firmness, and shew him that I too can renounce my worldly happiness for my religion?—When I am gone, I may perhaps in time be forgotten by him, and he may find happiness with one whose milder destiny forbids her not to unite her fate with his. And in spending my life in prayers for him, I shall at least feel tranquillity. I

will, therefore, not suffer a single regret henceforth to intrude itself, for I cannot remain here without sin."

But, when arrived at this magnanimous conclusion, poor Agnes evinced the struggle it cost her, by the bitter tears with which it was accompanied. She, however, felt thankful that she had, as she imagined, guarded every look so well, that Gowrie remained in total ignorance of her sentiments toward him. She endeavoured by prayer to compose her mind before she retired to rest, and succeeded so well, that considering herself now the contracted bride of Heaven, her choice was no longer balanced between this world and the next. Her heart was filled with religion and immortality, and her thoughts soared above all sublunary joys, when compared with the eternity she hoped to spend with him she so innocently and so deeply loved.

## CHAPTER II.

The flush of shame mantled her forehead,
And the cold, tremulous, and imperfect accents
Of sin detected, dropped from her utterance.

*Citizen of Marseilles.*

On the morning appointed by Father Leonard, Lady Agnes rose with the dawn, and entered the Chapel, where she perceived him already awaiting her.

"Welcome, my child, to this holy spot," he said. "It is long since my feet have trode its pavement; and forcibly indeed does the remembrance of former times return upon me. Methinks it was but yesterday, that I beheld the lovely Mary sitting yonder," pointing to the royal gallery, "catching at one moment, with breathless alarm,

every distant sound, as the forerunner of insult, and the next, sinking every fear for her own safety in ardent devotion. It was here that, with condescending sweetness, she thanked me, after the service of the day was over, for my zeal to her, and our holy religion; and in having braved the dangers threatened to him who should execute so sacred a duty. For, on the Sunday before, the brutish and infuriated mob had outraged decency, and insulted their Sovereign, by violently interrupting the performance of mass in this Chapel, and by threatening to put to death the priest who officiated, and who, being a timid man, refused to expose himself again to such peril.—But time flies, my daughter, and is now too precious to be expended in the repetition of former events,—unburden to me, therefore, thy thoughts, and rest secure of my best counsel and assistance, in so far as they may avail."

Agnes, who, in listening to the old man, had almost forgotten the purport of her meet-

ing him, felt much embarrassed, and remained silent.

Father Leonard viewed her pale countenance and quivering lips with solicitude.

"Why are you so agitated, my child?" said he, while he bent his penetrating eyes upon her. "What is passing within thy soul?—Have I indeed argued truly, and has other thought than that of dedicating thyself to God entered thy heart, to wound and disturb its serenity? Fear no stern severity in me, thy fellow-worm.—Thou hast been left, my poor child, as a lamb among wolves—as an unfenced garden in the land of the spoilers;—what wonder, then, if ye have not escaped wounds, or if the fair hopes of the spring have been trodden down? Humble thyself then, and spread open before me the secrets of thy breast;—it may be, that, though faulty, thou may'st yet retrace thy steps, and by timely repentance regain the peace thou hast lost."

"Alas!" said Agnes, in a faltering voice, as she kneeled before the old man, while,

bending down her head, her tears dropped upon the pavement,—" Alas! my father, I have been but too sensible to the perfections of one, who is truly great and noble, and it is the fear of losing his society for ever, that has caused my unhappiness, and that want of resolution you perceived in me at first to accompany my aunt to her convent."

" And is this dangerous man a heretic? and hast thou suffered him to know that he has usurped the place of God in thine heart?" said the Father, somewhat sternly.

Agnes raised her head, and looked at the old man reproachfully, while an air of offended dignity diffused itself over her whole frame.

" No, Father," she said, " I have given him no cause to despise or pity me; for you have named the insurmountable barrier that is placed between us."

" And it is even so, then," replied the old man, in a subdued tone; " and a heretic possesses that heart hitherto so innocent!"

" But, my Father," continued Agnes, " you know not the worst.—His reasonings

on our holy faith have sometimes affected me in so unusual a manner, as make me shudder but to think of.—My faith has been assailed, as you well know, from almost my childhood, but never was it shaken. What means it, then, that the arguments I have so often heard before, should now have power to disturb my imagination?"

"Alas! my dear daughter," returned the Father, in a tone of the utmost compassion, while his limbs shook with emotion, "Satan hath launched at thee one of his most powerful darts. It is the man, and not his arguments, that hath produced this dreadful effect;—it is an earthly love which hath taken possession of thy soul, and where it once gains the ascendant, it wounds unto the death. I did, indeed, glory in thy faith, young maiden, and in the strength of thine understanding, so far above thine years. But what is man, unless supported by his Maker? and what the most splendid gifts of mind and fortune?—They but raise him above his fellows, to make him feel inwardly

their emptiness and fallacy! But humility and piety will secure the blessing of God. Repose, therefore, my daughter, on him alone, and no longer put any trust in a world that ever deceives in its promises; which for happiness gives sorrow, and whose pleasures are a dream.—But thou hast not yet named him, young maiden, who hath been the cause of this fatal disease, and thou must not seek to hide aught from thy soul's physician."

"Though magnanimous and noble," said Agnes, in faltering accents, "he is nevertheless one whom I fear to mention, for the Earl of Gowrie is the determined enemy of the Catholic religion. But God sees my resolves," continued she, "and he will bless them.—Let me depart from this land immediately, and for ever!"

As she said this, her eyes were turned steadily toward heaven, while so saintly an expression beamed from her beautiful features, that she seemed no longer of this world.

The old Monk gazed on her for a space

in silence, as if some beatific vision had presented itself to his view. At length, laying his hand upon her head,—"My daughter," said he, with enthusiasm, "you need not the counsels of man, while gifted with that piety which raises you above the weakness of your sex; it will prove a shield and breast-plate against all temptations.—But thou hast had, indeed, no common trial to sustain, for he whom thou hast mentioned is a strong pillar in the fabric of apostacy—one whom God, for his own wise ends, hath allowed to possess the exterior of the arch-angel, ere he fell from his allegiance—and who, moreover, is said to be endowed with all the extraordinary gifts and mental qualities which excite the admiration of his fellow-mortals."

A thrill of delight ran through the veins of Agnes at this high tribute to the merits of the man she loved. But the Father, sensible of the high panegyric he had pronounced, and probably seeing its effects sparkling in the eyes of his penitent, quickly re-

verted to the dark side of the picture.—"But now, mark," he said, "my daughter, the tenfold wickedness of one thus endowed, who, abusing all these inestimable gifts, turns them as weapons against that Power from whom he received them, and who, blasphemously attacking the authority of the holy successor of St Peter, becomes the agent of the evil one, in directing all his efforts against the sacred rites of our venerable church;—who, withdrawing as many as he can from their holy faith, drags them down with him to the pit of destruction. Blessed art thou, young maiden, who hast had strength given thee from above to resist this dreadful fate. Prepare thyself then for this journey, for in a few days thou shalt be released from thy post of danger. I go straight hence to hasten thy flight, and will find means to give thee notice when all is prepared. Bless thee, my daughter! I will not say farewell, for we shall meet again," said he, as Agnes rose from her knees and stood before him, with pale cheeks, and that expression of mute

despair, which so often succeeds to those bursts of heroism by which we have trampled our human feelings under foot. But he regarded her not; for the zealous old priest, who, in the picture he had been drawing of Gowrie, beheld him as a personification of the devil, ready to fly away with the maiden,—in his haste to save her, scarcely noticed her as he quitted the Chapel.

Agnes withdrew to her own apartment, with the consciousness of having done what she believed to be her duty, in confessing her attachment to Gowrie; at the same time, with a sensation natural to every delicate female heart, which shrunk from the idea of telling that it had bestowed itself unasked. What then would have been her feelings, had she known, that she had been heard by other than her confessor? But so it was, for the Jesuit, instead of leaving the chapel, when the Father, whom he conducted, entered it, slipped behind a row of seats, which, going round the building, left a vacancy between the carved wood-work

that formed a screen at their backs and the wall, and stealing within a few feet of the place where the Father and Agnes were, he not only heard distinctly every word that was spoken, but had also, through the fret-work of the screen, a full view of the persons by whom they were uttered.

He was forcibly struck with the manner in which Agnes replied to the Father's question, whether Gowrie knew the share he held in her heart, and with the exalted expression which accompanied the avowal of her determination of quitting him directly, and for ever; being fully capable of understanding that firmness of soul which could, when called upon, relinquish its own desires, provided the object in view were of magnitude to sanction the sacrifice. It was true, he acknowledged nothing worthy of such sacrifice, save fame and power; but he could well imagine, that what worldly ambition was to him, the idea of celestial happiness might be to the innocent being before him.

Father Leonard and Agnes had no sooner

quitted the chapel, than emerging from his hiding place, he paced the middle aisle with hasty steps, while he revolved in his mind the secret with which he had just become acquainted.

"The old dotard!" said he, "sees he not what a stab would be given to these accursed Presbyterians by the marriage of their main supporter, their demi-god, with a Catholic? And can he not read what is so legibly written on that damsel's brow, that this mighty Earl, even were he her husband to-morrow, would in vain assail her faith? I have got a hint, however, which shall be followed up—events shall not proceed in the train that they expect—and this girl shall yet become a powerful instrument in my hands, to work the downfall of the House of Ruthven. But I must about it quickly."

Having taken his resolution, he left the Chapel by hasty strides, and proceeding out of the Palace in the direction he knew Fa-

ther Leonard had taken, he presently joined him.

"Father," said he, "methinks you move nimbly this morning; for though I was upon the watch to join you, I have had barely time to lock the Chapel, and deposit the key, and here you are almost a quarter of a mile off already, on the road which I am going to take, if, as I suppose, you wend your way to the Craigs?"

"I do," replied the old Priest, "for I have just learned from the maiden that which maketh it necessary that the holy Mother should not delay her departure; nay, so urgent is the necessity, that there is not a day to be lost; and, as you have informed me that the vessel is arrived at Leith, in which they are to take their passage, I go to warn the Abbess, that she may prepare for her departure."

"May I not know," said the Jesuit, "what additional motive you have learned for quickening the motions of the mother? I trust no fear of detection hangs over her."

"What I have learned was under the seal of confession," replied the Father; "but I do by no means exaggerate the danger."

"Then, undoubtedly," said the Jesuit, "the sooner they depart the better. Do you, holy Father, still hold your resolution of accompanying them?"

"I do," returned the Monk; "there are few left in this perverted city to whom I can now be useful, and my great age maketh it probable, that I shall soon be called hence. I will therefore, if it be the will of God, end my days, where this body will not be refused the last sacred rites, and where these bones may rest among the ashes of the faithful."

The Jesuit and Father Leonard proceeded together to Euphan's, where they found the Abbess overjoyed at the prospect of so speedily beginning her voyage, and anxious to depart immediately. The Jesuit, therefore, turned his steps toward Musselburgh, where, entering the cottage of Nicol Partan, he found the honest fisher-

man, in the absence of his daughter, endeavouring to thumb out for himself an oaten cake, which the girdle, placed over some peat embers, was in readiness to receive.

"Gude day to ye, Maister Austin," said Nicol, looking over his shoulder at the Jesuit as he entered.—"I'm here," he continued, "at the warst job I ever yoket wi' i' my days; curse the meal, an I can get it to stick thegether at a'. Od, I ne'er saw sic wark as this; I wish Grizzy were come hame again, for I wad maist rather gang without ony meat, as be plaguit this gait. —Jeest only see till it now," he went on, looking ruefully at his huge black paws, to which the meal was adhering with the tenacity of bird-lime, so that he lifted half the intended cake every time he moved them. "See till it; a' that I can do it will stick till my nieves."

"You seem to have made it too wet, friend," remarked the Jesuit, much amused by his difficulties; "mix more dry meal with it, and see what that will do."

Nicol took his advice. "Ay, that has made my hands braw and clean, ony how," said he, as he rubbed them together, till they were cleaner and whiter than they had probably ever been before. In vain, however, did he awkwardly endeavour to knead the dough into proper consistence; it obstinately refused to take shape or form, and bursting into a fit of impatience, he swept it, with one stroke of his hand, into a wooden bowl that stood beside him.—"There," said he, "de'il but I'll sup ye in crowdy, and ne'er mint at baking another bannock as lang as there's a mouthfu' o' mashlock (bread made nearly all of bran) to be had in the township. But I reckon, maister, ye came here on some other eerant than to see me fecht wi' ait-meal scons?"

"I had indeed another errand, " said the Jesuit, " of which I will speak, as soon as you are at leisure to listen."

"Weel, weel, bide a minute or I tak aff the girdle, for ye see it's red het, wait-

ing on the scon that will ne'er come till it," said he, in a grumbling tone. He next removed a black kettle, in which his breakfast had been cooked, from the top of a wooden stool, and drew his sleeve along it, to clean it from the soot. "Now," resumed he, "sit ye down, Maister Austin, and tell me a' about it."

The Jesuit, however, declined taking precedence of the kettle.

"Weel, an ye winna sit down, I canna help ye; but let's hear what fetched ye here?"

"Why, the matter that brought me here," said the Jesuit, "is this. My sister has resolved upon quitting this country again, finding things here not according to her expectation, which indeed I half guessed would be the case; but let that pass. Now there is a vessel to sail for a foreign country, where she has friends and great encouragement to settle, and the master of this vessel has agreed to cast anchor at four

o'clock the morning after to-morrow, in the Frith, to the west of your bay. I wish you to be in readiness with your boat, as nearly opposite to it as possible, to put on board a young woman, who is to accompany her, but whom it will not be convenient to embark at Leith, where my sister proposes to go on board. And not only this, but I also wish you to pilot the vessel out of the Frith, and see her fairly on her way, for you must of course be well acquainted with the navigation of the coast; and if you undertake to do me this service, I shall endeavour, on your return, to proportion your reward to your trouble, and my sense of your desire to oblige me."

"As to kennin the navigation," said Nicol, "it wad be unco strange if I didna, seeing I hae gane to the herrin' drave ilka season for three-and-twenty years bygane; gude reason I hae to mind that year I gaed first, for it was the same that eight score and ten boats gaed out o' Dunbar to

draw their nets, ae Sabbath night, and, fearfu' to tell, no' ane o' thae godless men ever wan to land again. Sirs, but that was an awsome night! and as awsome a day the neist, when the wail o' fourteen score o' widows was heard on the coast side; but thanks to Him, me and a wheen other chiels were better keepit, for they couldna get us persuaded to gang or the Sabbath was past; and or ever that time the storm was risen. And foreby the drave, I used the deep-sea fishing a while for the cod and the ling, and hae whiles been as far as the Holy Isle; sae an I dinna ken the coast, I'm thinking ye'll no get ane that kens it better."

"I am perfectly satisfied of your knowledge and experience," replied the Jesuit; "all I wish, is your promise to undertake what I require."

"Weel, weel," said Nicol, "I hae nae objections to the job at a', gin the weather be ony thing gude."

"And I shall depend on your informing

me of your proceedings, as soon as you return," said the Jesuit, as he left the hut of Nicol.

" Ay, ay, ye may be sure o' that," replied the fisherman.

## CHAPTER III.

If weather serve, and we have rest and peace,
We shall be seen into our playing place
In good array, about the hour of seven.
Of thriftiness that day, I pray you cease;
But ordain us good drink against alleven;
Fail not to be upon the Castle-hill,
Beside the place where we purpose to play;
With good stark wine, your flaggons see you fill;
And had yourselves the merriest that you may.

*Proclamation of the Play made by Sir David Lindsey of the Mount, in* 1555.

On the day following that, of which we have recorded the incidents in the last chapter, the inhabitants of that part of the Palace next the Park were disturbed by times in the morning, by the noise of a hundred hammers, which resounded in preparation for the performance to be exhibited in the open air; which attracting the attention of all within its hearing, quickly caused in-

quiries to be made as to the intent of the operations. The answers given to these questions spread with the rapidity of lightning through the city, and to the utmost limits of its suburbs. A report of the revival of their ancient May-games, by the authority of his Majesty, soon sent hundreds to ascertain its truth, by becoming themselves eye-witnesses of the preparations then making for them in the King's Park.

The ministers of Edinburgh took the alarm, and endeavoured to persuade the people to continue at their usual occupations. But it was in vain that they hurried from place to place, exhorting the timid, and threatening the obstinate. All alike joined the flood that was pouring toward the Park, and Edinburgh seemed to be emptied of its population long before the hour of the exhibition.

The day was uncommonly favourable for the purpose, the air being soft and balmy, in a degree unusual to the climate at that season of the year. The sun, in his cloud-

less progress, exerted his genial influence on all around, and expanded the buds of the plane-tree and such others of early foliage as were intermixed with the stately oaks, which, with browner and graver aspect, still defied his power. The spot fixed on for the players' performance, was an open space, nearly opposite to the back of the Palace, where the new spring grass of freshest green, studded here and there with the early wild flower, presented a thick soft carpet of enamelled turf. On a perfectly level part of this space, was a long platform, about ten feet wide, raised about five feet above the ground, to which a flight of steps gave access at each end. On the centre of this was placed the royal canopy, of scarlet cloth, fringed with gold, above two chairs covered with the same materials, and elevated a step higher than two benches that run from end to end in a line with them on each side, covered with tapestry, which serving also as a carpet for the platform, fell down in front of it to the ground. To the right

and left of this were also two long wooden benches, fixed on the turf, for the accommodation of such of the followers of the King and the noblemen present as were raised above the rank of menials; and from each end of them ran barriers, which enclosed a square space from the intrusion of the spectators, sufficient for the free movement of the actors. These preparations were carried on with such vigour, that all was in readiness for the reception of their Majesties before the appointed hour of two o'clock in the afternoon; and the populace were so eager for the representation to begin, that it required some exertion in the King's guard, who had been placed there at an early hour, to keep them in order.

Satisfaction and glee were painted in each face, from the burley peasant, in his garments of coarse grey, or sky-blue coloured cloth, with his flat broad blue bonnet,—to the richer tradesman, in a cloth of English or French manufacture. And here and there some young scape-grace of more

equivocal occupation, affecting a costume between the citizen and the courtier, clad in stuff, ornamented with silk lace, with hat and short feather, rapier and cloak, might be seen urging his way to obtain next the platform a place best suited to the display of his graces, and commanding a view of the court dames, on some one of whom vanity perchance whispered that his handsome person might make a favourable impression; while he disdained not, meantime, to fish for the admiration of the simpler maidens who stood around him with hair smoothly combed and neatly snooded. To this motley crowd the gay colours of the women's plaids gave animation, similar to that bestowed by the gaudy tulip, when mixed in a border of more sober-coloured flowers.

Tedious was the interval of expectation, till the hour of two sounded from the clock of the Palace; which had no sooner flung its warning on the air, than a flourish of trumpets, and the twang of bagpipes,

announced the approach of their Majesties. The nobles and ladies poured forth, and formed a line, reaching from the gate at which they issued, to the platform through which their Majesties passed, and ascending its steps, took their seats under the canopy. A smile of exultation sat on the countenances of both, for the multitude had not disappointed their most sanguine expectation, and they looked around them with so gracious an expression, that bonnets were tumultuously thrown aloft, and the air resounded with rude shouts of gratulation and joy. The players advanced from a temporary building erected for the purpose of a tiring-room, and no sooner appeared, than profound silence reigned among the multitude. The play chosen for this occasion was the " Midsummer Night's Dream," from the appropriateness of the place to its general scenery, and the partiality of her Majesty for the plays of Shakspeare. The Amazonian Queen, and enamoured Duke, stepped forward on the turf,

and the charge of the latter, which was spoken with much animation, to

> " Stir up the Athenian youth to merriment,
> Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth,
> And turn melancholy forth to funerals,"

seemed not only literally obeyed by the Scottish youth then present, but also by the hoary head of age, who all replied to it by a simultaneous shout of revelry. But as the drama proceeded, silence again reigned; and the Earl of Gowrie, who had only that morning returned, and, in confutation of the King's and Rathsay's surmises, appeared upon the field, was perhaps, with the exception of Agnes, the only person on whom the scene immediately following,—when Theseus questions Hermia, concerning her resolution to become a nun,—had other effect than that of amusement.

During this speech, the Earl turned his eyes involuntarily on Agnes, whom he stood near, as if searching her very soul, in the hope of finding the answer to his arguments, which he was so anxious to learn.

She, however, satisfied him by no expression of feature which he could construe to mark or indicate any change of her former determination. The picture drawn by the Athenian Duke, presented Agnes to his imagination like the rose "withering on the virgin thorn," and consuming her days in acts of superstitious austerity. Nay, he thought he read in her countenance the very answer of Hermia—"So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord." And he was only roused from his profound reverie by the cheering given to Quince and his comrades, when they met to allot to each the characters for the performance of Pyramus and Thisbe. For here the delight of the populace in a scene so calculated for their amusement, knew no bounds.

When the first act concluded, and the players retired to the tiring-room, the multitude began to regale themselves with such luxuries as, in this holiday time, they had provided; and many were those who, like

the Squire of La Mancha, fixed their eyes upon the heavens, while the bottoms of their ale or wine-flasks were uppermost. Nor was this most delectable amusement confined to the lower class of the audience; for a page approached his Majesty with a cup of wine, which he, graciously receiving, raised to his lips, and appeared to kiss the goblet with as much fervour as any of his plebeian subjects, applying to it again and again, until the players returned, habited as fairies, and the pastime proceeded, and continued to amuse the spectators more and more as it drew toward a close. Shouts of applause attended the appearance of him who represented the lion, and who, clad in a skin of that lordly animal, came ambling through the trees, accompanied by Moonshine. They had scarce appeared, however, and given time for this expression of pleasure in the multitude to subside, when a confused and tumultuous noise was heard in the direction of the Craigs, while loud vociferations of—"To the play-field with

her!—to the King with the witch!" resounded through the air, as those who uttered them approached nearer and nearer. The attention of the crowd, which had been exclusively fastened on the actors, was now transferred to the authors of this tumult. His Majesty rose from his seat, and walked forward to the front of the platform, where he perceived a number of people bearing, as in triumph, a woman seated in an arm-chair, with whom they were endeavouring to force their way into the area occupied by the players. James, one of whose principal weaknesses, it is well known, was a firm belief in witchcraft, and who had a peculiar delight in examining those accused of that crime, gave orders, in a loud voice, that the people who carried the woman should be allowed to pass with her and her accusers into the open space, and directed them forward immediately in front of his person. There they placed the chair in which the woman sat, and dragging forward a dead mastiff by a rope fastened round his

neck, laid him at her side. For some moments, with looks of mingled rage and anguish, she continued to regard the animal, that, bloody and mangled, with his eyes open and turned up toward her face, still shewed his teeth, as if grinning defiance on her enemies.

There was, as we have before remarked, at all times something uncommon in the appearance of old Euphan; but now, seated in the midst of an assembled multitude, all of whom she considered her adversaries, her keen black eyes flashed fire, as she turned their glance of inexpressible scorn on all sides of her, and sat erect, as if feeling herself superior to all she looked upon. There was so striking an impression of fearlessness and contempt of worldly authority stamped upon her pallid countenance, that it was impossible not to experience a degree of awe in contemplating it, as the expression of one who had survived all hope and fear. The King began to bend his attention on the old woman with a peculiar animation

in his manner and countenance, which told that he was now employed according to his heart's content.

"Let this woman's accusers stand forth!" said James.

"Please your Majesty," said a man, who directly answered to the summons, and who, from his dwarfish and elfish appearance, and the fiendish glee that seemed to possess him, might himself have been mistaken for an agent of the evil one,—"Please your Majesty, this same auld beldame is ane o' the most pestilent witches that ever cast her cantrips ower a country-side. Lang and sair hae the people and cattle suffered for mony a mile round, frae divers strange diseases, but the ill-doer was ne'er found out or yesterday, when a callant cam to my house, and tell't me and my niebours, that, living at Musselburgh, and rising with the gray dawn, about his maister's wark, ae morning, he had nae sooner opened the door to issue furth, than he spied a mawkin rinnin away frae it, whan, thinkin to fell

her, he cast a stane after her, and brak ane o' her legs; but she still ran on, hirpling on the tither three; and though he made up wi' her nows and than, she aye jinked him at some odd corner; but he fallowed, and she led him through breers and through whuns, till at the last she led him up the gully yonder, whare he lost her. But now comes the clearest pruif that was e'er gi'en your Majesty anent a witch; for what does he find out, but that this auld brimstane, whae has a house up there, has broken her leg, naebody kend how but hersel. Sae a' body may ken, please your Majesty, wha the mawkin was, I trow!—Look," said he, "as her leg is wound about wi' duds!"—and he went up to her, and placing a stick which he held in his hand under her ankle, forced it out into notice.

An involuntary cry of agony escaped the wretched woman at this inhuman outrage, and deep muttered curses trembled on her lips.

"Are there nae mair witnesses against

her than this man ?" said the King.—" Gif there be, let them speak, that we may judge righteous judgment; for, though the evidence o' this man seemeth very clear, we wad fain examine mair deeply; and mair especially, we desire to hear the testimony o' that same callant o' whom he speaketh; for, being gifted by the grace o' God wi' discernment in thae matters, we will sift this to the bottom."

At this instant there pressed forward not less than twenty people, all eager to speak; but the boy was no where to be seen.

" Mak peace !" cried his Majesty; " we will hear that little auld woman in front first—Stand back, and let her say what she kens anent this matter !"

An old woman, the picture of squalid wretchedness and dirt, now came forward, and dropping a low reverence, was about to speak, when our host of Loretto burst through the crowd, and, covered with dust

and perspiration, made his way past her, and stood directly before his Majesty.

"I maist humbly crave your gracious Majesty's pardon," said he, in a voice interrupted by his want of breath, while, with the end of his clerical band, as being most convenient, he wiped off the drops that trickled to his chin,—"I maist humbly crave your Majesty's maist gracious pardon for appearing thus forfeughen before the Lord's anointed;—especially seeing, although I had come in my best guise, as was fitting, still it is written, 'Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king.'—But, nevertheless, it being also written, that 'It is the honour of kings to search out a matter,' it surely becometh his faithful subjects to assist him therein. Therefore, most high and mighty Prince, be pleased to hearken unto the voice of one of the lowliest, but most faithful of thy people. Be it known unto your Majesty, that in coming hither, I met with an imp of the devil,

whom I believe to be the false witness against this poor woman, that the misguided wrath of the multitude hath arraigned before thee, O King! If I have, therefore, your Majesty's permission, I will proceed with mine evidence."

Here, bending his body toward the King, he waited his reply, and was ordered by him to proceed.

"As I said, then," he resumed, "please your Highness, I encountered, in coming here, an infernal young incubus, who was umquhille an inmate of my domicile, and, from bad practices, about to be expelled therefrom, when his father the devil delivered him out of my lock-fast keeping, as he hath even now delivered him from my grip, leaving nought in my hand save this his doublet."—And he drew from under his arm a greasy leathern jacket, which he exhibited in his hands, and which had whilom incased the body of the boy, but which he had maliciously and cunningly left, in place of himself, in the hands of Macsticket, by

dexterously slipping his arms out of it while held by the collar. "Now this being so," he continued, "and learning that this woman is here upon his instigation, I do misdoubt me that he hath deceived the people. But, if I am wrang in your Majesty's eyes, I humbly crave your forgiveness."

"Na," said the King, "ye hae acted like an honest man; nevertheless, we opine that ye hae not spoken to the point anent this matter; and," continued James, unwilling to give up an examination in which he imagined his wisdom would shine so conspicuously, "as there are mony witnesses present again' her, we shall examine according to that measure o' discernment whilk hath been heretofore granted unto us."

Our host having performed another low obeisance, was about to retire.

"Stop, man!" said the King; "your garments bespeak ye a member o' the Kirk,—I pray ye, how happeneth it that ye hae ventured to approach this spot, unhallowed

by a divertisement, against whilk the anathemas of your brethren hae been sae rigorously launched?"

Macsticket, who possessed no small share of discernment in aught that concerned his temporal welfare, immediately determined to turn to the best account the incident which had thus brought him before Majesty; and, maugre his having come to Edinburgh on the report of the intended scene in the Park, that he might exhort the refractory of his own congregation, he now bethought himself of some scriptural precepts to his purpose, and delivered them with an appearance of readiness, which gave every mark of sincerity to his words.

"Maist high and mighty Prince," said he, in answer to the question of the King, "under whom thy people enjoy all Christian liberty of studying the true Evangel, I opine that they consult it to small purpose, who set up their opinions against your Majesty's, and forget that it sayeth, 'A divine sentence is in the lips of the King, his

mouth transgresseth not in judgment.'— And again, 'Whoso provoketh the King, sinneth against his own soul.'"

Pleased with doctrine so congenial to his own ideas, and differing so widely from that held by the bulk of the clergy, James turned with a sort of chuckle toward the Duke of Lennox, who stood near him, and said, "This is a shrewd fellow, i' faith, Lennox, and hath, methinks, studied his Bible to some purpose." And, turning again to our host,—"Tell me, man," said he, "what is thy name, and the place o' thy ministry?"

"My name, and please your Highness, is Macsticket, and I minister in spiritual things to the ancient and respectable corporation of fleshers in your Majesty's metropolis."

"Weel," returned the King, "thy dutifulness hath pleased us withal, and we will bethink us o' somewhat to thy advantage.— Bide now, and let us hear what this little auld woman hath to say in evidence."

The woman again advanced, and told

her story to the King, in language such as she was accustomed to use, mixed with the application of a title which she supposed the due of him, who, since the Pope was put down, must be the greater man.

"Please your Holiness," said she, "I live but and ben wi' Saunders Macshane, whose lassie aye serves that auld kimmer wi' a soup milk ilka mornin; sae ae mornin' Saunders' cow pat her fit i' the cog, and skailed the milk; for she's a thrawn limmer, as e'er your Holiness kenn'd. Weel, in comes the lassie, and she wad hae me to gie her a soup for the auld kimmer; but mine was setten by, an' I wadna break it; but an I had kenned, she should hae had it a';—for ye see, please ye, twa days hadna gane by, whan my cow took a dwining, and sae it cam into my head that she was witched; and some o' the neibours persuaded me to hang the gudeman's breeks on her horns, ower her head, (an approved recipe of the period,) and baste her out o' the byre wi' a muckle rung, upon a Friday

morning, and they said she behoved to gang straight to the door o' them that witched her; sae I did it, and she made for the Park here; and when she cam to the wa', she aye breasted at it, and minted at it wi' her horns, because she couldna won through to that wife's house; and while she drave at the wa', she rave the breeks a' to pieces, and blawed like a pair o' smiddy-bellows, and though we got her turned back, she fell down and deed or ever she wan hame; and we neer durst say wha it was that witched her; but, now the randy's ta'en haud o', ilk ane may speak again' her; for it's weel kenn'd that ye are a righteous King, please your Holiness, whae specially minds that ane o' the ten commandments that says, 'Ye shanna suffer a witch to live;' and that the lunt o' a bleezing witch is as pleasant to your sight, as a hale army o' sodgers was to your forbears."

It is more than probable that his Majesty did not feel any particular satisfaction in this public rehearsal of his virtues; for he

instantly silenced the speaker, and commanded, with a frown, and a voice of impatience, that those who were rushing forward with their testimony should stand back while he examined the accused.—The result of which examination shall be recorded in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER IV.

A pawkie auld kimmer wons in yon glen,
Nane kens how kimmer can fight and fen;
Kimmer gets malt, and kimmer gets meal,
And canty lives kimmer, right cosey and hale;
Kimmer gets bread, and kimmer gets cheese,
And kimmer's uncannie, e'en keep her at ease;
Kimmer can sit i' the coat-tail o' the moon,
And tipple red wine in Brabant brewn.

*Witch of Ae.*

THOSE who had been so anxious to testify against her, who was now become the object of public reprobation, awed by the King's command, and his irritated manner, precipitately retreated among the crowd.

"Speak, woman!" said his Majesty, addressing Euphan; "what hae ye to say—for there is strang evidence again' ye?"

Euphan fixed her eyes steadily and sternly on the King;—for, harassed and menaced,

tormented by pain, and baited by the rabble, she had become more than usually careless of life.—" Make ready," she said, " your torments, for I shall say nought in my defence; prepare your manacles and ropes, your boots, your carpie-claws, and pliniwinks, and then your stakes and faggots!—I have already been tried in the furnace seven times heated, and if I am now to ascend as a burnt-offering, what matters it?—I shall soon be beyond the reach of a world I hate, and of a Prince, whose weakness I despise!"

" What say ye, wretched hag?" said the King, kindling into anger; " we shall incontinent put to the proof thae vaunts, gif ye hae not somewhat to allege whilk may prove your innocence o' the foul crime laid to your charge; and it is o' our great mercy and graciousness that ye are now permitted to testify in your ain behalf, seeing that your speech hath already been that for whilk a less patient sovereign had alane condemned ye."

" I have already said," replied she, " that

I have nought to urge in my defence.—If ye are indeed so besotted as to believe that a poor crushed worm like me can do the things which these people have spoken, all I could say of mine innocence would not avail me ;—for I have not forgotten that ye brought to a wretched death man and woman, high and low, because when ye sailed for Denmark there was not a smooth sea, a summer sky, and soft winds, at a season when tempests were natural. Think ye then that I expect mercy at your hands ?—Na ! I have not forgotten that ye condemned to the burning alive my benefactress, that honourable and good lady, the daughter of your faithful servant Lord Cliftonhall.—Ye cannot torture me as ye did her, for I have no children to leave motherless—no husband to wail for me !—Na, na !" said she, overcome by her recollections, and pressing her shrivelled hands against her bosom with the intensity of despair, while her countenance lost for a while its character of high daring, and assumed a subdued look of un-

utterable anguish,—" they are all lost forever, as an arrow, which parteth the air, and leaveth no trace behind, but nevertheless sticketh deep in the breast that it pierceth.—The bitterness of death is past, therefore do your pleasure, but let it be done quickly—I have nought to confess. There lies the last memorial of husband and children," she continued, looking on the dog at her side; " poor old brute!—that was the play-fellow of my weans, and the guard of my lonely state!—I put more respect upon thy dead carcase, than on king, and court, and people to boot!"

She ceased, and there was a dead silence; for King and people were spell-bound by her reckless audacity. Presently recovering her erect mien, and again turning her regards on the King, in which the utmost indignation was expressed, she continued—

" Said I that I had nought to confess?—How could I forget to tell, that I hold the same faith with your martyred mother?—

I am a Papist!—this of itself is enough to condemn me—is it not?"——

Here she was interrupted by loud cries from the multitude, of—"Away with her!—burn the Papist witch!" But as soon as this noise subsided, she went on.

"Dear sainted Queen!" she cried, lifting her hands above her head, and turning up her eyes to heaven, "thou too didst suffer the persecution of the enemies of our faith, and what am I, that thy son should spare me, who lacked courage and a heart to save his mother!"

His Majesty's anger now became perfectly ungovernable.—"Let the officers o' justice be called!" he cried, in a voice choked with rage, "and let this d—d blasted witch be strictly confined, till she undergo the sentence o' the law!"

The crowd was now seen parting in different directions, to allow several men to pass through, who were about to bear her off, when she assumed a tone and look of authority, which, savage as they were, they

instantly obeyed. While putting them back with her left hand, she drew from her bosom with the right a small leathern bag, and, addressing his Majesty, she said—

"This contains what I must soon relinquish; I will therefore bestow it on you, though, in so doing, I give to your neglect that which I have all but worshipped."

Strong curiosity now possessed the lookers on to see what the bag contained. Taking from it a small parcel, she unfolded three separate papers, and keeping their mysterious contents in the hollow of her hand, she laid it on her breast, and closed her eyes, while all the fervour of mental prayer quivered on her lips. She next raised it, and imprinted on it a fervent kiss, and then shaking it out to its full length, gave to the action of the breeze a long lock of silver hair, which, toward the end where it had been cut from the head, was strongly matted together with blood.

"Behold," she cried, "this hair, false

Prince! which your conduct clothed with the snows of winter ere yet the autumn of her beauty had arrived! and behold the sacred blood in which it is steeped—it is that of her who gave you being!"

"The woman raves—she is horn wud!" cried the King—"awa wi' her! Will ye stand there hearkening til a mad woman, whan I command ye to take her awa?"

The men again approached her, and she stretched out her right hand, from which the long hair streamed like a pennon, while the strong tones of her voice were distinctly heard by all.

"I am a dying woman, and, as I hope for salvation through the Son of the Holy Virgin, and as this is a symbol of that cross on which he suffered," she said, making the sign upon her breast, "I swear that this hair which I now hold in my hand was cut from the head of Mary Stuart, Queen of Scotland, after that head was severed from the body by the accursed axe!"

Conviction was forced upon James, in spite of the prejudice which he had conceived against the unhappy woman.

" And how cam into your possession sic a relic?—If that be in sooth the hair o' my parent, it maun furnish a proof o' what is allegit against ye, for it could only hae been obtained by thy dealings wi' Satan, sae strictly was the bearing away o' any memorial guarded against.—How then say ye did it come into your possession ?"

" Misbelieving Prince !" she resumed, in a voice of anger—" it was given me by one on whom I had some claim. I was the foster-mother of Mistress Jean Kennedy, afterwards the wife of the Master of your Household, Sir Andrew Melville, that was drowned, as ye weel ken, in crossing from Bruntisland, and was, as ye also know, the Queen's faithful attendant, even in the last bloody scene of her murder. This hair was part of what she procured from the surgeon appointed to embalm the body, under promise of secrecy, and under such promise

did I receive it; for Mistress Kennedy well knew that she could not bestow on me that which I would value as much, although she had given me houses and land, gold and jewels."

"Send here that braid of hair—ower valuable a relic to be possessed by sic as ye!" said James, at the same time sending the Master of Ruthven to receive it from her, who had no sooner reached the place where she sat, than, folding it up once more, she placed her hand over it on her breast.

"Who are you, young man," she said, "to whom I am ordered to surrender my last earthly treasure?—methinks I would fain know to whose hand I give it?"

The Master had stretched forth his hand to receive the braid, but now withdrew it, and was about to speak, when one of the men who stood by the chair of old Euphan, provoked by her want of respect for his Majesty, and at this abrupt question addressed to one of a family so highly honoured by the people, seized her by the shoulder,

and gave her a shake—"What, brimstane!" said he, "do ye question the Master o' Ruthven, as though he were ane o' your ain degree?"

"Desist, fellow!" interposed the Master; "lay no hand on the unfortunate woman! —It is the King's pleasure, old mother," he continued, "that you deliver to me the hair which you hold in your hand." And he again made a motion to receive it.

She eyed him from head to foot—"Na, na," said Euphan, still keeping her hand pressed upon her breast—"not to a descendant of the persecuting house of Ruthven—the enemies of God, and of the blessed Queen Mary—will I deliver this last memorial of her!—Stand back!" she said, with an authoritative dignity, that might have become an empress, and which made the Master recede a few steps in surprise.

She cast a searching look along the bench to the right and left of the Queen, where her Majesty's ladies sat, and relaxing some-

what the sternness of her aspect, she once more raised her voice.

"Is there no one in that gay and courtly throng of dames," she said, "who, for the respect they bear to the memory of her, so lovely and unfortunate, will do mine errand to the King?"—And again the grey pennon streamed from her hand.

A dead silence reigned in the forms she addressed. None of the fair occupiers were ever before present at a scene of this nature, and they had bestowed upon it the most profound attention, accompanied by a thrilling interest in the unfortunate woman, whom they figured to themselves as standing on the very verge of eternity, and whose passage to it was to be effected by a death so fearful, that they shuddered but to think of it; and this feeling was naturally increased by the quick transition which had been made from mirth and amusement to a scene so impressive. But although the courtly females were deeply interested in this novel tragedy, none of them viewed it

with the distracted feeling of poor Agnes, who, from various circumstances, recognizing Euphan as the person who had given the asylum to her aunt, feared every instant that something would fall from her lips by which the Abbess would be discovered; nor could she conceive how she had escaped being brought forward as a witness against Euphan, if found dwelling in her house. Several times during her interrogation was she upon the point of addressing the King in her behalf, but was as often withheld by the fear of its being unavailing, when she heard her braving his wrath in a manner which she expected every instant would bring down the whole weight of his resentment upon her. But no sooner did the unfortunate woman appeal immediately, as it were, to herself, than, rising from her seat, and drawing forward her long veil, she enveloped herself in it, and darting over the intermediate ground, she was, with the quickness of lightning, at the side of Euphan.

"Give me that precious relic," she said, "and I will be its bearer to the King."

"Most willingly," replied Euphan; "for I am persuaded, young maiden, that she who, in the face of an assembled multitude, fears not to attend the summons of a reviled and persecuted woman, is worthy to be intrusted with it, more especially if she be, as I suspect, the Lady Agnes Somerdale."

"I am she whom you mention," said Agnes; and as she stooped to receive the lock of hair, she said hastily, and in a whisper, "Where is she to whom you gave an asylum?"

"Content you, lady—she is safe," was the reply.

Lady Agnes instantly returned with the braid to the King. As she ascended the steps on the right of the King, the Earl of Gowrie met her at the foot of them, and taking her hand to lead her to his Majesty, said, as they passed on, "Fear not for the

unfortunate woman; I have thought on a scheme to remove her from immediate danger."

"That is kind, indeed," said Agnes; "for, strange as it may appear, those nearly connected with me have been under obligations to her, which I would fain repay. May I venture to intercede for her with his Majesty, do you think?"

"Certainly," returned the Earl, who had no time to say more, for they were then before the King.

Agnes threw back her veil, and kneeling, presented the braid of hair. He took it, and placing it in the palm of his hand, which trembled violently, he regarded it for some moments with intense feeling, which appeared in the workings of every muscle in his face; and then searching in his pocket, produced that same purse which he had received from the Jesuit, and enclosing it within it, returned it to his pocket. It was then that he seemed first to perceive

that the Lady Agnes was still kneeling at his feet.

"Pardon," he said, "fair lady, this neglect; that wretched wife's extraordinar gitt hath somewhat disordered us."

"Before I rise, let me entreat your Majesty to have mercy on that poor old wretch," said Agnes; "she is certainly insane; and her great zeal for the unfortunate Queen, to whom that hair belonged, seems in part to have been the cause of transporting her beyond the bounds of reverence due to your Majesty."

"Rise, young lady," said his Majesty, extending his hand toward her; and continuing in a low voice, "confess that the faith she hauds hath somewhat prepossessed the Lady Agnes in her favour; but gif witchcraft is proved upon her, she maun suffer the penalty o' her crime. God forbid else!"

Agnes was about to reply, when the Earl of Gowrie interposed.

"If your Majesty thinks proper to trust me with the keeping of this wretched woman, I will take order that she escapes not from the place of her confinement till your Majesty's further pleasure is known."

"Be it sae, gif you, my lord, will tak this trouble; for nane will suspect," said the King, with a smile of irony, "my Lord o' Gowrie to favour a Papist. And to speak sooth, she has sae interwoven her discourse wi' mention o' honourable names, that gif she was indeed the nursing mother o' Sir Andrew Melville's spouse, we shanna be sorry to find her innocent o' the crime laid to her charge, and shall even forgie her unmannered insolence to oursel, putting it down, as this young lady sayeth, to the account o' a disordered brain."

On obtaining this permission, the Earl beckoned Laurence toward him, whom he met at the end of the platform.

"That woman (pointing to Euphan) is delivered over to my keeping," said the Earl. "Make those fellows who surround

her chair, remove her to my house. Place her in one of the stone apartments; look to it, that she be supplied with all necessary conveniencies, and take with you a sufficient number of your fellows to secure her from insult. Suffer no one to lay a finger on her, at your own peril; and when she is safely lodged, set a watch upon the door of her apartment, that no one gain access to her. Begone—and see that my orders are strictly fulfilled."

"They shall, my lord," said Laurence; and gathering together a band of his master's domestics, whom he caused to draw their weapons and follow him, he approached the men in whose charge Euphan then was; and ordering them, in the name of the Earl, to remove the woman to his lordship's house in the Canongate, they proceeded with her through the crowd, who, satisfied with her being in the custody of the Earl, and anticipating her final condemnation, suffered her to pass without further molestation, save what was offered

in the opprobrious epithets bestowed upon her by the rabble.

The players, who had been lookers on from the time of the old woman's first appearance, now prepared to finish the representation. The Lion once more became a four-footed beast, and Moonshine resumed his lantern. But their Majesties signified their pleasure of withdrawing from the field, and immediately all was in motion. The gallant throng of nobles and ladies, with nodding plumes, and floating veils, surrounded their Majesties, and moved forward, till they disappeared within the gate of the Palace, from whence they had issued.

It was passing through the crowd which divided to form a passage for the courtly throng, that Lady Agnes felt her arm seized by some person behind her, and turning, perceived Father Leonard, who put a paper into her hand, and immediately disappeared by mixing with the crowd.

This abrupt termination to the amusement of the day, would, it is more than

probable, have much displeased the populace, had not her Majesty caused it to be proclaimed before she left the field, that they should have a similar entertainment prepared for them on the morrow; after which, they were to be allowed the performance of any pastime which it had been usual for them to practise, before the abolishment of the May-games. This assurance was well timed, and sent them home in as great glee as the Queen herself returned to the Palace, where she had before determined to finish the day with one of the most splendid balls she had ever given.

It is necessary here to relate, that the urchin, who had been the immediate cause of Euphan's misfortune, was, as our host conjectured, no other than the boy who had escaped, by means of his wits, from the wood-house in which the hostler shut him up; for no sooner did he find it impossible to repass the door by which he had entered, than he set himself to consider how he might effect his deliverance; and having

dragged a log of wood against the door, and piled upon it as many more pieces as he thought might prevent a sudden entrance from without, he climbed up the wall to where the beams supported the roof, and taking a large clasp knife from his pocket, he began on the back part of the building to hew away at the inside of the thatch. Having cut a slit of sufficient length to admit his body, he proceeded in a slanting direction, carefully putting aside or pulling out the straw that impeded his egress, till an aperture was made of sufficient size to allow of his passing through, taking care, however, to injure the appearance of the building on the outside as little as possible; and having crept through, he contrived to hide the hole so artfully, that when he was missed from the place of his confinement, it was neither seen nor suspected by what means he had made good his retreat, it being much easier, according to the method of settling these matters at the period, to suppose that he owed his freedom to

some supernatural agency. Nor was it any matter of surprise to the household of the inn, and their neighbours, that the devil should at length have claimed him, whom they had all prophesied so long would one day belong to him. There was, therefore, no search made for him; and after wandering for a considerable time in the environs of Edinburgh, sheltering himself in woods and glens, which he only left at night to crave food from the inhabitants of the surrounding cottages, whom he addressed with fictitious tales of woe, he at length one night approached the dwelling of Euphan, for the same purpose. Being terrified from entering by her dog, he looked in at the window, where, to his inexpressible surprise, he beheld the woman from whom he had purloined the purse, and who had been the cause of his disgrace, sitting opposite to him, by the side of a fire, whose blazing light made any mistake in her identity impossible. Happening to look toward the window, and beholding a pale face close to

it, for his wanderings had half famished him, she uttered an ejaculation of alarm, and, at the same time, crossed herself several times most fervently. This was enough; for the boy, who marked and understood the action, had scarce turned a dozen yards down the glen, when it suggested to his fertile imagination an expedient to avenge himself on the person he had just seen; and, at the same time, exculpate himself from the charge of theft, by attributing to her witchcraft all that had happened, to which her being a Papist he knew would give a colouring; most of the unfortunate people on whom that crime was charged at the period, being of that religion. For this malicious purpose he took his way to the nearest dwelling, which happened to be that of the old woman whose evidence we have heard respecting her cow. And never could he have made a better selection of one more prejudiced against the inhabitant of the cottage at the Craigs; for he no sooner entered her house, and inquired, with well-

feigned terror, who it was that inhabited the cottage, than he learned all the old woman knew respecting Euphan, who, she informed him, had always been suspected of being a Papist, and whom he immediately personified with the Abbess, supposing that, for some secret reason, she had passed herself off while at Loretto as a traveller.

It directly occurred to the wretched boy, that he might also turn to account the adventure of the broken leg, by interweaving it in the tissue of falsehoods he was then manufacturing. And with a promptitude which nothing but the father of lies could have supplied, he, with affected surprise, avowed his belief that he had himself broken her limb, and told the story of the hare before rehearsed. It was now late, but the old woman, full of what she believed a corroboration of all her surmises, and anxious to stir up her neighbours against one whom she had always feared and hated since the death of her cow, set out to inform them of the discovery she had made, and, predis-

posed as they were to form a harsh judgment of Euphan, it is no matter of surprise that they willingly followed in her wake next day, when so good an opportunity offered of dragging her before his Majesty, from whose judgment they anticipated her punishment.

When, however, the noise of the approach of the rabble reached the ears of Euphan, and the other inmates of her house, and the terrified Grizzy reported their approach, imagining it might be the Abbess they had come in search of, she directed her to a place of concealment, which, entering from behind her bed, communicated with a space large enough to conceal her, which formed part of a large out-shot chimney, and which had many times served the same purpose, in times of persecution, to those of her faith.

The rabble, on their arrival, met with considerable opposition from the old mastiff; but having at length killed him, they bore off old Euphan in her chair; not, it may be supposed, from any regard to her

comfort, but because she made so much resistance on their attempting to drag her along, that carrying her thus was easier for themselves. When the boy who had been her accuser saw that she was not the person against whom his revenge was levelled, he took the first opportunity of slinking off, not caring to appear as the accuser of one against whom he had no ill will, and met the Rev. Mr Macsticket in his flight, from whom, as before related, he also effected his escape.

## CHAPTER V.

Fare thee well!—thus disunited—
Torn from every dearer tie—
Sear'd in heart—and lone—and blighted—
More than this, I scarce can die.

BYRON.

AT the time the Queen made her intention known of giving a ball on the evening of that day on which the representation took place in the Park, she at the same time commanded, that all who were to be present should be sumptuously attired. Fain would Lady Agnes have been spared the necessity of putting on the trappings of joy, while her heart was a prey to the deepest sorrow. For in the letter delivered to her when leaving the play-field, she had received the intelligence from her aunt, that all was in

readiness for their departure, and giving her directions for joining the person who was to conduct her to the vessel at four o'clock the next morning.

Long did she debate with herself whether she should, by seeking an excuse, absent herself from the gay throng, and thus pass from the world without again looking upon him who so powerfully mingled with all her thoughts, or whether it was not incumbent on her, before leaving him forever, to express her gratitude for his good wishes, and the sense she felt for the interest he had taken in her welfare. Dangerous as such a determination might be, she was swayed toward it by too many feelings interwoven with her very being, to be able to resist it.

With all the sensations, therefore, which may be supposed to assail the Eastern victim, who immolates herself on the tomb of him she loved, while decorating for death, Agnes, for the first time for many months, laid aside her sable garments, to be attired

with a lustre and magnificence in which she had never before appeared. When she entered the great hall, in which the gay multitude were assembled, all eyes were turned upon her. There was a lofty expression accompanying every look and gesture, which had never before been observed in the retiring Agnes—a sort of halo thrown around her, who was about forever to quit this scene of vanity, and it gave her appearance that divine grace, which it is the province of the soul alone to bestow upon the outward form. The Earl of Gowrie beheld with surprise the extreme splendour of her dress, and the marked alteration in her demeanour, which served as a new cause of admiration, while it carried with it a presentiment that she was actuated by some inexplicable cause, and the tremour of his hand was perceived by Agnes as he led her to the centre of the hall, where they performed one of those grave dances so much in fashion at the time, and in which they both greatly excelled; while Rathsay, who was, just as she gave

her hand to Gowrie, approaching to claim it for himself, looked on the perfect figure of the Earl, even in the midst of disappointment, with extorted admiration, and on that of Agnes with rapture; and, to say truth, two more exquisite models of beauty were never clothed in mortality. Nor were they more distinguished for their symmetry and noble deportment, than for the elegant magnificence with which they were on that night attired. The upper garment of Agnes was an open robe, reaching to the feet, of transparent white gauze, edged with silver roses, covering a dress of white satin made to fit tightly to the body, and fastened with diamond clasps; the long train of which was bordered with rich silver embroidery, and allowed to sweep its folds at full length upon the floor, in imitation of the train of the peacock—that bird giving its name to the dance in which she was performing, and which, at that period, was most approved for elegant and majestic movements. The innumerable ringlets of her bright and lux-

uriant hair, fell like a veil over the polished neck and shoulders of Agnes, while it was prevented from encroaching on her features by a band set with diamonds, that sparkled in her dark hair like stars in a deepening firmament. The Earl of Gowrie was habited in a close dress of pale blue uncut velvet, slashed in the Spanish fashion with white satin, and ornamented with rich gold figured lace. His hose were embroidered in the clocks with gold, and his shoes decorated with diamond rosettes, which were again matched at the knees—his middle was circled by a broad belt of gold filigree work, from which hung a small rapier, the hilt of which was studded with precious stones of great value; and in his hand he carried a hat of white beaver, the original material of which was merely distinguishable through a net-work of gold, with which it was covered. This hat was further ornamented by a lofty plume of white ostrich feathers, and looped up in front with a chain, composed of small brilliants, passed over a diamond button, of such lus-

tre and value, that it put to scorn the royal jewels, and those of the whole court, and was in itself a fortune. A mantle, lined with costly sables, the outside of which, to correspond with his doublet, was of embroidered blue velvet, was thrown over his shoulders, fastened in front with a brilliant clasp, in form of a wreathed serpent, and over the collar of this mantle fell deep lace points, leaving the throat bare. The hat which the Earl bore in his hand added much to the gracefulness of his action; and as his motions harmonized with those of his beautiful partner, and his eye watched hers, his fine countenance beamed with a softened tenderness, which, amidst the surrounding pomp and magnificence, seeing only Agnes, he sought not to conceal. Meanwhile, the features of Lady Agnes were calm, but her smile was melancholy, and her voice tremulous, as she replied to him while leading her to her seat. She determined to seize what she thought might be a last opportunity of speaking to him; and, there-

fore, instead of avoiding him, as she had so long done, she now appeared anxious to enter into conversation, and, delighted with this returning frankness of manner, the Earl seated himself beside her.

Agnes began by thanking him for the important assistance he had already rendered poor Euphan, by the protection from insult he had afforded her, and by beseeching him to aid her still more, if in his power.

"For it is not only that we hold, as his Majesty remarked, the same faith," she said, "but this poor woman, whom misfortune seems to have crazed, has rendered important services, at her own risk, to a friend of mine whom I much value, and I would fain requite it by setting her free from the perils with which she seems at present encompassed."

The Earl assured Agnes, that, independently of his pity for the old woman, which of itself would have interested him in her favour, he should consider her request as binding him to exert himself for her ac-

quittal, and promised to do all for that purpose which lay within the compass of his power.

"Too happy," continued the Earl, "should I be so fortunate as in aught to add to your contentment, for I had feared that you meant to punish my presumption, in having dared to offer my advice on a point which has, I confess, engaged much of my thoughts during the interval that has passed since we first conversed on the subject."

"Not so, my lord," said Agnes; "although I have avoided any farther conversation on what my duty has prompted me to settle contrary to your advice."

"What!" replied Gowrie, interrupting her; "you have not determined irrevocably to withdraw from the world? I had even hoped, upon the slight grounds of the alteration this night made on your dress, that you had altered your resolves.—Oh! speak and dispel this fear, which I feel creeping through my veins, and which, in

spite of all my fancied philosophy, I am unable to bear."

"You judged, then, of my determination by my dress?" said Agnes, as she glanced her eye over her splendid garments.—"You are not ignorant that it is the custom to attire the——" victim, she was going to say, but she changed the expression—"the person, gorgeously, who is about to renounce the world? This, you see, I have in part anticipated; for I shall only once more, in compliance with that custom, wear such habiliments as these."

"But," said the Earl, endeavouring to gather courage from the improbability he was about to mention, "how are you to accomplish this sacrifice? Your uncle has not surely given his consent to it?"

The answer of Agnes was in the negative; and he went on.

"Then is it most unlikely that his Majesty will allow you to depart contrary to his will?"

"My lord," returned Agnes, "my con-

fidence in you prompts me to assure you, that arrangements are made, which will shortly enable me to perform a duty, from which there is no appeal, nor, if acquainted with all the circumstances, which imperiously demand it, could any one who is interested in me, wish that I should shun a path, which heaven itself hath pointed out."

"God forbid," said the Earl, "that I should be that man! I only fear your determination may spring from some mistaken impulse;—but I have no right to inquire farther than you think proper to trust me. I too must follow the path of duty, painful and thorny as it is."

"Believe me," replied Agnes, "no mistake whatever exists to mislead me. But any farther explanation is at present impossible. Nay, without the implicit confidence I feel that you will not betray me, I have already said too much."

"Betray you!" repeated Gowrie—"No! though every hope of future happiness departs with you, I will not—I cannot betray

you!—Still I must cling to the trust, however fallacious, that something will occur to prevent the execution of your plan, which, considering the difficulties you have to encounter, cannot be of easy accomplishment."

Agnes shook her head, with a look which seemed to intimate, that she differed from him in this opinion.

"But lest you should be mistaken, my lord," she said, "and this should be the last time I may have an opportunity of expressing my sentiments, I beg you to accept the grateful thanks of one who has but few to care for her, for the trouble you have so benevolently taken to instruct me in what you consider the right path; and though I fear it is impossible, that we can ever hold the same faith, yet, I trust," she said, "that I am no bad Catholic, in hoping that the benevolent instructor may one day meet his refractory pupil, where he shall know and appreciate all the motives of her conduct." As she said this, despite of her utmost efforts, the tears trembled on her long eye-lashes, and she rose

hastily to join her friend, Lady Beatrix, for she found it necessary to put an instant restraint upon her feelings. At this moment Rathsay approached to solicit her hand; but she declined dancing again, and he rolled his dark eyes on Gowrie, with an expression of hatred, mingled with a look of haughty triumph, as he said—

"You have been fortunate to-night, my Lord of Gowrie, as usual, in securing to yourself alone the hand of the Lady Agnes, but perchance I shall not be always thus foiled." He passed on, and Gowrie, no way inclined to submit to what he considered an insult, was about to follow him.

"Oh! my lord," said Agnes, "cause me not, I beseech you, the unhappiness of seeing you quarrel with that fierce man on my account; I shall soon cease to form any excuse for his rude bearing." She spoke with a pleading earnestness, to which Gowrie could not refuse to listen, and he promised to take no notice of what had passed, unless it was repeated. Agnes therefore di-

rectly quitted the Earl, not wishing to provoke Rathsay further by remaining longer in conversation with him, and, following her original intention, sought her friend Beatrix.

"You are just come in time, my dear Agnes," said Beatrix, while her eyes sparkled with mirth, "to see Herbal exhibit his folly, of which he wished me to be the partner, for he is determined to dance; but I persuaded him I should have greater pleasure in being allowed to admire his performance as a spectator; and he has found out a young lady, who, not having danced to-night, is glad to figure upon any terms; but do come this way—see, he is about to claim his partner."

This intention of Herbal was, however, delayed for a few minutes by Rathsay, who, coming up to him at the moment, seized his arm, and bore him off to a distance.

"What the fiend are you going to do now?" said Rathsay; "see you not that you are become the butt of the whole court, by your ridiculous attempts to please that pert

minion of the Queen, who is forever exposing you to derision, while you appear perfectly insensible of her intention? Are you not content with the amusement you afforded her and her royal mistress the other day, by your awkward attempts to vault on your horse, while they were observing from a window, with such uncontrolled glee, each ineffectual endeavour?—I cannot bear to see thee make such a blockhead of thyself,—I prithee, therefore, desist from the accursed folly you are now meditating; for if you persist, you will no longer be able to shut your eyes against what I have told you."

The pride of Herbal had been several times hurt by the insinuations of Rathsay on the same subject, and particularly so at this period, when his consummate vanity was anticipating a triumph entirely new, in the applause which he believed would attend those elegant gestures that he had been practising for a length of time with such assiduity, and, as he imagined, with such complete success. Considering the defect

but small, which the lameness of his foot occasioned, he thought it would pass totally unobserved amid the flourishes and graces with which he meant to garnish his performance. To the admonition of Rathsay, he therefore replied with scornful incredulity—

"Your hatred of Lady Beatrix's family, which cannot be concealed," said Herbal, "makes you see all her motives in a different light from the true one. Did I observe in her half the pride and scorn that appear to possess her friend Lady Agnes, when you approach her, I should indeed cease to anticipate success in my endeavours to please."

Having said this, he remained not for an answer, but hurried off, full of the rash security he had just expressed, and made his way toward his destined partner; his self-complacency in no measure disturbed by what had just passed.

Rathsay looked after him with undisguised contempt.—"There he goes," said he, "full tilt to make an ass of himself;—

'bray a fool in a mortar, and he will still remain a fool.'"

"Now, do but look," said Beatrix to Lady Agnes, as Herbal approached, "see the conceited wretch how he is attempting to conceal his lameness; it really turns what would be a respectable infirmity into a source of derision. Who but himself could be so absurd as to imagine he could excite admiration by the movements of a leg a quarter of a yard shorter than its fellow?"

Here the scene became so conspicuously ludicrous, that Beatrix indulged herself in a most plebeian fit of laughter, in which she was joined by so many, that the disciple of Galen became at length susceptible of the ridicule of his situation; and glancing a look of suspicious inquisitiveness at the Queen, he perceived that she also was convulsed with merriment, which, as her eyes were bent full upon him, he could only construe to be at his own expense. His countenance underwent an immediate change, from the most satisfied complacency to a sallow dead-

ly hue,—his limbs trembled, and his livid lips quivered with passion; while all that Rathsay had said rushed with intense and convincing force upon his recollection. He concluded the dance as speedily as possible, and walking up to where the Ladies Beatrix and Agnes stood, he addressed the former, whose countenance still exhibited an arch inclination to salute him with the same laugh that had accompanied his performance.

"The Lady Beatrix seems disposed to be merry," said the enraged physician;—"may I inquire what has been the cause of the disposition to mirth which I have witnessed in her and her friends?—If it has been occasioned by my desire to conform to her taste, in practising the accomplishments she thought proper to approve, I shall henceforth leave all attempts of the kind to those who have more faith than I now confess myself to entertain in the stability of a woman's mind. But although I may not hitherto have been successful in my efforts, I possess some advantages, incalculably above what

may be suspected :—For instance, I have a knowledge in palmistry, which hath never yet deceived me in reading the lines of fortune ; and, to convince you of this, if the Lady Beatrix will withdraw her glove, I will engage to predict her fate so truly, that she shall hereafter be obliged to confess, that, however I may have failed in my other calculations, I have not in this over-rated my abilities."

The mischievous Beatrix, much amused by the rage he exhibited, and who expected to reap further entertainment from his spleen, retired, followed by Agnes and Herbal, to the vicinity of a strong light, where, withdrawing the glove from one of her hands, she presented it to him. He looked on it intently for a few moments, and said, raising his eyes to her face with a look so malignant and so appalling, that it made her start,—

" I see here more, young lady, than I care to mention ; nevertheless, remember my words, some great disaster shall shortly befal

you, and I caution you to husband your mirth withal, for the time is assuredly coming when you shall not find it so plentiful a commodity."

He walked away, leaving Agnes and Beatrix looking at each other in amazement.

"What can he mean?" said the former.

"I know not," replied Beatrix; "but he looked so like a demon while he pronounced his mysteries, that I could not help shuddering; though, after all, I daresay he only means to express his spite, because he hath at last discovered that I have been playing on his vanity."

The speech, however, of Herbal, and his manner, even more than his words, dwelt unpleasantly on her memory, and restrained, at least for that evening, her spirit of playfulness.

When Agnes was about to retire shortly afterwards, in order to make arrangements for her final departure, she fervently pressed the hand of Beatrix, as she bade her good night, while her eyes sought a last

look of Gowrie, whom she beheld standing with his arms folded, and resting his head upon the side of a window, with his eyes fixed on the ground, and so deep in thought, that he did not perceive her, as she glided quickly past him. She paused for a moment before she passed through the door, and cast back a mournful look upon him, as she quitted for ever the scene of pomp and magnificence. All the bitterness of death seemed centered in that farewell glance; and in a few moments the dazzling of the lights, the lustre of beauty, the splendour of dress, and the magic of music, faded on her sight and ear, and she found herself in the comparatively dark and quiet gallery that led to her own apartment, where as soon as she had arrived, she demanded the assistance of her handmaiden to disencumber her of her gay robes, which she exchanged for a close mourning dress; and having written a few lines to Lady Beatrix, to say she would feel consolation in the thought of her wearing, for her sake, the ornaments which she

should now no longer require, she informed her of her resolution to take the veil, and that her plan of escape was so well laid, as scarcely to admit a doubt of its successful termination; and concluded by promising to inform her hereafter, by her own hand, of her health and proceedings, when she should have reached the place of her final destination. She then inclosed her jewels and the letter in a small cut ivory casket, and proceeded to consult Alice on the mode of conveyance to be adopted, who, bethinking herself for an instant, said,—

"There is an old servant of Lord Gowrie's now waiting on his master below, who, as I hear say, is about to return to the Earl's house at St Johnstoun; now, as you know, lady, my step-dame resides there, it can be put in a parcel, with a direction for her to deliver it to some one of the Earl's household for the Lady Beatrix, or she might return it to old Adam, who will be sure to give it safely into the hands it is designed for."

This circuitous plan appeared to Agnes a safe one, and particularly well suited to her circumstances, as it would effectually prevent the delivery of the casket till she should have accomplished her escape, and be gone beyond recall; and she proceeded to put it in practice, by writing to the step-mother of Alice, and packing up the casket in a parcel, with which her maid went immediately back to the place where Lord Gowrie's servants waited, and having found old Adam, obtained a willing assent to her request.

Agnes, having made over all her wearing apparel to her attendant, proceeded next to assist her in packing and affixing such directions as should secure the various articles to those to whom she intended to bequeath them, and which, from their number and value, were no mean legacies.

When they had finished their employment, Alice urged her lady to take an hour's repose; for, she continued, "It has not yet struck three o'clock, and this has

been a fatiguing day for you, my dear lady."

"I shall have time enough to lay down when we reach the vessel, my good girl," replied Lady Agnes; "meanwhile, I prefer watching the approach of the last morning that I shall ever see dawn upon my native hills."

"Alas!" said Alice, as she began to weep bitterly, "it is a sad thing indeed to leave one's country for ever, with all one has been used to care for!—I think, somehow, if I could but see St Johnstoun once more, and have a walk on the bonny South Inch, where I used to play when I was a bairn, and go to the graves of my father and mother, I should not care so much about leaving every thing."

"Alas, my poor girl!" said Agnes, mournfully, "there is another who would also like to revisit the scenes of her childhood, and look once more on the graves of her parents; but it cannot be.—If, however, good maiden, now that the hour hath arrived, your

courage shrinks from the trial, or you repent in aught of your former determination to accompany me, it is not yet too late, nor shall I regard you the less for preferring to remain behind."

The tears of Alice were quickly dried upon her burning cheek.—" Cruel lady!" said the offended handmaiden, with a half-incredulous air, " to believe that any misfortune could be so great as being left behind by you!—No; I would rather go barefoot with you through the wide world, than be parted from you to be made a queen!"

" My kind and faithful girl!" replied Agnes, throwing her arms round her neck, " may all your attachment and affection to me be doubly repaid by Him who is the father and protector of such disinterested hearts as thine!—But," she continued, " the stars are fast fading, the dawn is approaching, and we must prepare for our departure."

They enveloped themselves in large cloaks, the hoods of which came over the head; and,

on leaving the apartment, locked the door, and carried away the key, that it might appear in the morning, if any attempt was made to enter, that they had, from the lateness of retiring the night before, continued their repose longer than usual. Having taken this precaution, they fled along the gallery with noiseless steps, and at length arrived at the door from which the letter of the Abbess had directed them to issue, and which, to their no small disappointment, they found still fast. Here they waited in breathless anxiety for about ten minutes, which appeared magnified by their impatience into at least half an hour. At length they heard a key put into the lock, the door was opened, and, as far as Agnes could discern, the same person who had been her guide to the Chapel of St Anthony appeared. He came close up to her, and said, in a low whisper,—

"I have no orders, lady, to conduct any one hence but yourself—Who is it that accompanies you?"

"It is," returned Agnes, "a faithful attendant, who I have solemnly promised shall share in my flight, and whom I therefore cannot leave behind."

The man seemed, by inclining his head, and fixing his eyes on the ground for a short space, to be deeply considering the matter.

"Seeing it may not be helped, let her come on then," said the Jesuit; for it was to his guidance now, as formerly, that Agnes was intrusted.

He took his way through what is now called the Duke's Walk, Lady Agnes and Alice keeping close at his heels.

Agnes felt revived by the refreshing air of early day, accompanied with all its delightful sights and sounds. The smaller wild animals were scudding across their path, and the birds twittering and chirping as they roused themselves to meet the first indications of the rising sun. At the end of the avenue, their guide turned off nearly in the direction of the path which now leads to Peirshill, where, in a small clump

of trees, they found two horses made fast by their bridles, and a man muffled in a long riding-cloak, who was standing on the outside of the little wood, waiting their approach.

"As I have brought you two females instead of one," said the Jesuit to the man, "it will be necessary that you take this young woman up behind you, and see that you make the best of your way to the Frith."

The man whom he addressed mounted immediately, and bringing his horse to the side of a small knoll, the Jesuit assisted Alice to mount behind him. He then raised Agnes to her saddle, made her a low obeisance, and wishing her a safe journey, turned, and was quickly out of sight, while they proceeded on their way at a brisk trot.

The beams of the rising sun began to dispel the grey mists of the morning, and to throw their long radiations of light across the Frith, which, like a broad blue girdle, surrounded the land that lay in wide expanse before them, with all its varieties of

romantic scenery. A number of vessels were passing up and down, but there was a small sloop apparently moored right opposite to them, which Agnes singled out as that in which her aunt awaited her; and she was straining her sight to try if she could descry her figure on its deck, when the sudden swerving of her horse recalled her attention to his guidance, and she perceived with affright that it had been occasioned by a man, who, turning suddenly into the road at her side, was throwing himself in before her to impede her progress. He seized her bridle, and conjured her to stop, while, going up to her guide, he communicated something to him in a low and hurried voice, to which he answered, in an audible tone,—

"Ah! the devil!—But you say sooth, for it is only by hard riding we can save ourselves;" and he continued, coming close up to Agnes, "Lady, you are betrayed; but your protectors have been too cunning for your pursuers, and, in case of this happening, provided you a secure place of re-

fuge, to which you have now only to follow me as fast as your horse can carry you, for nought else can save us from being overtaken ; trust in me, and let us on."

So saying, he turned down a lane in a different direction from that which they were pursuing, and setting spurs to his horse, was followed by that of Agnes, at a rate that would have appalled a less experienced horsewoman ; but, accustomed as she had been of late to attend the Queen in her hunting expeditions, who piqued herself on her excellence in this accomplishment, she felt no alarm at the rapidity of her horse's motion, or at the necessity which frequently occurred of clearing a hedge or ditch in her progress. Poor Alice, however, but little accustomed to this exercise, clung closely to the man who sat before her, and never failed to utter a loud shriek when the horse bounded over these obstacles,—which was partly vociferated on her own account, and partly on that of her lady, whom she ever and anon turned her head to behold, with the most rueful anticipation of seeing

her neck broken. They rode, or rather flew, at this rate for a distance of five miles, when, on entering a wood, the guide slackened his pace, and Lady Agnes rode forward, and demanded where he was leading her.

"To Craigmillar Castle," was the reply, "where you will find an asylum, even within one of his Majesty's habitations, and from which we may again join the vessel to-night, if all goes right."

"Do you then suppose that our intention of going to the vessel is not known?"

"O no, lady," replied the man, "it seems they do not suspect that; no, no, they know nought of the vessel, and are only about to search in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, thinking you intend to conceal yourself."

"Would it not have been safer, then, to have proceeded as we first intended?"

"No," returned the man; "ten to one you would have been seen before you could have reached the ship, and then, how easy it would have been to send after her, and bring her back! but now, by remaining till it is

dark, you may easily, I apprehend, reach the boat which your friend at Holyrood will take care to have in readiness for you."

However vexatious this delay was to Agnes, she yet endeavoured to hope the best, and was at all events thankful that her aunt had escaped detection. Nay, she thought she perceived, in bringing her back, less fear for her than for the Abbess, whom she imagined it not impossible might be at last obliged to sail without her. When this idea first suggested itself to Agnes, she was astonished that it seemed to afflict her much less than, according to her general method of reasoning, it ought to have done; and as she continued to weigh all the probable consequences of such an event, a sunny beam of hope seemed to brighten her prospects; for it was happiness to think of remaining in her native country near to him who had filled her young heart with a feeling as intense as it was pure. She, however, checked these thoughts, as savouring too much of selfishness, when she reflected on what must be

her aunt's disappointment, if at length she was obliged to depart alone.

While Agnes was deeply engaged in these thoughts, they had approached near to Craigmillar, and began to ascend the circular hill which is crowned by that lordly and magnificent building. The early mists had disappeared and a glorious sun, shooting his level beams on tower and battlement, gleamed on the windows, turning them to plates of burnished gold, and, touching the topmost branches of the trees that grew under the rampart wall, gave to the light foliage of early summer a transient gilding of trembling richness. This luminous appearance was strongly contrasted by the parts of the vast building which still lay in deep shadow, and, like the future to the ken of mortals, remained in dense obscurity.

The guide of Agnes took his way to a small postern, which, upon their approach being observed, opened to admit them, and where a man, having assisted Agnes and her exhausted damsel to dismount, led them

through an inner court to the Keep of the Castle, where they ascended by those broad stone stairs, which still afford such easy access to the curious stranger, when exploring his way to the top of this lofty tower, where the rich and extensive range of prospect equals whatever the most lavish fancy can imagine of varied and luxuriant scenery. The man who was their conductor ushered them into an apartment, which, though small, was commodiously fitted up, being hung with tapestry, and furnished with such stools, cushions, and carpets, as shewed that it was one of those occupied by royalty, when it made its abode at Craigmillar. The same man who had shewn them into this room presently returned with refreshments, accompanied by the person who had been their conductor to the Castle, who, remaining till the other had withdrawn, assured Agnes that he would present himself at night, if her escape could be effected, which he anticipated would be the case, but that, in the mean time, he

must return to her friend at Holyrood for instructions; having said this, he departed.

We must now leave the recital of Lady Agnes's further adventures to form the subject of another chapter, having already made this a very long one.

## CHAPTER VI.

Love various hearts does variously inspire,
It stirs in gentle bosoms gentle fire,
Like that of incense on the altar laid;
But raging fires tempestuous souls invade;
A fire which every windy passion blows,
With pride it mounts, and with revenge it glows.

DRYDEN.

LADY AGNES and her hand-maiden remained silent for some time after the departure of their guide, each revolving in her own mind the circumstances which had brought them to their new abode; and each feeling afraid of expressing the thoughts which she could not help indulging. Agnes would not give vent to what, in fact, she was ashamed to acknowledge to herself were her sensations, on supposing it probable that the Abbess might leave her behind;

and Alice, fearful of her lady's misconstruing again any symptom of joy she might betray in such a prospect, said not a word, but occupied herself in observing the furniture of the apartment. At length she broke silence, by expressing her wonder at great people's liking to live in such massy buildings, which looked more, according to her ideas, like prisons than any thing else. "And I am sure, if any body had a mind to keep us here," she said, "we should never be able to get out again; for unless they chose to open one of those little doors by which we entered, it would be no easy matter to jump the rampart wall, which, as I looked up to it from below, seemed fifty feet high at least." This, however, was a deception in the vision of Alice, its utmost height being thirty feet. "And do but see here, my lady," she continued; "this is more like a prison than all the rest. Behold how closely the windows are grated."

"This Castle was built as a place of strength," replied Lady Agnes; "and all

these precautions were necessary in times less peaceful than the present."

"Here is another apartment," said Alice, lifting up the hangings opposite to a small door, which she opened without any hesitation, and finding it led to an inner room, Lady Agnes followed her. In this place, which was still smaller than the one they had left, was a bed, and every thing to render a sleeping apartment commodious and comfortable; on a table were some books neatly arranged, such as might be supposed to suit a lady's reading; and, upon inspecting them, Agnes found many of her favourite authors. This apartment was also, according to the custom of the period, furnished with several massy pieces of plate, such as a chafing-dish, a drinking cup and salver, a lamp and warming-pan, all richly chased and embossed. The books, and many other things which she observed, strongly impressed her with the idea, that her mysterious friend at Holyrood must

have previously provided for her accommodation.

Father Leonard had said, that he was not what he appeared to be. She could only therefore conjecture, that he might be some person of superior rank, possessed of such authority as enabled him to protect her, while he did not wish to appear openly to meddle in her affairs, and who, she had learned from her aunt, took an interest in her, from being himself a Catholic, though a concealed one. These considerations made her quietly acquiesce in his arrangements, trusting to his vigilance and judgment to extricate her from her present embarrassments. Meditating on these matters, she went to the window, which commanded a view of the Frith, and with astonishment beheld that the small vessel, which she had seen in the morning, had left its anchorage, and that not a single ship of its size was to be seen from Leith to the mouth of the Frith, except one,

which, scudding fast before a brisk westerly breeze, would quickly be out of sight. She entertained a strong suspicion that this was the vessel that conveyed her aunt from the shores of Scotland; and her heart beat violently as she looked eagerly after it, with a feeling which at once partook of joy and sorrow. She leaned her head against the casement, without uttering even a sound that might draw the attention of Alice. In the variety of conflicting emotions which naturally agitated her at a crisis so important to her future prospects, it appeared that sorrow was at length the most predominant; for while she gazed after the vessel, the tears silently chased each other down her cheeks, as she reflected on what the Abbess must then be suffering, from having failed in a scheme that she had so long flattered herself was to conclude far otherwise. "Dear sister of my beloved mother," she thought, "thus then end all your anxious hopes; and you return without her, who, you fondly imagined, was to sooth your

age, and to whom you meant to ensure an escape from the trials of this mortal life. If I had wilfully deserted you, how deep would have now been my remorse! Thank God, it has happened through circumstances, over which I had no control!"

And her musings, as she watched the little vessel, till it diminished to a point, reverted again in some measure to what they had been in her rapid journey to the Castle. She began to seek for palliatives. This is the doing of Providence, she thought, and it must assuredly be ordered for the best, that she has departed without me. She has done all that was permitted her, in taking so long and dangerous a journey on my account; and she is too pious to repine, because it has been the will of Heaven to thwart her schemes; and when once arrived at her peaceful convent, she will soon forget her disappointment in the midst of her nuns, who must all love her for her amiable and gentle disposition. "And," said she, as she still went on thus endea-

vouring to justify feelings which had taken too deep root to be eradicated, "I will keep so strict a watch over my conduct, that I shall be in every thing, save form, that which she wished to make me. It can surely be no crime to love excellence; and it is that alone which I love in the noble Gowrie. Had he been other than he is, could he have had any influence over my mind? No, it is his virtues I love."

The musings of Agnes were here interrupted by Alice, who had withdrawn to the other apartment, that she might not intrude on the contemplative mood of her mistress. She entered hastily, and appeared much agitated.

"What is the matter?" said Lady Agnes, as turning from the window she beheld her cheeks pale as ashes.

"Don't let me frighten you, dear lady," said Alice; "but I fear me much there is something more in all this than we suspected, for we are locked in. I went to the

door of the outer room just now, intending to see how much further up the stairs go, and I found the door fastened on the outside; and I am sadly afraid there is more truth in what I said about this being a prison than I thought of."

"It is perhaps necessary to fasten the door to prevent intrusion," replied Agnes; "but it is certainly somewhat strange, that the man did not mention this necessity, and allow us to secure the door inside."

"We could not have done that," replied Alice, "for it has no inside fastening; nor," said she, examining the door of the chamber they were in, "has this either lock or bar on this side."

Lady Agnes felt rather uneasy at discovering this unpleasant circumstance; but reflecting that the want of the means of security within, must necessarily have obliged the man to fasten the door without, she determined to wait with patience till he again appeared, when she expected to

gain such information from him as would satisfy her doubts.

When the hour of dinner arrived, which at that period was generally served about mid-day, they heard some one ascending the stairs, and the same man they had seen before brought in their meal, which consisted of such delicacies as were then most in repute, served in a manner so scrupulously nice, as might have tempted the most sickly appetite. After placing every thing that could be required, he presented Lady Agnes with a small silver whistle, the call of which, he informed her, should instantly be attended to; and he was about to retire when she prevented his intention.

"Pray, is there a necessity for the door being secured on the outside, that you have locked us in?"

"There is, lady," returned the man; "for, except myself and the person who prepares your provisions, none in the Castle know of your being here."

"Could you procure some fastening for

the inside, do you think?" said Agnes; "if it were but a wooden bolt, which you could put on yourself, by the assistance of a few nails and a hammer?"

"I will try what can be done to comply with your wish, lady," replied the man, who was again about to withdraw.

"Stop," said Agnes; "I wish to inquire if you have received any directions concerning us, and the probable period of our continuance here, should we not depart to-night, as was our first intention?"

"None, lady," returned the man. "My orders were only to attend to your wishes during your abode here; but the man who came with you this morning, told me a person would be here before the evening, who can inform you further. This is all I know." And he withdrew.

Agnes very naturally concluded that it was her friend at Holyrood whom she must expect to see; and as she knew him to be intimately acquainted with all her concerns, and every circumstance relating to her aunt,

she waited impatiently for his appearance, that she might learn what had caused the Abbess to depart without her; for if she was indeed gone, what was she now to do? To return to Holyrood, to confess herself a fugitive and a run-away, and to meet the sneers and ridicule of those with whom she had no feeling in common, and who she knew were even eager to catch at any circumstance which might cast ridicule on her faith, she felt to be a humiliation to which she could not voluntarily subject herself. She accordingly determined, if, as she believed, all chance of her leaving the kingdom was gone, to write to his Majesty, humbly entreating, upon condition of her faithful promise not to quit its precincts till her uncle's arrival, to be allowed to retire to her father's house, on the coast side, in East Lothian. And if he did but grant her prayer, she thought she could then be happy, when relieved from the pageantry and turmoil of a court to which she had of late been exposed. She therefore intended

to consult the friend whom she expected, on the propriety of despatching this letter, and the method of its conveyance to his Majesty. What explanation to give of her abode at Craigmillar, was a circumstance which much puzzled her; but in this, as well as all her other difficulties, she expected aid from her concealed friend. Meanwhile, to pass away the time, Agnes had recourse to one of the books, that had been so considerately provided for her amusement. She continued to read till it drew towards evening, but no one appeared; she, however, reconciled this delay to herself, as she was in the habit of doing all which happened not according to her wish, by calling reason to her aid, and suggesting the probable circumstances which might act upon passing events. For Agnes, unlike the most of heroines, knew full well, that "sufficient to the day is the evil thereof," and therefore never sought, by viewing evils through an exaggerated medium, to add to their terrors by her own distorted vision.

Evening arrived, and Agnes approached the window to admire the calm serenity of the setting sun. The sight was one she thought she could never be weary of beholding. The newly-clothed earth was displaying its livery of emerald green, with every advantage of an atmosphere indescribably clear. All abroad was brightness, life, and hope. Agnes looked at the young fawns, as they bounded in playful gambols by the side of their mothers in the park beneath her, and longed to be there. "How happy shall I be," said she to herself, "if I am allowed to return to my own house! I shall then be confined by forms, no more than any village maiden, and may enjoy all the charms of nature without molestation."

The last beams of day were faintly lighting the apartment before Agnes left the window; and Alice had already gone to bring the lamp from the inner chamber, which she was preparing, in order to light at the fire of the room she had left, when

the key turned in the lock of the outward door, and Agnes heard a gentle rap with the hand, announcing that some one asked permission to enter. She flew toward the door; and on opening it, beheld, by the dim light of a fire sunk almost to embers, a figure much taller, and of more slender make, than the person she had expected. She however waved her hand courteously for him to enter. He did so, and placing his back to what light there was, appeared by this movement to seek the concealment of his features; nor did he speak, but, with a low bend of his head, presented a letter. Agnes took it, and hastened Alice with the lamp, which she placed on the small table at which she had been reading; and so eager was she to peruse the contents of her letter, which she imagined her friend, not being able to come himself, had sent by some one he deemed trust-worthy, that she broke the seal, and began to read, before she again lifted her eyes to the bearer of it, who had approached the fire-place,

but no sooner saw her eyes intently fixed on the letter, than he moved mid-way the small apartment, and seemed to employ all his penetration in developing the feelings betrayed in her varying and expressive countenance, while she read as follows :—

"UNDUTIFUL LADY,

"IT were meet, after having rewarded our royal care with the ingratitude you have shewn in having attempted to escape from our protection, that we should leave you to your own waywardness; whilk, however, taking into consideration your extreme youth, your mistaken views of religion, and, above all, the regard we bear to our right trusty servant, my lord, your uncle, we have graciously determined not to do. But have fixed in our clemency on a way to prevent your making the like attempt in future, by bestowing you in marriage, with your uncle's consent already obtained, on our well esteemed servant John Rathsay, at this present our page; but whom, should he

continue to bear himself with that faithfulness he hath hitherto done, it will doubtless be hereafter our good pleasure to honour and promote according to the sense we have of his deserts. We have thought good thus effectually to declare our will, and we trust there will be no necessity to enforce obedience, which, nevertheless, must be done, should you disregard our behest and lawful authority.

"JAMES R.

"*From our Palace of Holyrood—These.*
*To the Lady Agnes Somerdale.*"

When Lady Agnes began to read, her cheeks were flushed, and her eyes sparkled with intense interest; but when she arrived at that part of the letter, which commanded her to look on Rathsay as her future husband, her hands trembled so violently, that she could hardly hold the paper, and the lamp casting a full blaze of light upon her face, shewed it overspread with a death-like paleness. The stranger advanced a

step or two forward, and, by his gesture, appeared to apprehend she was about to swoon, for he extended his arms, as if in readiness to prevent her sinking to the floor; but she saw him not, and continued to read, till she had finished every line of the letter, which she laid on the table before her. She then, for the first time, turned her eyes on the stranger, and beheld in him the man of all others she dreaded the most; for it was Rathsay himself that stood before her. The colour returned to her cheeks, and deepened there into a hectic glow, while every movement of her eye seemed to emit a flash of living fire. She was treacherously betrayed. She saw and felt it all, and every other feeling gave place to indignation, as she rose from her seat, and said haughtily, "May I request to know, if his Majesty's messenger is allowed to carry back to him my answer to this?" and she laid her hand on the letter.

"You have but to speak your commands,

fair lady," said Rathsay, " to have them obeyed by your devoted servant."

Agnes, without taking the smallest notice of this gallant speech, or bestowing any mark of recognition on the speaker, instantly applied the silver call to her lips, and it was as instantly answered by her old attendant.

" Bring me writing materials, and another lamp without delay," she said; and instantly retired to the inner apartment, leaving Alice to receive them from the man, and bring them to her chamber, where, having written her letter, she sent Alice to deliver it to Rathsay.

" Will your lady not come forth herself, good maiden ?" said he.

" I know not, sir," returned Alice; " I have done as my lady directed."

" But perhaps you may persuade her to listen to somewhat I have to communicate, that it is of consequence she should hear."

" My lady requires no persuasions to do

what she deems proper to be done. I shall, therefore," said Alice, "acquaint her with your request, sir, and let you know her will."

She presently returned.—"I am commanded to say, that my lady apprehends she can have nothing to hear from the messenger of his Majesty, save what her Sovereign has thought proper to express in the letter of which he was the bearer."

Rathsay's brow lowered into a sullen scowl. "It is well," he said; "but, my young mistress, if you have any regard to your own interest, or know the value of such pretty play-things as these," and he displayed a purse, with the gold glittering through the meshes of the net, "you will do wisely to give your interest to him who seeks his own happiness only by promoting that of your mistress."

"Gramercy for that, kind sir," answered Alice, emboldened by her anger at his supposing her accessible to bribery. "Methinks if you have had any hand in locking her

up in this dismal tower, where we hang between heaven and earth, it is somewhat a new method of promoting her happiness."

"Hah! my young damsel," said Rathsay; "is the scorn of the mistress not sufficient punishment for my sins, but I must be subjected to the wit of her waiting-woman? Here, my good girl, take this," and he offered to put the purse into her hand; "and I could venture such another, that we shall soon be better friends."

"Never upon these terms, mistaken sir," replied Alice. "I am, it is true, but a serving-maiden, but thanks to my kind lady, her bounty is not so scant as to leave me destitute of aught that befits my station; and low as that station is, there are things I have been taught to prize far above gold. But my lady will wonder why I remain here," she said, as she lifted the hangings; and darting into the inner chamber, left Rathsay standing in the apartment alone.

"Now, could I find it in my heart," said he, biting his nether lip with rage, "to fol-

low her, and tell that proud woman what she has to expect. But no; let me control mine anger; for if I recollect me right, there is an indifferent sensible saying, that 'fraying a bird is no way to catch it.' So adieu for this night, my pretty bird of paradise; you will be glad to quit your cage soon on mine own terms, or Heaven will bestow upon me more patience than it hath yet thought fit to endow me withal."

So saying, he descended the stairs, mounted his fleet steed, and dashing the spurs into his sides, rode toward Holyrood with the swiftness of the wind; his motion, rapid as it was, not keeping pace with his impatience to be made acquainted with the contents of the letter he bore, which, that the reader may not be left in ignorance of, we here copy for his information.

"May it please your Majesty to hold my boldness excused in replying to your Highness. For, not having an opportunity of pleading my cause and defence in your

Majesty's presence, my hopes and my duty alike prompt me to this remeed. I am, alas! a friendless young maiden, relying entirely upon the clemency of your Majesty. It is true I have appeared to withdraw myself from the gracious protection of my Sovereign. In this, however, I acted not willingly, but as under a promise made to a tender parent on her death-bed, and not from any undutiful disregard or blindness to the honour conferred upon my unworthiness by your Majesty condescending to become my protector. I therefore humbly crave of your Highness, by all that your Majesty holds dear and sacred, to retract the cruel mandate, which commands me to marry a man I detest, and with which command I would rather suffer death in its most horrible shape than comply. If it pleases your Majesty, therefore, to allow me to retire to one of my own residences, till the return of my uncle, the Lord Somerdale, I doubt not being able to prevail on him to hear my prayers; and I solemnly

engage never to leave my house, even for the purpose of recreation, without the consent of your Majesty, should such be the pleasure of your Highness. I beseech forgiveness for this mine audacity, and hoping your Majesty will be graciously pleased to grant me an answer of peace,

"I remain,

"Your Majesty's afflicted,

"but most humble subject,

"AGNES SOMERDALE.

"*From the Castle of Craigmillar.*"

We must now leave for a time Lady Agnes, and her faithful attendant, while we explain the circumstances that led them into their present predicament.

## CHAPTER VII.

——————— Work on,
My medicine work! thus credulous fools are caught.
SHAKSPEARE.

THE reader will recollect that, upon hearing the confession of Lady Agnes with regard to Gowrie, the Jesuit made instant preparation for the departure of the Abbess, determining, at the same time, that Agnes should not accompany her. He had, therefore, no sooner arranged matters with Nicol Partan, than he returned to seek out Rathsay, with whom he had lately become a favourite, in consequence of that intuitive knowledge, by which one daring spirit recognizes and appreciates another. For some time past, therefore, Rathsay had made fa-

vourable mention of his skill in the management of the hawks and hounds to his Majesty. And, upon one occasion, when the Master of Ruthven disputed a point with him in the hunting field, and being angry spoke somewhat sharply, Rathsay espoused his cause, which had nearly bred dangerous consequences between him and the Master. This shew of favour on the part of Rathsay, with whose passion for Agnes the Jesuit's intriguing spirit had become perfectly acquainted, made the less ceremony necessary in accomplishing a scheme, which he despaired of effecting without his assistance, and by which he also intended to increase the dislike, which he knew to subsist between him and Gowrie.—He therefore began his interview, by launching out into a flattering eulogium on Rathsay's gallant bearing in all athletic exercises, and by expressing the gratitude with which his favour and protection had filled him.—"And," said he, "if I am right in my conjectures, I have it now in my power to shew

the deep feelings of gratitude with which you have inspired me: and, that I am not altogether mistaken, I partly trust to report, and partly to mine own observation, that it seldom happeneth but the young, the gallant, and the gay, such as you, noble sir, have some fair lady to whom they pay their devoirs."

Here the Jesuit paused, for he perceived he had awakened in Rathsay both interest and curiosity.—"By my faith, you are eloquent to-night, falconer," said he; "your language, it seemeth to me, often soars a pitch beyond your fortunes. But to what, I prithee, may your rhetoric at present tend, for I comprehend you not?"

"Nay," replied the Jesuit,—"if that be the case, then am I at fault, and have only to crave pardon for my freedom.—And yet it was so natural a mistake," he continued half aloud, as if speaking to himself; "and I was so happy to have it in my power to assist a brave young man in gaining the ear of beauty.—Deal candidly with me, young

gentleman," said he, again addressing Rathsay aloud,—"Would you then venture nought to secure to yourself an interest in the Lady Agnes Somerdale?"

The Jesuit accompanied this interrogatory with a look so piercing, that his keen glance seemed to penetrate to the very soul of Rathsay. "And what then, Master Falconer?" said he, as he returned the bold glance of the Jesuit, with one in which a sort of haughty complacence was discernible.—"Pray, should you have guessed right, how do you propose to aid me?"

"First, then," said the Jesuit, "I must begin by convincing you, that I know more of the affairs of the lady whom I have named, than any other person, save one, and then leave you to judge whether you wish my further assistance or not."

"You talk strangely," said Rathsay, whose curiosity was fast getting the better of his hauteur; "for how the devil should you come by such knowledge?"

"Be patient, and I will explain myself,"

said the Jesuit.—"Know then, that this morning, in passing by the door of the Palace Chapel, which communicates with the under passage, I caught a glimpse of a man as he was entering it, who appeared by his demeanor to seek concealment.—I followed him, and looking through a crevice where the door is somewhat shrunk from its frame, I perceived a person much muffled, pacing backward and forward in the middle aisle, as if awaiting some one, for he frequently looked toward the door. But as his steps appeared feeble from age, and he moved but slowly, I seized the opportunity of entering, while his back was toward me, and closing the door without noise, concealed myself behind the oaken screen, which you may recollect runs round the Chapel on the north side."

"Truly, I so seldom see its interior," said Rathsay, "that I cannot say I have remarked much of its arrangement; but that matters not, proceed."

"I had not waited long till the entrance

of a female figure," continued the Jesuit, "added much, I confess, to my curiosity, and moving round nearer to the window, I had soon a full and distinct view, through the carved screen, of the Lady Agnes Somerdale kneeling before the old man, whom, by their conversation, I found to be a Priest of the Church of Rome, come thither for the purpose of confessing her, and also, of giving her some important information.—"And now," continued the Jesuit, "if you are sufficiently interested to inquire further, I have ample information to communicate; but if not, I will not uselessly betray even a Catholic."

"Go on, in God's name," said Rathsay, impatiently; "I will confess myself interested, or whatever else thou wilt, only let me understand what passed."

"You must first swear to me then," returned the Jesuit, "by the faith of a noble Cavalier, that you will not repeat what I am going to tell you; and that should I suggest aught that will avail you, nothing shall be done without my consent and advice."

"All this I swear," said Rathsay, "and the more readily, because I do verily believe there is that in thee, which will make thee a safe and convenient counsellor; for I tell thee, falconer, I have marked thee well, since the day that proud minion attempted to misuse thee, and thou hast not been always what thou art now."

"Whether you have guessed right or not, gallant sir," said the Jesuit, while a sarcastic smile played in the corners of his mouth, and his eye-brows were slightly elevated, "this is no time to say, but never shall your conduct on the day alluded to pass from my memory; and may I become the vilest thing that crawls the earth, if I do not one day avenge me on mine insulter!"

"Amen!" said Rathsay, "with all my spirit! But I beseech thee to proceed, for soul is in mine ears."

"Implicitly relying then on your good faith," replied the Jesuit, "I shall do as you require. The Lady Agnes, then, as I have said, knelt before the old man, and to speak

sooth, the radiance of her extreme beauty well nigh dazzled these eyes, which have long ceased to look with delight upon her sex. And there she confessed, what you perchance must nerve yourself to hear—that she loved another."

Rathsay, who during this conversation had been walking to and fro in his apartment, made a hasty stride toward the Jesuit.

"Man!" said he impetuously, "if thou didst hear the accursed name, pronounce it, and end my doubts!"

"He is head of that family, whom I believe you and I equally detest," continued the Jesuit, thus artfully blending his own interest with Rathsay's.

"It is Lord Gowrie whom thou meanest, is it not?" returned Rathsay, as the blood forsook his swarthy countenance, and left there the hue peculiar to the deep expression of the malignant passions of envy and jealousy.

"Thou hast guessed well, young gentleman," said the Jesuit; "but, I prithee, con-

jure down the devil that is now raging in your breast, and I shall lend you my assistance to do so, by proceeding in my story."

Rathsay remained intently listening, and he went on.

"When the confession was at an end, the old fellow lectured her on the crime of mortal love, and persuading her that instant escape was the only remedy, proceeded to instruct her how to effect her flight, which he told her was already planned by him, and that a boat would be in readiness, on the morning after to-morrow, at a place he named, for her conveyance to a vessel, which it appears is intended to bear her from this kingdom.—All this I heard.—Therefore, if you do not take some decisive step, she will shortly be gone beyond your reach."

Rathsay bent his eyes on the ground, and strode back and forward the room, while the Jesuit eyed his fierce and perturbed features with internal satisfaction.

"I have in vain essayed to form any plan,

save that of informing his Majesty, who will prevent her flight; and it shall be done!" said he, as he swore a tremendous oath, "for she shall not so escape me!—Oh!" he continued, laying his hand upon his rapier, which was the only weapon allowed by his Majesty to be worn within the precincts of the court,—"that I had nought to do but to let forth the life-blood of that hypocritical Earl!"

"And I, too, could say amen to that," returned the Jesuit. "But you must walk warily, else you lose all. It would be of small avail to you to keep the lady here by the King's authority, where you could not make known your mind to her freely. Now, if it pleases you, I will speak my poor opinion on the subject."

"Do so," replied Rathsay; "and if you can but point out a way to detain her, and to avenge me on her lover, I will be bounden to thee life and soul for ever."

"Listen, then," returned the Jesuit, "and do not interrupt me by your vehe-

mence. I will find a trusty person to counterfeit the guide expected by the lady, and no sooner shall she have reached a certain turn on her road to the boat, than I will cause her to be overtaken, and persuaded to fly for refuge to a place which she shall believe recommended by the old Priest, for he is the engine by which the wheels are worked.—And now, young sir, you have but to name the retreat to which you would have her conveyed."

"And even there I am completely at a loss," said Rathsay. "So far, your scheme is an excellent one, but now the difficulty commences; for I should be finely sped in detaining in captivity a ward of the King's without his consent."

"This, too, I have thought on," replied the Jesuit, "and will make bold to say my say, since your wit, gallant sir, seemeth to be blunted by this sudden emergency."

"I tell you, falconer, I would sell my soul to the devil," said Rathsay, eagerly,

" could he but devise me a way to solve this last difficulty."

" It may, however, I am inclined to think," returned the Jesuit, " be accomplished, without your driving so desperate a bargain. The belief is, Sir Page, that you are in no small favour with your royal master;—might you not make him your confidant in this matter? and setting forth your love for the lady, and your dread of a rival, move him to grant, that you may convey her to another of his royal residences—Craigmillar for instance, which, by its vicinity to Holyrood, and its not removing her from his protection, may satisfy his Majesty; and, at the same time, give you an opportunity of pleading your cause with the lady to some purpose, where my Lord of Gowrie cannot interfere. What think you of this?"

" What think I of it?" replied Rathsay, his eyes sparkling with joy, and his brow at once cleared of the weight that had hung on it like a thunder-cloud—" Why, that you must assuredly deal with the devil;—for

know, my prince of falconers, that his Majesty is already acquainted with my love secret, and has written to the lady's uncle in aid of my suit; nor, if I guess right, will the King have any dislike to an opportunity of thwarting that misproud Earl, her lover. I will instantly seek his Majesty. Remain you here till my return."

"Ay," said the Jesuit, looking after Rathsay as he left the apartment; "go on thy way, and fulfil thy destiny. Thou art a right excellent tool to work withal, and shame it were, having such a two-edged weapon to wield, if I use you not to the accomplishment of mine own purpose. These audacious heretics," he said, "who have cast off the yoke of Rome, shall yet become the scourges and executioners of each other, forwarding at once mine own aggrandisement, and that of the parent church."

When Rathsay returned, the Jesuit beheld, with one glance of his eye, that he had prospered well, and most truly did he share in his joy, as he recounted all that had

passed between his Majesty and him.—Suffice it to say, that the result was what the reader is already acquainted with. We shall therefore begin a new chapter, by taking a retrospective view of the adventures of old Euphan, after her departure from the playfield.

## CHAPTER VIII.

'Tis he! 'tis he himself!—It is my son!

HOME.

WHILE the servants of the Earl of Gowrie were obeying his orders in removing old Euphan from the play-field to his house, Laurence, who acted upon that occasion as her principal guard and protector, observed among the crowd a young man in the dress of a foreign sailor, who, after anxiously eyeing the old woman, rushed forward toward her, which Laurence perceiving, put him back with his weapon.

"Villain!" said the man, "you and all your gang shall not stop me, she is my——."

"Hah," said Laurence, as he took a second look at the man.—"What! my old

croney Walter, dost not know Laurence Dalgliesh?"

The man regarded him with a surly aspect.

"It is true," said he, "you are Laurence, sure enough;—but what are you going to do with my mother?"

"What sayest thou," returned Laurence. "*Thy* mother?"

"Ay, true," replied the man; "and tell me instantly where you are carrying her, or I will so lay about me with this oaken cudgel, that my own arm shall work her deliverance, 'spite of you and all who beset her."

"Peace!" said Laurence, "ye talk like a madman, and well is it for thee that the shouts of the rabble have kept thy vaunts from being heard:—I am here as her protector, and no harm shall happen her. Follow me, and I will tell thee more anon; but peace, I say! for thy life and her's too depend upon it."

When they arrived at the Earl's house,

Laurence placed the unfortunate woman in the room assigned her by his lord, and putting a sentinel on the outside of the door, he conducted her son into his own apartment, where, placing a flagon of stout ale between himself and his old acquaintance, he began to interrogate him. Walter's story was soon told. The reason of his banishment the reader already knows. After his going abroad he had remained in the Low Countries, where Laurence had for some time also been, during his peregrinations, and where they had on one occasion lodged in the same house. Walter having, however, lately heard of the death of his sister, and that a report had reached his mother of his own decease; the idea of her forlorn situation made life of little value to him, and he determined at all hazards to return to his native country. After working his passage home, he was just come up from the vessel which had conveyed him to Scotland, when in his way to the Craigs he met his mother in the situation of a prisoner.

"And now I have in my turn," said Laurence, "somewhat to communicate, which if it were known, would put my craig in peril; but I may trust it to thee, my boy, seeing it is thy interest to keep my counsel.—Know, then, that since we last parted, I have become one of thine own church, and this my conversion hath made me zealous to aid its oppressed members."

"The right hand of fellowship t' ye," said Walter, interrupting him and shaking him heartily by the hand; "now, go on, and let me hear about my poor old mother, and how she came into your hands."

"Why, thy mother hath been accused of witchcraft, and might have been, perchance, burning at the stake by this time, had not my honourable master, the Earl of Gowrie, taken compassion on her, and obtained leave to remove her here; but how much farther he may be able to protect her, seemeth to me not so clear. Now, there is this night a vessel to sail from Leith, which brought hither my master's goods from Italy,

and into this vessel I proposed to get her conveyed after it is dark, and thou art arrived in good time to assist, for I see no other way of saving you both; it will therefore be necessary that you depart together. The only difficulty in the accomplishment of this plan will be in her conveyance, for, having lately received a severe hurt in one of her legs, she cannot walk."

"But she can be carried," said her son, his eyes glistening with pleasure, as he stretched up his athletic person, and extended his brawny arms. "And I defy ye, Master Laurence, to find one more able for the load than myself."

"I will engage to manage the rest then," said Laurence; "and in the meantime I will inform her of the way in which her escape is to be effected, but not that you are to be the instrument of her deliverance, for I fear me for her poor old wits. Tarry thou here, and when I return from her, I will go with thee to Leith, and inform the master of the

vessel of thy intention of taking thy passage with him."

It was, however, in vain that upon entering the room where Euphan was confined, he exhausted his rhetoric in persuading her to acquiesce in his plan for her safety. She persisted in a determination to remain where she was, and abide her fate. Her humour, as the reader knows, was at all times intractable; but the insults she had recently received, made the state of her mind resemble insanity, even more than it had ever yet done.

"What!" said she in answer to his arguments—"Shall I seek to preserve the life that has long been a curse to me, by escaping to become a beggar in a foreign land? Away—avaunt!—and seek not to tempt her, whose resolves the offer of the world could not alter. Away, I say, and if thou dost indeed wish to favour me in aught, shew it by leaving me this night to myself. I have neither hope nor wish to escape—wish, do I

say? why, I will go to my death as I went to my bridal, when all the lying blandishments of hope were warm in my young bosom, and I looked forward for happiness to the years that have brought with them nought but anguish; and now, when the cup of everlasting peace is offered to my lips, shall I refuse to taste it?—shall I refuse to join those whom my soul pants to meet? Curse on their dastard souls who would act thus, and to shun a short-lived pain, would hug their chains, even when become too heavy to be borne!"

"Nay, but mother," said Laurence, "bethink thee, thou art now like the bull that hath been newly baited,—thou art filled with rage, and it maketh thee reckless of death; but other thoughts will come when this night hath passed, and all chance of escape is gone. Thou wilt then in vain repent thy rashness, and thine obstinacy."

"I tell thee, once more, begone, and torment me not!" said Euphan, with an impatient and frantic gesture, "or I will

shout aloud, till not only the roof of this cell, but that of the house itself, shall ring with thy purpose of aiding my flight. Avoid ye, then, before ye become yourself involved in that fate which your feeble soul would shrink to meet."

"D—d old hag!" said Laurence, bursting into a fit of passion at a threat he deemed the height of ingratitude; "dost think I would stand here wasting my time and breath on such a cursed, wrinkled, ugly old crone, as thou art, for the pleasure of saving thy rotten bones and parchment skin from being grilled, if it were in naught to advantage myself?—No, no, I could perchance set fire to the faggots as well as another; but know, that I am employed by Master Austin, who is earnest to save your worthless carcase, and who pays well—yes, I shall finger the cash, and therefore save thee I will."

Euphan laughed aloud, but the sound was fearful, for it was as the scornful mocking of a demon.—"Ha! ha!" she said,

" thou art reasonably modest, young man; no doubt I shall now listen to thine arguments, that I may secure to thee thy bribe; but thou hast done away all scruple, and shalt no longer torment me."

Here, exerting the whole strength of her lungs, she proceeded to put her threat into execution. Laurence saw her intention, and darting forward, stopped her mouth in an instant, by placing one hand before it, and the other at the back of her head, holding it as if in an iron vice. The noise, however, having been heard by her guard, the door opened, and a rough-looking fellow demanded the cause of the yell with which she had commenced.

" O, nothing," replied Laurence ; " only I was progging up the old witch a little, to see if I could make her confess, and now I am keeping her from alarming the neighbourhood."

" Ay, ay," returned the man, grinning from ear to ear, " I thought that wad be it ; but can I no help ye to brod her,—for

it was that same auld brimstane that cast her glamour ower Ailie Spiggots, the vintner's dochter, and gar'd her leave me for the sutor's son, though we had broken siller atween us, and——"

"I know the story," said Laurence; "go to your post, and see that no one enters here."

The man shut the door, muttering discontentedly at not being allowed to finish his story, or to torment the poor wretch, who struggled in vain with all her strength to free herself from the grasp of Laurence, or to utter an intelligible expression. She soon ceased, however, from exhaustion, to resist any longer, and she no sooner became quiet in his hands, than he began again to speak.

"Now listen to me, old beldame," he said, "and mark me well.—Thy son Walter lives, and is now in this house; you know the predicament in which he stands, and that, if he is discovered, his life is for-

feit to the law; now, I swear by all on earth, and all in hell beneath, that if you refuse in your madness to leave this country with him this night, in the vessel which conveys the Abbess from hence, I will give him up to justice, and then he may either burn with you for company's sake, or he may dance a jig on the gallows by himself, for aught I care. Hear ye me, old sorceress?" said he, as he gave her head a shake, and released it from his hold, that she might answer; but no sooner had he done so, than she fell forward a dead weight on the stone pavement. Laurence attempted to raise her head, but it fell alternately on her shoulders; and perceiving no signs of life,—for her brow was cold and damp, and her attenuated form stiff and motionless,—

"I have earned my reward now indeed, with a devil's benison!" said he; "I did not think I could so easily have stopped the breath of the old hag.—Holla! you Giles, there!" and the sentinel appeared once more within the room—"We are fairly

sped now," he continued—" she's gone to the old one before her time, and we shall have to answer for it to our master."

" *We!*" replied Giles—" *you* may, indeed; but mind ye that ye wadna let me pit a finger i' the pie while the fun was gaun on, and now I shall wash my hands clear o' it."

" Help me to put her in the chair again," said Laurence, " and give me none of your gibes."

" I'll do that," said Giles, " and then I'll just gie her nose a tweak, and prick her under the nails, for she's maybe not dead yet."

He was about, as soon as they raised her, to try his brutal remedies, but Laurence prevented him.—" No," said he, " she is under my charge, and I will not suffer her to undergo any more this bout.—Fetch some water, man, can't ye! and let us try what laving her well will accomplish;—or hold! where is that flask you offered me a swig of in the play-field?"

" True," said Giles, " there is still a soup

in it yet, I mind;" and he drew it forth from his pocket, and forced some of it into her mouth. This was done with some difficulty, nor did it appear to avail, for none of it seemed to pass down her throat.

"Look at the gude brandy-wine," continued Giles, "how it's pouring back out o' her mouth!—Now I gie her up; for if she were not as dead as a herrin, she wad never spit out sic noble liquor as that—Na, na! witches ken better; for I hae it frae certain authority, that it's ane o' their favourite pastimes to visit the cellars o' your rich nobles, and swig till they are hardly fit to mount their besom-shanks, whilk, if they were na the quietest nags i' the warld, wad ne'er get them hame again; and I'll tell ye a story, and a gude ane it is, i'faith, o' sic a merry meeting at Carlisle."

"May old Beelzebub ride on a broomstick down your throat, and carry your musty old stories with him, you doating idiot!" said Laurence—"Stand back, and give her air!—don't you see she is beginning

to breathe again?—Away with you, and leave me to deal with her!—But stop! let's see the flask first," said he, snatching it from his hand, and pouring another small quantity of it into her mouth, while, almost at the same instant, he raised it to his own lips, and sent the remainder down at a gulp.

"Now get you gone," said he, throwing the empty flask at him, "and keep the door!"

Euphan sat upright in the chair, and pushed away the hand of Laurence that sustained her, while, casting a bewildered glance into every corner of the room—"Some one said my son was living," she said, in a low and tremulous voice, "and that, if I saved him not, he must suffer the death; but, alas!" she continued, wringing her shrivelled hands, "it is but a dream!—And yet," she said again, endeavouring to recollect herself, when the blood began to circulate more freely, and her memory to return—"and yet it does not so seem—no,

this was no dream—it was you who said he lived—I remember me now—but perhaps ye did but mock me. Oh!" she said, sinking upon her knees before he could prevent her, with a look that touched the heart of even the hardened and profligate Laurence—"Oh! deep will be your perdition, if ye can indeed mock a withered heart with hopes that would once more bind it to its kind!"

"I mock ye not, old woman," he said, "though ye have well nigh driven me beside myself, what with your cursed obstinacy, and what with your fits. But I have little more time to spare. Therefore, I say again, your son lives—you may escape with him this night—What say you now?"

"To behold my winsome son once more, I would submit, after, to have these old eyes torn from their sockets; but I cannot believe he lives, till I indeed behold him."

"Will ye go or not, then, once for all?" said Laurence, as he turned to leave the room.

"I will go with my Walter to the further end of the earth, if he be yet living."

"Then," said Laurence, returning, "take care, mistress mine, that you name not him on your escape, for one word hangs him. I will return when all is ready."

"But how shall I go, for I cannot walk?" returned Euphan.

"That is cared for already," said Laurence, as he left the room. When he had closed the door,—"Harkee, Giles," said he, with a tone of authority, "I shall send you somewhat presently for the woman to eat—see that you carry it to her immediately; and dost hear," he continued, with a stern frown; "none of your tricks, for if ye tend her not, as she were the mother that bore ye, and she complains when I return—I say no more—you know me."

"It shall be as ye say," replied Giles, with forced humility; "and whan ye send the vivers ye mention, if ye will but increase the quantity, and mak it a reason-

able portion for twa, I shall be muckle bounden unto ye, for I hae tasted nae meat sin' seeven hours this mornin; drink there was plenty i' the play-field, but deevil a mouthfu' to eat; and I believe, as they say, 'My waim thinks my weasand is cutted.'"

Attention to this request did not however make any part of Laurence's plan, and he therefore dispatched barely what was sufficient for Euphan, with a small cup of wine to recruit her strength; taking care not to allow any one to visit Giles again till he returned, which was not till near eleven o'clock at night, when the tide served at Leith for the sailing of the vessel. Giles, who dared not disobey one so much nearer in favour to his master, and who was moreover cowed by the fierce spirit of Laurence, meanwhile fulfilled his commands to the letter. But while he did so, he did not fail to bestow many hearty curses upon the upstart pride of him, who thus took it upon him to command and threaten; and fiercely did his wrath burn against him, for what he

imagined the mere wantonness of power he had shewn, in not sending him the supply of provisions he had demanded.

When at length, then, Laurence appeared, he found Giles sitting on the stone bench at Euphan's door, in a very moody humour; but if hours had seemed days to the hungry man, they had appeared as years to the wretched Euphan, who had no sooner lost sight of Laurence, than she began again to doubt his words, nor dared she almost repeat them to herself. The hopes he had raised in her bosom, struggling there with deep-rooted despair, had well nigh terminated her existence; and when she in some measure recovered the use of her senses, though it was not in nature to relinquish those hopes altogether, they lay as it were dead and frozen within her heart, till conviction should warm them into life. In this state of fearful suspense, she heard the bell of the great house-clock chime hour after hour.—The last glimpse of twilight departed, and suspense became agony,—still the clock struck its

hours, and that agony had nearly arisen to phrenzy. She crawled to the door, and sat down close by it on the pavement, her frame now chilled and palsied with nervous fear, and now scorched with the devouring fever that issued from her burning heart. She untied from below her chin the toy, or large cap of white linen she wore on her head, and threw it back from the side of her face, that no sound might escape her. All sense seemed centred in that of hearing, and the steps of Giles, as he paced the stone passage, sounded painfully loud upon the morbid ear, which was exercising a preternatural faculty, in endeavouring to discover those at a distance.

At length, she heard footsteps afar off; they approached nearer and nearer, and she then listened to the discourse Laurence held with Giles.—She heard him excuse himself for having neglected to send his provisions, and his offer of guarding the door while he took half an hour to refresh himself, on condition that he returned punc-

tually at that time. The terms were joyfully accepted, and Giles departed. The door at length opened, and Laurence entered with an iron lamp in his hand.

"What the devil hath set thee down on the cold flags, the night is not so hot methinks? come, spring up, my old grashopper," said he, giving her his hand, and assisting her to the chair she had before occupied; "there is not a moment to be lost—your son is at hand; but now, hark'ee old one, if ye set up a caterwauling when ye see him, I would not give a pease-cod for both your lives, so keep quiet when I bring him."

Euphan gasped for breath, and every labouring throb of her bosom appeared distinctly through her clothing.—She still feared and doubted; for would not such as Laurence think it a good jest to disappoint her excited hopes, and might she not even now, perhaps, be about to be led to her death?

Laurence, however, quickly returned, and with him another man, bearing a sack in his hand. They shut the door, and approached.

The stranger snatched up the lamp, came close up to Euphan; the light fell upon his face, and upon the smile of joy which illumined it; he laid his finger on his lips, set the lamp on the floor, folded his mother in his arms, and laid her cold face to his—What pen shall describe the feelings of Euphan at that moment—they were those of the widow of Nain; for she too "was a widow, and he was the only son of his mother."

It was some time before she could articulate, and then only in low murmurs.

"I have embraced him," she said, "I have seen his sunny smile, and felt his warm tears—Now, O Lord, let me depart in peace, for this is bliss indeed!"

"Not so, dearest mother," said Walter, "you will, I hope, only depart at present with me, to live still many years yet—but we must be speedy.—I am a strong fellow, you see, and I purpose to carry you to the vessel on my back in this pock. Come, you must get in," said he, as he wrapt her clothes round her feet, and drew the sack upwards;

" you need not fear, for I feel as if I had the strength of Goliah and Sampson both in me to-night."

" Stop, old lady," said Laurence, as she was about to disappear in the sack, " this must be my perquisite;" and he laid hold of the sleeve of a loose gown that she wore over her other clothes, " strip it off quickly." Neither question nor comment followed, and he threw it down on the pavement, and assisted Walter to tie the top of the sack, and cut a hole opposite to Euphan's mouth, that she might breathe freely, as also to pass round a broad hempen belt, somewhat below the middle of the sack, and fit it round his shoulders, fastening it in front of his chest, by which means Euphan found a kind of seat, and her weight became easier to her son.

" Here we go, then," said Walter, crossing the apartment, and threading two or three bye-passages, in company with Laurence, who let him out by a back way, and conducted him to a lane, which struck in-

to the road to Leith, where they parted; Laurence hastening back to put in practice the rest of his plan before the return of Giles, and Walter to pursue his journey, with his maternal burthen, the distance of a full mile to Leith. Nor with more dutiful veneration did Æneas take his way from Troy with his aged father, than Walter trudged along with Euphan on his back. He continued in spite of his load, and the darkness of the night, to walk briskly forward, till he at length deposited his burden in the cabin of the little vessel, where the Abbess and Father Leonard were arrived before him. Meantime, Laurence was preparing to execute one of those crafty tricks, by which the superstition of that age was so frequently imposed on. For, no sooner had he seen Walter clear of the premises with his burden, than he returned to the chamber so lately occupied by Euphan, and having shut the door, he took up the old woman's gown, and sprinkling on it some powdered sulphur, he held it to the lamp, burn-

ing in it numerous holes, and conveyed it to the farthest corner of the chamber. He then placed a considerable quantity of gunpowder within the fire-place on the hearth, and laying a long train of wet powder from it, such as he calculated might be ten minutes in reaching the heap within the hearth, he went to the door, and the instant he heard the footsteps of Giles approaching, he set fire to the train, left the apartment, and sat down on the stone bench.

"Well," said he to Giles, as he rose from his seat at his approach, and began to move away, "you have kept your time pretty exactly, and I will send some one to relieve you within the hour; and, in truth, I wish it had pleased our noble master to give us some other duty to perform than watching this accursed witch; but I must away now down to Holyrood, to wait for my lord, where they are footing it merrily yonder."

"I only wish I had some ane for company," said Giles; "for now it wears late,

it's fearfu' to be left anesel', sic near neebours wi' the deevil."

Laurence laughed, and walked off. "Ay," thought he, "you will think so presently, I fancy."

He left the house instantly; and when he arrived at Holyrood, sent the man, who was to relieve Giles in his guard, giving him his directions with the same precision and gravity, as though Euphan had really been in custody.

On the Earl of Gowrie's return from Holyrood, which was soon after Lady Agnes retired, he found his house in the utmost confusion, and upon making inquiry, learned, from the reports of the terrified servants, that the devil had appeared in his own proper person, and carried off the witch up the chimney of the room in which she was confined, in a flame of fire, with a shock like that of an earthquake, accompanied with a smoke and smell of brimstone, that had filled the whole house. Of this sul-

phurous smell, the Earl had been perfectly sensible, as soon as he entered from the air. He had no sooner heard this story, than he proceeded to the room in which Euphan had been confined, and there he certainly beheld, at the first glance, many corroborating circumstances, among which the gown was pre-eminent. This might have served for evidence with one whose mind was less strong than the Earl's; but on examining more narrowly, he saw the black appearance on the flags where the train had been laid, and the marks within the chimney, where the quantity of powder had exploded, and was satisfied in his own mind of the trick. He, however, spoke not, except to order Giles to his presence, and was informed that he had been taken up from the passage, where he lay prostrate in a swoon, and conveyed to bed, where, when questioned by his master, his story was uttered so incoherently, and he seemed so much under the dominion of terror while he spoke, that nothing more could be learned from him, ex-

cept, that hearing a hissing noise within the chamber, he laid his ear to the door to listen, when a bright flash of light issued through every aperture, and a clap of thunder, a hundred times louder than any he had ever heard in his life, succeeded it, when he remembered no more, till he found himself in his bed, surrounded by his fellow-servants, who informed him that the devil had flown away with the witch at that moment.

" An' oh ! may it please you, my lord," said Giles, " to order that I may ne'er be asked ony mair questions anent the matter ; for, as I am a sinner, I ken nought mair than I hae spoken, and I desire neither to mak' nor meddle in the affairs o' Satan, though I trust, nae mair power will be granted him to appear bodily i' this house, seeing that now the evil thing is removed. But I ken my ain determination ! If ever I be persuaded to pit my finger in his pie by watching his bairns again, be they witch or warlock, then shall I deserve to

keep them company whan it is his pleasure to carry them wi' him," said he, nodding his head with an expression of determination so ludicrous, that Laurence, who had followed the Earl into the room, could no longer contain himself, and burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter, to the utter astonishment of the perplexed Giles and his fellow-servants, who looked upon his mirth at so awful a moment as the very extremity of daring impiety.

His master, however, saw it in a different light, and when he presently after left the room, ordered Laurence to follow him to his own apartment; when there, he sternly accosted him, "You cannot deceive me, rascal!" said the Earl. "That woman hath been removed by thy contrivance. Confess to me instantly what you have done with her; for, by Heaven, if a hair of her head hath been injured, I will make your worthless body answerable for it!"

Laurence knew too well with whom he had to deal, to dare an attempt at decep-

tion, and auguring from the orders he had received respecting her at first, and the proof his master's words had just given of the interest he took in her safety, that he would not at heart be sorry to learn her escape, he began to excuse himself, with an air of the deepest humility, and a semblance of that humanity he knew the Earl invariably practised himself, and prized so much in others.

"Well do you say, my lord," replied Laurence, "that I cannot deceive you—it were a task I should undoubtedly fail in, were I to attempt it, which, be assured, your faithful servant never will. When I learned what a poor unfortunate creature it was whom your lordship gave into my charge on the play-field, pity took possession of me, and I felt willing to run some risk for her deliverance——"

"And so," said the Earl, interrupting him, "you took it upon you, contrary to the orders I gave, to become yourself her judge and deliverer; and, after my passing

my word to my Sovereign for her safe keeping, you have aided her in escaping?"

"Be but pleased to hear me, my gracious lord," said Laurence—"His Majesty cannot possibly demand of you her whom the devil hath taken to himself; and only allow Giles and the other servants to be questioned, and I will peril my neck upon it that no doubt will remain on the mind of his Majesty, or of any judge in the land, respecting the fact."

"And pray, what could you say, Sir Scoundrel, if you were called upon?—You cannot surely expect me to connive at your perjuring yourself?"

"Nay, God forefend!" returned Laurence, turning up the whites of his eyes with the most hypocritical expression of horror—"No, my lord; if I am examined, I can truly swear that I was in attendance on your lordship at the Palace when the event took place; and only please to recollect, my lord, that you were also absent, and you will be convinced that no disagreeable conse-

quences can result to your lordship from this matter."

There was much reason in this, and, in fact, it turned out exactly as Laurence had predicted. His Majesty was perfectly satisfied of the truth of her having been carried off bodily by the devil; and these things were too commonly believed at the time for the circumstance to be further noticed than as a nine days' wonder.

Laurence was about to inform the Earl of some of the particulars of her escape; but Gowrie, who was satisfied with her eluding the punishment which he had feared might await her, put a stop to his intended information. He did this also that, should his Majesty put any questions to him, he might be the less embarrassed in his answers.

Perhaps few things at that moment could have given Gowrie more pleasure than what had happened, after the conversation he had that night held with Agnes about Euphan, especially as he was sensible that, though he

had exerted himself to the utmost extent of his power, he might have been unable to save her ;—for so blindly superstitious and ignorant were all ranks in Scotland at that day, and so firmly did they believe in witchcraft, that no absurdity was too gross to gain credit, if supported by the testimony either of folly or malice ; and in none of his subjects was that belief more strongly implanted than in King James himself, of which there are left many evidences in his own writings, and in the chronicles of his time ; for it was during his reign, both in Scotland and England, that the annals of law were stained, by recording the most atrocious cruelties, practised on hundreds of unhappy wretches, for this imaginary crime,—the belief in which, though repugnant to common sense, found its chief supporter in the Sovereign, whose baneful example was followed by judges and jurymen, who condemned to torture and to death their fellow-creatures, without compassion or remorse.

It is probable that the conviction of this

poor woman's safety tended more to the ease of Gowrie's mind, and to the soundness of his repose, on the night of which we are recording the events, than almost any thing else could have done; for he could not help painfully reverting to the words of Agnes—"And, said she, we were so speedily to part, that we might meet only in eternity? I will not believe it," he said—"Yet what avails our meeting, while religion and honour both alike forbid our union.—Still I cannot cease to hope, because I cannot cease to love."

## CHAPTER IX.

Heigh, my hearts!—cheerly, cheerly, my hearts!—yare! yare!—Take in the top-sail!—tend to the master's whistle!

SHAKSPEARE.

WE now return to the Jesuit, on the second night from that in which the Abbess had embarked at Leith, when he had still heard nothing of Nicol Partan, although he had that afternoon taken a walk to Musselburgh, to inquire of his daughter Grizzy if he had arrived.

This circumstance gave him considerable uneasiness; and he was sitting in his own apartment in the Palace, anticipating some mischief, and deliberating how he was to act, in order to ascertain what had become

of him, when a sharp knock at the door roused him from his meditation. The Jesuit rose and opened it, and Nicol walked in.

"I am happy to see you are returned at last, my trusty confidant," said the Jesuit; "but pray, why have you remained so long absent?—Let me hear the particulars of your adventures."

"Confidant ca' ye me?" repeated the fisherman, with an appearance of doggedness he had never assumed before—"why, Maister Austin, ye see I dinna understand fine words, but if, as I tak it, ye mean that ye hae let me into your secrets, it's ower late to fule me that gait; for an I had kenn'd what a cargo o' gullified Papist deevils ye sent me to pilot, the ne'er a fit-length wad I hae stirred; and I canna say I tak it weel at your hands, for it wad hae been mair like an honest man, I trow, an ye had laid information again' sic a nest o' vipers, in place o' helping them aff the coast; and d—n me if I believe ye are

sound i' the faith yoursel, or ye wad ne'er hae set a decent man, that keeps the Kirk, and a' its ordinances, on sic an errand!"

"What, I pray thee, is the matter, good Nicol?" returned the Jesuit, who was somewhat astounded by the violence and loudness that accompanied the bellowing forth of Nicol's resentment; "speak lower, and command your temper; perhaps some misapprehension of yours may have caused this ill-humour, that I never before witnessed in you.—If you have come by any wrong, I may have it in my power to repair it, and you will find me no way slack therein—Speak plainly then."

"Why," returned Nicol, "ye are aye sae fair-fashioned, Maister Austin, that there's scarce ony saying again' ye.—But I'se tell ye what, it'll be nae little siller will gar me haud my tongue this bout; for ye see, to speak plainly, as ye say, if the job ye set me about cam to be kenn'd, I'm thinking——"

"It would go far to hang both of us,"

returned the Jesuit, without giving him time to finish his speech; "therefore, my good friend, common sense will teach you, that the less that is said about it the better; so just seat yourself on that bench, and tell me if your cargo, as you call them, have got safe off, and how you came by your information that they are Papists."

"They are safe eneugh, for aught I ken," said Nicol, "for the de'il's aye kind till his ain; and as to my kenning about their papistry, I cam by that knowledge and a waimfu' o' saut water muckle about the same time; and it's little less than a miracle o' mercy that my carcase isna riddled through wi' the wilks or ever this time, for I had a sair struggle to win at the shore after the cobble gaed down."

"You have lost your boat, then, I understand," said the Jesuit.

"Ou ay, every spale o' her," returned Nicol.

"Well," said the Jesuit, taking out a handful of pieces, "here is sufficient to buy

you another, and new fishing-tackle to boot; and do you name what you consider a fair recompence for your time and trouble, and I will double it; only, I beseech you, let me have your story, and an assurance that you forgive my share in your mishap."

"See here now," said Nicol, "how soon a weel-conditioned man, that's no dure by nature, can be pacified!"—Here he held out, in token of amity, a hand as hard as though it had been carved out of an oaken plank.—"I heartily forgie ye, maister; and if ye hae aught here," he continued, looking round the apartment, "to gie me to drink your health, I'll do that blithely too; for faith I begin to think ye're nae Papist, after a', for I've heard say they're gay close-handed—And that cursed auld carline at the Craigs—de'il rive her!—made gude the saying, for she's gane aff, and no made the least compliment to neither Grizzy nor mysel, but disposed upon the gudes up by for the love o' the siller, I'se warrant; for I

understand frae Grizzy that there's folk in the house else, that claim a right to the plenishing; but, ods death! if I had kenn'd she was to play me sic a plisky at the hinder end, she should hae rotted or e'er me or my bairn had gane near her."

"You do not know, then, that she has left your daughter the furniture at the cottage, and whatever else remains there?"

"Ay!—wha tell'd ye that?" said Nicol, his hard weather-beaten features relaxing into a grin of surprise, not, however, unmingled with doubt—"I'm fearing ye're mista'en, for she mentioned naithing o' it when she tell'd me she had ordered her affairs."

"There is no mistake, however," said the Jesuit, feeling in his pocket, "for here it is, under her own hand."

Nicol gave two or three skips or flounders of joy, resembling the movements of a dancing elephant.—"Odds fish!" he cried, "but our Grizzy will be a weel-tochered lass, after a'!"

"Now, if your raptures are over," said the Jesuit, holding in his hand a small cup of brandy, "here is wherewith to drink my health in your favourite liquor; but you do not get it, my good friend, till you have first finished your story."

"Hout, hout!—ye ken as weel as me," said Nicol, greedily eyeing the cup, "that naething louses the jaw like a soup drink; and sooth, I dinna ken gin I can tell ony mair or I get it, for the saut water I swallowed is making sic a rumbling, I can scarce hear mysel speak; sae e'en let's get a mouthfu', maister, and then I'll crack like a pen-gun."

The Jesuit, who now saw it only delayed time to refuse, allowed him to take it.

"Weel, here's lang life and prosperity to ye, Maister Austin!" said Nicol; and I'm sure I hope frae my heart ye're nae Papist."

"Content yourself on that score, honest Nicol," returned the Jesuit; "but why should you suspect it?"

"Humph!" said Nicol, giving his shoulders a shrug of incredulity—"I dinna ken;

but if yon woman ye ca'd sister and you were ae parents' bairns, I was thinking ye might aiblins be baith tarr'd wi' ae stick."

"Nay," replied the Jesuit, "that is not fair, good Nicol; I must not be blamed for the faith of my sister—the most a man can do is to answer for himself, and you will not find one who attends the reformed Kirk more regularly than myself.—But it was certainly much better, since no persuasions of mine could have made my sister change her religion, to allow her to depart for a country where she will not be persecuted on account of it, than to let her remain here, where she would have involved both herself and me in trouble; and it was thus that I came to employ you.—But go on again with your story."

"Weel, ye see," said Nicol, "whenever ye gied me that bit line for her i' the boat, ye ken, and tell'd me the young woman wasna coming, I gaed aff directly to the sloop, and gied the paper into her ain hand; and whan she had read it, I thought she was

gaun to swiff awa', for she turned as white in the gills as a haddock that's new ta'en out o' a cod's maw; and then she gaed as she had been clean daft, casting up her een, and muttering till hersel. Weel, this lasted a while, and then she gaed down below; and we went merrily down the Frith till we came forenent Dunbar; but then a squall rose frae the north, and some muckle black clouds cast up in that airt, and the water began to rise, and I dreeded a gale; sae whan I judged there wad be a bit dust, I cried to the sailors—(a wheen yellow, wissent-faced creatures, no the height o' a handspike)—to stand by their tackle, and mak clear their ropes for rinnin; and we just got a bit breeze aff the land, whan whif comes a squall, and taks us flat a-back—jibe gangs the boom, and tirle gangs the sloop on her beam-ends; so then, ye may think, I sung out lustily for them to let go the gaff-topsail-sheet and peak-haulyards. And it turned out, after a', that nane o' them understood ae word that

I said, saving the skipper, and, in place o' his minding his business, down he pops upon his knees, and begins to pray wi' a' his pith; and wi' that up comes your sister, and up comes the auld carline o' the Craigs, and at her back her son Watty, that we a' thought dead sae lang syne; and whan I saw them, I thought the glamour had come ower my een, and, for that matter, I dinna ken yet how they cam a' there; but ne'er mind.—Ance they had a' won on to the deck, sic a rookery rase as ye ne'er heard a' your days; for ane cried upon this saunt, and the other cried upon that saunt, and some o' them cried upon a' the saunts in heeven, till they were fit to ding a body clean stupid; sae I clean lost patience, and cursed them for a wheen Papist lubbers, and d—d a' their saunts to h—ll, and tell'd them the saunts wadna wark the vessel, and gin they didna do it themsels, we might gang to the bottom. Then they set up a' their throats thegither—'O the excommunicate sinner!' says ane—'O the heretic

monster!' says another; and then your titty, she behoved to pit in her oar, and she preached till them anent pittin their trust i' the blessed Virgin, and about makin me tak to my boat, for that I was the Jonah that gar'd the storm rise; and then an auld gaberlunzie-looking chiel cam in wi' his jaw, and wi' that they a' yoked to me, and hoisted me ower into the cobble, and cut the rope; sae there I was set adrift without mair ado."

"That was hard usage, my good friend, indeed," said the Jesuit, hardly able to suppress the laugh which his account excited.

"Ay, it was that," said Nicol; "and ye needna think but I was in an awfu' rage; but, i'faith, I soon got other things to do nor curse them, for ye see, to mak a lang tale short, I kenn'd it was nonsense to think o' getting up the Frith again or the sea calmed, sae I made for the shore at the nearest; but a' that I could do, I couldna keep the bit boat aff the rocks, sae on she gaed, and there she stuck, and me rugging

and riving to get her aff, or I brak the oars. At last a muckle sea cam, and she gaed to pieces; and it happened weel for me that I was sae near the shore, for the neist muckle jaw drave me clean out ower the rocks upon the channel, sae up I banged, and spat out sae muckle o' the saut water, and cam aff as fast as my twa legs could carry me."

"And saw you what became of the sloop?" inquired the Jesuit.

"The last time I looked ower my shouther at her," said Nicol, "she had wathered St Abb's, and, as I said afore, there's nae fears o' her, for the de'il aye kens his ain bairns."

"You have really had a narrow escape, poor fellow! and I am truly sorry for your misadventures," said the Jesuit.

"As to the matter o' that," replied Nicol, "it's gane by, and ye hae gien me that, and tell'd me that, sin' I cam here, that had made up for a', an it had even been waur, for 'a dog winna howl gin ye strike him wi' a rough bane.' But div ye ken if Euphan's

gudes be to the fore?—for I was thinking them that tirled her out o' the bit beild up by will may be no hae had muckle reverence to the gudes, and it's likely they hae gotten her pose, for she but to hae siller, or how could she hae lived when she had nane to work for her?—If I could but grip till that now, odd it wad be something!"

The Jesuit could not help smiling at this speech of Nicol's, which betrayed such a grasping disposition.—"I cannot," returned he, "give you much hopes of finding money in her house, because, to my knowledge, she took with her all she possessed; but the furniture, and all she left, is perfectly safe, for a person was sent to guard it from depredation."

"That's weel," returned Nicol; "and, to be sure, she may come to need her pickle siller in a far country, sae she's welcome till it for Nicol Partan.—And I'll just gang hame, and speak for somebody to help me to lift the plenishing the morn's morning wi' the skreigh o' day; for I've heard say

the gudes o' a kenn'd Papist are confisticat to the king, and sae it will be right to lift them, for fear o' some ill-deeded body pittin the law in execution, ye ken."

"There is such a law, I believe, Nicol," said the Jesuit; "but set your heart at rest, my interest will be sufficient security for your possession of Euphan's bequest to you; but be you silent on the subject, for it is believed that the devil carried her off from her place of confinement, therefore you cannot be too cautious; for if, through the smallest imprudence on your part, the truth is discovered, it will go hard, perhaps, with us both; yet, even in that case, I would rather stand in mine own shoes than yours, though, in fact, I am only to blame.—For look ye, honest Nicol, I have some friends here at court, that would come between me and the gallows, but all my interest might be insufficient to save your neck from a halter."

"Say nae mair, say nae mair," said Nicol—"there's nae sic yeuking about my

craig to be sib to the woody, I trow, that I should tak pains to bring them acquaint; and if it's ne'er tell'd till I tell it, Ise answer for it that'll no be or the day o' judgment."

"So will you act wisely," replied the Jesuit; "and if at any time you stand in need of a friend, or a little money, you know where to find them both, while I am an inmate of this place, which may be long enough, for aught I know at present."

"And lang may it be!" returned Nicol; "and I reckon ye hae a braw cosey place o' it, Maister Austin, for ye cou'dna hae sae mony sma fish to cast to your neebours, if ye didna catch muckle anes to yoursel."

Laurence, who had been also somewhat anxious to hear tidings of the vessel, now entered the apartment, and put a stop to their conversation; for Nicol, seeing in him one before whom he could no longer hold conference on the subject in which he was engaged, rose, after having swallowed an-

other cup of the Jesuit's brandy, and departed.

When Laurence had learned all that the Jesuit had just heard from Nicol, he began to relate what had been the state of his master since he was informed of the flight of Lady Agnes; with which account we shall begin the next chapter.

## CHAPTER X.

——————— I have lost
More than the female world can give me back.
I had beheld even her whole sex unmoved,
Look'd o'er 'em, like a bed of gaudy flowers,
That lift their painted heads, and live a day,
Then shed their trifling glories unregarded.
My heart disdain'd their beauties till she came,
With every grace that nature's hand could give,
And, with a mind so great, it spoke its essence
Immortal and divine.

*Lady Jane Gray.*

"THE Earl is a changed man," said Laurence to the Jesuit, "and hath done nothing these two days as he was wont. The frost of reserve that lay on the lofty summit of his pride, hath begun to thaw, and he hath not scrupled to let me understand of his love to the Lady Agnes—me, with whom he never deigned to converse, save on points of my duty. He hath, moreover,

offered me large remuneration, if I can discover where she is. And now, by my faith, Seignor Austin, the devil, who, thou knowest full well, is always busy, hath been no way slack in suggesting to my honesty that it is too scrupulous, and that I might have profited by his offer, without you or Master Rathsay being the wiser. This temptation, however, my virtue hath overcome; but shall I confess," he continued, casting a sly glance on the Jesuit, "that it hath been partly by means of my promising it a double bribe from your worship?"

"I dare swear to it," replied the Jesuit, "for do I not know how well thou lovest gold? and yet, methinks, the sum I gave thee after the lady was conveyed to Craigmillar, might have contented thee for one while."

"He cannot be said to love gold too well, I think," said Laurence, "who is willing to part with it as soon as he gets it, and that am I."

"Only take heed to walk by my direc-

tion," returned the Jesuit, "and perchance you may finger more than you have yet done. But I caution you not to listen to the devil, when he parleys with what you are pleased to call your virtue, to betray aught with which you are intrusted by me; for remember, that as I have power to reward, I have also power to know and punish any deception of which you could be guilty."

As the Jesuit said this, he looked on Laurence with a peculiar expression of severity.

"Now, by the mass!" said Laurence, "one cannot venture a jest with you, but what your eyes look as fierce as tigers, ready to leap on one from their dens; and you threaten a free-born man, as though he were your vassal and slave. If you know, Master Austin, that I love gold, you might also know by this time that I am no poltroon to betray secrets. Put me to any test you think proper; so long as you perform your promises, I will perform mine."

"Nay," said the Jesuit, clearing his countenance at once from the terrific expression that had marked it a minute before, and replacing it with that smile of urbanity he could so easily assume. "Nay, thou hast stood one test even now, and come off valiantly. And thinkest thou I blame thee for thy love of gold? I tell thee no. Do I not toil for it myself? and, I repeat once more, we work for one, in whose power it is to reward us according to our hearts' desire."

"Well, well," said Laurence, "you are the master architect—give me your directions, and I'll warrant ye the work shall please."

"I am *not* the master architect," said the Jesuit, with a singular smile; "but I have work to do, in which I shall require your assistance. Be therefore diligent; and when it is accomplished, thou shalt finger more gold than it hath been thy fate ever yet to look upon. Thou shalt return to Italy, and live like a prince."

"Ah! thou hast hit it now, Seignor Aus-

tin," replied Laurence—" Italy or Spain! for it is only there a man can enjoy himself, and do that for which the whining Presbyterians would say he merits eternal perdition. Ah! there it is that the jolly priest hath something of a fellow feeling for ye; and provided ye can but pay him, quickly clears the passages of a bad conscience, to bring in the waters of comfort. Ah! those are the countries for the pure juice of the grape, and the darlings of the dark glancing eye! I pray you, how long may this same business you are engaged in, detain us in this land of skim-milk? for now you have set me agog after mine old pastimes, methinks I would fain be going."

" Our stay here," said the Jesuit, " depends on many circumstances, over which I have no control; we must, however, let nothing escape us; and for that reason, you must be minute and faithful in reporting to me all your master's movements; you must watch him vigilantly in all that relates to his passion for Lady Agnes, and

endeavour, by every means in your power, to augment it."

"Faith, there is small occasion for that," replied Laurence; "and you would think so, had you but heard him raving yesterday morning, as I did, when the Master of Ruthven came to tell him of her disappearance; and then, as I told thee, he proffered me a large reward, if I could procure him any information concerning her, which I of course promised to endeavour."

"Thou didst right," returned the Jesuit, "and thou must still continue to promise; and look that thou dost appear to distrust Master Rathsay; his love of the lady is noised abroad; and thou mayest throw in a spice of suspicion, that he knoweth somewhat about her; but look that it appeareth to the Earl as the phantom of thine own brain, and not the result of certain knowledge.—And now go," continued the Jesuit, "and be upon the alert, that nought worthy of mark may happen in thine absence; and when thou hast that to communicate

which thou thinkest of avail, return and make me acquainted therewith."

Laurence strictly fulfilled the commands of the Jesuit, and more than once suggested to his master that the love which Rathsay was known to entertain for the Lady Agnes, might, he thought, have had some connexion with her disappearance. But though the very mention of Rathsay as her lover never failed to disturb the mind of Gowrie, yet having his own reasons for believing her flight to be voluntary, he put no faith in the surmises of his attendant. The only circumstance that puzzled him with regard to Rathsay, was the extreme indifference with which he had heard and spoken of her departure. This he could in no manner account for, unless by attributing it to the pleasure Rathsay felt in the disappointment he supposed him to be suffering, and which the Earl thought might, in a great measure, reconcile a spirit so vindictive to his own loss; for as the agony of

Gowrie's mind could not be altogether concealed, neither can it be described. It was in vain, that his brother endeavoured to sooth him; for, believing he should never again see her, he gave himself up to despondence. Being no longer called upon to wage war with his inclination, there was no longer occasion for the resistance, which, while the conflict lasted, had supported him; and his mind fell from that state of high excitation in which it had so long been kept by its various and contending emotions, into that of moody irritation, accompanied by the most poignant feelings of regret for not having laid open his heart before her, whose image alone filled it. In this state of suffering, his understanding was too much obscured by the mists of passion to allow of his reason being heard. Nor could his fortitude, though stimulated by a degree of virtue seldom surpassed by frail human nature, combat the total loss of the hopes which he now felt he had cherished in an

unwarrantable degree. The pang of a disappointment, so complete and sudden, made him unjust to the noble motives that had influenced him.

"That she loved me," he thought, "I can have little doubt. She shewed it in a thousand nameless instances; and I have suffered her to depart without her knowing what it has cost me to conceal my sentiments. Curse on that fastidiousness which has allowed one so innocent and lovely to suppose herself contemned and despised on account of her faith! This despair that rends my heart-strings, is a fit reward for the bigotry by which I have been actuated. Perhaps, had I poured out my soul before her, even her religious scruples had given way to the eloquence of affection; but, fool that I was, I sought to convince her reason without the aid of her love, and I have lost her for ever!"

Yet the strong and lofty mind of Gowrie did not always resign itself entirely to

these impotent ravings; for there were times when gleams of reason broke in upon his turbulent state of mind, and he believed that he should in vain have essayed to change the faith of Agnes, and again repeated to himself all the arguments he had formerly used. Still these were but gleams; and like momentary flashes of lightning, were quickly lost in the surrounding darkness.

In this state of mind the Earl of Gowrie was still found to be every day a visitor at Holyrood; for it was there only he heard Lady Agnes mentioned, with various surmises on the direction of her flight, which he fondly imagined might be the means of suggesting some hint for him to follow; and it was there also that he could talk of her to his sister, and meet that sympathy which woman alone knows how to bestow.

Lady Beatrix was sitting one day with the Earl, conversing about Agnes, some time after her departure, when he was informed that his old servant, Adam, had arrived from

St Johnstoun, and wished to see Lady Beatrix. Curious to know what could be his errand, he was instantly admitted. A venerable-looking man entered the apartment, whose eyes beamed with pleasure as he cast them on his master, and made a low and respectful obeisance to him and Lady Beatrix.

"Well, my good Adam," said the Earl, "what has brought you here? I thought you were, according to my desire, at St Johnstoun, indulging your old age in a comfortable chimney corner, after all your late toils."

"But you know, my kind lord," said Adam, "that old and feckless as I am, I cannot sit and see another do that, which is my duty; and this small casket," he continued, producing it, "was intrusted to me, which contains, I was told, things of value, that I was desired myself to deliver into the hands of my honoured young lady."

"This belongs to Agnes," said Lady Beatrix to the Earl, as she received the casket from Adam. "I have seen it often.

—It has a lock of singular contrivance," and as she pressed a spring, the lid flew open, and she took from it the letter, which Agnes had written the night she left the Palace. When she had glanced her eye over it, she put it into the Earl's hand. His frame shook with emotion while he read it; and he had no sooner finished it, than, striking his forehead with his hand, he exclaimed, with phrenzied violence, " She has left the kingdom, and I am a lost man !"

" O !" said Beatrix, much alarmed by the apparent agony of her brother, and throwing her arms round his neck,—" O ! say not so—time will do much, and you will hereafter be surprised at the violence of your present feelings. Take comfort from the rectitude of your intentions, and bear this disappointment with somewhat of your wonted firmness."

" Alas !" said the Earl, " what hath availed my firmness ? What hath it been, but a thick veil spread before what was passing here ?" laying his hand on his breast;

" but my regrets from this hour shall be hidden within its deepest recesses, and my life henceforth devoted to the promotion of those interests for which I have sacrificed my early happiness."

He kissed the cheek of Beatrix, on which the tears fell like rain, and gently disengaging her arms from his neck, left the room.

Old Adam had been a silent, but not an unmoved spectator of this scene. He had been gazing alternately on the Earl and Lady Beatrix, endeavouring to comprehend what was passing; not from idle curiosity, but from the keen interest which he took in his master's welfare; and no sooner was the Earl gone, than moving toward the lower end of the room, where Beatrix still stood, looking at the door through which the Earl had passed, the old man uttered a kind of short cough to attract her notice. It had the desired effect, and she turned round.

" I humbly hope," said he, smoothing down with his hand, first on one side, and

then on the other, the long straight locks of silver hair, which, being parted on the top of his head, hung down to his shoulders, —" I humbly hope, I may use the privilege of love I bear to my dear lord, and make bold to ask what is the cause of the unhappiness I have witnessed, and which seemeth to transport him so far beyond the bounds of patience?"

" I shall not attempt to conceal from you, good old man," replied Beatrix, " what you cannot but already surmise. He is unfortunately attached to a young lady, whom he cannot marry."

" Not marry her!" said Adam, while his eyes glistened with indignation, through the moisture called into them by his master's distress,—" And why not?—Is there a lady could refuse my noble master?—Sure," said he, proudly, " the first princess in the world might be his wife without disparagement."

" He has not been refused, as you seem to imagine," said Beatrix; " and I think

with you, Adam, there are not many that would refuse him; but the lady I allude to is a Roman Catholic."

"Alas! alas!" ejaculated Adam, in a voice of horror—"a Romanist! a Papist! —Marry her! God forbid!—But did I not hear him say that she had left the kingdom, young lady?"

"Yes," replied Beatrix, "she is gone to take the veil, I believe, in Italy."

"God be thanked!" returned the old man fervently, "God be thanked! and I heartily wish he had never seen her without a veil; and yet if it had concealed her no better than they do the Papist ladies at Padua, in sooth, she was as well without it, for they use them as traps to catch the men, in place of garments to hide them from their view; and, indeed, I never saw any of them I thought much worth. Oh! who could have thought that my dear lord, who minded them no more there than he did the old monks in their hoods, should be catched by one of them here at last?"

This philippic was uttered against the Papist ladies with such genuine bitterness, that Beatrix would at any other time not have failed to extract amusement from the old man's account of the manners of the Italian ladies, which he seemed so much to reprobate; but her affectionate heart was too much interested in her brother's feelings, to allow of her indulging the spirit of mirth which generally possessed her; and she gravely replied, that the lady she had alluded to was far from wishing to *catch* any one; "and if you had but seen," she said, "how beautiful she is, and known how good, you could not have been surprised at your master's loving her."

"That may be, as you say it, young lady, but I have little skill of any of her kind," said Adam; "and I am sure you cannot help blessing the merciful Providence which hath kept them asunder.—My noble master marry a Papist!" muttered Adam, continuing with a shake of his head; "no, no! that he never will. Why,

it would be enough to bring the old lord, his grandsire, and my late lord, your father, out of their graves again, to think that the goodly structure of reformation they were foremost in raising, should receive such a blow from one of their own posterity—from one that all the kingdom looks up to like my lord, for its support and upholding."

"It is not to be thought of, indeed," said Beatrix, with a sigh; "nor did my brother ever allow himself any hope of the kind, unless what was founded on her change of religion."

"Ay, that is a different matter," said the old man; "for I mind of hearing say, that the blessed Luther himself married a professed nun, when he had turned her from her wicked idolatry to understand the pure evangel.—But God's will be done," continued Adam, "and may He be blessed, and praised by the whole family, that He has seen good to remove her! for I cannot think, in my own mind, there's any good among them black Papist brood."

This last clause was, however, added in an under tone, as he left the apartment, and closed the door.

## CHAPTER XI.

And do not stand on quillits how to slay him;
Be it by gins, by snares, by subtilty,
Sleeping or waking, 'tis no matter how,
So he be dead!

SHAKSPEARE.

"AND the Earl of Gowrie departs for St Johnstoun tomorrow, you say," replied the Jesuit, in answer to the information which Laurence had just given him; "but so must not you, for I have work for you here."

"Good," returned Laurence; "but what excuse shall I offer to my master, I pray you, my good seignor, for remaining behind?"

"Pshaw," returned the Jesuit, "you a fellow of parts, and lack invention for such small matter as this! Was't never confined to thy bed by a cholic, or fit of the cramp,

or what not? and canst thou not be seized with thine old disease again, and follow thy master when thou art able?"

"Hold!" returned Laurence; "tell me now, seignor—you who are somewhat of a mediciner—is not brandy-wine the remedy for cramp in the stomach?"

"Ay, and one which I suppose you will have no objection to," replied the Jesuit.

"Cramp be it, then," said Laurence; "for the medicine is one which long use causeth me to swallow like mother's milk; and as to the grimaces and distortions, let me alone for that—they shall be to the life. And, after my master is gone, and I can make shift to crawl out again, I suppose I may come to your worship?"

"Do so," said the Jesuit; "for, though I have not instant use for you, I must not allow you to go where I cannot command your service."

"I must, however, take myself off just now, that I may arrange my master's matters for this journey," said Laurence, as he left the apartment.

The Jesuit having, some time previous to this, transmitted to his General, by a secret conveyance, an account of all the circumstances worthy of note that had occurred since his residence in Scotland, had just received, in answer to his statement, an order to accomplish the purport of his mission to Scotland with as little delay as possible—reminding him also, how much depended on keeping down puritanism in that kingdom—that, should James shortly succeed to the throne of England, as in all probability he would, he might find his hands strengthened by the removal of this most powerful protestant leader. This mandate concluded with reminding him of the reward promised him, should he succeed in fulfilling these expectations.

"What needs," said the Jesuit, inwardly, after having perused the cipher in which the paper was written—"what needs this puerile repetition of that with which he knows me so well acquainted? And it is still more unnecessary to call my attention

to the high expectations, which are my polar star, and alone keep me in the milky way of obedience to commands, that I would otherwise spurn with contempt. Ah! they little dream of the fire which ambition had kindled in this bosom, ere yet my equals in age had resigned their childish toys, who deem it their requisite to remind me of that to which I have dedicated the ardour of youth, the flower of manhood, and the energies of talent—for which I have been content to separate me from my kind, to see no eye beam affection on me, to hear no tongue greet me in the language of sympathy or love; and for which my proud nature hath condescended to take all shapes, and bend to all circumstances, to become all things to all men, to do deeds at which the fearful tremble, and from which even the accustomed villain would gladly turn. Hath it not led me," he continued, "through the toilsome depths of those deceitful sciences, that to him who hath but sounded their shoals, promise the prescience which is alone

the attribute of Deity?—or the inexhaustible command of that metal, which, on this earth, is all omnipotent? And having proved their fallacy, hath again returned me to that path, which, despite all obstacles, shall lead me ere long to power greater than that possessed by any potentate on earth? He is somewhat impatient, methinks," he went on, reverting again to the epistle of his Superior. "I am to accomplish my purpose, he says, with as little delay as possible—True; but it is not the dagger of a hired assassin, or the mortal effects of an Italian posset, that can do this business. The ruin must be complete and overwhelming—it must destroy both life and fame. I must first stir up all who are inclined to be his enemies until they are fit for my purpose, and then some well-feigned documents of treason shall be the argument to urge his fate upon him, which shall involve the party he supports in disgrace and shame, and humble to the earth these whining ministers."

But though the wily Jesuit determined to watch over and take every advantage of passing events, and had laid many deep schemes for the ruin of the Earl of Gowrie, yet accident did more toward furthering his nefarious plans, than his most sanguine expectations could have anticipated.

It was not long after the departure of Gowrie, that the Jesuit was one day summoned by the King, to follow him to the garden of the Palace with his favourite falcon, of which he had grown so passionately fond, that he had been much in his presence of late, being always called upon to attend him while he amused himself with the bird. These gardens were divided, according to the fashion of the olden time, for the benefit of shelter and the sake of their imagined beauty, by high and thick hedges of clipped holly. The King had gone alone into the garden; and it was down a broad grass walk, bounded on one side by one of those living walls, and garnished on the other by a row of leaden Muses, that the Jesuit followed

with the bird; when, about mid-way, he perceived the King strike off to the right, through an opening in the hedge, at which when he arrived, he in vain looked along the vista to which it opened, for his Majesty. He therefore continued in the same path, thinking the King had taken the other side of the hedge, and that he should meet him at the bottom. But as he hurried on, lest his Majesty might become impatient, he naturally turned his looks toward the object which he supposed hid him from his sight, to try if he could catch a glimpse of him through it, and presently, where it was somewhat thinner, he perceived that it formed the back of a bower, which his Majesty had entered; and, on looking more narrowly through the branches, he saw a man lying on the seat of the arbour, apparently asleep, on whom his Majesty was gazing with intense interest. The day was sultry, and the person had bared his breast and throat to the air. The King approached him, and seemed to listen for an instant,

to assure himself that he slept; he then stooped down, and, lifting something attached by a ribband which hung from his neck, he gazed on it intently, and, taking a knife from his pocket, he proceeded to cut the silk to which it was fastened; but, whether it was from the motion of the King's hands, which shook violently, and caused a certain vibration to reach the neck of the sleeper, or from some other cause, he suddenly moved himself, and his Majesty instantly retreated, and quitting the bower, precipitately re-entered the walk he had recently left, just as the Jesuit, aware of the movement, turned to meet him with the hawk. His Majesty's agitation was great and apparent, his cheeks were flushed, his breath come short and thick, and there was an air of absence to surrounding objects in his demeanour, and an expression of deep and troubled thought on his brow. The Jesuit approached, but James waved him aside and passed, but had not proceeded

many steps, when he turned and beckoned him to follow.

"Ye have been represented to me," said the King, "as trust-worthy, and I the mair readily credit it, from thy faithfulness to thy late master." Here the King paused, as if irresolute whether or not to proceed, while he scanned the countenance of the Jesuit narrowly and anxiously, as if expecting to find encouragement for him to go on. The Jesuit flinched not from this investigation of his features, into which he threw a mixture of solicitude and humility; and James thus addressed him—

"If ye seek in aught to serve thy King and master, ye may rest assured o' reward suited to thy merit; and doubtless we pledge our princely word, that nane o' our servants shall do so without reaping the fruits of their fidelity.—Can ye, man, keep your Sovereign's counsel?"

The Jesuit expressed the most devoted determination to perish, rather than reveal

what the King should be graciously pleased to intrust to him.

"The Maister o' Ruthven lies there sleepin' in that bower," said James, "near the spot whare ye did meet me wi' the bird, and hath tied round his neck a toy whilk hath got loose from his vest, and now resteth on the bench whereon he reclineth—I wish to have it."

The Jesuit waited no further instruction, and instantly presented the bird to the King.

"Your Majesty shall have your desire, or I will die in the attempt," replied the Jesuit, as he was moving off.

"Stop, man!" said the King, "mind that ye do nae violence; ye maun do it secretly, or not at all; ye maun not awaken him, although ye should lose the opportunity."

The Jesuit made a low obeisance as in assent, and proceeded to the bower, with steps that became gradually more stealthy the nearer he approached. His caution was how-

ever in vain; for, on looking through the interlacings of the arbour, he perceived the Master of Ruthven just awakened from his slumbers, and saw him thrust the locket which had attracted the King's notice into his vest, and begin to arrange his dress. The opportunity had therefore passed for the present, and the Jesuit retreating from the bower, retired quickly down another path, and overtook his Majesty as he paced a distant walk to and fro, in anxious expectation of his return.

"Your Majesty's command is obeyed," said the Jesuit, "and——."

"Ye hae got it, then," said James, as he eagerly stretched forth his hand.

"No, my liege," said the Jesuit, "I was about to say that your Majesty's command hath this time protected the Master of Ruthven, and he hath escaped with the prize; otherwise, although awake when I reached the bower, he had not been now possessed of the trinket your Majesty wished to have."

"Ye wadna hae taen it by force?" said

the King, regarding him with a look of curiosity, which was mingled with the appearance of disappointment, excited by his want of success.

"Had your Majesty said the word," returned the Jesuit, "one of us should have died upon the spot, before he had thus triumphed."

"That ware rash," said the King; "na, that wun'na do, na, na," continued he, as if weighing in his own mind, what he could not but suppose an offer of the Jesuit to become the assassin of the Master.

"May your Majesty be graciously pleased to pardon my boldness," said the Jesuit, "when I say, that I would desire no better than to match my strength with that of the Master of Ruthven, who once took base advantage of my station, and insulted your Majesty, by threatening to chastise your servant."

"Ay!" said the King, "I ken his presumption; but though thy rank matched his, our commands are strick and peremptory

again the drawing o' weapons; but gif ye could find some secret and canny way o' getting that whilk I desire to hae, ye may yet see the humbling o' thine enemy."

"I solemnly swear, my liege, it shall be done; and that," said the Jesuit, "before to-morrow's sun hath dawned!"

"What say ye, man?" said his Majesty, in the utmost surprise; "afore the morn! Keep but this promise, and rely on thy King and Maister for thy reward; but mind be secret—be na rash, and abune a', spill nae bluid, I charge ye.—Here, tak the bird, I shall find nae pleasure till ye hae made gude your words."

The Jesuit took the hawk from his Majesty, and followed him to the Palace, deeply meditating on the means by which he was to make good his oath to the King.—That the history of the trinket involved some bitter cause of resentment in the breast of his Majesty was evident, and the penetration of the Jesuit led him to surmise, that the Queen was connected with it; for,

besides the vague rumours mentioned by old Heronshaw, Rathsay, in their late confidential intercourse, had, in his hatred of Gowrie and his family, spoken pretty plainly of the court-scandal relating to her Majesty and Ruthven. Before the Jesuit had reached the Palace, he had determined on the plan he meant to pursue; and seeking out Laurence, gave him directions for taking the necessary measures to facilitate it, which were punctually obeyed by his satellite; and in consequence of which, at a late hour on the same night, he appeared in the apartment of the Jesuit, who was anxiously awaiting him.

"Is all as it should be?" eagerly inquired the Jesuit.

"Ay, ay, he hath taken his dose,—the window is fastened,—I have laid the ladder, and the night is as dark as thou couldst wish it. I had something more of difficulty with that fellow Younger than I expected, for I could scarce convince him that the drug to

be mingled with his master's night-cup, was not intended to harm him, but merely to promote a frolic, which I was not at liberty to explain. When, however, I swallowed before him a small portion of the drug, (which even now makes me heavy with sleep,) and shewed him the broad gold piece, his scruples melted like summer snow, and he not only agreed to administer the dose, and leave the window you mentioned unfastened, but swore not to confess any knowledge of the affair, should his master question him with regard to aught that may happen."

The Jesuit tarried no longer after this information than to take with him a small dark lantern, which, as the Master burnt no light during the night, would be necessary to guide him to his object. Laurence accompanied him to hold the ladder, and act as sentinel in the event of any sudden alarm. No obstacle, however, occurred; all was still, within and without the Palace; and the Jesuit quickly found himself within the sleeping-chamber of the Master of Ruthven,

where he at first trode cautiously, listening at every step toward the bed, being unable to judge from the breathing of its occupier, whether he slept or not. He at length ventured to turn the light toward him. The night was close and warm, as the day had been. The arms of Ruthven were thrown above the bed-clothes, which were pushed down from his breast, and his shirt being open at the collar, the fatal gift of the Queen remained exposed to full view. The Jesuit looked with an undefinable sensation on the admirable beauty of his features, which the deep sleep, caused by the strong soporific drug, had rendered like those of death,—he lay on his back with the richly-wrought night-cap pushed off his forehead, as though done to relieve some uneasiness on the first operation of the draught.—All colour had fled from his face, which, undisturbed even by the passing expression of a dream, was like statuary marble. The Jesuit surveyed him, as the yellow light fell on his countenance, with mixed feelings of

pity and relentlessness.—The former were the dictates of the *man*, the latter the result of the cruel policy of the *Jesuit*.

" Ill-fated youth," said he, " your sleep bears all the outward marks of that long rest to which thou mayest soon be doomed! But what are a thousand such as thou art, when put in the balance with that at which I grasp?" He set down the lamp, and taking a small sharp dagger from his bosom, he divided the ribband at one stroke, and withdrawing the locket from it, retreated with all the precipitation consistent with leaving the window, by which he had entered, in the same state he had found it, and which he had accomplished, by first closing the shutters, before he drew down the sash. This necessity of scaling the window was caused by the attempt of the turbulent Earl of Bothwell a short time previous to this, to break into the sleeping apartment of his Majesty, and those of various office-bearers in his household; ever since which period, his Majesty had enjoined the inhabitants of

the Palace to use the additional inside fastening, with which he had caused the doors to be furnished.

The next morning the Jesuit was early awakened by the reiterated knocks of Rathsay at his door.—"You sleep sound, Master Falconer," said he, when he was at length admitted—"sounder than thy kingly master hath done this night, if I may judge from appearances. Be speedy and don thy doublet, for I am sent in all haste to bring thee to the presence. This is indeed a grand discovery our Royal Master hath made of the trinket—the gift of himself to his consort, which she hath bestowed upon her favourite, and which, well helped, shall go nigh to rid us of this coxcomical Master, yea, and of his brother also, the high and mighty Earl!—Faith, the blood danced in my veins with joy, when his Majesty related to me your garden scene of yesterday! But why promised you him such speedy possession of this bauble, which hath seemed to confirm his worst surmises, and

which, God wot, it is no fault of mine were not confirmed long ago.—But come, let us begone ; and look to have your presumption well chidden for having failed to do that which he expects, most unreasonably, you can have already accomplished."

" I am ready to attend you now, my young sir ; and as to the chiding, I must abide it as I may," returned the Jesuit.

The King was risen, and the Jesuit accompanied his page to the same room in which he had first seen his Majesty—a kind of small study, or closet, commonly occupied by him when he wished to be private. When they entered, the agitation of James was apparent ; he fixed his gaze exclusively on the countenance of the Jesuit, as if, without asking the question, he meant to form a judgment of what had been the result of the promise he had received, and he there perceived an expression of exultation, which made him at once cry out, " Ye hae been successfu', fallow, or your looks belie ye !"

Rathsay cast a glance of curiosity on the Jesuit, occasioned more by his desire of knowing how he would stem the torrent of impatience about to burst on him, than by any expectation of his having performed his promise to the King; when, to his utter astonishment, he drew the gem from his pocket, and approached his Majesty, to present it on his knee; but, fond as James was of this species of homage, it being more universally used toward him than any potentate of the period, he allowed no time now for such a ceremony, and quickly meeting him, snatched it from his hand. A pause of some moments ensued, while his Majesty withdrew to the window, and examined it narrowly; and, as he stood sideways to the light, Rathsay and the Jesuit saw the symptoms of increasing passion advancing every moment across his swelling features, and at length, every muscle quivering with uncontrollable rage, he muttered between his firmly set teeth, in a tone which could only have been distinguished by those as deeply

interested as his present hearers, "The deevil damn ye baith!" and raising his arm to its utmost stretch, he threw the locket to the floor with violence, and stamped and danced upon it with all the furious and frantic gestures of a passionate child who has quarrelled with his toy.

Rathsay and the Jesuit looked on each other with marks of intelligence, but the former was much less moved than the latter by the exhibition of his rage, for Rathsay had often before witnessed these bursts of passion in his Royal Master on occasions of much less import, and he feared that it might prove in this instance as evanescent as it had frequently done before; while the Jesuit only saw in it the wrathful indications of revenge, and augured from it, however foolish and impotent at the moment, the most happy presages to his own interests.

After the King had wrecked on its inanimate object the first violence of his wrath, he threw himself into a chair, where, with

a face pale with rage, and panting for breath, he sat some time totally absorbed in his own thoughts. He at length seemed to waken from this state of abstraction, and signed to Rathsay to fill him a cup of wine, which his constant use of that beverage caused this apartment to be always furnished with, that he might not wait till it was brought. The violent marks of agitation subsided in some degree after he had drank, but he still spoke not, and neither Rathsay nor the Jesuit attempted to interrupt the silence, or even to lift their eyes from the ground, till he should think proper to break it.

At length he motioned the Jesuit toward him.—"Tell me, man," he said, "how ye gained possession o' that d—d gaud."

The Jesuit informed him minutely of the method by which he had taken it from the Master of Ruthven.

"I wish that the potion had been ane frae whilk he was ne'er to waken!" said James, with fervour.

"I did but obey your Majesty," return-

ed the Jesuit, "in not touching his life, or——"

"Surely, man," said his Majesty—"I meant nae other.—Yet, methinks our hands are somewhat bound up i' this matter, and we, whae ought, as the representative of God, to be omnipotent in our kingdom, yet lack power to dispense justice oursel."

"And that for such detestable treason," said Rathsay, catching at his Majesty's meaning, "that the heaviest punishments of the law would fall short in requiting it."

"Ye say true," said the King; "but my speedy vengeance hath owertaen sic proud minions or now."

"And why not again, my liege?" said Rathsay.—"Were this Master condemned by the law, every one would be satisfied of its justice; yet I am humbly of opinion, that in his punishment, no name should be implicated but his own, without it were that of the Earl his brother, who hath come home to Scotland, it would appear, to draw these

canting ministers still farther from their allegiance."

"Sooth, sooth!" said the King—"ye say sooth.—Would to God I were rid o' them baith! for methinks the state this mighty Earl sees fit to tak upon him is somewhat o' a cast ower royal.—Did ye notice his gilded stirrups, his embroidered bridle, and his princely retinue, whan last he rade wi' us to Cruickston?—Whae can tell what next may follow on sic pageantry?"

"And yet was that but naught," said Rathsay, "to the state he took upon him when the other day he journeyed to St Johnstoun,—for, trust me, your Highness' self could not have been more gallantly accompanied. I myself saw him on a prancing steed, richly caparisoned, and surrounded by lords and barons, riding down the High Street, and ever and anon bowing to the crowded windows with a well-aped air of majesty; and I bethought me of the

words of your Majesty's Royal Father, when the Border thief appeared before him—'What wants that knave that a king should have?'"

"Pshaw!" said the King, pettishly,—for Rathsay, by this description of the homage paid to Gowrie, had piqued him beyond endurance,—"pshaw!—his father was as weel accompanied, and had as mony to behold him to the boot, the day he suffered on the scaffold; and methinks I owe not sae muckle to this scion o' a rebellious stock, whae forgetteth whase hand it was that hath planted and nourished him, that I should care although he made sic another exit."

"I wish to Heaven your Majesty would but point out the means of vengeance," said Rathsay, his dark eye settling its steady glance upon the King.—"Your Majesty knoweth I have but small love to the brothers, and for that cause, and my zeal to your Highness, I swear that none would execute your Majesty's behests with more alacrity."

The Jesuit, who had been allowed to remain a hearer of this dialogue between Rathsay and the King, from having so recently and deeply served them both, now artfully took an opportunity of venturing to join in a debate, to which, considering his apparent rank, he had so singularly become an auditor.

"Could I but be allowed to serve his Majesty," said he, addressing himself to Rathsay, "freely would I venture my life to rid him of these obnoxious traitors."

"I have proved this fellow faithful," said his Majesty, "*et sæpe etiam olitor verba opportuna loquutus.*"

The Jesuit smiled inwardly at this compliment to his understanding; but being aware that no man ever lost in the estimation of James by his knowledge of the Latin tongue, he ventured to reply to it in the same language.

"But your Majesty knoweth, if I may be so bold, that *experientia stultorum magister;* and I have sojourned in countries

where the potentate disdained not, when need required, to make use of such poor tools as even your Highness's falconer; and, did your Majesty but count me worthy to be further trusted, I might perchance assist in serving your Highness, as it is fabled of that small and despised animal who gnawed asunder the net which put restraint upon the freedom of the monarch of the woods; and I would be cut to pieces, or drawn with wild horses, before I betrayed my sovereign's trust."

The King and Rathsay were each filled with surprise while the Jesuit spoke.

"Hah!" said his Majesty, "we kenn'd not that ye was a Latin scholar;—where got ye sic learning as hath now surprised us?"

"In this your Majesty's kingdom," said the Jesuit, "and which I have had occasion to improve abroad."

"I like ye a' the better for your learning, man," said his Majesty, "and mak ye welcome to commune wi' this our faithfu friend and servant upon some means to

avenge us; for God do sae to me, and mair also, gif that young traitor dies not! Meantime," continued the King, "reach here that mutilated toy, and I will speedily tak order for his departure from this our royal house."

Rathsay picked up the locket and gave it to the King, which, maugre the ill treatment it had received, was little injured, except by having lost a few of the pearls round the edge; and his Majesty instantly departed to the Queen's chamber, where what passed could only be known from the effect, which appeared in the departure of Ruthven on that same day to join his brother at St Johnstoun.

## CHAPTER XII.

Was ever woman in this humour woo'd?
Was ever woman in this humour won?
I'll have her.———

SHAKSPEARE.

WE shall now return to the Lady Agnes and her handmaiden, who had, for the space of three weeks, been the prisoners of the King and the headstrong Rathsay.

On the morning following the day in which we have related that our heroine was immured within the massive walls of Craigmillar, she found in the outward apartment, the mails containing her clothes, which she had directed to be otherwise disposed of, and which were left by her at Holyrood. This seemed at first no good

omen of the request Agnes had made to his Majesty; but she thought it possible they might be despatched only for her immediate convenience, and, as they could be as easily removed from her present abode as from Holyrood, when the place of her residence should be changed, she, on second consideration, attached little importance to this circumstance, and awaited, with a degree of restless anxiety which totally deprived her of any repose, the further commands of his Majesty. This suspense Rathsay doomed her to suffer for several days, judging that by thus giving her leisure to reflect in solitude and confinement on the mandate of the King, she might the more readily be brought to listen to himself. His own impatience to ascertain her determination led him sooner than he had at first determined, however, to be the bearer of a second more laconic epistle from his Majesty, in which he assured her that nothing but obedience to his previous commands could either release her from her present captivity, or restore her to his favour.

This mandate Rathsay refused to entrust to the hands of Alice, and Lady Agnes, eager to receive it, was obliged, however unwillingly, to appear in the outward apartment, when Rathsay, still retaining the letter in his possession, launched out into a thousand protestations of ardent attachment, which did but increase the disgust and aversion with which she beheld him. For, although the face and person of this young man were what might justly be called handsome, they carried an air and expression of bold audacity, and a daring license, that seemed totally to disregard all the minor traits of courtesy and feeling, and made him appear capable of going any lengths in the prosecution of his favourite plans. Lady Agnes, therefore, instead of being in any measure soothed by his passionate expressions of fidelity and love, gave herself up, on reading the King's letter, to the most appalling apprehensions at finding herself so utterly abandoned to his power. In this state of irritated feeling, she bestowed the bitterest

and most cutting reproaches on Rathsay for his unmanly conduct, and assured him of her fixed determination rather to remain a prisoner for the remainder of her life, than regain her freedom by becoming his wife. Rathsay, who had expected to meet opposition and reproach from Agnes, was yet astonished at the dignity of her demeanour, and the firmness of her language; and notwithstanding the support of his Sovereign, and his own unscrupulous sentiments, found himself placed in a situation of no small difficulty,—for he foresaw that nothing but a forced marriage could give him any right to claim her as his wife. To this, however, after being wearied out by employing persuasions and entreaties to no purpose, he determined to resort at last, should she still continue obstinate, and trust to time and necessity for reconciling her to her fate, relying on the consent he had obtained from the King and her uncle, to bear him out in the deed.

Three weeks, as we have already said,

passed on, and Agnes was stil a prisoner, no change having taken place in the determination of either party, when Rathsay resolved to put a speedy end to a delay which his haughty and impatient spirit had with difficulty endured so long. He consequently lost no time in repairing to Craigmillar, to warn Lady Agnes of his determination, which he did without much ceremony, invoking dreadful imprecations on himself if he did not put his threat in practice within a week from that day. It was in vain Agnes assured him she would never give the consent which would be necessary to make the marriage valid, and expressed her firm belief that he would never find a man, bearing the sacred character of a minister, who would commit such profanation as to perform a forced ceremony.

He laughed this belief to scorn. "Trust not to a hope so frail," said he; "for be assured it will lead to disappointment. Reconcile yourself to necessity. Meantime, I shall not again subject myself to your una-

vailing reproaches, till the time I have mentioned, when I shall return with the hope that you will prevent the necessity of so private a bridal, by willingly signing a marriage contract, and pledging your faith for its fulfilment; in which case, as your uncle, the Lord Somerdale, mentions his intention of speedily returning, I will not hurry on matters any farther till his arrival.—But," continued he, the blood mounting to his dark brow as he spoke, and giving an air of menace to his words, " when that hour of grace is passed, beware! I have sued and cringed long enough to a haughty beauty; and somewhat too long, if my natural disposition, and amply accredited powers, be considered. And take comfort to yourself, that I am not a scrupulous puritan, like your favourite hypocritical Gowrie. No! I will not abridge you of your religious liberty. When you become my wife, you shall follow the bent of your inclination in that respect; nay, who knows but I may become your convert, if that can

win one smile of approbation from those lovely lips, which are now only opened to upbraid me, or are closed in scorn."

"Merciful Father, hear me!" said the distressed Agnes, clasping her hands together; "and grant that thy all-powerful arm may work my deliverance from this cruel and profligate man!—Wretch!" continued she, bending on Rathsay a look of abhorrent contempt, "the noble nature of him thou hast dared to call a hypocrite, would spurn the mean thought of oppressing a helpless maiden, that he might possess himself of her broad lands! For think not that thou hast deceived me. I know well your motive for this merciless persecution. But now," she continued, assuming an air of inflexible determination, "mark me! although God were so far to forsake me, that you should accomplish this horrible marriage, I swear solemnly by every thing I hold sacred, that I will appeal against your villainy to the free Parliament of my country,

where the King himself dare not support such atrocity !"

" No doubt," replied Rathsay, worked up to uncontrollable phrenzy by her vindication of Gowrie, and her concluding threat, " no doubt, the interest of your puissant Earl would there be great, but be not too sure that he would exert it in your favour ; for, methinks, he is but a craven, who could scorn your love, fair lady."

" Base man !" replied Agnes, with indignation strongly marked on every feature ; " it is false ! but I consider it far beneath me to enter with you into such a subject ; and I cannot express the scorn I feel for one who can so far forget his manhood as thus to insult an unprotected woman."

" Nay, proud one," said Rathsay, " this denial can avail you nothing ; for now listen —and rather marvel that I have thus long forborne to taunt you with it, than that your ungovernable pride hath forced it from my lips at last. Listen, I say, to that which

you will not be able to deny. Know that your confession to the old priest in the Chapel of Holyrood was not without a witness.—Need I repeat what that confession was?" continued Rathsay, waiting her reply with a fiendish smile of sarcastic triumph.

The firmness which had hitherto supported the persecuted Agnes, now gave way before this cruel information, and uttering an involuntary cry of surprise and distress, she sunk into a chair near which she was standing, and covering her crimsoned face with her hands, she burst into an uncontrolled agony of tears and violent sobs, which seemed as though they would rend in sunder the delicate frame which they convulsed. Even the hardened Rathsay could not refrain from some degree of pity at her suffering, although triumph at the humiliation of one who had so long remained unmoved by his persecution, was secretly his prevailing sensation. He, therefore, spoke

soothingly to her, and expressed his sorrow that she had forced him to cause her such affliction. But if she heard him, she neither expressed by word, look, or sign, that she did so; and wearied at length by her continued distress, he opened the door of the inner-chamber, and calling Alice, (whom he had of late prohibited from witnessing his interviews with Agnes, by threatening to separate them entirely, if her mistress insisted on her remaining in the room,) he ordered her to attend her lady, and inform her, when she was composed enough to listen, that his intention of returning at the time, and for the purpose, he had already mentioned to her, was in nothing altered. He then precipitately departed, without so much as casting another glance on Lady Agnes.

Alice continued a considerable time with her lady, ere she could procure a reply to her affectionate but somewhat clamorous inquiries, as to what new misfortune had caused her such poignant distress. The complica-

ted misery which she experienced from the threats of a forced marriage, and her knowledge that her secret sentiments with regard to Gowrie were known by the licentious Rathsay, went near to annihilate the senses of the unfortunate Agnes. She remained in a state of misery, which mocked all the endeavours of the frightened and afflicted Alice to alleviate, till it was in some degree exhausted by its own violence; and she sunk for some hours into the helplessness of overwhelming despair, which her keen sense of remorse, at the recollection of what she could not but acknowledge to have been sensations of satisfaction, at being left in Scotland by her aunt, served to make still more bitter. "And thus am I punished," said she, "for my dereliction from the strict path of duty even in thought! Yet will I put my faith in Him who is alone able to help me, that He will not allow me to become the wife of that profane mocker. —No," said she to her faithful attendant,

"rather, I trust, will He shelter me where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

And indeed this appeared to Alice but too likely a termination of her lady's sufferings; for long harassed by internal struggles, her health had begun to give way before she left Holyrood; and ever since her confinement at Craigmillar, the want of exercise and air, joined to the anxiety, fear, and indignation, which alternately possessed her, had been making visible inroads on her strength. But this last blow was so severe, that she ceased to struggle any longer. And it almost broke the heart of Alice to see her beloved mistress constantly rejecting the food offered to her, and turning each day weaker and more delicate in appearance, while her long tresses fell neglected and dishevelled on a forehead and neck, the skin of which daily became more transparent, and which, joined with the alternate hectic glow of her cheek, and its

deadly paleness, seemed to say that destruction was doing its work. The complaints of Alice, and her execrations on those who were killing her lady, became louder and more clamorous every time their attendant, who had never been changed, entered the outward apartment, where, as Agnes had never come for several days, she had an opportunity of saying all that was in her heart, without being heard by her, whom it concerned.

One of the themes which Alice constantly harped upon during this week of dreadful suspense to Agnes, was the cruelty of suffering her to die without medical aid; and the man at length informed Rathsay of the desire of Alice, and his conviction, from his own observations, of the truth of her report with regard to her mistress's health. In answer to this representation, Rathsay desired him to say that a physician should be sent to visit her; and he no sooner communicated this intelligence to Alice, than she flew to her lady to ex-

press her hopes, that by means of this person, some way might occur of releasing her from the power of Rathsay, before the arrival of the day which she so much dreaded. When, however, they reflected that this man was to be sent by their enemy, it destroyed, in a great measure, the airy structures that poor Alice had been rearing. There was, however, still some relief to the mind of Agnes, in the thoughts of seeing a stranger, who, it was possible, might be moved by her misery. And when toward evening Alice introduced him to her chamber, where she was lying on her couch, she started up, and with burning cheeks, and eyes whose flashing brilliancy seemed to seek the heart of him who had come to minister to her bodily infirmities, she besought him rather to bestow his aid in releasing her from her mental sufferings. "Oh!" said she, "I require no medicine; but if you have a heart of human mould, you will discover some method of releasing me from the power of one who seeks the destruction

of both body and soul. You will not refuse to save a wretched maiden, who hath none to care for or protect her. Think, if your sister or your daughter were in the power of one who threatened her with a forced marriage, most abhorrent to her principles and her nature, what you would counsel her to do in my circumstances; and aid me with the same advice, if you cannot assist me otherwise.—But," she continued, "if you are capable of sympathy in the misery of your fellow-creatures, if money can tempt you, or if your conscience can be touched, you will take some step to release me from this prison before two days have passed, and I am lost for ever."

The stranger was about to speak, but she made a motion to him to be silent, while she threw herself on her knees.

"Merciful father!" she said, "suffer him not to speak till thou hast stirred his heart, and instructed him how to save me!"

"This boots not, lady," he said. "Rise and listen to me; but first dismiss your at-

tendant; what I have to say is for your ear alone."

"My faithful companion," replied Agnes, "may safely be trusted with aught that concerns her unfortunate mistress; for our lot hath been long cast together for good and evil. Nevertheless, as it is your desire she should leave us—Go, Alice," she continued, "leave the door unshut, and remain within call."

Alice obeyed, and the stranger motioned Agnes to the window of the room, which was at its utmost extremity from the door.

"Lady," he said, "I am about to trust you deeply; but you must confine within your own breast what I am going to say, for it puts my life in your hands."

"Fear me not," returned Agnes; "I will die a thousand deaths ere I will injure you in aught, if you can but release me from my cruel persecutor. But oh! proceed."

"I am in the interest of the friend," replied the Jesuit, "spoken of by the Ab-

bess, who watched over your safety at Holyrood. He has not been ignorant of your abode here, but has till now lacked the means of liberating you, though determined to accomplish it before the time arrived which would have rendered it too late, for he is intimately acquainted with the intentions of your persecutor. And it has fortunately happened that I am now sent unwittingly by Master Rathsay himself, to report upon your state of health; therefore, attend to my words. To-morrow night, as soon as the dusk renders objects indistinct, you may escape if you manage properly; but much must depend on the dexterity of your attendant."

He then proceeded to point out the means by which it was to be accomplished, which, though lighting up the eyes of Agnes with the first beams of joy that had enlivened them for many a weary day, yet appeared so uncertain and precarious, that she could not avoid expressing her doubts of their ultimate success.

"Give yourself no further uneasiness, lady," said the Jesuit in reply; "for if these means should fail, rest assured I will devise somewhat that shall deliver you from the fate which you so much dread. Rouse yourself, therefore, to encounter and overcome the difficulties which lie in your path, before you can reach a place of safety. And now let us call in your attendant, that I may instruct her in the part she has to perform, and on which so much depends."

Alice heard with uncontrolled joy the prospect of release held out by the Jesuit, and expressed such full confidence in her own powers of executing the project suggested by him, that after his departure, the mind of Agnes became comparatively calm, and she no longer refused to partake, in such measure as her delicate appetite allowed, of the food and wine offered her by the affectionate Alice, whose spirits, rendered buoyant by hope, exhausted themselves in a thousand ways to amuse and reassure her lady.

We must, however, leave them for the present, to conquer or to be overcome by the difficulties which surround them, and follow the Earl of Gowrie and the Master of Ruthven to St Johnstoun.

## CHAPTER XIII.

As a beam o'er the face of the waters may glow,
While the tide runs in coldness and darkness below;
So the cheek may be tinged with a warm sunny smile,
Though the cold heart to ruin runs darkly the while.

One fatal remembrance, one sorrow that throws
Its bleak shade alike o'er our joys and our woes,
To which life nothing darker or brighter can bring,
For which joy hath no balm, and affliction no sting.

MOORE.

IMMEDIATELY on the receipt of the letter contained in the casket, and the consequent overthrow of the lingering hopes which he had continued to nourish, the Earl of Gowrie set himself to prepare for returning to his house at St Johnstoun, as Perth was then still called, after its patron saint, John the Baptist. It was there that, by the full employment of his hours in promo-

ting the welfare of its citizens, he expected in time to acquire at least resignation, though he could not hope for happiness. In this ancient town, where his ancestors had principally resided, they had for several generations been hereditary provosts. He had himself nominally filled that office during the six years which he had remained abroad, and the inhabitants of St Johnstoun regarded his character with enthusiastic admiration.

The heads of the powerful family of Ruthven had been long considered there almost in the light of sovereigns, and the citizens had, one and all, watched over the rising fame of the present youthful Earl with the anxious solicitude of fathers. The thought, therefore, of retiring among a people so attached to him, was, even at this moment of despondence, a balm to the spirit of Gowrie; and he reproached himself for having so long withstood their urgent solicitations to take up his abode among them; for during the three months which he had been in

Scotland, so much had he suffered himself to be engrossed by his attendance at court, and his attachment to Lady Agnes, that he had not yet visited St Johnstoun. He now, therefore, as we have said, determined to absent himself no longer from his native place, where he could follow the bent of his inclination without control, and, by an active life of habitual usefulness, banish in some degree from his heart the vain regrets by which it was devoured. In consequence of this determination, the Earl attended upon his Majesty to announce his intention, and to take his leave.

"Your preparations for this journey, my Lord of Gowrie," said his Majesty, with marked coldness, "was the reason, we apprehend, that ye absented yoursel yesterday frae the sport our favourite falcon made us wi' the kite, and whilk we sent you warnin o' by our faithfu servant Colonel Stuart, whae, we are tauld, met nae bias courtesy, your lordship not even deignin to see him; thus treatin him as a common lackey, and

no as an honourable gentleman sent to do your Sovereign's behest."

This Colonel Stuart was the same man who had apprehended Gowrie's father, and commanded the guard that conducted him to his execution. He had always been in high favour with his Majesty, who had made several unsuccessful attempts to introduce him to the notice of Gowrie, but the Earl had always shunned him; and it was in consequence of this, and James's displeasure thereat, and of his present unfavourable humour toward Gowrie, that, in the despotism of the moment, he had chosen him as his messenger. Gowrie, however, felt the implied insult, and refused to see him.

"If," said Gowrie, in answer to the King, while, at the same time, he assumed the erect and fearless attitude and expression of firm dignity—" if I have in aught offended my Sovereign, I am truly grieved, and most dutifully crave him to believe that I am incapable of doing so intentionally.

But if I have only offended Colonel Stuart, I must beg your Majesty to consider impartially the relation in which we must ever stand to each other; respect for my Sovereign shall prevent my ever seeking to injure Colonel Stuart, but it is not decorous that he should cross my path; and let him beware of doing so again."

Rathsay and Herbal, who were near each other, looked on James, as expecting the cloud that sat upon his brow to burst in thunder on the head of Gowrie.

But the King, though unable to control his passion in the first impulse of the moment, ever pusillanimously avoided retort, and had the ready knack of recovering himself instantly, when the person he attacked defended himself from his anger by opposing firmness to his fury, under which the fears of James always anticipated that treason might lurk. He had, therefore, no sooner cast his eye on the dignified bearing of Gowrie, and heard his words, than shrink-

ing from the determination it bespoke to repel insult, and taking no further notice of what had passed, he calmly said, "In sooth, my lord, it was a pity that ye beheld not the noble sport whilk our new falconer made us wi' our white gyr-falcon, whilk took a towering flight and strack doun the fierce kite as though he had been a dow. We hae heard that Henry o' France hath hawks whilk excel in strikin the kite, yet we oursel, ne'er having afore seen the sport, did tak extraordinar delight therein; and, methinks, wadna part wi' that same falcon for a prince's ransom."

"It is indeed," replied Gowrie, "a bird of extreme strength and beauty; I have seen this sport at the court of France, but should apprehend, from what I observed of her exploits, that your Majesty's white hawk is superior to any in the possession of the King of France."

"Now, by our saul! we are happy to hear we hae the advantage o' him in somewhat," said James, his eyes sparkling with delight,

and smiling most graciously on Gowrie, who, in speaking exactly what he thought on a subject he considered comparatively trifling, had said that which had all the effects of a piece of well-timed flattery. For it was music to the ears of James, who put such inordinate value on the good properties of a horse, a hawk, or a hound, to hear that he was master of any that excelled those of Henry of France, whom he not only envied his extensive hunting establishments, but against whom he had a personal pique, occasioned by the witty sarcasms in which that monarch indulged himself at his expense. This change in James's humour, however, was only a farther proof, if Gowrie had required one, of the little dependence to be placed on the stability of his Majesty's mind; and he took his farewell of the Court of Holyrood without one regret, save what he experienced at being obliged to leave his brother and sister in a vortex of folly and dissipation, where, as the reader knows, he did not consider either of them free from

danger. In his last interview with them, he again most affectionately repeated his warnings, which at this season were particularly calculated to sink deeply into their minds, from the respect and love they felt for a brother who could so far forget his own bitter feelings, as to appear for the time sensible alone to their welfare and happiness. But the mind of this young nobleman was of no common mould, and though suffering under one of the severest blows which can assail an ardent and susceptible heart, in the loss of her who had occupied it with all the fervour of a first and youthful passion, he was incapable, after the first frenzied moments of disappointment had passed away, of neglecting the duties incumbent on his high station, that he might indulge exclusively in a weak and unavailing regret. Yet he sought not oblivion of his feelings in following the path of duty, for his was that yearning after a union with kindred excellence, which presents one of the sublimest prospects of enjoyment in a

world to come, and it was to that world he now looked forward, where, having each acquitted themselves of their duty, according to their separate beliefs, they should be united in eternity.—This was the purport of the last words she had addressed to him. It mingled with every thought, and every purpose of action, and seemed to bestow a foretaste of celestial happiness on each pursuit, and consecrate them all to Agnes.

When the Earl of Gowrie arrived at St Johnstoun, he was accompanied by all the nobles and gentlemen who had their residences for many miles round; and who unanimously joining in this mark of respect, met him at a considerable distance from the town, where, on his arrival, he was greeted by its inhabitants with enthusiastic shouts of "Long live the good young Earl!"—"Long live our noble Provost!"—"Welcome to his ain town, welcome to St Johnstoun!" While the oldest and principal householders, every now and then, as the crowd impeded the way of his noble steed,

pressed forward to grasp his offered hand, and shewed, by the satisfaction beaming on their honest countenances, the affection which they bore to the young nobleman. Early in the morning, the female inhabitants, anxious to contribute their part to the general demonstrations of joy, had decorated every window in the town with flowers and boughs of the most beautiful shrubs. While waving handkerchiefs and smiling faces were seen to greet him, as he passed onward to the town Cross; where, dismounting from his horse, the Earl partook of a collation prepared for him, and from whence, after having listened with gratitude and delight to the wishes with which the people pledged each other to his health and prosperity, and having frequently raised the wine-cup to his lips in return, he was accompanied by the office-bearers of the corporation, who, forming themselves into a procession, proceeded with him to the principal kirk. It was immediately filled, and every head devoutly inclined, as the minister pronounced a long

and fervent prayer of thanksgiving for the safe return of the young Earl from a foreign land—for his amiable dispositions, and for his firm adherence to the faith of his noble fathers. He was then accompanied in the same order to Gowrie House, situated on the south side of the town, close to the river Tay, where they left him, after receiving the warm and sincere expressions of his gratitude, for the demonstrations of attachment and kindness that had welcomed his return to their town, and assurances of his intention, by every means in his power, to promote the interest and happiness of its inhabitants.

The distinguished reception the Earl had just met, and the kindliness and affection conspicuous in every face he had looked upon, whether of youth or age, rich or poor, filled his heart with congenial emotions, and struck him with shame for having so lately given way to such violence of despair. "Unworthy that I am," said he, "of all the blessings Heaven hath so liberally bestowed—Hath it not given me wealth

and honours—the love of valuable and dear relations, and the attachment of kind friends and dependants; and is this not sufficient ground of thankfulness, although I am not permitted to enjoy happiness in the way my wayward heart would choose?—Shall I spurn from me all these blessings, and not acknowledge such bounty, though Providence see not fitting to fill my cup of felicity to the brim?—Shall I become like a sullen child, who will not taste of a banquet, because he is denied that single viand, on which he had fixed his capricious fancy?—Oh, no! it is not thus he must act, who would gain the approbation of Heaven! I shall never marry," he continued; "for, with three brothers to continue the name and titles of my family, I am released from any necessity of sacrificing my own feelings in this respect. Assuredly this, too, is no small ground of thankfulness, that I am not called upon by duty to banish her image from my heart, for vain I fear would have been the effort. And only God knows how long I should

have possessed firmness to desist from that rash and open avowal, which my better reason tells me might have involved us both in future misery; and seeing this, how frail is that nature which prevents me from rejoicing that Heaven has taken the matter into its own hands, by separating us forever! Yet, rejoice I cannot—all that I can attain is to bow before the dispensation which I know to be that of Eternal Wisdom."

Thus did this truly noble young man struggle to keep within bounds the passion which he was unable altogether to conquer.

The stately mansion of the Earl of Gowrie, at St Johnstoun, was filled with retainers according to the usage of the time, as well as by innumerable visitors, who came to congratulate him on his arrival, or to seek counsel or assistance from him in his official capacities of High Sheriff of the county, or Provost of the town. Thus, by attending to the proper subordination and comfort of his household—the hospitality due to his visitors, and in dispensing justice and ad-

vice to those who required it, his sympathies were multiplied, his benevolence extended, and a new spring added to his existence.

Yet there were hours of darkness when his heart was joyless, and neither sympathy nor benevolence could fill its aching void, and when his most strenuous efforts to silence the language of its complaints were unavailing. For where is he who is always wise and always firm?—who never knows the touch of mental infirmity, and who can at all times say to his perturbed feelings, be still, and they shall obey him?—Alas! such power resides not in man; and perhaps more especially not in him, who, like the Earl, confines his deep and ardent feelings to his own bosom, where, denied the range allowed them by the more volatile or less firm, they rage at times with the irresistible fury of pent up fires.

It was fortunate, however, for the Earl, that his time and thoughts were so far engaged by the means we have related, that

the hours given to melancholy were few in comparison with those spent in the exercise of duty. This was seen with pleasure by old Adam, whose naturally strong sense, and thorough knowledge of his master's sentiments and habits, acquired by a close attendance on him from his infancy, enabled him to judge of his feelings with a degree of accuracy, unattainable by any one who had not possessed these means of penetrating them. This old man, who it will be recollected was the bearer of the casket sent from Agnes to Lady Beatrix, was the same mentioned in a former part of the story, as the person sent abroad with the young Gowrie, by his mother, and who had returned since the arrival of the Earl, in the vessel which conveyed his baggage to St Johnstoun. The wife of Adam had been the Earl's nurse, and the old man loved him also on that account as the child of his bosom. He watched, after the Earl's return to St Johnstoun, his every turn of countenance, and modulation of voice, and when he caught the look

of abstraction, or heard the half-drawn sigh, the tears would start to his eyes, and he would make a thousand pretences to approach him with some trifling act of officious kindness, that he might endeavour to withdraw his thoughts from what he knew them to be dwelling upon. These expressions of love never failed to be rewarded by a kind glance or a gracious word, more precious to the faithful old man than the diamonds of Golconda.

"Oh! would he but speak about her!—would he but complain!" thought Adam,—"would he but complain, and not shut up his vexation so close within his own breast, a body might have something to say! for his is e'en a sore disease, that has covered many a leal young heart with the moulds; and it's not a common case neither, for it's a sinful love, and her a Papist.—Oh! that's worst of all,—weary on her that ever she came in his way!"

But the Earl had soon another cause of distress beside the one old Adam so frequently

lamented; for no sooner was the Master of Ruthven dismissed from Holyrood, than he took his way to St Johnstoun, with all the speed that his steed could carry him, in a state of temporary delirium, from the deleterious effects of his over-night's dose, and with a sense of dishonour acting as a deeper goad on his impetuous spirit, than his spurs were to the animal, into whose sides they were so deeply plunged.

On his arrival at Gowrie House, he rushed into the room, where the Earl was entertaining his guests, with his dress, which was not one calculated for a journey, disordered and soiled, and his countenance overshaded by hair dripping with perspiration, where, with a vehemence that set all ceremony at defiance, he demanded a private interview with his brother in another apartment.—When they had arrived there, striking his bosom with frantic gesture, he exclaimed,

"It is no longer here, Gowrie; the King hath discovered and gained possession of that accursed locket! I am banished from

Holyrood,—and am the most miserable and degraded of men—stigmatized with baseness my soul abhors, and involving our Royal Mistress, whose fame I would die to preserve, in unmerited calumny. But this is the work of my enemies, and I will rip the confession with my sword from their dastard breasts!"

The Earl could scarcely conquer the dream-like consternation which enveloped all his faculties, while he listened to Ruthven, sufficiently to understand his meaning, and so wild was the accent in which the intelligence was conveyed, and so appalling his haggard look, that Gowrie began to fear for his senses; for, after the first few hours of heavy death-like repose on the previous night, the drug had produced troubled visions, in which Ruthven's strength was exhausted in contending with a thousand imaginary dangers, and wrestling with hydra-headed foes. From this troubled slumber he was awakened to hear what of itself would have been nearly sufficient to

distract him, and he flew with all the speed a swift horse could carry him to lay open his lacerated bosom before the brother who had ever participated in his joys and sorrows, and whom he considered not only as the most affectionate, but the wisest of human beings. Yet, shocked as the Earl was with this communication, the consequences of which he dreaded would be highly dangerous to Ruthven, the first thing that seemed to demand his attention was the immediate care of his health. For his appearance was altogether that of a maniac, who, after a violent struggle, had escaped from his keepers; and the Earl dreaded that, if he was not speedily restored to some degree of composure, this state of excitation would end in brain-fever, or some other violent illness of a similar nature. It was in vain, however, that he besought him to take rest or refreshment;—he paced the apartment with hurried and irregular steps, while he stopped ever and anon, and fixed upon the Earl wild looks of despair, blended with

terrific fierceness. Gowrie saw that this mood could not be at once overcome, and he led him by questions to speak more at large concerning the particulars of this unfortunate affair, throwing in from time to time some soothing remark, or pointing out some palliating circumstance.

All that Ruthven knew was quickly told. He related the circumstance of his having fallen asleep in the garden at Holyrood the day before, and perfectly recollected having replaced the trinket within his vest after he awakened. He also mentioned finding a small knife within the arbour, which he believed to belong to the King. All that he could therefore conjecture was, that his Majesty must have entered the bower while he slept, and, recognizing the jewel, have attempted to cut the ribband, but that, being in some way disturbed in his purpose, he had so nearly severed it, that it had afterwards dropped from his neck, but whether it had then been found by the King, or given him by some of his emissaries, he

knew not, though the fact of its being now in his possession was proved, from his having shewn it to the Queen, and upbraided her with bestowing it on him, in the most gross and threatening language. This information he had received from Beatrix, who was also the bearer of a few lines of warning to him from the Queen, which he now showed the Earl, and that ran thus :—

" If I have any influence with you, I pray you let me be convinced of it at this time, by your ruling your anger in such measure, that neither your enemies, who are mine also, nor he, who is so greatly deceived in this matter, shall take cause therefrom to carry their proceedings further to your hurt. I *command*, therefore, that you withdraw instantly to some one of your family residences, at a distance from hence, and trust to time, and her who writes this, for your more happy incoming."

The first resolve of Ruthven had been

to seek an interview with his Majesty, and by standing the brunt of his anger, and flinging defiance in the teeth of those he considered his enemies on this occasion, thus probe the matter to the bottom. And this determination, dangerous and mad as it was, he would have put in practice, but for the tears and entreaties of Beatrix, and the command of her Majesty, which his sister enforced with all her eloquence, and which changed his intention, and sent him immediately to St Johnstoun.

"And now," said Ruthven, after having finished this account, and again relapsing into a state of furious passion, from which the necessity of coherently relating this story had for a short time released him—"and now, were I but sure of what I suspect, that John Rathsay hath been an instrument in this my disgrace, the day we next meet should be his last, although it were in kirk, or royal palace, and he stood at the King's right hand. I have but too long forborne to chastise his insolent and

scowling looks; and, by Heaven!" he continued, "it were well done to return, and at all events prevent his rejoicing in my downfal."

"Nay," said Gowrie, "if you have enemies, my dear Alexander, that were, methinks, the ready way to make them rejoice. It is your chafed and indignant humour that now prompt these rash thoughts; wait only till reason is allowed to assert her rights, and you will see the propriety of following the Queen's advice, and feel that you would be doing her an irreparable injury in making her name, the argument for committing murder. Consider the predicament you would place her in by the reports, to which such violence would give rise. How tallies this with your late assurance, that you would die to preserve her fame?"

"And in saying so," replied Ruthven, "I spoke but truth, basely else would I requite the favour of my Royal Mistress; and have I not already done more than that

at her command, in disgracing myself by flight?"

"You know well how dear you are to me," said Gowrie, "nor need you be told, I trust, that I hold your honour as sacred as my own. Be therefore, for once, ruled by me; remain here, strong in your own innocence, despising those fickle gales of court favour, on which, thank Heaven! we are not dependent. That the King wished to avoid any open avowal of his displeasure toward you is evident, by his making the Queen the instrument of your dismissal. Open force, I think, we need not fear; for it is repugnant to James's very nature, especially as he knows we should not be without powerful means of defence. He comes, however, soon to Falkland, when we shall be better enabled to judge of the measures he means to keep with us, and be ruled thereby: let us abide in patience, then, the issue of events."

During this remonstrance of Gowrie, the features of Ruthven became gradually calm-

er; and at length the Earl prevailed on him to seek repose.

This affair was, however, matter of deeper concern to Gowrie than he chose to express to his brother, in the present state of his feelings. The Earl was not now ignorant, as he had for some time remained after his arrival, of the envy and jealousy his favour with the King had excited in many who had shewn themselves at all times ready to do him ill offices with James. He had also, as is already known, observed a change in the King's manner toward him for a considerable time past; and though he heartily despised the meanness of those who sought to rise by his ruin, yet he knew but too well how liable the King was to be ruled by such interested spirits, and when he reflected on the offence with which Ruthven was accused in the mind of his Majesty, he again recollected the fate of the Earl of Murray, and trembled for his brother. Time passed on, however, and nothing had transpired, as far as the brothers could learn, of

the real cause of Ruthven's absence from court, which was ascribed, it appeared, to his wish of spending some time with his brother. And this report, conveyed by sundry of the King's household, whom Gowrie or Ruthven met at the castles of the neighbouring nobles, or who frequented their own, seemed in some measure to appease the latter, whose pride felt still more soothed shortly after this period, by a letter from his Majesty to the Earl, informing him of his arrival at the Palace of Falkland, and his wish of seeing him and his brothers join in his field sports on the 5th of August, then near at hand. Now, as the Earl's two youngest brothers, William and Patrick, resided with their mother at Dirlton, and had not been at St Johnstoun since the Earl's return, both Gowrie and Ruthven imagined this was done to avoid the necessity of naming the latter particularly, although thus included in the invitation. This being the case, the Master determined to avail himself, by attending the hunt,

of the offered opportunity, to discover how the King was disposed toward him. And in the thought of facing his enemies, and in all probability eventually triumphing over them, his spirits began to return, and his light steps once more bounded with joy, while he felt impatient of the short space which intervened between him and his hopes.

END OF VOLUME SECOND.

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