

THE SABBATH WRECKS.

A LEGEND OF DUNBAR.

It was a beautiful Sabbath morning in the autumn of 1576: a few small clouds, tinged with red, sailed slowly through the blue heavens; the sun shone brightly, as if conscious of the glory and goodness of its Maker, diffusing around a holy stillness and tranquillity, characteristic of the day of rest; the majestic sunbeams flashed back the sunbeams, while, on the bosom, slowly glided the winged granaries of commerce; there, too, lay its islands, lying in their strength—the May, shrouded in light, appeared as a leviathan sunning its rays—and the giant Bass, covered with seaweed, rose as a proud mountain of alabaster in the midst of the waters. A thousand boats lay along the shores of Dunbar. It was a herring season, and there were many boats from the south and from the north, and boats from the coast of Holland.

Now, tidings were brought to the fishermen that an immense shoal was upon the coast; and, regardless of its being Sabbath morning, they began to prepare their thousand boats, and to go out to set their nets.—The Rev. Andrew Simpson, a man possessed of the piety and boldness of an apostle, was a minister of Dunbar; and as he went forth to the kirk to preach to his people, he beheld the unhallowed preparations of the fishermen on the beach, and he turned and went amongst them, and reproved them only for their great wickedness. But the fishermen were obdurate—the prospect of great gain was before them, and they mocked the words of the preacher. Yea, some of them came unto him, in the words of the children to the prophet—“Go up, thou bald head.” He went from boat to boat, counselling, entreating, expostulating with them, and praying for them.

“Surely,” said he, “the Lord of the Sabbath will not hold ye guiltless for this profanation of his holy day.” But, at that period, religion was but little felt or understood in the Borders, and they regarded not his words.

He went to one boat, which was the property of members of his own congregation, and there he found Agnes Crawford, the daughter of one of his elders, hanging upon

the neck of her husband, and their three children also clung around him, and they entreated him not to be guilty of breaking the Sabbath for the sake of perishing gain. But he regarded not their voice; and he kissed his wife and his children, while he laughed at their idle fears. Mr. Simpson beheld the scene with emotion, and approaching the group—“John Crawford,” he exclaimed, addressing the husband, “you may profess to mock, to laugh to scorn the words of a feeble woman, but see that they return not like a consuming fire into your bosom when hope has departed. Is not the Lord of the Sabbath the Creator of the sea as well as of the dry land? Know ye not, that ye are now braving the wrath of Him before whom the mighty ocean is a drop, and all space but a span? Will ye then glory in insulting His ordinances, and delight in profaning the day of holiness? Will ye draw down everlasting darkness on the Sabbath of your soul?—When ye were but a youth, ye have listened to the words of John Knox—the great apostle of our country—ye have trembled beneath their power, and the conviction that they carried with them, and when ye think of those convictions, and contrast them with your conduct this day, does not the word *apostate* burn in your heart? John Crawford, some of your blood have embraced the stake for the sake of the truth, and will ye profane the Sabbath which they sanctified? The Scotsman who openly glories in such a sin, forfeits his claim to the name of one, and publishes to the world that he has no part or communion with the land that gave him birth. John Crawford, hearken unto my voice, to the voice of your wife, and that of your bairns, (whose bringing up is a credit to their mother) and be not guilty of this gross sin.” But the fisherman, while he regarded not the supplications of his wife, became sulky at the words of the preacher, and springing into the boat, seized an oar, and with his comrades, began to pull from the shore.

The thousand boats put to sea, and Mr. Simpson returned sorrowful from the beach to the kirk, while Agnes Crawford and her children followed him. That day he took