

beyond the high
I have already
rather to the block,
his wishes within
I know, had mine
scapes: I am well-
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more.'

with Dan Cupid to

'arney?' said the

y, 'be not angry
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id the earl; 'I
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id Varney, 'wo
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'no more of

this. I said not that the step, which my own ease and comfort would urge me to, was to be taken hastily, or without due consideration to the public safety. Bear witness to me, Varney: I subdue my wishes of retirement, not because I am moved by the call of private ambition, but that I may preserve the position in which I may best serve my country at the hour of need.—Order our horses presently.—I will wear, as formerly, one of the livery cloaks, and ride before the portmanteau.—Thou shalt be master for the day, Varney—neglect nothing that can blind suspicion. We will to horse ere men are stirring. I will but take leave of my lady, and be ready. I impose a restraint on my own poor heart, and wound one yet more dear to me; but the patriot must subdue the husband.'

Having said this in a melancholy but firm accent, he left the dressing apartment.

'I am glad thou art gone,' thought Varney, 'or, practised as I am in the follies of mankind, I had laughed in the very face of thee! Thou mayest tire as thou wilt of thy new bauble, thy pretty piece of painted Eve's flesh there, I will not be thy hindrance. But of thine old bauble, ambition, thou shalt not tire, for, as you climb the hill, my lord, you must drag Richard Varney up with you; and if he can urge you to the ascent he means to profit by, believe me he will spare neither whip nor spur.—And for you, my pretty lady, that would be countess outright, you were best not thwart my courses, lest you are called to an old reckoning on a new score. "Thou shalt be master," did he say!—By my faith, he may find that he spoke truer than he is aware of.—And thus he who, in the estimation of so many wise-judging men, can match Burleigh and Walsingham in policy, and Sussex in war, becomes pupil to his own menial; and all for a hazel eye and a little cunning red and white—and so falls ambition. And yet if the charms of mortal woman could excuse a man's politic pate for becoming bewildered, my lord had the excuse at his right hand on this blessed evening that has last passed over us. Well—let things roll as they may, he shall make me great, or I will make myself happy; and for that softer piece of creation, if she speak not out her interview with Tressilian, as well I think she dare not, she also must traffic with me for concealment and mutual support in spite of all this scorn.—I must to the stables.—Well, my lord, I order your retinue now; the time may soon come that my master of the horse shall order mine own. What was Thomas Cromwell but a smith's son? and he died my lord—on a scaffold, doubtless, but that, too, was in character.—And what was Ralph Sadler but the clerk of Cromwell? and he has gazed eighteen fair lordships,—*rad!* I know my steerage as well as they.'

So saying, he left the apartment.

In the meanwhile, the earl had re-entered the bedchamber, bent on taking a hasty farewell of the lovely countess, and scarce daring to trust himself in private with her, to hear requests again urged, which he found it difficult to parry, yet which his recent conversation with his master of horse had determined him not to grant.

He found her in a white cymar of silk lined

with furs, her little feet unstockinged and hastily thrust into slippers; her unbraided hair escaping from under her midnight coil, with little array but her own loveliness, rather augmented than diminished by the grief which she felt at the approaching moment of separation.

'Now, God be with thee, my dearest and loveliest!' said the earl, scarce tearing himself from her embrace, yet again returning to fold her again and again in his arms, and again bidding farewell, and again returning to kiss and bid adieu once more.

'The sun is on the verge of the blue horizon—I dare not stay. Ere this I should have been ten miles from hence.'

Such were the words with which at length he strove to cut short their parting interview.

'You will not grant my request, then?' said the countess. 'Ah, false knight! did ever lady, with bare foot in slipper, seek boon of a brave knight, yet return with denial?'

'Anything, Amy, anything thou canst ask I will grant,' answered the earl—'always excepting,' he said, 'that which might ruin us both.'

'Nay,' said the countess, 'I urge not my wish to be acknowledged in the character which would make me the envy of England—as the wife, that is, of my brave and noble lord, the first as the most fondly beloved of English nobles. Let me but share the secret with my dear father! Let me but end his misery on my unworthy account—they say he is ill, the good old kind-hearted man.'

'They say?' asked the earl hastily; 'who says? Did not Varney convey to Sir Hugh all we dare at present tell him concerning your happiness and welfare? and has he not told you that the good old knight was following, with good heart and health, his favourite and wonted exercise? Who has dared put other thoughts into your head?'

'O, no one, my lord, no one!' said the countess, something alarmed at the tone in which the question was put; 'but yet, my lord, I would fain be assured by mine own eyesight that my father is well.'

'Be contented, Amy—thou canst not now have communication with thy father or his house. Were it not a deep course of policy to commit no secret unnecessarily to the custody of more than must needs be, it were sufficient reason for secrecy, that yonder Cornish man, yonder Trevanion, or Tressilian, or whatever his name is, haunts the old knight's house, and must necessarily know whatever is communicated there.'

'My lord,' answered the countess, 'I do not think it so. My father has been long noted a worthy and honourable man; and for Tressilian, if we can pardon ourselves the ill we have wrought him, I will wager the coronet I am to share with you one day, that he is incapable of returning injury for injury.'

'I will not trust him, however, Amy,' said her husband; 'by my honour, I will not trust him. I would rather the foul fiend intermingle in our secret than this Tressilian!'

'And why, my lord?' said the countess, though she shuddered slightly at the tone of determination in which he spoke; 'let me but know why you think thus hardly of Tressilian?'