

The Abbot

Sir Walter Scott

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[Illustration: ROLAND GRAEME AND CATHERINE SETON BEFORE QUEEN MARY.]

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THE ABBOT.

BEING THE SEQUEL TO THE MONASTERY.

By Sir Walter Scott

* * * * *

INTRODUCTION--(1831.)

From what is said in the Introduction to the Monastery, it must necessarily be inferred, that the Author considered that romance as something very like a failure. It is true, the booksellers did not complain of the sale, because, unless on very felicitous occasions, or on those which are equally the reverse, literary popularity is not gained or lost by a single publication. Leisure must be allowed for the tide both to flow and ebb. But I was conscious that, in my situation, not to advance was in some Degree to recede, and being naturally unwilling to think that the principle of decay lay in myself, I was at least desirous to know of a certainty, whether the degree of discountenance which I had incurred, was now owing to an ill-managed story, or an ill-chosen subject.

I was never, I confess, one of those who are willing to suppose the brains of an author to be a kind of milk, which will not stand above a single creaming, and who are eternally harping to young authors to husband their efforts, and to be chary of their reputation, lest it grow hackneyed in the eyes of men. Perhaps I was, and have always been, the more indifferent to the degree of estimation in which I might be held as an author, because I did not put so high a value as many others upon what is termed literary reputation in the abstract, or at least upon the species of popularity which had fallen to my share; for though it were worse than affectation to deny that my vanity was satisfied at my success in the department in which chance had in some measure enlisted me, I was, nevertheless, far from thinking that the novelist or romance-writer stands high in the ranks of literature. But I spare the reader farther egotism on this subject, as I have expressed my opinion very fully in the Introductory Epistle to the Fortunes of Nigel, first edition; and, although it be composed in an imaginary character, it is as sincere and candid as if it had been written "without my gown and band."

In a word, when I considered myself as having been unsuccessful in the Monastery, I was tempted to try whether I could not restore, even at the risk of totally losing, my so-called reputation, by a new hazard--I looked round my library, and could not but observe, that, from the time of Chaucer to that of Byron, the most popular authors had been the most prolific. Even the aristarch Johnson allowed that the quality of readiness and profusion had a merit in itself, independent of the intrinsic value of the composition. Talking of Churchill, I believe, who had little merit in his prejudiced eyes, he allowed him that of fertility, with some such qualification as this, "A Crab-apple can bear but crabs after all; but there is a great difference in favour of that which bears a large quantity of fruit, however indifferent, and that which produces only a few."

Looking more attentively at the patriarchs of literature, whose career was as long as it was brilliant, I thought I perceived that in the busy and prolonged course of exertion, there were no doubt occasional failures, but that still those who were favourites of their age triumphed over these miscarriages. By the new efforts which they made, their errors were obliterated, they became identified with the literature of their country, and after having long received law from the critics, came in some degree to impose it. And when such a writer was at length called from the scene, his death first made the public sensible what a large share he had occupied in their attention. I recollected a passage in Grimm's Correspondence, that while the unexhausted Voltaire sent forth tract after tract to the very close of a long life, the first impression made by each as it appeared, was, that it was inferior to its predecessors; an opinion adopted from the general idea that the Patriarch of Ferney must at last find the point from which he was to decline. But the opinion of the public finally ranked in succession the last of Voltaire's Essays on the same footing with those which had formerly charmed the French nation. The inference from this and similar facts seemed to me to be, that new works were often judged of by the public, not so much from their own intrinsic merit, as from extrinsic ideas which readers had previously formed with regard to them, and over which a writer might hope to triumph by patience and by exertion. There is risk in the attempt;

"If he fall in, good night, or sink or swim."

But this is a chance incident to every literary attempt, and by which men of a sanguine temper are little moved.

I may illustrate what I mean, by the feelings of most men in travelling. If we have found any stage particularly tedious, or in an especial degree interesting, particularly short, or much longer than we expected, our imaginations are so apt to exaggerate the original impression, that, on repeating the journey, we usually find that we have considerably over-rated the predominating quality, and the road appears to be duller or more pleasant, shorter or more tedious, than what we expected, and, consequently, than what is actually the case. It requires a third or fourth journey to enable us to form an accurate judgment of its beauty, its length, or its other attributes.

In the same manner, the public, judging of a new work, which it receives perhaps with little expectation, if surprised into applause, becomes very often ecstatic, gives a great deal more approbation than is due, and elevates the child of its immediate favour to a rank which, as it affects the author, it is equally difficult to keep, and painful to lose. If, on this occasion, the author trembles at the height to which he is raised, and becomes afraid of the shadow of his own renown, he may indeed retire from the lottery with the prize which he has drawn, but, in future ages, his honour will be only in proportion to his labours. If, on the contrary, he rushes again into the lists, he is sure to be judged with severity proportioned to the former favour of the public. If he be daunted by a bad reception on this second occasion, he may again become a stranger to the arena. If, on the contrary, he can keep his ground, and stand the shuttlecock's fate, of being struck up and down, he will probably, at length, hold with some certainty the level in public opinion which he may be found to deserve; and he may perhaps boast of arresting the general attention, in the same manner as the Bachelor Samson Carrasco, of

fixing the weathercock La Giralda of Seville for weeks, months, or years, that is, for as long as the wind shall uniformly blow from one quarter. To this degree of popularity the author had the hardihood to aspire, while, in order to attain it, he assumed the daring resolution to keep himself in the view of the public by frequent appearances before them.

It must be added, that the author's incognito gave him greater courage to renew his attempts to please the public, and an advantage similar to that which Jack the Giant-killer received from his coat of darkness. In sending the Abbot forth so soon after the Monastery, he had used the well-known practice recommended by Bassanio:--

"In my school days, when I had lost one shaft,
I shot another of the self-same flight,
The self-same way, with more advised watch,
To find the other forth."

And, to continue the simile, his shafts, like those of the lesser Ajax, were discharged more readily than the archer was as inaccessible to criticism, personally speaking, as the Grecian archer under his brother's sevenfold shield.

Should the reader desire to know upon what principles the Abbot was expected to amend the fortune of the Monastery, I have first to request his attention to the Introductory Epistle addressed to the imaginary Captain Clutterbuck; a mode by which, like his predecessors in this walk of fiction, the real author makes one of his *dramatis personae* the means of communicating his own sentiments to the public, somewhat more artificially than by a direct address to the readers. A pleasing French writer of fairy tales, Monsieur Pajon, author of the History of Prince Soly, has set a diverting example of the same machinery, where he introduces the presiding Genius of the land of Romance conversing with one of the personages of the tale.

In this Introductory Epistle, the author communicates, in confidence, to Captain Clutterbuck, his sense that the White Lady had not met the taste of the times, and his reason for withdrawing her from the scene. The author did not deem it equally necessary to be candid respecting another alteration. The Monastery was designed, at first, to have contained some supernatural agency, arising out of the fact, that Melrose had been the place of deposit of the great Robert Bruce's heart. The writer shrunk, however, from filling up, in this particular, the sketch as it was originally traced; nor did he venture to resume, in continuation, the subject which he had left unattempted in the original work. Thus, the incident of the discovery of the heart, which occupies the greater part of the Introduction to the Monastery, is a mystery unnecessarily introduced, and which remains at last very imperfectly explained. In this particular, I was happy to shroud myself by the example of the author of "Caleb Williams," who never condescends to inform us of the actual contents of that Iron Chest which makes such a figure in his interesting work, and gives the name to Mr. Colman's drama.

The public had some claim to inquire into this matter, but it seemed indifferent policy in the author to give the explanation. For, whatever praise may be due to the ingenuity which brings to a general combination all the loose threads of a narrative, like the knitter at the finishing of her stocking, I am greatly deceived if in many cases

a superior advantage is not attained, by the air of reality which the deficiency of explanation attaches to a work written on a different system. In life itself, many things befall every mortal, of which the individual never knows the real cause or origin; and were we to point out the most marked distinction between a real and a fictitious narrative, we would say, that the former in reference to the remote causes of the events it relates, is obscure, doubtful, and mysterious; whereas, in the latter case, it is a part of the author's duty to afford satisfactory details upon the causes of the separate events he has recorded, and, in a word, to account for every thing. The reader, like Mungo in the Padlock, will not be satisfied with hearing what he is not made fully to comprehend.

I omitted, therefore, in the Introduction to the Abbot, any attempt to explain the previous story, or to apologize for unintelligibility.

Neither would it have been prudent to have endeavoured to proclaim, in the Introduction to the Abbot, the real spring, by which I hoped it might attract a greater degree of interest than its immediate predecessor. A taking title, or the announcement of a popular subject, is a recipe for success much in favour with booksellers, but which authors will not always find efficacious. The cause is worth a moment's examination.

There occur in every country some peculiar historical characters, which are, like a spell or charm, sovereign to excite curiosity and attract attention, since every one in the slightest degree interested in the land which they belong to, has heard much of them, and longs to hear more. A tale turning on the fortunes of Alfred or Elizabeth in England, or of Wallace or Bruce in Scotland, is sure by the very announcement to excite public curiosity to a considerable degree, and ensure the publisher's being relieved of the greater part of an impression, even before the contents of the work are known. This is of the last importance to the bookseller, who is at once, to use a technical phrase, "brought home," all his outlay being repaid. But it is a different case with the author, since it cannot be denied that we are apt to feel least satisfied with the works of which we have been induced, by titles and laudatory advertisements, to entertain exaggerated expectations. The intention of the work has been anticipated, and misconceived or misrepresented, and although the difficulty of executing the work again reminds us of Hotspur's task of "o'er-walking a current roaring loud," yet the adventurer must look for more ridicule if he fails, than applause if he executes, his undertaking.

Notwithstanding a risk, which should make authors pause ere they adopt a theme which, exciting general interest and curiosity, is often the preparative for disappointment, yet it would be an injudicious regulation which should deter the poet or painter from attempting to introduce historical portraits, merely from the difficulty of executing the task in a satisfactory manner. Something must be trusted to the generous impulse, which often thrusts an artist upon feats of which he knows the difficulty, while he trusts courage and exertion may afford the means of surmounting it.

It is especially when he is sensible of losing ground with the public, that an author may be justified in using with address, such selection of subject or title as is most likely to procure a rehearing. It was with these feelings of hope and apprehension, that I venture to

awaken, in a work of fiction, the memory of Queen Mary, so interesting by her wit, her beauty, her misfortunes, and the mystery which still does, and probably always will, overhang her history. In doing so, I was aware that failure would be a conclusive disaster, so that my task was something like that of an enchanter who raises a spirit over whom he is uncertain of possessing an effectual control; and I naturally paid attention to such principles of composition, as I conceived were best suited to the historical novel.

Enough has been already said to explain the purpose of composing the Abbot. The historical references are, as usual, explained in the notes. That which relates to Queen Mary's escape from Lochleven Castle, is a more minute account of that romantic adventure, than is to be found in the histories of the period.

ABBOTSFORD,
1st January, 1831.

* * * * *

INTRODUCTORY EPISTLE.

FROM THE AUTHOR OF "WAVERLEY," TO CAPTAIN CLUTTERBUCK, LATE OF HIS MAJESTY'S ---- REGIMENT OF INFANTRY.

DEAR CAPTAIN:

I am sorry to observe, by your last favour, that you disapprove of the numerous retrenchments and alterations which I have been under the necessity of making on the Manuscript of your friend, the Benedictine, and I willingly make you the medium of apology to many, who have honoured me more than I deserve.

I admit that my retrenchments have been numerous, and leave gaps in the story, which, in your original manuscript, would have run well-nigh to a fourth volume, as my printer assures me. I am sensible, besides, that, in consequence of the liberty of curtailment you have allowed me, some parts of the story have been huddled up without the necessary details. But, after all, it is better that the travellers should have to step over a ditch, than to wade through a morass--that the reader should have to suppose what may easily be inferred, than be obliged to creep through pages of dull explanation. I have struck out, for example, the whole machinery of the White Lady, and the poetry by which it is so ably supported, in the original manuscript. But you must allow that the public taste gives little encouragement to those legendary superstitions, which formed alternately the delight and the terror of our predecessors. In like manner, much is omitted illustrative of the impulse of enthusiasm in favour of the ancient religion in Mother Magdalen and the Abbot. But we do not feel deep sympathy at this period with what was once the most powerful and animating principle in Europe, with the exception of that of the Reformation, by which it was successfully opposed.

You rightly observe, that these retrenchments have rendered the title no longer applicable to the subject, and that some other would have been more suitable to the Work, in its present state, than that of THE ABBOT, who made so much greater figure in the original, and for whom

your friend, the Benedictine, seems to have inspired you with a sympathetic respect. I must plead guilty to this accusation, observing, at the same time, in manner of extenuation, that though the objection might have been easily removed, by giving a new title to the Work, yet, in doing so, I should have destroyed the necessary cohesion between the present history, and its predecessor THE MONASTERY, which I was unwilling to do, as the period, and several of the personages, were the same.

After all, my good friend, it is of little consequence what the work is called, or on what interest it turns, provided it catches the public attention; for the quality of the wine (could we but insure it) may, according to the old proverb, render the bush unnecessary, or of little consequence.

I congratulate you upon your having found it consistent with prudence to establish your Tilbury, and approve of the colour, and of your boy's livery, (subdued green and pink.)--As you talk of completing your descriptive poem on the "Ruins of Kennaquhair, with notes by an Antiquary," I hope you have procured a steady horse.--I remain, with compliments to all friends, dear Captain, very much

Yours, &c. &c. &c.

THE AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY.

* * * * *

THE ABBOT.

* * * * *

Chapter the First.

Domum mansit--lanam fecit.
Ancient Roman Epitaph.

She keepit close the hous, and birlit at the quhele.
GAWAIN DOUGLAS.

The time which passes over our heads so imperceptibly, makes the same gradual change in habits, manners, and character, as in personal appearance. At the revolution of every five years we find ourselves another, and yet the same--there is a change of views, and no less of the light in which we regard them; a change of motives as well as of actions. Nearly twice that space had glided away over the head of Halbert Glendinning and his lady, betwixt the period of our former narrative, in which they played a distinguished part, and the date at which our present tale commences.

Two circumstances only had imbittered their union, which was otherwise as happy as mutual affection could render it. The first of these was indeed the common calamity of Scotland, being the distracted state of that unhappy country, where every man's sword was directed against his

neighbour's bosom. Glendinning had proved what Murray expected of him, a steady friend, strong in battle, and wise in counsel, adhering to him, from motives of gratitude, in situations where by his own unbiassed will he would either have stood neuter, or have joined the opposite party. Hence, when danger was near--and it was seldom far distant--Sir Halbert Glendinning, for he now bore the rank of knighthood, was perpetually summoned to attend his patron on distant expeditions, or on perilous enterprises, or to assist him with his counsel in the doubtful intrigues of a half-barbarous court. He was thus frequently, and for a long space, absent from his castle and from his lady; and to this ground of regret we must add, that their union had not been blessed with children, to occupy the attention of the Lady of Avenel, while she was thus deprived of her husband's domestic society.

On such occasions she lived almost entirely secluded from the world, within the walls of her paternal mansion. Visiting amongst neighbors was a matter entirely out of the question, unless on occasions of solemn festival, and then it was chiefly confined to near kindred. Of these the Lady of Avenel had none who survived, and the dames of the neighbouring barons affected to regard her less as the heiress of the house of Avenel than as the wife of a peasant, the son of a church-vassal, raised up to mushroom eminence by the capricious favour of Murray.

The pride of ancestry, which rankled in the bosom of the ancient gentry, was more openly expressed by their ladies, and was, moreover, imbibed not a little by the political feuds of the time, for most of the Southern chiefs were friends to the authority of the Queen, and very jealous of the power of Murray. The Castle of Avenel was, therefore, on all these accounts, as melancholy and solitary a residence for its lady as could well be imagined. Still it had the essential recommendation of great security. The reader is already aware that the fortress was built upon an islet on a small lake, and was only accessible by a causeway, intersected by a double ditch, defended by two draw-bridges, so that without artillery, it might in those days be considered as impregnable. It was only necessary, therefore, to secure against surprise, and the service of six able men within the castle was sufficient for that purpose. If more serious danger threatened, an ample garrison was supplied by the male inhabitants of a little hamlet, which, under the auspices of Halbert Glendinning, had arisen on a small piece of level ground, betwixt the lake and the hill, nearly adjoining to the spot where the causeway joined the mainland. The Lord of Avenel had found it an easy matter to procure inhabitants, as he was not only a kind and beneficent overlord, but well qualified, both by his experience in arms, his high character for wisdom and integrity, and his favour with the powerful Earl of Murray, to protect and defend those who dwelt under his banner. In leaving his castle for any length of time, he had, therefore, the consolation to reflect, that this village afforded, on the slightest notice, a band of thirty stout men, which was more than sufficient for its defence; while the families of the villagers, as was usual on such occasions, fled to the recesses of the mountains, drove their cattle to the same places of shelter, and left the enemy to work their will on their miserable cottages.

One guest only resided generally, if not constantly, at the Castle of Avenel. This was Henry Warden, who now felt himself less able for the stormy task imposed on the reforming clergy; and having by his zeal

given personal offence to many of the leading nobles and chiefs, did not consider himself as perfectly safe, unless when within the walls of the strong mansion of some assured friend. He ceased not, however, to serve his cause as eagerly with his pen, as he had formerly done with his tongue, and had engaged in a furious and acrimonious contest, concerning the sacrifice of the mass, as it was termed, with the Abbot Eustatius, formerly the Sub-Prior of Kennaquhair. Answers, replies, duplies, triplies, quadruples, followed thick upon each other, and displayed, as is not unusual in controversy, fully as much zeal as Christian charity. The disputation very soon became as celebrated as that of John Knox and the Abbot of Crosraguel, raged nearly as fiercely, and, for aught I know, the publications to which it gave rise may be as precious in the eyes of bibliographers. [Footnote: The tracts which appeared in the Disputation between the Scottish Reformer and Quentin Kennedy, Abbot of Crosraguel, are among the scarcest in Scottish Bibliography. See M'Crie's *Life of Knox*, p. 258.] But the engrossing nature of his occupation rendered the theologian not the most interesting companion for a solitary female; and his grave, stern, and absorbed deportment, which seldom showed any interest, except in that which concerned his religious profession, made his presence rather add to than diminish the gloom which hung over the Castle of Avenel. To superintend the tasks of numerous female domestics, was the principal part of the Lady's daily employment; her spindle and distaff, her Bible, and a solitary walk upon the battlements of the castle, or upon the causeway, or occasionally, but more seldom, upon the banks of the little lake, consumed the rest of the day. But so great was the insecurity of the period, that when she ventured to extend her walk beyond the hamlet, the warder on the watch-tower was directed to keep a sharp look-out in every direction, and four or five men held themselves in readiness to mount and sally forth from the castle on the slightest appearance of alarm.

Thus stood affairs at the castle, when, after an absence of several weeks, the Knight of Avenel, which was now the title most frequently given to Sir Halbert Glendinning, was daily expected to return home. Day after day, however, passed away, and he returned not. Letters in those days were rarely written, and the Knight must have resorted to a secretary to express his intentions in that manner; besides, intercourse of all kinds was precarious and unsafe, and no man cared to give any public intimation of the time and direction of a journey, since, if his route were publicly known, it was always likely he might in that case meet with more enemies than friends upon the road. The precise day, therefore, of Sir Halbert's return, was not fixed, but that which his lady's fond expectation had calculated upon in her own mind had long since passed, and hope delayed began to make the heart sick.

It was upon the evening of a sultry summer's day, when the sun was half-sunk behind the distant western mountains of Liddesdale, that the Lady took her solitary walk on the battlements of a range of buildings, which formed the front of the castle, where a flat roof of flag-stones presented a broad and convenient promenade. The level surface of the lake, undisturbed except by the occasional dipping of a teal-duck, or coot, was gilded with the beams of the setting luminary, and reflected, as if in a golden mirror, the hills amongst which it lay embossed. The scene, otherwise so lonely, was occasionally enlivened by the voices of the children in the village, which, softened by distance, reached the ear of the Lady, in her solitary walk, or by the distant call of the herdsman, as he guided his cattle

from the glen in which they had pastured all day, to place them in greater security for the night, in the immediate vicinity of the village. The deep lowing of the cows seemed to demand the attendance of the milk-maidens, who, singing shrilly and merrily, strolled forth, each with her pail on her head, to attend to the duty of the evening. The Lady of Avenel looked and listened; the sounds which she heard reminded her of former days, when her most important employment, as well as her greatest delight, was to assist Dame Glendinning and Tibb Tackett in milking the cows at Glendearg. The thought was fraught with melancholy.

"Why was I not," she said, "the peasant girl which in all men's eyes I seemed to be? Halbert and I had then spent our life peacefully in his native glen, undisturbed by the phantoms either of fear or of ambition. His greatest pride had then been to show the fairest herd in the Halidome; his greatest danger to repel some pilfering snatcher from the Border; and the utmost distance which would have divided us, would have been the chase of some outlying deer. But, alas! what avails the blood which Halbert has shed, and the dangers which he encounters, to support a name and rank, dear to him because he has it from me, but which we shall never transmit to our posterity! with me the name of Avenel must expire."

She sighed as the reflections arose, and, looking towards the shore of the lake, her eye was attracted by a group of children of various ages, assembled to see a little ship, constructed by some village artist, perform its first voyage on the water. It was launched amid the shouts of tiny voices and the clapping of little hands, and shot bravely forth on its voyage with a favouring wind, which promised to carry it to the other side of the lake. Some of the bigger boys ran round to receive and secure it on the farther shore, trying their speed against each other as they sprang like young fawns along the shingly verge of the lake. The rest, for whom such a journey seemed too arduous, remained watching the motions of the fairy vessel from the spot where it had been launched. The sight of their sports pressed on the mind of the childless Lady of Avenel.

"Why are none of these prattlers mine?" she continued, pursuing the tenor of her melancholy reflections. "Their parents can scarce find them the coarsest food--and I, who could nurse them in plenty, I am doomed never to hear a child call me mother!"

The thought sunk on her heart with a bitterness which resembled envy, so deeply is the desire of offspring implanted in the female breast. She pressed her hands together as if she were wringing them in the extremity of her desolate feeling, as one whom Heaven had written childless. A large stag-hound of the greyhound species approached at this moment, and attracted perhaps by the gesture, licked her hands and pressed his large head against them. He obtained the desired caresses in return, but still the sad impression remained.

"Wolf," she said, as if the animal could have understood her complaints, "thou art a noble and beautiful animal; but, alas! the love and affection that I long to bestow, is of a quality higher than can fall to thy share, though I love thee much."

And, as if she were apologizing to Wolf for withholding from him any part of her regard, she caressed his proud head and crest, while, looking in her eyes, he seemed to ask her what she wanted, or what he

could do to show his attachment. At this moment a shriek of distress was heard on the shore, from the playful group which had been lately so jovial. The Lady looked, and saw the cause with great agony.

The little ship, the object of the children's delighted attention, had stuck among some tufts of the plant which bears the water-lily, that marked a shoal in the lake about an arrow-flight from the shore. A hardy little boy, who had taken the lead in the race round the margin of the lake, did not hesitate a moment to strip off his _wylie-coat_, plunge into the water, and swim towards the object of their common solicitude. The first movement of the Lady was to call for help; but she observed that the boy swam strongly and fearlessly, and as she saw that one or two villagers, who were distant spectators of the incident, seemed to give themselves no uneasiness on his account, she supposed that he was accustomed to the exercise, and that there was no danger. But whether, in swimming, the boy had struck his breast against a sunken rock, or whether he was suddenly taken with cramp, or whether he had over-calculated his own strength, it so happened, that when he had disembarrassed the little plaything from the flags in which it was entangled, and sent it forward on its course, he had scarce swam a few yards in his way to the shore, than he raised himself suddenly from the water, and screamed aloud, clapping his hands at the same time with an expression of fear and pain.

The Lady of Avenel, instantly taking the alarm, called hastily to the attendants to get the boat ready. But this was an affair of some time. The only boat permitted to be used on the lake, was moored within the second cut which intersected the canal, and it was several minutes ere it could be unmoored and got under way. Meantime, the Lady of Avenel, with agonizing anxiety, saw that the efforts that the poor boy made to keep himself afloat, were now exchanged for a faint struggling, which would soon have been over, but for aid equally prompt and unhopd-for. Wolf, who, like some of that large species of greyhound, was a practised water-dog, had marked the object of her anxiety, and, quitting his mistress's side, had sought the nearest point from which he could with safety plunge into the lake. With the wonderful instinct which these noble animals have so often displayed in the like circumstances, he swam straight to the spot where his assistance was so much wanted, and seizing the child's under-dress in his mouth, he not only kept him afloat, but towed him towards the causeway. The boat having put off with a couple of men, met the dog half-way, and relieved him of his burden. They landed on the causeway, close by the gates of the castle, with their yet lifeless charge, and were there met by the Lady of Avenel, attended by one or two of her maidens,

eagerly waiting to administer assistance to the sufferer.

He was borne into the castle, deposited upon a bed, and every mode of recovery resorted to, which the knowledge of the times, and the skill of Henry Warden, who professed some medical science, could dictate. For some time it was all in vain, and the Lady watched, with unspeakable earnestness, the pallid countenance of the beautiful child. He seemed about ten years old. His dress was of the meanest sort, but his long curled hair, and the noble cast of his features, partook not of that poverty of appearance. The proudest noble in Scotland might have been yet prouder could he have called that child his heir. While, with breathless anxiety, the Lady of Avenel gazed on his well-formed and expressive features, a slight shade of colour

returned gradually to the cheek; suspended animation became restored by degrees, the child sighed deeply, opened his eyes, which to the human countenance produces the effect of light upon the natural landscape, stretched his arms towards the Lady, and muttered the word "Mother," that epithet, of all others, which is dearest to the female ear.

"God, madam," said the preacher, "has restored the child to your wishes; it must be yours so to bring him up, that he may not one day wish that he had perished in his innocence."

"It shall be my charge," said the Lady; and again throwing her arms around the boy, she overwhelmed him with kisses and caresses, so much was she agitated by the terror arising from the danger in which he had been just placed, and by joy at his unexpected deliverance.

"But you are not my mother," said the boy, recovering his recollection, and endeavouring, though faintly, to escape from the caresses of the Lady of Avenel; "you are not my mother,--alas! I have no mother--only I have dreamt that I had one."

"I will read the dream for you, my love," answered the Lady of Avenel; "and I will be myself your mother. Surely God has heard my wishes, and, in his own marvellous manner, hath sent me an object on which my affections may expand themselves." She looked towards Warden as she spoke. The preacher hesitated what he should reply to a burst of passionate feeling, which, perhaps, seemed to him more enthusiastic than the occasion demanded. In the meanwhile, the large stag-hound, Wolf, which, dripping wet as he was, had followed his mistress into the apartment, and had sat by the bedside, a patient and quiet spectator of all the means used for resuscitation of the being whom he had preserved, now became impatient of remaining any longer unnoticed, and began to whine and fawn upon the Lady with his great rough paws.

"Yes," she said, "good Wolf, and you shall be remembered also for your day's work; and I will think the more of you for having preserved the life of a creature so beautiful."

But Wolf was not quite satisfied with the share of attention which he thus attracted; he persisted in whining and pawing upon his mistress, his caresses rendered still more troublesome by his long shaggy hair being so much and thoroughly wetted, till she desired one of the domestics, with whom he was familiar, to call the animal out of the apartment. Wolf resisted every invitation to this purpose, until his mistress positively commanded him to be gone, in an angry tone; when, turning towards the bed on which the body still lay, half awake to sensation, half drowned in the meanders of fluctuating delirium, he uttered a deep and savage growl, curled up his nose and lips, showing his full range of white and sharpened teeth, which might have matched those of an actual wolf, and then, turning round, sullenly followed the domestic out of the apartment.

"It is singular," said the Lady, addressing Warden; "the animal is not only so good-natured to all, but so particularly fond of children. What can ail him at the little fellow whose life he has saved?"

"Dogs," replied the preacher, "are but too like the human race in their foibles, though their instinct be less erring than the reason of poor mortal man when relying upon his own unassisted powers. Jealousy,

my good lady, is a passion not unknown to them, and they often evince it, not only with respect to the preferences which they see given by their masters to individuals of their own species, but even when their rivals are children. You have caressed that child much and eagerly, and the dog considers himself as a discarded favourite."

"It is a strange instinct," said the Lady; "and from the gravity with which you mention it, my reverend friend, I would almost say that you supposed this singular jealousy of my favourite Wolf, was not only well founded, but justifiable. But perhaps you speak in jest?"

"I seldom jest," answered the preacher; "life was not lent to us to be expended in that idle mirth which resembles the crackling of thorns under the pot. I would only have you derive, if it so please you, this lesson from what I have said, that the best of our feelings, when indulged to excess, may give pain to others. There is but one in which we may indulge to the utmost limit of vehemence of which our bosom is capable, secure that excess cannot exist in the greatest intensity to which it can be excited--I mean the love of our Maker."

"Surely," said the Lady of Avenel, "we are commanded by the same authority to love our neighbour?"

"Ay, madam," said Warden, "but our love to God is to be unbounded--we are to love him with our whole heart, our whole soul, and our whole strength. The love which the precept commands us to bear to our neighbour, has affixed to it a direct limit and qualification--we are to love our neighbour as ourself; as it is elsewhere explained by the great commandment, that we must do unto him as we would that he should do unto us. Here there is a limit, and a bound, even to the most praiseworthy of our affections, so far as they are turned upon sublunary and terrestrial objects. We are to render to our neighbour, whatever be his rank or degree, that corresponding portion of affection with which we could rationally expect we should ourselves be regarded by those standing in the same relation to us. Hence, neither husband nor wife, neither son nor daughter, neither friend nor relation, are lawfully to be made the objects of our idolatry. The Lord our God is a jealous God, and will not endure that we bestow on the creature that extremity of devotion which He who made us demands as his own share. I say to you, Lady, that even in the fairest, and purest, and most honourable feelings of our nature, there is that original taint of sin which ought to make us pause and hesitate, ere we indulge them to excess."

"I understand not this, reverend sir," said the Lady; "nor do I guess what I can have now said or done, to draw down on me an admonition which has something a taste of reproof."

"Lady," said Warden, "I crave your pardon, if I have urged aught beyond the limits of my duty. But consider, whether in the sacred promise to be not only a protectress, but a mother, to this poor child, your purpose may meet the wishes of the noble knight your husband. The fondness which you have lavished on the unfortunate, and, I own, most lovely child, has met something like a reproof in the bearing of your household dog.--Displease not your noble husband. Men, as well as animals, are jealous of the affections of those they love."

"This is too much, reverend sir," said the Lady of Avenel, greatly offended. "You have been long our guest, and have received from the

Knight of Avenel and myself that honour and regard which your character and profession so justly demand. But I am yet to learn that we have at any time authorized your interference in our family arrangements, or placed you as a judge of our conduct towards each other. I pray this may be forborne in future."

"Lady," replied the preacher, with the boldness peculiar to the clergy of his persuasion at that time, "when you weary of my admonitions--when I see that my services are no longer acceptable to you, and the noble knight your husband, I shall know that my Master wills me no longer to abide here; and, praying for a continuance of his best blessings on your family I will then, were the season the depth of winter, and the hour midnight, walk out on yonder waste, and travel forth through these wild mountains, as lonely and unaided, though far more helpless, than when I first met your husband in the valley of Glendearg. But while I remain here, I will not see you err from the true path, no, not a hair's-breadth, without making the old man's voice and remonstrance heard."

"Nay, but," said the Lady, who both loved and respected the good man, though sometimes a little offended at what she conceived to be an exuberant degree of zeal, "we will not part this way, my good friend. Women are quick and hasty in their feelings; but, believe me, my wishes and my purposes towards this child are such as both my husband and you will approve of." The clergyman bowed, and retreated to his own apartment.

Chapter the Second.

How steadfastly he fix'd his eyes on me--
His dark eyes shining through forgotten tears--
Then stretch'd his little arms, and call'd me mother!
What could I do? I took the bantling home--
I could not tell the imp he had no mother.

COUNT BASIL.

When Warden had left the apartment, the Lady of Avenel gave way to the feelings of tenderness which the sight of the boy, his sudden danger, and his recent escape, had inspired; and no longer awed by the sternness, as she deemed it, of the preacher, heaped with caresses the lovely and interesting child. He was now, in some measure, recovered from the consequences of his accident, and received passively, though not without wonder, the tokens of kindness with which he was thus loaded. The face of the lady was strange to him, and her dress different and far more sumptuous than any he remembered. But the boy was naturally of an undaunted temper; and indeed children are generally acute physiognomists, and not only pleased by that which is beautiful in itself, but peculiarly quick in distinguishing and replying to the attentions of those who really love them. If they see a person in company, though a perfect stranger, who is by nature fond of children, the little imps seem to discover it by a sort of free-masonry, while the awkward attempts of those who make advances to them for the purpose of recommending themselves to the parents, usually fail in attracting their reciprocal attention. The little boy, therefore, appeared in some degree sensible of the lady's caresses,

and it was with difficulty she withdrew herself from his pillow, to afford him leisure for necessary repose.

"To whom belongs our little rescued varlet?" was the first question which the Lady of Avenel put to her handmaiden Lilius, when they had retired to the hall.

"To an old woman in the hamlet," said Lilius, "who is even now come so far as the porter's lodge to inquire concerning his safety. Is it your pleasure that she be admitted?"

"Is it my pleasure?" said the Lady of Avenel, echoing the question with a strong accent of displeasure and surprise; "can you make any doubt of it? What woman but must pity the agony of the mother, whose heart is throbbing for the safety of a child so lovely!"

"Nay, but, madam," said Lilius, "this woman is too old to be the mother of the child; I rather think she must be his grandmother, or some more distant relation."

"Be she who she will, Lilius," replied the Lady, "she must have an aching heart while the safety of a creature so lovely is uncertain. Go instantly and bring her hither. Besides, I would willingly learn something concerning his birth."

Lilius left the hall, and presently afterwards returned, ushering in a tall female very poorly dressed, yet with more pretension to decency and cleanliness than was usually combined with such coarse garments. The Lady of Avenel knew her figure the instant she presented herself. It was the fashion of the family, that upon every Sabbath, and on two evenings in the week besides, Henry Warden preached or lectured in the chapel at the castle. The extension of the Protestant faith was, upon principle, as well as in good policy, a primary object with the Knight of Avenel. The inhabitants of the village were therefore invited to attend upon the instructions of Henry Warden, and many of them were speedily won to the doctrine which their master and protector approved. These sermons, homilies, and lectures, had made a great impression on the mind of the Abbot Eustace, or Eustatius, and were a sufficient spur to the severity and sharpness of his controversy with his old fellow-collegiate; and, ere Queen Mary was dethroned, and while the Catholics still had considerable authority in the Border provinces, he more than once threatened to levy his vassals, and assail and level with the earth that stronghold of heresy the Castle of Avenel. But notwithstanding the Abbot's impotent resentment, and notwithstanding also the disinclination of the country to favour the new religion, Henry Warden proceeded without remission in his labours, and made weekly converts from the faith of Rome to that of the reformed church. Amongst those who gave most earnest and constant attendance on his ministry, was the aged woman, whose form, tall, and otherwise too remarkable to be forgotten, the Lady had of late observed frequently as being conspicuous among the little audience. She had indeed more than once desired to know who that stately-looking woman was, whose appearance was so much above the poverty of her vestments. But the reply had always been, that she was an Englishwoman, who was tarrying for a season at the hamlet, and that no one knew more concerning her. She now asked her after her name and birth.

"Magdalen Graeme is my name," said the woman; "I come of the Graemes

of Heathergill, in Nicol Forest, [Footnote: A district of Cumberland, lying close to the Scottish border.] a people of ancient blood."

"And what make you," continued the Lady, "so far distant from your home?"

"I have no home," said Magdalen Graeme, "it was burnt by your Border-riders--my husband and my son were slain--there is not a drop's blood left in the veins of any one which is of kin to mine."

"That is no uncommon fate in these wild times, and in this unsettled land," said the Lady; "the English hands have been as deeply dyed in our blood as ever those of Scotsmen have been in yours."

"You have right to say it, Lady," answered Magdalen Graeme; "for men tell of a time when this castle was not strong enough to save your father's life, or to afford your mother and her infant a place of refuge. And why ask ye me, then, wherefore I dwell not in mine own home, and with mine own people?"

"It was indeed an idle question," answered the Lady, "where misery so often makes wanderers; but wherefore take refuge in a hostile country?"

"My neighbours were Popish and mass-mongers," said the old woman; "it has pleased Heaven to give me a clearer sight of the gospel, and I have tarried here to enjoy the ministry of that worthy man Henry Warden, who, to the praise and comfort of many, teacheth the Evangel in truth and in sincerity."

"Are you poor?" again demanded the Lady of Avenel.

"You hear me ask alms of no one," answered the Englishwoman.

Here there was a pause. The manner of the woman was, if not disrespectful, at least much less than gracious; and she appeared to give no encouragement to farther communication. The Lady of Avenel renewed the conversation on a different topic.

"You have heard of the danger in which your boy has been placed?"

"I have, Lady, and how by an especial providence he was rescued from death. May Heaven make him thankful, and me!"

"What relation do you bear to him?"

"I am his grandmother, lady, if it so please you; the only relation he hath left upon earth to take charge of him."

"The burden of his maintenance must necessarily be grievous to you in your deserted situation?" pursued the Lady.

"I have complained of it to no one," said Magdalen Graeme, with the same unmoved, dry, and unconcerned tone of voice, in which she had answered all the former questions.

"If," said the Lady of Avenel, "your grandchild could be received into a noble family, would it not advantage both him and you?"

"Received into a noble family!" said the old woman, drawing herself up, and bending her brows until her forehead was wrinkled into a frown of unusual severity; "and for what purpose, I pray you?--to be my lady's page, or my lord's jackman, to eat broken victuals, and contend with other menials for the remnants of the master's meal? Would you have him to fan the flies from my lady's face while she sleeps, to carry her train while she walks, to hand her trencher when she feeds, to ride before her on horseback, to walk after her on foot, to sing when she lists, and to be silent when she bids?--a very weathercock, which, though furnished in appearance with wings and plumage, cannot soar into the air--cannot fly from the spot where it is perched, but receives all its impulse, and performs all its revolutions, obedient to the changeful breath of a vain woman? When the eagle of Helvellyn perches on the tower of Lanercost, and turns and changes his place to show how the wind sits, Roland Graeme shall be what you would make him."

The woman spoke with a rapidity and vehemence which seemed to have in it a touch of insanity; and a sudden sense of the danger to which the child must necessarily be exposed in the charge of such a keeper, increased the Lady's desire to keep him in the castle if possible.

"You mistake me, dame," she said, addressing the old woman in a soothing manner; "I do not wish your boy to be in attendance on myself, but upon the good knight my husband. Were he himself the son of a belted earl, he could not better be trained to arms, and all that befits a gentleman, than by the instructions and discipline of Sir Halbert Glendinning."

"Ay," answered the old woman, in the same style of bitter irony, "I know the wages of that service;--a curse when the corslet is not sufficiently brightened,--a blow when the girth is not tightly drawn,--to be beaten because the hounds are at fault,--to be reviled because the foray is unsuccessful,--to stain his hands for the master's bidding in the blood alike of beast and of man,--to be a butcher of harmless deer, a murderer and defacer of God's own image, not at his own pleasure, but at that of his lord,--to live a brawling ruffian, and a common stabber--exposed to heat, to cold, to want of food, to all the privations of an anchorite, not for the love of God, but for the service of Satan,--to die by the gibbet, or in some obscure skirmish,--to sleep out his brief life in carnal security, and to awake in the eternal fire, which is never quenched."

"Nay," said the Lady of Avenel, "but to such unhallowed course of life your grandson will not be here exposed. My husband is just and kind to those who live under his banner; and you yourself well know, that youth have here a strict as well as a good preceptor in the person of our chaplain."

The old woman appeared to pause.

"You have named," she said, "the only circumstance which can move me. I must soon onward, the vision has said it--I must not tarry in the same spot--I must on,--I must on, it is my weird.--Swear, then, that you will protect the boy as if he were your own, until I return hither and claim him, and I will consent for a space to part with him. But especially swear, he shall not lack the instruction of the godly man who hath placed the gospel-truth high above those idolatrous shavelings, the monks and friars."

"Be satisfied, dame," said the Lady of Avenel; "the boy shall have as much care as if he were born of my own blood. Will you see him now?"

"No," answered the old woman sternly; "to part is enough. I go forth on my own mission. I will not soften my heart by useless tears and wailings, as one that is not called to a duty."

"Will you not accept of something to aid you in your pilgrimage?" said the Lady of Avenel, putting into her hands two crowns of the sun. The old woman flung them down on the table.

"Am I of the race of Cain," she said, "proud Lady, that you offer me gold in exchange for my own flesh and blood?"

"I had no such meaning," said the Lady, gently; "nor am I the proud woman you term me. Alas! my own fortunes might have taught me humility, even had it not been born with me."

The old woman seemed somewhat to relax her tone of severity.

"You are of gentle blood," she said, "else we had not parleyed thus long together.--You are of gentle blood, and to such," she added, drawing up her tall form as she spoke, "pride is as graceful as is the plume upon the bonnet. But for these pieces of gold, lady, you must needs resume them. I need not money. I am well provided; and I may not care for myself, nor think how, or by whom, I shall be sustained. Farewell, and keep your word. Cause your gates to be opened, and your bridges to be lowered. I will set forward this very night. When I come again, I will demand from you a strict account, for I have left with you the jewel of my life! Sleep will visit me but in snatches, food will not refresh me, rest will not restore my strength, until I see Roland Graeme. Once more, farewell."

"Make your obeisance, dame," said Lilius to Magdalen Graeme, as she retired, "make your obeisance to her ladyship, and thank her for her goodness, as is but fitting and right."

The old woman turned short around on the officious waiting-maid. "Let her make her obeisance to me then, and I will return it. Why should I bend to her?--is it because her kirtle is of silk, and mine of blue lockram?--Go to, my lady's waiting-woman. Know that the rank of the man rates that of the wife, and that she who marries a churl's son, were she a king's daughter, is but a peasant's bride."

Lilius was about to reply in great indignation, but her mistress imposed silence on her, and commanded that the old woman should be safely conducted to the mainland.

"Conduct her safe!" exclaimed the incensed waiting-woman, while Magdalen Graeme left the apartment; "I say, duck her in the loch, and then we will see whether she is witch or not, as every body in the village of Lochside will say and swear. I marvel your ladyship could bear so long with her insolence." But the commands of the Lady were obeyed, and the old dame, dismissed from the castle, was committed to her fortune. She kept her word, and did not long abide in that place, leaving the hamlet on the very night succeeding the interview, and wandering no one asked whither. The Lady of Avenel inquired under what

circumstances she had appeared among them, but could only learn that she was believed to be the widow of some man of consequence among the Graemes who then inhabited the Debateable Land, a name given to a certain portion of territory which was the frequent subject of dispute betwixt Scotland and England--that she had suffered great wrong in some of the frequent forays by which that unfortunate district was wasted, and had been driven from her dwelling-place. She had arrived in the hamlet no one knew for what purpose, and was held by some to be a witch, by others a zealous Protestant, and by others again a Catholic devotee. Her language was mysterious, and her manners repulsive; and all that could be collected from her conversation seemed to imply that she was under the influence either of a spell or of a vow,--there was no saying which, since she talked as one who acted under a powerful and external agency.

Such were the particulars which the Lady's inquiries were able to collect concerning Magdalen Graeme, being far too meagre and contradictory to authorize any satisfactory deduction. In truth, the miseries of the time, and the various turns of fate incidental to a frontier country, were perpetually chasing from their habitations those who had not the means of defence or protection. These wanderers in the land were too often seen, to excite much attention or sympathy. They received the cold relief which was extorted by general feelings of humanity; a little excited in some breasts, and perhaps rather chilled in others, by the recollection that they who gave the charity to-day might themselves want it to-morrow. Magdalen Graeme, therefore, came and departed like a shadow from the neighbourhood of Avenel Castle.

The boy whom Providence, as she thought, had thus strangely placed under her care, was at once established a favourite with the Lady of the castle. How could it be otherwise? He became the object of those affectionate feelings, which, finding formerly no object on which to expand themselves, had increased the gloom of the castle, and imbittered the solitude of its mistress. To teach him reading and writing as far as her skill went, to attend to his childish comforts, to watch his boyish sports, became the Lady's favourite amusement. In her circumstances, where the ear only heard the lowing of the cattle from the distant hills, or the heavy step of the warder as he walked upon his post, or the half-envied laugh of her maiden as she turned her wheel, the appearance of the blooming and beautiful boy gave an interest which can hardly be conceived by those who live amid gayer and busier scenes. Young Roland was to the Lady of Avenel what the flower, which occupies the window of some solitary captive, is to the poor wight by whom it is nursed and cultivated,--something which at once excited and repaid her care; and in giving the boy her affection, she felt, as it were, grateful to him for releasing her from the state of dull apathy in which she had usually found herself during the absence of Sir Halbert Glendinning.

But even the charms of this blooming favourite were unable to chase the recurring apprehensions which arose from her husband's procrastinated return. Soon after Roland Graeme became a resident at the castle, a groom, despatched by Sir Halbert, brought tidings that business still delayed the Knight at the Court of Holyrood. The more distant period which the messenger had assigned for his master's arrival at length glided away, summer melted into autumn, and autumn was about to give place to winter, and yet he came not.

Chapter the Third.

The waning harvest-moon shone broad and bright,
The warder's horn was heard at dead of night,
And while the portals-wide were flung,
With trampling hoofs the rocky pavement rung.
LEYDEN.

"And you, too, would be a soldier, Roland?" said the Lady of Avenel to her young charge, while, seated on a stone chair at one end of the battlements, she saw the boy attempt, with a long stick, to mimic the motions of the warder, as he alternately shouldered, or ported, or sloped pike.

"Yes, Lady," said the boy,--for he was now familiar, and replied to her questions with readiness and alacrity,--"a soldier will I be; for there ne'er was gentleman but who belted him with the brand."

"Thou a gentleman!" said Lilius, who, as usual, was in attendance; "such a gentleman as I would make of a bean-cod with a rusty knife."

"Nay, chide him not, Lilius," said the Lady of Avenel, "for, beshrew me, but I think he comes of gentle blood--see how it musters in his face at your injurious reproof."

"Had I my will, madam," answered Lilius, "a good birchen wand should make his colour muster to better purpose still."

"On my word, Lilius," said the Lady, "one would think you had received harm from the poor boy--or is he so far on the frosty side of your favour because he enjoys the sunny side of mine?"

"Over heavens forbode, my Lady!" answered Lilius; "I have lived too long with gentles, I praise my stars for it, to fight with either follies or fantasies, whether they relate to beast, bird, or boy."

Lilius was a favourite in her own class, a spoiled domestic, and often accustomed to take more licence than her mistress was at all times willing to encourage. But what did not please the Lady of Avenel, she did not choose to hear, and thus it was on the present occasion. She resolved to look more close and sharply after the boy, who had hitherto been committed chiefly to the management of Lilius. He must, she thought, be born of gentle blood; it were shame to think otherwise of a form so noble, and features so fair;--the very wildness in which he occasionally indulged, his contempt of danger, and impatience of restraint, had in them something noble;--assuredly the child was born of high rank. Such was her conclusion, and she acted upon it accordingly. The domestics around her, less jealous, or less scrupulous than Lilius, acted as servants usually do, following the bias, and flattering, for their own purposes, the humour of the Lady; and the boy soon took on him those airs of superiority, which the sight of habitual deference seldom fails to inspire. It seemed, in truth, as if to command were his natural sphere, so easily did he use himself to exact and receive compliance with his humours. The chaplain, indeed, might have interposed to check the air of assumption

which Roland Graeme so readily indulged, and most probably would have willingly rendered him that favour; but the necessity of adjusting with his brethren some disputed points of church discipline had withdrawn him for some time from the castle, and detained him in a distant part of the kingdom.

Matters stood thus in the castle of Avenel, when a winded bugle sent its shrill and prolonged notes from the shore of the lake, and was replied to cheerily by the signal of the warder. The Lady of Avenel knew the sounds of her husband, and rushed to the window of the apartment in which she was sitting. A band of about thirty spearmen, with a pennon displayed before them, winded along the indented shores of the lake, and approached the causeway. A single horseman rode at the head of the party, his bright arms catching a glance of the October sun as he moved steadily along. Even at that distance, the

Lady recognized the lofty plume, bearing the mingled colours of her own liveries and those of Glendonwyne, blended with the holly-branch; and the firm seat and dignified demeanour of the rider, joined to the stately motion of the dark-brown steed, sufficiently announced Halbert Glendinning.

The Lady's first thought was that of rapturous joy at her husband's return--her second was connected with a fear which had sometimes intruded itself, that he might not altogether approve the peculiar distinction with which she had treated her orphan ward. In this fear there was implied a consciousness, that the favour she had shown him was excessive; for Halbert Glendinning was at least as gentle and indulgent, as he was firm and rational in the intercourse of his household; and to her in particular, his conduct had ever been most affectionately tender.

Yet she did fear, that, on the present occasion, her conduct might incur Sir Halbert's censure; and hastily resolving that she would not mention, the anecdote of the boy until the next day, she ordered him to be withdrawn from the apartment by Lilius.

"I will not go with Lilius, madam," answered the spoiled child, who had more than once carried his point by perseverance, and who, like his betters, delighted in the exercise of such authority,--"I will not go to Lilius's gousty room--I will stay and see that brave warrior who comes riding so gallantly along the drawbridge."

"You must not stay, Roland," said the Lady, more positively than she usually spoke to her little favourite.

"I will," reiterated the boy, who had already felt his consequence, and the probable chance of success.

"You will, Roland!" answered the Lady, "what manner of word is that? I tell you, you must go."

"Will," answered the forward boy, "is a word for a man, and must is no word for a lady."

"You are saucy, sirrah," said the Lady--"Lilius, take him with you instantly."

"I always thought," said Lilius, smiling, as she seized the reluctant boy by the arm, "that my young master must give place to my old one."

"And you, too, are malapert, mistress!" said the Lady; "hath the moon changed, that ye all of you thus forget yourselves?"

Lilius made no reply, but led off the boy, who, too proud to offer unavailing resistance, darted at his benefactress a glance, which intimated plainly, how willingly he would have defied her authority, had he possessed the power to make good his point.

The Lady of Avenel was vexed to find how much this trifling circumstance had discomposed her, at the moment when she ought naturally to have been entirely engrossed by her husband's return. But we do not recover composure by the mere feeling that agitation is mistimed. The glow of displeasure had not left the Lady's cheek, her ruffled deportment was not yet entirely composed, when her husband, unhelmeted, but still wearing the rest of his arms, entered the apartment. His appearance banished the thoughts of every thing else; she rushed to him, clasped his iron-sheathed frame in her arms, and kissed his martial and manly face with an affection which was at once evident and sincere. The warrior returned her embrace and her caress with the same fondness; for the time which had passed since their union had diminished its romantic ardour, perhaps, but it had rather increased its rational tenderness, and Sir Halbert Glendinning's long and frequent absences from his castle had prevented affection from degenerating by habit into indifference.

When the first eager greetings were paid and received, the Lady gazed fondly on her husband's face as she remarked, "You are altered, Halbert--you have ridden hard and far to-day, or you have been ill?"

"I have been well, Mary," answered the Knight, "passing well have I been; and a long ride is to me, thou well knowest, but a thing of constant custom. Those who are born noble may slumber out their lives within the walls of their castles and manor-houses; but he who hath achieved nobility by his own deeds must ever be in the saddle, to show that he merits his advancement."

While he spoke thus, the Lady gazed fondly on him, as if endeavouring to read his inmost soul; for the tone in which he spoke was that of melancholy depression.

Sir Halbert Glendinning was the same, yet a different person from what he had appeared in his early years. The fiery freedom of the aspiring youth had given place to the steady and stern composure of the approved soldier and skilful politician. There were deep traces of care on those noble features, over which each emotion used formerly to pass, like light clouds across a summer sky. That sky was now, not perhaps clouded, but still and grave, like that of the sober autumn evening. The forehead was higher and more bare than in early youth, and the locks which still clustered thick and dark on the warrior's head, were worn away at the temples, not by age, but by the constant pressure of the steel cap, or helmet. His beard, according to the fashion of the time, grew short and thick, and was turned into mustaches on the upper lip, and peaked at the extremity. The cheek, weather-beaten and embrowned, had lost the glow of youth, but showed the vigorous complexion of active and confirmed manhood. Halbert Glendinning was, in a word, a knight to ride at a king's right hand,

to bear his banner in war, and to be his counsellor in time of peace; for his looks expressed the considerate firmness which can resolve wisely and dare boldly. Still, over these noble features, there now spread an air of dejection, of which, perhaps, the owner was not conscious, but which did not escape the observation of his anxious and affectionate partner.

"Something has happened, or is about to happen," said the Lady of Avenel; "this sadness sits not on your brow without cause--misfortune, national or particular, must needs be at hand."

"There is nothing new that I wot of," said Halbert Glendinning; "but there is little of evil which can befall a kingdom, that may not be apprehended in this unhappy and divided realm."

"Nay, then," said the Lady, "I see there hath really been some fatal work on foot. My Lord of Murray has not so long detained you at Holyrood, save that he wanted your help in some weighty purpose."

"I have not been at Holyrood, Mary," answered the Knight; "I have been several weeks abroad."

"Abroad! and sent me no word?" replied the Lady.

"What would the knowledge have availed, but to have rendered you unhappy, my love?" replied the Knight; "your thoughts would have converted the slightest breeze that curled your own lake, into a tempest raging in the German ocean."

"And have you then really crossed the sea?" said the Lady, to whom the very idea of an element which she had never seen conveyed notions of terror and of wonder,--"really left your own native land, and trodden distant shores, where the Scottish tongue is unheard and unknown?"

"Really, and really," said the Knight, taking her hand in affectionate playfulness, "I have done this marvellous deed--have rolled on the ocean for three days and three nights, with the deep green waves dashing by the side of my pillow, and but a thin plank to divide me from it."

"Indeed, my Halbert," said the Lady, "that was a tempting of Divine Providence. I never bade you unbuckle the sword from your side, or lay the lance from your hand--I never bade you sit still when your honour called you to rise and ride; but are not blade and spear dangers enough for one man's life, and why would you trust rough waves and raging seas?"

"We have in Germany, and in the Low Countries, as they are called," answered Glendinning, "men who are united with us in faith, and with whom it is fitting we should unite in alliance. To some of these I was despatched on business as important as it was secret. I went in safety, and I returned in security; there is more danger to a man's life betwixt this and Holyrood, than are in all the seas that wash the lowlands of Holland."

"And the country, my Halbert, and the people," said the Lady, "are they like our kindly Scots? or what bearing have they to strangers?"

"They are a people, Mary, strong in their wealth, which renders all

other nations weak, and weak in those arts of war by which other nations are strong."

"I do not understand you," said the Lady.

"The Hollander and the Fleming, Mary, pour forth their spirit in trade, and not in war; their wealth purchases them the arms of foreign soldiers, by whose aid they defend it. They erect dikes on the sea-shore to protect the land which they have won, and they levy regiments of the stubborn Switzers and hardy Germans to protect the treasures which they have amassed. And thus they are strong in their weakness; for the very wealth which tempts their masters to despoil them, arms strangers in their behalf."

"The slothful hinds!" exclaimed Mary, thinking and feeling like a Scotswoman of the period; "have they hands, and fight not for the land which bore them? They should be notched off at the elbow!"

"Nay, that were but hard justice," answered her husband; "for their hands serve their country, though not in battle, like ours. Look at these barren hills, Mary, and at that deep winding vale by which the cattle are even now returning from their scanty browse. The hand of the industrious Fleming would cover these mountains with wood, and raise corn where we now see a starved and scanty sward of heath and ling. It grieves me, Mary, when I look on that land, and think what benefit it might receive from such men as I have lately seen--men who seek not the idle fame derived from dead ancestors, or the bloody renown won in modern broils, but tread along the land, as preservers and improvers, not as tyrants and destroyers."

"These amendments would here be but a vain fancy, my Halbert," answered the Lady of Avenel; "the trees would be burned by the English foemen, ere they ceased to be shrubs, and the grain that you raised would be gathered in by the first neighbour that possessed more riders than follow your train. Why should you repine at this? The fate that made you Scotsman by birth, gave you head, and heart, and hand, to uphold the name as it must needs be upheld."

"It gave me no name to uphold," said Halbert, pacing the floor slowly; "my arm has been foremost in every strife--my voice has been heard in every council, nor have the wisest rebuked me. The crafty Lethington, the deep and dark Morton, have held secret council with me, and Grange and Lindsay have owned, that in the field I did the devoir of a gallant knight--but let the emergence be passed when they need my head and hand, and they only know me as son of the obscure portioner of Glendearg."

This was a theme which the Lady always dreaded; for the rank conferred on her husband, the favour in which he was held by the powerful Earl of Murray, and the high talents by which he vindicated his right to that rank and that favour, were qualities which rather increased than diminished the envy which was harboured against Sir Halbert Glendinning among a proud aristocracy, as a person originally of inferior and obscure birth, who had risen to his present eminence solely by his personal merit. The natural firmness of his mind did not enable him to despise the ideal advantages of a higher pedigree, which were held in such universal esteem by all with whom he conversed; and so open are the noblest minds to jealous inconsistencies, that there were moments in which he felt mortified that his lady should possess

those advantages of birth and high descent which he himself did not enjoy, and regretted that his importance as the proprietor of Avenel was qualified by his possessing it only as the husband of the heiress. He was not so unjust as to permit any unworthy feelings to retain permanent possession of his mind, but yet they recurred from time to time, and did not escape his lady's anxious observation.

"Had we been blessed with children," she was wont on such occasions to say to herself, "had our blood been united in a son who might have joined my advantages of descent with my husband's personal worth, these painful and irksome reflections had not disturbed our union even for a moment. But the existence of such an heir, in whom our affections, as well as our pretensions, might have centred, has been denied to us."

With such mutual feelings, it cannot be wondered that it gave the Lady pain to hear her husband verging towards this topic of mutual discontent. On the present, as on other similar occasions, she endeavoured to divert the knight's thoughts from this painful channel.

"How can you," she said, "suffer yourself to dwell upon things which profit nothing? Have you indeed no name to uphold? You, the good and the brave, the wise in council, and the strong in battle, have you not to support the reputation your own deeds have won, a reputation more honourable than mere ancestry can supply? Good men love and honour you, the wicked fear, and the turbulent obey you; and is it not necessary you should exert yourself to ensure the endurance of that love, that honour, and wholesome fear, and that necessary obedience?"

As she thus spoke, the eye of her husband caught from hers courage and comfort, and it lightened as he took her hand and replied, "It is most true, my Mary, and I deserve thy rebuke, who forget what I am, in repining because I am not what I cannot be. I am now what the most famed ancestors of those I envy were, the mean man raised into eminence by his own exertions; and sure it is a boast as honourable to have those capacities which are necessary to the foundation of a family, as to be descended from one who possessed them some centuries before. The Hay of Loncarty, who bequeathed his bloody yoke to his lineage,—the 'dark gray man,' who first founded the house of Douglas, had yet less of ancestry to boast than I have. For thou knowest, Mary, that my name derives itself from a line of ancient warriors, although my immediate forefathers preferred the humble station in which thou didst first find them; and war and counsel are not less proper to the house of Glendonwyne, even, in its most remote descendants, than to the proudest of their baronage." [Footnote: This was a house of ancient descent and superior consequence, including persons who fought at Bannockburn and Otterburn, and closely connected by alliance and friendship with the great Earls of Douglas. The Knight in this story argues as most Scotsmen would do in his situation, for all of the same clan are popularly considered as descended from the same stock, and as having a right to the ancestral honor of the chief branch. This opinion, though sometimes ideal, is so strong even at this day of innovation, that it may be observed as a national difference between my countrymen and the English. If you ask an Englishman of good birth, whether a person of the same name be connected with him, he answers (if in dubio.) "No—he is a mere namesake." Ask a similar question of a Scot, (I mean a Scotsman,) he replies—"He is one of our clan; I daresay there is a relationship, though I do not know how distant." The Englishman thinks of discountenancing a species of

rivalry in society; the Scotsman's answer is grounded on the ancient idea of strengthening the clan.]

He strode across the hall as he spoke; and the Lady smiled internally to observe how much his mind dwelt upon the prerogatives of birth, and endeavoured to establish his claims, however remote, to a share in them, at the very moment when he affected to hold them in contempt. It will easily be guessed, however, that she permitted no symptom to escape her that could show she was sensible of the weakness of her husband, a perspicacity which perhaps his proud spirit could not very easily have brooked.

As he returned from the extremity of the hall, to which he had stalked while in the act of vindicating the title of the house of Glendonwyne in its most remote branches to the full privileges of aristocracy, "Where," he said, "is Wolf? I have not seen him since my return, and he was usually the first to welcome my home-coming."

"Wolf," said the Lady, with a slight degree of embarrassment, for which perhaps, she would have found it difficult to assign any reason even to herself, "Wolf is chained up for the present. He hath been surly to my page."

"Wolf chained up--and Wolf surly to your page!" answered Sir Halbert Glendinning; "Wolf never was surly to any one; and the chain will either break his spirit or render him savage--So ho, there--set Wolf free directly."

He was obeyed; and the huge dog rushed into the hall, disturbing, by his unwieldy and boisterous gambols, the whole economy of reels, rocks, and distaffs, with which the maidens of the household were employed when the arrival of their lord was a signal to them to withdraw, and extracting from Liliias, who was summoned to put them again in order, the natural observation, "That the Laird's pet was as troublesome as the lady's page."

"And who is this page, Mary?" said the Knight, his attention again called to the subject by the observation of the waiting-woman,--"Who is this page, whom every one seems to weigh in the balance with my old friend and favourite, Wolf?--When did you aspire to the dignity of keeping a page, or who is the boy?"

"I trust, my Halbert," said the Lady, not without a blush, "you will not think your wife entitled to less attendance than other ladies of her quality?"

"Nay, Dame Mary," answered the Knight, "it is enough you desire such an attendant.--Yet I have never loved to nurse such useless menials--a lady's page--it may well suit the proud English dames to have a slender youth to bear their trains from bower to hall, fan them when they slumber, and touch the lute for them when they please to listen; but our Scottish matrons were wont to be above such vanities, and our Scottish youth ought to be bred to the spear and the stirrup."

"Nay, but, my husband," said the Lady, "I did but jest when I called this boy my page; he is in sooth a little orphan whom we saved from perishing in the lake, and whom I have since kept in the castle out of charity.--Liliias, bring little Roland hither."

Roland entered accordingly, and, flying to the Lady's side, took hold of the plaits of her gown, and then turned round, and gazed with an attention not unmingled with fear, upon the stately form of the Knight.--"Roland," said the Lady, "go kiss the hand of the noble Knight, and ask him to be thy protector."--But Roland obeyed not, and, keeping his station, continued to gaze fixedly and timidly on Sir Halbert Glendinning.--"Go to the Knight, boy," said the Lady; "what dost thou fear, child? Go, kiss Sir Halbert's hand."

"I will kiss no hand save yours, Lady," answered the boy.

"Nay, but do as you are commanded, child," replied the Lady.--"He is dashed by your presence," she said, apologizing to her husband; "but is he not a handsome boy?"

"And so is Wolf," said Sir Halbert, as he patted his huge four-footed favourite, "a handsome dog; but he has this double advantage over your new favourite, that he does what he is commanded, and hears not when he is praised."

"Nay, now you are displeased with me," replied the Lady; "and yet why should you be so? There is nothing wrong in relieving the distressed orphan, or in loving that which is in itself lovely and deserving of affection. But you have seen Mr. Warden at Edinburgh, and he has set you against the poor boy."

"My dear Mary," answered her husband, "Mr. Warden better knows his place than to presume to interfere either in your affairs or mine. I neither blame your relieving this boy, nor your kindness for him. But, I think, considering his birth and prospects, you ought not to treat him with injudicious fondness, which can only end in rendering him unfit for the humble situation to which Heaven has designed him."

"Nay, but, my Halbert, do but look at the boy," said the Lady, "and see whether he has not the air of being intended by Heaven for something nobler than a mere peasant. May he not be designed, as others have been, to rise out of a humble situation into honour and eminence?"

Thus far had she proceeded, when the consciousness that she was treading upon delicate ground at once occurred to her, and induced her to take the most natural, but the worst of all courses in such occasions, whether in conversation or in an actual bog, namely, that of stopping suddenly short in the illustration which she had commenced. Her brow crimsoned, and that of Sir Halbert Glendinning was slightly overcast. But it was only for an instant; for he was incapable of mistaking his lady's meaning, or supposing that she meant intentional disrespect to him.

"Be it as you please, my love," he replied; "I owe you too much to contradict you in aught which may render your solitary mode of life more endurable. Make of this youth what you will, and you have my full authority for doing so. But remember he is your charge, not mine--remember he hath limbs to do man's service, a soul and a tongue to worship God; breed him, therefore, to be true to his country and to Heaven; and for the rest, dispose of him as you list--it is, and shall rest, your own matter."

This conversation decided the fate of Roland Graeme, who from

thence-forward was little noticed by the master of the mansion of Avenel, but indulged and favoured by its mistress.

This situation led to many important consequences, and, in truth, tended to bring forth the character of the youth in all its broad lights and deep shadows. As the Knight himself seemed tacitly to disclaim alike interest and control over the immediate favourite of his lady, young Roland was, by circumstances, exempted from the strict discipline to which, as the retainer of a Scottish man of rank, he would otherwise have been subjected, according to all the rigour of the age. But the steward, or master of the household--such was the proud title assumed by the head domestic of each petty baron--deemed it not advisable to interfere with the favourite of the Lady, and especially since she had brought the estate into the present family. Master Jasper Wingate was a man experienced, as he often boasted, in the ways of great families, and knew how to keep the steerage even when the wind and tide chanced to be in contradiction.

This prudent personage winked at much, and avoided giving opportunity for farther offence, by requesting little of Roland Graeme beyond the degree of attention which he was himself disposed to pay; rightly conjecturing, that however lowly the place which the youth might hold in the favour of the Knight of Avenel, still to make an evil report of him would make an enemy of the Lady, without securing the favour of her husband. With these prudential considerations, and doubtless not without an eye to his own ease and convenience, he taught the boy as much, and only as much, as he chose to learn, readily admitting whatever apology it pleased his pupil to allege in excuse for idleness or negligence. As the other persons in the castle, to whom such tasks were delegated, readily imitated the prudential conduct of the major-domo, there was little control used towards Roland Graeme, who, of course, learned no more than what a very active mind, and a total impatience of absolute idleness led him to acquire upon his own account, and by dint of his own exertions. The latter were especially earnest, when the Lady herself condescended to be his tutress, or to examine his progress.

It followed also from his quality as my Lady's favourite, that Roland was viewed with no peculiar good-will by the followers of the Knight, many of whom, of the same age, and apparently similar origin, with the fortunate page, were subjected to severe observance of the ancient and rigorous discipline of a feudal retainer. To these, Roland Graeme was of course an object of envy, and, in consequence, of dislike and detraction; but the youth possessed qualities which it was impossible to depreciate. Pride, and a sense of early ambition, did for him what severity and constant instruction did for others. In truth, the youthful Roland displayed that early flexibility both of body and mind, which renders exercise, either mental or bodily, rather matter of sport than of study; and it seemed as if he acquired accidentally, and by starts, those accomplishments, which earnest and constant instruction, enforced by frequent reproof and occasional chastisement, had taught to others. Such military exercises, such lessons of the period, as he found it agreeable or convenient to apply to, he learned so perfectly, as to confound those who were ignorant how often the want of constant application is compensated by vivacity of talent and ardent enthusiasm. The lads, therefore, who were more regularly trained to arms, to horsemanship, and to other necessary exercises of the period, while they envied Roland Graeme the indulgence or negligence with which he seemed to be treated, had little reason to

boast of their own superior acquirements; a few hours, with the powerful exertion of a most energetic will, seemed to do for him more than the regular instruction of weeks could accomplish for others.

Under these advantages, if, indeed, they were to be termed such, the character of young Roland began to develop itself. It was bold, peremptory, decisive, and overbearing; generous, if neither withstood nor contradicted; vehement and passionate, if censured or opposed. He seemed to consider himself as attached to no one, and responsible to no one, except his mistress, and even over her mind he had gradually acquired that species of ascendancy which indulgence is so apt to occasion. And although the immediate followers and dependents of Sir Halbert Glendinning saw his ascendancy with jealousy, and often took occasion to mortify his vanity, there wanted not those who were willing to acquire the favour of the Lady of Avenel by humouring and taking part with the youth whom she protected; for although a favourite, as the poet assures us, has no friend, he seldom fails to have both followers and flatterers.

The partisans of Roland Graeme were chiefly to be found amongst the inhabitants of the little hamlet on the shore of the lake. These villagers, who were sometimes tempted to compare their own situation with that of the immediate and constant followers of the Knight, who attended him on his frequent journeys to Edinburgh and elsewhere, delighted in considering and representing themselves as more properly the subjects of the Lady of Avenel than of her husband. It is true, her wisdom and affection on all occasions discountenanced the distinction which was here implied; but the villagers persisted in thinking it must be agreeable to her to enjoy their peculiar and undivided homage, or at least in acting as if they thought so; and one chief mode by which they evinced their sentiments, was by the respect they paid to young Roland Graeme, the favourite attendant of the descendant of their ancient lords. This was a mode of flattery too pleasing to encounter rebuke or censure; and the opportunity which it afforded the youth to form, as it were, a party of his own within the limits of the ancient barony of Avenel, added not a little to the audacity and decisive tone of a character, which was by nature bold, impetuous, and uncontrollable.

Of the two members of the household who had manifested an early jealousy of Roland Graeme, the prejudices of Wolf were easily overcome; and in process of time the noble dog slept with Bran, Luath, and the celebrated hounds of ancient days. But Mr. Warden, the chaplain, lived, and retained his dislike to the youth. That good man, single-minded and benevolent as he really was, entertained rather more than a reasonable idea of the respect due to him as a minister, and exacted from the inhabitants of the castle more deference than the haughty young page, proud of his mistress's favour, and petulant from youth and situation, was at all times willing to pay. His bold and free demeanour, his attachment to rich dress and decoration, his inaptitude to receive instruction, and his hardening himself against rebuke, were circumstances which induced the good old man, with more haste than charity, to set the forward page down as a vessel of wrath, and to presage that the youth nursed that pride and haughtiness of spirit which goes before ruin and destruction. On the other hand, Roland evinced at times a marked dislike, and even something like contempt, of the chaplain. Most of the attendants and followers of Sir Halbert Glendinning entertained the same charitable thoughts as the reverend Mr. Warden; but while Roland was favoured by their lady, and

endured by their lord, they saw no policy in making their opinions public.

Roland Graeme was sufficiently sensible of the unpleasant situation in which he stood; but in the haughtiness of his heart he retorted upon the other domestics the distant, cold, and sarcastic manner in which they treated him, assumed an air of superiority which compelled the most obstinate to obedience, and had the satisfaction at least to be dreaded, if he was heartily hated.

The chaplain's marked dislike had the effect of recommending him to the attention of Sir Halbert's brother, Edward, who now, under the conventual appellation of Father Ambrose, continued to be one of the few monks who, with the Abbot Eustatius, had, notwithstanding the nearly total downfall of their faith under the regency of Murray, been still permitted to linger in the cloisters at Kennaquhair. Respect to Sir Halbert had prevented their being altogether driven out of the Abbey, though their order was now in a great measure suppressed, and they were interdicted the public exercise of their ritual, and only allowed for their support a small pension out of their once splendid revenues. Father Ambrose, thus situated, was an occasional, though very rare visitant, at the Castle of Avenel, and was at such times observed to pay particular attention to Roland Graeme, who seemed to return it with more depth of feeling than consisted with his usual habits.

Thus situated, years glided on, during which the Knight of Avenel continued to act a frequent and important part in the convulsions of his distracted country; while young Graeme anticipated, both in wishes and personal accomplishments, the age which should enable him to emerge from the obscurity of his present situation.

Chapter the Fourth.

Amid their cups that freely flow'd,
Their revelry and mirth,
A youthful lord tax'd Valentine
With base and doubtful birth.
VALENTINE AND ORSON.

When Roland Graeme was a youth about seventeen years of age, he chanced one summer morning to descend to the mew in which Sir Halbert Glendinning kept his hawks, in order to superintend the training of an *eyas*, or young hawk, which he himself, at the imminent risk of neck and limbs, had taken from the celebrated *eyry* in the neighborhood, called *Gledsraig*. As he was by no means satisfied with the attention which had been bestowed on his favourite bird, he was not slack in testifying his displeasure to the falconer's lad, whose duty it was to have attended upon it.

"What, ho! sir knave," exclaimed Roland, "is it thus you feed the *eyas* with unwashed meat, as if you were gorging the fowl brancher of a worthless hoodie-crow? by the mass, and thou hast neglected its castings also for these two days! Think'st thou I ventured my neck to bring the bird down from the crag, that thou shouldst spoil him by thy

neglect?" And to add force to his remonstrances, he conferred a cuff or two on the negligent attendant of the hawks, who, shouting rather louder than was necessary under all the circumstances, brought the master falconer to his assistance.

Adam Woodcock, the falconer of Avenel, was an Englishman by birth, but so long in the service of Glendinning, that he had lost much of his notional attachment in that which he had formed to his master. He was a favourite in his department, jealous and conceited of his skill, as masters of the game usually are; for the rest of his character he was a jester and a parcel poet, (qualities which by no means abated his natural conceit,) a jolly fellow, who, though a sound Protestant, loved a flagon of ale better than a long sermon, a stout man of his hands when need required, true to his master, and a little presuming on his interest with him.

Adam Woodcock, such as we have described him, by no means relished the freedom used by young Graeme, in chastising his assistant. "Hey, hey, my Lady's page," said he, stepping between his own boy and Roland, "fair and softly, an it like your gilt jacket--hands off is fair play--if my boy has done amiss, I can beat him myself, and then you may keep your hands soft."

"I will beat him and thee too," answered Roland, without hesitation, "an you look not better after your business. See how the bird is cast away between you. I found the careless lurdane feeding him with unwashed flesh, and she an eyas." [Footnote: There is a difference amongst authorities how long the nestling hawk should be fed with flesh which has previously been washed.]

"Go to," said the falconer, "thou art but an eyas thyself, child Roland.--What knowest thou of feeding? I say that the eyas should have her meat unwashed, until she becomes a brancher--'twere the ready way to give her the frounce, to wash her meat sooner, and so knows every one who knows a gled from a falcon."

"It is thine own laziness, thou false English blood, that dost nothing but drink and sleep," retorted the page, "and leaves that lither lad to do the work, which he minds as little as thou."

"And am I so idle then," said the falconer, "that have three cast of hawks to look after, at perch and mew, and to fly them in the field to boot?--and is my Lady's page so busy a man that he must take me up short?--and am I of false English blood?--I marvel what blood thou art--neither Englander nor Scot--fish nor flesh--a bastard from the Debateable Land, without either kith, kin, or ally!--Marry, out upon thee, foul kite, that would fain be a tercel gentle!"

The reply to this sarcasm was a box on the ear, so well applied, that it overthrew the falconer into the cistern in which water was kept for the benefit of the hawks. Up started Adam Woodcock, his wrath no way appeased by the cold immersion, and seizing on a truncheon which stood by, would have soon requited the injury he had received, had not Roland laid his hand on his poniard, and sworn by all that was sacred, that if he offered a stroke towards him, he would sheath the blade in his bowels. The noise was now so great, that more than one of the household came in, and amongst others the major-domo, a grave personage, already mentioned, whose gold chain and white wand intimated his authority. At the appearance of this dignitary, the

strife was for the present appeased. He embraced, however, so favourable an opportunity, to read Roland Graeme a shrewd lecture on the impropriety of his deportment to his fellow-menials, and to assure him, that, should he communicate this fray to his master, (who, though now on one of his frequent expeditions, was speedily expected to return,) which but for respect to his Lady he would most certainly do, the residence of the culprit in the Castle of Avenel would be but of brief duration. "But, however," added the prudent master of the household, "I will report the matter first to my Lady."

"Very just, very right, Master Wingate," exclaimed several voices together; "my Lady will consider if daggers, are to be drawn on us for every idle word, and whether we are to live in a well-ordered household, where there is the fear of God, or amidst drawn dirks and sharp knives."

The object of this general resentment darted an angry glance around him, and suppressing with difficulty the desire which urged him to reply in furious or in contemptuous language, returned his dagger into his scabbard, looked disdainfully around upon the assembled menials, turned short upon his heel, and pushing aside those who stood betwixt him and the door, left the apartment.

"This will be no tree for my nest," said the falconer, "if this cock-sparrow is to crow over us as he seems to do."

"He struck me with his switch yesterday," said one of the grooms, "because the tail of his worship's gelding was not trimmed altogether so as suited his humour."

"And I promise you," said the laundress, "my young master will stick nothing to call an honest woman slut and quean, if there be but a speck of soot upon his band-collar."

"If Master Wingate do not his errand to my Lady," was the general result, "there will be no tarrying in the same house with Roland Graeme."

The master of the household heard them all for some time, and then, motioning for universal silence, he addressed them with all the dignity of Malvolio himself.--"My masters,--not forgetting you, my mistresses,--do not think the worse of me that I proceed with as much care as haste in this matter. Our master is a gallant knight, and will have his sway at home and abroad, in wood and field, in hall and bower, as the saying is. Our Lady, my benison upon her, is also a noble person of long descent, and rightful heir of this place and barony, and she also loves her will; as for that matter, show me the woman who doth not. Now, she hath favoured, doth favour, and will favour, this jack-an-ape,--for what good part about him I know not, save that as one noble lady will love a messan dog, and another a screaming popinjay, and a third a Barbary ape, so doth it please our noble dame to set her affections upon this stray elf of a page, for nought that I can think of, save that she--was the cause of his being saved (the more's the pity) from drowning." And here Master Wingate made a pause.

"I would have been his caution for a gray goat against salt water or fresh," said Roland's adversary, the falconer; "marry, if he crack not

a rope for stabbing or for snatching, I will be content never to hood hawk again."

"Peace, Adam Woodcock," said Wingate, waving his hand; "I prithee, peace man--Now, my Lady liking this springald, as aforesaid, differs therein from my Lord, who loves never a bone in his skin. Now, is it for me to stir up strife betwixt them, and put as'twere my finger betwixt the bark and the tree, on account of a pragmatial youngster, whom, nevertheless, I would willingly see whipped forth of the barony? Have patience, and this boil will break without our meddling. I have been in service since I wore a beard on my chin, till now that that beard is turned gray, and I have seldom known any one better themselves, even by taking the lady's part against the lord's; but never one who did not dirk himself, if he took the lord's against the lady's."

"And so," said Liliias, "we are to be crowed over, every one of us, men and women, cock and hen, by this little upstart?--I will try titles with him first, I promise you.--I fancy, Master Wingate, for as wise as you look, you will be pleased to tell what you have seen to-day, if my lady commands you?"

"To speak the truth when my lady commands me," answered the prudential major-domo, "is in some measure my duty, Mistress Liliias; always providing for and excepting those cases in which it cannot be spoken without breeding mischief and inconvenience to myself or my fellow-servants; for the tongue of a tale-bearer breaketh bones as well as Jeddart-staff." [Footnote: A species of battle-axe, so called as being in especial use in that ancient burgh, whose armorial bearing still represent an armed horseman brandishing such a weapon.]

"But this imp of Satan is none of your friends or fellow-servants," said Liliias; "and I trust you mean not to stand up for him against the whole family besides?"

"Credit me, Mrs. Liliias," replied the senior, "should I see the time fitting, I would, with right good-will give him a lick with the rough side of my tongue."

"Enough said, Master Wingate," answered Liliias; "then trust me his song shall soon be laid. If my mistress does not ask me what is the matter below stairs before she be ten minutes of time older, she is no born woman, and my name is not Liliias Bradbourne."

In pursuance of her plan, Mistress Liliias failed not to present herself before her mistress with all the exterior of one who is possessed of an important secret,--that is, she had the corners of her mouth turned down, her eyes raised up, her lips pressed as fast together as if they had been sewed up, to prevent her babbling, and an air of prim mystical importance diffused over her whole person and demeanour, which seemed to intimate, "I know something which I am resolved not to tell you!"

Liliias had rightly read her mistress's temper, who, wise and good as she was, was yet a daughter of grandame Eve, and could not witness this mysterious bearing on the part of her waiting-woman without longing to ascertain the secret cause. For a space, Mrs. Liliias was obdurate to all inquiries, sighed, turned her eyes up higher yet to heaven, hoped for the best, but had nothing particular to communicate.

All this, as was most natural and proper, only stimulated the Lady's curiosity; neither was her importunity to be parried with,--"Thank God, I am no makebate--no tale-bearer,--thank God, I never envied any one's favour, or was anxious to propale their misdemeanour-only, thank God, there has been no bloodshed and murder in the house--that is all."

"Bloodshed and murder!" exclaimed the Lady, "what does the quean mean?--if you speak not plain out, you shall have something you will scarce be thankful for."

"Nay, my Lady," answered Lilius, eager to disburden her mind, or, in, Chaucer's phrase, to "unbuckle her mail," "if you bid me speak out the truth, you must not be moved with what might displease you--Roland Graeme has dirked Adam Woodstock--that is all."

"Good Heaven!" said the Lady, turning pale as ashes, "is the man slain?"

"No, madam," replied Lilius, "but slain he would have been, if there had not been ready help; but may be, it is your Ladyship's pleasure that this young esquire shall poniard the servants, as well as switch and baton them."

"Go to, minion," said the Lady, "you are saucy--tell the master of the household to attend me instantly."

Lilius hastened to seek out Mr. Wingate, and hurry him to his lady's presence, speaking as a word in season to him on the way, "I have set the stone a-trowling, look that you do not let it stand still."

The steward, too prudential a person to commit himself otherwise, answered by a sly look and a nod of intelligence, and presently after stood in the presence of the Lady of Avenel, with a look of great respect for his lady, partly real, partly affected, and an air of great sagacity, which inferred no ordinary conceit of himself.

"How is this, Wingate," said the Lady, "and what rule do you keep in the castle, that the domestics of Sir Halbert Glendinning draw the dagger on each other, as in a cavern of thieves and murderers?--is the wounded man much hurt? and what--what hath become of the unhappy boy?"

"There is no one wounded as yet, madam," replied he of the golden chain; "it passes my poor skill to say how many may be wounded before Pasche, [Footnote: Easter.] if some rule be not taken with this youth--not but the youth is a fair youth," he added, correcting himself, "and able at his exercise; but somewhat too ready with the ends of his fingers, the butt of his riding-switch, and the point of his dagger."

"And whose fault is that," said the Lady, "but yours, who should have taught him better discipline, than to brawl or to draw his dagger."

"If it please your Ladyship so to impose the blame on me," answered the steward, "it is my part, doubtless, to bear it--only I submit to your consideration, that unless I nailed his weapon to the scabbard, I could no more keep it still, than I could fix quicksilver, which defied even the skill of Raymond Lullius."

"Tell me not of Raymond Lullius," said the Lady, losing patience, "but send me the chaplain hither. You grow all of you too wise for me, during your lord's long and repeated absences. I would to God his affairs would permit him to remain at home and rule his own household, for it passes my wit and skill!"

"God forbid, my Lady!" said the old domestic, "that you should sincerely think what you are now pleased to say: your old servants might well hope, that after so many years' duty, you would do their service more justice than to distrust their gray hairs, because they cannot rule the peevish humour of a green head, which the owner carries, it may be, a brace of inches higher than becomes him."

"Leave me," said the Lady; "Sir Halbert's return must now be expected daily, and he will look into these matters himself--leave me, I say, Wingate, without saying more of it. I know you are honest, and I believe the boy is petulant; and yet I think it is my favour which hath set all of you against him."

The steward bowed and retired, after having been silenced in a second attempt to explain the motives on which he acted.

The chaplain arrived; but neither from him did the Lady receive much comfort. On the contrary, she found him disposed, in plain terms, to lay to the door of her indulgence all the disturbances which the fiery temper of Roland Graeme had already occasioned, or might hereafter occasion, in the family. "I would," he said, "honoured Lady, that you had deigned to be ruled by me in the outset of this matter, sith it is easy to stem evil in the fountain, but hard to struggle against it in the stream. You, honoured madam, (a word which I do not use according to the vain forms of this world, but because I have ever loved and honoured you as an honourable and elect lady,)--you, I say, madam, have been pleased, contrary to my poor but earnest counsel, to raise this boy from his station, into one approaching to your own."

"What mean you, reverend sir?" said the Lady; "I have made this youth a page--is there aught in my doing so that does not become my character and quality?"

"I dispute not, madam," said the pertinacious preacher, "your benevolent purpose in taking charge of this youth, or your title to give him this idle character of page, if such was your pleasure; though what the education of a boy in the train of a female can tend to, save to ingraft foppery and effeminacy on conceit and arrogance, it passes my knowledge to discover. But I blame you more directly for having taken little care to guard him against the perils of his condition, or to tame and humble a spirit naturally haughty, overbearing, and impatient. You have brought into your bower a lion's cub; delighted with the beauty of his fur, and the grace of his gambols, you have bound him with no fetters befitting the fierceness of his disposition. You have let him grow up as unawed as if he had been still a tenant of the forest, and now you are surprised, and call out for assistance, when he begins to ramp, rend, and tear, according to his proper nature."

"Mr. Warden," said the Lady, considerably offended, "you are my husband's ancient friend, and I believe your love sincere to him and to his household. Yet let me say, that when I asked you for counsel, I expected not this asperity of rebuke. If I have done wrong in loving

this poor orphan lad more than others of his class, I scarce think the error merited such severe censure; and if stricter discipline were required to keep his fiery temper in order, it ought, I think, to be considered, that I am a woman, and that if I have erred in this matter, it becomes a friend's part rather to aid than to rebuke me. I would these evils were taken order with before my lord's return. He loves not domestic discord or domestic brawls; and I would not willingly that he thought such could arise from one whom I favoured--What do you counsel me to do?"

"Dismiss this youth from your service, madam," replied the preacher.

"You cannot bid me do so," said the Lady; "you cannot, as a Christian and a man of humanity, bid me turn away an unprotected creature against whom my favour, my injudicious favour if you will, has reared up so many enemies."

"It is not necessary you should altogether abandon him, though you dismiss him to another service, or to a calling better suiting his station and character," said the preacher; "elsewhere he maybe an useful and profitable member of the commonweal--here he is but a makebate, and a stumbling-block of offence. The youth has snatches of sense and of intelligence, though he lacks industry. I will myself give him letters commendatory to Olearius Schinderhausen, a learned professor at the famous university of Leyden, where they lack an under-janitor--where, besides gratis instruction, if God give him the grace to seek it, he will enjoy five merks by the year, and the professor's cast-off suit, which he disparts with biennially."

"This will never do, good Mr. Warden," said the Lady, scarce able to suppress a smile; "we will think more at large upon this matter. In the meanwhile, I trust to your remonstrances with this wild boy and with the family, for restraining these violent and unseemly jealousies and bursts of passion; and I entreat you to press on him and them their duty in this respect towards God, and towards their master."

"You shall be obeyed, madam," said Warden. "On the next Thursday I exhort the family, and will, with God's blessing, so wrestle with the demon of wrath and violence, which hath entered into my little flock, that I trust to hound the wolf out of the fold, as if he were chased away with bandogs."

This was the part of the conference from which Mr. Warden derived the greatest pleasure. The pulpit was at that time the same powerful engine for affecting popular feeling which the press has since become, and he had been no unsuccessful preacher, as we have already seen. It followed as a natural consequence, that he rather over-estimated the powers of his own oratory, and, like some of his brethren about the period, was glad of an opportunity to handle any matters of importance, whether public or private, the discussion of which could be dragged into his discourse. In that rude age the delicacy was unknown which prescribed time and place to personal exhortations; and as the court-preacher often addressed the King individually, and dictated to him the conduct he ought to observe in matters of state, so the nobleman himself, or any of his retainers, were, in the chapel of the feudal castle, often incensed or appalled, as the case might be, by the discussion of their private faults in the evening exercise, and by spiritual censures directed against them, specifically, personally, and by name. The sermon, by means of which Henry Warden

purposed to restore concord and good order to the Castle of Avenel, bore for text the well-known words, "_He who striketh with the sword shall perish by the sword,_" and was a singular mixture of good sense and powerful oratory with pedantry and bad taste. He enlarged a good deal on the word striketh, which he assured his hearers comprehended blows given with the point as well as with the edge, and more generally, shooting with hand-gun, cross-bow, or long-bow, thrusting with a lance, or doing any thing whatever by which death might be occasioned to the adversary. In the same manner, he proved satisfactorily, that the word sword comprehended all descriptions, whether backsword or basket-hilt, cut-and-thrust or rapier, falchion, or scimitar. "But if," he continued, with still greater animation, "the text includeth in its anathema those who strike with any of those weapons which man hath devised for the exercise of his open hostility, still more doth it comprehend such as from their form and size are devised rather for the gratification of privy malice by treachery, than for the destruction of an enemy prepared and standing upon his defence. Such," he proceeded, looking sternly at the place where the page was seated on a cushion at the feet of his mistress, and wearing in his crimson belt a gay dagger with a gilded hilt,--"such, more especially, I hold to be those implements of death, which, in our modern and fantastic times, are worn not only by thieves and cut-throats, to whom they most properly belong, but even by those who attend upon women, and wait in the chambers of honourable ladies. Yes, my friends,--every species of this unhappy weapon, framed for all evil and for no good, is comprehended under this deadly denunciation, whether it be a stillet, which we have borrowed from the treacherous Italian, or a dirk, which is borne by the savage Highlandman, or a whinger, which is carried by our own Border thieves and cut-throats, or a dudgeon-dagger, all are alike engines invented by the devil himself, for ready implements of deadly wrath, sudden to execute, and difficult to be parried. Even the common sword-and-buckler brawler despises the use of such a treacherous and malignant instrument, which is therefore fit to be used, not by men or soldiers, but by those who, trained under female discipline, become themselves effeminate hermaphrodites, having female spite and female cowardice added to the infirmities and evil passions of their masculine nature."

The effect which this oration produced upon the assembled congregation of Avenel cannot very easily be described. The lady seemed at once embarrassed and offended; the menials could hardly contain, under an affectation of deep attention, the joy with which they heard the chaplain launch his thunders at the head of the unpopular favourite, and the weapon which they considered as a badge of affectation and finery. Mrs. Lillias crested and drew up her head with all the deep-felt pride of gratified resentment; while the steward, observing a strict neutrality of aspect, fixed his eyes upon an old scutcheon on the opposite side of the wall, which he seemed to examine with the utmost accuracy, more willing, perhaps, to incur the censure of being inattentive to the sermon, than that of seeming to listen with marked approbation to what appeared so distasteful to his mistress.

The unfortunate subject of the harangue, whom nature had endowed with passions which had hitherto found no effectual restraint, could not disguise the resentment which he felt at being thus directly held up to the scorn, as well as the censure, of the assembled inhabitants of the little world in which he lived. His brow grew red, his lip grew pale, he set his teeth, he clenched his hand, and then with mechanical readiness grasped the weapon of which the clergyman had given so

hideous a character; and at length, as the preacher heightened the colouring of his invective, he felt his rage become so ungovernable, that, fearful of being hurried into some deed of desperate violence, he rose up, traversed the chapel with hasty steps, and left the congregation.

The preacher was surprised into a sudden pause, while the fiery youth shot across him like a flash of lightning, regarding him as he passed, as if he had wished to dart from his eyes the same power of blighting and of consuming. But no sooner had he crossed the chapel, and shut with violence behind him the door of the vaulted entrance by which it communicated with the castle, than the impropriety of his conduct supplied Warden with one of those happier subjects for eloquence, of which he knew how to take advantage for making a suitable impression on his hearers. He paused for an instant, and then pronounced, in a slow and solemn voice, the deep anathema: "He hath gone out from us because he was not of us--the sick man hath been offended at the wholesome bitter of the medicine--the wounded patient hath flinched from the friendly knife of the surgeon--the sheep hath fled from the sheepfold and delivered himself to the wolf, because he could not assume the quiet and humble conduct demanded of us by the great Shepherd. Ah! my brethren, beware of wrath--beware of pride--beware of the deadly and destroying sin which so often shows itself to our frail eyes in the garments of light! What is our earthly honour? Pride, and pride only--What our earthly gifts and graces? Pride and vanity. Voyagers speak of Indian men who deck themselves with shells, and anoint themselves with pigments, and boast of their attire as we do of our miserable carnal advantages--Pride could draw down the morning-star from Heaven even to the verge of the pit--Pride and self-opinion kindled the flaming sword which waves us off from Paradise--Pride made Adam mortal, and a weary wanderer on the face of the earth, which he had else been at this day the immortal lord of--Pride brought amongst us sin, and doubles every sin it has brought. It is the outpost which the devil and the flesh most stubbornly maintain against the assaults of grace; and until it be subdued, and its barriers levelled with the very earth, there is more hope of a fool than of the sinner. Rend, then, from your bosoms this accursed shoot of the fatal apple; tear it up by the roots, though it be twisted with the chords of your life. Profit by the example of the miserable sinner that has passed from us, and embrace the means of grace while it is called to-day 'ere your conscience is seared as with a fire-brand, and your ears deafened like those of the adder, and your heart hardened like the nether mill-stone. Up, then, and be doing--wrestle and overcome; resist, and the enemy shall flee from you--Watch and pray, lest ye fall into temptation, and let the stumbling of others be your warning and your example. Above all, rely not on yourselves, for such self-confidence is even the worst symptom of the disorder itself. The Pharisee, perhaps, deemed himself humble while he stooped in the Temple, and thanked God that he was not as other men, and even as the publican. But while his knees touched the marble pavement, his head was as high as the topmost pinnacle of the Temple. Do not, therefore, deceive yourselves, and offer false coin, where the purest you can present is but as dross--think not that such--will pass the assay of Omnipotent Wisdom. Yet shrink not from the task, because, as is my bounden duty, I do not disguise from you its difficulties. Self-searching can do much--Meditation can do much--Grace can do all."

And he concluded with a touching and animating exhortation to his

hearers to seek divine grace, which is perfected in human weakness.

The audience did not listen to this address without being considerably affected; though it might be doubted whether the feelings of triumph, excited by the disgraceful retreat of the favourite page, did not greatly qualify in the minds of many the exhortations of the preacher to charity and to humility. And, in fact, the expression of their countenances much resembled the satisfied triumphant air of a set of children, who, having just seen a companion punished for a fault in which they had no share, con their task with double glee, both because they themselves are out of the scrape, and because the culprit is in it.

With very different feelings did the Lady of Avenel seek her own apartment. She felt angry at Warden having made a domestic matter, in which she took a personal interest, the subject of such public discussion. But this she knew the good man claimed as a branch of his Christian liberty as a preacher, and also that it was vindicated by the universal custom of his brethren. But the self-willed conduct of her protégé afforded her yet deeper concern. That he had broken through in so remarkable a degree, not only the respect due to her presence, but that which was paid to religious admonition in those days with such peculiar reverence, argued a spirit as untameable as his enemies had represented him to possess. And yet so far as he had been under her own eye, she had seen no more of that fiery spirit than appeared to her to become his years and his vivacity. This opinion might be founded in some degree on partiality; in some degree, too, it might be owing to the kindness and indulgence which she had always extended to him; but still she thought it impossible that she could be totally mistaken in the estimate she had formed of his character. The extreme of violence is scarce consistent with a course of continued hypocrisy, (although Lillias charitably hinted, that in some instances they were happily united,) and therefore she could not exactly trust the report of others against her own experience and observation. The thoughts of this orphan boy clung to her heartstrings with a fondness for which she herself was unable to account. He seemed to have been sent to her by Heaven, to fill up those intervals of languor and vacuity which deprived her of much enjoyment. Perhaps he was not less dear to her, because she well saw that he was a favourite with no one else, and because she felt, that to give him up was to afford the judgment of her husband and others a triumph over her own; a circumstance not quite indifferent to the best of spouses of either sex.

In short, the Lady of Avenel formed the internal resolution, that she would not desert her page while her page could be rationally protected; and, with a view of ascertaining how far this might be done, she caused him to be summoned to her presence.

Chapter the Fifth.

--In the wild storm,
The seaman hews his mast down, and the merchant
Heaves to the billows wares he once deem'd precious;
So prince and peer, 'mid popular contentions,

Cast off their favourites.

OLD PLAY.

It was some time ere Roland Graeme appeared. The messenger (his old friend Lilius) had at first attempted to open the door of his little apartment with the charitable purpose, doubtless, of enjoying the confusion, and marking the demeanour of the culprit. But an oblong bit of iron, ycleped a bolt, was passed across the door on the inside, and prevented her benign intentions. Lilius knocked and called at intervals. "Roland--Roland Graeme--_Master_ Roland Graeme" (an emphasis on the word Master,) "will you be pleased to undo the door?--What ails you?--are you at your prayers in private, to complete the devotion which you left unfinished in public?--Surely we must have a screened seat for you in the chapel, that your gentility may be free from the eyes of common folks!" Still no whisper was heard in reply. "Well, master Roland," said the waiting-maid, "I must tell my mistress, that if she would have an answer, she must either come herself, or send those on errand to you who can beat the door down."

"What says your Lady?" answered the page from within.

"Marry, open the door, and you shall hear," answered the waiting-maid. "I trow it becomes my Lady's message to be listened to face to face; and I will not for your idle pleasure, whistle it through a key-hole."

"Your mistress's name," said the page, opening the door, "is too fair a cover for your impertinence--What says my Lady?"

"That you will be pleased to come to her directly, in the withdrawing-room," answered Lilius. "I presume she has some directions for you concerning the forms to be observed in leaving chapel in future."

"Say to my Lady, that I will directly wait on her," answered the page; and returning into his apartment, he once more locked the door in the face of the waiting-maid.

"Rare courtesy!" muttered Lilius; and, returning to her mistress, acquainted her that Roland Graeme would wait on her when it suited his convenience.

"What, is that his addition, or your own phrase, Lilius?" said the Lady, coolly.

"Nay, madam," replied the attendant, not directly answering the question, "he looked as if he could have said much more impertinent things than that, if I had been willing to hear them.--But here he comes to answer for himself."

Roland Graeme entered the apartment with a loftier mien, and somewhat a higher colour than his wont; there was embarrassment in his manner, but it was neither that of fear nor of penitence.

"Young man," said the Lady, "what trow you I am to think of your conduct this day?"

"If it has offended you, madam, I am deeply grieved," replied the youth.

"To have offended me alone," replied the Lady, "were but little--You have been guilty of conduct which will highly offend your master--of violence to your fellow-servants, and of disrespect to God himself, in the person of his ambassador."

"Permit me again to reply," said the page, "that if I have offended my only mistress, friend, and benefactress, it includes the sum of my guilt, and deserves the sum of my penitence--Sir Halbert Glendinning calls me not servant, nor do I call him master--he is not entitled to blame me for chastising an insolent groom--nor do I fear the wrath of Heaven for treating with scorn the unauthorized interference of a meddling preacher."

The Lady of Avenel had before this seen symptoms in her favourite of boyish petulance, and of impatience of censure or reproof. But his present demeanour was of a graver and more determined character, and she was for a moment at a loss how she should treat the youth, who seemed to have at once assumed the character not only of a man, but of a bold and determined one. She paused an instant, and then assuming the dignity which was natural to her, she said, "Is it to me, Roland, that you hold this language? Is it for the purpose of making me repent the favour I have shown you, that you declare yourself independent both of an earthly and a Heavenly master? Have you forgotten what you were, and to what the loss of my protection would speedily again reduce you?"

"Lady," said the page, "I have forgot nothing, I remember but too much. I know, that but for you, I should have perished in yon blue waves," pointing, as he spoke, to the lake, which was seen through the window, agitated by the western wind. "Your goodness has gone farther, madam--you have protected me against the malice of others, and against my own folly. You are free, if you are willing, to abandon the orphan you have reared. You have left nothing undone by him, and he complains of nothing. And yet, Lady, do not think I have been ungrateful--I have endured something on my part, which I would have borne for the sake of no one but my benefactress."

"For my sake!" said the Lady; "and what is it that I can have subjected you to endure, which can be remembered with other feelings than those of thanks and gratitude?"

"You are too just, madam, to require me to be thankful for the cold neglect with which your husband has uniformly treated me--neglect not unmingled with fixed aversion. You are too just, madam, to require me to be grateful for the constant and unceasing marks of scorn and malevolence with which I have been treated by others, or for such a homily as that with which your reverend chaplain has, at my expense, this very day regaled the assembled household."

"Heard mortal ears the like of this!" said the waiting-maid, with her hands expanded and her eyes turned up to heaven; "he speaks as if he were son of an earl, or of a belted knight the least penny!"

The page glanced on her a look of supreme contempt, but vouchsafed no other answer. His mistress, who began to feel herself seriously offended, and yet sorry for

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