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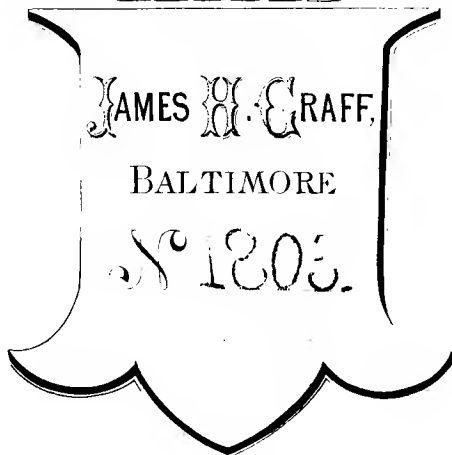
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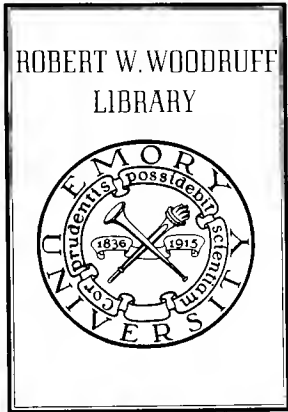
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GILDEROY :

A SCOTTISH TRADITION.

BY

ROBERT S. FITTIS.

Gilderoy was a bonny boy,
Had roses till his shoon;
His stockings were of silken soy,
Wi' garters hanging doon.
It was, I ween, a comely sight
To see so trim a boy:
He was my joy and heart's delight,
My handsome Gilderoy.

Old Ballad.

LONDON:
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1866.

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TO

JAMES GRANT, ESQ.

Author of "The Romance of War," &c.

AN UNKNOWN ADMIRER OF HIS GENIUS, AND OF HIS TRUE
OLD SCOTTISH SPIRIT,

DEDICATES THIS BOOK.

PREFACE.

THIS Tale is the first attempt, so far as the author is aware, to embody in such a form the scattered historical and legendary memorials of one of the popular heroes of Scotland—the “Bonny Boy,” whose name is familiar to every Scotsman as a household word, because imperishably embalmed in the ballad poetry of his country. The author of *Waverley* enhanced the fame of Rob Roy; but hitherto all our novelists have strangely neglected the daring exploits and tragic fate of the earlier scion of the Gregalich—the “handsome Gilderoy” of the Scottish muse.

Although the most prominent of the actual incidents in Gilderoy’s career have been retained in the Tale, yet some liberty has been taken with the time of their occurrence. Gilderoy perished in the summer of 1636, shortly before Scotland became convulsed with the bloody troubles of the Covenant. The time has been shifted twenty years later, for the purpose of interweaving his adventures with the history of the Protectorate in Scotland—a period, by the way, to which tradition, though erringly, ascribes some of them.

Fiction is generally allowed a license of this kind when its object is avowedly to strengthen the vague, and reconcile the often contradictory, details handed down by tradition respecting popular heroes; and surely the theme which Campbell did not disdain to illustrate in one of his finest lyrics offers a legitimate and promising field for the exercise of the novelist's imagination.

May, 1866.

GILDEROY;

A SCOTTISH TRADITION



CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY

Come up amang the Highland hills,
Thou wee, wee German lairdie,
And see how Charlie's lang-kail thrive,
That he dibbled in his yardie.

Jacobite Song.

THE suppression of the Scottish Cavalier revolt, in 1653-4, confirmed the iron sway of Cromwell over Scotland, whose independence, from the very beginning of the troubles with the English Commonwealth, had been betrayed by fanatical dissensions. The olden scheme of conquest which cost the first two Edwards of England so much unavailing blood and treasure, seemed realized at last, after the lapse of more than three centuries; and Scottish patriots had every reason to dread that the sun of their country's liberty had set for ever. True, the claymore still flashed forth defiance from the fastnesses of the north-western Highlands, to which a remnant of the discomfited Royalists had betaken themselves, rejecting peace at the price of submission to the Lord Protector, and stubbornly hopeful that by some fortuitous turn of events, their exiled sovereign would yet "enjoy his ain again." But defiance such as that was "the Usurper" could safely despise, now that the nation generally had succumbed to his domination.

The rising in 1653, under William, ninth earl of Glencairn, was a feeble attempt of the Scottish Royalists to shake off Cromwell's yoke, and it signally failed. The chiefs of the party obviously miscalculated the resources at their

command. The glorious achievements of Montrose, in the wars of the Covenant, inspired them with the confidence that very much the same game could again be played; but they did not, or would not, perceive how completely circumstances had altered, and how destitute they themselves were of the main elements that ensure success. They had no Montrose to direct their discordant councils and animate their soldiers with his own dauntless spirit and fiery enthusiasm. The grisly head of the *Great Marquis*—"that Scottish oak and regal Buckler of fidelity and valour," as a Restoration writer felicitously termed him—was bleaching in the sun and wind on the spike of Edinburgh Tolbooth; and of his best and bravest lieutenants, whose names were "familiar as household words" in the straths and glens of the faithful north, not one was left to uplift the banner struck down in the rout of Corbiesdale. Still, despite all disadvantages and discouragements, the cavaliers adventured the perilous enterprise; for, as misfortune never shook their loyalty, it was equally incapable of damping their hopes. They held, with the poetic maxim of Montrose, that

He either fears his fate too much,
Or his deserts are small,
Who dares not put it to the touch,
To gain or lose it all.

They put it to the touch, and they lost it.

At the same time it must be acknowledged that had the expedition been conducted by a resolute and experienced soldier, in all probability the Cromwellian Governor of Scotland, General Monk, would have had to encounter a harassing struggle, similar to what was waged so successfully against the Edwards of England. But no captain of eminence appeared. Glencairn, a nobleman of no great ability, was joined by General Middleton, who had fought on the side of the Covenant during Montrose's wars, but was now a staunch Cavalier. The General's talents, at the best, were little to boast of, and it was only a subordinate position which he could have filled with credit to himself, or benefit to the cause which he espoused. In short, the leaders who aspired to follow in the footsteps of "the gallant Graham" never gained the confidence of the Highland warriors whom their summons called into the field. The consequence was that, not long after the raising of the royal standard, portions of the forces deserted it. For instance, Lorr, the son of

Argyle, brought 1,000 foot and 50 horse to the muster, but decamped with his men in about a fortnight. The deserters being pursued, the most of them were brought back, "but within a fortnight thereafter," says a writer who calls himself an eye and ear witness to all that passed from first to last, "neither officers nor soldiers of them were to be seen with us; and we heard no more of Lord Lorn, nor any of his men, since that time." Things went from bad to worse, and at length Glencairn himself withdrew, taking the whole of his followers with him, and wisely made his peace with the Cromwellian Government. Middleton then succeeded to the supreme command of as much of the army as still held together; but his campaign was brief and inglorious. On the 26th of July, 1654, he was defeated at Lochgarry, in upper Perthshire, and, his forces dispersing, he fled to the Isle of Skye, and thence to Holland. "The fate of Middleton's army," says Lord Hailes, "was such as might have been expected, from the want of subordination and harmony which prevailed in it. Five thousand men possessed of the fastnesses of the Highlands of Scotland, might have maintained a long and honourable, if not a successful war; yet they melted away before the enemy." The Government poured fresh troops into the Highlands, to trample out the scattered embers of the insurrection. The most of the vanquished chiefs submitted upon the lenient conditions tendered by General Monk. Indeed, the only one of mark who disdained submission was Cameron of Lochiel, who, for a time, maintained a vigorous partizan warfare against the invaders of his native wilds, baffling all their endeavours to subdue him by force of arms, till they were glad to grant him peace upon his own conditions.

Such was the issue of "Glencairn's Expedition."—It but confirmed, as we have said, the sway of Cromwell; and he maintained his conquest by an army of occupation, 8,000 strong, including the garrisons of the four new Forts or Citadels, which he had caused to be erected at Leith, Perth, Inverness, and Ayr.

Notwithstanding every fault inherent in the system of government which Cromwell established in Scotland—and perhaps its greatest fault, in the eyes of the Scottish people, consisted in its being the creation of a conqueror whose regicidal proclivities and whose ecclesiastical tenets they abhorred—it very considerably promoted the welfare of the

country. "Though harsh," says Guizot, "the yoke was equitable; it was rendered tolerable by regularity, and not aggravated by violence." Bishop Burnet gives strong evidence on the point:—"There was good justice done, and vice was suppressed and punished, so that we always reckon those eight years of usurpation a time of great peace and prosperity." Justice had never been administered in the Scottish courts of law since Scotland was a nation so honestly and fearlessly as it was by the Cromwellian judges. No ties of kindred or faction, no personal feelings whatsoever, influenced their awards. They purified the source of justice—they made the judgment-seat respectable by their unswerving probity—they "poised high the steady scale,"—their hands were innocent of "the guilty bribe," and they dealt righteously between man and man. Says Sir Walter Scott:—"The peculiar aptitude of the men employed by Cromwell being pointed out to a learned judge in the beginning of the next century, his lordship composedly answered, 'Devil thank them for their impartiality! a pack of kinless loons! For my part, I can never see a cousin or friend in the wrong.' The shameful partiality in the Scottish courts of law revived with the Restoration, when the judges were to be gained, not only by the solicitations of private friends and by the influence of kinsfolk, but by the influence of persons in power and the application of downright bribery." Lauderdale's memorable remark—"Show me the man, and I'll show you the law"—was the rule in Scottish jurisprudence for a longer series of years after the Restoration than we care to count. "The country," says Robert Chambers, "was never in a more prosperous, more peaceful, or more happy condition, than during these few years of bondage. Its manners and manufactures were improved by the English soldiery: its wealth was increased by the large sums (about £140,000 annually) which were sent from England to pay the army; and the people found a degree of humane justice in the English judges, and even in the military commanders, which they had never experienced under their former feudal masters, or under their tyrannical priesthood. It almost appeared from this period of its history, that Scotland had never needed anything to render it a happy country, but a government sufficiently strong to repress the religious and political factions by which it was torn; in other words, it only required to be deprived of the power of injuring itself." Nothing,

however, could sufficiently reconcile the bulk of the nation, thoroughly monarchical at heart, to the rule of the great English Republican.

Rumours of fresh plotting on the part of the Cavaliers continued to annoy the Government. In the course of 1655 the Royal Exile projected an invasion of his lost dominions, in which he was to be assisted by Spanish troops, and also by certain of the English Republicans whose expectations Cromwell had altogether disappointed, and who were, therefore, eager to compass his overthrow. One Colonel Sexby, a keen Leveller, went over to the Continent, and entered into communication with Charles. But the negotiations, after dragging their slow length through more than a year, eventually came to nothing.

The following story, founded on historical and traditionary gleanings, opens in the summer of 1656, about two years after the royal defeat at Lochgarry.

CHAPTER II.

In the deep and distant glen,
The Fiddach, wildly wailing,
Of foes upon its woody banks,
Of coming woe was telling.

Then faintly on the stormy blast
Was heard the voice of mourning,
And then appeared the bursting flames—
Auchindoun was burning.

Alex. Laing's "Wayside Flowers."

IN a deep, grim, desert pass of the Grampian mountains fell a cataract that sent a brawling stream away down through the braes of Angus. The pass was called Glen Connachan—the Glen of Weeping or of Lamentation—a name originating, doubtless, in some mournful but forgotten incident of Highland legendary lore. At some parts the grey craggy walls on either side rose almost perpendicularly, with only here and there a few broad-leaved weeds flaunting from crevices and narrow shelves of the naked rock; while at

others the mountain slopes were bristly with whin and furze, or thickly clad with heather. The path throughout was much encumbered with blocks of stone, dislodged by the fury of wintry tempests from the beetling heights. It was about the middle of the pass where the cataract streamed down with a voice of thunder. The torrent poured over the brow of a cliff in one broad sheet, which, striking in mid career upon a projecting ledge, separated into two cascades that dashed, in a succession of leaps, into a hollow at the bottom of the precipice, whence a whirling spray-mist steamed up as from an infernal cauldron, and, when struck by the sunbeams, was spanned by a brilliant rainbow. The scenery around the fall impressed on every beholder a profound sense of dreary, gaunt, savage desolation. The stream from the rocky basin flowed turbulently through a tortuous channel, half-choked with boulders; and the glen itself was long and winding, with a gradual descent towards Angus.

It was a dull hazy evening in early summer, when summer had as yet scarce begun to shed her smiles; for the spring had been bleak to a degree that induced an important Presbytery of the Kirk to ordain a public Fast for better weather, which was kept throughout their bounds in the beginning of "the merry month of May." Heavy showers had fallen at intervals during the former part of the day, swelling and embrowning the cataract, and filling the roadway of the pass with muddy pools and runnels of rain-water. The gloaming closed in apace. The broken red streaks in the western sky, that served to indicate demarcation betwixt earth and cloud-land, faded out, and sombre shadows began to gather, like ghosts, in the glen, rendering its rugged wildness all the more weird and fearsome. Birds of prey sometimes burst out from yawning clefts, and with shrill hungry screams wheeled lazily around the peaks. Suddenly a wild Highland horse, with its shaggy mane floating like a streamer, galloped down the pass, as if on its way to the fresh pastures of Angus. The animals of this species were of small size but graceful form, their colour being generally bay, spotted with black, though some were occasionally found of a pure white. At the period of our tale the Grampian recesses were haunted by several wild quadrupeds, such as the wolf, the horse, and the boar, besides, as was said, a small misshapen creature (probably imaginary) called *Fambh*,

somewhat larger than a mole, of brown colour, and believed to exude a certain poisonous matter fatal to horses if they happened to crop the grass on which it had fallen. The wild horses were once numerous in the Highland wildernesses, where they were caught with the *lasso*; but, by the end of the seventeenth century, they were much thinned in numbers, and could be found only in the extreme northern districts. Imperceptibly the plashing roar of the cataract deepened, although night imposed no greater stillness than what reigned by day. This curious fact relating to sounds by night is noticed by Humboldt in his description of the Falls of Orinoco, which were, he says, three times louder in the night time than during the day, and he attributes the phenomenon to the transparency and uniform density of the night air. Thus the angry voice of Glen Connachan's cataract grew louder as darkness descended.

A strange appearance now made itself manifest in the eastern horizon along the summits of the cliffs. It might have been the rising moon struggling through the vapour; but, whatever it was, a red shifting glimmer gradually brightened the sullen sky into a fiery glow. It wavered, but still grew more and more intense. No; it could not be the moon, and it resembled nothing so much as the glare reflected on the night heaven by a great conflagration. Soon it expanded to the zenith, receded like a receding wave, burst forth again red as blood, and flashed like successive sheets of summer lightning, sharply defining against the sky every pinnacle and crest of the crags down the glen. The mysterious glare continued with fluctuating intensity until after midnight, when it quickly died away, and was seen no more. About that hour, "between the dark and light," a moving flame began to flicker far down the pass, and then another and another shone out like stars through the gloom. These lights kept gliding to and fro, sometimes hidden as if among trees, and sometimes mingling in a cluster. On they came towards the cataract.

It was a party of armed men marching through the glen by torchlight. They seemed nearly all Highlanders, and numbered rather more than a score, several of whom carried burning pine branches, which shed a smoky glare around, and gleamed fitfully back from dripping rock and foaming torrent, while a few others were laden with unwieldy bundles, apparently containing household plunder. The most of the

men were clad in tartan, and well armed with dirks, claymores, and pole-axes, and at their backs hung round targets of hardwood, covered with bull's hide nailed on with big polished iron studs, arranged in circles and triangles. Few of them wore shoes or brogues, the majority going bare-legged and barefooted, as well as bareheaded and bare-armed. Two or three were even more squalid in their attire than any of their comrades, having no other garment around the naked body than a long coat of coarse, grey, homespun cloth, without sleeves, reaching to the knee. This coat was closed down the front with thin thongs of leather or clumsy metal buttons, and confined about the middle by a leathern belt, or a thick rope, sustaining the claymore and the dirk. Of those who had head-covering, some wore Highland bonnets and others battered helmets, ancient-looking enough to have figured in the wars of the Fingalians. But, as we have indicated, all the party were not Celts. One of the foremost was a Lowlander—a tall, light-haired young fellow, in a buff coat, and back and breast plates, and with an iron morion on his head, furnished with a *nasal*, or perpendicular bar of iron, to defend the warrior's face from the stroke of a sword. He was armed with a heavy, double-edged blade, which hung at his side, and a musket, which he carried on his shoulder in military fashion. He was muscular and somewhat handsome in figure, and his sun-burnt countenance was open and free in its expression, and lighted up by two clear blue eyes. He wore his light hair in the Cavalier style, streaming abundantly over his broad shoulders from beneath his head-piece; and one of those wicked love-locks, against the unloveliness and sinfulness of which William Prynne vented his bitterest diatribes, curled down his left temple and cheek. This Lowlander, however, was not the leader of the band.

The personage who seemed to claim the distinction of leader was a stately youth, dressed with uncommon taste in a hybrid habit between that of a Lowland Cavalier and that of a Highland chieftain. He was arrayed in a blue silk doublet, slashed with white and orange; tartan pantaloons, or *trews*, as they are called in the Gaelic vernacular; and a pair of close-fitting brogues of tanned leather tied at the instep with thongs. A steel casque, from which some knightly crest had been hewn by a hostile brand, defended his head; and his locks, of a darkish red colour (the colour which

Michael Scott, the wizard, in his book of Physiognomy, held to indicate a person "envious, venomous, deceitful, proud, and evil-speaking"), were abundant and flowing, like those of the Lowland soldier. A tartan plaid, striped red and black in the distinguishing check of the Gregalach, or Clan Macgregor, was thrown around his shoulders, with a fringed end hanging gracefully down his back. He also wore a red silk scarf, which was much spotted with dark stains, and crumpled here and there as though it had been repeatedly and tenaciously clutched in the hand. A belt around his waist sustained a claymore, and also a pair of steel pistols, of the kind then manufactured at Doune, in western Perthshire, and much used among the Highlanders. According to an ancient Highland custom, his left hand only was cased in an iron gauntlet; the other one, being bare, looked as small and white and delicate as that of a lady. He had no target. His features were regular, and even somewhat finely moulded, but there was a haughty, passionate, supercilious air about them; and his hazel eyes were troubled and bloodshot, lending a sinister effect to a visage which otherwise would have been counted prepossessing. He spoke to no one, but strode on, apparently immersed in his own thoughts, and now and then his small right hand clenched itself with involuntary rigidity. Scarcely twenty summers seemed to have passed over his head.

The band passed the cataract, and continued their march up the glen till they had turned an angle of the path, where the distance and the intervening crags deadened the roar of waters. The red-haired youth now called out something in Gaelic, upon which a general halt took place, the men with the bundles relieving themselves of their oppressive loads, and sitting down to rest on the masses of stone that lay scattered about. It now appeared that there were other two remarkable persons in the company—namely, a female, and a grey-haired man in the plain garb of a Presbyterian clergyman. The former, at least, was evidently a prisoner. Judging from the superior quality of her attire, she seemed of some rank; but she was so closely shrouded in a silken plaid that her face was invisible. She was in great agitation, and wept in a low monotonous tone.

Aloof from all, the red-haired youth was standing gazing vacantly up the gloomy pass, and the lady and the clergyman now advanced towards him.

The "day-spring" was mottling the sky, and as the cool breeze slowly rolled away the clouds, some stars were seen fading in the morning beam. The sweet carol of birds began to ring through the air, heralding the return of the sun. The Highlanders extinguished their flambeaux, and the grey twilight seemed to take away that savagery in the men's appearance which the glare of torches had made so frightsome.

As the lady advanced with her companion to where the red-haired youth was standing with his back turned towards them, she drew back the silken plaid from her face for an instant, and darted a furtive, terrified glance around her, and then, shuddering violently, she replaced the covering, and sobbed as though her heart would break. The minister composedly touched the youth on the arm. "Macgregor," he said—"James, James! the hour o' passion and revenge is past; and winna you now listen to the voice o' reason and humanity?"

Macgregor turned round, put back the minister's hand, which had continued to rest upon his arm, and stared at him, but uttered not a word.

"I carena for mysel, James," resumed the minister. "I am in the hand o' Ane higher and mightier in power than the highest and mightiest on earth; and, trusting in His kind protection, I can fearlessly meet the fiercest gusts o' man's wrath. But this young lady——"

"Shall come by no harm, Mr. Gilchrist, take a Highlandman's word for it," answered Macgregor, in a stern voice, and speaking the English tongue with scarcely a Highland accent. "Not a hand shall be lifted to do her wrong; not a hair of her head shall be touched. Let my solemn pledge suffice you; for I pledge you by the honour of my father."

"But you ha'e deprived her o' her best friend on earth—her lawfu' guardian," returned the minister, "and you are dragging awa' the puir thing to a dreadfu' captivity, in your ain fastnesses, and among your ain wild clan. What ill can you wyte upon her, man? I needna address you in my capacity as an unworthy minister o' God's evangel—although you haena forgotten, James, that it was thae twa auld hands that sprinkled the baptismal water upon your infant face, when you were brought to the kirk yon drifty Sabbath morning, rowed up in your father's plaid, and a'budy thinking you wadna lived mony days, you were sae dwyning

—but I wad crack to you, my jo, in the name o' humanity, and beseech you to release the lady and let her gang back to her ain place in peace. The fearfu' trial o' yestreen will stick to her a' her days, puir lass, and prove a sair enough heartbreak without mair troubles at your hand."

"Mr. Simon," said the youth, sullenly, "I am not to be driven from my purpose by the strongest appeal. You must return to your manse; but the lady accompanies me to Rannoch. My determination is fixed like fate."

"And mine, too, is fixed," cried the minister, with a show of equal firmness. "Do what you will, Gilderoy; but I tell you that Annabel Rutherford and mysel' shanna be parted. I winna leave her as a bird in the snare o' the fowler. If you tak' her, you tak' us baith. I winna leave her."

Gilderoy smiled. "You have followed us thus far by no compulsion of mine," he said; "and now you must return without more parley. Believe me, Mr. Simon, the vassals of Dunavaig stand in urgent need of your consolation this day."

"Consolation!" echoed the minister, sadly. "Alas, alas! my jo, there will be sma' consolation at Dunavaig either the day or the morn. But," he added, in an altered tone, while his eye kindled, "dinna you think that the bluid o' the murdered cries frae the very ground, and will be heard and answered? Mony a heart-wrung, wild-spoken prayer will gang up to heaven this morning for justice and righteous retribution. Mony a malison will be pronounced against you. Trembling hands will be lifted heavenwards to draw down swift and unerring vengeance upon your head. What ha'e you done? You ha'e come frae your moors and woods, and slaughtered your ain kinsman at his ain door, and proclaimed your fearfu' crime to the hail country by the blaze o' your slaughtered kinsman's house. Dinna you think, Gilderoy, that the crime will steel every heart and nerve every hand against you? There will but ae word gang frae mouth to mouth, and that ae word will be 'Vengeance!' and you will be branded as a second Cain, and counted as a wild beast that maun be hunted doon and destroyed, to let the land ha'e peace."

This bold outburst had no apparent effect upon him to whom it was addressed; but it evoked rage and fury among the Celts, most of whom understood the greater part of it. Before the minister concluded, his voice was nearly drowned

in growls and the rattle of weapons, and the savages seemed looking for a signal from their leader that they might rush in and cut his traducer to pieces. But Gilderoy gave no such signal; on the contrary, he commanded them to be silent and still.

"Your head, Mr. Gilchrist, was never in greater jeopardy than it was a moment syne," said the Lowland soldier, gravely. "You should bear in mind, sir, that you are no in your ain poopit enoo, reproving your ain parishioners for sins and lack o' duty."

"I ken my danger and my duty baith, Dobbie Hackston," responded Mr. Gilchrist. "Thae lads can do nac mair than what my great Master permits; and He can open or shut the lions' mouths according to His ain gudc pleasure. I am content. But it's the truth I've spoken. It's my bounden duty to speak the truth in ony presence and in ony jeopardy. I'm in the place, as worthy John Knox said, whaur I'm commanded o' conscience to speak the truth, and the truth I'll speak, impugn it whoso lists. I maun lift up my voice—would that it were mair powerfu' and persuasive!—I maun lift it up in warning and reproof, without respect o' persons. It's to this misguided callant that I maun speak; for he has made himsel' an astonishment, a terror, and a hissing unto a' that hear his name."

"Mr. Gilchrist," cried Gilderoy, with an impatient gesture, "you know all the provocation which made me my kinsman's enemy. The provocation justifies everything I have done. It would justify more."

"Oh, James!" interrupted the minister, "you crack as though this load o' guilt lay lichtly upon you—as though the foul stain o' murder could be as easily washed frac your soul and conscience as thae splashes o' gore from your white right hand."

Macgregor held up his bare hand, and perceived, apparently for the first time, that it was streaked with barked blood. He replied sternly, "You say well, sir. *That* guilt—if guilt you call it—does, indeed, lie light on my conscience. A merc feather's weight. Did no oppression, no suffering, no wrong, drive me to revenge? You know better. You know the provocation."

"Your brother's death——"

"Ay," said Gilderoy, with a fierce smile, as a sudden emotion burned on his cheek and flashed from his eye; "you

can reeount the provoocation well. My brother—my only brother—was marked out for slaughter. They tracked and hunted him as we track and hunt the ravening wolf. Traitors sold him to the enemy; and the blood-money—the price of his head—was earned and worn by—By whom was it won? *You* can answer. By that sordid, faithless caitiff whom you style my kinsman. He received the bribe in full tale. Yes—Connal of Dunavaig, my father's second cousin, plotted and perpetrated the destruction of my father's eldest son. Patrick was lured away by fiendish guile, and seized in an unguarded moment; bound, like a cattle-beast, and driven to the shambles of St. Johnstoun, where they hung him upon one of the gibbets which, as in my boyish days I heard the burghers tell, were set up at the four ports of the town to hang the Macgregors, pursuant to statutes of Parliament. And you—you were with Patrick when he died."

"I travelled a' the road frae Dunavaig to the burgh town, and heard his trial in the Tolbooth; yea, and I attended him in prison after sentence was passed, and likewise to the gallows."

"And he died like a son of Clan-Alpin—like a scion of the royal race of Macgregor. His cheek never blanched, save, perchance, when the thought crossed him that I, too, might fall a victim to traitors' wiles ere I had avenged his doom."

"He died as he had lived," said the minister, "heart-hardened to the last. He wad pay nae heed to the things that concerned his everlasting peace; the word o' salvation had far less effect upon him than a doited sennachie's story; and even he declared that in place o' my earnest prayers, he wad rather hear the pibroch o' Clan-Gregor summoning to foray or feast. I've been sair grieved for Patrick."

"And you know that, with his latest breath, my brother accused Dunavaig."

"But Dunavaig constantly maintained his utter innocence," said Mr. Gilchrist. "Lady Annabel there can tell you."

"It will not deny," said Gilderoy. "No, no, it will not deny. My brother's death lay at Connal's door. All the world said so; and what all men say must be true. It was my duty to avenge my brother, and I have avenged him; I have written my vengeance in characters of blood and fire, that all our enemies may read it and tremble at the name of Gilderoy."

"Vengeance is the Lord's," said the minister; "and what is man that he should usurp the prerogative o' Heaven?"

"Heaven's vengeance has slumbered long," returned Macgregor, with a sneer. "For two long centuries has the race of Macgregor been oppressed; and when were Heaven's bolts of wrath ever hurled against our implacable spoilers? Our wrongs are numberless as the leaves of the forest, as the purple bells of the heather, as the drops of yonder cataract. And may we not, forsooth, turn on our oppressors and rend them? Even the trampled worm will turn. You know what sufferings I have endured; my father slain—my brother dragged to a death of shame—myself outlawed and proscribed. And now that the claymores of the Gregalich start from their sheaths and smite my inveterate foes—now that I am struggling to hold my own—now that I am snatching the justice that was so long denied me, you call me a second Cain!"

"Ou, my jo, you may mak' a fashion to justify yoursel' in your ain e'en," said the minister; "but a' thae braw bauld words will avail but little, unco little, I fear, at anither tribunal."

"What tribunal?" exclaimed Gilderoy.

"The heavenly tribunal," responded Mr. Gilchrist. "I wish you may never stand before an earthly ane. I entreat you, ance mair, James, to mak' what amends you can for yon dreadfu' deed at Dunavaig, by letting this young lass gang free. It's but a pair favour I'm begging o' you, man."

All the time of this animated colloquy the lady stood covered with her plaid; but now she suddenly dropped it from her face, and turned her full gaze on Gilderoy. The falling of the plaid disclosed to the greedy eyes of the band a vision of the most bewitching beauty. The lady was in her early womanhood, and possessed a rich endowment of personal charms—a sweet pensive countenance, eyes dark and languishing, silky tresses of the glossiest black, and a slender form instinct with every grace. She was attired in a light satin habit, with a necklace of Scots pearls about her swan-like ivory neck. She had conquered her emotion for the moment; the fountain of her tears had dried up; and she addressed Macgregor in clear accents that went thrilling through every ear they reached.

"I am in your power," she said, motioning with her right hand as she spoke; "but I warn you that I am not destitute

of friends to take up arms in my cause. It is not so very difficult to divine your secret purpose in thus carrying me away as your prisoner; for I am well assured that you are in close league and compact with the Knight of Spierhaughs. But you may rely that if you undertook this murderous enterprise at the instigation of Sir John Spiers, to promote the crafty designs which he has so long cherished, you will yet find that you never served a master so utterly false and ungrateful."

"I have no such league with Sir John Spiers," answered Gilderoy. "I own that I rank him as one of the few friends whom evil fortune has still left me; but there was no paction betwixt us about last night's work. It was the sense of deep wrong that alone prompted me to attack Dunavaig."

"And you struck down the innocent," said the lady. "My poor guardian was altogether guiltless of your brother's death. When your men were dragging him out—when he grasped you by the scarf again and again, speechless with horror—I cried to you that he was innocent, and could show proofs; but the assassins' hands would not be stayed."

"Pshaw!" cried Gilderoy. "I am not to be deluded."

"Whether he was guilty or not," said the lady, "you cannot imagine that his death will pass unpunished. Yesterday, a wandering pedlar spoke of intelligence that a strong detachment of General Monk's soldiers are advancing into the Highlands of Perthshire, under the command, too, of Colonel Edward Campion, reputed as one of the sternest and most fanatical of the Commonwealth officers. The tale of murder and outrage at Dunavaig will send them upon your track; and you will best consult your own safety by setting me at liberty. Even Sir John Spiers himself could not protect you against the wrath of the Government; and if you lean upon him you lean upon a broken reed."

"I lean upon my own good sword," retorted Gilderoy, disdainfully. "Why do you taunt me with Sir John Spiers? I need none of his protection. I have ever been able to make my own hand protect my own head. Let the Roundheads come! It is no new thing for a Macgregor to find himself front to front with the bloodhounds of a tyrannical Government."

He called out a few words in Gaelic to his followers, and there was an instant bustle amongst them. Seeing this, the minister renewed his entreaties; but Gilderoy impera-

tively commanded him to withdraw—a command which the lady, fearing for her good old friend's personal safety, felt it necessary to second. "You will best serve me, Mr. Gilchrist, by returning to Dunavaig," she said. "I am resigned to my fate, trusting in the protection of Heaven, which will not be denied to the forlorn; and I shall meet danger and suffering with a firm heart, because I am persuaded that the purposes of this man, dark, crafty, and vindictive as he is, will be frustrated. He stands in greater peril than his captive."

A severe and perplexing struggle took place in the minister's mind; but he found himself absolutely compelled to succumb to the power of circumstances. Addressing Gilderoy, he said, "I ha'e been your friend, James, and I was the friend o' your faither before you; and often, often, ha e I gane to my knees, in my ain closet, and prayed for your true welfare. But now you ha'e done mair than enough to gar ilka Christian man pray without ceasing for your utter overthrow and destruction. Ay, though you were dead the morn, man,"—and he involuntarily slapped Macgregor on the breast,— "I wadna add a stain to your cairn, and me a Highland-man."

Gilderoy visibly trembled with indignation; but quickly suppressing all sign of it, he forced a smile, and responded, "What says the old proverb, Mr. Gilchrit?—"Am fear nach meudaich an carn, g'a meudaich c chroisch!"* But it is more a curse than a simple proverb, my honest friend; and, in sooth, for all your hard biting speeches I lack the heart to curse you outright. Rest yourself satisfied, since I have pledged my honour, that the lady shall suffer no wrong. But she must go with me, though it were only as a hostage for the good behaviour of her friends, with whose resentment she threatens me so boldly."

The minister did not trust himself to say another word to Gilderoy; but, taking a tender farewell of the lady, he gave her his blessing, and, tearing himself away, with tears standing in his eyes, hastened down the glen.

"Now, madam, we hie us to Rannoch," said Gilderoy. "At some distance we will procure a horse for your convenience. Be under no apprehensions about your safety."

The fair captive said nothing, but muffled herself anew in her plaid.

* The man who will not increase the cairn may he augment the gallows.

In a short time the band resumed their march—Gilderoy and the Lowland soldier walking together a little in advance, so that their conversation might not be overheard.

“The minister,” began Hackston, “said true enough that the blaze o’ Dunavaig wad raise the country ; and I wish we were weel on our way to the Moor and the Black Wood o’ Rannoch ; though the tacksmen and pendiclers o’ Dunavaig hae na power o’ themsells to pursue us.”

“The deed will daunt some o’ our enemies but infuriate others,” answered Macgregor. “He who fancied that the hand of Gilderoy was weak as a withered rush beyond the Moor of Rannoch, now lies stark and stiff at his own door. When I saw them slay him, I felt as little compunction and as little dread of the consequences as though they had killed a deer at the stalk. Vengeance was a duty which I owed to my clan, and to the memory of my murdered brother. Therefore, come what may—fresh proscription—new letters of fire and sword—I have flung down my gage in mortal defiance, and this right hand, baptized in a traitor’s blood, shall be my triumphant vindicator.”

After pausing for a moment, during which he glanced at his hand, on which the red murder-streaks were still apparent, he went on—“Hark you, trusty comrade—Gilderoy’s fortunes will not be dashed. Long years ago, when I was but a boy, my triumph was foretold. I was standing on the fair North Inch of St. Johnstoun, viewing a football play between the burghers and the men of Scone, when a tall, keen-eyed stranger—a man with an eye so bright and piercing that all eyes quailed before its burning glance—a man, I say, with thin grey locks, and covered with a sober mantle—came suddenly to my side, and seizing my shoulder with one hand, parted the thick curls on my brow with the other, and fixed his mysterious gaze upon me. I lost all power of speech or action. I could only look into the far bright depths of his eye. A wan smile came to his lips, as he said, with a tongue that must have known the Gaelic—‘Boy, thou wearest the garb of the Sassenach, but the blood of Clan-Gregor flows in thy veins ; and I am commanded to announce to thee that thy head shall yet be lifted higher than ever was head of Macgregor !’ And with these words he left me, and became lost in the surrounding crowd.”

“And you never met that stranger again ?”

“Never. But I treasured up his prophecy ; and, hidden

in my heart of hearts, it has proved to me a spell of power, the spring of courage and hope. I feel that I am destined to exalt the honour of the Gregalich."

Silence ensued for a few minutes, and then Hackston said, "But the lady—how will yellow-haired Marion o' the Moor like to see sae bonnie a bird brought hame?"

Gilderoy reddened, frowned, and smiled. "What makes you fancy that Marion would not like to have such a bonnie bird under her charge, Dobbie?"

"By reason that this dame has a bonnie face, amaisht as bonnie as Marion's ain; and the bit lassie may tak' jealous thoughts in her head that somebody's heart may be won by the Lowland lady—and the Lowland lady an heiress."

"Neither you nor I, Dobbie, will ever be guilty of folly so stark as to sue for the hand of Annabel Rutherford, heiress of Glenbirkie," said Gilderoy. "But the lady has a rich suitor who would pay a heavy ransom into my hands did I surrender her to him. I have counted her worth in the yellow gold."

"I mak' nae doubt that she's weel worth her ain weight in gold," said Dobbie; "but I sair mislippen an' we binna putten to our mettle to keep the grip o' her. Women-folk are unco slippery gear at a' times; and sicean a braw flower winna be lang allowed to adorn the wilds o' Rannoch, an bauld hearts and steel blades can help it. There will be a fierce fray about her—look you for that. You never ga'e your enemies, great and sma', sae muckle cause to seek your destruction as you hae gi'en them now."

"True, Dobbie, true. And will you venture with me still, instead of taking service under Lord Cranstoun, who, as tidings go, is now beating his drums to gather recruits for the King of Poland's army?"

"I'll tak' pat-luck wi' you to the end," replied the soldier, promptly. "Unless you had gi'en me shelter after the fray o' Lochgarry, my banes wad, lang ere now, ha'e been picked bare by the Highland eagles, and lying whitening amang the heather, and the wild cats snuffing and snooking about them; or, aiblius, they wad been clattering and rattling in gibbet-irons, frichtening the wanderer as he cam' slipping in by some burgh-town late at e'en, wi' the wind and sleet blattering in his teeth. I'm your ain man, Gilderoy, in weal or in woe. And," added he, "I will say that I dinna doubt you'll be able to keep a' your enemies at the staff-end."

"I have ever done so," said Gilderoy; "and I see little to fear from those Roundhead troops who are said to be advancing."

"I think I see the Roundheads, guided by fause Highlandmen wha ken the roads, warsling ower the weary hills in search o' us," said Hackston. "Atween ilka verse o' the psalm they're singing, they vow a' vengeance upon that desperate malignant, Gilderoy. They march on, ram-staun, fornent whaur we're lying in ambuscade, on the breast o' a brae, wi' the lang fern waving ower our heads, and the bum-bees bumming their ain canny psalm tune in the heather-bells. The whisper runs through our band that the moment has come. Then a whistle, sharp and lang, pierces the air, and a line o' fire blazes up on the height, and a blue wreath o' smoke rises wi' a lazy curl. The eagle sailing far aboon in the sunny lift starts at the rattle o' the shots, and soars higher wi' a shrill, angry scream. The volley has drownea the Roundheads' psalm for ever. In place o' the psalm we hear the hurried beat o' the drum, and the tout o' the trumpet, and the officers, in great bewilderment, crying the word o' command:—'Poise your firelocks—Cock your firelocks—Present—Give fire!' They fire, and we fire back again—our bullets and arrows fleeing like a hail-storm. Yonder's the enemy's foremost rank a' in gaps, like the slaps o' a dyke. Death's busy yonder. Doon the brae, and through the choking reek, we rush like wild cats, our slogan sounding like thunder, and our claymores gleaming in the sun. There's a dreadfu' clash o' steel; and the Roundhead lines are broken. The battle's done. It's maybe Dobbie Hackston that has riven the Roundhead standard frae the death-grip o' the ensign that he shot through the head; and Dobbie, honest chield, waves that standard, a' riddled wi' bullets, triumphantly in the air, as the beacon o' victory. The maist feck o' the sodgers are lying as they fell, like swathes o' girss ahint the scytheman. Here and there twa o' them stand, with their backs to ane anither, surrounded by whirling broadswords that dazzle their e'en, and syne come cleaving like lichtning down through their harness; and yonder's a wheen o' the lave flinging a' frae them—musket, pike, head-piece, bandoliers, and a'—and scouring aff like stour; but few, few escaping to tell the tale."

Gilderoy smiled, and slapped his imaginative ally on the shoulder.

“I’m nae prophet,” added Dobbie; “I’m no presuming to compare mysel’, for clear-sightedness, wi’ Donach o’ the Den, or ony ither famed Highland seer; but I ken that naething can withstand the rush o’ the claymores wielded by faithfu’ Highland hands.”

CHAPTER III.

Hoot, hoot, the auld man ’s slain outright!
Lay him now wi’ his face down; he’s a sorrowful sight.

Border Ballad.

A PREY to the most harassing reflections, the Rev. Simon Gilchrist retraced his way down the glen, and after a considerable journey emerged from its gloomy gorge, within full view of the burned house of Dunavaig.

The troubled torrent on issuing from Glen Connachan into the clear light of day suddenly abated in its turbulence, and pursued a free and quiet course among the green braes rising in the foreground of a wide scene, which, bounded by heights, some of which were grassy to the summits, and others inclosed with straggling belts of young planting, was peculiarly pastoral in its cast. The morning sun, enshrined in a tabernacle of snowy clouds, smiled on a green landscape, such as poetic fancy might people with peaceful flocks, gentle shepherdesses, and love-sick swains. The eye, as it followed the wayward course of the stream, naturally rested at last upon a considerable eminence, on the slope of which stood the house of Dunavaig—a strong, half-castellated sort of mansion, with iron-stanchioned windows, high crow-stepped gables, and roof flagged with grey stone (according to the old and very substantial Scots fashion of “theiking wi’ stane”), and surrounded by an outer wall which had an embattled portal. The old house, however, was now a dismal mass of ruin, blackened by fire and still emitting puffs of smoke. A portion of the heavy roof had fallen in, and every window and shot-hole had been licked by the all-devouring flames.

The outhouses or barns in the court or "close" were entirely burned to the ground, and the ascent to the house was strewn with broken furniture and other household "plenshing," which the marauders had torn out, but lacked the means of carrying off. A few countrymen were gathered in a group without the gate, poring over something which lay on the ground in their midst.

The minister quickened his pace, and soon reached the foot of the eminence. None of the party assembled at the gate observed his approach, and he was close on them when one man, casually lifting his eyes, started aside, exclaiming—"Mercy be wi' us!—there's the minister's ghaist!" This cry threw the group into momentary consternation, and, as they separated, Mr. Gilchrist discovered that what they had been poring over was the dead body of an aged man, in a dress above the common sort, lying on its back, and the long white locks dabbled with blood.

"I am in the body, brethren—I am safe," cried the minister, stretching out his hands. "The reivers were not permitted to touch so much as a hair of my head, for which I render laud and thanks to Him whose mercy protected me, even as He protected the prophet of old in the den of lions."

"And where's Lady Annabel?" demanded several voices. "Have they murdered her as they murdered the laird there?"

"They didna wrong her so long as I was with them," replied the minister, shuddering as he glanced again at the cold corpse. "I followed the reivers in order to try and prevail with Gilderoy to let her go; for I thought that if anybody could prevail with him it would be myself, considering my long acquaintance with his father, and the many services I've done to one and all of them. But no; he was like unrighteous Pharaoh, his heart was hardened, and he would not let her go, and I was compelled to come away and leave her in his hands."

"And what will they make o' the lassie?" inquired one of the bystanders. This was a short, squat, broad-shouldered man, with a dark complexion, small keen grey eyes, and a harsh, dogged look. He wore a suit of homespun cloth, a blue bonnet drawn well down over his massive wrinkled brow, and a belt around his middle, from which hung a basket-hilted broadsword. "Will they take her life, think you?"

"I canna bring myself to think that Macgregor means to do the lass any bodily harm," responded the minister. "He looks for a *ransom*, I conjecture. Indeed, Gideon, the misguided lad, can ha'e no other object in carrying her aff."

"Humph! humph!—misguided lad!" uttered Gideon, turning away, with his hand on the hilt of his sword, but still looking at the minister, and with a stern and reproachful eye too. "Is that the way you speak o' an emissary o' Satan, a firebrand o' hell, a wild boar o' the wood, that comes down frae his norland muirs, wi' a band o' his bare-legged gillies at his back; and when we gang at night to our beds in peace and quietness, we waken up at the skreigh o' day to see the roofs aboon our heads blazing like bonfires? I say again—is that the way you speak o' sic a singing deevil?"

"Tak' patience, Gideon Beaton, tak' patience," said Mr. Gilchrist, soothingly.

"Patience!" echoed Gideon. "Them that hae come to nae skaith may tak' patience; but didna I get my ain fauld toomed the other morning? and wha but the Macgregors were at the tooming o' it? And still you ca' Gilderoy a misguided lad, and crack about patience. Look at the good milk kine lying half-roasten among the ruins o' their byres; look at that cauld crop among our feet; look at thae auld wa's spawing out the reek; look at a' the desolation around us; and then tell me if Gilderoy is not ten hundred times waur nor misguided. I say"—and here he lifted his clenched right hand—"I say that himself and his following must be swept from the face of the land with the besom of destruction, and the curse of Jericho pronounced upon his dwelling!"

A kind of angry cheer from his peasant companions followed this energetic speech. The minister, bending over the dead body, perused with melancholy interest the pallid sunken countenance. Death had been caused by several stabs and shots.

"And mair nor Dunavaig slain," resumed Gideon. "Twa o' the serving men lying dead in the ha'; and the other four and the maids would hae been murdered too had they no leapt a window and escaped in the dark."

"And where are they?" asked Mr. Simon.

"The lassies are down at the Grange, and the men are raising the country," said Gideon. "I wish we had the

country raised, that we might carry fire and sword through all the wilds o' Rannoch."

"What needs you speak, Gideon Beaton, about carrying fire and sword through the wilds o' Rannoch, when you ken that though we had a' the parish mustered, we would not hae sufficient power to do ony such thing, and that therefore we must petition the law to take dealings with the offenders?" returned Mr. Gilchrist.

"Law!" echoed Beaton. "Have you forgotten, Mr. Simon, that our nation lies under bondage to an usurper?—and can justice be gotten when the very fountain head is polluted by sectarian tyranny? I'll never acknowledge that tyrannical governor, Monk, or any of his instruments, by laying my petition before him or them. How could I acknowledge a man that tramps his heel upon the dear-bought liberties and privileges of Scotland's Kirk, by declaring our General Assembly an illegal convocation, and sending parties of pikemen and musketeers to disperse it should it venture to meet? Were na you a member yourself, Mr. Simon, of the Assembly of '53, when it was broken in upon and disannulled by Monk's troops? And would I appeal to the like o' *him*?"

"Even the great Apostle o' the Gentiles did na scruple to appeal unto Cæsar," said Mr. Gilchrist, in a quiet way.

"But I'll ne'er sin my soul by bringing an appeal before General Monk," cried Beaton. "Look ye, neighbours, ye a' ken that I signed my name, wi' my ain blood, on the great parchment o' the Covenant, when it was spread out on a grave-stane in the Grey Friars' kirkyard in Edinburgh. I hae been a Tacksman on the lands o' Dunavaig for lang and mony a day; and ye a' ken that between the laird and mysel' there was a dour plea anent the march-dykes and certain other just claims o' mine which he wrongfully resisted, so that for the last four year and seven month a friendly word never passed between us. But when I find him lying dead at his own door, slain by savages from the mountains—the heathen, papist, prelatie crew that followed and fought for that bloody excommunicate traitor and murderer, James Graham, some time Marquis of Montrose, what signifies to me a' the pleas that ever broke out between us? He was my Laird, and I hae ta'en a vow upon my head to avenge his death."

"You must be calm, Gideon," said the minister, "and not let your anger overcome you."

"I may say with Jonah, the prophet, that I do well to be angry," retorted Beaton. "I signed my name in blood to my promise before, and I'm ready to shed my blood for my promise again;" and he struck the hilt of his broadsword, so that the weapon rattled loudly in its sheath.

"You've said it, Gideon, you've said it, just as I would say it mysel'," cried another of the party, a young ploughman. "I'm as willing as you are to forgie the dead a' my wrangs, and to seek speedy vengeance for his murder. My wrangs werena licht, and ye a' ken about them. I mind, and you mind, and so will the minister, that when I was a bit wean in my mother's oxter, my puir faither, that's dead and gane, fell ahint ae term wi' the rent o' the pendicle. It was a weet raw summer, and an unco weet hairst, and the most o' our crop was lost. But Dunavaig would hear o' naething but his rent, and his rent was not to gie, and so we were rouped to the door."

"A' body said that the guilt o' sac cruel an action wad cling to him, and wad be seen upon him before he left the earth," remarked one of the bystanders.

"We keeplit up nae ill-will, and I've nane to this day," resumed the young hind; "for immediately on the back o' our misfortune, Lady Carnegie took pity on our hard lot, and ga'e us ane o' her best pendicles; and things prospered wi' us in a while. But a' that weary end o' the year the tear was never out o' my mither's e'e; and she wad sit down, sae thieveless-like, at the ingle-side, and aye dicht awa' the ither drap wi' the end of her apron; and when I wad spier, in my ain bairnly way, what mammie was greeting for, she wad smile for a moment—a sorrowful smile—and grip me to her bosom—and—and dog on't! when I mind o' that—deevil anc o' me will lift hand or foot in his quarrel. No, no! Let him go; he's weel awa', the auld Judas. I'll never forgie him—forgie him that likes. I'm nane o' his servants—God be thanked!—I dinna belong to his land. I'll to my ain wark."

So saying, the speaker, whose face was now burning with passion, cast on the corpse a fierce, contemptuous glance, and hurried down the brae, whistling a march.

"Geordie Allan has ta'en a droll tidd," quoth one of the party. "But I must allow that his folk were ill-used by the laird, and *that's* aye sticking in his thrapple yet, and winna gae down."

“It’s my opinion, friends,” said an old patriarch, bending over his staff, “that we must just act according to our minister’s advice: it’s the best we can get.”

“Indeed?” said Beaton. “We had better just submit to the Clan Gregor at ance, and let them do with our lives and our goods and chattels what pleases them. How lang is it since twa score of ewcs and three fat nowte were lifted aff my land?—and I maun seek nae amends for that loss? I would raise the strength o’ the country round and round, and pursue the caterans, and root them out, even as the Canaanite, the Jebusite, and the Hivite were ordered to be rooted out o’ the Land o’ Promise. Mair by token, Mr. Simon, there’s both law and Gospel against the Clan Gregor; for how many Acts o’ our ain Scots Parliament have been passed for their destruction?”

“I beseech you, Gideon, cast awa wild thoughts,” said the minister. “The law must vindicate its insulted majesty. We can do nothing of ourselves; we haena power to tak’ the field against Gildcroy. I hear that Monk’s troops are marching this way.”

“Mention not that sectarian tyrant’s name,” interrupted Beaton.

“I hear that General Monk’s troops are marching this way,” repeated Mr. Gilchrist; “and we can mak’ our complaint to them. I’ll warrant they’ll be blythe to get occasion for an onslaught on Rannoch. In the mean time we must get the body carried to the nearest house, for it cannot lie here as a spectacle; and syne we’ll take sober counsel together as to what’s best to be done in this great strait.”

“I wash my hands o’ the whole business,” cried Gideon Beaton, angrily. “Do as you like, Mr. Simon; but I’s hame to my ain house.” And without another word, he followed the example of the unforgiving ploughman by striding down the hill.

CHAPTER IV

He's carried her ower yon hich, hich hill,
 Until a Highland glen,
 And there he met his brother John,
 Wi' twenty armed men.

And there were cows, and there were ewes,
 And there were kids sae fair;
 But sad and wae was bonnie Baby,
 Her heart was full o' care.

Ballad of "Bonnie Baby Livingstone."

THE Moor of Rannoch is perhaps the dreariest wilderness in Scotland. This immense plain, lying on a great altitude above the level of the sea, presents one broad expanse of heath and moss-hags, with scarcely a single tree to enliven or break its dark sullen monotony. The traveller, pausing in the middle of the moor to look around him, perceives that the desert is bounded on all sides by mountain chains, but at such a distance that their low wavy outlines seem merely to indent the circle of the horizon. There are no beaten tracks among the interminable moss-hags, small lochs, and water-runnels which intersect the moor. In the summer season noxious exhalations arise thickly from the marshy steppc. A more cheerless and forbidding scene, even under the sun of summer, can scarcely be conceived. Its bleak uniformity oppresses both the eye and the mind. Near the centre, between barren banks, lies a long black lake, presenting the aspect of a miniature Dead Sea. The desert is abandoned to beast and bird. The hawk wheels in the air overhead; the wild cat starts from behind a mossy stone, glares at the traveller for a moment, as if intending to dispute his passage, and then skulks out of sight; the deer tilts over the hillocks in the distance; and the adder, nerved and envenomed by the summer heat, coils up in the way, darting forth its sting-like tongue in defiance. When, however, the traveller approaches the upper extremity of the moor, he finds the character of the scenery rapidly improving, and Highland beauty and grandeur beginning to echallenge his admiration. In one direction he will be repaid for all his

toils by the view of Loch Rannoch, a fine sheet of water, surrounded by the most varied and romantic scenery. He will pass from the moor into deep sequestered glens, teeming with natural beauties, and vocal with the sweet voices of woods and waters. Rannoch was long famous as a nest of caterans. Down almost to the period of the last rebellion in 1745, "this district," says Heron, "was in an uncivilized state. The inhabitants were thieves and robbers, who acknowledged no law, paid no debts, and laid all the neighbouring country from Stirling to Coupar of Angus under contribution;" and "as they all bore arms, it was hardly possible to bring to justice a thief who belonged to their number."

The sun was setting on the evening of the fourth or fifth day after the burning of Dunavaig House, when Gilderoy and his followers were wending their way homewards through the great moor. It was in this quarter that they had their haunt, to which they were now carrying the captive lady and the spoils of Dunavaig.

The country of Rannoch formed part of the original possessions of the Clan Gregor, and was acquired by a bloody onslaught upon a tribe remembered in Highland tradition by the title of *Clan-ic-Ian-Bhui*, or "the grand-children of Yellow John," whom the Macgregors succeeded in exterminating, and in whose domains, comprehending a very extensive but wild district, they established themselves, fixing there their chief seat. This conquest is said to have occurred at a very remote period of Scottish history. The Macgregors, or Gregalich, subsequently became one of the most powerful septs in the Highlands. They styled themselves "The Royal Clan," asserting their direct descent from Alpin and Gregory, father and son, two of the Scottish monarchs, who are stated to have reigned some time in the ninth century; hence the patronymics of Clan Alpine and Clan Gregor which the clan adopted. Their ancient heraldic device favoured their proud assumption, being a lion crowned, with the motto, *Sriogal mo dhream*—"My race is royal." Their more modern cognizance was a fir-tree torn up by the root, crossed by a sword with a crown on the point of it, the motto being, "E'en do and spare not." To this latter device the *Black Book of Taymouth* contains a sarcastic allusion in the following rhymes:—

“OFF THE M^cGREGOURIS ARMES.

The sword and fir tree croceit beneath ane crown,
 Are fatall signs appropriate to this race,
 By some foreseeing fellow well set down,
 Meet for such lymmaris spoilzeing everie place.
 The crown presents the Kingis most royall Grace,
 Ane rychteous judge with skill wha does decree
 That they, and all such cut-throat^s, should embrace
 His severe censure for their villanie:
 To wit, gif ony frae his sworde goes free
 On execute, continuing in the wrang,
 He will erect ane gallows of that trie,
 And thereupon them in ane wuddie hang.
 “Sae far’s my wits can serve, I can nocht ken
 Ane hetter badge for such a sort of men.”

POSTSCRIPTUM.

“One thing yet rests that should their armes befit,
 If with Sanct Johnston’s ribbons* they were knit.”

Of course, this diatribe, written by an adherent of the Clan Campbell, owed its inspiration to the fierce and unquenchable feud between that sept and the Macgregors, from which the latter reaped so many bitter fruits. The autiquity of the Gregalich is commemorated in one of their own rhymes, which says—

“Hills, and waters, and Alpines,
 The oldest three in Albin,”

And their claim to Royal descent in aouther—

“The royal hereditary family,
 Who lived down at Dunstaffnage,
 To whom at first the crown of Albin belonged,
 And who have still an hereditary claim to it.”

In the palmy days of the clan, “the country of the Macgregors” extended over considerable portions of the shires of Perth, Argyle, Dumbarton, and Stirling. The Gregalich were foremost among the adherents of Robert Bruce, during his protracted struggle for Scottish independence, and contributed in no small degree to the glorious result of Bannockburn. But in little more than a century afterwards they were overtaken by a succession of misfortunes without a parallel in Highland annals. The melancholy narrative of their downfall needs no recapitulation here. Doubtless they were turbulent, and paid little regard to the principle of

* St. Johnstoun’s ribbons—Halters.

meum and *tuum*; but in such respects they were no worse than their neighbours; and, so far as can be ascertained, they were guilty of no such atrocious crimes as justified the savage measures put in force against them. By the beginning of the sixteenth century they were deprived of all their possessions in the north of Perthshire. Still, in times of civil war, the Macgregors stood loyal to the throne, which it was their pride to believe had once been filled by their remote ancestors. They espoused the cause of Mary Queen of Scots, and in consequence provoked the vengeful ire of the Regent Moray. But their darkest days followed the battle of Glenfruin, in which they defeated the Colquhouns with great slaughter. Their name was proscribed. Rewards were offered for the bringing in of their heads, as though they were wild beasts. Four men of them durst not meet together under the pain of death. Their wives were to be "marked in the face with a key." Their children were to be taken from them. And, strange to say, despite all this monstrous persecution, they steadily supported the royal cause throughout the wars of Montrose.

Of this unfortunate clan Gilderoy was a scion. A lineal descendant of the chiefs of the main branch of the clan, a remnant of which (little other than a horde of banditti) still clung tenaciously to the wilds of Rannoch, Gilderoy was acknowledged as head of that remnant after the death of his elder and only brother. When quite young, the two brothers had been sent to the Lowlands, in charge of a faithful servant, and under an assumed name, with the view of being kept out of the reach of danger, as their father was struggling against many foes, and their mother was dead. They remained there for a number of years, until the death of their father, who was slain in some petty conflict, necessitated their return home. The brothers—one of whom had scarcely turned nineteen, and the other was about a couple of years his junior—found themselves obliged to stand on their own defence against implacable enemies, who, taking advantage of old Macgregor's death, were endeavouring to drive the clan out of Rannoch altogether. Their stronghold was an ancient tower on the north-western confines of the moor of Rannoch. Their adherents gradually grew numerous, including "broken men" of all clans; so that they succeeded in keeping their ground. They joined in "Glencairn's Expedition," and after Lochgarry, retired to their

own fastnesses, where they kept close and were unmolested by the victors. But speedily resuming their favourite practice of issuing forth to plunder along the nearest Lowland border, they drew upon themselves the direst fulminations of the law. They were proscribed, and high rewards were offered for their apprehension, alive or dead. In the end of 1655, the elder brother, Patrick, was betrayed into the hands of justice, and suffered death as a malefactor. Common rumour attributed the act of treachery to a distant kinsman of the family, Connal of Dunavaig, near whose house Patrick was overpowered. The chieftainship, such as it was, devolved on James, who was termed in the Gaelic *Gillieroy*, or *Gilderoy* (i.e. "the red-haired lad"), from the colour of his hair. Actuated by a deep sense of his wrongs, Gilderoy very soon (in Rehoboam's phrase) made his little finger thicker than his brother's loins. But by far the most daring of his enterprises was the assault of Dunavaig, when he slew old Connal in revenge for his unnatural treason. From his long residence in the low country, Gilderoy had not only acquired the Lowland tongue, but also a good deal of Lowland culture. He had a handsome figure, and he was very fond of dress and finery. Indeed, he showed more of Saxon taste and habits than was quite agreeable to most of his adherents.

The minister of Dunavaig parish, Mr. Gilchrist, had long been on intimate terms with this family of Macgregors, having been settled, at one time, in a Highland parish bordering on Rannoch. That night Gilderoy attacked Dunavaig House the minister was on a visit to a sick parishioner residing in the vicinity, and when the alarm arose he hurried to the scene of outrage, but arrived too late to save the old man, who was dragged out to the gate by Gilderoy's men, and there barbarously murdered.

The lady, Annabel Rutherford, a young and rich heiress, whose estate of Glenbirkie lay in the west of lower Perthshire, had been left by her deceased father under Connal's guardianship till she should attain her eighteenth year. This guardianship had for some time expired; but as she was still in the habit of frequently visiting at Dunavaig House, she unluckily chanced to be there on the fatal occasion, when the marauder seized her as a prize of no ordinary estimation.

It was at the close of a hot summer day—the summer weather having set in suddenly, as if in answer to the public prayers—that the Macgregors were returning through the

Moor of Rannoch. The slant beams of the setting sun, bathing the western sky in a golden mist, streamed across the dark expanse of wilderness, and glittered dazlingly on the pools and water-runnels. The caterans were now within easy distance of their fastness. The fair captive was seated on a rough Highland pony, the only creature of the party that betrayed no signs of fatigue. The lady's face was unmuffled, and she was gazing over the pathless solitude with a vacant eye. The length and vicissitudes of the journey, in which her conductors had taken unfrequented and circuitous routes in order to avoid danger, had almost overwhelmed her. Hackston led the hardy little horse by the bridle, and ventured occasionally to address a word of cheer to the drooping lady.

"Your friends in the low country, mistress, will soon relieve you; tak nae fear," he said. "Gilderoy will advise them o' the ransom, and they'll send it to the bills, sae you mayna hae to dwell lang a prisoner in Clan Gregor's country."

"How comes it that you, a Lowlander, belong to Macgregor's band?" inquired Annabel.

"By the fortune o' war, madam," replied the soldier, glad and proud that she had spoken to him, for hitherto she had scarcely deigned to hold the slightest conversation with any of the party. "I first drew sword in the ranks o' Montrose; I focht baith at Dunbar and Worcester; I was up wi' Middleton; and when Lochgarry blasted a' our hopes, I had to tak shelter wi' the Macgregors, because I disdained, simple soldier as I was, to accept o' General Monk's peace. I'm just waiting to join the first man that raises the King's standard again. It's lang since I had nae hame in the Lowlands. The girss is growing ower my father's hearthstane, and ower his grave and my mither's."

The lady was interested in him.

"I entreat you," she said, "protect me from insult or violence; and when I regain my liberty your good service shall not pass unrewarded."

"As to that," returned Dobbie, "you needna harbour a fear. Nane o' the band will fash you; they've ither thochts in their heads."

The party drew to the upper verge of the moor, where the mountains that bounded it were seen divided by deep-foliaged ravines. Immediately in front was the woody gorge

of a pass, towards which the party were directing their steps. Near by stood an ancient pillar or obelisk of whinstone, covered with uncouth sculptures, gleaming red in the sun. The lady passed it so closely that she was able to trace the rude figures of men, beasts, and reptiles, which the chisel of a barbarian artist had carved upon the monument that probably marked the last resting-place of a mighty but forgotten chieftain.

On entering the woody gorge of the pass, Annabel found herself in the midst of the most picturesque scenery. Several huts were observable on the sides of the heights, and a clachan, or village, appeared at a distance straggling across the bottom of the glen. The marauders now quickened their weary, lagging pace, and speedily approached the clachan, which poured forth a motley rabble of females, old men, and half-naked urchins to welcome their arrival. There was a good deal of uproarious congratulation, and screams of vindictive triumph arose when the news of the fire of Dunavaig was made known and the spoil seen. A blind piper awoke a pibroch, shrill and stormy as a wintry wind on a Highland heath, and several of the young women and children fell to dancing.

The huts of the clachan were of the most wretched description, being roughly composed of earth or clay, and thatched with heather and broom. The doorways were so low that a full-grown person could not enter without stooping considerably. A sickening squalor pervaded the whole place. Some bestial were grazing on plats of scanty pasture in the neighbourhood, and, according to all appearances, it was the custom to house the cattle beneath the same roofs with their owners. Everything smelt strongly of peat reek; the inhabitants were tan-skinned and bleary-eyed with it. Noisome jaw-holes and "middens" flanked every door.

The Lady Annabel, becoming the chief object of attention to the crowd, was obliged to muffle herself in her plaid. Gilderoy, seeing this, gave orders to the band to "march on to the tower," and on they marched accordingly. The tumult of the clachan soon subsided in the distance, and when Annabel looked up again, she found that the scene had become more rugged and majestic. The glen had greatly expanded, and far onward, where it seemed shut in by mountains whose bald summits the glow of evening was empurpling, lay a broad sheet of water, placid as the sleep

of infancy, and reflecting the brilliant heaven above. At some distance from the lake, on the right hand, stood a square grey tower, with embattled roof, and surrounded by a wall. This was the stronghold of Gilderoy.

That personage soon came forward to Hackston, and, whispering in his ear, the soldier relinquished the lady's bridle, and, stepping aside, fired his musket in the air. The signal had scarcely died away in mimic peals among the hills when a flash of fire broke from the battlements of the tower, and an answering shot echoed far and wide.

"That was the matchlock of Evan Glas," said Macgregor; then addressing Annabel, he said,—“Your long journey, lady, is about ended. Yonder tower will be your abode for some time; but you need fear nothing, for you shall have no reason to accuse me of cruelty towards a defenceless woman.”

“It was your own savage hand that made me defenceless,” she answered. “You have bereft me of my best friend, whose grey hairs might have pled for him and arrested the assassin's hands.”

The marauder, with a blush and a frown, instantly left her side. The party advanced quickly and soon reached their destination.

The rugged old strength had borne its full share of the rough vicissitudes of centuries. The small narrow windows had probably never been filled with even the coarsest glass; they were quite empty, and seemed like great wild eyes staring out upon the equally wild Highland scene around. The roof was cracked in several places, and portions of the battlement had fallen down. Altogether the building presented a peculiarly grim and forbidding aspect, exciting thoughts of fierce banditti, dungeons, and murders in the dark.

The gate was flung open by a young Highlander, of much about the age of Gilderoy, with a stalwart athletic figure, and an iron-grey complexion. He stepped out a few paces, and was followed by an old woman and a girl: while the courtyard behind seemed thronged with armed clansmen, eager to greet their chief and comrades. The old woman was bent with age. She had piercing coal-black eyes, in which a dusky fire seemed to smoulder, and a sharp, sallow, shrivelled visage, with something indescribably mysterious and malevolent in its expression. Her dress was coarse and

mean. Her head was covered by a dingy white linen coif, from beneath which straggled some grey snaky elf-locks; and a tartan mantle was negligently flung around her shoulders; but her neck was encircled by a double string of large and very beautiful Lammer or amber beads, which she probably cherished as a charm against blindness, according to a superstitious belief long prevalent in the Highlands. As for the girl, her companion, she instantly awoke a deep interest in Annabel's mind, for she was a fair and sylph-like creature—her cheek blooming like the newly-blown rose; her light blue eyes rivalling the hue of a clear summer heaven; and her long tresses of the softest gold. She was probably eighteen, and rather under the middle size. Her attire was a simple homely habit, with a tartan scarf fastened across her bosom by a circular brooch of silver set with sparkling stones; and her rich locks were modestly confined by a blue velvet snood or fillet. There was an air of winning artlessness about her sweet young face; and she had come smiling to the gate; but as soon as her eyes fell on Annabel the smile vanished like a transient beam of sunshine, and starting back, as if struck with alarm, she began to tremble, and the rose-tints faded from her cheeks, leaving a death-like pallor.

“Welcome, Gilderoy,” exclaimed the iron-grey Highlander, offering his hand to the chief. “I rejoice that fortune and glory have followed your steps.”

“Not one clansman has fallen, and scarce a drop of our blood has been shed,” answered Gilderoy; “but our enemy has paid the forfeit of his fell treachery, and the cup of our vengeance overflows. Hah! my blooming Marion! Come hither, thou wild flower of the moor. This lady whom I have brought you must wait upon dutifully. Why, you look pale—you tremble.” He extended his right hand to the agitated girl, who pressed it, but said not a word, casting her eyes to the ground. “This lady,” he continued, “will be an inmate of the tower for a few days, and must be treated with all respect and honour. But understand me, Marion; she is a prisoner, and you shall answer for her safe keeping; and you, too, Evan Glas, must watch that this bonny bird breaks not forth from the cage.”

“Have you found a Lowland bride, James?” cried the old woman, who had been regarding Annabel with her scorching sinister eye. “Did you gang to woo and win

and bring hame a lovable lady instead o' to revenge your brither's doom? Aha! That young face has a spell that might weel ensnare the proudest in the land."

"Nay, nay, Judith; dismiss your fears," returned Macgregor, with a laugh. "I have but taken a captive, whom I may hold to ransom, and 'tis nothing to me that she has a winsome face."

"Confess rather," said Judith, "that she has ta'en yoursel' a captive and bound you firm and fast in the chains o' love."

Evan Glas now whispered the two females, both of whom withdrew within the gateway, and the clansmen in the courtyard pressed out to overwhelm their chief with their hearty congratulations. Hackston assisted Annabel to dismount, and conducted her into the tower.

Annabel was led shuddering into the hall of the stronghold, where she found Judith and Marion by themselves. There was a wide fire-place in the hall, but no fire burning, and an immense bloodhound lay supine on the cold hearth, scarcely opening its sleepy eye to mark the entrance of a stranger. The furniture was rude and scanty, and the narrow deep-sunk windows admitted only a dim light. Trophies of the chase, and weapons of war, hung around the walls, woven together with spiders' webs, in which entangled flies were buzzing and droning.

"I'm unco sorry, my lady, that we canna gie you sae grand a reception as nae doubt you hae been accustomed to in the country o' the Sassenach," said the old woman, with a sneer. "But we little expected sic a braw guest, and——"

"I pray, good woman," interrupted Annabel, with dignity, "give yourself neither count nor care for me. I am brought hither against my own will, as you were told, and therefore I look for no ceremony on your part."

"But you ken, madam," said the girl Marion, with a sarcastic smile, "you ken that mony lasses, baith gentle and simple, prefer that their joes should rin awa wi' them, and syne they haud oot, wi' fair faces and wily tongues, that it was a' done against their ain consent. It's a common story, baith in the Highlands and the Lowlands. A woman's word, in a love affair, they say, maun aye be ta'en the clean contrary way. Sae, madam, you needna fash yoursel' putting on sic airs wi' us, for it 'll soon be the clash o' the country, I suppose."

"You are right, girl," said Annabel. "Nay, I make little doubt that the country is already ringing with the story of my wrongs, and I fear that my presence here will be attended with more danger to your friends than you or they imagine."

"I doubtna, madam, I doubtna," cried Mariou, with a scornful toss of her pretty head, which threw her flowing locks into confusion. "I'll warrant your folk will neither be able to haud nor bind when they hear tell that you're aff and awa wi' braw John Highlandman. There will be naething but mounting steeds, and loosing o' the ban-dogs, and crying for a rope to hang, or a fire to burn, your Highland wooer."

"What a jealous little gipsy!" exclaimed Hackston. "Didna I foretell as muckle? Bethink yoursel', woman. Canna you look on a bonuy face without dreading that it has won the heart o' *somebody*?"

"I like uane o' your saucy jeers, Dobbie Hackston," retorted Marion. "The lady is welcome enough, since it's the chief's command; and you may gang and tell him sac, Dobbie, for there's little use o' you standing there like a gowk deavin' folk wi' havers."

Dobbie laughed and retired.

The hall did not boast of a chair; but there was an oaken settle standing at the wall, upon which Annabel, without being invited, was fain to sit down.

"How lang are you to stay here?" inquired Marion. "This place is far oot o' the world, I wad think, for a lady o' your degree. There's naebody here, I'm sure, but armed men and black cattle; and nae mair to be seen but a wheen hills and heather on them."

"Gilderoy can tell," answered the lady. "Being a prisoner, I cannot."

"I'll ne'er speir at him," cried Marion, disdainfully. "You keu weel enough yoursel', but you're thinking to mak' a great secret o't. I'll warrant, you canna tell whaur you cam frae ueither. Gilderoy wad need be speired aboot that and a'"

"I was brought from Dunavaig," replied Annabel, "where Gilderoy murdered the laird, my guardian, and burned the house to the ground."

"That's the heiress o' Glenbirkie," said Judith, turning to the girl, but pointing with her claw-like hand at Annabel.

"There's baith wealth and beauty in the scale against you, lassie. Better, woman," — and she suddenly confronted Annabel with a scathing glare, — "better that you had perished in the consuming blaze o' Dunavaig than come here!"

At this juncture Gilderoy himself appeared, and spoke to Judith and Marion apart and in a low voice, as if giving them instructions. In a few minutes he retired, and passing into the court-yard, which was thronged with his uoisy followers, he was tapped on the arm by a stripling, armed with broadsword and target, who had just entered the gate.

"Sad news, Gilderoy," he faltered, drawing the chief aside out of the throng. "Alister Mhor is dead."

"Where and how did he die?"

"At Spierhaughs, and by treachery," answered the gillie.

"Treachery and murder *there*?"

"Alister was coming over the hill with Callum Dhu, driving some four kyloes, when the men of Spierhaughs set upon them. What was the feud I know not; but the cattle did not belong to Spierhaughs. Alister was taken, for his claymore broke in his grasp. Callum Dhu, though sore wounded, broke through them and escaped, and made to the woods, where he lay down to die; but a friendly herdsman found him and carried him to his shieling, where he will be faithfully tended. I came by chance to the shieling, and was told the tale. Alister Mhor was dragged to the castle, and the captain of the Sassenach soldiers who are quartered there——"

"Roundhead troops at Spierhaughs?" exclaimed Gilderoy, in astonishment. "Roundhead troops on the borders of Athole?"

"Yes, and in good strength. The Saxon captain and his head officers sat in judgment on Alister, and sentenced him to be hung on the Dule tree before the castle gate. Yesternorn I saw Alister hanging on the tree, as I stole through the woods at sunrise, within sight of the castle."

Gilderoy stood staring on the ground, his lip trembling, and his right hand clenched. "You have done well, Hamish, and shall be remembered," he said at length. "Pass into the tower and refresh yourself. I shall speak with you anon."

The gillie left him, and Gilderoy perceiving Evan Glas at a little distance, beckoned him to his side, and then, taking his arm, led him into the tower, and up to a small chamber communicating with the ruinous battlement.

CHAPTER V

Then out it spak' his brother John—
 "If I were in your place,
 I'd send that lady hame again,
 For a' her bonny face."

Bonnie Daby Livingston.

"WHAT proof, think you, has Sir John Spiers given me of his vaunted friendship?" said Gilderoy, as he closed the door of the chamber. "He has put to death Alister Mhor, who saved my life at Lochgarry. Hamish Grant brought me the tidings just now;" and he recapitulated the story.

"But you reposed little confidence in the fair-spoken knight of Spierhaughs," answered Evan Glas.

"I mistrusted him ever," said Gilderoy; "but I was not prepared for an act so base as this. I can admit that perchance circumstances pressed him to give some open assurance, in the presence of the Roundhead captain, of his fealty to the usurper's government; for though Sir John was never an avowed cavalier, yet he was somewhat implicated in certain of the late plots, and was all but delated as a malcontent who should be punished. But why should he have selected one of my foremost clansmen as the victim of his craft and treachery? The cattle which Alister and Callum were driving had not been lifted from Spierhaughs. Evan, I cannot forgive it."

"Sir John's purpose in feigning friendship with you has been fully served," said Evan; "and now he casts away with disdain an instrument which can no longer be useful. It is for you to resent the insult. Some quiet night we will sweep his lands, and leave nothing but blood and ashes behind us."

"As at Dunavaig," said Gilderoy, thoughtfully. They both mused for a brief space, and then Evan said—"I fear that this lady's capture will involve you in sore trouble;—for her friends will move heaven and earth in her behalf."

"But consider," said Macgregor; "though the troops now at Spierhaughs march against me, do you imagine they will dare to push me to extremity so long as the lady's life is in my power?"

“No, truly,” said Evan, shaking his head. “But stormy times are at hand, and unless your followers, Gilderoy, stand firm and faithful, the blast may be too strong for us.”

“What? Firm and faithful?” said Gilderoy. “Can the men’s fidelity be doubted?”

“I say not so,” responded Evan. “But the elders of the tribe were not consulted about the raid on Dunavaig, and there have been murmurings already.”

“Murmurings? Can any man who boasts the lineage of Clan Alpine blame me for striking down the traitor who sold my brother to death?” exclaimed Gilderoy. “Would they keep me in leading-strings, and make my power a mockery? Am not I free to draw my own sword? I am no longer a boy. I am head of the clan, and no power on earth shall ever make me a mere puppet.”

“Certain of the elders desire peace, as you well know, seeing that Glencairn’s war is at an end,” said Evan. “Who can tell how they will act, if, as I fear, the usurper’s troops march to avenge the laird’s death and to the rescue of the lady?”

“If there were honour in Spierhaughs,” said Gilderoy, after a pause, “a path of safety would still be open to us. He loves the lady, or rather he courts her inheritance, and has frequently urged me to spirit her away from Dunavaig, that she might be put into his power and forced to become his bride; for she scorns his love, and would never, of her own free will, bestow her hand upon him. Would he turn aside the threatened vengeance, or assist us to defy it, on a pledge from me that Lady Annabel should be consigned to him?”

“Has she no other lover?” inquired Evan Glas, who seemed astonished by the last disclosure.

“Her favoured lover, I am assured, is Jasper Rollo, Dunavaig’s heir, who is now abroad.”

“It would, I think, be a wise stroke of policy to inform Spierhaughs that the lady is your prisoner,” said Evan. “He might lend us effectual aid at this pinch, for the sake of building up his own fortunes. Perhaps, after all, the danger that seems to threaten us will not prove so very great, though I must confess that Donach of the Den has startled me with a strange warning which appears to apply to our present difficulty.”

“What was the seer’s warning?” cried Gilderoy, anxiously.

"Hesitate not, Evan, if you love me. Disclose it, I charge you. Not that I put much faith in the maunderings of a dotard; but I know the influence of superstition over our kinsfolks. What was the warning?"

"In the cool of yester-evening I strayed to the Den and found the aged seer seated, as is his usual, at the cave's mouth," said Evan. "He arose and greeted me cheerfully, but we had not exchanged many words when the *Tashitaraugh** fell upon his spirit, and after a rapt interval he faltered out that Gilderoy was in mortal peril from the white hand of a woman."

"The white hand of a woman?" repeated Gilderoy. "What meant he? what said he more?"

"No more. The *seam* vanished, and he tottered back into his cavern. I followed, but he continued mute to all my questions, and I withdrew, enjoining him to keep the vision secret."

"A prudent injunction," said Gilderoy. "I shall visit him in the morning. But you, who give full credence to such fantasies should have verified the vision for yourself by placing your hand on the seer's head, and looking over his right shoulder."

"Would you have had me to entail that fearful power upon myself for life, and be cursed in my moments of peace and joy with sights of horror and death?" said Evan, solemnly. "I would not share the *Tashitaraugh* for all the power of the Highlands."

A pause followed, and Gilderoy paced moodily to and fro, his sombre aspect indicating the cast of his meditations. He started suddenly, and glancing around the chamber, said—"So dusky it grows. Let us step out upon the battlement, where there is light."

They went out. The warm western sky suffused the silent hills and the still bosom of the lake with a roseate glow, and the gentle fanning zephyr breathed the soft fragrance of the heather and the birch-trees.

"That evening sky has caught the hue of blood!" said Gilderoy, in a husky voice, as he waved his arm tremblingly towards the empurpled west.

"It promises a bright morrow," was Evan's quiet rejoinder. "On such a scene you have often gazed with delight. Remember you how we used to watch the sunset's splendours

* The power of the second sight.

on the Grampian Hills, when we wandered with my grandmother and Marion on the North Inch of St. Johnstoun?"

"He was not so closely allied to my father's house," muttered Gilderoy, as if thinking aloud.

"Of whom speak you?" inquired Evan.

Gilderoy looked up in confusion, and appearing to recollect himself replied—"Of Connal. I said the tie of kindred between us was but a slender one—slender as a spider's thread."

"And his treachery severed it," said Evan. "As soon as the blood-money rattled in his hand, he became an alien for ever."

"And so he perished," said Macgregor, stamping on the battlement. "The blood of my brother was beneath his nails, and my revenge was justice. By heaven! had pity for a traitor's grey hairs moved me to spare him, the whole Highlands would have cried out upon me! I fear not his avengers. The glens, and rocks, and pathless wastes that have long sheltered us will shelter us still, and the claymores of Clan Gregor can strike as fatally as of yore. *O' ard Choille!*" And he uttered the slogan of his clan (signifying "From the woody height") with such fervour that the gillies in the courtyard heard it, and returned it with a shout.

"'Twere well," said Evan Glas, "that a secret messenger were despatched to Spierhaughs this very night or early to-morrow morning, and also spies to watch the passes."

Gilderoy nodded assent, and then they both quitted the battlement and the little chamber, and passing down the stair, separated, after appointing another consultation that night when the bustle in the tower should have subsided.

When Gilderoy entered the hall, he encountered Marion sitting alone, who informed him that, according to his instructions, the Lady Annabel had been conducted by Judith to "the painted chamber"—which, we presume, was the only chamber in the tower fit for a lady's accommodation.

"She's a bonnie woman," added Marion, "and a high-born and a rich woman. What did you bring her here for?"

"She's a captive—a hostage," answered the chief, "and you must keep her safely."

"And how lang is she to bide?" pursued Marion.

"Until her friends shall ransom her," said Macgregor. "Why are you so curious about her? I have told you all this over and over."

“Me curious!” exclaimed Marion, with a hysterical laugh. “I carena though you should make her lady o’ Rannoch; but I winna be her bond-slave.” And she broke away from him and left the hall.

The immense bloodhound that couched on the cold hearth now rose lazily from its lair, stretched its limbs and its jaws, and wagging its tail, crept towards the chief, and began to fawn on him. He caressed it, and then seating himself on the old oaken settle, leaned his head on his hand, heaved a deep sigh, and resigned himself to the current of troubled thoughts that filled his brain. The hound lay down at his feet.

CHAPTER VI

The desert gave him visions wild,
Such as might suit the spectre’s child.

Thus the lone seer, from mankind hurried,
Shaped forth a disembodied world.
One lingering sympathy of mind
Still bound him to the mortal kind.

Lady of the Lake.

AT early morn Gilderoy stealthily quitted the tower to seek an interview with the seer of the clan, Donach of the Den.

The sun had just risen from his ocean bed, but a dense mist swathed the earth like a grey pall, so that the broad round disc of the orb of day, shorn of every beam, gleamed as ruddy as a vapoury moon. The stifling mist closed around the wayfarer like water, shutting out everything from his view but the fiery sun. Not a sound was in the air; neither of wind, nor water, nor warbling birds. The silence and the obscurity were oppressive to ear and eye. But when Gilderoy had gained the mountains and had ascended some little way, he suddenly emerged from the region of fog into a pure bracing atmosphere. Engrossed in his own reflections, the transition startled him. He now saw the golden sun

shining across the sea of mist, which, stirred by a rising breeze, was wreathing languidly and scattering. The mountains rose into the clear sky like islands in a seething ocean. The leaves rustled, the birds broke into song, and pearl-drops fell glancing from every bough. The breeze freshened, and the vapours were rolled together in mighty billows, broken, blown about like spray, and finally dissipated. It was a glorious morning, with beauty and joy beaming over heaven and earth.

Gilderoy descended into a rocky hollow among the great hills, in which stood a solitary lightning-riven tree—a fit emblem of his own desolate fortunes—and approached a darksome cleft in the side of a naked cliff. It was the yawning mouth of a cavern which seemed

—————ywrought by wondrous art,
Deep, darke, uneasy, dolefull, comfortlesse.

The country of Rannoch boasts of many extensive caves, which gave secure shelter, in times of necessity, to fugitive heroes, but some of which have never to this day been sufficiently explored. “Sheltering beds,” as the natives designate hollows under the shade of rocks and on the sides of hills, in which persons might lie in concealment without much fear of discovery, also occur throughout the district, and are associated with many spirit-stirring legends.

Peering within the gloomy, damp recess, Gilderoy cried, “Donach!—Donach of the Den!”

There was no response. He repeated the call, and then a rustle was heard, and a hollow, broken voice, next for the dismal echoes of a sepulchre, issued forth—“Who calls for Donach—the last of his race?”

“The last of my father’s house,” replied the chief.

“Gilderoy,” said the voice, “I hear and obey.”

In another instant a singular figure glided into view at the cavern’s mouth. It was an aged man with a bald head and a grisly matted beard that swept his breast. He was clad partly in skins and partly in tartan. His head, arms, and feet were bare. His doublet or coat, or by whatever name the garment might be called, was of untanned goat-skin, shaggy with the hair; and he wore a pair of tartan trews, barely descending past the calf of his leg, and a plaid about his shoulders. A staff of mountain ash supported his feeble, flagging steps. His complexion was unnaturally pallid,

lending additional wildness to his large grey eyes. His forehead was full and rounded at the temples, and doubtless at one period of life his aspect had been noble, but now it was simply repulsive, for a distempered imagination had stamped itself upon his every feature. He seemed to inhale the breeze with sensations of pleasure, and his eye acquired fresh animation and brilliancy from the lustre of the morning.

Gilderoy drew back a pace when the wild tenant of the rock came forth. "I regret to have disturbed your rest at this early hour," he said, speaking in Gaelic; "but the times are pressing, and I seek counsel."

"I must needs confess that the morning sun no longer arouses me from the couch of heath," said the seer, "to breast the mountain's side, and scale yonder giddy peaks where the burnished clouds gather their folds. The weight of many years lies heavily upon me, and I feel that the hour is fast approaching when I shall be as the clods beneath my feet, unconscious that the grass waves and the wild flowers bloom over my dust."

"May that hour be far distant!" exclaimed Gilderoy, fervidly. "But since last we met you have been visited with baleful visions, as my foster-brother, Evan, relates."

"Gilderoy," said the old man, fixing his glittering eyes upon the agitated youth, "you know how long and how devotedly I served your father's house. Its misfortunes were my misfortunes; its hours of triumphant vengeance were my hours of triumphant vengeance; its black and bloody days were my black and bloody days."

"A trustier adherent than Donach of the Den never breathed," responded the chief.

"In my youth and manhood," continued the seer, "this right arm, now withered and shrunk to skin and bone, wielded the claymore beneath the banner of Clan Alpine, wherever that banner was spread."

"But the vision—the vision," cried the impatient Macgregor.

Donach drew a long breath. "The mystic power," he said, "which has been an inheritance in our race since remote generations, came upon me as I sat on yonder boulder, making my moan to the fleeting shades of the desert. The cloud fell heavily around me, and then the *seam* brightened, and I beheld the tide of ruin roll over the land of the Gre-

galich. I saw a youthful figure, whose back was towards me, bound as a helpless captive. I saw a tall gibbet, with its dangling cord; and methought a voice cried that the white hand of a woman had wrought the doom of Gilderoy. Darkness closed, and the vision passed from my sight, but once again it returned when Evan Glas was with me. Gilderoy, look warily to yourself. Beware of woman's wiles, of woman's hatred, and of woman's love. Bewarned—be warned."

"If my doom be set," cried Gilderoy, "what need of warning? I cannot avoid my fate. Destiny's fixed decree may not be altered by mortal power. Already have I kindled a fresh feud. I have slain the traitor Connal, and burned his house, and made his fair ward my captive. And the gallows must be my doom? No, never! Gilderoy shall never perish in shame. You saw not the face of that bound figure? There your vision juggles. When Gilderoy falls, he shall fall sword in hand, and on the field of battle."

"Release the captive lady," said the seer, "and perchance the adverse tide may be arrested."

"I care not, though I should meet that tide's full force," ejaculated Gilderoy, trembling with indignant emotions.

"Follow your own counsels, and may success attend you!" said the old man. "But listen to my parting words, and ponder them well. If anything can be undone, undo it. Whatever reparation can be made, make it. The flames of fresh feud which you have kindled, exert yourself to quench."

"Shame upon you, Donach!" interrupted Gilderoy. "You counsel abject submission. Your counsel would hurry me to the gallows. I shall rather trust to the claymores of my clansmen."

"May their claymores ever prevail!" said the calm and unperturbed seer. "But, by the memory of your father—by the memory of your brother—by the honour and faith and hopes of the Gregalich—I conjure you, once more, to beware. Spurn not my counsels; for counsels spurned become as coals of fire upon our heads."

"What is done is done!" cried the chief. "I shall stand on my defence."

"Stand on your defence, and prosper!" responded the seer. "But remember the white hand of a woman."

With these last words on his lips, the solitary of the desert tottered back into his dusky cavern.

Gilderoy watched the disappearance of the seer with a furious look, and then forcing a scornful smile, hastened from the Den, and was soon on the open hill-side, where the sun poured his beams without a cloud to mar the glory.

CHAPTER VII.

Show me the horrid tenant of thy heart
Or wrath, or hatred, or revenge, is there.

Maturin's "Bertram."

THE morning found Marion in the glen gathering wild flowers, obviously for the purpose of household decoration. The fresh and balmy breeze had blown away all traces of the mist, and the green glen basked in the sunshine. The tinkling rills glistened brightly, and every spray shed sparkling dew-drops, like pearls from Aurora's crown. The Highland girl's cheeks, fanned by the healthful breath of morn, bloomed again like briar-roses, and her flowing tresses shone with "the dewy weat," which the gently rustling branches sprinkled on her head as she glided underneath their screen. After roaming hither and thither, and culling a rich variety of the flowers, she sat down on a knoll to arrange and bind up a posie, singing to herself meanwhile an odd snatch or two of an olden Highland song. Thus absorbed in her task, she was unconscious of the approach of the Saxon soldier, Hackston, who now joined her.

"Flowers for the chief's chamber, my Highland queen?" he exclaimed, touching her lightly on the bare neck, which was white and smooth as ivory. "Gilderoy will think them bonnier and sweeter when he kens they were pu'ed by your ain wee hand."

"Preserve us! Dobbie Hackston sae early a riser!" cried Marion, with a smile. "You hadna been lang at the quaich yestreen, else you wadna been sae early astir."

"At the quaich?" repeated the soldier. "Atweel, lass, instead o' a nicht o' mirth and ranting, after sic a foray and sae muckle rich plunder brought hame—no to speak o' the

lady whase worth we haena counted yet—it was mair like a nicht after a lost battle. The puirest latewake* that ever I saw dang it a'thegither, and I've seen mony a ranting splore at latewakes. I wish, wi' a' my heart, it had been a latewake; and nae doubt the quaichs and bickers wad been gaun round till this gude hour."

"Wha spoilt your cheer, then?" inquired the girl, binding up the flowers. "Neither meat nor drink was stinted. You ken yoursel' how mony piggs o' the mountain-dew my grandmither set doon for the company. I thought some o' the braw silver jugs and crystal glasses frae Dunavaig wad been weel graced wi' Highland cheer?"

"Since the mirth was spoilt, it does not matter at this time o' day wha spoilt it," said Dobbie. "But for ae thing—there was Gilderoy cam' in, wi' a frown on his brow like a thundercloud, and no a single word to be gotten oot o' him. You may ken what a dull nicht we had when I tell you that ilka man left the table on his ain feet. How is the strange lady this morning, do you ken?"

"Her?—she'll no be stirring for hours yet," said Marion, disdainfully. "Folk o' her quality ha'e nae pleasure in smelling the caller morning air."

"True," returned the soldier; "and if Annabel Rutherford were lady o' the tower, Gilderoy's chamber o' presencc wadna be buskit ilka morning wi' fresh flowers gathered when ilka ane's bosom had a dew-drap in it, glittering like a lammer-bead."

"Hoot, Dobbie!" said Marion, in a low tone; "what wad hinder the lady frae sending out her maids in the morning to gather the flowers, though she herself would not let down her dignity sae far as to pu' a blue-bell in the glen at the sun-rising?" Marion had now become very pallid. The flowers she was binding became so extremely difficult to manage that she could not help the half of them slipping through her trembling fingers, and scattering, in a variegated shower, on the grass at her feet. "But, joking aside, Dobbie, what can be Gilderoy's reason for bringing her sae far frae hame? Tell me now, Dobbie—and no joking. It's no a thing to joke about, for wha kens what may come o' it yet?"

"Come o' it?" echoed Dobbie. "Something will come o' it. If the lady has friends—and whatna lass wi' lands and

* Latewake or Lykewake—the ceremony of watching a corpse over night previous to interment.

siller hasna routh o' friends to tak' her part in ony quarrel?—there will be deadly feud about her. But nae doubt Gilderoy seized her for the sake of her ransom, and he will not let her go without sufficient consideration in the gude red gowd. She has but to write doon in black and white her orders to whae'er has charge o' her siller, and as soon as the siller elinks in Gilderoy's hand she's a free woman, and we'll convoy her doon to the Lowland border wi' mair pleasure and better speed than we brought her to Rannoch."

The girl's eyes were riveted on the soldier's countenance while he spoke, and she brightened up at once, as though a new light had broken on her. "I'll tell her so this very day—yes, I'll tell her," she said. "Winna she rejoice that she can mak' so easy a bargain, and get her freedom?"

"Were I in her place," said the soldier, "I ne'er wad weigh a thousand marks against my liberty, though red-nosed Nell himself were marching to my rescue at the head o' a' his Ironsides."

"I wonder," said Marion, quietly, "I wonder if Gilderoy has ony regard for her himself—ony love, I mean, seeing that she's sic a bonny woman, and sic a great heiress. You should ken that, Dobbie."

"Me ken?" cried Hackston, laughing. "There's one thing I ken fu' weel—that a bonny lass, wi' gear and lands, mak's lovers wherever she shows her sweet face; and there's another thing I ken—that you're jealous o' the lady. I ken nae mair."

A deep blush suffused Marion's cheeks. Hastily gathering up her flowers in a fold of her plaid, she wished Dobbie "Gude morning and mair sense," and tripped away in the direction of the tower.

None but the sentinels on the battlements and at the gate seemed astir when Marion returned to the stronghold. She passed to her chamber, and placing the flowers in a jug of water, sat down to think.

Her ruminations seemed of no pleasant kind, judging from the incessant alternations of colour on her cheeks, and the occasional tear that fell unheeded to the ground.

Nearly an hour had thus passed in silence, when the voices of the female domestics of the tower recalled her to herself; and next moment old Judith, who had apparently been stirring her handmaidens to their duties, made her appearance.

“Ha’e you seen the captive lady this morning, grand-mither?” was the girl’s first inquiry.

“Wherefore no?” returned Judith, with a scowl on her forbidding visage. “She maun be seen to before better folk. I’m but new come frae her chamber; and she’s greeting, and wringing her hands, and tearing her hair like a demented thing. She could mak’ nae mair ado, as I told her, though we were planning to buckle her to old Dougal Crotach o’ the clachan, wi’ his hump back and his skleyt feet, and his ringle e’e, and his scalled head, instead o’ to a’ braw, young, swanking gallant like Gilderoy. But that made her worse, so I came off and left her. Let her greet till she’s tired. What gude ever cam’ o’ fleeching wi’ a wilfu’ woman? She thinks, I suppose, that we should sit doon and mak’ a great moan for her. I wadna mak’ a moan though I saw her streckit upon the floor-head.”

“But Gilderoy,” said Marion, “has no thought of wedding her. He only wants her ransom. That’s what he says himself, and sae does my brither, and sae does Dobbie Hackston.”

“Hoot, lassie, they could gar you trow that your lug was half a bannock,” said Judith, contemptuously. “Do you think Gilderoy sic a fool as to let her aff for a ransom, when he can get hold of all her wealth and heritage by making her his bride? Will he fling awa the chance?—Na; he minds the proverb—*Am fear nach gabh ’nuair a gheibh, cha’n fhaidh ’nuair is ail.*”*

Evidently much disturbed in mind, she paced about the chamber at random, mumbling to herself, and then suddenly grasping her trembling grand-daughter by the arm, she said in a fierce hissing whisper—“Marion, I know that your innocent young heart is bound up in Gilderoy, and that were you slighted your bit heart would break. And yet, wherefore should it break, while there’s power in *my* hand to work in the dark? I looked through the speal-banc† this morning, wi’ the first blink o’ the sun, and what did I see?—An ancient kirk, and a braw gallant and a bonnie dame joining hands before a minister in his Geneva gown. But, mark me, Marion, if there should be a bridal appointed here, I tell you a burial will follow fast—a burial will follow.”

* This proverb has been rendered—

“He who will not when he may,
When he will he shall have nay.”

† The shoulder-blade of a sheep, formerly in use among the Highlanders to disclose future events.

"Who will be buried?" cried Marion, with a stare of affright.

"Tak you nae heed of *that*," responded Judith, nodding her head emphatically. "Tak *you* no heed."

"I dinna understand you, grandmither," said Marion. "You're terrifying me."

"Silly bairn!—terrifying you?" exclaimed Judith, stepping back and raising her hands in the air. "You shall be a chieftain's lady—child of my only child! Gilderoy shall be the *Fer'tdhie* and yourself shall be the *Perntdhie*;* or, by the heaven above us, and the hell beneath! there shall never another woman wed with Gilderoy and—and live!"

It all flashed on Marion's mind—the hideous appalling truth—like a glare of lightning on a dark and troubled sea. She uttered a feeble shriek, her brain swam, and she would have fallen to the floor, had not the frail arm of her grandmother, timeously interposed, sustained her from sinking.

"Daft old fool that I am!" ejaculated Judith. "What made me start the bairn? Come, my bonny Marion, you must not swarf for an auld wife's havers. What ails you?"

Marion recovered from the faintness, but began to weep; seeing which her grandmother stroked down her tresses and caressed her. Caresses, however, seemed to cause the tears to flow all the faster, and the poor girl burst into a paroxysm of grief, and sobbed as if her very heart would burst.

"I'll warrant you, Marion," went on the old woman, "Gilderoy will never take another bride but yourself. They may crack that likes o' their braw Lowland ladies, but Gilderoy's heart is set on his Highland lass, and Gilderoy's heart is true as steel. Never let a doubt of his truth and honour cross your thoughts. Twenty Lowland ladies could not rob you of his affection."

A passing footstep outside the room put an abrupt stop to Marion's grief and Judith's solacements. Judith soon withdrew, glad to escape from the quandary in which she had unwittingly involved herself. Marion, drying her cheeks, and putting on an air of cheerfulness, though her heart was dull and heavy as lead, proceeded to gather up her flowers, and compose a bouquet.

* The Gaelic names of the chief and his lady, signifying the goodman and goodwoman of the town.

CHAPTER VIII.

She fables not : I feel that I do fear
Her words set off by some superior power.

Milton's Comus.

IT was Marion herself who served the captive lady with breakfast.

Lady Annabel's fit of sorrow was over, though its traces were still visible on her fair countenance. She was sitting by the casement, gazing forth disconsolately on the desert scene over which the morning sun was shedding his ruddy glory. She scarcely turned her head when the Highland maiden entered and placed on the table a homely but plentiful repast of oaten cakes, whey-cheese, milk, and wild honey. The room was the "painted chamber" of the tower; but age and smoke had nearly obliterated the green oil-colour with which the walls had once been adorned. There was a well-spread couch at one end, and the rest of the furniture consisted of a small round table of oak, a few chairs, and a footstool covered with red velvet.

"A fair gude morning, madam; and I hope your rest was soft and sound," said Marion, kindly, but looking as if eager to initiate conversation.

The lady glanced towards her, but remained silent.

"I am vexed, madam," continued Marion, blushing, being abashed by the haughty indifference with which her advance was received—"I am unco vexed that I should have been saucy to you when you came in your troubles yestreen; but——"

"My good girl," said Annabel, "if there is anything to forgive, it is freely forgiven you. I bear you no malice for a thoughtless word. Your face, I think, shows that your tongue must belie your heart when your words are aught but gentle."

Marion's eyes were instantly cast to the ground, and the blush on her cheek grew deeper.

"You speak the Lowland tongue as though you were Lowland born," added the lady. "Do you belong to the clan?"

"Ay, madam, we belong to the clan, though our name's no Macgregor," replied Marion. "Our name's Mackinnon. My brither, Evan Glas—Glas, you ken, means grey in Gaelic, and they ca' him Glas because he has a grey-like complexion—like as my faither before him was ca'd Colin Glas Mackinnon—my brither, Evan, as I said, is Gilderoy's foster-brither; for my mither nursed the young chief; but she is dead now, and so is my faither, and there's just my grandmither living (my mither's mither, with your leave, madam), and Evan and me—that's a' that's of us in this world."

Annabel could not help smiling at so much unexpected particularity. Marion smiled too, and then went on—"My faither, madam, was slain in the fray where Gilderoy's ain faither fell. We had a name and power in the Highlands langsyne; but we shared in the misfortune o' Clan Gregor, of which we're a branch. It was thae weary wars of Montrose that drave my faither from house and hall. My faither was ane o' great Montrose's supporters; but after Montrose's men were a' scattered, the enemy came destroying all before them, and seized my faither's lands, and drave a' our kin to the hills.'

"The like unhappy fate has overtaken many a gallant royalist," said Annabel. "Even Montrose himself, the bravest and best of Scotland's cavaliers, paid for his loyalty with his life."

"And for a' that's come and gone yet, madam," said Marion, kindling with her theme, "were anither Montrose to rise for the king, there's no a claymore in a' Rannoch but wad be drawn at his bidding. I hope and pray that I may live to see Cromwell, and Monk, and the Clan Campbell, and a' our auld enemies trampled under foot!"

"And have you lived in the Highlands all your days?" inquired Annabel.

"I'm coming to that, madam," said the maiden. "My mither, as I said, was Gilderoy's nurse. Aweel, when Gilderoy and his brither, Patrick, were but bairns, the auld chief, their faither, thought it for their better safety to send them down to the low country, seeing there was muckle danger here, and the lady, their mither, dead. Accordingly we a' went down to the Lowlands—that is, my mither, my grandmither (wha belanged to the South), and the two sons of the Macgregor, and Evan, and myself. I was but an

infant at that time, and mind nothing about the journey. We went down to the burgh town o' bonny St. Johnstoun that stands on the Tay, whaur my grandmither's second cousin was ane o' the foremost burgesses and a trade's bailie; and there we a' dwelt, under the name o' Mac-kinnon; and ne'er ane o' the town's folk, except our ain friend and his family, kent that the sons o' the Macgregor were there. Wae's me, madam! there was a heap o' us then. But now there's nane left to care for me but my grandmither, and Evan, and—and Gilderoy."

"Does Gilderoy care for you?—Gilderoy, the leader of a ruthless banditti?"

"Dinna blame him, madam," said the girl; "it's no *his* fault that he is what he is. You little know how muckle oppression has been poured upon his head. There's no a Lowland town within twenty miles o' the Highland line but what has heads o' the Macgregors stuck up over the ports—the withered sightless faces turned to our ain north hills. Gilderoy's faither was foully slain; Gilderoy's brither was betrayed and put to death; there's been proclamation after proclamation issued out against Gilderoy, declaring him a traitor and an outlaw, and offering a price for his head; and the very name o' Macgregor makes the Southron bluid-hounds grind their teeth. Is it for flesh and blood, madam, to bear such wrangs, and no to resist them? I trow not."

"But the Macgregors," responded Annabel, "have their own lawless and barbarous deeds to thank for all they suffer."

"With your leave, madam, there's lawless deeds committed ilka day and nicht benorth the Grampians that a Macgregor has no hand in," said Marion. "Were you Gilderoy yourself, madam, and standing in his shoon, I doubt you would do little else than what he has done. But as the proverb says—'If you gi'e a dog an ill name, you may hang him then.' *That's* where it lies."

"But," said Annabel, thoroughly interested in the girl and in the argument, "I am utterly at a loss to understand upon what grounds either you or Gilderoy can pretend to justify the oppression which I am made to suffer. Gilderoy may conceive that his attack on Dunavaig was justified by the common suspicion which pointed out the old laird as being accessory to his brother's death—a suspicion, however, most unfounded; but what can he allege against me?"

"Nothing that I know of, madam," said the maiden. "If he *has* anything, he's keeping it to himself."

"He has nothing—nothing to lay to my charge," cried Annabel. "When vengeance overtakes him, he can have no plea to urge in palliation of the outrage. Separate the burning of Dunavaig and the murder of the laird from my captivity, and consider what plea he can put forward to avert the indignation of *my* friends. Thus, girl, you may also consider whether in many other instances the crimes of the Magregors were not equally unprovoked."

After a thoughtful pause, Marion said, dubiously, "Gilderoy has done you little wrong, madam. You are safe enough here. There's no evil intended against you. It's no that he took you awa, intending to mak you his lady, and get your gear—"

The lady sprang to her feet, and gazing wildly on Marion's face, demanded—"Has Gilderoy ever hinted at such a design? Tell me truly, girl, as you shall answer to your God."

"No, madam, no; far frae sic a thing," replied Marion, with a solemn earnestness in her tone and look. "As some o' the men tell me, all that Gilderoy seeks—and it's no muckle after a'—is just a ransom for your liberty. Prisoners are aye ransomed, you ken. We read in the auld chronicles that kings o' Scotland themselves had to pay ransoms when they were taen captive by the Southron enemy. A ransom's nae new thing, madam."

"A ransom for my liberty!" said Annabel, indignantly. "And is not this the most villanous injustice?"

"Aweel, madam, you may think so," said Marion. "But," continued she, with a smile, "there's an auld Highland saying that tells us—*Feumaidh na fithich fein bhi beo*—that is, Even the ravens themselves must live." A lady o' your wealth and quality would ne'er ken the want o' the siller; and liberty is aye sweet to beast or body."

"Ah! I see," exclaimed Annabel, almost with a sneer. "Gilderoy *cares* so much for you that he has employed you to sound me on the point. I understand your object now, and I am sorry that so fair a face should conceal so much craft."

A deep flush of indignant pride mantled on Marion's countenance, and her blue eye kindled with a fire to which it seemed habitually a stranger. "You do me a sair

wrang," she ejaculated. "Gilderoy never sent me to speak to you about a ransom. But I thought I was doing you a good turn by showing you how you might escape. You are come o' gentle bluid and high degree, madam, and you may think little o' a Highland lass, whose kindred are the kindred of Gilderoy. Still, I can tell you, that the kith and kin of Marion Mackinnon set as high a worth upon their forbears, and upon their ain name and honour, as any lord or lady in the Lowlands. My forbears, madam, though they wore the tartan plaid, had castles and clachans and clansmen lang syne. They were sprung frae a royal stem; and what mair can the best in the land say? And, hark you, I wad sooner tear oot my tongue by the roots than come to you wi' a false tale in my mouth to cheat you of your gear. You may think on't, madam."

"'Twas but a natural suspicion, my good girl," said Annabel, "and I am glad you have convinced me it was a false one."

"Ay, madam, you may well ca' it false," returned Marion, "for I mean your gude, madam, and you'll bear wi' me when I tell you ance mair that you'll be a wise woman to give Gilderoy what he seeks, if he seeks a ransom—and then go home to your friends, and no more about it. Wadna it be a fell thing for a lady like you to be keepit here, dear kens how lang, amang a wheen Highlandmen?"

"But though I should yield to Gilderoy's rapacity, would the government be satisfied?" said Annabel. "General Monk's soldiers are not far distant."

"Gilderoy needna value the Government a flee," said Marion. "They've tried again and again to drive him oot o' Rannoch, and doesna he bear ruld and sway in Rannoch to this day?"

"Time will show," said the lady. "But I should like to speak with Gilderoy, that I might learn from his own lips what fate he designs for me. Will you carry my message to him?"

"Willingly, madam. What is your errand?"

"Merely that I desire an interview with him half an hour hence."

The maiden instantly left the room, securing it on the outside with a bar, and after an absence of about ten minutes returned, with glad looks, and informed Annabel that Gilderoy would wait upon her punctually at the time

appointed. Having thus discharged her commission, and received the lady's thanks, Marion again withdrew.

Annabel sat down to her morning meal, but lingered sadly over it, having little or no appetite. The repast was scarcely finished when Gilderoy entered the chamber.

The marauder was dressed with some scrupulousness; but he had not yet recovered from the agitation into which he had been cast by the startling warning of Donach of the Den, and the sight of the lady brought back on his mind the full force of the seer's ominous revelation. His countenance, constitutionally florid, wore a sickly paleness, and his eyes were still blood-shot, and had a downward, wavering stare. When he came in, and shut the door behind him, he placed his back against it, as if fearing an attempt on the lady's part to escape. He then stammered out some compliment, which sounded in her ears as if conveyed half in English and half in Gaelic.

Annabel, who had risen from her chair on his entrance, mentioned that she had sent for him with the view of knowing his reasons for retaining her as a captive.

Gilderoy at first seemed at a loss for an answer, but at length he assured her that she need entertain no apprehensions for her personal safety, which would be guarded most religiously, and that she should be in want of nothing which the place afforded. "I am well aware, lady," he continued, gathering confidence from the sound of his own voice, "that here you will lack many comforts to which you have been accustomed in the low country; but, on the other hand, you may rely on enjoying as much security as though you were within the walls of your own castle of Glenbirkie."

"This is beside the question, Macgregor," said Annabel. "For what end, what purpose, are you confining me here?"

"The purpose, lady? I told you that I must retain you as a hostage against the vengeance of Dunavaig's friends."

Annabel was somewhat taken aback by a declaration so unexpected.

"Let Dunavaig's friends pledge themselves, and give me firm assurance, that I shall be held free of his slaughter," continued Macgregor, "and immediately you shall be escorted beyond the Highland line."

"It is to the law that you must give account," returned Annabel; "and think you that the Government will stoop to

an ignoble paction? Some of your people spoke to me about a ransom."

"Why, lady, the love of gold is as strong among the children of the hills as among the merchant burgesses and other douce folk of the Lowland towns," said the outlaw. "But, I tell you frankly, I have no covetous eye to your wealth. I am proclaimed by sound of trumpet, for a common cateran, an outlaw, and what not, guilty of every offence in the black catalogue of the Saxon law; but I never yet put forth a hand to snatch the gear of the helpless. The poor, the widow, and the orphan have nothing to fear from me. I may have thought of a ransom when I seized you—I may think of it still; but more important considerations force themselves upon me. I must look to my own defence."

"Then prepare for it," said Annabel boldly. "The death of my guardian will stir up vengeance that cannot be appeased. It is folly to dream of the law being thwarted because you hold a woman as a hostage. No, Macgregor, your hostage cannot save you. The deed you committed was doubly base, inasmuch as Connal was your kinsman, and your accusation against him false."

"Can *you* prove the falsehood of that accusation?" demanded Gilderoy, with warmth.

"Had you given Dunavaig breathing time he would have cleared himself triumphantly, and shown that instead of betraying your brother, he used every effort in his power to save him."

Gilderoy burst into a loud laugh of derision.

"You would not hear him speak when he offered to vindicate himself," continued Annabel. "His feeble terror-stricken voice was drowned in execrations and the clash of swords. But what proof had *you* that he betrayed your brother?"

"He received the blood-money."

"He never handled a plack of it."

"Pshaw! It was the common report of the country. Even Mr. Gilchrist could not deny the hateful fact."

"The minister never believed my guardian guilty," said Annabel: "but he had seen no evidence whereby he could have contradicted your assertion with effect. It was only on the day before your attack that the laird obtained possession of documents which fully established his innocence and testified to whom the blood-money, as you call it, was paid."

“ And to whom was the money paid ? ”

“ To a Highlander named Ranald Vourigh.”

“ Ranald Vourigh!—the false Macpherson!—the hired spy of the Roundheads!—he whom my father harried out of Rannoch!—he!”

“ The papers showed,” said Annabel, “ that this man, moved by wrongs done him by your father, led the soldiers who arrested your brother Patrick, after he had been decoyed on some pretence from the hills. The plot was of Ranald Vourigh’s own devising. Your brother being seized, the soldiers conveyed him to Dunavaig’s house for security until next morning, when they intended to carry him down to the Tolbooth of St. Johnstoun. That night the laird strove hard to give Patrick his liberty. He plied the guards with drink, and stole the key of the dungeon from the sergeant who kept it; but all came to nought—the plot failed.”

“ Were you in Dunavaig House that night ? ”

“ I was not,” responded Annabel. “ It was Ranald Vourigh who discovered the plot; and had he told it to the English captain, doubtless the laird would have met condign punishment. But feelings of old friendship made Macpherson hold his tongue. The story then arose (very naturally, I allow) among people who were ignorant of the real circumstances, that the laird was your brother’s betrayer; and you may easily understand how terror of the Government prevented his openly rebutting the dangerous calumny. But you know he sent a messenger to assure you that he was innocent of all participation in the deed, and you disbelieved his sworn word.”

“ Where are the documents you speak of ? ” inquired Gilderoy.

“ They were burned, I suppose, in the conflagration.”

“ Oh ! ” ejaculated Gilderoy, with another laugh, but not quite so loud or so hearty as the first.

“ I saw them—I read them—I can swear to their purport,” said Annabel. “ You would have seen them yourself had you stayed the murderous hands of your followers.”

Gilderoy seemed struck to the heart. He advanced a step, and then traversed the chamber—his eyes still bent downwards with a troubled stare, the colour coming and going on his cheek, and his brow, overshadowed by his abundant red hair, growing corrugated and dark. Without speaking a word, he passed abruptly from the chamber.

Annabel had but resumed her seat when Gilderoy burst anew into the room with such marks of agitation about him that she felt alarmed at the threatening apparition.

“What sort of papers were those?” he cried,

“They were two in number,” answered the lady, after a brief pause. “The one was a letter from the officer of the party who took your brother to St. Johnstoun, and it contained a transcript of the acquittance for the blood-money, bearing Ranald Vourigh’s mark, a cross, because he could not write his name.”

“How came those papers into Connal’s hands?”

“He heard rumours that you meditated a desperate revenge upon him,” said Annabel; “so he applied to Ranald Vourigh and to the English officer, entreating them to furnish him with such proofs of his innocence as would best remove your incredulity and avert your wrath. They complied with his request. The other of the two documents was a missive written by a public notary at Ranald Vourigh’s desire, avouching that the laird was neither art nor part in your brother’s betrayal. No evidence could be more decisive.”

“And where is the false Macpherson?”

“It was from the town of Dundee that he sent his missive.”

“And the English officer?”

“He sent his letter from St. Johnstoun; but he is now in Athole at the head of a detachment of Monk’s soldiery.”

“Brand him with eternal infamy!” ejaculated Gilderoy, in a terrible voice that shook the chamber. “The Saxon hangman! By the honour of my father, he shall die the death of a dog! Oh, lady, lady,” he added, his voice suddenly sinking into plaintiveness, “had all this strange knowledge come to me in time! But I am not to blame. My brother, even at the foot of the gallows, accused Dunavaig.”

“Because he was ignorant of Dunavaig’s innocence, and of the attempt to save him,” responded Annabel.

Gilderoy dashed his hands together violently, and rushed from the lady’s presence.

CHAPTER IX.

By some auld houlet-haunted biggin',
 Or kirk deserted by its riggin',
 It's ten to ane ye'll find him snug in
 Some eldritch part.

Burns.

“CERTAINLY we have lost our way in this Highland wilderness, and must e'en be content to pass the night under the bield of a rock. By my troth, it will not be the first time that I have had to take the fern bush for my *host*, as romancers phrase it.”

So said a traveller who, attended by a couple of retainers, was riding slowly through a defile to the south-west of Dunavaig. He seemed to be a young man, and was mounted on a powerful horse, somewhat spent, however, with protracted toil. He was wrapped in a sad-coloured riding-cloak, fastened at the neck with tasselled strings, and wore a black beaver, from the jewelled band of which nodded a long black plume. He had a sword by his side and a pair of pistols in his holsters. His countenance was thin, pale, and grave, but manly—a curled moustache giving it a sort of military air. His two followers were equally well mounted. Both of them had stout buff doublets and iron gauntlets, and were armed with broadswords and ponderous pistols. The one, perhaps the eldest, had his hair closely cropped about his ears, and wore a high-crowned hat; while the other wore long locks, and had his head defended by a steel morion.

The summer night was descending, with a sky densely overclouded; and a blustering south wind swept through the defile, dying away occasionally in dreary moans in the far distance. No human habitation was within sight, and the three horsemen were riding at random—they had lost their road.

“We may as well halt at once as proceed any farther,” said the cavalier. “The sky thickens, the night darkens fast, and we shall have a storm ere long, if I am not much mistaken.”

“There's little shelter here, Mr. Jasper,” said the attendant with the cropped hair, with a rueful shake of his head and a shrug of his shoulders.

"The trees are thick enough at the foot of the craigs yonder," said the man with the morion. "I have spent many a worse night on a bare hill-side or barren moor, where there was neither bush nor bield. But if I may presume to advise you, master, I think we should push on to the end of this pass, where we'll likely come upon some house or other."

Mr. Jasper silently acquiesced in this sensible counsel by applying his spur to his flagging horse; and the party set forward at a quickened pace.

After riding a considerable distance, they had the satisfaction of emerging from the defile, which opened upon what appeared to be a great tract of comparatively level country, bounded by high mountains, which they knew to be the Grampians. But the scene was desolate, and not a house or hut to be seen. They drew up their horses on the banks of a burn, and fell to considering what should next be done.

The wind now lulled, and the wailing notes of a Highland pibroch fell faintly upon their ears, coming from the dim distance in the front—perchance from the very mountains whose dark and uncertain outlines marked the horizon. They listened eagerly. A surly gust of wind drowned the soft music; but in another pause the strains came clearer than before, and then suddenly ceased.

"John Highlandman is astir, late as the night is," said the man with the morion. "Let us forward and see."

"Tak' tent, Blackburn," said his comrade. "You dinna ken where you are. I warn you, Mr. Jasper Rollo," addressing his master, "be na ower venturesome. There's nae John Highlandman would play his pipes at this time o' nicht in a gude cause. There are many queer sights and queer sounds to be seen and heard in this outlandish country, where papistry and heathen idolatry prevail—a country fu' o' the abominations o' Satan, and a' uncleanness."

"Tut, tut!" cried Blackburn. "We are safe so long's we have such a babe of grace as yourself in the company. I'll lay a French crown that the very sight of your sanctified face will make Auld Clooty beat a retreat for a hundred miles. Do you take me, Elshender?"

"We will advance," said Rollo. "Doubtless we shall fall in with somebody able to put us on the right road to Dunavaig."

"I wadna stir a foot, Mr. Jasper, before daylight, no for a king's ransom," said Elshender, backing his horse. "Rather

let us set up our Ebenezer here, and no tempt Providence by throwing ourselves in the gate o' the Powers o' the Air."

"What do you dread, man?" cried Rollo. "Highland banditti may be abroad, but we have small reason to fear a scuffle, unless the odds were heavy."

"We may encounter worse nor the worst Highland banditti that ever trod in brogues," replied Elshender. "Satan has many wiles, and this is the dead hour o' nicht, when a' uneanny things ha'e maist power. I beseech you, Mr. Jasper, an' you be a wise man, eall a halt till morning, and then we can go on our way rejoicing."

"We have weapons," said Blackburn, "and we can use them."

"I ken, I ken," said Elshender, with a sigh. "But to your sin, and sorrow, and shame, the weapons o' *your* warfare were aye uneo carnal. Think you that the Enemy o' Souls eares a whistle for the best Ferraras or Toledos, or blades o' Damaseus, ever forged on anvil? And isna it aye in dry desert places that unquiet spirits wander about?"

"Come, come, Elshender, cease this silly prating," cried Rollo. "We lose time. Let us on."

The little party rode straight in the direction whence they conceived the strains of the bagpipes had proceeded, and soon a feeble light glimmered through the stormy gloom before them. They halted again, and Rollo, pointing to the light, expressed his gratification that they were now within reach of some dwelling.

"You little think of the manifold inventions of the adversary," said Elshender. "It may be but a corpse candle, kindled by a touch o' a deevil's finger, to delude the unwary to their utter destruction in the dark. The Highlands are fu' o' sie eldritch appearances."

"The wind is high, but the light is steady, and so cannot burn in the open air," said Rollo.

On they went, making towards the light, which gradually broadening and brightening, was found at last to gleam from the tall spaeious window of some stately-building. A little closer, and the outline of a church or chapel shaped itself against the sky, with a fine window (destitute, however, of the slightest vestige of glass), strongly illumined.

"An auld synagogue o' Popery lichted up at midnight!" said Elshender in an agitated whisper, as the party drew their bridles. "Didna I tell you, Mr. Jasper, it was some

uncanny thing you were going to seek? It can be nothing but a covin o' norland warlocks and witches, and the enemy himsel' standing up in the pulpit, in the shape o' a black goat, preaching to his sworn servants, as he did in North Berwick Kirk, in Doctor Fian's days. Whaur's a' your bauld jeering now, Blackburn? What will a' your carnal weapons avail against the assembled Powers o' Darkness?"

"Leave you me to fight my own battle, Elshender," retorted his comrade, angrily. "You're for ever prophesying ill-luck. I'm as ready to face the devil as you are. And, by Jove!—devil or no devil—if I'm attacked——"

"Be still!" commanded their master. "There is mystery here. Let us advance cautiously."

They advanced as cautiously as they could, the roar of the wind swallowing the slight sound of the horses' tread.

The church was built on the summit of an irregular brae, the ascent of which was rugged and overgrown with bushes and brackens. The illumination of the window, which was quite sheltered from the blast, seemed to proceed from torch-light, the glare was so red and smoky. The edifice itself was altogether in ruins, and thick masses of ivy clothed the crumbling walls, rising and falling with the wind.

"I begin to understand where we are," said Rollo. "I have seen this old church before. It is some miles from Dunavaig House, and used to be the burial-place of the Dunavaig family before the Connals came to the heritage. We will dismount and examine into this affair. Hold your weapons ready, men. Your pistols are loaded?"

"Mine carry double charges," answered Blackburn.

They dismounted and tied their horses to a tree.

"Keep close at my back," said Rollo. "Straight up the brae to the window. Watch your footing, and tread softly."

"Mr. Jasper," implored Elshender, "hear me speak for a moment. Couldna we march on singing a verse o' a psalm? I could gie out eight lines off my ain tongue."

"Hush! not another word," said his master.

Amid the howling of the blast, and the dreary rustling and sighing of the ivy on the aged walls, Rollo stole softly up the difficult ascent, and approached the lighted window, the sill of which was scarcely four feet from the ground owing to an accumulation of rubbish from the fall of a portion of the small belfry-tower, whence, in other times, the solemn

summons of baptized bells had issued, calling all men to prayer and praise. A peculiar sound suddenly arrested Rollo's footsteps. It was the dull rasping sound of shovels among gravelly earth. Thoughts of secret murder and hurried interment flashed across his mind. His heart beat quick, his blood ran cold. But, mastering the alarm, he crept forward to the window, closely followed by his retainers, and peering in at the side, under cover of a waving screen of ivy, beheld a scene for which the sepulchral sound of the shovels had prepared him.

His startled gaze fell upon a funeral party assembled within the ruined fane. From eighteen to twenty men composed the company, three or four of whom wore the Lowland garb, but the others were tartaned Highlanders, armed with swords and targets. The superior dress and accoutrements of one of the Highlanders, and the mute but marked deference paid him, pointed him out as being of some rank and authority. There were two pipers, carrying under their arms the instruments whose "savage and shrill" strains had previously reached the ears of our travellers. Exactly in front of the spot which the altar of the church had once hallowed, but from which the altar had long disappeared, two half-naked men were digging a large excavation, while immediately behind, upon a pile of stones and fragments of joists, arranged with some care to serve as a kind of bier, lay a coffin, scantily covered with a black velvet pall or mortcloth, mildewed, moth-eaten, and very ragged about the fringed edges. The company were grouped in a semicircle about the bier. Half a dozen of them held burning torches, the smoky glare of which filled the church, and a large unlighted torch was in another man's hand.

Our travellers had not viewed this striking scene for more than a couple of minutes when a shaggy deer-hound started up from behind the bier with a terrible yell, and springing through the window attacked Rollo. The cavalier drew his sword and dealt a blow with the flat of it, which felled his fierce assailant to the earth. Not much injured, though smarting from the stroke, the animal scrambled to its feet, and, barking furiously, ran round and round the strangers, but cautiously keeping beyond the reach of a second chastisement.

The yell and spring of the hound acted upon the funeral party in the same way as the admiring exclamation of honest

Tam o' Shanter upon the conelave of witches whose grotesque gambols he witnessed in Auld Kirk Alloway. The most of the party, including several of the torch-bearers, rushed to the door, which opened from the other end of the ruin, and thronged into the open air, just as

" Bees bizz out wi' angry fyke
When plundering herds assail their byke."

The torches, flashing through the midnight gloom, discovered the three strangers guarding themselves from the fierce dog with their drawn swords. An indignant cry broke from the Highlanders; claymores and dirks were instantly unsheathed, and bloodshed might have been the result; but the principal personage commanded his men to keep the peace, and calling off the dog (which was promptly seized by the Lowlander, to whom it seemed to belong), he scrutinized the strangers, and then demanded of them who they were, and what they wanted in such a place at such a time of night.

"I am a belated traveller," said Rollo. "These are my followers. I have missed the road to Dunavaig."

"Missed the road to Dunavaig?" repeated the Highlander, who spoke good Lowland Scotch. "Was it to the laird's you were bound?"

"It was," replied Rollo.

"Then you'll find, my friend, that ye haena gane unco far wrang after a'."

"Say you so? I am glad to hear it," said Rollo. "Will you allow one of your men to put us on the right track?"

The Highlander shook his head sadly. "An you be seeking the Laird o' Dunavaig, you couldna hae come a better road to find him, for he is lying dead and cauld in his coffin in-bye."

"In his coffin!" ejaculated Rollo. "Connal of Dunavaig, you mean? Is Connal dead?"

"He was dead four nichts since," said the Highlander; "and we are opening the old vault to bury him among the ashes o' the ancient lairds. You have come in good time to make up the company; for it's unco thin. Indeed, man, and you dinna ken o' the laird's slaughter?"

"His slaughter!" cried Rollo, more aghast than ever. "Was he murdered?"

"Basely murdered," returned the Highlander. "You maun be a great stranger, never to hae heard o' a' this."

"It is not many days since I landed in Scotland from abroad," explained Rollo. "But the murder—"

"Gilderoy, the outlaw of Rannoch—James Macgregor is his name—broke into Dunavaig under cloud o' night, slaughtered the laird, plundered a' he could lay his hands on, set the house in a blaze, and then departed, carrying Lady Annabel Rutherford o' Glenbirkie a prisoner wi' him to Rannoch."

"My God! When—when was all this done?" ejaculated Rollo.

"Four nights since," said the Highlander. "Gilderoy blamed the laird for betraying his brither, but it was a false charge, as I can testify. If you wad witness the last rites," he added, "follow me. Our time is short, and the ceremony cannot be delayed."

"I thank you for an invitation of which I shall most gladly avail myself," said Rollo. "Blackburn, attend to the horses. We have horses," he explained to the Highlander; "we tied them to a tree down yonder, and they may break loose if not looked after."

CHAPTER X.

It's saftlie, saftlie have they layd Lord Archibald in graif,
 And it's dowie, dowie ower his bouk thair plumis and banneris waif;
 And it's lichtlie, lichtlie doe they hap the red erth on his heid;
 And waefil was ilk knichtly fere to luik upon the deid.

Motherwell.

THE retainer, Blackburn, hastened away to undertake the prescribed duty. His master, overwhelmed with emotion, accompanied the Highlander into the interior of the ruin; all the others followed, and Elshender, with a sour and supercilious aspect, was the last that entered. The company gathered again around the bier, and the two labourers resumed their toil.

Rollo drew the Highlander apart. "I have been abroad for some years," said he. "The old laird was my kinsman, though a distant one; and indeed I am his only heir."

The Highlander was not a little astonished. "Your name is Jasper Rollo?" he said.

"The same."

"I have heard about you; and maybe you'll have heard the laird speak o' me. My name is Ranald Vourigh. Macpherson the Sassenachs call it. I was on my way yesterday to visit the laird, when the news o' the disaster met me. I never got sic a sorrowfu' surpris in a' my days. I kent that Gilderoy had been vowing vengeance; but I ne'er dreamt he wad dare to put his threats into execution."

"There were ties of blood between Dunavaig and the Rannoch Macgregors, if I am not in error."

"To be sure; but the villain Gilderoy cares for no ties of kindred when his evil passion gets the mastery o' him," said Ranald; and then musing for a moment, he said, "Your honour has gotten a waefu' hame-coming, and nae doubt you'll think it unco strange that the company here assembled are sae few in number."

"Well, I do remark that," said Rollo.

"It was the ancient custom, as you mayna be ignorant," said the Highlander, "that the barons of Dunavaig—for Dunavaig was a barony before the dignity was lost in the troubles langsyne—should be interred, by torchlight, at the hour o' midnight, in this Kirk o' St. Michael. The fashion passed awa at the Reformation, a hunder year back, because folk ca'd it a remnant o' Popery. But you ken that Highlandmen like to keep up a' auld customs, and especially in regard to the burial o' the dead; therefore, as Gilbert Connal was my auldest friend, and had perished in sic a shameful manner, and as I discovered that the neighbouring gentry, who had aye been on ill terms wi' him for some reason or other, were giving themselves nae fash about his death, I desired that he should be laid in the dust wi' a' the auld honours. Did I richt, your honour, or did I wrang?"

"Most assuredly you did richt," replied Rollo.

"Thank your honour," said Ranald. "But the parish minister, Mr. Simon Gilchrist, would hear of nothing o' the kind being done, declaring that it savoured o' Popery and Prelacy, and that if he countenanced ony sic superstitious mummery it would cost him a rebuke from the Presbytery, and maybe his place a'thegither in the lang run. I wadna be driven from my plan for the feud o' minister or Presbytery. We came to angry words, and fell out. Mr. Simon

stayed awa frae the burial, though it was himsel' that had ordered everything regarding it at first; his ruling elder, Beaton, stayed awa; and their example gart a hantle mair stay awa; so my dozen o' men and me, and thae wee pickle o' the tacksmen and cottars that you see before you, got the hail ceremony to perform. Did I right, I speer at you?"

"Quite right," responded Rollo. "I deeply regret that my kinsman lived on such unfriendly terms with his neighbours. I know he was hard and grasping."

"And aye stirring up fykes aboot his *rights*. But he ne'er was an ill friend to me."

"In the mean time, until we farther advise, let nobody know who I am," said Rollo.

"A prudent resolution," returned Ranald. "And I suppose the ceremony is just to go on as I arranged it? You see, the men are digging doon through a' that rubbish to lay open the mouth o' the burial vault."

"Conduct it all in your own way, my friend," said the cavalier, putting his hand to his forehead. "This dire catastrophe has quite unmanned me. But I shall lower his head into the vault."

The labourers speedily completed their excavation by digging down through the mass of rubbish that heaped the pavement of the church, and laying bare a broad flagstone, to the head of which a couple of large iron rings were attached. With the aid of ropes the flag was raised on end, as though it moved on hinges. Several of the company then proceeded to make ready the coffin for being lifted by the spokes on which it rested on the bier.

"Do you wish a last look o' your kinsman?" whispered the Macpherson in Rollo's ear.

"No—no," answered the cavalier, with faltering tongue.

A damp foetid odour issued from the dark orifice that yawned in the floor. Originally a short flight of steps had given easy access to the vault; but now it was almost entirely fallen away. The two labourers and two Highlanders let themselves down into the sepulchral region below, the arched roof of which was somewhat higher than their heads. A lighted torch and the large unlighted one were handed down to them.

"Let the funeral hymn be chanted," said Macpherson. "Stand forward, Neil Gorm, and take your book. Ne'er let

the terror o' the kirk fash you. Your grandfather was *Reader* o' Dunavaig parish in John Knox's day, and nae man has a better richt than yoursel' to fill that 'sponsible office on this occasion. This company gi'e you commission to exercise it, for Dunavaig shall gang to his last resting-place wi' the funeral hymn chanted ower him in spite o' a' the kirks in Christendom.'

An infirm, white-headed patriarch, clad in hodden grey, with a broad blue bonnet under his arm, a small smoke-dried volume in his hand, and a pair of horn-mounted spectacles on his nose, tottered out from among his companions, and took his stand close to the mouth of the vault. Opening his little book at a dog's ear, he began, in a quavering voice, to chant a long old-fashioned hymn, of which the following stanzas may be taken at a specimen :—

“ Our brother let us lay in grave,
And no doubt thereof let us have,
But he shall rise at doomsday,
And shall immortal live for aye.

He is but earth, and of earth made,
And maun return to earth through deid ;
Shall rise syne frae the earth and ground
When that the last trumpet shall sound.

Ye faithful, therefore, let him sleep,
And not like heathen for him weep ;
But deeply print into your breast
That death to us approaches neist.

End shall our days, short and vain,
And syne, when we cannot refrain,
Ended shall be our pilgrimage,
And brought hame to our heritage.”

No one accompanied him in the chant, but all maintained a death-like silence ; and the thin, weak tones of the *Reader* trembled with peculiarly thrilling influence through the torch-lit ruin, around which the melancholy moan of the midnight wind sounded like the voice of a visitant from the unseen world beyond death and the grave bewailing the woes of man.

On concluding, the old man shut his book, made an obeisance to the auditory, and slunk back to his former place ; but the retainer, Elshender, who stood at his master's back, could not suffer the affair to pass without putting in a whispered protest : “ I lift up my testimony against a form of vain words that has lang been abolished and forbidden by the universal Kirk of Scotland, as likewise against the

daring assumption of an office, to wit, that of Reader, which has had nae place in the kirk for fourscore year back."

It may be stated here that for some time after the Reformation a form of burial service was used by the reformed congregations in several parts of Scotland, but speedily fell into disrepute with the General Assembly, and was abolished. A copy of this service, under the title of "The Forme and Maner of Buriall used in the Kirk of Montrois," or Montrose, has been preserved, and consists of an exhortation to be read by the minister and reader, after the body has been "reverentlye brocht to the graiff, accompany'd with the congregatioun," and a funeral hymn, of which we have quoted four verses. The office of reader did not long survive, having been abolished by the Assembly in 1581. Burial in churches was forbidden over and over again by that ecclesiastical court, whose mandates in this particular did not meet with very general obedience for a long course of years. Burials by torchlight passed under the same anathema. In the year 1579, on the occasion of the funeral of the Earl of Athole, the Assembly hearing a "bruit" that it was to be conducted with "superstitious rites," such as the use of "a white cross on the mortcloth, lang gowns, with stroupes and torches," made diligent inquiry, and finding there was to be no cross, they "grantit the gownes and deny'd the torches."

"Dust to dust, ashes to ashes," exclaimed Ranaid Vourigh. "Play, pipers; rasic the coronach. Waken your strains of lamentation. *Ha til mi tulidh*—We return no more!"

The pipers instantly raised the Highland dirge. The coffin was borne forward and upheld over the dismal chasm, and the company gathered in closely, with uncovered heads. The faded threadbare mortcloth was removed, revealing a small oblong silver plate on the coffin-lid, inscribed with the deceased's name, style, and age; and the black cords of the coffin being unrolled, Rollo put forth a trembling hand and took hold of the one at the head. The spokes were withdrawn, and while the plaintive wail of the coronach filled the gloomy pile, the coffin was slowly lowered into its last repository. When the ropes slackened, they dropped from the hands that held them, and rattled hollowly on the lid. A confused shuffling and trampling beneath succeeded, and then a gruff voice called out that all was done. The four men scrambled up one by one, the last bringing his burning

torch with him. Preparations were now made for replacing the flagstone.

"Stay!" cried Rollo, who observed with surprise that a glare of light issued up through the mouth of the vault. "They have left a torch blazing below."

"Another auld fashion," said Macpherson. "A lighted torch was aye placed near the head o' the coffin o' a Baron o' Dunavaig when he was laid amang his ancestors, and the vault was quickly closed, leaving the torch to burn itself out.* Down with the flag-stane. Nor did I forget the ither auld fashion," added he, in a whisper, "of putting a silver plack in the coffin to win for the dead man a clear passage to the next world. Cover up the flag."

The two sextons shovelled in the earth and rubbish above the flagstone—a work of speedy accomplishment. Every rite had now been duly paid, and the strains of the bagpipes ceased. Ranald Vourigh rewarded the sextons with a handful of silver and copper money from his *sporan*. Two greybeards and a plentiful supply of oaten cakes and cheese were produced, and the company were served with French wine and Highland usquebagh in quaichs. This regalement passed in solemn silence, and then the proceedings came to an end.

The party slowly broke up, and retired in groups from the ruin, leaving all the torches with the sextons, who, still lingering behind, set them up to stand among the rubbish.

Ranald Vourigh and Rollo paused at the porch, and cast a parting look behind them. "Heaven be praised!" said the former, "that we have been able to gi'e Dunavaig the burial o' an auld Scots laird. There will never anither Connal be buried here, either wi' auld fashions or without them."

Rollo had now an opportunity of observing fully and narrowly the appearance of Macpherson. The Highlander was a powerful, strong-limbed, swarthy man, of about the middle height, and certainly past middle age, with a bold, martial air, and two full dark eyes. His black hair, streaked with sober grey, was short, thin, and inclining to curl, and he wore a shaggy moustache and beard, mottled likewise

* An interesting funeral usage has long been observed in the north of Scotland. When the coffin has been lowered to its resting-place, fire is set to a torch placed beside it, and the doors of the vault are hastily closed, not to be opened until another tenant is given to the tomb.—Vide *Deliciae Litrariæ*, p. 46.

with the hue of advancing age. His attire consisted of a buff doublet, strengthened with plates of iron; tartan trews; a tartan plaid; and a flat Lowland bonnet, apparently lined with an iron plate in the crown, and decked with a raven's feather. His arms were a claymore, a dirk, and Doune pistols, and he carried a target at his back. Upon the whole, he presented a good specimen of the Highland leader of the time, whose inherent savagery had been partially smoothed down by continued contact with the more civilized life of the Lowlands.

"Was no attempt made to intercept Gilderoy in his retreat?" said Jasper Rollo. "He was suffered to carry off the plunder and the lady without molestation?"

"It was a' done under cloud o' night," answered Macpherson. "The enormity of the deed dang folk doited. Gilderoy was off into the heart o' the Grampians before half the tenantry were awake. And what did they do when they were awake? The body was carried to the shepherd's cot, being the nearest house, and there they assembled, along with the minister, to tak' counsel about steps for redress. But Beaton, the ruling elder, wad hear o' nae appeal being made to the officers o' a sectarian Government—a Government, by my troth! the best that Scotland has seen for many a long day. Some simple men hearing him rant awa' about breach o' covenant, and comiug judgments for sinfu' compliances, sided wi' him; the neighbour lairds were cauldribe upon the whole matter, and so no steps at all were taken. Ne'er fash your thumb, your honour," he added, as Rollo uttered an indignant exclamation. "I'll take steps. Hear me, sir. I am in the service and pay o' the Government: so are my men. General Monk is my chief."

"General Monk is in Edinburgh," interposed Rollo, "and what may be the fate of the captive lady before he can be able to take action in her behalf?"

"A strong party of the Governor's soldiers, commanded by Colonel Campion, is presently at Spierhaughs Castle, on the borders of Athole," returned Macpherson. "To Athole I'll haste with all speed; and you may rely, sir, that, ere many days pass, there will be wild work in Rannoch."

"I am the party agrived, and it is my duty to accompany you," said Rollo. "I will not look upon the ruined walls of Dunavaig till my kinsman's murder be avenged, and Lady Aunabel set free."

“Vengeance will be swift and sure,” said Ranald. “Come, then, and I’ll get my shields in order, and we’ll march to the clachan o’ Stanebriggs, and make due preparation for the journey.”

They quitted the chapel; but the moment they did so a most ludicrous scene began to be enacted within. The two sextons had not apparently divided the *honorarium* bestowed on them by Ranald Vourigh according to any just principles of arithmetic; for even while Ranald and Jasper were hovering in the porch, they were not entirely unobservant of an altercation arising between the worthies, which, however, was kept within decent bounds, though a rough Gaelic oath occasionally enlivened it, till they went out. As soon as the disputants were left by themselves, heavy blows were super-added to abusive words, and a furious game at fisticuffs ensued over the very burial vault. The torches sticking upright in the rubbish were knocked over and extinguished one after another, involving the ghostly church in its congenial darkness. The darkness enforced a cessation of hostilities, and both combatants set themselves to yelling for light, without anybody thinking proper to pay the slightest attention to them.

CHAPTER XI.

He was of that stubborn crew
Of errant saints, whom all men grant
To be the true Church militant;
Such as do build their faith upon
The holy text of pike and gun.

Hudibras.

ON getting quit of the few tenants and cottars, Macpherson and Rollo, with their respective followers, took their way towards the nearest village, which luckily happened to lie in the direct route to Athole.

“The country folk,” said Macpherson, “have sharper eyes than you might suspect. They kent your honour, or I’m cheated.”

“Did they?” said Rollo. “For myself, I did not know

a single face. I was but once at Dunavaig, and the visit was short, so that I had no means of making the acquaintance of any of the tenantry."

"You might have seen how they started when they saw you go to the head of the coffin. But I dare say the poor state in which you found them, a mere handful, at the laird's funeral, kept them silent for shame."

"When next we meet," said Jasper, sternly, "they shall behold in me the laird's avenger."

"You'll ken the knight of Spierhaughs?" said Ranald. "The laird, honest man, was in great friendship wi' him."

"I met him at Dunavaig during the short visit I spoke of," answered Rollo. "What is the reason that a division of the Lord Protector's troops is quartered at Spierhaughs?"

"To keep down an unruly country," replied Ranald. "Gilderoy's misdeeds will give Colonel Campion the wark he seeks, and gar him flee like fire and tow. He's a stern, fearless mau, the Colonel. He's ane that would march up to the very muzzle o' the *musquet's mither* (as our Highland folk ca' the muckle cannon), though the cannonier were applying his lighted linstock to the touch-hole. And syne to hear him expounding: he'll preach and pray as though he had been born and bred in a pulpit."

"And what is the power of this Gilderoy?"

"No muckle to brag o'," said Ranald, "though he holds his head as high, if not higher, than great Macallanmore himself."

"He seems to have made himself famous."

"Famous? Hoot! a man with a band of armed gillies at his back can soon mak' himself famous," said Ranald. "I might have been famous mysel', but feud arose between me and Gilderoy's father, and he attacked me with all his power, and drove me out of Rannoch. There's nae word of Ranald Vourigh among the famous men of the Highlands, though it was *his* hand that tied the thongs upon Patrick Macgregor's wrist and ankles. Ay, and it will be *my* hand that'll shatter the strength of Gilderoy, and level him with the dust aneath my feet!"

At Rollo's solicitation, the Highlander entered into a minute detail of the circumstances which had come to his knowledge attending to the deadly outrage at Dunavaig. The story was a heart-rending one, and again it caused the measure of Rollo's grief and indignation to overflow.

When they arrived at the clachan, or little country village, the Highlanders procured a requisite supply of provisions for their journey to Athole; but Rollo endeavoured, without effect, to obtain a change of horses, his own being quite exhausted. The three horses were committed to the charge of the keeper of the village change-house, or tavern, who was duly cautioned by Ranald Vourigh as to their safe custody until such time as they should be rightfully reclaimed; and Rollo and his attainers had nothing for it but to commence trudging on foot like their Highland allies—a necessity which went sore against the grain of Elshender's nature.

After a short rest, the party resumed their journey. The day was fine, the heat of the sun being tempered with a brisk breeze. At the very next village Rollo had the satisfaction of hiring three stout horses—a stroke of good fortune which completely restored Elshender's temper. The journey lasted all day, and in the evening the travellers, much overcome with their exertions, approached their destination.

The castle of Spierhaughs was situated in a pleasant strath, which was well cultivated, and watered by a shallow river pursuing a winding course between thinly-wooded banks. Our travellers forded the water opposite to a hamlet, amidst whose scattered cottages the grey spire of an ancient kirk rose above the trees that shaded the adjacent burying-ground, within the grassy bounds of which some sheep and cows were feeding. Farther up the same bank of the stream stood the baronial seat of the lord of the valley—a venerable square tower, which looked as if it had been recently strengthened with additional defences. A spacious lawn spread out in front, dotted here and there with gigantic oaks, and upon this green expanse a good many military tents were pitched in regular order. From a high pole, about the centre of the encampment, floated the flag of the Commonwealth—a broad banner of white silk, charged with the red cross of England, and the word *Emmanuel* in large golden lettering. Red-coated sentries were posted about the open ground, their polished head-pieces and musket-barrels flashing in the sun; and a considerable crowd of unarmed soldiers had collected together on the outskirts of the encampment.

Our party passed through the village, and on reaching the encampment found that the military concourse which had attracted their attention from a distance was in attendance on an evening “exercise” or open-air preaching. A personage

wearing the undress of an officer of rank was mounted on the head of an upturned barrel, and holding forth to his auditory in strong, impressive tones.

"That's Colonel Campion," said Ranald Vourigh. "Just hear him."

The setting sun, almost touching the rim of the distant mountains, shed his slant beams in a resplendent blaze across the fair green strath, with its thickets, its village, its castle, its cultured fields, and its glittering river, and struck full on the elevated figure of the preacher. Shining on his smooth, sleek, black hair, the sunlight gave his bare head the appearance of being encircled with a saintly halo or glory. He was a man in the prime of life, but lank and slender in person, although probably sinewy and vigorous. His countenance was of commanding interest. Of oval form, it was emaciated and pallid—the emaciation and pallor being apparently the results of intense corroding overthought; and his coal-black eyeballs beamed with a lustre which seemed to partake somewhat of the fire of insanity. The whole face had a fascinating basilisk-like influence upon the beholder, awakening strange indescribable feelings that verged on the painful. The man's gesture was vehement, but not altogether ungraceful, although he had the trick of sawing the air, which Hamlet denounces.

The advance of our travellers caused the preacher to make a pause. But, seeing that they halted to listen, he went on again in the following strain:—

"The Apostle tells us—'This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind; having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.' Thus sayeth the Scriptures. And who are the Gentiles in these latter times? Some may say that the Gentiles are those heathen whom the word of truth and the glad tidings of salvation have never reached. But I say unto you, brethren and fellow-soldiers, be not deceived. The word clearly points to those who deem themselves heirs of the kingdom—even the sons of Prelacy and of Presbytery, who have made war with the saints—who have taken unto themselves a name while they have no name—who have professed to serve God, while they are only serving Mammon, and who will be astonished, and put to shame, and covered

with confusion, in that great day when the saints receive the wedding garments clean and white. What part have we in Presbytery? What part have we in Prelacy? To your tents, O Israel! Did not Presbyterian as well as Prelatist fight to the uttermost against the blessed work of reformation and Gospel liberty in these lands, and uphold the tyrannical claims of the young man, Charles Stuart, even when we had cast him out? And who are they that shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel? Even yourselves, brethren and fellow-soldiers, who have come through great tribulation—who have trodden down principalities and powers, and everything that exalted itself—who gave neither sleep to your eyes nor slumber to your eyelids till the reformation work was accomplished. They who were as watchmen in the night, with their loins girded and their lamps burning, ready to go forth to meet the bridegroom; they who, having once put their hands to the plough, never looked back; they who rose up against Baalam and Baal-peor, and threw down Dagon of the Philistines, and dashed in pieces the idols of Askelon and Ashdod, and burned the groves; they who made war with sin and Satan, and the world and the flesh, calling no man brother unless he had received a new name; they who dragged a tyrant to the block, and held up the bleeding head of an anointed king in the open face of the world, and proclaimed, as with a thunder-shout, that the reign of Gospel liberty was begun; they, and they alone, are the chosen people, who shall inherit the glory, and enter into the rest; and ye are of them. Acquit yourselves, therefore, as men. Be strong, be valiant, to the pulling down of strongholds, and the building up of the heavenly Jerusalem, in which the just shall walk by faith. Be steadfast and immoveable. Fear not what man can do—vain man whose breath is in his nostrils. Press towards the mark of the high calling, fighting the good fight of faith. Kings and princes and the mighty ones of the earth shall be as dust before us. And in that glorious millennium which is now dawning upon the world we shall reign a thousand years, and afterwards dwell for ever with the angels!"

"Doonricht blasphemy!" exclaimed the retainer Elshender, quite unable to control the wrath with which the preacher's remarks, particularly his denunciation of the Presbyterians, had filled him.

An indignant outcry broke from the congregation, and

every eye darted furiously towards the daring disturber of the sermon, which hitherto had been received with the most solemn attention. Rollo collared his man and roughly reproved him for his gross indiscretion. Ranald Vourigh looked daggers.

The preacher himself was irritated by the interruption, but speedily recovering his composure, he stretched forth his right hand towards Elshender, and said, calmly: "Friend, when I have finished my discourse I shall be glad to hold communing with thee touching the points of doctrine which thou seemest to impugn with such a show of vain swelling words. Peradventure I may enlighten the darkness of thine understanding; for thou seemest as an heathen man and a publican."

"Gae awa' wi' you, man!" cried the undaunted Elshender; "I'm nae publican, and nane o' my forbears had onything to do wi' a *public*. I was brought up in an honest God-fearing house, which is mair nor maybe you or the like o' you can brag o'; and I dinna scorn a *public* neither; far frae that, for I ken mony decent folk in a *public* line that wad shut up your mouth in a moment upon any scriptural point whatsoever."

A storm of voices arose. "Shoot the malignant!" "Cut him down!" "Thrust his doctrine down his throat with a pike-head!" But fortunately none of the soldiers carried arms.

"Peace, all of ye," shouted the preaching colonel. "We are freemen whom the truth hath made free; and wherefore should we be stirred up to ungodly wrath because of the blindness of the Gentiles? Let us compassionate those who still walk in darkness. This man hath not attained unto the marvellous light which illumines and fructifies our own souls. Need we wonder that he is still groping among the moles and the bats? His revilings can but return upon his own head. If he would but listen patiently to my concluding application, some beam of light may pierce the thick darkness of his mind, and enable him to see with us eye to eye."

This was applauded by a loud but uncommonly surly hum.

"No in sic darkness as you think, colonel," cried Elshender. "I was teached at the parish school to read my Bible, and to say the Single Catechism by heart; and I hae sitten under the ministry o' the purest kirk in a' the world. As for

your sectarianism, you may ca' it a licht; but it's naething but a will-o'-the-wisp that leads daft folk straught on the road to destruction."

"Elsnyder," said Rollo, shaking him by the collar, "this is not the first time your silly tongue has brought us into trouble. I warn you, that if this occurs again you shall wear my livery no longer."

"At your humble service, Mr. Jasper," answered the retainer; "but in matters o' conscience I ken nae master upon earth. Nevertheless," added he, seeing the frown darkening on Jasper's countenance, "what needs I raise din to mysel' by disputing with a sectarian fool that winna be enlightened? Let him follow his errors. I'se cast nae mair pearls before him. Tak' awa' your hand, Mr. Jasper, and you'll no find me in the fault again."

Silence and order being restored, the preacher resumed his discourse, and continued for fully half an hour in the same rhapsodical strain. When the sermon was over, a short hymn was sung and a prayer offered, and the "exercise" concluded. The preacher descended from his cask, and putting on a plumed beaver, made directly through the dispersing assemblage towards our party, as if with the view of bringing Elshender to task. But Ranald Vourigh threw himself in the way, and accosting the colonel, who welcomed him with a cordial shake of the hand, informed him that the most urgent business awaited his attention.

"Then come with me to my tent," said the colonel, instantly assuming a different air from that of the preacher.

He accordingly led the way towards a capacious bell-shaped pavilion, centrally pitched in the encampment, in front of which stood the tall pole bearing the red-cross banner of the Commonwealth. A couple of sentinels guarded the curtained entrance. Rollo dismounted, and followed the colonel and Macpherson into the interior. The rest of the party drew up in order on the open space beyond the flagstaff.

Taking upon himself the office of spokesman, Ranald Vourigh gave a clear and succinct account of the outrage at Dunavaig; and Rollo supplemented the statement by explaining his own relationship to the deceased laird.

Campion heard them both with grave attention; and then he said: "It is a grievous calamity, and hard to be borne. But the arm of Government is not weak; and you shall find that the sword of justice has not been committed to me in

vain. The very purpose of my present expedition is to overawe and quell the turbulence of the Highlands; and now I am resolved to strike such a blow in Rannoch as shall make the name and authority of the Lord Protector respected and feared by all the lawless and disaffected, and cause even the chief of Loehiel himself to tremble in his western wilds."

"The Lady Annabel is known, I believe, to Sir John Spiers," said Rollo; "and doubtless he will feel a deep interest in her misfortunes."

"We must acquaint Sir John forthwith," returned the colonel. "He is in the castle. Attend me, friends."

They left the pavilion and made for the castle, the heavy front of which faced them and filled up the view, suffused by the yellow flush of the western sky, which showed all the rough scars left by time and warlike assault on the massive stronghold. At about a stone's cast, in a direct, line from the arched gateway, and close to the curving pathway which led up to it, stood a withered oak of immense size, one great branch of which stretched out almost horizontally from the trunk. Not a single leaf, not a single bud, gave the aspect of vitality to this naked remnant of an ancient forest. But judge Rollo's surprise to perceive, on closer approach, the corpse of a man in the Highland garb hanging by the neck from the great bough. In the old feudal times every Scottish castle had its "dule tree" before the gate, on which all male criminals condemned to death by the baron court were executed; the females falling under the like sentence being drowned in the nearest pool. And this gigantic oak was the dule tree of Spicerhaughs. The only covering of the dead man's face was his own long shaggy hair, which waved and fluttered as the wind swung the body to and fro. An aged woman, huddled in a tartan plaid, sat crouching at the foot of the tree on a grassy hillock, through which the gnarled roots protruded like ribs of iron. The miserable creature was slowly rocking her body as she sat, and crooning to herself what sounded like a dirge.

"Sir John has been holding his baron court, and exercising his power of pit and gallows," said Macpherson.

"He has," answered the colonel, carelessly. "One of Gilderoy's followers, whom we captured prowling in the neighbourhood, was hung on the tree yesterday; and this fellow, one of Sir John's own vassals, a noted cattle-stealer, or *cattle-lifter* as they say here, who had been imprisoned in

the castle for some time awaiting trial, was sentenced to-day, and served in the same fashion, for the sake of uniformity and impartiality. This old crone seems to be his mother. She came from the hills to petition for his pardon, and has been wandering about the castle these some days."

The sound of their voices caused the old woman to look up. "A prettier lad never trod the heather, or wore the tartan trews," she said, in Gaelic. "The light of his mother's eye, and the hope and pride of his mother's heart. But now they have hung him upon the dule tree. Alas! the flower of Glenfruchie!"

"Why do you sit mourning here, when you know it is all in vain?" said Ranald Vourigh, addressing her in her native tongue.

"Where should I sit but at *his* feet?" she responded. "The hearth-stone is cold; the shieling hut is empty; there is no light step, no manly voice to cheer me at eve and morn. The ravens and the hooded crows would settle on him, were I not here to drive them away. I hear the foul birds croaking on the next trees. Where should I sit but where the brave and only son of the widow hangs upon the blasted oak?"

"He should have left other men's cattle in their folds and byres," said Macpherson.

The old woman shook her head. "Pass on, Gael," she said. "I perceive that you have shaken hands with the Saxon, and stained the honour of Clan Vourigh, whose tartans you wear."

"She's daft, puir body," said Macpherson, relapsing into the Lowland tongue. "Sorrow has turned her brain."

"His dog was with him when he left the shieling-hut," continued the mourner, speaking as if to herself; "but it comes not now to lick my hands and bear me company, though I fed it many a day for his sake. Like all our worldly friends, Oscar forsakes us when the cold night of sorrow settles down with rain and storm. But I shall sit and watch, and look for vengeance. My son's father was slain on the heath, and brought home to my door in the grey of the morning with the fatal dirk in his side, and the seal of death on his brow. My son, my Roderick, was then but a child at the breast, and dabbled his little white hands with the blood that soaked his father's plaid. And now *he* too is taken away, and I am left alone to bear the burden of a weary life!"

Rollo pulled some silver money from his pocket and threw it in her lap. She took the coins in her hand, and examined them one by one with a vacant bewildered stare, and then laughed and burst into tears. "Bless your tender heart, Sassenach," she cried; "and never may the mother that bore you need to sit and mourn as I sit and mourn. What are these silver pieces to me? Though you were to pour into my lap the wealth of the Low country, would it heal my bleeding heart? Take the pieces back."

"Keep the money; it is the free gift of a generous soul, honest woman," said Ranald Vourigh. "Leave her, gentles—and to the castle."

To the castle they went. On entering, Colonel Campion, without calling any of the servants, led the way familiarly to a chamber on the first storey, the door of which he opened without any preliminary knock. Near the open casement of the chamber sat a youthful man, dressed in the extreme of the Lowland fashion, feeding and toying with a goshawk. He started up the moment his privacy was broken. He was of good stature, and somewhat shapely and well-built, with good features and bold laughing blue eyes; but his air was exceedingly pretentious and affected, bespeaking an overweening consciousness of high birth and position. He greeted his visitors with great suavity. "Be seated, Colonel; be seated, you, sir; ah! Ranald Vourigh! Something in the wind when you have swooped so far." Here he placed the hawk upon its perch at the side of the casement, where it immediately commenced pluming its feathers and shaking its silver bells. "By the way, Ranald, strange rumours were heard this afternoon about some foray made by Gilderoy upon Dunavaig. What truth, if any, is there in the story?"

"Too much, Sir John," said Jasper Rollo.

"Ah!—indeed?" cried the knight, staring at the speaker. "Why—I should know *your* face, sir: I have seen it somewhere."

"We meet once at Dunavaig, years ago," said Rollo.

"We did—I remember now—I remember well," cried Sir John. "I never forget a face. Your name is Rollo—Jasper Rollo. You are the laird's only kinsman. Welcome to Spierhaughs, sir!—a thousand times welcome! Would that you had brought the laird with you, man! You should be chid for that neglect." Sir John shook him heartily by

the hand. "But what has happened to our good old friend? The caterans were easily repulsed, I presume?"

"Alas! no," replied Rollo. "They murdered the old man, plundered and burned the house, and dragged away the heiress of Glenbirkie along with them. This man," pointing to Macpherson, "will narrate the sad story more fully than I can; for I but reached Dunavaig in time to lay my poor kinsman's head in the grave."

The knight was struck speechless with astonishment. He sat down and heard Ranald tell the story.

"As I am a Christian man and an officer of the Commonwealth," exclaimed the Roundhead colonel, "I shall visit this fell outrage with the sternest retribution. This horde of barbarians must be smitten hip and thigh, even as the Amalekites were smitten by the hand of Israel in the wilderness."

"What could be Gilderoy's object in seizing the lady?" said Sir John Spiers.

"He looks for a ransom," answered Ranald Vourigh. "What else? But bethink yourselves, gentles; if Gilderoy discovers that cold steel and lead bullets are all the ransom likely to be offered, will the lady's honour and life be safe with him?"

"That," said Rollo, "is the great perplexity. We cannot tell what mad schemes may have entered into the villain's brain, and it would be a melancholy issue if our attempt to rescue the lady had no other effect than to accelerate her fate."

"In that view," said Sir John, "would it not be prudent to open negotiations with him before resorting to extremities?"

"Negotiate with a common robber and murderer?" said the colonel; "that would disgrace my commission. You fear for the lady's life? Well, and what would it avail him to perpetrate a fresh crime? Would we slacken in the pursuit of vengeance?"

"I am somewhat inclined to the colonel's opinion," said Rollo, "so far as regards the improbability of Gilderoy wreaking his wrath upon Lady Annabel, when he finds that the Government has taken up the quarrel. Were we raising a mere private feud—"

"It is not, and never shall be, a private feud," exclaimed the Roundhead, in a vehement tone, as he rose from his chair. "I stand here, bearing the commission of the Lord Protector, and I am actuated by no other motive than the

desire faithfully to perform my duty to my country and to my God. I have been sorely persecuted in my time by the cry of 'private motives,' because I stood forward as one in a thousand and executed righteous justice. They turn round on me with the venom of asps beneath their tongues, and tell me that it all sprung from a private feud, originating in a saucy word and a contumelious blow given me in early youth. But I make my appeal to the Searcher of all hearts; and I declare, before men and angels, that nothing but an overpowering sense of duty impelled me to step forward, when they who sat on the tribunal and pronounced the sentence of doom shrank from the consummation. They fear and hate the courage of the Christian man who put forth his hands to the slaughter weapon—"

But there he stopped. While he was speaking his eyes were cast upwards, gleaming with a grey light, and his countenance wore an awe-inspiring composure; but as soon as he stopped, the grey light vanished from his eyes, a sickly, sneering smile wreathed his lips, and he gazed around, and flung himself into his chair.

Sir John Spiers and Ranald Vourigh glanced at each other. Jasper Rollo, unaccustomed to the mental vagaries of the English Roundheads, began inwardly to doubt the man's sanity.

"The lady's safety should be our chief consideration," said Rollo, "and every means should be tried to effectuate that object. From certain expressions which dropped from Gilderoy at Dunavaig, as I understand, it is probable that he will attempt to purchase his own immunity by the lady's release. In such a case, Campion, there will be but one alternative—namely, to close with the offer."

"I will not throw away a single chance of saving the lady," answered Campion, "though I will not degrade my commission by opening negotiations with Gilderoy. If he sees meet to submit an offer, we shall consider it. In the mean time we must to action. To-morrow I shall march upon Rannoch. Our detachment numbers three hundred men; Sir John will muster some fifty or so of his vassals to join us, and we will get accessions from the friendly clans on our march, so that we shall enter Rannoch in sufficient strength to crush the country into submission."

"I go with you," said Rollo.

"And I," said Sir John Spiers.

“Nor will I be behind when Gilderoy is to be hunted down,” said Macpherson. “At what hour do you march?”

“Noon,” replied the Colonel.

In fact, Campion had eagerly caught at the prospect of active service. The particular duty on which he had been commissioned to the Highlands was to traverse certain districts, with the view of keeping down all disorders; and here he was presented with the best opportunity for effective operations which he could have desired.

A desultory conversation followed touching the conduct of the impending enterprise, after which Sir John entertained the party to supper at his own table, having first issued orders for the muster of a certain number of his vassals at the castle next morning.

It was a late hour when Sir John retired to his sleeping apartment. But he did not immediately go to rest, though he looked flushed and weary. He sat down at a table on which writing materials were lying, and proceeded to write a letter. The letter proved to be a very short one. Sealing it carefully, he called in one of his attendants—a raw slim youth, frightfully scarred with the smallpox.

“Donald Breck,” said Sir John, “you must start to-night with a hasty message to Gilderoy in Rannoch.”

The gillie nodded, and uttered a discordant sound which showed that he was a mute.

“You must deliver this letter into Gilderoy’s own hand,” continued Sir John. “Disguise yourself, set out instantly, and spare not a moment by the way. Life and death depend on your fidelity and speed. When you return, let it be by a different route; and avoid all meeting with the English soldiers.”

With these instructions he delivered the letter to the youth, who concealed it in his bosom, raised his right hand to Heaven, and uttered a guttural screech, as if swearing fidelity, and then glided from the room.

CHAPTER XII.

Athol, Argyle, I hold you bound,
 A price is on M'Gregor's head;
 With unsheathed sword and bloody hound
 Avenge the widow and the dead!
Ballad of "The Raid of Glen Fruin."

JASPER ROLLO lodged in the castle that night. On being shown to his bedchamber, he felt that, despite the fatigues which he had undergone, his agitation of mind was such as precluded the possibility of sleep being speedily courted. He paced through the room, giving free scope to the turmoil of his thoughts; and all the hopes and aspirations of his early days, and the chequered fortunes of his latter career, passed in confused succession through his busy brain.

Born of an ancient but decayed family, the heir of a good name but a paltry fortune, Jasper Rollo had been thrown, at an early period of life, into stern conflict with the stern realities of life. In his boyhood he was deprived by death of a tender and affectionate mother, whose whole soul seemed bound up in her only child; and although the bitterness of this first great grief subsided under the soothing influence of time, the bereavement had made an ineradicable impression upon his heart, and imparted to his whole character a tone of subdued melancholy which nothing could alleviate. His father, a worthy representative of the old Scottish laird, lived on his small estate of Cairnabee, in Lower Perthshire, very much by himself, and seeing little of the world—pecuniary embarrassments, which he had inherited along with the lands, preventing him from mingling in the society befitting his station. The laird was proud, and usually showed a good deal of temper when he fancied that his family pretensions were not fully acknowledged; but he was affable and generous to those about him, and beloved by all his tenantry and dependents. He had no *penchant* for politics, neither understanding nor caring about them. The frugal management of his limited property, the direction of his son's education, an occasional hunting match in summer, a curling bonspiel in winter, and quiet confabulations with

the minister of the parish, were the chief avocations which filled up the routine of his existence. When the commotions of the Covenant broke out, they failed to enlist much of his interest, although, at the same time, he sympathized generally with the cause. He adhibited his name to the Covenant of 1638, but took no part in the strife to which it subsequently gave rise; and about the time when Montrose began his enterprise, the laird became bedridden, and continued more or less so until his death, about 1652, when he was in his sixtieth year, and his son in his twenty-second.

The loss of his father, from whom he had scarcely ever been apart, was a heavy blow to young Rollo. The solitariness and aimlessness of his life came oppressively upon one of his peculiar temperament. The old financial troubles, which had never been surmounted, now annoyed him with double sting. By the advice of friends, he resolved to go abroad for some time and seek military service, as was the custom of many poor Scots gentlemen who, like himself, found it difficult to maintain their proper standing at home. It was at this juncture that he was invited to visit Connal of Dunavaig, a relative of his family, and of whom, indeed, failing direct succession (and Dunavaig was an old confirmed bachelor), he was the nearest and sole heir. A life-long estrangement, originating in some petty quarrel, had existed betwixt Connal and Jasper's father; but soon after the latter's death Dunavaig seemed to have repented of his animosity, and tendered overtures of friendship to the young man, which he thought it prudent to accept in the spirit in which they were offered. Jasper accordingly repaired to Dunavaig House, and was most cordially received, the old man evincing the warmest attachment to him, and assuring him that his purse and everything he possessed were at his disposal. Afraid, however, of laying too much stress upon what might have been a mere whim which would soon pass away, Jasper would not forego his resolution to leave Scotland for a few years.

It was at Dunavaig that Jasper first saw Annabel Rutherford, the heiress of Glenbirkie, who had just then become the laird's ward under her late father's settlement. She was younger than Rollo, but she had suffered bereavements equal to his own, and it was not surprising that a community of feeling almost instantly became established betwixt them. Thrown entirely into each other's society,

their mutual friendship and esteem ripened into love. Jasper's brief sojourn at Dunavaig proved to him a long dream of unalloyed happiness, inspiring him with the hope that eventually his success in the world would entitle him to claim Annabel's hand.

Rollo went abroad—to France—and obtained service among the far-famed Scottish Archers of the Guard. He was rising to considerable distinction when his career was checked. Dunavaig became urgent for his return, and, unwilling to offend the old man and run the risk of losing his good graces, Jasper returned to Scotland. Landing at one of the Fife ports, he engaged a couple of military retainers or jackmen, and set out for Angus, where the reader first met him on his way.

During his absence Lady Annabel had rejected several distinguished suitors. Among the rest was Sir John Spiers, of Spierhaughs, the representative of a Lowland house, which, by a fortunate marriage in the preceding century, had acquired a considerable estate on the borders of Athole. Sir John's character did not rank high. He was vain, impetuous, and crafty, yet with a dash of hollow generosity about him, that tended in many eyes to conceal his faults. He had renewed his suit again and again without success; and latterly, he had given the lady reason to suspect that he meditated some more effectual but nefarious means of insuring his aim. She hesitated to communicate her suspicions to her guardian; but they were far from being unfounded. We may mention that Sir John Spiers had endeavoured to induce the two brothers of Rannoch (whom he sometimes secretly employed in his interest) to abduct the lady and place her in his power, that he might then attempt to force her into marriage with him. But the brothers demurred, principally on the score of her guardian's kinship to them. Patrick's betrayal and execution, however, seemed to remove this obstacle. No one was more assiduous than Sir John Spiers in pouring into Gilderoy's ear the guilty falsehood that Dunavaig was the betrayer of his brother; and it was partly owing to Sir John's base assertions and taunts that Gilderoy credited the tale, and resolved to avenge himself.

The castle clock was striking some of the short hours "ayont the twal" when Rollo sought his couch. His thoughts had now calmed themselves down, and he quietly

dropped into deep dreamless slumber, of which his exhausted frame was in so much need.

The brazen sound of trumpets awoke him, and he found the morning advanced. He arose and dressed himself, and then looked out at the casement, which, being to the back of the castle, commanded a delightful prospect of the upper strath, where the blue mountains closed in on the winding bed of the river. Elshender now made his appearance.

"It's past eight upon the clock, Mr. Jasper," said the retainer. "I might hae waukened you sooner; but you're nane the waur o' a gude sound sleep. A' body's making ready for the march. Four score o' the Spierhaughs men are mustered already; fifty to gang wi' their lord, and thirty to keep the castle when he's awa."

"A beautiful morning," said Rollo, pointing to the sunny scene without.

"We'll hae a braw day," replied Elshender. "There's a wee skiffing o' mist aboot the hills; but the sun and wind will soon dispel it; and the sky is fu' o' snaw-white clouds. This is a bonnie country side; but I'm wae to think it's inhabited by a wild people that ken nathing o' the word and power o' grace."

Jasper followed his servant downstairs to the hall, where he found Sir John Spiers, Colonel Campion, several of the subordinate officers, and Ranald Vourigh. He was kindly greeted by all. Breakfast was served in sumptuous style. During the meal, Spierhaughs was moody and absent-minded; the Colonel talkative without any fanatical escapades; and Macpherson exceedingly elated. Ranald said that he had "a long account to settle with Gilderoy, and he would now clear all scores once and for ever. It was years since he was harried out of Rannoch; but he found the reek of his burnt house still sharp in his nostrils; and he knew he was destined to lay the head of Gilderoy as low on the heather as he had laid his brother's." The officers were also in high spirits about the expedition, and, to Rollo's wonder, some of them expressed their confidence of good fortune from a certain obscure and Delphic-like prediction put forth in the "Astrological Almanack" of the celebrated William Lilly, for that year—a work which (notwithstanding their severe Puritanical profession) appeared by no means scarce among the detachment.

Noon came, and the Roundhead troops along with their

auxiliaries were drawn up on the lawn. The encampment had already been struck, and the tents conveyed to the out-houses of the castle, where the other luggage was deposited. The Roundheads had a most gallant bearing. They were arrayed in scarlet coats, with back and breast plates, and morions or head-pieces. One portion were armed with muskets, and consequently wore bandoliers containing charges for their pieces; and another with pikes, sixteen feet in length; but every man had a heavy cut-and-thrust blade, and was burdened with provisions for more than one day. The Commonwealth banner had been taken down from the tall pole and attached to a common portable staff; and an ensign at the head of the line was now shaking out its broad folds to the gale.

There was a short "service" of prayer and praise, conducted by Colonel Campion, and then the trumpets blew, and the expeditionary troops commenced their march—the Colonel and Sir John Spiers riding side by side in the van. Rollo, with his two retainers and Ranald Vourigh, waited a little to see the martial array defile past them, after which they followed in the wake. Crossing the lawn, near to the dule trec, they found it still bearing its hideous burden, and the widow still crouching on the root; for all through the weary night-watches, and up to that good hour, had she kept her post, to scare away the raven and the hooded crow from their coveted prey. She seemed watching with interest the departure of the troops. When she perceived, Rollo she smiled wanly in recognition of him, and waved her hand in token of farewell.

"The Highlands will tell a sorrowful tale ere yonder lads come back," said Ranald Vourigh, addressing her in the Gaelic.

"They will," she answered. "Many a mother will be childless, and many a happy wife will be a despairing widow, and many a fair girl will be bereft of her chosen lover, ere yonder evil banner wave on this green again. But I'll watch—I'll watch."

A maid-servant of the castle now came up to the tree, carrying some barley bannocks and a cog of milk, which she laid on the grass at the old woman's feet, and then she whispered something in her ear which caused her to utter a shrill shriek, and start from the ground with her arms upraised, as though in the extremity of despair.

"What did you say, lassie?" demanded Ranald Vourigh, in Scotch.

"That the lads are coming to take down the corpse and bury it," answered the girl in Gaelic; and away she ran.

An aged serving-man and two rustics, carrying spades on their shoulders, now approached—the old woman fixing her eyes on them with an infuriate expression; and there seemed every likelihood that she was determined to resist all interference with the body of her dead son. The serving-man directed the rustics to proceed to a thicket by the river side, and there dig a grave.

"We maun bury your lad, gudewife," said he.

The widow did not understand a single word of what he said; but she guessed pretty accurately what he meant. "Why should my son's body rest here, and not beside his father, miles away, in our own glen?" she said, fiercely. "He cannot rest in the shadow of that evil castle where they doomed him to death."

"Speak to the auld creature, Ranald Vourigh, in her ain tongue, and put her aff her daft thocht," said the servitor. "She's feckless, Ranald. Speak to her, and get her pacified; for she has nae means to tak' awa' the body to her ain glen."

Macpherson spoke to her; but though she listened patiently to his expostulation, she looked as obdurate as ever.

An elderly man, clad in black, mounted on a Highland pony, now trotted towards the group, and hailing Rollo in an eager voice, hastened to his side.

"Mr. Gilchrist!" exclaimed Rollo. "You have come in the very nick of time, if you sought to see me; for I accompany the expedition to Rannoch."

They shook hands; but there was a certain reserve on the

"How did you come to know that I was present at the funeral?" inquired Rollo.

"Some of the folk knew you, but said nothing, because they saw you wanted to keep your ain secret," replied Mr. Gilchrist. "As soon as they told me you were there, and that you marched off to Spierhaughs, I determined to follow you. And I'll go with you to Rannoch likewise, for I may help to persuade Gilderoy to give up the lady without bloodshed."

"I shall be glad of your company," said Rollo.

"I'm anxious to do a' I can to further your interests, Mr. Jasper," said the Minister, "though Ranald Vourigh's high-handed ongoings kept me back from showing due respect to the memory of the auld laird. But I couldna countenance Popish practices."

"I saw no Popish practices at the funeral," said Rollo. "There was a sort of service used, a portion of what once was common in the Church of Scotland. However, as it is all over, I do not reproach you, and I trust you and Ranald Vourigh will forget the unseemly squabble and make up your old friendship again. Ranald, come hither, man, and shake hands with the minister."

Ranald went thither, but his greeting to the Minister was exceedingly dry, and after exchanging a few words he fell back into the rear.

The Minister then began to speak of the particulars of Gilderoy's outrage at Dunavaig; and mentioned, with much satisfaction, that a considerable portion of the money and valuables in the mansion had escaped the hurried search of the plunderers, and was now removed for security to the manse, where it lay at Mr. Jasper's disposal.

As soon as our friends overtook the troops, Rollo introduced the minister to Colonel Campion. The latter seemed well pleased at the accession of such an auxiliary, who, from his familiar acquaintance with Gilderoy, might be of much service in promoting what was the chief object of the expedition; namely, the release of the captive heiress.

CHAPTER XIII.

Though some of you, with Pilate, wash your hands,
 Showing an outward pity; yet you Pilates
 Have here deliver'd me to my sour cross,
 And water cannot wash away your sin.

King Richard II.

THE march continued. The scenery along the route was wild, and continually changing in its romantic characteristics. The Roundheads occasionally relieved their tedium by the singing of psalms and spiritual songs, which was accompanied by trumpets and drums. After a long day's journey, the troops halted to bivouac for the night under the friendly shade of a wood. They saw the setting sun redden the brows of a distant range of mountains which overlooked the Macgregors' country, where they would find every man able to wield a sword or draw a bow their resolute foe.

The soldiers had their evening "exercise" after the usual fashion. Colonel Campion delivered a sermon specially adapted to the circumstances of his men, whom he compared to the host of Israel passing up through the wilderness to destroy the heathen of the land of promise—to the sons of Jacob descending upon Shechem, each man with his sword in his hand, to avenge the wrongs of their sister Dinah—to Abram and his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, pursuing unto Dan the kings who had taken Lot, Abram's brother's son (who dwelt in Sodom), and his goods. Mr. Gilchrist absented himself on principle from the service, and Rollo forbade the attendance of his retainer, Elshender. When all was over, the men retired to their bivouacs, and sentries were posted.

The Colonel, Jasper Rollo, and Mr. Gilchrist took their evening repast with Sir John Spiers, who had brought various delicacies and some rich wine from the castle in his baggage; for, among his good qualities, the love of good living was rather prominent.

Abstemious by habit and principle, Campion indulged himself very sparingly in the wine-cup; but Spierbaughs, who had been moody and taciturn during the march, drank to

excess, and became exceedingly hilarious—draining goblet after goblet to favourite healths, not forgetting those of Lady Annabel and Jasper Rollo, and hurling forth the most hectoring denunciations against Gilderoy and all his tribe. More than once, Mr. Gilchrist, somewhat scandalized by the knight's intemperate vehemence, made bold to reprove him in an indirect way, but with little effect.

"The parting-cup at a Highland banquet," cried Sir John, "must needs be of the strong waters or usquebagh, for which the Highlands of Scotland are becoming famous:" and he filled a silver goblet with the clear sparkling liquor which so well merited the flattering appellation of *mountain dew*, savouring of the peat-reek and the heather-bell. "Our Senachies may talk of the virtues of the beverage of the Picts, the secret of which is lost, but, sure am I, it never could have matched with the pure usquebagh."

"What sort of beverage had those blue-painted Picts?" inquired the Roundhead.

"It was brewed from heather, and called heather-ale, possessing unrivalled potency," said Sir John. "But, as I told you, the secret of its preparation is lost, and has been so for many long centuries. When King Kenneth McAlpin (one of the fabled progenitors of the Macgregors) overthrew the Pictish dominion and massacred the nation, only two of the Pictish race—a father and his son—remained alive as prisoners, and they were said to possess the secret of the heather-ale. Kenneth called them before them, and demanded to be informed of the preparation. 'Slay, my son,' said the father, 'and I will disclose the mystery.' His son was slain before his eyes. 'Now,' cried the old man, 'you may lay me beside him; for I alone am possessed of the knowledge which you seek, and it shall never, never pass my lips!' They struck him dead beside his son; and so the secret of the heather-ale perished with the last of the Picts. Drink, guests! honour the Highland cup!"

The Highland cup was duly honoured, and then the party separated.

Rollo lay down, with his mantle about him, among some thick underwood, and disposed himself to rest; but his slumbers were brief and unrefreshing. About an hour after daybreak he left his grassy couch, and wandering through the mazes of the wood was surprised to find Champion standing alone in a little lonely glade, with his back against a tree,

and his looks bent to the ground. However deep had been the Colonel's abstraction, his quick ear caught the approaching footfall, and he glanced round and observed Jasper.

"Ha, Rollo!" cried he. "You have spent as wakeful a night as myself."

"I slept but little," said Jasper; "repose was denied me."

"Sleep utterly fled mine eyelids," said the Roundhead. "For the last hour I have been musing in this quiet solitary place, musing on the scenes and events of past times, that start unbidden into our recollection during the solemn night-watches. I have been musing on the joys and the sorrows of 'langsyne,' as you Scots term it. Langsyne! What a depth of tenderness in that simple, homely, old-fashioned word! I was thinking,—not without regret, perchance, that the former days were passed away for ever—of the happiness, pure and sweet as a spring in the desert, which it pleases the Great Disposer of events to bestow upon our early years."

"A fitting theme for a nocturnal reverie," said Rollo.

"How light the heart, how buoyant the step, how sweet the slumbers, how gladsome the awakening of the boy, when the morning sunlight flashes in upon his little pallet, whether that pallet be spread in a princely palace or a peasant cot!" said Campion. "I once knew such a time, though my lot was humble and my name obscure. Oh! those blissful years of innocence and peace, when the song of the lark, fluttering high above the breezy meadows of spring, inspired me with deeper rapture than ever I have felt when the hoarse blast of the war-trumpet pealed the note of victory over a field heaped with the dying and the dead. And such a change has come! Had any man declared, or a voice from heaven revealed, that I was to mingle in scenes of strife and death—that I was set apart, by infinite decree, as the chosen instrument to pull down tyrants, and to set my foot, in the triumph of disdain, upon kingly thrones—that this arm of mine was to strike a blow at which my brethren in the cause should stand aghast—that my name should be remembered to latest ages as the name of one who executed a deed of justice such as the world had never before seen, I would have counted the prophecy a falsehood, and the revelation a snare of the devil!"

"'Tis well that we are ignorant of our destinies," responded Rollo; "for, were the future faithfully revealed to us, we

would be tempted to dash down the mingled cup of life, and seek a refuge in the quiet grave. I have borne my own share of this world's troubles, and when I look back, I behold the path of my life strewed with dead hopes like the withered leaves of autumn."

"I was lowly-born," said the soldier; "I was lowly bred. Early was my lot cast among strangers. I cherished no high hopes. I plodded on my way, in humble obscurity, caring for none of those things with the full possession of which so many of our fellow-mortals are cursed instead of blessed. How hard is it to say whether what we call a worldly blessing be a blessing indeed! How impious to revile Providence for denying to our prayers what would prove to us the most fatal curses!"

"True!—most true!" said Rollo. "And how well was it said by Seneca of old—'Our very prayers are more pernicious than the curses of our enemies; and we must pray again to have our former prayers forgiven. Where is the wise man that wishes to himself the wishes of his mother, his nurse, or his tutor—the worst of enemies, with the intention of the best of friends? We are undone if our prayers be heard; and it is our duty to pray that they may not, for they are no other than well-meaning execrations. They take evil for good, and one wish fights with another. Give me rather the contempt of all those things whereof they wish me the greatest plenty.' Again, Juvenal in his tenth satire, according to the learned translation by Sir Robert Stapylton, speaks thus:—

"To few men good and ill unmasked appear,
For what with reason do we hope or fear?
What hast thou by thy happiest project gained,
But thou repent'st thy pains and wish obtained?
Whose houses, th' easy gods have overthrown,
Granting their prayers that did those houses own."

"It is better said," returned the Colonel, "by an English poet, Francis Quarles, in his Book of Emblems—

"O, what a crocodilian world is this,
Composed of treach'ries and ensnaring wiles!
She clothes destruction in a formal kiss,
And lodges death in her deceitful smiles;
She hugs the soul she hates; and there does prove
The veriest tyrant where she vows to love,
And is a serpent most when most she seems a dove.

"Thrice happy he, whose nobler thoughts despise
To make an object of so easy gains

Thrice happy he, who seems so poor a prize
Should be the crown of his heroic pains.'

I set my heart upon the attainment of no earthly baubles. I yearned not for wealth, power, or distinction. What has the immortal spirit within us to do with dust, and dross, and ashes? No wonder that presumptuous man's path is strewed with dead hopes! I sought pardon and grace. Will these things be denied? Did heaven ever shut its ears to the imploring cry of the earnest soul? I sought that I might be clothed with the wedding-garment. *That* was the highest flight of my ambition."

"And it was gratified?" said Rollo.

"Gratified to the full," said Campion, proudly. "I coveted no worldly distinctions; yea, I despised and spurned them—and lo! as soon as I was clothed with the wedding-garment, I was chosen to stand before kings and the mighty ones of the earth. When I drew my sword I clove my way up to such a height as would make most men giddy. This right hand was predestined to execute a work with which the ears of the world shall tingle, and which will be remembered until time shall be no more and the heavens pass away as a scroll. Moreover, there is another work which this hand shall yet perform. But the eyes of this generation are still darkened, so that they discern not the signs of the times. 'Judah stoopeth down, he coucheth as a lion, and as an old lion: who shall rouse him up?'"

"I presume you served with the Lord Protector throughout our late unhappy wars?" said Rollo.

"We contended side by side in the same good cause," replied the Roundhead. "But even Cromwell's hand, terrible and resistless as a hammer dashing the rock in pieces, could not have perfected the good work without aid from mine. And because I urged him on, because I helped to clear the way for him, I am hated and dreaded by those whom my bold, honest hand served and elevated. They fear, craven ingrates as they are, that I may seek to rouse up the lion of the tribe of Judah. Moreover, I am become the mark of all the fiery darts of Apollyon and his hosts. Who can contend with foes impalpable and insidious as the air we breathe? They steal into my bosom, pouring their poison into my very soul, and sometimes prevailing so far—in those moments when the frail Adam sinks in the mire of despondency, and perceives not that he is surrounded by protecting

chariots of fire and horses of fire, like Elisha of old—that I have been ready, like ungodly Saul, to call to mine armour-bearer to pierce me through, or to fall upon my own sword.”

“Nay, indeed, Colonel,” ejaculated Rollo; “these are the hallucinations of a morbid fancy.”

The eyes of the Roundhead, flashing forth a grey ghastly light, darted on Rollo an indignant glare. “You speak in ignorance and disbelief, young man,” he said, sternly; “but I tell you these things are so. Better than an hour ago, as I lay courting sleep, the voice of the Tempter came to my drowsy ear. I knew the hissing whisper; and, had I given heed to his glozing words, he would have whispered away my soul! He spake of the hopelessness and misery of life, and sneeringly asked me was it a sign of saving grace that I should live the torment of myself and the hatred and terror of others? The foul crawling serpent! In wild confusion of spirits, I sprang from the ground, and there, beneath the dim night-sky, in the deep stillness, I felt the breath of the fiend blowing upon my cheek like the blast from a furnace! And there passed before my face a tall, grim shadow, the horror of which caused the hair of my flesh to stand up; but raising mine eyes to the seat of all holiness, I beheld a brilliant planet shining down like the eye of God that ever watches the world, and a prayer came to my lips; the shadow vanished away, and then I knew that I had vanquished the demon.”

“Is it often thus with you?” inquired Rollo.

“Often!” echoed the Colonel. “Know you not that Lucifer goeth about continually as a roaring lion? A constant dropping weareth away stone, and he flattereth himself that, like the importunate widow of old, he will at last weary me into compliance with his will.”

The Roundhead drew his hand slowly across his eyes, as if to remove some film, and then heaving a profound sigh, he staggered forward, and fell prone on the grass. Rollo flew to his assistance, and raising his head, found his countenance apparently stamped with the impress of death!

The bivouac was instantly alarmed, and there was great confusion. It was supposed at first that the Colonel had expired; but this was not the case; he still breathed, though his limbs were rigid, his eyes shut, and his cheeks cold and clammy.

The march to Rannoch was thus checked.

CHAPTER XIV

But had you seen the philabegs,
 And skyrin tartan trews, man,
 When in the teeth they dared our Whigs,
 And Covenant true-blues man.

Burns.

IT was the third day before Colonel Campion regained consciousness, and even then he was so exceedingly debilitated that he could scarce utter a word or lift a hand. The regimental surgeons were puzzled how to deal with him. Other two days passed, and his recovery was so rapid that on the sixth he was convalescent, to the great relief and joy of his men. The nature of the singular malady by which he had been so suddenly prostrated in the midst of good health no one could tell, but it was his own firm opinion that he had been demon-struck, and he seemed to take some little pride in assuming such to be the fact.

The march, meanwhile, had been entirely suspended, but on the sixth day it was resumed.

Six days had thus been gained to Gilderoy, affording him ample time to muster and marshal his strength, should he have determined on open resistance.

Colonel Campion led his troops towards "the Macgregors' country," obtaining, as he advanced, considerable reinforcements of friendly Highlanders, who cheerfully responded to his summons. The march was rather slow, owing to the loss of time necessarily occasioned by the raising of the new levies; but about noon on the second day after its resumption the troops, with a blazing sun above their heads, approached a pass that led direct to the enemy's fastnesses.

It was now known that Gilderoy had collected a force around him, consisting of his own adherents and all the "broken men" of the district, with the design of giving battle in some one of the difficult mountain ravines through which the invaders must attempt to force their way; so, as the troops approached this pass, a party of Highlanders were sent forward to explore its deep recesses. This party returned with the satisfactory intelligence that not the trace of an enemy could be found.

The mouth of this path was wide, but very rugged and gloomy, presenting a region over which the wolf, the wild-cat, and the eagle held hereditary sway. The troops advanced in good order; a strong body of Highlanders forming the vanguard, the Government soldiers the centre, and the rest of the auxiliaries the rear. Colonel Campion, accompanied by Sir John Spiers, Jasper Rollo, Ranald Vourigh, and the Rev. Mr. Gilchrist, marched at the head of his own troops.

For some time everything seemed to confirm the report of the exploring party; but unexpectedly the troops were brought to a stand when they neared a part of the pass where it suddenly contracted, while the heights on both sides shelved down with greater steepness than before, and though but sparsely dotted with trees, were well covered with long heather and tangled brushwood.

"By my troth!" exclaimed one of the foremost Highlanders, pointing onward with his broadsword, "I see the glitter of a spear-head up yonder among the broom-bushes above the white crag."

He had barely pronounced these words, when—as if a concealed enemy, exasperated at being discovered, sought to snatch the advantage promised by the old superstition that

"Which spills the foremost foe-man's life,
That party conquers in the strife—"

an arrow, shot from no weak bow somewhere in the vicinity of the very spot to which he was still pointing, struck through the bonnet of one of his comrades. This drew forth an angry shout from the band, and an immediate halt was made. It was abundantly obvious that the previous inspection of the glen had been performed in the most perfunctory manner. Colonel Campion and his friends hurried to the front—Mr. Gilchrist as eagerly as any of them.

"Gilderoy has ta'en his post wi' great skill," said Ranald Vourigh. "If you be to reconnoitre, Colonel, just let me hold this target of mine over your head; for it's no disparagement to a brave man to defend himself against hidden foes. Ah! see! Yonder's a spear now, and a Lochaber axe,

* It is curious to notice that Mariner in his account of the natives of the Tonga Islands mentions a similar superstition as prevalent among the islanders. "Killing these three men, in the first attempt upon the enemy, was by no means to be considered a trifling advantage; for it was supposed to augur the protection of the gods, and great future success." See 3rd edition, vol. i p. 159.

on the right-hand side—ay, and a banner too. Gilderoy stands on his defence in brave style. There's Clan Alpine's pine-tree waving to the sun. Aweel, Colonel, you brawly ken how to deal with armed rebels. 'E'en do and spare not.' Spare not, I say."

While he was speaking, there had arisen from among the bushes on the right side of the pass a spear, and a pole-axe, and a banner—the latter, as the light breeze slowly unrolled it, displaying the well-known cognizance of the Macgregors—a pine-tree torn up by the roots. Voices began to call and answer each other from the heights on both sides, and at length there burst forth the strong notes of a bagpipe.

"Hear you that pibroch?" cried Ranald. "It's the *Cruinneachadh*, or Gathering of Clan Gregor—the *Ruaig Ghlinn Bhruin*, commemorating the defeat of the Colquhouns in fatal Glenfruin."

As if in obedience to the summons of the war-pipe, which proclaimed defiance to the foe, spears, axes, muskets, and broadswords bristled up thickly on the steep sides of the narrow part of the pass, and now and then bonneted and helmeted heads started up suddenly into view above the bushes, and as suddenly sank and disappeared.

The Colonel was very wroth about the misleading report which had been brought him by the exploring party; but his courage and skill were fully equal to the emergency. "This is a well-laid ambuscade," he said. "The glen is manned by the enemy, and they have left the path open and free that we may walk leisurely into the snare. But we are strong enough to force our way, and scatter these lurking knaves. It would be impossible, I dare say, to draw them by stratagem from their vantage-ground?"

Ranald Vourigh shook his head, answering: "They ken their advantage and there they'll remain, as immovable as the rocks around them."

"The heights," said the Colonel, examining the enemy's position through a small pocket-glass—"the heights are not precipitous, and may easily be scaled. Our Highlanders are well accustomed to such modes of warfare."

"Should not some endeavour be made to bring the men to reason?" interposed the Minister. "Send forward a trumpeter, Colonel, wi' a flag o' truce, offering accommodation, to prevent the effusion o' bluid."

The Colonel mused. "They are openly defying the

authority of the Commonwealth and the Lord Protector," he said, "and accommodation, I am greatly afraid, is quite out of the question. Nevertheless, in the interest of the captive lady, and to satisfy tender or scrupulous consciences, I will despatch a trumpeter offering to treat, in good faith, with Gilderoy, for his being received into the Lord Protector's peace, upon his complying with the following demands:—first, the lady's release; second, the surrender of the actual murderers of Dunavaig; third, the restoration of all the plunder carried away; and——"

"Leave out the plunder," interrupted Rollo. "Raise no unnecessary obstacle to a pacification."

"As you will," responded Campion. "Third and lastly, then, the immediate dispersal of the men now in arms before us. Will any man deny the fairness of these terms?"

"No man can question their fairness," replied the Minister. "I trust they will be accepted."

"They will be scouted," said the Colonel, with a stern smile. "Here, call me Ensign Trumbull and a trumpeter."

A boyish-looking trumpeter came to the front, followed by an elderly ensign, who, from his dark and grim aspect, seemed to have fed on gunpowder all his days. The Colonel deliberately repeated the message which was to be borne to the rebels.

"I pray you, Colonel," said the Minister, "suffer me to gang forward too."

"That would be against all rule and usage, sir, in such a case as this," returned Campion.

"Maybe," persisted the Minister, "maybe; but if James Macgregor be yonder himsel', and comes down to give an answer, I think *my* word will have some weight wi' him in bringing about a peaceable arrangement. Dinna forbid me, Colonel."

"I forbid you not," said the Colonel. "You may go, with my best wishes for your success. But I am persuaded that the hearts of these savages will be hardened to reject our terms, in order that the sword of just vengeance may be let loose against them."

"I'll go wi' the Minister," said Rarald Vourigh, as a thought struck him. "Gilderoy never saw my face, and as I never saw his, I would like to get a gude look o' the villain, that I may ken him again should we meet in battle. Sec, I hae borrowed a different clansman's plaid to disguise me."

The Colonel consented, but with manifest reluctance.

A white handkerchief was affixed to the end of a pike to serve as a flag of truce, and this extempore flag being committed to the hand of Ensign Trumbull, he, attended by the trumpeter, and supported by Mr. Gilchrist and Ranald Vourigh, advanced steadily and fearlessly up the glen towards the verge of the enemy's position, which lay at about the distance of a good bowshot.

"Minister," said Ranald Vourigh, with a careless laugh, as he drew his plaid across the lower part of his face to prevent recognition by any of the foemen who might have known him previously, "the Macgregors are a clan that you canna ride waters on. I've seen as much as that we'll hae a shower of bullets and arrows amang us before we win the length o' yon auld birk-tree."

"Our lives are in a high hand," answered the Minister; "and we—that is, the ensign and mysel—are on an errand o' peace and mercy. But you are cherishing evil passion and the thirst o' bluidshed in your bosom; and were it not that I dreaded that the Colonel would have forbidden anybody going forward but the ensign, had I raised scruples on your account, I would have protested against your company on this perilous mission; for what blessing can attend a man that so lately set himself to countenance the abomination of Popish ceremony?"

Macpherson, nettled by such a speech, was beginning a saucy retort, when the ensign sternly imposed silence. The party went on; and now a strong voice called out, in very good English, from the right side of the pass, commanding them to halt. They at once obeyed, drawing up almost in the middle of the road. The officer waved his flag of truce, and the trumpeter blew a loud clear parley.

The echoes of the trumpet-blast were but dying away in the upper recesses of the defile when the figure of an armed man arose from the broom-bushes a little below where the banner was waving, and came slowly down the height. When he had almost reached the bottom, another man started up and accompanied him, and after a few more steps he was joined by a third. Many plumed bonnets, iron morions, and bare shaggy heads now appeared among the underwood and heather on both sides, and under the bright sunshine the heights glittered with arms.

"That's James Macgregor foremost—that's Gilderoy

himself," said the Minister, in a low voice. "The second is a Lowlander, named Hackston; and the third is Evan Glas Maekinnon, the foster-brother of Gilderoy."

Attended closely by his two faithful adherents, Gilderoy approached the little party. He was accoutred with an ancient mail-coat and a steel head-piece, with a gauntlet on his left hand, and carried a broadsword at his side, a target at his back, and a dirk and pair of Doune pistols in his buff belt. The only distinguishing marks of a Highlander about him were his tartan trows and brogues. His long red hair flowed gracefully on his shoulders, and his look was high and commanding, with a consciousness of power in his clear steady glance.

"How now," he cried, as he came up. "What message do you bring? You, Mr. Simon? What! have *you* turned Roundhead when the Gregalich are to be oppressed? Ah, shame!" he added, glancing at Macpherson, "shame that I should behold the tartan in such a service!"

The boyish trumpeter, exerting the utmost power of his lungs, blew an ear-splitting blast, and then Ensign Trumbull delivered his summons, embellishing it with such epithets as he deemed peculiarly applicable to Gilderoy, such as "robber, outlaw, traitor, murderer," &c.

Gilderoy heard him calmly to an end, and then gave his answer with equal calmness. "I have no desire to waste time in bandying spiteful words. I utterly disown and despise the authority of the usurper and regicide, Cromwell, and all to whom he has delegated it. Return to your captain, and tell him that I am here to defend myself. Let him do his worst. I spurn his offers. Such is my answer."

"It shall be reported, Macgregor," said the ensign formally, but with a fierce twist of his moustache.

"James, James, you are rushing upon your certain destruction," ejaculated Mr. Gilchrist, apparently in great trouble of mind. "Winna you offer to make some amends? Winna ye restore the lady to her friends? Is she living?—is she well?"

"She is living, and she is well," answered Gilderoy. "But hark you, Mr. Simon, I will not warrant her safety should these Sassenach dogs attack us. Bear *that* in mind."

"Touching the unworthy term by which you are pleased to designate the officers and men of General Monk's forces," said Ensign Trumbull, "I make bold to pass my word that

you and your Highland savages will find anon that we have sharp enough fangs to bite and throttle. Bear *that* in mind. And more—if so much as a single hair of the lady's head falls to the ground wrongfully, fire and sword and pitiless destruction shall be let loose over the length and breadth of your country, till none but the dead be left to bury the dead!"

"Nobly spoken!" exclaimed Ranald Vourigh, in whose fierce and vindictive breast the presence of his foe was fast fanning the flames of wrath.

"Be it as nobly done!" cried Gilderoy, with a laugh of scorn, and then a furious scowl darkening his brow, he added: "Prove yourselves the fellest bloodhounds that ever lapped the blood of the brave!"

"It *shall* be done! Heaven's vengeance and mine cannot be averted!" burst forth the Maepherson, dropping the fold of his plaid from the lower part of his face. "This day shall ever be blackest in the annals of Clan Alpine. Your dastard deeds, and those of your father, shall now meet their reward. Your claymores shall be scattered like thistle-down before the blast. Look upon me, Gilderoy!—look upon me! I once was the victim of your father's relentless hatred. I once was driven from my home and my country, in misery and despair. But patiently have I waited for my fortunate hour, because I knew that such an hour was marked on the dial of fate; and now my hour is come. Look upon me! I am Ranald Vourigh, and this is my day of vengeance—the day of which I warned your father, when his gillies fired the roof above my head, and my only child—the motherless infant—perished in the flames. Since the black hour in which I was driven from Rannoch, the fortunes of your clan have ever been crossed: your very land has lain under the evil burden of the *eirthear*:* and now angry heaven hurries you to your doom!"

"False villain!" faltered Macgregor; "I dreamt not how foul a miscreant that plaid of a Campbell concealed. Spy, traitor, outcast! was not thy fell revenge slockened with the blood of my brother, the price of whose head was paid into thy mercenary hands?"

"The price of thine own head shall follow!" cried Macpherson, dashing his clenched right hand into the open palm

* The curse which, according to Highland superstition, attaches to land from which a tenant has been violently evicted.

of his left, and then imitating the telling out of money. "There's a thousand merks upon it, and the prize shall be mine."

"Did not that white rag protect you," cried Gilderoy, grasping the hilt of his blade, and pointing to the flag of truce in Ensign Trumbull's hand, "you should never quit this spot alive!"

"I disclaim all the protection of that flag!" shouted Ranald, half-unsheathing his own weapon.

"Stop them, officer!" implored Mr. Gilchrist.

Ensign Trumbull instantly interfered, and prevented such a flagrant violation of his flag of truce by ordering Ranald to fall back. Here the parley ended, and both parties retired—the ensign rating the fiery Macpherson most soundly for the gross indiscretion he had displayed.

Negotiations having failed, Colonel Campion made his final arrangements, and issued his orders for battle. He felt no doubt at all about the result; for, according to his own observation and that of the flag-of-truce party, the enemy, though strongly posted, were not very strong in number, and their main strength seemed to be disposed along the heights on the right side of the pass, where, indeed, Gilderoy had taken his station.

The Colonel's arrangements were these: His own troops would advance and deliver a heavy fire upon the hill-sides, under cover of which columns of Highlanders would charge the heights at the point of the sword; the Roundheads, then occupying the open pass, would keep the enemy permanently divided, and sustain and reinforce their allies wherever necessary. A small reserve under one of the officers, assisted by Sir John Spiers, was ordered to remain in the rear, to which Mr. Gilchrist now gladly betook himself.

CHAPTER XV

The English horse they were so rude,
 They bathed their hoofs in Highland blood;
 But our brave clans, they boldly stood
 Upon the haughs of Cromdale.

But, alas! we could no longer stay,
 For o'er the hills we came away,
 And sore we do lament the day
 That e'er we came to Cromdale.

Old Ballad.

PLACING himself at the head of his men, Colouel Campion drew his sword, exclaiming—"Be our battle-word this day, *The Lord of Hosts and the Commonwealth!* On, my brethren—on, and conquer!"

The Roundheads advanced in steady order, with trumpets sounding, drums beating, and the red-cross banner of the Commonwealth floating on the wind. Speedily a flight of arrows—the "short brown shafts sae meanly trimm'd"—hailed down amongst them, but did little execution, being well resisted by the headpieces and breastplates. This discharge was followed by a straggling fire of muskets and pistols, the tongues of flame and puffs of smoke darting out at short intervals along the shaggy hill-sides. The soldiers halted, and delivered, in return for the warmth of this reception, a close rattling volley, the drifting smoke of which obscured the whole scene; but the fresh breeze quickly rolling away the "sulphurous canopy," evidence was at once apparent of the destructive effects of their fire. Several wounded Highlanders had fallen to the foot of the crags, where they lay writhing in the agonies of death. Others were crawling and staggering through the bushes. One tall, half-naked savage, having received a shot in the throat, had risen from his covert beside a projecting cliff, the edge of which he grasped convulsively for a moment to steady himself; but losing his hold, he was precipitated head-foremost down the steep, and dashed out his brains at the bottom. The musketry and arrow-shot from above continued, and great stones were hurled down with crashing force. The troops firing another volley, their auxiliaries, sword in hand,

and holding their round targets above their heads to ward off the pelting shower of missiles, charged gallantly up the heights. In a few minutes the greater part of Campion's men were engaged, and the reserve were ready, at a signal, to join in the fray. The clangour of the claymores smiting upon the targets and head-pieces was deafening; and the Roundheads most effectively seconded the assault given by their allies, by pouring volley after volley, in quick succession, over their heads.

The body of Highlanders who attacked the heights on the right side of the pass, where Gilderoy himself and the main strength of the Macgregors were stationed, rushed to the shock with indomitable resolution. It was to this division that Ranald Vourigh and Jasper Rollo had attached themselves with their respective followers. Jasper was arrayed for the conflict in the uniform and accoutrements of a Roundhead officer, which he had obtained through his friend the Colonel. The assailants, with a yelling shout of slogans, sprang up the heights, covering themselves with their targets, and soon came front to front with their enemies, who, confused by the musketry of the troops, were broken up into small detached groups. A random fire of pistols was exchanged, and then claymores, spears, and pole-axes clashed together in furious strife. The leaves and boughs severed from the trees by the contending weapons scattered on the wind. Ranald Vourigh was intent upon confronting Gilderoy, but nowhere could his eager eye distinguish the chief; and he threw himself against his enemies with frantic valour, hewing right and left, and beating down all who opposed him. Jasper Rollo followed, and his two retainers gave good proofs of their sterling hardihood. The struggle was stubborn, fierce, and bloody. But the Macgregors, favourable as was their position, were slowly driven backwards, step by step, up the well-contested steeps, with serious loss. Their banner was down already. A blow from a two-handed sword had cut the staff in twain, and the standard-bearer was cloven, clean through his steel-lined bonnet, down to the chin, by the claymore of Ranald Vourigh, who then tore the flag asunder, spat upon the rags, and trampled them under foot, with a shout of triumph.

"Gilderoy! Gilderoy!" he cried, in Gaelic, high above the roar of the battle. "Meet me, villain; meet me! Ranald Vourigh is here!"

But Gilderoy was as yet invisible. His men gave way more and more before the impetuosity of their opponents, until a few of them fairly took to flight. The fugitives, however, were quickly checked by some commanding voices in the rear, and they doggedly returned to mingle again in the conflict. At a little distance behind now appeared Evan Glas, Dobbie Hackston, and Gilderoy; and the presence of the chief restoring at once the flagging courage of his men, the assailants, unexpectedly pressed by a sudden charge, were borne half way to the bottom in much disorder. Scorning to yield an inch, Ranald Vourigh was left almost alone. The nearest of his supporters was the retainer Elshender; but at the next moment Elshender was levelled by a stone, and Jasper Rollo, who, from a distance, saw Ranald's extremely perilous predicament, called out to him to retreat. Retreat? No! Ranald was made of sterner stuff. Retreat in the very presence of the enemy whom he had again and again defied? Never! Raising the slogan of the Clan Vourigh—*Craig-dhu!* (signifying the "Black Rock," the place of rendezvous of the Maephersons), and whirling his broadsword around his head with a rapidity that made it look like a circle of light, he fearlessly threw himself across the path of Gilderoy, who was coming down the height through some trees.

The two foemen glared on each other for an instant like ravening wolves. Each one felt that the crisis of his fate was come.

"Traitor!" cried Gilderoy, trembling with rage, "I heard you shout my name. I am here, and death alone shall part us."

Ranald, in whom the sense of his wrongs was boiling at fever heat, hissed a defiance through his set teeth, and elevating his buckler, strode up cautiously to encounter his enemy, or rather enemies, for both Hackston and Evan Glas, who now loomed into sight again through the eddying smoke fast behind Macgregor, seemed determined to aid him in the impending combat. But the heavy odds, which unquestionably would have proven fatal to the lion-hearted Maepherson, were speedily balanced, for Elshender, little the worse for his fall, had by this time risen, and Jasper Rollo had pressed to the spot, and they each singled out an opponent—Elshender selecting Dobbie Hackston, and Jasper the foster-brother. Not another man belonging to either party was at hand, as the battle was raging down towards the bottom of the height.

With every nerve strung for a mortal struggle, Macpherson and Gilderoy advanced upon each other, both having now an equal advantage of ground, as they met on a somewhat broad and level plat scantily covered with grass. The heavy broadswords clashed, and emitted sparks of fire. At the third blow, Ranald struck his youthful antagonist on the head, and but for the strength and temper of the good old head-piece which Gilderoy wore, the trenchant steel, wielded by such a hand, would have bitten into his brain. The stout morion withstood it, and Gilderoy, though staggered by the shock, was able to ward off the succeeding blow, and in returning it with all his might he cleft Macpherson's buckler in twain. The one half of the iron-studded disc fell clattering on the ground. Ranald, thus shorn of his defence, instinctively stepped back, and plucking a pistol from his belt with his left hand, fired it at his enemy's breast. The bullet, which even Gilderoy's target or his mail-coat might not have been sufficient to resist, it was shot so close, struck his claymore, which he was brandishing at the moment, and splintered the blade about half a foot from the basket-hilt, leaving only the dagger-like remnant in his hand. But though his life was saved from the bullet, death seemed inevitable; and it is no disparagement of the freebooter's valour to say that his visage now became ashy pale. He apparently forgot that he too had pistols in his belt. Seeing him almost defenceless, the Macpherson swung his broadsword in the air, and rushed forward to cleave him. What hope was there for Gilderoy? Down came the furious blow; but Gilderoy dexterously covering himself with his buckler, was fortunate enough to escape a wound, though the shock was such as to crush him to the earth. With a triumphant yell, Ranald was dealing the fatal stroke, when his foot was tripped by the fragment of his broken target, and he stumbled in his eagerness and fell above his antagonist.

The two combatants grappled each other in all the intensity of mortal hatred. Their swords slipped from their hands; they attempted to draw their dirks; but that was impossible. Locked in a desperate choking clasp, they rolled over and over each other down the declivity until a large stone arrested their descent; and then, as if by mutual accord, they relaxed their hold, and scrambled to their feet. They both unsheathed their dirks; but though almost within arms' length of each other, they stood panting, with

glaring eyes, as if gathering breath to make the deadly spring.

A second encounter, however, was prevented by a new turn of the battle below. The Macgregors were worsted again, and now came surging up the hill-side in full flight. Ranald Vourigh was thrown down in the confusion; but Gilderoy was borne away, like a waif, by the tide of his followers. Jasper Rollo and Elshender were also separated from their opponents, who saw it prudent to join in the retreat. A crowd of Champion's Highlanders, intermingled with military, crowded up in hot pursuit, and the height was won. When Ranald Vourigh reached the summit, he was received with thundering acclamations; for his dauntless bravery had been witnessed by most of his friends.

Victory, which had thus crowned the efforts of the right division of the assailants, did not fail also to crown those of the left. The enemy's force, posted on the left side of the pass, being weak and ill commanded, quickly lost heart, and dispersed across the mountains.

The main body of Champion's troops, while rendering important service in the conflict, had hitherto been but partially engaged hand to hand; but their full share of that sort of work was about to be afforded them. Gilderoy, repulsed as we have seen from the main height, which was divided from the succeeding one by a deep gully, probably filled in winter by a torrent, but now quite dry and strewed with large stones, drew off his men across the water-course, and stationing a few along its edge, under cover of the trees and bushes, to prevent the pursuers passing over, he prepared for a last *coup*. Collecting together his whole available forces, he gave a few hurried orders, and led them down in a mass against the Roundheads. It was the last effort of despair.

The soldiers were taken completely by surprise. They had no premonition of the onslaught. For some minutes previously not a single hostile shot had been fired; and they were concluding, from the shouts of their friends on either hand, that the victory was decided, when the Macgregors broke down upon them in grim silence. A bloody hand-to-hand conflict ensued. Attacked in front and on one flank, the column was pierced here and there. The long pike and musket-barrel seemed unequal to resist the claymore and two-handed sword. The trumpets sounded for the advance of

the reserve, which was hurried to the spot by the officer in command, and the knight of Spierhaughs. The contest became dreadful. Sir John Spiers, surrounded by some of his personal followers, pressed his way to the front to support Colonel Campion; but he soon found cause to repent his temerity. He was struck down and trodden on; and Gilderoy, perceiving his fall, commanded that he should be taken at all hazards and carried away a prisoner. The seizure of the knight was very difficult; but it was eventually accomplished, and he was dragged off, apparently more dead than alive, by four of the Macgregors.

But the descent of the auxiliaries from the heights decided the struggle, and the Macgregors were swept away like chaff. Gilderoy had staked everything on the chance of overwhelming the Roundheads by a sudden onset; and his game was lost. The Macgregors, we say, were scattered in irretrievable defeat, and even Gilderoy himself narrowly escaped capture. The pursuit was not very close; for Colonel Campion, looking to his losses, which were by no means light, was anxious to keep his troops compactly together, in place of allowing them to disperse in harassing the enemy's retreat.

The smoke of battle soon cleared away, and the summer sun looked brightly down on the scene of slaughter and triumph. The victors were still shouting in honour of their victory. But unfortunately some of the dry furze on the right-hand heights caught fire from smouldering matches and wadding scattered about, and burst into a broad crackling blaze, which, impelled by the wind, spread with inconceivable rapidity, so that in a few minutes the glen was filled again with dense clouds of smoke. The burning ashes floating on the breeze speedily communicated the conflagration to the other side, and the scene of conflict became another Tophet.

"Save the wounded! save the wounded!" cried Colonel Campion. "Save them all—save friend and foe alike; for there is no respect of persons with our God who hath given us the victory."

The conflagration, however, waxed so vehement that the soldiers found it impossible fully to execute the humane command. Many of the wounded were flinging themselves out from amongst the blazing bushes—all were shrieking for help. The soldiers did their best, but several miserable

wretches had to be abandoned to their fate. The breeze still fanned the flames, and rolled the smoke through the pass as through the mouth of a furnace. The intolerable heat and smoke forced the troops to retire to a distance, carrying with them all the wounded whom they had been able to rescue. The conflagration, however, was not of long continuance; for ridges of naked rock effectually stopped its progress, and it speedily burned itself out.

When the troops returned to the scene, they found the bottom of the pass swarming with adders, which had been driven from the hill-sides by the fire. The most of the wounded who had been left behind had perished. Much regret was expressed for the capture of Sir John Spiers. All the other men of mark belonging to Champion's force were safe; but the general casualties were heavy.

"The axe has been laid to the root of Gilderoy's power," said the Colonel, "and we shall now deal out to him the full measure of justice."

"He'll never mak' head again," said Ranald Vourigh "Daft fool! to think that wi' twa threecundred men at his back he would contend and cope wi' the power o' General Monk!"

"But," said Mr. Gilchrist, who had followed the rest after all danger was past, 'winna the fiend o' revenge enter into him, and possess him, and urge him on to take the life o' the puir innocent lady? It's very true, Colonel, that you hae dashed his power in pieces like unto a potter's vessel; but we're as far frae our purpose as ever; for how is the lady to be rescued?"

"She is in God's hands," replied Champion; "let us do our duty fearlessly, and I doubt not that all will go well."

"I fervently hope so," said Rollo. "The lady's safety is our dearest care."

"Rest content in your hope," returned Champion. "Her death cannot avail him. I said so from the beginning, and I say it again. Rest content."

"Sir John Spiers too," said Rollo. "I fear the good knight is in an equally perilous plight."

"Hum!" uttered Champion, with astonishing indifference. "Do you know, sir," added he, drawing Jasper aside to some distance, "do you know that this morning, just as the cry of a heath-fowl awoke me from deep slumber, a strong presentiment darted into my mind that defeat and disgrace awaited us?"

"It has proved a false one," answered Rollo, smiling.

"False as the false demon who breathed it into my soul," replied the visionary. "Nevertheless, I confess to you that my confidence was much shaken; and when I marched into this wild pass, which resolute men, holding their lives in their hands for the sake of a great cause, might successfully defend against hosts, I marched as to a grave which was yawning for me. The power of the tempter was strong; but at length my faith waxed stronger, and see how great a mercy has been vouchsafed to me. I have triumphed, despite the malice of Satan, and the treason which lurked and plotted in our midst."

"Treason, say you?" cried Rollo, in astonishment.

"Yea, treason; I speak advisedly. Who could have acquainted Gilderoy with the particular direction of our march, seeing that according to the plans which we arranged before setting out from Spierhaughs we repeatedly changed our route for the very purpose of misleading him?"

"Doubtless he had spies and scouts."

"Doubtless he had; but Satan must have gained over some one in our own camp."

It was difficult for Jasper to decide in his own mind whether this singular suspicion of treason was not like the rest of the Roundhead's visionary prepossessions. "Upon whom does your suspicion rest?" he inquired.

"One of my sentries," responded Campion, "saw a dumb stripling belonging to the household of Spierhaughs leave the castle secretly and in disguise shortly after we had left Sir John's supper-table."

"What of that?"

"And see—here is a scrap of paper which a soldier found lying on the hill-side over yonder. Attend to it, for it unravels a deep and guilty mystery." The Colonel took a crumpled, blackened scrap of writing-paper from his pocket, and presented it to Rollo. It seemed to be a fragment of a letter, but was so disfigured by the tread of feet, and damaged by fire, that Rollo could not, at the first hasty glance, decipher a single word of the writing which it contained. He returned it without offering any remark.

"Examine it more narrowly," said Campion, holding it out in the sunshine, "and you will make a strange discovery. Pshaw! your master would be private," he said, half angrily, waving back the retainers Elshender and Blackburn,

who were sauntering up. "This matter," he went on, speaking to Rollo in a low voice, "must be a secret betwixt us. Lend me your close attention for a moment. See you not that there has been a signature? It is partly torn away; but what remains?—'p i e r s;' and above, 'march this morning;' and again, 'by the pass of.' Hah! do I enlighten you? Then, 'arm with all speed;' and, 'I will strive to delay.' Now, was not that signature, in its entirety, 'John Spiers?' I can swear to his handwriting. Was not this a missive, despatched in haste to Gilderoy, betraying our plans and urging resistance? Said I not well that Satan had gained over one of our friends? And 'I will strive to delay,' too. What do such words betoken? Jasper Rollo, we have been foully betrayed. Have we not good reason to conclude that my sudden illness was caused by some drugs treacherously mixed in my cup by Sir John Spiers when we supped with him in the wood—not perchance with the deadly intent of destroying my life, but with the design of delaying the march of the expedition?"

"Can all this be true of Sir John Spiers!" exclaimed Rollo.

"His own handiwork vouches his guilt," cried Campion. "But say nothing till we sift this matter farther,"

"But what could have induced Sir John Spiers to act a part so disgraceful?"

"There you are at fault," said Campion, with a dark smile. "During my short sojourn in Spierhaughs Castle, about twelve months ago, Sir John opened to me some of the workings of his inmost heart. He spoke of the lady Annabel Rutherford, of her beauty and fortune. I gathered from his discourse that he had been her suitor, and was rejected, and was ready to move heaven and earth to gain her hand. Now, Jasper Rollo, what think you? May not he have betrayed us to the Macgregors in order that the lady might be kept out of the reach of her friends until he had matured measures to force her into wedlock with him? The moment I perceived this scrap of paper the whole plot—ay, and darker suspicions too—flashed into my mind."

All this fell on Rollo like a thunderbolt. Until now he had never heard a word about Sir John's suit to Annabel, and the bare thought had never entered his brain. "My kinsman's murder and the lady's abduction," he exclaimed, "may have been planned by this felon knight, and perpetrated in his interest."

The conversation was here cut short by a crash behind them, on the left side of the glen. On looking round, they saw a wounded Highlander of Gilderoy's party, who in attempting apparently to crawl down the height in quest of water from a small spring or *well-e'e*, at the bottom, had fallen headlong, and his iron breast-plate striking against the stones had made the crash which attracted their attention. The poor wretch—a stalwart, nay, a gigantic figure—uttered a heavy groan, and struggled in vain to rise. Moved by compassion, the Colonel and Rollo hastened to his assistance, and lifted him into a sitting posture among the stones. His life blood was oozing from a gash in the breast, which he had striven ineffectually to stanch with the end of his plaid. Never had they beheld so wild and horrible a visage as that which, distorted by pain and smeared with blood, was now languidly raised towards them. All that the man could falter for some moments was "Water, water!" The Colonel ran, and picking up a morion, filled it to the brim at the well, and offered him the clear sparkling beverage. But, to the Colonel's profound astonishment, the mountaineer suddenly thrust back the extempore goblet from his lips, though they were parching for a draught.

"Away with it!" he exclaimed, in accents of strong emotion, while his glazing eyeballs lighted up with a lurid lustre. "Away! There is murder upon that hand. The blood of the Lord's anointed reeks upon it. Away! Your touch has polluted the blessed water from the spring, and turned it into quick poison. I would not wet my lips from that goblet—no, for a thousand head of black cattle."

Campion dropped the morion at his feet, and steadfastly regarded the mountaineer with somewhat of his old insane glare. "How came you by that knowledge?" he cried. "Rollo," he added, turning to his friend, "you see and hear for yourself. This is but another of Satan's buffetings. He hath opened a mouth of reviling against me."

"The knowledge came upon me like a beam of light," said the dying man. "My father was gifted with the *Tashitauragh*. The gift became mine. I inherited it with his brown locks, and hazel eyes, and dauntless heart that ever hated the Saxon. Yes, I see the blood upon your hand. It is the blood that cannot be effaced. Water will not wash it away, neither can steel cut, or fire burn it out. And I see the same hand raising itself against your own

life. Hark! the death-peal resounds through the midnight streets! I would not have your weird for a hundred forests of deer. They shall say of me, when I am gone, that I was ever true and loyal to my chief; but thou—hence to thy doom in yonder stately city of the south!”

He spread forth his hands, and while a slogan yell struggled from his lips, he fell forward on his face, and, after a short convulsion, the spirit forsook its earthly tenement.

Rollo had been much struck by the Colonel's acquiescence in the charge of being implicated in some great mysterious crime, and he gazed on him with undefinable feelings of awe.

“It was an evil spirit speaking by the lips of that lump of clay,” said the Roundhead, disdainfully touching the corpse with his foot. “But I appeal to Him who knoweth all hidden things to justify me in the eyes of this stiff-necked and rebellious generation.”

CHAPTER XVI.

Hence with thy brew'd enchantments, foul deceiver!
Hast thou betray'd my credulous innocence
With visor'd falsehood and base forgery?
And wouldst thou seek again to trap me here?

Milton's "Comus."

“**W**HEN will they come back, grandmither? Will there be a lang war wi' the Sassenach, as in Glencairn's time? Oh, the tower is silent and cheerless when the lads are awa'. The hills yonder ha'ena the same bonny warm glow when the sun sets behind them, and the e'ning star hasna the same sweet blink as when a' was blythe around us. There's a weary sough in the very wind, grandmither, blaw it ever sae gently.”

The speaker was Marion o' the Moor, who, disconsolate and pale, sat looking from a casement of the Macgregors' tower. The only other person in the chamber was her grand-

mother, who was busying herself in straining some boiled herbs, probably of a medicinal character, into a bowl.

"There can be nae lang war, but just a bit skirmish in some strait glen, and the Sassenach captain will be driven back the road he cam', and that will mak' an end o' it," answered Judith. "Aweel," she added, after a short pause, "this gear o' mine is the best that ever I brewed, for the herbs and plants were gathered in the prime o' their virtue; and I'll warrant it will do the lady muckle gude."

"But if the Saxons come in great strength, and there be a great battle," pursued the girl, "how few o' our lads may return to us! and, except the guards o' the tower, every one is away that was able to wield a broadsword or draw a bow."

"Hoot, lassie!" said the crone, querulously. "Great battle or sma' battle, the claymore will be victorious, and Gilderoy will return wi' honour and glory."

"Both Gilderoy and Evan were sad and downcast when they went away," said Marion. "No one was heartsome but Dobbie; and he's heartsome at a times. I wish Gilderoy had some o' Dobbie's blythe spirit."

"Gilderoy was never like himsel' after that strange lady cam' here," said Judith, laying aside the bunch of herbs, and beginning to stir the potion in the bowl with a horn spoon. "It's her that's brought a' this feud. She aye threatened that her kinsfolk wad rise, and they've risen indeed."

"But you ken, grandmither, it wasna wi' her ain will that she cam' amang us; and though she has brought us muckle ill luck, we canna blame her," returned Marion. "She's pinning awa' through sorrow."

"Aweel, lassie, I am grieved to see her ailing," said Judith, in a softer tone, "and I'm exerting my best skill to mak' her richt again; for I can save life, as you ken."

"Is the drink ready?" inquired Marion.

"Ay, ay," answered Judith, stirring the liquid faster. "It's a healthsome drap. I'll tak' it up the stair to her mysel'; for I maun gi'c her a' the directions about the taking o' it."

"Tell me, and I'll tak' it," said Marion. "You and her dinna agree when you meet; and she'll accept the medicine frae my hand wi' more—more—"

"More what? Could she think that I meant to do her an ill turn? Na, na; I maun tak' it up mysel'. You wad forget the directions, bairn."

"She is more affable wi' me, you ken," persisted Marion.

"Dinna insist about it, lassie," said her grandmother; "for there shall naebody tak' it up but mysel'."

Marion rose from her chair at the casement, and sauntering forward to the small table at which her grandmother was standing with her medicinal bowl, she looked at the mixture. "It has a queer colour," she remarked. "And whatna scum is that on the tap? She'll never put it to her lips unless you tak' aff that scum."

"Sit down, you fool!" cried Judith. "The scum is the very proof o' the mixture's virtue."

"Let me taste it!" said Marion, while a flush appeared on her brow.

"Let *you* taste it!" cried the crone with a start, and forcing a giggle. "You maun set up for a woman o' skill, indeed! Let *you* taste it! Behave yourself. Stand back, I say; or, deil be on me, an' you persist in meddling wi' things that dinna concern you, I'll fling bowl and a' in your face."

"Grandmither," returned Marion, in a subdued but emphatic tone, "I'll be at a word wi' you. Unless you let me taste that drink, it shall never gang up the stair. Let me taste it. Gie me the bowl in my ain hand."

Judith straightened herself up with a fierce and darkening countenance, but instantly thereafter laughed aloud. "The lassie's in a creel," she said. "What has putten you upon tasting a sick woman's drink? Aweel, then, hae—I'se no hinder you; for wha can guide a wilfu' woman? Hae, see, mak a muckle mouth, and drink it to the bottom."

Suiting the action to the word, she lifted the bowl in one hand, and held it to Marion's head, doubtless in expectation that she would recoil from it with loathing; but finding that, on the contrary, the girl was eager to taste the mixture, Judith drew back the bowl, and hurrying across the chamber to the open casement, flung it out with great violence. This done she seated herself on a low chair without speaking a single word.

"Why have you spilt the gude mixture?" exclaimed Marion, all in a tremor.

"You've spoilt your gude fortune," answered the crone, with an air of indifference. "The lady may live or die for me, and Gilderoy may come hame and make her his bride without me moving hand or foot against it."

"I doubt," replied Marion, "I doubt, frae your ain words, that my fears were not without reason."

"Fears? What did you fear?"

"That there was—that there was *something* in the bowl."

"Something in the bowl? Aweel, you've spoilt your gude fortune. Isna that woman a curse to us a', and a terror baith day and nicht? Though she were lying in her shroud before you—and she wad mak a bonny corp—wad you be the worse for that?"

"Ah!" cried Marion, as the tears burst over her cheeks, "you winna halt till you bring down the wrath and curse o' heaven upon us baith. Hae you forgotten that there's a God that punishes a' sin, whether o' thocht or deed?"

"So Mess John says; but I dinna ken," responded Judith, with a light laugh. "The Roman priests are a mair comfortable people, for they can gi'e you clear scores for a sma' fee, be you living or be you dead; and they're the cattle for my siller when I need them. I canna awa' wi' your new-fangled doctrines and your new-fangled ministers."

"But," said Marion, "remember this—if anything comes ower the lady at your hands, I'll leave you for ever and seek a hame whaur ne'er ane kens me. The lady has done us nae wrang, and I'll no see a wrang done her, though she should be Gilderoy's bride the morn. Mind my words."

"I'll mind them, dinna fear," responded Judith, smiling sardonically. "I thocht I was building up your fortune; but tak' your will—I'll put out my hand nae farther."

"You can never, never, build up my fortune by—murder!" ejaculated Marion, through her sobs and tears.

"Murder!" repeated the old hag, as she sprung from her seat, and stamped her foot in impotent rage. "What will you say if, at this moment, Gilderoy and your brither be lying stark and stiff aneath the swords o' this woman's friends."

"God forbid;" shrieked Marion in dismay. "And God save a' kin o' mine frae deadly guilt!"

And she fled from Judith's presence, and ran straight to Annabel's room.

Annabel was sitting pensively by the window of her prison chamber. It was a hot still day—the distant mountains dim with a sultry haze, and not a breath of air to stir the leaves of the aspen. The swallows wheeling around the battlements of the ancient tower imparted to the sunny silent scene the only appearance of animation which it possessed.

The "iron of captivity" was entering into the lady's soul. Her spirits had sunk, and her health was failing; in fact, for the last day or two she had been somewhat indisposed, and it was in consequence of this slight indisposition that Judith had set about preparing a "healing mixture," the fate of which is already recorded.

Marion had dried her cheeks before she presented herself, but Annabel saw at once that she had been weeping, and therefore inquired, with much anxiety, whether any tidings of Gilderoy had arrived.

"There's nae word yet," answered Marion, "but I hope there will be nae bluidshed after a', for maybe Gilderoy and your kinsfolk may come to a bargain, and part without blows."

"If my friends were all with whom Gilderoy had to deal, there might soon be a bargain," replied the lady; "but the troops of General Monk, I am afraid, will refer the quarrel to none other arbitrament than that of the sword, and the issue will probably be ruinous to the Macgregors."

These depressing words caused the tears to start again into Marion's eyes.

"Whatever betide, my good Marion," said Annabel, gently, "I pray Heaven that your own kinsmen may be spared. Ah! who is this!" she ejaculated, having that instant turned her glance to the window. "Look, girl! Yonder comes a messenger. One of your own clan. And, as I live! he is the bearer of evil tidings. His spear is broken—his head is bandaged. There has been a battle, and Gilderoy has lost the day!"

Marion flew to the window, which looked towards the glen, and saw a Highlander making for the tower in great haste, but evidently much fatigued. He was followed at a distance by some women from the elachan, who were tearing their hair and wringing their hands as they ran.

Turning on Annabel a look of speechless agony, Marion tottered from the chamber, and went down to the outer gate of the tower, which was just in the act of being thrown open by several of the guards to receive the messenger. As the latter approached, Marion recognised in him one of the personal and favourite followers of Gilderoy. He was bare-headed, but with a blood-stained bandage about his temples. He rushed breathlessly to the open gate; but as soon as his eyes met those of Marion, he stopped, and leaning heavily

on his broken spear, exclaimed, in his native tongue—"Woe, maiden, woe? The iron hand of the Sassenach hath smitten us; and all is lost!"

Having said thus much, he bowed his head upon the spear-shaft, and almost sank to the ground; but Marion, grasping him by the shoulder, demanded—"And how fared it with Gilderoy?"

"I saw him in the thickest of the fight, bearing him bravely," he answered; "but we were all broken, and I saw him no more."

"Slain! slain!" shrieked the girl, clasping her hands together. "Wretch!" she cried, with gleaming eyes, as horror and anguish gave place to indignation. "Base kerne! and did you forsake your chief in the midst of danger, and leave him to perish unavenged, that you might preserve your own worthless life to be a burden and a curse to yourself? Dastard slave, dare you hold up your face in the light of the sun, and confess that you left your chief to die under the feet of the foe?"

The man responded only with a deep groan and a rueful shake of his head.

The alarm now brought out the other inmates of the tower—old Judith and several clansmen and domestics. The mourning women of the clachan also coming up—one of whom carried a sickly infant at her breast, and dragged a half-naked squalling urchin behind her by the hand—they all flew upon the messenger, like so many tigresses robbed of their whelps, demanding to be told of the fate of those near and dear to them, who had gone forth with Gilderoy to meet and repel the Roundhead invaders. Their outcries deafened and stupefied the poor man, and he staggered to the wall, and leaned his back against it for support.

"How can I answer, when you will not cease your tongues?" he cried. "Stand back, and give me breath to speak. Back, and give me free air."

They stood back indeed, but with no abatement of their bewildering clamour

The man told his story betimes. On the previous day the clan had been routed by the government troops, but he could give no certain information about Gilderoy or any of his principal followers. Separated from all his comrades in the flight, badly wounded, and frequently falling down exhausted by loss of blood, it was with the utmost difficulty that he

had been able to make his way homewards. "You need not bend your looks of scorn on me, daughter of Grey Colin," he added, "for I fought as long as the men stood together, and my single arm could not turn the fortune of the day."

"But you could have died with your chief," retorted Marion. "My brother, I am sure, would never quit his side."

"Did the enemy pursue?" inquired Judith.

"I know not," answered the messenger.

"The whole band cannot have been cut off," cried a clansman. "Where are all the survivors of the battle?"

"They did not fly so fast as this coward," said Marion. "They would rally again to defend the next pass."

"That is what your Sassenach dame has brought upon us," said Judith, in her grandchild's ear. "Fire and sword, ruin and desolation, will now spread over our country, and all for her sake."

The fugitive sank down in a swoon at the side of the gate, and the wailing of the women grew louder and more piteous than ever.

Marion quitted the spot, and hurried once more to the captive lady's chamber. Rushing in distractedly, she burst into a fit of weeping. "They are all slain!" she sobbed, unconsciously using the Gaelic, in which she had spoken with the fugitive, and then as unconsciously reverting to the Scottish Doric. "They are a' slain, every man o' them—Gilderoy, my brither, Hackston, and them a' They'll never come back. I'll never see their faces again. There was a great battle, and the clan fled. May Heaven ha'e mercy on me!"

"And on me!" cried Annabel, whose tears broke forth also. "Oh, that I had never lived to see this doleful day!"

"But you—why should you grieve and sorrow?" said Marion. "You ha'e lost naeboddy, madam. But a' my friends are slain—and I am left alane."

"Does the man say positively that Gilderoy and your brother fell?" asked Annabel.

"The man! False kerne!—dinna speak o' him, madam. There had been mony like him—mony had deserted their chief in the battle. Oh, woman, woman!—my heart is breaking!"

Annabel snatched the sobbing helpless girl in her arms, and, sitting down on a chair, pressed her tenderly to her

breast. Marion's grief, breaking through all control, was violent and heartrending, and for some time she wept and lamented bitterly, deaf and insensible to all the lady's entreaties and condolences. The unhappy pair were in this posture when old Judith stole into the chamber, and startled them both with her sharp tremulous voice, instinct with insensate wrath and hatred.

"You've been the curse o' Gilderoy!" she cried, shaking her clenched hand at the lady. "You've wrought the ruin o' the clan. There's no a house in Rannoch but will ring this day wi' lamentation—the bairn in the eradle for its father, the mither for her son, the widow for her husband, the sister for her brither, and the maiden wi' the silken snood for her betrothed. Woman, you ha'e brought on us a curse waur than that o' hell!"

"Would to God that I had never entered within these walls!" faltered Annabel.

"You may never quit them a living woman," retorted Judith, fiercely.

Marion raised herself from Annabel's embrace, and bade her grandmother depart. "There's mair need for you to gang and comfort the pair women greeting at the gate."

"That Sassenach dame," cried Judith, "has cast glamour ower you, lassie, as she cast it ower Gilderoy. And there you'll mak' your lament to *her*! For shame! You dinna see the web o' disgrace and ruin that she is weaving around you; and you ha'ena power to break it; but—I'll cut it asunder wi' the cauld steel!"

"Leave us, I tell you!" said Marion, indignantly, as she waved her hand towards her grandmother. "You canna touch her life but through mine."

Judith stepped back to the open door, and looking down the stair, called out—"Murdoch, Murdoch Moolach, come hither!" and then broke into a hollow rattling laugh.

A heavy footstep came up the stair, and a shaggy Highland savage shuffled into the chamber, armed with a drawn basket-hilted broadsword. The man was clad in ragged tartans. His brawny brown arms were bare of any other covering save short tufts of coal-black hair from the gnarled wrists to the shoulders; and through the tangled locks that hung about his face, mingling with his moustache and beard, his fiery eyeballs glittered like those of a wild beast. He entered the chamber with a menacing growl, turning his

restless eyes to Judith as if awaiting her commands, while his left hand played with the butts of two steel pistols sticking in his belt.

"You see that Sassenach soreress, Murdoch?" said Judith, in the Gaelic language, pointing to Annabel. "Cut her down. Spare her not. Cleave her, and east out her carcase to feed the carrion crows!"

The hirsute savage gave another growl, and brandished his weapon; but Marion started forward with outstretched arms in front of Annabel to prevent his attack. A fiendish smile passed over his wolfish gaping lips. "Not you, my pretty girl, not you," he said. "Ill befall the hand that strikes at you. Keep to the one side, and let me cut her down."

With the rapidity of thought Marion darted in upon him, plucked both pistols from his belt, sprang back again, cocked them, and presented them full in his face. The hideous miscreant laughed in scorn, and playfully held up his left hand as if to intercept the threatened shots.

"They are loaded," cried Marion. "I know by their weight."

"They are toys for a man's hands alone," said the ruffian, "and not for the small white hands of a pretty damsel. Give me back the dags."

"Unless you withdraw, you shall have their contents in your brain," said Marion. "I give you warning."

"Are you afraid of a child, Murdoch Moolach?" cried Judith, tauntingly. "Do my bidding like a man."

Hairy Murdoch advanced a step with his uplifted broadsword; but Marion, true to her word, pulled the trigger of one of the pistols. The report shook the chamber, and filled it with smoke. A yell from Murdoch seemed to indicate that the bullet had taken fatal effect; but it had merely grazed his left temple, and shorn away a lock of hair. He had fallen back to the doorway, in which he now stood, rubbing his temple with one hand, which, when he withdrew it, appeared filled with blood. Judith, aghast at her grandchild's audacity, crept towards him. A war of passions raged within him, but he durst not retaliate on his fair assailant; besides, she had still another pistol, and her second aim might be more unerring than the first.

"If a man had drawn so much as that little drop of my blood," he said, stretching out his left hand from the tip of the middle finger of which a thick gout fell to the floor, "I

would have cleft him to the breast-bone. But you are the favourite of the clan, the flower of Rannoch, and the darling of Gilderoy—and you did this in your sport.”

“Begone!” cried Marion, in a voice of high command. “Begone, or you shall have my next bullet through your heart.”

“A lovely maiden cannot be resisted,” said the ruffian. “May we soon be friends again.”

With these words he hustled out of the doorway, and ran down the stair. Judith followed in his wake. Marion laid the pistols on the table, shut, and secured the door, and then, with an agonizing cry, flung herself upon Annabel’s breast.

During this fearful scene Annabel had stood silent and motionless. Paralysed by the apparent inevitability of death, she had passively awaited the stroke of doom; but now, when the danger was past, and Marion sobbing on her bosom, she found words to express her feelings, and thanked the faithful girl with a widely impassioned ardour.

“I’ve done naething, madam, naething but what was my duty in the sight o’ God,” answered the brave-hearted maiden. “They shall not murder you while I am by your side.”

“My fate, I fear, is not to be averted,” said Annabel. “They are set upon my death. The rest of the band will return, infuriated by defeat, and who can save me then? Heaven look down on me in pity. This is my darkest hour.”

“You *must* be saved,” cried Marion. “There’s bolts to draw, and armed men to pass; but you must escape.”

A gleam of hope kindled up in Annabel’s mind for a moment, but then it died out, leaving a deeper darkness and an intenser horror than before. “Escape is impossible,” she said.

“No—we can try; we *must* try. Oh! that you were miles and miles awa’, though there was nae living thing near you but the eagles!”

“You will but endanger yourself in my unfortunate cause, and not succeed in saving me after all,” said the lady. “You will turn the fury of your own kindred upon yourself.”

“If you stay here your death is certain,” returned Marion, gazing steadily in Annabel’s face. “Steel or poison will do

the work. Alas! madam, and when you lay dead and cauld at my feet, they wad come and tell me that it was a' for my sake they had slain you."

"For *your* sake? How?"

"You must fly—you must escape," said Marion, evading the question. "Oh! that you could escape this night—though it should prove the stormiest that ever blew on the Highland hills; for what wad be the hurricane howling ower a dark desert, and the red flash of the fire-flaughts cleaving the blackness, and the roar o' the thunder drowning the dash o' cataracts, compared wi' Murdoch Moolach's merciless steel? Yes, and I'll fly with you, and be your guide to some place o' safety, and then—and then, may kind death end a' my cares and troubles!" She slowly rose from Annabel's embrace, and pressed her hands on her burning forehead. "For what is there to bind me to this place? They're a' dead and gane—ilka ane that loved me."

"But the messenger—did he assert that Gilderoy and your brother fell in the battle?" said Annabel, anxious to soothe the damsel's woes.

"He didna; but I ken they fell," cried Marion; "for they wad never quit the field o' defeat."

"Still, there is room for hope," said the lady.

"Nae hope remains for me—naething but sorrow and the grave!" and Marion wandered blindly about the chamber, with her hands covering her face, and her beautiful hair dishevelled and streaming on her shoulders. "Oh! Gilderoy! Gilderoy! better that we had remained in the burgh town a' our days, for this is no place for quiet loving hearts. The blessing of God cannot rest here!"

CHAPTER XVII

Desert us—fly us—carry with thee half
Our strength! With the remaining half we'll struggle,
Nor vilely live the thralls of tyranny!

Caius Gracchus.

SURROUNDED by the confused remnants of his band, Gilderoy fled from the fatal pass. His discomfiture was all the more galling inasmuch as he had promised him-

self an easy victory and great renown. He now felt how grievously he had erred in spurning the enemy's offers; for his own overweening pride and presumption on finding himself, for the first time in his life, at the head of a somewhat formidable force, joined with his high hopes of secret aid through a secret ally in the adverse camp, had led him to attempt a *voie* which calmer reflection might have shown he could not sustain. Rudely dissipated for ever was the false dream of his ambition that he should raise himself to a position among the chieftains of the north. Few of the desperadoes—the “broken men”—whom he had lured to his standard by the prospect of plunder, followed him from the scene of conflict; and when the retreat had continued for some miles, he found none around him but his own clansmen, amongst whom, however, were all his leading adherents.

The route now lay across a mountain; and on gaining its naked summit the fugitives halted through sheer exhaustion, and looking back beheld thick clouds of smoke ascending from the fatal pass, and spreading like a grey pall all over the surrounding country.

The Macgregors scattered along the broad brow of the mountain. Some lay down to snatch a short repose; some wandered to and fro, waving their broadswords, lamenting the kinsmen they had lost, and yelling out the slogan of their clan; while others, shading the sun from their eyes with their hands, gazed intently and long towards the burning glen, and then turned away with looks of horror and despair. One tall, thin, aged Highlander, bareheaded, and with the stain of blood on his wrinkled temples, kept apart from all the rest, and as he roamed about he muttered to himself in hoarse tones through his flowing beard. His only weapon was a ponderous two-handed sword, and his defensive armour consisted of a battered shirt of chain mail, which had borne many a brunt in the wars of the Highlands. At length he came to a stand, and leaning on his sword, spoke out in a solemn, impassioned strain—

“When the war-pipe summoned Clan Alpine to battle, and the fiery cross scoured hill and moor, I ranged myself under the pine-tree banner, with four gallant sons at my back; and when the combat mingled, we were foremost in the strife of swords. But where are now my children? Where are the sons of Eachin Macraw, stately as young oaks on the mountains? Alas! their blood soaks the heather, and they

have perished in vain. Exult, Sassenach, exult in the triumph which thou hast won. Wave thy red cross flag of oppression above the corpses of the brave and true. But from this dark hour my heart shall neither pity nor my hand spare. Death shall mark my footsteps, and the Lowlands shall shudder at my name."

"Idle are our lamentations, Eachin—idle our vows of vengeance," said another warrior, approaching. "It was fated long ago that we should fall like ripe corn before the Saxon sickle."

"Mine is not an idle vow," said Macraw, gloomily; "for many a Lowland home shall I lay in ashes, and many a hearthstone shall I sprinkle with the blood of those dear beneath the roof-tree."

Gilderoy came forward, attended by Hackston and Evan Glas. "How many do we number now, Evan?" he inquired.

Evan glanced carelessly around, and then answered—"Nearly fourscore; but many of them are badly wounded."

"Where is our prisoner?" cried Gilderoy, after a deep pause.

"I am here," answered Sir John Spiers, who now advanced, guarded by several clansmen. His steel morion was dented, and the plume partly cut away; but he seemed to have received no personal injury of any consequence in the battle. "It was a sad blunder, Maegregor," he proceeded, "to carry me away as a prisoner, for by so doing you have deprived yourself of my influence in blunting the edge of Colonel Campion's ire."

"Villain!" exclaimed Gilderoy, gazing fiercely on the knight.

"Why a villain?" cried Spierhauglis. "For giving you timely warning of your danger? For delaying, by a secret sleight, the march of the enemy?"

"There would have been no warning, and the march would have been hastened instead of delayed," retorted Gilderoy, "if the heiress of Glenbirkie had not been my captive. I have unmasked your craft; I have penetrated your machinations, and I behold in you my evil genius—my worst foe. Why did you attack my men, and hang my bravest follower before your castle gate?"

"This is neither the time nor the place, Maegregor, for such explanations as you demand," said Spierhauglis, warmly, but with no sign of fear about him. "I am well able to clear

up what looks mysterious, and to convince you that throughout our dealings I have acted in good faith. But, for one thing, we are not alone."

A wave of the chief's hand caused the guards to fall back. "Your followers," resumed Sir John, "were unwise enough to approach the castle too closely, driving some cattle which they had lifted from a neighbouring glen. They were set upon by Campion's soldiers, and found to belong to the party of an outlaw. But it is idle in you to pretend that their fate can weigh much with you one way or another. Let us pass to far more important matters. What are your designs regarding Lady Annabel?"

"Oh! to put her into your power," said Gilderoy, with a bitter smile; "and then to suffer myself to be crushed by your guile. I could have no other design. I am but a novice in such affairs—a silly catspaw; and when I have been sufficiently hoodwinked, the sooner I am got rid of the better."

"Nay, man, this is no time for jest," said Spierhaughs. "You will sink like a stone unless some strong arm supports you. Why should I disguise the naked truth? Allow me an opportunity of addressing the Lady Annabel; or rather send her to the house of a chosen friend in Athole whom I shall name, and your reward——"

"Reward!" repeated Gilderoy, scornfully.

"In the first place," said Sir John, "I will give my bond for the sum which I formerly pledged myself to pay you so soon as the lady was put into my power; and in the next place I will endeavour to smooth matters for you with Colonel Campion. Recollect that I have strong interest with some of your neighbours, whom I can incite to lend you what assistance they can."

"To be short and plain with you, Sir John, I reject your offer," cried Gilderoy. "I am not inclined to risk my neck to promote your aggrandisement. It was partly at your instigation that I set myself to meet the Roundheads hand to hand, and you see how I have fared. You urged me to retain the lady at all hazards. I'll retain her still, and yourself too; for while such prisoners are in my hands, Campion will walk warily, and not provoke me to retaliation."

"You are mad, Macgregor, you are mad!" ejaculated Spierhaughs, in great disappointment. "You are recklessly flinging from you the only means of safety."

"I am resolved to follow no plan which you suggest," said

Gilderoy. "I have suffered bitterly by your falsehoods and your guile. When I was in doubt as to the betrayer of my brother, you employed every art to convince me that Dunavaig was the man, and I went and slew him; and now I am convinced of his innocence."

"The proofs of his guilt seemed strong enough," answered the knight, with some uneasiness.

"Proofs! There were no proofs," cried Gilderoy. "But it served your purpose to malign him, and to hound me on against his life."

"I never suggested his death. How can you urge an accusation so unfounded?"

"I hesitated before I struck the blow. I hesitated long," said Macgregor; "and but for your falsehoods it had never been struck."

"What can cure this infatuation?" exclaimed Sir John.

"Nothing that you can promise or threaten," replied Gilderoy. "My mind is made up. I am more likely to advance my own interests by holding a dirk to your throat than by helping you to wealth and beauty. Our friendship is broken for ever. The blood of Dunavaig lies betwixt us, never to be overpassed. Remove the prisoner."

"You will live to repent this madness," cried Sir John.

The guards closed around their prisoner, and led him away, fuming with wrath and disappointment. Gilderoy rejoined Hackston and Evan Glas.

The western sun was flooding the mountainous scene with his richest splendours, and the light smoke that still ascended from the distant battle-pass shone like a golden mist hovering on the hills.

Gilderoy and his followers continued their retreat; but it was very slow, and altogether unharassed. On the second night after the battle—for they had been watching the advance of the enemy, who was much encumbered with his wounded—they returned to their fortalice.

Fir torches flared in the open gateway, showing the pale anxious face of Marion Mackinnon, the evil visage of Judith, and the shaggy front of Murdoch Moolach, with many another countenance full of grief and horror. A feeble halloo greeted the appearance of Gilderoy. On the impulse of the moment, Marion, with a sob of anguish, threw herself upon his breast; but he, chafed and indeed half distracted, rudely pushed her aside and passed into the tower.

That was a wretched night. No one thought of rest. Gilderoy directed that Sir John Spiers should be conveyed to the dungeon—a small, damp, darksome oubliette underneath the tower. As to his other prisoner, the Lady Annabel Rutherford, he was anxious in his inquiries about her health, and seemed distressed to hear that she had been ailing.

About sunrise scouts came in bringing the intelligence that Campion was still advancing, and would certainly reach the tower that night.

Gilderoy gave orders that his principal adherents should be summoned to hold council with him in the hall a couple of hours thence. This done, he stole away by himself to seek another interview with Donach of the Den.

The morning was calm and bright. The Highland waste smiled in the sunshine. Gilderoy hurried on his way, careless of the beauties of the morning. Suddenly he was hailed by a voice, and raising his eyes he beheld the seer advancing to meet him.

"The blow hath fallen!" exclaimed the inhabitant of the Den, standing erect, with a frenzied look. "The white hand of a woman hath wrought the ruin shadowed forth in the *seam*. They told me of the battle, and that you had fled from the face of the Saxon. Gilderoy, beware, for there is darker misfortune still in store!"

"Prophet of evil!" faltered the youth, stung to the heart by such an address, "I came hither to seek thee in the expectation that thou might'st speak a word of hope with which to cheer me. But—idiot that I am!—how could I look for hopeful words from thy lips—bird of ill omen!"

"Be warned, chieftain of Clan Gregor," replied the seer. "If thou desirest to live and rule where thy fathers lived and ruled, set free that Sassenach woman. It was her hand that I saw in the *seam* dragging thee to destruction. Her kinsmen have already beaten down our banner. Away with her! She is more to be dreaded than a pestilence that slays its thousands."

"If I deliver her up, I must 'come in the merey' (so the phrase goes) of the Roundhead captain and his canting crew," said Gilderoy. "I tell you, while she remains my prisoner, she is my best security."

"Thou shalt perish, Gilderoy, thou shalt perish in ignominy!" cried the seer, as with a heavy groan he cast his

hands above his head and clenched them convulsively. "They are raising the gibbet already."

Still more bitterly stung by these terrible words, Gilderoy could no longer contain himself. Pulling a pistol from his belt, he levelled it at the old man, and drew the trigger; but the powder was damp, and the weapon missed fire.

The seer never stirred a limb—never moved a muscle. A martyr at the stake could not have shown sterner composure. "Ah!" he said, "and is it thus? But I will not reproach thee. Better to perish than to live and witness the ruin which comes rolling on like a destroying flood. *Beannuich am Morair!*"*

Ashamed of his unmanly conduct, Gilderoy replaced the pistol in his belt, and silently left the spot.

CHAPTER XVIII.

But, doomed and devoted by vassal and lord,
Macgregor has still both his heart and his sword—
Then courage, courage, courage, Grigalach!

Macgregor's Gathering.

AS Gilderoy approached the tower he found Marion Mackinnon listlessly wandering by the wayside—perhaps watching his return. When their eyes met, they both smiled; and he, remembering his rudeness at the gateway overnight, hastened to atone for it by a cordial greeting.

"Ah, Marion," he said, "yonder sun will shine upon a desolate tower to-morrow, and we will hail its rising as fugitives afar among the hills."

"An' you be safe," she answered, with a deep blush, "it doesna matter whaur the rising sun may shine upon us, near or afar. But what's to come o' the Lowland lady? She's no used to mak' her bed on the moor, amang the slae-bushes and the brackens."

"She must go with us, Marion; and I trust you will be her faithful guardian."

* In English—"Bless the chief!"

"But she may dee on the hills; for she's ill and disconsolate," said Marion. "Oh, it was a pity that ever she cam' here ava. As long as we keep her from her friends, there will be fierce feud against us."

"Think you that setting her free would heal the feud?" cried Gilderoy.

"God kens!" sighed Marion. "But when will it be healed? Will it ever be healed?"

"Not while the Roundhead captain is flushed with victory. I must endeavour to recruit my broken strength, and keep him at bay after Loehiel's manner. I seek to share with gallant Loehiel the glory and renown of resistance to the Southron regicides."

"They'll come," said Marion, with downeast eyes that swam in tears. "and they'll burn and destroy the haill glen and the tower, and spread death and desolation ower a'."

"But," returned Maegregor, "doubtless the sight of such pitiless ravage, wrought by Saxon invaders, will rouse the true Highland spirit; and when the country rises in its strength, my standard may again wave at the head of a gallant array. Who knows but that the name of Gilderoy—so long linked with scorn and degradation—may yet be pronounced with honour in the exiled court of King Charles the Second, and in every court of Europe, as the name of the compatriot of trusty Loehiel?"

"Oh! Gilderoy, we were happier in the burgh town than ever we hae been in Rannoeh," said Marion; "happier when we ran gathering gowans on the North Inch o' bonny St. Johnstoun, or climbed Kinnoull eliff to the Dragon's Cave on May mornings langsyne."

"Fie, woman! you with a Highland heart, and yet giving way to idle repining!" exclaimed Maegregor, with a reproachful gesture. "You, who shall one day be a chieftain's lady, should never yield to fear, but rather strive to restore to the downeast that high courage which an evil hour has depressed."

"A chieftain's lady?" repeated Marion, sadly, as big tears slowly chased each other down her cheeks, and her little foot toyed nervously with the sprigs of heather among which it was half buried. "That high dignity may fa' to the lot o' the Lowland lady; for she has great beauty, and broad lands, and muckle gear to win the love o' a chief; but it canna fa' to mine, for I am but a simple Highland maid, wi' little mair

to ca' my ain than the silken plaid around me, and thae braw jewels that you gifted me yoursel'."

"Cease, cease, Marion; you pain me exceedingly," said Gilderoy. "The lady is but a hostage in my hands—nothing more. And I pray you, be gentle and forbearing with her; soften the hardships which she must endure; watch over her, and tend her as a sister."

Ah! he little knew how faithful Marion had been to her trust; how she had intercepted the poisoned bowl and the uplifted steel! For Judith, when her insensate fury cooled down, had besought Marion to keep silence on the dreadful subject, and to entreat Lady Annabel to do the same; and Marion had obeyed, so that Gilderoy was in ignorance of the desperate perils through which his fair captive had passed. Still, in her heart of hearts, Marion was resolved to be most unfaithful to her trust. She was strongly touched with pity for the lady's misfortunes; but with this feeling there mingled not only that of jealousy—an intense foreboding that Annabel's beauty and wealth would captivate Gilderoy—but also a rooted conviction that the lady's deliverance would effectually appease the wrath of the enemy. Therefore was she waiting her opportunity to set her free.

"Speak to me a word of courage," said Gilderoy. "No one speaks aught but words of evil augury. Bid me go forth and fight, like my fathers, for the honour of the clan."

"The honour o' the clan can never suffer stain as lang as you uphald your father's banner," responded Marion. "Go forth, Gilderoy! and may victory follow every shout of your slogan, every flash of your claymore!" She was looking him steadily in the face, and the tears had dried on her cheeks, and her eyes beamed with a hopeful lustre. "Although a murky tempest-cloud has broken in thunder over your head, the bolt hasna shivered Clan-Alpine's pine. Go forth, Gilderoy! and soon may the sun o' fortune, bursting through the stormy gloom, mak' a bricht and happy day."

The appearance of Dobbie Hackston put a period to the colloquy, and Marion instantly glided out of sight.

"There's anither scout come in," said the soldier, "and he reports that the enemy are still on the advance."

"We have still good time to retreat," said Gilderoy.

"I wish we were aff to the hills, and kent the best or the warst o' it," said Dobbie. "Suspense is dreadfu' Better a finger aff than aye wagging."

They returned together to the tower. Marion, however, had preceded them, and was now in close conference with Lady Annabel, whom she had informed, among other interesting news of the morning, of the approaching council of the head men of the clan.

"If it were possible," said Annabel, a sudden thought striking her, "I would go down to that council, and appeal to the clansmen in person. *They* have no interest in prolonging my captivity. I could show them how peace might be restored."

"But would you be safe among such a band?"

"Safe! Am I safe now? I will dare all hazards. Suffer me, my dear girl, to go down to the hall when the council is met, and the consequences will lie on my own shoulders. Will you grant this favour? But stay—it will bring you under suspicion, and that is what I would wish to avoid."

"We'll mak' it appear that you went down unken't to me and unken't to a'body," said Marion. "Yes, madam, you shall gang; and may God speed you. Tell them that a' feud will cease as soon as you're at liberty. Mak' ony promise they seek, and I dinna doubt o' your success."

It was past the hour appointed for the council before any of the head men responded to the summons. Numbers of the common clansmen loitered about the tower, but to none of that class was it permitted to enter the place of meeting until their betters had done so, and even then their presence would only be suffered as that of spectators, having no share in the deliberations.

A peculiar class among the Highlanders, namely, the "elders of the tribe," occupied an influential position in the economy of clanship. They claimed and exercised the right of controlling the chief in all his more important proceedings. "Although the chief," says the historian of the Highlands and Highland Clans, "had great power with his clan in the different relations of landlord, leader, and judge, his authority was far from absolute, as he was obliged to consult the leading men of the clan in matters of importance—in things regarding the clan or particular families, in removing differences, punishing or redressing injuries, preventing law-suits, supporting declining families, and declaring war against, or adjusting terms of peace with, other clans." This commendable system, which imposed a curb upon the abuse of power, prevailed all over the Highlands;

and among the Macgregors of Rannoch, broken clan as they were, the ancient usage was respected. Their leading men, though sadly reduced in numbers, clung tenaciously to their rights. But when Gilderoy succeeded to the chieftainship he began to act very much at his own hand and upon his own responsibility. A comparative stranger to Highland customs, he not unfrequently slighted and infringed them, and by so doing undermined the foundations of his own position. His haughty, self-willed, and domineering demeanour served to raise discontent in the minds of those whom perhaps he expected should be dazzled by the success of his predatory exploits. He did not consult the elders before the raid of Dunavaig, nor did he do so in gathering followers to oppose the Roundheads. As soon as news of the enemy's march reached him, he despatched the *Crian Tarigh*, or, Fiery Cross, to call the clan to his side, and solicited assistance from such of the neighbouring septs as were on friendly terms with him. Whatever the discontent that existed among the elders of the Macgregors, they held it to be their bounden duty to fly to arms when they saw the fiery symbol, and learned that Cromwell's soldiery were advancing to devastate their country. But when they heard from the lips of Gilderoy himself the real causes of hostilities, their discontent manifested itself undisguisedly. The most of them disbelieved the story of Dunavaig's treachery, and all denounced the abduction of Lady Annabel Rutherford, declaring that she should be honourably liberated, as a means of preventing hostilities. Gilderoy, however, stubbornly refused to do anything but fight, relying on certain success; and the result was what he might have foreseen—humiliating defeat.

The elders accompanied him in his retreat to the tower; for they had no other resource, after appearing in arms against the government. Previous to the hour of council they consulted together a good while in the vicinity of the tower; but they could discover little or no prospect of extricating themselves from the fatal dilemma in which the hot-headed precipitancy of Gilderoy had involved them.

When they passed into the hall, a crowd of clansmen poured in after them. Gilderoy, pale and agitated, received them with saddened courtesy. The elders arranged themselves around the oaken table, and silently awaited what communication Gilderoy had to make. In like silence stood the common clansmen grouped behind.

During this gloomy interval the figure of an aged weird-looking Celt, clad in a sky-blue mantle, suddenly arose from where he had been sitting in the shade, underneath one of the deep-embayed windows, and pushed his way to the head of the table, upon which he set a harp strung with brass wire. Raising his rapt visage to the vaulted roof—his brilliant eyes fastening piercingly on vacancy—he ran his fingers over the strings, and after a jangling prelude, struck into something like a strain of heroic music, which he accompanied with a song. The song was in Gaelic, and appeared to be an ancient composition detailing the genealogy and the heroic achievements of the Clan Gregor. When the song came to an end, the bard, snatching up his harp, resumed his seat under the window.

This attempt to stir the flagging soul of clanship produced little effect on the assemblage. The strains of the bard seemed to have lost all their intrinsic power. Gilderoy then spoke. He commented bitterly on the want of energy displayed by many of his assumed friends and allies. Had all the men behaved with their accustomed valour, the day must have gone against the enemy. Still, everything was not lost, and he counselled retreat to the inaccessible wilds, believing that Campion would content himself with the capture of the tower, and attempt no other enterprise.

The elders listened moodily to all he said; and what answer could they make? There was a deep pause, and then one of them broke the silence by suggesting that an attempt should be made to treat with the enemy, whose wrath they might mollify by the liberation of the captive lady.

“I appeal to you, men of Clan Gregor! I appeal to you for justice!” exclaimed a female voice in the hall, and Lady Annabel herself broke through the throng and reached the foot of the table. She was very pale, and she trembled much; but resolution shone in every glance of her steady eye. Her apparition-like entrance, and her great beauty, produced a profound sensation, and the mountaineers, of whatever degree, gazed with wonder, admiration, and awe on her lovely features and exquisite form. “I appeal to you,” she cried, “against the madness of your leader. Counsel him to liberate me from this wretched thralldom, and if I am set free, my best endeavours shall be exerted to stay the effusion of blood, and to restore peace to your

country. On my bended knees will I implore the English commander to grant you good and honourable terms."

"She says well," cried several voices. "Let her go."

"There is deep-laid treachery here!" exclaimed Gilderoy, seizing Annabel by the arm. "How came you from your chamber? Do they keep neither watch nor ward?"

"I pledge my troth, clansmen, that I will strive to obtain sure peace," cried Annabel. "Send me to the English camp, or allow me to communicate in writing to the English captain."

"Send a message offering to free the woman," said one of the council. "If we delay, not even her influence and entreaties may avail us one jot. The other prisoner, too, may make interest."

What other prisoner? thought Annabel, for, as Gilderoy had strictly enjoined that the fact of Sir John Spiers being brought to the tower should be concealed from her, she was as yet in complete ignorance of it.

"I saw the white hand of a woman knitting the knot of death!" enunciated a hollow voice; and the seer, Donach of the Den, stood on the threshold of the hall, with his right arm uplifted. "Beware! children of my tribe. Send her away in peace, that the threatened doom may be averted!"

There was great confusion.

"Impostor! traitor!" muttered Gilderoy between his teeth. "Evan Glas," he cried, "away with her! Look to her safe keeping, as you shall answer with your life."

Annabel offered no resistance when Evan led her away.

Fuming with mortification, Gilderoy at once declared the council dissolved. "Though not a man should follow me," he cried, "I shall still uphold the banner of Clan Alpine in the face of every foe."

"I am ready to bear a message to the Saxon captain offering to release the lady on safe conditions," said an elder.

"The Saxon captain would hang you upon the nearest tree," responded Gilderoy.

He strode angrily from the hall, and so there was an end of the council.

Preparations were immediately begun for the evacuation of the fortalice. All the valuables, the spoils of many raids in the Low country, were taken out and buried in the earth

at a spot known only to Gilderoy and one or two of his most trusted confidants; and next, the arms and ammunition were removed. It was arranged that the men should be divided into several small parties, taking different routes, but with a common rendezvous in the end. One party was to have Lady Annabel in charge, and another Sir John Spiers. Gilderoy, at the head of a third, was to watch the motions of the enemy. The fortalice was to be left bare and tenantless, that the foe might find nothing on which to wreak his wrath save the old walls. The inhabitants of the elachan were to betake themselves to the hills, setting their rude huts on fire behind them.

But at the eleventh hour old Judith caused a great dilemma by declaring that upon no account whatsoever would she quit the tower. She was incapable of bearing fatigue, she said; she saw clearly that ruin was brimming in the cup; and therefore she would stay and meet the fate appointed for her. No remonstrance, no entreaty, could shake this resolution. Marion, in an excess of grief, vowed that she too would remain and share the fate of her grandmother; but Judith set her face firmly against any such companionship, and commanded Marion to depart on pain of drawing down her direst curses.

There was no help for it but just to allow the stubborn old woman to remain where she was; and Gilderoy was the more reconciled to this course by reflecting that she might be able to furnish him with important intelligence, should she pass unscathed by the enemy, and indeed there was little fear that any harm would befall her. As to Marion, it was absurd to think that she should stay, and therefore she had to take a sorrowing farewell of her half-crazed relative.

As the sun was going down, the outlaws finally evacuated the tower, which was left under the solitary guardianship of old Judith.

CHAPTER XIX.

“Where are the lads o’ this castle?”

Says the Lammikin.

“They are a’ wi’ Lord Weire hunting,”

The false nourice did sing.

Ballad of “Lammikin.”

TWILIGHT gathered around the abandoned tower of the Macgregors with a blustering wind and a heavy rain. But ever and anon the bluster of the gale and the plash of the rain were mingled with the faint roll and rattle of distant drums. The victorious Roundheads were advancing.

Some of the women belonging to the hamlet lingered about the tower till well on in the summer night, bemoaning the evil fortune meted out to the clan. Old Judith kept wandering up and down, and out and in, speaking to herself, but paying no heed to these gossips, who feeling hurt by such treatment resented it by going away altogether.

At midnight Donach of the Den presented himself in the hall, and sitting down by the cold hearth muffled his head in his plaid, and spoke not a word. Judith still continued her aimless wearisome peregrinations, repeatedly locking and unlocking the outer gate, and muttering to herself: “I needna flee to save the dregs o’ a wretched existence. I’ve wrought sair to raise that silly lassie to high dignity, and she winna be raised by hand o’ mine. I’ll work nae mair.”

The storm passed away with the night, and morning came with mellow sunshine. The seer still occupied his seat by the cold black hearth, and Judith, having bolted the gate for the last time, had stationed herself at an upper casement of the tower.

The drums, which had ceased early in the night, were now sounding nearer, and in a short while the forces of Colonel Campion were descried defiling down the hill sides to the eastward of the tower. They descended the heathy slopes in gallant array—the red-cross banner flying, the trumpets and drums resounding, and the bagpipes of the allied Highlanders yelling forth their respective pibrochs.

Judith beheld the troops surround the tower at a good

distance, and begin preparations for attack. She ground her teeth at the sight with impotent fury. "An' I had but ae piece o' cannon mounted on the battlement," she said to herself "and plenty o' pouter and shot, and a lichted peat in my hand, scores o' thae villains should bite the dust before the tower o' the Macgregors was ta'en. But wae worth me! I'm but a feckless auld wife."

The tower was speedily summoned by a trumpeter. Without much unnecessary delay Judith went down the stair, crossed the courtyard, unbolted and opened the gate, and invited the man to enter.

This ready surrender amazed the soldier, who after gazing for some moments at the leering hag, demanded—"Where is James Macgregor, commonly called Gilderoy?"

"Awa wi' the craws. What gart you be sac langsome in coming?" answered Judith, with a mocking laugh, and giving her skinny hands a wave in the air above her head. "An' you doubt my word, come in and look, and believe your ain een."

"And his followers?—where are his followers?—how many of them compose the garrison of the place?"

"Come in," said the crone, pointing to the inner door, "and you'll find naebody but auld Donach o' the Den waiting to spae your fortune, and to tell you how mony days lie between you and the gallows."

The trumpeter made haste back to his captain, and reported the singular colloquy.

"The nest is empty; the birds are flown!" exclaimed Ranald Vourigh. "Och hone for Gilderoy!"

He then advanced at a rapid pace towards the gate, with drawn claymore and braced target, heedless of the warning which the more cautious Elshender shouted after him: "For any sake, Ranald Vourigh, dinna gang ower hard unto the door o' the tower. Remember, man, that at the intaking o' the strong tower of Thebez, a certain woman cast a piece o' a millstane upon Abimelech's head, and crackit the venturesome fool's crown. I hope, Mr. Jasper," added he, turning to his master, "*you'll* hae mair gude sense."

The old woman, who narrowly watched the advancing Highlander, recognized him as he drew near; but probably her recognition of him was much quickened by hearing Elshender bawl out his name. "Ranald Vourigh!" she exclaimed, "do you mind when the raven that croaked evil to

the children o' Clan Gregor took wing to save his worthless life frae the fire that should hae scorched him?"

"Ay, by my troth, auld wife, but you hae a gude memory," answered Macpherson, with a dark scowl and a fierce laugh. "But that raven, though he flew far and wide, finding sma' rest for the sole o' his foot, and yearning for vengeance sae lang that whiles he feared it wad never be gotten, has flown hame at last with the fire aneath his wing that will burn and destroy a' his enemies. Ay, auld wife, that raven will clap his wings in triumph ower the smoking ashes o' Gilderoy's nest. Come on, colonel! Come on, men! The tower is our ain!"

He boldly entered the courtyard, and was soon followed by a crowd of soldiers and mountaineers, who made the clear air ring with their stentorian huzzahs and shrill halloos.

The tower was searched all over, but no other inmate was found save Donach of the Den. Colonel Campion put the seer and Judith "to the question," eliciting the information that Gilderoy and his followers, carrying the two prisoners along with them, had retired to the mountains. He was much astonished to hear that Sir John Spiers had been treated with the utmost rigour. Rollo made eager inquiry respecting Lady Annabel, but Judith would condescend to say very little about her.

"Were you to tie a burning match between the auld jade's fingers, she wad soon find plenty to tell," said Macpherson.

Jasper, however, protested against any form of torture being resorted to, and it was not done. But Judith and the seer were placed in separate confinement to prevent their acting as spies.

The troops established themselves in and around the tower. By this time they were disencumbered of their wounded, the latter having at last been left behind under the charge of friendly Highlanders; and Mr. Gilchrist had seen it to be his duty to remain in attendance on the sufferers.

"Now, colonel," said Jasper Rollo, as he and Campion sat down in 'the painted chamber' to partake of some refreshment,

"Thus far into the bowels of the land
Have we marched on,"

but still the prize eludes our grasp. To what hand shall we turn next?"

Ranald Vourigh, who had casually entered the room, answered—"We should haud about the tower for a day or twa, till we smell the breath o' the country. Gilderoy winna gang far; and if we get the country to join us, he'll be hunted doon wi' little din."

Here a corporal of the guards announced that the Chief Ian Vich Ian M'Ian, who held considerable power and influence in the neighbouring country, had arrived at the fortalice, desiring a conference with Colonel Campion.

The Roundhead left his repast, and gave audience to his visitor in the hall.

The chief was a stalwart Highlander, past middle age, but possessing all the nerve and vigour of confirmed hardy manhood. A band of his vassals, well appointed and armed to the teeth, stood in the courtyard, exchanging pipes of tobacco and pinches of snuff with the other Celts. After making a respectful salutation to the colonel, whose appearance seemed to impress him favourably, the chief broke at once into an explanation of the object of his visit.

"It was only yesterday, colonel, that I heard of your march, and your victory, and all that," he said. "It rejoiced my heart, I assure you, to hear how you had elawed the Macgregors' crowns, and I wished I had been there myself to help you? but it was not in my power, beecause, you see, I was out on the hill at the stalking—and pretty sport, too, you may believe, for there's not better stalking ground in the Highlands of Scotland than at Tullochmore. You must take a day with us some time, colonel. It would be a great pleasure to all our country, I am sure. You could not but hear that I refused to rise with Middleton, and was not at Lochgarry at all, for he once put a slight upon me, and I did not count him fit for a cateran, far less a leader of the clans, as I have said in many a good company. So, colonel, I came on this morning by peep of day to have speech of you, and I hope you will be free and outspoken with me, for I want to put a question. Is it against Gilderoy *alone* that you come here?"

Campion succinctly explained the occasion and object of his expedition.

"Yes—well, to be sure, it was a sore business—a black business—the raid of Dunavaig," said the chief, "and Gilderoy was a fool to bring away the bonny lass, unless he had a sheep's eye after her himself. But I hope and trust,

colonel, that no garrison is to be posted here, nor the country at large held down for Gilderoy's fault."

"I have no orders to plant garrisons here," returned Cam-
pion. "My object is to root out this gang of banditti; and
I shall give neither sleep to mine eyes nor slumber to mine
eyelids until I have accomplished my design."

"The country will give you thanks; and I may say for
myself that I am ready to bring a good force to back you."

"You are an honest and loyal subject of the Common-
wealth," said the colonel.

"Hout ay, we're all subjects," cried the chief, apparently
wincing under the idea of subjection to such a government,
"though you need not be casting that in our teeth every day.
Nobody says a word against the Lord Protector. We wish
to live at peace with him, and according to our own customs
and fashions. He must not meddle with our ways of doing,
and we will not meddle with him. Garrisons here, and gar-
risons there, and garrisons the other place—devil confound
them all! they are the torment and disgrace of any country,
sucking out our very marrow and making fools of us, to say
no worse of them. The Lord Protector, nor General Monk,
nor yourself neither, must not try to put a bridle into our
mouths and a yoke upon our necks, when we are doing
nothing to anger any of you."

The Roundhead looked puzzled. "I have come here," he
said, "to endeavour to vindicate the sacred cause of order,
justice, and righteousness—to restrain the unbridled licence
of lawless men, who prevent the ignorant people being weaned
from their savage habits."

"Tut, tut! you may spare yourself the trouble," cried Ian
Vich Ian, with a careless laugh. "You are free to do with
Gilderoy as you like: the country will be well quit of him!
but, take my word, colonel, you will never make the High-
lands any better for all your righteousness. Let me tell you
—and I think I ought to know the country and the people
much better than you can pretend to do—let me tell you,
soberly, that if you try to impose your new-fangled notions
anent the regiment of kirk and state upon the Highland
folk, you will wind yourself a bonny pirln, and Cromwell will
not thank you at the tail of the day. See what is going on
just now in Lochiel's country on account of the planting of
garrisons, and what not."

"Am I to understand, M'Ian, that I make a false step if

I attempt to set up the power of the law, and to rid the country of marauders who make all around them suffer?"

"Gilderoy had more good sense in his head than to make me suffer," replied the chief. "Had he tried to make me suffer, I would have been here long ere now, with the torch and the brand, and so saved you a long march. In a word, colonel, if you intend to make war upon Gilderoy alone, I am ready to give you all the assistance in my power; but if you have some scheme behind your hand to bring us all, every man and mother's son of us, under the lash of the Lowland law——"

"I pledge my word that I have no designs against any other than Gilderoy," said Campion. "As to planting garrisons, I have no instructions."

"Good and well! Then we shall shake hands and make a paction upon it. And more, I shall send off word this moment for my men to join."

The chief accordingly went outside, and despatched his messenger, and then went his rounds among the leaders of the allied Highlanders.

Campion returned to the painted chamber.

"Is M'Ian friendly?" asked Rollo.

"Friendly after a fashion," answered the Roundhead, with a vexed smile, and he repeated what had passed. "The men of note here," he said, "are not one whit better affected towards the Commonwealth than to the true faith. They are glad to see Gilderoy put down, because he has been as a thorn in their side and an adder in their path; but if you attempt to restrain and reform their own disorderly habits, they will turn round and curse you to your face. They will not brook close acquaintance with the Lowland law, as they call it."

"They suspect," said Rollo, "that the sword now unsheathed against Gilderoy will ultimately be suspended *in terrorum* above their own heads."

"Precisely," returned the colonel; "and as we are dealing with such inflammable materials, we must take care lest accident kindle a general conflagration about us."

"In such circumstances," said Rollo, "it might be advisable to treat with Gilderoy on the easiest terms, for the sake of Lady Annabel, and so put an end to this *embroglio*."

"That opinion is forcing itself upon my own mind," said Brandon. "To destroy the marauder would do the land a

service; but Gilderoy's head would be rather dearly purchased at the expense of the lady's life. Sir John Spiers I care nothing about; let him take his fate. We can punish his treason by confiscating Spierhaughs."

CHAPTER XX.

He mounted himself on his steed so tall
 And her on a fair palfrey,
 And slung his bugle about his neck,
 And roundly they rode away.

Fair Emmeline scarce had ridden a mile,
 A mile forth of the town,
 When she overheard her father's men
 Come galloping o'er the down.

Fair Emmeline sighed, fair Emmeline wept,
 And aye her heart was woe:
 While 'twixt her love and the carlish knight
 Pass'd many a baneful blow.

Ballad of "The Child of Elle."

ANNABEL never lost heart so much as when acquainted that she was about to be conveyed away to the hills, in consequence of the near approach of the Roundheads. The same pony on which she had made her journey to the tower was again pressed into her service, and another was procured for Marion Mackinnon, who was appointed to accompany her. The fair captive's escort was formed of a small band of clansmen under the command of Evan Glas, and attended by the bloodhound belonging to the tower.

The route was north-westerly, and the stormy night was passed under the scanty shelter of a wood; but the Highlanders were careful enough to construct a kind of wattled harbour, which protected the two females from the inclemency of the weather. Next morning the same route was resumed—leading through pathless deserts where neither human dwelling nor human face could be seen, and where everything was silent and desolate. Under other circumstances, Marion would have exhausted all her gentle and winning arts to sustain and cheer the lady's spirits; but now the kind-hearted girl, exceedingly downcast by the terrible calamities which had overtaken her own friends, was herself in sore need of consolation, and bemoaned parting

from her grandmother, as though she should never see her more.

In the evening the little band entered a rocky glen, down which the setting sun poured his parting splendours, and soon came in sight of a thatched hut nestling at the foot of a tall naked cliff.

"Yon's our lodging, madam," said Marion, pointing to the cottage; "and we're to stay there till we get mair orders frae Gilderoy. The guidwife is an honest, kindly woman, and winna do you wrang."

"But where is Gilderoy?" asked the lady. "Is he in that house?"

"No, he's no in that house," replied Marion. "He's watching the enemy [and gathering strength. We mayna see him very soon, an' all goes well wi' him."

The house was of good dimensions, and had a barn or byre behind for the accommodation of three or four milch kine and several goats, which a flaxen-headed young boy was slowly driving home from their pasture. A comely matron, carrying a chubby infant in her arms, came to the door of the cottage, apparently attracted by the lowing of the cows, for she seemed surprised when her eyes fell on the armed party; but immediately putting on a smile of welcome, she sauntered out to meet the latter, and saluted them cheerfully in Gaelic. Evan Glas took her aside, and had a brief whispered conversation with her, after which she came forward and stared at Annabel, and then, speaking a few words to Marion, she hastened back to the cottage.

"Her husband, she says, hasna come back frae the south yet," whispered Marion to Annabel. "He gade doon the country wi' a drove o' black cattle, belonging to the Laird o' Balorick; and weel for her and the bairns that he did sac; for, had he been at hame, he wad ha'e followed Gilderoy to the battle, and micht ha'e been slain."

On their dismounting at the door, Marion led the lady into the cottage, which they found tolerably clean, but scant and poor in its furnishings and conveniences. A thin wooden partition divided it somewhat equally into two apartments, the inner or best one of which was appointed for the use of the fair guests. The matron (Mrs. Helen Macnab, by name, as Marion mentioned) was complacent and kind. The men of the escort, who carried a sufficient supply of provisions with them, did not need to infringe upon her little stock. They

disposed of themselves in groups behind the house, and fell to their supper with hearty good will.

At nightfall Mrs. Macnab left her two guests by themselves in their room, and betook herself to rest along with her children, of whom she had three—two young boys, and the child (a girl) in the cradle. The outer door was fast locked, and a couple of sentries were posted outside. The rest of the band laid themselves down to sleep, part in the byre and part in the open air. Neither Annabel nor Marion slept much that night, and both were astir early in the morning.

It was a weary day—a long, tedious, weary day. Gilderoy did not make his appearance, and there were no tidings from him; at least, if there were tidings, Evan Glas kept them to himself. None of the band interfered in the remotest degree with the privacy of the prisoner, and Evan came in only once to inquire concerning her health.

During the earlier part of the day the lady observed Marion repeatedly in private conversation with Mrs. Macnab, and in the afternoon, when the most of the Highlanders, including Evan Glas, had gone to kill deer in the neighbourhood, she again saw her at a short distance from the cottage, talking earnestly with a young clansman of the band. But she took no notice of these circumstances, as Marion herself made no allusion to them.

The hunting party returned with three fat bucks, which they dressed for supper. Shortly afterwards, about one-half of the whole band marched away as if despatched on an expedition; and Marion on inquiring of her brother, who still remained, the reason of this, was told that a message had been received from Gilderoy, directing a certain number of the men to be sent to join him at a particular place.

The cottage door was locked earlier than on the previous evening, and Mrs. Macnab and her family retired earlier to rest.

When all was quiet, and the lady was about to prepare for her couch, Marion confessed, in great agitation, that she had concocted a plan for her escape that very night!

Annabel started with astonishment, and yet she had been suspecting something of the kind, though without allowing her troubled hopes to build upon it. "My dear girl," she said, "I cannot be accessory to anything that may endanger you. In the present desperate pitch of Gilderoy's fortunes he will be ready to punish treachery with death."

"I fear nae danger, madam," replied the girl. "Listen to me. Mrs. Macnab is weel content to let me work my will; and I've engaged Kenneth Drummond, a trusty lad o' the band, to be your guide to a place o' safety. Every obstacle is overcome, and the path o' escape lies open before you. The attempt cannot fail. I gave every one of the clansmen left wi' us, my brither amang the rest—every man except Kenneth—a drink o' milk to their supper, mixed with a powder o' herbs that will make them sleep lang and sound. It was my graudmither that made the powder; for she is weel versed in a' sic skilly things, and I brought some o' it frae the tower in a paper, thinking that I micht have need for it."

"Take care that you have not poisoned the men," said the lady.

"I can rely on my grandmither's skill," returned the girl; "though I never till now dealt amang her drugs. The only thing that I ever tried my hand on was a wash for the face—goat's milk infused wi' sweet violets: a wash that, as an auld Highland sang says, will gar a woman's complexion shine sae fair, that princes will admire her beauty. Naething waur than deep sleep comes o' my grandmither's powder. Kenneth is to watch till the men are a' sound, and then you'll flee, lady, for your life."

"But if Gilderoy should come?" suggested Annabel.

"He's no expected here the nicht," said Marion. "He canna come before the morn; but by that time ye'll be mony miles awa' Kenneth will guide you in a' haste to the south, and you'll soon meet wi' folk able and willing to protect you. I have been hesitating whether I should not tak' my flicht alang wi' you; but after a' I canna leave my friends and my country, and it's for the sake o' friends and country that I hae planned your escape."

"Gilderoy's vengeance will fall upon your head," said the captive.

"He'll never blame me," returned Marion. "How can he? Were I to flee wi' you, my treachery wad be clear; but I'll stay and face the storm, kenning that what I've done will a' end in gude. He'll blame Kenneth, and he'll blame the band for sleeping; but Kenneth will be beyond his reach, and my brither and the men daurna be meddled wi'."

"And what interest has this Kenneth in my welfare that he is ready to encounter so great a peril?" said Annabel.

“No muckle interest, madam; but he’ll risk his life at my bidding; for, to tell the truth, he’s an auld lover o’ mine, and wad do onything to pleasure me. I ken that he will be faithfu’. He’s a braw fellow, and you may freely put your trust in him.”

“If I were assured of your own safety, I would readily embrace the opportunity,” said Annabel. “But they will judge at once that you had a hand in it. You told me that Gilderoy accused you of having connived at my appearance in the hall.”

“But you mauna scruple at the means o’ deliverance opened up to you,” responded Marion, gravely, and with somewhat of an authoritative air. “It’s your duty to avail yoursel’ o’ them, and to trust a kind Providence for the rest. Are you willing to gang wi’ Kenneth?”

“And Kenneth, too; it will bring ruin to the young man,” said Annabel.

“To help your escape is the best way o’ saving Gilderoy himsel’,” said Marion; “for, when you win back to your ain friends, you’ll gar the usurper’s sodgers march hame again, and leave the Macgregors at peace.”

“I shall go down upon my knees to the commander, and implore him to stop the war, as I pledged myself before the council,” said Annabel.

“Then fear naething, but go with Kenneth,” said Marion. “Let me assure you that before I broke the matter to him at all, he had resolved in his ain heart to desert the cause o’ Gilderoy, for there’s been lang a secret hatred betwixt them, and it’s time they were separated for ever. Therefore, spare not a thocht on Kenneth, but say that you’ll go wi’ him, for the hour approaches. Will you go?”

Annabel, in her perplexity, burst into tears; but, eagerly and solemnly pressed by the Highland girl, she at length yielded a reluctant consent to embrace the opportunity of escape.

“May God watch ower you, madam, and bring you triumphantly out o’ a’ troubles!” exclaimed Marion, raising her clasped hands to heaven.

The gloaming deepened in the glen, and all was silent, save when a wakeful bird warbled forth an inconstant carol to the stilly night. Lady Annabel, with a heavy and foreboding heart, made herself ready for her perilous adventure. Marion gave her a gold ring—the blue stone of which she

described to be a potent talisman, and Annabel bestowed on her in return a valuable ring from her own finger.

A slight tap now came to the window, which Marion instantly opened. The lower or moveable half of the window consisted of two wooden boards on hinges, the upper half being filled with bits of coarse, green, knobby glass.

"They are all asleep," said a young Highlander on the outside. "Is the lady ready?"

"Are you ready to go with Kenneth, madam?" inquired Marion, turning round.

Annabel answered tremblingly in the affirmative. Marion waved her hand to the clansman and he disappeared from the window, and immediately the cottage door was heard to open softly.

"You'll no forget me?" said Marion, as she threw herself into the lady's arms, and kissed her cheek and brow again and again.

"Forget you?—never!" responded Annabel. "May God watch over you, Marion, and reward you for your devotion to me. I pray that I may yet see you happy in the realization of all your wishes. Remember that in me you have a friend till death. I shall never forget you. Heaven reward you, I say; for your kindness is beyond all earthly price."

"And as it may be the will o' Heaven that we shall never meet again," said Marion, "I winna hide frae you the secret o' the ither prisoner."

"What other prisoner?" inquired Annabel, in surprise. "Is there another prisoner here?"

"No here; but a prisoner was brought to the tower frae the battle; and I'm sure he's a trusty friend o' your ain, because Gilderoy forbade me mentioning to you a word about him. But I'll let the secret gang, since you are on the road to freedom."

"A trusty friend o' mine!" said Annabel. "What is his name?"

"Sir John Spiers."

Annabel started back with a faint shriek. "Heaven help me in this evil hour!" she ejaculated. "Sir John Spiers! Where is he?"

"He was ta'en awa frae the tower by Dobbie Hackston and anither band," returned Marion. "But I canna think his life's in danger. They winna slay him; you needna fear that."

"I care not," said Annabel. "He is the enemy whom I have the most reason to dread. I thank you for this knowledge; and I will cheerfully meet all privations and perils to escape from the machinations of Sir John Spiers. Come, dearest, I must not lose another moment."

They both passed noiselessly through the outer room or kitchen, where the good woman of the house was sleeping, and found the young Highlander standing in the open door. There they shook hands for the last time, and then Annabel glided out on tiptoe. A sudden dizziness struck into her brain, and she staggered, and might have sunk to the ground had not the youth seized her by the arm and led her along. A sentinel was lying in front of the cottage, in profound slumber, and farther off the remainder of the band lay stretched on the grass equally unconscious.

"The powder that Marion put into the milk has wrought wonders," whispered Kenneth. "There they all lie, drowned in slumber, like dead men."

The bloodhound was loose, and now stole suspiciously and with a low growl towards the lady; but a wave of Kenneth's hand pacified it. He stooped and patted it on the head, and tried to wile it away with him, but it would not stir a step. It fawned upon him in return for his caresses; but follow him it would not; and at last it lay down among the sleepers, and looked demurely in his face. With a muttered curse Kenneth desisted caressing the obstinate brute, and conducted Annabel to a little thicket beyond the house, where her pony was standing tied to a tree. He unfastened it, assisted her to the saddle, and then taking hold of the bridle, led the way down the glen.

It was not dark, for there was scarcely a fleck of cloud in the blue firmament, and the west still shone faintly with the lingering light of day. Annabel's anxious heart throbbled tumultuously with conflicting hopes and fears; and sometimes her fears gained so much the ascendancy that they seemed almost to quench the beacon light of hope. When she regained some little composure, she began to scrutinize her guide. He was a shapely athletic youth, with a handsome ingenuous countenance, and was fully armed with broadsword and target, dirk and pistols.

"Shall we have a far journey before we reach a place of security?" she asked, desirous of engaging him in conversation.

"It will be all night and part of to-morrow too," answered Kenneth, who spoke the English tongue rather fluently. "You see I have provided for the journey," he added, pointing to a small canvas bag, containing cakes and roasted venison, which was attached to the saddle. "The journey will be pretty long; but there is no danger to dread."

"Unless Gilderoy arrives at the cottage to-night, and gives pursuit," said Annabel. "At all events there will be pursuit, I doubt not, as soon as the men awake from their charmed sleep."

"I would not care for Gilderoy, or for the men either," returned Kenneth. "But yonder hound that I have often fed out of my own hand—I should have drawn my dirk across her throat. Might not I go back and do it yet?" He stopped the pony, and looked back fiercely towards the cottage, which could not now be distinguished in the distance.

"For mercy's sake, no!" implored Annabel. "Let us forward with best speed."

"Marion forgot the dog when she gave out the milk," said Kenneth; "and as the dog is Marion's favourite, I did not feel in my heart to do it harm; for I thought I could have lured it away with us. The dog, if need be, could track us to the world's end. I should not have been so simple. But no matter," he added, more cheerfully, as he again put the pony in motion, "no matter; we have got the start. They cannot overtake us though they had all the sleuth-hounds in Scotland. Pshaw! No, no. I am a fool to care about the dog."

"Have you left any friends among Gilderoy's followers?"

"Not one."

"And no friends in the Macgregors' country?"

"Only my foster-father, and a young orphan boy, his grandson," responded Kenneth. "My foster-father is frail and old, and the boy has been long sick, as if past all cure. The rest of my friends are in their graves, and some of them fell in the feuds of the clan. I have fought and bled for the clan, too," he added; "but I am weary of Gilderoy, and I will fight for him no more. Ever since he came to Rannoch, he has been bringing misfortunes on us by his own rashness, and he scoffs at all sober counsel, and will not listen to words of wisdom and prudence. He has ruined the clan."

"Why did the men fight for him against General Monk's troops?" said Annabel.

"You did not see the battle, and therefore you can say nothing about it," said Kenneth. "Trust me, lady, if the men's hearts had been in the work, we would have destroyed the enemy in the pass."

"It is very sad that the crimes of Gilderoy should be visited on the heads of all his kindred and dependants."

"But who can help it?" cried the youth. "He has been driving us, like cattle, to the shambles; but it has come to an end. We have found out that he never had a Highland heart. He is Saxon to the core. He despises our traditions and customs, and holds us as his born slaves. I cannot away with his haughtiness. I would sometimes come to the tower to speak a word with Marion, and he would drive me away with scoff and scorn, though I have shed my blood for him. By the honour of my father! but he shall repent his insolence."

"Perhaps he is in love with Marion?" suggested Annabel.

"In love with Marion?" cried Kenneth, with a dark smile, and a dark glance towards the lady. "To be sure; and if he could win a wealthy Lowland lady as his bride, he would cast Marion from him like a weed. Never tell me that he kept you as a hostage, and wanted your ransom. He had another and deeper aim. I know his guile. But he shall neither wed with you nor with Marion, for he shall perish on the gallows-tree, like his brother!"

The conversation dropped off at this interesting point as if by mutual consent. It had entirely satisfied Annabel about the fidelity of her guide.

The glen was soon cleared, and Kenneth led the way across a dreary range of mountains. A wind now sprang up, blowing in fitful southing gusts, which the dense pine woods scattered among the hills answered with a deep and solemn sound like the rushing of a sea. The blast drifted broken masses of cloud into the heavens, blotting out the lustre of the "sentinel stars," and the shades of the summer night fell darker on the desert solitude.

When the timid beam of morn was brightening the cloudy east, the fugitives began to ascend a narrow crooked pass, which scarred the side of a mountain like a rugged rent caused by some convulsion of Nature. At intervals both sides of the gully were so thickly set with birch and hazel-trees, that the branches intertwining overhead formed a close canopy, and cast dense obscurity on the irregular path beneath, which, moreover, was rendered doubly hazardous

by splintered fragments of rock lying about. Here the lady was obliged to dismount and continue her progress on foot, while the guide led the hardy little horse behind him.

It was a very difficult, not to say dangerous passage; and Kenneth was assuring the lady that the worst of it had been got over, when a strange sound, unlike any other sound which had as yet been borne by the wind—and many a mystic and weirdlike sound strikes the traveller's ear in "desert wildernesses"—came echoing up the deep pass with a fresh gust of the gale. The Highlander stood still, and turned his ear to listen. His ruddy cheek grew pale.

"Are we pursued?" faltered the lady. "Is it a sound of pursuit?"

"It is," answered Kenneth, in a hoarse low tone. "That hell-hound!—she is on our track. She is near the bottom of the pass. The men have discovered all."

"We are lost!" cried Annabel, in accents of despair.

The youth went down the gully a few paces, and parting the overhanging boughs, listened for some moments, and then stole back again, unslinging his target from his back.

"They are coming—a band of them," he said. "I must find some place where to make a stand."

"Alas! what can you do against so many?" sighed Annabel.

"Do?" responded Kenneth. "I can fight, and I can die. But I must seek vantage ground."

They hurried up the pass, and vantage ground was speedily attained at a place where a huge boulder, nearly four feet high, lay in the road, leaving only a straight passage on one side, while a spreading tree slanting out from the bank flung its drooping branches over the head of the stone. Here Kenneth cast the pony loose, and urging it up the path beyond the obstruction, enjoined Annabel to follow.

"Retire behind some of the upper crags, lady, to escape the arrow and bullets," he said. "As for me, I shall take post behind this great stone, and while I live not a man of them shall pass it."

"But," said the lady, "if I surrender myself at once, they may spare your life."

"You shall never surrender in my presence," said Kenneth, firmly. "Up, up—and leave me to meet them here. I know how to sell my life as dearly as I can."

Annabel accordingly retired up the pass, and coming

to a projecting rock, sat down behind it in tears and horror.

Kenneth, ensconcing himself behind the boulder, peered cautiously over it, the canopy of clustering foliage effectually concealing his head. He held one of his pistols cocked in his hand. The wind blowing strongly in his face, the sounds of voices and footsteps down the path were heard approaching, and at length several Highlanders emerged into view, following the ban-dog of the tower that ran before them, snuffing the ground, and tracing the slot with unerring instinct. The light of dawn was now in the sky, and the birds were chirping in the trees. The pursuers came on, clambering over the scattered stones, and occasionally calling out to each other and to the hound; and it was with a "stern joy" that Kenneth discovered the foremost to be Gilderoy himself!

The hound suddenly stopped short, and raising her head, gazed keenly up the pass, and began to howl and grind her fangs. That same instant a stream of fire flashed over the rugged top of the grey boulder and through the green dewy leaves—a shot rattled sharply through the air—and a Highlander, who had stepped before the chief to drive on the sleuth-hound, leaped from the ground like a stricken deer, casting out his arms, and then fell on his face, without so much as a moan.

A confused cry burst from the pursuers, who were rapidly increasing in numbers, as one after another hastened into sight. Drawing their broadswords, they brandished them about their heads, but seemed irresolute as to advancing, being ignorant of what force might be in ambuscade above.

"Forward, men of Clan Gregor!" exclaimed Gilderoy. "Will you stand to be shot like deer!"

Another flash blazed over the great stone, and a second clansman clapped his hand to his forehead, and staggering back stumbled over his fallen comrade.

"Forward—forward!" again shouted Gilderoy, and waving his sword he led the way, his men scrambling after him like a pack of eager hounds, making the gully ring with their savage yells. Not another shot arrested their progress; but the narrow gap at the side of the boulder was filled by the undaunted Kenneth, who with his naked broadsword in his hand, and covering himself with his target, stood prepared to dispute the passage.

The bloodhound, rushing in advance, bounded on her former friend as if to throttle him, undeterred by the gleam of his steel; but his first stroke clove her skull in twain, and his second, aimed full at Gilderoy, though caught by the latter's target, hurled him back upon his followers. The strife now thickened with hate and ferocity on both sides. Some of the enemy attempted to climb over the boulder; but that was impracticable in the press, and they rolled down and were trampled on by their comrades. Kenneth defended himself with the most daring courage, every sweep of his blade seeming to deal destruction. Four or five of the band lay gasping at his feet before the fatal gap. But at last the force of numbers prevailed, and he was slowly driven from his vantage-ground, and then overwhelmed, beaten down, and stabbed to death.

Gilderoy and a few of his men ran up the pass, wondering what had become of the lady; but she was soon discovered in her hiding-place and dragged forth. She was pallid, speechless, and trembling like a leaf.

"Lady," said Gilderoy, "it is not the will of Fate that you shall escape me, for all our lives hang upon your head."

Annabel had not a word to offer.

The pony was soon found and brought back; and Gilderoy had taken the lady's hand to lead her away, when something caused him to start and look suspiciously up the pass.

"What noise was that?" he said.

"I hear nothing but the wind and the branches," answered a clansman.

"I hear footsteps among the stones!" cried another. "Holy Virgin forefend, that we be not taken in our own toils!"

All doubt was put an end to by the clear, prolonged blast of a trumpet, which echoing down from the upper regions of the pass, smote on the ears of the Macgregors like the trump of final doom itself; and immediately after steel morions and breastplates glimmered through the branches above, and a small body of Champion's troops came in sight.

The unfortunate Annabel was scarcely conscious of what happened during the next few minutes. She seemed to be rudely dragged away, and then to sink helplessly to the earth; and then a volley of musketry bellowed like thunder

through the confined pass, shaking the very rocks, and a furious strife surged past her ; and when her senses resumed their wonted sway, she was half-reclining at the foot of a crag, and the tumult of battle was raging down beyond the stone.

All at once she was raised from the ground by a soldier, in whom, to her unutterable astonishment, she fancied she recognized the long-absent Jasper Rollo !

“ You are saved, dearest Annabel, you are saved,” exclaimed he.

The voice thrilled her to the heart. She gazed fixedly and wildly at him, and her first impression was fully confirmed. Jasper Rollo himself stood before her, in the uniform and accoutrements of a Roundhead officer. He was changed, indeed, since she saw him last. His aspect was manlier, his complexion darker, his stature taller ; but the old lineaments, which had been long graven on her memory, were not to be mistaken. With a cry of joy and gladness she fell on his breast and sobbed aloud.

“ Rouse thee, lady,” he cried. “ Summon strength, and come with me. Heavens ! the air is full of death !” he added, as first one bullet and then another clanked and flattened against the rock at his side. He sheltered her behind the jutting crag under which she had fallen. “ Remain here, where you will be safe, till the detachment has driven off the outlaws.”

The roar and clangour of the conflict below waxed louder and louder. Down beyond the boulder the pass was thick with smoke, which ever and anon was streaked with red flashes of muskets and pistols. Suddenly two soldiers emerged from the dense obscurity, and came running up the rugged path at headlong speed.

“ Cowards !” cried Rollo ; “ have you turned your backs to the foe whom you so lately vanquished ?”

“ The sons of Zeruah are too strong for us,” gasped one of the fugitives. “ They have smitten us hip and thigh with a great slaughter. Fly, friend, fly. Your life is in your hand.” And he and his comrade rushed past.

“ ’Tis vain for me to strive against fate,” cried Annabel.

“ Nay, nay,” answered Rollo. “ The path is open, and we will endeavour to escape. Another detachment of the troops cannot be far distant. Summon strength and resolution, I say, and God may grant us a safe deliverance.

Colonel Campion himself, at the head of a powerful force, is traversing these mountains. You shall not, while I live, pass again into Gilderoy's hands."

By a strong effort Annabel overcame her weakness, and leaning on his arm, suffered him to hurry her up the ascent, though she had a strong presentiment that all his efforts to save her would be fruitless. They were not long in reaching the summit of the mountain, where the pass became separated into three or four similar gullies, which diverged downwards on the other side. The roar of battle was behind; more guardsmen were seen in full flight; and high above all the tumult rang the slogan of Clan Gregor—" *O'ard Choille!* "

"Where shall we find safety?" cried Annabel, despairingly. "You will perish like the brave and faithful guide."

"Down the height! down the height!" responded Rollo. And he led the trembling lady down one of the paths.

CHAPTER XXI.

And fast before her father's men
 Three days we've fled together,
 For, should he find us in the glen,
 My blood would stain the heather.

Lord Ullin's Daughter.

My sister is not so defenceless left
 As you imagine; she has a hidden strength
 Which you remember not.

Comus.

JASPER ROLLO expected every moment to be overtaken by the enemy; but he prudently concealed his fears from Annabel, and urged her down the mountain as fast as her strength permitted. Occasionally the halloo of the Macgregors' slogan was heard from above; but such alarming sounds soon ceased, and there was no sign of pursuit. It seemed certain that if the victorious Highlanders were in pursuit at all, they had unwittingly taken another track. The bottom of the mountain was fringed by a straggling wood, to whose shade our fugitives gladly betook themselves.

"The events of this morning have been marvellous," said

Annabel, as they passed through the trees. "But your own presence here is the most startling marvel of all."

"My story is long and involved, and therefore must be deferred till a more fitting time," answered Jasper. "But I may tell you briefly that I only reached Dunavaig in time to witness my poor old kinsman's interment. I then proceeded to Spierhaughs, and joining Colonel Campion's expedition, was present at the battle with the Macgregors. After we seized Gilderoy's stronghold, Campion, fearing for your safety, had resolved to offer easy terms, with the view of obtaining your freedom, when two deserters from Gilderoy's slender band of followers came in and disclosed everything respecting his plans and haunts. Acting upon this information, we went out in detached parties, hoping to surprise the marauders. The party which I accompanied has fared badly; but the colonel, with a sufficient power, cannot be far away; and now that you have escaped, Gilderoy and his lawless abettors will be destroyed without compunction."

"Gilderoy offered me no indignity," replied Annabel. "It is but just that I should bear that testimony in his favour. There are some, too, among his kindred whom I would fain save from the common ruin." She mentioned Marion and Judith and Evan Glas, recounting the great services which Marion had rendered her. "The generous girl merits the highest reward for exerting herself so disinterestedly in my behalf, and I pray that it may not be denied her. But for her interposition, I should still have remained a hopeless captive."

"Colonel Campion will protect and reward her according to your wishes," said Rollo. "You shall be enabled to requite her for the good services to which you owe your liberty."

They passed through the straggling wood, and came again among the silent mountains, whose lofty summits were now crowned with the golden resplendency of the rising sun. Still no sign of friend or foe. Often and eagerly did Rollo pause and scan the scene around, in hopes of descriing Campion's party. Often and eagerly did he listen, if so be that he might catch the welcome breath of a trumpet. But no soldiers were seen—no trumpet heard.

"If you had reached Dunavaig a few days earlier than you did, Gilderoy's fell purpose would have been foiled," said Annabel, "because the laird and I had arranged that

immediately on your arrival we should all go to Glenbirkie for some weeks. But it was otherwise ordained."

"I fear," said Rollo, "that Gilderoy was instigated to the outrage by one more subtle than himself. I refer to Sir John Spiers," and here he related the discovery made by Colonel Campion. "But," added he, "I never knew until the latter told me, that Sir John was once your suitor."

Annabel looked slightly disconcerted, but explained how Sir John had pressed his suit, and how she had rejected it.

"Should he fall into our hands, he will meet the due recompense of his matchless perfidy," said Rollo. "Even Gilderoy himself seems to have broken with him."

Thus they conversed; and the summer sun mounted to his altitude, and still they were wandering through the mountainous deserts. Annabel, much exhausted, sat down to rest beside a forest spring; and Rollo producing the little quantity of provisions which he carried in his haversack, a pretty good repast was furnished forth.

The setting sun found them still wandering—they knew not whither. Dreary solitudes still encompassed them. It was now high time, however, that they should endeavour to find some kind of shelter from the approaching night, which certain appearances in the sky seemed to augur would be stormy.

The sun went down behind a low-lying bank of vapour, the breeze blew loud and shrill, and heavy rain-drops pattered on the leaves. The fugitives held on their way. Still no sign of friends—no sign of enemies—not a house to be seen, nothing but the bleak Highland wastes.

They were slowly traversing an open stretch of moorland, when Annabel suddenly pointed to a small loch lying at a short distance on the right hand, and Rollo, easting his eyes in that direction, perceived a man carrying a pitcher coming up from the side of the water.

"We must accost this person," said Rollo, "whether he prove friendly or not."

They turned aside and met the man. He was an aged and infirm Highlander, apparently of peasant grade, stooping in his gait, and with bleared eyes and frosty locks. Rollo inquired whether he had seen any of the Lowland soldiers in the neighbourhood during the day? The old man answered, in imperfect English, that he had seen none; but that he had been at home all day, tending a sick boy, his grand-child,

who was his only inmate, adding that as the water of this loch was reckoned a sovereign remedy for certain distempers incidental to children, he was in the habit of coming occasionally for a supply to administer to the boy.

"Where is your dwelling?" asked Rollo.

The old man replied that it was distant about three miles.

"Could you afford us shelter all night?" pursued Jasper.

By this time the rain-drops were falling more thickly, and the Highlander, glancing at the lowering firmament, said that his hut was small and poor; but that, seeing the night threatened to be a rough one, and there was no other house within easy reach, he would willingly give the shelter solicited. Rollo promised to reward him well for his hospitality. In answer to further inquiries, the old man stated that his name was Callum Cluny, and that he had lived alone for many years until his orphan grandson was cast upon his care. "The boy," he added, "is the last branch of our old stem, and I fear that his days are numbered. I have no other kindred—unless I count my foster-son, a brave youth, who is among the followers of Gilderoy; for his father was of that clan."

"What is that youth's name?" asked Annabel.

"Kenneth Drummond. But Gilderoy casts an evil eye upon him; his heart is set against him—and without cause."

Annabel heaved a sigh to the memory of her gallant but ill-fated guide. "Have you not heard that the Commonwealth troops have poured into the Macgregor's country, and driven Gilderoy to the hills?" she said.

"Never till this moment," cried the old man, in breathless accents. "Do you know if my foster-son fell in the strife?"

"We cannot tell," answered Rollo. "But this much we know, that Gilderoy and his men were utterly routed. The Saxon soldiers now garrison the tower of Rannoch, and Gilderoy is a hunted fugitive, with a price on his head."

"May evil fortune attend him for the evil eye that he casts upon my foster-son!" exclaimed Callum. "Indeed!—and indeed!—and Gilderoy has lost the day!"

"I am surprised," said Rollo, "that all this did not reach your ears sooner."

"I dwell in a lonely place," said Callum. "But would that I knew of Kenneth's safety. Alas! he has perished, else he would have been here."

In great agitation he lifted the earthenware pitcher of

water, which he had set down during the colloquy, and proceeded to lead the way towards his dwelling. Rollo relieved him of his burden; and then they went on quickly, Callum putting a thousand questions about the overthrow of Gilderoy.

The journey was fully three miles, and by the time it was accomplished Annabel was very weary and faint. Callum's dwelling was a common clay-built hut, near the foot of a steep heathery hill, and with a small enclosure at the back, in which a couple of cows and some sheep and goats were pastured. The frail door was secured on the outside by a twisted twig, which Callum undid, and then he ushered his guests into the humble domicile, just as the rain, which had been threatening so long, began to fall heavily.

"I wonder," remarked Rollo, "that in such a lawless country you find your house and your cattle as you left them."

"This is a lonely place, as I told you," answered Callum; "but there is not a cateran in all the Highlands who would spoil poor old Cluny of his little gear."

There being no fire on the hearth, the place was clear of the usual "peat-reek." The sick boy lay on a couch of heath covered with a plaid. His grandsire, taking the pitcher from Rollo, placed it in front of the couch, and kneeling beside it felt the boy's brow and his pulse. "He is asleep," he said, "and I need not waken him, for he never shut an eye all day." Dipping his forefinger in the pitcher, he traced a watery cross on the boy's forehead, and muttered a few hurried sentences in Gaelic. The boy slept on, and his grandsire rose from his knees, and placed stools for his guests, and then brought out some cakes and milk from a small press for their entertainment. The homely viands proved very acceptable, and soon disappeared from the board.

The night, which now blew a storm of wind and rain, darkened fast, and Callum kindled a splinter of fir, which being stuck in a kind of sconce affixed to the wall, dispensed a smoky light through the cottage. Conversation proceeded briskly, the subject being Gilderooy, his misdeeds, and his defeat; but Annabel still refrained from afflicting the old man by telling him of his foster-son's slaughter.

Time was verging on midnight, when Callum started up, declaring that he heard men's voices outside. His guests also rose to their feet and listened, but apparently heard

nothing. Next moment there was a heavy knock at the door, which was secured within by a wooden bar. "We must open," said Callum, "for they will see our light;" and he went and opened the door.

"A wild night, Callum," said a man's voice in Gaelic. "You must give us the screen of your roof till this rough blast blows by." The speaker brushed past Callum, and strode heavily into the cottage. It was Gilderoy! Several Highlanders followed him. The wet was dripping from their plaids, and they all seemed in very sorry plight. A shriek from Lady Annabel and an exclamation of astonishment from Gilderoy showed their mutual recognition.

"Never met I better fortune!" cried Macgregor, in English. "The heiress herself, and the Roundhead Captain—lovers fond and true! Nay, by my faith! not the Captain, but one of his minions!"

Rollo's sword was already unsheathed in his hand, and he threw himself betwixt Annabel and the outlaw. The clansmen gave a shout, and drew their swords, while more of the band pressed themselves into the hut.

"Do you value your life so lightly, sirrah, that you dare to interpose betwixt me and my prize?" cried Macgregor, bending the full glare of his fixed eye on Rollo. "Stand off—sheath your weapon—surrender yourself—or, by Heaven! you die, without space to frame a prayer!"

"Let no bloodshed ensue, I entreat you, brave friend," said Annabel, laying her trembling hand on Jasper's arm. "You cannot save me. Fortune is against us, and we must submit."

"You must," said Gilderoy, sternly. "In place of promoting your rescue, the intervention of the Roundheads has frustrated your own plans, and prevented your escape; for, had they not come out in parties, and driven me back, I would not have come to Macnab, the drover's house, so soon after your flight. Their Captain thought to surround me. Pshaw! the fool strives beyond his strength." Then addressing Rollo, he cried—"Will you sheath your weapon, or must I strike you down?"

"Yield—yield, for the love of heaven, and for my sake!" implored the lady.

Fuming with bitterest mortification, Jasper sheathed his sword, and presently he was beset by four of the band, who pinioned his arms, divested him of his weapon, and rifled him of all the money which he carried about him.

"You wear the Roundhead uniform, but yet you do not seem to belong to the service," said Gilderoy. "Who are you? and what is *your* ground of quarrel with me?"

"You imbrued your hands in the blood of my kinsman at Dunavaig," answered Rollo, fearlessly.

At these words Gilderoy's countenance fell; but again he fastened a searching gaze on the prisoner. "You are the heir of Dunavaig?" he said. "But know you not that your kinsman betrayed my brave brother?"

"He had no share in your brother's death," returned Rollo; "and you were bribed by Sir John Spiers to commit the outrage."

"A silly tale!" cried Gilderoy, scornfully, as he turned away his head.

Old Callum now besought a word with him, and made inquiry respecting Kenneth. An angry frown darkened Macgregor's brow as he answered—"You have a foster-son no longer. The villain died beneath our swords this morning for his foul treachery. I might almost hold you as an accomplice in his plot, seeing that we find this lady concealed here."

"Kenneth slain! and by your sword and the swords of the clansmen!" ejaculated Callum, in tones of agony. "He had no traitor's heart, James Macgregor. He was ever loyal and true."

"Question the band, dotard, and they will tell you how he played me false," said Gilderoy.

Callum, overwhelmed with anguish, staggered towards the couch, and sank down beside it, wringing his hands.

The rain was lashing in torrents, and the tempestuous blast shook the frail cottage as if it would shake it to the ground. To escape the storm, the most of Gilderoy's followers pressed inside the door. There appeared to be about a score altogether in the party, several of whom were wounded men. Some half-dozen were obliged, however, to remain outside, for want of room in the house.

"I have vowed, and I must fulfil, and no man shall stay my pitiless hand," exclaimed a hoarse, quavering, ferocious voice from the door. "It is blood for blood, life for life, that I crave." And the clansman, Eachin Macraw, who lost his four sons in the battle, elbowed his way to Gilderoy's side, with his rusty corslet on his breast, and trailing his two-handed sword behind him. "Chieftain of the Gregalich,

there stands one of the Saxon villains who slew my gallant children, and what hinders me from snatching my revenge?"

"Keep silence, Eachin," said Macgregor, pushing the savage back. But Eachin resisted, and struggled for room to draw his sword. "Macraw," said the chief, sternly, "I *must* be obeyed. Go back."

"You had your own revenge, and why should I be foiled of mine?" demanded Eachin. "The Saxon coward hung your brother upon a tree, and set his head upon a pole, and you descended from the hills like a torrent, and destroyed the traitor of Dunavaig. And because of that brave deed, and because of this pale-faced girl, the usurper's soldiers marched against us, and scattered our power, and slew my sons. And, standing in my desolation, I lifted up my hand and vowed that I should never spare. And that vow I must fulfil."

"Another word, and it shall be your last," cried Gilderoy, pulling a pistol from his belt. "Your sons fell in the battle—what then? They died in their duty like many others. Go back, and keep silence."

With a hollow laugh, Eachin drew back, and disappeared in the crowd.

"Macgregor," cried Rollo, "I think I could undertake to arrange some accommodation with Colonel Campion, based upon the release of all the prisoners in your hands."

"Have you authority to enter into a covenant with me?" inquired Gilderoy.

"I have not; but I believe I could induce Colonel Campion to offer favourable terms."

"That can be tried," said Gilderoy. "If the Roundheads agree to let bygones be bygones, and to quit Rannoch, my prisoners shall be given up. To-morrow you shall have an opportunity of communicating with the Colonel."

The old man of the cottage, who had been crouching on the floor beside the sick boy's couch, now arose, and slowly making his way through the crowd towards the door, passed out without interruption. The rain was abating, but the wind was still strong. He wandered forth into the stormy gloom, and as he went he muttered—"Oh! that those Saxon soldiers would pass this way, for then should Kenneth be avenged! Oh! that the Saxon soldiers were at hand!"

Strange to say, his eager wild wish was speedily gratified; for the Powers of Vengeance were riding the blast that

night. He had wandered upwards of a mile, when, near the skirts of a wood, he came upon a marshalled body of armed men advancing straight in the direction of his cottage. He was instantly observed, and three or four Highlanders seized him.

"What is the name of your chief?" he asked.

"Colonel Campion," they answered.

"Bring him to me," said Callum, gladly.

The rest of the troops coming up, the old man was surrounded in a trice. Colonel Campion presented himself.

"Are you in quest of Gilderoy?" said Callum.

"I am," answered the Colonel. "According to reliable accounts, he has fled in this direction. There is a heavy price on his head, and if you bring me front to front with him, the reward shall be your own."

"I will deliver him into thine hand," responded Callum, "He is now under my roof, a little distance hence, and his band of murderers with him."

"Callum Cluny," exclaimed a stalwart mountaineer, clapping the old man's shoulder, "if your words prove true, you shall have a handful of gold pieces out of my own *sporrán*."

"Follow me and see, Ranald Vourigh," said Callum, after a deep pause. "I would not have known your face so soon; but your voice—ah! it brings back remembrances of happier days. You, too, suffered from the rancour of the Macgregors; and now, Ranald, vengeance is within your reach."

Callum was then addressed by another questioner. "You'll maybe no ken naething, auld carle, aboot my master, Jasper Rollo, the laird o' Cairnibie and, as I may say, Dunavaig? for he has faun lawfu' heir to the Dunavaig lands, and therefore he is laird o' the twa places. We heard that he was neither killed nor taen prisoner this morning, but fled awa' wi' a lady, to wit, the heiress o' Glenbirkie." The questioner was Elshender.

Callum replied by relating how a Saxon soldier and a fair lady had followed him to his cottage, and how they were seized by the Macgregors.

All this was brave news for Colonel Campion. Fortune had never been so propitious. His party was numerous, and he had nothing to fear. "Lead on to the cottage, but quietly," he said. "And, hark you," added he,

in a whisper, touching a corporal on the shoulder, "keep your eye on this old man, and if he plays the rogue shoot him through the head."

No idea of suspicion disturbed the minds of the few Macgregors who lounged outside the cottage; therefore they were far more anxious to screen themselves from the ill weather than to keep vigilant watch. Their carelessness allowed the house to be surrounded by the enemy before they were aware; and one of them had scarcely raised an alarm, when the fire of several muskets stretched them all on the ground, dead or dying. A wild outcry arose within the house, and the door being pulled open with difficulty, the dull red light which gleamed forth showed that the interior was crowded with men.

"James Macgregor!" cried the strong voice of Colonel Campion, "in the name of the Lord Protector, whose commission I carry, I call upon you to surrender, under pain of being dealt with according to the extremities of martial law."

The crowd within the doorway opened a little, and Gilderoy himself appeared on the threshold, with his drawn sword in his hand. He cast his eyes around, and his heart died within him on finding that he was thoroughly trapped—that it was impossible for him to break through and escape. Still, one desperate hope was left him. "Bring forth the lady," he cried. Annabel was led to the door by two of his band. "There is the bonnie bird whom you have sought so long," he exclaimed; "and if you fire another shot, her life shall be the forfeit."

"I call upon all those infatuated men now in rebellion against the Lord Protector to lay down their arms and submit to me, his lieutenant in these parts," exclaimed Colonel Campion. "A free pardon and a thousand merks to whoever shall bring me Gilderoy dead or alive."

"Gilderoy!" ejaculated Ranald Vourigh, stepping out from the line of soldiers in front of the cottage, and waving his sword. "Gilderoy! you fled from my face in the battle like a dastard; and I am here and dare you again to the fight. Come forth, heart of hare! I am Ranald Vourigh, and I defy you, and proclaim you coward before all your men."

Macgregor was greatly agitated, but gave no response.

"No, you lack courage to meet a death of honour," cried

Macpherson ; "and you'll die on the gallows, like your brother before you."

"Bring out the other prisoner," said Gilderoy, at last. Rollo was brought to the side of Lady Annabel. "Now, sirrah, you have the opportunity of performing your promise. Obtain terms from your captain.

"Entreat the Colonel," said Annabel, "to grant life and liberty to them all."

"Tell him this," said Gilderoy : "the lady and yourself will be delivered on condition that one and all of us are allowed to depart whithersoever we choose, without molestation. In the first place, I will deliver the lady, and then depart with one-half my men. At the end of a full hour you shall be given up, and the other half of my party will march away, and a full hour will be allowed before any pursuit is made. These are my terms—my final terms. I can listen to no others. I will never degrade my name by submission to the usurper. Free was I born—free shall I live ; or I can die fighting for freedom to the last."

A loud yell of applause burst from his followers.

Jasper Rollo immediately hailed Colonel Champion and communicated the proposal, which the latter, after making a show of consulting with his officers, accepted.

"I am sorry that Spierhaughs is not here," added Champion. "But Sir John's turn will come next. Let Maegregor now ratify his own part of the agreement, and I will ratify mine. I pass my word of honour, as a Christian man and a soldier, for the faithful performance of my part of the covenant."

Matters being thus arranged, Lady Annabel was liberated ; and Gilderoy and one half of his party marched out, and soon disappeared over the hill behind the cottage, Ranald Vourigh gnashing his teeth meanwhile in bitter mortification.

The lady was no sooner among her friends than, overcome by her feelings, she swooned at Champion's feet. When she recovered, she thanked him cordially for the strong interest which he had manifested in her behalf. She recounted the story of her adventures, and entreated his favour for Marion and her friends, as well as for old Callum, the foster-father of her trusty but helpless guide. He assured her that he would act according to her wishes.

At the end of the allotted hour, Jasper Rollo was released, and the rest of the Macgregors retired, taking along with

them two of the wounded sentinels, being all that remained alive.

Rollo suggested that Annabel should be conveyed without delay to the Lowlands.

"She must accompany us back to the tower in the meantime," said the Colonel; "for, as Macgregor's adherents are roaming far and wide, it would be hazardous for her to attempt a journey to the Lowlands with so small an escort as I could afford to detach at present."

"I desire to be guided entirely by your opinion," said Annabel. "If you think it best that I should return to my old prison-house, I am most willing to do so. Indeed, by returning there, I may be of service to some of the friends I spoke of."

The Colonel then proposed that all the party should join in thanksgiving to God for the great meed of success which had attended the expedition; and this duty was accordingly performed with much solemnity.

CHAPTER XXII.

We've neither safety, unity, nor peace;
For the foundation's lost of common good.

Venice Preserved.

RELIEVED from their dilemma in old Callum's hut, Gilderoy and his little band eagerly pursued their flight. They traversed the wilds for several hours until they reached the place of rendezvous which had been appointed with those they left behind. The morning was fair and bright, but the wind still continued boisterous, and the swollen torrents tumbled down the mountain sides like long winding wreaths of foam.

The rendezvous gained, the party halted to rest, and awaited the upcoming of their comrades.

At this juncture Evan Glas, with a few of the Macgregors, appeared on the brow of a neighbouring eminence.

Evan had fallen sorely under Gilderoy's displeasure on account of the Lady Annabel's escape from the woman Mac-

nab's cottage, himself and his men having been found fast asleep when Gilderoy, attended by Hackston and other followers, unexpectedly arrived there a very short time after the captive had fled. High and hot words arising, Gilderoy had refused to allow Evan to accompany him in the pursuit.

Gloomy looks and embarrassed salutations now marked the meeting of the foster-brethren. Evan stated that the approach of one of the enemy's parties had forced him to leave Macnab's cottage, and to seek another refuge for his sister, and that he had come out that morning to endeavour to discover how Gilderoy himself had fared.

Gilderoy himself had fared badly, and all through the baseness of those whom he had trusted most. The lady was irrecoverably beyond his power. He had been constrained to surrender her to secure his own safety. This was the import of what he told Evan. "I have been foully betrayed," he cried. "How could I make head against the enemy, when those who followed my standard to battle were but lukewarm in the cause? Need I dream of retrieving our misfortunes when my own kindred are bent on thwarting all my designs?"

"You wrong your kindred by such an imputation," said Evan.

"I wrong no one," retorted Gilderoy. "You know the treachery of your sister."

"It has not been proved against my sister," said Evan. "Your violence threw her into such agitation that she could scarce speak a word in her own behalf; and her mind is still so much shaken that she is unfit for being questioned. Your suspicions even rested on myself—though all the men could testify that I knew nothing of it. Who can tell but that the plot was the contrivance of Kenneth alone, for he long seemed to me like one who had some old wrong rankling in his heart?"

"Curse the fate that led me to repose confidence in friends so unworthy!" exclaimed Gilderoy. "It is impossible that Kenneth could have plotted by himself alone."

Evan was strongly agitated, and his iron-grey complexion became deeply crimsoned. "I may bear your cruel words seeing that you are chafed by disaster," he said, stammering with suppressed passion. "But you are grievously unjust to one who was ever ready to lay down his life for your sake. I have shared your weal and your woe. I was your

early companion in the Lowlands; and after I followed you to Rannoch you never missed me from your side in the hour of danger. I have shared with you the same couch among the heather, with but one plaid around us, and the tempest raging in the angry heavens above. I have held with you the same weary watch on the midnight hill, when clansmen's huts were blazing on the plain, and the blast was laden with the shouts of the foe. And if at any time I offered you counsel, the counsel came from an honest and faithful heart."

"Had I been honestly served," said Gilderoy, "I should now have been sweeping the broken remnants of the Round-head force down to the Lowlands—gleaning the last handfuls of the harvest of death; but treachery blasted my career, and you behold your chief a wanderer with scarcely one faithful claymore at his back."

Evan Glas silently withdrew.

In about an hour the second party of clansmen who had been left at old Callum's cottage made their appearance. After they had rested themselves a little, Gilderoy gave orders for the whole band to march."

"Whither?" inquired Evan Glas.

Gilderoy paused. "Destruction threatens us on every hand," he said. "Whither would *you* lead us?"

"To the valley where I left my sister and the rest of my men," replied Evan. "We should gather together our little strength, the better to meet the attempts of the enemy."

"Lead us whither you will," cried Gilderoy.

Conducted by Evan, the band set out, and, after a rough and tedious journey among the hills, came to a confined but romantic valley, in which they soon descried a few of their comrades gathered around a fire, at which they were dressing the carcase of a sheep. At a small distance from the fire a female was sitting on a stone with her elbows on her knees, and her face bent on her hands, like one overwhelmed in misery.

The arrival of Gilderoy was welcomed with but listless gratulations. The whole of his armed adherents, with the exception of the party who had the custody of Sir John Spiers, were now before him, and they formed but a weak sorry band. How rapidly had the sword of the enemy shorn him of his strength!

"Yonder," said Gilderoy to Evan, pointing to the female

on the stone, who had not yet changed her attitude, "yonder sits the traitress. She dares not look me in the face."

"She may look all the world in the face," answered Evan, "without the dread of being justly reproached for a single crime."

"She shed my blood, son of Grey Colin," cried the hairy savage, Murdoch Moolach, rising from beside the fire.

"How came you here?" demanded Gilderoy. "You were one of the prisoner's guards. Has he escaped too?"

"The Saxon soldiers came upon us suddenly in the wood," answered Murdoch, "and we scattered and fled before their overpowering numbers."

"Was Sir John rescued?" cried Gilderoy.

"Not that I saw," said Murdoch. "But I lost my comrades, and wandered all night and this morning. It was the smoke of this fire that drew me hither, and glad was I to meet the faces of friends. But I will not keep silence on her," he continued, raising his voice. "They say that she has betrayed the clan, and therefore I will not keep silence. She shot at me and shed my blood wantonly. Behold the proof!" and with one hand he flung back the shaggy locks from his left temple. "You may see it plain. The scar is still raw; and had she been another man's child—had she not been the pride of Rannoeh, and the darling of Gilderoy—I would have slain her on the spot!"

"Base miscreant!" exclaimed Evan Glas. "Another such speech, and I shall tread you under foot!"

Evan was not ignorant of the circumstance to which the kerne had so inopportunately referred, for Marion had informed him of it during the flight from the tower, but it was unknown to Gilderoy.

Exasperated by Evan's threat, the savage muttered vindictively under his breath, and grasped the hilt of his broadsword. This act was too much for Evan in his present mood. He instantly drew his blade and aimed a cleaving blow at Murdoch, but the target of another clansman timorously interposed and caught the weapon; and Murdoch, starting back, unsheathed his sword with a yell of defiance.

Gilderoy rushed betwixt them. "What quarrel had you with Marion that made her shed your blood?" he demanded, seizing the savage Murdoch by the sword-arm.

"She shot at me when her grandmother called me up to the

painted chamber to slay the Saxon woman," answered Murdoch, readily.

Gilderoy was astounded. Marion had now risen from the stone, and was gazing wistfully towards the group. Evan briefly disclosed how his grandmother, on hearing of the defeat of the clan, had, in a moment of frenzy, determined on sacrificing the captive lady, and how Marion had prevented the foul assassination.

"So Marion saved her from a bloody death!" cried Gilderoy. "That was well and noble. But she rescued her again when the rescue was destruction to all my hopes. Sheath your sword, Murdoch—and you, Evan. Pass from this quarrel for ever."

On seeing them both obey, he sauntered onward to the stone on which Marion had resumed her seat in her former attitude. He touched her lightly on the shoulder, and she looked up with a countenance so wan and wasted that he could scarce think it possible that a few hours had wrought so grievous a change. There was a wavering wildness in her eye, but not a single tear dimmed it, for profound grief had dried up the fountain of tears.

"Is it true," he said, in much of his old familiar tone, but with a touch of acerbity in it, "is it true, Marion, lass, that you forgot the promise you made me, and became a traitress to your best friend? Little did I think you were capable of betraying a trust received from *my* hands; and little did you think when you opened the door and bade the lady flee, that you were taking the surest means of compassing my destruction. As long as that lady was my prisoner, the Round-head captain was trammelled; but now all Rannoch will soon feel the edge of the Saxon blade."

"I couldna sit and see the lady pining awa' for her liberty," answered Marion, in confusion; "and I thought that wae she free there wad be an end o' a' strife."

"Though you had torn from the hands of a drowning man the rope or the plank to which he clung in his agony," returned Macgregor, "you could not have done an act more cruel and fatal than that which you have done to me."

"But winna she plead with the Saxon Captain that he may grant you peace?"

"Plead for me?" ejaculated Macgregor, indignantly. "I scorn and scout her intercession. Were she still in my power, I could wring my own terms from the enemy; but

your treachery has undone everything. Traitress! the ruin of the clan lies at your door."

"Gilderoy," said Evan Glas, who now approached, with a sullen frown on his face. "I will not stand aside and hear you reproach the girl. She is my sister, and whatever be her fault, it was prompted by innocent feeling."

The chief turned a fiery eye on the speaker. "She confesses her guilt," he said. "I did not accuse her wrongfully."

"She is but a girl, and may be forgiven the fault into which her simple feelings betrayed her," said Evan. "The great damning error of all lay in your bringing the lady from Dunavaig. Blame yourself for all the evil which has befallen us. My sister's fault is light and trivial compared with your own."

"Evan Glas Mackinnon," responded Maegregor, sternly, "take heed what you say. Though I may fancy, in kindness, that you are irritated to discover your sister's guilt, yet your very violence would go far to show that you were a partner in it. Remember that I am still your chief, and that I still demand the respect which was ever my due. Take heed what you say."

"I take no more heed," cried the incensed Evan, "than though you were Murdoch Moolach himself; and I tell you that since you have chosen to cast a fresh stigma upon my honour, I could draw upon you as I did upon Murdoch, were it not that you were suckled at my mother's breast, and grew up under my mother's eye."

"Forbear, Evan," exclaimed Marion, with a shriek. "Forget a hasty word spoken in the midst o' trouble. This is an evil hour, and the bitterness o' misfortune is in the chief's heart, as weel as in your ain and mine."

"Then restrain your reproaches," said Evan. "I have fully shared in the calamities of this evil time, and I am willing to share them even to death. But your insults I cannot and will not bear."

"The misfortune that turns fast friends into foes is the warst misfortune o' a'," said Dobbie Haekston, who had followed Evan to the spot. "Ne'er be that misfortune among us."

"You have presumed upon me, Evan Glas," said Gilderoy, "knowing well that I lack heart to resent the insolence of one to whom I am bound by the closest ties. Alas! and

who could have imagined that *you* would lift up the heel against me? There once was a time when I could say with the proverb—'*Scaomh le fear a charaid, ach 's e smior a chrithe a chodhalt*.* But adversity tests our friendships, and strips deceit and subserviency of the mask that served for better days."

"Hold, Gilderoy, hold!" cried the impetuous Evan. "This is insult still more galling. I never wore a mask. My heart was ever open as the face of heaven. I never fawned upon you with the arts of a flatterer. I am a stranger to deceit. I never was subservient. I respected and obeyed you as my chief, and loved you devotedly as my foster-brother. Often have I ventured my life in your cause. Again and again have I saved you by my sword."

"It was but your duty," returned Gilderoy, haughtily. "It was but your duty to do all this, and it is so still."

"My blood is not so noble as your own," said Evan, whose feelings smarted under the callousness of Gilderoy's words; "but there never was a traitor of Mackinnon's race."

"What need we count our kin," cried Dobbie Hackston, "unless the dead are to rise frae their graves and help us at this pinch? and syne the man that has the longest pedigree will hae the biggest following."

"And to you I say," uttered Gilderoy, addressing the Highland girl, "that henceforth we shall be as strangers to each other. I will not reproach you again; but your treachery can never be forgotten."

Marion stood with drooping head, and her hands clasped before her. She never raised her eyes, and though her lips quivered as if she meant to speak, not a word came.

"Are we to bide here, quarrelling for nae guid end, when aiblins instead o' the cries o' the hawks aboon our heads we'll hear the Roundhead trumpets?" said Hackston. "Keep in mind that we're no sae mony mile awa' frae the enemy."

Gilderoy drew a long sigh. "Wander whither we will," he said, "we cannot escape the fell sweep of ruin."

"Tak' heart, man; tak' heart," cried Hackston. "As broken a ship has come to land."

* Affectionate to a man is a friend; but a foster-brother is as the life-blood of his heart.

“Pass the word that we continue our flight as soon as the men’s repast is over,” said Gilderoy. “We can seek some other spot in which to perish. We can wander on, protracting the evil hour as best we may; but not the wildest and most untrodden desert in all the Highlands will hide us from the ken of the pursuing Fates, who follow us like eagles hastening to their prey. It is no common enemy who is behind us, but the avenger of blood—pitiless as the grave.”

CHAPTER XXIII.

Though I ha’e slain the Lord Johnstone,
 What care I for their feid?
 My noble mind their wrath disdains;
 He was my father’s deid.
 Both night and day I labour’d oft
 Of him avenged to be;
 But now I’ve got what lang I sought,
 And I may not stay with thee.

Lord Maxwell’s Goodnight.

THE fall of the summer evening found Gilderoy and his followers far in the fastnesses of the mountains. It was one of those evenings of gorgeous, tranquil beauty that seem to lap the earth in the hues of heaven. The sun, in dazzling majesty, had rolled down the azure steeps of the west, and his dying blaze of glory slowly faded into a faint flush that suffused, as with the tender roseate tint of a sea-shell, the feathery cloudlets hanging motionless in the welkin, like fairy barques becalmed on a fairy sea. The winds were hushed: old Æolus slumbered in his cave; and only the cry of the heath fowl, or the scream of the eagle, disturbed the profound and almost oppressive quietude of Nature.

It was again a secluded valley, deep among the everlasting hills, that the fugitives chose for their resting-place, where a sparkling brook wandered at will with a gentle song.

O’er stiller place
 No singing sky-lark ever poised himself.
 The hills were heathy, save the swelling slope,
 Which had a gay and gorgeous covering on,
 All golden with the never-bloomless furze,
 Which now bloom’d most profusely.

Weary and dispirited the Highlanders sat down, in gloomy groups, on the banks of the water, and began preparations for their evening meal. Marion seated herself apart from all at the foot of a knoll, the thick verdure of which displayed a profusion of fairy rings.

Gilderoy, who had been sauntering listlessly up and down for some time communing with himself, now made a sign to Hackston; and they both withdrew up the glen, out of sight.

“Dobbie,” began the chief, “this wandering, desperate life must end. We may flee from glen to glen, and from desert to desert; but they will hunt us down at last. The Saxon bloodhounds are sure and strong of scent. Dobbie, I will leave Rannoch—leave it, never to return.”

The soldier was much startled, and he gazed inquiringly into Macgregor’s face.

“Our disasters can never be retrieved,” exclaimed Gilderoy. “I have striven and struggled with my whole soul, and Fate has put me under its ban. In truth, I have resolved, solemnly and finally, that this very night——”

“Tak’ nae rash oaths, Gilderoy; tak’ nae rash vows upon yoursel;” interrupted Hackston; “for rash vows are often repented when repentance is ower late.”

“Nor have I rashly resolved,” said Gilderoy. “If I but perceived the faintest gleam of hope breaking through the darkness that enshrouds me, I should not be daunted; but I have seen the last gleam of hope expire. The power of the Grealich in Rannoch is beaten down; and why should I struggle to retrieve what is undone and lost for ever and ever?”

Gilderoy paused, in deep thought, and drew his hand across his brow, as if to clear his brain from the confusion of thought which overwhelmed it. “Alas! alas! that such an hour as this should come!” he said. “My heart and soul were bound up with the honour and glory of my tribe. My infant ears were lulled with the songs of the mountains. My boyish heart was stirred by the traditions of my brave and unfortunate ancestry. I promised to myself the glory and renown of stemming the adverse tide which had so long set in against us. And look at the end! Treachery, defeat, shame, and degradation unutterable! But,” added he, with a gloomy stare into vacancy, “the blood of that old man at Dunavaig—would that it had never been spilt! His expiring yell evoked the storm which still rages around us!”

"But your brither's bluid was aneath his nails," said the soldier.

"So I thought—so I was told. Curses on Spierhaughs for that falsehood. The old man was innocent, and Ranald Vourigh was the villain to whom my brother owed his death."

"A sad mistak', truly," said Hackston. "But wha can mak' amends? The deed's done, and the laird's in his grave. This just shows the great folly o' rashness. You maunna be rash in times to come. A hasty man never wants wae. To leave Rannoch wad be an unco perilous venture; and whaur wad you flee?"

"To the Braes o' Balquhiddier, where the great branch of the Gregalach still hold their own," responded Gilderoy.

"That's a far flicht," said Hackston. "I thoct you wad rather ha'e tried to join Lochiel."

"The enemy will doubtless suspect a flight to Lochiel's country, and strain every nerve to intercept me," said Gilderoy. "The route towards the Lowlands will be unguarded, and Balquhiddier may be reached in perfect safety. The Roundheads will never dream of a flight to Balquhiddier. Arrived there, I can assure myself of friendly aid and concealment till it is seen how affairs turn in Rannoch. I said that I should leave Rannoch never to return; but I shall return so soon as a favourable juncture presents itself. I said that I had seen the last gleam of hope expire; but there is still within this racked and lacerated breast of mine a hope that better days are in store for Gilderoy. Who can tell how short may be the sway of this regicidal usurper, Cromwell? Who can tell how soon we may see King Charles restored? Yes, Dobbie, I feel the promptings of hope; but when the ghastly pleading face of Dunavaig comes across my imagination, every spark of hope becomes quenched in the blackness of despair. I think I see him now as he crawled along the earth, and clutched me by the sash, and implored for mercy, while the swords of the clansmen clashed above his bare head!"

"Dinna think on't," said Hackston, shuddering violently. "Glad am I that I never entered Dunavaig gate till the auld man was lying cauld. There's nae blame o' his death lying on my conscience. Let it be a warning to you, I say, against rashness. Winna you stay and tak' the morn's thochts upon your flicht?"

"The step, if taken at all, must be taken immediately—this very night," said Gilderoy; "and you shall be my only companion—that is to say, unless you are weary of following a ruined leader."

"Forbid that I should forsake in his misfortunes him that befriended me in mine!" cried the honest-hearted adventurer. "I'll never desert my colours. I'll follow you, betide what may. But I wad ance mair counsel you against hasty resolutions."

"My only hope depends on instant flight," said Gilderoy. "As soon as the men are sunk in sleep we shall steal off quietly, and ere sunrise be beyond the reach of our foes."

"Sae be it, Gilderoy, sae be it, since better winna be," said Dobbie, resignedly. "But what a clamour will rise the morn's morning when the men discover that you hae left them! What will poor Marion say?"

"I desire never to behold her face again," said Gilderoy.

"She'll be a sorrowfu' lass," said Hackston. "Aiblins she didna think she was dealing you a wound when she opened the cage and gave the bonnie bird its freedom. Puir lass! sorrow has laid a weary load upon her; and the load will grow nane the lichter when she keens that she's clean forsaken. We may come back—maybe soon, maybe late; but when we come back it wad gie me nae surprise to see the heather-bell' and the lang lady-fern growing ower her head."

"What can I do?" cried Gilderoy, with some emotion. "She betrayed my trust, and she cannot go with us; nor dare I acquaint her with my design."

It was now the shadowy gloaming. The dews had fallen, and the evening star was twinkling sweetly in the west. Gilderoy and his companion leisurely retraced their steps. They found Evan Glas sitting by himself on the green knoll, and Marion straying along the banks of the brook, as if pensively watching the melodious flow of the limpid laughing water.

When the evening meal was over, the Macgregors lay down to rest on the dewy grass, and Dobbie Hackston was appointed sentinel for the night. Evan Glas led his sister to a sheltered nook, a little up the valley.

Slowly passed the silent hours. Midnight had come and gone before the whole party, with the exception of Gilderoy and Dobbie, were sunk in slumber. In the grey twilight of

the summer morn, when not a breath was in the air, Gilderoy arose from his grassy couch, and stalking noiselessly through the recumbent groups, passed on to Hackston, and whispered — "The time is come."

"And are you resolved?" inquired Dobbie.

"I am," answered Gilderoy.

"He that will to Cupar maun to Cupar," said the soldier. "Lead on!"

They hastened down the glen with eager footsteps, as though they fled from pursuing foes, instead of sleeping friends. They uttered not a word to each other, and they never looked back. A wilderness of broomy braes soon lay between them and the unconscious band whom they had forsaken.

"This has been a long, long night," said Gilderoy, and he sighed. "While I lay watching the men dropping asleep, one by one, the fleet chariot of time seemed to stand still, and I thought midnight's gloom would never gather in the valley."

Dobbie looked weary and thoughtful, and appeared to find the musket which he carried on his shoulder a very inconvenient burden.

They proceeded on their way for some time in perfect silence. The sky kindled with the blush of morn, the winds sighed along the heath, and larks mounted into the cool air.

"The power of the Gregalich would have prevailed," ejaculated Gilderoy, as if in a reverie; "but the blood of that old man pressed it down!"

A trumpet sounded in the distance.

"Did you hear yon?" said Hackston. "Richt in front. The foes are in our path."

Gilderoy stood still, and cast his haggard looks around. "No; I will not go back," he said. "Though destruction be in our path, I will not go back. Turn to the left."

And so they turned to the left.

CHAPTER XXIV

'Tis the sunset of life gives me mystical lore,
And coming events cast their shadows before.

Lochiel's Warning.

She hides her love from one and all—

'Tis a modest maiden's whim—

Unless it be, whate'er befall,

She has it own'd to him.

Henry S. Riddell.

IT was not until high noon that Lady Annabel and her friends left the precincts of the lonely cottage, in which such startling vicissitudes of fortune had befallen her.

Colonel Campion, having been reinforced in the course of the morning by some of his Highland auxiliaries, resolved on leaving a considerable body of them at the cottage for some time, with the view of establishing there a post of observation against the Macgregors. This being arranged, he and the rest of his party began their journey back to the tower. It was now that Annabel took an opportunity of earnestly pressing upon him the desirability of giving peace to the fugitive enemy on the easiest terms possible.

"Are not my terms easy, lady?" answered the Round-head. "The men of the clan have but to deliver me Gilderoy, dead or alive, and I will at once admit them to the Lord Protector's peace. I am bound to execute righteous judgment; and I will rather see Rannoch turned into a waste and howling desert than suffer Gilderoy to lift his head again, either as a rebel or as a sworn subject of the Commonwealth. The family of Mackinnons, whom you mentioned, shall meet with my protection whenever it is required; but Gilderoy must be crushed for ever, and his fate held up as a salutary terror to this lawless and heathenish country. Gilderoy has now no hostage in his possession whose safety he can menace with any effect on me; for I value not Sir John Spiers a rush."

Hearing this settled resolution, Annabel had no room to plead farther.

"I devoutly trust this poor lady's misfortunes are now at an end," said the colonel, addressing Rollo, when Annabel had withdrawn. "I cannot but admire and extol the rare constancy of heart with which she hath endured them.

Blessed are they who regard adversity as a fatherly chastening, a trial of faith, the nursing-mother of virtue and all the heavenly graces, the purifier of the true gold. Witness Job and his tribulations. I make no doubt," he continued after a silence, "there were many righteous men on the earth in the days of Job; yet upon no head but his were the brimming vials of Satan's hatred poured out. Even so, in these latter days, am I set apart as one among a thousand. At this very moment Satan is stirring up a fresh controversy with me. The voice within—the inner monitor of the soul—hath sounded me a warning, that of all the darts in Apollyon's quiver, the heaviest and sharpest is now being drawn forth against my peace. He draws it forth—he poises it in his hand—he glances exultingly at the shining barbed point fresh from the forge of perdition, and he calls upon the accursed hosts of darkness to arise from their depths and behold the overthrow of a just man. But will they behold it?—will they behold the just man's overthrow? Never! This is the last and most dreaded dart; but as all previous missiles shivered against the breastplate of righteousness which glitters on my breast, so shall this one shiver into a thousand splinters, while Satan gnashes his teeth in impotent fury!"

"You seem to have had some presentiment of evil," said Rollo.

"The inner voice, I say, sounded the alarm," returned Campion; "but I know that I shall prevail, and that my righteousness shall shine forth clear as the sun and terrible as an army with banners."

"But you had a presentiment of defeat immediately previous to our victory in the glen," said Rollo, "which shows that such fancies are altogether unworthy of wise men's regard."

Before the Roundhead could respond, a Highland scout came up with some information about the Macgregors, but it was of no great interest. This incident, however, broke off the conversation, much, indeed, to Rollo's relief; and when the Colonel again became talkative, his topics were very different, the current of his thoughts having turned into another and more rational channel.

After a long journey, undiversified by any noteworthy adventure, the tower was at length reached.

The gate had just been thrown open, when a wild figure, partly clad in skins, rushed out, and grasped Colonel Campion by the right arm. It was the seer, Donach of the Den.

"He shall fall, and shall be seen no more on his native

mountains," ejaculated the crazed prophet. "In the *seam* which unfolded itself to my sight this day all was clear and bright as if in sunshine, and I saw him perish in the land of the Sassenach."

"Whom did you see perish?" inquired Campion, with a sneering smile.

"Mark his words, Colonel," cried Ranald Vourigh, pressing forward. "This man has the power of the *Tashitaraugh*, and, Macgregor as he is, I never kent his words fail. The secrets o' the unseen world are revealed to Donach in dreams and trances and open visions."

"I despise power derived from diabolical agencies," said Campion. "It is a mockery and a snare by which men's souls are lured to perdition."

"Speak, Donach, speak," cried Ranald. "The Sassenach captain will hear you. Disclose the vision."

"Woe to the land of the north—woe to the children of Clan Gregor!" cried the seer. "Evil was the vision: evil to Gilderoy: evil to his enemies." Then releasing Campion's arm he receded a pace, clasping his hands together on his breast. "I saw Gilderoy fall," he said, in a husky tone. "I saw Gilderoy perish. And thy hand, son of the Clan Vourigh—"

"Ay, my hand?" interrupted Ranald. "You saw it strike him down—clench the fetters on him—drag him to the gal-lows tree?"

"*Mo mhallachd ort!*"* exclaimed Donach, fiercely. "Your hand shall accomplish what you have said; but the day that gives Gilderoy to his doom shall see him avenged on the false Macpherson."

"Do you hear him, Colonel?" cried Ranald, greatly excited. "Mark the prophecy, and watch the issue. I ken," he added, gnashing his teeth, "I ken that I'll tramp my foot on Gilderoy's neck. I ken that my lang-hoarded revenge will be slockened in his blood. Hasten the day—hasten the day!"

"In that day of doom," said Donach, "this Sassenach leader,"—pointing at Campion—"shall have a name of wonder, affright, and horror in the land; but long before that day comes he shall be powerless as an unweaned child; for his authority shall have departed as a dream of the night, and all his honours fallen away from him, like the yellow leaves from the tree in gusty November."

* My curse upon you.

“Is any man so foolish and unenlightened as to give heed to such presumptuous ravings?” said the Roundhead, looking around.

“With reverence, Colonel,” broke in a sergeant; “it is my mind that we should take this false prophet, and bring him to judgment at the drum-head, and do unto him whatsoever may seem meet in the eyes of the court-martial.”

“For my sake, Colonel, deal gently with the poor old man,” cried Lady Annabel.

“The careless guards who have allowed him to escape from his confinement at this time are more to blame than himself,” said the colonel, “and it is their conduct which ought to be taken cognizance of by a court-martial.”

“But, with reverence, Colonel,” persisted the sergeant; “he gives himself out as a soothsayer, and as one who hath a familiar spirit—prophesying times and seasons, and threatening good men’s lives; which crimes are highly amenable to punishment, according to the laws of the Commonwealth.”

But Donach was summoned to a tribunal whose power is omnipotent, whose decree is eternal. His eyes blazed in their sockets for an instant, and then his head drooped on his shaggy breast, and he staggered back and measured his length on the ground. He could laugh to scorn all the laws of the Commonwealth—all the puny might of man. A slight convulsion shook his thin and emaciated frame, and when Ranald Vourigh bent over him, essaying to lift his head, the spirit of the Celtic soothsayer fled.

It might be that the “lightening before death” enabled the hoary dweller of the rock to pierce the veil of futurity, and to see clearly events yet in the far distance. It might be that as he drew nigh the borders of the better land, the shades of his fathers, waiting to receive him, poured prophetic knowledge into his soul. For, as has been finely said by Rabelais, in his soberest passage—“It hath been told frequently, that old decrepit men upon the brink of Charon’s banks do usher their decease with a disclosure, all at ease, to those that are desirous of such informations, of the determinate and assured truth of future accidents and contingencies. For as when,” he continues, “being upon a pier by the shore, we see afar off mariners, seafaring men, and other travellers amongst the curled waves of azure Thetis within their ships, we then consider them in silence only, and seldom proceed any further than to wish them a happy and prosper-

ous arrival ; but, when they do approach near to the haven, and come to wet their keels within their harbour, then both with words and gestures we salute them, and hastily congratulate their access safe to the port wherein we are ourselves. Just so the angels, heroes, and good demons, according to the doctrine of the Platonics, when they see mortals drawing near unto the harbour of the grave, as the most rare and calmest port of any, full of repose, ease, rest, tranquillity, free from the troubles and solitudes of this tumultuous and tempestuous world—then is it that they with alacrity hail and salute them, cherish and comfort them, and, speaking to them lovingly, begin even then to bless them with illuminations, and to communicate unto them the abstrusest mysteries of divination.”

The Colonel and his friends passed into the tower, all of them deeply impressed with the sudden stroke of fate which they had witnessed.

Old Judith, on being made aware of Lady Annabel's arrival, craved permission to speak with her, and the request was granted. Her object was to inquire about Marion ; but the lady, of course, could give her extremely little information, and she did not enter into any particulars about her own escape.

Two days afterwards there was authentic intelligence that the fugitive Macgregors were completely scattered, and that Gilderoy, with only a single adherent, had taken flight towards the low country.

To Lady Annabel, happily relieved from all her troubles, the Rannoch freebooter's tower was no longer a dreary habitation ; for she now had the society of one who loved her, and to whom she had given her heart. One evening she and Rollo were seated together at the casement of “ the painted chamber,” watching the setting sun, talking of their approaching return to the south, and expressing their hopes that the future had happiness in store for them, to compensate in some degree the misfortunes and dangers through which they had passed, when a small party of Roundhead cavalry galloped up to the tower.

Surprised at this occurrence, Rollo hastened away in quest of Colonel Campion.

CHAPTER XXV.

I think it is the weakness of mine eyes
That shapes this monstrous apparition.
It comes upon me—Art thou anything?

Julius Cæsar.

ROLLO, on entering the hall, found Campion in the act of receiving a sealed packet from the hands of the sergeant of the party who had just arrived at the tower.

The Colonel motioned Rollo to take a seat, and then broke open the packet, and unfolding an official-looking document which was inside, he leisurely perused it. This done, he addressed the soldier—"Thou art to quarter here, along with thy party."

"So my orders direct," answered the man with a salute.

"Well, my friend, thou shalt find rare quarters," said the Colonel; "and here is a piece of money for thy pains and expedition in bringing me the despatch. Call, in the outer court, for Sergeant Strongfaith, and he will bestow thee and thy good fellows suitably. The evening exercise is about to commence, and thou shalt hear Corporal Defy-the-devil expounding. It is the corporal's turn to-night, and he is a man of great zeal and unctiion."

The man made another military reverence, and took his leave.

The Colonel and Rollo being now alone, the former went and carefully shut the hall door, and returning to Jasper, who had risen from his seat, he held out the open packet and its enclosure in his hand, saying—"Thou hast not forgotten the revelation made to me touching——"

"Touching the fate of Gilderoy?" interrupted Rollo. "I have not."

"Nay, nay; not that foolishness," said the Colonel, "which had passed from my mind, even as the circling ripples caused by a pebble's plunge fade from the bosom of a quiet pool of water. I meant the revelation of a fresh and furious attack upon me by the great enemy of souls. Friend, the fiery dart, of which I had due warning, hath been thrown—it hath been hurled with all the force and might of hell,

and the chosen breastplate hath proved itself invulnerable. Glory, glory in the highest ! ”

Rollo, making no response, continued staring at the Roundhead, who stood calm and impassive, with no animation in his face, save the wild sparkling roll of his grey-lighted eyeballs.

“It is hurled,” resumed Campion, “and it is shivered as against a rock of adamant ! But,” said he, with somewhat of the tone in which he would have addressed troops under arms, “feel that pulse ; count the beats,” and he stretched forth his left hand. “Is there sign or token of agitation there ? ”

Rollo, humouring the vagary, felt the pulse with great care. “None,” he answered. “The beat is regular, and you are calm.”

“Then, you may judge of the resignation with which a just and upright man receives an unmerited stroke of adversity,” said the colonel ; “and I pray you, make it your earnest endeavour to profit by the example which I now set forth. I wished a word with you concerning a trivial matter ; but this great business”—holding up the papers—“which transpired as you came into my presence must take precedence of everything else. This despatch comes from General Monk, the Governor of Scotland. It notifies to me that he hath seen good and sufficient reasons to supersede me in my present command, by transferring the said command to Colonel Francis Solway, whose father, I may tell you, fell at Preston in the service of the tyrant, Charles Stuart, and who was ever suspected of secret leanings towards the malignant interest. I am directed to suspend all military operations in the Highlands, and to proceed to Edinburgh so soon as Colonel Solway arrives here to assume his duty, which will be shortly, as he is believed to be now on the way. In Edinburgh, the general will inform me as to what may be further required of me in the way of service under the Government.”

“But, my friend,” replied Rollo, “I cannot apprehend how this order can be construed into a wrong or a stroke of misfortune. To my view of the matter, General Monk intends to invest you with a higher commission. Very probably he stands in need of your counsel and skill at headquarters. This is advancement and not degradation.”

“Did I not know the man, I might, perchance, think so too,” said Campion. “But I am convinced that it is his

design to exclude me altogether from the service of the Commonwealth. I am not pliant enough for the purposes—the far-reaching ends—of George Monk.

“But you can complain to Cromwell himself,” said Rollo, “who, I conceive, will not suffer one of his old and tried supporters to be thrust aside in so very summary and ungracious a fashion.”

A dull smile parted the dry pale lips of the fanatic, and he took a few measured strides through the hall, while the old grey light in his eye was beaming brighter and brighter. “And Cromwell, too,” he said, coming to a stand; “even Cromwell, in his Protectoral chair, secretly views me with carnal suspicion, lest, in the face of the sun, and before the people of England, I might be tempted to declare his rule an odious tyranny, which wears the mask and apes the speech of freedom.”

“I beseech you, colonel, exercise some discretion and caution in your words, even in presence of a friend,” said Rollo. “What if you were overheard by some eaves-dropper? You would be apt to impute his sinister tale-bearing to my charge.”

“No one hears me but yourself; and there is frank and sterling honesty in every lineament of your countenance,” said Campion. “Nevertheless, my words are such as may be openly proclaimed in the market places and on the house-tops; for they are words of truth and soberness, of which no man need be ashamed. The time is coming—nay, almost now is—when they will be proclaimed over the length and breadth of the land. 'Tis well that I was warned of this sudden stroke; and even the dead soothsayer of Rannoch had been constrained, like Balaam of old, to utter a faithful prediction. The minions of tyranny,” he added, “would crush me if they dared; and because they dare not, they weave their spider-like nets, and conspire to goad me into some overt act which they would pronounce to be treason against the Commonwealth.”

“If such be the object of these orders, you should study to baffle it,” said Rollo; “and your enemies’ machinations will eventually recoil upon their own heads.”

“Pshaw! man; you need not counsel me,” cried Campion, with a sardonic laugh that made Jasper’s flesh creep and his blood run cold. “I know I shall yet be quits with them. I will bend to the blast. I will yield obedience to the orders.

I will be in George Monk's hand like the staff in the hand of the Master Jesuit. But there are thousands upon thousands of honest men in England by whom I shall be righted. And thou, Satan," he continued, turning to the blank wall, "the thunderbolt forged by thee, that should have ground my bones to powder, proves but a harmless shaft, weaker than a withered rush. Go, arch-deceiver! down to thy legions, and howl in unison with the howlings of perdition, because thou art baffled by the righteous." And he cast the papers in his hand violently against the wall.

In spite of himself, Rollo grew much agitated, for he saw that the fanatic's monomania was thoroughly roused.

Campion paced slowly to and fro, sometimes biting his nails, and mumbling over them. He started on a sudden, and raising his eyes to the wall against which he had dashed the papers, he stepped back dubiously, and then waved his hand in an impatient, scornful way, uttering another loud laugh.

"What avails it that you rise from your sepulchre, and thrust your pale ghastly face upon my sight, as though I were one whom the risen dead could appal?" he said. "Begone! It was the national tribunal that demanded the sacrifice. You were condemned by the people whom you had long oppressed and enslaved. The sentence of eternal justice had been passed upon you ere your head rolled among the sawdust of the scaffold. You have no power over me. I am steadfast and immovable, fearing neither the living nor the dead. Your blood clings not more to my hand than to the hands of all the others who sat in judgment at your arraignment. What have I to do with thee? Hence, idle phantom! You dare not say it was a private grudge that prompted me to give my voice for death. 'Tis true that in my young days, beneath the old elms in Chesterton Chase, you struck me to the ground in your haughty pride of heart, because I, a peasant boy, ventured, forsooth, to assert my rights against the insolence of a malapert boy-prince. But though no such passage had ever happened in my boyhood, I would as readily have consigned thee to the black-hung scaffold at Whitehall. Away, away with thy 'remembers.' The world will ever *remember* the great act of justice performed by the memorable Tribunal."

The shape which had made itself manifest to his diseased vision now seemed to melt away, for he raised himself rigidly

erect, and drew a long breath, as though a heavy weight were removed from his shoulders, and laughed again, and turned to Rollo, saying—"How they assail me. Even *he* must rise from his coffin!"

"Who?" inquired Rollo.

"Feel that pulse once more," said the Colonel, stretching out his left hand. "How does it beat?"

"Calmly—regularly," said Rollo, after a moment's examination. "But who arose from his coffin?"

"Who? Ha! ha! ha! As if the face that I looked fearlessly on at Whitehall could affright me now. It was the man, Charles Stuart!"

"The late king?"

"The late tyrant," said Campion. "Did you not perceive him standing yonder, with his pale melancholy countenance, and the red circle about his neck, showing where the headman's axe cut sheer through?"

What! Did Rollo stand in the presence of one of the judges of Charles the First?

"Colonel Campion," cried a soldier, flinging open the door, "Sir John Spiers is come."

"Good luck, Colonel," ejaculated a well-known voice behind the soldier, and immediately Spierhaughs hurried into the hall. "The game is up with Gilderoy; he is driven from Rannoch, and you have extirpated his banditti."

Probably had the Colonel's pulse been felt at that particular moment, it would have been found to have acquired a very decided acceleration. He was exceedingly surprised; but a threatening frown settled on his gloomy countenance. Nor was Rollo much less strongly moved by the sudden apparition. Sir John offered his hand to the Colonel, but the latter disdainfully declined it, and drew back. The hall being dusky, the knight did not fully perceive the unfavourable and ominous impression which his appearance had created. He looked a great deal the worse for his sojourn among the Macgregors; he was bare-headed, his beard was untrimmed, his dress was soiled and rent, and a ragged plaid hung about him.

"By what means did you make your escape?" was Campion's first inquiry.

"It can scarcely be called an escape," answered Sir John. "Your troops beat up the cateran's quarters so effectually that the gang who had me in charge were not able to hold together, and so,—"

Some flew east, and some flew west,
And some flew to the crow's nest;

but before they dispersed they set me at liberty to find my way home as I might. And I have had a dreadful journey of it, all on foot, and without a guide, and almost without food. Come, what cheer have you? Ah! Jasper Rollo! Confound this dingy dungeon! I did not recognise you till now. Wish you joy! The Lady Annabel is safe, they say. 'Fore heaven! what is it, Jasper? Do you refuse my hand?"

"He scorns the hand of so base a traitor," said Campion.

"Am I dreaming?" cried Sir John. "Did I hear you aright?"

"You did," returned the Colonel; "and were you to be served aright, you should instantly be hung up over the battlements."

"You betrayed our secret plans to the enemy," said Rollo. "You held treasonable correspondence with Gilderoy. You attempted to poison Colonel Campion."

"Dost thou confess thy treason?" demanded the Colonel.

"Treason—what treason?" cried Spierhaughs, vehemently. "Where are your grounds for accusations so monstrous?"

"I found a fragment of your very letter," said Campion.

"It is here;" and he produced the scrap from his pocket. "Read this, and say whether the handwriting be not your own."

Sir John took the fragment, and hastening to the nearest window, pored over it for a few seconds, and then returned, saying—"Why, indeed, there seems a slight resemblance; and he was a cunning scribe who wrote it; but you know, Colonel, you know full well it is but a sorry forgery;" and before he could be prevented, he tore the paper to shreds, which he indignantly scattered on the floor.

"Sir John Spiers, that act sufficiently proves your guilt," said the Colonel; "and but that I am now superseded in my command, I should order you into arrest as a traitor to the Commonwealth. As I am, I will take no step in any such public matter."

"But I have a different score to reckon with you, Sir John," said Rollo. "You instigated Gilderoy to murder my kinsman, and to carry off his ward. I call you villain and assassin, and dare you to prove your innocence at the sword's point. Take *that* for my challenge of battle,"

and he struck him across the shoulder with his sheathed blade.

Spierhaughs swore a deep oath—gasped for breath—and quivered with fury. “Let me have repose for a single night within these walls,” he said at last, “and I shall vindicate myself to-morrow.”

“To-morrow, then,” said Rollo.

“To-morrow it shall be,” returned Sir John; and with these words he at once left the hall.

“Will not the villain save himself by flight?” said Rollo. “You should arrest him without scruple. There are none of his vassals here to raise a disturbance, for they were all left behind in charge of the wounded after the battle.”

“I am counted unworthy to carry the Protector’s commission,” answered Campion, “and therefore I will no longer exercise authority in such a matter.”

They took seats, and sat down, agitated and full of thought. Not many minutes afterwards a corporal looked in to announce the “evening exercise;” and this man casually mentioned that Sir John Spiers had left the tower.

“I knew that he would fly,” cried Rollo, in great disappointment. “Why did you suffer him to go?”

“Suffer him to go?” repeated the soldier. “Is Sir John a delinquent?”

“A delinquent of the blackest dye,” said Rollo.

“That’s odd, indeed!” said the corporal. “He borrowed a horse and a headpiece, a pair of pistols, and an old cut-and-thrust, and then rode away.”

“Went he alone?” asked the Colonel.

“Yes—with the horse,” returned the soldier. “But he is not far gone; he is in sight yet. How do you say, Colonel, shall we pursue him?”

“Pursue him instantly,” cried the Colonel, rising to his feet. “So false and cowardly a villain must not escape.”

“With your leave, Colonel,” said Rollo, eagerly, “I’ll follow him myself, and make sure of his capture.”

In a few minutes more Rollo, with his two retainers, were on horseback, and galloping hard in pursuit of Spierhaughs.

The chase was short and successful. The false knight was overtaken. He offered no resistance, and was brought back a prisoner to the tower.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Like bloodhounds now they search me out,—
 Hark to the whistle and the shout!—
 If farther through the wilds I go,
 I only fall upon the foe:
 I'll couch me here till evening grey,
 Then darkling try my dangerous way.

Lady of the Lake.

WEEEKS had passed since the Knight of Spierhaughs was brought back a prisoner to the tower of the Macgregors.

The moon of July, round as the bossy shield of a Highland warrior, was shining placidly in the soft cloudless heaven, and sparkling and flashing on the waters of a burn that ran down the southern side of the Grampian mountains. It was a night in the wane of July; and it was a fair scene over which the full moon shed her solemn radiance. On descending the Grampian chain, the burn wound its way through the low country, mirroring the silvery orb of night and the sprinkling of pale stars that glimmered around her.

The plain was dotted with clumps of aged trees, evidently the remains of an ancient forest in which the Picts and Scots might have glutted themselves in mutual slaughter, or withstood the advance of the Roman legionaries. The gentle night-breeze rustled the deep foliage in unison with the babbling of the running stream.

On the skirt of one of the thickets, and hidden by the scattered furze, a man was carelessly lying along the grassy sod, with his head resting on his hand, and his eyes gazing drowsily on the bright water gliding merrily by. His aspect and attire were wild, rude, and vagabondish. He was roughly shapen in form, and harsh in features, with thick black hair, small fiery eyes, an enormous moustache, and a complexion deeply bronzed by the sun. His attire was very rude and simple, being a greasy leathern jerkin or long jacket fastened across the chest; breeches of coarse woollen stuff, reaching a little below the knee, and leaving the lower part of the leg bare; a pair of old Morocco slippers, tied on his feet with bits of twine; and a flat Lowland bonnet on his head, with

tufts of matted hair bristling up like feathers through gaping rents in the crown. He was armed, too, after a vagabondish fashion. In a belt girding the jerkin closely about his middle was stuck a whittle or broad-bladed knife in a tattered scabbard, along with a formidable-looking pair of pistols, the barrels and locks of which were very rusty. Altogether he was an extremely ugly customer to stumble upon, lurking on the edge of a thicket, in a lone place, at a late hour of the night.

As if something had startled him, he hastily gathered his large, uncouth, shambling limbs together, and sprang to his feet, cowering, however, behind the tall bushes to avoid being seen. With one hand on the buckhorn haft of his whittle, and the other on the butt of a pistol, he darted his keen fiery glance all around, and discovered two men coming down the nearer bank of the brook. They were still at a great distance, and had apparently followed the course of the stream from the mountains; but he saw that they were armed men—perhaps soldiers of the Government; for the moonshine struck brightly on their steel-caps and cuirasses. Seeing this, he glided noiselessly within the shade of the trees, where he stood on the watch, until on their close approach to the thicket he gave a loud premonitory cough, and boldly stepped forth to meet them, bringing them to a sudden and astonished stand.

“By all the stars above!” he exclaimed. “The very man I’m on foot to see! Gilderoy! And Hackston! honest Hackston besides! The best stroke of good luck I’ve had for many a day.”

“You mak’ free wi’ folk’s names, my lad,” said Dobbie, who had his musket in both hands ready for service.

“And you soon forget the face of an old comrade, Dobbie,” rejoined he of the whittle. “You could not greet me more gruffly though I were a spy and crossing your lines.”

“An auld comrade?” repeated Dobbie. “Say you sae? Ay, and you speak nac mair nor the truth,” added he, after a thorough examination of the vagabondish stranger. “Roger Cristal was ance your name, an’ you haena changed it, like a pass-word that has done its duty.”

“Blythely would I change it, if the change would better my fortune,” laughed the other, with a kind of drunken, half-military swagger. “Speaking of changes, there’s been

many a change since I was mad enough not to pitch my camp in Rannoch, along with yourself, Dobbie; but changes are lightsome, and fools are fond of them. It's the rolling stone, Dobbie, that gathers no fog. My service to you, Gilderoy. What's the news, friends? How are all my old acquaintances in Rannoch—bonny Marion among the rest?"

Neither Dobbie nor Gilderoy made any response. They looked first of all at each other, then at Roger, and lastly into the thicket behind him.

"I'm alone," said he, stepping aside, and waving his hand towards the thicket, as much as to say that they might examine it for themselves. "I have been resting among the trees since the rising of the moon. I'm on my way to Rannoch."

"To Rannoch?" said Hackston.

"Ay, to Rannoch," said Cristal; "for I scarce dare show my face openly in the Lowlands. Look at me; once a dashing blade like yourself, Dobbie, in Middleton's own body-guard, and winning the general's praise for bravery and saving the colours at Lochgarry; and now—look at me! I should have remained in Rannoch when you gave me the offer, Gilderoy."

"You thought there would be better fortune in the Lowlands," said Hackston, after a pause, seeing that Gilderoy abstained from speaking.

"And who would not have thought that a man might live by his own hand in a troubled country?" cried Roger. "But there was an evil destiny that held my head down. A few hardy lads consorted with me; but we were soon proclaimed at every market cross benorth the Firth of Forth; for Monk and his emissaries are making the country too hot for honest men. When my comrades were dispersed, I thought that were I to spend a month or two in Rannoch some dogs might be thrown off the scent, and I flattered myself that Gilderoy, and Dobbie Hackston, and the rest of my Rannoch friends would give me a hearty welcome."

"I'm doubting, Roger, an' you gang to Rannoch, it will be worse than frac the devil to the deep sea," said Hackston. "The scent will be stronger in Rannoch than in the Lowlands."

"What's wrong?" cried Roger. "And you, Gilderoy, what makes you so gloomy? You've never said a word to me. What's wrong?"

"The Usurper's sodgers are ruling the roast up yonder," said Hackston, jerking his thumb backwards over his shoulder in a northerly direction. "They're proclaiming a' honest men, and offering high rewards."

"Rewards!" said Cristal. "Rewards for what?"

"You profess ignorance of all that has happened in Rannoch this summer?" said Gilderoy, suspiciously.

"I did hear something about a rebellion in Rannoch, and Monk's troops marching to quell it," returned Cristal, with an earnest truthful air; "but as I bore the name of a black sheep myself, I kept out of people's sight as much as I could, and therefore heard little of the country news. But it was nothing wonderful to hear about troubles in Rannoch. The Highlands wouldn't be the Highlands if they were not always in troubles. But I see that you mistrust me, and I will force myself upon no man."

"Misfortune teaches us to distrust all," said Gilderoy; "and what I have now to tell you is known over all the country: the Roundheads have driven me out of Rannoch, and are hunting for my life."

"And you fear," said Cristal, "you fear lest the temptation to betray you should overcome me? Shame on such a thought! Because I am a broken man, have I lost all sense of honour?"

"The reward offered for my head is tempting," said Gilderoy, with a proud smile; "but it is far out of *your* reach."

Cristal darted a keen glance at Gilderoy, and then said: "I understand you, Gilderoy. Let us part. Take your own road—I'll take mine."

"And we may meet another day, Roger, when there will be nae occasion for mistrust," added Hackston. "But look to yourself, for I tell you there's nae safety within sight o' the hills."

Cristal nodded his head, and backed into the thicket, and the two fugitives went on their way.

Weeks had gone since that midnight when Gilderoy and his trusty adherent forsook the slumbering band in the quiet valley watered by a gentle brook; and not until this night in the wane of July had they been able to pass the Highland line by reason of the hot pursuit kept up by their enemies. Colonel Campion, to be sure, suspended all operations, and impatiently awaited the arrival of his successor in command; and the arrival of his successor had hitherto been

delayed owing to untoward circumstances which kept him in attendance on General Monk at head-quarters. But during this long interval no restraint was imposed on Ranald Vourigh, who, actuated by his insatiable thirst for vengeance, took upon himself the conduct of the pursuit after the outlaw, and pressed him so hard that Gilderoy found almost insuperable difficulties in escaping to the Lowlands.

For weeks had Gilderoy and his trusty adherent suffered the harshest privations while hunted from covert to covert by the bands of Macpherson; but now the broad Lowlands were before them, and they deemed the worst of their trials past.

"There's something in yon fellow's e'e I dinna like," said Hackston. "It's nae new thing for a cavalier sodger to turn outlaw and live a his ain hand in ill times; but I could never venture a groat upon Roger Cristal's honour, even in his best days."

"The thickets will enable us to change our route for the present," answered Gilderoy. "He will expect us to keep directly south; but if we strike east for some way we will throw him out of his reckonag."

"Unless we are fast purued by Macpherson, I dinna dread muckle at Cristal's hand," said Dobbie; "for houses are but few here, and Cristal is powerless o' himsel'. Ah! by my faith, yonder's a wreath o' peat-reek rising up aboon the trees."

They avoided the direction in which the peat-reek was rising, and kept their way close within the straggling old woods, which extended to the bottom of a low range of hills.

Roger Cristal saw the peat-reek ally as soon as the fugitives. He was dogging them step by step. Little did they think that they were tracked by as sure a bloodhound as ever took the slot. On seeing them begin to ascend the heights, he hurried back towards the spot whence the smoke arose. The winding burn twice interposed its flood between him and his destination; but the water being shallow, was easily waded. At length he found himself in the vicinity of a farm-house, surrounded with strong pangs, which fenced in the barn-yard, kail-yard, and other appertenances. There being little time to search about for the proper access, Roger took the fences in his way, and scrambled right across every obstruction, till his hasty progress was arrested

ly the clash and rattle of a chain, and the furious deep-mouthed barking of a dog. Brought to an instant stand, and grasping his pistols, he looked for nothing short of a desperate onset from the Cerberus of the place; but he was much relieved on discovering that the animal was firmly chained to the wall near the main door of the house. There was light in some of the windows, but it disappeared from all as soon as the dog began to bark; and in a moment or two afterwards the moveable board forming the lower half of one of the windows was opened, and the moonshine showed a man's head filling the aperture. The dog instantly fell quiet.

To an inquiry touching who he was and what he wanted—his interrogator adding the interesting information that he had a firelock at hand loaded to the muzzle—Cristal made answer by claiming assistance to apprehend a notorious Highland rogue, of whom the soldiers of Government were presently in hot pursuit.

“Whatna rogue?” demanded the voice at the window.

“Gilderoy,” replied Cristal. “There’s a high price on his head, and it can be won.”

“Let the man in,” said another voice at the back of the questioner. “Light the candles. Oh! that it might be permitted unto me to come face to face wi’ that murdering cateran! Quaker, light the candles, I say.”

“But do you stand cautions Gideon Beaton, for the safety of this house, an’ I open the door?” said the first voice, while the head withdrew from the aperture. “What do we ken but that this wild-lookin’ stranger is the ringleader of a band o’ thieves and robbers?”

“Trusting in the Lord” answered the other voice, “I’ll make my auld broadsword stand caution. Open the door.”

The bolts being drawn, and the door warily opened, a light broke forth which showed the figures of three men within the doorway. Cristal went forward, but not without a grave dread of the watch-dog, which did not seem at all reconciled to him on closer acquaintance. “It was weel for you,” said the first voice, “that Fangs was chained when you ventured ower the paling, for I was just on the eve o’ losin’ him for the night, when his bark told us that something was wrang. Be peaceable, Fangs, and let the man past you.” Thus admonished, the dog allowed free and quiet passage to the stranger, who was admitted into the doorway, and thence

conducted to the kitchen. The light of a couple of thick tallow candles which one of the men held in his hands, enabled Cristal to scan the faces of the three men, and the three men to scan his own. One of the three was "the gudeman o' the farm-toun" himself. The second was none other than our auld friend, Gideon Beaton. The third was the one who held the candles, a very remarkable figure. He was a long, lank man, with a thin, fleshless physiognomy, staring blue eyes, and short grey locks. The habit in which he was attired was cut after a peculiarly plain and formal fashion, and well patched, and much bespattered with mud. His manner was stiff and ungainly, and his look precise and melancholy.

In few words, but with some confusion and prevarication in details, Cristal recounted as much of his chance interview with the Rannoch fugitives as he chose to tell, and besought the men to join him in immediate pursuit, insisting strongly on the certainty of gaining a high reward. He freely confessed (and with perfect truth too) that hearing that Gilderoy was attempting escape to the Lowlands, he had hastened to the north in the hope of being able to discover and arrest him. It appeared, moreover, that he had been in some sort of indirect communication with Ranald Vourigh. "You may say I might have shot the villains off-hand," he added; "but it was dangerous to fly in the face of two desperate men, and in dogging them I could not get near enough to take sure aim."

Gideon Beaton listened greedily to every word, and then struck his sheathed sword emphatically on the hearthstone, saying: "It's no for the reward, man, that I would put forth my hand against the villain; but because it's a bounden duty upon us all to rid the land of a wild beast that has lang laid waste our vincyards. Think on the murder of the Laird o' Dunavaig! And no mony mornings before that deed, the malignant and his savages came down upon my ain fauld and drove twa score ewes, and three gude nowte—no their marrow in a' Angus. Let us up, I say, like men of war, wi' our swords upon our thighs, and cut off Amalek from the earth; for the Lord hath manifestly delivered him into our hands."

"I counsel thee," said the man with the candles, in a shrill and monotonous voice, which perceptibly paused betwixt each word—"I counsel thee, friend, to restrain thy feet

from those paths which lead men to blood-guiltiness. Hast thou forgotten what was said to Peter in the garden, when he drew his sword and cut off the high priest's servant's ear—and the servant's name was Malchus? 'They that take the sword shall perish by the sword.' Yea, friend, avouch thyself a true follower of the Prince of Peace."

"I'll listen to no more of your abuse of the blessed Word, Quaker," cried Gideon Beaton. "This night have I withstood your false doctrine, and proved, as plain as a pike-staff, how far wrang your inner licht has led you. No wonder though the country rises in indignation, and drives you oot to be wanderers and vagabonds on the face of the earth. Who could suffer such heresy in this covenanted land?"

"Come away; never mind kirk doctrine," cried Cristal, with angry impatience. "Come on, and after Gilderoy, else he'll slip through our fingers like a knotless thread. What power have you, laird?" he asked, clapping the "gudeman" on the shoulder.

"I ha'e four stout ploughmen lads," answered the latter. "They're a' sleeping in the barn. But how do we ken that after you get us awa' wandering through the country there mayna a band o' your tribe come in and fall on the steading?"

"Don't quit the steading—keep watch on the steading," replied Cristal. "Give me three of your ploughmen and I'll seek no other help."

"Count me anc o' the three," said Beaton. "You and me, and twa o' the lads, will tak' the road, and the other twa lads will keep the house wi' the laird and the Quaker. I think *that* should make a' things safe and richt."

This proposal was adopted without further discussion. The four hinds were roused from their lair of straw in the barn, and brought into the kitchen, where two of them received basket-hilted broadswords. The female domestics who had retired out of sight on the entrance of the stranger, were now called, and directed to procure a bottle of the best usquebagh which the house afforded. There was no "gudewife," as the "gudeman" was an old and confirmed bachelor. A hearty glass was served round, and the expeditionary party, inspired by the potent stimulant, marched forth.

The sky was still cloudless and the moon bright. No sound but the slumberous murmur of the winding stream saluted the ear of night.

“It looks as if a special Providence had brought me to Glenfoot this night,” said Beaton; “and wha kens what great wark is appointed to be wrought by my hand? I was at Kirkallon tryst this morning, and when my market was done I came west to spend a night wi’ my auld friend the gudeman o’ Glenfoot. When I cam in, there was yon Quaker creature in the kitchen, getting a bit of supper for charity; for he’s wandering about the country, without a plack in his pouch, by reason that his neighbours drave him oot frae amang them on account o’ his schismatical doctrines. Of all the sectaries that are over-running our covenanted land, surely the Quakers are the most perverse, and should be putten doon by the strong hand, instead of being utterly tolerated according to the new and sinful fashion of Cromwell and Monk. There is no doctrine so unscriptural, hatefu’, and detestable as toleration.”

“We must be silent, gudeman,” said Cristal; “for the night is quiet, and silence is best on such an errand.”

Under Cristal’s cautious guidance, the party rapidly pursued the route which he had seen the fugitives follow. When they ascended the low range of heights, they found the summit somewhat marshy, and Cristal, whose keen eye seemed to possess all the faculties of a Red Indian’s, soon discovered recent footprints on the sod, and skilfully tracing these until they disappeared, he led his allies down the other side of the braes, and straight on across the country until they came to the beaten track which wound away towards the south-west.

This beaten road was bordered pretty continuously with dwarf trees and tangled underwood, and the party had not pursued it for any great distance, when the acute ear of Cristal the spy detected the murmur of voices in front. The party paused to prepare their arms for use, and then stealing forward, almost on tiptoe, they turned an angle of the winding path, and came in full view of the objects of their search, who were seated on a grassy bank by the way-side. The moon, struggling through the foliage that overhung the bank, cast down a broad circle of light exactly over the heads of the fugitives, showing them to be engaged in mending the thongs of their brogues, and their heads being down, they did not observe the sudden but silent appearance of their enemies, who had therefore opportunity to withdraw out of sight before they should plan their attack.

The pursuers held a hurried council of war. The eager spy and his equally eager coadjutor, the Covenanting farmer, were quite prepared to rush at once upon the fugitives. A general rush was, indeed, the only practicable means of attack—the character of the road and of the surrounding ground forbidding the idea of stealing unseen to the bank. But the two ploughmen, now that they were brought almost front to front with the redoubtable Gilderoy, of whose desperate prowess they had heard so many startling relations, were shaken in their courage, and indicated plainly that they did not covet the perilous honour of a personal encounter.

Cristal, seeing their irresolution, pulled a pistol from his belt, and looked cautiously round the turn of the road. "I have hit a bird upon the wing, at a greater distance," he whispered, "and one good shot will rid us of one enemy."

"And then the other enemy will mak' aff," returned the Covenantant. "Na, na, friend—we canna trust to firing, for folks' hands are never steady at sic a moment as this. Come, lads, show your mettle. We maun fa' on. The first man that shows the white feather I'll brain him on the spot. Mind my words. It was me that wrote my name on the Covenant wi' my ain blude, so I am no a canny man to parry wi', lads."

All at once, all abreast, with a hoarse shout, and brandishing their naked weapons in the clear moonlight, the party poured down the path towards the fugitives, who, springing to their feet in confusion, grasped their arms, but looked as if undecided whether to fight or flee. The spy fired a pistol, but the shot far from justified his vaunted accuracy of aim, as it merely broke away a twig from a tree behind Gilderoy. The ineffectual shot was promptly returned from Dobbie Hackston's musket, and one of the ploughmen gave a thrilling yell, dropped his broadsword, and sank to the ground like a dead man.

"Down wi' the Philistines!" shouted Gideon Beaton, as he rushed at Macgregor and engaged him in combat. The other two threw themselves against Dobbie, who first dashed his gun in their faces, prostrating the second ploughman by the shock, and then drew his sword to encounter his remaining assailant, whom he recognised with a fierce and vengeful oath. Cristal presented another pistol at Hackston's breast; but the expert Dobbie struck it out of his hand before it was fired, and would have followed up the blow by cleaving

him, had not the second ploughman, who now rose from the ground with a capital stomach for the fray, pressed forward undauntedly, and drove back Hackston step by step.

Meanwhile Gilderoy found himself hard pressed by the stout Covenanter, who, with nerves of steel and the heart of a lion, kept raining a shower of blows upon him, which it took all his art and skill to ward off. Gilderoy was slowly forced to give way, until he unconsciously approached the brink of a deep gully at the side of the road, and suddenly stepping back into vacancy, he crashed down to the bottom through the dense brushwood with which the hollow was overgrown.

"So fall the enemies of Israel!" shouted the Covenanter, springing forward to the treacherous edge of the bank. His impetuosity almost caused him to share the fate of his antagonist, for a large portion of the loose earth gave way under his foot, and he only saved himself by clinging to a tree, and then springing back. "Amalek hath fallen into the snare," he said, "like a bird into the net of the fowler. The vane of Siddim and the slimepits thereof have swallowed him up, even as they swallowed up the ten kings of old!"

The faithful Dobbie, seeing the catastrophe which had befallen his leader, relinquished his combat with the ploughman, and fearlessly leaped down into the dark bosky hollow. A bullet from the spy's pistol whistled over his head as he sank, and the brushwood crashed with his fall, and closed above him. Cristal tore the sword from the hand of the fallen ploughman, and ran down the road in hopes of finding an easy descent to the gully. His two allies followed. They soon found what they sought, and plunged into the jungle; but the fugitives were nowhere to be seen or heard—they had utterly disappeared, as though they were of those "bubbles" which "the earth hath" in common with the water.

The rosy light of morn found the pursuers (now rejoined by the first ploughman, whose wound had turned out to be by no means serious) still "beating about the bush" in quest of their enemies; but all their search was in vain. Gloomy and dispirited they wandered back to the farmstead of Glenfoot.

The homeless Quaker met them by the way. "See you not the hand of God visibly in your discomfiture?" he said. "He will not suffer you to touch so much as the hem of the

garment of the sinner whom he hath reserved for his own visitation in His own good time."

"It's a droll thing," cried Beaton, "that every time I try to execute judgment upon Gilderoy, some fool or other comes and quotes a screed o' Scripture against me. First, there was our ain minister, and syne here's this Quaker. But I'll argue nae mair wi' a daft man. We maun on to Glenfoot, lads. Was a' thing richt at the steading, Quaker, when you left it?"

"I left the house as I found it—in peace and security," returned the Quaker. "The master wearied for your coming, and sent me forth to seek you."

"Then, follow us," cried Gideon, gruffly, "and I'll se mak you sure o' a gude breakfast, at ony rate. I hate and abhor your heresies, man; but I hae compassion on your distress. Try, man, and tak a thocht o' yoursel', and renounce that quake—quaking."

CHAPTER XXVII.

Of these three tracks which lie before us,
We know that one leads certainly to Death,
But know not which that one is.

Rowe's "Lady Jane Grey."

EVENING was closing in Glen Connachan—the lone and dismal Glen of Lamentation—and the high winds moaned in harmony with the thundering plash of the cataract. The sound of wind and water, echoing among the precipices, was sublime. There had been a glorious sunset, and the broken flying masses of cloud still faintly glowed with its purple dyes.

Many suns had risen and set since Gilderoy and his Lowland follower escaped from the toils of Cristal the spy. Nerved to incessant exertion by the prospect of earning a golden reward, the spy had succeeded in rousing the country and driving the fugitives back to the hills. The pursuit went

hotly on—the spy and Ranald Vourigh keeping it up with unflagging perseverance.

And on the night when the flying clouds still faintly glowed with the purple dyes of the sunset, Gilderoy and his last adherent sought the inhospitable and ominous recesses of Glen Connachan.

“Time had dealt roughly with them since we saw them last.” Gilderoy’s long hair hung torn and matted; the floridness of his complexion had deadened into ghastly pallor, his cheeks were sunken, deep furrows seamed his brow, and his whole aspect was “lean and hungry.” Hackston was in similar plight. Their swords were their only weapons, and Hackston carried Gilderoy’s target slung at his back.

“And we are driven into this fatal glen!” exclaimed Gilderoy, as he gazed regretfully on the frowning rocks around him. “Say what you will, my honest comrade—here we must perish. The weary struggle is near its close. There is no refuge here. Even now the villains may be close on our tract.”

“Ten to ane they’ll never think we wad tak a road that leads direct to Dunavaig,” answered Dobbie.

“Dunavaig!” repeated Gilderoy, in husky accents. “The blood that cries from the ground at Dunavaig——” There he stopped, and smote his hand on his brow. “The web of my fate is woven. The hour of doom approaches; and we can no more retard it than we can stay the sun in the midst of the firmament.”

Wandering past the cataract, and out of hearing of its eternal thunder, they reached a wide part of the glen, where on the opposite side from the torrent, the bottom, along the base of the giddy heights, was rather thickly set with trees and bushes. The wind was still for the time, and profound quiet pervaded the savage scene, save for the brawl of the water.

“Sit down,” said Dobbie, pointing to broken pieces of rock scattered among the trees. “We maun hae some rest. The branches o’ the hirks and hazels will hang ower us like a curtain, and a hunder men may pass, and no an e’e licht upon us. Sit down.” And he seated himself.

The spreading boughs hung motionless; hut the fragile leaves of a tall and stately aspen quivered with a gentle rustle that might have soothed the wayworn into slumber.

Far off in Highland wilds, 'tis said
 (But Truth now laughs at Fancy's lore),
 That of this tree the cross was made
 Which erst the Lord of glory bore,
 And of that deed its leaves confess
 E'er since a troubled consciousness.

"That pool," said Gilderoy, pointing to a pool of the stream, on the black surface of which patches of foam, like great white drowned moths, were lazily floating round and round—that pool is deep, and a plunge would end all my miseries."

"By the blackest misfortune o' a'," said Hackston, shaking his head. "Better far to rush upon the levelled pikes and brandished swords o' the enemy, and meet a death o' honour. Awa' wi' sic wild thochts. Sit down, I beg o' you. The caller air will cool the burning fever o' your brain."

Gilderoy sat down; but weary as he was, the agonising tumult of his thoughts seemed to render it impossible that he could taste of rest. He arose and paced up and down in front of where his follower was sitting.

"But wherefore should *you* share my fate?" he cried. "It is *my* life they seek. Yours may be saved."

"I'll follow you to the last," returned Dobbie.

"Oh! faithful friend, leave me, and save yourself!" ejaculated Gilderoy; "for, where I am, there destruction lovers around."

"I've told you often, and I tell you again, that I dinna desert my standard though it be borne down in the battle," responded Hackston.

An eagle started, with a loud scream, from a pinnacle up the pass, and mounted majestically, and straight as an arrow, into the darkening air. Suddenly a musket-shot was heard, and the bird dropped like a stone, but all in a wild flutter, to the summit of the precipice from which it had taken flight. Hackston sprang from his seat. Gilderoy hurried into the leafy covert beside him. Some moments of cruel suspense followed, and then distant voices were wafted on a gust of wind down the glen.

"We are lost!" faltered Macgregor. "Ranald Vourigh and his band!"

"Stand fast and silent," urged Hackston. "Silence is our only safety."

"Their dogs, if they have any, will infallibly discover us," said Gilderoy.

"I hear nae dogs," said Dobbie. "The shooting o' the eagle wad gart dogs bark." He took the target from his back and gave it to Gilderoy, who braced it on his left arm. They both drew their swords.

About twelve armed Highlanders, talking, jesting, and laughing, emerged into view, and marched leisurely down the middle of the road. They had no dogs.

"You thought I was no marksman, Donald," said one voice; "but put Gilderoy within fair range of me, and I will bring him down as surely as I brought down the erne."

"Oh, you may safely brag about Gilderoy," answered another voice; "for I'll wager that Gilderoy is over the hills and far away by this time."

The men passed the spot where the trees concealed the fugitives. No discovery was made; and the voices speedily died away in the distance.

"Macpherson's men," said Hackston.

"They are," answered Gilderoy, "a portion of his band; but he is not with them. Our fate is but deferred, not averted. They will shut up the pass and leave us no way of escape. More of the band may be fast behind. We are taken as in a trap." And in extreme dejection he sheathed his sword, unbuckled the target from his arm, and laying it down at his feet, glanced gloomily towards the dark pool on which the moth-like flecks of foam were swimming.

"Canna we endeavour to climb the crags?" returned Dobbie, cheerfully, as he pointed to the precipices on the opposite side of the glen. "Yonder stands a rock sae shelvy, that it looks like a muckle braid stair, built up, stap by stap, by the auld-warld builders, the Piets, wha' set up the kirk o' St. Johnstoun in ae nicht's time. We could easily scramble to the tap, hauding by the bushes. Tak' heart, Gilderoy."

"I lack all heart—even the very desire to secure my own safety," said the outlaw, casting his hands abroad in a frantic fashion. "Were we out of this accursed glen, I might think and speak and act like a man; but here—my very soul is weighed down by the recollection of that wild night at Dunavaig. It was truly said by the minister, that the fire of Dunavaig would raise the country to hunt me down. Not a blast of wind comes sweeping by, but seems to moan out a malison. Here I cannot struggle for my wretched life, or yield it with honour. Is there not a smell of burning in the air?"

"Ay, o' the powther wasted on the eagle that lies flapping up yonder on a peak unapproachable by mortal man," said Hackston.

"Let us across the heights," cried Gilderoy, eagerly. "My every energy is cramped and benumbed in this place. Curses light on the villain who told me that my brother perished through Dunavaig's guile! Hah! mercy on us! I hear voices!"

"In what direction?" asked Dobbie.

"Up the glen."

They listened, but nothing met their strained ears save the moan of the blast and the soughing rustle of foliage.

"What would I now give that Connal were sitting at his own hall fire!" said Gilderoy. "By the soul of my father, I do hear voices!"

"Where—where?" inquired Hackston.

"Up the glen, I tell you. There! You hear them! You must hear them!"

The voices were now quite perceptible. The fugitives slunk farther back among the trees. Another party of Highlanders, some six or eight in number, came rapidly down the glen.

"It is Ranald Vourigh! It is my arch-enemy at last!" whispered Macgregor. "We are undone!"

He began to buckle on his target, but his agitation was so excessive that his fingers seemed to have lost their power, and failing in the attempt he unluckily let the target fall. It clattered loudly on the stones, attracting the notice of the strangers, who were now close at hand, and causing them to halt.

It was the hour of doom. The outlaw's career was run. The iron hand of destiny was upon him. The murder of Dunavaig was about to be expiated.

A violent gust of wind scattered the branches of the thicket like dishevelled tresses of hair, and disclosed the forlorn fugitives to open view. The strangers, although not perhaps recognising them at the first, set up a shout, and seized their swords.

All the desperate courage and energy of the outlaw momentarily returned to him. He braced on his target, and raising his war-cry, broke out upon the strangers like a lion. Hackston, nothing loth, followed hard at his back.

"Gilderoy himself!" exclaimed the well-known voice of

Macpherson. "Make sure of him, my lads. Remember the price of his head!"

The fugitives encountered fearful odds. The furious clash of claymores sounded through the glen. The ferocious oaths and yells of the combatants showed the fiendish intensity of the strife. Soon did Hackston prostrate one of the enemy, and immediately a second fell beneath the hand of Gilderoy. But fate was not to be overborne. The enemy redoubled their exertions, determined that their prey should not escape. Ranald fought with overpowering fury. Twice he encountered Gilderoy hand to hand, and twice were they separated. The conflict went on—clash, and shout, and yell, mingled at intervals with the report of a pistol.

At length Dobbie Hackston was cut down. Many wounds were on him, and his blood was pouring out fast. He essayed to rise, but fell helplessly on his side, and his sword dropped from his hand. His battles were over. But even in his extremity his heart was with his leader—he was true to his colours to the last; he called to Gilderoy to flee.

Gilderoy strode across the prostrate body of his faithful follower, and dauntlessly continued the strife—the trees and bushes at his back securing him from attack behind. In this posture he clove the head of a third enemy; but his strength was failing, and a stroke from the Macpherson's claymore stretched him beside Hackston.

"Take him alive!" cried Ranald; for his remaining followers were rushing on the fallen chief to despatch him at once. "Take both alive. They shall be made gazing stocks to a' Scotland."

His behest was obeyed, and the outlaw and his adherent were secured as prisoners to be dragged to a judicial doom.

"Villain!" said Gilderoy, as he was flung over on his back, "complete your vengeance—stab me to the heart. I would do so to you."

"I swore to you that this hand of mine should clench the fetters upon your limbs, as it clenched them upon your brother's," answered Macpherson, with an exultant laugh. "I swore that this hand of mine should drag you to the black tree on which your brother died; and my oath shall be fulfilled."

He tore up a handful of long grass, and while he carefully wiped the blood from his sword with it, before returning the victorious weapon to its sheath, he directed his men to

attend to the wounds of the prisoners and of their own comrades. Hackston had now fainted from exhaustion. Gilderoy, whose wounds were not so deep and dangerous, attempted, though without avail, to resist the performance of a duty towards himself, which he well knew was prompted by no feelings of compassion. When the men came to examine the condition of their own fallen comrades (for the prisoners had engrossed their first care), they discovered, with surprise, that all three had expired. Macpherson himself and his remaining followers had entirely escaped wounds.

The prisoners spent the night in the glen—the Lowland soldier still continuing insensible, and apparently drawing nigh unto death, and Gilderoy, full of pride and disdain, maintaining a stern silence.

Ranald despatched one of his followers to bring up the party of Highlanders who previously passed. It appeared from his orders to the messenger that the party had been directed to proceed on to Dunavaig Manse, whither their leader intended to follow them for the purpose of meeting there with some friends whom he expected.

After daybreak the messenger returned with the party, and likewise with a country cart to convey away the prisoners. The cart was driven by the farmer to whom it belonged, and who, on coming forward, gazed eagerly and long at Gilderoy, who was seated on the ground, with his back against the aspen tree, which rustled incessantly, as if trembling for his fate.

“And this is Gilderoy!” said the farmer, after his long and eager gaze. “What a pity sae strapping a lad should fill the hangman’s grips!”

“You never suffered from his hand, gudeman?” said Ranald Vourigh, sneeringly. “You never had your house burnt over your head by the Macgregors?”

“No me, man—no me,” returned the farmer. “I ken that he set Dunavaig House in a blaze; but he ne’er burnt mine; and wherefore should I bear malice against him in his evil day? He’s a strapping lad, burn whase house he likes.”

“You’re one of the Dunavaig tenantry?” cried Macpherson, in wonder. “You’re one of the murdered laird’s tacksmen?”

“And to my sair loss, as a’ the parish can testify,” said

the farmer, with an angry indifference. "But we've gotten a braw new laird, that ought to ken law and justice; and 'new lairds, new laws,' as the proverb says."

Macpherson having appointed several of his men to stay behind and inter the dead bodies of their comrades at the spot where they fell, the two prisoners were lifted into the cart, which was then surrounded by the rest of the party, and driven slowly down the glen.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Aft I ha'e ridden thro' Stirling town
In the wind both and the weat;
But I ne'er rode thro' Stirling town
Wi' fetters at my feet.

Aft ha'e I ridden thro' Stirling town
In the wind both and the rain;
But I ne'er rode thro' Stirling town
Ne'er to return again.

Ballad of "Young Waters."

GILDEROY sat in the cart with his head downcast and his long red hair hanging in confusion over his face. Stretched at his feet lay the Lowland soldier, inanimate and pale as a corpse. When Gilderoy raised his haggard eyes for the first time during the journey, the sun was up and breaking through an amber cloud, and the blackened ruins of Dunavaig House—the memorial of his master-crime—met his gaze.

Ranald Vourigh, who sat on the front of the jolting vehicle, turned round as if to mark what effect the sight of the ruins should exercise upon his captive. But the captive seemed unmoved.

"Do you mind the night of murder and burning yonder?" said Macpherson, with a cruel smile, as he pointed to the scene of ravage, which showed blacker in the bright and bounteous sunshine.

"I do," answered Gilderoy. "And you will ever remem-

ber the dark and windy winter morning when the devouring flames drove you from your own dwelling, and my father's men lacked the heart to brain so mean and despicable a miscreant. My father's deeds of vengeance and my own will not soon be forgotten."

"Had the memory of that dark and windy winter morning melted from my mind like that winter's snow from the steepes of Schiehallion," replied Ranald, "I would not have tracked you from hill to glen, and from glen to muir, and through every pass and corrie of the Grampians. And I know that I shall yet witness the deeds of that morning avenged in your ignominious death."

A few country people were now hastening towards the party from various quarters, anxious to obtain a sight of the renowned freebooter, and among the rest was the Covenanting hero, Gideon Beaton.

"Your nowte and your sheep may now graze in safety, Gideon," said Macpherson, "for the forays of Gilderoy are all ended."

Beaton pushed up to the cart, and taking hold of the side-board with one hand, walked along at an equal pace, bending a keen gaze on the captive, whose head was now sunk again on his breast. "He's but a young man, a slender youth," said Gideon. "And for a' that has come and gane atween him and me, I winna rejoice in a carnal worldly spirit ower his downfall. Bly the wad I be to fight out the battle I had wi' him at Glenfoot, the twa of us getting equal weapons and a fair field; and I'm surprised that so slim a lad should have fought so sturdily with ane that's more nor twice his age, and has more nor twice his strength. But we must ne'er forget that we're forbidden in Scripture to exult ower our enemies. And," he added, casting his eyes among the Highlanders, "where's your ragged landlouper, Cristal?"

"I know nothing about him," answered Macpherson. "He's no man of mine. The reward brought him into the field, and he's working for his own hand; but eager as he is, I have outstripped him. The prize is won by me. You of this country-side," he continued, with an air of pique, occasioned doubtless by the commiserating tone of the Covenanters' remarks on Gilderoy, which were so similar to those previously expressed by the driver of the cart—"you of this country-side should give me thanks, I think, for ridding you of such a plague as the last of the Rannoch caterans."

“And so I do,” cried Beaton, quickly. “I praise and magnify the Lord for putting a hook in the young man’s nose, and a bridle in his jaws, and laying him at the mercy of them he wronged. My braw callant,” he said, turning to the silent captive, “it’s time you were taking thocht o’ your past life in the view of your latter end; and if you need a friend’s assistance, I’m free and willing to tak’ order wi’ you anent the things that concern the salvation o’ your immortal soul. Even at the eleventh hour the thief upon the cross found pardon, justification, and adoption.”

Gilderoy gave no answer. He did not even look at the speaker. It was doubtful whether, immersed in his own dark cogitations, he had heard him at all.

“I would counsel you, as a sober friend, to repent in sack-cloth and ashes,” resumed Gideon; “for though your life may ha’e been pleasing in your ain e’en, when you were rolling sin as a sweet morsel under your tongue, you must bear in mind that for a’ your thochts and deeds you will assuredly be brocht to judgment. No doubt, you were proud and uplifted when you dwelt in Rannoch at the head of your kilted heathens—villains that wad grip to dirk and claymore at a wag o’ your finger, or a wink o’ your e’e; but grim death now stares you in the face, and it’s a friend’s advice that you should turn your mind to think on how you can venture to face your Maker, wi’ innocent men’s bluid upon the skirts o’ your garments.”

He paused here, seeing that Gilderoy continued quite indifferent; and then he addressed Macpherson. “Ranald,” said he, “do you ken—yo’ that kens a’ Rannoch, and was there yoursel’ shortly syne—do you ken what the Macgregors did wi’ my cattle? Did you see ony o’ my ewcs? There were twa clad score o’ them, and ye wad maybe ken my mark upon them. They were marked across the back.”

“A cross you say?” said Ranald. “I did see some sheep there with that mark—a thick black cross.”

“Haud your tongue, man! do you ken wha you’re speaking to?” exclaimed the Covenanter, in a momentary passion. “Na, na; my mark was nae cross. I never dedicated beast of mine to the deevil and the Pope or Rome by putting upon it any such idolatrous token. If you saw sheep wi’ the cross upon them, they must have belanged to papishcs as heathenish and deluded as the Clan Gregor tamsel’s; and troth, man, folk that would put such tokens upon the poor dumb

brutes deserved to lose ilka trotter o' them for ever and aye. But my mark was made in Christian fashion—twa plain strokes, and naething mair. Did you see any sheep wi' *that* mark?"

Macpherson replied saucily in the negative.

"What did you do wi' you twa score ewes from the Craiginha' Muir, Gilderoy?" pursued Beaton, once more addressing the outlaw. "You mind well how your gillies drave them and three fat nowt. Hoot, man! you mind brawly. What price did they bring you, and wha was your merchant? Or, are they in Rannoch still? Eh? Do you hear me, man?"

"You need not question him," cried Macpherson, "for he'll give you no answer. There's too much devil in him."

"But I must question him," returned Gibbon; "for, if the beasts be still in Rannoch, it's but right and just that I should get my own. I'm saying to you, Gilderoy, and I'm speaking as a friend——"

But it was altogether useless to go on, either as a friend or as a foe, for Gilderoy paid no attention, and never raised his head, for all that could be said to him. Baffled and irritated, Beaton quitted the side of the cart, and fell into the rear of the party.

The cart jogged and jolted along until it came at last to a stand before the gateway of Mr. Githrist's manse—an old-fashioned, cozy-looking tenement, with "harled" walls, and roof covered with coarse grey slats—which was pleasantly situated several miles beyond the house of Dunavaig. There was a garden around the manse stocked with apple, pear, and cherry trees, gooseberry bushes, green kail, and a sprinkling of common flowers. A dry stone dyke enclosed the grounds, and on both sides o' the wide slap which formed the entrance way some gigantic sun-flowers reared their gaudy heads above the level of the dyke and the bristly tangled spray of sweet-briar and hawthorn that crept over it, and looked steadily forth o' the road, like sentinels on the watch. Cultured fields lay in the vicinity, waving with good crops of ripening grain. But there was a peculiarity about those fields which deserves to be remarked. It was only every alternate "rig" that grew corn, the remainder lying in grass, according to the immemorial usage of the district; and this mode of culture was called, in the vernacular, "rig and bauk." The bauks were never subjected to the ploughshare, but always left under their natural grass. Here and there

were seen the "faulds" for the cattle—enclosures with mud walls, which were frequently visited and "toomed" by marauders from the mountains. A broad but shallow stream wimpled in the rear of the manse; and the humble parish kirk, with its "ivied tower," stood on the brow of a green upland at about a bowshot's distance.

The Minister was a widower, with no surviving family, and his household consisted only of two maid-servants, both well advanced in years. The arrival of the party at his gate seemed to have taken him by surprise, although apparently he had received previous information of Gilderoy's capture. He came out hurriedly and (to judge by his looks) not in the best of humour, followed by his two domestics, and likewise by two gentlemen, in half-military habits, who were none other than Colonel Campion and Jasper Rollo.

"You must give our prisoners the shelter of your house for a little, Mr. Simon," said Ranald Vourigh, jumping down from off the shaft or "tram" of the cart on which he had been sitting. "How's a' wi' you, Colonel? How's a' wi' you, Mr. Jasper? I hope the lady is none the worse of her journey from the Maegregors' country."

"Do you intend making my house a common tolbooth, Ranald Vourigh?" demanded the Minister. "You'll bring me into bad bread wi' the Clan Gregor, wha will blame me wi' betraying James, as they blamed auld Dunavaig wi' betraying Patrick. Canna you just drive on wi' them to the first jail?"

"We require some time, Minister, to make provision for the journey," replied Maepheron, humbly. "Besides, sir, the other man Hackston is so sore wounded, that I fear he'll not survive many hours, and we will require, in common charity, to lift him into some house, till we see what comes of him. I ask you, sir, could we take him into any house where he would find better spiritual attendance than here?"

The Minister, Campion, and Rollo, went close to the cart and looked at the prisoners.

"The words of the Highland seer are now fulfilled," said the Roundhead. "He forewarned me that in the day when Gilderoy fell I should be powerless; and lo! am I not so?"

"And you have got down from that weary Rannoch at last, Colonel," said Maepheron. "You've been lang, lang."

"I could not in honour quit my post till my successor's arrival," answered the Colonel. "As you know, Lady Annabel and Rollo remained with me from day to day and from week to week, waiting till Colonel Francis Solway's arrival should enable me to conduct them to the Lowlands under the protection of the military escort assigned for myself. We all reached the manse early this morning, just after your messenger had come and gone, and we dismissed the escort an hour ago, as being no longer necessary."

"It was a blessed mercy that you sent me word to meet you here," replied Ranald; "for, in coming to meet you, I met my fortune. I never saw anything so lucky. Who would have looked for Gilderoy in Glen Connachan? And what news from Rannoch?"

The Colonel hummed, and shrugged his shoulders again and again. "What think you was Solway's first act on assuming command? Ay, Ranald, you may guess. He liberated Sir John Spiers, on the ground that my charges against him were frivolous! Satan is unchained!"

"Then let Lady Annabel beware of her disappointed suitor," said Ranald.

"Lady Annabel is bound for Glenbirkie," returned the Colonel, "where she will be out of his reach. Rollo has sent on his two retainers to announce her home-coming. I am invited to accompany her, but other duties forbid."

The Minister, leaning on the side of the cart, touched Gilderoy on the shoulder. "James, James," he said, "I warned you, my jo, that this would be your end, and you would listen to nae reason, your madness was so strong. Alas! alas! and is this the end of your father's son—the end of the lad-bairn on whose face I sprinkled the baptismal water!"

"Will you tell the Minister, though you winna tell me, what you did wi' twa score o' clad ewes, and three fat cattle beasts, frae the Craiginha' Muir, Gilderoy?" said Gideon Beaton, leaning over the opposite side of the cart. "Oh! man, it might ease your conscience a bit to restore the right thing the right gate; and you hae muckle to answer for beside the ewes and the nowte—though I hope and pray you will unfeignedly repent and be forgiven. It's a sign o' true and unfeigned repentance when sinners acknowledge their misdeeds, and try to mak' amends to them they wranged."

Gilderoy had hitherto been crouching in his old attitude, but he now raised his ghastly face, and with a shake of his head tossed back the red locks from his brow, and addressed the Minister, saying—"I have but one poor request, Mr. Simon. My brave but unfortunate comrade is lying here mortally wounded. I know that his moments are counted, and I pray you suffer him to be carried into the manse that he may die in peace."

"I will, I will," cried Mr. Simon. "Ranald, carry in the twa lads."

The Highlanders instantly bestirred themselves, and having unyoked the horse from the cart, took out the two prisoners, and conveyed them into the kitchen of the manse.

Gilderoy was placed in a large arm-chair. His companion, whose bonds were taken off, and who was reviving from his insensibility, was gently laid down upon a mattress which the maid-servants had spread on the floor for him, and pillows were put under his head.

The place soon filled to overflowing with the crowd of on-lookers. The Minister hastened up-stairs to his cabinet to procure balsams, salves, and cordials. Colonel Campion, having some little smattering of military surgery, promptly set about examining Hackston's wounds. But soon with a vexed and gloomy air, he pronounced them mortal. "He dies within the hour!"

"Ah! would to God you had left me, Hackston!" ejaculated Gilderoy, in bitterest anguish. "You should have left me, man, and made your peace with the enemy."

"I dinna rue," said Dobbie, feebly, as he raised himself on his elbow, and gazed round him, on the crowd of strange and excited faces, with a languid eye that seemed glazing fast. "It was aye my heart's wish to meet a sodger's death, and I'll meet it in spite o' a' the traitors in Scotland."

"Winna you think on the state o' your soul, my man?" said Gideon Beaton. "Would you like me or the Minister to put up a prayer for you?"

"An honest man's prayer can do me nae ill," responded Dobbie. "But I was aye true to my king and country. I followed Great Montrose through a' his wars; and to hae followed sic a leader is an honour and glory. Let the man, or the lass, or the bairn either, that ever I wrangled, stand forward and charge me. But my time is rinnung oot fast,

Gilderoy; and you maun hear to me, and pass your word that you'll grant my last request. Will you gang doon to the banks o' the Almond, some time when you hae leisure, and set a bit flower or twa on my faither and mither's grave?"

"My faithful companion," answered Gilderoy, with a deep groan, while tears trickled down his cheeks, "you forget that I am a prisoner on my way to death."

The dying soldier shifted himself on his elbow, and looked at Gilderoy with a bewildered eye, and then recollection returning, he faltered, "I ken—I ken—ay, ay, my mind was wandering, and I thoekt I saw the grave in the south-most nook o' the kirkyard, near by Elder John's marble stane wi' the twa white angels blawing trumpets on the tap o' it. There's anither lies in that kirkyard that ance I dearly lo'ed; Jeanie Gordon, my first and only love—the Flower o' Almondside—a puir man's daughter, but wi' a faee as fair as the summer morning, and a heart as pure as Almond's crystal wave. Oh! Jeanie, Jeanie! how I grat when I saw the green sods happit aboon your head!" His elbow yielded under his weight, and he fell prostrate on his back with a heavy and gurgling sigh. Next moment there was no Dobbie Hackston, but a lifeless and blood-boltered lump of clay!

A solemn stillness fell over the assemblage, now profoundly awed by the presence of death. The voice of Gideon Beaton, husky with emotion, was the first sound that broke it. "Puir lad," he said, "puir lad! The worth o' a' the ewes and nowte in Angus couldna recall the spirit that's now standing, in fear and trembling, before its Maker's throne o' judgment."

"Had I but a thousand men faithful and steadfast as he," said Colonel Campion, gazing on the dead, with the old grey light gleaming in his eye, "this nation should behold the lion of the tribe of Judah roused to conquest!"

"You have done your work," exclaimed Gilderoy, turning to Ranald Vourigh, who stood leaning on his sword. "You have slain as gallant a soldier as ever drew sword in battle for a loyal cause. You have done your work."

"I had no feud with Hackston, and he had none with me," answered Macpherson. "But it was his fortune to follow an outlawed villain whom every other friend deserted in disgust. You were unworthy of that dead man's friendship."

"The room must be cleared," cried Jasper Rollo. "We need not make the prisoner a mere show to stare at."

"There spoke a generous heart," said Gilderoy. "But for you, Macpherson—this is your day of dastardly triumph, and you may enjoy it to the full. Months—years—ay, years upon years may pass away, but the hand of a Macgregor will avenge me at the last. Every effort to avoid the avenger will be in vain. You may flee from Scotland, you may disown your name, and divest yourself of everything that could betray you for a Macpherson; but wherever you be, and under whatever disguise—whether in the heart of a wilderness, or upon the wide wide sea, or in the throng of a populous city—a Macgregor's dirk will find the way to your heart!"

"Threatened folk live lang," retorted Ranald, scornfully.

The Minister now hurried into the kitchen with his medicaments, and was greatly concerned to find the poor soldier dead. "Did naebody pray wi' him?" he cried. "You, Gideon Beaton, what were *you* doing?"

"I spak' o' prayer," answered Gideon; "but there was nae time, and he wadna halt boasting and blawing aboot Montrose."

The dead body was carried out and laid upon a temporary bier in the barn, and covered with a clean white sheet. The kitchen was cleared of all the company, only four of the Highlanders being left as a guard. Gilderoy's bonds being slackened, his wounds were dressed by Campion, and then refreshments were offered him, of which, however, he partook indifferently. When his repast was over, he earnestly desired to see the Lady Annabel, who he understood was in the manse. She came, along with Rollo.

"Lady," said Gilderoy, "you now behold the fallen chief of the Gregalich; but I will not wrong you by the suspicion that you rejoice in the sad sight."

"Believe me, I do not," she said.

"And can you find in your heart to forgive me the wrongs which you suffered at my hand?" he asked.

"I can," she replied; "I forgive you freely. May Heaven grant you forgiveness as free and full as mine!"

"You hear her, Jasper Rollo?" said Gilderoy. "Has forgiveness a place in *your* heart? I slew your kinsman; but I was urged on to the foul deed by the cunning falsehoods of Spierhaughs. May he meet with his reward! He had a

plot against the lady, but I never joined in it, for I had wild thoughts of my own which jarred with his. Say that you forgive me."

"I forgive you as freely as Lady Annabel has done," returned Rollo.

"Then, farewell," said Gilderoy. "To you, Colonel Campion, brave and skilful soldier, I owe my gratitude, because you have so generously tended your old enemy, and never insulted his misfortunes by a single proud word."

"No fallen enemy," answered the Roundhead, "ever brought against me such a reproach as that I insulted his distress."

This closed the brief interview, and the prisoner was left with the guard.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Has not this present Parliament
A leger to the Devil sent,
Fully empowered to treat about
Ending revolted witches out?
And has not he, within a year,
Hang'd threescore of 'em in one shire?

Hudibras.

ABOUT a fortnight had gone since the capture of Gilderoy.

There was a rough east wind blowing straight up the Firth of Forth, and lashing the sea into tumbling billows, the foam of which, flying through the air, seemed, in the gathering shades of night, like wildered sea-birds struggling with the storm of wind and wave. The fishermen on the Fife shore were dragging their craft high upon the sands, out of reach of the waves that rushed after them like furious mastiffs striving to exceed the bounds of their chains. Lights glimmered along the line of the coast, indicating its small towns and hamlets.

On the old, rickety, wooden pier of a fishing village or "town," on the Fife side, many of the denizens of the place had spent the afternoon, watching the rising of the gale; for they were sea-faring people, and not a few had friends aboard coasting vessels which were daily expected in the Firth. But when the night came prematurely down on the gurdy sea, and rain began to spit, the anxious watchers consoling themselves with the hope that the vessels they expected would not enter the estuary till the following day, and hearing no signals of distress, slowly and thoughtfully quitted the quay, one by one, to seek the comforts of their own snug firesides, till only two were left, and they were about to follow their neighbours and leave the open unsheltered pier (at which not a single vessel was lying) to the wind and the rain and the dashing spray.

"We've never had a nicht o' calm weather on that water," said one of the loiterers—a man of stunted stature and somewhat deformed shape, with a slouched hat upon his head, and a threadbare mantle tightly wrapped about his meagre body: "I say that there has never been a nicht o' calm weather on that water since it was crossed by the great malignant and outlaw frae the north, Gilderoy. Didna you mark it, neighbour? As soon as the boat that carried him left the pier the sea grew troubled, and three distinct claps o' thunder rattled ower our heads; and ilka nicht sinsyne the wind rises, and the sea rises, and there's a wild angry water till morning."

"But what do you mak' o' it, Reuben Kennoway, you that's a man o' wisdom?" said his companion. "We had a lang track o' braw weather before; and folk say the weather gangs in tracks—lang fair, lang foul."

"I make this," replied Reuben, "that there's witchcraft in it. A cantrip has been cast upon the water, and Gilderoy has a hand in the pie. I'm confident of that—especially from what I saw this day. Evil agencies are at work, Joseph Pettigrew; the enemy's emissaries are at their old trade, and it would give me no surprise though there should not be so much as a single coble left to the town before many days come to an end."

"Dinna you tak' steps to find out thae evil emissaries, and to bring them to justice?" said Joseph. "I'm sure there's no a better witchfinder than yoursel' in a' the kingdom o' Fife. What for do you suffer winds to blaw and storms to

rise, night after night, to the damage o' our cobles and shipping, let alane our auld pier that's cracking and shaking to its very foundations? Find oot them that's troubling the water, and let us mak' a bonfire o' them on the top o' the Gallows-knowe."

"Give me time, Joseph, give me time," responded the witchfinder. "Rome was not built in one day. I am in the midst of deep investigation, Joseph." And he nodded his head significantly, and pulling his thin cloak still closer around him, he took a few short meditative turns on the creaking pier, and then stood and gazed towards the eastern horizon, out of which the spirit of the storm was sweeping the clouds in mad career. Thick splashes of foam were spattered in his face, as if by a mocking hand. "Ay," he said, "many spells have been cast before the wind could blow so loud and the waves rise so high. You mind, Joseph," he continued, sidling up to his companion, "you mind how the water was calmed at the burning of old Eppie Sawers on the knowe? Eppie had long practised in secret against our fisher-folk and mariners, raising storms that cost this town dear; but after patient search, accompanied with fasting and prayer, I discovered her hidden arts, and brought her to a full and clear confession. She acknowledged that Satan, her master, instructed her to raise the wind, by dipping a clout or rag in water, and then knocking it on a stone with a beetle, and saying to herself—

I knock this rag upon this stane,
To raise the wind in the devil's name;
It shall not lie till I please again.

Likewise, he instructed her to lay the wind, by drying the wet clout and saying—

I lay the wind in the devil's name;
It shall not rise till I raise it again;

and if the wind would not abate on the instant, she was to cry out to him—

Thief! Thief!
Conjure the wind, and cause it to lie!

That morning she was to suffer, the wind was a hurricane, and the sea rinning like mountains. But when we chained her to the stake, and kindled the faggots, the wind suddenly

died away, and the water fell; and when naething remained of her but a heap of reeking ashes, the air was hushed; there was not a breath to scatter the bit curl of reek that rose from the pile as calmly as from my tobacco pipe. It was a great manifestation of our triumph over the powers of darkness."

"It's a pity, Reuben, that you couldna contrive to work the same wonder again."

"Can I no?" cried the witchfinder, with a low chuckling laugh. "I'll try."

"But where's the witch or the warlock to tak' and burn?" inquired the other. "Gilderoy is laid up in the Tolbooth o' Edinburgh, and oot o' our jurisdiction. Has he emissaries in this town? I thought you had purged town and parish months syne."

"Yea," said Reuben, "I purged town and parish, and the detection of witchcraft gart my pat play brown for many a day, though since Eppie Sawers suffered I've been able to make but a poor shift to keep soul and body together; for no witch, no wage, you know. But," continued he, coming closer to Joseph, and seizing him by the lappet of the coat, and rising on tiptoe so as to put his lips on a level with Joseph's ear, "there's a landward witch in the town—a Highland hag—a limmer frae Rannoch! How do I know that, think you?"

"You needna speir at me how you know it, Reuben; for you ken a' thing. There's mair skill in your little finger than in a' the heads in the parish putten thegither. But where is she, this Highland witch? I ne'er heard tell o' her."

"Did you meet an old woman and a young lass, in tartan plaids, coming into the town this morning, up at the New-barns?"

"That I did. Wha were they, yon?"

The witchfinder laughed drily. "Witches—rank witches," he said; "at least the old hag. I speak upon her. She could not deceive my sight. She could not cast her glamour over me. As for the young one, I merely hold her in suspicion as yet, for I make no rash accusations."

"Where was you when you saw them coming in by the New-barns?"

"I was just out to get a mouthful of the morning air, for I slept ill all night," responded Reuben. "When I saw them

coming, I bent down among the bushes, and you passed by, and they passed by, without seeing me. The moment I set my two eyes upon the old woman, I saw the devil's seal and signet upon her brow. I crept through the bushes behind them, and heard them speak of Gilderoy; yea, and the old hag, over and over again, lifted up her hands and swore vengeance against all his enemies. By heaven! her doom is set! I have blotted out her name from the Book of Life. She dies! she dies! And ye, her masters!" he cried, looking towards the angry sea, while his eyes flashed and his teeth chattered: "Reuben the deformed—Reuben, the sport of every thoughtless brat that jeers me as I pass in the street—Reuben the deformed shall quell your malice. Not a fiend that rides the blast, and hurls up the waves with a flap of his dark wing, but shall own my power supreme. Howl, rage, spit on me!" he hoarsely vociferated, wiping the spray from his face. "I shall find the means to chain ye down, and to scatter the ashes of your slave to the two and thirty winds of heaven!"

"But where's the witch?" demanded his companion. "And I wad beg o' you no to cry oot in sic a wild manner. You made my very heart loup. I could almost tak' my great oath that when you was skreighing yon time I saw a wave wi' something in the midst o' it like a face a' glowering wi' muckle round e'en."

"I see a host of fiendish faces rising and sinking," cried the witchfinder. "For, over yonder, a full half mile from shore, the 'Southron's Sandbank' used to appear at low water, till the currents and eddies of the Forth drifted it away."

"I've heard folk speak o' the story since I cam' to dwell in the town," said Pcttigrew, "and I've kent them that saw the spirits."

"The story has been a story longer than the town has been a town," said Reuben. "It happened in the days of King David Bruce, when the English armies had overrun Scotland (just as they have done at the present time), and set Edward Baliol on the throne. There was a ferry here, but only a single house, in which dwelt Allan Steersman, who kept the ferryboat. One day a band of the Southron troopers left Cupar Castle for an excursion, and passed on, drinking and driving, till they came to the water side, late at night, and then the thought struck them that they would cross the firth, and go forward to greet their comrades, the

garrison of Edinburgh Castle. It was a squally night, with a cloudy moon, and the tide near the flow. They knocked up Allan Steersman, and demanded to be taken across. He answered their call, and sore, sore, did he try to persuade them not to risk the venture; but persuaded they would not be—they would be over the firth, though Satan himself should forbid. They sent back the horse-boys to Cupar with their steeds, and crowded on board Allan's barque. Allan weighed anchor and set sail. It was a cloudy night, I say, and the sandbank rose high and dry, looking, in the uncertain light, for all the world like the white beach on the opposite coast. Allan, seeing they were all drunk, pointed to the bank, telling them he had fulfilled his duty and carried them to the Lothian shore. He dropped his anchor, and out the troops jumped, refusing to pay him a single plack for the passage. When the last man had gone, Allan hoisted his anchor, turned his helm, and bore off. A wild shriek came after him. The drunken troopers had discovered their error. The tide was rising on them. Allan gave no heed, but steadily kept on his course for his own shore. There was nothing that they did not promise him as they ran roaring along the edge of the bank. All the wealth of Scotland should be his if he would but put about and take them in. But Allan turned an adder's ear to their entreaties. They were the enemies and oppressors of his native country, and what cared he though the waves should swallow them up? The waves swallowed them. Not a soul escaped. And therefore, though the fatal sand-bank has long since disappeared, the ghosts of the drowned Southrons are heard and seen on stormy nights, yelling and waving their hands, as when they vainly implored Allan Steersman to come back and save them from the advancing tide.* There—I see them, mingled with seaweaving fiends! They spit their venom," he went on, as splashes of foam struck his breast. "But I scorn them—I scorn them!"

"Say nae mair to them—say nae mair aboot them," cried Joseph, in affright.

"Come with me, Joseph, and be a witness of the discovery and arrest of the Highland hag," said Reuben. "She and her companion are in Widow Thom's public-house, where I have been privately watching their doings."

* See this story circumstantially related in Heron's History of Scotland. Vol. iii., p. 237.

The rain was now beating thick and fast. In fact, wind and rain and flying foam seemed conspiring to sweep the two eronies from the pier. The witchfinder, with a curse, shook his clenched fist at the raging sea. Instantly, as if resenting the menace, a billow rose, like a lion, against the pier, dashed over it with a roar of thunder, and spent its fury almost at his feet. This was too much for the nerves of the eronies. They took to flight at the top of their speed, and rushed towards the village, which lay in a sandy hollow considerably beyond the beach.

The narrow, crooked, dirty lanes of the village (for street it had none) were all but deserted, and almost every door was shut against the tempest, but cheerful lights shone through the windows. The witchfinder, nearly spent with running, brought himself and his companion to a full stop in an empty space, and near to an open door which emitted a strong glare, illumining all around.

"The beldame and her young associate are here, in the change house, having gained on the compassion of Widow Thom," he said; "and they are to remain here till morning, when they intend to cross the firth, if wind and weather permit. But cross the firth they never shall. I could have seized them both in the day time; but I judged it more prudent to suffer them to entangle themselves in the toils. The beldame has been exerting her healing skill on Widow Thom's sick daughter; and perchance we will now seize her in the midst of her spells and incantations."

"You're a cunning dog, Reuben," answered his companion, with a laugh. "Lead the way, then, and ca' in a stoup o' the Kirkcaldy treacle wine; * and if the job hauds gude, you'll stand anither stoup o' stronger gear."

* In a charter, dated Windsor, 12th June, 1680, granted by Charles II. to the burgh of Kirkcaldy, mention is made of *treacle wine*, and also *water of life*, commonly called strong waters.

CHAPTER XXX.

Here, here she comes :—I'll have a bout with thee ;
 Blood will I draw on thee, thou art a witch,
 And straightway give thy soul to him thou serv'st.

King Henry VI.

THE witchfinder and his satellite entered the tavern quietly, and passed straight into its only public room, in which a good sea-coal fire was burning—the night being very chilly for the season of the year. Here a company of villagers were assembled over their drink. A fine young woman, wearing a tartan plaid, sat near the fire, pensively leaning her head on her hand. Some of the company greeted the new entrants jocosely, and invited them to seats; but although Reuben's companion complied at once with the invitation, Reuben himself did no such thing, but standing in the middle of the floor, fixed his eyes on the young woman, whose back was towards him, and who did not yet turn her head. Having sufficiently regarded her in grim silence, he stepped forward and touched her on the shoulder with his right hand, as though he arrested her in the name of the Lord Protector of the Commonwealth. She, apparently supposing that this was a hint for her to allow somebody a share of the hearth, shifted her stool aside, and then gave a half glance over her shoulder. It was Marion Mackinnon—Marion o' the Muir, that glanced at the witchfinder.

“Where is your mother, lass?” inquired Reuben.

“My grandmither, you mean,” said the Highland girl, with a smile.

“Ay, your grandmother—where is she?”

“She's ben the house.”

“Ben the house doing what?”

“Making a drink to the siek bairn.”

“And where got she the drink?”

“She brewed it frae herbs.”

“Brewed it frae herbs—imphm—And where were the herbs gotten? Can you tell?”

"I can tell brawly; for I was at the gathering o' them. They were gotten west at the foot o' the craig, where there's an auld kirk in ruins. We went out at noon, and sought for them, but could find nane till we cam' to the foot o' the craig."

"Did you pull them off the top of graves?"

"Graves, man! We saw nae graves."

"Was it near the kirk you pulled them?"

"About the breadth o' this room frae the side o' it."

"What side?"

"The east side."

"And you tell me you saw no graves?" cried Reuben, stepping back a pace. "All the town knows that the old burying-ground has not been in use these hundred years bygone, but the graves are still plainly visible to them that have eyes in their heads. Enough! I accuse you and your grandmother of witchcraft and sorcery."

A shout of surprise burst from the company who had been listening in eager silence to the interrogation, and every man sprang to his feet. Marion also rose from her stool and cast a startled gaze around her.

"Look ye, neighbours," cried the witchfinder, "this lass freely avows that she and her grandmother gathered baleful plants and herbs from off the graves of the dead, and therewith brewed magical potions for the recovery of the sick. Is not the proof of sorcery clear? They may pretend that they are no more than *white witches*, which kind use their unlawful skill in the healing of diseases; but our laws punish white witchcraft as well as black witchcraft—both kinds being equally obnoxious in a Christian land. Ho, neighbours!" he exclaimed in a louder key, "shall we suffer such enormities to be openly practised in the midst of us, without let or hindrance, as though there were no laws to which we could appeal? Look to your firth! Ever since it was crossed by that great malignant, Gilderoy, storms and tempests have prevailed to our astonishment, our alarm, and our heavy loss. But why need we wonder? Why stand we astonished? These women are of kindred to Gilderoy, and are practising in his interest. Count your own losses, neighbours. You, Caleb Wilson, lost a trawl net; you, John Currie, a new coble; you, an anchor and chain; you, a coil of ropes; you, Andrew Brydie, your boat with its hail load, your son narrowly escaping a watery grave."

“True, true!—it’s the truth, Reuben.”

“Haul forth the murdering limmers!”

“We’ll mak’ a blaze o’ them the nicht yet!”

“Tie them back to back, and fling them ower the pier to pacify the water!”

Such were the exclamations of the shocked auditory.

Marion stood motionless and mute, struck to the heart with consternation, and the plaid dropping from her shoulders revealed her gracefully-moulded form. Her dress was homely, and stained with travel.

“Faith! and she’s a comely strapping cummer this ane to be a witch!” cried one man. “Auld Clootie has shown gude taste in choosing siccan a winsome leman. *His* fancy used to lie among the auldest and ugliest Jezebels in a’ the country.”

The uproar brought in the hostess herself from some inner room of the public-house. Widow Thom was a dumpy, buxom, fresh-complexioned dame, with a quick black eye, and features indicative of easy good-nature. She bustled in, and coming to a stand, put her bare arms akimbo, and looked about her, partly in astonishment and partly in anger.

“You are harbouring witches, Agnes Thom,” said Reuben Kennoway; “and we must drag them forth to speedy judgment. Even at this moment the elder of them is engaged in administering drugs and drinks of damnation to your daughter.”

“Nonsense, you hivering gowk!” answered the widow, laughing. “The man’s in a creel! They’re no witches ava. They come frae the North Highlands, and they’re going across the water the morn to Edinburgh. The auld wife has great skill in bairns’ complaints; but there’s nae witchcraft nor ony ither ill craft about her.”

“She hath blinded you,” retorted the witchfinder. “You see not as I see.”

“I daresay no, Reuben,” cried the widow. “You’re either drunk or daft, man, to crack such blethers. Sit doon, neighbours, to your drink, and dinna mind what he says. We a’ ken Reuben; he’s crazy aboot witchcraft, puir body, and we maunna heed a man that’s no in his senses. Sit doon, lass; he daurna harm you on my floor-head.”

“Maybe the ale’s ’witched,” said Joseph Pettigrew, looking curiously into a half-full tankard on the board.

“Taste it and see,” cried several voices.

Joseph did so, and spat out the mouthful which he had imbibed, with strong aversion. "Feegh!" he cried, spitting and sputtering. "The taste o' brimstane! the taste o' sulphur!"

"Horrible! horrible!" ejaculated the witchfinder.

"My troth, gudeman," said the hostess, sailing majestically up to Joseph, like an inflated turkey; "before you misca' my ale, and cry 'Feegh!' till't, you should clear your auld lawings. I ha'ena seen the colour o' yer bawbees for twice eight days; but aye ilka nicht in you come and ca' for drink, and when reckoning time comes—Hoot! you've forgotten your purse, or you didna get your wage, or a hole in your pouch gart you lose twa or three groats, and you'll mak' a point to pay the morn. But that morn ne'er comes, and aye the score on the wa' aboon the chimley brace ben the house growing langer and langer, and me having rent, and coal, and candle, and the brewer to provide for!"

"Bring the magistrate—send for Bailie Will," cried the witchfinder. "Run, Joseph, run, and bring the bailie." Joseph instantly bolted out on this congenial mission. "Stand by me, neighbours," continued Reuben, "I have both law and gospel on my side. I obtest ye that ye value no man or woman's illegal resistance."

An exceedingly confused altercation ensued. But in vain did the good-natured hostess exert herself to allay the foolish excitement. She might as well have striven to allay the storm on the Firth. Her opposition only tended to add fuel to the flame. The witchfinder's madness bore down everything before it. When old Judith made her appearance from the sick child's bed-room, she was seized by half-a-dozen hands, and it was with great difficulty that some of the more furious spirits could be restrained from executing summary justice upon the unhappy crone on the spot. The increasing disturbance brought in people from the neighbouring houses, and, in fact, soon set the whole village in a ferment, so that by the time Bailie Will arrived a noisy crowd was thronging and bustling about the tavern door.

The bailie—a worthy master carpenter by trade, squat in person, and ineffably pompous in manner, with a strong smell of whisky and tar about him—elbowed his way into the house, and forthwith entered upon an investigation of the alarming case.

"Tak' tent, bailie," cried one of the crowd; "tak' tent that the limmers dinna smit you wi' their evil c'en."

“That cannot be,” quoth Reuben, “and the bailie knows it too; for hath not the late King James declared in his famous Book of Demonology—‘If witches be apprehended and detained by any private person, their power, no doubt, either in escaping or in doing hurt, is no less than ever it was before; but if, on the other part, their apprehending and detention be by the lawful magistrate, upon the just respects of their guiltiness in that craft, their power is then no greater than before that ever they meddled with their master; for where God begins justly to strike by his lawful lieutenants, it is not in the devil’s power to defraud or bereave him of the office or effect of his powerful and re-vengeing sceptre.’ Therefore the magistrate has nothing to fear.” He then stated the full charge against the prisoners.

The magistrate, himself a devout believer in the existence and prevalence of witchcraft, was much horrified to hear Reuben’s statement. Without troubling himself to put many questions to the accused, or to hear evidence in their behalf, he gave peremptory orders that they should be committed instanter to “the common gaol,” and there closely confined till the further orders of court.

The gaol was a tumble-down wooden erection, standing in the heart of the little town. When untenanted by prisoners, it was commonly used as a byre for cattle; and on this particular night it happened to be fully occupied in the latter capacity by some beasts belonging to a small farmer or cowfeeder resident at about a mile’s distance inland.

The high mandate of law having been solemnly pronounced, the two criminals were unceremoniously dragged outside. They made no resistance, and did not offer a single word in their own defence. After they were dragged out on their way to prison, the bailie remembered that the gaol was full of cattle, and the key in possession of their owner, according to use and wont. Here was a quandary. What was to be done? The bailie, however, had too high a sense of his own dignity to allow of his decision being balked by any such accident. The key, he declared, must be made forthcoming, the gaol opened and the prisoners incarcerated. The “town’s officer” being sent for, was found helplessly drunk in his bed. The bailie was, therefore, under the necessity of employing John Pettigrew for the nonce, in room of the obfuscated official, and him he despatched for the key, giving him from his pocket a huge clasp-knife, bearing his name clumsily carved on the haft, to

exhibit to the farmer as sufficient warrant. "Tell him," said the bailie, "that we winna turn oot the beasts the nicht; we'll no stir the beasts, but we'll only ram the twa criminals into the laigh cellar, the *Witches' Pit*, by themsels, till the morn, when the court opens. Haste you, Joseph, and dinna let the grass grow at your heels."

Joseph set off like a hare, and the bailie was about to direct the two prisoners to be carried back into the public-house until the key came, when the trampling of horses was heard, and four travellers came riding into view.

"It's Kimmerghame—it's the drucken laird, as fou as a piper!" cried several voices. "Mak' way for him. He'll be wanting anither jorum frae Luckie Thom."

The crowd readily opened to make way; but the travellers drew their bridles, and inquired the cause of the tumult.

"Twa witches frae the North Highlands, and we're waiting for the key o' the gaol," was the answer.

The foremost rider urged his champing steed towards Marion, on whose pallid face the strong light from the public-house door was shining, and who instinctively stretched out her hands towards him as if imploring his protection. He was a tall, thin youth, with a pimpled face, and long sandy hair floating in the wind. A good beaver, adorned with a jewelled band and feather, was squeezed down awry on his head; a mantle was blowing loosely about him, and he carried a rapier at his side, and pistols at his saddle-bow. The other three horsemen were evidently his attendants.

"Why, lass," he vociferated, with a drunken hiccup, "they blame you for witchcraft! Stop my breath, but if there's witchcraft about thee, it must be in those bright eyes. 'Slight! they pierce like bullets. Stand off, clowns!—stand off, I say. I must see to this."

"I've pronounced high sentence upon baith o' them, Kimmerghame," cried the bailie, "and it's at the peril o' ony man to contravene my decision. I'm Bailie Will, chief magistrate o' this town o' Parton, and my word is law within the liberties thereof."

"These women, Kimmerghame, have avowed themselves witches," added the witchfinder, who held both prisoners firmly; "and they are lawfully condemned to prison until judgment shall be executed upon them. They have troubled land and water with their sorceries, and they must die the death according to the Scriptures."

Kimmerghame showed himself to be a man of action rather than of many words. Urging his horse still closer to the prisoners, he lifted his heavy riding-whip, and struck first the bailie and then the witchfinder several rapid and hearty thwacks across the shoulders with the shaft of it, which was loaded with lead; and calling to his men to lay about them with the like good will—a command which they were by no means slack in doing—he seized Marion by the arm and pulled her towards him. The bailie bellowed, the witchfinder roared, and there was a general yelling clamour, enough to arouse the dead in their coffins. The crowd scattered in dismay, the onslaught was so sudden and energetic. The laird pulled at Marion with might and main, nearly oversetting himself with the exertion. The witchfinder held firm and shouted “Murder! murder!” in a voice that must have been heard over all the town. But the attendants now struck him unmercifully across the wrists with their whip-shafts, which made him forego his tenacious and death-like hold of both prisoners.

“Bear a hand with the girl,” cried the laird. “Get her up before me here. Come, my beauty, put your foot in the stirrup.”

Eager to embrace any means of escape, Marion clasped the laird’s hand, but at the same instant her agitation was so overpowering that she reeled in giddiness against his horse’s side. One of the attendants leaped nimbly from his saddle, and raised her upon the shoulder of his master’s steed. The laird clasped her around the waist, keeping her firm and secure in her seat. This effected, the attendant remounted.

“Save my grandmither!” implored Marion, waving her arms towards old Judith, who stood speechless and benumbed with fright. “They will murder her if you leave her.”

“Fire and faggot for them both!” cried the witchfinder, who was leaning against the wall of the tavern, rubbing his bruised and bleeding wrists.

“Treason!” shouted the bailie. “Men o’ Parton, winna you flee to your weapons and support your magistrate against a drucken ne’er-do-weel? Treason, treason!”

“Awa wi’ the lassie, Kimmerghame,” cried Widow Thom. “And dinna leave the auld wife neither. Put them baith ower the firth the morn, and I’ll gie ye as muckle brandy as you micht swim among.”

“Mind my grandmither,” again implored Marion.

"I'll mind yourself, my beauty, and that's enough for me," answered Kimmerghame.

"But I canna leave her," cried Marion. "I'll rather die beside her."

The laird, whistling to his men to follow, gave his horse the spur, and the party rode off, pursued by the mingling yells and huzzas of the excited mob.

Marion continued to beseech him to turn back and rescue old Judith, but he rather quickened his pace. She then struggled to get down, that she might return and share her grandmother's fate. But he held her fast, and on they went, out into the stormy darkness that by this time brooded over the open country.

Marion's struggles were very feeble, and she was soon exhausted, and became passive in the grasp of her deliverer. Still, however, she implored and wept, and still on the horsemen galloped, mile after mile, until they suddenly came to a halt under the barred archway of what seemed to be an ancient square tower, perched on an eminence close to the sea.

The servants dismounted, and knocked at the gate. One of them assisted Marion to the ground, and protected her with his cloak from the driving rain. The laird himself dismounted without assistance, though at considerable danger of pitching down upon the crown of his head. Staggering towards Marion, who stood sheltered under the servant's cloak, he cast his arms about her neck, and essayed to kiss her lips. The cloak prevented him, and she screamed and resisted with all her failing strength.

"The devil!" cried the laird. "After rescuing you from such a rabble, and bringing you so far at the hazard of my neck. Silly wench; do you refuse a kiss to your deliverer? You must yield one before my prim stashed sister sees you. Come!"

But she struggled still more violently, and at last slipped out of his hands altogether, and burst away with the speed of a startled doe.

The oaths and shouts of Kimmerghame were frightful. Instant pursuit! instant pursuit! Any money for the girl! One of the men mounted and galloped off at random; but his horse stumbled down a precipitous water-course, and the wind bore to Marion's ear the heavy groan of the crushed rider. The night was dark, and she knew not whither to fly, but fortunately she soon reached the skirts of a wood.

Pursuers—the laird and his two attendants—were so close behind, that scarcely had she crept in among the bushes and trees when they dashed past, hallooing like furies. They never saw her, and so Marion escaped them—thanks to the dark night and the thick wood.

CHAPTER XXXI.

The sea-weed thrown,
By wave or wind,
On strand unknown,
Lone grave to find,
Methinks may own
Of kindred more
Than I can claim
On life's bleak shore.

Motherwell.

THE poor trembling maiden crept in beneath a huge oak, whose wide-spreading boughs, almost sweeping the ground, and forming a sort of natural pavilion, would have afforded, even in the day-time, close concealment to any one who sat upon the hillocky root. Dripping with wet, chill and sick at heart, overpowered by a thousand cruel perplexities, Marion covered her face with her hands, and bursting into an impetuous flood of tears, besought Heaven that she might die and be at rest—"free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom Thou rememberest no more!"

The wind gradually fell; but the rain lashed for long hours that seemed long ages. Marion still sat crouched under the shelter of the friendly oak, undisturbed by her drunken pursuers, of whom she heard nothing farther. With the dawn of morn the rain ceased, and the sky beginning to clear, a sweet and soothing calm spread over the face of nature. The clouds that came from the German Sea had now a slow and solemn motion, and ever and anon rending asunder, they disclosed glimpses of the azure of heaven. Marion felt that she must promptly provide for her own safety, because, in the approaching daylight, she would run the risk of being discovered by somebody belonging to the tower, which reared

its gaunt and gloomy height at less than a mile from the wood. She felt, moreover, that to return to the town of Parton would be but to court the full rigours of persecution; still, she was eager to rejoin her grandmother, and to share her fate, whatever that might be.

After musing a little space, she quitted her seat, and passing through the wood, diverged towards the coast, taking the direction in which she conjectured the fishing village to lie. She pursued her way a good distance without meeting a single being or seeing a house, and the tower of Kimmerghame had sunk out of sight when a man came upon her from a cross-road. He had the appearance of a pedlar, for he carried a bulky pack strapped upon his back, and a long staff in his hand, which was marked as a measure or ellwand. Glancing suspiciously at her draggled dress and woe-begone looks, he inquired if she had been travelling all night in the rain. She replied in the affirmative, and requested to know the shortest road to Parton.

"You're on the straight road, lassie," he replied. "Haud on and you'll soon see the lums o' Parton reeking. There was a fell steer in Parton yestreen, I understand."

"About what?" asked Marion, tremblingly.

"A witch—an auld witch-wife. But witch or no witch, they brunt her."

"Brunt her?"

"Deed did they, as I was told. They took the law into their ain hands, and brunt her on the open ground in front o' Jackie Thom's public. But I wasna there to see, lassie. I only heard tell o' it this morning. You'll hear a' the news when you gang yont."

The poor girl could have thrown herself down upon the earth in despair; but she checked the tumult of her feelings, and, thanking the packman for his information, resumed her own course. A turn of the path, and the shade of some trees, enabled her to halt without the man's observation, though he might look back, and she seated herself beneath the trees, and gave way to the inexpressible anguish which was rending her heart.

It was an open country around her, with swelling uplands, and scattered woods, and level plains, and winding streamlets. The harvest had now been gathered in—a full and abundant harvest over all the land; for though the spring of the year had been very backward, the summer and harvest

proved so fine that "the like," says a diarist of the time, "was never seen in this age." The air was full of the briny smell of the sea; but the firth itself was not in sight, owing to the intervention of rising grounds. The morning sun, struggling through the clouds, shed transient beams on the quiet and smiling scene. Here and there, in the distance, cattle and sheep were browsing on the sunny slopes of green braes, and ascending smoke denoted the *locale* of a farmstead or a hamlet. Marion sat, with her head bent on her knees, utterly drowned in woe, and unconscious of the rapid flight of time. She wept till even tears failed her. For long she seemed in a stupor, and birds came hopping fearlessly around her silent motionless form, and butterflies alighted and swung on her wildered tresses which the light breeze was waving. When at length she stirred herself, and raised her head, and wiped her eyes, she knew by the altitude of the sun that noonday was at hand.

"And now," said she, rising stiff and shivering, "if I could but see Gilderoy, and get speech o' him, I wad joyfully bid farewell to this cruel world!"

She had abandoned every thought of going to Parton, seeing that her grandmother had miserably perished by the hands of the mob; and thoroughly alarmed for her own safety should she linger in such a ruthless neighbourhood, she was more anxious than ever to get across the firth, and make her way to the presence of Gilderoy in his dungeon. After tidying her hair and dress, she retraced her steps till she reached the cross-road up which the packman had come, and which undoubtedly led to the waterside.

Without a moment's hesitation she turned down this route. After a short walk she got to the brow of a rising ground, and saw the broad firth, on which the swell had not yet entirely subsided, and a few cottages beneath her, facing the sands. Several boats were drawn up on the beach beyond tide-mark, but one was riding at anchor off a small croy. Directly opposite, on the other side of the estuary, was a hamlet, with a wooden pier or jetty, and one or two sloops lying at it. She went down to the shore. There were a man and a boy lounging in the stern of the boat at the croy. The man was smoking his pipe, and gazing abstractedly at the clouds floating overhead. The boy was leaning over the side, dropping pepples, one by one, into the water. Neither of them took any notice of her as she approached, and nobody

else was visible on the beach, or about the houses. She accosted the man, asking him to be ferried across. On hearing her voice, the boy started up and flung aside the stones in his hand, and the man, shaking off his apparent reverie, took his pipe from his mouth, carefully knocked out the ashes, put it in his jacket pocket, and examining her rather saucily with a pair of greyish goggle eyes, demanded where she was going.

She replied that she was going to Edinburgh.

"And where come you frae?" he continued. "You dinna belang to this quarter, I think. You're no a Fife body; and looking at your figure-head, I'm to be excused for saying that you've maybe run awa frae your service benorth the Tay. Eh? Am I right? Or has some fause jo scorned you, and you're after the villain, to gar him stand to his plighted word?"

Marian smiled, and slightly blushed, and held down her head.

"Hoots, lassie, there's nae denying a common fault," continued the boatman, "and I'm no ca'ing you in question for it, sae you needna look blate. But you haena told where you come frae yet."

Marion remained silent. She was half afraid to say anything, and half angry at being so questioned.

"You didna come by Parton town this morning, did you?" he went on.

"No," answered Marion.

"Then you can tell naething about the burning o' the witch last night?"

"Was a witch burned at Parton?" inquired Marion, becoming questioner in her turn.

"Ay, brunt to a cinder," said the boatman. "Packman Pate spak' to a man that saw the affair. I wonder that nane o' the Parton folk ha'e been doon this way ere now; but they'll be doon in a little to mak' a great blaw o' their cleverness. And what may you be wanting ower at Edinburgh?"

"I ha'e a friend there," said Marion.

"A friend? Aweel, lass, put a saxpence in my loof, and I'll gie you a cast ower the water momentarily—that is to say, as soon as the ither passenger and his servants finish their eleven hours up bye," and he pointed to the nearest cottage.

The fare was higher than Marion had calculated on. She

had but a few coppers in her possession, for during the journey southwards her grandmother had been entrusted with the keeping of their joint purse. As soon as she put her hand to her pocket she felt she lacked sufficient to pay the fare; nevertheless, she held out her pittance, saying she was sorry to find she did not possess what he wanted, but hoped he would accept of what she had, it being her all. While she spoke she blushed deeply, and seemed to shrink within herself at the thought of her humiliating position, not one whit above that of a beggar.

"I'll accept nae sic thing," cried the boatman, thrusting out his hand with a repelling gesture. "What for should I bring doon my boat fee? Na, na, lass, I maun ha'e my fee, or the boat can lie here and rot."

"Kilt your coats, lass, and wade the water," said the boy, laughing.

Marion was proceeding to expostulate with the boatman when a gentleman, in a military undress, with a mantle over his arm, accompanied by two military-looking attendants though in plain attire, emerged from the nearest cottage, and came down to the beach. The boatman immediately laid a plank over the gunwale of the vessel for the sake of facilitating embarkation. Marion looked so wistful and dejected that she engaged the gentleman's attention. He stopped as he was about to put his foot on the plank, and probably suspecting the state of matters, inquired if she wished to cross the firth.

"That she docs," cried the boatman; "but she hasna the boat fee, your honour, and I canna keep boats on the water for naething."

"It's a matter o' life and death, sir," said Marion, and she was now ashy pale with shame; for several men, women, and children were hurrying down from the cottages to see the boat depart.

The stranger put no other question, but affably took her by the hand and assisted her to get into the vessel, and pointed her to take a seat in the bows.

The churlish boatman stared in open-mouthed amazement, and then became greatly confused, and harshly ordered his boy to the helm; but soon covering his confusion with a careless whistle, he drew in the plank after the two serving men had come on board, and proceeded to set his sail. The boat wore off, and propelled by an easy breeze from the

northwest, began to cleave the sparkling tide, drawing a long dancing line of brilliancy astern.

Not a word passed during the brief voyage; but the stranger ever and anon gazed meditatively at the Highland maiden, who sat abashed and drooping. Never had she seemed so innocently and captivatingly beautiful as in this her hour of deepest distress.

The boat soon ran aground on the opposite shore, a little way below the pier, and the party landed. The stranger paid the boatman his full fare, adding a solemn rebuke for his unkind treatment of the wanderer. The man took the money with a dogged air, and shuffled to his boat, grumbling and growling to himself; but suddenly turning back, as if some new thought had struck him, he thrust a piece of silver into Marion's hand.

"Hae, lassie," he said, with a very red face, "hae—there's a saxpence to yoursel'. It'll buy you some refreshment in the public. My bark was aye waur than my bite. Gude day to you, and a fair journey." And he jumped aboard his boat and swept out into the firth, as if afraid that his bounty would be scornfully returned.

"The rough clown hath somewhat of heart, after all," said the stranger. "Now, girl, whither do you go?"

"To Edinburgh town," answered Marion. "But before we part, I maun thank you heartily for your great kindness."

"You mean to travel on foot to the city?"

"Yes," she said. Her experience of the rough Laird of Kimmerghame made her somewhat shy of the stranger, whose aspect and bearing, however, though he was unquestionably a military man, were not such as to beget distrust, but rather calculated to inspire the fullest confidence. He was a staid, puritanical-looking personage, with a deep gravity about him.

"You wear the tartan," he said. "Do you come from the Highlands?"

"Frac Rannoch," responded Marion.

"The country of the Macgregors!"

"The same, sir."

"And what has brought you so far from home?" he pursued. "I suppose the late insurrection in that quarter has something to do with your journey? You may trust me with your secrets, young woman, for if you are in difficulty of any kind, I may lend you a helping hand."

Marion hesitated for a moment, and then said—"I'm going to Edinburgh to try and get a word o' Gilderoy. They hae putten him in the Tolbooth, and I maun see him before he dies. That's a' my secret."

The stranger's interest was still more strongly excited by this simple confession. Another question elicited the whole of the poor girl's history.

She told of the disasters in Rannoch and how she had fled to the wilds. Her brother Evan was surprised and shot by the military on the next morning after Gilderoy and his solitary adherent, Dobbie Hackston, forsook the band. On that fatal morning she herself very narrowly escaped capture or death. Her grandmother, who was imprisoned at first when the tower of the Macgregors fell into the hands of the enemy, was speedily liberated through the influence of the lady whose abduction from Dunavaig had been the main cause of the troubles; and the old woman succeeded in joining her in the mountains, with a kind message from the lady, stating that they were both at liberty to dwell anywhere they chose in the country, and that she would be happy if Marion would return to the tower, and place herself under her protection. But her grandmother kept away till they should see what became of Gilderoy, whom they always hoped to retrieve his misfortunes; and when they learned that he was seized and carried away to Edinburgh Tolbooth, they set out together from Rannoch, with the view of endeavouring to see him before he died; for they looked upon his speedy execution as certain. She concluded by relating the painful story of Judith's death by the hands of the mob in the town of Parton.

The stranger was much moved by the recital, but especially by the catastrophe with which it closed. "This fell deed," he said, sternly, "is a crying scandal to a Christian community, and must be brought under notice of the Government. It shall be my duty to speak to General Monk. These Fife louts must be taught the peril of assuming to themselves the administration of law and justice. What friends have you in Edinburgh?"

"Nane," she said. "But when Lady Annabel departed from Rannoch she left word for me that if I wad gang to her house o' Glenbirkie at any time I should be welcome. I didna mean to gang to Glenbirkie; but in coming through the Lowlands o' Perthshire, I heard that Lady Annabel was

on the eve o' setting oot for Edinburgh, and I may find her there. A lady o' her quality will be weel kent in the town."

Without prolonging the colloquy farther, the stranger requested her to accompany him to the village tavern, where he intended hiring horses for Edinburgh. After some slight demur, she consented and went.

On entering the tavern, the stranger ordered refreshments for the poor girl, and also such change of raiment as she stood in need of, for her misadventures of the previous night had reduced her to a very tawdry and soiled condition, though long before this time her drenched dress had been thoroughly dried by the sun and wind. This excess of generosity, however, did not fail to arouse suspicion in her own mind as to what might be his ultimate intentions, which suspicions were not abated by the landlady's remarks when she took her into a closet to look out the change of apparel—

"It's a braw thing to tak' a sodger's e'e, my bonny lass," said the good woman. "Only, you ken, sodgers are unco flighty, and get the name o' seeking a new jo in ilka town."

"Is the gentleman a sodger?" asked Marion, quietly, though she was indignant.

"Do *you* no ken his calling?"

"No."

"Nor his name?"

"No, nor naething about him," said Marion. "Do you?"

"As little as yoursel', an' you be telling the truth."

"What wad gar me no tell the truth?" cried Mariou. "I ne'er saw him till he met me at the ferry-boat."

"A clear case o' love at first sight," said the hostess, with a giggle. "He's some head officer by his looks—an e o' General Monk's richt hand men, and it's but proper that you should be weel put on, no to affront him. When you win to Edinburgh, lassie, you should gar him tak' you ower a' the mercers' shops in the Lawnmarket, and clee'd you frae tap to tae in the best braws. Thae officers never spare siller when they tak' a fancy to a bonny face; but you should be wily, lass, and mak' your hay when the sun shines, for there's plenty bonny faces in Edinburgh."

Marion darted a furious glance at the dame, and burst into tears.

"Hoot toot, woman!" cried the landlady, in some affright. "Dinna tak' a joking word sae sair to heart. It's nane o' my business what's betwene you and the officer, and if you

be pleased I'm mair nor pleased, for I've nae concern in the matter. Here—come—try on thir things."

"I'll no touch a rag o' your things," exclaimed Marion, in high wrath.

"Mercy, woman! he'll fire the house!" cried the hostess, now fairly alarmed. "For ony sake pacify yoursel', and look ower my meddlesomeness, and tak' the things. Thae officers are deevils when they're raised, and especially when lasses are amang hands."

Marion relented on seeing the dame's distress, and drying her cheeks, fitted herself with the plainest articles of apparel shown her, and only such as she absolutely required.

A carrier had now halted at the tavern, with his horse and cart, on his way to Edinburgh. The "officer" arranged with this man that Marion and one of his own attendants should have seats in the conveyance.

"Lest danger should arise on the way, my servant will protect you," said he, on informing Marion of the arrangement. "I shall ride on to the city at once; but when you arrive there, my servant will conduct you to the house of Deacon Molison, in the Luckenbooths, where I have engaged lodgings. My name is Champion."

"Colonel Champion!" shrieked Marion, with undisguised horror. "The desolator of Rannoch!"

"I am the man," returned the Roundhead, calmly. "But you have no reason to fear me. I have heard the Lady Annabel speak of you, and of your great exertions in her behalf, and I pledged my word to her that you should have my protection whenever and wherever it might be required. I shall place you under her care as soon as she arrives in Edinburgh, which, as I understand by advices from her, will be very shortly—in a day or two at most; and I shall also use my endeavours to procure you free access to the prisoner whom you so much desire to see."

"How can you show kindness to ane o' the unfortunate Macgregors, when you bathed your hand in our best bluid?" cried Marion.

"My hand was lifted against your chief and his clan, because they dared to set the laws of heaven and earth at defiance," said Champion. "I repressed violence, and visited the guilty with unerring retribution. I crushed the pride and power of Gildcroy, and established law and order where previously they were unknown. I did all this in my duty.

Nevertheless. Marion Mackinnon, in me you will find a fast friend. I heard your unhappy history from Lady Glenbirkie's own lips."

"It wasna unhappy till the troubles broke out," faltered Marion, with honest pride. "I lived like a queen in Rannoch."

She fell into a fit of weeping. People standing about began to stare and wonder, perceiving which, she overcame her emotion, and the Colonel reiterating his promises to befriend her, she was fain to commit herself to his guidance, as she had no other immediate resource.

Having paid all demands at the tavern, the Colonel took horse, along with a single attendant, and rode away towards Edinburgh.

The carrier started soon afterwards with his two passengers, and at night the cart halted at its destination in the Grassmarket. The Colonel's man conducted Marion to Deacon Molison's house, in the Luckenbooths, where she was hospitably received by the Deacon's spouse—a simple-looking homely dame of about fifty summers. Campion had arrived hours before, but was out visiting friends in the city. Marion did not see him that night, nor did she see any other member of the family.

CHAPTER XXXII.

I asked him for my dear, dear James,
With throbs of wild delight,
And begg'd him in his master's name,
To take me to his sight.

Hogg.

THE mass of buildings called the *Luckenbooths* stood in the centre of the High Street of Edinburgh, opposite St. Giles' Church, and separated from it by a curious narrow lane called the *Krames*, chiefly occupied by the small shops of the toy and confectionery sellers. At the west end of this block of houses was situated the Tolbooth. Near the

east end was the residence of Deacon Molison of the Wrights, a flat on the second story.

The Highland wanderer enjoyed a good night's rest, and arose early, much refreshed. She had as yet no idea, however, how close was her proximity to the Tolbooth, in which Gilderoy lay in his chains. The window of her bed-room looking to the High Street—that stately grand old street, which has no parallel in any other capital—she beheld with wonder the range of ancient lofty tenements rising story above story to a giddy height. She had seen nothing like this in any other Lowland town with which she was acquainted. The street, at first silent and deserted, quickly began to fill with people hastening to their daily toil. The merchant burgesses and craftsmen began to open their shops and booths. The shrill musical cries of bare-legged fishwomen, laden with heavy “creels” of the shining denizens of the deep, sounded through the street, mingled with the rattle of drums from the castle. Marion gazed on the busy scene with something like the interest of a child.

In due time worthy Mrs. Molison appeared to bid her guest good morning. They had some talk together. The Colonel had come home late at night, and was well pleased to hear of his protégée's safe arrival. Lady Annabel had not yet reached town, but might be expected every day. Marion told her hostess a little of her own history, and the hostess was equally communicative. It appeared that Deacon Molison and his spouse were a somewhat well-to-do couple, who had risen by their industry from a humble station. They had no children. They let out part of their house as lodgings for the better class, and kept as servant an elderly maiden relative of the Deacon's, Betty Kelly by name, with whom her mistress shared the household drudgery.

To this servant Mrs. Molison next introduced Marion, and thereupon left the two together.

“I was troubled with a headache last night, and went to my bed early,” said Betty, “so I did not see you when you came; but I hope you were well enough received.”

“Very kindly,” answered Marion.

“I'm glad of that; and now breakfast must be first in hand. Take you a chair, and I'll have everything ready in a crack.”

She was as good as her word, for she quickly loaded the table with a superabundance of substantial fare.

Marion made a fashion of applying herself to the tempting viands; but she had little appetite, and was soon satisfied. As all her miseries crowded into her heart, tears unconsciously trickled down her cheeks, and moistened the morsels which her trembling hand conveyed to her lips.

"You're greeting, lassie!" cried Betty. "I'm sure the very sight of all these dainties might heal the most sorrowful heart."

Marion excused herself incoherently, and forbore weeping.

"They tell me you want to see Gilderoy in the Tolbooth," said the servant.

"That's my only errand here," replied Marion.

"Well, lassie, I must say he's a handsome fellow."

"You saw him?"

"I saw him led up the street to the Tolbooth the other morning, among a band of soldiers and Highlandmen; and though he was a prisoner, and in a poor, miserable condition, he looked the chieftain every inch of him."

Marion listened breathlessly, fixing on the spinster the full gaze of her beautiful eyes, which glittered with tears.

"It was a wild windy morning," continued Betty. "The drums and trumpets coming up the street from the Netherbow caused every window to fly open, and folk were crying to one another—'It's Gilderoy! It's the robber o' Rannoch that killed the auld man, and stealt awa the young heiress!' And a thousand eyes were set upon him, just as your own eyes, lassie, are set upon me just now; but Gilderoy never changed a feature for all that. A handsome fellow! But they must pass sentence upon him; he cannot be pardoned, for he was taken in open rebellion."

"And will not I see him?" exclaimed Marion, rising to her feet in great agitation.

"Take patience, lassie, take patience," said Betty, gently urging her down again on the chair.

"How can I tak' patience, and him at the point o' death?"

"There's no time lost, woman. You'll see him, I suppose, before all is over with him; and though they should forbid you entering the prison, will not you see him on the scaffold, as well as the rest of the town? But tell me—have you come to try and get interest and intercession made for him, or just to take a last, lang farewell?"

"A last, but no a lang fareweel," said Marion, with a

wild upward stare, and then she bowed her head and pressed her temples with both hands. "I hae nae interest to mak'," added she, looking tearfully around her. "A' body in power is set against Clan Gregor; and though they were to offer Gilderoy his life upon condition that he made submission to them, I ken that his proud spirit wadna yield."

A heavy trampling of horses was now heard in the street, and Betty and Marion going to the window saw a small party of English cavalry halting below. An officer dismounted, and went up the clumsy fore-stair which gave access to the tenement.

"General Monk!" said Betty. "He's come to visit our Colonel."

After the lapse of a few minutes, Mrs. Molison burst into the room very much flushed and flustered, and announced that General Monk had come in from Dalkeith (where he had his residence), and was now closeted with Campion.

"There's a band of troopers at the stairfoot," continued the dame, "and the whole neighbourhood's out, wondering what the Governor can want in our house. I declare I do not know how to behave, and the gudeman away to his booth in the Cowgate. I was like to fall down with perfect surprise when the Governor met me at the door."

A small silver hand-bell tinkled sharply from an adjacent room, and Mrs. Molison, turning very pale, bustled away to answer the summons. She re-appeared presently, bringing the extraordinary command that Marion should be taken instanter into General Monk's presence.

Marion grew as pale as the mistress had done on hearing the silver bell; and without being allowed time to compose herself, she was led into a small but well-furnished chamber, in which she found her patron and the Governor of Scotland. Mrs. Molison, leaving her there, retired confusedly.

The two soldiers were standing on the opposite sides of a round table occupying the centre of the room, and were conversing loudly and almost passionately when Marion was introduced, but they fell silent, and turned their gaze upon her, while she made a low courtesy.

General Monk was a short, heavy, coarse-featured, dark-visaged man, with a full face, a narrow wrinkled forehead, and a bright eye. One of his cheeks was distended with a large quid of tobacco, the juice of which he occasionally

squirted on the floor—a habit which probably he acquired on board ship while commanding the English fleet.

“This is the young woman for whom I desire the pass to enable her to visit the prisoner Maegregor,” said Campion. “You may see she does not look like an agent of conspirators.”

Monk put several questions to her concerning her connection with the clan, and her motives for seeking an interview with the prisoner; all of which she answered with honest simplicity.

“The pass can be granted, Colonel,” said the Governor, “but only on your assurance that it will not be turned to improper uses. I hear rumours of a rescue being plotted, and in consequence the jailor has received instructions to admit no person whatever without special authority.”

“I thought my bare intercession would have served as assurance enough,” replied Campion, somewhat bitterly. “But things are changed, George Monk. I am suspected. I thought that.”

“In saying so,” cried Monk, “you do wrong both to yourself and to me.”

“Nay, general, my very position at this moment shows that my name, my principles, my devotion to the good old cause, and my services to the Commonwealth, stink in the nostrils of George Monk.”

The Colonel was right, how bluntly soever he expressed it; for Monk had already struck into that line of artful, insidious, secret policy by which he eventually weeded the army of occupation in Scotland of almost every one of its republican officers, and thereby paved the way for the restoration of Charles the Second.

“I have told you, over and over again, that I am acting under the Lord Protector’s express instructions,” said the Governor. “I must, of necessity, yield implicit and unquestioning obedience to the mandates of the supreme power. I have written pressing Cromwell to inform me of his views regarding yourself, and I await his reply.”

“So, so!” said Campion, with a grim smile. “But I tell you, I have been observant of certain recent changes, and it did not escape me that, one by one, the most prominent and faithful men are being supplanted in all offices of civil and military trust. To what does all this tend? Would I be better esteemed did I turn Cavalier?”

"Consider, consider, Colonel, that we have a witness," said Monk, pointing to Marion.

"Cautious as ever," said Campion. "But I care not though my words were proclaimed at Edinburgh Cross, for there would every honest man avouch their truth."

"You charge the Government wrongfully," cried Monk.

"I repeat my charge," said Campion. "Doubtless there existed strong and paramount reasons why the hand that cleared Cromwell's path to power should be disarmed."

"I beseech you, Colonel, force me not to take notice of your ravings," said General Monk. "Turn we to the proper business in hand."

"Your affected consideration for me will not avail you," cried the Colonel. "It is to *you* that I owe my dismissal, and it is from you that I demand reparation."

The general, in a sudden fit of wrath, spat out his quid emphatically, and grasped the hilt of his sword. Marion sprang forward, and throwing herself down upon her knees before Campion, she implored him to remember that if he incensed the Governor, she would likely get no pass to visit Gilderoy. This simple appeal cooled Monk's indignation, and caused him to smile. Campion smiled also, and stroking Marion's head, raised her to her feet.

"We shall right this grave business another time, general," said the Colonel. "Give the girl the pass. I vouch for her honesty."

Monk did not hesitate another moment. Applying himself to some writing materials that lay on the table, he scrawled a hasty line or two upon a slip of paper, which he then handed to Marion with the observation that the pass would admit no person but herself to the Tolbooth.

Tears trembled in her eyes as she received the precious document, and stammering forth her thanks, she withdrew.

She was all impatience to proceed to the Tolbooth; but by Mrs. Molison's advice she was persuaded to defer till evening, when there would be few or no strangers about the prison. She now learned that she was so near to the prison, and also that Gilderoy's arraignment was appointed to take place a few days thence. But before General Monk left the house she was unexpectedly recalled to his presence. He questioned her about the death of her grandmother, and then dismissed her with the assurance that the Government would take strict cognizance of the outrage.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

His foes are gone—and here he hath no friends :
 Is it some seraph sent to grant him grace ?—
 No, 'tis an earthly form with heavenly face !

Byron's "Corsair."

THE evening sun was casting a bright red beam along the roofs and chimney-stalks of the stately tenements of the High Street, when the Highland girl, accompanied by the deacon's spouse, repaired to the portal of the Tolbooth—the "Heart of Mid-Lothian"—a building famous in the pages of history and romance.

The High Street was crowded and gay, and the "eries of Edinburgh" rang shrilly above the buzz and bustle. The beauty of the evening had brought out half the population to the streets. The castle drums were sounding through the avenue of the Lawnmarket. Ladies and gentlemen of quality, attended by their liveried pages and footmen, sauntered about in groups. Soldiers mingled with the passing throng, their bright uniform and armour contrasting picturesquely with the sober attire of most of the citizens. The busy noisy street-scene seemed to bewilder Marion as soon as she came down stairs ; and glancing furtively about her as she was led towards the Tolbooth, she had but confused glimpses of the ancient market-cross, with its tall pillar surmounted by the Scottish Unicorn rearing upon a lance—the gateway, battlemented tower, and spire of the Netherbow Port—the public weigh-house also with its spire pointing to the brilliant evening sky—the airy imperial crown of St. Giles Church—and the many remnants of the olden time still adorning the broad and noble thoroughfare. The *Krames* (the narrow passage already mentioned betwixt the Tolbooth and St. Giles Church) was full of women and children viewing and purchasing the toys and sweetmeats, of which almost every one of the curious little booths plastered up against the walls of the church displayed a tempting variety. The Tolbooth itself was a huge clumsy pile. The greater portion of its ground-floor was not devoted to prison purposes, but was let out for merchants' shops. Marion

looked tremblingly at the grim edifice. But when she raised her timid eyes on high, what was her horror to perceive a human head fastened upon a spike on the summit of one of the gables! The face was black and sunken, but locks of long hair still waved about it freely. It was the head of Montrose!

Several privates of the Town Guard lounged about the door of the prison, and knowing Mrs. Molison, they touched their hats to her, and desired to know her commands. She told them, and Marion held out the pass. None of them were capable of decyphering the scrawl, possibly from having imbibed too much liquor. But they rendered what service they could. They knocked at the jail door, and then handed in the paper through a small square aperture or "vizzy-hole" at the side.

The strong iron-belted oaken door, ponderous as a mass of solid metal, slowly opened, with a dismal creaking that made the teeth chatter, and Marion trembled in every fibre. She took leave of her conductress.

"You will find your way back to the house, without any difficulty?" said the latter.

"It's but a few steps, and I canna go wrang," returned Marion. "Thank you kindly."

Mrs. Molison accordingly left her; and Marion, for the first time in her life, entered within the walls of a prison, with a sickening feeling in her heart as though she had heard the voice of destiny proclaim—"Leave every hope behind, all ye who enter here!"

She now stood before the jailor himself—the "Gudeman of the Tolbooth," as he was called—a bullet-headed personage, burly, squat, and sinister-eyed, wearing a greasy leathern jerkin, and a bunch of well-polished keys at his belt.

"And you want to speak with Gilderoy Macgregor?" he said, returning her the governor's pass. "Faith, and I will say, he's just the kind of gallows-bird to catch a thoughtless wench's eye. Come this way, lass, and you'll see him."

He closed and locked the door as before, thereby shutting out almost all the light, and involving the passage, or vestibule, or whatever it was, in which he and Marion were standing, in sudden gloom. The air smelt rankly and vilely of drink and tobacco, added to a damp unwholesome odour like that of a cellar. Taking Marion by the hand, he conducted her up several steps terminating at another massive door, which he opened, and light was restored.

She was ushered into a sort of common hall, in which were several men, obviously prisoners. There was a wooden pulpit, or something very like a pulpit, perched in a corner. The prisoners were chiefly engaged in play with cards and dice. Near the wooden erection stood a man, who, from a key or two being attached to his girdle, seemed to be an under-turnkey or warder. Marion's conductor secured the door, and bidding her wait a moment, went over to this person, and whispered a few words in his ear, after which they both ascended a stair near the pulpit, leading to the upper regions of the building.

While Marion was standing by herself glancing timidly at the prisoners, an old man with grey locks and an emaciated visage, who had been sitting by himself at the wall, under a grated window, poring over some smoke-dried papers, tottered towards her, depositing his papers in his pocket as he came along. A venerable pair of horn-mounted spectacles surmounted his nose, by the aid of which his rheumy blinking eyes took a deliberate survey of her face and person.

"So young, so bonny!" he said, somewhat indistinctly; for nearly all his front teeth were out. "This is no place for such a fresh tender flower; for here the sun ne'er shines nor the winds blaw, but aye a dim gloaming through these old, thick, rusty bars. What brought you here, lassie? It couldna be debt, like myself; and surely you didna take the life of a sweet bairn?"

"I cam' to speak wi' a prisoner," answered Marion, in a low and agitated tone.

"You came to speak with a prisoner," said the old man. "Nane of them here? Somebody above? Just so. Then may you pray, with all your heart and soul, that that prisoner's time may be short, short here, though his release should only be by the hangman's hempen rope, or the headsman's axe of steel. It's Gilderoy you come to see?"

"It is."

"The rope and the steel are waiting for *him*," said the prisoner; "but better that death should release him than that he should wear out his days in such a place as this. Lassie, I was seven-and-twenty when I was first put in here, and I'm fourscore this day."

"God help you!" cried Marion. "Hae you been a prisoner for sae mony long years?"

"Mostly, mostly," returned the old man. "I've been out

and in, out and in, more than a dozen of times; and I may say that the best part of my days has been spent here. I cannot understand what made folk be so hard with me; but always when I fell behind in the world they clapt me in here, for they said I would never pay a just and lawful debt except under the terror of the Tolbooth, and I paid and paid till I paid everything away. Maybe if I had my days to begin again, I would try another course to please folk; but my days are wearing done, and it's not in my power to turn over a new leaf. This is my last time here, and I'll never, never set foot on my own High Street again. I'll never more go down the Krames, where I've often run when I was a bit laddie, to buy a sugar-plum or a plaything. These old hands are stained with no crime, but the crime of honest poverty. Lord forgie us our debts as we forgie our debtors."

"Bah! you old knave!" cried one of the prisoners. "There's not a greater rogue in all Edinburgh."

"Do you hear him?" said the old debtor. "That's what they call me—a rogue; and they swear I hae siller, though I hae none. The man that spoke," he whispered, "is in for robbery and murder on the high road; and sometimes when he falls asleep at the wall yonder, it's dreadful to hear how he'll mutter about heads breaking and throats cutting! But he'll soon quit the Tolbooth to the gallows, and he'll see the Grassmarket and the Castle, and the faces of all the folk, which I'll never see, for I have no more siller, and I must just lie here."

"Can't you ask the wench for a groat to bring in a jug of nut-brown?" cried the murderer.

"If you have a groat to spare, lassie—and it's the fashion to make some small offering when you come to the Tolbooth to visit a friend—slip it into my hand, and let nobody see," whispered the debtor. "I have no concernment with the other prisoners. Every herring should hang by its own head. They all change from time to time; all these ruthless fellows may be away the morn, but I'm always left. I'm as much a part and portion of the Heart o' Mid-Lothian as these very walls. There's no a crack in the floor; there's no a mouse-web in the window; there's no rat, or a spider, about the prison, but what I know—great, big, wild spiders that come flying out of their dusty dens, like fiery dragons, when I catch a fly and let it fall among their webs. Look, lassie, there's a big fat villain that lives in yon web that's flaffing

among the topmost bars of the window—do you hear that?—that's a blue-bottle in his clutches, bizzing like mad! Eh, woman! he's a grand hunter, and a grand fighter. I wagered and won a shilling on him one day against a wasp—and he killed the wasp. Ah! I know him, and what's in him. Me, and the rats, and the spiders, are thirled to the Tolbooth. The Tolbooth would not be like itself without us. Now, my bonny dear, if you have a great——”

Marion had still the boatman's sixpence in her pocket, and she quietly took it out and put it into his hand. By this time, to her great relief, the jailor and the turnkey reappeared, and the aged debtor instantly hurried away to his former seat at the wall.

The jailor motioning her to cross the hall, she did so, and was conducted by him up the flight of steps, at the top of which was a strong iron-studded door, which he threw open, disclosing a dingy noisome cell, lighted by a small grated aperture close to the roof. A yellow glimmer of the sunset's glories struggling through the window showed a man in chains reclining on a heap of dirty straw. His chains were fastened to an iron bar of great thickness that traversed the place about breast-high from the floor.

“Gilderoy Macgregor!” shouted the Gudeman. “Here's a lass come to speak to you.”

The prisoner started, as if from slumber, and raised his eyes languidly to the open door.

“There's just half an hour allowed, lassie,” said the jailor, leading in Marion, and then shutting the door and locking it inside, and placing his back against it. “Just half an hour, so you must be brief.”

The captive outlaw, chained with heavy fetters like a beast of prey in a cage, arose slowly from among the straw, portions of which stuck in his long, matted, red locks, and about his ragged habiliments. His face was hollow, and most sepulchral in hue, but his sunken eyes still emitted a dull glare. Marion, quaking in every limb and fibre, stood looking at him, with her forefinger resting on her lower lip. At first he did not seem to recognise her; but after he had drawn his manacled hand across his eyes, recognition flashed upon him, and he struck his hands together, causing a hideous clash and rattle of his chains.

“Ah! serpent! viper!” he exclaimed, in tones of burning

hate. "Behold the fruit of your fell treachery! Are you come to gloat over my degradation?"

She was not looking at him then, for her eyes had sunk to the ground; but a deep sob escaped her lips the moment she heard his voice.

"An' it was her that gave you up to justice, she deserves credit," said the jailor; "for you cheated the gallows so long, man, that folk began to think the hemp wasna' spun that should make the rope to hang you."

"Peace, hound!" cried Gilderoy. "Were this hand free of its iron bands you would not dare to open your lips."

"*Trout sho!* John Highlandman! I'm as good a man as you, and maybe better, were it coming to close grips," retorted the jailor, contemptuously. "My name's Jock Darnaway, that never feared Highland folk nor Lawlant folk, unco folk nor kent folk; and I wad scorn to say, man, that a silly bit lassie was the outwitting of me. I thought it was Ranald Vourigh that apprehended you; for Ranald mak's a brag of it all over Edinburgh."

Marion was much disappointed and abashed on finding that the Gudeman was to be a witness of the interview, consequently she remained silent for some moments, till she overcame her confusion, and then she answered Gilderoy—"I ne'er betrayed you, James. I had as soon betrayed my own brother—I had sooner laid down my ain life. I only gave Lady Annabel Rutherford her liberty."

"And it was through her alone that I could have retrieved all my misfortunes," said the captive. "But you treacherously deprived me of my last hope and stay. Woman!—at your door lies all the guilt—all the guilt and shame of having betrayed and ruined him who was nursed upon your mother's knee. I fancied that though I were abandoned by all my followers, *you* would have been faithful. But it was *your* feeble, unsuspected, ungrateful hand that brought low the fortunes of the Gregalich."

"I had nae thocht that in letting the lady escape I had sae far wranged you," returned Marion, struggling with a spasm of agony. "I thocht that were she awa—and mony o' the clan thocht the same thing—the war wad cease, and you be saved frae ruin."

"Well, well!" said Gilderoy, gloomily. "It cannot be undone. We must submit. The iron destiny which has hurled me in the dust must have its course, and I need not

heap reproaches upon your head, silly girl. How are they all in Rannoch? Does the armed hand of the stranger still press them down?"

"When I cam' south," said Marion, "the sodgers were quartered up and down the country, and ilka elaymore was in its sheath."

"Sorry, sorry issue of my efforts to plant the pine-tree banner firmly on my native hills!" exclaimed Gilderoy, with the smile of a maniac on his pallid lips. "Coward hearts! had they but stood by me, we should have fed our Highland eagles with the Southron hosts, and maintained our independence against the utmost power of the usurper. But the very name of Maegregor will perish and be forgotten in a country which the Gregalach lacked the heart to defend!"

The hard harsh clank of his chains, as he swayed to and fro, formed an appropriate accompaniment to his husky accents.

"I could gang to the Colonel—I could gang to the Governor—or to Ranald Vourigh himsel'—I could gang to ane and a' o' them," cried Marion, sobbing, "and put my ain life in their hands to save you."

"You shall not beg my life of mortal man!" ejaculated Gilderoy, sternly. "Banish such a thought from your mind, unless you would have me curse you with my latest breath. I know that I must perish."

A pause followed. Marion was weeping silently.

"Why is Evan not here?" inquired the prisoner. "But that is a foolish question; for Evan durst not show his face in the Lowlands, unless after making his peace; and I fancy he disdains submission."

"Evan was slain," answered Marion. "The sodgers wad hae giv'n him his life; but he wadna submit, and sae he fell."

"Brave, gallant Evan! Would that I had fallen with him!"

"And my grandmither——"

"What of her?—where is she?"

"Dead."

Gilderoy was struck. Something like his old affectionate look returned, although dashed with despair. "And did you come all this long way alone, Marion?" he said. "Did you cross the Grampians and the Lowland plains without a friend to cheer you?"

As well as her sobs and tears would permit, she recapitulated the leading incidents of her journey. He heard her with

attentive silence; but when she told of him the kindness of Colonel Campion, he could not contain his astonishment.

"He is a generous soldier," he said. "But I trust you have not bowed, and knelt, and prayed, and cringed to him for my sake?"

"I craved naething frae him—no even the liberty to come here to see you," replied Marion. "He gave ilka ane o' his favours without prayer or request o' mine. Oh! say that you forgi'e me a' the ill I've done you."

"I will not go to my death with hatred in my heart against you," said Macgregor. "This long and perilous journey to speak a last word to me atones for all your errors. I forgive you all. But remember that you shall not beg my life of mortal man without incurring my deepest curse. Remember my words."

"Cut short, cut short—dinna you see the gloaming drawing on?" cried the jailor. "Shake hands, and be done."

Gilderoy held out his hand to Marion, who clasped it, and bending her face over it, bedewed it with her tears. They wished each other good night, but said not a word about another meeting, and so they parted.

CHAPTER XXXIV

But farewell now to unsuspecting nights,
 And slumbers unalarm'd. Now, ere you sleep,
 See that your polish'd arms are primed with care,
 And drop the night-bolt: ruffians are abroad;
 And the first laram of the cock's shrill throat
 May prove a trumpet summoning your ear
 To horrid sounds of hostile feet within.

Cowper's "Task."

THE street was dusky when Marion emerged from the Tolbooth. The cool breeze of the harvest gloaming gratefully fanned her throbbing brow. Lights were beginning to twinkle in the shops, and also in the windows of the tall piles of houses. The stir and bustle had not diminished, and vagrants and thieves of both sexes and all ages had come prowling abroad. Fortunately, the distance from the

prison to Deacon Molison's residence was very short, otherwise Marion might have felt some timidity in traversing such a noisy thoroughfare.

She was passing hurriedly towards the Deacon's stair-foot, when an exclamation of surprise caught her ear, and immediately her arm was firmly grasped by a man, tall of stature, with a grey Lowland plaid flung carelessly around his shoulders, and partly muffling his face. The voice and the figure were not unknown to her. She recognised Eachin Maeraw! He was dressed in a Lowland suit of humble hodden grey, with a broad blue bonnet on his head. His hair was cut short, and his beard trimmed; but he wore a basket-hilted broadsword buckled at his side.

"Thou hast seen him?" he said, in a clear whisper. "Thou hast visited him in the prison?"

"Alas! Eachin, he is to die!" she answered. "There's nae hope. But how cam' you here?"

"Could I remain in Rannoch when my chief was so near his latter end?" said the clansman. "I made my way to this great city, not to seek his presence and condole with him, but to watch his enemies, and to avenge his fate. These three days have I roamed the streets and lanes in hopes of encountering the false Macpherson, or the Saxon captain, that I might strike and lay either or both of them low; but as yet I have roamed in vain. I know they are in this city, and I am watching."

"Dinna harm the Saxon eaptain," said Marion, earnestly; "for he has greatly befriended me in my distress, and unless for his kind help I had never seen Gilderoy's faae."

"Can that be?" demanded the amazed savage.

"It is true, Eachin. A clansman couldna been mair generous than that Saxon eaptain has been to me."

"Wonderful!—and he our foeman!" said Eachin. "Then, for his good and kind deeds, the blow shall pass by him. But as for Ranald Vourigh—when we meet, he dies! I have searched the city, I have seoured the outskirts, and I have watched that prison door, lest perchance he might come to insult over his vietim; but never have I seen his face. Should he come, by heaven! the chief's dungeon shall ring with the bloodhound's dying yell!" He glared around him, and then added—"When did you come to this city? and where is your grandmother?"

Marion briefly informed him of her sad adventures.

“And how fares the chief?” asked Eachin, returning to the theme which was uppermost in his thoughts. “Would that I had the power to force yonder accursed portal!”

Before Marion could reply, a richly-dressed lady, followed by two female servants, coming down the street, brushed closely past her, and then turned round with a sudden cry, and caught her by the sleeve.

“Lady Annabel! Lady Annabel!” exclaimed Marion. “Heaven be praised that I have met you at last!”

“I thought I was not mistaken,” said Annabel; “and yet it seemed so utterly impossible that you, Marion Mackinnon, should be standing in the High Street of Edinburgh. Explain—explain this mystery.”

Marion had again to go over the old story.

“You have escaped great risks, my dear girl,” said Annabel. “But I hope you have seen the last of such troubles. I only arrived in Edinburgh to-day,” she added, “and I was not aware that Colonel Campion had preceded me. When I parted with him at the manse of Dunavaig, he intended to spend a fortnight or so with some old brother officers in Fife, previous to going to Edinburgh, and I thought he had not yet crossed the firth. It will be better, I think, that you make my lodgings your home. My lodgings are at the north back of the Canongate. I am going straight there just now, and I suppose you will accompany me. One of my maids can tell the Colonel’s people that you are gone with me, and I’ll see himself to-morrow, and explain matters. Will you go?”

Marion joyfully embraced the offer; and the lady, understanding that Eachin was one of the forlorn clansmen of Gilderoy, who had wandered to Edinburgh to watch the fate of his leader, and not recognising in him the furious maniac who had counselled her assassination in Callum Cluny’s cottage, invited him likewise to the shelter of her residence.

“I will be the guardian of Marion,” said Eachin.

“And faithful I ever found you,” said Marion. “But,” said she, in Gaelic, “you must not endanger this lady and her house by wild deeds against your enemies.”

“Not while her roof shelters me,” responded Eachin. “But that will not be long.”

Marion was still dubious about allowing the wild Macrao to follow her; but she could not well state her dubiety to Annabel, and so she held her tongue.

The party accordingly went down the street, and leaving a message at the Deacon's door, soon reached Lady Annabel's residence—an ancient tenement behind the north side of the Canongate.

Eachin was left in the kitchen with the rest of the menials of the house, after receiving a solemn caution from Marion as to how he should conduct himself both in speech and behaviour. Lady Annabel gave out that he was one of her own vassals who had followed her from the wilds of Glenbirkie.

Marion was taken up-stairs to the lady's parlour, where, after supper, she related her tale of woe at greater length than she had done in the open street; and Annabel exerted herself to soothe the poor wanderer's distress.

In the course of further conversation Lady Annabel mentioned that Jasper Rollo would be in Edinburgh in a day or two. He had been prevented attending her from Glenbirkie to the capital by certain pressing matters requiring his presence at Dunavaig. But the most important part of the lady's communications related to the knight of Spierhaughs. Since her return from Rannoch she had been troubled and even endangered by the renewed machinations of Sir John Spiers, who, undeterred by what had already befallen Gilderoy, appeared to be aiming once more at getting possession of her person.

"Is he mad?" said Marion.

"He seems bent on an insane enterprise," responded Annabel. "But I shall be quite safe in Edinburgh; and I am glad that my own affairs, which Dunavaig's death threw into temporary confusion, called me hither at this time."

She did not say it, but doubtless the probability of the early union of herself and Jasper Rollo was exciting the unscrupulous Sir John to a last desperate effort to prevent so great a fortune being lost to him for ever.

Before midnight the whole household had retired to rest. Eachin Macraw, the *pseudo* vassal of Glenbirkie, made his lair in an old lumber-room on the ground floor. A sumptuously furnished little eloset on the second story was assigned as Marion's bed-chamber—immediately over that of Lady Annabel, whose apartments occupied the floor beneath.

The poor, weary, distracted girl lay down on her soft and tempting couch, and endeavoured to court the sweets of

repose. But she could not shut an eye. In vain she strove to banish reflection. The darkness, silence, and deep solitude of the night-watches brought all her sorrows in dismal array before her. Thus she lay, now sobbing bitterly, now imploring kind Heaven to have compassion on her wretchedness, now planning how she might secretly slip away to Dalkeith, where General Monk held his residence, and crave mercy for Gilderoy. But at length exhausted nature gave way, and oblivion came.

How long she slept was uncertain ; but it could not have been long, because the day had not dawned, when she was awakened by a loud tumult, which, had been for some time mingling with her dreams, and which, to her horror, seemed to proceed from the lower parts of the house itself. She sat up in bewilderment, and listening, heard the familiar clash of swords, mingled with furious voices.

Springing from her couch in the darkness, she groped for her dress, and hastily putting it on, drew the bolt of the door and, passing out, stole timidly down the dark stair, anxious to see whether all was well with her protectress. The noise now wore away towards the back of the house, and then ceased of a sudden. When she reached the first landing-place, a maid-servant with her clothes huddled on in disorder rushed out of one of the passages carrying a lighted candle, while a heavy foot began to ascend the lower stair.

On perceiving Marion, the woman cried out that robbers had broken into the house, and that Lady Annabel was lying in a swoon. The footstep on the winding stair below was that of Eachin Macraw, who now came up waving his unsheathed claymore.

"I have slain him!" he exclaimed, holding the point of his weapon to the light, and showing that it was dyed with blood.

"Slain wha?" demanded the domestic.

"Their leader," replied Macraw.

"How mony were o' them?" she continued.

"There were six or seven of them, as cowardly dogs as ever fled from a sword in a true Highlander's hand," said Eachin, triumphantly. "They are all fled; but their leader—he will never tread the streets again."

"Is he lying dead below?" questioned the servant with a shriek of wild affright.

"No, no; he struggled off with them. But what matter?"

He cannot go far. He will crawl into some hole, and die there like a rat. Have I done well, Marion?"

"Well and nobly," answered Marion. "And you're un-wounded?"

"Unwounded," cried Eachin, with a laugh, as he wiped his ensanguined broadsword with an end of his plaid.

Other members of the household now made their appearance from their respective rooms, all in great terror and dismay. The landlady, a middle-aged dame, with false hair and false teeth, was in great agitation, wringing her hands, and scarcely able to draw one foot after the other, or even to utter an intelligible word. A second female domestic supported her tottering steps. A young student of theology, who boarded in the house, emerged from his dormitory in some out-of-the-way corner, armed with a pair of fire-tongs, and vowing destruction to all interlopers on the premises.

The landlady's first inquiry, when she was able to articulate correctly, was about Lady Annabel; and the damsel with the candle calmed her apprehensions by assuring her that the lady was quite safe, though she had fainted when the noise awoke her, and that she was presently attended by her own servants.

Eachin, now loudly called on for an explanation of his own share in the extraordinary disturbance, stated that having laid himself down to rest in the old lumber-room, he was fast sinking into slumber, when his attention was aroused by a peculiar rasping sound at the window, which was stanchioned with iron, and looked into an empty back court or yard. "I did not stir," he said. "The fire had burned low, and threw forth only a dull glow upon the floor. I never lie down without my broadsword with me, and I had my hand on the basket hilt. The rasping continued, and then one bar after another was snapped and torn out, and a man forced himself through the window. He dropped lightly upon the floor, and whispered to those without—'All is quiet—all is safe. Come on.' He did not perceive me lying in the dark corner among the straw. I was tempted to rise and cleave him, but I still lay quiet. The back door is close to the window, and he unbarred it, and admitted five or six men. They all wore masks, but one was in a richer dress than the others, and him I set down for their leader. They were gathering round the fire to light a lanthorn, and muttering about 'the

lady,' and 'her chamber,' and 'stifling her cries,' and so forth, when I sprang up with a yell, and struck amongst them, as I am wont to do in the throng of battle. Some of them wore armour beneath their dresses, as I knew when I struck them. My attack unmanned the villains, for although they drew their swords and closed with me, it was but short work, and they all fled by the open back door, but not before I had stabbed the leader."

"The man in the rich dress?" said the student.

"The same," replied Eachin. "Joyful am I, Marion, that I have repaid the Saxon lady for her kindness to you and to myself too."

"But the villains may return like dogs to their vomit," said the student, "and therefore, I say, we must look to the defence of the house; for should they return more numerous than before, like the devils that came back into the man that was possessed, our last state would be worse than our first."

"If you are acquainted with the windings of the back passages, youth," said Eachin, "come with me, and we will endeavour to overtake the miscreants. There must be a trail of blood left behind them. Light a torch, for the night is very dark."

The whole of the females protested vehemently against undertaking such a hazardous venture. Even the student of theology, valiant as he seemed, put in a strong caveat against it. "We must call the watchmen of the city," he said, "and take unto ourselves armed men of might, for the enemy may be as the sands of the sea-shore for multitude."

"Kindle a brand, and I will follow up the trail myself," cried Macraw, casting an impatient glance down the stair. "The wounded caitiff in the rich dress had not strength to fly far."

"You have been a man of war from your youth," said the student, "whereas I spend my days in the studious closet, and therefore I would prove but a poor comrade to you, for I know nothing of war and battles, ambuscades and surprises, pursuits and countermarches, beyond what I have read in Homer and Virgil, Cæsar and Tacitus, Xenophon and Thucydides, Arrian, and the other classic writers, both in poetry and prose. And to speak my mind openly, my honest friend, in this present great extremity and bamboozlement, I'm rather inclined to agree with Tibullus, the Roman poet, where he says—

*Quis furor est atram bellis accerserere mortem?
Imminet, et tacito clam venit illa pede.**

But if you will go, there's a candle"—taking the candle from the servant, and giving it to the mountaineer—"it must serve your turn; for there are no torches about this house to my knowledge; but if you pick out the wick with a pin, it will give a good blaze. Nevertheless," he continued, seeing scorn and contempt in Eachin's eyes, "if you constrain me to go, I'm content to gird up my loins and follow you."

"Lead the way!" cried Eachin, holding the flaring candle above his head.

"Never be it said that I could be so presumptuous before so brave a warrior!" said the student, hanging back, but shouldering his tongs. "I could not take it upon me to deprive you of your undoubted right and title to lead the van. I'll be proud to follow you. That's all I bargained for."

Despite the renewed remonstrances of the women, Eachin, with a hearty execration on Lowland cowardice, ran down the stair, carrying the candle. Immediately the women's remonstrances were changed into screams of affright at being so unceremoniously left in the dark. In this predicament the valorous student saw need to volunteer himself for the defence of the house, instead of venturing abroad on a wild-goose chase.

Eachin descended to the lumber-room, the scene of the fray, and finding everything dark and still, he unlocked the back door, which he had secured again after the flight of the enemy, and issued forth into a small unfenced yard behind the house, whence he passed into a sort of lane winding amongst ruinous barns and out-houses. The ground was wet with a recent shower of rain, and no trace of blood-drops was at all perceptible. It was a close dark morning, and not a breath of air was stirring. Still on he went, without finding a single sign to mark the course taken by the fugitives. He looked anxiously for blood-marks, but none could be seen.

The winding lane brought him to an old mud-built hovel

* What madness is it, in distracted broils,
To hasten on our Fate by martial toils?
Or Death provoke by seeking high renown?
Uncall'd, with silent pace, he comes too soon.

standing in the midst of an open space, with a light dimly glimmering through one of its window-boles, which was hung with a screen. Eachin's heart beat high when he saw the light, for he thought that now some tidings at least of the marauders would be obtained to guide him in his search. But his heart beat higher when he heard groans proceeding from the hovel. He hastened forward, and driving up the front door, which had been but imperfectly fastened, he burst into the place where the light was burning, and beheld the wounded man in the rich dress lying stretched before him.

It was a damp, miserable, low-roofed room, with scarcely any furnishings, and full of a rank atmosphere, as though the fresh air of Heaven never entered it. On a litter of dirty straw, spread under the curtained window-bole, lay the wounded stranger. His mask was off, and an oil lamp hanging on a peg in the wall shed its sickly light upon his visage. He groaned heavily, and seemed insensible, and in fact, at the point of death. By his side knelt a poorly-clad young woman, who was endeavouring to stanch, with a handful of rags, the blood that flowed from his breast, and near her stood a squalid, half-naked urchin, eyeing the operation, and apparently ready to scream, but struck dumb with terror.

When Macraw burst in, the woman did not rise from her knees, but looking round she shrieked, and exclaimed that "she wadna suffer murder to be committed in her house as lang as there was law in Edinburgh." The stranger was altogether unconscious of what passed around him; for he made no motion, not even lifting his eyelids, which were shut.

Advancing to the woman, Eachin demanded—"What gentleman is this? How is he called?"

"Do you mean his name, man?" said she.

"I do. What is it?"

"Atweel, I dinna ken, for I ne'er speired, and the puir gentleman is past speaking. Wha was it, ken you, that ga'e him siccan a wound? He didna get it here."

Eachin bent over the stranger, and observed his features closely; then starting back in wonder, he exclaimed, "Sir John Spiers! Is not this the hand of justice? He hung Alistor Mhor upon his black accursed dule-tree, and deluded Gilderoy to his ruin. Thank Heaven, I have met him!"

"Oh! man, what do I ken aboot him, or what he did, or wha he hanged?" cried the young woman, rising to her feet,

and in her hurry and confusion letting the bloody rags and also some gold coins drop from her trembling hands. "I ken naething about him—nae mair than that bairn at your foot. I had nae hand in the hanging you speak o', sae you maunna wyte me. I'm but a puir widow, left wi' that infant, and without a friend in a' the world. Oh! man tak' him wi' you; but dinna wyte me."

The child was gathering up the gold from the elay floor, reddening its little hands with the blood with which the pieces were wet.

"From whom had you that money?" demanded Eachin; "and who brought Sir John Spiers to your house?"

"I was waukened up by a wheen men laying to the door wi' their feet and nieves," replied the female; "and when I drew the bar they foosh him in, bleeding like a sheep, and laid him doon there, and ga'e me the gowd and bade me dress his wounds. But immediately some tigg took them, and they a' set aff."

This story looked exceedingly like the truth, and Eachin saw no reason to disbelieve it. "Did you know any of the men?" he asked.

"Nane o' them," she answered; but there was a sudden flutter in her manner as she answered which Eachin did not observe.

"Have you any neighbours here?"

"No ane at hand," said she. "The nearest house is Mrs. Maxwell's, whaur a great heiress has come to lodge, as I understand. But gude be about us!" she cried, turning to the wounded knight, "he'll dee upon my hands. He'll bluid to death, and naebody to help him! What am I to do? Canna there a man o' skill be gotten to save the life?" And throwing herself down upon her knees again, she picked up the bunch of rags, and resumed her efforts to arrest the flow of blood, the knight's groans becoming fainter and fainter.

Eachin looked on for a moment, and then saying—"Tend him carefully, good woman, while I hasten for assistance," he quitted the hovel.

CHAPTER XXXV

He has escaped !
 No ; he bears his death with him. Believe me.
 I saw him struck upon the side.

Pizarro.

THE wild Macraw, carrying his candle in one hand and his broadsword in the other, retraced his way back to Lady Annabel's lodgings, where he found several of the neighbours collected, both men and women. Announcing his important discovery, he demanded aid to secure the wounded knight ; but he was answered that the town-guard had already been sent for, and that it would be the more prudent course to wait their arrival, in order that the business might be gone about under colour of law. In angry impatience, Eachin gave vent to a volley of ear-splitting Celtic oaths, vowing that he would wait for no man ; but fortunately a small detachment of the guard now appeared.

A supply of lights being procured, Eachin took upon himself the task of conducting the party to the scene of action.

The hovel was soon reached, but the window-bole was dark ; the door stood wide open, showing no light within ; no sound was heard ; everything was silent as the grave.

"We are baffled!" exclaimed Eachin, furiously. "We have given the villains time to carry away their master."

He rushed into the interior, followed by the guard, and his worst suspicions were verified. The place was deserted. There was no wounded knight—there were no widow woman and her child. The blown-out lamp hung from the peg in the wall ; the litter of straw lay under the window, bearing the impress of a recumbent body ; the blood-soaked rags were scattered about the clay floor ; the scanty wretched furniture of the one wretched apartment of the ruinous hovel was all left just as Eachin had seen it at first.

"Is this the house?" cried the sergeant of the guard. "Are you sure about the house?"

"It is the very house, and there is the very straw he lay on," answered Eachin. "His followers have carried him

hence. I should have waited by him. I should never have left the place."

The party passed out again, and spread themselves in active search, but they could light upon no trace whatever.

It was ascertained, on inquiries, that the hovel had recently come into the occupancy of a man and his wife of the name of Cristal, who apparently belonged to the very lowest grade. The man, it was said, had been a cavalier soldier, and enjoyed an evil reputation, being suspected to make his bread by the worst shifts, but for some weeks back he had disappeared from the locality, leaving his wife and child to provide for themselves.

Eachin had never known Roger Cristal, and never heard of his hunt after Gilderoy, and therefore the name awoke no recollections in his mind.

"You have spoilt this business, Highlandman," said the sergeant. "Did it never strike you, man, that the rogues would come back and carry off their master, as soon as your back was turned? You should have given the alarm, and stuck to your post until we got up to you. It was very unsoldierly behaviour, man. You would be brought to the halberts for it in any service in Europe."

Eachin did not speak.

"I mind well," continued the sergeant, "I mind well, that while serving in Germany, under old Monro, one frosty night I was posted opposite a famous wine-shop in Schudlitz, frequented by all the toss-pots in the town. A drunken squabble arose—I heard the clash of tools, and then there was a dreadful shout that some fellow with a mighty long German name was run through the body. Out rushed a band of hallanshakers, yelling like devils; and out comes the landlord after them, roaring like a bull-calf, and calls me to secure the murderer. What did I know about the murderer? Well, I was taken a good deal aback. I just did what you did. Being but one man, I thought it best to run to my nearest comrade. But by the time I got back with him to the wine-shop every bird had flown, dead man and all, and the publican was lying brained to the bargain. By the holy Cæsar! here was a pickle! And, mark you, there were not people a-wanting either to say I had done the publican's job for him, out of revenge because he refused me liquor. Next morning I was brought up to the drum-head, before old Monro, and I can tell you, friend, I ran the

closest chance of swinging in a hempen cravat for deserting my post."

Eachin muttered something to himself, and then said aloud—"But the stab was deep, and he has not many hours to live."

"Questionable, questionable," said the sergeant; "as I remember well when I received a shot at the intaking of a certain dorp in Pomerania——"

"I never deal a weak stroke," interrupted Eachin. "They know that in the north. My arm is an arm of death."

"A Highland brag," cried the sergeant, disdainfully. "Look, man—I'll wager a month's pay and backlying arrears, that you'll not drive my Lochaber axe into that door-post so deep by two inches as I will. Do you take the wager?"

"Men and brethren," interposed the student of theology, who had followed the party, "let there be no wrangling and vain boasting among us."

"It's no boast," returned the sergeant; "I'll prove it in a moment."

"In my days of sin and darkness, when the old man was strong within me," said the student, "I looked to the pleasing of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, and would have done marvellous feats for sinful wagers, tempting Providence, and bringing condemnation upon myself; but mine eyes were enlightened."

"I don't want your advice," cried the sergeant. "Confound you, do you think I don't know what I'm about? I'll stand to my own wager. I'll keep my own ground. Do you take the wager, Highlander? No! Then what was the use of bringing us out here this raw morning, about—nobody knows what, and nothing to show us but an empty house and some old rags? Fall in, men, fall in, and let us march to our quarters, and report the affair. Lady Glenbirkie and her man will stand the consequences, if anything comes of it. But, hang me! if I don't think the whole story a flam!"

The veterans "fell in" gladly and marched away. Eachin, the student, and other people who had gathered, repaired to Lady Annabel's lodgings to report the utter failure of the search.

In the morning, after a swoon of long duration, Annabel was able to hear the strange narration of the night's adventures. Special information was transmitted to General

Monk, that he might take steps to discover the guilty knight of Spierhaughs and his accomplices.

Jasper Rollo arrived in Edinburgh that same day, and came directly to Annabel's residence, where he found Colonel Campion. In the absence of the poor lady, who was indisposed and confined to her apartment, where she was sedulously tended by Marion, the Colonel told him the story which was now engrossing all tongues in Edinburgh.

Rollo's amazement was unbounded. He saw Eachin and questioned him closely on the whole circumstances; but, like Annabel, though he was made aware that Eachin was a follower of Gilderoy, and heard his name, he failed to remember him as the ferocious savage of old Callam's hut.

"Spierhaughs, I fear, has played his last card," said Rollo, when he and Campion were by themselves. "The desperate game has gone against him."

"Ah! Sir John knows his business," answered the Colonel. "Some of Monk's favourites are Sir John's very good friends, and they can serve him at a pinch."

"But scarcely at such a pinch as this," replied Rollo.

"What can you expect at the hands of George Monk?"

"Impartial justice. The Governor sets great store by his impartiality; so do the new judges. This daring crime cannot be overlooked."

"Sir John's treason was overlooked already. You have not forgotten how my successor acted?"

"But we will openly appeal to the Governor for justice."

"To what purpose?" said the Colonel. "I know the man. He may deceive others, but me he cannot deceive. I know him. I ever suspected the sincerity of his attachment to the sacred cause of freedom. Ever close and impassable; what does such caution mean—what does it portend? I tell you, he is sapping the very foundations of the Commonwealth. All the labour of honest, brave, righteous men, in building up the fair and stately fabric of the nation's liberties, he counts as naught. But," he added, "if George Monk flatters himself that he can safely pour scorn and contumely upon those who would not count him with the dogs of their flocks, he is given over to judicial blindness. The time will come—the time must come when the inalienable rights of a Christian people shall be vindicated in the sight of the world: yea, the time is at hand, even at the door."

"It is dangerous, Colonel, to say so much," returned

Rollo. "I have warned you already, and I counsel you again, to weigh your words, lest such bold speculations find their way to the ears of the Governor."

"Why should such as he be suffered to lord it over a free-born people?" said Campion. "What has it availed that the blood of the mighty was poured out abundantly as water? The issue of our great struggle has been the setting up of a Rehoboam, whose little finger has become thicker than the headless tyrant's loins. Is not there strength enough in the nation to cast down this Dagon of the Philistines? Such questions have been asked of me by men of all degrees and all parties since you and I left Rannoch. It was the constant resort that was had to me in Fife which kept me so long from Edinburgh. Many men look to me as to a leader on whom they can rely."

"You have been wronged by the Government—undeniably wronged," said Rollo. "There is some serious misunderstanding, which it should be your endeavour to remove; but you should not give way to open resentment, which can do no good."

"Would you counsel me to crouch to George Monk?" cried the Colonel. "He has thrust me aside, and estranged himself from me. I am no dissembler. I cannot conceal mine honest sentiments. Monk! I despise him! Every party in the State despises his supremacy, and I know that a rising——"

"A rising!" echoed Rollo. "Surely you do not brood over a rebellion? A rising would be madness."

"And am I never to be vindicated in mine integrity?"

"Trust to time for your vindication," said Rollo. "Time is the great comforter, the great redresser, the great avenger. I have faith in Time."

The Colonel rose from his chair and traversed the apartment twice or thrice without speaking, then suddenly bade Rollo adieu, and took his leave.

"This man must be conciliated by those in power," said Rollo to himself, "otherwise he will breed serious commotion. They have thrown him aside because of his wild enthusiasm; but they little dream to what that enthusiasm may impel him. He has done me good service, and I thank him from the bottom of my heart. Yet I would gladly avoid him, for he is dangerous; and I shudder at the horrid supposition—God grant it be no more than a supposition!—that in him a chief judge of King Charles stands confessed."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Conspiracies no sooner should be form'd
Than executed. What means Portius here?
I like not that cold youth.

Cato.

AN hour or two after his arrival Jasper Rollo had the pleasure of being received by Lady Annabel, then quite recovered from her womanly weakness, though still depressed in spirits. He informed her that the Rev. Mr. Gilchrist proposed being in Edinburgh immediately to see what should become of Gilderoy.

The Government authorities, on being fully apprised of the nocturnal outrage, took ready action in the matter, dispelling all suspicion of their seeking to screen the chief delinquent from the consequences of his daring folly. The proper officials were sent to Lady Annabel's residence, where they made a thorough investigation; and every means was set at work to discover the offenders, of whom, as yet, no trace had been obtained. Before night a proclamation was read at the Cross of Edinburgh, offering high rewards for the apprehension of Sir John Spiers of Spierhaughs and his accomplices, including the man Roger Cristal and his wife Margaret.

Some days glided by without the slightest discovery falling out. At the first Lady Annabel had resolved on removing to another residence in the heart of the town, where she would be assured of perfect security; but, on second thoughts, she changed her mind, all probability of further molestation in any shape being at an end, the more especially as Jasper Rollo, who took up his quarters in the immediate neighbourhood, stationed his two retainers in her lodging every night as a guard. As soon, however, as this arrangement took place, Eachin Macraw disappeared from the house, and never returned, probably because he conceived there was no longer need of his services. Meanwhile poor Marion fell alarmingly ill, doubtless from the effects of the toils and dangers which she had undergone during her weary pilgrimage from the north; but with careful

treatment and gentle nurture she speedily surmounted the attack.

During this interval, Colonel Campion, accompanied by his attendants, left Edinburgh, stating that he was going to the country for a few days. After a brief absence, he returned without his attendants, and sent a message to Jasper Rollo, craving the favour of a visit from him at a certain hour of the following evening.

When Jasper called, the Colonel was at home, but engaged with a party of gentlemen; but on Mrs. Molison announcing the visitor's name, Campion came out of the room and met him in the lobby.

"A few chosen friends are with me," said the Colonel, "consulting on affairs which deeply concern us all. Will you join us for a spare hour? The opportunity is one which may be turned to very profitable account."

Jasper had no desire whatever to meet those friends, and, in fact, he had his own suspicions about their character, and the sort of "affairs" which they were assembled to consider. So he excused himself as well as he could; but the Colonel pressing him, and seeming to take his stinginess in ill part, he gave way, and suffered himself to be ushered into the presence of the conclave.

The room was lighted by an antique silver candlestick with several foliated branches, each holding a large waxen candle, which stood on a dark oaken table, around which sat seven men, with wine-bottles and glasses before them. These men were chiefly of a military cast, although not in any uniform. They all wore swords. The closely-cut hair of some showed that they belonged to the Roundhead or Republican party; and the others, who had flowing locks, might have been set down as cavaliers at heart. Three of them had short pipes in their mouths, and were fast filling the chamber with smoke.

Rollo's entrance seemed to have interrupted an animated conversation, and, judging from the surly looks of the company, his introduction was unfavourably received. The Colonel resumed his empty seat at the head of the table, and gave Rollo a chair on his right hand, and poured out wine for him.

"How now, Colonel?" cried one of those who wore their hair in the malignant fashion. "Whose friend is this? Give the name and quality, if you please. Let us have everything open and above board."

"All in good time," answered Campion; and he explained that Jasper Rollo of Dunavaig and Cairnibee was an esteemed friend, who had voluntarily served with him during the campaign against the Macgregors of Rannoch. "I have learned to confide in him," he added. "He is of good blood, and has a noble and generous spirit."

"A fig for good blood!" exclaimed the other, snapping his finger and thumb. "Can I boast of good blood? Can you? Can any of us? Why do you make a prate about good blood? My father was a tinker. My mother was a tinker's drab. She was twice branded, and ten times banished from one shire. I was born in a ditch, and my first cradle was the pannier on a donkey's back. Yet, for all that, I won my commission, and I am styled Major Luke. A fig for good blood! However, my lad, as the Colonel has given the password for you, and you look like a blade of the true mettle, you are right heartily welcome. Take a glass." And he placed the glass of wine, which the Colonel had filled, near to Rollo.

From the first moment he set eyes upon them, Rollo did not half like the company, and the more he saw of them the less he liked them. But unwilling to take or give offence, he lifted his glass and was putting it to his lips, when his hand was arrested by Major Luke giving a tremendous thump on the table.

"Have you no breeding?" cried the major. "You must pledge us, sir. The toast for to-night is—"God scatter all monks from out of Zion's sanctuary!"—a right worthy toast as ever passed around among good fellows. All of us have drunk to it, except Colonel Campion, and he drinks no toasts, for they stick in his Puritanical gizzard."

Jasper had suspected from the outset that all was not right with these men, and now he felt convinced that he was in a meeting of conspirators.

"The toast is an enigma," he said quietly, "and I am no Oedipus to pretend solving the riddles of the Sphinx. Moreover, I marvel that Colonel Campion should tolerate healths and toasts at his own board, seeing that he commonly denounces such as remnants of ancient paganism, which all good Christians should eschew."

"The Colonel preaches nonsense," cried another member of the party. "Never mind what he preaches. Dost thou think, because the Colonel is virtuous, there shall be no more

cakes and ale? Yes, by Saint Anne; and ginger shall be hot i' the mouth too. He that scruples to drink an honest toast is a fool—a downright, unmitigated fool. What says Edmund Waller?

Wine fills the veins, and healths are understood
To give our friends a title to our blood;
Who, naming me, doth warm his courage so,
Shows for my sake what his bold hand would do.

Honour the toast, and no more silly scrupling."

But Jasper still hesitated, with the glass in his hand.

"Do you drink the toast?" demanded Major Luke, peremptorily.

"Not without an explanation," answered Rollo.

"Not without an explanation?" repeated the Major.

"And that explanation being satisfactory," added Rollo.

"The gentleman," cried Major Luke, with another emphatic thump on the table, "the gentleman will not take the test."

"Is it a test?" exclaimed Rollo, setting down his glass, and rising from his chair. "If it be a test, I decline it."

"I leave your friend of good blood and generous spirit in your own hands, Colonel Campion," said the Major, with a bitter sneer. "Regard for you is all that prevents me forcing the test down his throat."

"A feat you will never perform," cried Rollo. "Hark you, sirrah—I have had, ere now, to chastise a bully who became insolent in his cups, and I care not though I should undertake the like sad task again."

The saucy major and one or two others started up with indignant outcries, and grasped their swords. The rest interfered to preserve the peace. Great clamour and hubbub followed, during which the most of the bottles and glasses were swept off the table, and dashed to pieces on the floor. At length, Campion, in tones of thunder, commanded silence, and the uproar ceased. ;

"Is it thus that ye avouch yourselves worthy of becoming leaders of a great and perilous enterprise?" he said, gazing fiercely at the Major and his supporters. "This idle drunken wrangle shows me how little dependence may be placed upon your circumspection. I introduced my friend, hoping that the sober speeches of honest men might enlighten his understanding, and bring him to cast in his lot

with us. But he is scarcely seated when ye fall upon him like so many cut-purses."

"We had no assurance of his good faith," cried Major Luke.

"His introduction by me should have satisfied all scruples," said Campion.

"Hush! there is a strange stir in the house!" cried one of the men, waving his hand in entreaty.

That same moment the chamber door was flung open with a force that dashed it back to the wall, and an officer of Monk's troops entered, sword in hand, followed by a party of his soldiers, whose morions, breastplates, and pikes glittered brightly in the wax-lights. The lobby without was also filled with soldiers. The company stood as if petrified.

The officer glanced sharply around the table, and as soon as his eye caught Colonel Campion, he strode up to him, and laying his left hand on the Colonel's shoulder, delivered himself thus—"I arrest you, Edward Campion, in the name of the Lord Protector. You are my prisoner."

"For what crime?" demanded Campion.

"Conspiracy against the peace and stability of the Commonwealth, and particularly against the Governor of Scotland, General Monk," was the ready response.

"And the proofs of such conspiracy?" said Campion.

"What and where are they?"

"They are in the Governor's own hands. Lists of your confederates and expositions of your schemes were found on the persons of your two serving-men, who were apprehended this morning in Fife."

The Colonel's countenance darkened when he heard this; but instantly his lip curled with a contemptuous sneer. "It is enough," he said. "George Monk pants for my blood. I know that he has long sought my ruin; but it is not given unto him to crush me. The Ruler of heaven and earth hath not put into *his* hands the power of taking away my life."

"You will resign to me your sword, Colonel Campion," said the officer.

"Not to mortal man," cried Campion, sternly.

"Hah! say you so?" exclaimed the officer, stepping back, as if expecting resistance. "Soldiers! do your duty."

"Stand fast, soldiers!" cried the Colonel, "I yield me freely. Here is the sword which you seek." He drew

his sword, and pressing the point aslant upon the hearthstone, he stamped his foot upon the shining blade, and snapping it asunder dashed the hilt to the ground among the fragments of the broken bottles and glasses. "Even in this has George Monk failed to degrade me," he said. "I have fought in the ranks of the Parliamentary armies from Edgehill to Worcester, and the good old sword which I have broken and flung away rendered essential service to the good old cause. Pick up the splinters and preserve them; for even the splinters of a patriot's sword are worthy of being treasured as precious relics. Now, I have done—and tyranny may work its will. Whither do you lead me?"

"To the castle," replied the officer.

"To Monk's presence?"

"I cannot tell."

"Is Monk in the castle?"

"He was when I came down."

"I am ready to confront both him and his subservient council," said Champion. "Know I not how he has been darkly plotting the destruction of those liberties which were purchased at the cost of many a true man's life? I can unmask his machinations. Confront me with him, I pray you."

"My orders direct me to convey you without loss of time to the castle," said the officer. "They admit of no dallying, as you may well understand."

"And my friends here—are they implicated with me?" inquired the Colonel.

His "friends" were standing like so many statues, silently eyeing the extraordinary scene.

"None of these gentlemen are named in your lists, and I have no warrant against any of them," said the officer. "Those named in your papers will all be arrested before to-morrow morning. The Government is conversant with all the ramifications of your plot as well as with the names of all your coadjutors and adherents down to the humblest partizan. All your papers in this house are now seized and in the hands of one of my sergeants. And, gentlemen," he added, addressing the guests, "take this catastrophe as a solemn warning to yourselves. Those who from mean and mercenary motives have been practising upon this man's rebellious humour, may blush for shame that they have suffered him to proceed thus far."

"A new enigma!" exclaimed Campion. "You intimate that I have been betrayed."

"To be betrayed is the common fate of all conspirators," responded the officer.

Here Jasper Rollo found speech at last. Addressing the officer, he said,—“I beg you to observe that I know nothing of these gentlemen, the Colonel's guests, and am accessory to no conspiracy whatsoever. I came here on the Colonel's simple invitation, utterly ignorant of his schemes.”

To Jasper's great surprise, one of the company asseverated—“That is the fact.”

“And I confirm it also,” added Campion.

“Good,” said the officer. “My duty here is strictly limited to the arrest of Edward Campion and the seizure of his papers. I have to do with nobody and nothing else. But again I say—Let this be a lesson and a warning to all. Edward Campion, we attend you.”

“Friends, farewell!” said the Colonel. He complacently resigned himself to his captors, and was marched out.

The house was speedily cleared of the soldiers; but then the clamour and hubbub recommenced among the guests; and the door being shut, and Major Luke placing his back against it, Jasper Rollo was prevented from leaving at once, as he wished to do.

“By all the fiends!” ejaculated the Major, hoarse in voice and black in the face with fury, “there are traitors amongst us.”

The glare of his eye fell on Rollo, who, supposing himself threatened, drew his sword.

“You!” cried the Major, “Pshaw!—you were not in the secret. It is another than you. Comrades, who can have been so base as to break the compact? Who? Name him, and I will search his heart!”

The violent throwing open of the door sent the Major staggering against the table; and Mrs. Molison burst in, followed by her worthy spouse, who was a portly, red-faced little man, with a very bald head.

“Preserve us all!” ejaculated the good lady. “What are they going to make of the Colonel?—and what was he doing? A sergeant and two men searched his bed-closet, and took away every bit of paper they could lay hands on.”

“The short and the lang of it is just this, in one word,” cried the Deacon, snorting and puffing with agitation, as he stood in the doorway surveying the company, “this is my

house, and as lang as ony gentleman behaves himself like a gentleman, and duly pays his lodging-fee, and renders due submission to the powers that rule, I'm well content; but I'll allow no Gowrie Conspiracy nor Gunpouther Plot within my door. I'm a deacon—a man in authority; and great discredit is likely to fall upon me for this business. It's a black, black business; and you'll all march to my door, and never dare to darken it again, upon peril of your lives."

"There is no conspiracy among us, Deacon," said one of the party.

"Conspiracy or no conspiracy—march!" shouted the Deacon, lashing himself into a passion, which immediately induced a violent fit of coughing.

"You are grossly insulting, sirrah," said Major Luke. "Remember that although this is your own house——"

"Yes it's my house—is't yours?" cried the Deacon. "Yes, you'll march, bag and baggage—or to the Tolbooth you go—vagabonds! Betty, Betty, cry back the soldiers and we'll get the house cleared of the villains."

"There's no occasion for the soldiers, my love," said his spouse.

"No occasion! And am I to stand with my thumb in my cheek and allow the house to be taken in over my head? Ruffians!"

"The gentlemen are willing enough to go," pursued Mrs. Molison. "Give them time till the mob be off the causeway."

"Allow me to pass," said Rollo, for the Deacon was still standing right in the doorway. "I have no connection with these men."

"Say you so?" retorted the Deacon. "And who are you connected with, then? My word! you're as gallows-looking a bird as the warst o' them. But you're welcome to go—and take the rest of your pack after you. Murdering scoundrels!"

Rollo passed out, and on descending to the street found great uproar and confusion, and the Lawn-market swarming with a noisy crowd. Hastening towards that quarter, he inquired of a man what had happened.

"The prisoner's broken awa'—that's it," was the answer.

"The prisoner?—Colonel Campion?"

"Ay, ay—the daft Colonel that lodged in Deacon Molison's. He's broken awa', sir, as sure as a gun. They should hae

handcuffed him, but as he was peaceable they took nae dread. As they marched along the Lawn-market, he drave ower some o' the sodgers, and darted doon a narrow close that leads you to the bank o' the Nor' Loch."

The people were thronging around the head of a dark close or entry on the north side of the street, which the soldiers had entered in pursuit of the fugitive. It was extremely amusing to hear the various surmises and rumours that passed from mouth to mouth. Some folks would have it that the prisoner had been arrested for conspiring to blow up the castle and afterwards sack the town. Others asserted that he was a cavalier emissary from Holland, who had landed that day at the pier of Leith, bringing with him a great store of arms and ammunition to carry on an insurrection. A third party declared that he had been taken in the very act of preparing tremendous explosive engines to burst open the Tolbooth and liberate Gilderoy.

A few soldiers came running out of the entry, and hurried to the castle, from which in a few minutes a strong detachment was sent down to assist in the search going on along the banks of the North Loch, a large stagnant sheet of water lying in the hollow on the north side of the city. As there was a ford across the loch, and no continuation of the city wall along its banks, a person ordinarily acquainted with the locality could meet with few obstacles in making his escape to the open country in that direction. It was now dark night, and the fugitive had never been seen since he disappeared within the murky jaws of the close.

Eventually the pursuit came to nothing. Colonel Campion had vanished as mysteriously as Sir John Spiers.

Rollo, who had gone down to the banks of the loch, returned with the returning crowd to the High Street, and took his way to his lodgings. A man in a mantle, who appeared to have dogged his steps for some distance, now came close up to him, and touching his arm, said, in a low tone—"He has escaped, and I'm glad on't."

Rollo had no wish to interchange sentiments with the stranger, so he gave no answer, but walked on with slightly accelerated pace. The man, however, followed, and continued his talk—"I was one of the party in Deacon Molison's," he said.

Rollo stopped, and looking at him, in the gleam of a lighted window, recognised the conspirator who had corrobo-

rated him in disclaiming connection with the company. "I am indebted to you," said he, "for the friendly word you spoke."

"'Twas but right," replied the stranger. "I was shocked to hear Luke insult you in such a fashion; but Luke is a cowardly insolent dog; and he and the rest of them, itching for Government pay, lured on the Colonel to his maddest schemes."

"And betrayed him?"

"They were forestalled in that," said the stranger. "The Government has its own agents. The Government has eyes and ears for everything. If Major Luke and his friends were worth a straw, they would be arrested; but they are too contemptible, and Government finds its account by overlooking them. The Colonel's brain must have been turned when he consorted with such rascallions. But I'm glad he has escaped, and I trust he will seek safety beyond seas."

"And is there truth in the heavy charge against him?"

"Much truth, as you will shortly find. Take care of yourself, Jasper Rollo, and look to what friendships you form in these uneasy times. Good night."

Having spoken these parting words, the stranger turned quickly on his heel and strode as quickly out of sight.

"He is a spy!" muttered Rollo to himself, as he walked homewards. "The Colonel was betrayed by this man alone."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A brave man knows no malice, but at once
Forgets in peace the injuries of war,
And gives his direst foe a friend's embrace.

Cowper's "Task."

THERE were now two fugitives from justice against whom the Government fulminated its thunders—Sir John Spiers and Colonel Campion; and over the retreat of both mystery threw her darkest veil.

The day after the Colonel's evasion the Rev. Mr. Gilchrist came to Edinburgh, ostensibly on business connected with Lady Annabel's affairs, but simply and solely to watch the fate of Gilderoy.

The secrets of the conspiracy fomented by Campion began to ooze out publicly, showing that his design was of the wildest character. The army was to be tampered with—General Monk seized or assassinated—the Government overturned—the authority of Cromwell solemnly abjured—and an independent Scottish Commonwealth established on principles akin to those of the Fifth Monarchy men, who anticipated the immediate coming of Christ, and the inauguration of the reign of the saints on earth. It did not transpire that he had drawn over many men of influence to his project; but several arrests took place among the subordinate officers of the forces stationed in and around the capital.*

Seeing what had befallen the Colonel, it was but natural that Marion should fear that the pass, which she had obtained through his intervention with the Governor, might not again avail her, and therefore, on regaining convalescence, she hesitated about venturing to visit Gilderoy a second time, although most eager to do so, lest she should be exposed to insult and danger. But on Mr. Gilchrist being acquainted with her doubts, he applied to one of Monk's officers to whom he was personally known, and was informed that the pass had not been withdrawn, but might still be used by Marion as she found occasion. Anxious himself to visit Gilderoy, he requested to be furnished with the like authority, but the officer told him that it could not then be granted, as orders were strict to exclude every person from Gilderoy till after his trial, except the bearer of the pass already granted. Mr. Gilchrist did not forget to make special in-

* A servant of Cromwell, but the hope of the Royalist party, and inflexible in denying any immediate intervention of the Lord in public affairs, Monk was necessarily an object of hatred to all religious and political fanatics. This hatred had burst out during the early period of his residence in Scotland. Overton, the major-general of his infantry, a millenarian enthusiast, and leader of the malcontents, had formed the plan of seizing the command of the troops and declaring against Cromwell. The conspirators intended to surprise Monk at Dalkeith, on the 1st of January, 1656. Some wished that he should be killed; but Samuel Oates, a minister, opposed this, threatening to reveal if his murder were contemplated. This opposition caused the postponement of the conference to another day. Monk, informed of the plot towards the end of December, arrested Overton and several of his accomplices, and sent them to London. A great many others were cashiered, and Monk took advantage of this occurrence to be more stringent in his army against that fanaticism and independence which were so obnoxious to him.—*Guizot's "Life of Monk."*

quiry concerning Judith. The officer, however, could give no better information than that an investigation of the case had been ordered, and was apparently still in progress, as he had not heard of the result.

At much about the same hour in the evening as on the former occasion, Marion presented herself at the Tolbooth door, and exhibiting her pass, was promptly admitted. The Gudeman expressed surprise that so long an interval had elapsed since her previous visit, which she accounted for on the score of sickness, and, indeed, she still looked thin, pale, and faint.

"Gilderoy himself is very down-hearted," he said. "He's taking ill, ill with the Tolbooth. I know a great change upon him since he came here; I know a great change upon yourself, lassie, since I saw you last."

These words caused Marion to shed tears as she followed him slowly up the dark steps. Before entering the common hall, however, through which she had to pass to the outlaw's prison, she was led into a small dingy room, evidently the Gudeman's own den, in which he lay in wait all the daytime. There was no one within.

"Hark you, lassie," he said, shutting the door, and speaking in a suppressed voice, "Gilderoy is so important a prisoner, and we are so jealous about his safe-keeping, that nobody can be admitted to see him, save yourself, because you have got General Monk's orders. But when you go up the stair to-night, perhaps you'll see what will make you start and wonder—perhaps you'll see nothing at all. But whatever you see, lock it as a secret in your own breast, and never speak a word to living creature about it, or the word may cost you and other folk dear."

"No a word will ever be spoken by me," answered Marion, in exceeding amazement.

"See that you faithfully stand to your promise," said the jailor, "and it will be the better for yourself, better for Gilderoy, better for us all."

He said no more, but forthwith conducted her to the Highland captive's prison.

It was still the same grim and gloomy cell, its gaunt proportions half-concealed by the grey twilight within, which was all of the blessed light of day that penetrated the narrow, barred, cobwebbed window. Marion looked inquisitively around. She thought there was a larger quantity of straw in the place than what she had observed before

and much of it was heaped in the darkest corner. But look as she might, she saw absolutely nothing to give occasion for the Gudeman's warning. This utter absence of anything to wonder at afforded her sufficient cause for wonderment.

The outlaw was on his feet, and leaning on the iron bar to which his chains were affixed by an iron ring which moved freely along it. On seeing Marion he seemed much pleased, and grasping the trembling hand which she held out, he pressed it ardently. She observed, with a thrill of pain, that the horrors of captivity were fast undermining his strength. Formerly he stood straight as a young pine in the Black Wood of Rannoch, but now his shoulders had contracted a decided stoop, and his gait, when he moved, was slow and shambling, as though he bore a heavy burden—and so he did; for the guilt of Dunavaig's slaughter was burden enough.

"You have not forsaken and forgotten me," he said. "I am abandoned by all the world save you and—Ranald Vourigh."

"Mention not his name," said Marion.

"Jailor," cried Gilderoy, "I conjure you, never more let me behold the face of that miscreant in this cell, else you and he may never leave it alive."

"Was Ranald Vourigh here?" inquired Marion, but with no surprise.

"He was," replied Gilderoy. "He bribed the jailor there with a portion of his ill-gotten gold to open the door and suffer him to glare in upon me. The door was opened ajar, and he glared in, with his cruel triumphant smile, and made a step towards me——"

The jailor watched him with a suspicious and troubled eye. "Tut, tut, man!" he interrupted, "what need you grudge a gold piece coming out of Macpherson's purse, and going into my pouch? And you saw that he could not look you straight in the face like an honest man."

"Let him come no more," said Gilderoy.

"He'll not seek, never you fear," responded the Gudeman, with a nod of his head. "Your steady look cowed him yon day."

"Oh! James!" cried Marion, breaking in on the jailor's speech. "Is there nae hope that they'll hae mercy?"

"Hope, girl? You know not what you speak," said the captive. "They are scarcely to give me the mockery of a trial,

for they had my doom sealed the moment they heard I was taken. I was fore-faulted long ago when the sentence of outlawry was pronounced against me. They have no more to do than to rake up the old sentence, and bid the executioner perform his part. Let no dream of mercy delude your mind. The time for such a dream is past for ever. It cannot be forgiven that I arrayed my banner against that of the Commonwealth. Tell me how you have fared since you last were here."

Marion narrated the incidents of the interval—her meeting with Lady Annabel Rutherford, the supposed fate of Sir John Spiers, the arrest and flight of Colonel Campion, the arrival of Mr. Gilchrist, &c.; but she said nothing about Eachin Macraw, for fear of the jailor giving a hint to the authorities that one of the prisoner's followers was in town.

Gilderoy listened to the recital with much interest, and then, after a long pause, said—"Forget that ever I chid you for giving the lady her freedom. Your fault was the fault of innocence and simplicity; and, after all, you are my best and only friend."

"And a helpless ane," faltered Marion. "Mr. Gilchrist," she added, "desires muckle to see you ance mair."

"Tell him," said Gilderoy, in a stern tone, "never to cross the black threshold of this prison house; for, with what intent would *he* come? To horrify mine ears with accusations—to undermine and destroy all the courage with which it will be my pride to meet death. Tell him to avoid me."

At this there was a rustling among the heap of straw in the dark corner, and a half-stifled voice articulated—"There must needs be penitent preparation for death. Wouldst thou dare eternal wrath and condemnation without hearty acknowledgment of sins and earnest prayer for forgiveness?"

Marion looked to the corner in great affright, and saw the heap of straw tossing aside, as by some inward convulsion, and a tall man, in a sad-coloured habit, rising up from amidst it. The voice did not sound altogether strange to her, and speedily she recognized the man, with much astonishment and sorrow—Colonel Campion, the proclaimed conspirator!

"I would be a partaker in thy guilt," he proceeded, advancing a step or two, "did I not take up my testi-

mony in the sight of heaven, and implore thee to prepare by due repentance for the last great change which is at hand. Dost thou not know, hast thou not read, that all wicked men shall be turned into the lowest hell, there to dwell with everlasting burnings?"

The jailor frowned, hemmed angrily, and jingled his bunch of keys.

"Fool!" said Gilderoy, looking askance at the fanatic. "Be silent, or quit the den. Day and night your madness lashes itself against me. I have ample cause to hate and curse you. But when I beheld you in evil fortune, hunted by the tyrants whom you served so long and so well, and when I recalled to mind that you befriended this hapless maiden, I freely consented to your concealment here. And is this your gratitude?"

"It is," replied Campion, in a calm, subdued tone. "Earnest care and solicitude for the welfare of your soul will not allow me to keep silence."

"Colonel," said the jailor, "you'll put it out of the power of mortal man to do you a good turn, for you will not keep your ill-scraped tongue quiet. What the devil need *you* mind what comes of him, or what comes of me, or what comes of anything that's no fashing you? See what will come of yourself if I put you to the door. Lie down among your straw, and give us peace."

"I am constrained, even at my own proper peril, to lift up my voice," said the Roundhead, "that so his conscience may be awakened, and his hard and stony heart melted, and he be led to make his peace with offended Heaven."

"Man of blood and desolation! minion of treason and regicide!" uttered Gilderoy, "hast *thou* not a long account to answer for in the final day of reckoning?"

"I am ready to meet that day," responded the fanatic. "In that great day, when the books shall be opened, there shall be given unto me a crown of glory that can never fade. It is written that the men whom the prophet Ezekiel saw, in the vision, standing beside the brazen altar, having each his slaughter weapon in his hand, were commanded to go forth into the city, and to smite all whom the man clothed with linen, having the inkhorn by his side, did set apart for destruction. They went forth and obeyed the commandment by filling the court of the temple with the slain. And blessed were they! I also am an inheritor of the blessing; for when the same

high hand set aside a tyrant for doom, and the same voice called unto me that I should lift my slaughter weapon, and therewith execute judgment, I was not disobedient to the heavenly mandate, but went forth and defiled the very throne of generations of kings !”

“ This madman has a thousand crimes to answer for !” said Gilderoy, with a loud rattle of his fetters. “ Unless his frenzy abates I must be alone. Such companionship is frightful.”

The Colonel, glaring upon the floor, and biting his nails to the quick, receded into his dark corner, and sat down among the straw.

“ The fit’s off him,” said the jailor. “ Such fury cannot last. Now, lassie,” continued he, laying his hand on Marion’s shoulder, “ what you see and hear must go no farther.”

“ I’ve promised,” she answered, “ and I’ll fulfil.”

“ For my sake be prudent—be secret,” said Gilderoy. “ He was my mortal foe ; but all that is over, and I would that the wretched man escape.”

“ He’s no prisoner ?” she said, her tearful eyes dilating with wonder.

“ He’s a prisoner by his own will and desire,” returned the jailor, with a dry laugh. “ You know little of the mysteries of the old Heart o’ Mid-Lothian. Sometimes a fellow that the magistrates would give any money to clap under my lock and key comes to my door of his own accord, seeking shelter and protection, because the last place the beagles wad think of searching for him is the Tolbooth, and there he lies snug till he finds means to flit. Do you understand me, lassie ?”

Sooth to say, the girl did not clearly understand at first such a strange and preposterous mode of eluding arrest. But, strange and preposterous as it looked, it was nevertheless a mode of which not a few parties are known to have availed themselves in Edinburgh. The keepers of the Tolbooth were never proof against bribes. They took bribes to defeat the ends of justice, both by favouring the escape of prisoners and by concealing persons in the prison from the pursuit of the officers. On more than one notorious occasion, while the whole city was strictly searched and every port guarded, while it was known to a certainty that the delinquent sought after was lurking somewhere about

Edinburgh—that very individual, by procuring secret admission to the Tolbooth, lived there securely and at his ease until such time as the heat of pursuit abated, and his friends had provided facilities for his retreat from the town.*

“But wha will save you?” cried Marion, with a bursting sigh, as she gazed on the outlaw.

“You must try to bear up against the many sorrows by which you are beset,” said Gilderoy.

“How can I bear up?” she sighed. “How can my heart be licht when there’s sic a weary load o’ sorrow on it? There’s uac mair peace for me ou this earth. You winna let me gang to the governor, uor to naebody, that I micht fa’ on my knees before them, and beg your life—only your life, though you were to be banished far, far frae Scotland, and never tread the Highland heather again a’ your days. Surely they couldna ha’e the heart to refuse a simple lass. If I had but the promise o’ your life!”

“Would you kneel and pray that I might live a life of shame and misery?” cried the prisoner, while a gleam kindled in his dull eye.

“I wad save you frae a death o’shame,” she stammered.

“As well might you look for mercy from famished wolves as from those who now have me in their power, and who are yearning for the moment when I shall look my last on earth and sky,” said Macgregor. “Never shall it be told that my father’s son sought mercy from his sworn foemen. They have beaten down my sword; but my free spirit they cannot conquer. When you go back to Rannoch, Marion, you will tell the story of my fate; and perchance, when my head, set upon an iron spike beside that of Great Montrose, is

* In two very extraordinary instances an escape from justice has, strange as it may appear, been effected by means of the old Tolbooth. At the discovery of the Rye House Plot, in the reign of Charles II., the notorious Robert Ferguson, usually styled the “Plotter,” was searched for in Edinburgh, with a view to his being subjected, if possible, to the extreme vengeance of the law. It being known almost certainly that he was in town, the authorities shut the gates, and calculated securely upon having him safe within their toils. The plotter, however, by an expedient worthy of his ingenious character, escaped by taking refuge in the old Tolbooth. A friend of his happened to be confined there at the time, and was able to afford protection and concealment to Ferguson, who, at his leisure, came abroad, and betook himself to a place of safer shelter on the Continent. The same device was practised in 1746 by a gentleman who had been concerned in the rebellion, and for whom a hot search had been carried on in the Highlands.—Chambers’ “*Traditions of Edinburgh*.”

picked to the bare white skull by the Lowland ravens, the claymores of the Gregalich will avenge their last chieftain."

"Alas! alas! I may never see the hills of Rannoch again!" sobbed Marion, hiding her weeping face in her hands. "But," added she, as the Gudeman gently admonished her that she had overstayed the allotted time, "I will come ilka day to see you, and aibliss some hope may arise."

She was conducted from the stroug room. As she went down the stair she heard a murmuring crooning voice from within a cell on the ouc side, the door of which was standing partly opeu. The sound struck her so forcibly that she stood stock still, and clutching the jailor's arm, iuquired in a whisper—"What woman is that in there?"

"In there?" said he. "Lassie, you made me start, griping me sae short. Wha is she? Some old jade they brought over the water from Fife this morning. She had been bewitching the haddock boats, I believe."

The door was drawn further open, and a turnkey appeared. "I've given the auld witch her supper," he said. "But I think she's clean demented. She does naething but sit and croon to hersel' "

"Do you ken her name?" asked Marion of the jailor. "Will you let me gang in and see her?"

These interrogations, being pronounced in her natural tone, were evidently overheard by the inmate of the cell; for a shrill and wild shriek issued from within, the half-closed door was pulled back to its full extent, and an aged, ragged, wretched-looking old crone rushed out past the turnkey, and flung herself upon Marion's bosom. It was Marion's grandmother! It was old Judith, who was thought to have perished in the Fife village!

Marion screamed, and embraced her with impassioned ardour, mingling her warm tears of joy with those which now hailed from the poor old woman's eyes. The two men stood transfixed with astonishment. At length the Gudeman found breath to ejaculate—"Lassie, have you friends in every hole and bore of the Tolbooth?"

"It's my ain bairn!" cried Judith.

"Your own bairn!" cried he. "You old 'witchiug jade!—hold up, I say!"

"It's my ain bairn that I thoct was lost and dead—my ain lassie—the apple o' my e'e and the joy o' my heart!"

sobbed the old woman, still clinging to Marion. "But they shall separate me and my lassie nae mair. We lived thegither lang, and she maun be wi' me to close my auld c'en when this weary pilgrimage is past and gane."

"They told me you were dead—that the folk in yon ill town took your life," said Marion; "and sair, sair ha'e I mourned sin syne. Oh! grandmither! grandmither! what's to become o' us in this awfu' time, when everything's black about us?"

"It can be but death at lang and last, lassie," returned Judith. "It's life and days o' sorrow that we ha'e maist to fear. It's no death; for death wad be welcome. It's death that wad put an end to a' our troubles, and gie us rest and peace."

"You must go, lass, you must go," said the jailor. "This is against all law, woman. It's past the hour. The prisoners are all in their own cells, and the common hall is empty. We must close up for the night, or I'll be found fault with."

"But I canna gang and leave her—my ain grandmither. I canna gang awa and leave her here; and maybe the morn she'll be taken up to the Castle hill, and brunt for a witch, and me see nae mair o' her," cried Marion, in a voice of agony. "Rather put me in there beside her, and keep me there, and I'll be your prisoner cheerfully. Send to the magistrates, and tell them I'm a blacker witch nor her; for I baptize cats, and fling strae-wisps into the sea to raise tempests to coup and sink haddock boats; and I blast corn; and I elf-shoot cattle; and I drive puddock-ploughs ower bonny rigs to mak them barren; and I cast an ill e'e on bairns to gar them dwine and dee in their cradles; and I raise the deil whiles in the shape o' a black goat, and whiles in the shape o' a muckle bumbee; and I've spoken wi' dead folk that live in Fairyland; and I—and—and—tell them a' that, jailor, and I'll confess till't, every word; and syne they winna find fault wi' you for letting me stay wi' my grandmither."

"Na, na, bonny lass, I'll do no such thing," returned the Gudeman of the Tolbooth, with a smile. "Ay, and you mind me, lassie," he added, thoughtfully, "you mind me of a sweet jo I had in my young days. I was a swank fellow then, and she was fair and handsome. And oh! woman, mony's the time we have wandered down the Links of Leith, or by St. Anton's well, in the summer gloamings, picturing

out to oursel's things that never were to be—picturing out the happy days when my apprenticeship would be served, and me a freeman, and her my winsome wife. We might have seen such days had not death stept in; and she has lain mony a year and mony a day under the sod of the old Greyfriars." He stopped, brushed his sleeve across his eyes, and then, assuming a peremptory tone, cried, "Come, come! you can see your grandmother the morn. But you must go home to-night."

"Gang hame?" echoed the old woman. "Gang hame to naething but sorrow and desolation—ilka house fu' o' mourning, and the sword o' the oppressor flashing ower the braid lands o' Clan Gregor, deadly as a gleam o' lichtuing? Gang hame, and no a friend's face to mak' her welcome? Her best hame, her only hame, is the grave; and oh! that her and me baith were there."

"But how did you escape death in yon ill town?" inquired Marion. "Tell me that, for I canna bide langer." She had now overcome her paroxysm of distraction.

"I canna tell muckle aboot it," said Judith. "When they shot me into a dark, gruesome prison, their evil passions gart them pu' me oot again to get me brunt before the nicht was past. They tied me to a post, and heaped strae and tarry sticks, and coals, and siclike elding aboot me; but just when they began to set lowe to the pile, the bailie and ither folk o' authority cam' and dispersed the unruly rabble, and put me back into my confinement. They kecpit me, I kenna how lang, and syne they brocht me ower the water, and shot me in here. And when was you putten in, my bairn?"

"I'm no putten in ava. I'm no a prisoner, grandmither. I only cam' here to see Gilderoy. I'm staying wi' yon Lowland lady."

"Curses cling to her! Her fair but fause looks were the ruin o' the chief and the clan."

But here the jailor and his assistant forcibly interfered, and parting Marion and her grandmother, they consigned the latter to her cell and bolted her in.

"Were your grandmother sentenced to die the morn, you might be loth to leave her," said the Gudeman; "but she's in no such condition. She must first be lawfully tried and condemned. The Fife tricks will not stand law on this side of the water, and the Protector's judges never lay great account by witchcraft at any rate."

The Gudeman led her down the stair, and through the common hall, which was now empty and silent, and then once more into his own little room. "Let me warn you again, lass, to say nothing about what you saw in Gilderoy's prison," he said, earnestly. "It wad be death to the Captain and me were it kent; and as he was *you*' friend at a pinch, as he tells me, you'll show your gratitude for his kindness by hauding your tongue about him. And if I find you discreet, I'll guide your granny weel as lang's she's here."

Poor Marion renewed her promise of absolute secrecy, and then left the prison.

When she reached home she astonished her friends by telling how she had so strangely discovered her grandmother; but, true to her pledge, she never said a word about Colonel Campion. She implored Jasper Rollo and Mr. Gilchrist to exert every means in their power to save Judith from the doom to which, it was to be feared in those witch-burning days, she might be hurried. They assured her no stone would be left unturned in Judith's defence against any accusation brought against her; and Mr. Gilchrist promised that next day he should make application to General Monk himself in her behalf. "But, indeed," said Rollo, "from the very fact that she has been taken out of the hands of her accusers and brought to Edinburgh, there is good ground to hope for her speedy release."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The charge is prepared, the lawyers are met,
 The judges all ranged—a terrible show!
 I go undismay'd, for death is a debt—
 A debt on demand—so take what I owe.

The Beggars' Opera.

THE Scottish Court of Justiciary (formed of Cromwell's "Commissioners") sat in judgment on Gilderoy.

He presented an uncouth, savage figure when placed in the felon's dock opposite to the solemn bench of Judges

arrayed in their robes' of office, his attire being still the tattered blood-stained rags in which he was taken. Scarcely less wild-looking a figure stood beside him in the person of the *Doomster*, wearing his characteristic livery of black and red.

The Court was filled to suffocation with spectators. Barons and their ladies, knights and their dames, burgesses and their wives—all were there, eager to behold the Highland outlaw, whose daring deeds had filled fame's mouth so long. It was the afternoon ere he was brought to the bar, other capital cases having occupied the previous portion of the sitting.

When he appeared, he evinced a dauntless courage. Ruin, imprisonment, despair, had passed heavily on him; his countenance was grisly, thin, and wan, but his eye, lately so sunken and lustreless, had gained a strong unnatural brilliancy, and his bearing was as proud, and haughty, and defiant as though he stood surrounded by a thousand of Clan Alpine's best claymores.

Mariou had been urgent to witness the trial, but was dissuaded by Lady Annabel, and Jasper Rollo was the only one of her friends who was present.

There was no need to rake up and parade the murder and fire-raising at Dunavaig and the abduction of the heiress of Glenbirkie. The prisoner was a proclaimed and proscribed outlaw and rebel. The doom of the law had been pronounced against him while yet he was free and the leader of a powerful band, laughing to scorn the might of his enemies; and what was there now to do but just to hand him over, in due form, to the hangman? This mode of procedure saved Lady Annabel and Mr. Gilchrist the pain of appearing against him as witnesses.

The sentence was given forth—death! He was to be hanged on the third day thence, upon a gibbet, on the road to Leith. And may the Lord have mercy on his soul!

“And this,” exclaimed the *Doomster*, in a harsh and sepulchral voice, that thrilled through the heart of every one in court, and laying his thick, heavy hand upon the prisoner's head, according to the usual custom, “This I pronounce for doom!”

The condemned man seemed struck that moment with a giddiness; but the weakness soon passed away. A buzz ran round the court. He glared fiercely towards the judges, and then at the gloomy official by his side, and muttered some

words between his teeth, clenched his hands, and drawing a deep sigh, turned his back upon the bar, and was led away.

As Rollo, having left the court, was making his way through the crowd outside, he was accosted by Ranald Vourigh, whom he had seen but once since he came to Edinburgh. Strange to tell, instead of wearing a triumphant expression, the face of the Highlander was dejected and sullen, as though the day's issue had been Gilderoy's acquittal.

"Ah, Macpherson!" said Rollo, "you are getting your revenge at last."

"And you'll get your own revenge, likewise," answered Ranald. "Do you know what the Doomster told me? Gilderoy is to be hung upon the highest gallows that ever was raised in Scotland. That's news to you."

"Unhappy wretch! I bear no revengeful feeling now," said Rollo.

"Wherefore shouldua you?" cried Macpherson, warmly. "Did you see yon dour proud front he set up at the bar? What a settled haughty defiance was in his look. Folk may say that I am revenged; but how can I be revenged until his spirit break? It was to break and crush his lofty spirit that I dragged him from the hills; but still that spirit defies me; and I am no more slockened of my vengeance than when he was at the head of his followers in the glen o' battle." Ranald's eyes flashed fire, and he stamped once or twice on the ground. "No, Dunavaig, I'm not sloekeued, and the memory of my old wrongs still burns at my heart's core. But you are fully avenged. The murderer of your kinsman will die on the gallows within three suns; and your desperate rival——"

"Are there any tidings of Sir John Spiers? Not likely."

"There are."

"Of what import?" cried Rollo, "Is he taken?"

"Ay, by the last arrest, your honour," responded Macpherson,

"He is dead?"

"Dead of his wounds."

"When—where?"

"The news came in just before Gilderoy was brought into court," said Ranald Vourigh. "The man, Roger Cristal, who tried to beguile me of the honour and profit of laying Gilderoy by the heels, has appeared, and made a full confes-

sion, and claimed the reward offered for Sir John's apprehension, living or dead."

"This Cristal must have been one of Sir John's accomplices."

"The chief mau of his band. Sir John engaged him in the North, after the capture of Gilderoy.

"But where has Sir John died?"

"Give me time to tell the story," said Macpherson. "Sir John and his baud followed Lady Aunabel and yourself to Glenbirkie, and planned various schemes to take her; but everything failed. She came suddenly to Edinburgh. They followed. It was soon known that her lodging was near by Cristal's own dwelling, where his wife resided. When the Highlandman put them all to flight, the band led or carried Sir John to Cristal's house, that they might get his wounds dressed; but the approach of the pursuer made them take to their heels. Seeing, however, it was but one man, they did not run far, but watched at a little distance, and when the Highlandman went off they returned, and away with their master out of the town altogether. Some miles south of Edinburgh they got him sheltered in a solitary cottage, and there he lay concealed till his death. As soon as Cristal saw the breath out of him, he came in and confessed, and claimed the reward."

"Thus, both Spierhaughs and his dupe, Gilderoy, are beneath our feet," said Rollo. "The haud of an avenging God is in this."

"Soldiers are already despatched to arrest the body and as many of the baud as may be gotten," said Ranald. "The dead and the living will be brought in the morn's morning. And on the third day we shall hae an end of Gilderoy. As soon as I see the last of him, I am for the North. Do you mind how he boasted me in Dunavaig Manse, that I but flee my country for fear of the dirks of his followers?"

"And you should not despise the warning," said Rollo. "Desperate men are to be dreaded."

"Hoot awa'!" cried Ranald. "Since I brought Gilderoy to the Tolbooth I've been up and down, and ne'er ane fashed me in town or country. The Macgregors daurna cross the Highland line; and north o' the Highland line the Governor's Guards ha'e effectually cowed them. I'll gang back to Rannoch, and enjoy my triumph; and wha daur lift a finger against me?"

And Ranald, with a proud laugh, snapped his finger and thumb in the air.

"If you gang to the castle the morn," he added, "you'll hear the whole story about Sir John Spiers. Congratulate Lady Annabel for me on the fate of her enemy."

"But there is nothing heard of Colonel Campion?"

"No a cheep," said Ranald. "Depend upon it, he's on the ocean by this time. Gude nicht. I may see you at the castle in the morning."

With this they separated, and Rollo proceeded to Lady Annabel's residence.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

My heart is sair—I darena tell—
 My heart is sair for somebody;
 I could wake a winter nicht
 For the sake o' somebody.
 I could range the world around
 For the sake o' somebody!

Burns.

MARION had been sitting alone all day—not weeping, not lamenting outwardly, scarcely drawing a sigh, but overcome with something like an atrophy. Devoured by grief, she was yet unable to shed a single tear, though tears might have relieved her. In her own mind, that day, the fate of Gilderoy never for one moment wavered in the balance. She knew what would be the sentence pronounced upon him, and it was at her own request that she was allowed to sit alone and sorrow unseen.

Shortly after the court rose she was visited by Annabel.

A wan smile, partaking deeply of despair, irradiated the poor girl's pallid countenance, and a thick, struggling sigh escaped her lips, as she stood up to receive Annabel. The lady took her tenderly by the hand, and, requesting her to be seated, placed herself beside her.

"He has been sentenced to death?" said Marion, perceiving her benefactress embarrassed. "That's what you ha'e

come to tell me. But I expected naething else. What else could I expect?"

"You must bear this stroke with resignation," said Annabel. "But I have also good news to tell you. I am assured by Mr. Gilchrist, who has been making strong interest, that there is a prospect of your grandmother's speedy release. They will fail to prove anything against her."

"May God bless you and the minister abundantly, madam!" cried Marion, as the tears came to her eyes.

"The minister and Rollo," said Annabel, "have been thinking it would be well were you to leave Edinburgh for a few days until all be over. The third day hence is Gilderoy's dying day."

"The third day?" said Marion, pale as death itself.

"A home in the country and every comfort will be provided for you," continued Annabel; "and in about a week you could return."

"It's kind, kind o' you to mak' sic an offer," replied Marion; "but I canna think o' leaving the town. There's Gilderoy condemned, and no ane to speak a word for him. He wiuna hear o' me gaun to the Governor and begging his life; but canna I just gang and beg it, and ne'er let him ken? Surely the Governor wad hear me. He heard me before when I wanted the pass, and when I told him aboot my grandmither."

"My dear girl, it would be a fruitless endeavour," said Annabel.

"But wadna General Monk hear me?"

"Probably not. At all events he could not grant your petition. Indeed—indeed, you are but clinging to the frailest of all frail hopes. You can do nothing to save Gilderoy."

"Still I may try, madam—I may try, though I should come nae speed. It's but my duty to him. And wha kens but that a blessing may follow my endeavours? The Governor may hear me when he wadna hear better folk."

"You may make every effort, Marion, but I fear every effort will be in vain," said the lady. "I entreat you not to add to your sorrows by the indulgence of hopes doomed to be blasted. Though you were my own sister I could offer you no better counsel."

"Oh! my lady, I ken that were it in your power there wadna lang be sorrow in my heart," responded Marion.

"But I canna sit still, and him in the dungeon, doomed to die, and no ane to speak a word for him. Or, I may sit and haud my tongue—and it will be a reproach to me a' my days."

Mr. Gilchrist now came in, and Annabel left him with the heart-broken mourner.

After speaking for some little time in a consolatory strain, to which Marion listened with sad attention, the Minister said—"But you cannot stay langer here among all this trouble. Both Lady Annabel and mysel' are of that mind."

"Minister," answered Marion, looking up wildly but steadily at him, while the tears ran down her cheeks, "I canna quit the town. Though I should ha'e to lie on the bare streets, I'll stay in Edinburgh before a' be ower wi' Gilderoy, and syne you may mak' o' me what you like."

The kind-hearted Minister took out his pocket-handkerchief, and dried her streaming cheeks with it. "You must endeavour to control this great sorrow," he said, "for all your grief and tears cannot change the course of a wise Providence, and you must learn resignation."

"God's will be done!" said Marion, with a bursting sigh. "But, oh, Mr. Gilchrist, it's ill to bear the thoct o' losing a' that we love on earth. You may pray, and you may trust, and you may sit, in your sorrow, and lift up your waefu' e'e to the heaven aboon, and try to learn resignation; but there's a sair breaking heart that winna heal, and a tear that winna dry, and bitter, racking thochts that you can nae mair get quit o' than you can get quit o' your ain shadow. And what can I do but just sit doon, as I am sitting, and greet my fill, and let my weary, weary heart break?"

Mr. Gilchrist then offered up a fervent prayer, suitable to the circumstances. It seemed to exert a soothing influence upon the mind of the sufferer; but the influence was evanescent. When the Minister left her, she sat lamenting, like Rachel of old, beyond the power of all comfort.

She had one more visit from Annabel at the supper-hour, and then she was left alone for the night. The little room darkened. Hour after hour passed away. The house grew gradually still, as the various inmates retired to rest. Marion continued weeping silently in the gloom. The bustle on the streets died away. A profound silence reigned. The moon, breaking for an instant through the thick clouds which obscured the heavens, threw a flash of silvery radiance on

the floor, and the deep-toned bell of St. Giles' Church tolled midnight. The other steeples repeated the solemn tale.

Marion started from her chair, and casting her plaid about her, softly opened the door and glided out. The house was as still as a sepulchre. She passed noiselessly down stairs,—unbolted the outer door—and without a moment's reflection rushed from the house, and made for the entry leading under the Canongate houses, to the street.

But ere she reached the mouth of the passage, a man, who apparently had been skulking within it, advanced towards her. She paused, with a suppressed shriek, and the moonshine breaking forth again, disclosed to her view the wild Maeraw!

"You, Eachin?" she said, in a whisper, snatching his outstretched hands, and gazing half doubtfully in his face.

"Me, Marion," answered the savage, in the like tone. "I am in my duty."

"I thocht you had fled the town."

"Nay—I cannot fly the town till I have done my duty."

"But you needna ha'e left the lady's house."

"Could I stay there and allow the false Macpherson to escape?"

"And ha'e you met him?" she asked, in dread.

"Never," returned Eachin. "I never met him. Once and again I have seen him, where it was impossible to strike a blow. I have seen him within the eastle-gates, which I durst not pass; at Holyrood, too, in the midst of Monk's soldiers. But his time will come. I had a dream of it, and I saw the red flush of sunset on the sea, and heard the roar of waters——"

"I wonder how you hae been able to conceal yoursel' since you left the house, for the officers were eager to see you again," said Marion.

"I took pains to do so," he said.

She now noticed that he wore a different Lowland habit from that in which she first found him; but his broadsword was still by his side. "But wherefore are you here the night?" she inquired.

"To watch lest evil should befall you in that house," he made answer. "And yet—what evil could befall you? For Sir John Spiers is dead of the stab I gave him, and the angry ghost of Alister Mhor may now rest in peace. My brain seems on fire—a fury has seized upon me since Gilderoy

was doomed. I wandered hither, in the silence and solitude of night, that I might be near to one who loves the chief. Ah! Marion—and he must die!”

He was speaking aloud and excitedly; but she put her hand on his mouth, and checking him, pointed to the house behind her. He then withdrew into the dark entry, and she followed.

“Why are you abroad?” he asked.

She told him that she had stolen out of the house with the settled intention of proceeding to Dalkeith, and there endeavouring to procure an audience of General Monk, that she might crave mercy for Gilderoy.

The eyeballs of the savage glowed and shot fire in the gloom, as, clenching his hand, he said—“It will disgrace us to crave favour from the foeman. But were there five score of the Gregalich at my back, soon would I rescue the chief from the fangs of the Saxon bloodhounds.”

“I could bear a’ disgrace if I saved his life,” returned Marion. “I’ll gang to Dalkeith.”

“Hear but one word,” said Eachin. “Daughter of Grey Colin, you seek to save Gilderoy; but it will not be done.”

“Dinna prophecy ill,” interposed Marion.

“It will not be done,” repeated Eachin. “We cannot save him; but let us avenge him, while vengeance is within our reach. Harken to my words. How many of the chief’s enemies sleep beneath yonder roof?” and he waved his hand toward Annabel’s residence.

“Enemies, Eachin? What do you mean?”

“Need you ask me, girl?” said Eachin, grasping her arm tightly. “To whom do we owe the desolation of Rannoeh and the fall of Gilderoy? To the Sassenach dame, with her sparkling eyes and witching face. And must she live and thrive, and Gilderoy die?” Surely his old madness was returning upon him in a spring-tide flood. “She is within my reach. I value not her lover’s retainers who guard her here. This sword would soon avenge all our wrongs. Let there be lamentation in yonder house of splendour, as well as in the heather-thatched huts of Rannoeh!”

“God help you, Eachin!” faltered Marion, striving, but in vain, to release her arms from his grasp. “Wad you slay her that befriended me—that befriended yourself? Eachin, what dreadfu’ thocht is this?”

“What you remind me of is as nothing when weighed

against the miseries which that false woman has brought upon Rannoch and upon us all," said the savage. "Where are my children?—my gallant sons? Lost to me for ever! They fell contending against *her* friends. Why do you plead for her? Think of my children trampled under foot of the Sassenach. Think of the chief doomed to die upon a gallows."

"Eachin Macraw," said Marion, "Gilderoy wad curse you for sic thochts. Come awa', and let us try to save Gilderoy; but we'll never save him by slaughtering the innocent and helpless."

"Not a mortal eye would behold me," said the mountaineer. "The door is open. I remember the ways of the house. Though we left every chamber swimming in blood, we could escape." It was indeed a maniac fury that was working in his brain.

Marion began to sob and to weep. Growling between his teeth, he took away his hand from her arm; but immediately she seized his hand, and led him into the Canongate.

Gloom and deep silence reigned in the street. The moon was again obscured; a gale was rising, and the thick clouds were flying towards the open sea, where they would lower over the waves and the struggling ships.

"Oh, for fire and faggot to force my way through the prison door!" ejaculated Eachin.

The dull clank of an iron chain—harsh voices—shouts for help—the clank of the chain again and again—hurried footsteps—redoubled shouts—far up the High Street.

"Gilderoy has burst the prison!" exclaimed Eachin.

Drawing his broadsword, and brandishing it above his head with an unearthly yell, he rushed away frantically up the lonely street. But soon the Netherbow Port, with its tower and spire relieved against the sky, barred his progress.

CHAPTER XL.

Untie these bands from off my hands,
 And bring to me my sword;
 And there's no man in all Scotland
 But I'll brave him at a word.

Burns.

WHEN Gilderoy was conducted back to his cell, after hearing his sentence, his fetters were refastened, and he, throwing himself down among the straw, seemed to abandon himself to despair. The Gudeman of the Tolbooth, touched with a rough pity, forbore saying a single word, and took his departure. Even the Roundhead, concealed in his dark corner, so far respected the feelings of his doomed mate as to maintain silence.

But eventually the outlaw's heavy dejection passed away. Pride and scorn resumed their wonted supremacy, and he arose from his couch with scarcely a trace of emotion on his wan and worn countenance.

The Colonel, who had also left his concealment, now addressed him—"And so you know your fate at last?"

Macgregor, half suspicious that the speaker intended insult, darted upon him a look of indignation; but he found he had misunderstood the Colonel.

"What was their sentence?" continued the latter.

"The gallows on the third morning." Gilderoy's voice faltered, in spite of himself, as he said this. "But the day of Clan Alpine's vengeance cannot be far distant."

"Your clan failed you in your greatest need," said Campion. "And how can you expect that the tidings of your death will stir them into action, after they have been trodden down by Monk's soldiery?"

Gilderoy deigned no reply, and there was a long silence. The glow of sunset was now on the cobwebbed bars of the window.

"Do you believe," resumed the Colonel, "that your surviving clansmen would rise again at your summons, were you to appear in Rannoch?"

"Mock me not," answered Macgregor, sternly. "You

know that I shall never more set foot in Rannoch. 'Tis an ungenerous gibe—and may heaven forgive you!”

“I speak not in mockery, but in sober seriousness,” said Campion, sinking his voice to a lower key than was usual or at all necessary; for even very loud talking in the strong-room could scarcely be heard outside the great thick door. “In any case, this will be our last night together, for many parties will have recourse here to-morrow, and my friend the jailor is to provide me another place of concealment in the morning. He would have had me away to-night, but I craved him to forbear that I might take farewell of you. I did so for your sake, Macgregor, because, look you—you can escape.”

“Escape!” echoed the outlaw, in surprise and doubt.

“Yea, escape.”

“How?”

“Hear me to an end.”

“Whether would you aid my escape or prevent it?”

“Can you doubt which? Hear me to an end, I say, then judge for yourself.”

“I asked you *how* I could escape,” said Gilderoy. “The very thought seems prompted by madness. These chains——”

“These chains need be little hindrance,” returned Campion. “I am possessed of a file by which they may be cut asunder.”

“But the bolts and bars and ponderous doors that interpose between me and the open street?” said Gilderoy, incredulously. “That window is too narrow to allow of my passage.”

“Every obstruction to your free passage through the prison may be removed,” responded Campion. “With the aid of my file I can cut your chains, and when the jailor brings in our extra food—which will be late, according to his habit since I came here—cannot we throw ourselves upon him, bind him down, and snatch his keys? I have been scheming and revolving all this in my mind; for I think your liberty may prove beneficial to a noble cause.”

Gilderoy stood trembling with the excitement into which this startling prospect cast him, so that his chains rattled loudly against each other.

“I have been pondering on the attempt,” proceeded the Roundhead; “and if you are willing to be guided by me,

you shall have life and freedom—you shall uplift your banner and draw your sword on the hills of the Highlands once more.”

“Guide me as you please,” returned Macgregor, with eager intensity. “Produce your file. Free me of my chains. You may guide me as you please in all honourable ways; and the claymores of the Gregalich will be at your command.”

“Hear me,” urged Campion. “I desire to strike a blow against this hypocritical, arbitrary, and tyrannical Government under which these unhappy nations groan. I lack friends, comrades—men of brave hearts and ready hands, who will go through with their work. Hitherto I was beset with traitors—secret minions of the Government, who betrayed all for filthy lucre.”

“Let the royal standard be unfurled again, and clan after clan will rise in their strength to support it,” said Gilderoy. “Highlanders long to retrieve the disasters of Lochgarry. The glorious example of Lochiel and his Camerons is not lost upon them.”

“It is the public interest—the good old cause—which I mean to uphold,” said the Colonel.

“And what other but the public interest, the good old cause, can a true Highlander uphold?” said Gilderoy. “What cause is better or older than that of rightful king and national independence? The Clan Gregor fought in the field of Bannoekburn, under Bruce’s banner of freedom, and their swords flashed in every battle since when the stake was national honour and national liberty.”

“Never shall my sword be drawn in the interest of any royal tyrant on earth,” rejoined the Roundhead. “The mission assigned me by Providence was the bringing down of the strongholds of tyranny and the building up of the fair fabric of freedom. Unless I follow out that mission, I have neither courage nor power.”

“For what, or for whom, will you fight?” demanded the outlaw. “The king is on one side, the usurper on the other. You are adverse to both.”

“To both,” answered Campion. “My desire is to overthrow the usurper’s authority, and to establish a free and paternal government, under which the land may have rest. From what I have observed, and from what I have been told since I left the Highlands, I am persuaded, nay, convinced,

that there is power around us to effect such a revolution. That power needs but to be called into energetic action. A successful revolt in Scotland would call up the inert might of England to imitate the glorious example. To link the cause with the name of any man would only provoke ruin. Good men are jealous of the young man, Charles Stuart, pledge himself as he may, for he comes of a race of deceivers, and he will be a deceiver to the end."

"He is the rightful crowned king of the realm," interrupted Gilderoy, "and it is the duty of every true-born Scot to vindicate his rights at all hazards."

"Will you mar your fortune by a blind, unreasoning adhesion to the cause of a wretched exile?" said the Colonel, with some passion. "Must the assertion of allegiance to that crownless outcast stand betwixt you and your freedom? He whom you call your rightful king has not disdained in his extremity, when few friends are left him, to bid high for *my* sword. Missives have been placed in my hands by the emissaries of Charles Stuart, pledging to me honours and wealth, would I but raise his standard against the usurper."

"Embrace the king's offers, and return to your allegiance."

"How *can* I return? Ah, you little know, and Charles Stuart's partisans little know, how great a gulf lies betwixt that young man and Edward Campion. Yea, it is a gulf impassable. But I am ready to league even with the malignants, if our common cause be the public interest. Should we succeed in overturning Cromwell's domination, let free Parliaments be summoned that the people themselves may judge and decide what forms of government shall be established in the nations. But come, what need we debate theories of government? If I cut your chains away, and enable you to gain your freedom, will you second me in my enterprise?"

"Not against the king," said Gilderoy.

"You seek liberty, do you not?"

"Of all the blessings which Fate could bestow, give me to stand once more on the Moor of Rannoch a free man."

"I am placing before you the issues of life and death," said Campion. "I offer you life and freedom, and the chance of regaining your lost power; but upon condition that you bind yourself, by solemn vow, to draw your sword and strike, at my bidding, against any principality or power,

any enemy, any tyrant whatsoever—against all whom I may denounce as public enemies. Ponder it well, Macgregor; weigh life and death in the balances; for now must the die be cast.”

“Rather than accept life and freedom at the cost of honour, I am prepared to meet death, even a death of shame,” returned Gilderoy. “Not all the terrors with which I may be surrounded shall shake the firm-rooted resolution of my soul. Standing, as I do, at the foot of the gallows, I tell you frankly that I will rather submit to my sentenced doom than draw my sword against my king. What!—would you have a seion of the ancient line of Scotland’s sovereigns, a descendant of King Alpin and King Gregor, to turn against a rightful Scottish king?”

“Spoken like a Highlander!” ejaculated the Roundhead. “Had you spoken otherwise I should have doubted your faith. But how say you about drawing your sword against the usurper?”

“I am at your will and pleasure in that feud,” responded Gilderoy. “Ready am I to shed my last drop of blood in the attempt to break the usurper’s yoke from off our necks.”

“Then raise your hand, and swear so,” said the Colonel.

“I swear!” said the freebooter, lifting his fettered hand. “Place the sword within my grasp, and you shall see how faithfully and devotedly will I perform my vow.”

“I am satisfied,” said Campion. “When the jailor enters, keep your attention on me. I will draw him into conversation for a few minutes; but as soon as I pronounce the words—‘*We must to sleep*’—spring upon him, and throw him down.”

“But I am still chained. Where is the file you spoke of?”

“It is ready.”

With these words the Colonel produced a small file, and immediately set to cut through the strong chain which secured his companion to the iron bar so often referred to. Selecting what appeared to be the weakest link near to the prisoner’s body, he set to work with a will, muffling the rasping sound of the file as much as he could. The task was a laborious one; for the link, comparatively weak as it seemed, was pretty thick. But steady, dogged perseverance overcomes all difficulties. His implement was good, and he made rapid progress. At length the link was cut through in two places, and the intermediate portion fell out; but in the same moment an unlucky turn snapped the file into several pieces!

A wild, and almost blasphemous malediction burst from the Colonel's lips. "The arch-enemy is striving against us," he said, with intense bitterness.

"'Tis the hard fate which has ever pursued me," answered Gilderoy. "Have you another file?"

"No other," replied Campion. He groped anxiously among the straw to recover the broken bits of the file, but soon found that each of them was too small to be of use. "What is to be done? You are but half freed. Your limbs are still fast fettered. Must we relinquish our good design, and so give a fresh triumph to Satan?"

Gilderoy detached the broken chain, and stood so far free. "I can escape with the fetters on me," he said. "Although fettered, I have still the use of my limbs. Fate shall not thwart us. Courage, comrade! Are you armed in any way?"

"I have a pair of small steel pistols here," returned the Colonel, clapping his hand on his breast. "But I trust there will be no need for them. Remember that, unless circumstances absolutely require the sacrifice, the jailor's life must be held sacred, for he has befriended me in my distress—although, I may say, his kindness has been bought with a price."

"I bear the man no malice—I have no wish to take the man's life," said Gilderoy. "But we must escape—I must escape,—no matter at what sacrifice."

"No man's life must be regarded when our enterprise is at stake," said Campion. "I only caution you against using needless violence. The jailor has stood my friend, and therefore I fain would spare the effusion of his blood. We may bind and gag him; but unless his death be absolutely necessary to our escape, break not, I beseech you, into the house of life. He undertook, upon the promise and pledge of a high reward, to afford me safe concealment here until arrangements should be made by certain of my secret friends for my escape; and I would not wish to have that man's blood upon my conscience."

"I hope he will delay his coming beyond the usual time," said Gilderoy; "for the later the hour the greater our chance. But what is to be our course after we quit the prison?"

"Leave that to me. I know this city—and I know where to find friends. Once we are outside of the Tolbooth, our course will be easy and plain."

“When shall I be relieved of my fetters?”

“You shall be relieved of them. Never fear.”

“Comrade,” said Gilderoy, striding through the cell, untrammelled by the curbing chain, “you have recalled all the high and daring hopes of my better days. I seem to feel the Highland breezes blowing through my locks. I hear, in fancy, the shouts of clansmen welcoming me back to Rannoch.”

“The hopes of enslaved, down-trodden nations centre in our enterprise,” responded the Roundhead. “Thousands of true men await my signal to rise and regain their rights. Tyranny now totters to its fall. We shall not fail. Be of stout courage, Maegregor; for this night you meet the grand crisis of your fate.”

CHAPTER XLI.

The guards are gain'd—one moment all were o'er—

Corsair! we meet in safety or no more;

If errs my feeble hand, the morning cloud

Will hover o'er thy scaffold, and my shroud.

Byron's "Corsair."

THE Gudeman's expected visit to the strong room was unusually delayed that night. It was close on midnight when he came. As may be readily conjectured, since the Colonel became his lodger a double quantity of provisions was required for that particular cell—a circumstance which, of course, had to be kept out of the knowledge of such of the subordinates of the Tolbooth as were not altogether in the jailor's confidence; consequently, he was in the practice of supplying the extra allowance at a late hour, when the prison was quiet.

When the heavy door was opened, and the strong light of a lantern flashed into the cell, the Colonel was lying hidden among the straw in his accustomed corner; but Gilderoy, with the appearance of having been startled from sleep, stood leaning on the bar—a position which he had taken with

the view of concealing the fracture of the chain which had been put together again to deceive cursory and unsuspecting observation. As if awakened by the opening of the door, the Colonel raised his head through the heap of straw, and then left his lair, and came forward to the bar.

The jailor, little thinking of any plot against him, set down his lantern inside the threshold, so as that it might cast its glare on the two men, and then brought in a small basket of bread, which he silently handed to the Colonel, who promptly disposed of it among the straw. When this had been done, the jailor seemed disposed to withdraw at once without ever opening his lips.

"How goes the night, Gudeman?" inquired the Colonel, in a clear whisper.

"Blow—blow, and not much moon," answered the jailor. And he looked about him in an uncertain, weary way, and then came into the cell again, and gave a heavy yawn, and closed the door partly behind him as was his wont. "It's time I were sound in my bed," he added; "for I've been hindered to-night making way for your concealment in the morning, Colonel. You must be ready to flit by sunrise."

"At any hour you choose, my good and trusty friend," replied Campion. "I desired to spend this night with Macgregor, that I might impart to him those counsels which one in his sad position——"

"Ay, ay, and he'll never heed you," interrupted the jailor. "In at the one ear and out at the other. If you could counsel and instruct him how to cheat the gallows, it would be more to his purpose; but that beats you, with all your skill."

"No word from without?" said the Colonel.

"No," returned the jailor. "But your friends are working. They'll manage by-and-by."

A short pause, and then Campion said, "The wind seems loud."

"It's rising louder, and the moon playing at hide-and-seek among the clouds," responded the jailor. "We'll have rain."

"Little stir on the streets?" proceeded the Colonel.

"None at all; but think of the hour. You'll hear midnight strike presently. Everybody is bedded but ourselves. Gilderoy, man, you have nothing to say to me to-night?"

Dog on't, man! I have no manner of concern with your misfortunes, farther than what my duty lays upon me; and I'm sure I have never stretched a single point against you."

Gilderoy roused himself, and answered that he had no cause of complaint, but that, on the contrary, he had been treated kindly, so far as was in the Gudeman's power: "for which kindness," he added, "I can offer you no return than empty thanks."

"You have given me better than thanks," said the jailor, "for you've helped to hide the Colonel, and that's a service of great price."

"How still the prison is," said Campion, as if anxious to change the topic; "not a sound to be heard!"

"Little wonder," said the jailor. "The folk are all asleep, and the keys hang at my belt. An' you were going out just now, Colonel, there would never an eye light on you. But your time has not yet come; though it's my earnest prayer that it may come speedily."

"It will," rejoined the Colonel. "And now," added he, stretching out his arms, "*we must to rest.*"

The signal had scarcely been given when Gilderoy, disengaging and letting fall the severed chain (which he had hitherto sustained at the flaw in one hand), darted underneath the iron bar, and threw himself upon the jailor, whom the unexpected and impetuous shock prostrated backwards on the floor. The heavy crash, with which mingled the rattle of chains and keys, shook the cell; but not a cry was given, not a word uttered.

With unerring aim, although encumbered by the fetters, Gilderoy had clutched the man by the throat with both hands, never foregoing his tenacious and strangling grip when he fell above him. The lantern was knocked over, and the light speedily extinguished, so that the struggle went on in darkness, which was but feebly relieved by a gleam of the moon. But the struggle did not last more than a few minutes. The outlaw's hold was so strong and inflexible, like that of a vice, that though the jailor was possessed of more than an ordinary share of personal strength, and could easily have shaken him off in a fair encounter, he was soon lying helpless and suffocating. Confused in the dark, Campion had as yet been unable to lend his confederate the slightest assistance; but, indeed, it was not required.

"I have done the work," faltered Gilderoy, who now felt that his antagonist was bereft equally of sense and motion.

"Have you killed him?" asked Campion.

"No, no," replied Gilderoy, as he cautiously relaxed his desperate grasp. "But he will scarcely come to himself for the next quarter of an hour. I have secured the keys;" and he sprang to his feet with the bunch of keys jingling in his hand.

"Give me the keys," said Campion. "I will manage them better."

Gilderoy gave him the keys.

"I hear footsteps!" said Campion. "Hush! listen."

"Footsteps!" echoed the outlaw. "Never!"

"I do," persisted the Colonel. "Some one comes this way."

"Then he comes to his death," returned Gilderoy. "Where are your pistols?"

"There," said the Colonel, thrusting one of his pistols into the outlaw's hand. "By heaven! those footsteps again! What was that? A light?"

A streak of light suddenly shot into the cell from the door, which was all but closed; a heavy step was heard in the passage without; the door was pushed open; a ruddy blaze met the eyes of the confederates; and a man, apparently one of the turnkeys, carrying a burning flambeau in one hand, and a rusty hatchet in the other, stood before them.

The first glance showed the man the state of matters, and, raising a shout, he advanced into the cell, brandishing his formidable weapon, and threatening both enemies alike. Careless of the consequences, Gilderoy presented his pistol, and drew the trigger. It missed fire; but the man being thrown off his guard by the terror of being shot, the Roundhead knocked him down with the bunch of keys.

Gilderoy, flinging away the pistol, snatched up the hatchet, and the Colonel the torch, and out they rushed, over the prostrate body of the half-stunned turnkey, and down the stair, and through the common hall, and on towards the street door. The intermediate doors had evidently been left unlocked by the jailor when he came up to the strong-room.

"Fortune is with us!" said the Colonel. "See you not how the way is opened for our escape?"

But, of course, the outer door was fast. On reaching it the Colonel handed his torch to Gilderoy, and then applied a key to the lock. It was the wrong key. Another was applied, and another, with the same result. Footsteps and voices again startled the fugitives, and before the proper key could be found, a second turnkey, bearing a light and a drawn sword, appeared on the top of the flight of steps behind them. At the critical moment, when this man was hurrying down with a stentorian shout, he slipped a foot, and fell headlong; and the Colonel, applying the proper key dragged open the prison door, trampled out the torch, and rushed into the street, followed by Gilderoy.

Bewildered and dizzy with agitation, the fugitives ran out to the middle of the High Street, and halting there, gazed up and down, as if uncertain about the direction of their flight. But they speedily found that they had yet another battle to fight for their liberty. The two turnkeys emerged from the Tolbooth like raging lions. Neither of them was armed; for the one's axe was in Gilderoy's hands, and the other had lost his sword when he fell; but both flew upon Gilderoy, roaring and yelling for assistance, and closed with him. The axe proved of little service to the outlaw; for though he struck with it at the men as they rushed at him, his blows were avoided, and he was grappled by the throat in the same fashion as he had done to the jailor. The Colonel, seeing himself unattacked, instantly relieved Gilderoy by pulling to the ground one of his antagonists—the turnkey who had been knocked down with the keys.

“Colonel! Colonel!” stammered this man, as he lay on the street. “Are you mad? Rin.”

The Colonel did not run, but held him down. In a twinkling the strange uproar alarmed the whole neighbourhood, and lights began to gleam in the adjacent windows on both sides of the street. Three of the city guards came running to the spot from their station at the Netherbow Port, and more from the guardhouse, all of whom promptly joined in the struggle. “Haud Gilderoy!” was the unceasing cry of the two turnkeys.

Gilderoy fought under great disadvantage, owing to the restraint of his fetters; but probably had he been left with a single antagonist he would have mastered him in the end. Against odds, however, he had no chance. He was thrown on the causeway, and held down—the turnkey kneeling on his breast.

The Colonel fell immediately after. As he lay grappling with his enemies, a bright red flash burst out among the group, and the report of a pistol drowned the tumult. There followed a deep groan, and then a cry of horror.

"He's shot—his brains are blown out!" exclaimed a voice; and the men who had been struggling with Campion started up from the ground, and ran back some paces, as if in affright, leaving him lying on his back silent and motionless.

"Wha had the pistol?" cried one voice.

"Wha fired the shot?" cried another.

"He should been ta'en alive. It was folly to shoot him."

"Naebody shot him. The pistol was his ain, and his ain hand pointed it to his brow. He has ta'en his ain life. That's the true gate o' it."

"Shot himself! Hae mercy on us! What kind o' a man was he? What had he done?"

"Let me see him. I'm a liar if it is not Colonel Campion, who was apprehended for treason."

"And did he break into the prison and set Gilderoy free?"

"That he did," answered a turnkey. "I suppose the Gudeman has been killed between them?"

"Nonsense!" cried the other. "Campion was never within the door. I heard a fearful crash on the floor, and ran up to the cage, and there was the Gudeman lying dead, and Gilderoy loose. The villain knocked me down with the keys and ran off."

"I may be wrang," said his companion; "I was in such a fluster; but really I thought the twa were in the passage, trying to open the door when I cam' doon upon them."

"You *are* wrang, and far wrang," returned the other; "but such a start was enough to derange ony decent man's senses. I saw Gilderoy open the door, and then Campion came forward from the street and seized him by the hand, and wished him joy, and said that everything was prepared, and their friends ready—or words to that effect. By my faith, it was a well-laid plot."

This turnkey showed himself to be the jailor's confidant.

Gilderoy was dragged back into the prison, and consigned to his former dungeon, on the floor of which the jailor was found sitting in a state of half stupefaction. When the worthy Gudeman came fully to his senses, he improvised a

story exactly the same as that of his confidant, the turnkey, which looked so very feasible that nobody for a moment doubted its truth.

And thus closed the absurd enterprise of Colonel Campion and his condemned confederate.

Having disposed of Gilderoy, the men examined the condition of the Colonel. But he was past all human care. Death, rudely summoned by his own impious hand, had snatched him from all earthly trouble. The body was cold and stiff. The fatal pistol was firmly clutched in his hand. The bullet had passed through his left temple, and a portion of his skull was blown away—the blood-dabbled hair half hiding the furrowed wound. But his face was placid, and bore no trace of the fury which possessed him in the last moments.

Thus strikingly fulfilled was the prediction of the dying Macgregor in the glen of battle.

There was a visible reluctance amongst the men to touch the cold body of him whom, only some few moments before, they had grappled and fought with so fiercely, for the common people of Scotland always cherished an instinctive horror of self-murder; and at the time of our story the dead bodies of suicides were not only denied the rites of decent sepulture, but were subjected to such savage and gross indignities as being drawn through the public streets at horses' heels, suspended from gibbets, and afterwards cast away like common carrion into a pit or a bog.

The Colonel's body was left on the street until instructions should come from the proper authorities.

There was now a crowd of the townspeople — men, women, and even children—upon the street, but keeping in a wide circle around the corpse; all the house-windows within view of the spot were open, showing groups of startled faces; and the buzz and clamour of tongues grew loud and incessant. The confused scene had a peculiarly wild and mysterious aspect as seen by the fluctuating light of the cloudy moon.

“Is that a Christian way to leave a human creature's body lying?” cried a feminine voice from amid the concourse. “Is there nothing ye can do but stand and glower and gabble?”

“What would you have us to do, Betty?” returned another feminine voice. “The man was a traitor, and broke into the

Tolbooth, and laid hands on his own life. It's no fit that Christian folk should touch him."

Betty Kelly, with a mantle flung over her arm, now pushed her way through the circle, and approaching the body, gazed at it for a moment, and then taking her mantle in both hands, she opened it out and spread it over the dead man, so as completely to cover him.

"I know nothing of his misdeeds," she said. "But I can testify that during the different times he lodged in our house, he was a great professor of religion, according to his light; and he was always kind and affable to me." The crowd had fallen silent as soon as they saw her advance towards the corpse, so that she spoke in the distinct hearing of all. "That mantle was his own gift to me on the day before he marched for the Highlands."

"Tak' care, Betty," cried a man, laughing, "that they dinna blame you for being a conspirator along wi' him."

"They'll never be so daft, friend," she answered, "knowing that I'm sillerless, and therefore no able to pay a fine."

Having thus spoken, she made her way towards her own abode, which, as will be recollected, was in immediate proximity to the prison. She was encountered at the stair-foot by Mrs. Molison herself, in excessive agitation.

"Whatna daft-like thing have you been about?" cried the latter, in shrill but stammering accents.

"Didna you see?" inquired Betty, with the most provoking calmness.

"Yes, I saw—and you've ruined us entirely; for they'll swear we were art and part with him."

"*You art and part with him!*" ejaculated Betty, lifting her hands in wonder. "No mortal man could ever suppose that either you or Deacon Molison had the spunk to be art and part with anybody of the kind. If you were come of quality, woman, they might suspect you. But what are you, or the Deacon, that you should be supposed capable of meddling with affairs of State? A bonny story, indeed, if Mrs. Deacon Molison were to be proved a conspirator and made a State prisoner! My word! it would be enough to put conspirators and State prisoners out of fashion."

"Go up the stair and to your bed!" cried her mistress, in a rage. "It's well for you that the Deacon is in Dalkeith this night on Town's business, or I fear he would shut the door in your face for ever and aye."

“And do you think that I would not do my duty though all the doors in this world were to be shut in my face?” responded Betty. And so saying, she very composedly walked up the stair.

CHAPTER XLII.

Wha wadna ha'e shared that lady's joy
 When watching the wounded hind,
 Rather than those of the feast and the dance,
 Which her kind heart resign'd?

James Hogg.

IT was broad daylight when Marion found herself reclining on her own bed in Lady Annabel's lodging. How she came there she could not divine. A maid-servant was laving her brow and hands with cold spring water. Annabel and Mr. Gilchrist were standing by.

In an instant most of the occurrences of the past day and night rushed, in painful distinctness, across the poor girl's recollection. “Oh!” exclaimed she, with a burst of anguish, while she clasped together her chill, dripping hands—“oh, that I had slept and never wakened! Oh, that I had died when I leaned me down on the doorstep!”

“These are sinful thoughts,” said Mr. Gilchrist. “The indulgence of them is ingratitude to Him who is the author of our lives and the wise dispenser of our fortunes. An awful example of the power of Satan has been made manifest on the High Street of Edinburgh this morning—enough to gar a Christian man's bluid rin cauld.”

“Whaur was you a' nicht, lassie?” inquired the domestic. “Naebody in this house heard the noise that was on the street; but I dinna ken how I happened to waken sae early—I wakened a hail hour before my usual time, and then I found the outer door standing aff the sneek, and you lying on the step in a faint. When the mistress cam to ken o' it, she near gade out o' her judgment; for, as she weel observed, we might a' been murdered in our beds. Whaur was you a' nicht, lassie? And what gart you faint? You've

lain in the faint for hours. Tell the lady and the Minister a' the truth."

"You were out of doors, Marion," said Annabel. "Will you tell us why you left the house?"

"It's your bounden duty, my woman, to mak' a clean breast of the matter," added the Minister, "and I obtest you to do sae without any reservation whatever."

Marion at once narrated her adventure, but carefully kept out of view Eachin's proposal of assassination. With the exception of that dark episode, she made a clean breast of everything. It appeared that she lost sight of Eachin near the Netherbow, upon which she wandered back to the house, and swooned at the door.

"Aweel, Marion, my lass," said Mr. Gilchrist, "a mair daft-like thing I never heard tell o' than for you to go out in the dead o' nicht, in a strange town, thinking to mak' intercession for Gilderoy."

"Poor girl," said Annabel. "Looking at her distress, we cannot blame her. This is not a time to chide."

"Blame her!—what for no?" said the Minister, sternly. "I want specially to ken, Marion, whether you had any hand in helping Gilderoy to break the prison?"

"Has he broken the prison?" cried Marion.

"I suppose you ken that he broke the prison," returned Mr. Gilchrist.

"We heard a noise far up the street, as I said, but I didna ken what it meant. Has Gilderoy escaped, or is he slain?"

She was prepared to hear that Gilderoy had perished in the desperate attempt. But Mr. Gilchrist told her the story, so far as was then known in the city. "And I can plainly see," he added, "that if it were kent you was on the street at the time o' the hurry, you wad be laid up in the Tolbooth yoursel'."

By the lady's directions some restoratives and light viands were brought in for Marion's use, and she was left alone with her. Marion, out of complacency, seeing Annabel so anxious about her welfare, affected to eat a few morsels.

"Oh, madam, you're owre kind, you're owre gude to me!" she cried in tears. "I shouldna ha'e come back here ava to bring danger upon you. When I gaed out I had made up my mind never to come back—never, never! for I canna live and a' this sorrow upon my head. But," added

she, "will I ever see Gilderoy again? Winna they lock him up frae a' body's sicht, and forbid a kent face to gang near him?"

"As to that I shall ask Mr. Gilchrist," answered the lady. "Indeed, to conceal nothing from you, I am rather afraid they will deem some such precaution necessary."

"There's nae help on earth," said Marion. "I grieve in vain. Though I were to greet my e'en blind, wad that restore to me the peace and happiness o' langsyne? They will slay him, and mak' a world's wonder o' him—him that they durstna, for their very lives, look in the face when he trod the Highland hills—him that spread a name o' renown ower a' the braid Lowlands!"

As she spokc, her pallid face brightened, her voice lost its quiver, her eye sparkled, and her bosom heaved as with some proud indignant emotion.

"I winna shed anither tear," she said, as she rose from the arm-chair in which she had latterly been sitting, and took a few graceful steps through the room; "I winna shed anither tear to shame his pride.

Annabel was struck with apprehension lest this mood should indicate a sudden aberration of intellect, and she grasped Marion's hand, and entreated her to sit down.

"Yes, yes, madam—by-and-by," said Marion. "But my heart must settle, and my mind clear. I ha'e done foolishly, I maun confess; for he told me, wi' his ain lips, no to speak a word in his behalf. Earnestly did he warn me against craving his life, and it was my ain fault that I disregarded his words. I see my folly now. His enemies will work their will though an angel were to come down frae Heaven and mak' intercession for him. They will tak' his life—they will wash their guilty hands in the bluid o' a gallant chief; but he winna yield, and they canna bend the proud spirit o' Gilderoy. Thae fause usurpers—they kenna the power o' a true woman's word. I am o' his ain kith and kin, and for the sake o' our kinship I will rouse Highland hearts and Highland claymores to vengeance." Suddenly this stormy mood passed away. "Oh, madam," she continued, "and maun he perish? Will there be no pity—no remeid? Maun I gang back to the north, and wander ower the grey hills and brown muirs, and never behold his face?"

"If you would take some rest," said Annabel. "This agitation will kill you."

“Do you think they will allow me to see him?—to speak to him for the last time?”

“It is questionable,” replied Annabel, “and you must prepare yourself for a refusal; but we can see what Mr. Gilchrist thinks about it.”

In a short time Marion grew more composed, and at the lady’s solicitation betook herself to rest.

Annabel then saw Mr. Gilchrist, and mentioned Marion’s anxiety about visiting Gilderoy. The Minister owned his doubts as to whether permission would be granted, but promised to do everything in his power to promote the poor girl’s wishes.

“But I find,” said he, “that your landlady is greatly offended at last night’s adventure, and has ta’en up an ill opinion o’ Marion a’thegither.”

He had just said so when the incensed landlady herself made her appearance in a high state of excitement. Making a very stiff courtesy to Annabel, she drew herself up in the middle of the floor, and opened her guns at once:—

“I’m come, madam, to take the first word of flyting, and all about that Highland gipsy that you brought into my house. It’s no wise-like nor creditable either to a widow woman of my degree to have my house made a beggars’ barracks.”

“Good Mrs. Maxwell,” answered Annabel, “the poor girl is no beggar, and I consider it my duty to befriend her in her misfortunes. She befriended me in mine.”

“I give you all manner of credit, madam, for your kind intentions,” replied Mrs. Maxwell; “but I wonder you never think that folk will be surprised to see a lady of your quality taking up with Highland rogues and limmers. When a beggar body, man or woman, young or old, Highland or Lowland, comes to my door, I give them a piece, or a handful of meal, or a bawbee, with a word of gude counsel; but, for all that, I never take them inbye, and plant them down at the fireside, cheek-by-jowl wi’ mysel’.”

“It appears to me,” said Annabel, “that the speediest way of removing your scruples will be my immediately finding another lodging, as I intended before.”

“Mrs. Maxwell’s in a fluster,” said Mr. Gilchrist. “Let her consider a bit. Dinna tak’ her up sae short, madam.”

“’Deed, sir, I’m in a fluster, and with great occasion,” returned the landlady. “I should be very sorry, madam,

that you and me had to part, and all on account of a Highland drab; and perhaps I ha'e spoken a word or twa out of joint. But I'm sure and certain you'll say yourself, madam, that it's not creditable to ha'e such clanjamfry in the house; and the hussy going out at the dead hour of night, and leaving the door open behind her, and then coming back and fainting. It's not to be borne with, though I dare say it wad mak' no great wonder in the Highlands."

"The lassie canna be left destitute, Mrs. Maxwell," said Mr. Gilchrist. "We must mak' some provision for her."

"You would do her a gude turn to set her to some honest handiwork," rejoined Mrs. Maxwell, "and not let her go back to the Highlands, able to do nothing else but keep house to a band o' kilted robbers."

"There need be no more words about it," said Annabel. "She is under my protection at present, and——"

"I do not wish to offend you, madam," interrupted Mrs. Maxwell; "and I'm speaking for the sake of your own good name as much as for the sake of mine. I really think it's far, far below your dignity, madam, to have dealings with the friends of the cateran that's lying in the Tolbooth under sentence of death."

"But the girl acted a noble part when my life was in danger," said Annabel. "And to make a long story short, I am ready to find another landlady."

"You have no occasion to quit the house, madam; but you may hear a word of reason," said Mrs. Maxwell. "Ever since that lassie crossed my doorstep, there's been nothing here but fright and fighting—ruffians breaking into the house, and ruffians being murdered. That's what I cannot suffer."

"Well, but the girl had nothing to do with the breaking into the house," said Annabel. "The house would have been broken into although she had never entered it."

"At ony rate it's queer," said Mrs. Maxwell, "that as soon as she comes to my house, ruffians break into it; and, as soon as she slinks out, ruffians break out of the Tolbooth. There's surely some uncanny thing about her. No wonder her grandmither is in danger of being burnt for a witch."

"Mrs. Maxwell," said the Minister, "I cautioned you already against letting it be kent that Marion was on the street through the night. I earnestly caution you again; for an idle thoughtless word may breed great trouble. It's

possible that the officers o' justice may mak' inquiry. In that case, your duty is to tell the truth. But, unless that necessity arises, let the matter be kept secret."

"You may rely on my discretion, sir," responded Mrs. Maxwell. "And I hope, madam," she continued, turning submissively to Annabel, "that you'll be put to no more trouble through your kindness. Your kindness to that lassie has been greater than ever I heard tell of. I'll say no more, only trusting you'll not take amiss——"

"Nothing shall be taken amiss, Mrs. Maxwell, if you just let the subject drop."

The discussion closed here; but notwithstanding Mrs. Maxwell's submission (which was enforced by the dread of losing her lady lodger), she did not look, in retiring, as if quite satisfied with the lame and impotent result.

Shortly after this little tiff, Jasper Rollo arrived with all the news and rumours of the hour concerning Gilderoy and Campion. He had called at the house before, and gone away to gather what he could. What he had gathered was somewhat disconcerting.

It was found that Gilderoy had used a file in cutting the chain, although, however, no file or fragment of a file could be discovered in the cell, owing doubtless, we may remark, to the cunning precaution of the jailor. The fact that a file had been used led to the inevitable conviction that it had been introduced into the prison by a friendly hand; and the young girl from Rannoch, the kinswoman of Gilderoy, and the protégée of Colonel Campion, was of all persons the most obnoxious to suspicion. In such circumstances it was very likely that the authorities would take cognisance of Marion. As for Gilderoy himself, he had declared that no earthly consideration could induce him to throw light on his connection with Campion; but he had absolved his kinswoman from all participation in the plot.

Annabel hurried to Marion's room, and asked her whether she knew anything of the file, or anything of the plot which had been frustrated. "Do not fear to confide to me your secret, if secret you have," said the lady; "for by confiding it to me you will best enable us to defend you from the consequences of any indiscretion of which you have been guilty."

Marion, in the most solemn manner, asseverated that she had done nothing whatever to connect herself with the plot, and that she had had no previous knowledge of it. This

asseveration was perfectly consistent with truth, although she did not as yet feel herself at liberty to reveal the unsuspected fact of Colonel Campion's concealment in the Tolbooth, which furnished the key to the mysteries of the whole affair. Her ingenuous earnestness fully convinced Annabel of her truth.

Scarcely had Annabel rejoined Rollo and the Minister, when two of the principal officers of justice were ushered in, announcing themselves as being commissioned to examine Marion Mackinnon, who lay under suspicion of having assisted Gilderoy in his attempt to escape.

"The Governor bids us say that he should be very sorry to cause pain to Lady Glenbirkie, considering what she has suffered at the hands of Gilderoy and his confederates," added one of them; "and therefore, in place of at once ordering the arrest of the young girl now under her protection, he has instructed us to make investigation, the result of which we trust will be to remove every shadow of suspicion."

The lady expressed her hearty thanks for the Governor's favour, and besought the officers not to deal harshly with the poor girl, seeing the extreme distress into which she had been cast by the accumulated misfortunes of her kindred. "My friends here as well as myself are convinced of her perfect innocence," she said; "because we fail to perceive how and where she could have found opportunity to assist in any plot."

Marion was then brought in, pale, trembling, and in tears.

The officers went about their business strictly, but with every forbearance. They questioned Marion at great length, and seemed pleased with her answers. It was rather dangerous ground when they inquired about Colonel Campion; but she contrived, without committing the slightest prevarication, to keep her secret intact. She enumerated her different visits to the Tolbooth, and on none of these occasions, either while going or returning, had she seen or heard of Colonel Campion. One circumstance, however, told much in her favour, and it was this—that during the past three days she had not visited the Tolbooth at all, having been prevented on the first two days by a recurrence of her sickness, and on the third by the dissuasion of her friends.

Annabel, Rollo, Mr. Gilchrist, Mrs. Maxwell—each had a good word to put in for Marion; and as the officers had no inkling of the midnight adventure, it was never brought above board.

"We will make our report," said one of the officers, addressing Annabel. "But I may tell you frankly that our opinion goes to clear the girl. Gilderoy asserts that she gave him no aid of any kind; and the jailor of the Tolbooth is most positive that she could have introduced nothing without his observation. If we could but get at the bottom of Colonel Campion's share in the plot, the whole mystery would be unravelled; but that is still wrapped in darkness."

"At this moment," said Annabel, "the poor girl is torn with anxiety to learn whether she can again be allowed to visit the prisoner, and, for the last time, under any precautions and restrictions that may be deemed requisite."

"That is a business for the governor to deal with," replied the officer. "An order has come out that none save clergymen be admitted to the prisoner; and I hardly conceive it can be relaxed. But you may try."

The officers then took their leave; and Marion sank in a paroxysm of agony at the thought that she should see Gilderoy no more.

But, in this fresh perplexity, Mr. Gilchrist stood Marion's friend.

Finding that her examination had not criminated her in the eyes of the authorities, he made strenuous application in the proper quarter, and succeeded in obtaining in her favour a relaxation of the order respecting admission to the Tolbooth, permitting her to visit Gilderoy at noon on the following day, being the day previous to the execution; and he resolved to accompany her on that occasion—procuring for himself the necessary authority as a clergyman.

Marion was overjoyed to hear that she should once more behold her lover: but, sooth to say, she did not appear at all satisfied of the necessity or propriety of being attended by Mr. Gilchrist.

"You ken what he said already," she urged. "He bade me forbid you to come near him; and what will he say when he sees my disobedience? Oh! Mr. Simon, dinna gar me do sic a thing, and him to die sae soon."

The Minister, however, eventually overcame her remonstrances.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Oh, Gilderoy! bethought we then
 So soon, so sad to part,
 When first in Roslin's lovely glen
 You triumph'd o'er my heart?

Ah! little thought I to deplore
 Those limbs in fetters bound;
 Or hear, upon the scaffold floor,
 The midnight hammer sound.

Campbell.

AT the hour of noon, next day, Marion and Mr. Gilchrist repaired together to the Tolbooth.

The name of Gilderoy was in everybody's mouth on the street. The ballad-singers and speech-criers were making capital stock of it. An old blind man, led by a dog, was chanting a rugged ditty, purporting to be "Gilderoy's Lament." A brawny fellow in the garb of a sailor, with a handful of printed papers, was loudly advertising "The true History of the Life and Adventures, Trial and Sentence, of that notorious Highland Rogue, called Gilderoy, from the Moor of Ramnoch, with a particular account of the Plot laid by Colonel Edward Campion to break open the Tolbooth and burn the good town of Edinburgh." A little further on, a wretched cripple was announcing "A Rare Discovery of the Courtship between the Highland Robber, Gilderoy, and a famed Lady of Quality presently living in the Canongate, together with an account of their meetings in prison, and complete copies of their Love Letters—all very proper to be read by gallants and young maidens." A crowd was collected about the spot where Colonel Campion died—the causeway being still darkly stained with his blood.

The Minister and his trembling companion pressed forward to the Tolbooth door, and on showing their papers of authority found admittance.

It was the Gudeman himself who received them. He looked much excited and out of sorts, smelt strongly of usquebagh, had a napkin tied loosely about his head, and wore in his belt a pair of unwieldy pistols. He had never seen Mr. Gilchrist before, but he made a reverence to him, knowing

from the terms of the pass that he was a clergyman, and he recognised Marion with a cunning smile.

"Wasna that a fearful story, lass, that befel here since I saw you last?" he said. "Your braw lover dashed my head against the hard stane floor, and nearly brained me. Sorrow be on him! I would have thought nothing of it had I been overstepping my duty with him—riding on the top of my commission; but he could have no crow to pluck with me on that score."

Marion was so agitated that the few words she uttered in answer were unintelligible.

"And how is the prisoner?" inquired Mr. Gilchrist.

"Brawly, sir; that is to say, he has got an extra chain put on him to keep him right. He has never crossed words with me since the broil; for I suppose he is ashamed of his conduct. But I'm wary of him now. See, there's twa pistols at my waist, each of them panged to the muzzle with powder and ball; and 'wha daur meddle wi' me?' as the auld sang says."

"Has there been no more discovered about the manner in which Colonel Campion broke into the prison?" pursued Mr. Gilchrist.

"Don't say 'broke into the prison,' sir; for that was out of his power; the matter remains a dead mystery, and I'm able to give you no enlightenment about it," said the jailor, with some confusion, and a sly glance at Marion. "The Colonel has gone to his account, and there let him rest. He was a strange man all his days, and he came to a strange end, from the like of which may we all be kept."

"Somebody had supplied Gilderoy with the means of escape," said the Minister. "I fear that he had a file."

"So it is thought; but the file was never found."

"It couldna ha'e been supplied by this lassie?"

"Her—hoot, fy! I would have seen it, sir. She had no more hand in the pic than yourself, though I hear they were questioning her yesterday."

"That they were; but they seemed satisfied of her innocence."

"So they ought, so far as my knowledge goes; and they might have taken my word without much more ado. What could hinder a file or other instrument being flung in at the window? I've known the like done before in the dead of night. It's a deep mystery, as I said, and it'll remain a

mystery; for Gilderoy refuses to tell a word; and you need not trouble yourself bidding him confess."

"But what o' my grandmither?" said Marion.

"There's no fear of her," returned the Gudeman. "Nothing worth turning over can be proved against her. She'll be set free, I suppose, very shortly. But come away and you'll see Gilderoy."

He forthwith led the way upstairs.

As they reached the door of the cell in which Judith was confined, they heard her crooning a Highland song. Marion was about to petition for another interview with the old woman; but the Gudeman, suspecting as much from her looks, seized her arm, and hurried her past.

The door of Gilderoy's cell was thrown open, and Mr. Gilchrist and Marion entered. The jailor followed, and shutting the door, placed his back against it, and carelessly passed his hand over the pistols in his belt.

The dank odour of the cell was oppressive, as the day happened to be close and sultry. A beam of sunshine struggled through the cobwebbed grating, the grim shadow of which it threw on the floor. The prisoner was reclining on his straw. He was far more heavily ironed than before, and presented a most forlorn and savage aspect. He rose from his wretched pallet, and with a dark scowl at Mr. Gilchrist, and another at Marion, he exclaimed—"How dare you bring this man here? Did not I command you to forbid him? I have refused to have dealings with any of his quality."

"She acted faithfully according to your directions, James," said Mr. Gilchrist. "If there be blame, it doesna rest on her shouthers."

"Then, why did you disregard my command?" cried Gilderoy."

"On the plea of auld acquaintance," responded Mr. Gilchrist. "Nane can be more sorry than mysel' to find you in this condition."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed the prisoner. "Let me meet my doom in peace."

"It's no to upbraid you that I've come here," said the Minister. "When I look back it seems but yesterday, though it's twa lang years, since I travelled down to the Tolbooth o' St. Johnstoun, and sat days and nights wi' your brither; and you may weel suppose that I ha'e crossed the

threshold o' Edinburgh Tolbooth this day wi' a sair, sair heart. Minding on auld langsyne, I winna desert your faither's son in his extremity, though my single-hearted friendship be met wi' the bitterest scorn."

The outlaw suddenly clashed his fetters together, and broke into a groan—a groan of anguish and despair.

"You are welcome, you are welcome," he faltered, with eyes cast to the ground. "But what comfort can your presence or your words impart? What hope can you hold forth? Can you hide from my sight the ghastly form of Dunavaig, mangled by my clansmen's dirks? Mr. Simon," he continued, in a steadier tone, as though he had succeeded in conquering the momentary weakness, "my brain is confused, and I scarce know what I say. But I thank you for your friendly offices, and I will now bid you farewell."

"I am ready to watch wi' you all night," returned Mr. Simon. "You will require some spiritual guide in your last hours."

"Pray for me; but leave me to myself," said the prisoner. "When you go back to your quiet home near the foot of the Grampians, bear witness for me that I die confident in the hope that Clan Gregor will yet upraise the ancient banner which has been trampled in the dust. And for my sake, Mr. Simon, and for the sake of your long friendship with my father's house, watch over the hapless girl by your side, and endeavour to shield her from fresh misfortunes. Watch over her, I beseech you, with all the watchfulness of a father, for she is dearer to me than all the world beside."

Marion had been weeping silently and unseen; but now her tears flowed forth in a flood, and she made no attempt to check or conceal them. She tremblingly approached the outlaw, with her beautiful hair loose and spreading over her shoulders. He took both her hands between his, and pressed them to his heart.

"Dearest," he said, "soon shall I be beyond the reach of all sorrow, misery, and dishonour; and my last request is that you will ever think of me as of one who loved you fondly. Oft and again had I dreams of peace and happiness, when you should be a chieftain's lady, and the power and glory of the Gregalich should be established by my hand. Vain, delusive dreams—broken and past for ever—never to be recalled! Yet those airy visions beguiled many a weary, drooping hour, and served to blunt the edge of many a sore

calamity. Farewell, Marion, and believe that my latest thoughts shall be of thee, and of the happier days when we both were dreamers."

Marion had no power of speech. Misery was at its height. There was a swimming in her brain, and she tottered and sank, but his arms saved her from falling.

"She has fainted!" cried the jailor.

"Would that she were dead!" ejaculated Gilderoy. "For, where on earth can she ever again find the peace which she has lost? Watch over her, I pray you, Mr. Simon, and the blessing of Heaven will reward the friend and comforter of the orphan!"

The spasm which had overwhelmed Marion now gave way. Her soul came back to the whole sense of its anguish. She breathed freely, and opening her eyes gazed into her lover's face.

"Tell them in Rannoch, when you return, that it was my last and dying injunction that every nerve should be strained to redeem the fortunes of the clan," he said. "The race of their ancient chiefs ceases with me; but Alister of the Rock bears kindred to our line by his mother's side, and he should be chosen in my stead. There was an estrangement betwixt us, for which cause he never drew sword under my banner; but I forgive the past, and it is my will that he should succeed me. Let the clan act as one man, and Alister of the Rock may yet redeem their fortunes."

"If I return, your words shall be told to them," said Marion, "and I doubtna that you will be obeyed."

"It wad be mair befitting your condition, James," said Mr. Gilchrist, "were you to send word to your followers enjoining them to dwell at peace wi' a' the world, and to turn their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks, that feud and bloodshed might cease, and ilka man sit under his ain vine and fig-tree, making naebody around him afraid."

"It is to the strong hand that they must look for their best security," responded the chief; "and with my latest breath would I urge them to war with their oppressors until they shall have retrieved their lost rights."

Abruptly changing the subject, he inquired about old Judith and Lady Annabel. Marion surprised him greatly by the discovery that her grandmother was still alive and imprisoned in the Tolbooth. She made grateful mention of

the kindness which she continued to experience from the lady.

"A blessing will follow her," said Gilderoy. "Mr. Simon, thank her heartily in my name. May Heaven prosper her!"

The conversation went on disjointedly for some time longer, until Mr. Gilchrist hinted that it was time the interview should close.

"I dinna hurry you," said the Gudeman. "There's great allowance when a man's condemned."

The mention of parting—and parting for the last time—renewed poor Marion's agony; and after a few convulsive sobs she fainted in the prisoner's arms. But her swoon was short, and when she recovered she was calm—fearfully calm, not a tear falling, not a tremor passing through her frame—and in a low, unfaltering voice she bade Gilderoy farewell.

"I ha'e but a'e wish," she said. "Suffer Mr. Gilchrist to watch wi' you."

"Mr. Gilchrist will lead you home, and then he may return," answered Gilderoy. "It will be some consolation to have a friend beside me to the last."

Marion's pallid cheeks brightened for a moment with the flush of gladness, and the Minister shook Gilderoy by the hand.

"And mark me, dearest," said Gilderoy; "one injunction I had almost forgotten. Remind the clan of Ranald Vourigh. May every man and stripling's hands be raised against him and his!"

Marion then requested that a lock of his hair might be given to her. He joyfully consented; and by means of the jailor's knife a long red lock was severed, which she deposited in her bosom. And then they bade each other an eternal adieu. She was all calmness at the moment when she imprinted the last kiss upon his hand.

Throughout the interview not a word was spoken about the escape from the Tolbooth and the mystery surrounding Colonel Campion.

Marion became half-insensible as the Minister led her from the cell. She leaned heavily on him as they went down the stair, and tears were again bedewing her cheeks; but the crooning song of her grandmother seemed to recall her to full consciousness.

They had just quitted the Tolbooth when a man on the street accosted Mr. Gilchrist, and they stopped.

"You've been seeing him, Mr. Simon," said the man. "And what now? Has he confessed the plot? Can he escape the vengeance o' Macpherson? No, though a' the captains in Scotland were banded wi' him."

Mr. Gilchrist felt Marion shrinking on his arm and feebly essaying to draw him away. "Forbear to glory in hatred and revenge, Ranald Vourigh," he answered. "He will soon appear before a judgment-seat where neither you nor I could stand without confusion o' face, unless we were partakers in the saving grace which is freely offered to a' repentant sinners."

"The baptism—the baptism!" replied Macpherson. "You canna forget that you sprinkled the water upon his face in the kirk. But can I forget the ruin that his father brought upon me? No! And the morn he'll hang as high as Haman, and I'll be standing at the gallows' foot. We'll see the morn!" And with a loud ferocious laugh he passed on.

"Lassie," said the Minister, "you maunna speak to your folk against that man. Leave him to the will o' Providence."

"Though I should never speak a word against him, his doom is certain," answered Marion. "Eachin Macraw is hunting for him day and night."

CHAPTER XLIV

—————'Tis most just
That thou turn rascal.

Timon of Athens.

CROONING songs all day long—songs of the land of the heather and the eataract, songs of feud and foray, of mourning for the departed, of triumph for victory won and bloodthirsty vengeance slockened—sat Judith of Rannoeh in her gloomy cell in the grim old "Heart of Midlothian"—crooning songs, and careless of the fate which ferocious superstition might have in store for her—careless,

though the stake might already be set, and the faggots piled, for her judicial murder in the face of day.

The cell door opened with a jarring crash which stilled her song, and a beam of the blessed sunlight, yellow as gold, striking across the stair from a narrow loophole in the wall, showed her the bulky form of the Gudeman of the Tolbooth standing in the entrance. He held in his left hand a written paper, which he glanced at for an instant, and then waved it beckoning towards her.

"Rise, you old skirling limmer!" he cried, in his deep, gruff voice. "Your time's come."

"Thank you for that word!" ejaculated the wretched captive, as she started with alacrity from the dirty straw on which she had been squatted at the wall. "I am ready."

"Come away, then, and give us peace of you," said the jailor.

"Is it to trial or to death that you summon me?" inquired Judith.

"You're no like a woman thinking of trial and sentence," said the jailor. "Ranting and singing from morning till night, you're ill-prepared, I doubt, to take your stand for death or life before the Lords of Justiciary."

"Death is what I seek," cried the suspected witch. "Death is what I canna find."

She came forward to him, drawing her plaid about her shrunken shoulders with one hand, and parting the grey, snaky elf-locks that straggled over her brow and eyes with the other. "Joyful is the hour," she said, "that brings me to the close o' a weary, weary journey."

The Gudeman put his arm within hers, and led her slowly down the stair, and through the common hall, which was then ringing with the oaths, ribaldry, and laughter of its habitués. They went still on, and reaching the strong outer door of the prison, the Gudeman unbolted it and dragged it open, letting in the golden lustre of the sunset and the Babel noise of the busy street. Judith now observed that one of the jailor's satellites had followed him from the hall.

At this moment half a dozen soldiers of the Town Guard marched up to the door with a prisoner—a little, deformed man, wearing a dark threadbare cloak and a steeple-crowned hat.

"We deliver up our charge, Gudeman," said the sergeant, who headed the party. "There's the warrant for his com-

mittal," handing the jailor a folded paper. "Reuben Kinnoway by name and surname, sometime practising the calling of a witchfinder in the town of Parton and sheriffdom of Fife, accused of attempted murder by means of poison. This is the man."

"And my enemy," said Judith, glaring with a red and glittering eye at the prisoner. "But, like me, he is on his way to death."

"Not to death, hag!" cried Reuben, vehemently. "For the man still lives, and will live: and they oppress the honest and upright—they malign the innocent and the poor. But thou art doomed!"

"Ay, to freedom: that's the doom pronounced upon her," responded the jailor, with a loud laugh. "Nothing can be found against her, except your own havers, which are not worth heeding. So the order for her liberation—here it is, see—came to me scarcely ten minutes since; and she's a free woman."

Judith had thus escaped—thanks to the humanity and intelligence which characterized the Lord Protector's chief officials in Scotland. These officials were generally averse to the witch persecution, though they could not venture, in every instance, to oppose the strong current of popular superstition and fanaticism. "There is much witchery up and down our land," says a zealous son of the Covenant, Robert Baillie: "*the English be but too sparing to try it, but some they execute.*" Judith, apparently, had had the good fortune to be taken cognizance of in a "too sparing" moment.

"Thus they pervert the laws of God and man," cried the Witchfinder, now foaming at the mouth, and his meagre visage, so fell and uncouth by nature, wearing the east of despair, while he convulsively raised his hands from beneath his mantle, showing that they were manacled together at the wrists. "'Tis thus they filch from me the fruits of my patient toil; 'tis thus they rob me of my daily bread; and when they have rendered me poor and starving, they blacken my name with imputed crime."

Judith, utterly overcome by her sudden reverse of fortune, was gasping for breath, and clinging helplessly to the Gude-man's arm.

"And what are the particulars of the charge against this man, did you say?" inquired the jailor, opening the folded paper which the sergeant had given him.

“ Attempting to poison Roger Cristal, who won the reward offered for the discovery of Sir John Spiers of Spierhaughs,” answered the sergeant. “ It seems they were old acquaintances, and meeting together this morning, after Roger had got his money, they went about drinking; and at last this man, conceiving the idea of robbing his friend, administered poison to him. Roger is still in life, but the doctors despair of his recovery.”

“ A falsehood!—a brazen falsehood!” cried the Witchfinder. “ What is Roger Cristal—a broken man, a highway robber, a spy—that he should be suffered to swear away an innocent man’s life? I never touched plack nor farthing of his money.”

“ There is murder in your eye,” said Judith; “ and the gallows awaits you as surely as it awaits the young and gallant Gilderoy.”

“ Hag of infamy!” yelled the Witchfinder. “ The Evil Spirit, thy master, hath rescued thee for the present; but he will desert thee in the end.”

“ To the dark dungeon with him?” cried Judith; “ that the ghosts of those whom he hath slaughtered for filthy gain may arise and curse him to his face. Night after night have I heard them whispering to each other:—‘ Patience, sister; patience, brother. He is on his doleful way; and the tree is felled, and the hemp spun.’ ”

A few street loungers had followed the soldiers to the Tolbooth door, but the prolonged colloquy gave occasion for a considerable crowd to assemble, who now began laughing and jeering.

The Gudeman turned to his satellite, saying:—“ You ken Luckie Maxwell’s in the Canongate? Take this old woman to that house, and state that you leave her there under the protection of Lady Glenbirkie; for that’s the order sent to me.”

Judith went away with the man, silent and acquiescent as a child. People stared to see the strange pair pass along, and the youngsters dogged them with mocks and gibes.

The evening was calm and lovely; for—

“ The weary sun had made a golden set,
And by the bright track of his fiery car,
Gave token of a goodly day to-morrow.”

But the morrow was destined to see the end of Gilderoy.

On Mrs. Maxwell's house being reached, the turnkey delivered his message and his charge to the landlady in person.

"A prisoner from the Tolbooth;" ejaculated the good dame. "Is my house to become the common howf of all such clanjamfry? But, I suppose, I must just submit."

Lady Annabel was speedily brought.

"Take me to Marion!" cried Judith. "Let me clasp the dear bairn to my heart before I die; and I will bless you, madam, I will bless you with my latest breath, though upon your head rests the ruin of Gilderoy and the clan!"



CHAPTER XLV

Of Gilderoy sae fear'd they were,
 Wi' irons his limbs they strung;
 To Edinburgh led him there,
 And on a gallows hung.
 They hung him high aboon the rest,
 He was sae bold a boy;
 There died the youth whom I lo'ed best,
 My handsome Gilderoy.

Old Ballad.

SUNRISE found the old Scottish capital all astir. It was the morning on which the Rannoch freebooter was to expiate his guilt.

Hundreds of people from the surrounding country districts flocked into the city to witness the execution. Troops of horse and companies of infantry paraded slowly through the principal streets. Trumpets blew and drums beat in every quarter. The town had not seen so great a commotion in connection with an execution since the day when a dastardly faction embrued their hands in the blood of the gallant Montrose.

The feelings and sentiments of the crowds on this occasion were as varied as their very features. Some good folks could not conceal their exultation that so famous a malignant was to suffer. Others rejoiced that the Highland cateran, who

had "lived a life of sturt and strife," was at last to receive the due reward of his crimes. Some, admiring his devotion to the Royalist cause in the north, regretted the fall of so brave and resolute a partisan. By others he was commiserated for his youth and daring. Stories were current that he had been betrayed by false friends, and when criminals are represented as the victims of treachery, they are usually held in high favour by the multitude.

The place of execution was on the road from Edinburgh to Leith, known by the name of Leith Walk—at least such is the appellation by which it is now known; but at the time we write of, it was a new thoroughfare along a mound of earth which had been thrown up, by direction of General Leslie, for the defence of the capital, when threatened by the advance of Cromwell's host, previous to the battle of Dunbar. This road, however, did not become the principal thoroughfare between Edinburgh and Leith until after the middle of the following century. Here the scaffold was erected, and, singular to relate, the gibbet reached to the unprecedented height of *fifty feet*, as if to mark emphatically the desperate character of the marauder who was to suffer upon it.

As the morning advanced, the sun shone out with cloudless splendour. The concourse around the gibbet gradually augmented, with much confusion, quarrelling, jesting, and laughter. Every accessible point whence a good view could be obtained was thronged with eager, patient gazers. As usual on such occasions, a considerable proportion of the spectators were females, old and young, many of them carrying children in their arms. The High Street continued to be more and more crowded, particularly in the vicinity of the Tolbooth, which was strongly guarded by soldiers. Every window of the tall tenements was filled with faces.

It was now nearly the hour when the prisoner should be brought forth.

"Maybe, after a'," cried one of the impatient spectators near the prison, "the Highland rogue will get a respite. I ha'e seen the like before. Maybe they ha'e gotten him, on promise o' his life, to confess a' he kens concerning Colonel Campion and his plots."

A man in tartan, a little back among the crowd, gazed fiercely on the speaker, saying—"He shall die this day,

though I should break through yonder door, and stab him wi' my dirk!"

"Gae awa wi' you, you dour-looking, bluidy-minded villain!" cried a tawdry, bare-headed matron. "Sae bonny a lad, and to be hanged for nae mair, as they tell me, than rinnin away wi' a bonny lass. A fell country, and fell-like laws, when the men-folk maun be beheaded and hanged for haudin a wark wi' the lasses. Shame fa' you, man, for your ill-will to ane o' your ain clan."

"You dinna ken, gudewife, what murder stained his savage hand," returned the Highlander.

"What murder? Haud your tongue. I ken brawly," retorted the sympathetic dame. "There was the auld fool the lass lived wi', that wanted to buckle till her himsel'—foul fa' him! What signifies for *him*? He should just ha'e let her gang wi' the lad she liked best, and he wad been sittin cauty enough in his ain hoose enoo, in place o' lying in the heart o' the cauld yird."

The death-bell tolled from the stone crown of St. Giles Church, and there was a sudden momentary outcry among the people, and then a deep silence in the street. The bell tolled on, its slow and doleful notes wafted by the wind over all the town, and away down towards Leith, warning the expectant thousands congregated around the gibbet that the tragedy was about to open.

The Tolbooth door was flung wide, and the melancholy procession emerged from the dim twilight of the prison into the bright sunshine of the autumn morn. The figure of Gilderoy soon met the gaze of countless eyes. Forth he came, stately and fearless. He met a breathless stillness; but soon voices were heard pitying his ignominious fate, and among them a harsh voice shouted out taunts and execrations, but it was instantly drowned in an indignant roar, and the multitude heaved like a swelling stream as the procession, guarded by foot and horse, began to wend its way down the street.

The deportment of Gilderoy was just what might have been expected of him by those who saw him appear before the High Court. His heavy fetters had been knocked off, and there was no other bond about him but the rope that pinioned his arms. Haggard and hairy of visage, clad in his ragged habiliments, which bore many a stain of his blood, and with his long red locks floating on the wind, he

looked wild and wretched; but his bearing was resolute and proud. By his side walked the Minister of Dunavaig (the only clergyman whom the prisoner had suffered to attend him), intently engaged in imparting to him religious instruction. The executioner walked behind.

The gigantic gibbet loomed into the prisoner's view, but he met it with a proud smile; and soon he stood in its shadow, and saw the rope dangling above him in the wind.

He ascended the scaffold with a firm step and an undaunted mien—preceded by soldiers and the executioner, and followed by Mr. Gilchrist, certain officials and more soldiers. Profound silence prevailed, disturbed only by the striking of the rope against the gallows and the ladder. Then a strong voice arose in earnest prayer, which was listened to by the multitude with uncovered heads; and then a psalm was sung in which many joined.

Two figures were seen ascending the ladder—the hangman and his victim. Half-way up, Gilderoy stopped, and in a clear, unshaken voice began to address the multitude. But a sudden roll of drums compelled him to forbear. And then he looked his last on earth and sky.

The dense crowd heaved tumultuously, and pressed upon the military guard around the scaffold. The soldiers had to meet the pressure by using their muskets and pikes. Women were shrieking and swooning. Stones and turf began to fly about the hangman's ears. And from that tall gibbet hung the lifeless form of Gilderoy, swaying with the wind!

* * * * *

The Firth of Forth was all a-glow with the setting sun. The water was dotted with boats, which, laden with people who had been in Edinburgh that morning witnessing the execution, were making across at Queensferry to the Fife side.

In one of the boats, which had just left the shore, sat the same man in tartan who had exposed himself to the reproaches of the matron in the High Street. He sat in the bows, with his sheathed broadsword resting betwixt his knees, and his hands crossed upon the basket-hilt.

A farmer, who sat near him, after silently eyeing him for some moments, observed—"Your countryman made a brave end this morning. He was so young, and so fearless, that I was amaist wae to see him come to sic a fate."

"His doom was just," answered the Highlander, sternly.

"Nae doubt, nae doubt," said the other. "But did you ever see sic courage in the face o' death?"

"Courage?" echoed the Highlander, with an angry vehemence. "It was but the courage o' despair; for I ken that Gilderoy was at heart a coward. He proved himsel' a coward when we met in battle."

"You've fought wi' him?"

"Ay, and made him flee," said the man in tartan. "It was my hand that wrought his destruction."

"Ranald Vourigh!" ejaculated a husky Highland voice from among the passengers in the body of the boat, "hadst thou but spoken one word in pity for Maegregor's fate, I might have spared thee. Bloodhound of the Saxon oppressors! I am here to avenge Maegregor's fate."

A tall form, wearing hodden grey and a Lowland bonnet, started up on one of the benches, showing the fell visage of Eachin Maeraw. The passengers were thunderstruck.

The threatened man also stood up, with his sword in both hands, ready to draw, and said—"Seize him! He is one of the outlawed Maegregors."

Quick as thought, Eachin pulled a steel pistol from the breast of his coat, levelled it at his enemy's head, and fired. Ranald fell forward with a piercing cry.

Eachin would have been overpowered next instant; but, springing upon the gunwale, he plunged into the sea, and disappeared from sight, leaving his blue bonnet floating on the waves.

The boat was put aback, and every eye was on the alert; but no Eachin could be seen. Had he perished after the daring perpetration of his revenge?

After some little time, a shrill yell rung over the water from the southern shore, and a tall figure was seen emerging from the surf, and struggling up a desolate part of the beach, waving his right hand above his bare head. The echoes of the triumphant yell had scarcely died away when Ranald Vourigh breathed his last.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE CONCLUSION.

This broken tale was all we knew
Of her he loved. *Byron's "Giaour."*

NOW that the fate of our hero, Gilderoy, has been fully recorded, little need be added respecting the subordinate actors in our drama who survived him.

It appeared that Gilderoy firmly refused to the last to make any disclosure touching his connection with Colonel Campion in the attempted escape; and his silence, combined with that of Marion, who buried the secret in her own breast, saved the Gudeman of the Tolbooth from the consequences of his extraordinary breach of duty.

Old Judith and her granddaughter were removed from Edinburgh, under the care of Mr. Gilchrist, to a quiet cottage on Lady Annabel's estate of Glenbirkie, as their friends did not judge it expedient that they should return to Rannoch till the commotions were entirely at an end.

But the poor old woman never saw Rannoch again. In a few weeks she sickened and died. Marion, thus bereft of her only relative, was immediately taken by Lady Annabel into her own household as her chosen companion.

Judith's denouncer, Reuben Kennoway, never left the Tolbooth but on his way to execution; for Roger Cristal died of poison which had been administered to him in his drink, and the guilt was clearly brought home to the Witchfinder.

In the course of the following summer Lady Annabel bestowed her hand on Jasper Rollo. The marriage ceremony was performed by Mr. Gilchrist. The reader may well imagine that the wedded pair entered upon a life of unalloyed happiness after all their trials and troubles.

The Highland maiden remained in the household of her benefactress till after the nuptials, when she went back to Rannoch, and was restored to the small patrimony of her family. The first to bid her welcome was the wild Macraw,

glorying in his revengeful slaughter of "the false Macpherson."

She passed the rest of her days among her own people, occasionally visiting her friends in the low country, though never long absent from her Highland home. She never married. She saw a good old age, and resigned her gentle and chastened spirit in that memorable year when Mar and his Jacobite compatriots set up the rebel standard among the Grampians.

APPENDIX.



HISTORICAL AND TRADITIONAL ACCOUNTS OF GILDEROY.

UNDER this heading we have to submit the historical and traditional gleanings on which the preceding tale has been mainly founded.

In the first place we extract the following from Chambers's "Domestic Annals of Scotland," vol. ii., p. 96:—

"July 27, 1636.—This was a terrible day for the *broken men* who had for the last few years been carrying on such wild proceedings in Morayland and other districts bordering on the Highlands. Lord Lorn—who soon after, as Marquis of Argyle, became the leader of the Covenanting party—had exerted himself with diligence to put down the system of robbery and oppression by which the country had been so long harassed; and he had succeeded in capturing ten of the most noted of the caterans, including one whose name enjoys a popular celebrity even to the present day. This was Gilderoy, or Gillieroy; such at least was his common appellation—a descriptive term signifying the Red Lad,—but he actually bore the name of Patrick Macgregor, being a member of that unhappy clan which the severity of the Government had driven to desperate courses about thirty years before. Another of the captured men was John Forbes, who seems to have been the *fidus Achates* of the notorious outlaw, James Grant. A natural son of Grant was also of the party. These ten men were now brought to trial in Edinburgh.

"It was alleged of Gilderoy that he and his band had for three years past *sornd* 'through the hail bounds of

Strathspey, Braemar, Cromar, and countries thereabout, oppressing the common and poor people, violently taking away from them their meat, drink, and provision, and their hail guid's.' They had taken fifteen nolt from one farm in the Glenprosen; had lain for days at Balreny, eating up the country and possessing themselves of whatever they could lay hands on, and in some instances they had carried off the goodman himself, or the man and wife together, in order to extort money for their ransom. One of the charges leads us to the romantic scenery of Loch Lomond, where there is an island called Inchcailloch (Women's Island), from having been the seat of a nunnery in ancient times. Gilderoy, in company with his brother, John Dhu Roy, and his half-brother, John Graham, had come to William Stewart's house in this island, and taken from it 'the whole insight, plenishing, guid's, and geir', besides the legal papers belonging to the proprietor. There had also been a cruel slaughter of one of the Clan Cameron. The other men were taxed with offences of a similar kind.

"If the doom of the ten caterans was duly executed—and we know nothing to the contrary—they were all, two days after, drawn backwards on a hurdle to the Cross, and there hanged, Gilderoy and John Forbes suffering on a gallows 'ane degree higher' than that on which their companions suffered; and further, having their heads and right hands struck off for exhibition on the city ports."

Professor Aytoun, in his "Ballads of Scotland," prefixes an interesting introduction to the ballad of "Gilderoy," which we shall now quote along with the ballad itself.

"A very different kind of freebooter from gentle Robin of Sherwood was Gilderoy, or Gillie Roy (*i.e.*, the Red Lad), whose memory also has been perpetuated in song. His real name was Patrick MacGregor, to which persecuted and proscribed clan the celebrated Rob Roy also belonged; and it appears that about the year 1632 he was the leader of a numerous gang of caterans, who spread their depredations far and wide. At his trial, which took place on 7th June, 1636, he was charged with various offences and acts of robbery and violence, committed not only in the Lennox, or district bordering on Lochlomond, but in the northern parts of Scotland, such as Strathspey and Braemar, and with having been a common cateran for upwards of three years. Even were we disposed to accept the distinction drawn by Evan

Dhu Maccombich, to the effect that 'he that steals a cow from a poor widow, or a stirk from a cottar, is a thief; he that lifts a drove from a Sassenach laird is a gentleman-drover,' we can hardly dignify Gilderoy with the latter title, inasmuch as he was charged, *inter alia*, with 'the theftuous steilling of *four hens*' pertaining to the gudeman of Calquharnie! Gilderoy and his lieutenants were convicted, and executed at the cross of Edinburgh, the master-cateran receiving the honour of a higher gibbet than his accomplices."

It is amusing to find that this poor cateran has been made the subject of romance, under the disguise of history, and has been elevated to a high pinnacle of infamy. In a work entitled "Lives and Exploits of English Highwaymen, Pirates, and Robbers, by Captain Charles Johnson," Gilderoy figures as a thief of European celebrity, and is represented as practising his art both in France and Spain. The following extract is worth preserving:—

"He then fled into France, where, being on a solemn day at the Church of St. Denis, in Paris, whilst Cardinal Richelieu was celebrating high mass, at which the King was present, Gilderoy had his hand in the Cardinal's purse, which was hanging at his side, while he was officiating at the altar. His Majesty perceiving the transaction, Gilderoy, who was dressed like a gentleman, seeing himself discovered, held up his finger to the King, making a sign to take no notice, and he should see good sport. The King, glad of such an occasion of mirth, let him alone; and a little after, coming to the Cardinal, he took occasion, in discourse, to oblige him to look into his purse for money, which he missing, began to wonder. The King, knowing which way it went, was more than ordinarily merry; until, being tired with laughter, he was willing that the Cardinal might have again what was taken from him. The King thought that he who took the money was an honest gentleman, and of some account, as he kept his countenance so well; but Gilderoy had more wit than to come near them, for he acted not in jest, but in good earnest. Then the Cardinal turned all the laughter against the King, who, using his common oath, swore by the faith of a gentleman it was the first time that ever a thief had made him his companion.

"He went from France into Spain; and being one day at Madrid he went into the Duke of Medina-Celi's house, when that grandee had made a great entertainment for certain

foreign ministers. Several pieces of plate were locked in a trunk, and stood in a little room next to a hall where the feast was, in which room many servants were waiting for their masters. Gilder Roy went in a Spanish habit, accoutred in all respects like the steward of the house, and going to those who sat on the trunk, desired them to rise, because he was going to use it; which they having done, he caused it to be taken up by some porters that followed him in, and got clear off with it."

But his most notable exploit (according to Captain Charles Johnson, whose inventive genius is not much inferior to that of M. Alexandre Dumas) was performed after he had returned home from his continental tour. We next find Gilderoy engaged in personal combat with the Protector!

"When Oliver Cromwell embarked at Donaghadey, in the north of Ireland, and landed at Portpatrick in Scotland, the news thereof came to Gilder Roy, who was then lurking in the shire of Galloway. Accordingly he met him on the road towards Glasgow. Cromwell having only two servants with him, he commanded him to stand and deliver; but the former thinking three to one was odds, refused to obey. They then came to an engagement, and several pistols were discharged on both sides for nearly a quarter of an hour; when the bold robber pretended to yield his antagonists the day, by running as fast as he could from them. They pursued him very closely for near half an hour, and then suddenly turning upon them, the first mischief he did was shooting Oliver's horse, which, falling on his side as soon as wounded, broke the Protector's leg. As for his servants, he shot one of them through the head, and the other begging quarter, it was granted; but Oliver being disabled, he had the civility to put him on an ass, and, tying his legs under his belly, sent both of them to seek their fortunes."

With regard to the origin of the term "Jeddart justice," Captain Charles Johnson thus enlightens us, showing satisfactorily that it is part of the statute law of Scotland, first to execute criminals and afterwards to try them.

"This insolence caused the legislature to contrive ways and means to suppress the audaciousness of Gilder Roy and his companions, who were dreaded far and near; and among them *one Jennet, a lawyer*, promoted the law for hanging a highwayman first, and judging him afterwards; which law, being approved of, it received the sanction of the Govern-

ment, without any contradiction, and was often put in force against many gentlemen of the road."

This veracious account of Gilderoy, along with the actual minutes of his trial, will be found in the Appendix to "Spalding's Memorials of the Troubles in Scotland."

I have not chanced to meet with a copy of the original ballad of Gilderoy, which Mr. Chambers mentions to have seen on a broadside, and of which he has given us the following specimen, being the opening and concluding stanzas :—

“ My love he was as brave a man,
 As ever Scotland bred ;
 Descended from a Highland clan,
 A kateran to his trade.
 No woman then, or womankind,
 Had ever greater joy,
 Than we two when we lodged alone,
 I and my Gilderoy.

* * * *

“ And now he is in Edinburgh town,
 'Twas long ere I came there ;
 They hang'd him upon a pin,
 And he wagg'd in the air.
 His relics they were more esteem'd
 Than Hector's were at Troy ;
 I never loved to see the face
 That gazed on Gilderoy.”

The following version, which is the only one now current, was adapted from the original by Sir Alexander Halket—at least, such was the general understanding until lately, when it became a mania with some literary antiquaries to attribute the authorship of the great bulk of the Scottish ballads to Sir Alexander's sister, Lady Wardlaw, on the single ground that she was the composer of “Hardyknute.”

Gilderoy was a bonnie boy,
 Had roses till his shoon,
 His stockings were of silken soy,
 Wi' garters hanging down :
 It was, I ween, a comely sight
 To see so trim a boy ;
 He was my joy and heart's delight,
 My winsome Gilderoy.

O sic twa charming e'en he had,
 A breath as sweet as rose ;
 He never ware a Highland plaid,
 But costly silken clothes ;
 He gain'd the love of ladies gay,
 None e'er to him was coy ;
 Ah, wae is me ! I mourn this day
 For my dear Gilderoy.

My Gilderoy and I were born
 Baith in one toun together,
 We scant were seven years befor
 We 'gan so love each ither ;
 Our daddies and our mammies they
 Were fill'd wi' meikle joy,
 To think upon the bridal day
 Of me and Gilderoy.

For Gilderoy that love of mine
 Gude faith, I freely bought
 A wedding sark of Holland fine,
 Wi' dainty ruffles wrought ;
 And he gied me a wedding-ring,
 Which I received with joy ;
 Nac lad nor lassie e'er could sing
 Like me and Gilderoy.

Wi' meikle joy we spent our prime,
 Till we were baith sixteen,
 And aft we past the langsum time
 Among the leaves sae green :
 Aft on the banks we'd sit us there,
 And sweetly kiss and toy ;
 While he wi' garlands deck'd my hair,
 My handsome Gilderoy.

O that he still had been content,
 Wi' me to lead his life !
 But ah, his manfu' heart was bent
 To stir in feats of strife.
 And he in many a venturous deed
 His courage bold wad try ;
 And now this gars my heart to bleed
 For my dear Gilderoy.

And when of me his leave he took,
 The tears that wet mine e'e ;
 I gied him sic a parting look :
 " My benison gang wi' thee !
 God speed thee weel, mine ain dear heart,
 For gane is all my joy ;
 My heart is rent, sith we maun part,
 My handsome Gilderoy."

The Queen of Scots possessed nought
 That my love let me want ;
 For cow and ewe he to me brought,
 And e'en when they were scant :
 All these did honestly possess,
 He never did annoy
 Who never fail'd to pay their cess,
 To my love Gilderoy.

My Gilderoy, baith fair and near,
 Was fear'd in every toun,
 And bauldly bare awa' the gear
 Of many a lawland loun :
 For man to man durst meet him nane,
 He was sae brave a boy ;
 At length with numbers he was ta'en,
 My winsome Gilderoy.

Wae worth the louns that made the laws,
 To hang a man for gear ;
 To reive of life for sic a cause,
 As stealing horse or mear !
 Had not these laws been made sae strict,
 I ne'er had lost my joy,
 Wi' sorrow ne'er had wat my cheek,
 For my dear Gilderoy.

If Gilderoy had done amiss,
 He might have banish'd been.
 Ah, what sair cruelty is this,
 To hang sic handsome men !
 To hang the flower o' Scottish land,
 Sae sweet and fair a boy—
 Nae lady had so white a hand
 As thee, my Gilderoy.

Of Gilderoy sae 'fraid they were,
 They bound him meikle strong,
 To Ediinburgh they took him there,
 And on a gallows hung :
 They hung him high aboon the rest,
 He was sae trim a boy ;
 There died the youth whom I lo'ed best,
 My handsome Gilderoy.
 Sunc as he yielded up his breath,
 I bare his corpse away,
 Wi' tears that triekled for his death,
 I wash'd his comely clay ;
 And sicker in a grave so deep
 I laid the dear-lo'ed boy ;
 And now for ever I maun weep
 My handsome Gilderoy.

The introduction to the ballad in Whitelaw's "Book of Scottish Song" furnishes a short account of Gilderoy; but some of the particulars are erroneous. We give it, however, as it stands.

"Gilderoy was one of the proscribed Clan Gregor, and a notorious freebooter, or lifter of cattle, in the Highlands of Perthshire, for some time before the year 1638. In February of that year, seven of his accomplices were taken, tried, condemned, and executed at Edinburgh. They were apprehended chiefly through the exertions of the Stewarts of Athol, and in revenge Gilderoy burned several houses belonging to the Stewarts. This proved his ruin. A reward of a thousand pounds was offered for his apprehension; and he was ultimately taken, along with five more accomplices, all of whom were hanged at the Gallowlee, between Leith and Edinburgh, in the month of July, 1638. As a mark of undeniable distinction, Gilderoy was hung on a gallows higher than the rest. This is alluded to in the ballad. This ballad itself is said to have been originally composed by his mistress, a young woman belonging to the higher ranks of life, who had been attached to this noted freebooter, and was induced to live with him. It is to be found in black-letter broadsides at least as old as 1650."

Mr. James Maidment, in his "Scottish Ballads and Songs," gives what he conceives to have been the original version of the ballad, consisting of five very commonplace stanzas,

which he found in a collection of Songs bearing the title "Westminster Drollery," published in London, 1671. The insertion of the ballad in that collection shows, as he remarks, "that the fame of this worthy cateran was not confined to his own country, but had reached London, where the fervour of his Lady-love would, no doubt, find the deepest sympathy in the bosoms of those tender damsels who adorned the Court of the Merry Monarch." Mr. Maidment also states that Captain Johnston's fictitious memoir of Gilderoy was taken from an earlier work, "Compleat History of the most Notorious Highwaymen, Foot Pads, &c.," by Captain Alexander Smith, published in London, 1713-19. "Gilderoy," he adds, "like Macheath, was deceived by a Delilah, and betrayed to the authorities, but not before he had taken revenge on the unhappy woman for her treachery."

In addition, we append the beautiful original ballad by Thomas Campbell:—

GILDEROY.

The last, the fatal hour is come,
That bears my love from me:
I hear the dead note of the drum,
I mark the gallows' tree!

The bell has toll'd; it shakes my heart;
The trumpet speaks thy name;
And must my Gilderoy depart
To bear a death of shame?

No bosom trembles for thy doom;
No mourner wipes a tear;
The gallows' foot is all thy tomb,
The sledge is all thy bier.

Oh, Gilderoy! bethought we then
So soon, so sad to part,
When first in Roslin's lovely glen
You triumph'd o'er my heart?

Your locks they glitter'd to the sheen,
Your hunter garb was trim;
And graceful was the ribbon green
That bound your manly limb!

Ah! little thought I to deplore
 Those limbs in fetters bound;
 Or hear, upon the scaffold floor,
 The midnight hammer sound.

Ye cruel, cruel, that combined
 The guiltless to pursue;
 My Gilderoy was ever kind,
 He could not injure you!

A long adieu! but where shall fly
 Thy widow all forlorn,
 When every mean and cruel eye
 Regard my woe with scorn?

Yes! they will mock thy widow's tears,
 And hate thine orphan boy;
 Alas! his infant beauty wears
 The form of Gilderoy.

Then will I seek the dreary mound
 That wraps thy mouldering clay,
 And weep and linger on the ground,
 And sigh my heart away.

In "Historical Memoirs of Rob Roy and the Clan Macgregor," by H. Macleay, M.D., published at Glasgow, in 1819, the traditional history of Gilderoy is recorded as follows:—

"The long-continued and unjustifiable severities to which the clan had been subjected, rendered them wholly regardless of the laws; and as they were seldom permitted to remain in the undisturbed possession of any land which they either accidentally might have retained, or which they rented, they were in a manner forced to form associations for mutual defence, as well as for purposes of spoliation, which their state of outlawry seemed to authorise; and many of them having consequently become desperate, assimilated into bands, pursuing the loose and unprincipled occupation of banditti. Of this description a confederacy was entered upon in 1630, under solemn engagements and systematic rules; and conducted by a party of bold and enterprising Maegregors. They had, for some years, conducted themselves with such moderation among their own

countrymen, that the law, violent and unrelenting as it still continued, could take no hold of them; and though they persevered in the old system of exacting black-mail, as a recompense for their services in protecting the property and cattle of those who paid such contributions, it was not regarded as criminal, but was sanctioned by the Government; and regular charters, which were considered legal, were frequently entered into for that purpose.

“This sect of Macgregors, however, from their vagabond lives, and ill-conducted schemes, had wantonly, or of necessity, committed several outrages over the country. They were headed by two brothers, Patrick and James Macgregor, with the denominative title of Gilderoy. But they ultimately became so notorious, that the elder brother, with three of his companions, were taken in Athol by John Roy Stewart, a singular character of his day; and being sent to Edinburgh, were executed. This Roy Stewart of Kincardine, in Strathspey, though intimately connected in marriage with the Macgregors, seemed not to regard such ties; and the younger brother James, equally despising Stewart for his opposition, set fire to his house, and killed Stewart himself. Gilderoy was soon after waylaid by the military, and, with seven of his followers, conducted to Edinburgh, and hanged on Leith Walk. This person was the subject of the beautiful Scottish melody of Gilderoy.”

We have only to add that Gilderoy and his adventures form the subject of a spirited Scottish drama, which still retains its place on the stage.

THE END.

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