

turn the world upside down, and we live ever the blithest life when the downer side is uppermost.

Warden would have replied ; but the Baron allowed him not time, striking the table with the hilt of his dagger, and crying out,—“ Ha ! you loitering knaves, bring our supper-meal quickly. See you not this holy man is exhausted for lack of food ? Heard ye ever of priest or preacher that devoured not his five meals a-day ? ”

The attendants bustled to and fro, and speedily brought in several large smoking platters, filled with huge pieces of beef, boiled and roasted, but without any variety whatsoever ; without vegetables, and almost without bread, though there was at the upper end a few oat-cakes in a basket. Julian Avenel made a sort of apology to Warden.

“ You have been commended to our care, Sir Preacher, since that is your style, by a person whom we highly honour.”

“ I am assured,” said Warden, “ that the most noble Lord”——

“ Prithee, peace, man,” said Avenel ; “ what need of naming names, so we understand each other ? I meant but to speak in reference to your safety and comfort, of which he desires us to be chary. Now, for your safety, look at my walls and water. But touching your comfort, we have no corn of our own, and the meal-girnels of the south are less easily transported than their beeves, seeing they have no legs to walk upon. But what though ? a stoup of wine thou shalt have, and of the best—thou shalt sit betwixt Catherine and me at the board-end. And, Christie, do thou look to the young springald, and call to the cellarer for a flagon of the best.”

The Baron took his wonted place at the upper end of the board ; his Catherine sat down, and courteously pointed to a seat betwixt them for their reverend guest. But notwithstanding the influence both of hunger and fatigue, Henry Warden retained his standing posture.

CHAPTER VII.

When lovely woman stoops to folly,
And finds too late that men betray——

* * * * *

JULIAN AVENEL saw with surprise the demeanour of the reverend stranger. “ Beshrew me,” he said, “ these new-fashioned religioners have fast-days, I warrant me—the old ones used to confer these blessings chiefly on the laity.”

“ We acknowledge no such rule,” said the preacher —“ We hold that our faith consists not in using or abstaining from special meats on special days ; and in fasting we rend our hearts, and not our garments.”

“ The better—the better for yourselves, and the worse for Tom Tailor,” said the Baron ; “ but come, sit down, or if thou needs must e’en give us a cast of thine office, mutter thy charm.”

“ Sir Baron,” said the preacher, “ I am in a strange land, where neither mine office nor my doctrine are known, and where, it would seem, both are greatly misunderstood. It is my duty so to bear me, that in my person, however unworthy, my Master’s dignity may be respected, and that sin may take no confidence from relaxation of the bonds of discipline.”

“ Ho la ! halt there,” said the Baron ; “ thou wert sent hither for thy safety, but not, I think, to preach to, or control me. What is it thou wouldst have, Sir Preacher ? Remember thou speakest to one somewhat short of patience, who loves a short health and a long draught.”

“ In a word, then,” said Henry Warden, “ that lady”——

“ How ! ” said the Baron, starting —“ what of her ? —what hast thou to say of that dame ? ”

"Is she thy house-dame?" said the preacher, after a moment's pause, in which he seemed to seek for the best mode of expressing what he had to say—"Is she in brief thy wife?"

The unfortunate young woman pressed both her hands on her face, as if to hide it, but the deep blush which crimsoned her brow and neck, showed that her cheeks were also glowing; and the bursting tears which found their way betwixt her slender fingers, bore witness to her sorrow, as well as to her shame.

"Now, by my father's ashes!" said the Baron, rising and spurning from him his footstool with such violence, that it hit the wall on the opposite side of the apartment—then instantly constraining himself, he muttered, "What need to run myself into trouble for a fool's word?"—then resuming his seat, he answered coldly and scornfully—"No, Sir Priest or Sir Preacher, Catherine is not my wife—Cease thy whimpering, thou foolish wench—she is not my wife, but she is handfasted with me, and that makes her as honest a woman."

"Handfasted?"—repeated Warden.

"Knowest thou not that rite, holy man?" said Avenel, in the same tone of derision; "then I will tell thee. We Border-men are more wary than your inland clowns of Fife and Lothian—no jump in the dark for us—no clenching the fetters around our wrists till we know how they will wear with us—we take our wives, like our horses, upon trial. When we are handfasted, as we term it, we are man and wife for a year and day—that space gone by, each may choose another mate, or, at their pleasure, may call the priest to marry them for life—and this we call handfasting."⁵

"Then," said the preacher, "I tell thee, noble Baron, in brotherly love to thy soul, it is a custom licentious, gross, and corrupted, and if persisted in, dangerous, yea, damnable. It binds thee to the frailer being while she is the object of desire—it relieves thee when she is most the subject of pity—it gives all to brutal sense, and nothing to generous and gentle affection. I say to thee, that

he who can meditate the breach of such an engagement, abandoning the deluded woman and the helpless offspring, is worse than the birds of prey, for of them the males remain with their mates until the nestlings can take wing. Above all, I say it is contrary to the pure Christian doctrine, which assigns woman to man as the partner of his labour, the soother of his evil, his helpmate in peril, his friend in affliction; not as the toy of his looser hours, or as a flower, which once cropped, he may throw aside at pleasure."

"Now, by the Saints, a most virtuous homily!" said the Baron; "quaintly conceived and curiously pronounced, and to a well-chosen congregation. Hark ye, Sir Gospeller! trow ye to have a fool in hand? Know I not that your sect rose by bluff Harry Tudor, merely because ye aided him to change *his* Kate; and wherefore should I not use the same Christian liberty with *mine*? Tush, man! bless the good food, and meddle not with what concerns thee not—thou hast no gull in Julian Avenel."

"He hath gulled and cheated himself," said the preacher, "should he even incline to do that poor sharer of his domestic cares the imperfect justice that remains to him. Can he now raise her to the rank of a pure and uncontaminated matron?—Can he deprive his child of the misery of owing birth to a mother who has erred? He can indeed give them both the rank, the state of married wife and of lawful son; but in public opinion, their names will be smirched and sullied with a stain which his tardy efforts cannot entirely efface. Yet render it to them, Baron of Avenel, render to them this late and imperfect justice. Bid me bind you together for ever, and celebrate the day of your bridal, not with feasting or wassail, but with sorrow for past sin, and the resolution to commence a better life. Happy then will the chance have been that has drawn me to this castle, though I come driven by calamity, and unknowing where my course is bound, like a leaf travelling on the north wind."

The plain, and even coarse features, of the zealous speaker, were warmed at once and ennobled by the dignity of his enthusiasm, and the wild Baron, lawless as he was, and accustomed to spurn at the control whether of religious or moral law, felt, for the first time perhaps in his life, that he was under subjection to a mind superior to his own. He sat mute and suspended in his deliberations, hesitating betwixt anger and shame, yet borne down by the weight of the just rebuke thus boldly fulminated against him.

The unfortunate young woman, conceiving hopes from her tyrant's silence and apparent indecision, forgot both her fear and shame in her timid expectation that Avenel would relent, and fixing upon him her anxious and beseeching eyes, gradually drew near and nearer to his seat, till at length laying a trembling hand on his cloak, she ventured to utter, "O noble Julian, listen to the good man!"

The speech and the motion were ill-timed, and wrought on that proud and wayward spirit the reverse of her wishes.

The fierce Baron started up in fury, exclaiming, "What! thou foolish callet, art thou confederate with this strolling vagabond, whom thou hast seen beard me in mine own hall! Hence with thee, and think that I am proof both to male and female hypocrisy!"

The poor girl started back, astounded at his voice of thunder and looks of fury, and turning pale as death, endeavoured to obey his orders and tottered towards the door. Her limbs failed in the attempt, and she fell on the stone floor in a manner which her situation might have rendered fatal—The blood gushed from her face—Halbert Glendinning brooked not a sight so brutal, but uttering a deep imprecation, started from his seat, and laid his hand on his sword under the strong impulse of passing it through the body of the cruel and hard-hearted ruffian. But Christie of the Clint-hill guessing his intention, threw his arms around him and prevented him from stirring to execute his purpose.

The impulse to such a dangerous act of violence was indeed but momentary, as it instantly appeared that Avenel himself, shocked at the effects of his violence, was lifting up and endeavouring to soothe in his own way the terrified Catherine.

"Peace," he said, "prithee, peace, thou silly minion—why, Kate, though I listen not to this tramping preacher, I said not what might happen an thou dost bear me a stout boy. There—there—dry thy tears—call thy women—So ho!—where be these queans?—Christie—Rowley—Hutcheon—drag them hither by the hair of the head!"

A half dozen of startled wild-looking females rushed into the room, and bore out her who might be either termed their mistress or their companion. She showed little sign of life, except by groaning faintly and keeping her hand on her side.

No sooner had this luckless female been conveyed from the apartment, than the Baron, advancing to the table, filled and drank a deep goblet of wine; then putting an obvious restraint on his passions, turned to the preacher, who stood horror-struck at the scene he had witnessed, and said, "You have borne too hard on us, Sir Preacher—but coming with the commendations which you have brought me, I doubt not but your meaning was good. But we are a wilder folk than you inland men of Fife and Lothian. Be advised, therefore, by me—Spur not an unbroken horse—put not your ploughshare too deep into new land—Preach to us spiritual liberty, and we will hearken to you.—But we will give no way to spiritual bondage.—Sit therefore down, and pledge me in old sack, and we will talk over other matters."

"It is from spiritual bondage," said the preacher, in the same tone of admonitory reproof, "that I came to deliver you—it is from a bondage more fearful than that of the heaviest earthly gyves—it is from your own evil passions."

"Sit down," said Avenel, fiercely; "sit down while the play is good—else by my father's crest and my mother's honour!"—

"Now," whispered Christie of the Clint-hill to Halbert, "if he refuse to sit down, I would not give a grey groat for his head."

"Lord Baron," said Warden, "thou hast placed me in extremity. But if the question be, whether I am to hide the light which I am commanded to show forth, or to lose the light of this world, my choice is made. I say to thee, like the Holy Baptist to Herod, it is not lawful for thee to have this woman; and I say it, though bonds and death be the consequence, counting my life as nothing in comparison of the ministry to which I am called."

Julian Avenel, enraged at the firmness of this reply, flung from his right hand the cup in which he was about to drink to his guest, and from the other cast off the hawk, which flew wildly through the apartment. His first motion was to lay hand upon his dagger. But changing his resolution, he exclaimed, "To the dungeon with this insolent stroller!—I will hear no man speak a word for him—Look to the falcon, Christie, thou fool, an she escape, I will despatch you after her every man—Away with that hypocritical dreamer!—drag him hence if he resist!"

He was obeyed in both points. Christie of the Clint-hill arrested the hawk's flight, by putting his foot on her jesses, and so holding her fast, while Henry Warden was led off, without having shown the slightest symptom of terror, by two of the Baron's satellites. Julian Avenel walked the apartment for a short space in sullen silence, and despatching one of his attendants with a whispered message, which probably related to the health of the unfortunate Catherine, he said aloud, "These rash and meddling priests—by Heaven! they make us worse than we should be without them."⁶

The answer which he presently received seemed somewhat to pacify his angry mood, and he took his

place at the board, commanding his retinue to do the like. All sat down in silence, and began the repast.

During the meal, Christie in vain attempted to engage his youthful companion in carousal, or, at least, in conversation. Halbert Glendinning pleaded fatigue, and expressed himself unwilling to take any liquor stronger than the heather-ale, which was at that time frequently used at meals. Thus every effort at joviality died away, until the Baron, striking his hand against the table, as if impatient of the long unbroken silence, cried out aloud, "What ho! my masters—are ye Border-riders, and sit as mute over your meal as a mess of monks and friars?—some one sing, if no one list to speak. Meat eaten without either mirth or music is ill of digestion. Louis," he added, speaking to one of the youngest of his followers, "thou art ready enough to sing when no one bids thee."

The young man looked first at his master, then up to the arched roof of the hall, then drank off the horn of ale or wine which stood beside him, and with a rough, yet not unmelodious voice, sung the following ditty to the ancient air of "Blue Bonnets over the Border."

I.

March, march, Ettricke and Teviotdale,
Why the deil dinna ye march forward in order?
March, march, Eskdale and Liddesdale,
All the blue bonnets are bound for the Border.
Many a banner spread,
Flutters above your head,
Many a crest that is famous in story;
Mount and make ready then,
Sons of the mountain glen,
Fight for the Queen and the old Scottish glory!

II.

Come from the hills where the hirsels are grazing,
Come from the glen of the buck and the roe;
Come to the crag where the beacon is blazing,
Come with the buckler, the lance and the bow.
Trumpets are sounding,

War-steeds are bounding,
Stand to your arms then, and march in good order,
England shall many a day
Tell of the bloody fray,
When the Blue Bonnets came over the Border !

The song, rude as it was, had in it that warlike character which at any other time would have roused Halbert's spirit ; but at present the charm of minstrelsy had no effect upon him. He made it his request to Christie to suffer him to retire to rest, a request with which that worthy person, seeing no chance of making a favourable impression on his intended proselyte in his present humour, was at length pleased to comply. But no Sergeant Kite, who ever practised the profession of recruiting, was more attentive that his object should not escape him, than was Christie of the Clint-hill. He indeed conducted Halbert Glendinning to a small apartment overlooking the lake, which was accommodated with a truckle bed. But before quitting him, Christie took special care to give a look to the bars which crossed the outside of the window, and, when he left the apartment, he failed not to give the key a double turn ; circumstances which convinced young Glendinning that there was no intention of suffering him to depart from the Castle of Avenel at his own time and pleasure. He judged it, however, most prudent to let these alarming symptoms pass without observation.

No sooner did he find himself in undisturbed solitude, than he ran rapidly over the events of the day in his recollection, and to his surprise found that his own precarious fate, and even the death of Piercie Shafton, made less impression on him than the singularly bold and determined conduct of his companion, Henry Warden. Providence, which suits its instruments to the end they are to achieve, had awakened in the cause of Reformation in Scotland, a body of preachers of more energy than refinement, bold in spirit, and strong in faith, contemptners of whatever stood betwixt them and their prin-

cipal object, and seeking the advancement of the Great Cause in which they laboured by the roughest road, provided it were the shortest. The soft breeze may wave the willow, but it requires the voice of the tempest to agitate the boughs of the oak ; and, accordingly, to milder hearers, and in a less rude age, their manners would have been ill adapted ; but they were singularly successful in their mission to the rude people to whom it was addressed.

Owing to these reasons, Halbert Glendinning, who had resisted and repelled the arguments of the preacher, was forcibly struck by the firmness of his demeanour in the dispute with Julian Avenel. It might be discourteous, and most certainly it was incautious, to choose such a place and such an audience, for upbraiding with his transgressions a Baron, whom both manners and situation placed in full possession of independent power. But the conduct of the preacher was uncompromising, firm, manly, and obviously grounded upon the deepest conviction which duty and principle could afford ; and Glendinning, who had viewed the conduct of Avenel with the deepest abhorrence, was proportionally interested in the brave old man, who had ventured life rather than withhold the censure due to guilt. This pitch of virtue seemed to him to be in religion what was demanded by chivalry of her votaries in war: an absolute surrender of all selfish feelings, and a combination of every energy proper to the human mind, to discharge the task which duty demanded.

Halbert was at the period when youth is most open to generous emotions, and knows best how to appreciate them in others, and he felt, although he hardly knew why, that, whether catholic or heretic, the safety of this man deeply interested him. Curiosity mingled with the feeling, and led him to wonder what the nature of those doctrines could be, which stole their votary so completely from himself, and devoted him to chains or to death as their sworn champion. He had indeed been told of saints and martyrs of former days, who had braved for

their religious faith the extremity of death and torture. But their spirit of enthusiastic devotion had long slept in the ease and indolent habits of their successors, and their adventures, like those of knights-errant, were rather read for amusement than for edification. A new impulse had been necessary to rekindle the energies of religious zeal, and that impulse was now operating in favour of a purer religion, with one of whose steadiest votaries the youth had now met for the first time.

The sense that he himself was a prisoner, under the power of this savage chieftain, by no means diminished Halbert's interest in the fate of his fellow-sufferer, while he determined at the same time so far to emulate his fortitude, that neither threats nor suffering should compel him to enter into the service of such a master. The possibility of escape next occurred to him, and though with little hope of effecting it in that way, Glendinning proceeded to examine more particularly the window of the apartment. This apartment was situated in the first story of the castle, and was not so far from the rock on which it was founded, but that an active and bold man might, with little assistance, descend to a shelf of the rock which was immediately below the window, and from thence either leap or drop himself down into the lake which lay below his eye, clear and blue in the placid light of a full summer's moon.—“Were I once placed on that ledge,” thought Glendinning, “Julian Avenel and Christie had seen the last of me.” The size of the window favoured such an attempt, but the stanchions or iron bars seemed to form an insurmountable obstacle.

While Halbert Glendinning gazed from the window with that eagerness of hope which was prompted by the energy of his character and his determination not to yield to circumstances, his ear caught some sounds from below, and listening with more attention, he could distinguish the voice of the preacher engaged in his solitary devotions. To open a correspondence with him became immediately his object, and failing to do so by less mark-

ed sounds, he at length ventured to speak, and was answered from beneath—“Is it thou, my son?” The voice of the prisoner now sounded more distinctly than when it was first heard, for Warden had approached the small aperture, which, serving his prison for a window, opened just betwixt the wall and the rock, and admitted a scanty portion of light through a wall of immense thickness. This *soupirail* being placed exactly under Halbert's window, the contiguity permitted the prisoners to converse in a low tone, when Halbert declared his intention to escape, and the possibility he saw of achieving his purpose, but for the iron stanchions of the window—“Prove thy strength, my son, in the name of God!” said the preacher. Halbert obeyed him more in despair than hope, but to his great astonishment, and somewhat to his terror, the bar parted asunder near the bottom, and the longer part being easily bent outwards and not secured with lead in the upper socket, dropt out into Halbert's hand. He immediately whispered, but as energetically as a whisper could be expressed—“By Heaven, the bar has given way in my hand!”

“Thank Heaven, my son, instead of swearing by it,” answered Warden from his dungeon.

With little effort Halbert Glendinning forced himself through the opening thus wonderfully effected, and using his leathern sword-belt as a rope to assist him, let himself safely drop on the shelf of rock upon which the preacher's window opened. But through this no passage could be effected, being scarce larger than a loop-hole for musketry, and apparently constructed for that purpose.

“Are there no means by which I can assist your escape, my father?” said Halbert.

“There are none, my son,” answered the preacher; “but if thou wilt ensure my safety, that may be in thy power.”

“I will labour earnestly for it,” said the youth.

“Take then a letter which I will presently write, for I have the means of light and writing materials in my scrip—Hasten towards Edinburgh, and on the way thou

wilt meet a body of horse marching southwards—Give this to their leader, and acquaint him of the state in which thou hast left me. It mayhap that thy doing so will advantage thyself.”

In a minute or two the light of a taper gleamed through the shot-hole, and very shortly after, the preacher, with the assistance of his staff, pushed a billet to Glendinning through the window.

“God bless thee, my son,” said the old man, “and complete the marvellous work which he hath begun!”

“Amen!” answered Halbert, with solemnity, and proceeded on his enterprize.

He hesitated a moment whether he should attempt to descend to the edge of the water; but the steepness of the rock, notwithstanding the clearness of the night, rendered the enterprise too dangerous. He clasped his hands above his head and boldly sprung from the precipice, shooting himself forward into the air as far as he could for fear of sunken rocks, and alighted on the lake, head foremost, with such force as sunk him for a minute below the surface. But strong, long-breathed, and accustomed to such exercise, Halbert, even though encumbered with his sword, dived and rose like a sea-fowl, and swam across the lake in the northern direction. When he landed and looked back on the castle, he could observe that the alarm had been given, for lights glanced from window to window, and he heard the draw-bridge lowered, and the tread of horses' feet upon the causeway. But little alarmed for the consequence of a pursuit during the darkness, he wrung the water from his dress, and plunging into the moors, directed his course to the north-east by the assistance of the polar star.

CHAPTER VIII.

Why, what an intricate impeach is this!
I think you all have drank of Circe's cup.
If here you hous'd him, here he would have been;
If he were mad, he would not plead so coldly.

Comedy of Errors.

THE course of our story, leaving for the present Halbert Glendinning to the guidance of his courage and his fortune, returns to the tower of Glendearg, where matters in the meanwhile fell out with which it is most fitting that the reader should be acquainted.

The meal was prepared at noontide with all the care which Elspeth and Tibb, assisted by the various accommodations which had been supplied from the Monastery, could bestow on it. Their dialogue ran on as usual in the intervals of their labour, partly as between mistress and servant, partly as maintained by gossips of nearly equal quality.

“Look to the minced meat, Tibb,” said Elspeth; “and turn the broach even, thou good-for-nothing Simmie,—thy wits are harrying bird's nests, child.—Weel, Tibb, this is a fasheous job, this Sir Piercie lying leaguer with us up here, and wha kens for how lang?”

“A fasheous job, indeed,” answered her faithful attendant, “and little good did the name ever bring to fair Scotland. Ye may have your hands fuller of them than they are yet—Mony a sair heart have the Piercies given to Scots wife and bairns with their pricking on the Borders. There was Hotspur, and many more of that bloody kindred, have sat in our skirts since Malcolm's time, as Martin says!”

“Martin should keep a weel scrapit tongue in his head,” said Elspeth, “and not slander the kin of any body that quarters at Glendearg; forby, that Sir Piercie