

even in that point in which thou didst deem thyself most strong, in thy spiritual pride and thy carnal wisdom. Thou hast laughed at and derided the inexperience of thy brethren—stoop thyself in turn to their derision—tell what they may not believe—affirm that which they will ascribe to idle fear, or perhaps to idle falsehood—sustain the disgrace of a silly visionary, or a willful deceiver.—Be it so; I will do my duty, and make ample confession to my superior. If the discharge of this duty destroys my usefulness in this house, God and Our Lady will send me where I can better serve them."

There was no little merit in the resolution thus piously and generously formed by Father Eustace. To men of any rank the esteem of their order is naturally most dear; but in the monastic establishment, cut off, as the brethren are, from other objects of ambition, as well as from all exterior friendship and relationship, the place which they hold in the opinion of each other is all in all.

But the consciousness how much he should rejoice the Abbot and most of the other monks of Saint Mary's, who were impatient of the unauthorized, yet irresistible control, which he was wont to exercise in the affairs of the convent, by a confession which would put him in a ludicrous, or perhaps even in a criminal point of view, could not weigh with Father Eustace in comparison with the task which his belief enjoined.

As, strong in his feelings of duty, he approached the exterior gate of the Monastery, he was surprised to see torches gleaming, and men assembled around it, some on horseback, some on foot, while several of the monks, distinguished through the night by their white scapularies, were making themselves busy among the crowd. The Sub-Prior was received with a unanimous shout of joy, which at once made him sensible that he had himself been the object of their anxiety.

"There he is! there he is! God be thanked—there he is, hale and fear!" exclaimed the vassals; while the monks exclaimed, "*Te Deum laudamus*—the blood of thy servants is precious in thy sight!"

"What is the matter children? what is the matter, my brethren?" said Father Eustace, dismounting at the gate.

"Nay, brother, if thou know'st not, we will not tell thee till thou art in the refectory," answered the monks; "suffice it that the Lord Abbot had ordered these, our zealous and faithful vassals, instantly to set forth to guard thee from imminent peril—Ye may ungrith your horses, children, and dismiss; and to-morrow, each who was at this rendezvous may send to the convent kitchen for a quarter of a yard of roast beef, and a black-jack full of double ale."*

The vassals dispersed with joyful acclamation,

* It was one of the few reminiscences of Old Parr, or Henry Jenkins, I forget which, that at some convent in the veteran's neighborhood, the community, before the dissolution, used to jole out roast-beef by the measure of feet and yards.

and the monks, with equal jubilee, conducted the Sub-Prior into the refectory.

CHAPTER X.

Here we stand—

Wondrous and well, may Heaven's high name be bless'd for'th
As erst, ere treason couch'd a lance against us.

DECKER.

No sooner was the Sub-Prior hurried into the refectory by his rejoicing companions, than the first person on whom he fixed his eye proved to be Christie of the Clinthill. He was seated in the chimney-corner, fettered and guarded, his features drawn into that air of sulky and turbid resolution with which those hardened in guilt are accustomed to view the approach of punishment. But as the Sub-Prior drew near to him, his face assumed a more wild and startled expression, while he exclaimed—"The devil! the devil himself, brings the dead back upon the living!"

"Nay," said a monk to him, "say rather that Our Lady foils the attempts of the wicked on her faithful servants—our dear brother lives and moves."

"Lives and moves!" said the ruffian, rising and shuffling towards the Sub-Prior as well as his chains would permit; "nay, then, I will never trust ashen shaft and steel point more—It is even so," he added, as he gazed on the Sub-Prior with astonishment; "neither wem nor wound—not as much as a rent in his frock!"

"And whence should my wound have come?" said Father Eustace.

"From the good lance that never failed me before," replied Christie of the Clinthill.

"Heaven absolve thee for thy purpose!" said the Sub-Prior, "wouldst thou have slain a servant of the altar!"

"To choose!" answered Christie; "the Fife men say, an the whole pack of ye were slain, there were more lost at Flodden."

"Villain! art thou heretic as well as murderer?"

"Not I, by Saint Giles," replied the rider; "I listened blithely enough to the Laird of Monance, when he told me ye were all cheats and knaves; but when he would have had me go hear one Wiseheart, a gopeller as they call him, he might as well have persuaded the wild colt that had flung one rider to kneel down and help another into the saddle."

"There is some goodness about him yet," said the Sacristan to the Abbot, who at that moment entered—"He refused to hear a heretic preacher."

"The better for him in the next world," answered the Abbot. "Prepare for death, my son—we deliver thee over to the secular arm of our bailie, for execution on the Gallow-hill by peep of light."

"Amen!" said the ruffian; "'tis the end I must have come by sooner or later—and what care I whether I feed the crows at Saint Mary's or at Carlisle?"

"Let me implore your reverend patience for an instant," said the Sub-Prior, "until I shall inquire—"

"What!" exclaimed the Abbot, observing him for the first time,—"Our dear brother restored to us when his life was unhop'd for!—nay, kneel not to a sinner like me—stand up—thou hast my blessing. When this villain came to the gate, accused by his own evil conscience, and crying out he had murdered thee, I thought that the pillar of our main aisle had fallen—no more shall a life so precious be exposed to such risks as occur in this border country; no longer shall one beloved and rescued of Heaven hold so low a station in the church as that of a poor Sub-Prior—I will write by express to the Primate for thy speedy removal and advancement."

"Nay, but let me understand," said the Sub-Prior; "did this soldier say he had slain me?"

"That he had transfixed you," answered the Abbot, "in full career with his lance—but it seems he had taken an indifferent aim. But no sooner didst thou fall to the ground mortally gored, as he deemed, with his weapon, than our blessed Patroness appeared to him, as he averred—"

"I averred no such thing," said the prisoner; "I said a woman in white interrupted me, as I was about to examine the priest's cassock, for they are usually well lined—she had a bulrush in her hand, with one touch of which she struck me from my horse, as I might strike down a child of four years old with an iron mace—and then, like a singing fiend as she was, she sung to me,

"Thank the holly-bush
That nods on thy brow;
Or with this slender rush
I had strangled thee now."

I gathered myself up with fear and difficulty, threw myself on my horse, and came hither like a fool to get myself hanged for a rogue."

"Thou seest, honored brother," said the Abbot to the Sub-Prior, "in what favor thou art with our blessed Patroness, that she herself becomes the guardian of thy paths—Not since the days of our blessed founder hath she shown such grace to any one. All unworthy were we to hold spiritual superiority over thee, and we pray thee to prepare for thy speedy removal to Aberbrothwick."

"Alas! my lord and father," said the Sub-Prior, "your words pierce my very soul. Under the seal of confession will I presently tell thee why I conceive myself rather the baffled sport of a spirit of another sort, than the protected favorite of the heavenly powers. But first let me ask this unhappy man a question or two."

"Do as ye list," replied the Abbot—"but you shall not convince me that it is fitting you remain in this inferior office in the convent of Saint Mary."

"I would ask of this poor man," said Father Eustace, "for what purpose he nourished the

thought of putting to death one who never did him evil?"

"Ay! but thou didst menace me with evil," said the ruffian, "and no one but a fool is menaced twice. Dost thou not remember what you said touching the Primate and Lord James, and the black pool of Jedwood? Didst thou think me fool enough to wait till thou hadst betrayed me to the sack and the fork! There were small wisdom in that, methinks—as little as in coming hither to tell my own misdeeds—I think the devil was in me when I took this road—I might have remembered the proverb, 'Never Friar forgot feud.'"

"And it was solely for that—for that only hasty word of mine, uttered in a moment of impatience, and forgotten ere it was well spoken?" said Father Eustace.

"Ay! for that, and—for the love of thy gold crucifix," said Christie of the Clinthill.

"Gracious Heaven! and could the yellow metal—the glittering earth—so far overcome every sense of what is thereby represented?—Father Abbot, I pray, as a dear boon, you will deliver this guilty person to my mercy."

"Nay, brother," interposed the Sacristan, "to your doom, if you will, not to your mercy—Remember, we are not all equally favored by our blessed Lady, nor is it likely that every frock in the Convent will serve as a coat of proof when a lance is couched against it."

"For that very reason," said the Sub-Prior, "I would not that for my worthless self the community were to fall at feud with Julian of Avenel, this man's master."

"Our Lady forbid!" said the Sacristan, "he is a second Julian the Apostate."

"With our reverend father the Abbot's permission, then," said Father Eustace, "I desire this man to be freed from his chains, and suffered to depart uninjured;—and here, friend," he added, giving him the golden crucifix, "is the image for which thou wert willing to stain thy hands with murder. View it well, and may it inspire thee with other and better thoughts than those which referred to it as a piece of bullion! Part with it, nevertheless, if thy necessities require, and get thee one of such coarse substance that Mammon shall have no share in any of the reflections to which it gives rise. It was the bequest of a dear friend to me; but dearer service can it never do than that of winning a soul to Heaven."

The Borderer, now freed from his chains, stood gazing alternately on the Sub-Prior, and on the golden crucifix. "By Saint Giles!" said he, "I understand ye not!—An ye give me gold for couching my lance at thee, what would you give me to level it at a heretic?"

"The Church," said the Sub-Prior, "will try the effect of her spiritual censures to bring these stray sheep into the fold, ere she employ the edge of the sword of Saint Peter."

"Ay, but," said the ruffian, "they say the Primate recommends a little strangling and burn-

ing in aid both of censure and of sword. But fare ye well, I owe you a life, and it may be I will not forget my debt."

The bailie now came bustling in, dressed in his blue coat and bandoliers, and attended by two or three halberdiers. "I have been a thought too late in waiting upon your reverend lordship. I am grown somewhat fatter since the field of Pinkie, and my leathern coat slips not on so soon as it was wont; but the dungeon is ready, and though, as I have said, I have been somewhat late—"

Here his intended prisoner walked gravely up to the officer's nose, to his great amazement.

"You have been indeed somewhat late, bailie," said he, "and I am greatly obligated to your buff-coat, and to the time you took to put it on. If the secular arm had arrived some quarter of an hour sooner, I had been out of the reach of spiritual grace; but as it is, I wish you good-even, and a safe riddance out of your garment of durance, in which you have much the air of a hog in armor."

Wroth was the bailie with this comparison, and exclaimed in ire—"An it were not for the presence of the venerable Lord Abbot, thou knave—"

"Nay, an thou wouldst try conclusions," said Christie of the Clinthill, "I will meet thee at day-break by Saint Mary's Well."

"Hardened wretch!" said Father Eustace, "art thou but this instant delivered from death, and dost thou so soon morse thoughts of slaughter?"

"I will meet with thee ere it be long, thou knave," said the bailie, "and teach thee thine Oremus."

"I will meet thy cattle in a moonlight night before that day," said he of the Clinthill.

"I will have thee by the neck one misty morning, thou strong thief," answered the secular officer of the Church.

"Thou art thyself as strong a thief as ever rode," retorted Christie; "and if the worms were once feasting on that fat carcass of thine, I might well hope to have thine office, by favor of these reverend men."

"A cast of their office, and a cast of mine," answered the bailie; "a cord and a confessor, that is all thou wilt have from us."

"Sirs," said the Sub-Prior, observing that his brethren began to take more interest than was exactly decorous in this wrangling betwixt justice and iniquity, "I pray you both to depart—Master Bailie, retire with your halberdiers, and trouble not the man whom we have dismissed—And thou, Christie, or whatever be thy name, take thy departure, and remember thou owest thy life to the Lord Abbot's clemency."

"Nay, as to that," answered Christie, "I judge that I owe it to your own; but impute it to whom ye list, I owe a life among ye, and there is an end." And whistling as he went, he left the apartment, seeming as if he held the life

which he had forfeited not worthy farther thanks.

"Obstinate even to brutality!" said Father Eustace; "and yet who knows but some better ore may lie under so rude an exterior?"

"Save a thief from the gallows," said the Sacristan—"you know the rest of the proverb; and admitting, as may Heaven grant, that our lives and limbs are safe from this outrageous knave, who shall insure our meal and our malt, our herds and our flocks?"

"Marry, that will I, my brethren," said an aged monk. "Ah, brethren, you little know what may be made of a repentant robber. In Abbot Ingilram's days—ay, and I remember them as it were yesterday—the freebooters were the best welcome men that came to Saint Mary's. Ay, they paid tithe of every drove that they brought over from the South, and because they were something lightly come by, I have known them make the tithe a seventh—that is, if their confessor knew his business—ay, when we saw from the tower a score of fat bullocks, or a drove of sheep, coming down the valley, with two or three stout men-at-arms behind them with their glittering steel caps, and their black-jacks, and their long lances, the good Lord Abbot Ingilram was wont to say—he was a merry man—there come the tithes of the spoilers of the Egyptians! Ay, and I have seen the famous John the Armstrang—a fair man he was and a goodly, the more pity that hemp was ever heckled for him—I have seen him come into the Abbey-church with nine tassels of gold in his bonnet, and every tassel made of nine English nobles, and he would go from chapel to chapel, and from image to image, and from altar to altar, on his knees—and leave here a tassel, and there a noble, till there was as little gold on his bonnet as on my hood—you will find no such Border thieves now!"

"No truly, Brother Nicolas," answered the Abbot; "they are more apt to take any gold the Church has left, than to bequeath or bestow any—and for cattle, beshrew me if I think they care whether beeves have fed on the meadows of Lanercost Abbey, or of Saint Mary's!"

"There is no good thing left in them," said Father Nicolas; "they are clean naught—Ah, the thieves that I have seen!—such proper men! and as pitiful as proper, and as pious as pitiful!"

"It skills not talking of it, Brother Nicolas," said the Abbot; "and I will now dismiss you, my brethren, holding your meeting upon this our inquisition concerning the danger of our reverend Sub-Prior, instead of the attendance on the lauds this evening—Yet let the bells be duly rung for the edification of the laymen without, and also that the novices may give due reverence.—And now, benedicite, brethren! The cellarer will bestow on each a grace-cup and a morsel as ye pass the buttery, for ye have been turmoiled and anxious, and dangerous it is to fall asleep in such case with empty stomach."

"*Gratias agimus quam maximas, Domine revo-*

rendissime," replied the brethren, departing in their due order.

But the Sub-Prior remained behind, and falling on his knees before the Abbot, as he was about to withdraw, craved him to hear under the seal of confession the adventures of the day. The reverend Lord Abbot yawned, and would have alleged fatigue; but to Father Eustace, of all men, he was ashamed to show indifference in his religious duties. The confession, therefore, proceeded, in which Father Eustace told all the extraordinary circumstances which had befallen him during the journey. And being questioned by the Abbot, whether he was not conscious of any secret sin, through which he might have been subjected for a time to the delusions of evil spirits, the Sub-Prior admitted, with frank avowal, that he thought he might have deserved such penance for having judged with unfraternal rigor of the report of Father Philip the Sacristan.

"Heaven," said the penitent, "may have been willing to convince me, not only that he can at pleasure open a communication betwixt us and beings of a different, and, as we word it, supernatural class, but also to punish our pride of superior wisdom, or superior courage, or superior learning."

It is well said that virtue is its own reward; and I question if duty was ever more completely recompensed, than by the audience which the reverend Abbot so unwillingly yielded to the confession of the Sub-Prior. To find the object of his fear shall we say, or of his envy, or of both, accusing himself of the very error with which he had so tacitly charged him, was a corroboration of the Abbot's judgment, a soothing of his pride, and an allaying of his fears. The sense of triumph, however, rather increased than diminished his natural good-humor; and so far was Abbot Boniface from being disposed to tyrannize over his Sub-Prior, in consequence of this discovery, that in his exhortation he hovered somewhat ludicrously betwixt the natural expression of his own gratified vanity, and his timid reluctance to hurt the feelings of Father Eustace.

"My brother," said he, *ex cathedra*, "it cannot have escaped your judicious observation, that we have often declined our own judgment in favor of your opinion, even about those matters which most nearly concerned the community. Nevertheless, grieved would we be, could you think that we did this, either because we deemed our own opinion less pregnant, or our wit more shallow, than that of our other brethren. For it was done exclusively to give our younger brethren, such as your much esteemed self, my dearest brother, that courage which is necessary to a free-deliverance of your opinion,—we oftentimes setting apart our proper judgment, that our inferiors, and especially our dear brother, the Sub-Prior, may be comforted and encouraged in proposing valiantly his own thoughts. Which our deference and humility may, in some sort, have produced in your mind, most reverend brother, that self-

opinion of parts and knowledge, which hath led unfortunately to your over-estimating your own faculties, and thereby subjecting yourself, as is but too visible, to the japes and mockeries of evil spirits. For it is assured that Heaven always holdeth us in the least esteem when we deem of ourselves most highly; and also on the other hand, it may be that we have somewhat departed from what became our high seat in this Abbey, in suffering ourselves to be too much guided, and even, as it were, controlled, by the voice of our inferior. Wherefore," continued the Lord Abbot, "in both of us such faults shall and must be amended—you hereafter presuming less upon your gifts and carnal wisdom, and I taking heed not so easily to relinquish mine own opinion for that of one lower in place and in office. Nevertheless, we would not that we should thereby lose the high advantage which we have derived, and may yet derive, from your wise counsels, which hath been so often recommended to us by our most reverend Primate. Wherefore, on affairs of high moment, we will call you to our presence in private, and listen to your opinion, which, if it shall agree with our own, we will deliver to the Chapter, as emanating directly from ourselves; thus sparing you, dearest brother, that seeming victory which is so apt to engender spiritual pride, and avoiding ourselves the temptation of falling into that modest facility of opinion, whereby our office is lessened and our person (were that of consequence) rendered less important in the eyes of the community over which we preside."

Notwithstanding the high notions which, as a rigid Catholic, Father Eustace entertained of the sacrament of confession, as his Church calls it, there was some danger that a sense of the ridiculous might have stolen on him, when he heard his Superior, with such simple cunning, lay out a little plan for availing himself of the Sub-Prior's wisdom and experience, while he should take the whole credit to himself. Yet his conscience immediately told him that he was right.

"I should have thought more," he reflected, "of the spiritual Superior, and less of the individual. I should have spread my mantle over the frailties of my spiritual father, and done what I might to support his character, and, of course, to extend his utility among the brethren, as well as with others. The Abbot cannot be humbled, without the community being humbled in his person. Her boast is, that over all her children, especially over those called to places of distinction, she can diffuse those gifts which are necessary to render them illustrious."

Actuated by these sentiments, Father Eustace frankly assented to the charge which his Superior, even in that moment of authority, had rather intimated than made, and signified his humble acquiescence in any mode of communicating his counsel which might be most agreeable to the Lord Abbot, and might best remove from himself all temptation to glory in his own wisdom. He then prayed the reverend Father to assign him

such penance as might best suit his offence, intimating, at the same time, that he had already fasted the whole day.

"And it is that I complain of," answered the Abbot, instead of giving him credit for his abstinence; "it is these very penances, fasts, and vigils, of which we complain; as tending only to generate airs and fumes of vanity, which, ascending from the stomach into the head, do but puff us up with vain-glory and self-opinion. It is meet and becoming that novices should undergo fasts and vigils; for some part of every community must fast, and young stomachs may best endure it. Besides, in them it abates wicked thoughts, and the desire of worldly delights. But, reverend brother, for those to fast who are dead and mortified to the world, as I and thou, is work of supererogation, and is but the matter of spiritual pride. Wherefore, I enjoin thee, most reverend brother, go to the buttery, and drink two cups at least of good wine, eating withal a comfortable morsel, such as may best suit thy taste and stomach. And in respect that thine opinion of thy own wisdom hath at times made thee less conformable to, and companionable with, the weaker and less learned brethren, I enjoin thee, during the said repast, to choose for thy companion, our reverend brother Nicolas, and without interruption or impatience, to listen for a stricken hour to his narration, concerning those things which befell in the times of our venerable predecessor, Abbot Ingilram, on whose soul may Heaven have mercy! And for such holy exercises as may farther advantage your soul, and expiate the faults whereof you have contritely and humbly avowed yourself guilty, we will ponder upon that matter, and announce our will unto you the next morning."

It was remarkable, that after this memorable evening, the feelings of the worthy Abbot towards his adviser were much more kindly and friendly than when he deemed the Sub-Prior the impeccable and infallible person, in whose garment of virtue and wisdom no flaw was to be discerned. It seemed as if this avowal of his own imperfections had recommended Father Eustace to the friendship of the Superior, although at the same time this increase of benevolence was attended with some circumstances, which, to a man of the Sub-Prior's natural elevation of mind and temper, were more grievous than even undergoing the legends of the dull and verbose Father Nicolas. For instance, the Abbot seldom mentioned him to the other monks, without designing him our beloved Brother Eustace, poor man!—and now and then he used to warn the younger brethren against the snares of vain-glory and spiritual pride, which Satan sets for the more rigidly righteous, with such looks and demonstrations as did all but expressly designate the Sub-Prior as one who had fallen at one time under such delusions. Upon these occasions, it required all the votive obedience of a monk, all the philosophical discipline of the schools, and all the patience of a Christian, to enable Father Eustace

to endure the pompous and patronizing parade of his honest, but somewhat thick-headed Superior. He begged himself to be desirous of leaving the Monastery, or at least he manifestly declined to interfere with its affairs, in that marked and authoritative manner, which he had at first practised.

CHAPTER XI.

You call this education, do you not?
Why, 'tis the forced march of a herd of bullocks
Before a shouting drover. The glad van
Move on at ease, and pause a while to snatch
A passing morsel from the dewy greensward,
While all the blows, the oaths, the indignation,
Fall on the croupe of the ill-fated laggard
That cripples in the rear.

OLD PLAY.

Two or three years glided by, during which the storm of the approaching alteration in church government became each day louder and more perilous. Owing to the circumstances which we have intimated in the end of the last chapter, the Sub-Prior Eustace appeared to have altered considerably his habits of life. He afforded, on all extraordinary occasions, to the Abbot, whether privately, or in the assembled Chapter, the support of his wisdom and experience; but in his ordinary habits he seemed now to live more for himself, and less for the community, than had been his former practice.

He often absented himself for whole days from the convent; and as the adventure of Glendearg dwelt deeply on his memory, he was repeatedly induced to visit that lonely tower, and to take an interest in the orphans who had their shelter under its roof. Besides, he felt a deep anxiety to know whether the volume which he had lost, when so strangely preserved from the lance of the murderer, had again found its way back to the Tower of Glendearg. "It was strange," he thought, "that a spirit," for such he could not help judging the being whose voice he had heard, "should, on the one side, seek the advancement of heresy, and, on the other, interpose to save the life of a zealous Catholic priest."

But from no inquiry which he made of the various inhabitants of the Tower of Glendearg could he learn that the copy of the translated Scriptures, for which he made such diligent inquiry, had again been seen by any of them.

In the meanwhile the good father's occasional visits were of no small consequence to Edward Glendinning and to Mary Avenel. The former displayed a power of apprehending and retaining whatever was taught him, which filled Father Eustace with admiration. He was at once acute and industrious, alert and accurate; one of those rare combinations of talent and industry which are seldom united.

It was the earnest desire of Father Eustace that the excellent qualities thus early displayed by Edward should be dedicated to the service of the Church, to which he thought the youth's own

consent might be easily obtained, as he was of a calm, contemplative, retired habit, and seemed to consider knowledge as the principal object, and its enlargement as the greatest pleasure, in life. As to the mother, the Sub-Prior had little doubt that, trained as she was to view the monks of Saint Mary's with such profound reverence, she would be but too happy in an opportunity of enrolling one of her sons in its honored community. But the good Father proved to be mistaken in both these particulars.

When he spoke to Elspeth Glendinning of that which a mother best loves to hear—the proficiency and abilities of her son—she listened with a delighted ear. But when Father Eustace hinted at the duty of dedicating to the service of the Church, talents which seemed fitted to defend and adorn it, the dame endeavored always to shift the subject; and when pressed farther, enlarged on her own incapacity, as a lone woman, to manage the feu; on the advantage which her neighbors of the township were often taking of her unprotected state, and on the wish she had that Edward might fill his father's place, remain in the tower, and close her eyes.

On such occasions the Sub-Prior would answer, that even in a worldly point of view the welfare of the family would be best consulted by one of the sons entering into the community of Saint Mary's, as it was not to be supposed that he would fail to afford his family the important protection which he could then easily extend towards them. What could be a more pleasing prospect than to see him high in honor? or what more sweet than to have the last duties rendered to her by a son revered for his holiness of life and exemplary manners? Besides, he endeavored to impress upon the dame that her eldest son, Halbert, whose bold temper and headstrong indulgence of a wandering humor rendered him incapable of learning, was, for that reason, as well as that he was her eldest born, fittest to bustle through the affairs of the world, and manage the little fief.

Elspeth durst not directly dissent from what was proposed, for fear of giving displeasure, and yet she always had something to say against it. Halbert, she said, was not like any of the neighbor boys—he was taller by the head, and stronger by the half, than any boy of his years within the Hallidome. But he was fit for no peaceful work that could be devised. If he liked a book ill, he liked a plough or a pattle worse. He had scoured his father's old broadsword—suspended it by a belt round his waist, and seldom stirred without it. He was a sweet boy and a gentle if spoken fair, but cross him and he was a born devil. "In a word," she said, bursting into tears, "deprive me of Edward, good father, and ye bereave my house of prop and pillar; for my heart tells me that Halbert will take to his father's gates, and die his father's death."

When the conversation came to this crisis, the good-humored monk was always content to drop

the discussion for the time, trusting some opportunity would occur of removing her prejudices, for such he thought them, against Edward's proposed destination.

When leaving the mother, the Sub-Prior addressed himself to the son, animating his zeal for knowledge, and pointing out how amply it might be gratified should he agree to take holy orders, he found the same repugnance which Dame Elspeth had exhibited. Edward pleaded a want of sufficient vocation to so serious a profession—his reluctance to leave his mother, and other objections, which the Sub-Prior treated as evasive.

"I plainly perceive," he said one day, in answer to them, "that the devil has his factors as well as Heaven, and that they are equally, or, alas! the former are perhaps more active, in bespeaking for their master the first of the market. I trust, young man, that neither idleness, nor licentious pleasure, nor the love of worldly gain and worldly grandeur, the chief baits with which the great Fisher of souls conceals his hook, are the causes of your declining the career to which I would incite you. But above all I trust—above all I hope—that the vanity of superior knowledge—a sin with which those who have made proficiency in learning are most frequently beset—has not led you into the awful hazard of listening to the dangerous doctrines which are now afloat concerning religion. Better for you that you were as grossly ignorant as the beasts which perish, than that the pride of knowledge should induce you to lend an ear to the voice of heretics." Edward Glendinning listened to the rebuke with a downcast look, and failed not, when it was concluded, earnestly to vindicate himself from the charge of having pushed his studies into any subjects which the Church inhibited; and so the monk was left to form vain conjectures respecting the cause of his reluctance to embrace the monastic state.

It is an old proverb, used by Chaucer, and quoted by Elizabeth, that "the greatest clerks are not the wisest men;" and it is as true as if the poet had not rhymed, or the queen reasoned on it. If Father Eustace had not had his thoughts turned so much to the progress of heresy, and so little to what was passing in the tower, he might have read, in the speaking eyes of Mary Avenel, now a girl of fourteen or fifteen, reasons which might disincite her youthful companion towards the monastic vows. I have said, that she also was a promising pupil of the good father, upon whom her innocent and infantine beauty had an effect of which he was himself, perhaps, unconscious. Her rank and expectations entitled her to be taught the arts of reading and writing;—and each lesson which the monk assigned her was conned over in company with Edward, and by him explained and re-explained, and again illustrated, until she became perfectly mistress of it.

In the beginning of their studies, Halbert had been their school companion. But the boldness and impatience of his disposition soon quarrelled

with an occupation in which, without assiduity and unremitting attention, no progress was to be expected. The Sub-Prior's visits were at irregular intervals, and often weeks would intervene between them, in which case Halbert was sure to forget all that had been prescribed for him to learn, and much which he had partly acquired before. His deficiencies on these occasions gave him pain, but it was not of that sort which produces amendment.

For a time, like all who are fond of idleness, he endeavored to detach the attention of his brother and Mary Avenel from their task, rather than to learn their own, and such dialogues as the following would ensue:—

"Take your bonnet, Edward, and make haste—the Laird of Colmslie is at the head of the glen with his hounds."

"I care not, Halbert," answered the younger brother; "two brace of dogs may kill a deer without my being there to see them, and I must help Mary Avenel with her lesson."

"Ay! you will labor at the monk's lessons till you turn monk yourself," answered Halbert.—"Mary, will you go with me, and I will show you the cushat's nest I told you of?"

"I cannot go with you, Halbert," answered Mary, "because I must study this lesson—it will take me long to learn—I am sorry I am so dull; for if I could get my task as fast as Edward, I should like to go with you."

"Should you, indeed?" said Halbert; "then I will wait for you—and, what is more, I will try to get my lesson also."

With a smile and a sigh he took up the primer, and began heavily to con over the task which had been assigned him. As if banished from the society of the two others, he sat sad and solitary in one of the deep window-recesses, and after in vain struggling with the difficulties of his task, and his disinclination to learn it, he found himself involuntarily engaged in watching the movements of the other two students, instead of toiling any longer.

The picture which Halbert looked upon was delightful in itself, but somehow or other it afforded very little pleasure to him. The beautiful girl, with looks of simple, yet earnest anxiety, was bent on disentangling those intricacies which obstructed her progress to knowledge, and looking ever and anon to Edward for assistance, while, seated close by her side, and watchful to remove every obstacle from her way, he seemed at once to be proud of the progress which his pupil made, and of the assistance which he was able to render her. There was a bond betwixt them, a strong and interesting tie, the desire of obtaining knowledge, the pride of surmounting difficulties.

Feeling most acutely, yet ignorant of the nature and source of his own emotions, Halbert could no longer endure to look upon this quiet scene, but starting up, dashed his book from him, and exclaimed aloud, "To the fiend I bequeath

all books, and the dreamers that make them!—I would a score of Southrons would come up the glen, and we should learn how little all this muttering and scribbling is worth."

Mary Avenel and his brother started, and looked at Halbert with surprise, while he went on with great animation, his features swelling, and the tears starting into his eyes as he spoke—"Yes, Mary—I wish a score of Southrons came up the glen this very day; and you should see one good hand, and one good sword, do more to protect you, than all the books that were ever opened, and all the pens that ever grew on a goose's wing."

Mary looked a little surprised and a little frightened at his vehemence, but instantly replied affectionately, "You are vexed, Halbert, because you do not get your lesson so fast as Edward can; and so am I, for I am as stupid as you—But come, and Edward shall sit betwixt us and teach us."

"He shall not teach *me*," said Halbert, in the same angry mood; "I never can teach *him* to do any thing that is honorable and manly, and he shall not teach *me* any of his monkish tricks.—I hate the monks, with their drawling nasal tone like so many frogs, and their long black petticoats like so many women, and their reverences, and their lordships, and their lazy vassals that do nothing but peddle in the mire with plough and harrow from Yule to Michaelmas. I will call none lord, but him who wears a sword to make his title good; and I will call none man, but he that can bear himself manlike and masterful."

"For Heaven's sake, peace, brother!" said Edward; "if such words were taken up and reported out of the house, they would be our mother's ruin."

"Report them yourself, then, and they will be *your* making, and nobody's marring save mine own. Say that Halbert Glendinning will never be vassal to an old man with a cowl and shaven crown, while there are twenty barons who wear casque and plume that lack bold followers. Let them grant you these wretched acres, and much meal may they bear you to make your *brochan*." He left the room hastily, but instantly returned, and continued to speak with the same tone of quick and irritated feeling. "And you need not think so much, neither of you, and especially you, Edward, need not think so much of your parchment book there, and your cunning in reading it. By my faith, I will soon learn to read as well as you; and—for I know a better teacher than your grim old monk, and a better book than his printed breviary; and since you like scholarcraft so well, Mary Avenel, you shall see whether Edward or I have most of it." He left the apartment, and came not again.

"What can be the matter with him?" said Mary, following Halbert with her eyes from the window, as with hasty and unequal steps he ran up the wild glen—"Where can your brother be going, Edward?—what book?—what teacher does he talk of?"



J. P. Stone.

J. P. Stone.

The White Lady.

"It avails not guessing," said Edward. "Halbert is angry, he knows not why, and speaks of he knows not what; let us go again to our lessons, and he will come home when he has tired himself with scrambling among the crags as usual."

But Mary's anxiety on account of Halbert seemed more deeply rooted. She declined prosecuting the task in which they had been so pleasingly engaged, under the excuse of a headache; nor could Edward prevail upon her to resume it again that morning.

Meanwhile Halbert, his head unbonneted, his features swelled with jealous anger, and the tear still in his eye, sped up the wild and upper extremity of the little valley of Glendearg with the speed of a roebuck, choosing, as if in desperate defiance of the difficulties of the way, the wildest and most dangerous paths, and voluntarily exposing himself a hundred times to dangers which he might have escaped by turning a little aside from them. It seemed as if he wished his course to be as straight as that of an arrow to its mark.

He arrived at length in a narrow and secluded *cleugh*, or deep ravine, which ran down into the valley, and contributed a scanty rivulet to the supply of the brook with which Glendearg is watered. Up this he sped with the same precipitate haste which had marked his departure from the tower, nor did he pause and look around until he had reached the fountain from which the rivulet had its rise.

Here Halbert stopped short, and cast a gloomy, and almost a frightened glance around him. A huge rock rose in front, from a cleft of which grew a wild holly-tree, whose dark green branches rustled over the spring which arose beneath. The banks on either hand rose so high, and approached each other so closely, that it was only when the sun was at its meridian height and during the summer solstice, that its rays could reach the bottom of the chasm in which he stood. But it was now summer, and the hour was noon, so that the unwonted reflection of the sun was dancing in the pellucid fountain.

"It is the season and the hour," said Halbert to himself; "and now I—I might soon become wiser than Edward with all his pains! Mary should see whether he alone is fit to be consulted, and to sit by her side, and hang over her as she reads, and point out every word and every letter. And she loves me better than him—I am sure she does—for she comes of noble blood, and scorns sloth and cowardice.—And do I myself not stand here slothful and cowardly as any priest of them all?—Why should I fear to call upon this form—this shape?—Already have I endured the vision, and why not again? What can it do to me, who am a man of lith and limb, and have by my side my father's sword? Does my heart beat—do my hairs bristle, at the thought of calling up a painted shadow, and how should I face a band of Southrons in flesh and blood? By the soul of the first Glendinning, I will make proof of the charm!"

He cast the leathern brogue or buskin from his

right foot, planted himself in a firm posture, unsheathed his sword, and first looking around to collect his resolution, he bowed three times deliberately towards the holly-tree, and as often to the little fountain, repeating at the same time, with a determined voice, the following rhyme:

"Thrice to the holly brake—
Thrice to the well:—
I bid thee awake,
White Maid of Avenel!

"Noon gleams on the Lake—
Noon glows on the Fell—
Wake thee, O wake,
White Maid of Avenel!"

These lines were hardly uttered, when there stood the figure of a female clothed in white, within three steps of Halbert Glendinning.

"I guess 'twas frightful there to see
A lady richly clad as she—
Beautiful exceedingly." *

CHAPTER XII.

There's something in that ancient superstition,
Which, erring as it is, our fancy loves,
The spring that, with its thousand crystal bubbles,
Bursts from the bosom of some desert rock
In secret solitude, may well be deem'd
The haunt of something purer, more refined,
And mightier than ourselves.

OLD PLAY.

Young Halbert Glendinning had scarcely pronounced the mystical rhymes, than, as we have mentioned in the conclusion of the last chapter, an appearance, as of a beautiful female, dressed in white, stood within two yards of him. His terror for the moment overcame his natural courage, as well as the strong resolution which he had formed, that the figure which he had now twice seen should not a third time daunt him. But it would seem there is something thrilling and abhorrent to flesh and blood, in the consciousness that we stand in presence of a being in form like to ourselves, but so different in faculties and nature, that we can neither understand its purposes, nor calculate its means of pursuing them.

Halbert stood silent and gasped for breath, his hairs erecting themselves on his head—his mouth open—his eyes fixed, and, as the sole remaining sign of his late determined purpose, his sword pointed towards the apparition. At length, with a voice of ineffable sweetness, the White Lady, for by that name we shall distinguish this being, sung, or rather chanted, the following lines:—

"Youth of the dark eye, wherefore didst thou call me!
Wherefore art thou here, if terrors can appall thee!
He that seeks to deal with us must know no fear nor falling!
To coward and churl our speech is dark, our gifts are unavailing.
The breeze that brought me hither now, must sweep Egyptian ground,
The fleecy cloud on which I ride for Araby is bound;
The fleecy cloud is drifting by, the breeze sighs for my stay,
For I must sail a thousand miles before the close of day."

* Coleridge's *Christabelle*.

The astonishment of Halbert began once more to give way to his resolution, and he gained voice enough to say, though with a faltering accent, "In the name of God, what art thou?" The answer was in melody of a different tone and measure:—

"What I am I must not show—
What I am thou couldst not know—
Something betwixt heaven and hell—
Something that neither stood nor fell—
Something that through thy wit or will
May work thee good—may work thee ill,
Neither substance quite nor shadow,
Haunting lonely moor and meadow,
Dancing by the haunted spring,
Riding on the whirlwind's wing;
Aping in fantastic fashion
Every change of human passion,
While o'er our frozen minds they pass,
Like shadows from the mirror'd glass.
Wayward, fickle is our mood,
Hovering betwixt bad and good,
Happier than brief-dated man,
Living twenty times his span;
Far less happy, for we have
Heir nor hope beyond the grave!
Man awakes to joy or sorrow;
Ours the sleep that knows no morrow.
This is all that I can show—
This is all thou mayest know."

The White Lady paused, and appeared to await an answer; but, as Halbert hesitated how to frame his speech, the vision seemed gradually to fade, and became more and more incorporeal. Justly guessing this to be a symptom of her disappearance, Halbert compelled himself to say,—
"Lady, when I saw you in the glen, and when you brought back the black book of Mary of Avenel, thou didst say I should one day learn to read it."

The White Lady replied:

"Ay! and I taught thee the word and the spell,
To waken me here by the Fairies' Well:
But thou hast loved the heron and hawk,
More than to seek my haunted walk;
And thou hast loved the lance and the sword,
More than good text and holy word;
And thou hast loved the deer to track,
More than the lines and the letters black;
And thou art a ranger of moss and of wood,
And scornest the nurture of gentle blood."

"I will do so no longer, fair maiden," said Halbert; "I desire to learn; and thou didst promise me, that when I did so desire, thou wouldst be my helper; I am no longer afraid of thy presence, and I am no longer regardless of instruction." As he uttered these words, the figure of the White Maiden grew gradually as distinct as it had been at first; and what had well-nigh faded into an ill-defined and colorless shadow, again assumed the appearance at least of corporeal consistency, although the hues were less vivid, and the outline of the figure less distinct and defined—so at least it seemed to Halbert—than those of an ordinary inhabitant of the earth. "Wilt thou grant my request," he said, "fair Lady, and give to my keeping the holy

book which Mary of Avenel has so often wept for?"

The White Lady replied:

"Thy craven fear my truth accused,
Thine idleness my trust abused;
He that draws to harbor late,
Must sleep without, or burst the gate.
There is a star for thee which burn'd
Its influence wanes, its course is turn'd
Valor and constancy alone
Can bring thee back the chance that's flown."

"If I have been a loiterer, Lady," answered young Glendinning, "thou shalt now find me willing to press forward with double speed. Other thoughts have filled my mind, other thoughts have engaged my heart, within a brief period—and by Heaven, other occupations shall henceforward fill up my time. I have lived in this day the space of years—I came hither a boy—I will return a man—a man, such as may converse not only with his own kind, but with whatever God permits to be visible to him. I will learn the contents of that mysterious volume—I will learn why the Lady of Avenel loved it—why the priests feared, and would have stolen it—why thou didst twice recover it from their hands.—What mystery is wrapped in it?—Speak, I conjure thee!" The lady assumed an air peculiarly sad and solemn, as drooping her head, and folding her arms on her bosom, she replied:

"Within that awful volume lies
The mystery of mysteries!
Happiest they of human race,
To whom God has granted grace
To read, to fear, to hope, to pray,
To lift the latch, and force the way;
And better had they ne'er been born,
Who read to doubt, or read to scorn."

"Give me the volume, Lady," said young Glendinning. "They call me idle—they call me dull—in this pursuit my industry shall not fail, nor, with God's blessing, shall my understanding. Give me the volume." The apparition again replied:—

"Many a fathom dark and deep
I have laid the book to sleep;
Ethereal fires around it glowing—
Ethereal music ever flowing—
The sacred pledge of Heav'n
All things reverse,
Each in his sphere,
Save man for whom 'twas giv'n:
Lend thy hand, and thou shalt spy
Things ne'er seen by mortal eye."

Halbert Glendinning boldly reached his hand to the White Lady.

"Farest thou to go with me?" she said, as his hand trembled at the cold and soft touch of her own—

"Farest thou to go with me?
Still it is free to thee
A peasant to dwell;
Thou mayest drive the dull steer,
And chase the king's deer,
But never more come near
This haunted well."

"If what thou sayest be true," said the undaunted boy, "my destinies are higher than thine own. There shall be neither well nor wood which I dare not visit. No fear of aught, natural or supernatural, shall bar my path through my native valley."

He had scarce uttered the words, when they both descended through the earth with a rapidity which took away Halbert's breath and every other sensation, saving that of being hurried on with the utmost velocity. At length they stopped with a shock so sudden, that the mortal journeyer through this unknown space must have been thrown down with violence, had he not been upheld by his supernatural companion.

It was more than a minute, ere, looking around him, he beheld a grotto, or natural cabin, composed of the most splendid spars and crystals, which returned in a thousand prismatic hues the light of a brilliant flame that glowed on an altar of alabaster. This altar, with its fire, formed the central point of the grotto, which was of a round form, and very high in the roof, resembling in some respects the dome of a cathedral. Corresponding to the four points of the compass, there went off four long galleries, or arcades, constructed of the same brilliant materials with the dome itself, and the termination of which was lost in darkness.

No human imagination can conceive, or words suffice to describe, the glorious radiance which, shot fiercely forth by the flame, was returned from so many hundred thousand points of reflection, afforded by the sparry pillars and their numerous angular crystals. The fire itself did not remain steady and unmoved, but rose and fell, sometimes ascending in a brilliant pyramid of condensed flame half way up the lofty expanse, and again fading into a softer and more rosy hue, and hovering, as it were, on the surface of the altar to collect its strength for another powerful exertion. There was no visible fuel by which it was fed, nor did it emit either smoke or vapor of any kind.

What was of all the most remarkable, the black volume so often mentioned lay not only unconsumed, but untouched in the slightest degree, amid this intensity of fire, which, while it seemed to be of force sufficient to melt adamant, had no effect whatever on the sacred book thus subjected to its utmost influence.

The White Lady, having paused long enough to let young Glendinning take a complete survey of what was around him, now said in her usual chant,

"Here lies the volume thou boldly hast sought,
Touch it, and take it,—'twill dearly be bought!"

Familiarized in some degree with marvels, and desperately desirous of showing the courage he had boasted, Halbert plunged his hand without hesitation, into the flame, trusting to the rapidity of the motion, to snatch out the volume before the fire could greatly affect him. But he was much disappointed. The flame instantly

caught upon his sleeve, and though he withdrew his hand immediately, yet his arm was so dreadfully scorched, that he had well-nigh screamed with pain. He suppressed the natural expression of anguish, however, and only intimated the agony which he felt by a contortion and a muttered groan. The White Lady passed her cold hand over his arm, and, ere she had finished the following metrical chant, his pain had entirely gone, and no mark of the scorching was visible:—

"Rash thy deed,
Mortal weed
To immortal flames applying;
Rasher trust
Has thing of dust,
On his own weak worth relying;
Strip thee of such fancies vain,
Strip, and prove thy luck again."

Obedient to what he understood to be the meaning of his conductress, Halbert bared his arm to the shoulder, throwing down the remains of his sleeve, which no sooner touched the floor on which he stood than it collected itself together, shrivelled itself up, and was without any visible fire reduced to light tinder, which a sudden breath of wind dispersed into empty space. The White Lady, observing the surprise of the youth, immediately repeated—

"Mortal warp and mortal woof,
Cannot brook this charmed roof;
All that mortal art hath wrought,
In our cells return to naught.
The molten gold returns to clay,
The polished diamond melts away:
All is altered, all is flown,
Naught stands fast but truth alone.
Not for that thy quest give o'er:
Courage! prove thy chance once more."

Imboldened by her words, Halbert Glendinning made a second effort, and, plunging his bare arm into the flame, took out the sacred volume without feeling either heat or inconvenience of any kind. Astonished, and almost terrified at his own success, he beheld the flame collect itself, and shoot up into one long and final stream, which seemed as if it would ascend to the very roof of the cavern, and then, sinking as suddenly, became totally extinguished. The deepest darkness ensued; but Halbert had no time to consider his situation, for the White Lady had already caught his hand, and they ascended to upper air with the same velocity with which they had sunk into the earth.

They stood by the fountain in the Corri-nan-shian when they emerged from the bowels of the earth; but on casting a bewildered glance around him, the youth was surprised to observe, that the shadows had fallen far to the east, and that the day was well-nigh spent. He gazed on his conductress for explanation, but her figure began to fade before his eyes—her cheeks grew paler, her features less distinct, her form became shadowy, and blended itself with the mist which was ascending the hollow ravine. What had late the symmetry of form, and the delicate, yet clear