

sort had given her, to present the prize with her own fair hand, to the successful competitor.

The gay cavalcade passed along, followed by the admiring looks and joyous greetings of the good citizens, who always fond of show, enjoyed, particularly during this peaceful reign, any spectacle that wore the panoply of war. The ground was soon reached, where the lists had been prepared; and an elevated seat, covered with crimson cloth, had been erected for the king, that he might enjoy without fatigue, all that passed before him. When he was seated, the trumpets sent forth their martial sound; the challenge was given, and a dozen knights on either side, leaping the frail barrier, coursed round and round a few times, as if to try their horses' power, and then returned to their stands, waiting the signal for the onset. And bravely did they meet the first encounter, one only being unhorsed, and then again the charge was eagerly renewed. Then followed single matches, young Lord Suffolk and Sir George Goring leading the way, while the king watched the strife with intense and breathless interest. Seeing that Suffolk was the most successful competitor, he sprang hastily up, crying out:

"For God's sake! give me a lance and shield, and I will myself unhorse you lord, lest he pride himself too much upon his success!"

Carre, who had watched all that passed, waited not even for a look from Lord Hay, but striking the spurs into his horse, dashed towards the king, when the noble steed, accustomed only to the rein, plunged forward and threw his unguarded rider to the ground. Burning with vexation, Carre attempted to rise, hoping still to present the lance to his sovereign; but it was in vain that he struggled, the fall had broken his leg, and he could not even move.

"Curse the beast!" murmured Hay, as he sprang forward to assist his unlucky protégé; "thou hast married the prettiest fortune ever woven by the Fates!"

But how short-sighted and mistaken was the good lord; for this accident, which he looked upon as the ruin of his young friend's hopes, led to their highest consummation, as since, in the words of a historian of those times, "James approached him with pity and concern, love and affection arose on the sight of his beauty and tender years, and the prince ordered him to be carried to the palace and carefully attended; and he himself, after the tilting was over, paid him a visit, and the simplicity of the boy finished the conquest begun by his exterior graces."

James, with his usual pedantry and pride of intellect, inquired into the young man's education, and finding it very imperfect, and that he

was entirely ignorant of *Latin*, he determined to lay aside his sceptre, and take up the birch, or in other words, to assume the office of teacher. pleasing himself with the idea that by his lessons and instructions, he might, in a short time, render this uneducated youth equal in knowledge to his wisest ministers.

The young man, stimulated by the favours he was receiving, and fully sensible of the benefit he should derive by gratifying the whim of his royal master, applied himself so studiously to his books that he soon made great advancement. The quiet of his sick room was favourable to study, and he could not regret the weeks of his confinement when he found that each day was endearing him more and more to the king. He had feared that lameness would be the consequence of his broken limb; but the surgeons of that time were skillful, and they assured him that cure alone was necessary to his perfect restoration.

How often during these weeks of his confinement did thoughts of his dear Alice come over him like the sweetness of balmy odours, exhaled by the dews of evening! He recalled her beauty, her delicacy, her devotion to himself; and he blessed his good fortune, which would soon enable him to make her his own, and place her in a sphere she seemed fitted to adorn.

The king had already knighted him, and created him Viscount Rochester, with a fortune sufficient to support the title; indeed his royal patron seemed never weary of heaping favours upon him; each day conferred upon him some new honour, and the young knight's heart was filled with grateful love to his too indulgent master.

He had written to his father and to Alice, telling them of his brilliant prospects; and he longed to receive their congratulations. At last they came; a letter from Alice, sweet and gentle as herself, but full of sadness—"Would, dearest Robert," it said, "I could win you to forsake the path which seems to you so full of hope and brightness; I feel that you are on the brink of a precipice, and I have not power to hold you back; believe me the flowers you are gathering are poisonous, and though you may resist their influence for a time, the effect at last is certain. I fear me, our day-dream of happiness is over—you do not think this, but I feel that our trusting spot, which I visit every day, will never behold us together again."

When he read these sad words, the young viscount almost wished he could recall the last few weeks, and be once more the simple Scottish lad, wandering with his own Alice among the green hills of Teviotdale. But then came the whisperings of ambition and gratified vanity, and the