

rich—the handsome favourite of fortune would not admit the thought that anything could ever occur to make him regret that he had left his native valleys.

Having now entirely recovered, the king made him a member of his privy council, and gave him the superintendence of his business, public and private. Such unlimited confidence would have brought upon the young viscount the hatred of the whole court, but for his own judicious management; he was not so intoxicated with his good fortune, as to be insensible of his own inability to fulfil the duties assigned him, and he wisely selected from among the many who courted him, Sir Thomas Overbury, as his especial friend and counsellor. He was just the person for so important a trust; experienced in courtly life, judicious and honourable, and a sincere and upright adviser, he guided the young tyro with so much discretion, teaching him to serve every body, but to show a decided preference for the English, that he won him friends even among his enemies, and led him to secure not only the love of his prince, but also that of the people.

Several months of this new and brilliant career passed happily away, and nothing seemed wanting to complete the young viscount's bliss, but that it should be shared by the one he loved. Accordingly he determined to obtain leave of absence from the court for a few weeks, that he might go and claim his gentle Alice as his bride. The king yielded his consent with great reluctance to his favourite's request; he could not bear to part with him even for a short time; but Rochester begged so earnestly for permission, that it was at last granted, though the king would not permit him to depart till after the ceremony of the investiture which was to confer on the young Duke Charles the title of Prince of Wales, as he wished Rochester to remain and partake of the magnificent court revels which were to celebrate the occasion.

It was with extreme reluctance that the viscount submitted to his sovereign's command, as his love for Alice and his impatience to behold her, prevented his enjoying, as he would have done under other circumstances, these courtly entertainments. His mind and heart still retained their purity, and he had never yet seen among the high-born ladies who surrounded him, one who could compare with his sweet wildflower, or for a moment make him forgetful of her whom he had so long loved. He had confided to Overbury his betrothal to Alice, and Sir Thomas had endeavoured to dissuade him from forming such a connexion; he advised him to ally himself with some illustrious family, and thus strengthen his claim to be ranked among the ancient nobility of

the kingdom. But these arguments were urged in vain; and fruitless were the smiles of the fairest flowers of the court, to win him from his allegiance to the early chosen of his heart.

The whole city was astir with preparations for the solemn ceremony of the investiture. It had already been deferred longer than was intended, for the king, naturally timid, was fearful it might renew the murmurs of the people, who, strongly attached to Prince Henry, had been much moved by a rumour that his sudden and violent death was caused by poison, administered through his father's jealousy. But this report was wholly without foundation, for the poor king had too pitiful a heart to cause the death of any living thing, much less of his own son, whom he mourned with heartfelt sorrow.

The ceremony was performed in the parish church of St. James, by the venerable Bishop of Ely, and the young prince won golden opinions from all present, by his modesty, and by the sadness which seemed to cloud his brow, at the remembrance of his brother, now brought by the occasion so powerfully to mind. Charles had tenderly loved him, and would not be reconciled to his death, though it had opened the way for him to a throne; and to our finite eyes, much happier would it have been for this ill-fated prince had his brother's life been spared, for Henry's energetic and warlike character was more fitted to wield the sceptre in those troublous times, which Charles was doomed to encounter, though his meek and quiet spirit consecrated his afflictions, and won for him the martyr's crown.

A sumptuous entertainment was given that night, in the queen's apartments. The amusements began with dancing, and the splendour of the scene, as chronicled by the writers of that day, had never been surpassed. In the midst of their enjoyment the whole company were surprised and delighted by the entrance of one of those magnificent pageants, which were the chief delight of Queen Anne. It had been composed expressly for the occasion, and as all the young nobility of the court were to be present in honour of the prince, it was of a higher order and more refined in its character than most of the masques of that day. It has been handed down to us unaltered, and few have read its thrilling description of the young and beautiful maiden, in the power of the hourly satyr, with only the amulet of modesty for her safeguard, without intense interest. What then must have been its effect upon the spectators, heightened as it was by the magic of scenic decoration: "the town and castle of Ludlow," says a contemporary, "being so beautifully depicted as to be immediately recognised." Rochester, as we must now term him, was gaz-