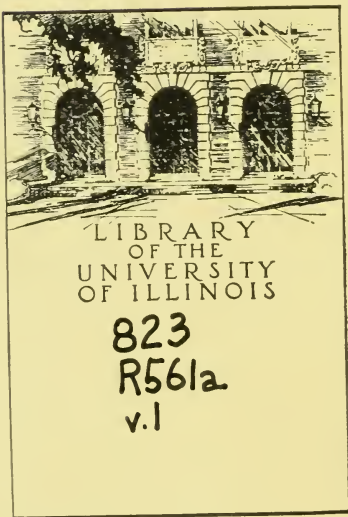




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THE

# ARMOURER'S DAUGHTER.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE ARMOURER'S DAUGHTER.

It was a pale but lovely face,  
Yet in its fresh spring of grace  
That spring before or leaf or flower  
Has known a single withering hour :  
With lips red as the earliest rose  
That opens for the bee's repose.

L. E. L.

ON a bright autumn afternoon in the year  
1492, the little town of Saint Evert, was  
thrown into a state of unusual excitement  
by the expected arrival of its sovereign

VOL. I.

B

50456 WATTS  
5 June 1674 p 3v

Lady, Margaret Duchess of Burgundy, who had expressed her intention of taking up her abode for a few days, within the walls of the ancient priory, which, situated on an adjoining eminence, overlooked a vast extent of country, peopled by obedient vassals, who did not reverence the spiritual authority of their rulers less, because it was supported by secular power. The prior himself, attended by the chief dignitaries of the institution, issued forth to receive his royal guest; grave burghers donned their festive garbs, anxious to display their willing fealty, and several knights, from distant parts of the province, joined the cavalcade; their glittering pennons and gay armour, lending fresh gaiety to the scene. The streets were lined with spectators; mechanics and artisans had thrown aside their various labours, and their voices shouted a rough welcome as the courtly train swept by. The noble dames of the vicinity were ranged on a balcony erected in front of the Hall of Justice; but, not-

withstanding the bevy of beauty assembled there ; many a knightly glance wandered from their united attractions to an upper window in the house of Nicholas Hather-ton the stout armourer of Saint Evert. This was scarcely to be wondered at, for the fair young face visible from that humble casement, could hardly have found an equal in its rare loveliness among the well-born maidens who crowded the platform beneath. Nicholas Hatherton was born in the north of merrie England; and having left his native land in the prime of manhood to acquaint himself with an improvement in the fashion of the steel corslet, his heart became captivated by the foreign beauty of a young Milanese ; accordingly he married her, and finally established himself at Saint Evert where he pursued his old craft. His wife did not long enjoy her wedded happiness, she died the second year after her marriage.

Viola, the armourer's only daughter, once

the plaything of his idle hours, had now grown into the careful housewife and affectionate companion. She had received no other tuition than that occasionally bestowed on her by the sisters of a neighbouring convent; but the natural powers of her mind were of a superior class; and her motherless position, instead of rendering her wilful and froward, had only imparted to her character a thoughtfulness and self-control beyond her years. She was little more than seventeen, and had inherited all her mother's beauty. Her features were faultless; her shining, raven hair was simply braided upon a brow of exquisite whiteness; her full dark eye beamed with peculiar lustre, and the calm, pure, expression of that Madonna-like countenance, seemed to promise it would pity the human weakness it could not share. On the present occasion, Viola was arrayed with a costliness becoming the heiress of one of the richest artisans of Saint Evert; her boddice was made of dark

cloth of Tours, embroidered in seed pearl' and fitted closely round her snow-white throat, and the light blue kerseymere petticoat, terminated rather above the ankle, displaying to advantage the small slippered foot. But her gay apparel had not influenced her mood, for she leaned against the balustrade with a listless air ; and as she gazed from her chamber window upon the moving throng below, she did not seem to note that a sturdy mechanic would often doff his cap in her honor, or a young knight occasionally rein in his steed as he rode by her dwelling. However, this apparent insensibility was not doomed to last long, for, suddenly a quick step trod the adjoining corridor, and then the colour rose to her cheek, and the glad light flew to her eye, although she did not change her position.

“What ails you, fair mistress Viola?” said a blithe, frank voice, as the door of the apartment was opened by the speaker ;

“how haps it that you keep house while all the world are making holiday?”

“Nay, Master Warbeck,” replied the maiden; “it was not exactly by choice. As all the people were from home, my father judged it fitting to give an eye to the workshop, and so considered himself obliged to deny me his companionship.”

“Now, out on my blindness!” exclaimed the armour’s young apprentice; “here have I lost the happiest chance of having on my arm the pride of our town—your new kirtle would have filled the damsels with ill-pleased wonder—and your fair presence would have made me the envy of all the court gallants.”

To this Viola replied not, being engaged in arranging one of her ruffles which had become slightly displaced.

“In sooth,” continued the youth, “this fault must be amended; and I shall not be on terms with myself, until we have taken a ramble among the sight-seekers.”

“And what thought you of the pageant?” interrupted Viola.

“’Twas a brave show; first came the reverend fathers in their vestments of state—then the solid burghers appearing half ashamed to find themselves in the gay procession—after them rode the daintily-clad knights, seemingly fit for nought but to win a lady’s ear—although, I warrant, there was some good metal amongst them—and in the rear of all, came the grim soldiers, looking as if they were part and parcel of their horses.”

“But the Duchess?” demanded Viola.

“I saw her not. I will tell you how it fell out. I had pushed myself into the front of the throng, and seeing the royal group approach, had just prepared to cry a lusty ‘God save Margaret of Burgundy,’ when my eye lighted on a lady who rode on the right of the Duchess. I never yet beheld such a blaze of beauty—my breath was suspended—my brain grew dizzy, and involuntarily I sank on one knee. I felt no-

thing but the power of that excess of loveliness—when my senses returned to me the fair apparition had vanished from view—the crowd was shouting at the the top of their voices, and there knelt I looking, it must be confessed, somewhat like a fool.”

“Can you not describe this incomparable being?” asked Viola.

“She was like nothing these eyes have ever looked on—stately as a queen—soft as a woman—bright as an angel—a miracle of nature—”

“A miracle of folly!” exclaimed a third person, who had entered the room unperceived by the others. “Out of what rhyme-book have you borrowed those fine words? You must have had sorry sport an you made not better use of your holiday than by gaping on a cunning piece of red and white of Nature’s workmanship.”

The speaker was Nicholas Hatherton; although advanced in life, he was still hale and vigorous. Perkin Warbeck was a great favorite with the old man, owing to the ap-



itude he displayed in his craft; and was, in consequence, permitted many indulgences which were not granted to the other workmen. Some months previous to the opening of our narrative, he had wounded his hand while endeavouring to carry out a new device invented by his master; during the time that he was disabled, he was admitted into the amourer's house, and placed under the tendance of young mistress Viola; thus a greater degree of intimacy and familiarity had arisen between the parties than their different positions seemed to warrant.

Perkin Warbeck was a foundling, although his extraction was unknown it was generally believed that the authors of his being belonged to the dregs of the people. In his childhood he had been protected by a benevolent Jew; after the death of his benefactor he had tried his fortune in various ways—at one time he fell into the company of a wandering Trouveur, then he became page to a noble lady, but growing weary of

such an uneventful life, he was promoted to the household of her kinsman, a warlike baron; a hasty word soon procured his dismissal from thence, and finally he took up service with his present master, with whom he had remained for upwards of two years. We have not yet described the exterior of our young apprentice, but as circumstances will hereafter compel us to do so with some minuteness, suffice it for the present to observe that his appearance was singularly prepossessing, which added to a ready wit, rendered him a general favorite.

Scarcely more than a boy in years, he was possessed of a natural aptitude for imitation, and as his varied career had given him the opportunity of observing the different grades of society, he could with equal ease affect the flippant bearing of a young cavalier, or the more sober deportment of one of his own station.

Perkin Warbeck bore with extreme good-humour the armourer's raillery, and only preferred a request that his daughter might

be entrusted to his charge for an hour or so, to take the air and divert herself abroad.

“I know not that it would be wise,” replied the old man; “our town is full of strangers, the ways of these courtiers are not unknown to me; if they fixed their bold eyes on my child they would follow her home and come here asking for new inventions in armour and weapons, but really to spy after other ware.”

“Fear nothing,” exclaimed the youth vehemently; “I should like to see the highest in the land cast a glance failing in respect at Mistress Viola while I am with her: a good Bilboa blade should teach them—”

“Hot-headed boy!” interrupted Hather-ton; “can I never teach you that which becomes your class? A good ashen stick is the only weapon fit for your hand.”

“Stick or sword I care not,” answered Warbeck; “I would soon make them rue the day they gave their eyes so wide a license.”

The prudent father turned to his daughter to hear what she had to say in favor of the proposed plan. Hers was a woman's argument, and one she would do well always to adhere to. Viola advanced to her father's side, and throwing her arms about his neck, pressed a kiss upon his cheek.

"Nay," said the old man, as if in answer to this mute appeal; "I say not that what I apprehend must come to pass—and then it is only for once in a way. Well, get thy veil and muffler and begone. I would not deny thee aught reasonable, but it would fret me to have thee scared."

The young people quickly availed themselves of the permission thus accorded, and set out together on their expedition—the young man laughing and talking, and gazing with curiosity on every fresh face; and she—her large loving eyes seldom strayed from the countenance of her companion, except when he turned his glance towards her to direct her attention to some object of inte-

rest, and then hers instinctively sought the ground.

The apprehensions of the old man apparently were not realized, and his daughter returned home without having encountered anything to alarm her timidity or call forth the prowess of her champion.

## CHAPTER II.

## INTRIGUE.

I'll read you matter deep and dangerous.  
As full of peril and advent'rous spirit  
As to o'er walk a current roaring loud,  
Or the unsteadfast footing of a spear.

*Shakespeare.*

MARGARET OF BURGUNDY, widow of Charles the Bold, was deservedly popular throughout the province. Since the decease of her husband she had held the reins of government with a wisdom and prudence scarcely

to be expected in one of her violent character, and while the affairs of state prospered under her guidance, she had devoted herself to superintending the education of the heir to the dukedom, with a vigilant zeal which justly entitled her to the esteem and affection of all parties.

Temperate and politic in her general views, there was, however, one subject on which the impetuosity of her feelings had betrayed her into signal error. An Englishwoman by birth, a daughter of the house of York, and sister to Edward the Fourth of England, her youth had witnessed the contentions of the rival roses, and so deeply had she entered into the party-spirit of the age, that even after the lapse of so many years, the very name of Lancaster could conjure up an evil spirit in her bosom which neither time nor absence had sufficed to allay. Apparently, the field of Bosworth had decided for ever the claims of York. Henry the Seventh now wore the British crown, and in him centred all the animosity

that Margaret bore to the hereditary enemies of her race.

Malcontents of all descriptions resorted from England to the Court of Burgundy, where they found immediate countenance and protection. No means, however unjustifiable or unworthy, were left untried to weaken the security of Henry's position; the insurrection of Simnel was aided and abetted by Margaret, and notwithstanding the ill-success of this endeavour, her restless brain even now fabricated an intrigue which should shake the kingdom of her foe to the very centre.

In a spacious and richly decorated apartment of the venerable Priory of Saint Evert sat the Duchess of Burgundy. Before her was a table covered with papers, which she seemed to scan with an anxious air, while a frown of impatience contracted her brow and rendered more marked the lines of age visible on her once handsome countenance. She was not alone: in the recess of a large bay window stood the ex-



quisitely moulded figure of the lady whose extreme loveliness had excited the enthusiasm of the armourer's apprentice. This was the Lady Katherine Gordon, daughter of the Earl of Huntley, and near kinswoman to the throne of Scotland, who, during her father's absence on a foreign mission, had come to spend some weeks with the Duchess, to whose late lord she was distantly related. As true chroniclers we feel bound to assert the pre-eminence of her beauty, a fact which history even has not passed by in silence.

Neither pen nor pencil could avail to give to posterity a description of the face of the most beautiful woman of her time, for the charm of expression constituted one of its principal attractions, and whether her bright blue eyes sparkled in their own sunshine, or softly melted into liquid lustre, the beholder was always ready to acknowledge that the mood she wore became her best.

The fair stranger had evidently been

employed at her tapestry frame, but had now pushed it from her, and stood looking thoughtfully down the broad avenue which led to the principal gate of the Priory. Her reverie was interrupted by the Duchess, who exclaimed,

“Why should we covet the gift of memory to ransack the storehouse of the past, when the present plainly shows how ill a fruit the promising blossom bore? Methinks I feel like the peasant churl who hoarded the fairy gold and found it turned to ashes. There,” continued she, pointing to some papers near her, “there are documents swearing faithful service to our line—devotion to the death—allegiance that could own no change: they were written years ago, and I have preserved them as records of noble and tried friends, until I find them utterly valueless. Here are characters traced by the same hands in which they give themselves the lie, breathing words of cold excuse, proffers of duty where more important interests were not at stake. Traitors all! it is almost

enough to weary one of life to see its base deceptions!"

"Nay, dear madam," interposed Katherine, "while the world still holds some true hearts, it is bootless to grieve over the many that are false."

"Wisely said," returned Margaret, "and I take shame to myself, that the desertion of such poor caitiffs should have had power to move me thus. Let us talk of other things. What is your opinion," she asked after a slight pause, "of the celebrated Arabian astrologer, Abdulrahman Ubrantes, who is astonishing the whole district with his predictions?"

"I have no faith in the tricks of these soothsayers," replied the Lady Gordon laughing, "but my waiting-women report marvels of his skill."

"Have you then, no wish to raise the veil that shrouds futurity from view?" enquired the Duchess in a tone of interest, for she was not exempt from the superstitious belief in the power of magic, which

prevailed so generally in the fourteenth century.

“The curiosity usually ascribed to our sex, forbids me to deny it,” replied Katherine, “but I would not be made the theme of idle gossip.”

“That can be avoided,” said Margaret, “I must own I have a desire to question this far-famed star-gazer. Leave the management of the affair to me. We will go as if to pay a visit to the Hotel de Clagny, bid our suite await us at the outer gate, and then, putting on a disguise, we will pass through the back postern and seek the dwelling of the Arabian.”

“At this moment, before Katherine had time to offer any opposition to the proposed plan, three slight taps were heard at the door, which was then opened, without the permission to enter being given, and a priest, wrapped in the dark, loose robes of his order, stood on the threshold. The intruder held the rank of sub-prior in the monastery, although he was seldom there,

being confessor to the Duchess, and also, as rumour asserted, her chief counsellor in the private correspondence which she continued to entertain with the former adherents of her family.

Father Hubert was a man about fifty years of age, rather above the ordinary stature, and his spare frame seemed to tell of severe penance and nightly vigils. The upper part of his countenance was far from unpleasing; the broad, benevolent brow, the calm, untroubled eye, suited well his garb and calling, but the mouth marred the effect of the whole, and excited surprise that it should be connected so closely with features of quite a different cast; the upper lip was extremely long, and not possessing the usual curve, extended from side to side in one unbroken line, only inclining downwards at the corners; the under lip was twice the size of its fellow, and drooped considerably, displaying to view a set of glittering white teeth. It has many times been declared that the eye is the window of

the soul; it may be so, and yet to our thinking the mouth is nearly as often the vehicle of expression, and less under the control of the owner—however, one thing is certain, the mouth of Father Hubert would neither have passed muster with the physiognomist, nor the admirer of beauty. None had ever heard him speak of any kindred ties, none knew the land of his birth, although most living languages came with equal readiness to his tongue.

With a slow step, the priest advanced to the table at which the Duchess was seated, but as his glance fell on the recess occupied by Lady Katherine Gordon, he paused.

“Pardon, noble lady,” said he, “I thought you were alone; if it please you I will retire, but having received despatches from the other side of the Channel, I sought you.”

“News from England, my native England!” exclaimed the Duchess, “how my heart beats at the very name. Out with

thy tidings, good father, for my patience this morning is at a very low ebb."

"Your anxiety is natural and shall speedily be gratified," returned the confessor.

Immediately on Father Hubert's entrance, Katherine began to collect her scattered work, and prepared to withdraw. As she passed, she made a lowly obeisance to the priest, who extended his hands in silent benediction over her bowed head, and then she glided from the apartment.

Scarcely was the door closed upon her retreating form, when the confessor drew from his breast a packet of papers, some had been read and had been sent to himself, but many were unopened, being addressed to Margaret of Burgundy. The Duchess grasped them with an eager hand, and was soon absorbed in their perusal. Father Hubert withdrew to the bay window, and having taken from the oaken shelf an illuminated missal, he feigned to be engaged in examining it, although his clear eye frequently

turned its searching light on the distant reader, as if to trace from her aspect, the feelings called forth by the intelligence before her. To judge from her countenance, her emotions were sufficiently varied—at first an appearance of undisguised interest, succeeded by a glow of pleasure, then a flush of surprise, and at last a slight shade of dissatisfaction gathered over her features, as throwing the packet from her and leaning her head upon her hand, she seemed to commune with herself.

“Too late,” she exclaimed, at length breaking the long silence; “too late do these fickle nobles and short-sighted gentry discover, that Henry VII. is no king for the brave and the ambitious—with a soul absorbed in the accumulation of wealth, how is he fit to rule a mighty people? But what avails the general disaffection now—the last descendents of our line fill a bloody grave, and Elizabeth, my dead brother’s daughter, has wedded the conqueror and sealed the downfall of her father’s house.”



"They say he loves her not," observed the confessor in a low tone.

"Love!" cried Margaret, "what should his cold, calculating spirit know of a feeling unfettered by rules of policy—and besides, he is jealous that the name of York is still loved by the many, and he does not brook to find he owes his secure possession of the throne to his union with her. Oh, that I were a man for a few brief months! I would give half the remnant of my days to see the White Rose borne victorious through the routed foe."

"'Tis a pity, madam," said Father Hubert, "that you cannot delegate to another your spirit and your ancestors."

"Yet the project of Simnel failed," observed the Duchess, her thoughts immediately reverting to the channel intended by her companion.

"It was an ill-concerted enterprise," replied Father Hubert, "and met the fate it merited."

"Think you that a better digested scheme

might be brought to successful issue?" asked Margaret.

"That question would be difficult to solve," said the priest in a musing tone. "True, Simnel fell, but the times are different. Henry's avarice has alienated the minds of his subjects—the crown sits loosely on his brow, and it only requires the raising of a hand to wrench it thence."

"Ay! but where may that hand be found? Earl Warwick, the only son of poor Clarence, has been a prisoner in the Tower, until, crippled in body and imbecile in mind, he is scarcely fit to go at large."

"How changed would have been the aspect of things, had either of the young princes escaped the murderer's hand," remarked the priest.

"Retrospect is useless," said Margaret sharply, for she liked not that another should dwell on the crimes of her family. "They are all swept from the face of the earth, and I am left alone to mourn them."

"In England," pursued Father Hubert,

“the belief is prevalent, that your youngest nephew did not share his brother's doom, and still lies in concealment for the better security of his person.”

“What care I,” exclaimed the Duchess, “if all the world give credit to the tale, when I know it to be false.”

“Others,” said the priest, “would easily be persuaded to think it true, and one might be found to personate the character.” The Duchess started, but made no reply. Father Hubert continued: “It can be no injury to the dead to assume their name—thus might your kindred be avenged, and the noble hearts panting to dethrone the usurper would find a leader.”

Margaret cast down her eyes and fell into a deep fit of musing—there were evil passions busy within her breast, and amid the war of contending feelings, the still small whisper of conscience became every instant less audible, until it sank at last completely overpowered.

“Leave me now,” said she raising her

head, and addressing her companion; "I am weary with over-thought. We will talk of these things at some other time. I would wish to be alone."

The subtle confidant withdrew, and the lady relapsed into a train of thought.

That evening, as Margaret presided at the banquet, talking lightly with the younger members of her court, or apparently listening to the grave discourse of the Prior, she often murmured inwardly:

"Where shall I find the hand to work my will?"

## CHAPTER III.

## THE ASTROLOGER'S CHAMBER.

I conjure you by that which you profess,  
(Howe'er you come to know it) answer me.

SHAKESPEARE.

WE must now change the scene to the chamber of the Arabian astrologer. It was the night following the conversation recorded in the last chapter. The room, which was circular, and its appurtenances, bore evident marks of the owner's addiction

to the occult sciences. Curious instruments, foreign plants, and vessels of antique shape, strewed the floor; strange hieroglyphics were depicted on the walls, and the ceiling had been painted to represent the celestial hemisphere. The light of day was perpetually excluded from the apartment, and a brazen lamp, emitting the choicest perfumes, burned there continually.

By that dim and mystic light, Abdulrahman Ubrantes stood examining some yellow parchments which he held before him. In appearance he was a very aged man; but the weight of years had not bowed his commanding figure, and although his face was literally seamed with wrinkles, his eye had lost none of its fire—the swarthy complexion of his features denoted the Eastern land that gave him birth, and contrasted singularly with his robe of snowy whiteness. Suddenly a panel in the wall, formed so skilfully as to elude the inspection of the most observant, was pushed

aside, and in another moment Father Hubert, confessor to the Duchess of Burgundy, passed through the aperture.

Apparently the intruder was known to the astrologer, for he merely recognised his presence by a slight inclination of the head, while his eyes remained fixed on the parchment.

“Listen,” said the priest, without noticing the other’s abstraction, “you have often fulfilled my behest, and have no cause to term me ungrateful, although the service has been mutual. You have encouraged our vassals to obedience by the promise of earthly blessings, and the church has extended over you the shield of protection, where she might have raised the sword of persecution. Once more I claim your aid. Two ladies will be here anon to consult your skill—one of them is—” and the priest approached his lips to the ear of his companion, who exhibited no other mark of surprise at the whispered name, than an

almost imperceptible elevation of the eyebrows.

“ Say on,” observed the astrologer calmly.

“ She will seek to learn from you something of the future,” continued the priest. “ Tell her the goodliest tree in the forest has been nearly hewn down, but another branch shall be grafted on that noble ruin, which shall spread and grow and cast its welcome shade around, until the passers by shall bless the hand which grafted in that alien branch. Read this scroll, you will find therein all I would have you say— use your own language, but make the meaning plain.”

“ And the other lady what of her?” asked the astrologer, glancing over the paper.

“ It matters not. Whisper in her ear any light folly that a young maiden might be apt to like.”

Father Hubert now drew from his gir-



a purse full of gold coin, which he laid upon the table. The astrologer uttered no thanks, but raised his fore finger in token of warning, the confessor sprang through the open panel which he closed after him, and Abdulrahman Ubrantes stood once more alone.

Father Hubert's departure was only just effected in time to escape detection, for in the following moment the door of the apartment glided noiselessly open, and two ladies, masked and wrapped in loose mantles, appeared on the threshold. In the house of the astrologer, the doors from the outer portal to that of the reception chamber, seemed to open of their own accord at the approach of any stranger who came to consult the sage; this did not fail to produce a certain sensation of awe in the superstitious, but as we are no believers in necromancy, we consider the peculiar mode of entry was effected by some mechanical arrangement, set in motion by some invisible agent.

Abdulrahman advanced two or three steps to meet his visitors, and then fixing on them his penetrating glance, led them to a cushioned seat at the upper end of the room.

“What seek ye, my gentle dames?” asked Abdulrahman, as he placed himself before them.

“Learned sir,” said the elder of the ladies in an affected accent, “we have come to enquire of your wisdom, if our husbands will make a successful treaty with the rich merchants of Flanders for the work of our looms.”

“Royal lady,” replied the Arabian gravely, “why sully thy lips with a falsehood, or degrade them with an unworthy jest? Me thou can’st not deceive.”

“I am then known to you!” exclaimed the lady.

“Duchess of Burgundy,” said Abdulrahman, “if my boasted lore could not teach me so simple a matter, how couldst thou expect that it would avail thee?”

“Believe me,” replied the Duchess, “I have never doubted you, but rather sought an excuse to myself for the confidence I felt.”

“Thou sayest well,” returned the astrologer, “and know, madam, that to those who seek me with distrusting minds, it is not permitted me to make the revelation of their destinies—now I wait thy bidding.”

Margaret paused for a few moments, anxious to frame her questions so as not to make too plain an exposure of her designs; the astrologer met her hesitation with a half contemptuous smile, and then exclaimed:

“Lady, I read thy heart and will answer to thy thoughts—the future is unveiled before me—I see an island throne filled by an alien, yet will he bear the cognizance of a mighty house—a crown shall be lost and won—in these changes shalt thou have thy part—when the work is ready, a fitting tool shall be found—scruple not to use the means which will present themselves—re-

ject them, and the fame of thy line is ended—accept them, and the dearest wish of thy heart is fulfilled.” •

“Stay!” exclaimed the Duchess, “I would fain know—”

“No more—the fates brook no further questioning,” and Abdulrahman turned to Margaret’s companion, who had not yet uttered a single word; he took her soft hand in his, and looked with an air of interest on the varied lines. “He who next shall touch this fair hand,” said the astrologer, “shall live to place on the finger the circlet of gold which shall link thee to him for ever—the union shall be of hearts as well as hands—meantime all good angels have thee in their keeping, and now farewell.”

The Arabian struck a silver bell, which immediately summoned a swarthy attendant, to whom he intimated, by a silent gesture, that his visitors should be conducted from his presence. The Duchess presented a massive gold chain in acknowledgment

of his services, and would gladly have spoken a few words at parting, but the astrologer having made a lowly obeisance, in homage of her rank, with an impatient wave of the hand, signified that he would be alone.

When the sound of their retreating footsteps had died away, Abdulrahman carelessly swept into a small oaken chest, the coin and costly chain which had been bestowed on him in guerdon of his predictions.

“Thus,” murmured he, “am I compelled to pander to ignorance and folly, to obtain the means to serve the glorious cause of science—I am nigh weary of this jugglery, but the end will atone for all.”

And giving orders that he should be disturbed no more that night, the alchemist retired to his laboratory.

The two masked ladies were conducted through various corridors by their silent guide, and at length dismissed by a portal different to that by which they entered.

Much to their surprise, they now found themselves in the principal street of the town; a group of young mechanics stood direct on their path, and immediately observing the house from which they had issued, approached them with loud shouts and bursts of merriment.

“Hallo! my pretty dames,” exclaimed one, “let us see if you merit the good fortune the prophet has promised you,” and as he spoke he laid his profane hand on the mask of the younger lady—a half suppressed shriek escaped her lips—at this moment a youth, who also wore the garb of an artisan, sprang into the centre of the throng and thrusting aside her assailant, exclaimed in a loud tone:

“Back, all of ye; or you will rue this jest till the last day of your lives.”

The remonstrance had effect, for the individual who uttered it was evidently known to most of the party, and the crowd fell back, somewhat astonished at the vehemence of the interference.

“Whither is it your pleasure that I attend you, noble lady?” asked the young stranger with an air of the most profound reverence.

“To the Hotel de Clagny,” was the reply.

The ladies hurried on in the direction they had indicated, and their unknown champion followed half a pace behind. A few minutes brought them to their destination. As they stood before the ponderous gate of the Hotel, the Duchess turned to the young stranger.

“We are beholden to you,” said she, “for your ready service, and would wish to learn the name of our protector.”

“An it please you, gracious madam, I am called Perkin Warbeck,” replied the young man in a respectful tone.

“We shall not forget to whom we are indebted,” continued Margaret. “Be discreet on this night’s adventure, and you shall not repent the part you have played therein.”

“Accept my thanks also,” added the other lady; and as she slightly inclined her head, her mask, which had been loosened in the affray, became unfastened and fell at the feet of Perkin Warbeck. He instantly raised it, and removing his cap as he returned it, with an innate courtliness which art could not teach, he fixed his eyes upon the ground, resolute not to avail himself of the opportunity to gaze on a countenance which the owner had evidently intended to conceal. When the mask was presented, their hands accidentally met, and a gay smile played on the fair one’s lip as she gave a glance at the artisan, and called to mind the prediction of the astrologer. The Duchess also turned her keen gaze on the stranger, and as the light from the archway of the gate for the first time completely exposed his lineaments to her view, she suddenly started back and passed her hand rapidly before her eyes, to assure herself of the reality of her vision. The face that met her sight was possessed of singular and



striking beauty; and let not carping critics call the term misplaced, for we have authority to state that the outward appearance of Perkin Warbeck was "of exceeding comeliness;" although the complexion was fair, the general tone and expression amply repelled the charge of effeminacy—intellect was stamped on the spacious brow, and a daring spirit was revealed in the quick flash of his bright blue eye; his bright hair clustered in short, thick curls round his well-shaped head, and his scarcely developed figure promised to be a model of manly grace.

This was not a face and form to scare the color from a lady's cheek, yet such was the effect they produced on Margaret of Burgundy. She was about to make an effort to speak when a side wicket was thrown open by an attendant apparently stationed there for the purpose, and the ladies both instantly hurried into the Hotel.

Having effectually removed their disguise, they entered the saloon, which by the con-

nivance of their hostess they had quitted an hour before, to indulge in a superstitious curiosity not uncommon in that unenlightened age.

At an early hour the Duchess returned to the Priory, and when she parted for the night from her companion, the Lady Katherine Gordon, Margaret kissed her cheek and whispered,

“Said not the fates that you should wed him whose hand first encountered yours?”

“Indeed, dear madam, I paid no heed to such folly,” replied Katherine, with a somewhat haughty toss of her graceful head as she retired to her chamber.

The Duchess did not seek her couch, but repaired to the room we have described, and dismissing her attendants, desired that Father Hubert should be summoned to her presence.

“Until my mind is fixed, I cannot close these eyes in sleep,” she murmured as she

paced the apartment with a troubled step.

The priest entered with his usual air of dignified composure. Margaret hurried towards him, and laid one hand upon his arm.

“Say, can the sheeted dead return to earth and wear the aspect of their youth? Or feel my pulse, and say if reason has abandoned her seat, and made me the sport of fancy! for this night I aver I have seen the living likeness of my brother Edward—not as at the time of his death, but when he first girded on his virgin sword. Was this an apparition, or a delusion of the brain?”

This address, poured forth with all the violence of her excited feelings was listened to by Father Hubert with unfeigned astonishment.

“Did you meet this vision,” he enquired “within the walls of the Priory, or in the reception-room of the French Countess?”

The Duchess evaded the question.

“His garb,” she continued, “was that of a peasant; but in his demeanour he might have represented a prince.”

The confessor started, and a sudden gleam of satisfaction relaxed the muscles of his mouth. He led his companion to a seat where the light fell full upon her agitated countenance.

“Lady,” said he, “your senses have not misled you: the youth you have seen is an artisan in the service of the armourer of this town—his name is Perkin Warbeck.”

“Ha! I remember me now—’twas so he called himself.”

“He is a foundling. I have seen and talked to him many times, and have been much struck with his miraculous resemblance to the royal Edward. If this same apprentice were to land on the broad shores of merry England, it would be difficult to persuade your countrymen that he was not

one of the young princes escaped from bloody Richard's murderous hand."

"Has he no one connected with him by ties of blood?" asked Margaret; and as she spoke, the words of the astrologer seemed once more to ring in her ears, and her thirst for revenge and insatiable love of intrigue combined to lessen her repugnance to the practice of any fraud which might lead to their gratification.

"He does not even know the land of his birth," answered the priest. "He is a youth of quick parts and general aptitude. He would be a fit instrument, and I doubt not, a willing one in any project policy might dictate. Nature has lavished gifts upon him far beyond the station in which chance has placed him. Would it not seem so, Madam?"

There was no reply; the Duchess trembled perceptibly, and the clasped hands were pressed still more tightly together. The confessor strode to the window—flung aside the heavy curtains and stepped forth upon

the stone terrace. He approached a white rose-tree, which, under careful tendance, had grown into a luxuriant plant, and gathered a half-blown bud, he then returned to his companion and silently laid the blossom before her—the right chord was touched—she pressed it to her lips and to her heart—in these peaceful days, it would be difficult to conceive the feeling of passionate veneration with which Margaret regarded this badge of her family dignity.

“Consider,” urged Father Hubert, in a low, rapid manner; “how singularly fate has favoured your wishes. Present to the world this youth as your nephew, Prince Richard, and my life on the issue! The partisans of York will rise as one man—Scotland’s king will seek an alliance—France will offer no opposition—there will be every thing to hope, and little to fear!”

“Fear!” echoed Margaret, in an energetic tone, from which all doubt and irresolu-

tion had vanished. "Fear! I cast it to the winds! When was a daughter of the House of York known to feel it? Henceforth, I vow myself to this enterprise; and no weak scruples shall check my course until my hereditary foe shall be crushed at my feet, or until I myself become a bye-word among nations as a perjured deceiver!"

How this resolution was kept will be seen hereafter.

## CHAPTER IV.

## TEMPTATION.

Oh ! what a tangled web we weave,  
When first we venture to deceive.

SCOTT.

ABOUT a mile from the town of Saint Evert, was a spot justly celebrated for its great natural beauty; and while its claims to attraction were extolled by the admirers of the picturesque, the lovers of solitude were compelled to own that nature could possess



no haunt more remote from the busy hum of men, than this lovely sylvan retreat. In the background rose a gently sloping hill covered with verdure, which did not admit of any thing being seen beyond itself and the distant heavens; where the ground became level stood a group of noble forest trees, extending their giant arms round a fairy ring, in the centre of which, some former seigneur had erected a fountain that had now, however, fallen into ruins—it was as though art had broken her wand in the presence of a mightier magician. In the foreground, stretched a boundless vista of hill and dale, with patches of woodland scenery; and winding through the whole, ran a limpid stream scarce wider than a brook, gleaming in the sunshine like a thread of silver, and giving a new charm to the varying landscape.

It was past the hour of noon, and the sun's rays had lost little of their summer fervour—on the greensward, protected by the

grateful shade of the encircling trees, reclined a youthful figure in an attitude which spoke rather of thought than slumber. It was Perkin Warbeck the armourer's apprentice. He had been there since the early morning; and, although the hours glided by, and he was conscious that his employer's displeasure would be aroused by his playing the truant; there he still lay absorbed in a reverie which seemed to have suspended all power of action. He reviewed the vicissitudes of his short career; his thoughts flew back to his early childhood which had never known a parent's fostering care—with what eagerness he yearned to penetrate the mystery of his birth—then rushed through his mind a host of wild ambitious hopes, blended with the consciousness that, if it could be proved he came of noble lineage, he should not disgrace the stock from which he sprang—how faithfully he would draw his sword in his country's cause—how devotedly would

he adore some bright-eyed dame—lovely, perchance, as the vision that had twice crossed his path in company with the Duchess—and thus the boy dreamed on until his eye fell accidentally on his coarse garments, and then he smiled half in bitterness at his own folly. A sullen discontent seemed to have taken possession of his soul, and he yielded passively to its influence as he inveighed against the injustice of fortune, and half-formed a resolution to leave his present service and seek advancement elsewhere.

His meditations had just reached this point when a slight sound warned him that his solitude was about to be invaded; he looked up and recognised the well-known figure of Father Hubert. The priest did not appear to note his vicinity, but stood wrapped in contemplation, surveying the distant scenery. An idea flashed across the mind of Warbeck—why should he not reveal his wish of obtaining other employ-

ment, and ask counsel of one who had already shown a friendly interest in him, and had, latterly, held frequent discourse with him—perhaps, the shrewd reader may guess that to these conversations with the court confessor, may be attributed the present unsettled and discontented mood of the young artisan. He rose slowly from his recumbent position and advanced towards Father Hubert.

“A fair morn to you, my son,” said the priest, slightly returning his salutation. “This is a favorite spot of mine ; and yet, while I court its solitudes, I marvel that it should hold out any attraction to the gayer spirits of youth.”

“I sought this retreat, good father,” answered Perkin, “because I would not weary others by my churlishness of mood.”

The priest fixed his cold, searching eye on the youthful countenance before him, and read its despondent expression aright.

“Your face is sad, my son—has any evil chanced to you? Speak out your grief. I love the young; and, if you need a counsellor, my experience may aid you.”

As he spoke he turned into the thick clump of trees and seated himself on the green turf, making a gesture to his companion to place himself by his side. Perkin Warbeck did not obey this movement and withdrew a few paces, carelessly leaning his slight form against the trunk of a mighty chesnut.

“Have you angered the good armourer by some idle frolic?” inquired the confessor, “if so I pledge myself to see him and reinstate you in his favor.”

“On this score I shall not need your kind offices, good father,” said the apprentice. “But I weary of the life I lead, this continual servitude frets me; and, if such luck could be mine, I would gladly enrol myself in the train of some stirring lord, where zeal might be rewarded by quick promotion—should your interest enable me to

do this, a poor lad's thanks will be gratefully paid."

"Have you any knowledge of the pursuits most esteemed in such a service?"

"I can rein a horse—fly a hawk—tune a lute—polish armour, and wield a sword indifferently well."

"Ha! the matter then might be brought about—but stay, there exists one insuperable obstacle—your birth."

The youth bit his lip, and the colour mounted to his cheek, but he made no reply.

"Recollect my young friend," continued Father Hubert, "that in the households of every noble of repute, the pages and esquires are of honorable descent—and how will it beseem them to have for their mate one on whose origin there rests so dark a mystery? Believe me, I would not, willingly, wound you—but think you, they will admit the foundling to their compa-

nionship? And then the implied taunt—the open gibe—”

“Never!” interrupted Perkin Warbeck, fiercely springing, with one bound, into the open space in front of the priest. “The tongue that uttered the foul jest should rather be rent out by the roots. In what do I differ from the children of the high-born, that we should be regarded as separate clay? Are they more lithe in limb—more stout in heart? My blood is red as theirs, and shall be poured out like water ere I take a wrong. Why was I born? What am I? A blot on this fair creation! a worm doomed to creep and crawl! To whom the hope of rising is forbidden? A loathsome object that must be kept from the presence of the noble of the land, lest the sight should blast them. Would that the earth could open and take back the nameless outcast.”

And the apprentice flung himself on the ground, rocking his body to and fro, as if the movement lashed him to a higher

pitch of fury. These words fell from his pale lips with a vehemence and impetuosity which nearly paralysed the priest—he had expected that his own speech should irritate; such had been its object, but versed as he was in the human character—he was quite unprepared for the uncurbed violence of feeling now displayed by the usually submissive boy. After allowing sufficient time for the paroxysm to subside, the confessor spoke in kindly accents.

“I knew not that you felt so keenly the injustice of your fate. Were such a thing possible, what would you do or risk to change it?”

“Do!” repeated the apprentice, “there is nothing you could name I would not do. Risk! I would hazard all, except my soul’s weal, for the chance of a fair start in the conflict of life, with the offspring of the great and powerful.”

Again the priest paused; he felt he was about to tread on dangerous ground, to broach a subject which he had resolved to



defer until a further acquaintance had revealed to him the secret springs by which the mind of his young companion could be actuated—yet the present opportunity offered an advantage which might never be recovered; and with a sudden decision he determined to avail himself of the youth's excited state of feeling to mould him to his wishes.

“Perkin Warbeck,” said the confessor, after a silence of some duration, “shake off this unmanly grief—come hither—closer still—bend down your ear—I have that to impart which the winds must not whisper again.”

Attracted by the gravity of this appeal, the youth half sullenly obeyed.

“You seem to repine at your obscure destiny, learn that it is in my power to snatch you thence and place you on a pinnacle far above your wildest hopes.”

“Know you aught of my parents?” exclaimed Warbeck, throwing himself on his knees before Father Hubert, and fixing his

flashing eyes with imploring earnestness on the impassable countenance of the other.

“I said not so,” answered the priest, coldly, “I spoke of raising you to a station of which your young ambition could not even have dreamed.”

“You said the means were yours, but not the will,” returned the youth, doubtingly, the glow of animation fading from his brow.

“Neither shall be wanting. Would you attain this eminence?”

“Shall it be one where brave men will not keep themselves aloof from contact with me, and where it would not be held presumption—” here he broke off abruptly and a faint blush dyed his cheek, as reverence for his companion's calling forbade him to complete the sentence.

“You were about to add,” said the priest, with a slight smile; “that you would fain raise an eye to a maiden of high estate, without the certainty of a

cudgel for your boldness. This, too, I can promise. There shall not be a lovely dame in Burgundy who would deny your suit. Why say I of Burgundy? In every country of Europe the proudest beauty shall esteem herself honoured by your wooing! I speak not of a solid burgher's well dowered daughter, but of rank equal to that of the Duchess's guest—the Lady Katherine Gordon—”

“ Give me the chance of winning a smile from her—though it be years hence—and I will be the willing slave of your will for life.”

“ If peril were to be encountered?”

“ I would brave it gratefully if it pointed the way to her.”

“ Will you swear in all things to entrust yourself to my guidance?”

“ Nay,” replied Warbeck, “ I am no child to be led hoodwinked in a matter of such deep moment; I will take no jump in the dark— but show me the chasm, and though

the grave yawned beneath a bold leap shall clear it."

The confessor fixed his eyes upon the ground in silent thought.

"Listen," said he, laying his hand upon his companion's shoulder. "I will give you a short outline of the scheme to be carried out—more than this, I cannot and will not do, until you have registered a vow to become its chief agent. A noble family lacks an heir—the child of their proudest hopes has been torn from them in infancy by fraud and violence—a grasping kinsman has stepped into the inheritance; he rules with a rod of iron, and oppresses, with base malevolence, every friend of the former line, to whom, in years gone by, he has done deadly wrong; a rumour is abroad that the long lost son is found, and is about to return to claim his own again—this is the character I propose you shall personate—every avenue to detection has been carefully guarded against. You start and shake

your head. Recollect, my young friend, how small the amount of evil, how large the balance of good—an injustice to one—a priceless benefit to numbers! Why do you turn away? The culpability of the deception may find ample atonement in the noble use you can make of your good fortune, and many shall live to bless your generous sway. Your election must now be made. Remain as you are, and forget what you have heard, or accept honour, power, splendour, and the choice of a bride among the noblest and fairest—ay! even the Lady Katherine Gordon. I leave you now—an hour hence I will return, and your own lips must then decide your fate.”

The priest rose as he spoke, and shrouded in his dark mantle, strode through the thicket of trees and quickly disappeared from view.

Perkin Warbeck gave one hurried glance around to assure himself he was alone, and then burying his face in his hands, sank down on the grass, while a perfect tempest

of emotion convulsed his frame. His young heart had yearned to be descended from a long race of noble forefathers—but the pride was for himself as much as for others; he had thought to win, with gallant deeds, a place of renown, not to steal with perjured speech into the seat of another. He could not do it. No! he would fly the tempter, and strive, and wait, and struggle, to carve out a road to fortune—then again, the chilling words with which the priest had answered his petition, crossed his mind—and his own judgment acknowledged the justice of the reasoning—the prejudices of the age forbade him to mingle in fellowship with those who could boast of time-honored ancestors—he had felt something of this in his earlier youth, and knew his nature could ill endure the looks askant, or even the tone of secret pity. Must he then abide for ever in his present sphere, and drag on the burden of life in one ceaseless round of thankless toil? Never more could he regard, without repining, his lowly lot;

other wishes had been excited in his breast, he might not yield to them—but they could not be expelled. What was the alternative? There was another side to the picture, and he resolved to indulge his fancy with a momentary glimpse of all that might be his if he acceded to the overtures of Father Hubert—the pride of power—the possession of means to ennoble the name he should be called upon to bear—the homage of grateful hearts—the luxuries of pleasure—the fulfilment of more than his young ambition had ever hoped or dreamed—the splendour of opulence—the princely home—and here there flitted across the scene a fairy vision—a form of light, and grace, and beauty, doubling his enjoyment by sharing it. There was rapture in the contemplation of such a prospect, and the youth started up with glowing cheek, and paced the grassy platform; the blood coursing through his veins like fire, while he reviewed and brought into the field every argument that could make sin seem less heinous, and throw around

it the false cloak of expediency. One act of guilt, and then the tenor of his after life should be of such lofty virtue—such exalted rectitude, that the sternest judge must deem the atonement sufficient. One error! tears of gratitude from happy dependents should blot it from the recording book, and a thousand daily blessings wring his pardon from offended Heaven. Mistaken and inexperienced reasoner! Who can say when he quits the path of right, how far his errant steps shall stray? One subterfuge may lead to a labyrinth of falsehood, while the thoughtless adventurer discovers, too late, that the clue has escaped from his hand.

The distant abbey bell announced that another hour was numbered with the annals of the past. The youth thought for an instant of a return to the workshop—his rough comrades, the drudgery of labor, and the rebuke which his causeless absence must call down upon him. He flung from his



head the artisan's coarse cap, and set his foot upon it.

"Come weal or woe," said he half aloud, "my choice is made! Henceforth I herd no more with the base and low-born. If there be wrong in my career, let the shame rest with those who threw me on the world without even the inheritance of a name!"

Presently the tall figure of Father Hubert was seen approaching the spot where he had left his young companion. Warbeck slowly advanced towards him; his face was deadly pale, but wore an air of stern composure; there was no sign of vacillation in the resolute eye as it met that of the priest, while he clasped the hand extended to him. The gesture was understood. Not a word more was exchanged upon the subject. The youth asked not of the station he was destined to fill, nor of the degree of peril he might be summoned to encounter; he had resolved to venture everything on the issue of the proposed enterprise, whatever it

might be, and his mind rather seemed to recoil from a description of its details.

“When shall we meet again?” he enquired in a subdued tone.

“Nay, my son,” answered the confessor, “we part not now; I have further matter for your ear. To-night you shall sleep at the Priory. I will myself see Nicholas Hatherton and tell him he must suit himself with another apprentice, as the Church has need of your service.”

“There is one,” said Warbeck musingly, “to whom I would fain send some trifling token of remembrance—the armourer’s daughter.”

“It shall be done, my son,” said Father Hubert. “Now let us push onwards.”

And so, side by side, the new-made confederates pursued their way to the town.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE TOKEN.

'Tis strange to think if we could fling aside  
The masque and mantle that love wears from pride,  
How much would be, we now so little guess,  
Deep in each heart's undreamed, unsought recess.

L. E. L.

THE sun had just disappeared from the gorgeous west, and the labours of the mechanic were about to close for the day, when Viola Hatherton stole to the threshold of her father's door, and gazed timidly down

the quiet street. The armourer was much chafed at the unjustifiable absence of his favorite apprentice, who had not been seen since early morning, and threatened to manifest his dissatisfaction in no measured terms. Knowing the impetuosity of Warbeck's character, the maiden was anxious to be the first to meet him, and entreat that he would not venture an excuse until his employer's displeasure had passed away.

Weary at last with her vain watch, she retreated to a small room on the ground floor, chiefly appropriated to her use, where the irritated accents of her father's angry voice only occasionally reached her ear.

Meantime father Hubert had not forgotten his engagement, and was even then pursuing his course to the abode of the armourer. As he sped on with downcast eyes and gliding step, a wayfarer, whose threadbare garments denoted that he belonged to the lower orders, accosted him in a foreign tongue, and asked him, for charity, to point out the road to the residence of

one Nicholas Hatherton. The priest looked searchingly at the low, mean features of the enquirer, and demanded if his business were of an important nature. The man replied that it was of interest only to himself, but he had travelled some hundreds of miles to attain his object, and as he could not make himself understood, he feared he should have some difficulty in finding the person he sought.

“I grieve to say,” answered the confessor, “that your quest here is fruitless. The individual you seek left Saint Evert some months ago, and went no one knows whither.”

With a heavy sigh and look of heavy disappointment the stranger turned away, and the priest walked onwards.

It would be difficult to analyze the feelings which caused Father Hubert thus to mislead the traveller; it might be an undefined wish that none should follow in his own track, or a sudden presentiment, or one of those impulses which to ourselves seems

afterwards unaccountable. Having arrived at Hatherton's dwelling, he passed through the half-open door, and was about to proceed to the distant workshop, when the graceful figure of Viola, seated in the opposite apartment, caught his eye, and immediately stepping forward he found himself in the presence of the armourer's daughter. He had been accustomed to the view of the rarest beauties of the court, and esteemed himself no mean judge of their comparative merits, but yet he could not help acknowledging there was a charm of no ordinary nature in the fair young face before him.

Somewhat startled at the appearance of such an unexpected guest, she rose hastily, and timidly advancing to bid him welcome, offered to seek her parent.

"Not so, fair maiden," replied the priest. "Presently I will myself go in search of the worthy Nicholas; I would now speak a few words with you."

Viola assumed an attitude of the most reverential attention, naturally expecting

that she was about to receive from him some ghostly counsel; but his next question sent the blood to her heart with a fearful rapidity, although she contrived to master every outward semblance of emotion.

“Your father had an apprentice, by name Perkin Warbeck?” said the confessor interrogatively.

“Nay, good father, I cannot guess why you should say he had been in our service. I believe him still to be so, and if you know otherwise, I pray you tell me.”

“This Warbeck then stands high in your regard?” said Father Hubert, looking keenly at her as he spoke.

The young girl instinctively felt that her interrogator was endeavouring to draw aside the veil from her bosom's secrets, and calmly raising her dark eyes, she answered with some spirit,

“The youth who has sat so long at our board can scarce be an object of indifference to me. If you can explain his disappear-

ance, my father will thank you, as he has been somewhat angered at his absence."

"Therefore have I come," said the priest; "I have undertaken to inform his employer that the church has need of him—not to serve her with robe and cowl, but as an active partisan in temporal matters. His duty accords with his inclination—through me he sends greeting and thanks for past favors to his former master, who shall be well repaid for the loss of his servitor."

"It will always please us to hear of his welfare and preferment," said Viola steadily, her low voice did not falter; but although Father Hubert endeavoured to catch a view of her countenance, he was defeated in his purpose, for she turned at the moment to close the casement, through which the evening air blew rather chilly.

The confessor then drew from the folds of his robe, a small gold chain of curious workmanship, to which was attached a ruby cross. Viola recognized it instantly, she



had often seen it in the possession of Perkin Warbeck, and once he had told her it was the only link by which he hoped to clear up the secret of his birth. When the youth consented to assume the feigned character which was to obtain for him the dignity and state he could not otherwise aspire to, he resolved to send to the armourer's daughter, as a token of recollection, the relic which formerly he would have guarded with his life, but which he now felt it would be mockery to keep. Accordingly he had confided the trinket to the confessor's charge, without remarking on the peculiar circumstances connected with it.

“Master Warbeck,” continued Father Hubert, “was much grieved to part so unceremoniously from one to whom he owed such a large debt of kindness, and bade me bring you this token of his grateful regard, and repeat his hopes that you would keep him a place in your remembrance, al-

though it may chance that you never meet again."

Viola mechanically grasped the ruby cross, and demanded:

"Has he then left Saint Evert?"

"His business did not admit of delay," answered the confessor evasively. "But night draws on apace, and I must not tarry. I have yet to hold a short conference with my old friend Nicholas—farewell, gentle maiden, and Heaven's benison rest with you."

"Good even, holy sir—will it please you that I summon my father?"

The priest declined her offer, and passed from the apartment.

Viola sprang to the door, fastened it securely, and sinking into a chair, sobbed as if her young heart would break, while the tears trickled like rain through her slender fingers.

"I marked her narrowly," muttered Father Hubert, as he wended his way to the

workshop. "She takes no dearer interest in the boy than their late companionship would render natural. This is well. There must be no looking backward in the path I destine him to tread. I must teach him to fix every thought upon the goal; what will await him when he reaches it? the axe or a throne."

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE BETROTHED.

One whom nature only meant  
To be queen of the tournament—  
Courtly *fête* and lighted hall,  
Grace and ornament of all!

L. E. L.

WE must now assume an author's privilege, and gliding over a space of nearly two years, transport our readers to a princely dwelling in the Scottish capital. A low, regular pile of buildings surrounded a vast

court, at either extremity of which rose a lofty octagonal tower, containing the state chambers, and other reception-rooms. The armorial bearings of the Earl of Huntly, were emblazoned above the principal entrance. This nobleman, nearly allied to royalty, and possessed of unbounded influence among his dependents, had been engaged for some weeks in quelling a disturbance in the north, and had now despatched a noble gentleman of his train to announce his speedy return to his daughter, the Lady Katherine Gordon. Sir Ronald Graham, followed by two attendants, rode into the court, and springing from his steed, threw the rein to the serving men, while he nodded hurriedly to a group of young knights and well-born idlers, who in those days were accustomed to attach themselves to the almost regal establishments of the chief nobility.

“What news from the camp?” cried one of the foremost, advancing to greet the new comer.

“ I may not tarry,” replied Sir Ronald. “ The Earl is on my heels for I have been delayed on the road. I will fulfil my mission, and then return to crush a cup with you, and exchange our tidings.”

“ I will wager a gold piece to a silver groat,” said the first speaker, “ that we of the court will give you news for which you will not be able to pay back a fair equivalent.”

“ We shall see, we shall see,” answered the young cavalier as he ascended the broad flight of steps, and entered the spacious hall. At one end was a range of lofty windows fitted up with stained glass, and the other sides formed an arcade whose arches corresponding with the windows, preserved an agreeable uniformity. Passing to a large ante-chamber filled with pages, he bade one of them inform the Lady Gordon that a messenger from the Earl of Huntly craved an audience. He then proceeded to arrange his attire to as much ad-

vantage as the circumstances would permit.

In a small withdrawing-room sat the beautiful Lady Gordon; one soft, white hand held an open letter, while its fellow pressed her flushed cheek. Before her lay a velvet miniature case, evidently just received, for it was still unopened. To obtain an insight into the thoughts and emotions reigning in that fair bosom, a short retrospect will be necessary.

James IV. of Stotland had long nourished a secret feeling of animosity against the English monarch, and was only solicitous to find some justifiable cause for a renewal of hostilities between the countries. Where the will is strongly bent on any object, it soon creates for itself opportunity. A new claimant to the British crown had just arisen in the person of a youth who proclaimed himself to be Richard of York, the youngest of the two princes generally supposed to have been smothered in the Tower. His age, his striking re-

semblance to Edward IV., and his knowledge of many minute family details—all confirmed his tale. With apparent difficulty he had been introduced at the court of the Duchess of Burgundy, and after a public hearing and strict investigation of his pretensions, she had acknowledged and embraced him as her nephew. Many were the adherents of York who crossed the Channel to pay their homage to the young adventurer. The Scottish King openly avowed a belief in his identity, and immediately entered into negotiations with him; and in order to draw still closer their alliance, consented to bestow on him in marriage the hand of his kinswoman, the Earl of Huntly's daughter. When the preliminaries were arranged, the Lady Gordon was made acquainted with the alliance destined for her by the king's gracious pleasure, confirmed as it was by her father's joyful sanction.

Our fair readers may naturally enquire in what spirit this arbitrary mandate was



received—perhaps a few sighs were breathed over the demolition of imaginary hopes, but although our heroine was endowed with the warm sensibilities inherent in the high-minded of her sex, she had been taught to consider her hand at the disposal of her sovereign, and most probably to be conferred as the price of some national benefit, or the means of conciliating some foreign power.

On that very morning the intelligence of her betrothal had been bruited about the good city of Edinburgh, and she had just received a despatch in the King's own handwriting, and accompanied by a picture of the young adventurer, whose destiny was so soon to be linked to hers.

With trembling fingers, gasping breath, and quivering lip she drew the velvet case towards her, pressed a secret spring, and the lid immediately flew open. For some moments everything swam in meaningless confusion beneath her unsteady eye, and then regaining her composure with a

mighty effort, she turned her gaze on the portrait before her. A single glance sufficed to show her that the outline of a noble countenance was there—the limner had well done his part—and she proceeded to dwell on every feature with the minutest attention—the fair hair waved carelessly round the high forehead.

“Here,” murmured she inwardly, “may be traced the descendent of a hundred kings—the eye, too, promises glorious things, daring, aspiring, yet bright with truth—methinks such an eye might easily school this heart to love—and then the lip, it wears an air of smiling tenderness, and yet I can read on it fiery impatience and unflinching firmness—well! I could swear to obey that lip—here is indeed the likeness of a man, such as a true-hearted woman might reverence for her lord.”

And then while a rosy blush gradually gathered over face and neck and hands, suffusing all in one universal glow, she bent over the picture, and her coral lips im-

pressed a kiss upon the senseless ivory. Starting up, she now approached the mirror, and surveyed her own graceful figure and beautiful features with more solicitude than she had ever before bestowed upon their contemplation—apparently the scrutiny was satisfactory—and returning to her seat, she relapsed into a train of happy thought. Her reverie was interrupted by the delivery of Sir Ronald Graham's message. His desire of admission to her presence was instantly acceded to. Sir Ronald had been left by his dying parent to the guardianship of the Earl of Huntly; during the early days of childhood, he was often the playmate of his protector's daughter—as they advanced in years, their opportunities of meeting became naturally less frequent, until latterly her intercourse with him was as rare as with any of the other noble gentlemen attached to her father's service.

Katherine now stepped forward to meet him with the kindly courtesy she invariably evinced towards her former companion.

The young cavalier, although unable to doff his riding apparel, had somewhat amended its travel-stained appearance, for he had ridden fast and far, and as he respectfully saluted the hand the lady graciously extended to him, it might be seen, notwithstanding his disadvantage of dress, that he possessed a tolerably good person, and rather attractive physiognomy. The Earl's packet was duly presented, after which followed some questions about the doings at the camp.

"There is a rumour," said Lady Gordon, "of a war with England, in which case I shall expect to hear the name of Sir Ronald Graham coupled with gallant deeds and deathless fame."

"Dear lady, the expression of such a wish from you ensures its fulfilment. To win a word of praise from your tongue, I would fight my way single-handed through a legion of Southernns."

"Nay!" responded Katherine, "rashness makes no part of a gallant soldier. Take

for your model some of the mighty leaders of our own native land, the warlike Elgin, the unconquered Douglas. Seek no unnecessary danger, but let it find you fixed as the rock firm set in the depths of the roaring waves. But I overstep the boundary of discretion in schooling you thus. 'Tis an old habit with me, and I cannot shake it off. Do you remember how gravely I chid you some ten years ago, when you were nearly drowned crossing the Lawrie's Ford to bring me some water-lilies, for which I had expressed my childish wish?"

"Lady Gordon, such recollections are the dearest portion of my inheritance."

A gay answer from Katherine changed the theme—and after a few enquiries about absent friends, the interview closed.

With a buoyant step and bounding heart, Sir Ronald quitted the withdrawing-room where he had found so gracious a reception. He paused at the window, terminating the long corridor and looked forth. How brightly

the sun shone on the animated scene below! he lingered for a few moments to watch its yellow lustre gilding the tree tops, and burnishing the arms of the stalwart sentinel. Loud shouts of merriment from the entrance-hall broke his fit of musing, and hurrying forward, he was soon surrounded by his friends and companions. Various were the queries made and answered.

“When does the good Earl come back?”

“The morrow’s moon will find him here.”

“Everything is then peaceful in the North?”

“As a convent of nuns.”

“You have just seen the Earl’s daughter,” cried another. “What said she? how looked she?”

“Truly, Lord Hamilton,” replied Sir Ronald stiffly, “I have had the honor of an audience with the Lady Katherine Gordon, but I have yet to learn how the recapitulation of what passed therein can be of the slightest advantage to yourself.”

“Heed him not, Hamilton,” exclaimed

another of the group, "he knows not that our curiosity springs lawfully from the tidings we promised him but now."

"And what are they?" demanded the young cavalier eagerly. "Compose your laughing brows, my merry men, and divulge quickly. I would gladly share your jest whatever it be."

A dozen voices were instantly raised in explanation.

"Of course," said one, "you have heard that King James has signed a treaty with this new-found prince of York?"

The young cavalier nodded his head in assent.

"Which treaty," cried another, "the hand of the Earl of Huntly's daughter is to rivet most indissolubly."

"And soon there will be a march to England," exclaimed a third, "and plenty of hard blows. Graves for some, and honor for all. Feastings occasionally and fastings often."

"Nor will swords be sheathed nor ban-

ners furred," said Lord Hamilton, "until Richard of York wears the English crown, and Lady Gordon, the pride of Scotland, is England's queen."

Sir Ronald Graham mechanically turned from one speaker to another, as their different exclamations reached his ear—a cloud had fallen upon his brow, his cheek was deathly pale, and he seemed far from participating in the mirthful mood of his companions.

"And now having amply redeemed our word," added the foremost of the throng, "we would fain learn of Sir Ronald how the bride elect bore the prospect of her unexpected elevation."

"There was certainly unusual animation in her tone and manner," said Graham slowly, rather answering his own thoughts than the question proposed to him. "Ill did I guess the cause. A slight flutter of agitation was perceptible in her graceful mien—so slight indeed, it needed a keen eye to mark it."



“As though a stone had been hurled into a peaceful lake, and ruffled its fair bosom for the first time,” observed a young knight, who, during the Earl’s absence, held the post of master of the household. “But this is no matter to be discussed dry-lipped. Let us in—and taste some of our good lord’s last vintage.”

With some difficulty Sir Ronald excused himself on the plea of fatigue, and the obligation he was under to execute some business entrusted to him. Separating himself from the laughing group, he pulled his hat over his brows, and strode forward through the crowded court.

The sun still shone, but he no longer noted the golden beams—his eyes were turned inwards, and there all was gloom and darkness.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE ADVENTURER.

Do but think  
How sweet a thing it is to wear a crown :  
Within whose circuit is Elysium,  
And all that poets feign of bliss and joy.

SHAKESPEARE.

ALL Edinburgh was a stir; the fair city had poured forth its countless thousands to witness the return of King James to his capital. The youthful monarch was then

in the zenith of his popularity; his personal qualities were exactly of a nature to win the affections of his turbulent, though loyal, subjects; and no act of arbitrary power had, hitherto, aroused the suspicions of his jealous vassals—as yet, his sceptre had never been raised to crush the oppressor, and his diadem glittered over a smiling brow.

A volley of artillery deafened the air—the joyous bells rung from every steeple—clarion and trumpet sounded—and then, drowning all these, rose one long continued shout—the single voice of a mighty multitude, announcing the approach of the sovereign. Uncovered, and bending his lofty head to the saddle bow, James passed slowly through the assembled crowds; and at his right hand, rode the young adventurer, whom, henceforth, we must designate as Richard of York—for thus he named himself, and was addressed by others. Amid the same uproar of acclamation, the royal cavalcade pursued their route to the eastern

extremity of the town, where stood the palace of Holyrood House.

There, in the long spacious gallery, were collected, by the king's express orders, the principal ladies of the court; and, pre-eminent among them all, stood the Lady Katherine Gordon—peerless in beauty as first in rank. She was splendidly attired in a robe of rich blue velvet slashed, at intervals, with satin of the same colour; the pendant, and half open white sleeves, partially exposed to view her finely-moulded arms—so round and soft—so perfect in their swelling outline, that they have often been cited as a model for the statuary. Her heart beat high beneath her jewelled bodice—for she had learned that James was to be accompanied by her princely suitor—and, although his picture had grown hourly on her liking, she entertained an anxious fear lest the original should fall below the standard to which her fancy had exalted him. We cannot say that our fair Katherine—proud even in her gentle loveliness—

did not regard her affianced bridegroom with more ready favor in consequence of his lofty descent. But do not misinterpret her ambition—it was not the prospect of a throne, but the lineage on which his claims thereto were founded, that captivated her imagination. Hers was a graceful pride—never displayed in her bearing to others, and tending rather to elevate her own character, impelling her to all that was noble as a just tribute to the race from which she sprang.

Prejudice had early instilled into her mind, the idea that high birth set its stamp upon a man, entrenching him in a barrier which nothing sordid or base could overleap— with this, she marvelled much that ought dishonoring or unworthy could ever be connected—without it, she would not have had much faith in the existence of the higher class of virtues.

The distant shouts that accompanied the king's progress reverberated through the

palace; and when the cavalcade halted at Holyrood House, the reiterated sounds of loyal greeting seemed literally to cleave the roof. Katherine pressed her hand upon her bosom as if to still its tumultuous throbbings. In a few minutes the doors of the great saloon were thrown open, and the monarch entered with the Prince of York on his right hand, and followed by a brilliant train of attendants. Immediately the throng at the upper end of the gallery fell back on each side, forming a circle, in the centre of which, the Lady Gordon was left standing almost alone. King James instantly approached her.

“Sweet cousin,” said he, “I bring you one who has sued long for the light of your presence. I pray you, for my sake and his own merits, give him no cold welcome—but I leave him to advocate his own cause.”

The young adventurer advanced with a mien in which the eager air of the lover,

the dignity of the prince, and the manly frankness of the soldier, were happily blended. Bending one knee to the ground, he gently took Katherine's fair, white hand and raised it to his lips.

"Dear lady," said he, in a tone so low that those around could not catch his words; "Tell me that I have not been over bold in urging my suit—say that I do not owe my fortune to the importunity of friends; assure me that this dearly valued hand is not reluctantly bestowed, and the measure of my happiness will be complete."

With a vivid blush Katherine bent forward and bade him rise; and as she shook back the countless curls of soft brown hair that fell in clusters down her ivory neck, Richard inwardly acknowledged that he had never beheld any thing half so lovely. The fair maiden too, even in her confusion, had stolen one glance at her affianced lord, and recognised the noble features whose portraiture had before won her approval—but

oh! how wide the difference! She thought the painter had done but scanty justice to his subject—the radiant eyes now sparkled with joyous animation—their language needed no interpreter, although the mouth was likewise engaged in pouring forth a torrent of ardent words and lover's vows.

The Earl of Huntly, who had ridden forth to meet the king, now advanced to his daughter's side, and drew her arm within his own. Meantime, James passed round the circle, rendering to each one some gracious salutation.

"I grieve to part so fair a company," he remarked at length, aloud, "but time wears on, and shortly our council meet. Cousin of York, we pray you take some refreshment; our chamberlain will conduct you to your apartments! Ha! Sir Ronald Graham, have you only just entered? What think you of the bonny bridegroom I have brought to our fair kinswoman? Saw you ever a pair so well matched?"



Sir Ronald bowed low, but his reply was inaudible; for, at the moment, in obedience to the king's implied desire, there was a general movement as the company prepared to quit the gallery. The young adventurer was escorted to the rooms set apart for his use, by several Scottish nobles; he dismissed them at the threshold with a few words of frank courtesy, and dispensed likewise with the attendance of his suite; signifying, that one alone, who wore the garb of a priest, should remain.

Throwing himself into a seat, Richard continued for some time immersed in thought. The long silence was broken by his companion.

“Welcome, my son, to the dominions of our Scottish ally; hitherto, every thing prospers with us, and success smiles upon our efforts.”

“At last, I have seen her again,” said Richard, raising his head, evidently not having attended to the other's words; “at

last—how I have thirsted for this moment! She is marvellously fair! surpassing even what memory depicted. I can scarce credit my own happiness! Say, Father Hubert, is not all this a dream that will presently dissolve, and leave me worse than beggared?”

“No, my lord, your prospects are not visionary; you have placed yourself under my guidance, and I have steered you through a thousand difficulties to this happy haven. I pledged myself that you should win your noble bride—have I kept my faith?”

The young man grasped his hand warmly in silent acknowledgment of his services.

“Ay!” continued the priest, “but much remains to be done. Opportunity must not be lost in idle dalliance. He who would earn a crown, must bear the brunt of the conflict. I did not err when I augured there was a spirit in you that would not blench in the hour of danger, and I shall live to

see Richard of England swaying, with just and wise hand, the destinies of a loving people."

"Mock me not with such high-sounding titles," said the young man smiling faintly. "From your lips they grate harshly on my ear. We are alone, let it suffice us to wear the mask before others.

"Not so," replied the priest; "try to think yourself what you seem to be until the character shall grow to your shape like an old habit. Let the past be forgotten. And now, my lord, will it please you to give your attention to these despatches from the South?" and as he spoke he drew forth a packet of sealed papers.

While they were plunging into the more minute details of their enterprise, King James had announced, in full council, his alliance with the prince of York, of whose undoubted pretensions to the English crown he felt the clearest conviction; the betrothal of his kinswoman, Lady Gordon, and the possibility that this might lead to a war

with England, although it was his firm determination to allow the first infraction of the treaty to proceed from the other side.

Among the Scotch nobles, high-spirited and warlike, no movement could be more generally popular than a march across the Borders, and the measure had been frequently recurred to by their rulers as a temporary diversion from intestine contentions. An unconquerable jealousy was entertained by them towards their Southern neighbours, and there were few of them whose family records could not furnish them with the recollection of some victory they hoped to emulate, or some defeat they burned to obliterate. Warfare was not then considered a national scourge, since the great and powerful maintained at all times an almost unlimited number of armed retainers, and therefore an incursion into the enemies' territory, with the prospect of booty, was always deemed a welcome means of enriching themselves at the expense of their opponents.

Such being the state of their feelings,

the closing appeal of King James was received with considerable enthusiasm.

“Say, my good lords,” he asked in an animated tone, “will it beseem us to desert a brother in distress? A crownless prince has sought our friendly shore—can we deny him an asylum lest England should take offence? My brave friends if we were to advocate so base a course, thank Heaven, there would not be found another man in our dominion of the same mind. What does this hapless Richard seek? His father was a king, and he claims the inheritance bequeathed to him; well, let him win it with the strong arm—and if a brave Scot should strike a good blow by his side, we will hold him high in honor for the gallant deed; and should the English Lion be roused to show his claws and turn his wrath our way—why then, my loving lords, we must abide his spring.”

A grim smile on the lips of all around evinced how acceptable was the allusion.

“Nevertheless,” added the monarch, “we

would pray you not to be over hasty, but to walk coolly and warily in this matter, and while we hold ourselves in readiness against surprise, it must not be forgotten that a peace exists at present between the two countries, which may not justly be infringed."

The council was dismissed; but the king's concluding pacificatory recommendations were far outweighed, in the minds of his hearers, by the more spirited portion of his address, and each noble went his way to count his stout followers and inspect their weapons and other military appointments, considering, that although war might not be overtly declared, they had virtually received permission from their sovereign to serve in the ranks of the invading prince.

Meantime the indefatigable activity of the Duchess of Burgundy and Father Hubert had apprised every partisan of the line of York of the claims of the new aspirant, and invited them to join his standard, while promises of future rewards in divers shapes

were liberally accorded. Some of minor note had obeyed the summons, but the more influential members of the faction hung back until the plans of the leaders of the proposed invasion were more fully developed.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BORDER CHIEF.

Let nobles fight for fame ;  
Let vassals follow where they lead,  
Burghers to guard their townships bleed,  
But war's the Borderer's game.

SCOTT.

ON the crest of an eminence on the Southern banks of the Tweed, there stood, at the time of which we write, an ancient fortress universally known by the name of the Heron's Haunt. The parapet of the outer wall was



covered with chinks or œillets through which arrows might be discharged. In the yard was the keep, the residence of the chieftain. The walls were of extraordinary thickness, and the staircases were peculiarly narrow, for the greater facility of defence in circumstances of extreme peril. At the top of the keep was a broad platform commanding a view over a vast extent of country, and on each side of the embattled gate was a tower in which sentinels were constantly stationed.

This fortress appertained to John Heron, a natural brother of the lord of Ford, commonly denominated the Bastard Heron, one of the chieftains who had especially distinguished himself in the Border warfare that was carried on unceasingly, without regard to treaties of peace or penal proclamations. His name had never been connected with any tale of cruelty or unprovoked act of rapacity, but rather as a general redresser of grievances. No sooner had a Scotch reiver committed a foray on the English side of the

Tweed, harrying and pillaging the unarmed inhabitants, than the Bastard Heron's foot was in his stirrup, and followed by his trusty band, he never rested until vengeance was exacted and restitution made. Afterwards, however, with an extraordinary idea of justice, he would himself make an inroad into the territory of his northern neighbours and carry off from the unoffending natives an equal amount of property, which booty he would bear to his castle-hold and divide among his followers; and woe to the Scotch Borderers who endeavoured to make him restore his prey, the attempt was never effectual, and was invariably attended with loss of life and limb. If any of the English marauders made an unjustifiable aggression on the Scotch frontier, he would lend no aid, whatever might be the consequences they drew down upon themselves; but in contests between his own countrymen he was always ready to take the part of the oppressed.

The grey mist of early dawn had dis-

persed from the horizon, and the sun had sent forth his first beam to waken creation into life and light, lending even a momentary brightness to the dark old fortress, when the two sentinels descended from the watch-towers, having been relieved from their night-guard, and sauntered to the outer postern, in order to continue their discourse undisturbed. The comrades were exceedingly dissimilar in their appearance. The one was of gigantic proportions, his extreme breadth of chest and length of limb could not fail to strike the beholder with surprise, and his overhanging brows and bullet head, covered with an abundant growth of shaggy hair, threw over him an air of singular ferocity. His companion was very diminutive in stature, and his well-knit frame was singularly slight, while his small features, fair complexion, and young, boyish face seemed scarce adapted to the character of a Border-rider. Apparently he was urging something with peculiar warmth.

“Surely Lilburn,” said he, “you must

bear in mind that this same Scottish Warden strung your brother to the nearest oak like an acorn—and can you rest while your kinsman's unburied bones are bleached by the howling winds, and his destroyer still lives to boast of the savage deed? Is your blood so sluggish that it cannot be roused? Has nature given you the thews and sinews of a giant, and thrust in the iron case a coward's shrinking spirit?"

The huge Lilburn's answer was tardily delivered.

"I would not be more slack than another in avenging the death of poor Lancelot; but, though it is a plain truth Sir Robert Ker gave him a hempen cord and a short shrift, it is no less certain he had often tempted his fate. You have taxed me with bearing a faint heart, Robin Starhed, but I think you ought to know that this body of mine is always ready to cover a friend or front a foe in the hour of need."

"I did you wrong," answered the youth.  
"It was the false slip of an angry tongue.

Imagine not that I forget your friendship, but there is also graven on my memory, an injury which scorches my blood when I think on't."

"Come! tell me your grievance," said the Border-rider kindly. "You have said a score of times that an insult has been put upon you, and why refuse to name it? Show the wound, or who can find the plaister."

"I will tell none," exclaimed Starhed vehemently, "nor even you, Dick Lilburn, unless you swear to help me to avenge myself. I will not be pointed at and flouted by every man on the country-side who measures half a yard more than myself."

"I cannot promise to do your bidding, but I would stretch a point rather than be backward in serving you," and Lilburn placed his large, muscular hand on the other's shoulder. The youth gently removed the friendly hand, and pressed it in his own small palm. "You are a true

friend and comrade, Dick, and shall hear all! On Saint Bridget's eve, I crossed the frontier to see one of the Elliotts, who was sick or sorry; as I was beating my way home, Black Harry and his band swept by me like a whirlwind—some minutes after the Scotch Warden and his followers passed onward in pursuit—they took the wrong path—I met them on their return after an ineffectual chase—the Warden drew up and asked me which road the fugitives had taken—I told him boldly enough that I was not there to make or meddle, but I could not betray my countrymen.”

“ ‘Answer,’ thundered Sir Robert Ker ‘or I will have you scourged like a malapert boy.’ ”

“ What did you reply ? ” interrupted Lilburn.

“ Nothing. The fierce troop gathered closer round me; there was no way of escape. At a signal from their leader they stripped the doublet from my shoulders. I sprang forward, and threw myself on my knees before Sir Robert Ker—

“‘My Lord Warden,’ said I, ‘I am a sworn follower of the Heron, and have never done you any wilful harm. Put me not then to this open shame, or you will live to rue it.’

“Sir Robert raised his foot and spurned me backward, saying to those around him,

“‘Bid the sullen hound confess where his thieving countrymen have stowed themselves.’

“I believe the question was thrice repeated, but my dull ear seemed scarce to comprehend its meaning—

“‘Scourge him as you would a dog,’ was the Warden’s cry. ‘If he were anything like a man, I would send a shaft through his cloth doublet.’

“The mandate was obeyed; the blood streamed from my shoulders and dyed the heather that grew at my feet. I said not a word to provoke further the wrath of my captors, lest they might slay me on the spot and then I should have died unavenged.

Their object being accomplished, they left me. At a slow pace, I returned here. Three days have passed away—sleep has not closed my eyes—food has hardly crossed my lips—one idea alone occupies my existence. Lilburn, the wounded flesh shrank but now from the pressure of your hand, yet that is nothing to the tortures of the broken spirit.”

“Poor Rob!” was the only comment made by the Border-rider for some minutes after the other’s tale was ended.

The affection existing between these strangely matched comrades was peculiarly strong, perhaps it might be explained by the observation that attachments are as frequently founded on dissimilarity of character as on congeniality of disposition. Robin Starhed was born of a good family, and lost his parents in a Border feud during his childhood—after the affray, John Heron took him under his temporary charge, and when some distant relatives coldly offered



him protection, the lad refused to abandon the wild life which familiarity had endeared to him. His diminutive stature and fiery temper had obtained for him among his companions the appellation of the Fire-fly. Some good seeds were early visible in his disposition, but no one was at hand to encourage their increase, and the exuberant growth of his unchecked passions was rapidly converting juvenile foibles into crime. Dick Lilburn, an ancient adherent of the Heron family, had sported with the boy, and instructed the youth in the military exercises necessary to his position, until constant association had bound them together in the closest friendship; and although the spirit of the gigantic Border-rider could with difficulty be roused on his own score, he was always ready to throw his weight into the scale in any of the quarrels in which his young favorite was too often involved. It required so much exertion to bring into play the very small portion of judgment with

which nature had endowed him, that he found it far easier to submit to his more decisive companion's impetuous direction, in all cases that did not include an infringement of discipline, the only misdemeanour he considered culpable in a frontier man. He had borne with comparative fortitude the execution of his brother, who, it must be owned, was as arrant a rogue as ever trod his native hills, still he felt instinctively aware that his assistance would be claimed to redress the injuries sustained by Starhed, although he did not comprehend in what way they could be resented. After some minutes' reflection, a mental labour to which he was not accustomed, he asked if the Chief knew of the outrage that had been committed on the person of his follower.

“Not a word to him for your life,” was the answer. “Sir Robert Ker is too high game for him to fly at; he would name the affair to our own Warden, who would insti-

tute an enquiry, and, then, perhaps, a compensation in money would be awarded, as if my flesh were to be bought for gold—a ducat for every stripe—or else our leader might pass into Scotland and cudgel the first poor groom he encountered wearing the livery of the Kers, by way of settlement. No! it is not thus the offence must be expiated.”

“How then?” demanded Lilburn.

“By blood!” answered the youth in a low, hissing whisper.

The Border-rider started, and opened his round eyes in blank amazement.

“The boy is mad,” he muttered, “this sad mischance has crazed his brain.”

“If I am maddened,” responded Starhed, “it is by the foul dishonor and ignominy that have been heaped upon me. You know, Lilburn, I am of gentle blood, and have abandoned the privileges of my birth to lead a frontier life—so will I do myself justice in Border fashion. I cannot survive those disgracing blows, if they be unatoned.

Seven days from hence is the annual day of truce, when Sir Robert gives a holiday to his large following, and rides to meet our Warden with a single attendant."

"You would not lay finger on him on the day of truce," exclaimed Lilburn.

"It must be so, or how else can we meet him without such fearful odds? He shall have a chance for life. You will stand by me, dear Lilburn, in this matter. Man to man we will deal with them. Why do you wear that hang-dog look? you will not refuse me. Who taught me never to bide a buffet from living hand? Who told me never to forget a kindness or forgive an injury? You have had an apt pupil, and now if you deny me the aid of your arm, I will meet my foe alone. I have sworn that the earth shall not continue to hold us both.—Hush! give not your answer at present—the Heron is descending from the platform with the stranger who arrived yesternight—have a care to salute him as

he passes, and pri'thee look not not so scared, for nothing escapes his eye."

At this moment, the Chief and his companions issued from the keep, and crossed to the principal gate; as they passed through it, the former called to Starhed to bid one of the serving-men bring his guest's horse to the base of the next hill. John Heron was a man in the prime of life, with noble features, and a bold, dark eye, and an imposing presence—an air of habitual command was perceptible in every movement, and his fine, martial figure possessed that union of strength and activity, so requisite in the Border Chief. He was attired in a plain hunting frock—the usual undress of the day—and the richly chased handle of a dagger protruded from his leathern belt—for in those disturbed districts and troubled times, it was scarcely considered prudent to be found without some weapon of offence. The companions walked thoughtfully along the sunny slope, until they reached the point where they were to

await the coming of the horse. Then the Chief broke the long silence.

“In good sooth, Master Dalton, since so it is your humour to be called, I hope you will pardon the license of an old friend, when I say I like not your present errand.”

“And why not?” asked the other quietly.

“Again I claim your forbearance. To my seeming, it does not tally with the character of a soldier and noble knight to eavesdrop and play the spy, even though the purpose may be to unmask a traitor, and the employer is a king.”

“Personal information is required on many points, and I have undertaken to obtain it.”

“I cannot overcome the repugnance with which I view the step. Around the person of the masquerading pretender, who styles himself Richard of York, will be found some honorable high-minded men, led thither by a mistaken sense of duty—many will be swayed by ambition or meaner motives, yet a few are honest—and will you eat of

their bread, and drink of their cup, to betray their secret counsels to their opponents?"

"The service is a painful one," said Dalton, "however, I have accepted it, and nothing will deter me from fulfilling it."

"Henry VII. has not a more faithful subject than his poor servant John Heron, yet obedience has its limits. My castle and life are at the disposal of my sovereign—my honour is in my own keeping."

"I fear we shall not convert each other," said his companion with a heavy sigh.

"You are then determined to proceed to Edinburgh, where the young impostor has sought refuge with the false Scotch King?"

"I am so. They report the youth is wonderfully like his father."

"His reputed father, you would say."

There was a pause, when the Chief added, "I would have you to remember that your position will be one of peril. Letters may

be intercepted, or your person recognised, and small will be your claim to mercy."

"To that I am indifferent. My hand and sword are tolerably well acquainted, and will serve, I doubt not, to keep my head on my shoulders. For the rest due precautions have been taken, and I have lived so long in solitude that I think I must have outgrown recollection—even your eye, John, can trace that I am strangely altered."

"You are indeed sadly changed. I remember the day when you were gayer and more buoyant than myself, the last at a feast, and the foremost in a fray, and now—" he stopped and glanced on the sunken features of his companion—his face was pale, unnaturally so, and this was rendered more apparent by the contrast with his full suit of deep mourning—his bright, restless eyes glittered with the brilliancy of youth, and the incessant motion of his arched eye-brows denoted a peculiar irritability of character.



Dalton met and understood his friend's melancholy gaze, and said, as if in reply to it:

“Grief writes sad chronicles on human tablets.”

“I fear,” observed the Borderer, “the pen that indented those untimely furrows must have had a venomed point.”

“It had,” said Dalton in a low tone, and then added with startling energy, “Do you recollect Tewkesbury? In that bloody field I stood twice between Edward of York and impending death, and now if I could be convinced that this aspirant to royalty was his son, and be myself the means of delivering him to the headsman's axe, I could meet my last hour with a lighter heart. But enough of this for the present—yonder comes my horse, and I have a long march before me. Farewell, John Heron, we shall meet again.”

So saying, he vaulted lightly on the horse which the groom had led from the castle

according to orders, waved his hand to his friend and rode off at a sharp pace, while the Chief returned slowly to the Heron's haunt.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BANQUET

Old Holy-rood rung merrily  
That night, with wassail, mirth, and glee.

Scott.

THE nuptials of Richard of York and the Lady Katherine Gordon, were celebrated with much pomp a week after his arrival; King James himself bestowed his fair kinswoman on the young adventurer, and the day closed with a solemn festival to which

the whole court was bidden. All the valour, wisdom, wit and beauty of the capital, were collected within the walls of Holy-rood House, and it was impossible to conceive a more gorgeous spectacle than that vast assemblage presented. The great event of the day had given universal satisfaction. As a matter of policy, hoary statesmen understood how advantageous it would be to their country, to have the English throne occupied by a prince so closely connected with, and deeply indebted to, their own monarch, while on the other hand, if Henry succeeded in repelling the invasion, his power would be so weakened by intestine disturbances, that it would be easy to extort from him a treaty favourable to the Scottish interests. Young nobles felt that chance of distinction was at hand, and were delighted at the prospect of changing the inactivity of their present life, for the stirring excitement of the camp. And the fair dames of that century (like those of our own) regarded a wedding with no small portion

of pleasurable interest. James, with the enthusiasm and inexperience of youth, had abandoned himself to the romantic pleasure of befriending an unfortunate exile without weighing the consequences to the kingdom he ruled.

So, the contentment being general, every one yielded themselves, with a spontaneous feeling, to the hilarity of the moment.

The spacious banquet-hall was crowded with guests—at the upper end of the room, on a raised platform, under a cloth of state, sat King James, the royal table being encircled by those whose rank entitled them to the distinction. Every one remained standing until a flourish of trumpets announced that the sovereign was seated, and then the rest of the company hurried to follow the example. Immediately behind the monarch stood Sir Robert Ker, Warden of the middle Marches, who likewise held the post of cup-bearer on state occasions. He was a man of strong build, with a swarthy complexion, and heavy cast of

countenance—slightly tinctured with the vices common to his age, he possessed many sterling qualities to atone for them. He rendered himself conspicuous by his unremitting endeavours to repress the wild license of the Borderers—of unimpeachable integrity, he recked not if the offender were high or low; neither menaces nor bribery could prevent the execution of his duty; although it must be confessed, his stern justice often degenerated into cruelty, his firmness into obstinacy, and his love of truth into uncouth discourtesy. There was only one being for whom the bluff Warden entertained the slightest degree of reverence—and this was the king—in his presence, a deep-rooted feeling of royalty caused him to change his abrupt bearing, and command the violence of his passions—thus, without intending it, his conduct offered a more acceptable kind of homage than the elaborate flatteries of more wily courtiers—in consequence he was a decided favorite with James, who was wont to say that a

nod of assent from Sir Robert Ker was of more worth than the oath of another.

On the King's right hand was placed the beautiful bride, the Earl of Huntly's daughter—every heart acknowledged her unequalled in loveliness—her fair cheek was slightly flushed with the excitement of the scene, and the drooping lashes half concealed her radiant eyes; a rich lace veil was fastened round her head, shading her snowy brow, and the lappets thickly studded with jewels fell on either side of her face, mingling with her waving curls. Beside her was the bridegroom, the lord of her future destiny. That her sovereign's award was her own heart's choice, could not be doubted by any who saw the depths of tenderness revealed in those soft, blue eyes, when some whispered word caused her to raise them to his. The young adventurer, magnificently arrayed in cloth of silver and claret-coloured velvet, looked a worthy competitor for a crown, and a fitting match even for the Lady Katherine.

Around the illustrious party at the upper end of the room, were ranged several noble gentlemen appertaining to the royal household, and likewise some few of Richard's personal attendants; among these might be seen the flowing robes of Father Hubert, who had resisted the hospitable entreaties of the ushers in waiting, that he would assume the place reserved for him at one of the distant tables, and stood conversing courteously with those near him, while neither gesture nor syllable of Richard escaped his eye and ear.

"And so, Sir Robert Ker," said the monarch to his cup-bearer, "you think the wild Borderers are less turbulent than heretofore?"

"Nay! my Liege, I said not so. If the Marches are somewhat more tranquil, it is because my foot is oftener in the stirrup than in the banquet-hall."

"We believe the rogues keep you in full exercise," said James. "We have often heard tell of the feats of the Southern free-



booters, Black Harry and the Bastard Heron."

"They cannot be classed together, your Highness," replied the Warden. "Black Harry is a marauder of the worst description; last week he crossed the Tweed and pillaged all the cottiers in Nethercleugh who had anything to lose; I gave chase in vain, but I shall live to reckon with him him yet. Now the Bastard Heron is a Border Chief of some repute, who has served his county with distinction in war time; although I say this, I owe him little love on more counts than one, and should be well content to measure swords with him—he is no depredator on his own score, but he seems to consider himself the champion of the English Border, and when one of our reivers—of whom there are enough and to spare—harries any of our Southern neighbours, his whole force is instantly in the field, and not only does he exact restitution, but pounces besides on the gear of some of our Scotch folks, which spoil he

divides among his retainers, as a compensation, I suppose, for their prompt administration of justice."

"In good sooth," said James with a smile, "that is by no means a bad mode of replenishing an empty exchequer. And when is the day of truce?"

"Two days from hence, my gracious Lord. I shall leave Edinburgh on the morrow before the dawn."

"The place of meeting is in the English territory, is it not?" asked James. "Think you, Sir Robert, there is no peril in riding unattended through a hostile country, where every man is your sworn foe?"

"I should say not, my Liege," returned the Warden. "The Borderers are lawless enough, Heaven knows—but still they hold a rude kind of faith, and would not be likely to violate the truce."

"The matter should be enquired into," said the monarch in a thoughtful tone. "If the meeting takes place on the other

side the Tweed, our Warden ought at least to be accompanied by an armed guard.'

"My Lord King," said the cup-bearer hastily, "I humbly pray you, make no changes while Robert Ker is Warden of the Marches. The custom that has suited his predecessors may very well serve him. There is no risk, I will vouch for it—a whole band of Border-riders would not beset a single man, and with two or three of the knaves I could hold my own."

"We will talk of it at some future moment," said James. "These Marchmen must lead a stirring life, and would make good soldiers—far better in our opinion, than the artizans and handicraftsmen that abound in other lands, although they are scarce enough in our own realms. What say you, my Lord of York? you have been in Flanders and Burgundy, and must have heard something of the mechanics and their apprentices; are they men likely to serve their prince in case of need—or are their

limbs bowed and strength weakened by servile toil?"

Richard had turned from his bride with a smiling lip, when the King addressed him—apparently the question was a difficult one, for he paused a full minute before he answered, and then there was a slight shade of embarrassment in his manner.

“Perhasps your Grace may deem the assertion a bold one, when I say I have seen an apprentice as good a master of his weapon as the best knight that ever belted on a sword.”

James made a courteous observation, and directed his attention to the other guests. The young adventurer did not resume his discourse with his fair Kate—a heavy cloud had settled on his brow, and his eyes were fixed moodily on vacancy—a flood of recollections swept across his brain; the festival, the waving plumes, and glittering jewels had disappeared from view, and he was looking at years gone by, over the gulph of

the irrevocable past. Father Hubert observed his pre-occupation, stepped behind his seat, and touching him on the shoulder, whispered in a low, distinct tone;

“Recollect yourself—what has disordered you thus? Strange eyes are on you.”

Richard turned and noted that his bride's glance was fastened on his face with an air of anxious solicitude, and shaking off the grasp of the confessor, he said aloud:

“Good Father, this is no season for the affair you speak of; it shall have due consideration on the morrow. How can I spare one moment from these hours of happiness?”

And Katherine was soon blushing and smiling once more as she listened to the loving flatteries of her young husband's voice. The priest fell back, somewhat disconcerted with the rebuff he had received, but the feeling passed away in a moment as he muttered:

“He but practises the lessons I have taught him, and should I chafe that he

plays his part so perfectly? Albeit when he has gained the ascent he aims at, he dare not for his life fling down the ladder by which he mounted—my fall would be the prelude of his own.”

With this consolatory reflection, the confessor returned to his post of observation. The banquet was now drawing to a close, when the King called for the large silver goblet which was used on all occasions of state ceremonial—filling it to the brim he rose, and after a few animated allusions to the future prospects of the bride and bridegroom, he bade the company pledge him to the health of Richard of York and the White Rose of Scotland. This appellation was now bestowed on Lady Katherine for the first time, but she retained it to the day of her death, and history speaks of her by this name, as recording at once the pretensions of her husband and her own rare beauty. When did royal eloquence fail to move an audience! rapturous shouts of applause rent the air—James drained his goblet; and the

example was right loyally followed. However there were some exceptions to the general enthusiasm. At one of the distant tables two guests were seated, who did not appear to share the contentment of the rest—chance had placed them together—yet both were alike ignorant of each other's name and station; the one was Sir Ronald Graham, who has been already introduced to the reader. The other, even in his sombre garb, seemed to denote how little congenial to his mood, was the mirth that reigned around—his cadaverous and care-worn features spoke of a spirit ill at ease—he was an Englishman, who, under the name of Dalton, had just joined the adventurer's standard, and offered his services in any way that they could be made available; he was received with open arms, and his adherence quoted as a proof of the attachment still felt for the House of York. In answer to the pledge made by the king, Dalton raised his cup to his lips and lowered it again without tasting the contents

Not so Sir Ronald, he dashed from him the fine Venetian glass with a violence which broke it into a hundred fragments—the eyes of the two met—the shivered glass and the untasted wine told a tale that could not be refuted—they were no longer strangers to each other—they owned one feeling in common, which caution would oblige them to mask from those around them.

At a signal from the monarch, the company repaired to the long gallery, where music's most enlivening measures invited to the dance—Graham and Dalton remained apart conversing in low, eager tones—and the young adventurer, flushed with his own daring hopes, and elated at his continued success, stood the centre of a knot of noble courtiers, and never dreamed that love and revenge were conspiring to eclipse the sun of his prosperity almost ere it rose.



CHAPTER X.

THE WARDEN.

Why is my temper shaken with each breath  
Of fleeting air, that's formed into a voice?  
Why have I not an equal mastery  
Over my passions with the rest of men?

It was an annual custom on the borders, when the two kingdoms were not at open hostility, for the Wardens of the different Marches to hold a solemn meeting, when compensation was made for accidental dam-

ge to property, trifling matters of complaint were amicably adjusted, and such of the more timid spirits as had provoked the vengeance of their stronger neighbours would seize this opportunity of offering pecuniary concessions whereby their wrath might be appeased. Notwithstanding the variety of feuds existing among the borderers, it rarely occurred that the day of truce was violated by the perpetration of any act of violence or outrage. From time immemorial, the place of rendezvous had been on the English side of the Tweed, and the Scottish Wardens had always passed to and fro without suffering the slightest molestation. In compliance with this long established practice, Sir Robert Ker had attended the annual conference—the business of the day was concluded without its tranquillity being infringed by any unusual occurrence, and the Scotch Warden took his road homewards accompanied by a single attendant; this show of careless security being invariably adopted by him when these

periodical meetings summoned him to the English territory; at other times, he was never seen without a band of armed followers, less from an idea of personal defence, than the necessity of enforcing order with the strong hand of power.

On the present occasion, mounted on a black steed, that had not a white speck to be seen, save a star on the forehead, Sir Robert pursued his journey in a more melancholy mood than was his wont. He had just brought, to a satisfactory settlement, several intricate affairs, and yet he was sensible of an unaccountable depression of spirits. Certainly, the surrounding scenery was not of the most enlivening character, but the mind of the Warden was not peculiarly susceptible to external impressions. His way lay through a narrow pass between stupendous hills, whose beetling summits were fringed with brown, stunted fir trees, no sign of habitation or cultivation was visible.

The leaden clouds hung over head in solid masses ; a chill evening mist half wrapped the distance in obscurity, and the wind swept through the ravine with a low portentous wail. As the defile widened, somewhat assuming the appearance of a regular path, the figures of two wayfarers became perceptible to our horseman, who pricked forward with increased celerity in order to overtake them. Here we must leave him for the present, while we make an observation on what was passing a little further on the road.

Under the shade of a straggling ash, whose branches drooped over a brawling rivulet, were stationed two men on horse-back, evidently on the look out, while their position denoted a wish for concealment.

“Hearken!” said one of the men, “is not that the tramp of a horse?”

“’Tis but the whistle of the rising gale; one might well fancy it a funeral moan.”

“I tell you plainly, Starhed, I have no stomach for the business we are on,” said Dick Lilburn—for the speaker was no other than the gigantic border-rider. “I never buckled on sword with less good will than this blessed eve.”

“Leave me, Dick, if you will. It matters not, here I take my stand. I will avenge me or die.”

“How know you that Sir Robert will not take the longer and safer road? You may be foiled yet, my fire-fly.”

“I feel that my prey will not escape me,” replied the youth, ominously, “The Warden, to give him his due, carries a stout heart, and will not skulk the mountain path for its loneliness.”

There was a long pause.

“How bitterly the wind pierces to the marrow of one’s bones,” muttered Lilburn.

“The burning shame of those disgracing blows has scorched out every other sensation. Since that evil day—”

The words were arrested on his lips as a distant cry echoed faintly through the hills. The comrades gazed on each other.

“It is the grey woman of the haunted glen,” murmured the huge border rider, with a superstitious tremour.

All was again still. There was a silence of some minutes, and then a second scream, louder and more piercing than the first, rang through the air.

“There is mischief abroad,” exclaimed Starhed, slackening his rein and galloping madly in the direction of the cries, while his companion followed at a more deliberate pace.

In order to account for the succeeding scene, we must pray our reader to return to Sir Robert Ker. A few moments brought him to the side of the travellers. One was a tall, sun-burnt man, far stricken in years, although he carried them well—his dress indicated that he belonged to the

working classes. Beside him walked a young maiden, whose dark hair and eye, and foreign costume, suggested the idea that she did not owe her birth to that northern clime. The knight reined in his horse as he approached. A single glance sufficed to convince him he had seen that Madonna countenance elsewhere—a slight exertion of memory recalled that it was in Burgundy, on the day of the Duchess' arrival at Saint Evert, whither he was led, partly by curiosity, and partly by a desire to do honor to the Earl of Huntly's daughter—though possessing little reverence for the sex—he was a rough admirer of beauty, and had made some ineffectual efforts to trace whose was the lovely face that had so attracted him.

“My good friend,” demanded the Warden, “whither are you bound?”

“Fair sir,” replied the old man, half churlishly—for he had noted the bold look fixed on his child. “Fair sir, our road seems to

be the same, but our weary limbs can ill keep pace with your mettled steed. I pray you to pass onward."

"My pretty maid," said Sir Robert, "if you will place your tiny foot on the toe of my boot, I will engage to vault you into the saddle as easily as a fly, and thus the way will be lighter for both of us."

Instinctively the young girl drew closer to her father, whose hand played tremulously with his knotted stick as he answered,

"My daughter thanks you for your courtesy, if it is intended as such. We are poor but honest wayfarers, and no fit company for a worshipful knight."

"Still I may not be defrauded of a kiss for my good offer. Nay, fly not, foolish trembler, your contumacy deserves harder penance. Here Andrew," turning to his attendant, "catch me yon frightened fawn; I will press her lips, although her peevishness scarce merits such a grace."



The grim retainer dismounted: as he advanced the maiden uttered the first low shriek that startled the Border-riders in their ambush.

However, aid was nearer than any of the parties expected. Suddenly a man bounded over the ragged summit of an adjacent peak, sprang down the declivity, and stood in another moment by the Warden's side. The new-comer was the Bastard Heron. While pursuing his usual ramble through the hills, accident directed his steps nigh the spot where the above scene was being enacted, and the cry of a woman in distress never met his ear unheeded. Placing himself before Sir Robert's horse, he said sternly,

“Back with you! Act your pleasure on your own Borders, but our free-born maidens shall find a protector from your lawless outrage wherever a man's heart beats in an English bosom. Take warning at once, and go hence in peace while you may,

or the evil that will ensue be on your own head!"

There was a momentary hesitation in the Warden's manner; the affair that had commenced with a rude jest, threatened a bloody termination; he inwardly felt that his cause of quarrel was not a worthy one, and was half inclined to recede, but a glance at the menacing frown on his opponent's brow recalled the native obstinacy of his character, and he answered, in terms as haughty as those in which he had been addressed,

"Stand from my path, base-born churl! The foul fiend himself shall not stay my purpose!"

While these words of defiance were being exchanged, the old man threw himself between the armed attendant and his daughter, and raising his stick dealt him as weighty a blow as his failing force would permit. Incensed at this attack, the retainer dashed his assailant aside with such violence that

he fell to the ground groaning heavily; his head had struck against a projecting stone, and the blood was flowing profusely from a wound in the temple. At this moment a second scream of mingled terror and anguish escaped the young girl's lips. As Sir Robert made a movement to advance, the Heron seized the bridle and caused the horse to rear up almost in a horizontal position; if his aim had been to unseat his opponent, he soon found his mistake, for the Warden remained as immovable as if he were a portion of the noble animal he bestrode. Perceiving that his horse was being backed to the edge of a deep chasm, the Warden drew his short sword, when quick as thought the Borderer relinquished the reins, and grasping the weapon with both hands, heedless of the gashes it inflicted, snapped the blade asunder. Tossing the fragments from him, he threw his long arms around the body of his adversary, and literally endeavoured to tear him from the saddle. In this iron embrace the arms of the Warden were pini-

oned to his sides, and at first his most strenuous efforts were insufficient to extricate himself. Through all the country-side there was none to compare with the Heron for strength and pliancy of limb, or dexterity in manly exercises; neither was Sir Robert a contemptible foe—his position on horse-back gave him a superiority which threatened to render the unequal struggle a brief one.

For some instants nothing was heard but the heavy breathing of the combatants, and then the galloping of a horse was distinguishable in the distance. The strength of the Borderer was becoming gradually expended. Sir Robert had released one of his arms, and snatched the dagger from his belt, when there came a sudden flash, the report of an arquebuse, and the Warden dropped heavily to the earth, bearing with him his antagonist who had not relinquished his tenacious hold.

To rise from the ground and rush towards the maiden who was weeping over her

father's bleeding body was with the Heron but the work of a moment. Hitherto the fierce retainer had stood by her unheeded, while she attempted to restore suspended animation, but when he saw the fall of his leader, he leaped on his horse and was soon lost to view in the winding defile.

Perceiving that life was not quite extinct, the Heron desired the girl to bind the old man's wound with her kerchief, and then returned to the spot where his fallen enemy was lying. Bending over him was a youth whom the chief instantly recognised as Robin Starhed, one of his own followers. His arquebuse, recently discharged, was leaning against the trunk of a neighbouring pine-tree. Dick Lilburn stood a few paces off, holding the horses, and seeming scarcely able to comprehend what had taken place.

“That was an unlucky shot of yours, Starhed, even though it saved me from a stroke of the dagger,” said the chief as he

gazed on the countenance of the dying Scot.

Life was evidently ebbing fast; the eyes were open, but it was difficult to say if recognition were in their glances; the strong man was wrestling with his last enemy, death. At length he appeared to gain a momentary advantage, as by an almost supernatural exertion he raised himself from his recumbent posture, and glared on those around him, while he exclaimed, in faint, hollow tones,

“ I call Heaven and earth to witness, John Heron, that I have been traitorously done to death by you and your myrmidons, on this day of truce! My blood shall be required at your hands, and this deed shall be recorded for ever as a blot upon your country, and a foul stigma on all who bear your name!”

There was no answer made to this solemn denunciation; each one felt inwardly appalled at the consequences of the act that

had been committed. With a convulsive gasp the Warden sank back, a slight tremor passed over his limbs, the dews of death gathered on his brow, and a light foam stood on his lips, while they murmured, "God save King James!" This was a last effort of expiring nature—Sir Robert Ker had breathed his last!

The Heron stooped over the body, and perceived that the bullet had passed a little below the heart.

"You should have aimed at a less vital part, Robin," said he, for Starhed was famed for his singular address as a marksman, whether with bullet or arrow. "But why do I reproach others! It is my own impetuous folly that has brought this sore disgrace on me. I should have remembered the truce; his person should have been sacred as that of our anointed king. I fear me this day's work will bring desolation on many an English hearth."

It was evident the Scottish Warden had

died in the belief that he had been design- edly beset by his enemies, and had fallen a victim to treachery—his opinion did no more than justice, as far as Starhed was concerned. No error of judgment, no excitation of the nerves at his leader's peril occasioned the shot which put so fatal a termination to the encounter—the youth galloped to the spot with a presentiment that he should find Sir Robert engaged in the scene of strife; he did not recognise the person of his chief, he felt only the presence of his enemy, and the dread that some other hand might lay him low—and his bullet sped on its avenging errand.

In a few brief sentences the Heron com- manded his followers to prepare a litter with the branches of trees, that the old wayfarer, whose course seemed nearly run, might be conveyed to the Heron's Haunt, with as much ease as the circumstances of his case would permit. His intention was to send from his castle a small troop to carry the



remains of Sir Robert Ker across the Tweed to the Castle of Jedburgh.

While the Border-riders were executing his orders, by a little kindly questioning he contrived to elicit from the poor maiden some account of herself. Her father, Nicholas Hatherton, was, she said, born and bred in the border-land, and had practised the craft of armourer in Burgundy, until lately, having sustained some severe losses in trade, he determined to return to his native country, and spend his last days among the friends of his youth. It was during their tedious journey from the coast that the above unhappy adventure had occurred.

All was in readiness for the march; the sufferer was placed on the rudely-constructed litter, and every eye was turned to the chief for directions how to proceed. With a hasty step he strode to the body of his fallen enemy, and taking from his left hand the hunting-glove embroidered with the armo-

rial cognizance of the Herons, he laid it on the breast of the dead knight, that all men might know by whom the deed had been committed. It was the custom of John Heron, in consequence of the stain on his birth, to employ the left glove as his gage in all matters of challenge, in order to distinguish him more markedly from the legitimate head of that noble house.

The litter was now raised and borne forward by the chief and Dick Lilburn; Viola Hatherton walked by her parent, holding his nerveless hand, and Starhed followed with the horses. They wended their way slowly and in silence, save when a groan broke at intervals from the lips of the wounded man.

Night had spread her sable wings ere they reached the Borderer's fortress. On entering the embattled gates, his first order was to send forth a band in quest of the corpse of Sir Robert Ker. Starhed accompanied them in the capacity of guide.

Dawn was glimmering in the East before the English Border-riders returned from an unsuccessful mission; they had sought far and wide—but the body of the Warden was nowhere to be found.

CHAPTER XI.

LOVE.

Without the smile from partial beauty won,  
Oh, what were man?—a world without a sun!

CAMPBELL.

THE sun was sinking to his rest, half cur-  
tained by a floating mass of golden clouds,  
as Richard of York and his bride of a day  
paced together along the trim, formal walks  
of the pleasure-garden which stretched be-  
hind the city residence of the Earl of Huntly.

His arm was thrown fondly around her graceful figure, and perhaps at that moment he did not deem the treasure of her love bought at too costly a price, even though self-respect and peace of conscience had been lost in the purchase.

Who has not felt occasionally, when introduced to an utter stranger, a vague impression that the aspect and features are not quite unfamiliar?—an indefinite consciousness that they have been encountered before, while memory declines to lend her aid for the solution of the mystery? Such was the case with the Lady Katherine Gordon; could it have been in her dreams that she had beheld the future partner of her destiny?—and she smiled as the idea crossed her mind.

Having elicited the cause of that involuntary smile, the Adventurer strove to combat the impression that they had met at some former period of their existence.

“And yet,” he added, “why should he doubt the airy creations of her slumbering

brain had worked so pleasant a miracle, since her own image was but the embodiment in one perfect whole, of all the phantoms of loveliness which had been wont to haunt the imagination of his youth.

“Tell me, my good lord,” interrupted the Lady Katherine, “tell me something of your early youth—if the sad tale will not weary you: I would fain hear you speak of yon gloomy Tower of London, where you passed so many hours of captivity, and escaped at last so cruel a death.”

“Nay, my own Kate, this is no time for such a blood-stained chronicle. The past is to me a tragic volume, which I would gladly keep for ever sealed; and the present is full of bliss so undeserved, that I tremble at the excess of my happiness. Say, lady mine, had your husband proved to be the lowly serf, which for his safety's sake he has sometimes been obliged to seem, could you have loved him then?”

“Jest not, my dear lord, on so high a theme,” exclaimed Katherine, as she disen-

gaged herself from his embrace, and stood before him with a countenance which denoted, in the play of each expressive feature, the earnest nature of her feelings.

“The kingdom you were born to rule, may have passed into the hands of the usurper, but who shall unking you? To me, you will ever be lord and sovereign. Though not a rood of the land, that should have been your inheritance, may ever call you master, who shall pluck from your bosom the royal heart that leads you forth to battle for the sceptre of your ancestors? In that dread struggle, no woman’s fear shall hold you back; and whatever of evil may betide, one subject will remain to you, whose loving duty will seek to atone for the unmerited strokes of adverse fortune.” And as she spoke, the young wife stooped forward to kiss her husband’s hand.

Passing his other hand rapidly across his brow, the adventurer turned on her a

glance of unutterable fondness as he murmured :

“ Little should I reckon of crown or kingdom, if this true heart still owned my dominion.”

At this moment, the figure of Father Hubert caught Richard's eye, as he crossed a side alley intersecting the other extremity of the long gravel walk.

“ I fear that I must quit this dear side for a short space,” said the adventurer. “ An affair of moment, summons me from you ; yet believe, sweet Kate, like a very miser, I shall long to return and gaze on my treasure, in order to assure myself of its possession.”

“ I like not the aspect of yonder dark priest,” observed the lady. “ Like some spectre from another world, he ever starts up when least expected, and then a cloud gathers on your brow, and you seek an early pretext to leave me.”

“ Chafe not at the vigilance of one whose



counsels I deeply value ; without his aid I should never have won my peerless bride ; all the energies of his active and powerful mind, have constantly been devoted to my success."

" Since he holds so high a place in your esteem, that should alone suffice to bespeak my favor ; and as a penance for my idle prejudice, I will, myself, begone and leave you to your conference," and inclining her snowy forehead to meet his eager lips, Katherine glided across the mossy lawn, where the daisy scarce bowed the head beneath the elastic tread of her fairy foot.

With a heart full of emotions, whose conflicting character it would be impossible to describe, Richard gazed after his beautiful companion till distance rendered her invisible ; and then folding his arms upon his breast, he slowly paced the narrow pathway, while his thoughts took the following strain, although they did not shape themselves into words.

" She says truly," he mused to himself,

“ yon hooded priest is, to me, a spectre of the past; haunting me with recollections of another sphere; the tempter whose smooth tongued words impelled me first to plunge into this sea of error—if it were not for the interruption of his presence, I might sometimes be led to forget what I have been, in what I seem to be. And yet, what is Katherine herself? My accusing angel! although she dreams not of it—her truthful look—her confiding affection and gentle deference, all these plant daggers in my heart—how would she spurn me could she guess to whom she had allied herself! Still, if she knows it not, wherein have I wronged her? Will not my heart beat for her with a love more fond and deep than the languid pulses of any son of luxury could ever feel? Shall I not be as watchful to soothe, as bold to defend, as if the blood that courses through my veins, could be traced to a hundred noble sires? To win her smiles, who would have perilled earth and heaven as I have done? Away then, with such gloomy

thoughts? Let me, with firmness at least, play the part I have taken on myself! And now, to seek my counsellor."

A few rapid strides brought the young man to the side of Father Hubert, and then succeeded several explanations relative to the intricacies of the plot, which will be found duly chronicled in the various histories of Perkin Warbeck's insurrection.

"Have you heard nought further from Sir William Stanly?" inquired the young adventurer.

"Not a syllable ; I fear much the learned chancellor's correspondence must have fallen into evil hands."

"It could not endanger his neck, if it is written in the usual cypher, of which we have the key."

"No doubt every possible precaution has been taken to elude discovery," rejoined Father Hubert. "And now, my lord, I would venture to suggest that, in your private negotiations with James, you must be no niggard of your promises, fair words at

the present crisis, will avail more than an armed host ; there are various strongholds on the other side of the Tweed, which the Scottish Kings have long coveted, of these you must guarantee him the possession—that is to say, when you come into your own—as a return for his immediate countenance and protection,”

Richard bit his lip, and fixed his eyes upon the ground, while he answered in a constrained voice,

“ It seems to me, neither just nor politic to compromise the interests of a people whose affections it would be desirable to conciliate ; and to surrender fortresses, which have been termed, with reason, the keys of the country, into the keeping of a rival king, would appear, to me, a dangerous expedient. But, indeed, the discussion is useless ; as if I could bring my mind to consent to an agreement of such a nature ; there is no certainty that I shall ever be in a position to redeem the pledge.”

“ Truly,” said the priest, with a smile,

“that last argument of yours lends weight to my side of the question. It will be easy to pass your word for the performance of certain conditions, whose fulfilment circumstances may forbid; and should happy fortune once raise you to the height we aim at, your promise can then be broken.”

While his companion spoke, the adventurer listened intently with knitted brow, flashing eye, and clenched teeth; as the last words were uttered, he sprang forward and grasped the other's arm violently, as he muttered,

“Out on you, for a false-tongued villain! And yet,” he added, relaxing his hold, “why should I upbraid him? Is not my own soul steeped in guilt and deception of a far deeper dye? I have lost the right to rebuke falsehood and condemn treachery—henceforth, they are my household gods and sit at my domestic hearth smiling at their victim.”

And the young man buried his face in his hands and groaned aloud.

“My young friend,” said the confessor, fixing his keen eye upon him; “take not the matter so seriously. That which I have proposed to you, is but one of the many stratagems which men of worldly wisdom deem justifiable, when employed in state affairs. In transactions of this nature, a slight deviation from rectitude does not involve a loss of honour. Has any thing occurred to make you loath the path you have chosen, and thus changed into reproaches, the grateful thanks with which you loaded me a few days since, as being the chief instrument in your elevation to splendour and happiness. Is there reasonable foundation for this alteration of sentiment?”

Richard shook his head impatiently.

Then, with a long succession of soothing arguments and subtle reasonings, did Father Hubert endeavour to reconcile his pupil to

the lot he had destined for him; laughing away his scruples, and urging that the assumption of the character of another person could not be accounted an injury to society, when the real existence of the individual in question would be generally hailed as a benefit. The topic upon which they had differed, was not again alluded to; and if the companions separated with somewhat less than their usual demonstrations of cordiality and good-will—at least the young man's manner was courteous and his words calm, as he wished the priest good even, and directed his steps towards the princely residence of the proud Earl, whose son-in-law he had become. The connection between Father Hubert and the youthful adventurer, generally known as Richard of York, was not of a nature likely to foster in the latter any feeling of respect for his preceptor, and yet such was the power of intellect, added to the advantages of experience, that the wily priest had contrived to obtain an almost unbounded influence over the mind of his pupil—his instructions, evil in their

import, were ever supported by sophistries difficult to refute—so subtle was the poison that it gradually became diffused into the system, without causing any decided shock to the frame. However, since Richard had proclaimed himself a suitor for the hand of the Lady Gordon, the confessor had assumed a greater freedom of address, an occasional sarcastic turn of expression, which did not fail to irritate the mind of his hearer, although the effect was not visible at the moment—bound irrevocably to the course he had adopted, since the happiness of one dearer than himself would be shipwrecked by his defection, there was no further fear that his impetuosity would mar, or his inward sense of right revolt from, the plots and schemes which had for their object the downfall of the house of Tudor. Endowed with many natural gifts of a superior order, during the two years he had been under the priest's tuition, the most careful culture had been expended on his mind and person, with a



view to render him a fair pretender to the regal dignity, and certainly the pains had not been ill-bestowed. Possessed of an untaught eloquence and habitual grace of speech, which art may improve but cannot confer, he seldom failed to charm and interest those with whom he came in contact. There was an easy dignity in his step, and an air of thoughtful command on his broad brow, which made him no unmeet representative of a royal line. Neither is it to be inferred from the readiness with which the nameless outcast yielded to the voice of the tempter, with its promises of exalted station and high-born beauty, that his heart was originally corrupted, or formed in an ignoble mould. On the other hand, his had been a generous ambition, and his temperament frank and open, until in a moment of weakness and despair, he had consented to play the part assigned to him, without foreseeing "the tangled web he was about to weave;" and since that fatal hour the sting of remorse had occasionally made it-

self felt in the very heighth of his triumph and even now prevented him from enjoying the fruits of his deception.

This is a case of no unfrequent occurrence—many there are whose virtue is not firm enough to avoid the wrong, and yet possess sufficient to regret it.

## CHAPTER XII.

## THE ENVOY.

'Tis true I am a king ;  
Honors and glory too have been my aim :  
But tho' I dare face death, and all the dangers  
Which furious war wears in its bloody front,  
Yet could I choose to fix my fame by peace,  
By justice, and by mercy ; and to raise  
My trophies on the blessing of mankind ;  
Nor would I buy the empire of the world  
With ruin of the people whom I sway,  
Or forfeit of my honor.

ROWE.

It is curious to note with what fanatical  
zeal men of the middle ages embraced the

faction to which their early training or personal predilection inclined them—how devotedly blind was their enthusiasm—how ready their belief in the possibility of success—and how easily was the faintest spark of hope extracted from the ashes of despair, and fanned into a bright and steadfast flame. Notwithstanding the late insurrection, organized by Simnel, had terminated so promptly in the complete overthrow of the insurgents, and the beheading and hanging of the ringleaders, the expectations of the Yorkists were still on the stretch; and in the easy credulity with which they accepted the claims of another pretender, might be read their fervent wish to see the banner of the White Rose once more in the field. And yet, to a dispassionate mind, Henry VII. was seated so firmly on the British throne, that the hopes of his adversaries had but a sorry foundation—his union with Elizabeth, daughter of Edward of York, and the last scion of that ill-fated line, bespoke for him the legitimate homage

of the country—his coffers were full of treasure that in those days, as in these, sufficed to purchase service and allegiance; and above all, he had contrived to attach to himself that new power lately grown up in the state, whose voice began to be heard, and whose influence would make itself felt; the traders and merchants of London, and their connections in England's most wealthy and populous cities, who were already assuming a distinct course of policy, and were no longer to be crushed by the armed heel of the noble, or affrighted by the terrors of the Church—the character of the reigning sovereign, cold, prudent, and calculating, was better appreciated by the thrifty sons of commerce than by the haughty Barons, who esteemed only the more chivalrous qualities characteristic of their orders. Aware that a fresh pretender to the crown had started up, and sought protection and assistance from the King of Scotland, Henry immediately despatched an ambassador to the court of Edinburgh,

to demand that the impostor should be dismissed from the kingdom. The individual selected to perform this mission, was Sir Ralph Wentworth, a man of little note, but one whose keen perception, undoubted courage, and inflexible loyalty had secured for him the favorable opinion of his royal master, and pointed him out as a fitting representative of his interests. The envoy had no sooner reached Edinburgh than his arrival was duly announced, and an early day was appointed for his reception. A full council was convened an hour before the time fixed for the introduction of the English ambassador—at one end of the hall, in a chair of state sat King James; and at his right hand was Richard of York, whose presence had been solicited in order that he might make a personal appeal to that noble assemblage, before his powerful enemy had an opportunity of urging his banishment. The monarch, after a few brief words of explanation, made a sign that the Adventurer should advance and

speaking in his own behalf. With a stately step Richard moved into the centre of the hall, and certes at that moment there was neither doubt nor vacillation on his lofty brow; as he raised his head, and glanced at the brilliant throng, his cheek flushed, his eye kindled, and he looked and felt as if he were indeed the exiled prince pleading for his birthright.

“Peers of Scotland,” he commenced, “brave knights and honorable councillors, by favor of your sovereign, I am here this day to pray of your nobleness and bounty that which would not be denied to the meanest kind—the boon of breathing the air of your free land unmolested, the power of wending where I list unquestioned. The broad heritage that my father’s sword wrested from the grasp of the usurper, is now swayed by another. The Envoy of this potent enemy stands now at your gate, to require that I should be thrust forth like a branded felon—this will be his demand. My lords, I read your answer on

your fearless brows; still it would be a wrong to your friendly trust, did I forbear to say that hereafter I shall turn my steps to England, backed by my just cause, a dauntless heart, and the few followers whom love and old allegiance have bound to me—and good hope have I that when the White Rose takes the field, friends will gather thick to the standard of their early faith. The struggle may not be bloodless, but if the issue is successful, Scotland will find Richard of York bears a grateful heart, and dear as brothers will he hold such knights as lend him aid of men or arms. After what I have avowed, if the dread of England's displeasure should interpose, and you cannot or dare not protect me, I will withdraw without remonstrance, and only sigh to think that Scottish men are less generous than I had believed. How say you, noble sirs, shall I have the boon I crave?"

The death-like stillness which prevailed while the Adventurer spoke, was broken by



a low murmur of approbation, which was only suppressed in deference to the presence of the king, who surveyed the scene before him with an air of keen interest although he did not offer any interruption. Then Archibald, lord of Angus, stepped forth. This was the celebrated warrior who had obtained the name of Bell-the-cat, from a circumstance that must be so well known to our readers that a repetition of it would be needless. Large of stature, strong of muscle, and gigantic in strength was the Chief of the line of Douglas, and although he had reached a time of life usually more distinguished for wisdom than personal prowess, his stalwart manhood had lost none of its might, and as he stood leaning on his heavy, two-handed sword, which few in that chamber could wield, bold indeed must have been the spirit that coveted a trial of arms with the stout old earl.

“My gracious liege,” said the Douglas, and his voice, potent in the council as in the field, riveted instant attention, “your

royal wisdom has in some measure left this matter to our arbitration, and therefore, beseeching your good patience, I would say it touches our honor that the young Prince of York should be driven from our shores at the bidding of our Southern neighbours. In consideration of the existing treaty, we may not marshal him across the Tweed with the banner of Scotland flying beside his own, though, by Saint Dunstan! such would be a just requital for former courtesies from English rulers. If they want aught in Scottish land, let them come and take it; they will find a rougher welcome than they look for. We may not be forward to attack, but we will be prompt to defend. If any here hold different judgment, impartial hearing should be given him, only let him beware that his counsel be not backed with arguments to which it might not beseem our king to listen."

"As thinks the Douglas, so say we!" exclaimed a score of eager voices in one breath.

James noted the gathering enthusiasm, and his hazel eye brightened; then with a mien of grave majesty which he well knew how to assume, he addressed the animated conclave.

“ Lords, ye have spoken as becomes your gallant spirit and knightly faith; and yet, the peace of two kingdoms must not be endangered lightly. Earl Hepburn, cousin Huntly, marshal this royal messenger with due ceremonial to our presence—we will admit him straight, and learn what Henry of England demands at our hand. If he ask what our honor may lawfully grant, he will not find us loath to do him pleasure.”

Obeying a silent gesture from the monarch, the Adventurer withdrew from the audience-hall, where a deep silence reigned, until the entry of the English Envoy, preceded by the nobles who had been appointed to conduct him to the presence.

Sir Ralph Wentworth was a man whose

calm superiority of mind forbade his being overawed by the dignity of rank, while his steady self-control would enable him under all circumstances to maintain a suitable deference to the symbol of royalty. Small had been the train assigned him by his sovereign, for the pressing nature of his mission did not admit of that ostentatious splendour usually displayed in any solemn embassy between the countries.

Passing through the gorgeous ante-chamber, the British Envoy became instantly an object of remark and interest to the groups of lesser nobles congregated there. Amid the glitter and shine of costly velvet and gleaming jewels, the dark robe of Father Hubert was seen in strange contrast, as he spoke in light phrase to the younger knights, of the pastimes suiting their years, while his ear was painfully stretched to catch the slightest sound from the adjoining hall.

Sir Ralph Wentworth advanced to King James's chair of state and made him due

obeisance, a herald having previously presented his letters of credence on bended knee. The monarch made gracious answer,

“ We have learned,” added he, “ that the majesty of England sends us a message through your lips. What wills our royal brother? We shall hold ourselves debtor if you will teach us how we may serve him.”

“ Gracious Sire,” replied Sir Ralph, “ I speak the bidding of my lord and king. Henry VII., by God’s grace, King of England and Ireland, demands that the Flemish imposter, falsely assuming to be Richard of York, should be banished this kingdom; and further, my most puissant liege and sovereign entreats your royal grace to distrust such ill-advised counsellors as would seek to dissuade you from his alliance, and for the establishment of a firm and durable peace, my gracious lord proposes to meet in person the King of Scotland, at any place

on the Borders that may be mutually agreed upon."

It may be matter of surprise that a prince so politic as Henry should couch his commission in terms so peremptory and so liable to offend a fiery spirit, but the English monarch was aware that an open enemy was less to be dreaded than a covert one, and his emissary had clear instructions to unmask the intentions of James, and compel him to avow them and take some decided part in the impending struggle. Besides, the feeling of the English was so jealously averse to the intermeddling of other states in their civil broils, that Henry knew the declared hostility of their northern neighbours would at least have the effect of giving an impetus to their national defences, which advantage he was resolved not to forego, in case he could not avert the evil of a foreign war.

There had been an angry spot on James's cheek at the commencement of the Envoy's

address, but he offered no interruption, and at the close he replied gravely,

“Compliance with your first demand accords not with our will, and exceeds our power. England forgets our dignity, and wrongs her own when she asks us to dismiss the guest we have voluntarily received.”

“May it please your Highness,” said Sir Ralph; “such a requisition is not without precedent; on this very question Charles of France—”

“Is no rule for James of Scotland,” interrupted the king sharply; “It is idle to cite an example we should shame to follow; Charles of France may choose to be dictated to in such a guise, and become thereby the scoff of Christendom—that is nought to us—urge us no further on this point; you have heard our answer.”

“Pardon Sire, if, having delivered the charge of my sovereign, I would fain offer a few words in my own unworthy person. Have I your princely leave?”

James nodded slightly, and the Envoy continued.

“As I rode hitherward, pressed with haste, and full of anxious thought, my eye could not but range over the fruitful fields and smiling glens through which my course was bent; will not your Highness ponder well ere you doom so fair a realm to a sanguinary contest, of which the issue must be doubtful?”

Here the king glanced proudly on his warlike vassals, the bulwarks of his throne. Sir Ralph marked the movement, and aptly changed the theme.

“And even should success crown your arms, the wail of the orphan and tears of the widow would too late awake remorse for the blood unnecessarily shed. Thinks not your Grace, the sacrifice of human pride to the prosperity of a whole people, will be more pleasing in the sight of Heaven than endowing the church with the spoils of victory?”



At this part of the discourse, James drew closer round him the iron belt which he always wore in penance for his involuntary participator in his father's murder.

“These manifold evils—the impoverishment of a fertile land, the destruction of human life, the curse of the desolate hearth, may be avoided by the exertion of your single will, without abatement of your regal dignity. Give King Henry the meeting he seeks, and in a personal conference your differences will be adjusted; and with one breath will be dispersed the light clouds which have unhappily arisen to impair so noble a fellowship.”

The Envoy ceased speaking, and a dead stillness reigned in the hall—the nobles read the indecision on the brow of their sovereign, and fixed their eyes moodily on the ground.

“Leave us for awhile, Sir Ralph,” said James, slowly. “We will take counsel of our own heart, before we reject your proposal. You have spoken well and boldly;

Henry of England has an able servant in his Envoy. An hour hence we will speak with you again.

Sir Ralph Wentworth bowed lowly and withdrew; and as he retired, he felt that if the establishment of peace were not yet fully decided, there was every probability that the result of his mission would be more favourable than he had dared to hope.

CHAPTER XIII.

DEFIANCE.

Wide let the news through Scotland ring,  
The northern eagle claps his wing !

SCOTT.

AFTER the door had closed on the Envoy, the silence remained unbroken until King James raised his head and scanned the dissatisfied countenances round him.

“What think you, my good lords,” asked

he, "of the project of this southern emissary, that we should give Henry of England the meeting in our person? Perchance, it would save some shedding of blood, and much waste of land. Yet, by our lady! ye look not as if the peaceful mood jumped with your humours. Speak, Angus, we will hear what you have to say, man, although we reserve the arbitrement of the question to ourself.

The Douglas, notwithstanding his unimpeachable loyalty and acknowledged services, was scarcely a favourite with James, from his prominent station and the high consideration in which he was held by his fellow barons; he was usually their mouth-piece on all occasions, when they desired to express their dissent from the known will of their sovereign—while his natural independence of character, and ignorance of a courtier's arts, rendered him habitually careless of chafing the monarch's fiery mood—and the manner in which the opposition was tendered, doubled the odium

of the act. Thus, on the present occasion James addressed himself to his powerful subject as the readiest means of ascertaining the sentiments of the rest. Bluntly did Douglas answer to the appeal.

“My liege,” said he, “ye have guessed aright, that having mustered our followers and made ready for the field, we mislike much, that such a goodly company should be dispersed without some blood-letting—howbeit, we are bound to conform to the pleasure of our leader, though it be variable as the wind. Still, when your Grace makes mention of a personal conference with Henry of England for the redress of our national grievances, I cannot choose but say, that your Highness’ youth and inexperience, would be an ill match for the English king’s mature wisdom—like wax would he mould you to his purpose—”

“Now, by my faith!” angrily interrupted James, “you have overstepped your license, Earl Douglas; and though you show little reverence for our lack of years, we would

bid you be wary that you urge not our patience too far, lest you find that Scotland's sceptre has not changed into a distaff, because her king is yet in the prime of youth."

"My gracious lord," interposed the Earl of Huntly, "I beseech you, be not over hasty to impute as a failure in respect, a caution, which the service of the state demanded. Douglas could not have intended—"

"Douglas needs no interpreter of his sayings," exclaimed the earl, vehemently. "If I have spoken amiss, it is too late to amend the matter—the wrath that I have aroused, I will abye."

These words, although they could not be actually termed rebellious, were accompanied by a look of defiance, which intimated how little the speaker heeded whose displeasure he had kindled.

An angry rejoinder was arrested on the lips of the monarch by a loud outcry proceeding from the ante-chamber; it was as

if a general burst of lamentation, echoed by many voices, betokened some tragic occurrence. Amazed and indignant at so unexampled a breach of decorum, the Earl of Huntly glided to the door, and half opened it, with a view to obtain some clue to the cause of the uproar, and in the expectation that his movement would call to the recollection of those present, the vicinity to the royal presence. Surrounded by a dense circle of anxious faces, stood a man in military garb, who was, apparently, narrating something which exercised an indescribable influence over the passions of the auditory.

“Tarry no longer,” cried Lord Hamilton, the most prominent of the group, in tones so audible, that they could hardly fail to reach the ears of those within the hall. “In to the king—the English Envoy has but now left the presence—the day should not be a second older ere your tale is told.”

The crowd parted, shouting simultaneously :

“To the king! to the king!”

And several of the young nobles pushed forward, dragging with them, the bearer of the intelligence which had created so violent an agitation. At this moment, the Earl of Huntly presented himself before them, and authoritatively motioned ~~to them~~ to them to fall back; he was about to close the door, and thus bar their further progress, when James, with an impatient brow, left his chair of state and stepped into the centre of the hall, saying—

“Admit these untimely intruders, cousin Huntly, whoever they be—if they have broken on our counsel without sufficient warrant, they shall rue their offence.”

There was a profound hush of expectation as the slightly raised voice of the king fell on the ears of those who thronged



the gangway ; the crowd wavered for a moment, as if the boldness of their trespass had just become apparent—and then Lord Hamilton, Sir Ronald Graham, and some other knights of less distinction, advanced, leading forward the military stranger, while the space behind them became gradually filled up by spectators from the ante-chamber.

“Ye are over bold, sir!” said James, “in thus forcing yourselves upon us—our deliberations or concerns of state, should be sacred from your unmannerly intrusions. Have you no reverence, that you neglect the usual means of approach? When did James Stuart deny himself to the lowliest of his subjects? When did he refuse aid to the afflicted, or justice to the oppressed?” Observing the downcast looks of the group, the royal monitor continued, in a milder tone, “What is this weighty business which must even taken precedence of the affairs of our kingdom? Ye are mute enough now, —will no one answer?”

The eyes of the party were instantly turned towards the soldier; who, encumbered with his warlike accoutrements, stood making profound obeisances, too abashed at the scene into which he had been so unceremoniously hurried, to render the required explanations.

The king remarked the awe his presence had inspired; and with the gracious purpose of affording the man time to collect his scattered faculties, ere he delivered himself of his tale, demanded his name."

"Jasper Ogilvy, at your Highness' service," was the reply.

"What wind brought you hither?" asked he monarch. "Whence come you?"

"Please your Grace, I am captain of the guard at your Highness' royal castle of Jedburgh?"

"Ha! what cheer from the borders? There must be wild work, I trow, for Sir Robert Ker, our trusty and well-beloved Warden, has failed us at our

morning's council. Doubtless, you bear his excuse. What says he—why came he not?"

"Noble king," replied the captain of the guard, "the lord Warden will never send message or sit at council more—he has been foully done to death by the English borderers, among their own hills, on the day of truce."

"Murdered!" gasped James, while a thrill of horror passed through the assemblage. "Now, by my crown!" continued the monarch as he stamped violently on the ground, and his eye sparkled with passion. "Vengeance bloody and dire will I exact for this cruel and dastardly deed. My loyal servant! Never had king a subject more faithful and true. For every hair of his head an Englishman shall die. Where lies his body—how know you your tale is true?"

"My Liege, a single retainer rode with Sir Robert, when he was beset by the troop of murdering Southernns—after he saw his

leader struck down, the man set spurs to his horse, and fled at the top of his speed to the other side of the Borders, there by good hap he fell in with a few of our Scottish riders under Donald Armstrong; he guided them back instantly to the scene of the affray, where they found the lifeless body of our Warden—his assassins had disappeared—the honored remains were borne with due ceremony to the castle of Jedburgh, whence the Governor forthwith despatched me with orders not to draw bridle before the sad tidings had been laid before your Grace.”

“Did you discover no traces of those by whom the crime was perpetrated?” asked James in the low, concentrated tones, which indicate the intensity of passion with far more certainty than the most violent outward ebullitions.

The captain of the guard drew from his doublet a glove, which he presented to the King with a profound and reverential inclination.

“This,” said he, “was found on the breast of the murdered man, in token that the doer of the traitorous deed shames not to avow his guilt.”

“This glove belongs to the left hand,” observed the monarch, carefully examining the embroidered cognizance. “How say you, cousin Huntly, whose felon hand owns this glove?”

The Earl thus appealed to, glanced slightly on the device, then instantly replied:

“The Bastard Heron’s,” and the glove was passed from hand to hand, and all with one voice corroborated the testimony,

“Now,” said James with dignity, “that we have been enlightened as to the nature of the peace which Henry of England desires to cement, we will again admit his Envoy, and bid him tell his master that though these fair realms be doomed to float in blood, we will not leave our subject’s death unavenged.”

In obedience to an intimation from the monarch, the officials departed to re-sum-

mon Sir Ralph Wentworth. At this moment the Earl of Douglas approached, and bending a knee, which seldom bowed to anything mortal, he took his sovereign's hand and pressed it to his lips.

"Pardon, my Liege," said he, if my rugged mood showed a lack of reverence which the heart of Douglas can never feel. Will your Grace forget what passed but now, and only remember that if James Stuart wills to resent a wrong, there is one life that would gladly be laid down in his cause."

James was touched with the submission of his mighty vassal, and raising him from the ground, said earnestly :

"Noble Angus, we have never mistrusted you—curb your frowardness of speech, and the annals of our reign will bear record of you as a man whom his sovereign honored as a leader, and valued as a friend."

In the interval that elapsed previous to the entrance of Sir Ralph, the King returned to his chair of state, and his cour-

tiers formed a brilliant circle round him, while those who had passed in from the outer chamber, finding their intrusion met with no further check, ranged themselves in a line down the spacious hall, in order to witness the ensuing scene. As Sir Ralph Wentworth won his way through the encircling ranks, he could not fail to mark the changed appearance of things, but without seeming to notice the fiery glances directed towards him, he stood once more before the Scottish King.

“We engaged that you should not tarry long for our answer,” commenced James, “this is it—war—fierce and deadly as the aggressions of which we have to complain—war to the death. Fire and flame may desolate our kingdom, yet these we prefer to the assassin’s steel.”

“Has your Highness then rejected the personal conference?” enquired Sir Ralph.

“Good faith!” replied the king, “we owe you thanks for the offer, Sir Envoy. But we would sooner trust our person in a

den of wild beasts, than with Henry of England and his treacherous subjects."

"Please your Highness," said the English knight, "I am a plain man, and read no riddles. Will your Grace deign to explain the cause."

"Learn it then," thundered James, "the murder of Sir Robert Ker, our Lord Warden, by your traitorous Borderers—our own friend whom we would have given our right hand to save—the bravest, truest, most devoted—" James paused for a moment in uncontrollable emotion, and then added more calmly—"This deed has been done by one of the Herons, a near kinsman to your own Warden. To express a doubt is useless—an eye-witness has assured us of the fact. Return then to your master, Sir Ralph, and tell him we shall soon cross the Borders in other fashion than he looks for."

"Sire, if you would but accord me time," urged the Envoy, "to communicate with the court at London, something might yet



be done in this unhappy affair. I would pledge my life there is no reasonable compensation that Henry would deny for so grievous a wrong."

"We can accord nothing further," answered the monarch. "Our wounded honor lies bleeding, and we shall ourselves avenge it. The sword has left our scabbard, and, Heaven be our witness! shall not be sheathed until your lord Warden, Sir William Heron, the head of his house, is brought before us dead or alive, that we may deal with his body as his kinsman has done to that of Sir Robert Ker. We grieve to play the niggard host, Sir Ralph, but we would counsel you, after needful repose, to hasten back with what speed you may, or we may chance to be our own herald."

By an imperious wave of the hand, James intimated that the audience was over, and thus closed this memorable interview, from which the actors retired with very different sentiments. The moment that the Envoy heard the nature of the

transgression that had been committed, he abandoned all hopes of peace—the surrender of the culprits would not have been deemed sufficient atonement—for setting aside the private feelings and public motives of James himself, in those days when a mortal feud was handed down from generation to generation as a natural heirloom, it could hardly be expected that the kinsfolk of the murdered man would rest contented while one of their enemies' race remained unsubdued; and on the other hand it could not be looked for, that a powerful family like the Herons should submit to indignity in the person of its chief, on account of an offence perpetrated by one of its branches; it was certainly within the range of possibility that they might not shield the offenders, but voluntarily they could not be induced to take any steps for a reconciliation to which they were indifferent. To comply, therefore, with the only demands to which the Scottish King would listen, involved a more arbitrary

stretch of authority than Henry dared to hazard on the eve of a general insurrection, which had for its declared object the restoration of the former dynasty. Under these circumstances war was inevitable. Although James mourned the loss of his favorite, and burned to avenge it, he was not on the whole dissatisfied with the complexion affairs had assumed; when solemnly appealed to, he would have resigned his personal wishes to his kingdom's weal, and signed an inglorious peace, which must have shut him out from all hope of distinction in martial achievements, but how much more willingly did he persuade himself that duty leaned to the side of inclination, and his whole mind was now occupied with arrangements for his march southward.

The Earl of Douglas rode away from the council at the head of his numerous followers, with a grim smile relaxing his iron features, as he laid his hand on his cumbrous sword, and thought how soon it might be drawn against his old Border enemies; and

the lowest squire in his train shared, in some degree, in the joy of his lord.

There was yet another who watched the proceedings of the day with the keenest interest. Father Hubert had pressed into the audience-hall with the rest, and unobserved, had taken his position in the background, where he listened to the final dismissal of the Envoy, with a triumph of heart which he contrived to conceal from every eye. War was declared with England—his darling project would receive the aid of Scotland; in anticipation he already revelled in success; his pupil, the puppet he had created, would fill the throne, while the obscure priest would sway the destinies of England—such at least were the aspirations of his ambitious mind, as with slow step and thoughtful brow he withdrew from the council-chamber.

CHAPTER XIV

THE HERON'S HAUNT.

If misfortune comes, she brings along  
The bravest virtues.

THOMSON.

WE must now return to the Border-fortress, where Viola Hatherton watches with unutterable anguish the ebbing life of her parent and only friend. Since the unhappy evening which terminated the existence of Sir Robert Ker, the utmost vigilance, that human foresight could suggest, had been

exercised in the Heron's Haunt, to guard against surprise; conscious as was its Chief that the whole force of a powerful kingdom might be levied at any moment for his destruction, while in the case of sudden extremity, he scarce dared to rely on the aid of his kinsman, the English Warden, or any other of his allies, so abhorrent was an aggression committed on a day of truce, in the eyes of every true man.

A deep-seated gloom now constantly overshadowed his brow, and no traces were to be seen of that blithe hilarity which, added to his dauntless courage and unprecedented successes, attached his followers to him in no ordinary degree. The military duties of the castle were carried on with more than usual precision, but in comparative silence, that the last moments of old Nicholas Hatherton might pass away undisturbed.

A day previous to the Border truce, Sir Ralph Wentworth and his scanty train passed into Scotland, and it was generally

known that his object was the establishment of a permanent peace between the two countries. The Chief awaited with restless anxiety the result of his mission. Should war be declared, he might well hope that his sovereign would bury the remembrance of his offence under the weight of new services; but on the other hand, if a fair and equitable peace should be decided on—what would be his fate? The English King could not then deny to the Majesty of Scotland the retribution that would naturally be demanded. Branded as an outlaw, hunted to the death, with the hand of every man raised against him; was such indeed the destiny reserved for the gallant Chief whose chivalrous sense of honor, and inviolable faith had ever been prominent among the irregularities of a Border life. Guiltless as he was of the blood of Sir Robert Ker, was not the act committed in his defence? and the unchecked vehemence with which he had yielded to the impulse of the moment, and rushed to an affray he was almost

bound to shun, caused him many a pang of secret self-reproach.

With folded arms and closely-knit brow, the Bastard Heron paced the short terrace on the top of the keep—it was the fourth day since the passage of Sir Ralph Wentworth into Scotland, no tidings from the Court at Edinburgh had reached that remote district—by whom had the Warden's body been found, and whither had it been conveyed? The feeling of lingering suspense was becoming intolerable, and he resolved at all hazards to terminate it. In truth, the English Envoy had already returned to his own country, by an unfrequented pass, far distant from the Heron's Haunt, the route being less circuitous, and the roughness of the ground proving an impediment to Sir Ralph's rapid advance.

In those days the circulation of public intelligence was attended with great uncertainty; sometimes rumour with her thousand tongues spread it through the land with the swiftness of the wind, and then



again an event of peculiar interest might by chance be withheld from those it most nearly concerned. On the present occasion the murder of Sir Robert Ker filled every bosom with consternation and dismay, and fearing it would be the fore-runner of some general outbreak, the Borderers of both kingdoms repaired to their respective strongholds, to superintend their means of defence.

For the hundredth time the Border Chief paused in his weary walk, and looked abroad on the landscape beneath him—no human figure could he descry—so deep was his reverie that he heard not his own name uttered in gentle accents close beside him, and it was not until a small white hand timidly touched his arm that he turned, and beheld the graceful form of Viola Hather-ton. So lovely was the face presented unexpectedly to his view, that John Heron might well be excused if he fancied for one moment that his guardian angel had visibly

descended to offer consolation to his troubled spirit. The soft dark eyes beamed with tender resignation, and if a slowly gathering tear occasionally overshadowed their brightness, it was forced back to its secret cell, to steal forth only when there was none to witness—the setting sun threw a richer glow over cheek and brow, and the warm rosy lips were perfect in form and colour. The maiden had been watching for many anxious hours by her father's sick couch, and had only withdrawn from her sorrowful task to find the lord of that isolated hold, and entreat that a confessor might be sought to receive her parent's last shrift. When this suit was ended, the chief paused, ere he made reply ; and fearing a denial, Viola added, with simple earnestness,

“ I beseech you, sir, deny not so poor a boon to one whose minutes are numbered ; this is the last grace that mortal power may yet accord.”

“ Fair mistress,” rejoined the Borderer,

“ you mistake John Heron, if you think he would not risk life and limb to do you a pleasure. If I hesitated, it was to ponder how your wish might best meet fulfilment. Well can I avouch no priest will be found nigher than Norham Castle, and that is distant more than a score of miles, as the crow flies—Father Paul will not venture on a lone ride among these wild hills, until the sun is up to light his way, and then, I fear, he will demand an escort—these are troublous times, and any one who sets much store by his span of life, would do more wisely to sit in the chimney nook, and tell his beads, than issue forth where a false Scot might choose to exercise his archery upon a living target. But droop not, Mistress Viola, I will myself do your errand.”

“ Nay!” commenced the maiden, hurriedly, “ if there be aught of peril.—”

“ There is none but what a ready ear, quick eye, and strong arm may avert. And I am not right sure that a death-blow in

some honourable field would not be the best boon I could now desire—at least it might save from a worse fate.”

So deep was the tone of melancholy with which these words were pronounced, that Viola Hatherton, who, her mission being fulfilled, had already retreated a few paces in her anxiety to rejoin her father, could not refrain from turning hastily round to glance on the speaker. Her eye quickly traced the air of despondency visibly imprinted on his features, and her heart smote her as she reflected that in the overwhelming sense of her own approaching bereavement, she had forgotten that in rescuing her from outrage, a heavy penalty had been incurred by her preserver—for such she deemed him—although no further injury was intended her than the perpetration of a foolish jest, it was not singular that in so lawless an age, her apprehensions had assumed the most fearful character. The exact particulars of the case had not been

made known to her, but she fully recognised that her persecutor was of high rank, and his death would be terribly avenged. As these thoughts rapidly crossed her mind, she returned to the Borderer's side.

“ Noble sir,” said she, “ if the protection of the helpless has placed you in danger, let the brave heart which led you on then, still bear you up against the worst that may betide—my poor thanks are all I can render for your priceless service, and though it had been far better that this worthless life should be spent, than that you should be thrust in so fearful a jeopardy, I know well your nobleness will not think so—therefore speak no more so despairingly, it becomes not the manhood of which you are reputed to have given such gallant proof.”

“ Bravely spoken!” exclaimed the chief, and his eye sparkled and his heart beat in quick echo to a reproof which chimed in exactly with his peculiar temperament, and habitual train of associations. “ And

yet, kind maiden, it would be wise to probe the wound ere you attempt the cure. Believe not that John Heron cares a rush for this feud with the Scotch, but the blood shed on that hapless night has affixed a stain to me, nothing can efface—on a day of truce, held inviolate by the most audacious freebooters, I have entered into an affray with the Warden of the Scottish Marches, struck him down as he rode without retinue on our English land, whither he had ventured to hold conference with our own Warden—turn the tale as you will, 'tis a deed that unborn ages will learn to curse—my very blood curdles when I think on't. 'Tis as though I murdered a guest on my own hearth-stone. And all this evil might have been avoided, had I governed my violent mood, and treated Sir Robert Ker with the consideration that was doubly his due. I am not the coward to shrink from the dangers of the fate I have invoked; but to walk evermore with the mark of

shame branded on my brow—it is this that unmans me.”

“ ’Tis a sore trial,” murmured Viola, “ yet if there was no eye-witness save a single retainer, how know you that your person was recognised, and the deed traced to you?”

“ Because,” said the Borderer, proudly, “ I placed my gauntlet on the dead body that no other might suffer for my transgression—had the matter remained doubtful, the whole Border might have been harried ere this. The Scots have now learned on whom to direct their vengeance—I must bide the brunt alone.”

There was a rude nobility in the sentiments of the Chief that involuntarily won the admiration of the armourer's daughter, and she was about to renew the discourse, when an aged crone, whom she had left in attendance on her father during her own temporary absence, made her appearance, and indicated that old Hatherton had twice called for his child. With a hasty step

she instantly disappeared—the Borderer suppressed a struggling sigh as he gazed after her, and then descended to the outer court, where he found Robin Starhed and several of his young comrades engaged in leaping, wrestling, and other military exercises, their sole diversion when the mimic war was not exchanged for the stern reality.

Starhed's bearing had resumed its usual quiet assurance since the murder of Sir Robert Ker, in which he at least had been a wilful agent—with that callous indifference to all moral responsibility which characterized him, he entertained no remorse, and only felt that the foe who had outraged him, no longer drew breath; and his step was lighter, and his sleep more calm in consequence. At times in the midst of his inward triumph, the instinctive attachment that bound him to his chief, would make him pause to consider if the act of vengeance that weighed so little on his soul, might not exercise an evil in-



fluence on the fortunes of his leader; with the careless elasticity of youth, he quickly shook off the presentiment.

By a mute signal John Heron summoned Starhed to his side, and bade him see that his horse was saddled an hour before day-break, with a couple of stout retainers ready equipped to accompany him.

"I would gladly ride in your train," said the youth earnestly.

"'Tis but to escort Father Paul hither from Norham Castle, and his reverence, who has such a marvellous regard for his goodly person, would prefer as a bulwark some of our more burly Riders."

"In sooth! I care not to make one," answered Starhed, "when the object of the expedition is to play guard over a cowardly priest. What horse will it please you to ride?"

"The roan—speed and endurance may both be put to the test—having secured the services of Father Paul, I shall part company with the others. In truth, Rob,

I cannot rest since that luckless affair, and intend to seek tidings at Edinburgh, ere another sun sets."

The Chief turned away, and Starhed returned no more to his companions, but walked aloof, and seemed lost in thought.

CHAPTER XV.

FATHER PAUL.

Where is to-morrow? In another world,  
For numbers this is certain : the reverse  
Is sure to none.

YOUNG.

LONG before daybreak, John Heron was in the saddle, and attended by three sturdy retainers, took the road to Norham Castle. A heavy mist hung like a shroud over the earth, a chilling sleet penetrated to the

skin, and as he looked around, the gloom without responded well to the gloom within. There are moments, when the spirit is oppressed with a weight of despondency, and a deep dejection clouds the burdened mind, that the glorious sunbeam lighting up the face of rejoicing nature, seems but to mock the despairing heart with its triumphant splendours—when the bleak hill, the rugged path, and the whistling gale are all in consonance with the troubled mood, and the traveller feels that life is a struggle wherein the difficulties and dangers are many, and the course seldom runs smooth. So thought the Chief as he sped onward. The first gleam of light had scarcely broken in the east, when by good hap he descried, at some short distance, the fat, rotund figure of Father Paul, bestriding a well-fed mule—to overtake him was the work of a moment. The worthy man was journeying back to Norham Castle, having been absent for some days, as he said, on an errand of mercy, and certes it had passed

into a proverb that his visits were longest where the ale was the strongest.

Nought had he heard of the murdered Warden, and the chance of a feud with Scotland, or the jovial priest would not have been met rambling through the country in so lonely a manner. The necessary explanations having been made, Father Paul was easily induced to yield to the Borderer's solicitations, and prepared to return with the attendants to the Heron's Haunt, while the Chief himself, after a few brief orders, turned his horse's bridle northward in a line of route totally different from that which the party had been hitherto pursuing.

Dick Lilburn, for one of the Border-riders was no other than our old friend, looked long after his leader, and his glance continued strained in the same direction, even when his form had lessened to a speck in the distance—at last, he resettled himself in the saddle with a puzzled air, and shaking his head, he muttered in an under tone,

“See, what a slippery jade fancy is! I could have sworn that I caught sight of Robin Starhed’s diminutive figure gliding after our chief like a second shadow; but it cannot be, and I must have been bewitched for such an idea to cross my brain.”

And as he spoke, he applied himself to urging forward the priest’s mule—which self-willed animal did by no means approve of the retrograde movement, inasmuch, as it did not understand that the present road would conduct them to good quarters as speedily as their former destination. Father Paul was soon engaged in discourse with his escort; to him it was a matter of indifference into whose companionship he was thrown, provided his ready tongue could find a willing listener.

“Mayhap,” asked the other retainer; “your reverence has heard some fresh tidings of the lying young mummer who has stuck a white rose in his cap, and goes by

the name of Richard of York, when we all know the poor young princes were smothered years ago by their crooked-backed uncle.'

"I trow," replied the priest, "that those who march in his train, will find themselves a head shorter some fine day."

"And yet," interposed Lilburn, "they do say many gentlemen of mark and birth, moved by the ancient allegiance, have flocked to Edinburgh to do homage to the impostor. 'Tis pity that so false a knave should have the power to lure men on to destruction."

"This rebellion," said the priest; "is a foul disease spreading far and wide. I fear me, the leprosy must be cut out, lest it eat into the heart of the land. Still the rebel camp contains several whom I pity and esteem; one youth in especial, whom I have known long and hold high in love—brave, and gentle, frank, and courteous, true and quick-witted, is Maurice Vipont, and a liker lad never trod the sward."

“Maurice Vipont,” echoed Lilburn, “that is no Border name.”

“He comes from the midland country, and has sojourned, for weeks together, at Norham Castle, and now the head-strong boy has gone to offer his sword and service to this mad adventurer. Sorely do I grieve for his folly. Gently, Surefoot, gently! A murrain take ~~take~~ the beast! one would think he was possessed by an evil spirit.”

And here a violent contention ensued between the mule and his rider, which cut short further converse, and continued until the party drew up before the embattled gates of the Heron's Haunt. With all due speed, Father Paul was assisted to dismount, and guided to the darkened apartment, where the anxious Viola was keeping her weary watch.

Dick Lilburn had no sooner attended to the wants of his horse, than with his accustomed deliberate pace, he proceeded to make



search for his young comrade, Robin Starhed, but his quest was fruitless, the youth was nowhere to be found, and all enquiries on the subject were equally vain, as no one had noted his egress from the fortress. Not even the mid-day meal had power to divert the mind of the Border-rider from his topic of wonder; and no sooner was that important ceremony concluded, than he betook himself to the outer court, where he encountered Giles Hurst, his companion in the expedition of that morning.

“They do say,” commenced Giles, “that the Fire-fly has made a moonlight flitting of it. Pray heaven he has given no one a stab in the dark—for sure a more fiery spirit never fretted and chafed in a frailer body.”

“He is a bold lad and a shrewd,” answered Lilburn; “and I will be his warranty that he will be back ere his turn of duty comes.”

“Ay! you were ever ready to stand by

him in his mad pranks; but I tell you plainly, friend Lilburn, I see no merit in this young springald you set such store by, with his talk of gentle blood, and hand on his dagger for the first wry word—so I will leave you on the look out for his return—and e'en go drink a health to pretty Janet of the mill."

Giles Hurst was a young man of athletic proportions, with an uncommonly good-humoured countenance, and intelligence and energy rather superior to most of his class. Dick Lilburn's looks expressed considerable dissatisfaction at the other's opinion of his favorite, but his reply was prevented by the appearance of Father Paul, who advanced with an air of unusual gravity.

"Has your reverence shrived the penitent?" inquired the Border-rider.

"Happily I was not too late," said the priest, "his spirit has but now passed away, and the poor maiden is grievously overcome."

Know you any discreet person, of her own sex, who may tend her in these first moments of sorrow? Your garrison contains but one old crone, whose duties are already too numerous."

"There is Janet, the miller's niece," exclaimed Hurst, eagerly. "Right sure am I, that she would be blithe to come on this errand of charity. I will step there forthwith, and ask her presence."

"Be it as you say—you will be doing a good office," said Father Paul, moving slowly away to return to the chamber of death.

In this world of hidden motives, it will often occur that commendation is received for acts of kindness, mainly suggested by our own inclination. I cannot say if this struck Giles Hurst as he hurried out of the side wicket, and proceeded on his mission.

Lilburn had followed his comrade, and was about to close the postern behind him, when

his eye fell on an old man, whose dress and appearance were squalid in the extreme, and who was seated at a short distance off on the stump of a fallen tree, apparently resting himself after a long march, or waiting to get speech of some one at the castle; probably the latter—for as Hurst strode by he made an effort to speak, which the other, full of the object he had in view, did not heed.

“Whom seek you, friend?” shouted Lilburn, having surveyed the stranger for a moment.

“I would speak with one Master Hatherton,” replied the old man; “I have traced him hither, and would ask him somewhat it much concerns me to know.”

“I grieve to say you are too late. The man you seek, died within the hour!”

And the Border-rider shut the wicket—for, at that instant, the voice of Father Paul summoned him from within.

The old man eyed the closed gate wistfully, and then, with an air of bitter disappointment, turned his steps from the dark fortress.

CHAPTER XVI.

AN ADVENTURE.

On each adventure rash he roved  
As danger for itself he loved.

SCOTT.

AT a late hour in the evening, a traveller entered the fair city of Edinburgh; he was clad in a suit of plain broad cloth—such as a steady citizen might be supposed to choose for his usual attire; and his sober cloak was drawn carefully

round him, while his well-knit frame, his erect bearing, and the manner in which he guided his powerful roan horse, did not exactly harmonize with his peaceful habiliments. The darkness of the hour prevented his person from being too closely scanned as he threaded the well-peopled streets; and, at length, directing his course to the meaner quarters of the town; he proceeded up a narrow alley, without a thoroughfare, and dismounting, led his steed across a long fore-court, where the weeds and tangled grass grew in considerable profusion, presenting a most desolate appearance, and testifying to the neglect or poverty of the proprietor. After knocking repeatedly with the heavy handle of his whip at the ricketty door, the stranger's patience gave way, and he was about to put in practise more forcible measures, when the door was suddenly unbarred from within, and an ungainly, ill-contrived figure of a man, with nether hose that scarcely fitted the limbs they covered, stood at the portal.

“What may you be pleased to lack?” he inquired in a surly tone.

“A few words with yourself, Ralph Multon,” replied the stranger.

“Ha! whose voice is that? But no! it cannot be!”

“John Heron, you would say, old neighbour. Yes, 'tis I! You should know me well—unless, with the rest of the world, you mislike a friend's face when it is under a cloud.”

“Heart sore am I, to see you here. Who would thrust his head in the jaws of a lion thirsting for blood?”

“You give me but a sorry welcome,” returned the Borderer, half smiling at the other's visible distress.

“No good can come of such a risk. Know you not that the Scottish King marches into England ere the week is out? and a power of gold he has promised to any one who shall bring him your head?”

“They must first take it,” exclaimed the Chief; although with instinctive cau-



tion, he dropped his voice a full half tone.

“That will be no difficult matter, if you run into such fearful straights for nought. Was ever venture so unlucky!”

“Rail not at fortune. Think what luck is mine, that while I hear a price is placed upon my life, I lay my hand on the shoulder of a true man, who would run some hazard to serve me.”

“Small merit is mine for any service I could render you—good reason is there that all of my kin should stand by you in fair weather or foul. I can never forget that night when you saved us all from fire and death.”

“Never mind that bygone tale. But tell me whom have you within the house at the present moment?”

And then followed Ralph Multon's long winded explanations, showing that he was possessed of a prying landlady, whose curiosity was fully equalled by her assurance; her sex forbade her being thrown out

of window; and a trifling arrear of rent placed him more completely in her power; her eye would now have been upon them, had she not retired to enjoy her evening nap, while Ralph was about to pay a visit to his sister's husband, who was one of the yeomen of the kitchen at the palace at Holyrood House.

"I will walk with you there," said the Borderer, decidedly. "Since I may not refresh myself under this roof, your kinsman will doubtless let me taste his fare, for to speak truth, I am half famished."

After sundry doleful ejaculations from Ralph on the score of the other's rashness, the horse was fastened up in a partly ruinous shed, which occupied one corner of the fore-court, and then the strangely assorted companions took their way to Holyrood House. On the road Ralph Multon, with much circumlocution, imparted to the Borderer the intelligence he was so solicitous to obtain—the discovery of Sir Robert Ker's body, and its transportation to

Jedburgh; the reception of the English Envoy, and the active preparations that were making throughout the land for immediate hostilities.

These latter tidings gladdened the heart of the chief; a war between the two countries, that might enable him to distinguish himself in the cause of his sovereign, would place him at the summit of his wishes, and surely his zeal and devotion would purchase amnesty for the late unfortunate transaction.

Twilight had deepened into the darkness of night as our adventurers passed into the palace by one of the back entrances, and Ralph having found his kinsman, the Chief was conducted to a small apartment, where the others quitted him with directions to abide patiently their return, as his detection would be attended with serious consequences to him, or to themselves—promising to bring him forthwith a supply of provisions for the fortification of the inner man.

Left to his own thoughts, the pictures that glided before his imagination were colored by hope; projects of daring achievements filled his brain; he would yet strike a blow that should leave men something else to talk of than his share in a cowardly assassination.

The Borderer's fit of musing was suddenly disturbed by the sound of voices, laughter, and many footsteps, plainly directing their course to the chamber in which he was concealed. His first impulse was to secure the door, but neither bolt nor bar could be found, and without the loss of a moment, he sprang through a door at the other end of the room, and darting up a narrow passage, paused to listen. The voices were still behind him, and the glimmer of a light at the extremity of the corridor showed that the party was approaching, although he had apparently not been seen.

With a stealthy step he proceeded onward, not knowing whither he went, and

little caring, provided he could only once more reach the outer air.

Wherever he heard the signs of any human being in the vicinity, he turned immediately in a contrary direction; many were the stairs he ascended, and the passages he crossed, sometimes in total darkness, and at other times lighted by a flambeau thrust down a niche in the wall. At length he came to a pause in a small ante-chamber, which evidently led to the more private apartments of the royal dwelling. Straight before him was a door slightly ajar, and the murmur of voices told the room beyond was occupied.

Placing himself close to the aperture, the cheerful light of a lamp suspended from the ceiling, enabled him clearly to observe what was passing within. The room was of moderate dimensions, and shelves filled with manuscripts covered the walls. A young man, with a bright hazel eye, and princely mein, reclined at full length in an easy chair; he was splendidly

attired, as if about to join some scene of revelry, and he was speaking with considerable earnestness to another individual who stood before him, in an attitude of deep reverence. Neither usher nor herald were needed to assure the Bastard Heron that James Stuart was before him; by instinct he recognized the fact, and had he doubted it, the ensuing conversation would have set the matter at rest.

“Sir Andrew Ker,” said the Monarch, “we cannot say how truly we have mourned your noble-hearted father. That he did his devoir as a gallant knight and faithful subject we shall be ever willing to avouch; his valour in the field, his upright judgment, and unswerving truth are all known to us, and we shall never cease to deplore the dastardly deed for which we have refused compensation, and plunged our kingdom in a foreign war.”

Andrew Ker bore a strong personal resemblance to the murdered Warden; and notwithstanding his extreme youth, he was

already distinguished by the same tenacity of purpose, and unalterable firmness of resolution that had characterized his parent.

“I humbly thank your Grace for your many kindnesses,” returned the young man. “To hear my dead father’s praises from your lips, is the greatest consolation left to me.”

“My good friend, we will not be content to bewail his loss, we will avenge it. When our armies cross the frontier, this base-born Heron cannot continue to cheat the the gibbet; we have set a price upon his life, and he will be a sharper-witted knave than we take him for, if he continue to wear his head much longer.”

“Your Grace’s assumption of my cause binds me to you, heart and hand, for ever. That my father loved you well, none can know better than myself—he has reared me firm in loyalty—and if his services have been of any worth to his prince, I

pray Heaven the chance may be mine to follow in his steps."

And here the youth stepped forward, and kneeling, kissed the hand his King extended to him.

"Come, man," said James, rising, "the hour grows late; we must seek our guests. It would be an idle ceremony to ask your presence; and since you are bound to Jedburgh on this melancholy business, we will give you the papers you wot of, we have left them in our cabinet."

With a few more expressions of grateful acknowledgment, Sir Andrew Ker followed his sovereign from the apartment.

During the above discourse, the concealed listener had remained at his post, breathless and motionless, apprehensive that the slightest sound would induce discovery; the Border Chief well deserved the reputation for courage he had acquired, still his pulsation became momentarily quickened, as he beheld in such close vicinity



the son he had rendered an orphan, and the Monarch whose favorite he had destroyed, while their menaces against his person were yet on their lips. After their departure, the Borderer deliberated for an instant, and then softly entered the room, where the royal conference had been held. The table was covered with articles of various description, he threw a quick glance around, and seizing a small sealed packet, thrust it in his doublet. The king's signet ring next caught his attention, and he quietly fixed it on his finger, conceiving that it might aid him in his escape from the palace. He was now about to hurry away, when a new idea crossed his mind, and returning to the table, he drew off the glove from his left hand, and laid it down on the spot where the packet and ring had been deposited. A smile brightened his bold features, he passed through the ante-chamber once more, and taking a different turning from that he had formerly pursued,

he began to entertain a hope of a successful issue from his dangerous position.

However he had not proceeded far, when he descried a serving man approaching him, bearing a light—the new comer was evidently startled at his appearance there, and paused to demand his business. Far from avoiding the encounter, the Chief stepped forward calmly, and displayed to the man the royal signet ring, exclaiming—

“Detain me not, good fellow; I am on an errand of life and death;” and then without waiting to be farther questioned, he passed onward. The man looked after him somewhat perplexed; but as it was not in his way to intermeddle with what he did not comprehend, he pursued his own course without more inquiry.

A fresh current of air now assured the fugitive that some mode of egress was nigh, and following the direction that the wind blew from, he soon perceived a massive door, one half of which was flung open, enabling him to look into a spacious quad-

range, lighted up by the soft beams of the rising moon. With a bound of joyous triumph, the Chief sprang through the aperture, and the next moment he found himself in the iron grasp of two armed sentinels, one of whom held a drawn sword to his breast, while the other pushed back his cap, in order to examine his features more closely.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CAPTURE.

The eagle pounces on the lamb,  
The wolf devours the fleecy dam ;  
Even tiger fell, and sullen bear  
Their likeness and their lineage spare.  
Man only mars kind nature's plan,  
And turns the fierce pursuit on man.

SCOTT.

THE Borderer's first impulse was to exert his great personal strength in freeing himself from his assailants, but he soon recognized

the madness of such an attempt ; more of his enemies were at hand, whose notice the slightest struggle could attract, and render his detention more secure. He was about once more to try the efficacy of the signet ring, when two gentlemen, richly dressed, crossed the quadrangle, and asked the meaning of the affray.

“What is going on here, treason, or worse?” said one of them. “Your guards, Graham, seemed disposed to give the poor knave a few inches of cold steel without much ado. What is his offence?”

“Please you, noble sir, it is offence enow that he came louping through the private portal like a thief in the dark—no one is permitted to pass out this way.”

The sentinel said this with an air of deference, for he recognized in the first speaker's companion, one of the officers of the guard for the night.

The Borderer had started almost imperceptibly as his ear caught the tones of the gentleman who had interposed in his be-

half, and now that his captors slightly relaxed their hold, he looked up boldly, and said :

“ Another time I would advise you, my masters, to greet a stranger less warmly ; had not my spirit been stout as my broad-cloth, both would have given way under your rough salutations. I am a peaceable man, and came here on my own personal concerns ; having lost my way in your maze of passages, I was glad enough to spy this open door, and floundered out in the dark, little expecting what was to befall me on the other side. That you cannot tell I am an honest man, is pretty natural, for you have never seen me before, but yon gentleman, Master Dalton, knows me well, and will be responsible that my purpose here is no worse than his own.”

The individual alluded to, was the Master Dalton, of whom we have made mention on more occasions than one ; his companion was Sir Ronald Graham, and both were accidentally passing to join the revellers in

the palace, when their attention was attracted by the prisoner's arrest. Thus publicly appealed to, Dalton stepped forward, and scrutinizing the captive's face keenly, a single glance was exchanged between them, its effect was decisive.

"I will wager," said Dalton, "that what this man says is true. I recognize in him an old acquaintance, and must pray you, Graham, to have him released."

"Stay!" returned Sir Ronald, "it is a point of duty—the matter should be enquired into—his designs may be found—"

"He can entertain none of any moment. Losing one's way is not in the catalogue of crimes you are bound to punish. For my sake, Graham, hold him harmless."

Then followed a short whispered consultation between the friends; at the termination, Sir Ronald desired that the prisoner should be set free, and bade him quit the precincts of the palace forthwith.

It might readily be imagined the Borderer was no laggard in obeying this order.

Without pausing to reflect what Ralph Multon and his kinsman might think of his disappearance, he bent his hurried steps to the mean alley where his old friend lodged, and leading his horse out of the dilapidated shed, he felt, as he leaped into the saddle, that his fate was once more partly in his own hands.

The signet ring served him well at the city gates, and he was soon galloping along the hard road at a pace that set pursuit at defiance. He had left Edinburgh many miles behind, when certain interior sensations warned him that he had endured a long fast, and at the same time his horse began to show symptoms of weariness. Feeling the necessity of recruiting himself, and certain that the fame of his last exploit could not have preceded him, he determined to stop at some house of public entertainment, and rest awhile. He had few apprehensions on the score of being recognized and detained, for he had seldom visited that part of the country, and be-



lieved he was fully able to protect himself from any ordinary dangers. His greatest fear was, that the lateness of the hour would prevent him obtaining the refreshment he so much required. However, his misgivings were needless, for as he drew up at a little hostelry which stood some distance apart from the road side, the blazing fire within spoke a cheerful welcome. Having attended to the wants of his horse, a duty which self-interest and gratitude alike dictated, the Border Chief entered the kitchen, where the trim hostess was spreading her table, evidently for the reception of a large party. Perhaps our single traveller would now have done wisely to withdraw, but prudence was not one of his characteristics, and moreover the steaming viands sent forth so acceptable a smell, that he could not relinquish his original intention of essaying their merits.

Seating himself, therefore, on a three-cornered stool, his wishes were promptly expressed—a smoking platter was soon

placed before him, and he did not fail to do full justice to the fare. Nature's first cravings being tolerably satisfied, he addressed himself to the hostess.

"It would seem that you are expecting a great number of guests; I can warrant they will not have cause to fall out with their supper."

"Ay, sir," replied the well-pleasèd hostess, "but every one has not your worship's kindly judgment."

"Nor my good appetite, you would say. How kuow you the party you are awaiting will arrive? The hour grows late for travellers."

"The archer who pricked forward to bid me have all in readiness, said it might be nigh midnight before they got here."

"Your customers are soldiers then; from what quarter come they?"

The good woman's reply was cut short by the loud tramp of horses' feet dashing into the yard, announcing the arrival of the company. Out she flew to assist in the

disembarkation; great was the uproar and confusion that prevailed; the shouts of the horse-boys, the barking of dogs, the laughter of the riders, and above all, the shrill voice of the hostess, giving a hundred directions in one breath.

At length Lord Hamilton, commander of the troop, entered the kitchen, closely followed by some of his subordinates—we shall not pause to particularise, for with these our tale intermeddles not—but will pass on to speak of one of the group, whose appearance rather distinguished him from the rest. This was Maurice Vipont, a young English volunteer; he had just bound himself to the service of Richard of York, whose cause he had embraced with motives as pure, and zeal as disinterested as ever led astray an ardent, enthusiastic temperament.

His father had always followed the White Rose to the field, and no fluctuations of fortune had influenced their constant adherence; the young man had hitherto

lived tranquilly under Henry's sway, but no sooner had he heard the generally current rumour, that a son of the Fourth Edward yet lived, to claim the crown of his ancestors, than he hastened to tender his allegiance, where alone he considered it to be lawfully due.

He was received by the Adventurer with the consummate grace, and winning address he knew so well how to employ ; and from that moment Maurice attached himself to his new lord with the most devoted regard. His patrimony was far from large, and now would necessarily be confiscated, but this and all other evils would of course be redressed when the Yorkists had won their way to the seat of power.

Without being prominently handsome the new recruit had sufficient good looks, to justify the favorable welcome given him by the fair ones of the Court of James. Strangely indifferent to their smiles, and longing for the activity of the camp, he had obtained permission to accompany Lord

Hamilton in his visit of inspection to the different Marches, to ascertain the number of Moss-troopers willing to enrol themselves in the army that King James was assembling.

There was one point in the approaching warfare which did occasionally cause Maurice Vipont a feeling of uneasiness; he could not quite reconcile himself to the idea of standing alongside Scottish men in a charge against his own countrymen; but he found consolation in the reflection that a sick man's life must often be saved by violent remedies; and there were no other visible means of delivering England from the usurper, so he settled the matter with his conscience very easily.

Lord Hamilton walked straight to the kitchen fire, gaily humming a tune, and scarcely glancing at the solitary traveller, who occupied a seat near the blazing pile. The rest quickly gathered round their leader, and an animated conversation took place concerning their prospects of honor

and booty, mingled with hopes that the bright eyes left behind them would not learn to rove during their absence.

The loud demands of the famished soldiers recalled the hostess to her duties within doors, and she concluded the catalogue of the cheer that was awaiting them, by an assurance that the worshipful gentleman in the ingle nook had liked it well.

“And so, my friend,” said Lord Hamilton, turning full round to the Borderer, “you speak approvingly of the gudewife’s fare; yet you are an Englishman,” added he after another keen survey of the stranger, “and that is a rare compliment, I trow, from one of your land.”

“That’s true enough,” rejoined the Chief readily. “I am a peaceful trader, and am returning to my own country, for if the tale I hear is correct, the two kingdoms will shortly be at issue.”

“You may not be far wrong,” pursued the young leader; “perhaps ere the moon

is over, we may meet again on your side of the Border."

"I trust then it will be in the way of lawful trade, for I love not whistling arrows and heavy armour; and come when you will, I hardly think I can promise you a better supper than I have tasted this blessed night."

While the above discourse was being carried on, Maurice Vipont had stepped into the yard, to see that the horses were properly cared for; he now re-entered in some haste, and prayed to speak a few words apart to Lord Hamilton.

Casting a lingering look at the tempting viands, which were being ranged upon the board, the young leader reluctantly suffered himself to be drawn into the narrow passage, where their conference was conducted in tones too low to reach the ears of those within.

The Borderer imagined this would be a seasonable opportunity for him to withdraw without attracting observation, and having

paid his reckoning, with a kindly "good even" to his hostess, he strode from the kitchen. Making a silent salutation, he passed Lord Hamilton and his companion, and proceeded to the stall where his steed had been stabled. Two grooms stood at the horse's head, and the saddle and other harness had been removed, as if it had been fully decided he should travel no further that night.

"What means this, knaves!" thundered the Chief.

He took two steps in advance, when his arms were suddenly seized from behind, and pinioned to his side, and he saw himself surrounded by a band of soldiers. The truth flashed across his mind, his true character had been discovered.

In triumph he was led back to the inn, where the soft-hearted landlady shed a few tears over his probable fate.

Lord Hamilton's eye sparkled as it met the steady glance of the prisoner.

"John Heron," said he sternly, "I may



not permit your return to England, but must hold you in safe keeping until the pleasure of my sovereign is made known."

Will you answer me one question?" said the Borderer. "How did you discover me?"

"My young friend there recognised your celebrated horse, made some inquiries that fully established your identity, and took the necessary precautions to secure your capture."

"So the good horse that has saved my neck so often, has delivered it at last to the halter. But 'twas ill done of an English tongue to betray his countryman to a Scot."

"True, John Heron," exclaimed Maurice vehemently. "But he who has stained our honest English name by a deed of midnight murder, is no countryman of mine! The foul blot must be washed out in your blood; England dishonoured herself in

giving birth to one so base and perjured!"

The Borderer's bronzed cheek flushed deeply, but he replied not, and pulling his cap over his brow, sank passively into the seat assigned to him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE COURT.

Oh, for knighthood's golden time,  
When romance was yet adored,  
When Love wrought the minstrel rhyme,  
When Love drew the warrior sword;  
When in woman's eye to shine,  
Every deed of fame was done;  
Peace the garland used to twine,  
War flung down the banner won.

SONG.

WE must now return to Holyrood-house.

King James, having terminated his interview with Andrew Ker, bent his steps to the

lighted hall, where a brilliant circle awaited the arrival of their royal entertainer.

In those days, when the system of ancient feudality had not been superseded by a more perfect state of civilization, the number of troops levied and paid by the crown was comparatively small, and the national army was principally composed of the followings of the warlike vassals, who were compelled to do military service, as a term of tenure; however, there were so many means of evading this duty, that an unpopular monarch would occasionally find it impossible to keep his forces in the field, and a cause of quarrel which failed to enlist the general sympathy was seldom brought to a successful issue.

On the verge of a war, James Stuart now felt the necessity of conciliating the various interests of his more powerful subjects, and while he conceded some immunities of trifling value to the burgesses, promises of reward and preferment were liberally bestowed on all classes.

With the elder knights he held grave council, and he failed not to gratify the younger by a succession of brilliant *fêtes*, whereat the bright glances and witchery of the fair dames of his court awoke a feeling of generous emulation and desire of honourable distinction in the breasts of those who owned the influence of their charms.

War was the universal theme. Nothing was thought of but the march to England, and many an eager suitor petitioned the lady of his love for the smallest gage of her favour—a knot of ribbons, a glove, or kerchief—vowing that the token should be carried foremost into the combat; and as we pique ourselves on our veracity, it must be owned the request so boldly urged, was not always denied. Proud beauties, who had jested hitherto at their lovers' sighs and oaths, now listened with downcast eye and changing cheek to the oft repeated protestations.

The scene of the revels on the present occasion was one of peculiar interest. The

vast hall with its colonnade of ornamented pillars, environed by many coloured lamps, presented a magnificent spectacle, filled, as it was, to overflowing, with the noblest and fairest in the realm. Many who joined the blithest in the passing glee, who won for themselves an everlasting name in Scotland's historic page—some too, who vaunted the loudest of the deeds that should be done when the Scots crossed the Borders, were doomed to leave their bones in that Southern land they spoke of so defyingly.

The Earl of Douglas stood somewhat apart; his court attire differed little from that which he wore in the field, but he was privileged, and his presence was esteemed a happy augury—seldom did he enter into the gaiety around him, his busy mind was employed in reviewing the nature of the ground, through which the royal army would have to pass, and his attention only became momentarily diverted from this occupation, when his eye chanced to fall, in curious speculation, on the sinewy frame of some

Highland leader, whose figure was unknown to him.

Among the variegated throng might be seen some Chief of the Isles, enveloped in his plaid, who stalked along with a bearing as haughty as if the world owned no other master. Occasionally a point of altercation would arise between these fiery spirits, and then the Earl of Huntly, with his usual peaceful policy, would glide among the disputants, and enter into the discussion, explaining away what had given offence, and restoring harmony and good will. There was one spot in the illuminated hall, which seemed to possess a more than ordinary attraction—this was where the Lady Katherine was stationed, the centre of a crowd of worshippers. An involuntary murmur of admiration passed from lip to lip at her unequalled loveliness, and every eye was fastened on her countenance. Notwithstanding the universal adulation she looked only on him to whom her hand and troth were

plighted, and his smile was the only homage she prized. Never did painter's dream of beauty call into creation a face of more marvellous attraction; a coronet glittered above her snowy brow, that had not yet been clouded by a care; and the sparkling joyousness of her whole aspect, denoted that her path had hitherto been strewn with flowers. When the Adventurer turned to address his beautiful bride, his voice unwittingly assumed a tenderer tone, and the love he read in her soft blue eyes was requited a thousand-fold by a devotion as deep and tender as ever animated the breast of man.

“Think you,” he whispered, as the entrance of King James directed the attention of the courtiers into another channel, “think you, my Kate, that you will not repent your determination to follow the fortunes of your husband? Have you weighed the privations of a hasty march? Of peril, I speak not, for there is not a



man in our gallant host who would not lose his life ere a curl on that bright head were endangered."

"Our fates are henceforth one," was her reply, "for me that will be sufficient happiness."

No music ever sounded half so sweet to Richard's ear as that unhesitating declaration of an affection which he coveted the more, perhaps, from his consciousness of how little he deserved it.

While the nobles eagerly encircled their Monarch, contending for a share of his notice, Father Hubert leaned against a slender column, contemplating stealthily the wedded pair—that wary glance betokened neither love, nor hatred, nor indifference, but rather the lynx-eyed, restless vigilance of one who watches a game in which he has a large issue at stake. The priest could not help secretly acknowledging that his surveillance had become irksome to his pupil; he felt, that as promptings of a better nature rose in the young man's bosom, he

shuddered to think how the deception, he was carrying on, would inflict ruin and bloodshed on an entire kingdom. Yet the toils were around him; what did remorse avail! When the Adventurer linked his destiny to that of the high-born maiden he had dared to love, Father Hubert knew there could be no drawing back, no willing abandonment of the position he had assumed—still the priest was aware that the enthrallment of the senses renders the powers of the mind less vigorous, and therefore he was ever on the alert to repair, by his ready wit, any mischance that might induce discovery.

Soon after the arrival of the King, Master Dalton and Sir Ronald Graham made their appearance in the hall; the latter was not long permitted to remain in the background. James beckoned him familiarly to his side, and with his usual winning courtesy, acquainted him that the Lady Katherine had wrought a standard which was to be borne to the field by the

following of her father, the Earl of Huntly.

“And as you are a Captain of that honoured band,” concluded the King, “be it your task to seek the noble lady, and tell her brave men are never thankless.”

In obedience to the royal mandate, Sir Ronald Graham crossed the hall, and approached the Lady Katherine; as he drew near, the Adventurer perceived his object, and moved away towards a group of gay gallants, in order to allow free access. Another moment, and the young knight stood before the queen-like bride; was it pleasure or pain that caused the momentary pallor which overspread his countenance? she received him with the frank simplicity of her early days. He took that soft, white hand, whose contact sent an indescribable thrill through every beating vein, and slightly touched it with his lips; when he resigned it, he made an effort to collect his scattered faculties.

“Noble Lady,” he commenced, “I am

here to offer the homage of a thousand hearts for the banner you have conferred on our troop—it was a gracious thought, and dear as our lives will we hold the gift—*us* it shall lead to glory—*it* we will guard with our blood—wherever the Gordon standard moves in the wind, far and wide shall it be known that honour is to be won, and victory secure.”

“That you will achieve fame and renown, Sir Ronald, I nothing doubt, and I pray it may some day be in the power of my good lord and husband to requite your service.”

“There is no need, madam,” returned the young man, coldly. “I draw the sword at my own sovereign’s behest; from his hand alone will I receive guerdon.”

“You are too proud then to accept thanks,” said Katherine, smiling at the other’s well-remembered impetuosity.

“Not from you, dear lady,” exclaimed Sir Ronald, eagerly. “Not from you—near you, I have no pride. For one poor

word from your lips I would toil for years, and think myself overpaid."

"Yours was ever a kind heart, Sir Ronald, and that you would gladly serve me, I have not now to learn. Have you been absent lately from the court?"

"No! madam; my duties have compelled my attendance."

"How is it then we have been such strangers? we have not met since—" she paused, and a faint blush dyed her cheek with a richer glow.

"Since the White Rose of Scotland was grafted on a foreign stock. But see—his Highness looks this way, and I must return to his side—moreover, I trespass on moments that might be more worthily spent. I leave you, lady, invoking every blessing on your honoured head."

Sir Ronald resisted the temptation of touching once more the jewelled hand that was half extended to him, and bowing lowly, he turned resolutely away—when next his eyes sought the form of the Lady

Katherine, she was leaning fondly on her husband's arm.

A sudden movement had now become apparent about the person of the King; messengers were despatched from the presence, and their return seemed to awaken fresh disquietude; the sovereign himself, with an appearance of discomposure and amazement, was speaking earnestly to the Earl of Huntly and the Lord Chamberlain.

Father Hubert was next summoned, and evidently returned a decided negative to the questions referred to him. At length, with a countenance black as midnight, the monarch, followed by some of the nobles, swept from the Hall. All was consternation and dismay in the gay assembly. To account for this unexpected change of cheer was whispered the varying tale, of how important papers had been taken from the outer cabinet where King James had given audience to the young heir of Ker; in vain, had been the strict search that was immediately instituted, and the only trace

that could be found of the hand that had removed the missing documents, had gloomed the monarch's brow, and raised a tempest of passion in his fiery heart, was a glove broidered with the well-known cognizance of the Bastard Heron, which had been left on the table from whence the packet was stolen! How came it there? Was treason at work so near the throne? Or had the audacious Borderer indeed penetrated into the royal dwelling? Each asked the other these questions which none could explain. With sundry ejaculations of astonishment the goodly company gradually dispersed. But there was one whose bearing showed more angry mortification than curiosity, as he listened to the widely circling rumour—this was Sir Ronald Graham. Instantly it flashed across his mind that the prisoner detained by the sentry, and freed by his own command, was no other than the redoubtable Border Chief, and he flew to find Reginald Dalton, by whose intervention the mishap had occurred.

“I am undone,” he exclaimed breathlessly, as he reached his friend’s side ; “and you are the cause. The man, you besought me to release, is the Bastard Heron, who has robbed the King of some state secrets, and me of my honour. I shall never raise head again with so foul a stain on my ’scutcheon.”

“By what strange miracle,” asked the Englishman, “did James know that his palace had held so unexpected a guest?”

“Because the bold varlet left his gauntlet of defiance as a bravado, in lieu of the papers he had seized.”

“’Twas a daring deed, but the fearless Heron will have his wings clipped, an he be not less rash.”

“And what need had you to meddle in the matter ?” asked Sir Ronald, impatiently. “Why importune me to send the man off scatheless? I could break my own head for my folly.”

“Because he was known to me in bygone days,” answered the Englishman, “and



I could not see him delivered to the doomsman."

"How shall I avow my part in this disastrous affair?"

"Be ruled by me. Keep your own counsel. The sentinels must be taught the value of discretion. I will set this business straight forthwith. Meet me an hour hence at my lodging. Away with you!"

And while the king chafed—the nobles marvelled—Sir Ronald accused his unlucky stars—and his friend was endeavouring to buy silence with hush money, the Border Chief was bound hand and foot, a captive in the power of Lord Hamilton and his Scottish archers.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ENGLISHMAN'S TALE.

Thou hast seen me start  
As if a dagger thrilled my heart,  
When it has happed some casual phrase  
Waked memory of my former days.

SCOTT.

THE hour had scarcely elapsed when Sir Ronald Graham entered the chamber of his English friend. It was past midnight, yet the fire burned brightly on the hearth—for,

although the season was early spring, the Southern stranger found the Scottish air chill, and indulged in a luxury which a hardier temperament would have despised.

The host had not yet returned; but shortly made his appearance—and before he had flung aside his hat and cloak, the young cavalier eagerly demanded his tidings—Dalton briefly disclosed that the matter was satisfactorily arranged—he had spoken with the sentinels—they were prudent men who could hold their peace—and had an eye to their own interest—which was far more effectually secured by keeping their young captain's secret, than in making a clean breast of it. Having neglected to reveal the case in the first instance, hereafter for their own sakes, they must be everlastingly mute. Sir Ronald felt inexpressibly relieved that this point was settled; nothing he dreaded so much as the public disgrace and general censure an exposure of the circumstances would entail.

Having furnished his guest with a cup of wine, Dalton stood regarding him for a few moments with an air of keen scrutiny, and then said, abruptly—

“You mislike this Richard of York—so do I—he has his father’s bland smile, gracious as the noon-day, fickle as April, false as hell. I would he had not strengthened his power by this alliance to your royal James.”

“He is my sovereign’s guest and plighted friend,” returned Sir Ronald, “and while he remains so, I may not lift finger to do him a despite.”

“Ay! and he has a fair wife and a loving.”

The other started, as if a scorpion had stung him, but made no reply.

“Seems it not strange—most strange,” pursued Dalton, “that one whose dower of beauty would bow all hearts, should be content to give her troth at a Monarch’s bidding, as though a high-born maiden’s affections were a legal object of barter.”

“Is not the bridegroom of princely birth?” asked Graham, bitterly. “Is he not gay, generous, valiant, and well favored—what would you more?”

“This would be passing well, had the maiden been nurtured in the convent shade; but reared in the precincts of a glittering court, would not one imagine that some young cavalier—some sharer of the childish pastimes—must ere this have stolen into her heart at unawares. Would not such be natural?”

“Who can say?” answered Sir Ronald, turning away his head.

The Englishman drew nearer, and pressing his companion's arm, dropped his voice, as he continued—

“Have you never thought that the Earl of Huntly's daughter smiled more sweetly than her wont on one of her father's train—did you never fancy that her tone was kindlier, her brow more joyous when you were nigh?”

“I have cherished such presumptuous thought,” exclaimed Graham, pushing aside his friend’s hand, and springing from his seat, he paced to and fro the room with hurried strides. “I have dreamed a dream of such exquisite bliss that a life-long of withering regret must atone for the short spanned pleasure. Out on the soft folly! One glimpse of a phantom crown, one word from a prince’s lips, and the hopes of years vanished into air.”

Dalton awaited until the first outbreak of emotion had subsided, and then said,

“You had some converse with the Lady Katherine this night: in what humour found you the would-be queen?”

Cold as the unsunned snow,” replied the young man, bitterly.

“The day may come when she will smile again,” said the Englishman, carelessly. “Men who strike for thrones, sometimes, make a false step, and slip into a grave.”

There was a long pause. At length, Sir Ronald Graham fixed his dark eyes on his associate's cadaverous and care-worn features, and stalked towards him with a determined air.

“Who are you?” demanded he, “who come here wearing the livery of one prince while your heart seems to own another. What is your purpose at our northern court? You have wrung my secret from my unwilling lips—give me yours in return.”

“You have told me nought that I had not guessed before—yet I will not gainsay your wish. You shall hear the history of my early wrongs; but first plight me your word as knight and gentleman, that what I now may utter, shall pass no further.”

“I will vow to be secret in all matters that impeach not my allegiance to my own sovereign lord King James.”

Placing the solitary lamp in such a position that the light gleamed on the countenance of the listener, while it cast a shadow

on his own, the Englishman commenced his tale.

“Perchance you will not marvel to learn the name I bear is a feigned one. That I spring from a long line of noble forefathers, is all I may now avow—heir to broad lands—the pride of my house—in the hey-day of vigorous youth—I would often wonder that others should cark and repine at a world which seemed to me one long scene of delight. And then, Love, with his zephyr wing, stirred the fresh emotions of my heart into a passion so wild and fervent, that to the eye of sober sense, it might well seem, a mad idolatry. I will not say how beautiful was my Edith—what lover swears not that his mistress is fair—enough that to me she was the loveliest on earth—the dearest—and Heaven assoil me at the hour of need! was I believe, the truest. The suit I urged was accepted. Little thought I of the lordship of Borodaile, over which hereafter she would have the rights of Seigneurie; the spot on which *she* stood was all



the empire I coveted. Friends smiled on our loves; we were affianced. At that moment the great Earl of Warwick gave the aid of his popular name, and mighty arm to the Lancastrian cause; the invaders' ships threatened our coast—trained to the use of arms, and vowed from my cradle to the White Rose, I tore myself from my ancestral halls, and arming my retainers, I flew to offer my services to Edward the Fourth. He assigned me a post near his own person. There was a witchcraft in his royal presence which bound me to him, as by a magic spell. I became devoted to his interest. Yet I had myself witnessed instances of his misrule—had I not heard tales of his cruelty, oppression, and rapine? Had he not broken the laws of gratitude and knightly faith? These things seldom strike home until the shaft is aimed at ourselves. Whenever there was a rising of the rebels, my sword was foremost in the onset; in exile I stood at his side; I served Edward with more than the zeal of a loyal

subject, for I loved him. Finally at the battle of Barnet, which secured his crown, my ready arm interposed between the King and death. My father and younger brother fell on that victorious field—as we stood among the heaps of slain—the King placed his hand on my shoulder, and said,

“ ‘ Edward of York owes you a life, the debt shall not be forgotten.’ ”

“ Wisely is it written—‘ Put not your faith in princes.’—Short time had we to grieve over our dead; the head of the rebellion had fallen, but the insurgents in small bodies still continued their resistance. Meantime the death of a kinsman had made my Edith heiress to a barony; by the Monarch's command, she was summoned to Court, and placed under the protection of the Queen. I took an opportunity to make known to the King that we were betrothed, and my claims were graciously allowed. As I left the court for the north, to head Edward's forces against a party of Lancastrians, who, aided by the Scots, were

ravaging our Marches, I could scarcely feel sad at a parting which was to be the prelude of my future happiness. Unluckily, in a hot skirmish, I was taken prisoner, covered with wounds, and carried to Scotland by my enemies. Tedious were the months of my captivity ; no efforts were made for my release, my friends seemed to have forgotten me. At last, a Border chief, John Heron, a companion of my boyhood, learned my pitiful state, and ransomed me from the prison whose walls he could not break—and once more I was a free man.”

Here Dalton paused, drew the wine-flask towards him, and took a long draught.

“ There was a man who, during my absence, had become popular with the King—Sir Herbert Coldinghame—his glozing tongue, and ready flatteries, had pleased the royal ear—he had too some clerkly skill—yet stay ! I must not belie my worst foe ; I have heard he was a deft swordsman, and had done his devoir aforetime in the King’s quarrel—being so young a cavalier, I had

never encountered him, for while I fought with the Yorkist troops, he was engaged in diplomatic negotiations at the Court of France. Besides he was connected with the Queen's kin—those upstart Woodvilles—that was a better pass-port to favour than scars or service—this man fixed his bold eyes on the seraph beauty of my Edith—perhaps her countless acres had some weight—still he loved her after his own fierce fashion—that unholy love appalled her gentle nature, she shrank from him with natural antipathy. He demanded her hand of the King—my claim was upheld by my affianced bride—endeavours were made to blacken my name—the charge fell to the ground, so that not the shadow of an excuse remained to the ingrate King. The new wooer's suit was backed by a queen, supported by powerful favorites—I had only the remembrance of past services, and the claim of a right founded on justice. The King's warrant was given empowering Sir Herbert Col-

dinghame to wed the Lady Edith of Boro-daile. See, I pray you, how calmly I speak of that which rends my heart-strings. Edith—no longer mine—knelt, wept, implored, resisted in vain. A priest was found to perform the espousals; violence was used, the mark of their unmanly grasp was laid upon her delicate arm, the ring was forced upon her finger, and she was in the eyes of all men a wedded wife. Thus much I gathered from the old retainers who preserved some reverence for their former lord. The night of the bridal, restored to freedom, I stood at my rival's castle gate. The feast and wassail had been prolonged; the guests were slowly departing from their revelry, when a gleam of light shot from the southern tower—it caught, it spread, the castle was on fire. Up crumbling staircases, over smoking rafters, through flaming ruins, I sought the one I had so madly worshipped—I found her at last, and carrying her like an infant, I bore her to a sequestered nook, where

once more we were alone together. Reason had fled—her own hand had fired the accursed pile—the flame had done its work on her feeble frame—grief, terror, and madness had also their part in the beautiful ruin. It would have made an angel weep to hear her despairing shriek when her eye fell on the abhorred ring—at last I soothed her into rest—her arm clasped my neck—her head on my bosom—and thus she died.”

“’Tis a moving tale,” exclaimed Sir Ronald, after a long silence, pressing his friend’s hand in token of cordial sympathy. “And what befell Sir Herbert Coldinghame?”

“He disappeared for aye; yet he perished not in the flames. Shame for the unknighthly deed—remorse perchance—caused him to quit his native land—possibly he is dead, for my strictest search never discovered a clue to his retreat.”

“What was your own fate?” asked the young cavalier.

“Some words of treason occasioned me to be held a prisoner, and dealt with as a traitor, until Henry Tudor won the English throne. I was then released. Sore sickness had changed the bloom of youth upon my cheek to the hues of death. Of what use was freedom? I had no object in life; I was the last of my race; my father and brother had died in battle. Sir Herbert Coldinghame never returned. My enmity to the house of York slept perforce, for there were none to feel it. Then suddenly I heard the tyrant Edward had yet a living son, to whom I could requite his father's wrong—the torpor fell from my soul—I lived again—the hope of revenge shook aside the apathy of years. The boy-prince has an inheritance he dreams not of—the deadly hate of an injured man. Now leave me, good Sir Ronald, I am weary with these sad memories. Yet stay—one word more; if the day should come when this league of amity should be dissolved between James and his new ally.”

“Then,” said the Scot, rising to depart, “I shall see in Richard of York, only the haughty rival and successful suitor to the lady whose smile I would have died to win.”



CHAPTER XX.

THE CONFERENCE.

Alas ! what is't for us to sound, to explore,  
To watch, oppose, plot, practise, or prevent,  
If he, for whom it is so strongly laboured,  
Shall, out of greatness and free spirit, be  
Supremely negligent.

BEN JOHNSON.

THE sun had risen high in the heavens,  
and his beams shone cheerily over pleasaunce  
and chase, yet King James kept his cham-  
ber. A few favoured counsellors only had

been admitted to his presence, and when Lord Hamilton besought an audience, after his return from a visit of inspection to the frontiers, in which the King had seemed to be especially interested—the gentlemen collected in the ante-room assured him his application would be denied. The young noble drew from his pouch a ring, and placing it in the hand of the page, who instantly recognized it as the royal signet ring, he bade him deliver it forthwith to the Monarch, and say the bearer humbly craved admission. The embassy was favorably received, and contrary to the general expectation, Lord Hamilton was admitted to the King's closet. In another quarter of the palace sat the young Adventurer, busily employed inditing a missive to the Duchess of Burgundy, praying her for a further subsidy. At length, his task concluded, he flung aside the pen with an air of impatience, and fell into a train of thought. Never was a temperament less fitted by nature for the hypocrisy of enact-

ing a false character—constitutionally frank and joyous—none could tell how irksome it was for him to weigh his words, to watch his actions, and dispense his smiles, with the accuracy of a well-formed machine. Then he had to wrestle with self-contempt, and a feeling of humiliation at his daily perjury, which lowered him in his own esteem, and oppressed his spirits; while at the same time he felt that loving eyes discerned the slightest shade upon his brow, and he was compelled to rouse from his dejection, and enter into the mirth of the hour, with a smiling lip and a weary heart. Still there were moments when the recollections of his obscure boyhood became like a dim and half forgotten dream. Habit was so powerful, that sometimes he would lose his own identity; and feel, in reality, as if he were the injured prince whose inheritance was a throne—the native ambition that filled and crushed his boyish heart, would take a wider sweep; and before his mind's eye would arise a long vista of brilliant achievements,

whose end was an empire. These hopes were not so chimerical, as, at first view, they might appear—true, his followers were few, his supplies of money and arms inadequate to the undertaking; and the King he was about to oppose, wielded his sceptre with a firm and able hand—yet it was in the remembrance of all men that, twenty years before, Edward of York landed on England's unfriendly coast, at the head of five hundred adventurers; and yet, in a few weeks, the conquering King entered the capital in triumph. What had the power of noble or baron availed to stem the torrent? The hearts of the people had raised an army to fight under the banner of the White Rose.

“Under this ensign too, will I conquer or perish!” said Richard to himself. “Again will the nation rally to the standard of the mighty House of York.” But the bright smile faded from his countenance, as the thought pressed upon him that he had no claim to the fealty which his adherents

might be called on to seal with their blood; what must be the feeling of the low born impostor, when knights of unstained lineage pledged to him their noble faith to live for his service or die in his cause. "What magic lies in a name!" thought the Adventurer. "The unworthiest descendent of the Plantagenets could marshal a host in arms, while Heaven help the chief! who, endowed with nature's goodliest gifts, has not this priceless boon. Such honored title have I borrowed with dissembling tongue. It is all too late to shun the struggle I have provoked; but if my unlawful grasp should wrest the crown from Henry Tudor's head—here, in the face of open day, I register a vow to live only for England. I will atone—deeply atone."

And, as he pronounced the last words, his face assumed an aspect of unwonted seriousness.

"Good morrow, fair lord," said Father Hubert, entering at the moment. "A royal

page waits without, charged with the message that King James intends to breathe his palfry anon, and prays your company."

"I will attend his Highness forthwith," and the young man lost no time in throwing aside his plain morning attire; and equipping himself in the magnificent riding apparel, which the cavaliers of that day were wont to exhibit on like occasions.

His super-tunic was of crimson velvet richly flowered, and the lawn shirt partially exposed to view, was edged with a deep gold fringe.

While he hastily arrayed himself, he did not allow the conversation to flag.

"I trust his Grace is in more cheerful mood, and frets no longer over the singular occurrence which caused his discomposure yesternight."

"'Tis an indignity that cannot be passed over lightly," replied the confessor. "Princes are not wont to be braved with impunity;

and the Stuart blood runs not always in a peaceful current. The fiercer the King's ire, and the deadlier his feud with these Herons, larger aid will he give to our cause, and firmer fellowship will he hold with yourself."

"In good sooth! fortune wears a smiling aspect," returned the Adventurer. "Our last letters from Sir William Stanley, England's chancellor, warrant the belief that our increased offers of honour and emolument, will win him to our side. Say you not so?"

"He is wary and politic. If he espouse your interest, 'twill be for the reason that it is linked with his own."

"Methinks, I am the last man who has a right to complain of such a motive," returned Richard, relapsing into the self-upbraiding tone which he usually adopted when alone with his confederate.

"What says your sweet lady to your high hopes?" asked the priest—for well he knew how to touch the mainspring on which

the progression of the whole work depended.

“She at least is fitted to mate with a king. To encircle her queenly brow with a diadem, what would I not dare!”

“Never did dame more worthy enter the royalty of England. She has a lofty spirit, and a right noble heart, and for her smiles a brave man might well risk much. Pardon my zeal, my lord, if I err,” continued the priest with some hesitation; “but to my anxious eye it seems that the Lady Katherine grieves and marvels sometimes to find your humour less gay and open than would be natural to expect.”

“She shall not repent this disproportioned match,” exclaimed Richard abruptly; “I will set a closer guard over every word and feature. I must on—on—with a bold and unflinching purpose. I will hew her out a path to exalted station. In her graceful pride she shall sit upon a throne. No touch of shame will ever kindle a blush upon her cheek, and though my heart may



sink and wither beneath the burden of its treachery, not a shadow of remorse shall be mingled with the triumph I will win for her."

The young man was now fully equipped, and placing on his head his braided cap with its single plume, he waved an adieu to his companion, and descended from the chamber.

Father Hubert retired, better pleased than usual with the disposition in which he found his associate. Provided there was a rigid adherence to the course of action most favourable to the success of his designs, he was indifferent to the motive from which they sprang. If the actor played his part to the life, his individual happiness or remorse could be of little importance.

In the spacious enclosure which extended before the inner gate of the palace were to be seen the horses of the monarch and the lords who were to share his morning's pastime. The grooms and retainers, wearing the badges of the different houses they

served, hurried to and fro with busy activity, preserving a decorous silence; while the nobles and gentles conferred together in a low tone on the events of the past night. The king's evident distemperature, and the English Borderer's daring feat afforded an ample field for conjecture. Nothing further had transpired, and the courtiers whose acquaintance with the sovereign was the most intimate, were well aware that the outrage was of a nature particularly adapted to gall his haughty character. The Adventurer had acquired some consideration among the Scottish knights; his frank and manly air, his address in the tilt-yard, and his princely courtesy of mien rendered him well-fitted, in their opinion, for the career marked out for him.

As Richard entered the enclosure, King James also made his appearance at the principal portal, his face radiant with smiles, and closely followed by the Earl of Huntley and Lord Hamilton. All stepped forward to pay their dutiful homage. When

the king's eye fell on the distant figure of the Adventurer, he hastened forward to meet him, accosting him gaily.

“I give you good day, gallant prince. The news we have but now received from yon young lord,” pointing to Hamilton, “are bright as the morn. The evil faitour who traitorously beset our Warden, and stole into our palace, carrying off our signet ring and other matters—this Bastard Heron, was seized last night, by Lord Hamilton, at the hostelrie where he was recruiting himself—his horse was recognized by a follower of your own: he is now in safe keeping at Glanmorris Castle. Why brought you not your prisoner straight to the capital, Lord Hamilton?”

“Because, my liege, I had your Grace's commission to leave the archers and horsemen at Glanmorris Castle, part of the garrison having lately been withdrawn. The tidings of the prisoner's fresh aggression had not reached me, and therefore I con-

sidered it expedient not to depart from the original plan; so I sent him southward with the rest of the troop, commanding that he should be held in strict durance until your Highness's pleasure was known."

"Our pleasure will work him small grace," returned James. "The priest and the hangman will be his doom. How found you the ring?"

"One of the men spied it on the knave's finger. "I took possession of it, deeming it a bold forgery."

"We will ourselves confront the shameless villain, and learn how he chanced to honor our poor dwelling with his presence. Od's life! we must look about us sharply, when the daggers of the Southernns may be at our throats, before we have time to cry 'God save us!'"

"I heartily wish your Highness joy," said the Adventurer, "that so great an offender should be brought to justice. His capture will be a warning not easily forgotten.

May I crave to know if your Grace regained possession of the packet of papers taken from your cabinet?"

"By some oversight the prisoner was disarmed, but his person was not minutely searched, as he made it appear he was coming to Edinburgh instead of returning from thence. A messenger has just been despatched with an order to seek the packet and have the Borderer conveyed forthwith to the capital under a strong guard. By the way, fair cousin," continued the King, drawing the Adventurer somewhat aside, "you are nearly concerned in the restoration of these documents. There is the letter written by your own hand to the English Chancellor, Sir William Stanley, and which we undertook to forward; if that scroll fell into the power of ill-wishers, it might bring his head to the block."

"Now Heaven forefend from such evil issue!" cried Richard, eagerly.

"That danger is happily eluded. Now, to horse, gentlemen."

The King vaulted lightly on his steed, and in a few minutes the gay cavalcade swept through the streets of Edinburgh, amid the shouts of the loyal citizens.

CHAPTER XXI.

FIDELITY.

Though perils did  
Abound as thick as thought could make 'em, and  
Appear in forms as horrid : yet my duty,  
As doth a rock against the chiding flood,  
Should the approach of this wild river break,  
And stand unshaken yours.

SHAKESPEARE.

IN a large, desolate room in one of the lower turrets of the castle of Glanmorris, sat the Bastard Heron, his head resting on

his hand, and his eyes fixed on the bare walls, prescribing such narrow limits to a step hitherto free as the mountain wind. It was the second day of his captivity.

In compliance with the injunctions of Lord Hamilton, he was kept under the strictest guard. It is true his limbs were unfettered, and he had escaped the infliction of a warder in his chamber, but an armed sentinel was posted day and night at the bottom of the staircase, which wound from his solitary turret, and formed the only possible outlet. Light and air were admitted through a spacious loophole, covered with a net-work of iron rings, of such massive and complex manufacture, as set at defiance alike the strength and art of man.

The noon-day sun streamed in through the grating, chequered by the shadow of an enormous sycamore tree, which extended its leafy covert close to the well defended loophole. The birds fluttered in its branches, and poured forth a flood of melody, almost



it might be thought in praise of that liberty which the captive could scarcely hope to regain.

Where were now the faithful hearts that would have shed their life's blood to ransom his—the followers who revered him as a Chief, and loved him as a father. They knew not of his danger. The first tidings of his capture would doubtless be accompanied by the history of his execution amid gaping crowds of blood-thirsty enemies. Still the Borderer bore a brave heart, and in the judgment of the guards, his demeanour well became his gallant name. When the Chief's morning meal had been brought to him, he had been given to understand that at sunset he was to be removed to Edinburgh by the royal order.

The announcement by no means imparted satisfaction.

“Had I but died sword in hand,” said the Borderer to himself, “with my foot on my native hills, and my breast to the foe,

I had not murmured at my fate—but to be caged in this rat-trap; to be made the gazing stock of the cowardly herd—this is no soldier's death—well-a-day! I must e'en accept it as a penance for the hasty deed which coupled the title of assassin with my name."

The Chief's thoughts had reached this point, when a sound differing somewhat from the notes of the feathered songsters caught his attention. His ear was strained to the utmost. For a few moments nothing was to be heard save the whistle of the distant sentinel as he endeavoured to while away the heavy hours. The Borderer approached the loophole, and fixed his anxious gaze on the huge sycamore tree. There was a slight rustling among the branches. An undefinable thrill of hope shot across the prisoner's bosom. In another instant a low voice issued from amid the leaves, speaking in a tone so low as to be barely audible.

"Noble Chief!" it whispered.

“Who speaks?” demanded the Borderer in the same cautious manner.

“’Tis I—Robin Starhed—one who would die to serve you.”

“My faithful Rob—then I may yet be saved—are you alone?”

“Unluckily, yes!”

“My true-hearted lad—how came you to discover my prison-house?”

“The tale is too long for the present precious moments,” replied Robin. “I have been concealed among these friendly branches for the last hour, being compelled to tarry until the sentry had passed to relieve guard. They will return anon. Say quickly—how can I best aid you?”

“Stay! until I can collect my thoughts.”

The Borderer pondered awhile.

“Listen!” said he. “This fortress is too well defended to permit the hope of escape. To-night after sunset, I am to be removed to the Scottish capital—if I am

not set free ere I arrive—my doom is sealed.”

“Ha! a rescue on the road is what you aim at?”

“There is my only chance. A party of our Border-riders in ambush would settle the affair. But the time is short—fearfully short. Let me consider—this spot is a score of miles from the Heron’s Haunt. Have you a horse, Robin?”

“Ne’er a one. The sorry beast I borrowed fell lame on the road.”

“Think you one could be procured?” asked the Chief, thoughtfully.

“The trial must not be made. I might be questioned and suspected, and then all would be lost. No—I am accounted fleet of foot, and will use my utmost speed. I have often followed the chase as far, and on this errand I shall prove no laggard.”

“My poor boy, you will never compass it; yet I see no other way. Would that I could put the sun back two short hours!”

“It shall not need,” said Robin, resolutely. “Doubt nothing—you shall be saved.”

“’Twill be a perilous risk of life,” pursued John Heron. “Why should my brave fellows spill their blood in a service that profits them nought. Out on my selfishness!”

“Noble Chief,” answered Starhed, “I pledge myself that no man shall ride to your rescue who does not hold himself prouder and blither to go on such an adventure than if he went to his bridal. Sore hearts will those have who remain in garrison.”

“I believe the poor lads love me,” said the Borderer, huskily.

“Body and soul,” replied Robin. “Take good cheer, gallant Chief, all will go well. If you have no further commands, I will away instantly.”

“Stop one moment,” returned the Borderer. “I have about me a packet of letters which I carried off from the enemy,

judging from the superscription of one of them that it contains a budget of treason against our good King Henry. In my possession they will be retaken. I will pass them out to you, and if we never meet again, have a care that they are delivered to our own sovereign."

As John Heron spoke, he unfastened the silk that bound the packet, and forced the missives separately through the iron rings of the grating—each one floated a moment in the balmy breeze, and then fell lightly to the earth."

"Farewell, Robin," murmured the Chief, "whether I live or die you have my thanks."

There was no reply. The youth had already glided to the ground, and was gathering up the letters which he deposited in his dusty jerkin. Afterwards, with his usual stealthy boldness he leaped the ditch, climbed the wall, and was shortly wending on the road far from the fortress. The Borderer had remained about half an hour

in hopeful contemplation, when many footsteps were heard ascending the stair-case, and presently the ponderous bolt which fastened the door from without, was drawn aside, and the governor of the castle, attended by four soldiers, entered the prison room. An order from King James had arrived some hours previously, enjoining that the English prisoner was to be conveyed that night, after sunset, to the capital, under the escort of Lord Hamilton's company of archers; meantime the slender garrison at Glanmorris was to be reinforced by a troop from Ayton Castle. The messenger brought directions for the immediate search of the Borderer's person, and the careful detention of a packet of papers that would be found thereon. The governor, a heavy, pompous man, replete with ideas of his own dignity, did not see the necessity of any haste in the matter, and consulting his personal ease, deferred obedience to the royal command until the business of the morning had been trans-

acted. The Border Chief, not so well acquainted as ourselves with the purport of this unexpected visit, could not help entertaining a slight feeling of uneasiness, fearful that his young retainer might have been detected, and made captive.

“John Heron, Bastard of that name,” commenced the governor with an air of authority, “it has been ordained by our sovereign lord, King James, that I should make strict inquisition for a packet feloniously carried off by you from the palace of Holyrood House, and reported to be at present concealed on your person. Will you yield it peaceably—ay or no?”

“I know nought of what you require,” returned the captive sullenly, “work your will.”

At a signal from their leader, the soldiers advanced, and seizing the Borderer, who made no resistance, they examined each article of his apparel separately, and with the greatest minuteness. It was soon evident that no papers were hidden about his



person. The room was closely searched—all was in vain.

“Can it be a mistake?” said the governor to himself, and then added aloud,—  
“If you entertain the smallest hope of grace from the King’s majesty, I would advise you not to trifle with his imperative demand.”

“I ask no favor from him or from you, save the scant courtesy of relieving me from the present annoyance, unless it is part of your purpose to torment a defenceless man—you are welcome to anything you may find; only leave me in peace.”

And the Borderer flung himself impatiently into a seat. After a closer and equally unsuccessful investigation, the governor withdrew in considerable perturbation, apprehensive that some blame might be attached to his own conduct in the affair, and the Border Chief was left alone to congratulate himself on the good fortune which had postponed the search for

the papers, until they had been transmitted into other hands.

We must now make a short digression in order to explain how Robin Starhed chanced to arrive so opportunely for the prisoner. The morning that the Chief left the Heron's Haunt, the young retainer tracked him, having an impression that he would proceed to Edinburgh, and entertaining certain misgivings as to the result of so dangerous an expedition. Perhaps his zeal was quickened by the consciousness that it was the vengeance due to his own crime, which threatened the life of his leader, and he resolved to be on the alert to give aid in case of extremity.

Finding his Chief did not return, and anxious to obtain intelligence, Robin procured a horse from a friendly Scot, and pushed along the road, until early on the following morning he reached the small hostelry, where the Borderer's horse had been recognised and himself captured.

The tale was soon elicited from the loquacious hostess, as well as the directions of Lord Hamilton that his prisoner should be conveyed, by the mounted troop, to the Castle of Glanmorris.

Without loss of time, Starhed returned southward; and an hour before noon, found himself approaching the towers of Glanmorris. His weary beast he left at the nearest farm house, and succeeded almost beyond his hopes, and in spite of a thousand obstacles, in obtaining a conference with the prisoner. As we before recounted, he retreated from the castle without much loss of time.

Aware that life and death hung upon his speed Robin sped on over hill and dale with the swiftness of the hunted deer. Each mountain pass—each secret defile—and winding track for twenty miles around, was known to the English Borderer—well was it for him—a false step, a wrong turning, and the doom of the Heron was sealed.

His foot scarcely seemed to press the bloom from the heather, as it lightly skimmed the ground. Now, sure-paced as a mule, he climbed some rocky ascent, maintaining his position by a grasp of the twining plants, whose fragile stems threatened to snap beneath his slender weight. Anon he plunged into a swollen torrent, seeking neither bridge nor ford—his diminutive frame breasted the foaming wave with a giant's courage—and when he gained the opposite bank—he shook the streaming water from his apparel, and with a cry of triumph, bounded forward on his way. It was long past noon; half of the distance had been traversed, and still Robin pressed onward with the same unwearied speed.

The shepherd idly tending his flock, and the lowland maid with jug or pail, looked wonderingly after the youth's flying figure, as he shot past them, deeming, no doubt, that some evil sprite was abroad. At length, momentarily overcome, Starhed paused and

dashed the elf locks from his pallid brow; feeling how necessary it was to husband his remaining strength.

The sun poured forth a blaze of glorious light as he travelled forward in his bright career; the youth fixed his anxious gaze on the glittering orb—away—away—messenger of mercy—the sun makes no pause in his steadfast course, and may yet win the race—of which the prize will be your Chieftain's life.

Once more Robin flew on with a step hardly less elastic than when first he started.

As he approached the frontier, so frequently traversed, every stone was a landmark to cheer him on; but the fatigue now began to tell on him sensibly; and dizzy from the rapid motion, he could, with difficulty, recognize the different hamlets and towers visible in the distance.

A shallow brook crossed his path—one he had often bounded over in sport—he essayed the leap, but stumbled, and barely saved himself from falling. For one moment he

threw himself on the shelving bank, dipped his palm in the stream and bathed his burning lips and brow—not one drop of that cooling water did he allow to enter his parched mouth, although he longed for the draught with feverish intensity—evidently, his powers of endurance would not bear him much farther—his young strength was failing, but his spirit was unquenched as ever—he turned his straining eyes on the sun, and once more he started on his weary course.

There was a perceptible alteration in his gait—his flying pace was slackened—each breath he drew with a sob—still he toiled onward. He dared not stop lest his limbs could not again be set in motion.

The Heron's Haunt was now in sight—he knew it was nigh at hand, but his flickering gaze could not descry the grim old fortress. His step reeled—he no longer seemed to breathe—a hoarse rattle issued from his breast, but the stout heart within was unsubdued—still he pressed onward. A

loud, well-remembered voice hailed him—he waved his hand, for he had not the power to reply—he rallied his energies for a last effort—the ponderous gate of the castle was swung open—he sprang through, and was caught in the arms of his ancient ally, Dick Lilburn.

The huge Border-rider felt the quivering of the slight frame that clung to him for support, and noted the ghastly pallor of the countenance; with a rough gentleness peculiar to himself, he bore his young comrade to the inner court, and deposited him on a stone bench, raising his head, and forbearing to question him until he had somewhat recovered. Every idler in the castle gathered round the spot. Robin understood it all—he heard distinctly the hum of voices—the saw the friendly faces round him—he knew that he had attained the desired haven—now was the moment—now—his lips moved, but he could not articulate—his haggard eye glanced towards the sun—with a sudden exertion he raised

himself on his feet, made a gesture, as it were, to demand silence, and then fell to the ground in a state of insensibility.

A cordial was promptly administered. His face retained the same hueless expression, but it would seem that the consciousness of the duty he had to perform, caused his senses to stagger back to life.

“The sun,” he exclaimed, wildly, as he started up. “Has the sun set? What time have we?”

And he stretched out his arm towards the bright luminary still travelling westward.

“There will be two hours and a half good before the sun sets,” returned Lilburn. “But is there anything to be done, Rob?”

The youth motioned for the restorative. Then with a rapid tongue, and eager haste, he recounted the history of their Chief's capture, and his own interview with him. He told how the order had arrived for John Heron's removal to Edinburgh that night at sunset, under the convoy of the Scottish



Archers, and he hurriedly explained that his only chance of life was a rescue on the road.

The tale was not concluded, ere every man in the castle had volunteered for the service ; however, twenty of the boldest riders were selected from the rest to conduct the expedition. The greatest confusion instantly prevailed. Horses were saddled, men equipped, and weapons brought forth—and in less than half an hour from the time that Robin Starhed entered the Heron's Haunt, a small but well-appointed train rode from the gates, armed to the teeth, and ready to brave every possible danger in the service of their Chief.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE CAMP.

Come away, come away,  
Hark to the summons!  
Come in your war array,  
Gentles and commons.

SCOTT.

OUR narrative now carries us back to the Scottish capital, King James's gay humour had continued unabated, and the *fête* that night was not less brilliant than the last, while its joyaunce was unmarred by the oc-

currence of any untoward event, such as had abruptly terminated the pastime of the previous evening.

On the following day, it had been announced that the King intended to review, on an extensive plain, without the fair city, the gallant army assembled by his liegemen for the invasion of England, under the personal command of the sovereign.

In so popular a cause, few were found to hang back; moreover, the various interests which spurred men on to action in those days, were all enlisted on the side of war. Did any wish to achieve fame—serve ambition—gratify an ancient grudge—obtain wealth, or court favour—where could there be an opportunity more propitious than the present for the attainment of his end. So at least thought the different leaders, as they donned their armour, and marshalled their men under their respective pennons, anxious to make a fair show in the eyes of the spectators.

Early on the morn appointed for the

martial display, Sir Ronald Graham and his English acquaintance rode together, at a leisurely pace, to the encampment. Wrapped in their dark mantles, the coats of mail which they wore beneath were only partially exposed to view. While the horsemen pricked onward, their discourse lightened the way. Their friendship had been of rapid growth, and they had become almost inseparable. Sir Ronald Graham felt a strange pleasure in the company of one who was acquainted with the secret of his love for the Lady Katherine—one to whom he could breathe the one loved name unrestrainedly, and in whose presence he was not compelled to guard every movement, lest his passion for the bride of the Prince of York should be detected. Master Dalton had, doubtless, his own motives for so close a fellowship.

“Hark!” exclaimed Sir Ronald; “the swell of yon trumpet denotes that the camp is near—and list you the sound of the pipes.”

They spurred their steeds towards some rising ground, and then drew the rein.

'Twas a spirit-stirring scene that stretched itself before them. The many-coloured tents gleamed gaily in the distance—a thousand banderols flaunted in the wind, and on every side the sparkling sunbeams were reflected dazzlingly upon spear and lance. Far as the eye could reach, the serried ranks were being ranged in fitting order under the directions of their commanders, and great was the diversity of appearance and accoutrements between the widely-spread bands.

Here was a file of men-at-arms, sheathed in mail from head to foot, and trained to act together with the utmost regularity and discipline; there a line of archers from Etrick Forest, with their graceful forms and far-famed bows, whose unerring aim was often the theme of minstrel's song. One portion of the ground was occupied by a company of burghers, lightly armed, and wearing little defensive armour, for they

liked not the unaccustomed weight, and preferred to run some additional risk rather than be harassed by so cumbrous a burden; in close proximity appeared a body of moss-troopers, and spearsmen from the Scottish Borders, each man differing from his fellow in weapons and garb, but no mean opponents were they, notwithstanding the irregularity of their front; their muscular strength had been brought to perfection by continual exercise, and for the most part they had literally been cradled in the lap of danger. Equally untaught, but essentially different in nature and habits were the wild Islemen, yielding blind obedience to their own chieftains, and disavowing allegiance to any other, even to the King himself. Couriers were posting to and fro with busy activity; and knights and barons were gathering their retainers around their unfurled standards.

Master Dalton looked at the goodly array—a kingdom's strength—and he uttered an inward malediction as he called to mind that this warlike power had been

summoned to attack his native England, foment civil war and broil in her peaceful bosom.

“There is yet a chance,” thought he, “that dissension may be sown between James Stuart and his young ally; then would this valiant host dissolve in a night, and leave the presumptuous boy to hew out his own path to the headsman’s block.”

Very different was the thought of Sir Ronald Graham; glancing joyously on the peopled plain, he plunged the rowel deep in his horse’s flanks, and made the animal perform a succession of lively caracoles.

“Yon display seems to please you well,” observed his companion.

“What leal heart would not bound at sight of so gallant a muster. ’T were worth half a life to wield a sword in so brave a company.”

“And what is the end you would compass by joining the mighty armament?” demanded Dalton, in a sarcastic tone of voice he could not always repress.

“Honor!” replied the Cavalier, briefly.

“The breath of fools,” returned the Englishman. “Nay, bend not your brows on me, man, but hearken. Suppose the expedition of your King should meet success, what is the issue! Richard of York fills Henry Tudor’s throne; the conqueror enters the English capital over his enemies’ necks, and his fair Kate owes to her lord a new measure of love and reverence, for having placed upon her dainty head a crown; meantime lip thanks are rendered to all concerned in the good work, and you, Sir Ronald, are then dismissed from Court with the rest of the worn-out swords and rusty armour. How like you the commentary on your text?”

Graham made no reply, but the gloom again gathered on his countenance, and giving an impatient shrug, he urged his steed forward. Dalton followed his lead, and they pursued their course in silence to the encampment.

As they approached closer to the scene



of action, the obstacles to their progress multiplied, and they experienced considerable difficulty in threading their way through the steel-clad throng. On one side a gallery, slightly raised, had been hastily constructed, for the accommodation of the ladies of the Court, in order that they might not be debarred a sight of the spectacle.

As the fair dames assumed their seats, there was a sudden rush of the spectators to the spot, and our horsemen were almost carried along with the inundation. Opposing manual resistance to the overwhelming tide, they succeeded at length in extricating themselves from the crowd, and then the friends separated. Sir Ronald Graham galloped off to his post in the Earl of Huntly's division, and Master Dalton remained on the watch to join the train of the Adventurer immediately that he entered the field.

He had not long to tarry. A joyous

burst of acclaim announced the appearance of King James.

He was surrounded by the gentlemen of his household, and beside him rode the Adventurer, attended by a body of English volunteers, who gradually became mingled with the Scottish gentles. Behind these marched a small party of Burgundians, sent over by the Duchess of Burgundy with her reputed nephew.

Comprehending little of what they saw, and startled by the wild dress and war-cry of the Highlanders, the foreign troops glanced ever and anon warily at their arms, and kept their attention fixed on their own immediate officer.

Now the business of the day commenced. Each separate band was reviewed by James, and afterwards addressed by him in the dialect and style most suitable to the predilections of the hearers: his princely affability winning a hearty blessing from many a loyal breast.

The review was over. The Lady Katherine had presented the banner worked by her own fair hands, to her father's followers, and the boon had been duly acknowledged on bended knee by the leaders of the division.

The ceremony having terminated; James spurred his charger to the gallery, in the centre whereof sat the Lady Katherine—her sweet face flushing, her proud lip tremulous with the emotion of the moment, and her eye sparkling brighter even than the sun-beam.

“Now by my sceptre! fair cousin,” said the King, as he looked on her, “’tis easy to read that the clash of swords rings as sweet music in your ear as in my own. I would have you ever at the head of our armies, that brave men might see in you the star of victory, and the faint-hearted take shame to learn courage from a woman.”

“Know you not, my liege,” returned Katherine, smiling, “that I have also the blood of the Stuart in my veins. Marvel

not then if I show a touch of their spirit."

"You are my own saucy kinswoman," replied the King, "and I will make complaint to your lord that while you carry the badge of the White Rose on your bosom you wear the rebel roses on your cheek—although it pleases us to see you have the grace to blush for your offence."

And James turned his laughing glance full on Katherine, whose cheek became every moment of a deeper color, as she felt the general observation attracted towards her. Richard now rode up to join the King, and pointing to the countless array that covered the plain on all sides, said:

"Happy is the Monarch at whose beck you valiant host has sprung to arms. The captainship of that gallant band would move an envy more than the pomp and pageant of a crown."

"Certes, the office of leading those brave hearts is not undervalued by us," answered the Monarch. "Dear to us likewise is the

cause for which our sword leaves the sheath; the assertion of our own dignity, involving vengeance for the death of our trusty subject and counsellor; neither are we indifferent to the hope of seeing our new kinsman and ally of the house of York win his way to the English throne."

"My poor words can ill express my sense of your Highness's benefits; my gratitude for your generous aid will take a whole life to prove."

"Away with such cold ceremony! When we ride side by side into London, when your kingly inheritance recognizes your sway--then, and not till then, will we speak of thanks."

As the King spoke, he extended his mailed hand and grasped that of the Adventurer--during some moments they retained the same attitude, while the latter expressed in animated terms his affectionate regard. The friendly act was quickly noted by the curious eyes that were seldom long diverted from the royal person, and

then issued from thousands of throats, a shout, long, loud, and deep—the trumpets sounded their most triumphant measure—the ladies waved their kerchiefs—still amid the din, the outcries of that armed multitude rang through the air :

“ God save King James—Long live Richard of York.”

And so ends the first act of our drama.

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