

then, how proudly waved the banners of two broad kingdoms by her side, how lightly sat the crown on that brow of angel beauty, how gaily beat the heart in those days of guileless youth! What a thought could have shadowed then her 'last communion?'

"Yes," returned Mary, "a heart-broken prisoner—a woman aged in her prime—a desolate widow, a forsaken mother, a betrayed queen. Gone were riches, crowns and friends; passed away the pomp of regal France, and the once fervent loyalty of false Scotland!"

"But," said Blanche, looking out to the clear sky, "how blessed to think one thing was left, the same faith, the same God. Even when His priests were kept from her, He came Himself, to absolve the sins of that sore-tried heart—to feed the fainting soul with angels' bread. What wonder, then, if, in the strength of that food, she went forth to die with a martyr's fortitude! What wonder then, that neither the insults of the Earl of Kent upon her dignity, nor those of the Dean of Peterborough, upon her religion moved her! Her spirit was in the hall of Caiaphas and upon the hill of Calvary—what wonder, then, that she forgot not for one instant the tenderness of the woman, the courage of the sovereign, or the endurance of the saint! So died she; so went she to her crown. Mary Stuart, queen and martyr, pray for us!"

Blanche lay back exhausted by her sudden burst of feeling. Mary was in tears and there was a short silence.

"I hear my father's step outside," said Mary; "are you well enough to see him dearest?"

"Oh yes," said Blanche, opening her eyes.

Mary went to the door and admitted her father. After gently kissing his suffering child, Sir Robert said:

"We have had news that a priest is to land on this coast immediately, and we have been in great tribulation, not knowing how to get any one to meet him."

"Could not Henry have gone?" said Blanche.

"Upon what horse, my child?" replied her father "thou forgettest the state of a recusant's stables. Henry went forth instantly to try and borrow a horse of Arthur Leslie, but Arthur declares it is far safer if he go himself; he has friends along the coast, and, being well known as a Protestant, there will be no danger of question."

"A singular sort of Protestant is Arthur," remarked Mary. "It is very noble of him to undertake such an office."

"Ay," said Robert, "and we must hope and pray his charity may be rewarded by the gift of faith."

"How is it," said Blanche, "that he stays out of the Church?"

"Simply because," said Sir Robert, "he cannot relinquish the hopes of life at one glance. He is his uncle's heir to one of the finest properties in the county, with every prospect of advancement. He knows well that to become a Catholic is to become poor, and despised, and persecuted—Well, I must not tarry, to fatigue my Blanche; I only came to tell you that perhaps tomorrow we may have a priest with us once more, and now, farewell, for here comes Henry to fetch me."

It was a beautiful sight to see the fine old grey haired baronet leaning on his son's arm, a young man full of the strength of early manhood. Both one and the other maintained well the reputation of the Thoresby family, as producing the finest men in England, and their faces bore evidence, too, of the character of the same family—generous and noble-hearted, and brave and loyal, and kind to the poor; and yet those were the men, who, in the glorious reign of good Queen Bess, held their lands, their homes, oftentimes their lives, in fear.

"Madam," interrupted the Earl of Kent, "your life would be the death of our religion, and your death will be its preservation." "Ah," exclaimed Mary, "I did not flatter myself with the thought I was worthy of such a death, and I humbly receive it as an earnest of my acceptance into the number of

God's chosen servants."—Lives of the Queens of Scotland.

Note.—"No papist, or reputed papist, so refusing or making default in making and subscribing the declaration as by the last mentioned Act, shall have or keep in his possession any horse above the value of five pounds; and two justices by their warrant may authorize any person, with the assistance of the constable or his deputy, to search for and seize the same for the use of the king. But if any person shall conceal or be aiding in concealing any such horse, he shall be committed to prison by such warrant and Act for three months, and shall also forfeit treble the value of such horse."

CHAPTER XII.

"They who call me to the work can shield me,
Or make me strong to suffer."
—Ion.

"You seem to be watching that ship very narrowly," said a young and fine-looking gentleman on horseback to two weather-beaten fishermen, who were mending their nets on the flat coast of Essex.

"Marry, and well we may sir," answered one of them; "for she is actually putting off a boat."

"And you think it will not live in this sea?"

The sailor pointed for answer to the boiling surf that dashed upon the sand, and the distant foam of the billows.

"Why, sir, the vessel herself is obliged to put to sea again, 'tis so dangerous on the coast; and some fools, I suppose, who want to land choose to drown themselves. Why not go on to London, I marvel?"

But Arthur Leslie did not wonder and felt convinced that the adventurer in the boat was no other than the man he was in quest of; so he gazed with absorbed interest on the struggle. The little boat was tossed up and down, as if the proud waves toyed with its destruction. Now it was lost to view, and seemed engulfed forever, then it rose triumphantly upon the white crest of a billow.

"She nears the shore, by Heavens!" cried one of the men.

"There must be some witchery about it," muttered the other; "for no mortal power could bring that boat to land."

"Could we not give help, now it is so near?" said Arthur, turning to the men.

"No, no," answered the last speaker; "I'll have nought to do with witchcraft; I'll not help them to land."

"Shame on you then!" returned Arthur—"will you not?" addressing the other.

He was too intently watching the scene to answer; but suddenly rousing,—

"By my halidome, but they are brave men!" he exclaimed "I'll down to the shore to see what I can do;" and he dashed down followed by Arthur. The raging spray flew in their faces and almost blinded them. The boat neared—it was amongst the breakers!

"There she goes!" said the sailor,

as, amid the roar of the waves, the cracking sound was audible.

"Now they must struggle for their lives!" and accordingly, getting free from the fragments of the boat, the two men who had been in her breast the waves bravely

No human help could avail!—the mighty waves tossed them back again and again, till at length, one more kindly threw them, panting and exhausted on the sand. Arthur and the sailor ran to them, and lifting them from the ground, drew them into a place of safety. Arthur was quite certain his conjecture was correct, and the form he held in his arms was that of a priest.

Presently the man revived a little, and his first act was to look up to heaven, and his first words were—"Thanks be to God!" Then, suddenly making an effort to rise, he exclaimed, "My poor companion, I trust me he hath not suffered."

"Be at ease, sir," answered Arthur, "he is nearly well, and less injured than you. He is, I trow, more accustomed to such feats than yourself."

"I have not indeed, tried swimming for some years, and I did feel as if I could struggle no longer, when suddenly the friendly waves dashed me on the beach. Thanks,

good sir, for your courtesy; I can now rise."

"You must change your drenched clothing," returned Arthur; "there is a fisherman's hut hard by, and afterwards I trust you will let me conduct you on your journey, for I know this . . . well."

The stranger seemed embarrassed at the kind offer, and Arthur, desirous to put an end to the mystery, said:

"Perhaps it is you, sir whom I am bid to seek. My good friend Sir Robert Thoresby, is expecting a friend from foreign parts."

There was the start he looked for. "Sir Robert Thoresby, of Thoresby, in this county?"

"The same."

"Then," said the stranger, "I think I am the one you seek."
(To be continued.)

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