

ing had not emitted a sound and roused her. She rose reluctantly, dragged herself to the great cupboard under the stairs, and, having lighted a rushlight at the dying flame, put out the lamp and refilled it.

She was about to re-light it, and had taken the rushlight in her hand for the purpose, when she heard through the shuttered windows and the barred door a growing clamour; the tramp of heavy feet, the hum of many voices, the buzz of a crowd that, almost as soon as she awoke to its near presence, came to a stand before the house. The tumult of voices raised all at once in different keys did not entirely drown the clash of arms; and while she stood, sullenly regarding the door, and resigned to the inevitable, whatever it might be, thin shafts of light pierced the shutters and stabbed the gloom about her.

With that a hail-storm of knocks fell on the door and on the shutters. A dozen voices cried, "Open! Open!" The jangle of a halberd as its bearer let the butt drop heavily on the stone steps added force to the summons.

Anne's first impulse was to retreat upstairs, and leave them to do their worst. Her next—she was in a state of collapse in which resistance seemed useless—was to open. She moved to the door, and with cold hands removed the huge bars and let down the chain. It was only when she had done so much, when it remained only to unlock, that she wavered; that she trembled to think on what the crowd might be bent, and what might be her fate at their hands. She paused then, with her fingers on the key; but not for long. She remembered that, before she descended, she had heard neither shot nor cry. Resistance therefore had ceased, and that of a single house, held by two helpless women, could avail nothing, could but excite to fury and reprisals.

She turned the key and opened. The lights dazzled