

ВАЛЬТЕР СКОТТ

THE FAIR MAID OF
PERTH; OR, ST.
VALENTINE'S DAY

Walter Scott
The Fair Maid of Perth;
Or, St. Valentine's Day

*http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=25448908
The Fair Maid of Perth; Or, St. Valentine's Day:*

Содержание

INTRODUCTORY	4
PREFACE	18
CHAPTER I	26
CHAPTER II	31
CHAPTER III	62
CHAPTER IV	74
CHAPTER V	87
CHAPTER VI	103
CHAPTER VII	121
CHAPTER VIII	140
CHAPTER IX	166
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	173

Walter Scott

The Fair Maid of Perth; Or, St. Valentine's Day

INTRODUCTORY

The ashes here of murder'd kings Beneath my footsteps sleep;
And yonder lies the scene of death, Where Mary learn'd to weep.

CAPTAIN MARJORIBANKS.

Every quarter of Edinburgh has its own peculiar boast, so that the city together combines within its precincts, if you take the word of the inhabitants on the subject, as much of historical interest as of natural beauty. Our claims in behalf of the Canongate are not the slightest. The Castle may excel us in extent of prospect and sublimity of site; the Calton had always the superiority of its unrivalled panorama, and has of late added that of its towers, and triumphal arches, and the pillars of its Parthenon. The High Street, we acknowledge, had the distinguished honour of being defended by fortifications, of which we can show no vestiges. We will not descend to notice the claims of more upstart districts, called Old New Town and New New Town, not to mention the favourite Moray Place, which is the Newest New Town of all. We will not match ourselves

except with our equals, and with our equals in age only, for in dignity we admit of one. We boast being the court end of the town, possessing the Palace and the sepulchral remains of monarchs, and that we have the power to excite, in a degree unknown to the less honoured quarters of the city, the dark and solemn recollections of ancient grandeur, which occupied the precincts of our venerable Abbey from the time of St. David till her deserted halls were once more made glad, and her long silent echoes awakened, by the visit of our present gracious sovereign.

My long habitation in the neighbourhood, and the quiet respectability of my habits, have given me a sort of intimacy with good Mrs. Policy, the housekeeper in that most interesting part of the old building called Queen Mary's Apartments. But a circumstance which lately happened has conferred upon me greater privileges; so that, indeed, I might, I believe, venture on the exploit of Chatelet, who was executed for being found secreted at midnight in the very bedchamber of Scotland's mistress.

It chanced that the good lady I have mentioned was, in the discharge of her function, showing the apartments to a cockney from London – not one of your quiet, dull, commonplace visitors, who gape, yawn, and listen with an acquiescent “umph” to the information doled out by the provincial cicerone. No such thing: this was the brisk, alert agent of a great house in the city, who missed no opportunity of doing business, as he termed it – that is, of putting off the goods of his employers, and improving his

own account of commission. He had fidgeted through the suite of apartments, without finding the least opportunity to touch upon that which he considered as the principal end of his existence. Even the story of Rizzio's assassination presented no ideas to this emissary of commerce, until the housekeeper appealed, in support of her narrative, to the dusky stains of blood upon the floor.

“These are the stains,” she said; “nothing will remove them from the place: there they have been for two hundred and fifty years, and there they will remain while the floor is left standing – neither water nor anything else will ever remove them from that spot.”

Now our cockney, amongst other articles, sold Scouring Drops, as they are called, and a stain of two hundred and fifty years' standing was interesting to him, not because it had been caused by the blood of a queen's favourite, slain in her apartment, but because it offered so admirable an opportunity to prove the efficacy of his unequalled Detergent Elixir. Down on his knees went our friend, but neither in horror nor devotion.

“Two hundred and fifty years, ma'am, and nothing take it away? Why, if it had been five hundred, I have something in my pocket will fetch it out in five minutes. D'ye see this elixir, ma'am? I will show you the stain vanish in a moment.”

Accordingly, wetting one end of his handkerchief with the all deterring specific, he began to rub away on the planks, without heeding the remonstrances of Mrs. Policy. She, good soul, stood

at first in astonishment, like the abbess of St. Bridget's, when a profane visitant drank up the vial of brandy which had long passed muster among the relics of the cloister for the tears of the blessed saint. The venerable guardian of St. Bridget probably expected the interference of her patroness — she of Holyhood might, perhaps, hope that David Ruzzio's spectre would arise to prevent the profanation. But Mrs. Policy stood not long in the silence of horror. She uplifted her voice, and screamed as loudly as Queen Mary herself when the dreadful deed was in the act of perpetration —

“Harrow, now out, and walawa!” she cried.

I happened to be taking my morning walk in the adjoining gallery, pondering in my mind why the kings of Scotland, who hung around me, should be each and every one painted with a nose like the knocker of a door, when lo! the walls once more re-echoed with such shrieks as formerly were as often heard in the Scottish palaces as were sounds of revelry and music. Somewhat surprised at such an alarm in a place so solitary, I hastened to the spot, and found the well meaning traveller scrubbing the floor like a housemaid, while Mrs. Policy, dragging him by the skirts of the coat, in vain endeavoured to divert him from his sacrilegious purpose. It cost me some trouble to explain to the zealous purifier of silk stockings, embroidered waistcoats, broadcloth, and deal planks that there were such things in the world as stains which ought to remain indelible, on account of the associations with which they are connected. Our good friend

viewed everything of the kind only as the means of displaying the virtue of his vaunted commodity. He comprehended, however, that he would not be permitted to proceed to exemplify its powers on the present occasion, as two or three inhabitants appeared, who, like me, threatened to maintain the housekeeper's side of the question. He therefore took his leave, muttering that he had always heard the Scots were a nasty people, but had no idea they carried it so far as to choose to have the floors of their palaces blood boltered, like Banquo's ghost, when to remove them would have cost but a hundred drops of the Infallible Detergent Elixir, prepared and sold by Messrs. Scrub and Rub, in five shilling and ten shilling bottles, each bottle being marked with the initials of the inventor, to counterfeit which would be to incur the pains of forgery.

Freed from the odious presence of this lover of cleanliness, my good friend Mrs. Policy was profuse in her expressions of thanks; and yet her gratitude, instead of exhausting itself in these declarations, according to the way of the world, continues as lively at this moment as if she had never thanked me at all. It is owing to her recollection of this piece of good service that I have the permission of wandering, like the ghost of some departed gentleman usher, through these deserted halls, sometimes, as the old Irish ditty expresses it —

Thinking upon things that are long enough ago; — and sometimes wishing I could, with the good luck of most editors of romantic narrative, light upon some hidden crypt or massive

antique cabinet, which should yield to my researches an almost illegible manuscript, containing the authentic particulars of some of the strange deeds of those wild days of the unhappy Mary.

My dear Mrs. Baliol used to sympathise with me when I regretted that all godsendings of this nature had ceased to occur, and that an author might chatter his teeth to pieces by the seaside without a wave ever wafting to him a casket containing such a history as that of Automates; that he might break his shins in stumbling through a hundred vaults without finding anything but rats and mice; and become the tenant of a dozen sets of shabby tenements without finding that they contained any manuscript but the weekly bill for board and lodging. A dairymaid of these degenerate days might as well wash and deck her dairy in hopes of finding the fairy tester in her shoe.

“It is a sad and too true a tale, cousin,” said Mrs. Baliol, “I am sure we all have occasion to regret the want of these ready supplements to a failing invention. But you, most of all, have right to complain that the fairest have not favoured your researches – you, who have shown the world that the age of chivalry still exists – you, the knight of Croftangry, who braved the fury of the ‘London ‘prentice bold,’ in behalf of the fair Dame Policy, and the memorial of Rizzio’s slaughter! Is it not a pity, cousin, considering the feat of chivalry was otherwise so much according to rule – is it not, I say, a great pity that the lady had not been a little younger, and the legend a little older?”

“Why, as to the age at which a fair dame loses the benefit of

chivalry, and is no longer entitled to crave boon of brave knight, that I leave to the statutes of the Order of Errantry; but for the blood of Rizzio I take up the gauntlet, and maintain against all and sundry that I hold the stains to be of no modern date, but to have been actually the consequence and the record of that terrible assassination.”

“As I cannot accept the challenge to the field, fair cousin, I am contented to require proof.”

“The unaltered tradition of the Palace, and the correspondence of the existing state of things with that tradition.”

“Explain, if you please.”

“I will. The universal tradition bears that, when Rizzio was dragged out of the chamber of the Queen, the heat and fury of the assassins, who struggled which should deal him most wounds, despatched him at the door of the anteroom. At the door of the apartment, therefore, the greater quantity of the ill fated minion’s blood was spilled, and there the marks of it are still shown. It is reported further by historians, that Mary continued her entreaties for his life, mingling her prayers with screams and exclamations, until she knew that he was assuredly slain; on which she wiped her eyes and said, ‘I will now study revenge.’”

“All this is granted. But the blood – would it not wash out, or waste out, think you, in so many years?”

“I am coming to that presently. The constant tradition of the Palace says, that Mary discharged any measures to be taken to remove the marks of slaughter, which she had resolved should

remain as a memorial to quicken and confirm her purposed vengeance. But it is added that, satisfied with the knowledge that it existed, and not desirous to have the ghastly evidence always under her eye, she caused a traverse, as it is called (that is, a temporary screen of boards), to be drawn along the under part of the anteroom, a few feet from the door, so as to separate the place stained with the blood from the rest of the apartment, and involve it in considerable obscurity. Now this temporary partition still exists, and, by running across and interrupting the plan of the roof and cornices, plainly intimates that it has been intended to serve some temporary purpose, since it disfigures the proportions of the room, interferes with the ornaments of the ceiling, and could only have been put there for some such purpose as hiding an object too disagreeable to be looked upon. As to the objection that the bloodstains would have disappeared in course of time, I apprehend that, if measures to efface them were not taken immediately after the affair happened – if the blood, in other words, were allowed to sink into the wood, the stain would become almost indelible. Now, not to mention that our Scottish palaces were not particularly well washed in those days, and that there were no Patent Drops to assist the labours of the mop, I think it very probable that these dark relics might subsist for a long course of time, even if Mary had not desired or directed that they should be preserved, but screened by the traverse from public sight. I know several instances of similar bloodstains remaining for a great many years, and I doubt

whether, after a certain time, anything can remove them save the carpenter's plane. If any seneschal, by way of increasing the interest of the apartments, had, by means of paint, or any other mode of imitation, endeavoured to palm upon posterity supposititious stigmata, I conceive that the impostor would have chosen the Queen's cabinet and the bedroom for the scene of his trick, placing his bloody tracery where it could be distinctly seen by visitors, instead of hiding it behind the traverse in this manner. The existence of the said traverse, or temporary partition, is also extremely difficult to be accounted for, if the common and ordinary tradition be rejected. In short, all the rest of this striking locality is so true to the historical fact, that I think it may well bear out the additional circumstance of the blood on the floor."

"I profess to you," answered Mrs. Baliol, "that I am very willing to be converted to your faith. We talk of a credulous vulgar, without always recollecting that there is a vulgar incredulity, which, in historical matters as well as in those of religion, finds it easier to doubt than to examine, and endeavours to assume the credit of an esprit fort, by denying whatever happens to be a little beyond the very limited comprehension of the sceptic. And so, that point being settled, and you possessing, as we understand, the open sesamum into these secret apartments, how, if we may ask, do you intend to avail yourself of your privilege? Do you propose to pass the night in the royal bedchamber?"

"For what purpose, my dear lady? If to improve the

rheumatism, this east wind may serve the purpose.”

“Improve the rheumatism! Heaven forbid! that would be worse than adding colours to the violet. No, I mean to recommend a night on the couch of the nose of Scotland, merely to improve the imagination. Who knows what dreams might be produced by a night spent in a mansion of so many memories! For aught I know, the iron door of the postern stair might open at the dead hour of midnight, and, as at the time of the conspiracy, forth might sally the phantom assassins, with stealthy step and ghastly look, to renew the semblance of the deed. There comes the fierce fanatic Ruthven, party hatred enabling him to bear the armour which would otherwise weigh down a form extenuated by wasting disease. See how his writhen features show under the hollow helmet, like those of a corpse tenanted by a demon, whose vindictive purpose looks out at the flashing eyes, while the visage has the stillness of death. Yonder appears the tall form of the boy Darnley, as goodly in person as vacillating in resolution; yonder he advances with hesitating step, and yet more hesitating purpose, his childish fear having already overcome his childish passion. He is in the plight of a mischievous lad who has fired a mine, and who now, expecting the explosion in remorse and terror, would give his life to quench the train which his own hand lighted. Yonder – yonder – But I forget the rest of the worthy cutthroats. Help me if you can.”

“Summon up,” said I, “the postulate, George Douglas, the most active of the gang. Let him arise at your call – the

claimant of wealth which he does not possess, the partaker of the illustrious blood of Douglas, but which in his veins is sullied with illegitimacy. Paint him the ruthless, the daring, the ambitious – so nigh greatness, yet debarred from it; so near to wealth, yet excluded from possessing it; a political Tantalus, ready to do or dare anything to terminate his necessities and assert his imperfect claims.”

“Admirable, my dear Croftangry! But what is a postulate?”

“Pooh, my dear madam, you disturb the current of my ideas. The postulate was, in Scottish phrase, the candidate for some benefice which he had not yet attained. George Douglas, who stabbed Rizzio, was the postulate for the temporal possessions of the rich abbey of Arbroath.”

“I stand informed. Come, proceed; who comes next?” continued Mrs. Baliol.

“Who comes next? Yon tall, thin made, savage looking man, with the petronel in his hand, must be Andrew Ker of Faldonside, a brother’s son, I believe, of the celebrated Sir David Ker of Cessford; his look and bearing those of a Border freebooter, his disposition so savage that, during the fray in the cabinet, he presented his loaded piece at the bosom of the young and beautiful Queen, that queen also being within a few weeks of becoming a mother.”

“Brave, beau cousin! Well, having raised your bevy of phantoms, I hope you do not intend to send them back to their cold beds to warm them? You will put them to some action, and

since you do threaten the Canongate with your desperate quill, you surely mean to novelise, or to dramatisé, if you will, this most singular of all tragedies?"

"Worse – that is less interesting – periods of history have been, indeed, shown up, for furnishing amusement to the peaceable ages which, have succeeded but, dear lady, the events are too well known in Mary's days to be used as vehicles of romantic fiction. What can a better writer than myself add to the elegant and forcible narrative of Robertson? So adieu to my vision. I awake, like John Bunyan, 'and behold it is a dream.' Well enough that I awake without a sciatica, which would have probably rewarded my slumbers had I profaned Queen Mary's bed by using it as a mechanical resource to awaken a torpid imagination."

"This will never do, cousin," answered Mrs. Baliol; "you must get over all these scruples, if you would thrive in the character of a romantic historian, which you have determined to embrace. What is the classic Robertson to you? The light which he carried was that of a lamp to illuminate the dark events of antiquity; yours is a magic lantern to raise up wonders which never existed. No reader of sense wonders at your historical inaccuracies, any more than he does to see Punch in the show box seated on the same throne with King Solomon in his glory, or to hear him hallooing out to the patriarch, amid the deluge, 'Mighty hazy weather, Master Noah.'"

"Do not mistake me, my dear madam," said I; "I am quite conscious of my own immunities as a tale teller. But even the

mendacious Mr. Fag, in Sheridan's Rivals, assures us that, though he never scruples to tell a lie at his master's command, yet it hurts his conscience to be found out. Now, this is the reason why I avoid in prudence all well known paths of history, where every one can read the finger posts carefully set up to advise them of the right turning; and the very boys and girls, who learn the history of Britain by way of question and answer, hoot at a poor author if he abandons the highway."

"Do not be discouraged, however, cousin Chrystal. There are plenty of wildernesses in Scottish history, through which, unless I am greatly misinformed, no certain paths have been laid down from actual survey, but which are only described by imperfect tradition, which fills up with wonders and with legends the periods in which no real events are recognised to have taken place. Even thus, as Mat Prior says:

"Geographers on pathless downs Place elephants instead of towns."

"If such be your advice, my dear lady," said I, "the course of my story shall take its rise upon this occasion at a remote period of history, and in a province removed from my natural sphere of the Canongate."

It was under the influence of those feelings that I undertook the following historical romance, which, often suspended and flung aside, is now arrived at a size too important to be altogether thrown away, although there may be little prudence in sending it to the press.

I have not placed in the mouth of the characters the Lowland Scotch dialect now spoken, because unquestionably the Scottish of that day resembled very closely the Anglo Saxon, with a sprinkling of French or Norman to enrich it. Those who wish to investigate the subject may consult the Chronicles of Winton and the History of Bruce by Archdeacon Barbour. But supposing my own skill in the ancient Scottish were sufficient to invest the dialogue with its peculiarities, a translation must have been necessary for the benefit of the general reader. The Scottish dialect may be therefore considered as laid aside, unless where the use of peculiar words may add emphasis or vivacity to the composition.

PREFACE

In continuing the lucubrations of Chrystal Croftangry, it occurred that, although the press had of late years teemed with works of various descriptions concerning the Scottish Gad, no attempt had hitherto been made to sketch their manners, as these might be supposed to have existed at the period when the statute book, as well as the page of the chronicler, begins to present constant evidence of the difficulties to which the crown was exposed, while the haughty house of Douglas all but overbalanced its authority on the Southern border, and the North was at the same time torn in pieces by the yet untamed savageness of the Highland races, and the daring loftiness to which some of the remoter chieftains still carried their pretensions.

The well authenticated fact of two powerful clans having deputed each thirty champions to fight out a quarrel of old standing, in presence of King Robert III, his brother the Duke of Albany, and the whole court of Scotland, at Perth, in the year of grace 1396, seemed to mark with equal distinctness the rancour of these mountain feuds and the degraded condition of the general government of the country; and it was fixed upon accordingly as the point on which the main incidents of a romantic narrative might be made to hinge. The characters of Robert III, his ambitious brother, and his dissolute son seemed to offer some opportunities of interesting contrast; and the tragic

fate of the heir of the throne, with its immediate consequences, might serve to complete the picture of cruelty and lawlessness.

Two features of the story of this barrier battle on the Inch of Perth – the flight of one of the appointed champions, and the reckless heroism of a townsman, that voluntarily offered for a small piece of coin to supply his place in the mortal encounter – suggested the imaginary persons, on whom much of the novel is expended. The fugitive Celt might have been easily dealt with, had a ludicrous style of colouring been adopted; but it appeared to the Author that there would be more of novelty, as well as of serious interest, if he could succeed in gaining for him something of that sympathy which is incompatible with the total absence of respect. Miss Baillie had drawn a coward by nature capable of acting as a hero under the strong impulse of filial affection. It seemed not impossible to conceive the case of one constitutionally weak of nerve being supported by feelings of honour and of jealousy up to a certain point, and then suddenly giving way, under circumstances to which the bravest heart could hardly refuse compassion.

The controversy as to who really were the clans that figured in the barbarous conflict of the Inch has been revived since the publication of the Fair Maid of Perth, and treated in particular at great length by Mr. Robert Mackay of Thurso, in his very curious History of the House and Clan of Mackay. Without pretending to say that he has settled any part of the question in the affirmative, this gentleman certainly seems to have quite

succeeded in proving that his own worthy sept had no part in the transaction. The Mackays were in that age seated, as they have since continued to be, in the extreme north of the island; and their chief at the time was a personage of such importance, that his name and proper designation could not have been omitted in the early narratives of the occurrence. He on one occasion brought four thousand of his clan to the aid of the royal banner against the Lord of the Isles. This historian is of opinion that the Clan Quhele of Wyntoun were the Camerons, who appear to have about that period been often designated as Macewans, and to have gained much more recently the name of Cameron, i.e. Wrynose, from a blemish in the physiognomy of some heroic chief of the line of Lochiel. This view of the case is also adopted by Douglas in his Baronage, where he frequently mentions the bitter feuds between Clan Chattan and Clan Kay, and identifies the latter sept in reference to the events of 1396, with the Camerons. It is perhaps impossible to clear up thoroughly this controversy, little interesting in itself, at least to readers on this side of Inverness. The names, as we have them in Wyntoun, are "Clanwhewyl" and "Clachinya," the latter probably not correctly transcribed. In the Scoti Chronicon they are "Clanquhele" and "Clankay. Hector Boece writes Clanchattan" and "Clankay," in which he is followed by Leslie while Buchanan disdains to disfigure his page with their Gaelic designations at all, and merely describes them as two powerful races in the wild and lawless region beyond the Grampians. Out of this jumble what Sassenach can pretend dare

lucem? The name Clanwehill appears so late as 1594, in an Act of James VI. Is it not possible that it may be, after all, a mere corruption of Clan Lochiel?

The reader may not be displeased to have Wyntoun's original rhymes [bk. ix. chap. xvii.]:

A thousand and thre hundyr yere,
Nynty and sex to mak all clere —
Of thre scor wyld Scottis men,
Thretty agane thretty then,
In felny bolnit of auld fed,
[Boiled with the cruelty of an old feud]
As thare forelderis ware slane to dede.
Tha thre score ware clannys twa,
Clahynnhe Qwhewyl and Clachinyha;
Of thir twa kynnis ware tha men,
Thretty agane thretty then;
And thare thai had than chiftanys twa,
Scha Ferqwharis' son wes ane of tha,
The tother Cristy Johnesone.
A selcouth thing be tha was done.
At Sanct Johnestone besid the Freris,
All thai entrit in barreris
Wyth bow and ax, knyf and swerd,
To deil amang thaim thare last werd.
Thare thai laid on that time sa fast,
Quha had the ware thare at the last
I will noucht say; hot quha best had,

He wes but dout bathe muth and mad.
Fifty or ma ware slane that day,
Sua few wyth lif than past away.

The prior of Lochleven makes no mention either of the evasion of one of the Gaelic champions, or of the gallantry of the Perth artisan, in offering to take a share in the conflict. Both incidents, however, were introduced, no doubt from tradition, by the Continuator of Fordun [Bower], whose narrative is in these words:

Anno Dom. millesimo trecentesimo nonagesimo sexto, magna pars borealis Scotiae, trans Alpes, inquietata fuit per duos pestiferos Cateranos, et eorum sequaces, viz. Scheabeg et suos consanguinarios, qui Clankay, et Cristi Jonsonem ac suos, qui Clanqwehle dicebantur; qui nullo pacto vel tractatu pacificari poterant, nullaque arte regis vel gubernatoris poterant edomari, quoadusque nobilis et industrius Dominus David de Lindesay de Crawford, at Dominus Thomas comes Moraviae, diligentiam et vires apposuerunt, ac inter partes sic tractaverunt, ut coram domino rege certo die convenirent apud Perth, et alterutra pars eligeret de progenie sua triginta personas adversus triginta de parte contraria, cum gladiis tantum, et arcubus et sagittis, absque deploidibus, vel armaturis aliis, praeter bipennes; et sic congregientes finem liti ponerant, et terra pace potiretur. Utrique igitur parti summe placuit contractus, et die lunae proximo ante festum Sancti Michaelis, apud North insulam de Perth, coram

rege et gubernatore et innumerabili multitudine comparentes, conflictum acerrimum inierunt; ubi de sexaginta interfecti sunt omnes, excepto uno ex parte Clankay et undecim exceptis ex parte altera. Hoc etiam ibi accidit, quod omnes in procinctu belli constituti, unus eorum locum diffugii considerans, inter omnes in annem elabitur, et aquam de Thaya natando transgreditur; a millenis insequitur, sed nusquam apprehenditur. Stant igitur partes attonitae, tanquam non ad conflictum progressuri, ob defectum evasi: noluit enim pars integrum habens numerum sociorum consentire, ut unus de suis demeretur; nec potuit pars altera quocumque pretio alterum ad supplendum vicem fugientis inducere. Stupent igitur omnes haerentes, de damno fugitivi conquerentes. Et cum totum illud opus cessare putaretur, ecce in medio prorupit unus stipulosus vernaculus, statura modicus, sed efferus, dicens: Ecce ego! quis me conducet intrare cum operariis istis ad hunc ludum theatralem? Pro dimidia enim marca ludum experiar, ultra hoc petens, ut si vivus de palaestra evasero, victum a quocumque vestrum recipiam dum vixero: quia, sicut dicitur, "Majorem caritatem nemo habet, quam ut animam suam ponat suis pro amicis." Quali mercede donabor, qui animam meam pro inimicis reipublicae et regni pono? Quod petiit, a rege et diversis magnatibus conceditur. Cum hoc arcus ejus extenditur, et primo sagittam in partem contrariam transmittit, et unum interficit. Confestim hinc inde sagittae volitant, bipennes librant, gladios vibrant, alterutro certant, et veluti carnifices boves in macello, sic inconsternate ad invicem se trucidant. Sed nec inter

tantos repertus est vel unus, qui, tanquam vecors ant timidus, sive post tergum alterius declinans, seipsum a tanta caede praetendit excusare. Iste tamen tyro superveniens finaliter illaesus exivit; et dehinc multo tempore Boreas quievit, nec ibidem fuit, ut supra, cateranorum excursus.

The scene is heightened with many florid additions by Boece and Leslie, and the contending savages in Buchanan utter speeches after the most approved pattern of Livy.

The devotion of the young chief of Clan Quhele's foster father and foster brethren in the novel is a trait of clannish fidelity, of which Highland story furnishes many examples. In the battle of Inverkeithing, between the Royalists and Oliver Cromwell's troops, a foster father and seven brave sons are known to have thus sacrificed themselves for Sir Hector Maclean of Duart; the old man, whenever one of his boys fell, thrusting forward another to fill his place at the right hand of the beloved chief, with the very words adopted in the novel, "Another for Hector!"

Nay, the feeling could outlive generations. The late much lamented General Stewart of Garth, in his account of the battle of Killiecrankie, informs us that Lochiel was attended on the field by the son of his foster brother.

"This faithful adherent followed him like his shadow, ready to assist him with his sword, or cover him from the shot of the enemy. Suddenly the chief missed his friend from his side, and, turning round to look what had become of him, saw him lying on his back with his breast pierced by an arrow. He had hardly

breath, before he expired, to tell Lochiel that, seeing an enemy, a Highlander in General Mackay's army, aiming at him with a bow and arrow, he sprung behind him, and thus sheltered him from instant death. This" observes the gallant David Stewart, "is a species of duty not often practised, perhaps, by our aide de camps of the present day." – Sketches of the Highlanders, vol. i. p. 65.

I have only to add, that the Second Series of Chronicles of the Canongate, with the chapter introductory which precedes, appeared in May, 1828, and had a favourable reception.

ABBOTSFORD, Aug. 15, 1831.

CHAPTER I

*“Behold the Tiber,” the vain Roman cried,
Viewing the ample Tay from Baiglie’s side;
But where’s the Scot that would the vaunt repay,
And hail the puny Tiber for the Tay?*

Anonymous.

Among all the provinces in Scotland, if an intelligent stranger were asked to describe the most varied and the most beautiful, it is probable he would name the county of Perth. A native also of any other district of Caledonia, though his partialities might lead him to prefer his native county in the first instance, would certainly class that of Perth in the second, and thus give its inhabitants a fair right to plead that, prejudice apart, Perthshire forms the fairest portion of the Northern kingdom. It is long since Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, with that excellent taste which characterises her writings, expressed her opinion that the most interesting district of every country, and that which exhibits the varied beauties of natural scenery in greatest perfection, is that where the mountains sink down upon the champaign, or more level land. The most picturesque, if not the highest, hills are also to be found in the county of Perth. The rivers find their way out of the mountainous region by the wildest leaps, and through the most romantic passes connecting the Highlands with

the Lowlands. Above, the vegetation of a happier climate and soil is mingled with the magnificent characteristics of mountain scenery, and woods, groves, and thickets in profusion clothe the base of the hills, ascend up the ravines, and mingle with the precipices. It is in such favoured regions that the traveller finds what the poet Gray, or some one else, has termed beauty lying in the lap of terror.

From the same advantage of situation, this favoured province presents a variety of the most pleasing character. Its lakes, woods, and mountains may vie in beauty with any that the Highland tour exhibits; while Perthshire contains, amidst this romantic scenery, and in some places in connexion with it, many fertile and habitable tracts, which may vie with the richness of merry England herself. The county has also been the scene of many remarkable exploits and events, some of historical importance, others interesting to the poet and romancer, though recorded in popular tradition alone. It was in these vales that the Saxons of the plain and the Gad of the mountains had many a desperate and bloody encounter, in which it was frequently impossible to decide the palm of victory between the mailed chivalry of the low country and the plaided clans whom they opposed.

Perth, so eminent for the beauty of its situation, is a place of great antiquity; and old tradition assigns to the town the importance of a Roman foundation. That victorious nation, it is said, pretended to recognise the Tiber in the much more

magnificent and navigable Tay, and to acknowledge the large level space, well known by the name of the North Inch, as having a near resemblance to their Campus Martins. The city was often the residence of our monarchs, who, although they had no palace at Perth, found the Cistercian convent amply sufficient for the reception of their court. It was here that James the First, one of the wisest and best of the Scottish kings, fell a victim to the jealousy of the vengeful aristocracy. Here also occurred the mysterious conspiracy of Gowrie, the scene of which has only of late been effaced by the destruction of the ancient palace in which the tragedy was acted. The Antiquarian Society of Perth, with just zeal for the objects of their pursuit, have published an accurate plan of this memorable mansion, with some remarks upon its connexion with the narrative of the plot, which display equal acuteness and candour.

One of the most beautiful points of view which Britain, or perhaps the world, can afford is, or rather we may say was, the prospect from a spot called the Wicks of Baiglie, being a species of niche at which the traveller arrived, after a long stage from Kinross, through a waste and uninteresting country, and from which, as forming a pass over the summit of a ridgy eminence which he had gradually surmounted, he beheld, stretching beneath him, the valley of the Tay, traversed by its ample and lordly stream; the town of Perth, with its two large meadows, or inches, its steeples, and its towers; the hills of Moncrieff and Kinnoul faintly rising into picturesque rocks, partly clothed

with woods; the rich margin of the river, studded with elegant mansions; and the distant view of the huge Grampian mountains, the northern screen of this exquisite landscape. The alteration of the road, greatly, it must be owned, to the improvement of general intercourse, avoids this magnificent point of view, and the landscape is introduced more gradually and partially to the eye, though the approach must be still considered as extremely beautiful. There is still, we believe, a footpath left open, by which the station at the Wicks of Baiglie may be approached; and the traveller, by quitting his horse or equipage, and walking a few hundred yards, may still compare the real landscape with the sketch which we have attempted to give. But it is not in our power to communicate, or in his to receive, the exquisite charm which surprise gives to pleasure, when so splendid a view arises when least expected or hoped for, and which Chrystal Croftangry experienced when he beheld, for the first time, the matchless scene.

Childish wonder, indeed, was an ingredient in my delight, for I was not above fifteen years old; and as this had been the first excursion which I was permitted to make on a pony of my own, I also experienced the glow of independence, mingled with that degree of anxiety which the most conceited boy feels when he is first abandoned to his own undirected counsels. I recollect pulling up the reins without meaning to do so, and gazing on the scene before me as if I had been afraid it would shift like those in a theatre before I could distinctly observe its

different parts, or convince myself that what I saw was real. Since that hour, and the period is now more than fifty years past, the recollection of that inimitable landscape has possessed the strongest influence over my mind, and retained its place as a memorable thing, when much that was influential on my own fortunes has fled from my recollection. It is therefore unnatural that, whilst deliberating on what might be brought forward for the amusement of the public, I should pitch upon some narrative connected with the splendid scenery which made so much impression on my youthful imagination, and which may perhaps have that effect in setting off the imperfections of the composition which ladies suppose a fine set of china to possess in heightening the flavour of indifferent tea.

The period at which I propose to commence is, however, considerably earlier of the remarkable historical transactions to which I have already alluded, as the events which I am about to recount occurred during the last years of the 14th century, when the Scottish sceptre was swayed by the gentle but feeble hand of John, who, on being called to the throne, assumed the title of Robert the Third.

CHAPTER II

*A country lip may have the velvet touch;
Though she's no lady, she may please as much.*

DRYDEN.

Perth, boasting, as we have already mentioned, so large a portion of the beauties of inanimate nature, has at no time been without its own share of those charms which are at once more interesting and more transient. To be called the Fair Maid of Perth would at any period have been a high distinction, and have inferred no mean superiority in beauty, where there were many to claim that much envied attribute. But, in the feudal times to which we now call the reader's attention, female beauty was a quality of much higher importance than it has been since the ideas of chivalry have been in a great measure extinguished. The love of the ancient cavaliers was a licensed species of idolatry, which the love of Heaven alone was theoretically supposed to approach in intensity, and which in practice it seldom equalled. God and the ladies were familiarly appealed to in the same breath; and devotion to the fair sex was as peremptorily enjoined upon the aspirant to the honour of chivalry as that which was due to Heaven. At such a period in society, the power of beauty was almost unlimited. It could level the highest rank with that which

was immeasurably inferior.

It was but in the reign preceding that of Robert III. that beauty alone had elevated a person of inferior rank and indifferent morals to share the Scottish throne; and many women, less artful or less fortunate, had risen to greatness from a state of concubinage, for which the manners of the times made allowance and apology. Such views might have dazzled a girl of higher birth than Catharine, or Katie, Glover, who was universally acknowledged to be the most beautiful young woman of the city or its vicinity, and whose renown, as the Fair Maid of Perth, had drawn on her much notice from the young gallants of the royal court, when it chanced to be residing in or near Perth, insomuch that more than one nobleman of the highest rank, and most distinguished for deeds of chivalry, were more attentive to exhibit feats of horsemanship as they passed the door of old Simon Glover, in what was called Couvrefew, or Curfew, Street, than to distinguish themselves in the tournaments, where the noblest dames of Scotland were spectators of their address. But the glover's daughter – for, as was common with the citizens and artisans of that early period, her father, Simon, derived his surname from the trade which he practised – showed no inclination to listen to any gallantry which came from those of a station highly exalted above that which she herself occupied, and, though probably in no degree insensible to her personal charms, seemed desirous to confine her conquests to those who were within her own sphere of life. Indeed, her beauty being of

that kind which we connect more with the mind than with the person, was, notwithstanding her natural kindness and gentleness of disposition, rather allied to reserve than to gaiety, even when in company with her equals; and the earnestness with which she attended upon the exercises of devotion induced many to think that Catharine Glover nourished the private wish to retire from the world and bury herself in the recesses of the cloister. But to such a sacrifice, should it be meditated, it was not to be expected her father, reputed a wealthy man and having this only child, would yield a willing consent.

In her resolution of avoiding the addresses of the gallant courtiers, the reigning beauty of Perth was confirmed by the sentiments of her parent.

“Let them go,” he said – “let them go, Catharine, those gallants, with their capering horses, their jingling spurs, their plumed bonnets, and their trim mustachios: they are not of our class, nor will we aim at pairing with them. Tomorrow is St. Valentine’s Day, when every bird chooses her mate; but you will not see the linnets pair with the sparrow hawk, nor the Robin Redbreast with the kite. My father was an honest burgher of Perth, and could use his needle as well as I can. Did there come war to the gates of our fair burgh, down went needles, thread, and shamoy leather, and out came the good head piece and target from the dark nook, and the long lance from above the chimney. Show me a day that either he or I was absent when the provost made his musters! Thus we have led our lives, my girl, working

to win our bread, and fighting to defend it. I will have no son in law that thinks himself better than me; and for these lords and knights, I trust thou wilt always remember thou art too low to be their lawful love, and too high to be their unlawful loon. And now lay by thy work, lass, for it is holytide eve, and it becomes us to go to the evening service, and pray that Heaven may send thee a good Valentine tomorrow.”

So the Fair Maid of Perth laid aside the splendid hawking glove which she was embroidering for the Lady Drummond, and putting on her holyday kirtle, prepared to attend her father to the Blackfriars monastery, which was adjacent to Couvrefew Street in which they lived. On their passage, Simon Glover, an ancient and esteemed burgess of Perth, somewhat stricken in years and increased in substance, received from young and old the homage due to his velvet jerkin and his golden chain, while the well known beauty of Catharine, though concealed beneath her screen – which resembled the mantilla still worn in Flanders – called both obeisances and doffings of the bonnet from young and old.

As the pair moved on arm in arm, they were followed by a tall handsome young man, dressed in a yeoman’s habit of the plainest kind, but which showed to advantage his fine limbs, as the handsome countenance that looked out from a quantity of curled tresses, surmounted by a small scarlet bonnet, became that species of headdress. He had no other weapon than a staff in his hand, it not being thought fit that persons of his degree (for he was an apprentice to the old glover) should appear on the street

armed with sword or dagger, a privilege which the jackmen, or military retainers of the nobility, esteemed exclusively their own. He attended his master at holytide, partly in the character of a domestic, or guardian, should there be cause for his interference; but it was not difficult to discern, by the earnest attention which he paid to Catharine Glover, that it was to her, rather than to her father, that he desired to dedicate his good offices.

Generally speaking, there was no opportunity for his zeal displaying itself; for a common feeling of respect induced passengers to give way to the father and daughter.

But when the steel caps, barrets, and plumes of squires, archers, and men at arms began to be seen among the throng, the wearers of these warlike distinctions were more rude in their demeanour than the quiet citizens. More than once, when from chance, or perhaps from an assumption of superior importance, such an individual took the wall of Simon in passing, the glover's youthful attendant bristled up with a look of defiance, and the air of one who sought to distinguish his zeal in his mistress's service by its ardour. As frequently did Conachar, for such was the lad's name, receive a check from his master, who gave him to understand that he did not wish his interference before he required it.

"Foolish boy," he said, "hast thou not lived long enough in my shop to know that a blow will breed a brawl; that a dirk will cut the skin as fast as a needle pierces leather; that I love peace, though I never feared war, and care not which side of the

causeway my daughter and I walk upon so we may keep our road in peace and quietness?"

Conachar excused himself as zealous for his master's honour, yet was scarce able to pacify the old citizen.

"What have we to do with honour?" said Simon Glover. "If thou wouldst remain in my service, thou must think of honesty, and leave honour to the swaggering fools who wear steel at their heels and iron on their shoulders. If you wish to wear and use such garniture, you are welcome, but it shall not be in my house or in my company."

Conachar seemed rather to kindle at this rebuke than to submit to it. But a sign from Catharine, if that slight raising of her little finger was indeed a sign, had more effect than the angry reproof of his master; and the youth laid aside the military air which seemed natural to him, and relapsed into the humble follower of a quiet burgher.

Meantime the little party were overtaken by a tall young man wrapped in a cloak, which obscured or muffled a part of his face – a practice often used by the gallants of the time, when they did not wish to be known, or were abroad in quest of adventures. He seemed, in short, one who might say to the world around him: "I desire, for the present, not to be known or addressed in my own character; but, as I am answerable to myself alone for my actions, I wear my incognito but for form's sake, and care little whether you see through it or not."

He came on the right side of Catharine, who had hold of her

father's arm, and slackened his pace as if joining their party.

“Good even to you, goodman.”

“The same to your worship, and thanks. May I pray you to pass on? Our pace is too slow for that of your lordship, our company too mean for that of your father's son.”

“My father's son can best judge of that, old man. I have business to talk of with you and with my fair St. Catharine here, the loveliest and most obdurate saint in the calendar.”

“With deep reverence, my lord,” said the old man, “I would remind you that this is good St. Valentine's Eve, which is no time for business, and that I can have your worshipful commands by a serving man as early as it pleases you to send them.”

“There is no time like the present,” said the persevering youth, whose rank seemed to be a kind which set him above ceremony. “I wish to know whether the buff doublet be finished which I commissioned some time since; and from you, pretty Catharine (here he sank his voice to a whisper), I desire to be informed whether your fair fingers have been employed upon it, agreeably to your promise? But I need not ask you, for my poor heart has felt the pang of each puncture that pierced the garment which was to cover it. Traitor, how wilt thou answer for thus tormenting the heart that loves thee so dearly?”

“Let me entreat you, my lord,” said Catharine, “to forego this wild talk: it becomes not you to speak thus, or me to listen. We are of poor rank but honest manners; and the presence of the father ought to protect the child from such expressions, even from

your lordship.”

This she spoke so low, that neither her father nor Conachar could understand what she said.

“Well, tyrant,” answered the persevering gallant, “I will plague you no longer now, providing you will let me see you from your window tomorrow, when the sun first peeps over the eastern hills, and give me right to be your Valentine for the year.”

“Not so, my lord; my father but now told me that hawks, far less eagles, pair not with the humble linnet. Seek some court lady, to whom your favours will be honour; to me – your Highness must permit me to speak the plain truth – they can be nothing but disgrace.”

As they spoke thus, the party arrived at the gate of the church.

“Your lordship will, I trust, permit us here to take leave of you?” said her father. “I am well aware how little you will alter your pleasure for the pain and uneasiness you may give to such as us but, from the throng of attendants at the gate, your lordship may see that there are others in the church to whom even your gracious lordship must pay respect.”

“Yes – respect; and who pays any respect to me?” said the haughty young lord. “A miserable artisan and his daughter, too much honoured by my slightest notice, have the insolence to tell me that my notice dishonours them. Well, my princess of white doe skin and blue silk, I will teach you to rue this.”

As he murmured thus, the glover and his daughter entered the Dominican church, and their attendant, Conachar, in attempting

to follow them closely, jostled, it may be not unwillingly, the young nobleman. The gallant, starting from his unpleasing reverie, and perhaps considering this as an intentional insult, seized on the young man by the breast, struck him, and threw him from him. His irritated opponent recovered himself with difficulty, and grasped towards his own side, as if seeking a sword or dagger in the place where it was usually worn; but finding none, he made a gesture of disappointed rage, and entered the church. During the few seconds he remained, the young nobleman stood with his arms folded on his breast, with a haughty smile, as if defying him to do his worst. When Conachar had entered the church, his opponent, adjusting his cloak yet closer about his face, made a private signal by holding up one of his gloves. He was instantly joined by two men, who, disguised like himself, had waited his motions at a little distance. They spoke together earnestly, after which the young nobleman retired in one direction, his friends or followers going off in another.

Simon Glover, before he entered the church, cast a look towards the group, but had taken his place among the congregation before they separated themselves. He knelt down with the air of a man who has something burdensome on his mind; but when the service was ended, he seemed free from anxiety, as one who had referred himself and his troubles to the disposal of Heaven. The ceremony of High Mass was performed with considerable solemnity, a number of noblemen and ladies of rank being present. Preparations had indeed been made for

the reception of the good old King himself, but some of those infirmities to which he was subject had prevented Robert III from attending the service as was his wont. When the congregation were dismissed, the glover and his beautiful daughter lingered for some time, for the purpose of making their several shrifts in the confessionals, where the priests had taken their places for discharging that part of their duty. Thus it happened that the night had fallen dark, and the way was solitary, when they returned along the now deserted streets to their own dwelling.

Most persons had betaken themselves to home and to bed. They who still lingered in the street were night walkers or revellers, the idle and swaggering retainers of the haughty nobles, who were much wont to insult the peaceful passengers, relying on the impunity which their masters' court favour was too apt to secure them.

It was, perhaps, in apprehension of mischief from some character of this kind that Conachar, stepping up to the glover, said, "Master, walk faster – we are dogg'd."

"Dogg'd, sayest thou? By whom and by how many?"

"By one man muffled in his cloak, who follows us like our shadow."

"Then will it never mend my pace along the Couvrefew Street for the best one man that ever trode it."

"But he has arms," said Conachar.

"And so have we, and hands, and legs, and feet. Why, sure, Conachar, you are not afraid of one man?"

“Afraid!” answered Conachar, indignant at the insinuation; “you shall soon know if I am afraid.”

“Now you are as far on the other side of the mark, thou foolish boy: thy temper has no middle course; there is no occasion to make a brawl, though we do not run. Walk thou before with Catharine, and I will take thy place. We cannot be exposed to danger so near home as we are.”

The glover fell behind accordingly, and certainly observed a person keep so close to them as, the time and place considered, justified some suspicion. When they crossed the street, he also crossed it, and when they advanced or slackened their pace, the stranger’s was in proportion accelerated or diminished. The matter would have been of very little consequence had Simon Glover been alone; but the beauty of his daughter might render her the object of some profligate scheme, in a country where the laws afforded such slight protection to those who had not the means to defend themselves.

Conachar and his fair charge having arrived on the threshold of their own apartment, which was opened to them by an old female servant, the burgher’s uneasiness was ended. Determined, however, to ascertain, if possible, whether there had been any cause for it, he called out to the man whose motions had occasioned the alarm, and who stood still, though he seemed to keep out of reach of the light. “Come, step forward, my friend, and do not play at bo peep; knowest thou not, that they who walk like phantoms in the dark are apt to encounter the conjuration of

a quarterstaff? Step forward, I say, and show us thy shapes, man.”

“Why, so I can, Master Glover,” said one of the deepest voices that ever answered question. “I can show my shapes well enough, only I wish they could bear the light something better.”

“Body of me,” exclaimed Simon, “I should know that voice. And is it thou, in thy bodily person, Harry Gow? Nay, beshrew me if thou passest this door with dry lips. What, man, curfew has not rung yet, and if it had, it were no reason why it should part father and son. Come in, man; Dorothy shall get us something to eat, and we will jingle a can ere thou leave us. Come in, I say; my daughter Kate will be right glad to see thee.”

By this time he had pulled the person, whom he welcomed so cordially, into a sort of kitchen, which served also upon ordinary occasions the office of parlour. Its ornaments were trenchers of pewter, mixed with a silver cup or two, which, in the highest degree of cleanliness, occupied a range of shelves like those of a beaufet, popularly called “the bink.” A good fire, with the assistance of a blazing lamp, spread light and cheerfulness through the apartment, and a savoury smell of some victuals which Dorothy was preparing did not at all offend the unrefined noses of those whose appetite they were destined to satisfy.

Their unknown attendant now stood in full light among them, and though his appearance was neither dignified nor handsome, his face and figure were not only deserving of attention, but seemed in some manner to command it. He was rather below the middle stature, but the breadth of his shoulders, length and

brawniness of his arms, and the muscular appearance of the whole man, argued a most unusual share of strength, and a frame kept in vigour by constant exercise. His legs were somewhat bent, but not in a manner which could be said to approach to deformity, on the contrary, which seemed to correspond to the strength of his frame, though it injured in some degree its symmetry.

His dress was of buff hide; and he wore in a belt around his waist a heavy broadsword, and a dirk or poniard, as if to defend his purse, which (burgher fashion) was attached to the same cincture. The head was well proportioned, round, close cropped, and curled thickly with black hair. There was daring and resolution in the dark eye, but the other features seemed to express a bashful timidity, mingled with good humor, and obvious satisfaction at meeting with his old friends.

Abstracted from the bashful expression, which was that of the moment, the forehead of Henry Gow, or Smith, for he was indifferently so called, was high and noble, but the lower part of the face was less happily formed. The mouth was large, and well furnished with a set of firm and beautiful teeth, the appearance of which corresponded with the air of personal health and muscular strength which the whole frame indicated. A short thick beard, and mustachios which had lately been arranged with some care, completed the picture. His age could not exceed eight and twenty.

The family appeared all well pleased with the unexpected appearance of an old friend. Simon Glover shook his hand again and again, Dorothy made her compliments, and Catharine

herself offered freely her hand, which Henry held in his massive grasp, as if he designed to carry it to his lips, but, after a moment's hesitation, desisted, from fear lest the freedom might be ill taken. Not that there was any resistance on the part of the little hand which lay passive in his grasp; but there was a smile mingled with the blush on her cheek, which seemed to increase the confusion of the gallant.

Her father, on his part, called out frankly, as he saw his friend's hesitation: "Her lips, man – her lips! and that's a proffer I would not make to every one who crosses my threshold. But, by good St. Valentine, whose holyday will dawn tomorrow, I am so glad to see thee in the bonny city of Perth again that it would be hard to tell the thing I could refuse thee."

The smith, for, as has been said, such was the craft of this sturdy artisan, was encouraged modestly to salute the Fair Maid, who yielded the courtesy with a smile of affection that might have become a sister, saying, at the same time: "Let me hope that I welcome back to Perth a repentant and amended man."

He held her hand as if about to answer, then suddenly, as one who lost courage at the moment, relinquished his grasp; and drawing back as if afraid of what he had done, his dark countenance glowing with bashfulness, mixed with delight, he sat down by the fire on the opposite side from that which Catharine occupied.

"Come, Dorothy, speed thee with the food, old woman; and Conachar – where is Conachar?"

“He is gone to bed, sir, with a headache,” said Catharine, in a hesitating voice.

“Go, call him, Dorothy,” said the old glover; “I will not be used thus by him: his Highland blood, forsooth, is too gentle to lay a trencher or spread a napkin, and he expects to enter our ancient and honourable craft without duly waiting and tending upon his master and teacher in all matters of lawful obedience. Go, call him, I say; I will not be thus neglected.”

Dorothy was presently heard screaming upstairs, or more probably up a ladder, to the cock loft, to which the recusant apprentice had made an untimely retreat; a muttered answer was returned, and soon after Conachar appeared in the eating apartment. There was a gloom of deep sullenness on his haughty, though handsome, features, and as he proceeded to spread the board, and arrange the trenchers, with salt, spices, and other condiments – to discharge, in short, the duties of a modern domestic, which the custom of the time imposed upon all apprentices – he was obviously disgusted and indignant with the mean office imposed upon him.

The Fair Maid of Perth looked with some anxiety at him, as if apprehensive that his evident sullenness might increase her father’s displeasure; but it was not till her eyes had sought out his for a second time that Conachar condescended to veil his dissatisfaction, and throw a greater appearance of willingness and submission into the services which he was performing.

And here we must acquaint our reader that, though the private

interchange of looks betwixt Catharine Glover and the young mountaineer indicated some interest on the part of the former in the conduct of the latter, it would have puzzled the strictest observer to discover whether that feeling exceeded in degree what might have been felt by a young person towards a friend and inmate of the same age, with whom she had lived on habits of intimacy.

“Thou hast had a long journey, son Henry,” said Glover, who had always used that affectionate style of speech, though no ways akin to the young artisan; “ay, and hast seen many a river besides Tay, and many a fair bigging besides St. Johnston.”

“But none that I like half so well, and none that are half so much worth my liking,” answered the smith. “I promise you, father, that, when I crossed the Wicks of Baiglie, and saw the bonny city lie stretched fairly before me like a fairy queen in romance, whom the knight finds asleep among a wilderness of flowers, I felt even as a bird when it folds its wearied wings to stoop down on its own nest.”

“Aha! so thou canst play the maker [old Scottish for poet] yet?” said the glover. “What, shall we have our ballets and our roundels again? our lusty carols for Christmas, and our mirthful springs to trip it round the maypole?”

“Such toys there may be forthcoming, father,” said Henry Smith, “though the blast of the bellows and the clatter of the anvil make but coarse company to lays of minstrelsy; but I can afford them no better, since I must mend my fortune, though I mar my

verses.”

“Right again – my own son just,” answered the glover; “and I trust thou hast made a saving voyage of it?”

“Nay, I made a thriving one, father: I sold the steel habergeon that you wot of for four hundred marks to the English Warden of the East Marches, Sir Magnus Redman. He scarce scrupled a penny after I gave him leave to try a sword dint upon it. The beggardly Highland thief who bespoke it boggled at half the sum, though it had cost me a year’s labour.”

“What dost thou start at, Conachar?” said Simon, addressing himself, by way of parenthesis, to the mountain disciple; “wilt thou never learn to mind thy own business, without listening to what is passing round thee? What is it to thee that an Englishman thinks that cheap which a Scottishman may hold dear?”

Conachar turned round to speak, but, after a moment’s consideration, looked down, and endeavoured to recover his composure, which had been deranged by the contemptuous manner in which the smith had spoken of his Highland customer.

Henry went on without paying any attention to him. “I sold at high prices some swords and whingers when I was at Edinburgh. They expect war there; and if it please God to send it, my merchandise will be worth its price. St. Dunstan make us thankful, for he was of our craft. In short, this fellow (laying his hand on his purse); who, thou knowest, father, was somewhat lank and low in condition when I set out four months since, is now as round and full as a six weeks’ porker.”

“And that other leathern sheathed, iron hilted fellow who hangs beside him,” said the glover, “has he been idle all this while? Come, jolly smith, confess the truth – how many brawls hast thou had since crossing the Tay?”

“Nay, now you do me wrong, father, to ask me such a question (glancing a look at Catharine) in such a presence,” answered the armourer: “I make swords, indeed, but I leave it to other people to use them. No – no, seldom have I a naked sword in my fist, save when I am turning them on the anvil or grindstone; and they slandered me to your daughter Catharine, that led her to suspect the quietest burgess in Perth of being a brawler. I wish the best of them would dare say such a word at the Hill of Kinnoul, and never a man on the green but he and I.”

“Ay – ay,” said the glover, laughing, “we should then have a fine sample of your patient sufferance. Out upon you, Henry, that you will speak so like a knave to one who knows thee so well! You look at Kate, too, as if she did not know that a man in this country must make his hand keep his head, unless he will sleep in slender security. Come – come, beshrew me if thou hast not spoiled as many suits of armour as thou hast made.”

“Why, he would be a bad armourer, father Simon, that could not with his own blow make proof of his own workmanship. If I did not sometimes cleave a helmet, or strike a point through a harness, I should not know what strength of fabric to give them; and might jingle together such pasteboard work as yonder Edinburgh smiths think not shame to put out of their hands.”

“Aha, now would I lay a gold crown thou hast had a quarrel with some Edinburgh ‘burn the wind’ upon that very ground?”

[“Burn the wind,” an old cant term for blacksmith, appears in Burns:

Then burnewin came on like death, At every chaup, etc.]

“A quarrel! no, father,” replied the Perth armourer, “but a measuring of swords with such a one upon St. Leonard’s Crags, for the honour of my bonny city, I confess. Surely you do not think I would quarrel with a brother craftsman?”

“Ah, to a surety, no. But how did your brother craftman come off?”

“Why, as one with a sheet of paper on his bosom might come off from the stroke of a lance; or rather, indeed, he came not off at all, for, when I left him, he was lying in the Hermit’s Lodge daily expecting death, for which Father Gervis said he was in heavenly preparation.”

“Well, any more measuring of weapons?” said the glover.

“Why, truly, I fought an Englishman at Berwick besides, on the old question of the supremacy, as they call it – I am sure you would not have me slack at that debate? – and I had the luck to hurt him on the left knee.”

“Well done for St. Andrew! to it again. Whom next had you to deal with?” said Simon, laughing at the exploits of his pacific friend.

“I fought a Scotchman in the Torwood,” answered Henry Smith, “upon a doubt which was the better swordsman, which,

you are aware, could not be known or decided without a trial. The poor fellow lost two fingers.”

“Pretty well for the most peaceful lad in Perth, who never touches a sword but in the way of his profession. Well, anything more to tell us?”

“Little; for the drubbing of a Highlandman is a thing not worth mentioning.”

“For what didst thou drub him, O man of peace?” inquired the glover.

“For nothing that I can remember,” replied the smith, “except his presenting himself on the south side of Stirling Bridge.”

“Well, here is to thee, and thou art welcome to me after all these exploits. Conachar, bestir thee. Let the cans clink, lad, and thou shalt have a cup of the nut brown for thyself, my boy.”

Conachar poured out the good liquor for his master and for Catharine with due observance. But that done, he set the flagon on the table and sat down.

“How now, sirrah! be these your manners? Fill to my guest, the worshipful Master Henry Smith.”

“Master Smith may fill for himself, if he wishes for liquor,” answered the youthful Celt. “The son of my father has demeaned himself enough already for one evening.”

“That’s well crowed for a cockerel,” said Henry; “but thou art so far right, my lad, that the man deserves to die of thirst who will not drink without a cupbearer.”

But his entertainer took not the contumacy of the young

apprentice with so much patience. "Now, by my honest word, and by the best glove I ever made," said Simon, "thou shalt help him with liquor from that cup and flagon, if thee and I are to abide under one roof."

Conachar arose sullenly upon hearing this threat, and, approaching the smith, who had just taken the tankard in his hand, and was raising it to his head, he contrived to stumble against him and jostle him so awkwardly, that the foaming ale gushed over his face, person, and dress. Good natured as the smith, in spite of his warlike propensities, really was in the utmost degree, his patience failed under such a provocation. He seized the young man's throat, being the part which came readiest to his grasp, as Conachar arose from the pretended stumble, and pressing it severely as he cast the lad from him, exclaimed: "Had this been in another place, young gallows bird, I had stowed the lugs out of thy head, as I have done to some of thy clan before thee."

Conachar recovered his feet with the activity of a tiger, and exclaimed: "Never shall you live to make that boast again!" drew a short, sharp knife from his bosom, and, springing on Henry Smith, attempted to plunge it into his body over the collarbone, which must have been a mortal wound. But the object of this violence was so ready to defend himself by striking up the assailant's hand, that the blow only glanced on the bone, and scarce drew blood. To wrench the dagger from the boy's hand, and to secure him with a grasp like that of his own iron vice, was,

for the powerful smith, the work of a single moment.

Conachar felt himself at once in the absolute power of the formidable antagonist whom he had provoked; he became deadly pale, as he had been the moment before glowing red, and stood mute with shame and fear, until, relieving him from his powerful hold, the smith quietly said: "It is well for thee that thou canst not make me angry; thou art but a boy, and I, a grown man, ought not to have provoked thee. But let this be a warning."

Conachar stood an instant as if about to reply, and then left the room, ere Simon had collected himself enough to speak. Dorothy was running hither and thither for salves and healing herbs. Catharine had swooned at the sight of the trickling blood.

"Let me depart, father Simon," said Henry Smith, mournfully, "I might have guessed I should have my old luck, and spread strife and bloodshed where I would wish most to bring peace and happiness. Care not for me. Look to poor Catharine; the fright of such an affray hath killed her, and all through my fault."

"Thy fault, my son! It was the fault of yon Highland cateran, whom it is my curse to be cumbered with; but he shall go back to his glens tomorrow, or taste the tolbooth of the burgh. An assault upon the life of his master's guest in his house! It breaks all bonds between us. But let me see to thy wound."

"Catharine!" repeated the armourer – "look to Catharine."

"Dorothy will see to her," said Simon; "surprise and fear kill not; skenes and dirks do. And she is not more the daughter of my blood than thou, my dear Henry, art the son of my affections."

Let me see the wound. The skene ocle is an ugly weapon in a Highland hand.”

“I mind it no more than the scratch of a wildcat,” said the armourer; “and now that the colour is coming to Catharine’s cheek again, you shall see me a sound man in a moment.”

He turned to a corner in which hung a small mirror, and hastily took from his purse some dry lint to apply to the slight wound he had received. As he unloosed the leathern jacket from his neck and shoulders, the manly and muscular form which they displayed was not more remarkable than the fairness of his skin, where it had not, as in hands and face, been exposed to the effects of rough weather and of his laborious trade. He hastily applied some lint to stop the bleeding; and a little water having removed all other marks of the fray, he buttoned his doublet anew, and turned again to the table, where Catharine, still pale and trembling, was, however, recovered from her fainting fit.

“Would you but grant me your forgiveness for having offended you in the very first hour of my return? The lad was foolish to provoke me, and yet I was more foolish to be provoked by such as he. Your father blames me not, Catharine, and cannot you forgive me?”

“I have no power to forgive,” answered Catharine, “what I have no title to resent. If my father chooses to have his house made the scene of night brawls, I must witness them – I cannot help myself. Perhaps it was wrong in me to faint and interrupt, it may be, the farther progress of a fair fray. My apology is, that

I cannot bear the sight of blood.”

“And is this the manner,” said her father, “in which you receive my friend after his long absence? My friend, did I say? Nay, my son. He escapes being murdered by a fellow whom I will tomorrow clear this house of, and you treat him as if he had done wrong in dashing from him the snake which was about to sting him!”

“It is not my part, father,” returned the Maid of Perth, “to decide who had the right or wrong in the present brawl, nor did I see what happened distinctly enough to say which was assailant, or which defender. But sure our friend, Master Henry, will not deny that he lives in a perfect atmosphere of strife, blood, and quarrels. He hears of no swordsman but he envies his reputation, and must needs put his valour to the proof. He sees no brawl but he must strike into the midst of it. Has he friends, he fights with them for love and honour; has he enemies, he fights with them for hatred and revenge. And those men who are neither his friends nor foes, he fights with them because they are on this or that side of a river. His days are days of battle, and, doubtless, he acts them over again in his dreams.”

“Daughter,” said Simon, “your tongue wags too freely. Quarrels and fights are men’s business, not women’s, and it is not maidenly to think or speak of them.”

“But if they are so rudely enacted in our presence,” said Catharine, “it is a little hard to expect us to think or speak of anything else. I will grant you, my father, that this valiant burgess

of Perth is one of the best hearted men that draws breath within its walls: that he would walk a hundred yards out of the way rather than step upon a worm; that he would be as loth, in wantonness, to kill a spider as if he were a kinsman to King Robert, of happy memory; that in the last quarrel before his departure he fought with four butchers, to prevent their killing a poor mastiff that had misbehaved in the bull ring, and narrowly escaped the fate of the cur that he was protecting. I will grant you also, that the poor never pass the house of the wealthy armourer but they are relieved with food and alms. But what avails all this, when his sword makes as many starving orphans and mourning widows as his purse relieves?”

“Nay, but, Catharine, hear me but a word before going on with a string of reproaches against my friend, that sound something like sense, while they are, in truth, inconsistent with all we hear and see around us. What,” continued the glover, “do our King and our court, our knights and ladies, our abbots, monks, and priests themselves, so earnestly crowd to see? Is it not to behold the display of chivalry, to witness the gallant actions of brave knights in the tilt and tourney ground, to look upon deeds of honour and glory achieved by arms and bloodshed? What is it these proud knights do, that differs from what our good Henry Gow works out in his sphere? Who ever heard of his abusing his skill and strength to do evil or forward oppression, and who knows not how often it has been employed as that of a champion in the good cause of the burgh? And shouldst not thou, of all women,

deem thyself honoured and glorious, that so true a heart and so strong an arm has termed himself thy bachelor? In what do the proudest dames take their loftiest pride, save in the chivalry of their knight; and has the boldest in Scotland done more gallant deeds than my brave son Henry, though but of low degree? Is he not known to Highland and Lowland as the best armourer that ever made sword, and the truest soldier that ever drew one?"

"My dearest father," answered Catharine, "your words contradict themselves, if you will permit your child to say so. Let us thank God and the good saints that we are in a peaceful rank of life, below the notice of those whose high birth, and yet higher pride, lead them to glory in their bloody works of cruelty, which haughty and lordly men term deeds of chivalry. Your wisdom will allow that it would be absurd in us to prank ourselves in their dainty plumes and splendid garments; why, then, should we imitate their full blown vices? Why should we assume their hard hearted pride and relentless cruelty, to which murder is not only a sport, but a subject of vainglorious triumph? Let those whose rank claims as its right such bloody homage take pride and pleasure in it; we, who have no share in the sacrifice, may the better pity the sufferings of the victim. Let us thank our lowliness, since it secures us from temptation. But forgive me, father, if I have stepped over the limits of my duty, in contradicting the views which you entertain, with so many others, on these subjects."

"Nay, thou hast even too much talk for me, girl," said her

father, somewhat angrily. "I am but a poor workman, whose best knowledge is to distinguish the left hand glove from the right. But if thou wouldst have my forgiveness, say something of comfort to my poor Henry. There he sits, confounded and dismayed with all the preachment thou hast heaped together; and he, to whom a trumpet sound was like the invitation to a feast, is struck down at the sound of a child's whistle."

The armourer, indeed, while he heard the lips that were dearest to him paint his character in such unfavourable colours, had laid his head down on the table, upon his folded arms, in an attitude of the deepest dejection, or almost despair.

"I would to Heaven, my dearest father," answered Catharine, "that it were in my power to speak comfort to Henry, without betraying the sacred cause of the truths I have just told you. And I may – nay, I must have such a commission," she continued with something that the earnestness with which she spoke and the extreme beauty of her features caused for the moment to resemble inspiration.

"The truth of Heaven," she said, in a solemn tone, "was never committed to a tongue, however feeble, but it gave a right to that tongue to announce mercy, while it declared judgment. Arise, Henry – rise up, noble minded, good, and generous, though widely mistaken man. Thy faults are those of this cruel and remorseless age, thy virtues all thine own."

While she thus spoke, she laid her hand upon the smith's arm, and extricating it from under his head by a force which, however

gentle, he could not resist, she compelled him to raise towards her his manly face, and the eyes into which her expostulations, mingled with other feelings, had summoned tears.

“Weep not,” she said, “or rather, weep on, but weep as those who have hope. Abjure the sins of pride and anger, which most easily beset thee; fling from thee the accursed weapons, to the fatal and murderous use of which thou art so easily tempted.”

“You speak to me in vain, Catharine,” returned the armourer: “I may, indeed, turn monk and retire from the world, but while I live in it I must practise my trade; and while I form armour and weapons for others, I cannot myself withstand the temptation of using them. You would not reproach me as you do, if you knew how inseparably the means by which I gain my bread are connected with that warlike spirit which you impute to me as a fault, though it is the consequence of inevitable necessity. While I strengthen the shield or corselet to withstand wounds, must I not have constantly in remembrance the manner and strength with which they may be dealt; and when I forge the sword, and temper it for war, is it practicable for me to avoid the recollection of its use?”

“Then throw from you, my dear Henry,” said the enthusiastic girl, clasping with both her slender hands the nervous strength and weight of one of the muscular armourer’s, which they raised with difficulty, permitted by its owner, yet scarcely receiving assistance from his volition – “cast from you, I say, the art which is a snare to you. Abjure the fabrication of weapons which

can only be useful to abridge human life, already too short for repentance, or to encourage with a feeling of safety those whom fear might otherwise prevent from risking themselves in peril. The art of forming arms, whether offensive or defensive, is alike sinful in one to whose violent and ever vehement disposition the very working upon them proves a sin and a snare. Resign utterly the manufacture of weapons of every description, and deserve the forgiveness of Heaven, by renouncing all that can lead to the sin which most easily besets you.”

“And what,” murmured the armourer, “am I to do for my livelihood, when I have given over the art of forging arms for which Henry of Perth is known from the Tay to the Thames?”

“Your art itself,” said Catharine, “has innocent and laudable resources. If you renounce the forging of swords and bucklers, there remains to you the task of forming the harmless spade, and the honourable as well as useful ploughshare – of those implements which contribute to the support of life, or to its comforts. Thou canst frame locks and bars to defend the property of the weak against the stouthrief and oppression of the strong. Men will still resort to thee, and repay thy honest industry – ”

But here Catharine was interrupted. Her father had heard her declaim against war and tournaments with a feeling that, though her doctrine were new to him, they might not, nevertheless, be entirely erroneous. He felt, indeed, a wish that his proposed son in law should not commit himself voluntarily to the hazards which the daring character and great personal strength of Henry

the Smith had hitherto led him to incur too readily; and so far he would rather have desired that Catharine's arguments should have produced some effect upon the mind of her lover, whom he knew to be as ductile when influenced by his affections as he was fierce and intractable when assailed by hostile remonstrances or threats. But her arguments interfered with his views, when he heard her enlarge upon the necessity of his designed son in law resigning a trade which brought in more ready income than any at that time practised in Scotland, and more profit to Henry of Perth in particular than to any armourer in the nation. He had some indistinct idea that it would not be amiss to convert, if possible, Henry the Smith from his too frequent use of arms, even though he felt some pride in being connected with one who wielded with such superior excellence those weapons, which in that warlike age it was the boast of all men to manage with spirit. But when he heard his daughter recommend, as the readiest road to this pacific state of mind, that her lover should renounce the gainful trade in which he was held unrivalled, and which, from the constant private differences and public wars of the time, was sure to afford him a large income, he could withhold his wrath no longer. The daughter had scarce recommended to her lover the fabrication of the implements of husbandry, than, feeling the certainty of being right, of which in the earlier part of their debate he had been somewhat doubtful, the father broke in with:

“Locks and bars, plough graith and harrow teeth! and why not grates and fire prongs, and Culross girdles, and an ass to carry

the merchandise through the country, and thou for another ass to lead it by the halter? Why, Catharine, girl, has sense altogether forsaken thee, or dost thou think that in these hard and iron days men will give ready silver for anything save that which can defend their own life, or enable them to take that of their enemy? We want swords to protect ourselves every moment now, thou silly wench, and not ploughs to dress the ground for the grain we may never see rise. As for the matter of our daily bread, those who are strong seize it, and live; those who are weak yield it, and die of hunger. Happy is the man who, like my worthy son, has means of obtaining his living otherwise than by the point of the sword which he makes. Preach peace to him as much as thou wilt, I will never be he will say thee nay; but as for bidding the first armourer in Scotland forego the forging of swords, curtal axes, and harness, it is enough to drive patience itself mad. Out from my sight! and next morning I prithee remember that, shouldst thou have the luck to see Henry the Smith, which is more than thy usage of him has deserved, you see a man who has not his match in Scotland at the use of broadsword and battle axe, and who can work for five hundred marks a year without breaking a holyday.”

The daughter, on hearing her father speak thus peremptorily, made a low obeisance, and, without further goodnight, withdrew to the chamber which was her usual sleeping apartment.

CHAPTER III

*Whence cometh Smith, be he knight, lord, or squire,
But from the smith that forged in the fire?*

VERSTEGAN.

The armourer's heart swelled big with various and contending sensations, so that it seemed as if it would burst the leathern doublet under which it was shrouded. He arose, turned away his head, and extended his hand towards the glover, while he averted his face, as if desirous that his emotion should not be read upon his countenance.

“Nay, hang me if I bid you farewell, man,” said Simon, striking the flat of his hand against that which the armourer expanded towards him. “I will shake no hands with you for an hour to come at least. Tarry but a moment, man, and I will explain all this; and surely a few drops of blood from a scratch, and a few silly words from a foolish wench's lips, are not to part father and son when they have been so long without meeting? Stay, then, man, if ever you would wish for a father's blessing and St. Valentine's, whose blessed eve this chances to be.”

The glover was soon heard loudly summoning Dorothy, and, after some clanking of keys and trampling up and down stairs, Dorothy appeared bearing three large rummer cups of green

glass, which were then esteemed a great and precious curiosity, and the glover followed with a huge bottle, equal at least to three quarts of these degenerate days.

“Here is a cup of wine, Henry, older by half than I am myself; my father had it in a gift from stout old Crabbe, the Flemish engineer, who defended Perth so stoutly in the minority of David the Second. We glovers could always do something in war, though our connexion with it was less than yours who work in steel and iron. And my father had pleased old Crabbe, some other day I will tell you how, and also how long these bottles were concealed under ground, to save them from the reiving Southron. So I will empty a cup to the soul’s health of my honoured father – May his sins be forgiven him! Dorothy, thou shalt drink this pledge, and then be gone to thy cock loft. I know thine ears are itching, girl, but I have that to say which no one must hear save Henry Smith, the son of mine adoption.”

Dorothy did not venture to remonstrate, but, taking off her glass, or rather her goblet, with good courage, retired to her sleeping apartment, according to her master’s commands.

The two friends were left alone.

“It grieves me, friend Henry,” said Simon, filling at the same time his own glass and his guest’s – “it grieves me from my soul that my daughter retains this silly humor; but also methinks, thou mightst mend it. Why wouldst thou come hither clattering with thy sword and dagger, when the girl is so silly that she cannot bear the sight of these? Dost thou not remember that thou hadst a

sort of quarrel with her even before thy last departure from Perth, because thou wouldst not go like other honest quiet burghers, but must be ever armed, like one of the rascally jackmen that wait on the nobility? Sure it is time enough for decent burgesses to arm at the tolling of the common bell, which calls us out bodin in effer of war.”

“Why, my good father, that was not my fault; but I had no sooner quitted my nag than I run hither to tell you of my return, thinking, if it were your will to permit me, that I would get your advice about being Mistress Catharine’s Valentine for the year; and then I heard from Mrs. Dorothy that you were gone to hear mass at the Black Friars. So I thought I would follow thither, partly to hear the same mass with you, and partly – Our Lady and St. Valentine forgive me! – to look upon one who thinks little enough of me. And, as you entered the church, methought I saw two or three dangerous looking men holding counsel together, and gazing at you and at her, and in especial Sir John Ramorny, whom I knew well enough, for all his disguise, and the velvet patch over his eye, and his cloak so like a serving man’s; so methought, father Simon, that, as you were old, and yonder slip of a Highlander something too young to do battle, I would even walk quietly after you, not doubting, with the tools I had about me, to bring any one to reason that might disturb you in your way home. You know that yourself discovered me, and drew me into the house, whether I would or no; otherwise, I promise you, I would not have seen your daughter till I had donn’d the new

jerkin which was made at Berwick after the latest cut; nor would I have appeared before her with these weapons, which she dislikes so much. Although, to say truth, so many are at deadly feud with me for one unhappy chance or another, that it is as needful for me as for any man in Scotland to go by night with weapons about me.”

“The silly wench never thinks of that,” said Simon Glover: “she never has sense to consider, that in our dear native land of Scotland every man deems it his privilege and duty to avenge his own wrong. But, Harry, my boy, thou art to blame for taking her talk so much to heart. I have seen thee bold enough with other wenches, wherefore so still and tongue tied with her?”

“Because she is something different from other maidens, father Glover – because she is not only more beautiful, but wiser, higher, holier, and seems to me as if she were made of better clay than we that approach her. I can hold my head high enough with the rest of the lasses round the maypole; but somehow, when I approach Catharine, I feel myself an earthly, coarse, ferocious creature, scarce worthy to look on her, much less to contradict the precepts which she expounds to me.”

“You are an imprudent merchant, Harry Smith,” replied Simon, “and rate too high the goods you wish to purchase. Catharine is a good girl, and my daughter; but if you make her a conceited ape by your bashfulness and your flattery, neither you nor I will see our wishes accomplished.”

“I often fear it, my good father,” said the smith; “for I feel how

little I am deserving of Catharine.”

“Feel a thread’s end!” said the glover; “feel for me, friend Smith – for Catharine and me. Think how the poor thing is beset from morning to night, and by what sort of persons, even though windows be down and doors shut. We were accosted today by one too powerful to be named – ay, and he showed his displeasure openly, because I would not permit him to gallant my daughter in the church itself, when the priest was saying mass. There are others scarce less reasonable. I sometimes wish that Catharine were some degrees less fair, that she might not catch that dangerous sort of admiration, or somewhat less holy, that she might sit down like an honest woman, contented with stout Henry Smith, who could protect his wife against every sprig of chivalry in the court of Scotland.”

“And if I did not,” said Henry, thrusting out a hand and arm which might have belonged to a giant for bone and muscle, “I would I may never bring hammer upon anvil again! Ay, an it were come but that length, my fair Catharine should see that there is no harm in a man having the trick of defence. But I believe she thinks the whole world is one great minster church, and that all who live in it should behave as if they were at an eternal mass.”

“Nay, in truth,” said the father, “she has strange influence over those who approach her; the Highland lad, Conachar, with whom I have been troubled for these two or three years, although you may see he has the natural spirit of his people, obeys the least sign which Catharine makes him, and, indeed, will hardly be ruled

by any one else in the house. She takes much pains with him to bring him from his rude Highland habits.”

Here Harry Smith became uneasy in his chair, lifted the flagon, set it down, and at length exclaimed: “The devil take the young Highland whelp and his whole kindred! What has Catharine to do to instruct such a fellow as he? He will be just like the wolf cub that I was fool enough to train to the offices of a dog, and every one thought him reclaimed, till, in an ill hour, I went to walk on the hill of Moncrieff, when he broke loose on the laird’s flock, and made a havoc that I might well have rued, had the laird not wanted a harness at the time. And I marvel that you, being a sensible man, father Glover, will keep this Highland young fellow – a likely one, I promise you – so nigh to Catharine, as if there were no other than your daughter to serve him for a schoolmistress.”

“Fie, my son – fie; now you are jealous,” said Simon, “of a poor young fellow who, to tell you the truth, resides here because he may not so well live on the other side of the hill.”

“Ay – ay, father Simon,” retorted the smith, who had all the narrow minded feelings of the burghers of his time, “an it were not for fear of offence, I would say that you have even too much packing and peiling with yonder loons out of burgh.”

“I must get my deer hides, buckskins, kidskins, and so forth somewhere, my good Harry, and Highlandmen give good bargains.”

“They can afford them,” replied Henry, drily, “for they sell

nothing but stolen gear.”

“Well – well, be that as it may, it is not my business where they get the bestial, so I get the hides. But as I was saying, there are certain considerations why I am willing to oblige the father of this young man, by keeping him here. And he is but half a Highlander neither, and wants a thought of the dour spirit of a ‘glune amie’ after all, I have seldom seen him so fierce as he showed himself but now.”

“You could not, unless he had killed his man,” replied the smith, in the same dry tone.

“Nevertheless, if you wish it, Harry, I’ll set all other respects aside, and send the landlouper to seek other quarters tomorrow morning.”

“Nay, father,” said the smith, “you cannot suppose that Harry Gow cares the value of a smithy dander for such a cub as yonder cat-a-mountain? I care little, I promise you, though all his clan were coming down the Shoegate with slogan crying and pipes playing: I would find fifty blades and bucklers would send them back faster than they came. But, to speak truth, though it is a fool’s speech too, I care not to see the fellow so much with Catharine. Remember, father Glover, your trade keeps your eyes and hands close employed, and must have your heedful care, even if this lazy lurdane wrought at it, which you know yourself he seldom does.”

“And that is true,” said Simon: “he cuts all his gloves out for the right hand, and never could finish a pair in his life.”

“No doubt, his notions of skin cutting are rather different,” said Henry. “But with your leave, father, I would only say that, work he or be he idle, he has no bleared eyes, no hands seared with the hot iron, and welked by the use of the fore hammer, no hair rusted in the smoke, and singed in the furnace, like the hide of a badger, rather than what is fit to be covered with a Christian bonnet. Now, let Catharine be as good a wench as ever lived, and I will uphold her to be the best in Perth, yet she must see and know that these things make a difference betwixt man and man, and that the difference is not in my favour.”

“Here is to thee, with all my heart, son Harry,” said the old man, filling a brimmer to his companion and another to himself; “I see that, good smith as thou art, thou ken’st not the mettle that women are made of. Thou must be bold, Henry; and bear thyself not as if thou wert going to the gallows lee, but like a gay young fellow, who knows his own worth and will not be slighted by the best grandchild Eve ever had. Catharine is a woman like her mother, and thou thinkest foolishly to suppose they are all set on what pleases the eye. Their ear must be pleased too, man: they must know that he whom they favour is bold and buxom, and might have the love of twenty, though he is suing for theirs. Believe an old man, woman walk more by what others think than by what they think themselves, and when she asks for the boldest man in Perth whom can she hear named but Harry Burn-the-wind? The best armourer that ever fashioned weapon on anvil? Why, Harry Smith again. The tightest dancer at the maypole?

Why, the lusty smith. The gayest troller of ballads? Why, who but Harry Gow? The best wrestler, sword and buckler player, the king of the weapon shawing, the breaker of mad horses, the tamer of wild Highlandmen? Evermore it is thee – thee – no one but thee. And shall Catharine prefer yonder slip of a Highland boy to thee? Pshaw! she might as well make a steel gauntlet out of kid's leather. I tell thee, Conachar is nothing to her, but so far as she would fain prevent the devil having his due of him, as of other Highlandmen. God bless her, poor thing, she would bring all mankind to better thoughts if she could.”

“In which she will fail to a certainty,” said the smith, who, as the reader may have noticed, had no goodwill to the Highland race. “I will wager on Old Nick, of whom I should know something, he being indeed a worker in the same element with myself, against Catharine on that debate: the devil will have the tartan, that is sure enough.”

“Ay, but Catharine,” replied the glover, “hath a second thou knowest little of: Father Clement has taken the young reiver in hand, and he fears a hundred devils as little as I do a flock of geese.”

“Father Clement!” said the smith. “You are always making some new saint in this godly city of St. Johnston. Pray, who, for a devil's drubber, may he be? One of your hermits that is trained for the work like a wrestler for the ring, and brings himself to trim by fasting and penance, is he not?”

“No, that is the marvel of it,” said Simon: “Father Clement

eats, drinks, and lives much like other folks – all the rules of the church, nevertheless, strictly observed.”

“Oh, I comprehend! – a buxom priest that thinks more of good living than of good life, tipples a can on Fastern’s Eve, to enable him to face Lent, has a pleasant in principio, and confesses all the prettiest women about the town?”

“You are on the bow hand still, smith. I tell you, my daughter and I could nose out either a fasting hypocrite or a full one. But Father Clement is neither the one nor the other.”

“But what is he then, in Heaven’s name?”

“One who is either greatly better than half his brethren of St. Johnston put together, or so much worse than the worst of them, that it is sin and shame that he is suffered to abide in the country.”

“Methinks it were easy to tell whether he be the one or the other,” said the smith.

“Content you, my friend,” said Simon, “with knowing that, if you judge Father Clement by what you see him do and hear him say, you will think of him as the best and kindest man in the world, with a comfort for every man’s grief, a counsel for every man’s difficulty, the rich man’s surest guide, and the poor man’s best friend. But if you listen to what the Dominicans say of him, he is – Benedicite! – (here the glover crossed himself on brow and bosom) – a foul heretic, who ought by means of earthly flames to be sent to those which burn eternally.”

The smith also crossed himself, and exclaimed: “St. Mary! father Simon, and do you, who are so good and prudent that you

have been called the Wise Glover of Perth, let your daughter attend the ministry of one who – the saints preserve us! – may be in league with the foul fiend himself! Why, was it not a priest who raised the devil in the Meal Vennel, when Hodge Jackson’s house was blown down in the great wind? Did not the devil appear in the midst of the Tay, dressed in a priest’s scapular, gambolling like a pellack amongst the waves, the morning when our stately bridge was swept away?”

“I cannot tell whether he did or no,” said the glover; “I only know I saw him not. As to Catharine, she cannot be said to use Father Clement’s ministry, seeing her confessor is old Father Francis the Dominican, from whom she had her shrift today. But women will sometimes be wilful, and sure enough she consults with Father Clement more than I could wish; and yet when I have spoken with him myself, I have thought him so good and holy a man that I could have trusted my own salvation with him. There are bad reports of him among the Dominicans, that is certain. But what have we laymen to do with such things, my son? Let us pay Mother Church her dues, give our alms, confess and do our penances duly, and the saints will bear us out.”

“Ay, truly; and they will have consideration,” said the smith, “for any rash and unhappy blow that a man may deal in a fight, when his party was on defence, and standing up to him; and that’s the only creed a man can live upon in Scotland, let your daughter think what she pleases. Marry, a man must know his fence, or have a short lease of his life, in any place where blows are going

so rife. Five nobles to our altar have cleared me for the best man I ever had misfortune with.”

“Let us finish our flask, then,” said the old glover; “for I reckon the Dominican tower is tolling midnight. And hark thee, son Henry; be at the lattice window on our east gable by the very peep of dawn, and make me aware thou art come by whistling the smith’s call gently. I will contrive that Catharine shall look out at the window, and thus thou wilt have all the privileges of being a gallant Valentine through the rest of the year; which, if thou canst not use to thine own advantage, I shall be led to think that, for all thou be’st covered with the lion’s hide, nature has left on thee the long ears of the ass.”

“Amen, father,” said the armourer, “a hearty goodnight to you; and God’s blessing on your roof tree, and those whom it covers. You shall hear the smith’s call sound by cock crowing; I warrant I put sir chanticleer to shame.”

So saying, he took his leave; and, though completely undaunted, moved through the deserted streets like one upon his guard, to his own dwelling, which was situated in the Mill Wynd, at the western end of Perth.

CHAPTER IV

*What's all this turmoil crammed into our parts?
Faith, but the pit-a-pat of poor young hearts.*

DRYDEN.

The sturdy armourer was not, it may be believed, slack in keeping the appointment assigned by his intended father in law. He went through the process of his toilet with more than ordinary care, throwing, as far as he could, those points which had a military air into the shade. He was far too noted a person to venture to go entirely unarmed in a town where he had indeed many friends, but also, from the character of many of his former exploits, several deadly enemies, at whose hands, should they take him at advantage, he knew he had little mercy to expect. He therefore wore under his jerkin a “secret,” or coat of chain mail, made so light and flexible that it interfered as little with his movements as a modern under waistcoat, yet of such proof as he might safely depend upon, every ring of it having been wrought and joined by his own hands. Above this he wore, like others of his age and degree, the Flemish hose and doublet, which, in honour of the holy tide, were of the best superfine English broadcloth, light blue in colour, slashed out with black satin, and passamented (laced, that is) with embroidery of black silk.

His walking boots were of cordovan leather; his cloak of good Scottish grey, which served to conceal a whinger, or couteau de chasse, that hung at his belt, and was his only offensive weapon, for he carried in his hand but a rod of holly. His black velvet bonnet was lined with steel, quilted between the metal and his head, and thus constituted a means of defence which might safely be trusted to.

Upon the whole, Henry had the appearance, to which he was well entitled, of a burgher of wealth and consideration, assuming, in his dress, as much consequence as he could display without stepping beyond his own rank, and encroaching on that of the gentry. Neither did his frank and manly deportment, though indicating a total indifference to danger, bear the least resemblance to that of the bravoës or swashbucklers of the day, amongst whom Henry was sometimes unjustly ranked by those who imputed the frays in which he was so often engaged to a quarrelsome and violent temper, resting upon a consciousness of his personal strength and knowledge of his weapon. On the contrary, every feature bore the easy and good-humoured expression of one who neither thought of inflicting mischief nor dreaded it from others.

Having attired himself in his best, the honest armourer next placed nearest to his heart (which throbbed at its touch) a little gift which he had long provided for Catharine Glover, and which his quality of Valentine would presently give him the title to present, and her to receive, without regard to maidenly scruples.

It was a small ruby cut into the form of a heart, transfixed with a golden arrow, and was inclosed in a small purse made of links of the finest work in steel, as if it had been designed for a hauberk to a king. Round the verge of the purse were these words:

Loves darts Cleave hearts Through mail shirts.

This device had cost the armourer some thought, and he was much satisfied with his composition, because it seemed to imply that his skill could defend all hearts saving his own.

He wrapped himself in his cloak, and hastened through the still silent streets, determined to appear at the window appointed a little before dawn.

With this purpose he passed up the High Street, and turned down the opening where St. John's Church now stands, in order to proceed to Curfew Street; when it occurred to him, from the appearance of the sky, that he was at least an hour too early for his purpose, and that it would be better not to appear at the place of rendezvous till nearer the time assigned. Other gallants were not unlikely to be on the watch as well as himself about the house of the Fair Maid of Perth; and he knew his own foible so well as to be sensible of the great chance of a scuffle arising betwixt them.

"I have the advantage," he thought, "by my father Simon's friendship; and why should I stain my fingers with the blood of the poor creatures that are not worthy my notice, since they are so much less fortunate than myself? No – no, I will be wise for once, and keep at a distance from all temptation to a broil. They

shall have no more time to quarrel with me than just what it may require for me to give the signal, and for my father Simon to answer it. I wonder how the old man will contrive to bring her to the window? I fear, if she knew his purpose, he would find it difficult to carry it into execution.”

While these lover-like thoughts were passing through his brain, the armourer loitered in his pace, often turning his eyes eastward, and eyeing the firmament, in which no slight shades of grey were beginning to flicker, to announce the approach of dawn, however distant, which, to the impatience of the stout armourer, seemed on that morning to abstain longer than usual from occupying her eastern barbican. He was now passing slowly under the wall of St. Anne’s Chapel (not failing to cross himself and say an ace, as he trode the consecrated ground), when a voice, which seemed to come from behind one of the flying buttresses of the chapel, said, “He lingers that has need to run.”

“Who speaks?” said the armourer, looking around him, somewhat startled at an address so unexpected, both in its tone and tenor.

“No matter who speaks,” answered the same voice. “Do thou make great speed, or thou wilt scarce make good speed. Bandy not words, but begone.”

“Saint or sinner, angel or devil,” said Henry, crossing himself, “your advice touches me but too dearly to be neglected. St. Valentine be my speed!”

So saying, he instantly changed his loitering pace to one with

which few people could have kept up, and in an instant was in Couvrefew Street. He had not made three steps towards Simon Glover's, which stood in the midst of the narrow street, when two men started from under the houses on different sides, and advanced, as it were by concert, to intercept his passage. The imperfect light only permitted him to discern that they wore the Highland mantle.

“Clear the way, cateran,” said the armourer, in the deep stern voice which corresponded with the breadth of his chest.

They did not answer, at least intelligibly; but he could see that they drew their swords, with the purpose of withstanding him by violence. Conjecturing some evil, but of what kind he could not anticipate, Henry instantly determined to make his way through whatever odds, and defend his mistress, or at least die at her feet. He cast his cloak over his left arm as a buckler, and advanced rapidly and steadily to the two men. The nearest made a thrust at him, but Henry Smith, parrying the blow with his cloak, dashed his arm in the man's face, and tripping him at the same time, gave him a severe fall on the causeway; while almost at the same instant he struck a blow with his whinger at the fellow who was upon his right hand, so severely applied, that he also lay prostrate by his associate. Meanwhile, the armourer pushed forward in alarm, for which the circumstance of the street being guarded or defended by strangers who conducted themselves with such violence afforded sufficient reason. He heard a suppressed whisper and a bustle under the glover's

windows – those very windows from which he had expected to be hailed by Catharine as her Valentine. He kept to the opposite side of the street, that he might reconnoitre their number and purpose. But one of the party who were beneath the window, observing or hearing him, crossed the street also, and taking him doubtless for one of the sentinels, asked, in a whisper, “What noise was yonder, Kenneth? why gave you not the signal?”

“Villain,” said Henry, “you are discovered, and you shall die the death.”

As he spoke thus, he dealt the stranger a blow with his weapon, which would probably have made his words good, had not the man, raising his arm, received on his hand the blow meant for his head. The wound must have been a severe one, for he staggered and fell with a deep groan.

Without noticing him farther, Henry Smith sprung forward upon a party of men who seemed engaged in placing a ladder against the lattice window in the gable. Henry did not stop ether to count their numbers or to ascertain their purpose. But, crying the alarm word of the town, and giving the signal at which the burghers were wont to collect, he rushed on the night walkers, one of whom was in the act of ascending the ladder. The smith seized it by the rounds, threw it down on the pavement, and placing his foot on the body of the man who had been mounting, prevented him from regaining his feet. His accomplices struck fiercely at Henry, to extricate their companion. But his mail coat stood him in good stead, and he repaid their blows with

interest, shouting aloud, "Help – help, for bonny St. Johnston! Bows and blades, brave citizens! bows and blades! they break into our houses under cloud of night."

These words, which resounded far through the streets, were accompanied by as many fierce blows, dealt with good effect among those whom the armourer assailed. In the mean time, the inhabitants of the district began to awaken and appear on the street in their shirts, with swords and targets, and some of them with torches. The assailants now endeavoured to make their escape, which all of them effected excepting the man who had been thrown down along with the ladder. Him the intrepid armourer had caught by the throat in the scuffle, and held as fast as the greyhound holds the hare. The other wounded men were borne off by their comrades.

"Here are a sort of knaves breaking peace within burgh," said Henry to the neighbours who began to assemble; "make after the rogues. They cannot all get off, for I have maimed some of them: the blood will guide you to them."

"Some Highland caterans," said the citizens; "up and chase, neighbours!"

"Ay, chase – chase! leave me to manage this fellow," continued the armourer.

The assistants dispersed in different directions, their lights flashing and their cries resounding through the whole adjacent district.

In the mean time the armourer's captive entreated for

freedom, using both promises and threats to obtain it. "As thou art a gentleman," he said, "let me go, and what is past shall be forgiven."

"I am no gentleman," said Henry – "I am Hal of the Wynd, a burgess of Perth; and I have done nothing to need forgiveness."

"Villain, then hast done thou knowest not what! But let me go, and I will fill thy bonnet with gold pieces."

"I shall fill thy bonnet with a cloven head presently," said the armourer, "unless thou stand still as a true prisoner."

"What is the matter, my son Harry?" said Simon, who now appeared at the window. "I hear thy voice in another tone than I expected. What is all this noise; and why are the neighbours gathering to the affray?"

"There have been a proper set of limmers about to scale your windows, father Simon; but I am like to prove godfather to one of them, whom I hold here, as fast as ever vice held iron."

"Hear me, Simon Glover," said the prisoner; "let me but speak one word with you in private, and rescue me from the gripe of this iron fisted and leaden pated clown, and I will show thee that no harm was designed to thee or thine, and, moreover, tell thee what will much advantage thee."

"I should know that voice," said Simon Glover, who now came to the door with a dark lantern in his hand. "Son Smith, let this young man speak with me. There is no danger in him, I promise you. Stay but an instant where you are, and let no one enter the house, either to attack or defend. I will be answerable that this

galliard meant but some St. Valentine's jest."

So saying, the old man pulled in the prisoner and shut the door, leaving Henry a little surprised at the unexpected light in which his father-in-law had viewed the affray.

"A jest!" he said; "it might have been a strange jest, if they had got into the maiden's sleeping room! And they would have done so, had it not been for the honest friendly voice from betwixt the buttresses, which, if it were not that of the blessed saint – though what am I that the holy person should speak to me? – could not sound in that place without her permission and assent, and for which I will promise her a wax candle at her shrine, as long as my whinger; and I would I had had my two handed broadsword instead, both for the sake of St. Johnston and of the rogues, for of a certain those whingers are pretty toys, but more fit for a boy's hand than a man's. Oh, my old two handed Trojan, hadst thou been in my hands, as thou hang'st presently at the tester of my bed, the legs of those rogues had not carried their bodies so clean off the field. But there come lighted torches and drawn swords. So ho – stand! Are you for St. Johnston? If friends to the bonny burgh, you are well come."

"We have been but bootless hunters," said the townsmen. "We followed by the tracks of the blood into the Dominican burial ground, and we started two fellows from amongst the tombs, supporting betwixt them a third, who had probably got some of your marks about him, Harry. They got to the postern gate before we could overtake them, and rang the sanctuary bell; the gate

opened, and in went they. So they are safe in girth and sanctuary, and we may go to our cold beds and warm us.”

“Ay,” said one of the party, “the good Dominicans have always some devout brother of their convent sitting up to open the gate of the sanctuary to any poor soul that is in trouble, and desires shelter in the church.”

“Yes, if the poor hunted soul can pay for it,” said another “but, truly, if he be poor in purse as well as in spirit, he may stand on the outside till the hounds come up with him.”

A third, who had been poring for a few minutes upon the ground by advantage of his torch, now looked upwards and spoke. He was a brisk, forward, rather corpulent little man, called Oliver Proudpute, reasonably wealthy, and a leading man in his craft, which was that of bonnet makers; he, therefore, spoke as one in authority.

“Canst tell us, jolly smith” – for they recognised each other by the lights which were brought into the streets – “what manner of fellows they were who raised up this fray within burgh?”

“The two that I first saw,” answered the armourer, “seemed to me, as well as I could observe them, to have Highland plaids about them.”

“Like enough – like enough,” answered another citizen, shaking his head. “It’s a shame the breaches in our walls are not repaired, and that these landlouping Highland scoundrels are left at liberty to take honest men and women out of their beds any night that is dark enough.”

“But look here, neighbours,” said Oliver Proudpute, showing a bloody hand which he had picked up from the ground; “when did such a hand as this tie a Highlandman’s brogues? It is large, indeed, and bony, but as fine as a lady’s, with a ring that sparkles like a gleaming candle. Simon Glover has made gloves for this hand before now, if I am not much mistaken, for he works for all the courtiers.”

The spectators here began to gaze on the bloody token with various comments.

“If that is the case,” said one, “Harry Smith had best show a clean pair of heels for it, since the justiciar will scarce think the protecting a burgess’s house an excuse for cutting off a gentleman’s hand. There be hard laws against mutilation.”

“Fie upon you, that you will say so, Michael Webster,” answered the bonnet maker; “are we not representatives and successors of the stout old Romans, who built Perth as like to their own city as they could? And have we not charters from all our noble kings and progenitors, as being their loving liegemen? And would you have us now yield up our rights, privileges, and immunities, our outfang and infang, our handhaband, our back bearand, and our blood suits, and americiaments, escheats, and commodities, and suffer an honest burgess’s house to be assaulted without seeking for redress? No, brave citizens, craftsmen, and burgesses, the Tay shall flow back to Dunkeld before we submit to such injustice!”

“And how can we help it?” said a grave old man, who stood

leaning on a two handed sword. "What would you have us do?"

"Marry, Bailie Craigdallie, I wonder that you, of all men, ask the question. I would have you pass like true men from this very place to the King's Grace's presence, raise him from his royal rest, and presenting to him the piteous case of our being called forth from our beds at this season, with little better covering than these shirts, I would show him this bloody token, and know from his Grace's own royal lips whether it is just and honest that his loving lieges should be thus treated by the knights and nobles of his deboshed court. And this I call pushing our cause warmly."

"Warmly, sayst thou?" replied the old burgess; "why, so warmly, that we shall all die of cold, man, before the porter turn a key to let us into the royal presence. Come, friends, the night is bitter, we have kept our watch and ward like men, and our jolly smith hath given a warning to those that would wrong us, which shall be worth twenty proclamations of the king. Tomorrow is a new day; we will consult on this matter on this self same spot, and consider what measures should be taken for discovery and pursuit of the villains. And therefore let us dismiss before the heart's blood freeze in our veins."

"Bravo – bravo, neighbour Craigdallie! St. Johnston for ever!"

Oliver Proudpute would still have spoken; for he was one of those pitiless orators who think that their eloquence can overcome all inconveniences in time, place, and circumstances. But no one would listen, and the citizens dispersed to their own houses by the light of the dawn, which began now to streak the

horizon.

They were scarce gone ere the door of the glover's house opened, and seizing the smith by the hand, the old man pulled him in.

“Where is the prisoner?” demanded the armourer.

“He is gone – escaped – fled – what do I know of him?” said the glover. “He got out at the back door, and so through the little garden. Think not of him, but come and see the Valentine whose honour and life you have saved this morning.”

“Let me but sheathe my weapon,” said the smith, “let me but wash my hands.”

“There is not an instant to lose, she is up and almost dressed. Come on, man. She shall see thee with thy good weapon in thy hand, and with villain's blood on thy fingers, that she may know what is the value of a true man's service. She has stopped my mouth overlong with her pruderies and her scruples. I will have her know what a brave man's love is worth, and a bold burgess's to boot.”

CHAPTER V

*Up! lady fair, and braid thy hair,
And rouse thee in the breezy air,
Up! quit thy bower, late wears the hour,
Long have the rooks caw'd round the tower.*

JOANNA BAILLIE.

Startled from her repose by the noise of the affray, the Fair Maid of Perth had listened in breathless terror to the sounds of violence and outcry which arose from the street. She had sunk on her knees to pray for assistance, and when she distinguished the voices of neighbours and friends collected for her protection, she remained in the same posture to return thanks. She was still kneeling when her father almost thrust her champion, Henry Smith, into her apartment; the bashful lover hanging back at first, as if afraid to give offence, and, on observing her posture, from respect to her devotion.

“Father,” said the armourer, “she prays; I dare no more speak to her than to a bishop when he says mass.”

“Now, go thy ways, for a right valiant and courageous blockhead,” said her father – and then speaking to his daughter, he added, “Heaven is best thanked, my daughter, by gratitude shown to our fellow creatures. Here comes the instrument by whom God has rescued thee from death, or perhaps from

dishonour worse than death. Receive him, Catharine, as thy true Valentine, and him whom I desire to see my affectionate son.”

“Not thus – father,” replied Catharine. “I can see – can speak to no one now. I am not ungrateful – perhaps I am too thankful to the instrument of our safety; but let me thank the guardian saint who sent me this timely relief, and give me but a moment to don my kirtle.”

“Nay, God-a-mercy, wench, it were hard to deny thee time to busk thy body clothes, since the request is the only words like a woman that thou hast uttered for these ten days. Truly, son Harry, I would my daughter would put off being entirely a saint till the time comes for her being canonised for St. Catherine the Second.”

“Nay, jest not, father; for I will swear she has at least one sincere adorer already, who hath devoted himself to her pleasure, so far as sinful man may. Fare thee well, then, for the moment, fair maiden,” he concluded, raising his voice, “and Heaven send thee dreams as peaceful as thy waking thoughts. I go to watch thy slumbers, and woe with him that shall intrude on them!”

“Nay, good and brave Henry, whose warm heart is at such variance with thy reckless hand, thrust thyself into no farther quarrels tonight; but take the kindest thanks, and with these, try to assume the peaceful thoughts which you assign to me. Tomorrow we will meet, that I may assure you of my gratitude. Farewell.”

“And farewell, lady and light of my heart!” said the armourer,

and, descending the stair which led to Catharine's apartment, was about to sally forth into the street, when the glover caught him by the arm.

"I shall like the ruffle of tonight," said he, "better than I ever thought to do the clashing of steel, if it brings my daughter to her senses, Harry, and teaches her what thou art worth. By St. Macgrider! I even love these roysterers, and am sorry for that poor lover who will never wear left handed chevron again. Ay! he has lost that which he will miss all the days of his life, especially when he goes to pull on his gloves; ay, he will pay but half a fee to my craft in future. Nay, not a step from this house tonight," he continued "Thou dost not leave us, I promise thee, my son."

"I do not mean it. But I will, with your permission, watch in the street. The attack may be renewed."

"And if it be," said Simon, "thou wilt have better access to drive them back, having the vantage of the house. It is the way of fighting which suits us burghers best – that of resisting from behind stone walls. Our duty of watch and ward teaches us that trick; besides, enough are awake and astir to ensure us peace and quiet till morning. So come in this way."

So saying, he drew Henry, nothing loth, into the same apartment where they had supped, and where the old woman, who was on foot, disturbed as others had been by the nocturnal affray, soon roused up the fire.

"And now, my doughty son," said the glover, "what liquor wilt thou pledge thy father in?"

Henry Smith had suffered himself to sink mechanically upon a seat of old black oak, and now gazed on the fire, that flashed back a ruddy light over his manly features. He muttered to himself half audibly: "Good Henry – brave Henry. Ah! had she but said, dear Henry!"

"What liquors be these?" said the old glover, laughing. "My cellar holds none such; but if sack, or Rhenish, or wine of Gascony can serve, why, say the word and the flagon foams, that is all."

"The kindest thanks," said the armourer, still musing, "that's more than she ever said to me before – the kindest thanks – what may not that stretch to?"

"It shall stretch like kid's leather, man," said the glover, "if thou wilt but be ruled, and say what thou wilt take for thy morning's draught."

"Whatever thou wilt, father," answered the armourer, carelessly, and relapsed into the analysis of Catharine's speech to him. "She spoke of my warm heart; but she also spoke of my reckless hand. What earthly thing can I do to get rid of this fighting fancy? Certainly I were best strike my right hand off, and nail it to the door of a church, that it may never do me discredit more."

"You have chopped off hands enough for one night," said his friend, setting a flagon of wine on the table. "Why dost thou vex thyself, man? She would love thee twice as well did she not see how thou doatest upon her. But it becomes serious now. I am

not to have the risk of my booth being broken and my house plundered by the hell raking followers of the nobles, because she is called the Fair Maid of Perth, an't please ye. No, she shall know I am her father, and will have that obedience to which law and gospel give me right. I will have her thy wife, Henry, my heart of gold – thy wife, my man of mettle, and that before many weeks are over. Come – come, here is to thy merry bridal, jolly smith.”

The father quaffed a large cup, and filled it to his adopted son, who raised it slowly to his head; then, ere it had reached his lips, replaced it suddenly on the table and shook his head.

“Nay, if thou wilt not pledge me to such a health, I know no one who will,” said Simon. “What canst thou mean, thou foolish lad? Here has a chance happened, which in a manner places her in thy power, since from one end of the city to the other all would cry fie on her if she should say thee nay. Here am I, her father, not only consenting to the cutting out of the match, but willing to see you two as closely united together as ever needle stitched buckskin. And with all this on thy side – fortune, father, and all – thou lookest like a distracted lover in a ballad, more like to pitch thyself into the Tay than to woo a lass that may be had for the asking, if you can but choose the lucky minute.”

“Ay, but that lucky minute, father? I question much if Catharine ever has such a moment to glance on earth and its inhabitants as might lead her to listen to a coarse ignorant borrel man like me. I cannot tell how it is, father; elsewhere I can hold up my head like another man, but with your saintly daughter I

lose heart and courage, and I cannot help thinking that it would be well nigh robbing a holy shrine if I could succeed in surprising her affections. Her thoughts are too much fitted for Heaven to be wasted on such a one as I am.”

“E’en as you like, Henry,” answered the glover. “My daughter is not courting you any more than I am – a fair offer is no cause offend; only if you think that I will give in to her foolish notions of a convent, take it with you that I will never listen to them. I love and honour the church,” he said, crossing himself, “I pay her rights duly and cheerfully – tithes and alms, wine and wax, I pay them as justly, I say, as any man in Perth of my means doth – but I cannot afford the church my only and single ewe lamb that I have in the world. Her mother was dear to me on earth, and is now an angel in Heaven. Catharine is all I have to remind me of her I have lost; and if she goes to the cloister, it shall be when these old eyes are closed for ever, and not sooner. But as for you, friend Gow, I pray you will act according to your own best liking, I want to force no wife on you, I promise you.”

“Nay, now you beat the iron twice over,” said Henry. “It is thus we always end, father, by your being testy with me for not doing that thing in the world which would make me happiest, were I to have it in my power. Why, father, I would the keenest dirk I ever forged were sticking in my heart at this moment if there is one single particle in it that is not more your daughter’s property than my own. But what can I do? I cannot think less of her, or more of myself, than we both deserve; and what seems

to you so easy and certain is to me as difficult as it would be to work a steel hauberk out of bards of flax. But here is to you, father," he added, in a more cheerful tone; "and here is to my fair saint and Valentine, as I hope your Catharine will be mine for the season. And let me not keep your old head longer from the pillow, but make interest with your featherbed till daybreak; and then you must be my guide to your daughter's chamber door, and my apology for entering it, to bid her good morrow, for the brightest that the sun will awaken, in the city or for miles round."

"No bad advice, my son," said the honest glover, "But you, what will you do? Will you lie down beside me, or take a part of Conachar's bed?"

"Neither," answered Harry Gow; "I should but prevent your rest, and for me this easy chair is worth a down bed, and I will sleep like a sentinel, with my graith about me." As he spoke, he laid his hand on his sword.

"Nay, Heaven send us no more need of weapons. Goodnight, or rather good morrow, till day peep; and the first who wakes calls up the other."

Thus parted the two burghers. The glover retired to his bed, and, it is to be supposed, to rest. The lover was not so fortunate. His bodily frame easily bore the fatigue which he had encountered in the course of the night, but his mind was of a different and more delicate mould. In one point of view, he was but the stout burgher of his period, proud alike of his art in making weapons and wielding them when made; his

professional jealousy, personal strength, and skill in the use of arms brought him into many quarrels, which had made him generally feared, and in some instances disliked. But with these qualities were united the simple good nature of a child, and at the same time an imaginative and enthusiastic temper, which seemed little to correspond with his labours at the forge or his combats in the field. Perhaps a little of the hare brained and ardent feeling which he had picked out of old ballads, or from the metrical romances, which were his sole source of information or knowledge, may have been the means of pricking him on to some of his achievements, which had often a rude strain of chivalry in them; at least, it was certain that his love to the fair Catharine had in it a delicacy such as might have become the squire of low degree, who was honoured, if song speaks truth, with the smiles of the King of Hungary's daughter. His sentiments towards her were certainly as exalted as if they had been fixed upon an actual angel, which made old Simon, and others who watched his conduct, think that his passion was too high and devotional to be successful with maiden of mortal mould. They were mistaken, however. Catharine, coy and reserved as she was, had a heart which could feel and understand the nature and depth of the armourer's passion; and whether she was able to repay it or not, she had as much secret pride in the attachment of the redoubted Henry Gow as a lady of romance may be supposed to have in the company of a tame lion, who follows to provide for and defend her. It was with sentiments of the most sincere gratitude that

she recollected, as she awoke at dawn, the services of Henry during the course of the eventful night, and the first thought which she dwelt upon was the means of making him understand her feelings.

Arising hastily from bed, and half blushing at her own purpose – “I have been cold to him, and perhaps unjust; I will not be ungrateful,” she said to herself, “though I cannot yield to his suit. I will not wait till my father compels me to receive him as my Valentine for the year: I will seek him out, and choose him myself. I have thought other girls bold when they did something like this; but I shall thus best please my father, and but discharge the rites due to good St. Valentine by showing my gratitude to this brave man.”

Hastily slipping on her dress, which, nevertheless, was left a good deal more disordered than usual, she tripped downstairs and opened the door of the chamber, in which, as she had guessed, her lover had passed the hours after the fray. Catharine paused at the door, and became half afraid of executing her purpose, which not only permitted but enjoined the Valentines of the year to begin their connexion with a kiss of affection. It was looked upon as a peculiarly propitious omen if the one party could find the other asleep, and awaken him or her by performance of this interesting ceremony.

Never was a fairer opportunity offered for commencing this mystic tie than that which now presented itself to Catharine. After many and various thoughts, sleep had at length overcome

the stout armourer in the chair in which he had deposited himself. His features, in repose, had a more firm and manly cast than Catharine had thought, who, having generally seen them fluctuating between shamefacedness and apprehension of her displeasure, had been used to connect with them some idea of imbecility.

“He looks very stern,” she said; “if he should be angry? And then when he awakes – we are alone – if I should call Dorothy – if I should wake my father? But no! it is a thing of custom, and done in all maidenly and sisterly love and honour. I will not suppose that Henry can misconstrue it, and I will not let a childish bashfulness put my gratitude to sleep.”

So saying, she tripped along the floor of the apartment with a light, though hesitating, step; and a cheek crimsoned at her own purpose; and gliding to the chair of the sleeper, dropped a kiss upon his lips as light as if a rose leaf had fallen on them. The slumbers must have been slight which such a touch could dispel, and the dreams of the sleeper must needs have been connected with the cause of the interruption, since Henry, instantly starting up, caught the maiden in his arms, and attempted to return in ecstasy the salute which had broken his repose. But Catharine struggled in his embrace; and as her efforts implied alarmed modesty rather than maidenly coyness, her bashful lover suffered her to escape a grasp from which twenty times her strength could not have extricated her.

“Nay, be not angry, good Henry,” said Catharine, in the

kindest tone, to her surprised lover. "I have paid my vows to St. Valentine, to show how I value the mate which he has sent me for the year. Let but my father be present, and I will not dare to refuse thee the revenge you may claim for a broken sleep."

"Let not that be a hinderance," said the old glover, rushing in ecstasy into the room; "to her, smith – to her: strike while the iron is hot, and teach her what it is not to let sleeping dogs lie still."

Thus encouraged, Henry, though perhaps with less alarming vivacity, again seized the blushing maiden in his arms, who submitted with a tolerable grace to receive repayment of her salute, a dozen times repeated, and with an energy very different from that which had provoked such severe retaliation. At length she again extricated herself from her lover's arms, and, as if frightened and repenting what she had done, threw herself into a seat, and covered her face with her hands.

"Cheer up, thou silly girl," said her father, "and be not ashamed that thou hast made the two happiest men in Perth, since thy old father is one of them. Never was kiss so well bestowed, and meet it is that it should be suitably returned. Look up, my darling! look up, and let me see thee give but one smile. By my honest word, the sun that now rises over our fair city shows no sight that can give me greater pleasure. What," he continued, in a jocose tone, "thou thoughtst thou hadst Jamie Keddie's ring, and couldst walk invisible? but not so, my fairy of the dawning. Just as I was about to rise, I heard thy chamber door open, and watched thee downstairs, not to protect thee against this sleepy

headed Henry, but to see with my own delighted eyes my beloved girl do that which her father most wished. Come, put down these foolish hands, and though thou blushest a little, it will only the better grace St. Valentine's morn, when blushes best become a maiden's cheek."

As Simon Glover spoke, he pulled away, with gentle violence, the hands which hid his daughter's face. She blushed deeply indeed, but there was more than maiden's shame in her face, and her eyes were fast filling with tears.

"What! weeping, love?" continued her father; "nay – nay, this is more than need. Henry, help me to comfort this little fool."

Catharine made an effort to collect herself and to smile, but the smile was of a melancholy and serious cast.

"I only meant to say, father," said the Fair Maid of Perth, with continued exertion, "that in choosing Henry Gow for my Valentine, and rendering to him the rights and greeting of the morning, according to wonted custom, I meant but to show my gratitude to him for his manly and faithful service, and my obedience to you. But do not lead him to think – and, oh, dearest father, do not yourself entertain an idea – that I meant more than what the promise to be his faithful and affectionate Valentine through the year requires of me."

"Ay – ay – ay – ay, we understand it all," said Simon, in the soothing tone which nurses apply to children. "We understand what the meaning is; enough for once – enough for once. Thou shalt not be frightened or hurried. Loving, true, and faithful

Valentines are ye, and the rest as Heaven and opportunity shall permit. Come, prithee, have done: wring not thy tiny hands, nor fear farther persecution now. Thou hast done bravely, excellently. And now, away to Dorothy, and call up the old sluggard; we must have a substantial breakfast, after a night of confusion and a morning of joy, and thy hand will be needed to prepare for us some of these delicate cakes which no one can make but thyself; and well hast thou a right to the secret, seeing who taught it thee. Ah! health to the soul of thy dearest mother,” he added, with a sigh; “how blythe would she have been to see this happy St. Valentine’s morning!”

Catharine took the opportunity of escape which was thus given her, and glided from the room. To Henry it seemed as if the sun had disappeared from the heaven at midday, and left the world in sudden obscurity. Even the high swelled hopes with which the late incident had filled him began to quail, as he reflected upon her altered demeanour – the tears in her eyes, the obvious fear which occupied her features, and the pains she had taken to show, as plainly as delicacy would permit, that the advances which she had made to him were limited to the character with which the rites of the day had invested him. Her father looked on his fallen countenance with something like surprise and displeasure.

“In the name of good St. John, what has befallen you, that makes you look as grave as an owl, when a lad of your spirit, having really such a fancy for this poor girl as you pretend, ought

to be as lively as a lark?”

“Alas, father!” replied the crestfallen lover, “there is that written on her brow which says she loves me well enough to be my Valentine, especially since you wish it, but not well enough to be my wife.”

“Now, a plague on thee for a cold, downhearted goosecap,” answered the father. “I can read a woman’s brow as well, and better, than thou, and I can see no such matter on hers. What, the foul fiend, man! there thou wast lying like a lord in thy elbow chair, as sound asleep as a judge, when, hadst thou been a lover of any spirit, thou wouldst have been watching the east for the first ray of the sun. But there thou layest, snoring I warrant, thinking nought about her, or anything else; and the poor girl rises at peep of day, lest any one else should pick up her most precious and vigilant Valentine, and wakes thee with a grace which – so help me, St. Macgrider! – would have put life in an anvil; and thou awakest to hone, and pine, and moan, as if she had drawn a hot iron across thy lips! I would to St. John she had sent old Dorothy on the errand, and bound thee for thy Valentine service to that bundle of dry bones, with never a tooth in her head. She were fittest Valentine in Perth for so craven a wooer.”

“As to craven, father,” answered the smith, “there are twenty good cocks, whose combs I have plucked, can tell thee if I am craven or no. And Heaven knows that I would give my good land, held by burgess’ tenure, with smithy, bellows, tongs, anvil, and all, providing it would make your view of the matter the true one.

But it is not of her coyness or her blushes that I speak; it is of the paleness which so soon followed the red, and chased it from her cheeks; and it is of the tears which succeeded. It was like the April showers stealing upon and obscuring the fairest dawning that ever beamed over the Tay.”

“Tutti taitti,” replied the glover; “neither Rome nor Perth were built in a day. Thou hast fished salmon a thousand times, and mightst have taken a lesson. When the fish has taken the fly, to pull a hard strain on the line would snap the tackle to pieces, were it made of wire. Ease your hand, man, and let him rise; take leisure, and in half an hour thou layest him on the bank. There is a beginning as fair as you could wish, unless you expect the poor wench to come to thy bedside as she did to thy chair; and that is not the fashion of modest maidens. But observe me; after we have had our breakfast, I will take care thou hast an opportunity to speak thy mind; only beware thou be neither too backward nor press her too hard. Give her line enough, but do not slack too fast, and my life for yours upon the issue.”

“Do what I can, father,” answered Henry, “you will always lay the blame on me – either that I give too much head or that I strain the tackle. I would give the best habergeon I ever wrought, that the difficulty in truth rested with me, for there were then the better chance of its being removed. I own, however, I am but an ass in the trick of bringing about such discourse as is to the purpose for the occasion.”

“Come into the booth with me, my son, and I will furnish thee

with a fitting theme. Thou knowest the maiden who ventures to kiss a sleeping man wins of him a pair of gloves. Come to my booth; thou shalt have a pair of delicate kid skin that will exactly suit her hand and arm. I was thinking of her poor mother when I shaped them," added honest Simon, with a sigh; "and except Catharine, I know not the woman in Scotland whom they would fit, though I have measured most of the high beauties of the court. Come with me, I say, and thou shalt be provided with a theme to wag thy tongue upon, providing thou hast courage and caution to stand by thee in thy wooing."

CHAPTER VI

Never to man shall Catharine give her hand.

Taming of the Shrew.

The breakfast was served, and the thin soft cakes, made of flour and honey according to the family receipt, were not only commended with all the partiality of a father and a lover, but done liberal justice to in the mode which is best proof of cake as well as pudding. They talked, jested, and laughed. Catharine, too, had recovered her equanimity where the dames and damsels of the period were apt to lose theirs – in the kitchen, namely, and in the superintendence of household affairs, in which she was an adept. I question much if the perusal of Seneca for as long a period would have had equal effect in composing her mind.

Old Dorothy sat down at the board end, as was the homespun fashion of the period; and so much were the two men amused with their own conversation, and Catharine occupied either in attending to them or with her own reflections, that the old woman was the first who observed the absence of the boy Conachar.

“It is true,” said the master glover; “go call him, the idle Highland loon. He was not seen last night during the fray neither, at least I saw him not. Did any of you observe him?”

The reply was negative; and Henry’s observation followed:

“There are times when Highlanders can couch like their own deer – ay, and run from danger too as fast. I have seen them do so myself, for the matter of that.”

“And there are times,” replied Simon, “when King Arthur and his Round Table could not make stand against them. I wish, Henry, you would speak more reverently of the Highlanders. They are often in Perth, both alone and in numbers, and you ought to keep peace with them so long as they will keep peace with you.”

An answer of defiance rose to Henry’s lips, but he prudently suppressed it. “Why, thou knowest, father,” he said, smiling, “that we handicrafts best love the folks we live by; now, my craft provides for valiant and noble knights, gentle squires and pages, stout men at arms, and others that wear the weapons which we make. It is natural I should like the Ruthvens, the Lindsays, the Ogilvys, the Oliphants, and so many others of our brave and noble neighbours, who are sheathed in steel of my making, like so many paladins, better than those naked, snatching mountaineers, who are ever doing us wrong, especially since no five of each clan have a rusty shirt of mail as old as their brattach; and that is but the work of the clumsy clan smith after all, who is no member of our honourable mystery, but simply works at the anvil, where his father wrought before him. I say, such people can have no favour in the eyes of an honest craftsman.”

“Well – well,” answered Simon; “I prithee let the matter rest even now, for here comes the loitering boy, and, though it is a

holyday morn, I want no more bloody puddings.”

The youth entered accordingly. His face was pale, his eyes red, and there was an air of discomposure about his whole person. He sat down at the lower end of the table, opposite to Dorothy, and crossed himself, as if preparing for his morning's meal. As he did not help himself to any food, Catharine offered him a platter containing some of the cakes which had met with such general approbation. At first he rejected her offered kindness rather sullenly; but on her repeating the offer with a smile of goodwill, he took a cake in his hand, broke it, and was about to eat a morsel, when the effort to swallow seemed almost too much for him; and though he succeeded, he did not repeat it.

“You have a bad appetite for St. Valentine's morning, Conachar,” said his good humoured master; “and yet I think you must have slept soundly the night before, since I conclude you were not disturbed by the noise of the scuffle. Why, I thought a lively glune amie would have been at his master's side, dirk in hand, at the first sound of danger which arose within a mile of us.”

“I heard but an indistinct noise,” said the youth, his face glowing suddenly like a heated coal, “which I took for the shout of some merry revellers; and you are wont to bid me never open door or window, or alarm the house, on the score of such folly.”

“Well – well,” said Simon; “I thought a Highlander would have known better the difference betwixt the clash of swords and the twanging on harps, the wild war cry and the merry hunt's up.

But let it pass, boy; I am glad thou art losing thy quarrelsome fashions. Eat thy breakfast, any way, as I have that to employ thee which requires haste.”

“I have breakfasted already, and am in haste myself. I am for the hills. Have you any message to my father?”

“None,” replied the glover, in some surprise; “but art thou beside thyself, boy? or what a vengeance takes thee from the city, like the wing of the whirlwind?”

“My warning has been sudden,” said Conachar, speaking with difficulty; but whether arising from the hesitation incidental to the use of a foreign language, or whether from some other cause, could not easily be distinguished. “There is to be a meeting – a great hunting – ” Here he stopped.

“And when are you to return from this blessed hunting?” said the master; “that is, if I may make so bold as to ask.”

“I cannot exactly answer,” replied the apprentice. “Perhaps never, if such be my father’s pleasure,” continued Conachar, with assumed indifference.

“I thought,” said Simon Glover, rather seriously, “that all this was to be laid aside, when at earnest intercession I took you under my roof. I thought that when I undertook, being very loth to do so, to teach you an honest trade, we were to hear no more of hunting, or hosting, or clan gatherings, or any matters of the kind?”

“I was not consulted when I was sent hither,” said the lad, haughtily. “I cannot tell what the terms were.”

“But I can tell you, sir Conachar,” said the glover, angrily, “that there is no fashion of honesty in binding yourself to an honest craftsman, and spoiling more hides than your own is worth; and now, when you are of age to be of some service, in taking up the disposal of your time at your pleasure, as if it were your own property, not your master’s.”

“Reckon with my father about that,” answered Conachar; “he will pay you gallantly – a French mutton for every hide I have spoiled, and a fat cow or bullock for each day I have been absent.”

“Close with him, friend Glover – close with him,” said the armourer, drily. “Thou wilt be paid gallantly at least, if not honestly. Methinks I would like to know how many purses have been emptied to fill the goat skin sporran that is to be so free to you of its gold, and whose pastures the bullocks have been calved in that are to be sent down to you from the Grampian passes.”

“You remind me, friend,” said the Highland youth, turning haughtily towards the smith, “that I have also a reckoning to hold with you.”

“Keep at arm’s length, then,” said Henry, extending his brawny arm: “I will have no more close hugs – no more bodkin work, like last night. I care little for a wasp’s sting, yet I will not allow the insect to come near me if I have warning.”

Conachar smiled contemptuously. “I meant thee no harm,” he said. “My father’s son did thee but too much honour to spill such churl’s blood. I will pay you for it by the drop, that it may be dried up, and no longer soil my fingers.”

“Peace, thou bragging ape!” said the smith: “the blood of a true man cannot be valued in gold. The only expiation would be that thou shouldst come a mile into the Low Country with two of the strongest galloglasses of thy clan; and while I dealt with them, I would leave thee to the correction of my apprentice, little Jankin.”

Here Catharine interposed. “Peace,” she said, “my trusty Valentine, whom I have a right to command; and peace you, Conachar, who ought to obey me as your master’s daughter. It is ill done to awaken again on the morrow the evil which has been laid to sleep at night.”

“Farewell, then, master,” said Conachar, after another look of scorn at the smith, which he only answered with a laugh – “farewell! and I thank you for your kindness, which has been more than I deserve. If I have at times seemed less than thankful, it was the fault of circumstances, and not of my will. Catharine –” He cast upon the maiden a look of strong emotion, in which various feelings were blended. He hesitated, as if to say something, and at length turned away with the single word “farewell.”

Five minutes afterwards, with Highland buskins on his feet and a small bundle in his hand, he passed through the north gate of Perth, and directed his course to the Highlands.

“There goes enough of beggary and of pride for a whole Highland clan,” said Henry. “He talks as familiarly of gold pieces as I would of silver pennies, and yet I will be sworn that the

thumb of his mother's worsted glove might hold the treasure of the whole clan."

"Like enough," said the glover, laughing at the idea; "his mother was a large boned woman, especially in the fingers and wrist."

"And as for cattle," continued Henry, "I reckon his father and brothers steal sheep by one at a time."

"The less we say of them the better," said the glover, becoming again grave. "Brothers he hath none; his father is a powerful man – hath long hands – reaches as far as he can, and hears farther than it is necessary to talk of him."

"And yet he hath bound his only son apprentice to a glover in Perth?" said Henry. "Why, I should have thought the gentle craft, as it is called, of St. Crispin would have suited him best; and that, if the son of some great Mac or O was to become an artisan, it could only be in the craft where princes set him the example."

This remark, though ironical, seemed to awaken our friend Simon's sense of professional dignity, which was a prevailing feeling that marked the manners of the artisans of the time.

"You err, son Henry," he replied, with much gravity: "the glovers' are the more honourable craft of the two, in regard they provide for the accommodation of the hands, whereas the shoemakers and cordwainers do but work for the feet."

"Both equally necessary members of the body corporate," said Henry, whose father had been a cordwainer.

"It may be so, my son," said the glover; "but not both alike

honourable. Bethink you, that we employ the hands as pledges of friendship and good faith, and the feet have no such privilege. Brave men fight with their hands; cowards employ their feet in flight. A glove is borne aloft; a shoe is trampled in the mire. A man greets a friend with his open hand; he spurns a dog, or one whom he holds as mean as a dog, with his advanced foot. A glove on the point of a spear is a sign and pledge of faith all the wide world over, as a gauntlet flung down is a gage of knightly battle; while I know no other emblem belonging to an old shoe, except that some crones will fling them after a man by way of good luck, in which practice I avow myself to entertain no confidence.”

“Nay,” said the smith, amused with his friend’s eloquent pleading for the dignity of the art he practised, “I am not the man, I promise you, to disparage the glover’s mystery. Bethink you, I am myself a maker of gauntlets. But the dignity of your ancient craft removes not my wonder, that the father of this Conachar suffered his son to learn a trade of any kind from a Lowland craftsman, holding us, as they do, altogether beneath their magnificent degree, and a race of contemptible drudges, unworthy of any other fate than to be ill used and plundered, as often as these bare breeched dunnie wassals see safety and convenience for doing so.”

“Ay,” answered the glover, “but there were powerful reasons for – for – ” he withheld something which seemed upon his lips, and went on: “for Conachar’s father acting as he did. Well, I have played fair with him, and I do not doubt but he will act

honourably by me. But Conachar's sudden leave taking has put me to some inconvenience. He had things under his charge. I must look through the booth."

"Can I help you, father?" said Henry Gow, deceived by the earnestness of his manner.

"You! – no," said Simon, with a dryness which made Henry so sensible of the simplicity of his proposal, that he blushed to the eyes at his own dulness of comprehension, in a matter where love ought to have induced him to take his cue easily up.

"You, Catharine," said the glover, as he left the room, "entertain your Valentine for five minutes, and see he departs not till my return. Come hither with me, old Dorothy, and bestir thy limbs in my behalf."

He left the room, followed by the old woman; and Henry Smith remained with Catharine, almost for the first time in his life, entirely alone. There was embarrassment on the maiden's part, and awkwardness on that of the lover, for about a minute; when Henry, calling up his courage, pulled the gloves out of his pocket with which Simon had supplied him, and asked her to permit one who had been so highly graced that morning to pay the usual penalty for being asleep at the moment when he would have given the slumbers of a whole twelvemonth to be awake for a single minute.

"Nay, but," said Catharine, "the fulfilment of my homage to St. Valentine infers no such penalty as you desire to pay, and I cannot therefore think of accepting them."

“These gloves,” said Henry, advancing his seat insidiously towards Catharine as he spoke, “were wrought by the hands that are dearest to you; and see – they are shaped for your own.”

He extended them as he spoke, and taking her arm in his robust hand, spread the gloves beside it to show how well they fitted.

“Look at that taper arm,” he said, “look at these small fingers; think who sewed these seams of silk and gold, and think whether the glove and the arm which alone the glove can fit ought to remain separate, because the poor glove has had the misfortune to be for a passing minute in the keeping of a hand so swart and rough as mine.”

“They are welcome as coming from my father,” said Catharine; “and surely not less so as coming from my friend (and there was an emphasis on the word), as well as my Valentine and preserver.”

“Let me aid to do them on,” said the smith, bringing himself yet closer to her side; “they may seem a little over tight at first, and you may require some assistance.”

“You are skilful in such service, good Henry Gow,” said the maiden, smiling, but at the same time drawing farther from her lover.

“In good faith, no,” said Henry, shaking his head: “my experience has been in donning steel gauntlets on mailed knights, more than in fitting embroidered gloves upon maidens.”

“I will trouble you then no further, and Dorothy shall aid me,

though there needs no assistance; my father's eye and fingers are faithful to his craft: what work he puts through his hands is always true to the measure."

"Let me be convinced of it," said the smith – "let me see that these slender gloves actually match the hands they were made for."

"Some other time, good Henry," answered the maiden, "I will wear the gloves in honour of St. Valentine, and the mate he has sent me for the season. I would to Heaven I could pleasure my father as well in weightier matters; at present the perfume of the leather harms the headache I have had since morning."

"Headache, dearest maiden!" echoed her lover.

"If you call it heartache, you will not misname it," said Catharine, with a sigh, and proceeded to speak in a very serious tone.

"Henry," she said, "I am going perhaps to be as bold as I gave you reason to think me this morning; for I am about to speak the first upon a subject on which, it may well be, I ought to wait till I had to answer you. But I cannot, after what has happened this morning, suffer my feelings towards you to remain unexplained, without the possibility of my being greatly misconceived. Nay, do not answer till you have heard me out. You are brave, Henry, beyond most men, honest and true as the steel you work upon –"

"Stop – stop, Catharine, for mercy's sake! You never said so much that was good concerning me, save to introduce some bitter censure, of which your praises were the harbingers. I am

honest, and so forth, you would say, but a hot brained brawler, and common sworder or stabber.”

“I should injure both myself and you in calling you such. No, Henry, to no common stabber, had he worn a plume in his bonnet and gold spurs on his heels, would Catharine Glover have offered the little grace she has this day voluntarily done to you. If I have at times dwelt severely upon the proneness of your spirit to anger, and of your hand to strife, it is because I would have you, if I could so persuade you, hate in yourself the sins of vanity and wrath by which you are most easily beset. I have spoken on the topic more to alarm your own conscience than to express my opinion. I know as well as my father that, in these forlorn and desperate days, the whole customs of our nation, nay, of every Christian nation, may be quoted in favour of bloody quarrels for trifling causes, of the taking deadly and deep revenge for slight offences, and the slaughter of each other for emulation of honour, or often in mere sport. But I knew that for all these things we shall one day be called into judgment; and fain would I convince thee, my brave and generous friend, to listen oftener to the dictates of thy good heart, and take less pride in the strength and dexterity of thy unsparing arm.”

“I am – I am convinced, Catharine” exclaimed Henry: “thy words shall henceforward be a law to me. I have done enough, far too much, indeed, for proof of my bodily strength and courage; but it is only from you, Catharine, that I can learn a better way of thinking. Remember, my fair Valentine, that my ambition of

distinction in arms, and my love of strife, if it can be called such, do not fight even handed with my reason and my milder dispositions, but have their patrons and sticklers to egg them on. Is there a quarrel, and suppose that I, thinking on your counsels, am something loth to engage in it, believe you I am left to decide between peace or war at my own choosing? Not so, by St. Mary! there are a hundred round me to stir me on. ‘Why, how now, Smith, is thy mainspring rusted?’ says one. ‘Jolly Henry is deaf on the quarrelling ear this morning!’ says another. ‘Stand to it, for the honour of Perth,’ says my lord the Provost. ‘Harry against them for a gold noble,’ cries your father, perhaps. Now, what can a poor fellow do, Catharine, when all are hallooing him on in the devil’s name, and not a soul putting in a word on the other side?”

“Nay, I know the devil has factors enough to utter his wares,” said Catharine; “but it is our duty to despise such idle arguments, though they may be pleaded even by those to whom we owe much love and honour.”

“Then there are the minstrels, with their romaunts and ballads, which place all a man’s praise in receiving and repaying hard blows. It is sad to tell, Catharine, how many of my sins that Blind Harry the Minstrel hath to answer for. When I hit a downright blow, it is not – so save me – to do any man injury, but only to strike as William Wallace struck.”

The minstrel’s namesake spoke this in such a tone of rueful seriousness, that Catharine could scarce forbear smiling; but nevertheless she assured him that the danger of his own and other

men's lives ought not for a moment to be weighed against such simple toys.

“Ay, but,” replied Henry, emboldened by her smiles, “methinks now the good cause of peace would thrive all the better for an advocate. Suppose, for example, that, when I am pressed and urged to lay hand on my weapon, I could have cause to recollect that there was a gentle and guardian angel at home, whose image would seem to whisper, ‘Henry, do no violence; it is my hand which you crimson with blood. Henry, rush upon no idle danger; it is my breast which you expose to injury;’ such thoughts would do more to restrain my mood than if every monk in Perth should cry, ‘Hold thy hand, on pain of bell, book, and candle.’”

“If such a warning as could be given by the voice of sisterly affection can have weight in the debate,” said Catharine, “do think that, in striking, you empurple this hand, that in receiving wounds you harm this heart.”

The smith took courage at the sincerely affectionate tone in which these words were delivered.

“And wherefore not stretch your regard a degree beyond these cold limits? Why, since you are so kind and generous as to own some interest in the poor ignorant sinner before you, should you not at once adopt him as your scholar and your husband? Your father desires it, the town expects it, glovers and smiths are preparing their rejoicings, and you, only you, whose words are so fair and so kind, you will not give your consent.”

“Henry,” said Catharine, in a low and tremulous voice,

“believe me I should hold it my duty to comply with my father’s commands, were there not obstacles invincible to the match which he proposes.”

“Yet think – think but for a moment. I have little to say for myself in comparison of you, who can both read and write. But then I wish to hear reading, and could listen to your sweet voice for ever. You love music, and I have been taught to play and sing as well as some minstrels. You love to be charitable, I have enough to give, and enough to keep, as large a daily alms as a deacon gives would never be missed by me. Your father gets old for daily toil; he would live with us, as I should truly hold him for my father also. I would be as chary of mixing in causeless strife as of thrusting my hand into my own furnace; and if there came on us unlawful violence, its wares would be brought to an ill chosen market.”

“May you experience all the domestic happiness which you can conceive, Henry, but with some one more happy than I am!”

So spoke, or rather so sobbed, the Fair Maiden of Perth, who seemed choking in the attempt to restrain her tears.

“You hate me, then?” said the lover, after a pause.

“Heaven is my witness, no.”

“Or you love some other better?”

“It is cruel to ask what it cannot avail you to know. But you are entirely mistaken.”

“Yon wildcat, Conachar, perhaps?” said Henry. “I have marked his looks – ”

“You avail yourself of this painful situation to insult me, Henry, though I have little deserved it. Conachar is nothing to me, more than the trying to tame his wild spirit by instruction might lead me to take some interest in a mind abandoned to prejudices and passions, and therein, Henry, not unlike your own.”

“It must then be some of these flaunting silkworm sirs about the court,” said the armourer, his natural heat of temper kindling from disappointment and vexation – “some of those who think they carry it off through the height of their plumed bonnets and the jingle of their spurs. I would I knew which it was that, leaving his natural mates, the painted and perfumed dames of the court, comes to take his prey among the simple maidens of the burgher craft. I would I knew but his name and surname!”

“Henry Smith,” said Catharine, shaking off the weakness which seemed to threaten to overpower her a moment before, “this is the language of an ungrateful fool, or rather of a frantic madman. I have told you already, there was no one who stood, at the beginning of this conference, more high in my opinion than he who is now losing ground with every word he utters in the tone of unjust suspicion and senseless anger. You had no title to know even what I have told you, which, I pray you to observe, implies no preference to you over others, though it disowns any preference of another to you. It is enough you should be aware that there is as insuperable an objection to what you desire as if an enchanter had a spell over my destiny.”

“Spells may be broken by true men,” said, the smith. “I would it were come to that. Thorbiorn, the Danish armourer, spoke of a spell he had for making breastplates, by singing a certain song while the iron was heating. I told him that his runic rhymes were no proof against the weapons which fought at Loncarty – what farther came of it it is needless to tell, but the corselet and the wearer, and the leech who salved his wound, know if Henry Gow can break a spell or no.”

Catharine looked at him as if about to return an answer little approving of the exploit he had vaunted, which the downright smith had not recollected was of a kind that exposed him to her frequent censure. But ere she had given words to her thoughts, her father thrust his head in at the door.

“Henry,” he said, “I must interrupt your more pleasing affairs, and request you to come into my working room in all speed, to consult about certain matters deeply affecting the weal of the burgh.”

Henry, making his obeisance to Catharine, left the apartment upon her father’s summons. Indeed, it was probably in favour of their future friendly intercourse, that they were parted on this occasion at the turn which the conversation seemed likely to take. For, as the wooer had begun to hold the refusal of the damsel as somewhat capricious and inexplicable after the degree of encouragement which, in his opinion, she had afforded; Catharine, on the other hand, considered him rather as an encroacher upon the grace which she had shown him than one

whose delicacy rendered him deserving of such favour. But there was living in their bosoms towards each other a reciprocal kindness, which, on the termination of the dispute, was sure to revive, inducing the maiden to forget her offended delicacy, and the lover his slighted warmth of passion.

CHAPTER VII

This quarrel may draw blood another day.

Henry IV. Part I.

The conclave of citizens appointed to meet for investigating the affray of the preceding evening had now assembled. The workroom of Simon Glover was filled to crowding by personages of no little consequence, some of whom wore black velvet cloaks, and gold chains around their necks. They were, indeed, the fathers of the city; and there were bailies and deacons in the honoured number. There was an ireful and offended air of importance upon every brow as they conversed together, rather in whisper than aloud or in detail. Busiest among the busy, the little important assistant of the previous night, Oliver Proudpute by name, and bonnet maker by profession, was bustling among the crowd, much after the manner of the seagull, which flutters, screams, and sputters most at the commencement of a gale of wind, though one can hardly conceive what the bird has better to do than to fly to its nest and remain quiet till the gale is over.

Be that as it may, Master Proudpute was in the midst of the crowd, his fingers upon every one's button and his mouth in every man's ear, embracing such as were near to his own stature, that he might more closely and mysteriously utter his sentiments; and

standing on tiptoe, and supporting himself by the cloak collars of tall men, that he might dole out to them also the same share of information. He felt himself one of the heroes of the affair, being conscious of the dignity of superior information on the subject as an eyewitness, and much disposed to push his connexion with the scuffle a few points beyond the modesty of truth. It cannot be said that his communications were in especial curious and important, consisting chiefly of such assertions as these:

“It is all true, by St. John! I was there and saw it myself – was the first to run to the fray; and if it had not been for me and another stout fellow, who came in about the same time, they had broken into Simon Glover’s house, cut his throat, and carried his daughter off to the mountains. It is too evil usage – not to be suffered, neighbour Crookshank; not to be endured, neighbour Glass; not to be borne, neighbours Balneaves, Rollock, and Chrysteson. It was a mercy that I and that stout fellow came in, was it not, neighbour and worthy Bailie Craigdallie?”

These speeches were dispersed by the busy bonnet maker into sundry ears. Bailie Craigdallie, a portly guild brother, the same who had advised the prorogation of their civic council to the present place and hour, a big, burly, good looking man, shook the deacon from his cloak with pretty much the grace with which a large horse shrugs off the importunate fly that has beset him for ten minutes, and exclaimed, “Silence, good citizens; here comes Simon Glover, in whom no man ever saw falsehood. We will hear the outrage from his own mouth.”

Simon being called upon to tell his tale, did so with obvious embarrassment, which he imputed to a reluctance that the burgh should be put in deadly feud with any one upon his account. It was, he dared to say, a masking or revel on the part of the young gallants about court; and the worst that might come of it would be, that he would put iron stanchions on his daughter's window, in case of such another frolic.

“Why, then, if this was a mere masking or mummary,” said Craigdallie, “our townsman, Harry of the Wind, did far wrong to cut off a gentleman's hand for such a harmless pleasantry, and the town may be brought to a heavy fine for it, unless we secure the person of the mutilator.”

“Our Lady forbid!” said the glover. “Did you know what I do, you would be as much afraid of handling this matter as if it were glowing iron. But, since you will needs put your fingers in the fire, truth must be spoken. And come what will, I must say, that the matter might have ended ill for me and mine, but for the opportune assistance of Henry Gow, the armourer, well known to you all.”

“And mine also was not awanting,” said Oliver Proudpute, “though I do not profess to be utterly so good a swordsman as our neighbour Henry Gow. You saw me, neighbour Glover, at the beginning of the fray?”

“I saw you after the end of it, neighbour,” answered the glover, drily.

“True – true; I had forgot you were in your house while the

blows were going, and could not survey who were dealing them.”

“Peace, neighbour Proudpute – I prithee, peace,” said Craigdallie, who was obviously tired of the tuneless screeching of the worthy deacon.

“There is something mysterious here,” said the bailie; “but I think I spy the secret. Our friend Simon is, as you all know, a peaceful man, and one that will rather sit down with wrong than put a friend, or say a neighbourhood, in danger to seek his redress. Thou, Henry, who art never wanting where the burgh needs a defender, tell us what thou knowest of this matter.”

Our smith told his story to the same purpose which we have already related; and the meddling maker of bonnets added as before, “And thou sawest me there, honest smith, didst thou not?”

“Not I, in good faith, neighbour,” answered Henry; “but you are a little man, you know, and I might overlook you.”

This reply produced a laugh at Oliver’s expense, who laughed for company, but added doggedly, “I was one of the foremost to the rescue for all that.”

“Why, where wert thou, then, neighbour?” said the smith; “for I saw you not, and I would have given the worth of the best suit of armour I ever wrought to have seen as stout a fellow as thou at my elbow.”

“I was no farther off, however, honest smith; and whilst thou wert laying on blows as if on an anvil, I was parrying those that the rest of the villains aimed at thee behind thy back; and that is the cause thou sawest me not.”

“I have heard of smiths of old time who had but one eye,” said Henry; “I have two, but they are both set in my forehead, and so I could not see behind my back, neighbour.”

“The truth is, however,” persevered Master Oliver, “there I was, and I will give Master Bailie my account of the matter; for the smith and I were first up to the fray.”

“Enough at present,” said the bailie, waving to Master Proudfoot an injunction of silence. “The precognition of Simon Glover and Henry Gow would bear out a matter less worthy of belief. And now, my masters, your opinion what should be done. Here are all our burgher rights broken through and insulted, and you may well fancy that it is by some man of power, since no less dared have attempted such an outrage. My masters, it is hard on flesh and blood to submit to this. The laws have framed us of lower rank than the princes and nobles, yet it is against reason to suppose that we will suffer our houses to be broken into, and the honour of our women insulted, without some redress.”

“It is not to be endured!” answered the citizens, unanimously.

Here Simon Glover interfered with a very anxious and ominous countenance. “I hope still that all was not meant so ill as it seemed to us, my worthy neighbours; and I for one would cheerfully forgive the alarm and disturbance to my poor house, providing the Fair City were not brought into jeopardy for me. I beseech you to consider who are to be our judges that are to hear the case, and give or refuse redress. I speak among neighbours and friends, and therefore I speak openly. The King, God bless

him! is so broken in mind and body, that he will but turn us over to some great man amongst his counsellors who shall be in favour for the time. Perchance he will refer us to his brother the Duke of Albany, who will make our petition for righting of our wrongs the pretence for squeezing money out of us.”

“We will none of Albany for our judge!” answered the meeting with the same unanimity as before.

“Or perhaps,” added Simon, “he will bid the Duke of Rothsay take charge of it; and the wild young prince will regard the outrage as something for his gay companions to scoff at, and his minstrels to turn into song.”

“Away with Rothsay! he is too gay to be our judge,” again exclaimed the citizens.

Simon, emboldened by seeing he was reaching the point he aimed at, yet pronouncing the dreaded name with a half whisper, next added, “Would you like the Black Douglas better to deal with?”

There was no answer for a minute. They looked on each other with fallen countenances and blanched lips.

But Henry Smith spoke out boldly, and in a decided voice, the sentiments which all felt, but none else dared give words to: “The Black Douglas to judge betwixt a burgher and a gentleman, nay, a nobleman, for all I know or care! The black devil of hell sooner! You are mad, father Simon, so much as to name so wild a proposal.”

There was again a silence of fear and uncertainty, which

was at length broken by Bailie Craigdallie, who, looking very significantly to the speaker, replied, "You are confident in a stout doublet, neighbour Smith, or you would not talk so boldly."

"I am confident of a good heart under my doublet, such as it is, bailie," answered the undaunted Henry; "and though I speak but little, my mouth shall never be padlocked by any noble of them all."

"Wear a thick doublet, good Henry, or do not speak so loud," reiterated the bailie in the same significant tone. "There are Border men in the town who wear the bloody heart on their shoulder. But all this is no rede. What shall we do?"

"Short rede, good rede," said the smith. "Let us to our provost, and demand his countenance and assistance."

A murmur of applause went through the party, and Oliver Proudfoote exclaimed, "That is what I have been saying for this half hour, and not one of ye would listen to me. 'Let us go to our provost,' said I. 'He is a gentleman himself, and ought to come between the burgh and the nobles in all matters.'"

"Hush, neighbours – hush; be wary what you say or do," said a thin meagre figure of a man, whose diminutive person seemed still more reduced in size, and more assimilated to a shadow, by his efforts to assume an extreme degree of humility, and make himself, to suit his argument, look meaner yet, and yet more insignificant, than nature had made him.

"Pardon me," said he; "I am but a poor pottingar. Nevertheless, I have been bred in Paris, and learned my

humanities and my cursus medendi as well as some that call themselves learned leeches. Methinks I can tent this wound, and treat it with emollients. Here is our friend Simon Glover, who is, as you all know, a man of worship. Think you he would not be the most willing of us all to pursue harsh courses here, since his family honour is so nearly concerned? And since he blenches away from the charge against these same revellers, consider if he may not have some good reason more than he cares to utter for letting the matter sleep. It is not for me to put my finger on the sore; but, alack! we all know that young maidens are what I call fugitive essences. Suppose now, an honest maiden – I mean in all innocence – leaves her window unlatched on St. Valentine’s morn, that some gallant cavalier may – in all honesty, I mean – become her Valentine for the season, and suppose the gallant be discovered, may she not scream out as if the visit were unexpected, and – and – bray all this in a mortar, and then consider, will it be a matter to place the town in feud for?”

The pottingar delivered his opinion in a most insinuating manner; but he seemed to shrink into something less than his natural tenuity when he saw the blood rise in the old cheek of Simon Glover, and inflame to the temples the complexion of the redoubted smith.

The last, stepping forward, and turning a stern look on the alarmed pottingar, broke out as follows: “Thou walking skeleton! thou asthmatic gallipot! thou poisoner by profession! if I thought that the puff of vile breath thou hast left could blight for the tenth

part of a minute the fair fame of Catharine Glover, I would pound thee, quacksalver! in thine own mortar, and beat up thy wretched carrion with flower of brimstone, the only real medicine in thy booth, to make a salve to rub mangy hounds with!”

“Hold, son Henry – hold!” cried the glover, in a tone of authority, “no man has title to speak of this matter but me. Worshipful Bailie Craigdallie, since such is the construction that is put upon my patience, I am willing to pursue this riot to the uttermost; and though the issue may prove that we had better have been patient, you will all see that my Catharine hath not by any lightness or folly of hers afforded grounds for this great scandal.”

The bailie also interposed. “Neighbour Henry,” said he, “we came here to consult, and not to quarrel. As one of the fathers of the Fair City, I command thee to forego all evil will and maltalent you may have against Master Pottingar Dwining.”

“He is too poor a creature, bailie,” said Henry Gow, “for me to harbour feud with – I that could destroy him and his booth with one blow of my forehammer.”

“Peace, then, and hear me,” said the official. “We all are as much believers in the honour of the Fair Maiden of Perth as in that of our Blessed Lady.” Here he crossed himself devoutly. “But touching our appeal to our provost, are you agreed, neighbours, to put matter like this into our provost’s hand, being against a powerful noble, as is to be feared?”

“The provost being himself a nobleman,” squeaked the

pottingar, in some measure released from his terror by the intervention of the bailie. "God knows, I speak not to the disparagement of an honourable gentleman, whose forebears have held the office he now holds for many years –"

"By free choice of the citizens of Perth," said the smith, interrupting the speaker with the tones of his deep and decisive voice.

"Ay, surely," said the disconcerted orator, "by the voice of the citizens. How else? I pray you, friend Smith, interrupt me not. I speak to our worthy and eldest bailie, Craigdallie, according to my poor mind. I say that, come amongst us how he will, still this Sir Patrick Charteris is a nobleman, and hawks will not pick hawks' eyes out. He may well bear us out in a feud with the Highlandmen, and do the part of our provost and leader against them; but whether he that himself wears silk will take our part against broidered cloak and cloth of gold, though he may do so against tartan and Irish frieze, is something to be questioned. Take a fool's advice. We have saved our Maiden, of whom I never meant to speak harm, as truly I knew none. They have lost one man's hand, at least, thanks to Harry Smith –"

"And to me," added the little important bonnet maker.

"And to Oliver Proudpute, as he tells us," continued the pottingar, who contested no man's claim to glory provided he was not himself compelled to tread the perilous paths which lead to it. "I say, neighbours, since they have left a hand as a pledge they will never come in Couvrefew Street again, why, in my simple

mind, we were best to thank our stout townsman, and the town having the honour and these rakehells the loss, that we should hush the matter up and say no more about it.”

These pacific counsels had their effect with some of the citizens, who began to nod and look exceedingly wise upon the advocate of acquiescence, with whom, notwithstanding the offence so lately given, Simon Glover seemed also to agree in opinion. But not so Henry Smith, who, seeing the consultation at a stand, took up the speech in his usual downright manner.

“I am neither the oldest nor the richest among you, neighbours, and I am not sorry for it. Years will come, if one lives to see them; and I can win and spend my penny like another, by the blaze of the furnace and the wind of the bellows. But no man ever saw me sit down with wrong done in word or deed to our fair town, if man’s tongue and man’s hand could right it. Neither will I sit down with this outrage, if I can help it. I will go to the provost myself, if no one will go with me; he is a knight, it is true, and a gentleman of free and true born blood, as we all know, since Wallace’s time, who settled his great grandsire amongst us. But if he were the proudest nobleman in the land, he is the Provost of Perth, and for his own honour must see the freedoms and immunities of the burgh preserved – ay, and I know he will. I have made a steel doublet for him, and have a good guess at the kind of heart that it was meant to cover.”

“Surely,” said Bailie Craigdallie, “it would be to no purpose to stir at court without Sir Patrick Charteris’s countenance: the

ready answer would be, ‘Go to your provost, you borrel loons.’ So, neighbours and townsmen, if you will stand by my side, I and our pottingar Dwining will repair presently to Kinfauns, with Sim Glover, the jolly smith, and gallant Oliver Proudful, for witnesses to the onslaught, and speak with Sir Patrick Charteris, in name of the fair town.”

“Nay,” said the peaceful man of medicine, “leave me behind, I pray you: I lack audacity to speak before a belted knight.”

“Never regard that, neighbour, you must go,” said Bailie Craigdallie. “The town hold me a hot headed carle for a man of threescore; Sim Glover is the offended party; we all know that Harry Gow spoils more harness with his sword than he makes with his hammer and our neighbour Proudful, who, take his own word, is at the beginning and end of every fray in Perth, is of course a man of action. We must have at least one advocate amongst us for peace and quietness; and thou, pottingar, must be the man. Away with you, sirs, get your boots and your beasts – horse and haddock, I say, and let us meet at the East Port; that is, if it is your pleasure, neighbours, to trust us with the matter.”

“There can be no better rede, and we will all avouch it,” said the citizens. “If the provost take our part, as the Fair Town hath a right to expect, we may bell the cat with the best of them.”

“It is well, then, neighbours,” answered the bailie; “so said, so shall be done. Meanwhile, I have called the whole town council together about this hour, and I have little doubt,” looking around the company, “that, as so many of them who are in this place have

resolved to consult with our provost, the rest will be compliant to the same resolution. And, therefore, neighbours, and good burghers of the Fair City of Perth, horse and haddock, as I said before, and meet me at the East Port.”

A general acclamation concluded the sitting of this species of privy council, or Lords of the Articles; and they dispersed, the deputation to prepare for the journey, and the rest to tell their impatient wives and daughters of the measures they had taken to render their chambers safe in future against the intrusion of gallants at unseasonable hours.

While nags are saddling, and the town council debating, or rather putting in form what the leading members of their body had already adopted, it may be necessary, for the information of some readers, to state in distinct terms what is more circuitously intimated in the course of the former discussion.

It was the custom at this period, when the strength of the feudal aristocracy controlled the rights, and frequently insulted the privileges, of the royal burghs of Scotland, that the latter, where it was practicable, often chose their provost, or chief magistrate, not out of the order of the merchants, shopkeepers, and citizens, who inhabited the town itself, and filled up the roll of the ordinary magistracy, but elected to that preeminent state some powerful nobleman, or baron, in the neighbourhood of the burgh, who was expected to stand their friend at court in such matters as concerned their common weal, and to lead their civil militia to fight, whether in general battle or in private

feud, reinforcing them with his own feudal retainers. This protection was not always gratuitous. The provosts sometimes availed themselves of their situation to an unjustifiable degree, and obtained grants of lands and tenements belonging to the common good, or public property of the burgh, and thus made the citizens pay dear for the countenance which they afforded. Others were satisfied to receive the powerful aid of the townsmen in their own feudal quarrels, with such other marks of respect and benevolence as the burgh over which they presided were willing to gratify them with, in order to secure their active services in case of necessity. The baron, who was the regular protector of a royal burgh, accepted such freewill offerings without scruple, and repaid them by defending the rights of the town by arguments in the council and by bold deeds in the field.

The citizens of the town, or, as they loved better to call it, the Fair City, of Perth, had for several generations found a protector and provost of this kind in the knightly family of Charteris, Lords of Kinfauns, in the neighbourhood of the burgh. It was scarce a century (in the time of Robert III) since the first of this distinguished family had settled in the strong castle which now belonged to them, with the picturesque and fertile scenes adjoining to it. But the history of the first settler, chivalrous and romantic in itself, was calculated to facilitate the settlement of an alien in the land in which his lot was cast. We relate it as it is given by an ancient and uniform tradition, which carries in it great indications of truth, and is warrant enough, perhaps, for it

insertion in graver histories than the present.

During the brief career of the celebrated patriot Sir William Wallace, and when his arms had for a time expelled the English invaders from his native country, he is said to have undertaken a voyage to France, with a small band of trusty friends, to try what his presence (for he was respected through all countries for his prowess) might do to induce the French monarch to send to Scotland a body of auxiliary forces, or other assistance, to aid the Scots in regaining their independence.

The Scottish Champion was on board a small vessel, and steering for the port of Dieppe, when a sail appeared in the distance, which the mariners regarded, first with doubt and apprehension, and at last with confusion and dismay. Wallace demanded to know what was the cause of their alarm. The captain of the ship informed him that the tall vessel which was bearing down, with the purpose of boarding that which he commanded, was the ship of a celebrated rover, equally famed for his courage, strength of body, and successful piracies. It was commanded by a gentleman named Thomas de Longueville, a Frenchman by birth, but by practice one of those pirates who called themselves friends to the sea and enemies to all who sailed upon that element. He attacked and plundered vessels of all nations, like one of the ancient Norse sea kings, as they were termed, whose dominion was upon the mountain waves. The master added that no vessel could escape the rover by flight, so speedy was the bark he commanded; and that no crew, however

hardy, could hope to resist him, when, as was his usual mode of combat, he threw himself on board at the head of his followers.

Wallace smiled sternly, while the master of the ship, with alarm in his countenance and tears in his eyes, described to him the certainty of their being captured by the Red Rover, a name given to De Longueville, because he usually displayed the blood red flag, which he had now hoisted.

“I will clear the narrow seas of this rover,” said Wallace.

Then calling together some ten or twelve of his own followers, Boyd, Kerlie, Seton, and others, to whom the dust of the most desperate battle was like the breath of life, he commanded them to arm themselves, and lie flat upon the deck, so as to be out of sight. He ordered the mariners below, excepting such as were absolutely necessary to manage the vessel; and he gave the master instructions, upon pain of death, so to steer as that, while the vessel had an appearance of attempting to fly, he should in fact permit the Red Rover to come up with them and do his worst. Wallace himself then lay down on the deck, that nothing might be seen which could intimate any purpose of resistance. In a quarter of an hour De Longueville's vessel ran on board that of the Champion, and the Red Rover, casting out grappling irons to make sure of his prize, jumped on the deck in complete armour, followed by his men, who gave a terrible shout, as if victory had been already secured. But the armed Scots started up at once, and the rover found himself unexpectedly engaged with men accustomed to consider victory as secure when they were

only opposed as one to two or three. Wallace himself rushed on the pirate captain, and a dreadful strife began betwixt them with such fury that the others suspended their own battle to look on, and seemed by common consent to refer the issue of the strife to the fate of the combat between the two chiefs. The pirate fought as well as man could do; but Wallace's strength was beyond that of ordinary mortals. He dashed the sword from the rover's hand, and placed him in such peril that, to avoid being cut down, he was fain to close with the Scottish Champion in hopes of overpowering him in the grapple. In this also he was foiled. They fell on the deck, locked in each other's arms, but the Frenchman fell undermost; and Wallace, fixing his grasp upon his gorget, compressed it so closely, notwithstanding it was made of the finest steel, that the blood gushed from his eyes, nose, and mouth, and he was only able to ask for quarter by signs. His men threw down their weapons and begged for mercy when they saw their leader thus severely handled. The victor granted them all their lives, but took possession of their vessel, and detained them prisoners.

When he came in sight of the French harbour, Wallace alarmed the place by displaying the rover's colours, as if De Longueville was coming to pillage the town. The bells were rung backward, horns were blown, and the citizens were hurrying to arms, when the scene changed. The Scottish Lion on his shield of gold was raised above the piratical flag, and announced that the Champion of Scotland was approaching, like a falcon

with his prey in his clutch. He landed with his prisoner, and carried him to the court of France, where, at Wallace's request, the robberies which the pirate had committed were forgiven, and the king even conferred the honour of knighthood on Sir Thomas de Longueville, and offered to take him into his service. But the rover had contracted such a friendship for his generous victor, that he insisted on uniting his fortunes with those of Wallace, with whom he returned to Scotland, and fought by his side in many a bloody battle, where the prowess of Sir Thomas de Longueville was remarked as inferior to that of none, save of his heroic conqueror. His fate also was more fortunate than that of his patron. Being distinguished by the beauty as well as strength of his person, he rendered himself so acceptable to a young lady, heiress of the ancient family of Charteris, that she chose him for her husband, bestowing on him with her hand the fair baronial Castle of Kinfauns, and the domains annexed to it. Their descendants took the name of Charteris, as connecting themselves with their maternal ancestors, the ancient proprietors of the property, though the name of Thomas de Longueville was equally honoured amongst them; and the large two handed sword with which he mowed the ranks of war was, and is still, preserved among the family muniments. Another account is, that the family name of De Longueville himself was Charteris. The estate afterwards passed to a family of Blairs, and is now the property of Lord Gray.

These barons of Kinfauns, from father to son, held, for several

generations, the office of Provost of Perth, the vicinity of the castle and town rendering it a very convenient arrangement for mutual support. The Sir Patrick of this history had more than once led out the men of Perth to battles and skirmishes with the restless Highland depredators, and with other enemies, foreign and domestic. True it is, he used sometimes to be weary of the slight and frivolous complaints unnecessarily brought before him, and in which he was requested to interest himself. Hence he had sometimes incurred the charge of being too proud as a nobleman, or too indolent as a man of wealth, and one who was too much addicted to the pleasures of the field and the exercise of feudal hospitality, to bestir himself upon all and every occasion when the Fair Town would have desired his active interference. But, notwithstanding that this occasioned some slight murmuring, the citizens, upon any serious cause of alarm, were wont to rally around their provost, and were warmly supported by him both in council and action.

CHAPTER VIII

*Within the bounds of Annandale
The gentle Johnstones ride;
They have been there a thousand years,
A thousand more they'll bide.*

Old Ballad.

The character and quality of Sir Patrick Charteris, the Provost of Perth, being such as we have sketched in the last chapter, let us now return to the deputation which was in the act of rendezvousing at the East Port, in order to wait upon that dignitary with their complaints at Kinfauns.

And first appeared Simon Glover, on a pacing palfrey, which had sometimes enjoyed the honour of bearing the fairer person as well as the lighter weight of his beautiful daughter. His cloak was muffled round the lower part of his face, as a sign to his friends not to interrupt him by any questions while he passed through the streets, and partly, perhaps, on account of the coldness of the weather. The deepest anxiety was seated on his brow, as if the more he meditated on the matter he was engaged in, the more difficult and perilous it appeared. He only greeted by silent gestures his friends as they came to the rendezvous.

A strong black horse, of the old Galloway breed, of an under size, and not exceeding fourteen hands, but high shouldered,

strong limbed, well coupled, and round barrell'd, bore to the East Port the gallant smith. A judge of the animal might see in his eye a spark of that vicious temper which is frequently the accompaniment of the form that is most vigorous and enduring; but the weight, the hand, and the seat of the rider, added to the late regular exercise of a long journey, had subdued his stubbornness for the present. He was accompanied by the honest bonnet maker, who being, as the reader is aware, a little round man, and what is vulgarly called duck legged, had planted himself like a red pincushion (for he was wrapped in a scarlet cloak, over which he had slung a hawking pouch), on the top of a great saddle, which he might be said rather to be perched upon than to bestride. The saddle and the man were girthed on the ridge bone of a great trampling Flemish mare, with a nose turned up in the air like a camel, a huge fleece of hair at each foot, and every hoof full as large in circumference as a frying pan. The contrast between the beast and the rider was so extremely extraordinary, that, whilst chance passengers contented themselves with wondering how he got up, his friends were anticipating with sorrow the perils which must attend his coming down again; for the high seated horseman's feet did not by any means come beneath the laps of the saddle. He had associated himself to the smith, whose motions he had watched for the purpose of joining him; for it was Oliver Proudfoot's opinion that men of action showed to most advantage when beside each other; and he was delighted when some wag of

the lower class had gravity enough to cry out, without laughing outright: "There goes the pride of Perth – there go the slashing craftsmen, the jolly Smith of the Wynd and the bold bonnet maker!"

It is true, the fellow who gave this all hail thrust his tongue in his cheek to some scapegraces like himself; but as the bonnet maker did not see this byplay, he generously threw him a silver penny to encourage his respect for martialists. This munificence occasioned their being followed by a crowd of boys, laughing and hallooing, until Henry Smith, turning back, threatened to switch the foremost of them – a resolution which they did not wait to see put in execution.

"Here are we the witnesses," said the little man on the large horse, as they joined Simon Glover at the East Port; "but where are they that should back us? Ah, brother Henry! authority is a load for an ass rather than a spirited horse: it would but clog the motions of such young fellows as you and me."

"I could well wish to see you bear ever so little of that same weight, worthy Master Proudfoote," replied Henry Gow, "were it but to keep you firm in the saddle; for you bounce aloft as if you were dancing a jig on your seat, without any help from your legs."

"Ay – ay; I raise myself in my stirrups to avoid the jolting. She is cruelly hard set this mare of mine; but she has carried me in field and forest, and through some passages that were something perilous, so Jezabel and I part not. I call her Jezabel, after the Princess of Castile."

“Isabel, I suppose you mean,” answered the smith.

“Ay – Isabel, or Jezabel – all the same, you know. But here comes Bailie Craigdallie at last, with that poor, creeping, cowardly creature the pottingar. They have brought two town officers with their partizans, to guard their fair persons, I suppose. If there is one thing I hate more than another, it is such a sneaking varlet as that Dwining.”

“Have a care he does not hear you say so,” said the smith, “I tell thee, bonnet maker, that there is more danger in yonder slight wasted anatomy than in twenty stout fellows like yourself.”

“Pshaw! Bully Smith, you are but jesting with me,” said Oliver, softening his voice, however, and looking towards the pottingar, as if to discover in what limb or lineament of his wasted face and form lay any appearance of the menaced danger; and his examination reassuring him, he answered boldly: “Blades and bucklers, man, I would stand the feud of a dozen such as Dwining. What could he do to any man with blood in his veins?”

“He could give him a dose of physic,” answered the smith drily.

They had no time for further colloquy, for Bailie Craigdallie called to them to take the road to Kinfauns, and himself showed the example. As they advanced at a leisurely pace, the discourse turned on the reception which they were to expect from their provost, and the interest which he was likely to take in the aggression which they complained of. The glover seemed particularly desponding, and talked more than once in a manner

which implied a wish that they would yet consent to let the matter rest. He did not speak out very plainly, however, fearful, perhaps, of the malignant interpretation which might be derived from any appearance of his flinching from the assertion of his daughter's reputation. Dwining seemed to agree with him in opinion, but spoke more cautiously than in the morning.

"After all," said the bailie, "when I think of all the propines and good gifts which have passed from the good town to my Lord Provost's, I cannot think he will be backward to show himself. More than one lusty boat, laden with Bordeaux wine, has left the South Shore to discharge its burden under the Castle of Kinfauns. I have some right to speak of that, who was the merchant importer."

"And," said Dwining, with his squeaking voice, "I could speak of delicate confections, curious comfits, loaves of wastel bread, and even cakes of that rare and delicious condiment which men call sugar, that have gone thither to help out a bridal banquet, or a kirstening feast, or suchlike. But, alack, Bailie Craigdallie, wine is drunk, comfits are eaten, and the gift is forgotten when the flavour is past away. Alas! neighbour, the banquet of last Christmas is gone like the last year's snow."

"But there have been gloves full of gold pieces," said the magistrate.

"I should know that who wrought them," said Simon, whose professional recollections still mingled with whatever else might occupy his mind. "One was a hawking glove for my lady. I made

it something wide. Her ladyship found no fault, in consideration of the intended lining.”

“Well, go to,” said Bailie Craigdallie, “the less I lie; and if these are not to the fore, it is the provost’s fault, and not the town’s: they could neither be eat nor drunk in the shape in which he got them.”

“I could speak of a brave armour too,” said the smith; “but, cogan na schie! [Peace or war, I care not!] as John Highlandman says – I think the knight of Kinfauns will do his devoir by the burgh in peace or war; and it is needless to be reckoning the town’s good deeds till we see him thankless for them.”

“So say I,” cried our friend Proudpute, from the top of his mare. “We roystering blades never bear so base a mind as to count for wine and walnuts with a friend like Sir Patrick Charteris. Nay, trust me, a good woodsman like Sir Patrick will prize the right of hunting and sporting over the lands of the burgh as an high privilege, and one which, his Majesty the King’s Grace excepted, is neither granted to lord nor loon save to our provost alone.”

As the bonnet maker spoke, there was heard on the left hand the cry of, “So so – waw waw – haw,” being the shout of a falconer to his hawk.

“Methinks yonder is a fellow using the privilege you mention, who, from his appearance, is neither king nor provost,” said the smith.

“Ay, marry, I see him,” said the bonnet maker, who imagined

the occasion presented a prime opportunity to win honour. "Thou and I, jolly smith, will prick towards him and put him to the question."

"Have with you, then," cried the smith; and his companion spurred his mare and went off, never doubting that Gow was at his heels.

But Craigdallie caught Henry's horse by the reins. "Stand fast by the standard," he said; "let us see the luck of our light horseman. If he procures himself a broken pate he will be quieter for the rest of the day."

"From what I already see," said the smith, "he may easily come by such a boon. Yonder fellow, who stops so impudently to look at us, as if he were engaged in the most lawful sport in the world – I guess him, by his trotting hobbler, his rusty head piece with the cock's feather, and long two handed sword, to be the follower of some of the southland lords – men who live so near the Southron, that the black jack is never off their backs, and who are as free of their blows as they are light in their fingers."

Whilst they were thus speculating on the issue of the rencounter the valiant bonnet maker began to pull up Jezabel, in order that the smith, who he still concluded was close behind, might overtake him, and either advance first or at least abreast of himself. But when he saw him at a hundred yards distance, standing composedly with the rest of the group, the flesh of the champion, like that of the old Spanish general, began to tremble, in anticipation of the dangers into which his own venturesome

spirit was about to involve it. Yet the consciousness of being countenanced by the neighbourhood of so many friends, the hopes that the appearance of such odds must intimidate the single intruder, and the shame of abandoning an enterprise in which he had volunteered, and when so many persons must witness his disgrace, surmounted the strong inclination which prompted him to wheel Jezabel to the right about, and return to the friends whose protection he had quitted, as fast as her legs could carry them. He accordingly continued his direction towards the stranger, who increased his alarm considerably by putting his little nag in motion, and riding to meet him at a brisk trot. On observing this apparently offensive movement, our hero looked over his left shoulder more than once, as if reconnoitring the ground for a retreat, and in the mean while came to a decided halt. But the Philistine was upon him ere the bonnet maker could decide whether to fight or fly, and a very ominous looking Philistine he was. His figure was gaunt and lathy, his visage marked by two or three ill favoured scars, and the whole man had much the air of one accustomed to say, "Stand and deliver," to a true man.

This individual began the discourse by exclaiming, in tones as sinister as his looks, "The devil catch you for a cuckoo, why do you ride across the moor to spoil my sport?"

"Worthy stranger," said our friend, in the tone of pacific remonstrance, "I am Oliver Proudfoote, a burgess of Perth, and a man of substance; and yonder is the worshipful Adam

Craigdallie, the oldest bailie of the burgh, with the fighting Smith of the Wynd, and three or four armed men more, who desire to know your name, and how you come to take your pleasure over these lands belonging to the burgh of Perth; although, natheless, I will answer for them, it is not their wish to quarrel with a gentleman, or stranger for any accidental trespass; only it is their use and wont not to grant such leave, unless it is duly asked; and – and – therefore I desire to know your name, worthy sir.”

The grim and loathly aspect with which the falconer had regarded Oliver Proudpute during his harangue had greatly disconcerted him, and altogether altered the character of the inquiry which, with Henry Gow to back him, he would probably have thought most fitting for the occasion.

The stranger replied to it, modified as it was, with a most inauspicious grin, which the scars of his visage made appear still more repulsive. “You want to know my name? My name is the Devil’s Dick of Hellgarth, well known in Annandale for a gentle Johnstone. I follow the stout Laird of Wamphray, who rides with his kinsman the redoubted Lord of Johnstone, who is banded with the doughty Earl of Douglas; and the earl and the lord, and the laird and I, the esquire, fly our hawks where we find our game, and ask no man whose ground we ride over.”

“I will do your message, sir,” replied Oliver Proudpute, meekly enough; for he began to be very desirous to get free of the embassy which he had so rashly undertaken, and was in the act of turning his horse’s head, when the Annandale man added:

“And take you this to boot, to keep you in mind that you met the Devil’s Dick, and to teach you another time to beware how you spoil the sport of any one who wears the flying spur on his shoulder.”

With these words he applied two or three smart blows of his riding rod upon the luckless bonnet maker’s head and person. Some of them lighted upon Jezebel, who, turning sharply round, laid her rider upon the moor, and galloped back towards the party of citizens.

Proudfute, thus overthrown, began to cry for assistance in no very manly voice, and almost in the same breath to whimper for mercy; for his antagonist, dismounting almost as soon as he fell, offered a whinger, or large wood knife, to his throat, while he rifled the pockets of the unlucky citizen, and even examined his hawking bag, swearing two or three grisly oaths, that he would have what it contained, since the wearer had interrupted his sport. He pulled the belt rudely off, terrifying the prostrate bonnet maker still more by the regardless violence which he used, as, instead of taking the pains to unbuckle the strap, he drew till the fastening gave way. But apparently it contained nothing to his mind. He threw it carelessly from him, and at the same time suffered the dismounted cavalier to rise, while he himself remounted his hobbler, and looked towards the rest of Oliver’s party, who were now advancing.

When they had seen their delegate overthrown, there was some laughter; so much had the vaunting humor of the bonnet

maker prepared his friends to rejoice when, as Henry Smith termed it, they saw the Oliver meet with a Rowland. But when the bonnet maker's adversary was seen to bestride him, and handle him in the manner described, the armourer could hold out no longer.

“Please you, good Master Bailie, I cannot endure to see our townsman beaten and rifled, and like to be murdered before us all. It reflects upon the Fair Town, and if it is neighbour Proudpute's misfortune, it is our shame. I must to his rescue.”

“We will all go to his rescue,” answered Bailie Craigdallie; “but let no man strike without order from me. We have more feuds on our hands, it is to be feared, than we have strength to bring to good end. And therefore I charge you all, more especially you, Henry of the Wynd, in the name of the Fair City, that you make no stroke but in self defence.”

They all advanced, therefore, in a body; and the appearance of such a number drove the plunderer from his booty. He stood at gaze, however, at some distance, like the wolf, which, though it retreats before the dogs, cannot be brought to absolute flight.

Henry, seeing this state of things, spurred his horse and advanced far before the rest of the party, up towards the scene of Oliver Proudpute's misfortune. His first task was to catch Jezabel by the flowing rein, and his next to lead her to meet her discomfited master, who was crippling towards him, his clothes much soiled with his fall, his eyes streaming with tears, from pain as well as mortification, and altogether exhibiting

an aspect so unlike the spruce and dapper importance of his ordinary appearance, that the honest smith felt compassion for the little man, and some remorse at having left him exposed to such disgrace. All men, I believe, enjoy an ill natured joke. The difference is, that an ill natured person can drink out to the very dregs the amusement which it affords, while the better moulded mind soon loses the sense of the ridiculous in sympathy for the pain of the sufferer.

“Let me pitch you up to your saddle again, neighbour,” said the smith, dismounting at the same time, and assisting Oliver to scramble into his war saddle, as a monkey might have done.

“May God forgive you, neighbour Smith, for not backing of me! I would not have believed in it, though fifty credible witnesses had sworn it of you.”

Such were the first words, spoken in sorrow more than anger, by which the dismayed Oliver vented his feelings.

“The bailie kept hold of my horse by the bridle; and besides,” Henry continued, with a smile, which even his compassion could not suppress, “I thought you would have accused me of diminishing your honour, if I brought you aid against a single man. But cheer up! the villain took foul odds of you, your horse not being well at command.”

“That is true – that is true,” said Oliver, eagerly catching at the apology.

“And yonder stands the faitour, rejoicing at the mischief he has done, and triumphing in your overthrow, like the king in the

romance, who played upon the fiddle whilst a city was burning. Come thou with me, and thou shalt see how we will handle him. Nay, fear not that I will desert thee this time.”

So saying, he caught Jezabel by the rein, and galloping alongside of her, without giving Oliver time to express a negative, he rushed towards the Devil’s Dick, who had halted on the top of a rising ground at some distance. The gentle Johnstone, however, either that he thought the contest unequal, or that he had fought enough for the day, snapping his fingers and throwing his hand out with an air of defiance, spurred his horse into a neighbouring bog, through which he seemed to flutter like a wild duck, swinging his lure round his head, and whistling to his hawk all the while, though any other horse and rider must have been instantly bogged up to the saddle girths.

“There goes a thoroughbred moss trooper,” said the smith. “That fellow will fight or flee as suits his humor, and there is no use to pursue him, any more than to hunt a wild goose. He has got your purse, I doubt me, for they seldom leave off till they are full handed.”

“Ye – ye – yes,” said Proudpute, in a melancholy tone, “he has got my purse; but there is less matter since he hath left the hawking bag.”

“Nay, the hawking bag had been an emblem of personal victory, to be sure – a trophy, as the minstrels call it.”

“There is more in it than that, friend,” said Oliver, significantly.

“Why, that is well, neighbour: I love to hear you speak in your own scholarly tone again. Cheer up, you have seen the villain’s back, and regained the trophies you had lost when taken at advantage.”

“Ah, Henry Gow – Henry Gow – ” said the bonnet maker, and stopped short with a deep sigh, nearly amounting to a groan.

“What is the matter?” asked his friend – “what is it you vex yourself about now?”

“I have some suspicion, my dearest friend, Henry Smith, that the villain fled for fear of you, not of me.”

“Do not think so,” replied the armourer: “he saw two men and fled, and who can tell whether he fled for one or the other? Besides, he knows by experience your strength and activity: we all saw how you kicked and struggled when you were on the ground.”

“Did I?” said poor Proudpute. “I do not remember it, but I know it is my best point: I am a strong dog in the loins. But did they all see it?”

“All as much as I,” said the smith, smothering an inclination to laughter.

“But thou wilt remind them of it?”

“Be assured I will,” answered Henry, “and of thy desperate rally even now. Mark what I say to Bailie Craigdallie, and make the best of it.”

“It is not that I require any evidence in thy favour, for I am as brave by nature as most men in Perth; but only – ” Here the

man of valour paused.

“But only what?” inquired the stout armourer.

“But only I am afraid of being killed. To leave my pretty wife and my young family, you know, would be a sad change, Smith. You will know this when it is your own case, and will feel abated in courage.”

“It is like that I may,” said the armourer, musing.

“Then I am so accustomed to the use of arms, and so well breathed, that few men can match me. It’s all here,” said the little man, expanding his breast like a trussed fowl, and patting himself with his hands – “here is room for all the wind machinery.”

“I dare say you are long breathed – long winded; at least your speech bewrays – ”

“My speech! You are a wag – But I have got the stern post of a dromond brought up the river from Dundee.”

“The stern post of a Drummond!” exclaimed the armourer; “conscience, man, it will put you in feud with the whole clan – not the least wrathful in the country, as I take it.”

“St. Andrew, man, you put me out! I mean a dromond – that is, a large ship. I have fixed this post in my yard, and had it painted and carved something like a soldan or Saracen, and with him I breathe myself, and will wield my two handed sword against him, thrust or point, for an hour together.”

“That must make you familiar with the use of your weapon,” said the smith.

“Ay, marry does it; and sometimes I will place you a bonnet –

an old one, most likely – on my soldan's head, and cleave it with such a downright blow that in troth, the infidel has but little of his skull remaining to hit at.”

“That is unlucky, for you will lose your practice,” said Henry. “But how say you, bonnet maker? I will put on my head piece and corselet one day, and you shall hew at me, allowing me my broadsword to parry and pay back? Eh, what say you?”

“By no manner of means, my dear friend. I should do you too much evil; besides, to tell you the truth, I strike far more freely at a helmet or bonnet when it is set on my wooden soldan; then I am sure to fetch it down. But when there is a plume of feathers in it that nod, and two eyes gleaming fiercely from under the shadow of the visor, and when the whole is dancing about here and there, I acknowledge it puts out my hand of fence.”

“So, if men would but stand stock still like your soldan, you would play the tyrant with them, Master Proudpute?”

“In time, and with practice, I conclude I might,” answered Oliver. “But here we come up with the rest of them. Bailie Craigdallie looks angry, but it is not his kind of anger that frightens me.”

You are to recollect, gentle reader, that as soon as the bailie and those who attended him saw that the smith had come up to the forlorn bonnet maker, and that the stranger had retreated, they gave themselves no trouble about advancing further to his assistance, which they regarded as quite ensured by the presence of the redoubted Henry Gow. They had resumed their

straight road to Kinfauns, desirous that nothing should delay the execution of their mission. As some time had elapsed ere the bonnet maker and the smith rejoined the party, Bailie Craigdallie asked them, and Henry Smith in particular, what they meant by dallying away precious time by riding uphill after the falconer.

“By the mass, it was not my fault, Master Bailie,” replied the smith. “If ye will couple up an ordinary Low Country greyhound with a Highland wolf dog, you must not blame the first of them for taking the direction in which it pleases the last to drag him on. It was so, and not otherwise, with my neighbour Oliver Proudpute. He no sooner got up from the ground, but he mounted his mare like a flash of lightning, and, enraged at the unknightly advantage which yonder rascal had taken of his stumbling horse, he flew after him like a dromedary. I could not but follow, both to prevent a second stumble and secure our over bold friend and champion from the chance of some ambush at the top of the hill. But the villain, who is a follower of some Lord of the Marches, and wears a winged spur for his cognizance, fled from our neighbour like fire from flint.”

The senior bailie of Perth listened with surprise to the legend which it had pleased Gow to circulate; for, though not much caring for the matter, he had always doubted the bonnet maker’s romancing account of his own exploits, which hereafter he must hold as in some degree orthodox.

The shrewd old glover looked closer into the matter. “You will drive the poor bonnet maker mad,” he whispered to Henry,

“and set him a-ringing his clapper as if he were a town bell on a rejoicing day, when for order and decency it were better he were silent.”

“Oh, by Our Lady, father,” replied the smith, “I love the poor little braggadocio, and could not think of his sitting rueful and silent in the provost’s hall, while all the rest of them, and in especial that venomous pottingar, were telling their mind.”

“Thou art even too good natured a fellow, Henry,” answered Simon. “But mark the difference betwixt these two men. The harmless little bonnet maker assumes the airs of a dragon, to disguise his natural cowardice; while the pottingar wilfully desires to show himself timid, poor spirited, and humble, to conceal the danger of his temper. The adder is not the less deadly that he creeps under a stone. I tell thee, son Henry, that, for all his sneaking looks and timorous talking, this wretched anatomy loves mischief more than he fears danger. But here we stand in front of the provost’s castle; and a lordly place is Kinfauns, and a credit to the city it is, to have the owner of such a gallant castle for its chief magistrate.”

“A goodly fortalice, indeed,” said the smith, looking at the broad winding Tay, as it swept under the bank on which the castle stood, like its modern successor, and seemed the queen of the valley, although, on the opposite side of the river, the strong walls of Elcho appeared to dispute the pre-eminence. Elcho, however, was in that age a peaceful nunnery, and the walls with which it was surrounded were the barriers of secluded vestals, not the

bulwarks of an armed garrison.

“‘Tis a brave castle,” said the armourer, again looking at the towers of Kinfauns, “and the breastplate and target of the bonny course of the Tay. It were worth lipping a good blade, before wrong were offered to it.”

The porter of Kinfauns, who knew from a distance the persons and characters of the party, had already opened the courtyard gate for their entrance, and sent notice to Sir Patrick Charteris that the eldest bailie of Perth, with some other good citizens, were approaching the castle. The good knight, who was getting ready for a hawking party, heard the intimation with pretty much the same feelings that the modern representative of a burgh hears of the menaced visitation of a party of his worthy electors, at a time rather unseasonable for their reception. That is, he internally devoted the intruders to Mahound and Termagaunt, and outwardly gave orders to receive them with all decorum and civility; commanded the sewers to bring hot venison steaks and cold baked meats into the knightly hall with all despatch, and the butler to broach his casks, and do his duty; for if the Fair City of Perth sometimes filled his cellar, her citizens were always equally ready to assist at emptying his flagons.

The good burghers were reverently marshalled into the hall, where the knight, who was in a riding habit, and booted up to the middle of his thighs, received them with a mixture of courtesy and patronising condescension; wishing them all the while at the bottom of the Tay, on account of the interruption their arrival

gave to his proposed amusement of the morning. He met them in the midst of the hall, with bare head and bonnet in hand, and some such salutation as the following:

“Ha, my Master Eldest Bailie, and you, worthy Simon Glover, fathers of the Fair City, and you, my learned pottingar, and you, stout smith, and my slashing bonnet maker too, who cracks more skulls than he covers, how come I to have the pleasure of seeing so many friends so early? I was thinking to see my hawks fly, and your company will make the sport more pleasant – (Aside, I trust in Our Lady they may break their necks!) – that is, always, unless the city have any commands to lay on me. Butler Gilbert, despatch, thou knave. But I hope you have no more grave errand than to try if the malvoisie holds its flavour?”

The city delegates answered to their provost’s civilities by inclinations and congees, more or less characteristic, of which the pottingar’s bow was the lowest and the smith’s the least ceremonious. Probably he knew his own value as a fighting man upon occasion. To the general compliment the elder bailie replied.

“Sir Patrick Charteris, and our noble Lord Provost,” said Craigdallie, gravely, “had our errand been to enjoy the hospitality with which we have been often regaled here, our manners would have taught us to tarry till your lordship had invited us, as on other occasions. And as to hawking, we have had enough on’t for one morning; since a wild fellow, who was flying a falcon hard by on the moor, unhorsed and cudgelled our worthy friend Oliver

Bonnet Maker, or Proudpute, as some men call him, merely because he questioned him, in your honour's name, and the town of Perth's, who or what he was that took so much upon him."

"And what account gave he of himself?" said the provost. "By St. John! I will teach him to forestall my sport!"

"So please your lordship," said the bonnet maker, "he did take me at disadvantage. But I got on horseback again afterwards, and pricked after him gallantly. He calls himself Richard the Devil."

"How, man! he that the rhymes and romances are made on?" said the provost. "I thought that smaik's name had been Robert."

"I trow they be different, my lord. I only graced this fellow with the full title, for indeed he called himself the Devil's Dick, and said he was a Johnstone, and a follower of the lord of that name. But I put him back into the bog, and recovered my hawking bag, which he had taken when I was at disadvantage."

Sir Patrick paused for an instant. "We have heard," said he, "of the Lord of Johnstone, and of his followers. Little is to be had by meddling with them. Smith, tell me, did you endure this?"

"Ay, faith did I, Sir Patrick, having command from my betters not to help."

"Well, if thou satst down with it," said the provost, "I see not why we should rise up; especially as Master Oliver Proudpute, though taken at advantage at first, has, as he has told us; recovered his reputation and that of the burgh. But here comes the wine at length. Fill round to my good friends and guests till the wine leap over the cup. Prosperity to St. Johnston, and a

merry welcome to you all, my honest friends! And now sit you to eat a morsel, for the sun is high up, and it must be long since you thrifty men have broken your fast.”

“Before we eat, my Lord Provost,” said the bailie, “let us tell you the pressing cause of our coming, which as yet we have not touched upon.”

“Nay, prithee, bailie,” said the provost, “put it off till thou hast eaten. Some complaint against the rascally jackmen and retainers of the nobles, for playing at football on the streets of the burgh, or some such goodly matter.”

“No, my lord,” said Craigdallie, stoutly and firmly. “It is the jackmen’s masters of whom we complain, for playing at football with the honour of our families, and using as little ceremony with our daughters’ sleeping chambers as if they were in a bordel at Paris. A party of reiving night walkers – courtiers and men of rank, as there is but too much reason to believe – attempted to scale the windows of Simon Glover’s house last night; they stood in their defence with drawn weapons when they were interrupted by Henry Smith, and fought till they were driven off by the rising of the citizens.”

“How!” said Sir Patrick, setting down the cup which he was about to raise to his head. “Cock’s body, make that manifest to me, and, by the soul of Thomas of Longueville, I will see you righted with my best power, were it to cost me life and land. Who attests this? Simon Glover, you are held an honest and a cautious man – do you take the truth of this charge upon your

conscience?”

“My lord,” said Simon, “understand I am no willing complainer in this weighty matter. No damage has arisen, save to the breakers of the peace themselves. I fear only great power could have encouraged such lawless audacity; and I were unwilling to put feud between my native town and some powerful nobleman on my account. But it has been said that, if I hang back in prosecuting this complaint, it will be as much as admitting that my daughter expected such a visit, which is a direct falsehood. Therefore, my lord, I will tell your lordship what happened, so far as I know, and leave further proceeding to your wisdom.”

He then told, from point to point, all that he had seen of the attack.

Sir Patrick Charteris, listening with much attention, seemed particularly struck with the escape of the man who had been made prisoner.

“Strange,” he said, “that you did not secure him when you had him. Did you not look at him so as to know him again?”

“I had but the light of a lantern, my Lord Provost; and as to suffering him to escape, I was alone,” said the glover, “and old. But yet I might have kept him, had I not heard my daughter shriek in the upper room; and ere I had returned from her chamber the man had escaped through the garden.”

“Now, armourer, as a true man and a good soldier,” said Sir Patrick, “tell me what you know of this matter.”

Henry Gow, in his own decided style, gave a brief but clear

narrative of the whole affair.

Honest Proudpute being next called upon, began his statement with an air of more importance. "Touching this awful and astounding tumult within the burgh, I cannot altogether, it is true, say with Henry Gow that I saw the very beginning. But it will not be denied that I beheld a great part of the latter end, and especially that I procured the evidence most effectual to convict the knaves."

"And what is it, man?" said Sir Patrick Charteris. "Never lose time fumbling and prating about it. What is it?"

"I have brought your lordship, in this pouch, what one of the rogues left behind him," said the little man. "It is a trophy which, in good faith and honest truth, I do confess I won not by the blade, but I claim the credit of securing it with that presence of mind which few men possess amidst flashing torches and clashing weapons. I secured it, my lord, and here it is."

So saying, he produced, from the hawking pouch already mentioned, the stiffened hand which had been found on the scene of the skirmish.

"Nay, bonnet maker," said the provost, "I'll warrant thee man enough to secure a rogue's hand after it is cut from the body. What do you look so busily for in your bag?"

"There should have been – there was – a ring, my lord, which was on the knave's finger. I fear I have been forgetful, and left it at home, for I took it off to show to my wife, as she cared not to look upon the dead hand, as women love not such sights. But yet

I thought I had put it on the finger again. Nevertheless, it must, I bethink me, be at home. I will ride back for it, and Henry Smith will trot along with me.”

“We will all trot with thee,” said Sir Patrick Charteris, “since I am for Perth myself. Look you, honest burghers and good neighbours of Perth; you may have thought me unapt to be moved by light complaints and trivial breaches of your privileges, such as small trespasses on your game, the barons’ followers playing football in the street, and suchlike. But, by the soul of Thomas of Longueville, you shall not find Patrick Charteris slothful in a matter of this importance. This hand,” he continued, holding up the severed joint, “belongs to one who hath worked no drudgery. We will put it in a way to be known and claimed of the owner, if his comrades of the revel have but one spark of honour in them. Hark you, Gerard; get me some half score of good men instantly to horse, and let them take jack and spear. Meanwhile, neighbours, if feud arise out of this, as is most likely, we must come to each other’s support. If my poor house be attacked, how many men will you bring to my support?”

The burghers looked at Henry Gow, to whom they instinctively turned when such matters were discussed.

“I will answer,” said he, “for fifty good fellows to be assembled ere the common bell has rung ten minutes; for a thousand, in the space of an hour.”

“It is well,” answered the gallant provost; “and in the case of need, I will come to aid the Fair City with such men as I can

make. And now, good friends, let us to horse.”

CHAPTER IX

*If I know how to manage these affairs,
Thus thrust disorderly upon my hands,
Never believe me —*

Richard II.

It was early in the afternoon of St. Valentine's Day that the prior of the Dominicans was engaged in discharge of his duties as confessor to a penitent of no small importance. This was an elderly man, of a goodly presence, a florid and healthful cheek, the under part of which was shaded by a venerable white beard, which descended over his bosom. The large and clear blue eyes, with the broad expanse of brow, expressed dignity; but it was of a character which seemed more accustomed to receive honours voluntarily paid than to enforce them when they were refused. The good nature of the expression was so great as to approach to defenceless simplicity or weakness of character, unfit, it might be inferred, to repel intrusion or subdue resistance. Amongst the grey locks of this personage was placed a small circlet or coronet of gold, upon a blue fillet. His beads, which were large and conspicuous, were of native gold, rudely enough wrought, but ornamented with Scottish pearls of rare size and beauty. These were his only ornaments; and a long crimson robe of silk, tied

by a sash of the same colour, formed his attire. His shrift being finished, he arose heavily from the embroidered cushion upon which he kneeled during his confession, and, by the assistance of a crutch headed staff of ebony, moved, lame and ungracefully, and with apparent pain, to a chair of state, which, surmounted by a canopy, was placed for his accommodation by the chimney of the lofty and large apartment.

This was Robert, third of that name, and the second of the ill fated family of Stuart who filled the throne of Scotland. He had many virtues, and was not without talent; but it was his great misfortune that, like others of his devoted line, his merits were not of a kind suited to the part which he was called upon to perform in life. The king of so fierce a people as the Scots then were ought to have been warlike, prompt, and active, liberal in rewarding services, strict in punishing crimes, one whose conduct should make him feared as well as beloved. The qualities of Robert the Third were the reverse of all these. In youth he had indeed seen battles; but, without incurring disgrace, he had never manifested the chivalrous love of war and peril, or the eager desire to distinguish himself by dangerous achievements, which that age expected from all who were of noble birth and had claims to authority.

Besides, his military career was very short. Amidst the tumult of a tournament, the young Earl of Carrick, such was then his title, received a kick from the horse of Sir James Douglas of Dalkeith, in consequence of which he was lame for the rest of his

life, and absolutely disabled from taking share either in warfare or in the military sports and tournaments which were its image. As Robert had never testified much predilection for violent exertion, he did not probably much regret the incapacities which exempted him from these active scenes. But his misfortune, or rather its consequences, lowered him in the eyes of a fierce nobility and warlike people. He was obliged to repose the principal charge of his affairs now in one member, now in another, of his family, sometimes with the actual rank, and always with the power, of lieutenant general of the kingdom. His paternal affection would have induced him to use the assistance of his eldest son, a young man of spirit and talent, whom in fondness he had created Duke of Rothsay, in order to give him the present possession of a dignity next to that of the throne. But the young prince's head was too giddy, and his hand too feeble to wield with dignity the delegated sceptre. However fond of power, pleasure was the Prince's favourite pursuit; and the court was disturbed, and the country scandalised, by the number of fugitive amours and extravagant revels practised by him who should have set an example of order and regularity to the youth of the kingdom.

The license and impropriety of the Duke of Rothsay's conduct was the more reprehensible in the public view, that he was a married person; although some, over whom his youth, gaiety, grace, and good temper had obtained influence, were of opinion that an excuse for his libertinism might be found in

the circumstances of the marriage itself. They reminded each other that his nuptials were entirely conducted by his uncle, the Duke of Albany, by whose counsels the infirm and timid King was much governed at the time, and who had the character of managing the temper of his brother and sovereign, so as might be most injurious to the interests and prospects of the young heir. By Albany's machinations the hand of the heir apparent was in a manner put up to sale, as it was understood publicly that the nobleman in Scotland who should give the largest dower to his daughter might aspire to raise her to the bed of the Duke of Rothsay.

In the contest for preference which ensued, George Earl of Dunbar and March, who possessed, by himself or his vassals, a great part of the eastern frontier, was preferred to other competitors; and his daughter was, with the mutual goodwill of the young couple, actually contracted to the Duke of Rothsay.

But there remained a third party to be consulted, and that was no other than the tremendous Archibald Earl of Douglas, terrible alike from the extent of his lands, from the numerous offices and jurisdictions with which he was invested, and from his personal qualities of wisdom and valour, mingled with indomitable pride, and more than the feudal love of vengeance. The Earl was also nearly related to the throne, having married the eldest daughter of the reigning monarch.

After the espousals of the Duke of Rothsay with the Earl of March's daughter, Douglas, as if he had postponed his share in

the negotiation to show that it could not be concluded with any one but himself, entered the lists to break off the contract. He tendered a larger dower with his daughter Marjory than the Earl of March had proffered; and, secured by his own cupidity and fear of the Douglas, Albany exerted his influence with the timid monarch till he was prevailed upon to break the contract with the Earl of March, and wed his son to Marjory Douglas, a woman whom Rothsay could not love. No apology was offered to the Earl of March, excepting that the espousals betwixt the Prince and Elizabeth of Dunbar had not been approved by the States of Parliament, and that till such ratification the contract was liable to be broken off. The Earl deeply resented the wrong done to himself and his daughter, and was generally understood to study revenge, which his great influence on the English frontier was likely to place within his power.

In the mean time, the Duke of Rothsay, incensed at the sacrifice of his hand and his inclinations to this state intrigue, took his own mode of venting his displeasure, by neglecting his wife, contemning his formidable and dangerous father in law, and showing little respect to the authority of the King himself, and none whatever to the remonstrances of Albany, his uncle, whom he looked upon as his confirmed enemy.

Amid these internal dissensions of his family, which extended themselves through his councils and administration, introducing everywhere the baneful effects of uncertainty and disunion, the feeble monarch had for some time been supported by the

counsels of his queen, Annabella, a daughter of the noble house of Drummond, gifted with a depth of sagacity and firmness of mind which exercised some restraint over the levities of a son who respected her, and sustained on many occasions the wavering resolution of her royal husband. But after her death the imbecile sovereign resembled nothing so much as a vessel drifted from her anchors, and tossed about amidst contending currents. Abstractedly considered, Robert might be said to doat upon his son, to entertain respect and awe for the character of his brother Albany, so much more decisive than his own, to fear the Douglas with a terror which was almost instinctive; and to suspect the constancy of the bold but fickle Earl of March. But his feelings towards these various characters were so mixed and complicated, that from time to time they showed entirely different from what they really were; and according to the interest which had been last exerted over his flexible mind, the King would change from an indulgent to a strict and even cruel father, from a confiding to a jealous brother, or from a benignant and bountiful to a grasping and encroaching sovereign. Like the chameleon, his feeble mind reflected the colour of that firmer character upon which at the time he reposed for counsel and assistance. And when he disused the advice of one of his family, and employed the counsel of another, it was no unwonted thing to see a total change of measures, equally disrespectful to the character of the King and dangerous to the safety of the state.

It followed as a matter of course that the clergy of the

Catholic Church acquired influence over a man whose intentions were so excellent, but whose resolutions were so infirm. Robert was haunted, not only with a due sense of the errors he had really committed, but with the tormenting apprehensions of those peccadilloes which beset a superstitious and timid mind. It is scarce necessary, therefore, to add, that the churchmen of various descriptions had no small influence over this easy tempered prince, though, indeed, theirs was, at that period, an influence from which few or none escaped, however resolute and firm of purpose in affairs of a temporal character. We now return from this long digression, without which what we have to relate could not perhaps have been well understood.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «Литрес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на Литрес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.