

ples, and that the passion of her soul, as of his, was a tender, deep-lying faith towards God, which could exist independently of outward symbols and ceremonies. But unlike others of his school he was happy too to notice and encourage friendly relations between Lady Maxwell and his daughter, since he recognised the sincere and loving spirit of the old lady beneath her superstitions, and knew very well that her friendship would do for the girl what his own love could not.

The other passion of Isabel's life at present lay in her brother Anthony, who was about three years younger than herself, and who was just now more interested in his falcons and pony than in all the religious systems and human relationships in the world, except perhaps in his friendship for Hubert, who besides being three or four years older than himself, cared for the same things.

And so relations between the Hall and the Dower House were all that they should be, and the path that ran through the gardens of the one and the yew hedge and orchard of the other was almost as well trodden as if all still formed one estate.

As for the village itself, it was exceedingly difficult to gauge accurately the theological atmosphere. The Rector despaired of doing so. It was true that at Easter the entire population, except the Maxwells and their dependents, received communion in the parish church, or at least professed their willingness and intention to do so unless prevented by some accident of the preceding week ; but it was impossible to be blind to the fact that many of the old beliefs lingered on, and that there was little enthusiasm for the new system. Rumours broke out now and again that the Catholics were rising in the north ; that Elizabeth contemplated a Spanish or French marriage with a return to the old religion ; that Mary Stuart would yet come to the throne ; and with each such report there came occasionally a burst of joy in unsuspected quarters. Old Martin, for example, had been overheard, so a zealous neighbour reported, blessing Our Lady aloud for her mercies when a passing traveller had insisted that a religious league was in progress of formation between France and Spain,