

being disgusted with his pride and impiety, loaded him daily with fresh favours, till, as was said of him by the Archbishop of Canterbury, "he became drunk with prosperity," and fell from his high pinnacle of greatness, to the lowest and most abject depths of misery and disgrace.

The Duke De Longueville, in whose honour the present banquet was designed, was amazed at the pomp and splendour that surrounded him, and in the enjoyment of a scene so consonant to the taste of a gay and brilliant Frenchman, forgot for a time his anxiety to discover, amid the motley crowd, the beautiful princess, who was so shortly to become his queen. But this object was not long absent from his mind, and when among those whose features were not concealed beneath a mask, his search was vain; he strove, by her voice and figure, to identify her among the disguised groups who thronged the apartments. He sought her in the game of mumchance, then a favourite pastime of the court, and in the various sports and mummings, as they were termed, which diversified the pageants of the evening. But secure in her simple disguise, which Henry had promised not to betray, Mary remained silent and unsuspected amidst the gay and ever shifting crowd around her. To watch the noble form of Suffolk, as he roved listlessly through the apartments, to mark his abstracted air, and sigh, as she thought that even then, his spirit was on the wing to the mistress of his heart, formed her only occupation, till even this was taken from her by the sudden disappearance of the duke.

Wearied by the unceasing gaiety around her, dazzled by the blaze of a thousand lights, and faint with the voluptuous air of the perfumed halls, she stole silently through an open door upon a balcony that overhung the Thames. It was a moment of unexpected happiness and freedom. She had escaped from sights and sounds that palled upon her aching senses, from the dread of observation, and the necessity of preserving a composure, she was far from feeling, and stood alone beneath the ample canopy of heaven, brilliant with its host of stars, and the full orbed and unclouded glory of its midnight moon. She drew off her mask to inhale the pure night breeze, so delicious after the heated and artificial atmosphere she had been so long respiring, and advancing to the extremity of the balcony, leaned over the railing in silent thought. All nature seemed at peace, and the tranquil waters reflected in unbroken beauty the moonlit heavens, and the dark shadows of the trees that fringed their banks; and as she gazed upon their smooth unruffled surface, presenting such a contrast, to her agitated mind, the thought of what a quiet resting place there was beneath those tranquil waves, arose for an instant in her heart. But quickly was the fearful suggestion hushed by the voice of conscience and religion, though

tears gushed from her eyes, at the recollection of her fearful doom and early desolation, and sinking on a seat, she buried her face in her hands and wept. An approaching footstep startled her—she looked up, and the graceful figure of Suffolk, his brow bared and his arms folded, with an air of deep humility on his breast, stood beside her. Confused and indignant at what she deemed a bold and intentional intrusion on her privacy, Mary arose, and with a haughty glance would have passed without addressing him—but with an entreating air he cast himself before her.

"Your highness is displeased," he said; "yet leave me not in anger. You deem perchance that I have forced myself on your retirement, purposely to wrest from you the hearing which you have so long denied to my importunate desires. But fortune has at length befriended me. I stood in the shade of yonder pillar, when you came upon the balcony, and was in the act of retiring when you withdrew your mask, and disclosed the features of her whom, still with baffled hope, I had been seeking through the evening. Then, indeed, I could not resolve to depart without addressing you; I could not permit this long wished for opportunity to pass, without humbly suing for a return of that favor which has been so long alienated from me, and without which my existence is as dark and dreary as would be that of the natural world, without the revivifying and grateful influence of the sun."

His rapid and impassioned utterance almost overthrew the pride and coldness of Mary, but she struggled for composure, and replied calmly and haughtily:

"My lord, this is hardly a time or place fitting the purpose of private conversation—but yet I will take upon me to say that you accuse me wrongfully of that which was a thing of your own choosing, since it was you who voluntarily withdrew from my favour, when it was shining more fully upon you than was perhaps becoming in the sister of your sovereign to permit."

Suffolk bent low to this reply, and, though touched by the haughty tone in which it was uttered, answered with the most submissive mildness:

"Your highness does right, perhaps, to reproach yourself for the flattering distinction you once deigned to shew so humble an individual as myself, who owe all I am, and all my present fortunes, to the friendship and beneficence of my generous and gracious king."

"Nay, nay, I meant not that," said the relenting Mary, moved by the sad tenderness with which he addressed her; "I were an ingrate to chide myself for aught that I could say or do for the most loyal knight, and truest friend, that ever stood beside a monarch's throne—for the son of him, who died the victim of fidelity to my royal grandfather, and shed