

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

liege, or angry with your brother for telling the truth; since the best fruits are those that are slowest in ripening, and the best horses such as give most trouble to the grooms who train them for the field or lists."

The Duke stopped; and, after suffering King Robert to indulge for two or three minutes in a reverie which he did not attempt to interrupt, he added, in a more lively tone—"But, cheer up, my noble liege; perhaps the feud may be made up without farther fighting or difficulty. The widow is poor, for her husband, though he was much employed, had idle and costly habits. The matter may be therefore redeemed for money, and the amount of an assythment* may be recovered out of Ramorny's estate."

"Nay, that we will ourselves discharge," said King Robert, eagerly catching at the hope of a pacific termination of this unpleasing debate. "Ramorny's prospects will be destroyed by his being sent from court, and deprived of his charge in Rothsay's household; and it would be ungenerous to load a falling man.—But here comes our secretary, the Prior, to tell us the hour of council approaches.—Good-morrow, my worthy father."

"Benedicite, my royal liege," answered the Abbot.

"Now, good father," continued the King, "without waiting for Rothsay, whose accession to our councils we will ourselves guarantee, proceed we to the business of our kingdom. What advices have you from the Douglas?"

"He has arrived at his castle of Tantallon, my liege, and has sent a post to say, that though the Earl of March remains in sullen seclusion in his fortress of Dunbar, his friends and followers are gathering and forming an encampment near Coldingham, where it is supposed they intend to await the arrival of a large force of English, which Hotspur and Sir Ralph Percy are assembling on the English frontier."

"That is cold news," said the King; "and may God forgive George of Dunbar!"—The Prince entered as he spoke, and he continued—"Ha! thou art here at length, Rothsay;—I saw thee not at mass."

"I was an idler this morning," said the Prince, "having spent a restless and feverish night."

"Ah, foolish boy!" answered the King; "hadst thou not been over restless on Fastern's Eve, thou hadst not been feverish on the night of Ash Wednesday."

"Let me not interrupt your prayers, my liege," said the Prince, lightly. "Your grace was invoking Heaven in behalf of some one—an enemy doubtless, for these have the frequent advantage of your orisons."

"Sit down and be at peace, foolish youth!" said his father, his eye resting at the same time on the handsome face and graceful figure of his

* A mulct, in stonement for bloodshed, due to the nearest relations of the deceased.

favorite son. Rothsay drew a cushion near to his father's feet, and threw himself carelessly down upon it, while the King resumed.

"I was regretting that the Earl of March, having separated warm from my hand with full assurance that he should receive compensation for every thing which he could complain of as injurious, should have been capable of caballing with Northumberland against his own country.—Is it possible he could doubt our intentions to make good our word?"

"I will answer for him, No," said the Prince, "March never doubted your Highness's word. Marry, he may well have made question whether your learned counsellors would leave your Majesty the power of keeping it."

Robert the Third had adopted to a great extent the timid policy, of not seeming to hear expressions, which, being heard, required, even in his own eyes, some display of displeasure. He passed on, therefore, in his discourse, without observing his son's speech; but in private, Rothsay's rashness augmented the displeasure which his father began to entertain against him.

"It is well the Douglas is on the marches," said the King. "His breast, like those of his ancestors, has ever been the best bulwark of Scotland."

"Then woe betide us if he should turn his back to the enemy," said the incorrigible Rothsay.

"Dare you impeach the courage of Douglas?" replied the King, extremely chafed.

"No man dare question the Earl's courage," said Rothsay; "it is as certain as his pride;—but his luck may be something doubted."

"By St. Andrew, David!" exclaimed his father, "thou art like a screech-owl—every word thou say'st betokens strife and calamity."

"I am silent, father," answered the youth.

"And what news of our Highland disturbances?" continued the King, addressing the Prior.

"I trust they have assumed a favorable aspect," answered the clergyman. "The fire which threatened the whole country is likely to be drenched out by the blood of some forty or fifty kerne; for the two great confederacies have agreed, by solemn indenture of arms, to decide their quarrel with such weapons as your Highness may name, and in your royal presence, in such place as shall be appointed, on the 30th of March next to come, being Palm Sunday; the number of combatants being limited to thirty on each side, and the fight to be maintained to extremity, since they affectionately make humble suit and petition to your Majesty, that you will parentally condescend to waive for the day your royal privilege of interrupting the combat, by flinging down of truncheon, or crying of *Hoi!* until the battle shall be utterly fought to an end."

"The wild savages!" exclaimed the King; "would they limit our best and dearest royal privilege, that of putting a stop to strife, and

trying truce to battle?—Will they remove the only motive which could bring me to the butcherly spectacle of their combat?—Would they fight like men, or like their own mountain wolves?"

"My lord," said Albany, "the Earl of Crawford and I had presumed, without consulting you, to ratify that preliminary, for the adoption of which we saw much and pressing reason."

"How! the Earl of Crawford!" said the King. "Methinks he is a young counsellor on such grave occurrences."

"He is," replied Albany, "notwithstanding his early years, of such esteem among his Highland neighbors, that I could have done little with them but for his aid and influence."

"Hear this, young Rothsay!" said the King reproachfully to his heir.

"I pity Crawford, sire," replied the Prince. "He has too early lost a father, whose counsels would have better become such a season as this."

The King turned next towards Albany with a look of triumph, at the filial affection which his son displayed in his reply.

Albany proceeded without emotion. "It is not the life of these Highlandmen, but their death, which is to be profitable to this commonwealth of Scotland; and truly it seemed to the Earl of Crawford and myself most desirable that the combat should be a strife of extermination."

"Marry," said the Prince, "if such be the juvenile policy of Lindsay, he will be a merciful ruler some ten or twelve years hence! Out upon a boy that is hard of heart before he has hair upon his lip! Better he had contented himself with fighting cocks on Fastern's Even, than laying schemes for massacring men on Palm Sunday, as if he were backing a Welsh main, where all must fight to death."

"Rothsay is right, Albany," said the King; "it were unlike a Christian Monarch to give way in this point. I cannot consent to see men battle until they are all hewn down like cattle in the shambles. It would sicken me to look at it, and the warder would drop from my hand for mere lack of strength to hold it."

"It would drop unheeded," said Albany. "Let me entreat your Grace to recollect, that you only give up a royal privilege, which, exercised, would win you no respect, since it would receive no obedience. Were your Majesty to throw down your warder when the war is high, and these men's blood is hot, it would meet no more regard than if a sparrow should drop among a herd of battling wolves the straw which he was carrying to his nest. Nothing will separate them but the exhaustion of slaughter; and better they sustain it at the hands of each other, than from the swords of such troops as might attempt to separate them at your Majesty's commands. An attempt to keep the peace by violence, would be construed into an ambush laid for them; both parties would unite to resist it,—the slaughter would be the same, and the hoped-

for results of future peace would be utterly disappointed."

"There is even too much truth in what you say, brother Robin," replied the flexible King. "To little purpose is it to command what I cannot enforce; and although I have the unhappiness to do so each day of my life, it were needless to give such a very public example of royal impotency, before the crowds who may assemble to behold this spectacle. Let these savage men, therefore, work their bloody will to the uttermost upon each other; I will not attempt to bid what I cannot prevent them from executing.—Heaven help this wretched country! I will to my oratory and pray for her, since to aid her by hand and head is alike denied to me.—Father Prior, I pray the support of your arm."

"Nay, but, brother," said Albany, "forgive me if I remind you, that we must hear the matter between the citizens of Perth and Ramorny, about the death of a townsman—"

"True, true,"—said the Monarch, reseating himself; "more violence—more battle!—Oh! Scotland, Scotland! if the best blood of thy bravest children could enrich thy barren soil, what land on earth could excel thee in fertility! When is it that a white hair is seen on the beard of a Scottish man, unless he be some wretch like thy Sovereign, protected from murder by impotence, to witness the scenes of slaughter to which he cannot put a period?—Let them come in—delay them not. They are in haste to kill, and grudge each other each fresh breath of their Creator's blessed air. The demon of strife and slaughter hath possessed the whole land!"

As the mild Prince threw himself back on his seat, with an air of impatience and anger not very usual with him, the door at the lower end of the room was unclosed, and advancing from the gallery into which it led (where in perspective was seen a guard of the Bute-men, or Brandanes, under arms), came, in mournful procession, the widow of poor Oliver, led by Sir Patrick Charteris, with as much respect as if she had been a lady of the first rank. Behind them came two women of good, the wives of magistrates of the city, both in mourning garments, one bearing the infant, and the other leading the elder child. The Smith followed in his best attire, and wearing over his buff-coat a scarf of crape. Bailie Craigdallie, and a brother magistrate, closed the melancholy procession, exhibiting similar marks of mourning.

The good King's transitory passion was gone the instant he looked on the pallid countenance of the sorrowing widow, and beheld the unconsciousness of the innocent orphans who had sustained so great a loss; and when Sir Patrick Charteris had assisted Magdalen Proudfoot to kneel down, and, still holding her hand, kneeled himself on one knee, it was with a sympathetic tone that King Robert asked her name and business. She made no answer, but muttered some thing, looking towards her conductors.

"Speak for the poor woman, Sir Patrick Charteris," said the King, "and tell us the cause of her seeking our presence."

"So please you, my liege," answered Sir Patrick, rising up, "this woman and these unhappy orphans, make plaint to your Highness upon Sir John Ramorny of Ramorny, Knight, that by him, or by some of his household, her amquhile husband, Oliver Proudfoote, freeman and burges of Perth, was slain upon the streets of the city on the Eve of Shrove Tuesday, or morning of Ash Wednesday."

"Woman," replied the King, with much kindness, "thou art gentle by sex, and shouldst be pitiful even by thy affliction; for our own calamity ought to make us—nay, I think, doth make us—merciful to others. Thy husband hath only trodden the path appointed to us all."

"In his case," said the widow, "my liege must remember it has been a brief and a bloody one."

"I agree he hath had foul measure. But since I have been unable to protect him, as I confess was my royal duty, I am willing, in atonement, to support thee and these orphans, as well, or better, than you lived in the days of your husband; only do thou pass from this charge, and be not the occasion of spilling more life. Remember, I put before you the choice betwixt practising mercy and pursuing vengeance, and that betwixt plenty and penury."

"It is true, my liege, we are poor," answered the widow, with unshaken firmness; "but I and my children will feed with the beasts of the field, ere we live on the price of my husband's blood. I demand the combat by my champion, as you are belted knight and crowned King."

"I knew it would be so!" said the King, aside to Albany. "In Scotland, the first words stammered by an infant, and the last uttered by a dying gray-beard, are—'combat—blood—revenge.'—It skills not arguing further.—Admit the defendants."

Sir John Ramorny entered the apartment. He was dressed in a long furred robe, such as men of quality wore when they were unarmed. Concealed by the folds of drapery, his wounded arm was supported by a scarf, or sling of crimson silk, and with the left arm he leaned on a youth, who, scarcely beyond the years of boyhood, bore on his brow the deep impression of early thought, and premature passion. This was that celebrated Lindsay, Earl of Crawford, who, in his after-days, was known by the epithet of the Tiger Earl,* and who ruled the great and rich valley of Strathmore with the absolute power and unrelenting cruelty of a feudal tyrant. Two or three gentlemen, friends of the Earl, or of his own, countenanced Sir John Ramorny by their presence on this occasion. The charge was again

* Sir David Lyndsaye, first Earl of Crawford, and brother-in-law to Robert III.

stated, and met by a broad denial on the part of the accused; and, in reply, the challengers offered to prove their assertion by an appeal to the ordeal of bier-right.

"I am not bound," answered Sir John Ramorny, "to submit to this ordeal, since I can prove, by the evidence of my late royal master, that I was in my own lodgings, lying on my bed, ill at ease, while this Provost and these Bailles pretend I was committing a crime to which I had neither will nor temptation. I can therefore be no just object of suspicion."

"I can aver," said the Prince, "that I saw and conversed with Sir John Ramorny about some matters concerning my own household, on the very night when this murder was a-doing. I therefore know that he was ill at ease, and could not in person commit the deed in question. But I know nothing of the employment of his attendants, and will not take it upon me to say that some one of them may not have been guilty of the crime now charged on them."

Sir John Ramorny had, during the beginning of this speech, looked round with an air of defiance, which was somewhat disconcerted by the concluding sentence of Rothsay's speech. "I thank your Highness," he said, with a smile, "for your cautious and limited testimony in my behalf. He was wise who wrote, 'Put not your faith in Princes.'"

"If you have no other evidence of your innocence, Sir John Ramorny," said the King, "we may not, in respect to your followers, refuse to the injured widow and orphans, the complainers, the grant of a proof by ordeal of bier-right, unless any of them should prefer that of combat. For yourself, you are, by the Prince's evidence, freed from the attain't."

"My liege," answered Sir John, "I can take warrant upon myself for the innocence of my household and followers."

"Why, so a monk or a woman might speak," said Sir Patrick Charteris. "In knightly language, wilt thou, Sir John de Ramorny, do battle with me in the behalf of thy followers?"

"The Provost of Perth had not obtained time to name the word combat," said Ramorny, "ere I would have accepted it. But I am not at present fit to hold a lance."

"I am glad of it, under your favor, Sir John—there will be the less bloodshed," said the King. "You must therefore produce your followers according to your steward's household book, in the great church of St. John, that, in presence of all whom it may concern, they may purge themselves of this accusation. See that every man of them do appear at the time of High Mass, otherwise your honor may be sorely tainted."

"They shall attend to a man," said Sir John Ramorny. Then, bowing low to the King, he directed himself to the young Duke of Rothsay, and making a deep obeisance, spoke so as to be heard by him alone. "You have used me generously, my lord!—One word of your lips could

have ended this controversy, and you have refused to speak it—!"

"On my life," whispered the Prince, "I spake as far as the extreme verge of truth and conscience would permit. I think thou couldst not expect I should frame lies for thee;—and after all, John, in my broken recollections of that night, I do bethink me of a butcherly-looking mate, with a curtal-axe, much like such a one as may have done yonder night-job?—Ha! have I touched you, Sir Knight?"

Ramorny made no answer, but turned away as precipitately as if some one had pressed suddenly on his wounded arm, and regained his lodgings with the Earl of Crawford; to whom, though disposed for anything rather than revelry, he was obliged to offer a splendid collation, to acknowledge in some degree his sense of the countenance which the young nobleman had afforded him.

CHAPTER XXII.

In pottlirgry he wrocht great pyne;
He mardreit mony in medecyne.

DUNBAR.

WHEN, after an entertainment, the prolonging of which was like torture to the wounded knight, the Earl of Crawford at length took horse, to go to his distant quarters in the Castle of Dupplin, where he resided as a guest, the knight of Ramorny retired into his sleeping-apartment, agonized by pains of body and anxiety of mind. Here he found Henbane Dwining, on whom it was his hard fate to depend for consolation in both respects. The physician, with his affectation of extreme humility, hoped he saw his exalted patient merry and happy.

"Merry as a mad dog!" said Ramorny, "and happy as the wretch whom the cur hath bitten, and who begins to feel the approach of the ravening madness.—That ruthless boy, Crawford, saw my agony, and spared not a single carouse. I must do him justice, forsooth! If I had done justice to him and to the world, I had thrown him out of window, and cut short a career, which, if he grow up as he has begun, will prove a source of misery to all Scotland, but especially to Tayside.—Take heed as thou undoest the ligatures, chyrurgeon; the touch of a fly's wing on that raw glowing stump were like a dagger to me."

"Fear not, my noble patron," said the leech, with a chuckling laugh of enjoyment, which he vainly endeavored to disguise under a tone of affected sensibility. "We will apply some fresh balsam, and—he, he, he!—relieve your knightly honor of the irritation which you sustain so firmly."

"Firmly, man?" said Ramorny, grinning with pain; "I sustain it as I would the scorching flames of purgatory—the bone seems made of red-hot iron—thy greasy ointment will hiss as it drops upon the wound—And yet it is December's ee, compared to the fever-fit of my mind!"

"We will first use our emollients upon the body, my noble patron," said Dwining; "and then, with your knighthood's permission, your servant will try his art on the troubled mind—though I faint hope even the mental pain also may in some degree depend on the irritation of the wound, and that, abated as I trust the corporeal pangs will soon be, perhaps the stormy feelings of the mind may subside of themselves."

"Henbane Dwining," said the patient, as he felt the pain of his wound assuaged, "thou art a precious and invaluable leech, but some things are beyond thy power. Thou canst stupefy my bodily sense of this raging agony, but thou canst not teach me to bear the scorn of the boy whom I have brought up; whom I loved, Dwining—for I did love him—dearly love him! The worst of my ill deeds have been to flatter his vices—and he grudged me a word of his mouth, when a word would have allayed this chamber! He smiled, too—I saw him smile, when, yon paltry provost, the companion and patron of wretched burghers, defied me, whom this heartless Prince knew to be unable to bear arms.—Ere I forget or forgive it, thou thyself shalt preach up the pardoning of injuries!—And then the care for to-morrow—Think'st thou, Henbane Dwining, that in very reality, the wounds of the slaughtered corpse will gape, and shed tears of fresh blood at the murderer's approach?"

"I cannot tell, my lord, save by report," said Dwining, "which avouches the fact."

"The brute Bonthron," said Ramorny, "is startled at the apprehension of such a thing, and speaks of being rather willing to stand the combat. What think'st thou?—he is a fellow of steel."

"It is the armorer's trade to deal with steel," replied Dwining.

"Were Bonthron to fall, it would little grieve me," said Ramorny; "though I should miss a useful hand."

"I well believe your lordship will not sorrow as for that you lost in Curfew Street—Excuse my pleasantry—he, he, he!—But what are the useful properties of this fellow Bonthron?"

"Those of a bull-dog," answered the knight; "he worries without barking."

"You have no fear of his confessing?" said the physician.

"Who can tell what the dread of approaching death may do?" replied the patient. "He has already shown a timorousness entirely alien from his ordinary sullenness of nature; he that would scarce wash his hands after he had slain a man, is now afraid to see a dead body bleed."

"Well," said the leech, "I must do something for him, if I can, since it was to further my revenge that he struck yonder downright blow, though by ill luck it lighted not where it was intended."

"And whose fault was that, timid villain," said Ramorny, "save thine own, who marked a rascal deer for a buck of the first head?"

"Benedicite, noble sir," replied the mediciner; "would you have me, who know little save of chamber practice, be as skilful of woodcraft as your noble self, or tell hart from hind, doe from roe, in a glade at midnight? I misdoubted me little when I saw the figure run past us to the Smith's habitation in the Wynd, habited like a morrice-dancer; and yet my mind partly misgave me whether it was our man, for methought he seemed less of stature. But when he came out again, after so much time as to change his dress, and swaggered onwards with buff-coat and steel-cap, whistling after the armorer's wonted fashion, I do own I was mistaken, *super totam materiam*, and loosed your knighthood's bull-dog upon him, who did his devoir most duly, though he pulled down the wrong deer. Therefore, unless the accursed Smith kill our poor friend stone-dead on the spot, I am determined, if art may do it, that the ban-dog Bonthron shall not miscarry."

"It will put thine art to the test, man of medicine," said Ramorny; "for know that, having the worst of the combat, if our champion be not killed stone-dead in the lists, he will be drawn forth of them by the heels, and without further ceremony knitted up to the gallows, as convicted of the murder; and when he hath swung there like a loose tassel for an hour or so, I think thou wilt hardly take it in hand to cure his broken neck."

"I am of a different opinion, may it please your knighthood," answered Dwining, gently. "I will carry him off from the very foot of the gallows into the land of faery, like King Arthur, or Sir Huon of Bordeaux, or Ugero the Dane; or I will, if I please, suffer him to dangle on the gibbet for a certain number of minutes, or hours, and then whisk him away from the sight of all, with as much ease as the wind wafts away the withered leaf."

"This is idle boasting, Sir Leech," replied Ramorny. "The whole mob of Perth will attend him to the gallows, each more eager than another to see the retainer of a nobleman die for the slaughter of a cuckoldy citizen. There will be a thousand of them around the gibbet's foot."

"And were there ten thousand," said Dwining, "shall I, who am a high clerk, and have studied in Spain, and Araby itself, not be able to deceive the eyes of this hoggish herd of citizens, when the pettiest juggler that ever dealt in legerdemain can gull even the sharp observation of your most intelligent knighthood? I tell you, I will put the change on them as if I were in possession of Keddie's ring."

"If thou speakest truth," answered the knight, "and I think thou dardest not palter with me on such a theme, thou must have the aid of Satan, and I will have naught to do with him. I disown and defy him."

Dwining indulged in his internal chuckling laugh, when he heard his patron testify his defiance of the foul fiend, and saw him second it by

crossing himself. He composed himself, however, upon observing Ramorny's aspect become very stern, and said, with tolerable gravity, though a little interrupted by the effort necessary to suppress his mirthful mood,—

"Confederacy, most devout sir; confederacy is the soul of jugglery. But—he, he, he!—I have not the honor to be—he, he!—an ally of the gentleman of whom you speak—in whose existence I am—he, he!—no very profound believer, though your knightship, doubtless, hath better opportunities of acquaintance."

"Proceed, rascal, and without that sneer, which thou mayst otherwise dearly pay for."

"I will, most undaunted," replied Dwining. "Know that I have my confederate too, else my skill were little worth."

"And who may that be, pray you?"

"Stephen Smotherwell, if it like your honor, lockman* of this Fair City. I marvel your knighthood knows him not."

"And I marvel thy knaveship knows him not on professional acquaintance," replied Ramorny; "but I see thy nose is unslit, thy ears yet uncropped, and if thy shoulders are scarred or branded, thou art wise for using a high-collared jerkin."

"He, he! your honor is pleasant," said the mediciner. "It is not by personal circumstances that I have acquired the intimacy of Stephen Smotherwell, but on account of a certain traffic betwixt us, in which, an't please you, I exchange certain sums of silver for the bodies, heads, and limbs, of those who die by aid of friend Stephen."

"Wretch!" exclaimed the knight, with horror, "is it to compose charms and forward works of witchcraft, that you trade for these miserable relics of mortality?"

"He, he, he!—No, an it please your knighthood," answered the mediciner, much amused with the ignorance of his patron; "but we who are knights of the scalpel, are accustomed to practise careful carving of the limbs of defunct persons, which we call dissection, whereby we discover, by examination of a dead member, how to deal with one belonging to a living man, which hath become diseased through injury or otherwise. Ah! if your honor saw my poor laboratory, I could show you heads and hands, feet and lungs, which have been long supposed to be rotting in the mould. The skull of Wallace, stolen from London Bridge; the heart of Sir Simon Fraser,† that never feared man; the lovely skull of the fair Katie Logie.‡—Oh, had I but had the fortune to have preserved the chivalrous hand of mine honored patron!"

"Out upon thee, slave!—Thinkest thou to dis-

* Executioner. So called because one of his dues consisted in taking a small ladleful (Scottish, *loch*) of meal, out of every cake exposed in the market.

† The famous ancestor of the Lovats, slain at Halidon Hill.

‡ The beautiful mistress of David II.

gust me with thy catalogue of horrors?—Tell me at once where thy discourse drives. How can thy traffic with the hangdog executioner be of avail to serve me, or to help my servant, Bonthron?"

"Nay, I do not recommend it to your knighthood, save in an extremity," replied Dwining.—"But we will suppose the battle fought, and our cock beaten. Now, we must first possess him with the certainty, that, if unable to gain the day, we will at least save him from the hangman, provided he confess nothing which can prejudice your knighthood's honor."

"Ha!—ay, a thought strikes me," said Ramorny. "We can do more than this—we can place a word in Bonthron's mouth that will be troublesome enough to him whom I am bound to curse, for being the cause of my misfortune. Let us to the ban-dog's kennel, and explain to him what is to be done in every view of the question. If we can persuade him to stand the bier-ordeal it may be a mere bugbear, and in that case we are safe. If he take the combat, he is fierce as a baited bear, and may, perchance, master his opponent; then we are more than safe—we are revenged. If Bonthron himself is vanquished, we will put thy device in exercise; and if thou canst manage it cleanly, we may dictate his confession, take the advantage of it, as I will show thee on further conference, and make a giant stride towards satisfaction for my wrongs.—Still there remains one hazard. Suppose our mastiff mortally wounded in the lists, who shall prevent his growling out some species of confession different from what we would recommend?"

"Marry, that can his mediciner," said Dwining. "Let me wait on him, and have the opportunity to lay but a finger on his wound, and trust me he shall betray no confidence."

"Why, there's a willing fiend, that needs neither pushing nor prompting!" said Ramorny.

"As I trust I shall need neither in your knighthood's service."

"We will go indoctrinate our agent," continued the Knight. "We shall find him pliant; for hound as he is, he knows those who feed from those who browbeat him; and he holds a late royal master of mine in deep hate for some injurious treatment and base terms which he received at his hand. I must also farther concert with thee the particulars of thy practice for saving the ban-dog from the hands of the herd of citizens."

We leave this worthy pair of friends to their secret practices, of which we shall afterwards see the results. They were, although of different qualities, as well matched for device and execution of criminal projects, as the greyhound is to destroy the game which the slowhound raises, or the slowhound to track the prey which the gazehound discovers by the eye. Pride and selfishness were the characteristics of both; but from the difference of rank, education, and talents, they had assumed the most different appearance in the two individuals.

Nothing could less resemble the high-blown ambition of the favorite courtier, the successful gallant, and the bold warrior, than the submissive, unassuming mediciner, who seemed even to court and delight in insult; whilst, in his secret soul, he felt himself possessed of a superiority of knowledge—a power both of science and of mind, which placed the rude nobles of the day infinitely beneath him. So conscious was Henbane Dwining of this elevation, that, like a keeper of wild beasts, he sometimes adventured, for his own amusement, to rouse the stormy passions of such men as Ramorny, trusting, with his humble manner, to elude the turmoil he had excited, as an Indian boy will launch his light canoe, secure from its very fragility, upon a broken surf, in which the boat of an argosy would be assuredly dashed to pieces. That the feudal baron should despise the humble practitioner in medicine, was a matter of course; but Ramorny felt not the less the influence which Dwining exercised over him, and was in the encounter of their wits often mastered by him, as the most eccentric efforts of a fiery horse are overcome by a boy of twelve years old, if he has been bred to the arts of the manege. But the contempt of Dwining for Ramorny was far less qualified. He regarded the knight, in comparison with himself, as scarcely rising above the brute creation; capable, indeed, of working destruction, as the bull with his horns, or the wolf with his fangs, but mastered by mean prejudices, and a slave to priestcraft, in which phrase Dwining included religion of every kind. On the whole, he considered Ramorny as one whom nature had assigned to him as a serf, to mine for the gold which he worshipped, and the avaricious love of which was his greatest failing, though by no means his worst vice. He vindicated this sordid tendency in his own eyes by persuading himself that it had its source in the love of power.

"Henbane Dwining," he said, as he gazed in delight upon the hoards which he had secretly amassed, and which he visited from time to time, "is no silly miser, that doats on those pieces for their golden lustre; it is the power with which they endow the possessor, which makes him thus adore them. What is there that these put not within your command? Do you love beauty, and are mean, deformed, infirm, and old?—here is a lure the fairest hawk of them all will stoop to. Are you feeble, weak, subject to the oppression of the powerful?—here is that will arm in your defence those more mighty than the petty tyrant whom you fear. Are you splendid in your wishes, and desire the outward show of opulence?—this dark chest contains many a wide range of hill and dale, many a fair forest full of game; the allegiance of a thousand vassals. Wish you for favor in courts, temporal or spiritual?—the smiles of kings, the pardon of popes and priests for old crimes, and the indulgence which encourages priest-ridden fools

to venture on new ones,—all these holy incentives to vice may be purchased for gold. Revenge itself, which the gods are said to reserve to themselves, doubtless because they envy humanity so sweet a morsel—revenge itself is to be bought by it. But it is also to be won by superior skill, and that is the nobler mode of reaching it. I will spare, then, my treasure for other uses, and accomplish my revenge gratis; or rather I will add the luxury of augmented wealth to the triumph of requited wrongs."

Thus thought Dwining, as, returned from his visit to Sir John Ramorny, he added the gold he had received for his various services to the mass of his treasure; and having gloated over the whole for a minute or two, turned key on his concealed treasure-house, and walked forth on his visits to his patients, yielding the wall to every man whom he met, and bowing and doffing his bonnet to the poorest burgher that owned a petty booth, nay, to the artificers who gained their precarious bread by the labor of their welked hands.

"Caitiffs," was the thought of his heart, while he did such obeisance, "base, sodden-witted mechanics! did you know what this key could disclose, what foul weather from Heaven would prevent your unbonneting? what putrid kennel in your wretched hamlet would be disgusting enough to make you scruple to fall down and worship the owner of such wealth? But I will make you feel my power, though it suits my humor to hide the source of it. I will be an incubus to your city, since you have rejected me as a magistrate. Like the nightmare I will hag-ride ye, yet remain invisible myself.—This miserable Ramorny, too, he who, in losing his hand, has, like a poor artisan, lost the only valuable part of his frame, *he* heaps insulting language on me, as if anything which *he* can say had power to chafe a constant mind like mine! Yet while he calls me rogue, villain, and slave, he acts as wisely as if he should amuse himself by pulling hairs out of my head, while my hand had hold of his heart-strings. Every insult I can pay back instantly by a pang of bodily pain or mental agony—and—*he!* *he!*—I run no long accounts with his knighthood, that must be allowed."

While the mediciner was thus indulging his diabolical musing, and passing, in his creeping manner, along the street, the cry of females was heard behind him.

"Ay, there he is, Our Lady be praised!—there is the most helpful man in Perth," said one voice.

"They may speak of knights and kings for redressing wrongs, as they call it—but give me worthy Master Dwining the potter-carrier, cummers," replied another.

At the same moment the leech was surrounded and taken hold of by the speakers, good women of the Fair City.

"How now—what's the matter?" said Dwining; "whose cow has calved?"

"There is no calving in the case," said one of the women, "but a poor fatherless wean dying; so come awa' wi' you, for our trust is constant in you, as Bruce said to Donald of the Isles."

"*Opiferque per orbem dicor*," said Henbane Dwining. "What is the child dying of?"

"The croup—the croup," screamed one of the gossips; "the innocent is rousing like a corbie."

"*Cynanche trachealis*—that disease makes brief work. Show me the house instantly," continued the mediciner, who was in the habit of exercising his profession liberally, notwithstanding his natural avarice, and humanely, in spite of his natural malignity. As we can suspect him of no better principle, his motive most probably may have been vanity and the love of his art.

He would nevertheless have declined giving his attendance in the present case, had he known whither the kind gossips were conducting him, in time sufficient to frame an apology. But, ere he guessed where he was going, the leech was hurried into the house of the late Oliver Prondfute, from which he heard the chant of the women, as they swathed and dressed the corpse of the umquille Bonnet-maker, for the ceremony of next morning; of which chant, the following verses may be received as a modern imitation:—

1.
Viewless Essence, thin and bare,
Well-nigh melted into air;
Still with fondness hovering near
The earthly form thou once didst wear;

2.
Pause upon thy pinion's flight,
Be thy course to left or right;
Be thou doom'd to soar or sink,
Pause upon the awful brink.

3.
To avenge the deed expelling
Thee untimely from thy dwelling,
Mystic force thou shalt retain
O'er the blood and o'er the brain.

4.
When the form thou shalt espy
That darken'd on thy closing eye;
When the footstep thou shalt hear,
That thrilled upon thy dying ear;

5.
Then strange sympathies shall wake,
The flesh shall thrill, the nerves shall quake;
The wounds renew their clotted flood,
And every drop cry blood for blood.

Hardened as he was, the physician felt reluctance to pass the threshold of the man to whose death he had been so directly, though, so far as the individual was concerned, mistakingly accessory.

"Let me pass on, women," he said, "my art can only help the living—the dead are past our power."

"Nay, but your patient is up-stairs—the youngest orphan—"

Dwining was compelled to go into the house. But he was surprised, when, the instant he

stepped over the threshold, the gossips, who were busied with the dead body, stinted suddenly in their song, while one said to the others,—

"In God's name, who entered?—that was a large gout of blood!"

"Not so," said another voice, "it is a drop of the liquid balm."

"Nay, cummer, it was blood.—Again I say, who entered the house even now?"

One looked out from the apartment into the little entrance, where Dwining, under pretence of not distinctly seeing the trap-ladder by which he was to ascend into the upper part of this house of lamentation, was delaying his progress purposely, disconcerted with what had reached him of the conversation.

"Nay, it is only worthy Master Henbane Dwining," answered one of the sibyls.

"Only Master Dwining?" replied the one who had first spoken, in a tone of acquiescence; "our best helper in need?—then it must have been balm, sure enough."

"Nay," said the other, "it may have been blood nevertheless—for the leech, look you, when the body was found, was commanded by the magistrates to probe the wound with his instruments, and how could the poor dead corpse know that that was done with good purpose?"

"Ay, truly, cummer; and as poor gossip Oliver often mistook friends for enemies while he was in life, his judgment cannot be thought to have mended now."

Dwining heard no more, being now forced up-stairs into a species of garret, where Magdalen sat on her widowed bed, clasping to her bosom her infant, which, already black in the face, and uttering the gasping crowing sound, which gives the popular name to the complaint, seemed on the point of rendering up its brief existence. A Dominican monk sat near the bed, holding the other child in his arms, and seeming from time to time to speak a word or two of spiritual consolation, or intermingle some observation on the child's disorder.

The mediciner cast upon the good father a single glance, filled with that ineffable disdain which men of science entertain against interlopers. His own aid was instant and efficacious; he snatched the child from the despairing mother, stripped its throat, and opened a vein, which, as it bled freely, relieved the little patient instantaneously. In a brief space every dangerous symptom disappeared, and Dwining, having bound up the vein, replaced the infant in the arms of the half-distracted mother.

The poor woman's distress for her husband's oss, which had been suspended during the extremity of the child's danger, now returned on Magdalen, with the force of an augmented torrent, which has borne down the dam-dike that for a while interrupted its waves.

"Oh, learned sir," she said, "you see a poor woman of her that you once knew a richer.—But

the hands that restored this bairn to my arms must not leave this house empty. Generous, kind Master Dwining, accept of his beads—they are made of ebony and silver—he aye liked to have his things as handsome as any gentleman—and liker he was in all his ways to a gentleman than any one of his standing, and even so came of it."

With these words, in a mute passion of grief she pressed to her breast and to her lips the chaplet of her deceased husband, and proceeded to thrust it into Dwining's hands.

"Take it," she said, "for the love of one who loved you well.—Ah! he used ever to say, if ever man could be brought back from the brink of the grave it must be by Master Dwining's guidance.—And his ain bairn is brought back this blessed day, and he is lying there stark and stiff, and kens naething of its health and sickness! O, woe is me, and wala wa'.—But take the beads, and think on his puir soul, as you put them through your fingers; he will be freed from purgatory the sooner that good people pray to as-soilzie him."

"Take back your beads, cummer—I know no legerdemain—can do no conjuring tricks," said the mediciner, who, more moved than perhaps his rugged nature had anticipated, endeavored to avoid receiving the ill-omened gift. But his last words gave offence to the churchman, whose presence he had not recollected when he uttered them.

"How now, Sir Leech!" said the Dominican; "do you call prayers for the dead juggling tricks? I know that Chaucer, the English Maker, says of you mediciners, that your study is but little on the Bible. Our mother, the Church, hath nodded of late, but her eyes are now opened to discern friends from foes; and be well assured—"

"Nay, reverend father," said Dwining, "you take me at too great advantage. I said I could do no miracles, and was about to add, that as the Church certainly could work such conclusions, those rich beads should be deposited in your hands, to be applied as they may best benefit the soul of the deceased."

He dropped the beads into the Dominican's hand, and escaped from the house of mourning.

"This was a strangely-timed visit," he said to himself, when he got safe out of doors. "I hold such things cheap as any can; yet, though it is but a silly fancy, I am glad I saved the squalling child's life.—But I must to my friend Smotherwell, whom I have no doubt to bring to my purpose in the matter of Bonthron; and thus on this occasion I shall save two lives, and have destroyed only one."