

THE PROPHECY.

BY ROBERT HAMILTON.

Those who have visited Brussels and beheld the interior of the Carthusian monastery of that city, may remember, that above the high altar is placed a beautiful Madonna bearing the name of Paul Wouverman, who, it is said, finished his days as a monk of the Carthusian order. The circumstances connected with the picture are singular, and by both French and German writers have been handled with considerable success; I believe, however, it has never appeared in an English dress, and in such I now take the liberty to present it to thee, gentle reader.

In a little chamber, in an old Dutch mansion in the suburbs of Harlem, one evening in the year sixteen hundred and eighty-four, an elderly man was busily employed in finishing a picture, which represented the exterior of a monastery, before which was seen a huntsman, mounted on a white horse and a falcon with its hood and bells perched upon his arm, while, by his side stood a monk apparently pointing out the path he should pursue. The old painter suddenly stopped in his occupation, and falling back into his chair, as from extreme exhaustion, abandoned himself to the most melancholy reflections. Philip Wouverman, for that was the artist's name, had spent a long and virtuous life in the pursuit of his art, and like many others, had met with only neglect and opposition. He now felt that the close of his life was at hand, and almost regarded the picture he had just finished, as the last that should ever come from his pencil. At this moment, the door of his studio opened, and his only son, Paul, stood before him, who had just returned from Brussels, whither he had been sent by his father to dispose of some of his pictures.

"Ah! my boy, so soon returned," exclaimed the old man. "What success?"

"Bad! very bad!" replied Paul, shaking his head and drawing from his breast a small leathern bag, which he placed in his father's hand. "Only fifty stubers for the two."

The old man sighed heavily, and giving his pallet and pencils to his son, said, "Heaven's will be done!"

"I tried everywhere," continued Paul, "to dispose of them to the best advantage, but was con-

tinually repulsed with the reply, 'that modern productions are of little value.'"

"Ah!" said Philip, "if my pictures had borne the name of Bergham or Potter, they would have sold to six times the advantage," and he let his head drop upon his breast.

"It is true, my father, and yet many who are first rate connoisseurs say that these painters knew nothing of the structure of animals, that the most of their designs are faulty in the extreme, while they hesitate not to assert, that yours are in every respect superior—teeming with the reality of life. But heed not, posterity will certainly render you justice."

"Posterity!" cried Philip, bitterly. "Think you that praise will make me sleep more softly in my tomb?"

Paul's eye fell upon the picture on which his father had been occupied, he started with surprise, exclaiming, "What, the monastery of Brussels, and that monk—it is very singular—" and he stood lost in the intensity of his feelings.

"Why this astonishment, my son?" inquired old Wouverman, "does it not please you?"

"Yes, my father, yes, but such a group I saw last night in my dream. The monk that you have there portrayed, is the exact resemblance to one with whom, in my sleep, I held converse."

"Indeed," said Philip, "and what was that converse, Paul?"

"He bade me welcome to the monastery of Brussels. I had come even as that hunter, who is now standing there, to renounce the world and take the rosary and cowl."

Would to Heaven you had, my son, in reality, for in this world there is nothing but sorrow and despair."

"That monk," continued Paul, "has left an ineffaceable remembrance on my memory. How beautifully you have expressed your design. The emaciated and lengthened features of a penitent without sadness, without a trace of crime or of repentance, while over all there reigns a calm and holy tranquility. It is a design, my father, enough to make one long for the peace that there appears to be found."

"True, very true," said the old man with a sigh. "and as in my pilgrimage through life I have