

they stand in the greatest need of a priest. I am convinced that the lot of many of us will be to hide ourselves in holes and caves, that we may avoid our persecutors and succour the people. It is my firm conviction that if the priesthood stand firm and make up their minds to suffer, we shall preserve the faith of these people, let England do her worst against us."

"Father," said Lady Elizabeth, "you do not think very hopefully of our success."

The priest shook his head: "Child, a nation cannot learn in a moment how to govern itself any more than a man. A sudden opportunity has fallen in our way, a golden one, did we but know how to use it; but it has come too suddenly, we are not prepared. We are not a united body: factions and jealousies divide us, and while we dispute and discuss, the time slips on. If once the Lord Protector, as they term him, sets his foot here, we are lost—I mean for this generation at least."

"The Nuncio," said Mary, enquiringly.

"My Lord Nuncio is, as is said in Holy Writ, 'a true man,' but he understandeth not our people. Verily, we are hard to understand: hating the common foe, and yet not willing to make common cause against him; wary in many things, and yet most prudent in others; brave as a lion in actual fight, yet easily cowed by threats. Who can wonder the Nuncio is secretly perplexed, and pursues a course of action, we see to be unadvisable."

Mary now left the priest and Lady Elizabeth together for private conversation, while she went in search of the barefooted lad, who had borne sundry packets with him from the cart of such trifling articles for the Father's use, as their own poverty and the difficulty of transit had enabled them to bring.

*(To be continued.)*

### THE CURSE OF MONTROSE.

Several years have elapsed since I first visited the county of Sutherland, by far the most desolate and uninhabited district in the British Isles. Circumstances, over which the power of man had little control, have thinned its once populous glens, and driven the

hardy mountaineer to seek some more genial climate where the fertility of the soil is such as may yield a better recompense to his labor. The gentry, also, of whom there were formerly many—cadets and vassals of the ancient house of Mackay—have dwindled away. One by one, their possessions have fallen from them, and now, with a few trivial exceptions, the whole of this extensive country, its wilderness and forests, its mountains, lakes and rivers, belong to that noble family who wear the ducal coronet of Sutherland.

Few are the travellers, even at the present day, who have explored the remote wilds of this singular country. Not that any great degree of courage is required for the task, for "there be no lions in the path;" and the hand of the Highlander grasps not at the dirk so readily as it did of yore; but the refinement of modern taste leads the generality of tourists to prefer the shelter of a comfortable inn to a couch of straw or heather in a shepherd's bothy, and the shimmering variety of the flesh-pots of Egypt to a three weeks' browse upon salmon and salted ham. Moreover, stage coaches are there unknown, yet for the sportsman or the painter Sutherland has abundant charms. Every one of its lakes and rivers abounds in trout and salmon; grouse and ptarmigan swarm on the hills, and often on the top of some precipice you may descry a noble deer—a stag of ten—gazing down the valley. Then stop and look your fill. Another foot-fall, and the apparition has disappeared, silent and swift as the shadow of a passing cloud. To the painter its savage scenery affords the noblest study. Far nearer than Alps or Apennines are those materials to be found, from which Salvator Rosa drew his inspiration and his fame.

I belong rather to the class of sportsmen than to that of painters, and I have no shame in confessing that my first visit to Sutherland was made with more reference to the prospective contents of my game-bag and pannier, than my sketch-book. I had sojourned for several days amidst the dreary solitudes of Edderachylis, and was now proceeding slowly on my journey homeward, with my old white pony, the venerable Pantagruel, who had rather more than