

to see her on the morrow. Driven forth at the King's command, the old beldame wrung her hands, and cried, "Woe! woe! To-morrow I shall not see his face!" and the usher, upon the king's interrogation, repeated her words to him and to the queen. Upon hearing them, both were filled with anxiety and fear; and, thinking it best to close the festivities of the evening, the king gave the signal for the finish of the feast, and the guests slowly separated and left the hall. The king's chamberlain was the last to leave, and his errand was one of treachery.

During the day the conspirators had been busily preparing for their opportunity. The locks of the hall had been tampered with so that their keys were of no avail. The bars by which the gates were barricaded were removed from their accustomed place. Planks had been surreptitiously placed across the moat that the enemy might obtain easy access to the stronghold; and Sir Richard Graeme, with three hundred followers in his train, was waiting for the signal to advance.

James and his wife stood hand in hand before the log fire of the great hall, while the bower-maidens of the queen prepared the royal bed in an alcove leading from the chamber. The old crone's warning had struck terror to the queen's heart, and unnerved the courage of the king. While looking anxiously at the burning logs in the fireplace, again they heard the voice of the witch, inarticulate in its frenzy, uttering a wild, wailing scream. In an instant the waiting-women had