

CHAPTER XXIII.

Lo! where he lies embalmed in gore,
His wound to Heaven cries;
The floodgates of his blood implore
For vengeance from the skies.

URANUS AND PSYCHE.

THE High Church of St. John in Perth, being that of the patron saint of the burgh, had been selected by the Magistrates as that in which the community was likely to have most fair play for the display of the ordeal. The churches and convents of the Dominicans, Carthusians, and others of the regular clergy, had been highly endowed by the king and nobles, and therefore it was the universal cry of the city-council, that "their ain good auld St. John," of whose good graces they thought themselves sure, ought to be fully confided in, and preferred to the new patrons, for whom the Dominicans, Carthusians, Carmelites, and others, had found newer seats around the Fair City. The disputes between the regular and secular clergy added to the jealousy which dictated this choice of the spot in which Heaven was to display a species of miracle, upon a direct appeal to the divine decision in a case of doubtful guilt; and the town-clerk was as anxious that the church of St. John should be preferred, as if there had been a faction in the body of saints for and against the interests of the beautiful town of Perth.

Many, therefore, were the petty intrigues entered into and disconcerted, for the purpose of fixing on the church. But the Magistrates, considering it as a matter touching in a close degree the honor of the city, determined, with judicious confidence in the justice and impartiality of their patron, to confide the issue to the influence of St. John.

It was, therefore, after high mass had been performed, with the greatest solemnity of which circumstances rendered the ceremony capable, and after the most repeated and fervent prayers had been offered to Heaven by the crowded assembly, that preparations were made for appealing to the direct judgment of Heaven on the mysterious murder of the unfortunate Bonnet-maker.

The scene presented that effect of imposing solemnity, which the rites of the Catholic Church are so well qualified to produce. The eastern window, richly and variously painted, streamed down a torrent of checkered light upon the high altar. On the bier placed before it were stretched the mortal remains of the murdered man, his arms folded on his breast, and his palms joined together, with the fingers pointed upwards, as if the senseless clay were itself appealing to Heaven for vengeance against those who had violently divorced the immortal spirit from its mangled tenement.

Close to the bier was placed the throne, which supported Robert of Scotland, and his brother Albany. The Prince sat upon a lower

stool, beside his father; an arrangement which occasioned some observation, as Albany's seat being little distinguished from that of the King, the heir-apparent, though of full age, seemed to be degraded beneath his uncle in the sight of the assembled people of Perth. The bier was so placed, as to leave the view of the body it sustained open to the greater part of the multitude assembled in the church.

At the head of the bier stood the Knight of Kinfauns, the challenger, and at the foot the young Earl of Crawford, as representing the defendant. The evidence of the Duke of Rothsay in expurgation, as it was termed, of Sir John Ramorny, had exempted him from the necessity of attendance as a party subjected to the ordeal; and his illness served as a reason for his remaining at home. His household, including those who, though immediately in waiting upon Sir John, were accounted the Prince's domestics, and had not yet received their dismissal, amounted to eight or ten persons, most of them esteemed men of profligate habits, and who might therefore be deemed capable, in the riot of a festival evening, of committing the slaughter of the Bonnet-maker. They were drawn up in a row on the left side of the church, and wore a species of white cassock, resembling the dress of a penitentiary. All eyes being bent on them, several of this band seemed so much disconcerted, as to excite among the spectators strong prepossessions of their guilt. The real murderer had a countenance incapable of betraying him,—a sullen, dark look, which neither the feast nor wine-cup could enliven, and which the peril of discovery and death could not render dejected.

We have already noticed the posture of the dead body. The face was bare, as were the breast and arms. The rest of the corpse was shrouded in a winding-sheet of the finest linen, so that, if blood should flow from any place which was covered, it could not fail to be instantly manifest.

High mass having been performed, followed by a solemn invocation to the Deity, that he would be pleased to protect the innocent, and make known the guilty, Eviot, Sir John Ramorny's page, was summoned to undergo the ordeal.* He advanced with an ill-assured step,

* In a volume of miscellanies published in Edinburgh in 1825 under the name of *JANNA*, there is included a very curious paper illustrative of the solemnity with which the Catholic Church in the dark ages superintended the appeal to Heaven by the ordeal of fire; and as the ceremonial on occasions such as that in the text was probably much the same as what is there described, we extract may interest the reader.

CHURCH-SERVICE FOR THE ORDEAL BY FIRE.

"We are all well aware that the ordeal by fire had, during many centuries, the sanction of the Church, and moreover, that considering in what hands the knowledge of those times lay, this blasphemous horror could never have existed without the connivance, and even actual co-operation of the priesthood.

"It is only a few years ago, however, that any actual form of ritual, set apart by ecclesiastical authority for this atrocious ceremony of fraud, has been recovered. Mr. Büsching, the well-

Perhaps he thought his internal consciousness that Bonthron must have been the assassin, might be sufficient to implicate him in the murder, though he was not directly accessory to it. He paused before the bier; and his voice faltered, as he swore by all that was created in seven days and seven nights, by heaven, by hell, by his part of paradise, and by the God and author

known German antiquary, has the merit of having discovered a most extraordinary document of this kind in the course of examining the charter-chest of an ancient Thuringian monastery; and he has published it in a periodical work, entitled, '*Der Yorsell*,' in 1817. We shall translate the prayers, as given in that work, as literally as possible. To those who suspected no deceit, there can be no doubt this service must have been as awfully impressive as any that is to be found in the formularies of any church; but words are wanting to express the abject guilt of those who, well knowing the base trickery of the whole matter, who, having themselves assisted in preparing all the appliances of legerdemain behind the scenes of the sanctuary-stage, dared to clothe their iniquity in the most solemn phraseology of religion.

"A fire was kindled within the church, not far from the great altar. The person about to undergo the ordeal was placed in front of the fire, surrounded by his friends, by all who were in any way interested in the result of the trial, and by the whole clergy of the vicinity. Upon a table near the fire, the couter over which he was to walk, the bar he was to carry, or, if he were a knight, the steel-gloves which, after they had been made red-hot, he was to put on his hands, were placed in view of all.

"Part of the usual service of the day being performed, a priest advances, and places himself in front of the fire, uttering, at the same moment, the following prayer, which is the first Mr. Büsching gives:—

"O Lord God, bless this place, that herein there may be health, and holiness, and purity, and sanctification, and victory, and humility, and meekness, fulfilment of the law, and obedience to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. May thy blessing, O God of purity and justice, be upon this place, and upon all that be therein; for the sake of Christ, the Redeemer of the world."

"A second priest now lifts the iron, and bears it towards the fire. A series of prayers follows; all to be repeated ere the iron is laid on the fire.

"These are the Prayers to be said over the Fire and the Iron.

"1. Lord God, Almighty Father, Fountain of Light, hear us—enlighten us, O thou that dwellest in light unapproachable. Bless this fire, O God; and, as from the midst of the fire thou didst of old enlighten Moses, so from this flame enlighten and purify our hearts, that we may be worthy, through Christ our Lord, to come unto thee, and unto the life eternal.

"2. Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.

"3. O Lord, save thy servant. Lord God, send him help out of Zion, thy holy hill. Save him, O Lord. Hear us, O Lord. O Lord, be with us.

"4. O God, Holy and Almighty, hear us. By the majesty of thy most holy name, and by the coming of thy dear Son, and by the gift of the comfort of thy Holy Spirit, and by the justice of thine eternal seat, hear us, good Lord. Purify this metal, and sanctify it, that all falsehood and deceit of the devil may be cast out of it, and utterly removed; and that the truth of thy righteous judgment may be opened and made manifest to all the faithful that cry unto thee this day, through Jesus Christ, our Lord."

"The iron is now placed in the fire, and sprinkled with consecrated water, both before and after it is so placed. The mass is said while the iron is heating,—the introductory scripture being,—'O Lord, thou art just, and righteous are all thy judgments.' The priest delivers the water to the person about to be tried, and ere he communicates, the following prayer is said by the priest and congregation:—

"We pray unto thee, O God, that it may please thee to absolve this thy servant, and to clear him from his sins. Purify

of all, that he was free and sackless of the bloody deed done upon the corpse before which he stood, and on whose breast he made the sign of the cross, in evidence of the appeal. No consequences ensued. The body remained stiff as before; the curdled wounds gave no sign of blood.

The citizens looked on each other with faces of blank disappointment. They had persuaded

him, O heavenly Father, from all the stains of the flesh, and enable him, by thy all-covering and atoning grace, to pass through this fire,—thy creature—triumphantly, being justified in Christ our Lord."

"Then the Gospel:—'Then there came one unto Jesus, who fell upon his knees, and cried out, Good Master, what must I do that I may be saved? Jesus said, Why callest thou me good? &c.

"The chief priest, from the altar, now addresses the accused, who is still kneeling near the fire:—

"By the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and by the Christianity, whose name thou bearest, and by the baptism in which thou wert born again, and by all the blessed relics of the saints of God that are preserved in this church, I conjure thee, Come not unto this altar, nor eat of this body of Christ, if thou beest guilty in the things that are laid to thy charge; but if thou beest innocent therein, come brother, and come freely."

"The accused then comes forward and communicates,—the priest saying,—'This day may the body and blood of Jesus Christ, which were given and shed for thee, be thy protection and thy succor, yea, even in the midst of the flame.'

"The priest now reads this prayer:—'O Lord, it hath pleased thee to accept our spiritual sacrifice. May the joyful partaking in this holy sacrament be comfortable and useful to all that are here present, and serviceable to the removing of the bondage and thralldom of whatsoever sins do most easily beset us. Grant also, that to this thy servant it may be of exceeding comfort, gladdening his heart, until the truth of thy righteous judgment be revealed.'

"The organ now peals, and *Kyrie Eleison* and the *Litany* are sung in full chorus.

"After this comes another prayer:—

"O God! thou that through fire hast shown forth so many signs of thy almighty power! thou that didst snatch Abraham, thy servant, out of the brands and flames of the Chaldeans, wherein many were consumed! thou that didst cause the bush to burn before the eyes of Moses, and yet not to be consumed! God, that didst send thy Holy Spirit in the likeness of tongues of fiery flame, to the end that thy faithful servants might be visited and set apart from the unbelieving generation; God, that didst safely conduct the three children through the flame of the Babylonians; God, that didst waste Sodom with fire from heaven, and preserve Lot, thy servant, as a sign and a token of thy mercy: O God, show forth yet once again thy visible power, and the majesty of thy unerring judgment: that truth may be made manifest, and falsehood avenged, make thou this fire thy minister before us; powerless be it where is the power of purity, but sorely burning, even to the flesh and the sinews, the hand that hath done evil, and that hath not feared to be lifted up in false swearing. O God! from whose eyes nothing can be concealed, make thou this fire thy voice to us thy servants, that it may reveal innocence, or cover iniquity with shame. Judge of all the earth! hear us: hear us, good Lord, for the sake of Jesus Christ thy Son."

"The priest now dashes once more the holy water over the fire, saying, 'Upon this fire be the blessing of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, that it may be a sign to us of the righteous judgment of God.'

"The priest pauses; instantly the accused approaches to the fire, and lifts the iron, which he carries nine yards from the flame. The moment he lays it down he is surrounded by the priests, and borne by them into the vestry; there his hands are wrapped in linen cloths, sealed down with the signet of the church; these are removed on the third day, when he is declared innocent or

themselves of Eviot's guilt; and their suspicions had been confirmed by his irresolute manner. Their surprise at his escape was therefore extreme. The other followers of Ramorny took heart, and advanced to take the oath, with a boldness which increased as, one by one, they performed the ordeal, and were declared, by the voice of the judges, free and innocent of every suspicion attaching to them on account of the death of Oliver Proudfoot.

But there was one individual, who did not partake that increasing confidence. The name of "Bonthon—Bonthon!" sounded three times through the aisles of the church, but he who owned it acknowledged the call no otherwise than by a sort of shuffling motion with his feet, as if he had been suddenly affected with a fit of the palsy.

"Speak, dog," whispered Eviot, "or prepare for a dog's death!"

But the murderer's brain was so much disturbed by the sight before him, that the judges, beholding his deportment, doubted whether to ordain him to be dragged before the bier, or to pronounce judgment in default; and it was not, until he was asked for the last time, whether he

guilty, according to the condition in which his hands are found.
'Si sinus rubescens in vestigio ferri reperitur, culpabilis ducatur. Sin autem mundus reperitur, Laus Deo referatur.'

"Such is certainly one of the most extraordinary records of the craft, the audacity, and the weakness of mankind."

The belief that the corpse of a murdered person would bleed on the touch, or at the approach of the murderer, was universal among the northern nations. We find it seriously urged in the High Court of Justiciary at Edinburgh, so late as 1688, as an evidence of guilt. The case was that of Philip Standsfield, accused of the murder of his father, and this part of the evidence against him is thus stated in the "libel," or indictment: "And when his father's dead body was sighted and inspected by surgeons, and the clear and evident signs of the murder had appeared, the body was sewed up, and most carefully cleaned, and his nearest relations and friends were desired to lift his body to the coffin; and, accordingly, James Row, merchant (who was in Edinburgh in the time of the murder), having lifted the left side of Sir James his head and shoulder, and the said Philip the right side, his father's body, though carefully cleaned, as said is, so as the least blood was not on it, did according to God's usual method of discovering murders blood afresh upon him, and defiled all his hands, which struck him with such a terror, that he immediately let his father's head and body fall with violence, and fled from the body, and in consternation and confusion cried, 'Lord have mercy upon me!' and bowed himself down over a seat in the church (where the corp were inspected), wiping his father's innocent blood off his own murdering hands upon his cloaths." To this his counsel replied, that "this is but a superstitious observation, without any ground either in law or reason; and Carpovius relates that several persons upon that ground had been unjustly challenged." It was, however, insisted on as a link in the chain of evidence, not as a merely singular circumstance, but as a miraculous interposition of Providence; and it was thus animadverted upon by Sir George Mackenzie, the king's counsel, in his charge to the jury. "But they, fully persuaded that Sir James was murdered by his own son, sent out some chirurgeons and friends, who, having raised the body, did see it bleed miraculously upon his touching it. In which God Almighty himself was pleased to bear a share in the testimonies we produce; that Divine power, which makes the blood circulate during life, has oft times, in all nations, opened a passage to it after death upon such occasions, but most in this case."

would submit to the ordeal, that he answered, with his usual brevity,—

"I will not;—what do I know what juggling tricks may be practised to take a poor man's life?—I offer the combat to any man who says I harmed that dead body."

And, according to usual form, he threw his glove upon the floor of the church.

Henry Smith stepped forward, amidst the murmured applauses of his fellow-citizens, which even the angust presence could not entirely suppress; and lifting the ruffian's glove, which he placed in his bonnet, laid down his own in the usual form, as a gage of battle. But Bonthon raised it not.

"He is no match for me," growled the savage, "nor fit to lift my glove. I follow the Prince of Scotland, in attending on his Master of Horse. This fellow is a wretched mechanic."

Here the Prince interrupted him. "Thou follow me, caitiff! I discharge thee from my service on the spot.—Take him in hand, Smith, and beat him as thou didst never thump anvil!—The villain is both guilty and recreant. It sickens me even to look at him; and if my royal father will be ruled by me, he will give the parties two handsome Scottish axes, and we will see which of them turns out the best fellow, before the day is half an hour older."

This was readily assented to by the Earl of Crawford and Sir Patrick Charteris, the godfathers of the parties, who, as the combatants were men of inferior rank, agreed that they should fight in steel caps, buff jackets, and with axes; and that, as soon as they could be prepared for the combat.

The lists were appointed in the Skinners' Yards,* a neighboring space of ground, occupied by the corporation from which it had the name, and who quickly cleared a space of about thirty feet by twenty-five for the combatants. Thither thronged the nobles, priests, and commons,—all excepting the old King, who, detesting such scenes of blood, retired to his residence, and devolved the charge of the field upon the Earl of Errol, Lord High Constable, to whose office it more particularly belonged. The Duke of Albany watched the whole proceeding with a close and wary eye. His nephew gave the scene the heedless degree of notice which corresponded with his character.

When the combatants appeared in the lists, nothing could be more striking than the contrast betwixt the manly, cheerful countenance of the Smith, whose sparkling bright eye seemed al-

* "The Skinners' Yard," says Mr. Morrison, "is still in the possession of that fraternity, and is applied to the purpose which its name implies. Prior to the time of the peaceable Robert, it was the courtyard of the castle. Part of the gate which opened from the town, to the drawbridge of the castle, is still to be seen, as well as some traces of the foundation of the Keep or Donjon, and of the towers which surrounded the Castle-yard. The Curfew-row, which now encloses the Skinners' Yard, at that time formed the avenue or street leading from the northern part of the town to the Dominican Monastery."



"At length, fearing lest his unwieldy strength would be foiled by the activity of the Smith, Bonthron heaved up his axe for a downright blow, adding the whole strength of his sturdy arms to the weight of the weapon."

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ready beaming with the victory he hoped for, and the sullen, downcast aspect of the brutal Bonthron, who looked as if he were some obscene bird, driven into sunshine out of the shelter of its darksome haunts. They made oath severally, each to the truth of his quarrel; a ceremony which Henry Gow performed with serene and manly confidence—Bonthron with a dogged resolution, which induced the Duke of Rothsay to say to the High Constable, "Didst thou ever, my dear Errol, behold such a mixture of malignity, cruelty, and I think fear, as in that fellow's countenance?"

"He is not comely," said the Earl, "but a powerful knave, as I have seen."

"I'll gage a hogshead of wine with you, my good lord, that he loses the day. Henry the armorer is as strong as he, and much more active. And then look at his bold bearing! There is something in that other fellow that is loathsome to look upon. Let them yoke presently, my dear Constable, for I am sick of beholding him."

The High Constable then addressed the widow, who, in her deep weeds, and having her children still beside her, occupied a chair within the lists:—"Woman, do you willingly accept of this man, Henry the Smith, to do battle as your champion in this cause?"

"I do—I do, most willingly," answered Magdalen Prondfute; "and may the blessing of God and St. John give him strength and fortune, since he strikes for the orphan and fatherless!"

"Then I pronounce this a fenced field of battle," said the Constable aloud. "Let no one dare, upon peril of his life, to interrupt this combat by word, speech, or look. Sound trumpets, and fight combatants!"

The trumpets flourished, and the combatants, advancing from the opposite ends of the lists, with a steady and even pace, looked at each other attentively, well skilled in judging from the motion of the eye, the direction in which a blow was meditated. They halted opposite to, and within reach of, each other, and in turn made more than one feint to strike, in order to ascertain the activity and vigilance of the opponent. At length, whether weary of these manoeuvres, or fearing lest, in a contest so conducted, his unwieldy strength would be foiled by the activity of the Smith, Bonthron heaved up his axe for a downright blow, adding the whole strength of his sturdy arms to the weight of the weapon in its descent. The Smith, however, avoided the stroke by stepping aside; for it was too forcible to be controlled by any guard which he could have interposed. Ere Bonthron recovered guard, Henry struck him a sideling blow on the steel head-piece, which prostrated him on the ground.

"Confess or die," said the victor, placing his foot on the body of the vanquished, and holding to his throat the point of the axe, which terminated in a spike or poniard.

"I will confess," said the villain, glaring wildly upward on the sky. "Let me rise."

"Not till you have yielded," said Harry Smith.

"I do yield," again murmured Bonthron, and Henry proclaimed aloud that his antagonist was defeated.

The Dukes of Rothsay and Albany, the High Constable, and the Dominican Prior, now entered the lists, and addressing Bonthron, demanded if he acknowledged himself vanquished.

"I do," answered the miscreant.

"And guilty of the murder of Oliver Prondfute?"

"I am—but I mistook him for another."

"And whom didst thou intend to slay?" said the Prior. "Confess, my son, and merit thy pardon in another world; for with this thou hast little more to do."

"I took the slain man," answered the discomfited combatant, "for him whose hand has struck me down, whose foot now presses me."

"Blessed be the saints!" said the Prior; "now all those who doubt the virtue of the holy ordeal, may have their eyes opened to their error. Lo, he is trapped in the snare which he laid for the guiltless."

"I scarce ever saw the man before," said the Smith. "I never did wrong to him or his.—Ask him, an it please your reverence, why he should have thought of slaying me treacherously."

"It is a fitting question," answered the Prior.—"Give glory where it is due, my son, even though it is manifested by thy shame. For what reason wouldst thou have waylaid this armorer, who says he never wronged thee?"

"He had wronged him whom I served," answered Bonthron; "and I meditated the deed by his command."

"By whose command?" asked the Prior.

Bonthron was silent for an instant, then growled out,—"He is too mighty for me to name."

"Hearken, my son," said the churchman; "tarry but a brief hour, and the mighty and the mean of this earth shall to thee alike be empty sounds. The sledge is even now preparing to drag thee to the place of execution. Therefore, son, once more I charge thee to consult thy soul's weal by glorifying Heaven, and speaking the truth. Was it thy master, Sir John Ramoray, that stirred thee to so foul a deed?"

"No," answered the prostrate villain, "it was a greater than he." And at the same time he pointed with his finger to the Prince.

"Wretch!" said the astonished Duke of Rothsay; "do you dare to hint that I was your instigator?"

"You yourself, my lord," answered the unblushing ruffian.

"Die in thy falsehood, accursed slave!" said the Prince; and, drawing his sword, he would have pierced his calumniator, had not the Lord High Constable interposed with word and action.

"Your Grace must forgive my discharging

mine office—this caitiff must be delivered into the hands of the executioner. He is unfit to be dealt with by any other, much less by your Highness."

"What! noble Earl," said Albany, aloud, and with much real or affected emotion, "would you let the dog pass alive from hence, to poison the people's ears with false accusations against the Prince of Scotland?—I say cut him to mammocks upon the spot!"

"Your Highness will pardon me," said the Earl of Errol; "I must protect him till his doom is executed."

"Then let him be gagged instantly," said Albany.—"And you, my royal nephew, why stand you there fixed in astonishment? Call your resolution up—speak to the prisoner—swear—protest by all that is sacred that you knew not of this felon deed.—See how the people look on each other, and whisper apart! My life on't that this lie spreads faster than any gospel truth.—Speak to them, royal kinsman, no matter what you say, so you be constant in denial."

"What, sir," said Rothsay, starting from his pause of surprise and mortification, and turning haughtily towards his uncle; "would you have me gage my royal word against that of an abject recreant? Let those who can believe the son of their sovereign, the descendant of Bruce, capable of laying ambush for the life of a poor mechanic, enjoy the pleasure of thinking the villain's tale true."

"That will not I for one," said the Smith bluntly. "I never did aught but what was in honor towards his royal Grace the Duke of Rothsay, and never received unkindness from him, in word, look, or deed; and I cannot think he would have given aim to such base practice."

"Was it in honor that you threw his Highness from the ladder in Curfew Street, upon St. Valentine's Even?" said Bonthron; "or think you the favor was received kindly or unkindly?"

This was so boldly said, and seemed so plausible, that it shook the Smith's opinion of the Prince's innocence.

"Alas, my lord," said he, looking sorrowfully towards Rothsay, "could your Highness seek an innocent fellow's life for doing his duty by a helpless maiden?—I would rather have died in these lists, than live to hear it said of the Bruce's heir!"

"Thou art a good fellow, Smith," said the Prince; "but I cannot expect thee to judge more wisely than others.—Away with that convict to the gallows, and gibbet him alive as you will, that he may speak falsehood and spread scandal on us to the last prolonged moment of his existence!"

So saying, the Prince turned away from the lists, disdainful to notice the gloomy looks cast towards him, as the crowd made slow and reluctant way for him to pass, and expressing neither surprise nor displeasure at a deep hollow murmur, or groan, which accompanied his retreat. Only a few of his own immediate followers at-

tended him from the field, though various persons of distinction had come there in his train. Even the lower class of citizens ceased to follow the unhappy Prince, whose former indifferent reputation had exposed him to so many charges of impropriety and levity, and around whom there seemed now darkening suspicions of the most atrocious nature.

He took his slow and thoughtful way to the church of the Dominicans; but the ill news, which fly proverbially fast, had reached his father's place of retirement, before he himself appeared. On entering the palace and inquiring for the King, the Duke of Rothsay was surprised to be informed that he was in deep consultation with the Duke of Albany, who, mounting on horseback as the Prince left the lists, had reached the convent before him. He was about to use the privilege of his rank and birth, to enter the royal apartment, when MacLewis, the commander of the guard of Brandanes, gave him to understand, in the most respectful terms, that he had special instructions, which forbade his admittance.

"Go at least, MacLewis, and let them know that I wait their pleasure," said the Prince. "If my uncle desires to have the credit of shutting the father's apartment against the son, it will gratify him to know that I am attending in the outer hall like a lackey."

"May it please you," said MacLewis, with hesitation, "if your Highness would consent to retire just now, and to wait a while in patience, I will send to acquaint you when the Duke of Albany goes; and I doubt not that his Majesty will then admit your Grace to his presence. At present, your Highness must forgive me,—it is impossible you can have access."

"I understand you, MacLewis; but go, nevertheless, and obey my commands."

The officer went accordingly, and returned with a message that the King was indisposed, and on the point of retiring to his private chamber; but that the Duke of Albany would presently wait upon the Prince of Scotland.

It was, however, a full half hour ere the Duke of Albany appeared,—a period of time which Rothsay spent partly in moody silence, and partly in idle talk with MacLewis and the Brandanes, as the levity or irritability of his temper obtained the ascendant.

At length the Duke came, and with him the Lord High Constable, whose countenance expressed much sorrow and embarrassment.

"Fair kinsman," said the Duke of Albany, "I grieve to say that it is my royal brother's opinion, that it will be best, for the honor of the royal family, that your Royal Highness do restrict yourself for a time to the seclusion of the High Constable's lodgings,* and accept of the noble

* The Constable's, or Earl of Errol's lodgings," says Mr. Morrison, "stood near the south end of the Watergate, the quarter of the town in which most of the houses of the nobility were placed, amidst gardens which extended to the wall of the

Earl here present for your principal, if not sole companion, until the scandals which have been this day spread abroad, shall be refuted, or forgotten."

"How is this, my Lord of Errol?" said the Prince, in astonishment. "Is your house to be my jail, and is your lordship to be my jailer?"

"The saints forbid, my lord," said the Earl of Errol; "but it is my unhappy duty to obey the commands of your father, by considering your Royal Highness for some time as being under my ward."

"The Prince, the heir of Scotland, under the ward of the High Constable!—What reason can be given for this? Is the blighting speech of a convicted recreant of strength sufficient to tarnish my royal escutcheon?"

"While such accusations are not refuted and denied, my kinsman," said the Duke of Albany, "they will contaminate that of a monarch."

"Denied, my lord!" exclaimed the Prince; "by whom are they asserted? save by a wretch too infamous, even by his own confession, to be credited for a moment, though a beggar's character, not a prince's, were impeached.—Fetch him hither,—let the rack be shown to him; you will soon hear him retract the calumny which he dared to assert."

"The gibbet has done its work too surely to leave Bonthron sensible to the rack," said the Duke of Albany. "He has been executed an hour since."

"And why such haste, my lord?" said the Prince; "know you it looks as if there were practice in it, to bring a stain on my name?"

"The custom is universal—the defeated combatant in the ordeal of battle is instantly transferred from the lists to the gallows.—And yet, fair kinsman," continued the Duke of Albany, "if you had boldly and strongly denied the imputation, I would have judged right to keep the wretch alive for further investigation; but as your Highness was silent, I deemed it best to stifle the scandal in the breath of him that uttered it."

"Saint Mary, my lord, but this is too insulting! Do you, my uncle and kinsman, suppose me guilty of prompting such a useless and unworthy action, as that which the slave confessed?"

city adjoining the river. The families of the Hays had many rich possessions in the neighborhood, and other residences in the town besides that commonly known as the Constable's Lodgings. Some of these subsequently passed, along with a considerable portion of the Carse, to the Ruthven or Gowrie family. The last of those noble residences in Perth, which retained any part of its former magnificence (and on that account styled the palace), was the celebrated Gowrie House, which was nearly entire in 1805, but of which not a vestige now remains. On the confiscation of the Gowrie estates, it merged into the public property of the town; and, in 1746, was presented by the magistrates to the Duke of Cumberland. His Royal Highness, on receiving this mark of the attachment or servility of the Perth rulers, asked, with sarcastic nonchalance, "If the piece of ground called the Carse of Gowrie went along with it."

"It is not for me to bandy question with your Highness; otherwise I would ask, whether you also mean to deny the scarce less unworthy, though less bloody attack, upon the house in Couvrefew Street?—Be not angry with me kinsman; but, indeed, your sequestering yourself for some brief space from the court, were it only during the King's residence in the city, where so much offence has been given, is imperiously demanded."

Rothsay paused when he heard this exhortation; and looking at the Duke in a very marked manner, replied,—

"Uncle, you are a good huntsman. You have pitched your toils with much skill; but you would have been foiled, notwithstanding, had not the stag rushed among the nets of free-will. God speed you, and may you have the profit by this matter, which your measures deserve. Say to my father, I obey his arrest.—My Lord High Constable, I wait only your pleasure to attend you to your lodgings. Since I am to lie in ward, I could not have desired a kinder or more courteous warden."

The interview between the uncle and nephew being thus concluded, the Prince retired with the Earl of Errol to his apartments; the citizens whom they met in the streets passing to the further side, when they observed the Duke of Rothsay, to escape the necessity of saluting one whom they had been taught to consider as a ferocious as well as unprincipled libertine. The Constable's lodgings received the owner and his princely guest, both glad to leave the streets, yet neither feeling easy in the situation which they occupied with regard to each other within doors.

We must return to the lists after the combat had ceased, and when the nobles had withdrawn. The crowds were now separated into two distinct bodies. That which made the smallest in number, was at the same time the most distinguished for respectability, consisting of the better class of inhabitants of Perth, who were congratulating the successful champion, and each other, upon the triumphant conclusion to which they had brought their feud with the courtiers. The magistrates were so much elated on the occasion, that they entreated Sir Patrick Charteris's acceptance of a collation in the Town-hall. To this, Henry, the hero of the day, was of course invited, or he was rather commanded to attend. He listened to the summons with great embarrassment, for it may be readily believed his heart was with Catharine Glover. But the advice of his father Simon decided him. That veteran citizen had a natural and becoming deference for the Magistracy of the Fair City; he entertained a high estimation of all honors which flowed from such a source, and thought that his intended son-in-law would do wrong not to receive them with gratitude.

"Thou must not think to absent thyself from such a solemn occasion, son Henry," was his advice. "Sir Patrick Charteris is to be there him-

self, and I think it will be a rare occasion for thee to gain his good-will. It is like he may order of thee a new suit of harness; and I myself heard worthy Baillie Craigdallie say, there was a talk of refurbishing up the city's armory. Thou must not neglect the good trade, now that thou takest on thee an expensive family."

"Tush, father Glover," answered the embarrassed victor, "I lack no custom—and thou knowest there is Catharine, who may wonder at my absence, and have her ear abused once more by tales of glee-maidens, and I wot not what."

"Fear not for that," said the Glover, "but go like an obedient burgess, where thy betters desire to have thee. I do not deny that it will cost thee some trouble to make thy peace with Catharine about this duel; for she thinks herself wiser in such matters than King and Council, Kirk and Canons, Provost and Bailies. But I will take up the quarrel with her myself, and will so work for thee, that though she may receive thee to-morrow with somewhat of a chiding, it shall melt into tears and smiles, like an April morning, that begins with a mild shower. Away with thee, then, my son, and be constant to the time, to-morrow morning after mass."

The Smith, though reluctantly, was obliged to defer to the reasoning of his proposed father-in-law, and, once determined to accept the honor destined for him by the fathers of the city, he extricated himself from the crowd, and hastened home to put on his best apparel; in which he presently afterwards repaired to the Council-house, where the ponderous oak table seemed to bend under the massy dishes of choice Tay salmon, and delicious sea-fish from Dundee, being the dainties which the fasting season permitted, whilst neither wine, ale, nor metheglin, were wanting to wash them down. The waits, or minstrels of the burgh, played during the repast, and in the intervals of the music, one of them recited, with great emphasis, a long poetical account of the battle of Blackearn-side, fought by Sir William Wallace, and his redoubted captain and friend, Thomas of Longueville, against the English general, Seward—a theme perfectly familiar to all the guests, who, nevertheless, more tolerant than their descendants, listened as if it had all the zest of novelty. It was complimentary to the ancestor of the Knight of Kinfauns doubtless, and to other Perthshire families, in passages which the audience applauded vociferously, whilst they pledged each other in mighty draughts, to the memory of the heroes who had fought by the side of the champion of Scotland. The health of Henry Wynd was quaffed with repeated shouts, and the Provost announced publicly, that the magistrates were consulting how they might best invest him with some distinguished privilege, or honorary reward, to show how highly his fellow-citizens valued his courageous exertions.

"Nay, take it not thus, an it like your worships," said the Smith, with his usual blunt

manner, "lest men say that valor must be rare in Perth, when they reward a man for fighting for the right of a forlorn widow. I am sure there are many scores of stout burghers in the town who would have done this day's dargue, as well or better than I. For, in good sooth, I ought to have cracked yonder fellow's head-piece, like an earthen pipkin—ay, and would have done it too, if it had not been one which I myself tempered for Sir John Ramorny. But an the Fair City think my service of any worth, I will conceive it far more than acquitted by any aid which you may afford from the Common Good,* to the support of the widow Magdalen and her poor orphans."

"That may well be done," said Sir Patrick Charteris, "and yet leave the Fair City rich enough to pay her debts to Henry Wynd, of which every man of us is a better judge than himself, who is blinded with an unavailing nicety, which men call modesty.—And if the burgh be too poor for this, the Provost will bear his share. The Rover's golden angels have not all taken flight yet."

The beakers were now circulated, under the name of a cup of comfort to the widow, and anon, flowed around once more to the happy memory of the murdered Oliver, now so bravely avenged. In short, it was a feast so jovial, that all agreed nothing was wanting to render it perfect, but the presence of the Bonnet-maker himself, whose calamity had occasioned the meeting, and who had usually furnished the standing jest at such festive assemblies. "Had his attendance been possible," it was dryly observed by Baillie Craigdallie, "he would certainly have claimed the success of the day, and vouched himself the avenger of his own murder."

At the sound of the vesper bell the company broke up, some of the graver sort going to evening prayers, where, with half-shut eyes and shining countenances, they made a most orthodox and edifying portion of a Lenten congregation; others to their own homes, to tell over the occurrences of the fight and feast, for the information of the family circle; and some, doubtless, to the licensed freedoms of some tavern, the door of which Lent did not keep so close shut as the forms of the Church required. Henry returned to the Wynd, warm with the good wine and the applause of his fellow-citizens, and fell asleep to dream of perfect happiness and Catharine Glover.

We have said, that when the combat was decided, the spectators were divided into two bodies. Of these, when the more respectable portion attended the victor in joyous procession, much the greater number, or what might be termed the rabble, waited upon the subdued and sentenced Bonthron, who was travelling in a different direction, and for a very opposite purpose. Whatever may be thought of the compara-

* The public property of the burgh.

five attractions of the house of mourning and of feasting under other circumstances, there can be little doubt which will draw most visitors, when the question is, whether we would witness miseries which we are not to share, or festivities of which we are not to partake. Accordingly, the tumbril in which the criminal was conveyed to execution, was attended by far the greater proportion of the inhabitants of Perth.

A friar was seated in the same car with the murderer, to whom he did not hesitate to repeat, under the seal of confession, the same false asseveration which he had made upon the place of combat, which charged the Duke of Rothsay with being director of the ambuscade by which the unfortunate Bonnet-maker had suffered. The same falsehood he disseminated among the crowd, averring, with unblushing effrontery, to those who were nearest to the car, that he owed his death to his having been willing to execute the Duke of Rothsay's pleasure. For a time he repeated these words, sullenly and doggedly, in the manner of one reciting a task, or a liar who endeavors by reiteration to obtain a credit for his words, which he is internally sensible they do not deserve. But when he lifted up his eyes, and beheld in the distance the black outline of a gallows, at least forty feet high, with its ladder and its fatal cord, rising against the horizon, he became suddenly silent, and the friar could observe that he trembled very much.

"Be comforted, my son," said the good priest, "you have confessed the truth, and received absolution. Your penitence will be accepted according to your sincerity; and though you have been a man of bloody hands and cruel heart, yet, by the Church's prayers, you shall be in due time assuaged from the penal fires of purgatory."

These assurances were calculated rather to augment than to diminish the terrors of the culprit, who was agitated by doubts whether the mode suggested for his preservation from death would to a certainty be effectual, and some suspicion whether there was really any purpose of employing them in his favor; for he knew his master well enough to be aware of the indifference with which he would sacrifice one, who might on some future occasion be a dangerous evidence against him.

His doom, however, was sealed, and there was no escaping from it. They slowly approached the fatal tree, which was erected on a bank by the river's side, about half a mile from the walls of the city; a site chosen that the body of the wretch, which was to remain food for the carrion crows, might be seen from a distance in every direction. Here the priest delivered Bonthron to the executioner, by whom he was assisted up the ladder, and to all appearance dispatched according to the usual forms of the law. He seemed to struggle for life for a minute, but soon after hung still and inanimate. The executioner, after remaining upon duty for more than half an hour, as if to permit the last spark of life

to be extinguished, announced to the admirers of such spectacles, that the irons for the permanent suspension of the carcass not having been got ready, the concluding ceremony of disemboweling the dead body, and attaching it finally to the gibbet, would be deferred till the next morning at sunrise.

Notwithstanding the early hour which he had named, Master Smotherwell had a reasonable attendance of rabble at the place of execution, to see the final proceedings of justice with its victim. But great was the astonishment and resentment of these amateurs, to find that the dead body had been removed from the gibbet. They were not, however, long at a loss to guess the cause of its disappearance. Bonthron had been the follower of a baron, whose estates lay in Fife, and was himself a native of that province. What was more natural than that some of the Fife men, whose boats were frequently plying on the river, should have clandestinely removed the body of their countryman from the place of public shame? The crowd vented their rage against Smotherwell, for not completing his job on the preceding evening; and had not he and his assistant betaken themselves to a boat, and escaped across the Tay, they would have run some risk of being pelted to death. The event, however, was too much in the spirit of the times to be much wondered at. Its real cause we shall explain in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"Let gallows gape for dogs, let men go free."

HENRY V.

THE incidents of a narrative of this kind must be adapted to each other, as the wards of a key must tally accurately with those of the lock to which it belongs. The reader, however gentle, will not hold himself obliged to rest satisfied with the mere fact, that such and such occurrences took place, which is, generally speaking, all that in ordinary life he can know of what is passing around him; but he is desirous, while reading for amusement, of knowing the interior movements occasioning the course of events. This is a legitimate and reasonable curiosity; for every man hath a right to open and examine the mechanism of his own watch, put together for his proper use, although he is not permitted to pry into the interior of the timepiece, which, for general information, is displayed on the town-steeples.

It would be, therefore, uncourteous to leave my readers under any doubt concerning the agency which removed the assassin Bonthron from the gallows; an event which some of the Perth citizens ascribed to the foul Fiend himself, while others were content to lay it upon the natural dislike of Bonthron's countrymen of Fife to see him hanging on the river side, as a spectacle dishonorable to their province.

About midnight succeeding the day when the

execution had taken place, and while the inhabitants of Perth were deeply buried in slumber, three men, muffled in their cloaks, and bearing a dark lantern, descended the alleys of a garden which led from the house occupied by Sir John Ramorny to the banks of the Tay, where a small boat lay moored to a landing-place, or little projecting pier. The wind howled in a low and melancholy manner through the leafless shrubs and bushes; and a pale moon waded, as it is termed in Scotland, amongst drifting clouds, which seemed to threaten rain. The three individuals entered the boat with great precaution, to escape observation. One of them was a tall powerful man; another short and bent downwards; the third middle-sized, and apparently younger than his companions, well made and active. Thus much the imperfect light could discover. They seated themselves in the boat, and unmoored it from the pier.

"We must let her drift with the current till we pass the bridge, where the burghers still keep guard; and you know the proverb—A Perth arrow hath a perfect flight," said the most youthful of the party, who assumed the office of helmsman, and pushed the boat off from the pier; whilst the others took the oars which were muffled, and rowed with all precaution, till they attained the middle of the river; they then ceased their efforts, lay upon their oars, and trusted to the steersman for keeping her in mid-channel.

In this manner they passed unnoticed or disregarded beneath the stately Gothic arches of the old bridge, erected by the magnificent patronage of Robert Bruce in 1329, and carried away by an inundation in 1621. Although they heard the voices of a civic watch, which, since these disturbances commenced, had been nightly maintained in that important pass, no challenge was given; and when they were so far down the stream as to be out of hearing of these guardians of the night, they began to row, but still with precaution, and to converse, though in a low tone.

"You have found a new trade, comrade, since I left you," said one of the rowers to the other. "I left you engaged in tending a sick knight, and I find you employed in purloining a dead body from the gallows."

"A living body, so please your squitreehood, Master Bunce; or else my craft hath failed of its purpose."

"So I am told, Master Pottercarrier; but saving your clerkship, unless you tell me your trick, I will take leave to doubt of its success."

"A simple toy, Master Bunce, not likely to please a genius so acute as that of your valiance, Marry, thus it is. The suspension of the human body, which the vulgar call hanging, operates death by apoplexia,—that is, the blood being unable to return to the heart by the compression of the veins, it rushes to the brain, and the man dies. Also, and as an additional cause of disso-

lution, the lungs no longer receive the needful supply of the vital air, owing to the ligature of the cord around the thorax, and hence the patient perishes."

"I understand that well enough—But how is such a revulsion of blood to the brain to be prevented, Sir Mediciner?" said the third person, who was no other than Ramorny's page, Eviot.

"Marry, then," replied Dwining, "hang me the patient up in such fashion that the carotid arteries shall not be compressed, and the blood will not determine to the brain, and apoplexia will not take place; and, again, if there be no ligature around the thorax, the lungs will be supplied with air, whether the man be hanging in the middle heaven, or standing on the firm earth."

"All this I conceive," said Eviot; "but how these precautions can be reconciled with the execution of the sentence of hanging, is what my dull brain cannot comprehend."

"Ah! good youth, thy valiance hath spoiled a fair wit. Hadst thou studied with me, thou shouldst have learned things more difficult than this. But here is my trick. I get me certain bandages, made of the same substance with your young valiance's horse-girths, having especial care that they are of a kind which will not shrink on being strained, since that would spoil my experiment. One loop of this substance is drawn under each foot, and returns up either side of the leg to a cincture, with which it is united; these cinctures are connected by divers straps down the breast and back, in order to divide the weight, and there are sundry other conveniences for easing the patient; but the chief is this. The straps, or ligatures, are attached to a broad steel collar, curving outwards, and having a hook or two, for the better security of the halter, which the friendly executioner passes around that part of the machine, instead of applying it to the bare throat of the patient. Thus, when thrown off from the ladder, the sufferer will find himself suspended, not by his neck, if it please you, but by the steel circle, which supports the loops in which his feet are placed, and on which his weight really rests, diminished a little by similar supports under each arm. Thus neither vein nor windpipe being compressed, the man will breathe as free, and his blood, saving from fright and novelty of situation, will flow as temperately as your valiance's when you stand up in your stirrups to view a field of battle."

"By my faith, a quaint and rare device!" quoth Bunce.

"Is it not?" pursued the leech, "and well worth being known to such mounting spirits as your valiances, since there is no knowing to what height Sir John Ramorny's pupils may arrive; and if these be such, that it is necessary to descend from them by a rope, you may find my mode of management more convenient than the common practice. Marry, but you must be provided with a high-collared doublet, to conceal the ring

of steel; and above all, such a *bonus socius* as Smotherwell to adjust the noose."

"Base poison-vender," said Eviot, "men of our calling die on the field of battle!"

"I will save the lesson, however," replied Bunce, "in case of some pinching occasion.—But what a night the bloody hand-dog Bonthron must have had of it, dancing a pavise in mid air to the music of his own shackles, as the night wind swings him that way and this!"

"It were an almsdeed to leave him there," said Eviot; "for his descent from the gibbet will but encourage him to new murders. He knows but two elements, drunkenness and bloodshed."

"Perhaps Sir John Ramorny might have been of your opinion," said Dwining; "but it would first have been necessary to cut out the rogue's tongue, lest he had told strange tales from his airy height. And there are other reasons that it concerns not your valiances to know. In truth, I myself have been generous in serving him, for the fellow is built as strong as Edinburgh Castle, and his anatomy would have matched any that is in the chirurgical hall of Padua.—But tell me, Master Bunce, what news bring you from the doughty Douglas?"

"They may tell that know," said Bunce. "I am the dull ass that bears the message, and kens nought of its purport. The safer for myself perhaps. I carried letters from the Duke of Albany and from Sir John Ramorny to the Douglas, and he looked black as a northern tempest when he opened them—I brought them answers from the Earl, at which they smiled like the sun when the harvest storm is closing over him. Go to your Ephemerides, leech, and conjure the meaning out of that."

"Methinks I can do so without much cost of wit," said the chirurgeon; "but yonder I see in the pale moonlight our dead alive. Should he have screamed out to any chance passenger, it were a curious interruption to a night-journey to be hailed from the top of such a gallows as that.—Hark, methinks I do hear his groans amid the whistling of the wind, and the creaking of the chains. So—fair and softly—make fast the boat with the grappling—and get out the casket with my matters—we would be better for a little fire, but the light might bring observation on us. Come on, my men of valor, march warily, for we are bound for the gallows-foot—Follow with the lantern—I trust the ladder has been left.

"Sing three merry-men, and three merry-men,
And three merry-men are we;
Thou on the land, and I on the sand,
And Jack on the gallows-tree?"

As they advanced to the gibbet, they could plainly hear groans, though uttered in a low tone. Dwining ventured to give a low cough once or twice, by way of signal; but receiving no answer, "We had best make haste," said he to his companions, "for our friend must be *in extremis*, as he gives no answer to the signal which announces the arrival of help.—Come, let us to

the gear. I will go up the ladder first, and cut the rope. Do you two follow, one after another, and take fast hold of the body, so that he fall not when the halter is unloosed. Keep sure gripe, for which the bandages will afford you convenience. Bethink you, that though he plays an owl's part to-night, he hath no wings, and to fall out of a halter may be as dangerous as to fall into one."

While he spoke thus with sneer and gibe, he ascended the ladder, and having ascertained that the men-at-arms who followed him had the body in their hold, he cut the rope, and then gave his aid to support the almost lifeless form of the criminal.

By a skillful exertion of strength and address, the body of Bonthron was placed safely on the ground, and the faint yet certain existence of life having been ascertained, it was thence transported to the river side, where, shrouded by the bank, the party might be best concealed from observation, while the leech employed himself in the necessary means of recalling animation, with which he had taken care to provide himself.

For this purpose he first freed the recovered person from his shackles, which the executioner had left unlocked on purpose, and at the same time disengaged the complicated envelopes and bandages by which he had been suspended. It was some time ere Dwining's efforts succeeded; for in despite of the skill with which his machine had been constructed, the straps designed to support the body, had stretched so considerably as to occasion the sense of suffocation becoming extremely overpowering. But the address of the surgeon triumphed over all obstacles; and after sneezing and stretching himself, with one or two brief convulsions, Bonthron gave decided proofs of reanimation by arresting the hand of the operator as it was in the act of dropping strong waters on his breast and throat; and, directing the bottle which contained them to his lips, he took, almost perforce, a considerable gulp of the contents.

"It is a spiritual essence, double distilled," said the astonished operator, "and would blister the throat, and burn the stomach of any other man. But this extraordinary beast is so unlike all other human creatures, that I should not wonder if it brought him to the complete possession of his faculties."

Bonthron seemed to confirm this; he started with a strong convulsion, sat up, stared around, and indicated some consciousness of existence.

"Wine—wine," were the first words which he articulated.

The leech gave him a draught of medicated wine, mixed with water. He rejected it under the dishonorable epithet of "kennel-washings," and again uttered the words—"Wine, wine."

"Nay, take it to thee, i' the devil's name," said the leech, "since none but he can judge of thy constitution."

A draught, long and deep enough to have dis-

composed the intellects of any other person, was found effectual in recalling those of Bonthron to a more perfect state; though he betrayed no recollection of where he was or what had befallen him, and in his brief and sullen manner, asked why he was brought to the river side at this time of night.

"Another frolic of the wild Prince, for drenching me as he did before—Nails and blood, but I would—"

"Hold thy peace," interrupted Eviot, "and be thankful, I pray you, if you have any thankfulness in you, that thy body is not crow's meat, and thy soul in a place where water is too scarce to duck thee."

"I begin to bethink me," said the ruffian; and raising the flask to his mouth, which he saluted with a long and hearty kiss, he set the empty bottle on the earth, dropped his head on his bosom, and seemed to muse for the purpose of arranging his confused recollections.

"We can abide the issue of his meditations no longer," said Dwining, "he will be better after he has slept.—Up, sir! you have been riding the air these some hours—try if the water be not an easier mode of conveyance.—Your valors must lend me a hand. I can no more lift this mass, than I could raise in my arms a slaughtered bull."

"Stand upright on thine own feet, Bonthron, now we have placed thee upon them," said Eviot.

"I cannot," answered the patient. "Every drop of blood tingles in my veins as if it had pin-points, and my knees refuse to bear their burden. What can be the meaning of all this? This is some practice of thine, thou dog leech!"

"Ay, ay, so it is, honest Bonthron," said Dwining, "a practice thou shalt thank me for, when thou comest to learn it.—In the meanwhile, stretch down in the stern of the boat, and let me wrap this cloak about thee." Assisted into the boat accordingly, Bonthron was deposited there as conveniently as things admitted of. He answered their attentions with one or two snorts resembling the grunt of a boar, who has got some food particularly agreeable to him.

"And now, Buncle," said the chirurgeon, "your valiant squireship knows your charge. You are to carry this lively cargo by the river to Newburgh, where you are to dispose of him as you wot of; meantime here are his shackles and bandages, the marks of his confinement and liberation. Bind them up together, and fling them into the deepest pool you pass over; for, found in your possession, they might tell tales against us all. This low, light breath of wind from the west, will permit you to use a sail as soon as the light comes in, and you are tired of rowing. Your other valiancy, Master Page Eviot, must be content to return to Perth with me a-foot, for here severs our fair company.—Take with thee the lantern, Buncle, for thou wilt require it more than we, and see thou send me back my flasket"

As the pedestrians returned to Perth, Eviot expressed his belief that Bonthron's understanding would never recover the shock which terror had inflicted upon it, and which appeared to him to have disturbed all the faculties of his mind, and in particular his memory.

"It is not so, an it please your pagehood," said the leech. "Bonthron's intellect, such as it is, hath a solid character—it will but vacillate to and fro like a pendulum which hath been put in motion, and then will rest in its proper point of gravity. Our memory is, of all our powers of mind, that which is peculiarly liable to be suspended. Deep intoxication or sound sleep alike destroy it, and yet it returns when the drunkard becomes sober, or the sleeper is awakened. Terror sometimes produces the same effects. I knew at Paris a criminal condemned to die by the halter, who suffered the sentence accordingly, showing no particular degree of timidity upon the scaffold, and behaving and expressing himself as men in the same condition are wont to do. Accident did for him what a little ingenious practice hath done for our amiable friend from whom we but now parted. He was cut down, and given to his friends before life was extinct, and I had the good fortune to restore him. But though he recovered in other particulars, he remembered but little of his trial and sentence. Of his confession on the morning of his execution—he! he! he!"—(in his usual chuckling manner)—"he remembered him not a word. Neither of leaving the prison—nor of his passage to the Greve, where he suffered—nor of the devout speeches with which he—he! he!—edified—he! he! he!—so many good Christians—nor of ascending the fatal tree, nor of taking the fatal leap, had my revenant the slightest recollection.*—But here we reach the point where we must separate; for it were unfit, should we meet any of the watch, that we be found together, and it were also prudent that we enter the city by different gates. My profession forms an excuse for my going and coming at all times. Your valiant pagehood will make such explanation as may seem sufficing."

"I shall make my will a sufficient excuse if I am interrogated," said the haughty young man. "Yet I will avoid interruption, if possible. The moon is quite obscured, and the road as black as a wolf's mouth."

"Tut," said the physician, "let not your valor care for that; we shall tread darker paths ere it be long."

Without inquiring into the meaning of these evil-boding sentences, and indeed hardly listening to them, in the pride and recklessness of his nature, the page of Ramorny parted from his ingenious and dangerous companion; and each took his own way.

* An incident precisely similar to that in the text actually occurred, within the present century, at Oxford, in the case of a young woman who underwent the last sentence of the law for child-murder. A learned professor of that university has published an account of his conversation with the girl after her recovery.

CHAPTER XXV.

"The course of true love never did run smooth."
SHAKESPEARE.

THE ominous anxiety of our armorer had not payed him false. When the good Glover parted with his intended son-in-law, after the judicial combat had been decided, he found, what he indeed had expected, that his fair daughter was in no favorable disposition towards her lover. But although he perceived that Catharine was cold, restrained, collected, had cast away the appearance of mortal passion, and listened with a reserve, implying contempt, to the most splendid description he could give her of the combat in the Skinners' Yards, he was determined not to take the least notice of her altered manner, but to speak of her marriage with his son Henry as a thing which must of course take place. At length, when she began, as on a former occasion, to intimate, that her attachment to the armorer did not exceed the bounds of friendship,—that she was resolved never to marry,—that the pretended judicial combat was a mockery of the divine will, and of human laws,—the Glover not unnaturally grew angry.

"I cannot read thy thoughts, wench; nor can I pretend to guess under what wicked delusion it is that you kiss a declared lover,—suffer him to kiss you,—run to his house when a report is spread of his death, and fling yourself into his arms when you find him alone. All this shows very well in a girl prepared to obey her parents in a match sanctioned by her father; but such tokens of intimacy bestowed on one whom a young woman cannot esteem, and is determined not to marry, are uncomely and unmaidenly. You have already been more bounteous of your favors to Henry Smith, than your mother, whom God assoilzie, ever was to me before I married her. I tell thee, Catharine, this trifling with the love of an honest man, is what I neither can, will, nor ought to endure. I have given my consent to the match, and I insist it shall take place without delay; and that you receive Henry Wynd tomorrow, as a man whose bride you are to be with all dispatch."

"A power more potent than yours, father, will say no," replied Catharine.

"I will risk it; my power is a lawful one, that of a father over a child, and an erring child," answered her father. "God and man allow of my influence."

"Then, may Heaven help us!" said Catharine; "for if you are obstinate in your purpose, we are all lost."

"We can expect no help from Heaven," said the Glover, "when we act with indiscretion. I am clerk enough myself to know that; and that your causeless resistance to my will is sinful, every priest will inform you. Ay, and more than that, you have spoken degradingly of the blessed appeal to God in the combat of ordeal. Take

heed! for the Holy Church is awakened to watch her sheepfold, and to extirpate heresy by fire and steel; so much I warn thee of."

Catharine uttered a suppressed exclamation; and with difficulty compelling herself to assume an appearance of composure, promised her father, that if he would spare her any farther discussion of the subject till to-morrow morning, she would then meet him, determined to make a full discovery of her sentiments.

With this promise, Simon Glover was obliged to remain contented, though extremely anxious for the postponed explanation. It could not be levity or fickleness of character which induced his daughter to act with so much apparent inconsistency towards the man of his choice, and whom she had so lately unequivocally owned to be also the man of her own. What external force there could exist, of a kind powerful enough to change the resolutions she had so decidedly expressed within twenty-four hours, was a matter of complete mystery.

"But I will be as obstinate as she can be," thought the Glover, "and she shall either marry Henry Smith without farther delay, or old Simon Glover will know an excellent reason to the contrary."

The subject was not renewed during the evening; but early on the next morning, just at sunrise, Catharine knelt before the bed in which her parent still slumbered. Her heart sobbed as if it would burst, and her tears fell thick upon her father's face. The good old man awoke looked up, crossed his child's forehead, and kissed her affectionately.

"I understand thee, Kate," he said; "thou art come to confession, and, I trust, art desirous to escape a heavy penance by being sincere."

Catharine was silent for an instant.

"I need not ask, my father, if you remember the Carthusian monk, Clement, and his preachings and lessons; at which, indeed, you assisted so often, that you cannot be ignorant men called you one of his converts, and with greater justice termed me so likewise?"

"I am aware of both," said the old man, raising himself on his elbow; "but I defy foul fame to show that I ever owned him in any heretical proposition, though I love to hear him talk of the corruptions of the Church, the misgovernment of the nobles, and the wild ignorance of the poor, proving, as it seemed to me, that the sole virtue of our commonweal, its strength, and its estimation, lay among the burgher craft of the better class, which I received as comfortable doctrine, and creditable to the town. And if he preached other than right doctrine, wherefore did his superiors in the Carthusian convent permit it? If the shepherds turn a wolf in sheep's clothing into the flock, they should not blame the sheep for being worried."

"They endured his preaching, nay, they encouraged it," said Catharine, "while the vices of the laity, the contentions of the nobles, and