

"Ay!" said Frank, "but do not bid me not to thank you. You have preserved my heart's treasure. Whether I shall ever have the right to call her so, Heaven only knows; but such she is. And now your Ladyship may have some faint idea of my gratitude."

He wished her farewell, and was gone. Lady d'Aubigny looked after him from her window, as he crossed the quadrangle, and thought to herself that a more noble, affectionate, or personable gentleman had never given his love unrequited.

"It must not be so," she said to herself. "She must forget the villain Corbet, and learn to value this true heart that lies at her feet."

Dorothy gained ground, as her friend had promised, day by day, and was soon strong enough to walk about the quadrangle for a short time in the sunshine, and to receive the friends who had enquired for her so constantly. Lady d'Aubigny would not take her beyond the peaceful precincts of St. Anne's; and Dorothy had no wish to go; the fear of another meeting with Henry Corbet was enough to limit her wishes and movements. But the noblest cavaliers and the gentlest ladies in Oxford were Lady d'Aubigny's friends; such people as the Duke and Duchess of Richmond, and the gallant young Lord Newbury, came to her little evening assemblies, and did their utmost, by courtesy and kindness, to make Dorothy forget her lonely state. She was homeless, indeed, but very far from friendless; and there was one in Oxford who would have laid down his life willingly, rather than that any harm should come to her.

CHAPTER XIV.

AN EVENING AT ST. ANNE'S.

"O star of strength! I see thee stand
And smile upon my pain;
Thou becomest with thy mailed hand,
And I am strong again."

"Within my breast there is no light,
But the cold light of stars,
I give the first watch of the night
To the red planet Mars."

Longfellow.

THE largest and gayest of Lady d'Aubigny's assemblies, while Dorothy was with

her, was made remarkable by the presence of King Charles. He came among the guests dressed plainly in black velvet, like any other gentleman. Dorothy stood in a corner, her heart full of loyal enthusiasm, watching the noble face that Vandyck loved to paint, as its grave lines relaxed into pleasant smiles, and longing to kiss the King's hand, and tell him how heartily she and Marmaduke loved his cause. She did not expect him to notice her, surrounded as he was by his friends, and was quite happy watching him, as he talked to the other ladies, without any idea, as she thought, of the faithful heart that was looking at him through Dorothy Lyne's eyes. Presently, the handsomest cavalier in the room, who had watched every change in her face, came up to her in her quiet corner.

"His Majesty has been asking for you, dear cousin," he said in a low tone. "Lady d'Aubigny is about to present you to him."

"His Majesty is very good," said Dorothy, colouring with pleasure. "What can he know of me? Nay, stay beside me, Frank! I am not used to courts, and I do not know their ways. Shall I kiss His Majesty's hand?"

"If he allows it," said Frank, smiling.

He stood by, silent, while King Charles came up with his hostess to Dorothy. The whole room was looking at her, but she had eyes only for the King; and Frank, as he gazed at the small slight figure in its simple dress, with the bright expressive face, so true an index to her mind, compared her with the shining ladies all round, and once more crowned her queen of all his thoughts.

He heard, as in a dream, the King's words of greeting,—courteous, sympathetic, and kind; saw Dorothy's low reverence, and saw Charles take her hand in his, and stooping forward, just touch her forehead with his lips. "Your gallant brother," "your adventurous journey," "your sad indisposition," the King was saying everything that was most kind and gratifying, in the grave, gentle manner that his friends loved; but Frank Audley had a very indistinct idea of the conversation. When King Charles turned and spoke to him, he