

lation of the unexpected intelligence even excited a smile among the crowd, so near are the confines of the ludicrous to those of the terrible.

"The murderers have without doubt taken him for Henry Smith," said Griffin, "which must have been a great comfort to him in the circumstances."

But the arrival of other persons on the scene soon restored its deeply tragic character.

## CHAPTER XIX.

Who's that that rings the bell!—Diablos, ho!  
The town will rise.—

OTHELLO, Act II. Scene 3.

THE wild rumors which flew through the town, speedily followed by the tolling of the alarm bells, spread general consternation. The nobles and knights, with their followers, gathered in different places of rendezvous, where a defence could best be maintained; and the alarm reached the royal residence, where the young Prince was one of the first to appear to assist, if necessary, in the defence of the old King. The scene of the preceding night ran in his recollection; and, remembering the blood-stained figure of Bonthron, he conceived, though indistinctly, that the ruffian's action had been connected with this uproar. The subsequent and more interesting discourse with Sir John Ramorny had, however, been of such an impressive nature, as to obliterate all traces of what he had vaguely heard of the bloody act of the assassin, excepting a confused recollection that some one or other had been slain. It was chiefly on his father's account that he had assumed arms with his household train, who, clad in bright armor, and bearing lances in their hands, made now a figure very different from that of the preceding night, when they appeared as intoxicated Bacchanalians. The kind old monarch received this mark of filial

Halls, and Halleys, among whom even some of the ancient and honorable race of the Halkets have ranged themselves. All these claims are, however, esteemed very lightly by the Wynds, who to this day pride themselves on their thews and sinews, and consider that their ancestor being styled 'Henrie Winde,' by the metrical historian of the town, is of itself proof sufficient that their claim is more solid than the name would altogether imply.

"It is rather singular, that, in spite of all the ill-will which Henry seems to have borne to the Celts, and the contemptuous terms in which he so often speaks of them in the text, the Gows should be found foremost among the claimants, and that the strife should lie mainly between them and their Saxon name-takes, the Smiths, families whose number, opulence, and respectability will render it an extremely difficult matter to say which of them are in the direct line, even if it should be clearer than it is that the children of the hero were known by their father's occupation, and not by his residence.

"It only remains to notice the pretensions of the Chroms, Crooms, Crumbs, or Crombles, a name which every school-boy will associate, if not with the athletic, at least with the gymnastic exercises for which the Gow Chrom and the grammar school of Perth were equally celebrated. We need scarcely add, that while the Saxon name corresponding with the word Gow has brought a host of competitors into the field, there has not yet started any claimant resting his pretensions on the quality expressed in the epithet *Chron*, i. e., bandy-legged."

attachment with tears of gratitude, and proudly presented his son to his brother Albany, who entered shortly afterwards. He took them each by the hand.

"Now are we three Stewarts," he said, "as inseparable as the holy Trefoil; and, as they say the wearer of that sacred herb mocks at magical delusion, so we, while we are true to each other, may set malice and enmity at defiance."

The brother and son kissed the kind hand which pressed theirs, while Robert III. expressed his confidence in their affection. The kiss of the youth was, for the time, sincere; that of the brother was the salute of the apostate Judas.

In the meantime the bell of St. John's Church alarmed, amongst others, the inhabitants of Curfew Street. In the house of Simon Glover, old Dorothy Glover, as she was called (for she also took name from the trade she practised, under her master's auspices), was the first to catch the sound. Though somewhat deaf upon ordinary occasions, her ear for bad news was as sharp as a kite's scent for carrion; for Dorothy, otherwise an industrious, faithful, and even affectionate creature, had that strong appetite for collecting and retailing sinister intelligence, which is often to be marked in the lower classes. Little accustomed to be listened to, they love the attention which a tragic tale insures to the bearer, and enjoy, perhaps, the temporary equality to which misfortune reduces those who are ordinarily accounted their superiors. Dorothy had no sooner possessed herself of a slight packet of the rumors which were flying abroad, than she bounced into her master's bedroom, who had taken the privilege of age and the holytide to sleep longer than usual.

"There he lies, honest man!" said Dorothy, half in a screeching, and half in a wailing tone of sympathy,— "there he lies; his best friend slain, and he knowing as little about it as the babe new born, that kens not life from death."

"How now!" said the Glover, starting up out of his bed.— "What is the matter, old woman? is my daughter well?"

"Old woman!" said Dorothy, who, having her fish hooked, chose to let him play a little. "I am not so old," said she, flouncing out of the room, "as to bide in the place till a man rises from his naked bed—"

And presently she was heard at a distance in the parlor beneath, melodiously singing to the scrubbing of her own broom.

"Dorothy—screechowl—devil,—say but my daughter is well!"

"I am well, my father," answered the Fair Maid of Perth, speaking from her bedroom, "perfectly well; but what, for Our Lady's Sake, is the matter? The bells ring backward, and there is shrieking and crying in the streets."

"I will presently know the cause.—Here, Conachar, come speedily and tie my points.—I forgot—the Highland loon is far beyond Fortin

gall.—Patience, daughter, I will presently bring you news."

"Ye need not hurry yourself for that, Simon Glover," quoth the obdurate old woman; "the best and the worst of it may be tauld before you could hobble over your doorstane. I ken the hail story abroad; for, thought I, our goodman is so wilful, that he'll be for banging out to the tuilzie, be the cause what it like; and sae I maun e'en stir my shanks, and learn the cause of all this, or he will hae his auld nose in the midst of it, and maybe get it nipped off before he knows what for."

"And what is the news, then, old woman?" said the impatient Glover, still busying himself with the hundred points or latches, which were the means of attaching the doublet to the hose.

Dorothy suffered him to proceed in his task till she conjectured it must be nearly accomplished; and foresaw that if she told not the secret herself, her master would be abroad to seek in person for the cause of the disturbance. She, therefore, hollowed out—"Aweel, aweel, ye canna say it is my fault, if you hear ill news before you have been at the morning mass. I would have kept it from ye till ye had heard the priest's word; but since you must hear it, you have e'en lost the truest friend that ever gave hand to another, and Perth maun mourn for the bravest burgher that ever took a blade in hand!"

"Harry Smith! Harry Smith!" exclaimed the father and the daughter at once.

"Oh, ay, there ye hae it at last," said Dorothy, "and whase fault was it but your ain?—ye made such a piece of work about his companying with a glee-woman, as if he had companied with a Jewess!"

Dorothy would have gone on long enough, but her master exclaimed to his daughter, who was still in her own apartment, "It is nonsense, Catharine—all the dotage of an old fool. No such thing has happened. I will bring you the true tidings in a moment;" and snatching up his staff, the old man hurried out past Dorothy, and into the street, where the throng of people were rushing towards the High Street. Dorothy, in the meantime, kept muttering to herself, "Thy father is a wise man, take his ain word for it. He will come next by some scathe in the hobble-show, and then it will be, Dorothy, get the lint, and, Dorothy, spread the plaster; but now it is nothing but nonsense, and a lie, and impossibility, that can come out of Dorothy's mouth—Impossible! Does auld Simon think that Harry Smith's head was as hard as his stithy, and a hail clan of Highlandmen dinging at him?"

Here she was interrupted by a figure like an angel, who came wandering by her with wild eye, cheek deadly pale, hair dishevelled, and an apparent want of consciousness, which terrified the old woman out of her discontented humor.

"Our Lady bless my bairn!" said she. "What look you see wild for?"

"Did you not say some one was dead?" said

Catharine, with a frightful uncertainty of utterance, as if her organs of speech and hearing served her but imperfectly.

"Dead, hinny! Ay, ay, dead enough; ye'll no hae him to gloom at ony mair."

"Dead!" repeated Catharine, still with the same uncertainty of voice and manner. "Dead—slain—and by Highlanders?"

"I see warrant by Highlanders,—the lawless loons. Wha is it else that kills maist of the folk about, unless now and then when the burghers take a tirrvie, and kill ane another, or whiles that the knights and nobles shed blood? But I see uphauld it's been the Highlandmen this bout. The man was no in Perth, laird or loon, durst have faced Henry Smith man to man. There's been sair odds against him; ye'll see that when it's looked into."

"Highlanders!" repeated Catharine, as if haunted by some idea which troubled her senses. "Highlanders!—Oh, Conachar! Conachar!"

"Indeed, and I dare say you have lighted on the very man, Catharine. They quarrelled, as you saw, on the St. Valentine's Even, and had a warstle. A Highlandman has a long memory for the like of that. Gie him a cuff at Martin-mass, and his cheek will be tingling at Whitsunday. But what could have brought down the lang-legged loons to do their bloody wark within burgh?"

"Woe's me, it was I," said Catharine; "it was I brought the Highlanders down—I that sent for Conachar—ay, they have lain in wait—but it was I that brought them within reach of their prey. But I will see with my own eyes—and then—something we will do. Say to my father I will be back anon."

"Are ye distraught, lassie?" shouted Dorothy, as Catharine made past her towards the street door. "You would not gang into the street with the hair hanging down your haffets in that guise, and you kenn'd for the Fair Maid of Perth?—Mass! but she's out in the street, come o't what like, and the auld Glover will be as mad as if I could withhold her, will she nill she, flyte she fling she.—This is a brave morning for an Ash Wednesday!—What's to be done! If I were to seek my master among the multitude, I were like to be crushed beneath their feet, and little moan made for the old woman.—And am I to run after Catharine, who ere this is out of sight and far lighter of foot than I am?—so I will just down the gate to Nicol Barber's, and tell him a' about it!"

While the trusty Dorothy was putting her prudent resolve into execution, Catharine ran through the streets of Perth in a manner, which at another moment would have brought on her the attention of every one, who saw her hurrying on with a reckless impetuosity, wildly and widely different from the ordinary decency and composure of her step and manner, and without the plaid, scarf, or mantle, which "women of good," of fair character and decent rank univer

sally carried around them, when they went abroad. But distracted as the people were, every one inquiring or telling the cause of the tumult, and most recounting it different ways, the negligence of her dress, and discomposure of her mantle, made no impression on any one; and she was suffered to press forward on the path she had chosen, without attracting more notice than the other females, who, stirred by anxious curiosity or fear, had come out to inquire the cause of an alarm so general—it might be to seek for friends, for whose safety they were interested.

As Catharine passed along, she felt all the wild influence of the agitating scene, and it was with difficulty she forbore from repeating the cries of lamentation and alarm, which were echoed around her. In the meantime she rushed rapidly on, embarrassed like one in a dream, with a strange sense of dreadful calamity, the precise nature of which she was unable to define, but which implied the terrible consciousness, that the man who loved her so fondly, whose good qualities she so highly esteemed, and whom she now felt to be dearer than perhaps she would before have acknowledged to her own bosom, was murdered, and most probably by her means. The connexion betwixt Henry's supposed death, and the descent of Conachar and his followers, though adopted by her in a moment of extreme and engrossing emotion, was sufficiently probable to have been received for truth, even if her understanding had been at leisure to examine its credibility. Without knowing what she sought, except the general desire to know the worst of the dreadful report, she hurried forward to the very spot, which of all others her feelings of the preceding day would have induced her to avoid.

Who would, upon the evening of Shrovetide, have persuaded the proud, the timid, the shy, the rigidly decorous Catharine Glover, that before mass on Ash Wednesday she should rush through the streets of Perth, making her way amidst tumult and confusion, with her hair unbound, and her dress disarranged, to seek the house of that same lover, who, she had reason to believe, had so grossly and indelicately neglected and affronted her, as to pursue a low and licentious amour! Yet so it was; and her eagerness taking, as if by instinct, the road which was most free, she avoided the High Street, where the pressure was greatest, and reached the wynd by the narrow lanes on the northern skirt of the town, through which Henry Smith had formerly escorted Louise. But even these comparatively lonely passages were now astir with passengers, so general was the alarm. Catharine Glover made her way through them, however, while such as observed her looked on each other, and shook their heads in sympathy with her distress. At length, without any distinct idea of her own purpose, she stood before her lover's door, and knocked for admittance.

The silence which succeeded the echoing of her hasty summons increased the alarm, which had induced her to take this desperate measure.

"Open—open, Henry!" she cried. "Open, if you yet live!—Open, if you would not find Catharine Glover dead upon your threshold!"

As she cried thus frantically, to ears which she was taught to believe were stopped by death, the lover she invoked opened the door in person, just in time to prevent her sinking on the ground. The extremity of his ecstatic joy upon an occasion so unexpected, was qualified only by the wonder which forbade him to believe it real, and by his alarm at the closed eyes, half-opened and blanched lips, total absence of complexion, and apparently total cessation of breathing.

Henry had remained at home, in spite of the general alarm, which had reached his ears for a considerable time, fully determined to put himself in the way of no brawls that he could avoid; and it was only in compliance with a summons from the Magistrates, which, as a burgher, he was bound to obey, that, taking his sword and a spare buckler from the wall, he was about to go forth, for the first time unwillingly, to pay his service, as his tenure bound him.

"It is hard," he said, "to be put forward in all the town feuds, when the fighting work is so detestable to Catharine. I am sure there are enough of wenchens in Perth, that say to their gallants, 'Go out—do your devior bravely, and win your lady's grace;' and yet they send not for their lovers, but for me, who cannot do the duties of a man to protect a minstrel woman, or a of a burgher who fights for the honor of his town, but this peevish Catharine uses me as if I were a brawler and bordeller!"

Such were the thoughts which occupied his mind, when, as he opened his door to issue forth, the person dearest to his thoughts, but whom he certainly least expected to see, was present to his eyes, and dropped into his arms.

His mixture of surprise, joy, and anxiety, did not deprive him of the presence of mind which the occasion demanded. To place Catharine Glover in safety, and recall her to herself, was to be thought of before rendering obedience to the summons of the Magistrates, however pressing that had been delivered. He carried his lovely burden, as light as a feather, yet more precious than the same quantity of purest gold, into a small bed-chamber which had been his mother's. It was the most fit for an invalid, as it looked into the garden, and was separated from the noise of the tumult.

"Here, Nurse—Nurse Shoobred—come quick—come for death and life—here is one wants thy help!"

Up trotted the old dame. "If it should but prove any one that will keep thee out of the scuffle"—for she also had been aroused by the noise—but what was her astonishment, when, placed in love and reverence on the bed of her late mistress, and supported by the athletic arms of her

foster son, she saw the apparently lifeless form of the Fair Maid of Perth. "Catharine Glover!" she said; "and, Holy Mother—a dying woman, as it would seem!"

"Not so, old woman," said her foster son; "the dear heart throbs—the sweet breath comes and returns! Come thou, that may aid her more meetly than I—bring water—essences—whatever thy old skill can devise. Heaven did not place her in my arms to die, but to live for herself and me!"

With an activity which her age little promised, Nurse Shoobred collected the means of restoring animation; for, like many women of the period, she understood what was to be done in such cases, nay, possessed a knowledge of treating wounds of an ordinary description, which the warlike propensities of her foster son kept in pretty constant exercise.

"Come now," she said, "son Henry, unfold your arms from about my patient—though she is worth the pressing—and set thy hands at freedom to help me with what I want.—Nay, I will not insist on your quitting her hand, if you will beat the palm gently, as the fingers uncloset their clenched grasp."

"I beat her slight beautiful hand!" said Henry; "you were as well bid me beat a glass cup with a fore-hammer, as tap her fair palm with my horn-hard fingers.—But the fingers do unfold, and we will find a better way than beating;" and he applied his lips to the pretty hand, whose motion indicated returning sensation. One or two deep sighs succeeded, and the Fair Maid of Perth opened her eyes, fixed them on her lover, as he kneeled by the bedside, and again sunk back on the pillow. As she withdrew not her hand from her lover's hold or from his grasp, we must in charity believe that the return to consciousness was not so complete as to make her aware that he abused the advantage, by pressing it alternately to his lips and his bosom. At the same time we are compelled to own, that the blood was coloring in her cheek, and that her breathing was deep and regular, for a minute or two during this relapse.

The noise at the door began now to grow much louder, and Henry was called for by all his various names, of Smith, Gow, and Hal of the Wynd, as heathens used to summon their deities by different epithets. At last, like Portuguese Catholics when exhausted with entreating their saints, the crowd without had recourse to vituperative exclamations.

"Out upon you, Henry! You are a disgraced man, mansworn to your barger-oath, and a traitor to the Fair City, unless you come instantly forth!"

It would seem that Nurse Shoobred's applications were now so far successful, that Catharine's senses were in some measure restored; for turning her face more towards that of her lover, than her former posture permitted, she let her right hand fall on his shoulder, leaving her

left still in his possession, and seeming slightly to detain him, while she whispered, "Do not go, Henry—stay with me—they will kill thee, these men of blood."

It would seem that this gentle invocation, the result of finding the lover alive whom she expected to have only recognised as a corpse, though it was spoken so low as scarcely to be intelligible, had more effect to keep Henry Wynd in his present posture, than the repeated summons of many voices from without had to bring him down-stairs.

"Mass, townsmen," cried one hardy citizen to his companions, "the saucy Smith but jests with us! Let us into the house, and bring him out by the lug and the horn."

"Take care what you are doing," said a more cautious assailant. "The man that presses on Henry Gow's retirement may go into his house with sound bones, but will return with ready-made work for the surgeon.—But here comes one has good right to do our errand to him, and make the recreant hear reason on both sides of his head."

The person of whom this was spoken was no other than Simon Glover himself. He had arrived at the fatal spot where the unlucky Bonnet-maker's body was lying, just in time to discover, to his great relief, that when it was turned with the face upwards by Bailie Craigdallie's orders, the features of the poor braggart Proudfoot were recognised, when the crowd expected to behold those of their favorite champion Henry Smith. A laugh, or something approaching to one, went among those who remembered how hard Oliver had struggled to obtain the character of a fighting man, however foreign to his nature and disposition, and remarked now, that he had met with a mode of death much better suited to his pretensions than to his temper. But this tendency to ill-timed mirth, which savored of the rudeness of the times, was at once hushed by the voice, and cries, and exclamations of a woman, who struggled through the crowd, screaming at the same time,—“Oh, my husband!—my husband!”

Room was made for the sorrower, who was followed by two or three female friends. Maudie Proudfoot had been hitherto only noticed as a good-looking, black-haired woman, believed to be *dink*\* and disdainful to those whom she thought meaner or poorer than herself, and lady and empress over her late husband, whom she quickly caused to lower his crest when she chanced to hear him crowing out of season. But now, under the influence of powerful passion, she assumed a far more imposing character.

"Do you laugh," she said, "you unworthy burghers of Perth, because one of your own citizens has poured his blood into the kennel?—or do you laugh because the deadly lot has lighted on my husband? How has he deserved this?—Did

\* Contempruous—scornful of others.

he not maintain an honest house by his own industry, and keep a creditable board, where the sick had welcome, and the poor had relief? Did he not lend to those who wanted—stand by his neighbors as a friend—keep counsel, and do justice like a magistrate?”

“It is true, it is true,” answered the assembly; “his blood is our blood, as much as if it were Henry Gow’s.”

“You speak truth, neighbors,” said Bailie Craigdallie; “and this feud cannot be patched up as the former was.—Citizen’s blood must not flow unavenged down our kennels, as if it were ditch-water, or we shall soon see the broad Tay crimsoned with it. But this blow was never meant for the poor man on whom it has unhappily fallen. Every one knew what Oliver Proud-fute was, how wide he would speak, and how little he would do. He has Henry Smith’s buff-coat, target, and head-piece. All the town know them as well as I do; there is no doubt on’t. He had the trick, as you know, of trying to imitate the Smith in most things. Some one, blind with rage, or perhaps through liquor, has stricken the innocent Bonnet-maker, whom no man either hated or feared, or indeed cared either much or little about, instead of the stout Smith, who has twenty feuds upon his hands.”

“What then is to be done, Bailie?” cried the multitude.

“That, my friends, your magistrates will determine for you, as we shall instantly meet together when Sir Patrick Charteris cometh here, which must be anon. Meanwhile, let the surgeon Dwining examine that poor piece of clay, that he may tell us how he came by his fatal death; and then let the corpse be decently swathed in a clean shroud, as becomes an honest citizen, and placed before the high altar in the church of St. John, the patron of the Fair City. Cease all clamor and noise, and every defensible man of you, as you would wish well to the Fair Town, keep his weapons in readiness, and be prepared to assemble on the High Street, at the tolling of the common bell from the Town-House, and we will either revenge the death of our fellow-citizen, or else we shall take such fortune as heaven will send us. Meanwhile, avoid all quarrelling with the knights and their followers, till we know the innocent from the guilty.—But wherefore tarrys this knave Smith? He is ready enough in tumults when his presence is not wanted, and lags he now when his presence may serve the Fair City?—What ails him, doth any one know? Hath he been upon the frolic last Eastern’s Even?”

“Rather he is sick or sullen, Master Bailie,” said one of the city’s mairs, or sergeants; “for though he is within door, as his knaves report, yet he will neither answer to us nor admit us.”

“So please your worship, Master Bailie,” said Simon Glover, “I will go myself, to fetch Henry Smith. I have some little difference to make up with him. And blessed be Our Lady,

who hath so ordered it, that I find him alive, as a quarter of an hour since I could never have expected!”

“Bring the stout Smith to the Council-house,” said the Bailie, as a mounted yeoman pressed through the crowd, and whispered in his ear, —“Here is a good fellow, who says the Knight of Kinfanns is entering the port.”

Such was the occasion of Simon Glover presenting himself at the house of Henry Gow at the period already noticed.

Unrestrained by the considerations of doubt and hesitation which influenced others, he repaired to the parlor; and having overheard the bustling of Dame Shoolbred, he took the privilege of intimacy to ascend to the bed-room, and, with the slight apology of—“I crave your pardon, good neighbor,” he opened the door, and entered the apartment, where a singular and unexpected sight awaited him. At the sound of his voice, May Catharine experienced a revival much speedier than Dame Shoolbred’s restoratives had been able to produce; and the paleness of her complexion changed into a deep glow of the most lovely red. She pushed her lover from her with both her hands, which, until this minute, her want of consciousness, or her affection, awakened by the events of the morning, had well-nigh abandoned to his caresses. Henry Smith, bashful as we know him, stumbled as he rose up; and none of the party were without a share of confusion, excepting Dame Shoolbred, who was glad to make some pretext to turn her back to the others, in order that she might enjoy a laugh at their expense, which she felt herself utterly unable to restrain, and in which the Glover, whose surprise, though great, was of short duration, and of a joyful character, sincerely joined.

“Now, by good St. John,” he said, “I thought I had seen a sight this morning that would cure me of laughter, at least till Lent was over; but this would make me curl my cheek, if I were dying. Why, here stands honest Henry Smith, who was lamented as dead, and tolled out for from every steeple in town, alive, merry, and, as it seems from his ruddy complexion, as like to live as any man in Perth. And here is my precious daughter, that yesterday would speak of nothing but the wickedness of the wights that haunt profane sports, and protect glee-maidens.—Ay, she who set St. Valentine and St. Cupid both at defiance,—here she is, turned a glee-maiden herself, for what I can see! Truly I am glad to see that you, my good Dame Shoolbred, who give way to no disorder, have been of this loving party.”

“You do me wrong, my dearest father,” said Catharine, as if about to weep. “I came here with far different expectations than you suppose. I only came because—because—”

“Because you expected to find a dead lover,” said her father, “and you have found a living one, who can receive the tokens of your regard, and return them. Now, were it not a sin, I could find in my heart to thank Heaven, that thou hast been

surprised at last into owning thyself a woman—Simon Glover is not worthy to have an absolute saint for his daughter.—Nay, look not so piteously, nor expect condolence from me! Only I will try not to look merry, if you will be pleased to stop your tears, or confess them to be tears of joy.”

“If I were to die for such a confession,” said poor Catharine, “I could not tell what to call them. Only believe, dear father, and let Henry believe, that I would never have come hither, unless—unless—”

“Unless you had thought that Henry could not come to you,” said her father. “And now, shake hands in peace and concord, and agree as Valentines should. Yesterday was Shrovetide, Henry.—We will hold that thou hast confessed thy follies, hast obtained absolution, and art relieved of all the guilt thou stoodst charged with.”

“Nay, touching that, father Simon,” said the Smith, “now that you are cool enough to hear me, I can swear on the Gospels, and I can call my nurse, Dame Shoolbred, to witness—”

“Nay, nay,” said the Glover, “but wherefore rake up differences which should all be forgotten?”

“Hark ye, Simon!—Simon Glover!” This was now echoed from beneath.

“True, son Smith,” said the Glover, seriously, “we have other work in hand. You and I must to the council instantly. Catharine shall remain here with Dame Shoolbred, who will take charge of her till we return; and then, as the town is in misrule, we two, Harry, will carry her home, and they will be bold men that cross us.”

“Nay, my dear father,” said Catharine, with a smile, “now you are taking Oliver Proud-fute’s office. That doughty burgher is Henry’s brother-at-arms.”

Her father’s countenance grew dark.

“You have said a stinging word, daughter; but you know not what has happened.—Kiss him, Catharine, in token of forgiveness.”

“Not so,” said Catharine; “I have done him too much grace already. When he has seen the errant damsel safe home, it will be time enough to claim his reward.”

“Meantime,” said Henry, “I will claim, as your host, what you will not allow me on other terms.”

He folded the fair maiden in his arms, and was permitted to take the salute which she had refused to bestow.

As they descended the stair together, the old man laid his hand on the Smith’s shoulder, and said, “Henry, my dearest wishes are fulfilled; but it is the pleasure of the saints that it should be in an hour of difficulty and terror.”

“True,” said the Smith; “but thou knowest, father, if our riots be frequent at Perth, at least they seldom last long.”

Then, opening a door which led from the house into the smithy, “Here, comrades,” he

cried, “Anton, Guthbert, Dingwell, and Ringan! Let none of you stir from the place till I return. Be as true as the weapons I have taught you to forge; a French crown and a Scotch merry-making for you, if you obey my command. I leave a mighty treasure in your charge. Watch the doors well—let little Jannekin scout up and down the wynd, and have your arms ready if any one approaches the house. Open the doors to no man, till Father Glover or I return; it concerns my life and happiness.”

The strong swarthy giants to whom he spoke, answered, “Death to him who attempts it!”

“My Catharine is now as safe,” said he to her father, “as if twenty men garrisoned a royal castle in her cause. We shall pass most quietly to the Council-house by walking through the garden.”

He led the way through a little orchard accordingly, where the birds which had been sheltered and fed during the winter by the good-natured artisan, early in the season as it was, were saluting the precarious smiles of a February sun, with a few faint and interrupted attempts at melody.

“Hear these minstrels, father,” said the Smith; “I laughed at them this morning in the bitterness of my heart, because the little wretches sung, with so much of winter before them. But now, methinks, I could bear a blithe chorus, for I have my Valentine as they have theirs; and whatever ill may lie before me, for to-morrow, I am to-day the happiest man in Perth, city or county, burgh or landward.”

“Yet I must allay your joy,” said the old Glover, “though Heaven knows, I share it.—Poor Oliver Proud-fute, the inoffensive fool that you and I knew so well, has been found this morning dead in the streets.”

“Only dead drunk, I trust?” said the Smith; “nay, a candle and a dose of matrimonial advice will bring him to life again.”

“No, Henry, no. He is slain—slain with a battle-axe, or some such weapon.”

“Impossible!” replied the Smith; “he was light-footed enough, and would not for all Perth have trusted to his hands, when he could extricate himself by his heels.”

“No choice was allowed him. The blow was dealt in the very back of his head; he who struck must have a shorter man than himself, and used a horseman’s battle-axe, or some such weapon, for a Lochaber axe must have struck the upper part of his head. But there he lies dead, brained, I may say, by a most frightful wound.”

“This is inconceivable,” said Henry Wynd. “He was in my house at midnight, in a morrice’s habit; seemed to have been drinking, though not to excess. He told me a tale of having been beset by revellers, and being in danger; but, alas! you know the man; I deemed it was a swaggering fit, as he sometimes took when he was in liquor; and, may the Merciful Virgin forgive me! I let him go without company, in which

I did him inhuman wrong. Holy St. John be my witness! I would have gone with any helpless creature; and far more with him, with whom I have so often sat at the same board, and drunken of the same cup. Who, of the race of man, could have thought of harming a creature so simple, and so unoffending, excepting by his idle vaunts!"

"Henry, he wore thy head-piece, thy buff-coat, thy target—How came he by these?"

"Why, he demanded the use of them for the night, and I was ill at ease, and well pleased to be rid of his company; having kept no holyday, and being determined to keep none, in respect of our misunderstanding."

"It is the opinion of Bailie Craigdallie, and all our sagest counsellors, that the blow was intended for yourself, and that it becomes you to prosecute the due vengeance of our fellow-citizen, who received the death which was meant for you."

The Smith was for some time silent. They had now left the garden, and were walking in a lonely lane, by which they meant to approach the Council-house of the burgh, without being exposed to observation or idle inquiry.

"You are silent, my son, yet we two have much to speak of," said Simon Glover. "Behold thee that this widowed woman, Mandlin, if she should see cause to bring a charge against any one for the wrong done to her and her orphan children, must support it by a champion, according to law and custom; for be the murderer who he may, we know enough of these followers of the nobles to be assured, that the party suspected will appeal to the combat, in derision, perhaps, of those whom they will call the cowardly burghers. While we are men with blood in our veins, this must not be, Henry Wynd."

"I see where you would draw me, father," answered Henry, dejectedly: "and St. John knows I have heard a summons to battle as willingly as war-horse ever heard the trumpet. But bethink you, father, how I have lost Catharine's favor repeatedly, and have been driven well-nigh to despair of ever regaining it, for being, if I may say so, even too ready a man of my hands. And here are all our quarrels made up, and the hopes, that seemed this morning removed beyond earthly prospect, have become nearer and brighter than ever; and must I, with the dear one's kiss of forgiveness on my lips, engage in a new scene of violence, which you are well aware will give her the deepest offence?"

"It is hard for me to advise you, Henry," said Simon; "but this I must ask you—Have you, or have you not, reason to think, that this poor unfortunate Oliver has been mistaken for you?"

"I fear it too much," said Henry. "He was thought something like me, and the poor fool had studied to ape my gestures and manner of walking, nay, the very airs which I have the trick of whistling, that he might increase a resemblance which has cost him dear. I have ill-willers

enough, both in burgh and landward, to owe me a shrewd turn; and he, I think, could have none such."

"Well, Henry, I cannot say but my daughter will be offended. She has been much with Father Clement, and has received notions about peace and forgiveness, which, methinks, suit ill with a country where the laws cannot protect us, unless we have spirit to protect ourselves. If you determine for the combat, I will do my best to persuade her to look on the matter as the other good womanhood in the burgh will do; and if you resolve to let the matter rest—the man who has lost his life for yours remaining unavenged—the widow and the orphans without any reparation for the loss of a husband and father—I will then do you the justice to remember, that I, at least, ought not to think the worse of you for your patience, since it was adopted for love of my child. But, Henry, we must in that case remove ourselves from bonny St. Johnston, for here we will be but a disgraced family."

Henry groaned deeply, and was silent for an instant, then replied, "I would rather be dead than dishonored, though I should never see her again! Had it been yester evening, I would have met the best blade among these men-at-arms as blithely as ever I danced at a Maypole. But to-day, when she had first as good as said, 'Henry Smith, I love thee!'—Father Glover, it is very hard. Yet it is all my own fault! This poor unhappy Oliver! I ought to have allowed him the shelter of my roof, when he prayed me in his agony of fear; or, had I gone with him, I should then have prevented or shared his fate. But I taunted him, ridiculed him, loaded him with maledictions, though the saints know they were uttered in idle peevishness of impatience. I drove him out from my doors, whom I knew so helpless, to take the fate which was perhaps intended for me. I must avenge him, or be dishonored for ever. See, father—I have been called a man hard as the steel I work in—Does burnished steel ever drop tears like these?—Shame on me that I should shed them?"

"It is no shame, my dearest son," said Simon; "thou art as kind as brave, and I have always known it. There is yet a chance for us. No one may be discovered to whom suspicion attaches, and where none such is found, the combat cannot take place. It is a hard thing to wish that the innocent blood may not be avenged. But if the perpetrator of this foul murder be hidden for the present, thou wilt be saved from the task of seeking that vengeance which Heaven, doubtless, will take at its own proper time."

As they spoke thus, they arrived at the point of the High Street where the Council-house was situated. As they reached the door, and made their way through the multitude who thronged the street, they found the avenues guarded by a select party of armed burghers, and about fifty spears belonging to the Knight of Kinfauns, who, with his allies, the Greys, Blairs, Moncrieffs

and others, had brought to Perth a considerable body of horse of which these were a part. So soon as the Glover and Smith presented themselves, they were admitted to the chamber in which the magistrates were assembled.

## CHAPTER XX.

A woman waits for justice at the gate,  
A widow'd woman, wan and desolate.

PERTH.

THE Council-room of Perth\* presented a singular spectacle. In a gloomy apartment, ill and inconveniently lighted by two windows of different form and of unequal size, were assembled, around a large oaken table, a group of men, of whom those who occupied the higher seats were merchants, that is guild brethren or shopkeepers, arrayed in decent dresses becoming their station, but most of them bearing, like the Regent York, "signs of war around their aged necks;" gorgets, namely, and baldricks, which sustained their weapons. The lower places around the table were occupied by mechanics and artisans, the presidents, or deacons, as they were termed, of the working classes, in their ordinary clothes, somewhat better arranged than usual. These too wore pieces of armor of various descriptions. Some had the black jack, or doublet, covered with small plates of iron of a lozenge shape, which, secured through the upper angle, hung in rows above each, and which, swaying with the motion of the wearer's person, formed a secure defence to the body. Others had buff-coats, which, as already mentioned, could resist the blow of a sword, and even a lance's point, unless propelled with great force. At the bottom of the table, surrounded as it was with this varied assembly, sat Sir Louis Lundin; no military man, but a priest and parson of St. John's, arrayed in his canonical dress, and having his pen and ink before him. He was town-clerk of the burgh, and, like all the priests of the period (who were called from that circumstance the Pope's knights), received the honorable title of *Dominus*, contracted into *Dom*, or *Dan*, or

\* Mr. Morrison says, "The places where the public assemblies of the citizens, or their magistrates, were held, were so seldom changed in former times, that there seems every reason to conclude, that the meetings of the town-council of Perth, were always held in or near the place where they still convene. The room itself is evidently modern; but the adjoining building, which seems to have been reared close to it, if it did not actually form a part of the Chapel of the Virgin, bears many marks of antiquity. The room, in which it is not improbable the council meetings were held about the period of our story, had been relieved of part of its gloomy aspect in the reign of the third James, by the addition of one of those octagonal towers which distinguish the architecture of his favorite Cochran. The upper part of it and the spire are modern, but the lower structure is a good specimen of that artist's taste."

"The power of trying criminal cases of the most serious kind, and of inflicting the highest punishment of the law, was granted by Robert III. to the magistrates of Perth, and was frequently exercised by them, as the records of the town abundantly prove."

translated into *Sir*, the title of reverence due to the secular chivalry.

On an elevated seat, at the head of the council board, was placed Sir Patrick Charteris, in complete armor brightly burnished; a singular contrast to the motley mixture of warlike and peaceful attire exhibited by the burghers, who were only called to arms occasionally. The bearing of the Provost, while it completely admitted the intimate connexion which mutual interests had created betwixt himself, the burgh, and the magistracy, was at the same time calculated to assert the superiority, which, in virtue of gentle blood and chivalrous rank, the opinions of the age assigned to him over the members of the assembly in which he presided. Two squires stood behind him, one of them holding the knight's pennon, and another his shield, bearing his armorial distinctions, being a hand holding a dagger, or short sword, with the proud motto, *This is my charter*. A handsome page displayed the long sword of his master, and another bore his lance; all which chivalrous emblems and appurtenances were the more scrupulously exhibited, that the dignitary to whom they belonged was engaged in discharging the office of a burgh magistrate. In his own person, the Knight of Kinfauns appeared to affect something of state and stiffness, which did not naturally pertain to his frank and jovial character.

"So you are come at length, Henry Smith and Simon Glover," said the Provost. "Know that you have kept us waiting for your attendance. Should it so chance again while we occupy this place, we will lay such a fine on you as you will have small pleasure in paying. Enough—make no excuses. They are not asked now, and another time they will not be admitted. Know, sirs, that our reverend clerk hath taken down in writing, and at full length, what I will tell you in brief, that you may see what is to be required of you, Henry Smith, in particular. Our late fellow-citizen, Oliver Proudfoot, hath been found dead in the High Street, close by the entrance into the Wynd. It seemeth he was slain by a heavy blow with a short axe, dealt from behind and at unawares; and the act by which he fell can only be termed a deed of foul and forethought murder. So much for the crime. The criminal can only be indicated by circumstances. It is recorded in the protocol of the Reverend Sir Louis Lundin, that divers well-reputed witnesses saw our deceased citizen, Oliver Proudfoot, till a late period, accompanying the Entry of the morrice-dancers,\* of whom he was

\* Considerable diversity of opinion exists respecting the introduction of the morrice-dance into Britain. The name points it out as of Moorish origin; and so popular has this leaping kind of dancing for many centuries been in this country, that when Handel was asked to point out the peculiar taste in dancing and music of the several nations of Europe—to the French he ascribed the minuet; to the Spaniard, the saraband; to the Italian, arietta; to the English, the hornpipe, or Morrice-dance.

The local antiquary, whose kindness has already been mentioned once acknowledged, says:—

one, as far as the house of Simon Glover, in Curfew Street, where they again played their pageant. It is also manifested, that at this place he separated from the rest of the band, after some discourse with Simon Glover, and made an appointment to meet with the others of his company at the sign of the Griffin, there to conclude the holyday.—Now, Simon, I demand of you whether this be truly stated, so far as you know? and, further, what was the purport of the defunct Oliver Proudfoot's discourse with you?"

"My Lord Provost and very worshipful Sir Patrick," answered Simon Glover, "you and this honorable council shall know, that, touching certain reports which had been made of the conduct of Henry Smith, some quarrel had arisen between myself and another of my family, and the said Smith here present. Now, this our poor fellow-citizen, Oliver Proudfoot, having been active in spreading these reports, as indeed his element lay in such gossip, some words passed betwixt him and me on the subject; and, as I think, he left me with the purpose of visiting Henry Smith, for he broke off from the morrice-dancers, promising, as it seems, to meet them, as your honor has said, at the sign of the Griffin, in order to conclude the evening. But what he actually did, I know not, as I never again saw him in life."

"It is enough," said Sir Patrick, "and agrees with all that we have heard.—Now, worthy sirs, we next find our poor fellow-citizen environed by a set of revellers and maskers, who had assembled in the High Street, by whom he was shamefully ill treated, being compelled to kneel down in the street, and there to quaff huge quantities of liquor against his inclination, until at length he escaped from them by flight. This violence was accomplished with drawn swords, loud shouts, and imprecations, so as to attract the attention of several persons, who, alarmed by the tumult, looked out from their windows,

"It adds not a little interest to such an inquiry, in connexion with a story in which the fortunes of a Perth Glover form so prominent a part—to find that the Glover Incorporation of Perth have preserved entire among their relics the attire of one of the Morrice-dancers, who, on some festive occasion, exhibited his paces 'to the jocose recreation' of one of the Scottish monarchs, while on a visit to the Fair City.

"This curious vestment is made of fawn-colored silk, in the form of a tunic, with trappings of green and red satin. There accompany it two hundred and fifty-two small circular bells, formed into twenty-one sets of twelve bells each, upon pieces of leather, made to fasten to various parts of the body. What is most remarkable about these bells is the perfect intonation of each set, and the regular musical intervals between the tone of each. The twelve bells on each piece of leather are of various sizes, yet all combining to form one perfect intonation in concord with the leading note in the set. These concords are maintained not only in each set, but also in the intervals between the various pieces. The performer could thus produce if not a *tune*, at least a pleasing and musical chime, according as he regulated with skill the movements of his body. This sufficient evidence that the Morrice-dance was not quite so absurd and unmeaning as might at first be supposed; but that a tasteful performer could give pleasure by it so the skillful, as well as amusement to the vulgar."

as well as of one or two passengers, who, keeping aloof from the light of the torches, lest they also had been maltreated, beheld the usage which our fellow-citizen received in the High Street of the burgh. And although these revellers were disguised, and used vizards, yet their disguises were well known, being a set of quaint masking habits, prepared some weeks ago by command of Sir John Ramorny, Master of the Horse to his Royal Highness the Duke of Rothsay, Prince Royal of Scotland."

A low groan went through the assembly.

"Yes; so it is, brave burghers," continued Sir Patrick; "our inquiries have led us into conclusions both melancholy and terrible. But as no one can regret the point at which they seem likely to arrive more than I do, so no man living can dread its consequences less. It is even so—various artisans employed upon the articles, have described the dresses prepared for Sir John Ramorny's mask as being exactly similar to those of the men by whom Oliver Proudfoot was observed to be maltreated. And one mechanic, being Wingfield, the feather-dresser, who saw the revellers when they had our fellow-citizen within their hands, remarked that they wore the cinctures and coronals of painted feathers, which he himself had made by the order of the Prince's Master of the Horse.

"After the moment of his escape from these revellers, we lose all trace of Oliver; but we can prove that the maskers went to Sir John Ramorny's, where they were admitted, after some show of delay. It is rumored that thou, Henry Smith, sawest our unhappy fellow-citizen after he had been in the hands of these revellers—What is the truth of that matter?"

"He came to my house in the Wynd," said Henry, "about half an hour before midnight; and I admitted him, something unwillingly, as he had been keeping carnival while I remained at home; and there is ill talk, says the proverb, betwixt a full man and a fasting."

"And in which plight seemed he when thou didst admit him?" said the Provost.

"He seemed," answered the Smith, "out of breath, and talked repeatedly of having been endangered by revellers. I paid but small regard, for he was ever a timorous, chicken-spirited, though well-meaning man, and I held that he was speaking more from fancy than reality. But I shall always account it for foul offence in myself, that I did not give him my company, which he requested; and if I live, I will found masses for his soul, in expiation of my guilt."

"Did he describe those from whom he received the injury?" said the Provost.

"Revellers in masking habits," replied Henry. "And did he intimate his fear of having to do with them on his return?" again demanded Sir Patrick.

"He alluded particularly to his being waylaid, which I treated as visionary, having been able to see no one in the lane."

"Had he then no help from thee of any kind whatsoever?" said the Provost.

"Yes, worshipful," replied the Smith; "he exchanged his morrice-dress for my head-piece, buff-coat, and target, which I hear were found upon his body; and I have at home his morrice-cap and bells, with the jerkin and other things pertaining. He was to return my garb of fence, and get back his own masking-suit this day, had the saints so permitted."

"You saw him not then afterwards?"

"Never, my lord."

"One word more," said the Provost. "Have you any reason to think that the blow which slew Oliver Proudfoot was meant for another man?"

"I have," answered the Smith; "but it is doubtful, and it may be dangerous to add such a conjecture, which is besides only a supposition."

"Speak it out, on your burgher faith and oath.—For whom, think you, was the blow meant?"

"If I must speak," replied Henry, "I believe Oliver Proudfoot received the fate which was designed for myself; the rather that, in his folly, Oliver spoke of trying to assume my manner of walking, as well as my dress."

"Have you feud with any one, that you form such an idea?" said Sir Patrick Charteris.

"To my shame and sin be it spoken, I have feud with Highland and Lowland, English and Scot, Perth and Angus. I do not believe poor Oliver had feud with a new-hatched chicken.—Alas! he was the more fully prepared for a sudden call!"

"Hark ye, Smith," said the Provost,—"Answer me distinctly—Is there cause of feud between the household of Sir John Ramorny and yourself?"

"To a certainty, my lord, there is. It is now generally said, that Black Quentin, who went over Tay to Fife some days since, was the owner of the hand which was found in Convrefew Street upon the eve of St. Valentine. It was I who struck off that hand with a blow of my good sword. As this Black Quentin was a chamberlain of Sir John, and much trusted, it is like there must be feud between me and his master's dependants."

"It bears a likely front, Smith," said Sir Patrick Charteris.—"And now, good brothers and wise magistrates, there are two suppositions, each of which leads to the same conclusion. The maskers who seized our fellow-citizen, and misused him in a manner of which his body retains some slight marks, may have met with their former prisoner as he returned homewards, and finished their ill usage by taking his life. He himself expressed to Henry Gow fears that such would be the case. If this be really true, one or more of Sir John Ramorny's attendants must have been the assassins. But I think it more likely, that one or two of the revellers may have remained on the field, or returned to it, having

changed perhaps their disguise, and that to those men (for Oliver Proudfoot, in his own personal appearance, would only have been a subject of sport) his apparition in the dress, and assuming, as he proposed to do, the manner, of Henry Smith, was matter of deep hatred; and that seeing him alone, they had taken, as they thought, a certain and safe mode to rid themselves of an enemy so dangerous as all men know Henry Wynd is accounted by those that are his unfriends. The same train of reasoning, again, rests the guilt with the household of Sir John Ramorny.—How think you, sirs? Are we not free to charge the crime upon them?"

The Magistrates whispered together for several minutes, and then replied by the voice of Baillie Craigdallie,—"Noble Knight, and our worthy Provost,—we agree entirely in what your wisdom has spoken concerning this dark and bloody matter; nor do we doubt your sagacity in tracing to the fellowship and the company of John Ramorny of that ilk, the villainy which hath been done to our deceased fellow-citizen, whether in his own character and capacity, or as mistaking him for our brave townsman, Henry of the Wynd. But Sir John, in his own behalf, and as the Prince's Master of the Horse, maintains an extensive household; and as of course the charge will be rebated by a denial, we would ask, how we shall proceed in that case?—It is true, could we find law for firing the lodging, and putting all within it to the sword, the old proverb of 'short rede, good rede,' might here apply; for a fouler household of defiers of God, destroyers of men, and debauchers of women, are nowhere sheltered than are in Ramorny's band. But I doubt that this summary mode of execution would scarce be borne out by the laws; and no tittle of evidence which I have heard will tend to fix the crime on any single individual or individuals."

Before the Provost could reply, the Town-Clerk arose, and, stroking his venerable beard, craved permission to speak, which was instantly granted.—"Brethren," he said, "as well in our fathers' time as ours, hath God, on being rightly appealed to, condescended to make manifest the crimes of the guilty, and the innocence of those who may have been rashly accused. Let us demand from our Sovereign Lord, King Robert, who, when the wicked do not interfere to pervert his good intentions, is as just and clement a Prince as our annals can show in their long line, in the name of the Fair City, and of all the commons in Scotland, that he give us, after the fashion of our ancestors, the means of appealing to Heaven for light upon this dark murder. We will demand the proof by *bier-right*, often granted in the days of our Sovereign's ancestors, approved of by bulls and decretals, and administered by the great Emperor Charlemagne in France, by King Arthur in Britain, and by Gregory the Great, and the mighty Achais, in this our land of Scotland."

"I have heard of the bier-right, Sir Louis," quoth the Provost, "and I know we have it in our charters of the Fair City; but I am something ill-learned in the ancient laws, and would pray you to inform us more distinctly of its nature."

"We will demand of the King," said Sir Louis Lundin, "my advice being taken, that the body of our murdered fellow-citizen be transported into the High Church of St. John,\* and suitable masses said for the benefit of his soul, and for the discovery of his foul murder. Meantime, we shall obtain an order that Sir John Ramorny give up a list of such of his household as were in Perth in the course of the night between Fastern's Even and this Ash Wednesday, and become bound to present them on a certain day and hour, to be early named, in the High Church of St. John; there one by one to pass before the bier of our murdered fellow-citizen, and in the form prescribed to call upon God and his saints to bear witness that he is innocent of the acting, act or part, of the murder. And credit me, as has been indeed proved by numerous instances, that if the murderer shall endeavor to shroud himself by making such an appeal, the antipathy which subsists between the dead body, and the hand which dealt the fatal blow that divorced it from the soul, will awaken some imperfect life, under the influence of which the veins of the dead man will pour forth at the fatal wounds the blood which has been so long stagnant in the veins. Or to speak more certainly, it is the pleasure of Heaven, by some hidden agency which we cannot comprehend, to leave open this mode of discovering the wickedness of him who has defaced the image of his Creator."

"I have heard this law talked of," said Sir Patrick, "and it was enforced in the Bruce's time. This surely in no unfit period to seek, by such a mystic mode of inquiry, the truth, to which no ordinary means can give us access, seeing that a general accusation of Sir John's household would full surely be met by a general denial. Yet, I must crave farther of Sir Louis, our reverend town-clerk, how we shall prevent the guilty person from escaping in the interim?"

\* "There is," says Mr. Morrison, "a simplicity in the internal architecture of the building which bespeaks a very ancient origin, and makes us suspect that the changes it has undergone have in a great measure been confined to its exterior. Tradition ascribes its foundation to the Picts, and there is no doubt that in the age immediately subsequent to the termination of that monarchy it was famed throughout all Scotland. It is probable that the western part of it was built about that period, and the eastern not long afterwards, and in both divisions there is still to be seen a unity and beauty of design which is done little justice to by the broken, irregular, and paltry manner in which the exterior has at various times been patched up. When the three churches into which it is now cut down were in one, the ceilings high and decorated, the aisles enriched by the offerings of the devotees to the various altars which were reared around it, and the arches free from the galleries which now deform all these Gothic buildings, it must have formed a splendid theatre for such a spectacle as that of the trial by bier-right."

"The burghers will maintain a strict watch upon the wall, drawbridges shall be raised, and portcullises lowered, from sunset to sunrise, and strong patrols maintained through the night. This guard the burghers will willingly maintain, to secure against the escape of the murderer of their townsman."

The rest of the counsellors acquiesced, by word, sign, and look, in this proposal.

"Again," said the Provost, "what if any one of the suspected household refuse to submit to the ordeal of bier-right?"

"He may appeal to that of combat," said the reverend city scribe, "with an opponent of equal rank; because the accused person must have his choice, in the appeal to the judgment of God, by what ordeal he will be tried. But if he refuses both, he must be held as guilty, and so punished."

The sages of the council unanimously agreed with the opinion of their Provost and Town-Clerk, and resolved, in all formality, to petition the King, as a matter of right, that the murder of their fellow-citizen should be inquired into according to this ancient form, which was held to manifest the truth, and received as matter of evidence in case of murder, so late as towards the end of the seventeenth century. But before the meeting dissolved, Bailie Craigdallie thought it meet to inquire, who was to be the champion of Mandie, or Magdalen Proudfoot, and her two children.

"There need be little inquiry about that," said Sir Patrick Charteris; "we are men, and wear swords, which should be broken over the head of any one amongst us, who will not draw it in behalf of the widow and orphans of our murdered fellow-citizen, and in brave revenge of his death. If Sir John Ramorny shall personally resent the inquiry, Patrick Charteris of Kinfauns will do battle with him to the outrance, whilst horse and man may stand, or spear and blade hold together. But in case the challenger be of yeomanly degree, well wot I that Magdalen Proudfoot may choose her own champion among the bravest burghers of Perth, and shame and dishonor were it to the Fair City for ever, could she light upon one who were traitor and coward enough to say her nay! Bring her hither, that she may make her election."

Henry Smith heard this with a melancholy anticipation that the poor woman's choice would light upon him, and that his recent reconciliation with his mistress would be again dissolved, by his being engaged in a fresh quarrel, from which there lay no honorable means of escape, and which, in any other circumstances, he would have welcomed as a glorious opportunity of distinguishing himself both in sight of the court and of the city. He was aware that, under the tuition of Father Clement, Catharine viewed the ordeal of battle rather as an inst. to religion, than an appeal to the Deity, and did not consider it as reasonable, that superior strength

of arm, or skill of weapon, should be resorted to as the proof of moral guilt or innocence. He had, therefore, much to fear from her peculiar opinions in this particular, refined as they were beyond those of the age she lived in.

While he thus suffered under these contending feelings, Magdalen, the widow of the slaughtered man, entered the court, wrapped in a deep mourning veil, and followed and supported by five or six women of good (that is, of respectability), dressed in the same melancholy attire. One of her attendants held an infant in her arms, the last pledge of poor Oliver's nuptial affections. Another led a little tottering creature of two years, or thereabouts, which looked with wonder and fear, sometimes on the black dress in which they had muffled him, and sometimes on the scene around him.

The assembly rose to receive the melancholy group, and saluted them with an expression of the deepest sympathy, which Magdalen, though the mate of poor Oliver, returned with an air of dignity, which she borrowed, perhaps, from the extremity of her distress. Sir Patrick Charteris then stepped forward, and with the courtesy of a knight to a female, and of a protector to an oppressed and injured widow, took the poor woman's hand, and explained to her briefly, by what course the city had resolved to follow out the vengeance due for her husband's slaughter.

Having, with a softness and gentleness which did not belong to his general manner, ascertained that the unfortunate woman perfectly understood what was meant, he said aloud to the assembly, "Good citizens of Perth, and freeborn men of guild and craft, attend to what is about to pass, for it concerns your rights and privileges. Here stands Magdalen Proudfoot, desirous to follow forth the revenge due for the death of her husband, foully murdered, as she sayeth, by Sir John Ramorny, Knight of that ilk, and which she offers to prove, by the evidence of bier-right, or by the body of a man. Therefore, I, Patrick Charteris, being a belted knight and freeborn gentleman, offer myself to do battle in her just quarrel, whilst man and horse may endure, if any one of my degree shall lift my glove.—How say you, Magdalen Proudfoot, will you accept me for your champion?"

The widow answered with difficulty,—"I can desire none nobler."

Sir Patrick then took her right hand in his, and, kissing her forehead, for such was the ceremony, said solemnly,—"So may God and St. John prosper me at my need, as I will do my devoir as your champion, knightly, truly, and manfully. Go now, Magdalen, and choose, at your will, among the burgesses of the Fair City, present or absent, any one upon whom you desire to rest your challenge, if he against whom you bring plaint shall prove to be beneath my degree."

All eyes were turned to Henry Smith, whom the general voice had already pointed out as in every respect the fittest to act as champion on

the occasion. But the widow waited not for the general prompting of their looks. As soon as Sir Patrick had spoken, she crossed the floor to the place where, near the bottom of the table, the armorer stood among the men of his degree, and took him by the hand:—

"Henry Gow, or Smith," she said, "good burgher and craftsman, my—my—"

Husband, she would have said, but the word would not come forth; she was obliged to change the expression.

"He who is gone, loved and prized you over all men; therefore, meet it is that thou shouldst follow out the quarrel of his widow and orphans."

If there had been a possibility, which in that age there was not, of Henry's rejecting or escaping from a trust for which all men seemed to destine him, every wish and idea of retreat was cut off, when the widow began to address him; and a command from Heaven could hardly have made a stronger impression than did the appeal of the unfortunate Magdalen. Her allusion to his intimacy with the deceased moved him to the soul. During Oliver's life, doubtless, there had been a strain of absurdity in his excessive predilection for Henry, which, considering how very different they were in character, had in it something ludicrous. But all this was now forgotten, and Henry, giving way to his natural ardor, only remembered that Oliver had been his friend and intimate; a man who had loved and honored him as much as he was capable of entertaining such sentiments for any one; and above all, that there was much reason to suspect that the deceased had fallen victim to a blow meant for Henry himself.

It was, therefore with an alacrity which, the minute before, he could scarce have commanded, and which seemed to express a stern pleasure, that, having pressed his lips to the cold brow of the unhappy Magdalen, the armorer replied,—

"I, Henry the Smith, dwelling in the Wynd of Perth, good man and true, and freely born, accept the office of champion to this widow Magdalen, and these orphans, and will do battle in their quarrel to the death, with any man whomsoever of my own degree, and that so long as I shall draw breath. So help me at my need God and good St. John!"

There arose from the audience a half-suppressed cry, expressing the interest which the persons present took in the prosecution of the quarrel, and their confidence in the issue.

Sir Patrick Charteris then took measures for repairing to the King's presence, and demanding leave to proceed with inquiry into the murder of Oliver Proudfoot according to the custom of bier-right, and, if necessary, by combat.

He performed this duty after the Town-Council had dissolved, in a private interview between himself and the King, who heard of this new trouble with much vexation, and appointed next morning, after mass, for Sir Patrick and the

parties interested, to attend his pleasure in council. In the meantime, a royal pursuivant was dispatched to the Constable's lodgings, to call over the roll of Sir John Ramorny's attendants, and charge him, with his whole retinue, under the high penalties, to abide within Perth, until the King's pleasure should be farther known.

## CHAPTER XXI.

In God's name, see the lists and all things fit;  
There let them end it—God defend the right!

HENRY IV. Part II.

In the same council-room of the conventual palace of the Dominicans, King Robert was seated with his brother Albany, whose affected austerity of virtue, and real art and dissimulation, maintained so high an influence over the feeble-minded monarch. It was indeed natural, that one who seldom saw things according to their real forms and outlines, should view them according to the light in which they were presented to him by a bold astucious man, possessing the claim of such near relationship.

Ever anxious on account of his misguided and unfortunate son, the King was now endeavoring to make Albany coincide in opinion with him, in exculpating Rothsay from any part in the death of the Bonnet-maker, the precognition concerning which had been left by Sir Patrick Charteris for his Majesty's consideration.

"This is an unhappy matter, brother Robin," he said, "a most unhappy occurrence; and goes nigh to put strife and quarrel betwixt the nobility and the commons here, as they have been at war together in so many distant lands. I see but one cause of comfort in the matter, and that is, that Sir John Ramorny having received his dismissal from the Duke of Rothsay's family, it cannot be said that he or any of his people, who may have done this bloody deed (if it has truly been done by them), have been encouraged or hounded out upon such an errand by my poor boy. I am sure, brother, you and I can bear witness, how readily, upon my entreaties, he agreed to dismiss Ramorny from his service, on account of that brawl in Curfew Street."

"I remember his doing so," said Albany; "and well do I hope that the connexion betwixt the Prince and Ramorny has not been renewed since he seemed to comply with your Grace's wishes."

"Seemed to comply?—The connexion renewed?" said the King; "what mean you by these expressions, brother? Surely, when David promised to me, that if that unhappy matter of Curfew Street were but smothered up and concealed, he would part with Ramorny, as he was a counsellor thought capable of involving him in similar fooleries, and would acquiesce in our inflicting on him either exile, or such punishment as it should please us to impose—surely you cannot doubt that he was sincere in his professions, and would keep his

word? Remember you not, that when you advised that a heavy fine should be levied upon his estate in Fife in lieu of banishment, the Prince himself seemed to say, that exile would be better for Ramorny, and even for himself?"

"I remember it well, my royal brother. Nor, truly, could I have suspected Ramorny of having so much influence over the Prince, after having been accessory to placing him in a situation so perilous, had it not been for my royal kinsman's own confession, alluded to by your Grace, that, if suffered to remain at court, he might still continue to influence his conduct. I then regretted I had advised a fine in place of exile. But that time is passed, and now new mischief has occurred, fraught with much peril to your Majesty, as well as to your royal heir, and to the whole kingdom."

"What mean you, Robin?" said the weak-minded King. "By the tomb of our parents! by the soul of Bruce, our immortal ancestor! I entreat thee, my dearest brother, to take compassion on me. Tell me what evil threatens my son, or my kingdom?"

The features of the King, trembling with anxiety, and his eyes brimful of tears, were bent upon his brother, who seemed to assume time for consideration ere he replied.

"My lord, the danger lies here. Your Grace believes that the Prince had no accession to this second aggression upon the citizens of Perth—the slaughter of this bonnet-making fellow, about whose death they clamor, as a set of gulls about their comrade, when one of the noisy brood is struck down by a boy's shaft."

"Their lives," said the King, "are dear to themselves and their friends, Robin."

"Truly, ay, my liege; and they make them dear to us too, ere we can settle with the knaves for the least blood-witt.—But, as I said, your Majesty thinks the Prince had no share in this last slaughter; I will not attempt to shake your belief in that delicate point, but will endeavor to believe along with you. What you think is rule for me. Robert of Albany will never think otherwise than Robert of broad Scotland."

"Thank you, thank you," said the King, taking his brother's hand. "I knew I might rely that your affection would do justice to poor heedless Rothsay, who exposes himself to so much misconstruction that he scarcely deserves the sentiments you feel for him."

Albany had such an immovable constancy of purpose, that he was able to return the fraternal pressure of the King's hand, while tearing up by the very roots the hopes of the indulgent, fond old man.

"But, alas!" the Duke continued, with a sigh, "this burly intractable Knight of Kinfauns, and his brawling herd of burghers, will not view the matter as we do. They have the boldness to say that this dead fellow had been misused by Rothsay and his fellows, who were in the street in mask and revel, stopping men and women, com-

pellung them to dance, or to drink huge quantities of wine, with other follies needless to recount; and they say, that the whole party repaired to Sir John Ramorny's, and broke their way into the house, in order to conclude their revel there; thus affording good reason to judge, that the dismissal of Sir John from the Prince's service was but a feigned stratagem to deceive the public. And hence, they urge, that if ill were done that night, by Sir John Ramorny or his followers, much it is to be thought that the Duke of Rothsay must have at least been privy to, if he did not authorize it."

"Albany, this is dreadful!" said the King; "would they make a murderer of my boy; would they pretend my David would soil his hands in Scottish blood, without having either provocation or purpose? No, no—they will not invent calumnies so broad as these, for they are flagrant and incredible."

"Pardon, my liege," answered the Duke of Albany; "they say the cause of quarrel which occasioned the riot in Curfew Street, and its consequences, were more proper to the Prince than to Sir John; since none suspects, far less believes, that that hopeful enterprise was conducted for the gratification of the knight of Ramorny."

"Thou drivest me mad, Robin!" said the King.

"I am dumb," answered his brother; "I did but speak my poor mind according to your royal order."

"Thou meanest well, I know," said the King; "but, instead of tearing me to pieces with the display of inevitable calamities, were it not kinder, Robin, to point me out some mode to escape from them?"

"True, my liege; but as the only road of extrication is rough and difficult, it is necessary your Grace should be first possessed with the absolute necessity of using it, ere you hear it even described. The surgeon must first convince his patient of the incurable condition of a shattered member, ere he venture to name amputation, though it be the only remedy."

The King at these words was roused to a degree of alarm and indignation greater than his brother had deemed he could be awakened to.

"Shattered and mortified member! my Lord of Albany? Amputation the only remedy!—These are unintelligible words, my lord.—If thou appliest them to our son Rothsay, thou must make them good to the letter, else mayst thou have bitter cause to rue the consequence."

"You construe me too literally, my royal liege," said Albany. "I spoke not of the Prince in such unbecoming terms; for I call Heaven to witness, that he is dearer to me as the son of a well-beloved brother, than had he been son of my own. But I spoke in regard to separating him from the follies and vanities of life, which holy men say are like to mortified members, and ought, like them, to be cut off and thrown from

us, as things which interrupt our progress in better things."

"I understand—thou wouldst have this Ramorny, who hath been thought the instrument of my son's follies, exiled from court," said the relieved monarch, "until these unhappy scandals are forgotten, and our subjects are disposed to look upon our son with different and more confiding eyes."

"That were good counsel, my liege; but mine went a little—a very little—farther. I would have the Prince himself removed for some brief period from court."

"How, Albany! part with my child, my first-born, the light of my eyes, and—wilful as he is—the darling of my heart!—Oh, Robin! I cannot, and I will not."

"Nay, I did but suggest, my lord—I am sensible of the wound such a proceeding must inflict on a parent's heart, for am I not myself a father?" And he hung his head, as if in hopeless despondency.

"I could not survive it, Albany. When I think that even our own influence over him, which, sometimes forgotten in our absence, is ever effectual whilst he is with us, is by your plan to be entirely removed, what perils might he not rush upon? I could not sleep in his absence—I should hear his death-groan in every breeze; and you, Albany, though you conceal it better, would be nearly as anxious."

Thus spoke the facile monarch, willing to conciliate his brother and cheat himself, by taking it for granted, that an affection, of which there were no traces, subsisted betwixt the uncle and nephew.

"Your paternal apprehensions are too easily alarmed, my lord," said Albany. "I do not propose to leave the disposal of the Prince's motions to his own wild pleasure. I understand that the Prince is to be placed for a short time under some becoming restraint—that he should be subjected to the charge of some grave counsellor, who must be responsible both for his conduct and his safety, as a tutor for his pupil."

"How! a tutor? and at Rothsay's age?" exclaimed the King; "he is two years beyond the space to which our laws limit the term of nonage."

"The wiser Romans," said Albany, "extended it for four years after the period we assign; and, in common sense, the right of control ought to last till it be no longer necessary, and so the time ought to vary with the disposition. Here is young Lindsay, the Earl of Crawford, who they say gives patronage to Ramorny on this appeal—he is a lad of fifteen, with the deep passions and fixed purpose of a man of thirty; while my royal nephew, with much more amiable and noble qualities both of head and heart, sometimes shows, at twenty-three years of age, the wanton humors of a boy towards whom restraint may be kindness.—And do not be discouraged that it is so, my