

was afterwards rewarded by the chancellorship and elevated to the peerage!

It was while these dreadful scenes were enacting at Winchester, that a non-conformist minister named Hickes, together with his friend Nelthorpe, sought refuge at Moyles Court. Of their participation in Monmouth's rebellion, Lady Alice Lisle was utterly ignorant. The persecutions, which all the too scrupulous clergy had undergone from the myrmidons of the bigoted monarch, were well known to her, and it was in their ecclesiastic character that she had received the jaded and wayworn men, without entertaining the slightest suspicion that they had been numbered in the list of traitors. With the frank hospitality of her generous nature, she supplied their wants, and gave them an asylum in her house, using no attempt at concealment, except such as the safety of her guests required. But the unfortunate fugitives had been watched, and a military party was soon upon their track. They were traced to Moyles Court, and the Lady Alice not only saw her guests borne off to certain death, but also found herself a prisoner in the hands of the soldiers. The infamous Jeffreys was still holding what has been aptly termed, "The bloody Assize," and before him she was brought on a charge of having aided and abetted traitors.

On the 27th of August, 1685, the loyal and virtuous Lady Alice was confronted with her accusers, and never was there a more outrageous mockery of justice. Cloaking his violence and scurrility under a pretended zeal for truth, and mingling his vituperations with the most solemn appeals to Heaven, Jeffreys heaped every species of indignity on the grey head of the noble and excellent woman. Lady Lisle employed no counsel; she trusted to her own truthfulness and innocence, and her only defence was a simple, artless statement of facts. She calmly repelled the charge of treason, by pointing to the example of her son, whose loyalty, instilled in him from infancy, had led him to take up arms for the king in the recent revolt; while the dignified manner in which she proved the improbability of her risking the life of all most dear to her by harboring known traitors, won the admiration of all who listened to her defence. "I am not pleading for my life," said the noble woman; "I am not seeking to ward off the blow, which, even if now withheld, must soon fall upon my head, and lay me in the dust. Think you, that she who has counted three-score and ten years—years, marked by loneliness and sorrow; years, whose

record has been traced upon my heart in actors far deeper than those upon my brow—think you, she can find sufficient joy in making its continuance worth the words—have now been wasted upon it? No, my friends, the day when I shall be called to lay aside my burden of existence will be one of joyful not of fearful anticipation. But let me rest the traitor's death. Let not her, whose life has been a sacrifice to loyalty, go down to the grave with a branded and a blighted name.

But Jeffreys was drunk with blood and rage. He charged the jury in so partial a manner that no one could doubt his wishes, yet so convinced were all of the lady's innocence, that a unanimous verdict of acquittal was rendered. Enraged at this opposition to his will, Jeffreys compelled them to reconsider the matter. At length, intimidated by his ferocity, they returned a verdict of guilty. Then did the wretch turn a verdict of cruelty. On the following morning, he condemned the Lady Alice to be *burned alive*; allowing only six hours between the sentence and its execution.

The aged lady listened with calmness to her frightful doom, and however nature must have shrunk from the fiery trial, she gave no evidence of weakness in her placid deportment. But the clergy of Winchester interceded and remonstrated until the tiger-hearted judge was compelled to grant a few days' reprieve. The royalists, who had so long found in her a firm friend, seized the opportunity to sue from the king her pardon. The Earl of Pembroke knelt to the obdurate monarch, and implored him, with tears, to spare the life of a venerable and excellent woman. He recalled the events of her blameless life, the principles which her husband's principles had taught her, her devotion to the cause of the Stuarts, her solemn commemoration of the anniversary of the martyr's death, and the loyal education she had bestowed upon her children. He dwelt in moving terms the disgrace that would fall upon the court, if the grey head of so aged and noble a person were branded with unmerited dishonour; but the bigoted and cruel monarch coldly replied that "he had placed his word to Jeffreys *not to pardon her*." His only mercy extended in return for the entreaties and solicitations of her many friends, was the commutation of her sentence from burning to beheading.

On the 2d of September, the Lady Alice, who had then just attained her seventieth birthday, was brought to the scaffold. Before she laid her head upon the fatal block, she handed