

to make me believe that the fresh blood with which your shirt is stained, flowed from a wound which has been healed for weeks or months ! Unhappy mocker, think'st thou thus to blind us ? Too well do we know that is the blood of your victim, wrestling with you in the desperate and mortal struggle, which has thus dyed your apparel."

The Knight, after a moment's recollection, said in reply, " I will be open with you, my father—bid these men stand out of ear-shot, and I will tell you all I know of this mysterious business ; and muse not, good father, though it may pass thy wit to expound it, for I avouch to you it is too dark for mine own."

The Monk commanded Edward and the two men to withdraw, assuring the former that his conference with the prisoner should be brief, and giving him permission to keep watch at the door of the apartment ; without which allowance he might, perhaps, have had some difficulty in procuring his absence. Edward had no sooner left the chamber, than he despatched messengers to one or two families of the Halidome, with whose sons his brother and he sometimes associated, to tell them that Halbert Glendinning had been murdered by an Englishman, and to require them to repair to the tower of Glendearg without delay. The duty of revenge in such cases was held so sacred, that he had no reason to doubt they would instantly come with such assistance as would insure the detention of the prisoner. He then locked the doors of the tower, both inner and outer, and also the gate of the court-yard. Having taken these precautions, he made a hasty visit to the females of the family, exhausting himself in efforts to console them and in protestations that he would have vengeance for his murdered brother.

CHAPTER IX.

Now, by Our Lady, Sheriff, 'tis hard reckoning,
That I, with every odds of birth and barony,
Should be detain'd here for the casual death
Of a wild forester, whose utmost having
Is but the brazen buckle of the belt
In which he sticks his hedge-knife.

Old Play.

WHILE Edward was making preparations for securing and punishing the supposed murderer of his brother, with an intense thirst for vengeance which had not hitherto shown itself as part of his character, Sir Piercie Shafton made such communications as it pleased him to the Sub-Prior, who listened with great attention, though the Knight's narrative was none of the clearest, especially as his self-conceit led him to conceal or abridge the details which were necessary to render it intelligible.

" You are to know," he said, " reverend father, that this rustical juvenal having chosen to offer me, in the presence of your venerable Superior, yourself, and other excellent and worthy persons, besides the damsel Mary Avenel, whom I term my Discretion in all honour and kindness, a gross insult, rendered yet more intolerable by the time and place, my just resentment did so gain the mastery over my discretion, that I resolved to allow him the privileges of an equal, and to indulge him with the combat."

" But, Sir Knight," said the Sub-Prior, " you still leave two matters very obscure. First, why the token he presented to you gave you so much offence, as I with others witnessed ; and then again, how the youth, whom you then met for the first, or, at least, the second time, knew so much of your history as enabled him so greatly to move you."

The Knight coloured very deeply.

"For your first query," he said, "most reverend father, we will, if you please, pretermit it as nothing essential to the matter in hand; and for the second—I protest to you that I know as little of his means of knowledge as you do, and that I am well nigh persuaded he deals with Sathanas, of which more anon. Well, sir—In the evening I failed not to veil my purpose with a pleasant brow, as is the custom amongst us martialists, who never display the bloody colours of defiance in our countenance until our hand is armed to fight under them. I amused the fair Discretion with some canzonets, and other toys, which could not but be ravishing to her inexperienced ears. I arose in the morning, met my antagonist, who, to say truth, for an inexperienced villagio, comported himself as stoutly as I could have desired. So, coming to the encounter, reverend sir, I did try his metal with some half-a-dozen of downright passes, with any one of which I could have been through his body, only that I was loth to take so fatal an advantage, but rather, mixing mercy with my just indignation, studied to inflict upon him some flesh-wound of no very fatal quality. But, sir, in the midst of my clemency, he being instigated, I think, by the devil, did follow up his first offence with some insult of the same nature. Whereupon being eager to punish him, I made an estramazone, and my foot slipping at the same time,—not from any fault of fence on my part, or any advantage of skill on his, but the devil having, as I said, taken up the matter in hand, and the grass being slippery,—ere I recovered my position I encountered his sword, which he had advanced, with my undefended person, so that, as I think, I was in some sort run through the body. My juvenal, being beyond measure appalled at his own unexpected and unmerited success in this strange encounter, takes the flight and leaves me there, and I fall into a dead swoon for the lack of the blood I had lost so foolishly—and when I awake, as from a sound sleep, I find myself lying, as it like you, wrapt up in my cloak at the foot of one of the birch-

trees which stand together in a clump near to this place. I feel my limbs, and experience little pain, but much weakness—I put my hand to the wound—it was whole and skinned over as you now see it—I rise and come hither; and in these words you have my whole day's story."

"I can only reply to so strange a tale," answered the Monk, "that it is scarce possible that Sir Piercie Shafton can expect me to credit it. Here is a quarrel, the cause of which you conceal,—a wound received in the morning, of which there is no recent appearance at sunset,—a grave filled up, in which no body is deposited,—the vanquished found alive and well,—the victor departed no man knows whither. These things, Sir Knight, hang not so well together, that I should receive them as gospel."

"Reverend father," answered Sir Piercie Shafton, "I pray you in the first place to observe, that if I offer peaceful and civil justification of that which I have already averred to be true, I do so only in devout deference to your dress and to your order, protesting, that to any other opposite, saving a man of religion, a lady, or my liege prince, I would not deign to support that which I had once attested, otherwise than with the point of my good sword. And so much being premised, I have to add, that I can but gage my honour as a gentleman, and my faith as a Catholic Christian, that the things which I have described to you have happened to me as I have described them, and not otherwise."

"It is a deep assertion, Sir Knight," answered the Sub-Prior; "yet, bethink you, it is only an assertion, and that no reason can be alleged why things should be believed which are so contrary to reason. Let me pray you to say whether the grave, which has been seen at your place of combat, was open or closed when your encounter took place?"

"Reverend father," said the Knight, "I will veil from you nothing, but show you each secret of my bosom, even as the pure fountain revealeth the smallest

pebble which graces the sand at the bottom of its crystal mirror, and as"——

"Speak in plain terms, for the love of heaven!" said the Monk; "these holiday phrases belong not to solemn affairs—Was the grave open when the conflict began?"

"It was," answered the Knight, "I acknowledge it; even as he that acknowledgeth"——

"Nay, I pray you, fair son, forbear these similitudes, and observe me. On yesterday at even no grave was found in that place, for old Martin chanced, contrary to his wont, to go thither in quest of a strayed sheep. At break of day, by your own confession, a grave was opened in that spot, and there a combat was fought—only one of the combatants appears, and he is covered with blood, and to all appearance woundless."—Here the Knight made a gesture of impatience.—"Nay, fair son, hear me but one moment—the grave is closed and covered by the sod—what can we believe, but that it conceals the bloody corpse of the fallen duellist?"

"By Heaven, it cannot!" said the Knight, "unless the juvenal hath slain himself, and buried himself, in order to place me in the predicament of his murderer."

"The grave shall doubtless be explored, and that by to-morrow's dawn," said the Monk; "I will see it done with mine own eyes."

"But," said the prisoner, "I protest against all evidence which may arise from its contents, and do insist beforehand, that whatever may be found in that grave shall not prejudicate me in my defence. I have been so haunted by diabolical deceptions in this matter, that what do I know but that the devil may assume the form of this rustical juvenal, in order to procure me farther vexation? I protest to you, holy father, it is my very thought that there is witchcraft in all that hath befallen me. Since I entered into this northern land, in which men say that sorceries do abound, I, who am held in awe and regard even by the prime gallants in the court of Feliciana, have been here bearded and taunted by a clod-treading clown. I, whom Vincentio Saviola termed his nimblest and most

agile disciple, was, to speak briefly, foiled by a cow-boy, who knew no more of fence than is used at every country wake. I am run, as it seemed to me, through the body, with a very sufficient stoccata, and faint on the spot; and yet, when I recover, I find myself without either wem or wound, and lacking nothing of my apparel, saving my murrey-coloured doublet, slashed with satin, which I will pray may be inquired after, lest the devil, who transported me, should have dropped it in his passage among some of the trees or bushes—it being a choice and most fanciful piece of raiment, which I wore for the first time at the Queen's pageant in Southwark."

"Sir Knight," said the Monk, "you do again go astray from this matter. I inquire of you respecting that which concerns the life of another man, and, it may be, touches your own also, and you answer me with a tale of an old doublet!"

"Old!" exclaimed the Knight; "now, by the gods and saints, if there be a gallant at the British Court more fancifully considerate, and more considerately fanciful, more quaintly curious, and more curiously quaint, in frequent changes of all rich articles of vesture, becoming one who may be accounted point-de-vice a courtier, I will give you leave to term me a slave and a liar."

The Monk thought, but did not say, that he had already acquired right to doubt the veracity of the Euphuist, considering the marvellous tale which he had told. Yet his own strange adventure, and that of Father Philip, rushed on his mind, and forbade his coming to any conclusion. He contented himself, therefore, with observing, that these were certainly strange incidents, and requested to know if Sir Piercie Shafton had any other reason for suspecting himself to be in a manner so particularly selected for the sport of sorcery and witchcraft.

"Sir Sub-Prior," said the Euphuist, "the most extraordinary circumstance remains behind, which alone, had I neither been bearded in dispute, nor foiled in combat, nor wounded and cured in the space of a few hours, would nevertheless of itself, and without any other cor-

roborative, have compelled me to believe myself the subject of some malevolent fascination. Reverend Sir, it is not to your ears that men should tell tales of love and gallantry, nor is Sir Piercie Shafton one who, to any ears whatsoever, is wont to boast of his fair acceptance with the choice and prime beauties of the court; inso-much that a lady, none of the least resplendent constellations which revolve in that hemisphere of honour, pleasure, and beauty, but whose name I here pretermit, was wont to call me her Taciturnity. Nevertheless truth must be spoken; and I cannot but allow, as the general report of the court, allowed in camps and echoed back by city and country, that in the alacrity of the accost, the tender delicacy of the regard, the facetiousness of the address, the adopting and pursuing of the fancy, the solemn close and the graceful fall-off, Piercie Shafton was accounted the only gallant of the time, and so well accepted amongst the choicer beauties of the age, that no silk-hosed reveller of the presence-chamber, or plumed joustier of the tilt-yard, approached him by a bow's-length in the ladies' regard, being the mark at which every well-born and generous juvenal aimeth his shaft. Nevertheless, reverend Sir, having found in this rude place something which by blood and birth might be termed a lady, and being desirous to keep my gallant humour in exercise, as well as to show my sworn devotion to the sex in general, I did shoot off some arrows of compliment at this Mary Avenel, terming her my Discretion, with other quaint and well-imagined courtesies, rather bestowed out of my bounty than warranted by her merit, or perchance like unto the boyish fowler, who, rather than not exercise his bird-piece, will shoot at crows or magpies for lack of better game"——

"Mary Avenel is much obliged by your notice," answered the Monk; "but to what does all this detail of past and present gallantry conduct us?"

"Marry, to this conclusion," answered the Knight; "that either this my Discretion, or I myself, am little less than bewitched; for, instead of receiving my accost

with a gratified bow, answering my regard with a suppressed smile, accompanying my falling-off or departure with a slight sigh, honours with which I protest to you the noblest dancers and proudest beauties in Feliciania have graced my poor services, she hath paid me as little and as cold regard as if I had been some hobnailed clown of these bleak mountains! Nay, this very day, while I was in the act of kneeling at her feet to render her the succours of this pungent quintessence of purest spirit distilled by the fairest hands of the court of Feliciania, she pushed me from her with looks which savoured of repugnance, and, as I think, thrust at me with her foot as if to spurn me from her presence. These things, reverend father, are strange, portentous, unnatural, and befall not in the current of mortal affairs, but are symptomatic of sorcery and fascination. So that having given to your reverence a perfect, simple, and plain account of all that I know concerning this matter, I leave it to your wisdom to solve what may be found soluble in the same, it being my purpose to-morrow, with the peep of dawn, to set forward towards Edinburgh."

"I grieve to be an interruption to your designs, Sir Knight," said the Monk, "but that purpose of thine may hardly be fulfilled."

"How, reverend father!" said the Knight, with an air of the utmost surprise; "if what you say respects my departure, understand that it *must* be, for I have so resolved it."

"Sir Knight," reiterated the Sub-Prior, "I must once more repeat, this *cannot* be, until the Abbot's pleasure be known in the matter."

"Reverend Sir," said the Knight, drawing himself up with great dignity, "I desire my hearty and thankful commendations to the Abbot; but in this matter I have nothing to do with his reverend pleasure, designing only to consult my own."

"Pardon me," said the Sub-Prior; "the Lord Abbot hath in this matter a voice potential."

Sir Piercie Shafton's colour began to rise—"I marvel," he said, "to hear your reverence talk thus—What! will you, for the imagined death of a rude low-born scamp and wrangler, venture to impinge upon the liberty of the kinsman of the house of Piercie?"

"Sir Knight," returned the Sub-Prior, civilly, "your high lineage and your kindling anger will avail you nothing in this matter—You shall not come here to seek a shelter, and then spill our blood as if it were water."

"I tell you," said the Knight, "once more, as I have told you already, that there was no blood spilled but mine own!"

"That remains to be proved," replied the Sub-Prior; "we of the community of St. Mary's of Kennaquhair, use not to take fairy tales in exchange for the lives of our liege vassals."

"We of the house of Piercie," answered Shafton, "brook neither threats nor restraint—I say I will travel to-morrow, happen what may!"

"And I," answered the Sub-Prior, in the same tone of determination, "say that I will break your journey, come what may!"

"Who shall gainsay me," said the Knight, "if I make my way by force?"

"You will judge wisely to think ere you make such an attempt," answered the Monk, with composure; "there are men enough in the Halidome to vindicate its rights over those who dare to infringe them."

"My cousin of Northumberland will know how to revenge this usage to a beloved kinsman so near to his blood," said the Englishman.

"The Lord Abbot will know how to protect the rights of his territory, both with the temporal and spiritual sword," said the Monk. "Besides, consider, were we to send you to your kinsman at Alwick or Warkworth to-morrow, he dare do nothing but transmit you in fetters to the Queen of England. Bethink, Sir Knight, that you stand on slippery ground, and will act most wisely in reconciling yourself to be a prisoner in this place until the Abbot shall decide

the matter. There are armed men enow to countervail all your efforts at escape. Let patience and resignation therefore arm you to a necessary submission."

So saying, he clapped his hands, and called aloud, Edward entered, accompanied by two young men who had already joined him, and were well armed.

"Edward," said the Sub-Prior, "you will supply the English knight here in this spence with suitable food and accommodation for the night, treating him with as much kindness as if nothing had happened between you. But you will place a sufficient guard, and look carefully that he make not his escape. Should he attempt to break forth, resist him to the death; but in no other case harm a hair of his head, as you shall be answerable."

Edward Glendinning replied,—“That I may obey your commands, reverend sir, I will not again offer myself to this person's presence; for shame it were to me to break the peace of the Halidome, but not less shame to leave my brother's death unavenged.”

As he spoke, his lips grew livid, the blood forsook his cheek, and he was about to leave the apartment, when the Sub-Prior recalled him, and said in a solemn tone,—“Edward, I have known you from infancy—I have done what lay within my reach to be of use to you—I say nothing of what you owe to me as the representative of your spiritual superior—I say nothing of the duty from the vassal to the Sub-Prior—But Father Eustace expects from the pupil whom he has nurtured—he expects from Edward Glendinning, that he will not, by any deed of sudden violence, however justified in his own mind by the provocation, break through the respect due to public justice, or that which he has an especial right to claim from him.”

“Fear nothing, my reverend father, for so in an hundred senses may I well term you,” said the young man; “fear not, I would say, that I will in any thing diminish the respect I owe to the venerable community by whom we have so long been protected, far less that I will do aught which can be personally less than respect-

ful to you. But the blood of my brother must not cry for vengeance in vain—your Reverence knows our Border creed.”

“Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, and I will requite it,” answered the Monk. “The heathenish custom of deadly feud which prevails in this land, through which each man seeks vengeance at his own hand when the death of a friend or kinsman has chanced, hath already deluged our vales with the blood of Scottish men, spilled by the hands of countrymen and kindred. It were endless to count up the fatal results. On the Eastern Border, the Homes are at feud with the Swintons and Cockburns; in our Middle Marches, the Scotts and Kerrs have spilled as much brave blood in domestic feud as might have fought a pitched field in England, could they have but forgiven and forgotten a casual rencounter that placed their names in opposition to each other. On the West frontier, the Johnstones are at war with the Maxwells, the Jardines with the Bells, drawing with them the flower of the country, which should place their breasts as a bulwark against England, into private and bloody warfare, of which it is the only end to waste and impair the forces of the country, already divided in itself. Do not, my dear son Edward, permit this bloody prejudice to master your mind. I cannot ask you to think of the crime supposed as if the blood spilled had been less dear to you—Alas! I know that is impossible. But I do require you, in proportion to your interest in the supposed sufferer, (for as yet the whole is matter of supposition,) to bear on your mind the evidence on which the guilt of the accused person must be tried. He hath spoken with me, and I confess his tale is so extraordinary, that I should have, without a moment’s hesitation, rejected it as incredible, but that an affair which chanced to myself in this very glen—More of that another time—Suffice it for the present to say, that from what I have myself experienced, I deem it possible, that, extraordinary as Sir Piercie Shafton’s story may seem, I hold it not utterly impossible.”

“Father,” said Edward Glendinning, when he saw that his preceptor paused, unwilling farther to explain upon what grounds he was inclined to give a certain degree of credit to Sir Piercie Shafton’s story, while he admitted it as improbable—“Father to me you have been in every sense. You know that my hand grasped more readily to the book than to the sword; and that I lacked utterly the ready and bold spirit which distinguished”—Here his voice faltered, and he paused for a moment, and then went on with resolution and rapidity—“I would say, that I was unequal to Halbert in promptitude of heart and of hand; but Halbert is gone, and I stand his representative and that of my father—his successor in all his rights”(while he said this his eyes shot fire,)“and bound to assert and maintain them as he would have done—therefore I am a changed man, increased in courage as in my rights and pretensions. And, reverend father, respectfully, but plainly and firmly do I say, his blood, if it has been shed by this man, shall be atoned—Halbert shall not sleep neglected in his lonely grave, as if with him the spirit of my father had ceased for ever. His blood flows in my veins, and while his has been poured forth unrequited, mine will permit me no rest. My poverty and meanness of rank shall not avail the lordly murderer. My calm nature and peaceful studies shall not be his protection. Even the obligations, holy father, which I acknowledge to you, shall not be his protection. I wait with patience the judgment of the Abbot and Chapter, for the slaughter of one of their most anciently descended vassals. If they do right to my brother’s memory, it is well. But mark me, father, if they shall fail in rendering me that justice, I bear a heart and a hand which, though I love not such extremities, are capable of remedying such an error. He who takes up my brother’s succession must avenge his death.”

The Monk perceived with surprise, that Edward, with his extreme diffidence, humility, and obedient assiduity, for such were his general characteristics, had still boiling in his veins the wild principles of those from whom he

was descended, and by whom he was surrounded. His eyes sparkled, his frame was agitated, and the extremity of his desire of vengeance seemed to give a vehemence to his manner resembling the restlessness of joy.

"May God help us," said Father Eustace, "for, frail wretches as we are, we cannot help ourselves under sudden and strong temptation.—Edward, I will rely on your word that you do nothing rashly."

"That will I not," said Edward,—“that, my better than father, I surely will not. But the blood of my brother—the tears of my mother—and—and—and of Mary Avenel, shall not be shed in vain. I will not deceive you, father—if this Piercie Shafton hath slain my brother, he dies, if the whole blood of the whole house of Piercie were in his veins.”

There was a deep and solemn determination in the utterance of Edward Glendinning, expressive of a rooted resolution. The Sub-Prior sighed deeply, and for the moment yielded to circumstances, and urged the acquiescence of his pupil no farther. He commanded lights to be placed in the lower chamber, which for a time he paced in silence.

A thousand ideas, and even differing principles, debated with each other in his bosom. He greatly doubted the English knight's account of the duel, and of what had followed it. Yet the extraordinary and supernatural circumstances which had befallen the Sacristan and himself in that very glen, prevented him from being absolutely incredulous on the score of the wonderful wound and recovery of Sir Piercie Shafton, and prevented him from at once condemning as impossible that which was altogether improbable. Then he was at a loss how to control the fraternal affections of Edward, with respect to whom he felt something like the keeper of a wild animal, a lion's whelp or tiger's cub, which he has held under his command from infancy, but which, when grown to maturity, on some sudden provocation displays his fangs and talons, erects his crest, resumes his savage nature, and bids defiance at once to his keeper and to all mankind.

How to restrain and mitigate an ire which the universal example of the times rendered deadly and inveterate, was sufficient cause of anxiety to Father Eustace. But he had also to consider the situation of his community, dishonoured and degraded by submitting to suffer the slaughter of a vassal to pass unavenged; a circumstance which of itself might in those difficult times have afforded pretext for a revolt among their wavering adherents, or, on the other hand, exposed the community to imminent danger, should they proceed against a subject of England of high degree, connected with the house of Northumberland and other northern families of high rank, who, as they possessed the means, could not be supposed to lack inclination to wreak upon the patrimony of Saint Mary of Kennaquhair, any violence which might be offered to their kinsman.

In either case, the Sub-Prior well knew that the ostensible cause of feud, insurrection, or incursion, being once afforded, the case would not be ruled either by reason or by evidence; and he groaned in spirit when, upon counting up the chances which arose in this ambiguous dilemma, he found he had only a choice of difficulties. He was a monk, but he felt also as a man, indignant at the supposed slaughter of young Glendinning by one skilful in all the practice of arms, in which the vassal of the Monastery was most likely to be deficient; and to aid the resentment which he felt for the loss of a youth, whom he had known from infancy, came in full force the sense of dishonour arising to his community from passing over so gross an insult unavenged. Then the light in which it might be viewed by those who at present presided in the stormy Court of Scotland, attached as they were to the reformation, and allied by common faith and common interest with Queen Elizabeth, was a formidable subject of apprehension. The Sub-Prior well knew how they lusted after the revenues of the church, (to express it in the ordinary phrase of the religious of the time) and how readily they would grasp at such a pretext for encroaching on those of Saint Mary's as would be afford-

ed by the suffering to pass unpunished the death of a native-Scottishman by a Catholic Englishman, a rebel to Queen Elizabeth.

On the other hand, to deliver up to England, or, which was nearly the same thing, to the Scottish administration, an English knight leagued with the Piercie by kindred and political intrigue, a faithful follower of the Catholic Church, who had fled to the Halidome for protection, was, in the estimation of the Sub-Prior, an act most unworthy in itself, and meriting the malediction of heaven, besides being, moreover, fraught with great temporal risk. If the government of Scotland was now almost entirely in the hands of the Protestant party, the Queen was still a Catholic, and there was no knowing when, amid the sudden changes which agitated that tumultuous country, she might find herself at the head of her own affairs, and able to protect those of her own faith. Then if the Court of England and its Queen were zealously Protestant, the northern counties, whose friendship or enmity were of most consequence in the first instance to the community of Saint Mary's, contained many Catholics, the heads of whom were able, and must be supposed willing, to avenge any injury suffered by Sir Piercie Shafton.

On either side, the Sub-Prior, thinking, according to his sense of duty, most anxiously for the safety and welfare of his Monastery, saw the greatest risk of damage, blame, inroad, and confiscation. The only course on which he could determine was to stand by the helm like a resolute pilot, watch every contingency, do his best to weather each reef and shoal, and commit the rest to heaven and his patroness.

As he left the apartment, the Knight called after him, beseeching he would order his trunk-mails to be sent into his apartment, understanding he was to be guarded there for the night, as he wished to make some alteration in his apparel.

"Ay, ay," said the Monk, muttering as he went up the winding stair, "carry him his trumpery with all despatch. Alas! that man, with so many noble objects of pursuit,

will amuse himself like a jack-an-ape, with a laced jerkin and a cap and bells!—I must now to the melancholy work of consoling that which is well nigh inconsolable, a mother weeping for her first-born."

Advancing, after a gentle knock, into the apartment of the women, he found that Mary Avenel had retired to bed, extremely indisposed, and that Dame Glendinning and Tibb were indulging their sorrows by the side of a decaying fire, and by the light of a small iron lamp, or cruise, as it was termed. Poor Elspeth's apron was thrown over her head, and bitterly did she sob and weep for "her beautiful, her brave,—the very image of her dear Simon Glendinning, the stay of her widowhood, and the support of her old age."

The faithful Tibb echoed her complaints, and, more violently clamorous, made deep promises of revenge on Sir Piercie Shafton, "if there were a man left in the south that could draw a whinger, or a woman that could thraw a rape." The presence of the Sub-Prior imposed silence on these clamours. He sat down by the unfortunate mother, and essayed, by such topics as his religion and reason suggested, to interrupt the current of Dame Glendinning's feelings; but the attempt was in vain. She listened, indeed, with some little interest, while he pledged his word and his influence with the Abbot, that the family which had lost their eldest-born by means of a guest received at his command, should experience particular protection at the hands of the community; and that the fief which belonged to Simon Glendinning should, with extended bounds and added privileges, be conferred on Edward.

But it was only for a very brief space that the mother's sobs were apparently softer, and her grief more mild. She soon blamed herself for casting a moment's thought upon world's gear, while poor Halbert was lying stretched in his bloody shirt. The Sub-Prior was not more fortunate, when he promised that Halbert's body "should

be removed to hallowed ground, and his soul secured by the prayers of the church in his behalf."

Grief would have its natural course, and the voice of the comforter was wasted in vain.

CHAPTER X.

He is at liberty, I have ventured for him!
 _____ if the law

Find and condemn me for't, some living wenches,
 Some honest-hearted maids will sing my dirge,
 And tell to memory my death was noble,
 Dying almost a martyr.

Two Noble Kinsmen.

THE Sub-Prior of Saint Mary's, in taking his departure from the spence in which Sir Piercie Shafton was confined, and in which some preparations were made for his passing the night as the room which might be most conveniently guarded, left more than one perplexed person behind him. There was connected with this chamber, and opening into it, a small *outshot*, or projecting part of the building, occupied by a little sleeping apartment, which upon ordinary occasions was that of Mary Avenel, and which, in the unusual number of guests who had come to the tower on the former evening, had also accommodated Mysie Happer, the Miller's daughter; for anciently, as well as in the present day, a Scottish house was always rather too narrow and limited for the extent of the owner's hospitality, and some shift and contrivance was necessary, upon any unusual occasion, to insure the accommodation of all the guests.

The fatal news of Halbert Glendinning's death had thrown all former arrangements into confusion. Mary Avenel, whose case required immediate attention, had been transported into the apartment hitherto occupied

by Halbert and his brother, as the latter proposed to watch all night, in order to prevent the escape of the prisoner. Poor Mysie had been altogether overlooked, and had naturally enough betaken herself to the little apartment which she had hitherto occupied, ignorant that the spence, through which lay the only access to it, was to be the sleeping chamber of Sir Piercie Shafton. The measures taken for securing him there had been so sudden, that she was not aware of it, until she found that the other females had been removed from the spence by the Sub-Prior's direction, and having once missed the opportunity of retreating along with them, bashfulness, and the high respect which she was taught to bear to the monks, prevented her venturing forth alone, and intruding herself on the presence of Father Eustace, while in secret conference with the Southron. There appeared no remedy but to wait till their interview was over; and, as the door was thin, and did not shut very closely, she could hear every word which passed betwixt them.

It thus happened, that without any intended intrusion on her part, she became privy to the whole conversation of the Sub-Prior and the English knight, and could also observe from the window of her little retreat, that more than one of the young men summoned by Edward arrived successively at the tower. These circumstances led her to entertain most serious apprehension that the life of Sir Piercie Shafton was in great and instant peril.

Woman is naturally compassionate, and not less willingly so when youth and fair features are on the side of him who claims her sympathy. The handsome presence, elaborate dress and address of Sir Piercie Shafton, which had failed to make any favourable impression on the grave and lofty character of Mary Avenel, had completely dazzled and bewildered the poor Maid of the Mill. The Knight had perceived this result, and, flattered by seeing that his merit was not universally underrated, he had bestowed on Mysie a good deal more of his courtesy than in his opinion her rank warranted. It