

moments he had placed his nephew, William, in the custody of a Norman noble in whom he believed he could trust. But his fears soon revived, and he sent to have the youth taken away from his protector. Too late; the guardian had fled with his charge; and thenceforth, for several years, was exhibited the hollow, treacherous, avaricious, and time-serving series of events, by which the young Duke of Normandy was patronized, forsaken, bought, sold—but not delivered!—through the machinations of Kings and princes whose only objects were power and riches, and who looked on the helpless youth in no better light than as a means to their ends. Between these opposing interests, young William Fitz Robert was, for a time, thrown into the back ground; Henry got Normandy settled upon him by the King of France, whose daughter, also, was given to Henry's son—the vicious, arrogant, and insolent William—who, even early in life, had threatened the English that whenever he should have the rule, he would use them as the meanest beasts of burthen.

The cup of righteous indignation was now full, and the insensate Henry, as well as his tyrannical son, must drink of it. They embarked from Barfleur, when the homage for Normandy was paid, and the nuptials above-named were concluded. Beau Clerc's soul was elate, the carousings of the prince and his retinue were extravagant; the father and the son, with their several retinues, were in different vessels. The former duly reached the shores of England, but the latter—never. It was no tempest that beat down his bark, it was no overwhelming wave that swallowed her up.—It was the licentious orgies of a few intoxicated men, that caused "The white ship" to strike against rocks in the most favourable weather, and sent to their great account the prince and three hundred others. Ah! where were now the day-dreams of ambition which so long had occupied Henry's mind? Where were the hopes that his name and lineage should be continued to future generations?—Where should he find consolation under this sudden and dreadful stroke? To his wife, the "good Queen Maud?" Alas, she was no more! She had sacrificed herself in marrying him, in the vain hope of serving her native English people; but had long perceived that she had been made only a tool of his craft.—To religion?—He had pillaged the churches, and insulted their ministers; he had no confidence in its efficacy, and its aid never occurred to him?—To his subjects? They had

long ceased to hope anything from either promises or oaths uttered by him; for these had now become a bye-word to them.—To his own reflections?—Of all consolations, these offered the poorest resource. He was a glutton, a drunkard, plunged into the very depths of licentiousness, he was hated yet feared, and his very wisdom and talents which had procured for him his surname, only served to make him the more to be dreaded. He heard the fearful news as it were a rock fallen on his head.—He swooned; he recovered; he returned by degrees to the every-day business of his station; but from that instant in which he learned the death of his son, a smile never, never played upon his features; he was like a man forlorn.

King Henry had so long been in the habit of busying himself in the perplexities and intricacies of political intrigue, that despair itself could not prevent him from proceeding in that course. The loss of his son, so far from reconciling him to the claims of his nephew, Fitz Robert, seemed only to exasperate him the more against that unfortunate youth. He was conscious of his present power, and had confidence in the wiliness of his head which had generally carried him through his difficulties. That, however, which he now proposed, was of a nature so discordant to the received notions of sovereign rule, that it well required both hand and head to carry it effectually through. This was to proclaim his daughter Matilda, who had been married to the emperor of Germany and was now a widow, heiress of his throne in England and of his ducal authority in Normandy.

Now, in modern times, this would have been a matter of course; but in the warlike period of the twelfth century when every ruler and noble was a soldier, and commanded the forces of his own domains, the sovereign authority in the hands of a woman was altogether unknown. But Henry, instead of yielding to circumstances, was always best pleased when he could compel circumstances to bend to him; and although, in this attempt to exalt his daughter, he knew her to be naturally as arrogant as her brother had been, increased perhaps by the consciousness that she was even then the relict of an emperor, that her temper was bad, and that she was the plague of her father's life, yet such is the waywardness of the human heart, that he felt some satisfaction at the prospect of inflicting upon others some portion of the misery which had now begun to be poured upon him. He found not, however, the difficulty which he had an-