

"This is but idle talking," answered Lord Murray; "in times like these, we must look to men, and not to pedigrees. Hay was but a rustic before the battle of Loncarty—the bloody yoke actually dragged the plough ere it was blazoned on a crest by the herald. Times of action make princes into peasants, and boors into barons. All families have sprung from some one mean man; and it is well if they have never degenerated from his virtue who raised them first from obscurity."

"My Lord of Murray will please to except the House of Douglas," said Morton, haughtily; "Men have seen it in the tree, but never in the sapling—have seen it in the stream, but never in the fountain.<sup>13</sup> In the earliest of our Scottish annals, the Black Douglas was powerful and distinguished as now."

"I bend to the honours of the House of Douglas," said Murray, somewhat ironically; "I am conscious we of the Royal House have little right to compete with them in dignity—What though we have worn crowns and carried sceptres for a few generations, if our genealogy moves no farther back than to the humble *Alanus Dapifer!*"<sup>14</sup>

Morton's cheek reddened as he was about to reply; but Henry Warden availed himself of the liberty which the Protestant clergy long possessed, and exerted it to interrupt a discussion which was becoming too eager and personal to be friendly. "My lords," he said, "I must be bold in discharging the duty of my Master. It is a shame and scandal, to hear two nobles, whose hands have been so forward in the work of reformation, fall into discord about such vain follies as now occupy your thoughts. Bethink you how long you have thought with one mind, seen with one eye, heard with one ear, confirmed by your union the congregation of the church, appalled by your joint authority the congregation of Anti-Christ; and will you now fall into discord, about an old decayed castle and a few barren hills, about the loves and likings of a humble spearsman and a damsel

bred in the same obscurity, or about the still vainer questions of idle genealogy?"

"The good man hath spoken right, noble Douglas," said Murray, reaching him his hand, "our union is too essential to the good cause to be broken off upon such idle terms of dissension. I am fixed to gratify Glendinning in this matter—my promise is passed. The wars, in which I have had my share, have made many a family miserable; I will at least try if I may not make one happy. There are maids and manors enow in Scotland—I promise you, my noble ally, that young Bennygask shall be richly wived."

"My lord," said Warden, "you speak nobly, and like a Christian. Alas! this is a land of hatred and bloodshed—let us not chase from thence the few traces that remain of gentle and domestic love. And be not too eager for wealth to thy noble kinsman, my Lord of Morton, seeing contentment in the marriage state no way depends on it."

"If you allude to my family misfortune," said Morton, whose Countess, wedded by him for her estate and honours, was insane in her mind, "the habit you wear, and the liberty, or rather license, of your profession, protect you from my resentment."

"Alas! my lord," replied Warden, "how quick and sensitive is our self-love! When, pressing forward in our high calling, we point out the errors of the Sovereign, who praises our boldness more than the noble Morton? But touch we upon his own sore, which most needs lancing, and he shrinks from the faithful chirurgeon in fear and impatient anger!"

"Enough of this, good and reverend sir," said Murray; "you transgress the prudence yourself recommended even now. We are now close upon the village, and the proud Abbot is come forth at the head of his hive. Thou hast pleaded well for him, Warden, otherwise I had taken this occasion to pull down the nest, and chase away the rooks."

"Nay, but do not so," said Warden; "this William Allan, whom they call the Abbot Eustatius, is a man whose misfortunes would more prejudice our cause than his prosperity. You cannot inflict more than he will endure; and the more that he is made to bear, the higher will be the influence of his talents and his courage. In his conventual throne, he will be but coldly looked on—disliked, it may be and envied. But turn his crucifix of gold into a crucifix of wood—let him travel through the land, an oppressed and impoverished man, and his patience, his eloquence, and learning, will win more hearts from the good cause, than all the mitred abbots of Scotland have been able to make prey of during the last hundred years."

"Tush! tush! man," said Morton, "the revenues of the Halidome will bring more men, spears, and horses, into the field in one day, than his preaching in a whole lifetime. These are not the days of Peter the Hermit, when Monks could march armies from England to Jerusalem; but gold and good deeds will still do as much or more than ever. Had Julian Avenel had but a score or two more men this morning, Sir John Foster had not missed a worse welcome. I say, confiscating the monk's revenues is drawing his fang-teeth."

"We will surely lay him under contribution," said Murray, "and moreover, if he desires to remain in his Abbey, he will do well to produce Piercie Shafton."

As he thus spoke, they entered the market-place, distinguished by their complete armour and their lofty plumes, as well as by the number of followers bearing their colours and badges. Both these powerful nobles, but more especially Murray, so nearly allied to the crown, had at that time a retinue and household not much inferior to that of Scottish royalty. As they advanced into the market-place, a pursuivant, pressing forward from their train, addressed the monks in these words:—"The Abbot of St. Mary's is commanded to appear before the Earl of Murray."

"The Abbot of St. Mary's," said Eustace, "is in the patrimony of his Convent superior to every temporal lord.

Let the Earl of Murray, if he seeks him, come himself to his presence."

On receiving this answer Murray smiled scornfully, and, dismounting from his lofty saddle, he advanced, accompanied by Morton, and followed by others, to the body of monks assembled around the cross. There was an appearance of shrinking among them at the approach of the heretic lord, so dreaded and so powerful. But the Abbot, casting on them a glance of rebuke and encouragement, stepped forth from their ranks like a valiant leader, when he sees that his personal valour must be displayed to revive the drooping courage of his followers. "Lord James Stuart," he said, "or Earl of Murray, if that be thy title, I, Eustatius, Abbot of St. Mary's, demand by what right you have filled our peaceful village, and surrounded our brethren with these bands of armed men? If hospitality is sought, we have never refused it to courteous asking—if violence be meant against peaceful churchmen, let us know at once the pretext and the object?"

"Sir Abbot," said Murray, "your language would better have become another age, and a presence inferior to ours. We come not here to reply to your interrogations, but to demand of you why you have broken the peace, collecting your vassals in arms, and convocating the Queen's lieges, whereby many men have been slain, and much trouble, perchance breach of amity with England is likely to arise?"

"*Lupus in fabula,*" answered the Abbot scornfully. "The wolf accused the sheep of muddying the stream when he drank in it above her—but it served as a pretext for devouring her. Convocate the Queen's lieges? I did so to defend the Queen's land against foreigners. I did but my duty; and I regret I had not the means to do it more effectually."

"And was it also a part of your duty to receive and harbour the Queen of England's rebel and traitor; and to inflame a war betwixt England and Scotland?" said Murray.

"In my younger days, my lord," answered the Abbot, with the same intrepidity, "a war with England was no such dreaded matter; and not merely a mitred abbot, bound by his rule to show hospitality and afford sanctuary to all, but the poorest Scottish peasant, would have been ashamed to have pleaded fear of England, as the reason for shutting his door against a persecuted exile. But in those olden days, the English seldom saw the face of a Scottish nobleman, save through the bars of his visor."

"Monk!" said the Earl of Morton, sternly, "this insolence will little avail thee; the days are gone by when Rome's priests were permitted to brave noblemen with impunity. Give us up this Piercie Shafton, or by my father's crest I will set thy Abbey in a bright flame!"

"And if thou dost, Lord of Morton, its ruins will tumble above the tombs of thine own ancestors. Be the issue as God wills, the Abbot of St. Mary's gives up no one whom he hath promised to protect."

"Abbot!" said Murray, "bethink thee ere we are driven to deal roughly—the hands of these men," he said, pointing to the soldiers, "will make wild work among shrines and cells, if we are compelled to undertake a search for this Englishman."

"Ye shall not need," said a voice from the crowd; and, advancing gracefully before the Earls, the Euphuist flung from him the mantle in which he was muffled. "Via the cloud that shadowed Shafton!" said he; "behold, my Lords, the Knight of Wilverton, who spares you the guilt of violence and sacrilege."

"I protest before God and man against any infraction of the privileges of this house," said the Abbot, "by an attempt to impose violent hands upon the person of this noble knight. If there be yet spirit in a Scottish Parliament, we will make you hear of this elsewhere, my lords!"

"Spare your threats," said Murray; "it may be, my purpose with Sir Piercie Shafton is not such as thou dost suppose—attach him, pursuivant, as our prisoner, rescue or no rescue."

"I yield myself," said the Euphuist, "reserving my right to defy my Lord of Murray and my Lord of Morton to single duel, even as one gentleman may demand satisfaction of another."

"You shall not want those who will answer your challenge, Sir Knight," replied Morton, "without aspiring to men above thine own degree."

"And where am I to find these superlative champions," said the English Knight, "whose blood runs more pure than that of Piercie Shafton?"

"Here is a flight for you, my lord!" said Murray.

"As ever was flown by a wild-goose," said Stawarth Bolton, who had now approached to the front of the party.

"Who dared to say that word?" said the Euphuist, his face crimson with rage.

"Tut! man," said Bolton, "make the best of it, thy mother's father was but a tailor, old Overstitch of Holderness—Why, what! because thou art a misproud bird, and despisest thine own natural lineage, and rufflest in unpaid silks and velvets, and keepest company with gallants and cutters, must we lose our memory for that? Thy mother, Moll Overstitch, was the prettiest wench in those parts—she was wedded by Wild Shafton of Wilverton, who, men say, was a-kin to the Piercie on the wrong side of the blanket."

"Help the Knight to some strong waters," said Morton; "he hath fallen from such a height that he is stunned with the tumble."

In fact, Sir Piercie Shafton looked like a man stricken by a thunderbolt, while, notwithstanding the seriousness of the scene hitherto, no one of those present, not even the Abbot himself, could refrain from laughing at the rueful and mortified expression of his face.

"Laugh on," he said at length, "laugh on, my masters," shrugging his shoulders; "it is not for me to be offended—yet would I know full fain from that squire, who is laughing with the loudest, how he had discovered

this unhappy blot in an otherwise spotless lineage, and for what purpose he hath made it known?"

"I make it known?" said Halbert Glendinning in astonishment, for to him this pathetic appeal was made, "I never heard the thing till this moment."<sup>15</sup>

"Why, did not that old rude soldier learn it from thee?" said the Knight, in increasing amazement.

"Not I, by Heaven!" said Bolton; "I never saw the youth in my life before."

"But you *have* seen him ere now, my worthy master," said dame Glendinning, bursting in her turn from the crowd. "My son, this is Stawarth Bolton, he to whom we owe life, and the means of preserving it—if he be prisoner, as seems most likely, use thine interest with these noble lords to be kind to the widow's friend."

"What, my dame of the glen!" said Bolton, "thy brow is more withered, as well as mine, since we met last; but thy tongue holds the touch better than my arm. This boy of thine gave me the foil sorely this morning. The Brown Varlet has turned as stout a trooper as I prophesied; and where is White Head?"

"Alas!" said the mother, looking down, "Edward has taken orders, and become a monk of this Abbey."

"A monk and a soldier!"—Evil trades both, my good Dame. Better have made one a good master fashioner, like old Overstitch of Holderness. I sighed when I envied you the two bonnie children, but I sigh not now to call either the monk or the soldier mine own. The soldier dies in the field, the monk scarce lives in the cloister."

"My dearest mother," said Halbert, "where is Edward, can I not speak with him?"

"He has just left us for the present," said Father Philip, "upon a message from the Lord Abbot."

"And Mary, my dearest mother?" said Halbert. Mary Avenel was not far distant, and the three were soon withdrawn from the crowd to hear and relate their various chances of fortune.

While the subordinate personages thus disposed of themselves, the Abbot held serious discussion with the two Earls, and, partly yielding to their demands, partly defending himself with skill and eloquence, was enabled to make a composition for his Convent, which left it provisionally in no worse situation than before.

The Earls were the more reluctant to drive matters to extremity, since he protested, that if urged beyond what his conscience would comply with, he would throw the whole lands of the Monastery into the Queen of Scotland's hands, to be disposed of at her pleasure. This would not have answered the views of the Earls, who were contented for the time, with a moderate sacrifice of money and lands. Matters being so far settled, the Abbot became anxious for the fate of Sir Piercie Shafton, and implored mercy in his behalf.

"He is a coxcomb," he said, "my lords, but he is a generous, though a vain fool; and it is my firm belief you have this day done him more pain than if you had run a poniard into him."

"Run a needle into him, you mean, Abbot," said the Earl of Morton; "by mine honour, I thought this grandson of a fashioner of doublets was descended from a crowned head at least!"

"I hold with the Abbot," said Murray; "there were little honour in surrendering him to Elizabeth, but he shall be sent where he can do her no injury. Our pursuivant and Bolton shall escort him to Dunbar, and ship him off for Flanders. But soft, here he comes, and leading a female, as I think."

"Lords and others," said the English Knight with great solemnity, "make way for the Lady of Piercie Shafton—a secret which I listed not to make known, till fate, which hath betrayed what I vainly strove to conceal, makes me less desirous to hide that which I now announce to you."

"It is Mysie Happer the miller's daughter, on my life!" said Tibb Tacket. "I thought the pride of these Piercies would have a fa'."

"It is indeed the lovely Mysinda," said the Knight, "whose merits towards her devoted servant deserved higher rank than he had to bestow."

"I suspect though," said Murray, "that we should not have heard of the miller's daughter being made a lady, had not the knight proved to be the grandson of a tailor."

"My Lord," said Sir Piercie Shafton, "it is poor valour to strike him that cannot smite again; and I hope you will consider what is due to a prisoner by the law of arms, and say nothing more on this odious subject. When I am once more mine own man, I will find a new road to dignity."

"Shape one, I presume," said the Earl of Morton.

"Nay, Douglas, you will drive him mad," said Murray; "besides, we have other matter in hand—I must see Warden wed Glendinning with Mary Avenel, and put him in possession of his wife's castle without delay. It will be best done ere our forces leave these parts."

"And I," said the Miller, "have the like grist to grind; for I hope some one of the good fathers will wed my wench with her gay bridegroom."

"It needs not," said Shafton; "the ceremonial hath been solemnly performed."

"It will not be the worse of another bolting," said the Miller; "it is always best to be sure, as I say when I chance to take culture twice from the same meal-sack."

"Stave the miller off him," said Murray, "or he will worry him dead. The Abbot, my lord, offers us the hospitality of the Convent; I move we should repair hither, Sir Piercie and all of us. I must learn to know the Maid of Avenel—to-morrow I must act as her father—All Scotland shall see how Murray can reward a faithful servant."

Mary Avenel and her lover avoided meeting the Abbot, and took up their temporary abode in a house of the

village, where next day their hands were united by the Protestant preacher, in presence of the two Earls. On the same day Piercie Shafton, and his bride departed, under an escort which was to conduct him to the seaside, and see him embark for the Low Countries. Early on the following morning the bands of the Earls were under march to the castle of Avenel, to invest the young bridegroom with the property of his wife, which was surrendered to them without opposition.

But not without those omens which seemed to mark every remarkable event which befell the fated family, did Mary take possession of the ancient castle of her forefathers. The same warlike form which had appeared more than once at Glendearg, was seen by Tibb Tacket and Martin, who returned with their young mistress to partake her altered fortunes. It glided before the cavalcade as they advanced upon the long causeway, paused at each draw-bridge, and flourished its hand, as in triumph, as it disappeared under the gloomy archway, which was surmounted by the insignia of the house of Avenel. The two trusty servants made their vision only known to Dame Glendinning, who, with much pride of heart, had accompanied her son to see him take his rank among the barons of the land. "O, my dear bairn!" she exclaimed when she heard the tale; "the castle is a grand place to be sure, but I wish ye dinna a' desire to be back in the quiet braes of Glendearg before the play be played out."

But this natural reflection, springing from maternal anxiety, was soon forgotten amid the busy and pleasing task of examining and admiring the new habitation of her son.

While these affairs were passing, Edward had hidden himself and his sorrows in the paternal tower of Glendearg, where every object was full of matter for bitter reflection. The Abbot's kindness had despatched him thither upon pretence of placing some papers belonging to the Abbey in safety and secrecy; but in reality to prevent his witnessing the triumph of his brother. Through the deserted apartments, the scene of so many

bitter reflections, the unhappy youth stalked like a discontented ghost, conjuring up around him at every step new subjects for sorrow, and for self-torment. Impatient, at length, of the state of irritation and agonized recollection in which he found himself, he rushed out and walked hastily up the glen, as if to shake off the load which hung upon his mind. The sun was setting when he reached the entrance of Corrinan-shian, and the recollection of what he had seen when he last visited that haunted ravine, burst on his mind. He was in a humour, however, rather to seek out danger than to avoid it.

"I will face this mystic being," he said; "she foretold the fate which has wrapped me in this dress,—I will know whether she has aught else to tell me of a life which cannot but be miserable."

He failed not to see the White Spirit seated by her accustomed haunt, and singing in her usual low and sweet tone. While she sung she seemed to look with sorrow on her golden zone, which was now diminished to the fineness of a silken thread.

Fare thee well, thou holly green!  
Thou shalt seldom now be seen,  
With all thy glittering garlands bending,  
As to greet my slow descending,  
Startling the bewilder'd hind,  
Who sees thee wave without a wind.

Farewell, fountain! now not long  
Shalt thou murmur to my song,  
While thy crystal bubbles glancing,  
Keep the time in mystic dancing,  
Rise and swell, are burst and lost,  
Like mortal schemes by fortune crost.

The knot of faith at length is tied,  
The churl is lord, the maid is bride.  
Vainly did my magic sleight  
Send the lover from her sight;  
Wither bush, and perish well,  
Fall'n is lofty Avenel!

The Vision seemed to weep while she sung; and the words impressed on Edward a melancholy belief, that the alliance of Mary with his brother might be fatal to them both.

Here terminates the First Part of the Benedictine's Manuscript. I have in vain endeavoured to ascertain the precise period of the story, as the dates cannot be exactly reconciled with those of the most accredited histories. But it is astonishing how careless the writers of Utopia are upon these important subjects. I observed that the learned Mr. Laurence Templeton, in his late publication, entitled *IVANHOE*, has not only blessed the bed of Edward the Confessor with an offspring unknown to history, with sundry other solecisms of the same kind, but has inverted the order of nature, and feasted his swine with acorns in the midst of summer. All that can be alleged by the warmest admirer of this author amounts to this,—that the circumstances objected to are just as true as the rest of the story; which appears to me (more especially in the matter of the acorns) to be a very imperfect defence, and that the author will do well to profit by Captain Absolute's advice to his servant, and never tell him more lies than are indispensably necessary.