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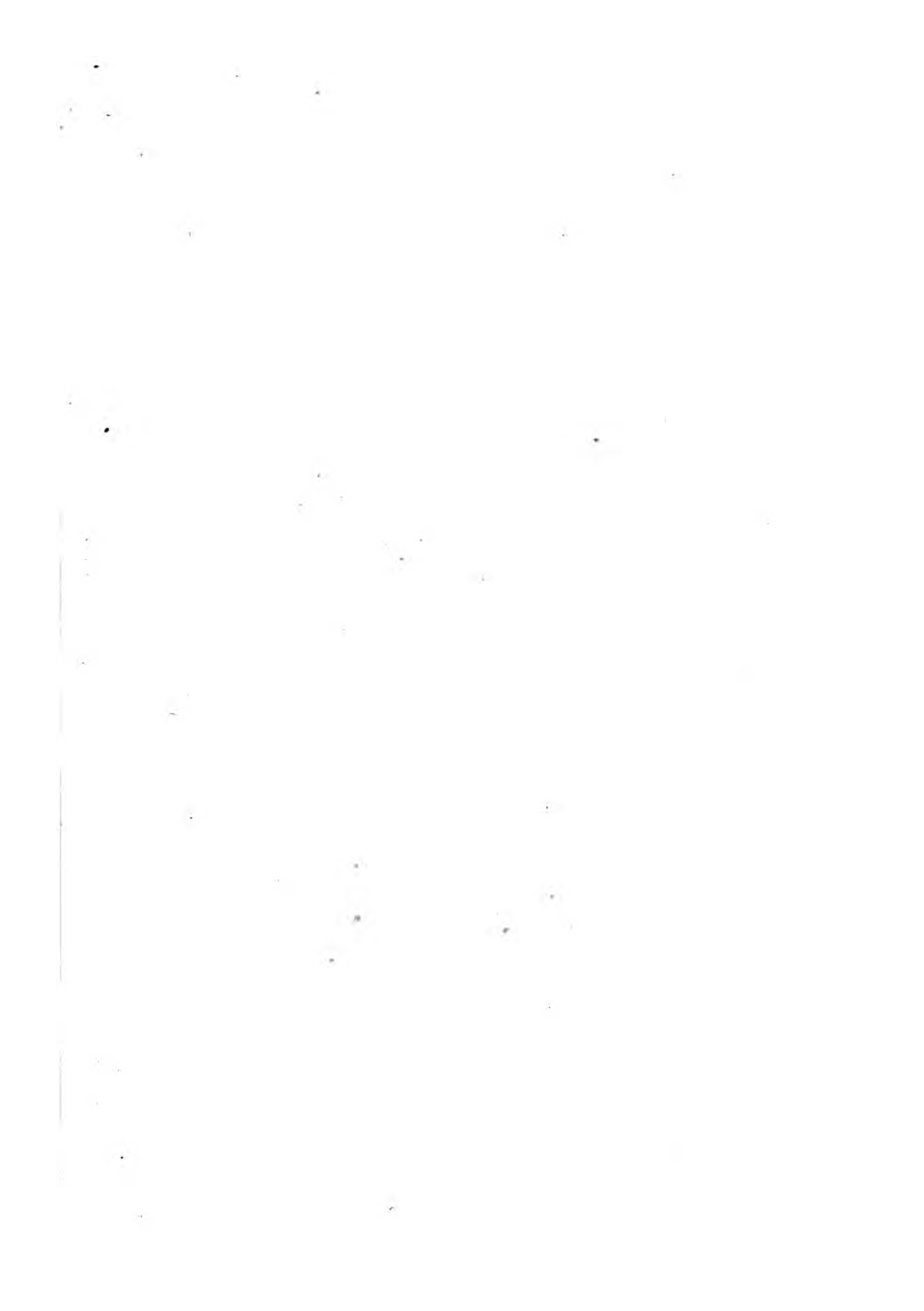


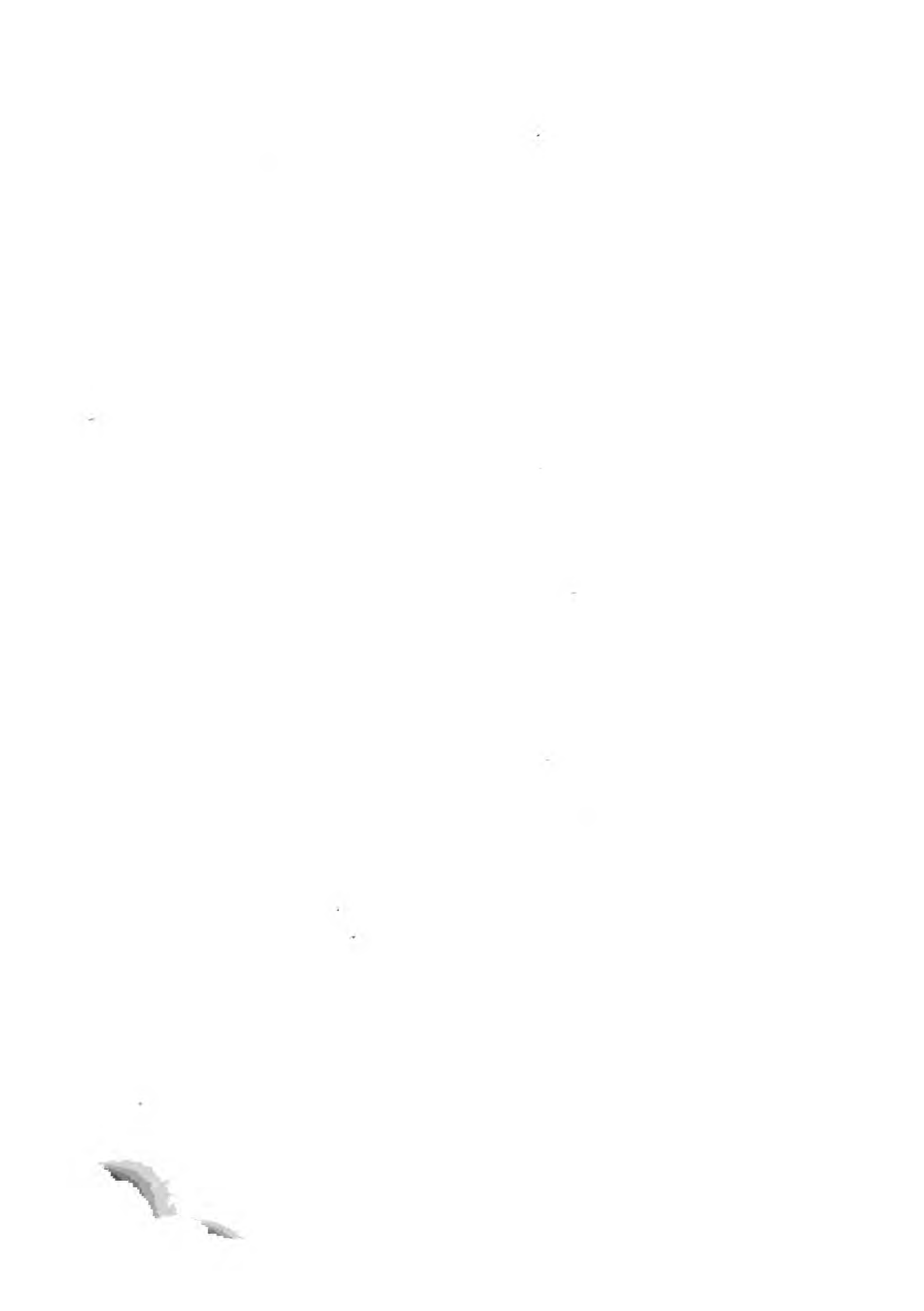
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STORIES OF THE STUDY.

BY

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“THE ANNALS OF THE PARISH;” “LAURIE TODD;”
“EBEN ERSKINE,” &c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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PREFACE.

I NEVER could understand why works of fiction should always be produced in three volumes ; the trade reason for publishing in that magnitude is obvious enough—namely, the expense of advertising is not more than for one volume ; but what authors have to do with the rule seemed to me inexplicable, especially as they are at liberty to consult their own predilections, and might make up the fashionable quantity as they think proper.

“The Lutherans” was dictated before my “Autobiography,” and is an attempt to exhibit by a story the spirit of the Reformation in the Church, which prevailed about the period in which I have laid the incidents. The reader will determine for himself how far the attempt has been successful.

But it is not in respect to “The Lutherans,” that this work is supposed to have some claim to originality. Long ago

the Author was convinced that the range of fiction might be enlarged by bringing imaginary persons into connection with occurrences derived from facts, and the public has been pleased to think that the endeavours were not failures. Impressed still with the notion, he has renewed his efforts to show how various a field may yet be cultivated. “The Dean of Guild” and “The Jaunt” are intended to illustrate the conception.

In the “Craniologist” a higher object was in view; he thinks it not erroneous to suppose that philosophy may be as amusingly taught by description and narrative, as by abstract reasoning, and, in consequence, has attempted to show that if the principles of those who believe in that faith—science they call it—be admitted, there is no end to the absurdities to which they may be required to assent. The story is only fictitious in the incidents. Several years ago the newspapers gave some account of a girl executed in Hungary, who had a *penchant* for setting fire to houses.

The other tales were written with no particular object, unless in "The Greenwich Pensioner," the introduction of a few local expressions can be accounted as such.

The descriptive tale of "The Deluge" is one of a series of the great epochal events in the history of the world. Mr. Martin undertook to illustrate them, but few more remarkable instances of complete failure can be adduced from the records of literature.

The work was called "The Ouranoulogos," to be published in numbers at only five shillings each, in a style of elegance not surpassed. It exhibited an improvement in the fine arts, by showing that previous pictures were not requisite even in the highest kind of engraving.

The illustration with "The Deluge" was a view of the Old World, a design directly on the plate, in line and mezzotinto engraving. The work was much admired; the periodicals gave it a high character, and yet it fell still-born from the press.

Perhaps no such instance of fatality

has ever occurred. Mr. Blackwood, the friend of the author, forgot to insert the advertisement in his Magazine, although named with Mr. Cadell, of the Strand, as one of the publishers, on the title page; and Mr. Fraser, with whom the author is equally connected, did the same thing.

The literary effusion is only inserted here to afford an opportunity of mentioning its singular fate, and to show that there are occasions when, with the usual care, destiny cannot be overcome. Besides, it has been thought that the description contained peculiarities which might obtain some attention, independent of the superb illustration with which it is adorned. The author has no hesitation in saying, whatever may be thought of his tale, that the picture by Mr. Martin to have been so entirely neglected reflects very little honor on the taste and discernment of John Bull in the Fine Arts; but it is not too late to redeem the reputation he gives himself, as the impression is still on hand at Mr. Cadell's.

STORIES OF THE STUDY.

INTRODUCTION.

BEING necessarily obliged to make a world of my study, I found it expedient to divide it into compartments, and thus it happened that, without any pre-disposition on my part, it naturally assumed a curious arrangement, in which the difficulty of locomotion in myself was in some measure compensated by the distribution into which the volumes and papers were placed for ease of access. In this sedentary task it was requisite to look somewhat particularly both into books and manuscripts ;

and in so doing, a number of works long cast aside and almost forgotten, came to be examined, by which my knowledge was refreshed on many subjects, and my ideas, if not enlarged, corrected. For, although I retained a very full impression of the facts learned in early life, it appeared, in this resuscitation, that subsequent experience had the effect of altering their colour. What I had thought fresh and universal as the benevolent green of nature, I found often chequered; and that I had frequently, in mere thoughtless simplicity, ascribed to local and particular hues a generality, which years and reflection had convinced me owed much of its seeming importance to the theories of the imagination.

I met, for example, with the sketch of a play, formed long ago, in which I had supposed that malice was an essential ingredient of bigotry. But a wider field of observation,

cultivated since with some care, has produced a different conclusion. I now think it may be a very honest habit, with which pride and egotism have much more to do, than the acrid quality I had once supposed. Accordingly, I flung into the fire, as unworthy of preservation, the mistaken and unamiable sketch, and resolved to dictate a story which should better illustrate my amended view of things. That essay is the subjoined tale, which originated in the following circumstances :—

When a young man, as all the world, much to the credit of its curiosity, well knows, I made many a desultory excursion in the Archipelago of the Levant. In one of these, driven by stress of weather into the city and isle of Scio, I was conducted from my caique to a house which the old widow of a British consul inhabited, with whom I made my domicile for some days.

The mansion, when I entered, seemed strangely familiar, insomuch that I endeavoured to recollect when and where I could have ever seen such another. It was an old Genoese edifice; the rooms were grandly lofty, the ceilings imposingly coved, the staircase spacious, and the oaken panelling under the dado was of a dark umber colour, antique, and richly carved; but above the dado, where probably fresco paintings had anciently glowed, the walls exhibited only a blank and oblivious white-wash, that gave an assurance of more cleanliness than magnificence. Still it was a venerable abode, and recalled historical associations of the fifteenth century, the gorgeous epochs of the Medici, and the controversies of the Reformation.

As the rain for several consecutive days confined me to this "locanda of the hippogriff," after I had examined every article of ornament

and use, I betook myself, in consequence of having nothing else to do, to the hatching of projects; and, among other literary ovi, the sketch of a drama, in which I proposed to develop the workings of bigotry; really making (though I should not say it) a very creditable conception. But, when recently confined to my own room, and, from sheer inability to move, compelled to look into old matters, this "ancient papyrus" fell into my hands, and surprised me with the errors into which I had fallen by supposing that bigotry was not, as much as any other passion, a moral element. To this discovery, the following attempt to embody the spirit of the ecclesiastical Reformation at its beginning, is owing.

The object in view was to give an exposition of the criminal courses into which men may fall, even while they believe themselves worthy;

and to show that conscientious sincerity is no proof of the virtue of actions.

In this undertaking I have had recourse to the introduction of honest characters only, and have only attempted to exhibit how much integrity may be modified by the ruling passion.

If I shall at all be thought to have succeeded, my self-congratulation will be very unequivocal, for I have done my best to develope the workings of strong feelings, and to give an air of antique quaintness to sentiments as old, in my opinion, as man, and as young as his latest difference on any doctrine which involves ostensible ceremonies.

THE LUTHERANS.

CHAPTER I.

“ The soldier tir'd of war's alarms,
Forswears the clang of hostile arms.”

IMMEDIATELY after the celebrated battle of Pavia, in which Francis I. of France was taken prisoner by the Emperor Charles V., a number of veteran officers, who had served long in the Imperial armies, retired to their estates, justly considering the war as ended.

Among them was the old Baron Rublestein, a German nobleman who possessed an allodial inheritance, and exercised within it the rights of sovereignty. He had served many campaigns, and was much renowned for his soldierlike

courage, as well as beloved for the simplicity of his manners, and the integrity of his heart ; but hardships had impaired his health, insomuch that a sentiment of affectionate compassion was felt by his companions when he retired from the field.

On arriving at his castle, which was situated in the neighbourhood of a town at some distance from a city, distinguished at that time for having adopted the Lutheran doctrines, and as having an university in which the prevalent spirit of inquiry prevailed, he found all his people greatly excited by the arrival of several Doctors on a proselytizing deputation from the college, insomuch that the magistrates found it necessary to allow them the use of the Guildhall for their disputations, to which a vast assemblage daily resorted.

The Baron was not very strict in his religious opinions : he was perhaps too indulgent towards the notions of others, for he had all his life been accustomed to camps, and interested

himself little in civil controversies. He heard, however, that his only son, the young Baron Henry, who was greatly distinguished for his various attainments, was among the daily disputants with the Lutheran Doctors, and at one time it was believed he would ultimately triumph in the argument.

This opinion, which the monks of the neighbouring monastery of St. Michael industriously circulated, was not, however, the fact. He had, it is true, evinced uncommon ingenuity in his arguments, and had met theirs with a bravery of elocution which displayed the sincerity of his belief in the truth of his own; but Baron Henry was exceedingly perplexed in the dispute. The Lutheran Doctors gradually gained an ascendancy, and at last it was observed that the tones of the accomplished young nobleman began to be less and less confident.

This was so obvious that the friars of the monastery interfered, and urged the young

man to abstain from the dispute; but the enthusiasm, and perhaps something of the pride of youth, were enlisted in the cause. Instead of abating in his attendance in the Guildhall, he became more constant; a grave earnestness took possession of his mind, and he continued his researches with indefatigable zeal. However, many observed that his zeal was not so much inspired by a regard for the interests of the Church, as for truth.

Such was the state of things which the veteran Baron Rublestein met with, when he returned home, to repose in honour as he expected, after a long life of gallant services, and to die lamented when it should please Heaven to remove him from this earthly scene.

He had not, however, considered that there often is an earnestness in civil affairs that excites the heart of man as strongly as the more animating enterprizes of war. The Baron found no rest in his castle; the Abbot and

friars of St. Michael's monastery were, at the time of his arrival, greatly alarmed at the symptoms of secession from the Papacy which began to be manifest in the demeanour of his son; especially as he had declared that if he did not satisfactorily refute, before a given day, certain positions of divinity which the Lutherans had adopted, he would openly espouse their opinions.

As soon, therefore, as it was known that the old Baron had returned from the wars in Italy, the priesthood and friars of the monastery held a meeting, at which they appointed Father Dominick to represent to the old man the alarming conduct of his son.

Father Dominick was distinguished in the monastery for the purity of his life, and the integrity with which he maintained the holiness of the priestly character. No blame was ever imputed to this stern and righteous old man. He believed, not only in the universality of the Roman Church, but in all those articles

of faith which she had established, and which constituted her character.

The morals of Father Dominick were not more rigid than he was sincere; indeed, few afforded so little by their life and conversation on which even the shadow of calumny could fall. But with all these virtues, he was narrow-minded, and considered the interests of the priests as those of Heaven, and the agitation with which Luther at that time was shaking the Church to its foundation, as doctrines that could not be enough abhorred.

Father Dominick undertook the mission with fervour, as an ordination from Heaven, and went to the Castle with that degree of energy which only the bigoted feel when actuated by sincerity.

CHAPTER II.

“ Even though vanquish'd he could argue still.”

FATHER DOMINICK related to the old warrior all the proceedings of the Lutheran Doctors, and concluded by stating the eternal penalties that would be incurred by those whom they might induce to quit the jurisdictions of the papacy, representing young Henry as in imminent peril.

“ What I have told you,” said he to the Baron, “ is true ; you will have to interpose and keep him from such company ; he is a youth of an exalted temperament, and apt from the very warmth of his nature to catch the infection of the times.”

The Baron, exceedingly sorrowful, and knowing the infirmities of his own knowledge in religious experience, said humbly, but with firmness too, for he knew something of his son's character, and doted on his frankness and love for honour, "Henry is of a bold straightforward temper, and what he thinks right, he will not resign; you had better, good father, take your remonstrances to himself, and point out his errors; you know in what they consist, I should only make havoc if I attempted to teach him."

The rigid father was disappointed on receiving this answer; it betrayed a moderation which he did not approve, but determined to do what he conceived to be his duty, replied—

"His temporal and eternal interests require you to interpose. The Church knows his character, and for his virtues is inclined to try all gentle means; I am sent to urge you to use a father's influence."

"If I saw," said the Baron, "ought in his

demeanour, that as a father I could condemn, I would not lose an instant in exercising my authority, but though what you say may be true, these Lutherans, I am told are blameless men, grave, and learned, and all his intercourse with them is patent to the public."

Father Dominick was still more disturbed by this answer, and with a degree of austerity unexpressed before said, —

"But have you never remarked that young men of his impassioned nature, are prone to attach themselves with assiduity to those in whom no companionable qualities can be discovered."

Baron Rublestein replied with an air of freedom, after a pause.

"I have ; and have expressed my wonder to my wife, that Henry should be so fascinated by these controversial Doctors ; she, good lady, like her husband, sees no harm in it ; what harm is there ?"

"Harm !" cried Father Dominick, "have

you not heard how these pestiferous heresies of Luther infect the very props of the Church, and, like wild boars, lay waste the vineyard of the Lord ?”

The Baron saw by the manner in which Father Dominick made his reply, that he was a little heated, and answered—

“ Yes, I have heard something of that,—not among the friars,—but it will soon pass away In what does it concern my son ?”

Father Dominick still kindling, exclaimed—

“ Much—much ! the pestilence has spread throughout all Christendom, and the plague spot is reddening on your son. Those he associates with are tainted. Baron of Rublestein ! I charge you as his father to keep the young man from the assassins of souls.”

The old soldier was a little shaken from his propriety, and said —

“ Assassins of souls ! assassins ! these are strong words ; what sort of men are endowed with such a bad prerogative ?”

“Men!” cried the monk still more empasioned, “they have but the seeming of men Sir, have you not heard that there are times when Heaven permits, in its great mysteries, the unblessed to be loosened from their chains, and gives them licence to rove upon the earth, for a time, on their unholy purposes. These demons then enter into the bodies of men, and prompt the Adamites to evil deeds,—such are those to whom your son gives heed.”

The Baron, astonished at the fervor and speech of the monk, inquired—

“How may I believe that? I have heard that the persons to whose society my son is so much addicted, are plain, honest men, and by the tests of their actions, praiseworthy. No, Father, they are not the incarnated fiends you fear. I am, myself, an old rough-minded man, little acquainted with the subtleties of those who take upon them the earthly protection of the Church, and not able, good Father Dominick, to combat with you in such recon-

dite lore as my son grows famous for. I would not, even if I could, much thwart him in his studies."

The monk felt he had gone a little too far, and, as if to regain the vantage ground, replied, more temperately—

"There you are remiss—you must interpose."

The veteran started.

"Must!" said he, "I am not used to that word must!"

Father Dominick relaxed a little, but firmly exclaimed—

"Aye, must: the Pope has proclaimed that those who have the power to interpose, as you have, and do not, shall be put to the ban for heresy."

This softened to the brave old soldier the offence of the phrase, and he was pacified, saying—

"Since it is a word in your orders, and not your own, let it pass; but I am not accustomed to terms so peremptory."

Father Dominick, catching at the military sense which the Baron put upon the word, said—

“It may be so; but I will give you time to reflect on the consequences of refusing; I beg you to consider that I am a soldier of the church, and here on duty.”

The old man bowed respectfully, and then said—

“You speak as if there were danger in not obeying you. In sooth, good Father, you have disturbed me; and though a calm and quiet man, that word *must* was not pleasant—but leave me now, there is something at this time which makes me not so gentle as I wish to be with all God’s creatures: I would spend the relics of my time on earth in peace with all mankind.”

Father Dominick saw he had touched a tender point of the old soldier, and affecting more humility than he felt, replied—

“It goes hard with me to be so stern in my

duty towards one who is so much beloved ; but all good men have tasks in which affection has no part. Farewell : I will see you soon ; in the mean time think seriously of what I have said.”

He then retired, and the veteran, after taking two or three turns on the floor, said to himself aloud—

“ ‘ Must ! ’ a command—it implies he expects to be obeyed—this is strange language ;—and all because Henry is bookishly inclined, and affects the company of secular men, renowned for learning. We certainly live in mystical times. In the camp, where I have spent so many rude, uncivil days, I never heard such unsheathed phraseology.”

CHAPTER III.

“ The choleric old man.”

THE Baron, still flushed with irritation, went to his lady's apartment. On entering it, she remarked that Father Dominick, in coming from his room, seemed much disturbed.

“ What has moved you,” said she; “ what has come to pass ?”

The Baron replied, with an endeavour to be composed, that Father Dominick might be a good man, but he was very rude of speech.

“ He is more wise than fair-spoken. He thinks me remiss in not representing to Henry the danger he may incur by frequenting the

company of those disputants who so agitate the town."

"There is no doubt," replied the lady, "that Father Dominick, though a blameless, is a stern character; but surely he does not approve of much that is objected to by the Lutherans in the conduct of his brethren. The world has few more worthy than the good Father; but he is somewhat harsh in the expression of his opinion. It is not always pleasant to be intimate with such a man, however correct in his behaviour."

The Baron insensibly adopting the opinion of his lady, added,

"Yes, one should bear much from him, he is in all things so conscientious; but he is severe in his manners, and stubborn in his humour; he talks over-much as one in authority. I would not have brooked such language from a soldier—but a soldier would not have so expressed himself."

The lady perceived that the Baron was more

affected than he wished her to observe, and with address and prudence refrained from exasperating his choler.

“ Ah ! forget it,” said she, “ we must overlook much on account of his age, and a great deal is due to the priestly profession.”

Still she did not entirely appease his passion, which was deep and strong, though not turbulent; for he added, with subsiding heat,

“ I forgive him. But there was something of a menace towards Henry in what he uttered. I did not like it.—I will not, however, interdict the intercourse our son holds with the Doctors ; for if, as I understand it, the priesthood have departed from their proper path, they should seek to regain it rather than find fault with those who may happen to point out their error. It is not right to punish men first, and afterwards instruct them ; punishment and instruction should go together, or the latter should have precedence.”

At this crisis of their conversation, Matilda

entered. She was their niece, and staid in the Castle, regarded as the destined bride of Henry.

Flurried, and with an appearance of fear, her complexion went and came, and in taking her aunt by the hand, she trembled so much that the Baron said to her,

“What news have you heard—what accident has befallen you? You look like one that has just escaped from danger. What danger?”

The old lady also added,

“You breathe in haste, Matilda: what makes you look about so apprehensively? you seem in much amazement.”

Without returning a direct answer, either to the Baron or his lady, she replied—

“About a bow-shot from the Castle I met Father Dominick; he seemed very sad, and, when he saw me, came angrily forward. I could not divine the cause, and he stopped me as a messenger entrusted with the execution of some dreadful behest.”

The Baron looked steadily for a moment at his wife, and then said—

“ Aye—what did he say ?”

His Lady added—

“ Angry, was he ?”

Matilda answered with agitation—

“ Yes, fiercely so ; and yet almost sad, even to the shedding of tears. He took hold of my hand, and gazing in my face, pronounced a benediction ; and then he abruptly resumed his walk, leaving me without saying another word. His manner surprised me : after he had proceeded some ten paces or so, he stopped, and crossing himself, bade God bless me ! I could make no reply—it was fearful and strange. I could only shake like the aspen.”

The old Baron looked at his Lady, and as if touched with some contrition, addressed her, saying—

“ I made use of nothing to chafe his mood, though he was certainly unmannerly.”

Matilda hearing this also, said to her aunt—

“Nor, gracious Madam, was this all; he stopped again, and turning round, told me to abjure the society of Henry; that anathemas were pronounced on many, and that he would be included in the number if he did not forsake his unblest confederates. What could the monk mean?—what confederates did he allude to?—and how are they unblest?”

Baron Rublestein interrupted her, and said, with a degree of haste in his speech that indicated something like alarm—

“Oh! he has been speaking of the Reformers—the Doctors sojourning in the town.”

“Nay,” answered the young lady; “he could not mean them, and yet to their society Henry is partial. Ah, I do remember he said something about the faith which they propagated, as errors hatched by some accursed cockatrice; but I was so amazed at what he did and said, that I have no right recollection of it.”

The Baron, who had not entirely recovered his composure, added,

“ It is all of a piece. The old man’s dried brain has caught fire ; why is he so wrath with Henry ? I will see the young man before he goes abroad to-day, and speak to him. This distemperature of Father Dominick must not pass unnoticed.”

And he immediately left the room, leaving the Baroness and Matilda together.

“ The friar,” said the old lady, “ is an irascible man ; he is of late more so than ever. The Baron, before you came in, was complaining of his rudeness, and said his language to him was rougher than one soldier would endure from another—he spoke indignantly ; it is a strange exception in the conduct of those who profess to give the world an example, to show in themselves how little they are regulated by the precepts they profess to teach ; it is as if they had warrantry, by being teachers, to exempt themselves from the rules which they enforce on others. But Father Dominick, though a harsh man, is possessed of great ho-

nesty, and in consideration of his years, much from him should be tolerated."

Matilda had by this time somewhat recovered from her astonishment, and could talk with more calmness to her aunt of the friar's irritation, and of the causeless enmity, as she thought it, which he cherished towards Henry; for she did not regard her lover's well-known controversies with the Lutheran Doctors as dangerous to the church, so she expressed herself, adding—

"I wonder why the clergy are all so angry at the doctrines which this man Luther has set forth; he is himself a monk, and what he preaches is not in reason objectionable."

"But come," said the Baroness, "it is the hour that we are accustomed to take our daily pleasure in the garden, we can discourse of it there."

At these words they descended to the parterre of the castle.

CHAPTER IV.

“ All wild and lone, yet not so lonely wild,
As man’s blest footsteps may not there be traced ;
But these good things engender’d evil thoughts.”

FATHER DOMINICK had, after his interview with Maltilda, walked towards the monastery alone. His path, at a short distance from the castle, lay over a wild, open country, which here and there was picturesquely studded with single trees of great antiquity, and clumps of younger growth. It had been in ancient times a forest, and retained something of that character in its waste and unenclosed state ; it was however, very lonely, and the views around sylvan and savage.

It was impossible to continue long on the dreary tract without insensibly giving way to sullen and unsocial reveries.

Over the woods in front, the towers of the church and monastery of St. Michael's rose dark and lofty; on their cornices and vantages the sun shone with a particular tint, that gave to them, in spite of their aged and sombre character, as it were a sacred hue, calculated to inspire the solitary spectator with feelings of solemnity.

The castle behind stood on an abrupt rising ground, the steep of which was in several places shaggy, with tufts of those hazel shrubs which sometimes cover rocks and precipices; but in general it was a green hill, crowned with hoary towers and battlements.

Except these two edifices, and only the spires of the monastery were visible over the trees, no other building could be seen from the path which the aged ecclesiastic took. Altogether the road lay through a wild and, in many

respects, desolate region, for the town was completely hidden by the woods, and his way lay across what may be called a common, little frequented.

No cattle were seen pasturing in the openings between the trees. It presented, however, a scene in unison with Father Dominick's reflections.

From an early period of life he had been educated by the friars for the service of the church, and his human frailties had never been mitigated by any experience of the world's temptations. In consequence, like all brought up in seclusion, he regarded the errors of mankind as the effects of voluntary sinfulness. In his own conduct spotless, he thought his excellence in manner the result of virtue; for he had never found it necessary to restrain those prone inclinations which he attributed to the inherited evil brought into the world by the original guilt of man.

Father Dominick in this, committed the mis-

take, which in the world often leads to much mischief. By considering as virtue the tightness of the reins he was obliged to hold over his own restive passions, he was not aware how much more restraint is necessary to keep those from headlong courses, who are exposed to blandishments, and accordingly he viewed with an austere eye, inflections of morality which, as effects of weakness, often require to be considered with indulgence. This, with the natural arrogance of old age, made him regard himself as superior to most men, and the conduct of others as tinged with a deeper delinquency.

Besides this defect, the old monk was a religious man, but his practice partook of his narrow estimate of temptation. Religion was with him a mere speculative quality, and unconscious to himself, he ascribed the negative character of his actions to the influence of the dogmas into which he had resolved his faith. Had his theory of human infirmity been different, religion would have tempered his reflec-

tions with more benevolence, but strengthening, as it were the acrid humour of his heart, it became bigotry, and led him to conclude that all who differed from him in belief, must, therefore, be more apt to fall into sin. This deleterious principle received confirmation from his various misanthropic notions.—The epithet is given to them, not only on account of their harshness, but of the pernicious opinions they were calculated to cherish of mankind.

In his conversation with the Baron, he had inadvertently expressed his belief, that Heaven at times permitted the doomed to assume a carnal shape, for the purpose of seducing the unguarded. But this ungracious statement was but one of the many morose fancies to which he gave credence—it was indeed with him a kind of enthusiasm to take strange views, and, without feeling that he was only yielding to an empasioned temperament—he often gave way to imaginations, as the dictates of religion, which had no higher source than his own mind.

The success which he anticipated to his remonstrances with the Baron, did not, by its failure, allay his innate animosity towards other men. On the contrary, it excited him ; and, in his way homeward, his thoughts were acrimonious against what he deemed the perversity of sinners. The scene around was in unison with his reflections, even while a sense of beauty glowed at his heart, and he drew from the aspect of nature inferences that encouraged his uncharitable estimates. In the middle of his journey he paused, and looking around on the tranquillity which hushed the landscape, exclaimed, “ But for man, how goodly had been this world !—how he has marred, by his guilt, the felicity with which Providence originally endowed nature. Every thing on the earth points upwards, and directs our thoughts to Heaven. Blind to that glorious tendency, he adopts heresies which betray him downwards to perdition. The trees lift their green heads, and expand their leafy arms aloft, as if prompted by gratitude ; the

flowers, stars of the sward, look from the earth as if their fragrant eyes ever contemplated some manifestation of Him to whom they owe their beauty. All creatures touched with gaiety, confess his goodness effused in the sunbeams; and the birds carol on high, as if solicitous of his benign notice. The sound of the far-heard waterfall, the hymn of solitude, ascends, and is received as the orison of inanimate things."

At this juncture he beheld, coming from behind a plantation, the Lord Abbot of the monastery, on his way towards the castle.

Something uneasy had arisen in the Abbot's mind when he heard, in the morning, that Father Dominick had, at an untimely hour, proceeded on his mission of exhortation to the old heroic Baron. He knew his purity of intention, and the rigid righteousness of his notions, but he was somewhat apprehensive of his zeal; for the Abbot was more a man of the world than the Friar, and knew that goodness could be only

rendered palatable by being administered with discretion.

With the temper of Baron Rublestein he was not much acquainted—he had heard him spoken of as an old brave soldier, and as one who had all his life lived much in camps; and although the Chapter at the monastery had concurred in investing Friar Dominick with authority to request his interference with the son, he did not altogether approve of the choice, though he had acquiesced in it. His visit, therefore, to the castle, was to moderate the zeal of Father Dominick, whom he apprehended, from his recluse habits, might not be quite so efficient a mediator with the veteran as the other members of the Chapter expected.

CHAPTER V.

“ Be with the gentle gentle,
Froward with the bold.”

After some general conversation respecting the object of the Friar's mission, the Abbot, in speaking of the Baron, said,—

“ From all I am able to understand, Baron Rublestein is an easy, good-natured old man, not given to be very stubborn in his own opinions, but licentious enough towards those of others.”

“ Your information respecting him,” replied Father Dominick, “ is correct ; he cannot understand the guilt that may lurk in opinion.

Insensible to the danger of his son, he will not oppose very strongly those measures which may be necessary to reclaim the young man."

The Abbot looked a good deal surprised, and repeated to himself the word "reclaim;" adding,—

"Do you imagine his son so far gone in error as to require reclaiming?"

Father Dominick did not reply directly to the question, but said,—

"Hitherto he has controverted the pestilent doctrines of the polemical strangers; but it is reported that he grows less firm in his arguments."

A slight shade of sadness darkened the complexion of the Abbot; he was evidently concerned to hear this intelligence—not that it was unknown to him, but because it was confirmed by such testimony; and said—

"It will be a sad lapse if he apostatize from the church. His revenues are ample, and his

estate populous; he would draw many with him; it would indeed be a deplorable loss were the Lutheran poison drank in this district."

Father Dominick admitted that it would, and lamented that the people were so veering with every wind of doctrine.

"But," said he, "these are secular concerns; better to lose them all than that the faith of the people should be tainted by the example."

The Abbot replied with equanimity: "these sentiments become you, holy father. Secularities are only secondary; yet if the means and opulence which has so long enabled the church to hold so proud a head are reft away, she will not long stand the change. But have you no hope of the Baron's interference?"

The Friar at once replied,—“No effectual hope in the father, nor is my confidence great in the mother; my only reliance is on Matilda, and yet on her I do not much rely.”

The Abbot, as if to conceal a feeling of perturbation, inquired hastily what he meant.

“Matilda,” replied the old man, “is gentle and submissive; I think her wedded to the church—but she holds, I am informed, young Henry in such worship that I doubt if she can suspect him of thinking any wrong, far less the danger that may spring from his apostacy—which Heaven avert!”

“Try her,” said the Abbot; —“this is a case in which every influence should be exerted.”

“In that, my lord,” replied the Friar, “you speak of her as something that might control the evil in his disposition. But, if he believe himself right, I fear, had she the charms of Eve, she would be ineffectual.”

The Abbot did not immediately answer; by his appearance he pondered for some time, and then replied,—

“If all the priesthood were like you, Father Dominick, pure and abstemious, there is little need to apprehend aught permanent from the followers of Luther; but it is true that many churchmen give too much license by their loose

lives to the tongue of scandal. However, try Matilda; it was a happy thought to think of using her influence."

This speech was agreeable to Father Dominick; and he said, with some complacency,

"When I left the Castle, I met her sauntering by herself beyond the walls; and being sorrowful at what the Baron seemed to think, I admonished her; my words were strong, perhaps, for I was agitated; and, rather as a command than what would have been more wise to have entreated, I bade her interpose with her cousin."

"Right," said the Abbot; "but I hope not too zealously, for with the gentle we must ever resort to gentle means. How did she receive your admonition?"

Father Dominick, with a little more hardness in his manner, said—

"At first she listened with thoughtfulness, but ultimately she became amazed, and was seized with terror."

The Abbot then observed she was tenderly sensitive; and, as it were smitten with some absence of mind, walked several paces forward. Suddenly, however, recollecting himself, he turned round, and said he would have more conversation with Father Dominick when he returned. The Friar made no reply, but bowed respectfully, and walked on.

The Abbot, more affected by what had passed, also resumed his walk; but his manner was pensive, and his steps heavy. He had not, however, proceeded above twenty or thirty paces when he again halted, and expressed himself with more anxiety than was his habit.

“The Doctors,” said he, “must have had some encouragement from their university to bring them to our town; nor was it wise in the magistrates to give such protection to their disputations—no matter. But there is more peril to us in the iron honesty of Father Dominick than in that good-natured policy. How may his integrity be dealt with, no other in all our house

is more blameless than the stern old man, whose severity hallows the indiscretion of his zeal.”

In saying this the Abbot went onward.

In the meantime, the Baron had gone to his son, and represented to him what had taken place at his interview with Father Dominick, of whom the old man spoke even more disparagingly than he had expressed himself to his lady. Reflection upon his speech had deepened its disagreeable impression. Being a man accustomed to regard monks and friars with less reverence than other men, and as of a cast far below the military, his antipathy to the boldness of the Friar was rather exasperated by rumination. Nor had there been any particular soothing in the language of his lady, who scarcely spoke of the Friar in conciliatory terms. She knew him esteemed for his strictness and integrity, but disliked his severity; especially when the provocation seemed more a foible than an offence. She was, in fact, not

very austere in her tenets, and regarded the controversy which her son held daily in the Guildhall with the Lutheran Doctors, as akin to a college exercise, rather than as a matter which dangerously touched the church.

CHAPTER VI.

“ If right, stand firm.”

WHEN the Baron entered the study of Henry he found him alone, entranced with his books.

The apartment had in its appearance and furniture the look of a library, although in those days private residences had strictly no apartment that merited the name, for books were still rare and precious; but they had rooms for study, and, together with the volumes bound in vellum which they exhibited, might be seen such scientific instruments as the philosophy of the age required.

The study, as it may be called, of the young Baron, was a large lofty and dark wainscotted apartment, with shelves in different places along the walls, and lighted by two high Gothic windows, glazed with painted glass, on which were depicted, besides armorial bearings, several designs of considerable elegance. In one corner stood a water clock, continually dropping; and in another an armelæry sphere, indicating, by being there, that among other studies, the young Baron was addicted to that species of astrology which considers signs in the heavens as indices of mutations on the earth; alembics and retorts were also lying on shelves, indicative that he did not neglect alchemy, their situation, however, showed that they were not often used.

The room had been gradually converted to its present use, for it was more spacious than seemed requisite for the purposes to which it was put.

The Baron, on entering, seated himself at a

table opposite to his son, and having repeated, as we have stated, what had passed at the interview with Father Dominick, then said, partly in sequence, that he was surprised Henry did not tire of being so constantly immersed in study.

“ If but for exercise, you should sometimes forsake your books and stir abroad.”

“ Why,” said Henry, “ this controversy with the Doctors takes root with me ; I am not yet quite satisfied that any of the venerable institutions of the church should be abrogated ; but, the more I inquire, my doubts increase.”

The Baron, without entertaining any very strong opinion on the subject, replied in something of an advising tone.—

“ It does not become a youth of your degree to meddle much with these ecclesiastical mysteries ; the priests are well paid for taking care of them. Come, come, throw aside that volume ; I have determined, in consequence of the Friar’s visit, to take you to the Imperial camp. The

pastimes there better suit one of your exalted station than crabbed and controverted lore."

Henry did not object to his father's proposal, for, though of a firm character, he was not at any time obdurate.

"You speak," said he to the veteran, "like a brave soldier, and you feel always as a soldier. Your duty has been altogether practical, and to sift doctrines is foreign to it; but there is, as it were, in this business, a pressure on my spirit—a resistless summons that compels me to the part I take, and, therefore, I pray you, give me time to finish my dispute with the Lutherans, after which I shall be ready to go with you."

The Baron, still feeling the shadow of Father Dominick's remonstrance upon his mind, replied,

"I wish seriously that you would abstain from disputing with those Doctors—you are not aware of the danger that may be in the sentiments of Luther."

Henry again answered his father indirectly, b saying,

“ Ay, that is Father Dominick’s opinion. I regret he is so vexed about me ; for, although austere, he is yet one of invulnerable integrity. What you have been telling of his visit, makes me sad ; for, with all his sincerity, he is pure and abstract—to any cause, such a character must be a strong-hold.”

“ But,” replied the Baron, “ what do you say to the apprehension he entertains of your eternal welfare ? ”

“ I but,” said Henry, “ endeavour to discover what is true : there cannot be danger in truth.”

The Baron, perplexed, replied, “ I cannot answer you, nay, it is a mystery to my soldiery how there should be any peril in attaining truth, which is a thing of Heaven. I believe, however, that there is something in what he told me of those who by the scope of their conduct, better deserve to be called incarnated demons than men. I once knew a

brave and gallant officer, but, saving the lion qualities of his profession, he was, in all things else, remorseless as a fiend ; often was it said that he had more of the devil's nature in him than of one who might be saved—he grew in guilt to such a dye of blackness, that he was shunned by all in the camp, and became an outcast, till at last, for an offence that might have been pardoned in more human culprits, he was ignominiously executed—the world was glad to be so well rid of such a foul blot.”

“ Surely,” said Henry, “ the Monk but spoke of such beings in analogy.”

“ I am not subtle enough,” said his father, “ in metaphysical lore, to answer you ; but experience tells me, that there is a kind of men of a baser nature than humanity, and that there are others of surpassing magnanimity—of such are heroes and the great in action, whose lustre throws the commonalty of the world into sordid shade. Whether there be any foundation in Father Dominick's belief or no, he has perplexed

me ; but Henry, it is not passing wise of you—a youth destined to secularities—to be so finely inquisitive in matters so ecclesiastical.”

“ You speak to me sir, gently,” replied his son, “ disapproving as you do of my researches ; would to heaven that all the world were as liberal ! ”

“ I have not, however,” answered the Baron, “ come altogether to tell you what the Monk said, but to propose—and your mother joins me in the request—that you should take up a livelier kind of pastime than these controversies. One in so high a station as God’s providence has called you to, must mingle more with the world than be ever extracting truth from books, honey to the mind though it be.”

Henry was a good deal affected by the kind tone and manner in which this was said, and remarked that his curiosity had enlisted him in the dispute ; afterwards the importance of the subject had made him take it up in earnest, adding :—

“ It is, I conceive, the duty of a ruler to know what impediments oppose the access of his people to what is true, and I begin to suspect that the churchmen have set up impediments that may be well removed.”

CHAPTER VII.

“ If to her share some trivial errors fall,
Look on her face and you forget them all.”

As the Abbot was ascending the steep road which led from the town to the castle-gate, his thoughtfulness increased, chiefly from reflecting that the young Baron was a very amiable personage, and that for a long period the family of Rublestein had been distinguished for their kindness and good-nature. It grieved him to think that his duty towards them might require severity; he lamented that already the conduct of Henry had been in too strong terms represented to the Bishop, and he regretted almost with anguish, when he thought of Father

Dominick having been appointed by the Chapter of his monastery to interfere in the young Baron's controversy with the Lutherans.

He knew the austere character of the Friar, and his experience of the world had taught him that austerity was not an accomplishment of any influence in the management of mankind. He gave full credit to him for the best intentions, and the purity of his life; but he had his doubts if that purity was so much the result of virtue, as seclusion from temptation. Above all he doubted, if one who showed the weakness of his judgment by an over-weening estimation of himself, was well qualified to take any part with effect in a matter so delicate, and his foresight taught him to apprehend greater danger from the prevalent controversies than he thought the churchmen were aware of. He was, in fact, a mild and urbane character, sufficiently firm however, withal, and acknowledged to himself that he could not carry his orders into full effect, because, in his opinion, they were harsher

than the occasion required; as only the temporal vices of the clergy were openly attacked. But latterly he saw that the dogmas of the church were, by a few obtrusive spirits, rather freely dealt with, and that Luther, the main-spring of all the troubles, countenanced them. His thoughts then reverted to the Doctors with whom Henry disputed, and he was not able to comprehend how men only celebrated for their learning, could have suddenly become so bold as to perambulate the country, disputing in all places many doctrines till then held sacred.

“ These Doctors,” said he in a soliloquy, “ must have encouragement from the University for what they do, there can be no doubt of it,—and it certainly does not look well that the knowledge of the rising generation is so troubled at the fountain head. By the lessons taught at schools and colleges, the spirit of the next age may be predicted, and it bodes more evil to the institutions of the church to see the

universities extending protection and patronage to the heresies of Luther, than to hear the falling off in faith of so many, not only of our brethren, but of respectable secular characters. I am, however, in this case more disturbed to think of the impracticable honesty of Father Dominick than I can well express." At this moment the Lady Gertrude appeared coming towards him, by the path which led from the castle-gate, across the fields to the town.

This young lady had been long a familiar visitor to the Castle, and was not suspected of any partiality for the young Baron, but she professed such an attachment to Matilda, that her sincerity was by some impeached. She was generally not held in much esteem, though her beauty was by all confessed to be surpassingly brilliant, for her sinister cast of mind was very obvious, and she was deficient in that feminine softness which renders holiness graceful.

On seeing the Abbot, she quickened her pace

towards him, and coming near stopped, and somewhat abruptly said—

“ I see, Lord Abbot, you are for the Castle. Have you heard the news? the young Baron, they say, has declared himself converted by the Lutherans.”

The character of the Lady Gertrude was not unknown to the Abbot, nor was he, even with her splendid person, very cordial towards her, but he was more worldly than most of his brethren, and replied courteously :—

“ You say not so ; no, no, the news is premature ; Father Dominick has come from the Castle, where, though he found the aspect of things dismal enough, he saw nothing so bad as that.”

The crafty are often caught in their own snare, is an old truth, and it was verified on this occasion. The lady had not heard the tidings she proclaimed, but, only anxious to ascertain how the Abbot was inclined, pretended to have derived from others what was, in fact, an inven-

tion of her own, the motive of which will be developed as we proceed. In the meantime she replied—

“ I heard this morning that he had confessed himself unable to refute the argument of the Doctors, and therefore must, in consequence of his promise, have declared himself of the new light.”

The Abbot, with reference to what had passed between him and Father Dominick, conceiving himself to be better and more recently informed, said,—

“ No, no, it has not yet come to that ; and I am in hopes we shall be spared from so great a misfortune.”

Gertrude, conscious that her information partook more of apprehension than of truth, perceiving this, shifted of their discourse, and inquired about Matilda.

“ Oh !” exclaimed the Abbot ; “ she is unchanged, but her reverence for Henry’s opinion is a little too strong.”

The lady somewhat unguardedly cried,—

“ Ah, there is little hope then.”

The Abbot with whom she was no particular favourite, looked at her steadily : there might be some firmness in his look, as he inquired—

“ What mean you—how hope ?”

The Lady Gertrude found she had been betrayed by her artifice into an inadvertency, and in the endeavour to recover from the error, fell into a deeper slough by saying :—

“ He will not be controled by the soft fancies of Matilda.”

The Abbot, not surprised at her speech, for the reality of her attachment to Matilda he never entirely credited, replied with more than his usual fervency,—

“ You speak as one that had found in this a cause of rejoicing.”

Gertrude felt that she had not his confidence, and began to weep.

“ Ah !” said he, “ what mean these tears ?”

“ I cannot, holy father,” answered the lady,
“ hide my heart longer from you.”

This was said in simplicity ; but the general impression of her character had not conciliated him. He was not, in consequence, altogether sensible of the feeling with which she was agitated, and said—

“ Why should this fond girl, by her adherence to the church, give you this cause of joy ?” .

“ Because he will not wed her if still she cling to our faith ; my hope is in that.”

“ Your hope,” said the Abbot, with surprise,
“ what hope ; though not a professed nun, you are betrothed to the church.”

Gertude’s natural character had rebounded back, and she added—

“ Ah ! I have acted rashly ; I knew not then young Henry’s influence : his danger has taught me how easily blown into a flame were the embers smouldering here.”

Affecting not to comprehend very well her meaning, the Abbot said, giving way to the thought which crossed his mind at the moment,

“ If he renounce Matilda for her faith, how can you expect he will attach himself to you?— you look downcast and perplexed,—surely you would not, for an earthly husband, abjure the spiritual spouse to whom you are promised?”

Turning from his mysterious eyes, the lady, really concerned, replied,—

“ We little know, Father Abbot, our nature’s weakness till we have been tried: I will prove myself a true sister, by endeavouring to keep him stedfast to the church.”

The churchman, though still doubtful, exclaimed—

“ That would be a glorious undertaking; but you are for the castle—I too am going there, and we can talk as we proceed: come.”

With these words he turned into the by-path which led to the gate, and they went forward together

CHAPTER VIII.

“ It comes, it comes, the waters come.”

IN the meantime, the Baron had continued with Henry, urging him, as an expedient to weaken his predilection for the controversy, to hasten on the projected union with his cousin Matilda, descanting on her beauty, and insinuating, to pique his pride, that he was remiss as a lover, in giving so much heed to the Doctors. Henry admitted, in part, the truth of the accusations, but said—

“ Until I answer these great questions of the Lutherans, I pray a respite; I do assure you I want no argument to persuade me to look

upon Matilda with enchanted eyes ; but in this matter I am tried by the Doctors, and somehow a superior, a supernatural power makes all things earthly seem only secondary. My cousin's beauty, and sweet gracious disposition, have all of my heart that temporal charms can attract ; but this entrancement is something of a higher scope ; let me, I pray you, answer those questions ; when the controversy is over, I will be all that you and my mother can desire, meanwhile foster in my fair cousin the kindest thoughts of me."

The Baron was moved by this representation, but he affected more gaiety than was at the moment in his heart, as he said—

" You are a wayward young man ; I never knew one half so gallant suspend his homage to a lady, in order to be so worshipful of musty books ;" and he added, gravely, " but since you make the matter so solemn, I cannot refuse the indulgence. Which way think you the

controversy may terminate, that I may give Matilda due notice?"

It was evident from this speech, that the good-natured old man did not imagine the controversy involved many temporal issues; he spoke of it as closing with the argument, and did not very clearly understand his son, when he said—

“To acknowledge the truth, my faith in many things has been sadly shaken; I do not think the Doctors in all correct, but this morning their errors somehow appeared not so gross as they did yesterday.”

“Ah, then,” cried the Baron, “you are coming round to their opinion.”

There was no particular feeling attached to this expression, but it drew from Henry a very earnest reply.

“Nay, Heaven forbid,” said he, “for they impeach much that the good have long held sacred; but I only require them to prove that

what they do allege to be corruption is so indeed."

Without answering him directly, the Baron replied—

"It is odd that one hitherto so gay, should be so magically changed in his nature;" and he added, a little pensively, "I thought, my boy, to make you a free-hearted soldier, but this dull bookishness has driven all my cherished hopes away."

Henry observed the inflexion of voice with which his venerable parent uttered this, and said, with emotion—

"Call it not magical, it is a transmutation which heaven itself is busy working out. If I succeed in convincing the learned Doctors that the faults which they impute to the church ought to be ascribed to individual members, and that the doctrines are still unblemished, I shall do invaluable service; churchmen will have but to amend their own lives; the holy fabric will still exist entire, yea, like the ark

amidst the darkening deluge, it will be still the vessel of deliverance."

The old man saw, from the tone of this speech, that it was needless to prolong the conversation, and accordingly answered—

"Well, well, take your own way, but it is not very much in the character of one born in such a station to meddle with these ecclesiastical matters."

Soon after he withdrew.

The Baroness and Matilda, meanwhile, continued their discourse respecting Father Dominick, as they leisurely walked in the parterre of the Castle.

"I did not tell," said Matilda, "my uncle all that passed, but the monk said many severe words to me about Henry, and spoke as if there were some infection in his company, which, as I valued my soul's health, I should shun. I never knew ought, however, about my gentle cousin, that did not merit esteem. I would, dear Madam, rather not have heard what Father Dominick

said, for he has made me almost fearful of committing some grievous guilt in listening to my cousin; yet Henry has never said to me aught that was not bright and cheerful—happiness to hear.”

The Baroness, with maternal caresses, replied, that she was delighted to hear her say so.

“The time has come,” said she, “that both the Baron and I agree your affection towards Henry may be more openly shewn. We did to-day intend to break this matter to him, and to express how much we both long for that union which from the first dawn of your mutual love has been expected with solicitude. But that morose Monk has stepped in like a cloud, and marred the day’s sunshine. He is a man, however, unused to many humanities, and we must overlook his foibles, even while they molest us.”

Matilda and Henry were thus made acquainted with the wish entertained for their

speedy union ; but Henry, owing to the enthusiasm of his nature, could not forego his argument so easily as Matilda was persuaded to give her consent to his mother ; for his dispute, nearing to a close, wrapt him entirely in its importance. In the mean time the two Lutheran Doctors had met to receive the paper which he had prepared, and as they were standing together the following conversation took place between them :—

“ What say your letters ? ” inquired Doctor Albert Muller.

“ All goes prosperously, ” replied his friend Rupert ; “ the church shakes. ”

“ Good, ” said Dr. Muller ; “ and if we could reckon on the young Baron it would give them great pleasure. ”

“ Though he is not a declared proselyte, ” replied Dr. Rupert, “ we may almost count upon him, he only seeks for difficulties to support his wavering faith ; this morning he admitted that, with the gift of reason, we had the

power to use it, and therefore, by it, to test all doctrines offered to the acceptance of man."

Dr. Albert appeared particularly pleased, and said—

"He cannot stop, but must go on;" adding, "but is there no temporal tie to bind him to the Roman faith?"

Rupert said alertly, "he is not one that would be so bound, nor is his father so wedded to the creed he credits as to attempt to sway him, and the Baroness, his mother, is all too fond and partial to him, as her only son, ever to oppose any obstacle to his secession. Were he openly to adopt the Protestant faith, I have great hopes that the old people would join him, but there is a fair damsel in the case."

"Ah!" cried Dr. Muller, "so I have heard; has no impression been made on her?"

"I doubt," said Rupert; "she can but lament his defection from herself."

"Defection! did you use that word; it is the nature of woman to think herself entitled

to the first place in a man's heart ; by the term you imply that she remains attached to the church? That would argue that she did not love him much."

Rupert did not expect a remark so shrewd, and said,

"That she does so, I have good reason to believe ;—but possibly she would follow her lover."

Dr. Muller shook his head in doubt, and replied,

"She may think him in error, and pity him ; but her adherence to the papacy betokens no relaxation. Women are never changed in their opinions except by the persuasion of passion :—if Matilda look on his inquiry after truth as defection, it shows that she herself still clings to the ancient faith."

"You are severe," said Rupert, "the gentle sex are ever gentle."

"Yes," replied the Doctor, "I grant them flexible, soft, and easily bent ; but I never yet

saw them in any matter of opinion broken. Religion is in a woman part of her nature, and cannot be eradicated without changing her from herself."

Without controverting his observations, Rupert replied, "Henry, for his years, is of a masculine understanding; but he possesses strong feelings; and it yet remains to be seen whether his feelings or his understanding shall predominate: but come, it is the hour he appointed to receive us; come, and we can discourse of this as we proceed to the hall."

CHAPTER IX.

“ Speak to herself—she has a dread upon her ;
A fear that shakes her, though she knows not wherefore.”

THE Baroness, in returning from the gardens to her bower-chamber in the castle, observing Matilda more thoughtful than she thought the cause merited, said—

“ This has affected you too much, Matilda, and you should ascribe the harsh manner of Father Dominick to his natural temper, rather than encourage apprehensions of danger in the conduct of Henry more than in that of other young men.”

“ So I would,” replied the pensive maiden,
“ I ever struggle to think of Father Dominick’s

natural severity ; it is lamentable that a man of such worth should be so rigid. I wonder how it is that goodness should be so connected with sternness. It is a pity that, in the course of providence, the graces should be so much in the possession of those who are not remarkable for their practical virtues.”

The Baroness was touched with compassion, and replied—

“ You should not indulge that bias : think no more about it ; Father Dominick was perhaps heated in his zeal by my husband’s words. Henry, though he has always much respected the man, has yet never been too partial to him, thinking his virtues ran too near the edge of error.”

Matilda, almost in tears, said—“ I do all in my power, but his animadversions have struck deep ; there is an alarm kindled here by them, which will not be quenched, and yet I often say to myself, what peril can there be in Henry

seeking the truth?—Alas! I dread somehow that he approaches danger.”

The Baroness, though her bosom responded to the sentiment, yet suppressed what she felt, and said—

“ You are too serious, Matilda, what danger can there be in believing what he has no choice in but believing?—men have not the power of selection in faith—they must believe what is before them, whether they will or not; their understanding is like the sight—whatever it discerns, must be received.”

This subtle speech affected Matilda extremely, and she replied—

“ I think so too; one cannot lift one’s eyes to any thing in nature—the skies, the landscape, or whatever is foul or fair—without seeing it; we have no choice: and so I think it is with the convictions of the mind. Reason is the eye of thought, and must see on what it looks, and must believe in the existence.”

“ You grow metaphysical, Matilda,” replied the matron, with a benign smile, “ it is not common to see one so young and artless, so very shrewd.”

Matilda took her by the hand, and kissing it, replied—

“ Ah, madam, in this affair my spirit has a busy part.”

“ But why so pensive ? ” said the Baroness, “ be not so sad. I could not think you would be so much with Henry, and not be sensible to his worth ; but in framing an excuse for preferring the new doctrines, you seem afraid of them, and alarmed lest they should not be true—why do you think of them at all ? ”

“ I know not, madam,” replied Matilda ; “ but I am taught that those who believe in the doctrines of Luther, will look upon us as things they should abhor ; my heart shrinks witheringly with that thought ; if Henry embrace the notions that he combats, and should

deem me a doomed creature, hell-bound and accursed ? ”

The Baroness, greatly agitated, exclaimed, “ Matilda, my child—my blessed and gentle maiden ! what hideous words are these ? Henry can never imagine the very basest of the human kind so sentenced and outcast.”

Matilda, still ruled by her fears, cried—

“ If he believe in these heresies, and they are so tainting as the dreadful Monk has said, is it not my duty to draw him from the pestilence—the eternal pestilence ? ”

“ Alas ! sweet creature ! ” cried the Baroness, “ these are wild fancies ; you fill my bosom with amaze—but Henry comes—I know his tread—let us conceal our fantastic terrors. Gracious Heaven ! that there should be such danger in believing while he endeavours to believe aright ? ”

At this moment the young Baron entered, and, stretching out both his hands, said, “ My mother—Matilda !—but why so solemn—wherefore these tears ? ”

The Baroness looked at him, and then said, with a sad voice—

“If you accede to what these apostles of the new doctrines teach, are you aware, that from your kin and ancestors you may be separated eternally?”

“Madam?”

The Baroness continued,

“There never can be, as Friar Dominick has said, communion held with you; the good will cast you off, and in that world to come—but I have not the heart to say what there may be encountered.”

Henry, still surprised, inquired her meaning.

“Are you not aware,” added she, “that those who believe these Lutheran opinions, hold as accursed the faithful to the church.”

“God forbid!” exclaimed the astonished youth— but the lady continued:—

“Do not the Doctors with whom you are in controversy, teach, that those who are their adversaries in opinion are maladict?”

Henry perceiving that his mother talked from the remonstrance of the Friar, said—

“It is the worst part of the church’s argument, that it maintains the threat, and asks less of a belief in what the mind acknowledges to be true, than, says the everlasting penalty, shall be incurred if man deserts its dogmas. Gracious madam, with what fearful notions have you become infected !”

Just as he said these words, Matilda, unable to restrain herself, suddenly left the room, which induced him to inquire—

“What has distressed her—what does she fear—and why so look on me with such anxiety ?”

His mother, aware that she had spoken rather too strongly, said,

“Father Dominick has been with her, and he is most averse to your long disputations with the Doctors.”

“I never liked that man,” said Henry, “and yet in all things he is accounted meritorious ;

he is too rough a husk for me, and has too much of arrogance and pride of self, mingled with his virtues:—surely, dear Mother, you do not foster the fears with which he has poisoned the peace of Matilda?”

Without replying to him, the Baroness said, “I pray, though, that there may be no jeopardy in holding intercourse with these erroneous Lutherans.”

The young Baron was deeply affected, and said, in answer, with submission and humility, “How can there be?”—But the Baroness interrupted him.

“My only son, think well of this: it would be to your good old father and my doating self, a fearful thing to think we stood obnoxious to your hate.”

As she concluded tears burst from her; on observing which he again took hold of her hand, which he had suddenly dropped, and exclaimed,

“That never—Mother—never can come to

pass! Surely, Matilda stands not within the awe of such an apprehension?"

"Speak to her yourself," said the matron—
"reason with her, for she is much disturbed. Alas! how is this day overcast, that we anticipated would be so bright and joyful!"

CHAPTER X.

“ Upon her tongue sat virtuous constancy—
But, oh ! her eyes ; her fell-tale beauteous eyes ! ”

WHEN Father Dominick had returned to the monastery of St. Michael's, after parting on the road from the Lord Abbot, it was observed by some of his brethren, that his mien had undergone a great change. He walked with a prouder and firmer step, the bearing of his visage was bolder and upward, but he carried his arms with that stiff and awkward air which is sometimes seen in the gait of persons not accustomed to the ease and confidence that can only be acquired in society, especially when

elated. Many of the other monks conjectured, from his self-satisfied appearance, that he had been successful in his mission, and that the old Baron had promised to assist him with the son ; but in the fraternity there were several members who made a different inference ; invidious men, they ascribed the alteration to some inward influence of self-love ; a visible effect, in their opinion, of a belief in himself that he had merited the trust which the Chapter had assigned to him. Perhaps they were not altogether mistaken, for the different other members of the Chapter thought individually that to interfere between father and son would be unpleasant, and that Dominick was selected for the office, not because he was deemed the fittest of the fraternity, but because the duty did not require the exercise of much delicacy. Indeed, every one felt the character of Father Dominick, but no one ventured to tell his neighbour what he really thought. Had each been applied to for his estimate, he would have said

nothing but of the virtues with which the Monk was animated, and of his stubborn integrity, probably with a slight allusion to the severity of his manners, and to a little want of tact, the consequence of his seclusion. But the inward opinion which they all entertained was different. Though outwardly awed by his show of sanctity, they were yet in the freedom of thought not scrupulous. They regarded him as an arrogant person, who, in his ignorance of the world, presumed, where he could, a great deal upon his own scanty knowledge. He contradicted others with the most remorseless plainness, not because he knew better, but partly from spleen, and partly from an unconscious wish to hamper the range and scope of the mind. It was obvious to all, that much of the purity ascribed to his conduct was the effect of the sequestered life he led; and it was generally observed, that when he did deviate from his custom into the company of others, it was always among persons who, by their defi-

ciencies of information, listened to him as an oracle.

On his return, he absented himself from the society of his brethren, not that he was often seen among them, but on this occasion he deemed himself endowed with some superiority, which he thought should not be profaned by an intercourse that might facilitate familiarity.

He retired to his own cell, gave himself up to meditation, and beheld in his reveries shrines and altars shaking around him.

Instead of attributing the phenomenon to a vibration caused by an acceleration in the wheels of knowledge, his spirit could discern only one of those epochs such as we read of in the poetical book of Job, when Satan is allowed for a time to present himself among the sons of God. Insensible to a natural effect of the art of printing, and the diffusion of more correct ideas, he only thought of the machination of demons let loose, and the completion of one of

those mysterious cycles of Providence, in which, to many minds, the events of the almost forgotten past seem renewed.

He had not long retired when the Lady Gertrude sought admission. She had not gone into the Castle with the Abbot, but had continued her ride to the monastery for the purpose of holding some conversation with Father Dominick.

Having imperfectly explained to him her anxieties respecting the wavering faith of Matilda, as she pretended, but really to ascertain if there were any chance of a bar being placed to her affections with Henry, he remarked to her:—

“The world is rife with error and deception; but wherefore is it, my pious daughter, that you evince so much solicitude for the young man’s eternal welfare?—women are more commonly interested in what is earthly and visible.”

The Lady Gertrude perceived that, as yet, he had no right conception of her character, while

his own vanity was obviously apparent, and she replied, with an air of candour almost confessional.

“ Ah, Father, your holy life has kept you from a knowledge of frail woman’s nature ; where she loves truly she loves all the man, and makes no distinction between his mortal and immortal part.”

Father Dominick had hitherto heard her only spoken of as remarkable for her attachment to Matilda, and said, as if to furnish her with some excuse to be more explicit—

“ Is, then, your regard for the Lady Matilda only a veil to hide your love for her betrothed? such female artifices I have often heard of.”

The lady saw she had gone a little too far, and, as if to recover the ground she had lost, replied,

“ Alas, good Father, probe not my sore too sharply. Henry and Matilda have from their childhood been betrothed to each other, and am not I all but a nun professed ?”

The Father giving full credit to what she said, replied,—

“ My gentle daughter, do you acknowledge to me that this solicitude for the young Baron’s everlasting health is prompted by tenderness for himself ? ”

The sinister and sharp-sighted long-forecasting young lady, perceiving that her acknowledgment had been received, answered,—

“ Good Father, if I am in error look on my fault with pity. The heart does not love upon resolution, but is impelled by Heaven ; it is in that way Providence works out its purposes. ”

She thus touched the key-string of the Father’s character, and he responded accordingly—

“ True, that is an orthodox opinion, no father of the church could have uttered a sounder sentiment. Your regard for Henry no man can condemn ; your struggle to subdue an unavailing passion does honour to your piety, even as much as this just fear for the young Baron’s everlasting jeopardy. ”

Gertrude discerning by this speech the weak side of her saintly friend, answered with equal cunning and plausibility—

“Alas, sir, life and time are dear to all; but I would not for the love I bear that virtuous young man be for aught of life and time so anxious as I am. It is for his indestructible spirit I am apprehensive, holy Father; how dreadful it will be to think if he, by yielding to these cursed heretics, be ruined in his soul for ever, ah, for ever!”

The weakness of the Father, still cajoled, led him to reply,—

“The church, sweet daughter, beholds at this time many in the peril of great wrath. Henry, I hope, however, will not prove insensible to admonition.”

Seeing her art taking effect, Gertrude continued,—

“But Matilda, my ill-fated friend, has great influence over him; ah, if you could persuade her to ply her blandishments to win him from

his error, it would, good Father, be a work of sacred piety ; but she, poor simple maid, knows not his danger."

Father Dominick did not exactly understand the drift of the lady's speech, and said, more sedately than was his custom,—

" I have myself exhorted the credulous maiden to use her influence ; but the world is now beneath the gloom of some eclipse, and souls unguarded wander in the darkness astray."

Gertrude, observing his vagueness, replied—

" We are all erring mortals, born and bred in sin ; Matilda may not know the power of her love, if she does not oppose his headlong course to terrible perdition."

" Oh, I am grieved," said Father Dominick, " that one so fair, so young, so innocent, and so rich from nature, should so far forget herself as to think temporal passion can compete with the pure glow of everlasting love ; but I will speak

to her, and though he were lost to us, and to all heavenly grace, let us rescue that fond child; you have afflicted me with painful thoughts, and, for a time, I pray you, leave me."

In saying these words, Father Dominick rose from his seat, expecting Gertrude would retire, but she evinced no intention of doing so, and he added,

"You have brought me sad tidings—I thought Matilda in her faith unchangeable, and had framed a holy stratagem by her, to lure unhappy Henry from his doom."

The lady still evincing no disposition to quit the cell, the friar, really sincere in his sorrow, abruptly left it, and when he was gone, she said aloud to herself—

"The old man is as weak, and hard as glass. Does he think that Heaven cannot rule the world without monks? yet if he can sow dissension between Henry and Matilda, good——oh my heart! my heart! this fatal passion makes me

forget myself and righteousness ; yet, if there be wrong in my prone error, does it not come from Providence? Ah, who can tell what men call crimes and piacles, seem such to the high Heavens ?”

CHAPTER XI.

“ The heated mind, like iron from the forge,
Throws off bright sparkles unaware.”

ALTHOUGH the Abbot, in his visit to the Castle, was actuated by a special motive, he was there so frequent a guest that it excited no particular remark.

Being an observant man, he soon saw that the inmates were disturbed. Too well bred to exercise the privilege which the priesthood generally assume, of prying into the domestic concerns of families, he judiciously made it appear as if he were not incited by any particular motive ; but his conversation was of a serious cast, and related to the turbulent spirit of the times : he abstained, however, from the mention

of events on which, even in the church, different opinions existed.

The young Baron, respecting whose health he inquired, could not be seen; his mother only remarked, that he was much engaged in the composition of a reply to the Lutheran strangers, who had impugned several articles in the doctrines of the church, which he was engaged in defending.

The Abbot replied, that he rejoiced to hear he so well employed himself, and turning round, said in an off-hand manner, but with design, to the old Baron—

“ I hope he will not imbibe any thing pernicious to himself in this controversy.”

“ I know not,” said the old man, “ why you priests have such a dread of this so strongly upon you; but I have no great fear that Henry will forget himself; he is a high-minded young man, not addicted to any vice, and I do not hear that the Lutherans are more lax in their morality than ourselves.”

“ Ah !” said the Abbot, in an ecclesiastical tone, “ purity is one of their devices.”

“ I should think,” replied the Baron, “ if that be the case, we ought to treat them with more consideration, for we have no other test but the conduct of men by which their worth can be appreciated.”

The Abbot knew too well that if this kind of conversation was prolonged, it might lead to the expression of a difference of opinion not convenient to be heard, and, accordingly, he soon after went away.

When he had retired, the old lady made some comparative remarks on the difference between him and Father Dominick, but the Baron, still disturbed by the events of the morning, rose and went into the armoury, a long, large, and lofty gothic apartment, in which, along the walls, were piles of armour, fit for immediate use, interspersed with banners and shields, and various articles of antique arms and panoply.

In this room the old man paced to and fro some time, silent and solitary ; it would not be easy to describe the current of his thoughts, but as he turned round at the one end to walk towards the other, he paused, and said to himself—

“ Either my habitudes, or something in my nature, makes me think that to be free from danger causes every thing to appear stale and tedious, and that this is the secret of making so much ado about this controversy. Give me, old as I am, the plumed warrior and the bannered camp—the bloody onset, and the long rough day of mirth and pranks which make a soldier’s happiness. What signifies it how this quest of Henry and these Lutheran doctors terminate, it cannot antedate death, and in another world will there not be also God? Why do these monks so trouble me?”

Henry, who had finished his paper, came into the armoury to take a short turn, before

seeing the Lutherans ; and his father, observing him enter, exclaimed—

“ Ah ! come, my son, I am glad to see you. Cannot you, Henry, maintain your disputations with these Lutherans without molesting me ? ”

The tone in which this was said surprised the young man, and he replied—

“ Molesting you ! I never once obtruded on your leisure.”

“ That is true,” said his father, “ you never did, and all I meant to say was, let me be spared this jargon of the monks—it puzzles plain soldiers. Who can tell why Heaven is pleased to lift one man to bliss, and send another howling to perdition ? ”

“ You astonish me,” cried Henry ; “ our talk was never of that ; it is the church that makes the question eminent. If, as these learned Doctors say, she has in her creed departed from the truth, surely we cannot return to it too soon ? Nor if we never heard aught

save error, we are not to blame. A crime involuntarily committed is not a sin, nor is the worshipping of error criminal, if in that worship we believe sincerely. It is to be aware of error, and yet to do it homage, that makes all the guilt of false virtue."

"That may be true," replied the old soldier, "but many years have passed since I have thought of sin at all; in sooth, my dear boy, amidst the brave adventures of a hearty life, sin seemed afar behind, and something that only belonged to the piping time of peace. There were, no doubt, rude speech and license in our camp, but not a man of us could look on them more than as a breach of discipline expiated by the punishment; yea, in the very stains and blots of war, if there were sin, we trusted that He who sweeps the earth with tempests might interdict the offence, if he conceived it could, by His Providence be spared, never troubling ourselves with questions of morality,"

Henry was moved by his father's sensibility, and said, "You seem disturbed, sir."

"I am, indeed," cried the baron. "Old age, and lame infirmity, enticed me from the camp, and in this peaceful domicile I looked for rest, but have found none. These monks, that you have, by your controversies, so alarmed, take from me all repose."

The young baron, still more pensively, replied, "What say they to you?"

"I have abjured them," cried his father; "they perplex me. In the morning, Father Dominick told me strange legends of permitted devils, and recently the Abbot has been here himself, and has full cunningly exhorted me to control your intercourse with the Doctors."

"What answer gave you him?" said Henry, diffidently.

"You know, Henry, I was not bred in college halls, and cannot tell where the truth lies; but trusting that men of lore, whose duty is to keep us in the right, interpret fairly, I endea-

vour to give efficacy in my actions to what I understand to be good gospel precepts. I never did regard myself as bound to determine their truth or falsehood ; but yet, my son, my only son, I lay no stress upon you in this matter. If you can confute these saucy churchmen, do so, and welcome ; but being now myself an old stiff-jointed engine of the wars, it would in me be grievous presumption to say to others, and to you, so educated in the lore of ages, what must be truth ; but the Abbot is mild and affable compared to that other fierce monk ; he is a man well nurtured in the world, but Dominick is a gnarled and ungainly fellow—he put my patience harshly to the proof.”

“ Your words”—said Henry, distressed to see how much the old man still thought of the past—“ your words grieve me, because on me depends your respite from this annoyance. That Dominick, though in his way a very paragon, has yet not in him the soft sense which doth instruct how men are prone to frailties ; he has for many years sequestered himself from,

it may be, a too sinful world, and by his sequestration he believes himself superior to temptation—alas, poor man, he only has not been tempted!”

The old baron, a little soothed by his son, replied—“ I say no more ; but if you can so demean yourself as not to give offence to these proud gentlemen, do it merely to save an old and fretful man from their intrusions ; but, Henry, in expressing this to you, I would not have you, no, not in one jot, abate to them your proper dignity ; the priesthood should teach us what is right, and they must answer to the irresponsible Deity for what they do. Keep firm in all things to your honour as a man ; do ever your best, and leave the issues to Heaven.”

This was spoken with energy and elocution. Henry felt its full force, and exclaimed—

“ Spoke like a soldier !” But he was interrupted by the entrance of a messenger from the Doctors.

CHAPTER XII.

“ They heed him, yet they wonder.”

WHILE these things were in process at the Castle, and the final disputation arranged to be heard in the town-hall, we must refer to a character who did not then appear as very prominent in the business ; indeed, at this time he had not taken any part in it at all. This was a Count Manhim, who had domiciled himself in the monastery of St. Michael's, with the intention of, in time, becoming one of the brotherhood.

Count Manhim had been a distinguished soldier, and one of those officers who had retired

from the imperial army after the battle of Pavia. Had the war continued, he would have remained while it lasted, probably with his companions in arms, as he was naturally attached to the profession, and, having been born a younger son, was not in possession of any inheritance, though there were many personal circumstances, which, to a mind of less ardour, would have justified, even had hostilities continued, the step he had taken.

Count Manhim was passed the middle period of life, and approaching to threescore; his health had suffered greatly by military hardships, which made him an old man even compared with his years, and his invalid condition was augmented in the last enterprises of the war by a severe wound in the head, and the loss of his right arm. It is unnecessary to mention the other circumstances which induced him to retire from the field.

By the wound in his head he was not at all times master of himself; on the contrary, he

was frequently morbidly irascible, and subject to mental delusions, which impaired the reliance that was previously put upon his word. But he felt the loss of his sword arm more seriously than the alternation in the current of his thoughts, which the wound in his head produced. In fact, he was not himself at all aware of what he had suffered by the wound ; it was only his friends who perceived its fitful effects. But perfectly awake to the injury he had sustained in the arm, he ascribed to it more of his infirmity than it really caused.

Count Manhim was often inconsistent in his conduct, never from design, but from the influence of his military injuries. It might have been supposed that these personal vicissitudes would have been soon observed in the reclusive fraternity of a monastery, and that due allowance would have been made by the brethren in consequence ; but at this time he had not been so long with them as to obtain a just indulgence for his occasional errors, and he suffered nothing

in their esteem by having brought from the camp an enviable reputation, not only as a man of honour, but as one who had never incurred reproach. While he enjoyed, however, all the weight of his well-earned reputation, he was not by his wounds in a condition always to entitle him to stand so high with the friars.

But although the Count, in the palmy vigour of his life, richly merited a degree of respect approaching to admiration, he had, like other men, his weaknesses. Among these, his likes and dislikes were rather too prominent; and it was a common saying among his friends, that with all his manliness he often resembled the monkey—a creature of sympathies and antipathies. These qualities were not, however, exercised to the prejudice of any one, and their effects were considered with more of mirth than uneasiness. After the wound in his head they attained a predominancy over the operations of his mind, greater than had previously been manifested, and sometimes as-

sumed a degree of strength that impaired his benevolence. On his arrival in the monastery he was in this condition, and the high character which he brought with him was not suspected of having been deteriorated.

He had not been many days resident with the friars when his infirmities began to show themselves, and particularly in a vehement aversion to Father Dominick. In health this feeling would not have been, perhaps, observable, but in his maimed and mutilated condition it was above control, and he regarded that inflexibly honest man with sentiments of great antipathy, in so much that he shunned his society, and often, when he saw him coming in the cloisters or the gardens, he turned round abruptly and hastened from him with symptoms of alarm.

This peculiarity was not observed at first by the other friars. At last, however, it attracted their attention, and furnished those of lighter humour with amusement.

Undoubtedly there was something insane in the way he felt, but it was not very obvious, nor would it have incurred so melancholy an epithet had it been always uniform, but sometimes it suddenly changed, and causeless hate was as often succeeded by the opposite feeling. Of this, however, the brotherhood had seen no instance, nor was Count Manhim himself aware of the peculiarity, nor knew why at one time he spoke with esteem and love, of those whom, a short time before, he could not sufficiently dislike.

When Father Dominick was observed returning from the Castle, after his encounter on the road with the Abbot, the Count was seen to avoid him, from the mere promptings of his instinctive antipathy. The Friars, who noticed this made merry with the circumstance, and joined the invalid as he hurried from Father Dominick, inquiring in what respects that holy person had provoked his spleen, for on this occasion he had shunned him so abruptly, that

it was not possible to see the action without imagining it was dictated by some inveterate cause.

Sensible, from his feelings, that he was actuated by an irrepressible dislike to the old man, the Count did not affect any disguise, but to the jocularly of the other monks replied seriously—

“ In truth,” said he, “ I cannot well explain my antipathy to that man ; that he is coarse is evident, that he is cold every one allows, but to me he seems worse than coarse or cold—a very island, if I may so say in humanity, unconnected with all his species, apart and distinguished for his sequestered sullenness. Yet he is reported to be, among you, a blameless man, and worthy of much reverence. I have, however, not been able to discern in him any quality entitled to so much regard. I do not say he is ill or vicious, or would do to any man an intentional wrong ; but his very virtues spur him into evil courses, for they are more insti-

gated by pride than by the native offspring of a good heart ; he thinks too ill of other men to be good himself. I may, however, do him injustice, yet I cannot but wish that he were not of our community.”

CHAPTER XIII.

“ Question them not too finely.”

WHEN it was known in the monastery that Father Dominick had not been successful in his endeavour to induce the old Baron to restrain his son from holding communion with the Lutheran Doctors, Count Manhim received from the whole house great credit for his discernment. It is thus that opinions are often formed ; the violence of the Count's dislike, which arose from disease, was ascribed to the acuteness of his perception, and he was praised for his discernment the more, as he had given no satisfactory reason for the antipathy, it was

thought to be the result of almost a natural faculty. The brotherhood was, in consequence, divided into two parties—factions, perhaps, they might be called—Count Manhim's and Father Dominick's.

The younger members embraced the Count's opinion, for the Father had rendered himself obnoxious to many of them by his rigid manners, and the severity with which he condemned their slightest deviations from what he conceived to be the rule of life that should govern the servants of Heaven. The old, and a few other members distinguished for the regularity of their lives, thought the Count's opinion of Father Dominick too hard, or rather they regarded him as a soldier, giving vent to the licentious partialities of the camp. It is no part of our task to examine which was right or wrong, but merely to state the fact; we cannot, however, refrain in doing so, from observing that it is the practice of the younger branches of every community to undervalue

the austere and the godly, and no less the custom of the old, and those whom experience of human nature should mellow, to disregard the perceptions of the young, especially when they profess to observe flaws and errors in the conduct of those who endeavour to possess esteem.

The first effect of the division in the monastery was not very striking; it related chiefly to Father Dominick himself. Some of the younger members, however, were gratified at hearing he had failed to persuade the Baron from interfering, and gave ludicrous and exaggerated versions of what they supposed had been his reception by the veteran. As if in spite, the adherents of the Father no less eagerly mistold the same tale. They represented the old Baron as an impassioned, fretful personage, sudden in his spurts of peevishness, and gave great credit to Father Dominick for the forbearance and patience which it was supposed he had exercised. There was as little truth in their report as in the other account,

and it perhaps involved something of misrepresentation, for the Baron was not that peevish petulant character which their story implied, nor had the monk really been obliged to lay any controul upon himself, in speaking with him. However, both stories had such an air of probability that they were credited, not only by the respective factions of the Count and Friar, but by many within the monastery, who took no sort of interest in the question.

Accordingly, when the Abbot returned from the Castle, and had informed some of both parties, in his confidence, what he had observed there, the Count's party became the partisans of Henry, and Father Dominick's declared themselves enemies to the Lutherans. This division was not, however, very remarkable; the utmost that could be said of it was, it existed, and that the respective members of the opposing parties were not aware it contained seeds of a sedition which might shoot up into vast effects.

The Abbot, in telling the results of his visit, expressed himself so guardedly concerning the young Baron, that, although his intention was to soften the minds of those who heard him towards that ingenuous young man, his caution had the reverse effect, and it very soon came to pass that the partisans of Father Dominick anticipated his conversion to the Lutherans; in some instances, several spoke of it as an event which would soon be known. The Count's party were also of the same opinion; they were slightly infected with what the clergy called the pestiferous heresies, and although they entertained no fears for the ultimate stability of the church, they allowed rather too freely that it stood in need of reparation, and that the original simplicity of the fabric had been marred by the fantastical additions of later times. Still there was no very ardent animosity between the two parties; we only allude to it to show how gentle it was in the beginning. But it is always thus in human

affairs; revolutions begin with mildness and grace, but touched by Fate, they proceed with accelerated haste, and rush at last intense, fervid, and inflaming.

The return of the Abbot was an era; as soon as Father Dominick heard of it he left his solitary cell, and went to him. The cogitations with which he was disturbed had not been of an allaying kind to the holy friars; and, without reflecting on the suavity of the superior's manners, he had allowed himself to expect that he would remonstrate with the Baron, and probably smooth the way to render his own exhortations, in the end, more effectual. But he was disappointed, and in consequence, from the the very circumstances which would have made a man better acquainted with human nature pause and hesitate, he adopted a sterner course.

“It will not do, my lord,” said he, “to practice leniency longer, the church is visibly in danger, and calls for all the zeal of her ministers; the reformers find apt auditors in

those that should defend her, and if the followers of Luther are not put down with the strong hand, we shall soon rue their ascendancy."

"Very true, Father Dominick," replied the Abbot, thoughtfully, "but I do not approve the principle of punishing those who are goaded into excesses by grievances; I would rather grant redress and let the offence provoked by the grievance escape. Some may doubt as to the nature of the grievance, but every one knows that punishment is an evil."

"That," said Father Dominick, "is to imply that there may be wrong and error in the old sanctified usages of the church, and also an acknowledgment that those who seek amendment in such things are not moved by their own intrinsic wickedness. My lord, I cannot be of that opinion; our holy structure, which high Heaven has favoured with so many blessings, stands not in need of such perilous reparations; these men are instigated by a profane spirit,

they seek but to destroy, and in defence we must resist them by the secular power.”

The Abbot made no answer, but sighed deeply, adding,

“ Let us await the issue of the dispute ; while the reformers restrict themselves to argument, we cannot have recourse to other weapons.”

CHAPTER XIV.

“ They seem!—the world is full of seemings.”

IN the afternoon, Count Manhim was taking his accustomed walk in the garden of the monastery, when he was addressed by one of the friars, who was known under the name of Ancelmo, and who related to him that the Abbot had returned home disconcerted, having been as unsuccessful as Father Dominick at the castle.

Ancelmo was a young man not half the age of the Count, and of a cheerful temperament ; he took very little interest in the subject of the controversy, and thought the Abbot and the austere Dominick over much affected by it, no

however absolutely throwing any ridicule upon their zeal, but at the same time, with some levity, saying that he would exult if Henry, finding himself unable to refute the Doctors, declared himself, as he had promised, a convert to their doctrines.

“ I would,” said he, “ rejoice in this result, if it were no more than for the vexation it would give to that rigorous old man, Father Dominick. If it gave our good Abbot any uneasiness I should, however, regret it for the same reason ; but I cannot conceive how he has taken so pensive an interest in the question.”

To Count Manhim this speech was particularly gratifying, he was in a state of excitement all day, from the influence of his wound, and his dislike to Dominick was at the time in a high fervor of causeless rancour ; he could give no explanation to himself for the animation of the hatred which he cherished against the old man, and so expressed himself to Ancelmo, wondering why he should be so unaccountably incensed.

Without meaning any thing particular, Ancelmo replied gaily, that perhaps he was a chosen instrument of Providence, and felt the working of some celestial power propelling him to an undivulged purpose.

In a calmer mood the words of Ancelmo would not have drawn attention, but in the morbid condition of the Count they fell upon his hearing with impressive efficacy ; through all his frame an indescribable thrill of emotion vibrated, for he was naturally superstitious, and the idea of being chosen an immediate agent of Heaven had the effect of inflating his diseased imagination with a wild fantasy ; but with that curious presence of mind which the insane often evince, he inquired with solemnity what Ancelmo meant.

“ Oh, nothing, nothing,” was the reply ; “ but there can be no doubt if you are so roused by this nameless impulse, it must be direct from Heaven—it is in that way that Heaven effects by mortal man the works of its Providence.”

“ I do feel,” said the Count, with a slow and sedate accent, “ that this energy in my bosom, which makes me tremble with aversion at the very sight of the friar, is something ominous, a voice exhorting me.”

Ancelmo was one of those who had heard of the Count's previous character, and in common with his brethren was not aware of the damage which it sustained at times from the injury in his head, and said with something of sincerity.

“ What does it command you to do ?”

“ Ah !” replied the Count, “ that is not yet manifested ; the last time I saw the fierce eye of the stern old man I shrunk and was afraid, but I felt no inclination then to do otherwise than to shun him.”

Ancelmo, still more surprised by this speech, and having no suspicion of the shattered intellect of his companions, inquired,

“ Are your feelings, then, now different ?”

“ I cannot say, but I no longer cower with apprehension and diffidence : I regard Father

Dominick with a stronger antipathy than fear ; I hate him, and yet I cannot assign any cause ; he never did me wrong, never rebuked me, but still I see something about the man that moves my aversion.”

“ If you be seized, Count Manhim, with these blind instincts, you should reveal them to some holier man who may interpret them ;” and he added with awe, “ Men feel not such propensities, but when selected to perform some fatal service.”

In discourse of this kind, becoming more and more grave, the Count and Ancelmo continued walking by themselves for a considerable time in the garden, and when the friar left the old soldier, it was observed that his countenance was uncommonly serious, and that he went at once to his own cell. The Count himself continued long after to meditate in the garden.

It was manifest that his thoughts were dark, and, even to himself, impassioned ; he looked on the ground, often stopped in the course of his

walk as if inwardly debating, and was so abstracted from all external influences as to be in strange antithesis to the objects around, for the day was bright, and a slight breeze only served to make the glittering leaves twinkle with light. The flowers, which here and there drew gladness from the sunbeams, as it were in return for their perfumes, had no effect on his senses; even the glorious sun himself was unregarded, and the clear blue of the cloudless æther could not raise his eyes from what a stranger might have thought, their sordid perusal of the trodden earth.

When he had continued some time in this ruminating mood, he retired into the church, as the altars were lighted for vespers; but, before any of the friars had entered to perform the rites, he walked, without lifting his eyes to the right or to the left, straight towards one of the side chapels, the altar-piece of which portrayed the martyrdom of a saint. Fixing his eyes on the picture, he reverentially knelt, and

remained for some time in a praying posture without uttering a word ; it was plain that the mind was rapt, and that his orisons were vented in thoughts, not in words.

Having continued in this silent position some-time, he then rose, and was proceeding towards the door, when he met the Monks coming in. An old man in white and scarlet robes was carrying a gilded crucifix before them, and behind him, at some distance apart, were two little boys in the same dress swinging censers of incense.

Not being yet professed, the Count did not join in the procession, but stood on the one side to allow them to pass, and, when the whole had gone up the aisle, he reverentially followed.

There was nothing so uncommon in the latter order of the ceremony as to excite particular notice ; but the whole demeanour of the Count had been, from the thoughtless speech of Ancelmo respecting him as an instrument of Providence, very awful, and his enthusiasm continued to increase. Before the service was completed,

several of the friars observed his solemn air ; and when they retired from before the altar, they spoke to one another in such a manner as to be interesting, the more especially as the Count, by his devotional attitude, appeared not inclined to move from the spot he had chosen. When all the friars had left the church, he was still standing there, entranced in religious meditation.

How long his orisons were continued cannot now be known ; but when the friars broke up their procession, they remarked to one another that the Count, who had been so distinguished for his heroism in the wars, appeared to have received a gracious endowment of piety. It thus came to pass that all the house were impressed with his saintly dispositions ; and although his particular devotion partook of insanity, it was not supposed that it received any bias from disease.

CHAPTER XV.

“ I have done the deed.”

AT an hour after vespers it was the custom, in the Monastery of St. Michael's, to close the gates for the night ; but on that occasion it appeared that many of the friars were absent. In this there was some breach of discipline, but as it was known they had gone to the town to be present at the conclusion of the dispute between Henry and the Lutheran strangers, the gates, in consequence, were ordered to be kept open an hour longer.

Whether this circumstance had any particular effect, or that the general brotherhood were

really interested in the result of the controversy, cannot be determined ; but all the friars at home were assembled on a paved platform in front of the church, discoursing of the topics of the time, and lamenting to one another the growth of heresy, which was known to be springing up with alarming vigour in all parts of Christendom ; some did not attach much importance to the phenomenon, but considered it as an epidemic mania, which would soon blow over and entirely subside ; others thought more seriously, and spoke of it as indicating a change in men's minds which might lead to strange effects ; but the main group of these pious brothers encircled Father Dominick, who was inveighing with eloquence on the newly planted snares that were on the earth to entrap unwary souls ; and it was the general sentiment of those who listened to his pious harangue, that the clergy were remiss in not extinguishing the heresy by secular means.

While they were thus employed, and the

earth was becoming more shadowy as the twilight deepened, and the stars on high kindled, the absent friars were discovered returning home in vehement conversation with one another. Those who lightly viewed the aspects of the times continued undisturbed, but the group around Father Dominick, consisting of older and graver men, suddenly dispersed themselves, and many went forward to meet the friars, to inquire what had come to pass.

The Abbot himself was among the crowd, and whether from character, or any exhortation from his superiors, was undoubtedly the most interested there.

He went forward to meet those who were coming from the town, and the brotherhood made way for him as he advanced. All were by this time roused into attention, and no one could mistake that some important event was about to be disclosed. It was so.

The first words that the thoughtful Abbot addressed to the brothers who had been hear-

ing the dispute, were heard in silence, the crowd was hushed, and his voice sounding loud, echoed in the stillness from the buildings.

“What has been the result?” said he.

Instead of one direct answer, several voices spoke, and it was not easy to make out what they said; it was not, however, a direct reply.

The Abbot, perceiving the cause of this confusion, ordered all to be quiet, and called by name on one of the brethren who had been at the town to be the spokesman, repeating, in the same sonorous tone, that he had made use of at first—

“What has been the result?”

Father Benedict, instead of replying at once to this simple and direct question, said that it was thought by many the young Baron had effectually answered the cavils of the Lutherans, but others were of opinion that he had not; “and,” continued Father Benedict, “I am sorry to say there is a rent and schism among our own party on the subject.”

Father Dominick, impatient with this evasion, as he deemed it, of the Abbot's question, stepped forward and said, with the accent of passion—

“How has the dispute ended? we do not want to hear what you and others think; tell us the result.”

No one present was surprised to hear Father Dominick say so, but they were variously affected when Benedict replied that it was finished.

“What then?” interposed the Abbot.

“Why, it is generally thought,” answered Benedict, “that the Lutherans have had the best of the argument.”

Every one, at these words, turned his eyes on Father Dominick, who, standing at the time on a step, was more elevated than the rest, and on his head, the moon, then rising, threw a gleam of light that made him strikingly conspicuous.

“But Henry, the young Baron, what of

him?" cried the irascible Monk, with hurried and suffocating accents.

"Oh!" replied Benedict, not particularly agitated, "he has acknowledged himself beaten."

"What do you say?" cried the Abbot, in alarm. "Do you," exclaimed Father Dominick, "mean to say that he had confessed himself unable to answer their heretical jargon?"

Friar Benedict, who was not aware of the importance connected with Henry's part in the controversy, said—

"Even so, he not only acknowledged himself unable to refute the Lutherans, but in the end declared himself of their opinion."

At this moment several of the friars rushed towards Benedict, exclaiming—

"Did he? Did he?"

The Abbot, in an emphatic manner, observed, "Then he has joined the Lutherans."

"I call upon you, holy Father," cried Dominick aloud, "to interpose the dread authority

with which you are armed by the Bishop, to check this criminal revolt."

The Abbot turned round, and addressed himself calmly to the impassioned Father, and said—

"We cannot to-night take any step, but at the dawn of day to-morrow a Chapter will be convened, for there is something dangerous in this open secession of the young Baron."

At this moment Count Manhim, who was among the crowd, stepped forward, glowing with indignation at the impetuosity of Father Dominick, and said to the Abbot—

"You do right, sir, to take the counsel of the Chapter, rather than to obey at once the frantic instigations of a rash old man."

Dominick, on hearing himself so spoken of, was at first almost choked with passion, and some time elapsed before his rage could find utterance in language; when it did, it was too violent to excite much sympathy, still some

were present who approved of his earnestness, and condemned, in their own minds, the interference of the soldier, or, more properly, novice, as he was then.

Father Dominick, in regaining the mastery of his choler, again exhorted the Abbot, in virtue of the powers with which he was entrusted, to seize Henry, and in no measured terms lamented that the Lutherans, or, as he called them, "The doomed Apostles of heresy," by being travellers, were under the protection of the magistrates, and the old lukewarm Baron, as he was pleased to designate the proselyte's father.

But again the anxious Abbot interposed, and reminded him that the Chapter would be called together; as they resolved he would so act; in the meantime he declared, that he did not think his powers sufficient for himself to institute any coercive proceedings unadvised.

While the nucleus of the crowd were thus

debating, and expressing their consternation at what was deemed the imprudence of the young Baron, the Janitors gave notice of shutting the gates, and broke up all debate for that night.

CHAPTER XVI.

“ There is a healing balsam in soft words.”

“ THE world is saturated with misery ; like water in the sponge, a slight pressure makes it soon apparent. In every shape and condition of things it is found. Among the humble, ravenous poverty predominates, and the famishing glutton, as the rod of Aaron did the Egyptian serpents, devours all minor evils. In the higher ranks it takes the form of danger, or, what is as ill to be endured, carking discontent. In the middle orders, where want is never felt nor peril can intrude, distrust asserts her bad eminence ; and all the ills of life become barbed

with cares respecting objects to which the heart gives value in its partialities.”

Thoughts of this kind passed through the Lord Abbot's mind, as he was dressing at day-break to attend the Chapter which he had directed to be summoned. Experience in the world had taught him that there was too much truth in the changes which the Reformers had alledged against the conduct of the clergy, and he was one of those who thought a gradual remedy should be applied without ostentation ; for it was evident to him that the world was becoming impatient under the oppression : the sudden revolt of Luther, however, greatly disturbed him.

He saw that the fire-damp had been approached, and that an universal explosion was about to take place. He also saw that the coercive measures adopted to quench the danger were of a nature to hasten it on ; for he had been directed by his superiors to employ force, penal means, to extirpate the heresies. The

people were disposed, he heard, in vast multitudes to side with the Reformers ; and in thinking of these things, he uttered the disconsolate soliloquy we have quoted, lamenting that the cares of his own office far outweighed the gratifications it could procure.

At this time the morning had only begun to dapple the east, and as some time would elapse before the members of the Chapter could assemble, though he had fixed an early hour and announced that the business was urgent, he descended to the garden oppressed with the news of Henry's secession.

It was fully an hour before sun-rise ; the air was fresh and cool, bathing the gentle senses with that delicious enjoyment which is only experienced in the dewy hours of the vernal season. The morning planet shone high and clear, and a few of the greater stars still spangled the brightening azure of the cloudless sky. The flowers around him sweetened the air with their fragrance ; but their beauty was dimmed

by the lingering shades of night, and something of a holy, though fading obscurity, made all around him minister ineffectually to tranquillity. Even the voice of early birds seemed to his disordered fancy to jar with dissonance, and the tenor of his thoughts made him morosely repel the blandishments of nature, in one of those sweet hours of prime sometimes conferred on the world, as if to reconcile the disappointed mind to that beneficence which at all times pervades the creation.

But, like every other afflicted with uneasy fancies, he was insensible to the influences of the opal-fronted morn. Perhaps something like regret was mingled with his reflections, when he might be required to exercise the authority with which he was entrusted ; for he regarded the young Baron with more than ordinary affection, and indeed cherished towards the whole Rublestein family sentiments of esteem. But, from whatever cause arising, he was troubled ; and the aspect of the morning failed to ap-

pease the anxieties with which he was then visited.

At last the bell announced that the time was come at which the Chapter was to meet, and he adjourned to take his place in that assembly.

It is needless to relate what passed at the meeting: suffice it to say, that it was determined to summon Henry before that portion of them which were constituted an inquisitorial tribunal, and to sift him on those points of faith respecting which they were most instructed.

Out of consideration for the neighbourliness which had long existed between the monastery and the castle, it was determined to proceed with clemency, no doubt this softened feeling was, in a great measure, owing to the tenderness with which the Abbot spoke of the worth of the family. But many in the Chapter regarded the young Baron as a tainted person, who had no right to indulgence. To reconcile, however, these decided characters to his policy, the Abbot proposed that Father Dominick should again

be sent to the castle, and with his wonted meekness invite the suspected young man to be examined.

This concession was universally applauded. Those who thought that coercion should at once be resorted to were constrained to acknowledge the prudent temperance of it even to themselves. With the moderate it was highly extolled as combining affability with firmness, and the friends of the Abbot magnified his address—Father Dominick himself relaxed his austerity, and considered his mission as extorted by his own worth and fitness; remembering that to his former nomination, the Abbot had shown himself averse. It thus happened that the whole Chapter unanimously adopted the proposition.

The meeting then adjourned till the evening, and Father Dominick immediately prepared for the execution of his mission.

After quitting the Chapter-house, the Abbot threw himself, as if by accident, in the austere Friar's way, and judiciously expressed to him

how distressing it was to them all to take so decided a step.

“ But,” said he, “ let us not yet unsheath the sword ; the young Baron may still remain true to the banner of the church, though, in the ambition of youth, he has indiscreetly declared, as it is said, for the Reformers.”

The manner in which he spoke had some effect in alleviating the humour of Father Dominick, and the sentiments of mildness and benevolence were too much in the spirit of catholic Christianity to be objected to.

“ But,” said Father Dominick, “ though I agree it would not be wise at first to put forth all your power, still some intimation ought to be conveyed of its extent.”

“ Yes,” said the Abbot, “ what you mention deserves consideration ; but if we think too much of the authority we possess, are we not apt to forget the restriction we intend to put upon it ? I pray you, good Father, be gentle in this office ; but it is needless to exhort you ;

your own good sense will check any impulse which, in an unguarded moment, your detestation of odious heresy might urge you to employ."

Father Dominick professed his conviction of the utility of proceeding mildly, and left the Abbot with the assurance of resorting to the aids only of charity and persuasion. Nor would it be just to say, that he did not sincerely believe he could abide by their dictates. Still his words did not obtain that credence with the Abbot which they seemed to deserve; and that urbane personage retired to his own apartment, almost grieved to think that, in order to obtain unanimity in the Chapter, he had found it expedient to propose the mission for one whom he could not approve as the fittest.

CHAPTER XVII.

“ Oh wad some power the giftie gie us,
To see ourselves as others see us.”

FATHER Dominick left the monastery for the Castle, determined to conduct himself with forbearance, and while he condemned in his own mind the treason against Heaven, as he deemed it, of heresy, he endeavoured to frame an apology for the weakness of human nature, and the errors into which man is liable to fall. The beauty of the morning and the freshness of the season, undoubtedly contributed to the inspiration of these amiable feelings, and as he walked along, the ruggedness of his nature was softened like a dodered tree, that has long ceased to

acknowledge the passing seasons, but, in a propitious time, puts forth again leaves, and seems to flourish. He appeared re-endowed with the sentiments of youth, and walked on towards the Castle alone, if not a good man, at least one entitled to respect.

He beheld, on every side, tokens of the benevolence with which all things had been first formed. In the green and glossy leaves, playing with the caressing air, he saw emblems and incitements to confidence and gaiety. The birds carolled to him with peculiar joy, and the riant sparkling of the brooks and rills was, as if, in sweet mockery, it bade sullenness depart.

He felt within his own bosom a sympathetic glow, that may be compared to the fresh verdure of the moss on the stone, rivalling in hue the grass that grows on spots of more fertility.

While in this pacified temper as he proceeded on his journey, he discovered two men at some considerable distance coming towards him.

They were strangers, and, by the fashion of their apparel, he perceived they were neither ecclesiastical nor military. As they drew nearer he saw, by the colour of their dress, that though secular in their character, they had yet a scholastic air; and he concluded that, possibly, they might be the disputative Doctors who had so alarmed the monastery, and filled the neighbourhood with commotion.

When they came up his suspicion was confirmed, and somehow, at the sight, he was considerably agitated, especially when they inquired of him if they were on the right road to the monastery?

Instead of replying directly to their question, he asked if they intended to go there, and what was their object?

Doctor Muller, the spokesman, answered civilly, though he was rather surprised at the abruptness of the question, that they had been some time resident in the town, and that their object, in going to the monastery, was to see

the superior, whom they had heard well spoken of, particularly for the affability of his manners; adding, that it was their intention to ask him to permit a disputation in his church, with any members of his house, respecting certain points of discipline and doctrine which in their opinion required amendment.

The fears of Father Dominick were increased by this candid answer, and he replied, with some warmth—

“ You are, then, those apostles of heresy who have so much disturbed us; you may turn back, the Lord Abbot will not see you, the Bishop has heard of your pestiferous practices, and has sent his mandate to hasten your departure beyond this diocese.”

The communication was quite uncalled for, and nothing in the manner of the two Doctors was in the slightest degree apparently calculated to chafe Father Dominick.

When he saw the astonishment with which he was regarded, the acrid old man repeated,

in a tone of arrogance, that they would show their discretion by returning immediately home.

Whether it was owing to any thing in the way he said this, or to some infirmity in Dr. Muller's character, is doubtful ; but instead of accepting the advice tendered, he replied, with pertinacity, that he was commissioned by Heaven to teach the truth and Christianity to all men.

This was to Father Dominick exceedingly exciting, and accordingly, without examining Dr. Muller's predilection for an argument, the words truth and Christianity seemed to him most improperly used, and he cried, kindling with passion.

“ How dare you, Sir, allow these sacred terms to be polluted by heretical lips. But, Sir, the presumption of you and your sect will not be long endured, the church is roused already, the mane and tail of her power threaten all heretics with penalties and indignation.”

Dr. Muller, a cautious and sedate person, seeing how much Father Dominick was inflamed, took his companion by the arm, and walked on without saying a word, or giving any token of adieu, leaving the old man standing in the path shaking with anger, and looking after them with inexpressible vexation.

“ This comes,” said he, “ of that rash young man’s declaration last night ; they are proud of the conquest, they presume upon it, they are going to our Abbot, they have heard of his weakness, but they shall not achieve the ruin of our house by all the arts and subtlety that the ministers of perdition have armed them with.”

So saying, he turned round and went forward on the path which led to the Castle with hasty and perturbed steps, a fiery visage, and eyes that sparkled with fierceness.

At this time the Baron and his lady were discoursing of their son. It could not be said that they very strenuously condemned Henry

for his declaration. The veteran did not think it a matter of importance, and the partialities of the mother mitigated her dislike of the proceeding. They were both in the expectation, that the dispute being now ended, there would be no longer any impediment to the marriage of Henry and Matilda.

“ It gladdens me,” said the old man, “ to think he will be so entranced with her, that he must soon forget all this controversy, and become more open and free-hearted.”

“ I am in hopes he will,” said the old lady ; “ and that if he have been led aside from duty by these subtle doctors, he will return to the fold, as the good Abbot says, — but here she comes.”

“ Well, Matilda,” said the Baroness, as she came in, “ we may now congratulate you on the dispute being ended.”

“ Yes,” replied Matilda modestly, “ but Henry has not yet been with me ; he went early to the town to bid, I understand, the Lutheran Doctors carry their controversies to

the monastery, and has not yet returned: ha!—his tread,—he comes.”

She had scarcely uttered these words when Henry entered. The careful and knotted looks which had deformed his natural aspect were gone, and he came in with the light step and jocund air of one who had escaped from some perplexity.

CHAPTER XVIII.

“ Oh ! it is ominous to be so wild.”

The family of Rublestein had not been very long in conversation together, when Father Dominick came hastily into the apartment.

From the time he had met the Doctors his passion had increased, and by some secret sympathy the precipitance of his steps had accelerated the ardour of his mind.

The Baron, with whom he was no favourite, turned round, as he entered, abruptly, and exclaimed,—

“ How now, Sir Priest ; none of your cloth are entitled to such license here.”

Dominick, unconscious of any offence, and arrogant with the pride of office, answered somewhat unmannerly,—

“ I come an armed Avenger. It is proclaimed that your weak and wicked son there has declared for the accursed, and it is believed also that you abet his guilt.”

The Baron, who, though good-natured, was quick-tempered, replied with vehemence,—

“ I charge you, meddling monk, not to upbraid me so rudely.”

Dominick, quivering with rage, which the indignation of the Baron exasperated, cried,—

“ Do you consent to the perdition of your son ?”

“ Bold man !” exclaimed the old soldier, stamping his foot indignantly ; but, suddenly checking himself, he added—“ I will repress my choler. Spider, get thee to thy cell ! Come with me, Henry ; this unmannerly priest probes me to the quick, it is not easy to brook such insolence ;—come.”

With these words he took hold of the young Baron by the arm, and retired from the scene. In the same moment Father Dominick, untamed in his resentment, addressed himself to Matilda, exclaiming—

“ Abjure this fated youth ; in him an everlasting contagion lurks. And you, sad mother—or, let me rather say, sad agent, that the avenging Heavens have chosen to breed a foredoomed progeny——”

“ Are you mad ?” cried the Baroness, “ Shame ! my Henry blamelessly obeys his conscience.”

The maddened Friar, mounting in his passion, cried.—

“ Woman, woman ! you know not what you say. Vial of wrath—Eve ! dread parent to another sentenced race !”

The lady, somewhat alarmed by his intoxication of passion, said more calmly,—

“ Be civil, Father Dominick ; my son is honest, and all-judging Heaven can read his heart.”

But the old man, still more frantic, cried,—

“Peace, peace!”

“If thou art beside thyself I must go forth and send thee aid,” said the lady. “Come, my Matilda, look not so amazed; come, leave this bedlamite.”

“She shall not go,” cried Father Dominick, sternly seizing Matilda by the arm, crying,

“Resign that hand—there’s ruin in thy touch! Oh! ye blest saints, that sit in Paradise, cry out and intercede for this lost race!”

“The man is mad,” said the Baroness to Matilda; “he must be tended; come at once with me.”

“She shall not from this dreadful spot depart; as you revere the living King of kings, fly the embraces of that fated mother; by all the tortures in the dark abyss, flee, daughter, flee! avaunt from this destruction!”

Matilda, whom he swung from the Baroness as he uttered this, cried,—

“ You tear and harrow me ; these are wild words.”

But, with no abatement of passion, he added,

“ I am commissioned in this work of fate, and may not answer thy irreverent questioning. Stand where thou art, and let that instrument of vengeance leave me.”

Still more terrified by his frenzy, Matilda exclaimed to the Baroness,—

“ Oh ! thou hast been my mother.”

“ No more !” shouted the monk—“ Stand there !” and turning round, he said to the astonishment of the frightened Baroness, “ Go hence, thou doomed ! go,—fly, woman, woman ! thou canst not fly from omnipresent wrath.”

Self-possession in some degree returned to the old lady ; and going up to the ghastly and trembling Matilda, she took her firmly by the haad, and was leading her out of the room, saying to her at the same time,—

“ Come with me child ; the old man is possessed.”

But in the same moment his ungovernable passion impelled him forward, and grasping Matilda again, dragged her from the apartment, crying with a hoarse loud voice,

“ This brand that I have snatched from the burning, remains with me. Daughter, come hence; no words,—delivered from the grasps of horror,—come, come !”

In uttering this rave of passion, he drew Matilda away, leaving the Baroness overwhelmed with consternation.

“ Does it rain fire,” she exclaimed, “ into the brains of men, that he speaks thus, and has wrenched Matilda from my arms, or is all this the riot of a dream? Ho! help—help—help !”

Her cries roused the whole house, who met the Priest, insane with passion, dragging his shrieking captive through the hall. The Baron and Henry heard the noise, and flying to the spot, rescued her. Dominick looking round, seemed as if suddenly awaking from a delirium, stood still, and gazed upon the crowd,

of servants and retainers whom the noise had brought together. He then extended his arms, and dropping on his knees, prayed for the compassion of Heaven on all the doomed and devoted—all but Henry: him he consigned to eternal excommunication; and rising from his knees, again incensed with passion, charged those that heard him to shun communion with the lost young man.

What stirred again the fires of his rage was the affected apathy of the old Baron, who, habituated to the dreadful orgies of war, said as coolly to his son as if they were in the whirlwind of a battle,—

“Poor man! he must not be allowed to quit this roof unattended.”

There was a tone of ironical compassion in these few words that conveyed something more irritating than contempt; and Father Dominick, who by this time was really inflamed to desperation, found no utterance, but stretching out his hands, and leaping with a howl, darted for-

ward to the ashes in the grate, and flinging them wildly into the air, shrieked aloud,—

“As these—so are the damned!”

Then with almost supernatural rapidity, he hurried from the hall, and, without looking behind him, fled homeward.

The silent surprise and awe which ensued cannot be described; but the old Baron seeing that there was no method in his madness, said to Henry as he returned to the armoury—

“That man is honest, though insane; there is no feint in his passion, but we must prepare for the result; if there be many such zealous spirits among the clergy, the storm is but beginning.”

The crowd in the hall had only witnessed the last paroxysm of Father Dominick's transports, and with one accord ascribed his extravagance to the sudden graspings and violence of demons, especially when they recalled his vehemence to Matilda, whose gentle and gracious deportment had long obtained their attachment and esteem.

CHAPTER XIX.

“It is not wise to wear your sword unsheathed.”

HUMAN nature is subject to many more diseases than the physicians recognize ; but of all the undescribed ails which flesh is heir to, perhaps none is more afflicting than that of being subject to phantasms. The rage of Father Dominick had its origin in this infirmity. In the highest state of excitement the feelings flash into the regions of madness, as in his case, but with few they blaze so intensely. In daily life it manifests itself in those conceits and misapprehensions which are equally causes of distress though unattended with violence.

When connected with religion, this species of reasoning insanity obtains the name of fanaticism ; but then it is of a kind that amounts almost to actual delirium. Of that energy we do not speak, but only of the more temperate vapour which attaches itself to so many minds in the shape of enthusiasm. It is commonly said that genius is akin to this malady, and it cannot be doubted that only a thin partition divides them ; still they are not the same, and the intellect has a coarse tact which does not discriminate their respective operations : genius revels and delights in multiplying and exalting the means of pleasure ; but minds corroded with this offensive phagedæna have an opposite tendency, and unconsciously imbitter the evils of fortune. We are not, however, engaged on a metaphysical disquisition, and must, therefore, now pursue the regular course of our narrative.

After parting with Father Dominick so abruptly, Dr. Muller and his companion went

forward to the monastery, merely expressing their regret to one another that so many of the clergy were acrimoniously opposed to the Reformation.

“By this blind opposition,” said the Doctor, “I am much affraid that differences of opinion will be resolved into actual hostilities, for men are as much governed by their interests as by their convictions, and it happens, as if it were an ordination of nature, that interests affected by reformations are too slightly considered ; kings and statesmen, I allow, act in their affairs differently, they consider interests too much, and err as greatly as those who regard them too little ; only the philosopher who sits apart from the turmoils of the world thinks judiciously on this subject ; he sees that many are sordid and can be only safely ruled by their interests, but he also confesses to himself that there is another class above the interested, the high-minded and those insensible to tangible motives, with whom some other mode of treatment must be em-

ployed. The depositaries of power obtain the title of great when they are endowed with this discriminative and rare practical faculty."

"I agree with you," said Dr. Rupert, "and certainly the virulence with which amendments are resisted might be mollified, if mankind could be brought to understand the utility of compensation; for, after all, it is not so much a doubt of the truth of what the Reformers maintain, as a dread of their desire to possess the loaves and fishes that makes the clergy so much our enemies."

In discourse of this kind the two Doctors continued their walk to the Monastery, and on their arrival, they stated to one of the janitors their desire to see the Superior, and found no impediment to their access. Indeed, the Abbot was one of those men who know the advantage of seeing and hearing every thing with their own eyes and ears; perhaps in his religious principles he was not so strict as many in his situation might have deemed it necessary to be; but

he was discerning in business, active in his duties, and in all the general qualities that merit respect in high trusts superior to most men. Some said that he had a slight inflexion of sinister cunning about him, but this opinion was not correct; he possessed only more than ordinary acuteness in detecting the latent peculiarities of characters, and this kind of talent made him more cautious in admitting to his confidence those who thought they deserved it. His knowledge, also, of the world made him give more heed to the suggestions of this perspicacity than he would naturally have done; it was, in fact, an artificial guardedness which he had assumed that others considered innate cunning. Had he been a soldier he would have been open and frank, because he would not then have felt that reverence for decorum which was ever present to his mind, and which made him, as a churchman, assume the wariness so much misunderstood. The consequence was, that being naturally more free than most men

from sinister intentions, but more addicted to address, the result of his habit of professional caution and his high offices, he seemed less intitled than he really deserved to be to the confidence of those who could not appreciate the general superiority of his talents : but no suspicion was ever entertained of his integrity.

Dr. Muller and his companion were conducted to him as he sat alone in his parlour, with various letters and papers on a table before him. Although aware of their character, he received them courteously, nor did he observe the surprise of the menial, but waived to the two strangers to be seated, and resumed himself the chair in which he had been sitting when they entered.

Dr. Muller communicated the object of their visit, and solicited the use of the monasterial church to dispute in.

Without in any degree abating his wonted urbanity, the Abbot replied, that he could not comply with their request.

“ I have received,” said he, “ instructions from the Bishop not to countenance these controversies which are now so rife throughout Christendom, and although I am not specially prohibited from lending the church, yet there is an implied obligation in the general orders which prevents me.”

While he was speaking, two old friars came into the room, attracted by hearing that the Lutheran Doctors were there, and seating themselves unbidden, quietly listened with greedy ears to this, as they deemed it, unbecoming speech.

The words only used in civility excited particular notice, and Dr. Muller, pleased with the general affability with which he had been received, expressed his sorrow at the prohibition in the use of the church, intimating at the same time how much he and his friend were obliged by the condescension of their reception, acknowledging that they would not therefore press the request.

The business of the visit being thus closed, the Abbot prolonged their stay by asking several questions respecting the progress of the Lutheran opinions.

The two old friars looked at one another, and simultaneously repeated at the same moment the word 'opinions.' They had never heard the errors, as they considered them, designated by so soft an epithet, heresies they thought would have been a fitter appellation, for they thought not, like their Superior, that good manners required him to say nothing offensive to his visitors.

In the whole of this interview the Abbot was actuated only by his habitude of consideration for the feelings of others, nor was his ecclesiastical honesty in any degree whatever impaired by his courtesy. The two friars, however, did not think so; they were old men accustomed to little intercourse with their species, and could not conceive that honesty might be practised without rudeness; on the contrary,

they thought that ascerbity was an essential ingredient of the virtue, and were surprised at the Abbot's gentleness. It is thus that the recluse, from the best intentions, unnecessarily are led to foment disagreements into quarrels ; not aware of the force of their expressions, they are instigated, by undisciplined feeling, to use stronger phrases than the meaning of what they intend to say requires, thinking that strength of language is equivalent to strength of argument. Nay, they go further in error, and mistake phraseology altogether for reasoning, giving offence where they intend to produce persuasion.

Finding themselves unsuccessful, but pleased with their reception and the manner of their refusal, the Lutherans took their leave, the Abbot also followed them, having at the time some little professional office to perform in another part of the monastery ; the two old monks were in consequence left by themselves.

CHAPTER XX.

“ There is no fallacy like that of seeming.”

It happened that Bernard, the servitor who conducted the two Reformers into the Abbot's presence, and who had seen with surprise the manner in which he had received them, was one of those coarse, sand-stone characters which neither education nor hope can refine. He had been a person of low birth; unblemished, however, in his character; and was induced by some sentiment of religion to enter the monastery. Continuing in the practice of the same constitutional qualities, he had at last been admitted to become a novice, with the prospect of

being in due time adopted into the brotherhood. To sum up his mental qualifications in one sentence, he was a person urged by strong ambition, not only without the ill that should attend it, but the grandeur of mind that gives it dignity.

Although accustomed to the affability of the Abbot, the bias of Bernard's coarse nature made him ascribe his habit on this occasion to design, and he inferred from the reception, that there was a leaning towards the Reformation in his mind.

On leaving the apartment he met, as he returned through the cloisters, with Count Manhim, and impressed with what he thought he had seen, stopped him and communicated his suspicion, remarking, that he would not be surprised to see the doctrine of Luther acknowledged in that neighbourhood, more especially since the young Baron had declared himself a proselyte.

The Count heard the news without much

emotion ; the sleep of the night and the sequestration in which he had till then indulged, were favourable to the subsidence of his disease. He was comparatively temperate in his mind, and his natural character had regained the ascendancy ; perhaps had nothing occurred to occasion fresh excitement, he would have become entirely tranquil ; indeed he had begun to entertain milder thoughts even of Father Dominick's bigotry, and with something like moderation, was not so much disposed as he had been the preceding night, to regard the old man with aversion ; he did not, it is true, look upon him as right, but he was reluctant to condemn him, and the general tendency of his reflections was benevolent towards the venerable but austere aged man.

Having separated himself from Bernard, the train of thought into which he afterwards fell, partook of the alloy that tempered his disease, and his solitary meditations were in consequence

much less severe against the frailties of man than in his state of excitement.

A slight feeling of curiosity was, however, awakened by Bernard's communication, which induced him to loiter in the cloisters till the Doctors came out, in order to see what sort of persons they were. In doing this, he had no ulterior purpose in view ; but he was observed by Bernard and several monks, and by what subsequently took place, they ascribed his action to design ; particularly, when after the departure of Dr. Muller and his companion, they saw him retire abstracted and thoughtful to his own cell. No motive was assigned for his conduct, but it was observed, and hereafter it will appear, that it was recollected as a manifestation of deep and agitated feeling.

In the mean time, the two old friars who had been left together in the Abbot's parlour, were discoursing of the interview which had passed, and agreed in condemning with no ordinary emphasis, the appearance of the two Doctors

They did not like their impassioned physiognomy contrasted with the sleeky colourless contentment of those Doctors in the church, with whom they were acquainted. But the chief object of their vituperation was the Abbot himself: they could not conceive any other cause for his suavity to the Doctors than a secret wish to stand well with them, which, in their opinion, arose from a sinister purpose which, however, beggared conjecture to say what it was, but in the opinion of both, something implied a predisposition for the prevalent disease.

This notion derived confirmation from his recent conduct. They recollected his objections to the first mission of Father Dominick to the castle, and it admitted of no doubt, as they thought, that his consent to the second was a device of cunning. They saw, indeed, much that was equivocal in the conduct of the Abbot, and said with mysterious looks and hints of prophecy, that the lots of the orthodox were in evil days.

“ We are old men,” said Father Augustin, “ but in the course of nature we can see coming events, and feel by anticipation the calamities that will soon take place.”

“ Very true,” said Father Paul, “ for our day the existing frame of things may last, but is it not gall and wormwood to the spirit to behold the warders in the watch-tower making signals to the besiegers?”

“ You do not,” said his ancient brother priest, “ surely suspect perfidy in high places ; you know the Abbot bears the repute of being a very courteous man, and may think that in these ominous times he was called upon to treat the Reformers with urbanity. In my opinion, however, Brother Paul, he has, if that were his intention, committed an irremediable error of judgment. But do you imagine he was really actuated by such a motive?”

“ I will,” replied Paul, “ judge of no man uncharitably, but it belongs to the props and pillars of the church to stand erect and stubborn

in the present quaking of the fabric ; however, let us keep a sharp eye upon him, for we have heard enough to justify the indulgence of the worst suspicions."

"I think so too," said the more ingenuous Augustin ; "but we have discovered nothing, Father Paul, by which we can make other men believe as we do ; therefore, be prudent, but observe."

With infirm and tottering steps, these hoary Machiavelli, as they deemed themselves, retired to take some repose, that they might be the more fresh and able to attend the Chapter summoned for the evening.

Soon after their departure, the Abbot returned into the room, and from among his papers on the table, drew a work recently published by Luther, which he began to read, and continued for some time entranced with the contents ; at last he laid it down, and throwing himself back in his chair, began to reflect aloud on what he had read, saying to himself,—

“ What the man has written is good common sense, and certainly if heaven were pleased to bestow on human nature the blessing of reason, it was with the intention that we should use it. Nay, when the Almighty essence assumed the form and incarnation of man, we are not told that it reserved to itself any peculiar function or faculty but only those of human nature, exercising this same reason or right of judgment as mortal men do. I am puzzled, and feel more and more the expediency of being indulgent towards others ; I wish the Bishop had not been so peremptory. Father Dominick is an instrument too highly tempered for these turbulent times. He seemed, however, in a restrained mood this morning when he went to the castle, and may have conducted himself there better than I have dared to hope. I long for his return, nor will I again hazard the employment of one who believes himself so good, and yet is so irascible.”

CHAPTER XXI.

“ Is not all nature an unfolded book,
Wherein the thoughts of all climes may be read ?”

OF all who felt themselves affected by the declaration of Henry, as a proselyte to the Reformers, none suffered more than the Lady Gertrude : it was not alarm nor fear, nor anything allied to hope, that stirred her, for at the same time she was informed that Matilda had declared the religion of Henry to be hers.

The wayward woman had imagined that religion was stronger in the female heart than love, yet she had meditated for herself to adopt the new creed of Henry, whenever she received the anticipated tidings ; she was no doubt, in

speculation, correct, for love is not always universally the ascendant sentiment of the female mind : women who are actuated by the coarser part of the passion, and who feel not that love is spiritual as well as corporeal, often pursue other objects than its supremacy with more devotion ; some think their duty to fathers paramount to dearer earthly ties, especially fathers who teach their celestial dogmas with the practice of parental anxieties and cares. Had the young lady looked into her own breast, she would have seen the fallacy of this opinion, and learnt, from her own actions, the divine predominance of the passion.

At first she was smitten with amazement ; she had anticipated the conversion of Henry, his separation from Matilda, for she early discovered that in the end he would be converted ; and, as if by her own seeming adherence to the church she could influence her friend Matilda, she feigned more than common anxiety about his apostacy ; meditating, at the

same time, as soon as it might be declared, to apostatize herself; to her, therefore, the recantation of Matilda came unexpectedly, and withered all her hopes.

It would have been well had it done no more, but in the same time that the blossoms of love were blasted, the milk of human kindness in her nature was changed: she felt as the proud feel when they are mortified, as if Henry had evaded the snares she had set for him, and towards him in consequence a burning hate; her whole mind, indeed, was in a state of combustion, and amidst the anarchy of fervid and fiery thoughts, no allaying compunction was allowed to mingle.

She abstained from visiting at the Castle, and pretended that she was too much shocked at what she heard of Matilda ever to see her again; her whole mind was filled with the image of Henry, but she spoke of him with indifference, as if his conscientious conversion was a thing she was prepared for, from the

lightness with which he had always viewed his faith ; she, however, nourished deep in the darkest recesses of her bosom, an unmitigable fear ; it was a sudden transition, but in proportion to its abruptness was its strength.

She fled, in a tempest of tears, from the presence of those who had brought her the tidings, and with the imprecations of a deserted Medea, she wildly appealed to the Heavens, and called down on the youth its vengeance and curses ; but when the paroxysm of rage subsided, she shuddered at the madness of herself, and, in penitential sorrow, deplored her own violence ; the fit of repentance, however, did not last long ; the demon of revenge soon took infœstment of her heart, and though she seemed restored to calm and beauty, the volcano within still burned and boiled.

Her attendants, who witnessed her vehemence, ascribed it to grief ; they had no conception of that temporary insanity which passion often excites, and in consequence she was spoken

of as erroneously for her sorrow as she had been for the zeal of her affection for her gentle friend.

All the day on which the not less frantic but honest Father Dominick had gone to the Castle, and been thwarted in his attempt to snatch Matilda from her friends, the ill-fated Gertrude meditated alone. The church was not then generally known to have armed itself with secular penalties for doctrinal differences, and her anger burned the fiercer, because it had nothing to fasten on, like flames irritated by the wind, which supplies no fuel.

Towards mid-day she became, as those around her thought, more calm, but the mood was that sullen sternness which betokens rancour.

As the sun declined, her countenance assumed a wild and unsettled cast. Never remarkable for her equanimity, she became so by her constancy of passion, and, before sunset, she gave orders for attendance to be in readiness to

accompany her at a distance to the abode of Ambrose.

This was a hermit who lived in a cavern of the neighbouring mountains ; whence he had come no one knew, but in the rigours of his life he was exemplary, and in the practices of prayer and penitence, he was not surpassed by any thing in the legends of the saints.

“ The moss his bed, a cave his humble cell,
His food the fruits, his drink the crystal well ;
Remote from man, with God he passed his days,
Prayer all his business, all his pleasure praise.”

In the mean time Father Dominick had returned to the monastery. The first part of his journey, after he left the Castle, was rapid ; desultory passions prompted his steps, and the occasional energy of rage hurried him forward. But as the distance to the monastery was considerable, he gradually cooled in his progress, and the whirlwind of his thoughts subsided. Still the train of his reflections was dismal, and dark images were blended with the arbitrary

sovereignty he ascribed to Omnipotence, but in this fearful arrogance he was not singular. The prone and the headlong ever fall into the same error; fortified by the consciousness of their own integrity, they imagine the storm within themselves,—the chaos of their own breasts, to be the indignation that is felt by the Irresponsible—by Him in whose sight the stars are as the dew-drops.

As he approached the portal of the monastery, his phantasms became less lurid, without losing their visionary character. They were touched with poetry, and, unconscious of the change in the spirit of his dreams, he experienced a vacuum of the heart which is often felt after the inflations of passion, and paused with a sorrow to which he could give no name—a feeling stronger than regret—a kind of innocent remorse, which sprung from no remembrance of guilt or sin.

Before him stood the ancient edifice, hoary with years, and pointing, with all its glittering

pinnacles, to the Heavens, types of its sacred uses. Its solemn aspect seemed, as it were, to reflect silence around. The numerous effigies of the canonized with which the front was adorned, inspired benevolent reveries; even in the fashion of the tall and spacious windows there was a holiness that awed his heart; but the mouldering hand of decay was visible on all, and it was as the weary, the aged, and the good, that serenely await the approach of death.

In contrast, nature around flourished, as if animated with immortal vigour; the trees waved their garlanded heads, for the spirit of life gladdened in their boughs, and the sun looked from a fleecy cloud, as if contemplating the scenes of the fragrant world with enjoyment and repose.

“The manifestations of God and man,” cried the worshipper devoutly, “are here! The evanescent edifice may vanish into ruin, but the firm and stedfast earth—the footstool of

Him who rules the cycles of eternity, is everlasting; and yet man is said to be endowed with an essence that shall brighten amidst the general vanishing of things, co-equal in existence with God. That mystery should make us pause; for as the earth was formed with principles of renovation, can it be thought that the eternal soul may, in its destiny, be changed by aught that is temporal.

CHAPTER XXII.

“ Between the acting of a dreadful thing
And the first motion, all is phantasma.”

AT the hour appointed, the inquisitorial portion of the Chapter which the Abbot had summoned, met. All the members were present; and, besides them, a numerous auditory of the brotherhood and strangers.

Without appearing to have received any intimation of the Lutheran Apostles in the town, or of the young Baron's apostacy, he reminded the assembly of the coercive instructions which he had received from the Bishop, directing him to oppose and suppress the contagious heresies with which all Christendom was then afflicted.

In delivering this address, it was observed that his voice was tremulous, and altogether his appearance that of a man oppressed with much care. He then rose and intimated to the assembly, that if any one knew persons tainted with heretical doctrines, he should name them, and that the persons so named should be summoned to answer the charge.

Upon this intimation several of the members rose together, and among them Father Dominick, evidently in a subdued mood. At his appearance there was an universal cry to hear him first, and accordingly the others sat down.

The old man then related, with calmness and candour, the unsuccessful result of his mission, and confessed that he had been betrayed, by irritation, to neglect to inquire if it were true, as reported, that Henry had professed himself publicly a convert to the new doctrines.

“But,” said he, “if the tribunal is sufficiently satisfied with the authenticity of the

report concerning him, it may order the young man to be brought before it.”

In delivering himself, Father Dominick exercised great forbearance ; he appeared an altered man, and spoke with a mildness that prepossessed even those who disliked him.

The Abbot was surprised at his moderation, but as it would have been improper to express any opinion, he remained silent.

The whole audience were greatly struck with his temperance, and particularly with the compassion which escaped from him when he adverted to the imputed heresies of Henry. Count Manhim was there, and deeply sympathized with the general feeling ; his morbid excitement had not only subsided, but as the turn of his thoughts was kind, it may be said that he was disposed to entertain opposite opinions. In consequence, no one felt, more than he did, the impression of the old man’s moderation ; his animosity was not only disarmed, but his

venerable appearance had the effect of removing much of the soldier's prejudice.

After some loose conversation on the perils and uncertainties of the time, it was at last determined that Henry should be summoned to appear before the chapter next day. To this proposition no objection was made, but it was stated by the orator who proposed it, that Matilda also should be called, as he had heard she had declared herself of Henry's faith.

Father Dominick instantly rose and stated, with some animation, but without fervour, that what his reverend brother had mentioned was probably true; and that himself, incensed by the permitted demons of the time, had endeavoured to rescue the ill-fated sister from her perilous bondage; but added, that the Baron and Henry had interposed to prevent him.

“However,” said he, “let us, in this solemn business, be not precipitate; examine Henry first, and if the result be not satisfactory, then

call the erring sister, for she does not, it is believed, assert the independence of her own mind, but only declares that her creed shall be the creed of her betrothed."

This speech, with what he had previously said, strengthened the feeling in his favour; it was judicious, and uncommonly liberal. The audience were delighted: for whatever interests the good feelings of our nature is always indulgently entertained. Count Manhim was amazed. The character in which he had discerned only sternness and bigotry, seemed to have undergone a great transmutation, and becoming in earnest with the business, the influence of his wound strengthened, and made him as much disposed to revere Father Dominick, as he had been the preceding evening inclined to think of him uncharitably.

It was then determined that Matilda should not be summoned, but that Henry should be required to attend next day.

This proceeding certainly merited approba-

tion—it was merciful; but at that time the papacy had not exalted in wrath her horn. Hatred to the Lutheran heresy was, no doubt, encouraged, bulls of penalties had been proclaimed against them, but there had been no great act of secular power yet committed; altogether the proceedings were marked with temper and clemency; but it was observed that the Abbot, who did every thing to promote this candour, was himself exceedingly perplexed; and the cloud on his countenance was invidiously noticed by many persons whom Bernard had infected with his apprehensions, particularly by those who had listened with a willing ear to the misrepresentations of the two old friars.

It was supposed by them that the Abbot was averse to the proceedings; and it was likewise inferred that the necessity of summoning Henry to the bar was reluctantly acknowledged. Nothing, indeed, could be more obvious than that he was laden with grief: he was indeed so. His letters had informed him that the doctrines of

the Reformers were spreading like an epidemic; and he saw that the affairs of the world were in a crisis, that some terrible mutation impended, and his perplexities and sadness arose from these causes. However, the business of the meeting being concluded the members dispersed, but, according to their several opinions, they soon congregated in groups, and gave vent to their respective sentiments.

Among the first with whom the Abbot met was Count Manhim, for whom he had been taught to cherish particular respect. It was in the garden, and their conversation naturally turned on the business of the day: the Abbot declaring himself at once surprised and pleased with the moderation evinced by Father Dominick.

“Of all men,” said he, “that I am acquainted with, I was the most distrustful of him, but goodness always unfolds itself when the test is applied. Father Dominick is a holy and just man, and sees the jeopardy to which things are

drifting; he is so lenient that I would almost think him actuated by contrition for some un-called-for crime."

"I am like you, my lord," replied the Count, "astonished at the mild course he has proposed; I had thought him an austere, hard, and intractable man, but his conduct this evening merits great praise. I hope his example of moderation will mitigate the temper of some among us, who think that the strong hand should be at once inflicted."

It thus came to pass, that when violent measures were only expected to be advocated by Father Dominick, he acted so benignly, for it could not be disguised that his manner and counsel seemed to partake of an elevated quality; but no one suspected that he himself rued, from the bottom of his heart, the harsh extravagance of which he had been guilty, although the Abbot, with his usual shrewdness, seemed to think something of that kind possible.

CHAPTER XXIII.

“ Remote from man with God he past his days,
Prayer all his business, all his pleasure praise.”

THE cell of Ambrose, the hermit, was situated in a ravine of the mountains, not more than a mile from the Tower of Upover, the residence of the Lady Gertrude with her widowed mother. She seemingly walked to it alone, but at some distance several servants acted as a guard. The country was lonely, and seldom frequented by travellers; it had been besides lately the haunt of robbers, who, though extirpated, were yet the cause of the orders she had given to her vigilant attendants.

The foot-path she followed winded up the

grassy side of the glen, down which a mountain torrent, leaping from rock to rock, made the solitude vocal ; here and there grey cliffs might be discovered in the ravine, feathered, as it were, with hazle ; and the scene, without being impressively savage, was wild and romantic. At the upper end, a little waterfall gushed from a considerable height into a clear and calm pool, on the one side of which the steep was shaggy with bushes, and on the other, nature had spread a rug of her embroidered carpetting on a sloping bank, leading towards a mountain ash that waved on the height over the grotto in which the old man resided. A mossy knoll, somewhat faded with frequent use as a seat, stood a little way apart in front, and from it spread an extensive view of the valley, checquered with woods, and gay with glittering spires : a window of the remote monastery shone to the setting sun like a star.

The attendants halted, and sat down on the margin of the pool, while the lady ascended to

the cave. As her shadow in the setting sun went far before her, Ambrose, who was within, on seeing it, came out.

He was an aged ,and, if the expression may be used, a picturesque figure; he wore on his head a friar's cowl, and his locks and beard, singularly white and hoary, flowed in great affluence over his breast and shoulders. His dress was something like that of a Capuchin monk, without the cap, and he supported himself with a rude staff, the top of which was formed into a cross; every thing about him was simple, yet so singular as to be striking.

When he saw the lady coming forward, he went towards her, and, observing the distress expressed in her countenance, took her courteously oy the hand, and led her into an outer excavation of his cell without speaking.

The appearance of the Lady Gertrude was at this time interesting, her features were tinted with more than the glow of beauty, in consequence of her upward walk and the agitation

of her mind. But without that, she would have been distinguished among the fairest of her sex, though the restlessness of her eye betokened the rashness that held her in thrall.

When seated two or three minutes, she inquired of the hermit if he had heard the news, and the alarming declaration which Henry had made. In this inquiry she evinced no particular emotion ; but when she added that her beloved companion and friend had also forsaken the church, her sobs rendered her utterance indistinct, and tears began to flow.

Ambrose, though he had lived many years a solitary life, and never mingled in the affairs of men, had yet about him a courtesy of manner that betrayed one accustomed to the urbanities of high and social breeding.

On seeing her tears he acknowledged, with a condoling accent, that the tidings till then had not reached him ; and as if in anticipation of diffidence, he inquired in what his services could be of avail.

This met the wishes of the vindictive damsel ; with more ardour than the occasion required, she lamented the aberration of her friend, and, seeming to pay comparatively little attention to the apostacy of Henry, wept for the offence of Matilda. In this, however, she over-acted ; Ambrose was familiar with the artifices of the world, and the violence of her sorrow for Matilda, compared with the apparent indifference she evinced for the lapse of the young Baron, awakened his suspicions ; but he could not divine for what purpose she had come to him, and again with more earnestness requested to know in what manner in such a crisis she required his services, repressing, however, his suspicion that she withheld from him some portion of the truth.

Finding herself thus pressed, she acknowledged that she wished for one on whom she could rely to be her occasional messenger to the Castle, where she would herself never again enter.

“I would,” said the hermit, “willingly and in charity comply with your request, but you know not that I have sworn to make my dwelling in the desert, and cannot, without the breach of a solemn vow, again return into the thoroughfares of men.”

She acknowledged that she had heard his vows were of such austerity ; but she had hoped that in so rare and direful a case, he might be persuaded to move from his solitude.

His answer was firm and inflexible—

“You must not,” said he, “tempt me by any tale of pity to forsake this sequestered abode, otherwise you will compel me to waken memory from the slumber into which she has, after much soothing, been lulled. I have that within,” said the aged Ambrose, “sufficient to engross all my reflections, and to make even such cases as you have told me light and trivial, when compared with mine.”

“But,” replied the Lady Gertrude, “it will

appease your anguish, if you consent to share the distresses of another."

The hermit looked at her steadily, and with some emotion said,—

"Forgive me, Lady, for asking if you have told me all the truth?"

Gertrude was not prepared for this searching question, and inquired, with a faltering voice and frightened air,—

"What do you mean?"

"Alas, fair sister, you either know too well the stratagems of youthful passion, or the malevolence which disappointment may suggest. I have seen through the feigned indifference with which you think your feelings towards the young Baron may be disguised; and I fear that your sorrow for Matilda springs from another cause than you apprehend the eye of man may discern. Alas! you may deceive man, but there is a lidless eye upon you!"

The openness and yet severity with which, in a tone of gentleness and pity, the old man

spoke, made a deep impression on her wild and wayward mind, and finding that she had trod upon a serpent where she thought there was only the flexible grass, she burst into a fit of sincere sorrow for having given way to the instigation of the evil passions by which she was possessed, exclaiming—

“Forgive, forgive me! I knew not that I should have to deal with one so clear in scrutiny! I pray you, father, forget my guilt, and deal with me only as a penitent!”

“Then,” said he, “although the sun is now set, listen to my story, learn the causes that have made me seek oblivion here, and then judge if you may expect from one so dead to the world aught but plain truth, unqualified by any kind of service.”

CHAPTER XXIV.

“ Divided hearts oft make one dwelling two.”

“ MY story,” said the hermit, “ is of errors, not of crimes; my native country, my name and lineage, must remain unknown; many years have passed since it was believed there, that I was numbered with the dead. More than that, fair daughter, it is not requisite I should disclose; all the time I have lived here, those who knew me when I was in the social world, have ceased their mourning, believing me no more.

“ I was destined to be a soldier, and was distinguished in the Neapolitan wars; what rank I attained need not be told, nor is it neces-

sary to recount the honours and heraldry of my ancestors.

“ In those wars, you have probably heard, it often happened there was a degree of partisanship that made them almost civil, and, in consequence, friends and brothers were often opposed to each other in the field. It was my destiny to experience this evil ; a dear companion of my youth was induced to enter the service of Louis XII, I adhered to the banners of my native country, but still remained with undiminished attachment to my friend. We met in battle, and, by some singular accident, became the antagonists of each other. The guilt of the war in which we were engaged flashed upon us both ; at the same moment, we paused in our encounter, and, bursting into tears, forgetting we were adversaries, rushed into each others arms. The soldiers around partook of our feelings, and there was a momentary pause in the commotion of battle, during which we retired from the field.

“ Not many leagues distant, was the residence of my friend’s family, we went to the Castle, determined never again to be embroiled in the hostilities of the time ; and I was, in consequence, induced to remain with him by the fascinations of his only sister. It belongs no more to my condition to speak of her beauty ; but her virtues furnish a theme which an anchorite can commit no sin in remembering.

“ After a residence of some months there, my friend proposed to render our connection more permanent, that I should marry his sister, and to overcome any scruples arising from my slender fortune as a younger son, said he would enrich her with an ample dowry—he had seen the symptoms of my kindling passion, and knowing the peculiar notions I entertained on this point, thought it became him to remove any obstacle that might deter me from declaring myself. The lady also, he believed, was not averse to receive me ; alas ! Heaven only knows

the secrets of the heart, we cannot penetrate into those of each other.

“ Lost to my country by my desertion, and enamoured of one who had no parallel, I was easily subdued by his persuasion; but we had both formed an erroneous opinion. What we imagined in her to be the indications of love sprung from pity, and that interest which we attributed to passion was only her sorrow at seeing a young man sacrifice so much to feeling.

“ I will not prolong this narrative; for the remembrance of many things sadly shakes the resolutions of a solitary. The lady, from the bias of her enthusiasm, was in her heart inclined to be a nun, but it was not known to her family. From her earliest years, however, it had been observed that her affections were more high and holy than those which gravitate to the things of this world. The knowledge of this celestial temperament had been the cause of her brother making the proposal which he had perceived I would at once embrace.

“ Any obstacle which I might have felt as a man of honour being removed, according to the etiquettes of that time, a period was fixed for our nuptials, and all the interval seemed smooth, prosperous, and flowery. For not having yet made any profession of a religious intention, she consented to her brother’s wishes, and thus without being aware how far she was betrothed in secret to a spiritual spouse, I wooed her for a temporal wife. It was not till the eve of our marriage, that she divulged to me the sacred engagement, as it may be called, and when she did so, I was not in a humour to regard her apprehensions with sufficient care. But I thought, when I had retired, of what she had told me, and more impressed with its importance, I communicated to her brother my fears, if with the sentiments she entertained, we could expect happiness. He, however, did not see the matter in the same light ; but, at my request, undertook to speak to her, and to say from me, that I doubted we should ever be

united, if she retained that preference for heavenly hopes independent of earthly duties.

“ What he said to her I can only now guess, but anxious from the kindest intentions to promote our union, he did not communicate all my request; but only spoke of the fears with which I had been infected, as something which she might alienate by future care. It thus happened, that without any knowledge of what I feared, she consented to our marriage, and I inferred, from that fatal compliance, that she saw the propriety in this life of seeking by the fulfilment of its duties a passport to the enjoyments of another. We thus were allowed to be united in delusion, but it did not last long, we were not many hours man and wife, when the paramount importance which she had ever assigned to her heavenly allegiance as compared with the fragile obligations of this life were manifested. Believing her brother to have made the communication solicited, I was, at first, only gentle in my remonstrances, in our

having a divided house ; but I sighed to know both from her character, and my own mind, that our prospect of mutual happiness was blighted. We long, however, and I believe, with sincere reciprocal respect for each other, struggled to controul our feelings, but the schism became wider ; intimacy bred that freedom between us, which with other sentiments would have contributed to happiness ; in our case, however, it led to sorrow. She felt it her duty to wean me from the world, beyond what my nature would agree to, for her peculiar opinions on this subject seemed to me too austere ; and the consequence was, that perceiving how ineffectual her endeavours had been, she felt the weakness of humanity, and deemed me ordained to bear the penalties of error ; she regarded me not, however, with aversion ; for she was too amiable to do that, but as one sentenced, for whom no intercession could avail.

“ The result of this unhappy misconception embittered life ; and without any particular

cause of complaint, but the innocent infirmity of incompatibility of temper, we were both miserable. In an evil hour her brother interfered, and among other things said that I ought to remember what he had done for me. This was probably an inadvertent expression ; I think so now, but he ought to have reflected on the effect which the sordid motive it implied would have on me. I made him no answer ; the same night I abandoned the country, and after wandering in the world for several years a disconsolate, and perhaps let me say, moody-minded man, fixed at last here in this lonely condition and life of penance.

“ I see, fair lady, that you are affected by my simple tale, but the moral of it is what I hope you will deeply ponder. Never imagine with yourself, that earthly happiness with the dearest object can be attained, in which a conscientious difference of religious dogmas interferes, no matter how unimportant they may appear to be.”

CHAPTER XXV.

“ Between the gloaming and the mirk,
Is no for market or for kirk.”

WHAT the Lady Gertrude proposed to accomplish by visiting the hermit is not distinctly known ; perhaps she did not know herself, and only impelled by those random feelings to which the mind, in the uncertainties of passion, is particularly prone, she was actuated by some impulse that could not be explained. Certain it is, she did not anticipate the reception she had met with, and far less the moral which the hermit had drawn from his own joyless tale. But whatever was her purpose, she parted from him with appeased rancour, for his narrative

subdued the vindictive feelings she had previously cherished against Matilda, for declaring herself of Henry's new faith—a declaration not anticipated, but to which she ascribed the most unworthy motives.

She returned homeward, more melancholy than impassioned: the night was closing on all sides, and the scene tended to lull her into composure.

Not a cloud obscured the least of the stars; all was peace, and the solemn mountains that surrounded the vale looked calmly on the darkening scene below. Here and there a light sparkled, as if the earth reflected the constellations of the skies. At times the drowsy tinkle of a sheep-bell was heard, and afar off the bay of the watch-dog, while the neighbouring rill, in its descent down the ravine, was only not musical because the chiming murmurs of its cascades were near. But a distant occasional voice seemed to give a kind of emphasis and variety to the gloom.

Before the Lady Gertrude descended the hill, the moon began to dawn, and, with her light, shadowy set off the face of things, till she presented in the serene landscape the repose which has been, with Homeric beauty, described in the Scottish song :—

“ The moon had climb'd the highest hill
That rises o'er the source of Dee,
And, from the eastern summit, shed
Her silver light on tower and tree.”

When Gertrude, followed by her attendants, reached the gate of Uperver tower, her mind, if not holy, was elevated above its ordinary pitch ; and, animated by the effect of the hermit's recital, she had wrought herself into the resolution of struggling with her desultory passion ; but in passing into the court she accidentally overheard that Henry had been summoned to appear before the Chapter of St. Michael's next day.

The tidings were casually mentioned by one servant to another, as merely news, and cer-

tainly there was neither in the manner nor in the words aught calculated to have produced any extraordinary impression, but at the same moment, as if boding some unrevealed disaster, the bell of the Castle clock proclaimed the hour, and the re-echo of the court, as an unseen spirit, sensible of the warning, moaned a low and mournful reply.

This natural occurrence produced upon her frame of mind a startling effect, and without any cause, a presentiment, as she felt it, of sorrow, vibrated responsively in her bosom.

Instead of going to her mother's bower chamber, as she had intended, she went straight to her own, and gave way to a flood of tears.

She could not discharge from her mind the fear with which she had been seized, when she first overheard that Henry had been summoned before the Chapter, and the awful heralding of the hour seemed to her ominous of some great purpose; nor was the complexion of her thoughts changed, when she learnt afterwards

that his conversion was the theme of every tongue, and was at the monastery considered of a criminal hue.

Her condition was full of grief, for though her feelings were abated in their violence, there was yet an anguish of heart that refused all comfort, and in spite of passion suggested the most dismal imaginations. For some time she gave uncontrolled licence to her fancies, and, while she did so, they were mingled with regrets that in more equal minds might have saddened into melancholy; but the hermit's tale was recollected, and she endeavoured to give them a religious bias.

In better ordered minds, the effect would have been salutary, and pity would have softened to sorrow the ruminations suggested by the dread of error; but with this vehement lady it was different; all she did was extreme, and her reflections on this occasion were of that kind. Religion, which should have taught her awe and moderation, prompted her to other

conclusions, and without suspecting herself of any rash directed judgment, she adopted the belief which the Papacy had begun to propagate. In a word, she considered Henry, to whom she was so ardently in secret attached, as having incurred by his apostacy not only penalties in this world, but that perdition in another which carnal men announced as the everlasting doom of heresy ; in consequence her thoughts were of the most lurid description ; she pictured to herself a phantom in which the soul was developed, and no form of pain or punishment could she conceive was not lavished on this ghastly creation of her own mind.

When she had tortured herself with these hideous imaginings till she had exhausted all images of suffering, her mind suddenly recoiled in her meditations, and reflected, as if conviction was a thing of the will, how much Henry would have escaped had he not adopted the Lutheran faith. This idea was not remote from those of the paroxysm in which she had visited the

hermit, and but little was wanted to toss her again into a hurricane of frenzy. All sentiment of grief was soon dispersed in the passion with which she was seized, and with a resolution as wild as that which led her to the mountains, she determined to be present at Henry's examination. Rank and the delicacies of her sex were dismissed to the winds; one thought, that of hearing herself what would pass, engrossed her whole attention, and without being able to assign any reason for a step so little in accordance with the manners of the time, she determined, at an early hour, to set out for the monastery. Without being touched with despair, she abandoned herself to its rashness and anarchies.

CHAPTER XXVI.

“ Smoke ever indicates a somewhere fire.”

ABOUT the time when the Lady Gertrude arrived at her mother's residence, the summons from the on Mastery was served on the proselyte at the Castle. To himself it excited no very great degree of surprise ; he only regarded it as a step in unison with the pretensions of the Catholic priesthood, but his mother and Matilda were alarmed and apprehensive of the issue without being able to explain wherefore.

The old Baron, who by this time was roused to a sense of his own allodial dignity, expressed himself angrily on the occasion. He deemed

the summons of his son as a bold instance of ecclesiastical arrogance, and would have advised the communication to be treated with contempt, calling it a device of Father Dominick's, and loudly inveighing against his presumption. Nothing, indeed, would have prevented him from treating the order with contumely but his personal respect for the Abbot, whose mild manners, good practical sense, and the leniency with which he observed the faults of other men, had made him a favourite.

After the first excitement had abated, the different parties, though with less vivacity of feeling, considered it more seriously. The young Baron's information and knowledge, taught him that such a step would not have been taken but by instructions given from an authority superior to that of the Abbot, and he in some measure was not offended that the church should have been betrayed into such a heady course, for he inferred that it would have the effect of consolidating wavering minds, and

inducing a braver decision on the part of the Reformers than they had yet shown.

The two ladies thought differently, and the mother, with affection for her son, represented to him the dangers he had incurred, and lamented the prominent part he had taken in the controversy, not aware of the power of the church and the enmity he had probably provoked. Matilda said nothing; she was conscious that, if her lover was in error, she had also erred, and sat apart in silence and tears. The veteran father walked about with hasty steps for some time; but, recollecting himself suddenly, he paused in the middle of the floor, and, fixing his eyes on his son, said slowly,—

“What avails resistance? the church is determined to put down this insurrection of opinion, and in spiritual matters we acknowledge her supremacy. The matter did not strike me in this light before. Go, my son, answer like a man, as you will, what these auda-

cious priests have to say, and do not increase our troubles by resistance."

"My thoughts," said Henry, "accord with these sentiments; for the truths I have acquired make me bold to all men, and I feel no diffidence in openly asserting them; but I wish it to be distinctly understood, and as I shall tell the Chapter, that I regard their employment of secular means to vindicate their doctrines as contrary to the spirit and precepts of Christianity; I only yield myself to their call to bear testimony before men, that they usurp means which our holy religion does not recognise. The faith is capable of defending itself against all adversaries; and I will say to them in the words of Scripture, 'Peter, put up thy sword.'"

The old man smiled compassionately when he heard him thus speaking, and said,—

"Such courage might, my boy, prevail with better beings than men; but recollect that you have to do with only men, and men of a kind who have their all at stake. However, you know

better what to do than I can advise you ; but if they hurt a hair of your head, I will avenge it with the soldier's weapon. Old as I am, and by long habitude unfit to take a part in these controversies, I yet can see that, if they strike with the secular arm, the battle is no longer a wrestle of strong wits, but a bloody contention with sharp-edged iron. So long as they use argument, you may contend with them—I will not interpose ; but if they launch the spear, I will lift the shield—and I say this without metaphor.”

In conversation of this kind the evening passed at the Castle, and notice was given to the retainers to be in readiness by break of day to accompany Henry to the monastery. With the single exception of this order, every thing held onward in its natural course ; but the menials and retainers in the hall, especially those who had come from the wars with the old Baron, expressed themselves loud and sternly when they heard the command.

They were men who had long lived in camps, and who had left the element in which they were proudest when they forsook the tented field. They were, no doubt, in their creed good Catholics, and could swear a prayer or two when it was needful; but in the priesthood they saw only men, and it was not in the spirit of the age to acknowledge that the clergy were of a higher cast or entitled to greater privilege than the military. They prepared, however, to accompany their young lord, and, it cannot be denied, with an intention to defend him from all harm; nor need it be told here, that the same spirit animated the inhabitants of the Baron's domain: they thought that the world did not contain a superior to Rublestein; even the Emperor, according to their notions, was indebted to him for support; and, in addition to these local sentiments, they considered the young Baron deserving of their most devoted attachment; yet they believed themselves faithful to the faith their confessors taught, and at-

tributed the proceedings at the monastery against their young chief, as dictated less by the laws of the church than by proud and irascible men. Their sympathy also was greatly awakened, when they heard that the marriage, of Henry and Matilda, was deferred until the lowering around them cleared away.

CHAPTER XXVII.

“ He sleeps ;
Of old—so artless did my baby sleep.”

WHEN midnight over all the landscape had settled calm and still, save the murmured ditty of the warder at the Castle-gate, the Baroness in her chamber could not sleep. Beside her, drowsily oppressed, lay the old warrior in defenceless forgetfulness ; and, as she listened at times to his inarticulate breathing, she fancied that she could discern the utterance of a foreboding spirit, to which her maternal anxiety gave dismal interpretation.

Incapable, from the fears with which she was beset, to close her eyes, she softly rose from the

couch, and, taking a light that ever stood dimly burning in the room, stealthily went to her son's chamber.

As she moved like a shadow along the silent gallery, she frequently paused and looked warily behind, starting at times when the owl without, on the battlements, ominously shrieked, as if it beheld portentous mysteries passing in the air.

On touching the latch of the young Baron's chamber-door she found it unfastened, and without noise entered. He was asleep, and heard not her intrusion; nor did she disturb him, but sat down in the chair at his bedside, and, holding up the lamp, gazed with tenderness mingled with sorrow on his unsuspecting countenance.

The remembrance of his innocent childhood came rushing as she gazed, and her tears flowed as she thought of the days in which, when heedless and harmless, he confided not only to her affection but to the lovingness of all mankind.

After some time spent in sad contemplation, she forgot the solemnity of the hour, and began an orison for his protection; but the sound of her voice soon awakened him, and, startled by the light, he hastily inquired who had come.

When he saw only his mother, melted with grief, he raised himself on his elbow, from his pillow, and mildly inquired why she was there at that hour, and with what intent she had come.

“I know not,” replied the venerable lady, “what is in this foretaste of affliction which Heaven administers; but my heart is heavy, and a voice whispers an alarm. I do not dream, for I cannot sleep; but wilder phantasies than ever dreams invoked float in my fears. Why have you, Henry, yielded to these subtle men?”

Her son, much moved, felt half-inclined to appease the mother's care with which her words were fraught; but he had so recently renounced the errors of the faith which he

knew she still professed, and from which he believed her anxiety proceeded, that he conceived himself bound to speak without equivocation.

“ I have not, mother, yielded but upon conviction. The truths which they have taught I could not but believe ; when there is light all things are visible, and to me their explanations were as light. Before this day I grappled with but fables and logomachies—things that took their forms from darkness ; now all is plain.”

“ And yet,” she cried, “ in what art thou now better ? What is there in thee now to make me love thee more ? Hath not Father Dominick said, ‘ that in the doctrines of these solemn strangers is a fatal peril to thy soul ? ’ ”

“ He talks,” replied the young Baron, “ as if the soul were something different from myself. I am myself my soul, and cannot love it more, or tend it better, than I do that self.”

“ What, then,” after a pause, said the perplexed matron, “ doth it avail thee, whether

these Doctors teach truth or falsehood? Thou canst not be changed in thyself, by heeding or rejecting aught that they teach."

The proselyte made no immediate answer; he grieved that he could but afflict her if he told her what he thought; at last he said—

"We both agree that mankind have incurred a fearful forfeiture, and that, without a Mediator, we must suffer the penalty; for Heaven will hold no more communion with us. But Father Dominick believes that human men, inheritors themselves of the ancestral curse, have efficacy in their mediation. The Lutherans reject that vain illusion."

"But how, my Henry, should there be aught of danger in believing with Father Dominick?"

"If I could believe, there would be none," replied the young man, thoughtfully; "but knowing the truth, can I, unblamed, affect a different creed?"

"But," said the lady, scarcely knowing her own meaning, "do not these Lutherans teach

that Heaven has made men for perdition? It cannot be—the irresponsible Creator would not do that.”

“It is not wise to judge,” said Henry, “the purposes of Almighty Providence by our small notions. We are made finite, and infirmity is our inheritance; perhaps, in the doubt which unbelievers feel in their consciences, they but experience a foretaste of their torment—”

He would have added something more; but his mother, rising, shook her uplifted hand over him, with awful tears, crying—

“The devils believe, and tremble.”

“What do they believe?” inquired her son; calmly adding, “Yes, they know God lives—in that their torment lies; why they are tormented cannot be told until the purpose for which the universe was made, is known.”

With the helpless look of fond affection that finds itself ineffectual, she regarded him for some time in silence; then, bidding God bless him, hastened out of the room.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

“ Unfurl the Saxon standard.”

IN consequence of the popular excitement, a considerable crowd next morning assembled in front of the Castle at an early hour. It would be difficult to say by what other motive than curiosity they were actuated ; but, undoubtedly, they had a leaning towards the young Baron, whom they all wished well. Among them were conspicuous the two Lutheran Doctors, who expected to be admitted to the inner courts of the Castle ; but the old Baron was as peremptory as if the enemy were at the gates, and the Lutherans were, in consequence, refused ad-

mittance. They expected, however, when it was known that they were there, the orders prohibiting the entrance of strangers would be relaxed in their favour, and accordingly sent in their names; but the old man declared that, inasmuch as they had been the cause of the troubles that impended, he was resolved to take no part in their favour, until his son had vindicated before the Chapter his dissent from the doctrines of the church.

It would not be easy to explain the motive of this order; but it seemed to the assembled populace very like impartiality, though many thought it exhibited a disposition to favour the church.

At last the young Baron issued from the Castle on horseback, attended by many retainers, also mounted; and the array presented an exhilarating spectacle. It seemed so like an advance to war; the civil character of the transaction was altogether forgotten, and the people cheered and shouted, as if the young

Baron were leading his squadrons to the field.

In this crisis, on one of the loftiest towers, the mother and Matilda were discovered spectators of the sight, and who, participating in the sentiments of the crowd, joined the general acclamation : nothing in the show indicated the peaceful controversy to which Henry had been called ; but all around stirred with animation, and a great multitude accompanied the cavalcade towards the monastery.

Henry was not altogether satisfied with the military character of the pageant ; but he had yielded to his father's advice, who thought that the rank of his son had been overlooked, in calling him to answer to the Chapter, several members of which were lowly born, and others not distinguished by any enviable superiority of conduct. However, he mastered his reluctance, and consented to the pomp with which his obedience to the summons, from a tribunal of the church, was so ostentatiously exhibited.

CHAPTER XXIX.

“Perplexity takes up the ravelled loup.”

AT the Monastery the effect of calling the young Baron to answer his imputed heresies was not less than at the Castle; nothing else was heard of among the Friars. Some thought it betokened great grandeur in the church that such a step should be hazarded; others doubted if he would attend; many considered the proceeding as rash, and calculated to do harm if he refused to come; and there were several men, no doubt of lax principles, who were of opinion that persons of rank and family should not be too strictly questioned about their articles of faith.

“Some allowance,” said they, “must be made to the members of the upper classes in religious matters.”

“Yes,” replied their neighbours; “they are not, like the poorer, obliged to trust so much to providence; and, therefore, if they preserve a decorous show, it is really as much as the world ought to expect.”

Father Dominick had, in the mean time, relapsed into himself, and with his characteristic zeal applauded the measure. On the preceding day he had felt, when he came from the Castle, that there had at least been a lack of decorum in his conduct there; and his contrition, in consequence, had temporarily produced the same effect as if he had been changed in his nature. Alternations of this kind are often seen in the behaviour of recluse men, and no doubt the sequestration in which he spent his time contributed to the fitfulness of his character. The church to him was supreme, and it is but doing him justice to say that he regarded:

her temporalities with comparative indifference. He was a man honest in his religion, and religious beyond most men, as far as discipline and the performance of those duties in which too many imagine that its essence consists. On him its doctrines had no other practical effect than in directing him to a strict performance of ceremonies ; his character still retained all its natural acerbities, and it was no part of his endeavour to subdue his innate temperament by the force of religious influences. But there was worse about him than this indulgence of his own rugged nature ; with honesty there was a strong infusion of acrid pride, and being more constant than others in his attendance on sacred rites, he deemed himself, from that cause alone, better than most men. It is unnecessary, therefore, to remark, that no one in all the monastery attached so much importance to the summoning of the young Baron as did this self-sufficient, rigidly righteous man.

Count Manhim unquestionably took almost as

deep an interest in the proceeding; but the substratum of his natural character was more generous. While under the influence of his malady, he perhaps was not less bigoted than Father Dominick; but the general tenor of his conduct was more humane. Under excitement, from whatever cause arising, he seemed greatly transformed; and the morbid partiality which he felt at one time for certain objects and opinions, was not greater than his prejudice against them at another. This disease in his character was not, however, known in the monastery; but his sudden transition from hatred to admiration of Father Dominick had attracted some attention; and those of the brotherhood, observers of men, were rather struck with the inconsistency. Still, as there was something like a basis of goodness in the change, it did not appear to them as very surprising: had it been the reverse, they would probably have considered it more seriously.

In this diversified state of feeling at the mo-

nastery, the important day dawned ; and about the time that Henry left the Castle, Count Manhim and the Abbot had an accidental interview in the garden of the monastery. Father Dominick was not seen ; he attached too much importance to the event about to take place, to seek any other solace than the repetition of his paternoster in private, with fasting, humiliation, and all the other rigours that constitute the virtues of monastic life.

The Abbot was not less impressed with the importance of the proceeding than Father Dominick ; but the effect on him was different. He saw that he had been precipitated into a measure which his conscience did not entirely approve ; he would, in fact, have himself been inclined to pass over, without particular notice, the dereliction of the young Baron ; but he regretted exceedingly that it was not in his power.

The apostles of Lutherism, by holding their controversies in public, possessed a manifest

advantage. It gave them an opportunity of making their audience acquainted with their doctrines, and obliged their adversaries to acknowledge themselves converted, when incapable of answering their arguments. No man was more sensible of these advantages than the Abbot; but it was not in his power, nor in that of the church, without secular interference, to prevent them.

He was reflecting on this subject with oppressed gravity, when the Count came towards him.

After the customary salutations of the morning, the Count inquired if it were expected the young Baron would come.

“ In verity, Count,” replied the Abbot, “ I do not know what to think ; if he stay away, I shall be compelled to report him to the Bishop as contumacious ; and if he do come, I apprehend no good can result, because, as I understand it, the points which the Lutherans have attacked in the conduct of the church are not

very tenable. The spirit of our holy religion they have not ventured in any way to impugn ; but they stigmatize, as idolatry and corruption, many things that had better never have been engrafted on the simplicity of our faith."

" You surprise me, Lord Abbot," said the Count, " to hear you speak so. Unless Heaven had been pleased to allow those things which you call corruptions and idolatries to have been adopted, it would never have entered into the minds of men to have done so ; and the very circumstance of their being in existence in the doctrines and ritual of the church, is a proof that Heaven has consented to their adoption."

The Abbot did not well know what answer to make to the Count ; but, after a short pause, replied—

" I fear, Count, though I cannot tell why, that your observation is not quite correct ; for, if the existence of a thing be a proof that Heaven approves of it, we shall find ourselves in much

difficulty to make men answerable for the evils of their actions.”

Not wishing, however, to follow this into an argument, the Abbot went away from the Count, and left him meditating on his remark, which, as he could not well answer, tended to increase his excitement.

CHAPTER XXX.

“ I stand upon my post. Ha ! who goes there ? ”

“ THE works of art begin to decay from the moment they are completed, and finally relapse into the elements of their materials ; but there is a reproductive principle in those of nature which, though the individual production perishes, the general mass ever continues substantially the same. It is this which marks the difference between the works of man and the creations of Heaven. Is this Reformation, then, a manifestation of decay, or a fading like that of the woods in autumn ? ”

So said the Abbot to himself ; but the Re-

formation was of too recent an origin for him to judge: he was startled, however, to think that the Doctrines of the Reformers were calculated to supersede much in the ecclesiastical structure he had thought indispensable. This alarming apprehension allied itself with his practical knowledge of mankind; and what he regarded as a symptom of decay, he did not feel himself warranted to treat otherwise than as the shedding of the leaves, and the procession of the season after the midsummer had been attained.

It might have been supposed that his reflections, both after he had been with Count Mannheim, as well as the general liberality of his ideas, would have led him to be even milder than he had been towards the young Baron; but the effect was different: he felt as a soldier on a station, and he did not conceive that he had any discretionary power, but only to act with decision, consistency, and bravery, in the defence of all entrusted to his care.

“The eyes of the world,” said he, “are on me, and Heaven has undoubtedly endowed its creations with a reproductive principle. I, therefore, have nothing to do with what is called the truth of the new opinions, but to defend my post to the uttermost. I received my trusts as they are, and honour requires that I should render them up unimpaired. If Providence has determined otherwise, it will find the means of effecting the change without me.”

Ruminations of this kind hardened him for his severe duties, and while his affability seemed to subside, he evidently became more and more nerved for the work he had to perform. But by one of those inexplicable freaks of nature, not uncommon, Father Dominick seemed to soften as the Superior grew stern, and when Count Manhim visited him in his cell, there was evidently a great alteration. He no longer considered the young Baron as a reprobate whom it was the duty of all Christian men to eschew; perhaps there was a little fear at the bottom of the

change, and that he was persuaded the temper of the times required another form of action than he had previously supposed. But this alteration was not likely to raise him in the opinion of the enthusiastic Count, who soon perceived that his moderation was not the effect of any restriction he had put upon himself, but proceeded from what the shattered veteran called prudential cowardice.

He found him less resolute in asserting his own opinions, while inclined to calculate the dangers to which the faith was exposed.

Their conversation, in consequence, was not satisfactory to the Count, nor did the old man's character rise in his esteem ; possibly his wounds might have some effect in this oscillation of opinion. We are inclined to think they had ; but the many regrets expressed by Father Dominick, that one so amiable and high-born as Henry should have fallen off from the church, awakened the Count's suspicions that the friar himself was tainted. Thus it came to pass that,

in less than twenty-four hours, Count Manhim's opinion of Father Dominick underwent an entire revolution, if it may be so called. Instead of the antipathy which he had felt towards him, as a man too absolute for the affairs of the world, he was led to cherish a species of contempt for him.

But the aged father appeared in another light among his brethren; they ascribed his relaxed austerity, not to doubt or terror, but to the effect of considering the guilt of Henry greater than he had imagined. No change was imputed to him, but only an increased solemnity of manner; and they ascribed it to an irreparable lapse in the delinquent.

In all societies, however, various opinions may be expected; and we give, perhaps, too strong a picture, when we imagine the brotherhood of the Monastery, to have presented an epitome of the world. Men, more shrewd and invidious than the friars were generally, might have thought it necessary to have considered

what was deemed a change of character, but as a different hue, arising from a different medium,—as sunshine on the pavement of a church, takes its tint from the storied windows through which it shines;—the pavement remains in all respects unaltered, but, by the medium of the painted glass, the external light appears in colour varied and different. It was so with Father Dominick; he was still the same, but new and unforeseen circumstances had arisen.

When he had to contend only with diurnal transactions, he was energetic to even an alarming degree; but, when the clouds thickened, and the tempest lowered, he was daunted by the aspect of the storm. The very preparations that would, but for the infirmity of his nature, have roused his courage, and made him breast the surge, had a very opposite effect; he stood in awe of what he would have himself recommended. The consequence was, that Count Manhim, when he left him in this abased mood,

spoke of him in no mitigated terms; for his experienced eye as a soldier, made him quick in discerning the multiplicity of shapes that conscious weakness assumes. The previous conduct of Father Dominick had, however, secured him a reputation in the monastery, which the disparagement of the Count could not sully; and, in consequence, many, certainly not the clearest sighted of the brotherhood, considered the visible alteration in the old man, as arising from his persuasion of the young Baron's unpardonable guilt, and accordingly reported the sayings of the Count, but drew a different conclusion. They were thus prepared for something severe towards Henry, and led to imagine the Count's contumelious mode of mentioning the infirmity of the monk, as some dross of the military profession that still adhered to him in his new capacity.

CHAPTER XXXI.

“ Oh, holy nature ! thee I do acquit
Of all the ills that mar thy beauty here.”

AFTER the young Baron with his retinue had departed from the castle-gate, his mother and Matilda continued on the battlements, looking at the procession with some degree of anxiety, but not a great deal ; for as yet the church had not been very corrosive in its persecutions, and their solicitude was, in consequence, not intense. The old lady felt, indeed, more of anger than of alarm at the presumption of the clergy in summoning her son before them. A vague feeling, however, allied to fear, lay cold in the bosom of Matilda : she was disturbed at the occurrence

without being able to assign any sufficient cause for what she suffered ; but she inferred, from the boldness of the measure, an apprehension of some unknown peril, and her reflections were gloomy, though the morning was cheerful and bright.

The landscape from their lofty situation presented only sunny images, with here and there a dusky tract of woodland, which, like a flake of shadow, darkened without saddening the scene. The pastoral mountains of Upover, slightly clouded with trees, were green to their summits, and tranquil in their aspect. The spires of the town in the vicinity of the Castle, with their gilded vanes, sparkled as if tipped with stars, and the canopy of smoke, as it rolled over the roofs and chimnies, produced that aerial haze which renders such objects somehow beautiful and picturesque, making the sunshine visible. The river glistened as it rolled along, and the air was redolent with vernal perfumes.

They continued on their breezy elevation for

a considerable time, until the cavalcade from the Castle was become indistinct by distance, no longer offering individuals to view, but gleaming and flickering as it wound across the open country towards the monastery, the scintillating armour of the vassals being alone visible. But just as they prepared to descend, their attention was attracted to a similar object—the Lady Gertrude, with a numerous train of attendants, also proceeding towards the monastery.

Something peculiar in the nature of this lady produced the same effect on her which disease did on others; and, without reflecting on the consequences, she was thus acting on her impassioned resolution of the preceding evening. From her childhood indulged by her mother, a natural capricious and headstrong temper had grown inflexible by habitude; and although the occasion was not one at which the presence of females might be expected, she could not resist the desire of being there.

The young Baron arrived some time before

her, and on alighting at the portal, was shown into a room set apart for the reception of distinguished visitors; he had himself expected that the Lord Abbot would have received him in his own parlour; but that dignitary had determined not to see him until he made his appearance before the Chapter. It thus happened, in the most accidental manner possible, that, when the Lady Gertrude arrived, she was conducted into the room where the young Baron was waiting.

For some time before, Henry had suspected her partiality for himself, and, in consequence, knowing her character, was not so much surprised at seeing her enter as the brotherhood were in hearing she had come.

He received her with comparative ease, and entered into conversation as if the impending probation were not important. But she was not mistress of her own feelings, and, in spite of her endeavours to imitate his self-possession, burst into tears.

There was no artifice in her emotion ; it proceeded altogether from the uncontrolled violence of her feelings ; but, before Henry could recover from the effect, her natural address suggested in what way the accident might be turned to account. Accordingly, instead of being relieved by her tears, as others would have been, she relapsed into a new paroxysm, with which art had more to do than nature. Her tears flowed more copiously, her sobs rendered her voice inarticulate, and she bent on his arm with a fervency of agitation that left no doubt of the state in which she was desirous to appear.

It is not in the heart of a man to treat with severity the woman who cannot conceal her affection for him, however ill-timed in the disclosure ; nor was Henry of a character in any circumstances to do so, and, therefore, although he did feel greatly embarrassed, he yet retained equanimity enough to inquire why she was so discomposed.

To this question, words of course, he did not

expect any particular answer ; but, with her violence in all things, she openly declared that sorrow for the apostacy of one whom she loved above all the world, could alone explain her grief.

This plainness left him no alternative, and with emphasis, he replied drily, that the business on which he had been summoned was of a description that required the utmost self-possession ; and to her declaration, however flattering, it was no longer in his power to give an equivocal reply.

This was fuel to the fire of passion beginning to kindle in her breast ; still, however, instigated by a false hope, she redoubled her endeavours to appear distressed.

The pressure of the time, the imminence of the business, and his betrothment to Matilda, all combined to render the declared partiality of Gertrude irksome ; but his native graciousness allayed the feeling, and he only, with a little more than common earnestness, requested that until his business was over, she would desist.

The word, with the conviction that her attachment was hopeless, like fire to gunpowder, suddenly filled her thoughts with confusion. The animosity, which had abated in the course of the night, returned, and dispersed the sentiments of love which her wishes had tended all the morning to encourage.

How long the evil feeling might have remained. cannot be conjectured ; but her fitful nature rendered it probably not long, and that, before the day was over, affection would again supplant anger ; but, before their strange interview was brought to a natural conclusion, the bell announced that the hour for the Chapter to assemble was arrived.

CHAPTER XXXII.

“ And storied windows richly dight,
Admit a dim, religious light.”

THE Chapter-house of St. Michael's was an oblong polygon building of considerable extent, attached to the church of the Monastery. The three sides of the ends exhibited in each a tall window of stained glass, representing different saints and the armorial bearings of the abbots. The door, or rather three doors, which communicated with the Monastery, displayed the wonted freedom, taste, and flourish of ancient Gothic architecture ; and opposite to them, on the contrary side, was a spacious window, in the centre compartment of which was depicted,

in painted glass, the figure of St. Michael and the Dragon, under the form of an archangel piercing with his spear a huge dragon, who appeared to be thrown upon his back. The scales of the four-footed monster were admirably exhibited, bristling as it were with ire : altogether, the painting was in a superior style of art for any age, and, at the time we are treating of, was held as a wonder which strangers often stopped to view.

One end of this gorgeous hall was occupied with tiers of benches for spectators, rising theatrically one above another to a considerable height. The other was allotted for the Abbot, who was also Dean of the Chapter ; and round a table in the open space a number of massy chairs for the members were placed ; they were of dark walnut, their limbs carved into the shape of lions' legs, resting each foot on a ball ; and their backs were taller than a man's head in a sitting posture ; their cushions were covered with leather, which had once been

brown, but was changed by age into a colour very nearly resembling black.

At the top of the table, leaving space enough for two clerks to be seated, were two stools covered with the same material; and behind them, considerably elevated, was the seat of the Dean, a large elbow-chair, gnarled with many rich carvings, the back surmounted with an image of St. Michael and the Dragon, executed with no ordinary skill and beauty.

But the young Baron was not allowed to enter till the Chapter had met in session. The Lady Gertrude, however, was permitted to come in, and, with two maiden attendants, was accommodated with chairs in advance of the other spectators.—We ought to mention also, that, before the Chapter entered, the servitors covered the table with a piece of gorgeous arras, representing the Judgment of Solomon, and placed on it six curiously chased antique silver candlesticks, each with a large taper, but not lighted, and a silver inkstand, which,

among many elaborate devices, exhibited in the centre a large ring on edge, emblem of eternity, crowned with another image of the contest between St. Michael and his enemy.

At the hour appointed, the folds of the centre of the three doors were thrown open, and the members of the Chapter entered in procession, preceded by a vergier bearing a crucifix, the junior members first, who took their places at the bottom of the table, but did not sit down till the whole were accommodated and the Abbot had mounted into the Dean's chair. They then solemnly bowed to him with their right hands on their breasts, and sat down. Not a breathing was heard, though the hall was crowded. Count Manhim, with all the brotherhood, who were not members of the Chapter, together with a great concourse of spectators, occupied the seats allotted to strangers.

The Abbot then opened the sitting by declaring the orders he had received from the Bishop, handing the same to the clerk,

and then, adverting to the pestilent progress of the Lutheran heresy, informed them that the young Baron of Rublestein had been summoned before them to explain certain opinions which he had professed publicly.

“ But,” said the Abbot, “ I am sanguine in the hope that our inquisition will be attended with pleasant results, for the young man has obeyed the summons, and is, I understand, ready in the house to answer your interrogatories.”

The Chapter would at once have called him in; but Father Dominick rose and proposed that he should be allowed a seat at the end of the table, for, from an ancient date, his family had been particular patrons of their house, and his readiness to obey was in some measure a proof of his alleged offence being capable of at least extenuation.

As the old man's sentiments with respect to the new doctrines, and his abhorrence of them, were well known, the whole Chapter concurred

in his liberal proposition. A seat was accordingly ordered at the bottom of the table for the proselyte. A messenger was then sent to bring him in, and soon returned with him, proclaiming his name ceremoniously.

Henry was magnificently attired for the occasion, and, with an air of gallantry, bowed first to the Abbot, and afterwards to the members who occupied the opposite sides of the table, before taking his seat; but at this moment a kind of scrambling rustling noise was heard at the door, and a considerable number of his retainers, with swords drawn, forced themselves into the room. The members of the Chapter were alarmed at the interruption; but the young Baron, waving his cap to the veteran soldiers, hushed the tumult, and the business proceeded.

The Abbot, without mentioning how he had obtained the paper, read an account of the proceedings which they were to investigate, and the particular articles of the Roman Catholic faith

which Henry had declared himself incapable of defending, laying a marked emphasis on his claim to exercise the right of judgment in all cases.

Before proceeding *seriatim* with the several questions, he intimated to Henry that they would previously hear what he had to say respecting the general charge.

“It may,” said he, “satisfy the Chapter, and save a long controversy.”

The manner in which the Abbot delivered himself was mild and prepossessing ; all present admired his discretion ; but there were a few who did observe that his voice in several sentences was tremulous. Henry, however, rose, and again bowing respectfully to the Chapter, replied, addressing himself to the Abbot :

“My lord, I shall not now answer those particular charges brought against me with an allegation of delinquency, but confine myself for the present to the final accusation, because, if I am correct with respect to it, it must follow

that I have a right to hold conscientiously all the other doctrines.

“ The important charge is, that I have asserted man has the right of private judgment in all matters ; those whom heaven has called to administer the affairs of the church deny this, and say, that we must surrender the freedom of our minds to articles of their dictation. My lord, those administrators are themselves but men ; and by what authority do they presume to refuse that to others which they themselves exercise?—they say, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Let them give proof of that, and I will recant ; but if they give only their assertion, what trust can other men have in their word ?”

He would have proceeded further, but a great stir arose both at the table and among the audience ; weak and impatient men cried out against him, and the Abbot leant back in his chair, covering his face with his right hand, while the confusion increased and the noise grew louder.

Seeing, after a time, that there was no chance of the confusion abating, he abruptly closed the session, and requested Henry, with two or three distinguished members of the Chapter, to attend him in his own room. Among these was Father Dominick, whose zeal burned brighter when he saw how the audience were disposed to side with the church, and felt suddenly all his passion rekindled by the speech of the proselyte, which went, in fact, to a denial of that inspiration which was regarded by the priest as the corner-stone of their fabric.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

“ He has brought letters, but of what import ?”

The conference which the Abbot held in his private chamber with the young Baron was not attended with the effects anticipated. The observations of those members of the Chapter present produced no impression on Henry. In vain they reiterated the claim of inspiration with which the errors of the church were palliated, thinking it then possible he could control the exercise of his reason—but it was too late.

In the midst of their controversy, a messenger came in with letters to the Abbot, who saw, by the superscription, that they were from the

Bishop; without, however, suspending the argument, he opened them, but scarcely had he read two or three sentences, when he started and became suddenly pale: something in them greatly disturbed him, and he rose from his seat and looked from the window in visible dismay.

After some time, he almost recovered the mastery of himself, and resumed his seat. Father Dominick whisperingly inquired what were the tidings. But he made no other answer than that he would tell him again, and took a part in the disputation as if nothing had occurred.

About an hour after the letters had been delivered, he proposed to suspend the dispute till the evening; and, in a careless manner, but cautiously, invited the young Baron to remain at the monastery till the next day, observing, that it was not in his power to prevent the Chapter from finishing their investigation; he proposed, however, that Henry should direct his retinue to return to the Castle, but, if he

thought fit, to order them to come again in the morning.

With the confidence of unsuspecting youth, the invitation was in good faith cheerfully accepted ; and in the interval, till the hour for renewing their debate arrived, Henry directed his attendants to go home, and come again for him next day. While he stood in the court of the monastery, as the soldiers mustered, Count Manhim came towards him, and inquired the occasion of sending away his guards.

“ It is,” said the Count, “ a blessed proof of the difference between the manners of a camp and a convent to see this take place. In my former condition, I would not have left myself so defenceless in the hands of my adversaries ; but, no doubt, there is a difference between opponents in an argument and hostile enemies.”

The Abbot, who was near them, heard these words, and looked keenly askance for a moment at the Count ; but he said nothing, and the retainers of the young Baron rode away.

They then adjourned to the refectory, where dinner was served up ; and the Abbot, with unusual urbanity, placed the young Baron on his right hand at the table.

During the time of their frugal meal, nothing particular occurred ; but the Abbot sent a message to Bernard, the janitor, requesting to see him after dinner, and before they renewed the controversy.

The message was delivered to the servitor aloud, and in an off-hand manner, as if it related to some ordinary unimportant matter. Henry heard it, but he gave it no particular heed ; especially as the Abbot directed his request to be conveyed to Bernard as a common message.

When the brotherhood and the strangers who partook of the refecton dispersed, Count Manhim, who had served with the old Baron, came up to Henry as an acquaintance, and conducted him into the garden, talking with him chiefly of scenes in which, with the Baron Rubiestein, he had spent many hearty days. The Abbot,

in the mean time, went to his own parlour, where he had ordered Bernard to come.

As soon as he was in the room by himself, he took the Bishop's letters from his bosom, where he had deposited them, and read them again with care and concern—he was evidently distressed by their contents, but deterred by something in them from immediately communicating their contents to any person whatever.

While pondering over these impressive documents, Bernard entered, of whom he inquired, without lifting his eyes from the papers, as if in some measure ashamed of what he intended to say, if all the young Baron's retinue had gone.

“Yes, my Lord, some time.”

A pause then ensued ; Bernard looked as if he expected to hear something more, but the Abbot continued taciturn ; at last he said, throwing a quick, perturbed glance at the janitor—

“Bernard !”

Another pause ensued.

“ My Lord !” said Bernard, earnestly.

But about a minute was allowed to elapse before he received any answer, and when he did, it was not very clear.

“ This house,” said the Abbot, “ is ancient, and was built in unsettled times, partly for defence.”

“ Yes,” replied Bernard, “ it is strong, and would stand a fierce assault: save by the gate, there is no access to the interior.”

“ All the Baron’s retainers are gone ?” said the Abbot again.

“ Yes, my Lord ;” and Bernard waited for an answer.

“ Could you not,” said the Abbot at last, looking Bernard steadily in the face, “ contrive to keep watch at the gate, and prevent the young Baron from going out ?”

“ Undoubtedly, I can,” said Bernard.

“ Then do so, and let no man know your instructions.”

The janitor, without speaking, laid his hand upon his heart, and bowed humbly in token of understanding the order.

Nothing further ensued at that time; but when Bernard left the room the Abbot again looked at the letters, and after a considerable interval, said to himself,—

“The Bishop is not well advised in this proceeding; but it is my duty to obey his instructions to the best of my ability. The news have travelled fast; I wonder who was the busy-body that told him of the young man’s apostacy, that he should have been moved to send me these peremptory orders. It may be necessary for the church to vindicate her authority, but it is not in the spirit of that creed we have been taught, to resort to secular means. Besides, the family of Rublestein have long been honoured in this neighbourhood, and the young Baron is not a man to be so used in the midst of his friends. However, though I wish things had been otherwise, I will do what I am commanded;

but it is against the grain. There is no checking the progress of opinion by persecution ; for, although it is very well to talk openly before the world of the church being governed by immediate revelations, we know the power of the Pope and Cardinals.”

CHAPTER XXXIV.

“ I’ll to the castle ; yes, I will go there !”

WHEN the Lady Gertrude was informed that the Chapter would not meet again till next day, she left the monastery, her bosom racked by contending passions.

The appearance of Henry had awakened all her tenderness, and she retired with a sad and subdued heart, discontented with herself and with all in nature.

When about half-way towards the residence of her mother at Uper Tower, a sudden thought entered her head, and, with the force of those violent impulses to which she was subject, she

resolved to go to the Castle. Of what use her presence could be there, she never paused to inquire, nor did she think of her recent determination never again to have communion with Matilda, whose apostacy with Henry she could not sufficiently condemn.

On reaching the gate, she directed her attendants to remain outside, and, with no clear conception of what she intended to do, alighted, and proceeded as she was wont to the bower chamber of the Baroness.

On entering, she found that lady, with Matilda and the veteran, sitting solemnly together. The retainers had returned, and the ladies deemed the circumstance, without knowing why, ominous; for by this time they had begun to think that there was more danger about the conduct of Henry than they had before supposed. The old Baron was, with the feelings of a jealous soldier, also vexed that Henry should have sent home his guards. He did not like the proceeding, and was disturbed. But

when he saw the Lady Gertrude, he received her with his wonted ease and cordiality, hastily inquiring what news she had brought.

She recounted what had taken place; and, as if some modification of her creed had been produced, she lamented that so much zeal was displayed in a transaction not remarkable.

The old man agreed with her that too much attention was directed to the conversion of his son, and a degree of excitement produced in the neighbourhood by it, which made a very ordinary affair portentous.

The old lady also indignantly mourned that the priests had taken up the business so highly; and turning to Matilda, said, without reflecting on her words—

“Your turn will be next.”

“I hope not,” replied Matilda; “I hope they will spare me from a public examination; I am but a weak woman, and have not sufficient courage to withstand any public probation.”

“Yes,” said Lady Gertrude, “it would be

a dreadful thing to be called before such a tribunal ;” and, she added, taking the young lady’s hand, “ you ought not so soon to have professed yourself of Henry’s new faith ; there is a prudence in all things, which cannot be neglected without danger ; you have rendered yourself liable, I fear, to endure what you would avoid.”

The old Baron thought her expressions a little too artful, not being very well acquainted with her oddly-mixed character ; but, smiling, said—

“ It would seem, Lady Gertrude, that we might infer, although you are professedly a very staunch adherent of the papacy, that there is more of policy than sincerity in what you profess : come, answer me truly : do you think Henry has done wrong ?”

Gertrude felt that she had shown more than she intended to disclose, and with gravity added, that she did not presume to call in question the

truth of any doctrine she had so long been taught to believe.

“But women, my Lord, have not strength to contend with men ; we must employ cunning. My friend here,” she added, with a wheedling accent, “has been too downright in her profession ; but Love is blind, they say, and those who are under his guidance may be pardoned for now and then stumbling.”

Matilda, to whom the business of the day was becoming more serious, looked at her companion with surprise ; there appeared, she thought, a discordant levity about her unobserved before ; and this opinion received a wild kind of confirmation by Gertrude suddenly rising, on the excuse of going home. She had entered with no definite object ; nothing had occurred within to attract her scattered thoughts, and she rose to go away as purposeless as she came.

When she had retired, Matilda remarked on her altered manner.

“ She is actuated,” said the young lady, “ by some strange feeling.”

“ I think so too,” said the Baroness ; “ and if I did not know that she has always professed the greatest indifference to Henry and attachment to you, a woman’s prying would make me suspect that things were different. She went to the monastery direct, without any communication with us ; and she is come to spy our conduct, as if she could draw any inference from it that might regulate her own.”

“ I always,” replied the Baron, “ thought her at least possessed of as much cunning as caprice. What can have induced her to come here ?”

“ Since we cannot divine,” said Matilda with a sigh, “ charity requires that we should ascribe the best motives to her.”

“ But I do not like,” said the old Baron, “ what she said to you about concealment ; there was more meant in that than met the ear. I don’t like men or women to play the hypo-

crite ; it is as if they stood more in awe of the world than of God, who knows, nevertheless, all the workings of the heart."

But, although Gertrude had no intention of doing anything at the Castle, and in going there only yielded to an impulse of feminine curiosity, she left it with a changed spirit, and felt as if Matilda had done her a wrong by having so soon and so openly professed Henry's faith ; as it prevented her from taking the important step herself. The consequence was, that, although her visit to the Castle was one of those aimless errands which are sometimes undertaken, it proved a connecting link of the chain which was wrapt about her, and by which she was to be dragged on to her destiny.

On prosecuting her journey homeward, her reflections took another turn. She imagined Matilda to be influenced by temporal considerations, and resolved to take a leaf from her book. Accordingly, judging of others by herself, who acknowledged no permanent principle,

she anticipated that the friars would persuade Henry to a recantation, and resolved at once to encourage the Protestantism of her friend Matilda, while she made her own adherence to the papal dogmas contributory to the wishes of her passion.

CHAPTER XXXV.

“Oh, were the volume of the heart unfolded.”

WITH all their clear perception of character, men of the world are occasionally liable to make great mistakes. It was so with the Abbot of St. Michael's, for although few surpassed him in that intuitive knowledge of human nature, which experience ripens into address, he yet supposed better of mankind than might have been expected from one who evinced so much dexterity in the management of his trusts. Perhaps he was agitated in the transaction to which we refer by the mandate from the Bishop, and was in consequence led to act has-

tily; certain it is, that not one in all the monastery was more deceived at this juncture by the vascillations of Father Dominick. But there was no deception practised on the part of that irascible, yet honest man. No one could be more sincere in his opinions; his only fault in that respect arose from his weakness. He believed himself always right, because he was uniformly conscientious.

The moderation which Father Dominick had displayed after returning from his intemperate visit to the Castle, derived value from his integrity; and the Abbot, in common with others, but in a greater degree, gave him credit for liberality, when he saw it was judicious to grant it. They inquired not into his motives, if he was swayed by any consideration at all; nor did they suspect the existence of that latent vanity which was called into play at this time, and which proved with him so strong a spring of action.

Believing him to be of that fair description

which had surprised so many, the Abbot thought him worthy of his confidence ; and, accordingly, before the meeting appointed for the afternoon, he communicated to him the episcopal despatches which had troubled himself so much.

By these it appeared that the Bishop had been informed of the young Baron's declaration ; and also that he had received instructions from the Vatican to smother the Lutheran heresies in his diocese with the utmost rigour, even to the burning of the contumacious.

In the severe spirit of the orders, the Abbot saw much to regret. There was not then that wide difference between the Lutherans and the Church of Rome, which events and accidents afterwards caused ; and he was persuaded that the preachings of the Reformers might be appeased by conceding to them the removal of a few undisguisable abuses. But with Father Dominick the case was otherwise. The approbation of the auditors in the Chapter-house had

awakened his vanity, and all the animosity which he had ever felt against heretics was renewed; especially when he saw in the Bishop's letters the reflex of his own notions concerning its fatal and eternal effects.

In this he fell into two errors of the most pernicious kind. He mistook the applause of the audience in the Chapter-house for an echo of the voice of the world, forgetting that the crowd chiefly consisted of friars and persons interested in upholding the church in all its plenitude. The remorseless measures for the extirpation of heresy, he regarded as evidence of the abhorrence in which they should be held, rather than as proof of the evil increasing, and with his constitutional vehemence he acted.

The Abbot was not prepared for this effect, nor aware of the impression he might produce till it was too late; and, unfortunately, the communication could not be recalled. To equivocate with his instructions was no longer possible, if he had been so inclined, and Father Dominick

would not listen to the procrastination deemed expedient. He consented, however, still to the private meeting arranged for the afternoon, but only upon condition, that if Henry remained invulnerable, the severest course should be adopted against him, and with the utmost promptitude,

The Abbot thus felt himself hampered in his intentions; and although it was agreed that the controversy should be renewed as fixed, leaving still a chance for Henry to escape a harsher inquisition, yet he could not enough lament to himself that he had been so imprudently betrayed to give his confidence to one so narrow in his views as Father Dominick.

At the controversy, and during the whole time of the meeting, he was absent and thoughtful; and Father Dominick observed with inexpressible grief and dismay, that he several times attempted to give a more lenient interpretation than the arguments in his opinion of the young Baron merited—it being most indisputably

obvious, that he was reprobate and lost for ever. Two or three times he endeavoured to repress this mistaken clemency, not only by significant looks, but by verbal hints that could not be misunderstood ; at last his impatience grew to such a pitch, that it could be no longer restrained, especially when he saw there was no hope of Henry conceding to any earthly tribunal jurisdiction over individual judgment. The utmost that the young man would acknowledge was possession of the power of punishment, and even then he contended free reason would judge of its justice.

To the visible chagrin and disappointment of the Abbot, the meeting broke up without having produced any impression on the tenets which the young Baron declared he had embraced in his creed, giving an intimation that next day, before the inquisition of the Chapter, he would publicly and boldly profess his new faith.

When the clergy who were present had re-

tired with Henry, Father Dominick remained behind with the Abbot.

“ It is of no avail,” said he, “ to expect recantation from that perverse and for ever lost young man. He regards the Church as a wicked usurpation, and we have no election but only to quench the reprobate spirit that is within him.”

The Abbot replied,—

“ There is time enough to think of that ; I cannot act on my orders from the Bishop till they are laid before the Chapter, and it does not meet till noon to-morrow ”

“ Were this a common affair,” rejoined the Father, “ delay might be allowed ; but our holy religion is in danger, and when the waters are out, and the roads are covered, we must not search for precedents as to what should be done.”

The Abbot was distressed to hear of precipitancy, and reminded Father Dominick that the Chapter stood adjourned till next day, and could not properly be convened sooner.

Opposition in any matter was like oil on fire to the nature of the monk when excited, and he replied with a degree of *fiercé* that was almost indecorous—

“ It may be true that you, my Lord, are prevented by the adjournment from calling the Chapter this night together, but we stand in imminent peril; the leak in the ship gains upon us, the fire that has seized the fabric rages;—we must be up and doing; and, my Lord, your instructions are to that effect.”

“ What would you have me do?” replied the Abbot, disconcerted; “ the Chapter cannot be again called together to-day, and I do not discern any thing in the present exigency that demands haste.”

“ No, my Lord! are we not as soldiers, and is not the enemy at our gates? do not we hear the wheels of his engines coming heavily towards us? and can we slumber and drowse in the jeopardy? If the Chapter may not meet, the members may be called together, and made

acquainted with the contents of the episcopalian missives."

The Abbot, finding himself driven up into a corner, made no answer, but bit his nether lip, which the energetic old man observing, followed up his advantage relentlessly, saying, "these are not times for diffidence; I see how averse you are to resort to extremities with this infected youth. But be not deterred from your duty by his rank; all creatures in the sight of God are equal—the sparrow and the sage."

"True, true!" cried the Abbot interrupting him, "but you do not reflect that we must look to secular considerations."

"Are not all the faithful on our side?"

"I am not sure of that; and he is the last of his race—his father will not tamely see him injured."

"We can make no respect of persons. The impartiality of Heaven should be our rule. The baronial rank and high descent of the heretic are but temporal trifles; our task is with immortal souls."

• The Abbot saw his endeavours to allay the stern purpose of the bigot were in vain; and, accordingly, said he would convene the members of the Chapter to a private meeting after the gates of the Monastery were shut for the night; in this he forgot, as well as the implacable monk, that the Monastery was within the alodial jurisdiction of the old Baron.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

“ The tender mother dreads, she knows not what,
For with her fondness there is ever fear.”

IN the meantime the maternal anxieties of the baroness suffered some change ; the indignation which she had all the day cherished against the priesthood, and particularly against the fraternity of St. Michael, began to abate ; and, now and then, a cold feeling of apprehension, like the fitful winds of the autumnal evening, rustled her fancies, while gathering fears darkened them with dismay. She did not dread harm to her son at the Monastery, for he had often passed the night there ; but she was uneasy to think he had sent home his guards.

“ Had he not taken them,” said she to Matilda, “ I would not, perhaps, have so noticed his absence ; but to send them back like a knotless thread, after so much ado, perplexes me, and yet there is nothing very mysterious in the circumstance—on the contrary, it implies security ; but I am not content, for the taking of them with him was a proof that he did at first apprehend in his heart that he might require their aid.”

Matilda sighed deeply ; in her own breast the sentiments of the old lady found a sad response, and she thought more made of Henry’s accession to the Lutherans than should have been : for she felt but as a fond woman, who carried not her views beyond the objects of the present time. She was not so timid as his mother, even while she heard of the tumult at the Chapter-house, but at times she confessed herself sensible to fears.

The old Baron had enjoyed all day a re-inspiration of youthful ardour : without the

slightest warrantry he was stirring with indefatigable activity in making warlike preparations throughout the Castle, which by sunset he had placed in a condition to withstand any sudden assault. For taking these precautions he could give no reason, nor even imagine where the enemies were to come from, but altogether actuated by an ominous impulse, his orders were as jealously given as if visible foes were forming at the gate—a demonstration that brooding apprehensions were nestling at his heart.

In the cool of the twilight the Baroness and Matilda again walked on the leads of the fortalice, and courted, from the tranquillity of the coming night, that quiet of thought which could not be obtained in their bower. When they ascended to the battlements the sun was on the point of sinking below the horizon, and all the air was filled with a gauzy haze that made the atmosphere almost palpable; a few flakes of cloud hung round the couch of the sun, and they con-

templated with delight the fanlike spokes of light and shade that spread to the mid-heavens, as if the beams of the lord of day were apparent in temperate radiance.

Matilda pointed out the beautiful phenomena to the pensive Baroness, and compared it to the squadrons of Providence flying forth from the gates of heaven into all quarters to take their post of nightly vigilance for the protection of the world.

While they viewed it with awe and admiration, the fluttering bats from the ivy-mantled towers seemed to accent their short, shrill shrieks with glee as they whirled around in their revelries.

The distant view gradually became more obscure, and the golden light of the evening faded into a dim amber colour, till every object became indistinct, while various lights, stars of the landscape, began to appear in every direction from cottage, hall, and grange.

The serenity of the evening induced the

ladies to prolong their walk ; they could not indeed compose their minds, so much were they excited by the occurrences of the day, and the moon was high and clear before they thought of descending : when they did, they found the old Baron resting after his aimless preparations.

He explained to the Baroness how he had been employed, and, by an inadvertent expression, conveyed a very lively impression of what he felt.

“ When I look,” said he, “ seriously at all this proceeding, I cannot persuade myself that any harm is intended, and yet I am actuated by a strange dread. It is not for a moment to be supposed that these monks will besiege the castle in battle array, with crucifixes for swords, and relics for catapults ; and I cannot divine where they are likely to find real soldiers, for, by the constitution of the empire, the territory of Rublestein cannot be invaded with impunity.”

“ True,” said the lady, whose fears were by this time no longer equivocal, “ the territory may be safe, but these monks would not be so bold if they had not some sort of heartening from the secular princes, I cannot discern, however, in what Henry’s fault consists. If a man has a house that requires repair, does he any wrong in repairing it? The Lutherans do no more; they have discovered that there are flaws and abuses in the church, and only propose to reform them; they do not plot anything against the fabric itself, but only try to make it more deserving the homage of the wise.”

“ That,” exclaimed the Baron, “ is no more than I expected, but it is not what is wanted—what men will not consent to do, begets quarrels. I remember when, with a detachment of the army in Piedmont, it came on a rough night, which obliged us to halt near a castle situated in a neutral territory. With other officers I civilly begged lodgings

for the night. The master was a churl, and would not open the gates, standing insolently on his neutrality. We beseeched for charity, and all that, to obtain permission to rest there; but he was as compunctionless as the storm; therefore, seeing no better could be had, we set fire to the gates, and afterwards made ourselves comfortable within. This, I think, is pretty much the practice of the world; what men cannot procure by soft words and fair means, they are apt to take by stratagems or force. The church is like the churl of the castle—it refuses the boon required, and will, like him, be obliged at last to surrender.”

“ Yes,” said the lady, “ it may be so, my lord; but it is all one to the victims, who perish in the mean time, how the dispute ends.”

The Baron made no reply, but turning round to Matilda, took her compassionately by the hand, saying,—

“ You do not speak, you are pale and sad: what think you of this business?”

Matilda, wiping her eyes, replied—

“ In sooth, my lord, I know not what to think; I did imagine it to be the privilege of Henry’s rank to think what he might in matters of faith; but this proceeding at the monastery has set all my ideas adrift; I am fearful, I know not why—only there may be danger in contesting points to which the clergy attach such peremptory importance. I wish Henry had not thought it necessary to be so bold—he could have thought as he does, if there be danger in it, without disclosing his opinions to the world.”

“ Now, in that,” replied the Baron, “ we greatly differ. If aught is to be gained by a brave declaration of a man’s creed, he is bound by his obligations to society to speak out; but what I am most surprised at is, that by his declaration he should be placed in jeopardy. However, ‘ all’s well that ends well,’ and I should not be sorry if these saucy priests found frost in the Reformation; they should have mended what was wrong about themselves, and having made

all right, then have ascertained who had the hardihood to impeach them. But, my fair child, we idly talk ; we know not the tendency of these things, and must abide the issue. I cannot, however, account for my unhappiness to-night. Be merciful, all-wise, all-seeing Heaven ! and grant us what we require, nor heed the idle prattle of our prayers.”

CHAPTER XXXVII.

“ Some know not what to do, others look stern,
And proudly looks the old man on them all.”

BERNARD, the janitor, no doubt by orders secretly given, shut the gates of the monastery a full hour before the wonted time ; and one of the servitors gave Henry notice, that the large apartment which he frequented would be wanted for a private meeting, which the Abbot had summoned for that evening, telling him that another room was prepared for his reception.

Count Manhim was with him when this information was delivered, and remarked, as the young Baron rose to quit the apartment, that

the wonted peacefulness of the abbey had been much disturbed, adding—

“ They seem to make an offence of your declaration”—for the Count having relapsed into his usual habitude, regarded the bustle and stir of the ecclesiastics with something of a soldier’s indifference. Henry, however, made no reply, but adjourned, followed by the Count, into another room, leaving the servitors to prepare for the reception of the members of the Chapter who belonged to the inquisition, to whom the Abbot had sent notice of his instructions.

Something indescribable, in the coolness and ceremony with which the young Baron had felt himself treated in the monastery, made his situation not pleasant. He saw that, at least there, his declaration of adherence to the Lutheran cause was not palatable. The Abbot kept aloof, and the other members of the brotherhood with whom he was acquainted were distant and taciturn. Of all the house,

Count Manhim appeared to have undergone no change, or, if he had suffered any, it was in the revival of his soldierly freedom, for he was less addicted to doctrinal speculations than when he came first to reside at St. Michael's; but this inflexion of conduct in the Count was entirely owing to the personal interest which he felt in the business. Recluse men, it is observed, attach importance to dogmas and doctrines; but men accustomed to deal with other men are more influenced by personal considerations. It was strictly so with that honoured veteran.

At the hour appointed, the different inquisitorial members met in the room prepared for them. The meeting was not regular, but the Abbot had been induced to call them together to ascertain their opinion privately of the Bishop's orders, before formally attempting to carry them into effect.

None but members of the Chapter, most distinguished for their talent and discretion, were assembled.

The room in which they met was a large lofty chamber, gloomy by the darkness of the wainscot, and grim with curious carvings and the effigies of such images as may be supposed to constitute the furniture of a friar's imagination; mitres and keys crowned the panels alternately with figures of St. Michael and the dragon, and a large fire-place, projecting its beetle-browed mantelpiece over the hearth, made it appear at once antique and solemn; but it was not until the party met that the whole strength of its lugubrious features became apparent.

Owing to the number of persons that were to meet, the table appeared disproportionably small; but the stately chairs from the Chapter-house were placed at some distance around it, and at the one end stood, elevated above the others, an ancient elbowed-seat for the Abbot. It was covered with black leather, and had evidently been constructed to receive a much more corpulent person—one of his predecessors, of

whose memory different traditions were preserved, that tended to keep in remembrance his uncomely proportions, and a certain quaintness of humour, for which, in his day, he had been celebrated.

Various articles, books, and papers, which lay upon the table, prevented candles from being used; but from the ceiling a large iron lamp depended, and it was so arranged that the light from it fell, in remarkable effulgence, upon the head and person of the Abbot. When he ascended into the chair, no other light was in the room, and the effect falling on the venerable forms around, was striking and mysterious.

The profoundest silence prevailed over all; no strangers nor auditors were admitted; it was strictly a conclave assembly, and the more solemn, as it was an extraordinary meeting, and convened for a purpose which all felt to be eminent, and apprehended to be awful.

Some time after taking their seats, the assem-

bly composed themselves to hear the communication; and the Abbot, rising solemnly, requested attention to what he had thought it necessary to make them acquainted with. He then read aloud the letters from the Bishop, containing the bull and program from Rome for their regulation in proceeding to the investigation of persons accused of the Lutheran heresies.

No remark was made upon this communication: whatever they thought of it, the different members kept in their own bosoms; but Father Dominick looked around, and was observed to smile, as if he derived pleasure from the documents, though they spoke only of penalties and crimes.

The Abbot then laid on the table the papers which he had himself read, for the clerks and officers of the Chapter were not present; and then said with gravity, that these were the instructions which he had received, and from which he could not recede. Afterwards he drew from his bosom another letter, and it was

observed that his hand greatly shook when he opened it ; but he soon recovered the mastery of himself, and read with a steady voice, this particular communication.

It narrated that the Bishop had been informed of the public dispute held in the neighbouring town, and of the part that the young Baron of Rublestein had indiscreetly taken, as it was called, in the controversy ; adding, he heard with inexpressible sorrow, that he had adopted the Lutheran creed ; concluding with ordering that the delinquent should be called before the Chapter of St. Michael's and interrogated respecting these alleged facts ; saying that, as the truth was elicited, the inquisitorial board should strictly conform to the process directed against heretics in the bulls and programs of Rome.

There was no observation made on this communication also ; but Father Dominick struck the table with his clenched hand, thereby asserting with more than common emphasis to the contents of the papers—but he also said nothing.

In a few minutes after, the whole party rose in silence and left the apartment, as if they had witnessed some spectacle, respecting which they could give no utterance.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

“ Oh ! man, weak man,
Dress'd in a little brief authority.”

THE Abbot, when he returned to his own parlour, sat down silent alone, and the servitor who attended him, placing a lamp on the table, retired without speaking.

For some time he continued in a meditative posture ; the meeting had not been exactly what he had expected ; from the characters of whom it was composed, he had anticipated some noisy remonstrance, and not that unanimity which had made it so solemn. In fact, he had been led to expect something condemnatory of the severe orders received ; but the

silence in which they were heard and the earnestness of the whole proceedings troubled him. He could not comprehend what the manner of the members betokened—not favourably, as he augured, to his wishes; and he had noticed the gestures of Father Dominick with reluctance, for they indicated the existence of feelings with which he could not sympathize.

When he had sat some time, a knock apprised him of some one being at the door; it did not surprise him, for it was a common practice in the monastery for visitors so to announce themselves; recollecting, however, that the young Baron was in the house, he rose expecting it was him, but experienced a disagreeable revulsion when he perceived, on opening it, that Father Dominick was there. Turning round somewhat disappointed, he went towards his seat, and without looking behind him, bade the old man come in and shut the door.

Father Dominick did as he was desired, and seated himself unbidden at the table.

The Abbot, still under the influence of the feelings which his solitary ruminations had suggested, inquired, with some lack of his usual courtesy, on what business the old man had come at that time of night.

“It is now late,” said he, “I was on the point of retiring to rest, but I fear the proceedings of this night have not been propitious to repose.”

Father Dominick, without taking any notice of his troubled appearance, replied, that he was glad to observe by the missives communicated to-night, that the church was at last awakened to her danger.

“If,” replied the Abbot, “the letters apprised me only of her being so roused, I should not be so molested; but the instructions are very rigorous, and we have not met with a case in this neighbourhood to which they properly apply as far as delinquency goes; but the worst is, that we have cases which the austere might bring under them.”

“Cases!” exclaimed Father Dominick; “what cases? is there any other than that of the young Baron Rublestein? But the plague spreads; something must be done, and that early, to arrest the contagion.”

“Father,” said the Abbot, “you are too quick; the young Baron Rublestein has certainly been imprudent, but surely you do not consider my instructions as applicable at all to his offence.”

“By the wounds of God,” replied Father Dominick, with more energy than was requisite; “I do; and if we deal with him leniently, much of his guilt may be ascribed to us.”

The Abbot, pushing back his chair, exclaimed,

“You surprise me, I could not have imagined, after your liberality in the Chapter, you would have allowed yourself to utter such a sentiment.”

“I did not think then,” replied Father Dominick, “that he was so marked out by

God and man for vengeance. Did you not hear the clamour that rose when he attempted to defend himself?—at that very hour, my lord, the letters were on the way to you, calling for the vindication of the church.”

This wild speech could not be answered; and the Abbot, desirous to avoid every thing that might seem opposed to the opinions of Father Dominick, said,—

“ But our holy religion bids us look with compassion on the errors of others; I do not think the young Baron has quite incurred the penalties that the church attaches to such heresy.”

“ It does not,” said Father Dominick, “ depend, my lord, on you; if he be guilty, why should he be spared; the church in this matter acts directly from the inspirations of Heaven, in whose sight all men are equal, the prince and the peasant.”

This speech a little ruffled the equanimity of the Abbot, who replied, tartly,—

“ You seem, Father Dominick, to think the young Baron has already been tried and condemned ; we have only, you will recollect, inquired into the truth of the rumours concerning him.”

“ That is the point,” said the old man, “ I have come to apprise you of ; but we have had his fearful declaration before all the Chapter, and he has by it made it plain that he is subject to the anathemas and condemnation of the church ; but still he must be tried, and in the interval let good men visit him : perhaps, before the time of trial comes, he may be won to recant his errors.”

The Abbot was still more disturbed by the harsh intrepidity of this speech, and said, with a mortified air,—

“ But nothing can be done till the Chapter formally decides ; the meeting of to-night goes for nothing. I pray you, good Father, reflect till the Chapter meets to-morrow, on what should be done ; we must not be too hasty in this dreadful business.”

“ You call it dreadful, my lord,” cried the fierce monk ; “ it is so, it is dreadful to think that the cast-out demons are loosened from their everlasting chains, and, for a time time, are permitted to roam on the earth.”

“ I beseech you, Father Dominick,” exclaimed the Abbot, “ give not expression to such thoughts as these; the rash young man only claimed, as I understood, the right of judgment.”

“ Aye, aye,” said Father Dominick, also rising, “ but did you not make the perilous inference that might be deduced from his blasphemous speech; if man be at liberty to exercise his reason on all things, of what avails the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, that has so long governed with blessedness the Catholic Church; we cannot admit the treasonous claim his pretence implies.”

“ It is to-night too late to sift that question,” said the Abbot, “ it requires time and consideration; but think till to-morrow, Father, of

my cruel orders,—I hope we are not come yet to such an extremity as to force an application of them to the Baron's case."

Father Dominick, moving towards the door, in some degree of chagrin at the humour in which he had found the Abbot, lifted his hand aloft, and, with wild enthusiasm, cried,—

“ An eye is on us,—a lidless eye !”

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