

I was more and more amazed at this madman, as I thought him, but I was to be more amazed yet.

"Carry not thy fierceness too far!" cried the officer, "for his death would be a sore work on our hands."

"Cry not mercy to me, damn you!" cried the armourer. "Mercy for such as him!" he said, with an oath, and to my wonder and indignation he took up his flagon of untasted ale, and crying, "Take that, thou dog of an earl!" flung the contents in my face with such force and direction that for an instant I was blinded with the stuff, that covered my face and ran down on my doublet.

"Dog of an armourer!" cried the officer, "thy contempt carrieth thee too far!" but the keepers only laughed a brutal laugh at this eccentricity of the master armourer. As for me, I tried to wipe my face with my manacled hands, but could not; and amid disgust and horror was standing in amazement, when I was surprised to hear him whisper as he passed me to examine mine eyes—

"As thou valuest thy life, wipe it not off!" Then he said in brutal tones to the keepers, "Hold him tight! Let him not move on your lives!" Then he turned to the apprentice and shouted, in tones of hard command—

"Quick, now, the iron ere it cools!" But another dread event was to happen. Just as I was looking, as I thought, for the last time on sweet blue skies and heaven's sunlight, a man rushed with an agonising yell