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THE
HISTORY
OF THE
KING
AND THE
COBLER

How King Henry VIII. become acquainted with a merry Cobler ; and his Entertainment in the Cobler's cellar.

How the Cobler prepared himself to go to Court, and the Manner of his Reception there.

His Entertainment in the King's cellar—and how he met with his new friend Harry Tudor.

HIS SONG IN THE KING'S CELLAR.

And last of all,
How he became a Courtier.

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THE
HISTORY
OF THE
KING AND THE COBLER.
CHAP. I.

How King Henry VIII. used to visit the Watches in the City, and how he became acquainted with a merry jovial Cobler.

It was the custom of King Henry the eighth, to walk late in the night into the City disguised, to observe and take notice how the constables and watch performed their duty, not only in guarding the city gates, but also in diligently watching the inward parts of the city, that so they

might, in a great measure prevent those disturbances and casualties which too often happen in great and populous cities in the night; and this he did often times, without the least discovery who he was; returning home to Whitehall early in the morning.

Now in his return home through the Strand, he took notice of a certain cobbler, who was constantly up at work, whistling and singing every morning. The King was resolved to see him and be acquainted with him, in order to which he immediately knocks the heel off his shoe by hitting it against a stone; and having so done, he bounced at the cobbler's stall.

Who's their? cries the cobbler.

Here's one, cries the King. With that the cobbler opened the stall door, and the King asked him if he could set the heel on his shoe.

Yes, that I can, says the cobbler. Come in, honest fellow, and sit thee down by me, and I will do it for thee straight; the cobbler scraping his awls and old shoes to one side, to make room for the King to sit down.

The King being hardly able to forbear laughing at the kindness of the Cobbler, asked him if there was not a house hard by that sold a cup of ale, and the people up.

Yes, said the cobbler, there is an inn ever the way, where I believe the folks are up. for the carriers go from thence very early in the morning.

With that the King borrowed an old shoe from the cobbler, and went over to the inn, desiring the Cobbler would bring his shoe to him thither as soon as he had put on the heel again. The cobbler promised he would. So making what haste he could to put on the heel, he carries it over to the King, saying, Honest blade, here

is thy shoe, and I warrant thee it will not come off again in haste.

Very well, says the King, what must you have for your pains ?

A couple of pence, replied the cobbler.

Well, said the king seeing thou art an honest merry fellow, here is a teaster for thee—come sit down by me, I will drink a full pot with thee. Come here's a good health to the King.

With all my heart, said the cobbler, I'll pledge thee were it in water.

So the cobbler sat down by the King, and was very merry, and drank off his liquor very freely ; he likewise sung some of his merry songs and catches, whereat the king laughed heartily, and was very jocund and pleasant with the cobbler, telling him withal that his name was Harry Tudor, that he belonged to the court, &

that if he would come and see him there, he would make him very welcome, because he was a merry companion, and charged him not to forget his name and to ask any one for him about the court, and they would soon bring him to him ; for, said the king, I am very well known there.

Now the cobbler little dreamt that he was the King that spake to him, much less that the King's name was Harry Tudor. Therefore, with a great deal of confidence he stands up, puts off his hat, makes two or three scrapes with his foot, and gives the King many thanks, also telling him, that he was one of the most honest fellows that ever he met with in all his life-time and although he had never been at court, yet he should not be long before he would make a holiday to come and see him.

Whereupon the King paying for what they had drunk, would have taken his leave of the Cobbler ; but he,

not being willing to part with him, took hold of his hand and said, By my faith you must not go, you shall not go, you shall first go and see my poor habitation, I have there a tub of good brown ale that was never tapped yet, you must go and taste it, for you are the most honest blade I ever met withal, and I love an honest merry companion with all my heart

CHAP. II.

How the Cobler entertained the king in his cellar, and of the disturbance they had like to have had by his wife Joan.

So the Cobler took the King with him over the way where he had his cellar adjoining the stall, which was handsomely and neatly furnished for a man of his profession. Into his cellar he had the king. There said he, sit down you're welcome, but I must desire you to speak softly for fear of waking my wife Joan who lives hard

by (shewing the King a close bed made up at a corner of the cellar, much like a closet) for if she should awake, she will make our ears ring again.

At which speech of the cobbler's, the king laughed, and told him he would be mindful and follow his directions.

Whereupon the cobbler kindled up a fire, and fetched out a brown loaf, from which he cut a lusty toast, which he toasted at the fire; then he brought out his Cheshire cheese—Now, says he, there is as much fellowship in eating as in drinking; which made the king admire the honest freedom of the cobbler.

So having eaten a bit, the cobbler began a health, "To all true hearts and merry companions." At which the King smiled, saying, Friend, I'll pledge thee.

In this manner they eat and drank

together till it was almost break of day ; the cobbler being very free of his liquor, and delighting the King with several of his old stories, inso-much, that he was highly pleased with the manner of his entertainment when on a sudden, the cobbler's wife began to wake, I faith, says the cobbler, you must begone, my wife begins to grumble, she'll awake presenty, and I would not for half the shoes in my shop she would find you here.

Then taking the king by the hand, he led him up atairs, saying, Farewel, honest friend, it shan't be long before I make a holiday to come and see thee at court.

Thou shalt be kindly welcome, replied the King.

So they parted, the King on his way to Whitehall, and the cobbler to his cellar, and there putting all things to rights before his wife Joan got up, he went to work again, whistling &

& singing as merry as he used to do being much satisfied that he happened on so good and jovial a companion, still pleasing himself in his thoughts how merry he should be when he came to court.

CHAP. III.

How the Cobler prepared himself to go to court, and how he was set out in the best manner by his wife Joan.

Now as soon as the King came home, he sent out orders about the court, that if any one enquired for him by the name of Harry Tudor, they should immediately bring him before him, whatever he was, without any further examination of him.

The cobbler thought every day a month till he had been at court to see his new acquaintance, and was troubled how he should get leave of his wife Joan, for he could not get with

out her knowledge, by reason he did resolve to make himself as fine as he could, for his wife always kept the keys of his holiday cloaths, whereupon one evening as they sat at supper, finding her in very good humour, he began to lay open his mind to her, telling her the whole story of their acquaintance, repeating it over and over again, that he was the most honest fellow that ever he met with. Husband, quoth she, because you have been so ingenious to tell me the whole truth, I will give you leave to make a holiday for this once ;—you shall go to court, and I will make you as fine as I can.

So it was agreed that he should go the court the next day ; whereupon Joan rose betimes the next morning, to brush up her husband's holiday clothes, and made him as fine as she could. She washed and ironed the lace-band and made his shoes shine that he might see his face in them ; having done this, she made her hus-

hand rise and pull off his shirt. Then she washed him with warm water from head to foot, putting on him a clean shirt; afterwards she dressed him in his holiday clothes; pinning his laced band in prim.

CHAP. IV,

The Cobler's Reception at Court.
with the Manner of his Behavior
before the King.

THE cobbler being thus set forth, strutted through the streets like a crow in a gutter. thinking himself as fine as the best of them all.

In this manner he came to court, walking up and down, and staring on every body he met with, not knowing to whom to ask for Harry Tudor. At last he espied one, as he thought in the habit of a servant, to whom he made this address, saying.

Dost thou hear, honest fellow, do

you know one Harry Tudor who belongs to the Court.

Yes, said the man, follow me, and I will bring you to him.

With that he had him presently up into the guard-chamber, telling one of the yeomen of the guard there was one that enquired for Harry Tudor.

Replied the yeoman, I know him very well—if you please to go along with me, I'll bring you to him immediately.

So the cobbler followed the yeoman, admiring very much the prodigious finery of the rooms which he carried him through. He thought within himself that the yeoman was mistaken in the person whom he enquired for; for, said he, he whom I look for is a plain merry, honest fellow, his name is Harry Tudor; we drank two pots together not long since. I suppose

he may belong to some lord or other about the court.

I tell you, friend, replied the yeoman, I know him very well, do you but follow me and I shall bring you to him straight.

So going forward he came into the room where the King was, accompanied by several of the nobles attended him.

As soon as the yoemen had put up by the orras, he spoke aloud. May it please your Majesty here is one that enquires for Harry Tudor.

The cobler hearing this, thought he had committed no less than treason : Therefore he up with his heels and ran for it ; but not being acquainted with the several turnings and rooms through which he came, he was soon overtaken, and brought before the King ; whom the cobler little thought to be the person he en-

quired after ; therefore in a trembling condition he fell down on his knees, saying,

May it please your grace, may it please your highness, I am a poor cobbler, and enquired for one Harry Tudor, who is a very honest fellow, I mended the heel of his shoe not long since for which he paid me nobly, and gave me two pots to boot, but, I had him afterwards to my sellar, where we drank part of p' cup of nappy ale, and were very merry, till my wife Joan began to grumble which put an end to our merriment for that time, but I told him I would come to the court and see him as soon as conveniently I could.

¶ Well, said the King, don't be troubled, do you know this honest fellow again, if you could see him ?

The cobbler replied, Yes, that I do, among a thousand.

Then said the King, Stand up and be not afraid, but look well about you, peradventure you may find the fellow in this company.

Whereupon the cobbler arose and looked wishfully upon the King and the rest of his nobles, but it was to little or no purpose; for though he saw something in the King's face which he thought he had seen before, yet he could not imagine him to be Harry Tudor whose shoe-heel he had mended, and who had been so merry with him at the inn, and at his own cellar.

He therefore told the King he had not expected to find Harry Tudor among such fine folks as he was there, but the person he looked for was a plain, merry, honest, and true-hearted fellow. Adding withal, that he was sure that did Harry Tudor but know that he was come to court, he would make him very welcome; for, says the cobbler, when we parted, he

charged me to come to court soon and see him, which I promised I would, and accordingly I have made a holiday on purpose to have a glass with him.

At which speech of the cobbler's, the King had much ado to forebear laughing out, but keeping his countenance as steady as he could before the cobbler, he spoke to the yeoman of the guard.

Here, said he, take this honest cobbler down into my cellar, and let him drink my good health—I will give orders that Harry Tudor shall come to him presently.

So away they went, the cobbler being fit to leap out of his skin for joy, not only that he had come off so well, but that he should see his friend Harry Tudor.

CHAP. V.

The Cobler's entertainment in the
King's Cellar,

The cobler had not been long in the King's cellar, before the King came to him in the same habit that he had on when the cobler mended his shoe ; whereupon the cobler knew him immediately, and ran and kissed him, saying.

Honest Harry I have made an holiday on purpose to see you but I had much ado to get leave of my wife Joan, who was loath to lose so much time from my work, but I was resolved to see you, and therefore I made myself as fine as I could. But I'll tell thee, Harry, when I came to court I was in a peck of troubles how to find you out ; but at last I met with a man who told me he knew you very well, and that he would bring me to you ; but instead of doing so, he

brought me before the King which almost frightened me out of my seven senses : but faith I'm resolved to be merry with you now since I have met you at last.

Ay, that we shall, replied the king, we will be as merry as princes.

Now after the cobbler had drunk about four or five good healths, he began to be merry, and fell a-singing his old songs and catches, which pleased the king very much, and made him laugh heartily.

When on a sudden, several of the nobles came into the cellar; extraordinary rich in apparel who all stood uncovered before Harry Tudor, which put the cobbler into great amazement at first; but presently recovering himself, he looked more wishfully upon Harry Tudor, and soon knowing him to be the King whom he saw in the presence chamber, though in a-

nother habit, he immediatly fell upon his knees, saying,

May it please your Grace, may it please your Highness, I am a poor honest cobbler, and mean no harm.

No, no, said the King, nor shall you receive any here, I assure you,

He then commanded him to rise, and be as merry as he was before ; and though he knew him to be the King, yet he should use the same freedom with him as he did when he mended the heel of his shoe-

This kind speech of the King's, and three or four glasses of wine, made him be in as good humour as he was before, telling the King several of his droll stories, and singing some of his best songs, very much to the satisfaction of the King and all his nobles.

THE
COBLER'S SONG

IN THE
KING'S CELLAR.

COME let us drink the other pot,
our sorrows to confound ;
We'll laugh and sing before the King
so let his health go round.
For I'm as bold as bold can be,
no cobbler e'er was ruder ;
Then here good fellow here's to thee,
rememb'ring Harry Tudor.

When I'm at work within my stall,
upon him I will think ;
His kindness I to mind will call,
whene'er I eat or drink.

His kindness was to me so great,
 the like was never known,
 His kindness I shall still repeat,
 And so shall my wife Joan.

I'll laugh when I sit in my stall,
 and merrily will sing,
 That I with my poor last and awl,
 am fellow with the king.
 But it is more, I must confess
 than I at first did know :
 But Harry Tudor, ne'ertheless,
 resolves it shall be so.

And now farewell unto Whitehall
 I homeward must retire,
 To sing and whistle in my stall,
 my Joan will me desire.
 I do but think how she will laugh,
 when she hears of this thing,
 That he that drank her nut brown,
 was England's royal king. (ale,

CHAP. VI.

How the Cobler became a Courtier.

Now the king considering the pleasant humour of the cobbler, how innocently merry he was, and free from any designs ; that he was a person that labored very hard, and took a great deal of pains for a small livelihood, was pleased out of his princely grace and favor, to allow him a liberal annuity of forty merks a year, for the better support of his jolly humour, and the maintainance of his wife Joan ; and that he should be admitted one of his courtiers, and that he might have the freedom of his cellar, whenever he pleased.

Which being so much beyond expectation, did highly exalt the cobbler's humour, much to the satisfaction of the King.

So after a great many legs and scrapes he returned home to his wife Joan, with the joyful news of his reception at court; which so well pleased her, that she did not think much at the great pains she took in decking him for the journey.

This is but the first part in a subsequent volume, both parts are given. FINIS.

W.M.