

THE WORLD AT WAR



BOTHWELL

OR, THE DAYS OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS
VOLUME 1, 2, 3

JAMES GRANT

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The Days of Mary Queen of Scots

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Volume 1

PREFACE.

The leading event upon which the following story hinges, will be found in the illustrative notes at the end of the third volume, which will show that the Magister Absalom (so frequently referred to) was a real personage, who, in the days of Earl Bothwell, was a Protestant clergyman at Bergen, and author of a Diary named *The Chapter Book*.

There is no style of reading more conducive to a good or evil result, than the historical romance, according to the manner it is treated, by a judicious or injudicious writer. I have been studious in avoiding any distortion of history, the tenor of which is so often misconstrued wilfully by writers of romance; for there are bounds beyond which not even they are entitled to go. The Scottish reader will find how closely I have woven up the stirring events of 1567 with my own story, which, in reality, contains much more that is veracious than fictitious.

Thus, Bothwell's journey to Denmark—his conflict with John of Park—the Queen's visit to Hermitage—the assault on the house of Alison Craig—the brawl and assistance given the Earl (in mistake for Arran) by the Abbot of Kilwinning—and many other incidents, all occurred actually as related.

With one or two exceptions, every character in the following pages was a *bona fide* personage "of flesh and

blood," who existed at the time, and was an actor in the scenes narrated.

In the general grouping, costume, and other dramatic accessories, I have endeavoured (as closely as I could) to draw a picture of the Scottish court and metropolis in the year 1567, at a time when the splendour of both was dimmed by the poverty which followed the wars and tumults of the Reformation; and with what success, I may say with the old knights of Cumbernauld—"Let the deed shaw!"

EDINBURGH, *September*, 1851.

CHAPTER I. THE CASTLE OF BERGEN.

The stern old shepherd of the air,
The spirit of the whistling hair,
The wind has risen drearily
In the northern evening sea,
And is piping long and loud
From many a heavy up-coming cloud.

Leigh Hunt.

It was the autumn of a bleak day in the September of 1566.

Enveloped in murky clouds, through which, at times, its red rays shot along the crested waves, the Norwegian sun was verging to the westward. From the frozen Baltic a cold wind swept down the Skager Rack, and, urged by the whole force of the Atlantic ocean, the sullen waves poured their foam upon the rocky bluffs and fissured crags that overhang the fiord of Christiana.

In those days, a vessel in the fiord proved an object of the greatest interest to the inhabitants of the hamlet; and it was with growing fears that the anxious housewives and weatherwise fishermen of Bergen, a little wooden town situated on the bay of Christiana, watched the exertions made by the crew of a small crayer or brigantine, of some eighty tons or so, that under bare poles, or having at least only her great square spritsail and jib set, endeavoured to weather the rocky headland to the east, and gain their little

harbour, within which the water lay smooth as a millpond, forming by its placidity a strong contrast to the boiling and heaving ocean without.

The last rays of the September sun had died away on the pine-clad hills of Christiana and the cathedral spire of Bergen. Night came on sooner than usual, and the sky was rendered opaque by sable clouds, through which the red streaks of lightning shot red and forklike; while the hollow thunder reverberated afar off among the splintered summits of the Silverbergen.

Then through the flying vapour, where, parted by the levin brand, the misty rain poured down in torrents on the pathless sea, and the goodwives of Bergen told their beads, and muttered a *Hail Mary!* or a prayer to Saint Erick the Martyr for the souls of the poor mariners, who, they were assured, would find their graves at the bottom of the deep Skager Rack ere morning brightened on the waters of the Sound.

The royal castle of Bergen, a great square tower of vast strength and unknown antiquity, reared on a point of rock, still overlooks the town that in the year of our story was little more than a fisher hamlet. Swung in an iron grating on its battlement, a huge beacon fire had been lighted by order of the governor to direct the struggling ship; and now the flames from the blazing mass of tarred fagots and well-oiled flax streamed like a torn banner on the stormy wind, and lit up the weatherbeaten visages of a few Danish soldiers who were grouped on the keep, glinting on their steel caps and

mail shirts, and on the little brass minions and iron drakes that peeped between the timeworn embrasures.

Another group, which since sunset had been watching the strange ship, was crowded under the sheltering arch of the castle gate, watching for the dispersion of the clouds or the rising of the moon to reveal her whereabouts.

"Hans Knuber," said a young man who appeared at the wicket, and whose half military attire showed that he was captain of the king's crossbowmen at Bergen, "dost thou think she will weather the Devil's Nose on the next tack?"

"I doubt it much, Captain Konrad," replied the fisherman, removing his right hand from the pocket of his voluminous red breeches to the front of his fur cap, "unless they steer with the keep of Bergen and the spire of the bishop's church in a line; which I saw they did not do. Ugh! yonder she looms! and what a sea she shipped! How heavily her fore and after castles and all her top-hamper make her heel to leeward!"

"They who man her seem to have but small skill in pilot-craft," said one.

"By Saint Olaus!" cried another, "unless some one boards and pilots her, another quarter of an hour will see her run full plump on the reef; and then God assoilzie both master and mariner!"

"Luff—luff—timoneer!" exclaimed the first seaman. "Now keep her full! Would I had my hands on thy tiller!"

"Every moment the night groweth darker," said the young man whom they called Konrad, and whom they

treated with marked respect: "as the clouds darken the lightning brightens. A foul shame it were to old Norway, to have it said that so many of us—stout fellows all—stood idly and saw yonder struggling ship lost for lack of a little pilot-craft: for as thou sayest, Hans, if she runs so far again eastward on the next tack she must strike on the sunken reefs."

"No boat could live in such a sea," muttered the fishermen as they drew back, none appearing solicitous of the selection which they expected the young man would make.

"The mists are coming down from the Arctic ocean—the west wind always brings them," said Jans Thorson; "and we all know 'tis in these mists that the spirits of the mountain and storm travel."

"Come hither, Hans Knuber," said the captain, whose plumed cap and rich dress of scarlet velvet, trimmed with white fur, and braided with silver like a hussar pelisse, were rapidly changing their hues under the drenching rain that lashed the castle wall, and hissed through the deep-mouthed archway. "Come hither, thou great seahorse! Dost mean to tell me thou art afraid?"

"Sir captain, I fear neither the storm nor the spirit of the mist; but Zernebok the lord of evil may be abroad to-night, and he and the Hermit of the Rock may chance to remember how once in my cups, like an ass as I was, I reviled and mocked them both."

"Bah!" retorted Konrad, whose superstition did not go so far as that of the seaman; "Jans Thorson, I will give thee this silver chain to launch and put forth to yonder ship. Come, man—away, for the honour of old Norway!"

"Not for all the silver in yonder hills, sir captain, nor the copper in the mines of Fahlun to boot, would I trust myself beyond the Devil's Nose to-night," said the old fisherman bluntly. "I have just refused Master Sueno, the chamberlain."

"Why, 'twas just in such a storm old Christian Alborg, and his stout ship the Biornen, were blown away into the wide ocean," said another; "and I marvel much, noble Konrad, that you would urge poor fellows like us"——

"On a venture which I would not attempt myself!" exclaimed the young man, whose dark blue eyes flashed at his own suggestion. "Now, Saint Olaus forefend thou shouldst say so!"

"Nay, noble Konrad"——

"But thou dost think so?"

The fisherman was silent.

A flush crossed the handsome face of Konrad of Saltzberg. He looked seaward a moment. The wind was roaring fearfully among the bare summits of the cliffs that towered abruptly from the shore to the very clouds—absolute mountains of rock rising peak above peak; and when the blue lightning flashed among them, their granite tops were seen stretching away in the distance, while the giant pines that flourished in their clefts and gorges, were tossing like black ostrich feathers in the storm.

At the harbour mouth the waves of snow-white foam were visible through the gloom, as they lashed, and hissed, and burst in successive mountains on the rocks of worn granite that fringed the entrance of the haven.

Konrad cast a rapid glance around him, and the appalling fury of the northern storm made even his gallant heart waver for a moment in its generous purpose; but a fair female face, that with all its waving ringlets appeared at a little casement overlooking the portal, and a kiss wafted to him from "a quick small hand," decided him. His eyes sparkled, and turning briskly round to the fishermen, he said,—

"By my honour, Sirs, though knowing less of pilot-craft than of handling the boll of an arblast, I will prove to you that I require nothing of any man that I dare not myself attempt—so thus will I put forth alone—and even if I perish shame you all."

And, throwing aside his sword and short mantle, the young man rushed down the steep pathway that led to the little pier, and leaped on board one of the long light whaleboats that lay there; but ere his ready hand had quite cast off the rope that bound it to a ringbolt on the mole, both Hans Knuber and Jans Thorson, fired by his example, sprang on board, and with more of the action of elephants, in their wide fur boots and mighty breeches, than the agility of seamen, they seized each an oar, and pushed off.

In Denmark and Norway, there were and are few titles of honour; but there has always existed in the latter an

untitled nobility, like our Scottish lairds and English squires, consisting of very old families, who are more highly revered than those ennobled by Norway's Danish rulers; and many of these can trace their blood back to those terrible vikingr or ocean kings, who were so long the conquerors of the English Saxons, and the scourge of the Scottish shores.

Konrad of the Saltzberg (for he had no other name than that which he took from a solitary and half-ruined tower overlooking the fiord) was the representative of one of those time-honoured races.

The fame his brave ancestors had won under the enchanted banner of Regner Lodbrog, Erick with the bloody axe, and Sigwardis Ring, yet lived in the songs and stories of the northern harpers; and Konrad was revered for these old memories of Norway's ancient days, while his own bravery, affability, and handsome exterior, gained him the love of the Norse burghers of Bergen, the Danish bowmen he commanded, the fishermen of the fiord, and the huntsmen of the woods of Aggerhuis.

By the glare of the beacon on the castle wall, his boat was briefly seen amid the deepening gloom as it rose on the heaving swell, and the broad-bladed oars of his lusty companions flashed as they were dipped in the sparkling water. A moment, and a moment only, they were visible; Konrad was seen to move his plumed cap, and his cheerful hallo was heard; the next, they had vanished into obscurity.

The fishers gazed on the gloom with intensity, but could discover nothing; and there was no other sound came on

the bellowing wind, save the roar of the resounding breakers
as they broke on the impending bluffs.

CHAPTER II. ERICK ROSENKRANTZ.

Turn round, turn round, thou Scottish youth,
Or loud thy sire shall mourn;
For if thou touchest Norway's strand,
Thou never shalt return.

Vedder.

The hall of the castle of Bergen was a spacious but rude apartment, spanned by a stone arch, ribbed with massive groins, that sprung from the ponderous walls.

Its floor was composed of oak planks, and two clumsy stone columns, surmounted by grotesque capitals, supported the round archway of the fireplace, above which was a rudely carved, and still more rudely painted, shield, bearing the golden lion of ancient Norway in a field gules. Piled within the arch lay a heap of roots and billets, blazing and rumbling in the recesses of the great stone chimney. Eight tall candles, each like a small flambeau, flared in an iron candelabrum, and sputtered in the currents of air that swept through the hall.

Various weapons hung on the rough walls of red sandstone; there were heavy Danish ghisannas or battle-axes of steel, iron mauls, ponderous maces, and deadly morglays, two-handed swords of enormous length, iron bucklers, chain hauberks, and leathern surcoats, all of

uncouth fashion, and fully two hundred years behind the arms then used by the more southern nations of Europe.

The long table occupying the centre of the hall was of wood that had grown in the forests of Memel; it was black as ebony with age, and the clumsy chairs and stools that were ranged against the walls were all of the same homely material. Several deerskins were spread before the hearth, and thereon reposed a couple of shaggy wolf-hounds, that ever and anon cocked their ears when a louder gust than usual shook the hall windows, or when the rain swept the feathery soot down the wide chimney to hiss in the sparkling fire.

Near the hearth stood a chair covered with gilded leather, and studded with brass nails; and so different was its aspect from the rest of the unornamented furniture, that there was no difficulty in recognising it as the seat of state. A long sword, the silver hilt of which was covered with a curious network of steel, hung by an embroidered baldrick on one knob thereof, balanced by a little velvet cap adorned with a long scarlet feather, on the other.

The proprietor of these articles, a stout old man, somewhere about sixty-five, whose rotundity had been considerably increased by good living, was standing in the arched recess of a well-grated window, peering earnestly out upon the blackness of the night, in hope to discern some trace of that strange vessel, concerning which all Bergen was agog. His complexion was fair and florid, and though his head was bald and polished, the long hair that hung from

his temples and mingled with his bushy beard and heavy mustaches, was, like them, of a decided yellow; but his round visage was of the ruddiest and most weatherbeaten brown. There was a bold and frank expression in his keen blue eye, that with his air and aspect forcibly realized the idea of those Scandinavian vikingr who were once the tyrants of Saxons, and the terror of the Scots.

His flowing robe of scarlet cloth, trimmed with black fur and laced with gold, his Norwayn anlace or dagger, sheathed in crimson leather sown with pearls, and the large rowelled spurs that glittered on the heels of his Muscovite leather boots, announced him one of Norway's untitled noblesse. He was Erick Rosenkrantz of Welsöö, governor of the province of Aggerhuis, castellan of Bergen, and knight of the Danish orders of the Elephant and Dannebrog.

"Sueno Thronson," said he to a little old man who entered the hall, muffled in a mantle of red deerskin, which was drenched with rain, "dost thou think there is any chance of yonder strange bark weathering the storm, and getting under the lee of our ramparts?"

"I know not, noble sir," replied Sueno, casting his drenched cloak on the floor, and displaying his under attire, which (saith the Magister Absalom Beyer, whose minute narrative we follow) consisted of a green cloth gaberdine, trimmed with the fur of the black fox, and girt at the waist by a broad belt, sustaining a black bugle-horn and short hunting sword. "I have serious doubts; for the waves of the fiord are combating with the currents from the Skager Rack,

and whirling like a maelstrom. I have been through the whole town of Bergen; but neither offer nor bribe—no, not even the bishop's blessing, a hundred pieces of silver, and thrice as many deer hides—will induce one of the knavish fishermen or white-livered pilots to put forth a boat to pick up any of these strangers, who must all drown the moment their ship strikes; and strike she must, if the wind holds."

"The curse of Saint Olaus be on them!" grumbled the governor, glancing at a rude image of Norway's tutelary saint.

"Amen!" added Sueno, as he wrung the wet tails of his gaberdine.

"Didst thou try threats, then?"

"By my soul, I did so; and with equal success."

"Dost thou gibe me, Thronson? This to me, the governor of Aggerhuis, and captain of the king's castle of Bergen!" muttered the portly official, walking to and fro, and swelling with importance as he spoke.

"The oldest of our fishermen are ready to swear on the blessed gospels that there has not been seen such a storm since Christian Alborg, in the Biornen, was blown from his moorings."

"Under the ramparts of this, the king's castle, by foul sorcery; and on the vigil of Saint Erick the king, and martyr too! I remember it well, Sueno. But what! is the old Norse spirit fallen so far, that these villains have become so economical of their persons that they shrink from a little salt water? and that none will launch a shallop in such to save

these poor strangers, who, unless they know the coast, will assuredly run full tilt on the Devil's Nose at the haven mouth? By Saint Olaus! I can see the white surf curling over its terrible ridge, through the gloom, even at this moment."

"I said all this, noble sir," replied Sueno, brushing the rain from his fur bonnet; "but none attended to me save young Konrad of the Saltzberg, the captain of our Danish crossbowmen, who cursed them for white-livered coistrils, and launching a boat, with Hans Knuber and Jans Thorson the pilot, pushed off from the mole, like brave hearts as they are, in the direction of the labouring ship, which Konrad vowed to pilot round the Devil's Nose or perish."

"Fool! and thou only tellest me of this now! Konrad—the boldest youth and the best in all old Norway!" exclaimed the burly governor. "Hah! and hath the last of an ancient and gallant race to peril his life on such a night as this, when these baseborn drawers of nets and fishers of seals hang back?"

"His boat vanished into the gloom in a moment, and we heard but one gallant blast from his bugle ring above the roar of the waves that boil round that terrible promontory."

"The mother of God pray for him—brave lad! What the devil! Sueno, I would not for all the ships on the northern seas, a hair of Konrad's head were injured; for though he is no kin to me, I love the lad as if he were mine own and only son. See that my niece Anna knoweth not of this wild adventure till he returns safe. She has seemed somewhat cold to him of late; some lover's pique"—

"I pray he *may* return, Sir Erick."

"He must—he *shall* return!" rejoined the impetuous old knight, stamping his foot. "Yea, and in safety too, or I will sack Bergen, and scourge every fisher in it. From whence thought these knaves the stranger came?"

"From Denmark."

"Malediction on Denmark!" said Rosenkrantz, feeling his old Norse prejudices rising in his breast. "Assure me that she is Danish, and I will extinguish the beacon and let them all drown and be——!"

"Nay, nay, Sir Governor, they know her to be a good ship of Scotland, commanded by a certain great lord of that country, who is on an embassy to Frederick of Denmark, and hath been cruising in these seas."

"Then my double malediction on the Scots, too!" said the governor, as he turned away from the hall window.

"And so say I, noble Sir," chimed in the obsequious chamberlain, as he raised the skirts of his gaberdine, and warmed his voluminous trunk hosen before the great fire.

"Right, Thronson! though eight of our monarchs are buried in Iona, under the Ridge of the Kings, the death of Coelus of Norway, who is graved in the Scottish Kyles, still lives in our songs; and the fatal field of Largs, when aided by such a storm as this, the Scots laid Haco's enchanted banner in the waves."

"And the wars of Erick with the bloody axe."

"And of Harold Graafeldt, his son."

"And Magnus with the Barefeet," continued the old man, whose eyes gleamed at the names of these savage kings of early Scandinavia.

"Enough, Sueno," said the governor, who was again peering from the window into the darkness; "enough, or thou wilt fire my old Norse heart in such wise by these fierce memories, that no remnant of Christian feeling will remain in it. After all, it matters not, Scots or Danes, we ought to pray for the souls that are now perhaps, from yonder dark abyss, ascending to the throne of God unblessed and unconfessed," added the old knight, with a sudden burst of religious feeling.

"God assoil them!" added Sueno crossing himself, and becoming pious too.

From the windows of the hall little else was seen but the dark masses of cloud that flew hither and thither on the stormy wind; at times a red star shot a tremulous ray through the openings, and was again hidden. Far down, beneath the castle windows, boiled the fierce ocean, and its white foam was visible when the lofty waves reared up their crested heads to lash the impending cliffs; but we have said that the bosom of the harbour was smooth as a summer lake when compared with the tumult of the fiord of Christiana. Overhead, showers of red sparks were swept away through the gloom, from the beacon that blazed on the keep to direct the waveworn ship.

"What led Hans Knuber and his brother knave of the net, to deem the stranger was a Scot? By her lumbering

leeboard I would have sworn she was a Lubecker."

"Nay, Sir, her high fore and after castles marked her Scottish build; and both Hans Knuber and Jans Thorson, who have eyes for these matters, and have traded to Kirkwall—yea, and even to that Scottish sea the fiord of Forth—averred she bore Saint Andrew's saltire flying at her mizen-peak—I see nothing of her now," continued Sueno.

"See! why, 'tis so dark, one cannot see the length of one's own nose. They must have perished!"

At that moment the flash of a culverin glared amid the obscurity far down below; but its report was borne away on the wind that roared down the narrow fiord to bury its fury in the Skager Rack.

"God and St. Olaus be praised!" muttered the old knight, rubbing his hands: "they are almost within the haven mouth; another moment, and they will be safe."

"Thou forgettest, noble sir," said the chamberlain, "that the stranger's pilot may be unacquainted with the nooks and crooks of our harbour, the rocks and reefs that fringe it, and that the water in some parts is two hundred fathoms deep."

"Saidst thou not that Konrad and Hans Knuber had put off in a boat?"

"True, true! A ray of light is shining on the water now."

"Whence comes it?"

"'Tis the hermit in the cavern under the rocks, who hath lit a beacon on the beach to direct the benighted ship."

"Saint Olaf bless him! Hoh! there goeth the culverin again. We heard the report this time. They are saved! 'Tis Konrad of Saltzberg hath done this gallant deed, and heaven reward him! for many a poor fellow had perished else. Now that they are in safe anchorage, away Sueno Thronson, take thy chamberlain's staff and chain, man a boat, board this seaworn ship, and invite this Scottish lord to Bergen; for a foul shame it were in a knight of the Elephant, to permit the ambassador of a queen, to remain on shipboard after such a storm, and within a bowshot of his Danish majesty's castle: we would be worse than Finns or Muscovites. Away, Sueno! for now the storm is lulling, and under the lee of its high hills the harbour is smooth as a mirror."

Thus commanded, Sueno unwillingly enveloped himself once more in the before-mentioned fur mantle, and retired.

A blast of his horn was heard to ring in the yard as he summoned certain followers, who grumbled and swore in guttural Norse as they scrambled after him down the steep and winding pathway, that led from the castle gate to the mole of Bergen.

CHAPTER III. THE STRANGERS.

To tell the terrors of deep untried,
What toils we suffer'd, and what storms
defied;
What mountain surges, mountain surges
lash'd,
What sudden hurricanes the canvass dash'd;
To tell each horror in the deep reveal'd,
Would ask an iron throat with tenfold vigour
steel'd.

Lusiad of Camoens.

"How now, Anna! thou lookest as pale as if all the gnomes of the Silverbergen, or Nippen and Zernebok to boot, had been about thee. Art thou affrighted by the storm, child?" asked Erick, pinching the soft cheek of his niece, who at that moment had entered the hall, and glided to his side in one of the great windows.

Her only reply was to clasp her hands upon his arm, and look up in his face with a fond smile.

Anna Rosenkrantz was the only daughter of Svend of Aggerhuis, the governor's younger brother, who had fallen in battle with the Holsteiners. In stature she was rather under the middle height; and so full and round was her outline, that many might have considered it too much so, but for the exquisite fairness of her skin, the beauty of her

features, and the grace pervading every motion. Norway is famed for its fair beauties, but the lustre of Anna's complexion was dazzling; her neck and forehead were white as the unmelting snows of the Dovrefeldt. From under the lappets of a little velvet cap, which was edged by a row of Onslow pearls, her dark-brown ringlets flowed in heavy profusion, and seemed almost black when contrasted with the neck on which they waved. Her eyes were of a decided grey, dark, but clear and sparkling. The curve of her mouth and chin were very piquant and arch in expression; her smile was ever one of surpassing sweetness, and at times of coquetry.

A jacket of black velvet, fashioned like a Bohemian vest, trimmed with narrow edgings of white fur, and studded with seed pearls, displayed the full contour of her beautiful bust; but unhappily her skirt was one of those enormous fardingales which were then becoming the rage over all Europe.

"Have the roaring of the wind and the screaming of the water-sprite scared thee, Anna?" continued the old man, who, like a true Nordlander, believed every element to be peopled by unseen spirits and imps. "By the bones of Lodbrog!" he added, patting her soft cheek with his huge bony hand, "my mind misgave me much that this last year's sojourn at the palace of Kiøbenhavn would fairly undo thee."

"How, good uncle?" said Anna, blushing slightly.

"By tainting thine inbred hardiment of soul, my little damsel, and making thee, instead of a fearless Norse maiden, and a dweller in the land of hills and cataracts, like one of those sickly moppets whom I have seen clustered round the tabouret of Frederick's queen, when, for my sins, I spent a summer at his court during the war with Christian II., that tyrant and tool of the Dutch harlot, Sigiberta."

"Indeed, uncle mine, you mistake me," replied Anna, "though I will own myself somewhat terrified by this unwonted storm."

"There now! said I not so? Three years ago, would the screaming of the eagles, the yelling of the wood-demon, the howl of the wind, or the tumult of the ocean, when all the spirits of the Skager Rack are rolling its billows on the rocks, have affrighted thee? Bah! what is there so terrible in all that? Do not forget, my girl, that thou comest of a race of sea-kings who trace their blood from O'Ivarre—he who with Andd and Olaff ravaged all the Scottish shores from Thurso to the Clyde, and once even placed the red lion of Norway on the double dun of Alcluyd.[*] But I warrant thou art only terrified for young Konrad, who, like a gallant Norseman, hath run his life into such deadly peril."

[*] A.D. 870 (Note by Mag. Absalom Beyer.)

"Konrad—tush!" said Anna pettishly.

"Ay, Konrad!" reiterated Erick testily; "which way doth the wind blow now? By my soul, damosel, thou takest very quietly the danger in which the finest young fellow in all Norway has thrust himself—when even the boldest of our fishers drew back. He departed in a poor shallop to guide

yonder devilish ship round the dangerous promontory, and if the blessed saints have not prevailed over the spirits of evil, who make their bourne in the caverns of that dark ocean—then I say, God help thee, Konrad of Saltzberg! But fear not, Anna," continued the old man kindly, perceiving that she turned away as if to conceal tears; "for thy lover is stout of heart and strong of hand—and—there now!—the devil's in my old gossiping tongue—pest upon it!—I have made thee weep."

Anna's breast heaved very perceptibly, and she covered her face, not to conceal her tears, but the smile that spread over her features.

"Come, damosel—away to thy toilet; for know there is in yonder ship which we have watched the livelong day, and which has escaped destruction so narrowly, a certain great lord, who this night shall sup with us; for I have sent Sueno with a courteous message, inviting him to abide, so long as it pleases him, in the king's castle of Bergen. Be gay, Anna; for I doubt not thou wilt be dying to hear tidings of what is astir in the great world around Aggerhuis; for, during the last month since thy return here, thou hast moped like some melancholy oyster on the frozen cape yonder."

"A great lord, saidst thou, uncle?" asked Anna with sudden animation.

"Of Scotland—so said Sueno."

Anna blushed scarlet; but the momentary expression of confusion was replaced by one of pride and triumph.

"Did thou hear of any such at Frederick's court, little one?"

"Yes—oh yes! there were two on an embassy concerning the isles of Shetland."

"Ah! which that fool, Christian of Oldenburg, gave to the Scottish king with his daughter Margaret? Their names?"

"I marked them not," replied Anna with hesitation; "for thou knowest, uncle mine, I bear no good-will unto these rough-footed Scots."

"Keep all thy good-will for the lad who loves thee so well," said the old man smiling, as he pressed his wiry mustaches against her white forehead. "I see thou hast still the old Norse spirit, Anna. Though three centuries have come and gone since the field of Largs was lost by Haco and his host, we have not forgotten it; and vengeance for that day's slaughter and defeat still forms no small item in our oaths of fealty and of knighthood. But hark! the horn of Sueno! There are torches flashing on the windows, and strange voices echoing, in the court. Away, girl! and bring me my sword and collars of knighthood from yonder cabinet; for I must receive these guests as becomes the king's representative at Aggerhuis, and captain of his castle of Bergen."

Anna glided from his side, and in a minute returned with a casket from the cabinet, and the long heavy sword that lay on the chair at the fireplace. She clasped the rich waistbelt round the old man's burly figure, and drawing from

the casket the gold chain with the diamond *Elephant*, having under its feet the enamelled motto,

"Trew is Wildbrat,"—

and the woven collar bearing the red cross of the Dannebrog, she placed them round Sir Brick's neck, and the jewels sparkled brightly among the red hair of his bushy beard.

She then glanced hurriedly at her own figure in an opposite mirror; adjusted the jaunty little cap before mentioned; ran her slender fingers through her long dark ringlets; smiled with satisfaction at her own beauty; and took her seat on a low tabouret near the great stuffed chair, between the gilded arms of which the pompous old governor wedged his rotund figure, with an energy that made his visage flush scarlet to the temples; and he had barely time to assume his most imposing aspect of official dignity, when the light of several flambeaux flashed through the dark doorway at the lower end of the hall, and the handsome commander of his crossbowmen, Konrad of Saltzberg, with his features pale from fatigue, and his long locks, like his furred pelisse, damp with salt water, and Sueno wearing his gold chain and key, having his white wand uplifted, and attended by several torch-bearers in the king's livery, preceded the strangers.

The first who approached was a tall and handsome man, in whose strong figure there was a certain jaunty air, that suited well the peculiar daredevil expression of his deep dark eye, which bespoke the confirmed man of pleasure. He

seemed to be about thirty years of age, and was clad in a shining doublet of cloth of gold, over which he wore a cuirass of the finest steel, attached to the backplate by braces of burnished silver. His mantle was of purple velvet lined with white satin; his trunk breeches were of the latter material slashed with scarlet silk, and were of that enormous fashion then so much in vogue, being so preposterously stuffed with tow, hair, or bombast, as to render even greaves useless in battle. He wore a long sword and Scottish dagger. His blue velvet bonnet was adorned by a diamond aigrette, from which sprung three tall white ostrich feathers. His eyes were keen, dark, and proud, and their brows nearly met over his nose, which was straight; he wore little beard, but his mustaches were thick and pointed upward. His page, a saucy-looking lad of sixteen, whom he jocularly called Nick (for his name was Nicholas Hubert), came close behind him; he was richly attired, and bore a very handsome salade of polished steel.

His companion, who deferentially remained a few paces behind, was also richly clad in the same extravagant fashion. His complexion was swarthy and dark as that of a Spanish Moor. His peaked beard, his enormous mustaches and short curly hair, were of the deepest black, and his dark hazel eyes were fierce, keen, and restless in expression. In addition to his sword and dagger, which were of unusual length, he carried at his glittering baldrick a short wheellock caliver or dague; and in lieu of a corselet wore a pyne doublet, calculated to resist sword-cuts. He had a gorget of

fine steel under his thick ruff; and we must not omit to add that his bulk and stature were gigantic, for he stood six foot eight in his boots.

"My lord, Sir Erick," began the chamberlain, "allow me to introduce James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell, a noble peer, ambassador from Mary, queen of the Scots, to his Danish majesty."

The portly governor of Aggerhuis bowed profoundly, each time reversing the hilt of the long toledo that hung by his voluminous trunk hose; while the graceful Earl, with a courtesy that, to a close observer, might have seemed a little overdone, swept the hall floor with his ostrich plumes as he bowed and shook the hand of the bluff old Norwegian.

"Hark you, master chamberlain," said he, "please to introduce my friend."

"My lord, Sir Erick," began Sueno.

"Cock and pie! Bothwell! he can introduce himself without the aid of chamberlain or chambercheild," said the dark man with a bravo air. "My good lord governor, thou seest in me Hob Ormiston of that ilk, otherwise Black Hob of Teviotdale, very much at your service; and, by the holy rood!"——

"Stuff!" interrupted the Earl; "know, we swear by nought but the staff of John Knox now."

"Foul fell thee, Bothwell!" said Black Hob ironically; "art thou growing profane?"

"Art thou turning preacher?" whispered the Earl with a laugh; "but prithee act gravely before this old Norland bear,

or ill may come of it. We thank you for your gracious hospitality, fair Sir," he added aloud; "and with gratitude will exchange for this noble hall, the narrow cabin of my half sinking galliot, and the black tumbling waves of yonder devilish sea."

"The king's castle of Bergen is ever at the service of the subjects of her fair Scottish majesty; and, in the name of Frederick of Zeeland, I bid you welcome to its poor accommodation."

"And now, brave youth! by whose valour we have been saved, let me thank you," said the Scottish earl, turning suddenly with generous gratitude to Konrad of Saltzberg, who had remained a little behind. "Had you not gained our ship at that desperate crisis, and directed our wavering timoneer, it had assuredly been dashed to pieces on yonder promontory."

"Yes—noble sir—the Devil's Nose," said Sueno.

"To venture in that frail shallop through the fierce surf of yonder boiling sea, was the bravest deed I ever saw man do; and remember I come from a land of brave hearts and gallant deeds."

The Earl warmly shook the hand of Konrad, who endeavoured to gain one glance from Anna, but she was too intently regarding the strangers.

In the dusky shadow formed by the projecting mantelpiece, she had stood a little apart, but now caught the eye of the Earl, who, with an air in which exquisite grace