

JOHN GALT

RINGAN GILHAIZE, OR,
THE COVENANTERS

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Содержание

INTRODUCTION	4
CHAPTER I	17
CHAPTER II	24
CHAPTER III	32
CHAPTER IV	39
CHAPTER V	47
CHAPTER VI	55
CHAPTER VII	62
CHAPTER VIII	68
CHAPTER IX	75
CHAPTER X	82
CHAPTER XI	89
CHAPTER XII	95
CHAPTER XIII	101
CHAPTER XIV	108
CHAPTER XV	115
CHAPTER XVI	121
CHAPTER XVII	129
CHAPTER XVIII	136
CHAPTER XIX	144
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	146

John Galt Ringan Gilhaize, or, The Covenanters

INTRODUCTION

A NEGLECTED MASTERPIECE

There have, of course, been many men of genius who have united with great laxity and waywardness in their lives a high and perfect respect for their art; but instances of the directly contrary practice are much rarer, and among these there is probably none more prominent than that of the author of *Ringan Gilhaize*. Gifted by nature with a faculty which was at once brilliant, powerful and genial, he led an industrious life, the upright and generally exemplary character of which has never for a moment been called in question. But, in the sphere of his art, it is as undeniable as unaccountable that he cared little or nothing to do his best. The haps or whims of the moment seem, indeed, to have governed his production with an influence as of stars malign or fortunate. Furthermore, we know that the profession of authorship – that most distinguished of all professions, as,

speaking in sober sadness without arrogance, we cannot but be bold to call it – that profession from which he was himself so well equipt to derive honour – was held by him in low esteem. So that, speaking of the time of his residence in Upper Canada, he thinks no shame to observe that he did *then* consider himself qualified to do something more useful than "stringing blethers¹ into rhyme," or "writing 'clishmaclavers' in a closet." And again says he, "to tell the truth, I have sometimes felt a little shamefaced in thinking myself so much an author, in consequence of the estimation in which I view the profession of book-making in general. A mere literary man – an author by profession – stands low in my opinion." Such remarks as these from a man of commanding literary talent are the reverse of pleasant reading. But let us deal with the speaker, as we would ourselves be dealt by – mercifully, and regard these petulant utterances as a mere expression of bitterness or perversity in one much tried and sorely disappointed. Even so, the fact remains that the sum of Galt's immense and varied production exhibits inequalities of execution for which only carelessness or contempt in the worker for his task can adequately account. We shall presently have occasion to speak of him in his relation to the great contemporary writer to whose life and work his own work and life present so many interesting points of similarity and diversity; but we may here note that, in the glaringly disparate character of his output, the author of *The Provost* is in absolute contrast to the author

¹ Scots expletives, signifying different varieties of nonsense.

of *The Antiquary*. For, if Scott's work viewed as a whole be rarely of the very finest literary quality, its evenness within its own limits is on the other hand very striking indeed. For, of his twenty-seven novels, there are perhaps but three which fall perceptibly below the general level of excellence; whilst probably any one of at least as many as six or eight might by a quorum of competent judges be selected as the best of all. And hence, where in the case of other authors we are called on to read this masterpiece or those specimens, and, having done so, are held to have acquitted ourselves, in the case of Scott we cannot feel that we have done our duty till we have read through the *Waverley Novels*. How entirely different is it with Galt – where we find *The Omen* occupying one shelf with *The Radical*, *The Annals of the Parish* catalogued with *Lawrie Todd*, and *The Spaewife* side by side with *The Covenanters*! And obviously it is in this inequality in its author's work – in the magnitude, that is, of the rubbish-heap in which he chose to secrete his jewels – that the explanation of the neglect, if not rather oblivion, into which the work last-named has fallen can alone be sought and found. For, once in the threescore years of his busy life, Galt did his best, consistently and on a large scale, with the pen; and that once was in the novel of *Ringan Gilhaize, or the Covenanters*. What is more – however lamentably he may appear in general to lack the faculty of self-criticism – he knew when he had done his best, and among all his books this one remained his favourite. But a man has to pay for artistic as he has for moral delinquencies, and it would seem

that the penalty of many a careless tome has been exacted in the obscuration of one of the finest and truest of historical romances in our language.² A word or two as to the genesis and character of the book which we have ventured thus to describe may not be out of place as preface to our endeavour to obtain for it a second hearing.

It was in the year 1822 or 1823 that Galt, aged then about forty-three, and having already seen much of life in various countries and capacities, settled at Esk Grove, Musselburgh, to apply himself to writing historical fiction. He was for the moment elated – carried away, perhaps, for his temper was enthusiastic even to a fault – by the recent and deserved success of his novels of Scottish manners, *Sir Andrew Wylie* and *The Entail*; and the soaring idea appears to have entered his head of deliberately attempting to rival Scott in the very field which "the Wizard" had made peculiarly his own. From the point of view of prudence, though not from that of art or of sport, this enterprise was a mistake. For an author, serving as he does the public, shows no more than common sense if he endeavour to study, in the proper degree, the idiosyncrasies of that employer on whose favour his reputation, nay, perhaps the payment of his butcher's bill, depends. And it has long been observed that when the public has once made up its mind that one man is supreme in his own line, it has generally little attention to spare for those who seek to have it

² Dismissed in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, *sub voce* Galt, as one of "three forgotten novels."

reconsider its decision. (This, by the way, was amply illustrated in the sequel of the very case now under discussion.) But the names of Galt and Prudence do not naturally go together: indeed, the two were never well or for any length of time acquainted. At Esk Grove, either in earnest, or, as seems more likely, in banter of the architectural incongruities of Abbotsford, Galt announced his intention of building a "veritable fortress," exactly in the fashion of the oldest times of rude warfare. *En attendant*, he worked hard with his pen, the first fruits of his industry appearing in the novel which is here reprinted after some six-and-seventy years.

What of the merits of this first attempt in a line that was new to him? In the first place, he had at least been guided in his choice of subject by an unerring historical instinct. For, surpassingly rich as is Scottish history in the elements both of picturesque and romantic incident and of wild and fascinating character, it is none the less a fact that there is but one period during which that history rises to the dignity of a really wide and permanent interest. And that period is of course the century, or century and a half, of the national struggle for religious liberty. It is not necessary to remind the reader that upon that struggle, and on those who maintained it, much has been written as well in the terms of indiscriminating eulogy as in those of uncomprehending condemnation. Nor is it more to the purpose to add that the truth lies neither entirely on one side nor the other. For – as in the earlier struggle for political independence, and, indeed, more or less in all other great national

movements – the motives of most of those who took part were mixed, and varied with the individual. Thus it is undeniable that in the breast of many a reforming Scottish laird of the sixteenth century, mistrust of Rome was a subordinate feeling to the covetousness excited by the sight of extensive and well-cultivated Church lands; whilst, again, there are, on the other hand, probably few persons now in existence who would be prepared to justify the intolerance embodied even by the martyr Guthrie in his celebrated Remonstrance – to say nothing of that which made the mere hearing of the mass, under certain circumstances, a capital offence. These things are, however, more or less accidental, and supply no criterion by which the true character of the reforming movement may be tested; for during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, the very nature of tolerance, if understood by one here and there, was beyond the comprehension of the masses of the people. And yet we believe that, notwithstanding the intolerant and implacable spirit too often manifested by the Covenanters, no candid reader will read this book to the end without acknowledging (what is, indeed, the truth) that the soul of the Covenanting movement was a great and noble one. And that soul we here find personified in the younger Gilhaize – a type, if there be one in literature, of the Covenanter of the best kind.

For, whatever may have been the temper of his associates in the aggregate, the hero of the book holds the scales between the rival parties with admirable evenness – and this notwithstanding

the strong bias of his temper and upbringing. Indeed, until the time when he has become, not metaphorically, but literally maddened by the wrongs and outrages to which he has been subjected, the book, in so far as it constitutes an expression of his personal sentiments, is a perfect homily on fairness. And how much such fairness has to do with the winning and retaining of sympathy, perhaps only a modern reader is qualified to say. Gifted with the saving graces of humour and of fellow-feeling, the supposed annalist of our chronicle is no less prepared to make allowance for the faults of the other side than to acknowledge the shortcomings of his own. In fact he is the pattern of a spirit at once upright, humble, and self-respecting, whose ruling passion is an earnest piety, and who asks no more of those set over him than freedom to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience. And for this little boon, so harshly and unjustly withheld, we see him called upon to sacrifice home, kindred and estate, to know his wife and daughters given over to death and worse than death, and finally to surrender his liberty and his last remaining child. Unless pity and terror in a master's hand have lost their power, surely this spectacle is a moving one! Nor must we forget that, even in the culminating scene of the tragedy – where Ringan makes his bold and inspired oration at the meeting of the Cameronian leaders with Renwick in a dell near Lasswade – the hero, for all his wrongs, remains unembittered, and retains unimpaired the gentleness and the manliness which are his characteristics. That there were such men as this among

the Covenanters, or that they constituted the salt which gave its savour to the movement, we are forbidden to doubt. But, saving in the pages which follow, we know not where to seek for the ideal presentment of one such. This is what we mean by saying, as we have said above, that Galt has in this romance laid bare the soul of the Covenanting movement. And this, we may add, is what Scott in *Old Mortality* most signally failed to do. For in that novel – in place of Galt's subtle and penetrating analysis of the motives which animated the Covenanters nobly to dare and nobly to endure – we find the author content himself with using the characteristics and the disturbances of the time for the mere purpose of providing incident and adventure, and a strong local colour for his puppets – in a word, for the most ordinary and conventional purposes of the romantic novelist. Nor is this the only instance of such psychological obtuseness in his work. That, in spite of this initial and damning defect, he does succeed in producing a fine novel, is but one more proof of the amazing fecundity of his genius. None the less does the fact remain that it is a novel, so to speak, without a soul – that, so far from being of the essence of the Covenant, the Burleys, Mucklewraths, Mauses and Macbrairs are but so many of its accidents, and that thus the main issues of the historical drama are not involved in the romance. In other words, it is as though the tragedy of *Hamlet* had been performed with great skill and *éclat*, only without the appearance of the Prince of Denmark upon the stage. And thus, if the historical novel is to play a part of any dignity in our

literature, we may safely predict that it is upon the stock here supplied by Galt, rather than upon that supplied by Scott in *Old Mortality*, that it will have to be grafted.

Having now assigned to our author the credit due to him for his choice and general treatment of a fine subject, it remains to touch briefly upon the technical skill which he has brought to bear upon the handling of its details. By resorting, then, to an ingenious and yet perfectly natural and legitimate device, he has contrived to extend his "household memorial" (for it is thus that he describes the story) so as to make it embrace the entire period of the religious struggle – from its inception under the regency of Marie of Lorraine to its close, or practical close, under the rule of the enlightened and tolerant William of Orange, – a period in all of full one hundred and thirty years. For the narrative, opening with the martyrdom of Walter Mill at St Andrews in 1558, is continued to the death of Claverhouse at Killiecrankie in 1689. And by this means the varying phases of the struggle are traced almost step by step, through the preachings of John Knox and the early image-breaking outrages, to the comparative lull of the reign of James the First of England, and thence again from the renewed exasperating of opposition by the shifty and infatuated Martyr King to the climax of the "Killing Time" under the younger of his sons. Few incidents of really primary or representative importance are omitted, and the skill shown by the Author in stringing the pearls of history upon the thread of his narrative is not the least of the merits he displays. But, as

should be in a novel, the historical never overweighs the human or fictitious interest, but is always properly subordinated to it.

We have spoken elsewhere³ of Galt the novelist as being "in advance of his time" – a facile phrase which it is expedient to use with due reserve and after due consideration. But the fact that the author with whose work we are instinctively impelled to compare the novel of *Ringan Gilhaize* is the great chief of the French "Naturalistic" School would appear, at least so far, to support that characterisation. It is, of course, undeniable that, at the outset, there confront us several striking points of contrast or divergence between the two authors. For example, of that *triste amour du laid*, which, with its concomitants, was for so long, and perhaps is even yet, regarded by the general public as Zola's one prominent characteristic – of this, Galt has absolutely nothing, his preoccupation being uniformly with beauty in one form or another, whether of matter or of spirit. With him, a gloom which, did we not fear to be less than just to Galt we might denominate Byronic, fills perhaps the place of Zola's pessimism. Next, of that misbegotten passion for the painter's brush which has vitiated so much of modern French writing, and of which Zola in inferior works has even more than his due share, the novel of *Ringan Gilhaize* shows equally no trace. On the contrary, its brief descriptive passages, of which it is noticeable how many are nocturnal or crepuscular, or paint effects of mist or rain-cloud – these might serve as models, at once in their breadth of

³ In "The *Blackwood Group*": Famous Scots' Series; Essay on Galt.

execution, their aptness and their pregnancy, or quality of moral suggestiveness, of what descriptions in literature should be. How different from those laboured outlines, laboriously filled in, of such a piece of writing as *La Curée*!

So much, then, for the divergence of the two authors; and now as to their relationship. It is, perhaps, in their power of putting their sense of a multitude before the reader, of exhibiting the passions by which that multitude is animated, and of tracing the phases and fluctuations of that passion, that the Frenchman or Italian and the Scot come first and most strikingly together. Witness in this book the scene of the advance of the congregations to the trial of the Ministers, or that of the return of the Reformer, Knox, to Scotland. This of itself, however, is not much; nor should we have felt justified in drawing special attention to it, but for the fact that it seems to us to be an outward and visible sign of what is a vital, perhaps *the* vital characteristic of either writer – or, at least, that of Galt in this book, and of Zola in his masterwork. It is associated, then, as we read it, with a desire to rise in art above the limitation of the merely individual, and the springs of this desire we take to lie in that noble and abounding pity which is the dominant passion of either author, or of either book. In either case it is an "objective" or artistic pity, called into being by the spectacle of human suffering as specific as it is intolerable to contemplate. Only that with Galt it is felt for a particular historical group of men, with Zola for a particular section of his contemporaries.

And from this characteristic there naturally results a gain of the quality of artistic grandeur in the books. For it is less the fortunes of the individual colliers than the Rights of Labour and their chances of recognition which form the true theme of *Germinal*; whilst in *Ringan Gilhaize* we are called to gaze upon nothing less than the grandiose spectacle of a nation in death-grips with a race of mansworn sovereigns. Hence, in either case, the individual characters, measured by the greatness of the issues at stake, sink into comparative insignificance. But this very insignificance serves to illustrate a fundamental truth. For, to quote the words of a great modern thinker, "This is the law which governs humanity: an immense prodigality in regard to the mere individual, a contemptuous heaping together of the unit of human life." He continues, "I can picture to myself the artificer letting great quantities of his material go to waste – undisturbed, indeed, although three parts of it fall useless to the ground. For it is the fate of the vast majority of the human race to serve as a mere floor-cloth on which Destiny may celebrate her revel, or, rather, to contribute towards the making up of one of those numerous persons who were known to the classical drama as the Chorus."⁴ Impressively to exhibit this truth in art is of itself to accomplish much; but in the infinite pathos of the individual lot there is a converse side to every great drama too, and to this neither of our writers is insensible. Hence it is that, against the shadowy curtain or background formed by

⁴ Ernest Renan in *L'Avenir de la Science*.

the crowded and suffering masses of humanity, are relieved and detached such tragic silhouettes as those of Ringan and of La Maheude. In the nature of the long-drawn unrelenting ordeal to which each of these is subjected they are identical; for both of them are rich only in human affection, and of this both live to see themselves entirely denuded. Gilhaize, who is raised above the struggle for mere daily bread, is animated by a spiritual and intellectual passion which would have been altogether beyond the comprehension of the miner's wife of Montsou; but that he is on that account the nobler or more interesting figure of the two, we do not take upon us to say. Neither, of course, must we be understood to insist unduly on the few points of resemblance in two books which, after all, are in so many respects radically unlike.

There is a lighter side to Galt's book, too, and this is seen principally, ere the stress of the action has become intense, in the adventures of the astute Michael Gilhaize. At this point in his narrative it is probably with Stevenson that Galt suggests comparison, nor is it any disparagement to the delightful author of *Kidnapped* and *Catriona* to say that the best of his work is to the best of Galt's as a clever boy's to that of a clever man. For whilst Galt presents incident with all, or nearly all, the charm of Stevenson, he is master, besides, of an adult psychology to which the other, in his short life, never attained.

GEORGE DOUGLAS.

Springwood Park, August 1899.

CHAPTER I

It is a thing past all contesting, that, in the Reformation, there was a spirit of far greater carnality among the champions of the cause than among those who in later times so courageously, under the Lord, upheld the unspotted banners of the Covenant. This I speak of from the remembrance of many aged persons, who either themselves bore a part in that war with the worshippers of the Beast and his Image, or who had heard their fathers tell of the heart and mind wherewith it was carried on, and could thence, with the helps of their own knowledge, discern the spiritual and hallowed difference. But, as I intend mainly to bear witness to those passages of the late bloody persecution in which I was myself both a soldier and a sufferer, it will not become me to brag of our motives and intents, as higher and holier than those of the great elder Worthies of "the Congregation." At the same time it is needful that I should rehearse as much of what happened in the troubles of the Reformation as, in its effects and influences, worked upon the issues of my own life. For my father's father was out in the raids of that tempestuous season, and it was by him, and from the stories he was wont to tell of what the Government did when drunken with the sorceries of the gorgeous Roman harlot, and rampaging with the wrath of Moloch and of Belial, it trampled on the hearts and thought to devour the souls of the subjects that I first was taught to feel,

know and understand the divine right of resistance.

He was come of a stock of bein burghers in Lithgow; but his father having a profitable traffic in saddle-irons and bridle-rings among the gallants of the court, and being moreover a man who took little heed of the truths of religion, he continued with his wife in the delusions of the papistical idolatry till the last, by which my grandfather's young soul was put in great jeopardy. For the monks of that time were eager to get into their clutches such men-children as appeared to be gifted with any peculiar gift, in order to rear them for stoops and posts to sustain their Babylon, in the tower and structure whereof many rents and cracks were daily kithing.

The Dominican friars, who had a rich howf in the town, seeing that my grandfather was a shrewd and sharp child, of a comely complexion, and possessing a studious observance, were fain to wile him into their power; but he was happily preserved from all their snares and devices in a manner that shows how wonderfully the Lord worketh out the purposes of His will, by ways and means of which no man can fathom the depth of the mysteries.

Besides his traffic in the polished garniture of horse-gear, my grandfather's father was also a ferrier, and enjoyed a far-spread repute for his skill in the maladies of horses; by which, and as he dwelt near the palace-yett, on the south side of the street, fornent the grand fountain-well, his smiddy was the common haunt of the serving-men belonging to the nobles frequenting the court, and as often as any newcomers to the palace were observed in

the town, some of the monks and friars belonging to the different convents were sure to come to the smiddy to converse with their grooms and to hear the news, which were all of the controversies raging between the priesthood and the people.

My grandfather was then a little boy, but he thirsted to hear their conversations, and many a time, as he was wont to tell, has his very heart been raspet to the quick by the cruel comments in which those cormorants of idolatry indulged themselves with respect to the brave spirit of the reformers; and he rejoiced when any retainers of the protestant lords quarrelled with them, and dealt back to them as hard names as the odious epithets with which the hot-fed friars reviled the pious challengers of the papal iniquities. Thus it was, in the green years of his childhood, that the same sanctified spirit was poured out upon him, which roused so many of the true and faithful to resist and repel the attempt to quench the relighted lamps of the Gospel, preparing his young courage to engage in those great first trials and strong tasks of the Lord.

The tidings and the bickerings to which he was a hearer in the smiddy, he was in the practice of relating to his companions, by which it came to pass that, it might in a manner be said, all the boys in the town were leagued in spirit with the reformers, and the consequences were not long of ripening.

In those days there was a popish saint, one St Michael, that was held in wonderful love and adoration by all the ranks and hierarchies of the ecclesiastical locust then in Lithgow; indeed,

for that matter, they ascribed to him power and dominion over the whole town, lauding and worshipping him as their special god and protector. And upon a certain day of the year they were wont to make a great pageant and revel in honour of this supposed saint, and to come forth from their cloisters with banners, and with censers burning incense, shouting and singing paternosters in praise of this their Dagon, walking in procession from kirk to kirk, as if they were celebrating the triumph of some mighty conqueror.

This annual abomination happening to take place shortly after the martyrdom of that true saint and gospel preacher Mr George Wishart, and while kirk and quire were resounding, to the great indignation of all Christians, with lamentations for the well-earned death of the cruel Cardinal Beaton, his ravenous persecutor, the monks and friars received but little homage as they passed along triumphing, though the streets were, as usual, filled with the multitude to see their fine show. They suffered, however, no molestation nor contempt till they were passing the Earl of Angus' house, on the outside stair of which my grandfather, with some two or three score of other innocent children, was standing; and even there they might, perhaps, have been suffered to go by scaithless, but for an accident that befel the bearer of a banner, on which was depicted a blasphemous type of the Holy Ghost in the shape and lineaments of a cushy-doo.

It chanced that the bearer of this blazon of iniquity was a particular fat monk, of an arrogant nature, with the crimson

complexion of surfeit and constipation, who for many causes and reasons was held in greater aversion than all the rest, especially by the boys, that never lost an opportunity of making him a scoff and a scorn; and it so fell out, as he was coming proudly along, turning his Babylonish banner to pleasure the women at the windows, to whom he kept nodding and winking as he passed, that his foot slipped and down he fell as it were with a gladder, at which all the thoughtless innocents on the Earl of Angus' stair set up a loud shout of triumphant laughter, and from less to more began to hoot and yell at the whole pageant, and to pelt some of the performers with unsavoury missiles.

This, by those inordinate ministers of oppression, was deemed a horrible sacrilege, and the parents of all the poor children were obligated to give them up to punishment, of which none suffered more than did my grandfather, who was not only persecuted with stripes till his loins were black and blue, but cast into a dungeon in the Blackfriars' den, where for three days and three nights he was allowed no sustenance but gnawed crusts and foul water. The stripes and terrors of the oppressor are, however, the seeds which Providence sows in its mercy to grow into the means that shall work his own overthrow.

The persecutions which from that day the monks waged, in their conclaves of sloth and sosherie, against the children of the town, denouncing them to their parents as worms of the great serpent and heirs of perdition, only served to make their young spirits burn fiercer. As their joints hardened and their

sinews were knit, their hearts grew manful, and yearned, as my grandfather said, with the zealous longings of a righteous revenge, to sweep them away from the land as with a whirlwind.

After enduring for several years great affliction in his father's house from his mother, a termagant woman, who was entirely under the dominion of her confessor, my grandfather entered into a paction with two other young lads to quit their homes for ever, and to enter the service of some of those pious noblemen who were then active in procuring adherents to the protestant cause, as set forth in the first covenant. Accordingly, one morning in the spring of 1558, they bade adieu to their fathers' doors, and set forward on foot towards Edinburgh.

"We had light hearts," said my grandfather, "for our trust was in Heaven; we had girded ourselves for a holy enterprise, and the confidence of our souls broke forth into songs of battle, the melodious breathings of that unison of spirit which is alone known to the soldiers of the great Captain of Salvation."

About noon they arrived at the Cross of Edinburgh, where they found a crowd assembled round the Luckenbooths, waiting for the breaking up of the States, which were then deliberating anent the proposal from the French king that the Prince Dolphin, his son, should marry our young queen, the fair and faulty Mary, whose doleful captivity and woful end scarcely expiated the sins and sorrows that she caused to her ill-used and poor misgoverned native realm of Scotland.

While they were standing in this crowd, my grandfather

happened to see one Icener Cunningham, a servant in the household of the Earl of Glencairn, and having some acquaintance of the man before at Lithgow, he went towards him, and after some common talk, told on what errand he and his two companions had come to Edinburgh. It was in consequence agreed between them that this Icener should speak to his master concerning them, the which he did as soon as my Lord came out from the Parliament; and the Earl was so well pleased with the looks of the three young men that he retained them for his service on the spot, and they were conducted by Icener Cunningham home to his Lordship's lodgings in St Mary's Wynd.

Thus was my grandfather enlisted into the cause of the Lords of the Congregation, and in the service of that great champion of the Reformation, the renowned, valiant and pious Earl of Glencairn, he saw many of those things, the recital of which kindled my young mind to flame up with no less ardour than his against the cruel attempt that was made, in our own day and generation, to load the neck of Scotland with the grievous chains of prelatiic tyranny.

CHAPTER II

The Earl of Glencairn, having much to do with the other Lords of the Congregation, did not come to his lodging till late in the afternoon, when, as soon as he had passed into his privy chamber, he sent for his three new men, and entered into some conversation with them concerning what the people at Lithgow said and thought of the Queen-dowager's government, and the proceedings at that time afoot on behalf of the reformed religion. But my grandfather jealous that in this he was less swayed by the expectation of gathering knowledge from them, than by a wish to inspect their discretion and capacities; for, after conversing with them for the space of half an hour or thereby, he dismissed them courteously from his presence, without intimating that he had any special service for them to perform.

One evening as the Earl sat alone at supper, he ordered my grandfather to be brought again before him, and desired him to be cup-bearer for that night. In this situation, as my grandfather stood holding the chalice and flagon at his left elbow, the Earl, as was his wonted custom with such of the household as he from time to time so honoured, entered into familiar conversation with him; and when the servitude and homages of the supper were over, and the servants were removing the plate and trenchers, he signified, by a look and a whisper, that he wished him to linger

in the room till after they were gone.

"Gilhaize," said he, when the serving-men had retired, and they were by themselves, "I am well content with your prudence, and therefore, before you are known to belong to my train, I would send you on a confidential errand, for which you must be ready to set forth this very night."

My grandfather made no reply in words to this mark of trust, but bowed his head in token of his obedience to the commands of the Earl.

"I need not tell you," resumed his master, "that among the friends of the reformed cause there are some for policy and many for gain, and that our adversaries, knowing this, leave no device or stratagem untried to sow sedition among the Lords and Leaders of the Congregation. This very day the Earl of Argyle has received a mealy-mouthed letter from that dissolute papist, the Archbishop of St Andrews, entreating him, with many sweet words, concerning the ancient friendship subsisting between their families, to banish from his protection that good and pious proselyte, Douglas, his chaplain, evidently presuming, from the easy temper of the aged Earl, that he may be wrought into compliance. But Argyle is an honest man, and is this night to return, by the Archbishop's messenger and kinsman, Sir David Hamilton, a fitting and proper reply. It is not, however, to be thought that this attempt to tamper with Argyle is the sole trial which the treacherous priest is at this time making to breed distrust and dissension among us, though as yet we have heard

of none other. Now, Gilhaize, what I wish you to do, and I think you can do it well, is to throw yourself in Sir David's way, and, by hook or crook, get with him to St Andrews, and there try by all expedient means to gain a knowledge of what the Archbishop is at this time plotting – for plotting we are assured from this symptom he is – and it is needful to the cause of Christ that his wiles should be circumvented."

In saying these words the Earl rose, and, taking a key from his belt, opened a coffer that stood in the corner of the room, and took out two pieces of gold, which he delivered to my grandfather, to bear the expenses of his journey.

"I give you, Gilhaize," said he, "no farther instructions; for, unless I am mistaken in my man, you lack no better guide than your own discernment. So God be with you, and His blessing prosper the undertaking."

My grandfather was much moved at being so trusted, and doubted in his own breast if he was qualified for the duty which his master had thus put upon him. Nevertheless he took heart from the Earl's confidence, and, without saying anything either to his two companions or to Icener Cunningham, he immediately, on parting from his master, left the house, leaving his absence to be accounted for to the servants according to his lord's pleasure.

Having been several times on errands of his father in Edinburgh before, he was not ill-acquainted with the town, and the moon being up, he had no difficulty in finding his way to Habby Bridle's, a noted stabler's at the foot of Leith Wynd, nigh

the mouth of the North Loch, where gallants and other travellers of gentle condition commonly put up their horses. There he thought it was likely Sir David Hamilton had stabled his steed, and he divined that, by going thither, he would learn whether that knight had set forward to Fife, or when he was expected so to do; the which movement, he always said, was nothing short of an instinct from Heaven; for just on entering the stabler's yard, a groom came shouting to the hostler to get Sir David Hamilton's horses saddled outright, as his master was coming.

Thus, without the exposure of any inquiry, he gained the tidings that he wanted, and with what speed he could put into his heels, he went forward to the pier of Leith, where he found a bark, with many passengers on board, ready to set sail for Kirkcaldy, waiting only for the arrival of Sir David, to whom, as the Archbishop's kinsman, the boatmen were fain to pretend a great outward respect; but many a bitter ban, my grandfather said, they gave him for taigling them so long, while wind and tide both served – all which was proof and evidence how much the hearts of the common people were then alienated from the papistical churchmen.

Sir David having arrived, and his horses being taken aboard, the bark set sail, and about daybreak next morning she came to anchor at Kirkcaldy. During the voyage, my grandfather, who was of a mild and comely aspect, observed that the knight was more affable towards him than to the lave of the passengers, the most part of whom were coopers going to Dundee to prepare for

the summer fishing. Among them was one Patrick Girdwood, the deacon of the craft, a most comical character, so vogie of his honours and dignities in the town council that he could not get the knight told often enough what a load aboon the burden he had in keeping a' things douce and in right regulation among the bailies. But Sir David, fashed at his clatter, and to be quit of him, came across the vessel and began to talk to my grandfather, although, by his apparel, he was no meet companion for one of a knight's degree.

It happened that Sir David was pleased with his conversation, which was not to be wondered at, for in his old age, when I knew him, he was a man of a most enticing mildness of manner, and withal so discreet in his sentences that he could not be heard without begetting respect for his observance and judgment. So out of the vanity of that vogie tod of the town council was a mean thus made by Providence to further the ends and objects of the Reformation in so far as my grandfather was concerned; for the knight took a liking to him, and being told, as it was expedient to give a reason for his journey to St Andrews, that he was going thither to work as a ferrier, Sir David promised him not only his own countenance, but to commend him to the Archbishop.

There was at that time in Kirkcaldy one Tobit Balmutto, a horse-setter, of whom my grandfather had some knowledge by report. This Tobit being much resorted to by the courtiers going to and coming from Falkland, and well known to their serving-men, who were wont to speak of him in the smiddy at Lithgow as

a zealous reformer – chiefly, as the prodigals among them used to jeer and say, because the priests and friars in their journeyings between St Andrews and Edinburgh took the use of his beasts without paying for them, giving him only their feckless benisons instead of white money.

To this man my grandfather resolved to apply for a horse, and such a one, if possible, as would be able to carry him as fast as Sir David Hamilton's. Accordingly, on getting to the land, he inquired for Tobit Balmutto, and several of his striplings and hostlers being on the shore, having, on seeing the bark arrive, come down to look out for travellers that might want horses, he was conducted by one of them to their employer, whom he found an elderly man of the corpulent order, sitting in an elbow-chair by the fireside, toasting an oaten bannock on a pair of tormentors, with a blue puddock-stool bonnet on his head, and his grey hose undrawn up, whereby his hairy legs were bare, showing a power and girth such as my grandfather had seen few like before, testifying to what had been the deadly strength of their possessor in his younger years. He was thought to have been an off-gett of the Boswells of Balmutto.

When he had made known his want to Tobit, and that he was in a manner obligated to be at St Andrews as soon as Sir David Hamilton, the horse-setter withdrew the bannock from before the ribs, and seeing it somewhat scowthert and blackent on the one cheek, he took it off the tormentors and scraped it with them, and blew away the brown burning before he made any response;

then he turned round to my grandfather, and looking at him with the tail of his eye from aneath his broad bonnet, said, —

"Then ye're no in the service of his Grace, my Lord the Archbishop? And yet, frien', I think na ye're just a peer to Sir Davie, that you need to ettle at coping with his braw mare, Skelp-the-dub, whilk I selt to him mysel'; but the de'il a bawbee hae I yet han'let o' the price; howsever, that's neither here nor there, a day of reckoning will come at last."

My grandfather assured Tobit Balmutto it was indeed very true he was not in the service of the Archbishop, and that he would not have been so instant about getting to St Andrews with the knight had he not a dread and fear that Sir David was the bearer of something that might be sore news to the flock o' Christ, and he was fain to be there as soon as him to speak in time of what he jealoused, that any of those in the town who stood within the reverence of the Archbishop's aversion, on account of their religion, might get an inkling and provide for themselves.

"If that's your errand," said the horse-setter, "ye s'all hae the swiftest foot in my aught to help you on, and I redde you no to spare the spur, for I'm troubled to think ye may be owre late — Satan, or they lie upon him, has been heating his cauldrons yonder for a brewing, and the Archbishop's thrang providing the malt. Nae farther gane than yesterday, auld worthy Mr Mill of Lunan, being discovered hidden in a kiln at Dysart, was ta'en, they say, in a cart, like a malefactor, by twa uncircumcised loons, servitors to his Grace, and it's thought it will go hard wi' him on

account of his great godliness; so mak what haste ye dow, and the Lord put mettle in the beast that bears you."

With that Tobit Balmutto ordered the lad who brought my grandfather to the house to saddle a horse that he called Spunkie; and in a trice he was mounted and on the road after Sir David, whom he overtook notwithstanding the spirit of his mare, Skelp-the-dub, before he had cleared the town of Pathhead, and they travelled onward at a brisk trot together, the knight waxing more and more pleased with his companion, in so much that by the time they had reached Cupar, where they stopped to corn, he lamented that a young man of his parts should think of following the slavery of a ferrier's life, when he might rise to trusts and fortune in the house of some of the great men of the time, kindly offering to procure for him, on their arrival at St Andrews, the favour and patronage of his kinsman, the Archbishop.

CHAPTER III

It was the afternoon when my grandfather and Sir David Hamilton came in sight of St Andrews, and the day being loun and bright, the sky clear, and the sea calm, he told me that when he saw the many lofty spires and towers and glittering pinnacles of the town rising before him, he verily thought he was approaching the city of Jerusalem, so grand and glorious was the apparition which they made in the sunshine, and he approached the barricaded gate with a strange movement of awe and wonder rushing through the depths of his spirit.

They, however, entered not into the city at that time, but, passing along the wall leftward, came to a road which led to the gate of the castle where the Archbishop then dwelt; and as they were approaching towards it, Sir David pointed out the window where Cardinal Beaton sat in the pomp of his scarlet and fine linen to witness the heretic Wishart, as the knight called that holy man, burnt for his sins and abominations.

My grandfather, on hearing this, drew his bridle in, and falling behind Sir David, raised his cap in reverence and in sorrow at the thought of passing over the ground that had been so hallowed by martyrdom, but he said nothing, for he knew that his thoughts were full of offence to those who were wrapt in the errors and delusions of popery like Sir David Hamilton; and, moreover, he had thanked the Lord thrice in the course of their journey

for the favour which it had pleased Him he should find in the sight of the kinsman of so great an adversary to the truth as was the Archbishop of St Andrews, whose treasons and treacheries against the Church of Christ he was then travelling to discover and waylay.

On reaching the castle-yett they alighted; my grandfather, springing lightly from the saddle, took hold of Sir David's mare by the bridle-rings, while the knight went forward, and whispered something concerning his Grace to a stalwart, hard-favoured, grey-haired man-at-arms, that stood warder of the port, leaning on his sword, the blade of whilk could not be shorter than an ell. What answer he got was brief, the ancient warrior pointing at the same time with his right hand towards a certain part of the city, and giving a Belial smile of significance; whereupon Sir David turned round without going into the court of the castle, and bidding my grandfather give the man the beasts and follow, which he did, they walked together under the town wall towards the east till they came to a narrow sallyport in the rampart, wherewith the priory and cathedral had of old been fenced about with turrets and bastions of great strength against the lawless kerns of the Highlands, and especially the ships of the English, who have in all ages been of a nature gleg and glad to mulct and molest the sea-harbour towns of Scotland.

On coming to the sallyport, Sir David chapped with his whip twice, and from within a wicket was opened in the doors, ribbed with iron stainchers on the outside, and a man with the sound

of corpulency in his voice looked through and inquired what they wanted. Seeing, however, who it was that had knocked, he forthwith drew the bar and allowed them to enter, which was into a pleasant policy adorned with jonquils and jelly-flowers, and all manner of blooming and odoriferous plants, most voluptuous to the smell and ravishing to behold, the scents and fragrances whereof smote my grandfather for a time, as he said, with the very anguish of delight. But, on looking behind to see who had given them admittance, he was astounded when, instead of an armed and mailed soldier, as he had thought the drumly-voiced sentinel there placed was, he saw a large, elderly monk, sitting on a bench with a broken pasty smoking on a platter beside him, and a Rotterdam greybeard jug standing by, no doubt plenished with cordial drink.

Sir David held no parlance with the feeding friar, but going straight up the walk to the door of a lodging, to the which this was the parterre and garden, he laid his hand on the sneck, and opening it, bade my grandfather come in.

They then went along the trance towards an open room, and on entering it they met a fair damsel in the garb of a handmaid, to whom the knight spoke in familiarity, and kittling her under the chin, made her giggle in a wanton manner. By her he was informed that the Archbishop was in the inner chamber at dinner with her mistress, upon which he desired my grandfather to sit down, while he went ben to his Grace.

The room where my grandfather took his seat was parted from

the inner chamber, in which the Archbishop and his lemene were at their festivities, by an arras partition, so that he could hear all that passed within, and the first words his Grace said on his kinsman going ben was, —

"Aweel, Davie, and what says that auld doddard Argyle, will he send me the apostate to mak a benfire?"

"He has sent your Grace a letter," replied Sir David, "wherein he told me he had expounded the reasons and causes of his protecting Douglas, hoping your Grace will approve the same."

"Approve heresy and reprobacy!" exclaimed the Archbishop; "but gi'e me the letter, and sit ye down, Davie. Mistress Kilspinnie, my dauty, fill him a cup of wine, the malvesie, to put smeddum in his marrow; he'll no be the waur o't, after his gallanting at Enbro. Stay! what's this? the auld man's been at school since him and me hae swappit paper. My word, Argyle, thou's got a tongue in thy pen neb! but this was ne'er indited by him; the cloven foot of the heretical Carmelite is manifest in every line. Honour and conscience truly! — braw words for a Hielant schore, that bigs his bield wi' other folks' gear!"

"Be composed, your sweet Grace, and dinna be so fashed," cried a silver-tongued madam, the which my grandfather afterwards found, as I shall have to rehearse, was his concubine, the Mrs Kilspinnie. "What does he say?"

"Say? Why, that Douglas preaches against idolatry, and he remits to my conscience forsooth, gif that be heresy — and he preaches against adulteries and fornications too — was ever sic

varlet terms written in ony nobleman's letter afore this apostate's time – and he refers that to my conscience likewise."

"A faggot to his tail would be ower gude for him," cried Mrs Kilspinnie.

"He preaches against hypocrisy," said his Grace, "the which he also refers to my conscience – conscience again! Hae, Davie, tak thir clishmaclavers to Andrew Oliphant. It'll be spunk to his zeal. We maun strike our adversaries wi' terror, and if we canna wile them back to the fold, we'll e'en set the dogs on them. Kind Mistress Kilspinnie, help me frae the stoup o' sherries, for I canna but say that this scalded heart I hae gotten frae that auld shavling-gabbit Hielander has raised my corruption, and I stand in need, my lambie, o' a' your winsome comforting."

At which words Sir David came forth the chamber with the letter in his hand; but seeing my grandfather, whom it would seem he had forgotten, he went suddenly back and said to his Grace, —

"Please you, my Lord, I hae brought with me a young man of a good capacity and a ripe understanding that I would commend to your Grace's service. He is here in the outer room waiting your Grace's pleasure."

"Davie Hamilton," replied the Archbishop, "ye sometimes lack discretion. What for did ye bring a stranger into this house – knowing, as ye ought to do, that I ne'er come hither but when I'm o' a sickly frame, in need o' solace and repose? Howsever, since the lad's there, bid him come ben."

Upon this, Sir David came out and beckoned my grandfather to go in; and when he went forward, he saw none in that inner chamber but his Grace and the Mrs Kilspinnie, with whom he was sitting on a bedside before a well-garnished table, whereon was divers silver flagons, canisters of comfits, and goblets of the crystal of Venetia.

He looked sharp at my grandfather, perusing him from head to foot, who put on for the occasion a face of modesty and reverence, but he was none daunted, for all his eyes were awake, and he took such a cognition of his Grace as he never afterwards forgot. Indeed, I have often heard him say that he saw more of the man in the brief space of that interview than of others in many intromissions, and he used to depict him to me as a hale, black-avised carl, of an o'ersea look, with a long dark beard inclining to grey; his abundant hair, flowing down from his cowl, was also clouded and streaked with the kithings of the cranreuch of age. There was, however, a youthy and luscious twinkling in his eyes, that showed how little the passage of three-and-fifty winters had cooled the rampant sensuality of his nature. His right leg, which was naked, though on the foot was a slipper of Spanish leather, he laid o'er Mistress Kilspinnie's knees as he threw himself back against the pillar of the bed, the better to observe and converse with my grandfather; and she, like another Delilah, began to prattle it with her fingers, casting at the same time glances, unseen by her papistical paramour, towards my grandfather, who, as I have said, was a comely and well-favoured

young man.

After some few questions as to his name and parentage, the prelate said he would give him his livery, being then anxious, on account of the signs of the times, to fortify his household with stout and valiant youngsters; and bidding him draw near and to kneel down, he laid his hand on his head and mumbled a benedicite; the which, my grandfather said, was as the smell of rottenness to his spirit, the lascivious hirkos, then wantoning so openly with his adulterous concubine, for no better was Mistress Kilspinnie, her husband, a creditable man, being then living, and one of the bailies of Crail. Nor is it to be debated that the scene was such as ought not to have been seen in a Christian land; but in those days the blasphemous progeny of the Roman harlot were bold with the audacious sinfulness of their parent, and set little store by the fear of God or the contempt of man. It was a sore trial and a struggle in the bosom of my grandfather that day to think of making a show of homage and service towards the mitred Belial and high priest of the abominations wherewith the realm was polluted, and when he rose from under his paw he shuddered, and felt as if he had received the foul erls of perdition from the Evil One. Many a bitter tear he long after shed in secret for the hypocrisy of that hour, the guilt of which was never sweetened to his conscience, even by the thought that he maybe thereby helped to further the great redemption of his native land in the blessed cleansing of the Reformation.

CHAPTER IV

Sir David Hamilton conducted my grandfather back through the garden and the sallyport to the castle, where he made him acquainted with his Grace's seneschal, by whom he was hospitably entertained when the knight had left them together, receiving from him a cup of hippocras and a plentiful repast, the like of which, for the savouriness of the viands, was seldom seen out of the howfs of the monks.

The seneschal was called by name Leonard Meldrum, and was a most douce and composed character, well stricken in years, and though engrained with the errors of papistry, as was natural for one bred and cherished in the house of the speaking horn of the Beast, for such the high priest of St Andrews was well likened to, he was nevertheless a man of a humane heart and great tenderness of conscience.

The while my grandfather was sitting with him at the board, he lamented that the Church, so he denominated the papal abomination, was so far gone with the spirit of punishment and of cruelty as rather to shock men's minds into schism and rebellion than to allure them back into worship and reverence, and to a repentance of their heresies – a strain of discourse which my grandfather so little expected to hear within the gates and precincts of the guilty castle of St Andrews that it made him for a time distrust the sincerity of the old man, and he

was very guarded in what he himself answered thereto. Leonard Meldrum was, however, honest in his way, and rehearsed many things which had been done within his own knowledge against the reformers that, as he said, human nature could not abide, nor the just and merciful Heavens well pardon.

Thus, from less to more, my grandfather and he fell into frank communion, and he gave him such an account of the bloody Cardinal Beaton as was most awful to hear, saying that his then present master, with all his faults and prodigalities, was a saint of purity compared to that rampagious cardinal, the which to hear, my grandfather thinking of what he had seen in the lodging of Madam Kilspinnie, was seized with such a horror thereat that he could partake no more of the repast before him, and he was likewise moved into a great awe and wonder of spirit that the Lord should thus, in the very chief sanctuary of papistry in all Scotland, be alienating the affections of the servants from their master, preparing the way, as it were, for an utter desertion and desolation to ensue.

They afterwards talked of the latter end of that great martyr, Mr George Wishart, and the seneschal informed him of several things concerning the same that were most edifying, though sorrowful to hear.

"He was," said he, "placed under my care, and methinks I shall ever see him before me, so meek, so holy, and so goodly was his aspect. He was of tall stature, black haired, long bearded, of a graceful carriage, elegant, courteous, and ready to teach. In his

apparel he was most comely, and in his diet of an abstemious temperance. On the morning of his execution, when I gave him notice that he was not to be allowed to have the sacrament, he smiled with a holiness of resignation that almost melted me to weep. I then invited him to partake of my breakfast, which he accepted with cheerfulness, saying, —

"I will do it very willingly, and so much the rather, because I perceive you to be a good Christian, and a man fearing God.'

"I then ordered in the breakfast, and he said, —

"I beseech you, for the love you bear to our Saviour, to be silent a little while, till I have made a short exhortation, and blessed this bread we are to eat.'

"He then spoke about the space of half an hour of our Saviour's death and passion, exhorting me, and those who were present with me, to mutual love and holiness of life; and giving thanks, brake the bread, distributing a part to those about him; then taking a cup, he bade us remember that Christ's blood was shed to wash away our sins, and, tasting it himself, he handed it to me, and I likewise partook of it: then he concluded with another prayer, at the end of which he said, 'I will neither drink nor eat any more in this world,' and he forthwith entered into an inner chamber where his bed was, leaving us filled with admiration and sorrow, and our eyes flowing with tears."

To this the seneschal added, "I fear, I fear, we are soon to have another scene of the same sort, for to-morrow the Bishops of Murray, and Brechin, and Caithness, with other dignitaries,

are summoned to the cathedral to sit in judgment on the aged priest of Lunan, that was brought hither from Dysart yestereen, and from the head the newfangled heresies are making, there's little doubt that the poor auld man will be made an example. Woes me! far better would it be an they would make an example of the like of the Earls of Argyll and Glencairn, by whom the reprobates are so encouraged."

"And is this Mill," inquired my grandfather with diffidence, for his heart was so stung with what he heard, that he could scarcely feign the necessary hypocrisy which the peril he stood in required – "Is this Mill in the castle?"

"Sorry am I to say it," replied the seneschal, "and under my keeping; but I darena show him the pity that I would fain do to his grey hairs and aged limbs. Some of the monks of the priory are with him just now, trying to get him to recant his errors, with the promise of a bein provision for the remainder of his days in the abbey of Dunfermline, the whilk I hope our blessed Lady will put it into his heart to accept."

"I trust," said my grandfather in the core of his bosom, "that the Lord will fortify him to resist the temptation."

This, however, the seneschal heard not, for it was ejaculated inwardly, and he subjoined, —

"When the monks go away, I will take you in to see him, for truly he is a sight far more moving to compassion than displeasure, whatsoever his sins and heresies may be."

In this manner, for the space of more than an hour, did

my grandfather hold converse and communion with Leonard Meldrum, in whom, he was often heard to say, there was more of the leaven of a sanctified nature than in the disposition of many zealous and professing Christians.

When the two shavlings that had been afflicting Master Mill with the offer of the wages of Satan were departed from the castle, the seneschal rose, and bidding my grandfather to come after him, they went out of the room, and traversing a narrow dark passage with many windings, came to the foot of a turnpike stair which led up into the sea-tower, so called because it stood farthestmost of all the castle in the sea, and in the chamber thereof they found Master Mill alone, sitting at the window, with his ancient and shrivelled lean hand resting on the sole and supporting his chin, as he looked through the iron stainchers abroad on the ocean that was sleeping in a blessed tranquillity around, all glowing and golden with the shimmer of the setting sun.

"How fares it with you?" said the seneschal with a kindly accent; whereupon the old man, who had not heard them enter, being tranced in his own holy meditations, turned round, and my grandfather said he felt himself, when he beheld his countenance, so smitten with awe and admiration, that he could not for some time advance a step.

"Come in, Master Meldrum, and sit ye down by me!" said the godly man. "Draw near unto me, for I am a thought hard of hearing. The Lord has of late, by steeking the doors and

windows of my earthly tabernacle, been admonishing me that the gloaming is come, and the hour of rest cannot be far off."

His voice, said my grandfather, was as the sound of a mournful melody, but his countenance was brightened with a solemn joyfulness. He was of a pale and spiritual complexion; his eyes beamed, as it were, with a living light, and often glanced thoughts of heavenly imaginings, even as he sat in silence. He was then fourscore and two years old; but his appearance was more aged, for his life had been full of suffering and poverty; and his venerable hands and skinny arms were heart-melting evidences of his ineffectual power to struggle much longer in the warfare of this world. In sooth, he was a chosen wheat-ear, ripened and ready for the garnels of salvation.

"I have brought, Master Mill," said the seneschal, "a discreet youth to see you, not out of a vain curiosity, for he sorrows with an exceeding grief that such an aged person should be brought into a state of so great jeopardy; but I hope, Master Mill, it will go well with you yet, and that ye'll repent and accept the boon that I hae heard was to be proffered."

To these words the aged saint made no reply for the space of about a minute; at the end of which he raised his hands, and casting his eyes heavenward, exclaimed, —

"I thank Thee, O Lord, for the days of sore trial, and want, and hunger, and thirst, and destitution which Thou hast been pleased to bestow upon me, for by them have I, even now as I stand on the threshold of life, been enabled, through Thy merciful

heartenings, to set at nought the temptations wherewith I have been tempted."

And, turning to the seneschal, he added mildly, "But I am bound to you, Master Meldrum, in great obligations, for I know that in the hope you have now expressed there is the spirit of much charitableness, albeit you discern not the deadly malady that the sin of compliance would bring to my poor soul. No, sir, it would na be worth my while now, for world's gain, to read a recantation. And, blessed be God, it's no in my power to yield, so deeply are the truths of His laws engraven upon the tablet of my heart."

They then fell into more general discourse, and while they were speaking, a halberdier came into the room with a paper, whereby the prisoner was summoned to appear in the cathedral next day by ten o'clock, to answer divers matters of heresy and schism laid to his charge; and the man having delivered the summons, said to the seneschal that he was ordered by Sir Andrew Oliphant to bid him refrain from visiting the prisoner, and to retire to his own lodging.

The seneschal to this command said nothing, but rose, and my grandfather likewise rose. Fain would he have knelt down to beg the blessing of the martyr, but the worthy Master Meldrum signified to him with a look to come at once away; and when they were returned back into his chamber where the repast had been served, he told him that there was a danger of falling under the evil thoughts of Oliphant, were he to be seen evidencing anything

like respect towards prisoners accused of the sin of heresy.

CHAPTER V

The next day was like a cried fair in St. Andrews. All the country from ayont Cupar, and many reformed and godly persons even from Dundee and Perth, were gathered into the city to hear the trial of Master Walter Mill. The streets were filled with horses and men with whips in their hands and spurs at their heels, and there was a great going to and fro among the multitude; but, saving in its numbers, the congregation of the people was in no other complexion either like a fair or a tryst. Every visage was darkened with doure thoughts; none spoke cheerfully aloud; but there was whispering and muttering, and ever and anon the auld men were seen wagging their heads in sorrow, while the young cried often "Shame! shame!" and with vehement gestures clave the air with their right hands, grasping their whips and staffs with the vigour of indignation.

At last the big bell of the cathedral began to jow, at the doleful sound of which there was, for the space of two or three minutes, a silence and pause in the multitude as if they had been struck with panic and consternation, for till then there was a hope among them that the persecutors would relent; but the din of the bell was as the signal of death and despair, and the people were soon awakened from their astonishment by the cry that "the bishops are coming," whereat there was a great rush towards the gates of the church, which was presently filled, leaving only a passage up

the middle aisle.

In the quire a table was spread with a purple velvet cloth, and at the upper end, before the high place of the mass, was a stool of state for the Archbishop; on each side stood chairs for the Bishops of Murray, Brechin and Caithness and his other suffragans, summoned to sit in judgment with him.

My grandfather, armed and wearing the Archbishop's livery, was with those that guarded the way for the cruel prelates, and by the pressure of the throng in conveying them into their place, he was driven within the screen of the quire, and saw and heard all that passed.

When they had taken their seats, Master Mill was brought before them from the prior's chamber, whither he had been secretly conducted early in the morning, to the end that his great age might not be seen of the people to work on their compassion. But, notwithstanding the forethought of this device, when he came in, his white hair and his saintly look and his feeble, tottering steps softened every heart. Even the very legate of Antichrist, the Archbishop himself, my grandfather said, was evidently moved, and for a season looked at the poor infirm old man as he would have spared him, and a murmur of universal commiseration ran through the church.

On being taken to the bottom of the table and placed forment the Archbishop, Master Mill knelt down and prayed for support in a voice so firm and clear and eloquent that all present were surprised, for it rung to the farthest corner of that great edifice,

and smote the hearts of his oppressors as with the dread of a menacing oracle.

Sir Andrew Oliphant, who acted as clerk and chancellor on the occasion, began to fret as he heard him thus strengthened of the Lord, and cried peevishly, —

"Sir Walter Mill, get up and answer, for you keep my lords here too long."

He, however, heeded not this command, but continued undisturbed till he had finished his devotion, when he rose and said, —

"I am bound to obey God more than man, and I serve a mightier Lord than yours. You call me Sir Walter, but I am only Walter. Too long was I one of the Pope's knights; but now say what you have to say."

Oliphant was somewhat cowed by this bold reply, and he bowed down, and turning over his papers, read a portion of one of them to himself, and then raising his head, said, —

"What thinkest thou of priests' marriage?"

The old man looked bravely towards the bishops, and answered with an intrepid voice, —

"I esteem marriage a blessed bond, ordained by God, approved by Christ, and made free to all sorts of men; but you abhor it, and in the meantime take other men's wives and daughters; you vow chastity, and keep it not."

My grandfather at these words looked unawares towards the Archbishop, thinking of what he had seen in the lodging of

Mistress Kilspinnie, and their eyes chancing to meet, his Grace turned his head suddenly away as if he had been rebuked.

Divers other questions were then put by Oliphant touching the sacraments, the idolatry of the mass, and transubstantiation, with other points concerning bishops and pilgrimages, and the worshipping of God in unconsecrated places, to all which Master Mill answered in so brave a manner, contrary to the papists, that even Oliphant himself often looked reprov'd and confounded. At last the choler of that sharp weapon of persecution began to rise, and he said to him sternly, —

"If you will not recant I will pronounce sentence against you."

"I know," replied Master Mill, with an apostolic constancy and fortitude, "I know that I must die once, and therefore, as Christ said to Judas, What thou doest do quickly. You shall know that I will not recant the truth, for I am corn and not chaff. I will neither be blown away by the wind nor burst with the flail, but will abide both."

At these brave words a sigh of admiration sounded through the church, but, instead of deterring the prelates from proceeding with their wicked purpose, it only served to harden their hearts and to rouse their anger, for when they had conferred a few minutes apart, Oliphant was ordered to condemn him to the fire, and to deliver him over to the temporal magistrates to see execution done.

No sooner was the sentence known, than a cry like a howl of wrath rose from all the people, and the provost of the town, who

was present with the bailies, hastily quitted the church and fled, abhorring the task, and fearful it would be put upon him to see it done, he being also bailie of the Archbishop's regalities.

When the sentence was pronounced, the session of the court was adjourned, and the bishops, as they were guarded back to the castle, heard many a malison from the multitude who were ravenous against them.

The aged martyr being led back to the prior's chamber, was, under cloud of night, taken to the castle; but my grandfather saw no more of him, nor of Master Meldrum, the seneschal; for there was a great fear among the bishops' men that the multitude would rise and attempt a rescue; and my grandfather, not being inclined to go so far with his disguise as to fight against that cause, took occasion, in the dusk of the evening, to slip out of the castle, and to hide himself in the town, being resolved, after what he had witnessed, no longer to abide, even as a spy, in a service which his soul loathed.

All the night long there was a great commotion in the streets, and lights in many houses, and a sound of lamentation mingled with rage. The noise was as if some dreadful work was going on. There was no shouting, nor any sound of men united together, but a deep and hoarse murmur rose at times from the people, like the sound of the bandless waves of the sea when they are driven by the strong impulses of the tempest. The spirit of the times was indeed upon them, and it was manifest to my grandfather that there wanted that night but the voice of a captain to bid them hurl

their wrath and vengeance against the towers and strongholds of the oppressors.

At the dawn of day the garrison of the castle came forth, and, on the spot where the martyrdom of Mr George Wishart had been accomplished, a stake was driven into the ground, and faggots and barrels of tar were placed around it, piled up almost as high as a man; in the middle, next to the stake, a place was left for the sufferer.

But when all things were prepared, no rope could be had – no one in all the town would give or sell a cord to help that sacrifice of iniquity, nor would any of the magistrates come forth to see the execution done, so it was thought for a time that the hungry cruelty of the persecutors would be disappointed of its banquet. One Somerville, however, who was officer of the Archbishop's guard, bethought himself, in this extremity, of the ropes wherewith his master's pavilion was fastened, and he went and took the same; and then his men brought forth the aged martyr, at the sight of whom the multitude set up a dreadful imprecation, the roar and growling groan of which was as if a thousand furious tigresses had been robbed of their young. Many of Somerville's halberdiers looked cowed, and their faces were aghast with terror; and some cried, compassionately, as they saw the blessed old man brought, with his hands tied behind him, to the stake, "Recant, recant!"

The monks and friars of the different monasteries, who were all there assembled around, took up the word, and bitterly

taunting him, cried likewise, "Recant, recant and save thyself!" He, however, replied to them with an awful austerity, —

"I marvel at your rage, ye hypocrites, who do so cruelly pursue the servants of God. As for me, I am now fourscore and two years old, and by course of nature cannot live long; but hundreds shall rise out of my ashes who shall scatter you, ye persecutors of God's people."

Sir Andrew Oliphant, who was that day the busiest high priest of the horrible sacrifice, at these words pushed him forward into the midst of the faggots and fuel around the stake. But, nothing moved by this remorseless indignity, the martyr looked for a moment at the pile with a countenance full of cheerful resignation, and then requested permission to say a few words to the people.

"You have spoken too much," cried Oliphant, "and the bishops are exceedingly displeased with what you have said."

But the multitude exclaimed, "Let him be heard! let him speak what he pleases! Speak, and heed not Oliphant." At which he looked towards them and said, —

"Dear friends, the cause why I suffer this day is not for any crime laid to my charge, though I acknowledge myself a miserable sinner, but only for the defence of the truths of Jesus Christ, as set forth in the Old and New Testaments."

He then began to pray, and while his eyes were shut, two of Somerville's men threw a cord with a running loop round his body, and bound him to the stake. The fire was then kindled,

and at the sight of the smoke the multitude uttered a shriek of anguish, and many ran away, unable to bear any longer the sight of that woful tragedy. Among others, my grandfather also ran, nor halted till he was come to a place under the rocks on the south side of the town, where he could see nothing before him but the lonely desert of the calm and soundless ocean.

CHAPTER VI

Many a time did my grandfather, in his old age, when all things he spoke were but remembrances, try to tell what passed in his bosom while he was sitting alone, under those clifty rocks, gazing on the silent and innocent sea, thinking of that dreadful work, more hideous than the horrors of winds and waves, with which blinded men, in the lusts of their idolatry, were then blackening the ethereal face of heaven; but he was ever unable to proceed for the struggles of his spirit and the gushing of his tears. Verily it was an awful thing to see that patriarchal man overcome by the recollections of his youth; and the manner in which he spoke of the papistical cruelties was as the pouring of the energy of a new life into the very soul, instigating thoughts and resolutions of an implacable enmity against those ruthless adversaries to the hopes and redemption of the world, insomuch that, while yet a child, I was often worked upon by what he said, and felt my young heart so kindled with the live coals of his godly enthusiasm, that he himself has stopped in the eloquence of his discourse, wondering at my fervour. Then he would lay his hand upon my head, and say, the Lord had not gifted me with such zeal without having a task in store for my riper years. His words of prophecy, as shall hereafter appear, have greatly and wonderfully come to pass. But it is meet that for a season I should rehearse what ensued to him, for his story is full of solemnities and strange accidents.

Having rested some time on the sea-shore, he rose and walked along the toilsome shingle, scarcely noting which way he went – his thoughts being busy with the martyrdom he had witnessed, flushing one moment with a glorious indignation, and fainting the next with despondent reflections on his own friendless state. For he looked upon himself as adrift on the tides of the world, believing that his patron, the Earl of Glencairn, would to a surety condemn his lack of fortitude in not enduring the servitude of the Archbishop, after having been in so miraculous a manner accepted into it, even as if Providence had made him a special instrument to achieve the discoveries which the Lords of the Congregation had then so much at heart. And while he was walking along in this fluctuating mood, he came suddenly upon a man who was sitting, as he had so shortly before been himself, sad and solitary, gazing on the sea. The stranger, on hearing him approach, rose hastily, and was moving quickly away; but my grandfather called to him to stop and not to be afraid, for he would harm no one.

"I thought," said the melancholy man, "that all his Grace's retainers were at the execution of the heretic."

There was something in the way in which he uttered the latter clause of the sentence that seemed to my grandfather as if he would have made use of better and fitter words, and therefore, to encourage him into confidence, he replied, —

"I belong not to his Grace."

"How is it, then, that you wear his livery, and that I saw you,

with Sir David Hamilton, enter the garden of that misguided woman?"

He could proceed no farther, for his heart swelled, and his utterance was for a while stifled, he being no other than the misfortunate Bailie of Crail, whose light wife had sunk into the depravity of the Archbishop's lemane. She had been beguiled away from him and her five babies, their children, by the temptations of a Dominican, who, by habit and repute, was pandarus to his Grace, and the poor man had come to try if it was possible to wile her back.

My grandfather was melted with sorrow to see his great affection for the unworthy concubine, calling to mind the scene of her harlotry and wanton glances, and he reasoned with him on the great folly of vexing his spirit for a woman so far lost to all shame and given over to iniquity. But still the good man of Crail would not be persuaded, but used many earnest entreaties that my grandfather would assist him to see his wife, in order that he might remonstrate with her on the eternal perils in which she had placed her precious soul.

My grandfather, though much moved by the importunity of that weak, honest man, nevertheless withstood his entreaties, telling him that he was minded to depart forthwith from St Andrews, and make the best of his way back to Edinburgh, and so could embark in no undertaking whatever.

Discoursing on that subject in this manner, they strayed into the fields, and being wrapt up in their conversation, they

heeded not which way they went, till, turning suddenly round the corner of an orchard, they saw the castle full before them, about half a mile off, and a dim white vapour mounting at times from the spot, still surrounded by many spectators, where the fires of martyrdom had burnt so fiercely. Shuddering and filled with dread, my grandfather turned away, and seeing several countrymen passing, he inquired if all was over.

"Yes," said they, "and the soldiers are slockening the ashes; but a' the waters of the ocean-sea will never quench in Scotland the flame that was kindled yonder this day."

The which words they said with a proud look, thinking my grandfather, by his arms and gabardine, belonged to the Archbishop's household; but the words were as manna to his religious soul, and he gave inward praise and thanks that the selfsame tragical means which had been devised to terrify the reformers was thus, through the mysterious wisdom of Providence, made more emboldening than courageous wine to fortify their hearts for the great work that was before them.

Nothing, however, farther passed; but, changing the course of their walk, my grandfather and the sorrowful Master Kilspinnie – for so the poor man of Crail was called – went back, and, entering the bow at the Shoegate, passed on towards a vintner's that dwelt opposite to the convent of the Blackfriars; for the day was by this time far advanced, and they both felt themselves in need of some refreshment.

While they were sitting together in the vintner's apartment,

a stripling came several times into the room, and looked hard at my grandfather, and then went away without speaking. This was divers times repeated, and at last it was so remarkable that even Master Kilspinnie took notice of him, observing, that he seemed as if he had something very particular to communicate, if an opportunity served, offering at the same time to withdraw, to leave the room clear for the youth to tell his errand.

My grandfather's curiosity was, by this strange and new adventure to him, so awakened, that he thought what his companion proposed a discreet thing; so the honest Bailie of Crail withdrew himself, and, going into the street, left my grandfather alone.

No sooner was he gone out of the house than the stripling, who had been sorning about the door, again came in, and, coming close up to my grandfather's ear, said, with a significance not to be misconstrued, that if he would follow him he would take him to free quarters, where he would be more kindly entertained.

My grandfather, though naturally of a quiet temperament, was nevertheless a bold and brave youth, and there was something in the mystery of this message – for such he rightly deemed it – that made him fain to see the end thereof. So he called in the vintner's wife and paid her the lawin', telling her to say to the friend who had been with him, when he came back, that he would soon return.

The vintner's wife was a buxom and jolly dame, and before taking up the money, she gave a pawkie look at the stripling, and

as my grandfather and he were going out at the door, she hit the gilly a bilf on the back, saying it was a ne'er-do-weel trade he had ta'en up, and that he wasna blate to wile awa' her customers, crying after him, "I redde ye warn your madam that gin she sends you here again, I'll maybe let his Grace ken that her cauldron needs clouting." However, the graceless gilly but laughed at the vintner's wife, winking as he patted the side of his nose with his fore-finger, which testified that he held her vows of vengeance in very little reverence; and then he went on, my grandfather following.

They walked up the street till they came to the priory yett, when, turning down a wynd to the left, he led my grandfather along between two dykes, till they were come to a house that stood by itself within a fair garden. But instead of going to the door in an honest manner, he bade him stop, and going forward he whistled shrilly, and then flung three stones against a butt, that was standing at the corner of the house on a gauntrees to kep rain water from the spouting image of a stone puddock that vomited what was gathered from the roof in the rones, and soon after an upper casement was opened, and a damsel looked forth; she however said nothing to the stripling, but she made certain signs which he understood, and then she drew in her head, shutting the casement softly, and he came back to my grandfather, to whom he said it was not commodious at that time for him to be received into the house, but if he would come back in the dark, at eight o'clock, all things would be ready for his reception.

To this suggestion my grandfather made no scruple to assent, but promised to be there; and he bargained with the lad to come for him, giving him at the same time three placks for a largess. He then returned to the vintner's, where he found the Craill man sitting waiting for him; and the vintner's wife, when she saw him so soon back, jeered him, and would fain have been jocose, which he often after thought a woful immorality, considering the dreadful martyrdom of a godly man that had been done that day in the town; but at the time he was not so over strait-laced as to take offence at what she said; indeed, as he used to say, sins were not so heinous in those papistical days as they afterwards became, when men lost faith in penance, and found out the perils of purchased pardons.

CHAPTER VII

My grandfather having, as I have told, a compassion for the silly affection wherewith the honest man of Craill still regarded his wanton wife, told him the circumstantial of his adventure with the stripling; without, however, letting wot he had discovered that the invitation was from her; the which was the case, for the damsel who looked out at the window was no other than the giglet he had seen in her lodging when he went thither with Sir David Hamilton, and he proposed to the disconsolate husband that he should be his friend in the adventure; meaning thereby to convince the unhappy man, by the evidence of his own eyes and ears, that her concubinage with the Antichrist was a blessed riddance to him and his family.

At first Master Kilspinnie had no zest for any such frolic, for so it seemed to him, and he began to think my grandfather's horror at the martyrdom of the aged saint but a long-fac't hypocrisy; nevertheless he was wrought upon to consent; and they sat plotting and contriving in what manner they should act their several parts, my grandfather pretending great fear and apprehension at the thoughts of himself, a stranger, going alone into the traps of a house where there were sic forerunners of shame and signs of danger. At last he proposed that they should go together and spy about the precincts of the place, and try to discover if there was no other entrance or outgate to the house

than the way by which the stripling conducted him, though well he remembered the sallyport, where the fat friar kept watch, eating the pasty.

Accordingly they went forth from the vintner's, and my grandfather, as if he knew not the way, led his companion round between the priory and the sea, till they came near the aforesaid sallyport, when, mounting upon a stone, he affected to discover that the house of the madam stood in the garden within, and that the sallyport could be no less than a back yett thereto.

While they were speaking concerning the same, my grandfather observed the wicket open in the gate, and guessing therefrom that it was one spying to forewarn somebody within who wanted to come out unremarked, he made a sign to his companion, and they both threw themselves flat on the ground, and hirsled down the rocks to conceal themselves. Presently the gate was opened, and then out came the fat friar, and looked east and west, holding the door in his hand; and anon out came his Grace the Antichrist, hirpling with a staff in his hand, for he was lame with that monkish malady called the gout. The friar then drew the yett to, and walked on towards the castle, with his Grace leaning on his arm. In the meantime the poor man of Crail was grinding the teeth of his rage at the sight of the cause of his sorrow, and my grandfather had a sore struggle to keep him down, and prevent him from running wud and furious at the two sacerdotal reprobates, for no lightier could they be called.

Thus, without any disclosure on my grandfather's part, did

Master Kilspinnie come to jealousy that the lemane who had trusted him was no other than his own faithless wife, and he smote his forehead and wept bitterly, to think how she was become so dreadless in sin. But he vowed to put her to shame; so it was covenanted between them, that in the dusk of the evening the afflicted husband should post himself near to where they then stood, and that when my grandfather was admitted by the other entrance to the house, he should devise some reason for walking forth into the garden, and while there admit Master Kilspinnie.

Accordingly, betimes my grandfather was ready, and the stripling, as had been bargained, came for him to the vintner's, and conducted him to the house, where, after giving the signals before enumerated, the damsel came to the door and gave him admittance, leading him straight to the inner chamber before described, where her mistress was sitting in a languishing posture, with the table spread for a banquet.

She embraced my grandfather with many fond protestations, and filled him a cup of hot malvesie, while her handmaid brought in divers savoury dishes; but he, though a valiant young man, was not at his ease, and he thought of the poor husband and the five babies that the adultriss had left for the foul love of the papist high-priest, and it was a chaste spell and a restraining grace. Still he partook a little of the rich repast which had been prepared, and feigned so long a false pleasance, that he almost became pleased in reality. The dame, however, was herself at times fearful, and seemed to listen if there was any knocking at the door, telling my

grandfather that his Grace was to be back after he had supped at the castle. "I thought," said she, "to have had you here when he was at the burning of the heretic, but my gilly could not find you among the troopers till it was owre late; for when he brought you my Lord had come to solace himself after the execution. But I was so nettled to be so baulked, that I acted myself into an anger till I got him away, not, however, without a threat of being troubled with him again at night."

Scarcely had madam said this, when my grandfather started up and feigned to be in great terror, begging her to let him hide himself in the garden till his Grace was come and gone. To this, with all her blandishments, the guilty woman made many obstacles, but he was fortified of the Lord with the thoughts of her injured children, and would not be entreated, but insisted on scogging himself in the garden till the Archbishop was sent away, the hour of his coming being then near at hand. Seeing him thus peremptory, Madam Kilspinnie was obligated to conform; so he was permitted to go into the garden, and no sooner was he there than he went to the sallyport and admitted her husband; and well it was that he had been so steadfast in his purpose, for scarcely were they moved from the yett into a honeysuckle bower hard by when they heard it again open, and in came his Grace with his corpulent pandarus, who took his seat on the bench before spoken of, to watch, while his master went into the house.

The good Bailie of Craill breathed thickly, and he took my grandfather by the hand, his whole frame trembling with a

passion of grief and rage. In the lapse of some four or five minutes, the giglet damsel came out of the house, and by the glimpse of a light from a window as she passed they saw she had a tankard of smoking drink in her hand, with which she went to the friar; and my grandfather and his companion, taking advantage of this, slipped out of their hiding-place and stole softly into the house and reached the outer chamber that was parted from madam's banquet bower by the arras partition. There they stopped to listen, and heard her complaining in a most dolorous manner of great heart-sickness, ever and anon begging the deluded prelate Hamilton to taste the feast she had prepared for him, in the hope of being able to share it with him and the caresses of his sweet love, to which his Grace as often replied, with great condolence and sympathy, how very grieved he was to find her in that sad and sore estate, with many other fond cajoleries, most odious to my grandfather to hear from a man so far advanced in years, and who, by reason of the reverence of his office, ought to have had his tongue schooled to terms of piety and temperance.

The poor husband meanwhile said nothing, but my grandfather heard his heart panting audibly, and three or four times he was obligated to brush away his hand, for, having no arms himself, the bailie clutched at the hilt of his sword and would have drawn it from the scabbard.

The Antichrist, seeing his lemame in such great malady as she so well feigned, he at last, to her very earnest supplication,

consented to leave her that night, and kissed her as he came away; but her husband broke in upon them with the rage of a hungry lion, and seizing his Grace by the cuff of the neck, swung him away from her with such vehemence that he fell into the corner of the room like a sack of duds. As for madam, she uttered a wild cry, and threw herself back on the couch where she was sitting and seemed as if she had swooned, having no other device so ready to avoid the upbraidings and just reproaches of her spouse. But she was soon roused from that fraudulent dwam by my grandfather, who, seizing a flagon of wine, dashed it upon her face.

CHAPTER VIII

Mrs Kilspinnie uttered a frightful screech, and, starting up, attempted to run out of the room, but her husband caught her by the arm, and my grandfather was empowered, by a signal grant of great presence of mind to think that the noise might cause alarm, whereupon he sprang instanter to the door that led into the garden just as the damsel was coming up, and the fat friar hobbling as fast as he could behind her; and he had but time to say to her, as it was with an inspiration, to keep all quiet in the garden and he would make his escape by the other door. She, on hearing this, ran back to stop the pandarus, and my grandfather closed and bolted fast that back door, going forthwith to the one by which he had been himself admitted, and which, having opened wide to the wall, he returned to the scene of commotion.

In the meantime the prelatie dragon that was so ravished from the woman had hastily risen upon his legs, and, red with a dreadful wrath, raged as if he would have devoured her husband. In sooth, to do his Grace justice, he lacked not the spirit of a courageous gentleman, and he could not, my grandfather often said, have borne himself more proudly and valiantly had he been a belted knight, bred in camps and fields of war, so that a discreet retreat and evasion of the house was the best course they could take. But Master Kilspinnie fain would have continued his biting taunts to the mistress, who was enacting a most tragical

extravagance of affliction and terror. My grandfather, however, suddenly cut him short, crying, "Come, come, no more of this; an alarm is given, and we must save ourselves." With that he seized him firmly by the arm, and in a manner harled him out of the house and into the lane between the dykes, along which they ran with nimble heels. On reaching the Showgate they slackened their speed, still, however, walking as fast as they could till they came near the port, when they again drew in the bridle of their haste, going through among the guards that were loitering around the door of the wardroom, and passed out into the fields as if they had been indifferent persons.

On escaping the gate they fell in with divers persons going along the road, who, by their discourse, were returning home to Cupar, and they walked leisurely with them till they came to a cross-road, where my grandfather, giving Master Kilspinnie a nodge, turned down the one that went to the left, followed by him, and it happened to be the road to Dysart and Crail.

"This will ne'er do," said Master Kilspinnie, "they will pursue us this gait."

Upon hearing this reasonable apprehension, my grandfather stopped and conferred with himself, and received on that spot a blessed experience and foretaste of the protection wherewith, to a great age, he was all his days protected. For it was in a manner revealed to him that he should throw away the garbardine and sword which he had received in the castle, and thereby appear in his simple craftsman's garb, and that they should turn back and

cross the Cupar road, and go along the other, which led to the Dundee waterside ferry. This he told to his fearful companion, and likewise, that as often as they fell in with or heard anybody coming up, the bailie should hasten on before or den himself among the brechans by the roadside, to the end that it might appear they were not two persons in company together.

But they had not long crossed the Cupar road and travelled the one leading to the ferry when they heard the whirlwind sound of horsemen coming after them, at which the honest man of Crail darted aside and lay flat on his grouff ayont a bramble bush, while my grandfather began to lilt as blithely as he could, "The Bonny Lass of Livingston," and the spring was ever after to him as a hymn of thanksgiving, but the words he then sang was an auld, ranting, godless and graceless ditty of the grooms and serving-men that sorned about his father's smiddy, and the closer that the horsemen came he was strengthened to sing the louder and the clearer.

"Saw ye twa fellows ganging this gait?" cried the foremost of the pursuers, pulling up.

"What like were they?" said my grandfather, in a simple manner.

"Ane of them was o' his Grace's guard," replied the man, "but the other, curse tak me gin I ken what he was like, but he's the bailie or provost of a burrough's town, and should by rights hae a big belly."

To this my grandfather answered briskly, "Nae sic twa ha'e

past me, but as I was coming along whistling, thinking o' naething, twa sturdy loons, ane o' them no unlike the hempies o' the castle, ran skirring along, and I hae a thought that they took the road to Crail or Dysart."

"That was my thought, too," cried the horseman, as he turned his beast, and the rest that were with him doing the same, bidding my grandfather good-night, away they scampered back; by which a blessed deliverance was there wrought to him and his companion on that spot, in that night.

As soon as the horsemen had gone by, Bailie Kilspinnie came from his hiding-place, and both he and my grandfather proved that no bird-lime was on their feet till they got to the ferry-house at the waterside, where they found two boats taking passengers on board, one for Dundee and the other for Perth. Here my grandfather's great gift of foreknowledge was again proven, for he proposed that they should bargain with the skipper of the Dundee boat to take them to that town and pay him like the other passengers, at once, in an open manner, but that, as the night was cloudy and dark, they should go cannily aboard the boat for Perth, as it were in mistake, and feign not to discover their error till they were far up the river when they should proceed to the town, letting wot that by the return of the tide they would go in the morning by the Perth boat to Dundee, with which Master Kilspinnie was well acquainted, he having had many times, in the way of his traffic as a plaiding merchant, cause to use the same, and thereby knew it went twice a week, and that the morrow

was one of the days. All this they were enabled to do with such fortitude and decorum that no one aboard the Perth boat could have divined that they were not honest men in great trouble of mind at discovering they had come into the wrong boat.

But nothing showed more that Providence had a hand in all this than what ensued, for all the passengers in the boat had been at St Andrews to hear the trial and see the martyrdom, and they were sharp and vehement not only in their condemnation of the mitred Antichrist, but grieved with a sincere sorrow that none of the nobles of Scotland would stand forth in their ancient bravery to resist and overthrow a race of oppressors more grievous than the Southrons that trode on the neck of their fathers in the hero-stirring times of the Wallace wight and King Robert the Bruce. Truly, there was a spirit of unison and indignation in the company on board that boat, everyone thirsting with a holy ardour to avenge the cruelties of which the papistical priesthood were daily growing more and more crouse in the perpetration, and they made the shores ring with the olden song of —

"O for my ain king, quo' gude Wallace,
The rightfu' king of fair Scotlan';
Between me and my sovereign dear
I think I see some ill seed sawn."

It was the grey of the morning before they reached Perth, and as soon as they were put on the land the bailie took my grandfather with him to the house of one Sawners Ruthven, a

blanket-weaver with whom he had dealings, a staid and discreet man, who, when he had supplied them with breakfast, exhorted them not to tarry in the town, then a place that had fallen under the suspicion of the clergy, the lordly monks of Scoone taking great power and authority, in despite of the magistrates, against all that fell under their evil thoughts anent heresy. And he counselled them not to proceed, as my grandfather had proposed, straight on to Edinburgh by the Queensferry, but to hasten up the country to Crieff and thence take the road to Stirling. In this there was much prudence, but Bailie Kilspinnie was in sore tribulation on account of his children, whom he had left at his home in Crail, fearing that the talons of Antichrist would lay hold of them and keep them as hostages till he was given up to suffer for what he had done, none doubting that Baal, for so he nicknamed the prelatie Hamilton, would impute to him the unpardonable sin of heresy and schism, and leave no stone unturned to bring him to the stake.

But Sawners Ruthven comforted him with the assurance that his Grace would not venture to act in that manner, for it was known how Mistress Kilspinnie then lived at St Andrews as his concubine. Nevertheless, the poor man was in sore affliction, and as he and my grandfather travelled towards Crieff, many a bitter prayer did his vexed spirit pour forth in its grief that the right arm of the Lord might soon be manifested against the Roman locust that consumed the land and made its corruption naught in the nostrils of Heaven.

Thus was it manifest that there was much of the ire of a selfish revenge mixt up with the rage which was at that time kindled in so unquenchable a manner against the Beast and its worshippers, for in the history of the honest man of Crail there was a great similitude to other foul and worse things which the Roman idolaters seemed to regard among their pestiferous immunities, and counted themselves free to do without dread of any earthly retribution.

CHAPTER IX

My grandfather and his companion hastened on in their journey, but instead of going to Stirling they crossed the river at Alloa, and so passed by the water-side way to Edinburgh, where, on entering the West-port, they separated. The bailie, who was a fearful man and in constant dread and terror of being burned as a heretic for having broke in upon the dalliance of his incontinent wife and the carnal-minded primate of St Andrews, went to a cousin of his own, a dealer in serge and temming in the Lawnmarket, with whom he concealed himself for some weeks, but my grandfather proceeded straight towards the lodging of the Earl of Glencairn to recount to his lordship the whole passages of what he had been concerned in, from the night that he departed from his presence.

It was by this time the mirkest of the gloaming, for they had purposely tarried on their journey that they might enter Edinburgh at dusk. The shops of the traders were shut, for in those days there was such a resort of sorners and lawless men among the trains of the nobles and gentry that it was not safe for honest merchants to keep their shops open after nightfall. Nevertheless the streets were not darkened, for there were then many begging-boxes, with images of the saints, and cruises burning afore them, in divers parts of the High Street and corners of the wynds, insomuch that it was easy, as I have heard my

grandfather tell, to see and know anyone passing in the light thereof. And, indeed, what befel himself was proof of it, for as he was coming through St Giles' Kirkyard, which is now the Parliament Close, and through which at that time there was a style and path for passengers, a young man, whom he had observed following him, came close up just as he reached a begging image of the Virgin Mary with its lamp that stood on a pillar at the south-east corner of the cathedral, and touching him on the left shoulder at that spot made him look round in such a manner that the light of the Virgin's lamp fell full on his face.

"Dinna be frightened," said the stranger, "I ken you, and I'm in Lord Glencairn's service; but follow me and say nothing."

My grandfather was not a little startled by this salutation; he, however, made no observe, but replied, "Go on, then."

So the stranger went forward, and, after various turnings and windings, led him down into the Cowgate and up a close on the south side thereof, and then to a dark timber stair that was so frail and creaking and narrow that his guide bade him haul himself up with the help of a rope that hung down dangling for that purpose.

When they had raised themselves to the stairhead, the stranger opened a door and they went together into a small and lonesome chamber, in the chimla-nook of which an old iron cruise was burning with a winking and wizard light.

"I hae brought you here," said his conductor, "for secrecy, for my Lord disna want that ye should be seen about his lodging. I'm ane of three that hae been lang seeking you, and, as a token that

ye're no deceived, I was bade to tell you that before parting from my lord he gi'ed you two pieces of gold out of his coffer in the chamber where he supped."

My grandfather thought this very like a proof that he had been so informed by the Earl himself, but happening to remark that he sat with his back to the light and kept his face hidden in the shadow of the darkness, Providence put it into his head to jealousy that he might nevertheless be a spy, one perhaps that had been trusted in like manner as he had himself been trusted, and who had afterwards sold himself to the perdition of the adversaries' cause; he was, accordingly, on his guard, but replied with seeming frankness that it was very true he had received two pieces of gold from the Earl at his departure.

"Then," said the young man, "by that token ye may know that I am in the private service of the Earl, who, for reasons best known to himsel', hath willed that you should tell me, that I may report the same secretly to him, what espionage you have made."

My grandfather was perplexed by this speech, but distrust having crept into his thoughts, instead of replying with a full recital of all his adventures, he briefly said that he had indeed effected nothing, for his soul was sickened by the woful martyrdom of the godly Master Mill to so great a disease that he could not endure to abide in St Andrews, and therefore he had come back.

"But you have been long on the way – how is that? – it is now many days since the burning," replied the stranger.

"You say truly," was my grandfather's answer, "for I came round by Perth, but I tarried at no place longer than was needful to repair and refresh nature."

"Perth was a wide bout gait to take frae St Andrews to come to Edinburgh. I marvel how ye went so far astray," said the young man, curiously.

"In sooth it was, but being sorely demented with the tragical end of the godly old man," replied my grandfather, "and seeing that I could do the Earl no manner of service, I wist not well what course to take, so after meickle tribulation of thought and great uncertainty of purpose I e'en resolved to come hither."

Little more passed; the young man rose and said to my grandfather he feared the Earl would be so little content with him that he had better not go near him but seek some other master. And when they had descended the stair and were come into the street he advised him to go to the house of a certain Widow Rippet, that let dry lodgings in the Grass-market, and roost there for that night. The which my grandfather in a manner signified he would do, and so they parted.

The stranger at first walked soberly away, but he had not gone many paces when he suddenly turned into a close leading up to the High-street, and my grandfather heard the pattering of his feet running as swiftly as possible, which confirmed to him what he suspected; and so, instead of going towards the Widow Rippet's house he turned back and went straight on to St Mary's Wynd, where the Earl's lodging was, and knocking at the

yett was speedily admitted and conducted instanter to my Lord's presence, whom he found alone reading many papers which lay on a table before him.

"Gilhaize," said the Earl, "how is this? why have you come back? and wherefore is it that I have heard no tidings from you?"

Whereupon my grandfather recounted to him all the circumstantial which I have rehearsed, from the hour of his departure from Edinburgh up till the very time when he then stood in his master's presence. The Earl made no inroad on his narrative while he was telling it, but his countenance often changed and he was much moved at different passages – sometimes with sorrow and sometimes with anger; and he laughed vehemently at the mishap which had befallen the grand adversary of the Congregation and his concubine. The adventure, however, with the unknown varlet in the street appeared to make his Lordship very thoughtful, and no less than thrice did he question my grandfather if he had indeed given but those barren answers which I have already recited; to all which he received the most solemn asseverations that no more was said. His Lordship then sat some time cogitating with his hands resting on his thighs, his brows bent, and his lips pursed as with sharp thought. At last he said, —

"Gilhaize, you have done better in this than I ought to have expected of one so young and unpractised. The favour you won with Sir David Hamilton was no more than I thought your looks and manners would beget. But you are not only well-favoured

but well-fortuned; and had you not found yourself worthily bound to your duty I doubt not you might have prospered in the Archbishop's household. The affair with Madam Kilspinnie was a thing I reckoned not of, yet therein you have proved yourself not only a very Joseph, but so ripe in wit beyond your years that your merits deserve more commendation than I can afford to give, for I have not sufficient to bestow on the singular prudence and discernment wherewith you have parried the treacherous thrusts of that Judas Iscariot, Winterton, for so I doubt not is the traitor who waylaid you. He was once in my service and is now in the Queen Regent's. In sending off my men on errands similar to yours, I was wont to give them two pieces of gold, and this the false loon has gathered to be a custom from others as well as by his own knowledge, and he has made it the key to open the breasts of my servants. To know this, however, is a great discovery. But, Gilhaize, not to waste words, you have your master's confidence. Go, therefore, I pray you, with all speed to the Widow Rippet's and do as Winterton bade you and as chance may require. In the morning come again hither, for I have this night many weighty affairs, and you have shown yourself possessed of a discerning spirit, that may, in these times of peril and perjury, help the great cause of all good Scotchmen."

In saying these most acceptable words, he clapped my grandfather on the shoulder, and encouraged him to be as true-hearted as he was sharp-witted, and he could not fail to earn both treasure and trusts. So my grand-father left him, and went to the

Widow Rippet's in the Grass-market; and around her kitchen fire he found some four or five discarded knaves that were bargaining with her for beds, or for leave to sleep by the hearth; and he had not been long seated among them when his heart was grieved with pain to see Winterton come in, and behind him the two simple lads of Lithgow that had left their homes with him, whom, it appeared, the varlet had seduced from the Earl of Glencairn's service and inveigled into the Earl of Seaton's, a rampant papist, by the same wiles wherewith he thought he had likewise made a conquest of my grandfather, whom they had all come together to see; for the two Lithgow lads, like reynard the fox when he had lost his tail, were eager that he too should make himself like them. He feigned, however, great weariness, and indeed his heart was heavy to see such skill of wickedness in so young a man as he saw in Winterton. So, after partaking with them of some spiced ale which Winterton brought from the Salutation tavern, opposite the gallow's-stone, he declared himself overcome with sleep, and perforce thereof obligated to go to bed. But when they were gone, and he had retired to his sorry couch, no sleep came to his eyelids, but only hot and salt tears; for he thought that he had been in a measure concerned in bringing away the two thoughtless lads from their homes, and he saw that they were not tempered to resist the temptations of the world, but would soon fall away from their religious integrity, and become lewd and godless roisters, like the wuddy worthies that paid half-price for leave to sleep on the widow's hearth.

CHAPTER X

At the first blink of the grey eye of the morning my grandfather rose, and, quitting the house of the Widow Rippet, went straight to the Earl's lodgings, and was admitted. The porter at the door told him that their master, having been up all night, had but just retired to bed; but while they were speaking, the Earl's page, who slept in the ante-chamber, called from the stairhead to inquire who it was that had come so early, and being informed thereof, he went into his master, and afterwards came again and desired my grandfather to walk up, and conducted him to his Lordship, whom he found on his couch, but not undressed, and who said to him on his entering, when the page had retired,

"I am glad, Gilhaize, that you have come thus early, for I want a trusty man to go forthwith into the west country. What I wish you to do cannot be written, but you will take this ring;" and he took one from the little finger of his right hand, on the gem of which his cipher was graven, and gave it to my grandfather. "On showing it to Lord Boyd, whom you will find at the Dean Castle, near Kilmarnock, he will thereby know that you are specially trusted of me. The message whereof you are the bearer is to this effect, – That the Lords of the Congregation have, by their friends in many places, received strong exhortations to step forward and oppose the headlong fury of the churchmen; and

that they have in consequence deemed it necessary to lose no time in ascertaining what the strength of the Reformed may be, and to procure declarations for mutual defence from all who are joined in professing the true religion of Christ. Should he see meet to employ you in this matter, you will obey his orders and instructions, whatsoever they may be."

The Earl then put his hand aneath his pillow and drew out a small leathern purse, which he gave to my grandfather, who, in the doing of this, observed that he had several other similar purses ready under his head. In taking it, my grandfather was proceeding to tell him what he had observed at the Widow Rippet's, but his Lordship interrupted him, saying, —

"Such things are of no issue now, and your present duty is in a higher road; therefore make haste, and God be with you."

With these words, his Lordship turned himself on his couch, and composed himself to sleep, which my grandfather, after looking on for about a minute or so, observing, came away; and having borrowed a frock and a trot-cozey for the journey from one of the grooms of the hall, he went straight to Kenneth Shely's, a noted horse-setter in those days, who lived at the West-port, and bargained with him for the hire of a beast to Glasgow, though Glasgow was not then the nearest road to Kilmarnock; but he thought it prudent to go that way, in case any of the papistical emissaries should track his course.

There was, however, a little oversight in this, which did not come to mind till he was some miles on the road, and that was the

obligation it put him under of passing through Lithgow, where he was so well known, and where all his kith and kin lived – there being then no immediate route from Edinburgh to Glasgow but by Lithgow. And he debated with himself for a space of time whether he ought to proceed, or turn back and go the other way, and his mind was sorely troubled with doubts and difficulties. At last he considered that it was never deemed wise or fortunate to turn back in any undertaking, and besides, having for the service of the Saviour left his father's house and renounced his parents, like a bird that taketh wing and knoweth the nest where it was bred no more, he knit up his ravelled thoughts into resolution, and clapping spurs to his horse, rode bravely on.

But when he beheld the towers of the palace, and the steeples of his native town, rising before him, many remembrances came rushing to his heart, and all the vexations he had suffered there were lost in the sunny recollections of the morning of life, when everyone was kind, and the eyes of his parents looked on him with the brightness of delight, in so much, that his soul yearned within him, and his cheeks were wetted with fast-flowing tears. Nevertheless, he overcame this thaw of his fortitude, and went forward in the strength of the Lord, determined to swerve not in his duty to the Earl of Glencairn, nor in his holier fealty to a far greater Master. But the softness that he felt in his nature made him gird himself with a firm purpose to ride through the town without stopping. Scarcely, however, had he entered the port, when his horse stumbled and lost a shoe, by which he was not

only constrained to stop, but to take him to his father's smiddy, which was in sight when the mischance happened.

On going to the door, he found, as was commonly the case, a number of grooms and flunkies of the courtiers, with certain friars, holding vehement discourse concerning the tidings of the time, the burden of which was the burning of the aged Master Mill, a thing that even the monks durst not, for humanity, venture very strenuously to defend. His father was not then within; but one of the prentice lads, seeing who it was that had come with a horse to be shod, ran to tell him; and at the sight of my grandfather, the friars suspended their controversies with the serving-men, and gathered round him with many questions. He replied, however, to them all with few words, bidding the foreman to make haste and shoe his horse, hoping that he might thereby be off and away before his father came.

But, while the man was throng with the horse's foot, both father and mother came rushing in, and his mother was weeping bitterly, and wringing her hands, chiding him as if he had sold himself to the Evil One, and beseeching him to stop and repent. His father, however, said little, but inquired how he had been, what he was doing, and where he was going; and sent the prentice lad to bring a stoup of spiced ale from a public hard by, in which he pledged him, kindly hoping he would do well for himself and he would do well for his parents. The which fatherliness touched my grandfather more to the quick than all the loud lament and reproaches of his mother; and he replied that he had entered into

the service of a nobleman, and was then riding on his master's business to Glasgow; but he mentioned no name, nor did his father inquire. His mother, however, burst out into clamorous revilings, declaring her dread that it was some of the apostate heretics; and, giving vent to her passion, was as one in a frenzy, or possessed of a devil. The very friars were confounded at her distraction, and tried to soothe her and remove her forth the smiddy, which only made her more wild, so that all present compassionated my grandfather, who sat silent and made no answer, wearying till his horse was ready.

But greatly afflicted as he was by this trial, it was nothing to what ensued, when, after having mounted, and shaken his father by the hand, he galloped away to the West-port. There, on the outside, he was met by two women and an old man, parents of the lads whom he had taken with him to Edinburgh. Having heard he was at his father's smiddy, instead of going thither, they had come to that place, in order that they might speak with him more apart, and free from molestation, concerning their sons.

One of the women was a poor widow, and she had no other child, nor the hope of any other bread-winner for her old age. She, however, said nothing, but stood with the corner of her apron at her eyes, sobbing very afflictedly, while her friends, on seeing my grandfather coming out of the port, stepped forward, and the old man caught the horse by the bridle, and said gravely,

"Ye maun stop and satisfy three sorrowful parents! What hae

ye done with your twa thoughtless companions?"

My grandfather's heart was as if it would have perished in his bosom; for the company he had seen the lads with, and the talk they had held, and above all their recklessness of principle, came upon him like a withering flash of fire. He, however, replied soberly, that he had seen them both the night before, and that they were well in health and jocund in spirit.

The mother that was standing near her husband was blithe to hear this, and reminded her gudeman, how she had often said, that when they did hear tidings of their son her words would be found true, for he had ever been all his days a brisk and a valiant bairn.

But the helpless widow was not content, and she came forward drying her tears, saying, "And what is my poor fatherless do-nagude about? I'm fearfu, fearfu to be particular; for, though he was aye kind-hearted to me, he was easily wised, and I doubt, I doubt he'll prove a blasting or a blessing, according to the hands he fa's among."

"I hope and pray," said my grandfather, "that he'll be protected from scaith, and live to be a comfort to all his friends." And, so saying, he disengaged his bridle with a gentle violence from the old man's hold, telling them he could not afford to stop, being timed to reach Glasgow that night. So he pricked the horse with his rowals, and shot away; but his heart, all the remainder of his day's journey, was as if it had been pierced with many barbed arrows, and the sad voice of the poor anxious widow rung in his

ears like the sound of some doleful knell.

Saving this affair at Lithgow, nothing befell him till he came to the gates of Glasgow; by which time it was dark, and the ward and watch set, and they questioned him very sharply before giving him admission. For the Queen Regent was then sojourning in the castle, and her fears and cares were greatly quickened at that time, by rumours from all parts of the kingdom concerning the murder, as it was called, of Master Mill. On this account the French guards, which she had with her, were instructed to be jealous of all untimely travellers, and they being joined with a ward of burghers, but using only their own tongue, caused no small molestation to every Scotsman that sought admission after the sun was set: for the burghers, not being well versed in military practices, were of themselves very propugnacious in their authority, making more ado than even the Frenchmen. It happened, however, that there was among those valiant traders and craftsmen of Glasgow one Thomas Sword, the deacon of the hammermen, and he having the command of those stationed at the gate, overheard what was passing with my grandfather, and coming out of the wardroom, inquired his name, which when he heard, and that he was son to Michael Gilhaize, the Lithgow ferrier, he advised to let him in, saying he knew his father well, and that they had worked together, when young men, in the King's armoury at Stirling; and he told him where he lived, and invited him, when his horse was stabled, to come to supper, for he was glad to see him for his father's sake.

CHAPTER XI

At this time an ancient controversy between the Archbishops of St Andrews and of Glasgow, touching their respective jurisdictions, had been resuscitated with great acrimony, and in the debates concerning the same the Glasgow people took a deep interest, for they are stouthearted and of an adventurous spirit, and cannot abide to think that they or their town should, in anything of public honour, be deemed either slack or second to the foremost in the realm, and none of all the worthy burgesses thereof thought more proudly of the superiority and renown of their city than did Deacon Sword. So it came to pass, as he was sitting at supper with my grandfather, that he enlarged and expatiated on the inordinate pretensions of the Archbishop of St Andrews, and took occasion to diverge from the prelate's political ambition to speak of the enormities of his ecclesiastical government, and particularly of that heinous and never-to-be-forgotten act, the burning of an aged man of fourscore and two years, whose very heresies, as the deacon mercifully said, ought rather to have been imputed to dotage than charged as offences.

My grandfather was well pleased to observe such vigour of principle and bravery of character in one having such sway and weight in so great a community as to be the chief captain of the crafts who were banded with the hammermen, namely, the cartwrights, the saddlers, the masons, the coopers, the mariners,

and all whose work required the use of edge-tools, the hardest and buirdliest of the trades, and he allowed himself to run in with the deacon's humour, but without letting wot either in whose service he was, or on what exploit he was bound, sowing however, from time to time, hints as to the need that seemed to be growing of putting a curb on the bold front wherewith the Archbishop of St Andrews, under the pretext of suppressing heresies, butted with the horns of oppression against all who stood within the reverence of his displeasure.

Deacon Sword had himself a leaning to the reformed doctrines, which, with his public enmity to the challenger of his own Archbishop, made him take to those hints with so great an affinity, that he vowed to God, shaking my grandfather by the hand over the table, that if some steps were not soon taken to stop such inordinate misrule, there were not wanting five hundred men in Glasgow who would start forward with weapons in their grip at the first tout of a trump to vindicate the liberties of the subject, and the wholesome administration by the temporal judges of the law against all offenders as of old. And, giving scope to his ardour, he said there was then such a spirit awakened in Glasgow that men, women and children thirsted to see justice executed on the churchmen, who were daily waxing more and more wroth and insatiable against everyone who called their doctrines or polity in question.

Thus out of the very devices which had been devised by those about the Queen Regent to intercept the free communion

of the people with one another was the means brought about whereby a chosen emissary of the Congregation came to get at the emboldening knowledge of the sense of the citizens of Glasgow with regard to the great cause which at that period troubled the minds and fears of all men.

My grandfather was joyfully heartened by what he heard, and before coming away from the deacon who, with the hospitality common to his townsmen, would fain have had him to prolong their sederunt over the gardevine, he said that if Glasgow were as true and valiant as it was thought, there could be no doubt that her declaration for the Lords of the Congregation would work out a great redress of public wrongs. For, from all he could learn and understand, those high and pious noblemen had nothing more at heart than to procure for the people the free exercise of their right to worship God according to their conscience and the doctrines of the Old and New Testaments.

But though over the liquor-cup the deacon had spoken so dreadless and like a manly citizen, my grandfather resolved with himself to depart betimes for Kilmarnock, in case of any change in his temper. Accordingly, he requested the hostler of the hostel where he had taken his bed, to which his day's hard journey early inclined him, to have his horse in readiness before break of day. But this hostel, which was called the Cross of Rhodes, happened to be situated at the Water-port, and besides being a tavern and inn, was likewise the great ferryhouse of the Clyde when the tide was up, or the ford rendered unsafe by the torrents of the speats

and inland rains – the which caused it to be much frequented by the skippers and mariners of the barks that traded to France and Genoa with the Renfrew salmon, and by all sorts of travellers at all times even to the small hours of the morning. In short it was a boisterous house, the company resorting thereto of a sort little in unison with the religious frame of my grandfather. As soon, therefore, as he came from the deacon's, he went to bed without taking off his clothes, in order that he might be fit for the road as he intended; and his bed being in the public room, with sliding doors, he drew them upon him, hoping to shut out some of the din and to win a little repose. But scarcely had he laid his head on the pillow when he heard the voice of one entering the room, and listening eagerly, he discovered that it was no other than the traitor Winterton's, the which so amazed him with apprehension that he shook as he lay, like the aspen leaf on the tree.

Winterton called like a braggart for supper and hot wine, boasting he had ridden that day from Edinburgh, and that he must be up and across his horse by daylight in the morning, as he had need to be in Kilmarnock by noon. In this, which vanity made him tell in bravado, my grandfather could not but discern a kind Providence admonishing himself, for he had no doubt that Winterton was in pursuit of him, and thankful he was that he had given no inkling to anyone in the house as to whence he had come and where he was going. But had this thought not at once entered his head, he would soon have had cause to think it, for while Winterton was eating his supper he began to converse

with their host, and to inquire what travellers had crossed the river. Twice or thrice, in as it were an off-hand manner, he spoke of one whom he called a cousin, but, in describing his garb, he left no doubt in my grandfather's bosom that it was regarding him he seemed at once both so negligent and so anxious. Most providential therefore it was that my grandfather had altered his dress before leaving Edinburgh, for the marks which Winterton gave of him were chiefly drawn from his ordinary garb, and by them their host in consequence said he had seen no such person.

When Winterton had finished his repast, and was getting his second stoup of wine heated, he asked where he was to sleep, to the which question the host replied that he feared he would, like others, be obligated to make a bench by the fireside his couch, all the beds in the house being already bespoke or occupied. "Every one of them is double," said the man, "save only one, the which is paid for by a young man that goes off at break of day and who is already asleep."

At this Winterton swore a dreadful oath that he would not sleep by the fire after riding fifty miles while there was half a bed in the house, and commanded the host to go and tell the young man that he must half blankets with him.

My grandfather knew that this could only refer to him; so, when their host came and opened the sliding doors of the bed, he feigned himself to be very fast asleep at the back of the bed, and only groaned in drowsiness when he was touched.

"O, let him alane," cried Winterton, "I ken what it is to be

tired; so, as there's room enough at the stock, when I have drank my posset I'll e'en creep in beside him."

My grandfather, weary as he was, lay panting with apprehension, not doubting that he should be speedily discovered; but when Winterton had finished his drink and came swaggering and jocose to be his bedfellow, he kept himself with his face to the wall, and snored like one who was in haste to sleep more than enough, insomuch that Winterton, when he lay down, gave him a deg with his elbow and swore at him to be quiet. His own fatigue, however, soon mastered the disturbance which my grandfather made, and he began himself to echo the noise in defenceless sincerity.

On hearing him thus fettered by sleep, my grandfather began to consider with himself what he ought to do, being both afraid and perplexed he knew not wherefore; and he was prompted by a power that he durst not and could not reason with to rise and escape from the jeopardy wherein he then was. But how could this be done, for the house was still open, and travellers and customers were continually going and coming. Truly his situation was one of great tribulation, and escape therefrom a thing seemingly past hope and the unaided wisdom of man.

CHAPTER XII

After lying about the period of an hour in great perturbation, he began to grow more collected, and the din and resort of strangers in the house also subsided, by which he was enabled, with help from on high, to gather his scattered thoughts and to bind them up into the sheaves of purpose and resolution. Accordingly, when all was still, and several young men that were sitting by the fire on account of every bed being occupied, gave note, by their deep breathing, that sleep had descended upon them, and darkened their senses with her gracious and downy wings, he rose softly from the side of Winterton, and stepping over him, slipped to the door, which he unbarred, and the moon shining bright he went to the stable to take out his horse. It was not his intent to have done this, but to have gone up into the streets of the city and walked the walls thereof till he thought his adversary was gone, but seeing the moon so fair and clear he determined to take his horse and forthwith proceed on his journey, for the river was low and fordable, and trintled its waters with a silvery sheen in the stillness of the beautiful light.

Scarcely, however, had he pulled the latch of the stable door – even as he was just entering in – when he heard Winterton coming from the house rousing the hostler, whom he profanely rated for allowing him to oversleep himself. For, wakening just as his bedfellow rose, he thought the morning was come and that

his orders had been neglected.

In this extremity my grandfather saw no chance of evasion. If he went out into the moonshine he would to a surety be discovered, and in the stable he would to a certainty be caught. But what could he do and the danger so pressing? He had hardly a choice; however, he went into the stable, shut the door, and running up to the horses that were farthest ben, mounted into the hack, and hid himself among the hay.

In that concealment he was scarcely well down when Winterton, with an hostler that was half asleep, came with a lantern to the door, bannin the poor knave as if he had been cursing him with bell, book and candle, the other rubbing his eyes and declaring it was still far from morning, and saying he was sure the other traveller was not gone. To the which there was speedy evidence, for on going towards Winterton's horse the hostler saw my grandfather's in its stall and told him so.

At that moment a glimpse of the lantern fell on the horse's legs, and its feet being white, "Oho!" cried Winterton, "let us look here – Kenneth Shely's Lightfoot – the very beast; and hae I been in the same hole wi' the tod and no kent it. The deil's black collie worry my soul, but this is a soople trick. I did nae think the sleekit sinner had art enough to play't. Nae doubt he's gane to hide himsel in the town till I'm awa, for he has heard what I said yestreen. But I'll be up sides wi' him. The de'il a foot will I gang this morning till he comes back for his horse." And with these words he turned out of the stable with the hostler and went

back to the house.

No sooner were they well gone than my grandfather came from his hiding-place, and twisting a wisp of straw round his horse's feet, that they might not dirl or make a din on the stones, he led it cannily out and down to the river's brink, and, there mounting, took the ford, and was soon free on the Gorbals side. Riding up the gait at a brisk trot, he passed on for a short time along the road that he had been told led to Kilmarnock, but fearing he would be followed, he turned off at the first wynd he came to on the left, and a blessed thing it was that he did so, for it led to the Reformation-leavened town of Paisley, where he arrived an hour before daylight. Winterton, little jealousing what had happened, went again to bed, as my grandfather afterwards learnt, and had fallen asleep. In the morning when he awoke and was told that both man and horse were flown, he flayed the hostler's back and legs in more than a score of places, believing he had connived at my grandfather's secret flight.

My grandfather had never before been in the town of Paisley, but he had often heard from Abercorn's serving-men that were wont to sorn about his father's smiddy, of a house of jovial entertainment by the water-side, about a stone-cast from the abbey-yett, the hostess whereof was a certain canty dame called Maggy Napier, then in great repute with the shavelings of the abbey. Thither he directed his course, the abbey towers serving him for her sign, and the moonlight and running river were guides to her door, at the which he was not blate in chapping. She

was, however, long of giving entrance, for it happened that some nights before the magistrates of the town had been at a carousal with the abbot and chapter, the papistical denomination for the seven heads and ten horns of a monastery, and when they had come away and were going home, one of them, Bailie Pollock, a gaucy widower, was instigated by the devil and the wine he had drunk to stravaig towards Maggy Napier's – a most unseemly thing for a bailie to do – especially a bailie of Paisley, but it was then the days of popish sinfulness. And when Bailie Pollock went thither the house was full of riotous swankies, who, being the waur of drink themselves, had but little reverence for a magistrate in the same state, so they handled him to such a degree that he was obliged to keep his bed and put collops to his eyes for three days. The consequence of which was that the house fell under the displeasure of the Town Council, and Maggie was admonished to keep it more orderly and doucely – though the fault came neither from her nor her customers, as she told my grandfather, for detaining him so long, it being requisite that she should see he was in a condition of sobriety before letting him in. But, when admitted, he was in no spirit to enjoy her jocosity concerning Bailie Pollock's spree, so he told her that he had come far and had far to go, and that having heard sore tidings of a friend, he was fain to go to bed and try if he could compose himself with an hour or two of sleep.

Maggie accordingly refrained from her jocularities, and began to soothe and comfort him, for she was naturally of a winsome

way, and prepared a bed for him with her best sheets, the which, she said, were gi'en her in gratus gift frae the Lord Abbot, so that he undressed himself and enjoyed a pleasant interregnum of anxiety for more than five hours; and when he awoke and was up, he found a breakfast worthy of the abbot himself ready, and his hostess was most courtly and kind, praising the dainties, and pressing him to eat. Nor when he proposed to reckon with her for the lawin would she touch the money, but made him promise, when he came back, he would bide another night with her, hoping he would then be in better spirits, for she was wae to see so braw a gallant sae casten down, doless and dowie.

When they had settled their contest, and my grandfather had come out to mount his beast, which a stripling was holding ready for him at a louping-on-stane near the abbey-yett, as he was going thither, a young friar, who was taking a morning stroll along the pleasant banks of the Cart, approached towards him, and, after looking hard at him for some time, called him by name and took him by both the hands, which he pressed with a brotherly affection.

This friar was of Lithgow parentage and called Dominick Callender, and when he and my grandfather were playing-bairns, they had spent many a merry day of their suspicion-less young years together. As he grew up, being a lad of shrewd parts, and of a very staid and orderly deportment, the monks set their snares for him, and before he could well think for himself he was wiled into their traps, and becoming a novice, in due season professed

himself a monk. But it was some time before my grandfather knew him again, for the ruddy of youth had fled his cheek, and he was pale and of a studious countenance; and when the first sparklings of his pleasure at the sight of his old play-marrow had gone off, his eyes saddened into thoughtfulness, and he appeared like one weighed down with care and heavy inward dule.

CHAPTER XIII

After Dominick Callender and my grandfather had conversed some time, with many interchanges of the kindly remembrances of past pleasures, the gentle friar began to bewail his sad estate in being a professed monk, and so mournfully to deplore the rashness with which inexperienced youth often takes upon itself a yoke it can never lay down, that the compassion of his friend was sorrowfully awakened, for he saw he was living a life of bitterness and grief. He heard him, however, without making any reply or saying anything concerning his own lot of hazard and adventure; for, considering Dominick to be leagued with the papistical orders, he did not think him safe to be trusted, notwithstanding the unchanged freshness of the loving-kindness which he still seemed to bear in his heart; nor even, had he not felt this jealousy, would he have thought himself free to speak of his errand, far less to have given to any stranger aught that might have been an inkling of his noble master's zealous, but secret, stirrings for the weal of Scotland and the enfranchisement of the worshippers of the true God.

When my grandfather had arrived at his horse, and prepared to mount, Dominick Callender said to him if he would ride slowly for a little way he would walk by his side, adding, "For maybe I'll ne'er see you again – I'm a-weary of this way of life, and the signs of the times bode no good to the church. I hae a thought to

go into some foreign land where I may taste the air of a freeman, and I feel myself comforted before I quit our auld, hard-favoured but warm-hearted Scotland, in meeting wi' ane that reminds me how I had once sunny mornings and summer days."

This was said so much in the sincerity of a confiding spirit that my grandfather could not refrain from observing, in answer, that he feared his friar's cloak did not sit easy upon him, which led him on to acknowledge that it was so.

"I am speaking to you, Gilhaize," said he, "with the frank heart of auld langsyne, and I dinna scruple to confess to one that I hae often thought of, and weary't to see again, and wondered what had become of, that my conscience has revolted against the errors of the papacy, and that I am now upon the eve of fleeing my native land and joining the Reformed at Geneva. And maybe I'm no ordain'd to spend a' my life in exile, for no man can deny that the people of Scotland are not inwardly the warm adversaries of the church. That last and cruellest deed, the sacrifice of the feckless old man of fourscore and upward, has proven that the humanity of the world will no longer endure the laws and pretensions of the church, and there are few in Paisley whom the burning of auld Mill has not kindled with the spirit of resistance."

The latter portion of these words was as joyous tidings to my grandfather, and he tightened his reins and entered into a more particular and inquisitive discourse with his companion, by which he gathered that the martyrdom of Master Mill had

indeed caused great astonishment and wrath among the pious in and about Paisley, and not only among them, but had estranged the affections even of the more worldly from the priesthood, of whom it was openly said that the sense of pity towards the commonalty of mankind was extinguished within them, and that they were all in all for themselves.

But as they were proceeding through the town and along the road, conversing in a familiar but earnest manner on these great concerns, Dominick Callender began to inveigh against the morals of his brethren, and to lament again, in a very piteous manner, that he was decreed, by his monastic profession, from the enjoyment of the dearest and tenderest pleasures of man. And before they separated, it came out that he had been for some time touched with the soft enchantments of love for a young maiden, the daughter of a gentleman of good account in Paisley, and that her chaste piety was as the precious gum wherewith the Egyptians of old preserved their dead in everlasting beauty, keeping from her presence all taint of impurity and of thoughts sullyng to innocence, insomuch that, even were he inclined, as he said many of his brethren would have been, to have acted the part of a secret canker to that fair blossom, the gracious and holy embalmment of her virtues would have proved an incorruptible protection.

"But," he exclaimed, with a sorrowful voice, "that which is her glory and my admiration and praise is converted by the bondage of my unnatural vows into a curse to us both. The felicity that

we might have enjoyed together in wedded life is forbidden to us as a great crime. But the laws of God are above the canons of the church, the voice of Nature is louder than the fulminations of the Vatican, and I have resolved to obey the one and give ear to the other despite the horrors that await on apostacy. Can you, Gilhaize, in aught assist my resolution?"

There was so much vehemence and the passion of grief in these ejaculations, that my grandfather wist not well what to say. He told him, however, not to be rash in what he did, nor to disclose his intents save only to those in whom he could confide, for the times were perilous to everyone that slackened in reverence to the papacy, particularly to such as had pastured within the chosen folds of the church.

"Bide," said he, "till you see what issue is ordained to come from this dreadful deed which so shaketh all the land, making the abbey towers topple and tremble to their oldest and deepest foundations. Truth is awakened and gone forth conquering and to conquer. It cannot be that ancient iniquities will be much longer endured, the arm of Wrath is raised against them, the sword of Revenge is drawn forth from its scabbard by Justice, and Nature has burst asunder the cords of the Roman harlot and stands in her freedom, like Samson, when the Spirit of the Lord was mightily poured upon him, as he awoke from the lap of Delilah."

The gentle friar, as my grandfather often told, stood for some time astounded at this speech, and then he said, —

"I dreamt not, Gilhaize, that beneath a countenance so calm

and comely, the zealous fires of a warrior's bravery could have been kindled to so vehement a heat. But I will vex you with no questions. Heaven is on your side, and may its redeeming promptings never allow its ministers to rest till the fetters are broken and the slaves are set free."

With these words he stepped forward to shake my grandfather by the hand and to bid him farewell, but just as he came to the stirrup he halted and said, —

"It is not for nothing that the remembrance of you has been preserved so much brighter and dearer to me than that of all my kin. There was aye something about you in our heedless days that often made me wonder, I could not tell wherefore, and now, when I behold you in the prime of manhood, it fills me with admiration and awe and makes me do homage to you as a master."

Much more he added to the same effect, which the modesty of my grandfather would not allow him to repeat; but when they had parted, and my grandfather had ridden forward some two or three miles, he recalled to mind what had passed between them, and he used to say that this discourse with his early friend first opened to him a view of the grievous captivity which Nature suffered in the monasteries and convents, notwithstanding the loose lives imputed to their inmates; and he saw that the Reformation would be hailed by many that languished in the bondage of their vows as a great and glorious deliverance. But still he was wont to say, even with such as these, it was overly mingled with temporal concerns, and that they longed for it less on account of its

immortal issues than for its sensual emancipations.

And as he was proceeding on his way in this frame of mind, and thinking on all that he had seen and learnt from the day in which he bade adieu to his father's house, he came to a place where the road forked off in two different airts, and not knowing which to take, he stopped his horse and waited till a man drew nigh whom he observed coming towards him. By this man he was told that the road leading leftward led to Kilmarnock and Ayr, and the other on the right to Kilwinning; so, without saying anything, he turned his horse's head into the latter, the which he was moved to do by sundry causes and reasons. First, he had remarked that the chances in his journey had, in a very singular manner, led him to gain much of that sort of knowledge which the Lords of the Congregation thirsted for; and second, he had no doubt that Winterton was in pursuit of him to Kilmarnock, for some purpose of frustration or circumvention, the which, though he was not able to divine, he could not but consider important, if it was, as he thought, the prime motive of that varlet's journey.

But he was chiefly disposed to prefer the Kilwinning road, though it was several miles more of bout-gait, on account of the rich abbacy in that town, hoping he might glean and gather some account how the clergy there stood affected, the meeting with Dominick Callender having afforded him a vista of friends and auxiliaries in the enemy's camp little thought of. Besides all this, he reflected, that as it was of consequence he should reach the Lord Boyd in secrecy, he would be more likely to do so by

stopping at Kilwinning and seeing someone there to guide him to the Dean Castle by moonlight. I have heard him say, however, the speakable motives of his deviation from the straight road were at the time far less effectual in moving him thereto than a something which he could not tell, that with an invisible hand took his horse, as it were, by the bridle-rings and constrained him to go into the Kilwinning track. In the whole of this journey there was indeed a very extraordinary manifestation of a special providence, not only in the protection vouchsafed towards himself, but in the remarkable accidents and occurrences by which he was enabled to enrich himself with the knowledge so precious at that time to those who were chosen to work the great work of the Gospel in Scotland.

CHAPTER XIV

As my grandfather came in sight of Kilwinning, and beheld the abbey with its lofty horned towers and spiky pinnacles and the sands of Cunningham between it and the sea, it seemed to him as if a huge leviathan had come up from the depths of the ocean and was devouring the green inland, having already consumed all the herbage of the wide waste that lay so bare and yellow for many a mile, desert, and lonely in the silent sunshine, and he ejaculated to himself that the frugal soil of poor Scotland could ne'er have been designed to pasture such enormities.

As he rode on, his path descended from the heights into pleasant tracks along banks feathered with the fragrant plumage of the birch and hazel, and he forgot, in hearkening to the cheerful prattle of the Garnock waters, as they swirled among the pebbles by the roadside, the pageantries of that mere bodily worship which had worked on the ignorance of the world to raise such costly monuments of the long-suffering patience of Heaven, while they showed how much the divine nature of the infinite God and the humility of His eternal Son had been forgotten in this land among professing Christians.

When he came nigh the town he inquired for an hostel, and a stripling, the miller's son, who was throwing stones at a flock of geese belonging to the abbey, then taking their pleasures uninvited in his father's mill-dam, guided him to the house of

Theophilus Lugton, the chief vintner, horse-setter and stabler in the town, where, on alighting, he was very kindly received; for the gudewife was of a stirring, household nature, and Theophilus himself, albeit douce and temperate for a publican, was a man obliging and hospitable, not only as became him in his trade but from a disinterested good-will. He was, indeed, as my grandfather came afterwards to know, really a person holden in great respect and repute by the visitors and pilgrims who resorted to the abbey, and by none more than by the worthy wives of Irvine, the most regular of his customers. For they being then in the darkness of papistry, were as much given to the idolatry of holidays and masses as, thanks be and praise! they are now to the hunting out of sound gospel preachers and sacramental occasions. Many a stoup of burnt wine and spiced ale they were wont at Pace and Yule and other papistal high times to partake of together in the house of Theophilus Lugton, happy and well content when their possets were flavoured with the ghostly conversation of some gawsie monk well versed in the mysteries of requiems and purgatory.

Having parted with his horse to be taken to the stable by Theophilus himself, my grandfather walked into the house, and Dame Lugton set for him an elbow-chair by the chimla lug, and while she was preparing something for a repast they fell into conversation, in the course of which she informed him that a messenger had come to the abbey that forenoon from Edinburgh, and a rumour had been bruited about soon after his arrival that

there was great cause to dread a rising among the heretics, for, being ingrained with papistry, she so spoke of the Reformers.

This news troubled my grandfather not a little, and the more he inquired concerning the tidings the more reason he got to be alarmed and to suspect that the bearer was Winterton, who being still in the town, and then at the abbey – his horse was in Theophilus Lugton's stable – he could not but think that in coming to Kilwinning instead of going right on to Kilmarnock he had run into the lion's mouth. But, seeing it was so, and could not be helped, he put his trust in the Lord and resolved to swerve in no point from the straight line which he had laid down for himself.

While he was eating of Dame Lugton's fare with the relishing sauce of a keen appetite, in a manner that no one who saw him could have supposed he was almost sick with a surfeit of anxieties, one James Coom, a smith, came in for a mutchkin-cap of ale, and he, seeing a traveller, said, —

"Thir's sair news! The drouth of cauld iron will be slockened in men's blood ere we hear the end o't."

"Deed," replied my grandfather, "it's very alarming; Lucky, here, has just been telling me that there's likely to be a straemash among the Reformers. Surely they'll ne'er daur to rebel."

"If a' tales be true, that's no to do," said the smith, blowing the froth from the cap in which Dame Lugton handed him the ale, and taking a right good-willy waught.

"But what's said?" inquired my grandfather, when the smith

had fetched his breath.

"Naebody can weel tell," was his response; "a' that's come this length is but the sough afore the storm. Within twa hours there has been a great riding hither and yon, and a lad straight frae Embro' has come to bid my Lord Abbot repair to the court; and three chiels hae been at me frae Eglinton Castle to get their beast shod for a journey. My Lord there is hyte and fykie; there's a gale in his tail, said they, light where it may. Now, atween oursels, my Lord has na the heart of a true bairn to that aged and worthy grannie of the papistry, our leddy the Virgin Mary – here's her health, poor auld deaf and dumb creature – she has na, I doubt, the pith to warsle wi' the blast she ance in a day had."

"Haud that heretical tongue o' thine, Jamie Coom," exclaimed Dame Lugton. "It's enough to gaur a body's hair stand on end to hear o' your familiarities wi' the Holy Virgin. I won'er my Lord Abbot has na langsyne tethert thy tongue to the kirk door wi' a red-het nail for sic blasphemy. But fools are privileged, and so's seen o' thee."

"And wha made me familiar wi' her, Dame Lugton, tell me that?" replied James; "was na it my Lord himself at last Marymas, when he sent for me to make a hoop to mend her leg that sklintered aff as they were dressing her for the show. Eh! little did I think that I was ever to hae the honour and glory of ca'ing a nail intil the timber hip o' the Virgin Mary! Ah, Lucky, ye would na hae tholed the dirl o' the dints o' my hammer as she did. But she's a saint, and ye'll ne'er deny that ye're a sinner."

To this Dame Lugton was unable to reply, and the smith, cunningly winking, dippet his head up to the lugs in the ale-cap.

"But," said my grandfather, "no to speak wi' disrespeck of things considered wi' reverence, it does na seem to me that there is ony cause to think the Reformers hae yet rebelled."

"I am sure," replied the smith, "if they hae na they ought, or the de'il a spunk's amang them. Isna a' the monks frae John o' Groat's to the Border getting ready their spits and rackses, frying-pans and branders to cook them like capons and doos for Horney's supper? I never hear my ain bellows snoring at a gaud o' iron in the fire but I think o' fat Father Lickladle, the abbey's head kitchener, roasting me o'er the low like a laverock in his collop-tangs; for, as Dame Lugton there weel kens, I'm ane o' the Reformed. Heh! but it's a braw thing this Reformation. It used to cost me as muckle siller for the sin o' getting fu', no aboon three or four times in the year, as would hae kept ony honest man blithe and ree frae New'erday to Hogmanæ; but our worthy hostess has found to her profit that I'm now ane of her best customers. What say ye, Lucky?"

"Truly," said Dame Lugton, laughing, "thou's no an ill swatch o' the Reformers; and naebody need be surprised at the growth o' heresy wha thinks o' the dreadfu' cost the professors o't used to be at for pardons. But maybe they'll soon find that the de'il's as hard a taxer as e'er the kirk was; for ever since thou has refraint frae paying penance, thy weekly calks ahint the door ha'e been on the increase, Jamie, and no ae plack has thou mair to spare.

So muckle gude thy reforming has done thee."

"Bide awee, Lucky," cried the smith, setting down the ale-cap which he had just emptied; "bide awee, and ye'll see a change. Surely it was to be expecket, considering the spark in my hass, that the first use I would mak' o' the freedom o' the Reformation would be to quench it, which I never was allowed to do afore; and whenever that's done, ye'll see me a geizen't keg o' sobriety, tak the word o' a drouthy smith for't."

At this jink o' their controversy who should come into the house, ringing ben to the hearth-stane with his iron heels and the rattling rowels o' his spurs, but Winterton, without observing my grandfather, who was then sitting with his back to the window light, in the arm-chair at the chimla lug; and when he had ordered Dame Lugton to spice him a drink of her best brewing, he began to joke and jibe with the blacksmith, the which allowing my grandfather time to compose his wits, which were in a degree startled. He saw that he could not but be discovered, so he thought it was best to bring himself out. Accordingly, in as quiet a manner as he was able to put on, he said to Winterton, —

"I hae a notion that we twa ha'e forgathered no lang sinesyne."

At the sound of these words Winterton gave a loup, as if he had tramped on something no canny, syne a whirring sort of triumphant whistle, and then a shout, crying, —

"Ha, ha! tod lowrie! hae I yirded you at last?" But instanter he recollected himsel', and giving my grandfather a significant

look, as if he wished him no to be particular, he said, "I heard o' you, Gilhaize, on the road, and I was fain to hae come up wi' you, that we might hae travelled thegither. Howsever, I lost scent at Glasgow." And then he continued to haver with him, in his loose and profligate manner, anent the Glasgow damsels, till the ale was ready, when he pressed my grandfather to taste, never letting wot how they had slept together in the same bed; and my grandfather, on his part, was no less circumspect, for he discerned that Winterton intended to come over him, and he was resolved to be on his guard.

CHAPTER XV

When Winterton had finished his drink, which he did hastily, he proposed to my grandfather that they should take a stroll through the town; and my grandfather being eager to throw stour in his eyes, was readily consenting thereto.

"Weel," said the knave, when he had warily led him into the abbey kirk-yard, "I didna think ye would hae gane back to my Lord; but it's a' very weel, since he has looked o'er what's past, and gi'en you a new dark."

"He's very indulgent," replied my grandfather, "and I would be looth to wrang so kind a master;" and he looked at Winterton. The varlet, however, never winced, but rejoined lightly, —

"But I wish you had come back to Widow Rippet's, for ye would hae spar't me a hard ride. Scarcely had ye ta'en the road when my Lord mindit that he had neglekit to gie you the sign, by the which ye were to make yoursel and message kent to his friends, and I was sent after to tell you."

"I'm glad o' that," replied my grandfather; "what is't?" Winterton was a thought molested by this thrust of a question, and for the space of about a minute said nothing, till he had considered with himself, when he rejoined, —

"Three lads were sent off about the same time wi' you, and the Earl was nae quite sure, he said, whilk of you a' he had forgotten to gie the token whereby ye would be known as his men. But the

sign for the Earl of Eglinton, to whom I guess ye hae been sent, by coming to Kilwinning, is no the same as for the Lord Boyd, to whom I thought ye had been missioned; for I hae been at the Dean Castle, and finding you not there, followed you hither."

"I'll be plain wi' you," said my grandfather to this draughty speech. "I'm bound to the Lord Boyd; but coming through Paisley, when I reached the place where the twa roads branched, I took the ane that brought me here, instead of the gate to Kilmarnock; so, as soon as my beast has eaten his corn, I mean to double back to the Dean Castle."

"How, in the name of the saints and souls, did ye think, in going frae Glasgow to Kilmarnock, o' taking the road to Paisley?"

"Deed, an' ye were acquaint," said my grandfather, "wi' how little I knew o' the country, ye would nae speir that question; but since we hae fallen in thegither, and are baith, ye ken, in my Lord Glencairn's service, I hope you'll no objek to ride back wi' me to the Lord Boyd's."

"Then it's no you that was sent to the Earl of Eglinton?" exclaimed Winterton, pretending more surprise than he felt; "and all my journey has been for naething. Howsever, I'll go back wi' you to Kilmarnock, and the sooner we gang the better."

Little farther discourse then passed, for they returned to the hostel, and ordering out their horses, were soon on the road; and as they trotted along, Winterton was overly outspoken against the papisticals, calling them all kinds of ill names, and no sparing the Queen Regent. But my grandfather kept a calm tongue, and

made no reflections.

"Howsever," said Winterton, pulling up his bridle and walking his horse as they were skirting the moor of Irvine, leaving the town about a mile off on the right, "you and me, Gilhaize, that are but servants, need nae fash our heads wi' sic things. The wyte o' wars lie at the doors of kings, and the soldiers are free o' the sin o' them. But how will ye get into the presence and confidence of the Lord Boyd?"

"I thought," replied my grandfather, pawkily, "that ye had gotten our master's token; and I maun trust to you."

"Oh," cried Winterton, "I got but the ane for the lad sent to Eglinton Castle."

"And ha'e ye been there?" said my grandfather.

Winterton didna let wot that he heard this, but, stooping over on the off-side of his horse, pretended he was righting something about his stirrup-leather. My grandfather was, however, resolved to prob him to the quick; so, when he was again sitting upright, he repeated the question, if he had been to Eglinton Castle.

"O, ay," cried the false loon; "I was there, but the bird was flown."

"And how got he the ear of the Earl," said my grandfather, "not having the sign?"

"In for a penny in for a pound," was Winterton's motto, and ae lie with him was father to a race. "Luckily for him," replied he, "some of the serving-men kent him as being in Glencairn's service, so they took him to their master."

My grandfather had no doubt that there was some truth in this, though he was sure Winterton knew little about it; for it agreed with what James Coom, the smith, had said about the lads from Eglinton that had been at his smiddy to get the horses shod, and remembering the leathern purses under the Earl his master's pillow, he was persuaded that there had been a messenger sent to the head of the Montgomeries, and likewise to other lords, friends of the Congregation; but he saw that Winterton went by guess, and lied at random. Still, though not affecting to notice it, nor expressing any distrust, he could not help saying to him, that he had come a long way, and after all it looked like a gowk's errand.

The remark, however, only served to give Winterton inward satisfaction, and he replied with a laugh, that it made little odds to him where he was sent, and that he'd as lief ride in Ayrshire as sorn about the causey of Enbrough.

In this sort of talk and conference they rode on together, the o'ercome every now and then of Winterton's discourse being concerning the proof my grandfather carried with him, whereby the Lord Boyd would know he was one of Glencairn's men. But, notwithstanding all his wiles and devices to howk the secret out of him, his drift being so clearly discerned, my grandfather was enabled to play with him till they were arrived at Kilmarnock, where Winterton proposed to stop till he had delivered his message to the Lord Boyd, at the Dean Castle.

"That surely cannot be," replied my grandfather; "for ye ken,

as there has been some mistak about the sign whereby I am to make myself known, ye'll ha'e to come wi' me to expound, in case of need. In trooth, now that we hae forgatherit, and as I ha'e but this ae message to a' the shire of Ayr, I would fain ha'e your company till I see the upshot."

Winterton could not very easily make a refusal to this, but he hesitated and swithered, till my grandfather urged him again; – when, seeing no help for it, and his companion, as he thought, entertaining no suspicion of him, he put on a bold face and went forward.

When they had come to the Dean Castle, which stands in a pleasant green park about a mile aboon the town-head of Kilmarnock, on entering the gate, my grandfather hastily alighted, and giving his horse a sharp prick of his spur as he lap off, the beast ran capering out of his hand, round the court of the castle.

With the well-feigned voice of great anxiety, my grandfather cried to the servants to shut the gate and keep it in; and Winterton alighting, ran to catch it, giving his own horse to a stripling to hold. At the same moment, however, my grandfather sprung upon him, and seizing him by the throat, cried out for help to master a spy.

Winterton was so confounded that he gasped and looked round like a man demented, and my grandfather ordered him to be taken by the serving-men to their master, before whom, when they were all come, he recounted the story of his adventures

with the prisoner, telling his Lordship what his master, the Earl of Glencairn, suspected of him. To which, when Winterton was asked what he had to say, he replied bravely, that it was all true, and he was none ashamed to be so caught, when it was done by so clever a fellow.

He was then ordered by the Lord Boyd to be immured in the dungeon-room, the which may be seen to this day; and though his captivity was afterwards somewhat relaxed, he was kept a prisoner in the castle till after the death of the Queen Dowager, and the breaking-up of her two-faced councils. This exploit won my grandfather great favour, and he scarcely needed to show the signet-ring when he told his message from the Lords of the Congregation.

CHAPTER XVI

By such devices and missions, as my grandfather was engaged in for the Earl Glencairn with the Lord Boyd, a thorough understanding was concerted among the Reformed throughout the kingdom; and encouraged by their great strength and numbers, which far exceeded what was expected, the Lords of the Congregation set themselves roundly to work, and the protestant preachers openly published their doctrines.

Soon after my grandfather had returned from the shire of Ayr, there was a weighty consultation held at the Earl his patron's lodging in Edinburgh, whereat, among others present, was that pious youth, afterwards the good Regent Murray. He was, by office and appointment, then the head and lord of the priory of St Andrews; but his soul cleaving to the Reformation and the Gospel, he laid down the use of that title, and about this time began to be called the Lord James Stuart.

The Lords of the Congregation, feeling themselves strong in the goodness of their cause and the number of their adherents, resolved at this council, that they should proceed firmly but considerately to work, and seek redress as became true lieges, by representation and supplication. Accordingly a paper was drawn up, wherein they set forth how, for conscience sake, the Reformed had been long afflicted with banishment, confiscation of goods, and death in its cruellest forms. That continual fears

darkened their lives till, being no longer able to endure such calamities, they were compelled to beg a remedy against the oppressions and tyranny of the Estate Ecclesiastical, which had usurped an unlimited domination over the minds of men, – the faggot and the sword being the weapons which the prelates employed to enforce their mandates, – plain truths that were thus openly stated in order to show that the suppliants were sincere; and they concluded with a demand, that the original purity of the Christian religion should be restored, and the government so improved as to afford them security in their persons, opinions, and property.

Sir James Calder of Sandilands was the person chosen to present this memorial to the Queen Regent; and never, said my grandfather, was an agent more fitly chosen to uphold the dignity of his trust, or to preserve the respect which, as good subjects, the Reformed desired to maintain and manifest towards the authority regal. He was a man far advanced in life; but there was none of the infirmities of age under the venerable exterior with which time had clothed his appearance. Of great honour and a pure life, he was revered by all parties, and had acquired both renown and affection, through his services to the realm and his manifold virtues.

On a day appointed by the Queen Regent, the Lords and leaders of the Congregation attended Sandilands, each with a stately retinue, to Holyrood House; my grandfather having leave from the Earl, his master, to wait on his person on that occasion.

It was a solemn day to the worshippers of the true God, who came in great multitudes to the town, many from distant parts, to be present, and to hear the issue of a conference that was to give liberty to the consciences of all devout Scotchmen. From the house in the Lawnmarket, where the Lords assembled, down to the very yetts of the palace, the sight was as if the street had been paved with faces, and windows over windows, roofs and lum-heads, were clustered with women and children. All temporal cares and businesses were that day suspended: in the accents and voices of men there was an awful sobriety, few speaking, and what was said, sounded as if every one was affected with the sense of some high and everlasting interest at stake.

When the Lords went down into the street, there was, for a brief interval, a stir and a murmur in the multitude, which opened to the right and left as when the waves of the Red Sea were opened, and through the midst thereof prepared a miraculous road for the children of Israel. A deep silence succeeded, and Sandilands, with his hoary head uncovered, bearing in his hand the supplication and remonstrance, walked forward; and the Lords went after also all bareheaded, and every one with them followed in like manner as reverentially as their masters. The people, as they passed along, slowly and devoutly, took off their caps and bonnets, and bowed their heads as when the ark of the covenant of the Lord was of old brought back from the Philistines; and many wept, and others prayed aloud, and there was wonder, and awe, and dread, mingled with thoughts of

unspeakable confidence and glory.

When Sandilands and those with him were conducted into the presence of the Queen Dowager, she was standing under a canopy of state, surrounded by many of the nobles and prelates, and by her maidens of honour. My grandfather had not seen her before, and having often heard her suspected of double-dealing, and of a superstitious zeal and affection for the papal abominations and cruelties, he had pictured to himself a lean and haggard woman, with a pale and fierce countenance, and was therefore greatly amazed when he beheld a lady of a most sweet and gracious aspect, with mild dark eyes beaming with a chaste dignity, and a high and fair forehead, bright and unwrinkled with any care, and lips formed to speak soft and gentle sentences. In her apparel she was less gay than her ladies, but nevertheless she was more queenly. Her dress and mantle were of the richest purple Genoese unadorned with embroidery, and round her neck she wore a ruff of fine ermine and a string of princely pearls. A small golden cross of curious graven gold dangled to her waist from a loup in the vale of her bosom.

Sandilands advanced several paces before the Lords by whom he was attended, and falling on his knees, read with a loud and firm voice the memorial of the Reformed; and when he had done so and was risen, the Queen received a paper that was given to her by her secretary, who stood behind her right shoulder, and also read an answer which had been prepared, and in which she was made to deliver many comfortable assurances, that at the

time were received as a great boon with much thankfulness by all the Reformed, who had too soon reason to prove the insincerity of those courtly flatteries. For no steps were afterwards taken to give those indulgences by law that were promised; but the papists stirring themselves with great activity, and foreign matters and concerns coming in aid of their stratagems, long before a year passed the mind of the Queen and government was fomented into hostility against the protestants. She called into her favour and councils the Archbishop of St Andrews, with whom she had been at variance; and the devout said, when they heard thereof, that when our Saviour was condemned, on the same day Herod and Pilate were made friends, applying the text to this reconciliation; and boding therefrom woe to the true church. Moved by the hatred which his Grace bore to the Reformers, the Queen cited the protestant preachers to appear at Stirling to answer to the charges which might there be preferred against them.

My grandfather, when this perfidy came to a head, was at Finlayston-house, in the shire of Renfrew, with the Earl, his master, who, when he heard of such a breach of faith, smote the table, as he was then sitting at dinner, with his right hand, and said, "Since the false woman has done this, there is nothing for us but the banner and the blade;" and starting from his seat he forthwith ordered horses, and, attended by my grandfather and ten armed servants, rode to Glasgow, where Sir Hugh Campbell of Loudon, then sheriff of Ayr, and other worthies of the time, were assembled on business before the Lords of Justiciary; and

it was instanter agreed, that they should forthwith proceed to Stirling where the court was, and remonstrate with the Queen. So, leaving all temporal concerns, Sir Hugh took horse, and they arrived at Stirling about the time her Highness supped, and going straight to the castle, they stood in the ante-chamber to speak, if possible, with her as she passed.

On entering the room to pass to her table she saw them, and looked somewhat surprised and displeased; but without saying anything particular she desired the Earl to follow her, and Sir Hugh, unbidden, went also into the banquet-room. It was seldom that she used state in her household, and on this occasion, it being a popish fast, her table was frugally spread, and only herself sat at the board.

"Well, Glencairn," said she, "what has brought you hither from the west at this time? Is the realm to be forever tossed like the sea by this tempest of heresies? The royal authority is not always to be insulted with impunity, and in spite of all their friends the protestant preachers shall be banished from Scotland, aye, though their doctrines were as sound as St Paul's."

The Earl, as my grandfather heard him afterwards relate, replied, "Your Majesty gave your royal promise that the Reformed should be protected, and they have done nothing since to cause the forfeiture of so gracious a boon: I implore your Majesty to call that sacred pledge to mind."

"You lack reason, my Lord," she cried, sharply; "it becomes not subjects to burden their princes with promises which it may

be inconvenient to keep."

"If these, madam, are your sentiments," replied the Earl, proudly, "the Congregation can no longer acknowledge your authority, and must renounce their allegiance to your government."

She had, at the moment, lifted the salt-cellar to sprinkle her salad, – but she was so astonished at the boldness of this speech, that she dropped it from her hand, and the salt was spilt on the floor, – an evil omen which all present noted.

"My Lord Glencairn," said she, thoughtfully, "I would execute my great duties honestly, but your preachers trouble the waters, and I know not where the ford lies that I may safest ride. Go ye away and try to keep your friends quiet, and I will consider calmly what is best to be done for the weal of all."

At these words the Earl and Sir Hugh Campbell bowed, and, retiring, went to the lodging of the Earl of Monteith, where they were minded to pass the night, but when they had consulted with that nobleman, my grandfather was ordered to provide himself with a fresh horse from Monteith's stable, and to set out for Edinburgh with letters for the Lord James Stuart.

"Gilhaize," said his master, as he delivered them, "I foresee we must buckle on our armour; but the cause of the Truth does not require that the first blow should come from our side. By this time John Knox, who has been long expected, may be hourly looked for; and as no man stands higher in the aversion of the papists than that brave, honest man, we shall know by the

reception he meets with what we ought to do."

So my grandfather, putting the letters in his bosom, retired from the presence of the Earl, and by break of day reached the West-port and went straight on to the Lord James Stuart's lodging in the Canongate. But, though the household were astir, it was some time before he got admittance, for their master was a young man of great method in all things, and his chaplain was at the time reading the first prayers of the morning, during which the doors were shut, and no one, however urgent his business, could gain admission into that house while the inmates were doing their homage to the King of kings.

CHAPTER XVII

As my grandfather, in the grey of the morning, was waiting in the Canongate till the worship was over in the house of the Lord James Stuart, he frequently rode up and down the street as far the Luckenbooths and the Abbey's sanctuary siver, and his mind was at times smitten with the remorse of pity when he saw, as the dawn advanced, the numbers of poor labouring men that came up out of the closes and gathered round the trone, abiding there to see who would come to hire them for the day. But his compassion was soon changed into a frame of thankfulness at the boundless variety of mercies which are dealt out to the children of Adam, for he remarked, that, for the most part, these poor men, whose sustenance was as precarious as that of the wild birds of the air, were cheerful and jocund, many of them singing and whistling as blithely as the lark, that carries the sweet incense of her melodious songs in the censer of a sinless breast to the golden gates of the morning.

Hitherto he had never noted, or much considered, the complicated cares and trials wherewith the lot of man in every station is chequered and environed; and when he heard those bondmen of hard labour, jocund after sound slumbers and light suppers, laughing contemptuously as they beheld the humiliating sight, which divers gallants and youngsters, courtiers of the court, degraded with debauch, made of themselves as they stumbled

homeward, he thought there was surely more bliss in the cup that was earned by the constancy of health and a willing mind, than in all the possets and malvesia that the hoards of ages could procure. So he composed his spirit, and inwardly made a vow to the Lord, that as soon as the mighty work of the redemption of the Gospel from the perdition of papistry was accomplished, he would retire into the lea of some pleasant green holm, and take, for the purpose of his life, the attainment of that happy simplicity which seeks but the supply of the few wants with which man comes so rich from the hands of his Maker, that all changes in his natural condition of tilling the ground and herding the flocks only serve to make him poorer by increasing.

While he was thus ruminating in the street, he observed two strangers coming up the Canongate. One of them had the appearance of a servant, but he was of a staid and more thoughtful aspect than belongs to men of that degree, only he bore on his shoulder a willease, and had in his hand a small package wrapt in a woollen cover and buckled with a leathern strap. The other was the master; and my grandfather halted his horse to look at him as he passed, for he was evidently no common man nor mean personage, though in stature he was jimp the ordinary size. He was bent more with infirmities than the load of his years. His hair and long flowing beard were very grey and venerable, like those of the ancient patriarchs who enjoyed immediate communion with God. But though his appearance was thus aged, and though his complexion and countenance

betokened a frail tenement, yet the brightness of youth shone in his eyes, and they were lighted up by a spirit over which time had no power.

In his steps and gait he was a little hasty and unsteady, and twice or thrice he was obliged to pause in the steep of the street to draw his breath; but even in this there was an affecting and great earnestness, a working of a living soul within, as if it panted to enter on the performance of some great and solemn hest.

He seemed to be eager and zealous like the apostle Peter in his temper, and as dauntless as the mighty and courageous Paul. Many in the street stopped, and looked after him with reverence and marvelling, as he proceeded with quick and desultory steps, followed by his sedate attendant. Nor was it surprising, for he was, indeed, one of those who, in their lives, are vast and wonderful, – special creations that are sent down from heaven, with authority attested by the glowing impress of the signet of God on their hearts, to avenge the wrongs done to His truths and laws in the blasphemies of the earth. – It was John Knox!

When he had passed, my grandfather rode back to the yett of the Lord James Stuart's lodgings, which by this time was opened, and instanter, on mentioning to the porter from whom he had come, was admitted to his master.

That great worthy was at the time sitting alone in a back chamber, which looked towards Salisbury Crags, and before him, but on the opposite side of the table, among divers letters and papers of business, lay a large Bible, with brass clasps thereon,

in which, it would seem, some one had been expounding to him a portion of the Scriptures.

When my grandfather presented to him the letter from the Earl of Glencairn, he took it from him without much regarding him, and broke open the seal, and began to peruse it to himself in that calm and methodical manner for which he was so famed and remarkable. Before, however, he had read above the half thereof, he gave as it were a sudden hitch, and turning round, looked my grandfather sharply in the face, and said, —

"Are you Gilhaize?"

But before any answer could be made, he waved his hand graciously, pointing to a chair, and desired him to sit down, resuming at the same time the perusal of the letter; and when he had finished it, he folded it up for a moment; but, as if recollecting himself, he soon runkled it up in his hand and put it into the fire.

"Your Lord informs me," said he, "that he has all confidence, not only in your honesty, Gilhaize, but in your discernment; and says, that in respect to the high question anent Christ's cause, you may be trusted to the uttermost. Truly, for so young a man, this is an exceeding renown. His letter has told me what passed last night with the Queen's Highness. I am grieved to hear it. She means well; but her feminine fears make her hearken to counsels that may cause the very evils whereof she is so afraid. But the sincerity of her favour to the Reformed will soon be tried, for last night John Knox arrived, and I was with him; and,

strong in the assurances of his faith, he intends to lead on to the battle. This morning he was minded to depart for Fife. – 'Our Captain, Christ Jesus,' said he, 'and Satan, his adversary, are now at open defiance; their banners are displayed, and the trumpet is blown on both sides for assembling their armies.' As soon as it is known that he is within the kingdom, we shall learn what we may expect, and that presently too; for this very day the clergy meet in the monastery of the Greyfriars, and doubtless they will be advertised of his coming. You had as well try if you can gain admittance among the other auditors, to hear their deliberations; afterwards come again to me, and report what takes place; by that time I shall be advised whether to send you back to Glencairn or elsewhere."

My grandfather, after this and some farther discourse, retired to the hall, and took breakfast with the household, where he was much edified with the douce deportment of all present, so unlike that of the lewd and graceless varlets who rioted in the houses of the other nobles. Verily, he used to say, the evidences of a reforming spirit were brightly seen there; and, to rule every one into a chaste sobriety of conversation, a pious clerk sate at the head of the board, and said grace before and after the meal, making it manifest how much all things about the Lord James Stuart were done in order.

Having taken breakfast, and reposed himself some time, for his long ride had made him very weary, he rose, and, changing his apparel, went to the Greyfriars church, where the clergy were

assembling, and elbowing himself gently into the heart of the people waiting around for admission, he got in with the crowd when the doors were opened.

The matter that morning to be considered concerned the means to be taken, within the local jurisdictions of those there met, to enforce the process of the summons which had been issued against the reformed preachers to appear at Stirling.

But while they were busily conversing and contriving how best to aid and further that iniquitous aggression of perfidious tyranny, there came in one of the brethren of the monastery, with a frightened look, and cried aloud, that John Knox was come, and had been all night in the town. At the news the spectators, as if moved by one spirit, gave a triumphant shout, – the clergy were thunderstruck, – some started from their seats, unconscious of what they did, – others threw themselves back where they sat, – and all appeared as if a judgment had been pronounced upon them. In the same moment the church began to skail, – the session was adjourned, – and the people ran in all directions. The cry rose everywhere, "John Knox is come!" All the town came rushing into the streets, – the old and the young, the lordly and the lowly, were seen mingling and marvelling together, – all tasks of duty, and servitude, and pleasure, were forsaken, – the sick-beds of the dying were deserted, – the priests abandoned their altars and masses, and stood pale and trembling at the doors of their churches, – mothers set down their infants on the floors, and ran to inquire what had come to pass, – funerals

were suspended, and the impious and the guilty stood aghast, as if some dreadful apocalypse had been made; – travellers, with the bridles in their hands, lingering in profane discourse with their hosts, suddenly mounted, and speeded into the country with the tidings. At every cottage door and wayside bield, the inmates stood in clusters, silent and wondering, as horseman came following horseman, crying, "John Knox is come!" Barks that had departed, when they heard the news, bore up to tell others that they saw afar at sea. The shepherds were called in from the hills; – the warders on the castle, when, at the sound of many quickened feet approaching, they challenged the comers, were answered, "John Knox is come!" Studious men were roused from the spells of their books; – nuns, at their windows, looked out fearful and inquiring, – and priests and friars were seen standing by themselves, shunned like lepers. The whole land was stirred as with the inspiration of some new element, and the hearts of the persecutors were withered.

"No tongue," often said my grandfather, "could tell the sense of that great event through all the bounds of Scotland, and the papistical dominators shrunk as if they had suffered in their powers and principalities, an awful and irremediable overthrow."

CHAPTER XVIII

When my grandfather left the Greyfriars, he went to the lodging of the Lord James Stuart, whom he found well instructed of all that had taken place, which he much marvelled at, having scarcely tarried by the way in going thither.

"Now, Gilhaize," said my Lord, "the tidings fly like wildfire, and the Queen Regent, by the spirit that has descended into the hearts of the people, will be constrained to act one way or another. John Knox, as you perhaps know, stands under the ban of outlawry for conscience sake. In a little while we shall see whether he is still to be persecuted. If left free, the braird of the Lord, that begins to rise so green over all the land, will grow in peace to a plentiful harvest. But if he is to be hunted down, there will come such a cloud and storm as never raged before in Scotland. I speak to you thus freely, that you may report my frank sentiments to thir noble friends and trusty gentlemen, and say to them that I am girded for the field, if need be."

He then put a list of several well-known friends of the Reformation ayont the frith into my grandfather's hands, adding, "I need not say that it is not fitting now to trust to paper, and therefore much will depend on yourself. The confidence that my friend the Earl, your master, has in you, makes me deal thus openly with you; and I may add, that if there is deceit in you, Gilhaize, I will never again believe the physiognomy of man – so

go your ways; see all these, wheresoever they may be, – and take this purse for your charges."

My grandfather accepted the paper and the purse; and reading over the paper, imprinted the names in it on his memory, and then said —

"My Lord, I need not risk the possession of this paper; but it may be necessary to give me some token by which the lords and lairds therein mentioned may have assurance that I come from you."

For some time the Lord James made no reply, but stood ruminating, with the forefinger of his left hand pressing his nether lip; then he observed, —

"Your request is very needful;" and taking the paper, he mentioned divers things of each of the persons named in it, which he told my grandfather had passed between him and them severally, when none other was present. "By remembering them of these things," said he, "they will know that you are in verity sent from me."

Being thus instructed, my grandfather left the Lord James, and proceeding forthwith to the pier of Leith, embarked in the Burntisland ferry-boat – and considering with himself, that the farthest way of those whom he was missioned to see ought to be the first informed, as the nearer had other ways and means of communion, he resolved to go forward to such of them as dwelt in Angus and Merns; by which resolution he reached Dundee shortly after the arrival there of the champion of the

Reformation, John Knox.

This resolution proved most wise and fortunate, for, on landing in that town, he found a great concourse of the Reformed from the two shires assembled there, and among them many of those to whom he was specially sent. They had come to go with their ministers before the Queen Regent's counsel at Stirling, determined to avow their adherence to the doctrines of which those pious men were accused. And it being foreseen that, as they went forward others would join, my grandfather thought he could do no better in his mission than mingle with them, the more especially as John Knox was also to be of that great company.

On the day following, they accordingly all set forward towards Perth, – and they were a glorious army, mighty with the strength of their great ally the Lord of the hosts of heaven. No trumpet sounded in their march, nor was the courageous drum heard among them, – nor the shouts of earthly soldiery, – nor the neigh of the war-horse, – nor the voice of any captain. But they sang hymns of triumph, and psalms of the great things that Jehovah had of old done for his people; and though no banner was seen there, nor sword on the thighs of men of might, nor spears in the grasp of warriors, nor crested helmet, nor aught of the panoply of battle, yet the eye of faith beheld more than all these, for the hills and heights of Scotland were to its dazzled vision covered that day with the mustered armies of the dreadful God: the angels of his wrath in their burning chariots; the archangels of his omnipotence, calm in their armour of storms and flaming fires,

and the Rider on the white horse, were all there.

As the people with their ministers advanced, their course was like a river, which continually groweth in strength and spreadeth its waters as it rolls onward to the sea. On all sides came streams of new adherents to their holy cause, in so much that when they arrived at Perth it was thought best to halt there, lest the approach of so great a multitude, though without weapons, should alarm the Queen Regent's government. Accordingly they made a pause, and Erskine of Dun, one of the Lord James Stuart's friends, taking my grandfather with him, and only two other servants, rode forward to Stirling to represent to her Highness the faith and the firmness of the people.

When they arrived, they found the town in consternation. Busy were the bailies, marshalling such of the burgesses as could be persuaded to take up arms, but all who joined them were feckless aged men, dealers and traffickers in commodities for the courtiers. Proud was the provost that day, and a type of the cause for which he was gathering his papistical remnants. At the sight of Dun and his three followers riding up the street to the castle, he was fain to draw out his sword and make a salutation; but it stuck sae dourly in that he was obligated to gar ane of the town-officers hold the scabbard, while he pulled with such might and main at the hilt, that the blade suddenly broke off, and back he stumbled, and up flew his heels, so that even my grandfather was constrained, notwithstanding the solemnity of the occasion, to join in the shout of laughter that rose thereat from all present.

But provosts and bailies, not being men of war, should not expose themselves to such adversities.

Nor was the fyke of impotent preparation within the walls of the castle better. The Queen had been in a manner lanerly with her ladies when the sough of the coming multitude reached her. The French guards had not come from Glasgow, and there was none of the warlike nobles of the papistical sect at that time at Stirling. She had therefore reason both for dread and panic, when the news arrived that all Angus and Merns had rebelled, for so it was at first reported.

On the arrival of Dun, he was on the instant admitted to her presence; for she was at the time in the tapestried chamber, surrounded by her priests and ladies, and many officers, all consulting her according to their fears. The sight, said my grandfather, for he also went into the presence, was a proof to him that the cause of the papacy was in the dead-throws, the judgments of all present being so evidently in a state of discomfiture and desertion.

Dun going forward with the wonted reverences, the Queen said to him abruptly, —

"Well, Erskine, what is this?"

Whereupon he represented to her, in a sedate manner, that the Reformed ministers were not treated as they had been encouraged to hope; nevertheless, to show their submission to those in temporal authority over them, they were coming, in obedience to the citation, to stand trial.

"But their retinue – when have delinquents come to trial so attended?" she exclaimed eagerly.

"The people, please your Highness," said Dun, with a steadfastness of manner that struck every one with respect for him, "the people hold the same opinions and believe the same doctrines as their preachers, and they feel that the offence, if it be offence, of which the ministers are accused, lies equally against them, and therefore they have resolved to make their case a common cause."

"And do they mean to daunt us from doing justice against seditious schismatics?" cried her Highness somewhat in anger.

"They mean," replied Dun, "to let your Highness see whether it be possible to bring so many to judgment. Their sentiment, with one voice, is, Cursed be they that seek the effusion of blood, or war, or dissension. Let us possess the evangile, and none within Scotland shall be more obedient subjects. In sooth, madam, they hold themselves as guilty of the crime charged as their ministers are, and they will suffer with them."

"Suffer! Call you rebellion suffering?" exclaimed the Queen.

"They have not yet rebelled," said Dun, calmly; "they come to remonstrate with your Highness first; for, as Christians, they are loth to draw the sword. They have no arms with them, to the end that no one may dare to accuse them of any treason."

"It is a perilous thing when subjects," said the Queen, much troubled, "declare themselves so openly against the authority of their rulers."

"It is a bold thing for rulers," replied Dun, "to meddle with the consciences of their subjects."

"How!" exclaimed the Queen, startled and indignant.

"I will deal yet more plainly with your Highness," said he, firmly. "This pretended offence of which the Reformed are accused is not against the royal authority. They are good and true subjects, and, by their walk and conversation, bear testimony to the excellence and purity of those doctrines for which they are resolved to sacrifice their lives rather than submit to any earthly dictation. Their controversies pertain to things of Christ's kingdom, – it is a spiritual warfare. But the papists, conscious of their weakness in the argument, would fain see your Highness abandon that impartial justice which you were called of Heaven to administer in your great office, and to act factiously on their side, as if the cause of the Gospel could be determined by the arm of flesh."

"What has brought you here?" exclaimed the Queen, bursting into tears.

"To claim the fulfilment of your royal promises," said Dun, making a lowly reverence that by its humility took away all arrogance from the boldness of the demand.

"I will," said she. "I am ever willing to be just, but this rising has shaken me with apprehensions; therefore, I pray you, Erskine, write to your brethren; bid them disperse; and tell them from me, that their ministers shall neither be tried nor molested."

At these words, she took the arm of one of her ladies and

hastily retired. Dun also withdrew, and the same hour sent my grandfather back to Perth with letters to the Congregation to the effect of her request and assurance.

That same evening the multitude broke up and returned to their respective homes, rejoicing with an exceeding great joy at so blessed a termination of their weaponless Christian war. Dun, however, distrusting the influence of some of those who were of the Queen's council, and who had arrived at the castle soon after my grandfather's departure, did not return, as he had intended, next morning to Perth, but resolved to wait over the day of trial; or, at least, until the ministers were absolved from attendance on the summons, either by proclamation or other forms of law.

CHAPTER XIX

John Knox, among all the ministers who remained at Perth after the Congregation of the Reformed had dispersed, was the only one, my grandfather has been heard to say, that expressed no joy nor exultation at the assurances of the Queen Regent. "We shall see, we shall see," was all he said to those among them who gloried in the victory; adding, "But if there is truth in the Word of God, it is not in the nature of the Beast to do otherwise than evil," and his words of discernment and of wisdom were soon verified.

Erskine of Dun, while he remained at Stirling, had his eyes and ears open; and in their porches he placed for sentinels, Distrust and Suspicion. He knew the fluctuating nature of woman; how every succeeding wave of feeling washes away the deepest traces that are traced on the quicksands of her unstable humours; and the danger having passed, he jealoused that the Queen Regent would forget her terrors, and give herself up to the headlong councils of the adversaries, whom, from her known adherence to the Romish ritual, he justly feared she was inclined to favour. Nor was he left long in doubt.

On the evening before the day which had been appointed for the trial, no proclamation or other token was promulgated to appease the anxiety of the cited preachers. He, therefore, thought it needful to be prepared for the worst; so, accordingly,

he ordered his two serving-men to have his horses in readiness forth the town in the morning, and there to abide his orders.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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