

THE DOVE AND THE RUIN.

IN an excursion in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, the writer had occasion to pass an old ruined tower, which, in former days, was the seat of one who gained unenviable distinction as a ready and unscrupulous tool in the persecution of the Scottish Covenanters. On entering the doorway to examine the ruin, a dove was observed nestling near the roof. The place, and the well-known emblematic character of this favourite of the groves, suggested the poem.

[The tower mentioned is understood to be the tower of Binns, in Linlithgowshire, once the residence of General Dalziel, a man of such evil repute in the days of the great persecution.]

THE DOVE AND THE RUIN.

TRAVELLER.

O DOVE! that charrest the stream and grove, is this fit haunt
for thee?

The walls are blackening into dust, the chambers foul to see :
No cowslip peeps beneath the bush, no lark salutes the morn ;
Spring quickens not the plane tree's leaf, nor swells the budding
thorn.

Oh, hie thee to the Almond banks, where beeches stately grow ;
For there thy wing may sweetly rest, thy murmurs sweetly flow.
This spot is waste and desolate, and leaf and blade are sear ;
Then why, O tender, warbling dove! why art thou resting here ?

DOVE.

Slight no spot in this beautiful earth,
Crumbling tower, or desert wild ;
For Nature, which hath given them birth,
Bestows fit dower on every child.
Love makes lovely all she looks on,
And flow'rets spring where she glides along ;
Ruins smile and deserts blossom,
And branchless thickets fill with song.

From confusion order wakes,
After midnight morning breaks :
This spot is drear, the leaves all sear,
Yet I, the Bird of Love, am here.

TRAVELLER.

The curse of rapine stamps decay on buttress, arch, and wall,
The earth around is barrenness, whereon no dews may fall ;
The spoiler of the saints is spoiled, his heritage laid bare,
And all is blackness now where he, the bloodhound, had his lair.
The blight may fail to strip the flower, the lightning lose its aim,
But vengeance from the Lord shall blast the persecutor's name.
This spot is waste and desolate, and leaf and blade are sear ;
Then why, O gentle-hearted dove ! why art thou resting here ?

DOVE.

When for the crown and the covenant
Scotland's faithful remnant stood,
And Antichrist did hotly pant
To glut his maw in the elect's blood,
O'er the moorland tracked by foemen,
In torturing cell, on gallows tree,
Peace hung o'er them, heaven before them
And death but gave them victory.
When the bloodhound held this den,
Weakest things had strengthening then !

This spot is drear, the leaves all sear,
 Yet I, the Bird of Peace, am here!

TRAVELLER.

But what avails heroic strife? the crown of glory won?
 The father's creed is ridiculed by his degenerate son;
 The burning martyr-words of faith are laughed at with disdain,
 He sealed the covenant with his blood, his blood is shed in vain,
 To endless struggles, baffled hopes, our weary lot is fixed;
 The victory that one age proclaims is still undone the next;
 And prostrate in inglorious dust our aspirations lie;
 'Tis better that we eat and drink, to-morrow we must die!

DOVE.

If thou hadst faith like a mustard-seed,
 Couldst thou tremble thus aghast?
 The clouds may shift, but the sun shines through,
 And tempests rage, but the earth stands fast.
 Symbols wane, the truths rekindle
 With fuel fresh and wider spread:
 Old oppressions stir; but valour,
 By ages stronger, strikes them dead.
 Forward, forward rolls the war!
 Triumphs beckon from afar!
 This spot is drear, the leaves all sear,
 Yet I, the Bird of Faith, am here.