

that she opposed his counsels. Sir Charles Laveo's name was a password in the Court, and he had no difficulty in conducting his sorrowful companions to the presence of the Queen.

In a grand but secluded apartment, on a couch of crimson velvet, and supported by cushions, lay the suffering Mary. Her sallow features were wasted and careworn, and bore on them the manifest impress of death. Two or three ladies sat around, endeavouring to soothe and amuse her.

The deep melancholy of her expression, lightened a little as Sir Charles advanced and bent his knee before her.

"What would you, Sir Charles?" she said, "and who are these who come to beg a boon of me?"

At a sign from her friend Mrs. Aubrey came forward, and throwing herself on her knees, at the feet of the Queen, poured out, in heart-felt words, her sorrows and her hopes.

Mary listened in silence. Then turning to Sir Charles she expressed her surprise that he should take so much interest in a miserable heretic.

Sir Charles briefly but warmly spoke of Mr. Aubrey's goodness, of the stratagem that had been used to ensnare him, and ended by entreating her Majesty to listen to the prayers of his unhappy wife.

Mary looked down on the beautiful and streaming eyes that were raised imploringly to hers, but there was no relenting on her face, though her ladies around were weeping. Unhappy in her own private life, she had little sympathy with the joys or the sorrows of others.

Frederic had hitherto been silent. He now advanced nearer to the Queen, and she gazed on the boy who pleaded so eloquently and well, and as he proceeded, her expression softened, and tears seemed gathering in her eyes. Hope was rising in the hearts of the suppliants, when suddenly a door opened, and Bishop Bonner was ushered into the royal presence. With an angry and haughty gesture he advanced to the side of the Queen, and confronting the unhappy petitioners, who now felt all hope was gone, demanded the meaning of this intrusion.

Sir Charles Laveo was about to answer, but the Queen, who had now regained her usual apathetic composure, motioned him to silence.

"Bishop Bonner," she said, "they have come to plead for the life of a heretic. Is he worthy of my mercy, and will he recant?"

"Madam," exclaimed Bonner, "I had heard of these petitioners, and I came to prevent any promise of mercy. This heretic must die. The warrant is already made out, and after being signed by your Majesty will be forwarded to-morrow evening to the village where he has sown his false and accursed doctrines."

Further pleading was useless, and at the command of Bonner the unhappy wife and son were hurried from the royal presence. Sir Charles accompanied them back to Mrs. Murray's house, but he could give them no comfort, nor hold out any hope of Mr. Aubrey's pardon.

*(To be continued).*