himself against the instructions of the chaplain, Henry Warden.

"The fanatic preacher," he thought within himself, during some one of the chaplain's frequent discourses against the Church of Rome, "he little knows whose ears are receiving his profane doctrine, and with what contempt and abhorrence they hear his blasphemies against the holy religion by which kings have been crowned, and for which martyrs have died!"

But in such proud feelings of defiance of heresy, as it was termed, and of its professors, which associated the Catholic religion with a sense of generous independence, and that of the Protestants with the subjugation of his mind and temper to the direction of Mr. Warden, began and ended the faith of Roland Græme, who, independently of the pride of singularity, sought not to understand, and had no one to expound to him, the peculiarities of the tenets which he professed. His regret, therefore, at missing the rosary which had been conveyed to him through the hands of Father Ambrose, was rather the shame of a soldier who has dropped his cockade or badge of service, than that of a zealous votary who had forgotten a visible symbol of his religion.

His thoughts on the subject, however, were mortifying, and the more so from apprehension that his negligence must reach the ears of his relative. He felt it could be no one but she who had secretly transmitted these beads to Father Ambrose for his use, and that his carelessness was but an indifferent requital of her kindness.

"Nor will she omit to ask me about them," said he to himself; "for hers is a zeal which age cannot quell; and if she has not quitted her wont, my answer will not fail to incense her."

While he thus communed with himself, Magdalen Græme entered the apartment. "The blessing of the morning on your youthful head, my son," she said, with a solemnity of expression which thrilled the youth to the heart, so sad and earnest did the benediction flow from her lips, in a tone where devotion was blended with affection. "And thou hast started thus early from thy couch to catch the first breath of dawn? But it is not well, my Roland. Enjoy slumber while thou canst; the time is not far behind when the waking eye must be thy portion as well as mine."

She uttered these words with an affectionate and anxious tone, which showed, that devotional as were the habitual exercises of her mind, the thoughts of her nursling yet bound her to earth with the cords of human affection and passion.

But she abode not long in a mood which she probably regarded as a momentary dereliction of her imaginary high calling—"Come," she said, "youth, up and be doing—It is time that we leave this place."

"And whither do we go?" said the young man; "or what is the object of our journey?"

The matron stepped back, and gazed on him with surprise, not unmingled with displeasure.

"To what purpose such a question?" she said; "is it not enough that I lead the way? Hast thou lived with heretics till thou hast learned to install the vanity of thine own private judgment in place of due honor and obedience?"

"The time," thought Roland Græme within himself, "is already come, when I must establish my freedom, or be a willing thrall for ever—I feel that I must speedily look to it."

She instantly fulfilled his foreboding, by recurring to the theme by which her thoughts seemed most constantly engrossed, although, when she pleased, no one could so perfectly disguise her religion.

"Thy beads, my son—hast thou told thy beads?"

Roland Græme colored high; he felt the storm was approaching, but scorned to avert it by a falsehood.

"I have forgotten my rosary," he said, "at the Castle of Avenel."

"Forgotten thy rosary!" she exclaimed; "false both to religion and to natural duty, hast thou lost what was sent so far, and at such risk, a token of the truest affection, that should have been, every bead of it, as dear to thee as thine eyeballs?"

"I am grieved it should have so chanced, mother," replied the youth, "and much did I value the token as coming from you. For what remains, I trust to win gold enough, when I push my way in the world; and till then, beads of black oak, or a rosary of nuts, must serve the turn."

"Hear him!" said his grandmother; "young as he is, he hath learned already the lessons of the devil's school! The rosary, consecrated by the Holy Father himself, and sanctified by his blessing, is but a few knobs of gold, whose value may be replaced by the wages of his profane labor, and whose virtue may be supplied by a string of hazel-nuts!—This is heresy—So Henry Warden, the wolf who ravages the flock of the Shepherd, hath taught thee to speak and to think."

"Mother," said Roland Græme, "I am no heretic; I believe and I pray according to the rules of our church—This misfortune I regret, but I cannot amend it."

"Thou canst repent it, though," replied his spiritual directress, "repent it in dust and ashes, atone for it by fasting, prayer, and penance, instead of looking on me with a countenance as light as if thou hadst lost but a button from thy cap."

"Mother," said Roland, "be appeased; I will remember my fault in the next confession which I have space and opportunity to make, and will do whatever the priest may require of me in atonement.—For the heaviest fault I can do no more.—But, mother," he added, after a moment's pause, "let me not incur your farther displeasure, if I ask whither our journey is bound, and what is its object. I am no longer a child, but a man, and at my own disposal, with down upon my chin, and a sword by my side—I will go to the end of the world with you to do your pleasure; but I owe it to myself to inquire the purpose and direction of our travels."

"You owe it to yourself, ungrateful boy?" replied his relative, passion rapidly supplying the color which age had long chased from her features,—"to yourself you owe nothing—you can owe nothing—to me you owe every thing—your life when an infant—your support while a child—the means of instruction, and the hopes of honor—and, sooner than thou shouldst abandon the noble cause to which I have devoted thee, would I see thee lie a corpse at my feet!"

Roland was alarmed at the vehement agitation with which she spoke, and which threatened to overpower her aged frame; and he hastened to reply,—"I forget nothing of what I owe to you, my dearest mother—show me how my blood can testify my gratitude, and you shall judge if I spare it. But blindfold obedience has in it as little merit as reason."

"Saints and angels!" replied Magdalen, "and do I hear these words from the child of my hopes, the nursling by whose bed I have kneeled, and for whose weal I have wearied every saint in heaven with prayers? Roland, by obedience only canst thou show thy affection and thy gratitude. What avails it that you might perchance adopt the course I propose to thee, were it to be fully explained? Thou wouldst not then follow my command, but thine own judgment; thou wouldst not do the will of Heaven, communicated through thy best friend, to whom thou owest thine all; but thou wouldst observe the blinded dictates of thine own imperfect reason. Hear me, Roland! a lot calls thee—solicits thee—demands thee—the proudest to which man can be destined, and it uses the voice of thine earliest, thy best, thine only friend—Wilt thou resist it? Then go thy way—leave me here—my hopes on earth are gone and withered—I will kneel me down before yonder profaned altar, and when the raging heretics return, they shall dye it with the blood of a martyr."

"But, my dearest mother," said Roland Græme, whose early recollections of her violence were formidably renewed by these wild expressions of reckless passion, "I will not forsake you—I will abide with you—worlds shall not force me from your side—I will protect—I will defend you—I will live with you, and die for you!"

"One word, my son, were worth all these—say only, 'I will obey you.'"

"Doubt it not, mother," replied the youth, "I will, and that with all my heart; only——"

"Nay, I receive no qualifications of thy promise," said Magdalen Græme, catching at the word, "the obedience which I require is absolute; and a blessing on thee, thou darling memory of my beloved child, that thou hast power to make a promise so hard to human pride! Trust me well, that in the design in which thou dost embark, thou hast for thy partners the mighty and the valiant, the power of the church, and the pride of the noble. Succeed or fail, live or die, thy name shall be among those with whom success or failure is alike glorious, death or life alike desirable. Forward, then, forward! life is short, and our plan is laborious—Angels, saints, and the whole blessed host of heaven, have their eyes even now on this barren and blighted land of Scotland—What say I? on Scotland?—their eye is on *us*, Roland—on the frail woman, on the inexperienced youth, who, amidst the ruins which sacrilege hath made in the holy place, devote themselves to God's cause, and that of their lawful Sovereign. Amen, so be it! The blessed eyes of saints and martyrs, which see our resolve, shall witness the execution; or their ears, which hear our vow, shall hear our death-groan drawn in the sacred cause!"

While thus speaking, she held Roland Græme firmly with one hand, while she pointed upward with the other, to leave him, as it were, no means of protest against the obtestation to which he was thus made a party. When she had finished her appeal to Heaven, she left him no leisure for farther hesitation, or for asking any explanation of her purpose; but passing with the same ready transition as formerly, to the solicitous attentions of an anxious parent, overwhelmed him with questions concerning his residence in the Castle of Avenel, and the qualities and accomplishments he had acquired.

"It is well," she said, when she had exhausted her inquiries, "my gay goss-hawk * hath been well trained, and will soar high; but those who bred him will have cause to fear as well as to wonder at his flight.—Let us now," she said, "to our morning meal, and care not though it be a scanty one. A few hours' walk will bring us to more friendly quarters."

They broke their fast accordingly, on such fragments as remained of their yesterday's provision, and immediately set out on their farther journey. Magdalen Græme led the way, with a a firm and active step much beyond her years, and Roland Græme followed, pensive and anxious, and far from satisfied with the state of

* The comparison is taken from some beautiful verses in an old ballad, entitled Fause Foodrage, published in the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border." A deposed queen, to preserve her infant son from the traitors who have slain his father, exchanges him with the female offspring of a faithful friend, and goes on to direct the education of the children, and the private signals by which the parents are to hear news each of her own offspring.

"And you shall learn my gay goss-hawk
Right well to breast a steed;
And so will I your turtle dow,
As well to write and read.

"And ye shall learn my gay goss-hawk,
To wield both bow and brand;
And so will I your turtle dow,
To lay gowd with her hand.

"At kirk or market when we meet,
We'll dare make no avow,
But, 'Dame, how does my gay goss-hawk?'
'Madame, how does my dow?'"

dependence to which he seemed again to be reduced.

"Am I for ever," he said to himself, "to be devoured with the desire of independence and free agency, and yet to be for ever led on, by circumstances, to follow the will of others?"

CHAPTER X.

She dwelt unnoticed and alone,
Beside the springs of Dove;
A maid whom there was none to praise,
And very few to love.

WORDSWORTH.

In the course of their journey the travellers spoke little to each other. Magdalen Græme chanted, from time to time, in a low voice, a part of some one of those beautiful old Latin hymns which belong to the Catholic service, muttered an Ave or a Credo, and so passed on, lost in devotional contemplation. The meditations of her grandson were more bent on mundane matters; and many a time, as a moor-fowl arose from the heath, and shot along the moor, uttering his bold crow of defiance, he thought of the jolly Adam Woodcock, and his trusty goss-hawk; or, as they passed a thicket where the low trees and bushes were intermingled with tall fern, furze, and broom, so as to form a thick and intricate cover, his dreams were of a roebuck and a brace of gaze-hounds. But frequently his mind returned to the benevolent and kind mistress whom he had left behind him, offended justly, and unreconciled by any effort of his.

"My step would be lighter," he thought, "and so would my heart, could I but have returned to see her for one instant, and to say, Lady, the orphan boy was wild, but not ungrateful!"

Travelling in these divers moods, about the hour of noon they reached a small straggling village, in which, as usual, were seen one or two of those predominating towers, or peel-houses, which, for reasons of defence elsewhere detailed, were at that time to be found in every Border hamlet. A brook flowed beside the village, and watered the valley in which it stood. There was also a mansion at the end of the village, and a little way separated from it, much dilapidated, and in very bad order, but appearing to have been the abode of persons of some consideration. The situation was agreeable, being an angle formed by the stream, bearing three or four large sycamore-trees, which were in full leaf, and served to relieve the dark appearance of the mansion, which was built of a deep red stone. The house itself was a large one, but was now obviously too big for the inmates; several windows were built up, especially those which opened from the lower story; others were blockaded in a less substantial manner. The court before the door, which had once been defended with a species of low outer-wall, now ruinous, was paved, but the stones were completely covered with long gray nettles, thistles, and other weeds, which, shooting up betwixt the flags, had displaced many of them from their level. Even matters demanding more peremptory attention had been left neglected, in a manner which argued sloth or poverty in the extreme. The stream, undermining a part of the bank near an angle of the ruinous wall, had brought it down, with a corner turret, the ruins of which lay in the bed of the river. The current, interrupted by the ruins which it had overthrown, and turned yet nearer to the site of the tower, had greatly enlarged the breach it had made, and was in the process of undermining the ground on which the house itself stood, unless it were speedily protected by sufficient bulwarks.

All this attracted Roland Græme's observation, as they approached the dwelling by a winding path, which gave them, at intervals, a view of it from different points.

"If we go to yonder house," he said to his mother, "I trust it is but for a short visit. It looks as if two rainy days from the north-west would send the whole into the brook."

"You see but with the eyes of the body," said the old woman; "God will defend his own, though it be forsaken and despised of men. Better to dwell on the sand, under his law, than fly to the rock of human trust."

As she thus spoke, they entered the court before the old mansion, and Roland could observe that the front of it had formerly been considerably ornamented with carved work, in the same dark-colored freestone of which it was built. But all these ornaments had been broken down and destroyed, and only the shattered vestiges of niches and entablatures now strewed the place which they had once occupied. The larger entrance in front was walled up, but a little foot-path, which, from its appearance, seemed to be rarely trodden, led to a small wicket, defended by a door well clenched with iron-headed nails, at which Magdalen Græme knocked three times, pausing betwixt each knock, until she heard an answering tap from within. At the last knock, the wicket was opened by a pale thin female, who said, "*Benedicti qui venient in nomine Domini.*" They entered, and the portress hastily shut behind them the wicket, and made fast the massive fastenings by which it was secured.

The female led the way through a narrow entrance, into a vestibule of some extent, paved with stone, and having benches of the same material ranged around. At the upper end was an oriel window, but some of the intervals formed by the stone-shafts and mullions were blocked up, so that the apartment was very gloomy.

Here they stopped, and the mistress of the mansion, for such she was, embraced Magdalen Græme, and, greeting her by the title of sister, kissed her with much solemnity, on either side of the face.

"The blessing of Our Lady be upon you, my sister," were her next words; and they left no doubt upon Roland's mind respecting the religion

of their hostess, even if he could have suspected his venerable and zealous guide of resting elsewhere than in the habitation of an orthodox Catholic. They spoke together a few words in private, during which he had leisure to remark more particularly the appearance of his grandmother's friend.

Her age might be betwixt fifty and sixty; her looks had a mixture of melancholy and unhappiness that bordered on discontent, and obscured the remains of beauty which age had still left on her features. Her dress was of the plainest and most ordinary description, of a dark color, and, like Magdalen Græme's, something approaching to a religious habit. Strict neatness and cleanliness of person, seemed to intimate, that if poor, she was not reduced to squalid or heart-broken distress, and that she was still sufficiently attached to life to retain a taste for its decencies, if not its elegancies. Her manner, as well as her features and appearance, argued an original condition and education far above the meanness of her present appearance. In short, the whole figure was such as to excite the idea, "That female must have had a history worth knowing." While Roland Græme was making this very reflection, the whispers of the two females ceased, and the mistress of the mansion, approaching him looked on his face and person with much attention, and, as it seemed, some interest.

"This, then," she said, addressing his relative, "is the child of thine unhappy daughter, sister Magdalen; and him, the only shoot from your ancient tree, you are willing to devote to the Good Cause?"

"Yes, by the rood," answered Magdalen Græme, in her usual tone of resolved determination, "to the good cause I devote him, flesh and fell, sinew and limb, body and soul."

"Thou art a happy woman, sister Magdalen," answered her companion, "that, lifted so high above human affection and human feeling, thou canst bind such a victim to the horns of the altar. Had I been called to make such a sacrifice—to plunge a youth so young and fair into the plots and bloodthirsty dealings of the time, not the patriarch Abraham, when he led Isaac up the mountain, would have rendered more melancholy obedience."

She then continued to look at Roland with a mournful aspect of compassion, until the intentness of her gaze occasioned his color to rise, and he was about to move out of its influence, when he was stopped by his grandmother with one hand, while with the other she divided the hair upon his forehead, which was now crimson with bashfulness, while she added, with a mixture of proud affection and firm resolution—"Ay, look at him well, my sister, for on a fairer face thine eye never rested. I too, when I first saw him, after a long separation, felt as the worldly feel, and was half shaken in my purpose. But no wind can tear a leaf from the withered tree which has long been stripped of its foliage, and no mere human casualty can awaken the mortal feelings which have long slept in the calm of devotion."

While the old woman thus spoke, her manner gave the lie to her assertions, for the tears rose to her eyes while she added, "But the fairer and the more spotless the victim, is it not, my sister, the more worthy of acceptance?" She seemed glad to escape from the sensations which agitated her, and instantly added, "He will escape, my sister—there will be a ram caught in the thicket, and the hand of our revolted brethren shall not be on the youthful Joseph. Heaven can defend its own rights, even by means of babes and sucklings, of women and beardless boys."

"Heaven hath left us," said the other female; "for our sins and our fathers' the succors of the blessed saints have abandoned this accursed land. We may win the crown of martyrdom, but not that of earthly triumph. One, too, whose prudence was at this deep crisis so indispensable, has been called to a better world. The Abbot Eustatius is no more."

"May his soul have mercy!" said Magdalen Græme, "and may Heaven, too, have mercy upon us, who linger behind in this bloody land! His loss is indeed a perilous blow to our enterprise; for who remains behind possessing his far-fetched experience, his self-devoted zeal, his consummate wisdom, and his undaunted courage! He hath fallen with the church's standard in his hand, but God will raise up another to lift the blessed banner. Whom have the Chapter elected in his room?"

"It is rumored no one of the few remaining brethren dare accept the office. The heretics have sworn that they will permit no future election, and will heavily punish any attempt to create a new Abbot of Saint Mary's. *Conjuraverunt inter se principes dicentes, Projiciamus laqueos ejus.*"

"*Quousque, Domine!*"—ejaculated Magdalen; "this, my sister, were indeed a perilous and fatal breach in our band; but I am firm in my belief, that another will arise in the place of him so untimely removed. Where is thy daughter Catherine?"

"In the parlor," answered the matron, "but"——She looked at Roland Græme, and muttered something in the ear of her friend.

"Fear it not," answered Magdalen Græme, "it is both lawful and necessary—fear nothing from him—I would he were as well grounded in the faith by which alone comes safety, as he is free from thought, deed, or speech of villany. Therein is the heretics' discipline to be commended, my sister, that they train up their youth in strong morality, and choke up every inlet to youthful folly."

"It is but a cleansing of the outside of the cup," answered her friend, "a whitening of the sepulchre; but he shall see Catherine, since you, sister, judge it safe and meet.—Follow us youth," she added, and led the way from the apartment with her friend. These were the only words which the matron had addressed to Roland

Græme, who obeyed them in silence. As they paced through several winding passages and waste apartments with a very slow step, the page had leisure to make some reflections on his situation,—reflections of a nature which his ardent temper considered as specially disagreeable. It seemed he had now got two mistresses, or tutoresses, instead of one, both elderly women, and both, it would seem, in league to direct his motions according to their own pleasure, and for the accomplishment of plans to which he was no party. This, he thought, was too much; arguing reasonably enough, that whatever right his grandmother and benefactress had to guide his motions, she was neither entitled to transfer her authority, nor to divide it with another, who seemed to assume, without ceremony, the same tone of absolute command over him.

"But it shall not long continue thus," thought Roland; "I will not be all my life the slave of a woman's whistle, to go when she bids, and come when she calls. No, by Saint Andrew! the hand that can hold the lance is above the control of the distaff. I will leave them the slipped collar in their hands on the first opportunity, and let them execute their own devices by their own proper force. It may save them both from peril, for I guess what they meditate is not likely to prove either safe or easy—the Earl of Murray and his heresy are too well rooted to be grubbed up by two old women."

"As he thus resolved, they entered a low room, in which a third female was seated. This apartment was the first he had observed in the mansion which was furnished with movable seats, and with a wooden table, over which was laid a piece of tapestry. A carpet was spread on the floor, there was a grate in the chimney, and, in brief, the apartment had the air of being habitable and inhabited.

But Roland's eyes found better employment than to make observations on the accommodations of the chamber; for this second female inhabitant of the mansion seemed something very different from any thing he had yet seen there. At his first entry, she had greeted with a silent and low obeisance the two aged matrons, then glancing her eyes towards Roland, she adjusted a veil which hung back over her shoulders, so as to bring it over her face; an operation which she performed with much modesty, but without either affected haste or embarrassed timidity.

During this manœuvre Roland had time to observe, that the face was that of a girl apparently not much past sixteen, and that the eyes were at once soft and brilliant. To these very favorable observations was added the certainty, that the fair object to whom they referred possessed an excellent shape, bordering perhaps on *embonpoint*, and therefore rather that of a Hebe than of a Sylph, but beautifully formed, and shown to great advantage by the close jacket and petticoat which she wore after a foreign fashion, the last not quite long enough to conceal a very pretty foot, which rested on a bar of the table at which she sate; her round arms and taper fingers very busily employed in repairing the piece of tapestry which was spread on it, which exhibited several deplorable fissures, enough to demand the utmost skill of the most expert sempstress.

It is to be remarked, that it was by stolen glances that Roland Græme contrived to ascertain these interesting particulars; and he thought he could once or twice, notwithstanding the texture of the veil, detect the damsel in the act of taking similar cognizance of his own person. The matrons in the meanwhile continued their separate conversation, eyeing from time to time the young people, in a manner which left Roland in no doubt that they were the subject of their conversation. At length he distinctly heard Magdalen Græme say these words—"Nae, my sister, we must give them opportunity to speak together, and to become acquainted; they must be personally known to each other, or how shall they be able to execute what they are intrusted with?"

It seemed as if the matron, not fully satisfied with her friend's reasoning, continued to offer some objections; but they were borne down by her more dictatorial friend.

"It must be so," she said, "my dear sister; let us therefore go forth on the balcony, to finish our conversation.—And do you," she said, addressing Roland and the girl, "become acquainted with each other."

With this she stepped up to the young woman, and raising her veil, discovered features which, whatever might be their ordinary complexion, were now covered with a universal blush.

"*Licitum sit*," said Magdalen, looking at the other matron.

"*Vix licitum*," replied the other, with reluctant and hesitating acquiescence; and again adjusting the veil of the blushing girl, she dropped it so as to shade, though not to conceal her countenance, and whispered to her, in a tone loud enough for the page to hear, "Remember, Catherine, who thou art, and for what destined."

The matron then retreated with Magdalen Græme through one of the casements of the apartment, that opened on a large broad balcony, which, with its ponderous balustrade, had once run along the whole south front of the building which faced the brook, and formed a pleasant and commodious walk in the open air. It was now in some places deprived of the balustrade, in others broken and narrowed; but, ruinous as it was, could still be used as a pleasant promenade. Here then walked the two ancient dames, busied in their private conversation; yet not so much so, but that Roland could observe the matrons, as their thin forms darkened the casement in passing or repassing before it, dart a glance into the apartment, to see how matters were going on there.

CHAPTER XI.

Life hath its May, and it is mirthful then;
The woods are vocal, and the flowers all odor;
Its very blast has mirth in't,—and the maidens,
The while they don their cloaks to screen their kirtles,
Laugh at the rain that wets them.

OLD PLAY.

CATHERINE was at the happy age of innocence and buoyancy of spirit, when, after the first moment of embarrassment was over, a situation of awkwardness, like that in which she was suddenly left to make acquaintance with a handsome youth, not even known to her by name, struck her, in spite of herself, in a ludicrous point of view. She bent her beautiful eyes upon the work with which she was busied, and with infinite gravity sate out the two first turns of the matrons upon the balcony; but then, glancing her deep blue eye a little towards Roland, and observing the embarrassment under which he labored, now shifting on his chair, and now dangling his cap, the whole man evincing that he was perfectly at a loss how to open the conversation, she could keep her composure no longer, but after a vain struggle broke out into a sincere, though a very involuntary fit of laughing, so richly accompanied by the laughter of her merry eyes, which actually glanced through the tears which the effort filled them with, and by the waving of her rich tresses, that the goddess of smiles herself never looked more lovely than Catherine at that moment. A court page would not have left her long alone in her mirth; but Roland was country-bred, and, besides, having some jealousy as well as bashfulness, he took it into his head that he was himself the object of her inextinguishable laughter. His endeavors to sympathize with Catherine, therefore, could carry him no farther than a forced giggle, which had more of displeasure than of mirth in it, and which so much enhanced that of the girl, that it seemed to render it impossible for her ever to bring her laughter to an end with whatever anxious pains she labored to do so. For every one has felt, that when a paroxysm of laughter has seized him at a misbecoming time and place, the efforts which he makes to suppress it, nay, the very sense of the impropriety of giving way to it, tend only to augment and prolong the irresistible impulse.

It was undoubtedly lucky for Catherine, as well as for Roland, that the latter did not share in the excessive mirth of the former. For seated as she was, with her back to the casement, Catherine could easily escape the observation of the two matrons during the course of their promenade; whereas Græme was so placed, with his side to the window, that his mirth, had he shared that of his companion, would have been instantly visible, and could not have failed to give offence to the personages in question. He sate, however, with some impatience, until Catherine had exhausted either her power or her desire of laughing, and was returning with good grace to the exercise of her needle, and then he observed with some dryness, that "there seemed no great occasion to recommend to them to improve their acquaintance, as it seemed that they were already tolerably familiar."

Catherine had an extreme desire to set off upon a fresh score, but she repressed it strongly, and fixing her eyes on her work, replied by asking his pardon, and promising to avoid future offence.

Roland had sense enough to feel, that an air of offended dignity was very much misplaced, and that it was with a very different bearing he ought to meet the deep blue eyes which had borne such a hearty burden in the laughing scene. He tried, therefore, to extricate himself as well as he could from his blunder, by assuming a tone of correspondent gaiety, and requesting to know of the nymph, "how it was her pleasure that they should proceed in improving the acquaintance which had commenced so merrily."

"That," she said, "you must yourself discover; perhaps I have gone a step too far in opening our interview."

"Suppose," said Roland Græme, "we should begin as in a tale-book, by asking each other's names and histories."

"It is right well imagined," said Catherine. "and shows an argute judgment. Do you begin, and I will listen, and only put in a question or two at the dark parts of the story. Come, unfold then your name and history, my new acquaintance."

"I am called Roland Græme, and that tall old woman is my grandmother."

"And your tutoress?—good. Who are your parents?"

"They are both dead," replied Roland.

"Ay, but who were they? you *had* parents, I presume?"

"I suppose so," said Roland, "but I have never been able to learn much of their history. My father was a Scottish knight, who died gallantly in his stirrups—my mother was a Græme of Heathergill, in the Debatable Land—most of her family were killed when the Debatable country was burned by the Lord Maxwell and Herries of Caerlaverock."

"Is it long ago?" said the damsel.

"Before I was born," answered the page.

"That must be a great while since," said she, shaking her head gravely; "look you, I cannot weep for them."

"It needs not," said the youth, "they fell with honor."

"So much for your lineage, fair sir," replied his companion, "of whom I like the living specimen (a glance at the casement) far less than those that are dead. Your much honored grandmother looks as if she could make one weep in sad earnest. And now, fair sir, for your own person—if you tell not the tale faster, it will be cut short in the middle; Mother Bridget pauses longer and longer every time she passes the window, and

with her there is as little mirth as in the grave of your ancestors."

"My tale is soon told—I was introduced into the Castle of Avenel to be page to the lady of the mansion."

"She is a strict Huguenot, is she not?" said the maiden.

"As strict as Calvin himself. But my grandmother can play the puritan when it suits her purpose, and she had some plan of her own, for quartering me in the Castle—it would have failed, however, after we had remained several weeks at the hamlet, but for an unexpected master of ceremonies——"

"And who was that?" said the girl.

"A large black dog, Wolf by name, who brought me into the castle one day in his mouth, like a hurt wild-duck, and presented me to the lady."

"A most respectable introduction, truly," said Catherine; "and what might you learn at this same castle? I love dearly to know what my acquaintances can do at need."

"To fly a hawk, hollow to a hound, back a horse, and wield lance, bow, and brand."

"And to boast of all this when you have learned it," said Catherine, "which, in France at least, is the surest accomplishment of a page. But proceed, fair sir; how came your Huguenot lord and your no less Huguenot lady to receive and keep in the family so perilous a person as a Catholic page?"

"Because they knew not that part of my history, which from infancy I have been taught to keep secret—and because my grand-dame's former zealous attendance on their heretic chaplain, had laid all this suspicion to sleep, most fair Callipolis," said the page; and in so saying he edged his chair towards the seat of the fair querist.

"Nay, but keep your distance, most gallant sir," answered the blue-eyed maiden; "for, unless I greatly mistake, these reverend ladies will soon interrupt our amicable conference, if the acquaintance they recommend shall seem to proceed beyond a certain point—so, fair sir, be pleased to abide by your station, and reply to my questions.—By what achievements did you prove the qualities of a page, which you had thus happily acquired?"

Roland, who began to enter into the tone and spirit of the damsel's conversation, replied to her with becoming spirit.

"In no feat, fair gentlewoman, was I found inexpert, wherein there was mischief implied. I shot swans, hunted cats, frightened serving-women, chased the deer, and robbed the orchard. I say nothing of tormenting the chaplain in various ways, for that was my duty as a good Catholic."

"Now, as I am a gentlewoman," said Catherine, "I think these heretics have done Catholic penance in entertaining so all-accomplished a serving-man! And what, fair sir, might have been the unhappy event which deprived them of an inmate altogether so estimable?"

"Truly, fair gentlewoman," answered the youth, "your real proverb says that the longest lane will have a turning, and mine was more—it was, in fine, a turning off."

"Good!" said the merry young maiden, "it is an apt play on the word—and what occasion was taken for so important a catastrophe?—Nay, start not for my learning, I do not know the schools—in plain phrase, why were you sent from service?"

The page shrugged his shoulders while he replied,—"A short tale is soon told—and a short horse soon curried. I made the falconer's boy taste of my switch—the falconer threatened to make me brook his cudgel—he is a kindly clown as well as a stout, and I would rather have been cudgelled by him than any man in Christendom to choose—but I knew not his qualities at that time—so I threatened to make him brook the stab, and my Lady made me brook the 'Begone;' so adieu to the page's office and the fair Castle of Avenel—I had not travelled far before I met my venerable parent—And so tell your tale, fair gentlewoman, for mine is done."

"A happy grandmother," said the maiden, "who had the luck to find the stray page just when his mistress had slipped his leash, and a most lucky page that has jumped at once from a page to an old lady's gentleman-usher!"

"All this is nothing of your history," answered Roland Græme, who began to be much interested in the congenial vivacity of this facetious young gentlewoman,—"tale for tale is fellow-traveller's justice."

"Wait till we are fellow-travellers, then," replied Catharine.

"Nay, you escape me not so," said the page; "if you deal not justly by me, I will call out to Dame Bridget, or whatever your dame be called, and proclaim you for a cheat."

"You shall not need," answered the maiden—"my history is the counterpart of your own; the same words might almost serve, change but dress and name. I am called Catharine Seyton, and I also am an orphan."

"Have your parents been long dead?"

"That is the only question," said she, throwing down her fine eyes with a sudden expression of sorrow; "that is the only question I cannot laugh at."

"And Dame Bridget is your grandmother?"

The sudden cloud passed away like that which crosses for an instant the summer sun, and she answered with her usual lively expression, "Worse by twenty degrees—Dame Bridget is my maiden aunt."

"Over gods forbode!" said Roland—"Alas! that you have such a tale to tell! and what horror comes next?"

"Your own history, exactly. I was taken upon trial for service——"

"And turned off for pinching the duenna, or affronting my lady's waiting-woman?"

"Nay, our history varies there," said the damsel—"Our mistress broke up house, or had her house broke up, which is the same thing, and I am a free woman of the forest."

"And I am as glad of it as if any one had lined my doublet with cloth of gold," said the youth.

"I thank you for your mirth," said she, "but the matter is not likely to concern you."

"Nay, but go on," said the page, "for you will be presently interrupted; the two good dames have been soaring yonder on the balcony, like two old hooded crows, and their croak grows hoarser as night comes on; they will wing to roost presently.—This mistress of yours, fair gentlewoman, who was she, in God's name?"

"Oh, she has a fair name in the world," replied Catherine Seyton. "Few ladies kept a fairer house, or held more gentlewomen in her household; my aunt Bridget was one of her housekeepers. We never saw our mistress's blessed face, to be sure, but we heard enough of her; were up early and down late, and were kept to long prayers and light food."

"Out upon the penurious old beldam!" said the page.

"For Heaven's sake, blaspheme not!" said the girl with an expression of fear.—"God pardon us both! I meant no harm. I speak of our blessed Saint Catherine of Sienna!—may God forgive me that I spoke so lightly, and made you do a great sin and a great blasphemy. This was her nunnery, in which there were twelve nuns and an abbess. My aunt was the abbess, till the heretics turned all adrift."

"And where are your companions?" asked the youth.

"With the last year's snow," answered the maiden; "east, north, south and west—some to France, some to Flanders, some, I fear, into the world and its pleasures. We have got permission to remain, or rather, our remaining has been connived at, for my aunt has great relations among the Kerrs, and they have threatened a death-feud if any one touches us; and bow and spear are the best warrant in these times."

"Nay, then, you sit under a sure shadow," said the youth; "and I suppose you wept yourself blind when Saint Catherine broke up housekeeping before you had taken arles * in her service?"

"Hush! for Heaven's sake," said the damsel, crossing herself; "no more of that! but I have not quite cried my eyes out," said she, turning them upon him, and instantly again bending them upon her work. It was one of those glances which would require the threefold plate of brass around the heart, more than it is needed by the mariners, to whom Horace recommends it. Our youthful page had no defence whatever to offer.

"What say you, Catherine," he said, "if we two, thus strangely turned out of service at the same time, should give our two most venerable duennas the torch to hold, while we walk a merry measure with each other over the floor of this weary world?"

"A goodly proposal, truly," said Catherine, "and worthy the mad-cap brain of a discarded page!—And what shifts does your worship propose we should live by?—by singing ballads, cutting purses, or swaggering on the highway? for there, I think, you would find your most productive exchequer."

"Choose, you proud peat!" said the page, drawing off in huge disdain at the calm and unembarrassed ridicule with which his wild proposal was received. And as he spoke the words, the casement was again darkened by the forms of the matrons—it opened, and admitted Magdalen Græme and the Mother Abbess, so we must now style her, into the apartment.

* *Anglicè*—Earnest-money.

CHAPTER XII.

Nay, hear me, brother—I am elder, wiser,
And holier than thou—Aud age, and wisdom,
And holiness, have peremptory claims,
And will be listen'd to.

OLD PLAY.

WHEN the matrons re-entered, and put an end to the conversation which we have detailed in the last chapter, Dame Magdalen Græme thus addressed her grandson and his pretty companion: "Have you spoke together, my children?—Have you become known to each other as fellow-travellers on the same dark and dubious road, whom chance hath brought together, and who study to learn the tempers and dispositions of those by whom their perils are to be shared?"

It was seldom the light-hearted Catherine could suppress a jest, so that she often spoke when she would have acted more wisely in holding her peace.

"Your grandson admires the journey which you propose so very greatly, that he was even now preparing for setting out upon it instantly."

"This is to be too forward, Roland," said the dame, addressing him, "as yesterday you were over slack—the just mean lies in obedience, which both waits for the signal to start, and obeys it when given.—But once again, my children, have you so perused each other's countenance, that when you meet, in whatever disguise the times may impose upon you, you may recognise each in the other the secret agent of the mighty work in which you are to be leagued?—Look at each other, know each line and lineament of each other's countenance. Learn to distinguish by the step, by the sound of the voice, by the motion of the hand, by the glance of the eye, the partner whom Heaven hath sent to aid in working its will.—Wilt thou know that maiden, whensoever, or wheresoever you shall again meet her, my Roland Græme?"

As readily as truly did Roland answer in the affirmative. "And thou, my daughter, wilt thou again remember the features of this youth?"

"Truly, mother," replied Catherine Seyton, "I have not seen so many men of late, that I should immediately forget your grandson, though I mark not much about him that is deserving of special remembrance."

"Join hands, then, my children," said Magdalen Græme; but, in saying so, was interrupted by her companion, whose conventual prejudices had been gradually giving her more and more uneasiness, and who could remain acquiescent no longer.

"Nay, my good sister, you forget," said she to Magdalen, "Catherine is the betrothed bride of Heaven—these intimacies cannot be."

"It is in the cause of Heaven that I command them to embrace," said Magdalen, with the full force of her powerful voice; "the end, sister, sanctifies the means we must use."

"They call me Lady Abbess, or Mother at the least, who address me," said Dame Bridget, drawing herself up, as if offended at her friend's authoritative manner—"the Lady of Heathergill forgets that she speaks to the Abbess of Saint Catherine."

"When I was what you call me," said Magdalen, "you indeed were the Abbess of Saint Catherine, but both names are now gone, with all the rank that the world and that the church gave to them: and we are now, to the eye of human judgment, two poor, despised, oppressed women, dragging our dishonored old age to a humble grave. But what are we in the eye of Heaven?—Ministers, sent forth to work his will,—in whose weakness the strength of the church shall be manifested—before whom shall be humbled the wisdom of Murray, and the dark strength of Morton.—And to such wouldst thou apply the narrow rules of thy cloistered seclusion?—or, hast thou forgotten the order which I showed thee from thy Superior, subjecting thee to me in these matters?"

"On thy head, then, be the scandal and the sin," said the Abbess, sullenly.

"On mine be they both," said Magdalen. "I say, embrace each other, my children."

But Catherine, aware, perhaps, how the dispute was likely to terminate, had escaped from the apartment, and so disappointed the grandson, at least as much as the old matron.

"She is gone," said the Abbess, "to provide some little refreshment. But it will have little savor to those who dwell in the world: for I, at least, cannot dispense with the rules to which I am vowed, because it is the will of wicked men to break down the sanctuary in which they are wont to be observed."

"It is well, my sister," replied Magdalen, "to pay each even the smallest tithes of mint and cummin which the church demands, and I blame not thy scrupulous observance of the rules of thine order. But they were established by the church, and for the church's benefit; and reason it is that they should give way when the salvation of the church herself is at stake."

The Abbess made no reply.

One more acquainted with human nature than the inexperienced page, might have found amusement in comparing the different kinds of fanaticism which these two females exhibited. The Abbess, timid, narrow-minded, and discontented, clung to ancient usages and pretensions, which were ended by the Reformation; and was in adversity, as she had been in prosperity, scrupulous, weak-spirited, and bigoted; while the fiery and more lofty spirit of her companion suggested a wider field of effort, and would not be limited by ordinary rules in the extraordinary schemes which were suggested by her bold and irregular imagination. But Roland Græme, instead of tracing these peculiarities of character in the two old dames, only waited with great anxiety for the return of Catherine, expecting probably that the proposal of the fraternal embrace would be renewed, as his grandmother seemed disposed to carry matters with a high hand.

His expectations, or hopes, if we may call them so, were, however, disappointed; for, when Catherine re-entered on the summons of the Abbess, and placed on the table an earthen pitcher of water, and four wooden platters, with cups of the same materials, the Dame of Heathergill, satisfied with the arbitrary mode in which she had borne down the opposition of the Abbess, pursued her victory no farther—a moderation for which her grandson, in his heart, returned her but slender thanks.

In the meanwhile, Catherine continued to place upon the table the slender preparations for the meal of a recluse, which consisted almost entirely of colewort, boiled and served up in a wooden platter, having no better seasoning than a little salt, and no better accompaniment than some coarse barley-bread, in very moderate quantity. The water-pitcher, already mentioned, furnished the only beverage. After a Latin grace, delivered by the Abbess, the guests sat down to their spare entertainment. The simplicity of the fare appeared to produce no distaste in the females, who ate of it moderately, but with the usual appearance of appetite. But Roland Græme had been used to better cheer. Sir Halbert Glendinning, who affected even an unusual degree of nobleness in his house-keeping, maintained it in a style of genial hospitality, which rivalled that of the Northern Barons of England. He might think, perhaps, that by doing so, he acted yet more completely the part for which he was born—that of a great Baron and a leader. Two bullocks, and six sheep, weekly, were the allowance when the Baron was at home, and the number was not greatly diminished during his absence. A boll of malt was weekly brewed into ale, which was used by the household at discretion. Bread was baked in proportion for the consumption of his domestics and retainers; and in this scene of plenty had Roland Græme now lived for several years. It formed a bad introduction to lukewarm greens and spring-water; and probably his countenance indicated some sense of the difference, for the

Abbess observed, "It would seem, my son, that the tables of the heretic Baron, whom you have so long followed, are more daintily furnished than those of the suffering daughters of the church; and yet, not upon the most solemn nights of festival, when the nuns were permitted to eat their portion at mine own table, did I consider the cates, which were then served up, as half so delicious as these vegetables and this water on which I prefer to feed, rather than do aught which may derogate from the strictness of my vow. It shall never be said that the mistress of this house made it a house of feasting, when days of darkness and of affliction were hanging over the Holy Church of which I am an unworthy member."

"Well hast thou said, my sister," replied Magdalen Græme; "but now it is not only time to suffer in the good cause, but to act in it. And since our pilgrim's meal is finished, let us go apart to prepare for our journey to-morrow, and to advise on the manner in which these children shall be employed, and what measures we can adopt to supply their thoughtlessness and lack of discretion."

Notwithstanding his indifferent cheer, the heart of Roland Græme bounded high at this proposal, which he doubted not would lead to another *tête-à-tête* betwixt him and the pretty novice. But he was mistaken. Catherine, it would seem, had no mind so far to indulge him; for, moved either by delicacy or caprice, or some of those indescribable shades betwixt the one and the other, with which women love to tease, and at the same time to captivate, the ruder sex, she reminded the Abbess that it was necessary she should retire for an hour before vespers; and, receiving the ready and approving nod of her Superior, she arose to withdraw. But before leaving the apartment, she made obeisance to the matrons, bending herself till her hands touched her knees, and then made a lesser reverence to Roland, which consisted in a slight bend of the body and gentle depression of the head. This she performed very demurely; but the party on whom the salutation was conferred, thought he could discern in her manner an arch and mischievous exultation over his secret disappointment.—"The devil take the saucy girl," he thought in his heart, though the presence of the Abbess should have repressed all such profane imaginations,—"she is as hard-hearted as the laughing hyæna that the story-books tell of—she has a mind that I shall not forget her this night at least."

The matrons now retired also, giving the page to understand that he was on no account to stir from the convent, or to show himself at the windows, the Abbess assigning as a reason, the readiness with which the rude heretics caught at every occasion of scandalizing the religious orders.

"This is worse than the rigor of Mr. Henry Warden, himself," said the page, when he was left alone; "for, to do him justice, however strict in requiring the most rigid attention during the time of his homilies, he left us to the freedom of our own wills afterwards—ay, and would take a share in our pastimes, too, if he thought them entirely innocent. But these old women are utterly wrapt up in gloom, mystery, and self-denial.—Well, then, if I must neither stir out of the gate nor look out at window, I will at least see what the inside of the house contains that may help to pass away one's time—peradventure I may light on that blue-eyer laugher in some corner or other."

Going, therefore, out of the chamber by the entrance opposite to that through which the two matrons had departed (for it may be readily supposed that he had no desire to intrude on *their* privacy), he wandered from one chamber to another, through the deserted edifice, seeking, with boyish eagerness, some source of interest or amusement. Here he passed through a long gallery, opening on either hand into the little cells of the nuns, all deserted, and deprived of the few trifling articles of furniture which the rules of the order admitted.

"The birds are flown," thought the page; "but whether they will find themselves worse off in the open air than in these damp narrow cages, I leave my Lady Abbess and my venerable relative to settle betwixt them. I think the wild young lark whom they have left behind them, would like best to sing under God's free sky."

A winding stair, strait and narrow, as if to remind the nuns of their duties of fast and maceration, led down to a lower suite of apartments, which occupied the ground story of the house. These rooms were even more ruinous than those which he had left, for having encountered the first fury of the assailants by whom the nunnery had been wasted, the windows had been dashed in, the doors broken down, and even the partitions betwixt the apartments, in some places, destroyed. As he thus stalked from desolation to desolation, and began to think of returning from so uninteresting a research to the chamber which he had left, he was surprised to hear the low of a cow very close to him. The sound was so unexpected at the time and place, that Roland Græme started as if it had been the voice of a lion, and laid his hand on his dagger, while at the same moment the light and lovely form of Catherine Seyton presented itself at the door of the apartment from which the sound had issued.

"Good-even to you, valiant champion!" said she. "Since the days of Guy of Warwick, never was one more worthy to encounter a dun cow."

"Cow?" said Roland Græme, "by my faith, I thought it had been the devil that roared so near me. Who ever heard of a convent containing a cow-house?"

"Cow and calf may come hither now," answered Catherine, "for we have no means to keep out either. But I advise you, kind sir, to return to the place from whence you came."

"Not till I see your charge, fair sister," answered Roland, and made his way into the apartment, in spite of the half serious half laughing remonstrances of the girl.

The poor solitary cow, now the only severe recluse within the nunnery, was quartered in a spacious chamber, which had once been the refectory of the convent. The roof was graced with groined arches, and the wall with niches, from which the images had been pulled down. These remnants of architectural ornaments were strangely contrasted with the rude crib constructed for the cow in one corner of the apartment, and the stack of fodder which was piled beside it for her food.*

"By my faith," said the page, "Crombie is more lordly lodged than any one here!"

"You had best remain with her," said Catherine, "and supply by your filial attentions the offspring she has had the ill luck to lose."

"I will remain, at least, to help you to prepare her night's lair, pretty Catherine," said Roland, seizing upon a pitch-fork.

"By no means," said Catherine; "for, besides that you know not in the least how to do her that service, you will bring a chiding my way, and I get enough of that in the regular course of things."

"What! for accepting my assistance?" said the page,—"for accepting *my* assistance, who am to be your confederate in some deep matter of import? That were altogether unreasonable—and, now I think on it, tell me if you can, what is this mighty emprise to which I am destined?"

"Robbing a bird's nest, I should suppose," said Catherine, "considering the champion whom they have selected."

"By my faith," said the youth, "and he that has taken a falcon's nest in the Scaurs of Polmoodie, has done something to brag of, my fair sister.—But that is all over now—a murrain on the nest, and the eyasses and their food, washed or unwashed, for it was all anon of cramming these worthless kites that I was sent upon my present travels. Save that I have met with you, pretty sister, I could eat my dagger-hilt for vexation at my own folly. But, as we are to be fellow-travellers——"

"Fellow-laborers! not fellow-travellers!" answered the girl; "for to your comfort be it known, that the Lady Abbess and I set out earlier than you and your respected relative to-morrow, and that I partly endure your company at present, because it may be long ere we meet again."

"By Saint Andrew, but it shall not though," answered Roland; "I will not hunt at all unless we are to hunt in couples."

"I suspect, in that and in other points, we must do as we are bid," replied the young lady.—"But, hark! I hear my aunt's voice."

The old lady entered in good earnest, and darted a severe glance at her niece, while Roland had the ready wit to busy himself about the halter of the cow.

"The young gentleman," said Catherine, gravely, "is helping me to tie the cow up faster to her stake, for I find that last night when she put her head out of window and lowed, she alarmed the whole village; and we shall be suspected of sorcery among the heretics, if they do not discover the cause of the apparition, or lose our cow if they do."

"Relieve yourself of that fear," said the Abbess, somewhat ironically; "the person to whom she is now sold, comes for the animal presently."

"Good-night, then, my poor companion," said Catherine, patting the animal's shoulders; "I hope thou hast fallen into kind hands, for my happiest hours of late have been spent in tending thee—I would I had been born to no better task!"

"Now, out upon thee, mean-spirited wench!" said the Abbess; "is that a speech worthy of the name of Seyton, or of the mouth of a sister of this house, treading the path of election—and to be spoken before a stranger youth, too?—Go to my oratory, minion—there read your Hours till I come thither, when I will read you such a lecture as shall make you prize the blessings which you possess."

Catherine was about to withdraw in silence, casting a half sorrowful half comic glance at Roland Græme, which seemed to say—"You see to what your untimely visit has exposed me," when, suddenly changing her mind, she came forward to the page, and extended her hand as she bid him good-evening. Their palms had pressed each other ere the astonished matron could interfere, and Catherine had time to say—"Forgive me, mother; it is long since we have seen a face that looked with kindness on us. Since these disorders have broken up our peaceful retreat, all has been gloom and malignity. I bid this youth kindly farewell, because he has come hither in kindness, and because the odds are great, that we may never again meet in this world. I guess better than he, that the schemes on which you are rushing are too mighty for your management, and that you are now setting the stone a-rolling, which must surely crush you in its descent. I bid farewell," she added, "to my fellow-victim!"

This was spoken with a tone of deep and serious feeling, altogether different from the usual levity of Catherine's manner, and plainly showed, that beneath the giddiness of extreme youth and

* This, like the cell of Saint Cuthbert, is an imaginary scene, but I took one or two ideas of the desolation of the interior from a story told me by my father. In his youth—it may be near eighty years since, as he was born in 1729—he had occasion to visit an old lady who resided in a Border castle of considerable renown. Only one very limited portion of the extensive ruins sufficed for the accommodation of the inmates, and my father amused himself by wandering through the part that was untenanted. In a dining apartment, having a roof richly adorned with arches and drops, there was deposited a large stack of hay, to which calves were helping themselves from opposite sides. As my father was scaling a dark ruinous turnpike staircase, his greyhound ran up before him, and probably was the means of saving his life, for the animal fell through a trap-door, or aperture in the stair, thus warning the owner of the danger of the ascent. As the dog continued howling from a great depth, my father got the old butler, who alone knew most of the localities about the castle, to unlock a sort of stable, in which Kill-buck was found safe and sound, the place being filled with the same commodity which littered the stalls of Augeas, and which had rendered the dog's fall an easy one.

total inexperience, there lurked in her bosom a deeper power of sense and feeling, than her conduct had hitherto expressed.

The Abbess remained a moment silent after she had left the room. The proposed rebuke died on her tongue, and she appeared struck with the deep and foreboding tone in which her niece had spoken her good-even. She led the way in silence to the apartment which they had formerly occupied, and where there was prepared a small refection, as the Abbess termed it, consisting of milk and barley-bread. Magdalen Græme, summoned to take share in this collation, appeared from an adjoining apartment, but Catherine was seen no more. There was little said during the hasty meal, and after it was finished, Roland Græme was dismissed to the nearest cell, where some preparations had been made for his repose.

The strange circumstances in which he found himself, had their usual effect in preventing slumber from hastily descending on him, and he could distinctly hear, by a low but earnest murmuring in the apartment which he had left, that the matrons continued in deep consultation to a late hour. As they separated he heard the Abbess distinctly express herself thus: "In a word, my sister, I venerate your character and the authority with which my Superiors have invested you; yet it seems to me, that, ere entering on this perilous course, we should consult some of the Fathers of the Church."

"And how and where are we to find a faithful Bishop or Abbot at whom to ask counsel? The faithful Eustatius is no more—he is withdrawn from a world of evil, and from the tyranny of heretics. May Heaven and our Lady assoilzie him of his sins, and abridge the penance of his mortal infirmities!—Where shall we find another, with whom to take counsel?"

"Heaven will provide for the Church," said the Abbess; "and the faithful fathers who yet are suffered to remain in the house of Kennaquhair, will proceed to elect an Abbot. They will not suffer the staff to fall down, or the mitre to be unfilled, for the threats of heresy."

"That will I learn to-morrow," said Magdalen Græme; "yet who now takes the office of an hour, save to partake with the spoilers in their work of plunder?—to-morrow will tell us if one of the thousand saints who are sprung from the House of Saint Mary's continues to look down on it in its misery.—Farewell, my sister — we meet at Edinburgh."

"Benedicite!" answered the Abbess, and they parted.

"To Kennaquhair and to Edinburgh we bend our way," thought Roland Græme. "That information have I purchased by a sleepless hour—it suits well with my purpose. At Kennaquhair I shall see Father Ambrose;—at Edinburgh I shall find the means of shaping my own course through this bustling world, without burdening my affectionate relation—at Edinburgh, too, I shall see again the witching novice, with her blue eyes and her provoking smile."—He fell asleep, and it was to dream of Catherine Seyton.

CHAPTER XIII.

What, Dagon up again!—I thought we had hurl'd him
Down on the threshold, never more to rise.
Bring wedge and axe; and, neighbors, lend your hands
And rive the idol into winter fagots!

ATHELSTANE, OR THE CONVERTED DANE.

ROLAND GRÆME slept long and sound, and the sun was high over the horizon, when the voice of his companion summoned him to resume their pilgrimage; and when, hastily arranging his dress, he went to attend her call, the enthusiastic matron stood already at the threshold, prepared for her journey. There was in all the deportment of this remarkable woman, a promptitude of execution, and a sternness of perseverance, founded on the fanaticism which she nursed so deeply, and which seemed to absorb all the ordinary purposes and feelings of mortality. One only human affection gleamed through her enthusiastic energies, like the broken glimpses of the sun through the rising clouds of a storm. It was her maternal fondness for her grandson—a fondness carried almost to the verge of dotage, in circumstances where the Catholic religion was not concerned, but which gave way instantly when it chanced either to thwart or come in contact with the more settled purpose of her soul, and the more devoted duty of her life. Her life she would willingly have laid down to save the earthly object of her affection; but that object itself she was ready to hazard, and would have been willing to sacrifice, could the restoration of the Church of Rome have been purchased with his blood. Her discourse by the way, excepting on the few occasions in which her extreme love of her grandson found opportunity to display itself in anxiety for his health and accommodation, turned entirely on the duty of raising up the fallen honors of the Church, and replacing a Catholic sovereign on the throne. There were times at which she hinted, though very obscurely and distantly, that she herself was foredoomed by Heaven to perform a part in this important task; and that she had more than mere human warranty for the zeal with which she engaged in it. But on this subject she expressed herself in such general language, that it was not easy to decide whether she made any actual pretensions to a direct and supernatural call, like the celebrated Elizabeth Barton, commonly called the Nun of Kent;* or whether she only dwelt upon the general duty which was incumbent on all Catholics of the time, and the pressure of which she felt in an extraordinary degree.

Yet though Magdalen Græme gave no direct

* A fanatic nun, called the Holy Maid of Kent, who pretended to the gift of prophecy and power of miracles. Having denounced the doom of speedy death against Henry VIII. for his marriage with Anne Boleyn, the prophetess was attainted in Parliament, and executed with her accomplices. Her imposture was for a time so successful, that even Sir Thomas More was disposed to be a believer.