

of her departure for that place, he wrote the monk the following letter in her name :—

"DEAR SWITHIN,—Your letter, which I duly received, has given me much delight. As De Morvel is gone to Ayr to attend a Shire-mote, you may come, silently and alone, to my chamber to-night at ten o'clock. I have ordered the hen that roosts next the cock, and a capon, for your supper.—Yours ever,
"BEATRIX."

The monk was right in his scapular, rocket, rosary and holy band, to go to mass, when the little page put the letter into his hand. The bell rung, but he heard it not; and he forgot to go to prayers, so proud was he that his letter should have been so favorably received. Long before the appointed time, he shaved his tonsure, and put on a shirt of the finest Holland, and dressed his person, of which he was very vain, as he thought meet to be seen by so fine a lady. When the convent lights were out, he stole away to her chamber, and, without light of either coal or candle, was quietly handed in—not by the lady, as he had first supposed, but by Sygtryg, De Morvel's Norwegian henchman, who, with a sarcastic grin, ere he had time to call for help, threw the string of a bugle horn round his neck, laid him on the ground with his face downwards, and held him in that position, by kneeling on his back, and drawing with all his might the cord, till he was strangled to death.

Scenes of slaughter had been familiar to De Morvel from the days of his boyhood, and he often boasted of the part he had individually acted in the destruction of human life, but he seemed quite appalled at having countenanced the assassination of a defenceless monk. He knew that a layman, by the ecclesiastical law, who dared even to strike a person in holy orders, forfeited both life and lands, and he soon became reconciled to the fate which he supposed inevitably awaited him; but, that his faithful Sygtryg might not suffer for a crime of which, although he was the chief actor, had thereby neither avarice nor revenge to satisfy, he thus addressed him;—"My faithful Norman, as you have risked your life in my unfortunate quarrel, you must speedily mount my fleetest steed and flee into England, to save yourself from the dreadful penalty of the law which you have now incurred. You must pass through the town of Ayr; there you will see the prison-house where I will voluntarily take up my abode before the sun sinks down again behind the rocky height of dark Ben-Goil, in order to wait the doom I now deserve."

The Norwegian, not having such a high sense of honor as his master, and being of a morose, sa-

vage disposition, thus chided him :—"Ah! why should a Baron, whose courage has been so often tried, and who has never yet been beaten by any foe—on whose heel even the king himself has buckled a golden spur on the battle-ground—in whose defence, at the sound of a bugle, Carrick, Kyle, and Cunningham would rise *en masse*, be so alarmed at seeing the corpse of an unworthy member of the Church choked by chance? No person is aware of what has happened here—I will instantly take the corpse back into the priory, and place him on his knees at the altar; it was his duty to perform vespers there: at midnight, his opponent, Sir Roland of Galloway, will go to succeed him, and must remain there, in pious contemplation till he perform matins at sunrise."

To such plausible propositions De Morvel not only assented, but readily agreed to assist in carrying the same into effect.

The castle and monastery were separated by a high wall; but Sygtryg, by the help of a ladder, with the corpse upon his back, soon reached the top—then, lifting the ladder over to the opposite side, descended into the yard of the cloisters, entered the Church, and placed the corpse of the unfortunate Swithin in a devotional position before the altar.

Lest some wakerife priest might hear the tread of the henchman, and thereby discover the whole affair, De Morvel ascended the winding stair that led to the warder's tower, and there listened through the loopholes most attentively, without being able to discover the least sound, except that made by his servant, whom, by the dim light of the moon, he saw leave the cloister, reascend the ladder, and leap from the top of the wall into the court of the castle—and, supposing all to be then right, they both retired to bed.

It was the allottery of Sir Roland, a priest of the same convent, who had been long at variance with Swithin, to succeed him in the performance of the altar duty; each priest in rotation having, according to the rules of the monastery, to remain in the sanctuary alone from sunset till second watch, and his successor from midnight till the morning service, or matins, was performed. As he advanced slowly towards the holy place, by the dim light of the moon that shone faintly through the small panes of a long Gothic window, he saw a person, but not in sacred vestments, leaning against the altar, which was such a very unusual sight at any time, but more particularly at midnight, that some time elapsed before he could summon up courage either to advance a single step, or give the usual salutation of "Brother, I relieve thee!" No answer being made to