BOTHWELL, VOLUME III

Title: Bothwell
or, The Days of Mary Queen of Scots

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Release Date: September 11, 2017 [eBook #55529]

Language: English

*** START OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK BOTHWELL, VOLUME III (OF 3) ***

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BOTHWELL:

OR,

THE DAYS OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.

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"THE ROMANCE OF WAR," "MEMORIALS OF EDINBURGH CASTLE,"

"THE SCOTTISH CAVALIER," &c., &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

PARRY & CO., LEADENHALL STREET.

MDCCCLI.

M'CORQUODALE AND CO., PRINTERS, LONDON.

WORKS, NEWTON.

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BOTHWELL;

OR,

THE DAYS OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.

CHAPTER I.

THE KIRK-OF-FIELD.

They make me think upon the gunner's lintstock,
Which yielding forth a light about the size
And semblance of the glow-worm, yet applied
To powder, blew a palace into atoms.
Sent a young king—a young queen's mate, at least—
Into the air, as high as ere flew night-hawk,
And made such wild work in the realm of Scotland.
Auchindrane, Act ii.

There was not a sound heard in the mansion, which, at that moment, had no other occupants than the doomed prince, his two pages, (or chamber-cheilds as the Scots name them,) and five other attendants,—William Taylor, Thomas Neilson, Simpson, Edwards, and a boy. These occupied apartments at the extremity of the house, but on the same floor with the king. All the other attendants had absconded, to partake of the festivities at Holyrood, or had gone there in the queen's retinue.

"French Paris—Nicholas Hubert," said Bothwell in a husky voice, "the keys!"

Hubert produced them from beneath his mantle. They were a set of false keys which had been made from waxen impressions of the originals. The door was softly opened, and the conspirators entered the lower ambulatory, on each side of which lay a vaulted chamber.

Bolton thought of Hubert's sister, and his heart grew sick; for the brother knew not that his sister was at that time above them, in the chamber of Darnley.

"Come, Master Konrad," said Ormiston, tapping him on the shoulder; "if we are to be friends, assist us, and make thyself useful; for we have little time to spare."

Thus urged, Konrad, though still in profound ignorance as to the object of his companions, and the part he was acting, assisted Ormiston and French Paris to unload the sumpter-horse, and to drag the heavy mails within doors. These he supposed to contain plunder, and then the whole mystery appeared unravelled. His companions were robbers, and the solitary house, about and within which they moved so stealthily, was their haunt and hiding-place. With affected goodwill he assisted to convey the mails into the vaults, where, some hours before, Hubert had deposited a large quantity of powder, particularly under the corner or ground stones of the edifice.

While they were thus employed, and while the ex-Lord Chancellor and Whittinghame kept watch, the Earl and John of Bolton ascended softly to the corridor of the upper story, where, by the dim light of a small iron cresset that hung from the pointed ceiling, they saw Andro Macaige, one of the king's pages, lying muffled in his mantle, and fast asleep on a bench.

"Confusion!" said the Earl fiercely; "this reptile must be destroyed, and I have lost my poniard!"

"Must both the pages die?" asked his companion, in a hollow tone.

"Thou shalt soon see!" replied the Earl, who endeavoured, by imitating Ormiston's careless and ruffian manner, to veil from his friends, and from himself, the horror that was gradually paralysing his heart.

They passed the sleeping page unheard, as the floor was freshly laid with rushes, and entered the chamber of the young king—that dimly-lighted chamber of sickness and suffering; where the innumerable grotesque designs of some old prebend of St. Mary, seemed multiplied to a myriad gibbering faces, as the faint and flickering radiance of the night lamp played upon them. The great bed looked like a dark sarcophagus, canopied by a sable pall; and the king's long figure, covered by a white satin coverlet, resembled the effigy of a dead man; and certainly the pale sharp outline of his sleeping face, in no way tended to dispel the dreamy illusion.

Bothwell's fascinated gaze was riveted on him, but Bolton's turned to the page, who was half seated and half reclined on the low bed, and, though fast asleep, lay against the sick king's pillow, with an arm clasping his head.

They seemed to have fallen asleep thus.

The thick dark hair of Mariette fell in disorder about her shoulders; her cheeks were pale and blanched, and blistered by weeping; her long and silky eyelashes were wet and matted with tears; and there was more of despondency than affection in the air with which she drooped beside the king. Her weariness of weeping and sorrow had evidently given way to slumber.

Rage and jealousy swelled the heart of Bolton. He panted rather than breathed; and though his long-desired hour of vengeance on them both had come, he too was paralysed, trembling, and irresolute. The Earl gave him a glance of uncertainty; but Bolton saw only Mariette. Conscience whispered "to pause," while there was yet time; but *the bond* had been signed, the stake laid, and to waver was to die!

For a moment a blindness fell upon his eyes, and a sickness on his heart; and the Earl said to Hepburn in a hollow accent—

"Thy poniard—thy poniard! Thou hast it! The king, the king! and I will grasp this boy."

At that moment Mariette started, awoke, and uttered a shrill cry of terror

on perceiving two armed men with their faces masked.

The king turned uneasily in bed; and, filled with desperation by the imminence of the danger, and the necessity for immediate action, Bothwell approached, the couch. But either Darnley had been awake (and watching them for some time,) or instantly became so, and with all his senses about him; for like lightning he sprang from bed—his long illness and attenuation making his lofty stature appear more colossal; he snatched a sword, and, clad only in his shirt and pelisse, rushed upon the intruders. On this, a frenzy seemed to take possession of both conspirators.

Parrying a sword thrust with his mailed arm, Bothwell threw himself upon the weak and powerless Darnley, and struck him down by a blow of the maul he carried.

The wretched king uttered a piercing cry; another and another succeeded, and Bothwell, animated by all the momentary fury of a destroyer, stuffed a handkerchief violently into his mouth, and at that moment he became insensible.

Meanwhile, Bolton, trembling with apprehension, jealousy, horror, and (shall we say it?) love, clasped Mariette in his arms, and endeavoured to stifle her cries; but she uttered shriek upon shriek, till, maddened by fear and excitement, all the despair of the lover became changed to hatred and clamorous alarm. A spirit of destruction possessed his soul; his nerves seemed turned to iron, his eyes to fire.

He became blind—mad!

He grasped her by the neck—(that delicate and adorable neck, which it had once been a rapture to kiss, while he toyed with the dark ringlets that shaded it)—and as his nervous grasp tightened, her eyeballs protruded, her arms sank powerless, and her form became convulsed.

She gave him one terrible glance that showed she recognised him, and made one desperate effort to release herself, and to embrace him.

"O Jesu Maria! spare me, dearest Hepburn—spare me! I love thee still—I do—I do! Kill me not—destroy me not thus—thus—with all my sins! Man—devil—spare me! God—God!"

She writhed herself from his hands, and sank upon the floor, where, vibrating between time and eternity, she lay motionless and still. Hepburn's senses were gone—yet he could perceive close by him the convulsed form of the king, with Bothwell's handkerchief in his throat. He was dead.

The terrible deed was done! They sprang away, stumbling over the body of Macaige the page, whom Hay of Tallo had slain in the corridor; and, descending the stairs almost at one bound, came panting and breathless to the side of the cool and deliberate Morton, who, with his sword drawn, stood near Ormiston, and superintended the laying of a train to the powder in the vaults. Then, by the

light of the red-orbed moon, that streamed full upon them, did the startled Konrad perceive that Bothwell and Bolton, whose masks were awry, appeared stunned and bewildered. The eyes of the Earl were glazed and haggard; his hands were clenched, and his brow knit with horrible thoughts; his companion was like a spectre; his eyes rolled fearfully, and his hair seemed stiffened and erect.

Konrad recognised them both, and immediately became aware that some deed of darkness had been perpetrated.

"Thou hast done well!" said Ormiston, surveying them grimly.

"*Well!*" reiterated the Earl, in a sepulchral voice, as, overcome and exhausted by the sudden revulsion of his terrible thoughts, he leaned against the doorway. "Well! saidst thou? Oh, Hob Ormiston! my very soul seemed at my finger-points when I grasped him. My God! what am I saying? I was intoxicated—delirious! Cain—Cain!"

"Ah, Mariette!" groaned the repentant Bolton; "thy dying cry, and the last glare of thy despairing eyes, will haunt me to my grave!"

"Cock and pie!" cried Ormiston, with astonishment and exasperation; "have we here two bearded men, or two schulebairns blubbering over their Latinities? May a thousand yelling fiends hurl ye both to hell!" he added savagely. "Away! disperse—while I fire the train. The match—the lunt! Hither, Paris—Hubert—thou French villain! quick!"

"Separate!" said the Earl of Morton; "disperse—I go to Dalkeith on the spur. Away!" and, leaping on the horse that had borne the powder, this noble Earl, who at all times was extremely economical of his own person, galloped away, and disappeared over the brae to the southward.

Bothwell's olive face glowed for a moment, as he blew the slow match and fired the train. Like a fiery serpent, it glowed along the ground, flashed through the open doorway, and down the dark corridor of the house, till it reached the vaulted chamber below that of Darnley, and where the powder lay. Then there was a pause—but for a moment only—for, lo'——

Broad, red, and lurid, on the shadowy night, through all the grated windows of the house of the Kirk-of-Field, there flashed a volume of light—dazzling and blinding light—eclipsing the full-orbed moon and all the sparkling stars—revealing the forms of the shrinking conspirators, and every surrounding object. Full on the massive ramparts of the city, tufted with weeds and blackened by the smoke of years, fell that sudden glow, revealing the strong embrasures that stretched away into far obscurity, the grim bastel-house close by, with its deep-mouthed gunport and peering culverin—on the ivied aisles of Mary's lonely kirk—on the shattered tower of the Dominicans—and displaying even for a gleam the distant woods of Merchiston. The fields quaked—the walls of the mansion shook; and then came a roar, as if the earth was splitting.

The solid masonry rent from copestone to foundation in a hundred ruddy fissures; the massive vaults yawned and opened; the window-gratings were torn asunder like gossamer webs; and a gigantic column of fire and smoke, dust and stones, ascended into the air, as if vomited from the mouth of a volcano, to descend in ruin and darkness on the earth; and a vast pile of rubbish was all that remained of the house of St. Mary-in-the-Fields!

"Ho! ho!" cried Ormiston, with a wild laugh. "Like a bolt from a bow, there goeth Henry Stuart, Lord of Darnley, Duke of Albany, and King of Scotland!"

For a moment Bothwell felt as if he neither lived nor breathed; but Ormiston hurried him away, while all their appalled comrades dispersed in various directions. Konrad, although the whole affair was an incomprehensible mystery to him, acting by the natural instinct of self-preservation, on finding himself deserted by companions whom he dreaded and abhorred, instead of returning to the city, struck into a narrow horseway that led southward, and hurried with all speed from the scene of this terrible explosion; for the whole bearing of those who had so suddenly left him to his own reflections, informed him that it would neither be conducive to his safety or honour to be found in a vicinity so dangerous.

Ignorant of the country, and with no other object than to leave the city far behind him, he traversed the rough and winding path, on one side of which lay a vast lake[*] and the ruins of a convent; on the other, fields marked in the ancient fashion (when draining was unknown) by high rigs, having between deep balks or ditches, where the water lay glistening in the moonlight. Then he entered upon the vast common muir of the burgh, that in the gloom of the night appeared to be bounded only by the distant hills.

[*] The Burgh loch. *Mag. Absalom.*

From the effect of long confinement he soon became faint and exhausted; and, though he dared not approach any habitation, there was none within view, for the district seemed strangely desolate and still.

At the verge of the muirland, near where a little runnel meandered between banks overhung by reeds and whin and rushes, there stood a little chapel, dedicated in the olden time to St. John the Baptist, having a crucifix and altar, where the wayfarer might pause to offer up a prayer. There a hermit had once resided; and the charter of foundation mentions, that he was clothed "in a white garment, having on his breast a portraiture of St. John the Baptist, whose hermit he was called." The chapel had been partly demolished to pave the road; and even the stone that marked the anchorite's grave, had been torn out for the same purpose.

The windows were empty, and the grass grew where the cross had stood on the altar; but there was no other resting-place, and Konrad entered the little ruin with caution.

A lamp was burning on the altar, but the oratory was quite desolate. The nuns of St. Katherine of Sienna had kept, in other days, a light ever burning on the Baptist's shrine, to which they made yearly pilgrimages; and one poor old survivor of the scattered sisterhood still tended the lamp with the labour of religious love.

Uttering a prayer to Heaven for protection, overcome by weariness and exhaustion, Konrad laid by his side the sword given him by Ormiston, and, wrapped in the other gift of the same remarkable personage, composed himself to sleep, leaving to the morrow the study and development of his future plans.

How little he knew of the deed in which he had that night been so unwittingly a participator!

Of Darnley's attendants, all were buried among the ruins save Neilson, who was taken alive from amid the debris next day, and William Taylor the page, whose body was found lying beside the king's. They had both been carried through the air, over the lofty ramparts of the city, into the garden of the Blackfriars, where they were found in their night-clothes, within a few yards of each other, without much external injury, save a wound made by the maul on the king's forehead.

Such was the generally received account of this affair, though the recent and able historian of Scotland asserted, that he had seen documents which proved that the young king had been first assassinated, and then carried into the garden; after which the house was blown up—a useless and dangerous means of causing a more general and immediate alarm.

CHAPTER II.

THE MIDNIGHT MASS.

What, though the men
Of worldly minds have dared to stigmatise
The sister-cause—religion and the law—
With superstitious name!
Grahame.

"Now, Lord Earl," said Ormiston, as they paused breathlessly near the Pleasance Porte; "which way wendest thou?"

"To Holyrood—to Holyrood!" panted the Earl. "And thou?"——

"Faith! to my own lodging. Thou knowest that I byde me at the Netherbow, in the turnpike above Bassandyne, that rascally proclamation printer; and we must enter the city separately." The Earl sighed bitterly. "Cock and pie! what dost thou regret?"

"To-night."

"Then, what dost thou fear?"

"To-morrow."

"By Tantony! thou art a very woman! Remember the bond by which this deed was done—signed by so many noble lords and powerful barons under that yew-tree at Whittinghame. Sighing again! What dost thou dread?"

"*Myself!*" replied the Earl, in whom the reaction of spirit had caused an agony of remorse. "Thee, and the subscribers of that bond, I may avoid—but myself—never!"

"These scruples come somewhat late, my lord!" said Ormiston, scornfully. "Dost thou doubt the faith of me, or of French Paris? Surely thou knowest my zeal!"

"True! but faith and zeal are very different things."

"'Sblood! Lord Earl, dost thou doubt mine honour?" said Ormiston, laying hand on his sword. "Though I owe thee suit and knight's service, nevertheless I am a baron of coat-armour, whose honour brooks no handling. But let us not quarrel, Bothwell!" he added, on seeing that the spirit of his ally was completely prostrated for the time. "Suspicion will never attach to thee; besides, that Norse knave is abroad, with the well-known cloak and sword of Darnley, which Hubert stole me from his chamber. These, when he is found again, will turn all the vengeance on him; so let us to bed ere the alarm be given—to bed, I say, in peace; for we have the alliance of ten thousand hearts as brave as ever marched to battle."

"How much more would I prefer the approbation of my own!"

"Out upon thee! I will loose all patience. If thou distrustest Paris, one stroke of a poniard"——

"Peace, Ormiston! thou art a very bravo, and would thus make one more sacrifice to increase our list of crimes."

"Just as a name may be wanted to fill the roll of Scotland's peers, by thy lamentable decapitation and profitable forfeiture," growled Ormiston. "I know little of statecraft, though I have a bold heart and a strong hand. Come! be once more a man, and leave remorse to children. The crime that passes unpunished, deserves not to be regretted."

"Sophistry!" exclaimed the conscience-struck Earl; "sophistry! Avenging

remorse will blast my peace for ever. Now, too bitterly I begin to feel, that joy for ever ends where crime begins!"

They separated.

Blind with confusion, and bewildered by remorse, the Earl reeled like a drunken man, as he hurried down by the back street of the Canongate towards the palace, impatient, and dreading to be missed from his apartments, when the alarm should be given.

A burning thirst oppressed him; his tongue felt as if scorched, and his lips were dry and baked. Frightful ideas pressed in crowds through his mind; he often paused and pressed his hands upon his temples; they were like burning coals, and throbbed beneath his trembling fingers. He looked back mentally to the eminence from which he had fallen, and shuddered at the depth and rapidity of his descent. In the storm of remorse and unavailing regret that agitated his soul, the beauty of Mary, and the dreams of ambition it had inspired, were alike forgotten.

He paused at times, and listened; he knew not why. The night was very still, and there came no sound on the passing wind. A pulse was beating in his head. How loud and palpable it was!

There was ever before him the last unearthly glare of those despairing eyes. It was ever in his ears, that expiring wail, sinking into a convulsive sob—ever—ever, turn where he would; if he walked fast—to leave his burning thoughts behind him; if he stood still—that cry and the deathlike visage were ever before him.

"O! to be as I have been—as I was but one long hour ago!" he exclaimed, shaking his clenched hands above his head. "O! for the waves of Lethe to wash the past for ever from my memory! Satan—prince of hell—hear me! Hear me, who dares not now to address his God!"

His frightful thirst still continued, until its agony became insupportable; and he looked around to find wherewith to quench it. On the side of St. John's hill, a green and solitary knoll that rose some sixty feet in height on the wayside, a light attracted his attention; and, supposing that it shone from a lonely cottage or small change-house, he approached to procure a draught of any thing that could be had for money—any liquid, from water to *lachryma Christi*, to quench the maddening thirst that seemed to consume him.

The light shone from an aperture in the door of a half-ruined barn. Bothwell grasped his sword, and adjusted his mask; but ere he knocked, a voice within, deep and musically solemn, arrested him by saying—

"Confiteor Deo Omnipotenti, beatæ Mariæ semper Virgini, beato Michaeli archangelo, beato Joanni Baptistæ, Sanctis Apostolis Petro et Paulo, omnibus Sanctis et tibi, Pater, quia peccavi nimis cogitatione, verbo et operâ. Meâ culpâ!

meâ culpâ! meâ maximâ culpâ!"

Astonished by these words, which form part of the office of mass, and struck to the very soul in hearing them at such a time, when their application was so painfully direct, he paused a moment. The door was opened by a man in complete armour; but the Earl entered immediately, to behold—what appalled and bewildered him still more.

The rude barn had been hurriedly adapted to the purposes of a chapel. A rough table, representing the altar, occupied one end; six candles burned thereon, three on each side of a plain wooden crucifix, which stood before an old representation of the crucifixion, that whilome had adorned some more consecrated fane.

Bowing down before this rude altar, with eyes full of fervour, and piety, and glory, was the aged priest, who, not a hundred yards from the same spot, had, but a few hours before, craved and received alms from the hands of the regicide noble; but now his aspect was very different, for he wore the rich vestments of other days, when he was one of St. Giles' sixteen prebendaries; and he held aloft a round silver chalice, which he had saved from the plunder of the church by the bailies of Edinburgh. The bell was ringing, and he was in the act of celebrating mass, before an anxious and fearful, but devout few, who, despite the terrible laws passed against them by the men of the new *regime*, met thus in secret to worship God after the fashion of their fathers, preferring the mystical forms and ceremonies which had been handed down to them by the priests of other years, to a new hierarchy, upheld by the swords of the unlettered peers and homicidal barons of 1560. The women, fearful and pale, were muffled in their hoods and plaids; the men were all well armed, and not a few grasped their poniards, and keenly scrutinized the Earl on his entrance.

All the long-forgotten piety of his childhood—all the memory of those days of innocence, when his pious mother, Agnes of Sinclair, taught him first to raise his little hands in prayer in Blantyre's stately Priory—gushed back upon his heart. Making a sign of the cross, he knelt down among the people; and, overcome by the influence of old associations, by the sudden vision of an altar and the mass, and by the terrible knowledge of what he was now in the sight of that Being whom he trembled to address, he burst into an agony of prayer.

Again and again the mass-bell rang, and lower bent every head before that humble altar, on which all present deemed (for such is the force of faith) that the invoked Spirit of God was descending, and the Destroyer trembled in his inmost soul. He covered his head with his mantle, and bent all his thoughts on Heaven, in prayers for mercy and forgiveness.

A shower of tears came to his aid, and his thirst passed away; but oh! how deep were those mental agonies, of which he dared to inform no one!

It was long since he had wept, and he could not recall the time; but his tears were salt and bitter. They relieved him; after a few minutes he became more composed; and the stern necessity of returning instantly to Holyrood pressed vividly upon him; but he dreaded to attract attention or suspicion of treachery, by moving away. Among those present, he recognised many citizens who outwardly had conformed to the new religion; but thus, in secret, clung to the old. Near him knelt young Sir Arthur Erskine, captain of the queen's archers, in his glittering doublet of cloth-of-gold; and a beautiful girl of eighteen, whose dark brown hair was but half-concealed by her piquant hood (*à la Mary*), was kneeling by his side, and reading from the same missal. Their heads were bent together, and their hair mingled, as the young girl's shoulder almost rested on the captain's breast.

Bothwell saw that they were lovers; for nothing could surpass the sweetness and confidence of the girl's smile when she gazed on Sir Arthur's face; for then the impulses of love and religion together, lit up her eyes with a rapture that made her seem something divine.

The Earl thought of Mary—of the desperate part he had yet to play; of all he had dared and done, and had yet to dare and do; the paroxysm passed, and he felt his heart nerved with renewed courage.

Love revived—remorse was forgotten; and, the moment mass was over, he stole hurried to Holyrood—gained his apartments unseen, swallowed a horn of brandy to drown all recollection, and flung himself on his bed, to await the coming discovery and the coming day.

CHAPTER III.

GUILT LEVELS ALL.

He is my lord!—my husband! Death! twas death!—
Death married us together! Here I will dig
A bridal bed, and we'll lie there for ever!
I will not go! Ha! you may pluck my heart out,
But I will never go. Help! help! Hemeya!
They drag me to Pescara's cursed bed.
Sheils' Apostate.

A stupor, not a slumber, sank upon him; it weighed down his eyelids, it confused

his faculties, and oppressed his heart; but even that state of half unconsciousness was one of bliss, compared to the mental torture he had endured.

The tolling of the great alarm bell of the city, which usually summoned the craftsmen to arms, and the gathering hum of startled multitudes, murmuring like the waves of a distant ocean, as the citizens were roused by those who kept watch and ward, awoke Earl Bothwell. He listened intently. Loudly and clearly the great bell rang on the wind, above the hum of the people pouring downwards like a sea, to chafe against the palace gates. Then came distant voices, crying—

"Armour!—armour!—fie!—treason!"

Steps came hastily along the resounding corridor; there was a sharp knocking at the door of his chamber, and, without waiting for the usual ceremony of being introduced by a page, Master George Halkett, the Earl of Huntly, and Hepburn of Bolton, entered. The latter was now in complete armour, that the visor might conceal the terrible expression of his altered face.

"How now, Master Halkett!" asked the Earl with affected surprise. "Whence this intrusion? What is the matter?"

"Matter enough, I trow!" replied the other; "the king's house has been blown up, and his majesty slain."

"Jesu!" cried the Earl, leaping from his bed, glad to find in action a refuge from his own solitary thoughts. "Fie! treason! Surely thou ravest! Speak, Bolton!"

Bolton replied in a voice so inarticulate that it was lost in the hollow of his helmet; for his mind seemed a chaos of despair and stupefaction. Since that terrible hour he had vainly been endeavouring to arrange his thoughts, and act like a sane man.

"'Tis the verity, my lord!" continued Halkett. "Hark! how the roar increaseth in the town."

"And who, say they, hath done this dark deed?"

"All men accuse the Earls of Morton and Moray," replied Huntly, who had been industriously spreading the rumour, which their known hostility to Darnley made common at the time.

"Fie! treason!" cried Bothwell, bustling about. "Armour!—a Bothwell! Harkee, French Paris—Calder, ho! my pyne doublet and sword!"

"Nay! thou hadst better take armour," said Bolton.

"Right! there lieth a Milan suit in yonder cabinet. Sirs, my pages are gone Heaven knows where—I crave service—my points, I pray you truss them."

Huntly and Bolton brought the mail from the carved cabinet, and hastily accoutred the Earl. It was a Milan suit, a very beautiful one of the late King James's fashion, washed with silver; the corselet was globular, having puckered lamboys of steel in lieu of tassettes, and a bourgoinette, with a metoniere acting as

a gorget. He could have concealed his face perfectly by this peculiar appendage to the headpiece; but his natural boldness and daring now rendered such a measure unnecessary. The moment the accoutring was over, he was left alone; for Master Halkett hurried away from chamber to chamber, being one of those who love to be the first bearers of startling tidings; Huntly departed to arm his retinue for any emergency, and Bolton to array the archer guard, and bear back the armed populace, who were clamouring at the palace gates.

Aware how much his future fate depended on the issue of his first interview with Mary, the Earl could bear suspense no longer; and aware that she would now be roused, notwithstanding the untimely hour, he resolved to seek her apartments; the daylight, his sword and armour, had restored his confidence.

Coldly and palely the February dawn was brightening: though the stillness of midnight lay yet upon the dewy hills, there was a din within the city that might "awake the dead." There was a melancholy solemnity about the dull grey dawn, and the gloomy façade of the old monastic edifice, that oppressed the Earl's heart as he crossed its empty court, and heard the jingle of his armour echoed in the dark arcades, where pages and servitors were hurrying to and fro; while quick steps and sharp voices rang in the long corridors and stone ambulatories of the old palace. As he approached James V.'s tower, where the queen occupied those apartments that are now daily exhibited to the curious, a man in a complete suit of black armour jostled him.

"Ormiston!" he exclaimed.

"Well met, Lord Earl—good-morrow!" replied his evil mentor, in a whisper. "The whole city is agog now, and every voice is raised against the Lord Moray—a lucky infatuation for us. The blue banner hath been displayed by the convener of the corporations, whose thirty-three pennons are all unfurled; so the rascally craftsmen are fast mustering in their helmets for trouble and tulzie; while Craigmillar and the Lord Lindesay, with their lances, are coming in on the spur.—But whither goest thou?"

"To the queen."

"Fool! fool! is this a time?"

"There was a time," replied the Earl, bitterly, "when such a varlet as thou dared not have spoken thus to Bothwell."

"True," replied the other, with a sardonic grin; "but *guilt*, like misfortune, levels all men. Tarry—the queen"——

"No, no—I must see her! Not hell itself shall keep me from her!"

"Ha! ha!" laughed Ormiston, as the Earl ascended the staircase; "odsbody! why, a stone wall or a stout cord would keep a stronger lover than thee well enow."

Bothwell felt now all the humility and agony of being in the power of this

unscrupulous ruffian, and he sighed bitterly more than once as he advanced towards the royal apartments.

"Now," thought he, "must I doubly dye my soul in guilt—the guilt of black hypocrisy. Oh, to be what I have been! How dark are the clouds—how many the vague alarms—that involve the horizon of my fate! Last night—and the recollection of that irreparable deed—could I blot them from memory, happiness might yet be mine."

A crowd of yeomanry of the guard, in their scarlet gaberdines, with long poniards and partisans; archers in green, with bent bows and bristling arrows; pages in glittering dresses, and gentlemen in waiting, all variously armed, made way at the entrance of the queen's apartments, near the door marked with Rizzio's blood. After a brief preliminary it was opened—the heavy Gobeline tapestry was raised, and the earl found himself in the presence of—Mary.

When he beheld her, every scruple and regret, every remnant of remorse again evaporated, and he felt that he had done nothing that he would not repeat.

She was plainly and hurriedly attired in a sacque of blue Florence silk, tied with a tassel round her waist. The absence of her high ruff revealed more than usual of her beautifully delicate neck and swelling bosom; while the want of her long peaked stays and stiffened skirts, displayed all the grace and contour of her graceful form. Save the rings that flashed on her fingers, she was without jewels; and in a profusion, such as the Earl had never seen before—her bright and luxuriant auburn hair fell unbound upon her shoulders, covered only by a square of white lace, a long and sweeping veil, that (as old Juvenal says), "like a tissue of woven air," floated around her. Her snow-white feet were without stockings, for she had just sprung from bed, and the short slippers of blue velvet shewed her delicately veined insteps and taper ankles in all their naked beauty.

Her brow and rounded cheeks were pale as death; but, though suffused with tears, her eyes were full of fire, and there was more perhaps of anger than of grief in the quivering of her short upper lip. Aware of her dishabille, and that the Countess of Argyle, and other ladies of the court, who were all in their night-dresses, had fled at the Earl's approach, as so many doves would have done from a vulture, leaving her almost alone with him—the queen cast down her long dark lashes for a moment, and then bent her keen gaze full upon Bothwell, whose open helmet revealed the pallor of his usually careless, jovial, and nutbrown face.

"Forth from its raven fringe the full glance flies,
Ne'er with such force the swiftest arrow flew;
'Tis as the snake late coil'd, who pours his length,
And hurls at once his venom and his strength."

Powerful and daring as he was, the Earl quailed beneath her eye; but immediately recovering his admirable air of self-possession, he began in the most courteous manner to deplore the dreadful event, "which," says the Knight of Halhill, "he termed the strangest catastrophe that ever was heard of; for thunder had come out of the sky, and burnt the house of the king, whose body was found lying dead at a little distance from the ruins under a tree."

"Thunder, sayest thou?" reiterated the Queen. "Sweet mother Mary—assist me! Some of the archers of our guard, Lord Earl, men whose bows were drawn at Pinkiecleugh and Ancrumford, aver that the ruins bear marks of Friar Bacon's art rather than electricity. Thunder!"——

"What does your majesty mean?"

"Lord Earl," replied Mary, in a low emphatic tone; "this—this is—*thy* doing—thine!"

"Madam—madam"—urged the Earl, but his tongue refused its office, and clove to the roof of his mouth.

"Hah, my Lord!" continued the Queen; "is it the astonishment of innocence, or the shame of guilt, that paralyses thy too ready tongue at this terrible moment? I see thou art guilty," she added, in a sepulchral voice; "and now thou comest before me covered with the blood of my husband."

"I swear to your majesty"——

"Swear not! Else whence do your hands tremble? Why is your face thus pale—yea, pale as Ruthven's seemed on that other fatal night—a year ago in this chamber?"

Gathering courage from desperation, the kneeling noble, hoping to be interrupted in his vow, replied—

"I swear to you, gracious madam, by heaven and all that is in it—by the earth and all that is on it—by the souls of my Catholic ancestors—by the bones of my father—by my own salvation and honour, which I prize more than life—by your love, your esteem, to win which I would gladly peril more than a thousand lives"——

"Enough!" replied the Queen, interrupting the terrible falsehood, and covering her face with her hands; "pardon my grief and horror—I believe thee. There—kiss my hand in token of trust."

Bothwell's heart was touched by her innocent confidence; he became giddy, and almost reeled.

"O Mary! my wish, my hope, my dream! Would that I were pure enough to be worthy of thee!" said the Earl, in a touching voice; for a moment his heart was crushed by sorrow and remorse, as he pressed to his lip the soft, small hand of the queen. But she did not hear these pathetic exclamations, which conveyed all

the Earl's secret in their tone; for at that moment a group that crossed the palace yard riveted all her faculties.

Sir Arthur Erskine and Hepburn of Bolton, both sheathed in armour, with a band of their archers, appeared escorting a few yeomen of the guard, who bore on their crossed partisans a body muffled in a soldier's mantle, and followed by a crowd of gentlemen, grooms, pages, and armed craftsmen.

She shuddered. The weak points of Darnley's character, his folly, his foppery, his profligacy, his neglect of herself, and the wanton murder of her secretary, all vanished from her memory for the time, and she saw him only as she had seen him first in the hall of Wemyss—handsome, tall, and graceful—in all the bloom of youth, nobility, and comeliness, with his dark eye sparkling and his feathers waving, and all the blind devotion which at two-and-twenty had become a part of her very being, and which had absorbed young Henry Stuart into her very soul, came back vividly and painfully upon her mind.

She tottered to a seat.

Her eyes assumed a tearless and stony aspect—a cloud of horror descended upon her snowy brow; and the Earl felt bitterly as he gazed on her, that his presence, and the love he had so daringly expressed, were alike unheeded or forgotten.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PREBEND OF ST. GILES.

A "God be with thee," shall be all thy mass;
Thou never lovedst those dry and droning priests.
Thou'lt rot most cool and quiet in my garden;
Your gay and gilded vault would be costly.
Fazio, a Tragedy.

After an uneasy slumber, in the place where we left him a few pages back, Konrad was awakened by a rough grasp being laid on his shoulder, and a voice crying—

"Harl him forth, till we find what manner of carle he is!" and, ere he was thoroughly roused, several strong hands dragged him to the door of that solitary little chapel, where he found himself in the presence of two knights on horseback, and a band of mailed men-at-arms, bearing hackbuts and partisans, and carrying

a banner bearing a blue shield charged with the heart and mullets of Morton.

It was a beautiful spring morning. The sun was rising above the eastern hills, and gilding the peaks of the Pentlands, that towered above the wreaths of gauzy mist rolling round their heath-clad bases.

"Whence comest thou, fellow?" asked the first knight, who was no other than our ferocious acquaintance, Lord Lindesay of the Byres, who, with his men-at-arms, had been scouring the adjacent country for some one upon whom to execute his vengeance.

"Some accomplice and abettor of the Lord Moray!" observed the other; "art and part at least—for all the city saith that he committed the deed; at least, there are those who find their interest in circulating the report most industriously."

"Tush! the Lord Moray abideth at his tower of Donibristle; and I will maintain body to body against any man, that he lieth foully in his throat who accuseth James Stuart of being concerned in the slaughter of last night."

"But, dustifute—knave—speak! whence comest thou?"

"By what right dost thou ask?" said Konrad, starting at the voice of the questioner, who had the policy to keep his visor down, and affected not to recognise his acquaintance of the hostellary.

"What right? false loon! the right of my rank. I am James Earl of Morton; and now that I look on thee, thou tattered villain—by St. Paul! I see the king's cloak on thy shoulders. We all know the Lord Darnley's scarlet mantle, sirs, with its gold embroidery; and doth its splendour not contrast curiously with this foreigner's rags and tatters?"

"By cock and pie!" said Ormiston under his helmet, as he pushed through the crowd at this juncture, "I would swear to it as I would to my own nose, or to the king's toledo sword, which I now see by the side of this double thief and traitor! We all know him, sirs! The unco'—the foreigner—who with John of Park attempted to assassinate my Lord of Bothwell in Hermitage glen. Last night he escaped from the tower of Holyrood."

"Close up, my merry men all!" said Morton; "forward, pikemen—bend your hackbuts; for we have meshed one of the knaves at last."

There was a terrible frown gathering on the brow of Lindesay. This ferocious peer, and uncompromising foe of the ancient church, was distinguished by the sternness and inflexibility of his character, even in that iron age; and the fire of his keen grey eye increased the expression of his hard Scottish, yet noble features, and thick grizzled beard, which consorted so well with the antique fashion of his plain steel armour, with its grotesque and gigantic knee and elbow joints projecting like iron fans, with pauldrons on the shoulders. His salade was of the preceding century, and was surmounted by his crest, a silver ostrich bearing in its beak a key—on his colours, a roll azure and argent. Unsheathing his long

shoulder-sword, he said with stern solemnity—

"Now, blessed be God! that hath given us this great and good fortune to-day. These ruins, where that mother of blasphemy and abomination—who hath made whole nations drunk with the cup of her iniquities—once practised her idolatries, seem to have rare tenants this morning. First, amid the walls of Leonard's chapel, we found that worshipper of graven images—Tarbet, the mass-priest, with all his missals and mummery in right order for the pillory at the Tron; and here, in the oratory of the Baptist, we have started our other game—one of the regicides, whose body shall be torn piecemeal, even as Graeme and Athol were torn of old; yea, villain! embowelled and dismembered shalt thou be, while the life yet flickers in thy bleeding heart; but, first, thou shalt be half-hanged from yonder tree. Quick! a knotted cord, some of ye!"

"Nay, my good Lord of Lindesay," interposed Morton, "I would reserve him for the queen's council, whose examination may bring to light much of whilk we are still in ignorance."

"Now, by my father's bones!" began fierce Lindesay, clenching his gauntleted hand with sudden passion, "must I remind thee, who wert High Chancellor of Scotland, and, as such, chief in all matters of justice—the king's most intimate councillor, and holder of that seal, without the touch of which not a statute of the estates can pass forth to the people—must I remind thee of that ancient Scottish law, by which our forefathers decreed, if a murderer be taken REDHAND, he should incontinently be executed within three days after commission of the deed; and here, within a mile of the Kirk-of-Field, we find a known comrade of Park, the border outlaw, with the sword and mantle of our murdered king"—

"Yea," interrupted a voice from the band, "a cloak which I saw in the king's chamber but yesternight."

"What other proof lack we?" said Lindesay.

"Away with him!" cried several voices, and Ormiston's among them; "for he hath assuredly murdered the king!"

To all these fiercely-uttered accusations, Konrad had not a word to reply in extenuation or defence; and his astonishment and confusion were easily mistaken for guilt and fear.

"As thou pleasest, Lindesay," said Morton coldly, for he was unused to find his advice neglected. "To me it mattereth not, whether he be hanged now or a year hence. I have but one thing more to urge. Let us confront him with the mass priest Tarbet, and I warrant that, by blow of boot and wrench of rack, we may make some notable discoveries. We know not whom they may, in their agony, accuse as accessories if we give them a hint;" and indeed the Earl might have added, that he did not care, while he was not accused himself.

But his own time was measured.

Lindesay seemed struck by this advice (as there was an estate bordering his own which he had long coveted), and so ordering the prisoner to be secured by cords, and gagged, by having a branch cut from a hawthorn bush tied across his mouth so tightly that the blood oozed from his torn lips. He was then bound to the tail of a horse, and thus ignominiously conducted back to the excited city, escorted by Morton's band of hackbuttiers.

Had an English army, flushed with victory, been crossing the Esk, a greater degree of excitement could not have reigned in the Scottish capital than its streets exhibited on this morning, the 11th February, 1567.

The crafts were all in arms, and the spacious Lawnmarket was swarming with men in armour, bearing pikes, hackbuts, and jedwood axes, two-handed swords, and partisans; while the pennons of the various corporations—the cheveron and triple towers of the sturdy Masons—the shield, ermine, and triple crowns of the Skinners—the gigantic shears of the Tailors—and so forth, were all waving in the morning wind. Splendidly accoutred, a strong band of men-at-arms stood in close array near the deep arch of Peebles Wynd, around the residence of the provost, Sir Simeon Preston of Craigmillar, whose great banner, bearing a *scudo pendente*, the cognisance peculiar to this illustrious baron, was borne by his knightly kinsman, Congalton of that Ilk.

A half-mad preacher, in a short Geneva cloak and long bands, and wearing a long-eared velvet cap under his bonnet, had ensconced himself in a turret of the city cross, from whence, with violent gestures, in a shrill intonation of voice, he was holding forth to a scowling rabble of craftsmen, and women in Gueldrian coifs and Galloway kirtles, who applauded his discourse, which he was beating down, with Knox-like emphasis, and striking his clenched hand on the cope of the turret with such fury, that he had frequently to pause, make a wry face, and blow upon it. Then, with increased wrath, he thundered his anathemas against the "shavelings of Rome, the priests of antichrist—the relics of their saints—their corrupted flesh—their rags and rotten bones—their gilded shrines and mumming pilgrimages!" Sternly he spoke, and wildly, too, with all the enthusiasm of a convert, and the rancour of an apostate, for he was both.

A few yards further down the sunlit street, stood one of those very shavelings against whom he was pouring forth the vials and the vehemence of his wrath. At the Tron beam stood the aged Tarbet on a platform, a few feet above the pavement. By a cord that encircled his neck, his head was tied close to the wooden column supporting the tron, or great steel-yard where the merchants weighed their wares; and to that his ear was fixed by a long iron nail, from which the blood was trickling. Faint and exhausted, the old man clung with feeble hands to the pillar to avoid strangulation, as his knees were refusing their office. He was

still in his vestments, with the cross embroidered on his stole; a rosary encircled his neck, and, to excite the mockery of the mob, a missal, a chalice, and censer were tied to it; and while enduring the greatest indignities to which the inborn cowardice, cruelty, and malevolence of the vulgar, can subject the unfortunate and the fallen, inspired by the memory of the greater martyr who had suffered for him, he blessed them repeatedly in return. The boys were yelling "Green Sleeves"—"John, cum kiss me now," and other songs, converted from Catholic hymns into profane ribaldry; ever and anon, as Knox tells us, serving him with "his Easter eggs," meaning every available missile, and under the shower that poured upon him the old man was sinking fast. At last a stone struck his forehead, the blood burst over his wrinkled face, and drenched his silver hair. He tottered, sank, and hung strangling by the neck; and then, but not till then, he was released and borne away to the nearest barrier, where he was again expelled the city, with the warning, that to say mass once more would involve the penalty of instant death.

The tide was now completely turned against the ancient clergy, and the sternest means were used by the new against them. Knox had declared that the toleration of a single mass was more dangerous to Scotland than 10,000 armed soldiers; and in the spirit of this precept, so long after the Reformation as 1615, a poor Jesuit was dragged from his altar in an obscure cellar, and hanged by King James's authority in the streets of Glasgow.

It was while the minds of the people were in the state we have described—excited by the terrible death of the king, inspired by the discourse of the firebrand on the cross, and only half glutted by the persecution of the poor old prebend of St. Giles, that, guarded by Morton's and Lindesay's band, Konrad of Saltzberg was led up Merlin's Wynd, and into the High Street, where the masses of men in a state of fury and ferment, swayed to and fro from side to side of that magnificent thoroughfare, like the waves of an angry sea. The moment he appeared, there was given a yell that rent the air; and a rush was made from all quarters towards the new victim, of whose participation in the deed at the Kirk-of-Field, a terrible account was instantly circulated.

CHAPTER V.

THE PAPISTS' PILLAR.

Oh! I will hail

My hour when it approaches; life has been
A source of sorrow, and it matters not
How soon I quit the scene, for I have roved
A friendless outcast in the thorny world,
Upon it, but not of it; and my death
Is but escape from bondage.
The Spell of St. Wilten.

We have likened the dense mass that filled the High Street to a sea, and so like the waves of a sea, when agitated by a stormy wind, was that mass urged in one direction towards this new victim, whom they demanded of both Morton and Lindesay to be given up to their summary vengeance. The windows were crowded to excess; and at the great square casement of his mansion, overlooking the Netherbow, was seen the grave and serious face of Knox the Reformer, with his portentous beard and Geneva cap, and beside him Master George Buchanan, with his stern visage and towering brow. They were observing the fray below, and making their caustic remarks on "yat terrible fact of yesternicht."

A deadly struggle seemed about to ensue; faces became flushed with passion, and eyes lit with energy—swords were drawn, bows bent, and matches blown.

"Truncheon me those knaves!" cried Lord Lindesay, as the people pressed upon his band and impeded their march; "use the bolls of your hackbutts! Back with these rascally burghers—how! dare they assail my banner in open day?"

"They are ripe for a fray, my lord," said Morton; "and in sooth, 'tis matter for consideration, whether by resistance we should shed the blood of our own countrymen, to lengthen by an hour the existence of a foreign knave, who must hang at all events."

"Right, Lord Earl—but to die thus! unhouselled and unprayed for—by the hands of a furious mob—to be torn piecemeal—to be hunted like an otter"——

Lindesay could not conclude, for the confusion increased every moment, and the dense and well-armed multitude demanded incessantly, and with stentorian clamour, that the regicide should be given up to their fury. Lindesay, who now became animated by a sentiment of compassion, on beholding one man in a situation so terrible, vainly endeavoured by the influence of his rank, his known determination and aspect, his stentorian voice and gigantic sword, to overawe the crowd, and convey his captive to King David's tower; but every where the craftsmen barred his way with levelled pikes and clubbed hackbutts. As yet, not a shot had been exchanged, or a blow struck; for the vassals who guarded Konrad, being quite indifferent as to the issue, behaved with admirable coolness. On see-

ing this, the populace demanded the prisoner more loudly than ever, and became more energetic and exasperated by the delay.

Gagged and bound, the unhappy Konrad found the impossibility alike of demanding either protection from his guards or mercy from their assailants—to fight or to escape; and a cold perspiration burst over him as the soldiers swayed to and fro, when the people pressed upon their iron ranks.

Ten thousand scowling faces were bent upon him, and twice that number of hands were raised against him. His heart never sank; but the mild precepts of Father Tarbet were forgotten, and, with an intensity amounting to agony, he longed to be free and armed, to indulge that momentary and tiger-like hatred of all mankind that swelled up within him, that he might sell his life as dearly as possible, and strike for vengeance ere he died! In that terrible moment of confusion and dread he never thought of prayer; but the image of Anna rose to his memory, and while he thanked Heaven that now she was probably safe at home in their native Norway, the recollection that he was desolate, and she was lost to him for ever, nerved him the more to encounter his terrible fate.

Lord Lindesay threatened them with summary vengeance from himself, and ultimately from the queen and lord provost; but he might as well have addressed the wind, for, by their nightly watches and constant brawling, the burghers were better trained to arms than were the vassals of the landowners, and his threats were unheeded.

"Come on, my bold callants!" cried a fat citizen in a vast globular corselet, a morion, and plate sleeves with gloves of steel, brandishing a ponderous jedwood axe with his right hand, while opposing with his left arm a light Scottish target to the levelled spears of Lindesay's band. "Come on, with a warrion! Are sae mony bearded men to be kept at play like bairns by these ox-goads o' the Byres?"

"Weel spoken, Adam!—Armour! armour!—Strike for the gude toun!" cried a thousand voices to the host of the *Red Lion*, who was looming about like a vast hogshead sheathed in iron; and thus encouraged, by sheer weight of body he burst through the ranks of Lindesay's vassalage, striking up their levelled lances. The mob followed in his wake, and the guards were immediately scattered, disarmed, and their prisoner dragged from his shelter.

Torn and whirled from hand to hand, Konrad was soon released from all his bonds; but still escape was impossible. Many a bow was drawn, and many a blade uplifted against him; but the very presence and blind fury of the people saved him; and madly he was hurled from man to man, till, alike bereft of sense of sight and sound, he sank breathless beneath their feet.

"Now, by the might of Heaven!" said old Lord Lindesay, "'tis a foul shame on us, Earl of Morton, to sit calmly here in our saddles, and see a Christian man used thus. Fie!—down with the traitors!" and he spurred his horse upon the people,

only to be repelled by a steady stand of pikes.

Konrad was loaded with mud and filth; and every new assailant was more fierce than the last. Howls, yells, and execrations filled the air, and he was bandied about like a football, till one well-aimed blow from the boll of a hackbutt struck him down, and, covered with mud and bruises, and bathed in blood, he lay upon the pavement motionless, and to all appearance dead.

They deemed him so, and, consequently, a momentary cessation of their cruelty ensued, till a voice cried—

"Fie! away wi' him to the Papists' pillar! Gar douk him in the loch! Harl him awa'! Gar douk! gar douk and droun!"

A shout of assent greeted this new proposition. The inanimate form of Konrad was raised on the shoulders of a few sturdy fellows, who bore him along the street with as much speed as its crowded state would permit; and closing, like a parted sea, the mob collapsed behind, and followed in their train. They bore him up the Lawnmarket, then encumbered by innumerable sacks of grain and wooden girnels, farm horses, and rudely constructed carts; for at that time the meal, and flesh, and butter markets, were held there. Turning down Blyth's close, under the lofty windows of the palace of Mary of Lorraine, they hurried to the bank of that steep lake which formed the city's northern barrier, and the vast concourse followed; the arch of the narrow alley receiving them all, like a small bridge admitting a mighty river.

The rough and shelving bank descended abruptly from the ends of the lofty closes, which (when viewed from the east or west): resembled a line of narrow Scottish towers overhanging the margin of the water, which was reedy, partly stagnant, and so much swollen by the melted snows of the past winter, that, on the northern side, it reached an ancient quarry from which the Trinity Church was built, and on the southern to the Twin-tree, an old double-trunked thorn that overhung the loch, and had for centuries been famous as a trysting-place for lovers, as it was supposed to exercise a supernatural influence on the pair who sat between its gnarled stems.

"Fie! gar douk!" cried the vast concourse that debouched from all the adjoining wynds and closes along the sloping bank. "To the pillar—to the pillar! Truss him wi' a tow to the Papists' pillar, and leave him there to rot or row;" and this new proposal was received with renewed applause.

The Papists' pillar was a strong oak stake fixed in that part of the loch where the water was about five feet deep. It had been placed there by the wise bailies of Edinburgh at this time, when certain ablutions were much in vogue, and considered so necessary for witches, sorcerers, scolding wives, and "obstinate papists;" for in every part of Europe ducking was the favourite penance for offences, against morality; and nothing afforded such supreme delight and in-

tense gratification to the worthy denizens of the Lawnmarket, and their kindly dames, as the sousing of an unfortunate witch, a "flyting wife" of the Calton, or a hapless Catholic, in the deep and execrable puddle that was named the North Loch—and so frequently were exhibitions of the latter made, that the stake was unanimously dubbed *the Papists' Pillar.*

To this the inanimate Konrad was fastened by a strong cord, encircling his neck and waist; and there he was left to perish, wounded, bleeding, and insensible—covered with bruises, and merged nearly to the neck in a liquid rendered fetid and horrible by all the slime and debris of the populous city that towered above it, being poured down hourly from its narrow streets, to increase the mass of corruption that grew and festered in its stagnant depths.

On accomplishing this, the mob retired; for the conveyance of the bodies of the murdered king and his attendants through the streets, excited all the morbid sympathy of the vulgar: the entire populace now rushed towards the other end of the city, and all became still as death where Konrad lay.

The coolness of the sudden immersion partially revived him, and the bleeding of the wound on his head ceased; but his senses were confused—his perception indistinct—and he hung against the column in a state bordering on insensibility.

There was a rushing sound in his ears; for still the roar of that vast multitude rang in them: there was a sense of pain and languor pervading his whole frame; a faint light shone before his half-closed eyes, and he was conscious of nothing more.

The noon passed away; evening came, and cold and pale the watery sun sank behind the summits of Corstorphine, involved in yellow haze. The clouds gathered in inky masses to the westward; a few large drops of rain plashed on the dark surface of the glassy water; there was a low wind rushing among the uplands; but Konrad neither saw nor heard these precursors of a coming storm.

And there he lay—helpless and dying!

A great and ravenous gled wheeled in circles round him. These circles diminished by degrees, until it had courage at last to alight on the top of the column, where it screamed and flapped its wings, while eyeing him with eager and wolfish impatience. So passed the evening.

Night—the cold and desolate night of February, came on, and the hungry gled was still sitting there. * * *

In the morning, the inexorable host of the *Red Lion* and others, who had made themselves so active in his persecution, went to the place where they had bound him.

The water had ebbed several feet; the stake was still standing there among the dark slime and sedges—but the cords were cut, and the unfortunate had dis-

appeared.

CHAPTER VI.

REMORSE.

All day and all the livelong night he pour'd,
His soul in anguish, and his fate deplored;
While every moment skimm'd before his sight,
A thousand forms of horror and affright.
Tasso.

Bothwell was sitting alone in his apartments at Holyrood. The fire burned cheerfully in the sturdy iron grate, and threw a ruddy glow on the gigantic forms of Darius and Alexander, who seemed ready to start from the gobeline tapestry into life and action. The Earl's sword and dagger hung on one knob of his chair; his headpiece and a wheel-lock caliver on the other; for there were dangerous rumours abroad in the city, and he knew not the moment in which he might be required to use them.

Let us take a view of him as he sat gazing fixedly into the fire, that glowed so redly between the massive bars.

A change had come over his features since the preceding night. They had acquired a more severe style of manly beauty. His noble brow was more pale and thoughtful in expression, and was already marked by those lines which are indicative of sorrow and remorse. But there were times when his keen dark eye assumed a diabolical glitter, and the redness of the fire shed an infernal brightness on his face. His lip was curled by bitterness; his brows were knit; and then nothing could surpass the scorn and misanthropy pervading the aspect of the fierce and haughty regicide.

Yes! he knew himself a destroyer; though, strange to say, he felt his personal importance increased by the awful reflection that he was so. He had more than once slain men in mutual strife; but never till now did he feel himself a—murderer.

Murderer! he repeated it in a low voice and then started, looking round fearfully as if he dreaded the figures might hear him. He frequently caught himself muttering it, coupled with his own name. They seemed synonymous. His

mind was full of incoherence and dread, and a regret so intense, that at times he smote his breast and wrung his hands in agony, or turned to a flask of Burgundy to drown all recollection; and so much was he absorbed in the fierce current of his own corroding thoughts, that he heard not the rising storm that shook the turrets of the palace, howled through the arcades of its ancient courts, and tossed the branches of its venerable trees.

A step rung in the antechamber; the tapestry was lifted, and the slight figure of Hepburn of Bolton, still sheathed in armour, appeared. His helmet was open, and the paleness of his features was painful to look upon.

"Well!" said his chieftain; "what say they in the city?"

"Every where, that the Lord Moray has slain the king, in pursuance of his ancient feud with the house of Lennox."

"This is well! I hope thou and Hob Ormiston have been spreading the report with due industry!"

"We have lacked in nothing!" replied Bolton, gloomily, as he drank a deep draught of the Burgundy; "but there is noised abroad a counter-rumour, that thou art not unconcerned in the deed."

"Hah!" ejaculated the Earl, drawing in his breath through his clenched teeth, while a frown of alarm contracted his brow, "Who value life so cheaply as to bruit this abroad?"

"The vassals of the Lord Morton, with whom certain archers of my band have been carousing at Ainslie's hostel overnight, have accused thee, and so strongly, that I sorely suspect treason somewhere, and that their lord hath prompted them."

"He dares not!" rejoined the Earl, half assuming his sword, and setting his teeth.

"Thou knowest how false and subtle all men deem him."

"He dare not prove so to me—I tell thee, John of Bolton, he dare not!" replied the Earl, in a fierce whisper, starting to his feet. "I would level to the earth his castle of Dalkeith, and spike his head amidst its ruins. There is the bond, the damning deed we signed at Whittinghame, that will cause us all to hang together in our armour, lest we hang separately without it. Ha! ha! take another horn of the Burgundy. Thou seest, Bolton, how it gives me both wit and spirit. Any other tidings?"

"None, save of a horrible apparition that last night haunted the Lord Athol's lodging, near the Kirk-of-Field."

"And what about our Norwegian?"

"He hath been bound to the Papists' pillar, and left to drown."

"Now, God's malison be on these rascally burghers!"

"By this time he must be dead, for the rain hath fallen heavily, and thou

knowest how fast the loch fills; besides, the host of the *Red Lion* shut the sluice at the Trinity House, so long ere this all must be over."

"One other life!" said the Earl, gloomily.

Hepburn gave a bitter laugh, and there was a momentary pause.

"By Heaven, Bolton! I will not permit this stranger to perish if I can save him. Come—'tis not yet midnight! The deed may in some sort atone"——

"True—true! but there will be some danger, and much suspicion"——

"Danger—so much the better! Suspicion—I hope we are above it! In a brawl about a rascally courtesan, how readily did I draw my sword with that blockhead d'Elboeuff; while to-day I stood by yonder Tron, and saw, on one hand, a consecrated priest of God insulted, pilloried, and beaten down senseless in his blood—a priest who yesternight celebrated the most holy of all Christian sacraments; on the other, I saw an innocent man dragged away to a merciless and dreadful death; and, like a child or a woman, I stood paralysed, without giving a word or a blow to save either. Coward that I was! Oh, how deeply would old Earl Adam, who fell by James's side on Flodden Field, blush for his degenerate grandson!"

"Be it so; I will doff some of this iron shell, and, if thou wilt lend me a pyne doublet, will go with thee. Hark! what a driech storm without; and how the windows dirl in the blast!" and, as he spoke, the rain, blown with all the violence of a furious east wind, came lashing on the lofty casements of the palace, and hissed as it plashed drearily on the pavement of its empty courts.

"Summon French Paris!" cried the Earl; "I must first speak with him."

CHAPTER VII.

THE RESCUE.

The lightning's flash
Scarce ran before the thunder's sudden crash;
Down on the lake, the rain sonorous rush'd;
O'er the steep rocks, the new-born torrents gush'd.
Bayley's Rival.

As the night closed, Konrad partially revived, and became alive to the horror of his situation. Corded by the wrists and neck to a stake, with the water almost up to his chin; faint, exhausted by the wound on his head, and the innumerable

blows he had received, he was so very feeble that he thought himself dying, and endeavoured to remember a prayer; but his mind was a chaos, and he found himself alike unable to account for his predicament, and to free himself from it.

Darker, and darker still, the clouds gathered over the lofty city that towered up to the south; and the rain-drops plashed more heavily on the surface of the water, till the circles became mingled, and the shower increased to a winter torrent; for the month was February only, and, though the first of spring, the cold was intense.

The gled shook its wings, and croaked on the post above his head, and Konrad feared it might suddenly stoop and tear out his defenceless eyes.

Poured along the gorge between the Calton Hill and the city, the chill wind from the German sea swept over the rippled water; and then came the glare of the lightning to render the darkness of the night more appalling. Pale, blue, and sulphury, it flashed in the north and east, dashing its forky strength between the masses of cloud, gleaming on the darkened water, and revealing the bleak outline of the Calton—the high and fantastic mansions of the city, among whose black summits the levin-bolts seemed playing and dancing—to be tossed from chimney to turret, and from turret to tower—leaping from hand to hand, ere they flashed away into obscurity, or cast one lurid glare on the gorge behind the church that, for four hundred years, covered the grave of Mary of Gueldres and of Zutphen.

Then the thunder rumbled in the distance; and, as if the air was rent, down gushed the rain upon the midnight lake; and Konrad, as he felt his senses and strength ebbing together, became aware that the water rose—that, with all his feeble struggles, he would ultimately drown in that lake of mud, where so many have perished; for, so lately as 1820, the skeletons of these unfortunates have been found in the bed, where of old the water lay.

Still the dusky gled sat on its perch, and, by the occasional gleams of the lightning, he could perceive its sable wings flapping above his unsheltered head, like those of a shadowy fiend; and oft it stooped down, as if impatient of its feast. Whenever its unearthly croak rang on the passing wind, he could not resist the inclination to raise his hands to protect his eyes—but his arms were pinioned below water. Powerless, he resigned himself to die without a murmur—save one prayer for Anna. His last thoughts were of her—for the love of poor Konrad surpassed the love of romance.

Strange visions of home and other years floated before him; he heard the wiry rustle of his native woods, and the voice of Anna mingling with the music of the summer leaves. Then came a state of stupefaction, in which he remained, he knew not how long.

A sound roused him; it was a scream from the gled, as, scared from its perch, it spread its broad wings to the wind, and vanished into obscurity like

an evil spirit. The stars were veiled in vapour; the moon was sailing through masses of flying cloud, and, by its fitful light, Konrad, as he unclosed his heavy eyes, could perceive a boat approaching. It contained two figures, which, as they were between him and the light, appeared in dark and opaque outline.

They were Bothwell and Hepburn of Bolton; both were masked as usual to the mustache, and wore their mantles up to their chins.

"If we are not too late," said the first, as they approached; "perhaps this act of mercy may be an atonement—yea, in somewise a small atonement—ha! heardst thou that cry?"

"What cry?"

"By the blessed Bothan, I heard it again!" said Bothwell, in a voice of agony. "Now God me defend!" he added, making the long-forgotten sign of the cross, while a cold perspiration burst over him; "but where is the Norwegian? I see but the stake only!"

"Here—here! his head is above water still. Now praise Heaven! Dost thou live yet?"

Konrad uttered a faint sound; upon which both gave an exclamation of joy, and, urging the boat towards the stake, succeeded in raising him up, cutting the cords, and drawing him on board; but so benumbed and lifeless, that he sank across the thwarts and lay there insensible. Meanwhile, Bolton and the Earl, after pulling a few dozen of strokes, beached the boat (which they had stolen from the ferryman) among the thick sedges and reeds that fringed the northern bank of the loch. Bothwell sprang ashore, and gave a low whistle. There was a reply heard, and French Paris came out of the ancient quarry before mentioned, (the site of which is now covered by the Scott monument,) leading four horses. Konrad was assisted ashore, and seated upon the bank.

"Now, Paris," said the Earl; "thy hunting bottle!" The page unslung a round leather flask from his waist-belt, and handed it to the Earl, who filled a quaigh with liquid, saying—

"I trust the cordial of which I spoke—that rare reviving compound made by the queen's physician—was mixed with this. Drink, sir, if thou canst, and in three minutes thou wilt be another man."

Konrad, who was still unable to speak, quaffed off the proffered draught, and immediately became revived; for a glow shot through every vein, and warmed his quivering limbs.

"Another," said the Earl, "and thou wilt still further bless the skill of Monsieur Martin Picauet as a druggist and apothegar. Now, Bolton, our task is done, and we must hie to Holyrood ere daybreak; for this is not a time for men of such light account as we, to be roving about like the owls. To thee, Paris, we will leave the rest. Thou art well assured of where this crayer of Norway lieth."

"At the New haven, immediately opposite the chapel of St James."

A shudder ran through the heart of Bolton; for the page's voice sounded at that moment too painfully like his sister's—who, though he knew it not, was probably lying, bruised and mangled out of human form, among the ruins of the Kirk-of-Field.

"Then here we part. Thou wilt see this stranger fitted with dry garments: give him this purse, and bid him go in the name of grace, and cross my path no more; for it is beset with thorns, dangers, and deep pitfalls—and I will not be accountable for the issue of our again forgathering."

"How well I know that voice!" said Konrad feebly. "Tell me, ere we part, if my suspicions are right. For whom shall I pray this night?"——

"Thy greatest enemy—but one who hath every need of prayer," replied the other, in a husky voice.

"Thou art"——

"Hush! James, Earl of Bothwell," replied the noble in a low voice, as he and Bolton mounted, and, without further parley, dashed at full gallop along the bank of the loch and disappeared in the direction of Dingwall's castle, a strong tower, battlemented at the top and furnished with tourelles, that overhung the steep bank above the Trinity House, forming the residence of its provost.

The night was still gloomy and dark, though occasional gleams of moonlight shot across the varied landscape to the north, one moment revealing it all like a picture, and the next veiling it in obscurity.

"Mount, if thou canst," said French Paris, "and wend with me, for we have little time to spare. Our burghers will be all at their accursed pillar, like ravening wolves, by daybreak, and if they should miss, pursue, and overtake thee, our lives would not be worth a brass testoon!"

"And whither wend we?"

"To the seashore—to Our Lady's port of Grace, where there lieth at anchor a trading crayer, commanded by a countryman of thine—Hans Knuber, or some such uncouth name."

"Ha, honest Hans!" exclaimed Konrad with joy. "But how came so great a noble as thy lord to know of this poor skipper?"

"Knowest thou not that he is high admiral of the realm, and that not a cock-boat can spread a sail in the Scottish seas unknown to him?"

"Jovial Hans!" continued Konrad; "I would give my right hand to see thee, and hear thy hearty welcome in our good old Norwayn. Let us mount and go! Benumbed, and stiff, and sick as I am at heart and in body, thou shalt see, Sir Page (for I know thee of old), that I can ride a horse like the demon of the wind himself."

Nevertheless, Konrad mounted with difficulty, and they progressed but

slowly; for the ancient way was steep and winding, and led them far to the westward of the city, which disappeared, as they traversed the steep and broken ground that lay between it and the Firth.

This district was all open and rural, but generally in a high state of cultivation, divided by hedges and fauld-dykes into fallow fields and pasture lands, in some places shaded by thick copsewood, especially round those eminences on which rose the towers of Innerleith and Waniston, between which the roadway wound. These square fortlets were the residences of two of the lesser barons; the first extended his feudal jurisdiction over the ancient village of Silvermills; and the other over that of Picardie, where dwelt a colony of industrious weavers, who had left their sunny France, and, under the wing of the ancient alliance, came hither to teach the Scots the art of weaving silk.

Near some ancient mills, gifted by Robert I. to the monks of Holyrood, the horseway crossed the pebbled bed of the Leith, which brawled and gurgled between rough and stony banks, jagged with rocks and boulders, and overhung by hawthorn, whin, and willow. Soon wood, and tower, and path were left behind, the city lights vanished in the distance, and Konrad, with his guide, entered on a broad and desolate tract, then known as the Muir of Wardie. There their horses sank fetlock deep in the soft brown heather, over which came the jarring murmur of the distant sea, as its waves rolled on the lonely shore of the beautiful estuary.

Then it was a lonely shore indeed!

That broad and desert moorland of many square miles, extended to the beach uncheered by house or homestead, by tree or bush, or any other objects than a solitary little chapel of Our Lady and the old tower of Wardie, with its square chimneys and round turrets, overhanging the rocks, on which, urged by the wind, the waves were pouring all their foam and fury, flecking the ocean with white when the moonbeams glinted on its waters.

Broad and spacious links of emerald green lay then between the little fisher-village and the encroaching sea, which has long since covered them; but their grassy downs had to be traversed by our horsemen ere they reached the wooden pier where the crayer of bluff Hans Knuber lay, well secured by warp and cable, and having her masts, and yards, and rigging all covered, and made snug, to save them from the storms which, at that season of the year, so frequently set in from the German sea.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CHALLENGE.

Defiled is my name full sore,
Through cruel spyte and false report;
That I may say for evermore,
Farewell, my joy! adieu, comfort!
For wrongfully ye judge of me.
Unto my fame a mortall wounde;
Say what ye lyst it will not be,
Ye seek for that cannot be founde.
Anne Boleyn's Lament.

The remains of the unfortunate king, after being embalmed by Picauet the French physician, were interred among his royal ancestors in the aisles of Holyrood, not contemptuously, as some historians tell us, but solemnly and privately; for Mary dared not have had the burial service of the Catholic church publicly performed, when, but seven years before, those sepulchral rites were, by the Reformers, denied to her mother.

In the southern aisle of the church of Sanctæ Crucis, near the slab that still marks where Rizzio lies, he was lowered into the tomb, while the torches cast their lurid light on the dark arcades and shadowy vistas of the nave, amid the lamentations and the muttered threats of vengeance—the deep sure vengeance of the feudal days—from the knights and barons of the Lennox.

Attired in sackcloth, poor Mary shut herself up in a darkened chamber hung with black serge, and there for many days she passed the weary hours in vigil and in prayer, for the unshriven soul of that erring husband, whom for the past year she had been compelled to hold in abhorrence—a sentiment which she then remembered with a remorse that increased her pity for his fate.

Bothwell dared not to approach her while this paroxysm lasted; but by plunging into gaiety and riot—by spending the days and nights in revelry with Ormiston and d'Elboeuff—he endeavoured to drown the recollections of the past, to deaden the sense of the present, and to nerve himself for the future; but in vain—one terrible thought was ever present!

It stood like something palpable and visible before him. It seemed written on the fragrant earth, in the buoyant air, and on the shining water, imparting to the sunny spring the gloom of winter. It was in his ears, it was on his tongue, and in his soul; there was no avoiding, no crushing, no forgetting it! Oh, how vividly at times, in the calm silence of the sleepless night, *that cry* came to his ears; and his thoughts were riveted on that grey marble slab in the chapel aisle,

beneath which, mangled, cold, and mouldering, lay one——he would smite his damp forehead to drive away the thoughts, and rush to drown his sense of misery in wine.

Amid the hum of the city, when its sunlit thoroughfares were crowded with the gaiety and bustle of passing crowds, all of whom seemed so happy and so gay, it rang in his ears!

Amid the solemn deliberations of the council on border raids and feudal broils—on English wars and French embassies—in all of which he was compelled to take the lead, as the royal favourite and first of the Scottish peers, it came to him sadly and mournfully above the voices of the most able orators; and then his heart sank when he looked on the blanched visages of Morton, of Maitland, and his other copartners in that terrible deed, to which—as if by common consent—they never dared to recur!

Amid the leafy rustle of the woods, as their dewy buds expanded beneath the alternate showers and sunshine of an early spring (if he sought the country), still he heard it!

Amid the deep hoarse murmur of the chafing sea, if he sought the lonely shore, he heard it still—that sad and wailing cry of death and of despair!

Amid the joys of the midnight revel, when the wine sparkled in the gilded glasses—the grapes blushed in their silver baskets—the lofty lamps filled the chamber with rosy light and rich perfume;—when the heedless ribaldry of Ormiston, the courtly wit of d'Elboeuff, the frolicsome spirit of Coldinghame, were all there to make the *present* paramount alike to the past and the future, still it came to him—that terrible sound—*the last cry of Darnley*!

The queen still remained shut in her darkened chamber, secluded from all—even from the prying ambassador of Elizabeth, who, when introduced, could not discern her face amidst the sombre gloom surrounding her; but, as he informed his mistress, the accents of Mary were both touching and mournful.

Two strange rumours were now floating through the city; one of a spectre which had appeared in the lodging of the Lord Athol on the night of the king's death; the other, of Bothwell's implication in that terrible deed, in which he and his companions had endeavoured (and perhaps not without good grounds) to implicate the Earl of Moray.

No one knew how this rumour gained credence; but each man whispered it to his neighbour. Voices, accusing him of the deed, rang at midnight in the narrow streets of the city; the scholars chalked ribald verses at the corners of the wynds and church-doors; while Moray—openly Bothwell's friend, and secretly his foe—had handbills posted on the portes, naming him as the perpetrator. Furtively these things were done; for few dared to impugn the honour of so powerful a noble, and none could arraign him save the father of the murdered

prince, Matthew Earl of Lennox, an aged noble, who had served with valour and distinction in the wars of Francis I.; and he boldly charged the Earl with the crime.

Bothwell saw, or imagined he saw, an accusation in the eye of every man whose glance he encountered. Pride, jealousy, and angry suspicion, now by turns animated his resentful heart, and galled his fiery spirit. He was always conferring secretly with the knights and barons of his train; he kept his vassals ever on the alert, and never went abroad without being completely armed, to prevent a surprise; but daily and hourly, slowly and surely, like an advancing and overwhelming tide, the suspicions of the people grew and waxed stronger, till, clamorously, it burst in one deep hoarse shout against him, and a hundred thousand tongues said, "Thou art the man!"

"Malediction on these presumptuous churls!" said the Earl angrily to Ormiston, as they met near the palace gate on the day after Darnley's funeral. "They all accuse me; and there must be treachery somewhere."

"Nay, nay, never think so while that bond of Whittinghame exists. It binds us all, body and soul, to be silent as the grave, and deep as Currie brig."

"But now they speak of the queen, adding all that the innate malevolence of the vulgar, the hatred that Knox and his compatriots have fostered and fanned, can add; and declaring that she is art and part with those who freed her and the nation from the dominion of the house of Lennox."

"May God forefend!" said Ormiston; for, ruffian as he was, he deemed the national honour at stake under such an accusation. "I would run my sword through the brisket of the first base mechanic who breathed a word of this."

"Breathed a word of it!—Gramercy! French Paris tells me, it is openly discussed by every full-fed burgess at the city cross; by every rascally clown who brings his milk and butter to the Tron; by every archer and pikeman over their cans of twopenny; by every apostate priest and pious psalmist who haunt the houses of Knox, of Craig, and Buchanan. A curse upon the hour when my secret love, my cherished hopes—the name and fame the brave old Lords of Hailes transmitted to me, so spotless and so pure—are turned to ribaldry and jest, to laughter and to scorn, by every foul-mouthed citizen."

"'Tis mighty unlucky all this; for here hath been my Lord Fleming, the great chamberlain, with the queen's especial commendations to your lordship, announcing, that on the morrow she intendeth to lay aside her weeping and wailing, her dumps and dolours, and departing hence for the house of Lord Seaton, a gay place, and a merry withal; and there she hopes you will escort her with your train of lances, for the Lothians are so disturbed that she mistrusts even Arthur of Mar and his band of archers."

"Be it so! Send Bolton to her grace with my dutiful answer," replied the Earl, whose eye lighted up, for he thought that, in the shock Darnley's fate had

given her, the queen had forgotten him; "we will be all in our helmets, and at her service by cock-crow to-morrow; but first," he added, sternly and impressively, "take this, my better glove, and hang it on yonder city cross, and there to-day at noon announce to all, that I, James Earl of Bothwell, and Lord of Hailes, will defend mine honour against all men, body for body, on foot or on horseback, at the barriers of the Portsburgh, between the chapel of St. Mary and the castle rock, so help me God at the day of doom!"

And drawing off his long buff glove, which was richly embroidered and perfumed, the Earl handed it to his faithful Achates, and returned into the palace to have his train prepared with becoming splendour, for the honourable duty of guarding the queen on the morrow.

In compliance with this command, Black Hob, sheathed in his sable armour, his visor up to reveal his swarthy visage, and mounted on a strong charger of the jettiest black, attended by Hay of Tallo as esquire, French Paris as his page, and three trumpeters in the Earl's gorgeous livery, gules and argent, and having his banner, with the lions of Hepburn rending an English rose, advanced into the city, and there, amid a note of defiance, hung the Earl's glove above the fountain, together with his declaration of innocence, and offer "to decide the matter in a duel with any gentleman or person of honour who should dare to lay it to his charge."

For many a day the glove hung there, and none answered the challenge; for the star of Hepburn was still in the ascendant, and none dared to encounter its chieftain in the field, for dread of the deadly feud that was sure to ensue.

But the printer of pasquils and the caricaturists were still busy, and one morning there was a paper found beneath the Earl's challenge, on which was drawn a hand grasping a sword, and bearing the initials of the queen, opposed to another armed with a *maul*, bearing those of the Earl—a palpable allusion to the weapon by which the unfortunate prince was slain, and which could only have been made by a conspirator.

The heedlessness of the unsuspecting Mary in visiting the Earl of Winton under the escort of Bothwell (of whose innocence she had been convinced by Moray), and his divorce from his countess, lent renewed energy to the voice of calumny; and then those rumours of her participation in that crime, in which all the skill of her enemies for three hundred years has failed to involve her, were noised abroad; and slowly but surely the nation, which had never loved her for her catholicity, and partiality for gaiety and splendour, was completely estranged from her. Now, on one hand, were a fierce people and a bigoted clergy; on the other, a ferocious vassalage, headed by illiterate and rapacious nobles, and to withstand them but one feeble woman.

In the glamour that came over the Scottish people, they failed to remember

that, animated by delicacy and honour, the unhappy Mary, only six weeks before the death of Darnley, had rejected a divorce, though urged by the most able of her ministers and powerful of her nobles; they also forgot how anxiously she had prevented his committing himself to the dangers of the ocean, when about to become an exile in another land; and they forgot, too, her assiduity and tenderness, to one who had so long slighted and ceased to love her, when he lay almost upon a deathbed, under the effects of a loathsome and terrible disease. The nobles saw only a woman, who stood between them and power—regencies, places, and command; the people saw only an idolater and worshipper of stocks and stones; and the clergy "ane unseemly woman," who dared to laugh, and sing, and dance, in defiance of their fulminations anent such sin and abomination.

Exasperated by his son's death, and the rumours abroad, the aged Earl of Lennox demanded of Mary that Bothwell should submit to a trial. His prayer was granted; and Keith acquaints us that she wrote to her father-in-law, requesting him to attend the court with all his feudal power and strength.

Dreading the issue of an ordeal which might blast his prospects and his fame, the politic Bothwell used every means to increase his already vast retinue, by enlisting under his banner every dissolute fellow, border outlaw, and broken man, that would assume his livery, the gules and argent; and thus his town residence, and those of his Mends, were soon swarming with these sinister-eyed and dark-visaged swashbucklers, with their battered steel bonnets, their long swords, and important swagger. Thus, when the day of trial came, the streets were crowded with them; and when Bothwell, after passing through a long lane of his own arquebussiers, at the head of three thousand men, (mostly barons, knights, and esquires,) appeared at the bar, sheathed in a magnificent suit of armour, supported on one side by the crafty Earl of Morton, and on the other by two able advocates—the father of the young prince he had destroyed dared not appear, as he dreaded to share the fate of his son.

After a long discussion, to which the high-born culprit listened with a beating heart—though his influence had packed the jury, which was composed of Mary's friends and Rizzio's murderers; and though he had bribed the judges and deterred the prosecutor—the court, actuated by sentiments best known to themselves, unanimously "*acquitted* the Earl of Bothwell of all participation in the king's death."

With him the die had been cast.

Had they brought in a verdict of guilty, another hour had seen his banner waving in triumph and defiance above the capital—for he was alike prepared to conquer or to die; but this decision of the jury, delivered by the mouth of Caithness, their chancellor, rendered all his warlike preparations nugatory. Had they found him guilty, he would boldly have rushed to arms in defence of his honour

and life, with an energy and wrath that would alike have stifled the whispers of conscience and remorse; but they had declared him innocent, and he left the bar slowly and sadly, feeling in his inmost soul a thousand degrees more criminal than ever.

As he left the chamber where the High Court sat, his friends and vassals received him with acclamations—with brandished swords and waving pennons; and, with trumpets sounding, conveyed him through the great arch of the Netherbow to St. Mary's Wynd, where, by his command, the host of the *Red Lion* had prepared a grand banquet and rere-supper for the nobles and barons attending the Parliament.

Though "one of the handsomest men of his time," as old Crawford tells us, the Earl feared that, notwithstanding the assiduity of his attentions, Mary would never regard him with other sentiments than those of mere esteem for his services, and efficiency as an officer of state. "Men stop at nothing when their hands are in," saith an old saw; and, actuated by this spirit, Bothwell—ever keeping steadily in view that alluring object, which, step by step, had drawn him to the dangerous and terrible eminence on which he found himself—resolved, by one more desperate act, to reach the summit of his hopes, or sink into the gulf for ever.

CHAPTER IX.

AINSLIE'S SUPPER.

Men talk of country, Christmasses, and court gluttony,
Their thirty pound butter'd eggs, their pies of carps' tongues,
Their pheasants drench'd with ambergris; the carcasses
Of three fat wethers bruised for gravy, to
Make sauce for a single peacock; yet their feasts
Were *fasts*, compared with the City's.
Massinger's City Madam.

It was, as we have stated, the month of April, and on the day of the Earl's acquittal.

About seven in the evening, the sun was setting behind the purple hills of the Ochil range, in all the splendour of that beautiful month of bright blue skies

and opening flowers—of the pale primrose and the drooping blue-bell; when the dew lingers long on the fresh grass and the sprouting hedges—when the swallow builds its nest under the warm eave, and the mavis sings merrily as he spreads his pinions on the buoyant air. It was an April evening. The rays of the setting sun had long since left the narrow streets of Edinburgh, though they still lingered on its gothic spires and gilded vanes, throwing a farewell gleam on each tall chimney head, each massy bartisan, and round tourelle.

A great fire blazed in the yawning hall chimney of the *Red Lion*, throwing its ruddy glow on the red ashler walls, which the host endeavoured to decorate by various pieces of tapestry, begged and borrowed from his neighbours, on the rough oak rafters that once had flourished on the burgh-muir—on the far-stretching vista of the sturdy table, flanked with wooden benches on each side for Bothwell's noble guests, covered with a scarlet broad cloth, and glittering in all the shiny splendour of French pewter and delft platters—for there had never been an atom of silver seen in an hostellary as yet; and by each dark-blue cover lay a knife, halfted with horn and shaped like a skene-dhu. A gigantic salt occupied the centre, and a carved chair raised upon a dais—a chair that whilome had held the portly Provost of St. Giles, but to which honest Adam had helped himself in 1559, that year of piety and plunder—stood at the upper end, and was designed for the great Earl of Bothwell.

A smile of the utmost satisfaction and complaisance spread over the fat rosy face of Ainslie's ample dame, as she surveyed the great table, which her taste and skill had decorated and arrayed; and she absolutely clapped her hands with glee, when the great platter, bearing a peacock roasted, and having its legs shining with gold-leaf, and all its bright-dyed pinions stuck round it, was placed upon the board at the moment that a trampling of horses in the narrow wynd announced the arrival of the Earl and his guests, among whom were such a number of dignitaries as never before had been under the rooftree of the *Red Lion*; and honest Elspat Ainslie was overwhelmed each time that she reckoned them on her fat fingers, and found there were eight bishops, nine earls, and seven barons, all the most powerful and popular in Scotland, where a man's power was then reckoned by the number of ruffians under his standard, and his popularity by his hatred of the Papists, and distribution of their gear to the preachers and pillars of the new regime.

The dame hurried to a mirror—gave her coif a last adjust—smoothed her apron and gown of crimson crammasie; while Adam brushed a speck from his fair doublet of broad cloth—practised his best bow several times to the gilt peacock; and all their trenchermen and attendants stood humbly by the door in double file as the guests entered.

Bothwell came first, with his usual air of gallantry and grace—his doublet

of cloth-of-gold glittering in the light of the setting sun; his ruff buttoned by diamonds; his shoulder-belt and mantle stiff with gold embroidery; while his sword, dagger, and plumed bonnet, were flashing with precious stones. He made a profound bow to the hostess; for now he smiled less than formerly, and the pallor of his noble features was attributed by all to *grief* at the Lord Lennox's accusation.

Morton followed, looking quite as usual, with his sinister eyes, his long beard and little English hat, his black velvet cloak and silver-headed cane; but, with a jocularity that was always affected, he pinched the plump cheek of Dame Ainslie, and thumped her husband upon the back, saying—

"How farest thou, host of mine? Faith, I need scarcely ask thee, for thou swellest and wallowest amid the good things of this life daily."

"By Tantony and Taudry! in these kittle times, my lord"—began Adam.

"Peace, thou irreverend ronion!" whispered the Earl of Huntly fiercely, as he grasped his poniard—"*Saint* Anthony and *Saint* Audry, thou meanest."

"I mean just whatever your lordship pleases," replied the hosteller, as he shrank abashed by the stern eye of the Catholic noble, who resented every disrespect to the ancient church, so far as he dared.

"Nay, nay," interposed Secretary Maitland, with his bland smile and flute-like voice; "poor Adam's slip of the tongue merited not a rebuke so sharp; to grasp thy poniard thus amounts almost to hamesucken—a gloomy beginning to our banquet, my Lord of Huntly."

There was present that gay scion of the house of Guise, d'Elboeuff—all smiles and grimaces, starched lace and slashes; there was the Earl of Sutherland, the lover of Bothwell's absent countess; Glencairn, the ferocious; Cassilis, who once half-roasted an abbot alive; Eglinton, the cautious; Seaton, the gallant; and Herries, the loyal; Rosse, of Hawkhead, and many others—until the hall was crowded by the bravest and the greatest of Scotland's peers, and many lesser barons, who, though untitled, considered themselves in feudal dignity second to the crown alone. All were well armed, and the nature of the time was evinced by their dresses; for all who had not on corselets and gorgets to prevent sudden surprises, had quilted doublets of escaupil, and all were scrupulously accoutred with swords and Parmese poniards, without which no gentleman could walk abroad.

As Bothwell advanced to the head of the table to assume his seat, his eye caught one of the black-letter proclamations of the council, which was fixed over the gothic fireplace, and offered a yearly rent, with two thousand pounds of Scottish money, for the discovery of the perpetrators of the crime at the Kirk-of-Field; "quhilk horribill and mischevious deed," as the paper bore it, "almychty God would never suffer to lie hid."

"Mass!" said the Earl, as the blood mounted to his temples, "thou hast a

roaring fire, Master Adam, this April day."

"The coals bleeze weel, Lord Earl; yet they cost a good penny, coming as they do by the galliots frae the knight of Carnock's heughs, aboon Cuboss."

"Little marvel is it that they burn thus," said the Earl of Glencairn; adding, in a lower voice, "for knowest thou, gudeman, that instead of contenting himself with such of this precious mineral as may be got shovel-deep, by advice of that damnable sorcerer, the knight of Merchiston, he hath sunk a pit—a cylinder—even unto the bowels of the earth, as Hugh of Tester did at his Goblin Hall; and he is now digging under the Forth, with intent, as Master George Buchanan told me yesterday, to ascend and seek upper air on this side."

"Ascend!" reiterated Morton with astonishment—"Where?"

"At the gate of thy castle of Dalkeith, perhaps; thou art thought to dabble a little in spell and philtre—like draweth to like."

"As the deil said to the collier," added old Lindesay. Several laughed at the hit, but Morton frowned.

This famous supper at Ainslie's hostel—a supper which has been fated to live for ever in Scottish history—was marked by all that barbaric profusion that characterised the feasts of those days, when men feasted seldom. Under the superintendence of a notable French *chef de cuisine*, the first course consisted of ling, pike, haddocks, and gurnards, dressed with eggs, cream, and butter; but there was no salmon, that being esteemed as fitted only for servants. The chief dish of all was a grand pie of salt herrings, minced, and prepared with almond paste, milts, and dates; a grated manchet, sugar, sack, rose-water, and saffron; preserved gooseberries, barberries, currants, and Heaven knows what more; but the curious or the epicurean may still find the recipe in worthy Master Robert May's "*Accomplished Cooke*, 1685."

This delightful mess threw the Marquis d'Elboeuff into as great an ecstasy as the artificial hens—which formed part of the second course, and were made of puff-paste—seated upon large eggs of the same material, each of which contained a plump mavis, seasoned with pepper and ambergris; and, to him, these proved infinitely more attractive than the haunches of venison, the chines of beef, and roasted pigs, that loaded the table. To suit the palates of Lindesay, Glencairn, and other sturdy Scots, who disdained such foreign kickshaws, there were sottens of mutton, platters of pouts, Scottish collops, tailyies of beef, and sea-fowl. Every description of French wine was to be had in abundance—ale and old Scots beer, seasoned with nutmeg; and it would have been a fair sight for the effeminate descendants of these doughty earls and bearded barons, to have witnessed how they did honour to this great repast, eating and drinking like men who rose with the lark and eagle, whose armour was seldom from their breasts, whose swords were never from their sides, and whose meals depended often on the dexterity

with which they bent the bow, or levelled the arquebuss.

On each side of the Earl sat four bishops; and all his real and pretended friends were present except Moray, who had suddenly departed to France, "that he might seem to be unconcerned in what was going forward: he failed not in this journey to circulate every injurious report to the prejudice of his unhappy sovereign, who, in the mean time, was destitute of every faithful friend and proper councillor."

The Archbishop of St. Andrew's—the last Catholic primate of Scotland (the same noble prelate whom, for his loyalty, Moray so savagely hanged over Stirling bridge five years after)—now arose, and, stretching his hands over the board, uttered the brief grace then fashionable:—"*Soli Deo honor et gloria*," whereat the Lord Lindesay muttered something under his beard, "anent the idolatry of Latin."

Instead of that calm, cold, and polite reserve, that marks the modern dinner table, their nut-brown faces shone with the broad good-humour that shook their buirdly frames with laughter, and they became boisterous and jocose as the night drew on; and the blood red wines of old France and Burgundy, and the stiff usquebaugh of their native hills, fired their hearts and heads.

Lord Lindesay had prevailed on d'Elboeuff to partake of a haggis, and he was laughing under his thick beard at the grimaces of the French noble, whose complaisance compelled him to sup a dish he abhorred.

"Thou findest it gude, Lord Marquis?"

"*Ah! cest admirable!*" sighed d'Elboeuff.

"Why, thou seemest to relish it pretty much as a cat liketh mustard."

"*Oui!*" smiled the Frenchman, who did not understand him.

"And how fares my noble friend, Coldinghame?" asked the Earl of his brother *roué*.

"Weel enow; but sick of dangling about this court, which is such a mess of intrigue."

"Tush! Bethink thee, the queen hath the wardship of many a fair heiress, and may bestow on thee a handsome wife."

"Bah! like my Lord of Morton, I care not for a handsome wife"—

"Unless she belong to another," said Ormiston, coarsely closing the sentence.

"By the rood! a good jest and a merry," laughed Bothwell; but Morton's olive cheek glowed with anger.

"Be not chafed, my lord," said Ormiston; "by cock and pie! I spoke but in boon fellowship. Drink with me! This Rochelle is famously spiced, and stirred with a rosemary sprig for good-luck."

"Does Master Ainslie warrant it old?"

"Old! my Lord Morton," reiterated Adam, turning up his eyes; "ay! auld as

the three trees of Dysart; for it lay many a long year before the '59, among the stoor and cobwebs o' the Blackfriars' binns, up the brae yonder."

"By the way," said the Lord Coldinghame, "as thou talkest of the Blackfriars, what tale of a roasted horse is this, anent whilk the whole city is agog, concerning a spectre which is said to have appeared there on the night the king was slain, and hath haunted the ruins of St. Mary's kirk ever since?"

"Knowest thou aught of this, Adam?" asked Bothwell, whose mind, though he endeavoured to maintain his usual aspect of nonchalance, wandered constantly to the gigantic projects he had in view.

"As ye know, my lord," replied Adam, setting his head on one side and his left leg forward, with the air of a man who has a story to tell; "on the night of that deadly crime in the Kirk-of-Field, two especial gentlemen of the Earl of Athol, the umquhile king's gude-cousin, were both a-bed at his lordship's lodging, which is just within the town wall, and not a bowshot frae auld St. Mary's kirk. In the mirk mid hour of the night, Sir Dougal Stuart, who slept next the wall, was awaked by a death-cauld hand passing owre his cheek, and which thereafter took him by the beard, while an unearthly voice, sounding as if from afar off, said—'Arise, or violence will be offered unto you!' At the same moment his friend, a half-wud Hielandman, awoke, saying furiously—'Where is my durk, for some one hath boxed mine ear?' And both started up to see, close by their bed, a dusky figure, of which no feature could be defined save a clenched hand, bare, and long, and glistening in the siller moonlight, that shone through the grated window; then it melted away like morning mist; the turnpike door was heard to close with a bang, as if some one had left the house; and while, with fear and alarm, they started to their sword's, lo! they heard the explosion that sent king and kirk-house into the air together."[*]

[*] See Buchanan.

"Stuff and nonsense!" said Bothwell angrily, for this story was then current in the city; "'tis a tale befitting only the old dames who play basset and primero in the queen's antechamber. Wert thou at sermon in the High Kirk this morning, Hob?" he asked, to change the subject.

"Cock and pie, no!" said Ormiston, as he gulped down his wine with surprise.

"Marry!" said Lord Lindesay; "thou didst miss a rare discourse."

"On what did Master Knox expone?" asked several Protestant peers; while Huntly and other Catholics curled their mustaches, and exchanged glances of

scorn. Lindesay replied—

"Anent the story of that strong loon, Samson, tying three hundred torches to the tails of sae mony tod-lowries, to burn the corn of the Philistines—likening himself unto Samson—the ministry o' the reformit kirk to the three hundred tods, and their discourses unto the bleezing torches—the corn o' the Philistines unto the kirk o' the Pope, whilk their burning tails would utterly overthrow, ruinate, and consume. God speed the gude wark!" added the stern peer, as he brushed aside his heavy white beard with one hand, and tossed over his wine-cup with the other.

"What spell hath come over thee, compere Bothwell?" said d'Elboeuff; "thou seemest grave as a judge. Here is the *merry-thought* of a capercailzie to scare thy melancholy."

"Marquis," replied the Earl gaily, "thy wit would require the addition of a *wing* to make it soar. What a tall goblet thou hast! Dost mean to get drunk to-night?"

"Why not, *parbleu!* when I am to ride to Holyrood?"

"What difference doth that make?"

"Mon Dieu! because, if I stumble, there is more effect when falling from a saddle, than sprawling endlong in the kennel like a beastly bourgeoise."

"'Tis time with thee, Marquis, that siclike follies were left owre, for thy beard getteth frosted wi' eild," said Lord Lindesay.

"*Tete Dieu!* dost thou say so, and live? But remember, most sombre Lord of the Byres, that Paris is as different from this city as the fields of Elysium are from those on the other side of the Styx. There the gaieties and glories of youth begin when we are yet children; when ye are boys, we are men; when ye are in your prime, we are in old age—exhausted with pleasure, *ennui*, drinking and gaming, roistering and"——

"Enough, Marquis!" said Bothwell, who had two ends in view—to drench his guests with wine, and to keep them all in excellent humour. "Enough!" he whispered; "for there are some stern spirits here who do not relish this discourse; and bethink thee of the reverend bishops who are among us."

"*Tonnere!* apostates! heretics!" muttered the Marquis. Meanwhile Ormiston, Bolton, Morton, and others who were Bothwell's friends, seeing how his spirit alternately flagged and flashed, left nothing undone to increase the hilarity of the evening, and keep the wine circulating; for there were many present whom descent, religion, or faction had set at deadly feud, and who, had they met on a hillside or highway, or perhaps in the adjacent street, would have fought like mad bulls; but these had been artfully and politicly separated, and thus the unrestrained jesting and revelry increased apace.

Some talked of creaghs upon the northern frontier, of forays on the south-

ern, of partition of kirk lands, and the flavour of wines, in the same breath. D'Elboeuff chattered like a magpie of new doublets and perfumes, of Paris and pretty women: old Lindesay spoke solemnly and portentously, over his ale, on the prospects of the holy kirk; and Glencairn responded with becoming gravity and ferocity of aspect.

Morton sat opposite Lethington, and from time to time they sipped their wine and exchanged those deep glances which the most acute physiognomist would have failed to analyse; but, as they watched the ebb and flow of the conversation around them, Morton seemed almost to say in his eyes, "Thou art wise as Nestor;" and the secretary to reply, "And *thou* cunning as Ulysses."

Gradually the latter led the conversation to the politics of the day—the misgovernment that, since the death of James V., had characterised each succeeding year; how the sceptre, feebly swayed by the hands of a facile woman, had never been capable of aweing the great barons and their predatory vassalage—the urgent necessity of some powerful peer espousing the queen, and assuming the reins of government, otherwise the destruction of Scotland by foreign invasion and domestic brawl—the subversion of the rights of the nobles, the power of the church, the courts of law, and the liberties of the people, would assuredly ensue.

This half-false and half-fustian speech, which the able Lethington delivered with singular emphasis and grace, was received with a burst of acclamation.

"My lords and gentles," said the aged Lindesay, standing erect, and leaning on his six feet sword as he spake; "here we are convened, as it seemeth, as mickle for council as carousal; albeit, ye have heard the premises so suitably set forth by the knight of Lethington, it causeth me mickle marvel to know whom among us he would name as worthy of the high honour of espousing our fair queen."

"Cock and pie!" exclaimed the impetuous Hob Ormiston, erecting his gigantic figure, and speaking in a voice that made the rafters ring; "whom would we name but her majesty's prime favourite and sorely maligned first counsellor, James Earl of Bothwell, Governor of Edinburgh and Dunbar, and Lord High Admiral of the realm? Who, I demand, would not rather see him the mate of Mary Stuart, than the beardless Lord of Darnley—that silken slave, that carpet knight, and long-legged giraffe in lace and taffeta? What say ye, my lords and barons, are we unanimous?"

There was a pause, and then rose a shout of applause, mingled with cries of "A Bothwell! a Bothwell!" from Morton and other allies of the Earl, who were so numerous that they completely overcame the scruples, or hushed into silence the objections, of the hostile and indifferent.

The Earl, whose heart was fired anew by the glow of love and ambition—for never did a prospect more dazzling open to the view of a subject than the hope of sharing a throne with a being so beautiful as Mary—thanked his friends with a

grace peculiarly his own, and immediately produced that famous BOND—a document in which the nobles in parliament assembled, asserted his innocence of the crime of the 11th February, and earnestly recommended him to Mary as the most proper man in Scotland to espouse her in her widowhood—and bind themselves by every tie, human and divine, "to fortify the said Earl in the said marriage," so runs the deed, "as we shall answer to God, on our fidelity and conscience. And in case we do on the contrary, never to have reputation or credit in time hereafter, but to be accounted *unworthy and faithless traitors*."

"God temper thy wild ambition, Bothwell!" said the Archbishop, as he signed the document to which the seven other prelates appended their names. That of Moray—Mary's dearly loved brother—had *already* been given before his departure; and its appearance had a powerful effect on all present.

"Deil stick me, gif I like mickle to scald my neb in another man's brose!" growled Glencairn; "yet I will subscrive it, albeit I would rather have had a suitor to whose maintainance of the Holy Reformit Kirk Master Knox could have relied on."

Morton gave one of his cold and sinister smiles as he appended his name in silence; while the Marquis d'Elboeuff also smiled, shrugged his shoulders, and applied to his nostrils an exquisitely chased silver pouncet-box of fragrant essences, to conceal the merriment with which he watched the arduous operation of fixing the signatures; for writing was a slow and solemn process in those days.

A new and terrible difficulty occurred, which nearly knocked the whole affair on the head.

Very few of these potent peers could sign their names, and others objected to making their mark, which, from its resemblance to a cross, savoured of popery; but Lethington effected a conscientious compromise, by causing them to make a T, as those did who signed the first solemn league—a smallness of literary attainment which did not prevent those unlettered lords from demolishing the hierarchy of eight hundred years, and giving a new creed to a nation as ignorant as themselves.

Bothwell felt as if he trode on air when consigning this tremendous paper, which had the signatures of so many bishops, earls, and lords, the most powerful in Scotland, to the care of Pittendreich, the Lord President.

The rere-supper lasted long.

Deeply they drank that night, but none deeper than the Earl and his friends; and the morning sun was shining brightly into the narrow wynd—the city gates had been opened, and the booths which, from 1555 till 1817, clustered round St. Giles, were all unclosed for business, and carlins were brawling with the *acquaoli* at the Mile-end well, ere the company separated; and the Earl, accompanied by Hob Ormiston and the knights of Tallo and Bolton, with their eyes half closed,

their cloaks and ruffs awry, and their gait somewhat oscillating and unsteady, threaded their way down the sunlit Canongate, and reached Bothwell's apartments in Holyrood—that turreted palace, where the unconscious Mary was perhaps asleep with her child in her bosom, and little foreseeing the storm that was about to burst on her unhappy head.

CHAPTER X.

HANS AND KONRAD.

Yes, she is ever with me! I can feel,
Here as I sit at midnight and alone,
Her gentle breathing! On my breast can feel
The presence of her head! God's benison
Rest ever on it!
Longfellow.

On this morning, the sun shone brightly on the blue bosom of the Forth, and the grey rocks of all its many isles. The sea-mews were spreading their broad white pinions to the wind, as they skimmed from their nests in the ruins of Inchcolm, and the caves of Wemyss.

The little fisher-hamlet that bordered the New haven, with its thatched and gable-ended cottages, its street encumbered by great brown boats, rusty anchors, and drying nets, looked cheerful in the warm sunshine; and troops of ruddy-cheeked children were gamboling on those broad links that lay where now the water rolls.

Near a little window in the confined cabin of a Norwegian ship, lay Konrad of Saltzberg, faint, feeble, and exhausted; for the fever of a long and weary sickness had preyed upon his body and mind, prostrating every energy. He was pale, attenuated, and hollow-eyed; and now, for the first time since the night we last saw him, had emerged from insensibility to a state of consciousness. He felt the cool air of the April morning blow freshly on his pallid cheek; he heard the ripple of the water, and saw its surface gleaming in the sunshine afar off, where its waves broke in purple and gold on a distant promontory; and close by (for the crayer lay within ten yards of the shore) he heard the merry voices of the children as they gamboled and tumbled on the bright green grass.

Konrad had been dreaming of his home, and these voices came to his slumbering ear in old familiar tones. He had heard the hearty greeting of old Sir Erick Rosenkrantz, and the merry laugh of Anna, as it had sounded in the days of his boyhood and joy; and he heard the murmur of the sea, as, wafted by the summer wind, its waves rolled upon the rocks of Bergen.

The morning breeze from the German ocean roused him from this dreamy lethargy, and for the first time in many weeks he raised his head, and endeavoured to recollect where he was; but the aspect of the little cabin, with its arched deck, and massive beams, confused and puzzled him.

"I am still dreaming," he murmured, and closed his eyes.

He opened them again, but still saw the same objects—the same little cabin, with its pannelled locker—a brass culverin on each side; a crossbow, maul, and helmet hanging on the bulkhead, and the open port affording a glimpse of the shining estuary, with its castled isle, and distant sails, that seemed like white birds resting on the faint and far off horizon.

Steps were heard, and then a stout and thick-set man was seen slowly descending the ladder from the deck. First appeared a pair of broad feet encased in rough leather shoes—then two sturdy legs in brown stockings, gartered with red ribbons; a vast obesity clad in chocolate-coloured breeches, garnished with three dozen of metal knobs at the seams; a waist encircled by a belt, sustaining a Norway knife; then square bulky shoulders in a white woollen jacket, and then a great bullet head, covered by a cap of black fox's fur, under which, on the person turning round, appeared the moonlike face of honest Hans Knuber, open-mouthed and open-eyed—expressive only of good-humour and hilarity; and, where not hidden by his thick red beard, exhibiting a hue that, by exposure to the weather, had turned to something between brick-dust and mahogany.

"Cheerily, ho!" said he, patting Konrad's shoulder with his broad hard hand; "and now, St. Olaus be praised, thou art come to life again! I knew the pure breeze that blew right over the sea from old Norway would revive thee."

"Honest Hans," replied Konrad, in a feeble voice, "I have often heard thy deep tones in the dreams of my sleep, as I thought."

"And so thou wert in a dream, lad—and a plaguy long one! such a dream as the wood-demon used to weave about those who dared to take a nap under his oak. Asleep! why, lad, thou'st been delirious"——

"How! since I came on board thy ship last night, in a plight so pitiful?"

"St. Olaus bless thee, Master Konrad! Thou hast lain by that gun-port for these eight long weeks!"

"Weeks—weeks!" muttered Konrad, pressing his hands on his temples, and endeavouring in vain to recollect himself.

"Ay, weeks; and a sad time we have had of it, with leeching and lancing,

drugging and dosing, plastering and patching. Mass! I thought thou would have slipped thy cables altogether, though under the hands of Maitre Picauet." For Hans had spared no expense, and had brought even the royal physician to see his young charge; and so, thanks to the same skill that brought James VI. into the world, and nearly recovered Darnley from the grave, Konrad, when the delirium left him, began to find himself a new man.

"Eight weeks! I remember me now. Thou hadst landed thy cargo of Norway deals from our old pine-woods of Aggerhuis—hazel cuts and harrowbills"——

"Ay, ay; and had stowed on board my new lading, being crammed to the hatches with tanned leather, earthenware, and Scottish beer, wheat and malt, for which I expect to realize a goodly sum in round dollars among the cities on the Sound, where I would long since have furled my topsails, but for a rascally English pirate that hath cruised off the mouth of the fiord (or frith as the Scots call it), and I dared not put to sea, though ready to sail, with the free cocquet of the queen's conservator in my pouch, and my ship hove short upon her cable; for this is my last venture, and under hatches I carry all that must make or mar for ever the fortune of old Hans Knuber."

"Thou didst tell me some news from old Norway, I now remember, on that night Earl Bothwell's page led me here."

"Why, thou wert like the spectre of a drowned man—St. Erick be with us! But here—drain thy cup of barley ptisan, and I will tell thee more in good time."

Konrad drank the decoction prescribed by the physician, and impatiently said—

"Thou sawest my good friend, the old knight Rosenkrantz, I warrant?"

"I did," replied Hans gravely.

"And how looked he?"

"Stiff enow, Master Konrad; for he was lying in his coffin, with his spurs on his heels, and his sword girt about him."

Konrad was thunderstruck, and barely able to articulate; he gazed inquiringly at Hans.

"True it is, this sad story," said the seaman, wiping a tear away with the back of his brawny hand; "thou knowest well how all the province loved the bluff old knight, who was never without a smile or a kind word for the humblest among us; and faith he never allowed old Hans Knuber to pass his hall door without putting a long horn of dricka under his belt. But Sir Erick is gone now, and the king's castle of Bergen (ah! thou rememberest *that*) is a desolate place enough. And honest Sueno Throndson, that most puffy and important of chamberlains, he is gone to his last home too. He went to Zealand in the ship of Jans Thorson, to hang Sir Erick's shield, with all his arms fairly emblazoned thereon, among those of other dead Knights of the Elephant, in the subterranean chapel of Fred-

ericksborg; but Jans, as thou knowest, could never keep a good reckoning, and, by not allowing duly for variation and leeway, was sucked by the moskenstrom, with all his crew, right down into the bowels of the earth. St. Olaus sain them!"

"Poor Sir Erick!" said Konrad, heedless of the fate of Jans, while his tears fell fast.

"Dost thou not know that King Frederick had created him Count of Bergen, and Lord of Welsöö, for his services in the old Holstein war?"

"Of all these passages, I have heard nothing."

"His niece, the Lady Anna, will be a countess now, as well as the richest heiress in the kingdom. Baggage that she is! Her uncle never recovered her desertion of his home for the arms of that Scottish lord, whom, if I had him here, I would string up to my gaff peak. By the mass! the old knight's heart was broken, for he loved thee as a son, and Anna as a daughter; but to the devil say I with women, for they all yaw in their course somehow, and require a strong hand at the tiller to make them lie well to the wind. This Anna, God's murrain"——

"Hold thee, Hans Knuber!" said Konrad, with something of his old air of dignity and authority; "for, nevertheless all thy kindness, I will not permit thee to breathe one word that is ungracious of Anna."

"As thou pleasest, lad," replied the seaman, taking off his fur cap to wipe his capacious head; "I thought 'twould relieve thee somewhat to hear one who had so shamefully misused thee roundly cursed."

"Oh no! never!" replied the young man in a low voice; "Oh, Hans! thou knowest not the depth and the enthusiasm of this passion that hath bewitched me. It banishes every angry thought from my mind, and leaves only a sense of desolation and agony, that can never die but with myself."

"Now, by the bones of Lodbrog! but I have no patience with this. How! a bold fellow like thee to be caterwauling thus, like a cat on a gutter? Go to! The Lubeckers and Holsteiners are again displaying their banners on the Elbe and Weser. Assume thy sword and helmet again. Thou hast the world before thee, with a fair wind; and what matters it leaving a false woman and a slighted love behind? Cheerily, ho! Master Konrad; a love that is easily won is lightly lost."

"False as this girl has been to me, Hans, there are times when her bright smile and her winning voice, and all the memory of our happy early days, come back to me in their first freshness and joy, and my soul melts within me. *Then*, Hans—in moments like these—I feel that, were she repentant, I could love her as of old. Oh, yes! I could forgive her—I could press her to my breast, and worship her as I did even in those days that have passed to return no more.

"Well, well—as thou pleasest. Take another gulp of this barley drench—thy ptisan. Get strong and healthy ere we see old Norway, where she is gone before thee with Christian Alborg, in the *Biornen*, and who knoweth what the clouds

of futurity may conceal? An old love is easily rekindled, I have heard, though, by the mass! I know little of such gear; though *this* I know, that the castle of Bergen, with the young countess's lordship of Welsöö, would make a very snug roadstead to drop one's anchor in;" and, with a leering wink, Hans Knuber once more clambered to the upper deck, where he drew his fur cap over his bushy brows, thrust his hands into his pockets, and scowled defiance at the small white speck that, near the Isle of May, still marked where the English pirate lay cruising in the offing.

CHAPTER XI.

HOW BOTHWELL MADE USE OF THE BOND.

I love you better—oh! better far than
Woman was ever loved. There's not an hour
Of day or dreaming night, but I am with thee;
There's not a wind but whispers of thy name,
And not a flower that sleeps beneath the moon,
But in its hues or fragrance tells a tale
Of thee, my love!
Mirandola, a Tragedy.

It was the 23rd of April, four days after the great supper described in chapter 9th, when the queen, without her guard of archers, and accompanied only by a slender retinue, passed along the Stirling road towards Edinburgh. She was mounted on her celebrated white palfrey, with its bridle and housings covered with silver bosses and elaborate embroidery; and with surpassing grace she managed it, the stately animal bowing its arched neck, and champing the burnished bit, as if proud of its beautiful rider.

Mary wore a long and flowing riding-habit of dark cloth, laced with silver about the neck and sleeves. It came close up to her dimpled chin, where a thick frill, or little ruff, stuck stiffly out all round. She had her glossy hair drawn back from her snow-white temples, under her lace cap of widowhood (the far-famed Queen Mary cap), that drooped over her brow, while cocked jauntily a little on one side, she wore one of those small sugar-loaf hats which were then so fashionable. A diamond band encircled it, and a veil of the richest lace danced from it

in the evening wind, as she caricoled along the old narrow horseway that wound among the fields near the ancient manor of Sauchton.

She was accompanied by only five attendants, among whom were Huntly, Lethington the secretary, and Sir James Melville of Halhill. With her colour brightened by the exercise of riding, and her eyes sparkling with animation and pleasure, (for she had just been paying a visit to the infant prince at Stirling—a visit fated to be her last,) when her veil was wafted aside, Mary's face seemed to glow with a beauty and vivacity, to which her smart beaver hat lent additional piquancy; and she conversed with more than her usual gaiety and thoughtlessness to the politic Melville, the subtle secretary, and their better man, the stately young chieftain of the house of Gordon. On her wrist sat the gift of her father's aged falconer, (James Lindesay of Westschaw,) one of those beautiful falcons which made their eyry in a perpendicular rock on the West-hill of Alva, where, says the Magister Absalom, never more than one pair have been known to build a nest, even unto this time.

The day was serene; the sun was verging westward, and large masses of shadow lay deepening on the Pentland hills, while the bright flush of the sunlight beamed upon their steep acclivities and heather-brows with a golden tint. The sky was cloudless, and the whole of that magnificent plain, which spreads from the western gates of Edinburgh to those of Glasgow, was clad in all the rural beauty of an early summer. Warmed by the April showers, the trees were putting forth their greenest leaves, and the pink foxglove and blue-bells were bordering the highway; while the wildbrier, the mountain thyme, and the rose of Gueldres, filled the air with perfume.

"Oh joy! how beautiful!" said Mary, as she checked her palfrey on the high and ancient bridge that crossed the Leith near the old baronial manor of the Elphinstones, whose broad dark chimneys were seen peeping above a grove of beeches. "See! yonder is the town, with its castle and St. Giles' spire shining blood-red in the light of the sunset, above the bright green copsewood. And look, Monsieur Huntly, what a delightful little cottage by the side of that river! The green ivy, the wild roses, and the woodbine, are all clambering about its thatched roof—nothing is visible but its little door. Ah, Jane, *ma bonne*!" she exclaimed to her sister Argyle, "how I should love to live there, with nothing to attend to but my flowers and music, and a nice little cow to milk."

"I fear your majesty would soon be ennuéeyed to death, and longing for Holyrood, with its floors of oak and walls of velvet tapestry, with your archers at the gate and pages in the corridor," replied the grave Lethington, with a smile of something between amusement and sarcasm at the simplicity of the young queen.

At the cottage door an old woman was sprinkling water on a herd of cattle,

with broom dipped from time to time in a tub, at the bottom of which lay a perforated stone, which was deemed a sovereign remedy against all witchcraft; but, suddenly ceasing her employment, she curtsied lowly to the lady, of whose exalted rank she was ignorant.

The scenery was very fine, for the country was then more thickly wooded almost than now, and afar off shone the rugged outline of Edinburgh, rearing up on its ridgy hills, with the great square spire of its cathedral, and the lofty towers and bastel-houses of its castle, clustering on lofty and perpendicular rocks. Close by the road, arose the double peaks of Craiglockhart; one covered with pastures of emerald green, the other bluff with whin-tufted basalt, and crowned with gloomy firs; while, following its winding and devious course, the Leith brawled and gurgled over its pebbled bed. Brightly the sunlight danced upon the dimpled water; already in blossom, the lilac groves that shaded it were filling the air with fragrance; their white and purple flowers being at times relieved by the pale green of the willow, the golden laburnum, and the pink cups of the wild-roses; while every flower and blade of grass were glittering in the early dew of the April evening. Unseen, amid the thick foliage that bordered the highway, a thousand birds were filling the air with a melody, that died away even as the sun's rays died upon the distant hills, and the saffron glow of the west assumed the sombre tint of the gloaming.

The young Highland earl, who rode by Mary's side, was charmed with her vivacity, and conversed with her alone; while the more phlegmatic Lethington and Melville jogged together a few paces behind, very intent on their own intrigues and correspondence with Elizabeth of England, with Cecil, and with Killigrew; both of whom, though able statesmen and subtle politicians, will be found, if tried by the rules of justice and honour, the greatest villains that ever breathed. The beauty of the scenery, and the buoyancy of the air, raised Mary's vivacity, and increased her brilliant wit; and she often made the thickets echo with her musical laugh, or a verse of a merry French song; till a sudden turn of the road brought them full in view of a sight that made her utter a faint cry of alarm, rein up her palfrey with one hand, and with the other grasp the arm of Huntly, who instantly drew his sword.

Right across that narrow path was drawn up the imposing line of a thousand horsemen in close array, all sheathed in armour, with the points of their uplifted lances, their breastplates, and conical helmets, glittering in the setting sun. Their flanks, which extended into the fields on each side, were well thrown forward, so as completely to encircle the terrified queen and her little retinue. A few yards in front were two knights with their visors up; one bore a standard displaying two Scottish lions rending a red rose, and by his sable armour, his negro-like visage, and colossal frame, all recognised Hob of Ormiston; but in the

other, whose light suit of mail, engrained with gold, was white as winter frost, and reached only to the knees of his scarlet hose, they knew the Earl of Bothwell. He leaped from his horse, and, drawing off his right gauntlet, advanced reverentially towards the queen on foot.

"What foul treason is meditated here?" asked Huntly sternly, as the Earl passed him.

"None; but thou shalt see," replied the other with a smile, "that I will now wed the queen—yea, *whether she will or not*!"[*]

[*] See Melville.

"Now by my father's soul!" began Huntly furiously.

"How!" said Secretary Lethington, with one of his cold and placid smiles; "has your lordship already forgotten the supper, and the bond?"

"Jesu Maria!" muttered Huntly; "I foresaw not this!"

"Your grace will hold me excused," said the Earl of Bothwell, grasping the bridle of Mary's palfrey; "but your own safety and the commonweal require that I should, without a moment's delay, lead you to my castle of Dunbar."

"Mother of God! How—why?" asked Mary in an agitated voice, as she gazed on the face of the Earl, which was pale as death; for the magnitude of the crime he contemplated, had for a moment appalled even himself. "With what am I menaced? Is there a raid among the Lennox men—an invasion of the English—or what? Who is my enemy?"

"James of Bothwell, as this sword shall prove!" exclaimed the young Earl of Huntly, making a furious blow at the noble's tempered helmet—a blow that must have cloven him to the chin, had not Bolton and Hob Ormiston crossed their lances, and interfered with the speed of light; but Hob's tough ash standard pole was cut in two.

"Mass!" he exclaimed; "now hold thee, Earl Huntly, or, with my jeddart staff, I will deal thee a dirl on the crown that will hang a scutcheon on the gate of castle Gordon for the next year."

The horsemen closed up with levelled lances, and the gentlemen of the queen's train were immediately disarmed.

"To Dunbar! to Dunbar!" cried Bothwell, leaping on horseback, but still retaining the queen's bridle.

"For what end, Lord Earl, and for what purpose, am I to be thus escorted, or made captive, I know not which? Tell me, I implore—nay, I demand of thee as my liegeman and vassal?"

"I refer your majesty to my advisers here present, to the Earl of Huntly and the Knight of Lethington; but fear not, dearest madam, for I am devoted to you in body and in soul, and I swear to you by the four blessed gospels, that I have only your weal at heart. Oh, come with me—come without resistance; for resistance would be vain!"

"Darest thou to say so?"

"Pardon me; but once within the gates of Dunbar, that stately castle with which thou didst so graciously gift me, I will tell thee all. On, on—knights and horsemen! for the night is closing fast, and I can foresee that, natheless the beauty of this April eve, we shall have a storm of no common potency."

Mary's pride, which never for a moment deserted her, impelled resistance; her dark eyes filled with fire; she grew very pale; her beautiful mouth expressed all the scorn and anger that swelled up in her breast, and she endeavoured to snatch her bridle from the hand of the Earl; but at that moment the soft persuasive voice of Secretary Maitland addressed her, and his hand touched her arm lightly. He spoke in an under tone, and what he said was unheard by the Earl; but his wily eloquence was never exercised in vain, and that tact which bent the most stubborn nobles to his purpose, was not likely to prove ineffectual upon the too facile and gentle Mary.

"Be it so!" she replied with hauteur. "*De tout, mon coeur*! I will bide my time; but, Sir William of Lethington, if this raid should prove as my mind misgiveth me, by every blessed saint my vengeance will be terrible!"

The cold statesman bowed with one of his inexplicable smiles as he reined back his horse; and then, by the command of Bothwell, the whole train set forward at a furious pace, which the Earl had no wish to diminish, for the double purpose of avoiding the alternate questions, threats, and intreaties of the queen, and escaping the fury of a sudden storm, that, with singular rapidity, had converted that beautiful evening into one of darkness and gloom.

Agitated, by turns, with astonishment, vexation, indignation, and fear, the queen rode on, reserving her enquiries till they should reach Dunbar.

But why to Dunbar, and not to Holyrood?

A thousand terrors and fancies flitted across her mind. Perhaps the principal nobles had again leagued to slay her, as they had done when her brother rose in rebellion; perhaps he was again in arms, with Lindesay, Glencairn, and all the furious upholders of that new doctrine, which she openly feared and secretly abhored.

The clank of a thousand suits of armour, and the rush of four times that number of galloping hoofs on the hard dusty road, stunned and confused her; while the figures of the mail-clad riders, their tall lances, and Bothwell's rustling banner, the hills and copsewood that overhung their way, grew darker and

duskier as the sky became veiled by the heavy clouds that came up in masses from the German sea.

The summits of the mountains were veiled in descending mist; the air became close and still, and afar off the broad red gleams of the sheet lightning brightened in the sky, revealing in bold outline the ridges of the distant hills, and the waving woods that crowned their summits.

Edinburgh, with its walls and gates, was left behind in night and obscurity; the marshes of Restalrig, where every moment their chargers floundered to the girths; the dreary Figgate whins, where every pace was encumbered with roots and other remains of an old primeval forest; and the ruined chapel of Mary Magdalene—were passed; and the captive queen, with her escort, were galloping along that far expanse of sandy beach, where the white-crested waves rolled with a sullen boom on the desert shore.

Now the clanging hoofs rang like thunder on the broad flagged pavement of the ancient Roman way, that led directly over the picturesque old bridge built by the soldiers of Agricola, and where a strong iron gate, erected transversely across the centre arch, closed the passage after nightfall. But a blast from Ormiston's bugle-horn summoned the gateward, cowering and shivering from his seat by the ingle; for now, from the darkened sky, the heavy rain was pattering upon the hurrying river. At the imperious command, to "make way for the Lord Earl of Bothwell!" the barrier was instantly unclosed, and on swept the train in all its military show, each horseman stooping his helmeted head, and lowering the point of his long Scottish spear, as he passed under the low-browed gate, and wheeled to the left, by the base of the mound, where still the Roman trenches lay, as strong and as visible as when the cohorts of the empire raised there a temple to "Apollo, the long-haired."

Then Musselburgh, the chapel of Loretto, with its demolished tombs and desecrated shrines, old Pinkiecleugh, with its woods and tower, where Abbot Durie dwelt, were left behind, and once more the train was sweeping along the echoing shore, by the margin of the midnight sea—with the thunder rumbling among the hills, and the rain and the storm adding spurs to their headlong speed. By midnight they reined up before the castle of Dunbar, where broad and vast, in all their ancient strength and feudal pride, the strong round towers of Bothwell's princely dwelling stood in clusters on the sea-beaten rocks.

Despite the darkness of the night, and the fury of the storm, which was pouring the German sea in waves of snow-white foam against the castle cliffs, the roar of three salvoes of brass culverins from the lower battlements, burst like peals of thunder on the air; while, red and forky, the flashes shot forth between the strong embrasures and deep-mouthed gun-ports of curtain-wall and flanking tower, as the drawbridge fell, the portcullis ascended, and the glare of twenty

blazing torches flashed under its iron teeth, displaying a court-yard crowded with the Earl's retainers in jack and morion, his servitors in livery, and pages glittering in lace and embroidery, grouped beneath the strong-ribbed archway to receive the queen.

Somewhat assured by this display of loyalty, respect, and security, the queen permitted Bothwell to kiss her hand as he assisted her to alight, and led her half sinking from fatigue to the hall, where every thing appeared as if prepared for her reception; for, thanks to the forethought of Hob of Ormiston, nothing was ever wanting to complete those dangerous dramas in which the Earl was now the leading actor; and, by his contrivance, while the Earl led Mary up the great staircase, French Paris conducted Sir James Melville and the other gentlemen of her retinue to a detached tower, where some of his vassals guarded them till daybreak, when they were expelled from the castle, the gates closed, and they were left (as Sir James tells us in his memoirs) somewhat unceremoniously to shift for themselves, and to bear to Edinburgh and its astonished citizens, the tidings of Bothwell's daring and the queen's captivity.

CHAPTER XII.

LOVE AND SCORN.

This gushing life
Is all that I can give in reparation
Of all the wrongs I have done thee.
We shall lie down together in the grave;
And, when the sound of Heaven shall rouse the dead,
We shall awake in one another's arms.
Shiels' Apostate.

Though the ardour of Bothwell's daring and ambitious passion for Mary was increased almost to a frenzy, on finding her completely in his power, within the strong gates and stronger walls of that magnificent fortress, of which, in an unfortunate moment of liberality, she had made him governor; he felt his courage sink when the moment came for revealing the bond of the nobles, the hopes he had cherished, and the deed of which he had been guilty.

Three great chandeliers of wax candles, which hung from the arched roof

of the lofty hall, shed a blaze of light upon the gobeline tapestry that covered its walls, from the base to the spring of the vault, which was profusely decorated with the richest fresco work, where the royal cipher and the *fleur-de-lys* were prominently seen. Four gothic pillars sustained the carved arch of the fireplace, where an enormous grate, standing on four knobs of brass, was filled with blazing coal. The floor was covered with thick rush matting; and a magnificent collation of fruit, confections, and dainties, in baskets of chased silver, flasks of crystal, and jasper vases, were laid upon the tables by French Paris, little Calder, and other attendants.

Meanwhile the storm continued with unabated fury without; with the noise of thunder the ocean dashed against the bluffs on which the castle stood, and roared in the far recesses of those deep caverns that perforate its cliffs of dark red basalt. The rain poured like a cataract against the barred windows, and hissed in the wide chimney; the mournful cry of the solan goose, and the shriek of the seamew, were heard on the passing wind, as it dashed them with the surf against the castle walls; and the streaming of the wax lights, and undulations of the tapestry within, increased the dreary effect of the tempest without; and its fury seemed the greater, from very contrast with the beautiful evening which had preceded it.

The Earl, like other men of his time, was not without a tinge of superstition; and the storm contributed greatly to increase his irresolution.

"Being at Dunbar," says Mary in one of her letters, "we reproached him with the favour we had always shewn him—his ingratitude, and all other remonstrances that might serve to release us out of his hands; albeit we found his doings rude, yet his words and answers were gentle, that he would honour and serve us. He asked pardon for the boldness of conveying us to one of our own houses, constrained by love, the vehemence of which made him set apart the reverence which naturally he bore us as our subject, as also the safety of his own life."

Thus far the artless Mary; but the papers of the worthy Magister Absalom Beyer are more full in their details.

Pale, from the hurry of the journey, and the current of her own thoughts, Mary stood in the centre of the hall, divested of her hat and riding-habit, which had been drenched by rain. Her plain but rich dress of black satin fell in deep and shining folds around her figure, but presented nothing to indicate her rank; for, save her amber beads, her gold crucifix, and celebrated diamond ring, she was without other ornament than her own bright auburn hair. In some degree damp and disordered, it fell in heavy braids upon her neck, which, on her ruff being removed, contrasted by its delicate whiteness with her black satin dress.

Bothwell had hurriedly thrown aside his wet armour, and assumed a manteau, or robe of scarlet, which was trimmed with ermine, and usually worn by

knights upon state occasions; and it lent additional dignity to his towering figure, as, with a beating heart, he approached Mary, and welcomed her to the castle of Dunbar.

Her eyes were full of enquiry, and her mouth, half-opened, displayed all her beautiful teeth; and Bothwell, dazzled and intoxicated, dreaded only that his own eyes might too soon reveal the passion which now, when he gazed upon its object, made every scruple to vanish.

"And now, Lord Earl," said the Queen gravely, but with a slight tinge of her usual playfulness, "for what have we had this terrible ride to Dunbar, passing in our hurry even the gates of our own palace and capital? Now, say—for what didst thou bring me here?"

"To say, madam, that I love you with other sentiments than those a subject bears a sovereign," replied the Earl, as he pressed her hand to his heart, for at the end of that vast hall they were almost alone. "Oh! thou too winning Mary," he added, in his low and most persuasive tones; "I have long adored thee, and with a love surpassing that of men."

Starting back a pace, the queen withdrew her hand; her brow crimsoned, and her flashing eyes were firmly bent on Bothwell.

"Lord Earl," she replied, in a voice that trembled between anger and dread, "what is this thou hast dared to do?"

"To love thee—is it a crime?"

"No, if it be such love as I may receive; but such is not thine, Lord Earl."

"Oh! visionary that I have been!" exclaimed the astonished noble, as he clasped his hands; "and to a dream have I given up my soul, my peace, my honour! Oh, madam! shew me some way in which I may yet farther prove the ardour of this passion, of which thou art the idol! Give me sufferings to be borne—difficulties to surmount—dangers to encounter; shew me battles to fight and fortresses to storm. Didst thou wish it, I would invade England to-morrow, and carry fire and sword even to the gates of York; for five hundred knights and ten thousand horsemen follow my banner."

"*Je vous remercie!*" exclaimed Mary, with irony, as she turned away—"I thank thee, Lord Earl; but ere I go to war with my good cousin Elizabeth, I must punish my rebels at home."

"Oh, madam! thou, to win whose love I have dared so much—thou, the object of my boyish dreams and manhood's bold ambition—towards whom I have ever been borne by an irresistible and inevitable tide—the sure, dark current of fatality—hear me? But look not upon me thus, for an aspect so stony will wither my heart."

"Lord Bothwell," replied the Queen gravely; "thou deceivest thyself with a volume of sounding words, but seek not to delude me, too. Till morning, I will

rest me in this, my castle of Dunbar; and to-morrow in Holyrood will seek a sure vengeance for the raid of to-night."

"Sayest thou so, madam?" replied the Earl, whose proud heart fired for a moment at her scorn; "then thine will be the greater remorse."

"Remorse? *mon Dieu!*" said Mary, laughing.

"Ah, madam! why didst thou encourage me to love thee?"

"I encourage you!" reiterated the Queen with astonishment. "Mother Mary! thou ravest. Never! never! I needed not to encourage men to love me."

"Thou didst so to me, madam. By God's death! thou didst; and it was cruel to inspire me with a passion which thou couldst not return."

"Thou hast mistaken my too affable manner," replied the Queen; "but I will not stoop to defend myself before thee, presumptuous vassal!"

Bothwell's spirit now fell as the queen's rose; for he felt certain that, should she continue in this mood, he was lost.

Ambition and policy supplied him with that eloquence, of which, perhaps, the excess of his romantic passion might have deprived him; and his voice, ever persuasive and seductive, poured all his practised blandishments like a flood upon her ear. Borne away by the tide of feeling, he painted his torments, his ardour, his long-treasured love, his stifled despair; and Mary listened with pity and interest, for her heart was the gentlest of the gentle; and she saw in him a handsome and gallant noble, who had drawn his sword in her service when a whole peerage held aloof—who had shed his blood to uphold her authority—and who had lately suffered deeply (so she thought) by the mere malevolence of his enemies; but not one glance even of kindness would she bestow upon him.

Even the bond signed by those reverend prelates, whom she almost worshipped—those powerful peers, whom she sometimes respected, but more often feared—and that politic brother, whom she had ever loved better than herself—even that document was urged upon her in vain. It served but to increase her anger, and she told Bothwell she "could never, never, love him!"

"Madam, madam, repulse me not! Oh, thou knowest not how long, how deeply, I have loved thee!"

"Summon my attendants! This night I will rest me here; but," she added threateningly, "to-morrow is a new day; and thou, Lord Earl, mayest tremble when I leave Dunbar!"

"Madam," replied the Earl proudly, but sadly, "from the hour my eyes first opened on the light, I have never trembled; and now I swear to thee, by the joys of heaven and the terrors of hell, thou shalt NEVER leave Dunbar but as the bride of Bothwell!"

And turning, he retired abruptly.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CRY.

She is a woman, therefore may be woo'd;
She is a woman, therefore may be won.
Titus Andronicus.

That night, in his private apartment, Bothwell drank deeply with Ormiston and Bolton.

The storm still raged without; the dash of the waves on the bluffs, their clangour in the caverns below, and the mournful moaning of the wind as it swept round the battlements above, were heard incessantly; but the fire burned merrily on the broad flagged hearth; the hounds yawned lazily as they stretched themselves before it; a supper of mutton sottens, broiled capon, a solan goose, and pout-pie, lay untouched on a buffet, which two oak wyverns upheld on their outspread wings.

The bright wines of Rochelle and Bordeaux sparkled as they were poured from great Flemish jugs into the elaborately chased silver maizers, from which the Earl and his friends were drinking—and drinking, as we have said, deeply; Bolton, to drown the memory of a deed that was likely to drive him distracted; Bothwell, to obtain nerve for whatever might ensue; and Hob Ormiston, to please himself, and keep them company. After a pause—

"Courage, brave Bothwell!" he exclaimed, striking the Earl on the shoulder; "for thou seemest the chosen son of the fickle little goddess."

"Fortune has been smiling on me of late; but, as I have told thee, I begin to scorn her favour since the rejection of my suit by Mary."

"All coy reluctance. By St. Anthony's pig! were I thou"——

"Nay, Nay! Mary is above acting so childishly. But wert thou me, what then?"

"By cock and pie! I would make her mine ere the sun rises from the sea to-morrow."

"Peace!" said the Earl, through whose heart there thrilled a fierce and sudden joy as Ormiston spoke.

”Take courage; for the same day that sees thee Duke of Orkney and Regent of Scotland, beholds me Earl of Ormiston and Marquis of Teviotdale; and by Tantony’s bell and bones, and pig to boot, the sooner the better say I, for every rood of my barony, main and milne, holm and haugh, are mortgaged to the chin among the rascally notaries and usurers of Edinburgh, whom the devil confound! What sayest thou, Bolton? Sorrow take him! he is drunk and asleep. Poor fool! he hath never been himself since that night. Hearken,” continued this ruffian, approaching the Earl, whom it was his interest to urge yet further on that desperate course in which they had embarked together; ”doth not the queen and her sister, the Lady Argyle, sleep in the chambers of the Agnes tower?”

”Yes; so sayeth Sandy of Whitelaw, my seneschal. The queen is in the vaulted chamber on the first floor; Jane of Argyle above.”

”Well!” said Ormiston, fixing his keen dark eyes on those of the Earl.

”Well?” reiterated the Earl.

”It is folly to pause midway in the career of ambition; and it lies with thyself to make this woman thine; for what is she but a pretty woman after all? It lieth with thyself, I say, to make her thine, to end her scruples, and to close for ever the web thou hast woven around her.”

”Silence!” said the Earl, rising abruptly, but immediately reseating himself; ”silence! thy villanous counsels will destroy me.”

”Destroy thee!” reiterated Ormiston. ”Nay; but thy faintness of heart will now, at the eleventh hour, destroy all those who follow thy banner by knight’s service and captainrie; by fear of Chatelherault and hatred of Lennox. Let Mary once be thine, and she dare not punish, but rather, for the reparation of her own honour, will be compelled to wed thee. Think of her alluring loveliness; and to be so near thee—so completely in thy power. Hah! art thou a child—a love-sick frightened boy—to sit there with that lackadaisy visage, when the woman thou lovest so madly is almost within arm’s length? Go to! What a miserable thing is this! to see a strong and proud man the slave of a passion such as thine—a love so wild, so daring, so misdirected; his heart and soul absorbed by a wayward woman, who perhaps secretly prizes, though she outwardly affects to despise, the acquisition.”

”Silence, I tell thee!” replied the Earl through his clenched teeth; but Ormiston saw, by the deep flush in his cheek—by the light that sparkled in his eye, and the tremour that passed over his frame, how deep was the impression his words had made.

”Dost thou recoil? By St. Paul! the safety of thine own house, and that of many a gallant baron, depends on the measures of this night; for to-morrow she will leave Dunbar only to return with the royal banner and all the crown vassals at her back. Take another maizer of the Rochelle, while I leave thee to ponder

over what I have said, for the night wears apace."

"Begone, in God's name! and take Bolton with thee, for I would be alone."

The powerful Ormiston bore away the lieutenant of the archers as if he had been a child, and the Earl was left to his own reflections.

"He is right—he is right! To hesitate is to fall—delay is fraught with danger; and to pause, is to be immediately overwhelmed by the recoil of that fatality of which I have taken the lead. But—but—curse thee, Ormiston! why did I listen to thee?"

He drank—again and again—to deaden alike the stings of conscience and the whispers of honour—to fire yet farther his insane passion, and to make, as it were, a tool of himself.

"Revenge!" he mused; "revenge and ambition spur me on, till the dread of death and the ties of honour are alike forgotten. How irresistible has been the fatality that has led me on, from what I was to what I am to-night—a regicide! a traitor! Let me not think of it; still—still, on this hand I glut my revenge on Morton and on Mar; on the other, I grasp love and power like a kingly orb. It shall be so!" he exclaimed, after a pause; "this night I am not myself—the hand of Destiny is upon me."

He leaped from his chair, and threw off his ermined manteau; exchanged his boots for soft taffeta slippers; he laid aside the sword and belt that girt his powerful figure; he took his sheathed poniard in one hand, a lighted cresset in the other, and, leaving his apartment by a private stair which the arras concealed, rapidly traversed the corridors and staircases that led to the queen's apartment.

His face was haggard—his hands trembled—his eyes were full of fire.

As he ascended softly, taking three steps at a time, he met Ormiston, who, being well aware of the train of thought he had fired, was loitering near to watch the explosion. He paused, and the blood rushed to his brow at meeting even him at such a moment.

"Ha—whither goest thou?" he asked.

"To the tower of Black Agnes," replied Bothwell in a husky voice, while he staggered from his emotions, and the effects of the wine.

"Thou darest then at last to act like a man."

"Like a fiend, if my fate wills it! What may I not dare now, after all I have dared and done? But hark!" said the Earl, as a ghastly pallor overspread his face; "didst thou hear?"

"What?"

"That mournful cry!"

"By the mass! I heard only the skirl of a wild sea-maw."

"Hah!" said the Earl, through his clenched teeth; "comest thou from thy grave in yonder abbey church, to scare me from my purpose? Avaunt! thou

shalt see that I fear thee not, and thus will trample alike on the vengeance of heaven, the fears of hell, the stings of conscience, and the slavish laws of men!" and, brandishing his cresset, he sprang up the staircase and disappeared.

Black Ormiston, that colossal ruffian, drew his long sword, and retired into a shadowy part of the corridor to keep watch and ward. The storm still rang without, though its fury was lessened, and coldly the fitful moonlight gleamed upon the frothy waste of waters that boiled around the caverned rocks. It shone at times through the strong iron gratings of the staircase window, and glinted on the dark face, the keen eyes, and bushy mustaches of the watcher, who ever and anon put forth his head to listen.

Still the wind howled—the rain pattered and hissed at intervals, and the mews shrieked like evil spirits as they were swept away on the skirts of the hurrying blast; but, lo! there came a cry from the upper chambers of that strong Saxon tower, that gave the listening bravo a shock as of electricity.

A fainter succeeded, and a cold and sinister smile spread over the face of Ormiston. * * * * *

CHAPTER XIV.

HANS' PATIENCE IS REWARDED.

While shunn'd, obscured, or thwarted and exposed,
By friends abandon'd and by foes enclosed;
Thy guardian council softens every care,
To ease soothes anguish, and to hope despair.
Richard Savage.

The English pirate still lay in the offing at the mouth of the estuary, and honest Hans Knuber, who, like all the skippers of that time, was his own merchant and supercargo, dared not put to sea; and each fine sunny day, while the fair wind blew down the river from St. Margaret's Hope, he trod his little deck to and fro, with his hands stuffed into the pockets of his chocolate-coloured small-clothes, his Elsinore cap pulled well over his red eyebrows, and consoling himself by praying to St. Mungo (who once had voyaged in these waters), and by swearing many a round oath in guttural Norse at the obnoxious Englishman, whose broad lateen sails, dark brown at sunrise, and snow-white at sunset, were always visible,

as he cruised under the lee of the May, that beautiful isle of old Saint Adrian.

Meanwhile the sunny month of May approached, and when Hans thought of the good prices his cargo of wheat and malt would bring in the market of Kiobenhafen, his vexation increased hourly; and every morning he solemnly gave over the Englishman to the devil and the jormagundr, or great sea-snake, that lies coiled round the foot of the north pole, and makes the whirlpool of Lofoden by wagging its tail.

During this, by the strength of his constitution and the care of Martin Picauet, Konrad recovered strength daily. He shook off the torpor that weighed upon his spirit; and, while he endeavoured to efface the image of Anna from his memory, it was evident to Hans Knuber (and *he* was no subtle love casuist), that the prospect of returning to Norway and meeting her again, contributed more than all the skill of the queen's apothegar to make him a new man.

And though, at times, when bluff Hans would thump him between the shoulders, and drink to Anna's health and his success, in their native dricka or brown Scottish beer, he was wont earnestly to assert, that were she queen of all Scandinavia, from the Naze of Norway to the Isles of Lofoden, he could not, and would not, wed her, after all that had passed; and he felt so: for now, deadened a little by absence, by bitter recollection, and the excess of his first despair, there was at times something of indignation mingled with his memory of her. At others, all his old tenderness would painfully revive, and come gushing back like a flood upon his heart; and she was then remembered only as the Anna of his boyhood's days—the Anna of that early love, which had first been told in whispers and confusion among the druid groves of Aggerhuis.

From time to time he heard tidings of Bothwell's daring deeds, but all, of course, distorted or discoloured by the malevolence of the narrators; for in that early age, when newspapers were unknown, the only means of intelligence were the "common bruit," as rumour was named; and the simple Norseman, who knew nothing of statecraft, of lawless ambition, the lust of power, and the boldness of such a spirit as Bothwell, heard with astonishment how he had slain the king of the land, by blowing his palace, with all his court and attendants, to the number of thousands, his guards, grooms, and horses, into the air; how he had seized the queen and crown; and how he had strangled the young prince before her eyes, because she had refused to marry him; and of how he had imprisoned her in chains in a dark dungeon, where her food was bread and black beer; and, assuming the sceptre, had seated himself on the throne. Poor Hans trembled for his cargo of malt when he heard of these terrible passages, prayed to St. Tradewell of Orkney, and wished himself safe at home.

He and Konrad knew not how common was the stratagem of seizing the Scottish sovereign in those days, and that the seizure of Mary had twice before

been attempted—once by the old Earl of Huntly, and once by her brother Moray, on his rebellion in 1565; and consequently, had Mary viewed Bothwell with any favour, there had been no necessity for his wooing her at the head of a thousand horse.

Meanwhile, Hans waited anxiously the arrival of those French galleys, which at times, under the pennon of the Chevalier de Villaignon, made their appearance in the Scottish firth—for Scotland had then but six or eight ships for military purposes, under the pennons of David Wood, Sir Edmund Blackadder, Thomas Dixon, and Edward Robertson, who (though Buchanan styles them "pirates of known rapacity") were Scottish sea-officers, and vassals of the Lord High Admiral. These ships were then in the Western seas; thus, the pirate of Hull, which was the bane of Hans' existence, lay there unmolested, like a wolf waiting for his prey, and the fishers from the New haven daily brought terrible accounts of her crew; how they were plundering the coast about Crail—how they cruised with a man hanging at each yard-arm—how her poop lanterns were human skulls—and the skipper was said to be the devil himself; for he came ashore every night, not in his jolly-boat, like any other respectable shipman, but in his broad beaver inverted on the water, to attend the witches of Pittenweem, who held the meeting in the weem, or great cavern, below St. Mary's priory; and thus poor Hans was denied the hope of escaping even in the night, by creeping along the shore, under the brows of Kincraigie and Elie-ness on the north, or by the broad and beautiful bay of Preston on the south; and so the time wore on—the month of May was passing—and still the *Skottefruin* of Bergen lay off the New haven, with her canvass bent, her brown sides and curved deck blistering in the summer sun.

At last there came tidings that the high admiral was about to put to sea, and that five Scottish frigates were anchored near his castle of Dunbar. Upon this, the pirate disappeared, and Hans Knuber rubbed his eyes again and again, one morning, to assure himself that the offing was clear. Then, impatient to bend his course homeward, he took immediate advantage of the gentle summer breeze that blew from the western hills, and spread his canvass on a beautiful morning in May—though a Friday, of all days in the week, by ancient superstition, the most unpropitious for putting to sea.

Then, with a heart that grew lighter as the Scottish mountains lessened in the distance, Konrad hailed the blue sky and the dark ocean; for he knew that, when land again was visible, it would be the pine-covered hills and thunder-riven

cliffs of his native Norway.

CHAPTER XV.

THE LEGEND OF ST. MUNGO.

A famous sanct St. Mungo was,
And ane cantye carle was he;
He drank o ye Molendinar burne,
Quhan he oouldna better prie!
Ballad.

"Mass!" said Hans Knuber to Konrad, as they walked to and fro one day on the lee side of his quarter-deck; "we have voyaged prosperously. I knew I should not implore the aid of good St. Mungo for nought; though, poor man! his work was like our anchorage in yonder firth—like to have no end."

"Thou seemest ever in a rare mood now, Hans;" replied Konrad; "but what made St. Mungo thy particular patron, and how came it that the work of so holy a man was never done?"

"Why, Master Konrad, 'tis a long story, which I heard from a certain old friar when my crayer was once discharging her cargo at the ancient Stockwell bridge of Glasgow. I care not if I tell it thee to wile away an hour or so; so here cometh like a rope out of the coil, with a wanion on it!—the story I mean, not the saint—the Lord forbid! It happened somewhere about the time that Erick Blodiaxe was among us here in Norway—the year 530—a long time ago, Master Konrad."

We here present the legend, not in the words of honest Hans, but as we find it in the MSS. of Magister Absalom, who has entitled it,

The Legend of St. Mungo.

In the days when Eugene III. was king of Scotland, and Lothus ruled the race of the Picts, there was a certain holy woman who dwelt in a cavern on the shore of the river Forth, above where the ruins of the Roman invaders overlooked the mouth of the Carron.

The place was then all desolate, and the land was covered with wood from

the dark summit of the distant rock of Stirling, where there frowned the fragments of a Roman tower, to the yellow shore of the river, where the rippling waves rolled up in all their echoing loneliness.

The only traces of men near her dwelling were a circle of stones—large and upright; in the centre lay one whereon the Druids of other times, on the first day of every ninth year, had sacrificed to Odin a foeman taken in battle; and to that mysterious circle, there yet came more than one white-bearded believer in his wild pagan faith to adore the morning sun, as he arose from his bed in the shining eastern sea. Where a busy town now stands, a few squalid huts, built of turf, and mud, and bows freshly torn from the pine woods, straggled up the rough ascent; and among them grazed a herd of wild cattle, watched by wilder-looking men, half naked and half clad in skins and coats of jointed mail, armed with bows and clubs, long reedy spears, and shields of black bull's hide; while their hair, long, yellow, and uncombed, flowed like horse-manes from beneath their caps of steel.

These were Scottish warriors, who had come on a hunting expedition from their native wilds in the west of Braidalbyn, to drive the deer in the woods of the Pictish race; for Lothus the Just was then at peace with Eugene.

The Scottish prince had wearied of hunting; he had tarried many days among the vast forests that bordered on Bodoria, and more than a hundred noble stags, and a score of the snow-white bulls of Caledonia, had fallen beneath the spears of his huntsmen.

It chanced that on Beltane morning, a beautiful white deer, scared from the mountains by the beal-fires that were lit on their summits, passed the young king, as slowly, dreamily, and alone, he rode along the sandy shore of that broad river, whose glassy surface had been unploughed by a keel since the galleys of Rome had, a hundred years before, quitted, and for ever, their now desolate harbours at Alauna and Alterva. It bounded close by him, lightly and gracefully as a spirit, and disappeared into a gloomy weem or cavern, up to the mouth of which the white-edged waves were rolling.

He sprang from his horse, threw its bridle, which was massive with brazen ornaments, over the branch of a tree, and, grasping his short hunting-spear, advanced fearlessly into the cavern; but he had not gone ten paces before his steps were arrested, and, removing his steel cap, which was encircled by the rude representation of an ancient diadem, he knelt before St. Thena, the recluse of that desert, and as yet nameless, solitude.

No man knew from whence St. Thena came; she was the daughter of a distant race, and her beauty, which was very great, had doubtless made her seek the wilderness, that there, separated from the temptations of the world, she might dedicate her days to God. For years her food had been barley bread and a few

wild-beans, to which, in times of great scarcity, she added a little milk, and now and then a small fish, when the receding waves left it on the shore near her cavern. Her prayer was continual, and her tears often flowed for the benighted and still Pagan state of many of her countrymen. She was good and gentle, and her face, which was seldom seen (for, like her form, it was enveloped in her long sackcloth garment), was said to be one of wondrous beauty. Many feared but more loved her; and the wild huntsmen, and wilder warriors, when they tracked either the foe or the red deer, through the vast woods or along the desert shores of that far-winding river, avoided to disturb the recluse, and blessed her peaceful life, after their own rude fashion.

The fame of her virtue spread abroad; and through all the land of King Lothus, from the waters of the Tay to those of the Abios, among the northern Saxons, she became known for the austerity of her fasts and other mortifications. Some averred she was the daughter of a king, and that, like the blessed St. Ebba, she had fled to avoid an evil marriage; others, that she was an angel, for the man who obtained even a glimpse of her figure, with its floating garments, never bent the bow nor threw the net in vain that day.

She stood with one arm around the neck of the deer, to protect it from the intruder; that arm was bare to the elbow, and its whiteness was not surpassed by the snowy coat of the fugitive. Her face was concealed by the overshadowing hood; a rosy little mouth and one long ringlet of golden hair were visible. The young king saw with pain, that her tender feet had no protection from the flinty floor of the cavern—that flinty floor whereon she knelt daily, before a rough wooden cross, which St. Serf of Lochleven had fashioned for her with his own holy hands.

Timidly she gazed on the young Scottish king, whose strong and graceful form was clad in a close-fitting hauberk of steel scales, and a tunic of bright-coloured breacan, that reached to his knees, which were bare; his sandals were covered with plates of polished brass, and were plaited saltirewise to within six inches of his tunic. A crimson mantle hung from his left shoulder, and on his right were his bow, fashioned of yew from the forest of Glenure, and his arrows, feathered from the wings of the swift eagles of Lochtreig.

"Warrior!" said the Recluse, "spare me this deer; it is the only living thing that clings to me, or to which my heart yearns in this wilderness."

"It is spared," replied the huntsman, lowering the bright point of his spear; "but whence is it, gentle voice, that so much beauty and goodness are hidden from the world; and that one so fair, so young, and so queen-like, is vowed to this life of austerity and seclusion."

"Because my heart told me it was my vocation; and now, warrior, I pray you to leave me, for I may not, and must not hold converse with men."

”Saint Thena, thou seest that I know thee,” replied the young man gently; ”I am Eugene, the King of the fierce Scottish tribes that dwell beyond the Grampians. Even there, among these distant mountains, we have heard of thy holiness and piety; and I will bless the hour that led me to thy cavern, for I have looked on a form that will never be forgotten.”

”And, king, what seekest thou here among these woods?”

”The white bull with its eyes of fire, and the great stags and wild elks of this rich land of the Cruitnich; but say, gentle Thena, may I not come again to have thy blessing ere I return to the wilds and wars of my own dark mountains in the land of the west?”

The saint paused, and the young king saw that her bosom heaved. Another long golden tress fell from her dark hood, and he could perceive, when her lips unclosed, that her teeth were white as the pearls of his diadem; again he urged, for an unholy curiosity burned within him, and the poor Recluse replied,—

”Why should I shun thee? come, yes, and I shall bless thee; go, and I shall bless thee likewise. God’s will be done! I am armed against temptation; but, O king! I am not above the tongue of reproach.”

”Art thou not Thena, the saint, and the holy one?” replied the young king; and, fearful lest she should retract her promise, he withdrew, and, still more slowly and thoughtfully than before, pursued his way by the echoing strand to the camp, where his bare-kneed Dalriads were stretched on the grassy sward, with their bucklers cast aside and bows unstrung, wiling away the sunny hours with bowls of blaedium, while the harpers sang of the wars of Fingal of Selma, and Fergus the son of Erc.

But a spell had fallen upon the Recluse, and after the king was gone, his voice seemed to linger in her ear, and his stately form was still before her; with his shining hauberk, and his bright curling locks, that glittered in the sunlight.

The next day’s eve was declining.

The sun was setting, like a circle of flame, behind the western hills; the waters of Bodoria rolled in light, and the bright green leaves of its pathless shores were glittering with the early dew, when the king, with a bugle in his baldrick, and a spear in his hand, again approached the cavern of Thena. He was alone and unattended, save by his favourite dog; one of those dark-eyed and deep-chested hounds of Albyn, rough, shaggy, and gigantic, like the Bran of other days.

He entered softly. The saint was at prayer, and she knelt on the bare step of her altar, which was a fragment of the living rock; a skull, thrown by the waves upon the shore, was placed thereon; and above it stood the cross of St. Serf. The white deer, which was asleep on the Recluse’s bed of dry leaves, sprang up on the stranger’s entrance, and cowered beside her.

Eugene paused till her orisons were over, and gazed the while with won-

der. Her hood had fallen back, and her long flowing hair, which steel had never touched, fell in luxuriance to her knees. Reflected from the glassy waters of the river, a ray of the setting sun entered the cavern; her tresses shone in light, and she seemed something ethereal, for they glittered like a halo of glory around her. The young king was intoxicated; and a deep sigh escaped him.

It startled the Recluse, and as she turned, a glow of shame, perhaps of anger, overspread her beautiful countenance.

The king implored her forgiveness.

And the gentle St. Thena forgave him; and in token, gave him a ring which she had that morning found upon the shore; and the king vowed to offer up a prayer for the donor, whenever he looked upon it.

Again and again the young king came to visit the fair inmate of that lonely cavern. After a time she ceased to chide his visits; and though she wept and prayed after his departure, and vowed to fly from him into the wild-woods that covered the howe of the Lowland Ross, she still lingered; and thus, day by day, the spell closed around her, and, day by day, the king came to lay the unwished for, and unrequested, spoils of the chase at her feet, until St. Thena learned to welcome him with smiles, to wreathe her ringlets with her white fingers, to long for evening, and to watch the fading sunlight as it died on the distant sea—yea, to watch it with impatience, but not, as in other days, for the hour of evening prayer.

It was surely a snare of the evil one to throw a handsome and heedless young prince in the path of this poor recluse, who had neither the power of St. Dunstan, when the fell spirit came to him in his cell at Glastonbury, nor the virtue of St. Anthony, when he tempted him so sorely in the old sepulchre wherein he dwelt at Como. Nothing short of a blessed miracle could have saved her, and no miracle was wrought.

Her good angel covered his face with his wings, and St. Thena fell, as her mother Eve had fallen before her.....

On his caparisoned horse, with all the bells of its bridle jangling, the wicked young king rode merrily along the sandy shore of the shining river; and the red eyes of his great hound sparkled when he hallooed to the dun deer, that on the distant ridges were seen against the western sky, for it was evening now. Thus merrily King Eugene sought the camp where his warrior huntsmen, impatient at his tarrying so long in the land of the wheat-eaters, muttered under their thick beards that waved in the rising wind, and pointed to the blue peak of the distant Benlomond, that looked down on the lake, with all its wooded isles—the lake where the fish swam without fins, the waves rolled without wind, and the fairies dwelt on a floating islet.

St. Thena was very sad.

A deep grief and a sore remorse fell upon her; she confessed her errors to good St. Serf, who dwelt on an isle of the lonely Leven, and the saint blessed and absolved her, because she had sinned and repented. Daily she prayed—yea, hourly—for the forgiveness of God; that the youth might return no more; and, though he had seduced her from her vows to heaven, that his presence might not be permitted to disturb her sincere repentance.

But he came not; war had broken out on the western hills of Caledonia, and, leaguing with Dovenald of Athole, Arthur, the son of Uther Pendragon, was coming with his white-mantled Britons against the bare-knee'd Dalreudini; and hastening to his home, where the seven towers of Josina look down on the mountains of Appin, King Eugene returned to St. Thena no more. Her remorse was bitter; but time, which cureth all things, brought no relief to her, for she found that she had become a mother; and there, unseen in that lonely cavern, gave birth to a boy—the son of a Scottish king; and when she laid him on her bed of soft leaves and dried grass, she thought of the little child Jesus, as he lay in the manger at Bethlehem, and thought herself happy, vowing the child to the service of God as an atonement for her own sin.

And, lo! it seemed to her as if, for a time, that the same star which shone above Bethlehem sparkled on the pure forehead of the sinless babe, and from that moment the heart of St. Thena rejoiced. All the mother gushed upon her troubled soul, and she would have worshipped the infant, for it was a miracle of beauty—and its feet and hands, they were so tiny and so rosy, she was never tired of kissing them, and bedewing them with her tears.

That night she felt happy, as, nestling beside her tame deer, the poor recluse hushed her babe to sleep, and covered its little form with her only garment, that it might not hear the wind mourning in those vast forests that overshadowed the shore, where the waves of the eternal sea were breaking in their loneliness.

I have said that Lothus was king of the land: he dwelt on the opposite shore, which he called Lothian, from himself. Now it chanced that a daughter of this king, attended by a train of maormars and ladies on horseback, came to visit St. Thena, the fame of whose holiness had spread from the rising to the setting sun. This princess, who was soon to be espoused by Eugene king of the Scots, was a proud and a wicked woman. St. Serf had recently converted her from Paganrie to the blessed faith; but her secret love yet lingered after the false gods of her fathers, and she still (as in her childhood) worshipped the crystal waters of a fountain that flowed at her father's palace gate; for her mother was of the tribe of the Lavernani, who dwelt on the banks of the Gryfe.

Dismounting with softness and fear near the cavern, the princess paused a moment to have her attire adjusted, that she might over-awe the poor recluse by the splendour of its aspect. According to the fashion of the Pictish virgins, her

flaxen hair flowed over her shoulders; her tunic was of scarlet cloth, and reached to her sandals; her mantle was of the yellow linen then woven by the distant Gauls, and it was fastened on her right shoulder by a shining beryl—an amulet of great virtue, which had been given to her mother by the last arch-druid of the Lavernani, and, filled with the vain thought of these things, she sought the presence of St. Thena. She was sleeping.

Softly the princess drew near, and, lo! she saw the babe that slept in the bosom of the recluse, and uttered a cry of spite and anger. St. Thena awoke, and, while her face reddened with modest shame, she raised one hand to shield the child, and the other in supplication.

"Hypocrite that thou art!" exclaimed the half Pagan princess, "is it for *this* that thou dwellest in caverns and lonely places, like the good druids of our forefathers! Truly it was wise of thee; for thy deeds require the cloak of darkness and obscurity. Ha!" she continued scornfully, seeing that the saint wept, "dost thou weep in contrition for thine abominable hypocrisy, or in terror of the punishment it so justly merits, and which I may mete out to thee? And is it to visit such as thee that I have endured so much in journeying through wild places, by pathless woods and rocky rivers? Ha! if such as thou art a priestess of the Christians' triple God, I say, welcome again be those of Him who rideth on the north wind, and whose dwelling-place is in yonder glorious sun, which we now see rising from his bed in the waters."

This imperious lady, as a mark of disgrace, then ordered the beautiful hair of St. Thena to be entirely cut off, and committed to the winds, that the birds might line their nests with it; and she further commanded her Pagan followers to place the poor recluse and her infant in a crazy little currach, or boat of wickerwork and deerskin, and commit them to the waters of the great river, that they might be borne to the distant sea.

The boat was old and decayed; it had been used in war, and flint arrows and spears had pierced its sides of skin. A human head and shoulders dried in the wind, and tanned with the bark of the oak-tree, ornamented its prow. Long ringlets of fair Saxon hair waved about its shrunken ears, and two clam-shells filled its hollow eyelids; it was a horrible and ghastly companion, and, when night came on, seemed like a demon of the sea, leading the fallen saint to destruction.

Endlong and sidelong, the sport of the waves and the current, the boat drifted down the broad Bodoria; the sun set behind the hills of the west, and its last rays faded away from the mountain peaks that look down on the valley of Dolour, and the waters of Sorrow and Care. The sky grew dark, and the shores grew darker; there were no stars, but the red sheet lightning gleamed afar off, revealing the rocky isles of the widening estuary. Still the boat floated on, darkly and silently; and, resigned to her fate, and pouring all her soul in prayer—but

prayer only for the poor infant that nestled in her bosom—St. Thena, overcome with weariness, after a time sank to sleep; and then, more than ever, did her good angel watch over her.

When she awoke, the sun had risen again; there was no motion; the little bark was still. Thena looked around her. The currach was fast, high and dry, upon a sandy beach; on one side, the broad and glassy river was flowing past; on the other, were the green and waving woods of Rosse.[*] An old man, with long flowing garments, and a beard of snow that floated in the passing wind, approached; and in his bent form, and the cross-staff on which he leant, she recognised St. Serf of the Isle, and hurried to meet him, and implore his blessing on her babe. Then the good man blessed it, and taking a little water from a limpid fountain that poured over a neighbouring rock, he marked its little forehead with the cross, and called the babe *Mungo*—a name which, he prophesied, would become famous in future times.

[*] Fife, so called as it lay between the Tay and Forth; hence *Kinross* and *Culross*, the head and back of Rosse.

And there, in that lonely place, where the fountain ran, the mother built a cell, where she dwelt in holiness, rearing her boy for the service of God; there she died in the odour of sanctity, and there she was interred; and above her grave her son built an oratory, which is called, even unto this day, by the burghers of Culross, the chapel of St. Mungo.

His mother's feast is the 18th of July, in the Scottish calendar.

Reared by St. Serf, and trained up in the way he was to pursue, the little boy, who imitated that man of God in all things, became, as he waxed older, a pattern of Christian humility and piety; and those hours which were not spent in labouring with his hands, that he might have food and raiment to bestow on the sick, the aged, and the poor, (for he called the poor the children of God,) he spent in prayer for the sins of men; and long after the blessed Serf had passed to the company of the saints, who are in heaven, the young man had waxed tall and strong, stately in figure and beautiful in face; but the fame of his goodness and sanctity exceeded even those of his pastor, until the simple people of the land, who knew not he was the son of their king, began to assert that his birth had been miraculous.

Now, after many days of deep meditation in the dark woods of Rosse, and of prayer at the shrine of his sainted mother, for her intercession and support, the young man took the staff of St. Serf, and set forth on a pilgrimage to convert

the benighted heathens of the south and west; for there were many still in Mercia and the land of the Deirii, who in their secret hearts worshipped fountains that sprung in lonely places, or made human sacrifices in the depths of forests, and lit Beltane fires on the lofty hills in honour of the rising sun; and so, moved by these things, St. Mungo gave the little he possessed to the poor, and, undeterred by the terrors of the journey, by the hostile tribes of savage men, and the equally savage denizens of the vast forests that covered the plains and mountains of Caledonia, the prowling wolves, the howling bulls, the grisly bears and ravenous boars, he went forth to teach and baptize, to convert and to save.

His under garment was sackcloth; his upper was the white skin of a sheep; his head had no other covering than his own fair hair, which curled upon his shoulders and mingled with his beard.

In that age there was no money in the land, save the old coins of the Roman invaders, which the women wore as amulets, and so the saint took no care for his sustenance. He had ever eternity before him; in the morning reflecting that he might not see the night, in the night reflecting that he might not see the morning. The acorns and the wild herbs of the forest were his food; a little water in the hollow of his hand quenched his thirst; and he regretted the time spent in these necessities, as so much taken from the service of his Master. He travelled throughout the whole isle of Britain, preaching, and taking no rest; hence cometh the old proverb—Like the work of St. Mungo, which never was done.

Now the fame of his preaching went far and wide, throughout the length and breadth of the land, till King Eugene in his distant castle of Dunolli, on the mountains of Midlorn, heard of the fame of St. Mungo, and dedicated to him an island in western Lochleven, which still bears his name, and it became the burial-place of the men of Glencoe, who name it *Eilan Mundh*, or the Island of St. Mungo. But Eugene knew not that the saint was his son, and as little did his queen, (with whom he lived in continual strife,) suppose that he was the same little boy, whom, with his mother, in that wicked moment of wrath and pride, she had committed to the waters of Bodoria; and tidings came that he was preaching and teaching the four gospels in the kingdom of Strathclyde, where he was daily bringing into the fold of God those red-haired Attacotti, who were said to be worshippers of fire and eaters of human flesh. He brought them to repentance and a horror of their ways; they levelled the stones of Loda, the altars of their wickedness, and destroyed the temples of their dreadful idols. He baptized them in thousands at a little stream that meandered through a plain to pour its waters in the Clyde.

To the saint it seemed that this was like the place where his mother lay; and there he built a bower among the alder-bushes, and rested for a time from his pious labours.

Now, about this time, it chanced that the ring which St. Thena had found upon the shore was the occasion of much discord between Eugene and his Pictish queen; for, having bestowed it upon her as a gift at Yule-tide, she had lost it, and thereby excited his jealousy. He swore by the *black stones of Iona*, the great oath of the Gael, that she should die a terrible death if the ring appeared not before the Beltane day; and, within three days of that time, the queen in great tribulation appeared at the bower on the Clyde, to seek the advice and consolation of St. Mungo; for she had not evilly bestowed the jewel, but had lost it, and knew not where or how; though she dreamt that a bird had flown away with it, and dropped it in the sea.

Though he had learned, from his mother's prayers, of the wrong this proud queen had done her, St. Mungo chid her not, but heard her story benignantly; and she told him in touching language of the king's wrath, and the value of the ring, for it had in it a pearl of great value: only two such were found in the Dee—one was in that trinket, and the other is at this hour in the Scottish diadem, where King Eugene placed it.

St. Mungo ordered one who stood near him to throw a baited line into the Clyde, and, lo! there was drawn forth a noble salmon, having in its mouth a beautiful ring. The queen knew it to be her own, and in a transport of joy she vowed to found there a cathedral church, in honour of God and St. Mungo, who should be first bishop of that see; and there, where the alder-bower had stood, the great lamp of the western tribes was founded and built, and the city that rose around was named Glasgow; but the spot was then, as the old Cistertian monk of Furness tells us, made pleasant by the shade of many a stately tree.

There, after preaching the gospel with St. David, and turning many away from Pelagianism, after converting all the northern Picts, and building an abbey at Culross, where his mother lay, St. Mungo, the first bishop of Glasgow, passed away to the company of the saints, on the 13th day of January, 603, having reached the miraculous age of a hundred and eighty-five years; and there, in his cathedral church, we may yet see his shrine, where many a miracle was wrought of old, when faith was strong in the land, and where the pious of other days gifted many a stone of wax for the candles at a daily mass for the repose of his soul.

In honour of St. Mungo we may to this hour see, in the arms of the great city he founded, the tree under which he built his bower, with his mass-bell hanging on a branch thereof; across its stem is the salmon with the ring of the Scottish queen in its mouth, and the bird that first bore it away has also a place on that armorial tree. Before the Reformation, St. Mungo's head, mitred, appeared in the dexter side of the shield; and on an escroll are the last words of that good man, which were a blessing upon the city and a prayer to God that in all future time Glasgow should *flourish*.

* * * * *

Such was the tale related by the old monk of Glasgow to Hans, who had no sooner concluded, than he drew a hand from his breeches pocket, and directed Konrad's attention to a low streak of blue that, on their lee-quarter, marked the distant Oyster-head of Denmark, and a shout of joy rang through the ship.

CHAPTER XVI.

MARY'S DESPAIR.

You never loved me.
And you are come to triumph o'er my sorrows,
To smile upon the ruin you have made;
To part——
Sheil.

We return to Dunbar.

The sun was rising from the sea, and redly its morning splendour shone upon the rock-built towers of old Dunbar, as they frowned upon the bright green ocean and its snow-white foam. The estuary of the Forth shone like gold in the glory of the east; fed by the streams from a thousand hills it there expanded to an ocean, and its broad bosom, dotted by fisher boats and by Flemish caravells, swept round its rocky isles in surf, and washed with tiny waves of silver the shells and pebbles that bordered its sandy margins—margins shaded by the summer woods of Fife and Lothian, and overlooked by many a green and many a purple peak.

One great window that lit the queen's apartment in the Agnes Tower, overlooked this beautiful prospect. It was open, and the morning breeze from the eastern sea blew freely upon Mary's pallid cheek, and lifted her dishevelled hair; she seemed very desolate and broken-hearted. She was reclining in a large velvet chair, in the shadow of one of the thick brocaded window curtains, which made the corner she occupied so dark, that to a pair of eyes which were observing her through a hole in the arras behind the high and canopied bed, little else was visible than her snow-white hands clasped before her, a jewel that sparkled in her unbound hair, a spangle or two that glittered on the stomacher of her disordered dress, or among the folds of her torn veil—that white and flowing veil, which had

won for her the romantic sobriquet of *la Reine Blanche*.

Her face was blistered by weeping; her lips were pale; she drooped her graceful head, and closed her blood-shot eyes, as if oppressed by an ocean of heavy thoughts. All that pride, energy, and indomitable courage which had sustained her unshaken amid a thousand scenes of outrage, insult, and sorrow, had now deserted her, laying her noble spirit prostrate; nothing but her gentle nature and woman softness remained behind. She was then, as she touchingly tells in one of her letters, "desolate of all council, and separated from all female attendance."

The very stupor of despair seemed to have settled upon her soul; she sat still—motionless as a statue, and nothing but the heaving of her bosom would have indicated that she lived. Yesterday she seemed so full of vivacity, so pure, so beautiful.

In this poor crushed being—this butterfly, formed only for the light and the sunshine of life—in this lonely and desolate woman, with her weeping eyes, her dishevelled hair, and torn dress, who could have recognised the same beautiful queen that shone so lately at Sebastian's hall, in all the pride of royalty; and a loveliness heightened to the utmost by magnificence of dress; and who, only five days before, had sat on the throne in the hall of the Scottish estates, with the crown of the Bruce on her brow, the St. Andrew sparkling on her bosom, and the sceptre of the Jameses in her hand, assenting to those laws by which we are still governed?

"Alas, for the Queen of Scotland and of France!" exclaims the old Magister Absalom; "Oh, for twenty knights of that good chivalry her grandsire led to Flodden, or of that glittering gendarmerie that many a time and oft had lowered their white pennons before her at the Tilts of the Tournelles, and on the Plains of Montmartre!"

A sound made her raise her head; the arras rose and fell, and Bothwell stood before her.

Shame crimsoned his brow, and confusion dimmed his eye; he felt compassion and remorse, together with the bitter conviction that he had gone too far to recede. The dreadful gulf between himself and other men was now wider than before; but he felt that to stand still was to sink into it and perish. He had yet to progress. He knew not how to address his victim. Her aspect filled him with pity, sorrow, and a horror of himself. He knew that he had irreparably ruined her honour, and destroyed her peace; and this was the woman he loved!

Strange it was, that now he felt himself alike attracted and repelled by her; but the necessity of soothing her compelled him to speak, and as policy ever supplied him with words, hurriedly, gently, and eloquently (for he too felt deeply, now when the storm of passion had died away), he endeavoured to console her;

to declare his contrition; his willingness to die as an atonement; and then, stung with remorse on witnessing the agony of her grief, he attempted to destroy himself with his own sword, and turned her despair into momentary terror, by inflicting on his own person a wound, from which the blood flowed freely.[*] Then he ventured to fold her in his arms, and to kiss her pale brow respectfully, assuring her again and again that she was now a thousand times dearer to him than ever. Then, sinking on his knees, he bowed down his head, and abjectly implored her pardon; but Mary remained silent, passive, speechless, cold as marble; and her situation seemed so hopeless, so wobegone, and irrelievable, that the Earl in despair knew not what more to urge. He received no answer, and his heart trembled between love, remorse for the past, and apprehension of the future. "Speak, dearest madam," said he; "for the mercy of Heaven, speak to me! Dost thou wish to leave Dunbar?"

[*] Whittaker.

"Yes!" replied Mary, rising with sudden energy, as if all her spirit had suddenly welled up in her breast. "Yes!" she continued, gathering up her dishevelled hair with her slender and trembling fingers. "My train!—my people!—summon them!—I will go"——

"Thou wilt go?" said the Earl, whose dark eyes shone with a sad and wild expression, "and where?"

"To Edinburgh."

"To denounce me to its purse-proud citizens—to proclaim me at the barrier gates and market cross of every Scottish burgh—at the court of every European king, to be what I am—what I shrink from contemplating. That I am a craven knight, a perjured peer, a rebel, and a ruffian! Ha, ha! No! hence shalt thou never go but with Bothwell at thy bridle rein, with his banner before, his knights around, and his spearmen behind thee. What has hurried me on, step by step, in the terrible career on which my destiny has driven me—from being the leader of the Scottish peers, esteemed in council as in battle, respected by mine equals, loved by my vassals, and feared by mine enemies—what hath made me, from being all this, a man whose name will perhaps be remembered in the land with reprobation, with curses, and with bitterness—what, but thy beauty, thy fatal beauty? Oh, wretched woman! a curse upon it, I say, for it hath been the cause of all! Fatal sorceress, thou still smilest upon me with scorn. In undoing thee, I have perhaps but undone myself; though from this time our fates and lives are entwined together; for, bethink thee, for very dread of what may ensue, for very

shame, and for the reparation of thine own honour, thou canst not destroy me. Yet can I read in thine eye, that thou hast visions of the dungeon, the block, the axe, the dismembered limbs, and the severed head of Bothwell, spiked on yonder city cross to welter in the midnight dew, and broil in the noonday sun—hah!"

And, rendered half furious by the picture his fancy conjured up, he gave her a push, so violent that she sank down on her knees, trembling and in tears.

Suddenly she arose again to her full height, her dark eyes flashing, and her proud nostrils appearing almost to dilate with the anger that curled her beautiful lip; she gave him one full, bright glance of reproach and anger, as she attempted to sweep from his presence; but the Earl firmly held her back, and, aware of the futility of attempting to pacify her at present, retired abruptly, leaving her still unattended, to sorrow and to tears.

Sir James Melville, who, as we have elsewhere stated, had been expelled that morning from Dunbar, relates that Bothwell's fury compelled her every day to weep—that she would have left him, but dared not—and that she would have *destroyed herself*, could she have found a knife or dagger; but a strict watch was kept over all her actions.

And thus passed twelve long and weary days, during which no attempt was made by her nobles, her knights, or her people, to relieve her. Each man gossiped to his neighbour of the unco' doings at Dunbar—citizens stared stupidly at each other, and contented themselves by marvelling sorely where all these startling events were likely to end.

So much of this part of our story belongs to the chronicles of the time, that it must be glanced at briefly, that we may hasten to the portion involving the fate of Konrad, and more particularly of the great Earl himself.

How he conducted Mary to Edinburgh, guarded by 1200 spearmen on horseback, and compelled her to appear in presence of the new chancellor and the nobles, and there to declare herself at full liberty—how he had the dukedom of Orkney, a marquisate, and other titles, conferred upon himself—and how he caused the banns of marriage between Mary and himself to be proclaimed in the great church of St. Giles, while she remained a captive in the castle of Edinburgh, which was garrisoned by his own vassals, and commanded by Sir James Balfour, the holder of the bond of blood, the brother of the Lord of Noltland, and of Robert Balfour, proprietor of the lonely house of the Kirk-of-Field—are known to every historical reader.

Still Mary withheld her consent to the marriage, for which the impetuous Earl made every preparation with determined deliberation.

A woman—a widow—a catholic—without a husband—she could never have governed Protestant Scotland, crowded as it was with rapacious peers and turbulent serfs, inured to blood and blows; and now, after all that had occurred at

Dunbar, and after being so completely abandoned by her people to Bothwell's mercy for twelve weary days, no foreign prince, no Scottish noble or gentleman of honour, and indeed no man, save he who had wronged her, would seek her hand. She had but two misfortunes to choose between; on one hand to lose her crown, her liberty, perhaps her life; on the other, to accept of Bothwell, whom (though she never loved, and now abhorred,) she knew to be devoted to her, and as crafty as he was gallant and bold; and might, if he chose, wrest the sceptre from her grasp; for, by the number of his vassals, and the strength of his fortresses, he was one of Scotland's most powerful peers. Should she wed him, acquitted as he had been by the peers and prelates of the crime of which he had been charged, and recommended by these same reverend prelates and statecrafty peers, with her brother at their head, to her earnest and favourable notice, a new dawn might shine upon her gloomy fortune. She knew that he had made every preparation for their public nuptials; and that *bongré malgré* she must wed, but still she withheld her consent until the very night before, and then, but not till the fatal promise was given.

In that wide and gloomy flood of desperation through which she struggled, her destroyer was the last plank to whom she could cling; and, abhorrent as he was to her now, she knew that he loved her deeply, and that sad, and terrible, and guilty, were the ties which bound them together, and would link their names in one to the latest posterity.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE BRIDAL AT BELTANE.

Slowly at length with no consenting will,
And eyes averse, she stretch'd her beauteous hand,
To that detested bridegroom, and received
The nuptial blessing, to her anguish'd heart,
Worse than a malediction. Then burst forth
Grief impotent.
Attila, King of the Huns.

Now came sweet May with its flowers and sunshine. Yellow buttercups sprinkled with gold the sides of Arthur's seat, and the blue hyacinth and the mountain-

daisy unfolded their petals on the steep slopes of Salisbury. The mavis and the merle sang merrily in the abbey orchards and old primeval oaks that shaded the grey walls of Holyrood; and sheltered by the thorn hedges that, in its ancient garden, grew like thick and impervious ramparts, the flowers of summer that Mary loved so well, were all, like herself, in the noon of their beauty and fragrance.

And now came Beltane-eve, when this soft season of sunshine and perfume was welcomed by those ancient merry-makings of which we read in Polydore Virgil, and which were a remnant of those joyous rites offered to the Flora of the Romans, and the great fire-god of the Scandinavians and the Celtæ—when the stern and mysterious Druids of Emona and Iona collected the dew of the morning, and sprinkled it on the fair-haired savages of Caledonia, as they blessed them in the name of the god of fire—the Beal of Scandinavia, and the Baal of the Moabites and Chaldeans.

Blooming Beltane came, but not as of old; for there was no maypole on the burgh links, or at the abbey-cross, and no queen of the May or stout Robin Hude to receive the homage of happy hearts; for the thunders of the reformed clergy had gone forth like a chill over the land, and the same iron laws that prevented the poor "papist" from praying before the symbol of his redemption, punished the merry for dancing round a garlanded tree.

Yet there were some remnants of other days that could not be repressed; and fires of straw were lit in the yard of many a castle and homestead, through which, as a charm against witchcraft, all the cattle were driven, amid furious fun and shouts of laughter; while the bluff laird regaled his vassals, and the bonneted farmer his sun-burned hinds, on pease-bannocks and nut-brown ale. Every old woman still marked her Beltane-bannock with the cross of life and the cipher of death, and covering it with a mixture of meal, milk and eggs, threw two pieces over her left shoulder at sunrise, saying as she did so—

"*This* for the mist and storm,
To spare our grass and corn;
This for the eagle and gled,
To spare the lamb and kid."

Door-lintels were still decorated with twigs of rowan-tree tied crosswise with red thread; and though the idolatrous Beltane-fire blazed on the summits of the Calton and Blackford, (as on St. Margaret's day they do still on those of Dairy in Ayrshire,) there was not the same jollity in the land; for as a mist from the ocean blights the ripening corn, so had the morose influence of the new clergy cast a gloom upon the temper, the manners, and the habits of the people—a gloom that is only now fading away, though its shadow still lingers in the rural valleys of

the south and west.

But there is much to relate, and we must be brief.

Encompassed by the intrigues of the Earl, surrounded by his creatures, and overwhelmed by the terrible situation in which she found herself, at midnight Mary consented to become his bride, and at four o'clock next morning he led her into the great hall of Holyrood, where one of his minions, Adam Bothwell, the Protestant Bishop of Orkney—(his new dukedom)—together with Craig, the colleague of Knox, prepared to officiate.

Mary was attired in her widow-weeds of sable velvet, without other ornament than a few diamonds, that sparkled on her stomacher, and in her ear-rings. Cold, placid, still, and thoughtful, there were signs of suffering and sorrow on her pure and open brow, and in her deep, dark, melancholy eyes, and there was a nun-like solemnity in her beautiful face, that touched the heart of Bothwell with more, perhaps, of pity than love.

She seemed a changed and miserable woman.

A sprig of rosemary and a lily were in her hand; the first, because of the old superstition that it was necessary at a wedding as denoting love and truth; the second, because the month was that of St. Mary, and the lily is the flower of the Virgin. Mary Stuart could not forget these little things, though she accepted of a Protestant ritual because her own Church is averse to second marriages.

Day was breaking in the distant east, and coldly the dull grey twilight struggled with the lamps and wax candles that illuminated the long and ancient hall of the palace, from the walls of which the grim visage of many an antique king, and many a solemn prelate, seemed to stare starkly and desolately on that sombre bridal group, on Bothwell's magnificent costume, sparkling with precious stones, on tall Ormiston, in his half military and half gala costume, and a crowd of adherents of the house of Hepburn, whose dresses of velvet and satin, enriched with embroidery and precious stones, fluttering mantles, waving feathers, glittering spurs, and daggers, filled up the background.

When Mary's hand touched his, the Earl found it cold as death: it trembled. He thought of Darnley's quivering throat on that terrible night, and a thrill shot through his heart.....

The ceremony was over, and Bothwell led forth that high-born and beautiful bride, to win whom he had dared and done so much.

For that hour he had perilled every thing in this world, and the hour had come, but there was not in his heart that fierce triumph—that exultation and joy, he had so long anticipated. A deadly coldness had succeeded, and there was a clamorous anxiety in his breast as he looked forward to the future.

"Mary, star of heaven, and mother of God," prayed the poor queen, kissing the lily, as they descended the gloomy stone staircase of the Albany Tower; "in-

tercede for me, that I may be forgiven this dark sacrilege in the month so solemnly dedicated to thee!" for, according to the ancient usage, it is still ominous to wed in the month of May—or *Mary.* Her piety was deep and fervent; when very young she had wished to assume the veil, that she might dwell with her aunt, the Prioress of Rheims; happy would it have been for her had she done so; and full upon her heart came back the first pious wish in that hour of humiliation and evil.

No pageants or rejoicings marked the ill-omened bridal; not a bell was rung, nor a cannon fired, and gloomily and in silence the few loiterers who were abroad at that early hour, or had never been a-bed, greeted their sovereign, and that presumptuous peer who had so determinedly espoused her.

That dawn, to Mary, was but the opening of another chapter in her life of misery and tears.

In one month from that day, Bothwell, instead of seating himself upon the Scottish throne, and making Black Hob an Earl, found all his stupendous projects fade away, like mist in the sunshine, and saw himself a homeless fugitive, cast, like a weed, upon the ocean of events.

The general, but somewhat curious indignation this marriage excited among those nobles who had *urged it* (having never had any other object in view than the gratification of their own greed and ambition), and their armed confederation against Bothwell, soon followed, for they accused him of intending to destroy the young prince, who was kept at Stirling by the Countess of Mar, and whom ostensibly they rose in arms to defend.

On this measure he was frequently urged by Black Hob.

"Cock and pie!" that worthy would frequently exclaim; "were this young cub once strangled *too*, thou mightst be king of broad Scotland, and I a belted earl."

"Tempter, begone!" replied the Earl, grasping his poniard; "far enough hast thou driven me on this desperate career—but another whisper of this, and thou diest!"

The armed combination soon made the Earl and his knights rush to arms; and, of all who followed his banner, there were none who hailed the approaching civil war with greater ardour than Ormiston and Bolton. The first, because, by a long career of profligacy, he had utterly ruined an ancient patrimony; the second, with a stern joy, because he was reckless, tired of life, and longing only for an honourable death, that in the oblivion of the grave he might for ever forget Mariette, and that remorse which rendered him miserable.

But Mary's surrender to the peers, and Bothwell's flight, frustrated their hopes for a time.

On the hill of Carberry, within view of the adverse lines, Mary and the Earl were parted to meet no more; and it is recorded that he bade her adieu with more

sincerity of sorrow than might have been expected in one so long hardened by private and political profligacy.

"Farewell to thee, Lord Earl!" said the Queen kindly, for she was ever gentle; "nathless all that hath passed, Mary Stuart can still with kindness say farewell, and God attend thee."

"Farewell to your grace!" replied the Earl, as he kissed her hand with tenderness. "Adieu, Mary! thou who hast been the light, the hope, the pole-star of my life, and whom, more than that life, I have held dear. A long good-night to thee, and all the visions my ambition so vainly pictured, and so ruthlessly attempted to grasp. I go; but, while life remains, I will bear in sad remembrance thy goodness, thy beauty, and thy wrongs. I go—to exile and despair!"

And turning his horse's head, attended only by Ormiston and Bolton, he galloped down the hill to his castle of Dunbar, never once daring to look back towards that fair being whom a reverse of fortune had delivered to his enemies; and, save a message she sent to Denmark on her escape from Lochleven, never once from that hour did the name of Bothwell sully the lips of Mary. In one week from that day he was a pirate among the Isles of Orkney, while Mary was a captive in the hands of the confederates, and led through the streets of her own capital, where—

"Around her numberless the rabble flow'd,
Shouldering each other, crowding for view,
Gaping and gazing, taunting and reviling;
Some pitying; but those, alas! how few.
The most, such iron hearts we are, and such
The base barbarity of human kind,
With insolence and loud reproach pursued her,
Hooting and railing, and with villanous hands
Gathering the filth from out the common ways
To hurl it on her head."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE WHIRLPOOL.

On Norway's shore the widowit dame
May wash the rocks with tears;

May long, long look o'er the shipless seas
Before her mate appears.

Tossed by adverse winds in the German sea, the labouring crayer of Hans Knuber, after several weeks (during which he became more and more convinced that Nippen, the spirit of evil, and the demons of the waves and wind, were in league against him), made a haven in the bleak isles of Shetland, where they found those uddallers, who inhabited the rude round towers and strong houses on the bluffs and promontories that overhung the ocean, all on the alert; for tidings were abroad that the great Earl of Bothwell, now a fugitive and a wanderer upon the face of the deep, in the madness and impotence of his wrath against his enemies, was spreading devastation and dismay among the northern isles.

After suffering a severe repulse at the Orcadian capital from the cannon of his old ally, Sir Gilbert Balfour of Noltland, he poured his fury upon the stray vessels he met in firth and bay, giving the poor hamlets of these half-desolate coasts to the flames, storming the fortlets of their lords, and, like a wild vikingr of old, spreading terror wherever his banner was unfurled.

Hans Knuber trembled again for his cargo of malt and beer when he heard of these terrible doings, and without other delay than that caused by procuring fresh water from a certain gifted well among those dreary hills that overlooked the sound of Balta, he bore away for the Skager Rack; but, notwithstanding every exertion of seamanship, whistling most perseveringly for fair winds, and sprinkling salt on the sea to lay the foul, the middle of June arrived before he prepared to enter the fiord of Christiana, and ere Konrad saw the shore of his native province rising from the dark blue water, and hailed those peaks, known as the hills of Paradise, that encircle the sea, arise before him with all their echoing woods and snow-white cataracts.

But there even, in their native seas, the fame and terror of the outlawed Earl had gone before them; and many a dismasted and many a shattered hull, with bloodstained decks and broken hatches, rolling on the Skager Back or stranded on the rocks of the fiord, attested the recklessness of that desperate noble and his followers, who were now at war with all mankind.

"I pray to Heaven we may meet this bold marauder, now that our keel is ploughing our own waters," said Konrad, whose old Norwegian spirit flashed up in his bosom at the sight of his native hills. "Would I had a score of my old crossbowmen that I left behind me at Bergen, and thou with thy two culverins"——

"St. Olaf forefend!" rejoined Hans, hastily hitching up his wide chocolate-coloured inexpressibles, as he thought of his investment in wheat and malt and

tanned leather, and the risk they would run. "I would I were safe under the batteries of our old castle of Bergen, where, please Heaven and honest Nippen, I will drop my anchor to-night. And now, Master Konrad, that once again we are in sight of *Gamle Norgé*, how meanest thou to shape thy course, and keep to the windward of misfortune? Dost thou steer for the Elbe or the Weser? There the Lubeckers and Holsteiners are every day playing at ding-dong with arquebuse and caliver."

"Thou askest, Hans, what I scarcely know how to answer. My band of crossbowmen will, of course, be still at Bergen, but the king, doubtless, will have given them another captain. Sir Erick is in his grave; and Anna, Heaven only knows where. I have nothing now to tie me to the spot I love so well," he continued, sighing, "but many sad and bitter memories, which are better committed to oblivion; so, as thou sayest, I will even wend me to the Elbe, and there follow the fortunes of the war."

"Then be it so: I can give thee a letter to Arnold Heidhammer, a certain burgomaster, which may avail thee much; and if a hundred rose nobles will be of service, thou mayest have them. For this cargo, above which we are now treading—But, ho! yonder is a sail that beareth towards us somewhat suspiciously. St. Olaf! but she shot round that promontory like a sea-gull!"

Hans sprang upon one of the culverins Konrad had referred to, and, shading his eyes with his hand (for his fur cap was minus a peak, and there were then no telescopes), he peered intently at the stranger.

"Friend Hans, what dost thou make her out to be?" asked Konrad, whose heart beat strangely.

"A great frigate, galley rigged—with ten culverins a-side—crossbows on her forecastle—and hackbuts on her poop; full of men, too—see how many helmets are glinting in the sunshine!"

The shore was five or six miles distant. The noonday sun shone joyously on the bright blue sea, and full upon the snow-white canvass of the approaching vessel, which was bellying in the land breeze, above the tier of brass-mouthed culverins that peered from the red port-holes of the bow, waist, and her towering poop and forecastle, which were covered with a profusion of heraldic and symbolical carving and gilding. Her masts were each composed of two tall spars, having four large square sails; she had ponderous basketed tops and poop-lanterns—a great square sprit-sail, under which the water that boiled against her bow was flashing, as it wreathed and foamed in the light of the meridian sun, and bubbled under the counters of her towering stern.

Several men in armour were visible above the gunnel, and their pikes glinted as she approached, rolling over the long waves; and there was one whose suit of polished steel shone like silver, as he stood on the lofty poop.

She was still above half a mile distant, and Hans, who liked not her appearance (for he had a mortal aversion to every thing like cannon, or coats-of-mail, on board ship) crowded all sail, and stood away, right up the Fiord. Upon this a red flash broke from the tall forecastle of the stranger—a wreath of white smoke curled aloft through her thick rattlins and white canvass, and a stone bullet, that whistled over the water, cut Hans' foreyard in the slings, and brought a ruin of splintered wood, and rope, and fluttering canvass, down upon his deck.

Deprived of her head-sails, the crayer immediately proved unmanageable; and the stranger, spreading his broad canvass more fully to the breeze, soon sheered ahead, and backing his fore-yard with an air of considerable seamanship, lay too across the bows of the *Skottefruin*.

Poor Hans now with dismay beheld a great foreign banner displayed; but though he knew it not, Konrad immediately recognised the cheverons and lions of Bothwell, and he perceived that the figure on the bow was the Earl's coroneted crest, a white horse's-head, with a gilded bridle; and one glance at the lofty sides, the grim cannon tier, and gigantic poop of the Scottish frigate, and her gunnels lined by pikemen and arquebusiers in their steel caps and coats-of-mail, sufficed to shew him that he was again completely in the power of his ancient enemy; though by what miracle he, who, when they left the Forth, seemed to have all Scotland prostrate under his hand, should thus again be a cruiser in the Scandinavian seas, he could not comprehend.

A small boat was lowered with a plash into the water; a tall man in dark armour, whose weight nearly overset it, dropped into it, and six seamen, armed with whingers and jedwood axes, followed, and immediately pushed off towards the vessel of the terrified Norwegian skipper, who stood as usual with his hands stuffed into his chocolate-coloured breeches, his Elsinore cap pulled over his bushy brows, his teeth set hard, and desperation in his eyes, viewing the approach of this armed and unknown enemy.

The dark knight put a foot on one of the forechain-plates, grasped the rattlins, and vaulted on board with singular agility, considering the bulk of his frame and the weight of his armour.

"Cock and pie!" he exclaimed, as he threw up his visor, and recognised both Konrad and Hans. "I find myself among acquaintances here."

"And what want ye now, Sir Knight?" said Konrad, as he threateningly grasped a handspike, the first and only weapon that lay at hand; "and how dare ye to bend cannon on a ship of the Danish king, within the Norwegian seas?"

"To the first question, Master Konrad," replied Ormiston, with mock deliberation, "as to what we want, I reply, a sight of this good skipper's invoice, for we mightily lack various things since our repulse before the harbour of Kirkwall, and an examination thereof will save us much trouble in overhauling a cargo

which may consist of nought else than hazel-wands and wheel-barrows. To the second—as to why we dared to bend our cannon against thee, thou hadst better ask my Lord the Earl of Bothwell—nay, I mean James, Duke of Orkney, who dare do just whatever pleaseth himself on the land, and I see no reason why he should curb his frolicsome fancies on the open sea. By St. Paul! skipper, thou hast the very gloom of a Nordland bear; but bring up thy jar of hollands—let us drink and be friends, and then I will examine thine invoice, for I love not trifling, and lack time."

This formidable knight had all the air of a man who was to be obeyed; the unhappy Hans produced his round and capacious leathern bottle of Dutch gin, of which Ormiston, who had seated himself upon a culverin, drank a deep draught, and then handed the remainder to his boat's crew.

"Now, sirrah, for thine invoice of the victual under these hatches; for we lack nought else."

From a tin case, concealed in the breast of his rough doublet, Hans, with trembling fingers, produced from among several others a small piece of parchment. Ormiston adjusted his steel glove, unfolded the invoice, and, after viewing it in various ways, handed it to Konrad, saying—

"I request of thee to read me this, and read it truly for thine own sake. By the mass! I never could read much at any time, and such a cramped scrawl baffles my skill in writing, which never went much beyond making my mark on an Englishman's hide."

Aware of the futility of resistance, and feeling for the agony of poor Hans, whose all was shipped on board his crayer, Konrad read the following invoice, which we give verbatim from the papers of the Magister Absalom:—

"Shippit by ye grace of God, in goode order and weel-conditioned, by Ihone Middiltoune, at the Timber Holfe, in and upon ye goode shippe *Skottefruin* of Bergen, quherof Hans Knuber is maister, now lying in the harberie of Leith, bound for Bergen—to saye, 113 baggs containing aucht tons, four bollis, three lippies, and twa pecks of wheaten flour, to be delivered at Bergen, in ye like gude order (the act of God, the queen's enemies of England, fire, and all other dangeris of ye sea excepted), as customarie; and so God send yis gude and noble shippe to her destined port in safety.—Amen.

"At Leith, ye 23d April, in ye zeir of our Lord 1567."

"Now God be with thee, thou dour carle!" said Ormiston, leaping up; "thou hast enough and to spare of the very provender we lack most. One hundred and thirteen bags of wheaten flour! St. Mary—I have not broken a flour bannock since we left Dunbar! Thou must hand me over, say fifty bags of this ware, and I will make thee a free gift of the three-and-sixty other bags, with the bolls, lippies, and pecks to boot—so up with thy hatches, for our stomachs and tempers lack no

delay."

It was only on hearing this that Hans seemed to shake oft his lethargy, and his rage burst suddenly forth. He seized a handspike, and, grasping it with nervous hands, flourished it aloft, and planted his broad sturdy feet, which were cased in rough leather shoes, upon the hatchway, vowing to dash out the brains of the first man who approached it.

"Presumptuous fool!" said the gigantic knight, laying his hand on his sword; "were it worth while to draw, I might by one sliver cut thee in two. I have no wish to harm thee; but beware, for thou hast to deal with ruined and outlawed men, whom toil by sea—a narrow escape from a superior force, that hath pursued and driven us into these waters—starvation, and Heaven knows what more—have rendered desperate—so beware thee, Sir Skipper, or I will hang thee at thine own mast-head!"

"And who art thou, robber and pirate! that I, a free trader, should unclose my hatches at thy bidding on the open sea?" cried Hans in broken Scottish, as he flourished his club within an inch of the speaker's nose.

"Black Hob of Ormiston, a name that would find an echo in bonny Teviotdale, Master Knuber, ha! ha!"

"And what wantest thou with my goods?"

"Nay, 'tis his grace the Duke of Orkney."

"And by whom shall I be paid?"

"The lords of the secret council at Edinburgh—ha! ha!—gif thou bringest to them our heads, thou old sea-dog! Mass! Hans Knuber, knowest thou not mine is well worth a hundred merks of silver, and that of his grace of Orkney two thousand pounds of Scottish gold. But I trifle. Back, fellow! and desire thy knaves to open the hatch and up with these wheaten bags; for, by St. Mary! my mouth waters at the thought of the bannocks."

Rendered furious by the prospect of being jocularly plundered by marauders, for such adventures were far from uncommon on the ocean in those days of ill-defined liberty and right, the long smothered passion of Hans broke forth; and, swinging the handspike aloft, he dealt a deadly blow at the head of Ormiston, who without much effort avoided it. The stroke glanced harmlessly off his polished helmet; but, ere it could be repeated, he grasped the portly assailant like a child, and with a strength that astonished Konrad, and none more than Hans himself, lifted him over the gunnel and dropped him into the boat alongside, saying,—

"Thank Heaven and thy patron, Sir Skipper, that I have not popped thee into the sea, with a bunch of cannon-balls at thy neck; yet for that rash blow I shall punish thee with a severity I meant not to practise."

Other boats now came off from the Earl's frigate; the hatches were raised, and in a few minutes fifty bags of flour, that had grown on the corn rigs of fertile

Lothian, and been ground in the mills of Leith, were transferred to the possession of Bothwell, whose outlawed crew, hollow-eyed and wolfish with long travail, danger, and scanty fare, received them with shouts of rapture—greeting each white dusty sack with a round of applause as it was hoisted on board. Last of all, Ormiston came off, bringing Hans Knuber and fourteen men who composed the crayer's crew.

"Now, sirrah," said he sternly to Hans; "lift thy pumpkin head, and behold how I will punish thee for that dirl on the sconce thou gavest me!"

Hans, whom rage and the shock of falling into the boat, had reduced to a state bordering on stupefaction, raised his heavy leaden-like grey eyes, and gazed at his crayer. The sprit-sail and fore-topsail had been hastily re-rigged and braced up—the helm lashed, to keep her head to the wind; she was again under sail, and, without a soul on board, was bearing full towards a dangerous eddy, that in those days boiled near the shore of Bergen; and Hans, as the distance increased between him and his vessel, gradually raised his hands to the ears of his fur cap, which he grasped with a tenacity that tightened as she neared the vortex, or little moskenstrom.

The rowers paused with their oars in the air, and looked back with curiosity and interest; for there was something very absorbing in the aspect of the abandoned ship, running full tilt on the career of destruction with all her sails set. Onward she went, rolling over the heavy swells caused by the waters of the fiord meeting those of the Skager Rack; the sun shone full upon her stern windows from the western hills—on her white canvass and the sparkling water that curled under her counter—and nearer and nearer she drew to the boiling circle, that with rapidity whirled white and frothy under the brow of an almost perpendicular cliff, that was overhung by an ancient wood of drooping pine.

Drawn within its influence, and dragged round by its irresistible current, with sails torn, cordage snapping, and her yards flying round like those of a windmill, she was borne about in a circle that narrowed at every turn—faster and faster, deeper and deeper, round she went, till in one wild whirl, with a sound that came over the water like the sob of a drowning giant, she vanished—sucked into the watery profundity of the abyss!

CHAPTER XIX.

BOTHWELL AND THE GREAT BEAR.

And do not fear the English rogues,
Nor stand of them in awe;
But hold ye fast by St. Andrew's cross
Till ye hear my whistle blaw.
Thus boarded they this gallant ship,
With right good-will and main;
But eighteen Scots were left alive,
And eighteen more were slain.
Old Ballad of Sir A. Barton.

When Konrad with Hans Knuber, and the fourteen Norsemen who composed his crew, were brought on board the ship of the Earl, they were immediately led towards him. Completely armed, save the helmet, which was placed upon the capstan, against which he leaned, the handsome form of Bothwell never appeared to greater advantage than when among his uncouth mariners, in their wide breeches and fur boots. His face was paler and more grave than when Konrad had last seen him; his deep dark eyes were melancholy and thoughtful; but his compressed lips and knitted brows showed a steadiness of purpose and determination of aspect, that failed not to impress the beholder. Still more pale and grave, Hepburn of Bolton stood near him, leaning on his long sword; and, among the group that pressed forward to scrutinize the prisoners, Konrad recognised the faces of French Paris, Hay of Tallo, and others of the Earl's retinue.

"What strange freak of fate hath thrown thee in my path again?" he asked, with a calm smile.

"The waves, the winds, and mine own evil destiny; for Heaven knoweth, Lord Earl, I had no desire again to see thy face," replied Konrad.

"Well, well, I cannot feel chafed by thine honest plainness, Konrad; for I know well I have given thee deep reason to hate me. A strange fatality has woven our adventures together. Thou didst save me once from the waves of this very ocean, when last for my sins I was traversing these Norwegian seas; and I saved thee twice from drowning—first in the crystal Clyde, under the windows of my own castle of Bothwell; and once again when thou wert chained like a baited bear to yonder pillar in the North Loch of Edinburgh. But come," added the Earl, clapping him on the shoulder; "let us be friends; are the faith or falsehood of a woman matters for two brave men to quarrel about?"

Konrad, who could not conceal the repugnance he felt at the presence of the Earl, whom he hated as his rival, and Anna's betrayer, drew back with a hauteur that stung the outlawed lord to the heart.

"Nay, Earl or Duke, for I know not which thou art—men style thee both—

though but a simple gentleman of Norway, a captain of crossbowmen, with a rixmark in the day, I would not follow thy banner to obtain the noblest of thy baronies. Our paths must be far separate. I never could owe thee friendship, suit, service, or captainrie; and I have but one request to make, that thou wilt land us on the nearest point of our native shore, and we will gladly say, God speed thee on thy voyage."

"I love and esteem few, and by fewer am I loved and esteemed," replied the Earl calmly; "but, fallen though I am, I have not yet sunk so low as to beg the friendship of any man. Be it so. Ere nightfall, I will land thee on yonder promontory, and the skipper knave likewise, though in good sooth he deserves to be hanged up at yonder yard-arm, for declining me the use of a few pitiful bags of our own Scottish wheat, when he saw my ducal banner displayed before his eyes."

With a brief reverence the Earl retired into his cabin, where French Paris attended to relieve him of part of that armour which he wore constantly; for he was in hourly expectation of being assailed—from the seaward, by ships sent in pursuit of him from Scotland—or from the land, for his piracies and plundering on the Danish and Norwegian shores.

"The raven's fate befall thee!" muttered Hans, thrusting his clenched hands farther into his pockets, and gazing with blank despair upon the vortex that, almost in sight of his haven, had swallowed up his ship.

The wind blew freshly from the fiord ahead of them, and David Wood, the Earl's skipper, found the impossibility of making the point where he desired to land their captives; and the sudden appearance of a large three-masted vessel of war, which, under easy sail, came round one of those steep headlands that overhung the water, made him bear away into the open channel; for so great was the rage and terror their depredations had spread on both sides of the Skager Rack, that the Earl knew he must greet a foe in every ship under the banner of Frederick of Denmark.

The sun had set, but the clear twilight of the long northern night played upon the dark blue waters of the fiord, which still rippled in silver against the wall-like rocks that hemmed them in; the air was mild and balmy; the whole sky had that clear, cold blue, which it exhibits among our lowland hills before sunrise; but the northern lights, that gleamed from Iceland's snow-clad peaks, the bright pole-star, and the myriad spangles of the milky-way, were all coming forth in their glory; nothing could surpass the beauty of the former, as their rays, like the gleams of a gigantic sword, flashed along the cerulean sky, behind the wooded summits of the dark and distant hills.

"Dost thou know aught of yonder ship, Sir Skipper?" asked Bothwell of Hans Knuber, who had been observing her approach with a stern joy which he

took no pains to conceal.

"Yes, I know her!" said Hans. "Ay, by St. Olaf! every plank in her hull and every rope in her rigging—for my own hands helped to nail one and reeve the other. There sails not a better craft, nor a swifter, in the Danish waters."

"A swifter!" rejoined the Earl, looking over his poop at the waves that curled under the counter. "I need care little for that, as Scottish men are unused to run either on sea or land, Master Knuber. She is a warship, I perceive."

"Thou art right, Lord Earl. She is the *Biornen*, or Great Bear, a ship of King Frederick's, carrying sixteen great carthouns, and as many demi-culverins; manned by three hundred mariners, and as many more crossbowmen and cannoniers. Christian Alborg commands—an old sea-horse as ever dipped his whiskers in salt-water—Knight of the Dannebrog and Commandant of Ottenbrocht. Ha! dost thou behold?"

At that moment, the red Norwegian flag, bearing a golden lion grasping a blue battle-axe, was unfurled upon the wind; the redder flash of a cannon, gleaming across the darkening water, and the whiz of the ball, as it passed through the rigging of the Earl's ship, announced his recognition by the stranger.

Hans drew his hands out of his chocolate-coloured breeches, and capered with revenge and joy as he heard it.

The ship of Bothwell was the *Fleur-de-Lys*, a galliot carrying twenty demi-culverins, and had been one of the war-ships of James V. The Earl, as Lord High Admiral of Scotland, had all the affairs and stores of the naval force under his control, and thus selected her, with all her cannon and gear, for his own particular service, and manned her with a crew of his vassals, on whose valour and fidelity he could rely to the last of their blood and breath.

Instead of the standard of Scotland, he ordered his own great banner, bearing the ducal arms of Orkney quartered with those of Bothwell, to be again displayed at the gaff-peak; from the mast-heads floated banneroles, bearing the three red pelicans of Ormiston, the cheverons of Bolton, the three red escutcheons of Hay of Tallo, and the pennons of other gentlemen who followed his desperate fortune; while enraged by the insult thus offered, in firing at once upon him, he gave immediate orders to open the gun-ports—shot the culverins—man the poop and topcastles with crossbowmen, and clear all for battle—orders which were obeyed by his people with alacrity. So now we will have to describe a sea-fight of the sixteenth century.

Both vessels were going under easy sail; but as the Earl had resolved to give battle to his heavy antagonist, careless of the result, he gradually shortened his way, making all secure on board as the distance lessened between him and his Danish Majesty's ship. The crossbowmen, with their weapons bent and bolts laid, and the arquebusiers, with muzzles pointed and matches lit, were crouching

behind the wooden parapets of the poop and forecastle, which, like those round the tops, were all fashioned in the shape of battlements; the cannoniers stood by their culverins with linstock and rammer; the waist of the ship bristled with steel caps, short pikes, two-handed swords, and jedwood axes; while on the towering poop and forecastle were seen the mail-clad figures of Bothwell and his knights; but, notwithstanding all this display of bravery, as they neared the foe, they saw how fearful were the odds to be encountered.

Each vessel came on under topsails; the courses being hauled up, displayed the steel-bristling decks, and the polished mouths of the brass cannon, that gleamed upon the dark blue water as they were run through the carved and painted sides of the gunwall (*gunnel*), loaded with bullets of stone and iron, and pebbles lapped in lead. Both vessels were now running in the same direction, but gradually neared each other. They were within three lance-lengths, and not a sound was heard on board of either but the ripple under their bows; and in breathless silence as the still twilight deepened on the ocean, the adverse crews continued gazing on each other.

All at once a line of lights glittered along the deck of the Norwegian.

"Yare, my hearts!" cried Wood, the Earl's skipper, "down, and save yourselves!"

Except Bothwell and his knights, every man threw himself flat on the deck; and while fire flashed from the wide muzzles of eight great carthouns and as many demi-culverins, their shot tore across the *Fleur-de-Lys*, splintering her bulwarks, rending her rigging and canvass, but doing little other personal injury than slaying a few of the arquebusiers, who occupied the little wooden turrets with which the angles of the poop were furnished.

"A Bothwell! a Bothwell!" cried the Earl brandishing his sword; "cannoniers to your lintstocks—crossbowmen to your duty, and show yourselves men, my rough-footed Scots. Fight bravely! for know ye, that if taken we shall all die the death of caitiffs and felons; for there is not a man among us but will hang from the yards of yonder Norseman, for so hath King Frederick sworn. Shoot aloft, and fire below! St. Bothan and on!"

A volley of cannon, crossbows, and arquebuses was poured upon the great quarter and stern of the *Biornen*, while her people were slowly and laboriously recharging their pieces. The bolts whistled from the crossbows, the bullets whizzed from the arquebuses *à croc*, and the cannon-shot boomed as they flew over the decks, or sank with a heavy crash into the echoing hulls of the adverse ships; while, ascending from the still bosom of that narrow inlet of the ocean, the reports were reverberated like thunder, as the echoes rolled from peak to peak along those high mountains that overlooked it.

From the poops and forecastles the arquebuses maintained an incessant

roar, and their bullets, each containing three ounces of lead, did deadly execution, being fired point-blank, beating great pieces of buff and mail into the bodies of those they slew.

"Yare, yare—my yeomen of the sheets and braces! Cheerily now—my timoneer!" bellowed the skipper of the *Fleur-de-Lys*, through his speaking trumpet, as he, by a rapidity of manoeuvre and superior seamanship, sheered his vessel upon the larboard side of the *Biornen* in the smoke, and poured another broadside upon the Norwegians, who did not expect it from that point, and the sudden crash and slaughter filled them with alarm and irresolution.

"By St. John of the Desart!" exclaimed Bothwell, in the excitement of the moment forgetting his assumed Protestantism, "ye do well my true cannoniers. Shoot—shoot, and spare not! or never again will ye see the woods of Clyde, and the blooming bank of Bothwell. To it, Bolton, with thy bowmen! Shoot me down those rascal archers on their tops; for by St. Peter, who smote off the lug of a loon, I have wellnigh lost mine by their hands. Shoot—shoot, and spare not!"

A loud cheer replied to the Earl, and his vassals bent to their toil with renewed ardour and alacrity.

The decks were rapidly becoming encumbered with the dead and wounded; for there were neither accommodation or due attendance for the latter, and so they were permitted to lie just where they fell, with their blood streaming away to leeward, and dripping from the scuppers into the ocean; while the shot ploughed and tore up the oak planking of the deck, beat down the bulwarks, rending mast and boom and spars to shreds and splinters; and each time the ponderous stone bullets of the great Danish carthouns thundered and crashed through the side of the *Fleur-de-Lys*, she staggered and trembled in every rib and plank.

"Sweep me the gunwall with your arquebuses!" cried the Earl, leaping upon the corpse-strewn forecastle, where Ormiston, like a swarthy Moor, was handling one of those ponderous fire-arms as easily as a bird caliver; "for one more salvoe from those accursed carthouns will hurl us from the ocean like a flash of lightning!"

"Cock and pie!" said Ormiston, as he levelled the long arquebuse in its iron sling; "we have been putting pelloks into their doublets ever since the tulzie began; and I doubt not have scored a hundred by the head, but the gloomy night is increasing so fast that we aim now at random."

The darkness, as he said, had increased very much. The clouds were gathering in heavy masses, and the red sheet lightning was gleaming behind the rocky peaks of those hills, where the northern lights had been flashing one hour before. Dark as ink grew the waters of the fiord, and the increasing wind that blew down it, between the high shores on either side, flecked its surface with foam, as it passed away into the turbulent waste of the Skager Rack. This change was

unseen or unheeded by the combatants, who were now lying to with their foresails backed, and pouring their missiles upon each other with a deadly animosity, that increased as the slaughter and the darkness deepened around them together. Notwithstanding the superior size of the Norwegian ship, and the heavier metal of her cannon, the little *Fleur-de-Lys* stood to her bravely; for she was manned by bold and desperate hearts, whom outlawry and revenge had urged to the utmost pitch of rashness and valour.

Meanwhile, Konrad and Hans Knuber watched with beating hearts the varying ebb and flow of the tide of battle in which they had so suddenly been involved. They remained passive spectators, exposed to the fire of their friends and countrymen, by whose hands they expected every instant to be decimated or decapitated. Whenever a barbed crossbow-shot from the *Biornen* struck down a poor Scottish mariner to writhe in agony and welter in his blood, or when a shot tore up plank and beam almost beneath his feet, Hans growled a Norse malediction, and thought of the ruin these Scots had that day brought upon him. Suddenly he grasped Konrad by the hand, and pointed to a part of the water that appeared covered with white froth.

"Seest thou that, Master Konrad?—hah!" he exclaimed.

"The lesser moskenstrom—the eddy that swallowed up thy ship. God shield us!" said Konrad; "for we are just upon its verge."

"Those accursed Scots perceive it not; but Christian Alborg doth. See, he hath hauled his wind and braced up his foreyard—another moment will see us sucked into the whirl, or stranded on the shoal made between us and the coast by the eddy, ha! ha!" and Hans, who was pale as death under the influence of wrath and fear, laughed like a hyena at the terrors about to replace those of the battle.

A shout of triumph burst from the little crew of Bothwell's shattered ship; but it was answered by one of derision and exultation from the Norwegian; for at that moment, as Hans had predicted, the *Fleur-de-Lys* bilged upon the reef or rocky shoal that lay between the eddy and the shore—striking with a crash that made her foremast bend like a willow wand ere it went by the board, bringing down the main-topmast; the heavy culverins went surging all to leeward, and, crashing away the bulwarks, plunged into the sea, which, being agitated by the increasing gale, broke in foam upon the ridgy summit of the reef, and hurled its breakers over the parting frame of the *Fleur-de-Lys*, which thus in a moment became a shattered and desolate wreck.

The shout of the Norsemen was their last display of hostility; for, on beholding the terrible trap into which the foe had so suddenly fallen, the gallant old Knight of the Dannebrog suspended his firing, and lowered his boats to pick up the survivors of the battle and wreck; for so fierce was the tumult of water

that boiled around her, and so great his dread of the whirlpool, that he continued rather to stand off than towards the scene of the catastrophe.

The towering forecastle of the bilged ship was highest above the water, and to that Konrad, after seeing poor Hans Knuber washed from his side, to be dashed again and again a lifeless corpse upon the brow of the reef, clung with all the energy of despair, clambering up step by step, clutching the ruin of spars and cordage that hung over it, till he reached the iron rail enclosing the top, which he embraced with both arms, and looked down upon the scene of terror and desolation presented by the lower half of the wreck, which was submerged in water.

Fitfully the white moon gleamed upon it, through the openings in the hurrying clouds; its cold lustre rather adding to, than lessening, the ghastly horror of the wreck and reef.

Far down in the deep waste, which was full of water—for every instant the surf broke over it in mountains of foam—was a swarm of struggling men, many of them in armour, clinging to whatever would support them. Ever and anon they sent forth cries of terror and despair; while every plank and spar creaked and groaned as the waves beat and lashed around, as if eager to overwhelm and engulf them all.

The wind was increasing, and, urged by the long fetch of the Skager Rack, the waves broke in stupendous volumes over the reef and the bilged wreck, at every return washing away some unfortunate into the abyss of the whirlpool, that yawned and foamed and growled on one side; while on the other lay the wide waste of the ocean, and the *Biornen* about a mile distant, with her white canvass gleaming, like the garments of a spirit, in the light of the fitful moon. Behind the reef towered up the black Norwegian hills, like a wall of steep and frowning rock, fringed by nodding pines, and bordered by a white line of froth, that marked where the breakers reared their fronts to lash and roar upon the impending cliffs—but all these were buried in the long and sombre shadow which the tremendous bluffs threw far on the restless sea.

Meanwhile, Bothwell and his knights, though landsmen, and more at home in the tiltyard, in the tavern, the castle hall, or on the mountain side, never for a moment lost their presence of mind. Throwing off the heavier parts of their armour, they contrived to secure one of the boats, into which the Earl, with Ormiston, Bolton, Hay of Tallo, French Paris, and several others, sprang with all the speed that fear of a terrible fate could lend them.

"A Bothwell! a Bothwell!" cried the Earl waving his hand, as the light shallop was one moment buoyed aloft like a cork, and the next plunged down into the deep, dark trough of the midnight sea. "Save yourselves by spars and booms, my brave hearts!" he cried to those whom his heart bled to leave behind—but it was

impossible that one boat could save them all; "or lash yourselves to the wreck, and we will return for you."

"Bend to your oars, my stout knaves, cheerily," cried Wood, the skipper.

"Yare!" added Ormiston, whose tall figure loomed in the labouring shallop like that of an armed giant; "cheerily, ho! for if it is our fate to be hanged we will never be drowned."

"Hold!" exclaimed the Earl, as they pulled under the lee of the lofty poop, "yonder is one whom I would rather die than leave behind to perish, for then I would forfeit mine honour."

"Cock and pie! Lord Earl, art thou mad?" cried Ormiston, in great wrath; "is this a time to have thy qualms about honour, when ten minutes more may see us all in the pit of hell?"

"Peace, peace; shame on thee, laird of Ormiston!" cried David Wood. "Mother of God, watch over us!"

"Hob, peace with thy blasphemy!" said the Earl, "or I will have thee cast into the sea. Is this a time for such dreadful thoughts as thine? By the bones of my father, I *shall* save him. Ho, there! Konrad of Saltzberg, I pledged my word to land thee on thy native shore, and even in this moment of dread I will redeem it, or perish with thee. Leap with a bold heart, and a ready will, and gain our boat if thou canst, albeit that it is laden so heavily."

Aware that the chance was a last one, Konrad, who could swim like a duck, sprang at once into the waters of his native fiord, and, rising a short distance from the boat, was pulled in by the athletic Ormiston. Then the oars were dipped in the frothy water, and, urged by wind and tide, the laden boat shot away from the desolate wreck.

At that moment a wild shriek—the last despairing cry of the strong and the brave, who had never flinched when the arrow flew and the culverin boomed around them—ascended from the seething ocean to the sky; the wreck parted into a thousand fragments, that covered the face of the water; and these, with the poor fellows who clung to them with the blind tenacity of despair and death, were again and again, at the sport of the waves, dashed against the ridgy summits, that were one moment visible in terrible array in the moonlight, and the next were hidden, as a mountain of foam swept over them, hurrying into the deep vortex of the whirlpool the last fragments and the corpses of the *Fleur-de-Lys*.

CHAPTER XX.

Where the wave is tinged with red,
And the russet sea-leaves grow;
Mariners, with prudent dread,
Shun the whelming reefs below.
Thus, all to soothe the chieftain's woe,
Far from the maid he loved so dear,
The song arose so soft and slow,
He seem'd her parting sigh to hear.
Leyden's Mermaid.

"Which way, Lord Earl?" asked the laird of Bolton; "steer we shoreward?"

"Nay!" cried Ormiston, in his usual tone of banter, for now his spirits rose as the danger lessened; "nay—a malison on thee, Norway! Woe worth the day I again set foot on thy devilish shore, where there is nought but bran-bannocks and sour beer in summer, and bears' hams with toasted snowballs in winter!"

"To yonder ship?" continued Hepburn.

"Yes!" replied the Earl. "Row briskly, my merry men; she hath altered her course, and stands towards us. We must yield; but my mind misgives me sorely, that we shall have but sorry treatment."

A few minutes' pulling brought them under the lee of the lofty Norwegian ship—a ladder was lowered, and the Earl and his attendants sprang fearlessly on board. They immediately found themselves surrounded by a crowd of savage-looking Norwegian seamen and Danish soldiers, the former in garments of singular fashion, and the latter wearing armour of an age at least two centuries older than their own. Their red bushy beards protruded from their little steel caps, and flowed over their gourgerins, as they leaned upon their iron mauls, chain maces, and the bolls of their slackened bows, and gazed with wild eyes on the strangers who thus voluntarily yielded themselves prisoners.

The whole group were immediately led to the summit of the lofty poop, where the captain stood surrounded by his officers; and Bothwell could perceive, by many a splintered plank and battered boom—by many a torn rope and shattered block—by spots of blood, and broken heads, and bandaged arms, that the *Biornen* had not come off scatheless in the late encounter.

The Norwegian captain was a fat and pompous little man; his round bulbous figure was clad in a quilted doublet of fine crimson cloth, the gold lacing of which shone in the light of three large poop lanterns that were blazing close by; his short, thick legs were covered by yellow silk stockings; he wore a thick

ruff that came up to his ears, and a beaver hat nearly four feet in diameter; his mustaches were preposterously long, and he rolled his saucer eyes in a way that was very appalling, as the Earl stepped up to him, and, in no degree abashed by the magnificence of his portly presence, raised his blue velvet bonnet, saying in French as he bowed gracefully—

"I believe I have the honour of addressing the knight Christian Alborg, captain of his Danish Majesty's galley, the *Biornen*?"

"Yes!" replied the captain gruffly; "and what art thou?"

"Boatswain of the Scottish ship."

"And where is the pirate, thy master?"

"He stands before thee," replied the Earl, pointing to David Wood; for he was anxious to preserve an incognito which he hoped his disordered attire might favour.

"Thou hast but little the air of a shipman," rejoined the captain of the *Biornen* incredulously; "and I think that, were this knave thy leader, *he* would have addressed me, and not *thou*. So, sirrah, art thou really captain of that ship which dared to abide my cannon in the Danish seas?"

"Yes!" replied Wood boldly; "and how darest thou, Sir Captain, to doubt the word of a true Scottishman?"

"Because I would save thee, if I could, from the doom such an acknowledgment merits—away with him to the yard-arm!"

And in another moment, almost ere a word could be spoken or a hand raised in his defence, a rope was looped round the neck of David Wood, and he was run up to the arm of the main-yard, where he hung, quivering and writhing in the moonlight, while his last half-stifled shriek tingled in the ears of his companions, who were silenced and appalled by a catastrophe so sudden.

"By St. Paul! my poor skipper," thought the Earl, "if thou farest so for telling the truth, how shall I fare for telling a falsity? Knave of a Norseman! thou hast destroyed the cadet of a gallant race—the line of Bonnington, in Angus!"

"Hah! this is not the bearing of a Scottish boatswain," said old Christian Alborg, stepping back a pace at the menacing aspect of his prisoner; "and now, I bethink me that such wear neither corselets of steel nor spurs of gold; so tell me who thou art, or, by the hand of the king, I will run thee up at the other arm of yonder yard. Thy name?"

"James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell, and Duke of Orkney, Knight of the Thistle, and Governor of the Kingdom of Scotland!" replied the Earl, drawing himself up with an aspect of dignity and pride, that was not lost upon the portly Norseman and his helmeted officers.

"Unhappy lord!" replied Christian Alborg, making a profound reverence; "I have heard of thine evil fame, and envy thee not the grandeur of thy titles."

"Thou sayest truly," said Bothwell, in a tone of sadness, "I am not to be envied; but withhold thy pity, for I am not yet fallen so low as find commiseration acceptable from any man."

"But if thou art governor of the kingdom of Scotland, what brought thee into these seas?"

"Foul wind, or fatality—which you will."

"And wherefore hast thou sacked the villages, stormed the castles, plundered the ships of thine own countrymen, who have done thee no wrong, and also committed innumerable piracies on the subjects of his Danish majesty, with whom thy people are at peace?"

"Because of my sore extremity!"

"That will form but a lame excuse to King Frederick, at whose palace of Kiobenhafen the tidings of thine outrages were sent from his castle of Bergenhuis, whither I have an order to convey thee, dead or alive. Though a bold man and a bad one, thou hast fought as became a Scottish noble, and I can respect valour wherever I find it. I had resolved to chain thee neck and heels, like a villanous pirate; but trusting to thine honour, that thou wilt not attempt to compromise me by escaping, I will permit thee to retain thy sword, to be at liberty, and to receive all due courtesy, till thou art committed to the custody of the king's garrison at Bergen."

The Earl was led to a cabin, and there left to his own melancholy reflections, which were rendered a hundred degrees worse by the reaction consequent to such a day of stirring activity and wild excitement.

He heard the ripple of the water as the waves that had swallowed up his companions flowed past; he heard the straining of the timbers, the creaking of the decks and cordage, as the wind bellied the full spread canvass of the *Biornen*, and urged her up the fiord of Bergen; but his thoughts were far away in the land he had left behind him, in the island tower of that lonely lake, overlooked by steep hills and girdled by the guarding water, where Mary of Scotland mourned in crownless captivity the shame, the contumely, and the hopeless fate *his* wiles and ambition had brought upon her.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CASTELLANA.

No waking dream shall tinge my thought

With dyes so bright and vain;
No silken net so slightly wrought,
Shall tangle me again.
No more I'll pay so dear for wit,
I'll live upon mine own;
Nor shall wild passion trouble it,
I'll rather dwell alone.
Scott.

Next day the *Biornen* cast anchor in the Jelta fiord, and, under a strong guard of crossbowmen, Christian Alborg carried Konrad and his prisoners ashore in a great red pinnace which bore the yellow lion of Norway floating at its stern.

They landed about half a mile from the citadel, to which he was conveying the captives, and Konrad accompanied them, for he knew not where else to bestow himself; but every step of the well-known way was full of bitter memories, and fraught with the idea of Anna.

And where was she?

Of Christian Alborg, who had conveyed her from Scotland, he never made an enquiry; for though he knew perfectly well that it was he who had received her from the Scottish council, he had no opportunity of an interview; and, on the other hand, Alborg knew not how deep was the young man's interest still in the fate of Anna, though he knew his story well; and thus no communication on the subject passed between them.

In all their old familiar features, his native hills were towering around that ancient fortress, which tradition averred to have been the work of the Sitonian giants; while, amid the deep recesses of their woods, the distant cry of the wolf was ringing as of old, and the wiry foliage of the Scandinavian pines, when they vibrated in the summer wind, as the Norse say, filled the air with the music of fairy harps, that mingled with the hum of the evening flies, and the rustle of the long reedy grass, as it waved in the rising wind like the surface of a rippled lake.

Every old familiar feature brought back its own sad train of memories. By the winding path they traversed, here and there lay an ancient runic monument, covered with uncouth characters, and those fantastic hieroglyphics with which the ancient Scandinavians handed down to posterity the history of their battles, and of the mighty men of the days of other years. There, too, was the ancient chapel of St. Olaus, still perched in a cleft of the mountains, with its bell swinging on the rocks that overhung it—rocks where the wild myrtle, the geranium, and the yellow pansy, all flourished together in one luxuriant blush of flowers.

As they ascended from the shore, the rocks became bolder and bolder, more

sterile and abrupt; not a blade of grass waved on their basaltic faces, yet from their summits the tall and aged pines locked their branches together, and excluded the daylight from the deep chasm at the bottom of which the roadway wound.

Rents in the volcanic rock afforded at times, far down below, glimpses of the narrow fiord, a deep, blue inlet of the ocean, dotted with white sails, and overlooked by the strong, dark tower of Bergen, with its rude and clustering ramparts, little windows, and loopholes for arrows.

As they approached it, Konrad's sadness increased; for every stone in its walls seemed like the face of an old friend, and every feature of the scenery was associated with that first and early love which had become part of his very being.

With Bothwell it was quite otherwise.

He looked around him with the utmost nonchalance, and scarcely thought of Anna, though the scene was quite enough to bring her fully back to his mind; but his passion for Mary had completely absorbed or obliterated every other fancy, feeling, and sentiment.

A change had come over his features; his forehead was paler and more thoughtful, his eyes had lost much of their bold and reckless expression, and there was a decided melancholy in his fine face, which excited the interest of all who regarded him. He had become more taciturn; even Hob Ormiston had lost much of his loquacity, and now, depressed by the gloomy prospect of their fortunes, walked in silence by the side of the dejected and miserable Hepburn of Bolton.

"Captain Alborg," said Bothwell, "whither dost thou wend with us now?"

"To the royal castle of Bergen—to the hereditary governor of which I must deliver thee."

"Thank Heaven! 'tis not Erick Rosenkrantz who holds command there now, or I warrant me we would have had but a short shrift, and shorter mercy, for the trick I now remember me to have played him. I marvel much what manner of person this new castellan may be; for in sooth, much of our comfort, in this most dolorous case, depends thereon."

"Be under no apprehension, Lord Earl," replied Alborg; "you are the king's prisoners, and, though accused of invasion and piracy, no castellan in Denmark or Norway can hang or quarter you without the king's express orders."

"Hang!" grumbled Ormiston; "hang thee, thou old sea-horse! Dost forget thou speakest to James, Duke of Orkney, the mate of Mary of Scotland?"

The family of Rosenkrantz were hereditary governors of Bergen, and castellans of Bergenhuis, and, as Konrad's ancestors had always followed their banner in battle, he had ever considered the castle of Bergen his home; and, with all the feeling of a returned exile, he approached its massive portal, which was flanked by broad round towers, and overhung by a strong portcullis of jagged and

rusted iron, where the crossbowmen of his own Danish band were still keeping guard in their scarlet gaberdines and steel caps.

At the gate they were received by Cornelius Van Dribbel, the great butler of Bergen, who, in his flutter and pomposity at the unusual arrival of such a goodly band of prisoners and visitors, never once recognised the careworn Konrad, who was too spirit-broken to address him, and, disguised by the altered fashion of his beard and garments, was borne with the throng towards the great hall, where the superior of the fortress was to receive them.

There was a flush on Bothwell's brow, a fire in his eye, a scorn on his lip, and a loftiness in his bearing, that increased as he approached the presence of this Norwegian dignitary; for, all unused to the humility of his position, he had resolved to requite pride with pride, scorn with scorn; and thus, modelling their looks by those of their leader, Hob Ormiston and Hay of Tallo assumed an air of sullen defiance; but the young knight of Bolton, who was utterly careless about his ultimate fate, wore a spirit-broken aspect, more nearly allied to that of Konrad.

"Cornelius Van Dribbel," said Christian Alborg, puffing and blowing, as he seated himself in a capacious chair on entering the hall, and wiped his great polished head with a handkerchief. "I thought thou saidst the castellan was here to receive the king's prisoners?"

"St. Olaus forefend!" replied Van Dribbel; "surely thou knowest that the knight Rosenkrantz hath lain in his last home at Fredericksborg these many months."

"Smite thee! yes," growled the seaman; "but I meant the new castellan."

"We have none but such as thou shalt see in time—Ha! lo you, now!" he added, as the arras concealing the archway, which, at the lower end of the hall, opened upon a carpeted dais, was withdrawn, and when again it fell, Anna Rosenkrantz, attended by Christina Slingebunder and another young maiden, stood before them.

Had a spectre appeared there, Bothwell and Konrad could not have appeared more disturbed, and Anna was equally so; but the Earl, now less animated by love, and, as a courtier, being habituated to keep his emotions under restraint, was the first to recover himself, and a smile of scornful surprise spread over his face, as he doffed his bonnet and bowed to the lady of the castle.

Poor Konrad grew pale as death; he became giddy and breathless; and shrank behind the shadow of a column against which he leaned, for the atmosphere seemed stifling.

Meanwhile Anna stood upon the dais, between two massive columns of gothic form, encrusted with old runic stones. She was looking pale, but beautiful as ever. Her tresses were gathered up in the simple fashion of the north, and, supported by a silver bodkin, formed a coronet of plaits, as they were wreathed

round her head. Her dress of blue silk was massive with embroidery and silver fringe, and her stomacher was studded with jewels, as became the heiress of Welsöö and Bergenhuis.

The Earl's first reflection, was his being now a captive, and completely in the power of an enraged and slighted woman, whom in the zenith of his power he had treated with cruelty, contumely, and contempt. These thoughts brought with them no qualm, no pity. He felt only apprehension for what she might now in turn make him endure; for, when in Italy and France, he heard many a tale of "woman's vengeance," that now came back full and vividly on his memory.

"By St. Paul! we find kenned faces wherever we go;" said Ormiston to Bolton; "this old sea-dog hath brought us to the right haven. We will have free-house and free-hold here, I doubt not."

"Madam," said the stout captain of the *Biornen*, bowing as low as his great paunch and long basket-hilted espadone would permit him, "allow me to introduce to you the terrible pirate who, for the last month, has been the terror of our Fiords, and the scourge of the Sound, and whom we find to be no other than the great Earl of Bothwell, with whose astounding misdeeds all Europe has been ringing."

Anna scarcely heard a word of the captain's address. On first beholding the Earl, she had trembled violently, and then became pale as death. Her eyes filled with fire, and she regarded him with a long, fixed, and serpent-like gaze, that even he had some trouble in meeting.

"Well, madam," said he, with one of his graceful smiles, "when last we stood together in this hall, we foresaw not the day when we would greet each other thus."

"The meeting is as unexpected to me as our last may have been to *you*, my Lord Earl," replied Anna in French, but with admirable hauteur and firmness. "So, pirate and outlaw, as I now understand thee to be, thou hast lived to see all thy wild visions and schemes of ambition crumble and fade away, and now thou art a captive in the power of her thou didst so deeply wrong, and so cruelly insult."

"True, madam," replied Bothwell, curling his mustache, "and what then?"

"Dost thou not know that thy life and liberty are alike in my power?"

"I am glad of it, being assured that they could not be in safer keeping."

"Oh, man! cold and heartless as thou art," said Anna, who seemed now to have forgotten her own infatuated passion for the Earl, "I cannot but admire this stately calmness under a reverse of fortune so terrible. Were thy fate fully in mine own hands, I would return thee to the land from whence thou hast fled, leaving the flames of civil war to rage behind thee—to the arms of her thou didst love and win, so fatally for herself—or I would again commit thee to the wide ocean, to follow thy wayward fate on other shores; for now there can neither be

love nor loyalty, nor falsehood nor truth, between us—but the will of the king sayeth nay!"

"And what sayeth the will of Frederick?" asked Bothwell, with proud surprise.

"That thou and thy followers must be separated."

"Hoh, is it so?"

"They, to be sent home to Scotland—thou, to his castle of Kiobenhafen, in fetters."

"Fetters!" cried the Earl, in a voice of thunder, while his eyes flashed fire and his hand grasped his sword. "This to Bothwell? Woman! what hast thou dared to say? Dost thou forget that I am a Scottish duke—the consort of a queen—the governor of a kingdom?"

"No!" replied Anna bitterly, while her eyes flashed with rage and jealousy, though every sentiment of love was long since dead; "and neither have I forgotten that thou art a regicide and a betrayer, who from this hour shall have meted out to him the stern measures he so ruthlessly dealt to others. Christian Alborg—this man is the king's prisoner, whom we have warrants from Peder Oxe, the marshal of Denmark, to detain. Away with him to the *Biornen*, and ere sunset be thou out of the Jelta fiord, and under sail for Kiobenhafen! Thou knowest Frederick, and that he brooks no delay."

And with a glance, where spite and jealousy were mingled with a sentiment of pity and admiration, Anna withdrew; and, as the arras fell behind her, a party of red-bearded Danish bowmen, who formed the garrison at Bergen, crowded round the Earl.

"Ha! ha!" he laughed bitterly through his clenched teeth; "there spoke thy woman's vengeance, Anna!"

"Lord Earl," said Ormiston gravely, "in the name of the master of mischief, what prompted thee to beard her thus? Foul fall thee! Why didst thou not flatter, and cajole, and feign thine old love? To fleech with the devil, when thou canst not fight him, is ever good policy. An old love is easily revived: she is only a woman, and would doubtless have believed thee, for thou hast a tongue that would wile the gleds out of the sky. Cock and pie! Bothwell, till something better came to hand, thou mightest have been castellan of Bergen, and I thy lieutenant. All our fortunes had been made even here, in this land of barkened bannocks and snowballs."

"To feign thus, would be to commit foul treason against her whom I will ever remember with loyalty and love, while Heaven, permits me to live. Here we part at last, stout Hob, perhaps to meet no more. If ever again thou treadest on Scottish ground, remember that in serving *her* thou servest Bothwell. Farewell to thee, Bolton, thou man of gloomy thoughts; and farewell thou, stout Hay of

Tallo; for I fear me much, that God's vengeance for *that night* in the Kirk-of-Field is coming surely and heavily upon us all."

They were rudely separated.

Ormiston, Bolton, and Tallo, raised their bonnets with sadness and respect as the Earl was led off; for the bonds of old feudality, and love, and service, which knit their names and fortunes together, had been strengthened by a certainty that the terrible career on which they had run, had for ever cut them off and isolated them from the rest of mankind; and thus a feeling of loneliness and desolation fell upon their hearts, as their great leader and master-spirit was led away to that mournful captivity which was to end only in the—grave.

That night a Scottish ship of war, which was commanded by two knights of distinction, and had been sent by the Earl of Moray in pursuit of Bothwell, anchored in the Jelta fiord, and to their care were consigned the shipwrecked followers of the captive noble; and soon after these knights set sail for Scotland.

But many hours before they had come into Bergen, the *Biornen* had vanished from that narrow inlet of the ocean, and was bearing the great Scottish captive along the shores of western Gothland, and breasting the frothy waves of the Cattegat.

The sun, as he set in the western ocean, shed a mellow light upon the wide expanse of shore that stretched upon their lee—on many an impending cliff, on the dark summits of which waved the old primeval pines of Scandinavia, and on whose bases the waters of the west were dashing in foam—on many a wooded wilderness, amid the recesses of which the wolves were prowling by the Druid stones of Loda, and the long-forgotten grave of many a gothic chief.

Buried in reverie, with folded arms and saddened eyes, Bothwell watched the changing features and windings of that foreign shore, with all its pathless woods, volcanic rocks, and dark blue hills, throwing their deepening shadows on each other, as the burning sun sank in the distant sea, and the dusky tints of night shed upon the scenery a gloom in unison with his own dark thoughts and bitter memories.

Bitter and sad they were truly; but how unavailing!

Now separated from the evil influence of Ormiston and others, he deplored his wickedness and folly with an intensity that amounted to agony. Had the universe been his, he would have given it that he might live the last year of his life over again, with the experience in his mind of what the guilt, the terrors, the anxieties, and remorse of that year had been.

With sorrow, with envy, yea, with agony, he looked back to the position he had held in the estimation of others, and of himself; and felt, in the bitterness of his soul, that the eminence could never more be re-won.

Never more, never more! It was a terrible reflection.

He thought, too, of the native land he might never see again; and—

"Of many a tale of love and war
That mingled with the scene;
Of Bothwell's bank that bloom'd so dear,
And Bothwell's bonny Jean."

But he thought of Anna only with anger, for no human heart could ever contain two loves. Jane Gordon he remembered with feelings of compunction, when he mused on her unrepining gentleness and devoted love; but he thought most of Mary, and, forgetting that he was himself a captive, laid many a wild and futile scheme to free and to avenge her.

He could not flee from his own thoughts. They *would* come again and again, weighing like an incubus upon his mind, alike in the bright sunshine of noon and the solemn silence of night; amid the heedless revelry of the Norwegian officers he longed for solitude, and in solitude the stings of conscience drove him back to revelry and wine; and thus the deep and morbid horror that hour by hour, and day by day, had every where pursued him, settled down like a cloud of darkness on his soul.

Long since satiated with pleasure, sick of ambition, and wearied of the world, he now found how deep were the stings of unavailing regret.

The day, we have said, went down, and night spread her spangled mantle on the darkened water and the moonlit sea.

Brightly in its calm beauty the evening star arose from the dark-heaving line of the northern ocean, and Bothwell thought of the time when he had last watched that orb expanding on the night, as it rose above the ruined spire of St. Mary-in-the-Field.

At that moment, a cry—that seemed to be wafted over the surface of the water—made his ears and heart tingle, as it passed away on the skirt of the hollow wind.

Bothwell grew ghastly pale, he covered his ears with his hands, and rushed away to his cabin in despair.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE VAIN RESOLUTION.

She told me all,
And as she spoke her eyes led captive mine—
Her voice was low, and thrill'd me to the bone;
She ceased and all was silence, whilst I sat
Like one who, long entranced by melody,
Feels still the music in the soul
Though sound has died away.
Sir C. Lindesay's Alfred.

Christian Alborg had departed with his prisoners; and, unnoticed and uncared for, Konrad stood in the hall, where he had once been so welcome a guest. A sensation of loneliness and bitterness ran through his mind. There was the chair of the old knight Rosenkrantz, with his sword and long leather gloves hung upon it, just as he had last left them; his walking-cane stood in a corner, and his furred boots were beside it; the place was identified with his presence—full of his memory; and his bluff round figure, in his ample red gaberdine and trunk hose, his kind old face, with its mild blue eyes and fair bushy beard, seemed to flit between the shadowy columns of the ancient hall.

Konrad had no intention of remaining in a place where all was so changed to him; but, ere he turned to leave it for ever, he paused a moment irresolutely. Since last he stood there, all that had passed appeared like a dream, but a sad and bitter one. His heart melted within him at the very thought of his own desolation; a shower of tears would have relieved him, but he had none to shed, for his eyes felt dry and stony.

"Why should I remain here, where not one is left to care for me now?" he said with a smile, as if in scorn of the weakness that made him linger, and, turning away, was about to retire, when a sound arrested him; once more the arras rose and fell, and Anna stood before him. He gazed upon her without the power of utterance.

She was alone.

With a heightened colour in her cheek, and a charming timidity in her eye, she approached, and, touching his arm, said—

"Christina told me thou wert here, Konrad; and wouldst thou go without one greeting—one farewell—to me?"

Her accents sank into his inmost soul; he trembled beneath her touch, and felt all his resolution melting fast away.

"Unkind Konrad!" said she, with one of her sad but most winning smiles, "is this the friendship thou didst vow to me at Westeray?"

"I have learned, Anna, that love can never be succeeded by friendship. It

runs to the other extreme—the impulses of the human heart cannot pause midway."

"Thou hast learned to hate me, then?"

"Heaven forbid!" replied Konrad, clasping his hands; "hate thee, Anna? oh no!"

His eyes were full of the sweetness and ardour of the days of their first love, and Anna's filled with tears.

"I have long wished," she faltered, in a low and broken voice, while seating herself on the bench of one of those deeply-recessed windows near them—"I have long wished to see thee once more," she repeated, without raising her timid eyes, "to implore—not thy pardon, dear Konrad, for that I have no right to expect—but—but that thou wilt not remember me with bitterness"——

Konrad muttered something—he knew not what.

"I feel, Konrad, that I owe thee much for all I have made thee suffer; and I have now seen the worth and faith of thy heart when contrasted with mine own, and I blush for my weakness—my wickedness—my folly. Thou mayest deem this unwomanly—indelicate; but in love we are equal, and why may not one make reparation as the other—I as well as thou? I have lived, I say, to learn the value of the heart that loved me so well, and which, in a moment of frenzy—infatuation—O, dearest Konrad! call it what thou wilt—I forsook for another—another who betrayed me by a semblance of religious rites—oh! spare me the rest!" ....

"Anna," said Konrad, in a choking voice, as he rose to retire—but, instead, drew nearer to her; "though my eye may be hollow, my cheek pale, and my heart soured and saddened, its first sentiment for thee hath never altered. Anna—Anna, God knoweth that it hath not! For all thou hast made me endure for the past two years—from my heart—from my soul, I forgive thee, and I pray that thou mayest be happy. Anna—dearest Anna—I am going far away from the hills and woods of Bergen, to join the Lubeckers, or perhaps the Knights of Rhodes in their warfare in the distant East, for I have doomed myself to exile; but I still regard thee as I did, when we were in yon far isle of Westeray—as my sister—as my friend. As we first met in this old castle hall, when thou wert but a guileless girl and I a heedless boy, so shall we now part. All is forgotten—all is forgiven. And now—farewell; may the mother of God bless thee!"

He kissed her hand, and his tears fell upon it; he turned to leave the hall, but a giddiness came over him, and a film overspread his eyes.

He still felt the hand of Anna in his: another moment, and she sank upon his breast. All her love for him had returned; and all her womanly delicacy, and overweening pride, had given way before the more tender and generous impulses this sudden reunion with her early lover had called up within her.

"Oh, Konrad!" she whispered, while almost suffocated by her tears, "if my

heart, though seared and saddened, is still prized by thee, it is thine, as in the days of our first love."

And, borne away by his passion, the forgiving Konrad pressed her close and closer to his breast. "And here," sayeth the Magister Absalom in his quaint papers, "here endeth the most important Boke in this our Historie."

CHAPTER XXIII.

RETRIBUTION.

Vanish'd each pleasure—vanish'd all his woes,
Nor Hope nor Fear disturb his long repose;
He saw the busy world—'twas but to-day!
A keen spectator of life's motley play—
The curtain falls—the scene is o'er.
Hallor's Eternity.

The summer wore away—and the winter approached.

By order of Frederick II., the conqueror of the Ditmarsians, Bothwell had been transmitted, heavily ironed—an insult under which his proud spirit writhed in agony—from the great castle of Kiobenhafen to that of Malmö, a strong and gloomy fortress on the Swedish coast, washed by the waters of the Sound, and overlooking a little town then possessed by the Danes.

There he was kept, in sure and strict ward, by a knight named Beirn Gowes, captain of Malmö and governor of Draxholm, in a vaulted apartment, with windows grated, and doors sheathed with iron, grooved in the enormous granite walls, to prevent escape; and there, the long and weary days, and weeks, and months, rolled on in dull and unchanging monotony.

Of those stirring events that were acting at home he knew nothing, for never a voice fell on his ear in that far-northern prison; and thus he heard not of Mary's escape from the isle of Lochleven—her futile flight to seek succour of the false Elizabeth, and that she, too, was pining a captive in the castle of Nottingham. He knew not that all his sounding titles, and those old heraldic honours which, by their good swords, his brave forefathers had acquired, and borne on their bucklers through many a Scottish battle-field, had been gifted away with his lordly castles, his fertile fiefs, and noble baronies, to the upholders of the new *régime*—the Lords

of the Secret Council. Of the fury of the Douglas wars—of Moray's death, and Lennox's fall—of Morton's power and pride, his lust and wrath, under which the capital languished and the country writhed. Of all these he heard not a word; for he was utterly forgotten and deserted by all. Even Jane of Huntly, his countess, that gentle being who had once loved him so well, after their divorce had soon learned to forget him in the arms of her former lover, the Earl of Sutherland, and to commit to oblivion that she had once been the happy bride of the splendid Bothwell.

He knew not, too, of the terrible vengeance that had fallen upon his numerous adherents,—how their heads were bleaching on the battlements of Edinburgh—how their castles were ruined, their families forfeited, their names proscribed; while James, Earl of Morton, the mainspring and prime mover of all these plots and conspiracies, of which his (Bothwell's) frantic love and mad ambition had made him the too ready tool, was flourishing, for a brief term, in unrestricted pride and plenitude of power, as Regent and Governor of Scotland.

Black Hob of Ormiston, Bolton, Hay of Tallo, with French Paris and others, who had been transmitted by Anna Rosenkrantz to Scotland, were solemnly arraigned as traitors and regicides before the supreme legal tribunal at Edinburgh, and sentenced to be decapitated and quartered.

In that grated chamber of the old tower of Holyrood, in which Konrad had been confined, young Hepburn of Bolton sat counting the minutes that yet remained to him between time and eternity.

The hand of retribution had come heavily upon him.

That day he had seen his three companions led forth to die—to be dismembered as traitors, to have their bowels torn out from their half-strangled and yet breathing bodies, and their limbs fixed to the ramparts of the city barriers; and that day, with sorrow and contrition, he had confessed to the ministers of Moray all his share in Bothwell's plots and crimes.

As if in mockery of his sad thoughts, bright through the iron grating streamed the setting sunlight in all the beauty of a warm autumnal eve.

At that sunset he gazed long and fixedly, for it was the last he would ever behold, and the tears filled his sunken eyes and bedewed his faded cheek, for more lovely was that evening sun than ever he had seen it, as, sinking behind the long ridge of the Calton, it cast a farewell gleam on the old rood spire and abbey towers of Holyrood—on the hills of emerald green and rocks of grey basalt that overhang them—on the woods of Restalrig, and the narrow glimpse of the blue and distant ocean beyond them—and he felt that on all this his eyes were about to be closed for ever.

For ever I did his mind recoil at this terrible reflection? No; but it often trembled between the depth of thought and the abyss of despair.

Better it was to die, than to linger out a life, haunted by the burning recollection of those crimes, upon which the force of circumstances, rather than any evil propensity of his own, had hurried him.

And Mariette—since the hour when first he knew her love was lost, he had felt comparatively happy, to what he had been since that terrible night on which he took such vengeance upon her, and on her kingly lover, in the house of the Kirk-of-Field—that vengeance for which he was now to die.

As he mused on all his blighted hopes and blasted prospects—of what he was and what he might have been—the young man groaned aloud in the agony of his soul; he wreathed his hands among his heavy dark-brown hair, and bowed his head upon the hard wooden bench, which served him alike for bed and table.

The sunlight died away—the gloaming came, and the walls of the old abbey, within whose aisles the dead of ages lay, looked dark and dreary; the silence of his prison increased, and a deep reverie—a stupefaction—fell upon the mind of Bolton.

A hand that touched his shoulder lightly aroused him; he looked up, and saw—could it be possible?

Mariette!

"Oh no! it is a spectre!" he muttered, and covered his face with his hands! Again he ventured to look up, and the same figure met his eye—the same face was gazing sadly upon him. The features—for he summoned courage to regard them fixedly—were indeed those of the Mariette Hubert he had loved so well; but the bloom of their beauty had fled; her dark French eyes had lost their lustre and vivacity; her cheeks their roses, and her lips their smiles.

Her countenance was full of grief, and expressed the most imploring pity. Hepburn gazed steadily upon her; and though for a moment he deemed her a supernatural vision, he felt no fear. Suddenly he sprang to her side, and threw an arm around her form—her passive but round and palpable form—exclaiming as he did so,—

"Mariette—my own Mariette, is it thou? By what miracle did the mercy of God enable thee to escape me? Speak—speak—convince me that it is thee, and to-morrow I will die happy; for I will be guiltless of thy death, Mariette—thine—thine! Oh, that moment of crime, of vengeance, of madness—how dear it has cost me! Speak to me, adorable Mariette—thou livest?"

"I do, dearest Bolton, by the mercy of Heaven."

"True, true!" he gasped; "for thy lover had none." He groaned aloud, and regarded her with eyes full of grief, astonishment, and passion.

"I found myself, when day was breaking, lying near the ruins of the king's house. I had been insensible I know not how long, and was covered with bruises, and almost dying; for" (she shuddered, and added with a sad but tender smile)

"thou, dear heart! in the blindness of thy fury, did so nearly destroy me"——

"Oh, now! when standing upon the verge of my grave, Mariette, remind me not of that moment of dread and despair. Thou wert found"——

"By an aged man, in other days a prebend of St. Giles, Father Tarbet, who conveyed me to a cottage near the ruined convent of Placentia, where an old woman, that in a better time had been a sister of St. Katherine, dwelt; and to her care he bequeathed me. A raging fever preyed upon me long; but, by the goodness of Heaven, and the tenderness of the poor old recluse, I recovered; and, disguised in this long cloak, by presenting to the javellour of Holyrood a forged order purporting to be from the Regent Moray, have gained admittance to thy cell, and am come to save thee, John of Bolton, and to take thy place till to-morrow—to be freed as a woman, or to die in thy name as fate may direct."

Hepburn wept with rapture to find that he had not destroyed her in that fit of insanity which jealousy and passion had brought upon him; hot and salt were the tears that fell upon her hands, as he kissed them again and again.

"The darkness increases apace," said Mariette; "take thou this mantle and broad hat, lower thy stature, stoop if thou canst, pass forth, and may God attend thee! Leave me in thy place—they cannot have the heart to destroy me, a poor French girl; and yet," she added, in an under tone, "what matters it now?"

"Destroy thee? thou the sister of French Paris—of that Nicholas Hubert, who this day died amid the yells of the infuriated thousands who crowded the Lawnmarket like a living sea!"

"True, true, I am his sister!" said Mariette, wringing her hands; "God sain and assoilzie thee, my dear, dear brother; but in this, my disguise of page, I have another chance of escaping, for Charles la Fram, Duval, and Dionese la Brone, who, thou mayest remember, were in thy band of archers, and now serve as arquebusiers in the guards of the Regent Moray, are at this moment sentinels in the Abbey Close, and by their connivance, for the love of old France, I am sure—oh! quite sure—of escaping in safety. Be persuaded, dearest monsieur, I am as certain of freedom as thou art of a terrible death."

"And by the ignominious rope—the badge of shame—amid a gazing and reviling multitude. John Hepburn, of the house of Bolton—the last of a line whose pennons waved at Halidon—to die thus! God of mercy! any risk were better than the agony of such an end."

"Away, then, and long ere the sun rises we shall both be free."

"At this hour, then, to-morrow eve, thou wilt meet me, Mariette."

"Meet thee—meet thee!—where?"

"At the Rood Chapel, by the loan side that leads to Leith."

"Ah, monsieur! 'tis a wild and solitary place."

"But a safe one. Thou knowest it then—near the Gallowlee. I have much—

oh, very much—to say to thee, and many a question to ask. Promise thou wilt come, Mariette, for the sake of that dear love thou didst once bear me!"

"Once," she repeated mournfully; "well, be it so. I promise—at this hour, then; but away while all around us is so quiet and still—take this pass, and leave me to my own ingenuity for the rest."

Bolton wrapped himself in the mantle, and drew the broad Spanish hat over his face.

"Ah, *mon Dieu*! La Fram and Duval will never be deceived!" said Mariette, with anguish, as she surveyed his towering figure.

"Trust to me and the gloom of this autumnal night. To-morrow, then—at the Rood Chapel—remember!" said Hepburn, taking her hands in his, and pausing irresolutely, until impelled by that old regard which, when once kindled in the human heart, can never wholly die, he drew her towards him, and kissed her; but with more calm tenderness, and with less of passion, than ever he had done in other days.

"Go, go!" said Mariette, in a choking voice, "I deserve not this honour from thee. Guilty have I been, and false; but St. Mary be my witness that I speak the truth—I was besieged, betrayed, and dazzled by the artful king; the rest was fear, despair, and frenzy all!"

She pressed her hands upon her bosom, as if it was about to burst.

"I can conceive all that *now*, Mariette," replied Hepburn, in the same broken voice, while he pressed her to his heart; "from my soul I forgive thee, as thou hast done me, the greater, the more awful ill, I meditated against thee."

They separated; but he had lingered so long, and time had fled so fast, that midnight tolled from the spire of the old abbey church before he had shown the pass bearing the forged signature of *James, Regent*, to the drowsy javellour, or gateward, avoided the sentinels at the outer porch, and issued into the palace gardens, from which, by scaling a wall, he easily made his way to the bare and desolate Calton.

At the east end of the hill there then lay many deep pits, overgrown with whin and bushes; deep, dangerous, and half-filled with water, the haunt of the hare and fuimart. These were known as the Quarry Holes, and were often the scene of a ducking for sorcery, and legal drowning for various crimes; and to these he fled for shelter and concealment; for though hundreds would gladly have afforded him both on his own barony of Bolton, which was only eighteen miles distant, and had been gifted to the (as yet unsuspected) secretary Maitland—there was not a man in Edinburgh but would instantly have surrendered him into the hands of the civil authorities—and to that punishment awarded him as Bothwell's abettor in the death of the Lord Darnley.

There, overcome by long deprivation of sleep, and the bitterness of his

thoughts for many a weary night and day, a deep slumber fell upon him, and the noonday sun of the morrow had soared into the wide blue vault of heaven, ere he awoke to consciousness and a remembrance of where he was—the fate from which he had escaped—the existence and the last devotion of Mariette.

Her existence! While lying in that desolate spot, he knew not what had been acted in the city that lay below the brow of the hill where he lurked in security.

In the grey twilight of that autumnal morning, which a dense and murky mist from the German sea rendered yet more gloomy, the prisoner in the tower of Holyrood had been led forth by the half-intoxicated doomster to die; and passing in her male disguise for Hepburn of Bolton, the repentant Mariette—as an atonement for the falsehood she had practised towards him—a faithlessness that had hurried him into crimes against his country, and plans of vengeance on his king—died on the scaffold, where her brother had perished but the day before—died with the secret of her sex on her lips—and died happy, that in doing so she might, by allaying all suspicion and pursuit, enable her lover to escape.

Young Hepburn knew not of this; but anxiously watched the passing day, and longed for evening, when he was to meet her at the Rood Chapel, a lonely little oratory situated on the open muirland midway between the Calton Hill and St. Anthony's Porte, the southern gate of Leith.

He heard the hum of Edinburgh ascending the hill-side, and the notes of its clocks on the passing wind as they struck the slow-seceding hours. The blue sky was above, and the dark-green whins were nodding from the rocks around him; at times, a red fox put forth its sharp nose and glancing eyes from its secret hole, or a fuimart, with its long body and bushy tail, shot past like an evil spirit; but nothing else disturbed the solitude of the place where he lay. Slowly the weary day rolled on, and he hailed with joy the last red rays of the sun, as they stole up the steep rocks of Salisbury, lingered for a moment on Arthur's rifted cone, and then died away.

The twilight soon came on; the young man crept from his hiding-place, and with an anxious heart descended the northern side of the hill, towards the place of meeting. The last flush of the set sun was lingering still behind the darkening Ochils; and amidst the smoke of busy Leith, the old spire of St. Mary, and St. Anthony's shattered tower, were still visible, but a favourable gloom and obscurity were veiling every thing; and Bolton hurried with a beating heart to the old oratory, burning to give Mariette the warm embrace, her devotion to him in his worst extremity so well deserved.

There was no one there.

Dismantled of its ornaments and statues, its font and altar, its door and windows, by reformers and thieves, the old chapel of the Holy Rood was desolate

and empty. The stone arches still sustained the groined roof; but the velvet moss and the tufted grass grew in the joints of the masonry, and clung to the carved crockets and grotesque corbels.

Long he waited, and anxiously he watched the loan, that, from the chasm below the Calton's western brow, led to Leith; but no one approached—not a footstep or a sound met his ear—but the wind, as it swept over the Gallowlee, whistling drearily in the open tracery of the chapel windows, and waving the tufts of grass and wallflower that grew in its mouldering niches.

Hour succeeded hour.

Midnight came, and an agony entered his soul, for he then feared, he knew not what—he dared not to think of it, but began hastily to traverse the rough horse-way that led to the city.

Near the chapel there stood a clump of ancient sycamores, and among them were two from which the branches had been lopped, and across the tops of these divested trunks, a beam was extended to serve for the gibbet, which obtained for the place the name it bears even unto this day—the Gallowlee—and thereon were usually exposed in chains the bodies of those who had been executed—a barbarous practice, which was common in England until a comparatively recent period.

A crowd of horrible thoughts filled the mind of Bolton; but, above all, two were most palpable before him—the image of Mariette as she had been when he loved her of old, and the gibbet.

He drew near it fearfully.

Behind this ill-omened spot, the landscape to the eastward was level, extending to the seashore; here and there low clumps of coppice and the rocks of Restalrig broke its horizontal outline. The sky was all of a cloudless white tint; there were no stars, there was no moon; but against that cold pale background, the trees and the beam of the gallows stood forth in strong relief and black outline.

On the right towered up the rocky Calton, a dark and undistinguishable mass.

A number of full-fed gleds and monstrous ravens, who built their nests in the sycamores, were perched on the beam of the gallows, where they clapped their dusky wings, and cawed and screamed as the disturber of their feast approached.

Two skeletons were swinging there in the night wind; and the remains of two other beings, evidently fresh from the hands of the doomster, swung beside them. One was headless and handless; but, by its bulk and vast conformation, Hepburn knew the body to be that of Black Hob of Ormiston.

The other, which was of much shorter stature and slighter make, hung by

the neck vibrating in the passing wind, which swayed it round and waved its long dark hair.

Fearfully, tremblingly, and scarcely daring to breathe, Hepburn of Bolton drew near it.

One glance sufficed him, and he rushed from the spot to return no more.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

MALMO.

Yes! there are sighs for the bursting heart,
And tears for the sleepless eye;
But tears and sighs and sympathy,
Are luxuries unknown to *me*.
The wretch immured in the dungeon-keep
May snatch an hour's repose;
And dream of home and the light of heaven
Ere he wake to misery's throes;
If *Hope* with her radiant light be there—
I mate with the swarthy fiend Despair!
Vedder.

Here, for a page or so, we resume the MSS. of the reverend and worthy Magister Absalom Beyer.

About this period, his diary, journal, or history (which you will), for it partakes of them all, suddenly breaks off, and there are left but a few fragments, referring to a later period.

One records the baptism of the sixth son of Anna and Konrad, whom King Frederick, for his valour in capturing a Lubeck frigate that ravaged the shores of Bergen, had created Count of Saltzberg, Lord of Welsöö, and governor of Bergenhuis; and the garrulous Magister records that this baptismal ceremony, at which he officiated, and which was celebrated with great splendour, was the seventh anniversary of that joyous day on which he had blessed the nuptial ring of Anna and Konrad in the old cathedral of the bishopric of Bergen; and he further records

the quantity of ale, wine, and dricka imbibed on the occasion, and the loads of venison, bread, and bergenvisch, eaten by the tenantry at the baptism of young Hans (for so baby the sixth was named); and how he screamed and kicked when the holy water fell on him, till he nearly sprang from his carved cradle, which was hollowed like a boat in the Norse fashion, lined with moss and velvet, and was borne by Christina Slingebunder, who had found her way from Westeray back to Bergen.

He also mentions that Konrad had grown somewhat florid, and rather more round in form, than when he had placed the ring on Anna's hand before that magnificent altar; and that she too, though retaining her youthful bloom, had (alas, for romance!) lost much of her slender and graceful aspect, and looked quite like the mother of the five chubby little ones, each of whom clung to her skirts with one hand, while the other was occupied with a great piece of the spiced christening cake, on which they were regaling with a satisfaction, equalled only by that of the Danish soldier, who, having again found the can and the cake offered on this occasion to Nippen, had appropriated them both to himself.

* * * * *

Ten years have elapsed since the reader last heard in these pages of Bothwell's hapless earl, and the lonely towers of Malmö.

Ten years!

And in all that long and weary time he had been a fettered felon within the iron walls of Malmö. Pining hopelessly in a captivity the most crushing to a heart so fierce and proud—to a soul so high-spirited and restless, with one thought ever before him—liberty and home; and though forgotten by Mary, or remembered only with a shudder, his old love for her had never died; and many a futile effort he made, by piteous letters and petitions, to Frederick II. of Demark—petitions so humble, that his once proud nature would have shrunk from their tenor—to interest himself, "pour la deliverance de la Royne sa Princesse Marie."[*]

[*] See Les Affaires de le Cante du Boduel.

But neither her deliverance or his own were ever achieved; for, were such a thing possible, even God seemed to have abandoned them to a fate that was alike inexorable and irresistible.

Year after year wore away, and the seasons succeeded each other in dreary and monotonous succession. This monotony was most intolerable in winter—the

long and desolate winter of the north; when the descending avalanche roared between the frozen peaks—when the ice cracked and burst in the narrow fiords, where the seals and walrusses slept in the rays of the moon—and when the northern lights, as they flashed behind the summits of the distant hills, filled the midnight sky with figures that were equally beautiful and terrible.

Ever and anon, in one of those dreary winters, when (as in A.D. 1333) all the harbours of the Sound were sheeted over with ice, and the shallow Baltic was frozen from Lubeck to the castle of Kiobenhafen, Bothwell sighed, as he thought of the great Yule-logs that blazed so merrily in many a Scottish hall, of the nut-brown ale and wine that flowed in many a quaigh and luggie; while the green holly branch and the mistletoe bough hung from the old roof-trees, and the mirth and joy of the season expanded every heart.

Then came the short spring, that lasted but a month, when the snow melted or lingered only on the distant peaks; when the streams burst their frosty barriers, and, with the roar of a thousand waterfalls, poured in silver currents over the rocks of the fiord, where the wild rasp, the dwarf birch, and the barberry, sprouted in the warmth of the coming sun.

And then, in the early mornings and the late nights of that northern region—nights when the sun sets at twelve P.M., he would gaze, dreamily, from his prison window on the waters of the Sound, until, to his fancy, they became like those of the Clyde, that swept round Bothwell bank, amid its dark green woods and sylvan solitude.

The summer passed, and winter would come again to spread snow and desolation over the face of the land; and so the time wore on, until its very monotony turned his impetuous brain, and he became a raving maniac!

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It was in the year of grace 1577, when a Scottish priest, one of those whom the Reformation had compelled to wander, in misery and penury, far from their native lands, appeared at the gates of Malmö, and sought permission of Beirn Gowes, knight castellan, to visit the unhappy captive.

The priest was a man about five-and-thirty; but the duties of his office, toil, and hardship, made him seem considerably older; his head was already becoming bald, even where he had no tonsure; his blue eyes were mild, and deep, and thoughtful; he leaned a little on a staff, and bore on his back the wallet containing a few of the necessaries required by him on his solitary pilgrimage; for he was one of those whose life had been devoted to spreading and upholding the

Catholic faith in those northern lands, where it had been most severely shaken; and, amid hardship and danger, his days were spent in exhorting the faithful, recovering the faithless, and confirming the wavering.

He stood within the vault where Bothwell lay, and, folding his hands upon his breast, regarded him fixedly with eyes that filled with tears.

Oh, what a change was there!

Visible only in the twilight that struggled through the open grating of that vaulted dungeon, the captive lay in a corner upon a little damp straw, chained by the middle to the wall like a wild animal; he was completely nude, and his coal-black hair and beard, now beginning to be grizzled, flourished in one thick matted and luxuriant mass, from amid which his wild black eyes gleamed like two bright stars. They were hollow, dilated, and ghastly. His form was attenuated to the last degree; every rib, joint, and muscle being horribly visible; he resembled an inmate of the grave—a chained fiend—any thing but a man in the prime of life, for the miserable being had barely reached his fortieth year.

When he moved, the straw rustled, and the rusty chain that fretted his tender skin rattled grimly in the ears of the priest, who knelt down in the further end of the dungeon, and prayed with fervour; but Bothwell neither saw nor heard him.

One of those glimmerings of the past that so frequently haunted him, was at that moment coming like a vision before his mind. Exhausted by illness, and the fever of his spirit, the poor maniac had become calm; and his thoughts were slowly emerging from the mist that obscured them, and arranging themselves in order and form, as he struggled back into a consciousness of existence—the brief consciousness that so often precedes the oblivion of the grave.

In the figures made by the damp on his dungeon wall, he saw the same pale face, with its weeping eyes and white veil, that had haunted him so often, ere his overcharged mind found a relief in insanity. Mary—*la Reine Blanche!* he stretched his bony arms towards the figure; but still it remained there, neither advancing nor retiring, till a change came over its features.

Then its eyes seemed to fill with a terrible glare, and the shriek that once rang through the Kirk-of-Field, seemed to rend the massive vault, and to pierce his tingling ears like a poniard. Then he dashed his hands against them, and grovelled down among the straw, to shut out that dreadful sound—the dying cry of Darnley!

"Oh, Father of mercy and of justice!" said the priest, beating himself upon the breast; "how dreadful is thy vengeance, when thou permittest the sinner to mete out the meed of his own sin!"

"A voice! a voice—who spoke?" said the Earl, struck by the unusual sound. "Hah! was it thee?"

His tone was low and husky, and the sounds seemed to come with labour from his furry throat.

"Was it thee—oh, say it was thee!" he continued, as he paused, and seemed to wrestle mentally with his madness, till he overcame it, and, by obtaining one further revelation of the past, became more and more cognizant of the present, and alive to the real horrors of his situation. "Memory," said he, passing a hand thoughtfully over his brow—"Oh, memory! what a curse art thou; and, when united to remorse, how doubly so! Hah! those eyes," he groaned; "those weeping eyes again! ... But that voice—it was hers! so soft—so gentle! it came back to me like a strain of old music on the wind of memory—as it has often come in the slow hours of many a cheerless day, and the dead calm silence of many a changeless night—through the long dark vista of many monotonous years. Years—how many! oh, how many! Dost thou smile with thine unearthly features? ha! ha!" ...

Like sunshine emerging from a mist, the past was coming gradually back; and suddenly, like a flash of light, one bright gleam of thought brought all the long-forgotten days of other years before him.

The visionary saw her—Mary—the bright, the beautiful, the innocent, as she had shone in the buoyancy of youth and loveliness, when surrounded by the chivalry of France, and the splendour of the house of Bourbon.

The scene changed—she was standing timidly, irresolute, and pale, on the shores of her half-barbarized native land; again she appeared—it was with the diadem of the Bruces on her brow, and the orb of the Alexanders on her sceptre, as she presided over the first of her factious parliaments, in the ancient hall of the Scottish estates. He saw her standing with the triumphant Darnley at the altar of Sancte Crucis, with more in her air and eye of the timid bride than the stately queen, blushing and abashed by the side of her handsome and exulting vassal.

Then came the memory of that terrible hour in the Kirk-of-Field—the night in the towers of Dunbar, and that fruitless cry for mercy—the sad low wail that chilled the ruffian heart of Ormiston.

He saw to what he had reduced that bright and happy being, who, like a butterfly or an Indian bird, was born alone for the sunshine and the most flowery paths of life! He saw her robbed of her purity and sweetness—crushed like a rose beneath the coil of a snake; and fancy painted her in a prison like his own, sad, solitary, and desolate—broken in heart, and crushed in spirit—blighted in name and fame and honour—withered in hope, and faded in form—a household word of scorn to the cruel and the factious, and all by him—by him, who had loved her so madly and so wickedly.

These thoughts poured like a current through the floodgate of memory; each and all came back with returning consciousness; and gradually his career

arose before him, like one stupendous curse.

He sighed heavily.

"God be with thee, thou sinful and vainglorious—thou rash and headstrong—lord!" said the priest; "now thou seest to what thy manifold transgressions against the blessed law have brought thee."

"It was my doom—my destiny," replied the Earl, pressing his bony hands upon his thin, wan temples.

"Nay, Lord Earl," replied the other, in a sad and broken accent; "unless it be that a man maketh his own destiny, as assuredly thou didst thine."

"And who," he asked, endeavouring to pierce the gloom with his hopeless eye; "who art thou that speakest thus to Bothwell?"

"One, in other days, Lord Bothwell's steadfast friend. I am John Hepburn of Bolton—hast thou quite forgotten me? I was long the partner of thy folly—the abettor of thine insane ambition—the partaker of thy damning guilt! *O miserere mei Deus!*"

"Oh, Bolton! John of Bolton!" exclaimed the fettered Earl, bursting into tears, and stretching forth his thin worn hands, which the priest grasped with fervour; "I know thee now—and where I am, and *what* I am. And thou art now a priest? Oh, how much thou art to be envied! Years—years have gone past me as the wind passes over the ocean. As the waves arise and sink, these years have come and gone, and have left no trace on my memory. But I feel that I am dying now!" he exclaimed in an unearthly voice; "Oh, God of my fathers! look down with pity on me, the most abject of their race! Oh, John of Bolton! if Heaven should be as unforgiving as earth—if God should be as inexorable as man!"

"Think not so, Bothwell"——

"Oh! it were indeed better that I should perish altogether, and pass into oblivion."

"Say not so," replied Bolton; "behold the flowers of the field, and the fruits of the earth; they spring up—they bloom—they wither, and die, but only to be reproduced at another season, more beautiful and blooming than before. So it is with men—and so will it be with thee. All human memory is freighted with care and sad remembrance"——

"But few with such remorse as mine."

"This contrition and grief are good," replied the priest, as, with kindling eyes, he pointed upwards to Heaven; "by perishing thou shalt be preserved, and die but to be renewed for ever, and in such glory as the mind of angels can alone conceive; for He who is above us, beareth aloft those scales, from which, on one hand, he metes out eternal life to the good and contrite—on the other, the eternal punishment to the unrepentant."

"Thou hast been lately in Scotland," said the Earl abruptly.

"Nay; not for ten long years," replied the priest calmly.

"Ten, ten!" reiterated Bothwell, passing his hands across his brow; "and what of Mary?"

"She is still a captive, with the axe of the English queen hanging over her devoted head."

Bothwell started, as if he would have leaped from the ground; but his strength failed him, and he sank heavily on the straw among which he was chained.

"My energies, so briefly gained, are sinking fast again; but ere they leave me, and perhaps for ever—oh! thou who art a priest, bless me, for I have sinned! Hear my confession—let it be written out, and attested by the captain of my prison, that my last earthly act may be one of justice to her whom I have so deeply wronged. Oh, John of Bolton! thou knowest well that she was the most innocent and artless of all God's creatures! Quick, quick! as an atonement to her, and to the world, for all I have done—hasten, ere it be too late!" cried the Earl sinking back, overcome by weakness and despair.

The friar knocked hurriedly on the dungeon door; it was opened by a Danish pikeman, who, by his request, hastened to summon the attendance of Biern Gowes, the castellan of Malmö and governor of Draxholm. Unwillingly he came, accompanied by Christian Alborg, Otto Brawe, captain of the king's castle of Ottenbrocht, Baron Gullemstierne, and others, with whom he had been drinking skiedam, till their faces, where visible through their red Danish beards and outrageous whiskers, were flushed like scarlet—and in their presence, that document now so well known, the CONFESSION of Bothwell's many crimes, and Mary's innocence of all that she had ever been accused of, was written, attested, and sealed up for transmission to King Frederick.

What a subject for a picture would this episode have formed!

That dreary vault of red granite, half-veiled in dusky obscurity, save where the moonlight struggled through a narrow slit on one hand; while, on the other, the flickering light of a single torch shed its fitful glare on the unearthly form of the dying Earl—hollow-eyed, pale, and attenuated to a skeleton—chained by the waist to his bed of straw, and sinking fast, with the death rattle almost in his throat; the bald head and dark robe of the priest, who knelt by his side writing down his dying words—that priest in other days his friend and knightly comrade—on the tall, burly figures of the sleepy Danish governor and his friends, with their long beards, and fantastic costumes trimmed with sable fur, stooping over the sputtering torch, to hear the faint but terrible words of those pale lips that were about to close for ever.

"Now, blessed be God, it is done!" cried the Earl, closing his eyes; "for I feel that I am passing from among you. I am dying! Oh, John of Bolton! in this

dread moment let me think that thou at least will stand by my grave—will say one prayer for my soul; and, in memory of the days of other years, will remember me with pity and forgiveness!"

Bolton pressed his clammy hand, but there was no return, for the jaw relaxed, and the eyes turned back within their sockets, announced that the soul of the Earl had fled.

* * * * * * * *

His grave lay under the old castle wall, in a lonely little dell.

It was shaded by the light leaves of the dwarf-birch and the purple flowers of the lilac tree; the blue forget-me-not, the white strawberry, and the yellow daisy, were planted there by the kind-hearted Swedes, in memory of the poor stranger that had found a grave so far from his home, and from where the dust of his forefathers lay.

On St. Bothan's eve, for many a returning year, a wandering priest was seen to kneel beside that lonely grave, with eyes downcast, and a crucifix in his clasped hands; and after praying he would go sadly away, but whither no one knew.

Year after year passed on, and still he came to offer up that promised prayer for the repose of the dead man's soul; though on the grave the weeds grew long and rank, and he who lay within it had long since mingled with the dust.

Those who first remembered the priest when they were little children, saw him still returning when they were men and women in the prime of life—but then he was decrepit and old.

The last time he was seen was in the reign of King Christian IV., about the year 1622. His form was then bent with extreme old age, and he leaned upon a staff; his hair was thin and white—his cheeks were hollow, and he wept as he prayed.

He gazed long and wistfully at the grassy tomb, and tottered away to return no more.

Where that poor priest died, no man knew.

And there lay the deserted grave in its loneliness, by the shore of the northern sea, with the long grass waving on its solemn ridge, till in time it became flattened and effaced, and its memory was forgotten; for no kind hand ever raised a stone to mark where that memorable instance of ambition and misrule, the last

Earl of the old line of Hailes and Bothwell, lay.

NOTES.

ANNA ROSENKRANTZ.

The foregoing story has been conceived from a passage in SUHM'S "SAMLINGES," or Collections for the History of Denmark.

As stated in the romance, there is every reason to believe that James Hepburn, the famous Earl of Bothwell, was married early in life to a Norwegian lady, Anne Throndson (daughter of Christopher Throndson), prior to his marriage with Lady Jean Gordon, of the house of Huntly, and that his possessing, by her, certain lands in Orkney, was the reason for his obtaining the Dukedom of these Isles in 1567.—(See *Les Affaires du Conte de Boduel*: Bannatyne Club.)

After his battle with, and defeat at sea by, the celebrated Sir William Kirkaldy of Grange, Bothwell entered Karmesound, a harbour between the island of Karm and the mainland, where he was found by Captain Christian Alborg, commander of the *Biornen*, or Great Bear, a Danish ship of war. He immediately demanded Bothwell's passports and licence for sailing with flag displayed and cannon bent in the Danish seas; and, failing their production, requested the Earl to follow him to Bergen up the Jelta Fiord. In his declaration or report, Alborg states, "That among the Scottish crew there was one dressed in old torn and patched boatswain's clothes, who, some time afterwards, stated himself to be the supreme ruler of all Scotland."

This was the Earl, with whom he reached the castle of Bergen on the 2nd September, 1567.

The governor of the castle and province, as stated in the romance, was Erick Rosenkrantz, a wealthy Danish noble, who, on the captain's report, appointed a committee of twenty-four gentlemen to examine the captive. They met on the 23rd September; among them were the bishop and four councillors of Bergen, who successively questioned Bothwell. He requested and obtained leave to reside in the city. Among his followers, we are told, there was found "one David Wood, a famous pirate."

Magister Absalom Beyer, the minister of Bergen, who has left behind him a diary, called *The Chapter Book*, extending from the year 1533 to 1570, recorded the following, which is extracted from SUHM'S "SAMLINGES."

"1567, *September* 2—Came in (to Bergen harbour) the ship *Royal David*, of which Christian Alborg is captain. He had captured a Scottish noble, named James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell, Duke of Orkney and Shetland, who had been wedded to the Queen of Scotland. He was suspected to have been in the plot against the King's life. The Council of the kingdom having revolted against the Queen, this Earl escaped, and has come hither to Norway.

"1567, *September* 17—I upbraided the Lady Anne, the daughter of Christopher Throndson, that the Earl of Bothwell had taken her from her native country, and yet would not keep her as his lawful wife, which he had promised her to do, with hand, mouth, and letters, which letters she caused to be read before him; and, whereas, he has three wives living—firstly, herself—secondly, another in Scotland, from whom he has bought (divorced?) himself—and, thirdly, Queen Mary. The Lady Anne opined, 'that he was good for nothing.' Then he promised her an annual rent of a hundred dollars from Scotland, and a ship with all her anchors and cordage complete.

"1567, *September* 25—The Earl went to the Castle, where Erick Rosenkrantz did him great honour.

"1567, *September* 28—Erick Rosenkrantz made a splendid banquet for the Earl and his followers.

"1567, *September* 30—The Earl departed on board the David, and was carried captive into Denmark, *where he yet remains* in the Castle of Malmo at this time, 1568.

"1567, *October* 10—Part of the Earl's men were returned to Scotland, on beard a small pink which Erick Rosenkrantz lent them, and, it is said, they were all put to death on their landing."

The only discrepancy lies in one statement of the Magister and the Committee; the former calls the Danish ship, the David; the latter, *Biornen*; but probably the Captain Alborg commanded two bearing these names.

From other passages in the diary, we find that so early as 1563, Lady Anna Rosenkrantz moved in the best circle in the province (which she could not have done as Bothwell's mistress); and also that she was usually named *Skottefruin*, or the Scottish lady. Her second sister, Dorothy, was married to John Stewart, a gentleman of Shetland; and the third, Else', was thrice married—the last time to Axel Mouatt, a Scottish gentleman settled in Norway.

The song sung by Anna in the first volume, is an old Norse or Lapland ballad, and is taken from Consett's *Remarks* in a Tour through Lapland.

II.—THE QUEEN'S APOTHECARY.

Three documents are still preserved in the General Register House of Edinburgh, from which we learn the name of this person, and other interesting items concerning that murder in the Kirk-of-Field, which bears so prominent a place in the romance.

On the 12th February, this precept, written by the Earl of Huntly, was issued by the Queen's order to Mr Robert Richardson, treasurer of Scotland, to pay £40 for perfuming the King's body.

"My Lord Thesaurar, forsamekle as the Queenis Majestie and Counsell has direckett ane Pottinger and Schirurgen to caus perfume the Kingis body, and in respect that there is syndri thingis requirit to the samyn quhilkis thay hadde nocht, heirfore the Queenis Majestie has ordanit me to advertis you, that ye cans delyver fourtie pundis for performance of sick necessars as appertenis thairtill, quhilkis sal be allouit to you, and delyver the same to the Pottinger, and tak his vritting thairon; and for my awin part, I vald pray you effectualy that the said soume war perfarmit with diligence and delyverit in all haist, in respect the same rynis to the Queenis Majesties honor and the hale cuntrey.

"At the Palyce of Halirudhous, the xij. februar, 1566.

"Your L. guid freind, HUNTLYE."

"To my Lord Thesraur."

(In dorso.)

"Je, Martin Picauet, appore de la Royne de Scosse, Douairiere de France, confesse auair Recu de Mr. Robert Richardson, tresorier des finances de la diste dame, la soume de quatre vintz livres Tourn., pour la fourniture des drogues pour l'ambamemente de Roy, de la quelle soume prometz en tenir compt au dist tresoreir, et a tous auttres Tesmointz mon seing Manuel cy mis le xij., jour de februier mil cinq cent soixante et six, auant pasques.

"E. PICAUET."

The High Treasurer's Accounts contain two interesting entries for the above purpose,

"*Item*, the xij. day of Februar, be the Queenis grace's speciall command to *Martine Picauet*, ypothegar, to mak furnesing of droggis, spices, and utheris necessaris for oppining and perfuming of the Kingis grace Majesties umquhile bodie, as his acquittance shawin upon compt beris, ... xl. li.

"*Item*, for colis, tubbis, hardis, barrellis, and utheris necessaris preparit for bowalling of the Kingis grace. ... xlvj. s."

For more information concerning this, see the third volume of ARCHÆOLOGIA SCOTICA, from which this is taken.

III.—QUEEN MARY'S ARCHERS.

"The Archearis of our Soverane Ladyis Gaird," seem to have numbered only seventy-five on their muster roll, in the books of the Comptroller and Collector of the Thirds of Benefices, 1st April, 1562. The pay list is as follows:—

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"*Item*, To the Captain of the Guard, . . . . . v. c. lib.
"To Robert Stewart, Ensign, . . . . . j. c. l. lib.
"To Corporal Jenat  . . . . . l. v. li.
"To Captain Bello . . . . . j. c. lib.
"To Captain Hew Lawder  . . . . . lxxv. lib."
```

Six Frenchmen, Dionese and Charles La Brone, Duval, La Bram, La Fram, Savoy, and a Trumpeter, appear on the list.

This garde-du-corps, which were enrolled under Sir Arthur Erskine, 1st April, 1562, or not quite a year after the Queen's return from France, continued under pay till 1567, when they were disbanded on her imprisonment in Lochleven. See the *Maitland Club Miscellany*.

IV.—BOTHWELL.

The following document is so little known, and so immediately relates to the melancholy fate of the unhappy hero of these pages, that an apology is almost unnecessary for presenting it here to the reader. It is the royal order for imprisoning him in the Castle of Malmö:—

Til Biorn Kaas.

"FREDERICK—Be it known unto you, that we have ordered our well-beloved Peder Oxe, our man, Councillor and Marshall of the Kingdom of Denmark, to send the Scottish Earl, who resides in the Castle of Copenhagen, over to our

Castle of Malmo, where he is to remain for some time. Therefore we request of you, that you will prepare the same vaulted room in the Castle where the Marshal Eyler Hardenberg had his apartment; and that you will cover with mason-work the private place in the same chamber; and where the iron bars of the windows may not be sufficiently strong and well guarded, that you will have them repaired; and when he arrives, that you will put him in the said chamber, give him a bed and good entertainment, as Peder Oxe will further direct and advise you; and that you, *before all things*, will keep a strong guard, and hold in good security, the said Earl, as you may best devise, in order that he shall not escape.

"THER MET SKEER WOR WILGE. (Thereby our will is done.)

"Written at Fredericksborg, the 28th day of December, of the year after the birth of Christ, 1567."

(See *Les Affaires du Conte de Boduel*, 4to.)

END OF VOL. III.

M'CORQUODALE AND CO., PRINTERS, LONDON.
WORKS, NEWTON.

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