

"I will, by my honor—whenever I receive her as such—Mark that reserration, John," said he aside to Ramorny.

The persons who were in the boat caught up the tidings, and concluding a reconciliation was about to take place betwixt the royal couple, exhorted Louise to profit by her good fortune and add herself to the Duchess of Rothsay's train. Several offered her some acknowledgment for the exercise of her talents.

During this moment of delay, Ramorny whispered to Dwining: "Make in, knave, with some objection. This addition is one too many. Rouse thy wits, while I speak a word with Henshaw."

"If I might presume to speak," said Dwining, "as one who have made my studies both in Spain and Arabia, I would say, my lord, that the sickness has appeared in Edinburgh, and that there may be risk in admitting this young wanderer into your Highness's vicinity."

"Ah! and what is it to thee," said Rothsay, "whether I choose to be poisoned by the pestilence or the potheary? Must thou too needs thwart my humor?"

While the Prince thus silenced the remonstrances of Dwining, Sir John Ramorny had snatched a moment to learn from Henshaw that the removal of the Duchess of Rothsay from Falkland was still kept profoundly secret, and that Catharine Glover would arrive there that evening or the next morning, in expectation of being taken under the noble lady's protection.

The Duke of Rothsay, deeply plunged in thought, received this intimation so coldly, that Ramorny took the liberty of remonstrating. "This, my lord," he said, "is playing the spoiled child of fortune. You wish for liberty—it comes. You wish for beauty—it awaits you, with just so much delay as to render the boon more precious. Even your slightest desires seem a law to the Fates; for you desire music when it seems most distant, and the lute and song are at your hand. These things, so sent, should be enjoyed, else we are but like petted children, who break and throw from them the toys they have wept themselves sick for."

"To enjoy pleasure, Ramorny," said the Prince, "a man should have suffered pain, as it requires fasting to gain a good appetite. We, who can have all for a wish, little enjoy that all when we have possessed it. Seest thou yonder thick cloud, which is about to burst to rain? It seems to stifle me—the waters look dark and lurid—the shores have lost their beautiful form—"

"My lord, forgive your servant," said Ramorny. "You indulge a powerful imagination, as an unskillful horseman permits a fiery steed to rear until he falls back on his master and crushes him. I pray you shake off this lethargy. Shall the glee-maiden make some music?"

"Let her—but it must be melancholy; all mirth would at this moment jar on my ear."

The maiden sung a melancholy dirge in Norman French; the words, of which the following is an imitation, were united to a tune as doleful as they are themselves:

1.  
Yes, thou mayst sigh,  
And look once more at all around,  
At stream and bank, and sky and ground,  
Thy life its final course has found,  
And thou must die.

2.  
Yes, lay thee down,  
And while thy struggling pulses flutter,  
Bid the gray monk his soul mass mutter,  
And the deep bell his death-tone utter—  
Thy life is gone.

3.  
Be not afraid.  
'Tis but a pang, and then a thrill,  
A fever fit, and then a chill;  
And then an end of human ill,  
For thou art dead.

The Prince made no observation on the music; and the maiden, at Ramorny's beck, went on from time to time with her minstrel craft, until the evening sunk down into rain, first soft and gentle, at length in great quantities, and accompanied by a cold wind. There was neither cloak nor covering for the Prince, and he sullenly rejected that which Ramorny offered.

"It is not for Rothsay to wear your cast garments, Sir John—this melted snow, which I feel pierce me to the very marrow, I am now encountering by your fault. Why did you presume to put off the boat without my servants and apparel?"

Ramorny did not attempt an exculpation; for he knew the Prince was in one of those humors, when to enlarge upon a grievance was more pleasing to him than to have his mouth stopped by any reasonable apology. In sullen silence, or amid unsuppressed chiding, the boat arrived at the fishing village of Newburgh. The party landed, and found horses in readiness, which, indeed, Ramorny had long since provided for the occasion. Their quality underwent the Prince's bitter sarcasm, expressed to Ramorny sometimes by direct words, oftener by bitter gibes. At length they were mounted, and rode on through the closing night, and the falling rain, the Prince leading the way with reckless haste. The glee-maiden, mounted by his express order, attended them; and well for her that, accustomed to severe weather, and exercise both on foot and horseback, she supported as firmly as the men the fatigues of the nocturnal ride. Ramorny was compelled to keep at the Prince's rein, being under no small anxiety lest, in his wayward fit, he might ride off from him entirely, and, taking refuge in the house of some loyal baron, escape the snare which was spread for him. He therefore suffered inexpressibly during the ride, both in mind and in body.

At length the forest of Falkland received them, and a glimpse of the moon showed the

dark and huge tower, an appendage of royalty itself, though granted for a season to the Duke of Albany. On a signal given the drawbridge fell. Torches glared in the court-yard, menials attended, and the Prince, assisted from horseback, was ushered into an apartment, where Ramorny waited on him together with Dwining, and entreated him to take the leech's advice. The Duke of Rothsay repulsed the proposal, haughtily ordered his bed to be prepared, and, having stood for some time shivering in his dank garments beside a large blazing fire, he retired to his apartment without taking leave of any one.

"You see the peevish humor of this childish boy, now," said Ramorny to Dwining; "can you wonder that a servant, who has done so much for him as I have, should be tired of such a master?"

"No, truly," said Dwining, "that and the promised Earldom of Lindores would shake any man's fidelity. But shall we commence with him this evening? He has, if eye and cheek speak true, the foundation of a fever within him, which will make our work easy, while it will seem the effect of nature."

"It is an opportunity lost," said Ramorny; "but we must delay our blow till he has seen this beauty, Catharine Glover. She may be hereafter a witness, that she saw him in good health and master of his own motions, a brief space before—you understand me?"

Dwining nodded assent, and added,

"There is no time lost; for there is little difficulty in blighting a flower, exhausted from having been made to bloom too soon."

#### CHAPTER XXXI.

Ah me! in sooth he was a shameless wight,  
Sore given to revel and ungodly glee;  
Few earthly things found favor in his sight,  
Save concubines and carnal companie,  
And flaunting wassailers of high and low degree.

Byron.

WITH the next morning the humor of the Duke of Rothsay was changed. He complained, indeed, of pain and fever, but they rather seemed to stimulate than to overwhelm him. He was familiar with Ramorny; and, though he said nothing on the subject of the preceding night, it was plain he remembered what he desired to obliterate from the memory of his followers—the ill-humor he had then displayed. He was civil to every one, and jested with Ramorny on the subject of Catharine's arrival.

"How surprised will the pretty prude be at seeing herself in a family of men, when she expects to be admitted amongst the hoods and pinners of Dame Marjory's waiting-women! Thou hast not many of the tender sex in thy household, I take it, Ramorny?"

"Faith, none—except the minstrel wench—out a household drudge or two whom we may not dispense with. By the way, she is anxiously inquiring after the mistress your Highness

promised to prefer her to.—Shall I dismiss her, to hunt for her new mistress at leisure?"

"By no means, she will serve to amuse Catharine.—And, hark you, were it not well to receive that coy jillet with something of a mumming?"

"How mean you, my lord?"

"Thou art dull, man.—We will not disappoint her, since she expects to find the Duchess of Rothsay—I will be Duke and Duchess in my own person."

"Still I do not comprehend."

"No one so dull as a wit," said the Prince, "when he does not hit off the scent at once.—My Duchess, as they call her, has been in as great a hurry to run away from Falkland, as I to come hither. We have both left our apparel behind. There is as much female trumpery in the wardrobe adjoining to my sleeping-room, as would equip a whole carnival. Look you, I will play Dame Marjory, disposed on this day-bed here, with a mourning veil and a wreath of willow, to show my forsaken plight; thou, John, wilt look starch and stiff enough for her Galwegian maid of honor, the Countess Hernigld; and Dwining shall present the old Hecate, her nurse,—only she hath more beard on her upper lip than Dwining on his whole face, and skull to boot. He should have the commodity of a beard to set her forth conformably. Get thy kitchen drudges, and what passable pages thou hast with thee, to make my women of the bedroom. Hearest thou?—about it instantly."

Ramorny hested into the anteroom, and told Dwining the Prince's device.

"Do thou look to humor the fool," he said; "I care not how little I see him, knowing what is to be done."

"Trust all to me," said the physician, shrugging his shoulders. "What sort of a butcher is he that can cut the lamb's throat, yet is afraid to hear it bleat?"

"Tush, fear not my constancy.—I cannot forget that he would have cast me into the cloister with as little regard as if he threw away the truncheon of a broken lance. Begone—yet stay—ere you go to arrange this silly pageant, something must be settled to impose on the thick-witted Charteris. He is like enough, should he be left in the belief that the Duchess of Rothsay is still here, and Catharine Glover in attendance on her, to come down with offers of service, and the like, when, as I need scarce tell thee, his presence would be inconvenient. Indeed, this is the more likely, that some folk have given a warmer name to the iron-headed Knight's great and tender patronage of this damsel."

"With that hint, let me alone to deal with him. I will send him such a letter, that, for this month, he shall hold himself as ready for a journey to hell as to Falkland.—Can you tell me the name of the Duchess's confessor?"

"Waltheof, a gray friar."

"Enough—then here I start."

In a few minutes, for he was a clerk of rare ce

erity, Dwining finished a letter, which he placed in Ramorny's hand.

"This is admirable, and would have made thy fortune with Rothsay—I think I should have been too jealous to trust thee in his household, save that his day is closed."

"Read it aloud," said Dwining, "that we may judge if it goes trippingly off," and Ramorny read as follows: "By command of our high and mighty Princess Marjory, Duchess of Rothsay, and so forth, we, Waltheof, unworthy brother of the order of St. Francis, do thee, Sir Patrick Charteris, Knight, of Kinfauns, to know, that her Highness marvels much at the temerity with which you have sent to her presence a woman, of whose fame she can judge but lightly, seeing she hath made her abode, without any necessity, for more than a week in thine own castle, without company of any other females, saving menials, of which foul cohabitation the savor is gone up through Fife, Angus, and Perthshire. Nevertheless, her Highness, considering the case as one of human frailty, hath not caused this wanton one to be scourged with nettles, or otherwise to dree penance; but as two good brethren of the convent of Lindores, the Fathers Thickskull and Dundermore, have been summoned up to the Highlands upon an especial call, her highness hath committed to their care this maiden Catharine, with charge to convey her to her father, whom she states to be residing beside Loch Tay, under whose protection she will find a situation more fitting her qualities and habits than the Castle of Falkland, while her highness the Duchess of Rothsay abides there. She hath charged the said reverend brothers so to deal with the young woman, as may give her a sense of the sin of incontinence, and she commendeth thee to confession and penitence.—Signed, Waltheof, by command of an high and mighty Princess"—and so forth.

When he had finished, "Excellent—excellent!" Ramorny exclaimed. "This unexpected rebuff will drive Charteris mad! He hath been long making a sort of homage to this lady, and to find himself suspected of incontinence, when he was expecting the full credit of a charitable action, will altogether confound him; and, as thou say'st, it will be long enough ere he come hither to look after the damsel, or do honor to the dame.—But away to thy pageant, while I prepare that which shall close the pageant for ever."

It was an hour before noon, when Catharine, escorted by old Henshaw and a groom of the Knight of Kinfauns, arrived before the lordly tower of Falkland. The broad banner which was displayed from it bore the arms of Rothsay, the servants who appeared wore the colors of the Prince's household, all confirming the general belief that the Duchess still resided there. Catharine's heart throbbled, for she had heard that the Duchess had the pride as well as the high courage of the house of Douglas, and felt uncertain touching the reception she was to experience. On entering the Castle, she observed that the

train was smaller than she had expected, but as the Duchess lived in close retirement, she was little surprised at this. In a species of ante-room she was met by a little old woman, who seemed bent double with age, and supported herself upon an ebony staff.

"Truly thou art welcome, fair daughter," said she, saluting Catharine, "and, as I may say, to an afflicted house; and I trust" (once more saluting her) "thou wilt be a consolation to my precious and right royal daughter the Duchess. Sit thee down, my child, till I see whether my lady be at leisure to receive thee. Ah, my child, thou art very lovely indeed, if Our Lady hath given to thee a soul to match with so fair a body."

With that the counterfeit old woman crept into the next apartment, where she found Rothsay in the masquerading habit he had prepared, and Ramorny, who had evaded taking part in the pageant, in his ordinary attire.

"Thou art a precious rascal, Sir Doctor," said the Prince; "by my honor I think thou couldst find in thy heart to play out the whole play thyself, lover's part and all."

"If it were to save your Highness trouble," said the leech, with his usual subdued laugh.

"No, no," said Rothsay, "I'll never need thy help, man—and tell me now, how look I, thus disposed on the couch—languishing and ladylike, ha?"

"Something too fine-complexioned and soft-featured for the Lady Marjory of Douglas, if I may presume to say so," said the leech.

"Away, villain, and marshal in this fair frost-piece—fear not she will complain of my effeminacy—and thou, Ramorny, away also."

As the knight left the apartment by one door, the fictitious old woman ushered in Catharine Glover by another. The room had been carefully darkened to twilight, so that Catharine saw the apparently female figure stretched on the couch without the least suspicion.

"Is that the maiden?" asked Rothsay, in a voice naturally sweet, and now carefully modulated to a whispering tone—"Let her approach, Griselda, and kiss our hand."

The supposed nurse led the trembling maiden forward to the side of the couch, and signed to her to kneel. Catharine did so, and kissed with much devotion and simplicity the gloved hand which the counterfeit Duchess extended to her.

"Be not afraid," said the same musical voice; "in me you only see a melancholy example of the vanity of human greatness—happy those, my child, whose rank places them beneath the storms of state."

While he spoke, he put his arms around Catharine's neck and drew her towards him, as if to salute her in token of welcome. But the kiss was bestowed with an earnestness which so much overacted the part of the fair patroness, that Catharine, concluding the Duchess had lost her senses, screamed aloud.

"Peace, fool! it is I—David of Rothsay."

Catharine looked around her—the nurse was gone, and the Duke tearing off his veil, she saw herself in the power of a daring young libertine.

"Now be present with me, Heaven!" she said; "and thou wilt, if I forsake not myself."

As this resolution darted through her mind, she repressed her disposition to scream, and, as far as she might, strove to conceal her fear.

"The jest hath been played," she said, with as much firmness as she could assume; "may I entreat that your Highness will now unhand me," for he still kept hold of her arm.

"Nay, my pretty captive, straggle not—why should you fear?"

"I do not struggle, my lord. As you are pleased to detain me, I will not, by striving, provoke you to use me ill, and give pain to yourself, when you have time to think."

"Why, thou traitress, thou hast held me captive for months," said the Prince; "and wilt thou not let me hold thee for a moment?"

"This were gallantry, my lord, were it in the streets of Perth, where I might listen or escape as I listed—it is tyranny here."

"And if I did let thee go, whither wouldst thou fly?" said Rothsay. "The bridges are up—the portullis down—and the men who follow me are strangely deaf to a peevish maiden's squalls. Be kind, therefore, and you shall know what it is to oblige a Prince."

"Unloose me, then, my lord, and hear me appeal from thyself to myself—from Rothsay to the Prince of Scotland.—I am the daughter of an humble but honest citizen. I am, I may well-nigh say, the spouse of a brave and honest man. If I have given your Highness any encouragement for what you have done, it has been unintentional. Thus forewarned, I entreat you to forego your power over me, and suffer me to depart. Your Highness can obtain nothing from me, save by means equally unworthy of knighthood or manhood."

"You are bold, Catharine," said the Prince, "but neither as a knight nor a man can I avoid accepting a defiance. I must teach you the risk of such challenges."

While he spoke, he attempted to throw his arms again around her; but she eluded his grasp, and proceeded in the same tone of firm decision.

"My strength, my lord, is as great to defend myself in an honorable strife, as yours can be to assail me with a most dishonorable purpose. Do not shame yourself and me by putting it to the combat. You may stun me with blows, or you may call aid to overpower me; but, otherwise, you will fail of your purpose."

"What a brute you would make me!" said the Prince. "The force I would use is no more than excuses women in yielding to their own weakness."

He sat down in some emotion.

"Then keep it," said Catharine, "for those women who desire such an excuse. My resistance is that of the most determined mind, which

love of honor and fear of shame ever inspired. Alas! my lord, could you succeed, you would but break every bond between me and life—between yourself and honor. I have been trained fraudulently here, by what decoys I know not; but were I to go dishonored hence, it would be to denounce the destroyer of my happiness to every quarter of Europe. I would take the palmer's staff in my hand, and wherever chivalry is honored, or the word Scotland has been heard, I would proclaim the heir of a hundred kings, the son of the godly Robert Stewart, the heir of the heroic Bruce—a truthless, faithless man, unworthy of the crown he expects, and of the spurs he wears. Every lady in wide Europe would hold your name too foul for her lips—every worthy knight would hold you a baffled, forsworn caitiff, false to the first vow of arms, the protection of woman, and the defence of the feeble."

Rothsay resumed his seat, and looked at her with a countenance in which resentment was mingled with admiration. "You forget to whom you speak, maiden. Know the distinction I have offered you is one for which hundreds, whose trains you are born to bear, would feel gratitude."

"Once more, my lord," resumed Catharine, "keep these favors for those by whom they are prized; or rather reserve your time and your health for other and nobler pursuits—for the defence of your country and the happiness of your subjects. Alas, my lord! how willingly would an exulting people receive you for their chief!—How gladly would they close around you, did you show desire to head them against the oppression of the mighty, the violence of the lawless, the seduction of the vicious, and the tyranny of the hypocrite!"

The Duke of Rothsay, whose virtuous feelings were as easily excited as they were evanescent, was affected by the enthusiasm with which she spoke. "Forgive me, if I have alarmed you, maiden," he said; "thou art too noble-minded to be the toy of passing pleasure, for which my mistake destined thee; and I, even were thy birth worthy of thy noble spirit and transcendent beauty, have no heart to give thee; for by the homage of the heart only should such as thou be wooed. But my hopes have been blighted, Catharine—the only woman I ever loved has been torn from me in the very wantonness of policy, and a wife imposed on me whom I must ever detest, even had she the loveliness and softness which alone can render a woman amiable in my eyes. My health is fading even in early youth; and all that is left for me is to snatch such flowers as the short passage from life to the grave will now present. Look at my hectic cheek—feel, if you will, my intermitting pulse; and pity me, and excuse me, if I, whose rights as a prince and as a man have been trampled upon and usurped, feel occasional indifference towards the rights of others, and indulge a selfish desire to gratify the wish of the passing moment."

"Oh, my lord!" exclaimed Catharine, with

the enthusiasm which belonged to her character—"I will call you my dear lord,—for dear must the Heir of Bruce be to every child of Scotland,—let me not, I pray, hear you speak thus! Your glorious ancestor endured exile, persecution, the night of famine, and the day of unequal combat, to free his country,—do you practise the like self-denial to free yourself. Tear yourself from those who find their own way to greatness smoothed by feeding your follies. Distrust you dark Ramorny!—You know it not, I am sure—you could not know;—but the wretch who could urge the daughter to courses of shame by threatening the life of the aged father, is capable of all that is vile—all that is treacherous!"

"Did Ramorny do this?" said the Prince.

"He did indeed, my lord, and he dares not deny it."

"It shall be looked to," answered the Duke of Rothsay. "I have ceased to love him; but he has suffered much for my sake, and I must see his services honorably requited."

"His services!—Oh, my lord, if chronicles speak true, such services brought Troy to ruins, and gave the infidels possession of Spain."

"Hush, maiden; speak within compass, I pray you," said the Prince, rising up. "Our conference ends here."

"Yet one word, my Lord Duke of Rothsay," said Catharine, with animation, while her beautiful countenance resembled that of an admonitory angel—"I cannot tell what impels me to speak thus boldly; but the fire burns within me, and will break out. Leave this castle without an hour's delay! the air is unwholesome for you. Dismiss this Ramorny, before the day is ten minutes older! his company is most dangerous."

"What reason have you for saying this?"

"None in especial," answered Catharine, abashed at her own eagerness,—“none, perhaps; excepting my fears for your safety."

"To vague fears, the Heir of Bruce must not listen.—What, ho! who waits without?"

Ramorny entered, and bowed low to the Duke and to the maiden, whom, perhaps, he considered as likely to be preferred to the post of favorite Sultana, and, therefore, entitled to a courteous obeisance.

"Ramorny," said the Prince, "is there in the household any female of reputation, who is fit to wait on this young woman, till we can send her where she may desire to go?"

"I fear," replied Ramorny, "if it displease not your Highness to hear the truth, your household is indifferently provided in that way; and that, to speak the very verity, the glee-maiden is the most decorous amongst us."

"Let her wait upon this young person, then, since better may not be.—And take patience, maiden, for a few hours."

Catharine retired.

"So, my lord,—part you so soon from the Fair Maid of Perth? This is, indeed, the very wantonness of victory."

"There is neither victory nor defeat in the case," returned the Prince, dryly. "The girl loves me not; nor do I love her well enough to torment myself concerning her scruples."

"The chaste Malcolm the Maiden revived in one of his descendants!" said Ramorny.

"Favor me, sir, by a truce to your wit, or by choosing a different subject for its career. It is noon, I believe, and you will oblige me by commanding them to serve up dinner."

Ramorny left the room, but Rothsay thought he discovered a smile upon his countenance; and to be the subject of this man's satire, gave him no ordinary degree of pain. He summoned, however, the knight to his table, and even admitted Dwining to the same honor. The conversation was of a lively and dissolute cast, a tone encouraged by the Prince, as if designing to counterbalance the gravity of his morals in the morning, which Ramorny, who was read in old chronicles, had the boldness to liken to the continence of Scipio.

The banquet, notwithstanding the Duke's indifferent health, was protracted in idle wantonness far beyond the rules of temperance; and, whether owing simply to the strength of the wine which he drank, or the weakness of his constitution, or, as it is probable, because the last wine which he quaffed had been adulterated by Dwining, it so happened that the Prince, towards the end of the repast, fell into a lethargic sleep, from which it seemed impossible to rouse him. Sir John Ramorny and Dwining carried him to his chamber, accepting no other assistance than that of another person, whom we will afterwards give name to.

Next morning, it was announced that the Prince was taken ill of an infectious disorder; and to prevent its spreading through the household, no one was admitted to wait on him save his late Master of Horse, the physician Dwining, and the domestic already mentioned; one of whom seemed always to remain in the apartment, while the others observed a degree of precaution respecting their intercourse with the rest of the family, so strict as to maintain the belief that he was dangerously ill of an infectious disorder.

#### CHAPTER XXXII.

In winter's tedious nights, sit by the fire  
With good old folks; and let them tell thee tales  
Of woful ages, long ago betid;  
And, ere thou bid good-night, to quit their grief,  
Tell thou the lamentable fall of me.

KING RICHARD II., *Act V. Scene 1.*

FAR different had been the fate of the misguided Heir of Scotland, from that which was publicly given out in the town of Falkland. His ambitious uncle had determined on his death, as the means of removing the first and most formidable barrier betwixt his own family and the throne. James, the younger son of the King, was a mere boy, who might at more leisure be easily set aside. Ramorny's views of aggrandizement, and

the resentment which he had latterly entertained against his master, made him a willing agent in young Rothsay's destruction. Dwining's love of gold, and his native malignity of disposition, rendered him equally forward. It had been resolved, with the most calculating cruelty, that all means which might leave behind marks of violence were to be carefully avoided, and the extinction of life suffered to take place of itself, by privation of every kind acting upon a frail and impaired constitution. The Prince of Scotland was not to be murdered, as Ramorny had expressed himself on another occasion,—he was only to cease to exist.

Rothsay's bed-chamber in the Tower of Falkland was well adapted for the execution of such a horrible project. A small narrow staircase, scarce known to exist, opened from thence by a trap-door to the subterranean dungeons of the castle, through a passage by which the feudal lord was wont to visit, in private, and in disguise, the inhabitants of those miserable regions. By this staircase the villains conveyed the insensible Prince to the lowest dungeon of the castle, so deep in the bowels of the earth, that no cries or groans, it was supposed, could possibly be heard, while the strength of its door and fastenings must for a long time have defied force, even if the entrance could have been discovered. Bonthron, who had been saved from the gallows for the purpose, was the willing agent of Ramorny's unparalleled cruelty to his misled and betrayed patron.

This wretch revisited the dungeon at the time when the Prince's lethargy began to wear off, and when, awakening to sensation, he felt himself deadly cold, unable to move, and oppressed with fetters, which scarce permitted him to stir from the dank straw on which he was laid. His first idea was, that he was in a fearful dream—his next brought a confused augury of the truth. He called, shouted—yelled at length in frenzy,—but no assistance came, and he was only answered by the vaulted roof of the dungeon. The agent of Hell heard these agonizing screams, and deliberately reckoned them against the taunts and reproaches with which Rothsay had expressed his instinctive aversion to him. When, exhausted and hopeless, the unhappy youth remained silent, the savage resolved to present himself before the eyes of his prisoner. The locks were drawn, the chain fell; the Prince raised himself as high as his fetters permitted—a red glare, against which he was fain to shut his eye, streamed through the vault; and when he opened them again, it was on the ghastly form of one whom he had reason to think dead. He sunk back in horror. "I am judged and condemned!" he exclaimed; "and the most abhorred fiend in the infernal regions is sent to torment me!"

"I live, my lord," said Bonthron; "and that you may live and enjoy life, be pleased to sit up and eat your victuals."

"Free me from these irons," said the Prince,

—"release me from this dungeon,—and dog as thou art, thou shalt be the richest man in Scotland."

"If you will give me the weight of your shackles in gold," said Bonthron, "I would rather see the iron on you than have the treasure myself!—But look up—you were wont to love delicate fare—behold how I have catered for you." The wretch, with fiendish glee, unfolded a piece of raw hide covering the bundle which he bore under his arm, and, passing the light to and fro before it, showed the unhappy Prince a bull's head recently hewn from the trunk, and known in Scotland as the certain signal of death. He placed it at the foot of the bed, or rather lair, on which the Prince lay—"Be moderate in your food," he said; "it is like to be long ere thou get'st another meal."

"Tell me but one thing, wretch," said the Prince. "Does Ramorny know of this practice?"

"How else hadst thou been decoyed hither?—Poor woodcock, thou art snared!" answered the murderer.

With these words the door shut, the bolts resounded, and the unhappy Prince was left to darkness, solitude, and misery. "Oh, my father!—my prophetic father!—The staff I leaned on has, indeed, proved a spear!" We will not dwell on the subsequent hours, nay days, of bodily agony and mental despair.

But it was not the pleasure of Heaven that so great a crime should be perpetrated with impunity.

Catharine Glover and the glee-woman, neglected by the other inmates, who seemed to be engaged with the tidings of the Prince's illness, were, however, refused permission to leave the Castle, until it should be seen how this alarming disease was to terminate, and whether it was actually an infectious sickness. Forced on each other's society, the two desolate women became companions, if not friends; and the union drew somewhat closer, when Catharine discovered that this was the same female minstrel on whose account Henry Wynd had fallen under her displeasure. She now heard his complete vindication, and listened with ardor to the praises which Louise heaped on her gallant protector. On the other hand, the minstrel, who felt the superiority of Catharine's station and character, willingly dwelt upon a theme which seemed to please her, and recorded her gratitude to the stout Smith in the little song of "Bold and True," which was long a favorite in Scotland.

Oh, Bold and True,  
In bonnet blue,  
That fear or falsehood never knew;  
Whose heart was loyal to his word,  
Whose hand was faithful to his sword—  
Seek Europe wide from sea to sea,  
But bonny Blue-cap still for me!  
I've seen Almain's proud champions prance—  
Have seen the gallant knights of France,  
Unrivall'd with the sword and lance—

Has seen the sons of England true  
Wield the brown bill, and bend the yew,  
Search France the fair, and England free,  
But bonny Blue-cap still for me!

In short, though Louise's disreputable occupation would have been in other circumstances an objection to Catharine's voluntarily frequenting her company, yet, forced together as they now were, she found her an humble and accommodating companion.

They lived in this manner for four or five days, and, in order to avoid as much as possible the gaze and perhaps the incivility, of the menials in the offices, they prepared their food in their own apartment. In the absolutely necessary intercourse with domestics, Louise, more accustomed to expedients, bolder by habit and desirous to please Catharine, willingly took on herself the trouble of getting from the pantler the materials of their slender meal, and of arranging it with the dexterity of her country.

The glee-woman had been abroad for this purpose upon the sixth day, a little before noon; and the desire of fresh air, or the hope to find some salad or pot-herbs, or at least an early flower or two, with which to deck their board, had carried her into the small garden appertaining to the castle. She re-entered her apartment in the tower with a countenance pale as ashes, and a frame which trembled like an aspen-leaf. Her terror instantly extended itself to Catharine, who could hardly find words to ask what new misfortune had occurred.

"Is the Duke of Rothsay dead?"

"Worse! they are starving him alive."

"Madness, woman!"

"No, no, no, no!" said Louise, speaking under her breath, and huddling her words so thick upon each other, that Catharine could hardly catch the sense. I was seeking for flowers to dress your pottage, because you said you loved them yesterday—my poor little dog, thrusting himself into a thicket of yew and holly bushes that grew out of some old ruins close to the castle-wall, came back whining and howling. I crept forward to see what might be the cause—and oh! I heard a groaning as of one in extreme pain, but so faint that it seemed to arise out of the very depth of the earth. At length, I found it proceeded from a small rent in the wall, covered with ivy; and when I laid my ear close to the opening, I could hear the Prince's voice distinctly say,—'It cannot now last long;' and then it sunk away in something like a prayer."

"Gracious Heaven! did you speak to him?"

"I said, 'Is it you, my lord?' and the answer was 'Who mocks me with that title?'—I asked him if I could help him, and he answered with a voice I shall never forget,—'Food!—food!—I die of famine!' So I came hither to tell you.—What is to be done?—Shall we alarm the nouse?"

"Alas! that were more likely to destroy than to aid him," said Catharine.

"And what then shall we do?" said Louise.

"I know not yet," said Catharine, prompt and bold on occasions of moment, though yielding to her companion in ingenuity of resource on ordinary occasions. "I know not yet—but something we will do—the blood of Bruce shall not die unaided."

So saying, she seized the small cruise which contained their soup, and the meat of which it was made, wrapped some thin cakes which she had baked, into the fold of her plaid, and, beckoning her companion to follow with a vessel of milk, also part of their provisions, she hastened towards the garden.

"So, our fair vestal is stirring abroad?" said the only man she met, who was one of the menials; but Catharine passed on without notice or reply, and gained the little garden without farther interruption.

Louise indicated to her a heap of ruins, which, covered with underwood, was close to the castle-wall. It had probably been originally a projection from the building; and the small fissure which communicated with the dungeon, contrived for air, had terminated within it. But the aperture had been a little enlarged by decay, and admitted a dim ray of light to its recesses, although it could not be observed by those who visited the place with torch-light aids.

"Here is dead silence," said Catharine, after she had listened attentively for a moment,—  
"Heaven and earth, he is gone!"

"We must risk something," said her companion, and ran her fingers over the strings of her guitar.

A sigh was the only answer from the depth of the dungeon. Catharine then ventured to speak. "I am here, my lord—I am here, with food and drink."

"Ha! Ramorny?—The jest comes too late—I am dying," was the answer.

"His brain is turned, and no wonder," thought Catharine; but whilst there is life, there may be hope.

"It is I, my lord, Catharine Glover—I have food, if I could pass it safely to you."

"Heaven bless thee, maiden! I thought the pain was over, but it glows again within me at the name of food."

"The food is here, but hew, ah how, can I pass it to you? the chink is so narrow, the wall is so thick! Yet there is a remedy—I have it. Quick, Louise; cut me a willow bough, the tallest you can find."

The glee-maiden obeyed, and by means of a cleft in the top of the wand, Catharine transmitted several morsels of the soft cakes, soaked in broth, which served at once for food and for drink.

The unfortunate young man ate little, and with difficulty, but prayed for a thousand blessings on the head of his comforter. "I had destined thee to be the slave of my vices," he said, "and yet thou triest to become the preserver of my life! But away, and save thyself."

"I will return with food as I shall see opportunity," said Catharine, just as the glee-maiden plucked her sleeve, and desired her to be silent, and stand close.

Both couched among the ruins, and they heard the voices of Ramorny and the mediciner in close conversation.

"He is stronger than I thought," said the former, in a low croaking tone. "How long held out Dalwolsy, when the Knight of Liddesdale prisoned him in his Castle of Hermitage?"

"For a fortnight," answered Dwining; "but he was a strong man, and had some assistance by grain which fell from a granary above his prison-house."\*

"Were it not better end the matter more speedily? The Black Douglas comes this way. He is not in Albany's secret. He will demand to see the Prince, and all *must* be over ere he comes."

They passed on in their dark and fatal conversation.

"Now gain we the tower," said Catharine to her companion, when she saw they had left the garden. "I had a plan of escape for myself—I will turn it into one of rescue for the Prince. The dey-woman enters the Castle about vesper-time, and usually leaves her cloak in the passage as she goes into the pantler's office with the milk. Take thou the cloak, muffle thyself close, and pass the warder boldly; he is usually drunken at that hour, and thou wilt go, as the dey-woman, unchallenged through gate and along bridge, if thou bear thyself with confidence. Then away to meet the Black Douglas; he is our nearest and only aid."

"But," said Louise, "is he not that terrible lord who threatened me with shame and punishment?"

"Believe it," said Catharine, "such as thou or I never dwelt an hour in the Douglas's memory, either for good or evil. Tell him that his son-in-law, the Prince of Scotland dies—treacherously famished—in Falkland Castle, and thou wilt merit not pardon only, but reward."

"I care not for reward," said Louise; "the deed will reward itself. But, methinks, to stay is more dangerous than to go—let me stay, then, and nourish the unhappy Prince, and do you depart to bring help. If they kill me before you return, I leave you my poor lute, and pray you to be kind to my poor Charlot."

"No, Louise," replied Catharine, "you are a more privileged and experienced wanderer than I—do you go—and if you find me dead on your return, as may well chance, give my poor father this ring, and a lock of my hair, and say, Catharine died in endeavoring to save the blood of Bruce. And give this other lock to Henry; say, Catharine

thought of him to the last; and that if he has judged her too scrupulous touching the blood of others, he will then know it was not because she valued her own."

They sobbed in each other's arms; and the intervening hours till evening were spent in endeavoring to devise some better mode of supplying the captive with nourishment, and in the construction of a tube, composed of hollow reeds, slipping into each other, by which liquids might be conveyed to him. The bell of the village church of Falkland tolled to vespers. The dey,\* or farm-woman, entered with her pitchers, to deliver the milk for the family, and to hear and tell the news stirring. She had scarcely entered the kitchen when the female minstrel, again throwing herself in Catharine's arms and assuring her of her unalterable fidelity, crept in silence down-stairs, the little dog under her arm. A moment after, she was seen by the breathless Catharine, wrapt in the dey-woman's cloak, and walking composedly across the drawbridge.

"So," said the warder, "you return early tonight, May Bridget? Small mirth towards in the hall—Ha, wench! Sick times are sad times!"

"I have forgotten my tallies," said the ready-witted Frenchwoman, "and will return in the skinning of a bowie."†

She went onward, avoiding the village of Falkland, and took a footpath which led through the park. Catharine breathed freely, and blessed God, when she saw her lost in the distance. It was another anxious hour for Catharine, which occurred before the escape of the fugitive was discovered. This happened so soon as the dey-girl, having taken an hour to perform a task which ten minutes might have accomplished, was about to return, and discovered that some one had taken away her gray frieze cloak. A strict search was set on foot; at length the women of the house remembered the glee-maiden, and ventured to suggest her as one not unlikely to exchange an old cloak for a new one. The warder, strictly questioned, averred, he saw the dey-woman depart immediately after vespers; and on this being contradicted by the party herself, he could suggest, as the only alternative, that it must needs have been the devil.

As, however, the glee-woman could not be found, the real circumstances of the case were easily guessed at; and the steward went to inform Sir John Ramorny and Dwining, who were now scarcely ever separate, of the escape of one of their female captives. Every thing awakens the suspicions of the guilty. They looked on each other with faces of dismay, and then went together to the humble apartment of Catharine, that they might take her as much

\* Sir Alexander Ramsay of Dalhousie, having irritated William Douglas, Lord of Galloway, by obtaining the Sheriffship of Teviotdale, which the haughty baron considered due to himself, was surprised in Hawick, while exercising his office, and confined in Hermitage Castle until he died of famine in June, A. D. 1342. Goscroft mentions the circumstance of the grain dropping from the cornloft.—P. 75.

\* Hence, perhaps, dairy-woman and dairy.

† i. e., A small milk-pail.—One of the sweetest couplets in *The Gentle Shepherd* is—

"To bear the milk-bowie no pain was to me,  
When I at the buchtin forgather'd wi' thee."

as possible by surprise, while they inquired into the facts attending Louise's disappearance.

"Where is your companion, young woman?" said Ramorny, in a tone of austere gravity.

"I have no companion, here," answered Catharine.

"Trifle not," replied the Knight; "I mean the glee-maiden, who lately dwelt in this chamber with you."

"She is gone, they tell me,"—said Catharine, "gone about an hour since."

"And whither?" said Dwining.

"How," answered Catharine, "should I know which way a professed wanderer may choose to travel? She was tired no doubt of a solitary life, so different from the scenes of feasting and dancing which her trade leads her to frequent. She is gone, and the only wonder is that she should have stayed so long."

"This, then," said Ramorny, "is all you have to tell us."

"All that I have to tell you, Sir John," answered Catharine, firmly; "and if the Prince himself inquire, I can tell him no more."

"There is little danger of his again doing you the honor to speak to you in person," said Ramorny, "even if Scotland should escape being rendered miserable by the sad event of his decease."

"Is the Duke of Rothsay so very ill?" asked Catharine.

"No help, save in Heaven," answered Ramorny, looking upward.

"Then may there yet be help there," said Catharine, "if human aid prove unavailing!"

"Amen!" said Ramorny, with the most determined gravity; while Dwining adopted a face fit to echo the feeling, though it seemed to cost him a painful struggle to suppress his sneering, yet soft laugh of triumph, which was peculiarly excited by any thing having a religious tendency.

"And it is men—earthly men, and not incarnate devils, who thus appeal to Heaven, while they are devouring by inches the life-blood of their hapless master!" muttered Catharine, as her two baffled inquisitors left the apartment.—"Why sleeps the thunder?—But it will roll ere long, and oh! may it be to preserve as well as to punish!"

The hour of dinner alone afforded a space, when, all in the Castle being occupied with that meal, Catharine thought she had the best opportunity of venturing to the breach in the wall, with the least chance of being observed. In waiting for the hour, she observed some stir in the Castle, which had been silent as the grave ever since the seclusion of the Duke of Rothsay. The portcullis was lowered and raised, and the creaking of the machinery was intermingled with the tramp of horse, as men-at-arms went out and returned with steeds hard-ridden and covered with foam. She observed, too, that such domestics as she casually saw from her

window were in arms. All this made her heart throb high, for it augured the approach of rescue; and besides, the bustle left the little garden more lonely than ever. At length, the hour of noon arrived; she had taken care to provide, under pretence of her own wishes, which the pantler seemed disposed to indulge, such articles of food as could be the most easily conveyed to the unhappy captive. She whispered to intimate her presence—there was no answer—she spoke louder, still there was silence.

"He sleeps"—she muttered these words half aloud, and with a shuddering which was succeeded by a start and a scream, when a voice replied behind her,—

"Yes, he sleeps—but it is for ever."

She looked round—Sir John Ramorny stood behind her in complete armor, but the visor of his helmet was up, and displayed a countenance more resembling one about to die than to fight. He spoke with a grave tone, something between that of a calm observer of an interesting event, and of one who is an agent and partaker in it.

"Catharine," he said, "all is true which I tell you. He is dead—you have done your best for him—you can do no more."

"I will not—I cannot believe it," said Catharine. "Heaven be merciful to me! it would make one doubt of Providence, to think so great a crime has been accomplished."

"Doubt not of Providence, Catharine, though it has suffered the profligate to fall by his own devices. Follow me—I have that to say which concerns you. I say follow" (for she hesitated), "unless you prefer being left to the mercies of the brute Bonthron, and the mediciner Henbane Dwining."

"I will follow you," said Catharine. "You cannot do more to me than you are permitted."

He led the way into the tower, and mounted staircase after staircase, and ladder after ladder.

Catharine's resolution failed her. "I will follow no farther," she said. "Whither would you lead me?—If to my death, I can die here."

"Only to the battlements of the castle, fool," said Ramorny, throwing wide a barred door which opened upon the vaulted roof of the castle, where men were bending mangonels, as they called them (military engines, that is, for throwing arrows or stones), getting ready cross-bows, and piling stones together. But the defenders did not exceed twenty in number, and Catharine thought she could observe doubt and irresolution amongst them.

"Catharine," said Ramorny, "I must not quit this station, which is necessary for my defence; but I can speak with you here as well as elsewhere."

"Say on," answered Catharine,—"I am prepared to hear you."

"You have thrust yourself, Catharine, into a bloody secret. Have you the firmness to keep it?"

"I do not understand you, Sir John," answered the maiden.

"Look you. I have slain—murdered if you will—my late master, the Duke of Rothsay. The spark of life which your kindness would have fed was easily smothered. His last words called on his father. You are faint—bear up—you have more to hear. You know the crime, but you know not the provocation. See! this gauntlet is empty—I lost my right hand in his cause; and when I was no longer fit to serve him, I was cast off like a worn-out hound, my loss ridiculed, and a cloister recommended, instead of the halls and palaces in which I had my natural sphere! Think on this—pity and assist me."

"In what manner can you require my assistance?" said the trembling maiden; "I can neither repair your loss, nor cancel your crime."

"Thou canst be silent, Catharine, on what thou hast seen and heard in yonder thicket. It is but a brief oblivion I ask of you, whose word will, I know, be listened to, whether you say such things were or were not. That of your mountebank companion, the foreigner, none will hold to be of a pin-point's value. If you grant me this, I will take your promise for my security, and throw the gate open to those who now approach it. If you will not promise silence, I defend this Castle till every one perishes, and I fling you headlong from these battlements. Ay, look at them—it is not a leap to be rashly braved. Seven courses of stairs brought you up hither, with fatigue and shortened breath; but you shall go from the top to the bottom in briefer time than you can breathe a sigh!—Speak the word, fair maid; for you speak to one unwilling to harm you, but determined in his purpose."

Catharine stood terrified, and without power of answering a man who seemed so desperate; but she was saved the necessity of reply, by the approach of Dwining. He spoke with the same humble congés which at all times distinguished his manner, and with his usual suppressed ironical sneer, which gave that manner the lie.

"I do you wrong, noble sir, to intrude on your valiancy when engaged with a fair damsel. But I come to ask a trifling question."

"Speak, tormenter!" said Ramorny; "ill news are sport to thee even when they affect thyself, so that they concern others also."

"Hem!—he, he!—I only desired to know if your knighthood proposed the chivalrous task of defending the Castle with your single hand—I crave pardon—I meant your single arm? The question is worth asking; for I am good for little to aid the defence, unless you could prevail on the besiegers to take physic—He, he, he!—and Bonthron is as drunk as ale and strong waters can make him—and you, he, and I, make up the whole garrison who are disposed for resistance."

"How!—Will the other dogs not fight?" said Ramorny.

"Never saw men who showed less stomach to the work," answered Dwining, "never.—But here comes a brace of them.—*Venit extrema dies.*—He, he, he!"

Eviot and his companion Bunclie now approached, with sullen resolution in their faces, like men who had made their minds up to resist that authority which they had so long obeyed.

"How now!" said Ramorny, stepping forward to meet them. "Wherefore from your posts?—Why have you left the barbican, Eviot?—And you other fellow, did I not charge you to look to the mangonels?"

"We have something to tell you, Sir John Ramorny," answered Eviot. "We will not fight in this quarrel."

"How! my own squires control me?" exclaimed Ramorny.

"We were your squires and pages, my lord, while you were master of the Duke of Rothsay's household—It is bruited about the Duke no longer lives—we desire to know the truth."

"What traitor dares spread such falsehood?" said Ramorny.

"All who have gone out to skirt the forest, my lord, and I myself among others, bring back the same news. The minstrel woman who left the Castle yesterday has spread the report everywhere, that the Duke of Rothsay is murdered, or at death's door. The Douglas comes on us with a strong force—"

"And you, cowards, take advantage of an idle report to forsake your master?" said Ramorny, indignantly.

"My lord," said Eviot, "let Bunclie and myself see the Duke of Rothsay, and receive his personal orders for defence of this Castle, and if we do not fight to the death in that quarrel, I will consent to be hanged on its highest turret. But if he be gone by natural disease, we will yield up the Castle to the Earl of Douglas, who is, they say, the King's Lieutenant—Or if,—which Heaven forefend!—the noble Prince has had foul play, we will not involve ourselves in the guilt of using arms in defence of the murderers, be they who they will."

"Eviot," said Ramorny, raising his mutilated arm, "had not that glove been empty, thou hadst not lived to utter two words of this insolence."

"It is as it is"—answered Eviot, "and we do but our duty. I have followed you long, my lord, but here I draw bridle."

"Farewell, then, and a curse light on all of you!" exclaimed the incensed Baron. "Let my horse be brought forth!"

"Our Valiancy is about to run away," said the mediciner, who had crept close to Catharine's side before she was aware. "Catharine, thou art a superstitious fool, like most women; nevertheless thou hast some mind, and I speak to thee as one of more understanding than the buffaloes which are herding about us. These haughty

barons who overstride the world, what are they in the day of adversity?—chaff before the wind. Let their sledge-hammer hands, or their column-resembling legs, have injury, and bah!—the men-at-arms are gone—heart and courage is nothing to them, lith and limb every thing—give them animal strength, what are they better than furious bulls—take that away, and your hero of chivalry lies groveling like the brute when he is hamstrung. Not so the Sage; while a grain of sense remains in a crushed or mutilated frame, his mind shall be strong as ever.—Catharine, this morning I was practising your death; but methinks I now rejoice that you may survive, to tell how the poor mediciner, the pill-gilder, the mortar-pounder, the poison-vender, met his fate, in company with the gallant Knight of Ramorny, Baron in possession, and Earl of Lindores in expectation.—God save his lordship!

“Old man,” said Catharine, “if thou be indeed so near the day of thy deserved doom, other thoughts were far wholesomer than the vain-glorious ravings of a vain philosophy.—Ask to see a holy man—”

“Yes,” said Dwining, scornfully, “refer myself to a greasy monk, who does not—he! he! he!—understand the barbarous Latin he repeats by rote. Such would be a fitting counsellor to one who has studied both in Spain and Arabia! No, Catharine, I will choose a confessor that is pleasant to look upon, and you shall be honored with the office.—Now, look yonder at his Valiancy—his eyebrow drops with moisture, his lip trembles with agony; for his Valiancy—he! he! he!—is pleading for his life with his late domestics, and has not eloquence enough to persuade them to let him slip. See how the fibres of his face work as he implores the ungrateful brutes, whom he has heaped with obligations, to permit him to get such a start for his life as the hare has from the greyhounds when men course her fairly. Look also at the sullen, downcast, dogged faces with which, fluctuating between fear and shame, the domestic traitors deny their lord this poor chance for life. These things thought themselves the superior of a man like me! and you, foolish wench, think so meekly of your Deity, as to suppose wretches like them are the work of Omnipotence!”

“No! man of evil, no!” said Catharine, warmly; “the God I worship created these men with the attributes to know and adore him, to guard and defend their fellow-creatures, to practise holiness and virtue. Their own vices, and the temptations of the Evil One, have made them such as they now are. Oh, take the lesson home to thine own heart of adamant! Heaven made thee wiser than thy fellows, gave thee eyes to look into the secrets of nature, a sagacious heart, and a skilful hand; but thy pride has poisoned all these fair gifts, and made an ungodly Atheist of one who might have been a Christian sage!”

“Atheist, sayst thou?” answered Dwining; “perhaps I have doubts on that matter—but they

will be soon solved. Yonder comes one who will send me, as he has done thousands, to the place where all mysteries shall be cleared.”

Catharine followed the mediciner's eye up one of the forest glades, and beheld it occupied by a body of horsemen, advancing at full gallop. In the midst was a pennon displayed, which, though its bearings were not visible to Catharine, was, by a murmur around, acknowledged as that of the Black Douglas. They halted within arrow-shot of the Castle, and a herald with two trumpets advanced up to the main portal, where, after a loud flourish, he demanded admittance for the high and dreaded Archibald Earl of Douglas, Lord Lieutenant of the King, and acting for the time with the plenary authority of his Majesty; commanding, at the same time, that the inmates of the Castle should lay down their arms, all under penalty of high treason.

“You hear?” said Eviot to Ramorny, who stood sullen and undecided. “Will you give orders to render the Castle, or must I—”

“No, villain!” interrupted the Knight, “to the last I will command you. Open the gates, drop the bridge, and render the castle to the Douglas.”

“Now, that's what may be called a gallant exertion of free will,” said Dwining. “Just as if the pieces of brass, that were screaming a minute since, should pretend to call those notes their own, which are breathed through them by a frowsy trumpeter.”

“Wretched man!” said Catharine, “either be silent, or turn thy thoughts to the eternity, on the brink of which thou art standing.”

“And what is that to thee?” answered Dwining. “Thou canst not, wench, help hearing what I say to thee, and thou wilt tell it again, for thy sex cannot help that either. Perth and all Scotland shall know, what a man they have lost in Henbane Dwining!”

The clash of armor now announced that the new comers had dismounted and entered the Castle, and were in the act of disarming the small garrison. Earl Douglas himself appeared on the battlements, with a few of his followers, and signed them to take Ramorny and Dwining into custody. Others dragged from some nook the stupefied Bonthron.

“It was to these three that the custody of the Prince was solely committed, during his alleged illness?” said the Douglas, prosecuting an inquiry which he had commenced in the hall of the Castle.

“No other saw him, my lord,” said Eviot, “though I offered my services.”

“Conduct us to the Duke's apartment, and bring the prisoners with us.—Also, there should be a female in the Castle, if she hath not been murdered or spirited away,—the companion of the glee-maiden, who brought the first alarm.”

“She is here, my lord,” said Eviot, bringing Catharine forward.

Her beauty, and her agitation, made some impression even upon the impassible Earl.

“Fear nothing, maiden,” he said; “thou hast deserved both praise and reward. Tell to me, as thou wouldst confess to Heaven, the things thou hast witnessed in this Castle.”

Few words served Catharine to unfold the dreadful story.

“It agrees,” said the Douglas, “with the tale of the glee-maiden, from point to point.—Now show us the Prince's apartment.”

They passed to the room which the unhappy Duke of Rothsay had been supposed to inhabit; but the key was not to be found, and the Earl could only obtain entrance by forcing the door. On entering, the wasted and squalid remains of the unhappy Prince were discovered, flung on the bed as if in haste. The intention of the murderers had apparently been to arrange the dead body, so as to resemble a timely parted corpse, but they had been disconcerted by the alarm occasioned by the escape of Louise. Douglas looked on the body of the misguided youth, whose wild passions and caprices had brought him to this fatal and premature catastrophe—

“I had wrongs to be redressed,” he said; “but to see such a sight as this banishes all remembrance of injury!”

“He! he!—It should have been arranged,” said Dwining, “more to your omnipotence's pleasure; but you came suddenly on us, and hasty masters make slovenly service.”

Douglas seemed not to hear what his prisoner said, so closely did he examine the wan and wasted features, and stiffened limbs, of the dead man before him. Catharine, overcome by sickness and fainting, at length obtained permission to retire from the dreadful scene, and, through confusion of every description, found her way to her former apartment, where she was locked in the arms of Louise, who had returned in the interval.

The investigations of Douglas proceeded. The dying hand of the Prince was found to be clenched upon a lock of hair, resembling, in color and texture, the coal-black bristles of Bonthron. Thus, though famine had begun the work, it would seem that Rothsay's death had been finally accomplished by violence. The private stair to the dungeon, the keys of which were found at the subaltern assassin's belt,—the situation of the vault, its communication with the external air by the fissure in the walls, and the wretched lair of straw, with the fetters which remained there,—fully confirmed the story of Catharine and of the glee-woman.

“We will not hesitate an instant,” said the Douglas to his near kinsman, the Lord Balveny, as soon as they returned from the dungeon. “Away with the murderers! hang them over the battlements.”

“But, my lord, some trial may be fitting,” answered Balveny.

“To what purpose?” answered Douglas. “I

have taken them red-hand; \* my authority will stretch to instant execution. Yet stay—have we not some Jedwood men in our troop?”

“Plenty of Turnbells, Rutherfords, Ainslies, and so forth,” said Balveny.

“Call me an inquest of these together; they are all good men and true, saving a little shifting for their living. Do you see to the execution of these felons, while I hold a court in the great hall, and we'll try whether the jury or the provost-marshal do their work first; we will have Jedwood justice,—hang in haste, and try at leisure.”

“Yet stay, my lord,” said Ramorny, “you may rue your haste.—Will you grant me a word out of ear-shot?”

“Not for worlds,” said Douglas; “speak out what thou hast to say before all that are here present.”

“Know all then,” said Ramorny, aloud, “that this noble Earl had letters from the Duke of Albany and myself, sent him by the hand of yon cowardly deserter, Buncle—let him deny it if he dare,—counselling the removal of the Duke for a space from court, and his seclusion in this Castle of Falkland.”

“But not a word,” replied Douglas, sternly smiling, “of his being flung into a dungeon—furnished—strangled.—Away with the wretches, Balveny, they pollute God's air too long.”

The prisoners were dragged off to the battlements. But while the means of execution were in the act of being prepared, the apothecary expressed so ardent a desire to see Catharine once more, and, as he said, for the good of his soul, that the maiden, in hopes his obduracy might have undergone some change, even at the last hour, consented again to go to the battlements,

\* Mr. Morrison says, “the case of a person taken red-hand by the magistrates of Perth, and immediately executed, was the main cause of the power of trying cases of life and death being taken from them, and from all subordinate judicatories. A young English officer connected with some families of rank and influence, who was stationed with a recruiting party at Perth, had become enamoured of a lady there, so young as still to be under the tuition of a dancing-master. Her admirer was in the habit of following her into the school, to the great annoyance of the teacher, who, on occasion of a ball given in his class-room in the Kirkgate, stationed himself at the door, determined to resist the entrance of the officer, on account of the scandal to which his visits had given rise. The officer came as a matter of course, and a scuffle ensued, which at last bore so threatening an aspect, that the poor dancing-master fled through the passage, or *close*, as it is called, by which there was access to the street. He was pursued by the officer with his drawn sword, and was run through the body ere he could reach the street, where the crowd usually assembled on such occasions might have protected him. The officer was instantly apprehended, and executed, it is understood, even without any form of trial; at least there is no notice of it in any of the records where it would with more probability have been entered. But the sword is still in the possession of a gentleman whose ancestors held official situations in the town at the time, and the circumstances of the murder and of the execution have been handed down with great minuteness and apparent truth of description from father to son. It was immediately afterwards that the power of the civic magistrates in matters criminal was abridged,—it is thought chiefly through the influence of the friends of this young officer.”

and face a scene which her heart recoiled from. A single glance showed her Bonthron, sunk in total and drunken insensibility; Ramorny stripped of his armor, endeavoring in vain to conceal fear, while he spoke with a priest, whose good offices he had solicited; and Dwining, the same humble, obsequious-looking, crouching individual she had always known him. He held in his hand a little silver pen, with which he had been writing on a scrap of parchment.

"Catharine," he said—"he, he, he!—I wish to speak to thee on the nature of my religious faith."

"If such be thy intention, why lose time with me?—Speak with this good father."

"The good father," said Dwining, "is—he, he!—already a worshipper of the deity whom I have served. I therefore prefer to give the altar of mine idol a new worshipper in thee, Catharine. This scrap of parchment will tell thee how to make your way into my chapel, where I have worshipped so often in safety. I leave the images which it contains to thee as a legacy, simply because I hate and condemn thee something less than any of the absurd wretches whom I have hitherto been obliged to call fellow-creatures. And now away!—or remain and see if the end of the quacksalver belies his life."

"Our Lady forbid!" said Catharine.

"Nay," said the mediciner, "I have but a single word to say, and yonder nobleman's valiancy may hear it if he will."

Lord Balveny approached, with some curiosity; for the undaunted resolution of a man who never wielded sword or bore armor, and was in person a poor dwindled dwarf, had to him an air of something resembling sorcery.

"You see this trifling implement," said the criminal, showing the silver pen. "By means of this I can escape the power even of the Black Douglas."

"Give him no ink nor paper," said Balveny, hastily, "he will draw a spell."

"Not so, please your wisdom and valiancy—he, he, he!"—said Dwining, with his usual chuckle, as he unscrewed the top of the pen, within which was a piece of sponge, or some such substance, no bigger than a pea. "Now, mark this"—said the prisoner, and drew it between his lips. The effect was instantaneous. He lay a dead corpse before them, the contemptuous sneer still on his countenance.

Catharine shrieked and fled, seeking, by a hasty descent, an escape from a sight so appalling. Lord Balveny was for a moment stupefied, and then exclaimed, "This may be glamour! hang him over the battlements, quick or dead. If his foul spirit hath only withdrawn for a space, it shall return to a body with a dislocated neck."

His commands were obeyed. Ramorny and Bonthron were then ordered for execution. The ast was hanged before he seemed quite to comprehend what was designed to be done with him. Ramorny, pale as death, yet with the same spirit

of pride which had occasioned his ruin, pleaded his knighthood, and demanded the privilege of dying by decapitation by the sword, and not by the noose.

"The Douglas never alters his doom," said Balveny. "But thou shalt have all thy rights.—Send the cook hither with a cleaver." The menial whom he called appeared at his summons. "What shakest thou for, fellow?" said Balveny; "here, strike me this man's gilt spurs from his heels with thy cleaver.—And now, John Ramorny, thou art no longer a knight, but a knave.—To the halter with him, provost-marshal! hang him betwixt his companions, and higher than them if it may be."

In a quarter of an hour afterwards, Balveny descended to tell the Douglas that the criminals were executed.

"Then there is no further use in the trial," said the Earl. "How say you, good men of inquest, were these men guilty of high-treason—ay or no?"

"Guilty," exclaimed the obsequious inquest, with edifying unanimity, "we need no farther evidence."

"Sound trumpets, and to horse then, with our own train only; and let each man keep silence on what has chanced here, until the proceedings shall be laid before the King, which cannot conveniently be till the battle of Palm Sunday shall be fought and ended. Select our attendants, and tell each man who either goes with us or remains behind, that he who prates dies."

In a few minutes the Douglas was on horse back, with the followers selected to attend his person. Expresses were sent to his daughter, the widowed Duchess of Rothsay, directing her to take her course to Perth, by the shores of Lochleven, without approaching Falkland, and committing to her charge Catharine Glover and the glee-woman, as persons whose safety he tendered.

As they rode through the forest, they looked back, and beheld the three bodies hanging, like specks darkening the walls of the old castle.

"The hand is punished," said Douglas: "but who shall arraign the head by whose direction the act was done!"

"You mean the Duke of Albany?" said Balveny.

"I do, kinsman; and were I to listen to the dictates of my heart, I would charge him with the deed, which I am certain he has authorized. But there is no proof of it beyond strong suspicion, and Albany has attached to himself the numerous friends of the house of Stewart, to whom, indeed, the imbecility of the King, and the ill-regulated habits of Rothsay, left no other choice of a leader. Were I, therefore, to break the band which I have so lately formed with Albany, the consequence must be civil war, an event ruinous to poor Scotland, while threatened by invasion from the activity of the Percy, backed by the treachery of March, No, Balveny—the punish-

ment of Albany must rest with Heaven, which, in its own good time, will execute judgment on him and on his house."

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

The hour is nigh: now hearts beat high:  
Each sword is sharpen'd well:  
And who dares die, who stoops to fly,  
To-morrow's light shall tell.

SIR EDWARD.

WE are now to recall to our reader's recollection, that Simon Glover and his fair daughter had been hurried from their residence without having time to announce to Henry Smith, either their departure or the alarming cause of it. When, therefore, the lover appeared in Carfew Street, on the morning of their flight, instead of the hearty welcome of the honest burgher, and the April reception, half joy half censure, which he had been promised on the part of his lovely daughter, he received only the astounding intelligence, that her father and she had set off early, on the summons of a stranger, who had kept himself carefully muffled from observation. To this, Dorothy, whose talents for forestalling evil, and communicating her views of it, are known to the reader, chose to add, that she had no doubt her master and young mistress were bound for the Highlands, to avoid a visit which had been made since their departure, by two or three apparitors, who, in the name of a Commission, appointed by the King, had searched the house, put seals upon such places as were supposed to contain papers, and left citations for father and daughter to appear before the Court of Commission on a day certain, under pain of outlawry. All these alarming particulars Dorothy took care to state in the gloomiest colors, and the only consolation which she afforded the alarmed lover was, that her master had charged her to tell him to reside quietly at Perth, and that he should soon hear news of them. This checked the Smith's first resolve, which was to follow them instantly to the Highlands, and partake the fate which they might encounter.

But when he recollected his repeated fends with divers of the Clan Quhele, and particularly his personal quarrel with Conachar, who was now raised to be a high chief, he could not but think, on reflection, that his intrusion on their place of retirement was more likely to disturb the safety which they might otherwise enjoy there, than be of any service to them. He was well acquainted with Simon's habitual intimacy with the Chief of the Clan Quhele, and justly argued that the Glover would obtain protection, which his own arrival might be likely to disturb, while his personal prowess could little avail him in a quarrel with a whole tribe of vindictive mountaineers. At the same time his heart throbb'd with indignation, when he thought of Catharine being within the absolute power of

young Conachar, whose rivalry he could not doubt, and who had now so many means of urging his suit. What if the young Chief should make the safety of the father depend on the favor of the daughter? He distrusted not Catharine's affections; but then her mode of thinking was so disinterested, and her attachment to her father so tender, that, if the love she bore her suitor was weighed against his security, or perhaps his life, it was matter of deep and awful doubt, whether it might not be found light in the balance. Tormented by thoughts on which we need not dwell, he resolved nevertheless to remain at home, stifle his anxiety as he might, and await the promised intelligence from the old man. It came, but it did not relieve his concern.

Sir Patrick Charteris had not forgotten his promise to communicate to the Smith the plans of the fugitives. But amid the bustle occasioned by the movement of troops, he could not himself convey the intelligence. He therefore intrusted to his agent, Kitt Henshaw, the task of making it known. But this worthy person, as the reader knows, was in the interest of Ramorny, whose business it was to conceal from every one, but especially from a lover so active and daring as Henry, the real place of Catharine's residence. Henshaw therefore announced to the anxious Smith, that his friend the Glover was secure in the Highlands; and though he affected to be more reserved on the subject of Catharine, he said little to contradict the belief, that she as well as Simon shared the protection of the Clan Quhele. But he reiterated, in the name of Sir Patrick, assurances that father and daughter were both well, and that Henry would best consult his own interest and their safety, by remaining quiet, and waiting the course of events.

With an agonized heart, therefore, Henry Gow determined to remain quiet till he had more certain intelligence, and employed himself in finishing a shirt of mail, which he intended should be the best tempered, and the most finely polished, that his skilful hands had ever executed. This exercise of his craft pleased him better than any other occupation which he could have adopted, and served as an apology for secluding himself in his workshop, and shunning society, where the idle reports which were daily circulated, served only to perplex and disturb him. He resolved to trust in the warm regard of Simon, the faith of his daughter, and the friendship of the Provost, who, having so highly commended his valor in the combat with Bonthron, would never, he thought, desert him at this extremity of his fortunes. Time, however, passed on day by day; and it was not till Palm Sunday was near approaching that Sir Patrick Charteris, having entered the city to make some arrangements for the ensuing combat, bethought himself of making a visit to the Smith of the Wynd.

He entered his workshop with an air of sym-