Historical Tales

AND

Legends

OF

Ayrshire

BY

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PREFACE.

THE County of Ayr is rich in Story and Tradition. And no wonder. Before the days of the Romans it was inhabited; and from the time that these early progenitors in the march of civilization left these shores never to return, a succession of races have either dwelt on its plains or in its towns, and by its river mouths, or have left unmistakable traces of their presence. Pict, and Scot, and Briton; Danish rover and Scandinavian Viking; English invader from beyond the Tweed, coming and going at intervals

down to the days when Oliver Cromwell was in the Fort of Ayr, and stabled his steeds under the shadow of St. John's—all have been here in turn. The Roman has left his roads and his camps, the Pict his dykes, the Celtic lake-dweller his crannogs, the Briton his tumuli, to tell the tale of a hardly recoverable past.

Great national movements have inwrought themselves with the history of the Shire. On the streets of the county town and in the country surrounding, Sir William Wallace first seriously measured strength with the invader. Robert the Bruce was Earl of Carrick. He stormed Turnberry, the home of his youth, and he wrought wondrously among the hills of Dailly, on the uplands of Cumnock and of Dalmellington, and by the base of Loudoun hill. And in a less degree, down to the days of the Revolution, Ayrshire men were prominent in the wars and in

the counsels of the period. It was to Ayrshire the Lollards came, with the leaven of a new faith. And the Reformation found many of its most ardent promoters among the gentry, as well as among the peasantry, of Kyle, Cuninghame, and Carrick.

In the centuries when feudal strife was rampant the great families of Kennedy, of Cuninghame, of Craufurd, of Montgomerie, of Campbell, of Boyd, maintained ceaseless activity in their warrings with one another. Their horsemen scoured the country-side; their yeomen went down in the encounter; their castles blazed intermittently from the borders of Renfrew in the north, to the waters of Stinchar in Southern Carrick, and from the moorlands adjacent to the march of Lanark to the shores of the Firth of Clyde. Their intrigues, their plots, their raids, their wiles, their machinations—are they not written on the creation of the existing social life of Ayrshire?

My main purpose has been to endeavour to present a series of historical pictures of the national and feudal history of the Shire. It will remain with the reader to say how far I have succeeded. I have not thought fit to give chapter and verse for all the historical facts recorded, but the reader may rest assured that these have been amply and carefully verified.

The chapters dealing with the social conditions are founded on the data of the periods treated; and the traditions recorded are those which, a hundred years ago and more, were universally accepted in the districts where they had their birth.

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HISTORICAL TALES

AND

LEGENDS

OF

AYRSHIRE.

THE FEUD

OF

GLENCAIRN AND EGLINTON.

THE district of Cuninghame was long the chosen battle ground of the rival families of Glencairn and Eglinton. Both were of high renown, both eminent in the service of their country, both produced men who gave their lives to the national cause, and both, at crises in the history of Scotland, came nobly to her aid. But for many long years in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, there ran through their own personal history a deadly and a bitter and a relentless feud—a feud which sent the flames curling from the roof-tree of Eglinton Castle itself, which fired many a homestead and hall besides, and in which scores, if not hundreds, of brave men went down before the exigencies of family rivalry and pride.

The Montgomeries of Eglinton held court at their castle on the banks of the Lugton. The castellated mansion of to-day, sitting quietly in the midst of a beautiful and extensive park, is built upon the spot occupied by at least two of its predecessors—that which was fired by the followers of the Earl of Glencairn in 1528, and to which Sir Hugh de Eglinton bore the pennon of Henry Hotspur from the field of Otterburn, and that which was demolished in the closing years of the eighteenth century to make room for the noble building which now dominates a scene of great beauty and refined taste, but which in the days of three or four centuries agone was too frequently a veritable Aceldama. The Cuninghames hailed from the parish of Kilmaurs, to which in the latter half of the fifteenth century, Sir William had brought home the co-heiress of many fair lands in Renfrew, Dumbarton, and Midlothian, as well as Glencairn in Dumfries, from which the title to the Earldom was acquired. With growing power came a corresponding growth of rivalry, until the jealousy and mistrust culminated in the series of tragedies which make memorable the story of northern Ayrshire throughout the long years in which they transpired. Both houses were possessed of numerous vassals and retainers, who espoused the rival causes with the intensity invariably begotten of the feud, and no Corsican vendetta was ever more inexorable in its decrees than were the Cuninghames and the Montgomeries in their work of extirpation. The feud passed on from man to man and from generation to generation, and it rolled, practically unchecked, until the power of the Scottish Crown was sufficiently consolidated to check the outrages of the rude lords who were a law unto themselves.

To follow the feud in all its devious windings would be an impossibility within anything like compact limits. Let us therefore rather select one or two of its outstanding incidents and endeavour to recall the actors to the scenes in

which they played their part. And suffice it to say by way of explanation that it was because the hereditary Bailieship of Cunninghame was transferred from the Glencairn family to that of Eglinton that the strife which had long been intermittent or smouldering, broke out into active and persistent hostility.

Kerelaw Castle is a picturesque ruin in the parish of Stevenston, massive in its decay, ivy mantled, stoutly standing up against the inroads of Time and of the elementary warfare which rages around its walls. As long ago as 1488 it stood in all its pride and glory. It was a stronghold of the Cuninghames, and behind its defences its lord could afford to look out with some complacency upon the broad lands and the strengths of the Montgomeries. Eglinton Castle was but a few miles distant in the one direction, and in the other, within easy ken, was the keep of Ardrossan, with its heavy battlements and its solid masonry. Kerelaw, strongly held, might have resisted a siege; and had its walls been tenanted by the men of Glencairn when the retainers of Eglinton came down upon it, it might have laughed their efforts to scorn. But they chose their own time for coming; and descending upon it when it was at their mercy, they set fire to it and went their way. Up into the blue sky rose the smoke of the burning pile; and when the night came the clouds were reddened with its glare. The fire was slow to take hold, for the floors were oaken and so were the beams and the furniture. But the quaint old wainscotting caught up the conflagration and hastened on the doom of the castle. The fire spread gradually but surely. From basement to turret it crept, peering out of the windows, darting from the loopholes, and accompanied as it rose with the crashing of masonry and the falling in of floors, until finally the flames dominated the keep and proclaimed themselves masters of Kerelaw. The Cuninghames could see the glare and the smoke from more than one of their strongholds; and we can

well imagine with what feelings they beheld the destructive handiwork of their foes, and how they resolved on retaliation. The conflagration died away and the walls cooled; but there was no dying away of the wrath in the breast of Glencairn, and no cooling of the ardour for revenge within the vassals of the house of Cuninghame. The Montgomeries had had their day; that of the Cuninghames was in the future. Kerelaw was the first keep to blaze; Eglinton Castle was doomed.

But it was not to be fired just yet. The Cuninghames nursed their wrath as the days lengthened out into months, and these again into years. Individual members of both houses were slain by the wayside. Attempt upon attempt was made to wreak vengeance upon the leaders in the feud, the heads of the different families who allied themselves with the rival fortunes of the opposing chiefs. William Cuninghame of Craigens was the first of note to feel the heavy hand. He was the King's coroner for the shire of Renfrew, a relative of the lord of Kilmaurs; and in 1505 he was waylaid and attacked by the Master of Montgomerie. Cuninghame resisted as stoutly as he was attacked, and succeeded in effecting his escape, though not until he was grievously wounded. He made complaint to the Scottish Parliament of the outrage; but the Master of Montgomerie did not obey the summons, and the affair was forgotten by the State. But not by the Cuninghames. Finding they could not obtain redress save at their own hand, they mustered their followers in January of 1507, and came upon Lord Montgomerie. The latter was not unprepared to receive them, and a hot conflict ensued. Hand to hand was the issue contested, until Lord Montgomerie was wounded, and lives were lost on both sides.

Two years later a temporary peace was patched up, and there was cessation awhile, for the national affairs demanded the energy and the daring of every patriot within the Scot-

tish realm. But when Flodden had been fought and lost; when Glencairn had recovered from the temporary eclipse of his fortunes which he suffered for having been concerned in the abortive attempt of Arran, who aspired to the Regency, to depose Albany; and when the Earl of Eglinton and Lord Montgomerie had welcomed the youthful monarch after his escape from Falkland to Stirling in the guise of a yeoman, there was time enough to attend to their own concerns in the west. In the interim, at the period when the country's cause called both Eglinton and the lord of Kilmaurs from local to national strife, Glencairn had still time left to slay three of the followers of the Montgomeries, and to wound the son and heir to the Earl himself; but so little thought of was the affair in the face of the graver events of the period, that no penal consequences of any kind whatever are known to have followed. A second peace was agreed upon on the instigation of Albany; but that neither side had any intent to abide by its terms was speedily made manifest. The Earl was blessed with a long memory. For nine years he remembered the attempt on the life of his son and the death of his followers, one of whom, Matthew Montgomerie, was a scion of the house, nor did he cry quits for that event until he and his had taken the life of Edward Cuninghame of Auchenharvie. He was proceeded against according to law; but not only did he escape the consequences of his deed, save by the imposition of a nominal sum for non-appearance, but he followed up the slaughter of the laird of Auchenharvie by that of another Cuninghame, Archibald of Waterstowu, whom his dependents slew in pursuance of the blood feud.

Then came the revenge of the Cuninghames. In his abode in the adjacent shire of Renfrew the Master of Glencairn heard tell how the Montgomeries had slain the Laird of Waterstown. Old memories flashed upon him. He called to mind the burning of Kerelaw, and all the misdeeds of the enemy which he had done since then. He remembered how

Eglinton had dispossessed the Cuninghames of the Bailieship of the division, which was their's by right, and how their bands had roamed hither and thither, making it all but impossible for the most remote connection of the family of Glencairn to be abroad within sight of one of the castles of the Montgomeries. He had a long score to settle. Hitherto, though the fortunes of the feud had wavered, now inclining to the one side and now to the other, they had on the whole befriended the foe ; but the Fates that had frowned on him might also—must also—be compelled to smile on his enterprise. He planned retribution. Over all his lands in Renfrew he sent his couriers, and he called in his dependents from his estates in North Ayrshire as well. They came gladly. The revenge prompted in the mind of the master was not confined to himself. Every man on his domains had heard tell the story of the unlimited treachery of the Montgomeries; and as the tales spread from hamlet to hamlet, from castle to castle, from mouth to mouth, they were magnified in the telling, until it seemed a solemn duty to each Cuninghame, and to each individual who followed in the train and fought under the banner of Glencairn, to wipe out in foray, in blood, and in retributory conflagration, the long series of misdeeds of the hated Eglinton. The Master found himself at the head of a large body of men, trained to arms, fit for troublous times, and for desperate adventure. They were as eager as he to march into the heart of the enemy's country, and they set forth on their expedition into Ayrshire, resolved to strike at the very centre of the enemy's strength. Their destination was the Castle of Eglinton. Their preparations had been made as far as possible in secret. No warning was sent before them, else the Earl might have been ready to give them greeting in force.

No sooner had they entered the lands of the Montgomeries than the Master of Glencairn encouraged his followers to slaughter and to depredation. Eglinton estate stretched

near and far; it had many fine homesteads, beeves fed on many a field, and the corn was ripe in the fields for the harvest. The farm houses sat peacefully in the autumn sun, their inmates all unconscious of what awaited them. The Cuninghames broke upon the scene with the fury of a winter's torrent, and as they passed on from point to point, and farm to farm, and from corn field to corn field, they left in their track the traces of rapine and of ravage. Before them waved the golden corn, or stood up cut by the patient reaper, in the fields. Before them grazed the cattle on the holms and in the meadows, or lay placidly ruminating under the grateful shelter of the autumn-tinted trees. Before them were the houses of the peasantry, their dwellers either innocent of the coming storm, or, warned by the columns of smoke that rose up into the blue, or the glare that reddened the night sky, fleeing for their lives into places of refuge and of security. Before them rose up the Castle of Eglinton, with its stout, heavy walls looking down on the placid waters of the Lugton, running free from its birthplace in the beautiful little Loch Libo in Renfrewshire. Behind them what a scene! The corn fired in the fields, the staff of life destroyed on its stem; the cattle slaughtered on the grass, and the sheep on the braes; the farm houses afire or smouldering in their ruins; and many a peasant slaughtered beside his once happy home!

The Earl of Eglinton heard the news. He was in his house by the Lugton. Down by the coast was the Castle of Ardrossan, looking out across the Firth of Clyde to the Cumbraes, to the long stretch of the yellow sands of the Ayrshire coast, to the rugged mountain tops of Arran, and the peaks serrated and riven and jagged by the omnipotent forces of Nature in her earlier and her wilder forms, to the conical summit of Ailsa, and to the gateway by which the waves of the Atlantic roll up to the higher shores of Ayrshire. The chief of the Montgomeries gathered his retainers,

as many as he could muster, around him. He called his wife and family to make haste and tarry not, and without draw of bridle or breathing space he hurried across the few intervening miles, across the flat, level country, to that stronghold by the sea. There was no time to lose. From the turrets of Eglinton he could trace the coming, the avenging Cuninghames. The rising smoke told him where they were and what they were doing, and he knew that their destination was his abode. As he galloped off he cast one longing, lingering look at the all-unconscious, slumbering keep wherein he dwelt, and he knew that when next he saw it, if ever he saw it again, it would be defaced, blackened, charred, and in ashes.

Nearer and nearer came the Master of Glencairn and his men, spreading destruction in their pathway. They were eager to be at the heart of the citadel, inflamed in their passions, and all but satiated with their revenge. Ah, but there was still a greater revenge in store for them! Along the way they came where Lugton meanders, and their horse hoofs woke the echoes not unaccustomed to the clattering of irate horsemen, or the tread of men prepared for the battle. And there, before them at last, was the Castle of Eglinton, the ancestral home of the Montgomeries. They drew rein at its gates. No warder challenged them, no bowmen appeared on its walls, no spearsmen defended its battlements. All was silent and deserted. The birds had flown. The gates were driven in, the entrance was forced, and the Cuninghames ran riot over the castle. Materials were hastily gathered together with which to ignite the conflagration. The light was applied to them, the flames began to curl and to flicker, and to catch hold and to ascend. The woodwork was ablaze. It was indeed a goodly sight for Glencairn and his men, and one that was well worth watching. As the smoke filled the castle they retired to the park, amid whose trees it stood, and watched the play of the con-

flagration. Here was a glorious revenge for the burning of Kerelaw. Kerelaw never made a blaze like that. The wind fanned the fire ; but it needed no fanning. It caught hold wherever there was footing for its scorching couriers. They licked the walls, they crackled on the oaken floors, they caught on the tapestry, on the paintings, on the ornaments, on the furniture. They plunged into recesses where valuables were hidden, and cleared them out as if they had been swept by the besom of destruction. They burst through the windows, and crept up the stairs. They spread from floor to ceiling, and from ceiling to floor. They ransacked the muniment room; and the records of the family of Eglinton back to the very days of the Norman Conquest, and before them, and the Charter to the lands of Montgomerie, given under the Great Seal, were changed into tinder. Crash went the floors, down fell the intermediate walls, and high above the housetops rose the infernal furnace. It roared in the air. Its heat made Glencairn and his watching followers stand back. And when the darkening came on, the castle glared in its own embers, its walls growing black upon the night, and within them a huddled, charred mass of *debris.* That was the Cuninghames' vengeance. Was it not worth their while? Did it not obliterate many a savage memory, and kindle a sense of wrong done to them rectified?

And when the fire had done its work the Master of Glencairn retraced his footsteps; and, plundering, ravaging, burning as he went, he returned into Renfrewshire.

From his Castle of Ardrossan the Earl of Eglinton saw the smoke ascend into the sky. It was his turn to vow vengeance, and vow it verily he did. He took an oath to exact satisfaction against Glencairn, against the Cuninghames, for the day's doings. He promised himself that he would leave no stone unturned ; that life would be sacrificed for life, and home for home. If his roof-tree had blazed, so

would those of the enemy. If his retainers had fallen, so would those of Glencairn. And his spirit he infused into the retainers, who, by his side, watched with him the tokens of the revenge of Glencairn.

But the revenge was not to be theirs; for the Earl died, and with him all that generation. Fifty years sped away—fifty years of rancour and of alternating fortunes in the rivalry of the feudalists, and it was not until the April of 1586 that an act of savagery on the part of the Cuninghames awoke to the full the slumbering fury in the breasts of the Montgomeries. It was another Glencairn, too, by this time, and other Cuninghames, but the blood feud was the same, passing on, handed down, irrespective of the flight of time and the changes of the actors in the tragedy.

It was in the spring-time of the year that the young Earl of Eglinton set out on a journey to Stirling, where the Scottish Court was sitting. He apprehended no danger. The feud, he knew, still ran; but not for many years—not, indeed, during his lifetime—had it broken out in anything like a virulent form. Scotland was gradually settling down to a condition of comparative rest and quiet, and the embers of the burning castles and farm-houses had grown cold long ere Earl Hugh had entered the scene he was destined to leave that April day that saw him on his way to meet his Sovereign. He was not backed by his men. None were with him save his immediate attendants, and when he set forth it was in the confident assurance that he would reach the heights of the City of the Rock, and see the gleaming Forth as it flowed along to the sea. April month; the vernal influences were upon nature; but, though they coaxed the buds to open and to unfold, they could not coax the malignity and the memory from the revengeful Cuninghames. The Earl came to the house of Langshaw, and there he dined. The Lady of Langshaw was a Cuninghame. So was one of her maids. They knew beforehand that the Earl was

coming, and they had consulted with David Cuninghame of Robertland, Alexander Cuninghame of Corsehill, Alexander Cuninghame of Aiket, and John Cuninghame of Clonbeith —a quartette of feudalists sworn by the ties of relationship, and by the remembrance of the past, to pay back upon the Montgomeries the deeds which had eventuated half a century agone. These concealed themselves in proximity to Langshaw, and waited the signal agreed upon between them and their fellow, or sister-conspirators within. To assure them that the Earl was really there, the Lady or her maid was to display a tablecloth from one of the upper windows. They were to accomplish the rest. As soon as they saw the tablecloth flutter, they took their measures accordingly. Gathering around them a band of thirty followers, they rode towards a bridge spanning the Annick burn, in the parish of Stewarton, and there they concealed themselves. The Earl suspected nothing. No kindly monitor warned him that impending fate awaited him by the moorland burn. He bade his host and hostess good-bye, and rode off. It is not easy to comprehend the condition of the lady's mind when Lord Eglinton shook her by the hand and said farewell. She knew it was a long farewell that he spoke, and that ere the evening sun had set his soul should have gone out into the darkness of the future and the unknown. The party travelled easily, and reached the bridge without incident. Unhappily, danger unforeseen does not mean danger non-existent, and this the Earl found to his cost, for, as he arrived at the spot selected by the conspirators, he was suddenly brought face to face with a company of armed and desperate men. They were behind him, before him, and on either side. The young chief of the Montgomeries did not need to be told that there was danger. He saw it. It encircled him. He would have given his horse the spur, but there was no exit by which he could hope to ride into safety; so, perforce, he had

to draw his sword and defend himself. His servants were unable to render him assistance, and those who could do so saved themselves by flight. The Cuninghames pressed in upon the Earl, striking at him with their swords and endeavouring to unhorse him. He grimly contested for his life—one man against a score. The odds was too powerful. He was wounded and bleeding, and as he reeled in his saddle John Cuninghame of Clonbeith drew his pistol and shot him dead. It was a cruel murder. Having accomplished their purpose, the conspirators and their retainers fled the scene. They had done the deed; they had struck a deadly blow at the House of Montgomerie; and, though they knew that the men of Eglinton would ere long be in the saddle and scouring the country on their mission of vengeance, they were gratified at having wiped out many a bitter memory in the life-blood of the young chief from the banks of the Lugton.

When they bore Earl Hugh lifeless home, dire was the rage that filled the halls of the Montgomeries. The tidings spread like wild-fire. No messenger bearing the fiery cross ever sped faster across the straths and hills of the Highlands to call the clansmen to the battle. The broad lands which looked inwards upon Eglinton rang with the story and with the names of the murderers, and there were hurried consultations and ominous meetings, which boded no good to the Cuninghames. These resulted in a gathering of the heads of the various branches of the house and in the exchange of oaths and of resolutions to do by the foe as the foe had done by them. A life for a life was not the order of the day. The war must be pushed to closer quarters than that. Relentlessly, pitilessly, and with the tenacity of the sleuthhound, they must hunt down, not one Cuninghame, but many. Every man who had taken part in the tragic scene by Annick's bridge must be slain; and the false lady who had fluttered the signal in response to which the

Cuninghames had awaited the coming of the Earl, must be denied the mercy usually accorded, even by the augriest of angry men, to women. She was the traitress. But for her the Laird of Montgomerie had not been slain. She was the Jael who had indirectly, if not directly, handled the hammer which had driven the nail into the temple of the young chief. And there was recalled many a deed done by the Cuninghames for which no atonement had yet been made. The long roll of their red-handed transactions was gone over, and with stern-set faces the Montgomeries addressed themselves to their task. The Cuninghames heard the tidings and sprang to arms. The Earl of Glencairn denied all knowledge or intent of the murder. He knew nothing of it, and as proof that he spoke in all sincerity he permitted the law to take its own course against his friends. But the law in those days and among the western lairds moved slowly, and its mills did not even grind small when they did grind. Its processes were too sluggish for the Montgomeries, and they preferred to redress their wrongs by the old rough-and-ready methods of their forefathers.

Then was a reign of terror begun in the country of the Cuninghames. No man's life was his own. As, half a century before, they had gathered around the Master of Glencairn and marched across the lands of their rivals, spreading death and destruction whithersoever they turned themselves, so now the Montgomeries were everywhere abroad, and all with the same fateful intent. Their horsemen rode by the waters of Corsehill and Lugton and Glazert; they skirted the Halket Loch and the base of the rocky knolls of Dunlop; they passed by the Annick burn and by the bridge where the murdered Earl had lain; they crossed the uplands on the borders of Renfrewshire and hasted on their raids upon the strongholds of the foe. Robertland Castle saw them and shut its gates; Laugshaw's warders watched them from the battlements of their tower, but they

left the keep behind and went forward on their errand; they skirted grey Corsehill, and the walls of Auchenharvie gave back the echoes of their horse-hoofs. The command had been given to slay, and to slay utterly; and it was fulfilled to the letter. Houses were fired and their inmates put to the sword; men were killed in the open fields for no other reason than that the fields were those of the Cuninghames; innocent rustics passing along the highways, and unable to satisfy the marauders that they had no connection with Glencairn, were ruthlessly sacrificed. The Cuninghames retaliated as best they could, but so rapidly had the raid been determined upon, and so speedily the resentment put into realisation, that no time was given them for concentration. The most, therefore, they could do was to offer a species of isolated defence, and that availed them little in the face of an enemy who had tasted blood, and who was almost as inexorable in the work of annihilation as were the chosen race when they marched to their heritage amid a succession of hecatombs. "In the heat of their resentment," says the manuscript history of the Eglinton family, "they killed every Cuninghame without distinction that they could come bye, or even so much as met with on the highways, or living peaceably in their own houses." With the aid of the Secret Council, the Earl of Eglinton obtained power to take into his keeping the Castles of Robertland and Aiket, and for the space of five years he retained possession of these houses. All the while the garrisons whom he ordered to hold them levied supplies from the surrounding country, and wrought their will upon the tenants who had survived the first cruel slaughter. Poor Lady Aiket, the wife of Alexander Cuninghame, complained bitterly of the destruction of her property. Everything was laid in ruins. Her houses were overthrown; her orchards and growing trees were destroyed; doors, windows, locks, were wrenched and broken. And while the Montgomeries were thus

wanton, they were rigorous in insisting on the exaction of fines and duties—to such an extent, indeed, that her ladyship added to her complaint a clause setting forth the grievous wrongs that were done upon the tenants. Nor was her's by any means an isolated case; it only differed from the majority of the others in that her retribution lasted the longer.

The Laird of Corsehill made haste to escape, for the Montgomeries were upon his track. He disappeared from the district and purchased his life at the cost of perpetual banishment from the country of his sires. Cuninghame of Robertland followed his example. Scotland was too small to afford him shelter; and thinking that in whatever part of the British realm he might secrete himself, the tenacious avenger of blood, ever on his track, might find him, he crossed the seas to Denmark, where he found protection at the court of Queen Ann. There he remained until the storm had exhausted itself, nor did he return to Ayrshire until the Danish Queen became the wife of James VI. By her influence his peace was made with the irate lord of Eglinton, and he was permitted to return to Robertland, and to spend the evening of his days at home. No such happy issue attended on Cuninghame of Clonbeith. His was a double share of guilt—aye, a treble share—for it was his hand that drew the pistol which put an end to the sufferings of the Earl of Eglinton by the bridge across the Annick. He was the direct murderer of the chief of the Montgomeries, and the Master of Montgomerie took reprisal in his case into his own hands. Collecting a well mounted body of retainers about him he rode to Clonbeith. Cuninghame heard of their coming and escaped. He travelled across the country in the hopes of throwing his pursuers off the scent; but no bloodhound ever more truly followed up a trail than they did his. From Ayrshire to Renfrewshire they tracked his goings, and from Renfrewshire into Lanark. He fled to

Hamilton; they pursued him. They were told where he lay concealed, in a house in that town, and thither they directed their course. The man in whose dwelling he was hidden was naturally anxious to befriend him, and artfully hid him in one of the wide chimneys of the house. The Montgomeries lost no time in making their appearance, and in demanding that he should be handed over to them and to justice. They were informed that he was not there.

"In that case," said the Master of Eglinton, "let them search the house and satisfy themselves as to the truth of the assertion."

To this no demur could be offered, the less that the avenging force was strong enough to storm the dwelling, and determined enough to brook no opposition. The door was accordingly opened, and the Montgomeries made a rigid search of every room and of every corner in which a man might be hidden.

One of the searchers, John Pollock of that ilk, a connection by marriage with the Cuninghames of Langshaw and yet a sympathiser with the enemy, one of the most determined of the band, was not to be balked. His eye lighted on the chimney. He examined it and discovered the fugitive. There was no hope for him now. Reaching up, the Montgomeries dragged him down to the floor, and without a moment's respite they cut him in pieces on the spot. And then, having obtained the satisfaction they sought, they retraced their march into Ayrshire.

It will be remembered that the presence of the Earl of Eglinton in Langshaw was made known to the Cuninghames by the Lady of the house, and that the fluttering of a tablecloth, waved either by her own hands or by those of her sympathetic maid, was the signal for doom. This was not forgotten by the Montgomeries, and they vowed her death; but when they came to put their threats into execution, they found that she had disappeared. Asking her where-

abouts they were told that she had fled the country, and this they were forced to believe when they had sought for her and found her not. She had not taken refuge, however, across the seas. In the house of one of her lord's tenants, who remained staunch and true to the most rigid secrecy, she lay concealed for years. She durst not venture abroad by the light of day; and though no doubt, when night fell, she walked amid the scenes of happier days and more pleasurable associations, her wearisome servitude must have proved irksome and depressing. Time passed on, and the animosities of the Montgomeries either were satisfied or died away; and the Lady returned to Langshaw. The Eglinton family heard of it, but they let her live. She remained to the close in comparative seclusion, and never, until the day of her death, did she look a Montgomerie in the face. Another victim to the feud was the Commendator of Kilwinning, Alexander Cuninghame of Montgreenan, the Earl of Glencairn's brother, who was shot dead at his own gate; and there were many more of less note who were offered up on the altar of the Montgomeries' revenge.

With the passing away of the actors in the tragedy, the gradually extending power of the civil and the criminal authority, and the solidifying of the authority of the Scottish monarch, the great feud of the Montgomeries and the Cuninghames died out. There is still an Earl in Eglinton; but the Earldom of Glencairn has, in the meantime, been allowed to lapse. But the Cuninghames are not extinct; and there is still a hope that the fortunes of Sir William Cuninghame, Bart., of Corsehill, or of his descendants, may culminate in the restoration to them of the once great name of Glencairn.

THE ROASTING
OF THE
COMMENDATOR OF CROSSRAGUEL
IN THE
BLACK VAULT OF DUNURE.

PART I.

THE EARL COOKS THE COMMENDATOR.

EARL GILBERT, the feudal chief of the Kennedys, had set his eye upon the lands of Crossraguel. The abbey, fair even in its ruins, stands by the wayside some two miles south-west of Maybole, the steep-streeted capital of Carrick. It is older than the Kennedys themselves. Tradition, indeed, ascribes to the great Carrick family a more remote genesis; but reliable history does not instal them in the Castle of Dunure at an earlier period than the battle of Largs. When Alexander beat back Haco and his Norsemen on the shore of Largs in 1263 a portion of the invading army took refuge in Dunure, whither they were pursued by a strong body of the Scots, led by the progenitor of the Earls of Cassillis and the Marquises of Ailsa. The keep was stormed, the original Kennedy entered into possession, and from that day to this vast stretches of country in Ayrshire have been in possession of the descendants of the doughty warrior. By policy, by conquest, by marriage, they gradually extended their domains, until they became the greatest individual force in the south-west of Scotland.

Crossraguel Abbey had rather more than attained its majority when the first of the Kennedys entered into possession of Dunure. Abbey, and Castle, and Kennedys, they kept on together, growing older and older. Centuries passed over their heads. Nature and its ravages assaulted the walls of Crossraguel and of grey Dunure; but, after three hundred years had gone, each, after its own fashion, still opposed itself to the great destroyer. Father Time had touched them lightly.

At no period of its existence did Crossraguel rise into any importance as a monastic institution. Its lands were not extensive; its wealth was small; it never tried to stem the restless current in the world without. It sat in the midst of an open country, and the holy fathers of these good old times had at all events not only every opportunity of communing with Nature in her solitudes, but, if so inclined, of admiring her in her beauty. To-day the ruin looks over a well-cultivated country, diversified with woodland, backed by rising hills, and intersected by streams. Three hundred years ago the greater part of Carrick was woodland; but there is no reason to doubt that when Earl Gilbert cast his covetous eyes upon the grain-bearing fields and fat beeves of the abbey, the development of agriculture had reached a higher point around Crossraguel than it had in the surrounding country, which, harried by rival Kennedys and raided by lesser barons and squires of every degree, was without the security necessary to the encouragement of the Carrick farmers of these unsettled and stormy times. The Earl's character is best read in the light of what eventuates later on; but history describes him as a man of stern aspect, of unbending, inflexible will, and of pride which could not bear to be brooked. He was the terror of Carrick, from the border of Kyle to the banks of the Stinchar, and beyond the hills of Galloway he was hardly less supreme. The smaller barons, save in combination, were powerless to

oppose him; and during all his life-time he was, so far as they were concerned, practically unchecked. When, therefore, in 1570, his covetous soul went out to the lands of Crossraguel, he little dreamt that in the Commendator of the Abbey, Allan Stewart, he should find a man as stubborn as himself, and as resolved to maintain his rights as the Earl was to abrogate them.

Earl Gilbert was the nephew of Quintin Kennedy, the last and the best known of the Abbots of Crossraguel. It was he who, in 1562, contended for three successive days in a house in Maybole with John Knox. The abbot was the author of a work in defence of the mass, nor was he slow to fulminate against those to whom the mass was an abomination. One Sunday of that year, preaching in the chapel of Kirkoswald, a village adjacent to the abbey, he publicly announced his determination to defend his views against anybody who would impugn them. Knox was in the neighbourhood, and, hearing of the challenge, he repaired the following Sunday to Kirkoswald to take up the ecclesiastical glove which the abbot had thrown down. Apparently the reformer did not wish to have a scene in the church, so he called upon the abbot privately to tell him his intention. It cannot be said that the abbot lacked courage, but, not wishing to have any disturbance in the church, he decided to remain at home. This he accordingly did, and Knox, doubtless glad of the opportunity to expose the sins of Rome, occupied his pulpit, and declaimed to the congregation concerning the errors adherent to the mystic woman of the Apocalypse. The abbot immediately afterwards challenged him to open debate. Knox responded. There were some preliminary difficulties in the way, the abbot desiring the disputation to take place in presence of a limited number of persons on both sides; Knox, on the other hand, being anxious to have the question of the mass thrashed out in open meeting. Ultimately the reformer

gave way, and the dispute was carried on in Maybole in presence of forty adherents of each of the rival champions of faith. There is no record of the argument, save that left by Knox; but it may be doubted whether any good resulted from the controversy. Even in the times in which we live religious disputation tends mainly to acrimony, and there is no reason to believe, though both claimed the victory, either that the Scottish reformer touched the heart or understanding of the abbot, or that the abbot quenched by one single degree the fiery zeal of the reformer. Knox, however, admits that Quintin Kennedy and his "flatterers and collatoralles, bragged greatly" of their triumph.

The good abbot Quintin rested from his controversies, and with his life went out that of Crossraguel as a monastic institution. Allan Stewart was appointed Commendator. The Commendator was, nominally, the trustee of a benefice during a vacancy; but not unfrequently, through the influence of the Pope, he was granted, for his own behoof, the revenues of the benefice in life-rent. This seems to have been the case with Allan Stewart. The Earl of Cassillis had exerted all the influence which he was capable of wielding, in order to secure the Commendatorship, with its very substantial advantages, on his own behalf. His efforts were, however, in vain; so he resolved to accomplish his aim by other and more direct means. He could not bear to be thwarted; and he formed a resolution to obtain by force or by fraud what his influence had failed to secure for him.

What follows partakes so much of the horrible that one would gladly, if at all possible, relegate it to the limbo of legend or of tradition. Unfortunately, however, for the sake of so much humanity as was incorporated in the person of Earl Gilbert, every detail is vouched for to the letter.

Having then, through the influence of his relative, Captain James Stewart of Cardonald, near Paisley, been appointed Commendator of the Abbey and its lands, Allan Stewart, in

the early autumn of 1570, went down to Ayrshire to visit what was practically, so far as his lifetime was concerned, his own property. He was the guest of his brother-in-law, the Laird of Bargany—also a Kennedy, and the nearest approach to a dangerous rival in Carrick whom the Earl of Cassillis had. The feud, which subsequently broke out into open hostility between Cassillis and Bargany, was as yet only smouldering; but the newly appointed Commendator could not well have more greatly incensed the Earl against him than by his residence in the house of his hostile kinsman on the banks of the Girvan. The Earl noted the movements of the Commendator; and on a day late in the month of August, when Stewart was in the wood of Crossraguel, he took him prisoner. He was careful, however, not to use violence; but the moral compulsion which he employed was certainly not far removed from actual force. In the complaint which Stewart lodged with the Privy Council the following year he says that the Earl of Cassillis, the Earl's brother Thomas, the Master of Cassillis, and their accomplices, to the number of sixteen or thereby "came to me and persuadit me be their flatteries and deceatful wordis to pas with thame to his Castle and place of Dunure; being always myndit, gif I had made refusal to pass with them, to have taken me perforce." Making a virtue of necessity, the hapless Commendator yielded to the exigencies of the situation. He accompanied the Earl and his followers to Dunure.

The Castle of Dunure stands in its ruins on a rock about seven miles south-west of Ayr. It may have been—it undoubtedly was—a stronghold in the days when Allan Stewart passed within its ramparts; but at its very best and strongest it has never, save from its associations, been worthy to be put in comparison with many of the other strong square peels and castles which stud the south-west of Scotland. It was impregnable from the sea—for the waters of the Firth

of Clyde wash the base of the crag on which it stands. The land behind, at no great distance from it, dominates it; and in these days of heavy ordnance it would be easily demolished. It was, in the period of its strength, protected by heavy ramparts and by a deep fosse; and held by a determined garrison, it was quite capable of resisting anything short of a sustained siege. When, therefore, the heavy gates closed on the unfortunate Commendator, he must have felt himself powerless in the grasp of his captor. Six of the Earl's retainers were ordered to watch him, so that escape was impossible. His horse was taken from him, he was relieved of his weapons of defence, and for that and the two following days he was left to realise his helplessness and to borrow such strength as he could obtain from the consciousness of the injustice that was being done him. Without the walls of the keep everything was suggestive of unrestrained freedom. The boundless, fetterless sea rolled in its majesty before him; the wind whistled at will in the great chimneys and turrets and caught up the sprays of the restless breakers which broke upon the rocks beneath; and the sea-birds, strong and unfettered of pinion, flew and screamed and dived as they listed, amid the foam.

On the first day of September the Earl returned to Dunure from Cassillis House, where, as a rule, he resided, and placed his demands before his captive. In the interval he had evidently consulted his agent, for he brought with him "made in parchment," "a five-year tack and a nineteen-year tack, and a charter of feu of all the lands of Crossraguel," which he called upon the Commendator to subscribe. This Stewart refused to do, pointing out to him that his demands were unreasonable, the more so that the Abbey lands were already "disponit" to the tenants and possessors thereof. The Earl used all his powers of persuasion and of cajolery in vain, so he resorted to other and sterner means. There are two narratives of what followed, one in "The History of the

Kennedys," the other the complaint of the Commendator to the Privy Council. The latter perhaps being the more accurate, though not the more detailed, is subjoined. I have taken the liberty of anglicising a word here and there that the reader may have no difficulty in following Stewart's remarkable story :—

The Earl, "after long boasting and bullying of me, caused me to be carried by John Kennedy, his baker; John M'Leir, his cook; Alexander Ritchard, his pantryman; Alexander Eccles, and Sir William Todd, to the Black Vault of Dunure; where the tormentors denuded me of all my clothes perforce, except only my sark and doublet; and then bound both my hands at the wrist with a cord, as he did both my feet; and bound my soles betwixt an iron grate and a fire; and, being bound thereto, could in no way stir or move, but had almost died through my cruel burning. And seeing no other appearance to me but either condescend to his desire or else to continue in that torment until I died, took me to the longest life, and said, 'I would obey his desire,' albeit it was sore against my will. And, to be relieved of my said pain, subscribed the foresaid charter and tack, which I never yet read nor knew what therein was contained; which being done, the said Earl caused the said tormentors of me swear upon a Bible never to reveal one word of this my unmerciful handling to any person or persons. Yet he, not being satisfied with these proceedings, came again upon the seventh day of the foresaid month, bringing with him the same charter and tack, which he compelled me to subscribe and required me to ratify and approve the same before a notary and witnesses, which altogether I refused. And therefore he, as of before, bound me, and put me to the same manner of tormenting, and I said notwithstanding, 'he should first get my life ere ever I agreed to his desire'; and being in so great pain, as I trust man was never in with his life, I cried, 'Fie upon you! will you (not) ding whingaris (thrust a short

sword) in me and put me out of this world! or else put a barrel of powder under me rather than to be used in this unmerciful manner'! The said Earl, hearing me cry, bade his servant, Alexander Ritchard, put a table-napkin in my throat, which he obeyed, the same being performed at eleven o'clock at night; who then, seeing that I was in danger of my life, my flesh consumed and burned to the bones, and that I would not condescend to their purpose, I was relieved of that pain, where-through I will never be able nor well in my life-time."

Though the Commendator in his complaint affirms that he did not ratify the documents, there can be no doubt that he did. Probably the pain which he underwent in the Black Vault was so intense as to drive from his memory any recollection of his having subscribed the obnoxious feu charter.

The element of the grotesque is added to that of the horrible in the narrative given of the occurrence in "The History of the Kennedys," where it is entitled "The Erle of Cassillis Tyranny against a Quick[1] Man." It may seem rather a strange thing to find the historian of the Kennedy family revel in such a scene; but all through his work, indeed, he brings forward events which a sycophantic narrator would studiously have kept in the background. The author is unknown. It is supposed by some that the history is the work of Mure of Auchendrane, probably in many respects the most dangerous and unscrupulous enemy that the Kennedys had; by others that it was written by a schoolmaster in Ayr, who likewise rejoiced in the name of Mure, and who must either have been exceptionally faithful as a chronicler, or, like his namesake of Auchendrane, must have been animated by deadly rancour against the Kings of Carrick. Here, as above, I give the story in the quaint,

[1] Living.

graphic language of the narrator, again anglicising it for the behoof of the reader:—

"After that certain days were spent, and that the Earl could not obtain the feus of Crossraguel according to his own appetite, he determined to prove if that a collation could work that which neither dinner nor supper could do of a long time. And so the said Master (Stewart) was carried to a secret chamber, and with him passed the honourable Earl, his worshipful brother, and such as were appointed to be servants at that banquet. In the chamber there was a great iron chimney, under it a fire; other great provision was not seen. The first course was—

"'My Lord Abbot,' said the Earl, 'it will please you confess here that with your own consent you remain in my company, because you dare not commit yourself to the hands of others.'

"The Abbot answered—

"'Would you, my lord, that I should make a manifest falsehood for your pleasure? The truth is, my lord, that it is against my will that I am here; neither yet have I any pleasure in your company.'

"'But you shall remain with me at this time,' said the Earl.

"'I am not able to resist your will and pleasure,' said the Abbot, 'in this place.'

"'You must then obey me,' said the Earl.

"And with that there were presented unto him certain letters to subscribe, amongst which there was a five-years' tack and a nineteen-years' tack, and a charter of feu of all the lands of Crossraguel, with all the clauses necessary for the Earl to haste him to hell! For if adultery, sacrilege, oppression, barbarous cruelty, and theft heaped upon theft deserve hell, the great King of Carrick can no more escape hell for ever than the imprudent Abbot escaped the fire for a season, as follows:—

"After that the Earl espied repugnance, and that he could not come to his purpose by fair means, he commanded his cooks to prepare the banquet. And so, first, they fleeced the sheep—that is, they took off the abbot's clothes, even to his skin; and, next, they bound him to the chimney, his legs to the one end and his arms to the other; and so they began to apply the fire, sometimes to his hips, sometimes to his legs, sometimes to his shoulders and arms. And that the roast should not burn, but that it might roast in sop, they spared not to anoint it with oil. (Lord, look Thou to sic cruelty!) And that the crying of the miserable man should not be heard, they closed his mouth that his voice might be stopped. In that torment they held the poor man, while that ofttimes he cried 'for God's sake to despatch him, for he had as much gold in his own purse as would buy powder enough to shorten his pain The famous King of Carrick and his cooks, perceiving the roast to be enough, commanded it to be taken from the fire, and the Earl himself began the grace in this manner—'*Benedicite Jesus Maria!* You are the most obstinate man that ever I saw! If I had known that you would be so stubborn, I would not for a thousand crowns have handled you so! I never did so to man before you!' And yet he returned to the same practice within two days, and ceased not until he had attained his foremost purpose; that is, he had gotten all his deeds subscribed as well as a half-roasted hand could do it!"

It is little wonder that the narrator adds, in the bitterness of his soul, that "in that time God was despised and the lawful authority was contemned in Scotland."

Part II.

THE ROAST DOTH NOT AVAIL THE EARL.

Having attained his object, the Earl left the Castle of

Dunure in the hands of a body of his servants, with strict injunctions that the suffering Commendator was to be kept a close prisoner. But the dark deed could not, and did not, hide. Tidings of what had occurred reached Bargany, and incited the natural and the righteous ire of the rival Kennedy on the banks of the Girvan. It needed but a spark to enkindle a conflagration; and, in place of a spark, here was a veritable fire itself. Bargany knew with whom he had to deal, and he acted swiftly and decisively. He at once despatched ten or twelve of his servants under cloud of night to Dunure, under the leadership of "David Kennedy of Maxweltown, who had been his page before." These men, skilfully led and evidently well acquainted with the weaknesses of Dunure, entered the chapel, which was outside the moat at the end of the drawbridge, but which, nevertheless, was connected with the main body of the castle. In the morning, when the keepers were opening the outer gate, they sallied forth, sword in hand, entered the house, made captive the domestics, whom they confined for safety in the keep, and brought encouragement to the half-roasted Commendator. The deed was a daring one, and might have proved fatal to those who did it; for the Master of Cassillis and the Laird of Culzean, Sir Thomas Kennedy, learning what had befallen, speedily mustered a strong body of the Earl's retainers, marched across the country from Cassillis, crossing the shoulder of Carrick Hill, and at once proceeded to active operations. By piercing the chapel walls, they would have obtained entrance to the dungeons, and this they immediately attempted; but the small garrison manfully held them at bay, threw large stones down from the battlements upon them, and, breaking the roof of the chapel, compelled them to stay their housebreaking operations. The Master of Cassillis was foremost in the attack. He did not incite or direct his followers to attempt a deed in the execution and danger of which he did not share. Seeing, however,

that a forcible entrance was not to be obtained, he resolved to adopt other and more active measures, and he threatened the defenders that if they did not yield up the castle he would set fire to the chapel and burn them out. But they were not to be thus daunted. On the contrary, they advised him to be more moderate in his determination. Whether he set about firing the chapel or not it is impossible to say; but at all events his efforts came to naught, and he finally desisted from the attack when " the wind of ane hacquebute blasted his shoulder." This mishap excited his wrathful "furie"; but, irate though he was, he suspended operations and left the Bargany men in possession.

Bargany himself was meanwhile rousing the West Country to indignation, and stirring it to revenge. The Earl had plenty of foes in Ayrshire, and to these Bargany either went in person or sent messengers to apprise them of what had taken place, and to request their assistance. He was backed by letters from the Privy Council. His posts rode over the hills of Carrick, the broad lands of Kyle, and the fields of Cunninghame; and ere long, at the head of a strong force, bent on vengeance, he appeared in front of the grey keep of Dunure, and relieved the small garrison who had so effectually surprised it.

The Earl would fain have dared the combat, but the odds were too great; and without let or hindrance the Commendator, still bearing manifest traces of his cruel treatment, was conveyed to the Market Cross of Ayr, where he denounced his persecutor, and exhibited his scars and his burns to an indignant population. Ayr was at all times more friendly to Bargany than it was to his kinsman of Cassillis; and it can well be believed that the burghers promised their aid in having justice done upon the headstrong " King of Carrick."

The Privy Council summoned the Earl into its presence; and he had the boldness, not only to obey the summons—which, perhaps, he could not well have refused to do—but to

question the legitimacy of the tribunal. The offence, he had committed, he said, if offence it was, was either civil or criminal. In either case it was a matter for the regularly constituted courts of the realm; and therefore he demanded to be taken "before the judges competent."

The Regent and the Council dealt very leniently with the Earl. He had doubtless his friends at Court; and it may be presumed that, in the disturbed state in which the country was, they were by no means anxious to incur the pronounced, and in all probability the active, hostility of the powerful chief of the Kennedys. They accordingly declined to view the unholy transaction in its criminal capacity, or to remit it to the Court of Justiciary, before which, by right, the Earl ought to have appeared. Falling back on their function to secure the quietness of the realm, they ordained him to find caution in the amount of two thousand pounds not to molest the Commendator anew or to interfere with his rights over Crossraguel, its fruits, rents, profits, or duties. Bargany was dissatisfied with the leniency of the Council, and made preparation for taking practical revenge; but mutual friends interposed to prevent the outbreak of hostilities. The Earl, if not ashamed of his action, was wise enough to comprehend the strong feeling of hostility to him which it had created in the Westland; and, by way of making such amends as he could, and stilling the popular tumult, he gave the "brunt" Commendator a certain sum annually by way of solatium. On the whole, it may be conceded that he escaped the just consequences of his misdeed very easily; though from that day to this the memory of the cruel wrong which he did in the Black Vault of Dunure has remained the darkest stain on the by no means unchequered annals of the Kennedys of Cassillis.

The following year Earl Gilbert obtained by payment what he had failed to obtain by fraud and cruelty combined, and he lived to enjoy as best he could the fruits of the

Abbacy until, five years later, he was thrown from his horse and fatally injured. Naturally, his treatment of the Abbot took a strong hold upon the superstitious peasantry of the country-side; and many a weird story floats over Carrick to this day concerning the unhallowed intercourse which he had with the powers of darkness. The same story, for instance, is told concerning his death as is narrated concerning the final leave-taking with this world of "the bluidy Dalziel"—how that one night as the master of an Irish coaster was sailing down the Firth of Clyde under the lee of Ailsa Craig, he espied coming over the waters to meet him a chariot of fire and horses of fire; how the skipper, nerving himself in face of the extraordinary and terror-inspiring spectacle, put his speaking-trumpet to his mouth and shouted to the spiritual driver, "Whence, and whither bound"? how the driver replied in a voice of thunder, "From hell to Cassillis for the soul of the Earl"! and how, later on the same night, the same shipmaster beheld the diabolic equipage return with another passenger, who wailed and howled above the storm which blew in sympathy with the occasion. There was also the familiar crow, which, as the remains of the King of Carrick were being borne in pomp to their last resting-place in Maybole, flew on heavy pinion towards the procession, and lighted on the coffin. So long as the evil bird sat above the body of the Earl, the horses could not move the carriage on which it rested; but no sooner had the Satanic emissary—if not the Great Spirit of Darkness himself—resumed his flight, than the horses proceeded without the slightest difficulty. It is told, too, how that in the Black Vault of Dunure the Earl had a raven for his "familiar," and that the bird of ill omen encouraged him—nay, urged him—to the roasting of the Commendator. Education and enlightenment, however, are rapidly driving these baleful traditions into oblivion.

Sir Walter Scott has not suffered the scene to escape

immortality; for in "Ivanhoe" he has gone far in the direction of reproducing its horrors. "In these very scales," said the Norman Baron, Front-de-Bœuf, to the trembling Jew, Isaac of York, "in these very scales shalt thou weigh me out a thousand silver pounds after the just measure and weight of the Tower of London." The demand was spoken in the dungeon of Torquilstone Castle; and it was made by the Baron to the Jew in the presence of two Saracen slaves ready to obey the slightest nod of their imperious lord. Isaac protested his inability to tell down such a ransom.

"This dungeon," retorted the Norman, "is no place for trifling. Prisoners ten thousand times more distinguished than thou have died within these walls, and their fate hath never been known! But for thee is reserved a long and lingering death, to which theirs were luxury."

On a given signal the Saracens disposed a quantity of charcoal in a large rusty grate, and exercised the bellows until the fuel came to a red glow.

"Seest thou, Isaac," said Front-de-Bœuf, "the range of iron bars above that glowing charcoal? On that warm couch thou shalt lie stripped of thy clothes as if thou wert to rest on a bed of down. One of these slaves shall maintain the fire beneath thee, while the other shall anoint thy wretched limbs with oil, lest the roast should burn. Now choose betwixt such a scorching bed and the payment of a thousand pounds of silver; for, by the head of my father, thou hast no other option."

It was in vain that the Jew appealed to the humanity of the Norman nobleman; he was inexorable. The furnace was all aglow, the Saracens had seized their victim, and were ready to lay him on the bars, when the covetous heart of Isaac gave way before the terrible torture with which he was threatened. More fortunate he than the tortured Commendator of Crossraguel!

KING HACO'S BATTLE

WITH THE

SCOTS AT LARGS.

It fell on this wise. The Norsemen in their strong war-ships had swept the western sea-board of Scotland. They held possessions on the mainland and over them they had placed rulers; they held whole islands, and on them they had set up tributary kings. The Scots, united under one king, looked westward and northward; and wherever they cast their gaze, there floated the banners of Norway. Scandinavian galleys swung at anchor in their roadsteads, Scandinavian warriors lorded it in their castles, the Scandinavian tongue was heard in the lands whose nomenclature was largely Celtic, and Scandinavian stories were told and songs sung where other songs and other stories ought to have been heard. For long years there was fretting and fuming and threatening in the Scottish Court, and now and then there was a descent in force on the shores possessed by the Norse sea-kings; but withal the Norsemen held their own and cared not what the rude Scots blustered. King Haco of Norway was a master whom his servants loved. For nearly half a century he had sat upon the throne of the ancient kings, and his subjects regarded him with something approaching to awe as well as affectionate admiration. The warriors shouted his name, the harpers tuned their harps to his praises, and the minstrels at Court and in hall sung his glories. Of ancient lineage and high renown, he was at the same time a sea-king of indomitable courage and tenacity; and when he planted on the Hebridean soil, and on the

western mainland of Scotland, petty chieftains and rulers, he realised that he was bound in honour and in faith to establish their rule, and to keep them there in spite of all the threats and the warrings of the Scots. So when he heard in his palace in far off Bergen that Alexander of Scotland was meditating descent upon his possessions, he sent his messengers near and far over Norway and to the bounds of distant Finland, to muster war-ships and warriors to the battle. All the winter through resounded the clang of preparation, and when the snows melted and in their place came the soft winds and the green grasses of the spring of 1263, there loosed from Bergen an expedition that was the glory of all the beholders.

Nor were the Scots idle. Tidings reached them that the hammers of the Norse shipbuilders were swinging, and that the giant pines from the stretching forest were being upreared to carry to Caledonia the hostile canvas. The Scandinavian rulers of the western seas were spreading abroad the report that a gigantic armament was coming to their aid, and that with the early summer would arrive the fleet of their relief. The Scots were not able to cope with the Norwegians at sea. Their navy was practically an unknown quantity; and therefore, if they were to confront the foe at all, the scene of battle must be the shore. To go away to the Hebrides would be to court destruction, at least defeat. They resolved, therefore, to abide on the mainland and to concentrate their forces at such a place as might afford them the opportunity of coping with their formidable rivals. While the Norsemen were busy with their shipping the Scots were raising their levies; and knights and squires, and yeomen and bowmen were being collected from all quarters. From the armourer's workshops in Spain came helmets and breastplates, and bright steel armour, and keen edged swords; and in the Scottish forests were found the long shafts for the deadly spears.

Alexander, the Scottish monarch, sent his couriers out among the Hebridean islands to watch for the coming foe, and to endeavour to ascertain his movements. These were the days of comparative leisure. The war-ships had to wait the breezes; and even after their arrival on the Scottish coast there was no apparent hurry in developing the plan of attack. When Haco's vessels were seen bearing down on the coast, messengers were despatched to tell the King of the Scots; and wherever they sailed, Alexander was kept posted in their movements. At length he heard that the sea-kings had rounded the Mull of Kintyre and that they were making for the Firth of Clyde; and the Scottish army was concentrated at Largs and there awaited the issue. But first there were negotiations entered upon. Alexander's policy was to delay, to induce Haco to defer his attack until as late in the year as possible. To accomplish this he pretended his willingness to come to terms on condition that the Norwegians were to relinquish their claims to all islands within the area of the basin of the Clyde. This Haco would not agree to. Bute he regarded as his, and Arran, and the two Cumbraes; and these he would not give up. Alexander temporized, and succeeded in deferring the descent of the Norwegian sovereign on the mainland of the estuary of the Clyde until the very end of September. The vessels of the Norsemen, however, scoured the shores of Loch Long, and their light boats were carried to Loch Lomond whose islands were devastated by fire and sword. Nowhere did the invaders meet a foe worthy to cope with them; and wherever they went they left the traces of their presence. The main body of their vessels lay under shelter of the Cumbraes. Haco was anxious to be gone; but Alexander still temporized, and that successfully, until the equinoctial gales burst upon the scene. These were the Scottish monarch's hopes; nor did they fail him. They came, with all the fury of the tempest. In from the distant ocean the seas rolled up the Firth,

and tossed the oaken war-ships of the Norsemen upon their angry crests. The winds blew fresh and still fresher, until they culminated in a gale which drove on the shore a number of the invaders' vessels and hastened the long deferred conflict.

Alexander was at Largs; and around him the Scottish army. They saw on the opposite shore the Scandinavian ships; they saw them driven from their moorings by the Fates on the seething waste of waters; they saw them ground right under their eyes on the Ayrshire coast. Then was their chance. Haco, whose big ship still swung at her anchors, saw the danger, and he led ashore a strong body of his warriors. As the night was falling the Scots made attack; but the Norsemen beat them off, and remained all night on the land. Haco would have stayed with them till the morrow, but they persuaded him to retire to his galley; and this he did, leaving his men under tried commanders whose courage he knew, and whose discretion and judgment he knew to be equal to their courage. In the morning the battle was joined. The Norsemen were not quite a thousand strong. Many of the gallant seamen-warriors who had left Bergen had gone down with their vessels in the storm which drove them upon the rocks; many more were attending to the relics of the disabled fleet; and others still were away on foraging and marauding expeditions and could not be recalled. The Scots had the advantage of numbers and of position. Theirs was the rising ground; for the Norsemen there was the sandy beach behind them, their frail boats, and the fleet lying off the shore. The youthful Scottish monarch—for the king was only about three and twenty years of age—was himself in command; and as he rode along the ranks of his army, he stimulated their courage and excited their ardour for the fray. The forces of the Scots were partly composed of horse and partly of foot soldiers; and all were animated with a feeling of revenge upon the ravaging foe.

The fight was begun by the Scots who rushed upon the invaders with native fury. The Norsemen stood firm for a moment; and then a portion of the army broke and fled. Some of them thinking that the day had gone irretrievably against them, jumped into their boats and made haste to reach their ships; but the remainder, shoulder to shoulder, and shield to shield, boldly contested every inch of ground. We can imagine with what scorn Haco received the fugitives. But there was no time to be lost. Slowly the remainder of his stalwart band were being forced back along the beach, their faces to the foe. They did great deeds of valour. Time and again they stemmed the rush of the pertinacious Scots; and when down before the long spears of the Scottish spearmen, or under the axes of the Scottish knights on their mail-protected horses, went the struggling Norsemen, others stepped into their places, the gaps were closed up, and the fight went on. Haco saw the situation; his keen eye detected the danger. He had not many men to spare, but all those whom he could spare he ordered ashore to the assistance of their friends; and soon the bosom of the still stormy Firth was dotted with boats springing under the strong arms that pulled the ashen oars, and filled with warriors eager to join in the issue. The Norsemen on shore saw them and took heart of grace. They stood—they made a stand—by the Kepping burn, and there they held the pressing foe at bay until their comrades sprang to their aid. The conflict raged anew; fresh life on the one side was met by fresh ardour and determination on the other. All that October day, amid the elemental strife, raged the struggle for the mastery. The Norsemen formed themselves into a ring, a ring of very determination; and standing back to back they resisted the impetuous onslaught of the Scots who circled them about. Spears were shivered against the shields of the Norsemen, and darts were caught upon them or found rest on the breasts of the warriors; swords rung on swords,

axes fell upon helmets, and shouts of defiance were answered by counter shouts or found mournful echo in the groans of the wounded and the dying. The green grass, the yellow sand, the brown rocks were alike stained with blood; and over all the field of battle were strewn weapons which had fallen from hands nerveless in death. At last the sun westered, and dipped behind the hills; and as the shades of night began to gather thick, and darkness was over the land, the hostile forces gave up the struggle. But the power of the Norsemen was broken. The Scots withdrew to their vantage ground, and in the still hours of the night, the warriors of Haco who had come through the deadly fray, betook themselves to their boats and were borne to their fleet which still lay under shelter of the Cumbraes.

Haco was unable to resume the conflict on the following day. He realized that he was unable to cope with the gallant Scots who were still encamped by the scene of the battle, and ready to begin anew the stern struggle for the mastery. Alexander was chivalrous as well as bold; and when messengers came to him from the Norwegian monarch asking permission to inter the Norsemen who had fallen on the shore of Largs, he at once consented. And after the manner of their race, the Scandinavians buried their dead out of their sight and raised their cairns to the memory of their comrades who had entered the happy halls of Valhalla.

Such is the Scottish narration of the battle of Largs—prosaic, matter-of-fact, as becomes a Scottish story of long ago. To get to the romance of the fray and the mighty efforts of the Norse King and his chivalry to reduce the standard of Alexander—to comprehend what an armament it was that set sail for Scotland, and was shattered finally upon the shore of Largs, we require to borrow from the Norwegian record. A spirit-stirring, old-world, romantic record. A tale redolent of the best days of chivalry, bracing as the breezes from the pine woods of Norway, sparkling as

the sunbeams that dance on the placid waters of the fjords. Its music comes down across the centuries, clear and rhythmical. Its invigorating atmosphere charms into being the gallant warriors who sailed under the banners of Haco, breathing into them the very breath of life, until they stand upon their feet an exceeding great army. Let us take up the record then, and tell the tale anew. Let us reproduce the story as it was sung by Sturla, the Laureate of the expedition, in the Ravens ode.

In the summer of 1262 the Norwegian Court was agitated by tidings that came in from the coasts of Scotland. The Hebridean kings who owed vassalage to Haco of Norway had heard that King Alexander was covetous of their domains, and Scottish rovers had descended upon the island of Skye and outraged the subjects of the Scandinavian monarch. Was it not told how the fierce Earl of Ross, with Kiarnach, the son of Mac-camel, had ravaged the country with fire and sword, giving churches and homes to the flames, and killing men and women indiscriminately? Did not the halls of Haco and the haunts of his sea kings ring with the sad story of the enemy's barbarity, and was there not a burning for revenge when it was told how the Scots had impaled the hapless children on the sharp points of their long spears and shaken the quivering weapons until the murdered bodies of the infants had fallen right down to the sinewy hands of the savage torturers? And, added to all, did not the Norse blood boil in the veins of the warriors when it passed from mouth to mouth that the king of the Scots meditated invading the territories of the noble Haco and wresting them from his grip? The Norsemen thought much, nor did they think long. The king summoned his counsellors about him, and as the result of their consultation an edict was issued ordering the levy of a large body of troops and of sharp-prowed war ships to meet at Bergen in the beginning of the following spring, and wipe out, in

descent on the Scottish coasts, the wrong done to the dwellers in the Hebrides.

Winter passed — a busy winter — and when the days lengthened out, and May-day had come and gone, King Haco repaired to Bergen. He was sage of counsel, of courage undaunted, in action ready; but the weight of years was upon him. Prince Magnus was emulous to command the expedition, but Haco set him aside, for well he knew the western seas and the strongholds of the foe. The Prince was invested with temporary sovereignty, yet was it with a sore heart that he beheld the fleet sail away into the evening sun.

Ere setting out Haco despatched two trusty captains to the Orkneys to procure pilots for Shetland. These, ere returning, sailed south as far as the Hebrides, and told King Dugal that he might look for relief; and King Dugal straightway spread abroad the report that forty ships of war were on their way to his aid. The Scots heard the tidings, and forbore to make a descent which they had meditated upon the Western islands. The pilots returned to Bergen, and eight vessels were ordered to the Hebrides and the adjacent coasts of Scotland. The wind blew hard in their teeth as they left the harbour, and they were compelled to shelter for a day or two under a favouring headland until the breezes were fair and the sea smooth. And then they raised their square sails to the wind, the rowers dipped their blades into the sea, and the advance couriers of the armament went forth on their errand. They were tried seamen who were in command, Ronald Urka, Erling Ivarson, Andrew Nicolson, and Halvard Red. Many a time had they crossed the same rough seas before, and many a plundering descent had they made upon the homes and haunts of the foe. They left Bergen high in hopes and in spirits, for action was their life, and adventure the mainspring of their being. In the darkness of the night, and

when the waves careered after their oaken vessels, the ship which bore Ronald Urka was separated from the remainder, and made for the Orkneys, where it remained until the fleet of Haco arrived. The other three captains went on their course. They passed in safety the stormy passage of the Pentland Firth, where storms revel, and where rapid run the currents; they swept along that rocky coast, only pausing at Durness to lay aside their long sweeps and flesh their swords in an incursion inland; and then rounding Cape Wrath, they steered for the Hebrides and waited there for Haco to come to them.

And Haco came. He came in his great galley, oaken from stem to stern, which his handicraftsmen had built for him at Bergen; he came surrounded by gallant captains, chiefs, and warriors, and fierce pirate kings of high degree. It was a noble ship he sailed, the pride of Norway. It contained seven and twenty benches for rowers, and as they gave way with their heavy oars, and the big ship forged ahead through the waters, the sunbeams were reflected back from the shields of the warriors and from the golden dragons' heads and necks, which made formidable the stately galley. And such a ship, and such an armament, they could not sail to disaster! So gallant a band of captains and warriors, heroes in many a field and in many a fray, they could not leave their native shores to return save in victory! And the omens were all favourable. The seers and the sages remembered and recalled how it was told that Alexander of Scotland, the father of the reigning monarch, had meditated a descent upon the Hebrides. While he lay slumbering upon his couch, he had received a visit from St. Olave and St. Magnus and St. Columba, and a warning that if he persisted in his enterprise it must prove fatal to him—St. Olave in his royal robes, ruddy of countenance, stern of aspect; St. Magnus, of slender shape, active and lithe in figure, and majestic of mien; St. Columba, of uncouth

feature, and uncomely—but he had neglected the warning and fell death had overtaken him and put an end to the expedition. If such had been the fate of the sire, what must be that predetermined for the son who had threatened to tread in his father's footsteps, and to do that which stern fate, and that foreshadowed, had warned him not to essay? Victory was the presage, and spoil, and treasure, and glorious battle. It was amid these good omens and bright prospects that the monarch sailed away. And Sturla sang—

"From the recesses of Finland, bands, keen for battle, sought the potent Ruler of the Storm of Javelins. The boisterous deep that girds this earth bore the ships of the Protector of Thrones west from the streams of Gotelfa.

"No terrifier of dragons, guardians of the hoarded treasure, e'er in one place beheld more numerous hosts. The stainer of the sea-fowl's beak resolved to scour the main, far distant shores connected by swift fleets.

"A glare of light blazed from the powerful far-famed monarch while, carried by the sea-borne wooden coursers of Gestils, he broke to the roaring waves. The swelling sails of keels that ride the surge reflected the beams of the unsullied sun around the umpire of wars.

"The abyss returned the flaming gleam of war, darted from the bright glittering concave shields of the goddesses of battle. This voyage, by the bands of the troubler of peace, through the sea that streams around the world was unwelcome to the foe—they dreaded the exacter of tribute."

Six and forty winters had King Haco ruled the Norsemen, and round him had he gathered warriors tried and true. Barons and knights were on the quarter-decks of the war galleys, and with the fleet was Magnus Earl of Orkney, to whom the king gave a goodly galley. Well might the Scandinavian monarch feel proud at the reflected might of

his power. Well might he stand on the stern of his oaken galley and feel elate as he contemplated on either hand the expanded sails of his ships. They crossed the summer sea —for it was the month of July—to the Orkneys, and there they debated whither they would steer their keels. Haco was desirous of sending an expedition to ravage the Firth of Forth, but his captains would not sail without their august commander, and so the course was set for Caithness. On shore went the Norsemen and exacted tribute, and the men of Caithness submitted themselves in peace to the exaction, for "all its tribes were terrified by the steel-clad exacter of tribute, and panic-struck at his mighty power." As they lay in Ronaldsvo a great darkness o'ercast the sun, and nature seemed to have gone to sleep. The Norsemen watched in awe the dark shadow becloud the face of the god of light; but the darkness passed, and the orb rolled on in its brightness. Quitting Ronaldsvo the expedition navigated the Pentland Firth, and, sailing round the jagged rocks which look out to the cold northern sea, steered for the Sound of Skye, where Magnus, King of Man, joined himself unto them, and where the forerunners of the fleet were found awaiting their arrival, Erling Ivarson, Andrew Nicolson, and Halvard Red; and when the navy reached the Sound of Mull, where King Dugal and the other Hebridean chiefs were assembled to receive them, the eyes of the islanders were gladdened by the sight of more than a hundred vessels, and by the mighty strength of the armament that had come to their relief. The great galley of the monarch, as she lay in the Sound, excited the fond admiration of men who had never seen anything more striking than the war ships of the pirate kings; and they sailed round her in their rude boats, and felt strong in the strength of the protectorate.

On and still on the expedition swept, and everywhere it went it found submission. Angus, Lord of Kintyre and Isla,

aware fealty, and so also did the Lord of Margad,[1] and on their bovine wealth Haco levied a fine of a thousand cattle.

"Our Sovereign, Sage in Council, the imposer of tribute, and brandisher of the Keen Falchion, directed his long galleys through the Hebrides. He bestowed Ila, taken by his troops, upon the valiant Angus, the generous distributer of the beauteous ornaments of the hand.

"Our dutiful King that rules the monsters of the deep, struck excessive terror in all the regions of the Western ocean. Princes bowed their heads in subjection to the cleaver of the battered helm; he often dismissed the suppliants in peace, and dispelled their apprehensions of the wasteful tribes."

A detachment of the fleet was sent south round the Mull of Kintyre, and, descending on the land, they pillaged the inhabitants and took back to their ships such spoil as they could find. Such of the people as they encountered they killed; and the remainder fled into the country and hid themselves. As thus they swept along the coast the King sent for them to return; and they voyaged back by the course by which they had come.

"The openers of gushing wounds, undaunted of soul, proceeded in the paths of the famed Sea-King, Getes, from the South round Kintyre. Our heroes, rousers of the thundering tempest of swords, glutted the swift, sable-clad birds of prey in Scotland."

Another expedition detached from the main fleet sailed as far as Bute and reduced the island.

"The wide-extended Bute was won from the forlorn wearers of rings (the Scotch) by the renowned and memorable troops of the promoter of conquest—they wielded the two-edged sword—the foes of our Ruler dropt, and the Raven from his fields of slaughter winged his flight for the Hebrides.

[1] Who this Margad was does not appear from History.

"The habitations of men, the dwellings of the wretched, flamed. Fire, the devourer of halls, glowed in their granaries. The hapless throwers of the dart fell near the swan-frequented plain, while south from our floating pines marched a host of warriors."

Then came Haco himself round to Arran: and while he lay there he sent his envoys to treat for peace with the King of Scotland. Alexander received them as became their rank, and listened to their terms; but he delayed to come to any decision, because the winter was nearing and the storm clouds were threatening to burst upon the Norwegian fleet. The Scottish King would not relinquish his right over Bute, Arran, and the two Cumbraes; and finding him stubborn the Scandinavian invaders left the shelter of Arran and swept along with all his forces past the Cumbraes. Again there were negotiations. Let the Sovereigns meet, counselled Haco, and arrange, if they could, the terms of an honourable peace. Should they agree, Haco and his war ships would hie them back to Norway: should they fail, then the issue must fall to be decided by the stern arbitrament of battle. But the Scottish King was waiting for the storms of winter and delayed to come to terms; and so Haco declared the truce at an end and recommenced his career of pillage. In their light boats they sailed up Loch Long; they drew their boats across the narrow neck of land which intervenes between Loch Long and Loch Lomond; they wasted with fire the houses on the islands, the possession of the Earl of Lennox; and all around they spread devastation.

"The persevering skilled warriors of the throwers of the whizzing spear drew their boats across the broad isthmus. Our fearless troops, the exactors of contributions, with flaming brands wasted the populous islands in the lake and the mansions around its winding bays.

"Our veterans, fierce of soul, feeders of wolves, hastened

> their wasteful course through the spacious districts of the mountains. Allan, the bravest of mortals, at the fell interview of battle, often wreaked his fatal vengeance on the expiring foe."

But now the storms of the winter began to blow; and dark were the clouds that settled on the peaks of the hills, and the winds swept over the main and sent up the billows to fight with dash and with fury against the Norsemen. Hailstones fell on them, begotten as sung Sturla of the powers of magic; and as the furies revelled in the tempest, ten of the war-ships were lost in Loch Long and five driven from their moorings took the ground hard by the shore of Largs. Even the great galley of the King began to drag her anchors. Seven of them were already out to windward, but the storm beat the harder and ever the harder; and as it raged the war-ship kept nearing the treacherous coast. There was one great anchor on board, the sheet anchor itself; and when that was cast out, the last hope of the struggling seamen, it caught fast and stayed the drifting; and the danger was past. But as the night descended there were other dangers attendant, and these of a different kind. The Scots who were upon the shore, seeing the extremity of the Norsemen, gathered in and rained upon them their spears and darts. The beleaguered Sea-Kings gallantly fought under cover of their ships; and the wind abating, Haco sent ashore fresh reinforcements to their relief.

> "The victorious breaker of gleaming weapons, attentive of soul, then sent his bands to the hard fought field, where breast plates rang. Our troops by the slaughter of the suspicious foe, established their monarch's fame, villified by the dwellers of the vallies."

The Scots retired, and the Norsemen continued ashore all the night. The morning broke on the scene of the day's battle. On the rising ground above the waters of the Firth, still troubled by the rude blasts of the equinox, were the Scots;

on the shores underneath, the Norsemen, inferior in numbers, but scorning retreat. Shrilly rang out the horns; loud rose the cries of defiance and of challenge. King Haco would fain have stayed by his men, and shared with them the brunt of the battle; but his councillors advised him to retire to his long oared galley and there await the issue. They were tried commanders whom he left behind; and under them were from eight to nine hundred steel clad warriors, bold with Scandinavian valour.

The onset was made by the Scottish Knights, five hundred in number. They rode on horses that had breast plates, and many of the steeds were protected by well-wrought armour from Spain. Behind them came on the footmen, well accoutred, bending their long bows or poising the quivering spears. And then began the slaughter. The Scots bore down with the rush of a whirlwind and drove the Scandinavians before them. So impetuous was the torrent that many of the invaders imagined the fray was o'er and had gone against them, and they jumped into their boats and made for the fleet. Their comrades who stood firm behind their rampart of shields called on them to return: but few obeyed the summons. Around the Norwegians swarmed the foemen pressing onwards to break the serried phalanx which, impenetrable, kept them back. Great were the deeds of valour. Fergus, one of the Scottish Knights, with helmet of gold and set with precious stones, and clad in costly mail, was one of the fiercest of the Scottish army. He rode towards the Norwegians and encountered their bravest knights; he encouraged his men to the assault; he behaved himself like a hero. But stout Andrew Nicholson singled him out and smote him with keen blade so that he cut his leg off right through the armour, the blow descending so heavily that chain protection and flesh and bone and sinew were snapped in twain and the edge of the sword, gleaming bright no longer, rested on the saddle of the horse; he reeled, he fell,

and the Norsemen stripped him of his Knightly belt. But still went hard the battle; still pressed the Scots on the Norse wall of defence.

"Where cuirasses rung, our generous youths, formed in a circle, prostrated the illustrious givers of bracelets. The birds of prey were gluttonously filled with lifeless limbs. What great chieftain shall avenge the fate of the renowned wearer of the Belt?"

Backwards and forwards rolled the tide of war. One detachment of the Norsemen were repulsed and forced to their boats; and now advancing, now retreating, the rival warriors spent the day in conflict. As the day wore down to the evening and the sun was beginning to dip beyond the westward hills, the Norsemen charged desperately up the hill whereon the Scottish Army fought.

"The champions of Norway's Lord saluted the stout harnessed Barons with the rough music of battle. The train of the supporter of thrones, courageous and clad in steel, marched to the din of clashing swords.

"At the conflict of corselets on the blood-red hill, the damasked blade hued the mail of hostile tribes, ere the Scots, nimble as the hound, would leave the field to the followers of our all-conquering King."

It was the Scots who fled. They took to the hills and to the darkness of the night, and the Norwegians rowed away to their vessels across the stormy waters of the Firth. They gathered up their slain the following morning, and saw no tokens of the foemen's dead, for these they had carried away under the sable cover of the night.

King Haco sailed away. Past the peaks of Arran he steered, and round the Mull of Kintyre, and thence to the island of Mull. His Hebridean kings he replaced, as he went, in their domains. He touched at Skye, and thence northwards he headed for Cape Wrath. He stayed at times to levy contributions, and the hardy islanders of hostile

islands fell avenging on his men. In the Pentland Firth the storms were out, and in a terrible whirlpool went down one of his galleys. The winter was on him, and he could not venture across that cold, tempestuous north sea, which raged between Scotland and the distant shores of Norway; so he distributed his fleet in safe havens, and himself near Kirkwall waited the passage of the winter and the coming of the vernal equinox. But it was not to come to the gallant old Scandinavian monarch. In Kirkwall he sickened. The Bible was read to him and its holy consolations soothed his spirit. He heard the Latin authors read; and then his desire was for the stories and the sagas of his own country, for the rehearsal of the doings of its knights, and for tales of the chivalry of his fathers and of those who served under them and who fought in their train. He divided his money for the payment of his troops, and gave gratuities to the faithful among his attendants. Then there came around him holy men; and when they had ministered to him, he kissed them and received extreme unction at their hands. As he sank lower and lower, he listened anew to the deeds of his forefathers read from the chronicles of the Norwegian kings; and these were his stay and solace until the Almighty called him hence. He had obsequies as became a monarch. By the bier on which he reposed stood attendants with lights in their hands, and the whole hall was illuminated; and as the warriors trooped in to gaze upon his features for the last time, he appeared beautiful as in life, with countenance still fair and ruddy. By night his nobles kept watch by his bed; and there he lay until the lid of the coffin was made fast upon him, and with high pomp and ceremony he was borne to the Church of St. Magnus and buried by the steps leading to the shrine of the Earl of Orkney. And all the winter through his knights watched by his grave and kept him silent company.

And when the spring days came, and the storms went

down, they lifted Haco from the vault and placed him yet once again on the long-prow'd, oaken galley, with its seven-and-twenty benches for the rowers and its decorations of gold so that all men did admire it. Out to sea they put, the sea king on his last voyage, the wind filling the flowing canvas and the rowers impelling the galley with their long-measured strokes. The sea was crossed and the coasts of Norway were in view; and out from Bergen came Prince Magnus and his nobles, and received the body of the dead monarch. His last voyage was done. And

> "The breakers of temper'd metals, stood crowding around the grave of the ruler of the nation, while in their swimming eyes appeared no look of joy."

Such, with Sturla's help, is the story of the Raven's ode and of the events that led up to and succeeded the battle of Largs. It would serve no good purpose to examine the Norwegian version critically, and all that need be said of it is that the Scandinavian singer has done his best to gild defeat and retreat, and to girdle in romance a hapless and ill-starred expedition.

The Norwegians came no more to the coasts of Scotland. Their supremacy was broken, and Scotland, its Highlands and its islands, was free from Norse dominion.

THE PRE-HISTORIC SIRES OF AYRSHIRE.

LONG before the dawn of anything like reliable history in Scotland, Ayrshire was inhabited. There were men and women then, as now, scattered all over the country. They

lived in a dim, indistinct age, probing their way onwards and upwards, slowly, surely, towards civilization, but perishing, whole generations of them, without leaving behind the record of their deeds. But as the disinterring of the buried cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii from the ashes flung out by Vesuvius, ere Christianity was many decades old, have been revealed to tell us how the citizens lived, and wrought, and enjoyed themselves; how they worshipped in the temples of their gods and gathered in the amphitheatre to witness the contests between man and man and between wild beast and man—so, though in a less degree, have the lake-dwellings of Ayrshire been dug out by patient explorers to tell how our forefathers lived, and to reveal, in their relics, many of the commoner events of their everyday history. There is much that is partial in the discoveries and much that is incomplete in the deductions that are drawn from them, but there is still enough to enable us, ineffectively it may be, to reproduce one or two scenes of the pre-historic age.

Lake-dwellers, it may be premised, whether in Scotland or in Ireland or in Switzerland, were invariably of Celtic origin; at all events there have been no traces of their ingenious and elaborately constructed crannogs brought to light in lands which were inhabited by other races. The exact period at which they flourished is uncertain; but it is fairly assured that, in Scotland at least, their occupation was co-terminous with the sixth on to the ninth or tenth centuries. The stone age, the bone age, the bronze age, and the iron age all coalesced, so to speak, in Ayrshire. The Celts of the crannogs used implements, as we shall see, of all these materials; and the finding of tools made of smelted iron and copper effectually disposes of the theory that the remains discovered at Lochlea, Lochspouts, and elsewhere, are those of abodes that were tenanted ere Homer sang or the deities dwelt on high Olympus.

Ayrshire was largely forest in these days. Vast stretches of oak, of alder, of willow, of birch, of hazel, were everywhere abundant; and through these roamed the tribes which dwelt in the land. To say that there was nothing that could now be called roads is to convey but a poor conception of the tracks which led from point to point. Two hundred years ago there were only a few well-marked routes of travel in the county; and these were so miserable that historians, towards the close of last century, recalling what they had heard and what they had read of them, congratulated their contemporaries on the transformation which had taken place. And if such was the case at so comparatively recent a date, what must have been the condition of the "highways" a thousand long years before? On all hands stretched the forest glades, hardly penetrated by the foot of the hardy wanderer. Dense, dark foliage rose overhead; thick underbrush covered the ground; and we can fancy the skin-clothed passenger threading his way through the arboreal omni-presence with nothing to guide him save the foot-marks of those who had gone before. The fleet red deer fled at his approach, and the startled roe deer retired into the thickets at the intrusion. It is not improbable that he encountered occasionally the ferocious wild boar, angry because his quiet solitudes were invaded, or that even a stray wolf may have appeared on the edge of the forest to tell him of the dangers of his solitariness. Occasionally he would emerge on a clearing where grew stunted crops of corn and of barley. The sight of fruit-trees charmed whatever taste he possessed; and his sense of the greatness of the race to which he belonged was enhanced when, nearing marshy lands or treading the borders of the lakes which abounded wherever the sloping country formed a natural basin, his astonished gaze lighted on the strongholds of the lake-dwellers. These must have seemed to him marvels of ingenuity, standing, like the earth in course of

creation, out of the water and in the water, their walls strong to resist attack and their thatched log-dwellings mighty in proportion to the insignificance of the traveller to whom their strength was revealed.

Self-preservation is one of the first instincts of human nature; and so, when a wandering band of Celts came to a spot which seemed to them to be fitted for something like a permanent home, they had to consider, not only whether the surrounding country was capable of bearing the staff of life, providing pasturage for their herds and flocks, and venison for the social board, but also whether it adapted itself for defence. These were the days of the strong arm and the stout heart—"the good old days," when might was right, and when the weak went to the wall even more speedily, if possible, than they do to-day. The chief of the tribe, or sept, sometimes erected a hill-fort, sometimes a crannog, sometimes both; and to these he and his followers retired when danger was in the air. But they were not only occasional refuges, but permanent habitations as well; though it is a reasonable enough deduction that while they were the strengths or strongholds of the tribe, the ordinary tribesmen dwelt in huts or in tents in the vicinity.

The wandering chieftain, then, with his warriors, their wives and families, and their store of cattle and sheep, roamed through the land until he reached a spot suitable for colonisation. To him and his the methods of the lake dwellers are no secret. He knows just what sort of a lake or a loch will suit him; he knows how to drive the pointed piles or lay the foundation; and when he reaches a spot that strikes his fancy, he surveys the landscape and guages its capacities; and having made up his mind that the water will afford him shelter, the hillsides pasture for his sheep, the plains grazing for his cattle; when he has made sure that he is in the run of the red deer and that the woods will not fail him; when he has examined the soil and assured

himself that it will grow corn and barley—when he has satisfied himself of these things, he sets about the construction of his abode. It is summer time, and the waters of the loch are low, so his men can work the more easily and with greater comfort. He settles temporarily in a rude encampment in the forest. The first thing to ascertain is the nature of the bottom of the lake. If it consists of deep ooze or yielding mud, without any hard or reliable subsoil, he must lay a wooden foundation; if, on the other hand, there is good holding ground, he will drive in piles, and on these he will build his abode. If he elects to do the former he will have to cut heavy stakes, not unlike railway sleepers; on these he will have to place layers of moss and branches of trees and large stones; and when he has attained a sufficient thickness he will bind it all together, and on the top will lay another platform of stakes, and connect with uprights the upper floor with the lower. No rising waves that disturb the surface of the lake will ever shake his foundation; though built on the mud it is secure and lasting. Should he elect to drive in piles he will have to construct outer and inner circles, and these he will have to pack with clay, with brushwood, with stakes and stones, and outside of all he will have to erect a palisading breast high above the water, over which no foeman shall be able to climb without subjecting himself to the deadly thrusts of the defenders with their long bone-headed or iron-headed spears. He elects, we shall say, to drive in piles; the bottom is marshy, but underneath the surface there is a clay subsoil which will ensure permanence and stability.

The Ayrshire lake-dweller has a change, an accumulation of implements. He comes upon the scene with a knowledge of how to smelt and form iron into any shape he may desire. But his knowledge is crude and rudimentary still. Iron is the future age characteristic; and while he uses it, he still clings to the tools and the weapons of his fathers. Out

then into the forest go his men. On their shoulders they bear their flint and stone-headed axes. They select such young oak and birch trees as will answer their purpose, and the glade rings with their telling blows. The work is hard, for the flint axes cut but slowly, and great care must be taken that the strokes are straight and steady. Time is not of much account, and there is none of the hurry and the rush of the nineteenth century jerry-builder. There is no scamping of work; no inferior wood is taken; only that which will last for generations is put into the foundation. The woodmen cut and cleave, and down tumble the trees. Their branches are lopped off and laid aside for the purpose of packing the double rows of the palisading. They do not strip the trees; the bark is left on so as to resist the action of the water. For days upon days the workmen work, until they have piled up ready for further use hundreds of strong, straight logs. Next they proceed to point them. This is done either with the axes or with the aid of the fire, or with both. This accomplished, they are carried out into the water, put in position, and driven home with heavy hammer stones. The work is slow, but it is sure, and every passing day sees the circles more and more complete. At last the last log is in its place, and the gratified builders gaze upon work well done, satisfied with the progress they have made. Next the division between the outer and inner circles is packed, transverse planks are laid across the top of the poles, morticed into them, and made additionally secure by long wooden or bone pins, the holes being bored by iron awls. On the top of the piles is laid a wooden platform, and by this time the workers are clear of the water; for between their work proper and the shore they have laid a gangway—no make-shift construction, but destined to be the means of permanent communieation between the crannog and the land. The erection of the houses now goes merrily on. As the iron tools blunt, they are sharpened on

whetstones; even the circular grindstone is not unknown to the builders.

The variety of their implements for work is greater than may be imagined. Not only have they axes of flint, of stone, of iron, hammer stones, and awls, but also stone polishers, flint scrapers and iron chisels, pickaxes, gauges, saws, knives, and punches. With the aid of these the houses soon begin to assume the appearance of dwellings. They are circular, constructed of piles erected in close juxtaposition to one another, the interstices filled with moss and clay; and above these a conical roof heavily thatched. There are door-posts and lintels as there are to-day. The door affords them light as well as entrance and exit. In the centre is the fireplace, which is generous of size as becomes the times—a common possession to all the dwellers on the crannog; and a spot easily accessible to the whole community is the ash-pit, whither all the broken ware, effete or disused tools, the refuse of the food, the bones of the animals slain, and the whole et cetera of domiciliary life find their way. Little did the lakemen dream, or the women of the crannog, as they cast their refuse into the water, that ten or twelve hundred years after they had gone hence, the antiquary would revel in delight as he turned over their compost heap, and that he would dissect its contents with the care of an anatomist, to discover the ways and work of their every-day life.

The number and variety of the relics so discovered indicate that the lake-dwellers were by no means the savage barbarians which they are popularly supposed to have been. That they were warlike, and that they lived in readiness to resist attack is evident from the very nature of their dwellings. Their weapons of conflict and for the chase consisted of flint-headed arrows, of sling stones, of heavy wooden clubs, of iron daggers, and of iron and horn-headed spears. All these have been found hard by their abodes. But while they cultivated the arts of war and were ever on the alert

to maintain by the strong arm what the strong arm had won for them, they by no means neglected the accompaniments of peace. Round their dwellings must have arisen clustering huts, the nucleus of the towns and villages of later days. Community of residence and of interest naturally begot esteem for the common good. The country, therefore, was laid under the beneficent tribute of the waving grain. They sowed their barley seeds and their corn, and in the fall they reaped their harvests, and when they had winnowed the cereals, they ground the grain in their querns. These were the primitive predecessors of the vast roller-mills of to-day. The quern consisted of two stones, the upper and the nether millstone, the former sitting in the hollow of the latter and turned round with a handle not altogether unlike that of a curling stone—with this important difference, however, that whereas the handle of the curling stone is at the centre that of the quern was at the side. In the middle of the upper stone was a hole, large enough to hold a closed fist; and into this was poured the grain, the worker turning the stone with the one hand while he or she fed the quern with the other. Thus they obtained their meal. Without a doubt it was coarse to a degree; but as the lake dwellers were unacquainted with any finer, its quality was naturally accepted without demur.

They had wooden implements galore. They ate their food from wooden plates and bowls and served it out with wooden ladles. They delved the ground with a wooden hoe, and they drove long wooden pins into their dwellings to ensure stability. Their cattle they supplied from wooden troughs, which also were used for the holding of water. They had wooden goblets, and in these they boiled their food. This was a matter of time and trouble. Clearly they could not put their goblets on the fire, so they had to bring the heat to the goblets. This they accomplished by heating

stones, a succession of which, taken from the midst of the fiery embers, they dropped into the goblets, and so effected their purpose. They supped their soup, or their porritch, with bone spoons, and sewed with bone needles. They had bone handles to their knives and into these were fitted iron blades. They combed their hair with bone combs, their teeth bearing evident token of having been cut with a saw. These combs were shaped exactly as are the small-tooth combs of to-day. Apparently those useful toilet accompaniments had somewhat hard work occasionally to get through the "tugs" of the long Celtic locks; for more than one of the combs that have been found are strengthened and bound together in the centre with iron rivets or clamps. As the years rolled away, new and improved requisites reached the crannogs. The wooden pins gave way to bronze ones, the wooden dishes were superseded, partially at least, by pottery, veritable Samian ware; glass found its way north, and was utilised in some form or other, and prepared leather took the place of the sun-dried skins.

Nor were the lake dwellers without their ornaments. No race ever is, however primitive in its manners and customs. The desire to decorate the person is inherent in human nature, and our early forefathers were not above the weaknesses of their fellow men. They wore glass beads and beads of vitreous paste, armlets made of jet and of cannel coal, rings of lignite, of bronze, of iron, of gold; they had copper fastenings for their leather attire; and brooches and pins of bronze were utilised for a similar purpose. They had, in short, no lack of ornaments, and when robed in their best attire they must have presented a very different picture from that which is generally drawn of them. They had coins of gold, with a distinct impression stamped upon them, and it is permissible, therefore, to believe that they had rubbed fringes with a higher civilization than their own, and that they were not by any means averse to learn

of the nations their ways, and to borrow stores of experience from the world that was beyond their immediate range of observation.

But, withal, the crude and the relatively civilized blended curiously in their everyday life. The only boats they knew were their dug-outs—canoes hollowed from the solid trunks of trees, and these they impelled with paddles, sometimes with one blade, sometimes with two. The crucibles in which they melted their minerals were of coarse clay; the ropes with which they moored their canoes were formed of three-ply withs, and the anvils on which they reduced their metals to shape were of hard quartz. The animals, wild and domestic, whose bones have been found in the compost heaps of the crannogs, are not numerous; but they are still sufficient to tell us that the lake-dwellers were pastoral in their habits, as well as followers of the chase. In their stalls were oxen; on their fields pastured long-horned, short-tailed sheep; the pig wallowed in their byres, and the horse neighed in their stables. In the forest roamed the red deer and the roe deer; and it is not improbable that the wild boar wandered at will, or that deer of another species than the roe and the red deer fell victim to their spears or their flint-headed arrows.

These details are sufficient to give the reader something like an idea of how the ancient dwellers in Ayrshire lived. That they were not simply wild, untamed, and untameable men and women of the woods is very evident. Necessity compelled them to form communities for self-defence; and, no doubt, their predatory instincts led them to possess themselves of the property of their neighbours. But as time rolled on they became attached to their habitations, and while they cultivated the arts of war, they by no means neglected those of peace. Whether they were Christians or not is an open question. St. Columba had died ere they drove the piles into the bed of the lakes, and his wandering

missionaries—heralds of the Cross from lonely Icolmkill—had penetrated the south-western lands of Scotland and preached the Gospel to the people. The light of a pure faith had been flashed athwart the darkness; and it is not by any means unlikely that St. Machar, the remains of whose little chapel stood, within memory, on the farm of Whitehill, in the parish of Dailly, may have sought out the lake-men in their homes, and, seated amid the rude instruments of battle, may have pointed them to the Prince of Peace. Thus, far across the darkness of the centuries, comes a ray of hope that the spiritual gloom was not quite unrelieved.

THE *TETHERING OF THE SOW* *ON THE* *LANDS OF KERSE.*

LONG, long, and fierce were the feuds between the Craufurds and the Kennedys. Great lords of Kyle, the Craufurds were powerful in men, and in money, and in influence. They dwelt in the Castles of Kerse, of Lessnorris, of Drongan; and many a raid was directed thence against their feudal foes of Carrick. The Kennedys, in the fifteenth and in the earlier part of the sixteenth centuries, were not riven by internal dissension. The laird of Bargany had not separated himself from the standard of Cassillis and set up a rival power of his own; and from Cassillis House, hard by the Doon, south as far as the grey towers of Ardstinchar, and thence across the march of the county into Wigtown, the

Kennedys came forth as one man to the fray. They were ever ready for the ride into Kyle, whose broad plains were none the less attractive to them that they were tenanted by their hereditary foes, the Craufurds. Many a deed of derring-do was performed in these family struggles. Success now sat upon this shield, and then upon that. Now, the Kennedys fled before the Craufurds, and put the Doon between them and their hard-riding, hard-fighting foes; and now the Craufurds retreated before the impetuous onslaughts of the men of Carrick. Tradition says that the Kennedys marched long ago, as early as the thirteenth century, right into the heart of the enemy's domain, and fired the Castle of Loudoun, reducing it to ashes, while it was in the possession and in the occupation of Alexander Craufurd, the hereditary sheriff of the shire. From this redoubted chief sprang Sir Reginald Craufurd, whose murder by the English incited the ire of Sir William Wallace, whose uncle he was, and who so signally avenged his death by setting fire to the Barns of Ayr while they were occupied by the alien soldiery.

Down through three centuries ran the blood feud between the Kennedys and the Craufurds. It was still at its height in the first twenty-five or thirty years of the sixteenth century, and, so far as reliable records go, the Craufurds seem, on the whole, to have had the best of individual enterprises. They marched into Carrick, where the head of the bailiary, Hew, Earl of Eglinton, was holding his Court, and forced him to suspend proceedings. They laid siege to, and captured, the Castle of Loch Doon, then held by Sir David Kennedy; and, to crown their misdeeds, they, in conjunction with their friends and followers, waylaid the Earl of Cassillis as he was riding past Prestwick, and slew him fighting for his life. For these misdeeds they were called to account, but their powerful influence was sufficient to enable them to obtain such terms as did not, in the carrying of them out, impede them in the prosecution of the steady

blood feud which occupied their energies, without exhausting them, century upon century. Many are the fruitful incidents of these long years of struggle; many the deed worthy of being commemorated; many the fight and the flight of these troublous times. That which follows is selected because it is unique. It is largely traditional, but the traditions are distinct and well preserved. They are reliable enough to have satisfied Sir Alexander Boswell of Auchinleck, who was connected by marriage with the Craufurd family, and who was not likely to have accepted the story without reasonably minute investigation.

The century was the fifteenth, and then, as long before and long after, the rivals on either side of the Doon were watching one another with a bitter intensity, which found vent in frequent incursions into one another's territories. The chief of the Craufurds was the old Laird of Kerse. His fighting days were done. Times were when he had led the van in the onset, but the stealing march of time had quenched his vigour, if it had not tamed the pride of his spirit. He lived anew in his sons—tall, deep-chested, broad-shouldered men, as once their sire had himself been. But, though he never now went a-harrying or a fighting, he remained head of the house in truth as well as in seniority, and never an expedition was undertaken without consulting him. The halls of Kerse Castle were open to his followers. He held court there, and in the long nights, when the venison haunch smoked on the board and the cheering cup passed down the well-filled tables, he entertained his family and guests with the tales of what had been. He inspired their courage as he told them of the encounters in which he had taken part, and he stimulated their hatred to their powerful rivals in Carrick as he recounted what evils they had done on the plains of Kyle. The family and the guests alike listened open-mouthed to his stories; and as they gazed upon his once massive, but now shrunken, limbs, they

realized that, in the full strength of his manhood, Kerse must have been a leader worthy to follow and to serve.

It was on one of those occasions, when the cup and the "crack" went round, that the warden announced a visitor. "Show in the stranger," said Kerse, "there's wealth enough in our almourie for ten, instead of one." The warden obeyed, and the stranger entered with bold footstep and undaunted air. As he doffed his cap and stood facing the company, revealing the handsome features of Gilbert Kennedy, a scion of the house of Bargany, Craufurd's sons sprang to their feet and laid their hands upon the hilts of their swords, which they wore even at the festive board, or which were laid close by them for instant use. Kerse turned to the warden—"Comes he alone?" he asked. "He does," replied the warden, "and the gates are shut behind him." "Then," quickly responded Kerse, to his sons, "put by your swords. You are not going to draw them upon the lad." The Craufurds needed no second telling. They laid aside or sheathed their weapons, and waited with a curiosity they did not attempt to hide to hear what Kennedy had to say. "Young man," said Kerse, addressing the representative of the Kennedys, "to what strange fortune do we owe your visit? Were you not afraid to pass within the gates of Kerse?" Kennedy laughed frankly. "Afraid, Kerse! No, not afraid. You would not dare to harm an unarmed man who put himself freely within your power. That is not the way of the Craufurds." "No, lad, it is not," returned Kerse, stroking his beard as he looked admiringly on the stranger. "You are right; it is not their way. But why are you here? Stay, though, a little; you must have refreshment." "Not till I have told my errand," replied Kennedy. "Then, say on," briefly returned the chief of the Craufurds, putting his arms on the table and assuming an attitude of attention.

"I bring defiance from the bold Bargany," said Kennedy.

"When morning breaks on Lammas Day, he will tether a sow upon the lands of Kerse, and deil a man of Kyle shall flit her." Kerse eyed the youth half admiringly, half contemptuously. "Ye're a bauld birkie," he ejaculated, "to bring any such message to these halls. But go back to him who sent you, and say we accept his challenge; and, though the Kennedys gather from the water of Stinchar, over all the plains of Carrick to the river Doon, by the keep of Cassillis, the Craufurds will not say them nay. There shall be no sow tethered upon the lands of Kerse on Lammas morning." "Aye, that there shall," retorted Kennedy, "nor will all your power prevent it." "That remains to be seen, and to be felt," was the response of the old chief, as he struck the table with his heavy hand. "Harkee, lad," continued Kerse, "the road is free and open for you to go; it will be closed ere long, so take my advice, and begone!" Kennedy turned to leave. "You are not going to allow him to depart, father?" asked Kerse's eldest son, the stout Esplin. "Why not?" replied Kerse, "he is but a messenger and a boy. Let him go; and mind, boy," he added, addressing Kennedy, "no delay." Gilbert took the hint, and marched, proud in bearing and with head erect, from the hall, leaving the Craufurds to discuss the message so boldly conveyed.

It lacked but three days of Lammas, and they were three busy days on both sides of the dividing river. From all quarters the Kennedys called in their men. Their horsemen rode along the valley of the Stinchar, through the quiet pastoral valley which has its outlet at Ballantrae, and is watered by the most pellucid of streams. They startled the dwellers in the sleepy hamlet of Colmonell. Among the hills of Barr, by the moors and mosses beyond Barrhill, they rode, calling in the retainers, who flocked to the standard of Bargany. Girvan sent its detachment, and Dailly and Kilkerran, and Kirkmichael and Kirkoswald.

The steep High Street of grey Maybole resounded to the tread of the gathering feet. And when the messengers had done their errand, and the Kennedys poured into the stretching haugh amid the great plane trees of Cassillis, well mounted, well armed, high in spirits, and eager for the fray, the King of Carrick might well view them with pride. The raid was Bargany's, however, not his; but he, as the chief of the sept, surveyed his retainers as they stood in front of the peel and gave them counsel for the morrow.

And if the Kennedys were ready, so were the Craufurds. They did not come from such a vast stretch of country as did their foes, but still many of them had a long day's ride ere they halted in front of the Castle of Kerse. They gathered from where Ayrshire is typical, along the upper reaches of the water of Ayr; from the plains of Mauchline and of Dreghorn and Tarbolton, and from the cold upper lands of Muirkirk, of Galston, and of Cumnock. Cairntable and Wardlaw and Blacksideend saw not a few of them as they rode past the bases crowned by their dark summits; and other riders pricked their way through the moss-hags where, later in the world's history, the Covenanters were lulled to rest by the eerie cry of the swamp birds. Wherever they came from, they came all the same; and, with rattle of helmet and sheen of breast-plate, with sword and spear and dagger, with large-handled, wide-mouthed pistols at their saddle-bows, and hagbuts slung across their backs, in many a guise, by many a path, they reached the halls of Kerse. The venerable chief came down and moved about among them. Fain would he have accompanied them on the morrow; but his tottering limbs and his grey locks forbade such a possibility. He inspired them by his presence, by his few simple words of incitement to duty and to daring, and by his prediction that ere the morning sun had risen over the tree tops, the forces of the Kennedys would be riding home broken and beaten through the forest of

Dalrymple. Craufurd's eldest son, Esplin, was leader of the band; and the Lairds of Drongan and of Loudoun and of Lessnorris, in addition to his younger brother, formed what may be called his staff. As the Kennedys did at Cassillis, so did the Craufurds at Kerse—they lay down to sleep on the ground like men ready for the fray.

Long ere the sun showed above the horizon, the rival forces were on the march. Their destination was in the vicinity of the village of Dalrymple, the scene of other conflicts than this. Neither of the rival companies had far to march—for Kerse is in the parish of Dalrymple, and Cassillis House is not far removed from it—but both were anxious to be early on the scene. The veteran chief of the Craufurds, regretful that he could not accompany his men, watched them as far as his eyesight could carry him; and when the last horse hoof had died away in the distance, and the troop had swept swiftly beyond ken, he sat him down on a rude oaken bench in front of the keep, and permitted himself in fancy to go with them.

What a longing possessed the old man for a return of the strength of his younger days, if only for this one morning! But the insurmountable barriers of failing nature had long interposed their veto, and he could naught but sit, and think, and long for the tidings of the fray. He watched the morning sun casting up his beams like streaks of gold athwart the pale green and blue sky, and he knew that ere the luminary himself should unfold the full glories of his beauteous disc, the Craufurds would be within easy hail of the Kirk of Dalrymple, past the haughs of Skeldon, and in full view of the Carrick yeomen as they emerged from the shadows of the pine and oak trees of the Dalrymple forest. He saw it all—the spreading haughs, the river shining like a streak of silver as it placidly flowed past, the background of the forest, the expectant, ready Kennedys, and his own impetuous followers longing for the conflict. Then he heard

the ringing shouts of the leaders, the clatter of the horses' hoofs as they sped across the narrow space intervening between the combatants, the cheers of the Craufurds as they swung high their battle-axes, the groans, the cries of the hand-to-hand conflict, the ring of steel upon steel, and the rattle of the firearms. And as the scene brightened, he saw in his mental vision the rushing together of the combatants, the spurting of the red blood, men unhorsed, horses flying, the wounded creeping and crawling out of the Gehenna, the dying and the dead. The scene came and went, once and again. At times the mental exhaustion induced physical, and he succumbed to the weariness which accompanies old age and failing energies, but he ever rallied anew, and anew he brought the strife within his ken. And there he sat looking out over the loch of Kerse until the news came.

Meanwhile the conflict was raging. The Kennedys were there in waiting, with the obnoxious sow in the keeping of a swine herd. They had crossed the Doon on the upper side of Dalrymple, and had chosen as the scene of the struggle one of the holms of Skeldon. Behind them ran the river, fringed with its margin of trees, and before them stretched the grassy sward, green in its early autumnal beauty. Kennedy of Bargany himself was there, the bold Bargany from Girvan side, a tried warrior in the feudal strife, strong of soul and of body, and hardened to the fray; and with him were a score of gentlemen representing branches of the great Carrick clan; some of them from keeps and castles nestling in the fertile plains of the bailiary; some from peels backed by the fortalice of the hills which rise on the confines of the shire; and some whose slumbers at home were soothed by the monotone of the waves and the sighing of the wind on the main. There was no lack of courage or of enthusiasm, or of determination to have the challenge realised. The nature of the challenge had stung the haughty hearts of the Craufurds, and steeled them to

dour, determined hostility; and as they gathered behind their leader, Esplin the brave, there was not a man among them who was not prepared to stake his life rather than that the honour of the name that leader bore, should be sullied or tarnished.

The conflict was not one for firearms. The hagbut, and even the pistol at short range, was but a dubious and uncertain weapon; and though at the outset, ere they charged, volleys were exchanged, it was not until the hagbuts had been thrown away, and the ranks opened out, so as to give the individual riders free play to their right arms, that the stern joy of the warriors was experienced. The distance was short, the steeds were swift, the ardour of the combatants high; and on they came like two surcharged clouds towards the thunder of battle. Shouts rent the air, cries of defiance and of encouragement; and the struggle raged with fury and with fire. Down went horses and men, Kennedys and Craufurds, in common misfortune. Esplin rode in the van, his giant form towering above those of his followers, and every blow he struck was that of a hero. He rode hither and thither, and wherever the Craufurds were beset, or hard bestead, he was by them to cheer them on and to swing his battle-axe, death-dealing as it fell. He saw his brother John go down a corpse, his head cleft open from forehead to chin; and, bounding on the man who had struck the fatal blow, he sent his spirit after that of his brother ere he could lift his hand to stay the stroke of doom. Nor was Bargany sparing of his valour; but stand right grimly though he did, the impetuosity of the Craufurds bore him and his steadily back to the brink of the river. On and still on the Kerse men pressed, without stop or stay, until, with one grand rally, they forced the Kennedys over the embankment and into the river, whose limpid waters now ran discoloured to the sea. Fate was sore upon the sons of Carrick that morning, and ere the orb of day had risen well above

the tree tops the Craufurds halted on the brink of the Doon and counted the slain. The ground was covered with the dead and the dying; but amid the ghastly scene the Craufurds raised high their shouts of victory ere they turned to succour the wounded and to count their losses. No sooner was the short, sharp conflict o'er, than Esplin despatched a messenger to tell his sire how the fight had gone.

The old chief, sitting under shadow of his own grey halls, was the prey of contending emotions. It is easier to many men to face danger than to wait tidings of import that may be fatal from the scene of danger. And so it was with Craufurd. Like the tides, his hopes and fears ebbed and flowed. He knew the stern chances of conflict; he knew the Kennedys were valorous; and he realized the possibility that victory might fall to their banners and not to his. He tried to battle down his fears, and succeeded after a fashion, but they were ever there, lying like a dark background, and casting their lurid shadows across his hopes. Time sped all too slowly. The sun was high above the tree tops, and yet there were no tidings. Was Carrick down? Was Kyle up? Was Esplin of the brawny frame and the lion heart dealing death blows among the Kennedys, or were the Kennedys establishing their foothold on the Kyle banks of the Doon? But above all these, and beyond them, of greater importance than they, was the sow flitted? That was the crucial thing. Was the insult in word and in threat to be established in deed and in truth, or were the challengers to disgrace for ever the name of Craufurd by tethering the sow on the lands of Kerse?

As thus he sat, his anxious gaze roamed over the country. Time and again he fancied he detected a messenger riding towards him; but time and again his vision played him false. Still, he must come—he could not be far away—he could not be long. Oh the slow lapsing minutes of the Lammas morn!

At length, as he gazed, he did see, slow riding across the country, the bearer of the tidings which he longed to hear. There was no mistake about it this time—it was indeed the courier. Why did he not make greater haste? Why did he ride so heavily? If he bore good news, surely he would spur his horse to its utmost speed. But then, mused Kerse, the horse must be tired. Like the rider, it had come through a hard contest; besides, the country was heavy, and it was possible the animal might have sustained a wound. As thus he reasoned, and thought, and wearied, the horseman drew nearer and nearer. The old chief's excitement could bear the strain no longer; and he arose from the seat on which he had awaited the issue, and advanced to a point overlooking the plain, across which the rider was still advancing steadily. Raising his voice ere yet the messenger was well within hail, Kerse cried, full loud and clear—

"Is the sow flitted?"

The horseman raised his hand to indicate that he was making all the haste he could; and Kerse saw that the horse on which he rode was jaded, and that its sides were white with foam, while the breath issued from its nostrils in hot, steaming exhalations. It was an anxious moment for the veteran.

"Is the sow flitted?" he cried again. "Tell me, loon, is the sow flitted?"

The courier reined up in front of the castle, and doffed his cap.

"Alas, alas!" he said, "your son John is dead. He fell ere we could save him, but Esplin"——

"Tell me, tell me," impatiently demanded the chief, "tell me what I ask. Is the sow flitted?"

"Ay, sir, the sow's flitted, and five score Kennedys are drowned in the Doon."

"My thumb for Jock!" shouted the old man gleefully,

snapping his fingers as he spoke, and as he realized that victory was theirs, "MY THUMB FOR JOCK! THE SOW'S FLITTED."

THE RAID

OF

LOUDOUN.

THE Campbells of Loudoun and the Kennedys of Carrick were at feud during the earlier part of the sixteenth century. There was no dissension then in the great family of southern Ayrshire. The Earl of Cassillis was the virtual monarch of his own country-side, and he rode whithersoever he listed, from the Doon into the heart of Galloway, amid vassals who owned his undisputed sway. The powerful collateral branch of Bargany yielded obedience to the King of Carrick. Its head may have been jealous of the overpowering domination of the Earl; but internal disputes were as yet under check, and to all intents and purposes the Kennedys could be depended on to rally to the standard of Lord Cassillis, when he upraised it either for Ayrshire feud, or to lead his men across the frontier of the shire in the national struggle or in the factional fights which decimated Scotland. Cassillis sided with the Duke of Albany. Not so Sir Hew Campbell of Loudoun. From his ancestral home on the upper waters of the Irvine, in the muirland strength of the country, he led his retainers at the call of the Hamiltons and the Douglases. How far the frays which succeeded resulted from different views taken of Scotland's general weal, or whether, being hereditary enemies, the Kennedys and the Campbells naturally took different sides in the national controversy,

it is beside our purpose to inquire. It is more to the point that they were at feud one with another; and that all along the first half of the sixteenth century they maintained an intermittent conflict which carried with it the most disastrous results to both families.

Sir Hew Campbell was from home when a messenger reached Loudoun to tell him that the Earl of Cassillis meditated a return to Ayrshire from Stirling. Lady Loudoun, however, was in residence, and gave the messenger interview. A Wallace of the Wallaces, she had been used to feudatory and predatory warfare since her girlhood. She had early been indoctrinated with the family history and the family hates; and, transferred to Loudoun, she espoused the cause of her liege lord with all the ardour of one who never forgot or forgave. When the courier told his tidings, she knew the suggestion that underlay them, and called in her husband's friends. At her bidding came George Craufurd of Lessnorris, and William his brother, John Campbell of Cessnock, Bartholomew Craufurd of Kerse, and David and Duncan, his brothers, John Craufurd of Drongan, and John and William, his sons, all good men and true to the family cause, and all inflamed with the same unquenchable hatred of the Kennedys that filled the breast of the Lady herself. She gave them the message, and left them to interpret it for themselves. Nor were they long in coming to a conclusion. The result was that they resolved to collect a strong party of their followers and to meet the chief of the Kennedys as he was returning from Stirling.

All resident in the same locality, it did not take them long to assemble their men. The season was the autumn. Nature was in her kindliest and most benevolent mood, but she failed to cast her mellowing influences upon the men from Loudoun-side. They were fixed of purpose and bent on retaliation. As they passed along the road, horsemen armed, the inhabitants of the scattered parishes of Galston,

and Mauchline, and Tarbolton, and St. Quivox wondered what their errand, and whither they were bound; but they returned no answer to the interrogations that met them, and jogged steadily on until they reached the neighbourhood of Prestwick. To this day the sandy knolls and the stretching links of Prestwick are well known; in the sixteenth century, with the exception of the one straggling street of the ancient burgh, and the quaint, old-fashioned, high-gabled kirk standing on its sandy eminence, with its churchyard around it, the greater part of the parish in the vicinity of the coast was wind-swept and bare, and afforded in the depressions of the knowes, excellent protection and secrecy for the wanderer or the waiter. The road from Glasgow to Ayr ran through a somewhat desolate and arid expanse. Here it rose above the hollows, and there it was overtopped by the hillocks; and there was little need to seek a hiding where every deep indentation was sufficient for the purpose. To one of these depressions the horsemen wended their way, and there they waited, ready at a moment's notice to remount their horses, and to do the deed which they were there to do.

Lord Cassillis was not amid his men as he came from the town of the Rock. He had no reason to anticipate danger, and he was attended only by a small retinue of body servants, armed indeed for defence, but armed rather against the ordinary dangers incidental to the highways of an unsettled country than to meet the shock of men-at-arms. He anticipated no danger. Ayr lay in front of him, not much more than two miles distant, and beyond the royal burgh he saw rise the brown heights of Carrick, which were all his own. In Ayr he would be, to all intents and purposes, in his own country; and once across the Doon, he would be a bold man indeed who would lay an angry finger upon the chief of the Kennedys. There were long miles behind him; there were but few in front of him. Half an hour's easy going at the outset would bring him to his residence in the county town.

But many a destiny has been met, though unforseen, in less time than half an hour. The Loudoun men were apprised of Lord Cassillis' approach and were instantly in readiness. They had few preparations to make. All they required to do was to see that in the first rush and turmoil the Earl did not escape.

Nor did he. Leisurely he came riding along, and the first warning he had of danger was the impetuous rush of the Campbells and the Craufurds. They were on him in an instant. Flee he could not, and to fight was all but unavailing. To supplicate mercy was useless, and he did not condescend to beg his life with the certainty of his petition being scorned. His followers, few as they were, closed around him, but the Campbells pressed on and overcame the feeble opposition. They were all men who knew how to wield their arms, men of great bodily strength and unmistakable courage; and strong indeed would have been the defence that they could not have beaten back. The combat was short and fatal to the small party of the Kennedys. One by one they fell to the ground, wounded and bleeding, the Earl in the midst. With him there were no half measures, no unsatisfied revenge. The sword and the dagger did their work; and satisfied that life was extinct, the men from Loudoun rode off. Their work was done, and back they hied them to their strongholds to wait the certain coming of the men of Carrick. "Revenge my cause, O Lord," was imprinted on the scroll of a banner borne once from Ayr all the way to Ballantrae in front of the bier of one of the chiefs of Bargany. The invocation was one the Campbells knew would be put into practical application; only, they were assured from experience that the Kennedys would not wait on the interposition of heaven, but would work out their own satisfaction, and that, too, without either fear or trembling.

The body of the slaughtered Earl was borne by reverent

hands to Ayr, and thence it was carried in state to the house of Cassillis by the river Doon.

There was wailing and lamentations under the dule tree, which spread its giant arms over the mourners; but mingled with the weeping rose the demand for revenge. The body was interred in the College Church of Maybole, where so many generations of the Kennedys have been laid to rest, and the days of mourning gave place to preparations for the coming judgment.

But these Barons, hot and impetuous as they were, did not act either hastily or rashly in a matter of this kind. They knew just when and where to strike and they bided their time without the lapse of either months or years softening or allaying their passions. In this case, the law was set in motion, and summonses to appear before the Court of Justiciary were issued, not only against the actual perpetrators of the deed but against Sir Hew Campbell of Loudoun as well. The Earl of Arran became surety for Sir Hew's appearance, but when the case was called, it was found that the chief of the Campbells and the Craufurds had disappeared, having evidently taken some measure of guilt to himself. It is certain he was not present when the Earl was slain, but there is some reason to believe that he may have connived at the deed. In any case, he failed to appear, and the Earl's bail bond for a hundred pounds was declared forfeited. Lady Loudoun was also summoned, but her chaplain, or curate, as he is called, deponed on oath that she was sick, and inasmuch as his testimony was corroborated by that of two other witnesses, the case against her was either departed from or adjourned *sine die.* The Craufurds of Lessnorris, Kerse, and Drongan, and Campbell of Cessnock, together with their followers, were included in the indictment. Like Sir Hew and Lady Loudoun, they failed to put in an appearance, and the whole batch were put to the horn—in other words were declared rebels, and

outlawed. A watch was set upon their movements, and wherever they went the sharp eyes of the enemy seem to have been upon them. Sir Hew was compelled to seek shelter among his friends, and he had many who were not afraid to run the risk of inter-communing with the rebel. At different times he was located with Cuninghame of Glengarnock, Mure of Rowallan, Hamilton of Colinskeith, Wallace of Newtown, Fullarton of Crosbie, the Master of Glencairn, Cuninghame of Caprington, Cuninghame of Aiket, Cuninghame of Bertonholm, Ross of Haining, Lockhart of Bar, and other allies of the common cause in North Ayrshire. All these named, and many more, were called to answer for their kindness to the knight of Loudoun, and in some cases were not only heavily fined but their goods were forfeited to the Crown. Withal, however, they did not abate their friendship for the prime sufferer from the tragedy done near Prestwick; and so far as can be discovered, no more serious consequences than those indicated resulted from the law having been set in motion.

The Kennedys waited patiently on the country's justice. Its pursuit was slow, and they had therefore, perforce, to take the judgment into their own hands. The fiery chief of Bargany undertook the work of revenge, and from his home by the banks of the Girvan he sent out his messengers to bid the Kennedys to the fray. They were never loath to come. The combat had no terrors for them. Nothing appealed more to them than a raid upon the territories of the enemy, and so they gathered in from far away Galloway and from the four quarters of Carrick. They came through the wild Glenapp and along the valley of the Stinchar; from the rock-girdled coast with its chain of castles, strongholds not to be despised; across the hills separating Ayrshire from its neighbouring shire on the southward; from the hills and plains by Girvan; from Maybole, where there were always good men and true; from every point of the

water of Girvan; from the homesteads clustering on the braes of the Duisk; and from the southern banks of the river Doon; and they gathered amid the tall plane trees surrounding the historic house of Cassillis. Many a war-like scene that placid landscape has witnessed. It is quiet to-day with its belts of trees, its fertile haughs, its outlook to the summit of the Downans; but when the world was younger than it is by two or three centuries, Cassillis gazed on different sights and scenes. Full often it has witnessed the gathering of the Kennedys on warlike errand bent; it has seen the shattered remnant of the force that rode gaily away beneath the streaming pennons, return broken and discomfited; it has heard the shouting of the victors; its walls have echoed to the wailing of the vanquished. It stands alone in its antiquity; there is nothing near it of equal age, save the friendly dule tree which stretches its hoary arms to the walls of the keep, and which stood where it stands to-day when the builders excavated for the dungeons, and threw out the soil to construct the fosse, now filled up and unrecognizable even in its outlines. Cassillis was the historic meeting place of the clan, and there the bold Bargany met with his men.

Five-and-twenty good miles lay between Cassillis and Loudoun, not miles of hard level road and good riding, but miles over a rough country with many a moss and stretch of moorland to cross. The riders were hardened to exercise, and the horses they bestrode were wiry and accustomed to plod steadily onwards, making the maximum of distance on the minimum of rest and fodder. It was not Bargany's intention to give the men on the upper waters of the Irvine time to gather in their own defence, and therefore, as they passed in a north-easterly direction to their destination, they kept as far as possible clear of the castles which studded the country-side. If Loudoun Castle was to be taken at all, it must be by surprise; for its walls were thick and secure,

and heavy were its battlements. Nothing save a regular siege could reduce the keep, and in feudal warfare such a thing was seldom if ever attempted. Bargany's intention was twofold—to kill and to destroy; to set fire to the castle, and to have retribution in kind for the life-taking of his hereditary chief, the Earl of Cassillis. He learned that Lady Loudoun was not resident in the house whither he was bent, but at the castle of Achruglen on the Galston side of the valley, and without wasting time he directed his course in that direction. It was late in the autumn and the country, clear of its harvest, was growing bare under the chilly airs which swept across its moorland solitudes. The trees were casting their leaves, and Nature's forces were beginning to rest from their summer and earlier autumn labours. Achruglen stood out a prominent feature in the landscape. It was a residence meet for the times, fit habitation for a feudal Baron. Not a formidable keep, but a house of refuge, built for the purposes of retiral under such a sudden emergency as that with which it was now face to face. Sir Hew was from home, but when Lady Loudoun heard the horse-hoofs of the Kennedys and saw Bargany and his men ride up the approach, she had the keep rapidly put into a condition for passive defence. She could not fight, but she could barricade. The heavy iron-studded door was accordingly fastened securely, and the upper floors of the castle were shut off from communication with the lower. With her son and her daughters she left the basement, and from one of the little windows of the tower, overlooking the approach at a considerable height from the ground, she watched Bargany and his ongoings.[1]

[1] What follows is taken mainly from an old ballad of the times. In the name of humanity the author expresses the hope that it may be but traditionary, though it has undoubtedly been accepted as in some degree genuine; and the ruins of Achruglen are pointed to in confirmation. Nor is the deed at all out of keeping with Ayrshire story of the sixteenth century.

Bargany surveyed the position. Achruglen, he saw, could not be carried by assault. If it was to fall at all it must be either by the agency of fire or by calling to his aid the treachery of some one within the building. Before proceeding to kindle the torch, he summoned Lady Loudoun to surrender. She spurned his offer. He told her that if she remained obstinate he would set fire to the building and that she would go down in the ruins or be burned to death. A woman of metal, even to death, she scorned to yield. Bargany then addressed himself to one of the house-servants who stood looking from the window. He promised him life and reward if he would deliver up the castle. The servant would fain have obeyed, for he had no heart for perishing in a conflagration, but Lady Loudoun's eye was upon him and he returned no answer. Negotiation thus proving fruitless, Bargany ordered his men to collect a large store of brushwood and of timber, and these they piled around the outer door. The pile was lit and the tragedy began. Up rose the smoke into the November air, and then the forked tongues of the fire. The door might have withstood the assaults of armed men, but a more potent weapon than the arm of man was raised against it. The timber was heavy and solid, but as the heat increased it caught fire, and soon, within the hall and without, the smoke rose in dense columns, half-stifling the inmates and preventing the Kennedys from seeing the progress of their handiwork. The crackling, splintering woodwork told its own tale. The man-servant who saw the destruction which he courted not, gaining fast upon him, earnestly besought Lady Loudoun to purchase life by yielding herself a prisoner, but, finding her still inexorable and calmly waiting the issues, he left her to her fate, and, proceeding to the rear of the building, whither the fire had not yet extended, he raised the door of a secret passage and made haste to flee. The Kennedys espied the exit and hastened to avail

themselves of it. Bargany would gladly at this moment have saved the life of the gallant Lady, and he bade his men enter and bare her out. But when they reached the stairs, they found these heavily barricaded, and Lady Loudoun herself in a calm, steady voice told them that she was ready to die at her post of duty. They implored her to yield, but she answered them haughtily; and finding that they must escape if they would save themselves, they returned to Bargany and told him their errand had been unsuccessful. He shouted to Lady Loudoun to throw herself from the battlements, assuring her that efforts would be made to break her fall; but having made up her mind, she did not respond to his earnest pleading.

Pen cannot portray the scene in the house of Achruglen. Begirt with flame round its base, gradually and swiftly the fire rose from floor to floor. Within were wife, and daughters, and son. They clung around their mother. The poor little fellow, sitting upon the knee of the faithful nurse, who elected to end her days with her mistress, complained of the smoke getting into his eyes and hurting his throat. His mother cast a look of unspeakable anguish on the heir destined never to come to his own, and at her little daughters doomed to accompany her in her furnace journey to the land beyond the gates of time; but the idea of yielding never crossed her mind. And if, ere the conflagration wrapped the tower in destruction, she regretted the doom which she had courted not only for herself, but for her bairns, she regretted it too late. Mercifully the swirling, searching smoke, filling the rooms and finding out every nook and cranny of the building, overpowered the senses of the suffering inmates, and prevented them enduring the agonies of the final havoc. The floors below that on which they stood gave way. There was crash upon crash, here an overhanging piece of masonry, and there heavy oaken beams burned in twain by the furious element. Up and still

upward crept—swept—the flames until, rising from every window of the topmost tier, they met together overhead, and united in triumph above the desolation they had accomplished. In one common wreck and ruin lay all within the four walls of Achruglen, the intrepid Lady Loudoun and her children, buried in funeral pyre, lit by the spirit of revenge.

Bargany and the Kennedys stood by till all was over, and then they turned away from the smouldering record of their stern retribution. Was it not with chastened hearts that they retraced their going? Or, as they thought of the deed they had done, was the predominant feeling in their breasts one of savage joy that they had wiped out the memory of the slaughtered Earl by one of the most cruel deeds recorded in Ayrshire story?

THE BURNING OF THE AYR

AND THE

DALRY WITCHES.

"THOU shalt not suffer a witch to live." So wrote the Hebrew lawgiver; and the Church and the Courts of Scotland in the sixteenth century construed his dictum literally. With the advance of the centuries we have outgrown witchcraft, but three hundred years ago its existence was a common article of belief; and the ministers and the gentry, as well as the venerable senators of the College of Justice, were instant, in season and out of season, in rooting out the

abominable thing. There was nothing too gross for them to credit when it was alleged against one who was suspected of inter-communing with the powers of darkness; there was no cruelty too gross for them to perpetrate upon silly old women, and equally silly old men, who were accused of being wise above that which was written.

Commissions to examine witches or wizards were issued by the High Court of Justiciary. These were generally in favour of well-known country gentlemen, or ministers of parishes, or both combined. The names of the persons to be proceeded against were inserted in the commissions, but inasmuch as it was quite certain that these would implicate others while under torture, a blank space was left for the insertion of other names. And thus it frequently came about that, whereas the proceedings were originally directed against one individual, at times as many as six or ten were really had up for examination, and, having been tried and tormented, were finally led to the stake. To these commissions were given the most ample powers of torture; and, even at this late stage of history, the record of the cruelties which they enacted is sufficient to make the blood run cold.

A few of the tortures may be indicated. There was the witch's bridle, for instance, which was placed around the neck, and which had a piece of iron attached to it with four prongs, which were thrust forcibly into the mouth, two of the prongs resting on the tongue or palate, the other two pointing outwards to either cheek. To this was added a "waker," an attendant whose duty it was to prevent the witch going to sleep; and the continued torture and sleeplessness rarely failed to break down the most contumacious of her kind. There were the boots and the thumbscrews, instruments which played an important part in the years of the Scottish persecution. The suspected were sometimes hung up by the arms with weights attached to their feet,

and in exceptionally bad cases they were treated to the caspicaws, iron hose or stockings, which were put into a movable furnace or chauffer, which was gradually heated, and during the heating of which the incriminatory questions were successively put. The services of the witch-finder were frequently called into requisition. When the devil initiated a witch, he applied his tongue to some part of her person, and sucked thence a mouthful of blood, which he spat out into his hand and with which he christened the novitiate. The mark thus made it was important to find, and these witch-finders, or prickers, drove needles into the bodies of the accused until they professed to find a spot in which there was no retaliatory pain. This found, the remainder of the prosecution was greatly facilitated. King James, of blessed memory, once ordered a doctor who was had up for witchcraft to be subjected to a "most strange torment," which is thus described in a contemporary pamphlet:—

"His nails upon his fingers were riven and pulled off with an instrument called in Scottish a Turkas (a smith's pincers), and under every nail there was thrust in two needles over even up to the heads, at all which torments, notwithstanding, the doctor never shrank any whit, neither would he then confess it the sooner for all the tortures inflicted upon him. Then was he, with all convenient speed, by commandment, conveyed again to the torment of the boots, wherein he continued a long time, and did abide so many blows in them that his legs were crushed and beaten together as small as might be, and the bones and flesh so bruised that the blood and marrow spouted forth in great abundance, whereby they were made unserviceable for ever. And notwithstanding all these fierce and cruel torments, he would not confess anything, so deeply had the devil entered into his heart."

As a rule, when the convicted, who were almost invariably

sentenced to death without other evidence than their own confessions, were taken to the stake, they were mercifully strangled before being burnt. But this was not always so, as the following painful memorandum, by Thomas, Earl of Haddington, in his Minutes of Privy Council proceedings, conclusively shows. The date is December 1, 1608:—

"The Earl of Mar declared to the Council that some women were taken in Broughton as witches, and, being put to an assize and convicted, although they persevered constant in their denial to the end, yet they were burnt *quick* (*i.e.* alive) after such a cruel manner that some of them died in despair, renounced their baptism, and blasphemed; and others half-burnt broke out of the fire and were cast in *quick* (alive) in it again, until they were burnt to death."

So it was that our forefathers fulfilled the command "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." Witchcraft was a stern reality to them, and it was without the faintest hesitation or difficulty that they credited the tales of old women riding on brooms in the moonbeams, or sailing the sea in riddles, or performing the hundred and one acts that pertained to necromancy. Without examining into witchcraft as an art, it is right to mention that it was overlain with immorality. No study of it is complete without the expounding of this phase of it; and, on the other hand, the confessions of the witches are often so grossly indecent that they cannot be reproduced for the ordinary reader.

Trials for witchcraft in Ayrshire were not uncommon, but there are two which stand out prominent and which may be taken as a type of the rest.

MAGGIE OSBORNE.

MAGGIE OSBORNE is the witch of Ayr town *par excellence*.

It is she who dwells in memory; it is her misdeeds that have been handed down; it is of her that the people still

talk; it is she who is identified with the era of witchcraft in the auld toun. A few years ago the inhabitants could point out to strangers the house in which she resided, but Time's effacing fingers have swept it away and nothing more than the site is left.

With Maggie Osborne, as with other "wise women," history and tradition have dealt differently; so that, while in reality there was only one Maggie, there are now three. The story tellers have diverged into separate paths, one party sticking to the bare facts of the case, the other over-laying it with details and with criticisms founded on nineteenth century advance. These latter forget that times have changed and we with them, and that what appears to us strange, savage, and barbarous, appeared to our forefathers as a sacred, though no doubt a painful duty. We have no right to believe that they gloried in the human sacrifices which in their ignorance they offered up. They were doing God service—they believed so, at least; and, therefore, while we cannot defend what they did, we need not go out of our way to analyze their motives or to brand them as fools or murderers.

The witch of tradition, the Maggie Osborne whose misdeeds and doings hung in mystery about the country-side long after the devil had claimed her as his own, was indeed a wondrous woman. She was a natural daughter of the Laird of Fail, a famous warlock and a master in the black arts of *diablerie*. Her sire instructed her in the profession in which he was himself a distinguished ornament, and she proved apt as a pupil. Her mother dying, Maggie took up a public house in Ayr, and continued to dispense the wines of the country to the burgesses for a full half-century. At nights, after she had finished the work of the day, she did not retire to rest; but muttering her charms, she rose into mid-air, and made excursions into Galloway, where she disported herself after the manners and customs of her kind, bewitching cattle, turning ale sour, "charming" wives and maidens,

and generally misconducting herself. She always went and came by the same route, crossing Carrick Hill by a path long after known as "Maggie's gate to Galloway." For a witch who had to go so far, she seems to have been in no special hurry, varying the monotony of flying by an occasional walk. As she scaled the shoulder of Carrick she folded her wings or gave her steed a rest, and down to earth descended with her the attendant imps. Coming from the nether regions their feet were naturally rather warm, and they not only scorched the grass but effectually baked the ground into such permanent sterility, that from that day to this no vegetation has ever been able to live in the track of their cloven hoofs. On one occasion as she was leisurely sailing over the Nick of the Balloch in the dusk of evening, she espied a funeral approaching; and not wishing to be discovered or recognized by the mourners, on many of whom she had played her cantrips, she transformed herself into a beetle, and, thus disguised, went creeping along the road. As the procession passed, she hid in a hollow in the ground made by the hoof of a horse and lay quietly, not daring to do more than peep from her hiding place. One cannot but think that Maggie's action in thus secreting herself did not say very much for her wisdom; but, amid the delightful incongruities of such lore, such a trifle may be allowed to pass. She came very near her death as it was; for one of the mourners trod on the hollow where she crouched and she only escaped death by a miracle. Maggie was vindictive. She knew the man whose heavy tread had endangered her existence and set about the accomplishment of his ruin. And she succeeded only too well. Surrounded by his family he sat down one winter night to supper. His wife, and his bairns, eight in number, barring one who was a sailor and at sea, were by him. By some unaccountable lapse of memory he forgot to say grace; and this gross dereliction of duty put him in the power of Maggie Osborne, who

rolled a huge wreath of snow upon his house, beneath whose weight the unhappy peasant and his family were crushed, or smothered to death.

Surely that was vengeance enough to satisfy even such a vindictive being as Maggie Osborne? Not quite. Returning home she learned by incantation that the sailor son was in a vessel in the Bay of Ayr and proceeded to compass his ruin. Witches had exceptional power over the elements, and of that power she availed herself. First of all she instructed her servant to put some water in the mash-tun, and to set an ale cup to sail in it, and then retired to her garret where she called in the aid of her master and set about storm-raising. The girl stood by the stairfoot waiting instructions. Maggie's first order to her was to go to the tun and ascertain on what portion of the surface the cup was floating. The servant went as ordered and found the cup being gently floated on ripples which played on the surface of the water, and in the very centre of the tun. "That will do," said Maggie, when the maid told her story, "but in a few minutes you must return to the brew-house and bring the particulars as before." On going the second time the servant was amazed to find the water violently agitated, the miniature waves washing over the rim of the vessel and the ale cup being dashed hither and thither. And worse still. Faintly and far off she heard as it were the cries of men in distress, imploring succour where no help was to be found. She hurried back to the stairfoot and called out to the witch, informing her of what she had seen and heard. "They will cry long ere I pity them," was the comment of Maggie Osborne "but go again." Trembling, the girl obeyed. The water was still once again, and unagitated; but as for the cup it had gone down to the bottom. On learning this the witch smiled as she remarked, "The devil has served me well for ance." As the mimic storm raged in the tun, so a storm of great violence raged in the bay; as

the ale cup was dashed about hither and thither, so a vessel was driven to and fro by the violence of the hurricane without; as the girl heard afar off the cries of drowning seamen, so the night winds heard the wails which floated up to them from the deck of the hapless craft; and as the ale cup went down in the tun, so, driven upon the jagged back of the Nicholas rock, the ship was lost with all hands, and among them the son of the peasant whose foot had well nigh crushed the witch as she hid in the hollow of the road, to escape the observation of the mourners at the Nick of the Balloch.

The servant girl certainly displayed a good deal of courage in watching the results of Maggie's incantations; and we are rather inclined to think that it must have been the same brave-hearted domestic who posed as the heroine of the ancedote which follows: Maggie and she "fell out," with the result that the maid was sent to work in the brew-house at night. As she was engaged in the still hours of the darkness attending to her duty, a number of ferocious cats entered, and at once, as if by preconcerted arrangement, began fighting with one another. The girl stood aside to enable the feline combatants to have a fair field and no favour; but one of the cats, a large and particularly savage specimen of the race, watching an opportunity, sprang at her throat, evidently with the intention of tumbling her into the boiling "worts" behind her. Undismayed, the girl defended herself right valorously; and dipping her ladle into the worts she bestowed its contents among the cats, taking good care that the one which attacked her received no ungrudging share of the scalding liquid. Witches or no witches, the cats took to flight, squalling as they retired, and vanished into the darkness. Next morning Maggie was ill and in bed. The girl, drawing her own conclusions from this rather unusual circumstance went upstairs to pay her a visit, and was not at all displeased to find her mistress

lying on her couch groaning and in evident pain. She refused to say what was the matter with her and positively declined to rise; but the maid, not to be beaten, pulled down the bed-clothes and discovered that her mistress was suffering from a series of blisters on her back. That seemed to the domestic to be proof positive of her witchery and she at once reported the matter to the magistrates, with the result that Maggie was apprehended and cast into prison.

It is a curious fact that the devil never seems to have been able, or willing, to rescue his friends from the clutches of the law. By pronouncing certain charms, witches could at will, when they enjoyed their freedom, rise into thin air and float away wherever they listed; but no sooner did the magistrates or the ministers lock them up in durance vile than they became as helpless as Samson after the sorceress had cut off his flowing locks. So it was with Maggie, though it is only fair to her grimy master to say that he did aid her to the best of his ability. He did not, it is true, take her out of her cell, but he informed her by what means she might escape from the stake. Her liberation was to be effected by the means of two pewter plates, which were to be fastened to her shoulders and with which she was to rise into space after the fire had been lit to consume her, and, as she rose, Satan was to envelope her in the smoke which ascended from the fire, and carry her off to safety and to fresh fields of usefulness. The plates, it was stipulated, were to be new and unwashed; indeed, Satan assured her that if they were permitted to be wet they would not act as wings. The morning came on which Maggie was to expiate her guilt at the stake, and around the Cross were gathered not only a large concourse of people, but a number of ministers who had come to see justice done. Maggie was penitent, she admitted her guilt, and, in order to make such reparation as lay in her power, she told the authorities that if they would only bring her two new pewter plates

which had never been wet, she would reveal mysteries which would help them to unravel witchcraft in others and overcome the powers of darkness. She admitted the justice of her sentence. The authorities, ever anxious to learn and to come to a knowledge of necromancy, agreed to comply with her request and despatched a messenger for the plates. In his hurry he stumbled and fell, and one of the two got wet. He thought that a well-dried plate would do just as well for all practical purposes as one that had never been wet, and accordingly he removed the last faint speck of damp and polished the metal till it shone again. Maggie was tied to the stake when he arrived. The plates were handed to her and she affixed them to her shoulders, and, to the amazement of the crowd instantly began slowly to ascend. Unfortunately for her, the pewter wing that had been wet refused to act freely and prevented her soaring out of reach of one of the guards, who hooked his halbert into her petticoats and brought her down again. The magistrates saw how nearly they had been balked of their prey and had the plates removed and the pile lit. The faggots were built up around her, and as the flames mounted higher and higher she was overheard addressing her master who, all invisible, stood beside her—"Oh, ye fause loon, instead o' a black goun, ye hae gi'en me a red ane; ha'e I deserved this for serving ye sae lang?" And so died the Maggie Osborne of rustic tradition and fire-side tale.

She of the local story-teller who reads sixteenth century events in the added light of three hundred years, is by no means so terrible or repulsive a beldame; she is, on the contrary, a young lady who courts our deepest sympathies and evokes our strongest antipathies to the lay and clerical bigots who doomed her to the stake. She is even beautiful of face and of character. The family to which she belonged, that of the Osborne's, is well known in the town, and of recognized social position. Her parents die and leave her

their money, and therewith she ministers to the temporal wants of her poorer neighbours. She is instant in season and out of season, and she is blessed for the good that she doeth. Unhappily she is stretched on a bed of sickness. Attacked by brain fever, her imagination and the clustering rush of unregulated and uncontrolled thoughts, carry her away. Her mind wanders and her words go a wool-gathering. She speaks of sacred mysteries; she rambles of the world to come, and those who are attendant upon her forthwith retail to the minister of the Old Kirk all that they have heard her say. Mr. Adair, like the supposed typical minister of the day, is on the outlook for witchcraft. He is a bigot of the first water, and hearing that Miss Osborne is talking to those who are beyond the gates of time, he sets the ever ready machinery of the law in order and has her apprehended. She is charged with inter-communing with Satan, with witchcraft, and with having sold her soul to the Prince of Darkness. She indignantly repudiates the charge. Mr. Adair is inexorable—he will have none of her denial. She passes into the hands of the witch-finder, and from his grasp into that of the inquisitor by torture. All the while the words "confess, confess," ring in her ears; and as these admonitions are accompanied by the usual satanic methods of extracting confession, she yields to the pleading and the torture, and admits her guilt. She is thrown into prison, to the uncongenial society of the goaler and his turnkeys. They are as much incensed against witchcraft as the minister; and what between incarceration and perpetual monition, the brain fever, which had begun to show symptoms of abating, returns. In the bitterness of her agony she longs for death; and this being interpreted according to the canons of the witch-hunters, she is formally put upon trial. The inevitable result ensues. She is found guilty and sentenced to be burned at the Cross of Ayr. At the stake she maintains returned calmness and resignation,

and with prayer on her lips, her soul ascends amid the smoke to the Father of mercies and God of all consolation. Her charred remains are buried in the churchyard of St. John's; and with her burning terminates the long series of deaths, by the hands of the public executioner, for witchcraft.

The story will hardly bear close investigation. While Mr. Adair was no doubt tinctured with the gross superstition of the times, he is not fairly represented in the character of an ignorant and bloody-minded bigot. Besides, brain fever cannot have been absolutely unknown to medical science in these days. The wanderings of a patient stretched on a sick bed could never have been accepted as *prima facie* evidence of guilt or of association with the powers of darkness; and therefore, and for the credit of humanity, it is permissible to dismiss the story as a somewhat weak invention.

The real Maggie Osborne, though she figures prominently in romance and in the recollections of her fellow-townsmen, does not bulk largely in the history of the royal burgh. The Osbornes, were, it is true, a well-known family in Ayr. Several of its members occupied positions of trust, and were looked up to by the citizens of their day. But what branch of the family Maggie belonged to is not recorded. She is assumed to have been the same person who, in November, 1648, was appointed by the Council "to receave the key of the house wherein Isabell Pyper died under suspicione of the infectioune, fra John Fergusson, one of the quartermasteris, and to intromit with the goods of the house and to be furthcumand to their said honours conforme to ane indenture thairof, to be taken and sett doun in wryt." She resided in High Street, in a house opposite the Fish Cross. It is only of late years that the house has been removed; and until its demolition—and it continued a good substantial structure to the close—it was known to old and young as

Maggie Osborne's house. Unfortunately there is a long hiatus in the Presbytery records, extending from 1652 to 1681; and it was during that period that the reputed witch was sent to her doom. The Council's books are equally reticent, and the criminal records of the country have been searched in vain for verification of the case. It is not, however, to be understood that the story is by any means legendary. It has passed into the history of the town as one of those things which cannot be shaken, and it is not at all improbable that the Council, ashamed of the whole transaction, expunged from their minutes any and every reference to it.

It would unquestionably have been interesting to know the nature of the indictment on which Maggie was tried; but whether she danced with other witches in the kirks of the Reformation, wrought incantations with the aid of ghastly relics disinterred from burying grounds, brought about sickness or death by her Satan-bestowed charms, or flew athwart the glimpses of the moon, must for ever remain a mystery. Her case, viewed in the light of the times, must have been a bad one; for the magistrates of Ayr were lenient, rather than otherwise, in their dealings with witches. As early as 1596 a woman from Galloway, Margaret Reid by name, was brought before the magistrates charged with the heinous sin. She was "considered guilty," says the record, and banished from the burgh, with the certification that, "if ever found within their jurisdiction," she was "to be punished without any further assize or process."

Poor Maggie was not treated so leniently; on the contrary, she was ordained to be burned at the Cross, and the sentence was carried into effect, with all the attendant horrors on such an event. Probably she was strangled as the pile was lighted; but as this enters into supposition, it may be dismissed into the limbo of tradition, together with the unholy glee of the Rev. Mr. Adair and the conviction of

an unhappy female, condemned because her mind wandered, and because she spake unadvisedly with her lips during an attack of brain fever.

BESSIE DUNLOP.

Bessie Dunlop, as a witch, stands by herself. She was not one of the broom-besom or kail-stock variety. She had no direct dealings with the devil. She never courted, in midnight flight, the glimpses of the moonbeams, or danced in unholy cantrip in the churches of the Reformation. She never rode over the crests of the waves in a riddle or sieve, nor charmed anybody's cattle, nor took away the milk from the breasts of her nursing neighbours, nor soured the malt, nor did harm to her acquaintances, nor acted in any one of the hundred other ways affected by the general run of weird women.

If these things be so, the question naturally arises—What did she do to bring her into the category of witches? If she was not a witch of the ordinary variety, why was she burned? Her story must supply the answer. And, fortunately, it can be reproduced in reasonable detail. On November 8th, 1576, she was arraigned at the bar of the High Court of Justiciary; and the faithful clerks of the assize have left us official record of the crimes laid to her charge. Before going into the narrative, however, it may be necessary to premise that in all probability her confessions were extracted from her by the aid of the torture. The witches became, almost without exception, pliant under the influences of starvation, of solitary confinement, of the witch-finders, and of the witch's bridle, and were ready to admit anything demanded of them, so that they might have an end put to their sufferings.

The crime of which she was accused was "sorcery, witchcraft, and incantation, with invocation of spirits of the devil, continuing in familiarity with them at all such times

as she thought expedient, dealing with charms, and abusing the people with devilish craft of sorcery aforesaid." She was her own witness. To begin with, the Court demanded to know by what means she was enabled to tell persons of divers things that had been lost, or had been stolen away, and how she had managed to cure sick persons. She knew nothing of herself, she replied ; all her power to reveal secrets came from her communing with a familiar spirit in the person of one Thomas Reid, who had been slain on the field of Pinkie nearly thirty years before. To all appearance Reid was an honest, elderly man, with a grey beard, who wore a grey coat with Lombard sleeves of the old fashion, grey "breeks" and white stockings gartered above the knees, a black bonnet on his head with lappets over his ears, and carrying a white wand in his hand. She first met him one day as she was going from her own house—she and her husband seem to have been tenants of Lord Boyd, a son of the Laird of Pinkill—to Monkcastle, and mourning over the illness of a cow and the sickness of her husband. "Good day, Bessie," said Reid to her. "God speed you, gudeman," she replied. "Sancta Marie," said he, "Bessie, why are you so very sad and greeting for any worldly thing?" "Alas!" was her response, "have I not great cause to be sad. Our gear is dwindling away, my husband is on the point of death, my baby will not live, I am weak myself also, and have I not good cause, then, to have a sair heart?" "Bessie," replied Reid, "thou has provoked God and asked something thou shouldest not have done. Therefore I counsel you to make amends to Him. I tell thee thy bairn shall die, and the sick cow before you return home; your two sheep will die too ; but your husband shall mend and be as strong and fair as ever he was." Having so delivered himself, and imparted to Bessie a modicum of comfort in the assurance that her husband would recover, he walked off towards the yard of Monkcastle, disappearing in a hole in a

dyke so small that, in Bessie's opinion, no mortal man could have gone through it. "This," says the record, "was the first time that Thom and Bessie foregathered."

At an interview which took place shortly after, Thom, as he is called by the narrator, reproached Bessie because she would not trust in him. Why would she not put her faith in him? he asked. Bessie strategically replied that she was willing to trust in anybody who did her good. The grey old man was ready with his promises. She should have, he told her, horses and cows, "and other graith," if she would deny Christianity and the faith which she took upon her at baptism. But, though Bessie was anxious enough to possess the world's goods, she would not deny her faith; and, rather than do so, she expressed her firm determination to be "riven" at horses' tails. This reply angered him, and he departed in a rage. When next he returned, however, his ill-temper had disappeared, and, under pledge of secrecy, he showed her a sight which no mortal save herself had ever before looked upon. This was none other than four men and eight women from Elfame—Elf-Hame—the Court of Fairyland. The men were clad in gentlemen's clothing, and the women had all plaids about them, and were very kind to her. Thom asked her if she knew any of them. None, she replied, save himself. They bade her sit down, and endeavoured to persuade her to go with them. To their solicitation she answered nothing, because Thom had previously forbidden her to speak in their presence. Finding their entreaties of no avail, they rose to take their departure, and as they parted from her, and left her lying sick upon the ground, "a hideous ugly blast of wind followed them." On Thom's return—for he, too, had gone off with them—he told her who they were, and pressed her anew to reconsider her decision, but this she stoutly refused to do. She saw no profit, she told him, in going with them without knowing what the result was to be. To this he replied that

she should better her position, and he pointed to his own well-clad, well-fed condition in token of the state of bodily comfort she would enjoy in the Court of Elfame. But all to no purpose.

About this time Bessie was coming to be recognized as a wise woman among her neighbours. When their cattle became ill she consulted Reid, and he gave her herbs with which to cure them; when their children were sick he handed to her potions to cure them ; and when their goods were lost or stolen she told them where to find them, or in whose possession they were. Persons of rank and of title sought advice from her. Lady Johnstone sent a servant to consult her regarding the sickness of her daughter, who was married to a neighbouring proprietor. Bessie in turn consulted Thom. "Her sickness," said that personage, "is due to cauld blood that went about her heart, that caused her to pine away. Therefore," counselled he, "let her take equal parts of cloves, ginger, annis-seed, and liquorice, and mix them together in ale; seethe them together; strain the mixture; put it in a vessel, then take a little quantity of it in a mutchkin can, with some white sugar cast among it; take and drink thereof each day in the morning; walk a while after, before meat, and she would soon be better." Bessie administered the physic in the house of Lady Blackhall, and received as payment a peck of meal and some cheese. Lady Thirdpart, in the barony of Renfrew, sent to her to discover who had stolen some coins out of her purse, and, after an interview with Thom, she informed her who had them. And Lady Blair similarly sought her advice concerning the recovery of a quantity of clothing which had been theftuously taken from her.

Passing over a number of parallel cases, Bessie's "familiar" is found acting the *role* of adviser. The daughter of William Blair of the Strand was shortly to be married to the young Laird of Baidland, Crawford by name; and

to the bride elect Thom had a warning message to send. It was to the purport that, "if she married that man, she should either die a shameful death, slay herself, cast herself down over a crag, or go raving mad." This terrible prediction effectually brought the betrothal to a close, but the young laird simply transferred his affections to his former intended's sister, whom he wedded without any such dire consequences being foretold, or, what is of more importance, happening, to mar his wedded bliss.

As a rule, Thom Reid, though quite indistinguishable from the ordinary flesh-and-blood denizens of this earth, does not seem to have cared to mingle with them. On two occasions, however, Bessie saw him in the throng—once in the churchyard of Dalry, where he was going up and down among the people, and again on the streets of Edinburgh on a market day, where he comported himself in a manner similar to those about him. He preferred rather to confine himself to the society of Bessie Dunlop herself, and to impart to her such knowledge as he was permitted to teach her. Her connection with the fairy folk, other than that already referred to, was very slight. A stout woman called upon her, took a drink of water from her hands, and told her that one of her children would die. This, Thom explained, was none other than his mistress, the Queen of Elfame. And while walking one day by the side of a loch a great company of riders came by, making a din as if heaven and earth had gone together, and disappeared in the loch "with many a hideous rumble." These were the happy wights of the Court of fairyland, and among them was the Laird of Auchinskeith, who had died nine years previously.

Bessie had consulted her familiar concerning what was likely to eventuate as the result of her acquaintance with spirit lore. He told her that she would be called to account, but that she was to seek an assize of her neighbours, and

that no evil should befall her. But, trusting to Thom, she leaned upon a broken reed; for, taken before the High Court of Justiciary, the jurors unanimously found her guilty of the crimes laid to her charge, and she was sentenced to be burned at the stake. There is no record of the sentence having been carried out, but that she paid the penalty due to her witchcraft, sorcery, and incantation, can hardly be doubted. The most notable feature in her case is that not even her enemies accused her of having done any harm to her neighbours or to those who consulted her, and she seems to have fallen a victim to practising on the credulity of the simple and to a knowledge of medicinal herbs.

THE DEATH OF OLD KING COIL.

THERE is incontestable evidence to show that Ayrshire was a well populated district when the dawn of reliable history broke upon it; indeed, long before the dawn there was a hardy race in these parts able to extract a living from the cold soil, to resist attack, to gather together for the onslaught, and to combine against the stranger who threatened defiance at the gates. The Romans found their work cut out for them when, under Maximus, one of their Prefects, in the year 360 A.D., they, with the Picts for allies, attacked the Scots "at the Water of Doon in Carrick." Like many another struggle of these shadowy times, that in which King Eugenius engaged, and in which he lost his life as he rallied his forces

to the combat, and hurled his long-bearded, badly armed warriors against the disciplined cohorts of Rome, had no Homer to sing it. We can only imagine the bloody combat, the rush of the Britons, the long spears of the mail-clad legions, the shock of battle, the fierce struggle for life and liberty and home, against the invader, the stern determination of the Romans, the ground covered with the dead and dying, the cheering on to the fray of his troops by Eugenius, the long combat, the inevitable defeat, the day, the Romans! Authorities are at one regarding the battle; and that it took place between the rivers Ayr and Doon has been fairly proven by the relics which, even in comparatively recent years, have been reclaimed from the soil—Roman and British places of sepulture, Roman swords, lances, daggers, pieces of mail and brazen camp vessels, intermixed with British urns of rudely-baked clay, hatchet and arrow heads, and other primitive implements of warfare used by the Caledonians. Urns, too, have been found, of curious make and workmanship; and antiquaries have disputed and debated over them as it becomes antiquaries to do.

But the conquering Romans were not the only invaders who came upon the scene when history and tradition were intermingled; for historians—Hollingshed, Boethius, and Buchanan—are at one in affirming that in the same locality the Scots and Picts encountered the Britons and defeated them with great slaughter.

And this brings us to King Coil. Everybody knows this much about King Coil—

Old King Cole was a merry old soul
  And a merry old soul was he;
He called for his pipe, and he called for his glass,
  And he called for his fiddlers three.

But everybody does not know that this King Coil—whatever may be said for his claims to having soothed himself with his pipe long centuries before the days of Sir Walter

Raleigh, or to his fondness for concerted fiddling—was a real and not a mythical personage. Indeed the only difficulty is to say which of the King Coils he was—whether the Coilu who lived three hundred and thirty years before Christ; or Coel, King of the Roman districts, who must have lived in the third century of our Lord, and who, according to Wynton

> left a dochter a wyrgyne
> That excedyt of bewte
> All the ladys of that cuntré
> That nane in Brettayne was sa fayre;

or Coelus, King of Norway, who was "eirded in Kyle after he stroke ane field against the Scots and (was) vanquished be them." The probability is that the one who was associated with the district of Kyle, which competent authorities admit may have been called after him, was the second named. For there does not seem to be much foundation for the existence of Coilus who is affirmed to have reigned three hundred years and more before Christ, and inasmuch as the Coelus of Norway was a Christian and left orders that he was to be interred in Icolmkill, there is no reason to believe that his followers adopted the heathen custom of burning his remains after death. And this simple fact, that his body was honoured by being consigned to a funeral pyre, has everything to do with the identification of the individual, inasmuch as the only real, existing evidence of his personality and of the fight which he fought in Ayrshire, consists in the discovery of relics of the fatal field, at Coilsfield in the parish of Tarbolton. Of course it is quite possible that the relics referred to may be those of some other warrior king of the shadowy epoch; but we prefer to believe that they are indeed those of "old King Coil" himself, the redoubtable king of the Britons.

The Picts and Scots were old enemies. Speaking generally, the Picts, who, according to Bede, were a colony of

Scythians, inhabited the eastern shores, contiguous to the German sea, while the Scots, who came across from Ireland, dwelt in the Western Highlands and Islands, and had colonies in the mountainous parts of the north. The Britons held the south and south-west of Scotland, and were further on the way of civilization than their rivals in other parts of the country. They had a regularly organized government and a king round whom they centred. The Picts hated the Scots, the Scots hated the Picts, and both hated and distrusted the Britons. Wiser in their generation than either Pict or Scot, the Britons advantaged themselves of the jealousies which they knew to exist, to set them one against the other, and, having accomplished their end, they offered aid to the Picts, even before they desired it, against the Scots; "which," says Buchanan, "when the latter perceived, they applied elsewhere for assistance and procured a foreign king to assist them against the threatened danger. The commanders of the islanders being almost all of equal authority, and disdaining to elect a chief from among themselves, Fergus, the son of Ferchard, was sent for with forces out of Ireland, as the most eminent person among the Scots, both for advice and action. By the public consent of the people he was chosen king; but while preparations were being made for a battle, if need required it, a rumour was dispersed abroad which came to the ears both of the Scots and Picts, that the Britons were acting a treacherous part, laying plots and counter-plots equally pernicious to both nations, and that in the event of a battle they would turn their arms upon the conquerors and conquered alike, in order to destroy both or drive them out of the island, that they might themselves enjoy the whole. This report made both armies doubtful what course to take, and for a time kept them within their respective trenches. A truce was secured, and, the secret fraud of the Britons being made manifest, peace was concluded, and, the three different armies returned home.

"The Britons, failing in their first project, had resort to another stratagem. They sent in robbers secretly among the Picts to drive away their cattle, and when the injured party demanded restitution, they were told to seek it from the Scots, who were accustomed to thieving and plundering, and not from them. Thus their messengers were sent away without satisfaction, and the affair was treated as a matter of derision. The fraud of the Britons being thus fully discovered, the late reproach incensed the hearts of both nations against them more than the remaining grudges and resentments for their former conduct, and, therefore, levying as great an army as they could, the two kings invaded the coasts in different directions, and, after ravaging the country with fire and sword, returned home with a great booty."

Coilus seems to have retaliated in kind, with the result that, after a good deal of skirmishing and manœuvring, the rival armies found themselves face to face on the banks of the Doon. Where they met it is impossible to say, but the probability is that it may not have been far from the mouth of the river; in the plain, maybe, that stretches from the estuary of the Doon to that of the Ayr. To-day it is dotted with houses or laid out in well cultivated fields or gardens, with a little woodland interspersed here and there; but in these far away times it was either open country, unfenced, undrained, swampy, with the sea making an occasional incursion across its lower portion, or else covered with forest. An attempt has been made to show that the scene of the conflict was near Dalrymple, which is about four miles from the mouth of the river Doon, and the discovery of relics of a very ancient date has been cited in proof; but it is more than likely that, if any serious affray in connection with this war did take place in that parish, it was what would now be known as an affair of outposts. There does, indeed, seem to have been much marching and counter-marching and much changing of the relative positions of

the armies. Fergus knew that in Coilus he had a foeman worthy of his steel. He knew that he had to contend with a foe nowise inferior in valour to the savage hordes which rallied to his banner, and that they were better disciplined than were his forces. Realizing the desperate nature of the undertaking, he sent away the wives and children who followed the fortunes of the field, under a strong escort, "into the mountains and other places of security," and then awaited Coilus to give him battle. This the British king was in no hurry to do; and the Picts and Scots, growing weary of waiting, resolved to effect a diversion, and, by sending men to ravage the territory of the Britons, to force their hand. Coilus learned their intent, and despatched five thousand men to lie in ambush and entrap the troops thus sent out to pillage. This, in turn, was discovered by the Picts and Scots; and Fergus at once made up his mind to risk an assault on the camp of the Britons by night.

It was a stern conflict; and well it merited some one to sing it. The Britons lay slumbering on the ground, their camp fires smouldering and, in all probability, the moon walking in her brightness across the sky. The Briton needed not the luxury of a tent, and therefore his canopy was the vault. And underneath it he lay and watched the stars shining faintly, far off in the blue, until sleep overcame him and he sank into the arms of Morpheus. The country around to all appearance was still, there was no indication of danger at hand, and little thought the warrior as he stretched himself upon the grass that the sun which he had seen set, would in all probability rise no more upon him. Sound of life there was none, save, it may be, the distant bark of the fox or the melancholy howl of the wolf—which then roamed over the greater part of Scotland—or the hooting of the owl as he sat blinking out into the night. But danger unforeseen or unthought of is, unfortunately, not always danger far removed. And there—sheltering

themselves by copse and woodland grey, and creeping along under the shadows of the trees, came from the one side the Scots, and from the other the Picts; unclothed, save the skins which they wore upon their shoulders and which girded them as with a girdle, their targe in the one hand, their short sword in the other, fury in their hearts, determination on their brows.

Not more stealthily creeps the tiger on his prey than did those rude sons of the coast and of the sail. They were strong in numbers and strong in resolution; and while they crept quietly they crept quickly. At length the Scots are within rushing distance of the camp of the weary Britons. Mayhap the watchman looked out upon the night and kept sleepless vigil; mayhap he even thought he heard a noise and bent earthwards to hear what it portended; but ere he could give the alarm, there is a wild shout from the Scots, the rush of hurrying feet, the moon telling the weapons which they brandished on high, the dense moving mass onward bound, as relentless as a Nemesis, onslaught upon onslaught. The startled Britons bound to their feet. Their arms are beside them. They grasp targe and battle axe and strike at the advancing horde. All is confusion. There is a rushing to a common centre and a line is formed for defence. Man to man, foot to foot, front to front, they hack and they hew, and the red blood runs down like water. The shouts of the combatants, the groans of the dying, make night hideous. Ah, how stubbornly they fight, inch by inch. Now the Scots bear in upon the Britons' throng, and now they are hurled back into the moonlight, and bows are drawn till the strings sing, and arrows fly through the air whizzing on to their billet. But hark! there is a yell, a cry from the rear and thence come on, bounding as they come, the red-haired Picts. The Britons are confused. They cannot turn their backs on the Picts, for that would be death. They cannot face the Picts and leave their rear

exposed, for that, too, would be death. They lounge out wildly here and there. But there is one man who is unmoved and steadfast of purpose and of resolve. It is the British King, Coilus himself. He sees the desperate strait. He knows that only grim pertinacity and sheer determination can stave off the destroyer. He is no parlour warrior, but strong of arm and staunch in heart. His chiefs rally round him, their men follow, and there is a ring of warriors, Coilus in the centre, as strong and steady a phalanx as that which encircled James on the hapless, fateful field of Flodden. All the while the moon sails aloft in the sky and the carnage rages on the earth. The ground shakes beneath the tramp of the contending forces, the noise of the captains and the shouting. But ever onward, upward, press the Scots and the Picts resolute on slaughter, and the circle of the Britons grows smaller and smaller, and away to the realms of the blest stream the spirits of the warriors slain in battle. Coilus is urged to fly; his chiefs tell him that they can cut a line of retreat for him. He refuses, he rallies them anew to the fight, and his war cry is heard afresh. Desperate are the exertions to overcome the pack of human wolves which surge up on all sides, desperate on annihilation. But they are all in vain. Heads are cleft and targes fall from lifeless arms, and the red blood pours on the ground from a thousand living streams. Still narrower and narrower grows the circle, until, with one wild rush it is broken in upon on all sides, and the British King and his warriors die as a British King and his warriors should die, with their faces to the foe. The eastern sun is lighting up the horizon ere the last blow is struck for life, for conquest, and ere the plain is full flooded with daylight, the combat is o'er and the Picts and Scots are rifling the slain.

It is matter for regret that the scene of the conflict cannot be more accurately localized. In all probability there

was, as has been said, a good deal of marching and counter-marching of the rival armies, and therefore it is quite possible that King Coilus may have taken up his position some miles inland from either the Doon or the Ayr. There is nothing inconsistent with this in that he had encamped by the Doon. Or it may be that after the battle his body was carried off the field as far as Coilsfield, either by his friends or his admiring foes, and given the rites and the honours of a funeral pyre. And this brings us to Coilsfield and its relics.

Coilsfield is in the parish of Tarbolton, where also are the ruins of the monastery of Fail, whose friars

Drank berry-brown ale—
The best that ere was tasted—
Just as the monks of Melrose
Made gude Kail,
On Fridays, when they fasted.

Here, too, is the "Castle of Montgomerie"—Coilsfield House, where "Summer first unfaulds her robes," and where "they langest tarry;" and here Burns, when he dwelt at Lochlea, was wont to meet his Highland Mary—Mary Campbell, one of the domestic servants at Coilsfield. We have nothing to do at present with friar or with poet, however; these in their proper place; it is ours to see what can be said for the tomb of King Coil. Local names often convey meanings which even the natives never dream of; indeed much of the nomenclature of Scotland, as of elsewhere, is both significant and suggestive. When, therefore, we find, tumbling into the water of Fail a "Bloody Burn;" and when we find opposite the mouth of the Bloody Burn a "Dead-men's-holm," we are inclined to think that these names are not entirely the result of chance-work. Neither is pretty; both, on the contrary, are rather gruesome. Nobody would be likely to affix such cognomens to stream or to haugh without some reason; and even if some morbid-

minded individual was so far left to himself as to do so, the inhabitants in the neighbourhood would require to be equally grim in the matter of taste ere the names would stick. It is, then, a fair conclusion that at one period of its rippling story the stream ran red with blood, as many a stream in this westland has done full oft, and that beneath the sward of the holm were laid those who fell in conflict upon it. Nor is this all. Chalmers in his "Caledonia" pooh-poohs the story of King Coil. And it is as well that he did so; for it stimulated to the opening of the circular mound known as "King Coil's grave," and the discovery of relics which are not to be explained away.

The mound which stands to the south of Coilsfield House, is circular, and is planted with trees: and thither, in May of 1837 repaired a competent band of excavators bent on searching after truth. A narrative of the search was communicated to the New Statistical Account by the then minister of the parish, the Rev. David Ritchie, a man of scholarly and level mind, and who, for many years—until, indeed, he became one of the veritable fathers of the Church of Scotland—continued to direct the ecclesiastical affairs of the parish. Mr. Ritchie was a thorough Scot, hard-headed and matter of fact, humorous withal, a man of thorough business capacity, and one of the most trusted members of the Presbytery of Ayr. And thus he writes:—

"The centre of the mound was found to be occupied by boulder-stones, some of them of considerable size. When the excavators had reached the depth of about four feet they came on a flagstone of a circular form, about three feet in diameter. Under the circular stone, was first a quantity of dry, yellow-coloured, sandy clay, then a small flagstone laid horizontally, covering the mouth of an urn filled with white-coloured burnt bones. In removing the dry clay by which this urn was surrounded, under flat stones, several small heaps of bones were observed, not

contained in urns, but carefully surrounded by the yellow-coloured clay mentioned above. The urns in shape resemble flower-pots; they are composed of clay and have been hardened by fire. The principal urn is $7\frac{7}{8}$ inches in height, $7\frac{7}{8}$ inches in diameter, $\frac{5}{8}$ths of an inch in thickness. It has none of those markings, supposed to have been made by the thumb nail, so often to be observed on sepulchral urns, and it has nothing of ornament except an edging or projecting part about half-an-inch from the top. No coins, or armour, or implements of any description, could be found. The discovery of these urns renders evident that, at a very remote period, and while the practice of burning the dead still prevailed—that is to say, before the introduction of Christianity—some person or persons of distinction had been deposited there. The fact of sepulchral urns having been found in the very spot where, according to an uninterrupted tradition, and the statements of several historians, King Coil had been laid, appears to give to the traditionary evidence, and to the statements of the early Scottish historians, in regard to Coil, a degree of probability higher than they formerly possessed. . . . . Other urns were found less indurated, and so frail as to fall to pieces when touched. An old man remembers that his father, then a tenant on the Coilsfield estate, turned up pieces of ancient armour and fragments of bones when ploughing the 'Dead-Men's-Holm.'"

In his "Tour through Britain," Defoe mentions that "a trumpet resembling a crooked horn was dug up in the field of battle, and is still kept in the Laird of Caprington's house, called Coilsfield, and made use of to call his servants and workmen together." "This horn," says Mr. Ritchie, "is carefully preserved at Caprington Castle. It corresponds exactly with the description given of it, and it retains its shrill sound." It is true he adds that "there is no tradition in the family as to when or where the trumpet

was found;" and therefore it would be rash to make any serious deductions from its discovery.

As an indication how continuous the tradition concerning the fate of the King of the Britons and the scene of his last fight—at all events of his cremation—has been, it may be noted that John Bonar, schoolmaster, Ayr, writing about the year 1631 gives a metrical description of the conflict which we have been endeavouring to elucidate, in which these lines occur:—

> Coylus he fled unto the river Doune,
> Quher drownet were many yt thair did runn
> And northward held, quhil they came to a muir
> And thair was slayet be Scots that on him fuir
> Fergus he followet, and came right haestillie,
> Quhair Coyle was killet and all his hole armie:
> The country people frae thenseforthe does it call
> Coylsfield in Kyll, as ever more it sall.

The bulk of evidence favours the conclusion to which we come, that Coil was a real and not a mythical personage, and that he met his death in battle at the hands of the Picts and Scots in this locality. Doubters may call for tangible proof; but the age in which the combat was fought was one which boasted of no contemporary literature, which had no historian waiting to reproduce in black and white the chronicles of the camp; and if all these sceptred shades and their ongoings are to be reduced in the crucible of destructive criticism, farewell to the one half of ancient history. Without then trusting overmuch to the authenticity of detail, we believe in the deeds and in the death of the King of the Britons, and in his sepulchre in Kyle.

THE STORY OF THE TOWER

OF

ST. JOHN'S IN AYR.

Were it possible for the ghosts to revisit the glimpses of the moon, and to haunt the scenes with which they were familiar upon earth, what a varied group might be seen ever and anon around the square tower of St. John's, which stands, as it has stood these seven centuries and more, a prominent feature in the landscape of Ayr! Could we even recall them in imagination and set them in procession, what a motley aspect, in garb, in tongue, in creed, in faith, they would assume! First in the long procession would come the builders who toiled and laboured with the old red sandstone, and who saw grow under their patient hands the square built pile that was to remain many centuries after they had crossed the mortal barrier; after them, the shaven preaching Friars, with their long loose robes, with candle and book, with matins and vespers, rung in by the solemn toned bell that was wont to hang in the belfrey, and to ring out over the sandy hillocks amid which St. John's stood open to the four winds of the heavens; mayhap an armour-clad Norseman with his helmet on his head, his short sword by his side, and his shield upon his arm, fresh from the raid or the fray; Sir William Wallace, noble of aspect, bold in speech, in daring, in deed, filled high with purpose and with patriotism; the Earl of Carrick, Robert the Bruce, the hero of many a tussle, and of national independence; behind him a

long, long succession of friars who ministered at the altars of St. John's while the centuries rolled on, and who prayed for the repose of the souls of the burghers of Ayr; quaint burgesses and their dames who, Sabbath after Sabbath, heard the word from the Catholic fathers in the long ago disappeared church, which the Tower dominated, and where gospel light was kept aflame when the surrounding country was given up to feudal strife, and raid, and murder; the fathers of the Reformation, Willock and Welsh, and him who never feared the face of man; the stern protector of the common weal, who desecrated the fanes of St. John's, and converted the holy places into a tabernacle for his soldiery; the labourers who toiled to prevent the wind swept sands of ruin mounting high against the walls of the edifice; the toilers who were wont to climb the steep steps of the tower to descry whether their home-freighted barks had escaped the perils of the deep and entered the bay, and the many, many, who were laid to sleep under the shadow of the pile.

It cannot now be told when St. John's was built; but that it is the oldest building in Ayr is undisputed. In all probability it was a century old when the "Auld Brig" was thrown across the rushing river. It was contemporary with the Castle of Ayr and the Castle of Newton, with the oldest of the Tolbooths. It was there, getting grey by this time, when Haco, in his warships, swept up the Clyde under oar and expanded sail, to be crushed on the field of Largs. It shone out in the glare that was reflected around when Wallace set fire to the Barns of Ayr. These are far away days and olden stories; but though seven round centuries have rolled their course since the copestone was put upon the thick walled tower, and though dynasties have crumbled away and disappeared under the touch of time, it stands today calm and serene amid the scene which it has adorned since reliable Scottish history began. When the foundation stone was laid, the site was open to the sea and to the river

Ayr, and there was nothing to break the blast of the west wind from the Atlantic. To-day it is encircled by houses, latter day companions on the scene; but there is no room to doubt that when decay's effacing fingers have touched the modern dwellings which St. John's overtops, the Tower itself will remain to tell the architects and the builders of the nineteenth century that they are but of yesterday and know nothing.

To tell all that St. John's has seen would be to tell the history of Ayr during the last seven hundred years or thereby. All that we can do, therefore, is to note one or two events with whose transactions it was connected, and to indicate one or two of the more important changes and epochs to which it has been a silent, but an ever-present, witness. It was built before Ayr was a royal burgh, at the cost of the king who, like many another monarch, atoned for his sins or purchased salvation by the erection and the endowment of places of worship. Though the town had not received its charter, it was a place of very considerable note and was occasionally the seat of the Scottish Court. Probably the first monarch on whom the spirit of St. John's looked was William the Lyon, and him it must have seen as he went to and fro from his new castle not far distant. At that period, to the reflective friar who toiled up the long steep steps to the summit of the tower, and who may have occasionally forgotten his spiritual exercises as he gazed on the fair prospect stretched all around him, the chief objects of interest in the immediate vicinity were in all probability the religious houses of other societies, the Castle of Ayr, and the Castle of Newton. Between Ayr and Newton ran, as runs to-day, the river, unspanned by bridge, lapping, not rude, prosaic quay walls, but sandy knowes overgrown with their long sea grass and merging back into green fields whereon the herd watched his cattle or tended his white flocks of fleecy sheep. About a mile to the south-west the

Doon sought the Firth of Clyde; for it had not then withdrawn its waters to their present estuary, nearly two miles distant; and all the way from the one river to the other stretched a series of undulating sand hills from which, across the town, swept the sand clouds, blocking the thoroughfares open to the south and south-west, and calling into being the energies of the townsmen to resist the encroachments of the drift. Ayr itself was small as compared with its present extent, but it was not by any means insignificant when compared with the other towns of Scotland, and it was, besides, venerable in point of antiquity. The Romans knew it, the ancient Britons had dwelt in it, and the red-haired Pict and haughty Scot had stood by its river and had fought on the level ground between the Ayr and the Doon. The new town was then in existence, a fact which goes to indicate the age of the old. Ayr had extensive privileges and broad acres. There were long miles of country that it could call its own, and it had the exclusive right of buying and selling, not only over the whole district of Kyle but across Cuninghame itself, to the very verge of the confines of Renfrew. The Castle of Ayr was a strong keep, fit for the times. These were unsettled. Not only did the Norwegian sea kings sweep the coast and descend upon it, spreading terror among the lieges and laying heavy tribute upon their goods and gear, but from the south came roving bands of fierce Galwegians, to whom Kyle and Cuninghame were fertile fields of plunder; and the friars of St. John's must many a time have sat cowering, or kneeled prayerful, in their cells when they heard that the redoubtable Rory Gill, the noted freebooter and the terror of the country-side, was abroad at the head of his hordes of rapine and plunder.

When the walls of the town were erected, cannot be said; but there is no mention made of them until the sixteenth century. At the same time, it is a tolerably reliable

assumption that, when in 1197 William gave Ayr her charter, the town was enclosed. Perhaps the walls were permitted to fall into decay; at all events in 1585 the ports were ordered to be rebuilt, in order to keep out a plague and to prevent infected persons, or people from infected districts, entering the town. To those who are unacquainted with Ayr it would serve no purpose to indicate in detail its exact dimensions in those early days of its story; it will, therefore, be sufficient to say that only what is now the very heart of the town was within the ports. The guardian spirit of St. John's would wonder to-day were he to leave the confines of the tower. What he knew as waste lands are now the busy haunts of traffic; and the sandy hillocks on which his mortal gaze was wont to rest, are studded with villas, or stretch away in streets or terraces.

For many years of the thirteenth century the inhabitants lived in terror of the Scandinavian rovers, and they had good cause to dread the visits of the long galleys of the Norsemen. Great was the commotion in the August of 1263 when the watchman from the high church tower descried in mid-channel the fleet of the gallant Haco. The inhabitants had heard the Norsemen were coming. All the summer they had been cruising round the Hebrides; and occasionally a small detachment from their navy had rounded the Mull of Kintyre and passed up the Clyde under the lee of Arran; but now, instead of keeping clear of the Ayrshire coast, the ships were heading right for the river's mouth. There was no Scottish army to beat them back, and the men of Ayr were not of themselves sufficient adequately to contend with the veterans—half-soldier, half-sailor—of the Scandinavian monarch. The Castle of Ayr had been built for just such an emergency as this; and as the galleys swung to in the river and the Norsemen landed on its banks, those who could fight went within the castle, and those who could not, sought refuge in the

surrounding country. The Norwegians delivered one ineffectual assault upon the stronghold, but as they were bound on a higher and more important errand, they retired to their ships, and swept onward up the Clyde to meet disaster from the winds of heaven by sea, and from the forces of the Scottish monarch by land, on the shore of Largs. And when next the watchman saw the fleet of the invader, reduced sadly in number, from the summit of his watch tower, he was barely able to descry them against the dark sides of Arran ; and when, like specks against the blue, he beheld them round the Mull of Kintyre, he witnessed the passing away from the Scottish coast for the last time and for ever, of those terrors of the western main.

But with the departure of the Scandinavians home troubles sprang up. Edward I. usurped the Scottish throne, and the Castle of Ayr was ceded to him and taken possession of by the English soldiery. For long years the friars of St. John's were compelled, therefore, to be the near neighbours of the invaders ; and, patriots as they no doubt were, they must have seen with pain the fluttering pennant of England, token of virtual subjection, hard by. The Southern soldiers passed and repassed. They levied tribute on the townsmen. Fearful of the always threatened rising, they trod the streets heavily, and with heavy hand they kept down the inhabitants. The proud Lord de Percie ruled with high hand, and, fret and fume as the burghers might, they were long, weary years that elapsed ere the deliverer came. But he did come at length. The spirit moved him in the camp of the people, and his deeds of prowess and of daring excited an ardour and an enthusiasm which never went to sleep until they culminated on the glorious field of Bannockburn. The deliverer was Sir William Wallace. St. John's knew him well. It heard of his deeds by the water of Irvine and on the streets of Ayr. The friars told one another how he had slain the insulting Englishman with his sword, and broken

the back of the braggart with one fell blow of his staff, and they trembled lest the men of the garrison should secure him and quench the faintly-dawning hopes begotten of the genesis of the deliverer. With the alternating fortunes of their hero, their spirits rose and fell. There was one night that reddened the sky above their heads. From the top of the tower they saw first the rising smoke, and then the forked flames darting from the barns, which stood within easy ken over against them on the banks of the river. It was a night of excitement such as few men who ever lived in Ayr had seen. On the midnight air arose the crackling of the burning timbers, and, strange medley of sounds, the roar of the conflagration, the yells of the dying, the groans of those who were undergoing suffocation, the clashing of swords, the appeals for mercy, the answering shouts of the stern patriots who watched, every man with his weapon unsheathed, by the burning pile. It lit up the surroundings, and St. John's cast long, dancing shadows as the infernal furnace rose and fell and flickered in the night wind. A calm succeeded—the calm of desolation and of death. Gradually the flames died away, the sky became black again, and nothing remained of the vengeance of Sir William Wallace but the blackened, smouldering ruins, and the charred bodies of the hapless victims. The friars went fearful to their beds that night, or if perchance even in the ecclesiastical breast there awoke the stern joy of accomplished retribution, there rose to check it at the same time the fear that there would be a bloody price to pay for the deed done. When they awoke—if ever they slept at all that night—the following morning, the standard of Scotland, the lion rampant, flew from the castle over against them, and they heard how the fort was won, and justice done upon the English soldiery.

The news sped fast to England. Edward heard it, and his wrath was kindled. A strong force of troops was despatched

to Ayr, and another series of excitements passed over the friars as the four thousand Southrons, armed and resolute, and burning to avenge insult and loss, sat down in front of the castle. The Scottish garrison were unequally matched, and, though they held out while they could, it was not long ere the sounds of the onset and the charge reached the ears of the friars, and told them that the defenders were selling their lives as dearly as they could. Again they saw the banner of England from the summit of the keep, and there it flew while tidings came in from the surrounding country that the hero of Elderslie was on the war path. He was not to be denied. From their strongholds he routed the Southrons until he had driven them from the westland. The garrison of Ayr did not wait the onslaught. Nor did they stand upon the order of their going, for they retreated precipitately, and left the men of Ayr to enter into possession of their three-towered vantage once again. But its history, and the excitement of the friars, were not yet at a close. Many a time they saw Robert the Bruce enter the castle and depart on his roving, wandering expeditions. Many a time they followed him with their hopes and their fears, and their prayers for his weal, and it was with sad hearts that, after the battle of Falkirk, they saw the torch put to the castle and the red flames lap its strong walls. The glory was surely departed then! But it was a dour, heavy fortress, and it refused to go down before the flames. They gutted it, they cleared it out, but its solid masonry was proof against them, and when, in the revolving cycle of events, the English came again, they repaired its shattered casements, they rebuilt what had fallen down, they restored its ports and its buttresses, and once again entered into possession. It was Ralph de Morthemer who held it, and there he sat entrenched while the war of independence raged, nor did he leave it until the Southern host had melted like the snowflakes at Bannockburn. Then there

was joy all over the land, and the friars, with hearts full of gratitude for victory and relief, said or sung their masses for the souls of their countrymen that had gone out into the future.

Sabbath, the 26th of April, 1315, was a day of feasting and of gladness in St. John's. Never in its history did such a gathering take place under the shadow of its red sandstone tower. The town was filled with nobles and with men-at-arms, and with the heroes who had conquered by the banks of the Bannock burn. They strode down in their armour across the sandy hillocks which intervened between the church and the town, and their firm tread awoke echoes unaccustomed to aught save praise and prayer and the preaching of the word. From north and south they had come, and from the east country; and as they passed along the crooked High Street, or urged their horses along the bridge, not then the old, the burghers felt the elation of men who rest from labour, and who have contributed their share to the cause whose success is an accomplished fact. The nobles and knights, the archbishops and abbots, who thronged St. John's, were met as a Parliament. In a company as sacred as it was secular, the religious duties of the day could not be forgotten, and never perhaps during all the centuries of its existence did the somewhat unromantic church echo to more sincere or grateful praise, and certainly never was it sung by so courtly a choir. Amid high state and ceremony the Scottish crown was settled upon Robert the Bruce, and allegiance sworn to him by the very steps of the altar. Yet twice more, within the lifetime of that generation, the English soldiers occupied the castle, and once at least they were put to the sword by the angry burghers. These were indeed the stormy days of St. John's. They had their periods of sunshine, when everything seemed the brighter because of the gloom which had preceded it; but no sooner was the sky clear and blue and unclouded, than

from the south arose the storm clouds to darken it anew. Many were the tales which the fathers of the Church had to tell. If those of St. John's were not themselves militant, they could at least point to their brothers of the Convent of Black Friars, who, on the memorable night when the Barns were fired, set valiantly upon a number of English soldiers who were resident in the convent, and, uncanonically, but patriotically, put them to the sword. As they recalled the scene, they jocularly talked of the "Friar of Ayr's blessing," and the saying passed into the lore of the town which they helped to safeguard.

One generation after another of friars came and went; and one generation of burghers after another was laid to sleep in the quiet churchyard. Gradually, if slowly, the country advanced from one degree of prosperity to another, though ever and anon, internal dissension broke up the public peace, or external quarrelling checked the march of progress and kept alive a feeling of uncertainty and insecurity. Amid it all the priests kept at their work and service. The townsmen ere they died—those of them who were of good report and who looked forward, after they were gone, to the celebration of prayers and masses for the repose of their souls—left grants to the church conditionally on their instructions being carried out. They took care that the preaching friars should not be unmindful of their duty. They specified the number of times the bell was to ring, the number of priests who were to pray, and of choristers who were to sing, and they stipulated that in the event of neglect of duty, the funds bequeathed to the church should go to the poor of the town. Some of these wills were exceptionally tightly drawn, and we may be pardoned if, as a sample of the mingled piety and scrupulousness of our ancestors, we extract from the Obit Book of St. John's the Obit or Foundation of Sir Andrew M'Cormyll, the vicar of Straiton.

"The OBIT, or Foundation, of Sir Andrew M'Cormyll, vicar of Stratone, who died on the 3rd day of the month of April, in the year of our Lord 1587, who gave to God, the psalter and choristers of the burgh of Ayr, and poor, twenty shillings of annual revenue, namely, from his tenement, with pertinents, lying near the Bridge of Ayr, between the Bridge on the one, and tenement of Patrick Ker on the other parts, sixteen shillings; and from his other tenement, with pertinents, lying in the said burgh between the tenement of John Chapell, on the one, and the tenement of the late Michael Masone, on the other parts, four shillings of annual revenue, to be annually levied; which same annual revenue shall be thus distributed, in perpetuity, namely, fourpence to the bellman, who shall go through the streets, with a loud voice, that the poor may come to the obit mass to receive their alms, and to pray for the founder; to which poor at the same time shall be given, in food and drink, and money, eight shillings, from the said sum of twenty shillings, to be distributed at the discretion of the principal priest of the choir, with consent of the Dean of Guild, if present. Whoever cometh to scrutinize the distribution, after this manner, shall have twelve pieces of money for his trouble from the foresaid sum of twenty shillings. If, however, the distributer shall take nothing for his trouble, he shall have a share, with the half which falls to the other priests annually. Likewise sixpence shall be given for the light of the altar. Also twelvepence to the clerk, or sacristan, for three times ringing the great bell at *placebo* and *dirige*, and three times at the obit mass. Otherwise, however, only sixpence. Which same obit, with nine lessons, shall be annually performed in the afternoon of the nativity of St. Andrew, and an obit mass with the other masses foresaid, in all time coming, at the altar of the holy blood. From those absent from the obsequies, and those absent from the whole mass, fourpence to be with-

drawn; to the absentees from both, nothing shall be given. And that six priests, at least, be present at the obsequies after this mode; and because delay brings danger, I wish that threepence be withdrawn from each present and not performing on the day of the obit; which same money, from the absence of the Dean or priests aforesaid, or from the failure of the clerk or sacristan, or non-celebration, shall be divided into two parts, of which one half to be added to the portion of the poor, and the other half to go to the use of the priests present in celebrating; and if it happen that anniversaries of this sort shall not be performed at the proper time, as above, hence it shall be lawful for the Dean of Guild, for the time being, and my nearest friends, to uplift the foresaid annual revenue of twenty shillings, and to lay out thirteen shillings on their poor. The remaining part of this foundation to be kept in the common chapel, for the use of the church, as shall to them seem expedient. Sir Patrick Law, notary to the premises."

While the friars were thus diligent in duty there came rumours to their ears of the birth of a new order of things. To them it was upheaval, not order. They knew that there were in Kyle certain people known as Lollards who were not of their way of thinking, who disregarded the mass, and who had no credence in the efficacy of the supplications of the Virgin; but they had never dreamt in their most fearful visions that the old Catholic faith was to be put upon its trial and virtually to pass away from the scene of their labours. The tidings they heard they at first discredited; but the new creed kept on growing and expanding. It spread from the Lollards to the common people, and even the families of Ayrshire which had from time immemorial clung to the faith of the fathers, became indoctrinated with the new religious leaven. There was an outcry against images and altars and masses. St. John's had four altars, and all the paraphernalia of the Church of Rome; and well

might the Friars fear when they heard the cries of the angry mob for the demolition of their shrines. It was not, however, till 1533 that their long continuity of worship was broken in upon. In that year there came to Ayr an iconoclast, Walter Stewart by name, a brother to the Lord of Ochiltree. He had drank deeply at the waters of the new well, and his spirit was stirred within him as he saw the images of the saints in the Church of Ayr. He could not restrain his fiery zeal, and in active protest he cast down one of the images to the floor. As it fell from its pedestal, the father Abbot might well have exclaimed, "There goes the Catholic Faith in Ayr," for its fall was the forerunner of that which was to follow. But the old faith was as yet supported by the temporal power. Complaint was made of the heretical deed to the Bishop of Glasgow, who had long dealings with the over-zealous reformer. The result of these was that Stewart was persuaded to recant his faith. But his recantation, and his life, were alike brief. On the way home he fell from the horse on which he rode, as he was crossing a stream. The water ran in angry flood, copious from the spring rains; and those who accompanied him could but stand on the banks of the water and see him drown. He clutched hold of a stone; and ere he let go and was swept away, he recanted his recantation; exhorted his friends to take warning by him not to redeem life by renouncing the truth, protested he was there to die in the new faith which he professed, and that, being sorry for his recantation, he was assured of the mercy of God in Christ. Finally, he bade them remember this judgment upon him to their own profit, after which he let go his hold of the stone and was drowned. Had Stewart tried to save his life and not exhausted himself preaching to his friends on the banks of the stream, he might possibly have lived to be of some further use in the world; but without a doubt, when the tidings of his unhappy end reached the friars of

St. John's, they recognized in his fate a just judgment for the heinous offence he had committed against the faith of their mother Church.

His fate, however, had no effect on the new growth. The Reformation was in the air. In 1559 there came to the royal burgh one whom the inmates of the Church of St. John's recognized as a pervert from the Romish faith. John Willock had himself been a friar of Ayr. He knew their ways and their doings; and when the spirit of regeneration caught him up and converted him into an enemy of the doctrines which he had in early life espoused, and which he had promulgated from the altar, there was none more earnest or more energetic than he in the Reformation crusade. Almost within hearing of the tenants of the old church, he proclaimed the new birth and hurled his anathemas against the faith which it still represented, nor did he cease until the strong secular arm laid hold of him and drove him forth from the town, to the bettering of his own personal fortune. Persecution has ever been a poor weapon when confronted with a religious crusade inspired with the first enthusism of its genesis. And so it was in this case. Willock went, but the new faith remained; and as it grew, the friars began to realize that the end of their long tenure was approaching. Under what circumstances they girded up their loins and fled—whether they had time to chant their *Nunc Dimittis* and then sadly yet gracefully retire, shaking off the dust from their feet in protest against the stern men and the stern doctrines of the Reformation, or whether they had to flee before the fury of an angry populace and were glad to escape with their lives—cannot now be said. But they went out into the world, severing for ever the chain which had stretched along through four centuries, and whose sundered links were not again destined to be reunited. In their place came men of a different type. No more were heard the matin and the vesper hymns; no

more were seen the processions of the friars and the choristers; the candles went out on the altar; the altars themselves were displaced; the swinging censers with their odorous incense were cast aside; and in their place rose the oaken pulpit, severe in its plainness, the unadorned services of Calvinism, and the Presbyterian minister. The bell that had tolled for mass rang in the people to hear the Word at the lips of Porterfield. There are few, if any, details to be had of this, the first reformed minister of St. John's. He was no ascetic. A Presbyterian he was, of course, but his ideas of regenerating the masses were not such as to stir the latent sympathies of those who clung to the old faith. After he had finished his sermon in the forenoon of the Sabbath, he was wont to resort to the bow-butts and the archery ground, and the people who formed his congregation had thus an opportunity of avenging themselves upon him, by defeating him in the sport, for the "dreich" or laboured discourse with which he had charged them in the earlier hours of the day.

But occasionally the quiet begotten of the ministrations, and the hilarity incidental to the sporting proclivities of Porterfield, were broken in upon, and the congregation of St. John's were not always permitted to dwell at ease in Zion. From the east country there came the greatest of all the Scottish Reformers, the most unbending champion whom the faith evolved, and across the intervening space which lay between the church and the town trooped the burghers to hear his denunciation of Popery and all its belongings. There was a quickening and a stimulating of the spiritual life while John Knox was in the pulpit, and if the ghosts of the long dead friars haunted the sacred edifice they must have made haste to quit it for ever when they heard their faith derided and their beliefs contemned. Knox passed on, and so did the years, until Porterfield was grown old; and the man who came to act with him in the ministry of St.

John's, and who, of all its pastors, was destined to be most closely connected with the early Reformation work in Ayr, arrived to take up his functions. That was John Welsh. It was not that his years in the town were many. He came in 1602, and he was driven from it in 1605; and the following year he left Scotland, never again to see it. His memory is blessed rather for the good he did, his earnest ministry, his practical Christianity, his services to humanity while the plague raged in Ayr, and his wonderful prescience in tracing out results from their initiatory causes.

After Welsh came George Dunbar, and Robert Blair, and John Fergushill, and these carried on the succession, with various interruptions, till the bishops drove them out, and Prelacy became the order of the day. St. John's was restored to something like its former ritualistic glory. Again was heard the voice of the choristers; again the Prayer Book and the Litany, though of another Church than the Roman Catholic, were reinstated. Where Knox had thundered and Welsh wrestled, comparative calm succeeded. But the calm was only on the surface. Underneath, the waters of Presbytery ran strong as ever; and though the burghers came to the church as before, their hearts were with the "outed" men hiding in the Ayrshire uplands. The time was one of unrest. To-day the one party were in the ascendant, to-morrow the other boasted of their triumphs. The spirit of the tower of St. John's, if he still remained in his sanctuary, must have been a veritable Vicar of Bray if he succeeded in harmonizing with the recurrent changes. These went on intermittently until 1638, the year of the second Reformation, when Episcopacy in Scotland was dethroned, and when the parish church of Ayr fell for the last time into the hands of the Reformers.

But it was not destined to remain a church for ever; for after the battle of Dunbar, when the king's forces were swept away before the ironsides of the Commonwealth,

Oliver Cromwell came into the westland, and turned St. John's into a shelter for his forces. Then around the castle, and enclosing the graveyard, where lay many generations of the dead, he built a powerful wall, a great part of which remains to this day. The old sanctuary thus became the centre of the Fort of Ayr; and even in the course of time it came to be erroneously designated the Fort Castle. As a solatium to the wounded feelings of the burghers, Cromwell gave them a thousand merks Scots with which to erect another church; and this they did on the Friars' yards by the banks of the river.

Here endeth the history of St. John's. Since the heavy-handed Protector left it, it has stood a solitary monument to the times that have passed away. The burgesses utilized the summit of the tower for many years in order to descry the incoming or the outgoing of their ships, but with the march of events they ceased to avail themselves of its advantages. The church disappeared, the graveyard went to decay, the Friars' Well was filled up, and all that remains to-day to tell of the long-buried past is the square, heavy-walled edifice.

Still stands the tower, four-square to the winds that blow, under the bending heavens. The sun has shone on it these seven centuries, and the moon cast its dark shadows upon the ground beneath. It has been beaten upon by many an equinoctial gale; and many a snowstorm has swirled round its sharp corners. If it could only speak, what a tale it could tell of the byegone! Nothing within its ken to-day—no handiwork of man—was visible when first it was upreared: only the everlasting hills, the boundless main, the undulating landscape, and the blue sky overhead.

HOW THE LAIRD OF CHANGUE THRASHED THE DEIL.

THE Laird of Changue is one of the notables of the Barr hills; and if it be true, as deponeth the ballad, that he made compact with the deil, and then thrashed the deil when he came to demand that the compact should be finally sealed, his great achievement deserves to be recorded in the annals of history. When the Laird lived it would not be very easy to say. It must have been long ago. But that he did live, we have on the authentic story of the Poet Laureate of the hills of southern Carrick.

Barr is the most mountainous parish of the shire. The greater part of its surface consists of hills; and what is not hilly is, in the main, the valleys caused by the sudden and precipitous descent of the crags on the level haughs of the Stinchar, the Cree, and the Water of Minnoch. The highest of the mountain tops is that of Shalloch on Minnoch, which towers to an altitude of 2,520 feet; next comes Polmaddie, and after it Shalloch, and Haggis, and Rowantree, and Eldrick, and Blackhill, and half a dozen more, all rising to the south of the Stinchar; while dominating the river on the north are Whiterow, Scaurs, Lennie, the Tappins, Jedburgh, Auchensoul, with a few companions, all rather bald and bare, but presenting in combination and in grouping, scenes of rugged Highland beauty which have no

counterpart elsewhere in all Ayrshire. Across the border into Galloway the hills stretch on and away, bigger, more massive, and not less rugged, until they culminate in Kirriereoch and Minnigaff, the latter of which pierces the blue at an elevation of 2,764 feet above the level of the sea.

You cannot travel at all in Barr without feeling that you are far removed from the haunts of men. There is a cloud-land and a muirland air about it. The wind whistles cold and shrill through its glens. In winter the rivers come down full to the brim, roaring in their rocky beds and spreading afar on the low-lying plains adjacent. The patient shepherd with his dogs, trailing along the hill-sides; the black faces feeding on the scanty verdure; the rocks scattered hither and thither by the forces of nature; the lonely farm houses by the steep waysides; the little village lying deep down in seclusion, shut out from the busy world; the belts of trees which here and there oppose themselves to the wandering winds; the sharp curved paths, all tell the same story.

Rugged as are the mountains, and long as are the miles, the natives of Barr are proud of their parish and of its associations. They recall many a story, many a reminiscence of the good old days when the Fair of Kirkdamdie was held, and when all the country-side from far and near gathered in to barter and to sport, and to fight with all the ardour of the boys of Donnybrook; and they tell tales of the smuggling days when the illicit stills sent their quiet smoke up into the clouds, and when, revenue officers to the contrary, large quantities of peat-scented whisky—the wine of the country—were smuggled out of the neighbourhood into the lower lying and more populous parts of Galloway. In some respects the glory has departed. Kirkdamdie is only a memory now, though it was a noted fair in its day; and the last of the smugglers has given up the contest with the officers of the excise.

The Laird of Changue was a noted smuggler, and as bold and desperate as he was notorious. He cared for neither man nor devil. Amid the quiet of the hills he distilled his liquor, and then he set forth by the hidden paths and the most unfrequented routes to dispose of it. He was a good customer at his own still, and wherever he went he was hail-fellow-well-met with those with whom he trafficked. At Kirkdamdie Fair he was not less known than feared. His courage was high, and his physical strength was in proportion to his courage; and when he laid about him with his cudgel or drew his long sword, there were very few of the roystering lads who centred at Barr while the fun was at its height, who cared to oppose themselves to him. When he lived the glory of the fair was in the zenith. It was the one market in the parish for the year, and worthy were the preparations made to receive the travelling merchants who came, on foot and on horseback, across the hills, to dispose of their wares. There were from thirty to forty tents or booths erected. On the evening preceding the fair the country folks gathered in from all quarters, full of fun in prospective, and with pockets well-lined with money. There was abundant store of liquor; there were spae wives and fortune tellers; there were ballad singers and wandering ministrels; farmers and their wives, farm servants, male and female—all gathered on the one spot, full of the common intent. The fair proper began at early morn. The earlier hours of the day were given up to legitimate trading, to the sale of sheep, to the buying, selling and bartering of wool, and to the laying in of stores for the winter months. This concluded, the pipers and the fiddlers tuned their instruments; the lads and lasses footed it unwearily on the sward; the booths resounded with song and clatter. By-and-bye the pugilistic tendencies awoke, as they were intended and expected to awake, and free fights were the order of the day and of the night. The scene

became riotous. Many a stiff "clout" was given and returned; there was many a broken head; pitched battles were a characteristic of the fair; and it was not until the long twilight had died out on the hill tops and left the mountain giants' black reflected against the deep sombre blue of night, that the revellers retired from the scene of their mirth. The Laird of Changue had no compeers, and his prowess in the encounters was something to remember and to talk about.

The Laird had capacity enough to make money; he had a double capacity to spend it; and consequently, whatever riches he secured took wings and flew away, even as the eagle sped over the hills of Barr. He was alternately wealthy and poor, beyond the reach of care and in the direst financial difficulties. Now, it is a well known fact that, in these olden days, there was one special way of making money. All else might fail, but the special way never could and never did fail. There were few who cared to risk the compact which it involved; and there were almost none who failed to regret to their dying day, and long after it, that they had entered into the unholy alliance which it was necessary to make, in order to obtain a constant supply of wealth and worldly gear. For the compact was with the deil himself. On the one hand, the purchase price which he exacted was the immortal soul; on the other, he gave in return wealth galore.

On one occasion when the Laird was in deepest difficulties and knew not what to do, Satan put in an appearance. The Laird was in no wise daunted, for he feared neither man nor devil. He was anxious to be rid of financial depression and he cared not a boddle at what price he purchased relief from his cares. The appearance of the devil would have affrighted most men; not so the Laird. He struck the desired bargain without a qualm; or if perchance his conscience rose in momentary revolt against

the deed he was about to do, he forced it to slumber. The deil was lavish in his promises. The Laird was to have money; the work of his hands was to prosper; whatever he touched was to turn out remunerative. In return, the deil was to have his soul—that was all. If all stories are true concerning the Laird of Changue, it is clear that the deil did not evince much wisdom in the compact. Had he only let Changue alone, he might have had him without any bargain. But perhaps he wished to make assurance doubly sure; and hence his anxiety to gain so redoubtable a spirit as that of the doughty smuggler.

The bargain struck, the devil went his way, and a new chapter opened out in the history of the Laird. The world frowned no more on him. In his smuggling expeditions he was invariably successful. The excisemen hunted for him and after him in vain. He eluded their prying eyes; and look and gaze and stare as they might, they never detected the curling smoke of his still rising into the clear, cold air of the hills. He spent money, but he made it faster than he spent it. Nobody ever took him in, and none of his speculations went awry. He added house to house and field to field. The impecunious man disappeared, and in his place was the wealthy, well-favoured Laird, with his barns full, and no evil or ill-luck befalling him. If he ever thought of the fulfilling of the compact it did not vex him, for his heart remained stout and his arm strong, and he felt in his inmost soul that the deil would have all his work cut out for him ere he carried him off to his infernal den. And as the years rolled on, the memories of the meeting with the Father of Evil became fainter and fainter. Because the deil never came, Changue reasoned with himself that he never would come; and he went on his way rejoicing, drinking and trading and smuggling and making money, all careless of what the future had in store for him.

But the deil was neither asleep nor forgetful; he was

only biding his time. And when he thought he had given the Laird a sufficiently long spell of life and of wealth, he resolved to take him home with him. Little reckoned he the character of the man with whom he had to cope. After the most approved fashion, however, he appeared on a lone spot to the Laird of Changue and told him that his time had come. The Laird stoutly replied that, time or no time, he meant to abide where he was, and he roundly condemned the deil to his own hot domains. This was more than the deil could stand; so he informed the Laird that if he would not come willingly, he must take him by force. "By force then be it," was what Changue in substance replied. After the style of the foul fiend in the Pilgrim's Progress, the adversary of mankind approached the smuggler, who drew on him at once with his keen bladed sword, and dared him to mortal combat. Before beginning the fray, however, he drew a circle round about the spot whereon they stood, with the point of his sword; and then, without appeal to either saint or scripture, he set about to work out his own salvation. The deil's tactics were uncommonly like those of a man. When he saw that he could not carry the Laird off without a severe tussle, he tried various means to drive him out of the ring in which they stood. Satan comprehended quite well what that ring was for. If he could put Changue without its magic circle then was the victory his, and away to the deepest depths of Gehenna he would carry the Laird; if, on the other hand, he failed in his purpose, or if he was driven outside the circle himself, then must he betake himself to his own dark domains without his prey. There was every inducement to the Laird to make a life and death struggle. It was nothing short of that for him, for victory to the deil meant death eternal as well as temporal to the Laird of Changue.

First of all Satan tried with all his might and main to kick the Laird out of the circle. But he kicked neither

wisely nor well, for the Laird struck at his cloven hoof such a blow that he enlarged the natural slit by several inches. This made him the more savage and he resorted to his second line of attack; he brought his tail into play. In the tip of the tail was a deadly sting; and if he could but insert that in the body of the Laird, the death of the latter was certain. Changue knew this, and as the tail with its envenomed point swung round, he let drive at it with his sword, and so deftly he smote it that down to the ground fell the sting, fatal no longer. This nerved the Laird to greater courage, and verily he required it; for Satan, the more angry grown, turned upon him the horrid horns which grew out of his head. With these he expected to gore him to death; but a third time he failed of his purpose. Changue's sword, grown into his hand and moving like lightning, fell on the horns, and both these formidable weapons dropped to the earth. Things were getting desperate with the inexorable Prince of Darkness; but as one part of his infernal armoury was rendered useless after another, he developed more terrible weapons. Give way he would not; and neither would the Laird.

There was a breathing space for a moment. The deil eyed Changue, and Changue in return eyed the deil. Both were panting heavily, but both had plenty of reserve force left, and the will to use it as well. The brief respite closed, Satan again pressed home. It would have terrified any ordinary mortal to have seen how he spread out his two expansive wings, which sprung from his shoulders, and how, as he rose from the ground so as to crush his opponent, the fire flew from his mouth; and though Changue was no ordinary mortal, it must be confessed the gruesome aspect of the foe well-nigh set him a-quaking. But he recovered his courage in an instant and nerved himself for the onslaught. Satan made at him, and he at Satan, and at it they went. The good brand again proved true. With one

powerful sweep it descended on the very joints of the wings, where they were fastened on to the deil's shoulders. Down to the earth fell the Adversary. Satan roared with pain; but jumping up again he sprang at the Laird with all the cataract force still left him, in one final attempt to hurl the hero from the circle. This was his last effort, and it was a futile one, for Changue, collecting all his energies, and cheered by the prospect of the coming victory, hit him on the mouth with the sharp steel so deadly a blow that he sent him spinning, howling with rage and pain, to the outside of the sword-drawn circle. The deil had had enough of it and he fled the scene, leaving the Laird of Changue master of the situation.

How it fared with the Laird afterwards tradition doth not depone; but it may be taken for granted that the deil troubled him no more.

KING ROBERT THE BRUCE—HIS UPS AND DOWNS IN AYRSHIRE.

ADAM DE KILCONCHAR, the Earl of Carrick, died, and the Countess, his widow, reigned in his stead. She was still in the bloom of her youth and beauty. A ward of the king, she was in some respects a waiter on his providence; but while she waited, she did not sit down and mourn the sad fate of the widowhood which had befallen her. She loved the chase, and, with her squires and her damsels about her,

she was wont to pursue, with native ardour, the red deer in his haunts. As thus one day she was engaged, she encountered a stranger who chanced to be passing through the district. Lordly of mien and noble of aspect, his appearance begat admiration in the breast of the fair lady, and she sent to inquire his name. He was the young Lord of Annandale and Cleveland. His birth and status being unexceptionable, the Countess invited him to her castle. He respectfully declined, knowing how dangerous it was to interfere, even in semblance, with a ward of the sovereign. But the lady was not to be cheated out of his friendship by his regard of the proprieties, and riding up to him, she seized hold of the bridle of his horse and led him away, a not unwilling captive to her home at Turnberry. Here, in that strong fortress by the sea, she entertained him hospitably for fifteen days.

What man could resist such attention? Not the Lord of Annandale. At the end of that period he sought her hand, or she his, and without as much as saying "by your leave" to the king, they were united in the holy bonds of wedlock. The sovereign was furious when he heard what had been done. He seized the Castle and the far-stretching lands behind it and on either hand; and it was not without the intercession of powerful friends, or without a heavy pecuniary consideration, that he received the young couple back into the royal favour. In right of his wife the young nobleman became Earl of Carrick, and took up his residence in Turnberry. Here, it is believed by many—though Lochmaben lays claim to the same distinction—the first son of the union was born—Robert Bruce, the hero of the Scottish independence, which was consummated on the field of Bannockburn. In his earlier days, Bruce resided frequently and for long periods on the Ayrshire coast. The same scenes which his youthful eyes beheld lie stretched out to-day as when he left them. The castle has mouldered

away into ruins, blown upon and beat upon by the storms and by the rains of the long centuries. The rigour of the Scottish climate and the hand of time have, between them, robbed Turnberry of its architectural glories and its boasted strength; but the sea rolls in front of it unchangeable and unchanged, the peaks of Arran rise up in the distance as clear or as storm-covered, Ailsa Craig heaves its massive head as grimly, the sea birds scream and dive and soar as restlessly, and the rocks and sands of the undulating coast melt away in the distance as picturesquely as they did when the boy of many hopes, with his chequered yet glorious career all before him, played with his brothers on the drawbridge bespanning the moat or waded in the pools left by the receding tides.

Robert the Bruce was crowned King of Scotland at Scone in 1306. A short time thereafter his little army was broken and routed, and he himself was a fugitive. His friends were treated with the rigour of a rigorous monarch. Some were driven from the country, some sought seclusion in flight; their lands were forfeited, their homes confiscated. Turnberry was in the hands of the English soldiery, and its lord was in hiding in the wilds of Rathlin. Here he matured his plans. Two trusty followers of his—Sir James Douglas and Sir Robert Boyd—in pursuance of designs for the reconquest of Scotland, descended with a body of soldiers on the Island of Arran and captured the Castle of Brodick; and thither, in the early spring of 1307, went Bruce himself with three hundred men, furnished chiefly by Christina of the Isles. The King was about to resume his connection with his early home and the country which he had roamed in his boyhood.

Bruce sent a messenger across the Firth of Clyde to ascertain what the English were doing and what the hopes of a successful rising among those whom he knew

to be true to him, and the people of the western shires generally. If fortune and hope still lowered, the courier was to return; if, on the contrary, his subjects were but waiting on the advent of their King to lead them anew to the battle, the messenger was to light a fire on the coast, and, in response to the signal, the King was to embark and join his friends on the mainland. The courier, robed as a wandering minstrel, went hither and thither over the west-land. Everywhere he found, co-mingled, oppression and depression. The country was in the hands of the foe, and there seemed no hope of breaking the iron ring by which the land was fettered. Sympathizers there were plenty, and tried friends who were willing once more to follow the fortunes of their liege-lord; but even they despaired of success and would have bidden the Bruce wait.

Providence works by means which do not commend themselves often to mankind; and it was chance, if there is such a thing at all in the working out of the destinies of the world, that decided what the King was to do. From Arran's shores he watched long, and longingly, for the smoke of the beacon by day, and for its glare on the southern sky by night. He wearied of inaction, but prudent as he was brave, he delayed his embarkation until he should see the kindling of the fire. Watching as was his wont, he espied, one day about noon, a faint wreath of smoke curl up into the heavens. It expanded, it grew denser, it broadened out, so that there could be no mistake about it. Bruce was a man of faith, and he saw in the column of smoke the signal for him to sail; so with three hundred men he set forth for the conquest of Scotland. What a poor little fleet it was! But it carried with it as true a band of patriot warriors as ever embarked in the cause of freedom. Night came down on them ere they reached the shores of Carrick, but against the dark background of the murky sky gleamed and shone the glare of the beacon. By its light they steered;

and the small craft keeping in close company, they landed at a spot not far from the Castle of Turnberry. The messenger whom Bruce had sent to glean tidings of the condition of the country met his master on the beach, and hasted to tell him that there was no hope. Why, then, asked Bruce, did you light the bonfire? The courier-minstrel told him that he had lighted no bonfire, and that he knew not who had. In a superstitious age it was not difficult for the knight-errants to credit the assumption that the blaze was mysterious, and the result of agency extraneous to man. In all probability it was nothing more than a prosaic whin-burning; but this was too matter-of-fact an explanation to suit the high-souled, spirit-inspired warriors. They took the signal as an invitation to go on to their work, and to their work they went.

Before Bruce was the Castle of Turnberry. It stood up against the night, and he knew every tower and angle and point about it. He knew how strong it was, and how strongly held, and that without the regular munitions of war it could not be reduced. Time for siege there was none. Its gates were shut, and behind them slumbered the fiery Percy and a chosen body of his followers, but by far the greater part of the garrison slept outside its walls, in adjacent houses and hamlets, on the rock on which the castle stood, and on the plains receding from the shore. Upon these Bruce directed his first vengeance. In the dead of the night he led his three hundred men to the assault. The silence, hardly broken by the rolling waves, gave way to the shouts of the assailants and the cries of the attacked. No quarter was expected, none was given; and ere the sun lighted up the morning the English soldiery, save those within the castle itself, had been slain. Percy heard the shouts and the cries, and he knew what they meant. He was uncertain, however, of the strength of the Scots, and,

instead of lowering the drawbridge and trusting to the aid of his men, he remained where he was behind the heavy-mantled walls and within the moat of Turnberry.

For a few days Bruce remained on the spot in the expectation that the country would flock to his standard. Instead of doing so, however, the country held aloof. The memories of the English severity were too fresh in recollection not to beget reciprocal fears for the future. Only forty men joined the attenuated ranks of the monarch's force, and these were furnished by a lady friend of his own, whose name unfortunately has not been handed down. There were Southern troops at Ayr and elsewhere at no very great distance, and hearing that reprisal was intended, and fearing to be caught in an ambuscade, Bruce left the coast and marched across the country as far as the hills above the village of Dailly. Here he encamped. Carrick side lay largely beneath his eye. He could sweep from one eminence or another all the paths and the passes; and, in the event of the advance of the enemy in greater force than he could hope to cope with, he was in a position to make good his retreat to stronger fastnesses and wilds even more sequestered. His brother Edward was in command of a portion of his force stationed in Galloway, and he, too, was encamped amid the strengths of the hills and the passes. Bruce knew that the English would not leave him long unmolested, and he was ever on the watch.

Sir Ingram Bell, with a strong following, was despatched from the Lothians by Amyer de Valence to bring about his downfall. This warrior knew better than to assail the king in open fight, so he resorted to less honourable tactics. By bribery he obtained the connivance of a treacherous relative of the Bruce, who undertook, with his two sons, to rid the country of its monarch. It was the custom of the king to retire to a thicket daily, where he spent some time in cogitation and in anxious consideration of his future. This was known to the traitor, whose aims fortunately were equally

well known to Bruce. When, therefore, with no friend near him save his page, and with no arms save a small sword, which he wore by his side, he saw the would-be assassins approaching, he ordered them to stand off. The father protested that, being a relative of Bruce, he had a right to be near his person, and, despite the warning, came on, followed closely by his sons, all three heavily armed. The page boy carried a bow. This the king took from him, and, drawing the string to its utmost stretch, he despatched the arrow so true and so straight that it struck the father right in the eye, penetrating to his brain and causing instant death. The sons made haste to avenge their father's downfall. Bearing hatchet and spear, they rushed to the encounter. Bruce never turned his back on such trifling odds as two to one. He met them dareful, and with his small sword despatched them one after another. When word of the feat reached the English, they were amazed at the intrepidity of the Bruce, as well they might.

Desertion set in, and the little army of the hero was reduced to not more than sixty men. This the Gallovidians heard, and, being then at enmity with the king, they raised a band of two hundred men, and despatched them with the intention of accomplishing the utter annihilation of the small band of patriots. Bruce was told of the fate intended for him, and, retreating from his elevated position on the hills above Dailly, he found a shelter in a morass not far distant. Then he commanded his followers to secrete themselves, and, attended by two sergeants, he went to reconnoitre. He paused a while to listen, and, hearing nothing to excite his suspicion, he made careful examination of the ground, and discovered, to his delight, that the point at which he had conducted his followers into the morass was the only spot by which the morass itself could be reached. It was a narrow pathway, and could not be forced in strength by any advancing force. As he stood surveying the

situation his quick ear detected, from far away, coming up on the night wind, the baying of a sleuth-hound. He knew the "questioning," and reason told him that the dog was being employed to track him down in his position of solitude. The sound came nearer and nearer until there was no ground of doubt left. Bruce had been unwilling to disturb his men as they slumbered, but now that danger threatened, he despatched the two sergeants to call his followers to the fray. They made haste to obey his command, and left him standing alone by the passage leading into the morass. The moon was shining, and as it lit up the scene the king distinctly descried the dark moving mass of men opposite, the blood-hound in leash leading them straight to the spot where he stood. The odds were tremendous, but Bruce resolved to face them and to keep the passage alone until succour should come. The spot on which he stood could only be reached by wading through a stream which ran close to the swamp, and ere the foe could come to close quarters with him they had to wade the burn, which not more than two could do abreast, and then ascend the bank which kept the running water in its channel. The Gallovidians shot their arrows at the mail-clad warrior, who stood immovable with his long sword in his hand, but he only drew down his visor, and waited.

The encounter which followed reads like a romance. On came the men of Galloway, striving who should be foremost to reach that solitary man. He who first jumped into the ford went down before the fell swoop of the long blade. Another followed, a horseman, and he fared no better. Round swung the sword, and the rider fell in his blood from the saddle. The horse stumbled in the rivulet and lay still, but Bruce, determined that the foe should not even have the advantage of such a stepping-stone, pricked it with the point of his sword, and it sprang to its feet, only to drop dead a few paces off. But the distance was quite sufficient.

The water again ran clear, and the bank was still an obstacle that could not be negotiated, save by favour of the Bruce. On again came the Gallovidians, but as they came they were met by the same keen blade and the same strong arm that had overcome their fellows. One by one, five of their number went down to rise no more; and still the passage was kept. The enemy drew back for a moment, but those in the rear pressed on and compelled the men in front to make the fatal attempt. Disaster waited on all who jumped into the stream. The sword blade was as keen, the nerve of the warrior as true, the arm as tireless as ever, and man after man went down in the water. Fourteen times, according to Barbour, was the blade fleshed that night ere, hurrying up to their leader's aid, came the followers of Bruce from the morass. Hearing them approach, the Gallovidians made haste to flee; and when the men who shared his perils came upon the scene it was to find their heroic leader seated upon the ground, sword in hand, and beneath him the stream dammed with the bodies of those whom he had slain.

Bruce got him great renown as the first fruits of his single-handed triumph, and with the renown came an acceleration of strength. The men of the western shires flocked to his standard, and he was soon at the head of a very considerable force. It was not such, however, as to enable him to compete with the English troops. They held the towns and the castles; they had command of the sources of supply; and the Scottish nobles and gentlemen who would gladly have espoused the cause of their own gallant sovereign were held in check by fear of what the future might have in store for them. Bruce only retained the services of four hundred followers, including those who followed in the train of James of Douglas, and with these he crossed the country to the more remote regions of the mountainous district of Cumnock parish. Here again he was pursued. Amyer de Valence

was marching to meet him, and eight hundred soldiers at his back. In conjunction with the Southern leader was John of Lorn and a party of Highlanders. John of Lorn had in his possession a blood-hound which had once been the property of the Bruce. It had changed ownership, but not its affection, and the Highland cateran was able to assure Amyer de Valence that if once it were put on the track of its old master nothing would prevent it from running down the prey. This was good news for de Valence, and he availed himself of the services of the Highland cateran and the dog. He instructed John of Lorn to seek the western side of the hills whereon the monarch was encamped, while he himself, with his English soldiers, was to advance straight from the eastward. Bruce, he surmised, would not accept the offer of battle; if he did, the English force was vastly superior in numbers and in military skill and discipline, and he reckoned confidently on victory. In the event of the Scots retreating, there was John of Lorn, the Highlanders, and the sleuth-hound, to depend on.

The Southern force advanced from the east in the light of day. Bruce saw them coming across the plain, cavalry and infantry, all in panoply of war; and he resolved to offer them battle. But finding that John of Lorn and his Highlanders were in his rear and that his little band was likely to be cut to pieces, he divided his men into three divisions and instructed them how to escape. At the head of little more than a hundred followers he himself retired towards the hills forming the high tableland which separates Ayrshire from Galloway. The blood-hound was put upon their track and with unerring instinct, picked up the trail of his old master and went after him, followed by the Highlanders. There was danger in the baying of that dog and in the tenacity with which it tracked the royal fugitives across the hills and the heathery moorland. Bruce knew there was. He divided anew his immediate followers into

three divisions and kept up the flight. The dog came to the spot where the trails parted, but not for a moment was he at fault; on the contrary, the scent getting fresher he strained the harder on the leash. Bruce saw that the Highlanders were gaining on him. He was heavily armed, and his speed was not equal to that of the pursuing mountaineers. The bark of the tireless sleuth-hound rang out sharper and clearer. For once the heart of the monarch seemed for a moment to fail him, and, spent with fleeing, he was almost ready to sit down on the heath and give up the unequal flight. His men urged him on and he continued to strain every nerve to escape.

By this time he had been hasting across a broken country for hours, and had reached the vicinity of Loch Doon. He was amid a scene of mountainous grandeur, surrounded on all sides by steep rugged hills heaving their giant masses far above him, and reflecting, in the seeming eternity of steadfast immobility, a strange contrast to the changing lot of the country on whose bosom their foundations were deep-implanted. Down from the glens and from the mountain sides poured the rills to feed the loch of Doon. As Bruce was crossing one of these it flashed upon his mind that the running water might be instrumental in throwing his pursuers off the scent. He jumped into the stream and, wading for a distance in its bed, took once again to the solid ground, and continued his flight. The dog came to the water; he ran hither and thither about its banks; he snuffed around, but the scent was gone. For the first time he was at fault. The Highlanders took him up the stream and down again a considerable distance in each direction, but Bruce had counted on this and had not left its bed until he had accomplished the object he had in view. By this time all his followers had left him save his foster-brother, each going off at a different point and in a different direction in the hope of taking the persistent bloodhound

astray. His immediate pursuers had dwindled away to five. Seeing this, Bruce did not hesitate to reveal himself; and finding their adversary calmly awaiting their approach the Highlanders made the more haste to effect his capture. His foster-brother stood by his side. On came the pursuers sword in hand and, without waiting for a breathing space, began the attack. Three of them set upon Bruce and two upon his foster-brother. The blade which had done such good service not long before at the ford of the streamlet in Carrick, did not fail him. At the first blow Bruce laid one of his assailants dead at his feet. The other two drew back for a moment, and the king taking advantage of this momentary respite, sprang to the aid of his foster-brother and speedily relieved him of one of his assailants. Turning again to face his own opponents, who were not lacking in courage, he laid about him with such effect that in a few moments both were despatched. His foster-brother had done as much by his antagonist. But the victory was hardly declared when John of Lorn came in sight at the head of his Highlanders, and the fugitives had again to resume the attempt at escape. The ruse which had proved effectual before, was again equally successful in throwing the dog off the scent, and the Highlanders, when they had gazed in amaze at the five dead bodies of their comrades, had no heart to continue the search. Bruce was in the shelter of a deep forest, and there he hid with his foster-brother until immediate danger had passed. After a brief rest he resumed his flight. Danger was ever-attendant on him. From one adventure he passed to another; and thus it came about that ere he was well clear of the wood he encountered a new trouble.

This presented itself in the guise of three men armed with swords and axes, who joined themselves to the company of the fugitives. Bruce had good reason to be suspicious of all men whom he knew not, and he asked of them

whither they were going. One of them replied deceitfully that they were in search of the king in order that they might join his arms and fight under his standard. If that were so, he told them, they were to go with him and he would soon show them him whom they sought. Something in the words and in the noble bearing of the Bruce, indicated to the strangers in whose company they were; and their self-conscious looks of guiltiness convinced the king that they meditated treason. He was quick to act. He ordered them to proceed in front of him. This they at first refused to do, but the orders were so imperative that they had no alternative save to obey. When night fell they reached a ruined farm-house and here they resolved to rest. The strangers, who professed themselves hurt at the suspicion which Bruce manifested towards them, insisted on his joining them at supper. This he agreed to do. A fire was lit, meat—which was obtained on the moor—was cooked, and the whole party ate in harmony until the cravings of the inner man were satisfied. Then they laid themselves down on the floor to sleep.

Bruce, who retained his suspicions, bade his foster-brother remain awake and keep an eye on their associates; but fearful lest unwilling sleep should seal the eyes of his friend, he himself lay awake watching the others without their being able to watch him. His deep breathing and regular respirations were not long in convincing the strangers that the king slumbered. Of his foster-brother there could be no doubt; he was unquestionably asleep. As Bruce watched he perceived the associates whispering together, and he saw them get their weapons ready and prepare to spring on himself and his companion. Starting to his feet, he gave his foster-brother a push so as to arouse him to a sense of his danger, but so overcome was he with sleep that he did not realize, ere it was too late for him, the imminence of the danger. The conspirators rushed forward simultaneously,

and as the king's foster-brother was rising, one of them drove his stout spear into his body and wounded him so sore that in a few minutes he succumbed. Meanwhile Bruce had drawn that terrible sword of his. With his back to the wall he had no fear of any ordinary three men. He dealt his blows in stunning succession; and in a few minutes he himself was the only living occupant of the room.

The death of his foster-brother affected him deeply, but he had no other alternative to leaving him where he lay. Not many miles stretched between him and his open foes; and the experience he had just undergone convinced him that treachery might still exist in a district which he had a right to expect would have been true to one of its own sons. So by the light of the moon he resumed his weary way across the country, nor halted until he reached the banks of the Cree, near Newton-Stewart, where he met with James of Douglas, Edward Bruce, and about one hundred and fifty men. He had travelled upwards of forty miles, through a hilly, and difficult country to traverse. He had climbed height after height, shoulder after shoulder; he had waded deep in the swamps and the moss-hags; he had pursued his way along the uneven bed of a rivulet; he had fought two desperate battles, almost single-handed, against serious odds; he had left the advance guard of John of Lorn, in their long sleep on the heath, and the assassins in the ruined farm-house; he had done a day's work that might well have wearied him out—yet no sooner had he met his friends on the banks of the Cree than he led an attack upon a company of English soldiers near Newton-Stewart, slaying the greater part of them and putting the remainder to flight.

He did not remain long out of Ayrshire. Within a few days he returned to Carrick, whose long stretches of woodland, and whose hills and riversides afforded ample protection to one who knew them so well as he. It was not for

nothing that in his earlier years he had hunted by the Stinchar and the Girvan, and pursued the red deer up the glens and the steeps of the bailiary; and now that he was encountering desperate odds, and had set his life and his kingdom upon the enterprise in which he had embarked, he came back to the countryside which knew him best, and to the scenes with which he was most familiar. Still, personal danger was ever attendant on him. He had not long returned ere he had to pit himself against three foemen. But he was not quite alone. He had gone out to hunt, and with him were two powerful dogs. Separated from his followers, he was crossing the country, when three men were seen rapidly approaching him, fully armed, and bending their bows. He could not afford to despise the flight of their shafts, for he had not his armour. He resorted to other tactics. Bidding them halt, he taunted them with cowardice. He was alone, he said, with no weapon save his sword, while they were three in number, and fully armed. Would they then fear an encounter, with such powerful odds on their side? They would not, they replied; and dropping their bows, they drew their swords and came on. Bruce smote the foremost to the ground ere he could raise guard to defend himself. One of his faithful hunting companions, seeing him assailed, sprang upon another, and seized him by the throat; and while he was thus held in the fangs of the dog the monarch slew him. The third, taking warning by the fate of his companions, made off, but the dogs speedily followed, and pulled him down as he sought the recesses of a wood. Following up, Bruce killed the third as he had done the others; and then, winding his horn, he called his followers about him, and hunted no more that day.

All Ayrshire rang with the exploits of the fugitive Sovereign; and, as the natural result, the force which he commanded grew rapidly in strength. Carrick was the first district to respond to his appeal; Kyle followed, and then

Cuninghame. His success galled the English Sovereign, and Sir Philip de Mowbray was despatched to Kyle with a thousand men to quell the insurrection. Bruce heard he was coming, and, with the intention of arresting his progress, he despatched Sir James Douglas to meet him by the way. This Sir James effectually did. He lay in ambush in a narrow pass distant a few miles from Kilmarnock—the exact spot is unknown—and when the English were crossing a ford, the Scots descended on them like an avalanche, putting the invaders to flight, and forcing De Mowbray himself to make good his escape. The English army was completely broken up; and the remnant made their way back to Bothwell to spread the fame of the growing power and influence of the Scottish Sovereign.

If the Scottish struggle for independence was not to attain formidable dimensions it must be crushed at all hazards, and this the Earl of Pembroke determined to accomplish. With a chivalry worthy of the best days of heroic warfare, he sent Bruce a messenger conveying a challenge to meet him in fair fight on the plains. Bruce had only six hundred men, yet he did not hesitate for a moment to take up the guage of battle. He fixed the date for the 10th of May, and the scene of conflict in the vicinity of Loudoun Hill. Like a wary general, he went in person to the chosen spot, and made a careful survey of the ground. He had only six hundred men, and these he had to oppose to three thousand choice troops. The problem that presented itself to him was how to minimise the force of the English attack by making it impossible for the enemy to launch his whole available force against him at one time. The highway ran through a morass, in which Bruce elected to take up his position. He had several walls erected, running at sharp angles to the road, yet so wide apart that five hundred cavalry could advance between them all abreast; and at the head of two of these walls he awaited the attack. The southern troops

came all gay in the full panoply of war, their standards flying, their drums beating, and the clear blast of their trumpets sounding out defiance. The small array of the Scots excited no feeling save that of derision in the breasts of the English, though their apparent fighting strength was considerably magnified by the presence of a large body of camp followers.

When the morning of the 10th of May broke, the English were speedily under arms. The sun shone on their accoutrements, and they presented a formidable appearance to the Scots quietly waiting the attack in the swamp. They were marshalled in two divisions. Bruce addressed his followers. The foe that was advancing, he said, intended to reduce them to slavery, or to slay them. It was their duty, therefore, to meet them hardily. Though the English were more numerous, they could not attack them in full force, owing to the nature of the improvised passages through which they had to advance, and inasmuch as they could not do more than oppose man to man, the issue rested upon the heroic exertions of those who should display their prowess. His words were received with loud shouts and an expression of determination to stand by duty and by the cause of Scotland "Then go we forth," responded the King, "where He that made of nothing all things lead us, and save us, and help us to our right." While the Scottish leader was thus exhorting his men, Amyer de Valence, who was in command of the English troops, was encouraging his followers to the fray. He kindled their enthusiasm by urging them on to displays of valour, and pointing out the glorious result that would follow the defeat and capture of Bruce.

The English advanced their cavalry. When they came within easy distance of the Scots the command was given to charge. The yeomen put spurs to their horses; they bent their heads so as to avoid the flight of the Scottish arrows; on their left arm hung their shields, and on their right lay

at rest their long spears. On they came right gallantly. The Scots met them straight, and a hand-to-hand conflict ensued. Bruce fought in the van, and with him his brother Edward and Sir James Douglas. The King himself performed prodigies of valour. Where the fray was hottest he was the foremost; where danger threatened, his strong arm was ever ready. He encouraged his men the while with word and deed alike. The Scots launched their spears at the horses of the enemy. Many of these came to the ground; others careering broke the ranks of the English. The Scots pressed the more hardly when they saw the foe begin to waver. With cheer and battle cry they redoubled their efforts, nor did they stay their hand until the force engaged with them was compelled to retreat. Sir Amyer de Valence had still as many more to take their place; but the tumultuous rout once begun it was impossible to arrest. The feeling of panic spread, and soon from the field of glory the Scots emerged victorious, driving the numerically superior force in disastrous flight over the plain.

Bruce followed up his advantage by laying siege to the Castle of Ayr. It was powerfully held, and there was no hope of reducing it save by starving the garrison out. The attempt failed. Edward, fretting under the rising of the Scots, sent north a strong relieving force, and the Scottish Monarch was compelled to carry on the war of independence elsewhere, and with brighter hopes of success.

In the course of his wanderings in the country the Sovereign suffered from an eruptive disease of the nature of leprosy—the result of his herculean exertions, and the miserable fare on which he had often to subsist. There was a well in Prestwick parish, which, report said, was a veritable pool of Bethesda for the suffering. To this he resorted. Its healing waters had the desired effect. The King was cured of his ailment; and, in gratitude to the Healer, he caused to be erected by the well a charitable institution for the

treatment of others similarly affected. This hospital he richly endowed.

It is not within our province to follow the Bruce further. With the battle of Loudoun Hill he passed out of Ayrshire to other and greater triumphs—triumphs that were ultimately, and after many vicissitudes, crowned on the field of Bannockburn.

THE ROVER'S DOOM
ON THE
CARRICK SHORE.

In this matter-of-fact, prosaic age, when everything is put into the crucible or reduced to its original constituents, the spirit world, as it was known to our forefathers, is at a discount. Spiritualism to-day is the creature of a special class; it has no hold on the masses. The ghosts, and fairies, and the mermaids of the centuries ago were, on the contrary, the possession of the country-side. The spectre who walked the Castle halls on certain specific occasions and who took his departure when he saw the first streaks of dawn break in upon the eastern sky, was no mere vision from beyond the gates. It was a real spectre, accepted, credited, believed in, sworn to; and there were peasants by the score who could offer irrefragable evidence as to its *bona fides.* The green wood knolls where the fairies danced by the moonbeams were veritable trysting-places of the little elves from their poetic worlds s(mewhere adjacent. And the mermaids who dwelt in the coral groves of the emerald sea and lured

the mariner or the stray fisherman on to his doom, were no shadowy creations of the heat-oppressed brain, but accepted as perfectly genuine by the great masses of the people. There was perhaps nobody in all Scotland three or four hundred years ago who did not believe in witchcraft and in demonology; and if there were unbelievers, they must have consisted of those who turned to account their special gifts for deceiving the multitude, and who themselves were credited with having seen and heard those things which mortal eye should not have seen and which the ear of mortal should not have heard. To-day we ridicule ghost-lore. The brownie and the pigmy are no more, the wraith has ceased to foreshadow the coming death, and the good people of fairy-land have gone with their queen into the court of oblivion.

To understand, therefore, the tenacity with which our forefathers adhered to their faith in that which is not, it is necessary to remember that they were reared amid surroundings congenial to superstition, and that they adhered as firmly as we do to the teachings of science, and far more firmly, to the traditions of the country-side. To two of these traditions, similar in kind, we turn.

Udolphe Ederic was a Danish pirate, a rover of the days when piracy was a profession, and when the strong arm of the individual was potent. His hunting-ground was the Scottish coast, and many were the descents he made upon it. We read of these war-galleys of the Danes, and the picture naturally crosses our vision of a lofty bark, with tapering masts and heavy spars, impelled partly by the breezes of heaven and partly by the long sweeps, or oars, in the hands of the brawny rowers. We fill her decks with men-at-arms, mail-clad warriors, helmet on head and shield on arm, spear in hand, and stout sword girded to their thigh.

Imagination plays us false. Were one of these war-galleys to sail to-day into one of our ports, we should see the

vision dispelled. The vessel before our eyes would be no larger than a good-sized Highland smack or trawler, with no deck running fore and aft, but only a short poop in the afterpart of the ship; with one solitary mast and one large sail on it; the greater part of the vessel open, right down to the keel, and so constructed that a succession of heavy seas would at the very least bring her rail down to the water's edge, if not completely and for ever overwhelm her; holes in her side for oars, and herself not so heavy or unwieldy that her crew could not make fair way with her in a dead calm. The men on board might be heroes, and all the more heroic that their vessel was frail and unseaworthy; but in the times when these were the warships that threw the coast-dwellers into trepidation, the weather was a vastly important study with the Vikings. They lay under lee of headlands and in sheltered bays when the sea was stormy or the wind contrary, and they only ventured out into the open when intuition told them that the weather was "set fair" and the breezes propitious. And when they encountered the fury of the elements, they hasted to shelter, where they could find a haven, or let their feeble craft drive on before the wind and the waves until these had exhausted their fury.

But to the story. Udolphe Ederic was not a Viking of this type. The sea was his home, and he revelled in the storm. No loud gale that ever blew could daunt him, or compel him to seek refuge or to ride at anchor when he had made up his mind to be off and away. He bent the elements to his service, and he never was happier than when the sea ran riot and the howling gale whistled shrill monotone in the shrouds of his gallant war-vessel. The dwellers of the Ayrshire coasts knew him well. He ravaged their shores, took their cattle from the fields, and their sheep from the hillsides. He landed on the beach where towered the strong keep, he sacked the portlets, and he slew the wardens; and he bore

away with him the wealth and the hard-won treasures of the people. The spirits that ride on the storm knew him; they spoke to him in the hurricane, and he answered them so that no mortal knew in what words he addressed them. He boarded the little trading ships, and he helped himself to their cargoes; and the black sides of his galley struck terror into the hearts of the many. His men were faithful to him, and of undaunted courage. They never turned their backs upon dangerous enterprises, or retreated without evincing their true metal in the face of overwhelming odds.

On one eventful occasion his ship rode under the lee of the Cumbraes. She was bound down for the Carrick coast; there to land her warrior-seamen. Udolphe Ederic had resolved that come what might, thither he would go.

It was early night, and the galley swung idly at anchor. The crew were all asleep, and the commander himself had either lain down to rest or was meditating on the enterprise to be undertaken the following day. Only one solitary footstep paced the deck, that of a nephew of Ederic himself. He looked over the ship's side—there was nothing visible save the dark waters, lit here and there by the pale reflection of the stars. The sea was rolling up, not hurriedly, not angrily, but with that long swell which the accustomed mariner knows portends the coming of the storm that, from far out on the ocean, sends its courier waves before it. The night wind was sighing plaintively, and low down on the western horizon sat a heavy bank of cloud. But though there were indications of storm somewhere, the sea is so sensitive that no sailor, even with these omens under his vision, would hesitate to heave up his anchor and risk the fates without. Udolphe Ederic's nephew was akin with the night influences. He was a gallant youth, but not cast in the same stern mould as his Viking uncle; and if the spirits of the vasty deep were to speak at all, he was just such an one as would be the chosen recipient of their secrets.

As, impressed with the night's solemnity, he walked backwards and forwards, his sharp ear detected, mingling with the sighing sough of the breezes, sounds to which he had hitherto been a stranger. The sound, first indistinct, was weird and wild and incoherent; but it gradually formed itself into voice. The young man leaned over the ship's rail, and he listened. It was like a dream to him, and he shook himself together to make sure that he was awake. There could be no doubt of it. There were the stars and the sea; beneath his feet the ship rising and falling; to starboard the dark loom of the land. The wind blew fresh upon him, and on the beach he heard the gentle ripple of the breaking waters upon the rocks and the shingle; and, amid it all, and permeating it all, the voice from space. It seemed all round him, and yet there was but the one voice. It thrilled him, driving the blood back upon his heart and then sending it coursing through his veins. By and bye the voice became more distinct and clear. It separated itself from the elements and the surroundings. It was no longer a wandering sound, but the voice of a woman—a sweet, wild voice. And thus it sang—

> When upon Carrick's rocky shores
> Resounds the thunder sea,
> Shall dwell the Rover and his crew
> In ocean's caves with me.

The young man was enchanted with the song. Weird was it and dire in its foreboding, but so long as it lasted—and the refrain was sung again and again—the listener could not lift the spell that lay upon his senses. The song gradually died away as it had come. It became indistinct. It mixed itself up with the murmur of the sea—it seemed now to ascend into space, and then to die away in the distance; and it was not until all was still again that the youth recovered his freedom from the charm which the strange melody had laid upon him.

Night passed on and the morning broke. The sun rose and shone in a windy sky. The breeze was freshening, and in from the Atlantic were beginning to troop the white-crested breakers. All the day long the storm increased until, late in the afternoon, it had attained to the dimensions of a gale. The scud flitted fast along the sky—the dark squalls broke in sequence of fury, and higher and higher ran the sea. The hilltops put on their caps, and loomed up like spectres against the black horizon. The experienced nautical eye saw at a glance that no passing gale was intended, and that it would be worse ere it would be better. Udolphe Ederic's nephew was in charge of the deck. Occasionally the rover himself came up from below, and scowled back to the scowling face of Nature. He exchanged words with no one. His nephew, thinking that it was time to give the ship additional moorings, was in the act of ordering the crew to take an anchor out to windward, when his commands were rudely cut short by the appearance of the Viking. "What means this?" he asked, "We are to sail to-night."

The words were abruptly spoken. His nephew read resolution in his eyes, but remembering, as he could not forget, the song of the mermaid, he asked his uncle to go below with him. The pirate hesitated. He had no liking to be crossed. But if there was a soft bit in his heart at all, it was for his nephew; and, checking the angry words which rose spontaneous to his lips, he turned on his heel and disappeared down the hatchway. His nephew followed him.

"On what fool's errand," asked the pirate, "have you brought me hither?"

"On no fool's errand," replied the young man. And then he told of the incident of the previous night—how that lying over the vessel's side he had heard no human voice speak to him, but a voice from the other world, with its note of warning. He repeated the Siren's song.

The rover frowned anew, but he made no reply. He turned his back on the young man and ascended anew to the deck. "Now then," he cried, "make haste and get in the anchors." The crew stared, and wondered, but they knew better than to question or to disobey. "No storm that ever blew," he continued, "shall turn me from my purpose. Get sail set and we shall see what the mermaid has to say for herself." The men heard what he said and were troubled; but labouring, they brought in the anchors, heaved up to the mast head the square canvas, reefed double; and the galley, impelled on its way, moved out from under shelter of the Cumbraes and put to sea. The storm was from the north-west. The wind was what sailors call "leading," right abeam, and so permitting vessels to sail in either of two directions. So long as the vessel was under shelter of the land she was in little or no danger; therefore, no sooner had the Cumbrae Heads been cleared than the Viking kept as near the wind as possible, so as to avail himself of the high land of Arran.

His destination was the Carrick coast and he could not reach it without crossing the Firth. It was a rash deed, by a rash man. Carrick was a lee shore, driven straight upon by the nor'-wester, and no mariner who was not courting doom would for a moment have thought of aught else than giving it as wide a berth as possible. Not so Udolphe Ederic. Blow high, blow low, thither he would go, and take the fate that might befall. So he ordered the galley's head to be eased towards the south-west and then towards the south, and out he went into the scene of riot on the Firth. By this time the gale raged at its full height. The wind filled the bellying canvas until it nearly tore the sail away from the bolt-ropes. Ederic's hand was upon the tiller, and with unquivering nerve he watched the following seas. They rose high above the stern of the vessel, but so well was she handled that she rode the waves like a thing

of life. No star was visible, nothing overhead but far-stretching gloom, one vast pall of undefined blackness, save where here and there angry greyish-edged clouds came sweeping up from the distant abyss. In the rigging the gale howled mournfully. The mast strained, but the good Norwegian stick, though it bent, remained unbroken. Heavy rain and hail squalls burst at intervals, and so thick was the atmosphere with the driving spray that the prow of the galley was invisible to the men who sheltered themselves beneath the after bulwarks. The Rover was undismayed, a smile lit up his features as he watched the sky, and he muttered to himself words which none comprehended save he. Whether he spoke with the spirit of the storm or with unseen friends from space, that clustered round him, none knew. He even sang the songs of his far-away fatherland; and his voice, borne on the wings of the tempest, added a fresh terror to the environment.

Beside Ederic stood his nephew. He knew that fate was awaiting them. He knew that it was not for nothing that the Siren had sung her lay; nay, even amid the raging of the tempest he caught at intervals the flashing echoes of her voice. The crew heard it, too; but they set it down to the shrill screaming of the gale in the blocks and in the cordage. Swiftly sailed the staunch galley. To add to the terrible grandeur of the scene the vivid flash of the lightning came to light up the gloom and to show the boiling waters of the Firth all around. In these bright flashes the youth kept his gaze steadily fixed ahead; and as the lightning sped, he descried, not a mile distant, the dark loom of the Carrick coast. He pointed with his finger to the spot; the Rover understood the sign and brought the vessel's head up a little on the wind. His intention was evident—it was to run along the coast until the gale abated. For Ederic had no mind to rush into destruction. He had kept his word. He had sailed to the Carrick coast, and there was nothing now

to prevent him striving to escape the clutches of death and to set the mermaid's prognostication at defiance. And now began the struggle with his fate.

It was an unequal fight. On the one side the little vessel, buffeted, driven hither and thither with the raging waters, the hand of mortal on the tiller; on the other the furies of the storm, to leeward a treacherous coast, and the malign influence of the Siren's prognostication. Ederic had a stout heart, none stouter; and he did not quail in face of the trial. He knew the craft beneath him; he knew just how far she could be brought up on the wind and sea, and the very point at which she was certain to broach-to; he knew her capacity for riding out a gale. His eager eye watched the shore whenever the lightning gleamed; and he felt hopeful that he was holding his own. The close reefed sail was shivering, and not one single inch more could the galley be brought to windward. His hope was ill-founded, and his experience told him that it was, but with firm hand he kept the vessel on her course. But the sea and the gale were working against him, and he was going steadily to leeward. His nephew saw it and acknowledged it to himself long ere the Rover would admit it; but ever as he ran along the coast the successive flashes of lightning told him that he was making rapid and dangerous leeway. And worse than that. In front of him was a headland, and he was to leeward of it. Could he but weather that, he might yet escape. But could he? He would try; and no man could do more. To go about was an impossibility; he must clear the headland or perish.

The ship was so near the wind that she was not making much headway; and the less speed she made the more she drifted. Still raged the storm, wilder than ever in its intensity; and to the horrors of the riotous chaos to windward was added the roar of the surf on the cliffs to leeward. Strange unearthly sounds fell upon the Rover's ear; and as

he glanced in the gleaming flashes, on the face of his nephew, he saw that he, too, heard them, and knew their meaning. They were sounds such as he had heard tell of in the folk-lore of his far-away home; and no man could hear them and live. Now they were piercing and fierce in their tone, and again triumphant and rapturous. The Viking felt how hopeless was his position, but he brought the galley's head up closer to the wind in a desperate attempt to achieve an impossibility. The storm caught him aback; the sail lay flat, pinned against the mast by the violence of the hurricane; and the galley began to glide, stern foremost, upon the shore. All was about over. A rending peal of thunder reverberated overhead, and its solemn roll was continued until it blended away into the roar of the surf lashing up on the cliffs. Nearer and nearer drifted the galley, and ever as she drifted the siren song pealed the louder and the clearer.

Crash went the vessel on the rocks; and when the morning broke on the Carrick shore and the gale sullenly moaned itself out, the fishers of the coast found the timbers of the Danish galley ; and they knew that in the dark hours of the night there had gone down in the angry deep brave men and true, who had encountered the furies of the waters without. And the sage, to whom the unseen world was ever present, told them that early in the morning watch, when the hurricane was at its height, he had heard the song of the weird woman of the sea which portended only evil, and that continually.

A Carrick fisher sat one fine evening as the sun was setting, hard by the Castle of Turnberry. It was a summer's eve; and behind Arran the orb of day was rapidly westering. There is no coast on which the sunset is more beautiful when the evening is clear than that of Ayrshire.

Right in front rise the peaks of Arran, abrupt in their rugged grandeur. As day declines, with a clear or a watery atmosphere, they stand out in bold relief, their deep scars revealed as clearly, and their green relieving patches as well defined, as if but five, and not twenty miles of water, lie between. Never is the sunset so beautiful, never are the lights so lovely and the purple hue of the cliffs so exquisite in its tinting as when rain or storm threatens. One would think to look at the corruscating masses of golden-lit cloud-land, ever changing from one celestial grandeur to another, that the scene was as reposeful in its portent as it is in appearance; but nothing is more certain, hard as it is at the time to believe it, that the morrow's sun will struggle through watery clouds, or glare, sickly and yellow, through a windy sky.

It was on such an evening that the fisher sat on the cliffs beside the historic Castle of Turnberry. Tradition does not tell his surname or his associations. His Christian name was William, and he dwelt in the village of the Maidens. The time was long ago, else he could not have heard the mermaid sing. He looked out over the familar sea. Many a time had he rocked on its bosom, in storm and in calm, in his little boat. He knew its moods by intuition; and he knew how easily its placid surface was changed into heaving, racing billows, chasing one another up from the deep Atlantic. The setting sun wrought out its image on the waters in a long golden chain; and on the top of Goatfell sat low the fleecy, luminous clouds. Behind him smiled the country; light the western zephyrs, green the trees, sweet the twittering of the birds in their branches, clear the carol of the lark in the sky. His spirit was akin with nature, receptive, sympathetic: and the calm of the summer's eve found reflection in his mind. As thus he sat pondering over the beauty and open to its every influence, he heard a strange sweet song such as he had never heard

before. He could see no singer; but the song itself was clear as its tones were entrancing. It came from the sea and it spell-bound him. Never had he heard such harmony before, such attractive and seductive melody.

"O, it is happy and blest to be here.
It is lovely on earth in greenwood bowers
To wander at eve 'mong the dewy flowers;
But sweeter and happier far to be
In the coral groves of the crystal sea."[1]

So sang the Siren. The fisher could not resist the charm. He rose from his seat. Beneath him his boat lay rocking on the gentle swell of the unbroken waves. Jumping lightly into it, he cast off the moorings and rowed in the direction whence the sound proceeded; but pull as he might, he could not come upon the singer. Yet still she sang, and ever the further out at sea. He could not rest; he did not permit himself to think, but straight out he pulled until, the Siren still leading him on, he had left the shore far behind. The clouds were darkening. The sun had dropped behind Arran, the light had gone out of the glorious day; and in its place shone the silvery moon and the little stars. He knew that he ought to cease from his vain quest, but the spell held him to his task, and the mermaiden ceased not to wile him with her dulcet notes. He did not see that low down on the western horizon, beyond where Ailsa lifts its round head, the clouds were thickening and dark beyond the darkness of the night. He did not care that the wind, which had hardly an hour before been sufficient to ruffle the surface of the waters, now blew fresh upon him, and that the prow of his little craft was rising and falling with the wind. He shipped his mast and he spread his sail, and out he sailed faster and faster. The sea-birds, these restless creatures of the deep, which do not fold their pinions until the night is advanced, were

[1] "Ballads founded on Ayrshire Traditions," 1850.

hurrying rockwards or landwards, as he knew they did when their instinct, or their reason, told them there was a sudden change impending. He heeded nothing save to find the Siren whose song had captivated alike his heart and his senses. The squall began to mount up and to becloud the sky. The wind whistled the more shrilly and it caught up the tops of the waves and sent them off in flying spray. But louder and louder rose the song, with the rising storm.

These squalls smite hard and fast; and so did this upon the fisherman's bark. William never beheld the Maidens or the Carrick shore again. He awoke to his danger, but too late, and the angry sea claimed him as its own. And for long years afterwards the fishers of the coast bid their sons beware of the Siren's song and warned them of the danger of yielding to her solicitations.

KING ALPIN SLAIN
IN THE
GLEN OF DUNASKIN.

THE dawn of Ayrshire history is, if the metaphor may be allowed, amid the war-clouds. You require to go back, not to the days of Bruce and Wallace, not to the thousand years ago when Alpin fell in conflict with the men of the shire, not to the era made memorable by the struggles of Pict and Scot with Briton, but back to the days of the Romans with their early military civilization, their carefully fortified camps, their roads constructed with true engineering capacities, and their villas by the shores of the Clyde. And if you could get beyond the Romans, the

story would still be the same, till it melted away in some primal struggle whose echoes died out thousands of years ago. All down the ages the landmarks are the scars of war, of man fighting with his fellow-man. They are found in tumuli, in sculptured urn, in rude cairn, in bone and flint-headed spears, in primitive battle-axes, and in the remains of the chieftain buried amid his followers. The grass of many centuries has grown rank over the relics of the warriors, and save in the case of a very few, their name and their memory have perished as completely as if they never had been; but, nevertheless, all over the country tradition and investigation point out the scenes of their struggles, and fancy can still call into being the fierce fights which they waged. There are many spots now silent enough and deserted enough, that one day were instinct with life and valour; where charging host gave answering shout to charging host; where flew the deadly showers of arrows; where sharp swords were wielded by strong arms; where armies were locked in deadly tussle, and where—helmets splintered, armour broken, life ebbing—the red blood ran like water.

And one of these scenes is hard by the wild glen of Dunaskin, in upland Dalmellington. The Romans were there. They left their traces in the road over which their legions marched from the coast. Their eyes rested on the same wild mass of hills, the same deep glens, the same valleys, the same loch, and the same rushing river, that still charm the heart of the wanderer in these mountainous solitudes. They passed away and for ever forsook the shores of Caledonia, but Nature remains as they left her, with a thousand years and more added to her tale. She recognizes not the puny strifes of the changing races who desecrate the soil with their warrings, but removes the traces of their desecration tenderly, yet remorselessly, with the flight of the years.

Alpin was the king of the Scots. Like other warrior-monarchs of all time, his soul was inspired with the love of conquest, and from his strongholds in Kintyre he looked across the intervening waters to where, outlined in the distance, he could descry the broad plains of Ayrshire, and longed to call them his own. His fiery warriors of the hills shared his ambition. The land which was their's was wild and comparatively inhospitable, but across the gleaming Firth of Clyde were fresh fields and pastures new, and worth the possessing. It was with a large armament that he embarked on his war of conquest. Rounding the southern end of Arran he directed his course to the mouth of the river Doon, and there he landed with his army. He did not deem it wise to launch his attack against the town of Ayr, with its walls and its fortified castle, but, leaving the coast behind him, he followed the course of the river Doon until he struck the Roman road leading from Ayr across the country into Galloway. Along this highway he marched, to the consternation of the surrounding country. The news of his coming was spread abroad through all the kingdom of Alcluyd. Messengers in hot haste journeyed by the highways and along the mountain paths; and from hamlet and cot, from field and fell, they called their men to the battle. There was no tarrying. From all quarters the warrior peasants trooped in, with their spears and their shields, with their bows, and quivers full of arrows, with their short swords by their side—all ready for battle. The alarm of war was no new sound in their ears. Love of country was their inheritance. They willed not that the kingdom of Alcluyd should be broken up, by the devastating hordes of Alpin; and high in courage and fired in determination they gathered with one accord to drive out the rude invader from the lands that were their birthright. Strong in his army and their devotion, the king of the Scots took up his position and waited the battle. He chose

his ground warily and well. In front of him was the wild glen of Dunaskin through which the lowlanders of Ayrshire must emerge ere they could give him battle; the centre of his army rested on the plain, and the right and left wings on rising ground on either hand. It was thus he awaited the issue!

More than a thousand years have rolled away since the fight, and the pall of distance and of oblivion has blotted out the very name of the hero who led the Alcluydensians to the combat. Some chieftain he of high renown, his deeds live, but his memory has perished. This much we know of him and can testify, that he was worthy of his race. He made himself familiar with the site of battle chosen by the Scots. He saw its difficulties with the eye of a soldier, and he canvassed his chances with the acumen of the strategist. Beyond the glen of Dunaskin, rugged and narrow, he could see the long lines of the Scots extending across the moor and resting on the hill-sides. There was no passage by which he could reach them save the one, and that was Dunaskin glen. It was a hazardous enterprise, but this nameless hero was the man for a desperate deed. He had faith in himself, and in the followers who had rallied to his call; and he resolved that through that glen he would go when the morning lighted up its darkness. The rival armies lay that night on the ground. The cold clear stars looked out of the deep blue vault upon them as they slumbered, and the cold crisp winds of the mountains chilled them. But these were but trifles to the warriors of the ninth century.

Ere the sun had rolled his huge round disc above the horizon there was the sound of preparation for war, in the camp. Alpin passed along his ranks and the fair-haired Scots gave him greeting. They had no need for encouragement to the fray. They were in the heart of the enemy's country, among hills that were not theirs, amid passes

where death would await them if they should ingloriously retreat. All round, as far as they could see, the land was a hostile camp. They must therefore either win the fight or perish. The incitement to the Alcluydensians was not less telling. Before them lay a daring foe, come to claim their lands, their homes, their kingdom, and their liberties; theirs was the proud honour of meeting the enemy and driving him hence, back to his ships, or overwhelming him in desperate fight. What more could they have to influence their courage?

All was in order. On the ground beyond the glen the Scots were quietly waiting the attack, their lines extended in order of battle. They had the best of the position. The Alcluyd chief did not hesitate. If the fight was to be fought, the glen must be faced. His army was soon on the way, and Dunaskin with its copsewood and its rocks was speedily a mass of moving men. Their wild horns awoke the echoes. The eagle was startled in his eyrie and the raven on heavy wing took his flight from the scene. On they poured, a mass closely wedged. Still the Scots waited; for the men of Alcluyd must emerge from the defile ere they could offer them battle. The vanguard broke from the narrow pass, and behind them poured like a flood the main column of the foe. There was to be no fighting at long ranges. These were the days of the hand-to-hand conflict, when man looked man in the face, and when warrior's sword crossed warrior's sword. The sun was reddening the morning glories of the sky. He had risen clear of the horizon, and the bright-lit mountain tops were sharing their heaven-gift of light with the valleys.

The glen of dark Dunaskin was passed, and then the armies came to closer quarters. Alpin ordered the charge; and from front of the Alcluydensians and from the two wings came with yell and shout, with waving sword and keen bright battle axe, the warriors from beyond the Firth.

There was no pausing mid-way to gather breath or to gain courage. Resolution was fired to daring, and deed must speak for deed. Rushed on the shock of battle; and the armies came together on the field of slaughter. The din was indescribable, the clashing of the swords, the blows of the heavy battle-axes, the encouraging cheers of the leaders, the hoarse roar of thousands of combatants all locked in deadly fray, the cries of the wounded, the groans of the dying. The mossy soil drank in the blood. The tide ebbed and flowed. Now the warriors of the country side with rallying cry drove back the tenacious Scots; and again the gathering Scots retaliated on the persistent Alcluydensians. But back the Alcluydensians could not go, dared not go. To go back was death. To go back was to lock themselves in the narrow embrace of Dunaskin and to be hurled into dire confusion. They must go on or fall where they stood. And so they pressed on, though the ground was slippery and their path over the dying and the dead. Leader fought as man and man as leader.

Alpin saw there was danger, saw the dauntless heroism of the lowlanders of Ayrshire, and the hillsmen who had joined them for the encounter. The danger he must encounter and avert. He led the fighting, and behind him pressed the Scots emulating their dauntless leader. There were no flights of arrows to distract the warriors in the battle; all was stern, close, hard fighting. The combatants were locked in one another's arms, nor was the grasp relieved until death relaxed the tensioned muscles and eased for ever the drawn sinews. Alpin faced death wherever the conqueror rode; for win who might, death was the inevitable conqueror. He paid the price of his daring. Foremost he advanced to measure sword and axe with the men of Alcluyd. He cut his way into their ranks, and then, surrounded, and pierced with many wounds, he fell. His followers rushed to his rescue. But too late. They could not save him, they could

only avenge his slaughter. The fight grew the more awful with the thinning of the ranks; but now that Alpin was gone, the Scots began to waver. It was he to whom they had looked; and now, gory with wounds and covered with the slain he lay with upturned face to the bright heavens which he was no more to see. His fall gave fresh courage and animation to the Alcluydensians. Ever onwards and upwards they pressed, nor ceased until the line of the foe was broken and eventual victory was foreshadowed.

But not yet. There were conflicts on either hand. Grimly, fiercely, the Scots contested the ground. So long as hope lasted they wielded their swords, and plied their battle axes, and caught the opposing strokes and blows upon their round shields. Leaderless, they bad to give way at last, and the tide of battle that had rolled up from the very mouth of Dunaskin Glen poured over the rising grounds and broke in fury and in storm all over the position held by the Scots. Beaten where they stood, they scattered, sundered and riven.

Away they sped over hill and moorland. Those who could, turned their faces to the friendly sea and sped by the pathway made for them by the Romans, back by the route over which they had come filled high with hope and expectation. Others fled to the open country, and more, seeing all was lost, struck one parting blow for life, and then yielded it up.

The Alcluydensians found King Alpin where he fell. No more for him the storm and the shock of the battle. Gone his ambitions and his dreams. No more the craggy peaks of the Western Highland hills; no more the long sweep of the Atlantic wave on the shores of his kingdom. There he lay in the land of the stranger. Hither he had come to conquer; there he remained to die. Hither he had led his forces strong for war; they were lying around him on the moss, or headlong fleeing the fatal field. But he was yet a king,

even in death. And the conquering Alcluydensians sought him where he lay, and reverently lifted him from the ground. They gave him a soldier's grave, and loudly they chanted his death-song. Laicht Alpin—the grave of Alpin —it remains to this day.

There is something indescribably pathetic in the memory of these far-away conflicts. All down the centuries resounds the wail of their pathos. They reveal in those who shared in them the same passions which dominate man to this present hour. Humanity has been humanity from the beginning. To-day the world is more politic, but the strong arm is yet the strong. The patriotism which burns in the breast of the Scottish Highlander of the nineteenth century, and in the breasts of all men who dwell upon the face of all the earth, is that which influenced the hosts of Alcluyd on that memorable morn by the Glen of Dunaskin. They fought for home and for country. It was for the domestic altar and the hills and plains of their motherland that they offered themselves for the fray. The age they lived in was dark, and wild, and gloomy, but it is lit up by the record of their gallantry. And yet, over all the countryside, by all the murmuring streams of Ayrshire, what a cry of grief must have risen to the heavens when the patriot warriors who had fallen on the field returned no more to their homes! Rejoicing there must have been, for the land was free from the invader, but rejoicing chastened with melancholy, the jubilate of its strains blending away into the dirge of the coronach.

To the superficial observer of to-day it may seem to be a matter of little or no consequence that the Scots were beaten, and that it would have been all the same to-day had Alpin swept the Alcluydensians before him into the glen, and out of existence. Perhaps it would, but in all probability it would not. The individuality of Ayrshire might have been entirely changed; and therefore it is of moment to remember

that the result of the battle may have affected, and still may affect, the people dwelling in these parts.

Up to within a comparatively recent period there stood, in the inner angle of the Glen of Dunaskin, the remains of the Castle of Laicht. Tradition had it that Alpin slept within its walls the night before the battle, but there is no solid reason for believing that such was the case, or even that the castle existed so far back as the ninth century. That was not the age of castle-building, save where there were towns to be defended. The position of Laicht rendered it absolutely impregnable. On three sides the glen, with its steeps and its rocks, afforded a natural barrier against attack. In front there was a deep fosse. What the history of the stronghold, it would be idle to speculate. It has gone, and has carried its story with it into oblivion.

THE TRIAL

OF THE

FEUDALIST AT AYR IN 1507.

The old Court-house of Ayr is crowded, every seat occupied, all the standing ground utilized. And that not by the degenerate crowd, which in the latter days of light and leading flocks to the halls of justice; but by an assemblage representative of the higher ranks and the historical interest of the early days of the sixteenth century. Those who shall take their places at the bar are not the dregs, the off-scourings of society, but men whose castles and towers dominate broad acres, and yeomen who follow in their train.

It is no disgrace to an Earl or to a Baron to have to appear before the Lords of Justiciary; on the contrary it is regarded as right and fitting that he should. The times are those of the strong hand and the strong will. Right is mixed up with might, and it is so difficult a matter for the feudal chieftains to discriminate between the one and the other that they do not hesitate in the exercise of their might to do what seems right in their own eyes. The Court is full of feudal superiors and inferiors, and outside on the causeway are their friends for whom there is no room within, and who are only prevented from flying at one another's throats by the knowledge that, inside the house of justice, Lord Andrew Gray is seated upon the bench, and that actual offending under his very eyes might be regarded as a serious matter and worthy of punishment.

The Court constituted with all the old formalities, the Judge has time to look about him. It is a familiar scene he contemplates. Even in Edinburgh, where the law has its permanent seat and the crown is powerful, if it is powerful anywhere, he has seen the western lairds so threatening in their demeanour at the very bar of the Court of Justiciary that the judges were compelled to declare the sitting at an end and the king's advocate forced to ask an adjournment for an unspecified time. Clamour, and the display of power, therefore, are nothing new to Lord Gray, and he anticipates that ere the day is done the rival groups of lairds and squires may give indication of their dissatisfaction with his decisions, and attempt by the display of mingled force and influence, to divert the stream of strict justice from its accustomed channels.

Beneath him are the representatives of the Crown and of the Court—the king's advocate, the advocates depute, and the clerks and other officials of court, and sitting close by them are the advocates who are expected to plead the righteous, or unrighteous cause of their clients, as the case

may be. The jury are in attendance, some of them lairds from the outlying parts of the shire and as good partisans, in the saddle or in the jury box, as their friends could wish to see or their enemies fear to encounter; some of them farmers, with sympathies not less keenly developed, within recognized lines of kinship and heredity, than those of the lairds themselves; and some, burgesses of the town of Ayr, or dwellers in the other towns of the shire, men of mercantile tastes and urban dread of the stormy petrels who keep the country side in unrest and disquiet.

But the "panels" as they are called, who are shortly to take their places at the bar, constitute the most interesting groups. There is Patrick Boyde, a brother of the Laird of Rowallan, and twenty-six of his followers, who are there charged with taking part in a raid upon the Cuninghames of Cuninghamehead. Close by is another brother to Rowallan, indicted for oppression done to the Laird of Busby and one of his adherents, in the town of Stewarton. Their hereditary enemy, Cuninghame of Cuninghamehead, is waiting to account for his share in the strife and for a series of other offences against his neighbours. John Shaw of Haly, his brother, and eight others attend to make amends for an outrage upon Margaret Montgomery, Lady Crechdow, and beside them David Craufurd of Kerse, stern defender of the Kyle marches against the stout lords of Carrick, ready to become surety for his followers. In addition to Craufurd himself, there is a large contingent from Kerse who will have to satisfy Lord Gray concerning various acts of oppression. The Earl of Eglinton is there also, to become surety for an offence against the old Lady of Home. Hamilton of Bargany has a raid to explain away, or for which to suffer; and there are one or two men of less importance, charged on various other counts. There is not much room left for spectators, and only a few of the more privileged have succeeded in securing admission. For these are the

days when families and their adherents are brought to book at the same time, and when the names of the accused not unfrequently cover whole pages of the indictments.

The preliminaries over, the Court proceeds to hear three different cases all arising from a feud between the Cuninghames and the Mures. Old opponents these, and destined to be opponents for many years still to come. In the first of the three, Patrick Boyde, in all probability one of the Boydes of Kilmarnock and connected by marriage with the family of Mure, is charged, in company with Neill Smyth, the tenant of Girdrum, and twenty-five others, with having come to the Kirk of Stewarton in company with John Mure of Rowallan and there engaged in conflict with Cuninghame and his servants. The immediate cause of dispute seems to have been the office of parish clerk, the Mures, on the one hand, and the Cuninghames on the other, forcibly insisting on the appointment of their own nominees. The Judge hears the evidence, which is conclusive of the strife having taken place, and imposes a fine; and the laird of Rowallan and Arnot of Lochrig having offered themselves in security for its payment, Boyde and his followers are let go. But another of the same party and a brother of Rowallan is waiting. He too has been in arms, on his own account, in the same town of Stewarton, and has provoked a contest with John Mowatt, the laird of Busby, and with a certain Andrew Stevenston, and for him also the laird of Rowallan is accepted as surety for the payment of five pounds Scots, a sum regarded as sufficient to meet the ends and the claims of justice.

The Mures thus disposed of, Cuninghame of Cuninghamehead is called to the bar, first for engaging in the contest concerning the parish clerkship and, in addition, for other offences. Not only had he taken part in the fray, but, turning his attention homewards, he had set covetous eyes upon a piece of land belonging to Lady Cuninghame. Apparently

he seems to have been at variance with his relative concerning her right to the lands of Cuninghamehead, and to have thought that he had a right to share her possessions. At any rate, he had forcibly occupied and manured for the purposes of cultivation a third of her lands, which were reserved to her under a special protection, or safeguard, from the king. And carrying his hostility to existing rights still further afield, he had sacrilegiously robbed the Abbey of Kilwinning, and the Earl of Eglinton as its Commendator, of its Tiend sheaves. Lord Gray amerciates him in a sum of money, which the clerk forgets to insert in the sentence, and he goes from the bar satisfied that on the whole, and notwithstanding the conviction, he has had the better of the different transactions. The laird of Cuninghamehead is succeeded at the bar by one of his adherents who had taken part in the Stewarton fray and, when a conviction has been found against him, the laird offers himself as security and is at once accepted.

The diet is next called against John Shaw of Haly, William Shaw dwelling with him, and eight others, who have behaved themselves in an oppressive and unseemly manner towards Margaret Montgomery, Lady Crechdow. The story that is told is a strange one. About midsummer they had taken forcible possession of the lady's house. She had naturally objected, and her servants with her; but when the latter had resented the intrusion and endeavoured to drive their intruders forth from their mistress' dwelling, they had given back blow for blow, and overpowered the domestics. This done, they had ransacked the house, which was under the direct protection of the King, and had spoiled it of its contents. Carrying their unlawful conduct still further, they had turned Lady Crechdow out of her house of Garlauche; and then, directing their attention to her stackyard and to her stock, they had thrown down stacks of hay and of bere, to the damage of the grain, and driven off sixty-five

cattle, shutting them up elsewhere than on her ladyship's lands. Worse still, when Lady Crechdow had remonstrated with them on their high-handed conduct, one of the accused had thrown a stone at her from the window of her own house, and had felled her to the ground. And having been convicted of all these offences, they were permitted to compound for their misdemeanours, and for general oppressions of the King's lieges in addition, and then dismissed, David Craufurd of Kerse becoming surety to satisfy the injured and the offended parties. Like all legal documents, the indictment is a bald, matter-of-fact statement of the case, but it nevertheless reveals in a very clear light the condition of western feudal society in the early years of the sixteenth century. The offence done—rather the series of offences—is not the work of common, every-day offenders against the peace of the lieges. The misdemeanants are at feud with the family of which the Earl of Eglinton is the head. They know that the Place of Garlauche is undefended, and that Lady Crechdow lives there in comparative seclusion. Being a woman, she thinks that her sex ought in itself to be her protection against outrage. But no. She is a Montgomery, and that is the head and front of her offending; so against her and against her dwelling come this party of the adherents of Kerse. They break into her house, assault her servants, throw her furniture out of the windows, overturn the stacks in her stackyard, drive her cattle from their pasture, and finally fell her with a stone as she raises her voice to denounce their conduct. So much, by way of parenthesis, for the gallantry of the gentlemen of 1508 towards a lady of rank and position! Nor is this an isolated case. On the contrary, such outrages of the period are so common that an individual case such as this is hardly worthy of a remark. And no adequate punishment follows. The parties are left to settle with one another for the oppression involved in the action of the strong against the weak.

The Craufurds of Kerse were ever a lawless family. Their domains were wide, and their influence wider still. David Craufurd had only to send out his messengers, and replies came in, in the guise of horsemen and of footmen, from a range of country stretching from the upper waters of the Irvine to the mid-waters of the Ayr, and reaching from these to where the Doon washed the domains of the Kennedys. The Craufurds played an important part in the national history. Sir Reginald Craufurd, the uncle of Sir William Wallace, was one of their forebears, and for a long series of years they held the hereditary sheriffship of Ayr. But they were feudal, and the Kerse of the early days of the sixteenth century—the chieftain of the house of Craufurd and the acknowledged leader of the men of Kyle when their interests were threatened—was never more at home than when, in the saddle, he raided the lands of Carrick, or turned his arms against the Montgomeries of Eglinton. He is waiting in court to stand trial, but ere he is called to appear at the bar, one of his followers, John Shaw, is examined on two separate indictments. He had slain with a stone a certain John Boyd, whether a scion of the house of Boyd or a man of no recognized family, we do not know. In all probability the latter, for the case is soon disposed of. Craufurd offers himself a surety to satisfy the parties, and his suretyship is accepted as a matter of course. But Shaw had performed a more serious and compromising action. Duncan Fergusson, the young laird of Kilkerran, had been residing at Burnfoot, and thither Shaw had gone at the head of a party of the retainers of Kerse. They had broken down the walls of the dwelling and wasted it, and for the space of a year they had made periodical incursions on the lands of Burnfoot, and destroyed every attempt to cultivate them; and to fill the cup of their vengeance, they had set upon one of the servants of the laird of Kilkerran with their swords, and had cruelly done him to death. But it was all in pursuance of hereditary

struggle, and in conformity with the unwritten, yet fully recognized, laws of the blood feud; and therefore, when Craufurd offers again to become surety, Lord Gray interposes no objection, and Shaw rejoins his friends.

The next case is of higher importance. Advancing without fear Craufurd himself, he of Kerse, with three of his own family and other seven of his followers, comes to account for interference with the court of the Bailie of Carrick, the Earl of Eglinton. That court had met to deal with a matter touching the laird of Kilhenzie, but its proceedings had been rudely interrupted.

Kerse was displeased that Lord Eglinton should hold the office of bailie. He had no territorial influence in Carrick, and while Craufurd had none himself, for many miles and by many a stretch of the winding Doon his lands looked across to those of the bailiary. And so it had come about that, while the Earl held court, the Craufurds, present in force, had so conducted themselves that the magistrate had not dared to adjudicate upon the affairs of Kilhenzie. Surely a serious offence, thus cavalierly to interfere with one of the judicatures of the country! Well, it may have been, but if a judgment on the regard in which the misdemeanour was held may be gauged by the sentence, it can hardly be that Lord Gray was inclined to see in it anything worse than an ordinary feudal offending. Kerse was fined in five pounds Scots, and the members of his family and his followers in forty shillings each.

A nominal fine is next inflicted on a Cuthbert Robisoune, farmer in Auchentiber, for an assault committed on one of his neighbours and upon the neighbour's son. The latter he had cast into the fire, burning him severely. Fine—five merks. He removed, the Earl of Eglinton stood forward to give monetary account of a raid committed by some of his adherents or friends. Their offence had been committed at a far distance from the castle of Eglinton. Away on a

cattle-lifting raid, they had encountered, on the confines of Galloway, a party of men connected with the estate of Lady Home. These, guessing their purpose, had intercepted them and offered combat; but the followers of Eglinton had fallen amain upon them, had wounded their leader among others, and had robbed them of twelve horses, of their boots, their spurs, and their swords. Continuing their raid they had entered upon Lady Home's possessions, and had driven thence three and twenty cows, and had capped their offending by carrying off as prisoner a certain Arthur Boyde, whom they had detained for some time a captive. The judge is not mightily concerned over the misdeed, and when the Earl of Eglinton, comes forward to offer satisfaction and to pay in hard Scottish coin for the horses and cattle, the boots, the spurs, and the swords, his suretyship is taken as a matter of form, and the next case is called.

It is the last, and, like the preceding, tells of the cattle raid. The accused is John Hamilton, one of the adherents of Kennedy of Bargany. In his search after the treasures of his neighbours he had taken whatever he could lay his hands upon. From the stackyards he had carried off corn and beans, and from houses, pots and pans. Four horses, eight cows, and four oxen he had driven homewards before him, and it is for the theft of the goods and gear, alive and dead, that he now figures as a panel at the bar of the Court of Justiciary. His crime is only a crime legally. The judge does not look upon it in that light. As he travels over the country from one assize to another he meets such cases every day on which he sits to do justice; and if he can only find some one to go bail that he will satisfy the parties, that is all he requires. In this case Kennedy of Bargany is the surety. The sentence is filled up and formally pronounced, and the court rises.

It has not been a heavy assize. Lord Gray thinks everything has been somewhat common-place and uninteresting;

and as the dempster of court declares its formal rising, the judge departs, satisfied that society is improving. In the evening the rival retainers of the great families of Ayrshire come into contact with one another on the streets of the town, and the douce burghers either stand aside to let them fight out their quarrels, or hurry home thankful that Ayr is a walled town and that these skirmishes are only periodical.

THE RAID OF BARBIESTON GLEN.

As night was falling—a September night of the year 1530—there was a gathering of the troopers of Carrick in the court-yard of Cloncaird. Sixty men and more came riding in. Some of these from Doonside, some from the Girvan's banks; not common yoemen and men-at-arms, who rode at the beck and call of their chiefs, but nearly all scions of powerful houses. Blairquhan sent its contingent of Kennedys; so, too, did Bargany, and Cassillis, and Guiltree, and when the raiders assembled at Cloncaird, there was a fair representation of every branch of the great family of Carrick. The power of the Kennedys was unbroken over the whole of Ayrshire, from the Doon to the confines of the shire. Their castles sat upon the rising grounds of the woody vale of Stinchar, they graced the haughs of the Girvan, their walls were washed by the murmuring stream which separated Kyle from the free lances of the bailiary, they were found in the thickest of the woodland, in the shelter of the rocks, on the sea-girt coast.

At any time, and at all times, a raid upon their hereditary foes was an attraction. The Craufurds, who kept the

frontier, were as ready to reciprocate; and often in the nights of the fall, when the moon shone bright, rival bands crossed from one side of the Doon to the other to sweep the beeves from the lea and drive the sheep from the pen on the hill-side. These cattle-lifting raids were periodical. Many a stout conflict they engendered, and many a man went down before the onslaught of the raiders or under the keen blades of the defenders. Retaliation was always in the air. It only needed the word to be passed to bring the horsemen together; and so, when the message sped from Cloncaird that a raid was forthcoming on the herds and flocks of green Barbieston Glen, the houses and the castles of Carrick sent forth their representatives to share in the excitement.

The Laird of Cloncaird, Patrick Mure, was connected by marriage with the Kennedys. He followed the fortunes of the Earl of Cassillis. It was at his instigation the raid was promoted, and it was in response to his summons that the Kennedys assembled. From Cloncaird to the southerly bank of the Doon was not a long ride, and it was not until the moon had risen that the raiders set out on their expedition. The villagers of Kirkmichael heard their horse hoofs as they passed. Well they knew their meaning. Such sounds were familiar to them, and they only shrugged their shoulders as they thought that some of the raiders might return no more to tell the tale of the night's adventure. A nearer way might have been chosen, but Cloncaird intended to keep his own side of the Doon as long as he could; and so he followed the highway until he entered the shades of Cassillis.

They are quiet enough to-day, these shades. The Doon maintains its ceaseless babble, carrying its story onwards as it flows, and rythmically running as if its waters had never borne a secret on their breast. And yet, were the divinities of the river to speak in comprehensible tones, what a tale they could tell! In that square old peel that sits so placidly there, dwelt a succession of men who held Carrick in a grip

of iron. They are all lying peacefully in the churchyard at Maybole; but from the day when the laird of grey Dunure crossed from the coast and wedded the mistress of Cassillis, down through three long centuries, the men who dwelt within the walls of that historic house made a whole country-side subservient to them. By the force of indomitable will they became the recognized chiefs of all southern Ayrshire and of a great part of Galloway, and by the strength of their arms and the valour of their bearing they relentlessly crushed out all opposition to their iron rule. The memories clustered thick around the castle and the branches of the great planes nodded their knowledge of many a wild and lawless deed, even when Cloncaird and his followers rode beneath the shadow of the keep and beneath the branches of the trees. It was a familiar echo that the walls gave back as the raiders passed, holding on their way towards the Kirk of Dalrymple and the river ford close by.

The night was still. Not a breath of wind stirred the foliage of the Dalrymple forest. Overhead sailed the moon, bringing out in relief the dense arborial mass, the flat top of the Downans, the interlacing streak of the river, the sleeping hamlets, and the distant hills along the coast and inland. Hitherto the route had been through a friendly country, but when the Doon was crossed at the ford and the riders were upon the territory of the Craufurds, there was need for extreme caution. Kerse was a watchful, wary fox. Not once or twice had his followers awaited on the verge of the river the coming of the Kennedys, and driven them back into the stream ere their struggling horses could obtain a footing on the yielding banks; and even when the passage of the river had been accomplished, the horsemen of Kyle had been found awaiting the arrival of the cattle-lifters under the dark shadow of the woodland. And when the Craufurds were not out in force, a solitary watchman had been discovered by the clattering of his horse as he rode away across

the country towards Kerse, to tell that the Carrick raiders were abroad and to summon the lads of Kyle to the contest. There was need, therefore, for caution, and at the same time for speed. The horses broke into a canter, and across the country they carried their riders towards the glen of Barbieston. The landscape was thickly studded with belts of trees, which cast friendly shadows over the troop. The night was still, and nothing stirred save the sheep on the hillsides and the cattle on the grass. If sounds were heard, they were those of nature, animate and inanimate, the lowing of the kine, the bleating of the flocks, the call of the lapwing, the screeching of the owl, the gentle sighing of the wind in the trees, and the distant rush of the river. On hurried the riders. Well they knew their way. Oft had they ridden across these same fields. Oft harried them of their bovine wealth. It was not a long ride to Barbieston Glen, and they reached it unobserved.

Unobserved? Not quite. The sharp eyes of a solitary watchman had seen them ere they entered the river; and ere they had reached the northern bank of the ford, he was speeding with all the haste he could muster towards Kerse. His steed was fleet, the distance could be accomplished in half an hour, and the miles were rapidly slipping away under the striding gallop of the horse. The warder at Kerse heard him come and threw open the gate to receive him. There was commotion in the castle when he told his tale; the commotion of excitement, a hasty girding on of swords, of donning of light armour, of snatching the ready hagbuts from their places, of the harnessing of horses in the stalls, of the calling in of the yeomen who lived at hand, of the mustering to repulse the Kennedys. It was an old story, and the Craufurds knew every detail of it by heart.

Meanwhile the Kennedys had entered the glen, and their horsemen were scouring the fields adjacent, for the spoil. Six score oxen fed there, and twelve horses were at the

grass in the meadows. Two or three score of sheep completed the number of the live stock. The moon showed where they were, and there was no searching for them; yet it took time ere they were all collected. For it had to be done quietly. The cattle were gathered together in a group, the horses were secured, and the sheep. Every attempt to break away, or to stampede, was checked by the ready riders. The gates were thrown open, the prey was driven out into the open, unenclosed country, and the raiders moved off towards the river.

"Methinks," said Mure of Cloncaird, as they turned their faces to the Doon, "that Kerse has slept over-soundly."

"Aye," responded Kennedy of Guiltree, "the old fox has been caught napping for once."

With what speed they could muster, they steadily drove the spoil in front of them. Within an hour they would cross the march of Kyle and re-enter Carrick, and then farewell to the hope of rescue. For Cassillis House was just over there amid the gloom of the trees, and from the rising ground they could all but espy its dark square towers against the night. An hour! If so, what need to haste?

The night was still serene, and sound travelled far; and from the direction in which the Castle of Kerse stood there fell on their ears an indistinct, undefined noise. Guiltree looked at Cloncaird, and they both reined in their horses and listened. The sound was faint, for it was far off, but, as they listened, it gradually shaped itself into what they could quite well comprehend. It came down more clearly, and more clearly still, until they recognized the rattle of a troop of horsemen across the rough stony road which led from Dalrymple to the hills above Cumnock. There was no need for caution now, and no time to be lost. It could be no other than the Craufurds, hard on their track.

"Drive on the cattle and reach the ford!" shouted Mure of Cloncaird. The Kennedys obeyed. The horsemen spread

themselves out fan-like in rear of the booty, whips were applied to the flanks of the steers, the frightened sheep were driven at a run, and the captive horses required no urging on to hurry from the tumult which rose behind. All the while the sound of the coming Craufurds became more and more distinct. They were making for the ford, and if the Kennedys were to drive off the prey they must reach it before their pursuers. The most strenuous efforts were made, therefore, to accomplish their object; but, unless their expedition was to be bootless, there was a point beyond which they could not force their pace. They could have left the cattle, but as well might they have remained at home. To give them up without a struggle was not one of the contingencies. What they must do was to send a party forward with the booty, and to retain in the rear the services of all who were not thus employed. This they did. About a dozen yeomen were accordingly instructed to drive the flocks on towards the Doon, and to make the passage with all available speed; the remainder took up their position on the path as it ran through between two belts of trees, and there awaited the inevitable conflict.

The Craufurds came full sixty strong, and thus had rather the advantage in numbers. There was nothing to delay or to stay their progress save the living barrier of Kennedys under the peaceful shadow of the woodland, and this barrier they must force at all hazards, unless they were to return to Kerse to tell the grey-haired chief whom they had left behind them that they had failed in their object. As the Kennedys saw them enter between the stretching plantations, they raised a shout of defiance. The Craufurds gave it back, and rode on ready for the shock. Each man held sword or battle-axe in hand, and all were eager for the fray. The quiet night air, which so shortly before was vocal only with the congenial voices of Nature, was filled with contending cries. These were but the prelude to the rushing of the

yeomen, the rattling of steel upon steel, the prancing of the horses, and the groans of the wounded. Right stoutly did the Kennedys oppose the men of Kyle. They met them man to man and hand to hand stubbornly, tenaciously contesting every inch of ground. Saddles were emptied of their riders, wounded horses fled across the country, wounded men crept under the shelter of the plantations. But the Craufurds pressed on and would not be denied. All down the path resounded the echoes of the fray, until the clashing of the armour and the cries of the struggling horsemen awoke the sleepers in Dalrymple hamlet, and bade them wonder and cower because of the strange, wild medley of the sounds.

The fight was now a running one. Yonder, not two hundred yards ahead, were the advance guard of the Kennedys, driving on with whip and yell the affrighted flocks. The ford was within sight. The nearer the Craufurds drew, the more desperate were the Kennedys to stay their progress. Who would reach the ford first? Already some of the oxen had stampeded, and solved the question so far as they were concerned, but the larger portion of the drove was still under control, and might yet be secured. The haughs of Cassillis were but over there—could they be won ere the men of Kerse should intervene and get between the cattle and the river?

The banks of the Doon were reached, and there the affray was decided. Craufurds and Kennedys were mingled in struggling confusion, fighting on the haughs by the stream, and in the river's bed; the oxen, bewildered, terrified, ran hither and thither in their fright, plunging into the cooling waters, or scattering in all directions across the country. Part of the booty was secured, part was not, and the echoes of the struggle died away in the silence of the night. By common consent the combatants drew off, and attended to their wounded. There were some who needed no attention. The battle-axe or the sharp sword-thrust had for ever put

them beyond the need for further care. But many there were with cruel wounds, and these were sought out all along the long line of the contest; the flowing blood was staunched, and they were put upon the backs of the horses and taken—the Kennedys across the Doon, to where Cassillis opened its portals to receive them; the Craufurds back by the way over which they had come, to the friendly walls of Kerse.

When the dead had been interred and the wounded healed, Kerse lodged information with the criminal authorities against those concerned in the raid of Barbieston. Kennedy of Guiltree, Kennedy of Blairquhan, Mure of Cloncaird, and fifty-seven others, were accordingly brought to book for their misdemeanour. They were sent from the Court of Justiciary in Edinburgh for trial to Ayr, where the leaders became surety for one another, and bound themselves to settle all lawful claims made by the Craufurds for the loss of the cattle lifted. As for the men slain, these were not scheduled in the indictment; and as for the wounds inflicted, these were a necessity of the situation, a natural outcome of the struggle which went on between the lords of Kyle and of Carrick. The number of cattle, of sheep, and of horses was duly paraded before the Judge, and the Kennedys had to pay accordingly.

JOHNNY FAA

AND THE

EARL OF CASSILLIS' LADY.

AYRSHIRE has comparatively few ballads. Songs she has innumerable, and song-writers galore; but ballads of the old

school and style, which have hung about the country side from days unknown, and which are either the product of local tradition, or are themselves responsible for tradition not otherwise authenticated, are scanty in the extreme. The Scottish and English borderland is peculiarly rich in this class of literature; and many an event which must otherwise have perished out of mind and memory, many a fray and foray, many a ride and raid, are thus as imperishably enshrined in verse as they could possibly have been by the most prosaic of historians, or the most candid and matter of fact of paragraphists. But speaking generally, the south-west of Scotland has a dearth of such literature; and the county of Ayr has certainly not a dozen old-world ballads worthy of the name. That of "Johnny Faa and the Earl of Cassillis' Lady" is the best known that we have. Its origin is unknown. It is found in old story books and in dog-eared and brown-paged song books; but whence it came and who wrote it are, as has been said, alike unknown.

One thing, however, is certain; it is not less than about a couple of centuries old. And this much, too, seems to be fairly assured, that as a ballad sung round the country and "crooned" by ingle-neuk and in peasant-gathering, it existed in its earlier days rather as "household words" than as a recognized and defined production. There are at least three or four versions of it, which go to show that as it passed from mouth to mouth and from memory to memory it underwent such changes as are easily understood when it is considered that those who reproduced it in black and white drew their knowledge of it from various sources. Had it been traceable to a given author, such changes could hardly—indeed, could not possibly—have occurred. As reproduced in magazine literature early in the present century, it is admittedly an antique ballad; and its author is specified as "unknown." Viewed as a ballad, it is a very fair specimen of the art of the balladist. It is quaint, it is long-drawn,

the lines are somewhat irregular; but sung to the tune now associated with "A wee bird cam' to oor ha' door," and with the believing sympathy of the Ayrshire peasant of a hundred years ago, we can well believe that it was one of the most popular lilts of the country side. It is too long for modern consumption or to suit the canons of the popular taste of to-day; but taste is a relative thing, and I am not disposed to say that it is too long or that it is without very considerable merit.

"Johnny Faa" was printed in the *Scots Magazine* about seventy years ago; and was accepted by the writer of the article which accompanied it, as worthy of credence. Whether he was right in his conclusions we shall inquire by-and-bye; let us, in the meantime, have a look at the ballad itself as it appeared in the pages of that magazine. It is not given as original; on the contrary the writer says distinctly that he took it down from the lips of a peasant, who no doubt had it in turn from somebody older than he. Here it is:—

The gypsies they came to my Lord Cassillis' yett,
  And O but they sang bonny;
They sang sae sweet and sae complete
  That down came our fair Ladie.

She came tripping down the stairs
  And all her maids before her,
As soon as they saw her weel-far'd face,
  They coost their glamourie owre her.

She gave to them the good wheat bread,
  And they gave her the ginger,
But she gave them a far better thing,
  The gold ring off her finger.

"Will ye go with me, my hinny and my heart,
  Will ye go with me, my dearie?
And I shall swear by the staff of my spear
  That your Lord shall ne'er come near thee."

"Gae tak' from me my silk manteel,
And bring to me a plaidie;
For I will travel the world owre
Along with the Gypsie Laddie.

"I could sail the seas with my Jockie Faa,
I could sail the seas with my dearie.
I could sail the seas with my Jockie Faa,
And with pleasure could drown with my dearie."

They wandered high, they wandered low,
They wandered late and early,
Until they cam' to an old tenant's barn,
And by this time she was wearie.

"Last night I lay in a weel made bed
And my noble Lord beside me;
And now I must ly in an old tenant's barn
And the black crew glowerin' owre me."

"O hold your tongue, my hinny and my heart,
O hold your tongue, my dearie,
For I will swear by the moon and the stars
That thy Lord shall nae mair come near thee."

They wandered high, they wandered low,
They wandered late and early,
Until they cam' to that wan water,
And by this time she was wearie.

"Aften have I rode that wan water
With my Lord Cassillis beside me,
And now I must set in my white feet and wade,
And carry the Gypsie Laddie."

By and by came home this noble Lord,
And asking for his ladie,
The one did cry, the other did reply,
"She is gone with the Gypsie Laddie."

"Go, saddle to me the black," he says,
"The brown rides never so speedie,
And I will neither eat nor drink
Till I bring home my Ladie."

He wandered high, he wandered low,
He wandered late and early,
Until he cam' to that wan water,
And there he spied his Ladie.

"O wilt thou go home, my hinny and my heart,
O wilt thou go home, my dearie,
And I'll close thee in a close room
Where no man shall come near thee?"

"I will not go home, my hinny and my heart,
I will not go home, my dearie,
If I have brewn good beer I will drink of the same,
And my Lord shall nae mair come near me.

"But I will swear by the moon and the stars,
And the sun that shines so clearly,
That I am as free of the gypsie gang
As the hour my mother did bear me."

They were fifteen valiant men,
Black but very bonny,
And they lost all their lives for one—
The Earl of Cassillis' Ladie.

There is no lack of detail here; indeed, there is on the other hand such a wealth of circumstance as to suggest to the careful reader that there is something mythological about the whole affair.

It is impossible to conceive of the Countess acting as she is said to have done, or to believe that, even if she were mad enough to leave the comforts of Cassillis behind her, she so openly and ostentatiously renounced her position and accepted the attentions of the fascinating "Gypsie." There

is, in short, no inherent evidence in the ballad itself, detailed as it is, that it is dealing with a matter of strict fact.

There is no necessity to compare the wording of the ballad as given above with that of other versions. In all which have come under our notice, the incidents are practically the same. But there is one which does deserve a passing reference. It has one special difference from that quoted, which will be alluded to later on. Apart from this, it is in some respects an improvement on the version given above. It is taken from a Collection of Scottish Songs published some years earlier than the *Scots Magazine* from which the ballad has been extracted. The name of the gipsy hero, instead of being spelt as "Faa," is given as "Faw;" and the song, with the delightful incongruity of this class of poetry, is put in the mouth of one of the gipsies, who was himself hung for his part in the transaction. The dialect, too, is more consistent than of that given. In the first verse, "And O but they sang bonny," reads—

"And wow but they sang sweetly."

"Glamourie" is "glamer;" the gipsy chief swears "by the hilt of my sword," instead of "by the staff of my spear;" and the Countess, instead of expressing her determination to "travel the world owre with the Gypsie Laddie," expresses herself thus:—

"Tho' kith and kin and a' had sworn,
I'll follow the Gypsie Laddie."

The Earl, on his return, orders out the "black, black steed," but makes no reference to the brown. And the last verse runs—

"And we were fifteen well-made men,
Of courage stout and steady,
And we were a' put down for ane,
A fair, young wanton lady,"

which, to say the least of it, is hardly complimentary to the moral character of the heroine of the ballad.

But, has the ballad any foundation in truth? Before trying to settle that question, it is as well to tell the story, in so far as it can be gleaned from very scant materials. The writer of the article in the *Scots Magazine* fixes the date of the elopement in 1643. The Earl of that period is recognized in the family traditions, and in the story of the times, as "the grave and solemn Earl." He was a Presbyterian, staunch and rigorous, and he was so prominent in this capacity that he was sent up from Scotland to Westminster, where the Assembly of Divines were in session, to sign, as representing the Presbyterianism of Scotland, the Solemn League and Covenant. Indeed, it was during his absence upon this very commendable errand that his wife, according to the story, gave occasion for the ballad. The Countess was Lady Jean, daughter of Thomas, first Earl of Haddington. So much, then, is gospel—that the grave and solemn Earl was the husband of Lady Jean. It is not much, indeed; but it has its bearing as throwing some light upon the character of the tale. Before her wedding—and here, I am afraid, we must throw ourselves somewhat more at large—she was wooed by a knight who hailed from Dunbar, and who rejoiced in the name of Sir John Faa. Sir John's attentions were favoured by the fair Lady Jean; but her father frowned upon them. Whether the knight was poor, or whether her parents aspired higher in their regards for their daughter's position in life, cannot be said now, but, at all events, the Earl of Haddington frowned savagely, and to some purpose, upon Sir John Faa. He encouraged the Earl of Cassillis, on the other hand, and insisted so hotly on Lady Jean accepting the noble lord from the westland, that she played the part of the dutiful daughter, deferred to his wishes, and wedded "the King of Carrick." Sir John Faa suffered in silence, but his heart was big within him, and he

swore, no doubt, by the hilt of his sword and by his faith, that not even her marriage should be allowed to stand between him and his love for his old sweetheart.

Time passed on : but its soothing influences were of no effect upon Sir John. So he resolved to gain strategically what he had failed to secure by fair means. Accordingly he attired himself as a gipsy chief, and with a band of his followers similarly disguised, he set out for Carrick. Arrived at Cassillis House, the quasi-gipsies contrived to attract the attention of the Countess, who was not long in recognizing in the leader of the wanderers her old lover from the east country. Her slumbering affection for Sir John revived, and, believing that the Earl was in London on State errand, and that the coast was clear for escape, she left Cassillis House behind her, and joined the gipsies, who, having attained their object, lost no time in taking their departure. But, unfortunately for them, the Earl was not so far away as they thought. His business in London concluded, he had set forth on his return journey, and, ere the gipsies with their willing captive were far removed from the scene, he rode into the courtyard and dismounted by the walls of the Castle. All was in confusion. Demanding the wherefore, the attendants told him what had occurred. Grave and solemn as he was, and fresh from an interview with the reverend fathers of the Solemn League and Covenant, the Earl was still a Kennedy. The Chief of a powerful family, proud of his race, his name, his honour, he listened impatiently while the frightened servants told the tale, and at once laying aside the semi-ecclesiastical character he had worn in England, he called his retainers to horse, and set out on his quest. According to one version of the story, the chase, as nearly all stern chases are, was a long one; for it was not until the gipsies were hard by the walls of merry Carlisle that they were overtaken. According to the other account, the Earl captured them ere they were

out of sight of the House of Cassillis, at a place known from that day to this as the Gipsy Steps. In either case, however, the result was the same. The gipsies objected to capture, and fought for their lives; and if they were not slain near Carlisle, nor by the banks of the Doon, they were hanged in the border city itself, or else from the gnarled branches of the ancient "dule tree" which throws its shadow over the hall door whence issued, that fateful day, the hapless Lady Jean. The gipsies—that is, Sir John Faa and his followers—thus disposed of, the Earl turned his attention to his wife. There stands at the foot of the High Street of Maybole a square peel of the old-fashioned type—strong-walled, built by men who meant that their handiwork should bear the brunt of war and of weather, and see generation upon generation of the sons of men go down under their shadow—and thither the Countess was conveyed. Here she was confined till the day of her death.

To keep her in constant memory of her lapse into unfaithfulness to the bands of wedlock, there were carved round the windows of her room a number of stone heads. These were to remind her of the fate which befell the masquerading gipsies, "and there they stand until this day to witness if I lie." She spent her spare time—and it must have been very considerable—sewing an elaborate tapestry still in existence, whereon she is represented seated on horseback behind a gaily-attired cavalier, and surrounded, or followed by a band of horsemen, whose garb is suggestive of something very different from that which may have been supposed to have been worn by a group of tatterdemalion gipsies.

The other story is practically the same in detail though the gipsy chief is a real and not a fictitious "Egyptian." He is the veritable Johnny Faw or Faa. By the aid of his charms or sorceries he bewitched the heart of the Countess; and having "cast the glammer owre her," persuaded her to fly with him. This she did. As before, the Earl arrived in

the nick of time, overtook the gipsies, brought them back to Cassillis House, and hung them all in a row from the branches of the family tree. This is the tale which finds the greater credence in Carrick; and it is dangerous to doubt it on the scene of its reputed occurrence. Why, there stands fair and flourishing the very dule tree from which the gipsies dangled in their dance of death; there is the very identical staircase adown which tripped the Countess with all her maids before her; and there even is "Johnny Faa's bedroom," where he slept, and the self-same bed in which he reposed. It must be said, however, with all respect to the sensitive feelings of the natives, that there is no tradition or ballad which gives the slightest colouring to the story that the gipsy chief ever passed a night under the roof of the Earl.

Now to examine into the truth of the two versions of the occurrence. It will be remembered that, according to the first, the occurrence took place in the year 1643. That is not so very long ago. History was history in the middle of the seventeenth century; and it is unlikely, to say the least of it, that a lady in the position of the Countess of Cassillis could have eloped, even with a Knight, without leaving behind some record of the adventure more reliable than a ballad. The memorials of the Kennedy Family are tolerably complete, from a much earlier date than this. They have not been compiled by a chronicler so very favourable to the great Carrick family that he would have permitted such an event to escape his attention; on the contrary, he would gladly have grasped at anything likely to stain the annals of the Kennedys. But worse than that, Lady Jean in 1643 would not, had she been alive, have been less than thirty-eight or thirty-nine years of age; and it is barely conceivable that a lady who was verging on forty summers, and who was in possession of a family of at least two daughters, would have left kith and kin and comfort

behind her, and sullied her life by running away with anybody, no matter whom. There is another side to this argument. Sir John Faa—if indeed he be not a myth altogether—was not at all likely to attempt to steal from the arms of her husband a lady over whose head nearly four decades had passed. Worse still, for the authenticity of the tale, Lady Jean died in 1642, the year before her reputed escapade. That ought to settle it so far as the year is concerned.

But, objectors may say, there is a possibility that it may be the date that is at fault. There is a good deal in possibility; but here at least not even possibility can explain away what certainty has written on records which are still existing. Lady Jean never was confined a prisoner in Maybole, but lived on terms of sincerest affection with her husband to the close of her chapter; and when she died and was buried from Cassillis, the Earl wrote lovingly and touchingly of her attributes and her faithfulness as a spouse. In the charter room of Eglinton Castle there was discovered a few years ago a letter from the Earl to Alexander, sixth Earl of Eglintoun (Greysteil,) intimating that, "it hath pleased the Almighty to call my dear bed-fellow from this valley of tears to her home (as she herself in her last hour so called it)," and inviting Lord Eglintoun to the funeral "at Cassillis, and from this to our burial-place at Maybole." Lord Eglintoun answered in terms of condolence. A contemporary letter from the Earl of Cassillis to the Rev. Robert Douglas is also in existence, in which the Earl refers to his deceased wife in terms of endearment, and which slays anew the thrice slain falsehood of the noble lady's misdemeanour. It may be added that Lady Jean left two daughters, one of whom was married to Lord Dundonald; the other, "in the last stage of antiquated virginity," conferring her hand, and her purse, upon the youthful Gilbert Burnett, afterwards celebrated as the Bishop of Salisbury.

Seeing then, that the 1643 story goes to the limbo of impossibility; that the Knight of Dunbar is a weak invention of the enemy; and that the popularly accepted tale of two centuries and more is a mere myth, we must look a hundred years further away if we are even to find a gipsy worth considering as a potent factor in a case of such aristocratic abduction. The fact might have been elaborated that in 1643 gipsies—or Egyptians as they are called in the criminal proceedings of the period, in which, unfortunately for their reputation, their names most often appear—were little better than the common vagrants that they are to-day, and that they were under the ban of a severe statute framed for their extermination. This was unnecessary.

A hundred years before, however, there was a Johnne Faw of distinction and note in his own way, who, in the reign of James V., ruled his own subjects as he listed, and who was not subjected to any interference on the part of the Crown; who, on the contrary, was backed up by the monarch in the exercise of his sway. This is clearly shown by a letter under the Privy Seal in favour of "Johnne Faw, Lord and Erle of Little Egypt," of date February 15, 1540. It is addressed to the Sheriffs of Scotland, including the Sheriff of "Air," to the "Baillies of Kile, Carrik, and Cunynghame," and to the Provost of "Air," as well as to the other chief magistrates of the burghs enjoying separate jurisdiction. It had been represented to His Majesty by "our lovite Johnne Faw" that he required assistance in the execution of justice upon his "company and folks, conform to the laws of Egypt, and for the punishment of all them that rebel against him." It seems that various members of his troop had run away from him; and, adding injury to insult, that they had taken away with them a large sum of money which they contended was theirs in lawful possession. The chief offender was one Sebastian Lalow, and among his accomplices were Anteane Donea, Salona Fanga, Nona Finco, Phillip Halfeyggow,

Grasta Neyn, Bernard Beige, Demer Mats Kalla, Noffow Lawlour, and Martin Femine. The gipsy chief declared himself bound to account for all his followers, dead or alive; and he therefore made appeal to the King to assist him. This James at once did, issuing a proclamation to the magistrates of the kingdom, which cannot be regarded as other than a most interesting and remarkable document. "Our will is therefore," he says, "and we charge you shortly that you and each one of you within the bounds of your offices, command and charge all our lieges within the bounds of your offices that none of them take in hand to reset, assist, fortify, supply, maintain, defend, or take part with the said Sebastian and his accomplices above written, against the said Johnne Faw, their lord and master; but that they and ye in likewise take and lay hands on them where they may be apprehended, and bring them to be punished for their demerits conform to his laws; and help and fortify him to punish and do justice upon them for their trespasses; and to that effect lend to him your prisons, stocks, fetters, and all things necessary thereto, as ye and each one of you, and all others our lieges will answer to us thereupon, and under our highest pain and charge that after may follow. . . and likewise that ye command and charge all skippers, masters and mariners of all ships within our realm, where the said Johnne and his company shall happen to resort and come, to receive him and them upon their expenses, for taking them forth of our realm to parts beyond sea."

These surely were the halcyon days for a gipsy chief in Scotland! But they did not last for ever. Early the following century—in 1609—an Act was passed for the extermination or banishment of the wandering aliens; and most reluctantly were its provisions acted upon. Two years after its enactment, for instance, we find a group of Faas, four in number—Moses, David, Robert, and John *alias* Willie—sentenced to be taken to the Burrow Muir of Edinburgh,

and there to be hanged "till they be deid." In 1415 the Court of Justiciary is found dealing with an individual who had resetted John Fall, " a notorious Egyptian and chieftain of that unhappy sort of people." Sentence of death was passed next year upon John Faa, James Faa, his son; Moses Baillie, and Helen Brown for no other crime apparently than that of being in the country contrary to statute, but the doom was ordered to be suspended pending the pleasure of the King. What that pleasure was there is no means of knowing. In 1624 Captain John Faa, Robert Faa, Samuel Faa, John Faa, younger, Andrew Faa, William Faa, Robert Brown, and Gavin Trotter, "all Egyptians, vagabonds, and common thieves," were sentenced to be hanged on the Burrow Muir. A most inhuman sentence was passed upon the wives and daughters of these victims of 1624. By the High Court of Justiciary they were ordered "to be taken to the place of their execution in some convenient part, and there to be drowned till they be deid." Fortunately for the credit of the Sovereign, he remitted the death sentence, and had the women and children, more mercifully, banished the kingdom.

It would be absurd to look among these vagrant wanderers for a worthy hero of such an adventure as that with which we are dealing. With the exception of Johnne Erle of Littel Egypt," there does not seem to have been one of all the gang fit for such a high enterprise; and unfortunately for his claim to rank as the hero of the ballad, we cannot find the faintest shadow of proof that he ever so distinguished himself. It is not at all improbable that the Earl of Cassillis may have been associated with gipsydom to this extent, that he may have been instrumental in having had prompt justice executed upon some members of the fraternity, who, through their misconduct, had incurred his displeasure; but it is too much to ask any intelligent reader to believe that nothing short of such an escapade as the stealing away

of his lawful spouse can be accepted as justification for his execution of summary vengeance upon the Faas. An earl's power and a gipsy's life were two very different things in these good old days.

The contemporary in the earldom of Cassillis to Johnne Faa, the "Erle of Littel Egypt," was Gilbert, the third earl, and there is abundant evidence to prove that his wife was a faithful spouse until the close of the chapter. Into that there is no need to go. It will be time enough to show that she did not disgrace the family name when it is seriously alleged that she did.

To conclude, there is evidence in the older version of the ballad itself to which I have alluded, to indicate that, as it was framed originally, it did not even affirm that its heroine was a Countess of Cassillis. The gipsies did not come to "Lord Cassillis' yett," but to "our good Lord's gate." How easy as the song went from mouth to mouth to account for the transition! From "our good Lord's yett" to "the Castle yett," and from that to "Lord Cassillis' yett" is accomplished without the faintest difficulty; and the local pronunciation of Cassillis (Castle's) makes the change all the more easy. Must we then dismiss the ballad as utterly devoid of foundation? We are loathe to give up such stories as "a weak invention of the enemy;" but in this case there can be no alternative. And therefore the most that can be said for the ballad now is that it is a fairly good specimen of the class of songs which delighted our ancestors. Historically, it is absolutely worthless—and worse, it is absolutely untrue.

THE STORY OF KYLE AND CARRICK FOUR HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

It is not easy to bring up a mind picture of everyday life a hundred years ago, and the further away back we go the task becomes the more difficult. In a hot July day you may talk of winter with its lowering skies and its crisp breezes and its cold snow drifts, but you cannot, even in the wildest stretch of imagination, fancy the sensation of a frosty morning. You know quite well what the frosty morning is like, but under the sultry suns of midsummer it is as intangible as a dream of the night. So is it with the centuries that went out long ago. You can read about them, you know that our forefathers did certain things, were imbued with certain convictions, attired themselves in a given garb, and ate certain foods; but not without the utmost difficulty can you place yourself down in the midst of them, walk with them, see the scenes they saw, hear the language they talked, or enter into their feelings concerning the everyday events of their lives. And so far as they were concerned individually, these were what made their lives worth living or not worth living. The moving of the nations, the changing of dynasties, the crashing of empires—these do not as a rule much affect the ordinary countryman of domestic habits. A line of monarchs may die out, empire may succeed kingdom, or republic be raised on the ruins of

empire, yet his little world wags all the same and his roof-tree stands sure above his head, independent of forms of government.

But while we cannot without a vivid use of the fancy transport ourselves to other days, we can utilize the experience and the observation of others, and this must be done if the picture to be presented is at all to be true to the life. And fortunately there were observers of the passing ages and of the simple manners and customs of the countryside. In Carrick, for instance, there was the Episcopal clergyman of Maybole—or Minniebole as it was then called—Mr. William Abercrombie, who utilized his short stay in the capital of the bailliary to some useful purpose. In all probability his congregation was small—for he was a Prelatist forced upon a Presbyterian people—but nevertheless he made good use of his opportunities for collecting knowledge and recording his impressions of the times in which he lived. A century later there was Colonel Fullarton of Fullarton who noted things as they were at that date, who spoke from a long experience, and who, apparently, was eminently solicitous to help on the social progress of the people among whom he spent his days. Earlier observers also left their impressions, and to-day we can look back through their spectacles and produce a faithful picture of the Ayrshire that then was. There is no need, however, to go back in detail further than the two centuries which have all but elapsed since the minister of Minniebole sat in his study and transcribed his contributions to "The Geographical Collections relating to Scotland, collected by Walter MacFarlan of that Ilk, Esquire."

When Colonel Fullarton began to indite his "General View of the Agriculture of the County of Ayr," he professed himself sensible that "this must unavoidably be the dullest of all writings." And no doubt he thought so, too. Were we to follow him in detail, our readers might be inclined, possibly, to side with the gallant colonel, but this there is no

need, for the attainment of the object we have just now in view, to do. We are dealing with social and not agricultural progress, and therefore we must discard the merely technical study and confine ourselves to such passages as bear on the general social condition of the shire.

We have said that Colonel Fullarton wrote from a long, observant knowledge of Ayrshire, and the picture which he draws of its condition in the middle of last century is dark and somewhat dismal. At that period there was hardly a practicable road in the county. The farm houses were mere hovels, "moated with clay," having an open hearth or fire-place in the middle, the dunghill was at the door, the cattle were starving, and the people wretched. Ditches were ill-constructed and hedges worse preserved. The land was over-grown with weeds and rushes, and "drowned" with water, save in the centre of the ridges, which were very high. There were no green crops, no sown grass, no carts or waggons, no straw yards. Garden vegetables were almost unknown. Hardly a potato was to be seen. The little bits of gardens contained poor, straggling kail stocks, which, with milk and oatmeal, composed the standard food of the countryside. Sledges for the carriage of manure were still employed in many districts, in others the manure was carried on cars set on what were called tumbler-wheels, which turned with the axle-tree, and these cars hardly sufficed to bear half a ton in weight. The ground was literally scourged with a succession of crops of oats until it would bear its wretched crop no longer, and then it was allowed to lapse into a condition of sterility and into a wilderness of weeds until it had sufficiently recuperated to produce again a scanty harvest.

Farms were small. A very ordinary sized holding was a "ploughgate," or as much as could employ four horses, the one half of the farm annually being turned up for seed. Three or four farmers frequently lived together in a common

centre and worked their holdings on the mutual help principle. Rents were in many cases paid in kind, the landlord receiving half the produce of the land. In addition to his share of the crops, the laird exacted various servitudes from his tenants. They had to plough his fields for him, work his hay, lead it in, and generally to attend to his business ere they were permitted to mind their own; and, as a consequence, their harvests were not unfrequently ruined from over exposure to the rains and the frosts of the fall months. Cattle were out on the fields, roaming at will, from the end of harvest to the ensuing seed-time; and the result in many cases was that on the clay lands the roots of the natural grass were broken, or the grass itself rotted with the water which gathered in the footprints of the stock. The horses were fed in winter on straw, on boiled chaff, on inferior corn, and on such coarse hay as could be collected from the bogs and marshes. It took four horses to each plough, and three men—one to hold, another to drive, and a third to clear the mould board and keep the coulter in the ground. The plough was invariably heavy, in order that it might contend on fair, equal terms with the stony ground. As a rule enough flax was grown on the farm to keep the women of the family busy at hours that might otherwise have been leisure, and enough hemp for the making of sacks and other coarse material, the stacks of the hemp being substituted in place of candles. Even when there were coal pits in the vicinity, the farmers spent months in cutting, drying, and loading peats to serve as fuel. In winter the cattle were in a condition approaching starvation. By the spring time they were hardly in a position to rise without assistance. In summer they were perpetually harassed by the herds and the yelping dogs which followed at their heels, and the result of their year's round of existence was that they were seldom fit for the market. The country people, however, used very little butcher meat;

and in the towns, save among the better class, flesh was not by any means a common article of diet. Porridge, oatmeal cakes, milk, cheese, groats, or prepared barley, and broth, formed the staple fare. The population of the town of Ayr in the middle of the eighteenth century was from four to five thousand; but so sparing were the burghers of butcher meat that one single animal was all that was killed per week, on an average.

Black cattle and blackfaced sheep had a monoply of the moorland farms. The former were regarded as heavy when they turned the scale at twenty stones; and the supply of wool obtained from the latter was no more than two or three pounds to a fleece.

The picture so far is a terribly black one—there is hardly a white or a bright patch on the canvas—and we might almost be inclined to think that the colours had been laid on with too heavy a hand. It is to be remembered, however, that Colonel Fullarton was not writing for the mere sake of writing, or even simply to record his impressions or his reminiscences, but that he was penning an official document for the Board of Agriculture, and that his statements were sure to be subjected to the strictest survey and the most critical analysis. Reluctantly, therefore, they must be accepted as at least a very close approximation to the truth. Bearing this in mind it does not surprise us to learn that the low condition of agriculture was productive of constant misery, that on many estates this misery was shared alike by laird and by tenant, that mortgages sat heavy on the shoulders of the encumbered landlords, and that a series of bad seasons was the sure precursor of starvation. The latter years of the seventeenth and the opening years of the eighteenth centuries produced incalculable suffering. The shire was reduced to something approaching actual want; and many families were compelled to leave the country and seek refuge in the north of Ireland,

where anew they took up their occupation, and where their descendants remain to this day. When the depth of misery was the greatest the inhabitants were not unfrequently compelled, in order to obtain bare subsistence, to bleed their cattle, so that they might mix the blood with what oatmeal they could procure.

It was not until the latter end of last century that a permanent and beneficial change began to make itself felt. The proprietors of the smaller estates were unable, from pecuniary embarrassments, to initiate reform; but those of the larger properties stepped into the march of progress and set seriously about the improvement of the land, and, with the land, the improvement of the people. The Earl of Eglinton initiated the new departure; and immediately following him were Mr. Fairlie of Fairlie, Mr. Fullarton of Fullarton, and other public spirited men. They set about draining and fencing; they devised methods of communication between the populace of the towns and the dwellers in the rural districts; they found markets for butter, for eggs, for cheese; they introduced stallions whose sires had been imported from Flanders or Holstein; they improved the breed of dairy cattle, gradually driving out the black cattle and putting in their place the progenitors of the present red and white Ayrshires; they made roads which were highways worthy of the name; they planted trees in large districts of the shire where at that period they were practically unknown; they taught the farmers the use of manures; they laid down systems of rotation in cropping; they induced the tenants to discard the agricultural implements of their fathers, and generally promoted the dawn of a brighter and a better epoch than the old.

But they had their own troubles to contend with. There were old prejudices to combat. Labourers were ignorant and indolent; and even the farmers were slow to join in the advance which was visible in more favoured or more

populous counties. Against these somewhat natural obstacles to progress, however, had to be placed incentives to industry. The population of the shire was rapidly increasing, coal-pits were being sunk, blast-furnaces were being erected or in full working, mills were being put down here and there, harbours were being deepened, and facilities for reaching the markets were being devised. There was no possibility of standing still; and so Ayrshire went forward. Yet were there drawbacks. In the multitude of advanced theories and systems of agriculture, all could not prosper; and so it happened that while one man did fairly or even excellently well, another came to grief. All soils were not alike, any more than were the capacities of the tenants to assimilate change. What suited the fertile holms by the rivers was not by any means adapted to the cold clay lands which stretched, and which still stretch, across the county; and what was applicable to the deep loam of the lower lying lands of the interior was out of place on the light, early dry soils of the coast. These things had all to be comprehended, and they took time to comprehend. But a score of years ere last century ran in, it could be affirmed of the Ayrshire farmer that there was no county in the kingdom where crops, especially in wet weather, were more handily or expertly reaped.

Thrashing mills were an adjunct to the improvement. It cost from £30 to £40 to erect one of these, to be worked by two horses. Where the farmers preferred to go to the millers they were at liberty to do so; and in that case drying and grinding cost sixpence per quarter of oats; while the drying, steeping, and malting of barley involved an outlay of two shillings. The cost of preparing an acre of ground for seed was estimated at from thirty to forty shillings; of draining, three to five pounds an acre; of making a turnpike road, five or six shillings a fall; and a complete, single-mounted horse cart cost £5. For a

time, even in an improving age, the people looked askance at pigs; but their remunerative, as well as their eating, qualities came to recommend them. Asses were very rare; indeed there was hardly a "quadruped of this description" to be seen. Mr. Oswald of Auchincruive made an attempt to introduce a good serviceable breed of mules. He sent to Spain to purchase jackasses, and succeeded in turning out large-sized mules, but the farmers turned their backs upon the hardy, long-lived, patient animals, and showed a distinct, and not an unnatural, preference for horses. The price of these, for good working beasts, ran as high as from £30 to £40. Ayrshire cattle ranged from £7 to £12, according to their size, shape, and qualities, and they were expected to give from twenty-four to thirty-four English quarts of milk daily during the summer months, and yield eight or nine English pounds of butter weekly. Sweet milk cheese realized from twopence halfpenny to fourpence per pound, butter from sixpence to sevenpence. Irish cattle fetched £2 or £3 less in the fairs than did the native; and two or three-year-old Highland "knouts" only realized at the most £3 per head, falling, in the case of inferior beasts, to twenty shillings. The aboriginal sheep, blackfaced, hardy, active, and restless, were purchased when three years old at £10 or £12 a score. They only carried from two to three pounds of wool; but when fed till they were five years old, they afforded the finest mutton in the kingdom.

Labourers who gained a livelihood by hedging, ditching, mowing, thrashing, and ploughing—by turning their hand, in short, to anything in the country they could find to do—were paid from a shilling to fourteenpence a day. The rents of their cottages, including a cow's grass, ground wherein to grow their potatoes, and a little garden, varied from £1 to £3 sterling, according to accommodation and extent of ground attached. A journeyman mason received one shilling and eightpence, in some cases two shillings, a day. When

the Catrine mills were erected labour was at a premium. Where in former days the girls with their spinning-wheels had to work hard to make fourpence a day, the men found they could earn from two to three shillings daily; women from one to two shillings daily; and children from one and sixpence to three shillings a week. The increase of public works and of wages was not, at least in the view of Colonel Fullarton, an unmixed good. It begat speculation, which frequently resulted in disaster; it substituted for "the civil cordial manners of the last generation" "regardless, brutal, and democratic harshness of demeanour;" the drinking of spirits, with the attendant evils of smuggling and of immorality, increased; frauds were committed and perjury occasioned, and litigation increased so much that the Sheriff Court at Ayr had frequently forty cases a week to dispose of. Schoolmasters were too often neglectful of the manners of the rising generation, rather encouraging them in rough and boorish incivilities than in acts of reciprocal kindness and urbanity; but seeing that, in addition to their houses and gardens, their salaries in rural districts did not amount to more than £6 or £8 a year, it is not easy to see how they could be expected to inculcate a high standard of either learning or of politeness. Country gentlemen indulged "the natural tendency" of counting upon imaginary rentals long before they became real ones, and they indulged also in a systematic course of "entertaining, drinking, hunting, electioneering, show, equipage, and the concomitant attacks upon the purse," to such an extent that it was surprising to the gallant observer how any unentailed property could possibly remain in the same family for more than two generations.

1696.

Two hundred years is not a long time, in one sense, in the history of a country. National growth is, or if healthy ought to be, a slow traveller; and, as far as social life is concerned,

it will be found that development has been very gradual. We are all conservative of our customs, of our faith, of our beliefs, of our traditions, and even of our superstitions. We know, for example, that the dead do not return from the realms of silence; but when we hear of mysterious appearances and eerie sounds at more or less regular intervals in keeps and in chambers which, in the popular belief, are haunted, while we may coldly dismiss the ghostly sights and noises, and laugh at them, we are very apt at the same time to put in a saving clause so as to keep open the possibility of supernatural occurrences. We cling to them, though cold reason and hard common-sense tell us they do not exist. And in like manner we are tenacious of our customs. We cling to them too. We do not want the countryside to lose its character; and so we do very much as our forefathers did before us. We go to the same kirk, we adopt the same political creed, we attend the same fairs, we do our business in the same markets, we tell the same stories, we live in the same beliefs, and we die in the same faith. But withal, while this is largely true, the world keeps on advancing, and we with it; and thus it comes about that we have to plant our old-world customs and traditions in modern soil. We cannot get rid of the roots of heredity, or of the main stem of our fatherhood, but we engraft new shoots upon the stem, and they draw their nourishment from the long-stretching, deep-reaching, tough fibrous roots that were planted so long ago that we cannot tell when the seed was sown or the sapling unfolded its first tiny leaves to the breeze.

The Carrick of two hundred years ago was very much the Carrick of to-day. Its boundaries were the same then as they are now. The same rivers watered it, the same hills shadowed it, the same Kennedys dwelt in it, the same keeps and castles dominated it. It had the same traditions, it had pretty much the same faith. The same kindly Nature smiled on it, the same human nature animated it.

But to see what it actually was, we must look at it through the spectacles of the Episcopalian minister of Maybole. In his eyes it was a country that was abundantly furnished with all the accommodations of human life. All it needed was iron, in order to enable it to exist without dependence on the outside world. It had the sea open on the one side; it had coal not far removed from the coast; its population was not so large that it could not grow all the grain that was required to feed them; on its broad plains pastured all the cattle, and on its hills all the sheep that were necessary to keep the inhabitants in the very limited supply of butcher meat which fell to their lot. It was a reciprocal district. The plains supplied the graziers with corn, and the hill-sides provided the plainsmen with beef and mutton, with wool, and butter and cheese. Store cattle were extensively preserved. Veal was seldom eaten, save such as came from Kyle or from Cuninghame. The poultry yards were well stocked, and the fowls were sold at easy rates. Wild birds were numerous—so plentiful indeed that the very poorest of the people had bountiful supplies in season of partridge, moor-fowl, black-cock, and plover. The solan goose was a staple article of diet, as was also the Ailsa cock, which was obtained in any desired number from that conical rock which stands sentinel in the jaws of the Firth of Clyde, but which is a part of the Carrick parish of Dailly. The fishers who went down to the sea brought thence supplies of herrings, mackerel, whitings, haddocks, cod and ling; from the Doon, the Girvan, and the Stinchar were taken such quantities of salmon that, in addition to supplying the wants of the district, the fishers were enabled to send their supplies to districts beyond the boundaries, less blessed in the king of fish; and from the lochs and the burns were fished pike, trout, and eels, to add variety to the overplus of the salmon fare.

Carrick was not so destitute, at that period, of forest as

the remainder of Ayrshire seems to have been. There were one or two large forests in various parts of the division, which sufficed for material for the making of implements used on farms and for the building of houses ; and Kyle and Cuninghame were largely indebted to the southern end of the county for their supplies of timber. The principal woods grown were birch, elder, saugh, poplar, ash, oak, and hazel. The banks of the rivers were lined, as they are largely to this day, with belts of trees ; and the parks of the houses of the gentry waved green with the spreading branches of the venerable and veritable fathers of the grove. There were—there are—no lack of lochs and small streams, and springs abounded everywhere.

Four of these springs commended themselves to the observant clergyman as worthy of special attention and as having come under his more immediate and more constant observation. There was My Lord's Well at Maybole, springing at times so abundantly that when its waters were brimming over, it sent down the channel which carried them away, a very considerable burn. The Welltrees Spout was even more generous. It never failed. It gushed and ran in the drought of the hottest and driest summer so generously that its copiousness and sweetness would, in the view of the parson, have been accounted a treasure in the capital city of the nation. Saint Helen's Well was noted for its medicinal properties. The simple folks believed in its efficacy to strengthen weak and backward children, and at certain seasons of the year, and especially on May-day, it was visited by parents in great numbers, carrying to its healing waters their tender or enfeebled offspring. The last of the four gurgled up in Pennyglen, and was believed to do for cattle what Saint Helen's did for children. Not only were the suffering animals brought to it to be cured of their illness, but its restorative waters were taken to them, even far up into the moorland country, where its fame was a household word.

The prelatic clergyman, who enjoyed at best but a doubtful tenure of office and whose hearers had no sympathy either with the doctrines he proclaimed or his manner of proclaiming them, looked somewhat askance at the common people. He admitted that the men were generally tall and stately, well-limbed and comely, and that nowhere else within his knowledge were women to be found with better complexions. He could not deny that they lived long, men and women alike, and that grandfathers were common appendages to the family circle. But putting aside what might be called the mortality aspects of the population, the minister was not quite satisfied that he resided among a race that was not deeply-dyed in original sin or inherited weakness. They loved ease. As a rule they preferred the pasturing of cattle and merchandizing, to digging in the soil or to any sort of hard labour. Even in trading, they were not inclined to carry their enterprise far afield; and so long as their energies found an outlet at home, they did not cultivate opportunities for extending business beyond the district. If taken away, however, from their native soil—driven out by adverse circumstances or emigrating from necessity—they seemed to have the knack of doing well and of prospering wherever they went. The general plenty at home begat turbulence and a tendency to be unruly; servants, instead of being obedient to their masters in all things, were insolent; and as a result of easy living and lax discipline in law and in morals, Carrick was what the minister called "a sanctuary, or rather a nursery of rogues bearing arms against authority upon pretext of religion." But there were sheep as well as goats; there was wheat as well as chaff, devout Christians who came to hear the preaching of the Word, worthy successors of the men of former generations who had founded and endowed monasteries and built kirks and houses of devotion in the name of the Master. And these were the salt of Carrick.

Whatever may have been the condition of the common people, the gentry seem to have enjoyed life after their own fashion. Their houses were beautifully situated, as a rule, either on the coast or in the country, and though their strong fortifications, heavy gates, and deep-cut moats betokened that they were at least meant for purposes of defence, if not of defiance, they were not above cultivating those little social amenities which enhance every day existence. Newark, on the northern slope of Carrick, boasted a well-kept park and a well planted orchard; at Cassillis grew apricots, peaches, cherries, and all other fruits and herbage that the kingdom could produce; the Castle of Ardmillan looked like a palace with its deep cut ditch, its large courtyard, its capacities for siege-standing, its early pears and apples, and its fertile meadows; Kirkmichael House was regarded as desirable a dwelling as there was in all Carrick, with its sheltered gardens, its well-stocked orchards, and its adjacent lake; Dalquharran, the best house of all that country, sat embosomed in vast enclosures of trees and afforded every comfort that the heart of man could desire; Bargany was "mighty commodious;" and as for the House of Drummochren, though small in size and comparatively unknown, it had beauties and conveniences sufficient to charm the heart of the somewhat unimpassioned recorder. It is, he says, "a most lovely thing, being every way commodious and convenient for living easily. It is, as it were, an abridgment of this country, having all the accommodations that are dispersed through it, all comprised within its short and small bounds. It has a house, not for ostentation, but for conveniency, fit to lodge the owner and his neighbours. It hath gardens, orchards, wood, water; all the fishes that swim in rivers; all sorts of cattle, sheep, cows, swine, and goats; all sorts of fowl, wild and tame; all manner of stone for building, freestone and limestone; coal, moor, moss, meadow, and marle; a wauk-mill and a

corn-mill; and all manner of artizans and tradesmen within its bounds." Such was the dwelling of a Carrick gentleman two hundred years ago.

It cannot fail to strike the observant reader that, according to the narratives of those who were in a position to know whereof they affirmed, the Carrick of 1696 was, on the whole, a much superior place to the Kyle and Cuninghame of a century later. And it is not improbable that, in some respects, it was. In the seventeenth century Carrick was fully abreast of the age; in the eighteenth, Ayrshire had fallen behind the times. The feudal system, with all its faults, reigned supreme in the one case; in the other it was being broken in upon by the increase of independent populations, by the progress of manufactures, and by the necessity to derive new methods of keeping in the van of progress. The old Carrick families were still in the enjoyment of their strength and their privileges; the population dependent on them was never large; the variety of the productions of the soil and the wealth of sea, of rivers, of plains, of hillsides, and of forests, were quite sufficient to stave off anything like serious depression or want. There was not the same rapid transition of estates from one set of owners to another as there seems to have been elsewhere; and the peasantry, like the lords, were native to the soil, and could look back to generations upon generations settled in the same dwellings and occupying relatively the same position to the owners. But while this may be so, and while the peasantry were, no doubt, fairly well to do, as careful an inquiry into their social condition as that bestowed upon the shire a century later might have been productive of revelations of a different character from those of the Episcopalian minister of Maybole. Probably the good man, holding uncertain tenure, and himself, from the nature of his position, unpopular, did not care to mix much with the common people, and drew his ideas concerning them

from those who sided with him in creed, and whose social position commended them to his good graces more than did the stern, dour, uncompromising Presbyterianism of the lower classes. They did not want to have anything to do with him, and he in return seems to have had very little to do with them.

A vast change has come over the country since the days when the Earl of Cassillis was hereditary Bailie of the whole district of Carrick. A couple of centuries ago he was the ruling spirit in its destinies; and he gathered about him in Maybole a fashionable assemblage of Carrick squires. There they had their town houses. No doubt many of the gentry went up to Edinburgh for the "season," as to-day they go to London; but as a proof that the ancient capital of Carrick was not despised as a residental centre, it is enough to note that within a comparatively recent time no fewer than twenty-eight winter mansion-houses could be counted in the town. To-day, it is unnecessary to say, there is literally not one, though the grey castle of Maybole still frowns upon the visitor who approaches by the Ayr road. The high court—and Carrick had a complete system of jurisdiction within itself—sat at Girvan, but the ordinary courts, civil and criminal, were located in Maybole. Maybole itself was a burgh, but neither a Royal burgh nor a burgh of Barony. It had a direct charter from the King, and appointed its own magistrates and officers; and it disputed the claim of the head of the House of Kennedy, Lord Cassillis, to be its superior. Into the ecclesiastical conditions I do not enter.

The good old times were only good on the same principle that far birds have fine feathers. Romance has thrown its halo round them. The novelist has depicted the courtly charms of the fair ladies, and the balladist has sung the valour of the knights, until a picture of universal grace and charm has been revealed. Even the raids and the forays have

been gemmed in poetry until in the far distance there seems to have been nothing more romantic than their rides, on purpose bent, by the pale moon beams. In all probability, save for its occasional excitement, the life of those days was a terribly hum-drum and monotonous affair. Education was limited; the more delicate sensibilities were left studiously uncultivated; sectarian and family feuds occupied the place of Christian charity and social brotherhood. But they were times of transition, as these of our own are, and, to be properly understood, they require to be viewed through the somewhat dim light which shines reflected on them, and not through the fierce, discriminating rays of the latter end of the nineteenth century. We cannot afford to belittle our forefathers; for, as we belittle them, so we belittle those who have sprung from them.

HOW A SHEEP'S HEAD BEGAT STRIFE BETWEEN AUCHINLECK AND OCHILTREE.

AYRSHIRE is full of beautiful scenery, in spite of its long, undulating stretches. These have a sameness about them, but they are only the foreground of the picture, or, if the picture is a small one, they are the paths that lead to it. Sometimes it is a quiet woodland scene, where Nature seems ever to rest, and where a profound sense of stillness and of quiet is felt. Sometimes it is the sweeping bend of a river, its clear waters tumbling from rock to rock, rippling over the shallows, or flowing unbroken on in that ceaseless eternity of motion which a river always suggests, to that

equal eternity of immensity that rolls round the globe. Above the river the trees droop gently, or the long bulrushes grow, and behind them the large, coarse fronds of the commoner ferns—if there is a coarseness in fern life at all—rise in their deep green, always refreshing to the eye and to the mind of the observer. Sometimes it is a deep wooded dell, a cleft in the surface of the earth, down which a little brook wanders, its sides a strange succession of contrasts, the rugged rock softened by the lichen, its rudest boulders harmonized and beautified by the creeping moss, the trailing woodbine, or the enswathing ivy. Sometimes it is a hoary old ruin, where the past dwells—the past of humanity—where once our fellow-mortals lived their part on life's stage, where history found one of its chapters and romance one of its stanzas. Or if the pathway leads, like giant vestibule, to scenes beyond, it is to the rocky peaks, the gently rising knolls, the leafy forest, or, best of all, to the sea. The country is living with such pictures. There is no end to them. They are to be found on every river's side, in every parish. They stretch from the extreme south, where the shire merges into Wigtown, to its contact with Renfrew in the north, and from the sea-coast to the western borders of Lanark and Dumfries. Many of them owe their attractiveness solely to Nature, none to art, and many to the lustre in which antiquity and personal story have bathed them.

Everybody has heard of the Lugar. It is one of the streams of song. Not a large river when it flows on a fine summer's day, but a beautiful. In its course it evolves a thousand scenic delights. Many a generation it has seen come and go, many a knight has ridden by its waters, many a lady of the olden times has pledged her troth to the accompaniment of its music. It flows to-day as ever, fresh and clear and bright, and in the murmur of its waters is heard the story of the past. And the chapter which follows is part of the story.

There stands on the bank of the Lugar, in the parish of Auchinleck, the remains of an old castle, the House of Auchinleck. It is the veriest of ruins. What still endures tells of a stronghold of five centuries ago and more, when Ayrshire was the battle ground of contending families, and when mansions were built for defence and for defiance. It is now the veriest ghost of its original. With its foundations deep in the old red sandstone, it occupies the crest of a high projecting rock—a point formed by the junction of the Hill-end Burn with the classic Lugar. On two sides it was protected—when protection was needed—by the water and the cliffs, while access on the other sides was only to be had by a devious bridle path which wound up the steep ascent, and which practically set attack at defiance. Its walls were heavy and strong, and behind its battlements the dwellers lived without fear of the stormy world beyond. Not far distant is a second old house of Auchinleck, deserted like its progenitor, and within easy distance is the castle, still inhabited, a picturesque mixture of the comparatively old and the comparatively new. It, too, has its old-world look and story, its reminiscences of portcullis and drawbridge, its manor-house redolent of the changing times when society was in the crucible, and when strength of wall and of approach were still regarded as consistent with taste and convenience, and its Grecian structure with its suggestions of civil reformation and emergence from the crude times of barbaric feudalism. The immediate surroundings are charming. Here and there the cliffs rise sheer more than a hundred feet from the foot of the glen, while adown its sides, where these shelve and slope more gently, luxuriant woodland and verdant turf give sylvan tone to the scene.

In the fifteenth century the old house of Auchinleck was inhabited by Auchinleck of that ilk. On the opposite side of the river stood the Castle of Ochiltree, another keep for the

age of the strong hand, and habited by the family of Colvill Both names have disappeared from the proprietorship of that part of the country, and both the families, at least in direct descent, are extinct. At the time mentioned, however, they were very much alive, and on the best terms with one another. So intimate were they that they had devised, by means of a rope, a regular communication between the houses, and when the one was desirous of telling the other anything, or sending something, in place of crossing the Lugar, they called their primitive postal system into exercise. This happy state of matters existed for long. Unhappily, however, the Colvills and the Auchinlecks came to words. What the immediate cause of the quarrel was cannot now be said, but that the strife was keen can well be believed. As the contention grew, all friendly relations ceased, and the heads of the respective families thought only how they could insult and offend one another.

It occurred to Auchinleck to send the crowning mark of contempt. With a grim sense of the ludicrous, he one day collected the bones of a sheep's head of which he and his had partaken, and, rolling them up in a parcel, he adjourned to the window near to which the rope was attached. The parcel was formally addressed to Colvill. The signal was given, the opposing window of Ochiltree was opened, and the little bundle was sent swinging across the river. On reaching its destination it was conveyed to Colvill. He was surprised at the audacity of the enemy across the water in venturing to send him anything whatever, and, when he undid the fastening and his eyes lighted on the collection of bones, his rage knew no bounds. Here was an insult, indeed—an insult that could not be wiped out save with blood. The more he contemplated the bones, the worse became his rage, until it culminated in action. He called about him his retainers and took counsel with them. One

thing was clear, they could not carry Auchinleck House by storm. Its approaches were too craggy for that, and even if the heights were successfully scaled, they were not strong enough to overcome anything partaking of the nature of a determined defence. As the result of their deliberations, they resolved to effect by strategy what they could not do by force. Accordingly, when the time was ripe for action, they stealthily clambered up the rocks leading to the house. They went quietly, so that they should not be overheard, and they lay in wait under the walls until the strong door which shut out the world should be opened. Their patience was at length rewarded. Innocent of the armed men waiting on the door to swing open on its hinges, the warder undid the fastenings. No sooner had he done so than Colvill and his men sprang to their feet, and ere the mischief could be undone they were within the house. The Laird of Auchinleck heard the scuffle in the hall, and, realizing in an instant what it portended, he retired to a secluded corner of his dwelling. He had only a few attendants—not such a gathering, by any means, as to resist the armed men who, swarming upstairs, were soon in possession of the lower floors of the castle and of such defences as Auchinleck could boast. The laird armed himself as best he could, and waited, standing on the defensive. His retreat did not long avail him. The door of his room, oaken though it was, was burst open, and in rushed the avengers. The struggle was short. Auchinleck defended himself to the end, but he was speedily overpowered and slain. And Colvill, having had his injured honour appeased, retreated to his own dwelling, satisfied at having wiped out the terrible insult to which he had been subjected.

Auchinleck was an adherent of the Douglas, and when tidings were conveyed to that doughty chieftain of the outrage perpetrated on him, he took instant steps to mete out retribution. To Ayrshire he came with all the speed

in his power, and with a sufficiently strong band to crush any opposition which he was likely to encounter. Colvill could not hope to cope with the Douglas. His was no large estate; no district of country looked up to him either as its feudal superior or its protector. All he possessed was the lands of Ochiltree. So when he looked out of the windows of his castle and saw surround it the men who followed in the train of Douglas, he needed no Cassandra to warn him that his doom was sealed. Defence was out of the question. What could a few attendants do in opposition to the fierce warriors from across the march of the county? He tried to make terms, but the refusal was curt. Douglas promptly told him to yield himself up to his tender mercies, and take his chance of life. He was not inclined to do this, so the door was forced, and he was speedily led out a prisoner. The house was given over to the flames, as many another castle in Ayrshire has been. Its day was past, its hour come. The torch was put to it. The trembling members of the family fled from it with the attendants, leaving Colvill himself in the hands of the enemy; and when they had put a sufficiently safe distance between themselves and danger, and paused to look back towards their dwelling, they saw the dark smoke beginning to wreath it. The pile was lit by the light of day, and all the country knew vengeance was being done. Its glare reddened the night sky, and when next morning broke, the sun, which these many years had been wont to cast his beams on the grey walls of Ochiltree, and light up the eastern windows with his earliest glances, shone on a heap of ruins. Walls, oaken beams, ceilings, furniture, all lay massed in common destruction, and from that day to this the Castle of Ochiltree has been a waste and a desolation.

The men of Douglasdale stood by while the flames caught hold, nor did they leave the spot until the conflagration had attained such fury as to warrant its running its destructive

course unchecked. The laird was in their midst. In the scuffle in which he had been captured he had been slightly wounded, but he was able to be a conscious witness, and painfully alive to the destruction of his house and his household gods. Douglas meant to carry him along with him, and to transform him into one of his own retainers; and accordingly, when the flames were bathing the topmost heights of the keep and roaring up the shaft of its four narrow walls, he ordered his men to retreat from the spot. They obeyed. Colvill was in close proximity to the chief. He was apparently a man of a communicative turn of mind, and he fell into conversation with the Douglas himself. The latter was taciturn, and he listened impatiently to the speech of his captive. As they pursued their way through the parish of New Cumnock they reached a stream known as the Pashhill Burn. Its waters recalled to Colvill a reminiscence which he could not but retail. One day he had been told by a sybil, or wise woman, that he would end his days by that burn. Whether he thought the prophecy would interest Douglas or not, or whether he related it with the view of ridiculing it, is a matter for speculation; but Douglas immediately resolved that it should be fulfilled. He accordingly gave orders to one or two of his followers to bring about the realization of the sybil's prediction; and so, by the Pashhill Burn, Colvill of Ochiltree was slain.

Douglas and his four brothers, Robert, Henry, Simon, and George, were summoned for their misdeed to appear at the bar of the Court of Justiciary, and were permitted to compound for the offence. Their followers were similarly called upon to make atonement. A hundred merks Scots was sufficient to purchase their release. Only one of their number failed to appear. Sentence of outlawry was pronounced against him, and his goods and gear were forfeited to the King.

THE WRAITH OF LORD LYNE.

It is wonderful how the old names and the old families have clung to Ayrshire. There are a score of estates in the county, big and little, owned by the direct descendants of men and women of the same name as those who possessed them hundreds of years ago; and the names of what are known as the common people are, though perhaps different in spelling, to all intents and purposes the same as those of the clansmen and the feudal retainers who went riding and raiding in the train of their chiefs in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. But while this is indisputable, it is equally true that many ancient families have become extinct, and the broad acres over which they once lorded it have passed into the hands of those who can claim no affinity with their long dead predecessors in possession. These men of a byegone age were great in their day and generation, but the sponge of virtual oblivion has blotted out their records, and now they only live in the pages of the antiquary or in the genealogical tables of the curious. Who else cares to know anything about them? There were, for example, in the parish of Dalry, the Lynes, vassals of a greater house, that of the De Morvilles, who of old possessed the greater part of Cuninghame. They came, they went, they disappeared. Even their names have become extinct in the

county. And yet from a remote time, down to the beginning of the seventeenth century, they played their part, and they left their influence on the countryside wherein they dwelt. Their house stood on the water of Caaf, close by a beautiful natural cascade or "linn." The little stream is there still, running on in its rocky channel as fresh and as clear as when it sprung sparkling from the generous hand of the bountiful Giver, but the walls of the strong tower which the Lynes founded for perpetuity have crumbled away, and the story the family lived is all but forgotten.

Dalry parish in the olden times was a favourite haunt of the denizens of the unseen world, and it had rather more than its share of the warlocks and witches who dwelt upon the earth, but whose nightly rambles were undertaken in the company of the spirits of evil. It had an elf house wherein the fairies abode, a romantic cave overlooking the Caaf. This cavern was a typical abode for the elves. Its chief entrance is right above the stream, which runs some forty feet below. Add to the picturesque surroundings the long, narrow interior, the central chamber, the rocky columns supporting the roof, the heavy, massive roof itself, and the general feeling of solitude and of suggestiveness which such a cave always conveys, and you can quite understand how, in the earlier days of Ayrshire story, the fairies were known to tabernacle within its haunted precincts. Later on there were Covenanters who lodged there; and no doubt with the incoming of the stern, dour saints of the years of persecution, the elfin train vanished away. Less "canny" than these harmless denizens of the glen and the greenwood were the witches and the warlocks who rode and ran in the train of Satan. Willie Mackie had an interview with them on the Ward Farm, and he had it put in writing so that all men might learn and consider. He was late out that night, and proceeding homewards. Suddenly the sound of the bagpipes filled the air, and then he heard sung by a multitude of

voices, to the tune of "O'er the hills and far awa'," one of those doggerel ditties so much affected by the witches of the age. Then, round him came hundreds of men and women, all in white, short dresses, and carrying wands in their hands. They hemmed him about. He rushed hither and thither to break forth from the infernal ring. The sweat poured from him with fear, and the very hair on his head stood up; and it was only after the most desperate exertions that he effected his escape. When he did, however, by the blessing of God, emerge from the legion of the unclean, they disappeared as if by magic. Many of the crew he recognized. One was an elder in the kirk in which he worshipped; and him, on the very next Sabbath, Willie Mackie saw standing at the plate as grave and douce as an elder ought to be. Others were his neighbours, whom he had little suspected of such pranks.

It was in this district that the family of the Lynes resided. Like a high-toned family they had their traditions; and they were even favoured by the reception of premonitory warnings of impending disaster denied to the commoner race of mortals. When one of their number was about to die, his wraith made itself visible to another member of the family. How often these wraiths appeared cannot now be told, but we have the solemn assurance of the balladist and the romancist that they seldom failed in their duty.

Young Lord Lyne had gone hunting on the muir of dark Macharnoch in goodly company. With the rising of the sun he had summoned his friends and his followers to the chase, and high in spirits, and with their sense of pleasurable anticipation whetted, they had cantered off down the glen and out into the open country. Lady Lyne, the mother of the young nobleman, watched them as they trooped away. A pleasant spectacle, indeed! The merry horns awoke the echoes as the light-hearted huntsmen waved their adieux. Beside them trotted the gaunt, lithe, wiry-haired staghounds,

quick to understand whither they were going. The country was well wooded, and in the recesses of the forest browsed the red deer and the fallow. The monarchs of the chase, high-antlered, would soon hear the cheering halloo and the baying of the dogs; and as the prospect filled the minds of the riders, they inhaled the fresh air of the morning with that sense of enjoyment which makes the blood course the faster in the veins of the careless and the free.

The pageant passed from the sight of Lady Lyne. The morning was pure, the air crisp and bracing, the glen hung in sun-begotten diamonds of dew, the green foliage rustled in the air, the little wild flowers raised their petals gently from the grass, and the dancing, shining waters of the stream gave back to the onlooker their heaven-begotten beauty. Tumbling over the linn the Caaf foamed down into its pools, and the rising spray rose like a summer's cloud to give added freshness to the scene. Lady Lyne took her way down the dell, sauntering on in placid admiration of the morning glories. Well she knew the spot, each winding turn, each babbling leap of the rivulet. The trees nodded friendly to her as she passed beneath them. The little birds hardly for a moment forbore their trill as they carolled amid the leaves. She sat down to enjoy the glen. Her mind reverted occasionally to her son and his companions now on their way to the muir of Macharnoch. He was her hope, her pride, a dutiful son and an obedient, with the future before him, his life yet young and full of happy promise.

While Lady Lyne thus sat in the glen she suddenly realized that she was not alone in it. There was Something there besides her. She saw nothing for a while, she heard nothing, but that oppressive sense of communion with the unknown, and yet not the unknown, possessed her. The unseen world was about her, and out from its impalpable shades came upon the lady that oppressiveness which indicated to one so much akin with nature and so susceptible

to the comings from the shadow-land, that she was about to be the solitary witness of a revelation. She gazed around her, and from far down the glen there broke upon her vision a company of horsemen. In front of the train rode her son. The dogs were in full chase, but not in full cry. Not a sound escaped them as they ran. As the hunt drew nearer, the lady noted that even the rattling hoofs of the horses were inaudible, and there was neither cheery cry nor blast of horn from the huntsmen. It was a grim chase, and a silent. On they came, the young lord in front. There was no stop nor stay. Natural obstacles were overcome as lightly as if there were none. It mattered not to the leader of the chase whether his horse careered along the winding banks of the stream or forged its away ahead up the bed of the rivulet. Rocks and boulders were as nothing. On swept the chase, the driven deer in front, and nearer and nearer approached the spot where the lady sat enchained with the strange spectacle. Right against her rose a cliff, craggy and impossible to mortal to scale, and straight towards this came the bounding stag, fleeing for his life. The dogs were in hot pursuit, and impetuous on their heels came Lord Lyne and his comrades. And then, as they drew near the cliffs, there was a wondrous scene. All noiseless ran the deer and the dogs, all soundless followed the huntsmen, yet all as eager on the chase as if the stag was the king of the Macharnoch Muir and the riders veritable horsemen begotten of women. But they were shadowy and unsubstantial, a troop of ghosts sent thither by the guardian spirit of the Lynes to warn the lady of a coming misfortune. She knew it, she felt it, and yet she could not but watch the ghosts as they sped. Right up to the cliffs came the stag, and with mighty bound he scaled the beetling summit and went on his way. Right up to the cliffs came the gaunt dogs, thirsting for their prey, and, without pausing for a moment, they undeviating took the aerial path and resumed the chase. Right up to the cliffs came the

horsemen, Lord Lyne in front, and like arrow sped from bow they drove on in hard pursuit of the dogs. And all were gone. They vanished like a dream. The lady listened, but no sound was there save the voices of Nature. The hunt had swept by, and there was not a trace left of their presence.

She knew what the vision portended, and that dark fate was about to spread its wings over her dwelling. Her heart went out to her son, and hurrying homewards she called her page. Taking her ring from her finger she bade him convey it with all the haste he could to Lord Lyne, and tell him that she was wearily waiting his return. The page put the ring in his breast. Light of foot, he sped away to Macharnoch Muir, but the sun was setting behind Caerwinning Hill ere he reached the hunt. It had been a glorious day for sport. They had roused the red deer from his lair, and over many a mile they had pursued him, nor ceased until the dogs had brought him to bay and to death; and now they were resting preparatory to setting out again for home. The page accosted Lord Lyne. He handed him the circlet of gold which he knew so well, and gave him his mother's message. Lord Lyne laughed at her anxiety, but, lest his prolonged absence should give her fresh cause for uneasiness, he at once set out for home. On his arrival he sought the chamber where his mother sat waiting, and, hastening to her side, asked the cause of her solicitude. "Well might she be solicitous," she replied, and then, without keeping back ought, she told him of the spectral vision that had passed before her in the glen. He listened in wonder, yet not without uneasiness, but when she had finished her recital with an account of the hunt vanishing from sight right up the face of a beetling cliff, he laughed airily and rallied her on her powers of imagination. But she was not to be coaxed or rallied out of her gloom. The wraith had never appeared in vain to the family of Lyne, and it was not for nothing now that the warning had passed before her eyes.

"It was your wraith I saw, my son," she said, "prepare yourself to die."

"I am ready to go," he replied, "whenever God calls me; but, mother, I am strong and well, so take heart of grace. Besides," he added, "wraiths sometimes betoken good fortune."

"Not the wraiths of the house of Lyne," was the response.

The young chief kissed his mother good-night, and, though not without a foreboding in his heart, betook himself to sociality, and then to rest.

With the golden flush of daylight Lord Lyne sprang from his couch. Whatever depressing thoughts had weighed him down the preceding night he discarded with the incoming of the rosy dawn, and dressing himself, he wandered forth to breathe the morning air in the glen. Nature had charms to him as she had to his mother. He loved her in all her haunts of solitude, and in all her accompaniments, animate and inanimate. As he came within view of the rocks where Lady Lyne had witnessed the wondrous scene of yester-morn he remembered her warning, but he dismissed it from his mind and gave himself up to the enjoyment of the morning.

Lady Lyne had spent an anxious, wakeful night. Her vision was ever before her. It hung above her head like the sword of Damocles, and she waited to see where and when it should fall. Her morning exercises over, she descended to the breakfast-room, and there waited on the coming of her son. He was long in coming. Where had he gone? She sent her page to see whether he had yet left his bed. The lad returned to say that his bed was untenanted, and that, with the rising of the sun, he had left the house to enjoy a walk in the glen. Then he would return ere long; and Lady Lyne waited. She looked out of the window, she busied herself with little household duties, she began to grow

anxious. She called her page a second time, and, in response to her orders, he ran down the glen, only to find no traces of his young master. He must have gone further afield; and Lady Lyne waited again, and the longer she waited the more perturbed she became. She could stand the anxiety no longer. The servants in the house were despatched to make careful search; and search they did. They called Lord Lyne's name aloud, till the rocks gave back the echo. They wandered by unfrequented pathways and by sylvan nooks without finding trace. And then they searched the bed of the stream and every little pool, because, like their mistress, they entertained a suspicion that something was wrong. They too felt the influence of the unknown upon them, and with feverish haste they pursued the path of the rivulet, looking for their secret in its rippling waters.

And they found it. In a deep pool, close by the fall, lay all that remained of the gallant young lord. Death had sought him. The plain, matter-of-fact man would have said that he accidentally stumbled and fell, and that, landing in a state of insensibility in the water, he was drowned without having recovered sufficient consciousness to make one struggle for life; but Lady Lyne knew otherwise. It was Death that had met him. It was his Fate he had encountered, the fate which she herself had seen foreshadowed when the spectral steed, with her son's wraith on its back, followed hard in the track of the ghostly stag and the wild dogs of hell.

THE KIRK OF AYR RULING THE PEOPLE.

UNFORTUNATELY there are no reliable data from which a pen and ink sketch can be drawn of the condition, socially, of our forefathers prior to Reformation times. Records preceding that era are notoriously lacking; and there is a tendency to conclude that the ages which have left little or nothing behind them had little or nothing to bequeath. There is some truth in the conclusion, no doubt, but there is also some fiction. Were such a thing possible, and were the observer of this century suddenly to have a vision placed before him of the habits and customs of those who walked the shores and the plains of Ayrshire, and the streets of her towns and villages, and who dwelt in her castles or in her religious houses, five or six centuries ago, the social state would unquestionably present a series of startling changes. He would suddenly be transferred to another world of conditions, into an era of slow thought and conservative change, into a religious atmosphere which he could hardly breathe, and into an apparent rusticity of speech, of manner, of locomotion, and of life itself, which he would fail to grasp, or even dimly to comprehend. But were the same observer, instead of merely being permitted to obtain a vision of these times, to be privileged to remain long enough in the far away to master its life and its people, the chances are that he would return to his nineteenth century existence with a much higher idea of at least some of the men and some of the manners of the byegone ages than that which he took

with him. He would have found men of great intellect and capacity, of deep philosophic mind, of earnest striving after the light and the truth; and it goes without saying that he would have been confronted by patriots and by heroes, in war and for faith. The common people he would have found undeniably guileless of letters, and, outside the walls of the towns, bound hand and foot to their feudal superiors.

There is no need to go further back than the age on which the daylight, albeit dim and intermittent, is shining. Beyond that period the social life can only be read from the deeds done, by the increase of population in given centres, by the march of progress in arms and in armour, and in the side glints which these give us into everyday life. Meantime we discard all speculative treatment and confine ourselves to the authentic records carefully prepared and as carefully transmitted by generation after generation of our fathers. Little did these humble parish clerks imagine when they penned the tale of everyday life, or the town clerks when they recorded the proceedings of the civic bodies under which they held office, that, hundreds of years after they had inscribed their last minute, or penned their last deliverance, the antiquarian would seize on their books with glee, and bless them fervently for their careful attention to duty.

Though, as we have said, the social conditions prior to the Reformation are very imperfectly defined, there is still enough material left with which to build the conclusion that the land was not all darkness. So far back as 1223 there was a public school in Ayr, and it was still in existence in 1519, when Maister Gavin Ross, one of the chaplains of St. John's Church, was granted a salary by the Town ouncil for discharging the duties of Burgh schoolmaster. Nor was attention paid only to the essential and common branches of education; for in 1535 the Church organist was employed to teach singing, and it was an essential of the position that he should not only be "an accomplished

singer," but also qualified to teach the "pynattre." The rector of the Grammar School of 1726 had to be proficient not only in Latin and Greek, but also in writing, navigation, arithmetic, and book-keeping. It will thus be seen that, at least from the beginning of the thirteenth century down to this present hour, the course of education in Ayr has been unbroken and systematic.

The records of Alloway extend further back than those of Ayr. Early in the sixteenth century the authorities of that parish were making investigations into the spread of leprosy, which was still prevalent in this part of the country. Their government partook freely of the grandmotherly. For example, in 1530 they passed an ordinance forbidding the people of the parish to take service without its bounds, or, under forfeiture of their goods, to carry a case at law before any court outside their jurisdiction. Whatever may be said for the former of these regulations, the latter commends itself in some ways to common sense. Not only did they resolve to keep their own folks at home, but they refused to permit outsiders to be brought in, and even went the length of forbidding their widows to marry outside of their jurisdiction—if the result of the marriage was to be the home-coming to Alloway—without the special licence of the magistrates. They further made it imperative on all the residents to assemble when called upon for the defence of the parish. The pre-sessional records of Ayr evince the same care and forethought for the public weal. Everything seems to have been done to order of the Council. The people were warned, night and morning, by the playing of the Burgh's minstrels, consisting of a piper, or fifer, and a drummer, when to go to bed and when to arise for the duties of another day. They were forbidden to discharge hagbuts or pistols on the streets—an ordinance somewhat suggestive of the feudal strifes of the times and the conflicts of rival parties in the thoroughfares of the town. A common

slanderer or "flyter" was liable to be put in the cage for three hours, and no doubt the cage was frequently tenanted to the great delight of the urchins and the gossips of the times. They were not allowed to take more than a fair profit on their goods, or to over-reach in merchandise the stranger within the gates. Pawnbrokers were forbidden to receive pledges save from the owners, and the housewives were cautioned against unnecessarily wasting the water when they drew their daily supplies from the well of St. Thomas.

Changing with changing times, the Council grew very strict in their regulation of morals and in their insistance on the most rigid Sabbath observance after the Reformation. Previously, if we may infer from their enactments, the Sabbath was not straitly kept, but when the ministers of the Protestant faith took the place of the Catholic priests in St. John's, the Sunday was hedged about, both in and out. In 1589 craftsmen were forbidden to labour on the day of rest, merchants were not allowed to go out of town to do business; plays were ordered to cease so that the mind of the burghers might not be distracted by unlawful recreation; the town bell was rung at six o'clock in the morning in order to warn the townsfolk to observe family worship and to pray for a blessing on the celebration of public ordinances, and at a later period the Councillors were commanded to attend church regularly under pain of losing their seats at the Council Board for the year.

The Magistrates and Council crusaded, on the introduction of the Reformation, against all sorts of sports and pastimes on Sundays. These the townsfolk had indulged in from time immemorial. A change of faith neither implied a change of heart nor of morals, and those who were wont to shoot at the butts or to go about their ordinary avocations or pleasures on the Sunday, naturally felt it was no easy matter to adapt themselves to the rigidity and the orthodoxy

of the Sabbath. But by dint of admonitions, lectures, bye-laws, punishment, and example, the old order was compelled to give way to the new, and it is certain that within a few years of the Reformation, the inhabitants kept the day of rest so well that the messengers whom they sent out to watch and spy found little reprehensible to look at and as little to report. There were occasional derelictions of duty, but these were visited with church censure so swiftly, and so publicly, that the ideal Sabbath of the orthodox became almost an accomplished fact. Still, amid the general obedience to magisterial rule, an occasional exception was found. In 1605 for instance, two men were cited before the session for playing a game known as "coppieshell" within the kirk door on the Sabbath, and the following year quite a number were had up for playing at the nine holes on the previous Sunday. It did not pay, even in a wordly sense, to be a Sabbath breaker in those days. Not only had they to submit to censure in the church and to sit on the seat of repentance, raised high and prominent among the people, but they had also to pay for their misdemeanours in hard cash, the fines ranging from six and eightpence for a first offence to six pounds Scots in the case of an oft-convicted and a hardened sinner. In 1604 punishment was inflicted at the instance of the session upon a man for "walking claith on the Sabbath day," on a second for cutting up flesh, and on a third for buying cows and bringing them home. Sunday walking was regarded as an iniquity, and children were strictly charged that they should not play on the streets on that day. More rigour even was shown in insistence on the observance of the fast-day. Where a first offender against the sanctity of the first day of the week was mulcted in six shillings and eightpence, there was nothing less than a forty shilling fine levied against him who disobeyed in the matter of the fast-day.

The Sunday thus hedged about, the kirk, and with the

kirk the magistrates, devoted themselves to the regulation of morals generally. There was a game called Lady Templeton which excited their ire. How it was played it is not easy now to tell, but it seems to have consisted, to some extent at least, of dancing round about, or in the train of, a figure or effigy which went under that name. Once the edict went forth that Lady Templeton should cease, the session visited those who took part in it with pains and penalties. In 1607 quite a host of pleasure-loving females were dealt with because they refused to comply with the sessional enactments. Most of them confessed and were let off with an admonition, but Janet Cochrane, who admitted having "buskit" the figure, and Tibbie Cochrane, who confessed to "ane spring" in the dancing, were not dismissed so easily. Janet was fined in a boll of malt, and had to stand at the Cross on a market day with the Lady Templeton in her hand, and had moreover to stand in the place of repentance in the kirk on the following Sunday, in her linen clothes, while Tibbie had to do the like, save that she was not required to do penance at the Cross with the image in her hand. These were in all probability sisters who were thus dishonoured.

Offences that to-day are disposed of by the police magistrates were also dealt with by the elders; indeed, nothing came amiss to them. Those who "cruelly dang and bluided ane anither," who caused public scandal, who "flyted" on the public streets, who used oaths or were guilty of blasphemy, who got drunk, who slandered their neighbours, who disobeyed their parents—all were compelled to appear before the session, that inquisition might be made concerning them, and punishments inflicted according to the demerit that was found in them. Curious cases cropped out occasionally. Blasphemy, and that of a particularly heinous type, seems, notwithstanding the extraordinary supervision and the strictness of the times, to have been very common.

In 1605, for instance, John Dalrymple was convicted of taking a piece of flesh and casting it from him, saying as he did so that it was the flesh of the Saviour. Christina Striveling was reported for cursing her body and soul, abusing the worship of God, and refusing to have grace said, or chapter read from the Bible. Nance Gemmell had to make atonement for railing at an elder and saying that he was over holy, and Johnnie M'Crae confessed "the great blasphemy" of saying that the devil and the priest between them were to blame for the poor. For this outrageous expression of opinion he was put in the "jougs," and had to appear on the pillar of repentance the next Sabbath day; and in addition the session decreed that if he should so offend again he should be banished from the town.

Punctuality was doubly a virtue when unpunctuality was punishable. Those who came late to church were reprimanded and ordered to amend their ways. A somewhat curious case was that against John Mure. He was brought up to the session for casting stones down from one of the galleries upon the women who were sleeping in the seats in the area, a fact which seems to indicate that it was considered much worse to take such forcible means of awakening the sleepers in Zion than it was to visit the land of Nod while the minister was enlarging on the heads and particulars of his discourse. And if the somewhat primitive method of hearing charges against the people was peculiar, so were the punishments inflicted. One of the Kennedys of Blairquhan was excommunicated because he contemptuously declined to defer to the discipline of the session; a female slanderer, Janet Smellie by name, was ordered to be carried to the Fish Cross and there exhibited with a spur in her mouth; and a notorious beldame named Christina M'Kerrel, because she "flyted" at one of her neighbours, was conveyed through the town, tied to the tail end of a cart, with a paper on her

head, with the inscription, "a common scald," conspicuously printed on it, and thereafter ordered to be put in the stocks at the Fish Cross.

It would seem to be easier to tabulate what the session, in conjunction with the magistrates, with whom the members were hand in glove, undertook to do, than to discover what was outwith their jurisdiction. They went the length of calling before them trespassers on land, and of inflicting, for notorious offences, the most barbarous punishments. Immorality was a common vice of the times, and it received, as it merited, the most careful attention of the elders. The ordeal, however, through which the habit and repute trespasser had to pass, can hardly be described as other than barbarous. A woman who had twice relapsed into sin was condemned, on the recommendation of the minister and the kirk session, to stand at the Fish Cross with the hangman beside her for an hour, during which time he was to shave her head in the presence of the people. With a view to the maintenance of order and of chastity, unmarried women were prevented from keeping public-houses; and, to secure the peace of the town, a bye-law was passed under which all these houses were ordered to be closed not later than ten o'clock. Against witchcraft both magistracy and session waged perpetual and relentless war. In one case they banished a woman from the precincts of the burgh, with certification that if she ever returned again she would be punished as her crime deserved, without further trial of any kind. In the case of the notorious Maggie Osborne, they passed the last dread sentence of the law upon her, and consigned her to the stake; and in the case of another witch, Janet Smelie, who eluded the pyre by dying in prison, they wreaked their vengeance on the corpse. By their orders the body of the woman, mercifully freed from their hands, was dragged to the gallows foot, from the Tolbooth, and there burned to ashes.

When the soldiers of Cromwell held the town, the authorities had much ado to keep order. Offences by the military were frequent, but common as they were, the civil law was invariably employed to maintain both the public peace and the public morals. For an offence against the social code an English soldier was publicly flogged through the streets. Rather a different result was effected in the case of another soldier. He had been reduced in rank and turned out of the barracks. Desirous of wedding one of the fair maids of the town, he received an indulgence to do so, but not until he had guaranteed his orthodoxy by signing and subscribing the Covenant.

The natural inference from all these petty inquisitions and somewhat drastic punishments ought to be that Ayr about the opening of the seventeenth century was an uncommonly dull and morose little town. In some ways, too, it must have been. But, on the other hand, there was great hilarity in quarters where such hilarity might not have been expected. The prisoners in the Tolbooth, for instance, not only enjoyed, but, where private means permitted, dispensed, hospitality with a lavish hand. Its heavy walls and gloomy corridors resounded at nights with unholy glee. Those incarcerated availed themselves of the right to invite their friends to see them, and these came, resolved to make a night of it. Scenes of riot followed on over-devotion to the wine of the country, and even at times it took all the authority, material as well as moral, of the guardians of the prison to check the hand-to-hand conflicts which raged within its walls. Things grew to such a pitch that, ere the close of the century, an enactment was passed forbidding prisoners to have more than one visitor each evening.

In their own sphere the magistrates and town councillors made free with the burgh's funds in the way of treating themselves in the various taverns of the town. In one year they spent in this way no less a sum than £480 15s. Scots,

and that too at a time when the clear income of the burgh was less by fully £11 than the amount spent in feasting and drinking. The magistrates put down the penny weddings because they regarded them as harmful, but they do not appear to have considered that what was sauce for the common goose was sauce for the magisterial and the uncommon gander. They encouraged the inhabitants in the practice of archery. When the bow gave place to firearms, they offered a silver hagbut to be shot for annually. They patronized horse-racing, donating £7 or £8 sterling from the town funds for the encouragement of this class of sport, and they repaired the town's common, at the request of gentlemen in the county, so that at the annual race meeting the horses might run with greater safety to themselves.

They were equally alive to the social progress of the town. In 1663 they established a foot post between Ayr and Edinburgh, the runner having exactly a week wherein to do the return journey. A letter cost two shillings Scots for conveyance, a packet four shillings. When newspapers began to be issued in Edinburgh the magistrates made provision for a regular supply. They supervised the food and drink purveyed to the people. As far back as 1589 they enacted that the penny loaf should be made of good and sufficient meal, and that, in baking, no other kind of material than wheat should be used. To the peck of shortbread they insisted that not less than half a pound of butter should be added, and that the bakers should stamp their bread; and in the matter of candles they even prescribed the size of the wick that was to be used. They relegated and confined the sale of fish to the Fish Cross in 1547, and forty years later they built a meal market. Sanitation evoked their energies in a new direction, and one in which they seem to have been very much required. The condition of the side streets and closes was such that, when the pestilence did come, it not only played sad havoc with the lives of the people, but

remained hanging about the slums long after it ought to have run its course and disappeared. There were no Local Authorities to order the regular cleaning of ashpits, and the good folks were not troubled with any craze for cleanliness. They gutted their fish at the doors of their houses, in the High Street, and on the bridge, and it was not until death swept across the burgh and removed by pestilence nearly a fourth of the population that the magistrates enacted that thenceforth no more compost heaps should be tolerated on the High Street, and that the practice of gutting fish on the main thoroughfare and on the bridge should cease. And when such regulations were necessary for the High Street and the bridge, what must have been the general sanitary condition elsewhere?

The most serious fault that can be found with these worthy magistrates of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is that they alienated so much land that had been gifted to the town by the Crown. Had they been as conservative of the rights of the public as they ought to have been, Ayr's patrimony to-day would at least have made unnecessary anything in the shape of rating. When they wanted money, however, they were never at a loss so long as they had a rich farm to barter; and they frittered away the inheritance of the townsfolks after such a lavish fashion that the ratepayers of to-day can hardly be expected to waste much time blessing their memory. Apart from that, they seem to have got on tolerably well. They adapted themselves to the times, and, in the march of progress in the country generally, Ayr never occupied a post in the rear guard. Up to the very end of the seventeenth century all the business was done in little stances or piazzas in front of the houses. There the baker sold his bread, and the cobbler his boots and shoes; nor was it until the year 1700 that an enterprising merchant obtained permission to open a shop. His example was not generally followed, for up to the opening

years of the nineteenth century a great proportion of the business was done in booths and in the little stances in front of the houses. Even in the fifteenth century the roofs were slated; the houses themselves being of two storeys, and largely constructed of wood.

Such, so far as can be gleaned, is a fairly complete resumè of what we know of the social life of the people of Ayr in the "good old times;" and candour compels the admission that it had not a few admirable points in it. Ancient history has to be regarded in the light, not of to-day, but of the period with which it deals; and bearing this in mind, it is impossible not to feel that while their ways seem to us somewhat remarkable, the church and the civil authorities were rightly exercised for the permanent good of the community. It is easy to stigmatize them as petty tyrants; but we require, while doing so, to remember the state of society and the difficulties with which they had to contend. They were certainly alive to their duties, to the claims that morality had upon them, to the spread of education, to the promotion of religion, and to the raising of the general tone of the population; and if they here and there overstepped the bounds of prudence and made life, in trivial matters, irksome, the general result of their efforts was both beneficial and progressive.

Necessarily, the rural districts have always been behind the towns in organization, in method, and in progress; and that this has been so in Ayrshire, in all reliable story, is very evident. No village in Ayrshire has had its history so well told as that of Mauchline.[1] Its accomplished parish minister has wandered with loving solicitude over its records, and the student of social as well as of church history can reproduce in his mind's eye from the pages of his works an accurate picture of how the villagers, and the village

[1] Old Church Life in Scotland, by Andrew Edgar, D.D., Minister of Mauchline.

authorities, conducted themselves during the remote years which succeeded the Reformation. With Dr. Edgar's work in general we do not deal. But there are one or two facts emphasized in it that bear out our present purpose.

In one important respect, at least, there was a deterioration in early Protestant as compared with late Roman Catholic times. The Papists regarded the last resting-places of the dead with reverence; they were indeed holy ground, consecrated to the ashes of those who lay in their quiet embraces. It was not so with the Presbyterians. The material was never sacred, neither kirk nor pulpit, nor graveyard, nor even the communion cups. At best, even the cups were but the receptacle for the "symbol." The result of this materializing of buildings and of the accessories to religion was that the graveyards were turned to the basest of uses. Not only were cattle and sheep permitted to wander about amid the tombs, not only were the village children allowed to play where slept the forefathers of the hamlet, but those whose houses abutted on the burying grounds actually used them whereon to deposit their household refuse; and worse still, they were, in extreme cases let us hope, but undeniably in certain specified cases, veritable realms of Cloacus.

The ordering of the church service was, in its main lines, pretty much what it is to-day. We have discarded the Readers, but otherwise the forms remain tolerably intact. In 1611 the proceedings were begun by the Reader reading an humble confession of sin and supplication for mercy. Singing followed, then the reading of the Word, and after that the minister entered the church. Having engaged in extempore prayer, he gave out his text and preached; and the congregation listened, some of them with heads uncovered, some with their hats on. A short—comparatively short—thanksgiving prayer followed the discourse, a psalm was sung, and then, with the benediction, the service was brought to a

close. That there were great gatherings at times of communion services, people flocking to the centre of attraction from all parts of the country, is well known; and that occasionally baser and more degenerate mortals than their fellows forgot themselves to such an extent as to beget public scandal can hardly be questioned; but it is open to serious doubt whether these communion or sacramental "seasons," as they were called, were, save perhaps in one or two very exceptional cases, the scene of either riot, drunkenness, or disorder.

All scandals of whatever kind were promptly seized and inquired into by the Session. The elders were virtually the police authorities of the districts, and they made it their business not only to repress but to discover all sorts and forms of misdemeanour; they listened to every story that was brought to their ears, or that floated about in the scandal-oppressed atmosphere of the village; and they even formed themselves into a sort of detective force, whose duty it was to catch the unwary and to trap the sinner in the very commission of sin. Woe betide the unhappy individual who neglected ordinances! After the two elders who stood watch and ward over the plate and the collection had seen the last person enter the church aud had carefully locked up the free-will offerings of the people in the vestry or session-house, they set forth on a tour of inspection. They went from house to house, they scanned the fields, they perambulated the highways and the bye-ways, and if they caught anybody at home or in the open air who ought to have been in the sanctuary, they showed him no mercy. In Mauchline they kept a complete suit of sackcloth wherein the penitents were compelled to appear for admonition. In Galston they had two suits, the one a sackcloth gown, the other a set of sheets; and in exceptionally bad cases the offenders had to appear Sunday after Sunday in these garments until the session thought that sufficient expiation

had been done for misconduct. In the case of certain minds these punishments must have had a hardening effect; at any rate, they do not seem to have been invariably resultful in effecting reformation; but at the same time the dread of exposure must have proved a powerful deterrent, as well as, not unfrequently, an incentive to hypocrisy.

But as has been already said, the times must be gauged by their own conditions and not by the social march of the nineteenth century; and if at times we are apt to think harshly of our forebears we must not forget that they lived in a transition age, and that civic and ecclesiastic authority was not divided and sub-divided as it is to-day.

A DAUGHTER

OF THE

HOUSE OF DUNDONALD.

SIR JOHN COCHRANE of Ochiltree lay in the Tolbooth of Edinburgh awaiting sentence of death. He had been concerned in the rising under the Earl of Argyll on behalf of the Duke of Monmouth. Monmouth himself was dead, the head of Argyll was to fall under the axe of the common executioner, and there was therefore not much likelihood that a better or a more merciful fate should befall Sir John Cochrane. James II. was vindictive, so far at least as those were concerned who ventured to stand between him and his accession to the throne; and, when Sir John was sentenced to death, the only hope remaining to his friends was to trade on the cupidity of the selfish monarch.

The Heart of Midlothian was a dreary dungeon. Its walls were redolent of terrible memories. Many a gallant man had been imprisoned within them, shut out for ever from the kindly association of kinship and friendship, and the free air of heaven ; and many more had left its cells only to meet death on the scaffold. That was the fate which stared Sir John Cochrane in the face. His time to live was short, his hopes of reprieve were of the very slightest, and when he received his wife and his family in the dingy corridors beyond which he dared not to stray, he felt that they were paying him their farewell visits. And they felt it too; for although they were using all the influence within their power to soften the obdurate heart of the monarch, the whole train of experience and of circumstances was against them. Among those who câme to see him in the Tolbooth was his daughter Grisell, a girl of about eighteen years of age. From the quiet and the leafy solitudes of Ochiltree she had come up with her mother and her sisters to the Scottish metropolis, there to remain until her father should have expiated his offence on the scaffold. She was a girl of strong, resolute, self-reliant mind and of great ingenuity, and while, with her mother and sisters, she shared in the common grief, she did not partake of the common apathetic despair. While her father lived there was hope. She ransacked her brain for a plan by which he might be carried off from the Tolbooth. But what could a feeble girl do against the guards and the soldiery, against the heavy-doored dungeons and the massive keys, against the barred windows and the solid masonry? Think as she might, she came no nearer a solution of the problem which faced her. She did not despair, however, because of the lions that were in the path; her mind only reverted to other methods by which she hoped to accomplish her end. She knew that friends of her father were at work on his behalf, and that time saved might, in his case, be doubly time gained.

Gaining all the information she could, she learned that the warrant from the Privy Council for her father's execution was expected in Edinburgh in the course of a few days. If that warrant could only be intercepted and secured, what might not be achieved ere another could be obtained? The king was notoriously in need of money, and her great-grandfather, the Earl of Dundonald, was ready to buy his grandson's freedom at a great ransom. Whatever the idea that had entered her mind, she did not reveal it to her father. She knew how sternly he would resist the incurring of any risk on his behalf by his daughter. He had even refused to see his own son, lest he should be compromised, and that young man, though in Edinburgh, was only to be permitted to say farewell on the day preceding the execution. Grisell, therefore, kept her own counsel. As soon as her plan was matured, so far as it could be in Edinburgh, she told her father that she would not revisit him for a few days. He pressed her to say why, but she stoutly refused to tell. Realizing that she was pondering a plan for his release, he warned her not to undertake any unnecessary or compromising risks. "I am a Cochrane," was all she replied, as she kissed Sir John and bade him hopeful and kindly good-bye.

At an early hour the following morning, long before the city was awake, Grisell Cochrane made ready for her project. Rising from bed while the rest of the household was buried in slumber, she attired herself in the garments of a domestic servant. Concealed in her dress were a brace of pistols. She opened the stable door and took therefrom one of the horses, a steed of tried mettle, which she led into the courtyard, and on whose back she sprang with the agility of a trained horsewoman. The sleepy watchman parading the streets wondered at the slim girl mounted on the huge horse at an hour when the good folks were still deep in slumber; and the drowsy guards by the city gates, as they let her out into the open country, remarked on the early start of the

young serving-woman. Once beyond the confines of the metropolis, she gave the horse his head, nor did she slacken speed until she had left the crown of St. Giles' and the frowning walls of the castle far behind. She had a long journey to perform, a journey which in itself even, and without the exciting adventures to which she intended it to be the prelude, might well have daunted a stronger frame than that of Grisell Cochrane. Berwick lay far away, and yet she was going beyond the walls of the grey city of the borders. She plodded steadily on across the country, letting the horse travel at comparative ease and taking care not to overtax his strength. The miles passed away as she rode through the beautiful country, but she had no eyes for scenery and no mind to enjoy the landscape which stretched itself out in its loveliness all about her. Her mind was wrought between two senses of depression—the one occasioned by the ever-present memory of her father lying a prisoner in the Heart of Midlothian, the other lest she should fail, as fail she well might, in the hazardous errand on which she had set out. She spent the night in a hostelry by the wayside, and on the following day rode through Berwick, and reached the house of her old nurse, four miles beyond the walls of the town, on the English side of the Tweed. The nurse at first failed to recognize in the plainly-clad stranger her former charge, but her sharp eyes soon dispelled the illusion begotten by the homespun garments, and she gave her cordial greeting.

Grisell knew whom to trust, and she made the nurse her confidante, explaining the whole motive and intent of her journey, and, in pursuance of her design, receiving from her a suit of clothes belonging to her foster-brother, who was light and slim of build. When Grisell told her that her object was to intercept the mail and to secure the mail-bags, the nurse trembled for fear; but she knew the young lady too well to waste time in endeavouring to dissuade her from her undertaking.

The post-boy was due at the little town of Belford about six o'clock in the morning. It was a long and arduous duty that was involved in the conveyance of letters from the English to the Scottish capital in those days. There were no fast-running trains careering across the leagues of country at the rate of a mile in the minute, leaving the wilderness of houses, yclept London, behind in the sunset of a summer evening, and crossing the Border ere the sun of the following morning was glinting on the walls of merry Carlisle, but in their place a succession of post-boys, who rode along the King's highways with the letter bags in front of them. In winter they had to wade through the snows and the rushing burns, and all the year round they were on the alert against robbers and highwaymen, who were seldom afraid to run the risk of encounter, even when they knew that the post-boy was heavily armed, and that he had instructions to shoot in his tracks whoever tried to deprive him of his charge, and that even success would, in all probability, result in apprehension and in execution. When Grisell reached Belford the post-boy was already there. He was permitted an occasional rest of a few hours' duration by the way, at given houses, and when she entered the change-house she saw him lying stretched out on bed sound asleep, with the mail bags beneath his head and his pistols within easy reach. A big, powerful, muscular fellow he was! Such an one as the slim girl could, in fair tussle, have no chance against. To abstract the bags was an impossibility, and therefore other means must be devised for accomplishing her desperate purpose. So she called the old woman of the hostelry and demanded some refreshment. The hostess pointed to the remains of a meal set on the table, and told her that was all she had to give her. If she could fare on that, she was welcome to fall-to; "and be pleased," she added, "to make as little noise as you can, for there's one asleep in that bed that I like ill to disturb." Grisell did not need the hint.

She was anxious, above all things at that moment, not to disturb the repose of the slumbering post-boy. It was no easy matter for the young girl to pretend enjoyment of the meal set before her under such circumstances, and she had negotiated but a mouthful or two when she called for a glass of water. The hostess grumbled; it was, she said, but an ill custom for a change-house. "I am aware of that," replied Grisell, "and therefore when in a public-house I always pay for the water the price of the strongest potation, which I cannot take." Such generosity restored her in a moment to the good graces of the hostess. At Grisell's request she proceeded to the well, which was at some distance from the house, in order to procure a supply of the clear cold spring, newly drawn.

No sooner had the old dame turned her back than Grisell turned to business. She would fain have obtained possession of the letter bags, but a glance at their position was sufficient to convince her that such a thing was impossible. With trembling hand she seized first the one pistol and then the other which the post-boy had laid at hand, and withdrew the charges. Her agitation was great, but she was fortified by the hope of ultimate success; and, steadying her nerves as best she could, she replaced the now harmless weapons in their position, and resumed her seat at the table. And that none too soon; for hardly was she seated ere the door opened, and the hostess reappeared, bearing in her hand the jug of water. Grisell was glad to see both her and the water, and she took a copious draught of the caller spring. This done, she settled her reckoning with prodigal liberality. Ere she took her departure she asked in a casual way how long the post-boy was in the habit of sleeping, and, having received the information, she repaired to the stable, brought out her horse, and rode off in a southerly direction. This she did so as not to excite suspicion. Once at a sufficient distance from the house, she took a cross road, which, by a

circuit reached the highway at a point a mile or two north of Belford, and here she waited the coming of the King's messenger.

The post-boy awoke from his slumber, and having finished what still remained of the viands on the table, and refreshed himself with a tankard of ale, remounted his horse, and resumed his journey. He rode quickly, for then, as of olden time, and as now, the King's business required haste. Reaching a long, lonely stretch of road, he saw in front of him a horseman leisurely jogging northwards. As he made up to him he beheld a young man of somewhat effeminate appearance, but rather inclined to sociality, who bade him good day, and who, for the sake of company, pushed his horse into a fast trot in order to keep pace with that of the mail-carrier. They rode side by side for some time, conversing of things in general, and it was not until they were far removed from the possibility of interference that Grisell—for of course the youthful rider was she—resolved to effect her purpose. She rode closer by his side, and with her eye on the mail bags—one containing the London letters, the other the letters picked up by the way—she addressed him in a tone of great determination. Coming at once to the point, she told him that she had taken a great fancy to the mail bags, and that she meant to have them at all hazards. The post-boy apparently thought she was joking. Drawing one of her pistols, she held it up and bid him look. She was well mounted, she said. She was allied with others who were stronger than she, and therefore the best thing he could do was to hand over the mail bags, and save any unnecessary shedding of blood. As she hinted of her alliance with others, she indicated that they were hidden in a wood not far ahead.

The post-boy looked at her in amazement. He affected to treat her demand as a joke. He warned her of the consequence of interference, if she were in earnest, and, drawing

one of his heavy pistols from the holster, he pointed it at her, warning her at the same time to save the necessity for bloodshed by riding on. Grisell replied that she was no fonder of bloodshed than he, "but," she added, as she set her teeth in grim determination and cocked the pistol which she was holding in her hand, "that mail I must and will have."

Seeing that she was in earnest, the post-boy naturally thought to have the first shot, so, steadying his aim for a moment, he fired, full in her face. There was a flash in the pan. With the rapidity of thought he threw the weapon from him, with a muttered curse, and laid his hand on the other pistol. A second aim, a second flash in the pan, and a second curse were the results. A man of some presence of mind and quick in action, he sprang from his horse, his intention being to seize that of his antagonist and to drag her from her seat. Grisell comprehended the intention at a glance, and was quick to avail herself of her opportunity. The horse carrying the mail bags, well trained, did not seek to make off. Smartly avoiding the rush of the furious messenger, Grisell adroitly led him some distance from his horse, and then with quick dash she forced her own steed to where it stood leisurely awaiting the convenience of its master, seized hold of the bridle, and cantered away, leaving the post-boy standing helplessly on the road. He would have followed if he had dared, but he looked ahead and he saw the wood to which Grisell had pointed when she told him of her confederates; and not wishing to run any unnecessary risks, he hastened back to Belford there to procure assistance to enable him to cope with the robbers in the seclusion of the glade.

Once in the shelter of the wood, Grisell Cochrane made haste to examine her treasures. The bag containing the correspondence picked up on the road she threw aside, and concentrated her attention on that which contained the

letters from London. It was secured by lock and key, but with a sharp pen-knife Grisell cut the bag open and its contents fell to the ground. There was no mistaking the official documents. These were enclosed in huge blue envelopes bearing the Government seal. She scanned them carefully, putting several aside for subsequent examination, until her eyes lighted on a missive addressed to the Council, in Edinburgh. That, she felt, was the document which she had undergone so much risk to possess. She undid the wrapping and ran her eyes hastily over its contents. These were what she feared they would be. Her father's sentence was confirmed, and the date of his execution fixed for the following week. Her eyes filled with tears as she thought of her captive parent in the grim Tolbooth, but she did not give way to unavailing grief, though the natural reaction had begun to tell. She tore the missive into small pieces and carefully deposited these in her breast. Other letters, dealing with sentences of different kinds to be imposed on incriminated individuals, she treated similarly, and then remounting her horse, she gave him the spur, and the faithful animal bore her back to the cottage of her nurse. Secure from prying eyes, they consigned the fragments to the flames. The nurse did not require to be pledged to secrecy; she knew how much depended on her silence. While they were busy with the letters the post-boy was organizing a strong party of law-abiding subjects to enable him to cope with the suppositious gang of robbers in the wood, and he lost no unnecessary time in following on the track of the miscreant who had stolen the letter bags. They approached the shelter of the trees cautiously. The post-horse was quietly cropping the grass by the side of the road, and close by him were the remaining London letters strewn on the ground. The provincial correspondence had not in any way been tampered with. Making the best of a bad bargain, the messenger resumed his journey northwards, to tell, wherever

he went, of the desperate encounter he had had with a ferocious highwayman and of his own heroic exertions in the exercise of his duty.

Meanwhile Grisell, after a short rest, and in the guise in which she had left Edinburgh, was pursuing her way home again. Anxiety and excitement pressed her on. She would willingly have remained in the saddle all the way from Berwick to the Metropolis, but a sense of kindness and of gratitude to the horse she rode, compelled her to seek two short rests by the way, each of about two hours' duration. She kept off the main road as far as possible, so as not to attract attention, but along the bye-paths she cantered all the day, making steady progress. The sun went down on her, and when the shades gathered in she sought the highway and by the light of the moon she travelled steadily on. When dawn broke on the intrepid girl and the jaded steed, the towers of Edinburgh were in view, and they entered the city and passed along the streets without either hindrance or question. Her mother did not know on what errand Grisell had left home, and had no idea, either of the long ride which she had undertaken, or the desperate risk she had encountered for the sake of her father. Grisell had been uncommunicative, partly because there was every likelihood she should fail in her errand, partly because, in the event of failure or discovery, she had no mind to implicate others in her rash adventure. For, successful as it proved, it was nevertheless a rash adventure. The penalty she risked was death, and there can be little doubt that, had the post-boy overcome her and handed her over to the authorities, neither her filial affection nor her high breeding would have been sufficient to have saved her from a cruel death.

When her daughter returned, Lady Cochrane was transported with delight. For good or evil the deed had been done, and in her mother's ear Grisell poured the story of her

ride. Lady Cochrane trembled as she heard, but she recognized that her daughter's courage had given a new lease of hope to the cause of her husband's release. She had faithful friends in Edinburgh, and two or three of those she summoned to her aid. She told them the whole story of Grisell's adventure, and they, prompted by admiration of the conduct of the gallant young lady, and sincerely zealous in their efforts to save Sir John Cochrane from a traitor's doom, consulted together concerning the change in the situation. The result of their consultations was that that very night three or four gentlemen of repute rode off to London in order to purchase Sir John's ransom with yellow gold. Nothing else would now avail, but they built their hopes upon the extravagance and the love of money of the King.

In his dingy little apartment in the Heart of Midlothian Sir John Cochrane still lay. For three or four days he had sadly missed the visits of his daughter Grisell. Where she was he knew not; he only knew she was engaged in an enterprise on his behalf, and he feared for the consequences. He was prepared manfully to face death for his own misdemeanour, but the very thought that she should involve herself was a constant pang which added unspeakable mental torture to his prison life. It was, therefore, with a glad heart that he welcomed Grisell's reappearance, and at least one streak of the dawn of hope lighted up his cell when he learned the steps that were being taken on his behalf. It was a weary, anxious three weeks and more that passed, none the less, ere Sir John's friends returned from London. They had not wasted time by the way. Barring the necessary rests which they took on the road, they made no halt. One series of horses they exchanged for another. They travelled at what was then regarded as a high rate of speed, and they reached London ere the intelligence had come to hand of the robbery

of the mail. The Earl of Dundonald lent them the aid of his powerful influence. He himself became security to the King for the sum of £5,000, in return for which Sir John Cochrane was to have his Majesty's gracious pardon. Other friends backed him out, and in a very few days the Edinburgh travellers were again on the highway and journeying with light hearts and in high spirits to convey to Edinburgh the joyful tidings that the Heart of Midlothian was to open its portals and send forth a freeman—the no longer attainted baronet. And not only was he to have release, but his estates, which had been forfeited, were to be restored to him, and he was to enjoy all the rights and privileges he possessed as a citizen ere he fell under the royal displeasure.

Lady Cochrane and the members of her family counted the days that must elapse ere their friends could return. They hoped, they feared, they despaired, they prayed, and they hoped again, in alternate sequence. The days passed all too slowly, though, when gloom possessed them, time seemed to fly on lightning's wings. When they heard the horsemen ride up the Canongate and halt at the door of their house, they looked anxiously forth to descry by their mien the result of their journey. As their friends beheld their careworn and wan faces, they waved their hats triumphantly; and over the mournful dwelling came the transformation scene of perfect happiness. No time was lost in conveying the pardon accorded to Sir John to the Governor of the Castle of Edinburgh, and that official hasted to comply with its terms. The prison doors were thrown back, and nightfall descended upon as happy a family circle as there was in the whole of Scotland.

But there was still a danger. What if Grisell's adventure should come to light? That must be guarded against, and all who were in the most remote degree in the secret were cautioned to observe the strictest secrecy. This they did

until three years had gone. By that time the Stewart race had become expatriated; the Revolution of 1688 was an accomplished fact, and nothing further was to be gained by silence. When once the silent embargo was removed, her deed spread like wild-fire, and Grisell became the heroine of the hour. It was not long ere she changed her name. Miss Grisell Cochrane became Mrs. Ker of Morriston, in the county of Berwick, and she was as amiable and loving a wife as she had proved to be a dutiful and affectionate daughter. Her father lived to succeed to the Earldom of Dundonald, and to take his place among the peers of the realm.

THE LADY OF HESSILHEAD OUTRAGED, AND GABRIEL MONTGOMERIE OF THIRDPART SLAIN.

THE Castle of Hessilhead is in the parish of Beith. A square, grey, ivy-mantled ruin is the old keep. Like its neighbouring strongholds, and like castles and fortalices all over Ayrshire, its glories have departed. Time has dealt hardly with it. Only imagination can now restore it to its former glories and breathe into it the breath of life. The little birds twitter and sing in the ivy which has grown up to mantle the decaying strength; and at night, in the hour between the gloaming and the mirk, when the light of day is dying out of the western sky, and ere yet the pall of Nox has been unfolded to cover the whole vault, the owl hoots music to his mate in the tall trees adjacent. Gone all sights and sounds of human life, the clash of the warrior's arms,

the tread of light feet in music and the dance, the revel rout of the retainers banqueting after the fray, the soft whispering voices of the lovers who left their earthly loves behind three or four centuries ago, the prattle of the children whose innocent lives shed a brighter light on the stern, rough points of the feudal story.

It was to this castle, to Hessilhead, that there came in 1576 Gabriel Montgomerie, a brother of the Laird of Scotstoun. Gabriel resided at Thirdpart, a house not far distant, and Montgomerie of Hessilhead being a relative of his, he was frequently in the habit of riding across from the one house to the other. Both were scions of the house of Eglinton; but notwithstanding their kinship, and their apparent friendliness, there was in the breast of the Laird of Scotstoun at least, and in those of his two brothers, a feeling of jealousy against the Laird of Hessilhead. How it originated cannot be said. It certainly existed; and when in those days jealousy was a mainspring of the feelings, it only required a very slight stimulus to develop it from the passive into the active.

Gabriel Montgomerie was accompanied by his servant, Robert Kent, a rude, boisterous fellow with an utter disregard of any proprieties that were outside those he considered due to the master whom he served. He knew that Gabriel was jealous of Hessilhead; and he had frequently shown that he fully shared in his master's antipathies. A strong, ready-handed man, he was as willing to give offence as he was to take it; and having hitherto escaped anything in the way of retaliation, he had grown so bold in his impertinence that he did not scruple, in her own presence, to make observations of a slighting character, upon the Lady of Hessilhead. Lady Hessilhead, who was of the Sempill family, naturally resented the affront.

"How dare you speak in my presence at all, unless you are spoken to?" she said, "and how dare you, in this

house, make free with what does not concern you? I'll teach you to behave yourself."

Kent darted a quick look at his master, Gabriel Montgomerie, and caught a glance of encouragement in his face.

"I am not your ladyship's servant," he replied, "and you have nothing to do with me. So I'll say what I like until my master bids me hold my tongue."

"Do you hear that, Gabriel Montgomerie?" retorted Lady Hessilhead, her eyes indignantly flashing and the colour mounting in her face. "Do you hear that? Is that the way you allow your servant to address a lady of rank in her own house?"

"He has said nothing amiss, Lady Hessilhead, so far as I have heard," said Gabriel, dourly.

"Nothing amiss!" was her ladyship's response. "Nothing amiss! Oh that my husband were here! He would not permit me to be thus insulted. But get you gone, both of you. Like master, like man—it's an old saying and a true one."

"It would be all one to us, Lady Hessilhead," replied Gabriel, "were your husband here. We are not saying or doing anything which we are not prepared to repeat and to justify in his presence."

"We shall see to that by and bye," Lady Hessilhead replied proudly, and curbing her temper with an effort. "Meantime, you will be good enough to leave the house."

"We shall, with pleasure," remarked Gabriel, with a mocking ring in his voice.

"With pleasure," echoed Kent, aping his master's politeness and bowing low, as he spoke.

The tones and the gestures of the servant stung Lady Hessilhead to the quick. She was naturally impetuous, and darting forward, she struck Kent with her open hand on the cheek so smartly that her own blood-mantled countenance was speedily reflected in that of the chastened servitor.

The suddenness of the cuff, and the impetuosity with which it was given, for a moment staggered the angry receiver of Lady Hessilhead's bounty. But only for a moment. With an oath he sprang towards her, and would undoubtedly have felled her to the ground, had not Gabriel Montgomerie interposed. The interposition gave the lady a moment's breathing space and time for reflection; and as the result of these she darted from the room, slamming the door behind her, and leaving two exceptionally angry men to curse alternately, and together, the termination of the interview. They exhausted themselves in vituperation, and, as there was no alternative, rode off to Thirdpart.

At Thirdpart Gabriel found his brother John and poured the tale of his woes into his sympathetic ear. John was as incensed as Gabriel.

"This is how it seems to me," he said, "Kent is our servant, and therefore we are bound to protect him. When he is attacked, it is not really he who is attacked—for nobody would think of attacking Kent for his own sake. Therefore, it is you who are attacked. Lady Hessilhead and her husband are one. He will defend her for anything she may do, and therefore, if we cannot have revenge upon Lady Hessilhead, we must have it upon her husband. That is sound reasoning, isn't it?"

"Quite, quite sound! And, therefore, the sooner we set about it the better. What do you propose?"

John took time to think. It was one of John's ideas that he could, and did, think; so he rubbed his chin, as he was in the habit of doing, and tried to formulate a plan of some kind or other. The one thing was to ensure as speedy retaliation as possible, and to the accomplishment of this John bent his mental energies. The result of his thinking was that late that night Gabriel and Kent remounted their horses, well armed, and rode once more towards Hessilhead Castle.

It was dark, but well they knew every foot of the way. Their intention was to attempt immediate entrance; but when they reached the castle the gates were shut; so they had perforce to resort to the house of a friend in the immediate neighbourhood, where they lay until the first streaks of the morning's coming proclaimed the hour for further action.

Daylight found them concealed close by the doorway. They had no well devised plan of action. Entrance to the house was first to be gained; and after that they were to do the best they could. Beneath the walls they lay fretting and fuming, nursing their wrath to keep it warm, until the gate was unbarred and the inner door stood wide open. The servants at Hessilhead had no anticipation that anything unusual was about to take place, and therefore no steps were taken to prevent the two conspirators from carrying out their purpose.

As soon as opportunity offered, Gabriel emerged from his seclusion, and, followed by his servant, entered the castle. The morning was still young, but the inmates were nearly all astir; and Lady Hessilhead herself had begun her household duties for the day. It was she they were primarily in search of; after her, her husband; and, as luck would have it, they had not to search long. Going from one room to another, opening the doors as they went and scanning the rooms for the object of their quest, Gabriel and Kent at last found Lady Hessilhead. Closing the door behind them, Gabriel accosted her.

"If you scream, Lady Hessilhead, or make the slightest noise, I'll shoot you dead where you stand."

Lady Hessilhead was taken aback and did not know what to do. The muzzle of a heavy pistol pointed straight at her did not help to restore her to instant equanimity. Still, she retained sufficient dignity to draw herself up to her full height and to demand the reason of the visit.

"You know well enough, madam," replied Gabriel, "you know well enough the reason of the visit. Your memory is not so defective as to have permitted you to forget what transpired yesterday."

"No sir," she responded, "it is not. I am only sorry I demeaned myself lifting my hand to that man there"—and she pointed to Kent—"but, save that, I have no regret for what occurred. And so far as that goes, he was not treated worse than he deserved."

"You lie, Madam, you lie," angrily retorted Kent.

"I do not lie," she replied. "But what are you doing here? What do you want? Were you not ordered out of this yesterday, and in such a way as would have prevented any man with any sense of honour whatever from returning to Hessilhead?"

"I have no time to waste words," was Gabriel's response. "We have come here to give you an opportunity to make your peace with us. You must either apologize, Madam, or"—and Gabriel handled his pistol meaningly and with an indication which could not fail to be interpreted.

"Or you will shoot me! Is that so?" asked Lady Hessilhead, drawing back.

Gabriel nodded his head.

"Then you have your answer. I will not apologize, having done no wrong; and you are cowards, both of you, thus to come threateningly upon an unprotected lady in her own house. But do not think you can escape. The sound of that pistol would be your death warrant."

"Aye, but it would first be yours," was Gabriel's retort, "and the death warrant, too, of anybody who came to your aid. See, we are armed to the teeth."

Lady Hessilhead's situation was desperate; but, a woman of courage, and ignoring the threatening muzzle of the weapon, she stepped forward, with the intention of passing between Montgomerie and Kent, and effecting her exit from

the room. Gabriel dropped the pistol, and seized hold of her as she tried to pass, and Kent, following his example, caught her roughly by the arm, and ordered her to remain where she was. A second time, in her anger, she struck him on the face. Kent retaliated with a savage blow on her breast, and, as she reeled, Gabriel completed the work by knocking her down.

Lady Hessilhead's screams echoed through the house and alarmed the inmates, and soon from all parts of the castle there was a sound of hurrying feet. Their anger excited to fury's point, the assailants kicked the prostrate lady several times on the stomach and on other parts of her person; and then, realizing their own danger, and knowing that the household was unmistakably alarmed, they rushed from the room brandishing their pistols and threatening to shoot anybody who dared to lay a finger on them. Had the Laird appeared on the scene, they would unquestionably have shot him. Such was their intention. But he had been fast asleep until awakened by his wife's cries, and ere he could secure his arms and come to her aid, her assailants had made good their escape. The servants would fain have arrested their progress, but they had no means of doing so.

When they reached the outer gate, Gabriel took the key from the lock, slammed the gate behind them, and locked the inmates in. As they rode off, the Laird of Hessilhead, half-dressed, rushed towards the exit, pistol in hand, vowing vengeance and imprecations upon their heads; but they stayed not upon the order of their going, and the Laird had the mortification of seeing them disappear in the direction of Thirdpart. And what made matters worse, and excited the Laird the more, was that they coolly appropriated a black horse which was feeding in the vicinity of the castle, and led it away with them.

The first care of the household was naturally Lady Hessilhead. Her injuries were severe, and for a little

occasioned considerable anxiety; but when she was put to bed, and poultices and bandages applied where these were required, the Laird lost no time in prosecuting vengeance. His good black horse, that he was wont to ride, was gone, but he had others remaining in the stables, and, mounted on one of these, he set out alone to overtake and punish the transgressors. He traced them as far as Thirdpart, and, finding his horse there, he naturally enough concluded that the horse-thieves and the assailants of his wife were at hand.

Nor was he disappointed. Ere yet the Laird had fixed his gaze upon those whom he sought, Gabriel and his brother John had seen him coming. He was all alone, unattended —one man against two. What better luck could have befallen than this? Gabriel and Kent would have killed the Laird in his own house of Hessilhead, had he only ventured to put in appearance during their presence in the castle; and now here he was at their very door, ready for the sacrifice. True, he had come to slay; but why, even if he had, should he not be slain? Thus reasoning, Gabriel and his brother did not keep him long in waiting. He had hardly let fall the ponderous knocker ere they rushed forth upon him, pistol in one hand, sword in the other. No challenge was given, no invitation was needed to fall to. With right good will they attacked him, and he, with will as hearty, discharged his pistol at them and then rushed to the fray.

The Laird's courage was not despicable, but his discretion was hardly equal to his valour, else he would not have risked such an issue single-handed. Gabriel Montgomerie was an expert swordsman, and John was not less ready, and had a powerful physique and a strong arm in addition. Nevertheless, the Laird cut and slashed away like a brave man so long as he was able to compete with the odds, and until Gabriel succeeded in inflicting a severe flesh wound on his right shoulder. His sword dropped from his grasp, he

reeled, and John completed the combat by striking him over the head and bringing him insensible to the ground. The blood poured from his wounds freely, and, satisfying themselves that nevermore would the Laird of Hessilhead ride forth on vengeance bound, his assailants withdrew into the house and left him weltering in his gore. Their retreat was stimulated by observing that there was a small company of the neighbours collecting, and by the fear that these might take the part of the wounded man.

But, dangerously wounded as he was, Hessilhead did not breathe his last just yet. He was conveyed, rolled up in a plaid, to his own house, where careful nursing, added to an iron constitution and an indomitable will, speedily restored him to strength. And when he arose from his sick bed, it was with a determination to have justice done upon John and Gabriel Montgomerie, and upon Kent, and to pay them back in their own rough coin.

The quarrel, which now threatened to extend to a regular feud, had originated with the insolence of Kent, and it was this feature of it that most annoyed and enraged Hessilhead. He sent word to Montgomerie of Scotstoun, the elder brother of Gabriel, that if Kent were only handed over to him, that he might himself do justice upon him, he would not prosecute the struggle further. Scotstoun and Gabriel talked the matter over, though, seeing that each had made up his mind beforehand to refuse compliance with the demand, they might as well have saved themselves the trouble. The result of their consultation was that they resolved to refuse to give Kent up at all hazards, and this they communicated to the Laird of Hessilhead. The latter kept their messenger waiting until he had perused the message, and then bid him tell his master and his brothers John and Walter that he held them responsible for whatever might further betide, and that Gabriel's blood would be on his own head if he were slain.

But Gabriel only held the more stoutly to his resolve, and put his house of Thirdpart into a condition of defence.

A few days thereafter Gabriel Montgomerie left Thirdpart to ride as far as Scotstoun. He anticipated no danger, and was jogging easily along the way. A watcher, unobserved by him, saw him as he took his way to his destination, and, returning to Hessilhead, told the Laird that circumstances were favourable for the launching of his first bolt upon the worst offender of the three brothers. The Laird acted at once on his information. He summoned three of his followers, named respectively Bruntshiells, Giffen, and Reid, and gave them instructions how to proceed. They armed themselves with hagbuts, and proceeded by quiet lanes and a devious route to a thicket not far from Thirdpart, through which Gabriel must pass on his return home. Here they watched until the afternoon was well spent and the shades of evening were beginning to gather.

Ere the sky had darkened they saw Gabriel come riding leisurely along. He was unsuspicious of danger, and therefore rode into the ambush, all unconscious of the fate in store for him. The three shots rang out simultaneously, and all was over. In each case, the aim was true, and there was no need for the avengers to waste time in satisfying themselves that they had not discharged their hagbuts in vain. Gabriel never moved. Hit in the head and in the heart, his death was instantaneous, and he lay with face upturned to the evening air in a pool of blood. Assured that they had faithfully discharged their duty, the trio wended their way back to Hessilhead by the same circuitous paths which they had chosen in reaching the fatal thicket, and with high elation communicated to the laird the success of their mission.

"So much for Gabriel Montgomerie," he said, "it would have been better for him had he handed Kent over to me and to justice."

"Yes," was Lady Hessilhead's comment, "insult is wiped out in blood, and the balance of revenge is on our side of the beam. And yet I cannot pity the fate of Gabriel, for I cannot forget the double insult which he offered to me."

"Never mind the insult," replied the laird, "Gabriel will insult neither you nor any other body any more. But it becomes us to be careful. His brothers, John and Walter, will have a reckoning for this transaction."

"They will never know who did the deed," responded Lady Hessilhead.

"Do not be too sure of that," said the laird. "Besides, they will not want to satisfy themselves. They will take it for granted that Gabriel was killed at our instigation, and they will act on it, too, so we must be careful."

And the laird and the lady were careful. If they went abroad at all, it was in company with an armed band of servants, sufficiently numerous to cope with any body of men that Scotstoun and his brother Walter were able to put in the field. Even when they rode within their own grounds, or visited the neighbouring gentry, their body-guard was in attendance. It was well for them that it was, for the brothers maintained ceaseless watch, and only waited an opportunity to avenge their brother's death.

Their watchings and their strategies of no avail, the Montgomeries resolved on a bolder course. Collecting as many followers as they could, they descended upon Hessilhead in the month of September, between two and three months from the date of the first overt act in the unhappy sequence, with the object of killing the laird. Kent was with them. The whole force was fully armed. In the language of the criminal record, they went with pistols, swords, bucklers, steel bonnets, and other weapons and armour. First they ransacked the house of Nether Hessilhead in the expectation of finding the laird there; but, disappointed in their quest, they marched on in the direction

of the castle. On their way thither they espied James Paterson, the laird's servant. His presence furnished Scotstoun with a suggestion, upon which he acted. His followers he secreted in a neighbouring plantation, and, only taking with him his brother Walter and the offending servant Kent, against whom the laird's wrath was specially kindled, he raised a loud shout, and pursued the unsuspicious domestic. But if Paterson was unsuspicious of danger at a distance, he realized it fully when it was close at hand; and, seeing the three armed men coming to meet him, he made haste to escape, and ran as fast as he could in the direction of the castle.

This was what the Montgomeries desired. With cries of vengeance and of threatening, they followed him up. Nothing would have been easier than for them to have overtaken him and killed him as they listed, but that was not their intent. The more nearly he approached Hessilhead, the more they gained on him; and when he reached a point within fifty or sixty yards of the gate, they were within a few paces of him. Their expectation was that the laird, seeing his servant bestead, would at once come forth to his aid.

But the laird was not to be entrapped by any such device. He remained within the gate, and encouraged Paterson in his flight. Seeing a chance for his life, the latter redoubled his exertions, and, to the intense chagrin of the Montgomeries, he reached the gate and entered in safety; and they had the mortification of seeing the heavy barrier closed in their faces, and of hearing the shouts of exultation which greeted their defeat. These stung Scotstoun and his brother to the quick. They shook their clenched fists at the Laird of Hessilhead, who, with a satisfied smile, was witness to their discomfiture. Nor did he forbear the exercise of his gratification.

"Methinks," he called out, addressing Scotstoun, "you have journeyed thus far for nothing."

"There are some men very bold," retorted Scotstoun, "when they are behind a fortification. Come out into the open, if you can."

"Why should I come out?" replied the laird. "Do you expect a sane man to come forth to meet three desperadoes like you, armed to the teeth and ready to murder?"

"You were not so scrupulous" was Scotstoun's answer, "when you sent your men to slay my brother Gabriel in the thicket."

"Gabriel had himself to thank," replied the laird. "This quarrel has been none of my seeking. And harkee, my friends, if you are ready to bring it to a close, you can do so even now. Give up to me that plundering, murderous scoundrel Kent, who stands by you, and I give you my solemn word of honour that the dispute is at an end so far as I am concerned. Do you think that it becomes men in whose veins runs the same red blood, to pursue one another like this, and to hunt one another to their destruction?"

"Give up Kent! Why should we give up Kent? That you may hang him in cold blood from the walls of your castle? No, sir, we will not give him up; nor will we sacrifice our revenge for the death of Gabriel until we have had satisfaction. So come out now and defend yourself." And Scotstoun waved his sword over his head.

"No, sir, I will not come out. You will have to come in, if you can, if you want to obtain your revenge. And if you will neither give up the fight nor enter Hessilhead Castle at the point of the sword, then you had better be gone. For I give you fair warning that you are in danger. You have come here armed to do murder, and, by the heavens above us, if you are not away and out of sight within two minutes, I shall have you shot where you stand. Paterson," continued the laird, addressing his servant, "get the walls manned with the hagbutters."

Paterson went to obey the order, and within a minute a dozen men had taken up their position.

"Now, I warn you for the last time, Scotstoun," resumed the laird. "I warn you to beware how you tempt me. There is justification enough for shooting you all three dead in your tracks; and if I bid you go, it is that the country's justice may befall you. Are you going?"

"We cannot do otherwise," gloomily responded Scotstoun; "but you shall hear from us again."

And so saying, Scotstoun and his associates departed.

While the rivals were thus engaged, after the manner of the times, in settling their dispute with high hand, they were equally busy in setting the machinery of the law in motion against one another; and the first result of the attempt to have punishment meted out by the criminal authorities was the citing to the bar of the Court of Justiciary, of Montgomerie of Scotstoun, his brother Walter, and Robert Kent. The brothers were charged with assault and oppression, and, in addition, Kent was libelled as having stolen the black horse of the Laird of Hessilhead. All tendered a plea of not guilty.

The case against Kent was first gone into. The jury was largely composed of gentlemen who must have been on terms of intimacy with the Montgomeries, both of Hessilhead and of Scotstoun; and its composition warranted the prosecutors in believing that they would not fail to obtain a verdict, at least against the obnoxious servant. The defence put forward was specious. It was that Kent and Gabriel Montgomerie were not the aggressors in the outrage at Hessilhead, but the injured parties, and that Kent appropriated the horse for the purpose of effecting his escape from the vengeance of the laird, and to secure immunity from instant pursuit. To this the counsel for the prosecution objected that it was notorious that Kent had admitted having stolen the horse, and he protested for wilful error if the jury should acquit him. Notwithstanding the protestation, however, Kent was discharged from

the bar, and the case against the Montgomeries was continued.

The Crown authorities, satisfied that the jury had wilfully and intentionally ignored a very palpable case against Kent, brought the fifteen gentlemen composing that body to trial. Delay was craved by the prosecution, but objected to by the jurors, and the result of a long, legal wrangle was that the jurors were discharged on their finding security to appear again should they be called on to do so. They never were cited anew, and no new trial was urged in the case of Kent.

John Montgomerie of Scotstoun and his brother Walter claimed to be tried at the Justiciary Court to be held in Renfrew, and, their claim being sustained, they were suffered to depart. A similar technicality was interposed in the case of those charged with the shooting of Gabriel, and they, too, escaped the consequence of their misdeeds. On all hands there was a general withdrawal from prosecution, and the dispute, judicially and socially, was at an end.

A FOUL FIEND RECLAIMS A CUNINGHAME DRUNKARD.

In common with other parts of the country, Ayrshire was of olden days the scene of not a few miraculous occurrences. When the holy St. Winning, for instance, took up his residence on the banks of the Garnock in the eighth century, he received a visit from a friend, who, fond of fishing, cast his line in the pellucid stream whose waters oft refreshed the weary saint. He was an expert angler, but to his chagrin the fish would not respond. They refused to rise to his lure, and charm he never so wisely, not one of the finny denizens

of the streams and the pools would bite. Nettled and irate at his ill-luck, he made complaint to St. Winning, and that holy personage took it upon himself to pronounce a curse on the river. The malediction was not long ere it operated. The Garnock left its original channel and sought out another, and from that day to this it has never returned to its primal course.

But, if St. Winning could curse, he could also bless. The tears that ran from his eyes in contemplation of sin, and sorrow, and suffering, formed a perennial spring of clear cold water of wondrous medicinal properties. To its healing virtues were brought the maimed and the sick, the halt and the blind; and having partaken of its cooling draught or bathed in its waters, they went their way restored and reinvigorated. Not less wonderful were the portents of the well. When war was approaching it ran with blood. A warning of this description was given in the year 1184, and is vouched for by two ecclesiastical authorities of sanctity and of good repute. For eight days and eight nights the red blood ran, and for nearly as many centuries the tale kept passing on without any satisfactory attempt to explain away the mystery. The possible explanation hardly reflects that credit on the holy men of the monastery that one might desire. "In 1826, when the square, or green, to the west of the monastery, was being levelled, the workmen came upon an old leaden pipe about an inch in diameter which ran from the direction of the building to a fine spring now called Kyles Well. This pipe had a considerable descent and could not have been used for the purpose of drawing water from the well to the abbey. Through it, therefore, in all probability, blood, or some liquid resembling it, had been caused to flow into the fountain, and thus the credulity of the people was imposed upon by the appearance of a miracle which served to enhance the fame of the monastery and the power of its priesthood."

The fact, therefore, of the blood flowing may remain, but the portent and the miracle disappear.

It is not often, it must be admitted, that the prince of the powers of darkness does reformation work. Unless he is greatly slandered, his ambition is rather to decoy the sons of men, so that he may take them home with him at the last, than even to frighten them into well-doing. And therefore, when we find a well-authenticated case in which good results are found to follow his practical monition, it is just as well that he should have whatever credit we can give him. Satan is not the kind of potentate to do good by stealth and blush to find it fame. The wonder is, none the less, that in the good old days, when he was wont to mingle with men, and when he spent no inconsiderable part of his spare time in appearing to the unwary and half-frightening them out of their wits, they should not have henceforth eschewed evil and learned to do well. It may be that they did, too frequently to suit the taste of the fiend; hence his disappearance from mortal ken during the last few centuries of the Christian era.

In the end of the thirteenth century there lived in Cuninghame a farmer whose name was William. The exact year was 1290; but, apart from the date, the occurrence is distinctly awanting in detail. "Cuninghame" is a large district of country, and "William" is not by any means an uncommon Christian name. However, we must be content with what the historian in the "Chronicle of Lanercost" has left us, and not endeavour to locate William in a given parish or to attempt to identify him with any of the families of the period.

William was wealthy, a farmer to occupation. The world had smiled on him, and he in return smiled on the world. He made a god of his belly. He frequented ale-houses and taverns, and wherever he could get food to eat or liquor to drink, there was William to be found. Nor did he eat and

drink like ordinary people. Where others ate, he devoured; where others drank, he gulped. He attacked his food as if it was his worst enemy and specially set before him so that he might annihilate it; and when the ale cup was placed on the table he did not need a first, let alone a second, invitation to fall to. He fell to, naturally, and of his own accord. When he could find boon companions to share with him the culinary glories of the field or the fold, he was glad to join their company and to eat in fellowship with them. When they were not to be found, he partook alone. So with the blessings of the brewery or the distillery. He was hail-fellow-well-met with all who would be hail-fellow-well-met with him. But an absence of associates did not slacken his thirst or allay by one jot or tittle his devotion to the rosy god. Men called him a drunken glutton or a gluttonous drunkard, but it was all one to William what they called him. He ate away, and he drank away, just the same.

One afternoon—it was a memorable afternoon in William's experience—he was seated in an ale-house in Cuninghame. The landlord knew him well. William always paid his bills like a man, and the host could afford, therefore, to excuse a good deal in presence of that potent fact. When the farmer entered with hungry eyes and thirsty tongue, he showed him in to his best room. He ransacked the larder and bore its contents thence to gratify the ample appetite of his customer, and he ran out his ale from the generous tap into the very largest measure he could find. William ate as long as he could eat, and he drank until he could drink no more. And then he was happy and as bold as a lion.

And he had need to be. For hardly had he swallowed the last mouthful and drawn the sleeve of his coat across his lips, than he found sitting, right opposite him, "the very hideous form of a spirit of the air, with a foul body, a ghastly countenance, and eyes fiery and of a frightful size."

Beside him on the floor sat an open vessel. William fancied there was an unpleasant odour about, and not a self-contained odour either. There was a distinct whiff of brimstone in it, but there was a suggestion of other ingredients which William could not exactly discriminate. His first sensation was one of terror. And no wonder. What mortal man, brought face to face with such an uncouth denizen of the spirit land, could be other than terror-stricken? The demon's face was horrible to behold. Its cheeks were gaunt and wan, "drawn" and twisted in all directions. Its eyes shone with the light of fire, and, as they were quite an unusual size, there was quite an unusual quantity of fire in them. The farmer stared. He had never seen anything like this before, and he fervently hoped and prayed he might never see anything like it again. The fiend would have smiled if it could, but fiends do not smile. The very nearest approach to a smile they are possessed of is a horrid leer, and this imp of darkness, wishing to make itself agreeable, leered. William had a good deal of natural courage, and he had, in addition, at this present moment, a good deal that was acquired. So, combining the two, he took a good square look at the demon and nodded his head to it. The demon responded. William took a long sniff.

"Man," he said, finding voice and speaking as boldly as he could, "man, that's an awfu' smell ye've brocht wi' ye."

"D'ye not like it?" replied the fiend. "I thought it would have been agreeable to you."

"Agreeable!" echoed William. "Agreeable! Ye may ca't agreeable if ye like, but tae my mind its simply disgustin'."

"That's all a matter of taste, William. But really I'm surprised. Never mind, though. I'm glad to see you."

"Are ye?" It's mair than I can say about you, for of a' the ugly, queer lookin' spirits o' darkness that ever I heard tell o,' I never did hear of ane sae verra plain and ordinar-lookin' as yersel'."

The spirit did not seem to take the compliment badly. It leered afresh and then resumed the conversation.

"You seem to enjoy life, William?"

"What for no? Life was given us tae enjoy't. An' even if I dae enjoy't mair than my fellow-mortals, I canna see that it's ony business o' yours. I say, what brocht ye here?"

"Oh, nothing very particular," replied the leering imp. "Nothing very particular, William. I was sent here to see you."

"Ye were, were ye? Ca' ye that naething verra particular? An' noo that ye've seen me, ye can gae awa' again, for I tell ye I dinna like yer company, and I can not bear that awfu' smell that ye carry about wi' ye."

"Would you like to know, William, what it is that makes the smell? It's something I've got in this vessel."

"Vessel! Is that what ye ca't? No, I canna be fashed wi' yer vessel. It's bad enough tae hae tae smell't owre here wi'oot comin' ony nearer. Besides, tae tell ye the truth, I div not like yer company. Ye hae an unco uncanny look aboot ye."

"Look is like smell, William. It's all a matter of taste. Where I come from I am not regarded as at all common or bad-looking."

"Maybe no, Mister Deevil!"

"No, I am not, I assure you. And, talking of taste, William, what about this way of living of yours? That must be pretty much a matter of taste too? What of your boon companions? What of the bounties you guzzle so continually? What of the drink that you are always swilling?"

"Never fash yer head aboot that. I'd rather tak' a look at what ye ca' yer vessel than hae a moral lecture frae you. Ye're no a verra fittin' body, I'm thinkin', tae read me or ony ither mortal man a lesson."

William's courage had risen into familiarity. For the deil —for this deil any way—he cared not a bodkin; and rising

from his seat, he neared his strange companion and the vessel from which continued to arise the horrible exhalations.

"Before we look at it," observed the farmer, pausing, "I'm thinkin' we'd be nane the waur o' a gless o' speerits, just tae keep the stamach straight."

"I never drink," responded the demon.

"That's queer," replied William; "but whether ye drink or no, I dae."

So he poured out a reaming draught of the liquor and quaffed it.

"Noo, I think I can stan' yer vessel. Oh, man, but it's an awfu' smell!"

Well fortified, William approached and looked into the vessel. What it contained he was not very sure. Its contents were a curious mixture of what appeared to be half-digested food and drink of all kinds, fermented, sour, and with a sickening odour, which, as the farmer afterwards declared, "was enough tae ding a pig doun."

"Guid save us!" ejaculated William, "what's that?"

"These," said the minister of evil, "which thou seest, I have collected from the vomiting of thy boon companions in your convivial meetings."[1]

"Preserve us a'! Is't as bad as that?" inquired the farmer.

"Just as you see it. That is the condition of your stomach at this present moment, and that will be its condition until the close of the chapter."

"I'm no sae sure aboot that," gasped William, relapsing into his seat and struggling to keep down the feeling of squeamishness that was creeping over him.

The demon rolled his fiery eyes around, and then fixed their piercing, intense glare on the pale face of the inebriate. Those eyes, they seemed to annihilate the few feet of space that intervened between the two, and they burned into the very soul of the affrighted farmer. He thought his time was

[1] The words of the "Chronicle of Lanercost."

come, and falling back on the only talisman he could think of, he made the sign of the Cross, and then fainted away.

When William came to himself, he was lying on the floor of the ale house. He glanced, and then gazed fearfully around. He was all alone. The little demon with the shining orbs had vanished, and save that there was still hanging about the apartment the mingled smell of brimstone and of the contents of the vessel, he had disappeared without a trace of his presence. William was a thankful man. But he was also a badly scared man; and he made haste to join the landlord in the kitchen, so that he might not again have to face such an interview, should the spirit return, in solitariness.

"Man," said the landlord, "but ye're lookin' sick an' glum."

"Aye," replied William, "an' you'd look sick an' glum tae if ye had been in my shoon for the last quarter o' an 'oor. What for did ye let him in?"

"Let wha in?"

"That wee, wizened, ill-faured lookin' deevil that was in the room wi' me. Ye maun hae seen him as he cam ben. Sic een as he had in his heid!"

"Ye're dreamin' surely!" said mine host. "There's been nae wee, wizened-lookin' object through this kitchen this blessed day. Ye maun hae been asleep an' dream't it."

"No, I wasna sleepin'," retorted William somewhat angrily; "an' ye maun hae seen him. Dinna think tae play yer pranks on me, for I'll hae nane o' them."

The landlord solemnly assured the bewildered guest that he had seen nobody enter and nobody leave the house.

"Weel then," retorted William, "if ye did na see him, ye could na help smellin' him ony way, an' his infernal vessel, as he ca't it. The verra thocht o't gars me bock."

"An infernal vessel!" the landlord said in astonishment.

"Aye, an infernal vessel," replied William emphatically, "if ye had smell't it like me ye wad na need tae speir twice

aboot it, for o' a' the smells that ever yet entered into the heart o' man tae conceive there was never ane, nor seven o' them combined for that matter o't, that could haud a can'le tae yon."

Again the host protested himself in complete ignorance of the strange visitor, and William, fain to believe him, went his way, musing and moralizing on the strange adventure through which he had passed.

But from that day on, a change came over him. The days of his riot and debauchery were at an end. He could still stand up manfully to a generous meal, but he ceased to eat as if the one great and only business in life was the consumption of victuals. He did not sign the pledge probably because there was no pledge to sign, but if he did indulge occasionally in the wine of the country, he did it in such a way that he came to be regarded and recognized as a moderate drinker, as one who had the most complete control of his tastes and his appetite. He devoted himself to good works, became altogether an altered man, and, until the day that he died, remained true to the better life.

The fiend must have been disappointed with the result, but nobody can be disposed to pity him, even if his feelings were hurt a little.

SIR ROBERT BOYD OF DEAN CASTLE AND HIS LAST COMBAT WITH STEWART OF DARNLEY.

Sir Robert Boyd stood manfully by his Sovereign on the field of Bannockburn, and in return for his services there,

and during the War of Independence, he received Dean Castle with its fair lands. The existing charter dates back as far as 1316. From that year down to 1775, amid many turmoils and vicissitudes, the Boyds continued to occupy their stronghold. It was not until the year 1775 that the carelessness of a domestic brought its residential career to a close, and sent the flames curling from the window and the loopholes of the massive edifice. But during its long history, Dean Castle was the scene of many a fierce conflict, and the centre of many an intrigue. Its lords played no unimportant part in the events of the times, national and local, and its walls looked down on many a fray whose very memory has gone into the silence of lapsed remembrance.

In 1439, it was Sir Robert Boyd who dispensed the hospitality and swayed the influence invariably possessed in these feudal days by the great territorial lords of the land. Like his progenitors and his descendants, and like the other great barons by whom he was surrounded, he carried matters with a high hand. From beneath the shadow and the shelter of the massive ramparts of the Dean he led his followers to the fray and the fight, sometimes to victory, sometimes to defeat; but whate'er betided, he could at all times withdraw to the safety of his towers and his bulwarks, man well his battlements, and bid the encircling host defiance.

One of the most tenacious and persistent of his foes was Sir Alan Stewart, of Darnley. Sir Alan had held the office of High Constable of the Scottish army in France. Having returned home to his seat in the Eastwood parish of Renfrewshire, he prosecuted campaigning against his rival; and though on a scale vastly inferior to that which had characterized his leadership on the Continent, he was animated by feelings not less vindictive and by perseverance not less notable than those which he had called into play on the bloody fields of France. In Sir Robert Boyd he met a foeman

full worthy of his steel, and the borderlands of Ayrshire and of Renfrewshire had good cause to remember the rapine and the plunder which distinguished the long-continued combat. It was war to the knife, against houses and homesteads, against castles and mansions, against farmers and rustics, against all who in any way were allied to, or connected with, either of the great families of Boyd or of Stewart.

The end of the feud, so far as Sir Alan Stewart had to do with it, came to him between Falkland and Linlithgow. Tidings had been brought to the Dean that the Baron of Darnley was on his way to the Scottish midlands, and with horse and with armour, with troopers riding in close order and ever alert against insidious attack, rode the lord of Kilmarnock on his mission of vengeance. He overtook Sir Alan at Polmaise Thorn, and falling upon him at unawares, slew him by the way side ; and then, retracing his steps, he hastened back to Ayrshire to set his house in order for the anticipated reprisal. For the Stewarts of Darnley were not the men to let a deed of this kind go unavenged, and Sir Robert knew it. The battle, he foresaw, must ere long be transferred to Ayrshire, and he prepared to meet it when it came.

When the young Sir Alexander Stewart heard the news that his sire had been slain, by his old rival, by the Thorn of Polmaise, he waited only until the days of the mourning were ended. The body of Sir Alan was borne to its last resting place with every pomp and circumstance; and, when the ancestral vault had received its tenant, Sir Alexander bid his men assemble at Darnley House in three days. The intervening time he did not waste in regrets or in recrimination. He did not call the civil power to his aid, but instead, he saw to it that his armoury was complete, that his battle-axes and his swords were sharp, that his horses were fit for the field, and that nothing was awanting to

ensure success. The days passed, and when they were gone the retainers of Darnley were ready, and their chief was at their head. He divided his followers into three detachments, each consisting of about seventy men. Two of these he sent on before him with orders to enter upon the lands surrounding the Dean at different points, and he gave them instructions to meet him at Craignaugh Hill on the following night. And having seen them on their way, he himself chose a third route, with the object of making the retaliation as wide-spread as possible, and the vengeance as complete as it could be.

Sir Robert Boyd, with a hundred of his men, were in the Dean Castle awaiting the advent of the Stewarts, and ready at a moment's warning to ride forth to give them stern greeting and welcome to the lands of Kilmarnock. And out over the hills of Dunlop they had their watchmen, well-mounted, or fleet of foot, to bring them tidings. It was weary waiting, but they had not long to wait, for on the very day that witnessed the departure of the Stewarts from Darnley, a messenger arrived to say that they were coming. The messenger had himself seen but one of the detachments, that led by Sir Alexander, and he reported that their numbers were about seventy, and that they were armed to the battle. There was joy and elation in the breasts of the Boyds. Their brief inaction within the walls of the Castle was at an end, and now they were bound out over the fields and the mosses, and away to the steeps of Dunlop. Swords, battle-axes, spears, armour, were taken down from the walls, the impatient horses were led from their stalls, and with jocund hearts and eager for the conflict, the Boyds clattered across the draw-bridge, and out into the open country. Sir Robert remained a moment behind, to take farewell of his wife. She was loath to let him go, and with tears in her eyes, she put her arms around his neck, and looked lovingly and longingly into his face.

"Cheer up, Isabel," he said, "you were not wont to be despondent, and why should you be so now?"

"No, I have never been like this before. And yet there is good cause for despondency," she replied. "But, good-bye. You will hasten back with all the speed you may; for I shall not rest either in mind or in body until I see you home again within the walls of the Dean."

"Then that will not be long. The Stewarts are but seventy strong, dear Isabel, and we an hundred. You are not afraid that we shall not be able to give account of them."

"No, I am not afraid of that, if they be only seventy strong. But beware lest they lead you into an ambush."

"I shall, Isabel; and all the more that you are so despondent and fearful. But tell me the cause of your despondency; I have never seen you so before."

"Well may I be despondent. Last night I had such a vision as only can portend some terrible disaster. I was standing, methought, at the centre gate of the castle, when I saw approach, not a gay cavalcade full of fire and life, such as that I have just seen ride away, but a broken force, battle-rent, returning from defeat. And, alas, my husband, you were not riding, as is your wont, at their head, but lying across the back of your war horse, all wounded, and in your gore. I saw you as plainly as I see you now, and is it any wonder, then, that I fear to part from you?"

"Banish your fears, dear wife; and bid your dreams asleep, for something tells me that I shall return all safe. Nor must I delay any longer. One farewell kiss, then!—now, good-bye, Isabel, and possess your soul in peace."

"May God go with you, dearest husband, while I remain behind, to wait and to pray that his angels may guard you in the hour of battle!"

With these words ringing in his ears, Sir Robert Boyd gave his anxious steed both whip and spur; and, galloping

off, he overtook his retainers, and assumed his natural position at their head. They took their way northwards past Kilmaurs, and, catching a glimpse of Rowallan Castle, they held on past Fenwick and Stewarton, over ground which had witnessed many a hard-fought fight, and which was yet destined to witness memorable scenes in the great struggle of the Montgomeries and the Cuninghames. Night was falling over the uplands of Dunlop ere they had entered the dangerous ground where they knew the Stewarts were to be found, and so they went warily through the gloaming and into the night, keeping sharp outlook the while, lest unawares they should fall into ambuscade. Two lynx-eyed watchers were in the van, and these peered into every dell and thicket and nook, where, perchance, a watching Stewart might be hidden.

Meantime, Sir Alexander Stewart and his retainers had not been idle. They had raided in different directions, making rapid incursions on the lands of the Boyds, and, with cattle and sheep and wealth of spoil, they had returned to the trysting place by Craignaugh Hill. Here they lay down for the night, the hill behind them, the broad plain in front of them, the sky overhead. It was a clear, calm night, and its earlier hours waned away unenlivened by aught else than the bleating of the sheep, the lowing of the kine, and the cry of the restless birds of the moorland and the swamp. The wind was cold, but deep among the heather, and under cover of such natural shelter as the undulating ground and the scattered boulders afforded them, the Stewarts slept. They needed no lullaby save that of Nature. They had had a hard and a long day's riding. They had skirted many a field and many a fold, they had driven the peasants on the lands of Dean into hiding, or else they had slain them where they stood, or overtaken them with their long spears as they ran. To maintain as much secrecy as they could, they had refrained from firing

the homesteads—that was a luxury reserved for the home-going. The chill breezes only made them sleep the sounder.

As the noon of night drew on, the sentinel who kept watch and ward heard far in the distance the sound of a body of horsemen. It was a familiar sound, and he knew it well; and, without waiting longer than to verify his assurance, he roused Sir Alexander Stewart, who, wrapped in his plaid, lay asleep on the moor. He, too, listened. The sound was there, ever present, a distant, indistinct noise which hardly obtruded itself on the natural stillness of the upland solitudes, but still sufficiently defined to leave no doubt in the mind of the Baron of Darnley what it portended. The horsemen were advancing by the highway towards Renfrewshire, which led right past the spot where the Stewarts were resting, and a short half-hour's riding was sufficient to bring the opposing troops face to face.

The moon was climbing up the vault when Sir Alexander Stewart roused his men from their sleep. They obeyed his call with alacrity, and in rank and file waited patiently for the foe. A scout was sent out on foot to ascertain the strength of the Boyds, and until his return silent watchfulness was the order of the night. The scout was not absent more than fifteen minutes. He had, by avoiding a circuitous detour of the road, succeeded, from the shelter of a copse where he had lain on the ground below the line of the horsemen's observation, in counting the troopers from Dean Castle, as they were outlined in passing against the sky, and was able to bring back the information that they were a hundred strong.

Sir Alexander Stewart rubbed his hands gleefully together, as he gave his orders. He instructed the two detachments whom he had sent off in advance from Darnley, to retire on either flank to a distance of about four hundred yards, and there to remain until the sound of the conflict reached

their ears. When they heard the clashing of the opposing arms, they were to join in the rush of battle.

"And what if we hear no sounds of war in the camp?" asked the leader of one of the companies.

"By my soul, but you shall hear it," was the reply.

And hear it they did. For no sooner had the Boyds come within striking distance than Sir Alexander Stewart bid them halt. The order was given in sharp, peremptory tones, which meant all they were intended to convey. Boyd was surprised to find himself not a hundred paces distant from the foe whom he sought, and that foe drawn up in array to receive him. His scouts had given him no warning, and, so far as he was concerned, they had disappeared. Notwithstanding all their vigilance, they had walked into a trap, and now, at the rear of the position occupied by the men of Darnley, they were stretched, bound hand and foot, on the ground.

In the moonlight Sir Robert Boyd could easily make out the number opposed to him in front, and, conceiving that he saw the whole force who had come to dispute his way, he replied insolently to the command of Stewart.

"I did not come here to halt, Sir Alexander. I am here to find you."

"Well, you have found me," was the reply, "and I am ready to receive you."

Boyd gave command to his men to charge, and, with spears at rest, they rode up the incline in front of them to meet with the Stewarts. The latter were little disinclined to the fray; on the contrary, raising their battle cry—a cry that sounded far into the night and reached the ears of their fellows to right and left of them—they dashed forward to encounter the troopers from Dean Castle. The distance intervening was hardly more than sufficient to enable the horses to gather way, and but a few moments elapsed ere Boyds and Stewarts were locked in warrior embrace. The

placid moon, witness to many a fell scene, looked coldly down on the fray. Beneath her beams swords flashed and axes gleamed, and the red blood flowed. By her light, Stewart locked in deadly encounter with Boyd, and Boyd with Stewart. She lighted up the spot where, at the head of his men, the Baron of Kilmarnock waved his keen blade, and brought it down with sweep and with fury upon the heads of the foemen. She saw the horsemen reel in their saddles and fall, never more to return the challenge or give back the vengeful blow. She beheld the horses go down in the shock of the melee, while the cries of the combatants and the groans of the dying made the night air fearful. As she flooded the landscape with her pale radiance, she lit up the path to the contest of the two detachments of Stewarts, who, withdrawn from the spot, awaited but the shock of battle to rush to the fray; and from right and left they came right valiantly to the slaughter. Never men hasted more gladly to bridal than they to the combat.

Boyd heard them approach. He had fallen into ambush. He saw it, he knew it, but there was no going back. Outnumbered by more than two to one, he might yet prevail, and not for a moment was he unnerved by the accession to the strength and valour of the foe. It was no place for an unnerved man; only warriors who knew no impossibilities could hope to cope with the superiority. So Boyd cried louder his battle shout, and more fiercely he fell upon the Stewarts. Before his strong arm the Stewarts went down as if cleft by a bolt from the heavens; and after him pressed his followers, emulating his prowess and giving back blow for blow. Their numbers were gradually and perceptibly thinning, and, surrounded by the foe, what could they do more than brave men have done in all ages? In the heart of the enemy they placed themselves back to back, they closed up their ranks, and, forming a circle, they grimly set themselves to beat back the Stewarts or else to die where

they fought. And ever up, and ever on, the men of Darnley pressed, striving to find one single gap in the circle of steel which kept them at bay—one single gap by which they might drive in a human wedge and throw the Boyds into confusion. But in vain. The Boyds stood firm, and there was no break in that stern circle of defence.

Sir Robert Boyd grew impatient, and out from the circle he sprang to try conclusions with Sir Alexander Stewart himself. And Stewart was nothing chary to risk the combat. At it, then, tooth and nail, they went, and there was a moment's pause, while the combatants closed in deadly tussle. But the pause was only for a moment. Seeing his opportunity, one of the Stewarts drove his dagger into the back of the lord of Kilmarnock. Boyd reeled in his seat, fell, and all was over. His men rallied around him, but not to his aid, for he was beyond the reach of mortal help, and his life's blood dyed the heath.

Their champion, their leader fallen, the men of Kilmarnock broke and fled. The Stewarts, victorious, rested on the scene of the fray, nor did they take their departure until the day was breaking and the rising sun was turning into sickly paleness the silver sheen of the orb of night. And then, bearing their dead and their wounded with them, they retraced their march into Renfrewshire, satisfied that they had had their revenge. When they were gone, the Boyds returned, and, taking up the body of their slaughtered chief, rode slowly southward towards Kilmarnock.

When Sir Robert Boyd left Dean Castle his wife retired to the solitude of her chamber to wait patiently, and to pray. The day wore down to night, and as the hours went slowly on in the solitude of the massive walls, her vision recurred with fresh intensity and vividness. She felt as she had never felt before. Clearly, distinctly, she saw before her eyes the scene re-enacted that had attended on the visions of dreamland. She could not shut her eyes to it.

Even when the setting sun shot his beams athwart the horizon and lighted up the landscape with his departing glories, she saw the silent procession, and when night came on, with its solemnities and its silence that might be felt, it was still there. She flung herself on her couch to rest, but rest she could not, so she betook herself to the solace of devotion. Thus engaged, the night passed through its vigils, and at the first streak of the morning she was afoot and alert to the return of her lord.

And return he did, and as she feared he would. Yonder came the procession, not marching in the panoply of its setting out, but straggling, broken, and disjointed. Every feature of the dream was reproduced. On horseback was the Baron, but cold and limp in the coldness of death. By the side of the steed which had often borne him to the fray there walked two of the followers of the fortunes of Dean Castle, and carefully they led the conscious horse up the path towards the keep. Sir Robert passed within the gates for the last time, and as the warder gave him admission the lady swooned away.

They laid her on her couch, and all the day long they watched and tended her. She spoke little, she wept little, but continued as in a trance until night returned. And then she fell asleep—asleep, never to awake. Never again to behold the gracious sun in his strength, or to walk as she was wont to do by the strong walls of the Dean. She had followed her husband to where, beyond these voices, there is peace.

THE BLOOD TEST;

OR,

MURDER ON THE CARRICK SHORE REVEALED.

SOMETIMES I wonder how much of the coast line of this country will have nothing to tell when the sea gives up the dead that are in it, and when the last record of its history comes to be handed in. Not much. Rocks and sands and shingle, boulders grey and stony beaches, they have nearly all at one time or other been witnesses to scenes worthy the re-telling.

Against these cliffs, standing there so serenely against the western sun, has been dashed many a gallant vessel, and strong swimmers have uttered their last vain cries for help to their resounding echoes. On this promontory, all bare save for a few scant ruins, for centuries stood a massive fortress, beat upon by the free winds of heaven, and bedewed by the countless springs of the rolling years, the tides of life and of activity all the while ebbing and throbbing around it. Here, within a stone-cast of the land, a solitary swimmer gave up his life in a last effort to reach the shore. From that jutting-out rock the suicide flung himself headlong to his fate. On this sandy stretch has been cast up the body of the murdered man. On that shingle has lain the corpse of a frail sister, driven to despair and to death by unsympathetic and cold humanity. From yonder cliff the hardy fowler has fallen into the sea, and his mangled remains have

bespattered these rocks with his life's blood. Within sight of this spot the toiling fisher has cast his last net, and the occupant of the pleasure-boat has succumbed to the treacherous squall that smote his craft like a bolt from the azure. In these caves over there the driven exile has hidden himself. On that sandbank the sloop has lain, while her contraband cargo was run ashore by the reckless smuggler. Here the lifeboat has been launched to battle with the breakers, and to save the lives of the seamen whose bark lay on the hidden rocks without; and there the lifeboat has been launched to battle all in vain in the riotous tempest. Here towns have stood, and generations of children have played on the sands, and that river has carried to the main many an evidence of its rushing winter torrents. Beneath the lea of that tall cliff has lain the warship of the pirate and the viking, while her crew made havoc ashore; and on that point of land has gone down the strong ship of the invader. Aye, all along, from cliff to cliff, from bay to bay, from river's mouth to river's mouth, memorable history has been unfolding itself these two thousand years and more, and its record is somewhere.

The Carrick shore will have its own story to tell in the great day of the telling, and few of its incidents will be more notable than that which follows.

It was an autumnal afternoon in the year of grace 1607. The day was fresh, invigorating, breezy as becomes a September day. In from the Atlantic rolled the waves, the sun lighting their crests. Here they expended themselves on the sandy stretches; here they dashed their brief life out on the cliffs, and here they rattled up amid the stones and the shingle with that rhythmic cadence which is all their own. The sun was westering. He had still a long way to go. In his course he stood above Ailsa Craig, and now shining in his glory, and then his radiance hidden by the passing clouds, he lighted up the restless waters of the Firth with a succession of evanescent gleams.

Adjacent to the beach, at no great distance northward from the town of Girvan, was gathered a throng of merry-makers. The harvest had been gathered, the work of the year in the season's staff of life was done; and hither had they come, the old and the young, to celebrate their harvest festival, and to rejoice in the fulfilment of the divine promise. The racers strained to the goal, the wrestlers strove for the mastery, the archers were at the butts, the hagbutters were at the targets, the lads and lasses danced in the ring, the revellers feasted, and drank, and sang; the children waded in the sea and dipped their white feet in the little pools among the rocks, and general merriment reigned supreme. On the one hand lay the quiet town of Girvan, whose natives had come forth to share in the gladness; on the other, not far northwards along the coast, stood the historic ruins of grey Turnberry, redolent with the glorious memories of the kingly Earl of Carrick.

The tide was flowing, and on the march of its waters came a dark object. The children were the first to see it. In their young fashion they discussed it, but, being unable to fathom the nature of the curious dead thing, now in the trough of the seas, now on the crest of the waves, they drew the attention of their seniors to it, and these, with the curiosity inherent to all pleasure-seekers, collected on the beach and discussed the wonder. It was coming nearer and nearer, the play of the breakers; and, as onward it came, it assumed the semblance of the dead body of a man. And that was what it was. Death in the midst of life.

As soon as the waves brought the corpse into comparatively shallow waters, some of the bystanders waded in and lifted it in their arms, and, amid a universal hush and reverent curiosity, they carried it to Girvan Churchyard, and laid it down upon one of those large flat tombstones that were wont to be erected to mark the last resting-place of the sleepers beneath. The body was that of a man evidently in

the early prime of life. To all appearance it had been in the sea for five or six days, and it was bloated and disfigured as only the sea can disfigure the relics of humanity. Enough of the semblance of the original, however, was left to enable those who were intimate with the deceased, while he was yet alive, to identify him.

Proverbially, bad news travels fast, and that same evening, from all parts of the immediately surrounding country, came in persons to gaze upon the corpse. Among them was James Bannatyne, the farmer of Chapeldonnan. When one of his servants had told him that there had been a dead body cast up on the beach he had become at once intensely agitated. For three or four days previous he had been observed at irregular intervals scanning the sea and the sea beach, as if in expectation of finding something. He had also been morose, fretful, and restless, and had altogether been a changed man. There was nothing known that could account for his altered demeanour. For some weeks there had been residing with him a young man, a relative of his own, William Dalrymple by name. Somewhat suddenly, nigh a week previous to the discovery of the body, he had taken his departure; but nothing was thought of the event. Dalrymple was a native of Ayr, and had friends in different parts of the shire. He had only come to Chapeldonnan farm on a visit; and, his visit being ended, he had, as Bannatyne said, left to join his friends elsewhere.

There was little known of Dalrymple's life; but what was known partook of the mysterious. Five years before the time with which we are dealing he had somewhat suddenly disappeared, and after an absence of some months he had just as suddenly reappeared, to tell that he had been sojourning in Arran, but that, growing weary of his exile from the Ayrshire coast, he had taken ship with a fisherman of Ayr, who had brought him back to his native town. He had remained at home for a few weeks, and then had again been

spirited away. This time the Continent of Europe had been his destination; and there, as a trooper of the Duke of Buccleuch, he had fought in the wars of the Low Countries. Peace concluded, he had returned again to Scotland, and, as has been said, he had been sojourning with Bannatyne of Chapeldonnan farm less than a week preceding the September day that witnessed the recovery of the body from the Firth of Clyde.

Agitated as Bannatyne was when the news was brought to him, he lost no time in repairing to Girvan Churchyard. Ere he had reached the scene, the body had been conveyed within the walls of the church, and he had perforce to enter the sacred edifice and, in the gathering gloom of the evening, to gaze upon the corpse. He was under self-restraint, but his depression was noticeable. A cold sweat broke over him as he identified the remains as those of his kinsman, and his recent guest, William Dalrymple; but this manifestation of excitement was set down by those present to the natural grief and horror of the farmer of Chapeldonnan in thus suddenly being confronted with the corpse of a relative of whose death he was not previously aware. Having satisfied himself concerning the identity, he took his departure, with the expressed intention of returning the following day to prepare the body for burial, and to bring with him a coffin wherein to deposit the remains of his hapless friend. And when he had taken his departure the doors of the church were closed, and the dead man was left to the silent gloom of the sanctuary.

Early the following forenoon the minister of Girvan had two visitors, a lady and a little girl. The former announced herself as Lady Kennedy of Culzean, and expressed her desire to see the body of the drowned man. Lady Kennedy's wish was law in these parts, and without the least demur the minister accompanied her to the church. The little girl, her ladyship's grandchild, followed, and would have

entered, but Lady Kennedy bid her wait at the gate of the churchyard until she returned. The child promised to obey.

The door was already open. There had been no time lost by Bannatyne in having the body dressed for the funeral, and just as the minister and his visitor entered, the remains of William Dalrymple were being laid in the coffin, in presence of about a dozen persons whom morbid curiosity had attracted to the scene. These were standing in a semi-circle round the coffin, but when Lady Kennedy approached, they respectfully opened up to right and left to make way for her.

"You said," observed Lady Kennedy, addressing the minister, "that this was the body of one William Dalrymple?"

"Yes, your ladyship, so I am informed, a relation of James Bannatyne, the farmer of Chapeldonnan."

"Can you tell me aught of his disappearance?"

"Nothing save what rumour tells, Lady Kennedy. He came, a few weeks ago, unexpectedly into this district. He had, it seems, been abroad fighting in Holland, and had only just returned from that country. He left Chapeldonnan about a week ago to return to Ayr, and nothing was heard of him until his body was found floating in the sea."

"Did anybody see him going away, when he left for Ayr?"

"None, my lady, save his kinsman, Bannatyne. He was the last to see him."

"And has he said where he bid his friend farewell?"

"Not so far as I know, Lady Kennedy. But I only know by rumour what little I do know. Has your ladyship any reason to suspect foul play in this matter?"

"I do not say what I suspect, but let us look a little more closely at the body itself. Where is the person who dressed the corpse for the funeral?"

An elderly female stepped forward, and announced that it was she who had clothed the remains in their last attire.

"Would you undo the grave clothes from his head and neck?"

The woman obeyed. With accustomed fingers she loosed the napkin that was about his head and neck, and, in response to further instructions, she raised the head and turned it round first to the right and then to the left.

"What mark is that?" said Lady Kennedy, as she pointed to a severe wound above the left ear.

"It is impossible to say now," replied the minister, "the body has been in the sea for five or six days. During that period who can tell what has befallen it? It may have been scraping along the bottom, or dashed against the rocks, or it may even have been attacked by the more voracious kind of fishes."

"These are possibilities, indeed," returned Lady Kennedy, "but, in connection with that wound, look also at the neck."

The minister did as he was asked, and started. Right round there was a blue mark as if originally caused by a rope tightly drawn, now swollen out and distended by the action of the waters.

"What do you make of it now, sir?"

"I confess, Lady Kennedy, that appearances are suspicious. But, if I may make bold to say such a thing, your ladyship must have had some reason to suspect that this man was foully treated ere being thrown into the water!"

"All that in good time, sir. But in the meantime you will see to it that the corpse is duly examined by the legal authorities ere permission is granted to have it interred!"

"I will, my lady. I shall attend to it myself."

The examination concluded, the body was laid in the coffin in the position in which it had been lying ere Lady Kennedy entered. The neck and the head were tied up again, and the face cloth again covered the face.

While her grandmother was in the church, the little grandchild of the lady was playing around the door, but growing weary of her play she sought Lady Kennedy within the building. Opening the door, she looked around, and was not long in discovering the object of her quest. She advanced up the aisle and reached the little group surrounding the coffin just as the corpse had been laid once more to rest, and, taking her grandmother's hand, she gazed in infant wonder at the white shroud and the narrow coffin. She had never seen such a thing before, and, without speaking, she kept her eyes fixed on the habiliments of death, and wondered what it was they enrobed.

Lady Kennedy was about to hurry her away when, to her own amazement and to the horror of the bystanders, the spotless linen enswathing the neck of the dead man became dyed with blood. It seemed to flow freely, and in a few seconds the grave clothes indicated that a wound had opened and that it was bleeding profusely.

Why such a strange, such an unaccountable eruption? For five or six days the corpse had been floated in the waters of the Firth of Clyde, and necessarily the blood within its veins must long ago have become congealed. Why then, in the presence of this child, who in terror at the sight clung nervously to the hand of her grandmother, should its fountain open anew and nature seem to reverse her processes? It was an accepted article of belief in those days that heaven was wont to reveal murder, and to point to the murderers, by causing the blood to flow from the bodies of the murdered in their presence. Neither Lady Kennedy nor the minister of Girvan doubted that this was so, and as for the rustic onlookers, they accepted the belief as the most literal of truths, and looked into one another's faces with glances that left no room to doubt that they felt they were in the presence of a mystery which Providence was Himself unravelling.

But even if William Dalrymple had been murdered, what connection could there be between the partakers in the foul deed, and the little girl? She could never have shared in the horrid transaction!

Lady Kennedy hurried her out of the church, and, with a final and a peremptory instruction to the minister to lock the door of the building and to communicate at once with the criminal authorities, drove off.

Ere nightfall the body had been duly examined and the depositions taken of those who had witnessed its bleeding, as well as of those who were familiar with Dalrymple's disappearance, and who had been present when the corpse was recovered from the waters of the Firth.

The country-side rang with the tidings, and ominous rumours spread from peasant to peasant, and from village to village. The little maid who had accompanied Lady Kennedy was the child of her daughter, the wife of James Mure, younger of Auchendrane. It had never been known in all the annals of crime that blood had flowed in presence of a relative of the murderer; but surely, here was a special interposition of heaven to ensure that blood must have blood! It was recalled that, at the time when William Dalrymple was sent away to Arran, he had last been seen in the company of James Mure. It was further remembered that his exile to the Low Countries had been preceded by his enforced sojourn in the house of Auchendrane, the residence of the Mures. And harking still further back, it was told that, after the murder of Sir Thomas Kennedy of Culzean in the wood of St. Leonard's, near the town of Ayr, the Mures had hidden Dalrymple, so that, when the case came before the Court of Justiciary, he could not be found. The Crown had sought for him. The Lord Advocate had openly accused the Mures of secreting the only witness who could identify their connection with the death of the slaughtered Knight, and though John Mure of Auchendrane had

indignantly denied the charge and attempted to make out that it was the Crown authorities who were keeping him out of the way, rumour had been busy in making out that they owed their discharge at that time to the non-appearance in the witness box of the man now lying dead in the church of Girvan. And was it not now clear that heaven was intervening to bring light out of darkness, and counsel out of perplexity?

Current rumour crystallized itself into a directly formulated charge; and within a few days of the recovery of the body, the Mures, father and son, were apprehended and conveyed, first to the Tolbooth of Ayr, and then to the grim Heart of Midlothian. And with them into captivity went James Bannatyne, the farmer of Chapeldonnan.

It can be no matter of surprise to find that the common people of Carrick regarded the spouting out of the blood in the case of William Dalrymple as a direct interposition of the Almighty; for not only at that period was the superstition credited as an indisputable fact by the country at large, but the learned senators and advocates of the College of Justice gravely sanctioned the hearing of evidence in such cases and drew learned and conclusive deductions from it. Even the celebrated Sir John Dalrymple of Stair and Sir George Mackenzie were ready to argue that where guilt could not otherwise be brought home, the blood test must be accepted as conclusive. They acted as public prosecutors in a case in which Philip Stanfield, the son of Sir James Stanfield of Newmills, was charged with having murdered his father. One of the witnesses, a surgeon, swore that "upon the prisoner's assisting to lift the body of his deceased father after it had been sewn up and clean linen put on, it darted out blood through the linen from the left side of the neck, which the panel touched, but that when he (the witness) and the other surgeon put on the linen and stirred and moved the head and neck, he saw no blood at

all." In the indictment the circumstances attending the blood-spouting are more fully detailed:—

"And accordingly James Row, merchant, who was in Edinburgh at the time of the murder, having lifted the left side of Sir James, his head and shoulder, and the said Philip his right side, his father's body, though carefully cleaned, as said is, so as the least blood was not on it, did (according to God's usual method of discovering murderers) blood afresh upon him and defile all his hands; which struck him with such a terror that he immediately let his father's head and body fall with violence—and fled from the body!—and in consternation and confusion cried, 'Lord have mercy upon me,' and bowed himself down over a seat in the church (where the corpse was inspected) wiping his father's innocent blood off his own murdering hands upon his clothes."

It was argued for the defence that this was but a superstitious observance, without any ground either in law or reason; that bodies had been known to bleed in presence of persons who were not guilty; that the bleeding in the case of Sir James Stanfield was directly due to an incision in his neck made by the surgeon; that the accused was only one of several who were present and in direct communication with the corpse; that he had touched his father's body before the incision and it did not bleed; and that the panel's grief and horror were the result of natural duty and affection.

Sir James Dalrymple answered that "although the deceased's servants had made a mutiny anent the burial till the corpse was sighted, yet the panel caused bury the corpse that same night without shewing them. After warrant for raising the body had been obtained, the inspection by surgeons and the touching took place; when the panel let his father's hand fall to the ground and cried out 'O God,' and ran away and went to a desk in the church where he lay groaning and in confusion, and durst never return to touch the corpse. And as there could no natural reason be

given but an ordinary and wonderful providence of God in this kind of discovery of murder, so the fact was never more evident and sure. Though half a dozen of persons were bearing the corpse, no man's hands were bloody but the panel's! That the corpse being two entire days in the grave, in that weather and season, the blood, by the course of nature, was become stagnant and congealed, so that the former tossing and lifting of the corpse, and even the incision itself, had occasioned no such effusion, but only some water or gore, but upon the first touch of the panel, the murderer, there appeared abundance of liquid florid blood."

And Sir George Mackenzie, backing up the allegations and the pleadings of Sir James Dalrymple, asserted that "God Almighty himself was pleased to bear a share in the testimonies which we produce; that Divine power, which makes the blood circulate during life, has oft-times, in all nations, opened a passage to it after death upon such occasions, but most in this case."

Sentence of death followed, and was no doubt duly carried out. Many similar instances are recorded in the criminal and other annals of the country. When Henry II. of England was being borne to his grave in Anjou, his son, Richard Cœur de Lion, approached the bier, when, according to the chronicler, the blood in great abundance gushed out of the mouth and nostrils of the corpse—a sight that so moved the Lion Heart that he burst into tears and openly accused himself of being the murderer of his father. At the bar of the King's Bench, 1628, a remarkable case was heard. A Cororner's Jury had returned a verdict of suicide on the remains of a woman who had been found, with her throat cut, dead in bed. The verdict being regarded as unsatisfactory, the body was disinterred thirty days after it had been laid in the grave. The minister of the parish required those who were suspected of the crime to touch the body. Three of them came forward and complied with his command;

and that, depones the minister, to some purpose. "The brow of the dead, which was before of a livid and carrion colour, began to have a dew or gentle sweat arise upon it, which increased by degrees until the sweat ran down in drops on the face. The brow turned to a lively and fresh colour, and the deceased opened one of her eyes and shut it again. And this opening the eye was done three several times. She likewise thrust out the ring or marriage finger three times, and pulled it in again, and the finger dropped blood from it on the grass." The Lord Chief Justice having expressed some reasonable doubt as to the *bona fides* of the evidence, the minister of the next parish was put into the witness-box and corroborated his fellow divine in every point, adding that "he himself dipped his finger in the blood which came from the dead body, to examine it, and he swore he believed it was blood." Two executions followed. In 1683 two murderers were gibbeted in Glasgow. "Though their entrails were taken out and their bodies cleansed from all blood, yet when it (the body of one of the culprits) came to the place where the murder was committed, it did gush out in blood in the arm which was cut, testified to be a truth by the beholders, which was a testimony of their guilt." When the coach of Middleton was driven underneath the Netherbow Port of Edinburgh, two or three drops of blood fell upon it from the head of the martyred Guthrie, which "all their art and diligence could not wipe off." But probably the most wonderful instance is that preserved by Sir Walter Scott concerning a murder that took place on the banks of the Yarrow. A quarrel had arisen between two young men, and one, in a fit of passion, stabbed the other to the heart with a fish spear. The man-slayer was never suspected. Fifty years passed, "when a smith, fishing near the same place, discovered an uncommon and curious bone which he put in his pocket and afterwards showed to some people in his smithy. The murderer being present, now a white-headed old man,

leaning on his staff, desired a sight of the little bone. But how horrible was the issue! No sooner had he touched it than it streamed with purple blood. Being told where it was found, he confessed the crime, was condemned, but was prevented by death from suffering the punishment due to his offence."

The old Scottish jurists were quite satisfied to accept the bleeding as entirely providential, but an English legal authority had the hardihood to formulate an explanation of the phenomenon.

"For certainly," he says, "the souls of them that are treacherously murdered by surprise use to leave their bodies with extreme unwillingness and with vehement indignation against them that force them to so unprovided and abhorred a passage. That soul, then, to wreak its evil talent against the hated murderer, and to draw a just and desired revenge upon his head, would do all it can to manifest the author of the fact. To speak it cannot, for in itself it wanteth the organs of voice; and those it is parted from are now grown too heavy, and are too benumbed for to give motion unto. Yet some change it desireth to make in the body which it hath so vehement inclination to, and therefore is the aptest for it to work upon. It must then endeavour to cause a motion in the subtlest and more fluid parts (and consequently the most moveable ones) of it. This can be nothing but the blood, which then being vehemently moved, must needs gush out at those places where it findeth issue."

Is it any wonder that the peasants of Carrick recognized the finger of Providence in the purple stream that gushed from the veins of William Dalrymple in presence of little Marie Mure, the daughter of one of his suspected murderers?

The trial of the Mures, which followed, excited the most intense interest throughout the whole of the western shires, partly because of the social standing of the principals, partly because of the nature of the murder itself and the

circumstances surrounding it, and partly because it was all but universally believed that the discovery of the crime was the direct work of the Almighty Himself. The elder Mure was eighty years of age. He had thrown himself with a passionate earnestness, rarely characteristic of more than three score years and ten, into the struggle between the rival branches of the great Kennedy family, siding with Kennedy of Bargany, the powerful rival of the Earl of Cassillis. He had himself instigated the slaughter of Sir Thomas Kennedy of Culzean, whose widow it was who came to the church of Girvan and pointed out to the minister the evidences of foul play. Lady Kennedy's daughter was married to the younger Mure, but even this did not for a moment abate or allay the desire for vengeance which she nourished against the murderers of her husband. William Dalrymple, then a mere lad, had, unfortunately for himself, conveyed a letter from Sir Thomas Kennedy to Mure the elder, imparting the information that on a given date he would ride towards Edinburgh; and it was by acting on this letter, written and conceived by Sir Thomas in quite a frendly spirit, that Mure had brought about his death. The Laird of Auchendrane did not himself take part in the murder, but it was his brain that planned it, and it was at his instigation and on his instructions that it was carried out. To obviate the subsequent risk of discovery, the Mures had, as already stated, first hidden Dalrymple in Arran, and then had sent him off to fight and to perish in the wars of the Low Countries. Dalrymple had escaped privation and exposure, the long marches, the cold nights in the trenches, the searching bullets and the hurtling cannon shot, and, a strong and a stalwart man, he had returned to Ayrshire, to the intense mortification of the Mures of Auchendrane, and to his own undoing.

Using the farmer of Chapeldonnan, James Bannatyne, an old retainer of theirs and a relative of Dalrymple, as their

tool, the Mures had succeeded in arranging an interview with the object at once of their fear and their hatred, on the sands of the Girvan shore, and thither they went with the deliberate intention of murdering him. So minutely were the veriest details planned, that not only did they carry firearms with them to be used in case of unexpected emergency, but also a rope for the purpose of strangulation, and spades with which to bury the dead out of their sight. All unthinking, Dalrymple kept tryst, and at the appointed hour he stepped upon a stretching sandbank on the Carrick shore in company with his relative the farmer of Chapeldonnan. Bannatyne was not aware that nothing short of deliberate murder was in the breasts of the Mures; all that he intended to connive at was the kidnapping of his kinsman and sending him away for the third time from Ayrshire. But once on the sea shore he was helpless to prevent the atrocity.

At a previously concerted signal the younger Mure sprang upon Dalrymple and knocked him down. Dalrymple was somewhat stunned, but his Continental training and a natural quickness in action impelled him at once to act on the defensive. He grappled with his adversary, who kneeled over him, but James Mure was a man of great bodily strength, and he held him down, firmly pinned to the ground, until his father succeeded in rendering him senseless by a brutal kick on the head. The rope was then rapidly passed around the neck of the inert man, and, the ends being drawn tight the compression was maintained until the last sign of life had departed.

The murder accomplished, the murderers compelled Bannatyne to aid in disposing of the corpse. The tide was flowing, but it was still some distance off, and the younger Mure and Bannatyne, the latter horror-stricken at the terrible transaction, deftly plied their spades. The yielding sand and incoming waters made their task an impossibility. The shore would not hide their dead out of their sight.

To the sea Dalrymple must be given up. The night was waning apace, and the Mures were anxious to be gone; so, again forcing Bannatyne to aid them, they raised the body in their arms and stepped into the water. An easterly wind was blowing right off the shore. The currents of the Firth at that point run northwards, towards Ayr, and therefore, concluded the Mures, the corpse would be absolutely certain to be carried out into the deeps beyond, and away from the spot where the murder had taken place. They waded out until the cold night waters chilled them, and until the rippling wavelets were breast high, and then they deposited their burden in the sea, and hasted ashore with what speed they could muster. With a final admonition and threat to Bannatyne, the Mures mounted their horses and rode away to Auchendrane, and the unhappy farmer, stricken with horror and afraid to look behind him, sought refuge in his own home at Chapeldonnan.

Nor was that the end of the scheming and the plotting of the Mures. During the brief period that elapsed ere they were conveyed prisoners to the Tolbooth of Ayr, they endeavoured to direct the attention of the criminal authorities against themselves in a direction less base and less revolting than that they had so much reason to dread. They planned the killing of a member of the Kennedy family, a relative of the Earl of Cassillis; and not only planned it but made an ineffectual attempt to carry it into execution. The only result was that the doughty Kennedy valiantly returned blow for blow, severely wounded the younger Mure, and then rode off. Still afraid that events would prove too many for them, they employed a ruffian of their own to kill Bannatyne, and actually made arrangements for the murder of the desperado after he had served their purpose.

But Providence, long-waiting, long-suffering, interposed. The corpse of William Dalrymple came ashore within a few

yards of the spot where it had been deposited in the waters of the Firth of Clyde, and the criminal career of the Mures of Auchendrane was at an end.

And yet it was only because the King was in his own mind absolutely convinced of their guilt that they did not succeed in escaping punishment. There was no direct proof against them. Even Bannatyne for a time refused to become king's evidence. The torture was applied to James Mure, but he bore the terrible ordeal with unflinching fortitude, and, when his leg was crushed and the bones smashed to a jelly, he called God to witness that he was innocent. The public clamoured for his release, and the criminal authorities could not have resisted the demand so long as they did, save for the King. But the King was obdurate, and his obduracy was justified when Bannatyne yielded to mingled fears, threats, and promises, and confessed the truth.

Before the High Court of Justiciary the Mures protested that they were guiltless, and loudly accused their wretched accomplice, albeit their unwilling coadjutor in crime, of perjury. This he solemnly denied, and, falling on his knees, he raised his hand to Heaven and swore that what he said was the truth.

Father and son expiated their guilt upon the scaffold. The Scottish guillotine, the Maiden, was the instrument used; and, in presence of a vast concourse of people, the Mures were decapitated. Previous to their death they admitted their crimes. The younger Mure professed penitence, but the elder, with the snows of winter upon his head, his long white beard down to his waist, and eighty years to look back upon, remained callous and careless to the end. He ascended the scaffold without a tremor, and placed his head on the block, and, with the swish of the sharp knife, the murder of William Dalrymple was expiated.

THE EARL OF EGLINTON'S ENCOUNTER NEAR ARDROSSAN.

In the fall of the year 1768 an excise officer named Mungo Campbell was trespassing in pursuit of game on the lands of Eglinton. Campbell was an excise officer at Saltcoats. He was well connected in the county. His father was Provost of Ayr, and his great-grandfather was Hugh Campbell of Netherplace. One of a family of twenty-four children, it can easily be understood that Mungo's father, the provost of the county town, could maintain him neither in independence nor in affluence. Like many another man, Mungo had to shift for himself. Through his father's influence he obtained a situation in the Excise, and in the year named he was on the station at Saltcoats, watching the smugglers who then, and for many years afterwards, ran their contraband cargoes of tea and of spirits ashore on the lower shores of the Firth of Clyde. His position was no sinecure. The smugglers were numerous and daring. They beached their small craft under cover of the night on the sandy shallows which abound all along the coast from Ardrossan to Ayr, and, at risk to themselves as well as to the officers of the State, they handed their exciseable goods to their associates on the mainland. Encounters were frequent, and it required men of courage in the Excise, to cope with the equally courageous and the more reckless individuals who made their living by "running the cutter."

If Mungo Campbell endeavoured to make the law honoured on the one hand, he placed himself in conflict with it on the other. If he kept one eye upon the whisky distilled amid the hilly wilds of Argyleshire or on the plains of France, he kept the other on the grouse and the partridges, the hares and the rabbits, of the neighbouring proprietors. Gun in hand, sometimes alone and sometimes in company with his brother excisemen, he was accustomed to roam the fields of the Earl of Eglinton and to take a quiet shot in the well-stocked plantations on the lands of Montgomerie. Sometimes by day, sometimes by night, he indulged his natural instincts for sport, and many a heavy bag he carried to his home in Saltcoats.

Archibald, the eleventh Earl of Eglinton, was no narrow-minded peer, wrapped up in his own selfish interests. On the contrary, he was a nobleman of exceptional culture, alive to the interests of the country, zealous in promoting its material well-being, personally and practically interested in agricultural pursuits, and popular over all the lands which he had inherited. But he was none the less imbued with a high sense of the maintenance of his own rights, in game as in other things, and he learned with displeasure that the Saltcoats exciseman, from whose avocation, as well as from whose birth and education, better things might have been expected, was appropriating without permission the winged and the four-footed reservations so dear to the heart of the sportsman.

While riding across one of his fields, the Earl encountered Campbell, gun in hand. The exciseman was within five years of reaching three-score years of age, and he had all the coolness of a man of his experience and training. When the Earl hailed him he made no effort to escape, but stood still, quietly waiting until the peer should come up with him. The usual dialogue ensued. The Earl demanded to know by what right he was trespassing in pursuit of game

Campbell returned a half-evasive, half-apologetic answer, and the Earl warned him that if ever he was found poaching there again it would be the worse for him. He made the exciseman promise that he would in future observe the law, and this Campbell promised to do, in consideration that no notice should be taken of his present offence.

Lord Eglinton dismissed him with an admonition to remember his position as a public servant, and not to weaken his influence by breaking the law he was sworn to maintain, and Campbell went home not at all dissatisfied that he had been treated so leniently.

The instinct for illegitimate sport is certainly not less than that for legitimate. The poacher is not by any means to be regarded simply as a creature who takes the risks incidental to his dangerous avocation for the mere love of the pounds, shillings, and pence that he receives from the game-vendor in return for the miscellaneous ingatherings of the night's raid on the preserves of the laird. He is this, indeed, but he is almost invariably something more—he is a lover of the sport itself for the sake of the sport. It is a real pleasure to him to tread the yielding heather and to note the hare spring in the early mornings from the dew-bespangled grass. To steal through the copse of the laird when the moon is up, or to ransack the cover, brings joy to his soul. Unfortunately for him, he is not often other than a poor man, and his regard for the strict letter of the law and his moral sensibilities are not sufficiently strong to outweigh the longing that possesses him to bag the pheasant or the hare.

So it was with Mungo Campbell. For a while he refrained from trespassing on the possessions of the Earl of Eglinton. The sight of his gun gave him many a twinge of longing, and he felt as if he ought somehow or other to be off and away across the country in search of sport and of game. He resisted after a fashion, but stronger

grew the desire and still stronger, until he yielded to it and resumed his poaching operations.

The month of October, 1769, came round. The crops had been gathered in, and the partridges were among the stubble. It was the season for the sportsman to be abroad, and Campbell went too, out into the parks of Ardrossan, close to the sea-shore. His gun was below his arm. While he was quietly pursuing his illegal way, the Earl of Eglinton saw him. The Earl was on horseback, but he alighted, leaving his four servants a little way behind him, and advanced towards the exciseman. Campbell waited until he came up. He was nettled at having been caught in the act from which he had promised to abstain, and, his native dourness of temperament coming to his aid, he resolved to face the noble lord with what tenacity of unyielding he could muster.

"And so, my man," said the Earl, "I've trapped you again?"

"Have you, my lord?" returned Campbell, refraining from direct answer.

"I have, and you are not going to escape me so easily as you did this time last year. You remember you promised to abstain from poaching if I took no proceedings against you then, and I refrained. Your memory is short."

"Is it?" replied the exciseman.

"Yes, it is—short," continued the Earl. "And now I'll trouble you for that gun."

"No, my lord, the gun you cannot have."

"Then I shall have to take it from you."

"No, my lord, you shall not take it so long as I can retain it," said Campbell, decisively.

"But have it I shall," returned the Earl.

"No, my lord, you shall not. If I have offended in any way against your lordship, or against the law, the law is open to you; but you have no right to this gun. It is my property, and not yours, and I mean to keep it."

"We shall see about that," calmly replied the Earl, advancing upon Campbell.

"Stand back, my lord," Campbell said, and there was a ring of determination in his tones; "stand back as you value your life. God knows I do not wish to harm a hair of your head, Lord Eglinton; but stand off, I say, and leave me alone."

Notwithstanding the threat, Lord Eglinton kept on advancing. The exciseman deliberately raised his gun and put the butt to his shoulder, the muzzle pointed straight at the Earl. The latter eyed Campbell, and the exciseman returned the stare without a tremor or a sign of yielding. Recognizing that he had to do with a desperate man, Lord Eglinton paused, and called on his servants to approach. These were watching the proceedings with the most undisguised evidence of alarm. They knew Campbell's reputation, and they had every reason to fear that he would carry his threat into execution.

When the servants were by his side, the Earl renewed his appeal to the exciseman to hand over the fowling-piece, and received the same reply.

"I have told you already, my lord, that I will not give you the gun. You may prosecute me if you like, and I shall abide by the consequences; but your lordship knows as well as I do that you have no right whatever to the gun, and you know, too, that you cannot have it."

"Think what you are about, my man. You are caught here in the act of poaching. I have already let you go, on promise of amendment; and now when I ask you to hand me over the piece, instead of complying, as you ought to do, you threaten to take my life."

"I have said all I have to say, my lord. Go on with your prosecution. That would be legal. To deprive me of the gun would not be legal. And, besides, it would be dangerous. Keep off, I tell you—keep off. God forbid that I

should shoot you; but shoot you I will rather than yield to your command."

"You are in dead earnest when you say you will shoot?"

"In dead earnest, my lord."

"Then," replied the Earl, calmly, "two can play at that game."

So saying Lord Eglinton instructed one of his servants to bring his fowling-piece from his carriage, which stood near. The servant made haste to comply with the order.

All the while the Earl's anger had been increasing. He was a man of undoubted valour and of great decision of character, and he could ill brook being thwarted by the exciseman. He was too much excited to wait until the return of his servant, and again advanced upon the wary exciseman. The latter kept his gun pointed at the nobleman, but began to retreat. The Earl followed him up.

With his face to the enemy, the retiring Mungo Campbell was not aware that behind him was a large stone. This he steadily neared, and, unsuspecting its presence, he fell backwards over it. But not for a moment did he take his eye off the Earl. Even as he fell he watched his man, and kept his finger on the trigger. The exciseman's tumble Lord Eglinton recognized as his opportunity, and reduced the distance between them until they were only three or four paces apart. Campbell was no sooner prone on the grass than he made as much haste to regain his feet as was consistent with the watch he was keeping on his antagonist. The Earl was in the act of rushing forward to close with Campbell when the latter pulled the trigger. The shot rang out, and the Earl sank on the grass bleeding profusely from a wound on his left side. He had received the whole contents of the exciseman's piece.

All was confusion. Excitement seized upon the servants. The only cool, collected man in the little company was the wounded nobleman. Conscious that his strength was

rapidly waning, he walked to a grassy hillock, and with his hand to his side in a vain attempt to staunch the flowing blood, he lay down. He knew he had been hard hit, but it was without quiver of voice or of demeanour that he told his servants that he was mortally wounded, and commanded them to carry him to his carriage and convey him home. The servants obeyed. All the way along to the vehicle was marked by the ruddy stream that ran from the wound; and when, rapidly driven, the coach stopped at the castle door, the matting on the bottom was dyed with the same crimson hue.

The Earl was laid on his bed, doctors were summoned, the flow of blood was staunched, and every conceivable effort was made to avert the inevitable. But in vain. The noble sufferer, patient and considerate to those about him, gradually sank. While consciousness remained, he conversed cheerfully with the sorrowful friends grouped around the bed. He called them to witness that he had intended no personal harm to Mungo Campbell, and that he had only ordered his gun to be brought him in order that he might frighten the exciseman. In proof of this he told them the fowling-piece was unloaded, a statement which, on investigation, was proved to be true. He was not afraid of death, and he met the tyrant calmly, resignedly, and with a mind at peace with both worlds.

Lord Eglinton was one of the ablest of a long succession of able men. He had high capacity for Parliamentary business, and it was chiefly owing to his patriotic efforts that Scotland owes the abolition of an optional clause in the early constitution of the Scottish banks, which gave them permission at will to refuse payment of their notes for six months after demand. In agricultural matters he was far ahead of the times in which he lived. He founded an agricultural society, and himself led the way in improving, by encouragement and example, the holdings on his own

possessions. So much was he minded in this direction that when, on one occasion, he was called out to fight a duel in consequence of some remarks he had seen it his duty to make from his place in Parliament, he concluded an epistle to his brother, written on the eve of the hostile meeting, with the laconic reminder, "Mind the turnip drilling." He emerged scatheless from the encounter.

Mungo Campbell was apprehended, and brought to trial for murder. In summoning the jury the Clerk, Mr. Muir, included among the jurors a number of landed gentlemen, and objection was taken to this by Mr. Maclaurin, who defended the accused. The objection was overruled, and the case went to trial, resulting in Campbell being found guilty by a majority of nine to six. He was sentenced to be hanged in the Grassmarket of Edinburgh on Wednesday, 11th April, 1770.

But Mungo Campbell forestalled the public executioner in putting an end to his life. On the day following his conviction, he hanged himself in his cell. The prison officials were about to hand over his body to Dr. Munro for dissection, but Campbell's friends interposed and objected to such a course being taken, on the ground that, while such treatment of his remains was unquestionably a corollary of his execution, it was by no means the legal sequence of his suicide. The Court sustained the contention, and ordered that the exciseman's body should be delivered to his friends.

Campbell was secretly buried under Salisbury Crags, but the interment becoming known, an Edinburgh rabble had the corpse dug up, and made sport of it, tossing it about until they were tired. To prevent further indecency and outrage Campbell's friends caused the body to be sunk in the sea.

THE
"TERROR OF THE WHIGS"
EXORCISES
THE BEANSCROFT DEIL.

THE farm of Beanscroft is in the parish of Fenwick. During the dark years of the persecution the moors and mosses of Fenwick proved excellent hiding ground for the Covenanters, and not seldom were they explored by the dragoons of Dalziel and of Claverhouse in search of the secreted Presbyterians. The minister, Mr. Guthrie, a divine of much mingled faith and fervour, was ejected from his charge with all the rudeness of military despotism by the Archbishop of Glasgow. One of Fenwick's best-known sons was Captain Paton of Meadowhead, for whose life General Dalziel claimed and obtained the good offices of the King; and saved from the scaffold he would have been but for the inhumanity of Bishop Paterson, who retained his pardon in his own possession until after his execution. Another was John Howie, of Lochgoin, the author of the "Scots Worthies." In the churchyard reposes the dust of at least three of the martyrs to the stern rigour of the times.

With memories like these, it may be supposed that superstition could not be a characteristic of the parish. As it happens, however, creed and confession have remarkably little to do with the shaping of popular beliefs in the presence of the powers of darkness. These beliefs have come down from times immemorial; and, though they are

now all but, if not altogether, extinct, they have not reached their end without maintaining a long struggle and a tenacious grasp.

It was towards the close of last century that Beanscroft became haunted. There was nothing either about the building itself or the tenant to indicate any special reason for the attachment to the farm of the spirits of evil. The farmer was a worthy man, douce and quiet, who went statedly and steadily about his life's work. He looked after his kye, he sowed his corn, he tilled his fields, he stacked his harvest, he went to kirk, and market, and fair, like his neighbours, and he was fairly well to do. He had a son, a trifle ambitious in his way, but not, apparently, ambitious beyond what was legitimate and right. The neighbours said he was upsetting, because he dabbled in chemistry, but, inasmuch as they would have said the same thing had he shown a predisposition to surgery or to theology, their opinion was not a matter of much consequence. And the rest of the family were after their kind.

The farmer was a Presbyterian and a staunch adherent of the kirk, and, though in a general way he had an unformulated belief in witches and bogles, and other fearsome things, he was solemnly assured that they were not permitted, and could not be permitted, by the overruling Power above, to disturb the lot and the life of such as he. But his faith was rudely assailed.

Mysterious noises were heard in the house and out of it, and nobody could account for them. In the dead of night, when the household slumbered, sleep was banished by moaning and groaning, by the thumping of heavy articles of furniture, by strange creaking sounds, by the rattling of delf, and the banging of fire-irons. What could it portend? The farmer lay a-bed and listened, and his wife lay and shook with fear. Such things had never occurred at Beanscroft before, and when in the mornings the family

assembled around the breakfast table, their faces told of the mingled emotions awakened by the ghastly visitations of the night watches. The eldest son undertook to discover the origin of the sounds, and more than once kept vigil; but when he was on duty the spirits refrained from their manifestations, and so nothing came of his attempt to unravel the secret.

Growing bolder with their immunity from identification, the spirits extended the scope of their manœuvres. They not only moaned and groaned, but they shrieked and yelled in unearthly vocalization. Their screams rent the night air, and ofttimes, when the farmer had sunk into a deep slumber, there fell upon his ear such horrid screeches that he was fain to cover his head with the blankets ere taking time to assure his spouse that there was no danger. Worse still, on more than one occasion, when he had the courage to rise and look out of the window across the steading, he beheld flashing lights, sometimes in the barn, sometimes in the byre, and sometimes in the stable. Nor were the lights always of the same hue. They alternated red, blue, and white; and, though these represented a combination quite national and patriotic in its character, the tenant of Beanscroft found no consolation in the fact. The manifestations went on at intervals for a considerable time, and all the country-side discussed the cantrips of the Beanscroft deil. The farm-servants resident in the house refused stoutly to remain in such uncanny quarters, and took their leave; and the peasant who had occasion to pass that way at night gave the farm a wide berth, and even put their fingers in their ears lest they should hear, borne on the night wind, an echo of the sounds they so much dreaded.

To complete the confusion, the cattle, which were invariably tied up carefully at nights, were found to be loose in the mornings. No mortal fingers had untied the ropes that were round their necks. The knots were intact and

untouched, but the ropes themselves were severed in the middle, and that, too, without the aid of a knife. This completed the farmer's despair, and he forthwith called in the aid of the clerical power.

There is no formula in the Presbyterian Church for the exorcising of demons, and, in the circumstances in which the goodman of Beanscroft was placed, all that could be done was to have "worship" made by the minister of the parish. That dignitary came specially out to the farm and "engaged." He gave out, and then acted as precentor, when the assembled family sang, two double verses of a psalm. He read a chapter from the Bible, and he prayed for the desired relief at considerable length. He also had his tea, an invariable accompaniment in the country to the visit of the minister.

But to no purpose. The ropes by which the cattle were fastened were treated as before. Still the Beanscroft deil routed and ranted. The night air was made hideous as hitherto by the groans and the moans, by the shouts and the cries, by the yells and the screeches of the haunting spirit, or by the tribe of ghosts who held high carnival in the house and in the farm offices. The farmer grew wan and pale, so did his wife, and so, too, did every member of the family, with the exception of the eldest born son. He remained bold and unquenchable in his threats to unearth the weird secret; and in the dead of the night, when aroused by his father at his own request and informed that the kye were loose, he had still the courage to sally forth alone and enter the byre.

Now, there resided in those days in Kilmarnock, a man whom Burns has consigned to the keeping of posterity. His name was John Goudie. He was an advanced thinker. He lived before his time, and, like all men of similar character and independence, he was regarded by the orthodox as dangerous and heterodox. He had his doubts about the

personality of the Devil. He cared not a straw for ghosts or ghouls, for witches or fairies, and he was ready at all times to court wordy encounter and to endeavour to explain away mysteries in a very everyday and distinctly worldly fashion. Burns described John Goudie as the " terror of the Whigs."

Here was a chance to expose the hollowness and the mockery of his unorthodox views, to convince him first hand that there was a deil, and a very potent, mischievous deil, too. A heaven-sent opportunity to convert the scoffer, or else bring him to confusion or turn his pretensions to ridicule!

Accordingly, Goudie was sent for. He was at first unwilling to come, because, as he said, it was none of his business to satisfy superstitious people that their superstitions were groundless; but when it was represented to him that refusal would be interpreted as the expression cf a knowledge that he was unable to put his own beliefs and theories to the test, he deferred to the request, and went. The farmer was glad to see him. He had some sort of faith in the " terror of the Whigs." In ordinary circumstances he would rather not have had anything to do with John Goudie, but the circumstances were not by any means ordinary; and when Goudie arrived, in company with two friends, he was ready to stock him unsolicited with the fullest possible information. One of the philosopher's companions was the Rev. Mr. Gillies, of Kilmaurs, the other Mr. Robert Muir, wine merchant, Kilmarnock.

Goudie listened patiently while the farmer detailed at length the whole story from the date of the first manifestation down to the cantrips of the previous night. Did he suspect nobody? No, he suspected nobody. Had he offended anyone likely to take out his revenge in such a fashion? No, he was guileless of offence. Had anybody any motive in frightening him out of the farm? No, none

whatever. The premises were duly inspected, the scene of the noises of the watches of the night that ought to have been silent, the windows from which the corruscating fires lit by spirit hands floated athwart the darkness, the ropes by which the cattle had been tied, and which had snapped asunder without visible agency.

Goudie's attention was rivetted on the ropes. Here was tangible proof of something. But of what? That was the question. Before answering it, the philosopher requested that all should leave the room, with the exception of the two companions he had brought with him and the farmer himself. His wish complied with, he held up the ropes, and a smile lit up his countenance.

"Ay, ay," he laughed—and the words are strictly his own —"I see the deil has no had muckle to do this while, I think; his whittle has been gey and sair rusted."

"What do you mean?" inquired the minister.

"Just this, that these ropes have been eaten through by aquafortis."

The farmer assured him that he knew of no aquafortis being on the premises.

"That may be," replied Goudie, "but there may be aquafortis on the premises without your knowing anything about it."

That the farmer had to admit.

"But what," asked he, "has the aquafortis to do wi' the screeches, an' the howls, an' the lichts?"

"Nothing whatever," was the philosopher's answer, "further than this, that the man who applied the aquafortis could howl and screech and yell as muckle as he liked, an' licht the flames, too, that ye saw. Depend on't," he added, "the whole thing is the work of one man."

At Goudie's special request the farmer, the minister, and the wine merchant bound themselves to secrecy concerning the revelation concerning the aquafortis; and the farmer,

stiffened in his courage by the cool, matter-of-fact way in which the Kilmarnock sage discussed the whole affair, agreed himself to keep watch and ward and try to discover the offender.

The other inmates of the dwelling were led to understand that nothing had been revealed, and that night the family retired to rest as usual. The farmer, however, did not long court repose. When all was quiet he rose, and, slipping quietly out, secreted himself in the barn. It was an eerie situation. There was a good, full moon sailing in the sky, and in at the windows it darted its rays, making the place comparatively light to the hiding agriculturist in the shadow of the corner where he had taken his stand. He was frightened. When it was daylight, and when he was sitting in a comfortable room surrounded by friends, his courage had been high, but now he began to think that the Kilmarnock philosopher's wit and wisdom might after all have played him false, and that at any moment some terrible apparition might arise by his side, or in the moonbeams in front of him, and reveal its proclivities after a fashion that might seriously alarm him.

While he waited and watched he heard a light foot without. The door was cautiously opened, and a figure entered. And that not the figure of a visitant from the dim beyond, but one that he knew very well. The farmer's waning courage came back to him in an instant. For flesh and blood he had no nervousness; and now that he recognized the man standing in the barn, it was all he could do to prevent himself from rushing upon him and administering corporal punishment.

The amateur ghost-manufacturer put his hand up to his lips, and, using it as a sort of trumpet, he made the silence ring with his cries. They were really very terrible cries. Practice makes perfect; and, having now for some considerable time been in steady training, the man was capable of

producing at will such a succession of sounds as suited the various grades of horror, or suffering, or despair. He laughed wildly in addition, and though the watcher knew right well the voice, the memories of that cachination made him feel distinctly eerie.

The vocal manifestations closed, the Beanscroft deil was about to proceed to further exhibitions of his skill, when his career was suddenly arrested by a half-smothered but distinctly angry and forcible ejaculation from the dark corner. The idea that evidently rushed into his mind was that he had called up a reciprocal and genuine spirit, and, possessed with this suggestion, he stood helpless and quaking on the barn floor. But his dread was speedily turned into another channel when the farmer stepped out of his seclusion, and laid lustily a heavy walking-stick across his shoulders. His cries were not simulated; indeed they were very real. The spirit in pain never uttered more ear-piercing yells than he did when he felt the weight of the avenging rod, and he lost no time in effecting his escape and rushing headlong into the house, whither he was hotly pursued by the angry farmer, and where he was compelled for the next round hour to listen to such a lecture as he had never heard before.

The Beanscroft deil was the farmer's eldest son. He had wanted to frighten his sire out of the farm, and to take up the lease in his stead, and he had resorted to this extraordinary method of effecting his purpose.

Stormed at and ridiculed at home, he became at the same time the butt and the jest of the country-side; and, covered with confusion, he not only fled the parish, but left Scotland altogether, never to return. John Goudie, the Kilmarnock *savant*, was held in high repute for his share in the transaction, and himself hugely enjoyed the result of his practical exorcising of the Beanscroft Deil.

THE FAITHLESS BRIDE OF AIKET.

The Castle of Aiket was a stronghold of the Cuninghames in the parish of Dunlop, and for many years played an important part in Ayrshire story. It was a square tower, such as those inhabited by the lesser Barons usually were, and stood on a picturesque site on the banks of the Glazert Burn. It was an appanage of a family which shared with the Montgomeries of Eglinton the territorial superiority of North Ayrshire, and generation upon generation of those who dwelt within its walls figured prominently in the county history of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries. One of the chiefs bore a part in the murder of Sir John Mure of Caldwell in 1570; a second was accessory to the slaughter of Hugh, fourth Earl of Eglinton, in 1586; a lady of the family was put on trial for attempting to poison her husband; and later on the Laird of Aiket commanded a troop under the Earl of Glencairn at the Revolution. Some of the barons were good, after their kind; some of them were the reverse, and the legend of the Faithless Bride is one of the results of the wayward insistence of a Cuninghame of the latter stamp.

It is never easy to give data for the origin of a tradition. One of its beauties is that it has impalpably, imperceptibly grown. It comes into existence largely of its own accord, is caught up in its genesis by the credulous and the superstitious, and is sent floating down all time stamped with the sign-manual of dreamland. But in this case, while no exception to the general rule can be claimed, it is permissible to

believe that the tradition owes something to an enforced marriage, and a very unhappy wedding it was, insisted on by one of the lairds of Aiket in the case of his own daughter, a girl twelve years of age. The early intention of the family was to have married her to a Montgomerie of Hessilhead, but, through extraneous influence, Cuninghame was induced to wed her to her own cousin. This was done, with the most baneful results. Her husband ill-treated her, neglected her, and deserted her, after squandering her dowry.

We say that in all likelihood the legend may have owed its accessories, if not its origin, to this event. In reality, however, it goes much farther back—back to the days when knights and squires went forth to fight with the unspeakable Paynim for the sacred places of the East. But not to anticipate.

Sweet flows the Glazert Burn adown its bed, here creeping through clumps of trees, the bushes overhanging its pure waters; there stealing gently, placidly through fertile holms, bearing on their surface the harvest produce of the year, or affording nourishment for the beasts of the field; here rippling musically along its stony channel; there forming quiet pools in which the speckled trout love to hide; here dancing over its tiny waterfalls, there broadening out into shallows where every stone shows its individuality to the sunbeams; now weak from want of rain, hardly able to maintain its course; and again, swollen by the tribute of the skies, rushing to its estuary with an impetuosity and a babble that seem to claim for it pretensions to importance, which it does not, and never can possess. If it only could speak, it could tell a story. But not all the feudal history it has witnessed, not all the raid-bent riders who have careered along its banks, not all the generations that have drunk of its limpid waters, can have such an interest to its harmless divinities as the tale of the knight and the damsel of the olden days who pledged their troth to the rhythm of its music, but whose

love, like its chequered flow, was broken in upon by the stern resistance of untoward circumstances.

The knight was a Montgomerie, the maid a Cuninghame. What a destiny the twain might have held in their hands! Had they been wed, what of the long series of bloody strifes between the rival families of Glencairn and Eglinton? Who knows but that the union of blood and of love might not have turned aside the torrent of rivalry and of hatred?

It was a sad meeting, that of the lovers—the last they were destined ever to enjoy. Far away in holy Palestine the Moslem and the Christian were at war. The holy places were either in the hands of the Paynim, or were in danger of being lost to Christianity; and the Christian soldiers of the West had girded on their armour, and, fired with zeal, were courageously doing battle for the right, and for the sacred spots of the Christian nativity. War and wounds, climate and disease, hardship and privation, were taking lives, though they could not quench enthusiasm; and as the ranks of the fighters became thinned and men dropped in the struggle into the great depth of forgetfulness, others were ready to take their places, and to carry forward the struggle to the bitter end.

Henry Montgomerie had fitted out a small band of warriors, and on the morrow they were to leave the plains of Ayrshire for the South, there to embark for Palestine. How better could he spend his last evening than with his lady love, by the banks and braes of Glazert? Nature was in one of her softening moods. A sleepy, calm evening followed on a hot, calm, windless day. The leaves all but forebore to rustle, and the waters of the stream were only loud enough in their flow to mark the silence. The birds were gentle in their carols. It was one of those evenings that, even its natural aspect, would come back to Montgomerie like a vision, when he was far away and under clearer but less sympathetic heavens.

"Do not let your heart droop, Anna dear," said the young man, "I go to the call of duty in a noble and righteous cause. The end of the crusade cannot be far away now. Our gallant countrymen must ere long conquer the Saracens and restore Christianity to its own in Palestine. And when the end is come, and the conflict is over, and the royal standard flies free on the walls of Jerusalem, and the Saracen is finally beaten off, I shall return to claim you for my own. So do not let your heart droop. Youth is on our side, and the days will fly."

"Fly, Henry—the days fly! Oh no, that can never be for me. With you in the tented field, and amid the splendour and excitement of the camp and the battle-field, time may fly, but to me it will travel on leaden wings. I am oppressed, Henry—with what I know not. But something tells me—why should I disturb you with such a thing?—but something does tell me that we shall meet no more."

"An idle fancy, Anna, a dream of the night. Think rather, Anna, of the noble cause in which I am about to embark. Think rather of the sweet days to come when the battle will be over, and when I shall return to Scotland and to you, never to part with either. You will not forget me, Anna, I know; and that thought will nerve me and keep me alive 'mid all the perils of the East."

"Forget you, Henry! Oh no. I shall not forget you. I will follow you with my heart and with my prayers for your safe conduct and your safe return, and I shall try rather to think of the bright days that may be in store for us than of the dangers of the enterprise."

"Do, Anna. Banish all thoughts of danger that may ever arise, and keep your heart and your hopes on the future. I know you will not forget me."

"I will try to do as you direct, Henry, but still, even amid the bright hopes and prospects you try to conjure up, there steals in the dark shadow of impending gloom.

Something is going to happen, I know; but come what may, come life or come death, I am yours."

"Mine in life, Anna—in life, not in death. Talk not of death."

"I talk as I feel, Henry—yours in death if need be. But I will say no more of this. I am yours to the end."

Night was creeping on apace over the landscape ere the lovers said adieu. It was a sad adieu. They knew that it was no ordinary good night that was spoken. Ere they should meet again years must elapse. Years of waiting! For the one, the East with its toils and its fightings; for the other, the quiet walls of Aiket, and—waiting, hoping, yearning!

The winter came and the winter went. Spring and summer and autumn followed in their succession ere Anna Cuninghame heard of her lover in the East. Tidings were brought by a knight, who bore traces of the fiery battle zeal of the Moslems, that he was alive and well. Twice had he been wounded in the encounter, fighting in the forefront of the Christian battle, but on each occasion the fatal shafts of the destroyer had been turned aside, and, when the messenger left, he was bearing himself valiantly and well.

There was a message to Anna, and a love-token—a little heart of gold, which Henry Montgomerie had either secured among the spoils or had purchased in some Eastern bazaar. This, with a lock of hair and a letter, the knight gave into Anna's own hands, and their reception brightened many a weary evening to the maiden in the halls of Aiket. It even, for the time being, laid to rest the phantoms of disquiet which ever and anon obtruded themselves rudely upon her faith in her lover soldier.

A second year was waning to a close when a young man, Allan Lockhart by name, the son of a neighbouring baron, began to visit the inmates of Aiket Castle. The far East and the clash of arms were not to his liking; the holy

places of Palestine did not stir any responsive, heroic enthusiasm in his breast. Courtly in manners, of outward grace, and fair of speech, he was nevertheless a rouè and a dissembler of the first water. He had already made serious havoc with his own patrimony, but he counted on annexing Anna's dowry to his already deplenished exchequer.

He laid siege to the maiden's heart, but the heart was proof against his blandishments. He tried to wile her affections away from her warrior of the Cross, but these were too deep-rooted and too sincere to be easily shaken. Finding that his personal merit was not such as to commend him, and that Anna was firm in her plighted troth, he changed his tactics, and devoted himself to cultivation ot the good graces of the Laird and the Lady of Aiket. These were more amenable to his attractions and to such graces as he had. It was a cardinal point with them to have Anna well married. Lockhart's father was not a baron, with generations of untainted blood in his veins, but he had lands and houses and gear; and these were the portion for which her parents were willing to bestow their daughter's hand. But in vain Lockhart urged his suit, and in vain the laird and the lady endeavoured to persuade Anna to regard him favourably. Her promise to Henry Montgomerie was sacred as an oath to her. In life and in death she was to be his. How, then, could she exchange her distant lover for another, and a less acceptable?

Distracted and inwardly wrought with contending emotions, Anna spent much of her time by the Glazert Burn. Its quiet flow was a perpetual solace to her. Its waters had caught the echo of his voice, and she heard his tones anew in their sympathetic murmur.

She was sitting pondering over the chances of fate one autumn evening when she was accosted by a stranger. A veteran warrior sure was he. Travel-stained and weary, haggard and weird, his countenance was tanned with hot suns

and exposure to the weather. He leaned heavily upon his staff, and, always as he came, he paused and rested and looked around. And at length his eyes lighted upon the girl by the side of the burn. The traveller's aspect at once excited her interest and her sympathy, and she accosted him.

"Come hither," she said, "my friend. You look weary."

"Ay, lady, that I am," replied the wanderer. "Weary I am, and worn. Yea, from far have I come, and the Saracens have not left me the man I was."

"Pray, be seated, sir. The grass is soft, and if you have come from the East, a seat on the ground can be nothing new to you."

The stranger smiled. "No, lady," he replied, "many a night have I lain upon the sands and the sward. The stars are brighter in the East than they are here, and the air is warmer; but here there is no call to arms, and the shrill yells of the Saracens do not disturb the slumber. I could lie down here gladly, and sleep as on a couch until the dawn."

"I hope there will be no need for that. But tell me, sir, tell me something of the struggle and of those who are fighting the battle of the Cross against the Crescent. Tell me how they fare."

"They fare, lady, as brave men may well fare in a conflict with the savage hordes of the infidel. They slay or they are slain; they wound or they are wounded; to-day the tide of battle rolls for us, to-morrow for them. For these Eastern dogs fight hard, and many a Christian warrior they have despatched. But we have no right to murmur. The cause is a good cause, a holy cause, and God himself will reward those who fall in it." And the travel-stained stranger crossed himself devoutly, and looked up.

"Pray tell me," said Anna, "in your wanderings and in the conflict heard you aught of a knight, Henry

Montgomerie by name. He hailed from Ayrshire, and I knew him well."

"Alas, alas, fair lady!" and the traveller's voice faltered, "I, too, knew him well. Stout and strong of limb he was, and lion-hearted; and many a time and oft have I seen his sword glitter in the forefront of the battle. Ah, it was a terrible weapon! But——" and the traveller paused.

"But what?" eagerly demanded Anna Cuninghame. "Do not be afraid to tell me evil tidings. I am strong—I am strong to bear them."

"Evil tidings they are, lady. But yet he died nobly."

Anna reeled as she sat, and would have fallen prone to the ground had not the stranger caught her and supported her. With a desperate effort she regained a measure of composure. She was deathly pale, and there was the glitter of intensity in her eyes. She clenched her fists and steeled herself to the story.

"Ah, lady, you are not able to hear it now," said the traveller, sympathetically; "another time, may be. I swear to heaven, I'd rather than a thousand crowns that another had been sent to break the tidings. For I know who you are—who you must be."

"I am Anna Cuninghame," quietly observed the girl.

"Yes, I know it now. You can be none other than she."

"Tell me, then," said Anna, "tell me all. Do not be afraid; I have long feared this. So tell me all at once, and for the last time."

"Henry Montgomerie was slain in front of the walls of Jaffa. The lion-hearted Richard himself was in command, and ordered the assault. Up to the fortified walls we marched—for I too was there, and was one of the first to enter by the breach. The Saracens fought like demons. They were here, there, and everywhere, clustering thick as bees, and, though we rode them down as they came out to the combat, they were so numerous that no thinning of their ranks

seemed to make any impression on them. They rallied in front of the breach and defended it desperately. There was danger to us—danger of defeat. 'That breach must be carried,' cried Richard; 'who will lead the van?' A score of knights offered themselves, Montgomerie among them. The King selected him from among the throng. He put himself at the head of his troop, and, with spears at rest, they pierced to the very heart of the Moslem defence. Into the wedge they had formed pressed hundreds of gallant warriors. There was a savage conflict, but the victory was ours.'

"And Henry?"

"Henry Montgomerie fell in the thick of the fray. When the combat was over, we found him with his face upturned to the orient heavens, but his soul was fled."

Anna heard as though she heard him not. Her countenance was set, but deadly pale, and the glance in her eyes was for the far-away, and neither for the near nor the present. The traveller grew frightened at her continued immobility, and addressed her in a few sympathetic words of comfort. These recalled her to herself, and, rising, she gave the stranger her hand.

"Come with me," she said, "to my father's dwelling. You will be well received for the sake of one who is now no more. Besides, you are weary and worn, and you require rest and refreshment."

"Thank you, lady, but I cannot come. I must journey on, for I could not remain beneath the roof of one whose heart I have crushed with my hapless and hopeless tidings."

"You have but done your duty, sir," replied Anna. "It is not you who have crushed a heart. Henry has fallen in his duty and on the field of glory, and, if it was yours to convey the blow to me, I know that it must have cost you a sore pang to do it."

"Believe me, lady, before Heaven it has. I would to God I had been spared the trial."

The stranger courteously said farewell, and departed; and Anna sought the seclusion of her chamber.

An hour later, and within two miles of the Castle of Aiket, two men were in conversation. The one was the traveller, the other Allan Lockhart, the hitherto rejected suitor of Anna Cuninghame.

"No," said the former, in a resolute tone of voice, "I have kept my word. I have told her the tidings. But keep your hundred crowns. They are the price of blood. Not one penny of the damned gold would I finger."

"Tush, man! what of that?" replied Lockhart, "you need money. You told me you were poor. Don't be a fool. Here, take the money."

"Not one copper coin of it," emphatically responded the stranger. "I gave you my oath that I would do it, and I have done it. I gave you my oath that I would not reveal your connection with it, and I have kept my oath."

"Don't be a fool, I say," persisted Lockhart; "you ought to know by this time that a girl's feelings are writ in water, and that the more acute and poignant her grief now, the sooner it will pass off. You have earned your money—so here, take it."

"Sir," replied the stranger, "I am an old Crusader, and I swear by the Cross, for which I have bled, that I would rather strike you dead at my feet this moment than I would defile myself by pocketing one single coin of your money. God knows I am poor and that I have need of money, but I should scorn myself all my life-long were I to accept reward for having broken the heart of a true maiden. Nay, more; this must be undone."

"Your oath—remember your oath."

"Yes, I do remember it. A curse upon it. But you must undo the wrong yourself. Else, if you do not——"

"What?"

"Beware. The maiden will never be your wife."

And without waiting to say more the traveller hurried down the road and disappeared from view.

When three years had passed from that evening, memorable in her young life, when Anna bid her final farewell to the Crusader, she yielded to the solicitations of her parents and consented to receive the addresses of Allan Lockhart. It was not that her sentiments towards Lockhart had undergone any change. Her heart was still with the cavalier whose untimely death she had wept. She did not pretend or profess that it was otherwise; but, with all her constancy, she was unable to withstand the pressure put upon her by her father and mother. She told them that her love was in the tomb with Henry Montgomerie, and that it never could be recalled. Affection for Lockhart she had none; but if her hand was at the disposal of her parents, they might bestow it upon whomsoever they might.

The Laird of Aiket lost no time in inviting Lockhart to the castle or in informing him of the change of circumstances. It was with unaffected pleasure that he heard what the laird had to tell him. His funds were low, his credit was all but exhausted, he was surfeited with pleasures and sensual immoralities, and, in his hours of self-recrimination, he had come to the conclusion that if he could only win Anna Cuninghame and her dowry he would turn over a new leaf. The laird told him that Anna could not give him her heart. It is true the laird ridiculed the sentiment, but as his daughter had bid him say so in the hope that Lockhart's sense of honour would dictate to him a correct line of duty, he thought it was only right that he should place the qualifying circumstance before the young man. When Lockhart heard the reservation he only smiled, and assured the laird that Anna having once given him her hand would

not long be able to retain possession of her affections. He would win them in spite of her.

The wooing was of a prosaic kind. No walks by the tall trees in the avenue, or in the green meadows; no whisperings of love by the whispering waters of the Glazert burn. Anna gave her consent coldly to her suitor, and not until she had told him plainly that the gift was in reality that of her parents, and that her heart was now and forever with her warrior lover in the distant Orient. Lockhart made no scruples which he did not feel. The rich dowry went with the maiden, and it was the dowry he sought.

The wedding day was fixed, the guests were invited, the arrangements were pressed forward towards completion. From near and far came those who were to witness the sacrifice, and the night before the marriage was to take place the halls of Aiket were ablaze with light and alive with goodly company.

That same night the warder at Hessilhead, the residence of Montgomerie, was awakened from slumber by a loud knocking at the postern gate. He rubbed his dream-laden eyes, and, grumbling at the unwonted call, slowly made his way in the direction of the gate. Without, there stood an impatient visitor. He had thrown himself from the back of a powerful black horse; and, when he heard the heavy tread of the warder, loudly demanded admission.

"Who comes here," the warder gruffly spoke, "at this untimeous hour of the night?"

"Be quick, Sandy, open the gate and let me in."

"Not until I know who and what you are, and what your errand here."

"Do you not know me, Sandy? Do you not recognize my voice?"

"No, I know you not. And yet, methinks, I've heard your voice before. But that cannot be either, for the man

whose voice resembles yours has gone to his account, and lay stark and stiff long ago, in the east."

"Ah, Sandy, the voice is that of the man whose you thought it resembled. I am not dead. Open the gate, Sandy, and let me in. I am Henry Montgomerie."

The warder fairly shook, half with fear, half with excitement, and his trembling fingers hardly succeeded in turning the key in the lock. But at length the lock went back and the visitor entered, leading his horse. Sandy fetched a light, and, holding it up to the face of the stranger, eyed him critically. But only for a moment. Bronzed were the features and changed; but, man or ghost, as Sandy declared afterwards, they were the unmistakable features of the young laird of Hessilhead.

The household was awaked, and in mingled trepidation and delight the wanderer was greeted. It was hard to believe that it was indeed he, but ocular proof soon dispelled the illusion, and the cheery greeting of the Crusader sent the fears a-vanishing. Henry was distinctly hungry, and not even the rapture occasioned by his return was sufficient to stay his appetite; and the hearty zeal with which he fell upon the viands dispelled the last lingering doubt in the mind of the most venerable domestic, his old nurse, that he was a visitor from the spirit land.

It was not until the cravings of the inner man were satisfied that Henry condescended to explain his return. There was no laboured explanation required. The last field had been fought, the Saracen had come to terms, the Crusade was over; and back to the westward had drifted the remains of the splendid host that in all the pomp and panoply of war had arrayed themselves to fight under the holy ensign.

Not until next day did Lady Montgomerie dare to break the tidings to her son of the forthcoming nuptials. The blow fell with crushing effect.

"Oh, mother," he said, "would that I had ne'er returned! Would that I had fallen, indeed, as it was told you I had, by the walls of Jaffa. But tell me, does Anna give her heart and her hand willingly and of her own free accord to this Allan Lockhart."

"She has consented to give her hand, but she has made no secret of it, that she cannot give her heart."

"Then, even at the eleventh hour, she must be saved."

"You are too late Henry, too late I fear. The hour of her bridal has struck, and ere you could reach Aiket she will have been wedded to Lockhart."

"There is no time to delay. Not a moment is to be lost. I must go, mother. Do not bid me stay."

"Too late, I say, Henry. What is done cannot be undone. You know she heard of your death. The tidings were even told to herself by a soldier who had come home from the east. She is not to blame, Henry, so do not make her life miserable."

"Miserable! Why, the misery she will have to endure might yet be stayed. Better by far that she should know I am returned than that she should learn it when her doom is sealed."

"It is sealed by this time, Henry."

"Something may have occurred to delay the ceremony. I shall go to see; and if, mother, if she is wedded, I shall leave the spot unnoticed and unknown."

Without another word Henry made haste to saddle his steed, and, springing lightly on his back, he dashed headlong towards the house of Aiket. The horse was speedy, the rider impetuous, and there was neither stop nor stay until——

Until the horse stumbling, threw its rider heavily to the ground. Henry had seen the house of Aiket, and recognized each familiar scene of its surroundings. The gray walls he knew, the trees surrounding, the winding turns of the

stream—all called up mingled memories and accentuated the intensity of the lingering hope that had bidden him on. But now he lay senseless on the ground, all unconscious of the wakeful life around him, of the throng of peasants not far distant who cheered the young wife, of the flag that flew from the walls of the castle, of the gay throng who made merry over the festivities, of the tender arms of the shepherds who laid him on the bed of their humble cot and tried to restore him to animation and to consciousness.

"Who is he?" asked the doctor, who was speedily called from the Castle of Aiket, where he had formed one of the marriage company.

The shepherds shook their heads. They knew nothing of him.

"He is dangerously, fatally injured," continued the doctor, "and has not long to live. I wish we could find out who he is, so that we might communicate with his friends."

Giving instructions to the shepherds to watch the injured man, the doctor made his way back to Aiket and told the guests what had occurred.

"I will see to him myself," said the laird, "it shall never be said that, because it was my daughter's wedding day, I failed in my duty to a fellow-man, and he a stranger."

The laird, accompanied by the doctor, hurried to the cottage where Henry lay, still unconscious and breathing heavily.

"He is internally injured, and bleeding severely," said the doctor as they entered, "and he cannot last long."

Approaching the bed on which Henry lay stretched, the laird looked upon him, and a sudden, inexplicable change came over his face. He grasped the arm of the doctor for support, and intently gazed upon the sufferer.

"Doctor," he gasped, "not a word of this at the Castle, as you value your life. That young man is Henry Montgomerie, the affianced lover of my daughter Anna, who has

just been married. Not a word of this, I say. He is fatally injured ?"

"Yes, fatally," replied the doctor, "he has not long to live."

"But," continued the laird, "we must send tidings at once to Hessilhead. This will be a sad blow to his parents."

"But," observed the doctor, "you said that Henry Montgomerie had been slain in the east."

"It was so said," replied the laird, in tones which prevented any further attempt on the part of the doctor to unravel the mystery.

A messenger was despatched to Hessilhead to summon Henry's parents. They obeyed the call without a moment's loss of time, but, ere they reached the cottage, the soul of their son had done with mortal suffering.

It was night, and high revelry there was in the halls of Aiket. From every window and from every lattice streamed the cheerful light, and out on the night wind floated the soft strains of music. The dancers moved gracefully to the harmony, and the guests at the tables quaffed the red wine and the white to the health and the happiness of the bridegroom and the bride. The song went round, the mirth-moving jest and the merriment. The stern faces of bearded men grew soft in the light of flashing eyes, and hoarse voices sank into whispers of love. Never had the castle hall shone so brightly. The bride was there, clad in her spotless marriage robes, the observed of all observers. Her cheeks were pale, her lips bloodless, her eyes lustrous, yet distant. They seemed to be looking far away, and now and again her lips moved, as if in silent prayer, or as if she were speaking to an unseen guest at the feast.

The castle bell tolled the midnight hour, and with the last stroke of the knell a strange hush fell upon the scene. And well it might, for there, right in the oaken doorway,

stood the tall, lithe figure of a knight in armour. His visor was down, but through the eyelet holes flashed orbs of wondrous brilliance. The guests started, amazed. There was a cold chill ran all around, as if the Presence in the doorway had brought with it a waft of the breezes from another world. Yet, shrink back as the guests might, there was something that rivetted their gaze upon the Presence.

The knight raised his hand and put up his visor, but his armour gave no sound. The bride, seated at the head of the room, gazed for a moment upon the features thus revealed, and rising, she walked two or three paces forward, and then, with outstretched arms, she fell insensible to the floor. Yet no one moved. How could they move? The Presence entranced them, and, statue-like, they remained in their places, cowering, fearful, speechless. But they could not shut their eyes against the sight. Right up the centre of the hall, slowly and with majestic mien, yet all silent, the knight advanced, and none could gainsay him. He reached the spot where, in dead swoon, Anna lay, her bridal wreath on her head, her bridal dress upon her, and lifted her up in his arms. There was a hush, like the hush of death, as the knight retraced his steps, with the fair burden in his clasp, to the door. A hush that might be felt. The lights burned blue, and there was another waft of the distant-borne chill air. For a moment the knight stood in the open doorway, then threw down his visor, and vanished as silently as he had come.

All was consternation. Men yelled to give relief to their pent-up emotions, and women screamed and fainted away. The bridegroom, hardly less ghostly-looking than the ghostly visitor, was rooted to the seat whereon he sat, and could neither speak nor move. Lady Cuninghame of Aiket, the first to recover her senses, urged him to fly to save his wife, but her appeals fell on unresponsive ears. He heard, he turned and looked at her, but a great fear was

upon him and bound him in its iron spell. Gradually there was a restoration on the part of the guests to a consciousness of the situation, and having given such attention as was necessary to the ladies, they instituted a search for the missing bride. But in vain. The terrified warder told how, from the surrounding darkness, a knight, clad in complete armour, had ridden up to the gate, and, all unbidden and unheralded, had passed silently within its closed portals. While he remained terror-stricken and unable to move, or to give warning of the visitant, the knight had entered the hall, whence he had seen him return with the lady in his arms. The gate still barred, he had passed to the outside as mysteriously as he had entered, and then, mounting his steed, he had disappeared into the night. There was no clattering of horse hoofs, there was neither speech nor sound, and the knight, with the bride in his arms, had vanished as completely as if he had never been.

By order of the laird the country was scoured in all directions, but never again was Anna seen in the flesh. The belated peasant, for long years thereafter, told how an apparition of a horseman, with a lady in front of him, had been seen against the night, ever hurrying onwards as if in quest of something he could not find, and he was a bold man who, in the mirk midnight hour, cared to risk the chance of encountering the phantom knight of Hessilhead and the white-robed daughter of Aiket.

THE END.

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