

***CHARLOTTE
M. YONGE***



***TWO PENNILESS
PRINCESSES***

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Two Penniless Princesses

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CHAPTER 1. DUNBAR

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“’Twas on a night, an evening bright
When the dew began to fa’,
Lady Margaret was walking up and down,
Looking over her castle wa’.

The battlements of a castle were, in disturbed times, the only recreation-ground of the ladies and play-place of the young people. Dunbar Castle, standing on steep rocks above the North Sea, was not only inaccessible on that side, but from its donjon tower commanded a magnificent view, both of the expanse of waves, taking purple tints from the shadows of the clouds, with here and there a sail fleeting before the wind, and of the rugged headlands of the coast, point beyond point, the nearer distinct, and showing the green summits, and below, the tossing waves breaking white against the dark rocks, and the distance becoming more and more hazy, in spite of the bright sun which made a broken path of glory along the tossing, white-crested waters.

The wind was a keen north-east breeze, and might have been thought too severe by any but the ‘hardy, bold, and wild’ children who were merrily playing on the top of the donjon tower, round the staff whence fluttered the double treasured banner with ‘the ruddy lion ramped in gold’ denoting the presence of the King.

Three little boys, almost babies, and a little girl not much older, were presided over by a small elder sister, who held the youngest in her lap, and tried to amuse him with

caresses and rhymes, so as to prevent his interference with the castle-building of the others, with their small hoard of pebbles and mussel and cockle shells.

Another maiden, the wind tossing her long chestnut-locks, uncovered, but tied with the Scottish snood, sat on the battlement, gazing far out over the waters, with eyes of the same tint as the hair. Even the sea-breeze failed to give more than a slight touch of colour to her somewhat freckled complexion; and the limbs that rested in a careless attitude on the stone bench were long and languid, though with years and favourable circumstances there might be a development of beauty and dignity. Her lips were crooning at intervals a mournful old Scottish tune, sometimes only humming, sometimes uttering its melancholy burthen, and she now and then touched a small harp that stood by her side on the seat.

She did not turn round when a step approached, till a hand was laid on her shoulder, when she started, and looked up into the face of another girl, on a smaller scale, with a complexion of the lily-and-rose kind, fair hair under her hood, with a hawk upon her wrist, and blue eyes dancing at the surprise of her sister.

‘Eleanor in a creel, as usual!’ she cried.

‘I thought it was only one of the bairns,’ was the answer.

‘They might coup over the walls for aught thou seest,’ returned the new-comer. ‘If it were not for little Mary what would become of the poor weans?’

‘What will become of any of us?’ said Eleanor. ‘I was gazing out over the sea and wishing we could drift away upon it to some land of rest.’

‘The Glenuskie folk are going to try another land,’ said Jean. ‘I was in the bailey-court even now playing at ball with Jamie when in comes a lay-brother, with a letter from Sir Patrick to say that he is coming the night to crave permission from Jamie to go with his wife to France. Annis, as you know, is betrothed to the son of his French friends, Malcolm is to study at the Paris University, and Davie to be in the Scottish Guards to learn chivalry like his father. And the Leddy of Glenuskie—our Cousin Lilian—is going with them.’

‘And she will see Margaret,’ said Eleanor. ‘Meg the dearie! Dost remember Meg, Jeanie?’

‘Well, well do I remember her, and how she used to let us nestle in her lap and sing to us. She sang like thee, Elleen, and was as mother-like as Mary is to the weans, but she was much blithesomer—at least before our father was slain.’

‘Sweetest Meg! My whole heart leaps after her,’ cried Eleanor, with a fervent gesture.

‘I loved her better than Isabel, though she was not so bonnie,’ said Jean.

‘Jeanie, Jeanie,’ cried Eleanor, turning round with a vehemence strangely contrasting with her previous language, ‘wherefore should we not go with Glenuskie to be with Meg at Bourges?’

Jeanie opened her blue eyes wide.

‘Go to the French King’s Court?’ she said.

‘To the land of chivalry and song,’ exclaimed Eleanor, ‘where they have courts of love and poetry, and tilts and tourneys and minstrelsy, and the sun shines as it never does in this cold bleak north; and above all there is Margaret,

dear tender Margaret, almost a queen, as a queen she will be one day. Oh! I almost feel her embrace.'

'It might be well,' said Jean, in the matter-of-fact tone of a practical young lady; 'mewed up in these dismal castles, we shall never get princely husbands like our sisters. I might be Queen of Beauty, I doubt me whether you are fair enough, Eleanor.'

'Oh, that is not what I think of,' said Eleanor. 'It is to see our own Margaret, and to see and hear the minstrel knights, instead of the rude savages here, scarce one of whom knows what knighthood means!'

'Ay, and they will lay hands on us and wed us one of these days,' returned Jean, 'unless we vow ourselves as nuns, and I have no mind for that.'

'Nor would a convent always guard us,' said Eleanor; 'these reivers do not stick at sanctuary. Now in that happy land ladies meet with courtesy, and there is a minstrel king like our father, Rene is his name, uncle to Margaret's husband. Oh! it would be a very paradise.'

'Let us go, let us go!' exclaimed Jean.

'Go!' said Mary, who had drawn nearer to them while they spoke. 'Whither did ye say?'

'To France—to sister Margaret and peace and sunshine,' said Eleanor.

'Eh!' said the girl, a pale fair child of twelve; 'and what would poor Jamie and the weans do, wanting their titties?'

'Ye are but a bairn, Mary,' was Jean's answer. 'We shall do better for Jamie by wedding some great lords in the far country than by waiting here at home.'

‘And James will soon have a queen of his own to guide him,’ added Eleanor.

‘I’ll no quit Jamie or the weans,’ said little Mary resolutely, turning back as the three-year-old boy elicited a squall from the eighteen-months one.

‘Johnnie! Johnnie! what gars ye tak’ away wee Andie’s claw? Here, my mannie.’

And she was kneeling on the leads, making peace over the precious crab’s claw, which, with a few cockles and mussels, was the choicest toy of these forlorn young Stewarts; for Stewarts they all were, though the three youngest, the weans, as they were called, were only half-brothers to the rest.

Nothing, in point of fact, could have been much more forlorn than the condition of all. The father of the elder ones, James I., the flower of the whole Stewart race, had nine years before fallen a victim to the savage revenge and ferocity of the lawless men whom he had vainly endeavoured to restrain, leaving an only son of six years old and six young daughters. His wife, Joanna, once the Nightingale of Windsor, had wreaked vengeance in so barbarous a manner as to increase the dislike to her as an Englishwoman. Forlorn and in danger, she tried to secure a protector by a marriage with Sir James Stewart, called the Black Knight of Lorn; but he was unable to do much for her, and only added the feuds of his own family to increase the general danger. The two eldest daughters, Margaret and Isabel, were already contracted to the Dauphin and the Duke of Brittany, and were soon sent to their new homes. The little King, the one darling of his mother, was snatched

from her, and violently transferred from one fierce guardian to another; each regarding the possession of his person as a sanction to tyranny. He had been introduced to the two winsome young Douglasses only as a prelude to their murder, and every day brought tidings of some fresh violence; nay, for the second time, a murder was perpetrated in the Queen's own chamber.

The poor woman had never been very tender or affectionate, and had the haughty demeanour with which the house of Somerset had thought fit to assert their claims to royalty. The cruel slaughter of her first husband, perhaps the only person for whom she had ever felt a softening love, had hardened and soured her. She despised and domineered over her second husband, and made no secret that the number of her daughters was oppressive, and that it was hard that while the royal branch had produced, with one exception, only useless pining maidens, her second marriage in too quick succession should bring her sons, who could only be a burthen. No one greatly marvelled when, a few weeks after the birth of little Andrew, his father disappeared, though whether he had perished in some brawl, been lost at sea, or sought foreign service as far as possible from his queenly wife and inconvenient family, no one knew.

Not long after, the Queen, with her four daughters and the infants, had been seized upon by a noted freebooter, Patrick Hepburn of Hailes, and carried to Dunbar Castle, probably to serve as hostages, for they were fairly well treated, though never allowed to go beyond the walls. The Queen's health had, however, been greatly shaken, the cold

blasts of the north wind withered her up, and she died in the beginning of the year 1445.

The desolateness of the poor girls had perhaps been greater than their grief. Poor Joanna had been exacting and tyrannical, and with no female attendants but the old, worn-out English nurse, had made them do her all sorts of services, which were requited with scoldings and grumblings instead of the loving thanks which ought to have made them offices of affection as well as duty; while the poor little boys would indeed have fared ill if their half-sister Mary, though only twelve years old, had not been one of those girls who are endowed from the first with tender, motherly instincts.

Beyond providing that there was a supply of some sort of food, and that they were confined within the walls of the Castle, Hepburn did not trouble his head about his prisoners, and for many weeks they had no intercourse with any one save Archie Scott, an old groom of their mother's; Ankaret, nurse to baby Andrew; and the seneschal and his wife, both Hepburns.

Eleanor and Jean, who had been eight and seven years old at the time of the terrible catastrophe which had changed all their lives, had been well taught under their father's influence; and the former, who had inherited much of his talent and poetical nature, had availed herself of every scanty opportunity of feeding her imagination by book or ballad, story-teller or minstrel; and the store of tales, songs, and fancies that she had accumulated were not only her own chief resource but that of her sisters, in the many long and dreary hours that they had to pass, unbrightened

save by the inextinguishable buoyancy of young creatures together. When their mother was dying, Hepburn could not help for very shame admitting a priest to her bedside, and allowing the clergy to perform her obsequies in full form. This had led to a more complete perception of the condition of the poor Princesses, just at the time when the two worst tyrants over the young King, Crichton and Livingstone, had fallen out, and he had been able to put himself under the guidance of his first cousin, James Kennedy, Bishop of St. Andrews and now Chancellor of Scotland, one of the wisest, best, and truest-hearted men in Scotland, and imbued with the spirit of the late King.

By his management Hepburn was induced to make submission and deliver up Dunbar Castle to the King with all its captives, and the meeting between the brother and sisters was full of extreme delight on both sides. They had been together very little since their father's death, only meeting enough to make them long for more opportunities; and the boy at fifteen years old was beginning to weary after the home feeling of rest among kindred, and was so happy amidst his sisters that no attempt at breaking up the party at Dunbar had yet been made, as its situation made it a convenient abode for the Court. Though he had never had such advantages of education as, strangely enough, captivity had afforded to his father, he had not been untaught, and his rapid, eager, intelligent mind had caught at all opportunities afforded by those palace monasteries of Scotland in which he had stayed for various periods of his vexed and stormy minority. Good Bishop Kennedy, with whom he had now spent many months, had studied at Paris

and had passed four years at Rome, so as to be well able both to enlarge and stimulate his notions. In Eleanor he had found a companion delighted to share his studies, and full likewise of original fancy and of that vein of poetry almost peculiar to Scottish women; and Jean was equally charming for all the sports in which she could take part, while the little ones, whom, to his credit be it spoken, he always treated as brothers, were pleasant playthings.

His presence, with all that it involved, had made a most happy change in the maidens' lives; and yet there was still great dreariness, much restraint in the presence of constant precaution against violence, much rudeness and barbarism in the surroundings, absolute poverty in the plenishing, a lack of all beauty save in the wild and rugged face of northern nature, and it was hardly to be wondered at that young people, inheritors of the cultivated instincts of James I. and of the Plantagenets, should yearn for something beyond, especially for that sunny southern land which report and youthful imagination made them believe an ideal world of peace, of poetry, and of chivalry, and the loving elder sister who seemed to them a part of that golden age when their noble and tender-hearted father was among them.

The boy's foot was on the turret-stairs, and he was out on the battlements—a tall lad for his age, of the same colouring as Eleanor, and very handsome, except for the blemish of a dark-red mark upon one cheek.

'How now, wee Andie?' he exclaimed, tossing the baby boy up in his arms, and then on the cry of 'Johnnie too!' 'Me too!' performing the same feat with the other two, the last

so boisterously that Mary screamed that 'the bairnie would be coupit over the crag.'

'What, looking out over the sea?' he cried to his elder sisters. 'That's the wrang side! Ye should look out on the other, to see Glenuskie coming with Davie and Malcolm, so we'll have no lack of minstrelsy and tales to-night, that is if the doited old council will let me alone. Here, come to the southern tower to watch for them.'

The sisters had worked themselves to the point of eagerness where propitious moments are disregarded, and both broke out—

'Glenuskie is going to Margaret. We want to go with him!'

'Go! Go to Margaret and leave me!' cried James, the red spot on his face spreading.

'Oh, Jamie, it is so dull and dreary, and folks are so fierce and rude.'

'That might be when that loon Hepburn had you, but now you have me, who can take order with them.'

'You cannot do all, Jamie,' persisted Eleanor; 'and we long after that fair smooth land of peace. Lady Glenuskie would take good care of us till we came to Margaret.'

'Ay! And 'tis little you heed how it is with me,' exclaimed James, 'when you are gone to your daffing and singing and dancing—with me that have saved you from that reiver Hepburn.'

'Jamie, dear, I'll never quit ye,' said little Mary's gentle voice.

He laughed.

'You are a leal faithful little lady, Mary; but you are no good as yet, when Angus is speiring for my sister for his

heir.'

'And do you trow,' said Jean hotly, 'that when one sister is to be a queen, and the other is next thing to it, we are going to put up with a raw-boned, red-haired, unmannerly Scots earl?'

'And do you forget who is King of Scotland, ye proud peat?' her brother cried in return.

'A braw sort of king,' returned Jean, 'who could not hinder his mother and sisters from being stolen by an outlaw.'

The pride and hot temper of the Beauforts had descended to both brother and sister, and James lifted his hand with 'Dare to say that again'; and Jean was beginning 'I dare,' when little Annapple opportunely called, 'There's a plump of spears coming over the hill.'

There was an instant rush to watch them, James saying—

'The Drummond banner! Ye shall see how Glenuskie mocks at this same fine fancy of yours'; and he ran downstairs at no kingly pace, letting the heavy nail-studded door bang after him.

'He will never let us go,' sighed Jean.

'You worked him into one of his tempers,' returned Eleanor. 'You should have broached it to him more by degrees.'

'And lost the chance of going with Sir Patie and his wife, and got plighted to the red-haired Master of Angus—never see sweet Meg and her braw court, and the tilts and tourneys, but live among murderous caitiffs and reivers all my days,' sobbed Jean.

'I would not be such a fule body as to give in for a hasty word or two, specially of Jamie's,' said Eleanor composedly.

‘And gin ye bide here,’ added gentle Mary, ‘we shall be all together, and you will have Jamie and the bairnies.’

‘Fine consolation,’ muttered Jean.

‘Eh well,’ said Eleanor, we must go down and meet them.’

‘This fashion!’ exclaimed Jean. ‘Look at your hair, Ellie—blown wild about your ears like a daft woman’s, and your kirtle all over mortar and smut. My certie, you would be a bonnie lady to be Queen of Love and Beauty at a jousting-match.’

‘You are no better, Jeanie,’ responded Eleanor.

‘That I ken full well, but I’d be shamed to show myself to knights and lairds that gate. And see Mary and all the lave have their hands as black as a caird’s.’

‘Come and let Andie’s Mary wash them,’ said that little personage, picking up fat Andrew in her arms, while he retained his beloved crab’s claw. ‘Jeanie, would you carry Johnnie, he’s not sure-footed, over the stair? Annaple, take Lorn’s hand over the kittle turning.’

One chamber was allotted to the entire party and their single nurse. Being far up in the tower, it ventured to have two windows in the massive walls, so thick that five-and-twenty steps from the floor were needed to reach the narrow slips of glass in a frame that could be removed at will, either to admit the air or to be exchanged for solid wooden shutters to exclude storms by sea or arrows and bolts by land. The lower part of the walls was hung with very grim old tapestry, on which Holofernes’ head, going into its bag, could just be detected; there were two great solid box-beds, two more pallets rolled up for the day, a chest or two,

a rude table, a cross-legged chair, a few stools, and some deer and seal skins spread on the floor completed the furniture of this ladies' bower. There was, unusual luxury, a chimney with a hearth and peat fire, and a cauldron on it, with a silver and a copper basin beside it for washing purposes, never discarded by poor Queen Joanna and her old English nurse Ankaret, who had remained beside her through all the troubles of the stormy and barbarous country, and, though crippled by a fall and racked with rheumatism, was the chief comfort of the young children. She crouched at the hearth with her spinning and her beads, and exclaimed at the tossed hair and soiled hands and faces of her charges.

Mary brought the little ones to her to be set to rights, and the elder girls did their best with their toilette. Princesses as they were, the ruddy golden tresses of Eleanor and the flaxen locks of Jean and Mary were the only ornaments that they could boast of as their own; and though there were silken and embroidered garments of their mother's in one of the chests, their mourning forbade the use of them. The girls only wore the plain black kirtles that had been brought from Haddington at the time of the funeral, and the little boys had such homespun garments as the shepherd lads wore.

Partly scolding, partly caressing, partly bemoaning the condition of her young ladies, so different from the splendours of the house of Somerset, Ankaret saw that Eleanor was as fit to be seen as circumstances would permit; as to Jean and Mary, there was no trouble on that score.

The whole was not accomplished till a horn was sounded as an intimation that supper was ready, at five o'clock, for the entire household, and all made their way down—Jean first, in all the glory of her fair face and beautiful hair; then Eleanor with little Lorn, as he was called, his Christian name being James; then Annaple and Johnnie hand-in-hand, Mary carrying Andrew, and lastly old Ankaret, hobbling along with her stick, and, when out of sight, a hand on Annaple's shoulder. In public, nothing would have made her presume so far. The hall was a huge, vaulted, stone-walled room, with a great fire on the wide hearth, and three long tables—one was cross-wise, on the dais near the fire, the other two ran the length of the hall. The upper one was furnished with tolerably clean napery and a few silver vessels; as to the lower ones, they were in two degrees of comparison, and the less said of the third the better. It was for the men-at-arms and the lowest servants, whereas the second belonged to those of the suite of the King and Chancellor, who were not of rank to be at his table. The Lord Lion King-at-Arms was high-table company, but he was absent, and the inferior royal pursuivant was entertaining two of his fellows, one with the Douglas Bloody Heart, the other with the Lindsay Lion on a black field, besides two messengers of the different clans, who looked askance at one another.

Leaning against the wall near the window stood the young King with two or three youths beside him, laughing and talking over three great deer-hounds, and by the hearth were two elder men—one, a tall dignified figure in the square cap and purple robe of a Bishop, with a face of great wisdom and sweetness; the other, still taller, with slightly

grizzled hair and the weather-beaten countenance of a valiant and sagacious warrior, dressed in the leathern garments usually worn under armour.

As Jean emerged from the turret she was met and courteously greeted by Sir Patrick Drummond and his sons, as were also her sisters, with a grace and deference to their rank such as they hardly ever received from the nobles, and whose very rarity made Eleanor shy and uncomfortable, even while she was gratified and accepted it as her due.

The Bishop inclined his head and gave them a kind smile; but they had already seen him in the morning, as he was residing in the castle. He was the most fatherly friend and kinsman the young things knew, and though really their first cousin, they looked to him like an uncle. He insisted on due ceremony with them, though he had much difficulty in enforcing it, except with those Scottish knights and nobles who, like Sir Patrick Drummond, had served in France, and retained their French breeding.

So Jean, hawk and all, had to be handed to her seat by Sir Patrick as the guest, Eleanor by her brother, not without a little fraternal pinch, and Mary by the Bishop, who answered with a paternal caress to her murmured entreaty that she might keep wee Andie on her lap and give him his brose.

It was not a sumptuous repast, the staple being a haggis, also broth with chunks of meat and barleycorns floating in it, the meat in strings by force of boiling. At the high table each person had a bowl, either silver or wood, and each had a private spoon, and a dagger to serve as knife, also a drinking-cup of various materials, from the King's gold

goblet downwards to horns, and a bannock to eat with the brose. At the middle table trenchers and bannocks served the purpose of plates; and at the third there was nothing interposed between the boards of the table and the lumps of meat from which the soup had been made.

Jean's quick eyes soon detected more men-at-arms and with different badges from the thyme spray of Drummond, and her brother was evidently bursting with some communication, held back almost forcibly by the Bishop, who had established a considerable influence over the impetuous boy, while Sir Patrick maintained a wise and tedious political conversation about the peace between France and England, which was to be cemented by the marriage of the young King of England to the daughter of King Rene and the cession of Anjou and Maine to her father.

'Solid dukedoms for a lassie!' cried young James. 'What a craven to make such a bargain!'

'Scarce like his father's son,' returned Sir Patrick, 'who gat the bride with a kingdom for her tocher that these folks have well-nigh lost among them.'

'The saints be praised if they have.'

'I cannot forget, my liege, how your own sainted father loved and fought for King Harry of Monmouth. Foe as he was, I own that I shall never look on his like again.'

'I hold with you in that, Patie,' said Bishop Kennedy; 'and frown as you may, my young liege, a few years with such as he would do more for you—as it did with your blessed father—than ever we can.'

'I can hold mine own, I hope, without lessons from the enemy,' said James, holding his head high, while his ruddy

locks flew back, his eyes glanced, and the red scar on his cheek widened. 'And is it true that you are for going through false England, Patie?'

'I made friends there when I spent two years there with your Grace's blessed father,' returned Sir Patrick, 'and so did my good wife. She longs to see the lady who is now Sister Clare at St. Katharine's in London, and it is well not to let her and Annis brook the long sea voyage.'

'There, Jean! I'd brook ten sea voyages rather than hold myself beholden to an Englishman!' quoth James.

'Nevertheless, there are letters and messages that it is well to confide to so trusty and wise-headed a knight as Glenuskie,' returned the Bishop.

The meal over, the silver bowls were carried round with water to wash the hands by the two young Drummonds, sons of Glenuskie, and by the King's pages, youths of about the same age, after which the Bishop and Sir Patrick asked licence of the King to retire for consultation to the Bishop's apartment, a permission which, as may well be believed, he granted readily, only rejoicing that he was not wanted.

The little ones were carried off by Mary and Nurse Ankaret; and the King, his elder sisters, and the other youths of condition betook themselves, followed by half-a-dozen great dogs, to the court, where the Drummonds wanted to exhibit the horses procured for the journey, and James and Jean to show the hawks that were the pride of their heart.

By and by came an Italian priest, who acted as secretary to the Bishop—a poor little man who grew yellower and yellower, was always shivering, and seemed to be shrivelled

into growing smaller and smaller by the Scottish winds, but who had a most keen and intelligent face.

‘How now, Father Romuald,’ called out James. ‘Are ye come to fetch me?’

‘Di grazia, Signor Re’, began the Italian in some fear, as the dogs smelted his lambskin cape. ‘The Lord Bishop entreats your Majesty’s presence.’

His Majesty, who, by the way, never was so called by any one else, uttered some bitter growls and grumbles, but felt forced to obey the call, taking with him, however, his beautiful falcon on his wrist, and the two huge deer-hounds, who he declared should be of the council if he was.

Jean and Eleanor then closed upon David and Malcolm, eagerly demanding of them what they expected in that wonderful land to which they were going, much against the will of young David, who was sure there would be no hunting of deer, nor hawking for grouse, nor riding after an English borderer or Hieland cateran—nothing, in fact, worth living for! It would be all a-wearying with their manners and their courtesies and such like daft woman’s gear! Why could not his father be content to let him grow up like his fellows, rough and free and ready?

‘And knowing nothing better—nothing beyond,’ said Eleanor.

‘What would you have better than the hill and the brae? To tame a horse and fly a hawk, and couch a lance and bend a bow! That’s what a man is made for, without fashing himself with letters and Latin and manners, no better than a monk; but my father would always have it so!’

‘Ye’ll be thankful to him yet, Davie,’ put in his graver brother.

‘Thankful! I shall forget all about it as soon as I am knighted, and make you write all my letters—and few enough there will be.’

‘And you, Malcolm!’ said Eleanor, ‘would you be content to hide within four walls, and know nothing by your own eyes?’

‘No indeed, cousin,’ replied the lad; ‘I long for the fair churches and cloisters and the learned men and books that my father tells of. My mother says that her brother, that I am named for, yearned to make this a land of peace and godliness, and to turn these high spirits to God’s glory instead of man’s strife and feud, and how it might have been done save for the slaying of your noble father—Saints rest him!—which broke mine uncle’s heart, so that he died on his way home from pilgrimage. She hopes to pray at his tomb that I may tread in his steps, and be a blessing and not a curse to the land we love.’

Eleanor was silent, seeing for the first time that there might be higher aims than escaping from dulness, strife, and peril; whilst Jean cried—

‘Tis the titles and jousts, the knights and ladies that I care for—men that know what fair chivalry means, and make knightly vows to dare all sorts of foes for a lady’s sake.’

‘As if any lass was worth it,’ said David contemptuously.

‘Ay, that’s what you are! That’s what it is to live in this savage realm,’ returned Jean.

At this moment, however, Brother Romuald was again seen advancing, and this time with a request for the presence of the ladies Jean and Eleanor.

‘Could James be relenting on better advice?’ they asked one another as they went.

‘More likely,’ said Jean, with a sigh, amounting to a groan, ‘it is only to hear that we are made over, like a couple of kine, to some ruffianly reivers, who will beat a princess as soon as a scullion.’

They reached the chamber in time. Though the Bishop slept there it also served for a council chamber; and as he carried his chapel and household furniture about with him, it was a good deal more civilised-looking than even the princesses’ room. Large folding screens, worked with tapestry, representing the lives of the saints, shut off the part used as an oratory and that which served as a bedchamber, where indeed the good man slept on a rush mat on the floor. There were a table and several chairs and stools, all capable of being folded up for transport. The young King occupied a large chair of state, in which he twisted himself in a very undignified manner; the Bishop-Chancellor sat beside him, with the Great Seal of Scotland and some writing materials, parchments, and letters before him, and Sir Patrick came forward to receive and seat the young ladies, and then remained standing—as few of his rank in Scotland would have done on their account.

‘Well, lassies,’ began the King, ‘here’s lads enow for you. There’s the Master of Angus, as ye ken—’(Jean tossed her head)—‘moreover, auld Crawford wants one of you for his son.’

‘The Tyger Earl,’ gasped Eleanor.

‘And with Stirling for your portion, the modest fellow,’ added James. ‘Ay, and that’s not all. There’s the MacAlpin threatens me with all his clan if I dinna give you to him; and Mackay is not behindhand, but will come down with pibroch and braid sword and five hundred caterans to pay his court to you, and make short work of all others. My certie, sisters seem but a cause for threats from reivers, though maybe they would not be so uncivil if once they had you.’

‘Oh, Jamie! oh! dear holy Father,’ cried Eleanor, turning from the King to the Bishop, ‘do not, for mercy’s sake, give me over to one of those ruffians.’

‘They are coming, Eleanor,’ said James, with a boy’s love of terrifying; ‘the MacAlpin and Mackay are both coming down after you, and we shall have a fight like the Clan Chattan and Clan Kay. There’s for the demoiselle who craved for knights to break lances for her!’

‘Knights indeed! Highland thieves,’ said Jean; ‘and ‘tis for what tocher they may force from you, James, not for her face.’

‘You are right there, my puir bairn,’ said the Bishop. ‘These men—save perhaps the young Master of Angus—only seek your hands as a pretext for demands from your brother, and for spuilzie and robbery among themselves. And I for my part would never counsel his Grace to yield the lambs to the wolves, even to save himself.’

‘No, indeed,’ broke in the King; we may not have them fighting down here, though it would be rare sport to look on, if you were not to be the prize. So my Lord Bishop here trows, and I am of the same mind, that the only safety is