

and banish the Scottish king to the sole government of his hereditary kingdom. They persisted in regarding him as an alien, and, as such, incapacitated by the laws of England, to sway the sceptre of its realm. Their hatred and jealousy of his person, was likewise augmented, by his strong prepossession in favour of his own countrymen, and by the injudicious partiality which he at all times displayed towards them, and not unfrequently to the detriment of his English subjects. Religious belief also was among the motives that made them wish a change of sovereigns, for as the lady Arabella was a papist, so those who would have made her the plaything of their own ambition or policy, were partakers of the same faith.

Thus circumstanced, the lady Arabella became, abroad and at home, the involuntary tool of a party. Alliances without number were projected for her, and plots and counterplots were being incessantly formed and defeated, in which she had no part. Yet all these proceedings came to the knowledge of the king—and they served to heighten the jealousy with which he had ever regarded her, and induced him to watch her actions with more vigilance, and to render more rigid the restraint, which both he and his imperious predecessor had ever exerted over the freedom of her conduct. This severity, however, was entirely uncalled for; since, so far, was she from countenancing the ambitious schemes of which she was the object, that once when she was addressed on the subject, she laughed at the purposes of those, who would thus, without her consent, elevate her to a station, which she courted not, and sent the letter to the king, avowing by that act, her entire disapprobation of those ambitious plans, which others were so busy in forming for her.

Hers was a character of truly feminine loveliness, —delicate and sensitive, yet highly intellectual, cultivated in no common degree, and indued with a fortitude, a constancy, which only awaited the hour of trial, to shine forth with a pure and unquenchable light. Educated in retirement, by her grandmother, the countess of Lenox, she shrank from the gaiety and splendour of the court, and found her chief happiness in the exercise of those gentle affections, and that cultivated intellect, which rendered her the charm and idol of a chosen circle, that well knew how to appreciate a mind and character like hers. She was gifted also with personal attractions, rare and brilliant in the extreme, which made her the object of many an ardent suit, and when the circumstances of her exalted birth, and her near connexion with the throne were taken into consideration, in fact her actual claims upon it, had she been inclined to assert them—for by her descent from the daughter of Henry the seventh, the blood of the Tudors mingled with that of the Stuarts in her veins, and she had stood in the same degree of relationship to Elizabeth, as she did to James—when

all these circumstances were considered by the ambitious and intriguing, her hand was sought, not only by the young nobles of the court, but by many a foreign prince, who trusted to climb through her aid to the highest pinnacle of his aspiring hopes.

But as it had ever been the policy of Elizabeth to prevent the marriage of her kinswoman, lest, should she not attempt it in person, her heirs might be induced to lay claim to the succession—so, from similar motives, the timid James had pursued towards her the same system of restraint. Yet, except in one instance, the interference of her nearest relatives had failed to wound her peace, and that was when the cruel authority of Elizabeth had compelled her to renounce her cousin, the Lord Esme Stuart, to whom, in the first flower of her girlhood, she had given the young affections of her heart, and long, long after, for his dear sake, she looked coldly on all who sought her favour, nor could any win her to prove false to the vows of her early love.

Time, however, and the absence of the beloved object, for the partiality which James evinced for Lord Esme, had awakened the jealousy of his nobles, and procured for him a sentence of banishment, gradually weakened the strength of Lady Arabella's attachment. She heard of her cousin Esme, as among the gayest gallants of the French Court, and woman's pride lent its aid in banishing him from her heart. Perhaps, also, the presence of another, who even in childhood had loved her, contributed to rob of its tender associations the long cherished image of Esme Stuart.

It was during the long days of the preceding midsummer that the Lady Arabella had met William Seymour, the second son of Lord Beauchamp, amid the classic shades of Arundel house, to whose noble owners she, with some friends, was at that time on a visit. When a mere child she had often seen him, with his parents, a guest at the table of her grandmother, and even then her image had made an impression on his young mind, which time had never been able to efface. He could not, therefore, meet her again without emotion—for since last he saw her, she had ripened into the loveliest womanhood—and her *spiritual* beauty, her enchanting grace, her gentle manners, her feminine sweetness, won his warmest admiration,—and, when after a brief intercourse, he discovered that her tastes, her pursuits, her sentiments, were in perfect harmony with his own, the feelings which he had long cherished towards her, deepened into an intense and absorbing passion. Nor was it unreturned by its fair and beautiful object. Hard as she was to be won, she could not remain indifferent to the gifted individual who now sought her love.

Mr. Seymour had just returned from abroad, having spent several of the last years in travelling, and to a person invested with all the graces of youth, and uncommon beauty, he added a brave and