

## CHAPTER THE LAST.

Carlton Abbey, the estate of the Earls of Castlemere for centuries back, was situated near Ollarten, on the borders of Sherwood Forest, in Nottinghamshire. It was formerly a religious house of the highest order, largely and richly endowed. whose broad acres ran some distance into "Merrie Sherwood" itself. It is reported that the renowned Robin Hood, with a score of his followers, once sought and obtained shelter and protection there, when pursued by the Sheriff of Nottinghamshire for slaying the king's deer and other misdemeanors within the limits of the forest; and later here also took place the celebrated meeting between Cardinal Woolsey and the Duke of Buckingham, previous to that haughty prelate's dismissal from royal favor and ultimate disgrace, and on the death of the Marchioness of Cosingby who, for forty years reigned as the Lady Abbess, the sisters of this order moved elsewhere, as the property fell into the hands of Eustace, first Earl of Castlemere, heir-at-law, by whom and his successors, alterations and additions were made becoming the home of an English noble; but although the last Earl lived a retired and secluded life, Carlton Abbey was not allowed to fall into decay, and the manor, preserves, and grounds generally were kept in excellent order, and so the Earl of