

THE FAIR MAID OF PERTH.

CHAPTER I.

"Behold the Tiber!" the vain Roman cried,
Viewing the ample Tay from Baigle's side;
But where's the Scot that would the vaunt repay,
And hail the puny Tiber for the Tay!*

ANONYMOUS.

Among all the provinces in Scotland, if an intelligent stranger were asked to describe the most varied and the most beautiful, it is probable he would name the county of Perth. A native, also, of any other district of Caledonia, though his partialities might lead him to prefer his native county in the first instance, would certainly class that of Perth in the second, and thus give its inhabitants a fair right to plead, that—prejudice apart—Perthshire forms the fairest portion of the northern kingdom. It is long since Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, with that excellent taste which characterizes her writings, expressed her opinion, that the most interesting district of every country, and that which exhibits the varied beauties of natural scenery in greatest perfection, is that where the mountains sink down upon the champaign, or more level land. The most picturesque, if not the highest hills, are also to be found in the county of Perth. The rivers find their way out of the mountainous region by the wildest leaps, and through the most romantic passes connecting the Highlands with the Lowlands. Above, the vegetation of a happier climate and soil is mingled with the magnificent characteristics of mountain-scenery; and woods, groves, and thickets in profusion, clothe the base of the hills, ascend up the ravines, and mingle with the precipices. It is in such favored regions that the traveller finds what the poet Gray, or some one else, has termed, Beauty lying in the lap of Terror.

From the same advantage of situation, this favored province presents a variety of the most pleasing character. Its lakes, woods, and mountains may vie in beauty with any that the Highland tour exhibits; while Perthshire contains, amidst this romantic scenery, and in some places, in connexion with it, many fertile and habitable tracts, which may vie with the richness of merry England herself. The country has also been the

* Such is the author's opinion, founded, perhaps, on feelings of national pride, of the relative claims of the classical river and the Scottish one. Should he ever again be a blotter of paper, he hopes to be able to speak on this subject the surer language of personal conviction. Aug., 1831.

scene of many remarkable exploits and events, some of historical importance, others interesting to the poet and romancer, though recorded in popular tradition alone. It was in these vales that the Saxons of the plain, and the Gael of the mountains, had many a desperate and bloody encounter, in which it was frequently impossible to decide the palm of victory between the mailed chivalry of the Low Country, and the plaided clans whom they opposed.

Perth, so eminent for the beauty of its situation, is a place of great antiquity; and old tradition assigns to the town the importance of a Roman foundation. That victorious nation, it is said, pretended to recognise the Tiber in the much more magnificent and navigable Tay, and to acknowledge the large level space, well known by the name of the North Inch, as having a near resemblance to their Campus Martius. The city was often the residence of our monarchs, who, although they had no Palace at Perth, found the Cistercian Convent amply sufficient for the reception of their Court. It was here that James the First, one of the wisest and best of the Scottish kings, fell a victim to the jealousy of the vengeful aristocracy. Here also occurred the mysterious conspiracy of Gowrie, the scene of which has only of late been effaced by the destruction of the ancient palace in which the tragedy was acted. The Antiquarian Society of Perth, with just zeal for the objects of their pursuit, have published an accurate plan of this memorable mansion, with some remarks upon its connexion with the narrative of the plot, which display equal acuteness and candor.

One of the most beautiful points of view which Britain, or perhaps the world, can afford, is, or rather we may say was, the prospect from a spot called the Wicks of Baigle, being a species of niche at which the traveller arrived, after a long stage from Kinross, through a waste and uninteresting country, and from which, as forming a pass over the summit of a ridgy eminence which he had gradually surmounted, he beheld, stretching beneath him, the valley of the Tay, traversed by its ample and lordly stream; the town of Perth, with its two large meadows or Inches, its steeples and its towers; the hills of Moncreiff and Kinnoul faintly rising into picturesque rocks, partly clothed with woods; the rich margin of the river, studded with elegant mansions; and the distant view of the huge

Grampian mountains, the northern screen of this exquisite landscape. The alteration of the road greatly, it must be owned, to the improvement of general intercourse, avoids this magnificent point of view, and the landscape is introduced more gradually and partially to the eye, though the approach must be still considered as extremely beautiful. There is yet, we believe, a footpath left open, by which the station at the Wicks of Baigle may be approached; and the traveller, by quitting his horse or equipage, and walking a few hundred yards, may still compare the real landscape with the sketch which we have attempted to give. But it is not in our power to communicate, or in his to receive, the exquisite charm which surprise gives to pleasure, when so splendid a view arises when least expected or hoped for, and which Chrystal Croftangry experienced when he beheld, for the first time, the matchless scene.*

Childish wonder, indeed, was an ingredient in my delight, for I was not above fifteen years old; and as this had been the first excursion which I was permitted to make on a pony of my own, I also experienced the glow of independence, mingled with that degree of anxiety which the most conceited boy feels when he is first abandoned to his own undirected counsels. I recollect pulling up the reins without meaning to do so, and gazing on the scene before me as if I had been afraid it would shift like those in a theatre, before I could distinctly observe its different parts, or convince myself that what I saw was real. Since that hour, and the period is now more than fifty years past, the recollection of that inimitable land-

* The following note is supplied by a distinguished local antiquary.

"The modern method of conducting the highways through the valleys and along the bases, instead of over the tops of the mountains, as in the days when Chrystal Croftangry travelled, has deprived the stranger of two very striking points of view on the road from Edinburgh to Perth. The first of these presented itself at the summit of one of the Ochills; and the second, which was in fact but a nearer view of a portion of the first, was enjoyed on attaining the western shoulder of the hill of Moredun or Moncreiff. This view from Moncreiff (that which, it is said, made the Romans exclaim that they had found another Field of Mars on the bank of another Tiber) now opens to the traveller in a less abrupt and striking manner than formerly, but it still retains many of those features which Pennant has so warmly eulogised. The view from the Ochills has been less fortunate, for the road here winds through a narrow but romantic valley amongst these eminences, and the passing stranger is ushered into Strathern, without an opportunity being offered to him of surveying the magnificent scene which in days of no ancient date every traveller from the south had spread out before him at the Wicks of Baigle.

"But in seeking out this spot—and it will repay the toil of the ascent a thousand-fold—the admirer of such scenes should not confine his researches to the Wicks of Baigle, strictly so called, but extend them westward until he gain the old road from Kinross to the Church of Drone, being that by which Mr. Croftangry must have journeyed. The point cannot be mistaken; it is the only one from which Perth itself is visible. To this station, for reasons that the critic will duly appreciate, might, with great propriety, be applied the language of one of the guides at Dunkeld on reaching a bold projecting rock on Craig Vinnac—"Ah, sirs, this is the decisive point!"

scape has possessed the strongest influence over my mind, and retained its place as a memorable thing when much that was influential on my own fortunes has fled from my recollection. It is therefore natural, that whilst deliberating on what might be brought forward for the amusement of the public, I should pitch upon some narrative connected with the splendid scenery which made so much impression on my youthful imagination, and which may perhaps have that effect in setting off the imperfections of the composition, which ladies suppose a fine set of china to possess in heightening the flavor of indifferent tea.*

The period at which I propose to commence, is, however, considerably earlier than either of the remarkable historical transactions to which I have already alluded, as the events which I am about to recount occurred during the last years of the fourteenth century, when the Scottish sceptre was swayed by the gentle, but feeble hand of John, who, on being called to the throne, assumed the title of Robert the Third.

CHAPTER II.

A country lip may have the velvet touch;
Though she's no lady, she may please as much.

DEYDEN.

PERTH, boasting, as we have already mentioned, so large a portion of the beauties of inanimate nature, has at no time been without its own share of those charms which are at once more interesting and more transient. To be called the Fair Maid of Perth, would at any period have been a high distinction, and have inferred no mean superiority in beauty, where there were many to claim that much-envied attribute. But, in the feudal times, to which we now call the reader's attention, female beauty was a quality of much higher importance than it has been since the ideas of chivalry have been in a great measure extinguished. The love of the ancient cavaliers was a licensed species of idolatry, which the love of Heaven alone was theoretically supposed to approach in intensity, and which in practice it seldom equalled. God and the ladies were familiarly appealed to in the same breath; and devotion to the fair sex was as peremptorily enjoined upon the aspirant to the honor of chivalry, as that which was due to Heaven. At such a period in society, the power of beauty was almost unlimited. It could level the highest rank with that which was immeasurably inferior.

It was but in the reign preceding that of

* Chrystal Croftangry expresses here the feelings of the author, as nearly as he could recall them, after such a lapse of years. I am, however, informed, by various letters from Perthshire, that I have made some little mistakes about names. Sure enough the general effect of the valley of the Tay, and the ancient town of Perth, rearing its gray head among the rich pastures, and beside the gleaming waters of that noblest of Scottish streams, must remain so as to justify warmer language than Mr. Croftangry had at his command.—Aug., 1831.

Robert III., that beauty alone had elevated a person of inferior rank and indifferent morals to share the Scottish throne; * and many women, less artful or less fortunate, had risen to greatness from a state of concubinage, for which the manners of the times made allowance and apology. Such views might have dazzled a girl of higher birth than Catharine or Katie Glover, who was universally acknowledged to be the most beautiful young woman of the city or its vicinity, and whose renown, as the Fair Maid of Perth, had drawn on her much notice from the young gallants of the Royal Court, when it chanced to be residing in or near Perth; insomuch that more than one nobleman of the highest rank, and most distinguished for deeds of chivalry, were more attentive to exhibit feats of horsemanship as they passed the door of old Simon Glover, in what was called Couvrefew, or Curfew Street, than to distinguish themselves in the tournaments, where the noblest dames of Scotland were spectators of their address.

But the Glover's daughter—for, as was common with the citizens and artisans of that early period, her father, Simon, derived his surname from the trade which he practised—showed no inclination to listen to any gallantry which came from those of a station highly exalted above that which she herself occupied; and though probably in no degree insensible to her personal charms, seemed desirous to confine her conquests to those who were within her own sphere of life. Indeed, her beauty being of that kind which we connect more with the mind than with the person, was, notwithstanding her natural kindness and gentleness of disposition, rather allied to reserve than to gaiety, even when in company with her equals; and the earnestness with which she attended upon the exercises of devotion, induced many to think that Catharine Glover nourished the private wish to retire from the world, and bury herself in the recesses of the cloister. But to such a sacrifice, should it be meditated, it was not to be expected her father, reputed a wealthy man, and having this only child, would yield a willing consent.

In her resolution of avoiding the addresses of the gallant courtiers, the reigning Beauty of Perth was confirmed by the sentiments of her parent. "Let them go," he said; "let them go, Catharine, those gallants, with their capering horses, their jingling spurs, their plumed bonnets, and their trim mustaches; they are not of our class, nor will we aim at pairing with them.

* David II., after the death of his Queen Jane, married his mistress, "ane lusty woman, Catharine Logie," and though he soon repented, and would fain have repudiated her, the Pope interesting himself in her favor, he found himself bound. As to the next generation, Boece tells us, that "After King Robert (II.) marryit the Earl of Rossis dochter, he had Elizabeth Mure (of Rowallan) in place of his wife. In the third year of King Robert deceasit Euphame his Queen; and he incontinent marryit Elizabeth, lemman afore rehearsit, for the affection that he had to her bairnis."—*BELLENDEN*, vol. I., p. 452.

Robert III. himself was the son of Elizabeth Mure.

To-morrow is Saint Valentine's Day, when every bird chooses her mate; but you will not see the linnet pair with the sparrow-hawk, nor the robin-redbreast with the kite. My father was an honest burgher of Perth, and could use his needle as well as I can. Did there come war to the gates of our fair burgh, down went needles, thread, and shamoy leather, and out came the good headpiece and target from the dark nook, and the long lance from above the chimney. Show me a day that either he or I was absent when the Provost made his musters!—Thus we have led our lives, my girl; working to win our bread, and fighting to defend it. I will have no son-in-law that thinks himself better than me; and for these lords and knights, I trust thou wilt always remember thou art too low to be their lawful love, and too high to be their unlawful loon. And now, lay by thy work, lass, for it is holytide eve, and it becomes us to go to the evening service, and pray that Heaven may send thee a good Valentine to-morrow."

So the Fair Maid of Perth laid aside the splendid hawking-glove which she was embroidering for the Lady Drummond, and putting on her holiday kirtle, prepared to attend her father to the Blackfriars Monastery, which was adjacent to Couvrefew Street, in which they lived. On their passage, Simon Glover, an ancient and esteemed burgher of Perth, somewhat stricken in years, and increased in substance, received from young and old the homage due to his velvet jerkin and his gold chain, while the well-known beauty of Catharine, though concealed beneath her screen,—which resembled the mantilla still worn in Flanders,—called both obeisances and doffings of the bonnet from young and old.

As the pair moved on arm in arm, they were followed by a tall handsome young man, dressed in a yeoman's habit of the plainest kind, but which showed to advantage his fine limbs, as the handsome countenance that looked out from a quantity of curled tresses, surmounted by a small scarlet bonnet, became that species of head-dress. He had no other weapon than a staff in his hand, it not being thought fit that persons of his degree (for he was an apprentice to the old Glover), should appear on the street armed with sword or dagger, a privilege which the jackmen, or military retainers of the nobility, esteemed exclusively their own. He attended his master at holytide, partly in the character of a domestic, or guardian, should there be cause for his interference; but it was not difficult to discern, by the earnest attention which he paid to Catharine Glover, that it was to her rather than to her father, that he desired to dedicate his good offices. Generally speaking, there was no opportunity for his zeal displaying itself; for a common feeling of respect induced passengers to give way to the father and daughter.

But when the steel caps, barrets, and plumes, of squires, archers, and men-at-arms, began to be seen among the throng, the wearers of those



W. Drummond.

W. H. Eggleston.

Catharine
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warlike distinctions were more rude in their demeanor than the quiet citizens. More than once, when from chance, or perhaps from an assumption of superior importance, such an individual took the wall of Simon in passing, the Glover's youthful attendant bristled up with a look of defiance, and the air of one who sought to distinguish his zeal in his mistress's service by its ardor. As frequently did Conachar, for such was the lad's name, receive a check from his master, who gave him to understand that he did not wish his interference before he required it. "Foolish boy!" he said, "hast thou not lived long enough in my shop to know that a blow will breed a brawl—that a dirk will cut the skin as fast as a needle pierces leather—that I love peace, though I never feared war, and care not which side of the causeway my daughter and I walk upon, so we may keep our road in peace and quietness?" Conachar excused himself as zealous for his master's honor, yet was scarce able to pacify the old citizen.—"What have we to do with honor?" said Simon Glover. "If thou wouldst remain in my service, thou must think of honesty, and leave honor to the swaggering fools who wear steel at their heels, and iron on their shoulders. If you wish to wear and use such garbure, you are welcome; but it shall not be in my house, or in my company."

Conachar seemed rather to kindle at this rebuke than to submit to it. But a sign from Catharine—if that slight raising of the taper finger was indeed a sign—had more effect than the angry reproof of his master; and the youth laid aside the military air which seemed natural to him, and relapsed into the humble follower of a quiet burgher.

Meantime the party was overtaken by a tall young man wrapped in a cloak, which obscured or muffled a part of his face—a practice often used by the gallants of the time, when they did not wish to be known, or were abroad in quest of adventures. He seemed, in short, one who might say to the world around him, "I desire, for the present, not to be known, or addressed in my own character; but, as I am answerable to myself alone for my actions, I wear my incognito but for form's sake, and care little whether you see through it or not."—He came on the right side of Catharine, who had hold of her father's arm, and slackened his pace as if joining the party.

"Good-even to you, goodman."

"The same to your worship, and thanks.—May I pray you to pass on?—Our pace is too slow for that of your lordship—our company too mean for that of your father's son."

"My father's son can best judge of that, old man. I have business to talk of with you and with my fair St. Catharine here, the loveliest and most obdurate saint in the calendar."

"With deep reverence, my lord," said the old man, "I would remind you, that this is good St. Valentine's Eve, which is no time for business,

and that I can have your worshipful commands by a serving-man as early as it pleases you to send them."

"There is no time like the present," said the persevering youth, whose rank seemed to be of a kind which set him above ceremony. "I wish to know whether the buff doublet be finished which I commissioned some time since;—and from you, pretty Catharine" (here he sank his voice to a whisper), "I desire to be informed whether your fair fingers have been employed upon it, agreeably to your promise? But I need not ask you, for my poor heart has felt the pang of each puncture that pierced the garment which was to cover it. Traitor, how wilt thou answer for thus tormenting the heart that loves thee so dearly!"

"Let me entreat you, my lord," said Catharine, "to forego this wild talk—it becomes not you to speak thus, or me to listen. We are of poor rank, but honest manners; and the presence of the father ought to protect the child from such expressions even from your lordship."

This she spoke so low, that neither her father nor Conachar could understand what she said.

"Well, tyrant," answered the persevering gallant, "I will plague you no longer now, providing you will let me see you from your window, to-morrow, when the sun first peeps over the eastern hill, and give me right to be your Valentine for the year."

"Not so, my lord; my father but now told me that hawks, far less eagles, pair not with the humble linnet. Seek some court lady, to whom your favors will be honor; to me—your highness must permit me to speak the plain truth—they can be nothing but disgrace."

As they spoke thus, the party arrived at the gate of the church. "Your lordship will, I trust, permit us here to take leave of you?" said her father. "I am well aware how little you will alter your pleasure for the pain and uneasiness you may give to such as us; but, from the throng of attendants at the gate, your lordship may see that there are others in the church, to whom even your gracious lordship must pay respect."

"Yes—respect; and who pays any respect to me?" said the haughty young lord. "A miserable artisan and his daughter, too much honored by my slightest notice, have the insolence to tell me that my notice dishonors them. Well, my princess of white doe-skin and blue silk, I will teach you to rue this."

As he murmured thus, the Glover and his daughter entered the Dominican Church, and their attendant, Conachar, in attempting to follow them closely, jostled, it may be unwillingly, the young nobleman. The gallant, starting from his unpleasing reverie, and perhaps considering this as an intentional insult, seized on the young man by the breast, struck him, and threw him from him. His irritated opponent

recovered himself with difficulty, and grasped towards his own side, as if seeking a sword or dagger in the place where it was usually worn; but finding none, he made a gesture of disappointed rage, and entered the church. During the few seconds he remained, the young nobleman stood with his arms folded on his breast with a haughty smile, as if defying him to do his worst. When Conachar had entered the church, his opponent, adjusting his cloak yet closer about his face, made a private signal by holding up one of his gloves. He was instantly joined by two men, who, disguised like himself, had waited his motions at a little distance. They spoke together earnestly, after which the young nobleman retired in one direction, his friends or followers going off in another.

Simon Glover, before he entered the church, cast a look towards the group, but had taken his place among the congregation before they separated themselves. He knelt down with the air of a man who has something burdensome on his mind; but when the service was ended, he seemed free from anxiety, as one who had referred himself and his troubles to the disposal of Heaven. The ceremony of High Mass was performed with considerable solemnity, a number of noblemen and ladies of rank being present. Preparations had indeed been made for the reception of the good old King himself, but some of those infractions to which he was subject had prevented Robert III. from attending the service, as was his wont. When the congregation were dismissed, the Glover and his beautiful daughter lingered for some time, for the purpose of making their several shrifts in the confessionals, where the priests had taken their places for discharging that part of their duty. Thus it happened that the night had fallen dark, and the way was solitary, when they returned along the now deserted streets to their own dwelling. Most persons had betaken themselves to home and to bed. They who still lingered in the street were night-walkers or revellers, the idle and swaggering retainers of the haughty nobles, who were much wont to insult the peaceful passengers, relying on the impunity which their masters' court favor was too apt to secure them.

It was, perhaps, in apprehension of mischief from some character of this kind, that Conachar, stepping up to the Glover, said, "Master, walk faster,—we are dogged."

"Dogged, sayest thou? By whom and by how many?"

"By one man muffled in his cloak, who follows us like our shadow."

"Then will I never mend my pace along the Courrefew Street, for the best one man that ever trode it."

"But he has arms," said Conachar.

"And so have we, and hands and legs and feet. Why sure, Conachar, you are not afraid of one man?"

"Afraid!" answered Conachar, indignant at

the insinuation; "you shall soon know if I am afraid."

"Now you are as far on the other side of the mark, thou foolish boy—thy temper has no middle course; there is no occasion to make a brawl, though we do not run. Walk thou before with Catharine, and I will take thy place. We cannot be exposed to danger so near home as we are."

The Glover fell behind accordingly, and certainly observed a person keep so close to them, as, the time and place considered, justified some suspicion. When they crossed the street, he also crossed it, and when they advanced or slackened their pace, the stranger's was in proportion accelerated or diminished. The matter would have been of very little consequence had Simon Glover been alone; but the beauty of his daughter might render her the object of some profligate scheme, in a country where the laws afforded such slight protection to those who had not the means to defend themselves. Conachar and his fair charge having arrived on the threshold of their own apartment, which was opened to them by an old female servant, the burgher's uneasiness was ended. Determined, however, to ascertain, if possible, whether there had been any cause for it, he called out to the man whose motions had occasioned the alarm, and who stood still, though he seemed to keep out of reach of the light. "Come, step forward, my friend, and do not play at bopeep; knowest thou not, that they who walk like phantoms in the dark, are apt to encounter the conjuration of a quarter-staff? Step forward, I say, and show us thy shapes, man."

"Why, so I can, Master Glover," said one of the deepest voices that ever answered question. "I can show my shapes well enough, only I wish they could bear the light something better."

"Body of me," exclaimed Simon, "I should know that voice!—And is it thou, in thy bodily person, Harry Gow? Nay, beshrew me if thou passeth this door with dry lips. What, man, curfew has not rung yet, and if it had, it were no reason why it should part father and son. Come in, man; Dorothy shall get us something to eat, and we will jingle a can ere thou leave us. Come in, I say; my daughter Kate will be right glad to see thee."

By this time he had pulled the person whom he welcomed so cordially into a sort of kitchen, which served also upon ordinary occasions the office of parlor. Its ornaments were trenchers of pewter, mixed with a silver cup or two, which, in the highest degree of cleanliness, occupied a range of shelves like those of a beanfret, popularly called *the Bink*. A good fire, with the assistance of a blazing lamp, spread light and cheerfulness through the apartment, and a savory smell of some victuals which Dorothy was preparing, did not at all offend the unrefined noses of those whose appetite they were destined to satisfy.

Their unknown attendant now stood in full light among them, and though his appearance was neither dignified nor handsome, his face and figure were not only deserving of attention, but seemed in some manner to command it. He was rather below the middle stature, but the breadth of his shoulders, length and brawniness of his arms, and the muscular appearance of the whole man, argued a most unusual share of strength, and a frame kept in vigor by constant exercise. His legs were somewhat bent, but not in a manner which could be said to approach deformity; on the contrary, which seemed to correspond to the strength of his frame, though it injured in some degree its symmetry. His dress was of buff-hide; and he wore in a belt around his waist a heavy broadsword, and a dirk or poniard, as if to defend his purse, which (burgher-fashion) was attached to the same cincture. The head was well proportioned, round, close cropped, and curled thickly with black hair. There was daring and resolution in the dark eye, but the other features seemed to express a bashful timidity, mingled with good-humor, and obvious satisfaction at meeting with his old friend. Abstracted from the bashful expression, which was that of the moment, the forehead of Henry Gow, or Smith (for he was indifferently so called),* was high and noble, but the lower part of the face was less happily formed. The mouth was large and well-furnished with a set of firm and beautiful teeth, the appearance of which corresponded with the air of personal health and muscular strength, which the whole frame indicated. A short thick beard, and mustaches which had lately been arranged with some care, completed the picture. His age could not exceed eight-and-twenty.

The family appeared all well pleased with the unexpected appearance of an old friend. Simon Glover shook his hand again and again, Dorothy made her compliments, and Catharine herself offered freely her hand, which Henry held in his massive grasp, as if he designed to carry it to his lips, but after a moment's hesitation, desisted, from fear lest the freedom might be ill taken. Not that there was any resistance on the part of the little hand which lay passive in his grasp; but there was a smile mingled with the blush on her cheek, which seemed to increase the confusion of the gallant. Her father, on his part, called out frankly, as he saw his friend's hesitation,—

"Her lips, man, her lips! and that's a proffer I would not make to every one who crosses my threshold. But, by good St. Valentine (whose holiday will dawn to-morrow), I am to glad to see thee in the bonny city of Perth again, that it were hard to tell the thing I could refuse thee."

The Smith—for, as has been said, such was the craft of this sturdy artisan—was encour-

aged modestly to salute the Fair Maid, who yielded the courtesy with a smile of affection that might have become a sister, saying, at the same time, "Let me hope that I welcome back to Perth a repentant and amended man."

He held her hand as if about to answer, then suddenly, as one who lost courage at the moment, relinquished his grasp; and drawing back as if afraid of what he had done, his dark countenance glowing with bashfulness, mixed with delight, he sat down by the fire on the opposite side from that which Catharine occupied.

"Come, Dorothy, speed thee with the food, old woman;—and Conachar—where is Conachar?"

"He is gone to bed, sir, with a headache," said Catharine, in a hesitating voice.

"Go, call him, Dorothy," said the old Glover; "I will not be used thus by him; his Highland blood, forsooth, is too gentle to lay a trencher or spread a napkin, and he expects to enter our ancient and honorable craft without duly waiting and tending upon his master and teacher in all matters of lawful obedience. Go, call him, I say; I will not be thus neglected."

Dorothy was presently heard screaming upstairs, or more probably up a ladder, to the cockloft, to which the recusant apprentice had made an untimely retreat; a muttered answer was returned, and soon after Conachar appeared in the eating apartment. There was a gloom of deep sullenness on his haughty, though handsome features, and as he proceeded to spread the board, and arrange the trenchers, with salt, spices, and other condiments,—to discharge, in short, the duties of a modern domestic, which the custom of the time imposed upon all apprentices—he was obviously disgusted and indignant with the mean office imposed upon him. The Fair Maid of Perth looked with some anxiety at him, as if apprehensive that his evident sullenness might increase her father's displeasure; but it was not till her eyes had sought out his for a second time, that Conachar condescended to veil his dissatisfaction, and throw a greater appearance of willingness and submission into the services which he was performing.

And here we must acquaint our reader, that though the private interchange of looks betwixt Catharine Glover and the young mountaineer indicated some interest on the part of the former in the conduct of the latter, it would have puzzled the strictest observer to discover whether that feeling exceeded in degree what might have been felt by a young person towards a friend and inmate of the same age, with whom she had lived on habits of intimacy.

"Thou hast had a long journey, son Henry," said Glover, who had always used that affectionate style of speech, though nowadays a-kin to the young artisan; "ay, and hast seen many a river besides Tay, and many a fair bigging besides St. Johnston."

* *Gone is Gaelic for Smith.*

"But none that I like half so well, and none that are half so much worth my liking," answered the Smith; "I promise you, father, that when I crossed the Wicks of Baigie, and saw the bonny city lie stretched fairly before me, like a Fairy Queen in romance, whom the Knight finds asleep among a wilderness of flowers, I felt even as a bird, when it folds its wearied wings to stoop down on its own nest."

"Aha! so thou canst play the Maker* yet?" said the Glover. "What, shall we have our ballets, and our roundels again? our lusty carols for Christmas, and our mirthful springs to trip it round the Maypole?"

"Such toys there may be forthcoming, father," said Henry Smith, "though the blast of the bellows, and the clatter of the anvil, make but coarse company to lays of minstrelsy; but I can afford them no better, since I must mend my fortune, though I mar my verses."

"Right again—my own son just," answered the Glover; "and I trust thou hast made a saving voyage of it?"

"Nay, I made a thriving one, father—I sold the steel habergeon that you wot of for four hundred marks to the English warden of the East Marches, Sir Magnus Redman.† He scarce scrupled a penny after I gave him leave to try a sword-dint upon it. The beggarly Highland thief who bespoke it, boggled at half the sum, though it had cost me a year's labor."

"What dost thou start at, Conachar?" said Simon, addressing himself, by way of parenthesis, to the mountain disciple; "wilt thou never learn to mind thy own business, without listening to what is passing round thee? What is it to thee that an Englishman thinks that cheap which a Scottishman may hold dear?"

Conachar turned round to speak; but, after a moment's consideration, looked down, and endeavored to recover his composure, which had been deranged by the contemptuous manner in which the Smith had spoken of his Highland customer. Henry went on without paying any attention to him.

"I sold at high prices some swords and whingers when I was at Edinburgh. They expect war there; and if it please God to send it, my merchandise will be worth its price. St. Dunstan make us thankful, for he was of our craft. In short, this fellow" (laying his hand on his purse), "who, thou knowest, father, was somewhat lank and low in condition when I set out four months since, is now as round and full as a six-weeks' porker."

"And that other leathern-sheathed iron-hilted fellow who hangs beside him," said the Glover, "has he been idle all this while?—Come, jolly

* Old Scottish for *Pot*, and, indeed, the literal translation of the original Greek.

† Sir Magnus Redman, some time Governor of Berwick, fell in one of the battles on the Border, which followed on the treason of the Earl of March, alluded to hereafter.

Smith, confess the truth—how many brawls hast thou had since crossing the Tay?"

"Nay, now you do me wrong, father, to ask me such a question" (glancing a look at Catharine) "in such a presence," answered the armorer; "I make swords, indeed, but I leave it to other people to use them. No, no—seldom have I a naked sword in my fist, save when I am turning them on the anvil or grindstone; and they slandered me to your daughter Catharine, that led her to suspect the quietest burghess in Perth of being a brawler. I wish the best of them would dare say such a word at the Hill of Kinnoull, and never a man on the green but he and I."

"Ay, ay," said the Glover, laughing, "we should then have a fine sample of your patient sufferance.—Out upon you, Henry, that you will speak so like a knave to one who knows thee so well! You look at Kate, too, as if she did not know that a man in this country must make his hand keep his head, unless he will sleep in slender security.—Come, come; beshrew me, if thou hast not spoiled as many snits of armor as thou hast made."

"Why, he would be a bad armorer, father Simon, that could not, with his own blow, make proof of his own workmanship. If I did not sometimes cleave a helmet, or strike a sword's point through a harness, I should not know what strength of fabric to give them; and might jingle together such pasteboard work as yonder Edinburgh smiths think not shame to put out of their hands."

"Aha—now would I lay a gold crown thou hast had a quarrel with some Edinburgh Burn-the-wind* upon that very ground?"

"A quarrel!—no, father," replied the Perth armorer, "but a measuring of swords with such a one upon St. Leonard's Crags, for the honor of my bonny city, I confess. Surely you do not think I would quarrel with a brother craftsman?"

"Ah, to a surety, no. But how did your brother craftsman come off?"

"Why, as one with a sheet of paper on his bosom might come off from the stroke of a lance—or rather, indeed, he came not off at all; for, when I left him, he was lying in the Hermit's Lodge daily expecting death, for which Father Gervis said he was in heavenly preparation."

"Well—any more measuring of weapons?" said the Glover.

"Why, truly, I fought an Englishman at Berwick besides, on the old question of the Supremacy as they call it—I am sure you would not have me slack at that debate?—and I had the luck to hurt him on the left knee."

"Well done for St. Andrew!—to it again—"

* *Burn-the-wind*, an old cant term for blacksmith, appears in Burns—

"Then *Burnecin* came on like death,
At every chapp," &c.

Whom next had you to deal with?" said Simon, laughing at the exploits of his pacific friend.

"I fought a Scotchman in the Torwood," answered Henry Smith, "upon a doubt which was the better swordsman, which, you are aware, could not be known or decided without a trial. The poor fellow lost two fingers."

"Pretty well for the most peaceful lad in Perth, who never touches a sword but in the way of his profession.—Well, anything more to tell us?"

"Little—for the drubbing of a Highlandman is a thing not worth mentioning."

"For what didst thou drub him, O man of peace?" inquired the Glover.

"For nothing that I can remember," replied the Smith, "except his presenting himself on the south side of Stirling Bridge."

"Well, here is to thee, and thou art welcome to me after all these exploits.—Conachar, bestir thee. Let the cans clink, lad, and thou shalt have a cup of the nutbrown for thyself, my boy."

Conachar poured out the good liquor for his master and for Catharine, with due observances. But that done, he set the flagon on the table and sat down.

"How now, sirrah!—be these your manners? Fill to my guest, the Worshipful Master Henry Smith."

"Master Smith may fill for himself, if he wishes for liquor," answered the youthful Celt. "The son of my father has demeaned himself enough already for one evening."

"That's well crowed for a cockerel," said Henry; "but thou art so far right, my lad, that the man deserves to die of thirst who will not drink without a cupbearer."

But his entertainer took not the contumacy of the young apprentice with so much patience.—"Now, by my honest word, and by the best glove I ever made," said Simon, "thou shalt help him with liquor from that cup and flagon, if thee and I are to abide under one roof."

Conachar arose sullenly upon hearing this threat, and, approaching the Smith, who had just taken the tankard in his hand, and was raising it to his head, he contrived to stumble against him and jostle him so awkwardly, that the foaming ale gushed over his face, person, and dress. Good-natured as the Smith, in spite of his warlike propensities, really was in the utmost degree, his patience failed under such a provocation. He seized the young man's throat, being the part which came readiest to his grasp, as Conachar arose from the pretended stumble, and pressing it severely as he cast the lad from him, exclaimed, "Had this been in another place, young gallops-bird, I had stowed the lugs out of thy head, as I have done to some of thy clan before thee."

Conachar recovered his feet with the activity of a tiger, and exclaiming, "Never shall you live to make that boast again!" drew a short sharp knife from his bosom, and springing on Henry Smith attempted to plunge it into his body over

the collar-bone, which must have been a mortal wound. But the object of this violence was so ready to defend himself by striking up the assailant's hand, that the blow only glanced on the bone, and scarce drew blood. To wrench the dagger from the boy's hand, and to secure him with a grasp like that of his own iron vice, was for the powerful Smith the work of a single moment. Conachar felt himself at once in the absolute power of the formidable antagonist whom he had provoked; he became deadly pale, as he had been the moment before glowing red, and stood mute with shame and fear, until, relieving him from his powerful hold, the Smith quietly said, "It is well for thee that thou canst not make me angry—thou art but a boy, and I, a grown man, ought not to have provoked thee. But let this be a warning."

Conachar stood an instant as if about to reply, and then left the room, ere Simon had collected himself enough to speak. Dorothy was running hither and thither for salves and healing herbs. Catharine had swooned at the sight of the trickling blood.

"Let me depart, father Simon," said Henry Smith mournfully; "I might have guessed I should have my old luck, and spread strife and bloodshed where I would wish most to bring peace and happiness. Care not for me—look to poor Catharine; the fright of such an affray hath killed her, and all through my fault."

"Thy fault, my son!—It was the fault of yon Highland cateran,* whom it is my curse to be cumbered with; but he shall go back to his glens to-morrow, or taste the tolbooth of the burgh. An assault upon the life of his master's guest in his master's house!—It breaks all bonds between us. But let me see to thy wound."

"Catharine!" repeated the armorer; "look to Catharine."

"Dorothy will see to her," said Simon; "surprise and fear kill not—skenes and dirks do. And she is not more the daughter of my blood than thou, my dear Henry, art the son of my affections. Let me see the wound. The skene-ocle † is an ugly weapon in a Highlander's hand."

"I mind it no more than the scratch of a wild-cat," said the armorer; "and now that the color is coming to Catharine's cheek again, you shall see me a sound man in a moment." He turned to a corner in which hung a small mirror, and hastily took from his purse some dry lint to apply to the slight wound he had received. As he unloosed the leathern jacket from his neck and shoulders, the manly and muscular form which they displayed, was not more remarkable than the fairness of his skin, where it had not, as in hands and face, been exposed to the ef-

* *Cateran*, or *robber*, the usual designation of the Celtic borderers on the lands of the Sassenach. The beautiful Lake of the Trossachs is supposed to have taken its name from the habits of its frequenters.

† *Skene-ocle*, i. e., kni'fe of the armpit—the Highlander's stiletto.

fects of rough weather, and of his laborious trade. He hastily applied some hint to stop the bleeding; and a little water having removed all other marks of the fray, he buttoned his doublet anew, and turned again to the table where Catharine, still pale and trembling, was, however, recovered from her fainting fit.

"Would you but grant me your forgiveness for having offended you in the very first hour of my return? The lad was foolish to provoke me, and yet I was more foolish to be provoked by such as he. Your father blames me not Catharine, and cannot you forgive me?"

"I have no power to forgive," answered Catharine, "what I have no title to resent. If my father chooses to have his house made the scene of night brawls, I must witness them—I cannot help myself. Perhaps it was wrong in me to faint and interrupt, it may be, the farther progress of a fair fray. My apology is, that I cannot bear the sight of blood."

"And is this the manner," said the father, "in which you receive my friend after his long absence? My friend, did I say? nay, my son. He escapes being murdered by a fellow whom I will to-morrow clear this house of, and you treat him as if he had done wrong in dashing from him the snake which was about to sting him!"

"It is not my part, father," returned the Maid of Perth, "to decide who had the right or wrong in the present brawl; nor did I see what happened distinctly enough to say which was assailant or which defender. But sure our friend, Master Henry, will not deny that he lives in a perfect atmosphere of strife, blood, and quarrels. He hears of no swordsmen but he envies his reputation, and must needs put his valor to the proof. He sees no brawl but he must strike into the midst of it. Has he friends, he fights with them for love and honor; has he enemies, he fights with them for hatred and revenge. And those men who are neither his friends nor foes, he fights with them because they are on this or that side of a river. His days are days of battle, and doubtless he acts them over again in his dreams."

"Daughter," said Simon, "your tongue wags too freely. Quarrels and fights are men's business, not women's, and it is not maidenly to think or speak of them."

"But if they are so rudely enacted in our presence," said Catharine, "it is a little hard to expect us to think or speak of anything else. I will grant you, my father, that this valiant burgess of Perth is one of the best-hearted men that draws breath within its walls—that he would walk a hundred yards out of the way rather than step upon a worm—that he would be as loath, in wantonness, to kill a spider, as if he were a kinsman to King Robert, of happy memory*—that in the

* The story of Bruce, when in sore straits, watching a spider tear his bed, as he made repeated unsuccessful efforts to attach its thread, but, still persevering, at last attained the object, and drawing from this an augury which encouraged him to proceed in spite of fortune's hard usage, is familiar to the reader of Bar-

last quarrel before his departure he fought with four butchers, to prevent their killing a poor mastiff that had misbehaved in the bull-ring, and narrowly escaped the fate of the cur that he was protecting. I will grant you also, that the poor never pass the house of the wealthy armorer but they are relieved with food and alms. But what avails all this, when his sword makes as many starving orphans and mourning widows as his purse relieves?"

"Nay, but Catharine, hear me but a word before going on with a string of reproaches against my friend, that sound something like sense, while they are, in truth, inconsistent with all we hear and see around us. What," continued the Glover, "do our King and our court, our knights and ladies, our abbots, monks, and priests themselves, so earnestly crowd to see? Is it not to behold the display of chivalry, to witness the gallant actions of brave knights in the tilt and tournament-ground, to look upon deeds of honor and glory achieved by arms and bloodshed? What is it these proud knights do, that differs from what our good Henry Gow works out in his sphere? Who ever heard of his abusing his skill and strength to do evil or forward oppression, and who knows not how often it has been employed as that of a champion in the good cause of the burgh? And shouldst not thou, of all women, deem thyself honored and glorious, that so true a heart and so strong an arm has termed himself thy bachelor? In what do the proudest dames take their loftiest pride, save in the chivalry of their knight; and has the boldest in Scotland done more gallant deeds than my brave son Henry, though but of low degree? Is he not known to Highland and Lowland as the best armorer that ever made sword, and the truest soldier that ever drew one?"

"My dearest father," answered Catharine, "your words contradict themselves, if you will permit your child to say so. Let us thank God and the good saints that we are in a peaceful rank of life, below the notice of those whose high birth, and yet higher pride, lead them to glory in their bloody works of cruelty, which haughty and lordly men term deeds of chivalry. Your wisdom will allow that it would be absurd in us to prank ourselves in their dainty plumes and splendid garments; why, then, should we imitate their full-blown vices? Why should we assume their hard-hearted pride and relentless cruelty, to which murder is not only a sport, but a subject of

bour. It was ever after held a foul crime in any of the name of Bruce, or inheriting Gentle King Robert's blood, to injure an insect of this tribe. But, indeed, it is well known, that compassion towards the weak formed part of his character through life; and the beautiful incident of his stopping his army when on the march in circumstances of pressing difficulty in the Ulster campaign, because a poor *laevendie* (washerwoman) was taken with the pains of childbirth, and must have been left, had he proceeded, to the mercy of the Irish kerns, is only one of many anecdotes that to this day keep up a peculiar tenderness as well as pride of feeling in the general recollection of this great man now 500 years mingled with the dust.

vain-glorious triumph? Let those whose rank claims as its right such bloody homage, take pride and pleasure in it; we, who have no share in the sacrifice, may the better pity the sufferings of the victim. Let us thank our lowliness, since it secures us from temptation.—But forgive me, father, if I have stepped over the limits of my duty in contradicting the views which you entertain, with so many others, on these subjects."

"Nay, thou hast even too much talk for me, girl," said her father, somewhat angrily. "I am but a poor workman, whose best knowledge is to distinguish the left-hand glove from the right. But if thou wouldst have my forgiveness, say something of comfort to my poor Henry. There he sits, confounded and dismayed with all the preaching thou hast heaped together; and he to whom a trumpet-sound was like the invitation to a feast, is struck down at the sound of a child's whistle."

The armorer, indeed, while he heard the lips that were dearest to him paint his character in such unfavorable colors, had laid his head down on the table, upon his folded arms, in an attitude of the deepest dejection, or almost despair. "I would to Heaven, my dearest father," answered Catharine, "that it were in my power to speak comfort to Henry, without betraying the sacred cause of the truths I have just told you. And I may—nay, I must have such a commission," she continued with something that the earnestness with which she spoke, and the extreme beauty of her features, caused for the moment to resemble inspiration. "The truth of Heaven," she said, in a solemn tone, "was never committed to a tongue, however feeble, but it gave a right to that tongue to announce mercy, while it declared judgment.—Arise, Henry—rise up, noble-minded, good, and generous, though widely mistaken man—thy faults are those of this cruel and remorseless age—thy virtues all thine own."

While she thus spoke, she laid her hand upon the Smith's arm, and extricating it from under his head by a force which, however gentle, he could not resist, she compelled him to raise towards her his manly face, and the eyes into which her expostulations, mingled with other feelings, had summoned tears. "Weep not," she said, "or rather weep on—but weep as those who have hope. Abjure the sins of pride and anger, which most easily beset thee—fling from thee the accursed weapons, to the fatal and murderous use of which thou art so easily tempted."

"You speak to me in vain, Catharine," returned the armorer; "I may, indeed, turn monk and retire from the world, but while I live in it I must practise my trade; and while I form armor and weapons for others, I cannot myself withstand the temptation of using them. You would not reproach me as you do, if you knew how inseparably the means by which I gain my bread are connected with that warlike spirit which you impute to me as a fault, though it is the consequence of inevitable necessity. While I strengthen the

shield or corselet to withstand wounds, must I not have constantly in remembrance the manner and strength with which they may be dealt; and when I forge the sword, and temper it for war, is it practicable for me to avoid the recollection of its use?"

"Then throw from you, my dear Henry," said the enthusiastic girl, clasping with both her slender hands the nervous strength and weight of one of the muscular armorer's, which they raised with difficulty, permitted by its owner, yet scarcely receiving assistance from his volition—"cast from you, I say, the art which is a snare to you. Abjure the fabrication of weapons which can only be useful to abridge human life, already too short for repentance, or to encourage with a feeling of safety those whom fear might otherwise prevent from risking themselves in peril. The art of forming arms, whether offensive or defensive, is alike sinful in one to whose violent and ever vehement disposition the very working upon them proves a sin and a snare. Resign utterly the manufacture of weapons of every description, and deserve the forgiveness of Heaven, by renouncing all that can lead to the sin which most easily besets you."

"And what," murmured the armorer, "am I to do for my livelihood, when I have given over the art of forging arms, for which Henry of Perth is known from the Tay to the Thames?"

"Your art itself," said Catharine, "has innocent and laudable resources. If you renounce the forging of swords and bucklers, there remains to you the task of forming the harmless spade, and the honorable as well as useful ploughshare—of those implements which contribute to the support of life, or to its comforts. Thou canst frame locks and bars to defend the property of the weak against the stonethief and oppression of the strong. Men will still resort to thee, and repay thy honest industry—"

But here Catharine was interrupted. Her father had heard her declaim against war and tournaments, with a feeling, that, though her doctrines were new to him, they might not, nevertheless, be entirely erroneous. He felt, indeed, a wish that his proposed son-in-law should not commit himself voluntarily to the hazards which the daring character and great personal strength of Henry the Smith had hitherto led him to incur too readily; and so far he would rather have desired that Catharine's arguments should have produced some effect upon the mind of her lover, whom he knew to be as ductile, when influenced by his affections, as he was fierce and intractable when assailed by hostile remonstrances or threats. But her arguments interfered with his views, when he heard her enlarge upon the necessity of his designed son-in-law resigning a trade which brought in more ready income than any at that time practised in Scotland and more profit to Henry of Perth, in particular, than to any armorer in the nation. He had some indistinct idea, that it would not be amiss to con-

vert, if possible, Henry the Smith from his too frequent use of arms, even though he felt some pride in being connected with one who wielded with such superior excellence those weapons, which in that warlike age it was the boast of all men to manage with spirit. But when he heard his daughter recommend, as the readiest road to this pacific state of mind, that her lover should renounce the gainful trade in which he was held unrivalled, and which, from the constant private differences and public wars of the time, was sure to afford him a large income, he could withhold his wrath no longer. The daughter had scarce recommended to her lover the fabrication of the implements of husbandry, than, feeling the certainty of being right, of which, in the earlier part of their debate he had been somewhat doubtful, the father broke in with—

“Locks and bars, plough-graith and harrow-teeth!—and why not grates and fire-prongs, and Culross girdles,* and an ass to carry the merchandise through the country—and then for another ass to lead it by the halter?—Why, Catharine, girl, has sense altogether forsaken thee, or dost thou think that in these hard and iron days, men will give ready silver for anything save that which can defend their own life, or enable them to take that of their enemy? We want swords to protect ourselves every moment now, thou silly wench, and not ploughs to dress the ground for the grain we may never see rise. As for the matter of our daily bread, those who are strong seize it, and live; those who are weak yield it, and die of hunger. Happy is the man who, like my worthy son, has means of obtaining his living otherwise than by the point of the sword which he makes. Preach peace to him as much as thou wilt—I will never be he will say thee nay; but as for bidding the first armorer in Scotland forego the forging of swords, curtal-axes, and harness, it is enough to drive patience itself mad—Out from my sight!—and next morning I prithee remember, that shouldst thou have the luck to see Henry the Smith, which is more than thy usage of him has deserved, you see a man who has not his match in Scotland at the use of broadsword and battle-axe, and who can work for five hundred marks a year, without breaking a holiday.”

The daughter, on hearing her father speak thus peremptorily, made a low obeisance, and, without further good-night, withdrew to the chamber which was her usual sleeping apartment.

CHAPTER III.

Whence cometh *Smith*, be he knight, lord, or squire,
But from the smith that forged in the fire!

VERSTEGAN.

THE armorer's heart swelled big with various and contending sensations, so that it seemed as

* The *girdle* is the thin plate of iron used for the manufacture of the staple luxury of Scotland, the oaten cake. The towns of Culross was long celebrated for its girdles.

if it would burst the leathern doublet under which it was shrouded. He arose—turned away his head, and extended his hand towards the Glover, while he averted his face, as if desirous that his emotion should not be read upon his countenance.

“Nay, hang me if I bid you farewell, man,” said Simon, striking the flat of his hand against that which the armorer expanded towards him. “I will shake no hands with you for an hour to come at least. Tarry but a moment, man, and I will explain all this; and surely a few drops of blood from a scratch, and a few silly words from a foolish wench's lip, are not to part father and son, when they have been so long without meeting? Stay, then, man, if ever you would wish for a father's blessing and St. Valentine's, whose blessed eve this chances to be.”

The Glover was soon heard loudly summoning Dorothy, and, after some clanking of keys and tramping up and down stairs, Dorothy appeared bearing three large rummer cups of green glass, which were then esteemed a great and precious curiosity, and the Glover followed with a huge bottle, equal at least to three quarts of these degenerate days.—“Here is a cup of wine, Henry, older by half than I am myself; my father had it in a gift from stout old Crabbe the Flemish engineer, who defended Perth so stoutly in the minority of David the Second. We glovers could always do something in war, though our connexion with it was less than yours who work in steel and iron. And my father had pleased old Crabbe—some other day I will tell you how, and also how long these bottles were concealed under ground, to save them from the reiving Southron. So I will empty a cup to the soul's health of my honored father—May his sins be forgiven him! Dorothy, thou shalt drink this pledge, and then be gone to thy cockloft. I know thine ears are itching, girl, but I have that to say which no one must hear save Henry Smith, the son of mine adoption.”

Dorothy did not venture to remonstrate, but taking off her glass, or rather her goblet, with good courage, retired to her sleeping apartment, according to her master's commands. The two friends were left alone.

“It grieves me, friend Henry,” said Simon, filling at the same time his own glass and his guest's, “it grieves me, from my soul, that my daughter retains this silly humor; but also, methinks, thou might'st mend it. Why wouldst thou come hither clattering with thy sword and dagger, when the girl is so silly that she cannot bear the sight of these? Dost thou not remember that thou hadst a sort of quarrel with her even before thy last departure from Perth, because thou wouldst not go like other honest quiet burghers, but must be ever armed, like one of the rascally jack-men* that wait on the nobility? Sure it is time enough for decent burghesses to

* Men wearing jacks, or armor.

arm at the tolling of the common bell, which calls us out bodin in effer of war.”*

“Why my good father, that was not my fault; but I had no sooner quitted my nag than I run hither to tell you of my return, thinking, if it were your will to permit me, that I would get your advice about being Mistress Catharine's Valentine for the year; and then I heard from Mrs. Dorothy that you were gone to hear mass at the Black Friars. So I thought I would follow thither; partly to hear the same mass with you, and partly—Our Lady and Saint Valentine forgive me!—to look upon one who thinks little enough of me—And, as you entered the church, methought I saw two or three dangerous looking men holding counsel together, and gazing at you and at her, and in especial Sir John Ramorny, whom I knew well enough, for all his disguise, and the velvet patch over his eye, and his cloak so like a serving-man's;—so methought, father Simon, that as you were old, and yonder slip of a Highlander something too young to do battle, I would even walk quietly after you, not doubting, with the tools I had about me, to bring any one to reason that might disturb you in your way home. You know that yourself discovered me, and drew me into the house, whether I would or no; otherwise, I promise you, I would not have seen your daughter till I had donned the new jerkin which was made at Berwick after the latest cut; nor would I have appeared before her with these weapons, which she dislikes so much. Although, to say truth, so many are at deadly feud with me for one unhappy chance or another, that it is as needful for me as for any man in Scotland to go by night with weapons about me.”

“The silly wench never thinks of that,” said Simon Glover. “She never has sense to consider, that in our dear native land of Scotland every man deems it his privilege and duty to avenge his own wrong. But, Harry, my boy, thou art to blame for taking her talk so much to heart. I have seen thee bold enough with other wenches—wherefore so still and tongue-tied with her?”

“Because she is something different from other maidens, father Glover—because she is not only more beautiful, but wiser, higher, holier, and seems to me as if she were made of better clay than we that approach her. I can hold my head high enough with the rest of the lasses round the Maypole; but somehow, when I approach Catharine, I feel myself an earthly, coarse, ferocious creature, scarce worthy to look on her, much less to contradict the precepts which she expounds to me.”

“You are an imprudent merchant, Harry Smith,” replied Simon; “and rate too high the goods you wish to purchase. Catharine is a good girl, and my daughter; but if you make her a conceited ape by your bashfulness and your

* That is, not in dread of war, but in the guise which *effairs*, or belongs, to war; in arms, namely, offensive and defensive. Bodin in feir of war, a frequent term in old Scottish history and muniments, means, arrayed in warlike guise.

flattery, neither you nor I will see our wishes accomplished.”

“I often fear it, my good father,” said the Smith; “for I feel how little I am deserving of Catharine.”

“Feel a thread's end!” said the Glover; “feel for me, friend Smith, for Catharine and me. Think how the poor thing is beset from morning to night, and by what sort of persons, even though windows be down and doors shut. We were accosted to-day by one too powerful to be named,—ay, and he showed his displeasure openly, because I would not permit him to gallant my daughter in the church itself, when the priest was saying mass. There are others scarce less reasonable. I sometimes wish that Catharine were some degrees less fair, that she might not catch that dangerous sort of admiration; or somewhat less holy, that she might sit down like an honest woman, contented with stout Henry Smith, who could protect his wife against every sprig of chivalry in the Court of Scotland.”

“And if I did not,” said Henry, thrusting out a hand and arm which might have belonged to a giant for bone and muscle, “I would I may never bring hammer upon anvil again! Ay, an it were come but that length, my fair Catharine should see that there is no harm in a man having the trick of defence. But I believe she thinks the world is one great minster-church, and that all who live in it should behave as if they were at an eternal mass.”

“Nay, in truth,” said the father, “she has strange influence over those who approach her—the Highland lad, Conachar, with whom I have been troubled for these two or three years, although you may see he has the natural spirit of his people, obeys the least sign which Catharine makes him, and, indeed, will hardly be ruled by any one else in the house. She takes much pains with him to bring him from his rude Highland habits.”

Here Harry Smith became uneasy in his chair, lifted the flagon, set it down, and at length exclaimed, “The devil take the young Highland whelp and his whole kindred? What has Catharine to do to instruct such a fellow as he? He will be just like the wolf-cub that I was fool enough to train to the offices of a dog, and every one thought him reclaimed, till, in an ill hour, I went to walk on the hill of Montcreiff, when he broke loose on the laird's flock, and made a havoc that I might well have rued, had the laird not wanted a harness at the time. And I marvel that you, being a sensible man, father Glover, will keep this Highland young fellow—a likely one, I promise you—so nigh to Catharine, as if there were no other than your daughter to serve him for a schoolmistress.”

“Fie, my son, fie—now, you are jealous,” said Simon, “of a poor young fellow, who, to tell you the truth, resides here, because he may not so well live on the other side of the hill.”