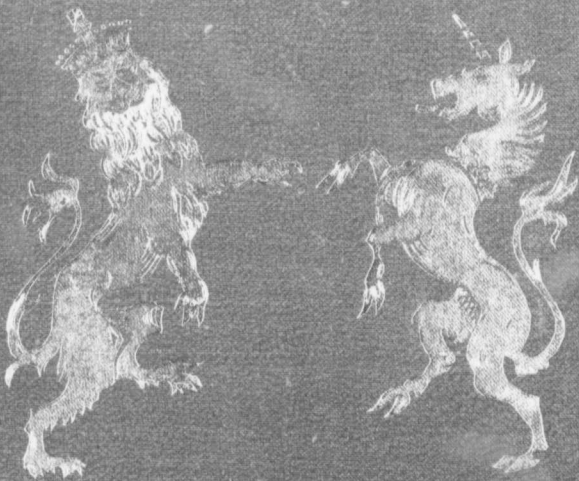




THE
PRINCESS'S
STORY BOOK



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THE PRINCESS'S STORY BOOK







"Suddenly the widowed queen rose and held on high the sacred wood."

Frontispiece

THE PRINCESS'S STORY BOOK

BEING HISTORICAL STORIES COLLECTED OUT
OF ENGLISH ROMANTIC LITERATURE IN ILLUS-
TRATION OF THE REIGNS OF ENGLISH
MONARCHS FROM THE CONQUEST
TO QUEEN VICTORIA

AND EDITED
WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY
GEORGE LAURENCE GOMME, F.S.A.

ILLUSTRATED BY
HELEN STRATTON

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GEORGE N. MORANG & COMPANY LIMITED

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INTRODUCTION

THE fourth, and last, of this series of story books collected and edited from the historical romances which form so important a feature of English literature, is now presented to our readers. The encouragement to "go on" has been so considerable that even if there had been fewer chances of drawing more prizes from the lottery than is the case, one would have had to make the attempt. Young readers fond of romance, simply because it is romance, and, I am glad to say, older readers pleased to become acquainted with some of the gems of English romance, have testified to the pleasure which these books have given them. To these, then, I present this last volume, but with some words of apology withal.

This is due to the fact that I have not been able to include a specimen of Thackeray's masterpieces. Thackeray is so great that one does not like to admit failure in the selection of a fourth set of stories from his three great books, *Esmond*, *The Virginians*, and *Vanity Fair*. But to have accomplished this it would have been necessary to make some alterations in the text so as to bring the selected extract into the category of a short story. To tamper with Thackeray's work is to commit an offence that should not be pardoned, and so reluctantly my fourth volume goes forth the poorer.

Otherwise all the writers formerly represented are again called upon to contribute. Scott, the greatest of all, gives us five stories, Lord Lytton supplies two, Ainsworth four. Then I have again called upon Sir William Napier, Charles Kingsley, Fenimore Cooper, and Lord Beaconsfield for one story each, while in the story from Horace Smith and from Samuel Lover I have introduced two new writers who will, I think, be welcomed cordially. The three stories from Lord Berners' translation of Froissart's Chronicle will, I am sure, be acceptable. The quaintness of the narrative, the charm of the

Elizabethan English, and the events treated of, are three good arguments in their favour. The remainder of the authors chosen to supply representative stories usefully fill up the gaps left by the greater writers.

Lord Lytton gives a charming and saddening picture of the events before the great battle of Hastings. It is not historically true from the records, but it is true from that wider field of common human experience which supplies glimpses into events when one is gifted, as Lord Lytton was gifted, with sufficient human sympathy to draw the picture. Lord Lytton's admiration and sympathy for the last King of the Saxon race were unbounded. He absorbed the chronicle narratives, dry and uninteresting except to the historian, and re-issued them in his thrilling romance. And perhaps the words of the kneeling king, "Mother—dear, dear mother, with these arms round my neck . . . " (p. 5), are about as true as they are deeply touching. Harold's mother was worthy of Harold and of Gurth and Leofwine.

Sir William Napier's romance of William the Conqueror gives a not unfaithful picture of the great battle. Of course readers will note that, contrary to Lord Lytton's views, and, I think, the correct views, he makes Editha Harold's Queen. There is doubt about this, but at all events not sufficient doubt for the romance lover to regret the pleasing fancy that the Queen led on her Saxons when the King could do no more. At times like the present, when Britain's danger from the foreign foe is again on the lips of her children, it is well to remember what romance has to say of the great events which have passed away.

The reigns of William II., Henry I., and Stephen are not represented. Henry II. is represented by the well-known episode of the death of Beckett, faithfully, if somewhat ponderously, told by W. Miller. Saltwood Castle still stands open to the visitors from Folkestone. The steps in Canterbury Cathedral leading to the historical, not now the sacred, shrine of the murdered Beckett, attest to the still living interest in this great event of English history.

For Richard I.'s reign I have chosen the fine scene in *The Talisman*, where Richard, his Queen, and the chiefs of the crusade are all depicted with surpassing vigour. I think Scott put into his portraiture of Cœur de Leon much of his own generous spirit. The sweetness of the King's welcome to the troubadour, the generous trust in Saladin, the contempt for

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what was mean and sordid among the other princes of the crusade, are all good to read and understand ; and if we could but believe them true of Richard the King, we should have a king to be proud of indeed.

John and Henry III. are not represented. This brings us to Edward I. and Miss Jane Porter's well-known *Scottish Chiefs* supplies the not too favourable picture of the greatest of the Plantagenets. Wallace was very great, but his greatness did not overshadow that of Edward.

With Edward II. we come to the first of the Froissart stories. The taking of the Spencers is graphically told, and we see the good city of London to the fore in greeting the Queen from her victory over cupidity and meanness.

For Edward III. the wonderful battle of Poitiers is the selected narrative. The Black Prince is charmingly figured, and one feels almost as if the events of the present war are being foretold when we read how the advanced scouts of the English forces "could not forbear but set on the tail of the French host and cast down many to the earth, and took divers prisoners, so that the host began to stir," and how "that night the Englishmen lodged in a strong place among hedges, trees, and bushes, and their host was well watched, and so was the French host," (p. 105).

The wooing of his French bride by Richard II. is the subject of the last of the Froissart stories, and supremely quaint it is. "Sir," quoth she, "an it please God and my loved father that I shall be Queen of England, I shall be glad thereof, for it is shewed me that I shall be then a great lady" (p. 117), is the sweet answer of the French girl-bride, and the passage is happily chosen for one of the most charming of the illustrations to this book. All through the negotiations, the intrigues of the Court, the political influences, and the petty surroundings are very finely portrayed, and we owe much to old Froissart for this penetration into the secret recesses of Court life.

Passing over the reigns of Henry IV. and Henry V., a slight but brilliant sketch of Lord Lytton's takes us to the inner circle of the Kingmaker's movement in favour of Henry VI. Clarence's feebleness and meanness, Neville's ambition and jealousy, and Anne's winsomeness, all typical of the general popular idea of these personages, are most happily depicted.

For Edward IV. I take the reader out of England to the

Court where Margaret of Anjou spent her last days. Old King René is charmingly pictured by Scott, and the whole story, ending with the dramatic death of the sorrowed Queen, is very illustrative of the events of this period.

For the reigns of Edward V. and Richard III. there are no stories. Henry VII., the first of the Tudors, is illustrated by the intrigue to get Perkin Warbeck recognised as Richard Duke of York, the younger of the two brothers supposed to have been murdered in the Tower. Henry's harshness, his Queen's doubts and unhappiness, the death of Elizabeth, the Queen of Edward IV., are not unhappily related by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley—a name one likes to see among the list of authors.

Henry VIII. is represented by Ainsworth's picturesque but unhistorical and, in truth, unreal account of the interview between Henry, his soon to be divorced wife Catherine of Arragon, and his newly-intended bride Anne Boleyn.

Mary's reign is illustrated by Ainsworth's spirited account of the carrying of the Princess Elizabeth to the Tower and the behaviour of that great-hearted Princess in those early days which might have proved so fatal to her and to England. "You are right and I am wrong, Bedingfield. Take me to my dungeon" (p. 194), are quite typical of Elizabeth's character, and Ainsworth is at his best, in this story.

With the next story we come to Charles Kingsley, a name honoured in English literature, and which one cannot recall at the present moment without a thought to the loss we have sustained lately by the death of his niece, Miss Mary Kingsley, who did not gain so much by the possession of a great name as by her own splendid individuality. Charles Kingsley's story of the events in Ireland, which was being made the spot from which to attack England, is good in every way. The pathetic opening, "God help my boy," the vigorous happiness of that same boy, who was teaching Edmund Spenser to come back to true English verse by the singing of a ballad he learned at his mother's knee, the repulse of the night attack, the bringing in of the prisoners and the terrible vengeance of the English led by Raleigh—"march one company in and drive them forth and let the other cut them down as they come out—Pah!" (p. 236) is all grandly told. Kingsley lifts the narrative to a great height. The simpleness and pathos of the story are only equalled by the ring of manly vigour and the unconscious display of English pluck which appear in the person of Amyas

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Leigh. And surely every one will be glad to read once more that delightful talk between Edmund Spenser and Walter Raleigh. Yes, Kingsley is very great here.

Sir Walter Scott gives us the grandest story in the book, however, for I have chosen another of his inimitable pictures of James I. "Take heed, sir, you are not to laugh at us—we are your anointed sovereign" (p. 239) is a command we cannot obey when the pen of the great wizard is wielded for the story. We laugh, but we love the old King too. His pedantic and humorous proof of the right of repossession of property redeemed from mortgage (p. 241) is perhaps the happiest expression of this King's character that can be imagined, while his belief that "there is one in this land that comes near to Solomon King of Israel, in all his gifts, except in his love to strange women, forby the daughter of Pharaoh" (p. 245) is altogether delightful. The now historic refrain to Kipling's national song is, it would appear, a quotation from King James I., for "'ye cry pay, pay, pay, as if we had all the mines of Ophir,' said the King" (p. 246).

The story illustrating the reign of Charles I. takes us to the events in parliament, and fitly so. The incidents are happily told and are full of dramatic interest.

The Commonwealth brings us to its central figure—Oliver Cromwell—whom Scott always represents most fairly. The mixture of fervent desire for the public good with the natural leaning towards personal advantage is very happily represented in this story and the whole episode does substantial justice to one of the greatest characters in English history.

Ainsworth's story of the great fire of London, that tragic but most useful event, puts Charles II. in a most favourable light—too favourable I think. Londoners will enjoy this story for its picturesque details.

The reigns of James II. and William and Mary are not represented. For Queen Anne, however, another London story is selected from Ainsworth. With the great but perfidious Duke of Marlborough and his Duchess as the central figures, the story stands out well as a happy effort of this author, who takes us to Pall Mall, Saint James' Street and other London places of historic interest with the greatest security.

A slight story from Sir Walter Scott brings us to the reigning house of the Guelphs. It is typical of many an event under the reign of George I.

For George II. a very delightful story by Fenimore Cooper is selected. It is a stirring account of a great sea fight interwoven with the narrative of how political considerations for the House of Stuart interfered for one brief moment with the duty of one of the Admirals.

The story for George III. will, I think, be welcomed as showing once more how Ireland has been made the shuttlecock of events inimical to England. Under Elizabeth we have had the same thing in different guise. Samuel Lover was right in showing up the insincerity of Napoleon. He would help Ireland only if it helped him, and not for the sake of Ireland.

George IV. and William IV. are not represented, and I hope the pungent but suggestive story from Lord Beaconsfield as to the inner and more sordid aspect of Cabinet making in the Queen's reign will not be considered too unkind a bit of real history to have preserved in the shape of a short story.

As in the previous volumes, the text of each author is untouched, except to exclude references to parts of the original narrative which are not brought into the selected story, to add a word or two at the opening or at the end of the story in explanation of a character or an incident, to insert a date, or some such minor alteration as these.

This brings me to the finish of my labours in this direction then. I am sure these stories have been useful as specimens of English literature; I believe they have pleased both old and young readers. The instalment in the present volume is enriched with some beautiful illustrations, so well chosen and so splendidly executed that I must be permitted to express one word of thanks to Miss Helen Stratton for her care and taste in the execution of her task.

LAURENCE GOMME.

24, DORSET SQUARE, N.W.

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I

With the Queen and Princesses before the Battle

ALL within the palace of Westminster showed the confusion and dismay of the awful time—all, at least, save the council chamber, in which Harold, who had arrived the night before, conferred with his thegns. It was the evening of the 11th October, 1066; the courtyard and the halls were filled with armed men, and almost with every hour came rider and bode from the Sussex shores. In the corridors the Churchmen grouped and whispered, as they had whispered and grouped in the day of King Edward's death. Stigand passed among them, pale and thoughtful. The serge gowns came rustling round the archprelate for counsel or courage.

"Shall we go forth with the King's army?" asked a young monk, bolder than the rest, "to animate the host with prayer and hymn."

"Fool!" said the miserly prelate, "fool! if we do so, and the Norman conquer, what become of our abbacies and convent lands? The Duke wars against Harold, not England. If he slay Harold——"

"What then?"

"The Atheling is left us yet. Stay we here and guard the last prince of the House of Cerdic," whispered Stigand, and he swept on.

In the Chamber in which Edward had breathed his last, his widowed Queen, with Aldyth, her successor, and Githa, the new King's mother, and other ladies, waited the decision of the council. By one of the windows stood, clasping each other by the hand, the fair young bride of Gurth, and the betrothed of the gay Leofwine. Githa sat alone, bowing her face over her hands—desolate; mourning for the fate of her traitor son; and the

wounds, that the recent and holier death of Thyra had inflicted, bled afresh. And the holy lady of Edward attempted in vain, by pious adjurations, to comfort Aldyth, who, scarcely heeding her, started ever and anon with impatient terror, muttering to herself, "Shall I lose *this* crown too?"

In the council-hall debate waxed warm—which was the wiser, to meet William at once in the battlefield, or to delay till all the forces Harold might expect (and which he had ordered to be levied, in his rapid march from York) could swell his host?

"If we retire before the enemy," said Gurth, "leaving him in a strange land, winter approaching, his forage will fail. He will scarce dare to march upon London: if he does, we shall be better prepared to encounter him. My voice is against resting all on a single battle."

"Is that thy choice?" said Vebba indignantly. "Not so, I am sure, would have chosen thy father; not so think the Saxons of Kent. The Norman is laying waste all the lands of thy subjects, Lord Harold; living on plunder, as a robber, in the realm of King Alfred. Dost thou think that men will get better heart to fight for their country by hearing that their King shrinks from the danger?"

"Thou speakest well and wisely," said Haco; and all eyes turned to the young son of Sweyn, as to one who best knew the character of the hostile army and the skill of its chief. "We have now with us a force flushed with conquest over a foe hitherto deemed invincible. Men who have conquered the Norwegian will not shrink from the Norman. Victory depends upon ardour more than numbers. Every hour of delay damps the ardour. Are we sure that it will swell the numbers? What I dread most is not the sword of the Norman Duke, it is his craft. Rely upon it, that if we meet him not soon, he will march straight to London. He will proclaim by the way that he comes not to seize the throne, but to punish Harold, and abide by the Witan, or, perchance, by the word of the Roman pontiff. The terror of his armament, unresisted, will spread like a panic through the land. Many will be decoyed by his false pretenses, many awed by a force that the King dare not meet. If he come in sight of the city, think you that merchants and cheapmen will not be daunted by the thought of pillage and sack? They will be the first to capitulate at the first house which is fired. The city is weak to guard against siege; its walls long neglected; and in sieges the

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Normans are famous. Are we so united (the King's rule thus fresh) but what no cabals, no dissensions will break out amongst ourselves? If the Duke come, as come he will, in the name of the Church, may not the Churchmen set up some new pretender to the crown—perchance the child Edgar? And, divided against ourselves, how ingloriously should we fall! Besides, this land, though never before have the links between province and province been drawn so close, hath yet demarcations that make the people selfish. The North-umbrians, I fear, will not stir to aid London, and Mercia will hold aloof from our peril. Grant that William once seize London, all England is broken up and dispirited; each shire, nay, each town, looking only to itself. Talk of delay as wearing out the strength of the foe! No, it would wear out our own. Little eno^g, I fear, is yet left in our treasury. If William seize London, that treasury is his, with all the wealth of our burgesses. How should we maintain an army, except by preying on the people, and thus discontenting them? Where guard that army? Where are our forts? where our mountains? The war of delay suits only a land of rock and defile, or of castle and breast-work. Thegns and warriors, ye have no castles but your breasts of mail. Abandon these, and you are lost."

A general murmur of applause closed this speech of Haco, which, while wise in arguments our historians have overlooked, came home to that noblest reason of brave men, which urges prompt resistance to foul invasion.

Up, then, rose King Harold.

"I thank you, fellow-Englishmen, for that applause with which ye have greeted mine own thoughts on the lips of Haco. Shall it be said that your King rushed to chase his own brother from the soil of outraged England, yet shrank from the sword of the Norman stranger? Well indeed might my brave subjects desert my banner if it floated idly over these palace walls while the armed invader pitched his camp in the heart of England. By delay, William's force, whatever it might be, cannot grow less; his cause grows more strong in our craven fears. What his armament may be we rightly know not; the report varies with every messenger, swelling and lessening with the rumours of every hour. Have we not around us now our most stalwart veterans—the flower of our armies—the most eager spirits—the vanquishers of Hardrada? Thou sayest, Gurth, that all should not be perilled on a single battle. True.

Harold should be perilled, but wherefore England? Grant that we win the day; the quicker our despatch, the greater our fame, the more lasting that peace at home and abroad which rests ever its best foundation on the sense of the power which wrong cannot provoke unchastened! Grant that we lose; a loss can be made gain by a king's brave death. Why should not our example rouse and unite all who survive us? Which the nobler example, the one best fitted to protect our country—the recreant backs of living chiefs, or the glorious dead with their fronts to the foe? Come what may, life or death, at least we will thin the Norman numbers, and heap the barriers of our corpses on the Norman march. At least, we can show to the rest of England how men should defend their native land! And if, as I believe and pray, in every English breast beats a heart like Harold's, what matters though a king should fall!—Freedom is immortal."

He spoke; and forth from his baldric he drew his sword. Every blade at that signal, leapt from the sheath; and in that council-hall at least, in every breast beat the heart of Harold.

The chiefs dispersed to array their troops for the morrow's march; but Harold and his kinsmen entered the chamber where the women waited the decision of the council, for that, in truth, was to them the parting interview. The King had resolved, after completing all his martial preparations, to pass the night in the Abbey of Waltham; and his brothers lodged, with the troops they commanded, in the city or its suburbs. Haco alone remained with that portion of the army quartered in and around the palace.

They entered the chamber, and in a moment each heart had sought its mate; in the mixed assembly each only conscious of the other. There, Gurth bowed his noble head over the weeping face of the young bride that for the last time nestled to his bosom. There, with a smiling lip, but tremulous voice, the gay Leofwine soothed and chided in a breath, the maiden he had wooed as the partner for a life that his mirthful spirit made one holiday; snatching kisses from a cheek no longer coy.

But cold was the kiss which Harold pressed on the brow of Aldyth; and with something of disdain, and of bitter remembrance of a nobler love, he comforted a terror which sprang from the thought of self.

"Oh, Harold!" sobbed Aldyth, "be not rashly brave: guard thy life for my sake. Without thee, what am I? Is it

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even safe for me to rest here? Were it not better to fly to York, or seek refuge with Malcolm the Scot?"

"Within three days at the farthest," answered Harold, "thy brothers will be in London. Abide by their counsel; act as they advise at the news of my victory or my fall."

He paused abruptly, for he heard close beside him the broken voice of Gurth's bride, in answer to her lord.

"Think not of me, beloved; thy whole heart now be England's. And if—if"—her voice failed a moment, but resumed proudly, "why even then thy wife is safe, for she survives not her lord and her land!"

The King left his wife's side, and kissed his brother's bride.

"Noble heart!" he said; "with women like thee for our wives and mothers, England could survive the slaughter of a thousand kings."

He turned, and knelt to Githa. She threw her arms over his broad breast and wept bitterly.

"Say—say, Harold, that I have not reproached thee for Tostig's death. I have obeyed the last commands of Godwin my lord. I have deemed thee ever right and just; now let me not lose thee, too. They go with thee, all my surviving sons, save the exile Wolnoth—him whom now I shall never behold again. Oh, Harold!—let not mine old age be childless!"

"Mother—dear, dear mother, with these arms round my neck I take new life and new heart. No! never hast thou reproached me for my brother's death—never for aught which man's first duty enjoined. Murmur not that that duty commands us still. We are the sons, through thee, of royal heroes; through my father of Saxon freemen. Rejoice that thou hast three sons left, whose arms thou mayest pray God and his saints to prosper, and over whose graves, if they fall, thou shalt shed no tears of shame!"

Then the widow of King Edward, who (the crucifix clasped in her hands) had listened to Harold with lips apart and marble cheeks, could keep down no longer her human woman's heart; she rushed to Harold, as he still knelt to Githa—knelt by his side, and clasped him in her arms with despairing fondness:—

"O brother, brother, whom I have so dearly loved when all other love seemed forbidden me;—when he who gave me a throne refused me his heart; when, looking at thy fair promise, listening to thy tender comfort—when, remembering the days

of old, in which thou wert my docile pupil, and we dreamed bright dreams together of happiness and fame to come,—when, loving thee methought too well, too much as weak mothers may love a mortal son, I prayed God to detach my heart from earth!—Oh, Harold! now forgive me all my coldness. I shudder at thy resolve. I dread that thou should meet this man, whom an oath hath bound thee to obey. Nay, frown not—I bow to thy will, my brother and my King. I know that thou hast chosen as thy conscience sanctions, as thy duty ordains. But come back—oh, come back—thou who, like me,” (her voice whispered) “hast sacrificed the household hearth to thy country’s altars,—and I will never pray to heaven to love thee less—my brother, oh, my brother!”

In all the room were then heard but the low sounds of sobs and broken exclamations. All clustered to one spot—Leofwine and his betrothed—Gurth and his bride—even the selfish Aldyth, ennobled by the contagion of the sublime emotion,—all clustered round Githa, the mother of the three guardians of the fated land, and all knelt before her, by the side of Harold. Suddenly, the widowed Queen, the virgin wife of the last heir of Cerdic, rose, and holding on high the sacred rood over those bended heads, said, with devout passion,—

“O Lord of Hosts—We Children of Doubt and Time, trembling in the dark, dare not take to ourselves to question thine unerring will. Sorrow and death, as joy and life, are at the breath of a mercy divine, and a wisdom all-seeing: and out of the hours of evil thou drawest, in mystic circle, the eternity of Good. ‘Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.’ If, O Disposer of events, our human prayers are not adverse to thy prejudged decrees, protect these lives, the bulwarks of our homes and altars, sons whom the land offers as a sacrifice. May thine angel turn aside the blade—as of old from the heart of Isaac! But if, O Ruler of Nations, in whose sight the ages are as moments, and generations but as sands in the sea, these lives are doomed, may the death expiate their sins, and, shrived on the battlefield, absolve and receive the souls!”

—LORD LYTTON, *Harold*.

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Princesses in the Fighting Line

HAROLD, having failed in an attempt to surprise the Normans by a sudden march, had drawn up his army on a sharp ridge, along the crest of which his hundred thousand Saxons stood arrayed for battle.

On the right were men of Salisbury, rude cultivators, armed with clubs and spears. Then came warlike Gloucester, strong to wield the seax and lance. Next, from woody Winchester, stood thousands whirling the heavy battle-axe. Near the centre the hardy Welshmen, active in war, were ranged. Near the King's standard stood the well-disciplined bands from London, under their leaders. Bright armour, richly inlaid with gold, distinguished ethel-born from ceorl.

In the centre, Harold's guards, ten thousand, who had followed him in all his wars, were armed alike, with huge, double-edged battle-axes; their arms and armour were in excellent order, not bright, but with all straps and buckles new and well fitted. They were in the prime of life; evenly sized, and large of limb. Grim and weather-beaten were their visages, and stern their aspect; for they knew war and all its turns and dangers, and blenched not to meet them all. With keen, experienced eyes they watched the Norman movements. Now and then their smiles expressed pity for the confusion of the younger soldiers; but silent and almost motionless they remained, amidst the noise and ribaldry of the rest. Yet would a joke at times pass, designed for Harold's ears when he came near them. To him alone they looked: he might speak with a voice of thunder to the rest, and be unheard in the turmoil; but a whisper would have moved his guards.

On the left of this veteran band were the strong, uncon-

querable men of Kent, little inferior to the guards in discipline, and devoted to the house of Godwin. Rich armour, and a variety of weapons, distinguished them and the Londoners from the rest of the Saxons. Joyous and bold, they jeered at the Normans and followed Harold as their own feudal chief rather than as king: for their own peculiar laws and customs they were to fight, and to him only who respected those things would they submit.

Stretching beyond the Kentish warriors were the tall and handsome men of Lancashire, fierce and free: and on the extreme left were the gaunt, powerful giants of Yorkshire and Northumberland, terrible in fight, and enthusiastic for Harold, who had twice saved them from Tostig, and led them to victory at Stamford Bridge.

In his wild host were heard the shrill pipes, and nakers, and trumpets, and rude music. The banner of the Saxon King—a warrior armed for combat, worked in gold by the hands of Editha—waved in the centre: it had waved o'er Stamford Bridge victoriously, and now gave a presage to the Saxons, for he who led it then led it now! But how different was the enemy! King Hardrada left his defensive armour in his ships, that his army might be light and active to plunder; he was caught in the midst of his error and punished by the rapid Harold; but Harold could not so catch Duke William, who took all fortune gave, but never trusted her. From London Harold had hoped to surprise them at Hastings; he found the Norman army ready to receive him. Now his banner was high and conspicuous, and before it stood the Saxon monarch himself; nor was the grandson of the great Canute unworthy of his high lineage and his station. Lofty in stature, commanding in mien, matchless in his nation as a warrior and politician, his people paid homage to him as a man and a king! He was the king of their choice, and they resolved to stand by him in fight. He leaned upon his axe as he contemplated the position of the Normans. His dress and arms were plain, and like those of his veterans, from whom he was only distinguished by his size, the beauty of his person, and his richly inlaid battle-axe, which was larger than ordinary men could wield. A small crown of gold ornamented his helmet, and his loins were girded with a belt, from which hung a short seax.

"Let our cavalry send their horses to the rear," said the King: "I will maintain the combat on foot, I will not descend

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from the height: our battle shall be defensive. When the Normans attack, let them be repulsed; but let none follow their defeated troops down the hill. Let a deep ditch be dug all round the camp, and hurdles set up to protect us from the Norman arrows, for their archers are good, and our men ill furnished with defensive armour; nor have we bowmen to encounter them, they would approach securely, and destroy our soldiers at their pleasure."

These orders Harold gave two days previous to the action; and as he finished, a murmuring sound arose far in the rear of the camp, and attracted the attention of all.

"Good thanes, what is that?" asked the King.

"It is not the ordinary noise of the camp," answered Earl Morcar.

"The people collect there far in the rear towards the woods," observed a powerful Saxon eorlðerman, named Osulph.

"Behold, a large force issues from the woods," cried Ailwin, the Childe of Kent.

"Even the Vala, by the head of Mimer!" exclaimed Harold.

And "The Vala! the Vala!" resounded through the field. Harold advanced to meet her: she was riding upon a palfrey, Vafthrudner and Gangrader leading the reins in surly state; she was dressed in the same costume as that she always assumed, but her long, grizzly locks hung loose and dishevelled over her shoulders. She led a body of five thousand men of Sussex, all armed with axes and shields.

"These, O noble Cyning," said the Vala, pointing with her wand to the band that followed her—"these are five thousand men armed from the treasury of the Vala, and true Saxons every man."

"Oh, thou wilt also foretell the fate of battle to us, great prophetess!" cried many voices, for by that time the host had collected in one great mass around her and the King.

"Yes," answered she, in the peculiar shrill tone she spoke when wishing to be heard by those far off, "I can prophesy upon what the fate of battle hangs, an ye will listen to the Vala."

"Upon what—upon what?" resounded from all parts of the multitude.

"Upon this!" shrieked the Vala, loudly and long continuing to pronounce the word, as, snatching a battle-axe from a sol-

dier who stood near, she held it high in the air, which was instantly filled with loud hurrahs. Vafthrudner and Gangrader, not understanding the tremendous shout, growled deeply and wrathfully; but luckily, being unable to fix their dangerous anger upon any particular person, it soon subsided.

"Glorious woman!" said the King to Frica, "in all the vast multitude around there is no heart more true to England, yet myself than thou art; remain in our camp till the battle, animate all with thy own brave spirit; and when the Normans come on, then follow the Queen, and ye shall both quickly hear that Harold and his army have earned a saga."

When the King entered his tent he sent for the Vala.

"We are alone, Frica; I pray thee, in the name of Odin, to foretell good success to us through the ranks, for though we are by some thousands more numerous than the Normans, yet are they better practised in war than our Saxons, and are far better armed and disciplined. Our numbers and our courage must do all, and for this reason I have fortified my position and will not descend into the plains."

"I will do all that a Vala can do, Cyning, to save thee and thy people and my people. I will forfeit my truth, my fame, my honour, my blood—in a word, I will be false as Muspelheim for thy sake. But listen, brave Harold—thine hour and mine are come. I have wearied the spirits and exhausted magic; all points to the fixed doom of thee and me. This is the twelfth day of October, on the fourteenth we both fall in battle." Here her two dogs sent forth a deep moan as they slept at her feet. "Ay, moan ye! moan ye! for ye, too, poor brutes, are doomed! Nor ye nor Frica will ever enter the tower of the Vala more: the raven shall tear our rotting flesh, the owl shall screech as he flies circling over our carcasses. But the Saxon people shall be worse off than we: the Norman leopard will rend and tear them living, yet neither thou nor I shall see it, Harold." The Vala laid her hands upon his shoulders, and, looking him full in the face, said, "Thou shalt be in Asgaard!"

Harold smiled: "Well, well, there are worse places," he said; "I shall find Hengist and Horsa, and Canute, and many a brave warrior there."

"Oh, I know, Harold, thou hast no fear to die! Editha is doomed to a worse fate. Ha! Harold, thou growest pale, man—but listen."

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thou wilt unman me if thou speakest of evil to Editha." The Vala was silent, yet still looked in the face of Harold, whose robust frame shook with agitation.

"Yet tell me, is there aught that I can do, which is left undone to protect Editha?"

"Nothing."

"Then, dear Frica, the will of God, of Editha's God and mine, and thine, be done."

"Believest thou in her God?" asked the Vala.

"Yea, even as I believe not in Odin."

"Then why does he not save the Saxons?"

"Why does not Odin?"

"Thou hast studied the Christian faith, Harold?"

"Yea, Frica, Editha has taught me its doctrines."

"And thou believest?"

"I have said so; I believe it, because Christ preached good to man and peace on earth, while the Scandinavian gods teach war and reward evil. If the Normans were Christians, they would not invade us; yet in Odin's eyes it is not evil but good to invade, and, as you foretell, to destroy us!"

"I have of late had reason to doubt many of my predictions," answered Frica; "but it is now too late to change."

"No, not so," said Harold; "our Saviour has promised heaven to man and woman who believe; hast thou not seen how fixed and resolute Editha is in danger?"

"Yea in truth, that sweet lady has been bold in danger, when the heart of Frica almost failed her; 'twas strange, and even now she seems rather to act for the Saxons than for herself."

"Then learn to believe, Frica; faith will teach thee to bear wrong; 'twill not support thee to do wrong."

"But if so, I must not foretell victory to the soldiers, when I know we shall be defeated."

"Prophecy neither! call upon the army to trust in the cross, and fight bravely for their country; the troops believe that thou art inspired and knowest the future; tell them, as thou didst this morning, that victory awaits the brave. Thy Scandinavian gods make thee false; if thou promisest victory, thou liest, for thy gods have told thee we shall be defeated. If thou prophesiest defeat, thou wilt insure it and ruin thy country! Thy gods are false gods, and seduce thee to do evil; but if as a Christian thou callest upon the Saxons to fight for their country, and protect their families from slavery,

if thou callest upon them to trust in God and do their duty, then art thou a true patriot and God will reward thee."

"Even as thou sayest will Frica do; what Harold and Editha believe Frica believes, and in thy faith she dies."

The dogs now awoke and came to Frica, licking her hands playfully; Gangrader, who had been smelling about the tent, came up wagging his tail with something in his mouth. The Vala took it from him—'twas Editha's crucifix!

"I accept the faith!" cried Frica; "'tis the will of God, he has himself converted me!"

"Take the crucifix and keep it, excellent Vala; to thee only would I give aught that belongs to Editha." Harold kissed the ivory cross, and hung it round the neck of the Vala, who went forth and told all that had happened, which greatly exalted the troops, for it was said that God had converted the Vala to the Christian faith by a miracle, had thereby taken the army under his special protection, and therefore in the great battle their cry was, "The rood, the rood!—the holy rood!"

William in the meantime had mounted a small eminence, from which for a long time he contemplated the position of the English army. On each flank, and in rear, it was protected by a thick forest, through which cavalry could not charge, and of cavalry three-fourths of the army consisted. The Norman archers, too, would be useless among the trees; for although amidst woods bowmen range with profit and grand divertisement in peace, 'tis not the same in war, because through the thick foliage of trees and their low branches, flights of arrows cannot find their way. Now Duke William's bowmen were of great advantage, seeing that King Harold had none to oppose them. The Duke, therefore, resolved to attack the enemy in front. Having formed his resolution, and as the evening began to close in, he returned to his tent.

"Sirs," said he, "at dawn to-morrow we will do battle with Harold; see that your armour be in order, your buckles good, and your weapons sharp; take food and rest that ye may be strong for the conflict; but let us to vespers, and that we may pray for success against the perjured Harold, and let the blood that will be spilt to-morrow be on his soul!"

The bishops of Bayeux and Coutances ordered the priests to spend the night in prayer and in confessing sinners; and thousands of men prepared themselves for taking their final leave of this world in the morrow's battle. Many were seen in the dusk, walking to and fro alone and thoughtful of those far

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away ; others ruminated on the chances of this world ; for though they had none to leave behind they much grieved to part with—what was to come ? They now thought, they now moved, they were now alive ; in a few hours where might they be ? A puzzling question. Was it right to do the deeds they were preparing for—was it right to invade the Saxons, who had done them no wrong—was it not fearful to die in the act of murder, preparatory to robbery ? Heaven knows ! 'twas too late then to study casuistry. Others again thought of the glory of the coming battle. "Live or die, no matter," thought they, "we take our glorious chance with William and with Harold. It is a thousand times better to fall in fight than to linger under the inflictions of some leech, who drugs the man to death with his nostrums. What is a tedious, monotonous life compared to a glorious death in battle ! Death comes but once, and in God's name be it now with thousands of brave comrades and under such a leader ! Would to Heaven 'twere daylight that we might begin ! Curse on the lingering hours of night ! Oh, the very thoughts of this battle are worth years and years of dull life ; and then, if we survive, glory and riches abide the conquerors."

Such were the thoughts that agitated the soldiers of Duke William. Those of King Harold rejoiced with light heart ; their work was hallowed ; they fought the battle of self-defence—they fought for all that was dear to men, and were conscious of a just and sacred cause : therefore did they pass the night in rejoicing. But the invaders had an evil deed to do, and they sought by prayers to blind their consciences to deeds of destruction.

The glorious fourteenth of October came. Before day broke, Duke William arose, and after a slight repast, sent for the Bishop and communicated : then he ordered his armour to be brought, and all stood round while he donned it. The squire who waited upon him presented him his shirt of mail the back part in front ; many thought this a bad omen, and his people showed signs of alarm : the Duke smiled.

"This is lucky," said he ; "it foretells that my dukedom is to be turned into a kingdom ! the duke's mail won't fit the king's body !" Then looking gravely around, "Sirs," he added, "I never believed in magic nor in divinations, nor in omens ; but have ever put my trust in God."

These words, and the solemn manner in which they were spoken, greatly inspired all who heard them. He then issued

forth, armed in complete and gorgeous panoply, ordering the army to take their weapons.

The day now dawned, but men could yet scarcely distinguish objects : a great sound of trumpets and other music burst with a warlike clang upon the ear from all parts of the camp, and William ascended the mound from which he had the evening before contemplated the enemy, and about this mound his army was formed in dense order. His Spanish horse, a noble animal, given to him by the King of Spain, richly accoutred, was behind, and pawed the ground as if impatient of its coming fate ; for three horses were slain in the fight at Hastings under that intrepid champion. Around were all those who formed the chief's personal retinue, but his own great stature and the rising part of the mound on which he had placed himself, rendered him conspicuous to the whole host ; he looked like a mighty giant, and the mist of the morn seemed to magnify his size.

"Soldiers!" cried he, with a loud voice of command ; "this day show the strength of your arms and the courage of your hearts! Honour and riches attend upon victory. Slavery and death from a merciless enemy await defeat. The sea is behind, retreat impossible: the enemy's fleet is at sea. Be daring, and victory will be yours. I will hang round my neck the holy relics upon which the perjured Harold took his oath : God will give us strength and courage to punish the wickedness of the Saxon chief and his people—those murderers who not long since massacred the Danes. Heaven has delivered them into your hands to punish ; let us go forth, then, and put all to the sword!" As he said this, he hung the relics over his armour, and then mounted his charger.

When the soldiers saw him, high towering upon his huge horse, they gave a general shout ; he seemed a host in himself, and at that instant the sun rose, and its first beams striking upon the polished helmet of the colossal warrior seemed to give him a radiant crown.

"He is crowned! he is crowned! All hail King of England!" burst from a thousand voices, whose shout ascended to the skies.

"Now, reverend fathers," said he to Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, and Geoffry de Montbray, Bishop of Coutances, "say mass." The prelate of Bayeux was in complete armour, carrying a heavy club: but Montbray, unarmed, bore a crucifix. The mass was said, an anthem sung, and loud the

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orisons of the warriors rose to heaven : they prayed for victory over their enemies—over those whose land they came to seize, whose lives they came to destroy, whose women they came to dishonour, whose children they came to enslave ! They came to render desolate an unoffending people, and they prayed the Almighty God for aid in the destruction of those he had created. God said, "Thou shalt not kill," and yet the bishops animated the host to battle ! They unfurled the standard of religion and raised the crucifix on high, as if to say, "Behold Him who died to teach ye peace ! Strike home ! Let blood flow, and rapine stalk through the land ! Do the work of hell ; again crucify the Son of man ; but have faith in the Church, faith in us, and all will be forgiven thee !" As the Pope's banner was raised, Odo gave his breviary to his attendants and retook the weapons. The prelate was a fine man, large of limb and of great prowess in combat.

Duke William now drew up his army, which he formed in three lines.

The first was composed of his bowmen and slingers, with machines for casting stones. This line was commanded by William Fitzosborne and Roger Montgomery, and in it stood the Angevins, Bretons, Manseaux, Pescherons, with the bands of two valiant captains, Aymere and Fergant.

The second line, formed of the heavy-armed infantry, was led by Eustace of Boulogne : here fought the Poitevins, the Boulonnois, and Allemans.

The third line was commanded by the great Duke himself : it consisted wholly of cavalry, and there fought all the Normans.

He drew it up in three divisions.

The first had orders to support the right wings of the two first lines.

The second to support the left wing.

The third, at the head of which he placed himself, supported the centre, and was ready to give aid wherever the battle pressed. This third line, being all of cavalry, and more numerous than the first and second lines, outflanked them.

The morning air was chill, the sun still low upon the horizon, vapours hung upon the ground, and the distant wings melted in the mist of the dawn. On the heights, now gilded by the rising orb of day, the air was more clear ; the Saxon arms on the most prominent points glittered in the sunbeams, while

those more retired were partially shadowed by the steamy vapours of the night still clinging to the hill. The surrounding woods, dropping dew and rich in their autumnal hues, added their broad masses of light and shade to the various scenes, calm spectators of the great tragedy then preparing. Daring courage, quailing cowardice, honour and shame, the thirst of glory, and the dread to die; high hopes, base fears, love, avarice, vengeance, and all the passions which agitate the soul of mortal man, there ran riot. One hundred and sixty thousand men, all desperate to destroy!

Merciful God! thou who from thy eternal throne castest down thy glance upon such deeds, against thy high behests; say how is this, that we so dare to disobey thee, and in the height and fervour of our impiety call upon thee as we strike, and in thy name slay him thou hast commanded us to cherish and to love? Boy! boy! it was the work of hell, and these our orisons were a mockery! But yet the scene was beautiful, and the sight glorious when the fogs brushed away, and the resplendent sun blazed out in all his majesty. Both hosts then stood marshalled to the sight, and on the impulse of the moment, wild ferocious howls of defiance arose from each army, mingling in the shaken air, and echoing in the wood for a time before they died away.

Harold looked down upon the host below with a calm, collected and unshaken fortitude, confident in his soldiers and in himself.

William's heart swelled with exultation as he beheld the high-wrought discipline and bearing of his chivalry: the strong position of Harold was indeed startling; but the Norman leader had never known defeat, and suddenly, animated by his own high recollections, he cried aloud:—

"Warriors of the Val de Dunes, of Hambrières, of Varaville, follow your victorious general!" then waving his heavy mace high in the air, he turned his horse towards the Saxon army.

"Val de Dunes," "Hambrières," and "Varaville," resounded responsive through the advancing battalions of Normandy.

"Raoul de Tony, grand gonfalonier of Normandy, bear thou through this battle the holy standard of the Pope," cried William.

"By the mass no, sire! for such a charge would prevent my fighting, and I mean so to deal my blows upon thine enemies this day, that neither thou nor they shall ever forget it."

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"Then bear it, thou, Walter Giffard," said the Duke to the Count of Longueville.

"Sire, I mean to do no less than that good knight, the grand gonfalonier. I bear nothing this blessed day but my armour, my lance, and your glory."

"Sire," cried the brave Toustan le Blanc, seigneur of Bec-Crespin, "give me the standard, and by the sword of my father I'll plant it on yon hill ere night, or Toustan sees not sunset."

"And the land on which thou plantest it shall be thine : largesse, brave sir," answered William.

"I have thy promise to begin the fight, sire," said Taillefer, as he rode up to the Duke.

"Gallant Taillefer, no man in this good army has a better claim upon William for this honour. Go ! and let thy sword bite as it is wont to do, for all time shall ring with the fame of this great day."

Taillefer rode forth in front of the army, caracoling with his strong Norman horse and singing aloud the song of Roland and Oliver, and the fight of Roncesvalles : his fine voice, loud and clear, rang forth the animating strains so that both armies heard him, and the bold champion as he sang, threw his sword aloft high whirling in the air. He challenged the best Saxon knight to single combat, and down came a mounted opponent at the call, though few had horses : he rode firmly from the hill and charged upon the plain ; their weapons clashed loudly, and the cloven skull of the tall Northumbrian told the prowess of Taillefer. Another and another came, but they too fell beneath the deadly blows of the minstrel-warrior. Furious at the shame, forth strode a sturdy man of Kent on foot : he approached the active Norseman, who rushed on elate with victory and animated by the cheers of the army, but no sooner was he within reach of the Saxon than one blow from the upraised battle-axe felled the champion to the ground, and Taillefer was no more ! The victor sprang upon the horse, and kissing his hand to the enemy rode back into his line : a groan followed the fall of Taillefer, but the invaders came on, and flights of arrows sprang from the Norman bows, whizzing through the air with hurtling sound, and winged by death.

"To your cover !" cried Harold. "Let no man quit the hill—each maintain his ground."

The word passed through the English line, it stepped back under shelter of the high hurdles which, placed above the

heads of the soldiers, received the arrows showered by the enemy, whose first line now mounted the hill covered by the bowmen. The assault was fierce, the resistance firm; the arrows, barred by the hurdles, fell harmless, and the two first lines, broken to pieces against the strong rampart, fled. The moment was critical; the Duke gave the word for his third line to charge, and then that grand chivalry advanced—a wall of moving iron. The earth shook, the air resounded with their cries, and as the huge curling wave leaps at the rocky shore, so the Normans sprang fiercely at the foe.

At that moment the Vala passed rapidly along their front like a wild meteor, her grey dishevelled hair and strange habiliments streaming in the wind; her look was fierce and supernatural as she held aloft the crucifix, and screamed with her unearthly voice, "The rood! the rood! the holy rood!" the word ran like wildfire through the host, a hundred thousand men yelled forth that war-cry, and "The rood! the rood! the holy rood!" responded to "*Dex aie!*" and "*Notre Dame!*" The fracas of arms and armour joined in the crashing uproar, and the war-horse of William bore him headlong up the rampart, bursting through the hedge of axes that bristled on the summit. He reached the Saxon standard. Harold leaping upon the Duke slew his steed; and then that trenchant axe gleamed high above the prostrate horse-encumbered hero, when a swarm of interposed bucklers barred the falling death. On! on! was the cry, yet no courage could force that rampart of strong shields, sharp weapons, and staunch soldiers crowning the ridge. They were repulsed, and went rolling down the height, friend and foe, dead and living, in one confused mass.

Harold's voice was heard above the mighty din:—

"Keep the heights, Saxons, keep the heights; the victory is our own." The word was repeated by thousands, and the outcry spread far and wide along the Saxon line. But the Bretons and men of Boulogne, assailing their left, now fled in disorder, and the bands of Salisbury and Gloucester, bold but inexperienced, disobeyed the orders of their King: seeing the flight of the gendarmes, they dashed down the hill in hot pursuit, and struck reckless into the plains.

William beheld the rout of his right wing, his centre and left repulsed, and a disastrous cry was running through the field that the Duke was slain. The crisis of the battle had arrived, and all hung upon his own great spirit.

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A momentary calm succeeded to this convulsive pang of battle, the fight relaxed. Then the genius of the Duke, towering above disasters, turned the day. He ordered his army again to attack, but after a while to feign a flight. The stratagem succeeded; the Saxons thinking the Normans were routed raised a general shout, and dashed down into the plain beneath, charging the fugitives.

Harold, at the head of his guards, alone remained firm. In vain he despatched orders to restrain the folly, and prevent the disobedience of his rash troops; their rush had been too sudden and impetuous; they went like an avalanche descending a mountain's side. But no sooner had they reached the plain than the pretended fugitives rallied to the cries of Harcourt, Annesly, Longueville, Mowbray, Falconer, Aumerle and Arundel, Warren and Vernon, and a hundred other leaders crying "To the rescue, ho!" They formed upon banner, and pennon, and pennoncel; and to the clangour of trumpets and loud shouts, fifty thousand disciplined warriors dashed, with an awful uproar, upon the disordered Saxons!

Harold saw the ruin. "Stand firm!" cried he to his guards; "the rush up the hill will come anon, and we may save these madmen yet!"

"Ye heroes of Asgaard, how they fight!" added he, looking down upon the conflict. "O God! O God! what madness drew them from the hill?" Uttering this exclamation, he dashed his battle-axe on the ground, as one beside himself with the agony of his feelings.

"Gurth, guard the heights; I will go down and try to save the maniacs."

"No, no, sire! stay thou upon the hill or all will be lost; let me go." Saying this, the brave Gurth rushed down, followed by his bold brother Sweyne.

Then fierce and wild waged the encounter below, man and horse rolled over man and horse, clouds of dust enveloped the battling hosts, and through its powdery veil coruscations of light glanced from armour and arms, gleaming and sparkling in the confused masses. The disciplined Norman cavalry pressed the disordered Saxons, till compressed by danger they closed, and shoulder to shoulder formed a barrier of shields against the charging cavalry: thus the remains of the native arms at last regained the hill—but Gurth and Sweyne had fallen.

"The height! the height! Now, Normans, now or never, follow your Duke!" shouted William, elated and conscious of

his advantage. They had then fought eight hours without intermission, yet the cry of the Duke thrilled through the breasts of his chivalry, overpowering all feelings of fatigue, and with responding cheers, his warriors once more, a serried line of steel, dashed up the slope. Duke William led, but gained not that part of the height where Harold fought, and under one blow of whose destroying battle-axe riders and steeds often fell together! He drove the Normans before him: it was death to encounter the terrible warrior—that day he had no rival but Duke William.

Having repulsed the attack in his front, and seeing that part of the height gained where the Duke fought, Harold called to his guards to follow him, and rushed upon the foe. Then "*Notre Dame! Dex aie!*" again rang with loud defiance, answered by "*The rood! the rood! the holy rood!*" Again the pitch of the stormy battle arose in all its fury; but the Duke and Odo tore down the hurdles as they fought, while with their long sharp swords their followers cut the lashings, making a wide breach, through which the assailants entered in thousands. The Saxons made desperate resistance, and when their rampart was beaten down closed shield to shield, presenting a barrier which no effort could force, and from behind which their heavy long-handled battle-axes and stubborn spears struck with resistless force. Not a foot could William gain upon his valorous enemies, and the combat, though far stretching right and left, hung upon the sharp crest of that bloody height.

Thickly and desperately did the invaders push up for footing on the table-land, and hundreds of self-devoted Saxons, closing with their enemies, flung themselves headlong with their foes in mortal struggle down the steep. There were seen dying men hurling their weapons madly as they lay, and expiring with the effort; and the wounded, resting upon their shields, yet still striking feebly at the foe ere they fell. Yet the impenetrable line of Saxons held the crest unbroken, and once more the scales of fate seemed turning against the Normans: one moment longer and again would the invaders have been beaten back by the intrepid sons of the soil.

"Now relics befriend us!" cried the Bishop, as an esquire handed him his bow, and the arrow headed with the holy nail, the present of the Pope to Duke William. "I vowed, that if the battle went hard this arrow should turn it: high in the air let it fly, and Heaven direct its fall!"

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Whizzing the shaft disappeared in the skies, and the man, the words, the act, all drew attention from friends and foes. For an instant their struggle ceased—the uplifted axe hung in air, and knee to knee, and shield against shield for a moment kept their hostile pressure motionless. Harold, whose glance watched all changes of that tumultuous field, beheld with surprise this sudden suspension of the fight; following with his eyes the upcast looks of the combatants, the descending arrow struck deep into his brain, and the great, the glorious hero fell a corpse. A loud, wailing cry ran through the Saxon ranks, and the shout of victory issued from the exulting Normans.

“*Dex aie* and forward! Now, brave Toustain, now! By the splendour of God, the day is our own!” shouted William, as with his whirling mace he rushed forward and struck the strong bearer of the Saxon standard to the earth; then Toustain, careering hard upon his chief’s lead, planted the sacred banner of the Pope, while the Duke beat down all who tried to rally round the body of their monarch. The Norman warriors soon clustered around, and the fight for the fourth time waged madly, but the Saxons had lost the crest of the height and their leader! Still the combat was maintained upon the tableland, and desperately; till no longer able to resist the Normans, who swarmed upon their flank, the Saxons slowly gave ground: they did not fly, but beaten by their want of discipline yielded.

So fought, so fell the Saxon soldiers of the great Harold. Broken but desperate, they still strove furiously, and only step by step did the Normans win their way in carnage.

The position was lost, the Saxon army staggered, reeled, and back, back, back; the invaders forced the island combatants; when, lo! a new leader appeared—it was Editha! Her countenance calm, her eye shining with a feverish lustre, her face of a deadly hue. She sat firmly on her white barb, her hair was loose and dishevelled, the golden fly above her forehead alone seemed to have held its place in the disorder of her white dress, which was stained with the blood of the wounded; a light shield was on her left arm, apparently placed there against her will, for she seemed indifferent to the protection which it afforded. Following her closely was the Vala, strange, wild, and impatient, but checked by the calmness of Editha’s master spirit. With these came the big Gunilda; her eyes flashed, she carried a battle-axe, was clothed in a shirt of

mail smeared with gore, and seemed to wait impatiently for work as the Queen rode into the combat.

"Elstan, is it true that the King is slain?" said Editha to a gory warrior resting on his target, bleeding and exhausted.

"Yes, lady, it is true! Fly hence, for nought but death is here; away, for the love of God, away! Where are Sweyne, Morcar, Ailwin, Gurth, Canute?"

"There is Canute," answered the huntsman, pointing to a man who was a few yards in front, cheering on his fellows, and with his weapon dealing rude blows around. Morcar at that moment came up.

"Fly! fly, Editha! all is lost!"

"Yes, for me, Morcar, but not yet for the Saxons. Seest thou that bank? Between it and where we now stand there is a deep moat filled with weeds, so as to appear like the firm greensward around. It has a sudden fall, and is deep, but there are firm passages across it where I have left men to mark them for our retiring soldiers. Give way here, rally on that dyke, and there we may yet save the day."

"I see," cried Earl Erick the Forester, seizing the advantage of the movement with the quickness of a warrior's eye.

"But fly thou, Editha," said Morcar, "for Heaven's sake fly, or you will be slain!"

"I fear not, Morcar. I will not fly. To the dyke—to the dyke! I see the Normans gathering upon the flanks. Ride everywhere and cry—To the dyke!"

On the word, Erick, Morcar, Gunilda, and the Vala rode along the battle. "*To the dyke—to the dyke!*" rang through that bloody field.

As Editha turned her horse to lead, an arrow struck her shield.

"Good shield," said she, "save me till I restore the battle, and then I have done with thee, for thou wouldst keep me from the death I yearn for. There, there, brave Saxons, there must be your stand!" she cried aloud, riding swiftly, and pointing to the dyke; "but mind the passes of the ditch. The victory will yet be ours."

"All is lost! the King is killed! all is lost!" cried a coward wretch, as he cast away his arms for flight.

"No, no! the King is not killed; he waits you on the dyke! To the dyke! I say, to the dyke!"

The shrill voice of Editha, as she half-shrieked these words with a desperate effort, was heard even in the din of that dread





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tumult ; and the brave hearts who heard it, and all who beheld the Queen, seemed animated with new fury for the contest. The rush for the opening was now general, and as they passed, Editha, and the remaining Saxon thanes, ranged them hastily on the low dyke which scarcely rose above the rest of the ground, but had the deep, marshy ditch in front. The brave Saxons who covered the retreat, kept their foes at bay while their countrymen occupied the new ground, and then themselves retired across the passes.

The desperate resistance made against the foremost Normans allowed time for those invaders who were in the rear to close up ; a pause in the sanguinary fray took place, and the exhausted armies for a moment fronted each other, breathless and desperate. Some rested panting on their swords and long heater shields, others on their battle-axes ; many leaped from their horses in haste to draw tight their saddle-girths ; all were breathing hard, and most were bleeding with wounds, while imprecations, and abuse, and defiance, were poured forth by either host. The fiery William was not in front ; his horse had been slain by Elstan, and ere he could mount a fourth charger the battle had passed forward.

Seizing the moment, Editha passed at speed along the Saxon front, exclaiming,—

“No flying, Saxons ! faithful to the death ! your Queen leads you !”

The cessation from havoc was but momentary.

“Why halt ye, sirs ? forward, and set upon these Saxon dogs !” cried the fierce Odo, as he brandished his club, and spurred his hot charger against the defenders of the dyke. The appeal was answered by the courageous Normans, and the mailed champions of Neustria and Armorica again dashed forward with an appalling yell.

“The rood, the rood ! the holy rood !” echoed along the dyke, and the charging Norman squadrons, blinded by rage, saw not the ditch, mistook the thick green weeds for the sound sod, and down, down they went, headlong into the traitorous fen, where the mud covered them. A taunting laugh pealed from the ranks above, and javelins and stones were hurled upon the struggling men below. Astounded by the fall of those in front, the Normans checked their charge, but those behind still pushed them with resistless pressure into that insatiate quagmire, while Editha led the Saxons forward to the attack through the firm passages across the greedy swamp.

Sallying thus, with hideous outcries, the battle raged more terribly than ever. Nearly all the Saxon chiefs had fallen around their King; but bold leaders are never wanting where brave men abound, and the storm burst vengeful on the foe as the shouting Saxon, ethel-born and ceorl-born, chiefman and socman, burst from the dyke, outgushing as a torrent. The battle thunder rolled from the nearer heights, along the distant hollows, rising and falling, as the press and turmoil of war poured its overboiling violence. Clattering blows resounded, helm and shield were bent and rived, ruthless imprecations met unheeded prayers, and spear and sword, and seax, and curtle-axe, and battle-axe, drove through shattered armour, freeing souls from carnal tenements.

Heedless of danger Editha rode, pallid and tranquil, through the contest.

"Forward, Saxons, forward! your Queen is with you!" were now the only words she uttered, while the Vala held high the cross, and the Amazonian Gunilda fought in the thickest of the strife.

Three times did the chivalrous Bishop Odo rally the Norman knights; but unable to withstand the storm, they gave way, and victory was once more with the Saxons.

At that crisis Duke William arrived, fresh mounted. He saw all the danger. He sent his loud voice ringing through his fainting battalions, and they rallied.

"Save yourself, sire; we are lost if we retire not on the instant," whispered the experienced Eustache of Boulogne, as he leaned forward to approach the ear of the hero. Those words were his last.

"Ha, villain! I have thee now," screamed a female voice, like the cry of the sea-mew in the storm. It was the voice of Gunilda, and her axe descended on the poll of Eustache. He fell heavily from his horse, his arms clanked with a dead sound, and the parting breath of life rattled in his throat.

"That, caitiff, for thy deeds at Dover! Now, my father, thy daughter has avenged thee! Saxons, follow Gunilda!"

"And her son Ethelred," shouted a youth, as he darted forward with the spear that he had snatched from the expiring Eustache.

"Art thou there, Ethelred? Varlet, get thee hence," said Gunilda, as she attacked Aumari de Thuars.

"Nay, mother mine, not so; I am thy son," and he thrust the deadly spear into the throat of the Norman.

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"Thou *art* mine own son by Odin ! On, Saxons ; the day is ours !" The next instant she fell pierced by an arrow.

And the day was not theirs. Death had thinned the ranks of both armies, and they closed in one confused and serried mass of combatants, so that the fate of that great duel hung no longer upon the cunning of leaders, but upon the thews and sinews of those intrepid and struggling gladiators.

—SIR W. NAPIER, *William the Conqueror*.

III

King or Priest

OUR story carries us to Bares in Normandy, where King Henry II. was keeping his Christmas. Many of the Norman Barons who sat at the table remarked that the King had never appeared more cheerful; he seemed, indeed, to have regained the buoyant spirit of former years. The King occupied the seat of honour on the dais, and around him sat many of his favourites, among whom were Reginald Fitzurse, Hugh de Merville, Tracy, and Brito; their conversation had turned upon a variety of matters, none of much import, and the wine cup had also circulated freely, and all either were, or pretended to be, in excellent spirits.

"Thou art in a merry mood to-night, De Corbel," said Henry, addressing one of his peers, whose jokes had before created much laughter among the barons; for these nobles made no scruple at jesting with religion over their wine cups:—"Thou art in a merry mood, but how thou canst prove that the saints sit laughing at the follies of us poor mortals surpasseth my understanding."

He was interrupted by an attendant, to whom he replied, "Admit them instantly"; then muttered to himself, "York, London, and Sarum;—what meaneth this?" All eyes were instantly turned upon the three prelates who now entered the hall, the Archbishop of York leading the way. Henry beckoned him to approach the dais; and, with a changed countenance, enquired: "What ill news have ye brought me? What—what hath brought ye from England?" Henry averted his head when he had put the question; for he saw at a glance that they were the bearers of evil tidings.

"The Primate hath driven us from England, my liege," said the Archbishop of York.

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were excommunicated or suspended," continued the Bishop of London.

"He carrieth fire and sword through the land ; and marcheth through every town with an armed rabble at his heels," added the Bishop of Salisbury.

"Goeth prowling about the fortresses, and endeavoureth to get his armed ruffians within the walls," resumed York.

"Entered Canterbury with the bleeding bodies of his enemies borne before him," echoed London.

"And vowed that he would not rest until he had so trampled upon the blood of all who had opposed him," chimed in Salisbury, speaking from report.

"Nay, more ; he even—" again began the Archbishop of York. But he was checked by Henry, who, springing up from his seat, exclaimed, in a voice of thunder: "Peace! peace! drive me not mad!"

It is almost impossible to convey to the reader a true picture of the scene up to the time that the monarch sprang from his seat ; the eagerness with which the ears of the barons drank in these rumours, the looks they exchanged with each other ; but, above all, the countenance of the King. As the bishops proceeded, he turned from one to the other like a lion at bay, as if he had made up his mind to escape, by bursting through all that surrounded him, but was at a loss for the moment at what point to make the first rush. As one after another took up the complaint, his fierce eyes went from face to face, until they assumed that blazing fierceness which was so terrible to look upon ; and that deep crimson hue glowed on his countenance, which gave him so much the looks of a lion, whose deep roaring was about to make every beast of the forest tremble. But when he had lashed himself into the very height of his anger and sprang up (overturning De Corbel and Glanvil as he arose), and bellowed forth, "Drive me not mad," he placed both his hands on the upper folds of his rich tunic, ground his teeth together, stamped with his foot upon the earth, ripped the costly garment from his shoulders, tore off his belt and trampled upon it ; seized a handful of rushes from the floor, threw them over his head, gnawed them between his teeth, and acted the part of a raving madman.

Almost unconscious of what he uttered, he at length exclaimed, as he turned upon the barons in the fury of his agony—"And this from one who hath fed out of my hand, a beggar whom I raised from the earth—a fellow who came to my court

upon a lame horse, now tramples upon my very heart!—now seeks to tear the kingdom from my grasp. And ye," added he, his eyes flaming as he gazed along the long lines of his guests; "towards, whom I nourish daily at my table, not one of ye have courage enough to deliver me from this turbulent priest." He could say no more, his fierce passion had overpowered him, and he would have fallen upon the floor of the hall, had he not been caught by the bishops and led away.

Scarcely had Henry quitted the hall, before Fitzurse arose from the banquet; he was speedily followed by De Morville; Tracy and Brito met them at an appointed place; the night was dark, but the wind blew fair for the shores of England.

One after another did the knights spur to the appointed place, each taking a separate path to avoid suspicion. Many a passenger halted on the road to listen to the furious tramping of their steeds in the darkness, when the distance no longer showed the sparks of fire, which their hoofs struck upon the pathway. They met together in the shadow of a rock by the seashore, where there was no sound but the heavy panting of their steeds, and the deep roaring of the breakers. Each horseman alighted, and stood with the reins of his steed thrown over his arm, and waited for several moments in silence. Reginald Fitzurse was the first to speak.

"If there is one amongst you," said he, his voice half buried by the sound of the waves, and scarcely reaching beyond the ears of his companions, "who feeleth his heart to falter, let him return ere it is too late. All we require of him being his knightly word to keep our mission a secret."

All expressed their determination to proceed, befall what might.

"Let every man, then, draw his sword," continued the baron, "and swear upon it that if the Primate refuseth to recall the sentences of excommunication which he hath issued against our friends, all and each of us shall do our *devoir* to deprive him of his life; that neither time nor place shall prevent us from shedding his blood; and that every one of us shall strike a blow to hasten his death. Swear!"

They crossed their swords over each other; and when Reginald Fitzurse again repeated the sentence, each knight swore, "So may it befall us if we keep not our oath, and may we find no mercy in the day of doom."

"Forward, then," said Fitzurse; "the very vessel which brought over the bishops lieth near at hand, and before another

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They rode a little way along the coast, and halted where the sail of a Norman galley glanced through the darkness. A few words from Fitzurse served to explain that their business was urgent, and concerned the King, and the mariners were speedily in motion. Their steeds were safely placed in the hold, the plash of the oars was heard, the huge sail bellied itself before the wind, and the carved dragon which ornamented the prow of the galley now turned its scaly head to the broad ocean, and shot through the rolling waves, till, by the noon of next day, they came in sight of the "pale-faced shore," and landed safely at Dover.

They halted not to refresh themselves, for no sooner were their steeds landed, than they again sprang into their saddles, nor once drew in the rein until they reached Saltwood, which is but a short distance from Canterbury. Here dwelt Ranulph de Broc, who took so active a part at the landing of Becket, and had since rendered himself more obnoxious to the Primate by maiming one of his sumpter horses.

"What brings ye hither in such haste?" said De Broc, as they alighted within the courtyard of the castle.

"Revenge!" muttered Fitzurse, slackening the girths of his steed; "or we have come to redeem our honour, if thou wilt. The King hath upbraided us with cowardice for allowing this cursed Primate so long to disturb his peace. So we deemed it high time to bestir ourselves."

"An that be your intent," said De Broc, "I will e'en stir up more forces; for, trust me, it will need some caution in approaching the lair of this wolf, for he stands high in the opinions of the multitude. But what say ye, have ye the King's consent to dispatch him?"

"Have I not told thee," replied Fitzurse sternly, "that Henry said we were cowards, or we should ere this have given the turbulent priest his quietus? True, he was angered when he spoke thus, but his wish joined with what had long been our own, and we gave him not time to cool. Either this proud churchman shall recall his curses, or another sun shall set upon his bleeding corse."

"Nay, I am one of those against whom his anathemas have been thundered," said De Broc, "though the devil a wink have I slept the less for it. There are also several others who groan under the same yoke, and if we will but abide until the mor-

row I doubt not but that I shall be able to raise such a force as will keep the whole mob of Canterbury in awe."

"It were wisdom," said Hugh de Morville, "to wait until then, for the day is fast declining, and I would fain so begin this work, that we may be able to accomplish it before tidings reach us from the King."

"It is wisely said," added De Tracy, "and would but be folly to proceed without a sufficient power to quell the adherents of Becket; for, trust me, we shall find him no cur that flies before us. Remember his bold bearing at Northampton."

"I have fought by his side," said Brito; "and although I am now in arms against him, yet do I respect his valour; and had he but remained what he then was, I would rather have severed my arm from my body than have uplifted it against him."

"I would fain that our victory should be bloodless," added Ranulph de Broc, "although I hate this haughty Primate to the death. But it will be well if we can compel him to withdraw these sentences without shedding his blood, for, trust me, it would be no light matter, for pope and priest would proclaim him a martyr; and though he had no more sanctity than Durand the Dane, who cut down monks as the serfs do billet-wood, yet would they be ready to register him among the saints. I speak not this to save his life, for if he refuses to retract the sentences, hand and glove will I go with ye, until we have either compelled him, or so left him that he shall never utter his curses again."

Fitzurse muttered something which was inaudible, and De Broc departed to muster a sufficient force together to overawe the adherents of Becket should they offer any resistance.

It was past the noon of the following day, and Becket was seated in the hall of the palace, attended by Gryme, and others of his household, when they were suddenly startled by the sound of voices, for the place was closely besieged. All, saving the Primate, showed symptoms of alarm; but he scarcely deigned to raise his eyes from the missal he was perusing. Presently, four men in armour entered the apartment, and sat down, without speaking, on a long oaken bench opposite the Archbishop; several men-at-arms also stood within the doorway. Becket saluted the mailed intruders, but they made no reply, and only knit their brows, or bit the ends of their gauntlets as they from time to time glanced upon him, or exchanged looks of

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dangerous meaning among themselves. Several monks who were in the hall, huddled together like a flock of affrighted sheep, were doubtless glad enough when they received a signal from Becket to retire; Gryme alone, out of the number, only remaining behind.

"What means this intrusion?" said the Primate, first breaking the painful silence, and speaking in a tone which scarcely accorded with the boldness of the interrogation. But not one of the knights replied, and the Primate gathered courage as he again repeated the question, and added, "Speak, unless ye are ashamed to utter your errand. What would you with me?"

The knights gazed again upon each other, then looked savagely upon Becket, and, having muttered something among themselves, Reginald Fitzurse at last said, "We have come from the King; our business is to see that you absolve the excommunicated bishops, and re-establish those whom you have suspended."

"Ah," muttered Becket, the blood instantly mounting his cheek, "you come from the King! and hath he then been bold enough to entrust you with such a commission?"

"We have brought no commission," replied Fitzurse, in a stern voice, "no parchment, with the broad seal of England affixed to it, that the Pope might hold as a bond, and utter his curses until he obtained payment; but we have come, with sharp swords and few words, to complete our errand."

"Such are the weapons of ruffians and robbers," said Becket, undaunted by their menaces, "and ye may carry them on the highways to lighten travellers of their mails. On me they will but be wasted."

"Speak in gentler terms," whispered Brito; "he has been a brave soldier, and learnt to laugh at threats."

"Thou dost, then, refuse to absolve the bishops," continued Fitzurse, with difficulty suppressing his fierce tones.

"I do," replied Becket, firmly, "unless they are willing to make submission, and abide by the decisions of Rome. As to the Archbishop of York, I will never recall his sentence; but have left him to be dealt with by his Holiness the Pope, whose sanction I have had for what is done."

"Who gave you the Archbishopric?" said Reginald Fitzurse, in an authoritative tone, "the King or the Pope?"

"The spiritual power I hold from Heaven and his Holiness,"

replied Becket, briefly, "the mere temporal rights from the King; nor can he deprive me of them."

"Hath not the King given you all?" enquired Fitzurse, knitting his dark brows as he spoke.

"No, he hath not," replied Becket; "ye need not to have put such a question, well knowing that if he had, he could, ere this, have divested me of the power. I am not accountable to him for what I do."

Fitzurse gnashed his teeth, and grappled the hilt of the dagger which was in his belt. The rest of the knights murmured deeply to themselves, and by their restlessness showed with what difficulty they subdued their feelings.

"It was but revenge that caused you to suspend and excommunicate the bishops," said Hugh de Morville. "They did but do their duty and merited it not."

"Hugh de Morville, it is not for thee to dictate to thy superior," said the haughty churchman. "Callest thou falling from their head doing their duty? I, who stood up for their liberties, and would allow no one to trample upon their privileges with impunity, but underwent a thousand privations to ward off and baffle the invader,—how did they reward me?—by going over to the enemy—by persecuting and punishing all who had the honesty to adhere to me during my exile. Thinkest thou that I have forgotten the sufferings of those who, bare-footed and an-hungered, came for succour to my cell at Pontigny—who were banished and houseless beggars, while these unfeeling churchmen were fattening upon their spoils—were bartering their conscience and their creed, that they might pamper their gross appetites, preferring ease and comfort and the world's possessions to the good of the Church? Nay, went even the length to insult me in my misery, by sending taunting epistles, and insolent messages. And yet these are the men that I am to pardon, and such deeds as these you call duty."

"They did their duty, inasmuch as they obeyed the bidding of their King," replied De Morville, "and all are traitors who do not."

"Even as thou art," said Ranulph de Broc, who had by this time entered the hall.

"Hold thy peace!" said the Primate, turning to De Broc, "lest I extend the curse which already rests upon thee, and doom all thy kindred to the third generation to share the dreadful sentence." Then, addressing the knights, he added,

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"Think ye that your threats or menacing looks, which, when put in force, can but torture for a few moments my body, weigh aught beside the holy resolves of my soul, that obeys no will but the dictates of Heaven, and which no earthly power can shake? If so, then are ye indeed to be pitied."

"We will do more than threaten," said the fiery Fitzurse, but ill brooking the contemptuous look of Becket; "we will make ourselves feared, unless thou dost absolve all those who are under thy ban. Rise, knights!" added he, unsheathing his sword, "and remember your oaths; it is but a waste of time to hold further parley with him."

"Do as ye list," said Becket, confronting them, not a shadow of fear appearing on his countenance. "I stood firm in the hall of Clarendon, when a score of swords were pointed at my throat; nor can your weapons for a moment shake my firm resolve. Nor will I submit, were ye to kneel to me until your knees grew to the floor. Desist, Gryme!" added he, addressing the monk, who was about to ring a bell to alarm the monks; "we have no need of earthly aid. Heaven will preserve me if it be its pleasure; and I can never perish in a more holy cause than that I am now maintaining. Ye have long sought my life," added he, again facing his enemies; "have hunted me through the land like a beast of prey; yet God delivered me from your vengeance, and the great work for which He preserved me is now accomplished; the bond but wants sealing with my blood, and I am ready to finish the deed."

"Fly!" said Fitzurse, uplifting the point of his sword to within an inch of the Primate's throat, yet fearing to strike, so much was he overawed by the bold bearing of Becket. "Swear that thou wilt never again set foot upon English ground, and thy life may yet be spared. Do this, or instantly beshow the bishops, or death is thy doom."

"Let us escape!" said Gryme, throwing himself at the archbishop's feet; "why wilt thou shed thy blood in quarrelling with those who have neither the fear of God nor man afore their eyes?"

"Keep thy tongue silent," said the Archbishop sternly; and leave me not at last to think so meanly of thee, as that thou wouldst sacrifice thy duty to Heaven, that thou mightest eathe a few more brief days." The faithful monk shrank back at this rebuke. Then, turning to the knights, he added, "Ye were my servants, sworn liege-men to me, as your lord;

nor have I as yet freed ye from your oaths. How dare ye thus to enter my palace, and threaten me in my hall?"

"We have bound ourselves by a new oath since that day," said De Tracy.

"And it will grieve me if we are compelled to keep it," added Brito.

Just then the bell sounded for service in the cathedral, and bidding Gryme lead the way, the Archbishop again looked upon the knights and said: "Ye have heard mine answer; nor must I longer delay the service of the church"; saying which he departed with a firm step through a door which led to the cathedral.

The knights arose to follow him with their swords ready drawn; but they hesitated a moment, and the door was closed upon them. "Ye are but cowards!" exclaimed Fitzurse, "to allow him to escape; let us follow."

"That name never belonged to me or mine," replied De Morville, stepping up and confronting him. "Why did you not strike when your sword was at his throat? it was the action of a coward to withdraw it."

"Ye stood like idle spectators," answered the fiery knight; "had I but have been encouraged by your looks only, I would have struck; but ye all quailed before him."

"It is but wasting time," said De Tracy, "thus to bandy words with each other; let us to the cathedral and make him prisoner, unless he will absolve the bishops; and fulfil our purpose."

"A quiet prisoner shall he be, when I next look upon him," said the savage Fitzurse, "unless he does my bidding: I will make up for this delay." So saying he led the way into the courtyard, and was followed by his companions-at-arms.

Disregarding the advice of his faithful attendants, who, with tears in their eyes, knelt down and implored him to fly, the undaunted Prelate commanded Gryme to take up the crucifix, and lead the way along the cloisters:—for the voices of the monks singing vespers in the choir fell upon his ear. With folded arms, his haughty head elevated, and his fine features possessing even more than their ordinary dignity, he traversed the pillared cloisters with stately and measured steps, while the long train of his rich dalmatic swept over the rudely carved gravestones, under which so many of his pious predecessors slept. They entered the northern transept, and his followers lingered behind a few moments to secure the door.

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Becket turned upon them with a stern look, and exclaimed in a deep tone,—“Why tarry ye there? fear ye to follow me?—if so, retire; if not, in the name of God come along, for the hour of my last service draweth near.”

“We would but render the outer doors secure, holy father,” replied a monk, “that these men of blood may not pollute the threshold of Christ’s church by their unclean footsteps.”

“Would ye fortify the house of God like a castle?” exclaimed the Archbishop sternly; “unbar the door instantly, and let it not be said that the representative of Christ made a fortress of the holy Church to save his life;—unbar the door! and whichever of you feeleth his footsteps to falter, follow me not.”

They all lingered behind, saving the faithful Gryme, who boldly preceded his master, bearing the silver crucifix before him, until they entered the church. The Archbishop lifted up his eyes as they gained the choir, and glanced at the vaulted and fretted roof, which stretched high above in its antique and gloomy grandeur, for the shades of evening were fast falling upon pillar and shrine; and the deep niches, in which stood the figures of many a saint and angel, were already darkened. Down the long aisles, however, the last rays of the sinking sun fell with a solemn splendour, and flashed upon the silver crucifix, which the faithful monk held up at arm’s length, while a portion of the dying glory crimsoned the lofty brow of Becket, and fell upon his rich drapery.

Here and there too a lonely lamp cast its shimmering light along the shadowy and obscure crypts, half revealing the shrine of the silver Virgin or saint before which it blazed, and giving a deeper darkness to the pillared recesses which its aint beams endeavoured in vain to illumine. The setting sun also gathered his golden garments around him, until the last gleam of splendour hung athwart the rainbow dyes of the ch window, falling along the edge of a descending cloud like a streak of flame, then leaving the deepening twilight to gather over the massy pile,—slow, and solemn, and soundless as the approach of sleep.

Meantime the monks from the choir had struck up the sper song, and the deep melody of their voices rushed rough the pillared aisles like the solemn sounding of the ean. Becket stood unmoved listening to that flood of holy lody, with his head slightly bent, and his hands clasped gether.

There was something strangely solemn and impressive in the whole of the scene ; the dim daylight which was fast fading away, and had in many places given way to the grey tints of evening,—the lamps which stood silently burning before the different shrines,—the huge pillars which assumed strange shadowy and gigantic shapes in the spreading gloom,—all wore a mysterious kind of grandeur, which, whether combined or taken apart, struck upon the soul with a feeling of holy awe, that scarcely seemed to belong to earth.

Even Becket was bound down for a few moments beneath the mighty silence which settled far and wide over the vast cathedral : it was but for a moment, and he sprang up like the gallant war-horse, that but listens until the sound of the trumpet dies away,—then rears, and is ready for the coming combat. So did he, in a voice which startled the calm of the cathedral, bid Gryme lead on to the altar, while he followed with rapid strides, and with a glance which, as it caught the flashing rays from the silver lamps, seemed to kindle with daring devotion. A meet genius to preside over that magnificent pile, appeared Thomas à Becket, as he ascended the steps before the altar of St. Bennet, and drew up the folds of his flowing drapery.

Scarcely had the Archbishop ascended the steps of the altar, before the sound of axes was heard without, hewing at the doors of the cathedral ; for in spite of Becket's remonstrance, the affrighted attendants had secured more than one entrance. All trembled, saving he whose life they sought ; but not a shadow of fear rested upon the Prelate : his lips were slightly compressed, and his calm eye traversed the length of the gloomy aisle, as if it sought amid the distant gloom to discover the cause of the uproar.

"Fly, my beloved master!" said Gryme, his voice tremulous with fear, and scarcely audible above the battering of the axes, as they rung upon the ponderous doors of the cathedral ; "they will search for you in vain amid the dark crypts and subterraneous vaults of the building ;—escape ! and leave us to bear the whole burst of their anger : they will harm no one but yourself ;—it is your blood for which they thirst."

"Never !" replied the Archbishop in a firm voice ; "were a thousand battle-axes brandished over my head, and each one could give me a separate death, I would not stir a foot. I have enlisted under the banner of heaven ; and, by the help of God, will die in fighting the battles of the Church."





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"If not for your own sake," continued the faithful monk, still retaining the hem of the mantle in his grasp, "O refuse not to save yourself for the sake of the Church of Christ,—" the remainder of his arguments were lost amid the deafening din of the assailants ; for the door was now broken open with a loud crash, which rent off the very hinges.

At this moment the form of Reginald Fitzurse was seen approaching, sheathed in complete mail, which flashed back the blaze of the lamps that still burnt before the shrines ; while his sword, as he waved it above his head, also glittered in the trembling light. "Where is the traitor ?" exclaimed he, approaching and brandishing his weapon ; while his voice, which was hoarse and thick with rage, echoed loudly through the vaulted aisle. No answer was, however, made, and for a few moments only the mailed steps of the savage barons were heard as they came up the centre aisle.

"Where is the Archbishop ?" vociferated the stormy Norman in a voice of thunder, which was caught up and given back by the awakened echoes.

"Here am I, the Archbishop, but no traitor !" replied Becket in a firm tone of voice, and without either eye or lip betraying a symptom of fear. "Here am I, ready to suffer in my Saviour's name ! How dare ye enter into this holy place in arms ? What want ye here ?"

"Your life !" answered Fitzurse, briefly and terribly.

"Come hither !" said Tracy, pulling Becket by the sleeve ; "thou art a prisoner."

The Prelate jerked away his arm with such force that the motion caused Tracy to stagger, and he would have fallen backward on the pavement, had he not caught the arm of Hugh de Morville and checked himself.

"Fly, or thou diest !" said Brito, striking the Archbishop on the shoulder with the flat of his sword. But Becket stirred not ; and bold and brutal as these knights were, they at first feared to take away his life before the altar.

"Fly, or thou art dead !" said the savage Fitzurse, uplifting his sword as if to strike. But the attendant Gryme, now fully aroused to the danger, upheaved the silver cross and struck the Norman such a blow, that had it not been for his steel helmet, he would never again have uplifted sword.

"Ah ! dealest thou such blows with thy spiritual weapon !" said Tracy, uplifting his sword, and aiming a blow at the

monk; but Gryme parried the stroke with the crucifix, and was again instantly at his master's side.

"Resist them not!" said Becket; "let them work their will upon me. Had it been my intention to resist, I would have met them in warlike guise; it beseemeth not that the temple of Christ should be turned into a place of combat."

Fitzurse ground his teeth with sheer rage, while he listened and his eyeballs flashed with madness as he exclaimed, "Then die, thou base reviler!" and, uplifting his sword, he aimed a blow at the head of Becket; which, although the faithful Gryme interposed his own arm, which was nearly severed, nevertheless wounded Becket in the shaven part of his crown, and the blood instantly fell down his face in a torrent. Still the Archbishop moved not; but, clasping his hands together and bowing his head, exclaimed: "To God, to Saint Mary, and to the Holy Patrons of this church, I commend my soul and the Church's cause." A second blow from the sword of Hugh de Morville brought him to the ground, and he fell at the foot of the altar, and even then folded his robe in "dying dignity," that he might perish as became the bold leader of God's Church. A third blow was struck by the brutal Brito with such force upon the head, that his sword broke upon the pavement. Tracy dealt the last savage stroke; but it was scarce needed, for the outstretched limbs of the dying Prelate were fast stiffening into death.

—T. MILLER, *Fair Rosamond*.

In Camp Tent

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In Camp and Tent

SURROUNDED by his valiant peers of England and Normandy, Richard Cœur de Lion stood on the summit of Saint George's Mount, with the banner of England by his side, borne by the most goodly person in the army, being his own natural brother, William with the Long Sword, Earl of Salisbury, the offspring of Henry the Second's amour with the celebrated Rosamond of Woodstock.

The powers of the various crusading princes, arrayed under their royal and princely leaders, swept in long order around the base of the little mound; and as those of each different country passed by, their commanders advanced a step or two up the hill, and made a signal of courtesy to Richard and to the standard of England, "in sign of regard and amity," as the protocol of the ceremony heedfully expressed it, "not of subjection or vassalage." The spiritual dignitaries, who in those days veiled not their bonnets to created being, bestowed on the King and his symbol of command their blessing instead of rendering obeisance.

Thus the long files marched on, and, diminished as they were by so many causes, appeared still an iron host to whom the conquest of Palestine might seem an easy task. The soldiers, inspired by the consciousness of united strength, sat erect in their steel saddles, while it seemed that the trumpets sounded more cheerfully shrill, and the steeds, refreshed by rest and provender, chafed on the bit, and trod the ground more proudly. On they passed, troop after troop, banners waving, spears glancing, plumes dancing, in long perspective—a host composed of different nations, complexions, languages, arms, and appearances, but all fired, for the time, with the holy yet romantic purpose of rescuing the distressed daughter

of Zion from her thralldom, and redeeming the sacred earth, which more than mortal had trodden, from the yoke of the unbelieving pagan. And it must be owned that if, in other circumstances, the species of courtesy rendered to the King of England by so many warriors, from whom he claimed no natural allegiance, had in it something that might have been thought humiliating, yet the nature and cause of the war was so fitted to his pre-eminently chivalrous character and renowned feats in arms that claims, which might elsewhere have been urged, were there forgotten; and the brave did willing homage to the bravest, in an expedition where the most undaunted and energetic courage was necessary to success.

The good King had a morion on his head, surmounted by a crown, which left his manly features exposed to public view, as with cool and considerate eye he perused each rank as it passed him, and returned the salutation of the leaders. His tunic was of sky-coloured velvet, covered with plates of silver, and his hose of crimson silk, slashed with cloth of gold. By his side stood an Ethiopian slave, holding a noble dog in a leash, such as was used in woodcraft. It was a circumstance which attracted no notice, for many of the princes of the Crusade had introduced black slaves into their household, in imitation of the barbarous splendour of the Saracens. In the background, and on the very summit of the mount, a wooden turret, erected for the occasion, held the Queen Berengaria and the principal ladies of the court.

The ceremony was indifferent to the King personally, but he regarded it as important when considered as atoning an indignity offered to the kingdom which he ruled. The King's standard had been stolen, and not one of the chiefs of the great army could throw light upon the occurrence. To show that it was not meant as an insult to the King of England, the whole army marched past the English post; and only when such leaders approached as, from circumstances of previous ill-will, he suspected of being accessory to the theft of the standard, or whom he judged capable of a crime so mean, did he show signs of interest.

When Philip Augustus of France approached at the head of his splendid troops of Gallic chivalry, he anticipated the motions of the French king by descending the mount as the latter came up the ascent, so that they met in the middle space, and blended their greeting so gracefully that it appeared they

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met in fraternal equality. The sight of the two greatest princes in Europe, in rank at once and power, thus publicly avowing their concord called forth bursts of thundering acclaim from the crusading host at many miles' distance, and made the roving Arab scouts of the desert alarm the camp of Saladin with the intelligence that the army of the Christians was in motion. Yet who but the King of kings can read the hearts of monarchs? Under this rude show of courtesy Richard nourished displeasure and suspicion against Philip, and Philip meditated withdrawing himself and his host from the army of the Cross, and leaving Richard to accomplish or fail in the enterprise with his own unassisted forces.

Richard's demeanour was different when the dark-armed knights and squires of the Temple chivalry approached, men with countenances bronzed to Asiatic blackness by the suns of Palestine, and the admirable state of whose horses and appointments far surpassed even that of the choicest troops of France and England. The King cast a hasty glance aside, but the Nubian stood quiet, and his trusty dog sat at his feet, watching with a sagacious yet pleased look the ranks which now passed before them. The King's look turned again on the chivalrous Templars as the Grand Master, availing himself of his mingled character, bestowed his benediction on Richard as a priest, instead of doing him reverence as a military leader.

"The misproud and amphibious caitiff puts the monk upon me," said Richard to the Earl of Salisbury. "But, Long-Sword, we will let it pass. A punctilio must not lose Christendom the services of these experienced lances, because their victories have rendered them overweening. Lo you, here comes our valiant adversary, the Duke of Austria; mark his manner and bearing, Long-Sword; and thou, Nubian, let the hound have full view of him. By Heaven, he brings his buffoons along with him!"

In fact, whether from habit, or, which is more likely, to intimate contempt of the ceremonial he was about to comply with, Leopold was attended by his *spruch-sprecher* and his jester, and as he advanced towards Richard he whistled in what he wished to be considered as an indifferent manner, though his heavy features evinced the sullenness, mixed with the fear, with which a truant schoolboy may be seen to approach his master.

As the reluctant dignitary made, with discomposed and

sulky look, the obeisance required, the *spruch-sprecher* shook his bâton, and proclaimed, like a herald, that in what he was now doing the Archduke of Austria was not to be held derogating from the rank and privileges of a sovereign prince, to which the jester answered with a sonorous *amen*, which provoked much laughter among the bystanders.

Meantime the troops of the Marquis of Montserrat next passed in order before the King of England. That powerful and wily baron, to make the greater display of his forces, had divided them into two bodies. At the head of the first, consisting of his vassals and followers, and levied from his Syrian possessions, came his brother Enguerrand, and he himself followed, leading on a gallant band of twelve hundred Stradiots, a kind of light cavalry raised by the Venetians in their Dalmatian possessions, and of which they had entrusted the command to the Marquis, with whom the republic had many bonds of connection. These Stradiots were clothed in a fashion partly European, but partaking chiefly of the Eastern fashion. They wore, indeed, short hauberks, but had over them parti-coloured tunics of rich stuffs, with large wide pantaloons and half-boots. On their heads were straight upright caps, similar to those of the Greeks, and they carried small round targets, bows and arrows, scimitars, and poniards. They were mounted on horses, carefully selected and well maintained at the expense of the estate of Venice; their saddles and appointments resembled those of the Turks, and they rode in the same manner, with short stirrups and upon a high seat. These troops were of great use in skirmishing with the Arabs, though unable to engage in close combat, like the iron-sheathed men-at-arms of Western and Northern Europe.

Before this goodly band came Conrade, in the same garb with the Stradiots, but of such rich stuff that he seemed to blaze with gold and silver, and the milk-white plume fastened in his cap by a clasp of diamonds seemed tall enough to sweep the clouds. The noble steed which he reined bounded and caracoled, and displayed his spirit and agility in a manner which might have troubled a less admirable horseman than the Marquis, who gracefully ruled him with the one hand, while the other displayed the bâton, whose predominancy over the ranks which he led seemed equally absolute. Yet his authority over the Stradiots was more in show than in substance; for there paced beside him, on an ambling palfrey of sombre mood, a little old man, dressed entirely in black, without beard or

moustaches insignificant around him; deputies who overlook the consigned control of the republic.

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Conrade Roswal, the sprang forth leashed, and charger, and down from sand, and camp.

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moustaches, and having an appearance altogether mean and insignificant when compared with the blaze of splendour around him. But this mean-looking old man was one of those deputies whom the Venetian government sent into camps to overlook the conduct of the generals to whom the leading was consigned, and to maintain that jealous system of espial and control which had long distinguished the policy of the republic.

Conrade, who by cultivating Richard's humour had attained a certain degree of favour with him, no sooner was come within his ken than the King of England descended a step or two to meet him, exclaiming at the same time, "Ha, lord Marquis, thou at the head of the fleet Stradiots, and thy black shadow attending thee as usual, whether the sun shines or not! May not one ask thee whether the rule of the troops remains with the shadow or the substance?"

Conrade was commencing his reply with a smile, when Roswal, the noble hound, uttering a furious and savage yell, sprang forward. The Nubian at the same time slipped the leash, and the hound rushed on, leaping upon Conrade's noble charger, and seizing the Marquis by the throat pulled him down from the saddle. The plumed rider lay rolling on the sand, and the frightened horse fled in wild career through the camp.

"Thy hound hath pulled down the right quarry, I warrant him," said the King to the Nubian, "and I vow to Saint George he is a stag of ten tynes! Pluck the dog off lest he throttle him."

The Ethiopian accordingly, though not without difficulty, disengaged the dog from Conrade, and fastened him up, still highly excited and struggling in the leash. Meanwhile many crowded to the spot, especially followers of Conrade and officers of the Stradiots, who, as they saw their leader lie gazing wildly on the sky, raised him up amid a tumultuary cry of—"Cut the slave and his hound to pieces!"

But the voice of Richard, loud and sonorous, was heard clear above all other exclamations, "He dies the death who injures the hound! He hath but done his duty, after the sagacity with which God and nature have endowed the brave animal. Stand forward for a false traitor, thou Conrade, Marquis of Montserrat! I impeach thee of treason."

Several of the Syrian leaders had now come up, and Conrade, vexation, and shame, and confusion struggling with

passion in his manner and voice, exclaimed, "What means this? With what am I charged? Why this base usage, and these reproachful terms? Is this the league of concord which England renewed but so lately?"

"Are the princes of the Crusade turned hares or deers in the eyes of King Richard that he should slip hounds on them?" said the sepulchral voice of the Grand Master of the Templars.

"It must be some singular accident, some fatal mistake," said Philip of France, who rode up at the same moment.

"Some deceit of the enemy," said the Archbishop of Tyre.

"A stratagem of the Saracens," cried Henry of Champagne.

"It were well to hang up the dog, and put the slave to the torture."

"Let no man lay hand upon them," said Richard, "as he loves his own life! Conrade, stand forth, if thou darest, and deny the accusation which this mute animal hath in his noble instinct brought against thee, of injury done to him and foul scorn to England!"

"I never touched the banner," said Conrade hastily.

"Thy words betray thee, Conrade!" said Richard; "for how didst thou know, save from conscious guilt, that the question is concerning the banner?"

"Hast thou then not kept the camp in turmoil on that and no other score?" answered Conrade; "and dost thou impute to a prince and an ally a crime which after all was probably committed by some paltry felon for the sake of the gold thread? Or wouldst thou now impeach a confederate on the credit of a dog?"

By this time the alarm was becoming general, so that Philip of France interposed.

"Princes and nobles," he said, "you speak in presence of those whose swords will soon be at the throats of each other, if they hear their leaders at such terms together. In the name of heaven, let us draw off each his own troops into their separate quarters, and ourselves meet an hour hence in the pavilion of council, to take some order in this new state of confusion."

"Content," said King Richard, "though I should have liked to have interrogated that caittiff while his gay doublet was yet besmirched with sand. But the pleasure of France shall be ours in this matter."

The leaders separated as was proposed, each prince placing

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himself at the head of his own forces ; and then was heard on all sides the crying of war-cries, and the sounding of gathering-notes upon bugles and trumpets, by which the different stragglers were summoned to their prince's banner ; and the troops were shortly seen in motion, each taking different routes through the camp to their own quarters. But although any immediate act of violence was thus prevented, yet the accident which had taken place dwelt on every mind ; and those foreigners who had that morning hailed Richard as the worthiest to lead their army now resumed their prejudices against his pride and intolerance, while the English, conceiving the honour of their country connected with the quarrel, of which various reports had gone about, considered the natives of other countries jealous of the fame of England and her King, and disposed to undermine it by the meanest arts of intrigue. Many and various were the rumours spread upon the occasion, and there was one which averred that the Queen and her ladies had been much alarmed by the tumult, and that one of them had swooned.

The Council assembled at the appointed hour. Conrade had in the meanwhile laid aside his dishonoured dress, and with it the shame and confusion which, in spite of his talents and promptitude, had at first overwhelmed him, owing to the strangeness of the accident and suddenness of the accusation. He was now robed like a prince, and entered the council-chamber attended by the Archduke of Austria, the Grand Masters both of the Temple and of the Order of Saint John, and several other potentates, who made a show of supporting him and defending his cause, chiefly perhaps from political motives, or because they themselves nourished a personal enmity against Richard.

This appearance of union in favour of Conrade was far from influencing the King of England. He entered the Council with his usual indifference of manner, and in the same dress in which he had just alighted from horseback. He cast a careless and somewhat scornful glance on the leaders, who had with studied affectation arranged themselves around Conrade, as if owning his cause, and in the most direct terms charged Conrade of Montserrat with having stolen the banner of England, and wounded the faithful animal who stood in its defence.

Conrade arose boldly to answer, and in despite, as he expressed himself, of man and brute, king or dog, avouched his innocence of the crime charged.

"Brother of England," said Philip, who willingly assumed the character of moderator of the assembly, "this is an unusual impeachment. We do not hear you avouch your own knowledge of this matter, further than your belief resting upon the demeanour of this hound towards the Marquis of Montserrat. Surely the word of a knight and a prince should bear him out against the barking of a cur?"

"Royal brother," returned Richard, "recollect that the Almighty, who gave the dog to be companion of our pleasures and our toils, hath invested him with a nature noble and incapable of deceit. He forgets neither friend nor foe, remembers, and with accuracy, both benefit and injury. He hath a share of man's intelligence, but no share of man's falsehood. You may bribe a soldier to slay a man with his sword, or a witness to take life by false accusation; but you cannot make a hound tear his benefactor: he is the friend of man, save when man justly incurs his enmity. Dress yonder Marquis in what peacock-robcs you will, disguise his appearance, alter his complexion with drugs and washes, hide him amidst an hundred men, I will yet pawn my sceptre that the hound detects him and expresses his resentment, as you have this day beheld. This is no new incident, although a strange one. Murderers and robbers have been, ere now, convicted, and suffered death under such evidence, and men have said that the finger of God was in it. In thine own land, royal brother, and upon such an occasion the matter was tried by a solemn duel betwixt the man and the dog, as appellant and defendant in a challenge of murder. The dog was victorious, the man was punished, and the crime was confessed. Credit me, royal brother, that hidden crimes have often been brought to light by the testimony even of inanimate substances, not to mention animals far inferior in instinctive sagacity to the dog, who is the friend and companion of our race."

"Such a duel there hath indeed been, royal brother," answered Philip, "and that in the reign of one of our predecessors, to whom God be gracious. But it was in the olden time, nor can we hold it a precedent fitting for this occasion. The defendant in that case was a private gentleman, of small rank or respect; his offensive weapons were only a club, his defensive a leathern jerkin. But we cannot degrade a prince to the disgrace of using such rude arms, or to the ignominy of such a combat."

"I never meant that you should," said King Richard; "it

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were foul play to hazard the good hound's life against that of such a double-faced traitor as this Conrade hath proved himself. But there lies our own glove ; we appeal him to the combat in respect of the evidence we brought forth against him ; a king at least is more than the mate of a marquis."

Conrade made no hasty effort to seize on the pledge which Richard cast into the middle of the assembly, and King Philip had time to reply ere the Marquis made a motion to lift the glove.

"A king," said he of France, "is as much more than a match for the Marquis Conrade as a dog would be less.* Royal Richard, this cannot be permitted. You are the leader of our expedition, the sword and buckler of Christendom."

"I protest against such a combat," said the Venetian proveditore, "until the King of England shall have repaid the fifty thousand bezants which he is indebted to the republic. It is enough to be threatened with the loss of our debt, should our debtor fall by the hands of the pagans, without the additional risk of his being slain in brawls amongst Christians concerning dogs and banners."

"And I," said William with the Long Sword, Earl of Salisbury, "protest in my turn against my royal brother perilling his life, which is the property of the people of England, in such a cause. Here, noble brother, receive back your glove, and think only as if the wind had blown it from your hand. Mine shall lie in its stead. A king's son, though with the bar sinister on his shield, is at least a match for this marmozet of a Marquis."

"Princes and nobles," said Conrade, "I will not accept of King Richard's defiance. He hath been chosen our leader against the Saracens, and if *his* conscience can answer the accusation of provoking an ally to the field on a quarrel so frivolous, *mine*, at least cannot endure the reproach of accepting it. But touching his bastard brother, William of Woodstock, or against any other who shall adopt, or shall dare to stand godfather to this most false charge, I will defend my honour in the lists and prove whomsoever impeaches it a false liar."

"The Marquis of Montserrat," said the Archbishop of Tyre, "hath spoken like a wise and moderate gentleman ; and methinks this controversy might, without dishonour to any party, end at this point."

"Methinks it might so terminate," said the King of France,

"provided King Richard will recall his accusations, as made upon over slight grounds."

"Philip of France," answered Cœur de Lion, "my word shall never do my thoughts so much injury. I have charged yonder Conrade as a thief, who under cloud of night stole from its place the emblem of England's dignity. I still believe and charge him to be such; and when a day is appointed for the combat, doubt not that, since Conrade declines to meet us in person, I will find a champion to appear in support of my challenge; for thou, William, must not thrust thy long sword into this quarrel without our special licence."

"Since my rank makes me arbiter in this most unhappy matter," said Philip of France, "I appoint the fifth day from hence for the decision thereof, by way of combat, according to knightly usage; Richard, King of England, to appear by his champion as appellant, and Conrade, Marquis of Montserrat, in his own person as defendant. Yet I own, I know not where to find neutral ground where such a quarrel may be fought out; for it must not be in the neighbourhood of this camp, where the soldiers would make faction on the different sides."

"It were well," said Richard, "to apply to the generosity of the royal Saladin, since, heathen as he is, I have never known knight more fulfilled of nobleness, or to whose good faith we may so peremptorily entrust ourselves. I speak thus for those who may be doubtful of mishap; for myself, wherever I see my foe, I make that spot my battle-ground."

"Be it so," said Philip; "we will make this matter known to Saladin, although it be showing to an enemy the unhappy spirit of discord which we would willingly hide from ourselves, were it possible. Meanwhile, I dismiss this assembly, and charge you all, as Christian men and noble knights, that ye let this unhappy feud breed no further brawling in the camp, but regard it as a thing solemnly referred to the judgment of God, to whom each of you should pray that He will dispose of victory in the combat according to the truth of the quarrel, and therewith may His will be done!"

"Amen, Amen!" was answered on all sides; while the Templar whispered the Marquis, "Conrade, wilt thou not add a petition to be delivered from the power of the dog, as the Psalmist hath it?"

"Peace, thou ——!" replied the Marquis; "there is a revealing demon abroad, which may report, amongst other

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"Thou wilt stand the brunt of challenge?" said the Templar.

"Doubt me not," said Conrade. "I would not, indeed, have willingly met the iron arm of Richard himself, and I shame not to confess that I rejoice to be free of his encounter. But from his bastard brother downwards the man breathes not in his ranks whom I fear to meet."

"It is well you are so confident," continued the Templar; "and in that case the fangs of yonder hound have done more to dissolve this league of princes than either thy devices or the dagger of the Charegite. Seest thou how, under a brow studiously overclouded, Philip cannot conceal the satisfaction which he feels at the prospect of release from the alliance which sat so heavy on him? Mark how Henry of Champagne smiles to himself, like a sparkling goblet of his own wine; and see the chuckling delight of Austria, who thinks his quarrel is about to be avenged without risk or trouble of his own. Hush, he approaches. A most grievous chance, most royal Austria, that these breaches in the walls of our Zion"—

"If thou meanest this Crusade," replied the Duke, "I would it were crumbled to pieces, and each were safe at home! I speak this in confidence."

"But," said the Marquis of Montserrat, "to think this disunion should be made by the hands of King Richard, for whose pleasure we have been contented to endure so much, and to whom we have been as submissive as slaves to a master, in hopes that he would use his valour against our enemies, instead of exercising it upon our friends!"

"I see not that he is so much more valorous than others," said the Archduke. "I believe, had the noble Marquis met him in the lists, he would have had the better; for though the islander deals heavy blows with the pole-axe, he is not so very dexterous with the lance. I should have cared little to have met him myself on our old quarrel, had the weal of Christendom permitted to sovereign princes to breathe themselves in the lists. And if thou desirest it, noble Marquis, I will myself be your godfather in this combat."

"And I also," said the Grand Master.

"Come, then, and take your nooning in our tent, noble sirs," said the Duke, "and we'll speak of this business over some right Nierenstein."

Before the English royal pavilion a party of horsemen dismounted. There was light and motion within the tent, and the King, with several of his nobility, was engaged in welcoming those who were newly arrived. The frank and bold voice of Richard was heard in joyous gratulation.

"Thomas de Vaux! stout Tom of the Gills! by the head of King Henry, thou art welcome to me as ever was flask of wine to a jolly toper! I should scarce have known how to order my battle array, unless I had thy bulky form in my eye as a landmark to form my ranks upon. We shall have blows anon, Thomas, if the saints be gracious to us; and had we fought in thine absence, I would have looked to hear of thy being found hanging upon an elder-tree."

"I should have borne my disappointment with more Christian patience, I trust," said Thomas de Vaux, "than to have died the death of an apostate. But I thank your Grace for my welcome, which is the more generous as it respects a banquet of blows, of which, saving your pleasure, you are ever too apt to engross the larger share; but here have I brought one to whom your Grace will, I know, give a yet warmer welcome."

The person who now stepped forward to make obeisance to Richard was a young man of low stature and slight form. His dress was as modest as his figure was unimpressive, but he bore on his bonnet a gold buckle, with a gem, the lustre of which could only be rivalled by the brilliancy of the eye which the bonnet shaded. It was the only striking feature in his countenance; but, when once noticed, it uniformly made a strong impression on the spectator. About his neck there hung, in a scarf of sky-blue silk, a *wrest*, as it was called,—that is, the key with which a harp is tuned, and which was of solid gold.

This personage would have kneeled reverently to Richard, but the monarch raised him in joyful haste, pressed him to his bosom warmly, and kissed him on either side of the face.

"Blondel de Nesle!" he exclaimed joyfully, "welcome from Cyprus, my king of minstrels! welcome to the King of England, who rates not his own dignity more highly than he does thine. I have been sick, man, and, by my soul, I believe it was for lack of thee; for, were I half-way to the gate of heaven, methinks thy strains could call me back. And what news, my gentle master, from the land of the lyre? Anything fresh from the *trouveurs* of Provence? anything from the

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minstrels of merry Normandy? above all, hast thou thyself been busy? But I need not ask thee; thou canst not be idle, if thou wouldst; thy noble qualities are like a fire burning within, and compel thee to pour thyself out in music and song."

"Something I have learned, and something I have done, noble King," answered the celebrated Blondel, with a retiring modesty, which all Richard's enthusiastic admiration of his skill had been unable to banish.

"We will hear thee, man; we will hear thee instantly," said the King; then, touching Blondel's shoulder kindly, he added, "that is, if thou art not fatigued with thy journey; for I would sooner ride my best horse to death than injure a note of thy voice."

"My voice is, as ever, at the service of my royal patron," said Blondel; "but your Majesty," he added, looking at some papers on the table, "seems more importantly engaged, and the hour waxes late."

"Not a whit, man, not a whit, my dearest Blondel. I did but sketch an array of battle against the Saracens, a thing of a moment, almost as soon done as the routing of them."

"Methinks, however," said Thomas de Vaux, "it were not unfit to enquire what soldiers your Grace hath to array. I bring reports on that subject from Ascalon."

"Thou art a mule, Thomas," said the King, "a very mule for dulness and obstinacy! Come, nobles, a hall! a hall! range ye around him. Give Blonde! the tabouret. Where is his harp-bearer? or, soft, lend him my harp, his own may be damaged by the journey."

"I would your Grace would take my report," said Thomas de Vaux. "I have ridden far, and have more list to my bed than to have my ears tickled."

"*Thy* ears tickled!" said the King; "that must be with a woodcock's feather and not with sweet sounds. Hark thee, Thomas, do thine ears know the singing of Blondel from the braying of an ass?"

"In faith, my liege," replied Thomas, "I cannot well say; but setting Blondel out of the question, who is a born gentleman, and doubtless of high acquirements, I shall never, for the sake of your Grace's question, look on a minstrel but I shall think upon an ass."

"And might not your manners," said Richard, "have accepted me, who am a gentleman born as well as Blondel, and, like him, a guild-brother of the *joyeuse science*?"

"Your Grace should remember," said De Vaux smiling, "that 'tis useless asking for manners from a mule."

"Most truly spoken," said the King; "and an ill-conditioned animal thou art. But come hither, master mule, and be unloaded, that thou may'st get thee to thy litter, without any music being wasted on thee. Meantime, do thou, good brother of Salisbury, go to our consort's tent, and tell her that Blondel has arrived, with his budget fraught with the newest minstrelsy. Bid her come hither instantly, and do thou escort her, and see that our cousin, Edith Plantagenet, remain not behind."

His eye then rested for a moment on the Nubian, with that expression of doubtful meaning which his countenance usually displayed when he looked at him.

"Ha, our silent and secret messenger returned? Stand up, slave, behind the back of De Neville, and thou shalt hear presently sounds which will make thee bless God that He afflicted thee rather with dumbness than deafness."

So saying, he turned from the rest of the company towards De Vaux, and plunged immediately into the military details which that baron laid before him.

About the time that the Lord of Gilsland had finished his audience, a messenger announced that the Queen and her attendants were approaching the royal tent. "A flask of wine, ho!" said the King; "of old King Isaac's long-saved Cyprus, which we won when we stormed Famagosta. Fill to the stout Lord of Gilsland, gentles; a more careful and faithful servant never had any prince."

"I am glad," said Thomas de Vaux, "that your Grace finds the mule a useful slave, though his voice be less musical than horse-hair or wire."

"What, thou canst not yet digest that quip of the mule?" said Richard. "Wash it down with a brimming flagon, man, or thou wilt choke upon it. Why, so—well pulled! and now I will tell thee, thou art a soldier as well as I, and we must brook each other's jests in the hall as each other's blows in the tourney, and love each other the harder we hit. By my faith, if thou didst not hit me as hard as I did thee in our late encounter, thou gavest all thy wit to the thrust. But here lies the difference betwixt thee and Blondel. Thou art but my comrade, I might say my pupil, in the art of war; Blondel is my master in the science of minstrelsy and music. To thee I permit the freedom of intimacy; to him I must do reverence,

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"To see your Majesty in such cheerful mood," said the Lord of Gilsland, "by my faith, I could remain till Blondel had achieved the great Romance of King Arthur, which lasts for three days."

"We will not tax your patience so deeply," said the King. "But see, yonder glare of torches without shows that our consort approaches. Away to receive her, man, and win thyself grace in the brightest eyes of Christendom. Nay, never stop to adjust thy cloak. See, thou hast let Neville come between the wind and the sails of thy galley."

"He was never before me in the field of battle," said De Vaux, not greatly pleased to see himself anticipated by the more active service of the chamberlain.

"No, neither he nor any one went before thee there, my good Tom of the Gills," said the King, "unless it was ourself now and then."

"Ay, my liege," said De Vaux, "and let us do justice to the unfortunate: the unhappy Knight of the Leopard hath been before me, too, at a season; for, look you, he weighs less on horseback, and so——"

"Hush!" said the King, interrupting him in a peremptory tone, "not a word of him," and instantly stepped forward to greet his royal consort; and when he had done so, he presented to her Blondel, as king of minstrelsy, and his master in the gay science. Berengaria, who well knew that her royal husband's passion for poetry and music almost equalled his appetite for warlike fame, and that Blondel was his especial favourite, took anxious care to receive him with all the flattering distinctions due to one whom the King delighted to honour.

The high-born Berengaria, daughter of Sanchez, King of Navarre, and the queen-consort of the heroic Richard, was accounted one of the most beautiful women of the period. Her form was slight, though exquisitely moulded. She was graced with a complexion not common in her country, a profusion of fair hair, and features so extremely juvenile as to make her look several years younger than she really was, though in reality she was not above one and twenty. Perhaps it was under the consciousness of this extremely juvenile appearance that she affected, or at least practised, a little childish petulance and wilfulness of manner, not unbefitting, she might

suppose, a youthful bride, whose rank and age gave her a right to have her fantasies indulged and attended to. She was by nature perfectly good-humoured; and if her due share of admiration and homage (in her opinion a very large one) was duly assigned to her, no one could possess better temper or a more friendly disposition; but then, like all despots, the more power that was voluntarily yielded to her the more she desired to extend her sway. Sometimes, even when all her ambition was gratified, she chose to be a little out of health and a little out of spirits; and physicians had to toil their wits to invent names for imaginary maladies, while her ladies racked their imagination for new games, new headgear, and new court scandal, to pass away those unpleasant hours during which their own situation was scarce to be greatly envied. Their most frequent resource for diverting this malady was some trick or piece of mischief practised upon each other; and the good Queen, in the buoyancy of her reviving spirits, was, to speak truth, rather too indifferent whether the frolics thus practised were entirely befitting her own dignity, or whether the pain which those suffered upon whom they were inflicted was not beyond the proportion of pleasure which she herself derived from them. She was confident in her husband's favour, in her high rank, and in her supposed power to make good whatever such pranks might cost others. In a word, she gambolled with the freedom of a young lioness, who is unconscious of the weight of her own paws when laid on those whom she sports with.

The Queen Berengaria loved her husband passionately, but she feared the loftiness and roughness of his character, and, as she felt herself not to be his match in intellect was not much pleased to see that he would often talk with Edith Plantagenet in preference to herself, simply because he found more amusement in her conversation, a more comprehensive understanding, and a more noble cast of thoughts and sentiments than his beautiful consort exhibited. Berengaria did not hate Edith on this account, far less meditate her any harm; for, allowing for some selfishness, her character was, on the whole, innocent and generous. But the ladies of her train, sharp-sighted in such matters, had for some time discovered that a poignant jest at the expense of the Lady Edith was a specific for relieving her Grace of England's low spirits, and the discovery saved their imagination much toil.

There was something ungenerous in this, because the Lady Edith was understood to be an orphan; and though she was

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called Plantagenet and the Fair Maid of Anjou, and admitted by Richard to certain privileges only granted to the royal family, and held her place in the circle accordingly, yet few knew, and none acquainted with the court of England ventured to ask, in what exact degree of relationship she stood to Cœur de Lion. She had come with Eleanor, the celebrated Queen-Mother of England, and joined Richard at Messina as one of the ladies destined to attend on Berengaria, whose nuptials then approached. Richard treated his kinswoman with much respectful observance, and the Queen made her her most constant attendant, and, even in despite of the petty jealousy which we have observed, treated her generally with suitable respect.

Accompanying his voice with the harp, so as to grace, but yet not drown, the sense of what he sang, the minstrel chanted in a sort of recitative one of those ancient adventures of love and knighthood which were wont of yore to win the public attention. So soon as he began to prelude, the insignificance of his personal appearance seemed to disappear, and his countenance glowed with energy and inspiration. His full, manly, mellow voice, so absolutely under command of the purest taste, thrilled on every ear and to every heart. Richard, rejoiced as after victory, called out the appropriate summons for silence,

‘Listen, lords, in bower and hall’;

while with the zeal of a patron at once and a pupil he arranged the circle around, and hushed them into silence; and he himself sat down with an air of expectation and interest not altogether unmixed with the gravity of the professed critic. The courtiers turned their eyes on the King, that they might be ready to trace and imitate the emotions his features should express, and Thomas De Vaux yawned tremendously, as one who submitted unwillingly to a wearisome penance.

“Thou hast changed the measure upon us unawares in that last couplet, my Blondel!” said the King, after a verse of the song was finished.

“Most true, my lord,” said Blondel. “I rendered the verses from the Italian of an old harper whom I met in Cyprus, and not having had time either to translate it accurately or commit it to memory, I am fain to supply gaps in the music and the verse as I can upon the spur of the moment, as you see boors mend a quickset fence with a fagot.”

"Nay, on my faith," said the King, "I like these rattling rolling Alexandrines; methinks they come more twangingly off to the music than that briefer measure."

"Both are licensed, as is well known to your Grace," answered Blondel.

"They are so, Blondel," said Richard; "yet methinks the scene, where there is like to be fighting, will go best on in these same thundering Alexandrines, which sound like the charge of cavalry; while the other measure is but like the sidelong amble of a lady's palfrey."

"It shall be as your Grace pleases," replied Blondel, and began again to prelude.

"Nay, first cherish thy fancy with a cup of fiery Chios wine," said the King; "and hark thee, I would have thee fling away that new-fangled restriction of thine, of terminating in accurate and similar rhymes. They are a constraint on thy flow of fancy, and make thee resemble a man dancing in fetters."

"The fetters are easily flung off, at least," said Blondel, again sweeping his fingers over the strings, as one who would rather have played than listened to criticism.

"But why put them on, man?" continued the King. "Wherefore thrust thy genius into iron bracelets? I marvel how you got forward at all; I am sure I should not have been able to compose a stanza in yonder hampered measure."

Blondel looked down and busied himself with the strings of his harp, to hide an involuntary smile which crept over his features; but it escaped not Richard's observation.

"By my faith thou laugh'st at me, Blondel," he said; "and in good truth, every man deserves it who presumes to play the master when he should be the pupil; but we kings get bad habits of self-opinion. Come, on with thy lay, dearest Blondel, on after thine own fashion, better than ought that we can suggest, though we must needs be talking."

Blondel resumed the lay; but, as extemporaneous composition was familiar to him, he failed not to comply with the King's hints, and was perhaps not displeased to show with how much ease he could re-model a poem even while in the act of recitation.

A murmur of applause ran through the assembly, following the example of Richard himself, who loaded with praises his favourite minstrel, and ending by presenting him with a ring of

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considerable value. The Queen hastened to distinguish the favourite by a rich bracelet, and many of the nobles who were present followed the royal example.

"Is our cousin Edith," said the King, "become insensible to the sound of the harp she once loved?"

"She thanks Blondel for his lay," replied Edith, "but doubly the kindness of the kinsman who suggested it."

"Thou art angry, cousin," said the King, "angry because thou hast heard of a woman more wayward than thyself. But you escape me not: I will walk a space homeward with you towards the Queen's pavilion; we must have conference together ere the night has waned into morning."

The Queen and her attendants were now on foot, and the other guests withdrew from the royal tent. A train with blazing torches and an escort of archers awaited Berengaria without the pavilion, and she was soon on her way homeward. Richard, as he had proposed, walked beside his kinswoman, and compelled her to accept of his arm as her support.

On the subsequent morning Richard was invited to a conference by Philip of France, in which the latter, with many expressions of high esteem for his brother of England, communicated to him, in terms extremely courteous, but too explicit to be misunderstood, his positive intention to return to Europe and to the cares of his kingdom, as entirely despairing of future success in their undertaking with their diminished forces and civil discord. Richard remonstrated, but in vain; and when the conference ended, he received without surprise a manifesto from the Duke of Austria and several other princes, announcing a resolution similar to that of Philip, and in no modified terms, assigning for their defection from the cause of the Cross the inordinate ambition and arbitrary domination of Richard of England. All hopes of continuing the war with any prospect of ultimate success were now abandoned, and Richard, while he shed bitter tears over his disappointed hopes of glory, was little consoled by the recollection that the failure was in some degree to be imputed to the advantages which he had given his enemies by his own hasty and imprudent temper.

"They had not dared to have deserted my father thus," he said to De Vaux in the bitterness of his resentment. "Not slanders they could have uttered against so wise a king would have been believed in Christendom; whereas—fool that I am!—I have not only afforded them a pretext for deserting me,

but even a colour for casting all the blame of the rupture upon my unhappy foibles."

These thoughts were so deeply galling to the King that De Vaux was rejoiced when the arrival of an ambassador from Saladin turned his reflections into a different channel.

This new envoy was an Emir much respected by the Soldan, whose name was Abdallah el Hadgi. He derived his descent from the family of the Prophet, and the race or tribe of Hashem, in witness of which genealogy he wore a green turban of large dimensions. He had also three times performed the journey to Mecca, from which he derived his epithet of El Hadgi or the Pilgrim. Notwithstanding these various pretensions to sanctity, Abdallah was (for an Arab) a boon companion, who enjoyed a merry tale, and laid aside his gravity so far as to quaff a blithe flagon, when secrecy insured him against scandal. He was likewise a statesman, whose abilities had been used by Saladin in various negotiations with the Christian princes, and particularly with Richard, to whom El Hadgi was personally known and acceptable. Animated by the cheerful acquiescence with which the envoy of Saladin afforded a fair field for the combat, a safe-conduct for all who might choose to witness it, and offered his own person as a guarantee of his fidelity, Richard soon forgot his disappointed hopes and the approaching dissolution of the Christian League in the interesting discussions preceding a combat in the lists.

The station called the Diamond of the Desert was assigned for the place of conflict, as being nearly at an equal distance betwixt the Christian and Saracen camps. It was agreed that Conrade of Montserrat, the defendant, with his godfathers, the Archduke of Austria and the Grand Master of the Templars, should appear there on the day fixed for the combat, with an hundred armed followers, and no more; that Richard of England, and his brother Salisbury, who supported the accusation, should attend with the same number, to protect his champion; and that the Soldan should bring with him a guard of five hundred chosen followers, a band considered as not more than equal to the two hundred Christian lances. Such persons of consideration as either party chose to invite to witness the contest were to wear no other weapons than their swords, and to come without defensive armour. The Soldan undertook the preparations of the lists, and to provide accommodations and refreshments of every kind for all who were to assist at the solemnity; and his letters expressed,

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with much courtesy, the pleasure which he anticipated in the prospect of a personal and peaceful meeting with the Melech Ric, and his anxious desire to render his reception as agreeable as possible.

All preliminaries being arranged and communicated to the defendant and his godfathers, Abdallah the Hadgi was admitted to a more private interview, where he heard with delight the strains of Blondel. Having first carefully put his green turban out of sight and assumed a Greek cap in its stead, he requited the Norman minstrel's music with a drinking song from the Persian, and quaffed a hearty flagon of Cyprus wine, to show that his practice matched his principles. On the next day, grave and sober as the water drinker Mirlip, he bent his brow to the ground before Saladin's footstool, and rendered to the Soldan an account of his embassy.

On the day before that appointed for the combat, Conrade and his friends set off by daybreak to repair to the place assigned, and Richard left the camp at the same hour and for the same purpose; but, as had been agreed upon, he took his journey by a different route, a precaution which had been judged necessary to prevent the possibility of a quarrel betwixt their armed attendants.

The good King himself was in no humour for quarrelling with any one. Nothing could have added to his pleasurable anticipations of a desperate and bloody combat in the lists, except his being in his own royal person one of the combatants, and he was half in charity again even with Conrade of Montserrat. Lightly armed, richly dressed, and gay as a bridegroom on the eve of his nuptials, Richard caracoled along by the side of Queen Berengaria's litter, pointing out to her the various scenes through which they passed, and cheering with tale and song the bosom of the inhospitable wilderness. The former route of the Queen's pilgrimage to Engaddi had been on the other side of the chain of mountains, so that the ladies were strangers to the scenery of the desert; and though Berengaria knew her husband's disposition too well not to endeavour to seem interested in what he was pleased either to say or to sing, she could not help indulging some female fears when she found herself in the howling wilderness with so small an escort, which seemed almost like a moving speck on the bosom of the plain, and knew, at the same time, they were not so distant from the camp of Saladin but what they might be in a moment surprised and swept off by an overpowering host

of his fiery-footed cavalry, should the pagan be faithless enough to embrace an opportunity thus tempting. But when she hinted these suspicions to Richard, he repelled them with displeasure and disdain. "It were worse than ingratitude," he said, "to doubt the good faith of the generous Soldan."

Yet the same doubts and fears recurred more than once, not to the timid mind of the Queen alone, but to the firmer and more candid soul of Edith Plantagenet, who had no such confidence in the faith of the Moslem as to render her perfectly at ease when so much in their power; and her surprise had been far less than her terror, if the desert around had suddenly resounded with the shout of *Alla hu!* and a band of Arab cavalry had pounced on them like vultures on their prey. Nor were these suspicions lessened, when, as evening approached, they were aware of a single Arab horseman, distinguished by his turban and long lance, hovering on the edge of a small eminence like a hawk poised in the air, and who instantly, on the appearance of the royal retinue, darted off with the speed of the same bird, when it shoots down the wind and disappears from the horizon.

"We must be near the station," said King Richard, "and yonder cavalier is one of Saladin's outposts; methinks I hear the noise of the Moorish horns and cymbals. Get you into order, my hearts, and form yourselves around the ladies soldier-like and firmly."

As he spoke, each knight, squire, and archer, hastily closed in upon his appointed ground, and they proceeded in the most compact order, which made their numbers appear still smaller; and to say the truth, though there might be no fear, there was anxiety as well as curiosity in the attention with which they listened to the wild bursts of Moorish music which came ever and anon more distinctly from the quarter in which the Arab horseman had been seen to disappear.

De Vaux spoke in a whisper to the King, "Were it not well, my liege, to send a page to the top of that sand-bank? Or would it stand with your pleasure that I prick forward? Methinks by all yonder clash and clang, if there be no more than five hundred men beyond the sand-hills, half of the Soldan's retinue must be drummers, and cymbal-tossers. Shall I spur on?"

The baron had checked his horse with the bit, and was just about to strike him with the spurs, when the King exclaimed,

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"Not for the world. Such a caution would express suspicion, and could do little to prevent surprise, which, however, I apprehend not."

They advanced accordingly in close and firm order till they surmounted the line of low sand-hills, and came in sight of the appointed station, when a splendid, but at the same time a startling, spectacle awaited them.

The Diamond of the Desert, so lately a solitary fountain, distinguished only amid the waste by solitary groups of palm trees, was now the centre of an encampment, the embroidered flags and gilded ornaments of which glittered far and wide, and reflected a thousand rich tints against the setting sun. The coverings of the large pavilions were of the gayest colours, scarlet, bright yellow, pale blue, and other gaudy and gleaming hues, and the tops of their pillars, or tent poles, were decorated with golden pomegranates and small silken flags. But, besides these distinguished pavilions, there were what Thomas de Vaux considered as a portentous number of the ordinary black tents of the Arabs, being sufficient, as he conceived, to accommodate, according to the Eastern fashion, a host of five thousand men. A number of Arabs and Kurds, fully corresponding to the extent of the encampment, were hastily assembling, each leading his horse in his hand, and their muster was accompanied by an astonishing clamour of their noisy instruments of martial music, by which in all ages the warfare of the Arabs has been animated.

They soon formed a deep and confused mass of dismounted cavalry in front of their encampment, when, at the signal of a shrill cry, which arose high over the clangour of the music, each cavalier sprang to his saddle. A cloud of dust, arising at the moment of this manoeuvre, hid from Richard and his attendants the camp, the palm trees, and the distant ridge of mountains, as well as the troops whose sudden movement had raised the cloud, and ascending high over their heads formed itself into the fantastic forms of writhed pillars, domes, and minarets. Another shrill yell was heard from the bosom of this cloudy tabernacle. It was the signal for the cavalry to advance, which they did at full gallop, disposing themselves as they came forward so as to come in at once on the front flanks and rear of Richard's little body-guard, who were thus surrounded and almost choked by the dense clouds of dust enveloping them on each side, through which were seen alternately and lost the grim forms and wild faces of the

Saracens, brandishing and tossing their lances in every possible direction, with the wildest cries and halloos, and frequently only reining up their horses when within a spear's length of the Christians, while those in the rear discharged over the heads of both parties thick volleys of arrows. One of these struck the litter in which the Queen was seated, who loudly screamed, and the red spot was on Richard's brow in an instant.

"Ha! Saint George," he exclaimed, "we must take some order with this infidel scum!"

But Edith, whose litter was near, thrust her head out, and with her hand holding one of the shafts, exclaimed, "Royal Richard, beware what you do! see, these arrows are headless!"

"Noble, sensible wench!" exclaimed Richard; "by heaven, thou shamest us all by thy readiness of thought and eye. Be not moved, my English hearts," he exclaimed to his followers, "their arrows have no heads, and their spears too lack the steel points. It is but a wild welcome, after their savage fashion, though doubtless they would rejoice to see us daunted or disturbed. Move onward, slow and steady."

The little phalanx moved forward accordingly, accompanied on all sides by the Arabs, with the shrillest and most piercing cries, the bowmen, meanwhile, displaying their agility by shooting as near the crests of the Christians as was possible, without actually hitting them, while the lancers charged each other with such rude blows of their blunt weapons that more than one of them lost his saddle, and well-nigh his life, in this rough sport. All this, though designed to express welcome, had rather a doubtful appearance in the eyes of the Europeans.

As they had advanced nearly half-way towards the camp, King Richard and his suite forming, as it were, the nucleus round which this tumultuary body of horsemen howled, whooped, skirmished, and galloped, creating a scene of indescribable confusion, another shrill cry was heard, on which all these irregulars, who were on the front and upon the flanks of the little body of Europeans, wheeled off, and forming themselves into a long and deep column followed with comparative order and silence in the rear of Richard's troop. The dust began now to dissipate in their front, when there advanced to meet them, through that cloudy veil, a body of cavalry of a different and more regular description, completely armed with offensive and defensive weapons, and who might well have served as a body-guard to the proudest of Eastern monarchs.

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This splendid troop consisted of five hundred men, and each horse which it contained was worth an earl's ransom. The riders were Georgian and Circassian slaves in the very prime of life ; their helmets and hauberks were formed of steel rings, so bright that they shone like silver ; their vestures were of the gayest colours, and some of cloth of gold or silver ; the sashes were twisted with silk and gold, their rich turbans were plumed and jewelled, and their sabres and poniards, of Damascene steel, were adorned with gold and gems on hilt and scabbard.

This splendid array advanced to the sound of military music, and when they met the Christian body they opened their files to the right and left, and let them enter between their ranks. Richard now assumed the foremost place in his troop, aware that Saladin himself was approaching. Nor was it long when, in the centre of his body-guard, surrounded by his domestic officers and those hideous negroes who guard the Eastern harem, and whose misshapen forms were rendered yet more frightful by the richness of their attire, came the Soldan, with the look and manners of one on whose brow Nature had written, This is a king ! In his snow-white turban, vest, and wide Eastern trousers, wearing a sash of scarlet silk, without any other ornament, Saladin might have seemed the plainest dressed man in his own guard. But closer inspection discerned in his turban that inestimable gem which was called by the poets the Sea of Light ; the diamond on which his signet was engraved, and which he wore in a ring, was probably worth all the jewels of the English crown, and a sapphire, which terminated the hilt of his canjiar, was of not much inferior value. It should be added that to protect him from the dust, which in the vicinity of the Dead Sea resembles the finest ashes, or perhaps out of Oriental pride, the Soldan wore a sort of veil attached to his turban, which partly obscured the view of his noble features. He rode a milk-white Arabian, which bore him as if conscious and proud of his noble burden.

There was no need of further introduction. The two heroic monarchs, for such they both were, threw themselves at once from horseback, and, the troops halting and the music suddenly ceasing, they advanced to meet each other in profound silence, and, after a courteous inclination on either side, they embraced as brethren and equals. The pomp and display upon both sides attracted no further notice : no one saw ought save Richard and Saladin, and they two beheld nothing

but each other. The looks with which Richard surveyed Saladin were, however, more intently curious than those which the Soldan fixed upon him; and the Soldan also was the first to break silence.

"The Melech Ric is welcome to Saladin as water to this desert. I trust he hath no distrust of this numerous array. Excepting the armed slaves of my household, those who surround you with eyes of wonder and of welcome are, even the humblest of them, the privileged nobles of my thousand tribes; for who that could claim a title to be present would remain at home when such a prince was to be seen as Richard, with the terrors of whose name, even on the sands of Yemen, the nurse stills her child and the free Arab subdues his restive steed!"

"And these are all nobles of Araby?" said Richard, looking around on wild forms with their persons covered with haiks, their countenances swart with the sunbeams, their teeth as white as ivory, their black eyes glancing with fierce and preternatural lustre from under the shade of their turbans, and their dresses being in general simple, even to meanness.

"They claim such rank," said Saladin; "but though numerous, they are within the conditions of the treaty, and bear no arms but the sabre—even the iron of their lances is left behind."

"I fear," muttered De Vaux in English, "they have left them where they can soon be found. A most flourishing House of Peers, I confess, and would find Westminster Hall something too narrow for them."

"Hush, De Vaux," said Richard, "I command thee. Noble Saladin," he said, "suspicion and thou cannot exist on the same ground. Seest thou," pointing to the litters, "I too have brought some champions with me, though armed perhaps in breach of agreement, for bright eyes and fair features are weapons which cannot be left behind."

The Soldan, turning to the litters, made an obeisance as lowly as if looking towards Mecca, and kissed the sand in token of respect.

"Nay," said Richard, "they will not fear a closer encounter, brother; wilt thou not ride towards their litters, and the curtains will be presently withdrawn?"

"That may Allah prohibit!" said Saladin, "since not an Arab looks on who would not think it shame to the noble ladies to be seen with their faces uncovered."

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"Thou shalt see them, then, in private, brother," answered Richard.

"To what purpose?" answered Saladin mournfully. "Thy letter, which denied the hopes I had entertained, was like water to fire; and wherefore should I again light a flame which may indeed consume, but cannot cheer me? But will not my brother pass to the tent which his servant hath prepared for him? My principal black slave hath taken order for the reception of the princesses, the officers of my household will attend your followers, and ourself will be the chamberlain of the royal Richard."

He led the way accordingly to a splendid pavilion, where was everything that royal luxury could devise. De Vaux, who was in attendance, then removed the *chappe* (*capa*), or long riding-cloak which Richard wore, and he stood before Saladin in the close dress which showed to advantage the strength and symmetry of his person, while it bore a strong contrast to the flowing robes which disguised the thin frame of the Eastern Monarch. It was Richard's two-handed sword that chiefly attracted the attention of the Saracen, a broad straight blade, the seemingly unwieldy length of which extended well-nigh from the shoulder to the heel of the wearer.

"Had I not," said Saladin, "seen this brand flaming in the front of battle, like that of Azrael, I had scarce believed that human arm could wield it. Might I request to see the Melech Ric strike one blow with it in peace, and in pure trial of strength?"

"Willingly, noble Saladin," answered Richard; and looking around for something whereon to exercise his strength, he saw a steel mace, held by one of the attendants, the handle being of the same metal, and about an inch and a half in diameter; this he placed on a block of wood.

The anxiety of De Vaux for his master's honour led him to whisper in English, "For the blessed Virgin's sake, beware what you attempt, my liege! Your full strength is not as yet returned; give no triumph to the infidel."

"Peace, fool!" said Richard, standing firm on his ground, and casting a fierce glance around; "thinkest thou that I can fail in *this* presence?"

The glittering broadsword, wielded by both his hands, rose aloft to the King's left shoulder, circled round his head, descended with the sway of some terrific engine, and the bar

of iron rolled on the ground in two pieces, as a woodman would sever a sapling with a hedging bill.

"By the head of the Prophet, a most wonderful blow!" said the Soldan, critically and accurately examining the iron bar which had been cut asunder; and the blade of the sword was so well tempered as to exhibit not the least token of having suffered by the feat it had performed. He then took the King's hand, and, looking on the size and muscular strength which it exhibited, laughed as he placed it beside his own, so lank and thin, so inferior in brawn and sinew.

"Ay, look well," said De Vaux in English; "it will be long ere your long jackanapes fingers do such a feat with your fine gilded reaping-hook there.

"Silence, De Vaux," said Richard; "by Our Lady he understands or guesses thy meaning; be not so broad I pray thee."

The Soldan, indeed, presently said, "Something I would fain attempt, though wherefore should the weak show their inferiority in presence of the strong? Yet each land hath its own exercises, and this may be new to the Melech Ric." So saying, he took from the floor a cushion of silk and down, and placed it upright on one end. "Can thy weapon, my brother, sever that cushion?" he said to King Richard.

"No, surely," replied the King; "no sword on earth, were it the Excalibar of King Arthur, can cut that which opposes no steady resistance to the blow."

"Mark, then," said Saladin; and tucking up the sleeve of his gown showed his arm, thin indeed and spare, but which constant exercise had hardened into a mass consisting of nought but bone, brawn, and sinew. He unsheathed his scimitar, a curved and narrow blade, which glittered not like the swords of the Franks, but was, on the contrary, of a dull blue colour, marked with ten millions of meandering lines, which showed how anxiously the metal had been welded by the armourer. Wielding this weapon, apparently so inefficient when compared to that of Richard, the Soldan stood resting his weight upon his left foot, which was slightly advanced; he balanced himself a little as if to steady his aim, then stepping at once forward drew the scimitar across the cushion, applying the edge so dexterously, and with so little apparent effort, that the cushion seemed rather to fall asunder than to be divided by violence.

"It is a juggler's trick," said De Vaux, darting forward and

snatching up the portion of the cushion which had been cut off, as if to assure himself of the reality of the feat ; "there is gramarye in this."

The Soldan seemed to comprehend him, for he undid the sort of veil which he had hitherto worn, laid it double along the edge of his sabre, extended the weapon edgeways in the air, and drawing it suddenly through the veil, although it hung on the blade entirely loose, severed that also into two parts, which floated to different sides of the tent, equally displaying the extreme temper and sharpness of the weapon and the exquisite dexterity of him who used it.

"Now, in good faith, my brother," said Richard, "thou art even matchless at the trick of the sword, and right perilous were it to meet thee! Still, however, I put some faith in a downright English blow, and what we cannot do by sleight we eke out by strength."

The Saracen Monarch departed from King Richard's tent, and having indicated to him, rather with signs than with speech, where the pavilion of the Queen and her attendants was pitched, he went to receive the Marquis of Montserrat and his attendants, for whom, with less good-will but with equal splendour, the magnificent Soldan had provided accommodations. The most ample refreshments, both in the Oriental and after the European fashion, were spread before the royal and princely guests of Saladin, each in their own separate pavilion ; and so attentive was the Soldan to the habits and tastes of his visitors that Grecian slaves were stationed to present them with the goblet, which is the abomination of the sect of Mohammed. Ere Richard had finished his meal, the ancient Omrah, who had brought the Soldan's letter to the Christian camp, entered with a plan of the ceremonial to be observed on the succeeding day of combat. Richard invited him to pledge him in a flagon of wine of Schiraz ; but Abdallah gave him to understand, with a rueful aspect, that self-denial in the present circumstances was a matter in which his life was concerned ; for that Saladin, tolerant in many respects, both observed and enforced by high penalties the laws of the Prophet.

"Nay, then," said Richard, "if he loves not wine, that lightener of the human heart, his conversion is not to be hoped for, and the prediction of the mad priest of Engaddi goes like chaff down the wind."

The King then addressed himself to settle the articles of

combat, which cost a considerable time, as it was necessary on some points to consult with the opposite parties as well as with the Soldan.

They were at length finally agreed upon, and adjusted by a protocol in French and in Arabian, which was subscribed by Saladin as umpire of the field, and by Richard and Leopold as guarantees for the two combatants. As the Omrah took his final leave of King Richard for the evening, De Vaux entered.

"The good knight," he said, "who is to do battle to-morrow requests to know whether he may not to-night pay duty to his royal godfather?"

"Hast thou seen him, De Vaux?" said the King, smiling; "and didst thou know an ancient acquaintance?"

"By our Lady of Lanercost," answered De Vaux, "there are so many surprises and changes in this land that my poor brain turns. I scarce knew Sir Kenneth of Scotland, till his good hound, that had been for a short while under my care, came and fawned on me; and even then I only knew the tyke by the depth of his chest, the roundness of his foot, and his manner of baying; for the poor gaze-hound was painted like any Venetian courtezan."

"Thou art better skilled in brutes than men, De Vaux," said the King.

"I will not deny," said De Vaux, "I have found them oft-times the honester animals. Also, your Grace is pleased to term me sometimes a brute myself; besides that I serve the Lion, whom all men acknowledge the king of brutes."

"By Saint George, there thou brokest thy lance fairly on my brow," said the King. "I have ever said thou hast a sort of wit, De Vaux; marry, one must strike thee with a sledge-hammer ere it can be made to sparkle. But to the present gear—is the good knight well armed and equipped?"

"Fully, my liege, and nobly," answered De Vaux; "I know the armour well: it is that which the Venetian commissary offered your Highness, just ere you became ill, for five hundred bezants."

"And he has sold it to the infidel Soldan, I warrant me, for a few ducats more and present payment. These Venetians would sell the Sepulchre itself!"

"The armour will never be borne in a nobler cause," said De Vaux.

"Thanks to the nobleness of the Saracen," said the King, "not to the avarice of the Venetians."

"I would to God your Grace would be more cautious," said the anxious De Vaux. "Here are we deserted by all our allies, for points of offence given to one or another; we cannot hope to prosper upon the land, and we have only to quarrel with the amphibious republic, to lose the means of retreat by sea!"

"I will take care," said Richard impatiently, "but school me no more. As thou passest through the camp, let the Queen know I will visit her pavilion; and tell Blondel to meet me there."

De Vaux departed, and in about an hour afterwards Richard, wrapping his mantle around him and taking his ghirr in his hand, walked in the direction of the Queen's pavilion. Several Arabs passed him, but always with averted heads and looks fixed upon the earth, though he could observe that all gazed earnestly after him when he was past. This led him justly to conjecture that his person was known to them; but that either the Soldan's commands, or their own Oriental politeness, forbade them to seem to notice a sovereign who desired to remain incognito.

When the King reached the pavilion of his Queen, he found it guarded by those unhappy officials whom Eastern jealousy places around the zenana. Blondel was walking before the door, and touched his rote from time to time in a manner which made the Africans show their ivory teeth, and bear burden with their strange gestures and shrill, unnatural voices.

"What art thou after with this herd of black cattle, Blondel?" said the King; "wherefore goest thou not into the tent?"

"Because my trade can neither spare the head nor the fingers," said Blondel; "and these honest blackamoors threatened to cut me joint from joint if I pressed forward."

"Well, enter with me," said the King, "and I will be thy safeguard."

The blacks accordingly lowered pikes and swords to King Richard, and bent their eyes on the ground, as if unworthy to look upon him. In the interior of the pavilion they found Thomas de Vaux in attendance on the Queen. While Berengaria welcomed Blondel, King Richard spoke for some time secretly and apart with his fair kinswoman.

At length, "Are we still foes, my fair Edith?" he said in a whisper.

"No, my liege," said Edith in a voice just so low as not to

interrupt the music; "none can bear enmity against King Richard, when he deigns to show himself, as he really is, generous and noble as well as valiant and honourable."

So saying, she extended her hand to him. The King kissed it in token of reconciliation.

The conclusion of the evening offered nothing worthy of notice.

It had been agreed, on account of the heat of the climate, that the judicial combat, which was the cause of the present assemblage of various nations at the Diamond of the Desert, should take place at one hour after sunrise. The wide lists, which had been constructed under the inspection of the Knight of the Leopard, enclosed a space of hard sand, which was one hundred and twenty yards long by forty in width. They extended in length from north to south, so as to give both parties the equal advantage of the rising sun. Saladin's royal seat was erected on the western side of the enclosure, just in the centre, where the combatants were expected to meet in mid encounter. Opposed to this was a gallery with closed case-ments, so contrived that the ladies, for whose accommodation it was erected, might see the fight without being themselves exposed to view. At either extremity of the lists was a barrier which could be opened or shut at pleasure. Thrones had been also erected, but the Archduke, perceiving that his was lower than King Richard's, refused to occupy it; and Cœur de Lion, who would have submitted to much ere any formality should have interfered with the combat, readily agreed that the sponsors, as they were called, should remain on horseback during the fight. At one extremity of the lists were placed the followers of Richard, and opposed to them were those who accompanied the defender, Conrade. Around the throne destined for the Soldan were ranged his splendid Georgian guards, and the rest of the enclosure was occupied by Christian and Mohammedan spectators.

Long before daybreak the lists were surrounded by even a larger number of Saracens than Richard had seen on the preceding evening. When the first ray of the sun's glorious orb arose above the desert, the sonorous call, "To prayer, to prayer!" was poured forth by the Soldan himself, and answered by others, whose rank and zeal entitled them to act as muezzins. It was a striking spectacle to see them all sink to earth for the purpose of repeating their devotions with their faces turned to Mecca. But when they arose from the ground, the

sun's rays, now strengthening fast, seemed to confirm the Lord of Gilsland's conjecture of the night before. They were flashed back from many a spear-head, for the pointless lances of the preceding day were certainly no longer such. De Vaux pointed it out to his master, who answered with impatience that he had perfect confidence in the good faith of the Soldan; but if De Vaux was afraid of his bulky body, he might retire.

Soon after this the noise of timbrels was heard, at the sound of which the whole Saracen cavaliers threw themselves from their horses, and prostrated themselves, as if for a second morning prayer. This was to give an opportunity to the Queen, with Edith and her attendants, to pass from the pavilion to the gallery intended for them. Fifty guards of Saladin's seraglio escorted them, with naked sabres, whose orders were to cut to pieces whomsoever, were he prince or peasant, should venture to gaze on the ladies as they passed, or even presume to raise his head until the cessation of the music should make all men aware that they were lodged in their gallery, not to be gazed on by the curious eye.

This superstitious observance of Oriental reverence to the fair sex called forth from Queen Berengaria some criticisms very unfavourable to Saladin and his country. But their den, as the royal fair called it, being securely closed and guarded by their sable attendants, she was under the necessity of contenting herself with seeing, and laying aside for the present the still more exquisite pleasure of being seen.

Meantime the sponsors of both champions went, as was their duty, to see that they were duly armed and prepared for combat. The Archduke of Austria was in no hurry to perform this part of the ceremony, having had rather an unusually severe debauch upon wine of Schiraz the preceding evening.

The hour at length arrived, the trumpets sounded, the knights rode into the lists armed at all points, and mounted like men who were to do battle for a kingdom's honour. They wore their vizors up, and riding around the lists three times showed themselves to the spectators. Both were goodly persons, and both had noble countenances. But there was an air of manly confidence on the brow of the Scot, a radiancy of hope which amounted even to cheerfulness, while, although pride and effort had recalled much of Conrade's natural courage, there lowered still on his brow a cloud of ominous despondence. Even his steed seemed to tread less lightly and blithely to the trumpet-sound than the noble Arab which was

bestrode by Sir Kenneth ; and the *spruch-sprecher* shook his head while he observed that, while the challenger rode around the lists in the course of the sun—that is, from right to left—the defender made the same circuit *widdersins*—that is, from left to right—which is in most countries held ominous.

A temporary altar was erected just beneath the gallery occupied by the Queen, and beside it stood a hermit in the dress of his order, as a Carmelite friar. Other churchmen were also present. To this altar the challenger and defender were successively brought forward, conducted by their respective sponsors. Dismounting before it, each knight avouched the justice of his cause by a solemn oath on the Evangelists, and prayers that his success might be according to the truth or falsehood of what he then swore. They also made oath that they came to do battle in knightly guise, and with the usual weaponse disclaiming the use of spells, charms, or magical devices, to, incline victory to their side. The challenger pronounced his vow with a firm and manly voice and a bold and cheerful countenance. When the ceremony was finished, the Scottish knight looked at the gallery and bent his head to the earth, as if in honour of those invisible beauties which were enclosed within ; then, loaded with armour as he was, sprang to the saddle without the use of the stirrup, and made his courser carry him in a succession of caracoles to his station at the eastern extremity of the lists. Conrade also presented himself before the altar with boldness enough ; but his voice, as he took the oath, sounded hollow, as if drowned in his helmet. The lips with which he appealed to Heaven to adjudge victory to the just quarrel, grew white as they uttered the impious mockery. As he turned to remount his horse, the Grand Master approached him closer, as if to rectify something about the siting of his gorget, and whispered, "Coward and fool ! recall thy senses, and do me this battle bravely, else, by Heaven, shouldst thou escape him, thou escapest not *me* !"

The savage tone in which this was whispered perhaps completed the confusion of the Marquis's nerves, for he stumbled as he made to horse ; and though he recovered his feet, sprang to the saddle with his usual agility, and displayed his address in horsemanship as he assumed his position opposite to the challenger's, yet the accident did not escape those who were on the watch for omens, which might predict the fate of the day.

The priests, after a solemn prayer that God would show the

rightful quarrel, departed from the lists. The trumpets of the challenger then rang a flourish, and a herald-at-arms proclaimed at the eastern end of the lists—"Here stands a good knight, Sir Kenneth of Scotland, champion for the royal King Richard of England, who accuseth Conrade, Marquis of Montserrat, of foul treason and dishonour done to the said King."

When the words Kenneth of Scotland announced the name and character of the champion, hitherto scarce generally known, a loud and cheerful acclaim burst from the followers of King Richard, and hardly, notwithstanding repeated commands of silence, suffered the reply of the defendant to be heard. He, of course, avouched his innocence, and offered his body for battle. The esquires of the combatants now approached, and delivered to each his shield and lance, assisting to hang the former around his neck, that his two hands might remain free, one for the management of the bridle, the other to direct the lance.

The shield of the Scot displayed his old bearing, the leopard, but with the addition of a collar and broken chain, in allusion to his late captivity. The shield of the Marquis bore, in reference to his title, a serrated and rocky mountain. Each shook his lance aloft, as if to ascertain the weight and toughness of the unwieldy weapon, and then laid it in the rest. The sponsors, heralds, and squires now retired to the barriers, and the combatants sat opposite to each other, face to face, with couched lance and closed vizor, the human form so completely enclosed that they looked more like statues of molten iron than beings of flesh and blood. The silence of suspense was now general: men breathed thicker, and their very souls seemed seated in their eyes, while not a sound was to be heard save the snorting and pawing of the good steeds, who, sensible of what was about to happen, were impatient to dash into career. They stood thus for perhaps three minutes, when, at a signal given by the Soldan, an hundred instruments rent the air with their brazen clamours, and each champion striking his horse with the spurs, and slacking the rein, the horses started into full gallop, and the knights met in mid space with a shock like a thunderbolt. The victory was not in doubt—no, not one moment. Conrade, indeed, showed himself a practised warrior; for he struck his antagonist knightly in the midst of his shield, bearing his lance so straight and true that it shivered into splinters from the steel spear-head up to the very gauntlet.

The horse of Sir Kenneth recoiled two or three yards and fell on his haunches, but the rider easily raised him with hand and rein. But for Conrade there was no recovery. Sir Kenneth's lance had pierced through the shield, through a plated corselet of Milan steel, through a *secret*, or coat of lined mail worn beneath the corselet, had wounded him deep in the bosom, and borne him from his saddle, leaving the truncheon of the lance fixed in his wound. The sponsors, heralds, and Saladin himself, descending from his throne, crowded around the wounded man; while Sir Kenneth, who had drawn his sword ere yet he discovered his antagonist was totally helpless, now commanded him to avow his guilt. The helmet was hastily unclosed, and the wounded man, gazing wildly on the skies, replied, "What would you more? God hath decided justly; I am guilty; but there are worse traitors in the camp than I. In pity to my soul, let me have a confessor!"

He revived as he uttered these words.

"The talisman, thy powerful remedy, royal brother!" said King Richard to Saladin.

"The traitor," answered the Soldan, "is more fit to be dragged from the lists to the gallows by the heels than to profit by its virtues; and some such fate is in his look," he added, after gazing fixedly upon the wounded man, "for though his wound may be cured, yet Azrael's seal is on the wretch's brow."

"Nevertheless," said Richard, "I pray you do for him what you may, that he may at least have time for confession. Slay not soul and body! To him one half-hour of time may be worth more, by ten thousand-fold, than the life of the oldest patriarch."

"My royal brother's wish shall be obeyed," said Saladin. "Slaves, bear this wounded man to our tent."

"Do not so," said the Templar, who had hitherto stood gloomily looking on in silence. "The royal Duke of Austria and myself will not permit this unhappy Christian prince to be delivered over to the Saracens, that they may try their spells upon him. We are his sponsors, and demand that he be assigned to our care."

"That is, you refuse the certain means offered to recover him?" said Richard.

"Not so," said the Grand Master, recollecting himself. "If the Soldan useth lawful medicines, he may attend the patient in my tent."

"Do so, I pray thee, good brother," said Richard to Saladin, "though the permission be ungraciously yielded. But now to a more glorious work. Sound, trumpets, shout, England, in honour of England's champion!"

Drum, clarion, trumpet, and cymbal rang forth at once, and the deep and regular shout which for ages has been the English acclamation sounded amidst the shrill and irregular yells of the Arabs, like the diapason of the organ amid the howling of a storm. There was silence at length.

"Brave Knight of the Leopard," resumed Cœur de Lion. "I have more to say to you when I have conducted you to the presence of the ladies, the best judges and best rewarders of deeds of chivalry."

The Knight of the Leopard bowed assent.

"And thou, princely Saladin, wilt also attend them. I promise thee our Queen will not think herself welcome, if she lacks the opportunity to thank her royal host for her most princely reception."

Saladin bent his head gracefully, but declined the invitation.

"I must attend the wounded man," he said. "The leech leaves not his patient more than the champion the lists, even if he be summoned to a bower like those of Paradise. And further, royal Richard, know that the blood of the East flows not so temperately in the presence of beauty as that of your land. What saith the Book itself?—Her eye is as the edge of the sword of the Prophet, who shall look upon it? He that would not be burnt avoideth to tread on hot embers; wise men spread not the flax before a bickering torch. He, saith the sage, who hath forfeited a treasure, doth not wisely to turn back his head to gaze at it."

Richard, it may be believed, respected the motives of delicacy which flowed from manners so different from his own, and urged his request no further.

"At noon," said the Soldan, as he departed, "I trust ye will all accept a collation under the black camel-skin tent of a chief of Kurdistan."

The same invitation was circulated among the Christians, comprehending all those of sufficient importance to be admitted to sit at a feast made for princes.

"Hark!" said Richard, "the timbrels announce that our Queen and her attendants are leaving their gallery; and see, the turbans sink on the ground, as if struck down by a destroying angel. All lie prostrate, as if the glance of an Arab's eye

could sully the lustre of a lady's cheek ! Come, we will to the pavilion, and lead our conqueror thither in triumph. How I pity that noble Soldan, who knows but of love as it is known to those of inferior nature !”

Blondel tuned his harp to its boldest measure, to welcome the introduction of the victor into the pavilion of Queen Berengaria. He entered, supported on either side by his sponsors, Richard and William Long-Sword, and knelt gracefully down before the Queen, though more than half the homage was silently rendered to Edith, who sat on her right hand.

“Unarm him, my mistresses,” said the King, whose delight was in the execution of such chivalrous usages. “Let Beauty honour Chivalry ! Undo his spurs, Berengaria ; queen though thou be, thou owest him what marks of favour thou canst give. Unlace his helmet, Edith ; by this hand, thou shalt, wert thou the proudest Plantagenet of the line and he the poorest knight on earth !”

Both ladies obeyed the royal commands. Berengaria with bustling assiduity, as anxious to gratify her husband's humour, and Edith, blushing and growing pale alternately, as slowly and awkwardly she undid, with Long-Sword's assistance, the fastenings which secured the helmet to the gorget.

“And what expect you from beneath this iron shell ?” said Richard, as the removal of the casque gave to view the noble countenance of Sir Kenneth, his face glowing with recent exertion, and not less so with present emotion. “What think ye of him, gallants and beauties ?” said Richard. “Doth he resemble an Ethiopian slave, or doth he present the face of an obscure and nameless adventurer ? No, by my good sword ! Here terminate his various disguises. He hath knelt down before you, unknown save by his worth ; he arises, equally distinguished by birth and fortune. The adventurous knight, Kenneth, arises David, Earl of Huntingdon, Prince Royal of Scotland !”

There was a general exclamation of surprise, and Edith dropped from her hand the helmet which she had just received.

“Yes, my masters,” said the King, “it is even so. Ye know how Scotland deceived us when she proposed to send this valiant Earl, with a bold company of her best and noblest, to aid our arms in this conquest of Palestine, but failed to comply with her engagements. This noble youth, under whom the Scottish Crusaders were to have been arrayed, thought foul



"Both ladies obeyed the royal commands."

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scorn that his arm should be withheld from the holy warfare, and joined us at Sicily with a small train of devoted and faithful attendants, which was augmented by many of his countrymen to whom the rank of their leader was unknown. The confidants of the royal Prince had all, saving one old follower, fallen by death, when his secret, but too well kept, had nearly occasioned my cutting off, in a Scottish adventurer, one of the noblest hopes of Europe."

"Yet may we know of your Grace by what strange and happy chance this riddle was at length read?" said the Queen Berengaria.

"Letters were brought to us from England," said the King, "in which we learnt, among other unpleasant news, that the King of Scotland had seized upon three of our nobles, when on a pilgrimage to Saint Ninian, and alleged, as a cause, that his heir, being supposed to be fighting in the ranks of the Teutonic Knights, against the heathen of Borussia, was, in fact, in our camp and in our power; and, therefore, William proposed to hold these nobles as hostages for his safety. This gave me the first light on the real rank of the Knight of the Leopard, and my suspicions were confirmed by De Vaux, who, on his return from Ascalon, brought back with him the Earl of Huntingdon's sole attendant, a thick-skulled slave, who had gone thirty miles to unfold to De Vaux a secret he should have told to me."

"Old Strauchan must be excused," said the Lord of Gilsland. "He knew from experience that my heart is somewhat softer than if I wrote myself Plantagenet."

"Thy heart soft? thou commodity of old iron—and Cumberland flint that thou art!" exclaimed the King. "It is we Plantagenets who boast soft and feeling hearts, Edith," turning to his cousin, with an expression which called the blood into her cheek. "Give me thy hand, my fair cousin, and, Prince of Scotland, thine."

"Forbear, my lord," said Edith, hanging back and endeavouring to hide her confusion under an attempt to rally her royal kinsman's credulity. "Remember you not that my hand was to be the signal of converting to the Christian faith the Saracen and Arab, Saladin and all his turbaned host?"

"Ay, but the wind of prophecy hath chopped about, and sits now in another corner," replied Richard.

It is needless to follow into further particulars the conferences at the royal tent, or to enquire whether David, Earl of

Huntingdon, was as mute in the presence of Edith Plantagenet as when he was bound to act under the character of an obscure and nameless adventurer. It may be well believed that he there expressed, with suitable earnestness, the passion to which he had so often before found it difficult to give words.

—SIR WALTER SCOTT, *The Talisman*.

V

At Falkirk

BEFORE the July sun of 1298 rose, every brave Scot within a few hours' march of Stirling was on the Carse, and Lord Andrew Murray, with his veteran Clydesdale men, were already resting on their arms in view of the city walls. The messengers of Wallace had hastened, with the speed of the winds, east and west ; and the noon of the day saw him at the head of thirty thousand men determined to fight or to die for their country.

The surrounding landscape shone in the brightness of mid-summer ; for it was the eve of St. Magdalen ; and sky and earth bore witness to the luxuriant month of July. The heavens were clear, the waters of the Forth danced in the sunbeams, and the flower-enamelled green of the extended plain stretched its beautiful borders to the deepening woods.

Wallace led forth his loyal chiefs to take their stations at the heads of their different clans. Sir Alexander Scrymgeour, with the proudest expectations for Scotland, unfurled his golden standard to the sun. The lords Lochawe and Bothwell, with others, rode on to the right of the Regent. Lord Andrew Murray, with the brave Sir John Graham, and a bevy of young knights, kept the ground on his left.

As the Regent moved forward, his heralds blew the trumpets of his approach, and a hundred embattled clans appeared in the midst of the plain, awaiting their leaders. Each chief advanced to the head of his line, and stood to hear the charge of Wallace.

"Brave Scots !" cried he, "treachery has admitted the enemy whom resolute patriotism had driven from our borders. Be steady in your fidelity to Scotland, and He who hath hitherto protected the just cause will nerve your arms to lay invasion and its base coadjutors again into the dust."

The cheers of anticipated victory burst from the soldiers,

mingled with the clangour of their striking shields at the inspiring voice of their leader. Wallace waved his truncheon (round which the plan of his array was wrapped) to the chiefs to fall back towards their legions; and while some appeared to linger, Athol, armed cap-à-pie, and spurring his roan into the area before the Regent, demanded in a haughty tone, "Which of the chiefs now in the field is to lead the vanguard?"

"The Regent of Scotland," replied Wallace, for once asserting the majesty of his station, "and you, Lord Athol, with the Lord Buchan, are to defend your country under the command of the brave head of your house, the princely Badenoch."

"I stir not from this spot," returned Athol, fiercely sticking his lance into its rest, "till I see the honour of my country established in the eyes of the world by a leader worthy of her rank being placed in her vanguard."

"What he says," cried Buchan, "I second."

"And in the same spirit, chieftain of Ellerslie," exclaimed Lord Bute, "do I offer to Scotland myself and my people. Another must lead the van, or I retire from her standard."

"Speak on!" cried Wallace, more surprised than confounded by this extraordinary attack.

"What these illustrious chiefs have uttered, is the voice of all!" was the general exclamation from a band of warriors who now thronged around the incendiary nobles.

"Your reign is over, proud chieftain," rejoined Athol; "the Scottish ranks are no longer to be cajoled by your affected moderation. We see the tyrant in your insidious smile, we feel him in the despotism of your decrees. To be thus ridden by a man of vulgar blood; to present him as the head of our nation to the King of England, is beneath the dignity of our country, is an insult to our nobles; and therefore in the power of her consequence I speak, and again demand of you to yield the vanguard to one more worthy of the station. Before God and St. Magdalen I swear," added he, holding up his sword to the heaven, "I will not stir an inch this day toward the enemy unless a Cummin or a Stewart lead our army."

"And is this your resolution also, Lord Bute?" Wallace asked.

"It is," was the reply; "a foe like Edward ought to be met as becomes a great and independent kingdom. We go in the

array of a unanimous nation to repel him; not as a band of insurgents headed by a general who, however brave, was yet drawn from the common ranks of the people. I therefore demand to follow a more illustrious leader."

"The eagles have long enough followed their owl in peacock's feathers," cried Buchan; "and being tired of the game, I, like the rest, soar upward again!"

"Resign that bâton!" cried Athol; "give place to a more honourable leader!" repeated he, supposing he had intimidated Wallace; but Wallace, raising the visor of his helmet, which he had closed on his last commands to his generals, looked on Athol.

"Earl," said he, "the voices of the three estates of Scotland declared me their Regent, and God ratified the election by the victories with which He crowned me. If in aught I have betrayed my trust, let the powers which raised me be my accusers. Four pitched battles have I fought and gained for this country. Twice I beat the representatives of King Edward on the plains of Scotland; and a few months ago I made him fly before me over the fields of Northumberland! What then has befallen me, that my arm is to be too short to meet this man? Has the oil of the Lord, with which the saint of Dunkeld anointed my brows, lost its virtue, that I should shrink before any king in Christendom? I neither tremble at the name of Edward, nor will I so disgrace my own as to abandon at such a crisis the power with which Scotland has invested me. Whoever chooses to leave the cause of their country, let them go; and so manifest themselves of noble blood! I remain, and I lead the vanguard! Scotsmen, to your duty."

As he spoke with a voice of unanswerable command, several chiefs fell back into their ranks. But some made a retrograde motion towards the town. Lord Bute hardly knew what to think, so startled was he by the appeal of the accused Regent, and the noble frankness with which he maintained his rights. He stood frowning as Wallace turned to him and said:

"Do you, my lord, adhere to these violent men? or am I to consider a chief who, though hostile to me, was generous in his ire, still faithful to Scotland, in spite of his prejudice against her leader? Will you fight her battles?"

"I shall never desert them," replied the Stewart; "'tis truth I seek; therefore be it to you, Wallace, this day according to your conscience!" Wallace bowed his head, and presented

him the truncheon around which his line of battle was wrapped. On opening it he found that he was appointed to command the third division ; Badenoch and Bothwell to the first and second ; and Wallace himself to the vanguard.

When the scouts arrived, they informed the Regent that the English army had advanced near to the boundary of Linlithgow, and from the rapidity of their march must be on the Carron the same evening. On this intelligence, Wallace put his troops to their speed ; and before the sun had declined far towards the west, he was within view of Falkirk. But just as he had crossed the Carron, and the Southron banners appeared in sight, Lord Athol, at the head of his rebellious colleagues, rode up to him. Stewart kept his appointed station ; and Badenoch, doing the same, ashamed of his brother's disorder, called after him to keep his line. Regardless of all check, the obstinate chief galloped on, and extending his bold accomplices across the path of the Regent, demanded of him, on the penalty of his life, "that moment to relinquish his pretensions to the vanguard."

"I am not come here," replied Wallace indignantly, "to betray my country ! I know you, Lord Athol ; and your conduct and mine will this day prove who is most worthy the confidence of Scotland."

"This day," cried Athol, "shall see you lay down the power you have usurped."

"It shall see me maintain it, to your confusion," replied Wallace ; "and were you not surrounded by Scots, of too tried a worth for me to suspect their being influenced by your rebellious example, I would this moment make you feel the arm of justice. But the foe is in sight : do your duty now, sir Earl : and for the sake of the house to which you belong, even this intemperate conduct shall be forgotten."

At this instant, Sir John Graham, hastening forward, exclaimed, "The Southrons are bearing down upon us !"

Athol glanced at their distant host ; and turning on Wallace with a sarcastic smile, "My actions," cried he, "shall indeed decide the day !" and striking his spurs furiously into his horse, he rejoined Lord Badenoch's legion.

Edward did indeed advance in most terrible array. Above a hundred thousand men swelled his numerous ranks ; and with these were united all from the Lothians and Teviotdale, whom the influence of the faithless March and the vindictive Soulis could bring into the field. With this aug-

mented host, and a determination to conquer or to die, the Southrons marched rapidly forward.

Wallace had drawn himself up on the ascent of the hill of Falkirk, and advantageously planted his archers on a covering eminence, flanked by the legions of Badenoch. Lord Athol, who knew the integrity of his brother, and who cared not in so great a cause how he removed an adversary from Edward and a censor from himself, gave a ridding order to one of his emissaries. Accordingly, in the moment when the trumpet of Wallace sounded the charge, and the arrows from the hills darkened the air, the virtuous Badenoch was stabbed through the back to the very heart. Athol had placed himself near, to watch his purpose: but in the instant the deed was done he threw himself on the perpetrator, and wounding him in the same vital part, exclaimed, holding up his dagger:

"Behold the weapon that has slain the assassin hired by Sir William Wallace! Thus it is that his ambition would rob Scotland of her native princes. Let us fly from his steel to the shield of a king and a hero."

The men had seen their leader fall; they doubted not the words of his brother, and, with a shout, exclaiming, "Whither you lead we follow!" all at once turned towards him. "Seize the traitor's artillery!" At this command they mounted the hill; and the archers, little expecting an assault from their countrymen, were either instantly cut down, or hurried away prisoners by Athol and Buchan, who now, at the head of the whole division of the Cummins, galloped towards the Southrons, and with loud cries of "Long live King Edward!" threw themselves *en masse* into their arms. The squadrons which followed Stewart, not knowing but they might be hurried into similar desertion, hesitated in the charge he had commanded them to make; and, while thus undecided, some obeyed in broken ranks, and others lingered.

The enemy advanced briskly up, surrounded the division, and on the first onset slew its leader. His faithful Brandanes, seeing their beloved commander trampled to the earth by an overwhelming foe, fell into confusion; and communicating their dismay to their comrades, the whole division sank under the shock of the Southrons, as if touched by a spell. Meanwhile Bothwell and his legions were fiercely engaged with the Earl of Lincoln amid the swamps of a deep morass: but being involved by reciprocal impetuosity, equal peril engulfed them both.

The firm battalion of the vanguard, alone remaining unbroken, stood before the pressing and now victorious thousands of Edward without receding a step.

The archers being lost by the treachery of the Cummins, all hope lay on the strength of the spear and sword ; and Wallace, standing immovable, saw rank after rank of his dauntless infantry mowed down by the Southron arrows ; while, as fast as they fell, their comrades closed over them, and still presented the same impenetrable front of steady valour against the heavy charges of the enemy's horse.

The King of England, indignant at this pause in his conquering onset, accompanied by his natural brother, the valiant Frère de Briagny, and a squadron of resolute knights, in fury threw themselves towards the Scottish pikemen. Wallace descried the jewelled crest of Edward amidst the cloud of battle there, and rushing forward, hand to hand engaged the King. Edward knew his adversary, not so much by his snow-white plume as by the prowess of his arm. Twice did the heavy claymore of Wallace strike fire from the steely helmet of the Monarch ; but at the third stroke the glittering diadem fell in shivers to the ground, and the royal blood of Edward followed the blow. He reeled ; and another stroke would have settled the freedom of Scotland for ever, had not the strong arm of Frère de Briagny passed between Wallace and the King.

The combat thickened ; blow followed blow ; blood gushed at each fall of the sword ; and the hacked armour showed in every aperture a grisly wound. A hundred weapons seemed directed against the breast of the Regent of Scotland, when, raising his sword with a determined stroke, it cleft the visor and crest of De Briagny, who fell lifeless to the ground. The cry that issued from the Southron troops at this sight again nerved the vengeful Edward ; and ordering the signal for his reserve to advance, he renewed the attack ; and assailing Wallace, with all the fury of his heart in his eyes and arms, he tore the earth with the trampling of disappointed vengeance, when he found the invincible phalanx still stood firm. " I will reach him yet ! " cried he ; and turning to De Valence, he commanded that the new artillery should be called into action. On this order, a blast of trumpets in the Southron army blew ; and the answering warwolves it had summoned sent forth showers of red-hot stones into the midst of the Scottish battalions. At the same moment the English reserve,

charging round the hill, attacked them in flank, and accomplished what the fiery torrent had begun. The field was heaped with dead ; the brooks which flowed down the heights ran with blood ; but no confusion was there—no, not even in the mind of Wallace ; though, with amazement and horror, he beheld the saltire of Annandale, the banner of Bruce, leading onward the last exterminating division ! Scot now contended with Scot, brother with brother. Those valiant spirits, who had left their country twenty years before to accompany their chief to the Holy Land, now re-entered Scotland, to wound her in her vital part ; to wrest from her her liberties ; to make her mourn in ashes, that she had been the mother of such matricides.

A horrid mingling of tartans with tartans, in the direful grasp of reciprocal death ; a tremendous rushing of the flaming artillery, which swept the Scottish ranks like blasting lightning, for a moment seemed to make the reason of the leader stagger. Arrows, winged with fire, flashed through the air ; and sticking in men and beasts, drove them against each other in maddening pain. Twice was the horse of Wallace shot under him ; and on every side were his closest friends wounded and dispersed. But his terrific horror at the scene passed away in the moment of his perception ; and though the Southron and the Bruce pressed on him in overwhelming numbers, his few remaining ranks obeyed his call ; and with a presence of mind and military skill that were exhaustless, he maintained the fight till darkness parted the combatants.

When Edward gave command for his troops to rest till morning, Wallace, with the remnant of his faithful band, slowly recrossed the Carron, that they also might repose till dawn should renew the conflict.

Lonely was the sound of his bugle, as sitting on a fragment of the druidical ruins of Dunipacis, he blew its melancholy blast to summon his chiefs around him. Its penetrating voice pierced the hills, but no answering note came upon his ear. A direful conviction seized upon his heart. But they might have fled far distant ! he blushed as the thought crossed him, and hopeless again, dropped the horn which he had raised to blow a second summons. At this instant he saw a shadow darken the moonlit ruins, and Scrymgeour, who had gladly heard his commander's bugle, hastened forward.

"What has been the fate of this dismal day ?" asked Wallace, looking onward, as if he expected others to come up.

"Where are my friends? Where Graham, Badenoch, and Bothwell? Where all, brave Scrymgeour, that I do not now see?" He rose from his seat at sight of an advancing group. It approached near, and laid the dead body of a warrior down before him. "Thus," cried one of the supporters, in stifled sounds, "has my father proved his love for Scotland!" It was Murray who spoke; it was the Earl of Bothwell that lay a breathless corpse at his feet!

"Grievous has been the havoc of Scot on Scot!" cried the intrepid Graham, who had seconded the arm of Murray in the contest for his father's body. "Your steadiness, Sir William Wallace, would have retrieved the day but for the murderer of his country; that Bruce, for whom you refused to be our king, thus destroys her bravest sons. Their blood be upon his head!" continued the young chief, extending his arms towards heaven. "Power of Justice, hear! and let his days be troubled, and his death covered with dishonour!"

"My brave friend," replied Wallace, "his deeds will avenge themselves; he needs not further malediction. Let us rather bless the remains of him who is gone before us in glory to his heavenly rest! Ah! better is it thus to be laid in the bed of honour, than, by surviving, witness the calamities which the double treason of this day will bring upon our martyred country! Murray, my friend," cried he to Lord Andrew, "we must not let the brave dead perish in vain! Their monument shall yet be Scotland's liberties. Fear not that we are forsaken because of these traitors; but remember our time is in the hand of the God of justice and mercy!"

Tears were coursing each other in mute woe down the cheeks of the affectionate son. He could not for some time answer Wallace, but he grasped his hand, and at last rapidly articulated, "Others may have fallen, but not mortally like him. Life may yet be preserved to some of our brave companions. Leave me, then, to mourn my dead alone! and seek ye them."

Wallace arose, and, making a sign to his friends, withdrew towards his men. Having sent a detachment to guard the sacred inclosure of Dunipacis, he despatched Graham on the dangerous duty of gathering a reinforcement for the morning.

In the morning Sir John Graham arrived with five hundred fugitives from Lord Bute's slaughtered division, whom he had rallied on the Carse. He informed his friend that the Earl of Mar was within half a mile of the Carron with three

thousand more, and that he would soon be joined by other reinforcements to a similar amount. While Graham yet spoke, a squadron of armed men approached from the Forth side. Wallace, advancing towards them, beheld the Bishop of Dunkeld, in his sacerdotal robes, at their head, but with a corselet on his breast, and instead of his crosier he carried a drawn sword.

"We come to you, champion of Scotland," cried the Prelate, "with the prayers and the arms of the Church. The sword of the Levites of old smote the enemies of Israel; and in the same faith that the God of Justice will go before us this night, we come to fight for Scotland's liberties."

His followers were the younger brethren of the monastery of Cambus-Kenneth, and others from the neighbouring convents, altogether making a stout and well-appointed legion.

"With this handful," cried Wallace, "Heaven may find a David, who shall yet strike yon Goliath on the forehead!"

Lord Mar and Lord Lennox now came up, and Wallace, marshalling his train, found that he had nearly ten thousand men. He gave to each leader his plan of attack, and took his station in the silent but swiftly moving army.

The troops of King Edward lay overpowered with wine. Elated with victory they had drunk largely, the royal pavilion setting them the example; for though Edward was temperate, yet, to flatter his recovered friends, the inordinate Buchan and Soulis, he had allowed a greater excess that night than he was accustomed to sanction. The banquet over, every knight retired to his tent; every soldier to his pallet; and a deep sleep lay upon every man. The King himself, whom many thoughts had long kept waking, now fell into a slumber.

Guards had been placed around the camp more from military ceremony than an idea of their necessity. The strength of Wallace they believed broken, and that they should have nothing to do next morning but to chase him into Stirling, and take him there. But the spirit of the Regent was not so easily subdued. He ever thought it shameful to despair while it was possible to make a stand. And now, leading his determined followers through the lower ground of Cumbernauld, he detached half his force under Mar, to take the Southron camp in the rear, while he should attack the front, and pierce his way to the royal pavilion.

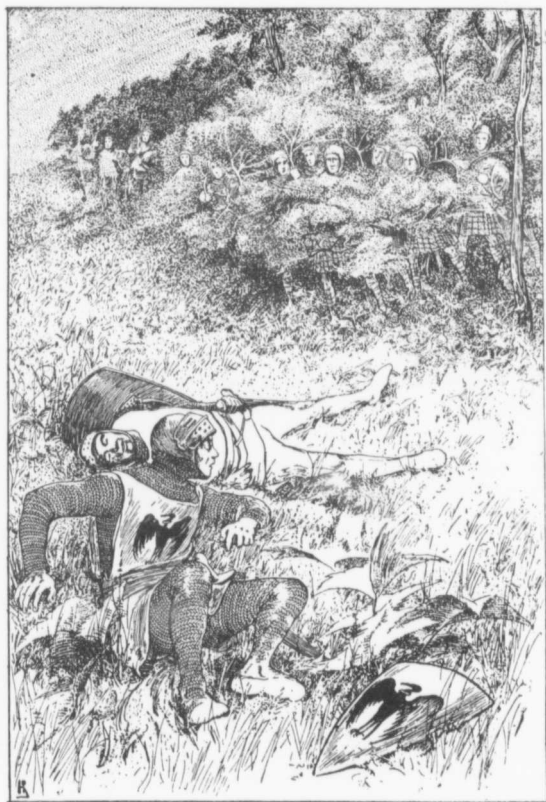
With soundless caution the battalion of Mar wound round the banks of the Forth to reach the point of its destination;

and Wallace, proceeding with as noiseless a step, gained the hill which overlooked his sleeping enemies. His front ranks, shrouded by branches they had torn from the trees in Tor Wood, now stood still. As the moon sank in the horizon they moved gently down the hill; and scarcely drawing breath, were within a few paces of the first outpost, when one of the sentinels, starting from his reclining position, suddenly exclaimed, "What sound is that?"

"Only the wind amongst the trees," returned his comrade; "I see their branches waving. Let me sleep; for Wallace yet lives, and we may have hot work to-morrow."

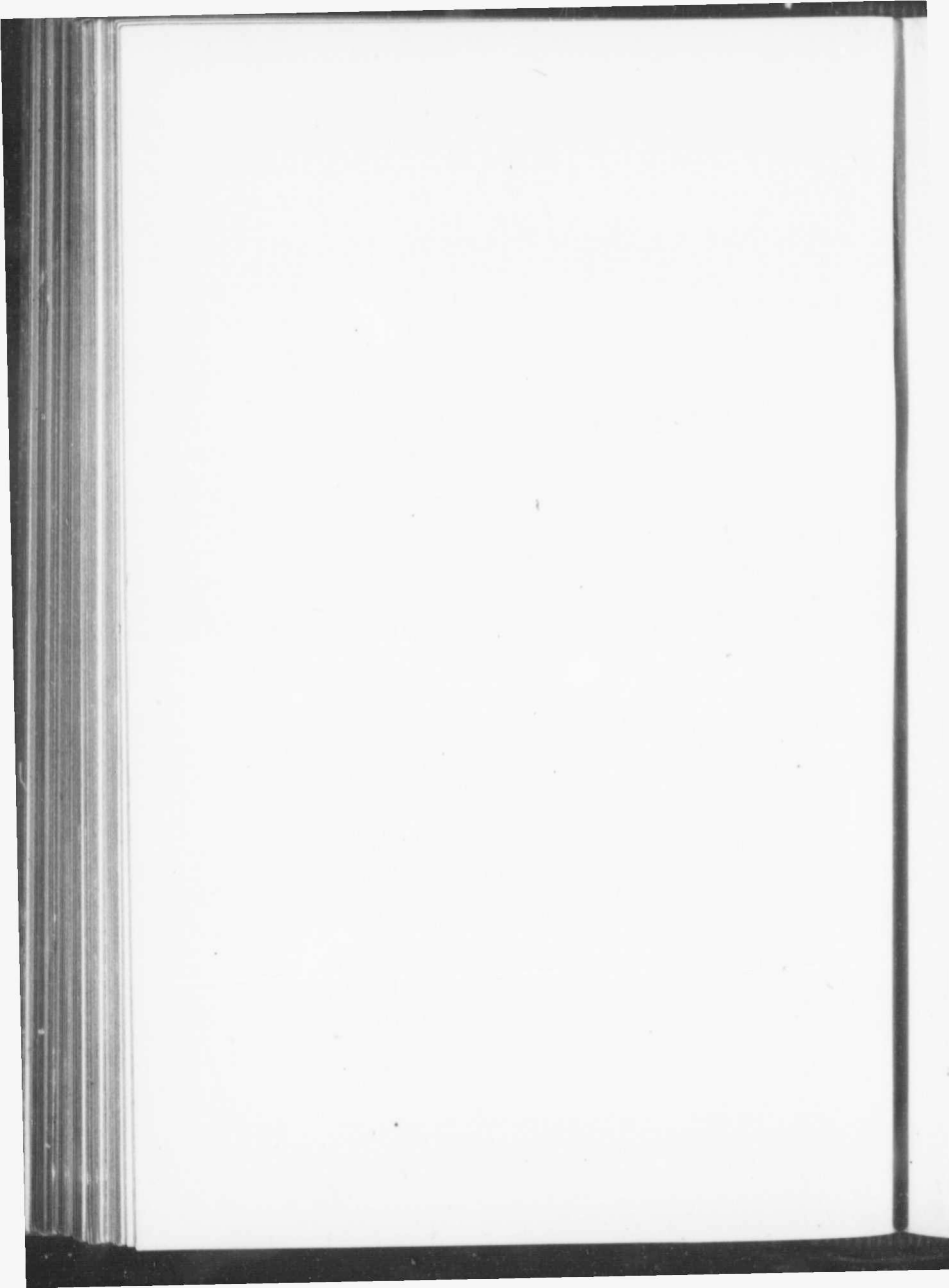
Wallace did live, and the man slept—to wake no more; for the next instant a Scottish brand was through every Southron heart on the outpost. That done, Wallace threw away his bough, leaped the narrow dyke which lay in front of the camp: and with Bruce and Graham at the head of a chosen band of brave men, cautiously proceeded onward to reach the pavilion. At the moment he should blow his bugle, the divisions he had left with Lennox and Murray and the Lord Mar were to press forward to the same point.

Still all lay in profound repose;—and guided by the lamps which burnt around the royal quarters, the dauntless Scots reached the tent. Wallace had already laid his hand upon the curtain that was its entrance, when an armed man with a presented pike demanded, "Who comes here?" The Regent's answer laid the interrogator's head at his feet; but the voice had awakened the ever-watchful King. Perceiving his own danger in the fall of the sentinel, he snatched his sword, and calling aloud on his sleeping train, sprang from his couch. He was immediately surrounded by half a score of knights, who started on their feet before Wallace could reach the spot. Short, however, would have been their protection; they fell before his arm and that of Graham, and left a vacant place, for Edward had disappeared. Foreseeing from the first prowess of these midnight invaders the fate of his guards, he had made a timely escape by cutting a passage for himself through the canvas of his tent. Wallace perceived that his prize had eluded his grasp, but hoping to at least drive him from the field, he blew the appointed signal to Mar and Lennox; caught one of the lamps from the Monarch's table, and setting fire to the adjoining drapery, rushed from its blazing volumes to meet his colleagues amongst the disordered lines. Graham and his followers, with firebrands in



"What sound is that?"

"Only the wind amongst the trees: I see their branches waving."



their hands, threw conflagration into all parts of the camp ; and with the fearful war-cries of their country, seemed to assail the terrified enemy from every direction. Men, half-dressed and unarmed, rushed from their tents upon the pikes of their enemies ; hundreds fell without striking a blow ; and they who were stationed nearest the outposts, betook themselves to flight, scattering themselves in scared throngs over the amazed plains of Linlithgow.

The King in vain sought to rally his men—to remind them of their late victory. His English alone hearkened to his call ; superstition had laid her petrifying hand on all the rest. Opposition seemed everywhere abandoned, excepting on the spot still maintained by the King of England and his brave countrymen. The faithless Scots who had followed the Cummins to the field also stood there and fought with desperation. Wallace opposed the despair and valour of his adversaries with the steadiness of his men ; and Graham, having seized some of the war-engines, discharged a shower of blazing arrows upon the Southron phalanx.

The camp was now on fire in every direction ; and putting all to the hazard of one decisive blow, Edward ordered his men to make at once to the point where, by the light of the flaming tents, he could perceive the waving plumes of Wallace. With his ponderous mace held terribly in the air, the King himself bore down to the shock ; and breaking through the intervening combatants, assaulted the chief. The puissant Edward wondered at himself as he shrank from before his strokes ; as he shuddered at the heroic fierceness of a countenance which seemed more than mortal. Edward trembled ; his mace was struck from his hand, but immediately a glittering falchion supplied its place, and with recovering presence of mind he renewed the combat.

Meanwhile the young Bruce, checking the onward speed of March, pierced him at once through the heart : "Die, thou disgrace to the name of Scot," cried he, "and with thy blood expunge my stains !" His sword now laid all opposition at his feet ; and while the tempest of death blew around, the groans of the dying, the shrieks of the wounded, and the outcries of those who were perishing in the flames, drove the King's ranks to distraction, and raised so great a fear in the minds of the Cummin clan, that, breaking from the royal line with yells of dismay, they fled in all directions after their already fugitive allies.

Edward saw the Earl of March fall; and finding himself wounded in many places, with a backward step he received the blows of Wallace; but that determined chief, following his advantage, made a stroke at the King which threw him into the arms of his followers. At that moment Lincoln raised his arm to strike his dagger into the back of Wallace; but Graham arrested the blow, and sent the young lord a motionless body to the earth. The Southron ranks closed immediately before their insensible Monarch; and a contest more desperate than any which had preceded it took place. Hosts seemed to fall on both sides; at last the Southrons (having stood their ground till Edward was carried from further danger) suddenly wheeled about and fled precipitately towards the east. Wallace pursued them on full charge, driving them across the lowlands of Linlithgow.

Wallace still led the pursuit of Edward, and meeting those auxiliaries from the adjoining counties which his provident orders had prepared to turn out on the first appearance of this martial chase, he poured his troops through Ettrick Forest, and drove the flying host of England far into Northumberland. There checking his triumphant squadrons, he recalled his stragglers, and returned with abated speed into his own country. Halting on the north bank of the Tweed, he sent to their quarters those bands which belonged to the border castles, and then marched leisurely forward, that his brave soldiers, who had sustained the weight of the battle, might recover their exhausted strength.

—JANE PORTER, *The Scottish Chiefs*.

VI

Queen and King

THE lords, by whom the Queen was called again into England, apparelled them in all haste to come to Edward her son, whom they would have to their sovereign lord. And the first that came and gave them most comfort was Henry, Earl of Lancaster, with the wry neck, called Tortecolle, who was brother to Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, beheaded, who was a good knight, and greatly recommended. This Earl Henry came to the Queen with great company of men-of-war, and after him came from one part and other, earls, barons, knights, and squires with so much people that they thought them clean out of perils, and always increased their power as they went forward.

Then they took counsel among them that they should ride straight to the town of Bristol, where the King was, and with him the Spencers. The which was a good town, and a strong, and well closed, standing on a good port of the sea, and a strong castle, the sea beating round about it. And therein was the King and Sir Hugh Spencer the elder, who was about ninety years of age, and Sir Hugh Spencer his son, who was chief governor of the King, and counselled him in all his evil deeds. Also there was the Earl of Arundel, who had wedded the daughter of Sir Hugh Spencer, and divers other knights and squires, repairing about the King's court.

Then the Queen and all her company, lords of Hainault, earls and barons, and all other Englishmen, took the right way to the said town of Bristol, and in every town where they entered they were received with great feast and honour, and always their people increased, and so long they rode by their journeys that they arrived at Bristol, and besieged the town round about as near as they might; and the King and Sir Hugh Spencer the younger held them in the castle, and the old Sir Hugh Spencer and the Earl of Arundel held them in

the town. And when the people of the town saw the great power that the Queen was of (for almost all England was of her accord), and perceived what peril and danger evidently they were in, they took counsel among themselves, and determined that they would yield up the town to the Queen, so that their lives and goods might be saved ; and so they sent to treat with the Queen and her council in this matter. But not the Queen nor her council would agree thereto without she might do with Sir Hugh Spencer and with the Earl of Arundel what it pleased her.

When the people of the town saw they could have no peace otherwise, nor save the town, nor their goods, nor their lives, in that distress, they accorded to the Queen, and opened the gates, so that the Queen and Sir John of Hainault, and all her barons, knights, and squires entered into the town, and took their lodging within, as many as might, and the residue without. Then Sir Hugh Spencer, and the Earl of Arundel were taken, and brought before the Queen to do her pleasure with them. Then there were brought to the Queen her own children, John her son and her two daughters, the which were found there in the keeping of the said Sir Hugh Spencer, whereof the Queen had great joy, for she had not seen them long before.

When the Queen, and her barons, and all her company were lodged at their ease, then they besieged the castle as near as they might. The Queen caused Sir Hugh Spencer the elder and the Earl of Arundel to be brought forth before Edward her son, and all the barons that were there present ; and said how that she, and her son, should take right and law on them, according to their deserts. Then Sir Hugh Spencer said : "Madam, God be to you a good Judge, and give you good judgment ; and if we cannot have it in this world, I pray God we may have it in another."

Then the barons and knights counselled with each other and so reported their opinions, the which was, how they had well deserved death, for divers horrible deeds, the which they had committed, for all the trespass rehearsed before to justify to be of truth, wherefore they have deserved for the diversities of their trespasses to have judgment in three divers manners : first to be drawn, and after to be beheaded, and then to be hanged on the gibbet.

This in like wise as they were judged, so it was done, and executed before the Castle of Bristol, in the sight of the King

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"Entered into a little vessel behind the castle, thinking to have fled to the country of Wales."

and of Sir Hugh Spencer the younger. This judgment was done in the year of our Lord 1326, on St. Denis' day, in October. And after this execution, the King and the young Spencer, seeing themselves thus besieged in this mischief, and knew no comfort that might come to them, in a morning betimes, they too, with a small company, entered into a little vessel behind the castle, thinking to have fled to the country of Wales. But they were eleven days in the ship, and enforced it to sail as much as they might. But whatsoever they did, the wind was every day so contrary to them, by the will of God, that every day once or twice they were ever brought again within a quarter of a mile to the same castle.

At last it fortuned that Sir Henry Beaumont, son to the Viscount Beaumont in England, entered into a barge, and certain company with him, and spied this vessel, and rowed after him so long that the ship, wherein the King was, could not flee fast before them, but finally they were overtaken, and so brought again to the town of Bristol, and delivered to the Queen and her son as prisoners.

And when the King and Sir Hugh Spencer were brought to Bristol by the said Sir Henry Beaumont, the King was then sent by the counsel of all the barons and knights to the strong castle of Berkeley, and put under good keeping and honest, and there were ordained people of estate about him, such as knew right well what they ought to do, but they were straitly commanded that they should in no wise suffer him to pass out of the castle. And Sir Hugh Spencer was delivered to Sir Thomas Wage, marshal of the host. And after that the Queen departed, and all her host, towards London, which was the chief city of England; and so rid forth on their journey; and Sir Thomas Wage caused Sir Hugh Spencer to be fast bound on the best and leniest horse of all the host, and caused him to wear on a tabard, such as traitors and thieves were wont to wear. And thus he was led in scorn, after the Queen's route, throughout all the towns as they passed, with trumps and canaries, to do him the greater despite, till at the last they came to the city of Hereford, where the Queen was honourably received, with great solemnity, and all her company, and there she kept the feast of All Saints with great royalty, for the love of her son and strangers that were there.

When this feast was done, then Sir Hugh Spencer, who was nothing beloved, was brought forth before the Queen, and all the lords and knights, and there before him in writing was

rehearsed all his deeds, against the which he would give no manner of answer. And so he was then judged by plain sentence.

First, to be drawn on an hurdle with trumps and trumpettis through all the city of Hereford, and after to be brought into the Market Place, where all the people were assembled, and there to be tied on high upon a ladder that every man might see him; and then his heart to be drawn out of his body, and cast into the fire—because he was a false traitor of heart. And according to his judgment he was executed.

Then the Queen and all her lords took their way toward London, and did so much by their journeys that they arrived at the city of London, and they of the city with great company met them, and did to the Queen and to her son great reverence, and to all their company as they thought it best bestowed.

—LORD BERNERS' *Chronicle of Froissart*.

VII

The Battle of Poitiers

THE Prince of Wales rode from the morning till it was against night, so that he came within two little leagues of Poitiers. Then the Captal de Buch, Sir Aymenon of Pommiers, the Lord Bartholomew of Brunes, and the Lord Eustace Dambreticourt, all these the Prince sent forth to see if they might know what the Frenchmen did. These knights departed with two hundred men-of-arms, well horsed ; they rode so far that they saw the great battle of the kings. They saw all the fields covered with men-of-arms. These Englishmen could not forbear, but set on the tail of the French host, and cast down many to the earth, and took divers prisoners, so that the host began to stir, and tidings thereof came to the French King as he was entering into the city of Poitiers.

Then he returned again, and made all his host to do the same ; so that Saturday it was very late ere he was lodged in the field. The English currours returned again to the Prince, and shewed him all that they saw and knew, and said how the French host was a great number of people. "Well," said the Prince, "in the name of God let us now study how we shall fight with them at our advantage." That night the Englishmen lodged in a strong place among hedges, vines, and bushes, and their host was well watched, and so was the French host.

When the Prince saw that he should have battle, and that the Cardinal [of Perigord] was gone without any peace or truce making, and saw that the French King did set but little store by him, he said then to his men : "Now, sirs, though we be but a small company, as in regard to the puissance of our enemies, let us not be abashed therefore ; for the victory lieth not in the multitude of people, but where God will send it. If it fortune that the journey be ours, we shall be the most

honoured people of all the world ; and if we die in our right quarrel, I have the King my father and brethren, and also ye have good friends and kinsmen, these shall revenge us. Therefore, sirs, for God's sake, I require you do your devoirs this day ; for if God be pleased, and St. George, this day ye shall see me a good knight." These words, and such other as the Prince spake, comforted all his people.

The Lord Sir John Chandos that day never went from the Prince, nor also the Lord James Audeley, of a great season : but when he saw that they should needs fight, he said to the Prince : " Sir, I have served always truly my lord, your father, and you also, and shall do as long as I live. I say this because I made once a vow that the first battle that either the King your father or any of his children should be at, how that I would be one of the first setters on, or else to die in the pain ; therefore I require your Grace, as in reward for any service that ever I did to the King your father, or to you, that you will give me licence to depart from you, and to set myself there, as I may accomplish my vow." The Prince accorded to his desire, and said : " Sir James, God give you this day that grace to be the best knight of all other," and so took him by the hand. Then the knight departed from the Prince, and went to the foremost front of all the battles, all only accompanied with four squires, who promised not to fail him. This Lord James was a right sage and a valiant knight, and by him was much of the host ordained and governed the day before. Thus Sir James was in the front of the battle, ready to fight with the battle of the marshals of France.

In like wise the Lord Eustace Dambreticourt did his pain to be one of the foremost to set on ; when Sir James Audeley began to set forward to his enemies, it fortun'd to Sir Eustace Dambreticourt as ye shall hear after.

Sir Eustace, being a horseback, laid his spear in the rest and ran into the French battle ; and then a knight of Allemagne called the Lord Louis of Coucoubas, who bare a shield silver, five roses gules, and Sir Eustace bare ermine, two hamedes of gules. When this Almayn saw the Lord Eustace come from his company, he rode against him, and they met so rudely that both knights fell to the earth ; the Almayn was hurt in the shoulder, therefore he rose not so quickly as did Sir Eustace, who, when he was up and had taken his breath, he came to the other knight, as he lay on the ground : but then five other knights of Allemagne came

on him all at once, and bare him to the earth ; and so perforce there he was taken prisoner, and brought to the Earl of Nosco, who as then took no heed of him ; and I cannot say whether they swore him prisoner or no, but they tied him to a chair and there let him stand.

Then the battle began on all parts, and the battalions of the marshals of France approached, and they set forth that were appointed to break the ray of the archers ; they entered a horseback into the way where the great hedges were on both sides, set full of archers. As soon as the men-of-arms entered the archers began to shoot on both sides, and did slee, and hurt horses and knights, so that the horses, when they felt the sharp arrows, they would in no wise go forward, but drew aback, and flang and took on so fiercely, that many of them fell on their masters, so that for preace they could not rise again ; insomuch that the marshals' battalion could never come at the Prince : certain knights and squires that were well horsed passed through the archers, and thought to approach to the Prince, but they could not.

The Lord James Audeley, with his four squires, was in the front of that battle, and there did marvels in arms ; and by great prowess he came and fought with Sir Arnold Dandrehen, under his own banner, and there they fought long together, and Sir Arnold was there sore handled. The battalion of the marshals began to disorder, by reason of the shot of the archers, with the aid of the men-of-arms, who came in among them, and slew of them, and did what they list ; and there was the Lord Arnold d'Andrehen taken prisoner, by other men than by Sir James Audeley, or by his four squires, for that day he never took prisoner, but always fought and went on his enemies.

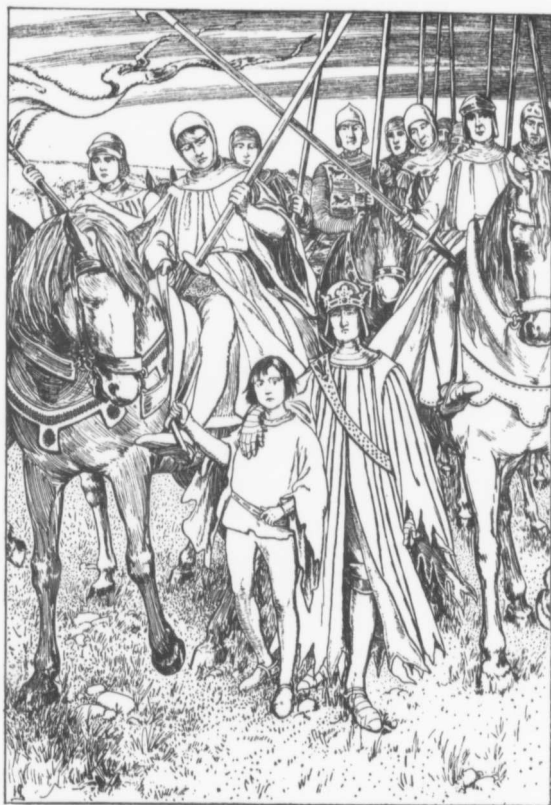
Also on the French party, the Lord John Clermont fought under his own banner as long as he could endure, but there he was beaten down, and could not be relieved nor ransomed, but was slain without mercy ; some said it was because of the words that he had the day before to Sir John Chandos : so within a short space the marshals' battalions were discomfited, for they fell one upon another, and could not go forth ; and the Frenchmen that were behind and could not get forward recoiled back, and came on the battalion of the Duke of Normandy, the which was great and thick, and were afoot : but anon they began to open behind : for when they knew that the marshals' battalion was discomfited, they took their horses

and departed, he that might best; also they saw a rout of Englishmen coming down a little mountain on horseback, and many archers with them, who brake in on the side of the Duke's battalion. True to say, the archers did their company that day great advantage, for they shot so thick that the Frenchmen wist not on what side to take heed; and, little and little, the Englishmen won ground on them: and when the men-of-arms of England saw that the marshals' battalion was discomfited, and that the Duke's battalion began to disorder and open, they leapt then on their horses, the which they had ready by them; then they assembled together and cried, "Saint George! Guyenne!" and the Lord Chandos said to the Prince, "Sir, take your horse and ride forth, this journey is yours: God is this day in your hands. Get us to the French King's battalion, for there lieth all the sore of the matter. I think verily by his valiantness he will not flee: I trust we shall have him, by the grace of God and St. George, so he be well fought withal; and, sir, I heard you say that this day I should see you a good knight." The Prince said: "Let us go forth, ye shall not see me this day return back"; and said, "Advance, banner; in the name of God and of Saint George." The knight that bare it did his commandment. There was then a sore battle, and a perilous, and many a man overthrown; and he that was once down could not be relieved again, without great succour and aid.

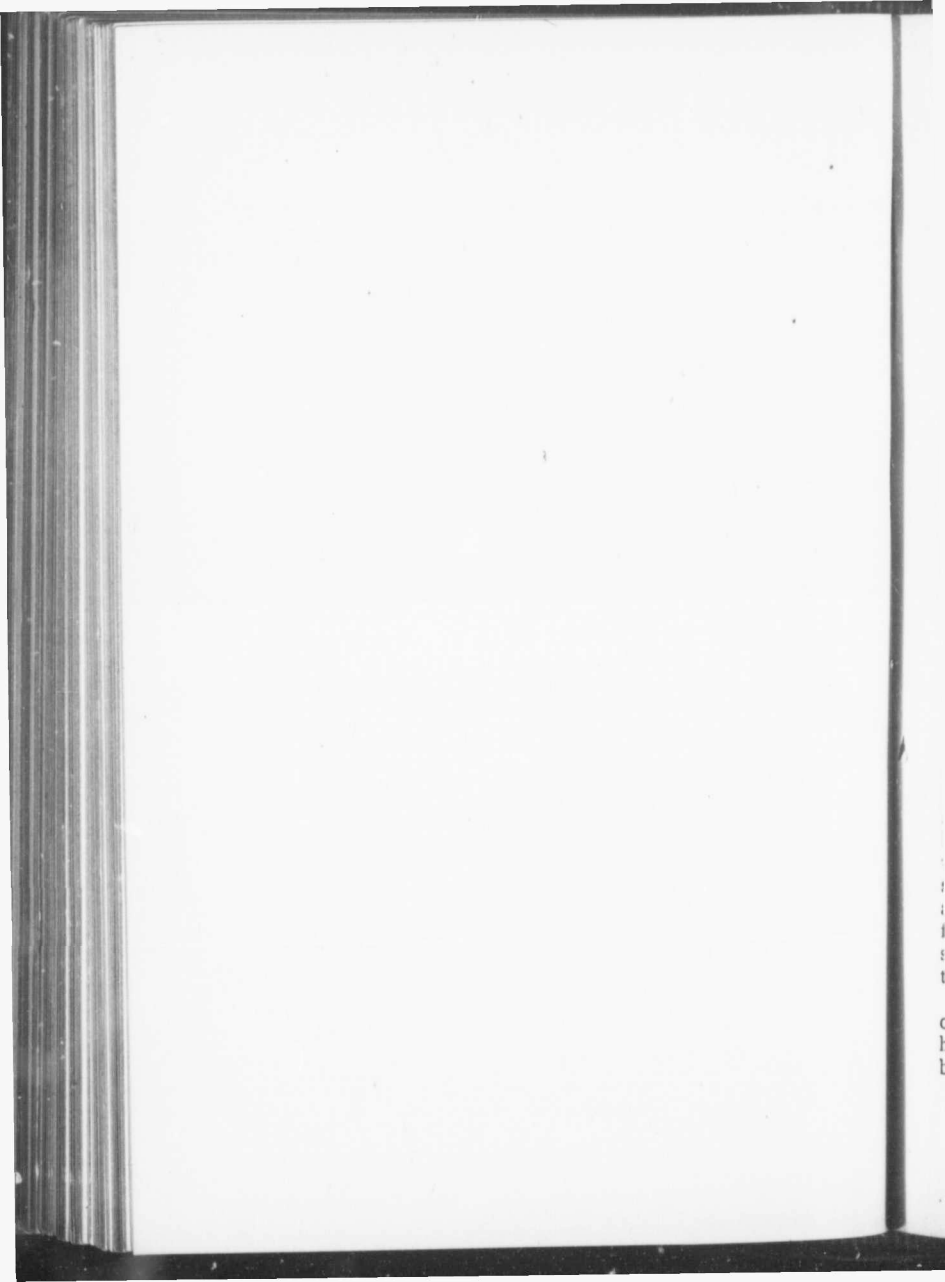
As the Prince rode and entered in among his enemies he saw on his right hand, in a little bush lying dead, the Lord Robert of Duras, and his banner by him, and a ten or twelve of his men about him. Then the Prince said to two of his squires and to three archers: "Sirs, take the body of this knight on a targe and bear him to Poitiers, and present him from me to the Cardinal of Perigord, and say how I salute him by that token"; and this was done. The Prince was informed that the Cardinal's men were on the field against him, the which was not pertaining to the right order of arms; for men of the Church that come and goe for treaty of peace ought not by reason to bear harness, nor to fight for neither of the parties: they ought to be indifferent: and because these men had done so the Prince was displeased with the Cardinal, and therefore he sent unto him his nephew, the Lord Robert of Duras, dead: and the castellan of Amposta was taken, and the Prince would have had his head stricken off, because he was pertaining to the Cardinal; but then the

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"And so brought him and his son in peace and rest to the Prince of Wales."



Lord Chandos said: "Sir, suffer for a season; attend to a greater matter; and peradventure the Cardinal will make such excuse that ye shall be content."

Then the Prince and his company dressed them on the battalion of the Duke of Athens, Constable of France. There was many a man slain and cast to the earth. As the Frenchmen fought in companies they cried: "Montjoye! Saint Denis!" and the Englishmen: "Saint George! Guyenne!" Anon the Prince with his company met with the battalion of Almayns, whereof the Earl of Salesbruce, the Earl Nosco, and the Earl Neydo were captains, but in a short space they were put to flight. The archers shot so wholly together that none durst come in their dangers; they slew many a man that could not come to ransom; these three earls were there slain, and divers other knights and squires of their company: and there was the Lord Dambreticourt rescued by his own men and set on horseback, and afterwards he did that day many feats of arms, and took good prisoners.

When the Duke of Normandy's battalion saw the Prince approach, they thought to save themselves; and so the Duke and the King's children, the Earl of Poitiers and the Earl of Touraine, who were right young, believed their governors, and so departed from the field, and with them more than eight hundred spears, that struck no stroke that day. Howbeit the Lord Guiscard d'Angle, and the Lord John of Saintré, who were with the Earl of Poitiers, would not fly, but entered into the thickest press of the battle.

The King's three sons took the way to Chauvigny; and the Lord John of Landas and the Lord Tybalt of Vodenay, who were set to wait on the Duke of Normandy, when they had brought the Duke a long league from the battle, then they took leave of the Duke, and desired the Lord of Saint-Venant that he should not leave the Duke, but to bring him in safeguard, whereby he should win more thanks of the King than to abide still in the field. Then they met also the Duke of Orleans, and a great company with him, who were also departed to the field with clear hands; there were many good knights and squires, though that their masters departed from the field, yet they had rather died than to have had any reproach.

On the English part the Lord James Audeley, with the aid of his four squires, fought always in the chief of the battle; he was sore hurt in the body and in the visage; as long as his breath served him he fought. At last, at the end of the

battle, his four squires took and brought him out of the field, and laid him under a hedge side for to refresh him, and they unarmed him, and bound up his wounds as well as they could.

On the French part King John was that day a full right good knight; if the fourth part of his men had done their devoirs as well as he did, the journey had been his by all likelihood. Howbeit they were all slain and taken that were there, except a few that saved themselves that were with the King.

Then there was a great press to take the King, and such as knew him cried: "Sir, yield you, or else ye are but dead." There was a knight of Saint Omer, retained in wages with the King of England, called Sir Denys Morbecke, who had served the Englishmen five years before, because in his youth he had forfeited the realm of France for a murder that he did at Saint Omer. It happened so well for him that he was next to the King when they were about to take him. He stept forth into the press, and by strength of his body and arms he came to the French King, and said in good Franch, "Sir, yield you." The King beheld the knight, and said, "To whom shall I yield me; where is my cousin, the Prince of Wales? If I might see him, I would speak with him." Denys answered and said, "Sir, he is not here; but yield you to me and I shall bring you to him." "Who be you?" quoth the King. "Sir," quoth he, "I am Denys of Morbecke, a knight of Artois, but I serve the King of England, because I am banished the realm of France, and I have forfeited all that I had there." Then the King gave him his right gauntlet, saying, "I yield me to you." There was a great press about the King, for every man enforced him to say, "I have taken him," so that the King could not go forward with his young son, the Lord Philip, with him because of the press.

The Prince of Wales, who was courageous and cruel as a lion, took that day great pleasure to fight and to chase his enemies. The Lord John Chandos, who was with him, of all that day never left him, nor never took heed of taking of any prisoners. Then at the end of the battle he said to the Prince: "Sir, it were good that you rested here, and set your banner a high in this bush that your people may draw hither; for they be sore spread abroad, nor I can see no more banners nor pennons of the French party. Wherefore, sir, rest and refresh you, for ye be sore chafed." Then the Prince's banner was set up a high on a bush, and trumpets and clarions began to sound. Then the Prince did off his basenet, and the knights

for his body and they of his chamber were ready about him, and a red pavilion put up, and then drink was brought forth to the Prince, and for such lords as were about him, the which still increased as they came from the chase. There they tarried, and their prisoners with them.

And when the two marshals were come to the Prince, he demanded of them if they knew any tidings of the French King. They answered and said: "Sir, we hear none of certainty, but we think verily he is either dead or taken, for he is not gone out of the battle." Then the Prince said to the Earl of Warwick and to Sir Reginald Cobham: "Sirs, I require you go forth and see what ye can know, that at your return ye may shew me the truth." These two lords took their horses and departed from the Prince, and rode up a little hill to look about them. Then they perceived a flock of men-of-arms coming together right warily. There was the French King afoot in great peril, for Englishmen and Gascons were his masters. They had taken him from Sir Denys Morbecke perforce; and such as were most of force said: "I have taken him." "Nay," quoth another, "I have taken him." So they strove which should have him. Then the French King, to eschew that peril, said: "Sirs, strive not; lead me courteously, and my son, to my cousin the Prince, and strive not for my taking, for I am so great a lord to make you all rich." The King's words somewhat appeased them; howbeit ever as they went they made riot, and brawled for the taking of the King. When the two foresaid lords saw and heard that noise and strife among them, they came to them and said: "Sirs, what is the matter that ye strive for?" "Sirs," said one of them, "it is for the French King, who is here taken prisoner; and there be more than ten knights and squires that challenge the taking of him and of his son." Then the two lords entered into the press, and caused every man to draw aback, and commanded them in the Prince's name, on pain of their heads, to make no more noise, nor to approach the King no nearer without they were commanded. Then every man gave room to the lords, and they alighted and did their reverence to the King, and so brought him and his son in peace and rest to the prince of Wales.

Thus this battle was discomfited, as ye have heard, the which was in the fields of Maupertius, a two leagues from Poitiers, the twenty-second day of September, the year of our Lord MCCCCLVII. It began in the morning, and ended at

noon ; but as then all the Englishmen were not returned from the chase, therefore the Prince's banner stood on a bush to draw all his men together ; but it was nigh night ere all came from the chase. And as it was reported, there was slain all the flower of France ; and there was taken with the King, and the Lord Philip his son, seventeen earls, beside barons, knights, and squires, and slain five or six thousand of one and other.

When every man was come from the chase, they had twice as many prisoners as they were in number in all. Then it was counselled among them, because of the great charge and doubt to keep so many, that they should put many of them to ransom incontinent in the field, and so they did ; and the prisoners found the Englishmen and Gascons right courteous. There were many that day put to ransom, and let go, all only on their promise of faith and truth to return again, between that and Christmas, to Bordeaux, with their ransoms.

Then that night they lay in the field, beside where the battle had been : some unarmed them, but not all, and unarmed all their prisoners, and every man made good cheer to his prisoner : for that day whosoever took any prisoner, he was clear his, and might quit or ransom him at his pleasure.

All such as were there with the Prince were all made rich with honour and goods, as well by ransoming of prisoners as by winning of gold, silver, plate, jewels that were there found ; there was no man that did set anything by rich harness, whereof there was great plenty, for the Frenchmen came thither richly beseen, weening to have had the journey for them.

—LORD BERNERS' *Chronicle of Froissart*.

VIII

The Wooing of a Princess

WE shall speak of the King of England's ambassadors, as the Earl of Rutland, and the Earl Marshal, and others, that were sent into France to treat of the marriage between King Richard, their lord, and the daughter of Charles, French King, who was but eight years of age; and I shall show you how they sped.

The English lords rode from Calais to Amiens, and to Clermont in Beauvoisis, and so to Paris, and in every place they were well received by the commandment of the French King; they were lodged about the Cross of Tyrover; they were five hundred horses. The French King was lodged at the Castle of Louvre, and the Queen and her children at the house of Saint Pol, upon the river of Seine; the Duke of Berry at the house of Nesle; the Duke of Burgundy at the house of Artois; and the Duke of Bourbon in his own house; the Duke of Orleans, the Earl of Saint Pol, and the Lord of Coucy at their own houses. The King had assembled there all his council, to the intent to make the better answer to the ambassadors of England. The King had commanded that every day there should be delivered to these ambassadors two hundred crowns of France, for their small expenses and for their horses. And the chief of these English lords, as the Earl Marshal and the Earl of Rutland, were oftentimes with the King, and dined with him; they had as good cheer as could be devised for the love of the King of England. These lords desired ever to have an answer, and they were ever fed forth with fair words, for the noblemen of France had great marvel of the requests of the Englishmen, and that the King of England would marry with France, seeing that the war had been so cruel and so long endured, and some of the French

King's council said: "How may our King agree to give his daughter in marriage to his adversary ere this treaty should be made? We think we shall have peace with England by some other ways, though it be not by the means of marriage."

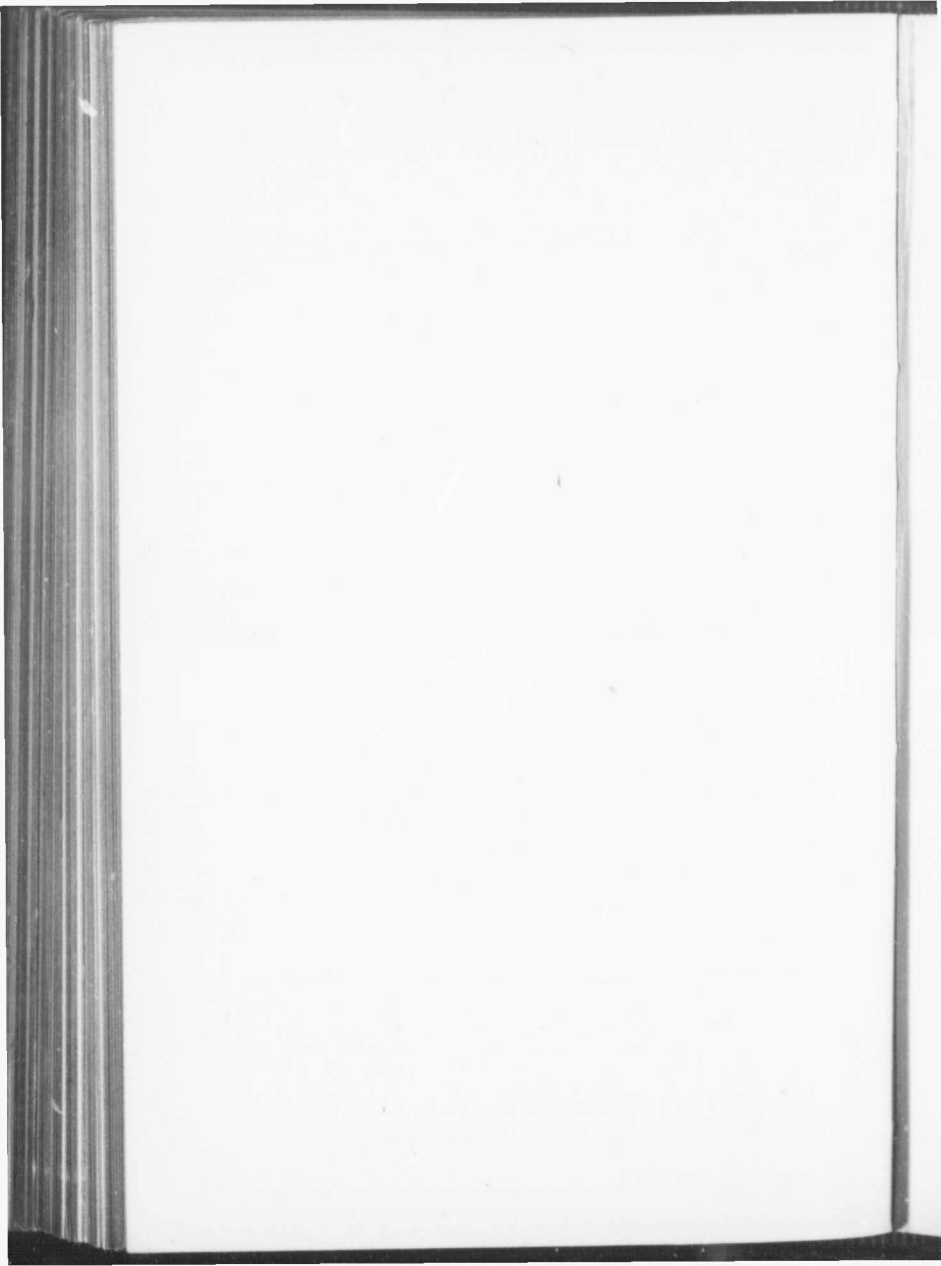
And as at that time there was a valiant knight of the French King's council called Sir Raynalt of Corby; he was a far-casting man, and considered what might fall in time to come. Then he said to the King and to his uncles: "My lords and masters, a man should enter in at the right door into a house. It seemeth that King Richard of England would nothing to you nor to the realm but love and all favour, seeing that by reason of marriage he would ally him to you. Two times your counsellors and his have met together at Amiens and at Balyngbam to treat for a peace, and yet they could never take good conclusion, but on the state of a truce: and, sir, it is well known that Thomas, Duke of Gloucester, King Richard's uncle, is of a contrary opinion, against the King and his other two uncles, the Dukes of Lancaster and of York. The King nor other cannot make him agree willingly to have peace; howbeit his puissance cannot resist the King's power. Therefore, sir, after mine opinion, receive this offer and refuse not this treaty, and let these lords have such answer as may content them."

Then it was concluded by the French King's council that there should be as good cheer made to the Englishmen as was before; and whether it was by dissimulation or otherwise the Frenchmen were determined to make a good and a sweet answer to the Englishmen, and to put them in hope that the King of England should have his desire.

The Queen and her children lay at the house of Saint Pol; and whereas the English lords desired to see them, it was granted to them, and specially to see her for whom their treaty was. Then it was shewed them that they must be content howsoever they found her, for they said she was but a young child of eight years of age; wherefore they said there could not be in her no great wisdom nor prudence; howbeit she was indoctrined well enough, and that the lords found well when they saw her. The Earl Marshal, being on his knees, said to her: "Fair lady, by the grace of God, ye shall be our Lady and Queen of England." Then answered the young lady well advisedly, without counsel of any other person: "Sir," quoth she, "an it please God and my lord my father that I shall be Queen of England, I shall be glad thereof, for



“‘Sir,’ quoth she, ‘an it please God and my lord my father
that I shall be Queen of England.’”



it is shewed me that I shall be then a great lady." Then she took up the Earl Marshal by the hand, and led him to the Queen, her mother, who had great joy of the answer that she had made, and so were all other that heard it. The manner, countenance, and behaviour of this young lady pleased greatly the ambassadors, and they said among themselves that she was likely to be a lady of high honour and great goodness.

Thus, when these lords of England had been at Paris twenty days, and their costs and charges paid for by the French King, a reasonable answer was given them, so that they were put in great hope to bring about that they came for. "Howbeit," the Frenchmen said, "it could not be done shortly, because the lady was so young, and also she was affianced to the Duke of Brittany's eldest son." Wherefore they said they must treat to break that promise ere they could proceed any further in that matter; and thereupon the French King and his council should send into England the next Lent after, to shew how the matter went; and when the days began to increase and wax fair, then the King of England to send again into France whom it should please him, and they should be welcome.

With this answer the Englishmen were contented, and took leave of the Queen and of her daughter, and of the King and of all other, and departed from Paris, and took the same way they came, and so returned to Calais, and then into England, and the two earls rode in post before their company to bring tidings to the King; they rode from Sandwich to Windsor in less than a day and an half. The King was right joyous of their coming, and was well content with the French King's answer. He set the matter so to his heart that he took great pleasure therein, and took heed to none other thing, but studied how he might bring it about to have the French King's daughter to wife.

The same season was sent into England from the French King the Earl Valeran of Saint Pol, with certain articles concerning the treaty of the peace, and with him was sent Robert the Hermit, whom the King of England was glad to hear speak. The Earl of Saint Pol found the King of England and his brethren, the Earls of Kent and of Huntingdon, and the Duke of Lancaster, the King's uncle, at the Manor of Eltham. The King received him joyously, and heard well his message, and said to him apart: "Fair brother of Saint Pol, as to the treaty of peace between me and my fair father of France, I am

right well inclined thereto ; but I alone cannot promote that matter. True it is my brethren and my two uncles of Lancaster and York incline right well thereto ; but I have another uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, who is right perilous and a marvellous man ; he letteth it as much as he can, and doth what he can to draw the Londoners to his opinion ; I fear me to make a rebellion in my realm, and that he should raise the people against me, which is a great peril ; for if the people of England rise again against me, and have mine uncle of Gloucester on their part, and such other barons and knights of the realm as be of his opinion, my realm were lost without remedy, for mine uncle of Gloucester is so secret that no man can know his mind."

"Sir," quoth the Earl of Saint Pol, "it behoveth you to win him with fair, sweet, and loving words, and give him great gifts ; if he demand anything, grant it him ; this is the way whereby ye shall win him. Ye must flatter him till the peace be made, and that ye have your wife brought hither to you, and that done then ye may take other counsel ; ye shall be then of the puissance to oppress all your rebels, for the French King, if need be, shall aid you ; of this ye may be sure."

"In the name of God, ye say well, and thus shall I do."

The Earl of Saint Pol was lodged at London, and oftentimes went to Eltham to see the King and the Duke of Lancaster, and had oftentimes communication on this marriage. The Earl of Saint Pol said how the French King should come to Saint Omer and his uncles, and bring with him his daughter, so that the King of England would come to Calais ; and so between Saint Omer and Calais the two kings should meet and speak together, whereby by reason of sight and speaking together should increase love and amity ; and there these two kings and their uncles should speak together without any other company on the form of the peace ; and if they conclude not on some peace, yet at least the truce might be prolonged to endure for thirty or forty year between the two realms and their allies. This device seemed right good to the King and to his council, and hereupon the King and other lords sent to Calais to make provision, and the King desired his uncle the Duke of Gloucester to go with him in that journey, and the Duchess his wife and his children, and in like wise the Dukes and Duchesses of York and Lancaster ; and so when everything was ready the King and the Earl of Saint Pol departed from Eltham and rode towards Canterbury, and after them

followed all other lords, such as should go in this voyage and such as had been desired. The Earl of Saint Pol passed the sea first, to the intent to advertise the French King, and so passed to Boulogne and so to Paris, and there declared to the French King and to his uncles how he had sped; wherewith they were well content, and so departed from Paris, and little and little approached to the city of Amiens, and the King of England and his uncles came to Calais, with many lords and ladies; and the Duke of Burgundy, one of the French King's uncles, came to Saint Omer; and by the means of the Earl of Saint Pol and Robert the Hermit, the Duke of Burgundy came to Calais, to see the King of England and his uncles, where he was nobly received, and there they counselled together on certain articles of the peace, whereto the King of England lightly inclined; and, for to say truth, he cared not what he did so he might have his wife.

As soon as the French King knew that the King of England was come again to Calais, he sent to him the Earl of Saint Pol to shew him what order was taken in France concerning his marriage, which the King of England was glad to hear. Then the Duke of Lancaster, and his son Beaufort of Lancaster, the Duke of Gloucester, and Humphrey his son, the Earl of Rutland, the Earl Marshal, the Earl of Huntingdon, the King's chamberlain, and many other lords, knights, squires, and ladies, rode with the Earl of Saint Pol to Saint Omer, where they were well received of the Duke of Burgundy, and of the Duchess; and thither came the Duke of Brittany, and had left the French King at Aire, and his daughter with him.

Ye may well know all the cheer that could be devised was made to the English lords and ladies and other at Saint Omer, and the Duchess of Burgundy made them a great dinner; there was the Duchess of Lancaster, and her son and two daughters; there were great gifts given of plate of gold and silver, nothing was spared, in so much that the Englishmen had marvel thereof, and specially the Duke of Gloucester, and said to his council: "I see well there are great riches in the realm of France." There was much given to him, to the intent to abate and to mollify his rancour that he had against France. The lords of France knew well that he was always hard to agree to the peace, wherefore they shewed him as much token of love and honour as they could do; he took ever all their gifts, but always the rancour abode still in his heart: for all that ever the Frenchmen could do, they could not mollify his fell stomach,

for always he made hard answers as they treated for any peace. The Frenchmen be subtle, yet for all that they could get no hold of him, for his words and answers were always so covert that they wist not how to understand them. When the Duke of Burgundy saw his manner, he said to his council: "We lose all that ever we do to this Duke of Gloucester; for as long as he liveth there shall be no sure peace between France and England, for he shall always find new inventions and accidents to engender hate and strife between both realms, for he intendeth nor thinketh none other thing; if it were not the trust that we have in the King of England, whereby hereafter to fare the better, the King should not have to his wife our cousin of France."

When the Duke and Duchess of Burgundy, the Countess of Nevers, the Countess of Saint Pol, and the other lords and ladies of France had greatly feasted the lords and ladies of England, then there was communication how these two kings should meet and speak together, and how the lady should be delivered. Thereupon appointment was made, and leave taken on all parts; the English party returned to Calais to the King, and shewed what cheer they had, and what presents had been given them. These news pleased well the King, for he was glad when he heard any honour spoken of the French King, he was so in love with him because of his daughter, whom he trusted to have to his queen. Then, anon, after the French King came to Saint Omer, and was lodged in the abbey of Saint Bertin, and dislodged all others that were there before, and had the Duke of Brittany in his company; and then it was ordained that the Dukes of Berry, of Burgundy, and of Bourbon should go to Calais to speak with the King of England.

So they came to Calais and were joyously received, and had as good cheer as could be devised. These three dukes had secret communication with the King and his council, so that many, both of France and of England, reputed that there was a peace concluded between France and England. And, indeed, it was near at a point, and the Duke of Gloucester agreed well thereto, as at that time; for the King of England had promised him, if he would agree to the peace, to give his son Humphrey the Earldom of Rochester in heritage, and to make him spend yearly in revenues two thousand pounds sterling, and to give to himself as soon as he came in England, in ready money, fifty thousand nobles; so that by reason of these gifts the

Duke of Gloucester's hardness was well allayed. So that the lords of France saw well his opinions were not so obstinate as they were before, for they found him then sweet and meek.

The King of England came to Guines, and the Duke of Lancaster with him, and the Duke of Gloucester to Ham. Thus on a Friday, being the even of Simon and Jude, in the year of our Lord God a thousand three hundred fourscore and sixteen, about ten of the clock in the forenoon, the two kings departed out of their tents, the which were pitched not far asunder, and came afoot the one to the other, and met at a certain place that was appointed. And on the one side there was arranged four hundred knights of France, armed with their swords in their hands, and on the other part, four hundred English knights in like manner: so the two kings passed through them: the Dukes of Lancaster and of Gloucester led the French King, and the Dukes of Berry and of Burgundy led the King of England. Thus they came forby the said eight hundred knights: and when the two kings came just together, all the eight hundred knights kneeled down to the ground, and many of them wept for joy. Thus the two kings met together bareheaded, and a little inclined, and took each other by the hands. Then the French King led the King of England into his tent, which was noble and rich; and the four dukes took each other by the hands and followed the two kings, and other knights after, the Frenchmen on the one side and the Englishmen on the other side; and so they stood regarding each other in good and humble manner till all was done. Then it was ordained that on the same place where as the two kings took each other by the hand, that there should be made and founded a chapel in the honour of our Lady, and should be called Our Lady of Grace. I cannot tell whether it were made or not.

Then on the Saturday, on the Feast of Saints Simon and Jude, about eleven of the clock, the King of England and his uncles, and other lords, came to the French King into his tent; they were received right honourably, and every man talked with his fellow merrily; then tables were set up, and the two kings sat at one table alone, the French King on the right hand; the Dukes of Berry, of Burgundy, and of Bourbon served the two kings. Then the Duke of Bourbon cast forth many jesting words to make the kings to laugh, and such as were before the table, for this Duke was a merry man, and said openly, addressing his words to the King of England:

"Sir," quoth he, "ye ought to make good cheer, for ye have all that ye desire; ye have your wife or shall have her delivered to you." Then the French King said: "Bourbonnois, we would that our daughter were of the age that our cousin of Saint Pol is, on the condition that it cost me a great good; then she should take my son with the better good will." The King of England heard well those words, and answered, speaking to the Duke of Bourbon (because the French King had compared his daughter to the Earl of Saint Pol's daughter), and said: "Sir, the age that my wife (that shall be) is of pleaseth me right well; we love not so much her heritage as I do the love of you and of our realms; for we two being of one accord there is no king, Christian nor other, that is able to annoy us."

The dinner thus done in the French King's tent, and after wine and spices taken, then the young Queen was brought forth, accompanied with a great number of ladies and damsels, and there she was delivered to the King of England. When that was done, every man took his leave to depart. The young Queen was set in a rich litter, and there went no more French ladies with her but the Lady of Coucy; there were the ladies of England, the Duchesses of Lancaster, of York, and of Gloucester, and of Ireland; the Lady of Namur, and the Lady Poinings, and a great number of other ladies, who received the Que-n with great joy.

Thus the King of England, and the young Queen, and his company, rode to Calais the same night, and the French King and his company to Saint Omer. Then the Tuesday after, which was All Hallows Day, the King of England married the said Lady Isabel of France in the Church of Saint Nicholas in Calais; the Archbishop of Canterbury wedded them, at which time there was a great feast and great largesse. The Thursday after there came to Calais the Dukes of Orleans, and of Bourbon to see the King and the Queen; and on the Friday they took their leave and departed, and rode to Saint Omer to the French King. And the same day in the morning the King and Queen took their ship, and had fair passage; they were over within three hours; the King lay in the Castle of Dover, and the next day to Rochester, and then to Dartford and so to Eltham.

Then all lords and ladies took their leave, and fifteen days after the Queen was brought to the city of London, accompanied with many lords, ladies, and damsels, and lay

the first night at the Tower of London, and the next day conveyed along through the city with great solemnity to the King's Palace of Westminster, and there the King was before ready to receive her. The same day the Londoners gave to the Queen great presents.

—LORD BERNERS' *Chronicle of Froissart*.

IX

The Struggle for Crown or Duty

FORGETFUL of the revel which was inaugurated in his honour, the Earl of Warwick had turned to the serener landscape of the grove and the moonlit greensward, and mused, and mused, when a soft arm thrown round him woke his reverie. For this had his lady left the revel. Divining, by the instinct born of love, the gloom of her husband, she had stolen from pomp and pleasure to his side.

"Ah! wherefore wouldst thou rob me," said the Countess, "of one hour of thy presence, since so few hours remain—since when the sun, that succeeds the morrow's, shines upon these walls, the night of thine absence will have closed upon me?"

"And if that thought of parting, sad to me as thee, suffice not, *belle amie*, to dim the revel," answered the Earl, "weetest thou not how ill the grave and solemn thoughts of one who sees before him the emprise that would change the dynasty of a realm can suit with the careless dance and the wanton music? But, not at that moment did I think of those mightier cares; my thoughts were nearer home. Hast thou noted, sweet wife, the silent gloom, the clouded brow of Isabel, since she learned that Anne was to be the bride of the heir of Lancaster?"

The mother suppressed a sigh. "We must pardon, or glance lightly over, the mood of one who loves her lord, and mourns for his baffled hopes! Well-a-day! I grieve that she admits not even me to her confidence. Ever with the favourite lady who lately joined her train—methinks that new friend gives less holy counsels than a mother!"

"Ha! and yet what counsels can Isabel listen to from a

comparative stranger? Even if Edward, or rather his cunning Elizabeth, had suborned this waiting-woman, our daughter never could hearken, even in an hour of anger, to the message from our dishonourer and our foe."

"Nay, but a flatterer often fosters, by praising the erring thought. Isabel hath something, dear lord, of thy high heart and courage, and ever from childhood her vaulting spirit, her very character of stately beauty, have given her a conviction of destiny and power loftier than those reserved for our gentle Anne. Let us trust to time and forbearance, and hope that the affection of the generous sister will subdue the jealousy of the disappointed princess."

"Pray Heaven, indeed, that it so prove! Isabel's ascendancy over Clarence is great, and might be dangerous. Would that she consented to remain in France with thee and Anne! Her lord, at least, it seems I have convinced and satisfied. Pleased at the vast fortunes before him, the toys of viceregal power, his lighter nature reconciles itself to the loss of a crown, which, I fear, it could never have upheld. For the more I have read his qualities in our household intimacy, the more it seems that I could scarcely have justified the imposing on England a king not worthy of so great a people. He is young yet, but how different the youth of Lancastrian Edward! In *him* what earnest and manly spirit! What heaven-born views of the duties of a king! Oh, if there be a sin in the passion that hath urged me on, let me, and me alone, atone—and may I be at least the instrument to give to England a prince whose virtues shall compensate for all!"

While yet the last word trembled upon the Earl's lips, a light flashed along the floors, hitherto illumined but by the stars and the full moon. And presently Isabel, in conference with the lady whom her mother had referred to, passed into the room, on her way to her private chamber. The countenance of this female diplomatist, whose talent for intrigue Philip de Comines has commemorated, but whose name, happily for her memory, history has concealed, was soft and winning in its expression, to the ordinary glance, though the sharpness of the features, the thin compression of the lips, and the harsh, dry, redness of the hair, corresponded with the attributes which modern physiognomical science truly or erringly assigns to a wily and treacherous character. She bore a light in her hand, and its rays shone full on the disturbed and agitated face of the Duchess. Isabel perceived at once the forms of her parents,

and stopped short in some whispered conversation, and uttered a cry almost of dismay.

"Thou leavest the revel betimes, fair daughter," said the Earl, examining her countenance with an eye somewhat stern.

"My lady," said the confidant, with a lowly reverence, "was anxious for her babe."

"Thy lady, good waiting-wench," said Warwick, "needs not thy tongue to address her father. Pass on."

The gentlewoman bit her lips, but obeyed, and quitted the room. The Earl approached and took Isabel's hand—it was cold as stone.

"My child," said he, tenderly, "thou dost well to retire to rest—of late thy cheek has lost its bloom. But just now, for many causes, I was wishing thee not to brave our perilous return to England; and now, I know not whether it would make me the more uneasy, to fear for thy health if absent or thy safety if with me!"

"My lord," replied Isabel, coldly, "my duty calls me to my husband's side, and the more, since now it seems he dares the battle, but reaps not its rewards! Let Edward and Anne rest here in safety—Clarence and Isabel go to achieve the diadem and orb for others."

"Be not bitter with thy father, girl—be not envious of thy sister!" said the Earl, in grave rebuke; then softening his tone, he added, "the women of a noble house should have no ambition of their own—their glory and their honour they should leave, unmurmuring, in the hands of men! Mourn not if thy sister mounts the throne of him who would have branded the very name to which thou and she were born!"

"I have made no reproach, my lord. Forgive me, I pray you, if I now retire; I am sore weary, and would fain have strength and health not to be a burden to you when you depart."

The Duchess bowed with proud submission, and moved on.

"Beware!" said the Earl, in a low voice.

"Beware!—and of what?" said Isabel, startled.

"Of thine own heart, Isabel. Ay, go to thine infant's couch, ere thou seek thine own, and, before the sleep of Innocence, calm thyself back to Womanhood."

The Duchess raised her head quickly, but habitual awe of her father checked the angry answer; and kissing, with formal reverence, the hand the Countess extended to her, she left the

room. She gained the chamber in which was the cradle of her son, gorgeously canopied with silks, inwrought with the blazoned arms of royal Clarence; and beside the cradle sat the confidant.

The Duchess drew aside the drapery, and contemplated the rosy face of the infant slumberer.

Then, turning to her confidant, she said—

“Three months since, and I hoped my firstborn would be a king! Away with those vain mockeries of royal birth! How suit they the destined vassal of the abhorred Lancastrian?”

“Sweet lady,” said the confidant, “did I not warn thee from the first that this alliance, to the injury of my lord Duke and this dear boy, was already imminent? I had hoped thou mightst have prevailed with the Earl!”

“He heeds me not—he cares not for me!” exclaimed Isabel; “his whole love is for Anne—Anne, who, without energy and pride, I scarcely have looked on as my equal! And now, to my younger sister, I must bow my knee—pleased if she deign to bid me hold the skirt of her queenly robe! Never—no, never!”

“Calm thyself; the courier must part this night. My Lord of Clarence is already in his chamber; he waits but thine assent to write to Edward, that he rejects not his loving messages.”

The Duchess walked to and fro in great disorder.

“But to be thus secret and false to my father?”

“Doth he merit that thou shouldst sacrifice thy child to him? Reflect!—the King has no son! The English barons acknowledge not in girls a sovereign; and, with Edward on the throne, thy son is heir presumptive. Little chance that a male heir shall now be born to Queen Elizabeth, while from Anne and her bridegroom a long line may spring. Besides, no matter what parchment treaties may ordain, how can Clarence and his offspring ever be regarded by a Lancastrian king but as enemies to feed the prison or the block, when some false invention gives the seemly pretext for extirpating the lawful race?”

“Cease—cease—cease!” cried Isabel, in terrible struggles with herself.

“Lady, the hour presses! And, reflect, a few lines are but words, to be confirmed or retracted as occasion suits! If Lord Warwick succeed, and King Edward lose his crown, ye

can shape as ye best may your conduct to the time. But if the Earl lose the day—if again he be driven into exile—a few words now release you and yours from everlasting banishment; restore your boy to his natural heritage; deliver you from the insolence of the Anjouite, who, methinks, even dared this very day to taunt your highness——”

“She did—she did! Oh that my father had been by to hear! She bade me stand aside (that Anne might pass)—‘not for the younger daughter of Lord Warwick, but for the lady admitted into the royalty of Lancaster!’ Elizabeth Woodville, at least, never dared this insolence!”

“And this Margaret, the Duke of Clarence is to place on the throne which your child yonder might otherwise aspire to mount!”

Isabel clasped her hands in mute passion.

“Hark!” said the confidant, throwing open the door.

And along the corridor came, in measured pomp, a stately procession, the chamberlain in front, announcing “Her Highness the Princess of Wales”; and Louis XI., leading the virgin bride (wife but in name and honour, till her dowry of a kingdom was made secure) to her gentle rest. The ceremonial pomp, the regal homage that attended the younger sister thus raised above herself, completed in Isabel’s jealous heart the triumph of the Tempter. Her face settled into hard resolve, and she passed at once from the chamber into one near at hand, where the Duke of Clarence sat alone, the rich wines of the livery, not untasted, before him, and the ink yet wet upon a scroll he had just indited.

He turned his irresolute countenance to Isabel as she bent over him and read the letter. It was to Edward; and after briefly warning him of the meditated invasion, significantly added—“and if I may seem to share this emprise, which, *here and alone*, I cannot resist, thou shalt find me still, when the moment comes, thy affectionate brother and loyal subject.”

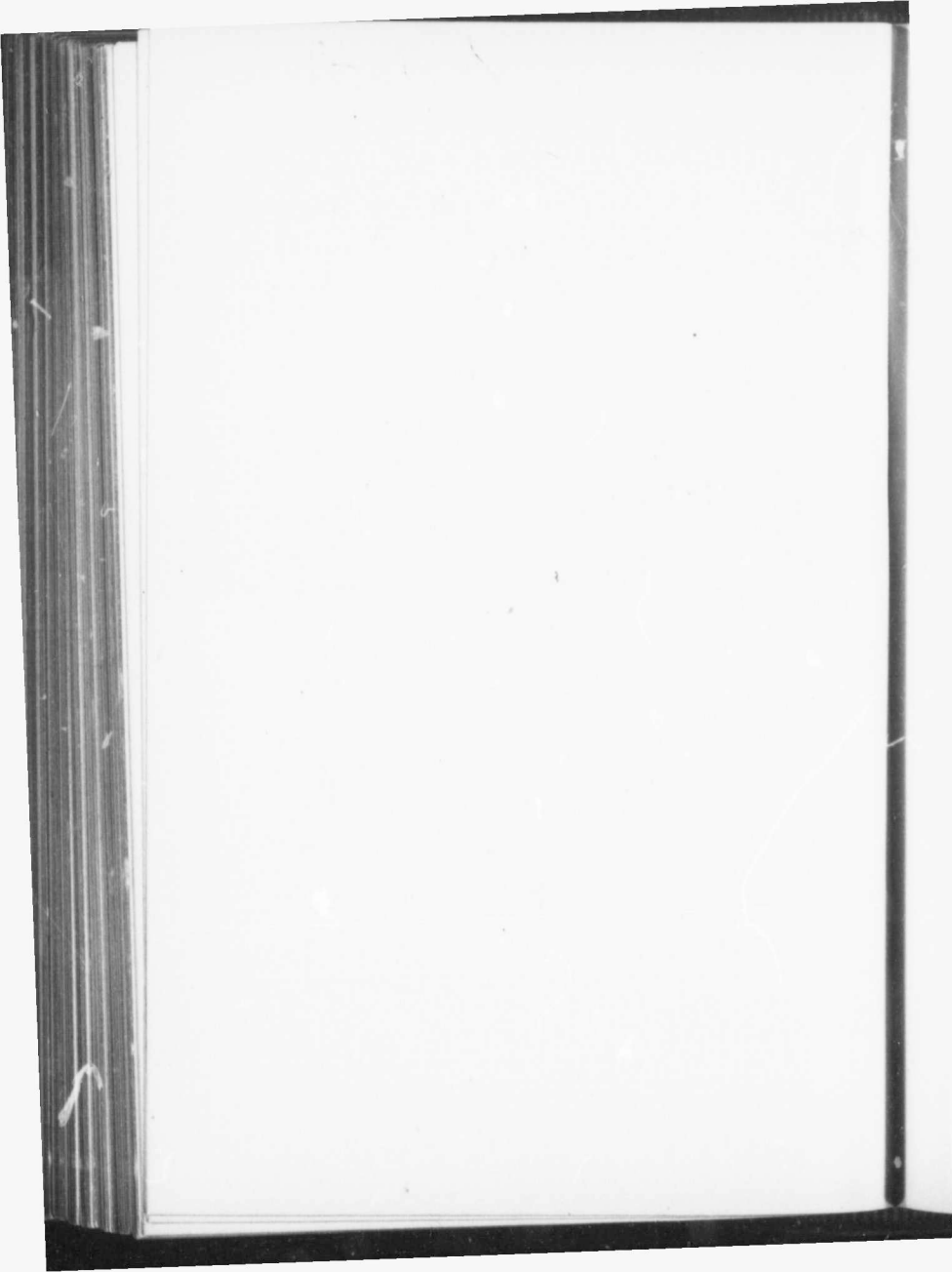
“Well, Isabel,” said the Duke, “thou knowest I have delayed this, till the last hour, to please thee; for verily, lady mine, thy will is my sweetest law. But now, if thy heart misgives thee——”

“It does—it does!” exclaimed the Duchess, bursting into tears.

“If thy heart misgives thee,” continued Clarence, who with all his weakness had much of the duplicity of his brothers,



"The confidante threw open the door."



"why, let it pass. Slavery to scornful Margaret—vassalage to thy sister's spouse—triumph to the House which both thou and I were taught from childhood to deem accursed,—why welcome all! so that Isabel does not weep, and our boy reproach us not in the days to come!"

For all answer, Isabel, who had seized the letter, let it drop on the table, pushed it, with averted face, towards the Duke, and turned back to the cradle of her child, whom she woke with her sobs, and who wailed its shrill reply in infant petulance and terror,—snatched from its slumber to the arms of the remorseful mother.

A smile of half-contemptuous joy passed over the thin lips of the she-Judas, and, without speaking, she took her way to Clarence. He had sealed and bound his letter, first adding these words—"My lady and duchess, whatever her kin, has seen this letter, and approves it, for she is more a friend to York than to the Earl, now he has turned Lancastrian"; and placed it in a small iron coffer.

He gave the coffer, curiously clasped and locked, to the gentlewoman, with a significant glance—"Be quick, or she repents! The courier waits! his steed saddled! The instant you give it, he departs—he hath his permit to pass the gates."

"All is prepared; ere the clock strike, he is on his way."

The confidant vanished; the Duke sank in his chair, and rubbed his hands.

"Oho! father-in-law, thou deemest me too dull for a crown. I am not dull enough for thy tool. I have had the wit, at least, to deceive thee, and to hide resentment beneath a smiling brow! Dullard *thou*, to believe aught less than the sovereignty of England could have bribed Clarence to thy cause!" He turned to the table and complacently drained his goblet.

Suddenly, haggard and pale as a spectre, Isabel stood before him.

"I was mad—mad, George! The letter! the letter—it must not go!"

At that moment the clock struck.

"*Bel enfant*," said the Duke, "it is too late."

—LORD LYTTON, *Last of the Barons*.

X

A Discrowned

Queen

BORN of royal parentage, and with high pretensions, King René of Anjou had at no period of his life been able to match his fortunes to his claims. Of the kingdoms to which he asserted right, nothing remained in his possession but the county of Provence itself, a fair and fertile principality, but diminished by the many claims which France had acquired upon portions of it by advances of money to supply the personal expenses of its master, and by other portions, which Burgundy, to whom René had been a prisoner, held in pledge for his ransom. In his youth he engaged in more than one military enterprise, in the hope of attaining some part of the territory of which he was styled sovereign. His courage is not impeached, but fortune did not smile on his military adventures; and he seems at last to have become sensible that the power of admiring and celebrating warlike merit is very different from possessing that quality. In fact, René was a prince of very moderate parts, endowed with a love of the fine arts, which he carried to extremity, and a degree of good humour, which never permitted him to repine at fortune, but rendered its possessor happy, when a prince of keener feelings would have died of despair. This insouciant, light-tempered, gay, and thoughtless disposition, conducted René, free from all the passions which embitter life, and often shorten it, to a hale and mirthful old age. Even domestic losses, which often affect those who are proof against mere reverses of fortune, made no deep impression on the feelings of this cheerful old monarch. Most of his children had died young; René took it not to heart. His daughter Margaret's marriage with the powerful Henry of England was considered a connection much above the fortunes of the King of the Troubadours. But in the

issue, instead of René deriving any splendour from the match, he was involved in the misfortunes of his daughter, and repeatedly obliged to impoverish himself to supply her ransom. Perhaps in his private soul the old king did not think these losses so mortifying as the necessity of receiving Margaret into his court and family. On fire when reflecting on the losses she had sustained, mourning over friends slain and kingdoms lost, the proudest and most passionate of princesses was ill-suited to dwell with the gayest and best-humoured of sovereigns, whose pursuits she contemned, and whose lightness of temper, for finding comfort in such trifles, she could not forgive. The discomfort attached to her presence and vindictive recollections embarrassed the good-humoured old monarch, though it was unable to drive him beyond his equanimity.

Another distress pressed him more sorely.—Yolande, a daughter of his first wife, Isabella, had succeeded to his claims upon the Duchy of Lorraine, and transmitted them to her son, Ferrand, Count of Vaudemont, a young man of courage and spirit, engaged at this time in the apparently desperate undertaking of making his title good against the Duke of Burgundy, who, with little right but great power, was seizing upon and overrunning this rich duchy, which he laid claim to as a male fief. And to conclude, while the aged King on one side beheld his dethroned daughter in hopeless despair, and on the other his disinherited grandson in vain attempting to recover part of their rights, he had the additional misfortune to know that his nephew, Louis of France, and his cousin, the Duke of Burgundy, were secretly contending which should succeed him in that portion of Provence which he still continued to possess; and that it was only jealousy of each other which prevented his being despoiled of this last remnant of his territory. Yet amid all this distress, René feasted and received guests, danced, sang, composed poetry, used the pencil or brush with no small skill, devised and conducted festivals and processions, and, studying to promote as far as possible the immediate mirth and good-humour of his subjects, if he could not materially enlarge their more permanent prosperity, was never mentioned by them excepting as *Le bon Roi René*, a distinction conferred on him down to the present day, and due to him certainly by the qualities of his heart, if not by those of his head.

Arthur de Vere, son of the Earl of Oxford, was receiving from his guide a full account of the peculiarities of

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King René, while they entered the territories of that merry monarch. It was late in the autumn, and about the period when the south-eastern counties of France rather show to least advantage. The foliage of the olive tree is then decayed and withered, and as it predominates in the landscape, and resembles the scorched complexion of the soil itself, an ashen and arid hue is given to the whole. Still, however, there were scenes in the hilly and pastoral parts of the country, where the quantity of evergreens relieved the eye even in this dead season.

The appearance of the country, in general, had much in it that was peculiar.

The travellers perceived at every turn some marks of the King's singular character. Provence, as the part of Gaul which first received Roman civilization, and as having been still longer the residence of the Grecian colony who founded Marseilles, is more full of the splendid relicts of ancient architecture than any other country in Europe, Italy and Greece excepted. The good taste of the King René had dictated some attempts to clear out and restore these memorials of antiquity. Was there a triumphal arch, or an ancient temple—huts and hovels were cleared away from its vicinity, and means were used at least to retard the approach of ruin. Was there a marble fountain, which superstition had dedicated to some sequestered naiad—it was surrounded by olives, almond and orange trees—its cistern was repaired, and taught once more to retain its crystal treasures. The huge amphitheatres and gigantic colonnades experienced the same anxious care, attesting that the noblest specimens of the fine arts found one admirer and preserver in King René, even during the course of those which are termed the dark and barbarous ages.

A change of manners could also be observed in passing from Burgundy and Lorraine, where society relished of German bluntness, into the pastoral country of Provence, where the influence of a fine climate and melodious language, joined to the pursuits of the romantic old Monarch, with the universal taste for music and poetry, had introduced a civilization of manners, which approached to affectation. The shepherd literally marched abroad in the morning, piping his flocks forth to the pasture with some love sonnet, the composition of an amorous Troubadour; and his "fleecy care" seemed actually to be under the influence of his music, instead of being ungraciously insensible to its melody, as is the case in colder cli-

mates. Arthur De Vere observed, too, that the Provençal sheep, instead of being driven before the shepherd, regularly followed him, and did not disperse to feed until the swain, by turning his face round to them, remaining stationary, and, executing variations on the air which he was playing, seemed to remind them that it was proper to do so. While in motion, his huge dog, of a species which is trained to face the wolf, and who is respected by the sheep as their guardian, and not feared as their tyrant, followed his master with his ears pricked, like the chief critic and prime judge of the performance, at some tones of which he seldom failed to intimate disapprobation, while the flock, like the generality of an audience, followed in unanimous though silent applause. At the hour of noon the shepherd had sometimes acquired an augmentation to his audience, as some comely matron or blooming maiden, with whom he had rendezvoused by such a fountain as we have described, and who listened to the husband's or lover's chalumeau, or mingled her voice with his in the duets, of which the songs of the Troubadours have left so many examples. In the cool of the evening, the dance on the village green, or the concert before the hamlet door; the little repast of fruits, cheese, and bread, which the traveller was readily invited to share, gave new charms to the illusion, and seemed in earnest to point out Provence as the Arcadia of France.

But the greatest singularity was, in the eyes of Arthur, the total absence of armed men and soldiers in this peaceful country. In England no man stirred without his long-bow, sword, and buckler. In France, the hind wore armour even when he was betwixt the stils of his plough. In Germany, you could not look along a mile of highway, but the eye was encountered by clouds of dust, out of which were seen, by fits, waving feathers and flashing armour. Even in Switzerland, the peasant, if he had a journey to make, though but of a mile or two, cared not to travel without his halberd and two-handed sword. But in Provence all seemed quiet and peaceful, as if the music of the land had lulled to sleep all its wrathful passions. Now and then a mounted cavalier might pass them, the harp at whose saddle-bow, or carried by one of his attendants, attested the character of a Troubadour, which was affected by men of all ranks; and then only a short sword was on his left thigh, borne for show rather than use, was a necessary and appropriate part of his equipment.

"Peace," said Arthur, as he looked around him, "is an in-

estimable jewel ; but it will be soon snatched from those who are not prepared with heart and hand to defend it."

The sight of the ancient and interesting town of Aix, where King René held his court, dispelled reflections of a general character, and recalled to the young Englishman the peculiar mission on which he was engaged.

He then required to know from the Provençal, Thiebault, whether his instructions were to leave him, now that he had successfully attained the end of his journey.

"My instructions," answered Thiebault, "are to remain in Aix while there is any chance of your seignorie's continuing there, to be of such use to you as you may require, either as a guide or an attendant, and to keep these men in readiness to wait upon you when you have occasion for messengers or guards. With your approbation, I will see them disposed of in fitting quarters, and receive my further instructions from your seignorie wherever you please to appoint me. I propose this separation, because I understand it is your present pleasure to be private."

"I must go to court," answered Arthur, "without any delay. Wait for me in half an hour by that fountain in the street, which projects into the air such a magnificent pillar of water, surrounded, I would almost swear, by a vapour like steam, serving as a shroud to the jet which it envelops."

"The jet is so surrounded," answered the Provençal, "because it is supplied by a hot spring rising from the bowels of the earth, and the touch of frost on this autumn morning makes the vapour more distinguishable than usual.—But if it is good King René whom you seek, you will find him at this time walking in his chimney. Do not be afraid of approaching him, for there never was a monarch so easy of access, especially to good-looking strangers like your seignorie."

"But his ushers," said Arthur, "will not admit me into his hall."

"His hall !" repeated Thiebault—"Whose hall ?"

"Why, King René's, I apprehend. If he is walking in a chimney, it can only be in that of his hall, and a stately one it must be to give him room for such exercise."

"You mistake my meaning," said the guide, laughing. "What we call King René's chimney is the narrow parapet yonder ; it extends between these two towers, has an exposure to the south, and is sheltered in every other direction. Yonder it is his pleasure to walk and enjoy the beams of the sun, on

such cool mornings as the present. It nurses, he says, his poetical vein. If you approach his promenade, he will readily speak to you, unless, indeed, he is in the very act of a poetical composition."

Arthur could not forbear smiling at the thoughts of a king, eighty years of age, broken down with misfortunes and beset with dangers, who yet amused himself with walking in an open parapet, and composing poetry in presence of all such of his loving subjects as chose to look on.

"If you will walk a few steps this way," said Thiebault, "you may see the good King, and judge whether or not you will accost him at present. I will dispose of the people, and await your orders at the fountain in the Corso."

Arthur saw no objection to the proposal of his guide, and was not unwilling to have an opportunity of seeing something of the good King René, before he was introduced to his presence.

A cautious approach to the chimney, that is, the favourite walk of the King who is described by Shakespeare as bearing

—— the style of King of Naples,
Of both the Sicilies, and Jerusalem,
Yet not so wealthy as an English yeoman,

gave Arthur the perfect survey of his Majesty in person. He saw an old man, with locks and beard of amplitude and whiteness, but with a fresh and ruddy colour in his cheek, and an eye of great vivacity. His dress was showy to a degree almost inconsistent with his years; and his step, not only firm, but full of alertness and vivacity, while occupied in traversing the short and sheltered walk, which he had chosen rather for comfort than for privacy, showed juvenile vigour still animating an aged frame. The old King carried his tablets and a pencil in his hand, seeming totally abstracted in his own thoughts, and indifferent to being observed by several persons from the public street beneath his elevated promenade.

Of these, some, from their dress and manner, seemed themselves Troubadours; for they held in their hands rebecks, rotes, small portable harps, and other indications of their profession. Such appeared to be stationary, as if engaged in observing and recording their remarks on the meditations of their Prince. Other passengers, bent on their own more serious affairs, looked up to the King as to someone whom they were accus-

tomed to see daily, but never passed without doffing their bonnets, and expressing, by a suitable obeisance, a respect and affection towards his person, which appeared to make up in cordiality of feeling what it wanted in deep and solemn deference.

René, in the meanwhile, was apparently unconscious both of the gaze of such as stood still, or the greeting of those who passed on, his mind seeming altogether engrossed with the apparent labour of some arduous task in poetry and music. He walked fast or slow as best suited the progress of composition. At times he stopped to mark hastily down on his tablets something which seemed to occur to him as deserving of preservation; at other times he dashed out what he had written, and flung down the pencil as if in a sort of despair. On these occasions, the Sibylline leaf was carefully picked up by a beautiful page, his only attendant, who reverently observed the first suitable opportunity of restoring it again to his royal hand. The same youth bore a viol, on which, at a signal from his master, he occasionally struck a few musical notes, to which the old King listened, now with a soothed and satisfied air, now with a discontented and anxious brow. At times his enthusiasm rose so high, that he even hopped and skipped with an activity which his years did not promise; at other times his motions were extremely slow, and occasionally he stood still, like one wrapped in the deepest and most anxious meditation. When he chanced to look on the group which seemed to watch his motions, and who ventured even to salute him with a murmur of applause, it was only to distinguish them with a friendly and good-humoured nod; a salutation with which, likewise, he failed not to reply to the greeting of the occasional passengers, when his earnest attention to his task, whatever it might be, permitted him to observe them.

At length the royal eye alighted upon Arthur, whose attitude of silent observation and the distinction of his figure pointed him out as a stranger. René beckoned to his page, who, receiving his master's commands in a whisper, descended from the royal chimney to the broader platform beneath, which was open to general resort. The youth, addressing Arthur with much courtesy, informed him the King desired to speak with him. The young Englishman had no alternative but that of approaching, though pondering much in his own mind how he ought to comport himself towards such a singular specimen of royalty.

When he drew near, King René addressed him in a tone of courtesy not unmingled with dignity, and Arthur's awe in his immediate presence was greater than he himself could have anticipated from his previous conception of the royal character.

"You are, from your appearance, fair sir," said King René, "a stranger in this country. By what name must we call you, and to what business are we to ascribe the happiness of seeing you at our court?"

Arthur remained a moment silent, and the good old man, imputing it to awe and timidity, proceeded in an encouraging tone:

"Modesty in youth is ever commendable; you are doubtless an acolyte in the Noble and Joyous Science of Minstrelsy and Music, drawn hither by the willing welcome which we afford to the professors of those arts, in which—praise be to Our Lady and the saints!—we have ourself been deemed a proficient."

"I do not aspire to the honours of a Troubadour," answered Arthur.

"I believe you," answered the King, "for your speech smacks of the Northern, or Norman-French, such as is spoken in England and other unrefined nations. But you are a minstrel, perhaps, from these ultramontane parts? Be assured we despise not their efforts; for we have listened, not without pleasure and instruction, to many of their bold and wild romances, which, though rude in device and language, and therefore far inferior to the regulated poetry of our Troubadours, have yet something in their powerful and rough measure which occasionally rouses the heart like the sound of a trumpet."

"I have felt the truth of your Grace's observation, when I have heard the songs of my country," said Arthur; "but I have neither skill nor audacity to imitate what I admire. My latest residence has been in Italy."

"You are perhaps then a proficient in painting?" said René; "an art which applies itself to the eye as poetry and music do to the ear, and is scarce less in esteem with us. If you are skilful in the art, you have come to a monarch who loves it, and the fair country in which it is practised."

"In simple truth, sire, I am an Englishman, and my hand has been too much welked and hardened by practice of the bow, the lance, and the sword, to touch the harp, or even the pencil."

"An Englishman!" said René, obviously relaxing in the warmth of his welcome; "and what brings you here? England and I have long had little friendship together."

"It is even on that account that I am here," said Arthur. "I come to pay my homage to your Grace's daughter, the Princess Margaret of Anjou, whom I and many true Englishmen regard still as our Queen, though traitors have usurped her title."

"Alas, good youth," said René, "I must grieve for you, while I respect your loyalty and faith. Had my daughter Margaret been of my mind, she had long since abandoned pretensions which have drowned in seas of blood the noblest and bravest of her adherents."

The King seemed about to say more, but checked himself.

"Go to my palace," he said; "enquire for the seneschal, Hugh de Saint Cyr; he will give thee the means of seeing Margaret, that is, if it be her will to see thee. If not, good English youth, return to my palace, and thou shalt have hospitable entertainment; for a king who loves minstrelsy, music, and painting is ever most sensible to the claims of honour, virtue, and loyalty; and I read in thy looks thou art possessed of these qualities, and willingly believe thou may'st, in more quiet times, aspire to share the honours of the Joyous Science. But if thou hast a heart to be touched by the sense of beauty and fair proportion, it will leap within thee at the first sight of my palace, the stately grace of which may be compared to the faultless form of some high-bred dame, or the artful, yet seemingly simple modulations of such a tune as we have been now composing."

The King seemed disposed to take his instrument, and indulge the youth with a rehearsal of the strain he had just arranged; but Arthur at that moment experienced the painful internal feeling of that peculiar species of shame, which well-constructed minds feel when they see others express a great assumption of importance, with a confidence that they are exciting admiration, when in fact they are only exposing themselves to ridicule. Arthur, in short, took leave, "in very shame," of the King of Naples, both the Sicilies, and Jerusalem, in a manner somewhat more abrupt than ceremony demanded. The King looked after him, with some wonder at this want of breeding, which, however, he imputed to his visitor's insular education, and then again began to twangle his viol.

"The old fool!" said Arthur; "his daughter is dethroned,

his dominions crumbling to pieces, his family on the eve of becoming extinct, his grandson driven from one lurking place to another, and expelled from his mother's inheritance,—and he can find amusement in these fopperies! I thought him, with his long white beard, like some great sage; but any old Swiss is a Solomon compared with him."

As these and other reflections, highly disparaging to King René, passed through Arthur's mind, he reached the place of rendezvous, and found Thiebault beneath the steaming fountain, forced from one of those hot springs which had been the delight of the Romans from an early period. Thiebault, having assured his master that his retinue, horse and man, were so disposed as to be ready on an instant's call, readily undertook to guide him to King René's palace, which, from its singularity, and indeed its beauty of architecture, deserved the eulogium which the old Monarch had bestowed upon it.

After looking around for a few minutes, the young Englishman ascended the steps of a noble portico, and asked of a porter, as old and as lazy as a great man's domestic ought to be, for the seneschal named to him by the King. The corpulent janitor, with great politeness, put the stranger under the charge of a page, who ushered him to a chamber, in which he found another aged functionary of higher rank, with a comely face, a clear composed eye, and a brow which, having never been knit into gravity, intimated that the seneschal of Aix was a proficient in the philosophy of his royal master. He recognised Arthur the moment he addressed him.

"You speak northern French, fair sir; you have lighter hair and a fairer complexion than the natives of this country. You ask after Queen Margaret. By all these marks I read you English. Her Grace of England is at this moment paying a vow at the Monastery of Mont Saint Victoire, and if your name be Arthur De Vere, I have commission to forward you to her presence immediately, that is, as soon as you have tasted of the royal provision."

The young man would have remonstrated, but the seneschal left him no leisure.

"Meat and mass," he said, "never hindered work—it is perilous to youth to journey too far on an empty stomach—he himself would take a mouthful with the Queen's guest, and pledge him to boot in a flask of old Hermitage."

The board was covered with an alacrity which showed that hospitality was familiarly exercised in King René's dominions.

Pasties, dishes of game, the gallant boar's head, and other delicacies, were placed on the table, and the seneschal played the merry host, frequently apologizing (unnecessarily) for showing an indifferent example, as it was his duty to carve before King René, and the good King was never pleased unless he saw him feed lustily as well as carve fealty.

"But for you, Sir Guest, eat freely, since you may not see food again until sunset; for the good Queen takes her misfortunes so to heart that sighs are her food, and her tears a bottle of drink, as the Psalmist hath it. But I bethink me you will need steeds for yourself and your equipage to reach Mont Saint Victoire, which is seven miles from Aix."

Arthur intimated that he had a guide and horses in attendance, and begged permission to take his adieu. The worthy seneschal, his fair round belly graced with a gold chain, accompanied him to the gate with a step which a gentle fit of the gout had rendered uncertain, but which, he assured Arthur, would vanish before three days' use of the hot springs. Thiebault appeared before the gate, not with the tired steeds from which they had dismounted an hour since, but with fresh palfreys from the stable of the King.

"They are yours from the moment you have put foot in stirrup," said the seneschal; "the good King René never received back as his property a horse which he had lent to a guest; and that is perhaps one reason why his Highness and we of his household must walk often a-foot."

Here the seneschal exchanged greetings with his young visitor, who rode forth to seek Queen Margaret's place of temporary retirement at the celebrated Monastery of Saint Victoire. He demanded of his guide in which direction it lay, who pointed, with an air of triumph, to a mountain three thousand feet and upwards in height, which arose at five or six miles' distance from the town, and which its bold and rocky summit rendered the most distinguished object of the landscape.

The crest of the mountain, consisting entirely of one bare and solid rock, was divided by a cleft or opening into two heads or peaks, between which the convent was built, occupying all the space between them. The front of the building was of the most ancient and sombre cast of the old Gothic, or rather, as it has been termed, the Saxon; and in that respect corresponded with the savage exterior of the naked cliffs, of which the structure seemed to make a part, and by which it

was entirely surrounded, excepting a small open space of more level ground, where, at the expense of much toil, and by carrying earth up the hill, from different spots where they could collect it in small quantities, the good fathers had been able to arrange the accommodations of a garden.

Arrived at this singularly situated monastery, a bell summoned a lay brother, to whom Arthur announced himself as an Englishman, who came to pay his duty to Queen Margaret. The porter, with much respect, showed the stranger into the convent, and ushered him into a parlour, which, looking towards Aix, commanded an extensive and splendid prospect over the southern and western parts of Provence.

So much was Arthur awed by the scene before him, that he had almost forgotten, while gazing from the bartizan, the important business which had brought him to this place, when it was suddenly recalled by finding himself in the presence of Margaret of Anjou, who, not seeing him in the parlour of reception, had stepped upon the balcony, that she might meet with him the sooner.

The Queen's dress was black, without any ornament except a gold coronal of an inch in breadth, restraining her long black tresses, of which advancing years and misfortunes had partly altered the hue. There was placed within the circlet a black plume, with a red rose, the last of the season, which the good father who kept the garden had presented to her that morning as the badge of her husband's house. Care, fatigue, and sorrow seemed to dwell on her brow and her features. To another messenger she would in all probability have administered a sharp rebuke, for not being alert in his duty to receive her as she entered; but Arthur's age and appearance corresponded with that of her loved and lost son. He was the son of a lady whom Margaret had loved with almost sisterly affection, and the presence of Arthur continued to excite in the dethroned Queen the same feelings of maternal tenderness which were always awakened by any one who brought reminiscences of the past. She raised him as he kneeled at her feet, spoke to him with much kindness, and encouraged him to detail at full length his father's message, and such other news as his brief residence at Dijon had made him acquainted with.

She demanded which way Duke Charles had moved with his army.

"As I was given to understand by the master of his

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artillery," said Arthur, "towards the Lake of Neufchatel, on which side he proposes his first attack on the Swiss."

"The headstrong fool!" said Queen Margaret,— "he resembles the poor lunatic, who went to the summit of the mountain, that he might meet the rain half-way. Does thy father, then," continued Margaret, "advise me to give up the last remains of the extensive territories, once the dominions of our royal House, and for some thousand crowns, and the paltry aid of a few hundred lances, to relinquish what is left of our patrimony to our proud and selfish kinsman of Burgundy, who extends his claims to our all, and affords so little help, or even promise of help, in return?"

"I should have ill discharged my father's commission," said Arthur, "if I had left your Highness to think that he recommends so great a sacrifice. He feels most deeply the Duke of Burgundy's grasping desire of dominion. Nevertheless, he thinks that Provence must, on King René's death, or sooner, fall either to the share of Duke Charles, or to Louis of France, whatever opposition your Highness may make to such a destination; and it may be that my father, as a knight and a soldier, hopes much from obtaining the means to make another attempt on Britain. But the decision must rest with your Highness."

"Young man," said the Queen, "the contemplation of a question so doubtful almost deprives me of reason!"

As she spoke, she sank down, as one who needs rest, on a stone seat placed on the very verge of the balcony, regardless of the storm, which now began to rise with dreadful gusts of wind, the course of which being intermitted and altered by the crags round which they howled, it seemed as if in very deed Boreas, and Eurus, and Caurus, unchaining the winds from every quarter of heaven, were contending for mastery around the Convent of Our Lady of Victory. Amid this tumult, and amid billows of mist which concealed the bottom of the precipice, and masses of clouds which racked fearfully over their heads, the roar of the descending waters rather resembled the fall of cataracts than the rushing of torrents of rain. The seat on which Margaret had placed herself was in a considerable degree sheltered from the storm, but its eddies, varying in every direction, often tossed aloft her dishevelled hair; and we cannot describe the appearance of her noble and beautiful, yet ghastly and wasted features, agitated strongly by anxious hesitation and conflicting thoughts, unless to those of

our readers who have had the advantage of having seen our inimitable Siddons in such a character as this. Arthur, confounded by anxiety and terror, could only beseech her Majesty to retire before the fury of the approaching storm into the interior of the convent.

"No," she replied with firmness; "roofs and walls have ears, and monks, though they have forsworn the world, are not the less curious to know what passes beyond their cells. It is in this place you must hear what I have to say; as a soldier you should scorn a blast of wind or a shower of rain; and to me, who have often held counsel amidst the sound of trumpets and clash of arms, prompt for instant fight, the war of elements is an unnoticed trifle. I tell thee, young Arthur Vere, as I would to your father—as I would to my son—if indeed Heaven had left such a blessing to a wretch forlorn ——"

She paused, and then proceeded.

"I tell thee, as I would have told my beloved Edward, that Margaret, whose resolutions were once firm and immovable as these rocks among which we are placed, is now doubtful and variable as the clouds which are drifting around us. I told your father, in the joy of meeting once more a subject of such inappreciable loyalty, of the sacrifices I would make to assure the assistance of Charles of Burgundy to so gallant an undertaking as that proposed to him by the faithful Oxford. But since I saw him I have had cause of deep reflection. I met my aged father only to offend, and, I say it with shame, to insult the old man in presence of his people. Our tempers are as opposed as the sunshine, which a short space since gilded a serene and beautiful landscape, differs from the tempests which are now wasting it. I spurned with open scorn and contempt what he, in his mistaken affection, had devised for means of consolation, and, disgusted with the idle follies which he had devised for curing the melancholy of a dethroned queen, a widowed spouse—and, alas! a childless mother—I retired hither from the noisy and idle mirth, which was the bitterest aggravation of my sorrows. Such and so gentle is René's temper, that even my unfilial conduct will not diminish my influence over him; and if your father had announced that the Duke of Burgundy, like a knight and a sovereign, had cordially and nobly entered into the plan of the faithful Oxford, I could have found it in my heart to obtain the cession of territory his cold and ambitious policy requires, in order to insure the assistance, which he now post-

pones to afford till he has gratified his own haughty humour by settling needless quarrels with his unoffending neighbours. Since I have been here, and calmness and solitude have given me time to reflect, I have thought on the offences I have given the old man, and on the wrongs I was about to do him. My father, let me do him justice, is also the father of his people. They have dwelt under their vines and fig-trees, in ignoble ease, perhaps, but free from oppression and exaction, and their happiness has been that of their good King. Must I change all this?—Must I aid in turning over these contented people to a fierce, headlong, arbitrary prince?—May I not break even the easy and thoughtless heart of my poor old father, should I succeed in urging him to do so?—These are questions which I shudder even to ask myself. On the other hand, to disappoint the toils, the venturous hopes of your father, to forego the only opportunity which may ever again offer itself, of revenge on the bloody traitors of York, and restoration of the House of Lancaster!—Arthur, the scene around us is not so convulsed by the fearful tempest and the driving clouds, as my mind is by doubt and uncertainty.”

“Alas!” replied Arthur, “I am too young and inexperienced to be your Majesty’s adviser in a case so arduous. I would my father had been in presence himself.”

“I know what he would have said,” replied the Queen; “but, knowing all, I despair of aid from human counsellors. I have sought others, but they also are deaf to my entreaties. Yes, Arthur, Margaret’s misfortunes have rendered her superstitious.”

As Margaret spoke, she tore from her hair the sable feather and rose which the tempest had detached from the circlet in which they were placed, and tossed them from the battlement with a gesture of wild energy. They were instantly whirled off in a bickering eddy of the agitated clouds, which swept the feather far distant into empty space, through which the eye could not pursue it. But while that of Arthur involuntarily strove to follow its course, a contrary gust of wind caught the red rose, and drove it back against his breast, so that it was easy for him to catch hold of and retain it.

“Joy, joy, and good fortune, royal mistress!” he said, returning to her the emblematic flower; “the tempest brings back the badge of Lancaster to its proper owner.”

“I accept the omen,” said Margaret; “but it concerns yourself, noble youth, and not me. The feather which is borne

away to waste and desolation is Margaret's emblem. My eyes will never see the restoration of the line of Lancaster. But you will live to behold it, and to aid to achieve it, and to dye our red rose deeper yet in the blood of tyrants and traitors. My thoughts are so strangely poised, that a feather or a flower may turn the scale. But my head is still giddy, and my heart sick. To-morrow you shall see another Margaret, and till then adieu."

It was time to retire, for the tempest began to be mingled with fiercer showers of rain. When they re-entered the parlour, the Queen clapped her hands, and two female attendants entered.

"Let the Father Abbot know," she said, "that it is our desire that this young gentleman receive for this night such hospitality as befits an esteemed friend of ours.—Till to-morrow, young sir, farewell."

With a countenance which betrayed not the late emotion of her mind, and with a stately courtesy that would have become her when she graced the halls of Windsor, she extended her hand, which the youth saluted respectfully. After her leaving the parlour, the Abbot entered, and in his attention to Arthur's entertainment and accommodation for the evening showed his anxiety to meet and obey Queen Margaret's wishes.

While the dawn of the morning was yet grey, Arthur again saw the Queen.

The paleness of her complexion still bespoke the fatigues of the day preceding; but, as she graciously bestowed on Arthur the greetings of the morning, her voice was firm, her eye clear, and her countenance steady. "I meet you," she said, "not as I left you, but determined in my purpose. I am satisfied that if René does not voluntarily yield up his throne of Provence by some step like that which we propose, he will be hurled from it by violence, in which, it may be, his life will not be spared. We will, therefore, to work with all speed. The worst is, that I cannot leave this convent till I have made the necessary penances for having visited the Garagoule, without performing which I were no Christian woman. When you return to Aix, enquire at the palace for my secretary, with whom this line will give you credence. I have, even before this door of hope opened to me, endeavoured to form an estimate of King René's situation, and collected the documents for that purpose. Tell him to send me, duly sealed, and under fitting charge, the small cabinet hooped with silver.

Hours of penance for past errors may be employed to prevent others ; and from the contents of that cabinet I shall learn whether I am sacrificing my father's interests to my own half-desperate hopes. I can cause the deeds of resignation and transference to be drawn up here under my own direction, and arrange the execution of them when I return to Aix, which shall be the first moment after my penance is concluded."

"And this letter, gracious madam," said Arthur, as he handed to her a small packet, "will inform you what events are approaching, and of what importance it may be to take time by the forelock. It is from my father. Place me but in possession of these momentous deeds, and I will travel night and day till I reach the Duke's camp. I shall find him most likely in the moment of victory, and with his heart too much open to refuse a boon to the royal kinswoman who is surrendering to him all. We will—we must—in such an hour, obtain princely succours ; and we shall soon see if the licentious Edward of York, the savage Richard, the treacherous and perjured Clarence, are hereafter to be lords of merry England, or whether they must give place to a more rightful sovereign and better man. But, O ! royal madam, all depends on haste."

"True ; yet a few days may—nay, must—cast the die between Charles and his opponents ; and, ere making so great a surrender, it were as well to be assured that he whom we would propitiate is in capacity to assist us. All the events of a tragic and varied life have led me to see there is no such thing as an inconsiderable enemy. I will make haste, however, trusting in the interim we may have good news from the banks of the lake at Neufchatel."

"But who shall be employed to draw these most important deeds ?" said the young man.

Margaret read the letter ere she replied—"The Father Guardian is complaisant, and I think faithful ; but I would not willingly repose confidence in one of the Provençal monks. Stay, let me think—your father says the Carmelite who brought the letter may be trusted—he shall do the turn. He is a stranger, and will be silent for a piece of money. Farewell, Arthur de Vere.—You will be treated with all hospitality by my father. If thou dost receive further tidings, thou wilt let me know them ; or should I have instructions to send, thou wilt hear from me.—So, benedicite."

Arthur proceeded to wind down the mountain at a much quicker pace than he had ascended on the day before. The

weather was now gloriously serene, and the beauties of vegetation, in a country where it never totally slumbers, were at once delicious and refreshing. His thoughts were of a preoccupied nature; and I grieve to say that they entirely drowned the recollection of the mysterious caution given him by his father, intimating that Arthur might not be able to comprehend such letters as he should receive from him, till they were warmed before a fire.

The first thing which reminded him of this singular caution was the seeing a chafing dish of charcoal in the kitchen of the hostelry at the bottom of the mountain, where he found Thiebault and his horses. This was the first fire which he had seen since receiving his father's letter, and it reminded him not unnaturally of what the Earl had recommended. Great was his surprise to see that, after exposing the paper to the fire as if to dry it, a word emerged in an important passage of the letter, and the concluding words now read—"The bearer may not be trusted." Well-nigh choked with shame and vexation, Arthur could think of no other remedy than instantly to return to the convent, and acquaint the Queen with this discovery, which he hoped still to convey to her in time to prevent any risk being incurred by the Carmelite's treachery.

Incensed at himself, and eager to redeem his fault, he bent his manly breast against the steep hill, which was probably never scaled in so short a time as by the young heir of De Vere; for within forty minutes from his commencing the ascent he stood breathless and panting in the presence of Queen Margaret, who was alike surprised at his appearance and his exhausted condition.

"Trust not the Carmelite!" he exclaimed—"You are betrayed, noble Queen, and it is by my negligence. Here is my dagger—Bid me strike it into my heart!"

Margaret demanded and obtained a more special explanation, and when it was given, she said, "It is an unhappy chance; but your father's instructions ought to have been more distinct. I have told yonder Carmelite the purpose of the contracts, and engaged with him to draw them. He has but now left me to serve at the choir. There is no withdrawing the confidence I have unhappily placed; but I can easily prevail with the Father Guardian to prevent the monk from leaving the convent till we are indifferent to his secrecy. It is our best chance to secure it, and we will take care that what inconvenience he sustains by his detention shall be well

recompensed. Meanwhile, rest thou, good Arthur, and undo the throat of thy mantle. Poor youth, thou art well-nigh exhausted with thy haste."

Arthur obeyed, and sat down on a seat in the parlour; for the speed which he had exerted rendered him almost incapable of standing.

"If I could but see," he said, "the false monk, I would find a way to charm him to secrecy!"

"Better leave him to me," said the Queen; "and, in a word, I forbid you to meddle with him. The coif can treat better with the cowl than the casque can do. Say no more of him."

Arthur, highly gratified with the Queen's condescension, once more left her presence.

Returning down the mountain with a speed very different from that which he had used in the ascent, he again found his Provençal squire, who had remained in much surprise at witnessing the confusion in which his master had left the inn, almost immediately after he had entered it, without any apparent haste or agitation. Arthur explained his hasty return by alleging he had forgot his purse at the convent. "Nay, in that case," said Thiebault, "considering what you left and where you left it, I do not wonder at your speed; though Our Lady save me, as I never saw living creature save a goat with a wolf at his heels, make his way over crag and briers with half such rapidity as you did."

They reached Aix after about an hour's riding, and Arthur lost no time in waiting upon the good King René, who gave him a kind reception, both in respect of the letter from the Duke of Burgundy, and in consideration of his being an Englishman, the avowed subject of the unfortunate Margaret. The placable monarch soon forgave his young guest the want of complaisance with which he had eschewed to listen to his compositions; and Arthur speedily found that to apologize for his want of breeding in that particular was likely to lead to a great deal more rehearsing than he could find patience to tolerate. He could only avoid the old King's extreme desire to recite his own poems, and perform his own music, by engaging him in speaking of his daughter Margaret. Arthur had been sometimes induced to doubt the influence which the Queen boasted herself to possess over her aged father; but, on being acquainted with him personally, he became convinced that her powerful understanding and violent passions inspired the feeble-minded and passive King with a mixture of pride, affection, and fear,

which united to give her the most ample authority over him.

Although she had parted with him but a day or two since, and in a manner so ungracious on her side, René was as much overjoyed at hearing of the probability of her speedy return as the fondest father could have been at the prospect of being reunited to the most dutiful child, whom he had not seen for years.

During the time of her absence, the days of the court of Provence were employed in sports and rejoicings of every description : tilting at the barrier with blunted spears, riding at the ring, parties for hare-hunting and falconry, frequented by the youth of both sexes, in the company of whom the King delighted, while the evenings were consumed in dancing and music.

On the fourth day news were received, by an express messenger, that Queen Margaret would enter Aix before the hour of noon, to resume her residence in her father's palace. The good King René seemed, as it drew nigh, to fear the interview with his daughter as much as he had previously desired it, and contrived to make all around him partake of his fidgety anxiety. He tormented his steward and cooks to recollect what dishes they had ever observed her to taste of with approbation ; he pressed the musicians to remember the tunes which she approved ; and when one of them boldly replied he had never known her Majesty endure any strain with patience, the old Monarch threatened to turn him out of his service for slandering the taste of his daughter. The banquet was ordered to be served at half-past eleven, as if accelerating it would have had the least effect upon hurrying the arrival of the expected guests ; and the old King, with his napkin over his arm, traversed the hall from window to window, wearying everyone with questions, whether they saw anything of the Queen of England. Exactly as the bells tolled noon, the Queen, with a very small retinue, chiefly English, and in mourning habits like herself, rode into the town of Aix. King René, at the head of his court, failed not to descend from the front of his stately palace, and move along the street to meet his daughter. Lofty, proud, and jealous of incurring ridicule, Margaret was not pleased with this public greeting in the market-place. But she was desirous at present to make amends for her late petulance, and therefore she descended from her palfrey ; and although something shocked at seeing René equipped with a napkin, she humbled herself

to bend the knee to him, asking at once his blessing and forgiveness.

"Thou hast—thou hast my blessing, my suffering dove," said the simple King to the proudest and most impatient Princess that ever wept for a lost crown. "And for thy pardon, how canst thou ask it, who never didst me an offence since God made me father to so gracious a child? Rise, I say, rise—nay, it is for me to ask thy pardon. True, I said in my ignorance, and thought within myself, that my heart had indited a goodly thing—but it vexed thee. It is therefore for me to crave pardon."—And down sank good King René upon both knees; and the people, who are usually captivated with anything resembling the trick of the scene, applauded with much noise, and some smothered laughter, a situation in which the royal daughter and her parent seemed about to rehearse the scene of the Roman Charity.

Margaret, sensitively alive to shame, and fully aware that her present position was sufficiently ludicrous in its publicity at least, signed sharply to Arthur, whom she saw in the King's suite, to come to her; and, using his arm to rise, she muttered to him aside, and in English, "To what saint shall I vow myself, that I may preserve patience when I so much need it?"

"For pity's sake, royal madam, recall your firmness of mind and composure," whispered her esquire, who felt at the moment more embarrassed than honoured by his distinguished office, for he could feel that the Queen actually trembled with vexation and impatience.

They at length resumed their route to the palace, the father and daughter arm in arm, a posture most agreeable to Margaret, who could bring herself to endure her father's effusions of tenderness, and the general tone of his conversation, so that he was not overheard by others. In the same manner, she bore with laudable patience the teasing attentions which he addressed to her at table, noticed some of his particular courtiers, enquired after others, led the way to his favourite subjects of conversation on poetry, painting, and music, till the good King was as much delighted with the unwonted civilities of his daughter as ever was lover with the favourable confessions of his mistress, when, after years of warm courtship, the ice of her bosom is at length thawed. It cost the haughty Margaret an effort to bend herself to play this part; her pride rebuked her for stooping to flatter her father's foibles, in order to bring him over to the resignation of

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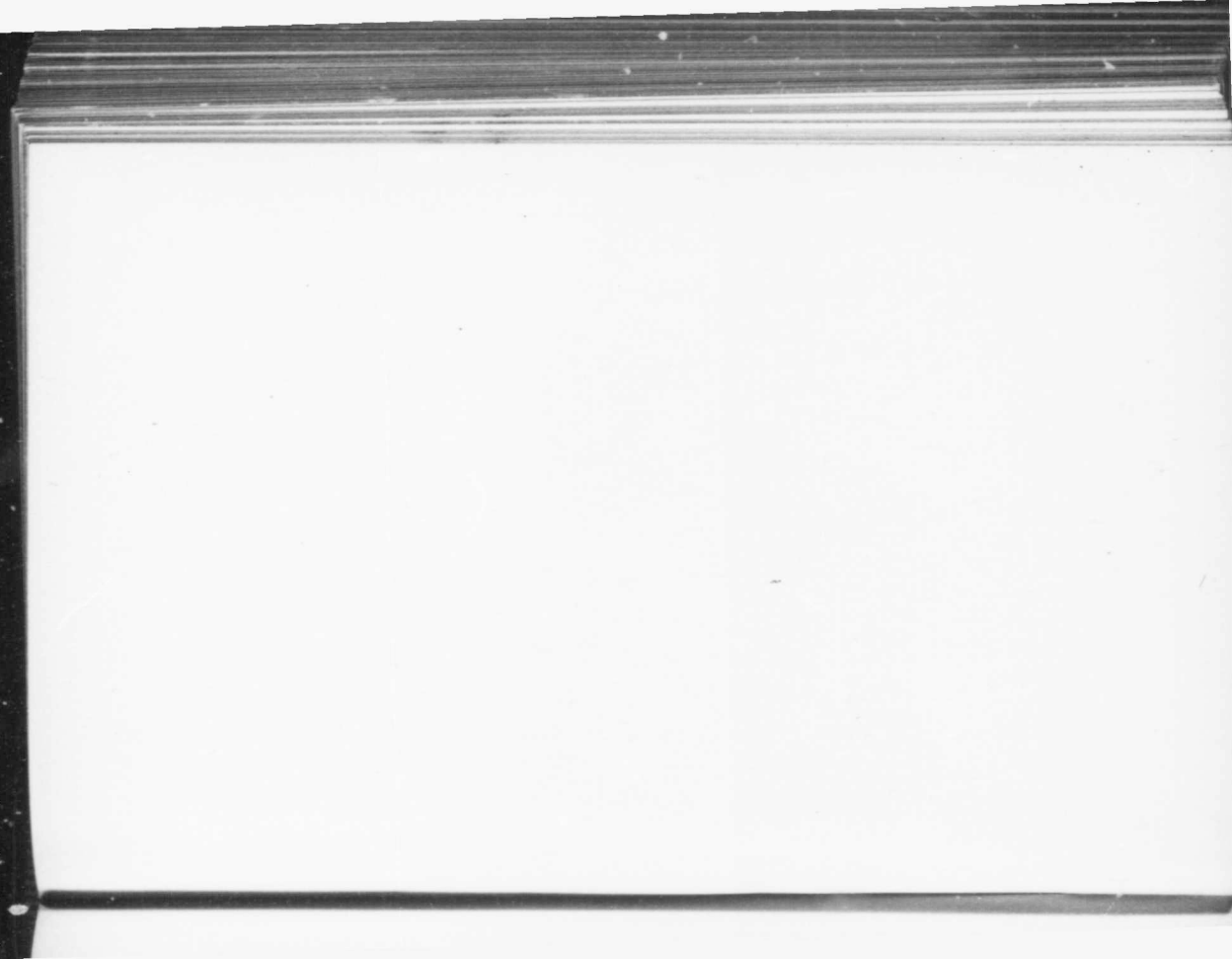
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"And down sank good King René upon both knees."



his dominions ; yet, having undertaken to do so, and so much having been already hazarded upon this sole remaining chance of success in an attack upon England, she saw, or was willing to see, no alternative.

Betwixt the banquet, and the ball by which it was to be followed, the Queen sought an opportunity of speaking to Arthur.

"Bad news, my sage counsellor," she said. "The Carmelite never returned to the convent after the service was over. Having learned that you had come back in great haste, he had, I suppose, concluded he might stand in suspicion, so he left the Convent of Mont Saint Victoire."

"We must hasten the measures which your Majesty has resolved to adopt," answered Arthur.

"I will speak with my father to-morrow. Meanwhile, you must enjoy the pleasures of the evening, for to you they may be pleasures."

The next day opened a grave scene. King René had not forgotten to arrange the pleasures of the day, when, to his horror and discomfiture, Margaret demanded an interview upon serious business. If there was a proposition in the world which René from his soul detested, it was any that related to the very name of business.

"What was it that his child wanted?" he said. "Was it money? He would give her whatever ready sums he had, though he owned his exchequer was somewhat bare; yet he had received his income for the season. It was ten thousand crowns. How much should she desire to be paid to her?—the half—three parts—or the whole? All was at her command."

"Alas! my dear father," said Margaret, "it is not my affairs, but your own, on which I desire to speak with you."

"If the affairs are mine," said René, "I am surely master to put them off to another day—to some rainy dull day, fit for no better purpose. See, my love, the hawking party are all on their steeds and ready—the horses are neighing and pawing—the gallants and maidens mounted, and ready with hawk on fist—the spaniels struggling in the leash. It were a sin, with wind and weather to friend, to lose so lovely a morning."

"Let them ride their way," said Queen Margaret, "and find their sport; for the matter I have to speak concerning involves honour and rank, life and means of living."

"Nay, but I have to hear and judge between Calezon and John of Acqua Mortis, the two most celebrated Troubadours."

"Postpone their cause till to-morrow," said Margaret, "and dedicate an hour or two to more important affairs."

"If you are peremptory," replied King René, "you are aware, my child, I cannot say you nay."

And with reluctance he gave orders for the hawkers to go on and follow their sport, as he could not attend them that day.

The old King then suffered himself, like an unwilling greyhound withheld from the chase, to be led into a separate apartment. To insure privacy, Margaret stationed her secretary, Mordaunt, with Arthur in an antechamber, giving them orders to prevent all intrusion.

"Nay, for myself, Margaret," said the good-natured old man, "since it must be, I consent to be put *au secret*; but why keep old Mordaunt from taking a walk in this beautiful morning; and why prevent young Arthur from going forth with the rest? I promise you, though they term him a philosopher, yet he showed as light a pair of heels last night with the young Countess de Boisgelin, as any gallant in Provence."

"They are come from a country," said Margaret, "in which men are trained from infancy to prefer their duty to their pleasure."

The poor King, led into the council-closet, saw, with internal shuddering, the fatal cabinet of ebony, bound with silver, which had never been opened but to overwhelm him with weariness, and dolefully calculated how many yawns he must strangle ere he sustained the consideration of its contents. They proved, however, when laid before him, of a kind that excited even his interest, though painfully.

His daughter presented him with a short and clear view of the debts which were secured on his dominions, and for which they were mortgaged in various pieces and parcels. She then showed him, by another schedule, the large claims of which payment was instantly demanded, to discharge which no funds could be found or assigned. The King defended himself like others in his forlorn situation. To every claim of six, seven, or eight thousand ducats, he replied by the assertion, that he had ten thousand crowns in his chancery, and showed some reluctance to be convinced, till repeatedly urged upon him, that the same sum could not be adequate to the discharge of thirty times the amount.

"Then," said the King, somewhat impatiently, "why not pay off those who are most pressing, and let the others wait till receipts come round?"

"It is a practice which has been too often resorted to," replied the Queen, "and it is but a part of honesty to pay creditors who have advanced their all in your Grace's service."

"But are we not," said René, "King of both the Sicilies, Naples, Arragon, and Jerusalem? And why is the monarch of such fair kingdoms to be pushed to the wall, like a bankrupt yeoman, for a few bags of paltry crowns?"

"You are indeed Monarch of these kingdoms," said Margaret, "but is it necessary to remind your Majesty that it is but as I am Queen of England, in which I have not an acre of land, and cannot command a penny of revenue? You have no dominions which are a source of revenue, save those which you see in this scroll, with an exact list of the income they afford. It is totally inadequate, you see, to maintain your state and to pay the large engagements incurred to former creditors."

"It is cruel to press me to the wall thus," said the poor King. "What can I do? If I am poor, I cannot help it. I am sure I would pay the debts you talk of, if I knew the way."

"Royal father, I will show it you.—Resign your useless and unavailing dignity, which, with the pretensions attending it, serves but to make your miseries ridiculous. Resign your rights as a sovereign, and the income, which cannot be stretched out to the empty excesses of a beggarly court, will enable you to enjoy, in ease and opulence, all the pleasures you most delight in, as a private baron."

"Margaret, you speak folly," answered René, somewhat sternly. "A king and his people are bound by ties which neither can sever without guilt. My subjects are my flock, I am their shepherd. They are assigned to my governance by Heaven, and I dare not renounce the charge of protecting them."

"Were you in condition to do so," answered the Queen, "Margaret would bid you fight to the death. But don your harness, long disused—mount your war-steed—cry, René for Provence! and see if a hundred men will gather round your standard. Your fortresses are in the hands of strangers; army you have none; your vassals may have good-will, but they lack all military skill and soldier-like discipline. You stand but the mere skeleton of monarchy, which France or Burgundy may

prostrate on the earth, whichever first puts forth his arm to throw it down."

The tears trickled fast down the old King's cheeks, when this unflattering prospect was set before him, and he could not forbear owning his total want of power to defend himself and his dominions, and admitting that he had often thought of the necessity of compounding for his resignation with one of his powerful neighbours.

"It was thy interest, Margaret, harsh and severe as you are, which prevented my entering, before now, into measures most painful to my feelings, but perhaps best calculated for my advantage. But I had hoped it would hold on for my day; and thou, my child, with the talents Heaven has given thee, wouldst, I thought, have found remedy for distresses which I cannot escape, otherwise than by shunning the thoughts of them."

"If it is in earnest you speak of my interest," said Margaret, "know that your resigning Provence will satisfy the nearest, and almost the only wish that my bosom can form; but, so judge me Heaven, as it is on your account, gracious sire, as well as mine, that I advise your compliance."

"Say no more on't, child; give me the parchment of resignation, and I will sign it: I see thou hast it ready drawn; let us sign it, and then we will overtake the hawks. We must suffer woe, but there is little need to sit down and weep for it."

"Do you not ask," said Margaret, surprised at his apathy, "to whom you cede your dominions?"

"What boots it," answered the King, "since they must be no more my own? It must be either to Charles of Burgundy, or my nephew Louis—both powerful and politic princes. God send my poor people may have no cause to wish their old man back again, whose only pleasure was to see them happy and mirthful."

"It is to Burgundy you resign Provence," said Margaret.

"I would have preferred him," answered René; "he is fierce, but not malignant. One word more—are my subjects' privileges and immunities fully secured?"

"Amply," replied the Queen; "and your own wants of all kinds honourably provided for. I would not leave the stipulations in your favour in blank, though I might perhaps have trusted Charles of Burgundy, where money alone is concerned."

"I ask not for myself; with my viol and my pencil, René the Troubadour will be as happy as ever was René the King."

So saying, with practical philosophy he whistled the burden of his last composed ariette, and signed away the rest of his royal possessions without pulling off his glove, or even reading the instrument.

"What is this?" he said, looking at another and separate parchment of much briefer contents. "Must my kinsman Charles have both the Sicilies, Catalonia, Naples, and Jerusalem, as well as the poor remainder of Provence? Methinks, in decency, some greater extent of parchment should have been allowed to so ample a cession."

"That deed," said Margaret, "only disowns and relinquishes all countenance of Ferrand de Vaudemont's rash attempt on Lorraine, and renounces all quarrel on that account against Charles of Burgundy."

For once Margaret miscalculated the tractability of her father's temper. René positively started, coloured, and stammered with passion, as he interrupted her,—"Only disown—*only* relinquish—*only* renounce the cause of my grandchild, the son of my dear Yolande—his rightful claims on his mother's inheritance!—Margaret, I am ashamed for thee. Thy pride is an excuse for thy evil temper; but what is pride worth which can stoop to commit an act of dishonourable meanness? To desert, nay, disown, my own flesh and blood, because the youth is a bold knight under shield, and disposed to battle for his right—I were worthy that harp and horn rung out shame on me, should I listen to thee."

Margaret was overcome in some measure by the old man's unexpected opposition. She endeavoured, however, to show that there was no occasion, in point of honour, why René should engage in the cause of a wild adventurer, whose right, be it good, be it bad, was only upheld by some petty and underhand supplies of money from France, and the countenance of a few of the restless banditti who inhabit the borders of all nations. But ere René could answer, voices, raised to an unusual pitch, were heard in the antechamber, the door of which was flung open by an armed knight, covered with dust, who exhibited all the marks of a long journey.

"Here I am," he said, "father of my mother—behold your grandson—Ferrand de Vaudemont; the son of your lost Yolande kneels at your feet, and implores a blessing on him and his enterprise."

"Thou hast it," replied René, "and may it prosper with thee, gallant youth, image of thy sainted mother—my blessings, my prayers, my hopes, go with you!"

"And you, fair aunt of England," said the young knight, addressing Margaret, "you who are yourself dispossessed by traitors, will you not own the cause of a kinsman who is struggling for his inheritance?"

"I wish all good to your person, fair nephew," answered the Queen of England, "although your features are strange to me. But to advise this old man to adopt your cause, when it is desperate in the eyes of all wise men, were impious madness."

"Is my cause then so desperate?" said Ferrand; "forgive me if I was not aware of it. And does my Aunt Margaret say this, whose strength of mind supported Lancaster so long, after the spirits of her warriors had been quelled by defeat? What—forgive me, for my cause must be pleaded—what would you have said had my mother Yolande been capable to advise her father to disown your own Edward, had God permitted him to reach Provence in safety?"

"Edward," said Margaret, weeping as she spoke, "was incapable of desiring his friends to espouse a quarrel that was irremediable. His, too, was a cause for which mighty princes and peers laid lance in rest."

"Yet Heaven blessed it not," said Vaudemont.

"Thine," continued Margaret, "is but embraced by the robber nobles of Germany, the upstart burghers of the Rhine cities, the paltry and clownish confederates of the Cantons."

"But Heaven *has blessed it*," replied Vaudemont. "Know, proud woman, that I come to interrupt your treacherous intrigues; no petty adventurer, subsisting and maintaining warfare by sleight rather than force, but a conqueror from a bloody field of battle, in which Heaven has tamed the pride of the tyrant of Burgundy."

"It is false!" said the Queen, starting; "I believe it not."

"It is true," said De Vaudemont, "as true as heaven is above us. It is four days since I left the field of Granson, heaped with Burgundy's mercenaries—his wealth, his jewels, his plate, his magnificent decorations, the prize of the poor Swiss, who scarce can tell their value. Know you this, Queen Margaret?" continued the young soldier, showing the well-known jewel which decorated the Duke's order of the Golden Fleece; "think you not the lion was closely hunted when he left such trophies as these behind him?"

Margaret looked, with dazzled eyes and bewildered thoughts, upon a token which confirmed the Duke's defeat, and the extinction of her last hopes. Her father, on the contrary, was struck with the heroism of the young warrior, a quality which, except as it existed in his daughter Margaret, had, he feared, taken leave of his family. Admiring in his heart the youth who exposed himself to danger for the meed of praise, almost as much as he did the poets by whom the warrior's fame is rendered immortal, he hugged his grandson to his bosom, bidding him "gird on his sword in strength," and assuring him, if money could advance his affairs, he, King René, could command ten thousand crowns, any part, or the whole of which was at Ferrand's command; thus giving proof of what had been said of him, that his head was incapable of containing two ideas at the same time.

King René came forth arm in arm with his grandson; and Margaret followed, with deep disappointment and vexation on her brow. She signed to Arthur as she passed, and said to him: "Make thyself master of the truth of this most unexpected news, and bring the particulars to me. Mordaunt will introduce thee."

The royal party then left the room, René bent on carrying his grandson to the sporting party, which had been interrupted, and Margaret to seek the solitude of her private apartment, and await the confirmation of what she regarded as evil tidings.

Soon after Mordaunt, appearing, summoned Arthur to his royal mistress's apartment. In that gay palace, a gloomy room, whose windows looked upon some part of the ruins of the Roman edifice, but excluded every other object save broken walls and tottering columns, was the retreat which Margaret had chosen for her own. She received Arthur with a kindness, more touching that it was the inmate of so proud and fiery a disposition,—of a heart assailed with many woes, and feeling them severely.

"Alas, poor Arthur!" she said, "thy life begins where thy father's threatens to end, in useless labour to save a sinking vessel. The rushing leak pours in its waters faster than human force can lighten or discharge. All—all goes wrong, when our unhappy cause becomes connected with it: strength becomes weakness, wisdom folly, and valour cowardice. The Duke of Burgundy, hitherto victorious in all his bold undertakings, has but to entertain the momentary thought of yielding

succour to Lancaster, and behold his sword is broken by a peasant's flail; and his disciplined army, held to be the finest in the world, flies like chaff before the wind; while their spoils are divided by renegade German hirelings and barbarous Alpine shepherds!—What more hast thou learned of this strange tale?"

"Little, madam, but what you have heard. The worst additions are, that the battle was shamefully cowardlike, and completely lost, with every advantage to have won it; the best, that the Burgundian army has been rather dispersed than destroyed, and that the Duke himself has escaped, and is rallying his forces in Upper Burgundy."

"To sustain a new defeat, or engage in a protracted and doubtful contest, fatal to his reputation as defeat itself. Where is thy father?"

"With the Duke, madam, as I have been informed," replied Arthur.

"Hie to him, and say I charge him to look after his own safety, and care no further for my interests. This last blow has sunk me—I am without an ally, without a friend, without treasure. Once more, be stirring with the dawn, and bend thy way back to thy father, and charge him to care for himself, and think no more of me. Bretagne, where the heir of Lancaster resides, will be the safest place of refuge for its bravest followers. Along the Rhine to be innocent of ill is no security; even here the proposed treaty with Burgundy may take air, and the Provençaux carry daggers as well as crooks and pipes. But I hear the horses fast returning from the hawking party, and the silly old man, forgetting all the eventful proceedings of the day, whistling as he ascends the steps. Well, we will soon part, and my removal will be, I think, a relief to him. Prepare for banquet and ball, for noise and nonsense—above all, to bid adieu to Aix with morning dawn."

Thus dismissed from the Queen's presence, Arthur's first care was to summon Thiebault to have all things in readiness for his departure; his next, to prepare himself for the pleasures of the evening, not, perhaps, so heavily affected by the failure of his negotiation as to be incapable of consolation in such a scene; for the truth was, that his mind secretly revolted at the thoughts of the simple old King being despoiled of his dominions to further an invasion of England, in which, whatever interest he might have in his daughter's rights, there was little chance of success.

Arthur avoided looking towards Queen Maragret during the course of the evening, lest he should disturb her thoughts from the channel in which they were rolling, by seeming to lay a claim on her protection. But after a time he could not help glancing an eye to the alcove where the Queen's chair of state was placed, to see if she observed him. The very first view was such as to rivet his attention. Margaret's head was reclined on the chair, her eyes scarcely open, her features drawn up and pinched, her hands closed with effort. The English lady of honour who stood behind her—old, deaf, and dim-sighted—had not discovered anything in her mistress's position more than the abstracted and indifferent attitude with which the Queen was wont to be present in body and absent in mind during the festivities of the Provençal court. But when Arthur, greatly alarmed, came behind the seat to press her attention to her mistress, she exclaimed, after a minute's investigation, "Mother of Heaven, the Queen is dead!" And it was so. It seemed that the last fibre of life in that fiery and ambitious mind had, as she herself prophesied, given way at the same time with the last thread of political hope.

—SIR WALTER SCOTT, *Anne of Gierstein*.

XI

A Message of Fate

ELIZABETH WOODVILLE, once Queen of England, had been for six years the melancholy inmate of her convent prison at Bermondsey. All necessity of caution there was soon at an end ; her health had long declined—latterly she had wasted to a mere shadow, so that the continuance of life in her attenuated frame appeared a miracle : a feeling of suffocation prevented her from lying down ; she sat propped by pillows ; her fleshless hands incapable of any office, her cheeks fallen in ; her eyes alone—the last retreat of the spirit of life—gleamed brightly amid the human ruin. So long had she been thus, that her death, apparently so near, was hardly feared by those around. Henry almost considered her danger as a new artifice, and absolutely refused her last request to be permitted to see her daughter and grandchildren once again. Her last hour approached ; and none were near save the nuns of the convent, who almost revered her as a saint.

There arrived at the monastery a pilgrim, with relics collected in Araby and Spain. She was admitted into the parlour ; and one simple sister asked for some wonder-working relic that might give health to the dying. The pilgrim heard of Elizabeth's hopeless state ; she begged to be admitted to her presence, that she might try the virtues of a precious balsam given her by the monks of Alcala-la-Real in Spain. Elizabeth was informed of her request : when last she had heard of her son, he was at Alcala—all the strength that had prolonged her life now roused itself ; with earnestness she desired that the Spanish maiden might be admitted to her presence. It was Henry's express command that none should see her ; but she was dying ; his power, so soon to be at an end, might well slacken in its rigour at the very verge of its annihilation.

The pilgrim knelt beside the Queen's couch—the nuns, commanded to retreat, observed a miracle—the dying

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appeared again to live; the grim spectre, who had planted his banner in the chamber, retreated for a moment, as Elizabeth listened to the pilgrim's whispered words. "Oh, for one hour more," she cried, "I have so much to say. He comes then, my son comes! Oh, rouse England with the tale! Sir William Stanley, you must visit him—bid him not draw his sword against my Edward's son. Say to the Dean of St. Paul's—I feel faint," she continued, "my voice fails me—I must leave all unsaid, save this—His sister must not doubt his truth; Henry must not shed the blood of his wife's brother."

"Madam," said the pilgrim, "let me bear some token to my lady the Queen."

"A token!—no words can these weak fingers trace. Yet stay; in this missal there is a prayer which each day I addressed to heaven to preserve my son. Bear the missal to my Elizabeth, bid her listen to you and believe."

With trembling hands the young girl took the small but splendid volume. The Queen then dismissed her with a faintly spoken blessing and a prayer. She was to carry news to the Queen, that her brother Richard, Duke of York, lived, and would aim at recovering the throne—that he was in Ireland and would soon be landed on the shores of England. Before night all was over—the cause of her son moved the dying Queen no more—her sorrowing heart reposed from every strife—she died.

While in attendance on the King at his palace of Shene, the Lord Chamberlain, Sir William Stanley, was informed that a young and foreign lady requested an audience with him. The pilgrim was ushered in—her extraordinary beauty—her large soft eyes—the fascinating sweetness of her manner, at once charmed the worthy gentleman. She spoke in good but accentuated English, and informed Sir William that she came from the death-bed of the Queen of England.

"I know," said Stanley, "that her grace has long been ill, but——"

"God take her to His mercy," interrupted the girl, "she died last night."

"Is his Majesty informed of this event?" Sir William asked.

"It is not yet noon," replied the maiden; "by that hour the messengers from the convent will arrive. I have reasons for greater speed. I bear the royal lady's last words to her

daughter, the Queen Elizabeth ; you, my lord, will favour me by procuring an immediate interview with her Majesty."

Stanley knew the aversion the King had to any private intercourse between Elizabeth and her mother. He informed his visitor that she must first obtain the King's permission for this audience, which he did not believe would be granted ; but the young pilgrim, without hesitation, declared that she would apply for it to the King, and requested the Chamberlain to introduce her. Stanley, good-natured but timid, hesitated—she would not be denied. At last he hit on an expedient. Henry had gone out hawking in the park ; if she would place herself at the gate on his return, she might prefer her prayer—he would be near to insure her being heard.

Noontide was approached. The sport was over, and the royal party on their return. Henry rode foremost with Morton, while his retinue followed at a slower pace, conversing gaily about the birds ; now and then hazarding a remark on the war, so oft delayed, at last declared. They were interrupted by the arrival of Sir William Stanley, who communicated to the King the tidings of the Dowager Queen's death. Six long years had passed since the battle of Stoke, and the commencement of Elizabeth Woodville's imprisonment. She was forgotten at Court. Many there had never seen her ; few remembered her as the reigning Queen of England. Her history was almost like a romance of the olden time ; yet forgotten during life, her death clouded the hilarity of those who heard it. Among those most affected by these tidings, as was natural, was her son, the Marquess of Dorset ; he hastily rode up to receive from Stanley's own lips confirmation of the news. Feeling that of late he had almost forgotten and wholly neglected his mother, a sudden visitation of remorse was blended with the grief that choked his voice, and blinded his eyes with tears. Henry, who was attached to him, viewed with pity the bitter regret of his gay unheeding kinsman, and bade him, ere ruder tongues proclaimed it, bear the melancholy tidings to his royal sister. Dorset, gladly escaping from the throng, rode swiftly forward. Meanwhile the order of the ride was disturbed. The nobles conversed earnestly together. After a few questions, Henry remained lost in thought ; eager perhaps to know whether her secret had died with her ; and viewing in her demise one master testimony the less in favour of his young competitor. Stanley awaited with some inquietude for the moment when they should encounter the

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Queen's messenger. They passed the park gate. She was not there. Henry pursued his way, and entered the palace. Still she did not appear.

Lord Dorset had ridden on with the speed of a man who seeks to escape from himself. Death has more power in its mere sound than the enchanting power of a wizard's rod. She was dead—how awful was that word!—the unfailing friend, his mother! All his remissness towards her took a monstrous form: he felt that if he had wearied Henry with prayers, he might have extorted some mitigation of her sufferings; and it would have consoled her in her solitude to have received the balmy medicine of filial tenderness, which he had neglected to pay. At that moment he would have given his marquisate to a beggar, to have purchased the memory of one action done to soothe her woful end. The pomp of a funeral—masses for her soul—these were small compensations, which her arch enemy, even Henry himself, could and probably would concede. The voice of affection—the duteous affection of a child—he only could have afforded; and he had withheld it.

The pilgrim stood at the park gate, attended by her Spanish domestic, whose singular costume alone must attract regard. "What do you here, maiden?" cried Dorset; "the King and his court will speedily pass this way: this is no fitting place for you."

"I am here," she replied, "to see and speak to your King. I come to prefer a request in the name of one, whom God take to His place; she can disturb him no more."

"You are from Bermondsey, from—" the words choked Dorset.

The young girl continued, "I come from the death-bed of the Lady Elizabeth of England."

"What demand would you make on his Majesty?" said the Marquess; "do you seek a *guerdon* for your pains? Speak then to me—I am her son."

He was about to draw forth his purse, but her look, which grew animated, prevented him, as she said, "I come on a holy errand. The dying lady commanded me to convey her last words to her royal daughter; I seek permission from your King to fulfil her wish."

Dorset was thoughtless and eager. He saw no objection that Henry could have that his sister should have the last message from her now dead parent; so without hesitation he

told the maiden that by Henry's permission he was now about to communicate the sad intelligence to the Queen, and that she might accompany him.

It is thus, by small invisible threads, that Fate weaves the intricate web of our lives. All hung by the slenderest issue: had the messenger seen Henry, most assuredly he would have prevented the interview she sought, and have used his utmost craft to discover whether the fatal secret made a part of the Queen's message. Now his sagacity, his caution, his severity were of no avail. The messenger stood in the presence of his wife.

Six years had considerably altered Elizabeth; habitual fear had engendered a moral timidity, which was not natural to her, for she was the daughter of a proud race; her sweetness, her affectionate disposition still remained; but her soul was sad, and she looked pale and inanimate. The news of her mother's death moved her to tears. One expression of bitter regret burst from her lips; it was mingled with blame of her consort; and she checked herself, while she wept still more abundantly. Dorset felt uneasy at the sight of female tears; he longed to escape. The request for a private interview came to liberate him; he presented her to his sister, and hurried away.

Elizabeth eagerly asked many questions concerning her mother's dying moments. The Spanish maiden, wondering at her own success, fearful of interruption, presented the missal, and then hastened to declare the motive for which it was sent: she opened the jewelled clasps, and showed the Queen the prayer written in her mother's hand on a blank leaf of the brilliantly illuminated pages: rapidly the enthusiastic girl detailed the escape, the exile of the Duke of York, while Elizabeth, not daring to believe her own senses, astounded, terrified, looked with large open eyes on the animated countenance of her lovely visitant. Before there was time for an answer, they were interrupted by the entrance of Sir William Stanley. He started when he saw the young girl, nor did the confused look of his Queen, as she hastily closed the fatal volume, tend to re-assure him. He came to announce a visit from Henry to Elizabeth. Frightened at what he saw, he hardly permitted a slight interchange of greeting, but hurried the maiden away through a door hid by the tapestry, down a narrow staircase into a garden, and then by a small gate that opened on a court. In this court was placed the entrance to



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the apartments of the pages and esquires of the King. Stanley unlocked the gate cautiously, hesitating before he permitted his fair companion to pass on, in the fear that some mischievous boy, or prying servitor, might be there to wonder at, and question wherefore he led the maiden from the Queen's garden through a door, sacred, and never opened, into the resort of wild and dissolute youth. As he unclosed the wicket, at its very entrance, standing so that in spite of every caution a full view of the beautiful girl was at once afforded, stood a young man, whose countenance bespoke him to be ever on the alert for gamesome tricks, or worse mischief. His first aspect was that of recklessness; his second spoke of baser habits; and athwart both broke gleams, now of better feelings, now of desperate passion. He had heard the rusty bolts move, and perceived the slow opening of the door: knowing how sacred was the respect enforced towards this ingress to the Queen's retirement, he stood close, to discover and shame any intruder. "In good season, my Lord Chamberlain!" he at first exclaimed, vexed to find no cause for taunt, till perceiving his fair companion, the expression of his countenance changed to irony, as he cried—"Whither so fast and fearfully, my good lord? Does her Grace deal in contraband: and art 'thou the huckster?"

"As ill luck will have it, wild Robin Clifford!" cried Stanley, angrily.

"Nay, we are brothers in wildness now, fair sir," retorted the other, "and I claim my part here."

Clifford approached the maiden, but Stanley interposed. "Waste your ribaldry on me, good knight, but spare this child; let us pass in all speed, I pray you."

She drew back, but Clifford still followed. "Child! In good hour she is young; and but that burning suns have made her cheek tawny, I might call her fair. She is well worth your pains, and I praise them. Sweet mistress, I am beholden to my Lord Chamberlain for making us friends."

He was running on thus, but the maiden, collecting her spirits, raised her large eyes on him: his name had caught her ear; she remembered partly having seen him; and frequent mention had subsequently been made of him by those who favoured the Yorkist party. She began, "Sir Robert Clifford, I know you will not harm me."

"Thanks for that knowledge, pretty one," cried the youth; "old greybeards only, with frozen hearts (pardon me, Sir

William !) could injure thee ; thou art sure of good from tall fellows (though, in troth, tall I am not) like me."

Sir William writhed with impatience ; again and again he would have interrupted the intruder. The girl replied, "We have met before—when you served him I now serve. I speak in his name : for the sake of PERKIN WARBECK detain me no longer. Noble sir, I attend you : Sir Clifford yields respect to the words I have spoken."

"They are strange indeed, maiden," he replied, "and I must hear more of this. We have met before, I now believe ; and we must meet again. Meanwhile, I will keep off bird-catchers till you and his reverence get clear of these limed twigs. Ah ! I see a gallant ; I will go draw William d'Aubigny aside while you pass forth."

And now again Sir William proceeded on his expedition, and conducted his gentle companion beyond the precincts of the palace. As they parted one from the other, the maiden, in a brief energetic manner, delivered the message of the departed Queen to the good Chamberlain : he was more disconcerted than surprised, and the reflection that Clifford was a party to the secret added to his consternation. He felt how far he was compromised by the introduction of the girl to the young Queen ; fear for a while palsied his better feelings ; he replied only by entreating her not to remain longer in London, but to embark in all haste for France : he then quitted her, yet again came back to ask where she sojourned in town, and turned away a second time, as if to escape from his better self, and from the interest he felt in King Edward's son, which impelled him to ask a thousand questions.

He returned to the courtyard of the Palace, and found Clifford pacing its length in deep thought. The young girl's words had awakened a thousand ideas in his unquiet bosom. He had run a headlong, ruinous course. No character can be wholly evil ; and Clifford's was not destitute of good, though overgrown and choked up by weedy vices, so that his better nature too often served but as a spur and incentive to folly and crime. He was generous ; but that led to rapacity ; since, unable to deny himself or others, if he despoiled himself one day, on the next he engaged in the most desperate enterprises to refill the void. He was bold—that made him fearless in doing wrong ; and to drown the gentle spirit of humanity, which too often for his own peace sprang up in his heart, he hardened himself in selfishness ;

then, as his sensitive, undisciplined nature received new impressions, he was cowardly, cruel, and remorseless. He had never forgotten the princely boy he had saved: he turned to that recollection as to one of the few oases of virtue in the far extended desert of ill, over which, in hours of satiety or despondency, his sickening memory wandered. Indeed, he was yet too young to be decidedly vicious, for at one and twenty a thousand mere human impulses, unrepressed by worldly wisdom, occasion sallies of kindly sympathy. The worst was, that Clifford was a ruined man: his fortunes were nought, his reputation shaken on its base: he veiled, by an appearance of hilarity and recklessness, the real despair that gnawed at his heart, when he considered all that he might have been—the worse than nothing that he was. Hitherto he had, to a great degree, blinded the world, and he longed for some adventure, some commotion, either public or private, that should refill his emptied money-bags, and paint him fair in men's eyes: all these considerations mingled incongruously to make him wish to know more of the outcast Duke.

He awaited the return of Stanley—he learned the name of the Spanish girl: as they spoke, both became aware that the other possessed a secret each dreaded to avow. Clifford first dashed through the flimsy barrier of useless discretion, and related an adventure at Lisle; meantime Sir William broke forth in lamentation that young Richard should have been induced to quit the security of private life, to enter on an unequal and bloody contest, which could only end in destruction to himself and his partizans, while England would again be made the tomb of the Irish (the landing of Richard at Cork was all that was then known), whom he might allure from their woods and bogs to ravage the more gifted sister isle.

—MARY W. SHELLEY, *Perkin Warbeck*.

XII

A Dishonoured Queen

IT was now the joyous month of June ; and where is June so joyous as within the courts and halls of peerless Windsor ? Where does the summer sun shine so brightly as upon its stately gardens and broad terraces, its matchless parks, its silver belting river, and its circumference of proud and regal towers ? Nowhere in the world. At all seasons Windsor is magnificent : whether, in winter, she looks upon her garniture of woods stripped of their foliage—her river covered with ice—or the wide expanse of country around her sheeted with snow—or, in autumn, gazes on the same scene—a world of golden-tinted leaves, brown meadows, or glowing cornfields. But summer is her season of beauty—June is the month when her woods are fullest and greenest ; when her groves are shadiest, her avenues most delicious ; when her river sparkles like a diamond zone ; when town and village, mansion and cot, church and tower, hill and vale, the distant capital itself—all within view—are seen to the highest advantage. At such a season, it is impossible to behold from afar the heights of Windsor, crowned, like the Phrygian goddess, by a castled diadem, and backed by lordly woods, and withhold a burst of enthusiasm and delight.

Windsor Castle looked down in all its magnificence upon the pomp of woods, and upon the twelve fair and smiling counties lying within its ken. A joyous stir was within its courts—the gleam of arms and the fluttering of banners were seen upon its battlements and towers, and the ringing of bells, and the beating of drums, and the fanfares of trumpets, mingled with the shouting of crowds, and the discharge of ordnance.

Amidst this tumult, a grave procession issued from the deanery, and took its way across the lower quadrangle, which was thronged with officers and men-at-arms, in the direction of the lower gate. Just as it arrived there, a distant gun was heard, and an answering peal was instantly fired from the culverins of the Curfew Tower, while a broad standard, emblazoned with the arms of France and England within the garter, and having for supporters the English lion crowned, and the red dragon sinister, was reared upon the keep. All these preparations betokened the approach of the King, who was returning to the castle, after six weeks' absence.

Though information of the King's visit to the castle had only preceded him by a few hours, everything was ready for his reception, and the greatest exertions were used to give splendour to it.

In spite of his stubborn and tyrannical nature, Henry was a popular monarch, and never showed himself before his subjects but he gained their applauses; his love of pomp, his handsome person, and manly deportment, always winning him homage from the multitude. But at no period was he in a more critical position than the present. The meditated divorce from Catherine of Arragon was a step which found no sympathy from the better portion of his subjects, while the ill-assorted union of Anne Boleyn, an avowed Lutheran, which it was known would follow it, was equally objectionable. The seeds of discontent had been widely sown in the capital; and tumults had occurred which, though promptly checked, had nevertheless alarmed the King, coupled as they were with disapprobation of his ministers, the sneering remonstrances of France, the menaces of the Papal See, and the open hostilities of Spain. But the characteristic obstinacy of his nature kept him firm to his point, and he resolved to carry it, be the consequences what they might.

All his efforts to win over Campeggio proved fruitless. The legate was deaf to his menaces or promises, well knowing that to aid Anne Boleyn would be to seriously affect the interests of the Church of Rome.

The affair, however, so long and so artfully delayed, was now drawing to a close. A court was appointed by the legates, to be holden on the 18th of June, 1532, at Blackfriars, to try the question. Gardiner had been recalled from Rome to act as counsel for Henry; and the monarch, determining to appear by proxy at the trial, left his palace at Bridewell the day before

it was to come on, and set out with Anne Boleyn and his chief attendants for Windsor Castle.

Whatever secret feelings might be entertained against him, Henry was received by the inhabitants of Windsor with every demonstration of loyalty and affection. Deafening shouts rent the air as he approached; blessings and good wishes were showered upon him; and hundreds of caps were flung into the air. But noticing that Anne Boleyn was received with evil looks and in stern silence, and construing this into an affront to himself, Henry not only made slight and haughty acknowledgment of the welcome given him, but looked out for some pretext to manifest his displeasure. Luckily none was afforded him, and he entered the castle in a sullen mood.

The day was spent in gentle exercise within the Home Park and on the terrace, and the King affected the utmost gaiety and indifference; but those acquainted with him could readily perceive he was ill at ease. In the evening, he remained for some time alone in his closet penning despatches.

Shortly after, Henry, accompanied by Anne Boleyn, proceeded with his attendants to Saint George's Chapel, and heard vespers performed. Just as he was about to return, an usher advanced towards him, and making a profound reverence, said that a masked dame, whose habiliments proclaimed her of the highest rank, craved a moment's audience of him.

"Where is she?" demanded Henry.

"In the north aisle, an't please your Majesty," replied the usher, "near the Urswick Chapel. I told her that this was not the place for an audience of your Majesty, nor the time; but she would not be said nay, and therefore, at the risk of incurring your sovereign displeasure, I have ventured to proffer her request."

The usher omitted to state that his chief inducement to incur the risk was a valuable ring given him by the lady.

"Well, I will go to her," said the King. "I pray you, excuse me for a short space, fair mistress," he added to Anne Boleyn.

And quitting the choir he entered the northern aisle, and casting his eyes down the line of noble columns by which it is flanked, and seeing no one he concluded that the lady must have retired into the Urswick Chapel. And so it proved; for on reaching this exquisite little shrine, he perceived a tall, masked dame within it, clad in robes of the richest black velvet. As

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he entered the chapel, the lady advanced towards him, and throwing herself on her knees, removed her mask—disclosing features stamped with sorrow and suffering, but still retaining an expression of the greatest dignity. They were those of Catherine of Arragon.

Uttering an angry exclamation, Henry turned on his heel, and would have left her, but she clung to the skirts of his robe.

"Hear me a moment, Henry—my king—my husband—one single moment—hear me!" cried Catherine, in tones of such passionate anguish that he could not resist the appeal.

"Be brief, then, Kate," he rejoined, taking her hand to raise her.

"Blessings on you for the word!" cried the Queen, covering his hand with kisses. "I am indeed your own true Kate—your faithful, loving, lawful wife!"

"Rise, madam!" cried Henry coldly; "this posture befits not Catherine of Arragon."

"I obey you now as I have ever done," she replied, rising; "though if I followed the prompting of my heart, I should not quit my knees till I had gained my suit."

"You have done wrong in coming here, Catherine, at this juncture," said Henry, "and may compel me to some harsh measure which I would willingly have avoided."

"No one knows I am here," replied the Queen, "except two faithful attendants, who are vowed to secrecy; and I shall depart as I came."

"I am glad you have taken these precautions," replied Henry. "Now speak freely, but again I must bid you be brief."

"I will be as brief as I can," replied the Queen; "but I pray you bear with me, Henry, if I unhappily weary you. I am full of misery and affliction, and never was daughter and wife of king wretched as I am. Pity me, Henry—pity me! But that I restrain myself, I should pour forth my soul in tears before you. Oh, Henry, after twenty years' duty and love, to be brought to this unspeakable shame—to be cast from you with dishonour—to be supplanted by another—it is terrible!"

"If you have only come here to utter reproaches, madam, I must put an end to the interview," said Henry, frowning.

"I do not reproach you, Henry," replied Catherine meekly, "I only wish to show you the depth and extent of my

affection. I only implore you to do me right and justice, not to bring shame upon me to cover your own wrongful action. Have compassion upon the princess our daughter—spare her, if you will not spare me !”

“You sue in vain, Catherine,” replied Henry. “I lament your condition, but my eyes are fully opened to the sinful state in which I have so long lived, and I am resolved to abandon it.”

“An unworthy prevarication,” replied Catherine, “by which you seek to work my ruin, and accomplish your union with Anne Boleyn. And you will no doubt succeed ; for what can I, a feeble woman, and a stranger in your country, do to prevent it? You will succeed, I say—you will divorce me, and place her upon the throne. But mark my words, Henry, she will not long remain there.”

The King smiled bitterly.

“She will bring dishonour upon you,” pursued Catherine. “The woman who has no regard for ties so sacred as those which bind us will not respect other obligations.”

“No more of this !” cried Henry. “You suffer your resentment to carry you too far.”

“Too far !” exclaimed Catherine. “Too far !—Is to warn you that you are about to take a wanton to your bed—and that you will bitterly repent your folly, when too late, going too far? It is my duty, Henry, no less than my desire, thus to warn you ere the irrevocable step be taken.”

“Have you said all you wish to say, madam?” demanded the King.

“No, my dear liege, not a hundredth part of what my heart prompts me to utter,” replied Catherine. “I conjure you, by my strong and tried affection—by the tenderness that has for years subsisted between us—by your hopes of temporal prosperity and spiritual welfare—by all you hold dear and sacred—to pause while there is yet time. Let the legates meet to-morrow—let them pronounce sentence against me—and as surely as those fatal words are uttered, my heart will break.”

“Tut, tut !” exclaimed Henry impatiently ; “you will live many years in happy retirement.”

“I will die as I have lived—a queen,” replied Catherine ; “but my life will not be long. Now, answer me truly—if Anne Boleyn plays you false——”

“She never will play me false !” interrupted Henry.

“I say *if* she does,” pursued Catherine, “and you are satis-

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fied of her guilt, will you be content with divorcing her as you divorce me?"

"No, by my father's head!" cried Henry fiercely. "If such a thing were to happen, which I hold impossible, she should expiate her offence on the scaffold."

"Give me your hand on that," said Catherine.

"I give you my hand upon it," he replied.

"Enough," said the Queen; "if I cannot have right and justice, I shall at least have vengeance, though it will come when I am in my tomb. But it *will* come, and that is sufficient."

"This is the frenzy of jealousy, Catherine," said Henry.

"No, Henry; it is not jealousy," replied the Queen with dignity. "The daughter of Ferdinand of Spain and Isabella of Castile, with the best blood of Europe in her veins, would despise herself if she could entertain so paltry a feeling towards one born so much beneath her as Anne Boleyn."

"As you will, madam," rejoined Henry. "It is time our interview terminated."

"Not yet, Henry—for the love of Heaven, not yet!" implored Catherine. "Oh, bethink you by whom we were joined together!—by your father, Henry the Seventh—one of the wisest princes that ever sat on a throne; and by the sanction of my own father, Ferdinand the Fifth, one of the justest. Would they have sanctioned the match if it had been unlawful? Were they destitute of good counsellors? Were they indifferent to the future?"

"You had better reserve these arguments for the legates' ears to-morrow, madam," said Henry, sternly.

"I shall urge them there with all the force I can," replied Catherine; "for I will leave nought untried to hinder an event so fraught with misery. But I feel the struggle will be hopeless."

"Then why make it?" rejoined Henry.

"Because it is due to you—to myself—to the Princess our daughter—to our illustrious progenitors—and to our people to make it," replied Catherine. "I should be unworthy to be your consort if I acted otherwise; and I will never, in thought, word, or deed, do ought derogatory to that title. You may divorce me, but I will never assent to it; you may wed Anne Boleyn, but she will never be your lawful spouse; and you may cast me from your palace, but I will never go willingly."

"I know you to be contumacious, madam," replied Henry.

"And now, I pray you, resume your mask, and withdraw. What I have said will convince you that your stay is useless."

"I perceive it," replied Catherine. "Farewell, Henry—farewell, loved husband of my heart—farewell, for ever!"

"Your mask—your mask, madam!" cried Henry impatiently. "God's death! footsteps are approaching. Let no one enter here!" he cried aloud.

"I *will* come in," said Anne Boleyn, stepping into the chapel, just as Catherine had replaced her mask. "Ah! your Majesty looks confused. I fear I have interrupted some amorous conference.

"Come with me, Anne," said Henry, taking her arm, and trying to draw her away—"come with me."

"Not till I learn who your lady-love is," replied Anne pettishly. "You affect to be jealous of me, my liege, but I have much more reason to be jealous of you. When you were last at Windsor, I heard you paid a secret visit to a fair maiden near the lake in the park, and now you are holding an interview with a masked dame here. Nay, I care not for your gestures of silence. I will speak."

"You are distraught, sweetheart," cried the King. "Come away."

"No," replied Anne. "Let this dame be dismissed."

"I shall not go at your bidding, minion!" cried Catherine fiercely.

"Ah!" cried Anne starting, "whom have we here?"

"One you had better have avoided," whispered Henry.

"The Queen!" exclaimed Anne, with a look of dismay.

"Ay, the Queen!" echoed Catherine, unmasking. "Henry, if you have any respect left for me, I pray you order this woman from my presence. Let me depart in peace."

"Lady Anne, I pray you retire," said Henry.

But Anne stood her ground resolutely.

"Nay, let her stay, then," said the Queen; "and I promise you she shall repent her rashness. And do you stay, too, Henry, and regard well her whom you are about to make your spouse. Question your sister Mary, sometime consort to Louis the Twelfth, and now Duchess of Suffolk—question her as to the character and conduct of Anne Boleyn when she was her attendant at the court of France—ask whether she had never to reprove her for levity—question the Lord Percy as to her love for him—question Sir Thomas Wyatt, and a host of others."



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"All these charges are false and calumnious!" cried Anne Boleyn.

"Let the King enquire and judge for himself," rejoined Catherine; "and if he weds you, let him look well to you, or you will make him a scoff to all honourable men. And now as you have come between him and me—as you have divided husband and wife—for the intent, whether successful or not, I denounce you before Heaven, and invoke its wrath upon your head. Night and day I will pray that you may be brought to shame; and when I shall be called hence, as I may be soon, I will appear before the throne of the Most High, and summon you to judgment."

"Take me from her, Henry!" cried Anne faintly; "her violence affrights me."

"No, you shall stay," said Catherine, grasping her arm and detaining her; "you shall hear your doom. You imagine your career will be a brilliant one, and that you will be able to wield the sceptre you wrongfully wrest from me; but it will moulder into dust in your hand—the crown unjustly placed upon your brow will fall to the ground, and it will bring the head with it."

"Take me away, Henry, I implore you!" cried Anne.

"You *shall* hear me out," pursued Catherine, exerting all her strength, and maintaining her grasp, "or I will follow you down yon aisles, and pour forth my malediction against you in the hearing of all your attendants. You have braved me, and shall feel my power. Look at her, Henry—see how she shrinks before the gaze of an injured woman. Look me in the face, minion—you cannot!—you dare not!"

"Oh, Henry!" sobbed Anne.

"You have brought it upon yourself," said the King.

"She has," replied Catherine; "and unless she pauses and repents, she will bring yet more upon her head. You suffer now, minion, but how will you feel when, in your turn, you are despised, neglected, and supplanted by a rival—when the false glitter of your charms having passed away, Henry will see only your faults, and will open his eyes to all I now tell him?"

A sob was all the answer Anne could return.

"You will feel as I feel towards you," pursued the Queen—"hatred towards her; but you will not have the consolations I enjoy. You will have merited your fate, and you will then think upon me and my woes, and will bitterly, but unavailingly, repent your conduct. And now, Henry," she exclaimed, turn-

ing solemnly to him, "you have pledged your royal word to me, and given me your hand upon it, that if you find this woman false to you she shall expiate her offence on the block. I call upon you to ratify the pledge in her presence."

"I do so, Catherine," replied the King. "The mere suspicion of her guilt shall be enough."

"Henry!" exclaimed Anne.

"I have said it," replied the King.

"Tremble, then, Anne Boleyn!" cried Catherine; "tremble! and when you are adjudged to die the death of an adulteress, bethink you of the prediction of the Queen you have injured. I may not live to witness your fate, but we shall meet before the throne of an eternal Judge."

"Oh, Henry, this is too much!" gasped Anne. And she sank fainting into his arms.

"Begone!" cried the King furiously. "You have killed her."

"It were well for us both if I had done so," replied Catherine. "But she will recover to work my misery and her own. To your hands I commit her punishment. May God bless you, Henry!"

With this she replaced her mask, and quitted the chapel.

Henry, meanwhile, anxious to avoid the comments of his attendants, exerted himself to restore Anne Boleyn to sensibility, and his efforts were speedily successful.

"Is it, then, reality?" gasped Anne, as she gazed around. "I hoped it was a hideous dream. Oh, Henry, this has been frightful! But you will not kill me, as she predicted? Swear it to me you will not!"

"Why should you be alarmed?" rejoined the King. "If you are faithful, you have nothing to fear."

"But you said suspicion, Henry—you said suspicion!" cried Anne.

"You must put the greater guard upon your conduct," rejoined the King moodily. "I begin to think there is some truth in Catherine's insinuations."

"Oh no, I swear to you there is not," said Anne. "I have trifled with the gallants of Francis's court, and have listened, perhaps too complacently, to the love-vows of Percy and Wyatt, but when your Majesty deigned to cast eyes upon me, all others vanished as the stars of night before the rising of the god of day. Henry, I love you deeply, devotedly—but Catherine's terrible imprecations make me feel more keenly

than I have ever done before the extent of the wrong I am about to inflict upon her—and I fear that retributive punishment will follow it."

"You will do her no wrong," replied Henry. "I am satisfied of the justice of the divorce, and of its necessity; and if my proposed union with you were out of the question, I should demand it. Be the fault on my head."

"Your words restore me in some measure, my liege," said Anne. "I love you too well not to risk body and soul for you. I am yours for ever—ah!" she exclaimed, with a fearful look.

"What ails you, sweetheart?" exclaimed the King.

"I thought I saw a face at that window," she replied—"a black and hideous face like that of a fiend."

"It was mere fancy," replied the King. "Your mind is disturbed by what has occurred. You had better join your attendants, and retire to your own apartments."

"Oh, Henry!" cried Anne—"do not judge me unheard—do not believe what any false tongue may utter against me. I love only you—and can love only you. I would not wrong you, even in thought, for worlds."

"I believe you, sweetheart," replied the King tenderly.

So saying, he led her down the aisle to her attendants. They then proceeded together to the royal lodgings, where Anne retired to her own apartments, and Henry withdrew to his private chamber.

—W. H. AINSWORTH, *Windsor Castle*.

XIII

Princess Elizabeth sent to the Tower

CHARGED with a painful and highly-responsible commission imposed upon him by the Queen, Sir Henry Bedingsfeld, accompanied by the Earl of Sussex and three others of the council, Sir Richard Southwell, Sir Edward Hastings, and Sir Thomas Cornwallis, with a large retinue, and a troop of two hundred and fifty horse, set out for Ashbridge, where Elizabeth had shut herself up previously to the outbreak of Wyatt's insurrection. On their arrival, they found her confined to her room with real or feigned indisposition, and she refused to appear; but as their mission did not admit of delay, they were compelled to force their way to her chamber. The haughty Princess, whose indignation was roused to the highest pitch by the freedom, received them in such manner as to leave no doubt how she would sway the reins of government, if they should ever come within her grasp.

"I am guiltless of all design against my sister," she said, "and I shall easily convince her of my innocence. And then look well, sirs—you that have abused her authority—that I requite not your scandalous treatment."

"I would have willingly declined the office," replied Bedingsfeld; "but the Queen was peremptory. It will rejoice me to find you can clear yourself with her Highness, and I am right well assured, when you think calmly of the matter, you will acquit me and my companions of blame."

Early the next morning, Elizabeth was placed in a litter, with her female attendants; and whether from the violence of her passions, or that she had not exaggerated her condition, she swooned, and on her recovery appeared so weak that they were obliged to proceed slowly. During the whole of the

journey, which occupied five days, though it might have been easily accomplished in one, she was strictly guarded ;—the greatest apprehension being entertained of an attempt at rescue by some of her party. On the last day, she robed herself in white, in token of her innocence ; and on her way to Whitehall, where the Queen was staying, she drew aside the curtains of her litter, and displayed a countenance, described in Renard's dispatches to the Emperor as "proud, lofty, and superbly disdainful,—an expression assumed to disguise her mortification." On her arrival at the palace, she earnestly entreated an audience of her Majesty, but the request was refused.

That night Elizabeth underwent a rigorous examination by Gardiner and nineteen of the council, touching her privy to the conspiracy of De Noailles, and her suspected correspondence with Wyatt. She admitted having received letters from the French ambassador on behalf of Courtenay, for whom, notwithstanding his unworthy conduct, she still owned she entertained the warmest affection, but denied any participation in his treasonable practices, and expressed the utmost abhorrence of Wyatt's proceedings. Her assertions, though stoutly delivered, did not convince her interrogators, and Gardiner told her that Wyatt had confessed on the rack that he had written to her, and received an answer.

"Ah! says the traitor so?" cried Elizabeth. "Confront me with him, and if he will affirm as much to my face, I will own myself guilty."

"The Earl of Devonshire has likewise confessed, and has offered to resign all pretensions to your hand, and to go into exile, provided the Queen will spare his life," rejoined Gardiner.

"Courtenay faithless!" exclaimed the Princess, all her haughtiness vanishing, and her head declining upon her bosom, "Then it is time I went to the Tower. You may spare yourselves the trouble of questioning me further, my lords, for by my faith I will not answer you another word—no, not even if you employ the rack."

Upon this, the council departed. Strict watch was kept over her during the night. Above a hundred of the guard were stationed within the palace gardens, and a great fire was lighted in the hall, before which Sir Henry Bedingfeld and the Earl of Sussex, with a large band of armed men, remained till daybreak. At nine o'clock, the word was

brought to the Princess that the tide suited for her conveyance to the Tower. It was raining heavily, and Elizabeth refused to stir forth on the score of her indisposition. But Bedingfeld told her the Queen's commands were peremptory, and besought her not to compel him to use force. Seeing resistance was in vain, she consented with an ill grace, and as she passed through the garden to the water-side, she cast her eyes towards the windows of the palace, in the hope of seeing Mary, but was disappointed.

The rain continued during the whole of her passage, and the appearance of everything on the river was as dismal and depressing as her own thoughts. But Elizabeth was not of a nature to be easily subdued. Rousing all her latent energy, she bore up firmly against her distress. An accident had well nigh occurred as they shot London Bridge. She had delayed her departure so long that the fall was considerable, and the prow of the boat struck upon the ground with such force as almost to upset it, and it was some time before it righted. Elizabeth was wholly unmoved by their perilous situation, and only remarked that "she would that the torrent had sunk them." Terrible as the stern old fortress appeared to those who approached it under similar circumstances, to Elizabeth it assumed its most appalling aspect. Gloomy at all times, it looked gloomier than usual now, with the rain driving against it in heavy scuds, and the wind whistling round its ramparts and fortifications, making the flagstaff and the vanes on the White Tower creak, and chilling the sentinels exposed to its fury to the bone. The storm agitated the river, and the waves more than once washed over the sides of the boat.

"You are not making for Traitor's Gate?" cried Elizabeth, seeing that the skiff was steered in that direction; "it is not fit that the daughter of Henry the Eighth should land at those steps."

"Such are the Queen's commands," replied Bedingfeld, sorrowfully. "I dare not for my head disobey."

"I will leap overboard sooner," rejoined Elizabeth.

"I pray your Highness to have patience," returned Bedingfeld, restraining her. "It would be unworthy of you—of your great father, to take so desperate a step."

Elizabeth compressed her lips and looked sternly at the old knight, who made a sign to the rowers to use their utmost despatch; and, in another moment, they shot beneath the gloomy doorway. The Water-gate revolved on its massive

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hinges, and the boat struck against the foot of the steps. Sussex and Bedingfeld, and the rest of the guard and her attendants, then landed, while Sir Thomas Brydges, the new Lieutenant, with several warders, advanced to the top of the steps to receive her. But she would not move but continued obstinately in the boat, saying, "I am no traitor, and do not choose to land here."

"You shall *not* choose, madam," replied Bedingfeld, authoritatively. "The Queen's orders must and *shall* be obeyed. Disembark, I pray you, without more ado, or it will go hardly with you."

"This from you, Bedingfeld," rejoined Elizabeth, reproachfully, "and at such a time, too?"

"I have no alternative," replied the knight.

"Well then, I will not put you to further shame," replied the Princess, rising.

"Will it please you to take my cloak as a protection against the rain?" said Bedingfeld, offering it to her. But she pushed it aside "with a good dash," as old Fox relates; and, springing on the steps, cried in a loud voice, "Here lands as true a subject, being prisoner, as ever set foot on these stairs. And before Thee, O God, I speak it, having no other friend but Thee."

"Your Highness is unjust," replied Bedingfeld, who stood bareheaded beside her; "you have many friends, and amongst them none more zealous than myself. And if I counsel you to place some restraint upon your conduct, it is because it may be disadvantageously reported to the Queen."

"Say what you please of me, sir," replied Elizabeth; "I will not be told how I am to act by you, or any one."

"At least move forward, madam," implored Bedingfeld; "you will be drenched to the skin if you tarry here longer, and will fearfully increase your fever."

"What matters it if I do?" replied Elizabeth, seating herself on the damp step, while the shower descended in torrents upon her. "I will move forward at my own pleasure—not at your bidding. And let us see whether you will dare to use force towards me."

"Nay, madam, if you forget yourself, I will not forget what is due to your father's daughter," replied Bedingfeld; "you shall have ample time for reflection."

The deeply commiserating and almost paternal tone in which this reproof was delivered touched the Princess sensibly;

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and, glancing round, she was further moved by the mournful looks of her attendants, many of whom were deeply affected, and wept audibly. As soon as her better feelings conquered, she immediately yielded to them ; and, presenting her hand to the old knight, said :

"You are right, and I am wrong, Bedingfeld. Take me to my dungeon."

As Elizabeth passed beneath the portal of the Bloody Tower, on her way to the Lieutenant's lodgings, whither she was conducted after quitting Traitor's Gate, by Bedingfeld and Sussex, she encountered the giants, who doffed their caps at her approach, and fell upon their knees. All three were greatly affected, especially Magog, whose soft and sensitive nature was completely overcome. Big tears rolled down his cheeks, and in attempting to utter a few words of consolation his voice failed him. Touched by his distress, Elizabeth halted for a moment, and laying her hand on his broad shoulder, said in a tone, and with a look calculated to enforce her words, "Bear up, good fellow, and like a man. If I shed no tears for myself, those who love me need shed none. It is the duty of my friends to comfort—not to dishearten me. My case is not so hopeless as you think. The Queen will never condemn the innocent and unheard. Get up, I say, and put a bold face on the matter, or you are not your father's son."

Roused by this address, Magog obeyed, and rearing his bulky frame to its full height, so that his head almost touched the spikes of the portcullis, cried in a voice of thunder, "Would your innocence might be proved by the combat, madam, as in our—" and he hesitated—"I mean your royal father's time! I would undertake to maintain your truth against any odds. Nay, I and my brethren would bid defiance to the whole host of your accusers."

"Though I may not claim you as champions," replied Elizabeth, "I will fight my own battle as stoutly as you could fight it for me."

"And your Grace's courage will prevail," rejoined Og.

"My innocence will," returned Elizabeth.

"Right," cried Gog. "Your Grace, I am assured, would no more harbour disloyalty against the Queen than we should, seeing that——"

"Enough," interrupted the Princess, hastily. "Farewell, good friends," she continued, extending her hand to them, which they eagerly pressed to their lips, "farewell! Be

of good cheer. No man shall have cause to weep for me."

"This is a proud, though a sad day," observed Og, who was the last honoured by the Princess's condescension, "and will never be obliterated from my memory. By my father's beard!" he added, gazing rapturously at the long, taper fingers he was permitted to touch, "it is the most beautiful hand I ever beheld, and whiter than the driven snow."

Pleased by the compliment—for she was by no means insensible to admiration—Elizabeth forgave its unseasonableness for its evident sincerity, and smilingly departed. But she had scarcely ascended the steps leading to the green, when she was chilled by the sight of Renard, who was standing at the northern entrance of the Bloody Tower, wrapped in his cloak, and apparently waiting to see her pass.

As she drew near, he stepped forward, and made her a profound, but sarcastic salutation. His insolence, however, failed in its effect upon Elizabeth. Eyeing him with the utmost disdain, she observed to Bedingfeld. "Put that Spanish knave out of my path. And he who will remove him from the Queen's council will do both her and me a good turn."

"Your Grace has sufficient room to pass," returned Renard, with bitter irony, and laying his hand upon the hilt of his sword, as if determined to resist any attempt to remove him. "Your prison within the Bell Tower is prepared, and if my counsels have any weight with her Majesty, you will quit it only to take the same path, and ascend the same scaffold as your mother, Anne Boleyn."

"Another such taunt," cried Sussex, fiercely, "and neither the sacred character of your office, nor the protection of the Queen shall save you from my sword."

And he thrust him forcibly backward.

Elizabeth moved on at a slow and stately pace, while the guard, closing round her and Sussex, opposed the points of their halberds to the infuriated ambassador.

"Your Highness has increased Renard's enmity," observed Bedingfeld, with a troubled look.

"I fear him not," replied Elizabeth, dauntlessly. "Let him do his worst. English honesty will ever prove more than a match for Spanish guile."

Entering the Lieutenant's lodgings, and traversing the long gallery which is situated in a westerly direction

Elizabeth soon reached the upper chamber of the Bell Tower, which, she was informed by Sir Thomas Brydges, was appointed for her prison.

"It is a sorry lodging for a king's daughter," she observed, "and for one who may be queen of this realm. But since my sister will have it so, I must make shift with it. How many attendants are allowed me?"

"One female," replied Brydges.

"Why not deprive me of all?" cried the Princess, passionately. "This chamber will barely accommodate me. I will be alone."

"As your Grace pleases," replied Brydges, "but I cannot exceed my authority."

"Can I write to the Queen?" demanded Elizabeth.

"You will be furnished with writing materials, if it is your purpose to prepare your confession," returned the Lieutenant. "But it must be delivered to the council, who will exercise their discretion as to transmitting it to her Highness."

"Ah!" exclaimed the Princess, "am I at *their* mercy?"

"Alas! madam, you are so," replied Bedingfeld; "but the Chancellor is your friend."

"I am not sure of it," returned Elizabeth. "Oh! that I could see the Queen, were it but for one minute. My mother perished because she could not obtain a hearing of my royal sire, whose noble nature was abused in respect to her; and the Duke of Somerset himself told me, that if his brother the Admiral had been allowed speech of him, he would never have consented to his death. But it is ever thus. The throne is surrounded by a baneful circle, whose business is to prevent the approach of truth. They keep me from my sister's presence, well knowing that I could clear myself at once, while they fill her ears with false reports. Bedingfeld, you are her faithful servant, and, therefore, not my enemy. Tell her, if she will grant me an audience alone, or before her councillors, I will either approve my innocence, or consent to lose my head. Above all, implore her to let me be confronted with Wyat, that the truth may be extorted from him."

"The interview would little benefit your Grace," remarked Brydges. "Wyat confesses your privy to the rebellion."

"He lies," replied Elizabeth, fiercely. "The words have been put into his mouth with the vain hope of pardon. But he will recant them if he sees me. He dare not—will not look me in the face, and aver that I am a partner in his foul prac-

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tices. But I will not believe it of him. Despite his monstrous treason, he is too brave, too noble minded, to act so recreant a part."

"Wyat has undergone the question ordinary and extraordinary, madam," replied Brydges; "and though he endured the first with surprising constancy, his fortitude sank under the severity of the latter application."

"I forgive him," rejoined Elizabeth, in a tone of deep commiseration. "But it proves nothing. He avowed thus much to escape further torture."

"It may be," returned Brydges, "and for your Grace's sake I hope it is so. But his confession, signed with his own hand, has been laid before the Queen."

"Ah!" exclaimed Elizabeth, sinking into the only seat which the dungeon contained.

"I beseech your Highness to compose yourself," cried Bedingfeld, compassionately. "We will withdraw and leave you to the care of your attendant."

"I want no assistance," replied Elizabeth, recovering herself. "Will you entreat her Majesty to grant me an audience on the terms I have named, and in the presence of Wyat?"

"It must be speedy, then," remarked Brydges; "for he is adjudged to die to-morrow."

"To-morrow!" echoed Elizabeth. "Nay, then, good Bedingfeld, seek the Queen without delay. Implore her by the love she once bore me—by the love I am assured she bears me still—to interrogate me before this traitor. If he perishes with this confession uncontradicted, I am lost."

"Your words shall be repeated to her Highness," replied Bedingfeld, "and I will not fail to add my entreaties to your own. But I cannot give a hope that your request will be granted."

"It is fortunate for your Highness that the Queen visits the Tower to-day," observed Brydges. "Her arrival is momentarily expected. As I live!" he exclaimed, as the bell was rung overhead, and answered by the beating of drums and the discharge of cannon from the batteries, "she is here!"

"It is Heaven's interposition in my behalf," cried Elizabeth. "Go to her at once, Bedingfeld. Let not the traitor, Renard, get the start of you. I may live to requite the service. Go—go."

The old knight obeyed, and the others immediately afterwards retired, closing the door upon the Princess, and placing a guard outside.

Left alone, Elizabeth flew to the narrow and strongly-grated loophole, commanding the southern ward, through which the Queen must necessarily pass on her way to the palace, in the hope of catching a glimpse of her. She had not to wait long. Loud fanfares of trumpets resounded from the gate of the Byward Tower. These martial flourishes were succeeded by the trampling of steeds, and fresh discharges of ordnance, and the next moment, a numerous retinue of horse and foot emerged from the gateway. Just as the royal litter appeared, it was stopped by Sir Henry Bedingfeld, and the curtains were drawn aside by Mary's own hand. It was a moment of intense interest to Elizabeth, and she watched the countenance of the old knight, as if her life depended upon each word he uttered. At first, she could not see the Queen's face, but as Bedingfeld concluded, Mary leaned forward, and looked up at the Bell Tower. Uncertain whether she could be seen, Elizabeth determined to make her presence known, and thrusting her hand through the bars, waved her kerchief. Mary instantly drew back. The curtains of the litter were closed; Bedingfeld stepped aside; and the calvalcade moved on.

"She will not see me!" cried Elizabeth, sinking back in despair. "I shall perish like my mother."

The Princess's agitation did not subside for some time. Expecting Bedingfeld to return with the tidings that Mary had refused her request, she listened anxiously to every sound, in the hope that it might announce his arrival. Hour after hour passed by and he came not, and concluding that he did not like to be the bearer of ill news, or, what was yet more probable, that he was not allowed to visit her, she made up her mind to the worst. Possessing the greatest fortitude, she had no resignation, and while capable of enduring any amount of physical suffering, could not control her impatience. Her thoughts were bitter and mortifying enough, but she felt no humiliation; and the only regrets she indulged were at having acted so unwise a part. Scalding tears bedewed her cheeks—tears that would never have been shed if any one had been present; and her mingled emotions of rage and despair were so powerful that she had much ado to overcome them. Ungovernable fury against Mary took possession of her, and she pondered upon a thousand acts of revenge. Then came the dreadful sense of her present situation—of its hopelessness—its despair. She looked at the stone walls by which she was enclosed, and invoked them to fall upon her and crush her—and she rushed

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towards the massive and iron-girded door, as if she would dash herself against it with impotent fury. Her breast was ravaged by fierce and conflicting passions; and when she again returned to her seat, she grasped it convulsively to prevent herself from executing the desperate deeds that suggested themselves to her. The sole thought that now touched her, and subdued her violence, was that of Courtenay. Neither his unworthiness nor his inconstancy could shake her attachment. She loved him deeply and devotedly—with all the strength and fervour of her character; and though she had much difficulty in saving him from her contempt, this feeling did not abate the force of her regard. The idea that he would perish with her, in some degree reconciled her to her probable fate.

Thus meditating, alternately roused by the wildest resentment, and softened by thoughts of love, Elizabeth passed the remainder of the day without interruption. Worn out, at length, she was about to dispose herself to slumber, when the door was opened, and Sir Thomas Brydges, accompanied by two serving-men and a female attendant, entered the room. Provisions were placed before her by the men, who instantly withdrew, and Brydges was about to follow, leaving the female attendant behind, when Elizabeth stopped him, and enquired what answer Sir Henry Bedingsfeld had brought from the Queen.

"My orders are to hold no communication with your Grace," replied the Lieutenant.

"At least, tell me when I am to be examined by the council?" rejoined Elizabeth. "The meanest criminal has a right to be so informed!"

But Brydges shook his head, and quitting the chamber, closed the door, and barred it outside.

Controlling her feelings, as she was now no longer alone, Elizabeth commanded her attendant to awaken her in an hour, and threw herself upon the couch. Her injunctions were strictly complied with, and she arose greatly refreshed. A lamp had been left her, and taking up a book of prayers, she addressed herself to her devotions, and while thus occupied her mind gradually resumed its composure. About midnight the door was opened by the Lieutenant, who entered the room attended by Nightgall, and two other officials in sable robes, while a guard of halberdiers, bearing torches, remained without.

"I must request your Grace to follow me," said Brydges.

"Whither?" demanded Elizabeth, rising. "To the Queen's presence?"

The Lieutenant made no answer.

"To the council?" pursued the princess,—"or to execution? No matter. I am ready." And she motioned the Lieutenant to lead on.

Sir Thomas Brydges obeyed, and followed by the Princess, traversed the gallery, descended the great staircase, and entered a spacious chamber on the ground floor. Here he paused for a moment, while a sliding panel in the wall was opened, through which he and his companion passed.

A short flight of stone steps brought them to a dark narrow passage, and they proceeded silently and slowly along it, until their progress was checked by a strong iron door, which was unfastened and closed behind them by a warder. The jarring of the heavy bolts, as they were shot into their sockets, resounded hollowly along the arched roof of the passage, and smote forcibly upon Elizabeth's heart, and she required all her constitutional firmness to support her.

They were now in one of those subterranean galleries, on either side of which were cells, and the clangour called forth many a dismal response. Presently afterwards, they arrived at the head of a staircase, which Elizabeth descended, and found herself in the torture chamber. A dreadful spectacle met her gaze. At one side of the room, which was lighted by a dull lamp from the roof, and furnished with numberless hideous implements—each seeming to have been recently employed—sat, or rather was supported, a wretched man upon whom every refinement of torture had evidently been practised. A cloak was thrown over his lower limbs, but his ghastly and writhen features proved the extremity of suffering to which he had been subjected. Elizabeth could scarcely believe that in this miserable object, whom it would have been a mercy to dispatch, she beheld the once bold and haughty Sir Thomas Wyatt.

Placed on the corner of a leather couch, and supported by two attendants, the latter of whom bathed his temples with some restorative, Wyatt fixed his heavy eyes upon the Princess. But her attention was speedily diverted from him to another person, whose presence checked her feelings. This was the Queen, who stood on one side, with Gardiner and Renard. Opposite them was Courtenay, with his arms folded upon his breast. The latter looked up as Elizabeth entered the

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chamber; and after gazing at her for a moment, turned his regards, with an irrepressible shudder, to Wyatt. Knowing that her safety depended upon her firmness, though her heart bled for the tortured man, Elizabeth disguised all appearance of compassion, and throwing herself at the Queen's feet, cried, "Heaven bless your Highness, for granting me this interview! I can now prove my innocence."

"In what way?" demanded Mary, coldly. "It would indeed rejoice me to find I have been deceived. But I cannot shut my ears to the truth. You traitor," she continued, pointing to Wyatt, "who dared to rise in arms against his sovereign, distinctly charges you with participation in his rebellious designs. I have his confession, taken from his own lips, and signed with his own hand, wherein he affirms, by his hopes of mercy from the Supreme Judge, before whom he will shortly appear to answer for his offences, that you encouraged his plans for my dethronement, and sought to win the crown for yourself, in order to bestow it, with your hand, upon your lover Courtenay."

"It is false," cried Elizabeth,—"false as the caitiff who invented it—false as the mischievous councillor who stands beside you, and who trusts to work my ruin,—but, by our father's soul, it shall go hard if I do not requite him! Your Majesty has not a more loyal subject than myself, nor has any of your subjects a more loving sister. This wretched Wyatt, whose condition would move my pity were he not so heinous a traitor, may have written to me, but, on my faith, I have never received his letters."

"Lord Russell's son declares that he delivered them into your own hands, observed Mary.

"Another lie," as false as the first," replied Elizabeth. "It is a plot, your Highness—a contrivance of my enemy, Simon Renard. Where is Lord Russell's son? Why is he not here?"

"You shall see him anon, since you desire it," replied Mary. "Like yourself, he is a prisoner in the Tower. But these assertions do not clear you."

"Your Highness says you have Wyatt's confession," rejoined Elizabeth. "What faith is to be attached to it? It has been wrung from him by the severity of the torture to which he has been subjected. Look at his shattered frame, and say whether it is not likely he would purchase relief from such suffering as he must have endured at any cost. The sworn tormentors are here. Let them declare how often they have stretched

him on the rack—how often applied the thumbscrew—how often delivered him to the deadly embraces of the scavenger's daughter, before this false charge was wrung from him. Speak, fellows! how often have you racked him?"

But the tormentors did not dare to reply. A stifled groan broke from Wyatt, and a sharp convulsion passed over his frame."

"The question has only extorted the truth," observed Mary.

"If the accusation so obtained be availing, the retraction must be equally so," replied Elizabeth. "Sir Thomas Wyatt," she exclaimed, in a loud and authoritative tone, and stepping towards him, "if you would not render your name for ever infamous, you will declare my innocence."

The sufferer gazed at her as if he did not nearly comprehend what was said to him.

Elizabeth repeated the command, and in a more peremptory tone.

"What have I declared against you?" asked Wyatt, faintly.

"You have accused me of countenancing your traitorous practices against the Queen's Highness, who now stands before you," rejoined Elizabeth. "You well know it is false. Do not die with such a stain upon your knighthood and your honour. The worst is over. Further application of the rack would be fatal, and it will not be resorted to, because you would thus escape the scaffold. You can have, therefore, no object in adhering to this vile fabrication of my enemies. Retract your words, I command you, and declare my innocence."

"I do," replied Wyatt, in a firm tone. "I have falsely accused you, and was induced to do so in the hope of pardon. I unsay all I have said, and will die proclaiming your innocence."

"It is well," replied Elizabeth, with a triumphant glance at the Queen.

"Place me at the feet of the Princess," said Wyatt to his supporters. "Your pardon, madam," he added, as the order was obeyed.

"You have it," replied Elizabeth, scarcely able to repress her emotion. "May God forgive you as I do."

"Then your former declaration was false, thou perjured traitor?" cried Mary, in amazement.

"What I have said, I have said," rejoined Wyatt: "What I now say is the truth." And he motioned the attendants to

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raise him, the pain of kneeling being too exquisite for endurance.

"And you will adhere to your declaration?" pursued Mary.

"To my last breath," gasped Wyat.

"At whose instigation were you induced to charge the Princess with conspiring with you?" demanded Renard, stepping forward.

"At yours," returned Wyat, with a look of intense hatred.

"You, who have deceived the Queen—deceived me—and would deceive the devil, your master, if you could—you urged me to it—you—ha! ha!" And with a convulsive attempt at laughter, which communicated a horrible expression to his features, he sank into the arms of the attendant, and was conveyed to a cell at the back of the chamber, the door of which was closed.

"My innocence is established," said Elizabeth, turning to the Queen.

"Not entirely," answered Mary. "Wyat's first charge was supported by Lord Russell's son."

"Take me to him or send him hither," rejoined Elizabeth. "He has been suborned, like Wyat, by Renard. I will stake my life that he denies it."

"I will not refute the idle charge brought against me," observed Renard, who had been for a moment confounded by Wyat's accusation. "Your Majesty will at once discern its utter groundlessness."

"I ask no clemency for myself," interposed Courtenay, speaking for the first time; "but I beseech your Highness not to let the words of that false and crafty Spaniard weigh against your sister. From his perfidious counsels all these disasters have originated."

"You would screen the Princess in the hope of obtaining her hand, my lord," replied Mary. "I see through your purpose, and will defeat it."

"So far from it," replied the Earl, "I here solemnly renounce all pretensions to her."

"Courtenay!" exclaimed Elizabeth, in a tone of anguish.

"Recent events have cured me of love and ambition," pursued the Earl, without regarding her. "All I desire is freedom."

"And is it for one so unworthy that I have entertained this regard?" cried Elizabeth. "But I am rightly punished."

"You are so," replied Mary, bitterly. "And you now taste some of the pangs you inflicted upon me."

"Hear me, gracious madam," cried Courtenay, prostrating himself before the Queen. "I have avowed thus much, that you may attach due credit to what I am about to declare concerning Renard. My heart was yours, and yours only, till I allowed myself to be influenced by him. I knew not then his design, but it has since been fully revealed. It was to disgust you with me, that he might accomplish the main object of his heart—the match with the Prince of Spain. He succeeded too well. Utterly inexperienced, I readily yielded to the allurements he spread before me. My indiscretions were reported to you. But, failing in alienating me from your regard, he tried a deeper game, and chose out as his tool the Princess Elizabeth."

"Ha!" exclaimed Mary.

"He it was," pursued Courtenay, "who first attracted my attention towards her—who drew invidious comparisons between her youthful charms and your Majesty's more advanced age. He it was who hinted at the possibility of an alliance between us—who led me on step by step till I was completely enmeshed. I will own it, I became desperately enamoured of the Princess. I thought no more of your Highness—of the brilliant prospects lost to me; and, blinded by my passion, became reckless of the perilous position in which I placed myself. But now that I can look calmly behind me, I see where and why I fell, and I fully comprehend the tempter's motives."

"What says your Excellency to this?" demanded Mary, sternly.

"Much that the Earl of Devonshire has asserted is true," replied Renard. "But in rescuing your Majesty, at any cost, from so unworthy an alliance, I deserve your thanks rather than your reprobation. And I shall ever rejoice that I have succeeded."

"You have succeeded at my expense, and at the expense of many of my bravest and best subjects," replied Mary, severely. "But the die is cast, and cannot be recalled."

"True," replied Renard with a smile of malignant satisfaction.

"Will your Highness pursue your investigations further to-night?" demanded Gardiner.

"No," replied the Queen, who appeared lost in thought. "Let the Princess Elizabeth be taken back to the Bell Tower, and Courtenay to his prison in the Bowyer Tower. I will

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consider upon their sentence. Wyat is respited for the present. I shall interrogate him further."

With this, she quitted the torture chamber with her train, and the prisoners were removed as she had directed.

Elizabeth still continued a close prisoner in the Bell Tower. But she indulged the most sanguine expectations of a speedy release. Her affections had received a severe blow in Courtenay's relinquishment of his pretensions to her hand, and it required all her pride and mastery over herself to bear up against it. She did, however, succeed in conquering her feelings, and with her usual impetuosity, began now to hate him in the proportion of her former love. While his mistress was thus brooding over the past, and trying to regulate her conduct for the future within the narrow walls of her prison, Courtenay, who had been removed to the Flint Tower, where he was confined in the basement chamber, was likewise occupied in revolving his brief and troubled career. A captive from his youth, he had enjoyed a few months' liberty, during which, visions of glory, power, greatness, and love—such as has seldom visited the most exalted—opened upon him. The bright dream was now ended, and he was once more a captive. Slight as his experience had been, he was sickened of the intrigues and hollowness of court life, and sighed for freedom and retirement. Elizabeth still retained absolute possession of his heart, but he feared to espouse her, because he was firmly persuaded that her haughty and ambitious character would involve him in perpetual troubles. Cost what it might, he determined to resign her hand as his sole hope of future tranquillity. In this resolution he was confirmed by Gardiner, who visited him in secret, and counselled him as to the best course to pursue.

"If you claim my promise," observed the crafty Chancellor, "I will fulfil it, and procure you the hand of the Princess, but I warn you you will not hold it long. Another rebellion will follow, in which you and Elizabeth will infallibly be mixed up, and then nothing will save you from the block."

Courtenay acquiesced, and Gardiner, having gained his point, left him with the warmest assurances that he would watch over his safety. Insincere as he was, the Chancellor was well-disposed towards Courtenay, but he had a difficult game to play. He was met on all hands by Renard, who was bent on the Earl's destruction and that of the Princess; and every move he made with the Queen, was checked by his

wary and subtle antagonist. Notwithstanding her belief in their treasonable practices, Mary was inclined to pardon the offenders, but Renard entreated her to suspend her judgment upon them till the Emperor's opinion could be ascertained. This, he well knew, if agreed to, would insure their ruin, as he had written secretly in such terms to Charles the Fifth as he was satisfied would accomplish his object. Extraordinary despatch was used by the messengers; and to Renard's infinite delight, while he and Gardiner were struggling for ascendancy over the Queen, a courier arrived from Madrid. Renard's joy was converted into positive triumph as he opened his own letters received by the same hand, and found that the Emperor acquiesced in the expediency of the severest measures towards Elizabeth and her suitor, and recommended their immediate execution. The same despatches informed him that Charles, apprehensive of some further difficulty in respect to his son's projected union with Mary, had written to the Count D'Egmont at Brussels, with letters of ratification and procuration, commissioning him to repair to the Court of London without delay, and conclude the engagement by espousing the Queen by proxy.

Not many hours later, the Count himself, who had set out instantly from Brussels on receiving his commission, arrived. He was received on the Queen's part by the Earl of Pembroke, the Earl of Shrewsbury, comptroller of the household, and the Marquis of Winchester, high treasurer, and conducted to the State apartments within the palace of the Tower, where the Court was then staying. Mary appointed an audience with him on the following day, and, in the interim, to Renard's disappointment, remained closeted with Gardiner, and would see no one beside. The Ambassador, however, consoled himself with the certainty of success, and passed the evening in consultation with D'Egmont, to whom he detailed all that had passed since the flight of the latter.

"The heretical faction in England," he observed, "is entirely crushed—or will be so, when Jane and Elizabeth are executed. And if his highness, Prince Philip, will follow up my measures, he may not only restore the old faith throughout the realm, but establish the Inquisition in the heart of London within six months."

The next day, at the appointed hour, the Count D'Egmont, attended by Renard and the whole of his suite, was conducted with much ceremony to the council chamber in the White Tower. He found Mary surrounded by the whole of her

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ministers, and, prostrating himself before the throne, acquainted her with his mission, and, presenting her with the letters of procuration he had received from the Prince, entreated her to ratify on her side the articles already agreed upon. To this request, for which she was already prepared by the Emperor's despatches, Mary vouchsafed a gracious answer, saying: "I am as impatient for the completion of the contract as the Prince your master can be, and shall not hesitate a moment to comply with his wishes. But I would," she added, smiling, "that he had come to claim its fulfilment himself."

"His Highness only awaits your Majesty's summons, and an assurance that he can land upon your shores without occasioning further tumult," rejoined D'Egmont.

"He shall speedily receive that assurance," returned Mary. "Heaven be praised! our troubles are ended, and the spirit of disaffection and sedition checked, if not altogether extinguished. But I pray you hold me excused for a short time," she continued, motioning him to rise; "I have some needful business to conclude before I proceed with this solemnity."

Waving her hand to Sir Thomas Brydges, who stood among the group of nobles near the throne, he immediately quitted the presence, returning in a few moments with a guard of halberdiers, in the midst of which were Elizabeth and Courtenay. At the approach of the prisoners, the assemblage divided into two lines to allow them passage; and, preceded by the Lieutenant, they advanced to within a short distance of the Queen.

Mary, meantime, had seated herself; and her countenance, hitherto radiant with smiles, assumed a severe expression. A mournful silence pervaded the courtly throng, and all seemed as ominous and lowering as if a thundercloud had settled over them. This was not, however, the case with Renard. A sinister smile lighted up his features, and he observed, in an undertone, to D'Egmont, "My hour of triumph is at hand."

"Wait awhile," replied the other.

Elizabeth looked in nowise abashed or dismayed by the position in which she found herself. Throwing angry and imperious glances around, and bending her brows on those who scanned her too curiously, she turned her back upon Courtenay, and seemed utterly unconscious of his presence.

At the Queen's command Gardiner stepped forward, and taking a roll of paper from an attendant, proceeded to read the charges against the prisoners, together with the depositions of those who had been examined, as to their share in the

insurrection. When he concluded, Elizabeth observed in a haughty tone: "There is nothing in all that to touch me, my lord. Wyat has recanted his confession, and avowed he was suborned by Renard. And as to the rest of my accusers, they are unworthy of credit. The Queen's Highness must acquit me."

"What say you, my lord?" demanded Gardiner of Courtenay.

"Nothing," replied the Earl.

"Do you confess yourself guilty of the high crimes and misdemeanours laid to your charge, then?" pursued the Chancellor.

"No," answered Courtenay firmly. "But I will not seek to defend myself further. I throw myself on the Queen's mercy."

"You do wisely, my lord," returned Gardiner; "and your Grace," he added to Elizabeth, "would do well to abate your pride and imitate his example."

"In my father's time, my lord," observed the Princess scornfully, "you would not, for your head, have dared to hold such language towards me."

"I dared to plead your mother's cause with him" retorted Gardiner with much asperity. "Your Majesty will now pronounce such sentence upon the accused as may seem meet to you," he added, turning to the Queen.

"We hold their guilt not clearly proven," replied Mary. "Nevertheless, too many suspicious circumstances appear against them to allow us to set them at large till all chance of further trouble is ended. Not desiring to deal harshly with them, we shall not confine them longer within the Tower. Which of you, my lords, will take charge of the Princess Elizabeth? It will be no slight responsibility. You will answer for her security with your heads. Which of you will take charge of her, I say?"

As she spoke she glanced enquiringly round the assemblage, but no answer was returned.

"Had not your Highness better send her Grace under a sure guard to the Emperor's court at Brussels?" observed Renard, who could scarcely conceal his mortification at the Queen's decision.

"I will think of it," returned Mary.

"Sooner than this shall be," interposed Sir Henry Bedingfeld, "since none worthier of the office can be found, I will undertake it."

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"You are my good genius, Bedingfeld," replied Mary.—"To you, then, I confide her, and I will associate with you in the office Sir John Williams, of Thame. The place of her confinement shall be my palace at Woodstock, and she will remain there till you receive further orders. You will set out with a sufficient guard for Oxfordshire."

"I am ever ready to obey your Highness," replied Bedingfeld.

"Accursed meddler!" exclaimed Renard to D'Egmont, "he has marred my project."

"The Earl of Devonshire will be confined in Fotheringay Castle, in Northamptonshire," pursued Mary. "To you, Sir Thomas Tresham," she continued, addressing one of those near him, "I commit him."

"I am honoured in the charge," returned Tresham, bowing. "Your Majesty will repent this ill-judged clemency!" cried Renard, unable to repress his choler; "and since my counsels are unheeded, I must pray your Highness to allow me to resign the post I hold near your person."

"Be it so," replied Mary, in a freezing tone; "we accept your resignation, and shall pray his Imperial Majesty to recall you."

"Is this my reward?" exclaimed Renard, as he retired, covered with shame and confusion. "Cursed is he that puts faith in princes!"

The prisoners were then removed, and as they walked side by side, Courtenay sought to address the Princess, but she turned away her head sharply, according him neither look nor word in reply. Finding himself thus repulsed, the Earl desisted, and they proceeded in silence as long as their way lay together.

And thus, without one farewell, they parted—to meet no more.

—W. H. AINSWORTH, *Tower of London.*

XIV

The Men who Fought for Queen and Country

IT was the blessed Christmas afternoon of the year 1580. The light was fading down ; the evensong was done ; and the good folks of Bideford were trooping home in merry groups, the father with his children, the lover with his sweetheart, to cakes and ale, and flapdragons and mummers' plays, and all the happy sports of Christmas night. One lady only, wrapped close in her black muffler and followed by her maid, walked swiftly, yet sadly, towards the long causeway and bridge which led to Northam town. Sir Richard Grenville and his wife caught her up and stopped her courteously.

"You will come home with us, Mrs. Leigh," said Lady Grenville, "and spend a pleasant Christmas night?"

Mrs. Leigh smiled sweetly, and laying one hand on Lady Grenville's arm, pointed with the other to the westward, and said :

"I cannot well spend a merry Christmas night while that sound is in my ears."

The whole party around looked in the direction in which she pointed. Above their heads the soft blue sky was fading into gray, and here and there a misty star peeped out : but to the westward, where the downs and woods of Raleigh closed in with those of Abbotsham, the blue was webbed and tufted with delicate white flakes ; iridescent spots, marking the path by which the sun had sunk, showed all the colours of the dying dolphin ; and low on the horizon lay a long band of grassy green. But what was the sound which troubled Mrs. Leigh ? None of them, with their merry hearts, and ears dulled with the din and bustle of the town, had heard it till that moment ; and yet now—listen ! It was dead calm. There was not a breath to

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stir a blade of grass. And yet the air was full of sound, a low deep roar which hovered over down and wood, salt-marsh and river, like the roll of a thousand wheels, the tramp of endless armies, or—what it was—the thunder of a mighty surge upon the boulders of the pebble-ridge.

"The ridge is noisy to-night," said Sir Richard. "There has been wind somewhere."

"There is wind now, where my boy is, God help him!" said Mrs. Leigh: and all knew that she spoke truly. The spirit of the Atlantic storm had sent forward the token of his coming, in the smooth ground-swell which was heard inland, two miles away. To-morrow the pebbles, which were now rattling down with each retreating wave, might be leaping to the ridge top, and hurled like round-shot far ashore upon the marsh by the force of the advancing wave, fleeing before the wrath of the western hurricane.

"God help my boy!" said Mrs. Leigh again.

"God is as near him by sea as by land," said good Sir Richard.

"True: but I am a lone mother; and one that has no heart just now but to go home and pray."

And so Mrs. Leigh went onward up the lane, and spent all that night in listening between her prayers to the thunder of the surge, till it was drowned, long ere the sun rose, in the thunder of the storm.

And where is Amyas Leigh on the same Christmas afternoon?

Amyas is sitting bareheaded in a boat's stern in Smerwick bay, with the spray whistling through his curls, as he shouts cheerfully:

"Pull, and with a will, my merry men all, and never mind shipping a sea. Cannon balls are a cargo that don't spoil by taking salt water."

His mother's presage has been true enough. Christmas eve has been the last of the still, dark, steaming nights of the early winter; and the western gale has been roaring for the last twelve hours upon the Irish coast.

The short light of the winter day is fading fast. Behind him is a leaping line of billows lashed into mist by the tempest. Beside him green foam-fringed columns are rushing up the black rocks, and falling again in a thousand cataracts of snow. Before him is the deep and sheltered bay: but it is not far up the bay that he and his can see; for some four miles out at

sea begins a sloping roof of thick gray cloud, which stretches over their heads, and up and far away inland, cutting the cliffs off at mid-height, hiding all the Kerry mountains, and darkening the hollows of the distant firths into the blackness of night, And underneath that awful roof of whirling mist the storm is howling inland ever, sweeping before it the great foam sponges, and the gray salt spray, till all the land is hazy, dim, and dun. Let it howl on! for there is more mist than ever salt spray made, flying before that gale; more thunder than ever sea-surge awakened echoing among the cliffs of Smerwick bay; along those sand hills flash in the evening gloom red sparks which never came from heaven; for that fort, now christened by the invaders the Fort del Oro, where flaunts the hated golden flag of Spain, holds San Josepho and eight hundred of the foe; and but three nights ago Admiral Winter's shrewdest hands, slung four culverins out of the Admiral's main deck, and floated them ashore, and dragged them up to the battery among the sand hills; and now it shall be seen whether Spanish and Italian condottieri can hold their own on British ground against the men of Devon.

Small blame to Amyas if he was thinking, not of his lonely mother at Burrough Court, but of those quick bright flashes on sand hill and on fort, where his gunner, Salvation Yeo, was hurling the eighteen-pound shot with deadly aim, and watching with a cool and bitter smile of triumph the flying of the sand, and the crashing of the gabions. Amyas and his party had been on board, at the risk of their lives, for a fresh supply of shot; for Winter's battery was out of ball, and had been firing stones for the last four hours, in default of better missiles. They ran the boat on shore through the surf, where a cove in the shore made landing possible, and almost careless whether she stove or not, scrambled over the sand hills with each man his brace of shot slung across his shoulder; and Amyas, leaping into the trenches, shouted cheerfully to Salvation Yeo:

"More food for the bull-dogs, Gunner, and plums for the Spaniards' Christmas pudding!"

"Don't speak to a man at his business, Master Amyas. Five mortal times have I missed; but I will have that accursed Popish rag down, as I'm a sinner."

"Down with it, then; nobody wants you to shoot crooked. Take good iron to it, and not footy paving-stones."

"I believe, sir, that the foul fiend is there, a turning of my shot aside, I do. I thought I saw him once; but, thank

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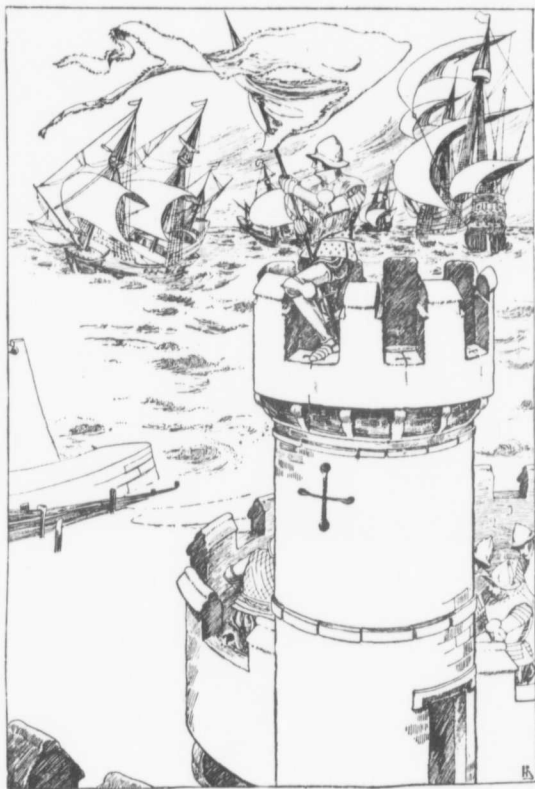
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Heaven, here's ball again. Ah, sir, if one could but cast a silver one! Now, stand by, men!"

And once again Yeo's eighteen-pounder roared, and away. And, oh glory! the great yellow flag of Spain, which streamed in the gale, lifted clean into the air, flagstaff and all, and then pitched wildly down head-foremost, far to leeward.

A hurrah from the sailors, answered by the soldiers of the opposite camp, shook the very cloud above them; but ere its echoes had died away, a tall officer leaped upon the parapet of the fort, with the fallen flag in his hand, and rearing it as well as he could upon his lance point, held it firmly against the gale, while the fallen flagstaff was raised again within.

In a moment a dozen long-bows were bent at the daring foe-man: but Amyas behind shouted:

"Shame, lads! Stop and let the gallant gentleman have due courtesy!"

So they stopped, while Amyas, springing on the rampart of the battery, took off his hat, and bowed to the flag-holder, who, as soon as relieved of his charge, returned the bow courteously, and descended.

It was by this time all but dark, and the firing began to slacken on all sides; Salvation and his brother gunners, having covered up their slaughtering tackle with tarpaulings, retired for the night, leaving Amyas, who had volunteered to take the watch till midnight; and the rest of the force having got their scanty supper of biscuit (for provisions were running very short) lay down under arms among the sand hills, and grumbled themselves to sleep.

He had paced up and down in the gusty darkness for some hour or more, exchanging a passing word now and then with the sentinel, when two men entered the battery, chatting busily together. One was in complete armour; the other wrapped in the plain short cloak of a man of pens and peace: but the talk of both was neither of sieges nor of sallies, catapult, bombard, nor culverin, but simply of English hexameters.

And fancy not, gentle reader, that the two were therein fiddling while Rome was burning; for the commonweal of poetry and letters, in that same critical year 1580, was in far greater danger from those same hexameters than the common woe of Ireland (as Raleigh called it) was from the Spaniards.

Imitating the classic metres, "versifying," as it was called in contradistinction to rhyming, was becoming fast the fashion

among the more learned. Stonyhurst and others had tried their hands at hexameter translations from the Latin and Greek epics, which seem to have been doggerel enough; and ever and anon some youthful wit broke out in iambics, sapphics, elegiacs, and what not, to the great detriment of the Queen's English and her subjects' ears.

I know not whether Mr. William Webbe had yet given to the world any fragments of his precious hints for the "Reformation of English poetry," to the tune of his own "Tityrus, happily thou liest tumbling under a beech-tree": but the Cambridge Malvolio, Gabriel Harvey, had succeeded in arguing Spenser, Dyer, Sidney, and probably Sidney's sister, and the whole clique of beaux-esprits round them, into following his model of

"What might I call this tree? A laurel? O bonny laurel!
Needes to thy bowes will I bowe this knee, and vail my bonetto";

after snubbing the first book of "that Elvish Queene," which was then in manuscript, as a base declension from the classical to the romantic school.

And now Spenser (perhaps in mere melancholy wilfulness and want of purpose, for he had just been jilted by a fair maid of Kent) was wasting his mighty genius upon doggerel which he fancied antique; and some piratical publisher (Bitter Tom Nash swears, and with likelihood, that Harvey did it himself) had just given to the world—"Three proper wittie and familiar Letters, lately passed between two University men, touching the earthquake in April last, and our English reformed Versifying," which had set all town wits a-buzzing like a swarm of flies, being none other than a correspondence between Spenser and Harvey, which was to prove to the world for ever the correctness and melody of such lines as—

"For like magnificoes, not a beck but glorious in show,
In deede most frivolous, not a looke but Tuscanish always."

Let them pass—Alma Mater has seen as bad hexameters sinco. But then the matter was serious. There is a story (I know not how true), that Spenser was half bullied into re-writing the *Fairy Queen* in hexameters, had not Raleigh, a true romanticist, "whose vein for ditty or amorous ode was most lofty, insolent, and passionate," persuaded him to follow his better genius. The great dramatists had not yet arisen, to form completely that truly English school, of which Spenser, unconscious of his

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own vast powers, was laying the foundation. And, indeed, it was not till Daniel, twenty years after, in his admirable apology for rhyme, had smashed Mr. Campian and his "eight several kinds of classical numbers," that the matter was finally settled, and the English tongue left to go the road on which Heaven had started it. So that we may excuse Raleigh's answering somewhat waspish to some quotation of Spenser's from the three letters of "Immerito and G. H."

"Tut, tut, Colin Clout, much learning has made thee mad. A good old fishwives' ballad jingle is worth all your sapphics, and trimeters and 'riff-raff thurlery bouncing.' Hey? have I you there, old lad? Do you mind that precious verse?"

"But, dear Wat, Homer and Virgil——"

"But, dear Ned, Petrarch and Ovid——"

"But, Wat, what have we that we do not owe to the ancients?"

"Ancients, quotha? Why, the legend of King Arthur, and Chevy Chase too, of which even your fellow-sinner Sidney cannot deny that every time he hears it even from a blind fiddler it stirs his heart like a trumpet-blast. Speak well of the bridge that carries you over, man! Did you find your Redcross Knight in Virgil, or such a dame as Una in old Ovid? No more than you did your Pater and Credo, you renegado baptized heathen, you!"

"Yet, surely, our younger and barbarous taste must bow before divine antiquity, and imitate afar——"

"As dottrels do fowlers. If Homer was blind, lad, why dost not poke out thine eye? Ay, this hexameter is of an ancient house, truly, Ned Spenser, and so is many a rogue: but he cannot make way on our rough English roads. He goes hopping and twitching in our language like a three-legged terrier over a pebble bank, tumble and up again, rattle and crash."

"Nay, hear, now——"

"See ye the blindfolded pretty god that feathered archer,
Of lover's miseries which maketh his bloody game?"

True, the accent gaps in places, as I have often confessed to Harvey, but——"

"Harvey be hanged for a pedant, and the whole crew of versifiers, from Lord Dorset (but he, poor man, has been past hanging some time since) to yourself! Why delude you into playing Procrustes as he does with the Queen's English, racking one word till its joints be pulled asunder, and squeezing

the next all a-heap as the Inquisitors do heretics in their banca cava? Out upon him and you, and Sidney, and the whole kin. You have not made a verse among you, and never will, which is not as lame a gosling as Harvey's own. Hark, now! There is our young giant comforting his soul with a ballad. You will hear rhyme and reason together here, now. He will not miscall 'blind-folded,' 'blind-fold-ed,' I warrant; or make an 'of' and a 'which' and a 'his' carry a whole verse on their wretched little backs."

And as he spoke, Amyas Leigh, who had been grumbling to himself some Christmas carol, broke out full-mouthed.

"As Joseph was a-walking

He heard an angel sing—

"This night shall be the birthnight
Of Christ, our Heavenly King."

"There, Edmund Classicaster," said Raleigh, "does not that simple strain go nearer to the heart of him who wrote *The Shepherd's Calendar*? Why dost not answer man?"

But Spenser was silent awhile, and then—

"Because I was thinking rather of the rhymers than the rhyme. Good heaven! how that brave lad shames me, singing here the hymns which his mother taught him, before the very muzzles of Spanish guns; instead of bewailing unmanly, as I have done, the love which he held, I doubt not, as dear as I did even my Rosalind. This is his welcome to the winter's storm; while I, who dream, forsooth, of heavenly inspiration, can but see therein an image of mine own cowardly despair. Pah! away with frosts, icicles, and tears and sighs——"

"And with hexameters and trimeters too, I hope," interrupted Raleigh: "and all the trickeries of self-pleasing sorrow."

"——I will set my heart to higher work than barking at the hand which chastens me."

"Wilt put the lad into the *Fairy Queen*, then, by my side? He deserves as good a place there, believe me, as ever a Guyon, or even as Lord Grey your Arthegall. Let us hail him. Hallo! young chanticleer of Devon! Art not afraid of a chance shot, that thou crowest so lustily upon thine own mixen?"

"Cocks crow all night long at Christmas, Captain Raleigh, and so do I," said Amyas's cheerful voice; "but who's there with you?"

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"A penitent pupil of yours—Mr. Secretary Spenser."

"Pupil of mine?" said Amyas. "I wish he'd teach me a little of his art; I could fill up my time here with making verses."

"And who would be your theme, fair sir?" said Spenser.

"No 'who' at all. I don't want to make sonnets to blue eyes, nor black either: but if I could put down some of the things I saw in the Spice Islands——"

"Ah," said Raleigh, "he would beat you out of Parnassus, Mr. Secretary. Remember, you may write about Fairyland, but he has seen it."

"And so have others," said Spenser; "it is not so far off from any one of us. Wherever is love and loyalty, great purposes and lofty souls, even though in a hovel or a mine, there is Fairyland."

"Then Fairyland should be here, friend; for you represent love, and Leigh loyalty; while, as for great purposes and lofty souls, who so fit to stand for them as I, being (unless my enemies and my conscience are liars both), as ambitious and as proud as Lucifer's own self?"

"Ah, Walter, Walter, why wilt always slander thyself thus?"

"Slander? Tut—I do but give the world a fair challenge, and tell it, 'There—you know the worst of me: come on and try a fall, for either you or I must down.' Slander? Ask Leigh here, who has but known me a fortnight, whether I am not as vain as a peacock, as selfish as a fox, as imperious as a bona roba, and ready to make a cat's paw of him or any man, if there be a chestnut in the fire: and yet the poor fool cannot help loving me, and running of my errands, and taking all my schemes and my dreams for gospel; and verily believes now, I think, that I shall be the man in the moon some day, and he my big dog."

"Well," said Amyas, half apologetically, "if you are the cleverest man in the world, what harm in my thinking so?"

"Hearken to him, Edmund! He will know better when he has outgrown this same callow trick of honesty, and learnt of the great goddess Detraction how to show himself wiser than the wise, by pointing out to the world the fool's motley which peeps through the rents in the philosopher's cloak. Go to, lad! slander thy equals, envy thy betters, pray for an eye which sees spots in every sun, and for a vulture's nose to scent carrion in every rose bed. If thy friend win a battle, show that he has needlessly thrown away his men; if he lose one,

hint that he sold it; if he rise to a place, argue favour; if he falls from one, argue divine justice. Believe nothing, hope nothing, but endure all things, even to kicking, if aught may be got thereby; so shalt thou be clothed in purple and fine linen, and sit in kings' palaces and fare sumptuously every day."

"And wake with Dives in the torment," said Amyas. "Thank you for nothing, Captain."

"Go to, Misanthropos," said Spenser. "Thou hast not yet tasted the sweets of this world's comforts, and thou raillest at them?"

"The grapes are sour, lad."

"And will be to the end," said Amyas, "if they come off such a devil's tree as that. I really think you are out of your mind, Captain Raleigh, at times."

"I wish I were; for it is a troublesome, hungry, windy mind as man ever was cursed withal. But come in, lad. We were sent from the Lord Deputy to bid thee to supper. There is a dainty lump of dead horse waiting for thee."

"Send me some out, then," said matter-of-fact Amyas. "And tell his Lordship that, with his good leave, I don't stir from here till morning, if I can keep awake. There is a stir in the fort, and I expect them out on us."

"Tut, man! Their hearts are broken. We know it by their deserters."

"Seeing's believing. I never trust runaway rogues. If they are false to their masters, they'll be false to us."

"Well, go thy ways, old honesty; and Mr. Secretary shall give you a book to yourself in the *Fairy Queen*—'Sir Monoculus or the Legend of Common Sense,' eh, Edmund?"

"Monoculus?"

"Ay, Single-eye, my prince of word-coiners—won't that fit?—'And give him the Cyclop's head for a device. Heigho! They may laugh that win. I am sick of this Irish work; were it not for the chance of advancement I'd sooner be driving a team of red Devons on Dartside; and now I am angry with the dear lad because he is not sick of it too. What a plague business has he to be paddling up and down, contentedly doing his duty, like any city watchman? It is an insult to the mighty aspirations of our noble hearts,—eh, my would-be Ariosto?"

"Ah, Raleigh! you can afford to confess yourself less than some, for you are greater than all. Go on and conquer, noble

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heart ! But as for me, I sow the wind, and I suppose I shall reap the whirlwind.'

"Your harvest seems come already ; what a blast that was ! Hold on by me, Colin Clout, and I'll hold on by thee. So ! Don't tread on that pikeman's stomach, lest he take thee for a marauding Don, and with sudden dagger slit Colin's pipe, and Colin's weasand too."

And the two stumbled away into the darkness, leaving Amy to stride up and down as before, puzzling his brains over Raleigh's wild words and Spenser's melancholy, till he came to the conclusion that there was some mysterious connections between cleverness and unhappiness, and thanking his stars that he was neither scholar, courtier, nor poet, said grace over his lump of horseflesh when it arrived, devoured it as if it had been venison, and then returned to his pacing up and down ; but this time in silence, for the night was drawing on, and there was no need to tell the Spaniards that any one was awake and watching.

So he began to think about his mother, and how she might be spending her Christmas ; and then about his brother, and wondered at what grand court festival he was assisting, amid bright lights and sweet music and gay ladies, and how he was dressed, and whether he thought of his brother there far away on the dark Atlantic shore ; and then he said his prayers and his creed ; and then he tried not to think of a certain lass of Devonshire, and of course thought about her all the more. So on passed the dull hours, till it might be past eleven o'clock, and all lights were out in the battery and the shipping, and there was no sound of living thing but the monotonous tramp of the two sentinels beside him, and now and then a grunt from the party who slept under arms some twenty yards to the rear.

So he paced to and fro, looking carefully out now and then over the strip of sand hill which lay between him and the fort ; but all was blank and black, and it began to rain furiously.

Suddenly he seemed to hear a rustle among the harsh sand grass. True, the wind was whistling through it loudly enough : but that sound was not altogether like the wind. Then a soft sliding noise : something had slipped down a bank, and brought the sand down after it. Amyas stopped, crouched down beside a gun, and laid his ear to the rampart, whereby he heard clearly, as he thought, the noise of approaching feet ; whether rabbits or Christians, he knew not : but he shrewdly guessed the latter.

Now Amyas was of a sober and business-like turn, at least when he was not in a passion ; and thinking within himself that if he made any noise, the enemy (whether four or two-legged) would retire, and all the sport be lost, he did not call to the two sentries, who were at the opposite ends of the battery ; neither did he think it worth while to rouse the sleeping company, lest his ears should have deceived him, and the whole camp turn out to repulse the attack of a buck rabbit. So he crouched lower and lower beside the culverin, and was rewarded in a minute or two by hearing something gently deposited against the mouth of the embrasure, which, by the noise, should be a piece of timber.

"So far, so good," said he to himself ; "when the scaling ladder is up, the soldiers follow, I suppose. I can only humbly thank them for giving my embrasure the preference. There he comes ! I hear his feet scuffling."

He could hear plainly enough some one working himself into the mouth of the embrasure : but the plague was, that it was so dark that he could not see his hand between him and the sky, much less his foe at two yards off. However, he made a pretty fair guess as to the whereabouts, and, rising softly, discharged such a blow downwards as would have split a yule log. A volley of sparks flew up from the hapless Spaniard's armour, and a grunt issued from within it, which proved that, whether he was killed or not, the blow had not improved his respiration.

Amyas felt for his head, seized it, dragged him in over the gun, sprang into the embrasure on his knees, felt for the top of the ladder, found it, hove it clean off and out, with four or five men on it, and then of course tumbled after it ten feet into the sand, roaring like a town bull to her Majesty's liege subjects in general.

Sailor fashion, he had no armour on but a light morion and a cuirass, so he was not too much encumbered to prevent his springing to his legs instantly, and setting to work, cutting and foining right and left at every sound, for sight there was none.

Battles (as soldiers know, and newspaper editors do not) are usually fought, not as they ought to be fought, but as they can be fought ; and while the literary man is laying down the law at his desk as to how many troops should be moved here, and what rivers should be crossed there, and where the cavalry should have been brought up, and when the flank should have been turned, the wretched man who has to do the work finds

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the matter settled for him by pestilence, want of shoes, empty stomachs, bad roads, heavy rains, hot suns, and a thousand other stern warriors who never show on paper.

So with this skirmish ; "according to Cocker," it ought to have been a very pretty one ; for Hercules of Pisa, who planned the sortie, had arranged it all (being a very *sans-appel* in all military science) upon the best Italian precedents, and had brought against this very hapless battery a column of a hundred to attack directly in front, a company of fifty to turn the right flank, and a company of fifty to turn the left flank, with regulations, orders, passwords, countersigns, and what not ; so that if every man had had his rights (as seldom happens), Don Guzman Maria Magdalena de Soto, who commanded the sortie, ought to have taken the work out of hand, and annihilated all therein. But alas ! here stern fate interfered. They had chosen a dark night, as was politic ; they had waited till the moon was up, lest it should be too dark, as was politic likewise : but, just as they had started, on came a heavy squall of rain, through which seven moons would have given no light, and which washed out the plans of Hercules of Pisa as if they had been written on a schoolboy's slate. The company who were to turn the left flank walked manfully down into the sea, and never found out where they were going till they were knee-deep in water. The company who were to turn the right flank, bewildered by the utter darkness, turned their own flank so often that, tired of falling into rabbit-burrows and filling their mouths with sand, they halted and prayed to all the saints for a compass and lantern ; while the centre body, who held straight on by a track way to within fifty yards of the battery, so miscalculated that short distance, that while they thought the ditch two pikes' length off, they fell into it one over the other, and of six scaling ladders, the only one which could be found was the very one which Amyas threw down again. After which the clouds broke, the wind shifted, and the moon shone out merrily. And so was the deep policy of Hercules of Pisa, on which hung the fate of Ireland and the Papacy, decided by a ten minutes' squall.

But where is Amyas ?

In the ditch, aware that the enemy is tumbling into it, but unable to find them ; while the company above, finding it much too dark to attempt a counter sortie, have opened a smart fire of musketry and arrows on things in general, whereat the Spaniards are swearing like Spaniards (I need say no more),

and the Italians spitting like venomous cats : while Amyas, not wishing to be riddled by friendly balls, has got his back against the foot of the rampart, and waits on Providence.

Suddenly the moon clears ; and with one more fierce volley, the English sailors, seeing the confusion, leap down from the embrasures, and to it pell-mell. Whether this also was "according to Cocker," I know not : but the sailor, then as now, is not susceptible of highly-finished drill.

Amyas is now in his element, and so are the brave fellows at his heels ; and there are ten breathless, furious minutes among the sand hills ; and then the trumpets blow a recall, and the sailors drop back again by twos and threes, and are helped up into the embrasures over many a dead and dying foe ; while the guns of Fort del Oro open on them, and blaze away for half an hour without reply ; and then all is still once more. And in the meanwhile, the sortie against the Deputy's camp has fared no better, and the victory of the night remains with the English.

Twenty minutes after, Winter and the captains who were on shore were drying themselves round a peat fire on the beach, and talking over the skirmish, when Will Cary asked :

"Where is Leigh ? who has seen him ? I am sadly afraid he has gone too far, and been slain."

"Slain ? Never less, gentlemen !" replied the voice of the very person in question, as he stalked out of the darkness into the glare of the fire, and shot down from his shoulders into the midst of the ring, as he might a sack of corn, a huge dark body, which was gradually seen to be a man in rich armour ; who being so shot down, lay quietly where he was dropped, with his feet (luckily for him mailed) in the fire.

"I say," quoth Amyas, "some of you had better take him up, if he is to be of any use. Unlace his helm, Will Cary."

"Pull his feet out of the embers ; I dare say he would have been glad enough to put us to the scarpines ; but that's no reason we should put him to them."

Now there was no love lost between Admiral Winter and Amyas ; and Amyas might certainly have reported himself in a more ceremonious manner. So Winter, whom Amyas either had not seen, or had not chosen to see, asked him pretty sharply, "What the plague he had to do with bringing dead men into camp ?"

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"If he's dead, it's not my fault. He was alive enough when I started with him, and I kept him right end uppermost all the way; and what would you have more, sir?"

"Mr. Leigh!" said Winter, "it behoves you to speak with somewhat more courtesy, if not respect, to captains who are your elders and commanders."

"Ask your pardon, sir," said the giant, as he stood in front of the fire with the rain steaming and smoking off his armour; "but I was bred in a school where getting good service done was more esteemed than making fine speeches."

"Whatsoever school you were trained in, sir," said Winter, nettled at the hint about Drake; "it does not seem to have been one in which you learned to obey orders. Why did you not come in when the recall was sounded?"

"Because," said Amyas, very coolly, "in the first place, I did not hear it; and in the next, in my school I was taught when I had once started not to come home empty-handed."

This was too pointed; and Winter sprang up with an oath—"Do you mean to insult me, sir?"

"I am sorry, sir, that you should take a compliment to Sir Francis Drake as an insult to yourself. I brought in this gentleman because I thought he might give you good information; if he dies meanwhile, the loss will be yours, or rather the Queen's."

"Help me, then," said Cary, glad to create a diversion in Amyas's favour, "and we will bring him round"; while Raleigh rose, and catching Winter's arm, drew him aside, and began talking earnestly.

"What a murrain have you, Leigh, to quarrel with Winter?" asked two or three.

"I say, my reverend fathers and dear children, do get the Don's talking tackle free again, and leave me and the Admiral to settle it our own way."

There was more than one captain sitting in the ring: but discipline, and the degrees of rank, were not so severely defined as now; and Amyas, as a "gentleman adventurer," was, on land, in a position very difficult to be settled, though at sea he was as liable to be hanged as any other person on board; and on the whole it was found expedient to hush the matter up. So Captain Raleigh returning, said that though Admiral Winter had doubtless taken umbrage at certain words of Mr. Leigh's, yet that he had no doubt that Mr. Leigh meant nothing thereby but what was consistent with the

profession of a soldier and a gentleman, and worthy both of himself and of the Admiral.

From which proposition Amyas found it impossible to dissent; whereon Raleigh went back and informed Winter that Leigh had freely retracted his words, and fully wiped off any imputation which Mr. Winter might conceive to have been put upon him, and so forth. So Winter returned, and Amyas said frankly enough:

"Admiral Winter, I hope, as a loyal soldier, that you will understand thus far; that naught which has passed to-night shall in any way prevent you finding me a forward and obedient soldier to all your commands, be they what they may, and a supporter of your authority among the men, and honour against the foe, even with my life. For I should be ashamed if private differences should ever prejudice by a grain the public weal."

This was a great effort of oratory for Amyas; and he therefore, in order to be safe by following precedent, tried to talk as much as he could like Sir Richard Grenville. Of course Winter could answer nothing to it, in spite of the plain hint of private differences, but that he should not fail to show himself a captain worthy of so valiant and trusty a gentleman; whereon the whole party turned their attention to the captive, who, thanks to Will Cary, was by this time sitting up, standing much in need of a handkerchief, and looking about him, having been unhelmed, in a confused and doleful manner.

"Take the gentleman to my tent," said Winter, "and let the surgeon see to him. Mr. Leigh, who is he?"

"An enemy, but whether Spaniard or Italian I know not; but he seemed somebody among them, I thought the captain of a company. He and I cut at each other twice or thrice at first, and then lost each other; and after that I came on him among the sand hills, trying to rally his men, and swearing like the mouth of the pit, whereby I guess him a Spaniard. But his men ran; so I brought him in."

"And how?" asked Raleigh. "Thou art giving us all the play but the murders and the marriages."

"Why, I bid him yield, and he would not. Then I bid him run, and he would not. And it was too pitch-dark for fighting; so I took him by the ears, and shook the wind out of him, and so brought him in."

"Shook the wind out of him?" cried Cary, amid the roar

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of laughter which followed. "Dost know thou hast nearly wrung his neck in two? His visor was full of blood."

"He should have run or yielded, then," said Amyas; and getting up, slipped off to find some ale, and then to sleep comfortably in a dry burrow which he scratched out of a sand bank.

The next morning, as Amyas was discussing a scanty breakfast of biscuit (for provisions were running very short in camp), Raleigh came up to him.

"What, eating? That's more than I have done to-day."

"Sit down, and share, then."

"Nay, lad, I did not come a-begging. I have set some of my rogues to dig rabbits; but as I live, young Colbrand, you may thank your stars that you are alive to-day to eat. Poor young Cheek—Sir John Cheek, the grammarian's son—got his quittance last night by a Spanish pike, rushing headlong on, just as you did. But have you seen your prisoner?"

"No; nor shall, while he is in Winter's tent."

"Why not, then? What quarrel have you against the Admiral, friend Bobadil? Cannot you let Francis Drake fight his own battles, without thrusting your head in between them?"

"Well, that is good! As if the quarrel was not just as much mine, and every man's in the ship. Why, when he left Drake, he left us all, did he not?"

"And what if he did? Let bygones be bygones is the rule of a Christian, and of a wise man too, Amyas. Here the man is, at least, safe home, in favour and in power; and a prudent youth will just hold his tongue, mumchance, and swim with the stream."

"But that's just what makes me mad; to see this fellow, after deserting us there in unknown seas, win credit and rank at home here for being the first man who ever sailed back through the Straits. What had he to do with sailing back at all! As well make the fox a knight for being the first that ever jumped down a jakes to escape the hounds. The fiercer the flight the fouler the fear, say I."

"Amyas! Amyas! thou art a hard hitter, but a soft politician."

"I am no politician, Captain Raleigh, nor ever wish to be. An honest man's my friend, and a rogue's my foe; and I'll tell both as much as long as I breathe."

"And die a poor saint," said Raleigh, laughing. "But if

Winter invites you to his tent himself, you won't refuse to come?"

"Why, no, considering his years and rank; but he knows too well to do that."

"He knows too well not to do it," said Raleigh, laughing as he walked away. And verily in half an hour came an invitation, extracted, of course, from the Admiral by Raleigh's silver tongue, which Amyas could not but obey.

"We all owe you thanks for last night's service, sir," said Winter, who had for some good reasons changed his tone. "Your prisoner is found to be a gentleman of birth and experience, and the leader of the assault last night. He has already told us more than we had hoped, for which also we are beholden to you; and indeed my Lord Grey has been asking for you already."

"I have, young sir," said a quiet and lofty voice; and Amyas saw limping from the inner tent the proud and stately figure of the stern Deputy, Lord Grey of Wilton, a brave and wise man, but with a naturally harsh temper, which had been soured still more by the wound which had crippled him, while yet a boy, at the battle of Leith. He owed that limp to Mary Queen of Scots; and he did not forget the debt.

"I have been asking for you; having heard from many, both of your last night's prowess, and of your conduct and courage beyond the promise of your years, displayed in that ever-memorable voyage, which may well be ranked with the deeds of the ancient Argonauts."

Amyas bowed low; and the Lord Deputy went on, "You will needs wish to see your prisoner. You will find him such a one as you need not be ashamed to have taken, and as need not be ashamed to have been taken by you: but here he is, and will, I doubt not, answer as much for himself. Know each other better, gentlemen both: last night was an ill one for making acquaintances. Don Guzman Maria Magdalena Sotomayor de Soto, know the hidalgo, Amyas Leigh!"

As he spoke the Spaniard came forward, still in his armour, all save his head, which was bound up in a handkerchief.

He was an exceedingly tall and graceful personage, of that *sangre azul* which marked high Visigothic descent; golden-haired and fair-skinned, with hands as small and white as a woman's; his lips were delicate, but thin, and compressed closely at the corners of the mouth; and his pale blue eye had a glassy dulness. In spite of his beauty and his carriage,

Amyas shrank from him instinctively; and yet he could not help holding out his hand in return, as the Spaniard, holding out his, said languidly, in most sweet and sonorous Spanish:

"I kiss his hands and feet. The Señor speaks, I am told, my native tongue?"

"I have that honour."

"Then accept in it (for I can better express myself therein than in English, though I am not altogether ignorant of that witty and learned language) the expression of my pleasure at having fallen into the hands of one so renowned in war and travel; and of one also," he added, glancing at Amyas's giant bulk, "the vastness of whose strength, beyond that of common mortality, makes it no more shame for me to have been overpowered and carried away by him than if my captor had been a paladin of Charlemagne's."

Honest Amyas bowed and stammered, a little thrown off his balance by the unexpected assurance and cool flattery of his prisoner, but he said:

"If you are satisfied, illustrious Señor, I am bound to be so. I only trust that in my hurry and the darkness, I have not hurt you unnecessarily."

The Don laughed a pretty little hollow laugh: "No, kind Señor, my head, I trust, will after a few days have become united to my shoulders; and, for the present, your company will make me forget any slight discomfort."

"Pardon me, Señor; but by this daylight I should have seen that armour before."

"I doubt it not, Señor, as having been yourself also in the forefront of the battle," said the Spaniard with a proud smile.

"If I am right, Señor, you are he who yesterday held up the standard after it was shot down."

"I do not deny that undeserved honour; and I have to thank the courtesy of you and your countrymen for having permitted me to do so with impunity."

"Ah, I heard of that brave feat," said the Lord Deputy. "You should consider yourself, Mr. Leigh, honoured by being enabled to show courtesy to such a warrior."

How long this interchange of solemn compliments, of which Amyas was getting somewhat weary, would have gone on, I know not: but at that moment Raleigh entered hastily——

"My lord, they have hung out a white flag, and are calling for a parley!"

The Spaniard turned pale, and felt for his sword, which was gone; and then, with a bitter laugh, murmured to himself, "As I expected."

"I am very sorry to hear it. Would to Heaven they had simply fought it out!" said Lord Grey, half to himself; and then, "Go, Captain Raleigh, and answer them that (saving this gentleman's presence) the laws of war forbid a parley with any who are leagued with rebels against their lawful sovereign."

"But what if they wish to treat for this gentleman's ransom?"

"For their own, more likely," said the Spaniard; "but tell them, on my part, Señor, that Don Guzman refuses to be ransomed, and will return to no camp where the commanding officer, unable to infect his captains with his own cowardice, dishonours them against their will."

"You speak sharply, Señor," said Winter, after Raleigh had gone out.

"I have reason, Señor Admiral, as you will find, I fear, ere long."

"We shall have the honour of leaving you here for the present, sir, as Admiral Winter's guest," said the Lord Deputy.

"But not my sword, it seems."

"Pardon me, Señor; but no one has deprived you of your sword," said Winter.

"I don't wish to pain you, sir," said Amyas, "but I fear that we were both careless enough to leave it behind last night."

A flash passed over the Spaniard's face, which disclosed terrible depths of fury and hatred beneath that quiet mask, as the summer lightning displays the black abysses of the thunder-storm; but like the summer lightning it passed almost unseen; and blandly as ever, he answered:

"I can forgive you for such a neglect, most valiant sir, more easily than I can forgive myself. Farewell, sir! One who has lost his sword is no fit company for you." And as Amyas and the rest departed he plunged into the inner tent, stamping and writhing, gnawing his hands with rage and shame.

As Amyas came out on the battery, Yeo hailed him:

"Master Amyas! Hillo, sir! For the love of Heaven tell me!"

"What then?"

"Is his Lordship stanch? Will he do the Lord's work faithfully, root and branch: or will he spare the Amalekites?"

"The latter I think, old hip-and-thigh," said Amyas, hurrying forward to hear the news from Raleigh, who appeared in sight once more.

"They ask to depart with bag and baggage," said he, when he came up.

"God do so to me, and more also, if they carry away a straw!" said Lord Grey. "Make short work of it, sir!"

"I do not know how that will be, my lord; as I came up a captain shouted to me off the walls that they were mutineers; and, denying that he surrendered, would have pulled down the flag of truce, but the soldiers beat him off."

"A house divided against itself will not stand long, gentlemen. Tell them that I give no conditions. Let them lay down their arms, and trust in the Bishop of Rome who sent them hither, and may come to save them if he wants them. Gunners, if you see the white flag go down, open your fire instantly. Captain Raleigh, we need your counsel here. Mr. Cary, will you be my herald this time?"

"A better Protestant never went on a pleasanter errand, my lord."

So Cary went, and then ensued an argument, as to what should be done with the prisoners in case of a surrender.

I cannot tell whether my Lord Grey meant, by offering conditions which the Spaniards would not accept, to force them into fighting the quarrel out, and so save himself the responsibility of deciding on their fate; or whether his mere natural stubbornness, as well as his just indignation, drove him on too far to retract: but the council of war which followed was both a sad and a stormy one, and one which he had reason to regret to his dying day. What was to be done with the enemy? They already outnumbered the English; and some fifteen hundred of Desmond's wild Irish hovered in the forests round, ready to side with the winning party, or even to attack the English at the least sign of vacillation or fear. They could not carry the Spaniards away with them, for they had neither shipping nor food, not even handcuffs enough for them; and as Mackworth told Winter when he proposed it, the only plan was for him to make San Josepha a present of his ships, and swim home himself as he could. To turn loose in Ireland, as Captain Touch urged, on the other hand, seven hundred such monsters of lawlessness, cruelty, and lust, as Spanish and Italian condottieri were in those days, was as fatal to their own safety as cruel to the wretched Irish. All

the captains, without exception, followed on the same side. "What was to be done, then?" asked Lord Grey impatiently. "Would they have him murder them all in cold blood?"

And for a while every man hesitated, knowing that it must come to that, and yet not daring to say it, till Sir Warham St. Leger, the Marshal of Munster, spoke out stoutly: "Foreigners had been scoffing them too long and too truly with waging these Irish wars as if they meant to keep them alive, rather than end them. Mercy and faith to every Irishman who would show mercy and faith, was his motto; but to invaders, no mercy. Ireland was England's vulnerable point; it might be some day her ruin; a terrible example must be made of those who dare to touch the sore. Rather pardon the Spaniards for landing in the Thames than in Ireland!"—till Lord Grey became much excited, and turning as a last hope to Raleigh, asked his opinion: but Raleigh's silver tongue was that day not on the side of indulgence. He skillfully recapitulated the arguments of his fellow-captains, improving them as he went on, till each worthy soldier was surprised to find himself so much wiser a man than he had thought; and finished by one of his rapid and passionate perorations upon his favourite theme—the West Indian cruelties of the Spaniards, ". . . by which great tracts and fair countries are now utterly stripped of inhabitants by heavy bondage and torments unspeakable. Shall we then answer it, my lord, either to our conscience, our God, or our Queen, if we shall set loose men (not one of whom, I warrant, but is stained with murder on murder) to go and fill up the cup of their iniquity among these silly sheep? Have not their native wolves, their barbarous chieftains, shorn, peeled, and slaughtered them enough already, but we must add this pack of foreign wolves to the number of their tormentors, and fit the Desmond with a bodyguard of seven, yea, seven hundred devils worse than himself? Nay, rather let us do violence to our own human nature, and show ourselves in appearance rigorous, that we may be kind indeed; lest while we presume to be over-merciful to the guilty, we prove ourselves to be over-cruel to the innocent."

"Captain Raleigh, Captain Raleigh," said Lord Grey, "the blood of these men be on your head!"

"It ill befits your Lordship," answered Raleigh, "to throw on your subordinates the blame of that which your reason approves as necessary."

"I should have thought, sir, that one so noted for ambition

as Captain Raleigh would have been more careful of the favour of that Queen for whose smiles he is said to be so longing a competitor. If you have not yet been of her counsels, sir, I can tell you you are not likely to be. She will be furious when she hears of this cruelty."

Lord Grey had lost his temper; but Raleigh kept his, and answered quietly:

"Her Majesty shall at least not find me among the number of those who prefer her favour to her safety, and abuse to their own profit that over-tenderness and mercifulness of heart which is the only blemish (and yet, rather like a mole on a fair cheek, but a new beauty) in her manifold perfections."

At this juncture Cary returned.

"My lord," said he in some confusion, "I have proposed your terms; but the captains still entreat for some mitigation; and, to tell you truth, one of them has insisted on accompanying me hither to plead his cause himself."

"I will not see him, sir. Who is he?"

"His name is Sebastian of Modena, my lord."

"Sebastian of Modena? What think you, gentlemen? May we make an exception in favour of so famous a soldier?"

"So villainous a cut-throat," said Zouch to Raleigh under his breath.

All, however, were for speaking with so famous a man; and in came, in full armour, a short, bull-necked Italian, evidently of immense strength, of the true Cæsar Borgia stamp.

"Will you please to be seated, sir," said Lord Grey coldly.

"I kiss your hands, most illustrious; but I do not sit in an enemy's camp. Ha, my friend Zouch! How has your Signoria fared since we fought side by side at Lepanto? So you, too, are here, sitting in council on the hanging of me."

"What is your errand, sir? Time is short," said the Lord Deputy.

"Corpo di Bacco! It has been long enough all the morning, for my rascals have kept me and my friend the Colonel Hercules (whom you know, doubtless) prisoners in our tents at the pike's point. My Lord Deputy, I have but a few words. I shall thank you to take every soldier in the fort—Italian, Spaniard, and Irish—and hang them up as high as Haman, for a set of mutinous cowards, with the arch-traitor San Josepho at their head."

"I am obliged to you for your offer, sir, and shall deliberate presently as to whether I shall not accept it."

"But as for us captains, really your Excellency must consider that we are gentlemen born, and give us either buena guerra, as the Spaniards say, or a fair chance for life; and so to my business."

"Stay, sir. Answer this first. Have you or yours any commission to show either from the King of Spain or any other potentate?"

"Never a one but the cause of Heaven and our own swords. And with them, my lord, we are ready to meet any gentlemen of your camp, man to man, with our swords only, half-way between your leaguer and ours; and I doubt not that your Lordship will see fair play. Will any gentleman accept so civil an offer? There sits a tall youth in that corner who would suit me very well. Will any fit my gallant comrades with half an hour's punto and stoccado?"

There was a silence, all looking at the Lord Deputy, whose eyes were kindling in a very ugly way.

"No answer? Then I must proceed to exhortation. So! Will that be sufficient?"

And walking composedly across the tent, the fearless ruffian quietly stooped down, and smote Amyas Leigh full in the face.

Up sprang Amyas, heedless of all the august assembly, and with a single buffet felled him to the earth.

"Excellent!" said he, rising unabashed. "I can always trust my instinct. I knew the moment I saw him that he was a cavalier worth letting blood. Now, sir, your sword and harness, and I am at your service outside!"

The solemn and sententious Englishmen were altogether taken aback by the Italian's impudence; but Zouch settled the matter.

"Most noble Captain, will you be pleased to recollect a certain little occurrence at Messina, in the year 1575? For if you do not, I do; and beg to inform this gentleman that you are unworthy of his sword, and had you, unluckily for you, been an Englishman, would have found the fashions of our country so different from your own that you would have been then hanged, sir, and probably may be so still."

The Italian's sword flashed out in a moment, but Lord Grey interfered.

"No fighting here, gentlemen. That may wait; and, what is more, shall wait till—— Strike their swords down, Raleigh, Mackworth! Strike their swords down! Colonel Sebastian, you will be pleased to return as you came, in safety, having

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lost nothing, as (I frankly tell you) you have gained nothing, by your wild bearing here. We shall proceed to deliberate on your fate."

"I trust, my lord," said Amyas, "that you will spare this braggart's life, at least for a day or two. For in spite of Captain Zouch's warning, I must have to do with him yet, or my cheek will rise up in judgment against me at the last day."

"Well spoken, lad," said the Colonel as he swung out. "So! worth a reprieve by this sword, to have one more rapier-rattle before the gallows! Then I take back no further answer, my Lord Deputy? Not even our swords, our virgin blades, signor, the soldier's cherished bride? Shall we go forth weeping widowers, and leave to strange embrace the lovely steel?"

"None, sir, by heaven!" said he, waxing wroth. "Do you come hither, pirates as you are, to dictate terms upon a foreign soil? Is it not enough to have set up here the Spanish flag, and claimed the land of Ireland as the Pope's gift to the Spaniard; violated the laws of nations, and the solemn treaties of princes, under colour of a mad superstition?"

"Superstition, my lord? Nothing less. Believe a philosopher who has not said a pater or an ave for seven years past at least. *Quod tango credo*, is my motto; and though I am bound to say, under pain of the Inquisition, that the most holy Father the Pope has given this land of Ireland to his most Catholic Majesty the King of Spain, Queen Elizabeth having forfeited her title to it by heresy,—why, my lord, I believe it as little as you do. I believe that Ireland would have been mine, if I had won it; I believe religiously that it is not mine, now I have lost it. What is, is, and a fig for priests; to-day to thee, to-morrow to me. Addio,"—and out he swung.

"There goes a most gallant rascal," said the Lord Deputy.

"And a most rascally gallant," said Zouch. "The murder of his own page, of which I gave him a remembrancer, is among the least of his sins."

"And now, Captain Raleigh," said Lord Grey, "as you have been so earnest in preaching this butchery, I have a right to ask none but you to practise it."

Raleigh bit his lip, and replied by the "quip courteous,"—

"I am at least a man, my lord, who thinks it shame to allow others to do that which I dare not do myself."

Lord Grey might probably have returned "the countercheck quarrelsome," had not Mackworth risen—

"And I, my lord, being in that matter at least one of Captain Raleigh's kidney, will just go with him to see that he takes no harm by being bold enough to carry out an ugly business, and serving these rascals as their countrymen served Mr. Oxenham."

"I bid you good morning, then, gentlemen, though I cannot bid you God speed," said Lord Grey; and sitting down again, covered his face with his hands, and, to the astonishment of all bystanders, burst, say the chroniclers, into tears.

Amyas followed Raleigh out. The latter was pale, but determined, and very wroth against the Deputy.

"Does the man take me for a hangman," said he, "that he speaks to me thus? But such is the way of the great. If you neglect your duty, they haul you over the coals; if you do it, you must do it on your own responsibility. Farewell, Amyas; you will not shrink from me as a butcher when I return?"

"God forbid! But how will you do it?"

"March one company in, and drive them forth, and let the other cut them down as they come out.—Pah!"

* * * * *

It was done. Right or wrong, it was done. The shrieks and curses had died away, and the Fort del Oro was a red shambles, which the soldiers were trying to cover from the sight of heaven and earth, by dragging the bodies into the ditch, and covering them with the ruins of the rampart; while the Irish, who had beheld from the woods that awful warning, fled trembling into the deepest recesses of the forest. It was done; and it never needed to be done again. The hint was severe, but it was sufficient.

—CHARLES KINGSLEY, *Westward Ho!*

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XV

How the Good King Tried to Mend a Bad Business

RICHIE MONIPLIES, servant to my Lord Glenvarloch, stood on Tower Wharf. After looking with contempt on several scullers by whom he was plied, and whose services he rejected with a wave of his hand, he called with dignity, "First oars!" and stirred into activity several lounging Tritons of the higher order, who had not, on his first appearance, thought it worth while to accost him with proffers of service. He now took possession of a wherry, folded his arms within his ample cloak, and sitting down in the stern with an air of importance, commanded them to row to Whitehall Stairs. Having reached the palace in safety, he demanded to see Master Linklater, the under-clerk of his Majesty's kitchen. The reply was, that he was not to be spoken withal, being then employed in cooking a mess of cock-a-leekie for the King's own mouth.

"Tell him," said Moniplies, "that it is a dear countryman of his, who seeks to converse with him on matter of high import."

"A dear countryman?" said Linklater, when this pressing message was delivered to him. "Well, let him come in and be d——d, that I should say sae! This now is some red-headed, long-legged, gillie-white-foot frae the West Port, that, hearing of my promotion, is come up to be a turn-broche, or deputy scullion, through my interest. It is a great hindrance to any man who would rise in the world, to have such friends to hang by his skirts, in hope of being towed up along with him.—Ha! Richie Moniplies, man, is it thou? And what has brought ye here? If they should ken thee for the loon that scared the horse the other day!——"

"No more o' that, neighbour," said Richie,—"I am just here on the auld errand—I maun speak with the King."

"The King? Ye are red wud," said Linklater; then shouted to his assistants in the kitchen, "*Look to the broches, ye knaves—pisces purga; salsamenta fac macerentur pulchre.* I will make you understand Latin, ye knaves, as becomes the scullions of King James." Then in a cautious tone, to Richie's private ear, he continued, "Know ye not how ill your master came off the other day? I can tell you that job made some folk shake for their office."

"Weel, but, Laurie, ye maun befriend me this time, and get this wee bit siffication slipped into his Majesty's ain most gracious hand. I promise you the contents will be most grateful to him."

"Richie," answered Linklater, "you have certainly sworn to say your prayers in the porter's lodge, with your back bare; and twa grooms, with dog-whips, to cry amen to you."

"Na, na, Laurie, lad," said Richie, "I ken better what belangs to siffications than I did yon day; and ye will say that yourself, if ye will but get that bit note to the King's hand."

"I will have neither hand nor foot in the matter," said the cautious Clerk of the Kitchen; "but there is his Majesty's mess of cock-a-leekie just going to be served to him in his closet. I cannot prevent you from putting the letter between the gilt bowl and the platter; his sacred Majesty will see it when he lifts the bowl, for he aye drinks out the broth."

"Enough said," replied Richie, and deposited the paper accordingly, just before a page entered to carry away the mess to his Majesty.

"Aweel, aweel, neighbour," said Laurence, when the mess was taken away, "if ye have done ony thing to bring yoursell to the withy, or the scourging-post, it is your ain wilful deed."

"I will blame no other for it," said Richie; and with that undismayed pertinacity of conceit, which made a fundamental part of his character, he abode the issue, which was not long of arriving.

In a few minutes Maxwell himself arrived in the apartment, and demanded hastily who had placed a writing on the King's trencher. Linklater denied all knowledge of it; but Richie Moniplies, stepping boldly forth, pronounced the emphatical confession, "I am the man."

"Follow me, then," said Maxwell, after regarding him with a look of great curiosity.

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case, the privilege of which at court is accounted a nearer road to power than the *grandes entrées* themselves. Arriving in what Richie described as an "ill redd-up" anteroom, the usher made a sign to him to stop, while he went into the King's closet. Their conference was short, and as Maxwell opened the door to retire, Richie heard the conclusion of it.

"Ye are sure he is not dangerous?—I was caught once.—Bide within call, but not nearer the door than within three geometrical cubits. If I speak loud, start to me like a falcon; if I speak loun, keep your lang lugs out of earshot—and now let him come in."

Richie passed forward at Maxwell's mute signal, and in a moment found himself in the presence of the King. Most men of Richie's birth and breeding, and many others, would have been abashed at finding themselves alone with their Sovereign. But Richie Moniplies had an opinion of himself too high to be controlled by any such ideas; and having made his stiff reverence, he arose once more into his perpendicular height, and stood before James as stiff as a hedge-stake.

"Have ye gotten them, man? have ye gotten them?" said the King in a fluttered state, betwixt hope and eagerness, and some touch of suspicious fear. "Gie me them—gie me them—before ye speak a word, I charge you, on your allegiance."

Richie took a box from his bosom, and, stooping on one knee, presented it to his Majesty, who hastily opened it, and having ascertained that it contained a certain carcanet of rubies, he could not resist falling into a sort of rapture, kissing the gems, as if they had been capable of feeling, and repeating again and again with childish delight, "*Onyx cum prole, silex-que! Onyx cum prole!* Ah, my bright and bonny sparkiers, my heart louns light to see you again." He then turned to Richie, upon whose stoical countenance his Majesty's demeanour had excited something like a grim smile, which James interrupted his rejoicing to reprehend, saying, "Take heed, sir, you are not to laugh at us—we are your anointed Sovereign."

"God forbid that I should laugh!" said Richie, composing his countenance into its natural rigidity. "I did but smile, to bring my visage into coincidence and conformity with your Majesty's physiognomy."

"Ye speak as a dutiful subject, and an honest man," said the King; "but what deil's your name, man?"

"Even Richie Moniplies, the son of auld Mungo Moniplies, at the West Port of Edinburgh, who had the honour to supply your Majesty's mother's royal table, as weel as your Majesty's, with flesh and other vivers, when time was."

"Aha!" said the King, laughing,—for he possessed, as a useful attribute of his situation, a tenacious memory, which recollected every one with whom he was brought into casual contact,— "ye are the selfsame traitor who had weel-nigh coupit us endlang on the causey of our ain courtyard? but we stuck by our mare. *Equam memento rebus in arduis servare*. Weel, be not dismayed, Richie; for, as many men have turned traitors, it is but fair that a traitor, now and then, suld prove to be, *contra expectanda*, a true man. How cam ye by our jewels, man?—cam ye on the part of George Heriot?"

"In no sort," said Richie. "May it please your Majesty, I come as Harry Wynd fought, uttérly for my own hand, and on no man's errand; as, indeed, I call no one master, save Him that made me, your most gracious Majesty who governs me, and the noble Nigel Olifaunt, Lord of Glenvarloch, who maintained me as lang as he could maintain himself, poor nobleman!"

"Glenvarlochides again!" exclaimed the King; "by my honour, he lies in ambush for us at every corner!—Maxwell knocks at the door. It is George Heriot come to tell us he cannot find these jewels.—Get thee behind the arras, Richie!—stand close, man—sneeze not—cough not—breathe not!—Jingling Geordie is so damnably ready with his goldends of wisdom, and sae accursedly backward with his goldends of siller, that, by our royal saul, we are glad to get a hair in his neck."

Richie got behind the arras, in obedience to the commands of the good-natured King, while the Monarch, who never allowed his dignity to stand in the way of a frolic, having adjusted, with his own hand, the tapestry, so as to complete the ambush, commanded Maxwell to tell him what was the matter without. Maxwell's reply was so low as to be lost by Richie Moniplies, the peculiarity of whose situation by no means abated his curiosity and desire to gratify it to the uttermost.

"Let Geordie Heriot come in," said the King; and, as Richie could observe through a slit in the tapestry, the honest citizen, if not actually agitated, was at least discomposed. The

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King, whose talent for wit, or humour, was precisely of a kind to be gratified by such a scene as ensued, received his homage with coldness, and began to talk to him with an air of serious dignity, very different from the usual indecorous levity of his behaviour. "Master Heriot," he said, "if we aright remember, we opignorated in your hands certain jewels of the Crown, for a certain sum of money—Did we, or did we not?"

"My most gracious Sovereign," said Heriot, "indisputably your Majesty was pleased to do so."

"The property of which jewels and *cinelia* remained with us," continued the King, in the same solemn tone, "subject only to your claim of advance thereupon; which advance being repaid, gives us right to repossession of the thing opignorated, or pledged, or laid in wad. Voetius, Vinnius, Groenwigeneus, Pagenstecherus,—all who have treated *de Contractu Opignorationis*,—*consentiunt in eundem*,—agree on the same point. The Roman law, the English common law, and the municipal law of our ain ancient kingdom of Scotland, though they split in mair particulars than I could desire, unite as strictly in this as the three strands of a twisted rope."

"May it please your Majesty," replied Heriot, "it requires not so many learned authorities to prove to any honest man, that his interest in a pledge is determined when the money lent is restored."

"Weel, sir, I proffer restoration of the sum lent, and I demand to be repossessed of the jewels pledged with you. I gave ye a hint, brief while since, that this would be essential to my service, for, as approaching events are like to call us into public, it would seem strange if we did not appear with those ornaments, which are heirlooms of the crown, and the absence whereof is like to place us in contempt and suspicion with our liege subjects."

Master George Heriot seemed much moved by this address of his Sovereign, and replied with emotion, "I call Heaven to witness, that I am totally harmless in this matter, and that I would willingly lose the sum advanced, so that I could restore those jewels, the absence of which your Majesty so justly laments. Had the jewels remained with me, the account of them would be easily rendered; but your Majesty will do me the justice to remember, that, by your express order, I transferred them to another person, who advanced a large sum, just about the time of my departure for Paris. The money was pressingly wanted, and no other means to come by it occurred

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to me. I told your Majesty, when I brought the needful supply, that the man from whom the moneys were obtained was of no good repute ; and your most princely answer was, smelling to the gold—*Non olet*, it smells not of the means that have gotten it."

"Weel, man," said the King, "but what needs a' this din? If ye gave my jewels in pledge to such a one, suld ye not, as a liege subject, have taken care that the redemption was in our power? And are we to suffer the loss of our *cimelia* by your neglect, besides being exposed to the scorn and censure of our lieges, and of the foreign ambassadors?"

"My Lord and liege King," said Heriot, "Gods knows, if my bearing blame or shame in this matter would keep it from your Majesty, it were my duty to endure both, as a servant grateful for many benefits ; but when your Majesty considers the violent death of the man himself, the disappearance of his daughter, and of his wealth, I trust you will remember that I warned your Majesty, in humble duty, of the possibility of such casualties, and prayed you not to urge me to deal with him on your behalf."

"But you brought me nae better means," said the King—"Geordie, ye brought me nae better means. I was like a deserted man ; what could I do but grip to the first siller that offered, as a drowning man grasps to the willow wand that comes readiest? And now, man, what for have ye not brought back the jewels? they are surely above ground, if ye wad make strict search."

"All strict search has been made, may it please your Majesty," replied the citizen ; "hue and cry has been sent out everywhere, and it has been found impossible to recover them."

"Difficult, ye mean, Geordie, not impossible," replied the King ; "for that whilk is impossible, is either naturally so, *exempli gratiâ*, to make two into three ; or morally so, as to make what is truth falsehood ; but what is only difficult may come to pass, with assistance of wisdom and patience ; as, for example, Jingling Geordie, look here !" And he displayed the recovered treasure to the eyes of the astonished jeweller, exclaiming, with great triumph, "What say ye to that, Jingler? By my sceptre and crown, the man stares as if he took his native prince for a warlock ! us that are the very *malleus maleficarum*, the contunding and contritulating hammer of all witches, sorcerers, magicians, and the like ; he thinks we are taking a touch of the black art ourselfs ! But gang thy way,

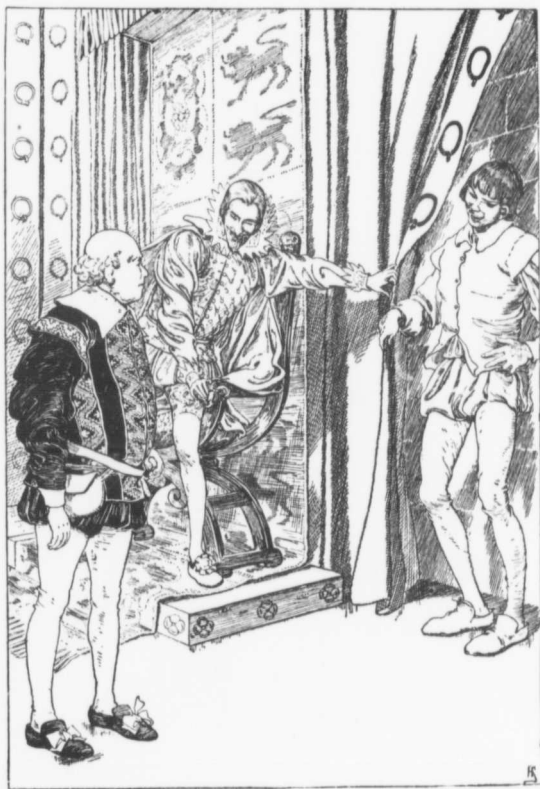
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"Todlowrie, come out o' your den."

honest Geordie ; thou art a good plain man, but nane of the seven sages of Greece ; gang thy way, and mind the soothfast word which you spoke, small time syne, that there is one in this land that comes near to Solomon, King of Israel, in all his gifts, except in his love to strange women, forby the daughter of Pharaoh."

If Heriot was surprised at seeing the jewels so unexpectedly produced at the moment the King was upbraiding him for the loss of them, this allusion to the reflection which had escaped him while conversing with Lord Glenvarloch, altogether completed his astonishment ; and the King was so delighted with the superiority which it gave him at the moment, that he rubbed his hands, chuckled, and, finally, his sense of dignity giving way to the full feeling of triumph, he threw himself into his easy chair, and laughed with unconstrained violence till he lost his breath, and the tears ran plentifully down his cheeks as he strove to recover it. Meanwhile, the royal cachinnation was echoed out by a discordant and portentous laugh from behind the arras, like that of one who, little accustomed to give way to such emotions, feels himself at some particular impulse unable either to control or to modify his obstreperous mirth. Heriot turned his head with new surprise towards the place, from which sounds so unfitting the presence of a monarch seemed to burst with such emphatic clamour.

The King, too, somewhat sensible of the indecorum, rose up, wiped his eyes, and calling, "Todlowrie, come out o' your den," he produced from behind the arras the length of Richie Moniplies, still laughing with as unrestrained mirth as ever did gossip at a country christening. "Whisht, man, whisht, man," said the King ; "ye needna nicher that gait, like a cusser at a caup o' corn, e'en though it was a pleasing jest, and our ain framing. And yet to see Jingling Geordie, that hauds himself so much the wiser than other folk—to see him, ha ! ha ! ha !—in the vein of Euclio apud Plautum, distressing himself to recover what was lying at his elbow—

'Perii, interii, occidi—quo curram ? quo non curram ?—
'Tene, tene—quem ? quis ? nescio—nihil video.'

Ah ! Geordie, you een are sharp enough to look after gowd and silver, gems, rubies, and the like of that, and yet ye kenna how to come by them when they are lost.—Ay, ay—look at them, man—look at them—they are a' right and tight, sound and round, not a doublet crept in amongst them."

George Heriot, when his first surprise was over, was too old a courtier to interrupt the King's imaginary triumph, although he darted a look of some displeasure at honest Richie, who still continued on what is usually termed the broad grin. He quietly examined the stones, and finding them all perfect, he honestly and sincerely congratulated his Majesty on the recovery of a treasure which could not have been lost without some dishonour to the crown; and asked to whom he himself was to pay the sums for which they had been pledged, observing, that he had the money by him in readiness.

"Ye are in a deevil of a hurry, when there is paying in the case, Geordie," said the King.—"What's a' the haste, man? The jewels were restored by an honest, kindly countryman of ours. There he stands, and wha kens if he wants the money on the nail, or if he might not be as weel pleased wi' a bit rescript on our treasury some six months hence? Ye ken that our Exchequer is even at a low ebb just now, and ye cry pay, pay, pay, as if we had all the mines of Ophir."

"Please your Majesty," said Heriot, "if this man has the real right to these moneys, it is doubtless at his will to grant forbearance, if he will. But when I remember the guise in which I first saw him, with a tattered cloak and a broken head, I can hardly conceive.—Are not you Richie Moniplies, with the King's favour?"

"Even sae, Master Heriot—of the ancient and honourable house of Castle Collop, near to the West Port of Edinburgh," answered Richie.

"Why, please your Majesty, he is a poor serving-man," said Heriot. "This money can never be honestly at his disposal."

"What for no?" said the King. "Wad ye have naeboddy sprackie up the brae but yoursell, Geordie? Your ain cloak was thin enough when ye cam here, though ye have lined it gay and weel. And for serving-men, there has mony a red-shank come over the Tweed wi' his master's wallet on his shoulders, that now rustles it wi' his six followers behind him. There stands the man himsell; speer at him, Geordie."

"His may not be the best authority in the case," answered the cautious citizen.

"Tut, tut, man," said the King, "ye are over scrupulous. The knave deer-stealers have an apt phrase, *Non est inquirendum unde venit* VENISON. He that brings the gudes hath surely a right to dispose of the gear.—Hark ye, friend, speak

the truth and shame the deil. Have ye plenary powers to dispose on the redemption-money as to delay of payments, or the like, ay or no?"

"Full power, an it like your gracious Majesty," answered Richie Moniplies; "and I am maist willing to subscribe to whatsoever may in any wise accommodate your Majesty anent the redemption-money, trusting your Majesty's grace will be kind to me in one sma' favour."

"Ey, man," said the King, "come ye to me there? I thought ye wad e'en be like the rest of them.—One would think our subjects' lives and goods were all our ain, and holden of us at our free will; but when we stand in need of ony matter of siller from them, which chances more frequently than we would it did, deil a boddle is to be had, save on the auld terms of giff-gaff. It is just niffer for niffer.—Aweel, neighbour, what is it that ye want—some monopoly, I reckon? Or it may be a grant of kirklands and teinds, or a knighthood, or the like? Ye maun be reasonable, unless ye propose to advance more money for our present occasions."

"My liege," answered Richie Moniplies, "the owner of these moneys places them at your Majesty's command, free of all pledge or usage as long as it is your royal pleasure, providing your Majesty will condescend to show some favour to the noble Lord Glenvarloch, presently prisoner in your royal Tower of London."

"How, man—how, man—how, man!" exclaimed the King, reddening and stammering, but with emotions more noble than those by which he was sometimes agitated—"What is that you dare to say to us?—Sell our justice!—sell our mercy!—and we a crowned King, sworn to do justice to our subjects in the gate, and responsible for our stewardship to Him that is over all kings?"—Here he reverently looked up, touched his bonnet, and continued, with some sharpness, "We dare not traffic in such commodities, sir; and, but that ye are a poor ignorant creature, that have done us this day some not unpleasant service, we wad have a red iron driven through your tongue, *in terrorem* of others.—Awa with him, Geordie,—pay him, plack and bawbee, out of our moneys in your hands, and let them care that come ahint."

Richie, who had counted with the utmost certainty upon the success of this master-stroke of policy, was like an architect whose whole scaffolding at once gives way under him. He caught, however, at what he thought might break his fall.

"Not only the sum for which the jewels were pledged," he said, "but the double of it, if required, should be placed at, his Majesty's command, and even without hope or condition of repayment, if only——"

But the King did not allow him to complete the sentence, crying out with greater vehemence than before, as if he dreaded the stability of his own good resolutions, "Awa wi' him—swith awa wi' him! It is time he were gane, if he doubles his bow that gate. And, for your life, letna Steenie, or any of them hear a word from his mouth; for wha kens what trouble that might bring me into! *Ne inducas in tentationem. Vade retro, Sathanas!*—Amen."

In obedience to the royal mandate, George Heriot hurried the abashed petitioner out of the presence and out of the palace; and, when they were in the palace yard, the citizen, remembering with some resentment the airs of equality which Richie had assumed towards him in the commencement of the scene which had just taken place, could not forbear to retaliate, by congratulating him with an ironical smile on his favour at court, and his improved grace in presenting a supplication.

"Never fash your beard about that, Master George Heriot," said Richie, totally undismayed; "but tell me when and where I am to sifficate you for eight hundred pounds sterling, for which these jewels stood engaged?"

"The instant that you bring with you the real owner of the money," replied Heriot; "whom it is important that I should see on more accounts than one."

"Then will I back to his Majesty," said Richie Moniplies, stoutly, "and get either the money or the pledge back again. I am fully commisionate to act in that matter."

"It may be so, Richie," said the citizen, "and perchance it may *not* be so neither, for your tales are not all gospel; and, therefore, be assured I will see that it *is* so, ere I pay you that large sum of money. I shall give you an acknowledgment for it, and I will keep it prestable at a moment's warning. But, my good Richard Moniplies, of Castle Collop, near the West Port of Edinburgh, in the meantime I am bound to return to his Majesty on matters of weight." So speaking, and mounting the stair to re-enter the palace, he added, by way of summing up the whole, "George Heriot is over old a cock to be caught with chaff."

Richie stood petrified when he beheld him re-enter the palace, and found himself, as he supposed, left in the lurch.

"Now, plague on ye," he muttered, "for a cunning auld skin-flint! that, because ye are an honest man yourself, forsooth, must needs deal with all the world as if they were knaves. But deil be in me if ye beat me yet!—Gude guide us! yonder comes Laurie Linklater next, and he will be on me about the sifflication. I winna stand him, by Saint Andrew!"

So saying, and changing the haughty stride with which he had that morning entered the precincts of the palace into a skulking shamble, he retreated for his wherry, which was in attendance, with speed which, to use the approved phrase on such occasions, greatly resembled a flight.

Master George Heriot had no sooner returned to the King's apartment, than James enquired of Maxwell if the Erl of Huntinglen was in attendance, and, receiving an answer in the affirmative, desired that he should be admitted. The old Scottish lord having made his reverence in the usual manner, the King extended his hand to be kissed, and then began to address him in a tone of great sympathy.

"We told your Lordship in our secret epistle of this morning, written with our ain hand, in testimony we have neither pretermitted nor forgotten your faithful service, that we had that to communicate to you that would require both patience and fortitude to endure, and therefore exhorted you to peruse some of the most pithy passages of Seneca and of Boethius *de Consolatione*, that the back may be, as we say, fitted for the burden. This we commend to you from our ain experience.

'Non ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco,'

sayeth Dido, and I might say in my own person, *non ignarus*; but to change the gender would affect the prosody, whereof our southern subjects are tenacious. So, my Lord of Huntinglen, I trust you have acted by our advice, and studied patience before ye need it—*venienti occurrere morbo*—mix the medication when the disease is coming on."

"May it please your Majesty," answered Lord Huntinglen, "I am more of an old soldier than a scholar; and if my own rough nature will not bear me out in any calamity, I hope I shall have grace to try a text of Scripture to boot."

"Ay, man, are you there with your bears?" said the King; "the Bible, man," (touching his cap,) "is indeed *principium et fons*—but it is pity your Lordship cannot peruse it in the original. For although we did ourselves promote that work of translation,—since ye may read, at the beginning

of every Bible, that when so palpable clouds of darkness were thought like to have overshadowed the land, after the setting of that bright occidental star, Queen, Elizabeth; yet our appearance, like that of the sun in his strength, instantly dispelled these surmised mists,—I say, that although, as therein mentioned, we countenanced the preaching of the gospel, and especially the translation of the Scriptures out of the original sacred tongues; yet nevertheless, we ourselves confess to have found a comfort in consulting them in the original Hebrew, whilk we do not perceive even in the Latin version of the Septuagint, much less in the English traduction."

"Please your Majesty," said Lord Huntinglen, "if your Majesty delays communicating the bad news with which your honoured letter threatens me, until I am capable to read Hebrew like your Majesty, I fear I shall die in ignorance of the misfortune which hath befallen, or is about to befall, my house."

"You will learn it but too soon, my lord," replied the King. "I grieve to say it, but your son Dalgarno, whom I thought a very saint, as he was so much with Steenie and Baby Charles, hath turned out a very villain."

"Villain!" repeated Lord Huntinglen; and though he instantly checked himself, and added, "but it is your Majesty speaks the word," the effect of his first tone made the King step back as if he had received a blow. He also recovered himself again, and said in the pettish way which usually indicated his displeasure—"Yes, my lord, it was we that said it—*non surdo canis*—we are not deaf—we pray you not to raise your voice in speech with us—there is the bonny memorial—read, and judge for yourself."

The King then thrust into the old nobleman's hand a paper, containing the story of the Lady Hermione Pauletti, with the evidence by which it was supported, detailed so briefly and clearly, that the infamy of Lord Dalgarno, the lover by whom she had been so shamefully deceived, seemed undeniable. But a father yields not up so easily the cause of his son.

"May it please your Majesty," he said, "why was this tale not sooner told? This woman hath been here for years—wherefore was the claim on my son not made the instant she touched English ground?"

"Tell him how that came about, Geordie," said the King, addressing Heriot.

"I grieve to distress my Lord Huntinglen," said Heriot;

"but I must speak the truth. For a long time the Lady Hermione could not brook the idea of making her situation public ; and when her mind became changed in that particular, it was necessary to recover the evidence of the false marriage, and letters and papers connected with it, which, when she came to Paris, and just before I saw her, she had deposited with a correspondent of her father in that city. He became afterwards bankrupt, and in consequence of that misfortune the lady's papers passed into other hands, and it was only a few days since I traced and recovered them. Without these documents of evidence, it would have been imprudent for her to have preferred her complaint, favoured as Lord Dalgarno is by powerful friends."

"Ye are saucy to say sae," said the King ; "I ken what ye mean weel enough—ye think Steenie wad hae putten the weight of his foot into the scales of justice, and garr'd them whomle the bucket ; ye forget, Geordie, wha it is whose hand uphaults them. And ye do poor Steenie the mair wrang, for he confessed it ance before us and our privy council, that Dalgarno would have put the Quean aff on him, the puir simple bairn, making him trow that she was a light-o'-love ; in whilk mind he remained assured even when he parted from her, albeit Steenie might hae weel thought ane of thae cattle wadna hae resisted the like of him."

"The Lady Hermione," said George Heriot, "has always done the utmost justice to the conduct of the Duke, who, although strongly possessed with prejudice against her character, yet scorned to avail himself of her distress, and on the contrary supplied her with the means of extricating herself from her difficulties."

"It was e'en like himsell—blessings on his bonny face !" said the King ; "and I believed this lady's tale the mair readily, my Lord Huntinglen, that she spake nae ill of Steenie ; and to make a lang tale short, my lord, it is the opinion of our council, and ourself, as weel as of Baby Charles and Steenie, that your son maun mend his wrong by wedding this lady, or undergo such disgrace and discountenance as we can bestow."

The person to whom he spoke was incapable of answering him. He stood before the King motionless, and glaring with eyes of which even the lids seemed immovable, as if suddenly converted into an ancient statue of the times of chivalry, so instantly had his hard features and strong limbs been arrested into rigidity by the blow he had received. And in a second

afterwards, like the same statue when the lightning breaks upon it, he sank at once to the ground with a heavy groan. The King was in the utmost alarm, called upon Heriot and Maxwell for help, and, presence of mind not being his *forte*, ran to and fro in his cabinet, exclaiming, "My ancient and beloved servant—who saved our anointed self! *Vae atque dolor!* My Lord of Huntinglen, look up—look up, man, and your son may marry the Queen of Sheba if he will."

By this time Maxwell and Heriot had raised the old nobleman, and placed him on a chair; while the King, observing that he began to recover himself, continued his consolations more methodically.

"Haud up your head—haud up your head, and listen to your ain kind native Prince. If there is shame, man, it comesna empty-handed—there is siller to gild it—a gude tocher, and no that bad a pedigree;—if she has been a loon, it was your son made her sae, and he can make her an honest woman again."

These suggestions, however reasonable in the common case, gave no comfort to Lord Huntinglen, if indeed he fully comprehended them; but the blubbling of his good-natured old master, which began to accompany and interrupt his royal speech, produced more rapid effect. The large tear gushed reluctantly from his eye, as he kissed the withered hands, which the King, weeping with less dignity and restraint, abandoned to him, first alternately and then both together, until the feelings of the man getting entirely the better of the Sovereign's sense of dignity, he grasped and shook Lord Huntinglen's hands with the sympathy of an equal and a familiar friend.

"*Compone lachrymas,*" said the monarch; "be patient, man, be patient;—the council, and Baby Charles, and Steenie, may a' gan to the deevil—he shall not marry her since it moves you so deeply."

"He SHALL marry her, by God!" answered the Earl, drawing himself up, dashing the tear from his eyes, and endeavouring to recover his composure. "I pray your Majesty's pardon, but he shall marry her, with her dishonour for her dowry, were she the veriest courtesan in all Spain. If he gave his word, he shall make his word good, were it to the meanest creature that haunts the streets—he shall do it, or my own dagger shall take the life that I gave him. If he could stoop to use so base a fraud, though to deceive infamy, let him wed infamy."

"No, no!" the Monarch continued to insinuate, "things are not so bad as that—Steenie himself never thought of her being a street walker, even when he thought the worst of her."

"If it can at all console my Lord of Huntinglen," said the citizen, "I can assure him of this lady's good birth, and most fair and unspotted fame."

"I am sorry for it," said Lord Huntinglen—then interrupting himself, he said—"Heaven forgive me for being ungrateful for such comfort!—but I am wellnigh sorry she should be as you represent her, so much better than the villain deserves. To be condemned to wed beauty and innocence and honest birth——"

"Ay, and wealth, my lord—wealth," insinuated the King, "is a better sentence than his perfidy has deserved."

"It is long," said the embittered father, "since I saw he was selfish and hard-hearted; but to be a perjured liar—I never dreaded that such a blot would have fallen on my race! I will never look on him again."

"Hoot ay, my lord, hoot ay," said the King; "ye maun tak him to task roundly. I grant you should speak more in the vein of Demea than Mitio, *vi nempe et via pervulgata patrum*; but as for not seeing him again and he your only son, that is altogether out of reason. I tell ye, man, (but I would not for a boddle that Baby Charles heard me,) that he might gie the glaiks to half the lasses of Lonnun, ere I could find in my heart to speak such harsh words as you have said of this deil of a Dalgarno of yours."

"May it please your Majesty to permit me to retire," said Lord Huntinglen, "and dispose of the case according to your own royal sense of justice, for I desire no favour for him."

"Aweel, my lord, so be it; and if your lordship can think," added the Monarch, "of anything in our power which might comfort you——"

"Your Majesty's gracious sympathy," said Lord Huntinglen, "has already comforted me as far as earth can; the rest must be from the King of kings."

"To Him I commend you, my auld and faithful servant," said James with emotion, as the Earl withdrew from his presence. The King remained fixed in thought for some time, and then said to Heriot, "Jingling Geordie, ye ken all the privy doings of our court, and have dune so these thirty years, though, like a wise man, ye hear, and see, and say

nothing. Now, there is a thing I fain wad ken, in the way of philosophical enquiry—Did you ever hear of the umquhile Lady Huntinglen, the departed Countess of this noble Earl, ganging a wee bit gleed in her walk through the world; I mean in the way of slipping a foot, casting the leglin-girth, or the like, ye understand me?"

"On my word as an honest man," said George Heriot, somewhat surprised at the question, "I never heard her wronged by the slightest breath of suspicion. She was a worthy lady, very circumspect in her walk, and lived in great concord with her husband, save that the good Countess was something of a Puritan, and kept more company with ministers than was altogether agreeable to Lord Huntinglen, who is, as your Majesty well knows, a man of the old rough world, that will drink and swear."

"O Geordie!" exclaimed the King, "these are auld-world frailties, of whilk we dare not pronounce even ourselves absolutely free. But the world grows worse from day to day, Geordie. The juveniles of this age may well say with the poet—

'Ætas parentum, pejor avis, tulit
Nos nequiores.'

This Dalgarno does not drink so much, or swear so much, as his father; but he wenches, Geordie, and he breaks his word and oath baith. As to what you say of the leddy and the ministers, we are a' fallible creatures, Geordie, priests and kings, as weel as others; and wha kens but what that may account for the difference between this Dalgarno and his father? The Earl is the vera soul of honour, and cares nae mair for world's gear than a noble hound for the quest of a foulmart; but as for his son, he was like to brazen us a' out—ourselves, Steenie, Baby Charles, and our council—till he heard of the tocher, and then, by my kingly crown, he lap like a cock at a grossart! These are discrepancies betwixt parent and son not to be accounted for naturally, according to Baptista Porta, Michael Scott *de secretis*, and others.—Ah, Jingling Geordie, if your clouting the caldron, and jingling on pots, pans, and veshels of all manner of metal, hadna jingled a' your grammar out of your head, I could have touched on that matter to you at mair length."

Heriot was too plain-spoken to express much concern for the loss of his grammar learning on this occasion; but after

modestly hinting that he had seen many men who could not fill their father's bonnet, though no one had been suspected of wearing their father's nightcap, he enquired "whether Lord Dalgarno had consented to do the Lady Hermione justice."

"Troth, man, I have small doubt that he will," quoth the King; "I gave him the schedule of her worldly substance, which you delivered to us in the council, and we allowed him half an hour to chew the cud upon that. It is rare reading for bringing him to reason. I left Baby Charles and Steenie laying his duty before him; and if he can resist doing what *they* desire him, why, I wish he would teach *me* the gate of it. O Geordie, Jingling Geordie, it was grand to hear Baby Charles laying down the guilt of dissimulation, and Steenie lecturing on the turpitude of incontinence!"

"I am afraid," said George Heriot, more hastily than prudently, "I might have thought of the old proverb of Satan reproving sin."

"Deil hae our saul, neighbour," said the King, reddening, "but ye are not blate! I gie ye license to speak freely, and, by our saul, ye do not let the privilege become lost *non utendo*—it will suffer no negative prescription in your hands. Is it fit, think ye, that Baby Charles should let his thoughts be publicly seen? No—no—princes' thoughts are *arcana imperii* *Qui nescit dissimulare nescit regnare*. Every liege subject is bound to speak the whole truth to the King, but there is nae reciprocity of obligation; and for Steenie having been whiles a dike-louper at a time, is it for you, who are his goldsmith, and to whom, I doubt, he awes an uncomatable sum, to cast that up to him?"

Heriot did not feel himself called on to play the part of Zeno, and sacrifice himself for upholding the cause of moral truth; he did not desert it, however, by disavowing his words, but simply expressed sorrow for having offended his Majesty, with which the placable King was sufficiently satisfied.

"And now, Geordie, man," quoth he, "we will to this culprit, and hear what he has to say for himself, for I will see the job cleared this blessed day. Ye maun come wi' me, for your evidence may be wanted."

The King led the way, accordingly, into a larger apartment, where the Prince, the Duke of Buckingham, and one or two privy counsellors were seated at a table, before which stood Lord Dalgarno, in an attitude of as much elegant ease and in-

difference as could be expressed, considering the stiff dress and manners of the times.

All rose and bowed reverently, while the King, to use a north-country word, expressive of his mode of locomotion, *toddled* to his chair or throne, making a sign to Heriot to stand behind him.

"We hope," said his Majesty, "that Lord Dalgarno stands prepared to do justice to this unfortunate lady, and to his own character and honour?"

"May I humbly enquire the penalty," said Lord Dalgarno, "in case I should unhappily find compliance with your Majesty's demands impossible?"

"Banishment frae our court, my lord," said the King; "frae our court and our countenance."

"Unhappy exile that I may be!" said Lord Dalgarno, in a tone of subdued irony—"I will at least carry your Majesty's picture with me, for I shall never see such another king."

"And banishment, my lord," said the Prince sternly, "from these our dominions."

"That must be by form of law, please your Royal Highness," said Dalgarno, with an affectation of deep respect; "and I have not heard that there is a statute compelling us, under such penalty, to marry every woman we play the fool with. Perhaps his Grace of Buckingham can tell me?"

"You are a villain, Dalgarno," said the haughty and vehement favourite.

"Fie, my lord, fie!—to a prisoner, and in presence of your royal and paternal gossip!" said Lord Dalgarno. "But I will cut this deliberation short. I have looked over this schedule of the goods and effects of Erminia Pauletti, daughter of the late noble—yes, he is called the noble, or I read wrong—Giovanni Pauletti, of the House of Sansovino, in Genoa, and of the no less noble Lady Maud Olifaunt, of the House of Glenvarloch. Well, I declare that I was pre-contracted in Spain to this noble lady, and there has passed betwixt us some certain *prælibatio matrimonii*; and now, what more does this grave assembly require of me?"

"That you should repair the gross and infamous wrong you have done the lady, by marrying her within this hour," said the Prince.

"O, may it please your Royal Highness," answered Dalgarno, "I have a trifling relationship with an old Earl, who calls himself my father, who may claim some vote in the matter. Alas!

every son is not blessed with an obedient parent!" He hazarded a slight glance towards the throne, to give meaning to his last words.

"We have spoken ourselves with Lord Huntinglen," said the King, "and are authorized to consent in his name."

"I could never have expected this intervention of a *proxaneta*, which the vulgar translate blackfoot, of such eminent dignity," said Dalgarno, scarce concealing a sneer. "And my father hath consented? He was wont to say, ere we left Scotland, that the blood of Huntinglen and of Glenvarloch would not mingle, were they poured into the same basin. Perhaps he has a mind to try the experiment?"

"My lord," said James, "we will not be longer trifled with. Will you instantly, and *sine mora*, take this lady to your wife, in our chapel?"

"*Statim atque instantur*," answered Lord Dalgarno; "for I perceive, by doing so, I shall obtain power to render great services to the commonwealth—I shall have acquired wealth to supply the wants of your Majesty, and a fair wife to be at the command of his Grace of Buckingham."

The Duke rose, passed to the end of the table where Lord Dalgarno was standing, and whispered in his ear, "You have placed a fair sister at my command ere now."

This taunt cut deep through Lord Dalgarno's assumed composure. He started as if an adder had stung him, but instantly composed himself, and, fixing on the Duke's still smiling countenance an eye which spoke unutterable hatred, he pointed the forefinger of his left hand to the hilt of his sword, but in a manner which could scarce be observed by any one save Buckingham. The Duke gave him another smile of bitter scorn, and returned to his seat, in obedience to the commands of the King, who continued calling out, "sit down, Steenie, sit down, I command ye—we will hae nae harns-breaking here."

"Your Majesty needs not fear my patience," said Lord Dalgarno; "and that I may keep it the better, I will not utter another word in this presence, save those enjoined to me in that happy portion of the Prayer Book, which begins with *Dearly Beloved*, and ends with *amazement*."

"You are a hardened villain, Dalgarno," said the King; "and were I the lass, by my father's saul, I would rather brook the stain of having been your concubine than run

the risk of becoming your wife. But she shall be under our special protection.—Come, my lords, we will ourselves see this blithesome bridal." He gave the signal by rising, and moved towards the door, followed by the train. Lord Dalgarno attended, speaking to none, and spoken to by no one, yet seeming as easy and unembarrassed in his gait and manner as if in reality a happy bridegroom.

They reached the chapel by a private entrance, which communicated from the royal apartment. The Bishop of Winchester, in his pontifical dress, stood beside the altar; on the other side, supported by Monna Paula, the colourless, faded, half-lifeless form of the Lady Hermione, or Erminia Pauletti. Lord Dalgarno bowed profoundly to her, and the Prince, observing the horror with which she regarded him, walked up, and said to her, with much dignity, "Madam, ere you put yourself under authority of this man, let me inform you, he hath in the fullest degree vindicated your honour, so far as concerns your former intercourse. It is for you to consider whether you will put your fortune and happiness into the hands of one, who has shown himself unworthy of all trust."

The lady, with much difficulty, found words to make reply. "I owe to his Majesty's goodness," she said, "the care of providing me some reservation out of my own fortune for my decent sustenance. The rest cannot be better disposed than in buying back the fair fame of which I am deprived, and the liberty of ending my life in peace and seclusion."

"The contract has been drawn up," said the King, "under our own eye, especially discharging the *potestas maritalis*, and agreeing they shall live separate. So buckle them, my Lord Bishop, as fast as you can, that they may sunder again the sooner."

The Bishop accordingly opened his book and commenced the marriage ceremony, under circumstances so novel and so inauspicious. The responses of the bride were only expressed by inclinations of the head and body: while those of the bridegroom were spoken boldly and distinctly, with a tone resembling levity, if not scorn. When it was concluded, Lord Dalgarno advanced as if to salute the bride, but seeing that she drew back in fear and abhorrence, he contented himself with making her a low bow. He then drew up his form to its height, and stretched himself as if examining the power of his limbs, but elegantly, and without any forcible change of attitude. "I could caper yet," he said, "though I am in fetters—

but they are of gold, and lightly worn.—Well, I see all eyes look cold on me, and it is time I should withdraw. The sun shines elsewhere than in England! But first I must ask how this fair Lady Dalgarno is to be bestowed. Methinks it is but decent I should know. Is she to be sent to the harem of my Lord Duke? Or is this worthy citizen, as before——”

“Hold thy base ribald tongue!” said his father, Lord Huntinglen, who had kept in the background during the ceremony, and now, stepping suddenly forward, caught the lady by the arm, and confronted her unworthy husband.—“The Lady Dalgarno,” he continued, “shall remain as a widow in my house. A widow I esteem her, as much as if the grave had closed over her dishonoured husband.”

Lord Dalgarno exhibited momentary symptoms of extreme confusion, and said, in a submissive tone, “If you, my lord, can wish me dead, I cannot, though your heir, return the compliment. Few of the firstborn of Israel,” he added, recovering himself from the single touch of emotion he had displayed, “can say so much with truth. But I will convince you, ere I go, that I am a true descendant of a house famed for its memory of injuries.”

“I marvel your Majesty will listen to him longer,” said Prince Charles. “Methinks we have heard enough of his daring insolence.”

But James, who took the interest of a true gossip in such a scene as was now passing, could not bear to cut the controversy short, but imposed silence on his son, with “Whisht, Baby Charles—there is a good bairn, whisht!—I want to hear what the frontless loon can say.”

“Only, sir,” said Dalgarno, “that but for one single line in this schedule, all else that it contains could not have bribed me to take that woman’s hand into mine.”

“That line maun have been the *summa totalis*,” said the King.

“Not so, sire,” replied Dalgarno. “The sum total might indeed have been an object for consideration, even to a Scottish king, at no very distant period; but it would have had little charms for me, save that I see here an entry which gives me the power of vengeance over the family of Glenvarloch; and learn from it that yonder pale bride, when she put the wedding-torch into my hand, gave me the power of burning her mother’s house to ashes!”

“How is that?” said the King. “What is he speaking about, Jingling Geordie?”

"This friendly citizen, my liege," said Lord Dalgarno, "hath expended a sum belonging to my lady, and now, I thank heaven, to me, in acquiring a certain mortgage, or wadset, over the estate of Glenvarloch, which, if it be not redeemed before to-morrow at noon, will put me in possession of the fair demesnes of those who once called themselves our house's rivals."

"Can this be true?" said the King.

"It is even but too true, please your Majesty," answered the citizen. "The Lady Hermione having advanced the money for the original creditor, I was obliged, in honour and honesty, to take the rights to her; and, doubtless, they pass to her husband."

"But the warrant, man," said the King—"the warrant on our Exchequer—Couldna that supply the lad wi' the means of redemption?"

"Unhappily, my liege, he has lost it, or disposed of it; it is not to be found. He is the most unlucky youth!"

"This is a proper spot of work!" said the King, beginning to amble about and play with the points of his doublet and hose, in expression of dismay. "We cannot aid him without paying our debts twice over, and we have, in the present state of our Exchequer, scarce the means of paying them once."

"You have told me news," said Lord Dalgarno, "but I will take no advantage."

"Do not," said his father; "be a bold villain, since thou must be one, and seek revenge with arms, and not with the usurer's weapons."

"Pardon me, my lord," said Lord Dalgarno. "Pen and ink are now my surest means of vengeance; and more land is won by the lawyer with the ram-skin, than by the Andrea Ferrara with his sheepshead handle. But, as I said before, I will take no advantages. I will await in town to-morrow, near Covent Garden; if any one will pay the redemption money to my scrivener, with whom the deeds lie, the better for Lord Glenvarloch; if not, I will go forward on the next day, and travel with all dispatch to the north, to take possession."

"Take a father's malison with you, unhappy wretch!" said Lord Huntinglen.

"And a King's, who is *pater patriæ*," said James.

"I trust to bear both lightly," said Lord Dalgarno; and bowing around him, he withdrew; while all present, oppressed, and, as it were, overawed, by the determined effrontery, found

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they could draw breath more freely, when he at length relieved them of his society. Lord Huntinglen, applying himself to comfort his new daughter-in-law, withdrew with her also; and the King, with his privy council, whom he had not dismissed, again returned to his council chamber, though the hour was unusually late. Heriot's attendance was still commanded, but for what reason was not explained to him.

James had no sooner resumed his seat at the council board than he began to hitch in his chair, cough, use his handkerchief, and make other intimations that he meditated a long speech. The council composed themselves to the beseeeming degree of attention. Charles, as strict in his notions of decorum as his father was indifferent to it, fixed himself in an attitude of rigid and respectful attention, while the haughty favourite, conscious of his power over both father and son, stretched himself more easily on his seat, and, in assuming an appearance of listening, seemed to pay a debt to ceremonial rather than to duty.

"I doubt not, my lords," said the Monarch, "that some of you may be thinking the hour of refection is past, and that it is time to ask with the slave in the comedy—*Quid de symbolo?*—Nevertheless, to do justice and exercise judgment is our meat and drink; and now we are to pray your wisdom to consider the case of this unhappy youth, Lord Glenvarloch, and see whether, consistently with our honour, anything can be done in his favour."

"I am surprised at your Majesty's wisdom making the enquiry," said the Duke; "it is plain this Dalgarno hath proved one of the most insolent villains on earth, and it must therefore be clear, that if Lord Glenvarloch had run him through the body, there would have been out of the world a knave who had lived in it too long. I think Lord Glenvarloch hath had much wrong; and I regret that, by the persuasions of this false fellow, I have myself had some hand in it."

"Ye speak like a child, Steenie—I mean my Lord of Buckingham," answered the King, "and as one that does not understand the logic of the schools; for an action may be inconsequential or even meritorious, *quoad hominem*, that is, as touching him upon *whom* it is acted; and yet most criminal, *quoad locum*, or considering the place *wherein* it is done; as a man may lawfully dance Chrighy Beardie or any other dance in a tavern, but not *inter parietes ecclesie*. So that, though it may have been a good deed to have sticked Lord Dalgarno,

being such as he has shown himself, anywhere else, yet it fell under the plain statute, when violence was offered within the verge of the court. For, let me tell you, my lords, the statute against striking would be of small use in our court, if it could be eluded by justifying the person stricken to be a knave. It is much to be lamented that I ken nae court in Christendom where knaves are not to be found; and if men are to break the peace under pretence of beating them, why, it will rain Jeddart staves in our very antechamber."

"What your Majesty says," replied Prince Charles, "is marked with your usual wisdom: the precincts of palaces must be sacred as well as the persons of kings, which are respected even in the most barbarous nations, as being one step only beneath their divinities. But your Majesty's will can control the severity of this and every other law, and it is in your power, on consideration of his case, to grant this rash young man a free pardon."

"*Rem acu tetigisti, Carole, mi puerule,*" answered the King; "and know, my lords, that we have, by a shrewd device and gift of our own, already sounded the very depth of this Lord Glenvarloch's disposition. I trow there be among you some that remember my handling in the curious case of my Lady Lake, and how I trimmed them about the story of hearkening behind the arras. Now this put me to cogitation, and I remembered me of having read that Dionysius, King of Syracuse, whom historians call *Tύραννος*, which signifieth, not in the Greek tongue, as in ours, a truculent usurper, but a royal king who governs, it may be, something more strictly than we and other lawful monarchs, whom the ancients termed *Βασιλείς*—now this Dionysius of Syracuse caused cunning workmen to build for himself a *lugg*. D'ye ken what that is, my Lord Bishop?"

"A cathedral, I presume to guess," answered the Bishop.

"What the deil, man—I crave your Lordship's pardon for swearing—but it was no cathedral—only a lurking-place called the king's *lugg*, or *ear*, where he could sit undescried, and hear the converse of his prisoners. Now, sirs, in imitation of this Dionysius, whom I took for my pattern, the rather that he was a great linguist and grammarian, and taught a school with good applause after his abdication (either he or his successor of the same name, it matters not whilk)—I have caused them to make a *lugg* up at the State prison of the Tower yonder, more like a pulpit than a cathedral, my Lord Bishop—and

communicating with the arras behind the Lieutenant's chamber, where we may sit and privily hear the discourse of such prisoners as are pent up there for State offences, and so creep into the very secrets of our enemies."

The Prince cast a glance towards the Duke, expressive of great vexation and disgust. Buckingham shrugged his shoulders, but the motion was so slight as to be almost imperceptible.

"Weel, my lords, ye ken the fray at the hunting this morning—I shall not get out of the trembling exies until I have a sound night's sleep—just after that, they bring ye in a pretty page that had been found in the Park. We were warned against examining him ourselves by the anxious care of those around us; nevertheless, holding our life ever at the service of these kingdoms, we commanded all to avoid the room, the rather that we suspected this boy to be a girl. What think ye, my lords?—few of you would have thought I had a hawk's eye for sic gear; but we thank God, that though we are old, we know so much of such toys as may beseem a man of decent gravity. Weel, my lords, we questioned this maiden in male attire ourselves, and I profess it was a very pretty interrogatory, and well followed. For, though she at first professed that she assumed this disguise in order to countenance the woman who should present us with the Lady Hermione's petition, for whom she professed entire affection; yet when we, suspecting *anguis in herba*, did put her to the very question, she was compelled to own a virtuous attachment for Glenvarlochides, in such a pretty passion of shame and fear, that we had much ado to keep our own eyes from keeping company with hers in weeping. Also, she laid before us the false practices of this Dalgarno towards Glenvarlochides, inveigling him into houses of ill-resort, and giving him evil counsel under pretext of sincere friendship, whereby the inexperienced lad was led to do what was prejudicial to himself and offensive to us. But, however prettily she told her tale, we determined not altogether to trust to her narration, but rather to try the experiment whilk we had devised for such occasions. And having ourselves speedily passed from Greenwich to the Tower, we constituted ourselves eavesdropper, as it is called, to observe what should pass between Glenvarlochides and this page, whom we caused to be admitted to his apartment, well judging that if they were of counsel together to deceive us, it could not be but something of it would spunk out. And what think

ye we saw, my lords?—Naething for you to sniggle and laugh at, Steenie—for I question if you could have played the temperate and Christian-like part of this poor lad Glenvarloch. He might be a Father of the Church in comparison of you, man.—And then, to try his patience yet farther, we loosed on him a courtier and a citizen, that is Sir Mungo Malagrowth and our servant George Heriot here, wha dang the poor lad about, and didna greatly spare our royal selves.—You mind, Geordie, what you said about the wives and concubines? but I forgie ye, man—nae need of kneeling, I forgie ye—the readier that it regards a certain particular, whilk, as it added not much to Solomon's credit, the lack of it cannot be said to impinge on ours. Aweel, my lords, for all temptation of sore distress and evil ensample, this poor lad never loosed his tongue on us to say one unbecoming word—which inclines us the rather, acting always by your wise advice, to treat this affair of the Park as a thing done in the heat of blood, and under strong provocation, and therefore to confer our free pardon on Lord Glenvarloch.”

“I am happy your gracious Majesty,” said the Duke of Buckingham, “has arrived at that conclusion, though I could never have guessed at the road by which you attained it.”

“I trust,” said Prince Charles, “that it is not a path which your Majesty will think it consistent with your high dignity to tread frequently.”

“Never while I live again, Baby Charles, that I give you my royal word on. They say that hearkeepers hear ill tales of themselves—by my saul, my very ears are tingling wi’ that auld sorrow Sir Mungo’s sarcasms. He called us close-fisted, Steenie—I am sure you can contradict that. But it is mere envy in the auld mutilated sinner, because he himself has neither a noble to hold in his loof, nor fingers to close on it if he had.” Here the King lost recollection of Sir Mungo’s irreverence in chuckling over his own wit, and only farther alluded to it by saying—“We must give the old maunderer *bos in linguam*—something to stop his mouth, or he will rail at us from Dan to Beersheba.—And now, my lords, let our warrant of mercy to Lord Glenvarloch be presently expedited, and he put to his freedom; and as his estate is likely to go so sleeveless a gate, we will consider what means of favour we can show him.—My lords, I wish you an appetite to an early supper—for our labours have approached that term.—Baby Charles and Steenie, you will remain till our couchee.—My

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Lord Bishop, you will be pleased to stay to bless our meat.—Geordie Heriot, a word with you apart."

His Majesty then drew the citizen into a corner, while the counsellors, those excepted who had been commanded to remain, made their obeisance, and withdrew. "Geordie," said the King, "my good and trusty servant"—here he busied his fingers much with the points and ribbons of his dress—"ye see that we have granted, from our own natural sense of right and justice, that which yon long-backed fellow, Moniplies I think they ca' him, proffered to purchase from us with a mighty bribe; whilk we refused, as being a crowned King, who wad neither sell our justice nor our mercy for pecuniar consideration. Now, what think ye should be the upshot of this?"

"My Lord Glenvarloch's freedom, and his restoration to your Majesty's favour," said Heriot.

"I ken that," said the King peevishly. "Ye are very dull to-day. I mean, what do you think this fallow Moniplies should think about the matter?"

"Surely that your Majesty is a most good and gracious sovereign," answered Heriot.

"We had need to be gude and gracious baith," said the King, still more pettishly, "that have idiots about us that cannot understand what we mint at, unless we speak it out in braid Lowlands. See this chield Moniplies, sir, and tell him what we have done for Lord Glenvarloch, in whom he takes such part, out of our own gracious motion, though we refused to do it on any proffer of private advantage. Now, you may put it till him, as if of your own mind, whether it will be a gracious or a dutiful part in him, to press us for present payment of the two or three hundred miserable pounds for whilk we were obliged to opignorate our jewels? Indeed mony men may think ye wad do the part of a good citizen, if you took it on yourself to refuse him payment, seeing he hath had what he professed to esteem full satisfaction, and considering, moreover, that it is evident he hath no pressing need of the money, whereof we have much necessity."

George Heriot sighed internally. "O my Master," thought he—"my dear Master, is it then fated you are never to indulge any kingly or noble sentiment, without its being sullied by some after thought of interested selfishness!"

The King troubled not about what he thought, but taking him by the collar, said,—“Ye ken my meaning now, Jingle—awa wi' ye. You are a wise man—manage it your ain gate—

but forget not our present straits." The citizen made his obeisance, and withdrew.

"And now, bairns," said the King, "what do you look upon each other for—and what have you got to ask of your dear dad and gossip?"

"Only," said the Prince, "that it would please your Majesty to command the lurking-place at the prison to be presently built up; the groans of a captive should not be brought in evidence against him."

"What! build up my lugg, Baby Charles? And yet, better deaf than hear ill tales of oneself. So let them build it up, hard and fast, without delay, the rather that my back is sair with sitting in it for a whole hour.—And now let us see what the cooks have been doing for us, bonny bairns."

—SIR WALTER SCOTT, *Fortunes of Nigel*.

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XVI

King, Queen, and Parliament

AFTER the mighty trial of the strength of parties over the Bill of General Remonstrance, there followed a short pause—a lull as it were—in the loud tempest of commotion, a breathing space snatched from the midst of battle. With the exception of a short and somewhat turbulent debate, on the day following that of the main question, originating in a wish on the part of the puritanic leaders to punish those who had protested on the previous night, but resulting merely in a penalty of form inflicted on one person, Jeffry Palmer, the Commons seemed to relax in the vigour of their defensive warfare against the Crown. The Bill for regulation of the militia and prevention of forcible impressment, unless in case of actual invasion, was, it is true, brought forward, but without any of that inveterate and rancorous spirit which had signalized their earlier measures.

The King, on his return from Scotland, was received—chiefly in consequence of the exertions of Sir Richard Gourney, the Lord Mayor of London, an active and uncompromising loyalist—with loud, if not sincere, manifestations of welcome and affection; was feasted at the Guildhall with more than ordinary splendour, and hailed, as he passed to and fro the city, with thundering acclamations by the wavering and worthless populace. A further triumph still awaited him in the address presented at his residence of Hampton Court, by Aldermen deputed from the city, requesting him to take up his abode among them, and to hold his court as heretofore in his palace at Whitehall.

This loyal and well-timed address, reputed as it was to be distasteful in no small degree to Parliament, was graciously accepted, the deputies all knighted, and the request granted

joyfully. The Bills, moreover, most obnoxious to the King—that principally which would exclude the Bishops' votes—made but slow progress, and, even should it pass the Commons, was not expected to receive the sanction of the Lords. Falkland and Colepepper, heretofore active members of the reforming party, although moderate and wary, now having taken office openly—the former being Secretary of State in lieu of Vane, the latter Chancellor of the Exchequer—held nightly conferences at the house of Hyde, for the well and wisely ordering the shaken and disordered principles of government; and would, as it seems probable, have met with eminent success in their beneficent and patriotic measures, had it not been for secret influences and the prevalence of councillors behind the throne.

Such was the state of matters, things gradually looking brighter and more bright for the royal party; and the remonstrant leaders, Hampden especially, becoming not only less violent in their opposition, but beginning to judge more favourably of the King's motives and intent, when the insane and childish protest of the Bishops was sent forth, instigated by the proud and angry Williams, declaring "all laws, orders, votes, resolutions, and determinations, already passed, or such as should hereafter pass, during their absence from that most honourable House"—compulsory as they affirmed it—"null and of none effect."

The consequence was an immediate and almost unanimous vote, both of the Lords and the Commons, for the committal of the prelates to the Tower, one solitary member only so far opposing it, as to declare that he believed them utterly insane, and therefore recommended Bedlam, rather than the Tower, as a fit place for their detention.

Then came reports of plots—rumours of aggressions meditated on the lower House—doubts and despondencies, and wrath and panics! It was believed on all sides that, without confident assurance of support, the Bishops had not dared to rush to such extremities. Petitions were poured in from every quarter! One from the city, setting forth that, since their loyal gratulations on his Majesty's return had been misconstrued as though they would disown the doings of the Parliament, they now declared their full resolve to live and die with them for the good of the commonwealth.

Addresses multiplied, and were accompanied even to the palace by such crowds, that in a message to the Common

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Council the King complained of the tumultuous assemblages daily increasing, to the disturbance of his palace of Whitehall. On the same day the Parliament petitioned him to grant to them a guard commanded by the Earl of Essex that appointed for their protection during his absence in the north having been instantly disbanded on his late return, on account of a malignant party now daring openly to threaten them with violence.

To this request, reasonable as after events proved it to have been, the self-willed monarch returned a negative, though offering that such a guard should wait on them, under a leader of his own choice, utterly subservient to his will, "as he would be answerable for to Almighty God!"

This proposition they of course declined, perceiving that the guard so ordered would be more like to militate against their liberties, if not their persons, than to defend them from external outrage.

It was upon the very day which followed this insidious offer—for such it must be deemed—that, urged by his worst counsellor, the false and faithless Henrietta, to that most rash and headlong step which rendered his affairs for ever irretrievable, and reconciliation with his subjects hopeless, elated still by his reception in the city, and heedless of the daily proofs of public feeling and opinion, he went on to commit his last and desperate aggression on the privilege of Parliament. It was on the next day that Herbert, the King's Attorney-General, entered the House of Peers, then sitting, and drawing out a paper in the King's own writing, read it aloud, by which the Lord Kimbolton, present there and then—and of the Commons, Denzil, Hollis, Sir Arthur Hazlerig, Pym, Strode, and Hampden—stood each and all accused of treason, as conspirators against the King and Constitution.

The Peers sat actually panic-stricken and aghast at this tremendous stroke of folly and misgovernment, hearing in sullen silence the grave accusation, while Kimbolton, springing to his feet, with eloquent and strenuous indignation professed his total innocence; nor was there any lord so hardy as to move for his committal on his Majesty's behalf.

Meanwhile, the Commons House was entered by the King's sergeant, demanding that the Speaker should deliver up the bodies of the members named above, to answer to a charge of treason, bearing no warrant or authority from magistrate or counsellor, but acting solely at the King's behest, and without

intervention of the law. News came at the same instant that the private lodgings of these members had been visited by royal messengers, their trunks and studies sealed up, and their papers violently seized.

With bold and masculine resolve, well suited to the peril of the crisis, did the House meet this haughty and high-minded insolence. The sergeant, having gone through his message, was desired to avoid the chamber; but word was sent the Monarch, by a deputation, assuring him those members should be instantly forthcoming as soon as any legal charge should be preferred against them; the House declaring, by a powerful vote, those violent acts of seizure, breaches of privilege, audacious and illegal, empowering their members to resist; calling on all men to abet and aid them in resisting such attempts upon their liberties, as free-born Britons; and instantly adjourning for the night, until the wonted hour on the morrow.

It was at a late hour in the evening of this fatal day that several ladies of the court, richly and splendidly attired, were collected in a proud saloon, decked with the masterpieces of Vandyck and Rubens, with tapestries of Gobelins and arras hangings, with cabinets of buhl and marquetry, buffets of antique golden plate and yet more costly porcelain, and all these priceless luxuries which mark a royal dwelling. Among this glittering group, and seemingly its principal, was one—a lady of low slender stature, and a shape slightly awry, though by skill of her tirewoman this defect was so disguised as to be scarce perceptible. Her hands were delicate and gemmed, as were her ears, her neck, the bosom of her robe, and the rich volumes of her jet black hair, with Indian brilliants. Her features were agreeable and sprightly, yet such as could not be properly praised as regular or beautiful; a pair of bright black eyes and a coquettish smile forming their chief attraction. Her conversation, lively, and perhaps even brilliant, though flippant and unguarded, was listened to by her attendant ladies, and by the only cavalier admitted to the presence—a man of noble bearing, easy yet dignified, and withal in person eminently handsome, with an attention so profound that it denoted—even without the bended knee and the averted back—the speaker to be one of royal rank.

Music and cards were in the chamber, and a most lovely girl of some seventeen or eighteen years, was dancing to the amatory strains of concealed musicians, in a style which would

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now be esteemed far too voluptuous to be performed by the chaste limbs of ladies, or looked upon by modest eyes.

Yet neither lansquenet, nor the soft melody, nor the exciting graces of the beautiful *danseuse* appeared sufficient to banish some uneasiness which lowered over that fair company. The brow of Henrietta, for she it was, was dark and gloomy, and her ill-humour had been so far contagious as to affect her bright companions with all outward signs of discontent and sorrow.

While she was talking earnestly to the Lord Digby, now her most beloved and trusty councillor, a short and hasty step was heard without, accompanied by a slight bustle, as if some more distinguished personage had suddenly and by surprise come on the unexpectant chamberlains and pages, sole inmates of the antechamber. The door of polished oak flew open, and, bearing evident marks of discomposure in his depressed lip and overshadowed brow, a gentleman of graceful presence entered the apartment. Of that time of life when the rashness and fire of youth are tempered by the sedateness of increasing years, although the face has lost no trait of its attraction, nor the limbs of their alert and agile motion, Charles Stuart (for the new comer was no other) was of a middle height, but strong and well-proportioned, excepting that his legs were triflingly bowed outward, a circumstance, which, while detracting somewhat from the grace and symmetry of his appearance, was favourable more than otherwise to his accustomed exercise of horsemanship, to which indeed it might have been in some sort owing. His visage, of a just and oval form, was pleasing, although dark-complexioned; his features regular and comely, with a full eye, dark, gentle and somewhat dull in its expression, unless its owner was aroused to sudden anger, when it could kindle up and flash as brightly as the keenest; he wore moustaches, somewhat unusually large and curling upward, with a small pointed beard, of that precise and formal cut which is so often met with in the portraits of Vandyck. The most remarkable trait, however, of his whole appearance was that continual cloud of mild and softened melancholy from which his dignified and stately aspect rarely or never brightened; for even when he smiled it was a faint and transient flash, scarce clearing up the gloom of that accustomed sadness which brooded over his countenance; although his disposition was cheerful more than otherwise, and if not buoyant, certainly neither mournful nor despondent; and which, as fanciful and

superstitious men have often imagined, is ominous of an untimely end. His dress, of plain black velvet, slashed and lined with satin, differed in nothing (save that upon the left side of his cloak glittered the diamond star belonging to the order of the Garter) from the garb of any private gentleman. He wore his hat above his sable hair, long-curved and flowing, and in his hand he carried a strong cane, or ferule, with a crutch-end of gold, which he struck passionately upon the carpet as he entered.

"The undutiful, disloyal varlets!" he exclaimed in tones of strong excitement; "the false, rebellious knaves! to deal thus with their Sovereign!" and for several moments he paced to and fro the room, regardless of the eager entreaties of his affrighted wife to speak the cause of his distemperature.

"A message!" he burst forth at length, but in a voice broken and faltering with passion. "To me! to me a message! I tell you, Marie, an they have their will, I may indeed be called your Majesty, be served upon the knee, be waited on bareheaded, but I shall be no more a king—nay, ten times less the master even of myself—than the most lowly gentleman in all my wide dominions. But so shall it not be! No! by God, never!" and in a few disjointed sentences he told her how he had demanded of the parliament the bodies of six members, on a charge of treason against himself and them, and had received, not prompt obedience to his orders, but a message!

"And is it possible," she cried, "that you, my lord, you, heir to such a line of mighty sovereigns; you, Monarch of Great Britain, will be thus braved and thwarted, will be controlled, defied, and trampled on by such a scum of low and scurvy fellows as this parliament? that you will brook to have your crown robbed of its brightest jewels of prerogative, your sceptre wrested from your hands without one struggle? Would—wretched princess that I am!—oh! would to God, that I had tarried in my own glorious France, or that I had been wedded to a man!"

"Madam, go to——!" the King retorted sharply, for all uxorious as he was, and prone to hold her slightest words as mandates to his will, his temper, naturally hasty and impatient, was now unusually aggravated by the commingled influence of anger and irresolution. "Be silent, and dare not impugn our energy and courage! England and you shall know, and that

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right speedily, that Charles Stuart brooks neither insolence at home nor usurpation of his rights abroad; and for these—rash and reckless rogues—they, too, shall learn that I am yet a King!”

“Well said, well said, my gracious Sovereign!” exclaimed Digby, with an exulting voice and an elated eye. “Better to crush at once this spawn of venomous and vicious serpents, in the dark den wherein they have engendered, than one by one to scotch them, when they shall have crawled forth to pollute the blessed daylight, and swelled from grovelling reptiles to the full growth of rampant dragons.”

“In this most noble wrath,” cried Henrietta, “again I recognise the worthiest, the most high-souled of men! Tomorrow thou shalt pull those vile rogues by the ears from out their infamous cabal, else never look me in the face again!”

“Brave girl!” replied the facile King, rueing already his late burst of anger, “Brave, brave Marie, and as beautiful as brave!” and, throwing one arm round her waist, he led her to a sofa at the farthest end of the saloon, where he seated himself at her side.

During the first part of the night which followed the city was all tumult and confusion, men running to and fro, in crowds or singly, conversing eagerly with white and panic-stricken visages, women increasing, with their shrill and anxious voices, the wild, din, and children, long hours past the accustomed time when they should have been sleeping peacefully in their warm chambers, wandering to and fro with looks of frightened and enquiring wonderment cast upward toward the agitated features of their parents. But the necessity of rest will conquer even the quickest and most moving causes of excitement, and ere the stars began to appear in the cold frosty sky the thoroughfares were quite deserted, as if no turbulence of party strife had ever interrupted their security and silence.

The morning broke in its due season, and the only thing observable in the demeanour of the groups who gradually filled the streets, passing this way or that, as men engaged in their customary avocations, in their pursuit of profit or of pleasure, was an air of general and pervading sternness—not merely gloom, but resolute and dark determination. There was no light or trifling conversation, no jests, no laughter; whatever of discourse seemed absolutely needful was couched in brief and pithy sentences, and uttered in a tone, not puritanic or morose, but sad, and at the same time full of energy, grave and severe, and wellnigh awful in its character.

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As the day advanced, the members of the lower House might be seen hurrying towards St. Stephen's, some mounted, some on foot, but all accompanied by at least one armed retainer; and they were greeted severally by the multitude with shouts of approbation, or with groans of censure and reviling, according as they were known for men of popular or loyal principles.

Meanwhile, in the small chamber of the palace of Whitehall, richly adorned with painted walls and splendid oaken carvings, and overlooking from its lofty casement the streets through which the crowds were flowing toward the Parliament, sat Henrietta with a single lady, a page awaiting, near the door of the apartment, the pleasure of his royal mistress. A frame filled with embroidery stood before her, at which it seemed she had but recently been occupied, though now she held a volume of some French romance, from which, however, her eyes glanced so often toward the windows, attracted by the mingled clamour of applause and hatred, rising at times even until they penetrated her reluctant ears, as to denote that little of her mind was given to the wild, witty author who apparently engaged her. Her eyes were full of bright and keen excitement; a hectic flush glowed in a spot of vivid crimson high upon either cheek, and her hands trembled with a visible and nervous agitation. Her conversation also, if the light and frivolous sentences that fell from her lips at intervals merited such a title, was broken, interrupted, and evidently embarrassed by some internal conflict which she hesitated to disclose.

For a considerable time she struggled to maintain a semblance of composure; but, as the hours passed onward, her trepidation became more and more apparent. At every step that sounded in the long corridors, at every closing of a distant door, she started, and once or twice, when the rattle of a carriage or the clatter of a horse's hoofs appeared to cease before the gates, she actually hurried to the balcony and gazed abroad into the town, exposing herself as if unwittingly to the rude stare of the transient multitudes who failed to greet her with the smallest tokens of affection or respect.

Twice or thrice, ere the bells chimed ten, the page in waiting was despatched to learn whether no tidings had arrived from Parliament; and each time that he returned the bearer of a negative, a peevish exclamation of disgust escaped from her, not unnoticed by the lady who attended on her privacy.

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At length, peal after peal, the steeples rang forth, and then, with an exulting smile, as though she could contain herself no longer—"Rejoice!" she cried in high triumphant tones, "rejoice! my Carlisle, for ere now the King is master in his states—ay, and his enemies are all in custody!"

"His enemies, your Grace," exclaimed the patriotic lady to whom she had divulged the secret, "his enemies?"

"His enemies, said I?" returned the Queen, in accents sharper than before; "in truth then I spake wrongly. His traitors, rather! His false, rebellious, and bloodthirsty traitors! By God's help, now his captives—Hampden and Pym and all their rabble rout."

And as she spoke, sweeping across the room and entering again the balcony, she cast a wistful glance down the long avenue. But scarcely had she turned her back, before the high-born lady whom she had addressed hastily tore a leaf from out her tablets, traced on it some half-dozen words, and pleading, on the Queen's return, casual indisposition, quietly left the chamber.

Ten minutes had not well elapsed ere she re-entered it, nor would the change in her demeanour have escaped the close and subtle watchfulness of her imperial mistress, had not that royal lady herself been perturbed too much to investigate the mood of others. The Countess of Carlisle's features, cast in the purest and calmest mould of conscious aristocracy, had worn throughout the morning an expression of grave feminine anxiety, and her broad placid eye had followed with a quiet yet observing scrutiny every unwonted movement, every nervous start, and every change of colour that had resulted from the Queen's excitement; nor had she tardily discovered that some dread crisis was at hand—though what that crisis was, not having been a party to the councils of the regal circle on the previous night, she might not even guess. The thoughtless words, however, of the fickle-minded Henrietta had given her at once the clue which her quick apprehension followed, as it were intuitively, through all its labyrinth; and she at once availed herself of the discovery she had made with a degree of cool and present courage, that, even in that age of prompt and daring action, failed not to wake the admiration which it merited.

Now, however, when the hardening excitement had passed over—when the nerves, which had been strung so tensely to the performance of her duty, were no longer kept in play—



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when she knew that her trusty messenger was on his way, and past the palace gates already, bearing the tidings of approaching insult, outrage and peril to the liberties of England's Parliament, the majesty of England's laws, she for the first time began to fear that she might be too late, and that the blow might have already fallen ere her warning should arouse the destined victims to perception of their danger. Her face was paler than its wont; and her blue eye, so tranquil in its usual expression, was slightly anxious.

It was but a little while that her uncertainty continued, for ere an hour had elapsed the Queen, whose passions became more and more enkindled with every moment of suspense, sending another message to learn whether the House were in session still, received for answer, that they had just adjourned until one of the clock, and that the members were even now passing to their lodgings.

"Heavens!" cried Henrietta, almost in despair at this unpleasing and most unexpected news. "Just Heavens! can it be that he hath failed me!" and casting herself down at length upon a couch, she covered her head with a thick veil and waited in an agonized and speechless fit of mingled hope and terror, the result of her intriguing machinations.

In the meantime the House, which had been assembled at the usual hour, not altogether unexpectant of some further outrage upon their privileges, had indeed, on receiving the well-timed announcement from the Countess of Carlisle, upon the instant voted an adjournment, that they might better so concert plans of resistance to that lawless violence which they were now too well assured their Sovereign had resolved to perpetrate.

It was at this moment, when all were hastening homeward, that a member of the House, Edgar Ardenne, observed Cromwell hurrying to and fro among the leading favours both of the popular and puritanic principles, and whispering to one a word or two, then passing to another; and, as he gazed upon his compressed lip and eye flashing with almost savage pleasure, he felt even more strongly than at any prior moment, the conviction that this wily person was indeed engaged more intimately in directing the important springs of party action than could have been supposed from the inferior part he was wont to play in his ostensible and open movement. He knew not at the time, any more than four-fifths of the House, what were the secret news which had so suddenly produced adjournment;

and had indeed himself voted against a measure which he could not comprehend, although the private hints of Oliver and Hampden had not escaped his notice; nor could he now conceive the meaning of the strong excitement which kindled all who listened to the words of Cromwell as it were with an electric spark. Not long, however, was he destined to remain in ignorance, for with his harsh features more than commonly inflamed and ruddy, the Puritan approached him.

"Ha!" he said in a loud, coarse whisper—"ha, Master Ardenne, how is this that you, to whom we confidently looked for succour, should in this strait and peril have turned against us, consorting with the men of Belial?"

"I know not, Master Cromwell," Ardenne replied, "to what you do allude; nor have I heard of any strait or peril. I saw indeed that you and Master Hampden were desirous I should vote for this adjournment, but seeing no cause wherefore, nor being, so far as I know it, your follower and pledged supporter, assuredly I deemed it best for mine own honour to abide by the poor dictates of my own opinion."

"Call it you then no strait," asked Oliver, with a dark sneer upon his lip—"no strait or peril, that Charles Stuart dare dare come hither with his accursed cavaliers, with his lewd yeomen and rakehell pensioners, seeking out whom they may devour, having their swords new whetted and their hearts afire to shed the blood of the saints should dare come hither—hither within these privileged, time-honoured walls—to lay his violent, tyrannical hands on those with whose salt only are we savoured?"

"What mean you, sir? speak out," cried Ardenne. "Will he indeed do this? Can he be so infatuated, so insane?"

"Will Charles Stuart dare it!" said the other; "say, rather, what will he not dare, if we, the watchers and the guardians sitting on the tower—yea, on the housetop—to give note of coming woe, blow not the trumpet through the land. Yea, he will come, and that right shortly. Yea, will he come; and if our hearts be not the stronger, and our arms too, if need be—will trample down the liberties of England unto everlasting."

"Never!" exclaimed Ardenne, vehemently moved—"no, never shall he do so—never while I, if none beside, have sword to wield and hand with which to wield it!"

"Ay, is it so?" returned the other, his whole face blazing out with a triumphant ecstasy. "Is it so? And would you draw the carnal sword if it were needed?"

"Would I?" cried Ardenne; "would I unsheathe the sword to guard these holy walls from desecration? Would I uplift my arm against the hireling of lawless and despotic violence? Ay, were those ministers ten thousand sworded angels!"

"Then fare thee well," cried Oliver—"then fare thee well, and hold fast to thy good resolve, while I go and wake the rest to a like spirit. Above all, be thou in thy place when we again assemble, and then call thou me fool and liar, an thou see not great things!"

The interval passed speedily enough away, consumed in wise and seemly preparations; notice was straight despatched to the Lord Mayor and Corporation of the threatened danger; the citizens were admonished to stand upon their guard; and members were sent down to the Temple and the Inns of Court to warn students that the House was well aware how they had already been tampered with, and to command that they should not come, on any plea, to Westminster.

Ere the time appointed the House was crowded. Edgar Ardenne was in his place among the first; and as he saw the five obnoxious members calmly resume their seats, as though no peril threatened them, a mingled sentiment of admiration and regret thrilled to his heart at the idea that if indeed the King, with his wild, dissolute attendants, should forcibly attempt to seize them, they surely would resist, and but too probably be slaughtered on the very spot which they had made to ring so often with their proud patriotic eloquence.

As he thus thought, a new impression shot with the speed of light into his mind: "If they be absent—if they be absent when he comes, the fearful consequences may be perchance averted, which otherwise must beyond doubt result from letting loose a band of reckless soldiery to rush sword in hand on gentlemen armed likewise, and almost unanimous to guard their liberties with life."

And on the instant he arose, and in a few words, powerful and manly, moved that the House should grant permission to those members to withdraw themselves, lest tumult, and perhaps even worse than tumult, fall of it.

"I second it," cried Cromwell, starting to his feet. "I second the most honourable member's motion. Let them withdraw them straightway to the city until this tyranny be overpast."

Without a single voice or vote dissentient the question was then carried. The House gave permission that they might

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retire, and at solicitation from their friends they instantly departed.

Scarce had the hurry and confusion consequent on their withdrawal ceased, ere a dull tramping noise was heard without, as of a powerful band of men. The word to halt was given, and for a while the sound was hushed, the members sitting stern and silent in their places, disdaining to show any sign either of wrath or terror. Again the sounds were heard, ascending the great staircase; and now the clink of steel, as broad blades of partisan and halberd clashed together; and now a shout "Fall on! fall on!" mixed with the shuffling tramp of feet, the jingling of scabbards, and all the bustle that accompanies a sudden and disordered march. Nearer and nearer came the tumult. The lobby was already filled, to judge from the increasing clatter, with armed intruders; and now the din of grounded arms rang audibly upon the ears of the undaunted councillors.

Then, for the first time, a show of passion manifested itself among the younger gentlemen. A dozen, at the least, impetuously started to their feet, and not a few grasped, with an energy that proved how fearlessly they would have used them, the hilts of the long rapiers which all of gentle birth at that time carried. A single word, however, from the Speaker of the House—a single cry of order, sufficed to bring them peacefully into their places. But there they sat with eyes that actually flashed with strong indignation.

At this instant was the door thrown open, and a messenger sent in, who reverentially enough informed the House that the King was at the door, and that the Speaker was commanded to sit still, with the mace lying on the board before him.

Still not one word was spoken, not a whisper, not a breath nor murmur, through that spacious hall, and every man sat fast, with head unmoved, and eyes fixed sternly straight before him, as if they did not so much as vouchsafe to cast a glance, still less a thought, toward the violator of their rights. Had there been aught of riot or confusion, had there been aught of armed or passionate resistance, nay, had there been any fear or doubt or wavering, it then had been an easier task for the misguided King to carry out his frantic and destructive purpose. But hard it is, and most revolting to all human feelings, to outrage and assault where there is neither terror nor resistance.

It was perhaps a minute, after the messenger retired, before

ought new disturbed the silence that prevailed unbroken beneath the vaulted roof.

Then came a quick, irregular tread, that readily betokened by its uncertain time the irresolution and the anxiety that were at work within the breast of him who was approaching.

"Enter not, any of ye, on your lives!" was uttered in the harsh voice of the King, before his person came in view; an order understood by all who heard, as it was doubtless meant by him who uttered it, to be words, empty words, and spoken for effect.

Then, leaning on the shoulder of the Palsgrave, Charles Stuart advanced. Those who stood nearest to his person might have seen a momentary pause—a brief, involuntary hesitation—a reluctance, hardly perhaps acknowledged to himself, to cross what was to be the Rubicon of all his future fortunes. But so short was the pause, so small the effort it required to conquer that reluctance, that it seemed indeed as if, according to the classic proverb, destined already to destruction, he were deserted by his sanity of intellect. Perhaps he had expected fear—abject and tame submission—had supposed that he should stride in triumph unopposed, and sued to on the bended knee, through that magnificent assemblage. Perhaps he had expected anger, indignation, and defiance! But now, as he looked up those lines of crowded benches and met no glance of recognition, encountered no full front even of wrath and scorn, but caught alone, row behind row, those stern and masculine profiles, composed, severe, and passionless—profiles averted less in resentment than in proud, contemptuous sorrow—his wayward spirit for a moment's space recoiled, and he half wished the perilous step untaken.

It was but for the twinkling of an eye, however, that his rash mood of obstinacy failed him; for without a quiver of his nerves, a change of his dark visage, he strode across the threshold, about a pace before his foreign kinsman. The Earl of Roxborough, a tall and powerful man, armed, somewhat more than commonly, with a long military sword and heavy poniard at his belt, had followed close upon his master's footsteps, until he also stood upon the threshold; he crossed it not, however, but stood there, leaning with his whole weight against the door, which opened outwardly, so that it would have been impossible for any from within the House to close it. His right hand rested, as if carelessly, upon the pommel of his war sword, and his left twirled, with a gesture of un-

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bridled insolence, his long moustache ; while many a fierce, licentious countenance might be seen glaring from behind him on the conservators of their country's freedom with a wild and wolfish aspect of malignant hatred.

The King himself, attired, as usual, in a plain garb of sable velvet, wearing no weapon but an ordinary walking-sword, and carrying in his right hand, together with his staff, the dark-plumed beaver which he had doffed on entering, stalked coolly up the House, the Palsgrave following slowly, and, as it seemed, with a half-timid and reluctant step. Still all was silence ! silence so profound that, save the heavy footsteps of the Monarch, not a sound could be perceived, unless it were when from without some weapon clang was heard, or some rude threat or imprecation was muttered in the antechamber.

The face of Charles, grave and even sorrowful by nature, was something paler than usual, but with that sort of paleness which conveys no thought of cowardice or trembling, but of immovable resolve. His mouth was firmly closed, but not compressed, nor showing aught of effort. His eye calm, searching, cold, but keen and hard as iron. His nostril only of his features gave token of emotion, or of any feeling hotter than determination, for it was dilated wide and slightly quivering. Yet was his hand steady as the columns that upheld the roof above him, and his stride, now that he stood among his lieges—however it had been irregular and hasty ere he entered—was measured, long, and equal.

As the King advanced along the floor he turned his head from side to side, perusing with deliberate and steady glance the lineaments of every member whom he passed ; and if when at a distance not one eye had sought him, so when he now stood close beside them not one eye avoided him. Each, as Charles came into his line of direct vision, met his hard gaze with an unblenching and unloosing brow, for not one man—even of those the most devoted to his will, of those who would have served him at that moment, who afterward did serve him with their whole hearts and lives—but was disgusted, angered, full of deep sorrow, almost to despair.

Little there was, however, of the stronger and more stormy passions painted upon the brows of those who sat thus fearlessly braving the temper of a king whose wrath was no less lasting and vindictive than it was hot and sudden. The expression that prevailed most largely was of mingled aspect, half pity, half defiance. But when the tyrant—for that action,

if that only, justified the title—approached the seat of Cromwell (who was, perhaps, at that day scarcely known by name to the proud Sovereign), and his glance fell upon those grim, ungainly features, then Ardenne witnessed—for his eye was still attracted, why he knew not, with a strange sense of fascination toward the Puritan—then Ardenne witnessed that which in after times he often called to mind, and never without awe and wonder, a dark conflict—a conflict of eye, countenance, and bearing between those men so eminently thrown together, and blended in their spheres of good or evil action.

The glance of Charles, when first it fell upon the coarse and most displeasing lineaments of Oliver, was instantly averted, but averted merely as men ever turn the eye away from objects naturally hateful or unseemly. At that point of time the face of Cromwell was as tranquil, as immovable as that of his great future rival; but the tranquillity was no less different than is the stillness of a hushed volcano and the peaceful calm of heaven. The swollen and corded veins upon the temple, the eyebrows lowered and contorted, the balls gleaming beneath them with a fixed and baleful light, the nostril rigidly distended, and the lips pressed so tightly that they alone of his whole aspect were of a livid whiteness.

Ere Ardenne had time to think, had there been any matter yet for thought, the eye of Charles stole back, half timidly as it appeared, toward that tigerlike and glaring face. Then, as it met the sinister and ominous stare of fierce defiance, it brightened also, vivid and keen, and with a falcon-like and noble splendour.

For some short space they gazed—those two undisciplined and haughty spirits—into each other's very souls, mutually, as it seemed, conscious at a glance of irremediable and desperate hostility. The King's look, quiet, although high and angry and most unutterably proud; Cromwell's sarcastic, bitter, furious and determined, and withal so savagely triumphant, so mirthful in its dire malignity, that Ardenne thought he had never beheld a countenance so fiendishly expressive! And Charles Stuart's aspect—after a fixed encounter of ten seconds' space—Charles Stuart's haughty aspect quailed beneath it; and as he passed along, for the whole occurred in less time than were needful to recite it, he gazed no more around him, but went directly onward, looking (and that, too, gloomily) upon the ground, toward the Speaker's chair.

But the stern democrat, as if conscious that his genius had

prevailed, cast his eyes round him with an air of loftier feeling than Ardenne had as yet observed him wear.

Meanwhile the King had reached the chair, and Lenthall, the bold Speaker, who had hitherto sat still, as proud and far more placid than his visitor, arose and stepped out stately and cold to meet him. Then the King mounted to his place, stood upon the step, but spoke not, nor sat down; and there he stood, gloomily gazing on the House with a dark look of sullen anger, for many minutes.

At length he spoke. "Gentlemen," he said in a high voice clearly audible to the most distant corner, though neither musical nor pleasing; "gentlemen, I am sorry for this my cause of coming to you. Yesterday I did send a sergeant to demand some, who, by my order, were accused of treason. Instead of prompt obedience I received—a message!" and he uttered the last word with the most concentrated scorn and insolence. "I must, then, here declare to you, that though no king that ever was in England could be more careful of your privileges than I have been, and shall be, yet, I can tell you, treason hath no privileges, and therefore am I come to tell you that I must have these men, and will, wherever I may find them!"

As he spoke he looked around the hall with a deliberate air, scanning the faces of all present, if he might find his men; then, raising his voice higher yet, he called aloud till the roof rang again—"Ho! I say, Master Hollis, Master Pym!"

No answer was returned, nor any sound, save an increased and angry tumult in the lobby, with a brandishing of partisans and a producing of concealed but ready pistols, so that some members thought to see the soldiers instantly rush into the chamber.

After a little pause, finding he got no answer, he turned to the Speaker. "Say," he exclaimed, "say, Mr. Speaker, be any of these men here present?"

For a moment Lenthall paused, as doubting whether to hurl his own defiance, and that of the assembled Commons, into his very teeth; but ere the echoes of the Monarch's voice had ceased he had resolved upon the wiser and more prudent part, and bending with most deferential courtesy his knee: "I have, sir," he replied, "nor eyes to see, nor tongue to speak in this place, save as this House, whose servant I am sworn, shall order me. And therefore must I pray your Majesty to pardon me that I return no further answer."

"Ha ! sir," returned Charles sharply, and with incipient fury, but a moment's thought convinced him that the humble answer of the Speaker defied at once, and rendered hopeless, any charge of violence against him. "Ha ! sir," he said again, but in a milder tone, "I do believe my eyes are to the full as good as yours, and I do see my birds are flown ; but this I tell you, and so look to it, I hold this House to send them to me ! Failing of which I shall myself go seek them. For, sir, their treason is most foul, and such as you shall thank me, and all of you now to discover. And I assure you, on a king's word I assure you, I never did mean any violence, and they shall have fair trial ; I meant not any other !"

He waited not for further words ; perchance he doubted what reply he should receive to this last asseveration. Stepping down from the chair, he walked, uncovered still, but with a quicker pace than that with which he entered, toward the lobby ; but now, as he departed, his looks were not turned haughtily from side to side, but sadly bent upon the floor ; nor was his passage silent as before, for member after member started up as Charles went past him, with bent brow and clenched hand, and groans both loud and deep saluted him.

As he came nigh the seat of Cromwell, the King raised his visage, haggard now and pale, as with an anxious curiosity, to look upon the man before whose eye he felt himself to have quailed ; and as he met it, Oliver sprang upon his feet, his long tuck rattling in the scabbard as he rose, and stamping on the floor with fury, shouted aloud, in tones not mild nor measured, the word "Privilege !" A dozen voices took it up, though not so loudly, nor with so marked defiance as the first daring speaker, and the whole House was in the wildest and most uncontrolled confusion.

Smothering for the time his virulent and vengeful fury, the King departed, the door swung heavily behind him ; and with no muttered curses on the head of him who lacked the spirit to perform what he and they yearned equally to execute, frustrated of their desired vengeance, unsatisfied and balked, his hireling desperadoes filed out from the venerable walls their presence had so shamefully polluted.

The night fell, dark and tempestuous withal. The winds wailed mournfully at intervals, at intervals shrieked out with savage fury, and as the heavy clouds were driven reelingly across the firmament, blotting out the faint light of the winking stars, fierce bursts of hail and rain came dashing to the earth,

and ceased as suddenly as they commenced. And ever and anon the thunder growled remotely, but with a sullen rolling that seemed almost continuous, such was the length and frequency of the strong peals, and lightnings flashed on every side the heaven, now in broad quivering sheets of ghastly light that transiently displayed the ragged edges of each fleeting storm-cloud in distant relief, and now in wavy lines of most intense and life-like fire, rushing athwart the rack from zenith to horizon.

Yet turbulent as the night was over the city, and ominous as showed the gathering of the elements, still more alarming was the turbulence that reigned in the full streets, and more portentous was the discourse of the armed and angry citizens. The train bands had been mustered in the early evening with arquebuse and pike, their lighted matches gleaming on all sides through the murky darkness, and the heavy trampling of their companies everywhere audible, as they marched to and fro, vainly desirous to allay the tumult which had arisen instantly on the arrival of the accused members seeking protection in the guarded precincts of the city.

From sunset till dawn the Mayor patrolled the streets, with his assistant magistrates, vainly endeavouring to quell the terrified and savage populace, with whom—all armed as chance had ordered it, some with the perfect implements of modern warfare, others with weapons obsolete and strange, brown-bills, and glaives, and maces—each court and alley, from the purlieus of Alsatia quite to the Tower, was blockaded and beset. Chains were made fast across the most frequented avenues; and barricades of stone and timber, heaped rudely but effectively together, above which yawned the mouth of many a ponderous cannon, would have presented no small obstacles to any who should dare invade the privileged limits. Huge bonfires blazed in every quarter, torches and flambeaux streamed and wavered in each gust of wind, casting a singular and ruddy glare upon the pallid faces and unusual weapons of the unwashed artisans, who formed the bulk of the assemblage; though they were mingled here and there with grave and well-attired burghers, their morions and gorgets at variance with their civic garbs and golden chains—with young and ruffling templars, to whom ought savouring of frolic or of fight was most congenial—and with sad-visaged and morose soldadoes, in suits of buff tarnished and soiled by service, girded with broadswords of unwieldy length, fresh from the

German wars or the Low Countries (then as in every after age the battlefield of Europe)—all keeping up, throughout the live-long night, a dissonance of tongues as loud and jarring as ever rent the air around the heaven-defying Babel.

At times a sudden panic would run through the crowd, none knowing whom to trust or whence to flee—a cry would ring above the mingled din—"The cavaliers! the cavaliers! the cavaliers! Flee! flee! The King and his wild cavaliers are up to fire the city!" and without waiting to enquire or to hear, the mob rushed they knew not whither, trampling the aged and the feeble under foot, and turning oftentimes the very weapons they had belted on to guard their liberties against each other in the blind and reeling rout. Meanwhile with words of fire and gestures of defiance some bolder spirit would brave the panic-stricken throng and rally it and lead it back with brandished arms and inflamed features to meet the foeman who existed only in their imagination maddened with terror and excitement.

Nor was the panic and confusion slighter within the royal palace. Between the hapless King and his perfidious consort distrust, recrimination, wrath, followed by feigned repentance on the one hand, uxorious pardon on the other! Among the councillors dismay and doubt, high words and mutual reproaches, and all the vehement disorder that ensues on the adoption and discomfiture of evil councils! Digby and Lunsford wearying Charles, fainthearted now and dubious, for permission to assail the city gates, and drag the impeached traitors forth from their stronghold at point of partisan and pike! others deploring the rash step already taken, and protesting against further violence; and some, the nobler and more upright spirits, Falkland and Hyde, and their associates, holding themselves aloof in deep resentful sorrow, that all their wisdom had been wasted and themselves distrusted and deceived.

Never was a longer night followed by a sadder morning; for although daylight calmed the terror and the tumult, it allayed nothing of the concentrated wrath, diminished nothing of the jealous apprehensions entertained by either party.

After a short debate the Parliament, both Lords and Commons, adjourned for several days, appointing a committee to sit constantly, mornings and afternoons, at Merchant's Hall within the town walls, where they might be secure from further outrage, and free to devise means for vindication of their members and safeguard of their violated rights.

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Ardenne, informed of their commotions, and anxious for the safety of the city, called for his horse the moment after the adjournment, and, with some six or seven followers well mounted and equipped, rode up the Strand, a scattered street at that day, occupied by the suburban dwellings of the rich and noble, with terraced gardens sloping downwards to the Thames. He was full of calm resolution, and intended instantly to volunteer his aid for putting down the riots, and establishing some governance of law.

When he reached Temple Bar, the gates were closed with bolt and chain, a powerful band of musketeers with gun and bandoleers manning its loops, and mustering at every window that overlooked the area before it. But at the announcement of his quality and name the bolts were drawn, the heavy leaves unfolded, and he entered amid presented arms and muttered greetings of the sentinels. With a pleased eye he saw at once that order was restored. Suspicion still prevailed, and vigilance, but tumult and confusion had given way to wise and watchful regulation. The shops were shut, and business was suspended, it is true, and all men who went forth wore weapons; but the train bands patrolled the streets with magistrates at the head of every company, no less to enforce internal quiet than to resist external force.

Scarce had he ridden twenty yards within the gates, ere a fresh summons roused the warders, and a King's messenger, after some parley, was admitted and conducted by a file of infantry to hearing of the aldermen then sitting at the Guildhall. The business on which Ardenne came directing him to the same quarter, and strong anxiety to learn the future movements of the court still further prompting him, he at once wheeled to the rear of this small band, and passing onward with them was ushered without delay to the Mayor's presence, and in consideration of his place in Parliament accommodated with a seat, whence he might witness the proceedings of the day, and lend his counsel if need were to the magistrates of the city.

To Ardenne's astonishment, as to that indeed of all, the messenger announced that His Majesty was already entering his coach, to wait upon the Mayor, when he had left Whitehall; and that he prayed that dignity to call a common council on the instant.

Sir Richard Gourney, the then holder of the office of Mayor, although inclined not slightly to the principles of the decided

royalists, disclaiming, as did all the wiser of the party, any participation in, or knowledge of, a course which now that it had failed they all professed to disapprove, was careful to display no symptom of subserviency. Perhaps, indeed, he truly felt that wrong had been committed, and was sincere in the determination to maintain inviolate the privileges of which he was the guardian.

The council was at the time in session, and scarcely had the messenger withdrawn before the King arrived, not with the armed and dissolute attendants who had conveyed him to the halls of Parliament, but with some two or three lords only, and those of the most moderate among his partisans. The shouts that rang like wildfire along the crowded streets, mingled with groans and yells—the cries "Privilege! privilege of Parliament!"—announced his presence at the doors of the Guildhall before he had alighted from his coach, and clearly proved the temper of the now thoroughly-aroused and fearless multitude; while as a token of the perfect mastery of the law, even at that moment of tremendous and wellnigh unparalleled excitement, a daring pamphlet writer, who had thrown into the Monarch's coach a paper bearing inscribed the scriptural watchword, "To your tents, O Israel," was instantly committed for contempt.

The city dignitaries rose from their seats on the King's entrance; they tendered to him all—all to the most minute particulars—that was his due, of reverence and ceremonial greeting; but there was no heart-inspired applause—no loyal spirit-stirring cry, "God save the King," no smile, no welcome. Strange it may seem, yet he had hoped indeed, infatuated man, that he should now succeed in gaining the authorities to yield their honoured guests to his demand; and so commenced what he esteemed a mild conciliatory harangue requiring their surrender. His speech was full of statements of his veneration and regard in all past times for England's laws and liberties—of his affection for the Protestant religion, of his enforcement of the penal statutes against the dreaded Papists, and no less full of promises concerning his intentions for the future.

Little applause and no obedience followed. Baffled a second time, and yet more deeply mortified, he left the Guildhall; but desirous still of pleasing, and imagining (shortsighted and deluded prince) that by a slender show of condescension he would efface the recollection of so many arbitrary acts

against the corporate and individual interests of the city, he vouchsafed to one—the worst affected toward his person—of the sheriffs the honour of dining at his house, where he was served, together with his retinue, with more than courtly luxury, with all respect and honour, paid not to himself, but to the station which he occupied.

In the evening, harassed in spirit and fatigued in body, irritated by the reproachful hootings of the multitude that jarred at every instant of his homeward progress on his reluctant ear, and hopeless now of compassing his tyrannical ends, the King retired to his palace, there to give impotent and childish vent to his indignant spleen by publishing a proclamation against all men who should presume to harbour or conceal the persons whom he had previously denounced as traitors.

Days passed away, each marked by some bold resolution of the Commons, by increased tokens of the deep respect and admiration entertained by the great bulk of the capital towards the vindicators of its rights, and by some weak and useless aggravation of his former measures on the part of the misguided and wife-governed monarch.

A week had scarcely rolled over their heads before the House, conscious of its own strength and knowing the entire impotence of the King's party, brought back their members to Westminster, as men against whom no legitimate or constitutional charge was pending; and the broad salvoes of cannon, thundering above the din and clamour of a mighty concourse of people, announced to the disheartened monarch, even in his sad retreat at Hampton, the failure of his aggressions.

—HORACE SMITH, *Oliver Cromwell*.

XVII

A Fight for the King

ON a night in October, 1651, the Parliamentary Colonel Everard, besides his constant attendant Roger Wildrake, had Master Nehemiah Holdenough with him as a guest at supper. The devotions of the evening having been performed according to the Presbyterian fashion, a light entertainment, and a double quart of burnt claret, were placed before his friends at nine o'clock, an hour unusually late. Master Holdenough soon engaged himself in a polemical discourse against Sectarian and Independents, without being aware that his eloquence was not very interesting to his principal hearer, whose ideas in the meanwhile wandered to Woodstock and all which it contained—the Prince, who lay concealed there—his uncle—above all, Alice Lee. As for Wildrake, after bestowing a mental curse both on Sectaries and Presbyterians, as being, in his opinion, never a barrel the better herring, he stretched out his limbs, and would probably have composed himself to rest, but that he as well as his patron had thoughts which murdered sleep.

The party were waited upon by a little gipsy-looking boy, in an orange-tawny doublet, much decayed, and garnished with blue worsted lace. The rogue looked somewhat stinted in size, but active both in intelligence and in limb, as his black eyes seemed to promise by their vivacity. He was an attendant of Wildrake's choice, who had conferred on him the *nom de guerre* of Spitfire, and had promised him promotion so soon as his young protégé, Breakfast, was fit to succeed him in his present office. It need scarce be said that the ménage was maintained entirely at the expense of Colonel Everard, who allowed Wildrake to arrange the household very much according to his pleasure. The page did not omit, in offering the company wine from time

to time, to accommodate Wildrake with about twice the number of opportunities of refreshing himself which he considered it necessary to afford to the Colonel or his reverend guest.

While they were thus engaged, the good divine lost in his own argument, and the hearers in their private thoughts, their attention was about half-past ten arrested by a knocking at the door of the house. To those who have anxious hearts, trifles give cause of alarm.

Even a thing so simple as a knock at the door may have a character which excites apprehension. This was no quiet, gentle tap, intimating a modest intruder; no redoubled rattle, as the pompous annunciation of some vain person; neither did it resemble the formal summons to formal business, nor the cheerful visit of some welcome friend. It was a single blow, solemn and stern, if not actually menacing in the sound. The door was opened by some of the persons of the house; a heavy foot ascended the stair, a stout man entered the room, and drawing the cloak from his face, said, "Markham Everard, I greet thee in God's name."

It was General Cromwell.

Everard, surprised and taken at unawares, endeavoured in vain to find words to express his astonishment. A bustle occurred in receiving the General, assisting him to uncloak himself, and offering in dumb show the civilities of reception. The General cast his keen eye around the apartment, and fixing it first on the divine, addressed Everard as follows:

"A reverend man I see is with thee. Thou art not one of those, good Markham, who let the time unnoted and unimproved pass away. Casting aside the things of this world—pressing forward to those of the next—it is by thus using our time in this poor seat of terrestrial sin and care, that we may, as it were—But how is this?"—he continued, suddenly changing his tone, and speaking briefly, sharply, and anxiously—"one hath left the room since I entered?"

Wildrake had, indeed, been absent for a minute or two, but had now returned, and stepped forward from a bay window, as if he had been out of sight only, not out of the apartment. "Not so, sir; I stood but in the background out of respect. Noble General, I hope all is well with the Estate, that your Excellency makes us so late a visit? Would not your Excellency choose some——"

"Ah!" said Oliver, looking sternly and fixedly at him—"no, sir; at present, I desire nothing more than a kind recep-

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tion, which, methinks, my friend Markham Everard is in no hurry to give me."

"You bring your own welcome, my lord," said Everard, compelling himself to speak. "I can only trust it was no bad news that made your Excellency a late traveller, and ask, like my follower, what refreshment I shall command for your accommodation."

"The State is sound and healthy, Colonel Everard," said the General; "and yet the less so, that many of its members, who have been hitherto workers together, and propounders of good counsel, and advancers of the public weal, have now waxed cold in their love and in their affection for the Good Cause, for which we should be ready, in our various degrees, to act and do, so soon as we are called to act that whereunto we are appointed, neither rashly nor over-slothfully, neither lukewarmly nor over-violently, but with such a frame and disposition, in which zeal and charity may, as it were, meet and kiss each other in our streets. Howbeit, because we look back after we have put our hand to the plough, therefore is our force waxed dim."

"Pardon me, sir," said Nehemiah Holdenough, who, listening with some impatience, began to guess in whose company he stood—"pardon me, for unto this I have a warrant to speak."

"Ah! ah!" said Cromwell. "Surely, most worthy sir, we grieve the Spirit when we restrain those pourings forth, which, like water from a rock ——"

"Nay, therein I differ from you, sir," said Holdenough; "for as there is the mouth to transmit the food, and the profit to digest what Heaven hath sent; so is the preacher ordained to teach, and the people to hear,—the shepherd to gather the flock into the sheepfold, the sheep to profit by the care of the shepherd."

"Ah! my worthy sir," said Cromwell, with much unction, "methinks you verge upon the great mistake, which supposes that churches are tall large houses built by masons, and hearers are men—wealthy men, who pay tithes, the larger as well as the less; and that the priests, men in black gowns or grey cloaks, who receive the same, are in guerdon the only distributors of Christian blessings; whereas, in my apprehension, there is more of Christian liberty in leaving it to the discretion of the hungry soul to seek his edification where it can be found, whether from the mouth of a lay teacher, who claimeth

his warrant from Heaven alone, or at the dispensation of those who take ordination and degrees from synods and universities, at best but associations of poor sinful creatures like themselves."

Here an officer opened the door and looked in, to whom Cromwell, exchanging the canting drawl, in which it seemed he might have gone on interminably, for the short brief tone of action, called out, "Pearson, is he come?"

"No, sir," replied Pearson; "we have enquired for him at the place you noted, and also at other haunts of his about the town."

"The knave!" said Cromwell, with bitter emphasis; "can he have proved false?—No, no, his interest is too deeply engaged. We shall find him by-and-by.—Hark thee hither."

Everard was certain that the personal attendance of Cromwell must be on some most important account, and he could not but strongly suspect that the General had some information respecting Charles's lurking-place. If taken, a renewal of the tragedy of the 30th January was instantly to be apprehended, and the ruin of the whole family of Lee, with himself probably included, must be the necessary consequence.

He looked eagerly for consolation at Wildrake, whose countenance expressed much alarm, which he endeavoured to bear out with his usual look of confidence. But the weight within was too great; he shuffled with his feet, rolled his eyes, and twisted his hands, like an unassured witness before an acute and not to be deceived judge.

Oliver, meanwhile, left his company not a minute's leisure to take counsel together. Even while his perplexed eloquence flowed on in a stream so mazy that no one could discover which way its course was tending, his sharp watchful eye rendered all attempts of Everard to hold communication with Wildrake, even by signs, altogether vain. Everard, indeed, looked for an instant at the window, then glanced at Wildrake, as if to hint there might be a possibility to escape that way. But the cavalier had replied with a disconsolate shake of the head, so slight as to be almost imperceptible. Everard, therefore, lost all hope, and the melancholy feeling of approaching and inevitable evil was only varied by anxiety concerning the shape and manner in which it was about to make its approach.

But Wildrake had a spark of hope left. The very instant Cromwell entered he had got out of the room, and down to

the door of the house. "Back—back!" repeated by two armed sentinels, convinced him that, as his fears had anticipated, the General had come neither unattended nor unprepared. He turned on his heel, ran upstairs, and meeting on the landing-place the boy whom he called Spitfire, hurried him into the small apartment which he occupied as his own. Wildrake had been shooting that morning, and game lay on the table. He pulled a feather from a woodcock's wing, and saying hastily, "For thy life, Spitfire, mind my orders. I will put thee safe out at the window into the court—the yard wall is not high—and there will be no sentry there. Fly to the Lodge, as thou wouldst win Heaven, and give this feather to Mistress Alice Lee, if possible—if not, to Joceline Joliffe. Say I have won the wager of the young lady. Dost mark me, boy?"

The sharp-witted youth clapped his hand in his master's, and only replied, "Done, and done."

Wildrake opened the window, and, though the height was considerable, he contrived to let the boy down safely by holding his cloak. A heap of straw on which Spitfire lighted rendered the descent perfectly safe, and Wildrake saw him scramble over the wall of the courtyard, at the angle which bore on a back lane; and so rapidly was this accomplished, that the cavalier had just re-entered the room, when, the bustle attending Cromwell's arrival subsiding, his own absence began to be noticed.

He remained during Cromwell's lecture on the vanity of creeds, anxious in mind whether he might not have done better to send an explicit verbal message, since there was no time to write. But the chance of the boy being stopped, or becoming confused with feeling himself the messenger of a hurried and important communication, made him, on the whole, glad that he had preferred a more enigmatical way of conveying the intelligence. He had, therefore, the advantage of his patron, for he was conscious still of a spark of hope.

Everard, desirous at once of knowing how far he stood committed, at last said, "Your Excellency seems to have something in your mind in which I am concerned. May I request you will speak it out, that I may know what I am accused of?"

"Ah, Mark, Mark!" replied the General, "there needeth no accuser speak when the still small voice speaks within us. Is there not moisture on thy brow, Mark Everard?—is there

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not trouble in thine eye?—is there not a failure in thy frame?—and who ever saw such things in noble and stout Markham Everard, whose brow was only moist after having worn the helmet for a summer's day—whose hand only shook when it had wielded for hours the weighty falchion? But go to, man! thou doubttest over much. Hast thou not been to me as a brother, and shall I not forgive thee even the seventy-seventh time? The knave hath tarried somewhere, who should have done by this time an office of much import. Take advantage of his absence, Mark; it is a grace that God gives thee beyond expectance. I do not say, fall at my feet; but speak to me as a friend to his friend."

"I have never said anything to your Excellency that was in the least undeserving the title you have assigned to me," said Colonel Everard proudly.

"Nay, nay, Markham," answered Cromwell; "I say not you have—but—but you ought to have remembered the message I sent you by that person" (pointing to Wildrake); "and you must reconcile it with your conscience, how, having such a message, guarded with such reasons, you could think yourself at liberty to expel my friends from Woodstock, being determined to disappoint my object, whilst you availed yourself of the boon, on condition of which my warrant was issued."

Everard was about to reply, when, to his astonishment, Wildrake stepped forward; and with a voice and look very different from his ordinary manner, and approaching a good deal to real dignity of mind, said boldly and calmly, "You are mistaken, Master Cromwell; and address yourself to the wrong party here."

The speech was so sudden and intrepid that Cromwell stepped a pace back, and motioned with his right hand towards his weapon, as if he had expected that an address of a nature so unusually bold was to be followed by some act of violence. He instantly resumed his indifferent posture; and irritated at a smile which he observed on Wildrake's countenance, he said, with the dignity of one long accustomed to see all tremble before him, "This to me, fellow! Know you to whom you speak?"

"Fellow!" echoed Wildrake, whose reckless humour was now completely set afloat—"no fellow of yours, Master Oliver, I have known the day when Roger Wildrake of Squattlesea-mere, Lincoln, a handsome young gallant, with a

good estate, would have been thought no fellow of the bankrupt brewer of Huntingdon."

"Be silent!" said Everard; "be silent, Wildrake, if you love your life!"

"I care not a maravedi for my life," said Wildrake. "Zounds, if he dislikes what I say, let him take to his tools! I know, after all, he hath good blood in his veins; and I will indulge him with a turn in the court yonder, had he been ten times a brewer."

"Such ribaldry, friend," said Oliver, "I treat with the contempt it deserves. But if thou hast anything to say touching the matter in question, speak out like a man, though thou look'st more like a beast."

"All I have to say is," replied Wildrake, "that whereas you blame Everard for acting on your warrant, as you call it, I can tell you, he knew not a word of the rascally conditions you talk of. I took care of that; and you may take the vengeance on me, if you list."

"Slave, dare you tell this to me?" said Cromwell, still heedfully restraining his passion, which he felt was about to discharge itself upon an unworthy object.

"Ay, you will make every Englishman a slave, if you have your own way," said Wildrake, not a whit abashed—for the awe which had formerly overcome him when alone with this remarkable man, had vanished now that they were engaged in an altercation before witnesses. "But do your worst, Master Oliver; I tell you beforehand, the bird has escaped you."

"You dare not say so! Escaped?—So, ho! Pearson! tell the soldiers to mount instantly.—Thou art a lying fool!—Escaped?—Where, or from whence?"

"Ay, that is the question," said Wildrake; "for look you, sir—that men do go from hence is certain; but how they go, or to what quarter——"

Cromwell stood attentive, expecting some useful hint from the careless impetuosity of the cavalier, upon the route which the King might have taken.

—"Or to what quarter, as I said before, why, your Excellency, Master Oliver, may e'en find that out yourself"

As he uttered the last words he unsheathed his rapier, and made a full pass at the General's body. Had his sword met no other impediment than the buff jerkin, Cromwell's course had ended on the spot. But, fearful of such attempts, the General wore under his military dress a shirt of the finest

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mail, made of rings of the best steel, and so light and flexible that it was little or no encumbrance to the motions of the wearer. It proved his safety on this occasion, for the rapier sprang in shivers; while the owner, now held back by Everard and Holdenough, flung the hilt with passion on the ground, exclaiming, "Be damned the hand that forged thee! To serve me so long, and fail me when thy true service would have honoured us both for ever!"

In the first instant of alarm, and perhaps suspecting Wildrake might be supported by others, Cromwell half drew from his bosom a concealed pistol, which he hastily returned, observing that both Everard and the clergyman were withholding the cavalier from another attempt.

Pearson and a soldier or two rushed in. "Secure that fellow," said the General, in the indifferent tone of one to whom imminent danger was too familiar to cause irritation. "Bind him—but not so hard, Pearson";—for the men, to show their zeal, were drawing their belts, which they used for want of cords, brutally tight round Wildrake's limbs. "He would have assassinated me, but I would reserve him for his fit doom."

"Assassinated! I scorn your words, Master Oliver," said Wildrake; "I proffered you a fair duello."

"Shall we shoot him in the street, for an example?" said Pearson to Cromwell; while Everard endeavoured to stop Wildrake from giving further offence.

"On your life, harm him not; but let him be kept in safe ward, and well looked after," said Cromwell; while the prisoner exclaimed to Everard:

"I prithee let me alone. I am now neither thy follower nor any man's, and I am as willing to die as ever I was to take a cup of liquor. And hark ye, speaking of that, Master Oliver, you were once a jolly fellow; prithee let one of thy lobsters here advance yonder tankard to my lips, and your Excellency shall hear a toast, a song, and a—secret."

"Unloose his head, and hand the debauched beast the tankard," said Oliver; "while yet he exists, it were shame to refuse him the element he lives in."

"Blessings on your head for once!" said Wildrake, whose object in continuing this wild discourse was, if possible, to gain a little delay, when every moment was precious. "Thou hast brewed good ale, and that's warrant for a blessing. For my toast and my song, here they go together:

'Son of a witch,
 Mayst thou die in a ditch,
 With the butchers who back thy quarrels;
 And rot above ground,
 While the world shall resound
 A welcome to royal King Charles!'

And now for my secret, that you might not say I had your liquor for nothing—I fancy my song will scarce pass current for much. My secret is, Master Cromwell—that the bird is flown, and your red nose will be as white as your winding-sheet before you can smell out which way."

"Pshaw, rascal," answered Cromwell contemptuously, "keep your scurril jests for the gibbet foot."

"I shall look on the gibbet more boldly," replied Wildrake, "than I have seen you look on the Royal Martyr's picture."

This reproach touched Cromwell to the very quick. "Villain!" he exclaimed; "drag him hence, draw out a party, and—— But hold, not now—to prison with him—let him be close watched, and gagged, if he attempts to speak to the sentinels. Nay, hold—I mean, put a bottle of brandy into his cell, and he will gag himself in his own way, I warrant you. When day comes, that men can see the example, he shall be gagged after my fashion."

During the various breaks in his orders, the General was evidently getting command of his temper; and though he began in fury, he ended with the contemptuous sneer of one who overlooks the abusive language of an inferior. Something remained on his mind, notwithstanding, for he continued stationary, as if fixed to the same spot in the apartment, his eyes bent on the ground, and with closed hand pressed against his lips, like a man who is musing deeply. Pearson, who was about to speak to him, drew back, and made a sign to those in the room to be silent.

"Ah! Everard," exclaimed the General, "thou mightest put this gear to rights if thou wilt! Shall some foolish principle of fantastic punctilio have more weight with thee, man, than have the pacification and welfare of England—the keeping of faith to thy friend and benefactor, and who will be yet more so, and the fortune and security of thy relations? Are these, I say, lighter in the balance than the cause of a worthless boy, who, with his father and his father's house, have troubled Israel for fifty years?"

"I do not understand your Excellency, nor at what service

you point, which I can honestly render," replied Everard. "That which is dishonest I should be loath that you proposed."

"Then this at least might suit your honesty, or scrupulous humour, call it which thou wilt," said Cromwell. "Thou knowest, surely, all the passages about Jezebel's palace down yonder? Let me know how they may be guarded against the escape of any from within."

"I cannot pretend to aid you in this matter," said Everard; "I know not all the entrances and posterns about Woodstock; and if I did, I am not free in conscience to communicate with you on this occasion."

"We shall do without you, sir," replied Cromwell, haughtily; "and if aught is found which may criminate you, remember you have lost right to my protection."

"I shall be sorry," said Everard, "to have lost your friendship, General, but I trust my quality as an Englishman may dispense with the necessity of protection from any man. I know no law which obliges me to be spy or informer, even if I were in the way of having opportunity to do service in either honourable capacity."

"Well, sir," said Cromwell, "for all your privileges and qualities, I will make bold to take you down to the Lodge at Woodstock to-night, to enquire into affairs in which the State is concerned. Come hither, Pearson." He took a paper from his pocket containing a rough sketch or ground-plan of Woodstock Lodge, with the avenues leading to it. "Look here," he said, "we must move in two bodies on foot, and with all possible silence. Thou must march to the rear of the old house of iniquity with twenty file of men, and dispose them around it the wisest thou canst. Take the reverend man there along with you. He must be secured at any rate, and may serve as a guide. I myself will occupy the front of the Lodge, and thus having stopt all the earths, thou wilt come to me for farther orders—silence and dispatch is all. Reverend sir, be pleased to accompany that officer. Colonel Everard, you are to follow me; but first give your sword to Captain Pearson, and consider yourself as under arrest."

Everard gave his sword to Pearson without any comment, and with the most anxious presage of evil followed the Republican General, in obedience to commands which it would have been useless to dispute.

Cromwell, finding it no longer possible to conceal his per-

sonal presence, disposed of every thing so as to be ready at a minute's notice. Half his soldiers he caused to dismount, and had the horses put into quarters; the other half were directed to keep their horses saddled, and themselves ready to mount at an instant's warning. The men were brought into the house by turns, and had some refreshment, leaving a sufficient guard on the horses, which was changed from time to time.

Thus Cromwell waited with no little uncertainty, often casting an anxious eye upon Colonel Everard, who, he suspected, could, if he chose it, well supply the place of his absent confidant. Everard endured this calmly, with unaltered countenance, and brow neither ruffled nor dejected.

Midnight at length tolled, and it became necessary to take some decisive step. He at length gave orders to Pearson to get the men under arms—he directed him concerning the mode of forming them, and that they should march with the utmost possible silence; or, as it was given out in the orders, "Even as Gideon marched in silence, when he went down against the camp of the Midianites, with only Phurah his servant. Peradventure," continued this strange document, "we too may learn of what yonder Midianites have dreamed."

A single patrol, followed by a corporal and five steady, experienced soldiers, formed the advanced guard of the party; then followed the main body. A rearguard of ten men guarded Everard and the minister. Cromwell required the attendance of the former, as it might be necessary to examine him, or confront him with others; and he carried Master Holdenough with him, because he might escape if left behind, and perhaps raise some tumult in the village. The Presbyterians, though they not only concurred with, but led the way in the civil war, were at its conclusion highly dissatisfied with the ascendancy of the military sectaries, and not to be trusted as cordial agents in anything where their interest was concerned. The infantry, being disposed of as we have noticed, marched off from the left of their line, Cromwell and Pearson, both on foot, keeping at the head of the centre, or main body of the detachment. They were all armed with petronels, short guns similar to the modern carbine, and, like them, used by horsemen. They marched in the most profound silence and with the utmost regularity, the whole body moving like one man.

About one hundred yards behind the rearmost of the dis-

mounted party came the troopers, who remained on horseback; and it seemed as if even the irrational animals were sensible to Cromwell's orders, for the horses did not neigh, and even appeared to place their feet on the earth cautiously, and with less noise than usual.

Their leader, full of anxious thoughts, never spoke, save to enforce by whispers his caution respecting silence, while the men, surprised and delighted to find themselves under the command of their renowned General, and destined, doubtless, for some secret service of high import, used the utmost precaution in attending to his reiterated orders.

They marched down the street of the little borough in the order we have mentioned. Few of the townsmen were abroad; and one or two, who had protracted the orgies of the evening to that unusual hour, were too happy to escape the notice of a strong party of soldiers, who often acted in the character of police, to enquire about their purpose for being under arms so late, or the route which they were pursuing.

The external gate of the Chase had, ever since the party had arrived at Woodstock, been strictly guarded by three files of troopers, to cut off all communication between the Lodge and the town. Spitfire, Wildrake's emissary, who had often been a bird-nesting or on similar mischievous excursions in the forest, had evaded these men's vigilance by climbing over a breach, with which he was well acquainted, in a different part of the wall.

Between this party and the advanced guard of Cromwell's detachment, a whispered challenge was exchanged, according to the rules of discipline. The infantry entered the Park, and were followed by the cavalry, who were directed to avoid the hard road, and ride as much as possible upon the turf which bordered on the avenue. Here, too, an additional precaution was used, a file or two of foot soldiers being detached to search the woods on either hand, and make prisoner, or, in the event of resistance, put to death, any whom they might find lurking there, under what pretence soever.

Meanwhile the weather began to show itself as propitious to Cromwell as he had found most incidents in the course of his successful career. The grey mist, which had hitherto obscured everything, and rendered marching in the wood embarrassing and difficult, had now given way to the moon, which, after many efforts, at length forced her way through the vapour, and hung her dim dull crescent in the heavens, which she enlightened,

as the dying lamp of an anchorite does the cell in which he reposes. The party were in sight of the front of the palace, when Holdenough whispered to Everard, as they walked near each other: "See ye not—yonder flutters the mysterious light in the turret of the incontinent Rosamund? This night will try whether the devil of the Sectaries or the devil of the Malignants shall prove the stronger. O, sing jubilee, for the kingdom of Satan is divided against itself!"

Here the divine was interrupted by a non-commissioned officer, who came hastily, yet with noiseless steps, to say, in a low stern whisper, "Silence, prisoner in the rear—silence, on pain of death."

They moved with the same silence as formerly, notwithstanding the difficulties which they encountered from being unacquainted with the road and its various intricacies. At length they were challenged, in a low voice, by one of their own sentinels, two concentric circles of whom had been placed around the Lodge, so close to each other as to preclude the possibility of an individual escaping from within. The outer guard was maintained partly by horse upon the roads and open lawn, and where the ground was broken and bushy by infantry. The inner circle was guarded by foot soldiers only. The whole were in the highest degree alert, expecting some interesting and important consequences from the unusual expedition on which they were engaged.

"Any news, Pearson?" said the General to his aide-de-camp, who came instantly to report to his superior.

He received for answer, "None."

Cromwell led his officer forward just opposite to the door of the Lodge, and there paused betwixt the circles of guards, so that their conversation could not be overheard.

He then pursued his enquiry, demanding—"Were there any lights, any appearances of stirring, any attempt at sally, any preparation for defence?"

"All as silent as the valley of the shadow of death—even as the vale of Jehosaphat."

"Pshaw! tell me not of Jehosaphat, Pearson," said Cromwell. "These words are good for others, but not for thee. Speak plainly, and like a blunt soldier as thou art. Each man hath his own mode of speech; and bluntness, not sanctity, is thine."

"Well then, nothing has been stirring," said Pearson. "Yet peradventure——"

"Peradventure not me," said Cromwell, "or thou wilt tempt me to knock thy teeth out. I ever distrust a man when he speaks after another fashion from his own."

"Zounds! let me speak to an end," answered Pearson, "and I will speak in what language your Excellency will."

"Thy Zounds, friend," said Oliver, "showeth little of grace, but much of sincerity. Go to, then—thou knowest I love and trust thee. Hast thou kept close watch? It behoves us to know that, before giving the alarm."

"On my soul," said Pearson, "I have watched as closely as a cat at a mouse-hole. It is beyond possibility that anything could have eluded our vigilance, or even stirred within the house, without our being aware of it."

"Tis well," said Cromwell. "Thy services shall not be forgotten, Pearson. Thou canst not preach and pray, but thou canst obey thine orders, Gilbert Pearson, and that may make amends."

"I thank your Excellency," replied Pearson; "but I beg leave to chime in with the humours of the times. A poor fellow hath no right to hold himself singular."

He paused, expecting Cromwell's orders what next was to be done, and, indeed, not a little surprised that the General's active and prompt spirit had suffered him, during a moment so critical, to cast away a thought upon a circumstance so trivial as his officer's peculiar mode of expressing himself. He wondered still more, when, by a brighter gleam of moonshine than he had yet enjoyed, he observed that Cromwell was standing motionless, his hands supported upon his sword, which he had taken out of the belt, and his stern brows bent on the ground. He waited for some time impatiently, yet afraid to interfere, lest he should awaken this unwonted fit of ill-timed melancholy into anger and impatience. He listened to the muttering sounds which escaped from the half-opening lips of his principal, in which the words, "hard necessity," which occurred more than once, were all of which the sense could be distinguished. "My Lord General," at length he said, "time flies."

"Peace, busy fiend, and urge me not!" said Cromwell. "Think'st thou, like other fools, that I have made a paction with the devil for success, and am bound to do my work within an appointed hour, lest the spell should lose its force?"

"I only think, my Lord General," said Pearson, "that

Fortune has put into your offer what you have long desired to make prize of, and that you hesitate."

Cromwell sighed deeply as he answered, "Ah, Pearson, in this troubled world, a man who is called, like me, to work great things in Israel, had need to be, as the poets feign, a thing made of hardened metal, immovable to feelings of human charities, impassible, resistless. Pearson, the world will hereafter, perchance, think of me as being such a one as I have described, 'an iron man, and made of iron mould.' Yet they will wrong my memory—my heart is flesh, and my blood is mild as that of others. When I was a sportsman, I have wept for the gallant heron that was struck down by my hawk, and sorrowed for the hare which lay screaming under the jaws of my greyhound; and canst thou think it a light thing to me, that, the blood of this lad's father lying in some measure upon my head, I should now put in peril that of the son? They are of the kindly race of English sovereigns, and, doubtless, are adored like to demigods by those of their own party. I am called Parricide, Bloodthirsty, Usurper, already, for shedding the blood of one man, that the plague might be stayed—or as Achan was slain that Israel might thereafter stand against the face of their enemies. Nevertheless, who has spoke unto me graciously since that high deed? Those who acted in the matter with me are willing that I should be the scapegoat of atonement—those who looked on and helped not bear themselves now as if they had been borne down by violence; and while I look that they should shout applause on me, because of the victory of Worcester, whereof the Lord had made me the poor instrument, they look aside to say, 'Ha! ha! the Kingkiller, the Parricide—soon shall his place be made desolate.'—Truly it is a great thing, Gilbert Pearson, to be lifted above the multitude; but when one feeleth that his exaltation is rather hailed with hate and scorn than with love and reverence, in sooth it is still a hard matter for a mild, tender-conscienced, infirm spirit to bear; and God be my witness that, rather than do this new deed, I would shed my own best heart's blood in a pitched field, twenty against one." Here he fell into a flood of tears, which he sometimes was wont to do. This extremity of emotion was of a singular character. It was not actually the result of penitence, and far less that of absolute hypocrisy, but arose merely from the temperature of that remarkable man, whose deep policy, and ardent enthusiasm, were intermingled with a strain of hypo-

chondriacal passion, which often led him to exhibit scenes of this sort, though seldom, as now, when he was called to the execution of great undertakings.

Pearson, well acquainted as he was with the peculiarities of his General, was baffled and confounded by this fit of hesitation and contrition, by which his enterprising spirit appeared to be so suddenly paralyzed. After a moment's silence, he said, with some dryness of manner, "If this be the case, it is a pity your Excellency came hither. Corporal Humgudgeon and I, the greatest saint and greatest sinner in your army, had done the deed, and divided the guilt and the honour betwixt us."

"Ha!" said Cromwell, as if touched to the quick, "wouldst thou take the prey from the lion?"

"If the lion behaves like a village cur," said Pearson, boldly, "who now barks and seems as if he would tear all to pieces, and now flies from a raised stick or a stone, I know not why I should fear him. If Lambert had been here, there had been less speaking and more action."

"Lambert? What of Lambert?" said Cromwell, very sharply.

"Only," said Pearson, "that I long since hesitated whether I should follow your Excellency or him; and I begin to be uncertain whether I have made the best choice, that's all."

"Lambert!" exclaimed Cromwell, impatiently, yet softening his voice lest he should be overheard descanting on the character of his rival, "what is Lambert?—a tulip-fancying fellow, whom nature intended for a Dutch gardener at Delft or Rotterdam. Ungrateful as thou art, what could Lambert have done for thee?"

"He would not," answered Pearson, "have stood here hesitating before a locked door, when fortune presented the means of securing, by one blow, his own fortune, and that of all who followed him."

"Thou art right, Gilbert Pearson," said Cromwell, grasping his officer's hand and strongly pressing it. "Be the half of this bold attempt thine, whether the reckoning be on earth or heaven."

"Be the whole of it mine hereafter," said Pearson, hardily, "so your Excellency have the advantage of it upon earth. Step back to the rear till I force the door; there may be danger, if despair induce them to make a desperate sally."

"And if they do sally, is there one of my ironsides who fears

fire or steel less than myself?" said the General. "Let ten of the most determined men follow us, two with halberds, two with petronels, the others with pistols.—Let all their arms be loaded, and fire without hesitation, if there is any attempt to resist or to sally forth. Let Corporal Humgudgeon be with them, and do thou remain here, and watch against escape, as thou wouldst watch for thy salvation."

The General then struck at the door with the hilt of his sword—at first with a single blow or two, then with a reverberation of strokes that made the ancient building ring again. This noisy summons was repeated once or twice without producing the least effect.

"What can this mean?" said Cromwell; "they cannot surely have fled, and left the house empty?"

"No," replied Pearson, "I will ensure you against that; but your Excellency strikes so fiercely, you allow no time for an answer. Hark! I hear the baying of a hound, and the voice of a man who is quieting him. Shall we break in at once, or hold parley?"

"I will speak to them first," said Cromwell—"Hollo! who is within there?"

"Who is it enquires?" answered Sir Henry Lee from the interior; "or what want you here at this dead hour?"

"We come by warrant of the Commonwealth of England," said the General.

"I must see your warrant ere I undo either bolt or latch," replied the Knight; "we are enough of us to make good the castle; neither I nor my fellows will deliver it up but upon good quarter and conditions; and we will not treat for these save in fair daylight."

"Since you will not yield to our right, you must try our might," replied Cromwell. "Look to yourselves within: the door will be in the midst of you in five minutes."

"Look to yourselves without," replied the stout-hearted Sir Henry; "we will pour out shot upon you, if you attempt the least violence."

But, alas! while he assumed this bold language, his whole garrison consisted of two poor terrified women; for his son, in conformity with the plan which they had fixed upon, had withdrawn from the hall into the secret recesses of the palace.

A dreadful explosion shattered the door, strong as it was, to pieces, and brought down the glass clattering from the windows, with all the painted heroes and heroines who had been

recorded on that fragile place of memory for centuries. The women shrieked incessantly, and were answered by the bellowing of Bevis, though shut up at a distance from the scene of action. The knight, shaking Phœbe from him with difficulty, advanced into the hall to meet those who rushed in, with torches lighted, and weapons prepared.

"Death to all who resist—life to those who surrender!" exclaimed Cromwell, stamping with his foot. "Who commands this garrison?"

"Sir Henry Lee of Ditchley," answered the old knight, stepping forward; "who, having no other garrison than two weak women, is compelled to submit to what he would willingly have resisted."

"Disarm the inveterate and malignant rebel," cried Oliver. "Art thou not ashamed, sir, to detain me before the door of a house which you had no force to defend? Wearest thou so white a beard, and knowest thou not that to refuse surrendering an indefensible post, by the martial law, deserves hanging?"

"My beard and I," said Sir Henry, "have settled that matter between us, and agree right cordially. It is better to run the risk of being hanged, like honest men, than to give up our trust like cowards and traitors."

"Ha! say'st thou?" said Cromwell; "thou hast powerful motives, I doubt not, for running thy head into a noose. But I will speak with thee by-and-by.—Ho! Pearson, Gilbert Pearson, take this scroll. Take the elder woman with thee. Let her guide you to the various places therein mentioned. Search every room therein set down, and arrest, or slay upon the slightest resistance, whomsoever you find there. Then note those places marked as commanding points for cutting off intercourse through the mansion—the landing-places of the great staircase, the great gallery, and so forth. Use the woman civilly. The plan annexed to the scroll will point out the posts, even if she prove stupid or refractory. Meanwhile, the corporal, with a party, will bring the old man and the girl there to some apartment—the parlour, I think, called Victor Lee's, will do as well as another. We will then be out of this stifling smell of gunpowder."

So saying, and without requiring any farther assistance or guidance, he walked towards the apartment he had named. Sir Henry had his own feelings, when he saw the unhesitating decision with which the General led the way, and which

seemed to intimate a more complete acquaintance with the various localities of Woodstock than was consistent with his own present design, to engage the Commonwealth party in a fruitless search through the intricacies of the Lodge.

"I will now ask thee a few questions, old man," said the General, when they had arrived in the room; "and I warn thee, that hope of pardon for thy many and persevering efforts against the Commonwealth can be no otherwise merited than by the most direct answers to the questions I am about to ask."

Sir Henry bowed. He would have spoken, but he felt his temper rising high, and became afraid it might be exhausted before the part he had settled to play, in order to afford the King time for his escape, should be brought to an end.

"What household have you had here, Sir Henry Lee, within these few days—what guests—what visitors? We know that your means of housekeeping are not so profuse as usual, so the catalogue cannot be burdensome to your memory."

"Far from it," replied the knight, with unusual command of temper; "my daughter, and latterly my son, have been my guests; and I have had these females, and one Joceline Joliffe, to attend upon us."

"I do not ask after the regular members of your household, but after those who have been within your gates, either as guests, or as malignant fugitives taking shelter."

"There may have been more of both kinds, sir, than I, if it please your valour, am able to answer for," replied the knight. "I remember my kinsman Everard was here one morning; also, I bethink me, a follower of his, called Wildrake."

"Did you not also receive a young cavalier, called Louis Garnegey?" said Cromwell.

"I remember no such name, were I to hang for it," said the knight.

"Kerneguy, or some such word," said the General; "we will not quarrel for a sound."

"A Scotch lad, called Louis Kerneguy, was a guest of mine," said Sir Henry; "and left me this morning for Dorsetshire."

"So late!" exclaimed Cromwell, stamping with his foot. "How fate contrives to baffle us, even when she seems most favourable! What direction did he take, old man?" continued Cromwell—"what horse did he ride—who went with him?"

"My son went with him," replied the knight; "he brought him here as the son of a Scottish lord.—I pray you, sir, to be

finished with these questions ; for although I owe thee, as Will Shakspeare says,

' Respect for thy great place, and let the devil
Be sometimes honour'd for his burning throne,'—

yet I feel my patience wearing thin."

Cromwell here whispered to the corporal, who in turn uttered orders to two soldiers, who left the room. "Place the knight aside ; we will now examine the servant damsel," said the General.—"Dost thou know," said he to Phœbe, "of the presence of one Louis Kerneguy, calling himself a Scotch page, who came here a few days since ?"

"Surely, sir," she replied, "I cannot easily forget him ; and I warrant no well-looking wench that comes in his way will be like to forget him either."

"Aha," said Cromwell, 'sayest thou so ? truly I believe the woman will prove the truer witness. When did he leave this house ?'

"Nay, I know nothing of his movements, not I," said Phœbe ; "I am only glad to keep out of his way. But if he have actually gone hence, I am sure he was here some two hours since, for he crossed me in the lower passage, between the hall and the kitchen."

"How did you know it was he ?" demanded Cromwell.

"By a rude enough token," said Phœbe.—"La, sir, you do ask such questions !" she added hanging down her head.

Humgudgeon here interfered, taking upon himself the freedom of a coadjutor. "Verily," he said, "if what the damsel is called to speak upon hath aught unseemly, I crave your Excellency's permission to withdraw, not desiring that my nightly meditations may be disturbed with tales of such a nature."

"Nay, your honour," said Phœbe, "I scorn the old man's words, in the way of seemliness or unseemliness either. Master Louis did but snatch a kiss, that is the truth of it, if it must be told."

Here Humgudgeon groaned deeply, while his Excellency avoided laughing with some difficulty. "Thou hast given excellent tokens, Phœbe," he said ; "and if they be true, as I think they seem to be, thou shalt not lack thy reward.—And here comes our spy from the stables."

"There are not the least signs," said the trooper, "that horses have been in the stables for a month—there is no litter

in the stalls, no hay in the racks, the corn-bins are empty, and the mangers are full of cobwebs."

"Ay, ay," said the old knight, "I have seen when I kept twenty good horses in these stalls, with many a groom and stable boy to attend them."

"In the meanwhile," said Cromwell, "their present state tells little for the truth of your own story, that there were horses to-day, on which this Kerneguy and your son fled from justice."

"I did not say that the horses were kept there," said the knight. "I have horses and stables elsewhere."

"Fie, fie, for shame, for shame!" said the General; "can a white-bearded man—I ask it once more—be a false witness?"

"Faith, sir," said Sir Henry Lee, "it is a thriving trade, and I wonder not that you who live on it are so severe in prosecuting interlopers. But it is the times, and those who rule the times, that make greybeards deceivers."

"Thou art facetious, friend, as well as daring, in thy malignancy," said Cromwell; "but credit me, I will cry quittance with you ere I am done. Whereunto lead these doors?"

"To bedrooms," answered the knight.

"Bedrooms! only to bedrooms?" said the Republican General in a voice which indicated, such was the internal occupation of his thoughts, that he had not fully understood the answer.

"Lord, sir," said the knight, "why should you make it so strange? I say these doors lead to bedrooms—to places where honest men sleep, and rogues lie awake."

"You are running up a farther account, Sir Henry," said the General; "but we will balance it once and for all."

During the whole of the scene, Cromwell, whatever might be the internal uncertainty of his mind, maintained the most strict temperance in language and manner, just as if he had no farther interest in what was passing than as a military man employed in discharging the duty enjoined him by his superiors. But the restraint upon his passion was but

"The torrent's smoothness ere it dash below."

The course of his resolution was hurried on even more forcibly, because no violence of expression attended or announced its current. He threw himself into a chair, with a countenance that indicated no indecision of mind, but a deter-

mination which awaited only the signal for action. Meanwhile the knight, as if resolved in nothing to forego the privileges of his rank and place, sat himself down in turn, and putting on his hat which lay on a table, regarded the General with a calm look of fearless indifference. The soldiers stood around, some holding the torches, which illuminated the apartment with a lurid and sombre glare of light, the others resting upon their weapons. Phoebe, with her hands folded, her eyes turned upwards till the pupils were scarce visible, and every shade of colour banished from her ruddy cheek, stood like one in immediate apprehension of the sentence of death being pronounced, and instant execution commanded.

Heavy steps were at last heard, and Pearson and some of the soldiers returned. This seemed to be what Cromwell waited for. He started up and asked hastily, "Any news, Pearson? any prisoners—any malignants slain in thy defence?"

"None, so please your Excellency," answered the officer.

"And are thy sentinels all carefully placed, as Tomkins' scroll gave direction, and with fitting orders?"

"With the most deliberate care," said Pearson.

"Art thou very sure," said Cromwell, pulling him a little to one side, "that this is all well, and duly cared for? Bethink thee, that when we engage ourselves in the private communications, all will be lost should the party we look for have the means of dogging us by an escape into the more open rooms, and from thence perhaps into the forest."

"My Lord General," answered Pearson, "if placing the guards on the places pointed out in this scroll be sufficient, with the strictest orders to stop, and, if necessary, to stab or shoot, whoever crosses their post, such orders are given to men who will not fail to execute them. If more is necessary, your Excellency has only to speak."

"No—no—no, Pearson," said the General, "thou hast done well. This night over and let it end but as we hope, thy reward shall not be awanting.—And now to business. Sir Henry Lee, undo me the secret spring of yonder picture of your ancestor. Nay, spare yourself the trouble and guilt of falsehood or equivocation, and, I say, undo me that spring presently."

"When I acknowledge you for my master, and wear your livery, I may obey your commands," answered the knight; "even then I would need first to understand them."

"Wench," said Cromwell, addressing Phoebe, "go thou undo

the spring—you could do it fast enough when you aided at the gambols of the demons of Woodstock, and terrified even Mark Everard, who, I judged, had more sense."

"Oh Lord, sir, what shall I do?" said Phœbe, looking to the knight; "they know all about it. What shall I do?"

"For thy life, hold out to the last, wench! Every minute is worth a million."

"Ha! heard you that, Pearson?" said Cromwell to the officer; then, stamping with his foot, he added, "Undo the spring, or I will else use levers and wrenching-irons—or, ha!—another petard were well bestowed. Call the engineer!"

"Oh Lord, sir," cried Phœbe, "I shall never live another peter—I will open the spring."

"Do as thou wilt," said Sir Henry; "it shall profit them but little."

Whether from real agitation, or from a desire to gain time, Phœbe was some minutes ere she could get the spring to open; it was indeed secured with art, and the machinery on which it acted was concealed in the frame of the portrait. The whole, when fastened, appeared quite motionless, and betrayed, as when examined by Colonel Everard, no external mark of its being possible to remove it. It was now withdrawn, however, and showed a narrow recess, with steps which ascended on one side into the thickness of the wall. Cromwell was now like a greyhound slipped from the leash with the prey in full view.—

"Up," he cried, "Pearson; thou art swifter than I. Up thou next, Corporal." With more agility than could have been expected from his person or years, which were past the meridian of life, and exclaiming, "Before, those with the torches!" he followed the party, like an eager huntsman in the rear of his hounds, to encourage at once and direct them, as they penetrated into the labyrinth described as the "Wonders of Woodstock."

The tradition of the country, as well as some historical evidence, confirmed the opinion that there existed, within the old Royal Lodge at Woodstock, a labyrinth, or connected series of subterranean passages, built chiefly by Henry II., for the security of his mistress, Rosamond Clifford, from the jealousy of his Queen, the celebrated Eleanor. There were stairs, which were ascended merely, as it seemed, for the purpose of descending again—passages, which, after turning and winding for a considerable way, returned to the place where they set out; there were trapdoors and hatchways,

panels and portcullises. Although Oliver was assisted by a sort of ground plan, it was found imperfect; and, moreover, the most serious obstacles to their progress occurred in the shape of strong doors, party walls, and iron gates, so that the party blundered on in the dark, uncertain whether they were not going farther from, rather than approaching, the extremity of the labyrinth. They were obliged to send for mechanics, with sledgehammers and other instruments, to force one or two of those doors, which resisted all other means of undoing them. Labouring along in these dusky passages, where, from time to time, they were like to be choked by the dust which their acts of violence excited, the soldiers were obliged to be relieved oftener than once, and the bulky Corporal Grace-bere himself puffed and blew like a grampus that has got into shoal water. Cromwell alone continued, with unabated zeal, to push on his researches—to encourage the soldiers, by the exhortations which they best understood, against fainting for lack of faith—and to secure, by sentinels at proper places, possession of the ground which they had already explored.

But his assistants began to lose heart and be discouraged, and required all his spirit to raise theirs. He then called their attention to voices which they seemed to hear before them, and urged these as evidence that they were moving on the track of some enemy of the Commonwealth, who, for the execution of his malignant plots, had retreated into these extraordinary fastnesses.

The spirits of the men became at last downcast notwithstanding all this encouragement. They spoke to each other in whispers of the devils of Woodstock, who might be all the while decoying them forward to a room said to exist in the palace, where the floor, revolving on an axis, precipitated those who entered into a bottomless abyss. Humgudgeon hinted, that he had consulted the Scripture that morning by way of lot, and his fortune had been to alight on the passage, "Eutychus fell down from the third loft." The energy and authority of Cromwell, however, and the refreshment of some food and strong waters, reconciled them to pursuing their task.

Nevertheless, with all their unwearied exertions, morning dawned on the search before they had reached an apartment, where their ingenuity was long at fault.

After a considerable pause, during which Cromwell sounded with the pommel of his sword almost every stone in the build-

ing and every plank on the floor, the General gave orders to bring the old knight to the spot trusting that he might work out of them some explanation of the secrets of this apartment.

"So please your Excellency, to let me deal with them," said Pearson, who was a true soldier of fortune, and had been a buccaneer in the West Indies, "I think that, by a whipcord twitched tight round their forehead, and twisted about with a pistol-but, I could make either the truth start from their lips, or the eyes from their head."

"Out upon thee, Pearson!" said Cromwell, with abhorrence; "we have no warrant for such cruelty, neither as Englishmen nor Christians. We may slay malignants as we crush noxious animals, but to torture them is a deadly sin; for it is written, 'He made them to be pitied of those who carried them captive.' Nay, I recall the order even for their examination, trusting that wisdom will be granted us without it, to discover their most secret devices."

There was a pause accordingly, during which an idea seized upon Cromwell's imagination—"Bring me hither," he said, "yonder stool"; and placing it beneath one of the windows, of which there were two so high in the wall as not to be accessible from the floor, he clambered up into the entrance of the window, which was six or seven feet deep, corresponding with the thickness of the wall. "Come up hither, Pearson," said the General; "but ere thou comest, double the guard at the foot of the turret called Love's Ladder, and bid them bring up the other petard. So now, come thou hither."

The inferior officer, however brave in the field, was one of those whom a great height strikes with giddiness and sickness. He shrank back from the view of the precipice, on the verge of which Cromwell was standing with complete indifference till the General, catching the hand of his follower, pulled him forward as far as he would advance. "I think," said the General, "I have found the clew, but by this light it is no easy one! See you, we stand in the portal near the top of Rosamond's Tower; and yon turret which rises opposite to our feet is that which is called Love's Ladder, from which the drawbridge reached that admitted the profligate Norman tyrant to the bower of his mistress."

"True, my lord, but the drawbridge is gone," said Pearson.

"Ay, Pearson," replied the General; "but an active man

might spring from the spot we stand upon to the battlements of yonder turret."

"I do not think so, my lord," said Pearson.

"What!" said Cromwell; "not if the avenger of blood were behind you, with his slaughter-weapon in his hand?"

"The fear of instant death might do much," answered Pearson; "but when I look at that sheer depth on either side, and at the empty chasm between us and yonder turret, which is, I warrant you, twelve feet distant, I confess the truth, nothing short of the most imminent danger should induce me to try. Pah—the thought makes my head grow giddy!—I tremble to see your Highness stand there, balancing yourself as if you meditated a spring into the empty air. I repeat, I would scarce stand so near the verge as does your Highness, for the rescue of my life."

"Ah, base and degenerate spirit!" said the General; "soul of mud and clay, wouldst thou not do it, and much more, for the possession of empire!—that is peradventure," continued he, changing his tone as one who has said too much, "shouldst thou be called on to do this, that thereby becoming a great man in the tribes of Israel, thou mightest redeem the captivity of Jerusalem—ay, and it may be, work some great work for the afflicted people of this land."

"Your Highness may feel such calls," said the officer; "but they are not for poor Gilbert Pearson, your faithful follower. You made a jest of me yesterday, when I tried to speak your language; and I am no more able to fulfil your designs, than to use your mode of speech."

"But, Pearson," said Cromwell, "thou hast thrice, yea, four times, called me your Highness."

"Did I, my lord? I was not sensible of it. I crave your pardon," said the officer.

"Nay," said Oliver, "there was no offence. I do indeed stand high, and I may perchance stand higher, though alas, it were fitter for a simple soul like me to return to my plough and my husbandry. Nevertheless, I will not wrestle against the Supreme Will, should I be called on to do yet more in that worthy cause. For surely he who hath been to our British Israel as a shield of help, and a sword of excellency, making her enemies to be found liars unto her, will not give over the flock to those foolish shepherds of Westminster, who shear the sheep and feed them not, and who are in very deed hirelings, not shepherds."

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"I trust to see your Lordship quoit them all downstairs," answered Pearson. "But may I ask why we pursue this discourse even now, until we have secured the common enemy?"

"I will tarry no jot of time," said the General; "fence the communication of Love's Ladder, as it is called, below, as I take it for almost certain that the party whom we have driven from fastness to fastness during the night has at length sprung to the top of yonder battlements from the place where we now stand. Finding the turret is guarded below, the place he has chosen for his security will prove a rat-trap, from whence there is no returning."

"There is a cask of gunpowder in this cabinet," said Pearson; "were it not better, my lord, to mine the tower, if he will not render himself, and send the whole turret with its contents one hundred feet into the air?"

"Ah, silly man," said Cromwell, striking him familiarly on the shoulder, "if thou hadst done this without telling me, it had been good service. But we will first summon the turret, and then think whether the petard will serve our turn—it is but mining at last. Blow a summons there, down below."

The trumpets rang at his bidding, till the old walls echoed from every recess and vaulted archway. Cromwell, as if he cared not to look upon the person whom he expected to appear, drew back, like a necromancer afraid of the spectre which he had evoked.

"He has come to the battlement," said Pearson to his General.

"In what dress or appearance?" answered Cromwell from within the chamber.

"A grey riding-suit, passmented with silver, russet walking-boots, a cut band, a grey hat and plume, black hair."

"It is he, it is he!" said Cromwell; "and another crowning mercy is vouchsafed!"

Meantime, Pearson and young Lee exchanged defiance from their respective posts.

"Surrender," said the former, "or we blow you up in your fastness."

"I am come of too high a race to surrender to rebels," said Albert, assuming the air with which, in such a condition, a king might have spoken.

"I bear you to witness," cried Cromwell, exultingly, "he hath refused quarter. Of a surety his blood be on his head. One of you bring down the barrel of powder. As he loves to

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soar high, we will add what can be taken from the soldiers' bandoleers. Come with me, Pearson; thou understandest this gear. Corporal Grace-be-here, stand thou fast on the platform of the window, where Captain Pearson and I stood but even now, and bend the point of thy partisan against any who shall attempt to pass. Thou art as strong as a bull; and I will back thee against despair itself."

"But," said the corporal, mounting reluctantly, "the place is as the pinnacle of the Temple; and it is written, that Euty-chus fell down from the third loft and was taken up dead."

"Because he slept upon his post," answered Cromwell readily. "Beware thou of carelessness, and thus thy feet shall be kept from stumbling. You four soldiers, remain here to support the Corporal, if it be necessary; and you, as well as the Corporal, will draw into the vaulted passage the minute the trumpets sound a retreat. It is as strong as a casemate, and you may lie there safe from the effects of the mine. Thou, Zerubbabel Robins, I know, wilt be their lance-prisade."

Robins bowed, and the General departed to join those who were without.

As he reached the door of the hall, the petard was heard to explode, and he saw that it had succeeded; for the soldiers rushed, brandishing their swords and pistols, in at the postern of the turret, whose gate had been successfully forced. A thrill of exultation, but not unmingled with horror, shot across the veins of the ambitious soldier.

"Now—now!" he cried; "they are dealing with him!"

His expectations were deceived. Pearson and the others returned disappointed, and reported they had been stopt by a strong trap-door of grated iron, extended over the narrow stair; and they could see there was an obstacle of the same kind some ten feet higher. To remove it by force, while a desperate and well-armed man had the advantage of the steps above them, might cost many lives. "Which, lack-a-day," said the General, "it is our duty to be tender of. What dost thou advise, Gilbert Pearson?"

"We must use powder, my lord," answered Pearson, who saw his master was too modest to reserve to himself the whole merit of the proceeding. "There may be a chamber easily and conveniently formed under the foot of the stair. We have a sausage, by good luck, to form the train—and so——"

"Ah!" said Cromwell, "I know thou canst manage such gear well. But, Gilbert, I go to visit the posts, and give them

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orders to retire to a safe distance when the retreat is sounded. You will allow them five minutes for this purpose."

"Three is enough for any knave of them all," said Pearson. "They will be lame indeed, that require more on such a service—I ask but one, though I fire the train myself."

"Take heed," said Cromwell, "that the poor soul be listened to, if he asks quarter. It may be, he may repent him of his hard-heartedness, and call for mercy."

"And mercy he shall have," answered Pearson, "provided he calls loud enough to make me hear him; for the explosion of that damned petard has made me as deaf as the devil's dam."

"Hush, Gilbert, hush!" said Cromwell; "you offend in your language."

"Zooks, sir, I must speak either in your way, or in my own," said Pearson, "unless I am to be dumb as well as deaf! Away with you, my lord, to visit the posts; and you will presently hear me make some noise in the world."

Cromwell smiled gently at his aide-de-camp's petulance, patted him on the shoulder, and called him a mad fellow, walked a little way, then turned back to whisper, "What thou dost, do quickly"; then returned again towards the outer circle of guards, turning his head from time to time, as if to assure himself that the Corporal, to whom he had intrusted the duty, still kept guard with his advanced weapon upon the terrific chasm between Rosamond's Tower and the corresponding turret. Seeing him standing on his post, the General muttered between his moustaches, "The fellow hath the strength and courage of a bear; and yonder is a post where one shall do more to keep back, than an hundred in making way." He cast a last look on the gigantic figure, who stood in that airy position, like some Gothic statue, the weapon half levelled against the opposite turret, with the butt rested against his right foot, his steel cap and burnished corslet glittering in the rising sun.

Cromwell then passed on to give the necessary orders, that such sentinels as might be endangered at their present posts by the effect of the mine, should withdraw at the sound of the trumpet to the places which he pointed out to them. Never, on any occasion of his life, did he display more calmness and presence of mind. He was kind, nay, facetious with the soldiers, who adored him; and yet he resembled a volcano before the eruption commences—all peaceful and quiet with-

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out, while an hundred contradictory passions were raging in his bosom.

Corporal Humgudgeon, meanwhile, remained steady upon his post; yet, though as determined a soldier as ever fought among the redoubted regiment of Ironsides, and possessed of no small share of that exalted fanaticism which lent so keen an edge to the natural courage of those stern religionists, the veteran felt his present situation to be highly uncomfortable. Within a pike's length of him arose a turret, which was about to be dispersed in massive fragments through the air; and he felt small confidence in the length of time which might be allowed for his escape from such a dangerous vicinity. The duty of constant vigilance upon his post, was partly divided by this natural feeling, which induced him from time to time to bend his eyes on the miners below, instead of keeping them riveted on the opposite turret.

At length the interest of the scene arose to the uttermost. After entering and returning from the turret, and coming out again more than once, in the course of about twenty minutes Pearson issued, as it might be supposed, for the last time, carrying in his hand, and uncoiling, as he went along, the sausage, or linen bag (so called from its appearance), which, strongly sewed together, and crammed with gunpowder, was to serve as a train betwixt the mine to be sprung, and the point occupied by the engineer who was to give fire. He was in the act of finally adjusting it, when the attention of the Corporal on the tower became irresistibly and exclusively riveted upon the preparations for the explosion. But while he watched the aide-de-camp drawing his pistol to give fire, and the trumpeter handling his instrument, as waiting the order to sound the retreat, fate rushed on the unhappy sentinel in a way he least expected.

Young, active, bold, and completely possessed of his presence of mind, Albert Lee, who had been from the loopholes a watchful observer of every measure which had been taken by his besiegers, had resolved to make one desperate effort for self-preservation. While the head of the sentinel on the opposite platform was turned from him, and bent rather downwards, he suddenly sprung across the chasm, though the space on which he lighted was scarce wide enough for two persons, threw the surprised soldier from his precarious stand, and jumped himself down into the chamber. The gigantic trooper went sheer down twenty feet, struck against a pro-

jecting battlement, which launched the wretched man outwards, and then fell on the earth with such tremendous force, that the head, which first touched the ground, dented a hole in the soil of six inches in depth, and was crushed like an egg-shell. Scarce knowing what had happened, yet startled and confounded at the descent of this heavy body, which fell at no great distance from him, Pearson snapt his pistol at the train, no previous warning given; the powder caught, and the mine exploded. Had it been strongly charged with powder, many of those without might have suffered; but the explosion was only powerful enough to blow out, in a lateral direction, a part of the wall just above the foundation, sufficient, however, to destroy the equipoise of the building. Then amid a cloud of smoke, which began gradually to encircle the turret like a shroud, arising slowly from its base to its summit, it was seen to stagger and shake, by all who had courage to look steadily at a sight so dreadful. Slowly, at first, the building inclined outwards, then rushed precipitately to its base, and fell to the ground in huge fragments, the strength of its resistance showing the excellence of the mason-work. The engineer, so soon as he had fired the train, fled in such alarm, that he well-nigh ran against his General, who was advancing towards him, while a huge stone from the summit of the building, flying farther than the rest, lighted within a yard of them.

"Thou hast been over hasty, Pearson," said Cromwell, with the greatest composure possible—"hath no one fallen in that same tower of Siloe?"

"Some one fell," said Pearson, still in great agitation, "and yonder lies his body half buried in the rubbish."

With a quick and resolute step, Cromwell approached the spot, and exclaimed, "Pearson, thou hast ruined me—the young man hath escaped. This is our own sentinel—plague on the idiot! Let him rot beneath the ruins which crushed him!"

A cry now resounded from the platform of Rosamond's Tower, which appeared yet taller than formerly, deprived of the neighbouring turret, which emulated, though it did not attain to its height,—“A prisoner, noble General—a prisoner—the fox whom we have chased all night is now in the snare—the Lord hath delivered him into the hand of His servants.”

“Look you keep him in safe custody,” exclaimed Cromwell, “and bring him presently down to the apartment from which the secret passages have their principal entrance.”

“Your Excellency shall be obeyed.”

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The proceedings of Albert Lee, to which these exclamations related, had been unfortunate. He had dashed from the platform, as we have related, the gigantic strength of the soldier opposed to him, and had instantly jumped down into one of the chambers. But the soldiers stationed there threw themselves upon him, and after a struggle, which was hopelessly maintained against such advantage of numbers, had thrown the young cavalier to the ground, two of them, drawn down by his strenuous exertions, falling across him. At the same moment a sharp and severe report was heard, which, like a clap of thunder in the immediate vicinity, shook all around them, till the strong and solid tower tottered like the mast of a stately vessel when about to part by the board. In a few seconds, this was followed by another sullen sound, at first low and deep, but augmenting like the roar of a cataract, as it descends, reeling, bellowing, and rushing, as if to astound both heaven and earth. So awful, indeed, was the sound of the neighbouring tower as it fell, that both the captive, and those who struggled with him, continued for a minute or two passive in each other's grasp.

Albert was the first who recovered consciousness and activity. He shook off those who lay above him, and made a desperate effort to gain his feet, in which he partly succeeded. But as he had to deal with men accustomed to every species of danger, and whose energies were recovered nearly as soon as his own, he was completely secured, and his arms held down. Loyal and faithful to his trust, and resolved to sustain to the last the character which he had assumed, he exclaimed, as his struggles were finally overpowered, "Rebel villains! would you slay your king?"

"Ha, heard you that!" cried one of the soldiers to the lance-prisade, who commanded the party. "Shall I not strike this son of a wicked father under the fifth rib, even as the tyrant of Moab was smitten by Ehud with a dagger of a cubit's length?"

But Robins answered, "Be it far from us, Merciful Strickalthrow, to slay in cold blood the captive of our bow and of our spear. Methinks, since the storm of Tredagh we have shed enough of blood—therefore, on your lives do him no evil; but take from him his arms, and let us bring him before the chosen Instrument, even our General, that he may do with him what is meet in his eyes."

By this time the soldier, whose exultation had made him the first to communicate the intelligence from the battlements to

Cromwell, returned, and brought commands corresponding to the orders of their temporary officer; and Albert Lee, disarmed and bound, was conducted as a captive into the apartment which derived its name from the victories of his ancestor, and placed in the presence of General Cromwell.

Running over in his mind the time which had elapsed since the departure of Charles, till the siege, if it may be termed so, had terminated in his own capture, Albert had every reason to hope that his Royal Master must have had time to accomplish his escape. Yet he determined to maintain to the last a deceit, which might for a time insure the King's safety. The difference betwixt them could not, he thought, be instantly discovered, begrimed as he was with dust and smoke, and with blood issuing from some scratches received in the scuffle.

In this evil plight, but bearing himself with such dignity as was adapted to the princely character, Albert was ushered into the apartment of Victor Lee, where, in his father's own chair, reclined the triumphant enemy of the cause to which the house of Lee had been hereditarily faithful.

Oliver Cromwell arose from his seat as the two veteran soldiers, Zerubbabel Robins and Merciful Strickalthrow, introduced into the apartment the prisoner, whom they held by the arms, and fixed his stern hazel eye on Albert long before he could give vent to the ideas which were swelling in his bosom. Exultation was the most predominant.

"Art not thou," he at length said, "that Egyptian, which, before these days, madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness many thousand men, who were murderers? Ha, youth! I have hunted thee from Stirling to Worcester,—from Worcester to Woodstock, and we have met at last!"

"I would," replied Albert, speaking in the character which he had assumed, "that we had met where I could have shown thee the difference betwixt a rightful King and an ambitious Usurper!"

"Go to, young man," said Cromwell; "say rather the difference between a judge raised up for the redemption of England, and the son of those kings whom the Lord in His anger permitted to reign over her. But we will not waste useless words. God knows that it is not of our will that we are called to such high matters, being as humble in our thoughts as we are of ourselves; and in our unassisted nature frail and foolish; and unable to render a reason but for the better spirit within us, which is not of us. Thou art weary,

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young man, and thy nature requires rest and refection, being doubtless dealt with delicately, as one who hath fed on the fat, and drank of the sweet, and who hath been clothed in purple and fine linen."

Here the General suddenly stopt, and then abruptly exclaimed—"But is this—Ah! whom have we here? These are not the locks of the swarthy lad Charles Stewart? A cheat! a cheat!"

Albert hastily cast his eyes on a mirror which stood in the room, and perceived that a dark peruke, found among Dr. Rocheliffe's miscellaneous wardrobe, had been disordered in the scuffle with the soldiery, and that his own light-brown hair was escaping from beneath it.

"Who is this?" said Cromwell, stamping with fury. "Pluck the disguise from him!"

The soldiers did so; and bringing him at the same time towards the light, the deception could not be maintained for a moment longer, with any possibility of success. Cromwell came up to him with his teeth set, and grinding against each other as he spoke, his hands clenched, and trembling with emotion, and speaking with a voice low-pitched, bitterly and deeply emphatic, such as might have preceded a stab with his dagger.

"Thy name, young man?"

He was answered calmly and firmly, while the countenance of the speaker wore a cast of triumph, and even contempt.

"Albert Lee, of Ditchley, a faithful subject of King Charles."

"I might have guessed it," said Cromwell. "Ay, and to King Charles shalt thou go, as soon as it is noon on the dial. Pearson," he continued, "let him be carried to the others; and let them be executed at twelve exactly."

"All, sir?" said Pearson, surprised; for Cromwell, though he at times made formidable examples, was, in general, by no means sanguinary.

"All," repeated Cromwell, fixing his eye on young Lee. "Yes, young sir, your conduct has devoted to death thy father, thy kinsman, and the stranger that was in thine household. Such wreck hast thou brought on thy father's house."

"My father, too—my aged father!" said Albert, looking upward, and endeavouring to raise his hands in the same direction, which was prevented by his bonds. "The Lord's will be done!"

"All this havoc can be saved if," said the General, "thou

wilt answer one question—Where is the young Charles Stewart, who was called King of Scotland ? ”

“ Under Heaven’s protection, and safe from thy power,” was the firm and unhesitating answer of the young Royalist.

“ Away with him to prison ! ” said Cromwell ; “ and from thence to execution with the rest of them, as malignants taken in the fact. Let a court-martial sit on them presently.”

“ One word,” said young Lee, as they led him from the room.

“ Stop, stop,” said Cromwell, with the agitation of renewed hope : “ let him be heard.”

“ You love texts of Scripture,” said Albert ; “ let this be the subject of your next homily—‘ Had Zimri peace, who slew his master ? ’ ”

“ Away with him,” said the General ; “ let him die the death ! I have said it.”

As Cromwell spoke these words, his aide-de-camp observed that he became unwontedly pale.

“ Your Excellency is overtoiled in the public service,” said Pearson, “ a course of the stag in the evening will refresh you. The old knight hath a noble hound here, if we can but get him to hunt without his master, which may be hard, as he is faithful, and——”

“ Hang him up ! ” said Cromwell.

“ What—whom—hang the noble dog ? Your Excellency was wont to love a good hound ? ”

“ It matters not,” said Cromwell ; “ let him be killed. Is it not written, that they slew in the valley of Achor, not only the accursed Achan, with his sons and his daughters, but also his oxen and his asses, and his sheep, and every live thing belonging unto him ? And even thus shall we do to the malignant family of Lee, who have aided Sisera in his flight, when Israel might have been delivered of his trouble for ever. But send out couriers and patrols. Follow, pursue, watch in every direction. Let my horse be ready at the door in five minutes, or bring me the first thou canst find.”

It seemed to Pearson that this was something wildly spoken, and that the cold perspiration was standing upon the General’s brow as he said it. He therefore again pressed the necessity of repose, and it would appear that nature seconded strongly the representation. Cromwell arose and made a step or two towards the door of the apartment ; but stopped, staggered,

and, after a pause, sat down in a chair. "Truly, friend Pearson," he said, "this weary carcass of ours is an impediment to us, even in our most necessary business, and I am fitter to sleep than to watch, which is not my wont. Place guards, therefore, till we repose ourselves for an hour or two. Send out in every direction, and spare not for horses' flesh. Wake me if the court-martial should require instruction, and forget not to see the sentence punctually executed on the Lees, and those who were arrested with them."

As Cromwell spoke thus, he arose and half opened a bedroom door, when Pearson again craved pardon for asking if he had rightly understood his Excellency, that all the prisoners were to be executed.

"Have I not said it?" answered Cromwell, displeasedly. "Is it because thou art a man of blood, and hast ever been, that thou dost affect these scruples, to show thyself tender-hearted at my expense? I tell thee, that if there lack one in the full tale of execution, thine own life shall pay the forfeit."

So saying, he entered the apartment, followed by the groom of his chamber, who attended upon Pearson's summons.

When his General had retired, Pearson remained in great perplexity what he ought to do; and that from no scruples of conscience, but from uncertainty whether he might not err either in postponing, or in too hastily and too literally executing, the instructions he had received.

The hour appointed for execution had been long past, and it was about five in the evening, when the Protector summoned Pearson to his presence. He went with fear and reluctance, uncertain how he might be received. After remaining about a quarter of an hour, the aide-de-camp returned to Victor Lee's parlour, where he found the old soldier, Zerubbabel Robins, in attendance for his return.

"How is Oliver?" said the old man anxiously.

"Why, well," answered Pearson, "and hath asked no questions of the execution, but many concerning the reports we have been able to make regarding the flight of the young man, and is much moved at thinking he must now be beyond pursuit."

"Then will I venture upon him," said the adjutant; "so give me a napkin that I may look like a sewer, and fetch up the food which I directed should be in readiness."

Two troopers attended accordingly with a ration of beef, such as was distributed to the private soldiers, and dressed

after their fashion—a pewter pot of ale, a trencher with salt, black pepper, and a loaf of ammunition bread. "Come with me," he said to Pearson, "and fear not—Noll loves an innocent jest." He boldly entered the General's sleeping apartment, and said aloud, "Arise, thou that art called to be a judge in Israel; let there be no more folding of the hands to sleep. Lo, I come as a sign to thee; wherefore arise, eat, drink, and let thy heart be glad within thee, for thou shalt eat with joy the food of him that laboureth in the trenches, seeing that since thou wert commander over the host, the poor sentinel hath had such provisions as I have now placed for thine own refreshment."

"Truly, brother Zerubbabel," said Cromwell, accustomed to such starts of enthusiasm among his followers, "we would wish that it were so; neither is it our desire to sleep soft, nor feed more highly than the meanest that ranks under our banners. Verily, thou hast chosen well for my refreshment, and the smell of the food is savoury in my nostrils."

He arose from the bed, on which he had lain down half dressed, and wrapping his cloak around him, sat down by the bedside, and partook heartily of the plain food which was prepared for him. While he was eating, Cromwell commanded Pearson to finish his report—"You need not desist for the presence of a worthy soldier, whose spirit is as my spirit."

"Nay, but," interrupted Robins, "you are to know that Gilbert Pearson hath not fully executed thy commands touching a part of those malignants, all of whom should have died at noon."

"What execution?—what malignants?" said Cromwell, laying down his knife and fork.

"Those in the prison here at Woodstock," answered Zerubbabel, "whom your Excellency commanded should be executed at noon, as taken in the fact of rebellion against the Commonwealth."

"Wretch!" said Cromwell, starting up and addressing Pearson, "thou hast not touched Mark Everard, in whom there was no guilt, for he was deceived by him who passed between us; neither hast thou put forth thy hand on the pragmatic Presbyterian minister, to have all those of their classes cry sacrilege, and alienate them from us for ever?"

"If your Excellency wish them to live, they live—their life and death are in the power of a word," said Pearson.

"Enfranchise them; I must gain the Presbyterian interest over to us if I can."

"Rochecliffe, the arch-plotter," said Pearson, "I thought to have executed, but——"

"Barbarous man," said Cromwell, "alike ungrateful and impolitic; wouldst thou have destroyed our decoy-duck? But you look at each other darkly, as if you had more to say than you durst. I trust you have not done to death Sir Henry Lee?"

"No. Yet the man," replied Pearson, "is a confirmed malignant, and——"

"Ay, but he is also a noble relic of the ancient English gentleman," said the General. "I would I knew how to win the favour of that race! But we, Pearson, whose royal robes are the armour which we wear on our bodies, and whose leading-staves are our sceptres, are too newly set up to draw the respect of the proud malignants, who cannot brook to submit to less than royal lineage. Yet what can they see in the longest kingly line in Europe, save that it runs back to a successful soldier? I grudge that one man should be honoured and followed, because he is the descendant of a victorious commander, while less honour and allegiance is paid to another, who, in personal qualities, and, in success, might emulate the founder of his rival's dynasty. Well, Sir Henry Lee lives, and shall live for me. His son, indeed, hath deserved the death which he has doubtless sustained."

"My lord," stammered Pearson, "since your Excellency has found I am right in suspending your order in so many instances, I trust you will not blame me in this also. I thought it best to await more special orders."

"Thou art in a mighty merciful humour this morning, Pearson," said Cromwell, not entirely satisfied.

"If your Excellency please, the halter is ready, and so is the provost-marshal."

"Nay, if such a bloody fellow as thou hast spared him, it would ill become me to destroy him," said the General. "But, then, here is among Rochecliffe's papers the engagement of twenty desperadoes to take us off—some example ought to be made."

"My lord," said Zerubbabel, "consider now how often this young man, Albert Lee, hath been near you, nay, probably, quite close to your Excellency, in these dark passages, which he knew, and we did not. Had he been of an assassin's

nature, it would have cost him but a pistol-shot, and the light of Israel was extinguished. Nay, in the unavoidable confusion which must have ensued, the sentinels quitting their posts, he might have had a fair chance of escape."

"Enough, Zerubbabel; he lives," said the General. "He shall remain in custody for some time, however, and be then banished from England."

"There remains only one sentenced person," said Pearson, "a noble wolf-hound, finer than any your Excellency saw in Ireland. He belongs to the old knight Sir Henry Lee. Should your Excellency not desire to keep the fine creature yourself, might I presume to beg that I might have leave?"

"No, Pearson," said Cromwell; "the old man, so faithful himself, shall not be deprived of his faithful dog. I would I had any creature, were it but a dog, that followed me because it loved me, not for what it could make of me."

"Your Excellency is unjust to your faithful soldiers," said Zerubbabel bluntly, "who follow you like dogs, fight for you like dogs, and have the grave of a dog on the spot where they happen to fall."

"How now, 'old grumbler," said the General, "what means this change of note?"

"Corporal Humgudgeon's remains are left to moulder under the ruins of yonder tower, and Tomkins is thrust into a hole in a thicket like a beast."

"True, true," said Cromwell, "they shall be removed to the churchyard, and every soldier shall attend with cockades of sea-green and blue ribbon. Every one of the non-commissioned officers and adjutators shall have a mourning scarf; we ourselves will lead the procession, and there shall be a proper dole of wine, burnt brandy, and rosemary. See that it is done, Pearson. After the funeral, Woodstock shall be dismantled and destroyed, that its recesses may not again afford shelter to rebels and malignants."

The commands of the General were punctually obeyed, and when the other prisoners were dismissed, Albert Lee remained for some time in custody. He went abroad after his liberation, entered in King Charles's Guards, where he was promoted by that Monarch.

—SIR WALTER SCOTT. *Woodstock.*

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XVIII

At the Fire of London

THE fire spread so rapidly that by the time it had reached the summit of Fish Street Hill, where, the overhanging storeys of the houses coming so close together as almost to meet at the top, the flames speedily caught the other side, and spread the conflagration in that direction. Two other houses were likewise discovered to be on fire in Crooked Lane, and in an incredibly short space the whole dense mass of habitations lying at the west side of Fish Street Hill, and between Crooked Lane and Eastcheap, were in flames, and threatening the venerable church of Saint Michael, which stood in the midst of them, with instant destruction. To the astonishment of all who witnessed it, the conflagration seemed to proceed as rapidly against the wind as with it, and to be approaching Thames Street both by Pudding Lane and Saint Michael's Lane. A large stable, filled with straw and hay, at the back of the Star Inn, in Little Eastcheap, caught fire, and carrying the conflagration eastward, had already conveyed it as far as Botolph Lane.

The conflagration had now assumed so terrific a character that it appalled even the stoutest spectator. For many weeks previous to the direful calamity the weather had been remarkably dry and warm, a circumstance which had prepared the old wooden houses abounding in this part of the city for almost instantaneous ignition. Added to this, if the incendiaries themselves had deposited combustible materials at certain spots to extend the conflagration, they could not have selected better places than accident had arranged. All sorts of inflammable goods were contained in the shops and warehouses: oil, hemp, flax, pitch, tar, cordage, sugar, wine, and spirits; and when any magazine of this sort caught fire, it

spread the conflagration with tenfold rapidity.

The heat of the flames had now become almost insufferable, and the sparks and flakes of fire fell so fast and thick that the spectators were compelled to retreat to a considerable distance from the burning buildings. The noise occasioned by the cracking of the timbers, and the falling of walls and roofs, was awful in the extreme. All the avenues and thoroughfares near the fire were now choked up by carts, coaches, and other vehicles, which had been hastily brought thither to remove the goods of the inhabitants; and the hurry of the poor people to save a wreck of their property, and the attempts made by the gangs of plunderers to deprive them of it, constituted a scene of unparalleled tumult and confusion.

In St. Michael's Lane, the venerable church from which it was designated was on fire, and in 'Thames Street, the conflagration had even made more fearful progress. Fishmongers' Hall, a large square structure, was on fire, and burning swiftly, the flames encircling its high roof, and the turret by which it was surmounted. Streams of fire, too, had darted down the numerous narrow alleys leading to the riverside, and, reaching the wharfs, had kindled the heaps of wood and coal with which they were filled. A party under the command of the Lord Mayor had used their utmost exertions to get rid of these combustible materials by flinging them into the Thames; but they came too late, and were driven away by the approach of the fire. Most of the barges and heavy craft were aground, and they, too, caught fire, and were burned with their contents.

All the houses between Fishmongers' Hall and the bridge were on fire, and behind them rose a vast sheet of flame. Saint Magnus' church, at the foot of the bridge, was next seized by the flame. An ancient gateway followed, and soon afterwards a large stack of houses erected upon the bridge burst into flames.

The inhabitants of the houses on the bridge, having now become thoroughly alarmed, flung bedding, boxes, and articles of furniture out of their windows into the river. A crowd of boats surrounded the starlings, and the terrified occupants of the structures above descending to them by the staircases in the interior of the piers, embarked with every article they could carry off. The river presented a most extraordinary scene. Lighted by the red and fierce reflection of the fire, and covered with boats, filled with families who had just quitted

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their habitations either on the bridge or in some other street adjoining it, its whole surface was speckled with pieces of furniture, or goods that had been cast into it, and which were now floating up with the tide. Great crowds were collected on the Southwark shore to watch the conflagration, while on the opposite side the wharfs and quays were thronged with persons removing their goods, and embarking them in boats. One circumstance, noted by Pepys, was the singular attachment displayed by the pigeons, kept by the owners of several houses on the bridge, to the spots they had been accustomed to. Even when the flames attacked the buildings to which the doves were attached, the birds wheeled round and round them, until, their pinions being scorched by the fire, they dropped into the water.

The aspect of the city was very striking. The innumerable towers and spires of the churches rose tall and dark through the wavering sheet of flame, and every now and then one of them would topple down and disappear, as if swallowed up by the devouring element. For a short space the fire seemed to observe a regular progressive movement, but when it fell upon better material it reared its blazing crest aloft, changed its hues, and burnt with redoubled intensity. At a distance the roaring of the flames resembled that of a thousand furnaces. Ever and anon it was broken by a sound like thunder, occasioned by the fall of some mighty edifice. Then there would come a quick succession of reports like the discharge of artillery, and followed by a shower of fiery flakes and sparks blown aloft, like the explosion of some stupendous firework. Mixed with the roaring of the flames, the thunder of falling roofs, the cracking of timber, was a wild hubbub of human voices, that sounded afar off like a dismal wail. In spite of its terror, the appearance of the fire was at that time beautiful beyond description, by its varying colours, its fanciful forms—now shooting out in a hundred different directions like lightning-flashes—now drawing itself up, as it were, and soaring aloft—now splitting into a million tongues of flame.

From the increased tumult in the city, it was evident the inhabitants were now thoroughly roused, and actively bestirring themselves to save their property. This was apparent, even on the river, from the multitude of boats deeply laden with goods of all kinds, which were now seen shaping their course towards Westminster. The fire, also, had made rapid progress on all sides. The vast pile of habitations at the north

side of the bridge was now entirely in flames. The effect of this was awfully fine. Not only did the flames mount to a greater height, and appear singularly conspicuous from the situation of the houses, but every instant some blazing fragment fell with a tremendous splash into the water, where it hissed for a moment, and then was for ever quenched, floating a black mass upon the surface. From the foot of the bridge to Coal Harbour Stairs extended what Dryden finely calls "a quay of fire." All the wharfs and warehouses were in flames, and burning with astonishing rapidity, while this part of Thames Street, "the lodge of all combustibles," had likewise become a prey to the devouring element. The fire, too, had spread in an easterly direction, and consuming three churches, namely, Saint Andrew's in Botolph Lane, Saint Mary's in Love Lane, and Saint Dunstan's in the East, had invaded Tower Street, and seemed fast approaching the ancient fortress.

At Whitehall a large body of mounted troopers were stationed before the gates of the palace, and a regiment of the foot guards were drawn up in the court. Drums were beating to arms, and other martial sounds were heard, showing the alarm that was felt. At the gate a sentinel stood barring the way of a London apprentice who had been refused admittance; and he would in all probability have been turned back, if at that moment the Lords Argentine and Rochester had not come up. On seeing him, the former frowned and passed quickly on, but the latter halted.

"You seem to be in some difficulty," remarked Rochester. "Can I help you?"

The apprentice, Leonard Holt by name, was about to turn away, but he checked himself. "I desire to see the King, my lord," he added to the Earl. "I have a proposal to make to him, which I think would be a means of checking the conflagration."

"Say you so?" cried Rochester. "Come along then. Heaven grant your plan may prove successful; in which case, I promise you you shall be nobly rewarded."

"I seek no reward, my lord," replied Leonard. "All I desire is to save the city."

"Well, well," rejoined Rochester, "it will be time enough to refuse his Majesty's bounty when offered."

Upon this, he ordered the sentinel to withdraw, and Leonard Holt followed him into the palace. They found the entrance hall filled with groups of officers and attendants, all conversing

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together, it was evident from their looks and manner, on the one engrossing topic—the conflagration. Ascending a magnificent staircase, and traversing part of a grand gallery, they entered an anteroom, in which a number of courtiers and pages—amongst the latter of whom was Chiffinch—were assembled. At the door of the inner chamber stood a couple of ushers, and as the Earl approached, it was instantly thrown open. As Leonard Holt, however, who followed close behind his leader, passed Chiffinch, the latter caught hold of his arm and detained him. Hearing the movement, Rochester turned, and said quickly to the page, "Let him pass, he is going with me."

"Old Rowley is in no humour for a jest to-day, my lord," replied Chiffinch, familiarly. "He is more serious than I have ever before seen him, and takes this terrible fire sadly to heart, as well he may. Mr. Secretary Pepys, of the Admiralty, is with him, and is detailing all particulars of the calamity to him, I believe."

"It is in reference to the fire that I have brought this young man with me," returned the Earl. "Let him pass, I say. State your plan boldly," he added, as they entered the audience chamber.

At the farther end of the long apartment, on a chair of state, and beneath a canopy, sat Charles. He was evidently much disturbed, and looked eagerly at the new-comers, especially at Leonard, expecting to find him the bearer of some important intelligence. On the right of the King, and near an open window, which, looking towards the river, commanded a view of the fire on the bridge, as well as of part of the burning city, stood the Duke of York. The Duke did not appear much concerned at the calamity, but was laughing with Lord Argentine, who stood close beside him. The smile fled from the lips of the latter as he beheld Leonard, and he looked angrily at Rochester, who did not, however, appear to notice his displeasure. On the left of the royal chair was Mr. Pepys, engaged, as Chiffinch had intimated, in detailing to the King the progress of the conflagration; and next to the Secretary stood the Earl of Craven—a handsome, commanding, and martial-looking personage, though somewhat stricken in years. Three other noblemen—namely, the Lords Hollis, Arlington, and Ashley—were likewise present.

"Who have you with you, Rochester?" demanded Charles, as the Earl and his companion approached him.

"A young man, my liege, who desires to make known to

you a plan for checking this conflagration," replied the Earl.

"Ah!" exclaimed the King; "let him accomplish that for us, and he shall ask what he will in return."

"I ventured to promise him as much," observed Rochester.

"Mine is a very simple and a very obvious plan, sire," said Leonard; "but I will engage, on the peril of my life, if you will give me sufficient authority and means to work withal, to stop the further progress of this fire."

"In what way?" asked Charles impatiently—"in what way?"

"By demolishing the houses around the conflagration with gunpowder, so as to form a wide gap between those left and the flames," replied Leonard.

"A short and summary process, truly," replied the King; "but it would occasion great waste of property, and might be attended with other serious consequences."

"Not half so much property will be destroyed as if the slower and seemingly safer course of pulling down the houses is pursued," rejoined Leonard. "That experiment has been tried and failed."

"I am of the young man's opinion," observed the Earl of Craven.

"And I," added Pepys. "Better lose half the city than the whole. As it is, your Majesty is not safe in your palace."

"Why, you do not think it can reach Whitehall?" cried the King, rising and walking to the window. "How say you, brother?" he added to the Duke of York; "shall we act upon this young man's suggestion, and order the wholesale demolition of the houses which he recommends?"

"I would not advise your Majesty to do so—at least, not without consideration," answered the Duke. "This is a terrible fire, no doubt; but the danger may be greatly exaggerated; and if any ill consequences should result from the proposed scheme, the blame will be entirely laid upon your Majesty."

"I care not for that," replied the King, "provided I feel assured it is for the best."

"The plan would do incalculably more mischief than the fire itself," observed Lord Argentine, "and would be met by the most determined opposition on the part of the owners of the habitations condemned to destruction. Whole streets will have to be blown up, and your Majesty will easily comprehend the confusion and damage that will ensue."

"Lord Argentine has expressed my sentiments exactly," said the Duke of York.

"There is nothing for it, then, but for your Majesty to call for a fiddle, and amuse yourself, like Nero, while your city is burning," remarked Rochester, sarcastically.

"Another such jest, my lord," rejoined the King, sternly, "and it shall cost you your liberty. I will go upon the river instantly, and view the fire myself, and then decide what course shall be adopted."

"There are rumours that incendiaries are abroad, your Majesty," remarked Argentine, glancing maliciously at Leonard. "It is not unlikely that he who lighted the fire should know how to extinguish it."

"His lordship says truly," rejoined Leonard. "There *are* incendiaries abroad, and the chief of them was taken by my hand, and lodged in Newgate, where he lies for examination."

"Ah!" exclaimed the King, eagerly; "did you catch the miscreant in the fact?"

"No, my liege," replied Leonard; "but he came to me a few hours before the outbreak of the fire, intimating that he was in possession of a plot against the city—a design so monstrous that your Majesty would give any reward to the discloser of it. He proposed to reveal this plot to me on certain terms."

"And you accepted them?" cried the King.

"No, my liege," replied Leonard; "I refused them, and would have secured him, but he escaped me at that time. I afterwards discovered him among the spectators near the fire, and caused his arrest."

After a short consultation, Charles stepped forward with a graver aspect than before, and said:

"Before proceeding to view this conflagration I must give some directions in reference to it. To you, my Lord Craven, whose intrepidity I well know, I intrust the most important post. You will station yourself at the east of the conflagration, and if you find it making its way to the Tower, as I hear is the case, check it at all hazards. The old fortress must be preserved at any risk. But do not resort to gunpowder unless you receive an order from me, accompanied by my signet-ring. My Lords Hollis and Ashley, you will have the care of the north-west of the city. Station yourselves near Newgate Market. Rochester and Arlington, your posts will be at St. Paul's. Watch over the august cathedral. I would not have

it injured for half my kingdom. Brother," he added to the Duke of York, "you will accompany me in my barge, and you, Mr. Pepys. You, young man," to Leonard, "can follow in my train."

Attended by the Duke of York and Mr. Pepys, and followed at a respectful distance by Leonard Holt, the King then passed through the anteroom, and, descending the grand staircase, traversed a variety of passages, until he reached the private stairs communicating with the river. At the foot lay the royal barge, in which he embarked with his train. Charles appeared greatly moved by the sight of the thousands of his houseless subjects whom he encountered in his passage down the Thames, and whenever a feeble shout was raised for him he returned it with a blessing. When nearly opposite Queenhithe he commanded the rowers to pause. The conflagration had made formidable progress since Leonard beheld it a few hours back, and had advanced nearly as far as the Stillyard on the riverside, while it was burning upwards through thick ranks of houses almost as far as Cannon Street. The roaring of the flames was louder than ever, and the crash of falling habitations and the tumult and cries of the affrighted populace yet more terrific.

Charles gazed at the appalling spectacle like one who could not believe his senses, and it was some time before the overwhelming truth could force itself upon him. Tears then started to his eyes, and, uttering an ejaculation of despair, he commanded the rowers to make instantly for the shore.

The royal barge landed at Queenhithe, and Charles, instantly disembarking, proceeded on foot, and at a pace that compelled his attendants to move quickly to keep up with him, to Thames Street. Here, however, the confusion was so great, owing to the rush of people and the number of vehicles employed in the removal of goods, that he was obliged to come to a halt. Fortunately at this moment a company of the train-bands rode up, and their leader, dismounting, offered his horse to the King, who instantly sprang into the saddle, and, scarcely waiting till the Duke of York could be similarly accommodated, forced his way through the crowd as far as Brewer Lane, where his progress was stopped by the intense heat. A little more than a hundred yards from this point the whole street was on fire, and the flames bursting from the windows and roofs of the houses with a roar like that which might be supposed to be produced by the forges of the Cyclops, united in a vast blazing

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arch overhead. It chanced, too, that in some places cellars filled with combustible materials extended under the street, and here the ground would crack and jets of fire shoot forth like the eruption of a volcano. The walls and timbers of the houses at some distance from the conflagration were scorched and blistered with the heat, and completely prepared for ignition; overhead being a vast and momentarily increasing cloud of flame-coloured smoke, which spread all over the city, filling it as with a thick mist, while the glowing vault above looked, as Evelyn expresses it, "like the top of a burning oven."

Two churches—namely, Allhallows the Great and Allhallows the Less—were burnt down in the King's sight, and the lofty spire of a third, Saint Lawrence Poulteney, had just caught fire, and looked like a flame-tipped spear. After contemplating this spectacle for some time, Charles roused himself from the state of stupefaction into which he was thrown, and determined, if possible, to arrest the further progress of the devouring element along the riverside, commanded all the houses on the west of Dowgate Dock to be instantly demolished. A large body of men were therefore set upon this difficult and dangerous, and, as it proved, futile task. Another party were ordered to the same duty on Dowgate Hill, and the crash of tumbling walls and beams was soon added to the general uproar, while clouds of dust darkened the air. It was with some difficulty that a sufficient space could be kept clear for carrying these operations into effect; and long before they were half completed Charles had the mortification of finding the fire gaining ground so rapidly that they must prove ineffectual.

Word was brought at this juncture that a fresh fire had broken out in Elbow Lane, and while the Monarch was listening to this dreary intelligence, a fearful cry was heard near the river, followed the next moment by a tumultuous rush of persons from that quarter. The fire, as if in scorn, had leapt across Dowgate Dock, and seizing upon the half-demolished houses, instantly made them its prey. The rapidity with which the conflagration proceeded was astounding, and completely baffled all attempts to check it. The wind continued blowing as furiously as ever, nor was there the slightest prospect of its abatement. All the King's better qualities were called into play by the present terrible crisis. With a courage and devotion that he seldom displayed, he exposed himself to the greatest risk, personally assisting at all the operations he com-

manded ; while his humane attention to the sufferers by the calamity almost reconciled them to their deplorable situation. His movements were almost as rapid as those of the fire itself. Riding up Cannon Street, and from thence by Sweeting's Lane to Lombard Street, and so on by Fenchurch Street to Tower Street, he issued directions all the way, checking every disturbance, and causing a band of depredators who had broken into the house of a wealthy goldsmith to be carried off to Newgate. Arrived in Tower Street, he found the Earl of Craven and his party stationed a little beyond Saint Dunstan's in the East.

All immediate apprehensions in this quarter appeared at an end. The church had been destroyed, as before mentioned, but several houses in its vicinity having been demolished, the fire had not extended eastward. Satisfied that the Tower was in no immediate danger, the King retraced his course, and encountering the Lord Mayor in Lombard Street, sharply reproved him for his want of zeal and discretion.

"I do not deserve your Majesty's reproaches," replied the Lord Mayor. "Ever since the fire broke out I have not rested an instant, and am almost worn to death with anxiety and fatigue. I am just returned from Guildhall, where a vast quantity of plate belonging to the city companies has been deposited. Lord ! Lord ! what a fire this is !"

"You are chiefly to blame for its getting so much ahead," replied the King, angrily. "Had you adopted vigorous measures at the outset, it might have easily been got under. I hear no water was to be obtained. How was that?"

"It is a damnable plot, your Majesty, designed by the Papists, or the Dutch, or the French—I don't know which, perhaps all three," rejoined the Lord Mayor. "And it appears that the cocks of all the pipes at the waterworks at Islington were turned, while the pipes and conduits in the city were empty. This is no accidental fire, your Majesty."

"So I find," replied the King ; "but it will be time enough to enquire into its origin hereafter. Meantime we must act, and energetically, or we shall be equally as much to blame as the incendiaries. Let a proclamation be made, enjoining all those persons who have been driven from their homes by the fire to proceed, with such effects as they have preserved, to Moorfields, where their wants shall be cared for."

"It shall be made instantly, your Majesty," replied the Lord Mayor.

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"Your next business will be to see to the removal of all the wealth from the goldsmiths' houses in this street, and in Gracechurch Street, to some place of security: Guildhall or the Royal Exchange, for instance," continued the King.

"Your Majesty's directions shall be implicitly obeyed," replied the Lord Mayor.

"You will then pull down all the houses to the east of the fire," pursued the King. "Get all the men you can muster, and never relax your exertions till you have made a wide and clear breach between the flames and their prey."

"I will, your Majesty," groaned the Lord Mayor.

"About it, then," rejoined the King. And, striking spurs into his horse, he rode off with his train.

He now penetrated one of the narrow alleys leading to the Three Cranes in the Vintry, where he ascended to the roof of the habitation, that he might view the fire. He saw that it was making such rapid advances towards him, that it must very soon reach the building on which he stood; and half-suffocated with the smoke and scorched with the fire drops, he descended.

Not long after this, Waterman's Hall was discovered to be on fire; and stirred by the sight, Charles made fresh efforts to check the progress of the conflagration by demolishing more houses. So eagerly did he occupy himself in the task, that his life had wellnigh fallen a sacrifice to his zeal. He was standing below a building which the workmen were unroofing, when all at once the whole of the upper part of the wall gave way, dragging several heavy beams with it, and would have infallibly crushed him if Leonard, who was stationed behind him, had not noticed the circumstances and, rushing forward with the greatest promptitude, dragged him out of harm's way. An engineer, with whom the King was conversing at the time of the accident, was buried in the ruins, and when taken out was found fearfully mutilated and quite dead. Both Charles and his preserver were covered with dust and rubbish, and Leonard received a severe blow on the shoulder from a falling brick.

On recovering from the shock, which for some moments deprived him of the power of speech, Charles enquired for his deliverer, and on being shown him, said, with a look of surprise and pleasure: "What, is it you, young man? I am glad of it. Depend upon it, I shall not forget the important service you have rendered me."

"If he remembers it, it will be the first time he has ever so exercised his memory," observed Chiffinch in a loud whisper to Leonard. "I advise you, as a friend, not to let his gratitude cool."

Undeterred by this late narrow escape, Charles ordered fresh houses to be demolished, and stimulated the workmen to exertion by his personal superintendence of their operations. He commanded Leonard to keep constantly near him, laughingly observing, "I shall feel safe while you are by. You have a better eye for a falling house than any of my attendants."

Worn out at length with fatigue, Charles proceeded with the Duke of York and his immediate attendants to Painter's Hall, in Little Trinity Lane, in quest of refreshment, where a repast was hastily prepared for him, and he sat down to it with an appetite such as the most magnificent banquet could not, under other circumstances, have provoked. His hunger satisfied, he dispatched messengers to command the immediate attendance of the Lord Mayor, the Sheriffs, and Aldermen; and when they arrived, he thus addressed them:—"My Lord Mayor and gentlemen, it has been recommended to me by this young man," pointing to Leonard, "that the sole way of checking the further progress of this disastrous conflagration, which threatens the total destruction of our city, will be by blowing up the houses with gunpowder, so as to form a wide gap between the flames and the habitations yet remaining unseized. This plan will necessarily involve great destruction of property, and may, notwithstanding all the care that can be adopted, be attended with some loss of life; but I conceive it will be effectual. Before ordering it, however, to be put into execution, I desire to learn your opinion of it: how say you, my Lord Mayor and gentlemen? Does the plan meet with your approbation?"

"I pray your Majesty to allow me to confer for a moment with my brethren," replied the Lord Mayor cautiously, "before I return an answer. It is too serious a matter to decide upon at once."

"Be it so," replied the King.

And the civic authorities withdrew from the King. Leonard heard, though he did not dare remark upon it, that the Duke of York leaned forward as the Lord Mayor passed him, and whispered in his ear. "Take heed what you do. He only desires to shift the responsibility of the act from his own shoulders to yours."

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"If they assent," said the King to Leonard, "I will place you at the head of a party of engineers."

"I beseech your Majesty neither to regard me nor them," replied Leonard. "Use the authority it has pleased Heaven to bestow upon you for the preservation of the city, and think and act for yourself, or you will assuredly regret your want of decision. It has been my fortune, with the assistance of God, to be the humble instrument of accomplishing your Majesty's deliverance from peril, and I have your royal word that you will not forget it."

"Nor will I," cried the King, hastily.

"Then suffer the petition I now make to you to prevail," cried Leonard, falling on his knees. "Be not influenced by the opinion of the Lord Mayor and his brethren, whose own interests may lead them to oppose the plan; but, if you think well of it, instantly adopt it."

Charles looked irresolute, but might have yielded, if the Duke of York had not stepped forward.

"Your Majesty had better not act too precipitately," said the Duke. "Listen to the counsels of your prudent advisers. A false step in such a case will be irretrievable."

"Nay, brother," rejoined the King, "I see no particular risk in it after all, and I incline towards the young man's opinion."

"At least, hear what they have got to say," rejoined the Duke. "And here they come. They have not been long in deliberation."

"The result of it may be easily predicted," said Leonard, rising.

As Leonard had foreseen, the civic authorities were adverse to the plan. The Lord Mayor, in the name of himself and his brethren, earnestly solicited the King to postpone the execution of his order till all other means of checking the progress of the conflagration had been tried, and till such time, at least, as the property of the owners of the houses to be destroyed could be removed. He further added that it was the unanimous opinion of himself and his brethren that the plan was fraught with great peril to the safety of the citizens, and that they could not bring themselves to assent to it. If, therefore, his Majesty chose to adopt it, they must leave the responsibility with him.

"I told your Majesty how it would be," observed the Duke of York, triumphantly.

"I am sorry to find you are right, brother," replied the King, frowning. "We are overruled, you see, friend," he added to Leonard.

"Your Majesty has signed the doom of your city," rejoined Leonard, mournfully.

"I trust not—I trust not," replied Charles, hastily, and with an uneasy shrug of the shoulder. "Fail not to remind me when all is over of the obligation I am under to you."

"Your Majesty has refused the sole boon I desired to have granted," rejoined Leonard.

"And do you not see the reason, friend?" returned the King. "These worthy and wealthy citizens desire to remove their property. Their arguments are unanswerable. I *must* give them time to do it. But we waste time here," he added rising. "Remember," to Leonard, "my debt is not discharged. And I command you, on pain of my sovereign displeasure, not to omit to claim its payment."

"I will enter it in my memorandum book, and will put your Majesty in mind of it at the fitting season," observed Chiffinch, who had taken a great fancy to Leonard.

The King smiled good-humouredly, and, quitting the hall with his attendants, proceeded to superintend the further demolition of houses. He next visited all the posts, saw that the different noblemen were at their appointed stations, and by his unremitting exertions, contrived to restore something like order to the tumultuous streets. Thousands of men were now employed in different quarters in pulling down houses, and the most powerful engines of war were employed in the work. The confusion that attended these proceedings is indescribable. The engineers and workmen wrought in clouds of dust and smoke, and the crash of falling timber and walls was deafening. In a short time, the upper part of Cornhill was rendered wholly impassable, owing to the heaps of rubbish; and directions were given to the engineers to proceed to the Poultry, and demolish the houses as far as the Conduit in Cheapside, by which means it was hoped that the Royal Exchange would be saved.

Meanwhile, all the wealthy goldsmiths and merchants in Lombard Street and Gracechurch Street had been actively employed in removing all their money, plate, and goods to places of security. A vast quantity was conveyed to Guildhall, as has been stated, and the rest to different churches and halls remote from the scene of conflagration. But in spite of all

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their caution, much property was carried off by the depredators, who contrived to secure a mass of plate, gold, and jewels, that satisfied even their rapacious souls. While this was passing in the heart of the burning city, vast crowds were streaming out of its gates, and encamping themselves, in pursuance of the royal injunction, in Finsbury Fields and Spitalfields. Others crossed the water to Southwark, and took refuge in St. George's Fields; and it was a sad and touching sight to see all these families collected without shelter or food, most of whom a few hours before were in possession of all the comforts of life, but were now reduced to the condition of beggars.

To return to the conflagration. While one party continued to labour incessantly at the work of demolition, and ineffectually sought to quench the flames by bringing a few engines to play upon them—a scanty supply of water having now been obtained—the fire, disdaining such puny opposition, and determined to show its giant strength, leaped over all the breaches, drove the water-carriers back, compelled them to relinquish their buckets and to abandon their engines, which it made its prey, and seizing upon the heaps of timber and other fragments occasioned by the demolition, consumed them, and marched onwards with furious exultation. It was now proceeding up Gracechurch Street, Saint Clement's Lane, Nicholas Lane, and Abchurch Lane at the same time, destroying all in its course. The whole of Lombard Street was choked up with the ruins and rubbish of demolished houses, through which thousands of persons were toiling to carry off goods, either for the purpose of assistance or of plunder. The King was at the west end of the street, near the church of Saint Mary Woolnoth, and the fearful havoc and destruction going forward drew tears from his eyes. A scene of greater confusion cannot be imagined.

Not half an hour after this the flames poured upon Lombard Street from the four avenues before mentioned, and the whole neighbourhood was on fire. With inconceivable rapidity they then ran up Birch Lane, and reaching Cornhill, spread to the right and left in that great thoroughfare. The conflagration had now reached the highest point of the city, and presented the grandest and most terrific aspect it had yet assumed from the river. Thus viewed, it appeared, as Pepys describes it, "as an entire arch of fire from the Three Cranes to the other side of the bridge, and in a bow up the hill for an arch of about a mile long: *it made me weep to see it.*" Vincent also

likens its appearance at this juncture to that of a bow. "A dreadful bow it was," writes this eloquent Nonconformist preacher, "such as mine eyes have never before seen ; a bow which had God's arrow in it with a flaming point ; a shining bow, not like that in the cloud which brings water with it, and withal signifieth God's covenant not to destroy the world any more with water, but a bow having fire in it, and signifying God's anger, and His intention to destroy London with fire."

As the day drew to a close, and it became darker, the spectacle increased in terror and sublimity. The tall black towers of the churches assumed ghastly forms, and to some eyes appeared like infernal spirits plunging in a lake of flame, while even to the most reckless the conflagration seemed to present a picture of the terrors of the Last Day. Never before had such a night as that which ensued fallen upon London. None of its inhabitants thought of retiring to rest ; or if they sought repose after the excessive fatigue they had undergone, it was only in such manner as would best enable them to rise and renew their exertions to check the flames, which were continued throughout the night, but wholly without success. The conflagration appeared to proceed at the same appalling rapidity. Halls, towers, churches, public and private buildings were burning to the number of more than ten thousand, while clouds of smoke covered the vast expanse of more than fifty miles. Travellers approaching London from the North-east were enveloped in it ten miles off, and the fiery reflection in the sky could be discerned at an equal distance. The "hideous storm," as Evelyn terms the fearful and astounding noise, produced by the roaring of the flames and the falling of the numerous fabrics, continued without intermission until the city was entirely destroyed.

—W. H. AINSWORTH, *Old St. Paul's*.

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XIX

At the Court of the Queen

THE royal birthday was usually kept with extraordinary splendour during the reign of Anne but on no previous occasion was it accompanied with so much magnificence and rejoicing as on the 6th of February, 1707. Preparations were made for a general illumination, and the bent of popular feeling was proved by the fact, that wherever the Queen's name appeared, it was sure to be followed by that of the hero of Blenheim and Ramilies, while transparencies were placed in the most conspicuous situations, representing the chief events of the recent campaign. Bonfires were lighted at an early hour, and the French King, the Pope, the Pretender, and the Devil, were paraded in effigy through the streets and subsequently burnt.

The weather was in unison with the general festivity, being unusually fine for the season. The sky was bright and sunny, and the air had all the delicious balminess and freshness of spring. Martial music resounded within the courts of the palace, and the trampling of the guard was heard, accompanied by the clank of their accoutrements as they took their station in Saint James's Street, where a vast crowd was already collected.

About an hour before noon, the patience of those who had taken up their positions betimes promised to be rewarded, and the company began to appear, at first somewhat scantily, but speedily in great numbers. The science of the whip was not so well understood in those days as in our own times, or perhaps the gorgeous and convenient, though somewhat cumbersome vehicles then in vogue were not so manageable; but, from whatever cause, it is certain that many quarrels took

place among the drivers, and frequent and loud oaths and ejaculations were poured forth.

The footpath was invaded by the chairmen, who forcibly pushed the crowd aside, and seemed utterly regardless of the ribs or toes of those who did not instantly make way for them. Some confusion necessarily ensued; but though the crowd were put to considerable inconvenience, jostled here, and squeezed there, the utmost mirth and good humour prevailed.

Before long, the tide of visitors had greatly increased, and coaches, chariots, and sedans, were descending in four unbroken lines towards the palace. The curtains of the chairs being for the most part drawn down, the attention of the spectators was chiefly directed to the coaches, in which sat resplendent beauties, bedecked with jewels and lace, beaux in their costliest and most splendid attire, grave judges and reverend divines in their respective habiliments, military and naval commanders in their full accoutrements, foreign ambassadors, and every variety of character that a court can exhibit. The equipages were most of them new, and exceedingly sumptuous, as were the liveries of the servants clustering behind them.

The dresses of the occupants of the coaches were varied in colour, as well as rich in material, and added to the gaiety and glitter of the scene. Silks and velvets of as many hues as the rainbow might be discovered, while there was every kind of peruke, from the courtly and modish Ramilies just introduced, to the somewhat antiquated but graceful and flowing French campaign. Neither was there any lack of feathered hats, point-lace cravats and ruffles, diamond snuff-boxes and buckles, clouded canes, and all the *et cetera* of beaush decoration.

Hard by the corner of Pall Mall stood a little group, consisting of a tall, thin, plainly-dressed man, apparently belonging to the middle class of society, and a rosy-faced, short-necked individual, whose cassock and band proclaimed his reverend calling, and who had a comely woman of some forty years old under one arm, and a pretty, shy-looking damsel of less than half that age under the other.

"Here comes Sir Nathan Wright, late Lord Keeper of the Great Seal," said the tall, thin man, addressing his reverend companion, to whom he appeared to act as cicerone.

"Is that Sir Nathan, Mr. Greg?" asked the Divine, gazing at a sharp-featured, well-wigged person in the coach.

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"The same, Mr. Hyde," replied the other; "and as I live, he is followed by his successor, Lord Cowper, whom I needn't tell you is one of the ablest lawyers that ever wore a gown. His lordship is pretty certain, ere long, to take his seat upon the woolsack."

"Save us! who's he in the gilt chariot?" cried the young damsel just mentioned. "What a curious fine gentleman he is, and what pure fine clothes he wears!"

"That's the Earl of Sunderland, Miss Angelica," replied Greg, "secretary of state, and son-in-law to his Grace of Marlborough. The Countess is by his side. That angry-looking nobleman, who is thrusting his head out of the window and rating his coachman for driving so slowly, is Lord Orford, another of the ministers, and one of the ablest of them, but no great favourite with her Majesty, for the reproof he administered the Prince of Denmark, on the score of his Highness's mismanagement of the navy. Behind him comes the Duke of Devonshire, and after the Duke, his Grace of Newcastle. Next follows my master, Mr. Harley, who, if he doesn't become lord treasurer one day, won't meet with his desert. Take note of him, I pray you, Miss Angelica, for he's worth looking at."

"Oh, yes! I see him," replied Angelica; "but I can't see much to admire about him."

"Many of your sex have entertained a different opinion," replied Greg, with a smile. "But how do you like the young gentleman with him?"

"Purely," replied Angelica; "purely. He's another guess sort of body."

"Who may the young man be, friend Greg?" inquired Parson Hyde.

"His name is Masham," replied Greg; "he is one of the Prince of Denmark's equerries, and considered the handsomest man at court."

"I'm sure he's the purest handsome man I've seen," cried Angelica, her eyes sparkling as she spoke. "O lud! if he isn't getting out of the coach. I hope he isn't coming to speak to me. Mother, lend me your fan to hide my face."

"Peace, you silly thing!" cried Mrs. Hyde, with a reproving look.

As she spoke, the carriage stopped, and Masham, stepping forth, closed the door after him. Greg's eulogium was not unmerited. The young equerry possessed a figure of perfect

symmetry, and a countenance remarkable for delicacy and beauty. His eyes were of liquid blue, and it would seem of great power over the female heart; for as he fixed them upon Angelica, as he was detained beside her for a moment by the press, she felt hers flutter within her bosom.

His attire was not remarkable for richness, but it was tasteful, consisting of a green velvet coat, laced with gold, and a white satin waistcoat, made so low as to descend half-way down the thigh, as was the mode. In lieu of a peruke, he wore his own dark-brown hair gathered from the forehead, and tied with a riband behind.

Samuel Masham was of a good Essex family, his father being Sir Francis Masham, of High-Laver, Bart., and his mother a daughter of Sir William Scott, of Rouen, in Normandy, who enjoyed the title of Marquis de la Mezansene in France; but as he was an eighth son, he had little expectation either of title or property. He was not more than twenty-three, or four at most, but had been for some time about court, having been page to the Queen while Princess of Denmark, and was now equerry and gentleman of the bed-chamber to Prince George.

"By your leave, my pretty lass," said he, addressing Angelica in tones which thrilled her with delight, "I would pass."

"This way, Mr. Masham, this way," said Greg, retiring, and endeavouring to clear a passage.

"Ah! Mr. Greg," cried Masham, "what are you doing here?"

"Merely come with some country cousins to see the quality go to court, sir," replied Greg.

"Faith, you'll find no brighter eyes, nor cheeks more blooming, than those you've with you," said Masham, chucking Angelica under the chin. "Those lips are cherries indeed, but I must not be seduced by them to linger here. I've a word to say to the Comte de Briançon before I enter the palace."

So saying, and with a laughing glance at Angelica, he pushed through the crowd, and entered the house at the corner of Pall Mall.

"The Comte de Briançon, whose hotel he has just entered, is the envoy-extraordinary from the Duke of Savoy," observed Greg, not a little elated at the notice taken of him and his pretty country cousin by the handsome equerry. "I am well acquainted with his confidential secretary, Monsieur Claude

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Baude, who is to his master what I am to Mr. Harley. He's a charming man, Mr. Masham—eh, Miss Angelica?"

"Curiously charming," simpered the damsel.

"All the ladies think so," pursued Greg; "they're all in love with him."

"I should be surprised if they weren't," said Angelica.

"But see!" pursued Greg, "here comes another handsome man, Mr. Saint-John, secretary at war. He's a terrible rake."

"A rake, is he!" cried Angelica. "Oh! gemini! then I won't look at him, for mother says a rake is worse than a roaring lion, and sure to eat one up. Tell me when he's gone, Mr. Greg, for I don't desire to lose any more of the sight than I can help."

"The roaring lion has departed," replied Greg, laughing; "and here you have the Duke of Beaufort and his beautiful Duchess. Has not her grace a noble presence? The bold, proud-looking dame who follows is the Lady Di Cecil. The three ladies laughing so loudly in yonder large coach are Lady Carlisle, Lady Effingham, and Mrs. Cross. Next comes my Lord Ross, to whom, they *do* say, Lady Sunderland is kinder than she should be; but that, I dare say, is mere scandal. Whom have we here? Faith, my Lady Fitzharding, at whose house more foolish spendthrifts are ruined at ombre and basset than at the groom-porter's."

"Oh, blind and perverse generation!" exclaimed Hyde, lifting up his eyes.

"Ah! you may well denounce them, reverend sir," replied Greg; "and here comes further food for a homily in the shape of his Grace of Grafton. Look with what an air he lolls back in his coach. His good looks have made desperate havoc among the ladies, and no one but Mrs. Onslow has been found to resist him. Next comes fat Mrs. Knight, of whom I could, if I chose, tell you a diverting history. To her succeeds my Lord Nottingham, who appears as grave as if he had not recovered his dismissal from office, though he has tried to console himself with the Signora Margareta. In the next coach sits the proudest dame at court—her Grace of Marlborough, whose daughter she is, not excepted—it is the Duchess of Montague. Isn't she a magnificent creature? The lady who whisks past next, covered with diamonds, is Mrs. Long, Sir William Raby's sister. That handsome equipage belongs to Sir Richard Temple—you may see him, and a fine-looking man he is. People talk of him and Mrs. Cent-

livre—but I say nothing. Ah! here come a brace of wits. The one nearest this way is the famous Mr. Congreve, and the other the no less famous Captain Steele. I wonder which of the two owns the chariot—neither, most probably. The fine lady who succeeds them is Mrs. Hammond, whose husband is as much of a roaring lion as Mr. Saint-John, while she is said to console herself for his neglect by the attentions of my Lord Dursley, vice-admiral of the blue, and whom you may see leaning out of the next chariot window kissing his hand to her.”

While he was thus running on, Greg felt his arm pulled by Angelica, who asked him in an under-tone if he knew the strange gentleman who had just taken up his station near them.

“To be sure I do,” replied Greg, looking in the direction indicated, and raising his hat as he caught the eye of the individual alluded to; “it is the Marquis de Guiscard.”

“Lawk, how he stares!” whispered Angelica. “I declare he quite puts a body out of countenance.”

The marquis was tall and well formed, though somewhat meagre, with dark, piercing eyes, black, bushy brows, and a pale, olive face, which looked perfectly blue where the beard had been shaven from it. His features were prominent, and would have been handsome but for a certain sinister expression, the disagreeable effect of which was heightened by an insolent and rakish air. His attire was the court-dress of an officer of high rank—namely, a scarlet coat, richly embroidered with gold, and having large cuffs; white satin waistcoat, likewise worked with gold; a point-lace cravat and ruffles, and a diamond-hilted sword. A full-flowing French peruke, a feathered hat, and a clouded cane completed his costume.

Antoine de Guiscard, Abbé de la Bourlie, or, as he chose to style himself, Marquis de Guiscard, a scion of an ancient and noble French family, was born in the year 1658, and was consequently not far from fifty, at the period under consideration. Destined for the Church, and possessed of considerable learning, he must, from his abilities and connexions, have obtained high preferment in it, if he could have placed due control on his passions. But amongst the depraved of a licentious court, he was the most depraved; and finding a priestly life too tame for him, he accompanied his brother, the Chevalier de Guiscard, to the scene of war in Flanders. On his return from this campaign, he resumed his wild courses, and assisted the chevalier to carry off a married woman, of whom the latter became

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enamoured. This affair was scarcely hushed up, when he got into fresh trouble, having wounded a gentleman, a near relation of Madame de Maintenon, and killed two of his servants, while shooting; and he put the climax to his folly and violence by subjecting a sergeant in his own regiment whom he had suspected of theft to the military rack—a species of torture administered by placing burning matches between the fingers of the accused. Orders being issued for his apprehension, he consulted his safety by flight, and escaped into Switzerland, where he conceived the notion of making himself the head of the malcontents in France, and with this view concerted measures with the leaders of the allies to produce a general insurrection, both of Protestants and Catholics, among the Camisards, who were then in a state of agitation. The plausible representations of the Marquis procured him the commission of lieutenant-general from the Emperor, and thus armed, he proceeded to Turin, where, with the assistance of the Duke of Savoy, he procured four small vessels of war, which were fitted up and manned at Nice, and with which he meditated a descent on the coast of Languedoc. But tempestuous weather, and, it may be, other causes, interfered with the expedition, and the Marquis, after losing one of his ships and running great risks, returned to the court of Savoy. Here his underhand proceedings having excited the suspicion of the Duke, he removed, towards the latter end of the year 1704, to the Hague, and had several conferences with the grand-pensionary, Heinsius, and the Duke of Marlborough, who were so well satisfied with his representations, that the States-General agreed to allow him the monthly pay of a hundred ducatoons. Intelligence being soon afterwards received of the Earl of Peterborough's expedition to Catalonia, the Marquis hastened to join him at Barcelona, and meeting with the same success which had hitherto attended his projects, he contrived to obtain letters of recommendation from the King of Spain to the Queen of England, with which he embarked for that country. During the voyage, which was remarkably stormy, the vessel he sailed in engaged with a French privateer, and afforded the Marquis a good opportunity of displaying his valour and skill, for it was mainly owing to his resolution capture was avoided. On reaching London he was graciously received by the Queen, and the royal countenance procured him the entrée to the houses of the Dukes of Devonshire and Ormond. He also speedily managed to gain the good opinion

of some of the ministers, particularly Mr. Saint-John. When, therefore, a descent upon France was proposed, and troops were raised for the purpose, to be commanded by the Earl of Rivers, Guiscard received the commission of lieutenant-colonel, and had a thousand pounds furnished him for his equipments. But fortune, which had hitherto smiled upon him, began now to waver. While the confederate fleet lay at Torbay, waiting for a favourable wind, disputes arose between him and the English generals, who refused to allow him the command which he claimed, and his ignorance of military affairs, as well as his imperfect acquaintance with the state of France, becoming apparent to Lord Rivers, he was recalled, and, returning to London, remained for some time in privacy. Though his pay as lieutenant-general was discontinued, he had still his regiment as well as his pension from the States; and taking a good house in Pall Mall, he set up a showy equipage, kept a host of servants, and commenced a career of extravagance and dissipation, which he contrived to support by play and other expedients, while he was constant in his attendance upon court, and at the levées of ministers, in search of employment and preferment.

Anxious, like most adventurers, to strengthen his precarious fortunes by an advantageous match, Guiscard had paid court to several heiresses and wealthy widows, but hitherto without success. It was also suspected that he had other and deeper schemes in hand; and that, having made his peace with France, he had contrived to open a clandestine correspondence with the court of Saint-Germains. Though a successful gamester, the Marquis indulged in other profligate excesses, which ran away with all his gains at play. Audacious and insolent in general, he could yet be cringing and supple enough, if it suited his purpose. From some of his creatures employed about the palace, he had ascertained how well Abigail Hill stood with the Queen, and at once discerning her future ascendancy, he turned all his attention to winning her regard. But his efforts were fruitless. Whether she divined his scheme, or had been warned against him by Harley, she repulsed his advances, and on the rare occasions of their meeting, scarcely treated him with civility. Guiscard, however, was not a man to be easily turned aside. Though his vanity was mortified by his rejection, he resolved to persevere, and to wait some favourable opportunity for the prosecution of his design.

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Soon after the Marquis had posted himself in the rear of Greg and his party, another slight disturbance occurred. It was occasioned by the issuing forth of several lacqueys in gay liveries from the house at the corner of Pall Mall, before alluded to, who pushed aside the crowd with their gold-headeds, to make way for a superbly-gilt chair, emblazoned with the arms of Savoy. As this chair was borne past the Marquis de Guiscard, the window was let down, and amidst an atmosphere of perfume, a handsome, but dissipated-looking man, wearing a magnificent French peruke, put out his head and addressed him.

"It is the Comte de Briançon himself," said Greg to his companions.

"How purely sweet he smells, to be sure," remarked Angelica. "I declare he's just like a great scent-bottle!"

"Well, my dear Marquis! how speed you? Is the adventure over?" inquired the Comte, laughing, and displaying a brilliant set of teeth.

"The lady has not yet passed," returned Guiscard. "What have you done with Masham? I thought he was in the chair with you."

"He has stayed behind to read a letter," said the Comte. "You have secured the coachman, you say."

"Five guineas has done his business," answered Guiscard. "But, by Saint Michael! here she comes. Away, Count!"

"Adieu, then, and success attend you," cried Briançon. And giving the signal to the chairmen, they moved on towards the palace.

The foregoing brief conversation, though conducted in French, was not lost upon Greg, who perfectly understood the language, and who being also well aware of the Marquis's character, at once comprehended the nature of the project on which he was engaged. He looked, therefore, with some curiosity towards the approaching coaches, to see which of them contained the heroine of the expected adventure, and he was not long in making the discovery. As he scanned the line, he observed a stout, rosy-faced fellow, in a full-bottomed, powdered wig, and sky-blue livery with yellow facings, who was seated on the hammer-cloth of a magnificent chariot, slightly raise his whip, and give a nod of intelligence to the Marquis.

"There she is, I'll be sworn!" he exclaimed, stepping forward to get a better view of the equipage. "As I live! 'tis Lady Rivers. He cannot mean to give her a billet-doux in

this public place. But who has she with her? Miss Abigail Hill. Oh! I now see his mark. Egad! she looks uncommonly well."

Abigail Hill could not be called positively beautiful, and yet the expression of her countenance was so agreeable, that she deserved the epithet quite as much as many persons whose features were more classically moulded. Fine eyes of a clear blue, a radiantly white skin, auburn hair, round dimpling cheeks, and teeth as white as pearls, constituted her attractions. Looking at her narrowly, it was seen that there was a good deal of firmness about the brow and mouth, and a steady expression in the eye, that argued determination, the proper bent of which seemed guaranteed by the rest of her face. Her quickness of manner, and vivacity of look, proclaimed the possession of a ready wit; nor were these outward indications delusive. Her figure was extremely good, slight, tall, and graceful. It was displayed in court dress of white satin, trimmed with lace, and made low, with short loose sleeves. Her age might be about four-and-twenty.

By this time the chariot in which she rode approached within a short distance of the Marquis de Guiscard, when the coachman, who had watched his opportunity, contrived to run against the vehicle moving in a line with him. He was instantly assailed with the most vehement abuse for his carelessness by the neighbouring Jehu, to whom he responded in appropriate terms, charging him with being the cause of the collision. This, as he anticipated, roused the other's ire so much, that he threatened to knock him off the box. Whereupon the offender replied by an oath of defiance, accompanied by a cut with his whip. The aggrieved coachman instantly rose on his box and lashed furiously at his adversary, who, while defending himself, had much ado to restrain his horses, which began to plunge desperately.

Greatly amused by the conflict, the spectators cheered lustily, while the ladies within the carriage becoming alarmed by the noise, Abigail Hill put her head out of the window to see what was the cause of the stoppage. At this moment, the Marquis de Guiscard rushed forward, and opening the door, offered to assist her out, but on seeing him, she instinctively drew back.

Guiscard then addressed himself to Lady Rivers, but with no better success.

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replied her ladyship, "but we will stay where we are. Do tell the coachman to drive on, or I will discharge him."

"Pardon, miladi," cried Guiscard. "The fellow refuses to attend to me. His island blood is up. Come, Miss Hill, I must be peremptory, and insist on your getting out. I am fearful some accident may occur."

"You are very attentive, Marquis," said Abigail; "but Lady Rivers's servants are at hand, and will take care of us. Ditchley," she added to a footman, who had now approached the door—"your arm."

The man would have advanced, but the Marquis motioned him angrily off. The fight, meanwhile, between the two coachmen, raged with increased fury.

"Ditchley!" screamed Lady Rivers, who now began to be seriously alarmed.

"Comin', your la'asip," replied the footman, trying to push past the Marquis.

"Back, fellow!" cried Guiscard. "I warn you not to interfere."

But seeing the man resolute, and exasperated at the failure of his plan, he raised his cane, and with a well-dealt blow on the sconce, stretched the unlucky Ditchley on the ground.

Both ladies now screamed, not knowing how far the violence of the Marquis might extend. At this, the three other footmen who were clinging behind the chariot, flew to their assistance, but another protector anticipated them. Just as Ditchley fell, Masham, who, a few moments previously, had issued from the Comte de Briançon's hotel, seeing what was going forward, made his way through the crowd, and rushing up to the carriage, caught the Marquis by the collar, and thrust him forcibly aside.

"Ha! what in the devil's name brings you here, sir!" cried Guiscard, in tones almost inarticulate with rage.

"I am come to protect these ladies from affront," replied Masham sternly, and laying his hand upon his sword.

"Sdeath, sir!—how do you know they have been affronted?—and who constituted you their defender?" demanded Guiscard, furiously.

"I will render you a full account for my interference hereafter, Marquis," replied Masham; "but if you have any pretension to the character of a gentleman, you will not carry on this dispute further in the presence of ladies."

"Be it so!" replied Guiscard, between his teeth. "But be assured, you shall not escape chastisement."

"Do not involve yourself in a quarrel on my account, I pray, Mr. Masham," said Abigail, who, meanwhile, had descended from the coach, the door having been opened by one of the footmen.

"I am very happy to have been of the slightest use to you, Miss Hill," replied Masham, bowing; "and as to the quarrel, I beg you will give yourself no concern about it."

"Only promise me one thing, Mr. Masham," she said—"that you won't accept the Marquis's challenge, if he sends one. If anything should happen to you, I shall never forgive myself."

"Have no fear," he replied, laughingly. "I shall run no risk."

"But promise me not to fight," cried Abigail. "Nay, if you hesitate, I must procure a mediator in the Queen. You dare not disobey her."

"It is scarcely worth while to trouble her majesty on so unimportant a matter," returned Masham.

"The matter is not so unimportant to me," replied Abigail. And then checking herself, and blushing, she leaned back in the carriage, which rolled on towards the gateway of the palace.

"You expressed great concern for Mr. Masham, my dear," observed Lady Rivers. "If he has any vanity,—and what handsome young fellow has not?—he will fancy he has made a conquest."

"Nay, I only expressed a natural concern for him, I'm sure," replied Abigail. "I should be terribly distressed if he were to fight this odious Marquis de Guiscard."

"And still more terribly distressed, if he should chance to get run through the body by the odious Marquis, who, they say, is the most expert swordsman about town," rejoined Lady Rivers.

"Don't suppose anything so dreadful," cried Abigail, turning pale. "I will certainly mention the matter to the Queen; that will be the surest way to prevent mischief."

"But take care not to betray the state of your heart to her majesty at the same time, my dear," said Lady Rivers, somewhat maliciously.

Abigail blushed again, but attempted no reply; and at this juncture the carriage stopped, the door was opened, and they were ushered into the palace.

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Never had a drawing-room at Saint James's been more numerous or brilliantly attended than on the present occasion. It was remarked, however, that the Queen looked somewhat jaded and out of spirits, while a slight inflammation about the eyes increased her general appearance of indisposition. Noticing these symptoms with concern, the Duke of Marlborough alluded to them to the Prince of Denmark, who replied hastily and heedlessly, as was his wont, "The Queen owes her illness to herself. If she did not sit up so late at night, her eyes would not be so red, nor her spirits so indifferent."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the Duke; "I thought her majesty retired to rest early."

"So she does, generally," replied the Prince, in some confusion at the indiscretion he now perceived he had committed; "but sometimes she will sit up talking for an hour or two—talking to me, your grace—merely to me—asking my opinion on matters before the cabinet—much better go to bed—late hours don't agree with either of us—ha! ha!" And he thrust his snuff-box into the Duke's hand to put an end to the discourse.

Marlborough acknowledged the attention with a bow, but he muttered to himself—"She sits up o' nights, ha! Some one besides the Duchess is in her confidence. This must be looked to."

Later on in the day, when the drawing-room was over, the Duke was alone with his illustrious lady at Marlborough House.

The Duchess was radiant. Her fine eyes sparkled with pleasure, and her cheeks were flushed with triumph. Her step, as she crossed the chamber towards a sofa at the further end of it, was prouder than usual, and her mien statelier. A magnificent woman still was Sarah of Marlborough, and little of decay was visible about her. There was something queenly in her look and deportment. Her figure was tall and commanding, and her features cast in that superb mould which seems reserved only for the great. All emotions could those features well portray, but the expression which they habitually wore was that of pride. And yet they were soft and feminine, and not destitute of a certain character of voluptuousness, chiefly discernible in the rich fulness of the lips, and the melting languor of the eyes, which, when not lighted into fire, had inexpressible tenderness. Her forehead

was exceedingly fine, and her dark hair, which was gathered like a tiara over her brow, descending in ringlets behind, retained all its original glossiness and profusion. Her proportions were full; the rounded neck, arm, and shoulder, being all of marble whiteness. Her attire corresponded in magnificence with her person, and blazed with diamonds and precious stones. Among other ornaments, she wore a ring of great value, which had been presented to her by Charles the Third of Spain, when he visited England four years before. The Duchess of Marlborough was a woman to inspire a grand passion, and to maintain it. Neither absence nor irritation could shake the devoted attachment entertained for her by the Duke, and, now, after their long union, he was as much her lover as when he wooed her as Sarah Jennings.

And well was she matched by her noble lord. Not more distinguished for his mental qualifications than for his personal graces and accomplishments, was the Duke of Marlborough. A perfect courtier, in the best sense of the word, which means that he was a most refined gentleman, the Duke super-added the soldier to the courtier, making a matchless combination. Nothing more polished, more graceful, more easy, or which set others more at ease, can be imagined than Marlborough's manner, while at the same time it was dignified and imposing. His figure was lofty, and nobly proportioned; and what with his renown, his stateliness of presence, and his handsome form and features, it was impossible to look at him without admiration. True, the Duke was no longer young—true, he had undergone excessive fatigue of all kinds, had been harassed in every way, and for years had known but few and brief intervals of repose; despite all this, however, he preserved his good looks in a most astonishing manner, and though no longer the fair youth who had captivated the Duchess of Cleveland in Charles the Second's day, he was still a model of manly beauty. He was habited in his general's uniform, and was richly decorated with orders, amongst which was the George, in a sardonix set with diamonds of immense value. His spirits were by no means so high as those of the Duchess. On the contrary, he looked thoughtful, and followed her slowly and musingly to the sofa.

"What ails your grace?" cried the Duchess, seating herself. "Methinks if anything could make you cheerful, it should be the acclamations with which you were greeted by the crowd

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as you left the palace. Their deafening cries of 'God save the Queen and the Duke of Marlborough!' can almost be heard here, and I fancy must have reached even the ears of Anne herself. The sweetest music to me is the applausive shouting of the people, and the most gladsome and stirring sight, their beaming faces and waving hats. But both seem to have lost their charm for you to day. Custom has staled them, as it has staled me."

"Popular applause may indeed fail to move me," replied the Duke affectionately; "perhaps does so; but the day is far distant, sweetheart, when I shall be insensible to your love. I am somewhat overcome by the tumult, and wish I had returned from the palace privately."

"Better as it is," said the Duchess; "you cannot show yourself too much. Has anything happened at the drawing-room to annoy you? I thought you looked somewhat grave there."

"Well, then, I must own I have been disturbed by a few words let fall by the Prince, respecting the Queen. I told him I was sorry to see her look ill, and he said it was her own fault, for she would sit up late at night."

"Did he tell you with whom?" demanded the Duchess.

"No," answered the Duke. "Like a poor chess-player, he tried to repair his inadvertence, and therefore exposed himself further. But I could not learn who was the Queen's companion beside himself."

"Then I will tell you," replied the Duchess; "it is our cousin, Abigail Hill."

"What, the dresser and bedchamber woman?" cried the Duke; "if that be all, it is of little moment."

"It is not of such little moment as your Grace imagines," replied the Duchess; "and if I had known what I now know of Abigail, when I placed her near the Queen, I would never have put it in her power to do me an injury. Who would have thought so artless a creature, to all appearance, could play her cards so cunningly! But the jade has discerned the Queen's weak points, and seeing how much she is the slave of those who feign to love her, and will condescend to fawn upon her and flatter her for her wit and understanding—*her* wit and understanding, forsooth!—she has resorted to all these mean arts to win her confidence."

"If she *has* won it, you cannot blame her," replied the Duke; "and I cannot help saying, if you yourself, madam,

were to study the Queen's temper and peculiarities more, it would be better."

"I am surprised to hear your grace talk thus," replied the Duchess, bridling up. "Would you have me sacrifice my opinions to one to whom I have been accustomed to dictate? Would you have me approve measures when I disapprove them? Would you have me cringe, protest, and lie, or copy the manners of this servile creature? Would you have me listen to every childish complaint, every whim, every caprice—or affect sympathy when I feel none? Would you have me solicit when I can command—kneel, when I can sit—obey, when I can exact obedience?"

"Nay—but, madam," said the Duke, "the duties to your Queen make what might appear servility and flattery to another, rightful homage and respect to her."

"I shall never be wanting in loyalty and devotion to the Queen," replied the Duchess; "and whatever opinions I offer, shall be consistent with her honour. I can never reproach myself with advising ought derogatory to her station or to the welfare of the country, and with that conviction I shall continue to act as I have begun. I may lose her regard, but I will never lose my own respect."

"I know you to be a high-minded woman, madam," replied the Duke, "and that all your actions are directed by the best and noblest principles; but I still conceive that, without any sacrifice of moral dignity or self-respect, you might more effectually retain her majesty's regard."

"Your Grace mistakes the Queen altogether," replied the Duchess impatiently: "and were I to yield to her humour, or subscribe to her opinion, things would be in a far worse position than they are now. Anne is one of those persons who, if allowed to have her own way, or act upon her own impulses, would be sure to go wrong. Without energy or decision, she is so short-sighted that she can only discern what is immediately before her, and even then is pretty sure to err in judgment. To serve her well she must be led—to make her reign prosperous and glorious, she must be ruled."

"My own experience leads me to the same conclusion as yourself, madam," said the Duke; "but this principle must not be carried too far. Weak natures like that of Anne must not be pressed too hardly, or they will rebel against the hand that governs them. I have observed some indications of this sort of late about the Queen. She seems displeased with you."

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"And what matter if she be displeased with me?" replied the Duchess, somewhat contemptuously; "she may be piqued for the moment, but I am too necessary to her, and, indeed, too much her mistress, for any lasting breach to occur between us."

"Be not over-confident, madam," returned the Duke. "Security is often fatal. Security lost the battle of Blenheim to Tallard; and to Villeroy's security I owe the victory of Ramillies. To trust too much is to give your enemy an advantage, and defeat may occur when there is least appearance of danger. It is true that the Queen has hitherto submitted to your governance in all things, but her advisers may turn your very power against you. I am so much of a Jesuit, in one sense, that if the object I had in view were praiseworthy, and I was satisfied on that score, I should not look too scrupulously at the means by which the great end was to be accomplished. Some concessions must be made to the Queen—some change in your deportment towards her, or I am apprehensive you will lose her favour."

"If I must lose it, I must," replied the Duchess. "But I will never retain it by imitating these truckling slaves—these minions who would crouch to the earth for a smile. It shall never be said of Sarah of Marlborough, that she adopted the abject policy of Abigail Hill—and she only feels surprised that her lord should give her such counsel."

"I recommend no abject policy," replied the Duke, a little nettled by her tone. "But firmness is one thing, imperiousness another. It is not in human nature, still less in the nature of one of such exalted rank, to submit to the control you impose upon Anne."

"Be content to rule in the camp, my lord," said the Duchess, "and leave the Queen to me. I have hitherto proved successful."

"But you are on the eve of a defeat," cried the Duke. "I warn you of that, madam."

"Your Grace is as impatient as her Majesty," said the Duchess, tauntingly.

"And with as much reason," cried the Duke, rising and pacing the apartment.

"I have been a faithful and loving wife to you, my lord, and a faithful and loving friend and servant to the Queen," replied the Duchess, "and I cannot alter my conduct to please either of you."

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"You rule us both with an iron rod," cried Marlborough; "and my own feelings of irritation make me perfectly comprehend those of the Queen."

"As I do not desire to quarrel with your Grace, I will leave you till you are cooler," said the Duchess, rising, and moving towards the door.

"Nay, you shall not go," cried the Duke, catching her hand. "I have been hasty—wrong. By Heaven! I do not wonder you govern Anne so absolutely, for I have no will but yours."

"Nor I any law but yours, my lord," answered the Duchess, smiling. "You know that, and therefore yield to me—*sometimes*. And so does her Majesty."

"If she loves you as truly as I do, Sarah," returned Marlborough, tenderly, "you have nothing to fear. My passion borders on idolatry, and I could be anything in your hands, if the reward for it was to be your love. The letters I have sent you, written amid the hurry and exhaustion of rapid marches—amid the vexations of opposing interests—on the agitating eve of battle, or in the intoxication of victory, would prove to you that you were ever foremost in my thoughts, but they could not speak the full extent of my feelings. Oh, Sarah! fortunate as my career has been, and much as I ought yet to do to serve my Queen and country, I would far rather retire with you to some quiet retreat, where we might pass the remainder of our life undisturbed by faction, or the cares of public life."

"Your Grace would not be happy in such an existence—nor should I," replied the Duchess. "We were made for greatness. The quiet retreat you propose would become a prison, where you would be tormented by a thousand stirring thoughts of conquests yet unachieved, and laurels yet unwon; while I should lament the ascendancy I had lost, and the power I had thrown aside. No, no, my lord, much is to be done, much to be won before we retire. It will be time to quit our posts when our acquisitions can no longer be increased. When I have made you the wealthiest noble, as you are the first in Europe, I shall be satisfied; but not till then."

"You are a woman in a thousand," cried the Duke, in admiration.

"I am worthy to be the wife of the Duke of Marlborough," she answered proudly; "and my lord may safely repose his honour and interests with me. I will watch well over both."

"I doubt it not, madam," cried the Duke, in a voice of

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emotion, and pressing her hand to his lips, "I doubt it not. But I would you had never placed Abigail near the Queen."

"My motive for doing so was this," replied the Duchess; "I was fatigued to death with attendance upon her Majesty, and to speak truth, after your Grace's elevation to a principality of the empire, I thought the office derogatory. Abigail was therefore introduced as the fittest and safest person to fill my place. That I could not have made a worse selection I now find. The wench has begun to comport herself towards me with a degree of insolence that argues the reliance she places on the Queen's protection. Add to which, I have discovered that an understanding subsists between her and her kinsman, Harley."

"Godolphin and I have for some time doubted Harley," returned the Duke, "and have been anxious for his removal from the ministry. But the Queen has clung to him with a tenacity till now unaccountable."

"Your Grace had once a high opinion of this secretary," said the Duchess, "but I always warned you against him as a smooth-tongued hypocrite, who had merely his own advancement in view. Now, I hope you are convinced?"

"Most unpleasantly so," rejoined the Duke. "But how do you suppose Harley communicates with Abigail?"

"I intercepted a note from her to him this morning at the drawing-room," said the Duchess.

"A love letter?" asked Marlborough.

"No; a few words hastily traced in pencil, desiring him to be at the garden gate of the palace at eleven to-morrow night," said the Duchess.

"That sounds like an appointment!" cried the Duke.

"Ay, but it is not with herself," said the Duchess. "He is to come there to see the Queen. Of that I am well assured. But I will surprise them. Having the key of the back staircase, I can easily be present at the conference."

"You had better think this over," said Marlborough. "The Queen may resent the intrusion."

"I have already told your Grace you know her not. She is far more in awe of me than I am of her, and with reason. It she were not ashamed of Harley, she would not receive him thus clandestinely. My discovery of the intercourse will be quite sufficient to put an end to it."

"I hope so," replied the Duke. "But while Abigail enjoys

her favour, there will always be danger. Can we not provide her a husband?"

"Hum!" exclaimed the Duchess.

At this juncture, a servant entered and announced the Earl of Sunderland.

"Glad to see you, son-in-law," said the Duke, extending his hand to him. "We were talking of marrying our cousin, Abigail Hill."

"What, to the Marquis de Guiscard! who attempted to carry her off in the face of all the world this morning," cried Sunderland, "and was only prevented by the interference of young Masham, the Prince's equerry?"

"Ah! how was that?" inquired the Duchess.

And the Earl proceeded to detail the occurrence.

"Guiscard is a dangerous man," said the Duke; "and if he cannot rid himself of a rival by fair means, will not hesitate to have recourse to foul. I heard a strange character of him at the Hague; but he is brave, and useful for certain purposes. I'll warrant me it is suspicion of Abigail's favour with the Queen that makes him pay court to her. Otherwise, she could have no attraction to an adventurer like him."

"Lord Ross, who mentioned the circumstance to Lady Sunderland," said the Earl, "and who had it from Lady Rivers, declared that Abigail was quite taken by Masham."

"Ah, indeed!" said the Duchess. "Something may be made of this hint. Are you acquainted with Mr. Masham, my lord?"

"Quite sufficiently for any purpose your Grace may require," replied Sunderland.

"Make it your business to find him out, then, and bring him here to dinner," rejoined the Duchess.

"You forget the ball this evening at the palace?" interposed the Duke.

"No, I do not," replied the Duchess; "and I will thank your Grace to send a card of invitation, without delay, to the Marquis de Guiscard. I will explain my motives presently. I depend upon you, Sunderland."

"Your behests shall be obeyed, madam, if possible," replied the Earl, who was accustomed, like all the Duchess's family, to render blind obedience to her. "I think I heard Masham was gone with Harley and some others to the Cocoa Tree. I'll seek him there at once."

The ball at the palace in the evening was as brilliantly

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attended as the drawing-room had been, though of course less numerous. Adjoining the grand saloon where dancing was going forward, was a small apartment hung with green silk, woven with gold, whence it obtained the name of the "green chamber," in which, by the subdued light of shaded candles, might be discovered, seated on a fauteuil, a finely-formed but somewhat full-proportioned lady, attired in a robe of purple velvet, of the particular dye devoted to royalty. Around her smooth throat, which lost little by the contrast, was twined a string of the largest and most beautiful pearls, while across her fair rounded shoulders glittered the collar of the George. Her dress was worn low in front, as was the mode—and the style perfectly suited the wearer, who was remarkable for the beauty of her bust. The upper part of the stomacher was edged with stiffened point lace, as were the short loose sleeves of the gown. Here again the mode was favourable to the wearer, whose arms were of Junonian roundness and whiteness. Her hair, dark brown in colour, and of a fine texture, was divided in the centre, but raised in high and ample curls above the head, and being looped behind by a string of pearls as magnificent as those encircling her throat, descended in thick waving ringlets down her back. Her complexion was fresh and rosy—its bloom derived from health and nature only—her features regular, with a small delicate mouth, and agreeably moulded chin. Her eyes were good, but disfigured by a slight contraction of the lids, while a heaviness about the brow gave a somewhat cloudy expression to her countenance. The Duchess of Marlborough says, in the character bequeathed by her of Anne: "There was something of majesty in her look, but mixed with a sullen and constant frown, that plainly betrayed a gloominess of soul, and a cloudiness of disposition within." But this was written after the painter of the portrait had, by her own imprudence, called a "constant frown" to the countenance.

Anne's manners were dignified, graceful, and easy, and her embonpoint rather added to the majesty of her deportment than detracted from it. In stature, she was of the middle size. In a much less exalted sphere of life, Anne would have been admired for her accomplishments and personal attractions, which were by no means inconsiderable. In earlier days she had danced remarkably well, and accompanied herself in singing on the guitar—an instrument then much in vogue, which she played with consummate skill. The tones of her voice

were singularly clear and harmonious, and, like her illustrious successor in modern times, she was distinguished by the admirable delivery of her speeches to parliament.

Anne's private virtues have already been dwelt upon. She was a model of conjugal affection, amiable, devout, charitable, and an excellent economist; insomuch that her treasury was always well provided. A lover of polite letters, and a true friend to the Church, her bounty in surrendering the tithes and first-fruits in augmentation of poor vicarages, must ever cause her name to be held in grateful remembrance by the clergy. At the period in question she was in her forty-third year.

Not far from the Queen, at a small card-table, sat her consort, Prince George of Denmark, playing at picquet with Mr. Harley. A slight description must suffice for the Prince. Stout, with large, handsome, good-humoured features, he seemed to be fonder of play, and the pleasures of the table, than the cares and perplexities of sovereignty. Apart from his constitutional apathy and indolence the Prince had many good qualities. He was humane, just, affable, and had the welfare of the country sincerely at heart. Rarely offering advice to the Queen, or interfering between her and her ministers; when he did so, his opinion was well considered. His was a character rather to inspire esteem than respect, and Anne loved him more for the qualities of his heart than regarded him for those of his head. He was dressed in black velvet, with a star upon his breast, and wore the blue riband, and the garter.

The Duchess of Ormond, Lady Portmore, and Lady Rivers, were in attendance on the Queen; and somewhat nearer to her than the rest, stood Abigail Hill, with whom she was conversing. A concert of singers from the Italian Opera, with which Anne had been much diverted, was just over, and she was still talking of the pleasure she had received from it when the Duchess of Marlborough entered.

"Ah! you are come at last," said Anne. "I feared I was not to see your Grace to-night."

"Your Majesty knows I have little taste for music," returned the Duchess, "and I therefore postponed my arrival till after the concert, which I knew would take place at ten."

"Better late than not at all, certainly," rejoined Anne; "but I have missed you."

"Your Majesty is infinitely obliging," said the Duchess, sarcastically, "and I fear sacrifices your sincerity at the shrine of

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complaisance; for I can scarcely believe I can have been missed when I find you in company so much more congenial to your taste than mine has become."

"If you mean Abigail," replied the Queen, slightly colouring, "she has indeed proved herself pleasant company, for she loves music as much as myself, and we have been talking over the charming songs we have just heard."

"You have heard of Abigail's adventure on her way to the drawing-room this morning, I presume, madam?" said the Duchess.

"I have," replied the Queen, "and have taken care that the quarrel between the Marquis de Guiscard and Mr. Masham shall proceed no further."

"Your Majesty is very considerate," said the Duchess; "but it would have been as well, methinks, if the young lady had made me, her kinswoman, acquainted with the occurrence."

"In imparting the matter to her Majesty, I thought I had done all that was needful," rejoined Abigail; "and I should not have interfered in the matter if I had not feared that harm might befall——"

"Mr. Masham," supplied the Duchess, maliciously. "But you need not have given yourself uneasiness. The Marquis de Guiscard has been with me to express his regret at what has occurred, and I must confess his explanation appears satisfactory. He says that some misapprehension of his intention, on your part, made you treat him in such manner as led to the violence which he regrets, and for which he is most anxious to apologise."

"I had no misapprehension of his intentions," said Abigail — "none whatever."

"If you mean to insinuate that he is in love with you," returned the Duchess, "I must admit that you are in the right, for he owned as much to me, and entreated me to plead his cause with you. For my own part I think the offer a good one, and, as your relation, should be pleased to see the union take place. If you yourself are willing, cousin, her Majesty, I am persuaded, will not refuse her consent."

"I certainly should not refuse my consent if I thought Abigail's happiness at all concerned," replied the Queen; "but in the present instance such does not appear to be the case. Nay, I almost fancy I should please her best by withholding it."

"Your Majesty is in the right," replied Abigail; "and even

if you were to lay your injunctions upon me to wed the Marquis de Guiscard, I do not think I could obey you."

"Your devotion shall not be so severely taxed," said the Queen, smiling.

"Yet the Marquis should not be rejected too hastily," said the Duchess. "You behaved somewhat rudely to him this morning, Abigail—his gallantry deserved a better return."

"It is easy for the contriver of a scheme to play it out," said Abigail. "What if I tell your Grace that Lady Rivers's coachman has since confessed to being bribed by the Marquis to act as he did?"

"The fellow must lie!" cried the Duchess, angrily. "But the truth shall be instantly ascertained, for the Marquis is without. May he be permitted to enter the presence?"

"Why—yes," replied the Queen, reluctantly, "if your Grace desires it."

"I *do* desire it," returned the Duchess. And stepping into the ball-room, she returned the next moment with Guiscard.

Notwithstanding his effrontery, the Marquis looked abashed at the presence in which he stood; he glanced uneasily towards the Queen, and from her to Abigail, beneath whose steadfast contemptuous look he quailed.

"My cousin Abigail declares you bribed Lady Rivers's coachman to occasion this disturbance, Marquis," said the Duchess. "Is it so?"

"I will frankly confess it is," replied Guiscard, with an air of candour; "and the impulse that prompted me to the act, I will with equal frankness admit, was my passion for the lovely Abigail. I hoped by this means to make a favourable impression upon her. But I have been sufficiently punished for my temerity by failure."

There was a moment's pause, during which a glance passed between the Queen and the Duchess of Marlborough.

"You did wrong, Marquis," said the former, at length; "but the admission of the motive is something."

"I have nothing to plead in extenuation of my conduct, but the excess of my passion, madam," rejoined the Marquis, penitently. "I entreat Miss Hill's forgiveness."

"I would willingly accord it," she answered, "if I felt assured there would be no repetition of the annoyance."

"Let me play the mediator, Abigail," interposed the Duchess.

"Your Grace will waste time," rejoined Abigail. "I am

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surprised that a person of the Marquis's spirit should persevere, where he sees there is no chance of success. A well-executed retreat, as the Duke of Marlborough would tell him, is equal to a victory. Let him retire while he can do so with a good grace."

"You have had your answer, Marquis," said the Queen, smiling.

"I have, madam," replied Guiscard, bowing to hide his mortification; "but a monarch of my own country, and one who had the reputation of understanding your sex thoroughly, having left it on record that woman is changeable, and that he is a fool who takes her at her word, and my own experience serving to prove the truth of the assertion, I shall not be discouraged, though at present rebuffed."

"I must at least interdict you from pressing your suit further," said the Queen.

"Agreed, madam," returned Guiscard; "but what if I have the fair Abigail's consent?"

"In that case, of course, the interdiction is withdrawn," replied the Queen.

"She shall yet be yours," said the Duchess, in a whisper to Guiscard.

"I know on whom I rely," returned the Marquis, in the same tone. "I would rather have your Grace's word than the lady's own promise."

"And you would choose rightly," said the Duchess, smiling.

As the words were uttered, the party was increased by the entrance of the Earl of Sunderland and Masham. The latter looked somewhat flushed and excited.

"Ah, Mr. Masham!" cried the Queen, "you are come most opportunely. I wish to make you friends with the Marquis de Guiscard."

"Your majesty is very kind and condescending," replied Masham, "but I am already reconciled to him."

"I am happy to hear it," rejoined Anne; "but I was not aware you had met."

"Oh dear, yes, madam!" returned Masham; "we both dined at Marlborough House, and are the best friends imaginable. Instead of quarrelling, we have laughed heartily at the adventure of the morning. If I had known the Marquis's motive, I should not have interfered."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Abigail, with a look of ill-disguised vexation.

"You surely do not think he was justified in what he did, Mr. Masham?" said the Queen.

"In love and war, I need not remind your Majesty, all stratagems are fair," replied Masham, bowing.

"You are a very unaccountable person, Mr. Masham," said Abigail, in a tone of pique.

"I am not the only unaccountable person in the world, Miss Hill," he replied significantly.

"There seems to be some misunderstanding here," interposed Harley, who had just finished his game, rising from the card-table; "can I set it right?"

"Where others fail, doubtless Mr. Harley can succeed," observed the Duchess, sarcastically.

"I will try, madam, at all events," replied the secretary. "You appear put out of the way, my dear?" he added, to Abigail.

"Oh, not in the least, cousin," she replied, quickly.

"And you?" he continued, turning to Masham.

"Oh, not in the least," was the answer; "unless, indeed," he added, "for making a fool of myself, and spoiling sport."

"But you really appear to require some explanation," said Harley; "and I am sure Miss Hill will afford it."

"You are giving yourself very needless trouble, sir," said Masham, coolly; "I have had all the explanation I require."

"And I have given all I design to afford," said Abigail, with affected indifference.

"Very adroitly managed, indeed, Mr. Secretary," laughed the Duchess. "You have set matters right very expeditiously, it must be owned."

"Perhaps I might be more successful," interposed Anne, good-naturedly.

"Oh, no, indeed, your Majesty!" said Abigail. "I begin to think I was wrong, after all, about the Marquis de Guiscard."

"She relents!" whispered the Duchess to the Marquis.

"Not so," he replied, in the same tone; "that was merely said to pique Masham."

"Never mind why it was said, if it promotes your object," rejoined the Duchess. "Go to her at once. If you succeed in irritating Masham past reconciliation, all will be well."

"There's my hand, Marquis, in token of forgiveness," said Abigail to Guiscard.

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"You are wrong, cousin," whispered Harley, "and will repent what you are doing.

"No I sha'n't," she replied, in the same tone.

Further asides were interrupted by the advance of the Marquis, who took Abigail's hand and pressed it respectfully to his lips.

"You were right, she is a mere coquette," said Masham to Sunderland, in a tone almost sufficiently loud to be audible to the others.

"Why—yes. I thought you could easily discover it," replied the Earl.

"May I be permitted to claim your hand for the dance, Miss Hill, now that I have possession of it?" said the Marquis.

"If her Majesty will allow me, yes," hesitated Abigail.

"You see I have the young lady's consent, madam," said Guiscard to the Queen. "I trust, therefore, you will graciously withdraw your interdiction?"

"Abigail must use her own discretion," replied Anne. "I think you are wrong in dancing with him," she added, in an undertone to her.

"I have a motive for it, madam," replied Abigail, in the same voice. "I have succeeded in vexing him," she added, aside, to Harley, as she passed.

"You have lost him," he rejoined, angrily.

"Well, no matter, I shall not break my heart about him," she returned. And dropping a profound courtesy to the Queen, she tripped into the ball-room with Guiscard.

"On my soul, I begin to think her a coquette myself," muttered Harley. "She will ruin all my plans. I must speak to Masham."

"I will myself proceed to the ball-room," said the Queen, rising, and taking the arm of her royal consort. "Your Grace will attend me?"

The Duchess bowed, and extending her hand to Masham, said: "Come, sir, you must go with me."

And, with a glance of triumph at the discomfited secretary, she followed the Queen into the ball-room.

Soon after, the Queen retired, the company dispersed, and the Duchess returned to Marlborough House well satisfied with the result of her schemes.

—W. H. AINSWORTH, *Court of St. James.*

XX

A Border Raid in the Prince's Name

FOUR or five riders were already gathered at the Trysting-pool. Hobbie Elliot and his friends stood in close consultation together, while their horses were permitted to graze among the poplars which overhung the broad still pool. A more numerous party were seen coming from the southward. It proved to be Earnscliff and his party, who had gone as far as the English border, but had halted on the information that a considerable force was drawn together under some of the Jacobite gentlemen in that district, and there were tidings of insurrection in different parts of Scotland. The two parties were endeavouring to follow up the track of a band who had not only carried off their cattle, but had abducted the daughter of an Armstrong. The news about the Jacobite rising took away from the act the appearance of private animosity, or love of plunder; and one of the leaders, Earnscliff, was now disposed to regard it as a symptom of civil war.

"Then, may I never stir frae the bit," said Elliot, "if auld Ellieslaw is not at the bottom o' the hail villany! Ye see he's leagued with the Cumberland Catholics; and that agrees weel wi' what has been hinted about Westburnflat, for Ellieslaw aye protected him, and he will want to harry and disarm the country about his ain hand before he breaks out."

Some now remembered that the party of ruffians had been heard to say they were acting for James VIII., and were charged to disarm all rebels. Others had heard Westburnflat boast, in drinking parties, that Ellieslaw would soon be in arms for the Jacobite cause, and that he himself was to hold a command under him, and that they would be bad neighbours for young Earnscliff, and all that stood out for the established government. The result was a strong belief that Westburnflat

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had headed the party under Ellieslaw's orders, and they resolved to proceed instantly to the house of the former, and, if possible, to secure his person. They were by this time joined by so many of their dispersed friends, that their number amounted to upwards of twenty horsemen, well mounted, and tolerably, though variously, armed.

A brook, which issued from a narrow glen among the hills, entered, at Westburnflat, upon the open marshy level, which, expanding about half-a-mile in every direction, gives name to the spot. In this place the character of the stream becomes changed, and from being a lively, brisk-running mountain torrent, it stagnates, like a blue swollen snake, in dull deep windings, through the swampy level. On the side of the stream, and nearly about the centre of the plain, arose the tower of Westburnflat, one of the few remaining strongholds formerly so numerous upon the borders. The ground upon which it stood was gently elevated above the marsh for the space of about a hundred yards, affording an esplanade of dry turf, which extended itself in the immediate neighbourhood of the tower; but, beyond which the surface presented to strangers was that of an impassable and dangerous bog. The owner of the tower and his inmates alone knew the winding and intricate paths, which, leading over ground that was comparatively sound, admitted visitors to his residence. But among the party which were assembled under Earnscliff's directions, there was more than one person qualified to act as a guide, for although the owner's character and habits of life were generally known, yet the laxity of feeling with respect to property prevented his being looked on with the abhorrence with which he must have been regarded in a more civilised country. He was considered, among his more peaceable neighbours, pretty much as a gambler, cock-fighter, or horse-jockey would be regarded at the present day; a person, of course, whose habits were to be condemned, and his society, in general, avoided, yet who could not be considered as marked with the indelible infamy attached to his profession where laws have been habitually observed. And their indignation was awakened against him upon this occasion, not so much upon account of the general nature of the transaction, which was just such as was to be expected from this marauder, as that the violence had been perpetrated upon a neighbour against whom he had no cause of quarrel,—against a friend of their own,—above all, against one of the name of Elliot, to which clan

most of them belonged. It was not therefore, wonderful, that there should be several in the band pretty well acquainted with the locality of his habitation, and capable of giving such directions and guidance as soon placed the whole party on the open space of firm ground in front of the Tower of Westburnflat.

The tower, before which the party now stood, was a small square building of the most gloomy aspect. The walls were of great thickness, and the windows, or slits which served the purpose of windows, seemed rather calculated to afford the defenders the means of employing missile weapons, than for admitting air or light to the apartments within. A small battlement projected over the walls on every side, and afforded farther advantage of defence by its niched parapet, within which arose a steep roof, flagged with grey stones. A single turret at one angle, defended by a door studded with huge iron nails, rose above the battlement, and gave access to the roof from within, by the spiral staircase which it enclosed. It seemed to the party that their motions were watched by some one concealed within this turret; and they were confirmed in their belief, when, through a narrow loophole, a female hand was seen to wave a handkerchief, as if by way of signal to them. Hobbie was almost out of his senses with joy and eagerness.

"It was Grace's hand and arm," he said; "I can swear to it among a thousand. There is not the like of it on this side of the Lowdens—We'll have her out, lads, if we should carry off the Tower of Westburnflat stane by stane."

Earnscliff, though he doubted the possibility of recognising a fair maiden's hand at such a distance from the eye of the lover, would say nothing to damp his friend's animated hopes, and it was resolved to summon the garrison.

The shout of the party, and the winding of one or two horns, at length brought to a loophole, which flanked the entrance, the haggard face of an old woman.

"That's the Reiver's mother," said one of the Elliots; "she's ten times waur than himsell, and is wyted for muckle of the ill he does about the country."

"Wha are ye? What d'ye want here?" were the queries of the respectable progenitor.

"We are seeking William Græme of Westburnflat," said Earnscliff.

"He's no at hame," returned the old dame.

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"When did he leave home?" pursued Earnscliff.

"I canna tell," said the portress.

"When will he return?" said Hobbie Elliot.

"I dinna ken naething about it," replied the inexorable guardian of the keep.

"Is there anybody within the tower with you?" again demanded Earnscliff.

"Naebody but mysell and baudrons," said the old woman.

"Then open the gate and admit us," said Earnscliff; "I am a justice of peace, and in search of the evidence of a felony."

"Deil be in their fingers that draws a bolt for ye," retorted the portress; "for mine shall never do it. Thinkna ye shame o' yoursells, to come here siccan a band o' ye, wi' your swords, and spears, and steel-caps, to frighten a lone widow woman?"

"Our information," said Earnscliff, "is positive; we are seeking goods which have been forcibly carried off, to a great amount."

"And a young woman, that's been cruelly made prisoner, that's worth mair than a' the gear, twice told," said Hobbie.

"And I warn you," continued Earnscliff, "that your only way to prove your son's innocence is to give us quiet admittance to search the house."

"And what will ye do, if I carena to thraw the keys or draw the bolts, or open the grate to sic a clamjamfrie?" said the old dame, scoffingly.

"Force our way with the king's keys, and break the neck of every living soul we find in the house, if ye dinna gie it ower forthwith!" menaced the incensed Hobbie.

"Threatened folks live lang," said the hag, in the same tone of irony; "there's the iron grate—try your skeel on't, lads—it has kept out as gude men as you, or now."

So saying, she laughed, and withdrew from the aperture through which she had held the parley.

The besiegers now opened a serious consultation. The immense thickness of the walls, and the small size of the windows, might, for a time, have even resisted cannon-shot. The entrance was secured, first, by a strong grated door, composed entirely of hammered iron, of such ponderous strength as seemed calculated to resist any force that could be brought against it. "Pinches or forehammers will never pick upon't," said Hugh, the blacksmith of Ringleburn; "ye might as weel batter at it wi' pipe-staples."

Within the doorway, and at the distance of nine feet, which was the solid thickness of the wall, there was a second door of oak, crossed, both breadth and lengthways, with clenched bars of iron, and studded full of broad-headed nails. Besides all these defences, they were by no means confident in the truth of the old dame's assertion, that she alone composed the garrison. The more knowing of the party had observed hoof-marks in the track by which they approached the tower, which seemed to indicate that several persons had very lately passed in that direction.

To all these difficulties was added their want of means for attacking the place. There was no hope of procuring ladders long enough to reach the battlements, and the windows, besides being very narrow, were secured with iron bars. Scaling was therefore out of the question; mining was still more so, for want of tools and gunpowder; neither were the besiegers provided with food, means of shelter, or other conveniences, which might have enabled them to convert the siege into a blockade; and there would, at any rate, have been a risk of relief from some of the marauder's comrades. Hobbie grinded and gnashed his teeth, as walking round the fastness, he could devise no means of making a forcible entry. At length he suddenly exclaimed, "And what for no do as our fathers did lang syne? Put hands to the wark, lads. Let us cut up bushes and briers, pile them before the door and set fire to them, and smoke that auld devil's dam as if she were to be reested for bacon."

All immediately closed with this proposal, and some went to work with swords and knives to cut down the alder and hawthorn bushes which grew by the side of the sluggish stream, many of which were sufficiently decayed and dried for their purpose, while others began to collect them in a large stack, properly disposed for burning, as close to the iron grate as they could be piled. Fire was speedily obtained from one of their guns, and Hobbie was already advancing to the pile with a kindled brand, when the surly face of the robber, and the muzzle of a musketoon, were partially shown at a shot-hole which flanked the entrance. "Mony thanks to ye," he said, scoffingly, "for collecting sae muckle winter eilding for us; but if ye step a foot nearer it wi' that lunt, it's be the dearest step ye ever made in your days."

"We'll sune see that," said Hobbie, advancing fearlessly with the torch.



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The marauder snapped his piece at him, which, fortunately for our honest friend, did not go off; while Earnscliff, firing at the same moment at the narrow aperture and slight mark afforded by the robber's face, grazed the side of his head with a bullet. He had apparently calculated upon his post affording him more security, for he no sooner felt the wound, though a very slight one, than he requested a parley, and demanded to know what they meant by attacking in this fashion a peaceable and honest man, and shedding his blood in that lawless manner.

"We want your prisoner," said Earnscliff, "to be delivered up to us in safety."

"And what concern have you with her?" replied the marauder.

"That," retorted Earnscliff, "you who are detaining her by force, have no right to inquire."

"Aweel, I think I can gie a guess," said the robber. "Weel, sirs, I am laith to enter into deadly feud with you by spilling ony of your bluid, though Earnscliff hasna stopped to shed mine—and he can hit a mark to a groat's breadth—so, to prevent mair skaith, I am willing to deliver up the prisoner, since nae less will please you."

"And Hobbie's gear?" cried Simon of Hackburn. "D'ye think you're to be free to plunder the faulds and byres of a gentle Elliot as if they were an auld wife's hen's-cavey?"

"As I live by bread," replied Willie of Westburnflat—"As I live by bread, I have not a single cloot o' them! They're a' ower the march lang syne; there's no a horn o' them about the tower. But I'll see what o' them can be gotten back, and I'll take this day twa days to meet Hobbie at the Castleton wi' twa friends on ilka side, and see to mak an agreement about a' the wrang he can wyte me wi'."

"Ay, ay," said Elliot, "that will do weel eneugh." And then aside to his kinsman, "Murrain on the gear! Lordsake, man! say nought about them. Let us but get puir Grace out o' that auld hellicat's clutches."

"Will ye gie me your word, Earnscliff," said the marauder, who still lingered at the shot-hole, "your faith and troth, with hand and glove, that I am free to come and free to gae, with five minutes to open the grate, and five minutes to steek it and to draw the bolts? less winna do, for they want creishing sairly. Will ye do this?"

"You shall have full time," said Earnscliff; "I plight my faith and troth, my hand and my glove."

"Wait there a moment, then," said Westburnflat; "or hear ye, I wad rather ye wad fa' back a pistol-shot from the door. It's no that I mistrust your word, Earnscliff; but it's best to be sure."

"O, friend," thought Hobbie to himself, as he drew back, "an I had you but on Turner's-holm, and naeboddy by but twa honest lads to see fair play, I wad make ye wish ye had broken your leg ere ye had touched beast or body that belonged to me!"

"He has a white feather in his wing this same Westburnflat, after a'," said Simon of Hackburn, somewhat scandalised by his ready surrender.—"He'll ne'er fill his father's boots."

In the meanwhile, the inner door of the tower was opened, and the mother of the freebooter appeared in the space betwixt that and the outer grate. Willie himself was next seen, leading forth a female; and the old woman, carefully bolting the grate behind them, remained on the post as a sort of sentinel.

"Ony ane or twa o' ye come forward," said the outlaw, "and take her frae my hand haill and sound."

Hobbie advanced eagerly to meet his betrothed bride. Earnscliff followed more slowly, to guard against treachery. Suddenly Hobbie slackened his pace in the deepest mortification, while that of Earnscliff was hastened by impatient surprise. It was not Grace Armstrong, but Miss Isabella Vere, whose liberation had been effected by their appearance before the tower.

"Where is Grace? where is Grace Armstrong?" exclaimed Hobbie, in the extremity of wrath and indignation.

"Not in my hands," answered Westburnflat; "ye may search the tower, if ye misdoubt me."

"You false villian, you shall account for her, or die on the spot," said Elliot, presenting his gun.

But his companions, who now came up, instantly disarmed him of his weapon, exclaiming, all at once, "Hand and glove! faith and troth! Haud a care, Hobbie; we maun keep our faith wi' Westburnflat, were he the greatest rogue ever rode."

Thus protected, the outlaw recovered his audacity, which had been somewhat daunted by the menacing gesture of Elliot.

"I have kept my word, sirs," he said, "and I look to have nae wrang amang ye. If this is no the prisoner ye sought," he said, addressing Earnscliff, "ye'll render her back to me again. I am answerable for her to those that aught her."

"For God's sake, Mr. Earnscliff, protect me!" said Miss

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Vere, clinging to her deliverer; "do not you abandon one whom the whole world seems to have abandoned."

"Fear nothing," whispered Earnscliff, "I will protect you with my life." Then turning to Westburnflat, "Villain!" he said, "how dared you insult this lady?"

"For that matter, Earnscliff," answered the freebooter, "I can answer to them that, has better right to ask me than you have; but if *you* come with an armed force, and take her awa' from them that her friends lodged her wi', how will you answer *that*?—But it's your ain affair—Nae single man can keep a tower against twenty—A' the men o' the Mearns downa do mair than they dow."

"He lies most falsely," said Isabella; "he carried me off by violence from my father."

"Maybe he only wanted ye to think sae, hinny," replied the robber; "but it's nae business o' mine, let it be as it may.—So ye winna resign her back to me?"

"Back to you, fellow! Surely no," answered Earnscliff; "I will protect Miss Vere, and escort her safely wherever she is pleased to be conveyed."

"Ay, ay, maybe you and her hae settled that already," said Willie of Westburnflat.

"And Grace?" interrupted Hobbie, shaking himself loose from the friends who had been preaching to him the sanctity of the safe-conduct, upon the faith of which the freebooter had ventured from his tower,—*"Where's Grace?"* and he rushed on the marauder, sword in hand.

Westburnflat, thus pressed, after calling out, "Godsake, Hobbie, hear me a gliff!" fairly turned his back and fled. His mother stood ready to open and shut the grate; but Hobbie struck at the freebooter as he entered, with so much force, that the sword made a considerable cleft in the lintel of the vaulted door, which is still shown as a memorial of the superior strength of those who lived in the days of yore. Ere Hobbie could repeat the blow, the door was shut and secured, and he was compelled to retreat to his companions, who were now preparing to break up the siege of Westburnflat. They insisted upon his accompanying them in their return.

"Ye hae broken truce already," said old Dick of the Dingle; "an we takna the better care, ye'll play mair gowk's tricks, and make yoursell the laughing-stock of the hail country, besides having your friends charged with slaughter under trust. Bide till the meeting at Castleton as ye hae greed; and if he disna

make ye amends, then we'll hae it out o' his heart's blood. But let us gang reasonably to wark and keep our tryst, and I'se warrant we get back Grace, and the kye an' a'."

This cold-blooded reasoning went ill down with the unfortunate lover ; but, as he could only obtain the assistance of his neighbours and kinsmen on their own terms, he was compelled to acquiesce in their notions of good faith and regular procedure.

Earnscliff now requested the assistance of a few of the party to convey Miss Vere to her father's castle of Ellieslaw, to which she was peremptory in desiring to be conducted. This was readily granted ; and five or six young men agreed to attend him as an escort. Hobbie was not of the number. Almost heart-broken by the events of the day, and his final disappointment, he returned moodily home to take such measures as he could for the recovery of Grace Armstrong.

SIR WALTER SCOTT, *The Black Dwarf*.

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XXI

For Country ; or for King

THE day opened with most of the glories of a summer's morning. The wind alone prevented it from being one of the finest sun-risings of July. That continued fresh at north-west, and consequently cool for the season. The seas of the south-west gale had entirely subsided, and were already succeeded by the regular but comparatively trifling swell of the new breeze. For large ships it might be called smooth water ; though the *Driver* and *Active* showed by their pitching and unsteadiness, and even the two-deckers by their waving masts, that the unquiet ocean was yet in motion. The wind seemed likely to stand, and was what seamen would be apt to call a good six-knot breeze.

To leeward, still distant about a league, lay the French vessels, drawn up in beautiful array, and in an order so close and a line so regular, as to induce the belief that M. de Vervillin had made his dispositions to receive the expected attack in his present position. All his main-top-sails lay flat aback ; the top-gallant-sails were flying loose, but with buntlings and clew-lines hauled up ; the jibs were fluttering to leeward of their booms, and the courses were hanging in festoons beneath their yards. This was gallant fighting canvas, and it excited the admiration of even his enemies. To increase this feeling, just as the commander of the English fleet reached the poop of his gallant vessel, the *Plantagenet*, the whole French line displayed their ensigns, and *Le Foudroyant* fired a gun to windward.

"Hey ! Greenly ?" exclaimed Sir Gervaise Oakes to his captain ; "this is a manly defiance, and coming from M. de Vervillin it means something ! He wishes to take the day for it ; though as I think half that time will answer, we will

wash up the cups before we go at it. Make the signals, Bunting, for the ships to heave-to, and then to get their breakfasts as fast as possible. Steady breeze, steady breeze, Greenly, and all we want!"

Five minutes later, while Sir Gervaise was running his eye over the signal-book, the *Plantagenet's* calls were piping the people to their morning meal at least an hour earlier than common; the people repaired to their messes with a sort of stern joy; every man in the ship understanding the reason of a summons so unusual. The calls of the vessels astern were heard soon after, and one of the officers, who was watching the enemy with a glass, reported that he thought the French were breakfasting also. Orders being given to the officers to employ the next half-hour in the same manner, nearly everybody was soon engaged in eating; few thinking that the meal might probably be their last. Sir Gervaise felt a concern which he succeeded in concealing, however, at the circumstance that the ships of his fleet to windward under the command of the Rear-Admiral made no more sail; though he refrained from signalling the rear-admiral to that effect, from a vague apprehension of what might be the consequences. While the crews were eating, he stood gazing thoughtfully at the noble spectacle the enemy offered to leeward, occasionally turning wistful glances at the division that was constantly drawing nearer to windward. At length Greenly himself reported that the *Plantagenet* had "turned the hands-to" again. At this intelligence Sir Gervaise started as from a reverie, smiled, and spoke.

"I have desired Galleygo to set my little table, half an hour hence, in the after-cabin, Greenly, and you will share the meal with me. Sir Wycherly will be of our party, and I hope it will not be the last time we may meet at the same board. It is necessary everything should be in fighting order to-day!"

"So I understand it, Sir Gervaise. We are ready to begin as soon as the order shall be received."

"Wait one moment until Bunting comes up from his breakfast. Ah! here he is, and we are quite ready for him, having bent-on the signal in his absence. Show the order, Bunting, for the day advances."

The little flags were fluttering at the main-top-gallant-mast-head of the *Plantagenet* in less than one minute, and in another it was repeated by the *Chloe*, *Driver*, and *Active*, all of which were lying to a quarter of a mile to windward, charged

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in particular with this among other duties. So well was this signal known, that not a book in the fleet was consulted, but all the ships answered the instant the flags could be seen and understood. Then the shrill whistles were heard along the line, calling "All hands" to "clear ship for action, ahoy!" No sooner was this order given in the *Plantagenet*, than the ship became a scene of active but orderly exertion. The topmen were on the yards, stoppering, swinging the yards in chains, and lashing, in order to prevent shot from doing more injury than was unavoidable; bulwarks were knocked down; mess-chests, bags, and all other domestic appliances disappeared *below*, and the decks were cleared of everything which could be removed and which would not be necessary in an engagement. Fully a quarter of an hour was thus occupied, for there was no haste, and as it was no moment of mere parade, it was necessary that the work should be effectually done. The officers forbade haste, and nothing important was reported as effected, that some one in authority did not examine with his own eyes to see that no proper care had been neglected. Then Mr. Bury, the first lieutenant, went on the main-yard in person, to look at the manner in which it had been slung, while he sent the boatswain up forward on the same errand. These were unusual precautions, but the word had passed through the ship that Sir Jarvy was in earnest; and whenever it was known that "Sir Jarvy" was in such a humour, every one understood that the day's work was to be hard, if not long.

"Our breakfast is ready, Sir Jarvy," reported Galleygo, "and as the decks is all clear, the b'ys can make a clean run of it from the coppers. I only wants to know when to serve it, your Honour."

"Serve it now, my good fellow. Tell the Bowlderos to be nimble, and expect us below. Come, Greenly; come, Wychecombe, we are the last to eat, let us not be the last to our stations."

"Ship's clear, sir," reported Bury to his captain, as the three reached the quarter-deck, on their way to the cabin.

"Very well, Bury; when the fleet is signalled to go to quarters, we will obey with the rest."

As this was said, Greenly looked at the Vice-Admiral to catch his wishes. But Sir Gervaise had no intention of fatiguing his people unnecessarily. He had left his private orders with Bunting, and he passed down without an answer or a

glance. The arrangements in the after-cabin were as snug and as comfortable as if the breakfast table had been set in a private house, and the trio took their seats and commenced operations with hearty good-will. The Vice-Admiral ordered the doors to be thrown open, and as the port-lids were up, from the place where he sat he could command glimpses both to leeward and to windward, that included a view of the enemy, as well as one of his own expected reinforcements. The Bowlderos were men from the Admiral's own home. They were in full livery, and more active and attentive than usual even. Their station in battle was on the poop as musketeers, near the person of their master, whose colours they wore, under the ensign of their Prince, like vassals of an ancient baron. Notwithstanding the crisis of the morning, however, these men performed their customary functions with the precision and method of English menials, omitting no luxury or usage of the table. On a sofa behind the table, was spread the full dress-coat of a Vice-Admiral, then a neat but plain uniform, without either lace or epaulets, but decorated with a rich star in brilliants, the emblem of the order of the Bath. This coat Sir Gervaise always wore in battle, unless the weather rendered a "storm uniform," as he used to term a plainer attire, necessary. The breakfast passed off pleasantly, the gentlemen eating as if no momentous events were near. Just at its close, however, Sir Gervaise leaned forward, and looking through one of the weather ports of the main cabin, an expression of pleasure illuminated his countenance as he said: "Ah, there go Bluewater's signals at last! a certain proof that he is about to put himself in communication with us."

"I have been a good deal surprised, sir," observed Greenly, a little drily, though with great respect of manner, "that you have not ordered the Rear-Admiral to make more sail. He is jogging along like a heavy wagon, and yet I hardly think he can mistake these five ships for Frenchmen!"

"He is never in a hurry, and no doubt wishes to let his crews breakfast before he closes. I'll warrant ye now, gentlemen, that his ships are at this moment all as clear as a church five minutes after the blessing has been pronounced. Well, Bunting, what does the Rear-Admiral say?"

"Upon my word, Sir Gervaise, I can make nothing of the signal, though it is easy enough to make out the flags," answered the puzzled Signal-Officer. "Will you have the good-

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ness to look at the book yourself, sir? The number is one hundred and forty."

"One hundred and forty! Why, that must have something to do with anchoring! Aye, here it is. 'Anchor, I cannot, having lost my cables.' Who the devil asked him to anchor?"

"That's just it, sir. The Signal-Officer on board the *Cesar* must have made some mistake in his flags, for though the distance is considerable, our glasses are good enough to read them."

"Perhaps Admiral Bluewater has set the private personal telegraph at work, sir," quietly observed Greenly. The Commander-in-Chief actually changed colour at this suggestion. His face, at first, flushed to crimson, then it became pale, like the countenance of one who suffered under acute bodily pain. Wychcombe observed this, and respectfully enquired if Sir Gervaise were ill. "I thank you, young sir," answered the Vice-Admiral, smiling painfully, "it is over. I believe I shall have to go into dock, and let Magrath look at some of my old hurts, which *are* sometimes troublesome. Mr. Bunting, do me the favour to go on deck, and ascertain, by a careful examination, if a short, red pennant be not set some ten or twelve feet above the uppermost flag. Now, Greenly, we will take the other cup of tea, for there is plenty of leisure." Two or three brooding minutes followed. Then Bunting returned to say the pennant *was* there,—a fact he had quite overlooked in his former observations, confounding the narrow flag in question with the regular pennant of the King. This short red pennant denoted that the communication was verbal, according to a method invented by Bluewater himself, and by means of which, using the ordinary numbers, he was enabled to communicate with his friend without any of the captains, or, indeed, without Sir Gervaise's own Signal-Officer's knowing what was said. In a word, without having recourse to any new flags, but, by simply giving new numbers to the old ones, and referring to a prepared dictionary, it was possible to hold a conversation in sentences that should be a secret to all but themselves. Sir Gervaise took down the number of the signal that was flying, and then he directed Bunting to show the answering flag, with a similar pennant over it, and to continue this operation so long as the Rear-Admiral might make his signals. The numbers were to be sent below as fast as received. As soon as Bunting disappeared the Vice-Admiral unlocked a secretary, the key of which was never out of his own possession, and

took from it a small dictionary, and laid it by his plate. All this time the breakfast proceeded, signals of this nature frequently occurring between the two admirals. In the course of the next ten minutes, a quarter-master brought below a succession of numbers written on small pieces of paper; after which Bunting appeared himself, to say that the *César* had stopped signalling.

Sir Gervaise now looked out each word by its proper number, and wrote it down with his pencil as he proceeded, until the whole read—"God sake—make no signal. Engage not." No sooner was the communication understood than the paper was torn into minute fragments, the book replaced, and the Vice-Admiral, turning with a calm, determined countenance to Greenly, ordered him to beat to quarters as soon as Bunting could show a signal to the fleet to the same effect. On this hint all but the Vice-Admiral went on deck, and the Bowlderos instantly set about removing the table and all the other appliances. Finding himself annoyed by the movements of the servants, Sir Gervaise walked out into the great cabin, which, regardless of its present condition, he began to pace, as was his wont when lost in thought. The bulkheads being down, and the furniture removed, this was in truth walking in sight of the crew. All who happened to be on the main deck could see what passed, though no one presumed to enter a spot that was tabooed to vulgar feet, even when thus exposed. The aspect and manner of "Sir Jarvy," however, were not overlooked, and the men prognosticated a serious time. Such was the state of things when the drums beat to quarters throughout the whole line. At the first tap the great cabin sank to the level of an ordinary battery; the seamen of two guns, with the proper officers, entering within the sacred limits, and coolly setting about clearing their pieces, and making the other preparations necessary for an action. All this time Sir Gervaise continued pacing what would have been the centre of his own cabin had the bulkheads stood, the grim-looking sailors avoiding him with great dexterity, and invariably touching their hats as they were compelled to glide near his person, though everything went on as if he were not present. Sir Gervaise might have remained lost in thought much longer than he did, had not the report of a gun recalled him to a consciousness of the scene that was enacting around him.

"What's that?" suddenly demanded the Vice-Admiral. "Is Bluewater signalling again?"

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"No, Sir Gervaise," answered the fourth Lieutenant, looking out of a lee-port; "it is the French Admiral giving us another weather gun,—as much as to ask why we don't go down. This is the second compliment of the same sort that he has paid us already to-day!"

These words were not all spoken before the Vice-Admiral was on the quarter-deck; in half a minute more he was on the poop. Here he found Greenly, Wychemcombe, and Bunting, all looking with interest at the beautiful line of the enemy. "Monsieur de Vervillin is impatient to wipe off his former disgrace," observed the first, "as is apparent by the invitations he gives us to come down. I presume Admiral Bluewater will wake up at this last hint."

"By Heaven, he has hauled his wind, and is standing to the northward and eastward!" exclaimed Sir Gervaise, surprise overcoming all his discretion. "Although an extraordinary movement, at such a time, it is wonderful in what beautiful order Bluewater keeps his ships!" All that was said was true enough. The Rear-Admiral's division having suddenly hauled up, in a close line ahead, each ship followed her leader as mechanically as if they moved by a common impulse. As no one in the least doubted the Rear-Admiral's loyalty, and his courage was of proof, it was the general opinion that this unusual manœuvre had some connection with the unintelligible signals, and the young officers laughingly enquired among themselves what "Sir Jarvy was likely to do next?"

It would seem, however, that Monsieur de Vervillin suspected a repetition of some of the scenes of a former day; for no sooner did he perceive that the English rear was hugging the wind, than five of his leading ships filled, and drew ahead, as if to meet that division, manœuvring to double on the head of his line; while the remaining five, with the *Foudroyant*, still lay with their topsails to the mast, waiting for their enemy to come down. Sir Gervaise could not stand this long. He determined, if possible, to bring Bluewater to terms, and he ordered the *Plantagenet* to fill. Followed by his own division, he wore immediately, and went off under easy sail, quartering towards Monsieur de Vervillin's rear, to avoid being raked.

The quarter of an hour that succeeded was one of intense interest and of material changes, though not a shot was fired. As soon as the Comte de Vervillin perceived that the English were disposed to come nearer, he signalled his own division to

bear up, and to run off dead before the wind under their top-sails, commencing astern; which reversed his order of sailing, and brought *Le Foudroyant* in the rear, or nearest to the enemy. This was no sooner done than he settled all his top-sails on the caps. There could be no mistaking this manoeuvre. It was a direct invitation to Sir Gervaise to come down fairly alongside; the bearing up at once removing all risk of being raked in so doing. The English Commander-in-Chief was not a man to neglect such a palpable challenge; but, making a few signals to direct the mode of attack he contemplated, he set fore-sail and maintop-gallant-sail, and brought the wind directly over his own taffrail. The vessels astern followed like clockwork, and then no one doubted that the mode of attack was settled for that day.

As the French with Monsieur de Vervillin were still half a mile to the southward and eastward of the approaching division of their enemy, the Comte collected all his frigates and corvettes on his starboard hand, leaving a clear approach to Sir Gervaise on his larboard beam. This hint was understood, too, and the *Plantagenet* steered a course that would bring her up on that side of *Le Foudroyant*, and at the distance of about one hundred yards from the muzzles of her guns. This threatened to be close work, and unusual work in fleets, at that day; but it was the game our Commander-in-Chief was fond of playing, and it was one, also, that promised soonest to bring matters to a result.

These preliminaries arranged, there was yet leisure for the respective commanders to look about them. The French were still fully a mile ahead of their enemies, and as both fleets were going in the same direction, the approach of the English was so slow as to leave some twenty minutes of that solemn breathing time, which reigns in a disciplined ship, previous to the commencement of the combat. The feelings of the two commanders-in-chief at this pregnant instant were singularly in contradiction to each other. The Comte de Vervillin saw that the rear division of his force, under the Contre-Amiral le Vicomte des Prez, was in the very position he desired it to be, having obtained the advantage of the wind by the English division's coming down, and by keeping its own luff. Between the two French officers there was a perfect understanding as to the course each was to take, and both now felt sanguine hopes of being able to obliterate the former disgrace, and that, too, by means very similar to those by which it had

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been incurred. On the other hand, Sir Gervaise was beset with doubts as to the course Bluewater might pursue. He had lived too long in the world not to know that political prejudice was the most demoralizing of all our weaknesses, veiling our private vices under the plausible concealment of the public weal, and rendering even the well-disposed insensible to the wrongs they commit to individuals, by means of the deceptive flattery of serving the community; and he knew that Admiral Bluewater was a Jacobite. He could not, however, come to the conclusion that he would abandon him to the joint efforts of the two hostile divisions; and so long as the French Rear-Admiral was occupied by the English force to windward, it left to himself a clear field and no favour in the action with Monsieur de Vervillin. He knew Bluewater's generous nature too well, not to feel certain his own compliance with the request not to signal his inferior would touch his heart, and give him a double chance with all his better feelings. Nevertheless, Sir Gervaise Oakes did not lead into this action without many and painful misgivings. As doubt was more painful than the certainty of his worst forebodings, however, and it was not in his nature to refuse a combat so fairly offered, he was resolved to close with the Comte at every hazard.

The *Plantagenet* presented an eloquent picture of order and preparation, as she drew near the French line, on this memorable occasion. Her people were all at quarters, and, as Greenly walked through her batteries, he found every gun on the starboard side loose, levelled, and ready to be fired, while the opposite merely required a turn or two of the tackles to be cast loose, the priming to be applied, and the loggerhead to follow, in order to be discharged also. A deathlike stillness reigned from the poop to the cockpit, the older seamen occasionally glancing through their ports in order to ascertain the relative positions of the two fleets, that they might be ready for the collision. As the English got within musket-shot, the French ran their topsails to the mastheads, and their ships gathered fresher way through the water. Still the former moved with the greatest velocity, carrying the most sail, and impelled by the greater momentum. When near enough, however, Sir Gervaise gave the order to reduce the canvas of his own ship. "That will do, Greenly," he said in a mild, quiet tone. "Let run the top-gallant-halyards and haul up the foresail. The way you have will bring you fairly alongside."

The Captain gave the necessary orders and the master shortened sail accordingly. Still the *Plantagenet* shot ahead, and in three or four minutes more her bows doubled so far on *Le Foudroyant's* quarter as to permit a gun to bear. This was the signal for both sides, each ship opening as it might be in the same breath. The flash, the roar, and the eddying smoke followed in quick succession, and in a period of time that seemed nearly instantaneous. The crash of shot and the shrieks of wounded mingled with the infernal din, for nature extorts painful concessions of human weaknesses at such moments, even from the bravest and firmest. Bunting was in the act of reporting to Sir Gervaise that no signal could yet be seen from the *Cesar* in the midst of this uproar, when a small round-shot, discharged from the Frenchman's poop, passed through his body, literally driving the heart before it, leaving him dead at his commander's feet. "I shall depend on you, Sir Wycherly, for the discharge of poor Bunting's duty the remainder of the cruise," observed Sir Gervaise, with a smile in which courtesy and regret struggled singularly for the mastery. "Quarter-master, lay Mr. Bunting's body a little out of the way, and cover it with those signals. They are a suitable pall for so brave a man!"

Just as this occurred the *Warspite* came clear of the *Plantagenet* on her outside, according to orders, and she opened with her forward guns, taking the second ship in the French line for her target. In two minutes more these vessels also were furiously engaged in the hot strife. In this manner ship after ship passed on the outside of the *Plantagenet*, and sheered into her berth ahead of her who had just been her own leader, until the *Achilles*, Lord Morganic, the last of the five, lay fairly side by side with *Le Conquereur*, the vessel now at the head of the French line.

The constantly recurring discharges of four hundred pieces of heavy ordnance, within a space so small, had the effect to repel the regular currents of air, and almost immediately to lessen a breeze of six or seven knots to one that would not propel a ship more than two or three. This was the first observable phenomenon connected with the action; but, as it had been expected, Sir Gervaise had used the precaution to lay his ships as near as possible in the positions in which he intended them to fight the battle. The next great physical consequence, one equally expected and natural, but which wrought a great change in the aspect of the battle, was the

cloud of smoke. At the first light, fleecy rising then sails of the would have nearly impeded they entered spread on skies, and tributed to often difficult midst of the alarmed the seamen to ready hand intent on the pations of

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cloud of smoke in which the ten ships were suddenly enveloped. At the first broadsides between the two admirals, volumes of light, fleecy vapour rolled over the sea, meeting midway, and rising thence in curling wreaths, left nothing but the masts and sails of the adversary visible in the hostile ship. This, of itself, would have soon hidden the combatants in the bosom of a nearly impenetrable cloud; but as the vessels drove onward they entered deeper beneath the sulphurous canopy, until it spread on each side of them, shutting out the view of ocean, skies, and horizon. The burning of the priming below contributed to increase the smoke, until not only was respiration often difficult, but those who fought only a few yards apart frequently could not recognise each other's faces. In the midst of this scene of obscurity and a din that might well have alarmed the caverns of the ocean, the earnest and well-drilled seamen toiled at their ponderous guns, and remedied with ready hands the injuries received in the rigging, each man as intent on his own particular duty as if he wrought in the occupations of an ordinary gale.

"Sir Wycherly," observed the Vice-Admiral, when the cannonading had continued some twenty minutes, "there is little for a flag-officer to do in such a cloud of smoke. I would give much to know the exact positions of the divisions of our two Rear-Admirals."

"There is but one mode of ascertaining that, Sir Gervaise—if it be your pleasure, I will attempt it. By going on the maintop-gallant-yard one might get a clear view perhaps." Sir Gervaise smiled his approbation, and presently he saw the young man ascending the main-rigging, though half concealed in smoke. Just at this instant Greenly ascended to the poop from making a tour of observation below. Without waiting for a question, the Captain made his report. "We are doing pretty well now, Sir Gervaise, though the first broadside of the Comte treated us roughly. I think his fire slackens, and Bury says he is certain that his foretop-mast is already gone. At all events, our lads are in good spirits, and as yet all the sticks keep their places."

"I'm glad of this, Greenly; particularly of the latter, just at this moment. I see you are looking at those signals—they cover the body of poor Bunting."

"And this train of blood to the ladder, sir?"

"It is one of the Bowlderos, who has lost a leg. I shall have to see that he wants for nothing hereafter."

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There was a pause, and then both the gentlemen smiled as they heard the crashing work made by a shot just beneath them, which, by the sounds and the direction, they knew had passed through Greenly's crockery. Still neither spoke. After a few more minutes of silent observation, Sir Gervaise remarked that he thought the flashes of the French guns more distant than they had been at first, though at that instant not a trace of their enemy was to be discovered, except in the roar of the guns, and in these very flashes, and their effect on the *Plantagenet*.

"If so, sir, the Comte begins to find his berth too hot for him; here is the wind still directly over *our* taffrail, such as it is."

"No, no; we steer as we began. I keep my eye on that compass below, and am certain we hold a straight course. Go forward, Greenly, and see that a sharp look-out is kept ahead. It is time some of our own ships should be crippled; we must be careful not to run into them. Should such a thing happen, sheer hard to starboard and pass *inside*."

"Ay, ay, Sir Gervaise; your wishes shall be attended to."

As this was said, Greenly disappeared, and at the next instant Wycherly stood in his place.

"Well, sir, I am glad to see you back safe. If Greenly were here now, *he* would enquire about his *masts*, but *I* wish to know the position of the *ships*."

"I am the bearer of bad news, sir. Nothing at all could be seen from the top; but in the cross trees I got a good look through the smoke, and am sorry to say the French Rear-Admiral is coming down fast on our larboard quarter with all his force. We shall have him abeam in five minutes."

"And Bluewater?" demanded Sir Gervaise, quick as lightning.

"I could see nothing of Admiral Bluewater's ships; but knowing the importance of this intelligence, I came down immediately, and by the back-stay."

"You have done well, sir. Send a midshipman forward for Captain Greenly; then pass below yourself and let the lieutenants in the batteries hear the news. They must divide their people, and by all means give a prompt and well-directed *first* broadside."

Wycherly waited for no more. He ran below with the activity of his years. The message found Greenly between the knight-heads, but he hurried aft to the poop to ascertain

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its object. It took Sir Gervaise but a moment to explain it all to the Captain.

"In the name of Heaven, what can the other division be about," exclaimed Greenly, "that it lets the French Rear-Admiral come upon us in a moment like this?"

"Of that, sir, it is unnecessary to speak *now*," answered the Commander-in-Chief, solemnly. "Our present business is to get ready for this new enemy. Go into the batteries again, and, as you prize victory, be careful not to throw away the first discharge in the smoke."

As time pressed, Greenly swallowed his discontent, and departed. The five minutes that succeeded were bitter minutes to Sir Gervaise Oakes. Beside himself, there were but five men on the poop—viz., the Quarter-master, who tended the signals, and three of the Bowlderos. All of these were using muskets, as usual, though the Vice-Admiral never permitted marines to be stationed at a point which he wished to be as clear of smoke and as much removed from bustle as possible. He began to pace this comparatively vacant little deck with a quick step, casting wistful glances towards the larboard quarter; but though the smoke occasionally cleared a little in that direction, the firing having much slackened, from exhaustion in the men as well as from injuries given and received, he was unable to detect any signs of a ship. Such was the state of things when Wycherly returned and reported that his orders were delivered and part of the people were already in the larboard batteries.

"Are you quite sure, Sir Wycherly Wyhecombe, that there is not some mistake about the approach of the rear division of the French?" enquired the Vice-Admiral, endeavouring to catch some glimpse of the water through the smoke on the larboard hand. "May not some crippled ship of our own have sheered from the line and been left by us, unknowingly, on that side?"

"No, Sir Gervaise, there is *no* mistake; there *can* be none, unless I may have been deceived a little in the distance. I saw nothing but the sails and spars, not of a single vessel, but of *three* ships; and one of them wore the flag of a French rear-admiral at the mizzen. As a proof that I was not mistaken, sir, there it is this minute!"

The smoke on the off side of the *Plantagenet*, as a matter of course, was much less dense than that on the side engaged, and the wind beginning to blow in eddies, as ever happens in

a heavy cannonade, there were moments in which it cast aside the "shroud of battle." At that instant an opening occurred through which a single mast and a single sail were visible, in the precise spot where Wycherly had stated the enemy might be looked for. It was a mizzen-top-sail beyond a question, and above it was fluttering the little square flag of the Rear-Admiral. Sir Gervaise decided on the character of the vessel and on his own course in an instant. Stepping to the edge of the poop, with his natural voice, without the aid of a trumpet of any sort, he called out in tones that rose above the roar of the contest the ominous but familiar nautical words of "stand by!" Perhaps a call from powerful lungs (and the Vice-Admiral's voice, when he chose to use it, was like the blast of a clarion) is clearer and more impressive when unaided by instruments, than when it comes disguised and unnatural through a tube. At any rate, these words were heard even on the lower deck by those who stood near the hatches. Taking them up, they were repeated by a dozen voices, with such expressions as "Look out, lads; Sir Jarvy's awake!" "Sight your guns!" "Wait till she's square!" and other similar admonitions that it is usual for the sea-officer to give as he is about to commence the strife. At this critical moment Sir Gervaise again looked up and caught another glimpse of the little flag as it passed into a vast wreath of smoke; he saw that the ship was fairly abeam, and, as if doubting all his powers, he shouted the word "Fire!" Greenly was standing on the lower-deck ladder, with his head just even with the coamings of the hatch, as this order reached him, and he repeated it in a voice scarcely less startling. The cloud on the larboard side was driven in all directions, like dust scattered by wind. The ship seemed on fire, and the missiles of forty-one guns flew on their deadly errand, as it might be at a single flash. The old *Plantagenet* trembled to her keel, and even bowed a little at the recoils; but, like one suddenly relieved from a burden, righted and went on her way none the less active. That timely broadside saved the English Commander-in-Chief's ship from an early defeat. It took the crew of *Le Pluton*, her new adversary, by surprise; for they had not been able to distinguish the precise position of their enemy; and besides doing vast injury to both hull and people, drew her fire at an unpropitious moment. So uncertain and hasty indeed was the discharge the French ship gave in return, that no small portion of the contents of her guns passed ahead

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of the *Plantagenet*, and went into the larboard quarter of *Le Téméraire*, the French Admiral's second ahead.

"That was a timely salute," said Sir Gervaise, smiling, as soon as the fire of his new enemy had been received without material injury. "The first blow is always half the battle. We may now work on with some hopes of success. Ah! here comes Greenly again, God be praised! unhurt."

The meeting of these two experienced seamen was cordial, but not without great seriousness. Both felt that the situation not only of the ship, but of the whole fleet, was extremely critical, the odds being much too great, and the position of the enemy too favourable, not to render the result, to say the very least, exceedingly doubtful. Some advantage had certainly been obtained thus far; but there was little hope of preserving it long. The circumstances called for very decided and particularly bold measures.

"My mind is made up, Greenly," observed the Vice-Admiral. "We must go aboard of one of these ships, and make it a hand-to-hand affair. We will take the French Commander-in-Chief; he is evidently a good deal cut up by the manner in which his fire slackens, and if we can carry him, or even force him out of the line, it will give us a better chance with the rest. As for Bluewater, God only knows what has become of him! He is not here, at any rate, and we must help ourselves."

"You have only to order, Sir Gervaise, to be obeyed. I will lead the boarders myself."

"It must be a general thing, Greenly; I rather think we shall all of us have to go aboard of *Le Foudroyant*. Go, give the necessary orders, and when everything is ready, round in a little on the larboard braces, clap your helm a-port, and give the ship a rank sheer to starboard. This will bring matters to a crisis at once. By letting the fore-sail fall, and setting the spanker, you might shove the ship ahead a little faster."

Greenly instantly left the poop on this new and important duty. He sent his orders into the batteries, bidding the people remain at their guns, however, to the last moment; and particularly instructing the Captain of marines as to the manner in which he was to cover, and then follow, the boarding party. This done, he gave orders to brace forward the yards as directed by Sir Gervaise.

The reader will not overlook the material circumstance that all we have related occurred amid the din of battle. Guns were exploding at each instant, the cloud of smoke was both

thickening and extending, fire was flashing in the semi-obscurity of its volumes, shot were rending the wood and cutting the rigging, and the piercing shrieks of agony, only so much the more appalling by being extorted from the stern and resolute, blended their thrilling accompaniments. Men seemed to be converted into demons, and yet there was a lofty and stubborn resolution to conquer mingled with all, that ennobled the strife and rendered it heroic. The broadsides that were delivered in succession down the line, as ship after ship of the rear division reached her station, however, proclaimed that Monsieur des Prez had imitated Sir Gervaise's mode of closing, the only one by means of which the leading vessel could escape destruction, and that the English were completely doubled on. At this moment, the sail trimmers of the *Plantagenet* handled their braces. The first pull was the last. No sooner were the ropes started than the foretop-mast went over the bows, dragging after it the main with all its hamper, the mizzen snapping like a pipe-stem at the cap. By this cruel accident, the result of many injuries to shrouds, back-stays, and spars, the situation of the *Plantagenet* became worse than ever; for, not only was the wreck to be partially cleared, at least, to fight many of the larboard guns, but the command of the ship was in a great measure lost, in the centre of one of the most infernal *mêlées* that ever accompanied a combat at sea. At no time does the trained seaman ever appear so great as when he meets sudden misfortunes with the steadiness and quiet which it is a material part of the *morale* of discipline to inculcate. Greenly was full of ardour for the assault, and was thinking of the best mode of running foul of his adversary when this calamity occurred; but the masts were hardly down when he changed all his thoughts to a new current, and called out to the sail-trimmers to "lay over, and clear the wreck." Sir Gervaise, too, met with a sudden and violent check to the current of his feelings. He had collected his Bowlderos, and was giving his instructions as to the manner in which they were to follow, and keep near his person, in the expected hand-to-hand encounter, when the heavy rushing of the air, and the swoop of the mass from above announced what had occurred. Turning to the men, he calmly ordered them to aid in getting rid of the incumbrances, and was in the very act of directing Wycherly to join in the same duty, when the latter exclaimed, "See, Sir Gervaise, here comes another of the Frenchmen close upon our quarter. By heavens, *they* must mean to board!"

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The Vice-Admiral instinctively grasped his sword-hilt tighter, and turned in the direction mentioned by his companion. There, indeed, came a fresh ship, shoving the cloud aside, and by the clearer atmosphere that seemed to accompany her, apparently bringing down a current of air stronger than common. When first seen, the jib-boom and bowsprit were both enveloped in smoke, but his bellying foretop-sail, and the canvas hanging in festoons, loomed grandly in the vapour, the black yards seeming to embrace the wreaths, merely to cast them aside. The proximity, too, was fearful, her yard-arms promising to clear those of the *Plantagenet* only by a few feet, as her dark bows brushed along the Admiral's side. "This will be fearful work, indeed!" exclaimed Sir Gervaise. "A fresh broadside from a ship so near will sweep all from the spars. Go, Wychemcombe, tell Greenly to call in—Hold!—'Tis an English ship! No Frenchman's bowsprit stands like that! Almighty God be praised! 'Tis the *Cæsar*—there is the old Roman's figurehead just shoving out of the smoke!" This was said with a yell, rather than a cry, of delight, and in a voice so loud that the words were heard below, and flew through the ship like the hissing of an ascending rocket. To confirm the glorious tidings, the flash and roar of guns on the off side of the stranger announced the welcome tidings that *Le Pluton* had an enemy of her own to contend with, thus enabling the *Plantagenet's* people to throw all their strength on the starboard guns, and pursue their other necessary work without further molestation from the French rear-admiral. The gratitude of Sir Gervaise, as the rescuing ship thrust herself in between him and his most formidable assailant, was too deep for language. He placed his hat mechanically before his face, and thanked God with a fervour of spirit that never before had attended his thanksgivings. This brief act of devotion over, he found the bows of the *Cæsar*, which ship was advancing very slowly, in order not to pass too far ahead, just abreast of the spot where he stood, and so near that objects were pretty plainly visible. Between her knightheads stood Bluewater, conning the ship by means of a line of officers, his hat in his hand waving in encouragement to his own people. At that moment three noble cheers were given by the crews of the two friendly vessels, and mingled with the increasing roar of the *Cæsar's* artillery. Then the smoke rose in a cloud over the forecastle of the latter ship, and persons could no longer be distinguished.

Nevertheless, like all that thus approached, the relieving ship passed slowly ahead, until her whole length protected the undefended side of her consort, delivering her fire with fearful rapidity. The *Plantagenets* seemed to imbibe new life from this arrival, and their starboard guns spoke out again, as if manned by giants. It was five minutes, perhaps, after this seasonable arrival, before the guns of the other ships of the English rear announced their presence on the outside of Monsieur des Prez's force; thus bringing the whole of the two fleets into four lines, all steering dead before the wind, and, as it were, interwoven with each other. By that time the poops of the *Plantagenet* and *Cæsar* became visible from one to the other, the smoke now driving principally off from the vessels. There again were our two Admirals each anxiously watching to get a glimpse of his friend. The instant the place was clear, Sir Gervaise applied the trumpet to his mouth and called out, "God bless you, Dick! may God for ever bless you—*your* ship can do it—clap your helm hard a-starboard, and sheer into Monsieur des Prez; you'll have him in five minutes."

Bluewater smiled, waved his hand, gave an order, and laid aside his trumpet. Two minutes later, the *Cæsar* sheered into the smoke on her larboard beam, and the crash of the meeting vessels was heard. By this time the wreck of the *Plantagenet* was cut adrift, and she, too, made a rank sheer, though in a direction opposite to that of the *Cæsar's*. As she went through the smoke her guns ceased, and when she emerged into the pure air, it was found that *Le Foudroyant* had set courses and topgallant-sails, and was drawing so fast ahead as to render pursuit, under the little sail that could be set, unprofitable. Signals were out of the question, but this movement of the two admirals converted the whole battle scene into one of inexplicable confusion. Ship after ship changed her position, and ceased her fire from uncertainty what that position was, until a general silence succeeded the roar of the cannonade. It was indispensable to pause and let the smoke blow away. It did not require many minutes to raise the curtain on the two fleets. As soon as the firing stopped, the wind increased, and the smoke was driven off to leeward in a vast straggling cloud that seemed to scatter and disperse in the air spontaneously. Then a sight of the havoc and destruction that had been done in this short conflict was first obtained.

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little time for Sir Gervaise to get a clear idea of the state of his own ships. Generally, it might be said that the vessels were scattering, the French sheering towards their own coast, while the English were principally coming by the wind on the larboard tack, or heading in towards England. The *Cesar* and *Le Pluton* were still foul of each other, though a Rear-Admiral's flag was flying at the mizzen of the first, while that which had so lately fluttered at the royal-mast-head of the other had disappeared. The *Achilles*, Lord Morganic, was still among the French, more to leeward than any other English ship, without a single spar standing. Her ensigns were flying, notwithstanding, and the *Thunderer* and *Dublin*, both in tolerable order, were edging away rapidly to cover their crippled consort, though the nearest French vessels seemed more bent on getting out of the *mêlée*, and into their own line again, than on securing any advantage already obtained. *Le Téméraire* was in the same predicament as the *Achilles* as to spars, though much more injured in her hull, besides having thrice as many casualties. Her flag was down; this ship having fairly struck to the *Warspite*, whose boats were already alongside of her. *Le Foudroyant*, with quite one-third of her crew killed and wounded, was running off to leeward, with signals flying for her consorts to rally round her; but, within less than ten minutes after she became visible, her main and mizzen masts both went. The *Blenheim* had lost all her top-masts, like the *Plantagenet*, and neither the *Elizabeth* nor the *York* had a mizzen-mast standing, although engaged but a very short time. Several lower yards were shot away, or so much injured as to compel the ships to shorten sail; this accident having occurred in both fleets. As for the damage done to the standing and running rigging, and to the sails, it is only necessary to say that shrouds, back and head-stays, braces, bowlines and lifts, were dangling in all directions, while the canvas that was open exhibited all sorts of rents, from that which had been torn like cloth in the shopman's hands, to the little eyelet holes of the canister and grape. It appeared by the subsequent reports of the two parties, that, in this short but severe conflict, the slain and wounded of the English amounted to seven hundred and sixty-three, including officers; and that of the French to one thousand four hundred and twelve. The disparity in this respect would probably have been greater against the latter, had it not been for the manner in which M. des Prez succeeded in doubling on his enemies.

Little need be said in explanation of the parts of this battle that have not been distinctly related. M. des Prez had manoeuvred in the manner he did at the commencement of the affair, in the hope of drawing Sir Gervaise down upon the division of the Comte de Vervillin; and, no sooner did he see the first fairly enveloped in smoke, than he wore short round, and joined in the affair as has been mentioned. At this sight, Bluewater's loyalty to the Stuarts could resist no longer. Throwing out a general signal to engage, he squared away, set everything that would draw on the *Cæsar*, and arrived in time to save his friend. The other ships followed, engaging on the outside, for want of room to imitate their leader.

The first hour after the action ceased was one of great exertion and anxiety to our Admiral. He called the *Chloe* alongside by signal, and, attended by Wycherly and his own quarter-master, Galleygo, who went without orders, and the Bowlderos who were unhurt, he shifted his flag to that frigate. Then he immediately commenced passing from vessel to vessel, in order to ascertain the actual condition of his command.

The master of the *Chloe* had just taken the sun, in order to ascertain his latitude, when the Vice-Admiral commanded Denham to set topgallant-sails, and go within hail of the *Cæsar*. That ship had got clear of *Le Pluton* half an hour after the action ceased, and she was now leading the fleet, with her three topsails on the caps. Aloft she had suffered comparatively little; but Sir Gervaise knew that there must have been a serious loss of men in carrying, hand to hand, a vessel like that of M. des Prez. He was anxious to see his friend, and to hear the manner in which his success had been obtained, and, we might add, to remonstrate with Bluewater on a course that had led the latter to the verge of a most dangerous abyss.

The *Chloe* was half an hour running through the fleet, which was a good deal extended, and was sailing without any regard to a line. Sir Gervaise had many questions to ask, too, of the different commanders in passing. At last the frigate overtook *Le Téméraire*, which vessel was following the *Cæsar* under easy canvas. As the *Chloe* came up abeam, Sir Gervaise appeared in the gangway of the frigate, and hat in hand, he asked with an accent that was intelligible, though it might not have absolutely stood the test of criticism:—" *Le Vice-Amiral Oakes*

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A little elderly man, dressed with extreme care, with a powdered head, but of a firm step and perfectly collected expression of countenance, appeared on the verge of *Le Téméraire's* poop, trumpet in hand, to reply. "*Le Vicomte des Prez remercie bien Monsieur le Chevalier Oakes, et désire vivement de savoir comment se porte Monsieur le Vice-Amiral ?*"

Mutual waves of the trumpets served as replies to the questions, and then, after taking a moment to muster his French, Sir Gervaise continued, "*J'espère voir Monsieur le Contre-Amiral à diner, à cinq heures précis.*"

The Vicomte smiled at this characteristic manifestation of good-will and courtesy; and after pausing an instant to choose an expression to soften his refusal, and to express his own sense of the motive of the invitation, he called out: "*Veillez bien recevoir nos excuses pour aujourd'hui, Mons. le Chevalier. Nous n'avons pas encore digéré le repas si noble reçu à vos mains comme déjeuner.*"

The *Chloe* passing ahead, bows terminated the interview.

Several minutes now passed in silence, during which the frigate was less and less rapidly closing with the larger vessel, drawing ahead towards the last, as it might be, foot by foot. Sir Gervaise got upon one of the quarter-deck guns, and steadying himself against the hammock-cloths, he was in readiness to exchange the greetings he was accustomed to give and to receive from his friend, in the same heartfelt manner as if nothing had occurred to disturb the harmony of their feelings. The single glance of the eye, the waving of the hat, and the noble manner in which Bluewater interposed between him and his most dangerous enemy, was still present to his mind, and disposed him even more than common to the kindest feelings of his nature. The Captain was already on the poop of the *Cesar*, and, as the *Chloe* came slowly on, he raised his hat in deference to the Commander-in-Chief. It was a point of delicacy with Sir Gervaise never to interfere with any subordinate flag-officer's vessel any more than duty rigidly required; consequently his communications with the captain of the *Cesar* had usually been of a general nature, verbal orders and criticisms being studiously avoided. This circumstance rendered the Commander-in-Chief even a greater favourite than common with Captain Stowel, who had all his own way in his own ship, in consequence of the Rear-Admiral's indifference

to such matters. "How do you do, Stowel?" cried out Sir Gervaise, cordially. "I am delighted to see you on your legs, and hope the old Roman is not much the worse for this day's treatment."

"I thank you, Sir Gervaise, we are both afloat yet, though we have passed through warm times. The ship is damaged, sir, as you may suppose; and, although it stands so bravely and looks so upright, that foremast of ours is as good as a condemned spar. One thirty-two through the heart of it, about ten feet from the deck, an eighteen in the hounds, and a double header sticking in one of the hoops! A spar cannot be counted for much that has as many holes in it as those, sir!"

"Deal tenderly with it, my old friend, and spare the canvas; those chaps at Plymouth will set all to rights again in a week. Hoops can be had for asking, and as for holes in the heart, many a poor fellow has had them, and lived through it all. You are a case in point; Mrs. Stowel not having spared you in that way, I'll answer for it."

"Mrs. Stowel commands ashore, Sir Gervaise, and I command afloat; and in that way we keep a quiet ship and a quiet house, I thank you, sir; and I endeavour to think of her at sea as little as possible."

"Ay, that's the way with your doting husbands;—always ashamed of your own lively sensibilities. But what has become of Bluewater? Does he know that we are alongside?"

Stowel looked round, cast his eyes up at the sails, and played with the hilt of his sword. The rapid eye of the Commander-in-Chief detected this embarrassment, and quick as thought he demanded what had happened.

"Why, Sir Gervaise, you know how it is with some admirals who like to be in everything. I told our respected and beloved friend that he had nothing to do with boarding; that if either of us was to go, I was the proper man; but that we ought both to stick by the ship. He answered something about lost honour and duty, and you know, sir, what legs he has when he wishes to use them! One might as well think of stopping a deserter by a halloo; away he went with the first party, sword in hand, a sight I never saw before, and never wish to see again! Thus you see how it was, sir."

The Commander-in-Chief compressed his lips, until his features, and indeed his whole form were a picture of desperate resolution, though his face was as pale as death, and the

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muscles of his mouth twitched, in spite of all his physical self-command. "I understand you, sir," he said, in a voice that seemed to issue from his chest; "you wish to say that Admiral Bluewater is killed."

"No, thank God! Sir Gervaise, not *quite* as bad as that, though sadly hurt; yes, indeed, very sadly hurt!"

Sir Gervaise Oakes groaned, and for a few minutes he leaned his head on the hammock cloths, veiling his face from the sight of men. Then he raised his person erect and said steadily: "Run your topsail to the masthead, Captain Stowel, and round your ship to. I will come on board of you." An order was given to Denham to take room, when the *Chloe* came to the wind on one tack and the *Cæsar* on the other. This was contrary to rule, as it increased the distance between the ships; but the Vice-Admiral was impatient to be in his barge. In ten minutes he was mounting the *Cæsar's* side, and in two more he was in Bluewater's main cabin. One of his midshipmen was seated by the table, with his face buried in his arms. Touching his shoulder, the boy raised his head, and showed a face covered with tears. "How is he, boy?" demanded Sir Gervaise, hoarsely. "Do the surgeons give any hopes?" The midshipman shook his head, and then, as if the question renewed his grief, he again buried his face in his arms. At this moment, the surgeon of the ship came from the Rear-Admiral's state room, and following the Commander-in-Chief into the after-cabin, they had conference together.

A report was made to Sir Gervaise of what had been done, and then an order came on deck that occasioned all in the fleet to stare with surprise. The red flag of Sir Gervaise Oakes was run up at the fore royal-masthead of the *Cæsar*, while the white flag of the Rear-Admiral was still flying at her mizzen. Such a thing had never before been known to happen, if it has ever happened since; and to the time when she was subsequently lost, the *Cæsar* was known as the double flagship.

Not a syllable of explanation, reproach, or self-accusation passed between the Commander-in-Chief and the Rear-Admiral. Each party appeared to blot out the events of the last few hours, leaving the long vista of their past services and friendship undisfigured by a single unsightly or unpleasant object. Sir Gervaise Oakes, while he retained an active superintendence of his fleet and issued the necessary orders right and left, hovered around the bed of Bluewater with the assiduity and almost with the tenderness of a woman; still not the slightest

allusion was made to the recent battle, or to anything that had occurred in the short cruise. A few words uttered in the midst of other conversation, were all that might in any manner carry the mind of either back to events that both might wish forgotten. The Rear-Admiral felt this forbearance deeply, and now that the subject was thus accidentally broached between them, he had a desire to say something in continuation. Still he waited until the baronet had left the window and taken a seat by his bed.

"Gervaise," Bluewater then commenced, speaking low from weakness, but speaking distinctly from feeling, "I cannot die without asking your forgiveness. There were several hours when I actually meditated treason—I will not say to my King; on that point my opinions are unchanged—but to you."

"Why speak of this, Dick? You did not know yourself when you believed it possible to desert me in the face of the enemy. How much better I judged of your character is seen in the fact that I did not hesitate to engage double my force, well knowing that you could not fail to come to my rescue." Bluewater looked intently at his friend, and a smile of serious satisfaction passed over his pallid countenance as he listened to Sir Gervaise's words, which were uttered with his usual warmth and sincerity of manner. "I believe you know me better than I know myself, truly," he answered, after a thoughtful pause; "yes, better than I know myself. What a glorious close to our professional career would it have been, Oakes, had I followed you into battle, as was our old practice, and fallen in your wake, imitating your own high example!"

"It is better as it is, Dick—if anything that has so sad a termination can be well—yes, it is better as it is; you have fallen at my side as it were. We will think or talk no more of this."

"We have been friends and close friends too for a long period, Gervaise," returned Bluewater, stretching his arm from the bed, with the long, thin fingers of the hand extended to meet the other's grasp; "and yet I cannot recall an act of yours which I can justly lay to heart as unkind or untrue."

"God forgive me if you can—I hope not, Dick; most sincerely do I hope not. It would give me great pain to believe it."

"You have no cause for self-reproach. In no one act or thought can you justly accuse yourself of injuring me. I should die much happier could I say the same of myself, Oakes!"

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"Thought! Dick? Thought! You never meditated aught against me in your whole life. The love you bear me is the true reason why you lie there at this blessed moment."

"It is grateful to find that I have been understood. I am deeply indebted to you, Oakes, for declining to signal me and my division down when I foolishly requested that untimely forbearance. I was then suffering an anguish of mind to which any pain of the body I may now endure is an elysium; your self-denial gave time——"

"For the heart to prompt you to that which your feelings yearned to do from the first, Bluewater," interrupted Sir Gervaise. "And now, as your commanding officer, I enjoin silence on this subject for ever."

"I will endeavour to obey. It will not be long, Oakes, that I shall remain under your orders," added the Rear-Admiral, with a painful smile. "There should be no charge of mutiny against me in the last act of my life. You ought to forgive the one sin of omission, when you remember how much and how completely my will has been subject to yours during the last five and thirty years how little my mind has matured a professional thought that yours has not originated!"

"Speak no more of 'forgive,' I charge you, Dick. That you have shown a girl-like docility in obeying all my orders, too, is a truth I will aver before God and man; but when it comes to mind, I am far from asserting that mine has had the mastery. I do believe, could the truth be ascertained, it would be found that I am, at this blessed moment, enjoying a professional reputation which is more than half due to you."

"It matters little now, Gervaise—it matters little now. We were two light-hearted and gay lads, Oakes, when we first met as boys, fresh from school, and merry as health and spirits could make us."

"We were, indeed, Dick! yes, we were, thoughtless as if this sad moment were never to arrive!"

"There were George Anson and Peter Warren, little Charley Saunders, Jack Byng, and a set of us, that did, indeed, live as if we were never to die! And yet we carried our lives, as it might be, in our hands, Oakes!"

"There is much of that, Dick, in boyhood and youth; but he is happiest, after all, who can meet this moment as you do—calmly, and yet without any dependence on his own merits."

"I had an excellent mother, Oakes! Little do we think in youth how much we owe to the unextinguishable tenderness

and far-seeing lessons of our mothers ! Ours both died while we were young, and yet I do think we were their debtors for far more than we could ever repay." Sir Gervaise simply assented, but making no immediate answer otherwise, a long pause succeeded, during which the Vice-Admiral fancied that his friend was beginning to doze. He was mistaken. "You will be made Viscount Bowldero for these last affairs, Gervaise," the wounded man unexpectedly observed, showing how much his thoughts were still engrossed with the interests of his friend. "Nor do I see why you should again refuse a peerage. Those who remain in this world may well yield to its usages and opinions, while they do not interfere with higher obligations."

"I!" exclaimed Sir Gervaise, gloomily. "The thought of so commemorating what has happened would be worse than defeat to me ! No, I ask no change of name to remind me constantly of my loss !"

Bluewater looked grateful rather than pleased ; but he made no answer.

The scene that followed was solemn and sad. One by one, the captains drew near the bed, and to each the dying man had something kind and affectionate to say. Even the most cold-hearted looked grave, and one of them, O'Neil, a man remarkable for a *gaieté de cœur* that rendered the excitement of battle some of the pleasantest moments of his life, literally shed tears on the hand he kissed.

Another long pause succeeded this exciting little scene, during which Bluewater lay quietly communing with himself and his God. Sir Gervaise wrote orders, and read reports, though his eye was never off the countenance of his friend more than a minute or two at a time. At length the Rear-Admiral aroused himself again, and began to take an interest once more in the persons and things around him.

"Galleygo, my old fellow-cruiser," he said, "I leave Sir Gervaise more particularly in your care. As we advance in life, our friends decrease in numbers ; it is only those that have been well tried that we can rely on."

"Yes, Admiral Blue, I know that, and so does Sir Jarvy. Yes, old shipmates before young 'uns any day, and old sailors, too, before green hands. Sir Jarvy's Bowlderos are good plate-holders, and the likes of that ; but when it comes to heavy weather and a hard strain, I think but little on 'em all put together."

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"By the way, Oakes," said Bluewater, with a sudden interest in such a subject that he never expected to feel again, "I have heard nothing of the day's work, in which, through the little I have gleaned by listening to those around me, I understand you dismantled the French Admiral?"

"Pardon me, Dick; you had better try and get a little sleep; the subject is really painful to me."

"Well, then, Sir Jarvy, if you has an aversion to telling the story to Admiral Blue, I can do it, your Honour," put in Galleygo, who gloried in giving a graphic description of a sea-fight. "I think, now, a history of that day will comfort a flag-officer as has been so badly wounded himself." Bluewater offering no opposition, Galleygo proceeded with his account of the evolutions of the ships, as we have already described them, succeeding surprisingly well in rendering the narrative interesting, and making himself perfectly intelligible and clear, by his thorough knowledge, and ready use of the necessary nautical terms. When he came to the moment in which the English line separated, part passing to windward, and part to leeward of the two French ships, he related the incident in so clear and spirited a manner, that the Commander-in-Chief himself dropped his pen, and sat listening with pleasure.

"Who could imagine, Dick," Sir Gervaise observed, "that those fellows in the tops watch us so closely, and could give so accurate an account of what passes!"

"Ah! Gervaise, and what is the vigilance of Galleygo to that of the All-seeing eye! It is a terrible thought, at an hour like this, to remember that nothing can be forgotten. I have somewhere read that not an oath is uttered that does not continue to vibrate through all time, in the wide-spreading currents of sound—not a prayer lisped, that its record is not also to be found stamped on the laws of nature by the indelible seal of the Almighty's will!"

An hour before day, the wounded man revived in a way that the surgeon distrusted. He knew that no physical change of this sort could well happen that did not arise from the momentary ascendancy of mind over matter, as the first is on the point of finally abandoning its earthly tenement; a circumstance of no unusual occurrence in patients of strong and active intellectual properties, whose faculties often brighten for an instant, in their last moments, as the lamp flashes and glares as it is about to become extinct. Going to the bed, he

examined his patient attentively, and was satisfied that the final moment was near.

"You're a man and a soldier, Sir Jarvis," he said, in a low voice, "and it'll no be doing good to attempt misleading your judgment in a case of this sort. Our friend, the Rear-Admiral, is *articulo mortis*, as one might almost say; he cannot possibly survive half an hour." Sir Gervaise started. He looked around him a little wistfully; for, at that moment, he would have given much to be alone with his dying friend. But he hesitated to make a request which, it struck him, might seem improper. From this embarrassment, however, he was relieved by Bluewater himself, who had the same desire, without the same scruples about confessing it. He drew the surgeon to his side, and whispered a wish to be left alone with the Commander-in-Chief.

"God bless you, Oakes, and keep you the same simple-minded true-hearted man you have ever been." Sir Gervaise buried his face in the bed-clothes, and groaned. "Kiss me, Oakes," murmured the Rear-Admiral. In order to do this, the Commander-in-Chief rose from his knees and bent over the body of his friend. As he raised himself from the cheek he had saluted, a benignant smile gleamed on the face of the dying man, and he ceased to breathe. Near half a minute followed, however, before the last and most significant breath that is ever drawn from man was given. The remainder of that night Sir Gervaise Oakes passed in the chamber alone, pacing the floor, recalling the many scenes of pleasure, danger, pain, and triumph through which he and the dead had passed in company.

—FENIMORE COOPER, *The Two Admirals*.

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XXII

"Britannia Rules the Waves"

IT was in the grey of a fine autumnal morning, in the year 1797, that a swift lugger was seen dashing the spray from her beautiful bows as she sailed through a fleet of stately men-of-war that lay in the Texel. The lugger made for the shore, and when close in, dropped her anchor; and her small boat being lowered from her stern, three men entered it, and it was pulled swiftly to the beach. To one who knew not that a craft like the lugger required a numerous crew, it might have been supposed, when those three men left her side, that every living thing had departed from her; for the stillness which prevailed within her was profound. There she lay on the placid water, quiet as the element she floated on, without a sign or a sound to indicate that she was the den of many a daring ruffian.

About noon the boat reapproached the lugger, with two additional persons, and after hailing her, and remaining a few minutes under her quarter, again pushed off, and made for the centre of the fleet, where the flag of Admiral De Winter floated from the mast of the *Vryheid*,—a splendid seventy-four.

Three persons from the boat went up the side of the Admiral's ship; two of these were admitted to the Admiral's cabin; the third, the Commander of the lugger, waited on the deck until those he brought from the shore should command his presence below. And these two were persons whose names are well known in the eventful history of the period, and on their heads was the price of blood,—Theobald Wolfe Tone, and Lewines: the former an exile for some time from his country; and the other, more recently an envoy from the executive of the disaffected party in Ireland. Tone had obtained rank in the French army, and was at this moment on

the *état major* of the armament destined for the invasion of the kingdom of Great Britain ; though at what point that invasion might take place was not yet decided ;—it being a matter of dispute whether the expedition should land on the English coast or in Ireland ; whether it should strike at the vitals of Great Britain, or assail her from her extremities.

General Hoche, who was only second in fame to Bonaparte, was anxious to do something brilliant, while the fame of his rival's Italian campaigns made Europe ring with wonder ; and as the prevalence of contrary winds had prevented the expedition from sailing for Ireland for some weeks, he formed the daring proposal of landing in Lincolnshire and marching direct on London.

A year before, his expedition which sailed from Brest for Ireland was utterly defeated by contrary winds ; and as the same element seemed, as usual, to interpose a providential barrier between England and her foes, he, with that impatient thought so characteristic of genius, suggested the idea that as the wind did not blow in favour of the course they wanted to steer, they should make it subservient to another purpose, descend on the most open quarter, and trust to the fortune of war ; for he burned that some great achievement of his should prevent his name from being overshadowed by the freshly-springing laurels of Napoleon Bonaparte.

Against this preposterous notion of carrying England by a *coup de main*, Tone had always argued strenuously ; but he found such a singular ignorance of the state of England, as well as Ireland, to exist amongst the French, that it was with great difficulty he could make General Hoche listen to a word against his newly-conceived expedition.

It was, therefore, with great pleasure he had a letter of the French agent, De Lacy, bearing so strongly on this point, put into his hands that morning by the Commander of the lugger, and he lost no time in laying it before the authorities in command of the expedition, to dissuade them from a course that he knew could be no other than ruinous.

When he and Lewines entered the cabin of the Admiral. Generals Hoche and Daendells were looking over a map of England ; while Admiral De Winter and his second-in-command, Admiral Storey, were examining charts of the British Channel and the North Sea.

"You see I've not given it up yet," said Hoche vivaciously to Tone.

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"I perceive you have not, General," said the latter; "but I think this will decide you"; and he presented to him the letter.

Hoche pounced upon it, and began to devour its contents. He passed rapidly on, till, stopping suddenly, he asked:

"Who is this from?"

Tone informed him it was from an agent of General Clarke, who had been commissioned to inquire into the truth of all the statements Tone had made to the Directory.

"I remember," said Hoche; and he resumed his reading.

A conversation ensued in the meantime between the Admirals and the Irish emissaries, until it was interrupted by Hoche exclaiming impatiently:

"*Que diable!* What have carved ceilings and handsome apartments to do with the matter? His oak ceiling is only too good for burning! What nonsense!" And he threw down the letter contemptuously.

"Pray go on, General," said Tone. "There is a good deal of detail, certainly, in the communication; but if the writer has been careful and elaborate in his observations, it is only fair to read them all, so as to arrive at a just estimate of his judgment."

Hoche continued the reading of the letter, and as he proceeded, his face became more thoughtful, he read with deeper attention; and when he had finished the perusal, he laid down the letter in silence, as though he had not the heart to say, "I must give up my expedition," although he felt it was hopeless.

"You see, General," said Tone, "the expedition to Ireland is the only thing."

"Whenever it can sail there," said Hoche.

"That may be a month," said Daendells.

"Or to-morrow," said Tone.

"This south-westerly wind is blowing as if it had set in for it," said the Admiral, shaking his head doubtingly at Tone's hopeful anticipation.

"The troops have now been embarked nearly a month," said General Daendells, "and though amply provisioned for the probable necessities of the expedition, it is impossible their stores can last much longer; and whenever they become exhausted, I doubt how far our government would deem it prudent to advance further supplies."

"General Daendells," said Hoche, "it has appeared to me, lately, that the Batavian republic seems to have a jealousy that her army should be led by a general of France in an affair that

promises so much glory, and I should not wonder that much further delay in the sailing of the expedition might prevent this noble undertaking altogether. Now, I would not for the glory of Cæsar that my personal fame should interfere with the great cause of universal freedom; and if you think that your legislative assembly would be more willing to pursue this enterprise if it were under the command of one of its own generals, I will withdraw my pretensions to the command, and give all the chance of the glory to you."

"You are a noble fellow," said Daendells, extending his hand to Hoche; "there may be some truth in what you say, and I shall never forget this act of generosity on your part, for none can deny that you, from your efforts made and disappointments endured in this cause, deserve to reap all the laurels that may be mine in the result. This is the greatest of your conquests—you have triumphed over your ambition!"

Tone was affected almost to tears—he could scarcely speak; but, struggling with his emotion, he said:

"General, my country will never forget this noble conduct on your part. We knew how brave you are, but we did not know how generous!"

"Who brought this letter?" said Hoche, wishing to turn the conversation.

"De Welskein, the smuggler," said Tone; "and he wishes to know whether he may promise speedy aid to the sufferers in Ireland, for they are beginning to be impatient of it."

"The moment the wind permits, they shall have succour," said Daendells. "Is it not so, Admiral?" said he to De Winter.

"Certainly," answered the Admiral. "Is the smuggler on board?" added he, addressing Tone.

"Yes, Admiral."

"Then I wish to speak to him"; and the smuggler was ordered into the Admiral's presence.

De Welskein was a Frenchman, though bearing a Dutch name: he was one of the many desperate characters that the French revolution produced. A fellow of loose habits and desperate fortunes, he took to smuggling, as the readiest mode of indulging the one and repairing the other; he had also a love of *finesse* and a spirit of intrigue, that this sort of life enabled him to indulge in; and he was the most active of the agents in carrying on intelligence between France and Ireland at that period; not that he cared for the Irish, not that he had

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moral sensibility within him to desire the liberation of the veriest slave, but that it gave him an opportunity to smuggle and intrigue.

Many a turbulent spirit in Ireland who longed for an outbreak of rebellion, and who looked to France for aid, courted Monsieur de Welskein as an emissary from the land of promise, and he made them, through this hold upon them, more ready instruments in his smuggling speculations.

Deficient though De Welskein was in any moral appreciation of the beauty of freedom, he babbled about it in the jargon of his time, and shouted "*Vive la liberté!*" because his *liberté* meant the absence of all restraint, human or divine; and he had a sort of confused notion that a revolution was glorious, and that it was the business of the *grande nation* to revolutionise the world in general, but Ireland in particular, because it gave him a good opportunity for smuggling brandy and tobacco.

There was a species of melodramatic fancy about the fellow too—a propensity for romance and adventure, that his connection with Ireland gratified.

Besides, it indulged his vanity, as, in his present situation, Monsieur Eugene St. Foix de Welskein was no small personage in his opinion: he rhodomontaded about the fate of empires and the destinies of nations, as though he were a sucking Jupiter, or one of the French Directory.

His names, too, were a source of rejoicing to him: Eugene St. Foix. The former he inherited from his father; the latter was the maiden name of his mother, who was a washerwoman. De Welskein he did not much like; so that his companions, when they wished to vex him, called him by his surname, while in moments of friendship they addressed him as Eugene; but when they courted him the heroic title of St. Foix was the one they preferred. To be sure they sometimes called him behind his back, *Sans foi*; but in his presence he was fond of having his courage celebrated under the name of *Sans Peur*: so that *St. Foix sans peur* was a flattering address sometimes made to him; but though St. Foix was certainly *sans peur*, he was not *sans reproche*.

When De Welskein entered the cabin, Admiral De Winter asked him, had he seen the English fleet?

He answered that he had passed them in the night.

"Then you could not count the number of their ships?" said the Admiral.

"I was sufficiently near in the morning to see them," said the smuggler, "and I think they are eighteen sail."

"Eighteen! are you sure?"

"I think, eighteen; I'm almost sure."

"Frigates, or line-of-battle?"

"Most line-of-battle."

"I see he has observed them," said the Admiral, "for I could perceive, even from the harbour, with a glass, that they were all line-of-battle:—but I could only make out fifteen; they must have been reinforced. Some of their ships were in mutiny at the Nore; perhaps the mutiny has been suppressed, and that accounts for the increase of numbers."

"That's unlucky," said Tone.

"How unlucky, sir?" said Storey.

"As long as our fleet had a superiority, there was a chance we could force our passage; but——"

"Sir," said Storey, "you mistake very much if you think we would shrink from contending with an equal, or even superior, number of the enemy. I wish for nothing better than to be broadside to broadside with them."

This was the bravado of the man who, in about a month after, deserted De Winter in his engagement with that identical fleet, and literally ran away with his division of the Dutch force from the enemy he vaunted himself so eager to engage. So much for braggarts!

"Pardon me, Admiral," said Tone; "I hope neither you nor Admiral De Winter"—and he bowed deferentially to that gallant officer, as if it were to him rather than to Storey he apologised—"I hope you do not suppose me so unworthy as to undervalue the bravery of the Dutch navy, at the same time that I consider it a matter of importance we should reach Ireland without an engagement, as our force will in that case be undiminished; and I wish that the army landed should be as large as possible, for the affair will be the sooner decided, and thus an effusion of blood will be spared, and I wish from my heart that in my poor country as little blood as possible may be shed."

"Bah!" said Hoche; "you can't make omelettes without breaking of eggs."

"Adjutant-general," said De Winter to Tone, "I do not misapprehend you: there is no denying that the English are a brave enemy, and Admiral Duncan is a gallant and able officer. I shall not seek an encounter with him

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Thus spoke the man of true courage, who fought his ships gallantly in the subsequent action, even after the defection of the braggart who deserted him.

Tone tapped General Hoche on the shoulder, and led him apart for a few words in private. The door being open that led to the stern gallery, they walked forth, and Tone began an energetic address, requesting the General to dissuade the Admiral as much as possible from an engagement with the English fleet.

"Let the troops be landed in Ireland," said he, "on the land you are invincible, as the English are on the seas. Fate seems to have given to them the dominion of the ocean. Mark me—my words are prophetic—so sure as this fleet shall engage the English, so surely shall it be beaten!"

"De Winter is an able officer," said Hoche.

"He is," said Tone, "and a brave man I am certain from his moderate manner; while I doubt very much the courage of that flourishing gentleman. But have we not the example of repeated engagements to show us that Great Britain is an overmatch for every nation on the seas? and it makes my blood boil to think that while her fleets are freely manned by Irishmen, the land that gives them birth groans beneath her oppression. Ireland helps to gather laurels for Britain's brows, but not a leaf of the chaplet is given to her; she shares in winning the victories that enrich and aggrandise the Queen of the Ocean, but is allowed no portion of the fame or the prosperity."

"Be not thus agitated," said Hoche soothingly, touched by the fierce enthusiasm with which Tone uttered the latter part of his address: "when once this armament lands in Ireland there is an end of Great Britain's domination."

"Ay, when it lands," said Tone, with a voice in which impatience and hopelessness were strangely blended. "Oh!" said he, stretching out his hands to the expanse of sea and sky before him—"Oh! ye elements—ye mysterious agents of heaven! why do ye interpose your potent shield of air and foam between England and her foes? You blasted the Armada of Spain; I saw you scatter the ships of France at Bantry; and now this gallant fleet, with fifteen thousand chosen men, who burn for the liberation of my country, is chained here by an adverse wind for a whole month! Ireland, my country, I fear you are doomed!"

His hands dropped to his side, his head sank on his chest, and he stood with his eyes fixed on the ground.

"Rally, man, rally!" said Hoche, slapping him on the shoulder; "why, Adjutant-general, I have never seen you thus before!"

"Whenever I think of the fate of that unhappy country, it breaks my heart! But I've done: only for God's sake, General Hoche, dissuade them from a sea-fight; we are ruined if they attempt it."

Hoche and Tone now re-entered the cabin. They found De Winter and Daendells giving instructions to the smuggler. De Winter desired him to put himself in the way of the English fleet, and give them some false information.

It was planned that De Welskein should pass the English squadron in the night, and towards morning sail back again, as if he came up Channel, and tell the English Admiral that he saw a French fleet at the Channel's mouth; this might give him an idea that the Brest fleet had got out to sea, which would serve to divide his attention, and possibly draw him farther off the coast, and leave a passage from the Texel more open, in case the wind should change so as to favour such a movement.

General Daendells told him to assure the Irish of speedy succour, for that fifteen thousand men were embarked for that service, and only waited a fair wind to sail. A few lines to De Lacy, from Hoche, was all the writing the smuggler bore, and he left the ship on his mission.

Such were the plans that were proposed; such were the promises made. What was the result?

The wind continued foul a fortnight longer; in all, six weeks. The provisions for so large a number of troops, as well as seamen, became exhausted; the troops were relanded; the expedition to Ireland was given up, and England again was spared the danger of a formidable invasion of a disaffected portion of her kingdom.

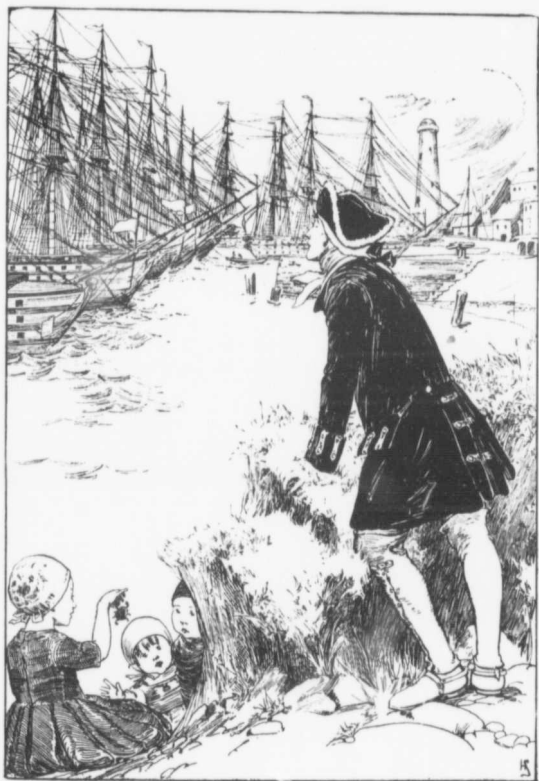
The night the troops were disembarked Tone went to his tent with a heavy heart: the next morning he saw the pennants of the fleet turned towards England.

The breeze which the day before would have made his blood dance, had he felt it on the deck of the *Vryheid*, now only made his heart sick; he stood on the beach like one possessed.

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fiercely, clenched his teeth, struck his forehead with his hand, and walked rapidly away; but ere he descended a slight declivity that shut out the bay, he turned round and cast a look of despair towards his country.

Thus ended the second expedition undertaken for the invasion of Ireland: and the gallant Hoche, within a month after, was no more—cut off in his prime of manhood and career of glory by the hand of the assassin!

And what was the fate of the fleet?

Admiral De Winter, the October following, sailed from the Texel, met the English squadron under Admiral Duncan, and fought like a hero—but Storey deserted him. De Winter, nevertheless, maintained a fierce engagement against superior numbers: but the prophesy of Tone was fulfilled; after a well-contested fight the Dutch struck their colours, and the flag of England again floated triumphantly over the seas.

The glorious news to Britain of the victory of the 11th of October had spread rejoicing over England, but caused aching to many a heart in Ireland. The Texel fleet was conquered, and its Admiral a prisoner in England. No more chance of aid might be looked for from that quarter, and for a short time the hopes of the United Irishmen were blighted.

But in a few days other news arrived to temper the severity of this blow, and make them yet more confident of assistance from France.

Other triumphs than Duncan's filled the ear of Europe; for just now the rapid and brilliant succession of Bonaparte's victories in Italy more than outweighed the naval conquest of Duncan; and Austria saw her experienced Generals beaten, one after another, by the young Corsican, and her veteran armies overwhelmed by the raw levies of impetuous France. The 18th of October witnessed the failure of the Bourbon plot in the assemblies of Paris; the Clichy Club was suppressed; Pichegru and Carnot fled; the republic again triumphed over the attempts of the Royalists, and was once more secured under a new Directory: Austria was forced to sign a peace dictated by the enemy, and France was more free than ever to pursue her hostility against England. Then came that tremendous assembling of her victorious troops, which soon after were gathered on her northern shore, under the denomination of the "Army of England"; and then was threatened the memorable "invasion" that occupied all the attention of Great Britain.

The troops were often inspected by Napoleon Bonaparte, to whom the Directory were anxious to entrust some important command, so as to get him out of Paris, for they dreaded the presence of the General so near the seat of government. He was at that moment the darling of the people, and little short of worshipped, after his wonderful conquest of Italy. They feared his towering temper and popularity might prove inconvenient; for Bonaparte, just then, openly complained of not being employed, and accused the Directory of being desirous of having him forgotten—no man knew better than he how short-lived is popularity, and that any amount of fame becomes profitless which has not a periodical increase. And then it was he wove his secret scheme for the conquest of Egypt, and the gorgeous dream of founding an Eastern empire opened on his daring and ambitious spirit. So, while he indulged the popular belief that an invasion to the North was in preparation, his views and hopes were all directed to the South. In the meantime his visits to the Army of the North were continued, and the organization of his forces was conducted on the shores of the British Channel, where he knew their presence would retain the English navy until the proper season should arrive for marching them to the coast of the Mediterranean, where the absence of a hostile fleet was so important.

During the entire winter De Lacy and Tone, and other Irish emissaries, looked forward to the opening spring for the realisation of all their hopes and labours in a descent upon Ireland; but bitter was their disappointment and deep their despair when the order for the whole armament to march southward arrived in the month of April. As yet it was unknown what was the destination of the Army of the North; but it was enough for the Irish refugees to know it was not Ireland. De Lacy's heart sank; but sorrow soon gave place to indignation when Tone informed him that he and other Irish delegates had had an interview with Bonaparte, and that every hope for Ireland was gone for the present.

"You saw him, then?" said De Lacy.

"Yes," answered Tone.

"What did he say?"

"Not much."

"The Corsican is short of speech," said De Lacy.

"Yes," answered Tone; "and I wish I could say, in the idiom of our country, 'short and sweet': but it was far from that."

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"What was the objection?"

"Not one: there was no direct reason given against the undertaking, but a manifest disinclination to engage in it; and it seemed to me there was a hidden preference for some other enterprise which usurped dominion over his wishes—I may say, his reason, for he had not a shadow of argument to advance for abandoning the Irish project."

"Did he say nothing?"

"I wish he had said nothing, rather than what he did say. If he had made a downright objection, that one could have met and argued out with him, I would have been content—and, I hope, content even though I had been beaten in the argument. But no, not a word of argument, but—what do you think?" said Tone, becoming excited as he spoke.

"I can't conceive," said De Lacy.

"Why, only fancy—only imagine, De Lacy, my indignation, when, on my urging Ireland as an object of importance, he replied, 'Ireland has done all for us we can expect or want: she has made a diversion in our favour.'—By G—d! the very words—a diversion in our favour. Fancy this!—a diversion! Oh, my poor country! that he who ought to fight the cause of freedom, and has power to do so, should give such an answer, and so treat a suffering people, and make a diversion of you!"

"It is too bad," said De Lacy: "but perhaps the Directory——"

"Are in the same cue," said Tone: "they handed me over to Bonaparte."

"Was there no word of argument for present delay?"

"Not one."

"Nor of future hope?"

"Not a syllable: the laconic Corsican, after having made his diversion of poor Ireland, gave us our *congé*."

"This is very hard after all the expectations raised."

"Hard!—it is infamous!" said Tone. "I cannot forgive him for it—and may just Heaven, that sees him turn unheeding from the cry of a suffering nation, throw the crime into the balance against him, and may it weigh heavily! Yes! may he live to remember and curse the hour he refused to make Ireland his friend, and finds her his enemy!"

The words were uttered with the fervour of national indignation and the spirit of prophecy; for on the field of Waterloo, Ireland was his enemy, and her son his conqueror.

—SAMUEL LOVER, *Rory O'More*.

XXIII

"For Whom has the Queen Sent"

"IT is all right," said Mr. Tadpole. "They are out. Lord Melbourne has been with the Queen and recommended her Majesty to send for the Duke, and the Duke has recommended her Majesty to send for Sir Robert."

"Are you sure?" said Mr. Taper.

"I tell you Sir Robert is on his road to the palace at this moment; I saw him pass, full-dressed."

"It is too much," said Mr. Taper.

"Now what are we to do?" said Mr. Tadpole.

"We must not dissolve," said Mr. Taper. "We have no cry."

"As much cry as the other fellows," said Mr. Tadpole; "but no one of course would think of dissolution before the next registration. No, no; this is a very manageable Parliament, depend upon it. The malcontent radicals who have turned them out are not going to bring them in. That makes us equal. Then we have an important section to work upon—the Sneaks, the men who are afraid of a dissolution. I will be bound we make a good working conservative majority of five and-twenty out of the Sneaks."

"With the Treasury patronage," said Mr. Taper; "fear and favour combined. An impending dissolution, and all the places we refuse our own men, we may count on the Sneaks."

"Then there are several religious men who have wanted an excuse for a long time to rat," said Mr. Tadpole. "We must get Sir Robert to make some kind of a religious move, and that will secure Sir Litany Lax and young Mr. Salem."

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said Mr. Taper. "Commissions and committees ought always to be supported."

"Besides it will frighten the saints," said Mr. Tadpole. "If we could get him to speak at Exeter Hall—were it only a slavery meeting—that would do."

"It is difficult," said Taper; "he must be pledged to nothing—not even to the right of search. Yet if we could get up something with a good deal of sentiment and no principle involved; referring only to the past, but with his practised powers touching the present. What do you think of a monument to Wilberforce or a commemoration of Clarkson?"

"There is a good deal in that," said Mr. Tadpole. "At present go about and keep our fellows in good humour. Whisper nothings that sound like something. But be discreet; do not let there be more than half a hundred fellows who believe they are going to be Under Secretaries of State. And be cautious about titles. If they push you, give a wink and press your finger to your lip. I must call here," continued Mr. Tadpole as he stopped before the house of the Duke of Fitz-Aquitaine. "This gentleman is my particular charge. I have been cooking him these three years. I had two notes from him yesterday, and can delay a visit no longer. The worst of it is, he expects that I shall bear him the non-official announcement of his being sent to Ireland, of which he has about as much chance as I have of being Governor-General of India. It must be confessed ours is critical work sometimes, friend Taper; but never mind—what we have to do to individuals Peel has to do with a nation, and therefore we ought not to complain."

The Duke of Fitz-Aquitaine wanted Ireland and Lord de Mowbray wanted the Garter. Lord Marney, who wanted the Buck-hounds, was convinced that neither of his friends had the slightest chance of obtaining their respective objects, but believed that he had a very good one of securing his own if he used them for his purpose, and persuaded them to combine together for the common good. So at his suggestion they had all met together at the duke's, and were in full conference on the present state of affairs, while Tadpole and Taper were engaged in that interesting and instructive conversation of which we have snatched a passage.

"You may depend upon it," said Lord Marney, "that nothing is to be done by delicacy. It is not delicacy that

rules the House of Lords. What has kept us silent for years? Threats; and threats used in the most downright manner. We were told that if we did not conform absolutely and without appeal to the will and pleasure of one individual, the cards would be thrown up. We gave in; the game has been played, and won. I am not at all clear that it has been won by those tactics—but gained it is; and now what shall we do? In my opinion it is high time to get rid of the dictatorship. The new ruse now for the palace is to persuade her Majesty that Peel is the only man who can manage the House of Lords. Well, then it is exactly the time to make certain persons understand that the House of Lords are not going to be tools any longer merely for other people. Rely upon it a bold united front at this moment would be a spoke in the wheel. We three form the nucleus; there are plenty to gather round. I have written to Marisforde; he is quite ripe. Lord Hounslow will be here to-morrow. The thing is to be done; and if we are not firm the grand conservative triumph will only end in securing the best posts both at home and abroad for one too powerful family."

"Who had never been heard of in the time of my father," said the duke.

"Nor in the time of mine," said Lord de Mowbray.

"Royal and Norman blood like ours," said Lord Marney, "is not to be thrown over in that way."

It was just at this moment that a servant entered with a card, which the Duke looking at said "It is Tadpole; shall we have him in? I dare say he will tell us something." And notwithstanding the important character of their conference, political curiosity, and perhaps some private feeling which not one of them cared to acknowledge, made them unanimously agree that Mr. Tadpole should be admitted.

"Lord Marney and Lord de Mowbray with the Duke of Fitz-Aquitaine," thought Mr. Tadpole, as he was ushered into the library and his eye, practised in machinations and prophetic in manœuvres, surveyed the three nobles. "This looks like business and perhaps means mischief. Very lucky I called!" With an honest smile he saluted them all.

"What news from the palace, Tadpole?" inquired the Duke.

"Sir Robert is there," replied Tadpole.

"That's good news," exclaimed his Grace, echoed by Lord de Mowbray, and backed up with a faint bravo from Lord Marney.

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Then arose a conversation, in which all affected much interest, respecting the Jamaica debate; whether the whigs had originally intended to resign; whether it were Lord Melbourne or Lord John who had insisted on the step; whether if postponed they could have tided over the session; and so on. Tadpole, who was somewhat earnest in his talk, seemed to have pinned the Duke of Fitz-Aquitaine; Lord Marney, who wanted to say a word alone to Lord de Mowbray, had dexterously drawn that personage aside on the pretence of looking at a picture. Tadpole, who with a most frank and unsophisticated mien had an eye for every corner of a room, seized the opportunity for which he had been long cruising. "I don't pretend to be behind the scenes, duke; but it was said to me to-day, 'Tadpole, if you do chance to see the Duke of Fitz-Aquitaine, you may say that positively Lord Killcroppy will not go to Ireland.'"

A smile of satisfaction played over the handsome face of the Duke—instantly suppressed lest it might excite suspicion; and then with a friendly and very significant nod, that intimated to Tadpole not to dwell on the subject at the present moment, the Duke, with a rather uninterested air, recurred to the Jamaica debate, and soon after appealed on some domestic point to his son-in-law. This broke up the conversation between Lord de Mowbray and Lord Marney. Lord de Mowbray advancing was met accidentally on purpose by Mr. Tadpole, who seemed anxious to push forward to Lord Marney.

"You have heard of Lord Ribbonville?" said Tadpole in a suppressed tone.

"No; what?"

"Can't live the day out. How fortunate Sir Robert is! Two garters to give with!"

Tadpole had now succeeded in tackling Lord Marney alone; the other peers were far out of ear-shot. "I don't pretend to be behind the scenes, my Lord," said the honest gentleman in a peculiarly confidential tone, and with a glance that spoke volumes of state secrecy; "but it was said to me to-day, 'Tadpole, if you do chance to meet Lord Marney, you may say that positively Lord Rambrooke will not have the Buck-hounds.'"

"All I want," said Lord Marney, "is to see men of character about her Majesty. This is a domestic country, and the country expects that no nobleman should take household office whose private character is not inexpugnable. Now that

fellow Rambrooke keeps a French woman. It is not much known, but it is a fact."

"Dreadful!" exclaimed Mr. Tadpole. "I have no doubt of it. But he has no chance of the Buck-hounds, you may rely on that. Private character is to be the basis of the new government. Since the Reform Act that is a qualification much more esteemed by the constituency than public services. We must go with the times, my Lord. A virtuous middle class shrink with horror from French actresses; and the Wesleyans—the Wesleyans must be considered, Lord Marney."

"I always subscribe to them," said his Lordship.

"Ah!" said Mr. Tadpole mysteriously, "I am glad to hear that. Nothing I have heard to-day has given me so much pleasure as those few words. One may hardly jest on such a subject," he added with a sanctimonious air; "but I think I may say"—and here he broke into a horse smile—"I think I may say that those subscriptions will not be without their fruit." And with a bow honest Tadpole disappeared, saying to himself as he left the house, "If you were ready to be conspirators when I entered the room, my Lords, you were at least prepared to be traitors when I quitted it."

Two and even three days had rolled over since Mr. Tadpole had reported Sir Robert on his way to the palace, and marvellously little had transpired. It was of course known that a cabinet was in formation, and the daily papers reported to the public the diurnal visits of certain noble lords and right honourable gentlemen to the new first minister. But the world of high politics had suddenly become so cautious that nothing leaked out. Even gossip was at fault. Lord Marney had not received the Buck-hounds, though he never quitted his house for ride or lounge without leaving precise instructions as to the identical time he should return home, so that his acceptance should not be delayed. Ireland was not yet governed by the Duke of Fitz-Aquitaine, and the Earl de Mowbray was still ungartered. These three distinguished noblemen were all of them anxious—a little fidgety; but at the same time it was not even whispered that Lord Rambrooke or any other lord had received the post which Lord Marney had appropriated to himself; nor had Lord Killcrotty had a suspicious interview with the prime minister, which kept the Duke of Fitz-Aquitaine quiet, though not easy; while not a shadow of coming events had glanced over the vacant stall of Lord Ribbonville in St. George's Chapel, and

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this made Lord de Mowbray tranquil, though scarcely content. In the meantime, daily and hourly they all pumped Mr. Tadpole, who did not find it difficult to keep up his reputation for discretion; for knowing nothing, and beginning himself to be perplexed at the protracted silence, he took refuge in oracular mystery, and delivered himself of certain Delphic sentences which adroitly satisfied those who consulted him while they never committed himself.

At length one morning there was an odd whisper in the circle of first initiation. The blood mantled on the cheek of Lady St. Julians; Lady Deloraine turned pale. Lady Firebrace wrote confidential notes with the same pen to Mr. Tadpole and Lord Masque. Lord Marney called early in the morning on the Duke of Fitz-Aquitaine, and already found Lord de Mowbray there. The clubs were crowded even at noon. Everywhere a mysterious bustle and an awful stir.

What could be the matter? What has happened?

"It is true," said Mr. Egerton to Mr. Berners at Brookes'.

"Is it true?" asked Mr. Jermyn of Lord Valentine at the Carlton.

"I heard it last night at Crockford's," said Mr. Ormsby; "one always hears things there four-and-twenty hours before other places."

The world was employed the whole of the morning in asking and answering this important question "Is it true?" Towards dinner time, it was settled universally in the affirmative, and then the world went out to dine and to ascertain why it was true and how it was true.

And now what really had happened? What had happened was what is commonly called a "hitch." There was undoubtedly a hitch somewhere and somehow; a hitch in the construction of the new cabinet. Who could have thought it? The whig ministers it seems had resigned, but somehow or other had not entirely and completely gone out. What a constitutional dilemma! The Houses must evidently meet, address the throne, and impeach its obstinate counsellors. Clearly the right course, and party feeling ran so high, that it was not impossible that something might be done. At any rate, it was a capital opportunity for the House of Lords to pluck up a little courage and take what is called, in high political jargon, the initiative. Lord Marney, at the suggestion of Mr. Tadpole, was quite ready to do this; and so was the Duke of Fitz-Aquitaine, and almost the Earl de Mowbray.

But then when all seemed ripe and ready, and there appeared a probability of the "Independence of the House of Lords" being again the favourite toast of conservative dinners, the oddest rumour in the world got about, which threw such a ridicule on these great constitutional movements in petto, that even with the Buck-hounds in the distance and Tadpole at his elbow, Lord Marney hesitated. It seemed, though of course no one could for a moment credit it, that these wrong-headed, rebellious ministers who would not go out, wore—petticoats!

And the great Jamaica debate that had been cooked so long, and the anxiously expected, yet almost despaired of, defection of the independent radical section, and the full-dressed visit to the palace that had gladdened the heart of Tadpole—were they all to end in this? Was Conservatism, that mighty mystery of the nineteenth century—was it after all to be brained by a fan?

Lady Deloraine consoled herself for the "Bedchamber Plot" by declaring that Lady St. Julians was indirectly the cause of it, and that had it not been for the anticipation of her official entrance into the royal apartments the conspiracy would not have been more real than the Meal-tub plot or any other of the many imaginary machinations that still haunt the page of history, and occasionally flit about the prejudiced memory of nations. Lady St. Julians, on the contrary, wrung her hands over the unhappy fate of her enthralled sovereign, deprived of her faithful presence and obliged to put up with the society of personages of whom she knew nothing and who called themselves the friends of her youth. The ministers who had missed, especially those who had received their appointments, looked as all men do when they are jilted—embarrassed and affecting an awkward ease; as if they knew something which, if they told, would free them from the supreme ridicule of their situation, but which, as men of delicacy and honour, they refrained from revealing. All those who had been in fluttering hopes, however faint, of receiving preferment, took courage now that the occasion had passed, and loudly complained of their cruel and undeniable deprivation. The constitution was wounded in their persons. Some fifty gentlemen who had not been appointed Under Secretaries of State, moaned over the martyrdom of young ambition.

"Peel ought to have taken office," said Lord Marney. "What are the women to us?"





"Wrung her hands over the unhappy fate of her enthralled sovereign, deprived of her faithful presence."

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"Peel ought to have taken office," said the Duke of Fitz-Aquitaine. "He should have remembered how much he owed to Ireland."

"Peel ought to have taken office," said Lord de Mowbray. "The garter will become now a mere party badge."

Perhaps it may be allowed to the impartial pen that traces these memoirs of our times to agree, though for a different reason, with these distinguished followers of Sir Robert Peel. One may be permitted to think that, under all circumstances, he should have taken office in 1839. His withdrawal seems to have been a mistake. In the great heat of parliamentary faction which had prevailed since 1831, the royal prerogative, which, unfortunately for the rights and liberties and social welfare of the people, had since 1688 been more or less oppressed, had waned fainter and fainter. A youthful princess on the throne, whose appearance touched the imagination, and to whom her people were generally inclined to ascribe something of that decision of character which becomes those born to command, offered a favourable opportunity to restore the exercise of that regal authority, the usurpation of whose functions has entailed on the people of England so much suffering and so much degradation. It was unfortunate that one who, if any, should have occupied the proud and national position of the leader of the tory party, the chief of the people and the champion of the throne, should have commenced his career as minister under Victoria by an unseemly contrariety to the personal wishes of the Queen. The reaction of public opinion, disgusted with years of parliamentary tumult and the incoherence of party legislation, the balanced state in the kingdom of political parties themselves, the personal character of the sovereign—these were all causes which intimated that a movement in favour of prerogative was at hand. The leader of the tory party should have vindicated his natural position, and availed himself of the gracious occasion: he missed it; and as the occasion was inevitable, the whigs enjoyed its occurrence. And thus England witnessed for the first time the portentous anomaly of the oligarchical or Venetian party, which had in the old days destroyed the free monarchy of England, retaining power merely by the favour of the Court.

—LORD BEACONSFIELD, *Sybil*.

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