

than my accomplices. Remember, Ramorny was preferred to my service by my sainted mother."

"Name her not, David, I charge thee!" said the King; "she is happy that she never saw the child of her love stand before her doubly dishonored, by guilt and by falsehood."

"I am indeed unworthy to name her," said the Prince; "and yet, my dear father, in her name I must petition for Ramorny's life."

"If I might offer my counsel," said the Duke of Albany, who saw that a reconciliation would soon take place betwixt the father and son, "I would advise that Ramorny be dismissed from the Prince's household and society, with such farther penalty as his imprudence may seem to merit. The public will be contented with his disgrace, and the matter will be easily accommodated or stifled, so that his Highness do not attempt to screen his servant."

"Wilt thou, for my sake, David," said the King, with a faltering voice, and the tear in his eye, "dismiss this dangerous man? for my sake, who could not refuse thee the heart out of my bosom?"

"It shall be done, my father—done instantly," the Prince replied; and seizing the pen, he wrote a hasty dismissal of Ramorny from his service, and put it into Albany's hands. "I would I could fulfil all your wishes as easily, my royal father," he added, again throwing himself at the King's feet, who raised him up, and fondly folded him in his arms.

Albany scowled, but was silent; and it was not till after the space of a minute or two, that he said, "This matter being so happily accommodated, let me ask if your Majesty is pleased to attend the Even-song service in the chapel?"

"Surely," said the King. "Have I not thanks to pay to God, who has restored union to my family? You will go with us, brother?"

"So please your Grace to give me leave of absence—no," said the Duke. "I must concert with the Douglas, and others, the manner in which we may bring these Highland vultures to our lure."

Albany retired to think over his ambitious projects, while the father and son attended divine service, to thank God for their happy reconciliation.

CHAPTER XIV.

Will you go to the Hiellands, Lizzy Lyndesay,
Will you go to the Hiellands wi' me?
Will you go to the Hiellands, Lizzy Lyndesay,
My bride and my darling to be!

OLD BALLAD.

A FORMER chapter opened in the royal confessional; we are now to introduce our readers to a situation somewhat similar, though the scene and persons were very different. Instead of a Gothic and darkened apartment in a monastery, one of the most beautiful prospects in Scotland lay extended beneath the hill of Kin-

noul, and at the foot of a rock which commanded the view in every direction, sat the Fair Maid of Perth, listening in an attitude of devout attention to the instructions of a Carthusian Monk, in his white gown and scapular, who concluded his discourse with prayer, in which his proselyte devoutly joined.

When they had finished their devotions, the priest sat for some time with his eyes fixed on the glorious prospect, of which even the early and chilly season could not conceal the beauties, and it was some time ere he addressed his attentive companion.

"When I behold," he said at length, "this rich and varied land, with its castles, churches, convents, stately palaces, and fertile fields, these extensive woods, and that noble river, I know not, my daughter, whether most to admire the bounty of God or the ingratitude of man. He hath given us the beauty and fertility of the earth, and we have made the scene of his bounty a charnel-house and a battle-field. He hath given us power over the elements, and skill to erect houses for comfort and defence, and we have converted them into dens for robbers and ruffians."

"Yet surely, my Father, there is room for comfort," replied Catharine, "even in the very prospect we look upon. Yonder four goodly convents, with their churches, and their towers, which tell the citizens with brazen voice, that they should think on their religious duties;—their inhabitants, who have separated themselves from the world, its pursuits and its pleasures, to dedicate themselves to the service of Heaven,—all bear witness, that if Scotland be a bloody and a sinful land, she is yet alive and sensible to the claims which religion demands of the human race."

"Verily, daughter," answered the priest, "what you say seems truth; and yet, nearly viewed, too much of the comfort you describe will be found delusive. It is true, there was a period in the Christian world, when good men, maintaining themselves by the work of their hands, assembled together, not that they might live easily or sleep softly, but that they might strengthen each other in the Christian faith, and qualify themselves to be teachers of the word to the people. Doubtless there are still such to be found in the holy edifices on which we now look. But it is to be feared that the love of many has waxed cold. Our churchmen have become wealthy, as well by the gifts of pious persons as by the bribes which wicked men have given in their ignorance, imagining that they can purchase that pardon by endowments to the Church, which Heaven has only offered to sincere penitents. And thus, as the Church waxeth rich, her doctrines have unhappily become dim and obscure, as a light is less seen if placed in a lamp of chased gold, than beheld through a screen of glass. God knows, if I see these things and mark them, it is from no wish of

singularity, or desire to make myself a teacher in Israel; but because the fire burns in my bosom, and will not permit me to be silent. I obey the rules of my order, and withdraw not myself from its austerities. Be they essential to our salvation, or be they mere formalities, adopted to supply the want of real penitence and sincere devotion, I have promised, nay vowed, to observe them; and they shall be respected by me the more, that otherwise I might be charged with regarding my bodily ease, when Heaven is my witness how lightly I value what I may be called on to act or suffer, if the purity of the Church could be restored, or the discipline of the priesthood replaced in its primitive simplicity."

"But, my Father," said Catharine, "even for these opinions men term you a Lollard and a Wickliffite, and say it is your desire to destroy churches and cloisters, and restore the religion of Heathenesse."

"Even so, my daughter, am I driven to seek refuge in hills and rocks, and must be presently contented to take my flight amongst the rude Highlanders, who are thus far in a more gracious state than those I leave behind me, that theirs are crimes of ignorance, not of presumption. I will not omit to take such means of safety and escape from their cruelty, as Heaven may open to me; for, while such appear, I shall account it a sign that I have still a service to accomplish. But when it is my Master's pleasure, He knows how willingly Clement Blair will lay down a vilified life upon earth, in humble hope of a blessed exchange hereafter.—But wherefore dost thou look northward so anxiously, my child?—thy young eyes are quicker than mine—dost thou see any one coming?"

"I look, Father, for the Highland youth, Conachar, who will be thy guide to the hills, where his father can afford thee a safe, if a rude retreat. This he has often promised, when we spoke of you and of your lessons—I fear he is now in company where he will soon forget them."

"The youth hath sparkles of grace in him," said Father Clement; "although those of his race are usually too much devoted to their own fierce and savage customs, to endure with patience either the restraints of religion or those of the social law.—Thou hast never told me, daughter, how, contrary to all the usages either of the burgh or of the mountains, this youth came to reside in thy father's house?"

"All I know touching that matter," said Catharine, "is that his father is a man of consequence among those hill-men, and that he desired as a favor of my father, who hath had dealings with them in the way of his merchandise, to keep this youth for a certain time; and that it is only two days since they parted, as Conachar was to return home to his own mountains."

"And why has my daughter," demanded the priest, "maintained such a correspondence with this Highland youth, that she should know how to send for him when she desired to use his ser-

vices in my behalf? Surely, this is much influence for a maiden to possess over such a wild colt as this youthful mountaineer."

Catharine blushed, and answered with hesitation, "If I have had any influence with Conachar, Heaven be my witness, I have only exerted it to enforce upon his fiery temper compliance with the rules of civil life. It is true, I have long expected that you, my Father, would be obliged to take to flight, and I, therefore, had agreed with him that he should meet me at this place, as soon as he should receive a message from me, with a token, which I yesterday dispatched. The messenger was a light-footed boy of his own clan, whom he used sometimes to send on errands into the Highlands."

"And am I then to understand, daughter, that this youth, so fair to the eye, was nothing more dear to you, than as you desired to enlighten his mind and reform his manners?"

"It is so, my Father, and no otherwise," answered Catharine; "and perhaps I did not do well to hold intimacy with him, even for his instruction and improvement. But my discourse never led farther."

"Then have I been mistaken, my daughter; for I thought I had seen in thee of late some change of purpose; and some wishful regards looking back to this world, of which you were at one time resolved to take leave."

Catharine hung down her head, and blushed more deeply than ever, as she said, "Yourself, Father, were used to remonstrate against my taking the veil."

"Nor do I now approve of it, my child," said the priest. "Marriage is an honorable state, appointed by Heaven as the regular means of continuing the race of man; and I read not in the Scriptures, what human inventions have since affirmed, concerning the superior excellence of a state of celibacy. But I am jealous of thee, my child, as a father is of his only daughter, lest thou shouldst throw thyself away upon some one unworthy of thee. Thy parent, I know, less nice in thy behalf than I am, contentances the addresses of that fierce and riotous reveller, whom they call Henry of the Wynd. He is rich, it may be; but a haunter of idle and debauched company—a common prize-fighter, who has shed human blood like water. Can such a one be a fit mate for Catharine Glover?—And yet report says they are soon to be united."

The Fair Maid of Perth's complexion changed from red to pale, and from pale to red, as she hastily replied, "I think not of him; though it is true some courtesies have passed betwixt us of late, both as he is my father's friend, and as being, according to the custom of the time, my Valentine."

"Your Valentine, my child?" said Father Clement. "And can your modesty and prudence have trifled so much with the delicacy of your sex, as to place yourself in such a relation to such a man as this artificer?—Think you that this Val-

entine, a godly saint and Christian bishop, as he is said to have been, ever countenanced a silly and unseemly custom, more likely to have originated in the heathen worship of Flora or Venus, when mortals gave the names of deities to their passions, and studied to excite instead of restraining them?"

"Father," said Catharine, in a tone of more displeasure than she had ever before assumed to the Carthusian, "I know not upon what ground you tax me thus severely for complying with a general practice, authorized by universal custom, and sanctioned by my father's authority. I cannot feel it kind that you put such misconstruction upon me."

"Forgive me, daughter," answered the priest, mildly, "if I have given you offence. But this Henry Gow, or Smith, is a forward, licentious man, to whom you cannot allow any uncommon degree of intimacy and encouragement, without exposing yourself to worse misconstruction,—unless, indeed, it be your purpose to wed him, and that very shortly."

"Say no more of it, my Father," said Catharine, "You give me more pain than you would desire to do; and I may be provoked to answer otherwise than as becomes me. Perhaps I have already had cause enough to make me repent my compliance with an idle custom. At any rate, believe that Henry Smith is nothing to me; and that even the idle intercourse arising from St. Valentine's Day, is utterly broken off."

"I am rejoiced to hear it, my daughter," replied the Carthusian; "and must now prove you on another subject, which renders me most anxious on your behalf. You cannot yourself be ignorant of it, although I could wish it were not necessary to speak of a thing so dangerous, even before these surrounding rocks, cliffs, and stones. But it must be said.—Catharine, you have a lover in the highest rank of Scotland's sons of honor!"

"I know it, Father," answered Catharine, composedly. "I would it were not so."

"So would I also," said the priest, "did I see in my daughter only the child of folly, which most young women are at her age, especially if possessed of the fatal gift of beauty. But as thy charms, to speak the language of an idle world, have attached to thee a lover of such high rank, so I know that thy virtue and wisdom will maintain the influence over the Prince's mind which thy beauty hath acquired."

"Father," replied Catharine, "the Prince is a licentious gallant, whose notice of me tends only to my disgrace and ruin. Can you, who seemed but now afraid that I acted imprudently in entering into an ordinary exchange of courtesies with one of my own rank, speak with patience of the sort of correspondence which the heir of Scotland dares to fix upon me? Know, that it is but two nights since he, with a party of his debauched followers, would have carried me by force from my father's house, had I not been rescued by that

same rash-spirited Henry Smith,—who, if he be too hasty in venturing on danger on slight occasion, is always ready to venture his life in behalf of innocence, or in resistance of oppression. It is well my part to do him that justice."

"I should know something of that matter," said the monk, "since it was my voice that sent him to your assistance. I had seen the party as I passed your door, and was hastening to the civil power in order to raise assistance, when I perceived a man's figure coming slowly towards me. Apprehensive it might be one of the ambuscade, I stepped behind the buttresses of the chapel of St. John, and seeing, from a nearer view, that it was Henry Smith, I guessed which way he was bound, and raised my voice in an exhortation, which made him double his speed."

"I am beholden to you, Father," said Catharine; "but all this, and the Duke of Rothsay's own language to me, only show that the Prince is a profligate young man, who will scruple no extremities which may promise to gratify an idle passion, at whatever expense to its object. His emissary, Ramorny, has even had the insolence to tell me, that my father shall suffer for it, if I dare to prefer being the wife of an honest man, to becoming the loose paramour of a married prince. So I see no other remedy than to take the veil, or run the risk of my own ruin and my poor father's. Were there no other reason, the terror of these threats, from a man so notoriously capable of keeping his word, ought as much to prevent my becoming the bride of any worthy man, as it should prohibit me from unlatching his door to admit murderers.—Oh, good Father! what a lot is mine! and how fatal am I likely to prove to my affectionate parent, and to any one with whom I might ally my unhappy fortunes!"

"Be yet of good cheer, my daughter," said the monk; "there is comfort for thee even in this extremity of apparent distress. Ramorny is a villain, and abuses the ear of his patron. The Prince is unhappily a dissipated and idle youth; but, unless my gray hairs have been strangely imposed on, his character is beginning to alter. He hath been awakened to Ramorny's baseness, and deeply regrets having followed his evil advice. I believe, nay, I am well convinced, that his passion for you has assumed a nobler and purer character, and that the lessons he has heard from me on the corruptions of the Church, and of the times, will, if enforced from your lips, sink deeply into his heart, and perhaps produce fruits, for the world to wonder as well as rejoice at. Old prophecies have said, that Rome shall fall by the speech of a woman."

"These are dreams, Father," said Catharine; "the visions of one whose thoughts are too much on better things, to admit his thinking justly upon the ordinary affairs of earth. When we have looked long at the sun, every thing else can only be seen indistinctly."

"Thou art over hasty, my daughter," said Clement, "and thou shalt be convinced of it

The prospects which I am to open to thee were unfit to be exposed to one of a less firm sense of virtue, or a more ambitious temper. Perhaps it is not fit that, even to you, I should display them; but my confidence is strong in thy wisdom and thy principles. Know, then, that there is much chance that the Church of Rome will dissolve the union which she has herself formed, and release the Duke of Rothsay from his marriage with Marjory Douglas."

Here he paused.

"And if the Church hath power and will to do this," replied the maiden, "what influence can the divorce of the Duke from his wife produce on the fortunes of Catharine Glover?"

She looked at the priest anxiously as she spoke, and he had some apparent difficulty in framing his reply, for he looked on the ground while he answered her.

"What did beauty do for Catharine Logie? Unless our fathers have told us falsely, it raised her to share the throne of David Bruce."

"Did she live happy, or die regretted, good Father?" asked Catharine, in the same calm and steady tone.

"She formed her alliance, from temporal, and perhaps criminal ambition," replied Father Clement; "and she found her reward in vanity and vexation of spirit. But had she wedded with the purpose that the believing wife should convert the unbelieving, or confirm the doubting, husband, what then had been her reward? Love and honor upon earth, and an inheritance in Heaven with Queen Margaret, and those heroines who have been the nursing mothers of the Church."

Hitherto Catharine had sat upon a stone beside the priest's feet, and looked up to him as she spoke or listened; but now, as if animated by calm, yet settled feelings of disapprobation, she rose up, and extending her hand towards the monk as she spoke, addressed him with a countenance and voice which might have become a cherub, pitying, and even as much as possible sparing, the feelings of the mortal whose errors he is commissioned to rebuke.

"And is it even so?" she said; "and can so much of the wishes, hopes, and prejudices of this vile world, affect him who may be called tomorrow to lay down his life for opposing the corruptions of a wicked age and backsliding priesthood? Can it be the severely virtuous Father Clement, who advises his child to aim at, or even to think of, the possession of a throne and a bed, which cannot become vacant but by an act of crying injustice to the present possessor? Can it be the wise reformer of the Church who wishes to rest a scheme, in itself so unjust, upon a foundation so precarious? Since when is it, good Father, that the principal libertine has altered his morals so much, to be likely to court in honorable fashion the daughter of a Perth artisan? Two days must have wrought this change; for only that space has passed since he was

breaking into my father's house at midnight, with worse mischief in his mind than that of a common robber. And think you, that if Rothsay's heart could dictate so mean a match, he could achieve such a purpose without endangering both his succession and his life, assailed by the Douglas and March at the same time, for what they must receive as an act of injury and insult to both their houses? Oh! Father Clement, where was your principle, where your prudence, when they suffered you to be bewildered by so strange a dream, and placed the meanness of your disciples in the right thus to reproach you?"

The old man's eyes filled with tears, as Catharine, visibly and painfully affected by what she had said, became at length silent.

"By the mouths of babes and sucklings," he said, "hath He rebuked those who would seem wise in their generation. I thank Heaven, that hath taught me better thoughts than my own vanity suggested, through the medium of so kind a monitress.—Yes, Catharine, I must not hereafter wonder or exclaim, when I see those whom I have hitherto judged too harshly, struggling for temporal power, and holding all the while the language of religious zeal. I thank thee, daughter, for thy salutary admonition, and I thank Heaven that sent it by thy lips, rather than those of a sterner reprover."

Catharine had raised her head to reply, and bade the old man, whose humiliation gave her pain, be comforted, when her eyes were arrested by an object close at hand. Among the crags and cliffs which surrounded this place of seclusion, there were two which stood in such close contiguity, that they seemed to have been portions of the same rock, which, rended by lightning or by an earthquake, now exhibited a chasm of about four feet in breadth, betwixt the masses of stone. Into this chasm an oak-tree had thrust itself, in one of the fantastic frolics which vegetation often exhibits in such situations. The tree, stunted and ill-fed, had sent its roots along the face of the rock in all directions to seek for supplies, and they lay like military lines of communication, contorted, twisted, and knotted like the immense snakes of the Indian archipelago. As Catharine's look fell upon the curious complication of knotty branches and twisted roots, she was suddenly sensible that two large eyes were visible among them, fixed and glaring at her, like those of a wild animal in ambush. She started, and without speaking, pointed out the object to her companion, and looking herself with more strict attention, could at length trace out the bushy red hair and shaggy beard, which had hitherto been concealed by the drooping branches and twisted roots of the tree.

When he saw himself discovered, the Highlander, for such he proved, stepped forth from his lurking-place, and, stalking forward, displayed a colossal person, clothed in a purple, red, and green-checked plaid, under which he wore a

jacket of bull's hide. His bow and arrows were at his back, his head was bare, and a large quantity of tangled locks, like the glibbs of the Irish, served to cover the head, and supplied all the purposes of a bonnet. His belt bore a sword and dagger, and he had in his hand a Danish pole-axe, more recently called a Lochaber-axe. Through the same rude portal advanced, one by one, four men more, of similar size and dressed and armed in the same manner.

Catharine was too much accustomed to the appearance of the inhabitants of the mountains so near to Perth, to permit herself to be alarmed, as another Lowland maiden might have been on the same occasion. She saw with tolerable composure these gigantic forms arrange themselves in a semicircle around and in front of the monk and herself, all bending upon them in silence their large fixed eyes, expressing, as far as she could judge, a wild admiration of her beauty. She inclined her head to them, and uttered imperfectly the usual words of a Highland salutation. The elder and leader of the party returned the greeting, and then again remained silent and motionless. The monk told his beads; and even Catharine began to have strange fears for her personal safety, and anxiety to know whether they were to consider themselves at personal freedom. She resolved to make the experiment, and moved forward as if to descend the hill; but when she attempted to pass the line of Highlanders, they extended their pole-axes betwixt each other, so as effectually to occupy each opening through which she could have passed.

Somewhat disconcerted, yet not dismayed, for she could not conceive that any evil was intended she sat down upon one of the scattered fragments of rock, and bade the monk, standing by her side, be of good courage.

"If I fear," said Father Clement, "it is not for myself; for whether I be brained with the axes of these wild men, like an ox when worn out by labor, he is condemned to the slaughter, or whether I am bound with their bow-strings, and delivered over to those who will take my life with more cruel ceremony, it can but little concern me, if they suffer thee, dearest daughter, to escape uninjured."

"We have neither of us," replied the Maiden of Perth, "any cause for apprehending evil; and here comes Conachar, to assure us of it."

Yet as she spoke, she almost doubted her own eyes; so altered were the manner and attire of the handsome, stately, and almost splendidly dressed youth, who, springing like a roebuck, from a cliff of considerable height, lighted just in front of her. His dress was of the same tartan worn by those who had first made their appearance, but closed at the throat and elbows with a necklace and armlets of gold. The hauberk which he wore over his person, was of steel, but so clearly burnished, that it shone like silver. His arms were profusely ornamented, and

his bonnet, besides the eagle's feather marking the quality of chief, was adorned with a chain of gold, wrapped several times around it, and secured by a large clasp, glistening with pearls. His brooch, by which the tartan mantle, or plaid, as it is now called, was secured on the shoulder, was also of gold, large and curiously carved. He bore no weapon in his hand, excepting a small sapling stick, with a hooked head. His whole appearance and gait, which used formerly to denote a sullen feeling of conscious degradation, was now bold, forward, and haughty; and he stood before Catharine with smiling confidence, as if fully conscious of his improved appearance, and waiting till she could recognise him.

"Conachar," said Catharine, desirous to break this state of suspense, "are these your father's men?"

"No, fair Catharine," answered the young man. "Conachar is no more, unless in regard to the wrongs he has sustained, and the vengeance which they demand. I am Ian Eachin MacIain, son to the Chief of the Clan Quhele. I have moulted my feathers, as you see, when I changed my name. And for these men, they are not my father's followers, but mine. You see only one-half of them collected; they form a band consisting of my foster father and eight sons, who are my body-guard, and the children of my belt, who breathe but to do my will. But Conachar," he added, in a softer tone of voice, "lives again so soon as Catharine desires to see him; and while he is the young Chief of the Clan Quhele to all others, he is to her as humble and obedient as when he was Simon Glover's apprentice. See, here is the stick I had from you when we nipped together in the sunny braes of Lednoch, when Autumn was young in the year that is gone. I would not exchange it, Catharine, for the truncheon of my tribe."

While Eachin thus spoke, Catharine began to doubt in her own mind whether she had acted prudently in requesting the assistance of a bold young man, elated, doubtless, by his sudden elevation from a state of servitude, to one which she was aware gave him extensive authority over a very lawless body of adherents.

"You do not fear me, fair Catharine?" said the young Chief, taking her hand. "I suffered my people to appear before me for a few minutes, that I might see how you could endure their presence; and methinks you regarded them as if you were born to be a chieftain's wife."

"I have no reason to fear wrong from Highlanders," said Catharine, firmly; "especially as I thought Conachar was with them. Conachar has drunk of our cup, and eaten of our bread; and my father has often had traffic with Highlanders, and never was there wrong or quarrel betwixt him and them."

"No?" replied Hector, for such is the Saxon equivalent for Eachin, "what! never when he took the part of the Gow Chrom" (the bandy-legged Smith) "against Eachin MacIain?—Say

nothing to excuse it, and believe it will be your own fault if I ever again allude to it. But you have some command to lay upon me—speak, and you shall be obeyed."

Catharine hastened to reply; for there was something in the young Chief's manner and language, which made her desire to shorten the interview.

"Eachin," she said, "since Conachar is no longer your name, you ought to be sensible that in claiming, as I honestly might, a service from my equal, I little thought that I was addressing a person of such superior power and consequence. You, as well as I, have been obliged to the religious instruction of this good man. He is now in great danger; wicked men have accused him with false charges, and he is desirous to remain in safety and concealment till the storm shall pass away."

"Ha! the good Clerk Clement? Ay, the worthy clerk did much for me, and more than my rugged temper was capable to profit by. I will be glad to see any one in the town of Perth persecute one who hath taken hold of MacIain's mantle!"

"It may not be safe to trust too much to that," said Catharine. "I nothing doubt the power of your tribe, but when the Black Douglas takes up a feud, he is not to be scared by the shaking of a Highland plaid."

The Highlander disguised his displeasure at this speech with a forced laugh.

"The sparrow," he said, "that is next the eye, seems larger than the eagle that is perched on Bengeoile. You fear the Douglasses most, because they sit next to you. But be it as you will—You will not believe how wide our hills, and vales, and forests extend beyond the dusky barrier of yonder mountains, and you think all the world lies on the banks of the Tay. But this good Clerk shall see hills that could hide him were all the Douglasses on his quest—ay, and he shall see men enough also, to make them glad to get once more southward of the Grampians.—And wherefore should you not go with the good man? I will send a party to bring him in safety from Perth, and we will set up the old trade beyond Loch Tay—only no more cutting off of gloves for me. I will find your father in hides, but I will not cut them, save when they are on the creatures' backs."

"My father will come one day and see your housekeeping, Conachar—I mean, Hector.—But times must be quieter, for there is feud between the town's people and the followers of the noblemen, and there is speech of war about to break out in the Highlands."

"Yes, by Our Lady, Catharine! and were it not for that same Highland war, you should not thus put off your Highland visit, my pretty mistress. But the race of the hills are no longer to be divided into two nations. They will fight like men for the supremacy, and he who gets it will deal with the King of Scotland as an equal, not

as a superior. Pray that the victory may fall to MacIain, my pious St. Catharine, for thou shalt pray for one who loves thee dearly."

"I will pray for the right," said Catharine; "or rather, I will pray that there be peace on all sides.—Farewell, kind and excellent Father Clement; believe I shall never forget thy lessons—remember me in thy prayers.—But how wilt thou be able to sustain a journey so toilsome?"

"They shall carry him if need be," said Hector, "if we go far without finding a horse for him. But you, Catharine—it is far from hence to Perth. Let me attend you thither as I was wont."

"If you were as you were wont, I would not refuse your escort. But gold brooches and bracelets are perilous company, when the Liddesdale and Annandale lancers are riding as throng upon the highway as the leaves at Hallowmass; and there is no safe meeting betwixt Highland tartans and steel jackets."

She hazarded this remark, as she somewhat suspected, that, in casting his slough, young Eachin had not entirely surmounted the habits which he had acquired in his humbler state, and that, though he might use bold words, he would not be rash enough to brave the odds of numbers, to which a descent into the vicinity of the city would be likely to expose him. It appeared that she judged correctly; for, after a farewell, in which she compounded for the immunity of her lips, by permitting him to kiss her hand, she returned towards Perth, and could obtain at times, when she looked back, an occasional glance of the Highlanders, as, winding through the most concealed and impracticable paths, they bent their way towards the North.

She felt in part relieved from her immediate anxiety, as the distance increased betwixt her and these men, whose actions were only directed by the will of their chief, and whose chief was a giddy and impetuous boy. She apprehended no insult on her return to Perth, from the soldiery of any party whom she might meet; for the rules of chivalry were in those days a surer protection to a maiden of decent appearance, than an escort of armed men, whose cognizance might not be acknowledged as friendly by any other party whom they might chance to encounter. But more remote dangers pressed on her apprehension. The pursuit of the licentious Prince was rendered formidable by threats which his unprincipled counsellor, Ramorny, had not shunned to utter against her father, if she persevered in her coyness. These menaces, in such an age, and from such a character, were deep grounds for alarm; nor could she consider the pretensions to her favor which Conachar had scarce repressed during his state of servitude, and seemed now to avow boldly, as less fraught with evil, since there had been repeated incursions of the Highlanders into the very town of Perth, and citizens had, on more occasions than one, been made prisoners, and carried off from their own houses, or had

fallen by the claymore in the very streets of their city. She feared, too, her father's impertinence on behalf of the Smith, of whose conduct on St. Valentine's Day unworthy reports had reached her; and whose suit, had he stood clear in her good opinion, she dared not listen to, while Ramorny's threats of revenge upon her father rung on her ear. She thought on these various dangers with the deepest apprehension, and an earnest desire to escape from them and herself, by aking refuge in the cloister; but saw no possibility of obtaining her father's consent to the only course from which she expected peace and protection.

In the course of these reflections, we cannot discover that she very distinctly regretted that her perils attended her because she was the *Fair Maid of Perth*; this was one point which marked that she was not yet altogether an angel; and perhaps it was another, that, in despite of Henry Smith's real or supposed delinquencies, a sigh escaped from her bosom, when she thought upon St. Valentine's dawn.

CHAPTER XV.

O for a draught of power to steep
The soul of agony in sleep!

BERTHA.

We have shown the secrets of the confessional; those of the sick-chamber are not hidden from us. In a darkened apartment, where salves and medicines showed that the leech had been busy in his craft, a tall thin form lay on a bed, arrayed in a nightgown belted around him, with pain on his brow, and a thousand stormy passions agitating his bosom. Every thing in the apartment indicated a man of opulence and of expense. Henbane Dwining, the apothecary, who seemed to have the care of the patient, stole with a crafty and cat-like step from one corner of the room to another, busying himself with mixing medicines and preparing dressings. The sick man groaned once or twice, on which the leech, advancing to his bedside, asked whether these sounds were a token of the pain of his body, or of the distress of his mind.

"Of both, thou poisoning varlet," said Sir John Ramorny; "and of being encumbered with thy accursed company."

"If that is all, I can relieve your knighthood of one of these ills, by presently removing myself elsewhere. Thanks to the feuds of this boisterous time, had I twenty hands instead of these two poor servants of my art" (displaying his skinny palms), "there is enough of employment for them; well-requited employment, too, where thanks and crowns contend which shall best pay my services; while you, Sir John, wreak upon your surgeon the anger you ought only to bear against the author of your wound."

"Villain, it is beneath me to reply to thee," said the patient; "but every word of thy malign-

ant tongue is a dirk, inflicting wounds which set all the medicines of Arabia at defiance."

"Sir John, I understand you not; but if you give way to these tempestuous fits of rage, it is impossible but fever and inflammation must be the result."

"Why then dost thou speak in a sense to chafe my blood? Why dost thou name the supposition of thy worthless self having more hands than nature gave thee, while I, a knight and gentleman, am mutilated like a cripple?"

"Sir John," replied the surgeon, "I am no divine, nor a mainly obstinate believer in some things which divines tell us. Yet I may remind you that you have been kindly dealt with; for if the blow which has done you this injury had lighted on your neck, as it was aimed, it would have swept your head from your shoulders, instead of amputating a less considerable member."

"I wish it had, Dwining—I wish it had lighted as it was addressed. I should not then have seen a policy, which had spun a web so fine as mine, burst through by the brute force of a drunken churl.—I should not have been reserved to see horses which I must not mount—lists which I must no longer enter—splendors which I cannot hope to share—or battles which I must not take part in. I should not, with a man's passions for power and for strife, be set to keep place among the women, despised by them, too, as a miserable impotent cripple, unable to aim at obtaining the favor of the sex."

"Supposing all this to be so, I will yet pray of your knighthood to remark," replied Dwining, still busying himself with arranging the dressings of the wounds, "that your eyes, which you must have lost with your head, may, being spared to you, present as rich a prospect of pleasure as either ambition or victory in the lists or in the field, or the love of women itself, could have proposed to you."

"My sense is too dull to catch thy meaning, leech," replied Ramorny. "What is this precious spectacle reserved to me in such a shipwreck?"

"The dearest that mankind knows," replied Dwining; and then, in the accent of a lover who utters the name of his beloved mistress, and expresses his passion for her in the very tone of his voice, he added the word "REVENGE!"

"The patient had raised himself on his couch to listen with some anxiety for the solution of the physician's enigma. He laid himself down again as he heard it explained, and after a short pause, asked, "In what Christian college learned you this morality, good Master Dwining?"

"In no Christian college," answered his physician; "for though it is privately received in most, it is openly and manfully adopted in none. But I have studied among the sages of Granada, where the fiery-souled Moor lifts high his deadly dagger as it drops with his enemy's blood, and avows the doctrine which the pallid Christian

practises, though coward-like he dare not name it."

"Thou art then a more high-souled villain than I deemed thee," said Ramorny.

"Let that pass," answered Dwining. "The waters that are the stillest, are also the deepest; and the foe is most to be dreaded who never threatens till he strikes. You knights and men-at-arms go straight to your purpose with sword in hand. We, who are clerks, win our access with a noiseless step and an indirect approach, but attain our object not less surely."

"And I," said the knight, "who have trod to my revenge with a mailed foot, which made all echo around it, must now use such a slipper as thine? Ha!"

"He who lacks strength," said the wily mediciner, "must attain his purpose by skill."

"And tell me sincerely, mediciner, wherefore thou wouldst read me these devil's lessons? Why wouldst thou thrust me faster or farther on to my vengeance, than I may seem to thee ready to go of my own accord? I am old in the ways of the world, man; and I know that such as thou do not drop words in vain, or thrust themselves upon the dangerous confidence of men like me, save with the prospect of advancing some purpose of their own. What interest hast thou in the road, whether peaceful or bloody, which I may pursue on these occurrences?"

"In plain dealing, Sir Knight, though it is what I seldom use," answered the leech, "my road to revenge is the same with yours."

"With mine, man!" said Ramorny, with a tone of scornful surprise. "I thought it had been high beyond thy reach. Thou aim at the same revenge with Ramorny!"

"Ay, truly," replied Dwining; "for the smithy churl under whose blow you have suffered, has often done me despite and injury. He has thwarted me in council, and despised me in action. His brutal and unhesitating bluntness is a living reproach to the subtlety of my natural disposition. I fear him, and I hate him."

"And you hope to find an active coadjutor in me?" said Ramorny, in the same surpercilious tone as before. "But know the artisan fellow is too low in degree, to be to me either the object of hatred or of fear. Yet he shall not escape. We hate not the reptile that has stung us, though we might shake it off the wound, and tread upon it. I know the ruffian of old as a stout man-at-arms, and a pretender, as I have heard, to the favor of the scornful puppet, whose beauties, forsooth, spurred us to our wise and hopeful attempt.—Fiends, that direct this nether world! by what malice have ye decided that the hand which has couched a lance against the bosom of a prince, should be struck off like a sapling, by the blow of a churl, and during the turmoil of a midnight riot!—Well, mediciner, thus far our courses hold together, and I bid thee well believe that I will crush for thee this reptile mechanic. But do not thou think to escape me, when that

part of my revenge is done, which will be most easily and speedily accomplished."

"Not, it may be, altogether so easily accomplished," said the apothecary; "for, if your knighthood will credit me, there will be found small ease or security in dealing with him. He is the strongest, boldest, and most skilful swordsman in Perth, and all the country around it."

"Fear nothing; he shall be met with had he the strength of Samson. But then, mark me! Hope not thou to escape my vengeance, unless thou become my passive agent in the scene which is to follow. Mark me, I say once more. I have studied at no Moorish college, and lack some of thy unbounded appetite for revenge, but yet I will have my share of vengeance.—Listen to me, mediciner, while I shall thus far unfold myself; but beware of treachery, for powerful as thy fiend is, thou hast taken lessons from a meaner devil than mine. Hearken—the master whom I have served through vice and virtue, with too much zeal for my own character perhaps, but with unshaken fidelity to him—the very man, to soothe whose frantic folly I have incurred this irreparable loss, is, at the prayer of his doating father, about to sacrifice me, by turning me out of his favor, and leaving me at the mercy of the hypocritical relative, with whom he seeks a precarious reconciliation at my expense. If he perseveres in this most ungrateful purpose, thy fiercest Moors, were their complexion swarthy as the smoke of hell, shall blush to see their revenge undone! But I will give him one more chance for honor and safety, before my wrath shall descend on him in unrelenting and unmitigated fury.—There, then, thus far thou hast my confidence—Close hands on our bargain—close hands, did I say?—where is the hand that should be the pledge and representative of Ramorny's plighted word! is it nailed on the public pillory, or flung as offal to the houseless dogs, who are even now snarling over it? Lay thy finger on the mutilated stump then, and swear to be a faithful actor in my revenge, as I shall be of yours.—How now, Sir Leech, look you pale—you, who say to Death, stand back or advance, can you tremble to think of him or to hear him named? I have not mentioned your fee, for one who loves revenge for itself, requires no deeper bribe—yet, if broad lands and large sums of gold can increase thy zeal in a brave cause, believe me, these shall not be lacking."

"They tell for something in my humble wishes," said Dwining; "the poor man in this bustling world is thrust down like a dwarf in a crowd, and so trodden under foot—the rich and powerful rise like giants above the press, and are at ease, while all is turmoil around them."

"Then shalt thou rise above the press, mediciner, as high as gold can rise thee. This purse is weighty, yet it is but an earnest of thy grudge."

"And this Smith? my noble benefactor?"—said the leech as he pouched the gratuity—"thi-

Henry of the Wynd, or whatever is his name—would not the news that he hath paid the penalty of his action, assuage the pain of thy knighthood's wound better than the balm of Mecca with which I have salved it?"

"He is beneath the thoughts of Ramorny; and I have no more resentment against him than I have ill-will at the senseless weapon which he swayed. But it is just thy hate should be vented upon him. Where is he chiefly to be met with?"

"That also I have considered," said Dwining. "To make the attempt by day in his own house, were too open and dangerous, for he hath five servants who work with him at the stithy, four of them strong knaves, and all loving to their master. By night were scarce less desperate, for he hath his doors strongly secured with bolt of oak and bar of iron, and ere the fastenings of his house could be forced, the neighborhood would rise to his rescue, especially as they are still alarmed by the practice on St. Valentine's Even."

"O ay, true, mediciner," said Ramorny, "for deceit is thy nature even with me—thou knewest my hand and signet, as thou saidst, when that hand was found cast out on the street, like the disgusting refuse of a shambles,—why, having such knowledge, went'st thou with these jolter-headed citizens to consult that Patrick Charteris, whose spurs should be hacked of from his heels for the communion which he holds with paltry burghers, and whom thou brought'st here with the fools to do dishonor to the lifeless hand, which, had it held its wonted place, he was not worthy to have touched in peace, or faced in war?"

"My noble patron, as soon as I had reason to know you had been the sufferer, I urged them with all my powers of persuasion to desist from prosecuting the feud, but the swaggering Smith, and one or two other hot heads, cried out for vengeance. Your knighthood must know this fellow calls himself bachelor to the Fair Maiden of Perth, and stands upon his honor to follow up her father's quarrel; but I have forestalled his market in that quarter, and that is something in earnest of revenge."

"How mean you by that, Sir Leech?" said the patient.

"Your knighthood shall conceive," said the mediciner, "that this Smith doth not live within compass, but is an outlaw and a galliard. I met him myself on St. Valentine's Day, shortly after the affray between the townfolk and the followers of Douglas. Yes, I met him sneaking through the lanes and by-passages with a common minstrel wench, with her messian and her viol on his one arm, and her buxom self hanging upon the other. What thinks your honor? Is not this a trim squire, to cross a prince's love with the fairest girl in Perth, strike off the hand of a knight and baron, and become gentleman-usher to a strolling glee-woman, all in the course of the same four-and-twenty hours?"

"Marry, I think the better of him that he is so much of a gentleman's humor, clown though he be," said Ramorny. "I would he had been a precisian instead of a galliard, and I should have had better heart to aid thy revenge;—and such revenge! revenge on a smith—in the quarrel of a pitiful manufacturer of rotten cheverons? Pah!—And yet it shall be taken in full. Thou hast commenced it, I warrant me, by thine own manoeuvres."

"In a small degree only"—said the apothecary;—"I took care that two or three of the most notorious gossips in Curfew Street, who liked not to hear Catharine called the Fair Maid of Perth, should be possessed of this story of her faithful Valentine. They opened on the scent so keenly, that, rather than doubt had fallen on the tale, they would have vouched for it as if their own eyes had seen it. The lover came to her father's within an hour after, and your worship may think what a reception he had from the angry Glover, for the damsel herself would not be looked upon. And thus your honor sees I had a foretaste of revenge. But I trust to receive the full draught from the hands of your lordship, with whom I am in a brotherly league, which—"

"Brotherly!" said the knight, contemptuously. "But be it so, the priests say we are all of one common earth. I cannot tell—there seems to me some difference; but the better mould shall keep faith with the baser, and thou shalt have thy revenge. Call thou my page hither."

A young man made his appearance from the anteroom upon the physician's summons.

"Eviot," said the knight, "does Bonthron wait? and is he sober?"

"He is as sober as sleep can make him after a deep drink," answered the page.

"Then fetch him hither, and do thou shut the door."

A heavy step presently approached the apartment, and a man entered, whose deficiency of height seemed made up in breadth of shoulders and strength of arm.

"There is a man thou must deal upon, Bonthron," said the knight.

The man smoothed his rugged features, and grinned a smile of satisfaction.

"That mediciner will show thee the party. Take such advantage of time, place, and circumstance, as will insure the result; and mind you come not by the worst, for the man is the fighting Smith of the Wynd."

"It will be a tough job," growled the assassin; "for if I miss my blow, I may esteem myself but a dead man. All Perth rings with the Smith's skill and strength."

"Take two assistants with thee," said the knight.

"Not I," said Bonthron. "If you double any thing, let it be the reward."

"Account it doubled," said his master; "but see thy work be thoroughly executed."

"Trust me for that, Sir Knight—seldom have failed."

"Use this sage man's directions," said the wounded knight, pointing to the physician. "And hark thee, await his coming forth—and drink not till the business be done."

"I will not," answered the dark satellite; "my own life depends on my blow being steady and sure. I know whom I have to deal with."

"Vanish then, till he summons you, and have axe and dagger in readiness."

Bonthron nodded and withdrew.

"Will your knighthood venture to intrust such an act to a single hand?" said the mediciner, when the assassin had left the room. "May I pray you to remember that yonder party did, two nights since, baffle six armed men?"

"Question me not, Sir Mediciner; a man like Bonthron, who knows time and place, is worth a score of confused revellers.—Call Eviot—thou shalt first exert thy powers of healing, and do not doubt that thou shalt, in the farther work, be aided by one who will match thee in the art of sudden and unexpected destruction."

The page Eviot again appeared at the mediciner's summons, and at his master's sign assisted the chirurgion in removing the dressings from Sir John Ramorny's wounded arm. Dwining viewed the naked stump with a species of professional satisfaction, enhanced, no doubt, by the malignant pleasure which his evil disposition took in the pain and distress of his fellow-creatures. The knight just turned his eye on the ghastly spectacle, and uttered, under the pressure of bodily pain or mental agony, a groan which he would fain have repressed.

"You groan, sir," said the leech, in his soft insinuating tone of voice, but with a sneer of enjoyment, mixed with scorn, curling upon his lip, which his habitual dissimulation could not altogether disguise—"you groan, but be comforted. This Henry Smith knows his business—his sword is as true to its aim as his hammer to the anvil. Had a common swordsman struck this fatal blow, he had harmed the bone and damaged the muscles, so that even my art might not have been able to repair them. But Henry Smith's cut is clean, and as sure as that with which my own scalpel could have made the amputation. In a few days you will be able, with care and attention to the ordinances of medicine, to stir abroad."

"But my hand—the loss of my hand—"

"It may be kept secret for a time," said the mediciner. "I have possessed two or three tattling fools, in deep confidence, that the hand which was found was that of your knighthood's groom, Black Quentin, and your knighthood knows that he has parted for Fife, in such sort as to make it generally believed."

"I know well enough," said Ramorny, "that the rumor may stifle the truth for a short time. But what avails this brief delay?"

"It may be concealed till your knighthood re-

tires for a time from the court, and then, when new accidents have darkened the recollection of the present stir, it may be imputed to a wound received from the shivering of a spear, or from a cross-bow bolt. Your slave will find a suitable device, and stand for the truth of it."

"The thought maddens me," said Ramorny, with another groan of mental and bodily agony. "Yet I see no better remedy."

"There is none other," said the leech, to whose evil nature his patron's distress was delicious nourishment. "In the meanwhile it is believed you are confined by the consequences of some bruises, aiding the sense of displeasure at the Prince's having consented to dismiss you from his household, at the remonstrance of Albany; which is publicly known."

"Villain, thou rack'st me!" exclaimed the patient.

"Upon the whole, therefore," said Dwining, "your knighthood has escaped well, and, saving the lack of your hand, a mischance beyond remedy, you ought rather to rejoice than complain; for no barber-chirurgion in France or England could have more ably performed the operation than this churl with one downright blow."

"I understand my obligation fully," said Ramorny, struggling with his anger, and affecting composure; "and if Bonthron pays him not with a blow equally downright, and rendering the aid of the leech unnecessary, say that John of Ramorny cannot requite an obligation."

"That is spoke like yourself, noble knight!" answered the mediciner. "And let me further say, that the operator's skill must have been vain, and the hemorrhage must have drained your life-veins, but for the bandages, the cautery, and the styptics, applied by the good monks, and the poor services of your humble vassal, Henbane Dwining."

"Peace!" exclaimed the patient, "with thy ill-omened voice, and worse-omened name!—Methinks, as thou mentionest the tortures I have undergone, my tingling nerves stretch and contract themselves as if they still actuated the fingers that once could clutch a dagger!"

"That," explained the leech, "may it please your knighthood, is a phenomenon well known to our profession. There have been those among the ancient sages who have thought that there still remained a sympathy between the severed nerves, and those belonging to the amputated limb; and that the several fingers are seen to quiver and strain, as corresponding with the impulse which proceeds from their sympathy with the energies of the living system. Could we recover the hand from the Cross, or from the custody of the Black Douglas, I would be pleased to observe this wonderful operation of occult sympathies. But I fear me, one might as safely go to wrest the joint from the talons of a hungry eagle."

"And thou mayst as safely break thy malignant jests on a wounded lion, as on John of Ra-

morny!" said the knight, raising himself in uncontrollable indignation. "Caitiff, proceed to thy duty; and remember, that if my hand can no longer clasp a dagger, I can command a hundred."

"The sight of one drawn and brandished in anger were sufficient," said Dwining, "to consume the vital powers of your surgeon. But who then," he added, in a tone partly insinuating, partly jeering, "who would then relieve the fiery and scorching pain which my patron now suffers, and which renders him exasperated even with his poor servant for quoting the rules of healing, so contemptible, doubtless, compared with the power of inflicting wounds?"

Then, as daring no longer to trifle with the mood of his dangerous patient, the leech addressed himself seriously to salving the wound, and applied a fragrant balm, the odor of which was diffused through the apartment, while it communicated a refreshing coolness, instead of the burning heat; a change so gratifying to the fevered patient, that, as he had before groaned with agony, he could not now help sighing for pleasure, as he sank back on his couch to enjoy the ease which the dressing bestowed.

"Your knightly lordship now knows who is your friend," said Dwining; "had you yielded to a rash impulse, and said, 'Slay me this worthless quacksalver,' where, within the four seas of Britain, would you have found the man to have ministered to you as much comfort?"

"Forget my threats, good leech," said Ramorny, "and beware how you tempt me. Such as I brook not jests upon our agony. See thou keep thy scoffs, to pass upon misers* in the hospital."

Dwining ventured to say no more, but poured some drops from a phial which he took from his pocket, into a small cup of wine allayed with water.

"This draught," said the man of art, "is medicated to produce a sleep which must not be interrupted."

"For how long will it last?" asked the knight.

"The period of its operation is uncertain—perhaps till morning."

"Perhaps for ever," said the patient. "Sir Mediciner, taste me that liquor presently, else it passes not my lips."

The leech obeyed him with a scornful smile. "I would drink the whole with readiness; but the juice of this Indian gum will bring sleep on the healthy man as well as upon the patient, and the business of the leech requires me to be a watcher."

"I crave your pardon, Sir Leech," said Ramorny, looking downwards, as if ashamed to have manifested suspicion.

"There is no room for pardon where offence must not be taken," answered the mediciner.

* That is, miserable persons, as used in Spenser, and other writers of his time; though the sense is now restricted to those who are covetous.

"An insect must thank a giant that he does not tread on him. Yet, noble knight, insects have their power of harming as well as physicians. What would it have cost me, save a moment's trouble, so to have drugged that balm, as should have made your arm rot to the shoulder-joint, and your life-blood curdle in your veins to a corrupted jelly? What is there that prevented me to use means yet more subtle, and to taint your room with essences, before which the light of life twinkles more and more dimly, till it expires, like a torch amidst the foul vapors of some subterranean dungeon? You little estimate my power, if you know not that these, and yet deeper modes of destruction, stand at command of my art.* But a physician slays not the patient by whose generosity he lives, and far less will he, the breath of whose nostrils is the hope of revenge, destroy the vowed ally, who is to favor his pursuit of it.—Yet one word,—should a necessity occur for rousing yourself—for who in Scotland can promise himself eight hours' uninterrupted repose?—then smell at the strong essence contained in this pounce-box.—And now, farewell, Sir Knight; and if you cannot think of me as a man of nice conscience, acknowledge me at least as one of reason and of judgment."

So saying, the mediciner left the room; his usual mean and shuffling gait elevating itself into something more noble, as conscious of a victory over his imperious patient.

Sir John Ramorny remained sunk in unpleasant reflections, until he began to experience the incipient effects of his soporific draught. He then roused himself for an instant, and summoned his page.

"Eviot! what ho! Eviot!—I have done ill to unbosom myself so far to this poisonous quack salver—Eviot!"

The page entered.

"Is the mediciner gone forth?"

"Yes, so please your knighthood."

"Alone, or accompanied?"

"Bonthron spoke apart with him, and followed him almost immediately—by your lordship's command, as I understood him."

"Lack-a-day, yes!—he goes to seek some medicaments—he will return anon. If he be intoxicated, see he comes not near my chamber, and permit him not to enter into converse with any one. He raves when drink has touched his brain. He was a rare fellow, before a Southron bill laid his brain-pan bare; but since that time he talks gibberish whenever the cup has crossed his lips.—Said the leech aught to you, Eviot?"

* The extent to which the science of poisoning was carried in the middle ages on the continent, is well known. The hateful practice was more and more refined, and still more generally adopted afterwards; and we are told, among other instances of diabolical cunning, of gloves which could not be put on without inflicting a mortal disease, of letters which, on being opened, diffused a fatal vapor, &c., &c. Voltaire justly and candidly mentions it as a distinguishing characteristic of the British, that political poisonings make little if any figure in their history.

"Nothing, save to reiterate his commands that your honor be not disturbed."

"Which thou must surely obey," said the knight. "I feel the summons to rest, of which I have been deprived since this unhappy wound—at least, if I have slept it has been but for a snatch. Aid me to take off my gown, Eviot."

"May God and the saints send you good rest, my lord," said the page, retiring after he had rendered his wounded master the assistance required.

As Eviot left the room, the knight, whose brain was becoming more and more confused, muttered over the page's departing salutation.

"God—saints—I have slept sound under such a benison. But now—methinks if I awake not to the accomplishment of my proud hopes of power and revenge, the best wish for me is, that the slumbers which now fall around my head, were the forerunners of that sleep which shall return my borrowed powers to their original non-existence—I can argue it no farther."

Thus speaking, he fell into a profound sleep.

CHAPTER XVI.

On Fastern's E'en when we war fou.

SCOTS SONG.

THE night which sunk down on the sick-bed of Ramorny, was not doomed to be a quiet one. Two hours had passed since curfew-bell, then rung at seven o'clock at night, and in those primitive times all were retired to rest, excepting such whom devotion, or duty, or debauchery, made watchers; and the evening being that of Shrove-tide, or, as it was called in Scotland, Fastern's E'en,* the vigils of gaiety were by far the most frequented of the three.

The common people had, throughout the day, toiled and struggled at football; the nobles and gentry had fought cocks, and hearkened to the wanton music of the minstrel; while the citizens had gorged themselves upon pancakes fried in lard, and brose, or brewis—the fat broth, that is, in which salted beef had been boiled, poured upon highly-toasted oatmeal, a dish which even now is not ungrateful to simple old-fashioned Scottish palates. These were all exercises and festive dishes proper to the holyday. It was no less a solemnity of the evening, that the devout Catholic should drink as much good ale and wine as he had means to procure; and, if young and able, that he should dance at the ring, or figure among the morrice-dancers, who, in the city of Perth, as elsewhere, wore a peculiarly fantastic garb, and distinguished themselves by their address and activity. All this gaiety took place under the prudential consideration that the long term of Lent, now approaching, with its fasts and deprivations, rendered it wise for mortals to

* Fastern's E'en, the evening before the commencement of the fast—*Anglice—Shrove-tide*, the season of being shaven, or of confession and absolution, before beginning the penance of Lent. The cock-fights, &c., still held at this period, are relics of the Catholic carnival that preceded the weeks of abstinence.

cram as much idle and sensual indulgence as they could into the brief space which intervened before its commencement.

The usual revels had taken place, and in most parts of the city were succeeded by the usual pause. A particular degree of care had been taken by the nobility, to prevent any renewal of discord betwixt their followers and the citizens of the town; so that the revels had proceeded with fewer casualties than usual, embracing only three deaths, and certain fractured limbs, which, occurring to individuals of little note, were not accounted worth inquiring into. The Carnival was closing quietly in general, but in some places the sport was still kept up.

One company of revellers, who had been particularly noticed and applauded, seemed unwilling to conclude their frolic. The Entry, as it was called, consisted of thirteen persons, habited in the same manner, having doublets of chamois leather sitting close to their bodies, curiously slashed and laced. They wore green caps with silver tassels, red ribands, and white shoes, had bells hung at their knees and around their ankles, and naked swords in their hands. This gallant party, having exhibited a sword-dance before the King, with much clashing of weapons, and fantastic interchange of postures, went on gallantly to repeat their exhibition before the door of Simon Glover, where having made a fresh exhibition of their agility, they caused wine to be served round to their own company and the bystanders, and with a loud shout drank to the health of the Fair Maid of Perth. This summoned old Simon to the door of his habitation, to acknowledge the courtesy of his countrymen, and in his turn to send the wine around in honor of the "Merry Morrice-dancers of Perth."

"We thank thee, Father Simon," said a voice, which strove to drown in an artificial squeak the pert conceited tone of Oliver Proudfoot. "But a sight of thy lovely daughter had been more sweet to us young bloods, than a whole vintage of Malvoisie."

"I thank you, neighbors, for your good will," replied the Glover. "My daughter is ill at ease, and may not come forth into the cold night-air—but if this gay gallant, whose voice methinks I should know, will go into my poor house, she will charge him with thanks for the rest of you."

"Bring them to us at the hostelry of the Griffin;" cried the rest of the Ballet to their favored companion; "for there will we ring-in Lent, and have another rouse to the health of the lovely Catharine."

"Have with you in half an hour," said Oliver, "and see who will quaff the largest flagon, or sing the loudest glee. Nay, I will be merry in what remains of Fastern's Even, should Lent find me with my mouth closed for ever."

"Farewell, then," cried his mates in the morrice; "farewell, slashing Borne-maker, till we meet again."