

Keeps Death his court; and there the antic sits,
Scoffing his state, and grinning at his pomp;
Allowing him a breath, a little scene
To monarchize, be feared, and kill with looks;
Infusing him with self and vain conceit,—
As if this flesh, which walls about our life,
Were brass impregnable;—and, honoured thus,
Comes at the last, and, with a little pin,
Bores through his castle-wall, and—farewell,
king!" *Shakspeare.*

The carnage had ceased, and the thunder of battle was hushed. The town of Mantes was a prey to the devouring element, which, in various parts still blazed with uncontrolled fury, whilst in others, the smouldering embers cast forth occasionally a flickering light, as if emulous of the glare which was spread in so many directions. The soldiers in both the adverse hosts, and the people of the devoted city, were busily engaged; alas! how differently! The martialists according to the position in which the result of the day's action had severally placed them, the citizens in melancholy and heart-rending duties. All the horrors of war were at this moment experienced by the latter; and the spectacle which they exhibited, might have furnished an indelible lesson, to any but the prince and half barbarous people who at once executed and were the subjects of the picture.

Here, a party of sufferers were eagerly engaged in subduing the darting fires which were rapidly consuming their dwellings and their little all of possession;—there, were anxious relatives traversing the streets, earnestly prying over the defaced countenances of the dead and the dying, in order to discover their own lost ones; their hearts sickening over the distress and pain which they beheld, ever expecting also that the next examination of prostrate suffering would repay their search, by enabling them to give the rites of sepulture to their own beloved slain; yet, with an unconscious hope that their labors might be in vain, and that those for whom they sought might be still in life and health, even although in captivity. Other groups presented parents weeping over their children, children lamenting the loss of their parents, wives prostrated in momentary forgetfulness over the bodies of their husbands; the accents of despair, of sorrow, and occasionally of holy resignation mingled with grief, were heard in every direction. The stern effort at composure was manifested in the countenance of the wounded and helpless soldier, as though he felt that to betray the pain of his wounds was unworthy of his manhood; yet the mangled carcasses and broken limbs of some were productive of agony too

excruciating to admit of that stoic deportment and to writhed and yelled in excess of agony, torture. The deep and sonorous groans of the wounded or dying war-horse added horror to these discordant sounds, and the eye, the ear, and the heart were smitten by the contemplation of these dread effects of war, these awful consequences of turbulent ambition, wounded vanity, or sordid thirst of acquisition.

But there were other sounds mingling with these, as if to complete the horrid whole, and to convey a picture of very deep misery on earth. The licentious roamed likewise through the streets in quest of booty, others, for more and wicked objects.—Listen to the insolent ruffian, as he demands ducted to unknown or hidden treasures. Hear the shrieks of the defenceless female, as she falls within the grasp of the brutal and powerful assaillant, who, in the unbridled licentiousness of the hour, and the horrid scope and immunity given to victors in those days, was bent on his own degraded gratification, at the expense of all that is noble to the manly heart, and all that is held valuable in that of the feebler sex! *Hell, is indeed let loose*, in a sacked city; and all the enormities which expelled her legions from the seats of immortal happiness, are for the time committed in horrid triumph.

And whence arose the war which produced such devastating consequences? Was it to procure the restitution of rights?—Was it for the redress of injuries done to weaker powers? Was it in revenge of wrongs received? Was it in self-defence, or for the assistance of the defenceless?—Was there a holy, just, or even a worldly-important purpose to serve, in this wide and cruel destruction of life, property, and honor?—*It was caused by a jest!*

The kings of France and England were mutually jealous of the growing power of each other. The former was imperceptibly, but gradually and surely, advancing, from the condition of a mere nominal *suzerain* over many small principalities, towards that of the real sovereign of a large and powerful kingdom;—the latter, who was but a few steps in descent from a successful Danish marauder, and was himself under the stigma of illegitimacy, had, from a French vassal, become fully an equal to the monarch of France, and was able to demand concessions and territories, in a style that wounded the pride of the Gallic monarch. At this period there were dominions in dispute between William of England, now surnamed