

WITCHCRAFT

An Annotated Edition of Joanna Baillie's Play

by

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HYPertext & PERFORMANCE

A Resonant Response to Joanna Baillie's *Witchcraft*

<http://resonance.hexagram.ca/witchcraft>

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Headnote

Joanna Baillie (1762-1851) was born in Bothwell, Lanarkshire, Scotland. Her father was a reverend and her mother was related to the poet John Hunter. In 1778, Baillie's father died, leaving the family with barely anything. Five years later, Matthew Baillie, Joanna's brother, inherited from his uncle William Hunter of a property in London on Windmill Street. The next year, Baillie moved to her brother's new home and was introduced to the world of salon through her aunt, Anne Hunter. It is at that time that she met several key members of the Bluestocking circle, especially Frances Burney, Elizabeth Carter and Elizabeth Montague.

In 1790, Baillie published a collection of poems written in blank verse titled *Poems: Wherein it is Attempted to Describe Certain Views of Nature and of Rustic Manners*. She begins to work on *Plays on the Passions* the following year. It would become a lifetime project. The first series of *Plays on the Passions* was published anonymously in 1798. In her famous introduction, Baillie explains to the reader that it is her intent to write a tragedy and a comedy delineating a passion and to illustrate the process through which passion influences the human mind, conduct and behaviour. Her approach to theatre is thus very analytical, where the human mind and the passions are carefully constructed and the progression of the passion is finely detailed. This style was controversial since contemporary theatre was not made for this level of characters introspection and when Baillie's plays were staged, they were often not a financial success. However, readers very much appreciated her plays since they were able to follow the minute changes in characters. This has lead critiques to label her a closet dramatist, although, through her plays, she fought to change theatre's rules and manners.

In 1836, she publishes three volumes of miscellaneous dramas, including the play *Witchcraft*. Aesthetically, the play keeps the subtlety of the *Plays on the Passions* and avoids the mannerism of contemporary theatre. Set at the end of the witch hunt, *Witchcraft* describes how fear and gossip spread in a small community and how fast a group of people can fall into hysteria. This is not without recalling the 1692 Salem witch trials, and in the twentieth century, Arthur Miller's 1952 play *The Crucible*. It must be said that, like Salem, Scotland's history is tied with witchcraft and the uncanny. It is the perfect setting for witches, monsters or apparitions, as proven from the many literary works using Scotland as the home of the uncanny, from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* to the novels like Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* or James Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner*. According to *The Survey of Scottish Witchcraft*, near 4,000 people were accused of witchcraft between 1560 and 1740 and went through phases of collective hysteria concerning witchcraft.¹ The Scottish Witchcraft Act was finally repealed in 1736, alongside the British Act. It must be noted that witchcraft did not ceased to be a crime: after 1736, someone could be prosecuted for "pretended witchcraft" although the maximum penalty was of a year of imprisonment.

The editors would like to thank the whole team behind this project, especially Joanna Donehower for their help and work compiling information and context about Joanna Baillie and witchcraft in Scotland.

1 <http://www.shc.ed.ac.uk/Research/witches/>

WITCHCRAFT:

A TRAGEDY IN PROSE. IN FIVE ACTS.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

Robert Kennedy of Dungarren (commonly called Dungarren).
Murrey.
Rutherford , Minister of the Parish.
Fatheringham , Friend of Murrey.
The Sheriff of Renfrewshire.
The Baillie or Magistrate of Paisley.
Black Bawldy , the Herdboy of Dungarren.
Anderson , the principal Domestic of Dungarren.
Wilkin , an Idiot.
Crowd, Jailor, Landlord, &c.

Lady Dungarren (commonly so called), Mother of Robert Kennedy.
Violet , Daughter of Murrey.
Annabella , the rich Relation of Lady Dungarren.
Grizeld Bane , reputed Witch.
Mary Macmurren , reputed Witch.
Elsy Low , reputed Witch.
Phemy , Maid to Annabella.
Nurse, Maidservants, Crowd, &c.

Scene in Renfrewshire², in Scotland.

² A former county of west central Scotland, on the Firth of Clyde, divided into Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire.

ACT I

SCENE I

A Parlour in the House or Tower of Dungarren.

Enter Lady Dungarren and Annabella, by different sides.

ANNABELLA. You must be surprised, my dear cousin, at my unexpected return.

LADY DUNGARREN. I will frankly confess that I am. How did you find your friends in Glenrowan³?

ANNABELLA. With their house full of disagreeable visitors and discomfort: another day of it would have cast me into a fever; so I will trespass on your hospitality a week longer, knowing how kindly disposed you have always been to the child of your early friend.

LADY DUNGARREN. It would be strange, indeed, if the daughter of Duncan Gordon were not welcome here.

ANNABELLA. How has poor Jessie been since I left you?

LADY DUNGARREN. *[Shaking her head]*. I have but a sorrowful account to give of her.

ANNABELLA. Had she any rest last night? Does she look as wildly as she did? Were any strange noises heard in the chamber during the night?

LADY DUNGARREN. Ay; noises that made me start and tremble, and feel a horrid consciousness that some being or other was in the room near me, though to the natural eye invisible.

ANNABELLA. What kind of sounds were they? Why did you think they were so near you?

3 A town in the Scottish Highlands.

LADY DUNGARREN. I was sitting by the table, with my head resting on my hand, when the door leading from the back staircase, which I am certain I had bolted in the evening, burst open.

ANNABELLA. And what followed?

LADY DUNGARREN. I verily⁴ thought to see some elrich⁵ form or other make its appearance, and I sat for some moments rivetted to my chair, without power to move hand or foot, or almost to breathe.

ANNABELLA. Yet you saw nothing?

LADY DUNGARREN. Nothing.

ANNABELLA. And heard only the bursting of the door?

LADY DUNGARREN. Only that for a time: but afterwards, when I listened intently, I heard strange whisperings near me, and soft steps, as of unshod feet, passing between me and the bed.

ANNABELLA. Footsteps?

LADY DUNGARREN. Ay; and the curtains of the bed began to shake as if touched by a hand, or the motion of some passing body. Then I knew that they were dealing with my poor child, and I had no power to break the spell of their witchcraft, for I had no voice to speak.

ANNABELLA. You had no power to speak?

LADY DUNGARREN. No; though the Lord's prayer was on my lips, I was unable to utter it.

ANNABELLA. Heaven preserve us! what a dreadful situation you were in! Did the poor child seem to notice any thing?

LADY DUNGARREN. I cannot say how she looked when the door burst open; but as soon as I could observe her, her eyes were wide open, gazing

fixedly, as if some ugly visage were hanging over her, from which she could not turn away, and presently she fell into a convulsion, and I at that instant recovered my voice and my strength, and called nurse from her closet to assist her.

ANNABELLA. What did nurse think?

LADY DUNGARREN. Nurse said she was sure that both Grizeld Bane and Mary Macmurren had been in the room. And this I will take my oath to, that afterwards, when she fell quiet, she muttered in her sleep, in a thick untuneable voice, and amongst the words which she uttered, I distinctly heard the name of Mary Macmurren.

ANNABELLA. What an awful thing it is if people can have power from the evil spirit to inflict such calamity!

LADY DUNGARREN. Awful indeed!

ANNABELLA. How can they purchase such power?

LADY DUNGARREN. The ruin of a Christian soul is price enough for any thing. Satan, in return for this, will bestow power enough to do whatever his bondswoman or bondsman listeth.

ANNABELLA. Yet they are always miserable and poor.

LADY DUNGARREN. Not always; but malignant gratifications are what they delight in, and nothing else is of much value to them.

ANNABELLA. It may be so: — it is strange and fearful!

LADY DUNGARREN. I must go to my closet now, and mix the medicine for poor Jessie, to be ready at the proper time; for I expect the minister to pray by her to-night, and would have every thing prepared before he comes.

[Exit].

ANNABELLA. [Alone, after a thoughtful pause.] Ay, if there be in reality such supernatural agency, by which a breast fraught with passion and

4 Truly.

5 Ghastly.

misery may find relief. *[Starting back.]* Dreadful resource! I may not be so assisted. *[After walking to and fro in great perturbation.]* Oh, Dungarren, Dungarren! that a paltry⁶ girl, who is not worthy to be my tirewoman⁷, the orphan of a murderer — a man disgraced, who died in a pit and was buried in a moor; one whose very forehead is covered with blushing shame when the eye of an irreproachable gentlewoman looks upon her; whose very voice doth alter and hesitate when a simple question of her state or her family is put to her, — that a creature thus naturally formed to excite aversion and contempt should so engross thy affections! It makes me mad! — “May not be so assisted!” Evil is but evil, and torment is but torment! — I have felt both — I have felt them to extremity? what have I then to fear?

[Starts on hearing the door open behind her, as Phemy enters.]

Who is there?

PEMEY. Only me, madam.

ANNABELLA. What brings thee here?

PEMEY. I came to know if you will trust the Glasgow carrier, who is just come for the orders of the family, with your commission to the silk shop.

ANNABELLA. What art thou telling me?

PEMEY. Of your commission to the silk shop.

ANNABELLA. I don't understand thee.

PEMEY. The additional yards of silk that are wanted.

ANNABELLA. I want none, fool! Thy wits are bewildered.

PEMEY. Not my wits, Madam. What will you please to have, then, for the trimming of your new mantua⁸?

6 Very small.

7 A lady's maid.

8 A woman's loose gown of a kind fashionable during the 17th and 18th centuries.

ANNABELLA. Newt⁹ skins and adder¹⁰ skins, an thou wilt.

PEMEY. That might do for a witch's gown, indeed: Grizeld Bane might have a garniture of that sort.

ANNABELLA. What dost thou know of Grizeld Bane?

PEMEY. Stories enow¹¹, if they be true. It is she, or Mary Macmurren, who has, as they say, bewitched the poor young lady here; and it was a spell cast by her, that made the farmer's pretty daughter fall over the crag¹² and break her leg, the week before her wedding.

ANNABELLA. Before her wedding?

PEMEY. Yes, truly, Madam; and no wedding at all will ever follow such an untoward mischance.

ANNABELLA. Who told thee this?

PEMEY. Everybody tells it, and knows it to be true. — *[After a pause.]* But the carrier is waiting. — She does not heed me. *[Aside.]* What is the matter, Madam? Are you not well?

ANNABELLA. *[Rousing herself suddenly.]* Dost thou know Grizeld Bane?

PEMEY. Heaven forfend!¹³

ANNABELLA. Dost thou know where she lives?

PEMEY. Somewhere not far distant, I believe: Black Bawldy the herd knows her den well enough.

ANNABELLA. Is he in the house at present?

9 A small slender-bodied amphibian.

10 A small venomous Eurasian snake; it is the only poisonous snake in Britain.

11 Enough.

12 A steep or rugged cliff or rock face.

13 “Heaven (or God) forfend” is an expression of dismay or horror at the thought of something happening.

PHEMY. Very likely; for this is the time when his cows are brought in for the milking.

ANNABELLA. Go find him, if thou canst, and send him to me immediately.

[Exit Phemy.]

If there be a spell to break wedlock, and to break affection also, it were well worth its purchase at any price; yea, though the soul's jeopardy were added to the gold.

Re-enter Phemy, followed by Bawldy.

PHEMY. I had not far to seek for him: he stood waiting in the passage, for the cooling of his brose¹⁴.

ANNABELLA. Come nearer, Bawldy. Dost thou know where Grizeld Bane lives?

BAWLDDY. Ay, that I do, to my cost. She and her black cat, too, live owre near my milk kye. Brindleand Hawky gi' but half the milk they should gi', and we wat weel whare the ither half gangs to.

ANNABELLA. Never mind that, my good lad! Hie to her immediately, and tell her to come to me.

BAWLDDY. To you, Leddy?

ANNABELLA. Yes: to come to me without loss of time. — There is money for thee. [Giving money.] Do thy errand speedily and secretly: let nobody know that I have sent thee.

BAWLDDY. An' she's to come to you here, hidlings,¹⁵ as it war?

ANNABELLA. Yes, Bawldy; and when she comes, let her wait for me in the cattle shed, by the wood, and I'll meet her there. Dost thou understand me, man? Go quickly.

¹⁴ A kind of porridge made with oatmeal or dried peas and boiling water or milk.

¹⁵ In secret.

BAWLDDY. The night, Leddy?

ANNABELLA. Yes, to-night. Why dost thou look so scared?

BAWLDDY. I darna gang to her at night. — Gude be wi' us! an I war to find her at her cantrips¹⁶, I had better be belaired in a bog, or play coupcarling owre the craig o' Dalwhirry.

ANNABELLA. She must be very terrible to make thee so afraid.

BAWLDDY. When she begins to mutter wi' her white wuthered lips, and her twa gleg¹⁷ eyen are glowering like glints o' wildfire frae the hollow o' her dark bent brows, she 's enough to mak a trooper quake; ay, wi' baith swurd and pistol by his side. — No, no, Leddy! the sun maun¹⁸ be up in the lift whan I venture to her den.

ANNABELLA. Thou wilt get there before it be dark, if thou make good speed.

BAWLDDY. No, though I had the speed o' a mawkin¹⁹. It is gloaming already; black clouds are spreading fast owre the sky, and far-off thunner is growling. There is a storm coming on, and the fiends o' the air are at wark; I darna gang till the morning.

ANNABELLA. Timid loon! retire then, and go in the morning. But see that thou keep the secret. I'll give thee more money, if thou prove trusty and diligent.

[Exit Bawldy.]

PHEMY. The carrier will set off in a trice²⁰, Madam.

ANNABELLA. Let him go.

PHEMY. And no orders given?

¹⁶ A mischievous act.

¹⁷ Sharp eye.

¹⁸ Must.

¹⁹ An archaic or dialect name for a cat; a variant of malkin.

²⁰ Very quickly.

ANNABELLA. Give him what orders thou wilt, and plague me no more.

[Exeunt severally²¹.]

SCENE II

Before the Gate of Dungarren Tower: Anderson and other Servants are seen loitering within the Gate.

Enter Dungarren, with a fowling-piece²² in his hand, and a pouch or bag swung from his shoulder, as returned from sport.

ANDERSON. *[Advancing to meet him.]* I'm right glad to see your honour returned; for the night draws on, and it wad hae been nae joke, I trow,²³ to hae been belated on a haunted warlock moor, and thunner growling i' the welkin²⁴.

DUNGARREN. The sky indeed looks threatening.

ANDERSON. And what sport has your honour had the day? The birds grow wilder every year, now.

DUNGARREN. Think you so, Anderson?

ANDERSON. Trowth²⁵ do I! There's something uncanny about them too. It's a fearfu' time we live in.

DUNGARREN. I have done pretty well, however. Give this to the housekeeper to increase the stores of her larder.

[Unfastening the bag, and giving it to Anderson.]

ANDERSON. By my faith! she'll be glad enough o' sick a supply; for Madam Annabell is come back again, wi' that Episcopal lassie frae the Isle o'

²¹ Each in turn.

²² A light shotgun for shooting birds and small animals.

²³ Think.

²⁴ The sky.

²⁵ Truth.

Barra²⁶, that reads out o' a prayer book, and ca's hersell her Leddy's gentlewoman. Lord be mercifu' to us! the leddy 's bad enough, but Job himsell could hardly thole²⁷ the gentlewoman.

DUNGARREN. What has brought her back so soon? She was to have staid a week in Dumbartonshire²⁸.

ANDERSON. That's more than I can say: but here comes Black Bawldy, wha was sent for to speak to her; ay, and gaed into the very parlour till her. He, maybe, kens²⁹ what has brought her back.

DUNGARREN. That's strange enough.

ANDERSON. Nae mair strange than true. Into the very parlour: I saw him set his dirty feet on the clean floor wi' my ain eyen.

Enter Bawldy.

DUNGARREN. So, Bawldy, thou 'rt become company for ladies in a parlour.

BAWLDDY. Toot, your honour! ony body 's gude enough to haver wi' them, when they're wearying.

DUNGARREN. What makes Mrs. Annabell return to us so soon, if she be wearying?

BAWLDDY. She'll no weary now, when your honour's come hame.

DUNGARREN. Has any thing happen'd? She was to have staid a week in Dumbartonshire.

BAWLDDY. Maybe she has been a week there, o' her ain reckoning, tho' we ca' it only twa days. Folks said when she gaed awa', that she wou'd na be lang awa'. It wou'd be as easy to keep a moth frae the can'le, or a cat frae the milk-house, as keep her awa' frae the tower o' Dungarren (lowering

²⁶ A predominantly Gaelic-speaking island, and apart from the adjacent island of Vatersay, is the southernmost inhabited island of the Outer Hebrides in Scotland.

²⁷ Tolerate.

²⁸ A former county of west central Scotland, on the Clyde, divided into East Dumbartonshire and West Dumbartonshire council areas.

²⁹ Knows.

his voice) when the laird is at hame.

DUNGARREN. What say'st thou, varlet³⁰?

BAWLDY. Only what I hear folks say, your honour.

DUNGARREN. Go thy ways to thy loft and thy byre³¹. Folks are saucy, and teach lads to forget themselves.

[Exit Bawldy.]

[Pointing to the bag.]

Take it in, Anderson.

[Exit Anderson.]

Watch [Dungarren's soliloquy](#).

DUNGARREN. [Alone, turning impatiently from the gate.] I thought to have crossed the threshold of my own house in peace. — To be pestered with the passion of an indelicate vixen! — She fastens her affection upon me like a doctor's blister-sheet, strewed with all the stinging powders of the torrid zone, for daring and desperate medication. [After pacing to and fro in a disturbed manner.] And my gentle Violet, too: must she be still subjected to her scornful looks and insulting insinuations? A noble spirit like hers, under such painful circumstances to be exposed to such insolence! It shall not be: I will not suffer it. [A thoughtful pause]. To affront a lady in my own house? Not to be thought of! To leave the country at once, and let the sea and its waves roll between us? Ay, this were well, were not all that is dear to me left behind; — my mother, my poor afflicted sister, my dear, dear Violet, the noble distressed Violet Murrey. — No; I will stay and contend with the termagant³², as I would with an evil spirit. Had she the soul of a woman within her, though the plainest and meanest of her sex, I would pity and respect her; but as she is — O! shame upon it! she makes me as bad as herself. I know not what to do: I dare not enter yet.

30 A man or boy acting as an attendant or servant.

31 A cowshed.

32 A harsh-tempered or overbearing woman.

[Exit the way by which he came.]

SCENE III

Watch [Witches on the Moor](#).

A wild Moor, skirted on one side by a thick tangled Wood, through which several open paths are seen. The stage darkened to represent faint moonlight through heavy gathering clouds. Thunder and lightning.

Enter by the front Elspy Low, Mary Macmurren, and her son, Wilkin, who stop and listen to the thunder.

MARY MACMURREN. [Spreading her arms exultingly.] Ay, ay! this sounds like the true sound o' Princedome and Powerfu'ness.

ELSPY LOW. [Clapping her hands as another louder peal rolls on.] Ay; it sounds royally! we shall na mare be deceived; it wull prove a' true at last.

MARY MACMURREN. This very night we shall ken what we shall ken. We shall be wi' the Beings of power — be wi' them and be of them.

[Thunder again.]

ELSPY LOW. It is an awfu' din, and tells wi' a lordly voice wha is coming and at hand: we shall na mare be deceived.

MARY MACMURREN. [To Wilkin, as he presses closer to her side.] Dinna tug at me sa wickedly, Wilkin; thou shalt ha' a bellyfu' soon o' the fat o' the lawn, my poor glutton.

WILKIN. Fou³³! fou! meat! great meat! — hurr, hurr! [Making a noise in his throat to express pleasure.] it's a-coming!

MARY MACMURREN. We shall ha' what we list at last, — milk and meat! meat and malt!

33 Sated.

ELSPY LOW. Mingling and merry-making; and revenge for the best sport of a'!

MARY MACMURREN. Ay; the hated anes³⁴ will pay the cost, I trow. We'll sit at our good coags of cream, and think o' the growling carle's kye³⁵ wi' their udders lank and sapless, and the goodwife greeting ow'r her kirn.³⁶

ELSPY LOW. Ha, ha, ha! there's good spice in that, woman, to relish far poorer fare.

MARY MACMURREN. They refused us a han'fu' in our greatest need, but now it wull be our turn to ha' fou sacks and baith cakes and kebbucks³⁷ at command, while their aumery³⁸ is bare.

ELSPY LOW. Ha, ha, ha! there's good spice in that, kimmer.³⁹

[A very loud peal⁴⁰, &c.]

MARY MACMURREN. Hear ye that! the thunner grows louder and louder; and here she comes wi' her arms in the air and her spirit as hie as the clouds. Her murky chief and his murky mates wull soon fra a' quarters o' the warld, I warrant ye, come trooping to their tryste⁴¹.

Enter Grizeld Bane from the wood by the bottom of the Stage, advancing with wild frantic gestures.

GRIZELD BANE. [Stopping on the middle of the stage, and spreading wide her raised arms with lofty courtesy.]
Come, come, my mighty master!
Come on the clouds; come on the wind!
Come for to loosen, and come for to bind!
Rise from the raging sea; rise from the mine!
There's power in the night storm for thee and for thine.

34 Ones.

35 Husbandman's cows.

36 Crying over her churn.

37 Cheeses.

38 Pantry.

39 A familiar reference to a woman.

40 A loud reverberating sound (e.g. thunder).

41 A meeting or meeting place that has been agreed on.

MARY MACMURREN. [Very eagerly to Grizeld.] Dost thou really see him?

ELSPY LOW. [In the same manner.] Dost thou see him? or hear him?

MARY MACMURREN. Is he near us?

ELSPY LOW. Is he on the moor?

GRIZELD BANE. Hold your peace, wretches! he may start up by your side in an instant, and scare the very life from your body, if ye forget what I told you.

ELSPY LOW. I have na' forgotten it.

MARY MACMURREN. Nor I neither. We're to tak' han's first of a'.

[Takes Elspy by the hand, and then turns to Wilkin.]

And thine, too, Wilkin.

WILKIN. Meat, meat!

MARY MACMURREN. No, glutton; thou mun gi' me thy haun and go round, as I told thee.

WILKIN. Round! round! pots be round, dishes be round; a' fou for Wilkin! hurr, hurr!

[Grizeld Bane joins them, and they all take hands, moving in a circular direction, and speaking all together in a dull chanting measure.]

To the right, to the right, to the right we wheel;
Thou heaving earth, free passage give, and our dark Prince reveal.
To the right, &c.

[three times, then turning the contrary way]

To the left, to the left, to the left we go;
Ye folding clouds, your curtain rend, and our great Master show.

[Loud thunder.]

ELSPY LOW. [After a pause.] Is he coming yet?

MARY MACMURREN. Is he coming, Grizeld Bane? I see nothing.

GRIZELD BANE. [Seizing her by the throat.] Hold thy peace, or I'll strangle thee! Is it for a wretch like thee to utter earthly words on the very verge of such an awful presence?

MARY MACMURREN. For God's sake! — for Satan's sake! — for ony sake, let gang thy terrible grip.

[A tremendous loud peal.]

GRIZELD BANE. [Exultingly.] There's an astounding din to make your ears tingle! as if the welkin were breaking down upon us with its lading of terror and destruction! The lightning has done as I bade it. I see him, I see him now.

MARY MACMURREN. Where, where? I see nothing.

ELSPY LOW. Nor I either, Grizeld.

GRIZELD BANE. Look yonder to the skirt of that cloud: his head is bending over it like a knight from the keep of a castle. Hold ye quiet for a space; quiet as the corse in its coffin: he will be on the moor in a trice.

ELSPY LOW. Trowth, I think he will; for I'm trembling sa.

MARY MACMURREN. I'm trem'ling too, woman; and sa is poor Wilkin.

GRIZELD BANE. [Exultingly, after another very loud peal, &c.] Ay, roar away! glare away! roar to the very outrage of roaring! Brave heralding, I trow, for the prince of the power of the air! — He will be here, anon⁴².

MARY MACMURREN. I'm sure he will, for my legs bend under me sa, I canna' stand upright.

GRIZELD BANE. Hold thy tongue! he is on the moor. Look yonder, where he is moving with strides like the steps of a man, and light by his side. Dost thou see it? [To Mary Macmurren.]

MARY MACMURREN. Preserve us from skathe⁴³! I see like a man wi' a lantern. Dost thou see it, Elspy?

ELSPY LOWE. Distinctly: and wi' what fearfu' strides he comes on!

GRIZELD BANE. It is him; he approaches. Bow your heads instantly to the earth, and repeat the Lord's Prayer backwards, if you can.

[They all bow their bodies and begin an inarticulate muttering; and presently enters Murrey, bearing a lantern, which he hastily darkens upon discovering them, and tries to avoid them.]

GRIZELD BANE. Do not pass from us! stay with us; speak to us, Satan! Our spells are shrewd and sure, and thou knowest we have served and will serve thee. Turn not away! Give us power and we'll worship thee. Art thou not come to our tryste?

MURREY. Miserable women! what brings you here at this hour in this place? With whom have you made a tryste?

GRIZELD BANE. With thyself, mighty Satan! for we know thee well enough for all the skreen of darkness that encircles thee.

MURREY. [In a deep, strong, feigned voice.] What is your will with me?

GRIZELD BANE. Give us power, and we'll worship thee.

MURREY. What power do you covet? Power over goods and chattels, or power over bodies and spirits? Say which, by your compact, you would purchase?

GRIZELD BANE. [Eagerly.] Both, both!

MURREY. Ye ask too much; take your choice of the one or the other.

⁴² Shortly.

⁴³ Harm.

MARY MACMURREN. What say'st thou, Elspy?

ELSPY LOW. I'll consider first.

MARY MACMURREN. Goods and chattels for my compact.

GRIZELD BANE. *[To her disdainfully.]* Sordid caitiff! Bodies and spirits for mine!

MURREY. I will see to that at convenient season.

GRIZELD BANE, MARY MACMURREN, and ELSPY LOW. *[Speaking at once.]*
Now, now!

GRIZELD BANE. Let us have it now, mighty master, and we'll swear to the compact on this spot.

MURREY. Have ye considered it? Ye shall have your will on earth for a term, and then ye must serve my will in the pit of fire and brimstone for ever.

GRIZELD BANE. Be it so! and make this very night the beginning of our power.

MURREY. Ye are rare mates, indeed, to be so eagerly set upon evil.

GRIZELD BANE. Are we not, master? Swear us forthwith, and remove that dull darkness from thy presence. Call round thy liege imps and begin. Ay, ay; they are all coming.

MARY MACMURREN. Where, where, Grizeld?

GRIZELD BANE. A score of grinning faces to the right and the left. Dost thou not see them, blind mole that thou art? But where is he who was wont to attend thee, great chieftain? Thou hast never a liege man like him.

MURREY. Whom dost thou mean, haggard dame?

GRIZELD BANE. He with the wreath round his throat; the fellest⁴⁴ and bravest of them all.

MURREY. He shall be with me when I meet you again.

GRIZELD BANE. Do not leave us now, princely master! do not deceive us again: bind us and give us power ere we part.

MURREY. Go to the further side of the wood, and I'll follow you: I may not bind you here, for I hear the sound of horses approaching. Begone; mortal man must not disturb our rites.

[As the women are about to go off, Rutherford, as if just dismounted, holding his horse by the bridle, appears from behind a rocky hillock which forms one of the side scenes, near the front, whilst the lightning, coming in a broad flash across the Stage, shows every thing upon it distinctly for a moment. A loud peal follows: Rutherford and his horse draw back and disappear; and exeunt by the opposite side Grizeld Bane, &c., leaving Murrey alone.]

And so there be verily such wretched creatures in the world, who are, or desire to be, in league with the wicked one! It is a fearful and mortifying glimpse of human nature. I hope they have not scared my poor child upon her way; or rather, that this awful storm has prevented her from coming abroad. O, would I had not requested her to meet me! for I know her brave spirit and the strength of her affection; neither storm nor danger will deter her. Why did I tempt her? Alas, my gentle child! is this the love of a parent? Here she is!

Enter Violet from the same side by which Rutherford disappeared, and he runs to her and locks her in his arms, both remaining silent for a time.

VIOLET. My father! my dear, dear father!

MURREY. My own sweet Violet! all that I can call my own, and worth all that I have lost. But for thee, my dear child, I should in truth be, what I am now, by all but thyself, believed to be, — no longer a being of this world.

VIOLET. Say not so, my dear father! are there not kindness and humanity every where, whether you receive it under one name or another? And if this be not the case, take me with you, and you shall be no longer friendless and bereft.

44 Sharpest.

MURREY. No, Violet; that I will never do. To see thee by stealth, were it but a few times in the course of years, with sad dreary intervals between, is still worth living for; and more than a man, stained with the blood of a fellow creature, deserves.

VIOLET. Ah, why will you tax yourself so harshly! The quarrel was fastened on you.

MURREY. Fool that I was, to let the angry reproaches of a fool get such mastery over me! were reason and prowess bestowed upon me for such a despicable use? Oh! had Fotheringham, who stood by, and was the only witness of the combat, endeavoured, as he might have done, to reconcile us, that blood had never been shed.

VIOLET. But what is past is past; let us think of the lot which is our portion now — of that which lies before us. I will love you always, and think of you always, and be with you always, if you will permit me. The rank and the fare and the home that are good enough for you are good enough for me. And if Fotheringham be still in life, he may again appear to clear you from this crime. In the mean time, your supposed death and your supposed body being found and buried by your friends, give you in any distant retreat a complete security. Let me then, my dear father, go with you now, or follow you soon.

MURREY. Is there not one to be left behind who is dear to you?

VIOLET. No one who is or ought to be so dear as you. And I shrink from the thought of being received into a family who will despise me.

MURREY. Violet, thou art too proud: thou hast got my infirmity by inheritance. Yes, I was proud once: but, dead in men's belief, and separated from the social world, I am now, as it were, a dead man in my own feelings. I look on the things of this earth as though I belonged not to it. I am meek and chastened now, and will not encourage thee in the cherishing of imprudent unreasonable pride. But we will talk of this elsewhere: I hear voices from the wood.

[Wild cries from the women heard at a distance, and then nearer.]

I fear they will return when they find I do not join them.

VIOLET. Whom do you mean?

MURREY. Didst thou meet nobody on the way?

VIOLET. Nobody but our good minister and his man, going, as I suppose, to the Tower of Dungarren, to pray by the sick child.

MURREY. I hope he did not see you.

VIOLET. I hope he did not: for I tried to conceal myself behind a bush; and he and the servant passed me in silence.

[Wild cries without, nearer than before.]

MURREY. Let us leave this spot: those creatures are returning to it. I will tell thee about them when we are in safety.

[Exeunt in haste.]

SCENE IV

A narrow Passage Hall or Lobby.

Enter Phemy, meeting Anderson, who carries a light in his hand.

ANDERSON. We may a' gang to our beds now, that are nae appointed to sit up.

PEMEY. What a terrible storm we have had! The brazen sconces in the hall, with the guns, pistols, pikes⁴⁵, and claymores⁴⁶, made such a clattering, as if they were coming down upon our heads altogether, with the slates and rafters of the old roof on the top of all. I'm certain a thunderbolt struck somewhere or other on this unlucky house: I wish I were out of it.

ANDERSON. It's pity ye dinna get your wish, then. I'm sure there's naebody rightfully belonging to this family that has ony mind to baulk⁴⁷ it.

⁴⁵ An infantry weapon with a painted steel or iron head on a long wooden shaft.

⁴⁶ A broad sword formerly used by Scottish Highlanders, typically double-edged.

⁴⁷ Refuse to comply.

PHEMY. Don't be so hasty, Mr. Anderson: I had no intention to disparage the house of Dungarren, though there be neither silk nor tapestry on its walls, like the houses that I have lived in.

ANDERSON. Weel, weel! be it sae! Silk and tapestry may be plentier than manners in the rich island of Barra.

PHEMY. I have lived in other places than Barra, I assure you.

ANDERSON. I dinna doubt ye hae; but let us us mak nae mair quarrelling about it now, whan we shou'd a' be thankfu' that we war sheltered frae sic a storm in ony house. — Grizeld Bane and her mates war on the moor the night, I'll tak my aith on't. God help ony poor wanderer wha may hae been belated near their haunts! I wadna hae been in his skin for the best har'st fee that ever was paid into a Lowlander's purse or a Highlander's spleuchan⁴⁸.

PHEMY. Was not the minister expected?

ANDERSON. O! he, belike, might cross the moor unscathed. It wad be a bauld witch or warlock either, that wad meddle wi' the minister. And that is the reason, I reckon, why he winna believe there is ony sic thing in a' the country about.

Enter Bawldy.

PHEMY. Here comes Bawldy. What keeps thee up, man?

BAWLDDY. I'm waiting for the minister.

ANDERSON. Wha bade thee wait? What is Duncan about?

BAWLDDY. He's about a Highlandman's business, just doing naething at a'; and wad be snoring on the settle in the turning o' a bannock⁴⁹, if fear wad let him sleep.

⁴⁸ A small pouch, especially for carrying tobacco or money.

⁴⁹ A round, flat loaf, typically unleavened, associated with Scotland and northern England.

PHEMY. Is he more afraid than the rest of you?

BAWLDDY. He has mair cause, mistress: he has seen bogles⁵⁰ enow in his time, and kens a' the gaits and fashions o' them.

PHEMY. Has he indeed.

BAWLDDY. Ay, certes⁵¹; by his ain tale, at least. We hae heard o' mawkins starting up in the shapes of auld women, whan chased to a cross running burn, but Duncan has seen it. Nae wonner if he be feared!

ANDERSON. Weel, than, an thou will sit up, he'll tell thee stories to keep thee frae wearying; and I dinna care if I join ye mysell for an hour or sae, for I'm naewise disposed for my ain bed in that dark turret-chamer.

BAWLDDY. But gin ye keep company wi' stable loons and herds, Mr. Anderson, ye'll gi' them, nae doubt, a wee smack o' your ain higher calling. Is the key o' the cellar in your pouch? My tongue's unco⁵² dry after a' this fright.

ANDERSON. Awa', ye pawky⁵³ thief! Dost tu think that I'll herrie the laird's cellar for thee or ony body? — But there's the whisky bottle in my ain cupboard, wi' some driblets in it yet, that ye may tak; and deil⁵⁴ a drap mair shall ye get, and thy tongue were as guizened⁵⁵ as a spelding⁵⁶. I wonder wha learnt sic a youngster as thee to be sae pawky.

PHEMY. Bawldy has by nature cunning enough to lose nothing for want of asking; and Mr. Anderson, too, has his own natural faculty for keeping what he has got. — Good night to you both.

ANDERSON. Good night to ye. [*Half aside.*] I'm sure I wad rather bid you good night than good morrow, at ony time.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

⁵⁰ Phantoms

⁵¹ Assuredly.

⁵² Remarkably.

⁵³ Showing a sardonic sense of humour.

⁵⁴ Devil.

⁵⁵ Overcooked.

⁵⁶ A haddock or other small fish split open and dried in the sun.

SCENE V

A large Chamber, with a Bed at the bottom of the Stage, on which is discovered a sick Child, and Lady Dungarren seated by it.

Enter Dungarren by the front, stepping very softly.

DUNGARREN. Is she asleep?

LADY DUNGARREN. Yes; she has been asleep for some minutes.

DUNGARREN. Let me watch by her then, and go you to rest.

LADY DUNGARREN. I dare not: her fits may return.

DUNGARREN. The medicine you have given her will, I trust, prevent it: so do go to rest, my dear mother!

LADY DUNGARREN. No, dear Robert; her disease is one over which no natural medicine has any power. As sure as there are witches and warlocks on earth — and we know there are — they have been dealing with her this night.

DUNGARREN. Be not too sure of this. The noise of the storm, and the flashes of lightning, might alarm her, and bring on convulsions.

LADY DUNGARREN. Ah, foolish youth! thou art proud of the heathenish learning thou hast gleaned up at college, and wilt not believe what is written in Scripture.

DUNGARREN. Nay, mother, say only that I do not believe —

[Enter Annabella behind them, and stops to listen.]

Watch [Sick Child](#).

— such explanations of Scripture as have given countenance to superstitious alarm. Our good pastor himself attaches a different meaning to those passages you allude to, and has but little faith in either witches or apparitions.

LADY DUNGARREN. Yes, he has been at college, good man as he is. Who else

would doubt of it?

DUNGARREN. But Violet Murrey has not been at college, and she has as little faith in them as Mr. Rutherford.

ANNABELLA. *[Advancing passionately.]* If Violet Murrey's faith, or pretended faith, be the rule we are to go by, the devil and his bondsmen will have a fine time of it in this unhappy county of Renfrew. She will take especial care to speak no words for the detection of mischief which she profits by.

DUNGARREN. Profits by! What means that foul insinuation?

LADY DUNGARREN. Be not so violent, either of you. Soften that angry eye, Robert; and remember you are speaking to a lady.

DUNGARREN. And let her remember that she is speaking of a lady.

ANNABELLA. What rank the daughter of a condemned malefactor holds in the country, better heralds than I must determine.

DUNGARREN. Malignant and heartless reproach! Provoke me not beyond measure, Annabella. For this good woman's sake, for thy own sake, for the sake of female dignity and decorum, provoke me no more with words so harsh, so unjust, so unseemly.

ANNABELLA. Not so unseemly, Dungarren, as degrading the heir of an honourable house, with an attachment so — But I will say no more.

DUNGARREN. You have said too much already.

LADY DUNGARREN. Hush, hush! for Heaven's sake be peaceable! You have wakened the child from her sleep. Look how she gazes about. Nurse! nurse! ho!

[Calling loud off the Stage.]

Enter Nurse.

NURSE. Are they tormenting her again? They hae time now, when their

storm and their revelry is past, to cast their cantrips here, I trow.
[Shaking her fist angrily.] O you ugly witch! show your elrich face from
 behind the hangings there, an' I'll score you aboon⁵⁷ the breath wi' a
 jocteleg⁵⁸.

LADY DUNGARREN. *[To Nurse.]* Dost thou see any thing?

NURSE. I thought I just saw a waft o' her haggart visage in the dark shadow
 o' the bed hangings yonder. But see or no see, she is in this room, as sure
 as I am a Christian saul. What else shou'd mak the bairn⁵⁹ stare sae, and
 wriggle wi' her body sae miserably?

DUNGARREN. But are not you a bold woman, Nurse, to threaten a witch so
 bloodily?

NURSE. I'm bauld enough to tak vengeance at my ain haun upon ony body
 that torments my bairn, though it war Satan himsel. Howsomever, I
 carry about a leaf o' the Bible sewed to my pouch, now; for things hae
 come to sic a fearfu' pitch, that crooked pins and rowan-tree⁶⁰ do next to
 nae good at a'. — Bless us a'! I wush the minister war come.

DUNGARREN. And you have your wish, Nurse; for here he is.

Enter Rutherford, in a hurried, bewildered manner.

LADY DUNGARREN. My good Sir, you are welcome: but my heart
 reproaches me for having brought you from home in such a dreadful
 night. — What is the matter with you?

DUNGARREN. He cannot speak.

LADY DUNGARREN. Sit down in this chair, my good Sir. He is going to faint.

*[Dungarren supports him, and places him in an easy chair; then fetches him a glass of
 water, which he swallows hastily.]*

57 Above.

58 A pocket clasp-knife.

59 A child.

60 A small deciduous tree of the rose family, with compound leaves, white flowers, and
 red berries.

DUNGARREN. Has the lightning touched you, dear Sir?

RUTHERFORD. Not the lightning.

LADY DUNGARREN. Has aught happened to you on the moor?

ANNABELLA. Have you seen any thing? — He has seen something.

DUNGARREN. Have you seen any thing, my good Sir?

RUTHERFORD. Nought, by God's grace, that had any power to hurt me.

DUNGARREN. But you have seen something which has overcome your
 mind to an extraordinary degree. Were another man in your case, I
 should say that superstitious fears had o'ermaster'd him, and played
 tricks with his imagination.

RUTHERFORD. What is natural or unnatural, real or imaginary, who shall
 determine? But I have seen that, which, if I saw it not, the unassisted
 eyesight can give testimony to nothing.

LADY DUNGARREN and ANNABELLA. *[Both speaking together.]* What was it?
 What was it?

[Rutherford gives no answer.]

DUNGARREN. You saw, then, what has moved you so much, distinctly and
 vividly?

RUTHERFORD. Yea, his figure and the features of his face, as distinctly,
 in the bright glare of the lightning, as your own now appear at this
 moment.

DUNGARREN. A man whom you knew, and expected not to find at such
 an hour and in such a place. But what of this? Might not such a thing
 naturally happen?

RUTHERFORD. *[Lowering his voice, and drawing Dungarren aside, while Annabella
 draws closer to him to listen.]* No, Robert Kennedy: he whose form and face

I distinctly saw, has been an indweller of the grave these two years.

DUNGARREN. *[In a low voice also.]* Indeed! Are you sure of it?

RUTHERFORD. I put his body into the coffin with mine own hands, and helped to carry it to the grave; yet there it stood before me, in the bright blazing of the storm, and seemed to look upon me, too, with a look of recognition most strange and horrible.

ANNABELLA. *[Eagerly.]* Whose ghost was it? Who was the dead man you saw?

RUTHERFORD. *[Rising from his chair, and stepping back from her with displeasure.]* I reckoned, Madam, but upon one listener.

LADY DUNGARREN. Nay, be not angry with her. Who can well refrain from listening to such a tale? And be not angry with me neither, when I ask you one question, which it so much concerns me to know. Saw you aught besides this apparition? any witches or creatures of evil?

RUTHERFORD. I will answer that question, Lady, at another time, and in greater privacy.

ANNABELLA. *[To Lady Dungarren.]* He has seen them; it is evident he has. But some of his friends might be amongst them: there may be good cause for secrecy and caution.

DUNGARREN. *[To Annabella.]* Why do you press so unsparingly upon a man whose spirits have, from some cause or other, received such a shock?

RUTHERFORD. I forgive her, Dungarren: say no more about it. It is God's goodness to me that I am here unhurt, again to do the duty of a Christian pastor to my dear and friendly flock now convened. Let me pray by the bed of that poor suffering child, for her, for myself, and for all here present.

LADY DUNGARREN. *[To Annabella.]* Let us put her in a different position before he begin: she must be tired of that; for see, she moves again uneasily.

[Lady Dungarren takes Annabella to the bottom of the Stage, and they both seem

employed about the child, while Dungarren and Rutherford remain on the front.]

DUNGARREN. It is a most extraordinary and appalling apparition you have seen. What do you think of it?

RUTHERFORD. What can I think of it, but that the dead are sometimes permitted to revisit the earth, and that I verily have seen it.

DUNGARREN. I would more readily believe this than give credit to the senseless power and malevolence of witchcraft, which you have always held in derision.

RUTHERFORD. It is presumption to hold any thing in derision.

DUNGARREN. Ha! say you so, in this altered tone of voice! Have you met with any thing to-night to change your opinions on this subject? Have you seen any of the old women, so strangely spoken of, on the moor?

RUTHERFORD. Would that I had only seen such!

DUNGARREN. The voice in which you speak, the expression with which you look upon me, makes me tremble. Am I concerned with aught that you have seen?

RUTHERFORD. You are, my dear Robert, and must think no more of Violet Murrey. *[A deep silence.]* Yes; it has stricken you to the heart. Think upon it as you ought. I expect no answer.

DUNGARREN. *[Endeavouring to recover speech.]* But I must — I will try — I must answer you, for I — *[tearing open his waistcoat, and panting for breath,]* — I can believe nothing that accuses her.

RUTHERFORD. Were a daughter of my own concerned, I could not be more distressed.

DUNGARREN. It makes me distracted to hear thee say so!

RUTHERFORD. Go to thine own room, and endeavour to compose thy mind, and I will pray for thee here. Pray for thyself, too, in private: pray earnestly, for there is, I fear, a dreadful warfare of passion abiding thee.

[Exit Dungarren by the front, while Rutherford joins the ladies by the sickbed, where they prepare to kneel as the Scene closes.]

ACT II

SCENE I

The inside of a miserable Cottage, with a Board or coarse Table by the wall, on which stand some empty wooden Bickers or Bowls.

Enter Wilkin, who runs eagerly to the board, then turns away disappointed.

WILKIN. Na, na! tuim yet! a' tuim yet! Milk nane! parritch nane! [*Pointing to the bowls, and then pressing his stomach.*] Tuim there! tuim here! Woe worth it! to say they wad be fou, an' they're no fou! Woe worth it! woe worth them a'!

Enter Bawldy, and Wilkin runs to take hold of him.

BAWLDY. [*Frightened.*] Han's aff, I tell thee!

WILKIN. Hast brought ony thing? Gie me't, gie me 't.

BAWLDY. [*Pulling out a horse-shoe from his pocket.*] Stan' aff, I say! Nane o' your witch nips⁶¹ for me! I hae, maybe, brought what thou winna like, an tu hae wit enough to ken what it is.

WILKIN. Will 't kill me?

BAWLDY. Ay; fule as he is, he's frightened for 't; — the true mark of warlockry. They hae linket him in wi' the rest: naething's owre waff for Satan, an it hae a saul o' ony kind to be tint.

WILKIN. Will 't kill me?

BAWLDY. No: but I'll score thy imp's brow wi 't, — that's what I'll do, — an tu lay a finger on me. But dinna glow'r sae: stan' aff a bit, an answer my quastions, and there's siller for thee. [*Throwing him some pence.*] Was tu on the moor i' the night-time, wi' thy mither?

61 Sharp bites or pinches.

WILKIN. Mither?

BAWL DY. Ay; was tu on the moor wi' her, whan the thunner roared?

WILKIN. Thunner roared, fire roared, thunner roared! hurl! hurl! hurl!
[Imitating the noise of thunder.]

BAWL DY. Ay; an' ye ware there?

WILKIN. Ay, there. [Nodding his head.]

BAWL DY. An' wha was there beside?

WILKIN. Beside?

BAWL DY. Beside thee an' thy mither. What saw ye there?

WILKIN. Black man an' fire: hurl! hurl! [Making a noise as before.]

BAWL DY. Gude saf' us! has tu seen the deil then, bodily?

WILKIN. Deil, deil!

BAWL DY. [Shrinking back from him.] Keep me frae scathe! That I should stan' sae near ane that has been wi' Satan himsel! What did tu see forbye?

WILKIN. Saw? Saw folk.

BAWL DY. What folk? Auld women?

WILKIN. Auld women; young women. Saw them a' on fire. Hurl! hurl! hurl!

BAWL DY. Saw a young woman? Was it Maggy Kirk's crooket daughter?

WILKIN. Na, joe! young woman.

BAWL DY. What's her name? What did they ca' her?

WILKIN. Leddy — young leddy, on fire.

BAWL DY. Gude saf' us a! can this be true!

[Voices without.]

FIRST VOICE. I'll tak amends o' her for cheating us again.

SECOND VOICE. An' sae will I, spitefu' carlin⁶²! Maun naebody hae power but hersel?

Enter Mary Macmurren and Elspy Low, and Bawldy hides himself behind the door.

MARY MACMURREN. There's power to be had, that's certain: power that can raise the storm and the fiend; ay, that can do ony thing. But we're aye to be puir yet: neither meat nor money, after a's dune!

ELSPY LOW. Neither vengeance nor glawmery, for a' the wicket thoughts we hae thought, for a' the fearfu' words we hae spoken, for a' the backward prayers we hae prayed! — I'll rive her eyen out o' her head, though they shou'd glare upon us frae their hollow sconces, like corpse-can'les frae a grave-stane.

MARY MACMURREN. [Pointing to the board.] Even thay puir cogs are as toom as before, and my puir idiot as hungry. Hast tu had ony thing, Wilkin?

[Turns round to him and discovers Bawldy.]

Ha! wha has tu wi' thee? [To Bawldy.] What brought thee here, in a mischief to thee! Thou's Dungarren's herd, I reckon.

BAWL DY. I came frae the tower of Dungarren wi' an errand, I wou'd hae ye to wit.

MARY MACMURREN. Tell thy errand, then, and no lurk that gate, in a nook, like a thoumart⁶³ in a dowcot⁶⁴: for if tu be come here without an errand, thou shalt rue it dearly to the last hour o' thy life.

⁶² Old woman.

⁶³ Pole-cat.

⁶⁴ A sort of a little tower in the corner of the auld house.

BAWL DY. Isna this Grizeld Bane's house?

MARY MACMURREN. No, silly loon! it's my house. She's but a rinagate⁶⁵ rawny⁶⁶, frae far awa' parts, that came to be my lodger. Ay; and she may gang as she came, for me: I'll no harbour her ony mair. Nae mair Grizeld Banes in my house, to reeve⁶⁷ an' to herrie me sae! She maun pack aff wi' hersel this very day.

Enter Grizeld Bane.

GRIZELD BANE. [*Looking on her with stern contempt.*] Who speaks of Grizeld Bane with such unwary words? Repeat them, I pray thee.

[Mary stands abashed.]

Thou wilt not. — [*To Elspy, in like manner.*] And what hast thou to say of Grizeld Bane? [*A pause.*] And thou, too, art silent before my face.

ELSPY LOW. There's a callant⁶⁸ frae Dungarren, i' the nook, that comes on an errand to thee.

GRIZELD BANE. [*To Bawldy.*] Do not tremble so, silly child! What is thine errand?

BAWL DY. She bade me — she bade me say — ye maun come to her.

Watch [Grizeld Bane's Second Spell](#).

GRIZELD BANE. To whom, and where? Thou speakest as if my hand were already on thy throat, where it shall very soon be, if thou tell not thy errand more distinctly.

BAWL DY. The stranger leddy at the tower, the Ledy Annabell, desires that ye wad meet her in the lone shed, near the outer gate, in the afternoon. Gi' me an answer, an please ye.

65 A fugitive.

66 Having little flesh.

67 Snatch forcibly.

68 A young fellow.

GRIZELD BANE. [*In a kind of chant.*]

Where there be ladies and where there be lords,
Mischief is making with glances and words,
Work is preparing for pistols and swords.

BAWL DY. Is that an answer?

GRIZELD BANE. She may take it for one; but if it please thee better, thou may'st say to her, I will do as she desires. And take this token with thee, youngster. [*Going close to him.*]

BAWL DY. Na, na, I thank ye; I have answer enough.

[Exit in a fright.]

GRIZELD BANE. [*Turning to Mary Macmurren and Elspy Low.*] And ye are dissatisfied, forsooth! you must have power as you will and when you will.

ELSPY LOW. Thou hast deceived us.

GRIZELD BANE. Was there not storm enough to please ye?

ELSPY LOW. Enough to crack the welkin; but what got we by it?

GRIZELD BANE. Did he come in the storm? Did you not see him and hear him?

MARY MACMURREN. Certes did he; but what gat we by it? He keepit na' his tryste wi' us the second time; an' we gaed wearily hame on our feet, as wat and as puir as we came.

GRIZELD BANE. O that false tongue! ye rode upon clouds: I saw you pass over my head, and I called to you.

MARY MACMURREN. The woman is a fiend or bereft a' thegether! I walket hame on my feet, en' gaed to my miserable bed, just as at ony ither time, an' sa did she.

GRIZELD BANE. But rode ye not afterwards, my chucks⁶⁹? I saw you both pass over my head, and I called to you.

ELSPY LOW. If we ware upon clouds, we ware sleeping a' the while, for I ken naething anent⁷⁰ it. Do ye, neighbour? *[To Mary Macmurren.]*

MARY MACMURREN. I dare na' just say as ye say, kimmer, for I dreamt I was flying in the air and somebody behint me.

GRIZELD BANE. Ay, ay, ay; ye will discern mist and mysteries at last. But ye must have power, forsooth! as ye list and when ye list. If he did not keep tryste in the night, let us cast a spell for him in the day. When doors and windows are darkened, mid-day is as potent as midnight. Shut out the light and begin. But if he roar and rage at you when he does come, that is no fault of mine.

[Draws a circle on the floor.]

MARY MACMURREN and ELSPY LOW. *[At once.]* Na, na! dinna bring him up now.

[Exeunt hastily, leaving Grizeld alone.]

GRIZELD BANE. *[Chanting to herself after having completed the circle.]*

Black of mien and stern of brow,
Dark one, dread one, hear me now!
Come with potency and speed;
Come to help me in my need.
Kith and kindred have I none,
Ever wand'ring, ever lone.
Black of mien and stern of brow,
Dark one, dread one, hear me now!

He is now at hand; the floor yawns under my feet, and the walls are running round; he is here!

[Bending her head very low and then raising it.]

69 Used as a friendly form of address.

70 Concerning.

Ha! is it thou? art thou risen in thy master's stead? It becomes thee to answer my call; it is no weak tie that has bound us together. I loved thee in sin and in blood: when the noose of death wrung thee, I loved thee. And now thou art a dear one and a terrible with the Prince of the power of the air. Grant what I ask! grant it quickly. Give me of thy power; I have earned it. But this is a mean, narrow den; the cave of the lin is near, where water is soughing and fern is waving; the bat-bird clutching o'er head, and the lithe snake stirring below; to the cave, to the cave! we'll hold our council there.

[Exit with frantic gestures, as if courteously showing the way to some great personage.]

SCENE II.

A Flower Garden by the cottage of Violet Murrey, with the building partly occupying the bottom of the Stage, and partly concealed.

Enter Dunganren, who stops and looks round him, then mutters to himself in a low voice, then speaks audibly.

DUNGARREN. The lily, and the rose, and the gillyflower⁷¹; things the most beautiful in nature, planted and cherished by a hand as fair and as delicate as themselves! Innocence and purity should live here; ay, and do live here: shall the ambiguous whisper of a frightened night-scared man, be his understanding and learning what they may, shake my confidence in this? It was foolish to come on such an errand.

[Turns back, and is about to retire by the way he entered, then seems irresolute, and then stops short.]

Yet being here, I had better have some parley with her: I may learn incidentally from her own lips, what will explain the whole seeming mystery. *[Looking again on the flowers as he proceeds towards the house.]* Pretty pansy! thou hast been well tended since I brought thee from the south country with thy pretty friend, the carnation by thy side. Ay, and ye are companions still; thou, too, hast been well cared for, and all thy swelling buds will open to the sun ere long.

Enter Violet from the house, while he is stooping over the flowers.

71 Any of a number of fragrant flowers, such as the wallflower or white stock.

VIOLET. You are come to look after your old friends, Dungarren?

DUNGARREN. I have friends here worth looking after, if beauty and sweetness give value. Thou art an excellent gardener, Violet; things thrive with thee wonderfully, even as if they were conscious whose flowers they are, and were proud of it.

VIOLET. Ah! that were no cause for pride. Methinks, if they were conscious whose flowers they are, they would droop their heads and wither away.

DUNGARREN. Say not so: thou art melancholy; the storm has affected thy spirits. Those who were abroad in it say that the lightning was tremendous.

VIOLET. It was tremendous.

DUNGARREN. And the rolling of the thunder was awful.

VIOLET. It was awful.

DUNGARREN. And the moor was at times one blaze of fiery light, like returning bursts of mid-day, giving every thing to view for an instant in the depth of midnight darkness. *[A pause.]* One who was there told me so. *[Another pause, and she seems uneasy.]* And more than that, a strange unlikely story. *[A still longer pause, and she more uneasy.]* But thou hast no desire to hear it: even natural curiosity has forsaken thee. What is the matter?

VIOLET. Nothing is the matter: tell me whatever you please, and I will listen to it. Were witches on the moor?

DUNGARREN. Yes, witches were there, but that is not my story. There was a form seen on the moor most unlike any thing that could be evil. Thou art pale and disturbed; hast thou a guess of my meaning?

VIOLET. The moor is wide, and benighted wanderers might be upon it of different forms and degrees.

DUNGARREN. But none who could look like one, whom, nevertheless, 'tis

said, it did resemble.

VIOLET. *[Endeavouring to recover herself.]* Nay, nay, Dungarren! do not amuse yourself with me: if the devil has power to assume what form he pleases, that will account for your story at once. If he has not, you have only to suppose that some silly girl, with her plaid⁷² over her head, was bewildered by the storm at her trysting place, and that will explain it sufficiently.

DUNGARREN. These are light words, methinks, to follow upon melancholy gravity so suddenly.

VIOLET. If my words displease you, Dungarren, there is more cause for sorrow than surprise, and the sooner I cease to offend the better.

DUNGARREN. Violet Murrey of Torewood!!!

VIOLET. Robert Kennedy of Dungarren!!!

DUNGARREN. What am I to think?

VIOLET. Thoughts are free: take your range. Thinking is better than speaking for both of us; and so, if you please, we shall wish each other good morning.

[Turning from him with a hurried step towards the house.]

DUNGARREN. *[Following her.]* We must not so part, my Violet. Had any woman but thyself used me thus, — but what of that! I love thee and must bear with thee.

VIOLET. No, Robert Kennedy; thou lovest me not: for there is suspicion harboured in thy mind which love would have spurned away.

DUNGARREN. Say not harboured. O no! Spurned and rejected, yet, like a trodden adder, turning and rearing again. I ask to know nothing that thou seekest to conceal. Say only that thou wert in thy own home during the night, as I am sure thou wert, and I will be satisfied, though all the diabolical witnesses of Renfrewshire were set in array against thee.

⁷² A long piece of tartan worn over the shoulder as part of Scottish Highland dress.

VIOLET. Must I be forced to bear witness in my own behalf? There is one who should bear witness for me, and lacking that evidence, I scorn every other.

DUNGARREN. And where is that witness to be found?

VIOLET. In the heart of Dungarren.

DUNGARREN. Thou wring'st it to the quick! I am proud and impetuous, but have I deserved this haughty reserve? Dost thou part with me in anger?

VIOLET. I am angry, and must leave thee; but perhaps I am wrong in being so.

DUNGARREN. Indeed thou art wrong.

VIOLET. Be thou charitable, then, and forgive me; but for the present let us part.

[Exit into the house.]

DUNGARREN. *[Alone.]* Her behaviour is strange and perplexing. Was her anger assumed or sincere? Was she, or was she not, on that accursed moor? "Some silly girl bewildered by the storm at her trysting place," — were not these her words? Ay, by my faith! and glancing at the truth too obviously; at the hateful, the distracting, the hitherto unsuspected truth. It is neither witch, warlock, nor devil, with whom she held her tryste. Yea, but it is a devil, whom I will resist to perdition! It is a devil who will make me one also. O, this proud rising of my heart! it gives the cruelty of distraction; and, but for the fear of God within me, would nerve my hand for blood.

Re-enter Violet, in alarm, from the house.

VIOLET. Oh Robert, Robert! what mean those tossings of the arms — those gestures of distraction? You doubt my faith, you think me unworthy, and it moves you to this fearful degree. If I deserve your attachment I deserve to be trusted. Think of this, dear Robert, for it kills me to see you so miserable.

DUNGARREN. Dear! you call me dear, only because you pity me.

VIOLET. I call thee dear, because — because — Out on thee, Robert Kennedy! hast thou no more generosity than this? *[Bursting into tears.]*

DUNGARREN. *[Catching her in his arms, then unclasping her suddenly and dropping on his knee.]* O forgive me, forgive me! I have treated thee ungenerously and unjustly: forgive me, my own sweet girl!

VIOLET. I will not only forgive thee, but tell thee every thing when I am at liberty to do so. Let us now separate; I have need of rest.

[He leads her towards the house, caressing her hand tenderly as they go; then exeunt severally.]

SCENE III.

A Passage or Entrance-room in the Tower.

Enter Anderson.

ANDERSON. *[Looking off the Stage.]* What's the cunning loon standing, wi' his lug⁷³ sae near that door for? *[Calling loud.]* What's tu doing there, rascal?

Enter Bawldy.

Watch [Anderson & Bawldy's scene](#).

Wha gies thee leave to come near the chambers o' gentle folks, and lay thy blackened lug sae close to the key-hole?

BAWLDDY. As for gentle folks, they come to me oftener nor I gang to them; and as for my lug, there was nae need to lay it to the key-hole whan the door was half open.

ANDERSON. Catch thee who can unprovided wi' a ready answer! Thou hast the curiosity o' the deevil in thee and his cunning to boot: what business hast thou to pry into people's secrets?

BAWLDDY. A secret, forsooth, tauld wi' an open door and voices as loud as twa

73 A person's ear.

wives cracking in the lone! And gude be wi' us a! they war only talking o' what we are a' talking or thinking o' fra' morning till night and fra' Sabbath day till Saturday.

ANDERSON. And what is that, ne'er-do-weel?

BAWLDRY. What should it be but witchcraft and the young leddy? But this last bout, I trow, is the strangest bout of a'.

ANDERSON. What has happened now?

BAWLDRY. As I was passing by the door, I heard Nurse tell the Liddy Annabell how the young leddy was frightened frae her rest, as she lay in her bed, wi' the room darkened.

ANDERSON. And how was that?

BAWLDRY. Witches cam' into the room, I canna tell how mony o' them, and ane o' them cam' upon the bed, and a'maist⁷⁴ smooored⁷⁵ her.

ANDERSON. The Lord preserve us!

BAWLDRY. Ay; and she would hae been smooored a'thegither, gin she had na claught haud of the witch's arm, and squeezed it sae hard that the witch ran awa', and left a piece o' her gown sleeve in the young leddy's han'.

ANDERSON. It was Grizeld Bane or Mary Macmurren, I'll be bound for't.

BAWLDRY. Wha it was she could na say, for she could na see i' the dark.

ANDERSON. But the piece of the gown sleeve will reveal it. Show me that, and I'll ken wha it was, to a certainty. I ken ilka⁷⁶ gown and garment belonging to them.

BAWLDRY. So does Nurse, too: but the young leddy took a fit, as the roodies left the chaumer, and she has lost the clout.

74 Almost.

75 Braised.

76 Each.

ANDERSON. That was a pity. The chamber maun be searched for it carefully, else they'll come again, and wi' some cantrup or ither, join it into the sleeve it was riven frae, as if it ne'er had been riven at a'. But gang to thy crowdy,⁷⁷ man, and dinna tine a meal for a marvel. Thou hast nae business here: the kitchen and the byre set thee better than lobbies and chambers.

[Exit Bawldy.]

That callant⁷⁸ lurks about the house like a brownie.⁷⁹ He's a clever varlet, too: he can read the kittle⁸⁰ names in the Testament, and ding⁸¹ the dominie himsel at the questions and caratches. He's as cunning and as covetous as ony gray-haired sinner i' the parish; — a convenient tool, I suspect, in the hands of a very artful woman.

[Exit.]

SCENE IV.

The Apartment of Annabella, who enters, and throws herself into a chair, remaining silent for a short time, and then speaks impatiently.

ANNABELLA. What can detain her so long? Could she miss finding him? He is seldom far off at this hour of the day, when broth and beef are on the board; and he can send a boy to the hill as his substitute. I wish the sly creature were come; for time passes away, and with it, perhaps, opportunity.

Enter Phemy.

PHEMY. He's here, Madam.

ANNABELLA. That's well. Let him enter immediately, and do thou keep watch in the outer room.

[Exit Phemy, and presently Bawldy enters.]

77 Gruel.

78 Lad.

79 A benevolent spirit or goblin.

80 Difficult.

81 Surpass.

I want thee to do an errand for me again, Bawldy. Do not look so grave and so cowed, man: thou shalt be well paid for it.

BAWLDDY. A'tweel, I'm ready enough to do ony errand, gin there be nae witchery concerned wi't.

ANNABELLA. And what the worse wilt thou be if there should? Didst thou not go to Grizeld Bane this morning, and return safe and sound as before, both soul and body, with a good crown in thy pocket to boot?

BAWLDDY. Certes my body cam' back safe enough; but for my puir saul, Lord hae mercy on it! for when I gaed to my kye on the hill again, I tried to croon o'er to mysel the hunder and saxteen psalm, and second commandment, and could hardly remember a word o' them. Oh! she's an awfu' witch, and scares the very wit frae ane's noddle.⁸²

ANNABELLA. Never fear, Bawldy: she has left thee enough of that behind to take care of thine own interest. Thou hadst wit enough, at least, to do thy business with her; for she came to me in good time, to the spot which I appointed.

BAWLDDY. If she kens the place, she may meet you there again, without my ganging after her. The Lord preserve us! I wadna enter that house again for twa crowns.

ANNABELLA. Be not afraid, man: it is not to that house I would send thee; and thou shalt have two crowns for thy errand, though it be both an easy and a short one.

BAWLDDY. As for that, Madam, an it war baith lang an' hard, I wadna mind it, so as it be an errand a Christian body may do.

ANNABELLA. A Christian body may go and speak a few words privately to Mrs. Violet Murrey's pretty maid, I should think.

BAWLDDY. [*Sheepishly.*] There's nae great harm in that, to be sure.

ANNABELLA. And a Christian body may slip a crown quietly into her hand,

82 Head.

and —

BAWLDDY. [*Interrupting her in a low murmuring voice.*] Ay, ane o' the twa ye spak o'.

ANNABELLA. No, indeed, Bawldy; a third crown, which I will give thee to take from thine own pocket, and put into her pretty hand. — Perhaps it may prove the forerunner of some other token between you. She is a good tight girl, but a few years older than thyself: she may take a fancy to thee.

BAWLDDY. Ah! Madam Annabell, somebody has been telling you that I hae a fancy for her; for they never devall⁸³ wi' their havers⁸⁴. — But what is she to do for the crown? for I reckon she maun won it some way or anither.

ANNABELLA. In a very easy way. Tell her to send me her mistress's striped lutestring gown, for I want to look at the pattern of it, and will restore it to her immediately.

BAWLDDY. Is that a'?

ANNABELLA. Only thou must make her promise to conceal, from her mistress and from every body, that I borrowed the gown. Be sure to do that, Bawldy.

BAWLDDY. That's very curious, now. Whaur wad be the harm o' telling that ye just looket at it.

ANNABELLA. Thou'rt so curious, boy, there's no concealing any thing from thee. Art thou silly enough to believe that I only want to look at it?

BAWLDDY. Na, I guessed there was somewhat ahint⁸⁵ it.

ANNABELLA. And thou shalt know the whole, if thou wilt promise to me solemnly not to tell any body.

83 Descend.

84 Foolish talk.

85 Behind.

BAWLDDY. I'll tell naeboddy. Gif my ain mither war to speer,⁸⁶ she wad ne'er get a word anent it frae me.

ANNABELLA. I have been consulting with Grizeld Bane, about what can be done to relieve our poor sick child from her misery, — for those who put her into it can best tell how to draw her out of it, — and she says, a garment that has been upon the body of a murderer, or the child of a murderer, — it does not matter which, — put under the pillow of a witched bairn, will recover it from fits, were it ever so badly tormented. But, mark me well! should the person who owns the garment ever come to the knowledge of it, the fits will return again, as bad as before. Dost thou understand me?

BAWLDDY. I understand you weel enough: but will witches speak the truth, whan the deil is their teacher?

ANNABELLA. Never trouble thy head about that: we can but try. Fetch me the gown from thy sweetheart, and thou shalt have more money than this, by and by. [*Gives him money.*]

BAWLDDY. Since you will ca' her my sweetheart, I canna help it; though I ken weel enough it's but mocking.

ANNABELLA. Go thy ways, and do as I bid thee, without loss of time, and thou wilt soon find it good, profitable earnest. She will make a very good thrifty wife, and thou a good muirland drover, when thou'rt old enough.

Watch [Annabella's scene](#).

[*Exit Bawlddy.*]

ANNABELLA. [*Alone.*] Now shall I have what I panted for, and far better, too, than I hoped. To be tormented by witchcraft is bad; but to be accused and punished for it is misery so exquisite, that, to purchase it for an enemy, were worth a monarch's ransom. Ay, for an enemy like this, who has robbed me of my peace, stolen the affections of him whom I have loved so ardently and so long; yea, who has made me, in his sight, hateful and despicable. I will bear my agony no longer. The heart of

⁸⁶ Ask.

Dungarren may be lost for ever; but revenge is mine, and I will enjoy it. — It is a fearful and dangerous pleasure, but all that is left for me. — Oh, oh! that I should live to see him the doating lover of a poor, homely — for homely she is, let the silly world call her what they please — artful girl, disgraced and degraded; the daughter of a murderer, saved only from the gibbet⁸⁷ by suicide or accident! That I should live to witness this! — But having lived to witness it, can revenge be too dearly purchased? No; though extremity of suffering in this world, and beyond this world, were the price — Cease, cease! ye fearful thoughts! I shall but accuse her of that of which she is, perhaps, really guilty. Will this be so wicked, so unpardonable? How could a creature like this despoil such a woman as myself of the affections of Dungarren, or any man, but by unholy arts?

Enter Phemy in alarm.

PHEMY. Madam, Madam! there are people in the passage.

ANNABELLA. And what care I for that?

PHEMY. You were speaking so loud, I thought there was somebody with you. [*Looking fearfully round.*]

ANNABELLA. Whom dost thou look for? Could any one be here without passing through the outer room?

PHEMY. I crave your pardon, Madam, they can enter by holes, as I have heard say, that would keep out a moth or a beetle.

ANNABELLA. Go, foolish creature! Thy brain is wild with the tales thou hast heard in this house. — Did I speak so loud?

PHEMY. Ay, truly, Madam, and with such violent changes of voice, that I could not believe you alone.

ANNABELLA. I was not aware of it. It is a natural infirmity, like talking in one's sleep: my mother had the same. — I'll go to the garden, where the flowers and fresh air will relieve me.

⁸⁷ A gallows with a projecting arm at the top, from which the bodies of criminals were formerly hung in chains and left suspended after execution.

PHEMY. Are you unwell?

ANNABELLA. Yes, girl; but say so to no one, I pray thee.

[Exeunt.]

ACT III

SCENE I.

A half-formed Cave, partly roofed with rock and partly open to the sky, which is seen through the overhanging bushes; a Burn or Brook crossing the mouth of it, at the bottom of the Stage, banked by precipitous rocks mixed with wood and fern.

VOICE. [Heard without.] Indeed, thou canst not pass this way.

SECOND VOICE. [Without.] I don't mind it at all; the water will do me no harm.

FIRST VOICE. [Without.] Thou shalt not wet thy feet, my dear child, when a father's arms are here, so able and so happy to carry thee.

Enter Murrey by the mouth of the cave, bearing Violet in his arms, whom he sets down by some loose rocks near the front of the Stage.

VIOLET. Set me down, my dear father; I am heavy.

MURREY. I could carry thee to the world's end, my own dear girl. O that thou wert again a baby, and mine arms lock'd round thee as of yore!

VIOLET. I remember it, father.

MURREY. Dost thou, sweet one? Ah, ah! thee in my arms, and she whom I loved by my side, and thy pretty worldless lips cooing to us by turns — an utterance that made all words contemptible! Alas, alas! such days, and many bright succeeding days have been and are gone. The fatal passion of a few short moments has made me a homeless outlaw, while reproach, instead of protection, is a father's endowment for thee. [Sits down on a low detached rock, and buries his face in the folds of his plaid.]

VIOLET. Dear, dear father! do not reproach yourself so harshly. If the world call what you have done by a very dreadful name, it is not a true

one: equal fighting, though for a foolish quarrel, deserves not that appellation.

MURREY. Whatever it may deserve, it will have it, when there is no witness to prove the contrary. Fotheringham alone was present, and he disappeared on the instant. When my trial came, I could not prove that the man I had slain fell in equal combat; nay, was the real aggressor in first attacking me.

VIOLET. It was cowardly and strange, — it was not the act of a friend to disappear and leave you so exposed.

MURREY. Some evil fate befell him: he was not alive, I am certain, when I was apprehended, else he would have come forward like an honest, manly friend in my justification. The sentence of death is upon me; the mark of Cain is on my forehead; I am driven from the fellowship of men.

VIOLET. Say not so; for you have by the accidental death of your servant been, as it were, providentially saved from a fearful end; and being so saved, I must needs believe that some better fortune is in reserve for you.

MURREY. Ay, poor Donald! I believe he would willingly have died for my sake, and Providence did so dispose of him. I little thought, after my escape from prison, when I had changed apparel with him, how completely our identity was to be confounded. He lies in the grave as James Murrey of Torwood, — in an unhallowed grave, as a murderer.

VIOLET. Were you near him when he fell into the pit?

MURREY. Dear Violet, thou art bewildered to ask me such a question! When we had changed clothes completely, and I had even forced upon him as a gift, which he well deserved, the gold watch and seals of my family, we parted; and when his body was discovered, many weeks afterwards, the face, as I understand, from the mutilations of bruises and corruption, was no longer recognizable. But this is a mournful subject, and it is useless to dwell upon it now.

VIOLET. Very true; let us speak of those things for which there is still cause

of thankfulness. The Irish home you have found on the mountains of Wicklow⁸⁸, is it not a pleasant one?

MURREY. Pleasant to those who look on sky and cliff, on wood and torrent, to rouse and refresh the mind, in the intervals of such retirement as hath a purpose and a limit. To the lonely outcast what scene is pleasant? The meanest man who plies his honest trade in the narrow lane of a city, where passers-by may wish him a good day, or bid God speed him, has a domicile and a home which I think of with envy.

VIOLET. O do not, then, live any longer in this deserted situation!

MURREY. I know what thou wilt offer, but it must not be.

VIOLET. Why so? Since I have lost my dear mother, and have no farther duties to detain me here, may I not cross the sea with you now, and spend some time with you in Wicklow. It will be thought that I am gone to visit our Irish relation.

MURREY. No, my affectionate child, that may not be.

VIOLET. I should go to our relation first, and nobody should know that I went anywhere else but Dungarren; nor should I even tell it to him without your permission.

MURREY. [*Rising quickly from his seat.*] Which thou shalt never have.

VIOLET. Why do you utter those words so vehemently? He is honourable and true.

MURREY. He is thy lover, and thou believest him to be so.

VIOLET. Are you displeased that he is my lover?

MURREY. Yes, I am displeased, for he will never be thy husband.

VIOLET. O think not so hardly of him! in his heart there is honour even stronger than affection. And if I might but tell him of your being alive —

MURREY. Art thou mad? art thou altogether bereft of understanding? Swear

88 A range of mountains in the southeast of Ireland.

to me, on the faith of a Christian woman, that thou wilt never reveal it.

VIOLET. He is incapable of betraying any one, and far less —

MURREY. Hold thy tongue! hold thy tongue, simple creature! Every man seems true to the woman whose affections he hath conquered. I know the truth of man and the weakness of woman. Reason not with me on the subject, but solemnly promise to obey me. I should feel myself as one for whom the rope and the gibbet are preparing, should any creature but thyself know of my being alive.

VIOLET. Woe is me! this is misery indeed.

MURREY. Do not look on me thus with such mingled pity and surprise. Call what I feel an excess of distrust — a disease — a perversion of mind, if thou wilt, but solemnly promise to obey me.

VIOLET. Let my thoughts be what they may, I dare not resist the will of a parent; I solemnly promise [*looking up to heaven, and then bending her head very low*].

MURREY. I am satisfied, and shall return to my boat, which waits for me on the Clyde⁸⁹, near the mouth of this burn, with a mind assured on so important a point, and assured of thy good conduct and affection. [*Looking about, alarmed.*] I hear a noise.

VIOLET. 'Tis the moving of some owlet or hawk in the refts of the rock overhead. To this retired spot of evil report no human creature ever ventures to come, even at mid-day.

MURREY. Yes, I remember it used to be called the Warlock's den, and had some old legendary pretensions to the name. But there is a noise.

[*Looks up to the open part of the cave, and discovers Dungarren above, looking down upon them.*]

VIOLET. It is Dungarren; what shall we do? Begone, father?

MURREY. I must stand to it now; he will be down upon us in an instant: it is too late to avoid him.

VIOLET. No, it is not; he shall not come down. [*Calling up to him.*] Robert Kennedy, is it thou?

DUNGARREN. [*Above.*] Does the voice of Violet Murrey dare to ask me the question?

VIOLET. Stay where thou art, and come no farther; I dare ask of thee to be secret and to be generous.

DUNGARREN. [*Above.*] Distracting and mysterious creature, I obey thee.

[*Retires.*]

VIOLET. He retires, and we are safe. Let us now separate. [*In a low voice.*] Farewell, my dear father! you will come and see me again?

MURREY. I hope next summer to pay thee another and a less hurried visit. Farewell. [*Holding her back.*] No, no! do not embrace me.

VIOLET. He has retired, and will not look again.

MURREY. Be not too confident. Farewell, and remember thy solemn promise. My ship will sail for Ireland to-morrow morning early, and thou shalt hear from me soon.

[*Exit by the way he entered.*]

VIOLET. [*Alone.*] If they should meet without, and they may do so! — But that must not be. [*Calling in a loud voice.*] Dungarren, Dungarren! art thou still within hearing?

[*Dungarren reappears above.*]

I cannot speak to thee in so loud a voice; come down to me here.

[*He descends by the jutting rocks into the bottom of the cave in the dress and accoutrements of an angler, with a fishing rod in his hand, and stands before her*]

89 A river in western Scotland which flows 170km (160 miles) from the Southern Uplands to the Firth of Clyde, formerly famous for the shipbuilding industries along its banks.

with a stern and serious look, remaining perfectly silent.]

O Robert Kennedy! look not on me thus! I meant to thank you for your friendly forbearance, but now I have no utterance: I cannot speak to you when you so look upon me.

DUNGARREN. Silence is best where words were vain and worthless.

VIOLET. You deserve thanks, whether you accept them or not.

DUNGARREN. To obey the commands of a lady deserves none.

VIOLET. Nay, but it does, and I thank you most gratefully. He who was with me is gone, but — but —

DUNGARREN. But will return again, no doubt, when the face of a casual intruder will not interrupt your conference.

VIOLET. O no! he will not return — may never return. Who he is, and where he goes, and how I am bound to him, O how I long to tell thee all, and may not!

DUNGARREN. What I have seen with mine eyes leaves you nothing to tell which I am concerned to hear.

VIOLET. Be it so, then; since the pride of your heart so far outmates⁹⁰ its generosity.

DUNGARREN. You have put it out of my power to be generous; but you desire me to be secret, and shall be obeyed. Is it your pleasure, madam, that I should conduct you to your home, since he who was with you is gone?

VIOLET. That I accept of a service so offered, shows too well how miserably I am circumstanced. But I do accept it: let me leave this place.

[Goes toward the mouth of the cave.]

DUNGARREN. Not by the burn, the water is too deep.

90 To exceed.

VIOLET. I came by it, and there is no other way.

DUNGARREN. Came by it, and dry-shod too! *[Looking at her feet.]* He who was with thee must have carried thee in his arms.

VIOLET. Yes, he did so; but now I will walk through the stream: wet feet will do me no injury.

DUNGARREN. There is another passage through a cleft rock on this side, concealed by the foxglove⁹¹ and fern.

VIOLET. Lead on, then, and I'll follow.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II.

A large Hall or Entrance-room, with deer's horns and arms hanging on the walls. Enter Nurse with a tankard in her hand, followed presently by Anderson, who calls after her as she is about to disappear by the opposite side.

ANDERSON. Nurse, Nurse, I say! Is the woman deaf?

NURSE. What are ye roaring after me for? Can a body get nae peace or comfort ony time o' the day or night? Neither o' them, by my truth, bring muckle⁹² rest to me.

ANDERSON. That may be, but ye'r tankard comforts, that belang, as it wad seem, to baith day and night, maun be stinted at present; for the sheriff and a' his rascally officers frae Paisley⁹³ are at the yett⁹⁴, and writers beside, Lord preserve us! wi' inkhorns at their buttons and paper in their hands. Gae tell the Leddy quickly, and set ye'r tankard down.

91 A tall Eurasian plant with erect spikes of pinkish-purple (or white) flowers shaped like the fingers of gloves.

92 Much.

93 A town in central Scotland, to the west of Glasgow.

94 A gate or grille of latticed wrought iron bars used for defensive purposes in castles and tower houses.

NURSE. For the sheriff officers to lay their lugs in. Na, na! sma'er browst may serve them; I'll mak' sure o'some o't.

[Takes a drink, and exit.]

ANDERSON. I wonder whaur the laird is: its an unchancy time for him to be out of the gaet. Donald, Donald!

Enter Donald.

Whaur's the laird? He should be here to receive the sheriff.

DONALD. He's no in the house.

ANDERSON. Gang and find him in the fields, then.

DONALD. He's no in the fields, neither.

ANDERSON. Whaur is he, then?

DONALD. He'll be a clever fellow, I reckon, that finds him on the hither side o' Dumbarton.

ANDERSON. How dost tu ken that sa weel? What suld tak him to Dumbarton?

DONALD. His ain ill humour, I believe, for he returned fra' the fishing wi' his knit brows as grumly as a thunner cloud on the peak o' Benloman⁹⁵, and desired me to saddle his meir: and he took the road to the ferry without speaking anither word; and the last sight I gat o' the meir and him was frae the black craig head, whan they war baith in the boat thegether, half way over the Clyde.

ANDERSON. That's unlucky: I maun gang to the yett and receive the sheriff mysel, as creditably as I can.

DONALD. Ye may save yoursel that trouble, I trow, for he has made his way into the house already.

Enter the Sheriff with his Officers and Attendants, and Servants of the family following them.

SHERIFF. *[To Anderson.]* We would see the Laird of Dungarren.

ANDERSON. He's frae hame, an please your honour.

SHERIFF. From home! are you sure of this? we come on no unfriendly errand.

ANDERSON. I mak' nae dout o' that, your honour: but he is frae hame, and far a-field, too.

SHERIFF. That is unfortunate; for I am here officially to examine the members of his household. His mother, I presume, is at home?

ANDERSON. Yes, your honour; the leddy is at hame, and will come to you immediately.

SHERIFF. It is said you have been disturbed with strange noises and visitations in this family, and that the young lady is more tormented than ever. What kind of noises have been heard?

ANDERSON. O Lord, your honour, sic⁹⁶ elrich din! I can compare it to nothing. Sometimes it's like the souging⁹⁷ o' wind; sometimes like the howling o' dogs.

DONALD. *[Taking the word from him.]* Sometimes like the mewling o' cats; sometimes like the clattering o' broomsticks.

FIRST SERVANT. *[Pressing forward, and taking the word from Donald.]* Sometimes like the hooting o' howlets; and sometimes like a black sow grunting.

SHERIFF. A black sow grunting!

DONALD. Ay, please your honour. The grunt of a black sow is as deil-like as its colour: I wad ken't, in the dark, frae ony white sow that ever wore a snout.

⁹⁶ Such.

⁹⁷ Moaning, whistling, or rushing sound.

⁹⁵ A mountain 3,192 feet high (973 metres) in Scotland.

SHERIFF. Well, sometimes hooting of owlets, and the grunting of a black sow.

ANDERSON, DONALD, and FIRST SERVANT. *[All speaking at once.]* And sometimes like a —

SHERIFF. Spare me, spare me, good folks! I can listen but to one at a time.

Enter Lady Dungarren, Annabella, Phemy, Nurse, and Maid-servants.

Good day, and my good service to you, Lady Dungarren. I'm sorry the laird is from home: my visit may perhaps disturb you.

LADY DUNGARREN. Do not say so, Sheriff; I am at all times glad to see you; but were it otherwise, we are too well accustomed to be disturbed in this miserable house, to think much of any thing.

SHERIFF. I am very sorry for it, — very sorry that your daughter continues so afflicted. — *[Showing her a paper.]* Have you any knowledge of this paper? The information contained in it is the cause of my present intrusion.

LADY DUNGARREN. *[After having looked over it attentively.]* I know nothing of the paper itself; but the information it conveys is true.

SHERIFF. Have you ever seen the hand-writing before?

LADY DUNGARREN. No — yes — I think I have. Look at it, Annabella: it is somewhat like your own.

ANNABELLA. *[In a hurried manner.]* Dear Madam, how can you say so? The l's, and the m's, and the n's are all joined stiffly together, and you know very well that I never join my letters at all.

LADY DUNGARREN. Very true, cousin; I see there is a great difference now, and I don't know whose hand it is, though doubtless the hand of a friend; for we cannot remain in this misery much longer. It should be examined into, that the guilty may be punished, and prevented from destroying my poor child entirely.

SHERIFF. Has any person of evil repute been admitted to see her? Who has been in her chamber?

LADY DUNGARREN. Who has been visibly in her chamber, we can easily tell; but who has been invisibly there, the Lord in heaven knows.

SHERIFF. Have they never been visible to the child herself whom they torment?

LADY DUNGARREN. She has stared, as though she saw them.

ANNABELLA. She has shrieked, as though they laid hold of her.

NURSE. She has clenched her hands, as if she had been catching at them, in this way. *[Showing how.]*

PEMEY. Ay, and moved her lips so *[Showing how.]*, as if speaking to them. I saw her do it.

NURSE. And so did I; and saw her grin, and shake her head so, most piteously.

PEMEY, NURSE, and MAID-SERVANT. *[All speaking at once.]* And I saw her—

SHERIFF. Softly, softly, good women! Three tellers are too many for one tale, and three tales are too many for one pair of ears to take in at a time. — *[Turning to the Lady.]* Has she ever told you that she saw witches by her bed-side?

LADY DUNGARREN. Yes; several times she has told me so, in wild and broken words.

SHERIFF. Only in that manner.

ANNABELLA. You forget, Madam, to mention to the Sheriff, that she told us distinctly, a few hours ago, how a witch had been sitting on her breast, as she lay in bed; and that, when she struggled to get rid of her, she rent a piece from the sleeve of her gown.

SHERIFF. The witch rent the sleeve from her gown?

NURSE. No, no, your honour; our poor child rent a piece frae the sleeve o' the witch's gown.

SHERIFF. Has the piece been found?

A GREAT MANY. *[Speaking at once.]* Ay, ay! it has! it has!

SHERIFF. Silence, I say! — *[To Annabella.]* Have the goodness to answer, Madam: has the rag been preserved?

ANNABELLA. It has, Sir; but it is no rag, I assure you.

NURSE. As good silk, your honour, as ever came frae the Luckenbooths of Edinburgh⁹⁸.

SHERIFF. Are not witches always old and poor? The devil must have helped this one to a new gown, at least; and that is more than we have ever heard of his doing to any of them before.

ANNABELLA. We have read of witches who have been neither old nor poor.

SHERIFF. Ha! is there warranty, from sober sensible books, for such a notion? I am no great scholar on such points: it may be so. — But here comes the minister: his better learning will assist us.

Enter Mr. Rutherford.

I thank you, my reverend Sir, for obeying my notice so quickly. Your cool head will correct our roused imaginations: you believe little, I have heard, of either apparitions or witches.

RUTHERFORD. My faith on such subjects was once, indeed, but weak.

SHERIFF. And have you changed it lately? —

[A pause for Rutherford to answer, but he is silent.]

⁹⁸ Built around 1460, the Luckenbooths or "Locked booths" housed Edinburgh's first permanent shops.

Since when has your faith become stronger?

[After a short pause as before, several Voices call out eagerly —] Since the storm on Friday night; when Mary Macmurren and a' the crew were on the moor.

SHERIFF. Silence, I say again! Can the minister not answer for himself, without your assistance? — You heard my question, Mr. Rutherford: were you upon the moor on that night?

RUTHERFORD. I was.

SHERIFF. And saw you aught upon the moor contrary to godliness and nature?

RUTHERFORD. What I saw, I will declare in fitter time and place, if I must needs do so.

SHERIFF. Well, well, you are cautious, good Sir; and, perhaps, it is wise to be so. — Lady Dungarren, with your permission, I will go into the sick chamber and examine your daughter myself.

LADY DUNGARREN. You have my permission most willingly. Follow me immediately, if you please, and ask the poor child what questions you think fit. Mr. Rutherford, do you choose to accompany us?

[Exeunt Lady Dungarren, Annabella, Sheriff, and Rutherford; Anderson, Nurse, Donald, &c. &c. remaining.]

ANDERSON. And he'll gie nae answer at a', even to the Sheriff.

NURSE. Certes, were he ten times a minister, he should hae tauld what he saw to the Sheriff of the county.

DONALD. A gentleman born and bred, and the king's appointed officer into the bargain.

NURSE. And he winna tell what he saw afore us, forsooth — for that's what he means by fitter time and place — foul befa' his discretion! He wadna believe in witches, I trow; but they hae cowed him weel for't at last.

ANDERSON. To be sure, he looket baith ghastly and wan, when the Sheriff speered what he saw upon the moor.

NURSE. Ay, ay, it was some fearfu' sight, nae doubt. God's grace preserve us a! the very thought o' what it might be gars⁹⁹ my head grow cauld like a turnip.

DONALD. It was surely something waur¹⁰⁰ than witches dancing that frightened the minister.

NURSE. As ye say, Donald: either Highlander or Lowlander has wit enough to guess that. I like nane o' your ministers that'll speak naewhere but in the pu'pit. Fitter time and place, quotha¹⁰¹!

ANDERSON. Hoot, toot, woman! he has gotten his lear¹⁰² at the college, and he thinks shame to be frightened.

NURSE. Foul befa' him and his lear too! It maun be o' some new-fangled kind, I think. Our auld minister had lear enough, baith Hebrew and Latin, and he believed in witches and warlocks, honest man, like ony ither sober, godly person.

ANDERSON. So he did, Nurse; ye're a sensible woman, but somewhat o' the loudest, whan ye're angry. Thae gude folks want some refection, I trow; and there 's gude yill¹⁰³ and ham in the buttery. — Come, Sirs, follow me.

[Exit, with a courteous motion of the hand, followed by the Sheriff's Officers, &c. Phemy and Nurse remaining.]

NURSE. Whaur can Black Bauldy be a' this while? His smooty face is seldom missing whan ony mischief is ganging on?

PHEMY. What do you want with him?

NURSE. To send him owre the craft for the new-laid eggs, that the

99 To make.

100 Worse.

101 Used to express surprise or sarcasm, after quoting the word or phrase of another.

102 Teaching.

103 Ale.

ploughman's wife promised us.

PHEMY. He has been sent further off on another errand already.

NURSE. And wha sent him, I should like to ken, whan we are a' sae thrang¹⁰⁴?

PHEMY. My lady sent him.

NURSE. Your leddy, say ye! She has grown unco intimate wi' that pawky loon o' late: I wish gude may come o't. I maun gang for the eggs mysel, I warrant. — But I maun e'en gang first to the chaumer door, and listen a wee; though we'll only hear the hum o' their voices, an our lugs war as gleg as the coley's¹⁰⁵.

PHEMY. And I'll go with you too: the hum of their voices is worth listening for, if nothing more can be heard.

[Exeunt.]

104 Crowd.

105 A type of fish, similar to cod.

ACT IV

SCENE I.

An open Space before the Abbey Church of Paisley.

Enter the Sheriff and Rutherford, in earnest discourse.

SHERIFF. Yes, you may, indeed, be well assured that I have never, during all the years in which I have served the office of sheriff of this county, performed a duty so painful; and I am very sensible that what I am compelled to summon you to perform, is still more distressing.

RUTHERFORD. Were it not sinful, I could wish myself incapable, from disease or disaster, or any other let, of giving legal testimony. Oh! to think of it clouds my brain with confusion, and makes me sick at heart! Violet Murrey, the young, the unfortunate, the gentle, and, I firmly believe, the innocent, — to give evidence to her prejudice, — it is a fearful duty

SHERIFF. It is so, good Sir; yet it must be done. I have taken into custody, on accusation of witchcraft, the fairest woman in the west of Scotland; and you must answer on oath to the questions that may be put to you, whether it be for or against her. If she be innocent, Providence will protect her.

Enter the Chief Baillie of Paisley behind them, and listens to the conclusion of the above speech.

BAILLIE. If she be innocent! Can any one reasonably suppose that such a creature would be accused, or even suspected, but on the strongest proofs of guilt? Some old haggard beldame¹⁰⁶, with an ill name at any rate, might be wrongfully suspected; but Violet Murrey, good sooth! must have been where she should not have been, ere a tongue or a finger in the county would have wagged to her prejudice.

¹⁰⁶ A malicious or loathsome old woman.

SHERIFF. That's what your wife says, I suppose.

BAILLIE. By my faith, Sheriff, it's what every body says; for it stands to reason.

RUTHERFORD. That it stands to folly, would be an apter cause for every body's saying it, my worthy Baillie.

BAILLIE. Grace be with us all! does a minister of the Gospel set his face against that for which there be plain texts of Scripture? And when cattle are drained dry, children possessed, storms raised, houses unroofed, noises in the air, and every one's heart beating with distrust and fear of his neighbour, — is this a time for us to stand still, and leave free scope for Satan and his imps to lord it over a sober and godly land? By my certes! I would carry faggots¹⁰⁷ with my own hands to burn my nearest of kin, though her cheeks were like roses, and her hair like threads of gold, if she were found, but for one night, joining in the elrich revelry of a devil's conventicle¹⁰⁸.

[A distant trumpet heard.]

Ha! the judges so near the town already!

SHERIFF. Would they were further off! they come sooner than I reckoned for.

BAILLIE. Soon or late, we must go to meet them, as in duty bound. — You take precedence, Sheriff: I will follow you.

[Exeunt Sheriff and Baillie.]

RUTHERFORD. *[Alone.]* What is or is not in this mysterious matter, lies beyond human reason to decide. That I must swear to the truth of what I have seen, when questioned thereupon by authority, is my only clear point of discernment. Hard necessity! My heart, in despite of every proof, whispers to me she is innocent.

[A loud brawling and tumult heard without.]

107 Bundle of sticks for fuel.

108 A secret or unlawful religious meeting.

What noise is this? — The senseless exasperated crowd besetting one of those miserable women who held orgies on the heath on that dreadful night.

Enter Mary Macmurren and Wilkin, in the custody of Constables, and surrounded by a crowd, who are casting dust at her, &c. The Constables endeavouring to keep them off.

FIRST WOMAN. Deil's hag! she'll pay for her pastime now, I trow.

SECOND WOMAN. For a' the milk kye she has witched.

FIRST WOMAN. For a' the bonnie bairns she has blasted.

FIRST MAN. She girns¹⁰⁹ like a brock¹¹⁰ at a terry-dog.

SECOND MAN. Score her aboon the breath, or she'll cast a cantrup, and be out o' your han's in a twinkling¹¹¹.

MARY MACMURREN. What gars ye rage at me sae? I ne'er did nae harm to nane o'ye.

FIRST WOMAN. Hear till her! hear till her! how she lees¹¹²!

FIRST MAN. And what for no? Leeing is the best o' their lear, that hae the deel for their dominie.

SECOND MAN. Ay, wicket witch; leeing's nought to her: but we'll gie her something forbye words for an answer. Wha has gotten a jocteleg to score the wrinkled brow o'her?

THIRD MAN. *[Offering a knife.]* Here! here!

[The crowd rush furiously upon her, and are with difficulty kept off by the Constables.]

109 To complain in a whining voice.

110 A name for a badger.

111 In an instant.

112 Lies.

FIRST CONSTABLE. Stand back, I say, every mither's son o' ye, an' every faither's daughter to boot. If the woman be a witch winna she be burnt for 't, as ithers o' that calling hae been afore her? Isna that enough to content ye?

FIRST MAN. Ay, we'll soon see that ugly face, glowering through the smoke o' her benfire, like a howlet in the stour of an auld cowping barn.

SECOND MAN. An that piece o' young warlockry by her side, see how he glow'rs at us! Can tu squeek, imp?

[Trying to pinch Wilkin, who calls out.]

WILKIN. O dull, o' dear! the're meddling wi' me.

FIRST CONSTABLE. Shame upon ye, shame upon ye a'! Ha' ye nae better way o' warring wi' the deel than tormenting a poor idiot?

MARY MACMURREN. Shame upon ye! he's a poor fatherless idiot.

FIRST WOMAN. Fatherless, forsooth! He's a fiend-begotten imp I warrant ye, and should be sent to the dad he belongs to.

[Trumpet heard nearer.]

FIRST CONSTABLE. Red the way, I say, and gang out o' our gait, ilka saul and bouk¹¹³ o' ye! The judges are at han', and my prisoner maun be kary'd or they come, else they'll order ye a' to the tolbooth¹¹⁴ at a swoop.

[Exeunt Constables with Mary Macmurren and Wilkin, followed by some of the crowd, while others remain; the trumpet heard still nearer.]

FIRST MAN. What a braw thing it is to hear the trumpet sound sae nobly! There they come now; the judges, and the sheriff, and the baillies, and the deacons — a' the grand authorities o' the country.

FIRST WOMAN. Hegh saf' us, what a gurly¹¹⁵ carle that judge is on the left!

113 Body.

114 Be imprisoned in a tollbooth.

115 Ill-tempered.

nae witch that stan's before him wull escape, I trow, war' she as young and as bonny as the rose-buds in June.

YOUNG WOMAN. Hau'd your tongue, mither, that a body may see them in peace. It's an awfu' thing but to look upon them here: the Lord help them that maun face them in condemnation!

FIRST WOMAN. Daft bairn! wull the Lord help witches, think'st tu?

Enter Judges in procession, followed by the Sheriff, Baillies, Gentlemen of the county, and Attendants, &c. &c. and passing diagonally across the Stage, exeunt.

SCENE II.

A poor, mean Room in a private house in Paisley.

Enter Annabella, throwing back her hood and mantle¹¹⁶ as she enters.

ANNABELLA. Now let me breathe awhile, and enjoy my hard-earned triumph unconstrainedly. — Revenge so complete, so swift-paced, so terrible! It repays me for all the misery I have endured. — May I triumph? dare I triumph? — Why am I astounded and terrified on the very pinnacle of exultation? Were she innocent, Providence had protected her. What have I done but contrived the means for proving her guilt? Means which come but in aid of others that would almost have been sufficient.

Enter Black Bawldy.

BAWLDDY. O dool¹¹⁷, O dool! she's condemned! she'll be executed, she'll be burnt, she'll be burnt the morn's morning at the cross, and a' through my putting that sorrowfu' gown into your hands, and by foul play, too, foul befa' it! O hone¹¹⁸, O hone!

ANNABELLA. What's all this weeping and wringing of hands for? Art thou distracted?

116 A loose sleeveless cloak or shawl, worn especially by women.

117 Grief.

118 Home.

BAWLDDY. I kenna how I am, I care na how I am; but I winna gang to hell wi' the death of an innocent leddy on my head, for a' the gowd in Christentie.

ANNABELLA. Poor fool! what makes thee think that the gown thou gottest for me had any thing to do with her condemnation?

BAWLDDY. O you wicked woman! I ken weel enough; and I ken what for you confined me in that back chammer sae lang, and keepet my brains in sic a whirligig¹¹⁹ wi' whiskey and potations.

ANNABELLA. Thou knowest! how dost thou know?

BAWLDDY. I set my lug to a hole in the casement, and heard folks below in the close telling a' about the trial. It was that gown spread out in the court, wi' a hole in the sleeve o't, matching precisely to a piece o' the same silk, which na doubt you tore out yoursel whan it was in your hands, that made baith judge and jury condemn her.

ANNABELLA. Poor simpleton! did'st thou not also hear them say, that the minister, sore against his will, swore he saw her on the moor, where the witches were dancing, in company with a man who has been in his grave these three years? was not that proof enough to condemn her, if there had been nothing more?

BAWLDDY. It may be sae.

ANNABELLA. And is so. Is not Mary Macmurren a witch? and has not she been condemned upon much slighter evidence? Thou'rt an absolute fool, man, for making such disturbance about nothing.

BAWLDDY. Fool, or nae fool, I'll gang to the sheriff and tell him the truth, and then my conscience wull be clear frae her death, whate'er she may be.

ANNABELLA. Her death, frightened goose! Dost thou think she will really be executed?

BAWLDDY. I heard them say, that she and Mary Macmurren are baith to be brunt the morn's morning.

ANNABELLA. They said what they knew nothing about. Mary Macmurren will be burnt, for an example to all other witches and warlocks, but a respite and pardon will be given to Violet Murrey: it is only her disgrace, not her death, that is intended; so thy conscience may be easy.

BAWLDDY. If I could but believe you!

ANNABELLA. Believe me, and be quiet; it is the best thing thou canst do for thyself, and for those who are dearest to thee. Be a reasonable creature, then, and promise to me never to reveal what thou knowest.

BAWLDDY. I will keep the secret, then, since she is not to suffer. But winna you let me out the morn to see the burning o' Mary Macmurren? It wad be a vexatious thing to be sae near till't, and miss sic a sight as that.

ANNABELLA. Thou shalt have all reasonable indulgence. But what scares thee so?

[Voice heard without.]

BAWLDDY. [Trembling.] I hear the voice o' Grizeld Bane. She mun ha' been below the grund wi' her master sin' we last gat sight o' her at the tower, else the sheriff officers wad ha' grippet her wi' the rest. — Lord preserve us! is she coming in by the door or the winnoch¹²⁰, or up through the boards o' the flooring? I hear her elrich voice a' round about us, an my lugs ring like the bell o' an amos house.

Enter Grizeld Bane.

GRIZELD BANE. Now, my brave lady, my bold lady, my victorious lady! Satan has many great queens in his court, many princesses in his court, many high-blooded beauties in his court; I saw them all last night, sweeping with their long velvet robes the burning pavement of it: thou wilt have no mean mates to keep thee company, and thou wilt match with the best of them too; there is both wit and wickedness in thee to perfection.

ANNABELLA. Hush, hush, Grizeld Bane! What brings thee here? Is there not good ale and spirits in thy cellar, and a good bed to rest upon? What brings thee here?

¹¹⁹ A carousel.

¹²⁰ Window.

GRIZELD BANE. Shame of my cellar! think'st thou I have been there all this time? I have been deeper, and deeper, and deeper than a hundred cellars, every one sunken lower than another.

BAWLDY. [*Aside to Annabella.*] I tauld you sae, madam.

ANNABELLA. [*Aside to Bawldy.*] Go to thy chamber, if thou'rt afraid.

GRIZELD BANE. Ay, deeper and deeper –

ANNABELLA. Thou need'st not speak so loud, Grizeld Bane: I understand thee well enough. I hope thou hast been well received where thou wert.

GRIZELD BANE. Ay; they received me triumphantly. They scented the blood that will pour and the brands that will blaze; the groans and the shrieks that will be uttered were sounding in their ears, like the stormy din of a war-pipe. What will be done to-morrow morning! Think upon that, my dainty chuck! and say if I did not deserve a noble reception.

ANNABELLA. No doubt, with such society as thy imagination holds converse with.

GRIZELD BANE. Yes, dearest! and thou, too, hast a noble reception abiding thee.

ANNABELLA. [*Shrinking back.*] Heaven forfend!

GRIZELD BANE. Ha, ha, ha! Art thou frighten'd, dearest? Do not be frightened! it is a grand place: my own mate is there, and the cord about his neck changed into a chain of rubies. There is much high promotion abiding thee.

ANNABELLA. And will have long abiding, I trust, ere I am invested with it.

GRIZELD BANE. Not so long; not so long, lady: whenever thou wilt it may be. Dost thou love a clasp'd gorget for thy pretty white neck?

[*Going up to her with a sly grin of affected courtesy, and attempting to grasp her throat.*]

BAWLDY. [*Springing forward and preventing her.*] Blasted witch! wad ye throttle her?

GRIZELD BANE. Ha! imp! hast thou followed me so fast behind? Down with thee! down with thee! There is molten lead and brimstone a-cooking for thy supper; there's no lack of hot porridge for thee, varlet.

BAWLDY. Oh madam, oh madam! what hae ye brought on yoursel and on me, that was but a poor ignorant callant! O send for the minister at once, and we'll down on our knees, and he'll pray for us. The damnation of the wicked is terrible.

ANNABELLA. She is but raving: the fumes of her posset¹²¹ have been working in her brain; be not foolish enough to be frightened at what she says.

BAWLDY. I wish, O I wish I had never done it! I wish I had never set eyes or set thoughts on the mammon¹²² of unrighteousness. Oh, oh!

GRIZELD BANE. [*To Bawldy.*] Ha, ha, ha! Thou'rt frighten'd, art thou?

ANNABELLA. Thou see'st she is in jest, and has pleasure in scaring thee. Go to thy chamber, and compose thyself.

[*Calling him back as he is about to go, and speaking in his ear.*]

Don't go till she has left me. Hie to thy cellar, Grizeld Bane.

GRIZELD BANE. And leave thy sweet company, lady?

ANNABELLA. For a good savoury meal, which is ready for thee; I hear them carrying it thither. Go, go! I have promised to visit Lady Dungarren at a certain hour, and I must leave thee. [*Calling very loud.*] Landlord! Landlord!

Enter Landlord (a strong determined-looking man)

¹²¹ A drink made of hot milk curdled with ale, wine, or other alcohol and typically flavoured with spices.

¹²² A term, derived from the Christian Bible, used to describe material wealth or greed, most often personified as a deity.

Is Grizeld Bane's meal ready? *[Significantly.]*

LANDLORD. Yes, madam, and with as good brandy to relish it as either lord or lady could desire. *[To Grizeld Bane.]* Come, my lofty dame, let me lead you hence.

[Fixing his eyes stedfastly on her face, while she sullenly submits to be led off.]

Manent¹²³ Annabella and Bawldy.

BAWLDDY. The Lord be praised she is gone! for she has been in the black pit o' hell since yestreen¹²⁴, and wad pu' every body after her an she could. Dear leddy, send for the minister.

ANNABELLA. Hold thy foolish tongue, and retire to thy chamber. Violet Murrey's life is safe enough, so thy conscience may be easy. Follow me, for I must lock thee in.

BAWLDDY. Mun I still be a prisoner?

ANNABELLA. Thou sha'n't be so long; have patience a little while, foolish boy.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III.

A Prison. Violet Murrey is discovered sitting on the ground, by the light of a lamp stuck in the wall; her face hid upon her lap, while a gentle rocking motion of the body shows that she is awake.

Enter Dunganren by a low arched door, which is opened cautiously by a turnkey, who immediately shuts it again and disappears.

DUNGARREN. *[Going close to her, and after a sorrowful pause.]* Violet, O Violet, my once dear Violet! Dost thou know my voice? Wilt thou not raise thy head and look upon me?

VIOLET. I know your voice: you are very kind to come to me in my misery.

¹²³ They remain.

¹²⁴ Last evening.

DUNGARREN. Misery, indeed! Oh that I should see thee thus, — the extremity of human wretchedness closing around thee!

VIOLET. *[Rising from the ground and standing erect.]* Say not the extremity, Robert Kennedy, for I am innocent.

DUNGARREN. I will believe it. Ay, in despite of evidence as clear as the recognition of noon-day, — in despite of all evidence, I would believe it. The hateful sin of witchcraft, if such a sin there be, thou hast never committed; it is impossible.

VIOLET. I know thou wilt believe it: and O! that thou could'st also believe that I am innocent of all falsehood and fickleness of affection! But thou canst not do so; it were unreasonable to expect it. Thou wilt think of me as an ungrateful, deceitful creature; and this is the memory I must leave behind me with Robert of Dunganren.

DUNGARREN. I forgive thee! I forgive thee, dear Violet! for so in thy low estate I will call thee still, though thou lovest another as thou hast never loved me.

VIOLET. I love him, full surely, as I cannot love thee, but not to the injury of that affection which has always been thine.

DUNGARREN. I came not here to upbraid¹²⁵: we will speak of this no more.

VIOLET. Alas, alas! I should speak and think of things far different, yet this lies on my heart as the heaviest load of all. May God forgive me for it!

DUNGARREN. And he will forgive thee, my dear friend! for such I may and will call thee, since I may not call thee more.

VIOLET. Do, my noble Robert! that is best of all. And, resting in thy mind as a friend, I know — I am confident, that something will happen,

¹²⁵ Find fault with (someone).

when I am gone, that will discover to thee my faithfulness. Death will soon be past, and thou wilt live to be a prosperous gentleman, and wilt sometimes think of one — my evil fame will not — thou wilt think, ay, wilt speak good of Violet Murrey, when all besides speak evil. Thou wilt not — *[Bursts into tears.]*

DUNGARREN. *[Embracing her passionately.]* My dear, dear creature! dear as nothing else has ever been to me, thou shalt not die: the very thought of it makes me distracted!

VIOLET. Be not so: it is the manner of it that distresses thee. But has it not been the death of the martyrs, of the holy and the just; of those, the dust of whose feet I had been unworthy to wipe? Think of this, and be assured, that I shall be strengthened to bear it.

DUNGARREN. Oh, oh, oh! If deliverance should be frustrated!

VIOLET. What art thou talking of? thou art, indeed, distracted. Nay, nay! let not my execution terrify thee so much. I, too, was terrified; but I have learnt from my gaoler¹²⁶, who has been present at such spectacles, that the sentence, though dreadful, is executed mercifully. The flames will not reach me till I have ceased to breathe; and many a natural disease doth end the course of life as mine will be terminated.

DUNGARREN. God forbid! God help and deliver us!

[Runs impatiently to a corner of the dungeon, and puts his ear close to the ground.]

I do not hear them yet: if they should fail to reach it in time, God help us!

VIOLET. What dost thou there? What dost thou listen for? What dost thou expect?

DUNGARREN. Means for thy deliverance, — thy escape.

VIOLET. Say not so; it is impossible.

DUNGARREN. It is possible, and will be, if there's a Providence on earth — if there's mercy in heaven.

[Puts his ear to the ground as before.]

VIOLET. *[Stooping and listening.]* I hear nothing. What is it thou expectest to hear?

DUNGARREN. I do hear it now: they are near; they will open upon us presently.

VIOLET. What dost thou hear?

DUNGARREN. The sound of their spades and their mattocks.¹²⁷ O my brave miners! they will do their work nobly at last.

VIOLET. A way to escape under ground! my ears ring and my senses are confounded. Escape and deliverance?

DUNGARREN. Yes, love, and friend, and dear human creature! escape and deliverance are at hand.

VIOLET. How good and noble thou art to provide such deliverance for me, believing me unfaithful!

DUNGARREN. Come, come; that is nothing: be what thou wilt, if I can but save thee! — Life and death are now on the casting of a die. — The ground moves; it is life! *[Tossing up his arms exultingly.]*

VIOLET. The ground opens: wonderful, unlooked-for deliverance! Thank God! thank God! his mercy has sent it.

[The earthen floor of the dungeon at one corner falls in, making a small opening, and the miners are heard distinctly at work.]

DUNGARREN. *[Calling down to them.]* May we descend? are you ready?

VOICE. *[Beneath.]* In two minutes the passage will be practicable.

DUNGARREN. *[As before.]* Make no delay; we will pass any how.

¹²⁶ A person in charge of a jail.

¹²⁷ Tools resembling pick-axes used to break up ground.

VIOLET. How quickly they have worked, to mine so far under ground since yesterday!

DUNGARREN. That mine was completed many months ago to favour the escape of a prisoner, who died suddenly in prison before his projected rescue. The secret was revealed to me yesterday, by one of the miners, who had originally conducted the work.

VOICE. *[Beneath.]* We are ready now.

DUNGARREN. Heaven be praised! I will first descend, and receive thee in my arms.

[As they are about to descend, the door of the dungeon opens, and enter Rutherford and Lady Dungarren, accompanied by the Sheriff and Gaoler.]

SHERIFF. Ha! company admitted without due permission! Dungarren here! Your underling, Mr. Gaoler, is a rogue. How is this?

GAOLER. As I am a Christian man, I know no more about it than the child that was born since yestreen.

SHERIFF. It is only one born since yestreen that will believe thee. A hole in the floor, too, made for concealment and escape! Dungarren, you are my prisoner in the king's name. To favour the escape of a criminal is no slight offence against the laws of the land.

DUNGARREN. You distract me with your formal authorities: the laws of the land and the laws of God are at variance, for she is innocent.

SHERIFF. She has abused and bewitched thee to think so; and a great proof it is of her guilt.

DUNGARREN. It is you and your coadjutors who are abused, dreadfully and wickedly abused, to hurry on, with such unrighteous obduracy¹²⁸, the destruction of one whom a savage would have spared. Tremble to think of it. At your peril do this.

SHERIFF. I am as sorry as any man to have such work to do, but yet it must be

¹²⁸ Stubbornness.

done; and at your peril resist the law. Holloa, you without! *[Calling loud.]*

Enter his Officers, armed.

Take Robert Kennedy, of Dungarren, into custody, in the king's name.

[The Officers endeavour to lay hold of Dungarren, who paces about in a state of distraction.]

DUNGARREN. Witchcraft! heaven grant me patience! her life to be taken for witchcraft? senseless idiotical delusion!

SHERIFF. *[To Officers.]* Do your duty, fellows: he is beside himself; distracted outright.

VIOLET. Noble Dungarren! submit to the will of heaven. I am appointed to my hard fate; and God will enable me to bear it. Leave me, my dear friend! be patient, and leave me.

DUNGARREN. They shall hack me to pieces ere I leave thee.

VIOLET. Dear Robert, these are wild distracted words, and can be of no avail. — Good Mr. Rutherford, and Lady Dungarren, too; ye came here to comfort me: this I know was your errand, but O comfort him! speak to him, and move him to submission.

RUTHERFORD. Your present vain resistance, Dungarren, does injury to her whom you wish to preserve.

LADY DUNGARREN. My son, my Robert, thou art acting like a maniac. Retire with these men, who are only doing their duty, and neither wish to injure nor insult you. I will stay with Violet, and Mr. Rutherford will go with you.

DUNGARREN. Leave her, to see her no more!

LADY DUNGARREN. Not so; the sheriff will consent, that you may see her again in the morning, ere —

SHERIFF. I do consent: you shall see her in the morning, before she goes forth to — to the — to her —

DUNGARREN. To that which is so revolting and horrible, that no one dare utter it in words. Oh! oh, oh!

[Groans heavily, and leans his back to the wall, while his arms drop listlessly by his side, and the Officers, laying hold of him, lead him out in a state of faintness and apathy.]

RUTHERFORD. His mind is now exhausted, and unfit for present soothing; attempts to appease and console him must come hereafter; there is time enough for that. *[To Violet, with tenderness.]* But thy time is short; I would prepare thee for an awful change. Unless thou be altogether hostile to thoughts of religion and grace, which I can never believe thee to be.

VIOLET. O no, no! that were a dreadful hostility; and thou, even thou, the good and enlightened Rutherford, my long-trying monitor and friend, can express a doubt whether I am so fearfully perverted. Alas! death is terrible when it comes with disgrace, — with the execration of Christian fellow-creatures! O pray to God for me! pray to God fervently, that I be not overwhelmed with despair.

RUTHERFORD. I will pray for thee most fervently; and thou wilt be supported.

VIOLET. I have been at times, since my condemnation, most wonderfully composed and resigned, as if I floated on a boundless ocean, beneath His eye who says, “Be calm, be still; it is my doing.” But, oh! returning surges soon swell on every side, tossing, and raging, and yawning tremendously, like gulfs of perdition, so that my senses are utterly confounded. My soul has much need of thy ghostly comfort.

LADY DUNGARREN. Comfort her, good Rutherford! I forgive her all that she has done against my poor child, and may God forgive her!

VIOLET. And will nothing, dear Madam, remove from your mind that miserable notion, that I have practised withcraft against the health and life of your child? Can you believe this and pity me? No, no! were I the fiend-possessed wretch you suppose me to be, a natural antipathy would rise in your breast at the sight of me, making all touch of sympathy impossible. I am innocent of this, and of all great crime;

and you will know it, when I am laid in a dishonoured grave, and have passed through the fearful pass of death, from which there is no return.

LADY DUNGARREN. You make me tremble, Violet Murrey: if you are innocent, who can be guilty?

VIOLET. Be it so deem'd! it is God's will: I must be meek when such words are uttered against me. *[After a pause.]* And you think it possible that I have practised with evil powers for the torment and destruction of your child; of poor Jessie, who was my little companion and play-fellow, whom I loved, and do love so truly; who hung round my neck so kindly, and called me — ay, sister was a sweet word from her guileless lips, and seemed to be —

[Bursts into an agony of tears.]

LADY DUNGARREN. *[To Rutherford.]* She may well weep and wring her hands: it makes me weep to think of the power of the Evil One over poor unassisted nature. Had she been less gentle and lovely, he had tempted her less strongly. I would give the best part of all that I possess to make and to prove her innocent. But it cannot be; O no! it cannot be!

RUTHERFORD. *[To Lady Dungarren.]* Forbear! forbear! Prayer and supplication to the throne of mercy for that grace which can change all hearts, convert misery into happiness, and set humble chastised penitence by the side of undeviating virtue, — prayer and supplication for a poor stricken sister, and for our sinful selves, is our fittest employment now.

VIOLET. Thanks, my good Sir; you are worthy of your sacred charge. I am, indeed, a poor stricken sister; one of the flock given you to lead, and humbly penitent for all the sins and faults I have really committed. Pray for me, that I may be more perfectly penitent, and strengthened for the fearful trial that awaits me.

RUTHERFORD. Thou wilt be strengthened.

VIOLET. O! I have great need! I am afraid of death; I am afraid of disgrace; I am afraid of my own sinking pusillanimous¹²⁹ weakness.

¹²⁹ Showing a lack of courage.

RUTHERFORD. But thou need'st not be afraid, my dear child; trust in his Almighty protection, who strengthens the weak in the hour of need, and gives nothing to destruction which in penitence and love can put its trust in Him.

VIOLET. *[Weeping on his shoulder.]* I will strive to do it, my kind pastor; and the prayers of a good man will help me.

RUTHERFORD. Let us kneel, then, in humble faith.

SHERIFF. *[Advancing from the bottom of the Stage.]* Not here, good Sir; I cannot leave her here, even with a man of your cloth, and that opening for escape in the floor.

RUTHERFORD. As you please, Sir; remove her to another cell: or, if it must be, let a guard remain in this.

Enter an Attendant.

ATTENDANT. *[To Sheriff.]* It is ready, Sir.

SHERIFF. *[To Violet.]* You must be removed to another prison-room.

VIOLET. As you please, Sheriff.

SHERIFF. Lean upon me, Madam: woe the day that I should lodge so fair a lady in such unseemly chambers!

VIOLET. I thank you for your courtesy, good Sheriff: — you do what you deem to be your duty; and when you are at last undeceived, and convinced of my innocence, as I know you will one day be, you will be glad to remember that you did it with courtesy.

SHERIFF. Blessing on thy lovely face, witch or no witch! dost thou speak to me so gently!

[Exit Violet, leaning on the Sheriff.]

Manet Gaoler, who mutters to himself as he prepares to follow them.

GAOLER. A bonny witch, and a cunning ane, as ever signed compact wi' Satan! I wonder what cantrap she'll devise for the morn, whan the pinching time comes. I wish it were over.

[Exit, locking the door.]

ACT V

SCENE I.

*A mean Chamber, with a window looking upon the Market-place of Paisley.
Enter Annabella and the Landlord of the House.*

LANDLORD. Here, Madam, you can remain concealed from every body, and see the execution distinctly from the window.

ANNABELLA. Yes; this is what I want. And you must let no creature come here, on any account. Keep your promise upon this point, I charge you.

LANDLORD. Trust me, Madam, nobody shall enter this room, though they carried a bag of gold in their hand. I have refused a large sum for the use of that window; and excepting some schoolboys and apprentices who have climbed up to the roof of the house, there is not a creature in the tenement, but Grizeld Bane and Black Bawldy, each in their place of confinement.

ANNABELLA. I thank thee, Landlord, and will reward thee well: thou shalt be no loser for the money thou hast refused on my account. What is the hour?

LANDLORD. The abbey church struck eight, as I reckon, half an hour ago.

ANNABELLA. Longer than that – much longer. The time should be close at hand for leading out the criminals.

[Going to the window.]

What a concourse of people are assembled! and such a deep silence through the whole!

LANDLORD. Ay; in the day of doom they will scarcely stand closer and quieter.

ANNABELLA. Hold thy tongue: we know nothing of such matters.

LANDLORD. But what the holy book reveals to us.

ANNABELLA. Leave me, I pray thee. I would be alone.

[Landlord retires.]

Half an hour! no half hour was ever of such a length. — Landlord! ho!
Landlord!

Re-enter Landlord.

LANDLORD. What is your pleasure, Madam?

ANNABELLA. Art thou sure that no reprieve has arrived? It must be past the hour.

[Bell tolls.]

Ha! the time is true.

LANDLORD. That awful sound! It gives notice that the prisoners will soon be led forth. Lord have mercy on their sinful souls! on all sinful souls!

ANNABELLA. Thou may'st go: I would be alone.

[Exit Landlord.]

[Bell tolls again, and at intervals through the whole scene.]

ANNABELLA. *[Alone.]* Now comes the fearful consummation! Her arts, her allurements, her seeming beauty, her glamour, and her power, — what will they all amount to when the noon of this day shall be past? a few black ashes, and a few scorched bones. — Fye upon these cowardly thoughts, — this sinking confidence! Revenge is sweet; revenge is noble; revenge is natural; what price is too dear for revenge? — Why this tormenting commotion? To procure false evidence for the conviction of one whom we know or believe to be guilty, — is this a sin past redemption? No; it is but the sacrifice of truth for right and useful ends.

I know it is; reason says it is; and I will be firm and bold, in spite of human infirmity.

Enter Grizeld Bane.

GRIZELD BANE. Yes, dearest; thou art very bold. There is not a cloven foot, nor a horned head of them all, wickeder and bolder than thou art.

ANNABELLA. *[Shrinking back.]* What brings thee here?

GRIZELD BANE. To be in such noble company.

ANNABELLA. What dost thou mean by that?

GRIZELD BANE. Every word hath its meaning, Lady, though every meaning hath not its word, as thou very well knowest. I am great; thou art great; but the greatest of all stands yonder.

[Pointing to the farther corner of the room.]

ANNABELLA. What dost thou point at? I see nothing.

GRIZELD BANE. But thou wilt soon, dearest. The master we both serve is standing near us. His stature is lofty; his robe is princely; his eyes are two flames of fire. And one stands behind him, like a chieftain of elrich degree. — But why is he thus? Can no power undo that hateful noose? It wavers before my eyes so distractingly!

ANNABELLA. Thou art, indeed, distracted and visionary. There is nobody here but ourselves.

GRIZELD BANE. The master of us all is waiting yonder; and he will not sink to his nether court again till the fair lady is with him.

Watch [Grizeld Bane & Annabella's scene.](#)

ANNABELLA. O! I understand thy moody fancy now. The master thou meanest is waiting for Violet Murrey.

GRIZELD BANE. Yes, dearest, if he can get her. If not, he will have some one

else, who is worthy to bear him company. He must have his meed¹³⁰ and his mate: he will not return empty-handed, when a fair lady is to be had.

ANNABELLA. Heaven forfend!

[The bell now sounds quicker.]

That bell sounds differently: they are now leading them forth.

GRIZELD BANE. *[Running to the window, and beckoning her.]* Come, come here, darling: here is a sight to make the eyes flash, and the heart's blood stir in its core. Here is a brave sight for thee!

[They both go to the window, and the Scene closes.]

SCENE II.

The Market-place prepared for the Execution, with two Stakes, and faggots heaped round them, erected in the middle, but nearer the bottom than the front of the Stage. A great Crowd of people are discovered. The Bell tolls rapidly, and then stops.

Enter the Sheriff and Magistrates, and Mary Macmurren, supported by a Clergyman, and guarded.

CLERGYMAN. Now, prisoner, may God be merciful to thee! Make use of the few moments of life that remain, by making confession before these good people of the wickedness thou hast committed, and the justice of the sentence that condemns thee. It is all the reparation now in thy power; and may God accept it of thee!

MARY MACMURREN. Oh, hone! oh, hone!

CLERGYMAN. Dost thou not understand what I say? Make confession.

MARY MACMURREN. Oh, hone! oh, hone!

CLERGYMAN. Dost thou hear me, woman? Make confession.

MARY MACMURREN. Confession?

CLERGYMAN. Yes, confession, woman.

MARY MACMURREN. Tell me what it is, an' I'll say't.

BAILLIE. How cunning she is to the last!

CLERGYMAN. *[To Mary Macmurren.]* Didst thou not confess on thy trial that thou wert a witch, and hadst tryste-meetings and dealings with the devil?

MARY MACMURREN. Lord hae mercy on me: I said what I thought, and I thought as ye bade me. The Lord hae mercy on a wicked woman! for that, I know, I am.

BAILLIE. How cunning she is again! She calls herself wicked, but will not call herself witch.

CLERGYMAN. Mary Macmurren, make confession ere you die, and God will be more merciful to you.

MARY MACMURREN. Oh, hone! oh, hone! miserable wretch that I am! Do ye mak confession for me, Sir, and I'll say't after you, as weel as I dow. Oh, hone! oh, hone!

SHERIFF. *[To Clergyman.]* There is no making any thing of her now, miserable wretch! Lead her on to the stake, and make her pray with you there, if the Evil One hath not got the entire mastery over her to the very last.

[The Clergyman leads Mary Macmurren to the stake.]

And now there is a sadder duty to perform; the fair, the young, and the gentle must be brought forth to shame and to punishment.

[He goes to the gate of the prison, and returns, conducting Violet Murrey, who enters, leaning on the arm of Rutherford.]

SHERIFF. Now, Madam, it is time that I should receive from you any commands you may wish to entrust me with: they shall be faithfully obeyed.

¹³⁰ A person's deserved share of praise.

VIOLET. I thank you, Mr. Sheriff. What may be allowed for mitigating my sufferings, I know you have already ordered: have you also given similar directions in behalf of my miserable companion?

SHERIFF. I have, Madam.

VIOLET. Thanks for your mercy! My passage to a better state will be short: and of God's mercy there I have no misgivings; for of the crime laid to my charge I am as innocent as the child newly born; as you yourself, worthy Sir, or this good man on whose arm I now lean.

SHERIFF. If this be so, Lady, woe to the witnesses, the judges, and the jury by whom you are condemned!

VIOLET. Say not so. I am condemned by what honest, though erring men, believed to be the truth. What God alone knows to be the truth, is not for man's direction. — *[To Rutherford.]* Weep not for me, my kind friend. You had good cause to believe that you had seen me in company with a creature not of this world, and you were compelled to declare it.

RUTHERFORD. I wish I had died, ere that evidence had been given!

VIOLET. Be comforted! be comforted! for you make me good amends, in that your heart refuses, in spite of such belief, to think me guilty of the crime for which I am to suffer. There is another — you know whom I mean — who thinks me innocent. When I am gone, ye will be often together, and speak and think of Violet Murrey. This is the memory I shall leave behind me: my evil fame with others is of little moment. And yet I needs must weep to think of it; 't is human weakness.

RUTHERFORD. God bless and strengthen thee, my daughter, in this thy last extremity!

VIOLET. Fear not for that: I am strengthened. You have prayed for me fervently, and I have prayed for myself; and think ye I shall not be supported?

[Looking round on the crowd.]

And these good people, too, some of them, I trust, will pray for me. They

will one day know that I am innocent.

SEVERAL VOICES. *[From the crowd, calling out in succession.]* We know it already. — She must be so. — She is innocent.

BAILLIE. I command silence! — Mr. Sheriff, your duty calls upon you.

SHERIFF. *[To Violet.]* Madam.

[Turns away.]

VIOLET. You speak, and turn from me: I understand you.

SHERIFF. I am compelled to say, though most unwillingly, our time is run.

VIOLET. And I am ready. —

[Turning to Rutherford.]

The last fearful step of my unhappy course only remains: you have gone far enough, my good Sir. Receive my dying thanks for all your kindness, and let us part. Farewell! till we meet in a better world!

RUTHERFORD. Nay, nay; I will be with thee till all is over, cost what it may, — though it should kill me.

VIOLET. Most generous man! thou art as a parent to me, and, woe the day! thy heart will be wrung as though thou wert so in truth.

BAILLIE. *[To Sheriff.]* Why so dilatory¹³¹? Proceed to the place of execution.

SHERIFF. Not so hasty, Sir! The psalm must first be sung.

BAILLIE. It will be sung when she is at the stake.

SHERIFF. *[Aside.]* Would thou wert there in her stead, heartless bigot! — *[Aloud.]* Raise the psalm here.

VIOLET. You are very humane, good Sheriff, but we shall, if you please,

¹³¹ Slow to act.

proceed to the place appointed.

[She is led towards the stake, when a loud cry is heard without.]

VOICE. Stop! stop! stop the execution.

Enter Murrey, darting through the crowd, who give way to let him pass.

MURREY. She is innocent! she is innocent! Ye shall not murder the innocent!

SHERIFF. *[To Murrey.]* Who art thou, who wouldst stop the completion of the law?

MURREY. One whom you have known; whom you have looked on often.

SHERIFF. The holy faith preserve us! art thou a living man?

RUTHERFORD. Murrey of Torwood! doth the grave give up its dead, when the sun is shining in the sky?

SHERIFF. Look to the lady, she is in a swoon.

MURREY. *[Supporting Violet.]* My dear, my noble child! thine own misery thou couldst sustain, but mine has overwhelmed thee: dear, dear child!

Enter Dungarren, running distractedly.

BAILLIE. *[Fronting him.]* Dungarren broke from prison, in defiance of the law!

DUNGARREN. In defiance of all earthly things.

[Pushing the Baillie aside, and rushing on to Violet.]

Who art thou? *[Looking sternly at Murrey.]* What right hast thou to support Violet Murrey?

MURREY. The right of a father; a miserable father.

DUNGARREN. Her father is dead.

MURREY. Not so, Dungarren: I would I were dead, if it could save her life.

DUNGARREN. *[Pointing to Rutherford.]* This good man, whose word is truth itself, laid Murrey of Torwood in the grave with his own hands.

MURREY. Did he examine the face of the corse which he so piously interred? I had changed clothes with my faithful servant. — But it is a story tedious to tell; and can ye doubt his claims to identity, who, in the very act of making them, subjects his own life to the forfeit of the law?

BAILLIE. *[Aside to the Sheriff's officers.]* By my faith! he is a condemned murderer, and will be required of our hands; keep well on the watch, that he may not escape.

DUNGARREN. She seems to revive; she will soon recover. *[To Murrey.]* And it was you who were with her on the heath, and in the cave?

MURREY. It was I, Dungarren.

DUNGARREN. No apparition, no clandestine lover, but her own father!

VIOLET. *[Recovering, and much alarmed.]* Call him not father! I own him not! Send him away, send him away, dear Robert!

MURREY. *[Embracing her.]* My generous child! the strength of thy affection is wonderful, but it is all vain: I here submit myself willingly to the authority of the law, though innocent of the crime for which I am condemned — the wilful murder of a worthy gentleman. And now, Mr. Sheriff, you cannot refuse to reprieve her, who is mainly convicted for that, in being seen with me, she seemed to hold intercourse with apparitions, or beings of another world.

SHERIFF. You speak reason: God be praised for it!

DUNGARREN. God be praised, she is safe!

BAILLIE. There be other proofs against her besides that.

DUNGARREN. Be they what they may, they are false!

Enter Black Bawldy, letting himself down from the wall of a low building, and running eagerly to the Sheriff.

BAWLDDY. Hear, my Lord Sheriff, — hear me, your honour — hear me, Dungarren; — hear me, a' present! She's innocent; — I stole it, I stole it mysel: the Lady Annabel tempted me, and I stole it.

SHERIFF. Simple fool! it is not for theft she is condemned.

BAWLDDY. I ken that weel, your honour. She's condemned for being a witch, and she's nae witch: I stole it mysel and gied it to the Lady Annabel, wha cuttet the hole i' the sleeve o't, I'll be sworn. Little did I think what wicked purpose she was after.

SHERIFF. Yes, yes, my callant! I comprehend thee now: it is that gown which was produced in Court, thou art talking of. Thou stole it for the Lady Annabel, and she cut a piece out of it, which she pretended to have found in the sick-chamber?

BAWLDDY. E'en sae, your honour. Whip me, banish me, or hang me, an' it man be sae, but let the innocent leddy abee.

SHERIFF. Well, well; I'll take the punishing of thee into my own hands, knave. What shrieks are these?

[Repeated shrieks are heard from the window of a house, and two figures are seen indistinctly within, struggling: a dull stifled sound succeeds, and then a sudden silence.]

There is mischief going on in that house.

BAILLIE. *[Running to the door of the house, and knocking.]* Let me enter: I charge you within, whoever ye be, to open the door. No answer!

[Knocks again.]

Still no answer! Open the door, or it shall be forced open.

GRIZELD BANE. *[Looking over the window.]* Ha, ha! what want ye, good Mr. Magistrate?

BAILLIE. Some body has suffered violence in this house; open the door immediately.

GRIZELD BANE. And what would you have from the house that ye are so impatient to enter? There be corses enow in the churchyard, I trow; ye need not come here for them.

SHERIFF. She is a mad woman, and has murdered somebody.

FIRST OFFICER. Mad, your honour! she's the witch we ha' been seeking in vain to apprehend, and the blackest, chiefest hag o' them a'.

SECOND OFFICER. By my faith, we mun deal cannily wi' her, or she'll mak her escape fra' us again through the air.

BAILLIE. *[Calling up to her.]* Open the door, woman, and you sha'n't be forced; we want to enter peaceably. Who is with you, there? Who was it that shrieked so fearfully?

GRIZELD BANE. Never trouble thy head about that, Mr. Magistrate; she'll never disturb you more.

SHERIFF. Who is it you have with you?

GRIZELD BANE. *[Throwing down to them the scarf of Annabella.]* Know ye that token? It was a fair lady who owned it, but she has no need of it now: hand me up a winding sheet.

SHERIFF. The cursed hag has destroyed some lady. — Officers, enter by force, and do your duty. Witch or no witch, she cannot injure strong men like you, in the open light of day.

[The door is burst open, and the Officers go into the house, and presently re-enter, bearing the dead body of Annabella, which they place on the front of the Stage, the crowd gathering round to stare at it.]

BAILLIE. Stand back, every one of you, and leave clear room round the body. It is the Lady Annabella. She has been strangled: — she has struggled fearfully; her features are swollen, and her eyes starting from her head;

she has struggled fearfully. — Stand back, I say; retire to your places, every one of you, or I'll deal with you as breakers of the peace.

SHERIFF. Be not so angry with them, good Baillie: they must have some frightful sight to stare at, and they will be disappointed of that which they came for.

BAILLIE. Disappointed, sheriff! You do not mean, I hope, to reprieve that foul witch at the other stake: is not one execution enough for them? It makes me sick to see such blood-thirsting in a Christian land.

SHERIFF. Ay, you say true; that poor wretch had gone out of my head.

BAILLIE. Wretch enough, good sooth! the blackest witch in Renfrewshire, Grizeld Bane excepted.

SHERIFF. But we need not burn her now: her evidence may be wanted to convict the other.

BAILLIE. Not a whit! we have evidence at command to burn her twenty times over. A bird in hand is a wise proverb. If we spare her now, she may be in Norway or Lapland¹³² when we want her again for the stake.

DUNGARREN. [*Approaching the body of Annabella.*] And this is thy fearful end, most miserable woman! It wrings my heart to think of what thou wert, and what thou mightst have been.

MURREY. [*To Sheriff.*] Your authority having, on these undoubted proofs of her innocence, reprieved her, may I request that she be now withdrawn from the public gaze? It is not fit that she should be further exposed.

SHERIFF. True, Torwood; you shall lead her back to prison, where she shall only remain till safe and commodious apartments are prepared for her. As for yourself, I am sorry to say, we have no power to lodge you otherwise than as a condemned man, obnoxious to the last punishment of the law.

VIOLET. O say not so, dear Sir! He had made his escape, he was safe, he was free, and he surrendered himself into your hands to save the life of his child. Will ye take advantage of that? it were cruel and ungenerous.

SHERIFF. We act, lady, under authority, and must not be guided by private opinions and affections.

BAILLIE. Most assuredly! it is our duty to obey the law and to make it be obeyed, without fear or favour.

VIOLET. On my knees, I beseech you!

[*Kneeling and catching hold of the Baillie and Sheriff.*]

I beseech you for an innocent man! Royal mercy may be obtained if ye will grant the time — time to save the life of the innocent — innocent, I mean, of intentional murder.

SHERIFF. Has he further proof of such innocence to produce than was shown on his trial?

BAILLIE. If he has not, all application for mercy were vain. He slew the man with whom he had a quarrel, without witnesses. If he is innocent, it is to God and his own conscience, but the law must deem him guilty.

VIOLET. He did it not without witnesses, but he who was present is dead. Alas, alas! if Fotheringham had been alive, he had been justified.

BAILLIE. Forbear to urge that plea, lady: that the only person who was present at the quarrel or combat is dead or disappeared, throws a greater shade of darkness on the transaction.

SHERIFF. These are hard words, Baillie, and unnecessary.

BAILLIE. You may think so, Sheriff, but if you yield on this point, I entirely dissent from it; ay, from granting any delay to the execution of his sentence. Shall a man be made gainer for having defied the law and broken from his prison?

SHERIFF. [*To Murrey sorrowfully.*] I am afraid we can do nothing for you. You

¹³² A region of northern Europe which extends from the Norwegian Sea to the White Sea and lies mainly within the Arctic. It consists of the northern parts of Norway, Sweden, and Finland, and the Kola Peninsula of Russia.

must prepare for the worst.

MURREY. I came here so prepared, worthy Sir: I knew you could do nothing for me. [*To Violet, who again kneels imploringly.*] Forbear, dearest child! thou humblest thyself in vain. I will meet fate as a man: do not add to my suffering by giving way to such frantic humiliation.

[*Raising her from the ground.*]

Dungarren, I commit her to your protection. You will be her honourable friend.

DUNGARREN. Ay, and her devoted husband, also, if you esteem me worthy to be so.

MURREY. Worthy to be her husband, were she the daughter of a king, my noble Robert Kennedy. But thou must not be the son-in-law of such a one as I am, — one whose life has been terminated by —

DUNGARREN. I despise the prejudice!

VIOLET. But I do not! O! I cannot despise it! If my father must suffer, I will never marry thee, and I will never marry another. — My fate is sealed. Thou and this good man [*pointing to Rutherford*] will be my friends, and Heaven will, in pity, make my earthly course a short one. A creature so stricken with sorrow and disgrace has nothing to do in this world but to wait, in humble patience, till God in his mercy takes her out of it.

MURREY. Come from this hateful spot, my sweet child! Cruel as our lot is, we shall be, for what remains of this day, together.

[*Endeavours to lead her out, but is prevented by the crowd, who gather close on the front of the Stage, as Grizeld Bane issues with frantic gestures from the house.*]

VOICES. [*From the crowd in succession.*] Ay, there she comes, and the deel raging within her. — The blackest witch of a'. — Let her be brunt at the stake that was meant for the leddy. — Hurra! hurra! mair faggots and a fiercer fire for Grizeld! — Hurra! and defiance to Satan and his agents!

[*A trumpet sounds without, and the tumult increases, till a company of Soldiers*

appears under arms, and enter an Officer, accompanied by Fatheringham.]

OFFICER. [*Giving a paper to the Sheriff.*] You will please, Mr. Sheriff, to make the contents of this paper public.

SHERIFF. I charge every one here, at his peril, to be silent.

[*Reading.*]

“Be it known unto all men, that the King’s Majesty, with the Lords and Commons in Parliament assembled, have decreed that the law punishing what has been called the crime of witchcraft as a felonious offence be repealed; and it is therefore repealed accordingly. Henceforth there shall no person be prosecuted at law as a wizard or witch, throughout these realms; and any person or persons who shall offer injury to any one, as being guilty of the supposed crime of witchcraft, shall be punished for such aggression. God save the King!”

[*A pause of dead silence, followed by low, then loud murmurs, and then voices call out in succession.*]

VOICES. My certes! the dee has been better represented in the house of Parliament than a’ the braid shires in the kingdom. — Sic a decree as that in a Christian land! — To mak Satan triumphant! — There’ll be fine gambols on moors and in kirkyards¹³³ for this, I trow. — Parliament, forsooth! we hae sent bonnie members there, indeed, gin thae be the laws they mak. — And will Mary Macmurren escape after a’? — Out upon’t! She may be brunt at ony rate, for she is condemned by the gude auld law of our forefathers. — Ay, so she may; that stands to reason.

[*Crowd close round the stake where Mary Macmurren is bound.*]

SHERIFF. [*To the Crowd.*] Desist, I say, or the soldiers shall disperse you forthwith.

FATHERINGHAM. Would they burn the miserable creature for an imaginary crime; one may say, for a pastime!

BAILLIE. [*To Fatheringham.*] No, good Sir; not imaginary. She is a witch by her own confession. And that woman [*pointing to Grizeld Bane*] is also, by her

¹³³ Churchyards.

own words, convicted of consorting and colleaguings with Satan, — an awful and mischievous witch.

FATHERINGHAM. Is she so?

GRIZELD BANE. [*Looking at him fiercely.*] Who says otherwise? The sun shines now, and that makes thee bold; but my time of power is coming.

FATHERINGHAM. [*Approaching her.*] Is this you, Grizeld Bane? What brought you to this part of the country?

GRIZELD BANE. The prince of the power of the air.

BAILLIE. There, Sir! you hear her confess it. And who is she? for you seem to know her.

FATHERINGHAM. A miserable woman whose husband was hanged for murder, at Inverness¹³⁴, some years ago, and who thereupon became distracted. She was, when I left that country, kept in close custody. But she has, no doubt, escaped from her keepers, who may not be very anxious to reclaim her.

BAILLIE. We must secure her, then, and send her back to the north.

GRIZELD BANE. Lay hands on me who dare! I defy you: my master is stronger than you all, since you sent him to his kingdom of darkness. Ye cannot stop the breath of a spirit, though you had a score of executioners at your beck. Lay hands upon me who dare!

FATHERINGHAM. Nobody will do you any violence, Dame; but you will quietly retire with these two friends of yours [*motioning significantly to two Soldiers, who advance and take charge of her.*] Nay; make no resistance: look steadfastly in my face, and you will plainly perceive that you must go.

[*Fixes his eyes upon her sternly, while she suffers herself to be led off.*]

OFFICER. Now, Mr. Sheriff, release your prisoners, since the laws against

witchcraft are abrogated¹³⁵.

SHERIFF. I do it most gladly. Would you had authority to command the release of all my prisoners.

OFFICER. It is only those condemned for witchcraft, whose enlargement I have authority to command.

MURREY. [*Stepping sternly from the opposite side of the Stage, and fronting Fotheringham closely.*] But there is a prisoner condemned for murder whom thou, James Fotheringham, knowest to be innocent, and therefore thou art by nature authorised, yea, compelled, to demand his release, — I mean, the reversion of his sentence.

FATHERINGHAM. [*Starting back.*] Murrey of Torwood in the land of the living!

MURREY. No thanks to thee that I am so! To desert me, and leave the country too, circumstanced as thou knewest me to be, — the only witness of that fatal quarrel, — was it the act of a friend, of a Christian, of a man?

FATHERINGHAM. No, neither of a Christian, nor a heathen, had it been a voluntary act. But you were not yet in custody, when I left the country, with no intention of going further than the southern coast of Ireland, to visit a dying relation.

MURREY. In Ireland all these years?

FATHERINGHAM. Be not so hasty. That coast I never reached: a violent storm drove our vessel out to sea, where she was boarded and captured by a pirate. My varied tale, dear Murrey, you shall hear on a fitter occasion. Thank God that I am now here! and have this day accompanied my friend [*pointing to the Officer*] on his public errand, still in time to save thee. For hearing, on my return to England, some weeks ago, thy sad story, how thou hadst been condemned, hadst made thy escape from prison, how thy dead body was found in a pit, and interred, — I was in no hurry to proceed northwards, as the justification of thy memory could not be disappointed.

¹³⁴ A city in Scotland situated at the mouth of the River Ness.

¹³⁵ Repealed.

MURREY. Thou shouldst not have suffered even my memory to rest under such imputation, — no, not an hour.

Watch [Fatheringham](#) scene.

VIOLET. Dear father, be not so stern when deliverance, — a blessed deliverance, — is sent to thee. See; there is a tear in his eye. It was not want of friendship that detained him.

FATHERINGHAM. I thank thee, sweet lady, for taking my part. It was not want of friendship that detained me; though Murrey has always been so hasty and ardent, and I so deliberate and procrastinating, it is wonderful we should ever have been friends.

DUNGARREN. No, not wonderful: though slow yourself, you loved him, perhaps, for his ardour.

FATHERINGHAM. Yes, young man, you are right. But how was it that he loved me? if, indeed, he ever loved me. Perhaps he never did.

MURREY. [*Rushing into his arms.*] I did — I do — and will ever love thee, wert thou as slow and inert as a beetle.

DUNGARREN. Now ye are friends, and this terrible tempest has past over us! May such scenes as we have this day witnessed never again disgrace a free and a Christian land!

[*A murmur amongst the Crowd.*]

SHERIFF. Good people, be pacified; and instead of the burning of a witch, ye shall have six hogsheads of ale set abroach at the cross, to drink the health of Violet Murrey, and a grand funeral into the bargain.

DUNGARREN. Forbear, Sheriff: the body of this unhappy lady is no subject for pageantry. She shall be interred with decent privacy; and those who have felt the tyranny of uncontrolled passions will think, with conscious awe, of her end.

[*The Curtain drops.*]

Back matter

THE TRAGEDY ON WITCHCRAFT

The subject of this drama was first suggested to me by reading that very curious and original scene in the “Bride of Lammermuir,” when the old women, after the division of largess given at a funeral, are so dissatisfied with their share of it, and wonder that the devil, who helps other wicked people willing to serve him, has never bestowed any power or benefits upon them. It appeared to me that the gifted author had come within one step of accounting for a very extraordinary circumstance, frequently recorded in trials for the crime of witchcraft, —the accused themselves acknowledging the crime, and their having had actual intercourse with Satan and other wicked spirits. This was a confession that was sure to be followed by a cruel death, and the conjectures produced to account for it have never been satisfactory. It has been supposed that, previously to their trial, from cruel treatment and misery of every kind, they desired to have an end put to their wretched existence, even at the stake. But this is surely not very probable; for, if a fair trial by unprejudiced judges acquitted them of the crime, —a circumstance not likely to happen, —it was still in their power to get rid of life in the first river or pond deep enough to drown them, or by some other means less dreadful than fire and faggot. Neither can it be supposed that such confessions, at least all of them, were made in a state of delirium. It is more reasonable to suppose that some of those unhappy creatures, from the state of their minds, and from real circumstances leading to it, actually did believe themselves to have had intercourse with the Evil One, consequently to be witches; and the design of the play is to illustrate this curious condition of nature. Soon after the publication of that powerful and pathetic novel, I mentioned my thoughts upon the subject to Sir W. Scott, and urged him to pursue the new path he had just entered into. That I was unsuccessful in my suit, and failed to persuade him to undertake the subject, all his warm admirers — and who are not? — must regret, — a regret that will not be diminished by the perusal of the Tragedy on Witchcraft. The language made use of, both as regards the lower and higher characters, is pretty nearly that which prevailed in the West of Scotland about the period assigned to the event, or at least soon after it; and that the principal witch spoke differently from the other two, is rendered probable from her being a stranger, and her rank in life unknown. Even in those days the well-educated classes were

distinguished from their neighbours on the south side of the Tweed, by their accent and pronunciation, rather than any actual difference of words.

The story is entirely imaginary, one circumstance excepted, viz. the piece rent from the gown of the supposed witch, produced in court as a proof that she had actually been present, though invisible, in the chamber of the tormented patient, — a real circumstance, mentioned, I believe, in one of the trials for witchcraft, though I forget where.