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THE CONSTABLE

OF

THE TOWER.

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

BY

WILLIAM HARRISON AINSWORTH.

FOURTH EDITION.

LONDON:

CHAPMAN AND HALL, 193, PICCADILLY.

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THE
Constable of the Tower.

PROLOGUE.

THE WILL OF HENRY VIII.

I.

HOW THE RIGHT HIGH AND RENOWNED KING HENRY THE EIGHTH WAXED GRIEVOUSLY SICK, AND WAS LIKE TO DIE.

THE terrible reign of Henry the Eighth drew to a close. The curtain was about to descend upon one of the most tremendous dramas ever enacted in real life—a drama which those who witnessed it beheld with wonder and awe. The sun of royalty, which had scorched all it fell upon by the fierceness of its mid-day beams, was fast sinking into seas lighted up by lurid fires, and deeply stained by blood.

For five-and-thirty years of Henry's tyrant sway, no man in England, however high his rank, could count his life secure. Nay, rather, the higher the rank the greater was the insecurity. Royal descent, wealth, power, popularity, could not save the Duke of Buckingham from Henry's jealous fears. Truly spake the dying Wolsey of his dread and inexorable master—"Rather than miss or want any part of his will or appetite, he will endanger the loss of half his realm. Therefore, be well advised what matter ye put in his head, for you shall never put it out again." Henry was prone to suspicion, and to be suspected by him was to be doomed, for he was unforgiving as mistrustful. His favour was fatal; his promises a snare; his love destruction. Rapacious as cruel, and lavish as rapacious, his greediness was insatiable. He confiscated the possessions of the Church, and taxed the laity to the uttermost. The marvel is, that the iron yoke he placed upon his subjects was endured. But he had a firm hand, as well as a strong will. Crafty as well as resolute, he framed laws merely to deride them and break them. He threw off the Pope's authority in order to make himself supreme head of the Church. Some were executed by him for maintaining the

Papal supremacy, others put to death for denying certain Catholic tenets. To prove his even-handed justice, Romanists and Lutherans were linked together, and conducted in pairs to the stake. At one moment he upheld the new doctrines; on the next, he supported the old religion. Thus he used the contending parties for his own purposes, and made each contribute to his strength. The discord in the Church pleased him, though he feigned to reprove it. His counsellors trembled at his slightest frown, and dared not for their heads give him honest advice. His parliaments were basely subservient, and confirmed his lawless decrees without an effort at resistance. A merciless system of religious persecution was commenced and carried out according to his changeful opinions. The fires at Smithfield were continually burning. The scaffold on Tower-hill reeked with the blood of the noble and the worthy. The state dungeons were crowded. Torture was applied. Secret examinations were allowed. Defence was denied the accused; and a bill of attainder smote the unfortunate person against whom it was procured as surely as the axe.

The wisest, the noblest, the bravest, the best of Henry's subjects were sacrificed to his resentments and caprice. Uprightness could not save More and Fisher, nor long services and blind obedience Wolsey and Cromwell. Age offered no protection to the octogenarian Lord Darcy, and piety failed to preserve the abbots of Fountains, Rivaux, and Gervaux.

But not alone did men perish by the stern behests of this ruthless tyrant, this worse than Oriental despot, but women!—women of incomparable beauty, who had shared his couch, and had every claim upon his tenderness and compassion. But pity was not in his nature. When love was gone, dislike and hate succeeded. Startling and almost incredible is the history of his six marriages. No parallel can be found to it save in wild and grotesque fiction. It reads like a Bluebeard story, yet, alas! it was fearful reality. Katherine of Aragon, faultless and loving, was divorced to make way for the lovely Anne Boleyn, who, in her turn, was decapitated to give place to the resistless Jane Seymour. The latter lived not long enough to weary her capricious consort, but was succeeded by Anne of Cleves, whose want of personal attraction caused the annul-

ment of her marriage and Cromwell's destruction. Next came the bewitching Catherine Howard, who was butchered like Anne Boleyn; and lastly, Catherine Parr, saved only from the block by her own spirit and prudence, as will be presently related. Twice was the nuptial knot forcibly untied—twice was it sundered by the axe. Pretexts for his violence were never wanting to Henry. But the trials of his luckless spouses were a mockery of justice. The accused were prejudged ere heard. The king's pleasure was alone consulted. From his vengeance there was no escape.

When it was a question whether the beautiful Jane Seymour's life should be preserved, or that of the infant she was about to bring into the world, Henry unhesitatingly sacrificed the queen, brutally observing, "that he could readily get other wives, but might not have other children." But not only did young and lovely women suffer from his barbarity; venerable dames fared no better. Execrable was the manner in which the aged and dignified Countess of Salisbury was slaughtered.

A list of Henry's victims would swell pages: their number is almost incredible. For nearly five-and-thirty years had this royal Bluebeard ruled the land; despoiling the Church, plundering his subjects, trampling on the necks of his nobles, disregarding all rights, divorcing and butchering his wives, disgracing and beheading his ministers; yet all the while, in the intensity of his egotism, entertaining the firm belief that he was one of the wisest and most merciful of kings, and arrogating to himself the title of Heaven's vicar and High Minister on earth.

But the end of this monstrous tyranny approached. For months the moody monarch had shut himself up within his palace at Westminster like a sick lion in his den, and it appeared almost certain he would never quit it alive. Nothing could be gloomier than the present aspect of the court, or offer a greater contrast to its former splendour and gaiety. The pompous pageantries and shows erstwhile exhibited there were over; the sumptuous banquets and Belshazzar-like festivals, of which the monarch and his favourite attendants partook, had ceased; boisterous merriment was no longer heard—laughter indeed was altogether hushed; gorgeously-apparelled nobles and proudly-beauti-

ful dames no longer thronged the halls; ambassadors and others were no more admitted to the royal presence; knightly displays were no more made in the precincts of the palace; the tennis-court was unfrequented, the manège-ground unvisited, all the king's former amusements and occupations were neglected and abandoned. Music was no longer heard either within or without, for light inspiriting sounds irritated the king almost to madness. Henry passed much of his time in his devotions, maintaining for the most part a sullen silence, during which he brooded over the past, and thought with bitter regret, not of his misdeeds and cruelties, but of bygone pleasures.

Not more changed was the king's court than the king himself. Accounted, when young, one of the handsomest princes in Europe, possessing at that time a magnificent person, a proud and majestic bearing, and all that could become a sovereign, he was now an unwieldy, unshapely, and bloated man. The extraordinary vigour of his early days gave promise of long life; but the promise was fallacious. Formerly he had been accustomed to take prodigious exercise, and to engage in all manly sports; but of late, owing to increasing obesity, these wholesome habits were neglected, and could never be resumed; his infirmities offering an effectual bar to their continuance. Though not positively intemperate, Henry placed little restraint upon himself in regard to wine, and none whatever as to food. He ate prodigiously. Nor when his life depended upon the observance of some rules of diet would he refrain.

Engendered in his frame by want of exercise, and nourished by gross self-indulgence, disease made rapid and fearful progress. Ere long he had become so corpulent, and his limbs were so much swollen, that he was almost incapable of movement. Such was his weight, that machinery had to be employed to raise him or place him in a chair. Doors were widened to allow him passage. He could not repose in a couch from fear of suffocation; and unceasing anguish was occasioned by a deep and incurable ulcer in the leg. Terrible was he to behold at this period. Terrible to hear were his cries of rage and pain, which resembled the roaring of a wild beast. His attendants came nigh him with reluctance and affright, for the slightest inadvertence drew down dreadful imprecations and menaces on their heads.

But the lion, though sick to death, was a lion still. While any life was left him, Henry would not abate a jot of the sovereign power he had exercised. Though his body was a mass of disease, his faculties were vigorous as ever; his firmness was unshaken, his will absolute. To the last he was true to himself. Inexorable he had been, and inexorable he remained. His thirst for vengeance was insatiable as ever, while his suspicions were more quickly aroused and sharper than heretofore.

But during this season of affliction, vouchsafed him, perchance, for repentance from his numerous and dire offences, there was no endeavour to reconcile himself with man, or to make his peace with Heaven. Neither was there any outward manifestation of remorse. The henchmen and pages, stationed at the doors of his chamber during the long hours of night, and half slumbering at their posts, with other watchers by his side, were often appalled by the fearful groans of the restless king. But these might be wrested from him by pain, and were no proof that conscience pricked him. Not a word escaped his lips to betoken that sleep was scared away by the spectres of his countless victims. What passed within that dark and inscrutable breast no man could tell.

II.

OF THE SNARE LAID BY HER ENEMIES FOR QUEEN CATHERINE PARR; AND HOW SHE FELL INTO IT.

So alarmed had been the fair dames of Henry's court by his barbarous treatment of his spouses, as well as by the extraordinary and unprecedented enactment he had introduced into Catherine Howard's bill of attainder, that when the royal Bluebeard cast his eyes among them in search of a new wife, they all shunned the dangerous distinction, and seemed inclined to make a similar response to that of the beautiful Duchess of Milan, who told Henry, "that unfortunately she had but one head,—if she had two, one of them should be at his Majesty's service."

At length however one was found of somewhat more mature years than her immediate predecessors, but of unimpaired personal attractions, who had sufficient confidence in her discretion, and trust in her antecedents, to induce her to venture on the hazardous step. This was Catherine, daughter of Sir Thomas Parr of Kendal, then in her second widowhood; she having married, in the first instance, the eldest son of Lord Borough of Gainsborough, and, on his demise, the Lord Latimer. By neither marriage had there been children, so no obstacle was offered to her union with the king on this score. Henry espoused her, and was well satisfied with his choice. In proof of his high estimation, he appointed her Regent of the kingdom prior to his departure on the expedition to France in 1544, the year after his marriage.

So great was Catherine Parr's prudence, and so careful her conduct, that in spite of all intrigues against her, she never lost her influence over her fickle and suspicious spouse. The queen inclined to the new doctrines, and consequently those who adhered to the old religion became her enemies. But she gave them little ground for attack, and her hold upon the king's affections secured her against their malice. Age and infirmities had subdued the violence of Henry's passions: hence Catherine had no reason to fear lest she should be superseded by some more attractive rival. Besides, she had prudence enough to keep temptation out of the king's way, and she gradually and almost imperceptibly gave a more austere character to his court and entertainments. It was at her instance, though Henry was scarcely conscious of the prompting, that the pageant-ries and festivities in which he had once so greatly delighted were discontinued. As Henry's ailments increased, and he became altogether confined to the palace, Catherine would fain have acted his nurse, but this Henry would not permit; and fearing his suspicions might be aroused, the queen did not urge the point. But she was frequently with him, and ever ready to attend his summons. Under the circumstances in which he was placed, her discourse might have been very profitable to the king if he had chosen to listen to it; but he would brook no monition, and his sternness on one or two occasions when the attempt was made, warned her to desist. But Catherine was somewhat

of a controversialist, and, being well read in theological matters, was fully able to sustain a dispute upon any question that might arise, and, though she never contradicted, she not unfrequently argued with him, yielding in the end, as was discreet, to his superior judgment.

One day she was suddenly summoned by the king, and, accompanied by her confidante, Lady Herbert, she prepared, without any misgiving, to attend upon him.

Catherine Parr's charms were of a kind which is more fully developed in the summer of life than in the spring. At thirty-five she was far handsomer than when she was ten years younger. Her complexion was of exquisite clearness, and her skin smooth as satin; her face was oval in form, the principal feature being slightly aquiline; her eyes were large, dark and languid in expression, with heavy eyelids, over-arched by well-defined jetty brows. Her raven locks were banded over her marble forehead, and partly concealed by her rich head-dress. Her figure was tall and perfectly proportioned, full, but not over-much. Her deportment was majestic and queenly, her manner calm, collected, almost cold; but, notwithstanding her gravity of aspect and staidness of demeanour, there was something in Catherine's looks that seemed to intimate that she *could* smile, ay, and indulge in innocent merriment, when alone among her women, or unawed by her imperious spouse.

On the present occasion she was richly attired, as was her wont. A circle of gold, ornamented with diamonds, rubies, and small pearls, encompassed her brows. Attached to this coronet was a coif of golden wire, while an embroidered couvre-chief depending from it, completed her head-gear. Her gown was of gold damask, raised with pearls of damask silver, with a long close-fitting stomacher, and sleeves tight at the shoulder, but having loose hanging cuffs of fur, beneath which could be discerned slashed and puffed under-sleeves of crimson satin. A necklace of jacinth adorned her throat, and her waist was surrounded by a girdle of goldsmith's work, with friar's knots, enamelled black. A pomander box terminated the chain of the girdle, which reached almost to the feet.

Her attendant, Lady Herbert, sister to Henry's third wife, Jane Seymour, and herself a very lovely woman, was

likewise richly habited in a gown of chequered tissue, fashioned like the queen's.

On Catherine's entrance into the royal presence, Henry was seated in his cumbrous chair. Ever fond of rich habiliments, even when labouring under mortal disease, his predilections did not desert him. A gown of purple cassa damask, furred with sables, and having a border embroidered and fringed with Venice gold, was thrown over his shoulders. His overgrown trunk was enveloped in a doublet of purple satin, embroidered all over with pearls; and his lower limbs were wrapped in a mantle of black cloth of gold upon bawdkin. On his head he wore a velvet skull-cap, richly set with pearls and other precious stones. But these trappings and ensigns of royalty only served to make the sick monarch's appearance more hideous. It was dreadful to look upon him as he sat there, with his features so bloated as scarcely to retain a vestige of humanity, and his enormously bulky person. No one would have recognised in this appalling object the once handsome and majestic Henry the Eighth. The only feature unchanged in the king was the eye. Though now deep sunken in their orbits, his eyes were keen and terrible as ever, proving that his faculties had lost none of their force.

On the king's right, and close beside him, stood the astute and learned Stephen Gardiner, who, though he had signed Henry's divorce from Katherine of Aragon, and written the famous oration *De Verâ Obedentiâ* in the monarch's behalf, was yet secretly devoted to the Romish faith, and strongly opposed to the new doctrines. Clad in his stole, scarlet chimere, white rochette, and black cassock, he wore a black skull-cap set low upon the forehead, and having flaps that covered the ears and neck. Gardiner was singularly ill-favoured; very swarthy, beetle-browed, and hook-nosed. Moreover he had wide nostrils, like those of a horse, and a hanging look. By nature he was fierce, of great boldness, extremely zealous and indefatigable, and enjoyed much credit with his royal master, which he was supposed to have employed against the Reformers.

On the other side of the monarch was stationed the Lord Chancellor Wriothsley (pronounced Wrottesley), a sombre-looking man, with harsh features, and a high, bald forehead. Robed in a black gown bordered with sable fur,

he had altogether the air of a grand inquisitor. As a knight companion of the Garter, he wore the George and collar round his neck. Like Gardiner, the Lord Chancellor was attached to the old faith, and bitterly, though secretly, hostile to its opponents. They both entertained the belief that on the king's death the progress of the Reformation would be arrested, and the religion of Rome triumphantly restored; and to this end they had plotted together to remove the queen, as one of the chief obstacles to the accomplishment of their scheme. They inflamed the king's mind against her by representing to him that her Majesty was in the habit of secretly perusing religious books and manuscripts prohibited by the royal decree, offering him proof, if needed, of the truth of their assertions; and Catherine herself unwittingly played into their hands by the imprudence with which she discussed certain points of doctrine with her intolerant spouse, stoutly maintaining opinions adverse to his own. Made aware of this by the king's displeasure, the plotters easily fanned the flame which had been already lighted until it burst into a blaze. He uttered angry menaces, and spoke of a committal to the Tower. But he would give her one chance of retrieving herself. She was summoned, as has been stated, and on her behaviour at the interview hung her sentence.

As Catherine entered, she perceived her enemies, and feared that something might be wrong, but an appearance of unwonted good-humour in the king deceived her. As she advanced and made a lowly obeisance, Wriothsley offered to raise her, but she haughtily declined the offer.

"How fares your Majesty this morning?" she inquired.

"Marry, well enough," Henry replied. "We have slept somewhat better than usual, and Butts thinks we are mending apace."

"Not too quickly, my gracious liege—but slowly and surely, as I trust," observed the physician, hazarding a glance of caution at the queen, which unluckily passed unnoticed.

"Heaven grant it be so!" exclaimed Catherine.

"Come and sit by us, Kate," pursued Henry; adding, as she placed herself on a fauteuil near him, "You spoke so well and so convincingly yesterday, that we would fain

have the Lord Chancellor and my Lord of Winchester hear you."

"We cannot fail to profit by her Majesty's discourse," remarked Gardiner, inclining his head.

"I would what I shall say might profit you, and the Lord Chancellor likewise, for ye have both need of improvement," replied Catherine, sharply "If his Highness will listen to me, ye shall neither of you have much more influence with him, for ye give him pernicious counsel. As to you, my Lord Chancellor, a circumstance hath been told me which, if it be true, proves the hardness of your heart, and must call down upon you his Majesty's displeasure. It is said that when Anne Askew underwent the torture in the Tower, and the sworn tormentor desisted and would not further pursue his hateful office, you yourself turned the wheel of the rack, and stretched it to the uttermost. And this upon a woman—a gentle, beautiful woman. Oh, my Lord, fie upon you!"

"I will not deny the fact," Wriothesley replied, "and I acted only in accordance with my duty in striving to wrest an avowal of her guilt from a mischievous and stubborn heretic, who was justly convicted under his Majesty's statute of the Six Articles, wherein it is enacted that whosoever shall declare, dispute, or argue that in the blessed sacrament of the altar, under the form of bread and wine, there is not present really the natural body and blood of our Saviour, or that after the consecration there remaineth any substance of bread or wine, such person shall be adjudged a heretic, and shall suffer death by way of burning, without any abjuration, clergy, or sanctuary permitted. Yet, had Anne Askew recanted her errors, and submitted herself to the king's clemency, she would doubtless have been spared."

"Ay, marry would she!" cried Henry. "The Lord Chancellor acted somewhat roughly, but I see not that he was to blame. You have no particular feeling for Anne Askew, I trust, Kate?"

"I have much sorrow for her, my liege," Catherine replied. "She died for her faith."

"Sorrow for a sacramentarian, Kate!" exclaimed the king. "Now, by holy Mary! you will next avouch that you are a sacramentarian yourself."

“Nay, my gracious liege,” interposed Gardiner. “Her Majesty may feel pity for the misguided, but she can never uphold perverse doctrines.”

“I know not that,” replied the king. “No longer than yesterday we discussed certain points of theology together, and she denied the doctrine of transubstantiation.”

“Your Majesty supposed so,” observed Gardiner, lifting up his hands. “It could not be.”

“But I say it was,” cried the king. “Whence she derived her arguments I cannot tell, but she stoutly maintained them. Are ye a heretic, Kate? Confess at once!”

“This sounds like an accusation, my liege,” replied the queen, rising; “and I know whence it comes,” she added, glancing at her enemies. “I will answer it at once. As the Bishop of Winchester well knows, I am of the orthodox Church, of which your Majesty is the supreme head and high minister.”

“And yet you deny the real presence in the Eucharist, Kate?” interrupted the king.

“I cannot believe that which I do not understand, sire,” she replied.

“Ha! you equivocate!” exclaimed Henry. “It is true! You are infected—infected to the core—by these perverse and heretical doctrines. Since you pity Anne Askew, and deem her a martyr, you shall share her fate. My statute of the Six Articles spares none—however high in degree. Quit my presence, and enter it not again. Not a word! Begone!”

And as he turned a deaf ear to all her entreaties, the queen was compelled to retire, and was led out of the chamber, in a half-fainting state, by Lady Herbert.

No sooner was she gone, than Gardiner and Wriothesley, who had exchanged looks of satisfaction during Henry’s explosion of rage, drew near his Majesty. Doctor Butts likewise approached the king, and said,

“Beseech your Majesty to be calm. These bursts of anger do you infinite hurt, and may even endanger your life.”

“God’s death! man, how can I be calm under such provocation?” roared Henry. “Things are come to a pretty pass when I am to be schooled by my wife. I must

bo ill indeed if freedoms like these, which no one ever ventured upon before, can be taken with me."

"Her Majesty, I am well assured, has unintentionally angered you, my gracious liege," said Butts. "She will not so offend again."

"There you are in the right, doctor," rejoined Henry, sternly. "Her Majesty will not offend again."

"Do nothing hastily, sire, I implore you," cried the physician.

"Withdraw, sir," returned the king. "I have no further need of you for the present."

"I cannot blame your Majesty's anger," observed Gardiner. "It is enough to move any man to wrath to find that he has been duped, and the queen has now revealed her real opinions to you. She has openly braved your displeasure, and you owe it to yourself that her punishment be proportionate to her audacity."

"Your Majesty cannot oppose your own decrees," said Wriothesley, "and the queen's infraction of them can be proven. On the night before Anne Askew was taken to the stake, she received a consolatory message from the queen, and she thereupon sent a prohibited book to her Majesty, which the queen hath in her possession."

"We will extirpate these heresies ere we die," said Henry; "and if but few hours are allowed us, by Heaven's grace they shall be employed in purging the land from the pest that afflicts it. It is not for nothing we have been appointed Heaven's vicar and high minister, as these heretics shall find. We will strike terror into them. We will begin with the queen. She shall have a warrant for her arrest. Go both of you to Sir Anthony Denny to obtain it, and bid him get the instrument impressed by the keeper of our secret stamp."

"It shall be done as your Highness enjoins," said Wriothesley. "Is it your pleasure that the arrest be made at once?"

"Tarry till to-morrow, I entreat your Majesty," interposed Doctor Butts, who had yet lingered, in spite of the king's order to withdraw. "Take a few hours of reflection ere you act thus severely."

"What! art thou still here, knave?" cried the king. "Methought I ordered thee hence."

“For the first time I have presumed to disobey you,” replied the physician; “but I beseech you listen to me.”

“If I might counsel your Majesty, I would urge you to carry out your just resolves without delay,” observed Gardiner. “Good work cannot too soon be begun.”

“Thou art right,” said the king. “Her Majesty shall sleep this night—if she sleep at all—in the Tower. Get the warrant as I have bidden you, and go afterwards with a guard to make the arrest. And harkye, forget not to advise Sir John Gage, the Constable of the Tower, of the illustrious prisoner he may expect, and enjoin him to prepare accordingly.”

“Your behests shall be obeyed,” said Wriothesley, scarcely able to conceal his satisfaction.

“Sir John Gage is now in the palace, if it shall please your Majesty to speak with him,” said Butts.

“That is lucky,” replied the king; “bring him to us without delay.”

With a covert smile of defiance at the queen’s enemies, Butts departed upon his errand.

As Gardiner and Wriothesley quitted the royal presence, the latter observed, in a low tone, to his companion,

“The queen is as good as brought to the block.”

“Ay, marry is she,” replied Gardiner, in the same tone, “if what we have done be not undone by Gage. He is like enough to try and thwart our plans. The king trusts him; and affirms that it was for his incorruptible honesty that he made him comptroller of the household and Constable of the Tower. Gage incorruptible, forsooth! as if any man living—ourselves excepted—were incorruptible.”

“Gage’s vaunted honesty will not induce him to oppose the king,” rejoined Wriothesley. “But let him try, if he be so minded. He may as well attempt to pull down the solid walls of the Tower itself as shake Henry’s resolution. And now for the warrant!”

III.

OF THE MEANS OF AVOIDING THE PERIL PROPOSED BY
SIR THOMAS SEYMOUR TO THE QUEEN.

IN a state of mind bordering almost upon distraction, the queen returned to her own chamber, where, having hastily dismissed all her attendants except Lady Herbert, she abandoned herself to despair.

"Lost!—utterly lost!" she exclaimed, in accents of bitter anguish. "Who shall save me from his wrath? Whither shall I fly to hide me? I shall share the fate of my predecessors. I shall mount the same scaffold as Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard. There is no escape—none. Well do I know the king is inexorable. No tears—no entreaties will move him. Pity me, dear Herbert—pity me. Help me if thou canst, for I am well-nigh at my wits' end."

"I only know one person who might perchance help your Highness in this direful extremity," replied Lady Herbert. "My brother, Sir Thomas Seymour, would lay down his life for you. He has always longed for an opportunity of proving his devotion."

"Where is Sir Thomas?" cried Catherine. "Go bring him to me straight. But no!—it may be dangerous to him to approach me now."

"Danger will never deter my brother from serving his queen," Lady Herbert rejoined. "But I need not seek him. Without tarrying for your Majesty's instructions, I have despatched a page to bring him hither."

"Thou hast done wrong, Herbert," cried Catherine. "I feel I ought not to see him. And yet to whom else can I turn? Heaven help me in my need!"

"There is no one, I repeat, upon whom your Majesty can more fully rely than on Sir Thomas Seymour—that I aver," rejoined Lady Herbert. "He lives but to serve you."

"If your brother be devoted to me as you represent, Herbert, and as in truth I believe him to be," said the

queen, "the greater is the reason why I should not drag him into this abyss with me. I will not see him."

"Your Majesty's interdiction comes too late," said Lady Herbert. "He is here."

As the words were uttered, the arras which covered a lateral entrance to the room communicating with the ante-chamber, was raised, and Sir Thomas Seymour stood before them.

Beyond all question the handsomest and most gallant-looking personage in Henry's court—where there were many such—was the haughty Sir Thomas Seymour, younger brother of the Earl of Hertford. Possessing a tall and stately person, Sir Thomas had a noble and highly picturesque head, as may be seen in the portrait of him by Holbein. He had the lofty forehead, the fine eyes, and the somewhat pale complexion which distinguished the Seymons; but he was the handsomest of a very handsome race, and it may be doubted whether he did not surpass in point of personal appearance his sister, the lovely Jane Seymour, to whom he bore a marked resemblance. His features were cut with extreme delicacy, but a manly character was given them by the long brown silky beard which descended midway down his doublet. Sir Thomas was in the prime and vigour of life, and of a very commanding presence, and neglected no advantages which could be afforded him by rich habiliments. He wore a doublet and hose of purple velvet, paneled and cut; with a cassock likewise of purple velvet, embroidered with Venice gold and bordered with fur—and his cassock was so fashioned as to give exaggerated breadth to the shoulder—such being the mode at the time. His arms were a long Spanish rapier, with elaborately wrought hilt, and dagger. His hair was shorn close, in accordance with the fashion of the period, and his head was covered with a flat velvet cap, ornamented with a balass-ruby and a crimson plume. But this cap he removed in stepping from behind the arras.

Third son of Sir John Seymour, of Wolf Hall, in Wiltshire, Sir Thomas had served with great distinction in the late wars with France. In 1544—three years before the date of this history—he had been made master of the ordnance for life. High in favour with the king, and uncle

to Prince Edward, heir to the throne, he would have possessed much influence and importance, had he not been overshadowed by his elder brother, the Earl of Hertford, who stood foremost in Henry's regard. Of an aspiring nature however, equally bold and unscrupulous, Seymour was greedy of political power, and determined to have it at any hazard and by any means. A daring conspirator, he lacked cunning and temper sufficient to mark his secret designs. His passions were fierce; his hatred undisguised; and he had many of the qualities of Catiline, with whom he was subsequently compared. Haughty and insolent to his inferiors, he was more popular with the ancient nobility of Henry's court than the Earl of Hertford, who sought by condescension to ingratiate himself with the populace. Such was Sir Thomas Seymour, then in the prime of manhood, and in the full splendour of his noble personal appearance.

On beholding him, the queen rose to her feet, and exclaimed, with almost frenzied anxiety, "Oh! you are come, Sir Thomas. What news do you bring? Has the king's wrath abated? Is there any hope for me?"

"Alas! madam," Seymour replied, flying towards her, "it grieves me to the soul to be the bearer of such ill tidings to your Majesty. The king's fury is as great as ever; he will not hear a word in your defence from Sir John Gage, who is with him now. Your enemies have prevailed against you. The warrant is ordered for your arrest—and if the peril cannot be averted, your august person will be attached, and you will be taken forthwith to the Tower."

"Then I am wholly lost!" exclaimed Catherine. "Oh! Seymour," she continued, in a tone of half reproach, "I looked to you for aid—but you offer none."

"I scarce dare offer such aid as is alone in my power," cried Seymour, almost fiercely; "yet circumstances almost seem to justify it. Say you would have me prevent it, and this warrant shall never be executed."

"But how will you prevent it?" demanded the queen, looking at him, as if she would rend his inmost soul.

"Ask me not how, madam," rejoined Sir Thomas. "But say you would have me die for you—and it shall be done."

These words were uttered with such terrible significance, that Catherine could not fail to comprehend their import.

"This must not be, Seymour!" she exclaimed, laying her hand upon his arm. "You meditate some desperate design. I charge you to forego it."

"'Twere but to stay the hand of a ruthless tyrant, who is about to shed blood that ought to be dearer to him than his own. Let me go, I beseech you, madam."

"No; I forbid it—peremptorily forbid it. If the king remains inflexible, I must die. Is there no way to move him?"

"You know his flinty heart as well as I do, madam," Seymour rejoined, "and that he is inaccessible to all feelings of humanity. But I will seek to move him—though I much fear the result."

"Plead not for me to your own danger, Seymour. You may draw down the king's anger on your own head."

"No matter," replied Sir Thomas. "I will run any risk. My life will be well lost, if, by losing it, I can profit your Majesty."

"Oh! if I could obtain speech with the king once more, I should not despair of melting his heart, hard though it be!" said Catherine. "But he will not see me."

"He has given peremptory orders against your admittance," rejoined Seymour; "and the guard and henchmen dare not for their lives disobey the mandate. Yet you must see him, and that speedily—but how?—Ha! I have it!" he exclaimed, after a moment's pause, as if struck with a sudden idea. "What will you say if I bring the king to you?"

"That you have wrought a miracle," replied Catherine. "But I pray you trifle not with me, Seymour."

"I trifle not, gracious madam," rejoined Sir Thomas, earnestly. "I have strong hopes of success. But you must second the scheme. I will at once to his Majesty, and represent to him that the terrible shock you have sustained has been too much for you, and brought you to the point of death—that you seek forgiveness from him, but as you cannot come to him, you humbly supplicate him to come to you."

"But he will not come," cried Catherine, with something of hope in the exclamation.

"I think he will," said Lady Herbert.

"I am sure he will," added Seymour. "When he appears, submit yourself entirely to him. I leave the rest to your sagacity. If you have letters about you from Anne Askew, or Joan Bocher, or any prohibited book, give them to me."

"Here is a letter from the poor martyr, and a book of prayer, blotted with her tears," replied the queen, giving the articles in question to Seymour, who placed them in the silken bag that hung from his girdle; "keep them for me until some happier day, or keep them in memory of me!"

"Speak not thus, madam, or you will rob me of my courage, and I shall need it all," rejoined Seymour, kneeling, and pressing the hand she extended to him reverentially to his lips. "At some happier season, when all such storms as this have passed, I may venture to remind you of the service I am about to render."

"Fear not I shall forget it," replied Catherine, with some tenderness. "Go! and Heaven prosper your efforts!"

And with a profound obeisance, and a look of unutterable devotion, Sir Thomas withdrew

Though Catherine was by no means so sanguine of the success of Seymour's scheme as he and his sister appeared to be, she nevertheless prepared for the part she might be called upon to play. The rest of her attendants were hastily summoned by Lady Herbert, and were informed that their royal mistress was dangerously ill. With every demonstration of grief, the weeping women gathered round the couch on which Catherine had extended herself, and would fain have offered her restoratives; but she refused their aid, and would not allow her physician to be sent for, declaring she desired to die. In this way full half an hour was spent—an age it seemed to the queen, who was kept on the rack of expectation.

At length, and just as Catherine's heart had begun to sink within her, a noise was heard without, and Lady Herbert whispered in her ear, "It is the king! My brother has succeeded."

IV

HOW THE DESIGNS OF WRIOTHESLEY AND GARDINER
WERE FOILED BY THE QUEEN'S WIT.

PRESENTLY afterwards, a double door communicating with the gallery was thrown open by two henchmen, giving admittance to a gentleman usher, wand in hand, and glittering in cloth of gold and tissue, who announced the king's approach; and in another minute Henry appeared, moving very slowly and with great difficulty, supported between Sir Thomas Seynour, on whose shoulders he leaned, and a man of large frame, and such apparent strength, that he seemed perfectly able to lift the unwieldy monarch from the ground should he chance to stumble.

Sir John Gage—for he was the stalwart personage on the king's right—had a soldier-like air and deportment, and that he had seen service was evident from the scars on his cheek and brow. His features were handsome, but of an iron cast, and singularly stern in expression. His beard was coal-black, and cut like a spade. He was attired in a doublet of tawny-coloured satin, a furred velvet cassock of the same hue, and orange-tawny hose. He was armed with rapier and dagger, and below the left knee wore the Garter. Appointed master of the wards and Constable of the Tower in 1540, soon after the fall of Cromwell, Sir John Gage was likewise made, at a later date, comptroller of the household, and filled these important offices to the king's entire satisfaction. His rough, blunt manner, and fearlessness of speech, contrasting forcibly with the servility and obsequiousness of his other courtiers, pleased Henry, who would brook some difference of opinion from his own, provided he was firmly convinced, as in this instance, of the speaker's honesty.

The king paused for a moment at the doorway to recover his strength, and during this interval his looks were anxiously scrutinized by Lady Herbert; but nothing favourable could be read in his bloated and cadaverous countenance. He was enveloped in a loose gown of crimson velvet, embroidered with gold, and lined and bordered with

minever, and made of such length and amplitude that it concealed his swollen person. If Lady Herbert failed to discover anything but what was formidable in Henry's inscrutable countenance, she gathered hope from her brother's significant glance, and whispered in the queen's ear as she feigned to raise her, "Be of good cheer, madam. All goes well."

By the help of his supporters Henry once more put himself in motion, and advanced slowly towards the couch on which Catherine was laid, surrounded by her women, and apparently almost in a state of insensibility. He was followed by Doctor Butts. The king had not gone far ere he again halted from weakness and want of breath, and, on recovering, he ordered Butts to see to the queen, and send away her noisy and wailing women.

On approaching Catherine, the physician instantly comprehended the trick put upon the king, but so far from betraying it, he lent his best aid to carry out the stratagem. Causing her to breathe at a phial, he fixed his eyes meaningly upon her as she revived, as if counselling her how to act.

"There, you are better now, gracious madam," he said.

"You waste your skill upon me, good Doctor Butts," Catherine replied, in a faint voice. "I am sinking fast. Nothing but the king's forgiveness can revive me, and that I shall never obtain. One kindly word from him would soothe my agony and reconcile me to my fate. But since I may not see him, tell him, good sir, that I died blessing him; that I have never knowingly disobeyed him; and that to feel I have offended him, albeit unwittingly, has broken my heart."

"Madam, your words have already reached the king's ear," replied Butts, "and I doubt not will be favourably received."

"Ay, Kate," cried Henry, "I come to bid thee live."

"Your Majesty here!" exclaimed the queen, slightly raising herself. "Then indeed I shall die content."

"Talk not of dying, Kate," rejoined he. "Our physician shall bring thee round."

"A few words from your lips, my liege, will accomplish more than all my art can effect," said Butts.

"Raise me, I pray you," said Catherine to the physician

and Lady Herbert, "and let me throw myself at the king's feet to implore his pardon."

"Nay, by Our Lady, there is no need of it, Kate," cried the king, with some show of kindness. "Set me a chair beside the queen," he added, "and bring me to it. Soh, Kate," he continued, as his commands were obeyed, "ye see your error, and repent it?—ha!"

"Most truly, my gracious lord and husband," she replied. "Yet while acknowledging my fault, and humbly entreating forgiveness for it, I must needs say that I have erred from inadvertence, not design. 'Twas but a seeming contradiction of your Majesty that I ventured on. I argued but to draw you forth, as well to benefit myself by your able and unanswerable expositions, as to make you forget for a while the pain of your ailment. This I did at the instigation of Doctor Butts, who will bear me out in what I say."

"That will I," cried the physician. "I counselled her Highness to argue with your Majesty—yea, and to contradict you—in the hope of diverting your thoughts from yourself, and giving you a brief respite from suffering."

"Then thou art the true culprit, Butts," cried the king. "By the rood! but that I need thee, thou shouldst pay the penalty of thy folly. Thus much thou art freely forgiven, Kate; but other matter yet remains to be explained. Art thou a sectary and sacramentarian? Hast thou received letters and prohibited books from Anne Askew?"

"Whence comes this accusation, sire?" rejoined Catherine. "From my mortal enemies the Lord Chancellor and the Bishop of Winchester. Let them prove the charge against me, and I will submit without a murmur to any punishment your Majesty may choose to inflict. But I defy their malice."

"Enough!" exclaimed Henry; "thou hast removed all my doubts, and we are perfect friends again. Content thee, Kate—content thee! Thou shalt have ample vengeance on thine enemies. I swear it—on my bead!"

"Nay, I entreat your Majesty be not angry with them," said the queen. "I am so happy in the restoration to your love, that I cannot harbour a vindictive thought. Pardon them, I pray of you."

"They deserve not your generosity, Kate," rejoined

Henry. "But thou art not forgiven for thy share in this matter, Butts," he continued. "Look you bring the queen round quickly—look that she suffer not from this mischance—look to it well, I say."

"I have no fear now, my liege," replied Butts. "Your Majesty has proved the better physician of the two. Under the treatment you have adopted, I will answer for the queen's perfect recovery."

"That is well," Henry rejoined. "Ha! what noise is that in the gallery? Who dares come hither?"

"Your Majesty forgets," remarked Sir John Gage.

"Right, right, I had forgotten. 'Tis Wriothsesley and Gardiner. They shall see how we will welcome them. Admit the Lord Chancellor and the Bishop of Winchester, and those with them," he roared.

As the order was given, the folding-doors were again thrown open, and the two personages mentioned by the king entered, followed by a guard of halberdiers. Wriothsesley held the warrant in his hand. On beholding the king, they both stopped in much confusion, perceiving at once that the tables were turned upon them.

"How now?" exclaimed the king, derisively. "Why do you hesitate? About your business quickly!"

"We would fain know your Majesty's pleasure ere proceeding further," said Wriothsesley.

"My pleasure!" vociferated Henry. "False traitors and evil counsellors that ye are, my pleasure would be to clap ye both in the Tower, and but for her Majesty's intercession ye should be sent thither under the conduct of the very guard ye have brought with you. Your machinations are discovered and defeated."

"Beseech your Majesty to grant us a hearing?" said Gardiner.

"No, I will not hear you," rejoined the king, fiercely. "Deliver up that warrant which was obtained on your false representation."

"I deny that it was obtained by any such means, my liege," replied Wriothsesley. "Nevertheless, as is my duty, I obey your behests."

And he delivered the warrant to Sir John Gage, by whom it was instantly torn in pieces.

"Begone!" exclaimed Henry, "or I will not answer

how far my provocation may carry me. Begone! and take with you the conviction that your scheme has failed—and that all such schemes are certain of failure.”

And seeing that it was in vain to urge a word in their defence, the baffled enemies of the queen retired.

“Are ye content, Kate?” Henry inquired, as soon as they were gone. And receiving a grateful response, he added, “Fear not henceforward to dispute with us on points of doctrine. We shall be ever ready for such arguments, and you have our physician’s word, as you wot, that they do us good.”

“Pray Heaven your Highness may not suffer from the effort you have made in coming to me!” said Catherine.

“Nay, by my life, I am the better for it,” Henry rejoined. “But I must quit you now, sweetheart. I have another matter to decide on—no less than the committal of his Grace of Norfolk and his son, the Earl of Surrey, to the Tower.”

“More work for me for your Majesty,” observed Sir John Gage, bluntly. “Yet I would this might be spared me.”

“How so, Sir John?” cried the king. “What liking have ye for these traitors?”

“I have yet to learn that they are traitors, my liege,” replied Gage, boldly. “As the Duke of Norfolk is first among your peers, so he has ever been foremost in zeal and devotion to your Majesty. Methinks his long services ought to weigh somewhat with you.”

“His Grace’s services have been well requited, Sir John,” interposed Seymour. “Know you not the grave charges against him?”

“I know well that you and your brother, the Earl of Hertford, are his enemies, and would rejoice in his downfall,” answered the Constable of the Tower.

“Peace, both of ye!” cried the king. “The charge against the Duke of Norfolk, which hath been proven to our satisfaction, is, that contrary to his oath and allegiance to us, he hath many times—mark that, Sir John—many times betrayed the secrets of our privy councils—the privy council, Sir John—to our great peril, and to the infinite detriment of our affairs.”

“His Grace may have spoken unguardedly—so might any of us—”

“Not you, Sir John,” interrupted the king, dryly. “You never speak unguardedly, I’ll answer for it.”

“I never speak untruthfully, my liege,” rejoined Gage. “And I dare affirm that although the Duke of Norfolk may have babbled of matters about which he had better have held his tongue, he has never been wanting in fidelity and loyalty to your Highness.”

“You know only part of the duke’s heinous offences, or you would not say so much in his defence, Sir John,” said Seymour. “Learn, then, that to the peril, slander, and disherison of his Majesty and his noble son, Prince Edward, heir-apparent to the throne, his aspiring Grace of Norfolk hath unjustly, and without authority, borne in the first quarter of his arms the arms of England, which are the proper arms of Prince Edward.”

“Is this some new discovery you have made, Sir Thomas?” inquired Gage. “Methinks you must have seen the duke’s blazon ever since you bore arms yourself.”

“The matter is not new, we grant,” said the king, sternly; “but we view it now with different eyes. We discern peril in this audacious act. We see in it pretended claims to be brought forth hereafter—disturbance to the realm—interruption to our son’s inheritance to the crown. We see this plainly, and will crush it.”

“With all submission, I do not think that the duke hath had any such daring presumption,” observed the Constable of the Tower. “But touching the Earl of Surrey: in what hath that peerless nobleman offended?”

“Peerless you well may call him,” cried Henry; “for in his own conceit he hath never a peer. Why could not his ambition content itself with shining in Phœbus’ court? Why should it soar so high in ours? His treason is the same as his father’s. He hath quartered in his shield the arms of Edward the Confessor, denoting pretensions to the crown.”

“What more?” demanded the Constable of the Tower.

“What more!” repeated Henry. “Is not that enough? But since you lack further information, Sir Thomas Seymour shall give it you. Tell him what thou knowest, Sir Thomas.”

“It were too long to tell all, my liege,” replied Seymour. “In regard to his arms, instead of a duke’s coronet, Surrey has put a cap of maintenance purple, with powdered fur, and a close crown, and underneath the arms the king’s cipher.”

“You hear?” cried Henry, sternly

“Let me propound these questions to Sir John Gage,” pursued Seymour. “If a man shall compass to rule the realm, and go about to rule the king, what imports it? Again, if the same man shall declare that if the king dies, none shall have the rule of the prince save his father and himself—what imports it? Again, if that man shall say, ‘If the king were dead I would shortly shut up the prince’—what imports it?”

“Treason—arrant treason,” replied Gage.

“Then, all this and more of the same treasonous stuff hath Surrey uttered,” rejoined Seymour. “He hath sought to bring about a union ’twixt myself and his sister, the Duchess of Richmond, in order that he might have more influence with the king’s Highness.”

“Is this indeed true, Sir Thomas?” inquired Catherine, quickly.

“Ay, madam,” he replied. “But failing in his scheme, the earl thenceforth became my mortal enemy, reviling me and my brother Hertford, and vowing that, if Heaven should call away the king, he would avenge himself upon us and all the upstart nobility, as he insolently styles us. He hates us—bitterly hates us for our love to the king, and for the favour shown us by his Highness. He says his Majesty has had ill counsels.”

“How say you now, Sir John?” cried Henry. “Are you not satisfied that the Duke of Norfolk and his son are a couple of traitors?”

“Humph! not altogether,” rejoined the Constable.

“You are hard to be convinced, Sir John,” said Seymour. “But think not, though I have spoken of myself and my brother Hertford, that I have any personal enmity to Surrey, much less any fear of him. But he is a traitor and dissembler. One of his servants hath been in Italy with Cardinal Pole, and hath been received again on his return. Moreover, he hath Italian spies in his employ, and is in secret correspondence with Rome.”

“Are ye still ineredulous?” demanded Henry.

“I know not what to say,” replied the Constable, in a troubled tone. “But I fear me much that both are condemned.”

“Come with us to the eouncil, and you shall hear more,” said Henry. “You seem to doubt our justice, but you shall find that we never punish without good cause, nor ever allow the greatness of the offender to shield him from just punishment. Fare ye well, sweetheart, for a while. Get well quickly, an you love us! Give me your arm, Butts; and yours, Sir John.”

Upon this he was raised with some difficulty from his seat, and, supported between the two persons he had named, he moved slowly out of the room.

When his back was turned, Seymour drew somewhat nearer to the queen.

“You have saved my life, Sir Thomas,” said Catherine, in a low tone, and with a look of deep gratitude. “How can I pay the debt I owe you?”

“There is small merit in the service, madam,” he replied, in a low impassioned voice. “I have saved you because your life is dearer to me than my own. I may claim a reward—but not now!”

And with a profound obeisance he retired, casting a parting look at the queen as he passed through the door.

V

OF THE INTERVIEW BETWEEN THE EARL OF SURREY AND SIR THOMAS SEYMOUR IN THE BOWYER TOWER.

A BITTER rivalry had long existed between the newly ennobled house of Seymour and the ancient and illustrious house of Howard. Not less distinguished for exalted rank than renowned as a military commander, the high-born Duke of Norfolk looked down with scorn upon the new nobility, holding them unworthy to be ranked with him; and his sentiments were shared by his chivalrous and ae-

complished son, Earl Surrey, "of the deathless lay," who, proud as his father, was of a yet more fiery temper. But the duke soon found that the elder Seymour was not an enemy to be despised. The Earl of Hertford's influence with the king increased, while that of Norfolk declined. When Catherine Howard perished on the block, the duke, her uncle, who had brought about the ill-starred match, fell into disfavour with the vindictive monarch, and never regained the place he had hitherto held in Henry's regard.

There was another ground of quarrel between the rival houses. The Howards continued firm in their adherence to the Church of Rome; and the Duke of Norfolk, who was looked upon as the head of the Catholics, and who hated the Reformers, made himself obnoxious by his rigour towards the sacramentarians. Hertford, on the other hand, as much as he dared, upheld the new doctrines and supported the Protestant party. On religious questions, the king gave predominance to neither side; but, setting one against the other, was equally severe with both.

This state of things endured for a time without any decisive blow being struck by his enemy against the powerful duke. But when Henry's increasing infirmities made it evident that his dissolution could not be far off, the immediate and total overthrow of the house of Howard was resolved upon by Hertford. As elder uncle of the young Prince Edward, then only in his tenth year, Hertford had secretly determined to become Lord Protector, and thereby enjoy the supreme power of the realm. He could rely upon the chief part of the council for support, but he well knew he should encounter formidable opposition from the Duke of Norfolk. Moreover, both the duke and his son had rashly menaced Hertford and his associates, declaring that the time for vengeance was at hand, and that they should shortly smart for their audacity.

Henry, whose affections had been artfully estranged from the Howards, lent a ready ear to the charges brought against Norfolk and Surrey by the agency of Hertford, and without weighing the duke's long-tried zeal and fidelity, and the many important services he had rendered him, signed the articles of accusation brought against father and son, causing them both to be suddenly arrested, and lodged in separate prisons in the Tower.

Arraigned in Guildhall before Lord Chancellor Wriothesley, the lord mayor, and other commissioners, the Earl of Surrey vehemently and eloquently defended himself, denying the charges brought against him, and offering to fight his principal accuser, Sir Richard Southwell, in his shirt. But his defence availed him nothing. As had been foreseen, he was found guilty of high treason, condemned to death, and taken back to the Tower to await his execution.

But though the gallant Surrey was thus sentenced, more difficulty was experienced in bringing condemnatory matter against his father. Immured within a cell in the Beauchamp Tower, treated with great rigour, subjected to frequent private examinations, kept in entire ignorance of the names of his accusers, and even of the accusations brought against him, denied all access to his son, or communication with him, the duke at last succumbed, and a confession of guilt, under promise of pardon, was extorted from him. But this promise, solemnly given by Hertford, was not intended to be kept. On the contrary, the confession was to be made the means of Norfolk's destruction. Moved, perhaps, by some feelings of compassion for his old favourite, and still more by the duke's humble submission, Henry hesitated to sign his death-warrant. But with the rapacity which characterised him to the last, he had not neglected to seize upon the duke's houses, and confiscate his treasures. Norfolk however contrived to balk his enemies of the spoil they anticipated. Well aware that Hertford and his associates counted upon dividing his large possessions among them, he petitioned the king that the estates might be settled upon Prince Edward; and the request appeared so reasonable to Henry, that it was immediately granted. But the duke's life was still in jeopardy, dependent upon the will of a fickle tyrant, who might at any moment surrender him to the enemies who panted for his blood.

Leaving him however in this state of dreadful uncertainty, we must go back to the Earl of Surrey, whose fate had been sealed, and visit him in his cell within the Bowyer Tower on the night previous to his execution.

In a narrow octangular stone chamber, arched and groined, and having walls of immense thickness, pierced

with deep embrasures, which were strongly grated on the outside, sat the unfortunate young nobleman. An iron cresset lamp dimly illumined the cell. A book lay upon the rude oak table, beside which the earl was seated; but though his eyes seemed to dwell upon the leaves, his thoughts were far away. Petrarch for the first time failed to fix his attention. The young earl was prepared to meet his fate. But with such brilliant prospects before him, with such keen relish of life and all its enjoyments as he possessed, with so much unaccomplished, with so much to bind him to the world, it was hard to perish in the flower of his age.

Surrey was then but seven-and-twenty, and though he might, if spared, have reached a higher point than he ever attained, he was distinguished above all his compeers for gallantry, courtliness, prowess, learning, and wit. After greatly distinguishing himself in the wars with France in 1544, he was made lieutenant-general in the expedition against Boulogne. A preux chevalier of the school of Bayard, he was no unworthy disciple of Petrarch. His graces of person were equal to his graces of mind, and a statelier figure and a nobler or more intellectual countenance than Surrey's could nowhere be found.

On his arraignment at Guildhall he had appeared in a doublet of black tylsent welted with cloth of silver, black silk hose, and a black velvet cassock, lined with crimson silk and furred with sable; and he wore the same garments now—with the exception of the cassock, which he had flung upon a stool—and meant to die in them.

Closing Petrarch, Surrey took up a copy of Virgil, which was lying on the table, and, being provided with writing materials, he set resolutely to work to translate a passage from the *Æneid*. He was occupied in this task when the withdrawing of a bolt on the outside of the door roused him, the key grated in the lock, and the next moment a gaoler, carrying a light, entered the cell.

“Bring you the ghostly father I have asked for to hear my shrift, Master Tombs?” the earl demanded.

“The priest is not yet arrived, my Lord,” Tombs replied. “The Constable of the Tower is without, and another with him.”

“What other?” cried Surrey, springing to his feet. “Is it the duke, my father? Speak, man!—quick!”

“No, my lord. I know not who it may be,” answered Tombs; “but assuredly it is not his Grace of Norfolk, for I left him not an hour ago in the Beauchamp Tower. Perchance it is one of the council.”

As the words were uttered, Sir John Gage passed through the doorway, and in so doing had to stoop his lofty head. He was followed by another tall personage, wrapped in a long black mantle, and so muffled up that his features could not be distinguished. Surrey however heeded not the latter, but, advancing towards the Constable, and warmly grasping his hand, exclaimed, “This is well and kindly done, Sir John. You have come to bid me farewell.”

“Would I were the bearer of the king’s grace to you, my Lord!” rejoined Gage, in tones of deep emotion. “But it is not so. I am indeed come to bid you a last adieu.”

“Then, as my friend, worthy Sir John—and such you have ever shown yourself, and never more than now—you will be glad to find that I am indifferent to my fate—nay, not altogether indifferent, but resigned. I have philosophy enough to support me in this hour of trial, and am content to die.”

“You amaze me!” exclaimed the Constable. “I did not think you possessed such firmness of soul.”

“Nor I,” added the muffled individual.

“Who is it speaks?” Surrey demanded. “Methinks I know the voice. I feel as if an enemy stood before me.”

“Your instinct has not deceived you, my lord,” Sir John Gage observed, in a low tone.

The muffled personage signed to Tombs to retire, and as soon as the gaoler was gone and the door closed, he let fall his cloak.

“You here, Sir Thomas Seymour!” the earl exclaimed, in a stern voice. “Is it not enough that your practices and those of your brother, the Earl of Hertford, have accomplished my destruction, but you must needs come to triumph over me? It is well for you that your malice failed not in its object. Had I lived, you and your brother should both have rued the ill counsels ye have given the king.”

“Let not your anger be roused against him, my Lord,” remarked the Constable, “but part, if you can, at peace with all men.”

“Fain would I do so, Sir John,” cried Surrey. “But let him not trouble me further.”

“You mistake my errand altogether, my lord,” said Seymour, haughtily. “It is not in my nature to triumph over a fallen foe. All enmity I have ever felt towards you is at an end. But I have something to say which it concerns you to hear. Leave us for a while, I pray you, Sir John.”

“Nothing hath interest with me now,” said Surrey; “yet go, my true friend. But let me see you once again.”

“Doubt it not,” returned the Constable. And he closed the door as he quitted the cell.

“My Lord,” said Seymour, “I have been your foe, but, as I just now told you, my enmity is past. Nay, if you will let me, I will prove your friend.”

“I desire to die in charity with all men,” replied Surrey, gravely, “and I freely forgive you the wrongs you have done me. But for friendship between us—never! The word accords ill with the names of Howard and Seymour.”

“Yet it might perhaps be better for both if it existed,” rejoined Sir Thomas. “Hear me, my Lord. Will you not account me a friend if I rescue you from the doom that awaits you to-morrow?”

“I would not accept life at your hands, or at those of any Seymour,” returned Surrey, proudly. “Nor would I ask grace from the king himself—far less seek the intercession of one of his minions. Be assured I will make no submission to him.”

“The duke, your father, has not been so unyielding,” said Seymour. “He hath humbly sued for mercy from the king, and, as a means of moving his Highness’s compassion, hath settled his estates upon Prince Edward.”

“Whereby he has robbed you and your insatiate brother of your anticipated prey,” rejoined the earl. “Therein he did wisely. Would he had not abased himself by unworthy submission!”

“Nay, my Lord, his submission was wise, for though a pardon hath not followed it—as no doubt his Grace ex-

pected—it will gain him time; and time, just now, is safety. The king cannot last long. A week, Doctor Butts declares, may see him out. Ten days is the utmost he can live.”

“You forget the statute that prohibits the foretelling of the king’s death, on penalty of death,” replied Surrey. “But no matter. I am not likely to betray you. His Majesty will outlast me, at any rate,” he added, with a bitter smile.

“If you will be ruled by me, my Lord, you shall survive him many a year. I cannot offer you a pardon, but I can do that which will serve you as well. I can stay your execution. I can put it off from day to day, till what we look for shall happen—and so you shall escape the block.”

“But wherefore do you seek to save me?” demanded Surrey. “Till this moment I have deemed that my destruction was your aim. Why, at the last moment, do you thus hinder the fulfilment of your own work?”

“Listen to me, my Lord, and you shall learn. Dissimulation would be idle now, and I shall not attempt it. My brother Hertford compassed your father’s destruction and your own, because he saw in you opponents dangerous to his schemes of future greatness. He will be guardian to Prince Edward, and would be Lord Protector of the realm—king in all but name.”

“I know how highly his ambition soars,” exclaimed Surrey. “Heaven shield Prince Edward, and guard him from his guardians! In losing me and my father he will lose those who might best have counselled him and served him. But proceed, Sir Thomas. You have spoken plainly enough of Lord Hertford’s designs. What are your own? What post do you count on filling?”

“I have as much ambition as my brother,” replied Seymour; “and like him am uncle to the king that shall be soon. You will easily perceive my drift, my Lord, when I tell you that my brother hates me, fears me, and would keep me down. He is to be everything—I nothing.”

“Ha! is it so?” cried Surrey.

“I say he fears me—and with reason,” pursued Seymour. “Let him take heed that I rob him not of the dignity he covets. I am Prince Edward’s favourite uncle—he loves me better than Hertford, and will be right glad of the exchange of governors.”

“Again I pray Heaven to guard the young prince from his guardians!” murmured Surrey.

“Hertford hath the majority of the council with him: Cranmer, St John, Russell, Lisle, Tunstal, Sir Anthony Brown, Sir Anthony Denny—all save Wriothesley and my brother, Sir William Herbert. They are with me. Could I but reckon on his Grace of Norfolk and on you, I should consider the success of my plan as certain.”

“You have made no overtures of this nature to my father, sir?” cried Surrey, eagerly.

“Not as yet,” Seymour replied. “But I cannot doubt his Grace’s concurrence.”

“You do not know my father, or you would not dare assert so much,” rejoined Surrey. “He would reject your proposal as scornfully as I reject it. He would not buy his life on terms so infamous.”

“I see no degradation in the terms,” said Seymour. “I offer you life, all the honours you have forfeited, and all the estates you have lost, and ask only in return your staunch support; little enough, methinks! Have you no love left for life, Lord Surrey? Have your pulses ceased to beat with their former ardour? Are your ears deaf to the trumpet-blast of fame? Have your own chivalrous deeds faded from your memory? Have you forgotten the day when, at the jousts given by the Grand-Duke of Tuscany, at Florence, you sustained the beauty of the lady of your love, the fair Geraldine, against all comers, and remained victorious? Have you had your fill of knightly worship and military renown? You are a widower, and may, without presumption, aspire to the hand of the Princess Mary. Ha!—have I touched you, my lord? But I will go on. Have courtly revels lost attraction for him who was once their chief ornament? Have the Muses ceased to charm you? I should judge not, when I see how you have been recently employed.”

“Oh! no, no!” exclaimed Surrey. “Life has lost none of its attractions in my sight. Glory and fame are dear as ever to me.”

“Then live! live! and win yet more fame and glory,” cried Seymour, with something of triumph, thinking he had vanquished the earl’s scruples.

“Well as I love life,” said Surrey, “I love my reputa-

tion better, and will not tarnish it by any unworthy act. I reject your offer, Sir Thomas."

"Your blood be upon your own head, then," rejoined Seymour, sterily. "Your scruples are fantastical and absurd. But we could look only for frenzy in a poet," he added, with scorn.

"You taunt an unarmed man, Sir Thomas," cried Surrey, with flashing eyes, "and 'tis a craven act. Had I been free, you dared not for your life have said so much! You have come at this final hour, like an evil spirit, to tempt me to wrong and dishonour—but you have failed. Now mark my words, for I feel they are prophetic. You and your brother have brought me to the scaffold—but my blood shall fly to heaven for vengeance. Your ambitious schemes shall come to nought. You shall have power only to lose it. The seeds of dissension and strife are already sown between you, and shall quickly grow and ripen. You shall plot against one another, and destroy one another. His hand shall sign your death-warrant, but your dying curse shall alight upon his head, and the fratricide shall perish on the same scaffold as yourself. Think on my words, Sir Thomas, when, like me, you are a prisoner in the Tower."

"Tush! I have no fear," replied Seymour, scarcely able to repress his uneasiness. "'Tis a pity you will not live to witness my nephew's coronation. You might have written an ode thereon."

"I will write your epitaph instead, sir," rejoined Surrey, "and leave it with the headsman."

At this moment the door of the cell was opened, and Sir John Gage stepped in.

"The ghostly father is without, my Lord," he said, addressing Surrey. "But you look ruffled. Nothing, I trust, has occurred to chafe you?"

"Ask Sir Thomas Seymour," the earl rejoined. "He will tell you as much or as little as he thinks fit. For myself, I have done with all worldly matters, and have time only to think of my sins, and ask forgiveness for them."

After a brief pause, he added in a voice of deep emotion, "One commission I will charge you with, good Sir John, and I well know you will not neglect it. Since my

imprisonment in the Tower I have not seen my little boy, and I shall never see him more. Kiss him for me, and give him my last blessing. Tell him I died without reproach and with unspotted honour. Poor orphan child! Early bereft of a mother's tenderness, thou wilt be robbed of a father's love by a yet more cruel stroke of fate! But something tells me thou shalt regain the title and dignity I have lost. Fare you well for ever, good Sir John!" he continued, embracing him. "I have nothing but those poor books to give you. If you care to have them, I pray you keep them in remembrance of your friend, Henry Howard."

"I shall dearly prize the gift, my Lord," replied Sir John, much moved, and fearful of unmanning himself—"farewell!"

Meanwhile, Seymour had resumed his cloak. Not a word more passed between him and Surrey, but they eyed each other sternly as Sir Thomas quitted the cell.

Soon afterwards, the priest was ushered in by Tombs, and remained for more than an hour with the earl.

On the next day, the chivalrous Surrey was decapitated on Tower-hill. His constancy remained unshaken to the last. Greeting the executioner with a smile, he laid his graceful head upon the block amid the tears and lamentations of the beholders.

VI.

HOW THE KING, FINDING HIS END APPROACH, TOOK A LAST LEAVE OF THE PRINCESSES MARY AND ELIZABETH, AND OF THE PRINCE EDWARD; AND OF THE COUNSEL HE GAVE THEM.

SURREY was gone, but his destroyer yet lingered on earth. By this time however the king's malady had made such progress, that Doctor Butts confidentially informed the Earl of Hertford and some others of the council, that his Majesty had little more than a week to live; but that

possibly his existence might be terminated at an earlier period. Henry could not be unconscious of his danger, though he spoke not of it, and no one—not even his physician, or his confessor, the Bishop of Rochester—dared to warn him of his approaching dissolution. He heard mass daily in his chamber, and received other rites, which led to the supposition that he was about to be reconciled, at the last moment, to the see of Rome. This opinion was strengthened when Gardiner and Wriothesley were again sent for, and restored to favour. Thus things continued, until Sir John Gage, seeing that all shrank from the perilous task of acquainting the dying monarch with his true condition, boldly inquired if he had no desire to see Prince Edward and the Princesses Mary and Elizabeth.

“To take leave of them! Is that what you mean?—ha!” roared Henry, who had just recovered from a paroxysm of anguish. “Speak out, man?”

“It is,” replied the Constable, firmly. “Forgive me, sire, if I offend. I but discharge my duty.”

There was a terrible silence, during which no one could say what might ensue. No explosion of rage however followed. On the contrary, the king said, in a milder tone, “Thou art a faithful servant, Sir John, and I honour thy courage. The interview must not be delayed. Let my children be brought to me to-morrow.”

“I rejoice to hear your Majesty say so,” replied Gage. “I will myself set out at once for Hampton Court, and bring his Highness Prince Edward and the Princess Elizabeth to the palace.”

“I will go with you, Sir John,” said Sir Thomas Seymour.

“And with your Majesty’s permission, I will repair to Greenwich, and advise the Princess Mary of your commands,” said Sir George Blagge. “I am assured she will hasten to obey them.”

“I am much beholden to you, sirs,” replied the king. “If Heaven shall grant me so much life, I look to see all three to-morrow. Let the whole of the council attend at the same time. Give me a draught of wine—and quickly, knave,” he added, to a cup-bearer near him. “I feel exceeding faint.”

“Saints grant that to-morrow be not too late!—his

looks alarm me," observed the Constable of the Tower, as he withdrew with Seymour and Blagge.

Contrary to expectation, Henry was somewhat better next day. He had slept a little during the night, having obtained some slight respite from the excruciating tortures he endured. Resolved to maintain his regal state and dignity to the last, he gave orders that as much ceremony should be observed at this his parting interview with his children as if it had been a grand reception. Causing the great cumbersome chair, which he now rarely quitted, to be placed beneath a cloth of estate embroidered with the arms of England, he sat in it propped up with velvet pillows, and wrapped in a long gown of white tylsent, flowered with gold, and lined and bordered with fur, and having wide sleeves. His head was covered with the embroidered black silk skull-cap, which he now customarily wore. On the opposite side of the chamber, in a chair of state, but not under a canopy, sat Queen Catherine, surrounded by Viscountess Lisle, Lady Tyrwhitt, and other ladies.

On the left of the king stood the Earl of Hertford, bearing his wand of office as great chamberlain. The pearly collar of the Garter with the George attached to it encircled his neck, and the gold band of the order was worn below his knee. He was magnificently apparelled in a doublet of white satin, embroidered all over with pearls of damask gold, with sleeves of the same stuff, formed down with threads of Venice silver. Over this he wore a cassock of blue velvet, embroidered with gold, and furred. Though not so strikingly handsome as his younger brother, Sir Thomas Seymour, the Earl of Hertford was yet a very noble-looking personage, with a fine cast of countenance, a tall, stately figure, and a commanding deportment. His eyes were dark and penetrating, but a slight contraction of the brows gave a somewhat sinister effect to his glances. His forehead was high and bald, his features regular and well shaped, the distinguishing expression of the face being gravity, tinged by melancholy. He had none of the boldness of look and manner that characterised his brother, but more caution, and perhaps subtlety. His complexion was pale, and his beard somewhat thin. Hertford's career had been one of uninterrupted success. By the king's favour he had risen to greatness. On Henry's marriage

with his sister, Jane Scymour, he was created Viscount Beauchamp. Sent ambassador to Paris in 1540, in the following year he received the Order of the Garter. In 1542 he was appointed Lord Great Chamberlain of England for life. Two years later, in the war with Scotland, he accompanied the Duke of Norfolk to that kingdom with the title of Lieutenant-General of the North; and when Henry proceeded to the siege of Boulogne, he was named one of the four councillors intrusted with the care of the realm. Only a few months ago he had been made Earl of Hertford. But high as he had risen, the aspiring noble looked to rise much higher. His dreams of ambition seemed about to be fulfilled. Supreme power was almost within his grasp. His enemies were removed or crushed. Surrey had lost his head—a like doom awaited Norfolk. Soon—very soon must come the day when Henry would be called to his account. Then the boy Edward would mount the throne—but he, his uncle, his guardian, would rule in his name. What more the earl dreamed of may appear when we have occasion to sound the inmost recesses of his breast.

Another important actor in this scene, and who secretly nourished ambitious designs scarcely less daring than those of Hertford, was John Dudley, Viscount Lisle. Son of that Edmond Dudley, whose death upon the scaffold inaugurated Henry's accession to the throne, this scheming and far-seeing noble had early distinguished himself by his bravery in the wars with France, and obtained the honour of knighthood besides regaining his forfeit rights. Attached both to Wolsey and Cromwell, he rose by their aid, and being appointed governor of Boulogne, which he successfully defended against all assaults, he was elevated to the dignity of Viscount Lisle, and made High-Admiral of England. He was moreover enriched by the lavish sovereign, whose favour he had won, by large possessions wrested from the Church, which were afterwards thought to bring down a curse upon him. Bold and ambitious, Lord Lisle was a profound dissembler, and though even at this moment he meditated plans which were not developed until long afterwards, he allowed no hint of his designs to escape him, but was content for the time to play a subordinate part to Hertford, whom he hoped in the end to eclipse.

As a means towards that object he looked to Sir Thomas Seymour. Lord Lisle was now in his forty-fifth year. His large and strongly-marked features evinced sagacity, shrewdness, and determination. His beard was scanty, and his short moustache disclosed a singularly firm-set mouth. His figure was tall, and his deportment martial, but his manner had nothing of the roughness of the camp about it. He could play equally well the part of soldier or of courtier. Compared with Hertford he was soberly attired, his habiliments being of dark velvet, destitute of embroidery, though his cassock was richly furred. But he wore the George and collar, and the lesser ensign of the Garter.

Near to Lord Lisle stood a venerable nobleman, with a long silvery beard descending almost to his girdle. This was Lord Russell, privy seal. The old peer bore his years well; having a hale look, and a stout frame. Like Hertford and Lisle he was a knight companion of the Garter, and decorated with the insignia of the order. Besides those already mentioned, there were several others grouped around the king, whom it will not be needful individually to describe. Amongst them was the Lord St John, great master; Sir Anthony Brown, master of the horse; Sir William Paget, chief secretary; Sir Anthony Wingfield, vice-chamberlain; Sir Thomas Cheney, treasurer; Sir Anthony Denny and Sir William Herbert, chief gentlemen of the privy chamber; Sir Richard Rich, Sir John Baker, Sir Ralph Sadler, Sir Richard Southwell, and others—all shining in rich habiliments, and making a goodly show.

The Lord Chancellor Wriothesley and Gardiner were likewise there, but held themselves apart from Hertford. But Gardiner was not the only ecclesiastic present. Others there were besides—namely, Tunstall, Bishop of Durham, and the king's confessor, the Bishop of Rochester. But there was yet another greater than them all—Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Clothed in his full ecclesiastical vestments of stole, chimere, and rochette, the primate stood on the right of the king. His manner was grave and dignified; his looks stern and full of thought, and a long grey beard added to the reverend expression of his countenance. Cranmer's features were hard, but yet not wholly destitute of kindness. He

seemed profoundly impressed—almost weighed down by the gravity of the occasion.

Indeed, notwithstanding the splendour that marked it, the assemblage had a mournful and solemn character. Not a word was spoken save in a whisper; each countenance wore a sad and sombre expression. All felt, though none cared to acknowledge it, that, in all likelihood, it was the last occasion on which they should be thus brought together during the king's life. Few among them would have retarded Henry's departure to his last home, had it been in their power to do so; some indeed would willingly have accelerated the event; and yet, to judge by their faces, all were full of sorrow, as if about to sustain a deep and irreparable loss.

For a few minutes it seemed as if the king himself were overpowered by this general semblance of grief. At length he roused himself, glanced with moistened eyes around the assemblage, and pressed Cranmer's hand kindly. He next called for a cup of wine, and, fortified by the draught, seemed to shake off his weakness. "Let the princesses come in," he said to Hertford; "I am ready to receive them."

Making a profound obeisance, the earl moved towards the bottom of the chamber, and the arras screening a door in this quarter being drawn aside at his approach by the gentlemen ushers in attendance, he disappeared, but returned the next moment leading the Princess Mary by the hand, while the Princess Elizabeth was conducted into the chamber in like manner by Sir Thomas Seymour. The two princesses were followed at a respectful distance by the Countess of Hertford and Lady Herbert.

Mary looked very grave, and seemed to have some difficulty in controlling her emotion, as her quivering lip betokened. Elizabeth had evidently been weeping, for tears were still in her eyes. Both were richly attired; but the elder sister had more of ornament about her dress—perhaps, because she needed it most—than the other. Mary's head-gear, of the angular form then in vogue, was of rich goldsmith's work, bordered with jewels, and was completed by a long covrechief of satin worked with gold. Her stomacher was fastened by two brooches of agates set with emeralds, from the lower of which a large orient pearl de-

pend. Her slender waist was encircled by a girdle of goldsmith's work, with roses of rubies, having friars' knots, and hanging down in front. Her dress was of gold bawd-kin, and fitting tight to the body, betrayed her extreme thinness, and gave her a very rigid look. Her dark auburn locks (for we care not to call them red) were gathered becomingly enough beneath her head-gear. Mary had few charms of person. She was thin to meagreness, and her features possessed little beauty; but they were intelligent in expression. To compensate however for these defects, she had great dignity of manner, and much grace; and there were some—and not a few—who, dazzled by her high rank, held her very blemishes to be beauties.

Mary was more than double the age of her sister, being thirty-two, while Elizabeth was only just thirteen. The younger princess however was a very well-grown girl, quite as tall as her sister, and infinitely more attractive in personal appearance. Elizabeth's charms indeed were almost precocious. Few who beheld her would have deemed her so young as she was in reality, but would have given her a year or two in advance. She had a finely-formed figure, already well developed, a complexion of dazzling whiteness, bright golden locks of great abundance, charming features, eyes blue and tender, and teeth like pearls. Her hands were of remarkable beauty, with taper fingers and rosy nails. Her profuse locks were confined by a band of gold and a net of gold wire, scarcely distinguishable from the bright tresses it restrained; a long white satin couvreachief fell behind her neck, and a dress of black taffeta displayed her figure to advantage, and at the same time set off the lovely whiteness of her skin.

As Mary approached the king, Cranmer slowly advanced to meet her, thus addressing her, in a voice of much solemnity: "Right high, right noble, and right excellent princess, the king, your august father, feeling that it may please Almighty God to call him hence suddenly, hath sent for you, and the right noble princess your sister, to give you wholesome counsel, to bestow his blessing on you, and to take, it may be"—(here the archbishop's voice slightly faltered)—"though Heaven grant it may be otherwise!—a last leave of you both. Nothing doubting that you will keep his counsels ever in your heart, and that you will

have the glorious example set by his Majesty constantly before you, I pray your Highnesses to kneel down before your royal father, and in that reverent posture give heed to what he shall say to you."

"I need no schooling in my duty from you, my Lord of Canterbury," replied Mary, who hated Crammer. "Not a word shall fall from my royal father's lips but it will dwell for ever in my breast."

Elizabeth attempted to speak, but words failed her, and she burst into tears.

Meanwhile, cushions of crimson velvet were placed near the chair occupied by the ailing monarch, and on these both princesses knelt down. Aided by Sir John Gage and Lord Lisle, Henry slightly raised himself, and this office performed, the assistants immediately retired.

Extending his arms over his daughters, the king said somewhat feebly, but with great earnestness, "My blessing on ye both! and may it rest ever with ye—ever! Only to the great Ruler of events is known the destiny in store for you. Both of ye may be queens—and should it so chance, ye will learn what cares the crown brings with it. But think only—as I have ever done—of the welfare and glory of your kingdom, and of your own honour, and ye shall reign wisely and well."

"Should it ever be my lot to reign, sire, I will essay to follow your glorious example," said Mary.

"I shall never be queen," sobbed Elizabeth, "and therefore I need make no promise."

"How know you that, girl?" cried the king, angrily. "You are as likely to be queen as Mary. I want no promises. I have pointed out the way you ought to pursue, and if you be not a degenerate daughter you will follow it."

"I despair of emulating your greatness, O my father!" cried Elizabeth. "But if it shall please Providence to call upon me to rule, I will endeavour to rule well."

"Enough!" replied Henry, appeased. "And now arise, both of ye, that I may look at you more nearly, for my sight waxes somewhat dim."

Taking his elder daughter's hand as she arose, Henry looked at her fixedly for a few minutes, during which he murmured, "Forgive me, Katherine, my first spouse, if I

have ever dealt harshly with this thy daughter!" adding aloud, after a pause, "It is right you should both know it—and that all should know it—that by my will I have confirmed the succession of both of ye to the crown. Neither of ye may wed, save with the consent and approval of the council—such consent to be given under hand and seal. But on your marriage each of ye shall have such sums of money as I have appointed, together with such jewels, plate, and household stuffs, as shall seem meet to those intrusted with the performance of my testament. I have left ye both alike—alike in yearly income, while ye continue single—alike on marriage. Now, mark me, Mary," he continued, sternly and authoritatively, "if you perform not the conditions required of you by my will, the crown will devolve on Elizabeth. And if Elizabeth shall neglect them," he added, glancing at his younger child, "the crown will go to our well-beloved niece, Frances Brandon, daughter of our sister Mary and the Duke of Suffolk. Now both of you know our will and pleasure. Kiss me, Mary, and let thy sister come nigh me."

Taking Elizabeth's hand, who stood weeping before him, and earnestly perusing her features, the king seemed struggling with recollections that would force themselves upon him, for he muttered to himself, "Ay, 'tis the very face, the eye, the lip!—thus looked she when I chided her. In all things she is like her mother, save in the colour of her hair. Anne, sweet Anne, how well do I recall thee with all thy winning ways! This fair child's neck is like to thine; and yet—— Would I could bring thee back again!"

As these words reached her ear, Elizabeth's tears fell yet more freely, and she trembled as a deep groan burst from the king. But Henry quickly shook off these passing feelings of remorse, and said kindly but firmly, "Weep not, sweet child, thou wilt spoil thy pretty eyes else. Keep thy sorrow till thou hast lost me. Be discreet, girl. Thou art fair, and wilt be fairer. Grow in grace as thou growest in beauty. So shalt thou be truly loved and honoured. Beauty without discretion bringeth death—thy mother found it so. Kiss me, and lay my counsel well to heart."

Elizabeth, almost shudderingly, complied, and the king,

feeling exhausted by the effort he had made, called for another cup of wine, and, after draining the goblet deeply, asked for Prince Edward.

Meanwhile, the princesses had retired, and stationed themselves on the other side of the chamber, near the queen.

On learning his Majesty's pleasure, the Earl of Hertford proceeded to the door from which the princesses had issued, and presently ushered in the youthful prince, conducting him ceremoniously towards the king. The prince was followed by Sir George Blagge and two other gentlemen.

All eyes were fixed upon Edward on his entrance, and every head was inclined as if in homage to the future sovereign. He gracefully acknowledged the reverence shown him, which no doubt would have been even greater but from the fear of offending the jealous king. The young prince, it has already been mentioned, had but just entered upon his tenth year, but he seemed to possess a degree of intelligence far beyond his age, and had indeed been most carefully instructed by some of the most learned men of the day. He spoke French and Italian, and had written letters in Latin to his father, his sisters, and the queen. There was a great fragility of look about him, and he seemed to have shot up quickly, like a forced plant. Though tall for his age, his limbs were very slight, and his complexion was of feminine delicacy. In appearance he was more of a Seymour than a Tudor. His face was a perfect oval, with some traces of his stern father about it, but his lineaments generally resembled those of his beautiful mother. His expression was gentle, but thoughtful—more thoughtful than befitted a child. His eyes were of a dark brown, and soft; his hair was light in hue, with a tinge of gold in it, worn short, and cut close round the forehead. He was attired like the son of a splendid monarch, and the heir to a powerful throne. His little cassock was of murrey-coloured velvet, embroidered all over with damask, gold and pearls, and having buttons and loops of gold; his doublet and hose were of dark-red satin, woven with threads of gold, and his velvet buskins were decorated with gold aglets. He was armed with a short rapier and a poniard in a richly ornamented sheath, and a velvet pouch was sus-

pended from his girdle. His flat velvet cap, which was removed on entering his royal father's presence, was adorned with rubies and emeralds, and had a brooch set with fair table diamonds on the right side, over which drooped a blood-red feather.

Again Cranmer advanced, and addressed the prince in terms nearly similar to those he had employed towards his sisters, but there was, perhaps, more of deference in his manner. Edward gazed at him with his clear eyes, steadily at first, but, as the archbishop proceeded, the young prince's composure quite forsook him. Natural feelings asserted their sway over his childish breast, and disregarding etiquette, he rushed towards the king, and, flinging his little arms round his neck, sobbed out, "My father!—my dear father!"

So unexpected, though so natural was this occurrence, that, cold and callous as were most of the assemblage, few of them refused it the tribute of sympathy. Some were even moved to tears. Fearing the effect of any sudden shock upon the king, Doctor Butts stepped towards him. But, though Henry was sensibly touched by this display of his son's affection, his nerves were strong enough to bear it. Kissing the boy on the brow, he gently disengaged himself from his embrace, addressing a few soothing words to him in a very kindly tone, while Edward still continued to weep.

Thinking the king might be troubled if the scene endured too long, the Earl of Hertford moved towards his nephew, but Henry checked him, by calling out, "Let him be!—let him be!"

But the action called Edward to himself. Controlling his grief, he knelt on the cushion before the king, and regarding him with eyes that were still filled with tears, he said, "Forgive me, sire! It is thus I ought to ask your blessing."

"Thou hast it, my dear child," replied the king, solemnly, yet tenderly. "Heaven bless thee, boy—my kingdom's hope and my own. May those I have appointed to watch over thee fulfil their trust."

"Doubt it not, my liege," said Hertford, as the king paused for a moment.

"Mark me, Edward!" pursued Henry, summoning up

all his firmness. "Eight years must elapse ere thou canst exercise the full authority of the crown. I have so willed it. Thou wilt be king soon enough. Meantime, prepare thyself for the high and important duties thou wilt have to discharge. I doubt not thou wilt have the notable virtues and princely qualities which should distinguish a sovereign. I know thee to be godly-minded, and I thank Heaven it is so; praying that thy heart may be illumined to all holy truths. I have provided thee with religious counsellors, to whom my desires are known, and in the soundness of whose judgment and principles I can rely. Can I not confide the prince's religious culture to you, my Lord of Canterbury?" (to Cranmer); "and to you, my Lord of Durham?" (to Tunstal.)

"And to me likewise, I would fain hope, my gracious liege?" observed Gardiner.

"No, not to thee, my Lord of Winchester," rejoined Henry. "Thou art a tool of the Pope. Listen to me, Edward. Thou wilt be placed under the guidance of the virtuous Cranmer. Give heed to his precepts. But on points of faith, when thou comest to understand them, be biased by no perverse doctrines. There is, unhappily, much discord and variance in the Church. The clergy preach one against another, teach one contrary to the other, inveigh one against another, without charity or discretion, and few or none of them preach truly and sincerely the word of God according as they ought to do. Unto thee it will be committed to correct these offences, and extinguish these dissensions. Thou wilt enjoy the same supreme spiritual authority as myself. Thou wilt be Heaven's vicar and high minister. Be not an unprofitable servant. Tread in thy father's footsteps—so shalt thou not stray from the path."

"I will do all that in me lies to act as you enjoin me, sire," replied Edward, meekly. "And I trust that with the aid of his good Grace of Canterbury I may succeed. I thank you heartily for placing me in his Grace's hands."

"The boy hath been schooled in this," remarked Wriothesley, in a low contemptuous tone, to Gardiner.

"No doubt on't; and he knows his lesson well," rejoined the bishop. "But we will teach him better ere long."

"Thus much for thy religious culture, my son," pursued

Henry. "Though I would have thee pious and learned, I would not have thee hurt thy health by over study. To be firm of mind thou must be firm of body: to uphold the kingly dignity, as thy father hath upheld it, thou must be robust and full of vigour. I would have thee skilled in all manly exercises and accomplishments. Strengthen thy arm betimes, so that it can bear a lance, and thy limbs so that they can sustain harness of war, and brook fatigue."

"Nay, father," cried Edward, brightening up and springing to his feet, "I shall soon be strong enough to bear a lance and ride in the tilt-yard; my uncle Sir Thomas Seymour tells me so. I often fence with him, and he tells me I am an apt scholar. I would your Majesty could see us at practice."

"No man is better able to teach thee all thou shouldst learn of martial exercises than thine uncle Seymour," replied the king, patting his son's head approvingly. "Sir Thomas," he added to Seymour, who stepped forward promptly at the summons, "I confide this part of my son's education to thee. While others make him a scholar and a theologian, be it thine to teach him princely manners and accomplishments."

"He shall lack nothing that I am able to teach, rely on it," replied Seymour, bowing profoundly.

"Give thy uncle thine hand, Edward," said the king.

"Ay will I, and that right willingly," replied the prince, grasping the hand which Seymour proffered him. "I love my uncle Sir Thomas best of any—your Majesty excepted."

"Ha! is it so?" mentally ejaculated Hertford. "Have I no place in thy regard, my gentle nephew?" he added aloud to the prince.

"Certes, my dear lord; I were an ingrate else," replied Edward. "But my uncle Sir Thomas is oftener with me than you are."

"I thought as much," muttered Hertford. "This must be stopped."

"Thou hast my son's hand within thine own, Sir Thomas?" demanded Henry.

"Ay, my liege," replied Seymour.

"Be it a pledge that thou wilt be ever true to him," pursued the king.

“I hereby vow fidelity to him,” said Seymour, bending the knee, and kissing his nephew’s hand.

“You are the best lance, the best swordsman, and the best horseman at our court, Sir Thomas,” continued the king to Seymour. “See that my son equals you in all these exercises.”

“He shall excel me in them all,” replied the other.

“A word in your ear, Sir Thomas,” said the king. “He is but a tender stripling,” he added, in a lever tone. “Press him not beyond his strength. For your sister’s sake, be a kind uncle to him.”

“For her sake—for yours, my liege—I will be to him all you could desire,” rejoined Seymour, earnestly.

As Sir Thomas retired, Henry said to his son, “Go to the queen, Edward, and conduct her to me.”

Upon this, the prince immediately tripped towards Catherine, who caught him in her arms, and kissed him tenderly; after which she arose and accompanied him to the king.

On drawing near her royal husband, the queen would have knelt down, but Henry would not permit her. Taking her hand kindly, he said, with the same earnestness with which he had spoken throughout, “Thou hast ever been an obedient wife, Kate, and in all things conformable to my will. Thou wilt not, therefore, I am well assured, disobey my last injunctions. This pretty boy has never known a mother’s love. Be thou a mother to him. Thou hast no child to wean thy tenderness from him—give it him all.”

“He has it already, sire,” replied the queen. “Dost thou not love me, Edward?”

“Ay, madam, as a mother,” replied the prince, affectionately.

“That is well,” said Henry; “but you must not humour his every whim, Kate. I hear he is somewhat wilful.”

“Those who have said so to your Majesty, wrong him,” rejoined the queen. “Edward is ever good and gentle—yea, most tractable.”

“If he continue so, it shall be well,” said Henry. “Thou lov’st thy sisters, Edward? Speak the truth, boy!”

“I ever do speak truth, sire,” replied the prince. “I love them dearly. But I love Elizabeth best,” he added,

in a lower tone, to the king, "for Mary is sometimes sharp and peevish with me, but Elizabeth is ever merry and ready for play."

"Elizabeth is nearer thine own age, boy. Thou wilt find out Mary's merits as thou growest older," replied the king. "I would have ye all dwell together in unity—ha!"

"What ails your Majesty?" cried Catherine, alarmed by the sudden alteration of his countenance.

"A spasm—it is gone," rejoined Henry, with a groan.

"Father—dear father! you look ill," cried Edward, terrified.

"Take him away," said the king, faintly, sinking backwards as he spoke.

All was now confusion and alarm, apprehension being generally entertained that the king was dying. Advancing quickly towards his royal patient, Doctor Butts placed his hand upon his pulse, and watched his countenance with great anxiety.

"Is he gone, think you?" asked Gardiner, anxiously, and in a low tone, of Wriothesley.

"It would seem so from Butts's looks," replied the other. "If he be, Norfolk's life is saved, for they will not dare execute him."

"Heaven grant it!" ejaculated Gardiner. "Mark you not Hertford's trouble? Something has been left undone."

"All may have been left undone," rejoined Wriothesley. "I do not think the will is signed."

"That were indeed a gain for us," said Gardiner. "But I dare scarcely hope it."

"How fares it with his Highness?" inquired the Earl of Hertford, whose countenance displayed much anxiety, as the physician moved away his hand.

"The king will live," replied Butts. "Let the chamber be instantly cleared."

"Ye hear, my lords?" said Hertford, evidently much relieved. "Doctor Butts declares that his Majesty is in no immediate danger, but he prays ye all to depart at once."

Thus exhorted, the assemblage began instantly to disperse.

Prince Edward however still lingered, though the queen, who was moving away, beckoned him to come with her.

“May I not stay with the king, my father?” said the prince, plucking Doctor Butts’s robe.

“It grieves me to refuse your Highness, but it cannot be,” replied the physician.

“Come with me, Edward,” said Sir Thomas Seymour. “The queen waits for you. This is a scene unmeet for eyes like yours.”

The young prince took his uncle’s hand, and allowed himself to be led out of the room, looking wistfully at his father as he retired. He never beheld him more.

“You are sure he will revive?” inquired the Earl of Hertford of Doctor Butts, as they were left alone with the still inanimate monarch.

“I am certain of it,” replied the physician. “But I will not answer that he may live many hours. You look uneasy, my lord. What remains to be done?”

“Everything,” replied Hertford. “Norfolk still lives—and the king hath not signed his will.”

“He spoke as if he had,” remarked Butts.

“All think so, and I would not have them undeceived,” replied Hertford. “The will has been well considered and debated, as you know, and is fully prepared, but he ever puts off the signing of it. All my persuasions have failed with him.”

“Obstinate as he is, he *shall* sign it,” replied the physician. “But hush!” he added, with a gesture of silence; “he stirs! Retire, my lord. And send Ferrys, the king’s chirurgeon, to me with all despatch.”

VII.

OF THE AWFUL SUMMONS RECEIVED BY THE KING.

UNDER the superintendence of Doctor Butts and of the chirurgeon Ferrys, and by the help of an engine employed for the purpose, Henry, who had only partially regained his consciousness, was lifted from his chair, and placed in a couch in the royal sleeping-chamber. The couch wherein he was thus deposited was of unusual size, and made of oak, richly carved, and black and lustrous as ebony. The lofty canopy was crowned with blood-red plumes, and supported by twisted pillars. The curtains were of cloth of gold of the thickest texture, embroidered with the Holy Cross, the cross of Saint George, the Rose, the Portcullis, and the Lion rampant, mingled with Fleurs-de-lys. The head of the bed was sculptured in bold relief with the arms of England. Notwithstanding the magnificence of its curtains, the general appearance of this huge bed was sombre in the extreme, and it looked a fitting receptacle for an expiring monarch. The walls of the chamber were hung with fine tapestry from the woofs of Tournay, representing the principal actions of Solomon the Wise, and in the upper border scrolls were painted in black letter sundry texts of Scripture, applicable to the destination of the room.

A dreadful night ensued, long remembered by those who watched by Henry's troubled couch, or were near enough to hear his appalling groans and roars of agony. No one who then listened to his terrific outcries, or witnessed his desperate struggles for breath, but felt that the despot's numerous victims were amply avenged. For every life taken by him it seemed he must endure a pang: and yet, though ever dying, he could not die. Throughout the long, long night, in that vast, dimly-lighted chamber, rendered gloomier by the dusky furniture and the grim arras on the walls, might be seen dark figures, as if detached from the tapestry, gliding with ghostly footsteps towards the king's couch, questioning the physician and chirurgeon in dumb show, and then swiftly but silently retreating if a groan broke from the royal sufferer. One tall personage,

scarcely to be distinguished from the hangings near which he stood, remained stationary at the back of the room throughout the whole night, as if anxiously awaiting the issue of this fearful conflict with death. Ever and anon, Doctor Butts moved noiselessly towards this sombre and mysterious-looking personage, and spoke with him under his breath. Their muttered converse had evident reference to the king, and to something required of him by the untiring watcher, whose gestures proclaimed the utmost anxiety; but, however important the matter might be, Butts clearly deemed it impracticable, for he shook his head, and returned alone to the sick monarch's couch. Worn out by anguish, Henry dropped asleep towards morning, and this favourable circumstance being communicated to the watcher, he disappeared, having previously received an assurance from Doctor Butts that he should be instantly sent for if any change for the worse occurred. Some of the drowsy pages and henchmen likewise sought repose; but the medical attendants did not for a moment quit the king's bedside.

Henry slept for several hours, and awoke, towards noon, much refreshed, and expressed a desire to receive the sacrament. After ordering the Bishop of Oxford to be summoned, the king commanded his attendants to lift him out of bed, and set him again in his chair. Doctor Butts endeavoured to dissuade him from this step, representing its extreme danger, and counselling the easiest posture possible during the performance of the holy office; but Henry authoritatively declared that he would kneel down, whatever risk might be incurred from the action, or whatever pain it might give him; adding, "that if he were not only to cast himself upon the ground, but under it, he could not tender to the sacrament the honour that was its due." No more was to be said. His injunctions were obeyed. Taken up and placed within his chair, he kept his seat until the consecration, when, with much difficulty, he contrived to kneel down before the bishop, and partook of the bread and wine. Though his sufferings must have been intense, he bore them with the constancy of a martyr, and the good prelate, who was much affected, could not sufficiently admire his fortitude. As soon as the sacred rite was over, the king was conveyed back to his couch, and did not ap-

pear much worse for the great effort he had made. By his own injunctions, which could not be disobeyed, he was then left wholly undisturbed until late in the day.

This was the evening of the Friday before Candlemas-day, 1547. About two hours before midnight, but not till then, the Earl of Hertford, who was in an agony of impatience for an audience, was permitted to approach the king. He found him lying on the couch, propped up by immense pillows. On regarding him, Hertford felt sure that the king was rapidly sinking, though his eye was still keen, and his voice strong and sonorous as ever. No time must be lost—no risk heeded—if the great stake for which he was playing was to be won.

“Let the chamber be cleared,” said Henry. “Our discourse must be strictly private.”

This being precisely what Hertford desired, he took care that the king’s behests should be promptly obeyed.

“We are alone, sire,” he said, as soon as all the attendants, including Doctor Butts and the surgeon, had withdrawn.

“Hertford,” said Henry, as the earl approached him, “you gaze on me as if you thought me worse. Deny it not, man—I can read your true opinion in your looks. No wonder I should appear greatly disordered. Last night was a dreadful one to me, Hertford. Not to purchase a fresh term of sovereignty would I endure such another. I cannot recall it without horror. I underwent the torments of the damned; and prayed—unavailingly prayed—for release from suffering. Thou knowest I am not idly superstitious—nor a believer in old wives’ fables. Prepare then to credit what I shall relate, however surprising and improbable it may seem to thee; and deem not that my nerves are shaken by sickness.”

“Whatever your Majesty shall tell me I shall infallibly believe—doubt it not,” replied Hertford. “And I am well assured that your nerves are firmly strung as ever.”

“Thou liest!—thou dost not think so—but they are. To my narration however,—and give the more heed to it, inasmuch as thou wilt find it concerns thee as well as myself.”

“Is there a ghost in the story, my liege?” inquired Hertford.

“Be silent, and thou shalt hear,” replied Henry, sternly. “Last night, during a brief interval of ease between my fits of agony, I was trying to court slumber, when I heard the bell toll midnight—I heard it distinctly, for I counted the strokes—and as the last vibration of sound died away, I turned to Butts to bid him give me a potion. He was gone, while Ferrys, who should have been watchful, had sunk within the chair nigh which thou standest, apparently overcome by sleep. I was about to awake and chide him—and should have done so, had not all power of speech and movement suddenly left me, as I saw a phantom—a grisly, ghastly phantom—glide towards my bed. Whom thinkest thou I beheld?”

“Nay, I cannot guess, my liege,” replied Hertford.

“Surrey, new-risen from his bloody grave—his noble features livid and disfigured—his locks clotted with gore—his stately neck sundered by the axe—yct, marvellous to say, set again upon the shoulders—a spectacle horrible to look upon—yet I instantly knew him. His eyes seemed to have life in them, and to fascinate like the basilisk, for, as he fixed them upon me, I could not avert my gaze. Then his lips moved, and with a gesture of menace such as I had never brooked from mortal man, and in accents more terrible than had ever reached my ears, he told me he came to summon me before Heaven’s Judgment-Throne; and that I must appear there ere the bell should again toll forth the hour of midnight.”

“Let not this weigh upon your mind, my gracious liege,” said Hertford, not wholly devoid of superstitious fear himself, though he strove thus to reassure the king. “I was in your chamber last night at midnight, and long after, and I saw and heard nothing such as you relate. ’Twas an ill dream—but only a dream. I pray you therefore dismiss these fancies. They are engendered by the sickness under which you labour.”

“No, Hertford,” replied Henry, in a tone of profound conviction, “it was neither dream, nor product of diseased imagination. I could not have conjured up such a spectre if I would—and I would not if I could,” he added, shuddering. “I saw Surrey plain enough, standing where thou art now. I will not tell thee all the spirit uttered of

vengeance and retribution—but it prophesied a bloody ending to thee and to thy brother.”

“I have no fear of the prediction,” said Hertford, in a tone that somewhat belied his words; “and I beseech your Highness not to attach any importance to the vision. You have told me how the spirit came to you, but you have not explained how it departed?”

“I know not how it vanished,” replied Henry. “For a time I remained spell-bound, as if under the influence of nightmare; but at last, by a mighty effort, I broke the charm that seemed to bind me, and called out. I then found the spirit gone, and Butts standing in its place. Ferrys also was awake.”

“All is now explained,” said Hertford. “It was the nightmare that oppressed your Highness. You need have no fear.”

“Fear!—I have none!” ejaculated the king. “No living man ever made the Eighth Henry tremble, nor can any dead man do it. This spirit may be right as regards thee and thy brother, but I will prove it wrong in one particular.”

“By living beyond the hour appointed by it, I trust, my liege,” said Hertford. “In one of mortal mould such a prediction would have been treasonable, but spirits are exempt from common penalties.”

“The jest is ill timed, my Lord,” observed Henry, sternly. “I will balk the ghost if I can, by living till tomorrow; but at all events I will balk him by consigning Norfolk to the block. I will have the duke’s head before I die. This will I do, because the ghost told me, as if in mockery, that I should be disappointed. I will send his father to bear him company.”

“Whatever may have prompted this decision, I am glad, right glad, it has been come to,” said Hertford. “Were Norfolk permitted to live he would undoubtedly cause the greatest embarrassment to Prince Edward during his minority. He might do more. Assisted by the Pope, the Emperor Charles V., and their partisans, he might even succeed in transferring the crown from the young prince’s head to that of the Princess Mary, and so undo all the work that you, sire, have so long and so assiduously laboured to accomplish. He might check the Reformation,

as well as alter the succession. You have delivered Prince Edward from one dangerous enemy, Surrey, but the other, and the more powerful foe, yet lives."

"Edward shall never be molested by him," rejoined the king. "He shall be beheaded to-morrow morning. Get the warrant for his execution at once, and deliver it to the Constable of the Tower."

"Why not to-night?" demanded Hertford.

"At this hour!" exclaimed Henry, sternly. "A secret execution would be set down to fear or anger—and I feel neither. No!—to-morrow morning will be soon enough. I shall not change my mind. Go for the warrant. Wherefore do you linger?"

"If I might venture to urge one matter on your Majesty," hesitated Hertford.

"Ha! what is it?" demanded the king.

"You have wisely and deliberately made all your arrangements for the future, but you have neglected the main point—the signing of your will. Here is the instrument, sire, which you have committed to my custody," he added, producing a coffer, and taking from it several sheets of paper, tacked together by a braid of green and white ribbon. "It lacks only your signature, or the impress of your royal stamp, to be complete."

"Leave it with me," said Henry, taking the will. "Perchance I may make some alterations in it."

"Alterations!" exclaimed the earl, startled out of his habitual caution.

"Ay, alterations! Wherefore not?" cried the king, sharply and suspiciously. "Marry, if it shall please me to erase your name from the list of my executors, I can do so, methinks?"

"Far be it from me to dispute your Highness's power to make any changes you may deem proper," replied Hertford, almost abjectly. "But I implore you not to delay the signing."

"You had best trouble me no more," rejoined Henry, sternly. "About your business straight. Send Sir John Gage to me. I desire to consult him."

"Will none other than Sir John Gage serve your turn?" asked Hertford.

"Ha! what is this? Dar'st thou to trifle with me?"

No one but Gage *will* serve my turn. There! thou art answered. Get thee gone!"

Scarcely able to conceal his uneasiness, Hertford made a profound obeisance, and departed.

VIII.

IN WHAT MANNER THE KING'S WILL WAS SIGNED.

No sooner had Hertford quitted the chamber than Butts and Ferrys, with a host of pages and henchmen, re-entered it. The physician hurried towards his royal patient's couch, and proceeded to feel his pulse.

"What think you of me?" demanded Henry, looking fixedly at him. "Any change for the better?—ha!"

"None, sire," replied the physician, gravely.

"I understand," rejoined the king, with great firmness. "Shall I last till to-morrow? Speak truth; I can bear it."

"If Heaven wills it, your Majesty will last so long," answered the physician, with increased gravity. "You are now in far mightier hands than mine. I can do little more to aid you."

Henry bore this dread announcement bravely. Leaning back upon his pillow, and looking upwards, he seemed for a while to be silently engaged in prayer. The physician signed to the attendants to keep still, so that the king was wholly undisturbed.

At length, the profound silence was broken by Henry, who, slightly raising himself, and turning to Butts, said, "May I have a draught of wine? Methinks it would do me good."

"Ay, marry! sire, here is a stoup of your favourite Gascoigne wine," replied the physician, filling a silver cup with the generous fluid, and presenting it to him. "I am right glad to find you so stout of heart."

"Enough!" exclaimed the king, putting away the goblet with disgust after placing it to his lips; "the wine likes me not. It tastes of blood—pah!"

“Will it please you to eat a mouthful of chicken-cullis?” asked Butts.

“No; I will eat nothing more,” replied Henry. “Let Sir John Gage be sent for with all despatch. Why comes he not?”

“He shall be summoned instantly,” replied Butts, issuing the necessary orders, and then returning to the king’s bedside. “Pardon me, sire,” he continued, in a low, earnest voice, “if I venture to remind you that you have left a most important matter undone. Your will, I perceive, is lying before you. Delay not the signing of it, I beseech you!”

“I will not sign it till I have spoken with Gage,” replied Henry, peremptorily. “There will be time to do it then.”

“Pray Heaven there may!” exclaimed the physician. “Not a moment ought to be lost.”

“Why comes not Sir John?” demanded Henry, after a pause, in a loud, fierce tone. “Send for him again; and bid him come quickly, if he values his life.”

“He is here, my liege,” replied Butts, as the Constable of the Tower entered the chamber, with a paper in his hand.

“Ha! you are come at last, Sir John,” cried the king, sharply. “Leave us alone together,” he added.

Whereupon the chamber was at once vacated by all save Gage. But, ere the private conference began, the arras on the further side of the king’s couch was cautiously raised, and Hertford stole into the room, and, unperceived either by Gage or the king, concealed himself behind the thick curtains of the bed. The stealthy entrance of the eunuch was favoured by the circumstance that this part of the chamber was almost buried in darkness.

“What paper hast thou in thine hand?” demanded Henry of the Constable.

“One I would rather be without,” answered Gage, gruffly—“the warrant for Norfolk’s execution to-morrow.”

“See it done,” rejoined Henry, coldly.

“If it be done, your last act will be one of injustice and cruelty,” retorted the Constable.

“How knowest thou it will be my last act?” said Henry, furiously. “I may live long enough to have thine own head as well as Norfolk’s.”

“I had rather you had mine than his,” said Gage; “and your own ingratitude would be less. Norfolk has served you longer and better than I have done.”

“Norfolk is dangerous to my son, and therefore he must be removed—and quickly. No more words! Again I say to thee, see it done!”

“I like it not,” grumbled the Constable. “’Tis a foul deed.”

“Hold thy peace! and turn we to another matter. Thou hast assisted at the debates concerning my will, and know’st its contents generally. Thou know’st also that I have appointed sixteen executors and twelve counsellors, and that amongst the executors is Hertford.”

“This I know!” returned Gage.

“My mind misgives me as to Hertford,” pursued Henry. “Something I have noticed in him of late makes me suspect him of sinister designs. I fear he aims at too much power, and will not be altogether true to Edward.”

“Yet the prince is his nephew, and must therefore be most dear to him,” observed Gage.

“He ought to be,” rejoined Henry. “You judge of others by yourself, good Sir John—but all are not of your stamp. If I thought my suspicions of Hertford were correct, I would strike out his name.”

“Nay, do not that. I entreat you, my liege. I think him faithful,” said the Constable.

“Thy opinion is ever honest, and I will be guided by it,” said the king. “Hertford’s name shall stand, though I had determined otherwise. But I will control him. At present, thou and Sir Thomas Seymour are mere counsellors, without voice or power. Ye both shall be executors, and have equal power with Hertford.”

“I cannot answer for Sir Thomas Seymour,” rejoined Gage; “but, for myself, I may say that I desire not the office.”

“I will have no refusal,” said Henry, authoritatively. “Sir Thomas is Edward’s favourite uncle. The boy loves him, and is beloved in return. Sir Thomas will guard him well—as thou wilt—ha?”

“Sir Thomas is more to be feared than his brother, according to my judgment,” observed Gage.

“There thou art wrong,” rejoined Henry. “Sir Tho-

mas is rash and headstrong, but trusty as steel. I have tried him."

"Humph!" ejaculated the Constable, dubiously. "Since your Majesty designs to make these changes in your will, why should Gardiner be left out? He is the ablest among the prelates, and of great experience in politics. Moreover, he has done your Highness many notable services."

"For the which he hath been well rewarded," interrupted Henry, sternly. "I will have none of him. Gardiner hath ability enough, but he is a subtle intriguer, and would set ye all by the ears. I can manage him, but no one else can. Thou art a Papist, Sir John, hence thy recommendation of Gardiner. But he shall have no power to breed discord in the Church when I am gone. It is quite enough that Wriothesley should be retained—I had thoughts of erasing his name likewise, and substituting the Marquis of Dorset."

"I pray you do not, sire," said Gage.

"Nay, thou mayst spare thy suing. I am content to keep the Lord Chancellor. I do not think he will do much mischief, and he will counterbalance Cranmer. Haste, then, and fetch Sir Thomas Seymour, and let William Clerc be in attendance with my secret stamp. My fingers are so swollen that I cannot use the pen."

"Heavens! is it possible your Majesty can have been so imprudent as to put off the signing of your will till now? You might have died last night; and then—"

"Prate not, but do as I have commanded thee," interrupted the king. "Yet stay!—is Cranmer in the palace?"

"Ay, my liege; his Grace is but newly returned from Croydon," replied the Constable.

"That is well. Let him come to me anon," said the king, more feebly. "This talk has wearied me. I feel as if I could sleep. Send Butts to watch by me, but let me not be otherwise disturbed for an hour."

"But the execution of the will, sire?—it is most urgent," cried the Constable.

But Henry made no reply. He had already begun to breathe heavily and stertorously.

After gazing at him for a moment, as if in doubt whether to rouse him, Gage left the room.

No sooner was he gone, than Hertford peered from be-

hind the curtain; and seeing that Henry was asleep—and indeed his loud breathing proclaimed the fact—he stepped cautiously forward.

At the same moment, Butts entered the chamber. Alarmed by Henry's breathing, without noticing the earl, he rushed to the king's bedside.

"'Tis as I feared," he said, after a pause, turning to Hertford. "This is the lethargy of death. He will never wake again—or, if he should, his mind will wander. Great Henry's power has left him. The absolute monarch is all helpless now."

"I would not rouse him from his trance, but let him go, were it not that the will remains unsigned!" exclaimed Hertford, distractedly. "I must wake him," he added, rushing towards the bed.

"It is in vain, I tell you," said Butts, staying him.

"Let me go, sir," said the earl, furiously. "I shall go mad if I lose this great prize."

"You need not lose it," replied Butts. "The will is here. Take it, and get it stamped. The keeper of the royal signet may be bribed to acquiesce, and witnesses can be procured in the same way."

"Your counsel is good, but it cannot be followed," cried Hertford. "Sir John Gage knows that his Majesty designed to make some alteration in his will, and that it is unsigned. The Constable is impracticable; there is no purchasing his silence. All is lost."

"Not so," rejoined the ready-witted physician, apparently troubled with as few scruples as Hertford himself. "As yet, no one but ourselves is aware of the king's condition. The signing of the will shall not be disputed, even by Gage. Bring hither the keeper of the signet; bring also the Earls of Essex and Arundel, Sir William Paget, Sir William Herbert, and any others upon whom you can rely, to serve as witnesses. Leave the rest to me. About it quick!"

"It shall be done; and if the scheme prosper, I shall not be wanting in gratitude to its bold contriver," replied Hertford. "While I am on my errand, do you give orders, as if from his Majesty, that no one but myself and those you have mentioned be allowed to enter the chamber. Our

plan will be marred infallibly if Gage and my brother gain admittance."

Butts promised compliance, and Hertford disappeared by the secret entrance.

The physician next wetted a napkin, and applied it to Henry's brow, shifting the pillows at the same time, so that the breathing of the dying monarch became sensibly relieved. He then drew the curtains about the bed, so as to hide in a great measure the upper part of the king's person; and afterwards placed a small table, with writing materials upon it, at a little distance from the couch on the left; so disposing the lights within the chamber that the bed was left completely in darkness.

These precautions taken, he proceeded to the ante-chamber, and calling the chief usher, gave him the orders that had been suggested by Hertford.

He was only just in time, for he had scarcely retired when the Constable of the Tower and Sir Thomas Seymour made their appearance; but they were refused admittance to the king's chamber. In vain Seymour, who was full of anxiety and impatience, remonstrated. The ushers were inexorable.

Ere long came a grave-looking personage in a black robe, with a small box under his arm. This was William Clerc, the keeper of the royal signet. He was allowed instant entrance.

Shortly afterwards came the Earl of Hertford, accompanied by the Earls of Essex and Arundel, and the others designated by Butts, all wearing countenances of extreme gravity, as if bound upon some object of the utmost seriousness and importance. Bowing solemnly to Gage and Seymour, they passed on, and were instantly admitted.

"This is very strange," remarked Gage. "I cannot understand it. His Majesty told me himself that he would not be disturbed for an hour. Are you quite sure, sir, that the orders are express against our admittance?" he added to the chief usher.

"Quite sure, Sir John," replied the individual addressed, bowing respectfully. "Doctor Butts delivered them to me himself."

"Hertford has outwitted us, Sir John," remarked Seymour. "We shall neither of us be executors."

“For my own part, I care not,” rejoined Gage. “I do not covet the distinction. But I hope the king’s intentions will be strictly carried out.”

Not long after this came Cranmer, who marched straight towards the door, but was detained like the others. The archbishop then joined Gage and Seymour, and was talking with them of the king’s dangerous condition, and deeply deploring it, when Butts appeared at the door, and after a word from him to the usher, all three were admitted.

What they beheld was this. Grouped round the little table, with writing materials upon it, were the persons who had subscribed the will as witnesses. Nearer the darkened couch, but with his back towards it, stood William Clerc, by whom, previous to its attestation, the will had been stamped at the top of the first page and the end of the last, and who had just delivered the instrument, thus signed and attested, to Hertford.

Butts explained to Cranmer and the others that his Majesty had had just sufficient strength to direct the stamping of his will, but that immediately after this was done, and the attestation completed, he was struck speechless.

“It is marvellous that he lasted so long,” continued the wily physician. “He spoke so feebly, that I alone could catch his words. I fear he will scarcely know your Grace,” he added, preceding Cranmer to the bed, and drawing back the curtain so as to expose the woeful figure of the king, who was now evidently *in extremis*; “he hath but little life left.”

“I will try,” replied the archbishop. Taking the king’s hand in his own, he drew close to him, and in tones of the utmost earnestness exhorted him to place his trust in Christ, and to call upon His mercy, beseeching him, if he had any consciousness left, to give him some token that he trusted in the Lord.

Henry seemed to understand what was said to him, for he slightly strained the primate’s hand.

After a while, the archbishop turned to the assemblage, now gathered round the bed, and, in a voice of the deepest solemnity, said, “It has pleased Heaven to call to its mercy our great king. Pray ye all for the repose of his soul!”

Upon this they all knelt down, and, while they were doing so, the bell tolled forth the hour of midnight.

Then Hertford called to mind what the king had said to him concerning the summons by the spirit, and he trembled exceedingly.

Thus far the Prologue.

BOOK I.

THE LORD PROTECTOR.

I.

HOW THE EARL OF HERTFORD AND SIR ANTHONY BROWN
ANNOUNCED HIS FATHER'S DEATH TO PRINCE EDWARD.

FOR two days Henry's demise was kept profoundly secret. On Monday, the last day of January, 1547, the Commons were sent for to the Lords, and the important intelligence was communicated to them by the Lord Chancellor Wriothesley, who, at that same time, acquainted them with such portions of the late king's will as it was deemed expedient to make public. The interval between the monarch's death and this public announcement of it had been employed by Hertford and his partisans in organising their plans, and debating the measures to be adopted during the new reign. Most of the upper council, in whom the administrative authority was lodged, had been won over by Hertford's promises, and it was not thought that any serious opposition would be offered by such as could not be corrupted—amongst whom were Cranmer and Tunstal. The only real obstacle in the way of the aspiring earl appeared to be the Lord Chancellor; but even he might be brought over, or, if troublesome, could be put out. Thus Hertford felt secure, and determined upon the immediate realisation of his schemes of aggrandisement.

As regarded the Duke of Norfolk, Henry's death, occurring when it did, at a moment of such extraordinary peril to that illustrious nobleman, was a piece of great good fortune, and was regarded by many who adhered to the old belief as nothing less than providential. Had Hertford however been allowed his own way, the duke would infallibly have been executed in accordance with Henry's warrant; but Sir John Gage resolutely refused to obey it, threatening, if the matter were persisted in, to publish

abroad the king's death. By these means Norfolk was saved, though he was still detained a prisoner in the Tower.

The young Prince Edward himself was kept in ignorance of the loss he had sustained until the Sunday, when it was announced to him by his elder uncle in person, attended by Sir Anthony Brown, master of the horse, and devoted to the earl. The young prince was staying at Hertford with the Princess Elizabeth, whither they had been sent after their last interview with their royal father. The earl and his companion found the prince engaged in reading Ludovius Vives's "Instruction of a Christian Woman" to his sister. Closing the book, and quitting the reading-desk near which he was stationed, Edward immediately advanced to meet them. He was greatly affected by the intelligence which they brought him, though not unprepared for it, and though it was conveyed in terms and in a manner calculated to rob it of much of its distressing effect.

Kneeling down before him, the earl and Sir Anthony saluted him as king, and tendered him their homage. Edward was too much afflicted to make any suitable reply. He turned away, and flinging himself into the arms of his sister, who was standing beside him, and equally grieved with himself, he mingled his tears with hers. "Never," says Sir John Hayward, describing the occurrence, "was sorrow more sweetly set forth, their faces seeming rather to beautify their sorrow, than their sorrow to cloud their faces. Their young years, their excellent beauties, their lovely and lively interchange of complaints in such sort graced their grief, as the most iron eyes at that time present were drawn thereby into society of their tears."

Deeming it best to let his royal nephew's grief have free course, Hertford did not offer him any consolation at first, but arising from his kneeling posture, he withdrew to a little distance with Sir Anthony.

"We have lost the best of fathers, Elizabeth," said Edward, at last, looking up at her face through his tears. "But he is in heaven, and therefore we need not mourn for him. Yet I cannot help it." And he wept afresh.

“Be comforted, gentle brother,” said the princess, tenderly. “Our father is happily released from suffering. I did not think we should ever see him again on earth. You must be a man now, since you are king.”

“Alas!” exclaimed Edward, sobbing. “My heart sinks at the thought of it.”

“And mine swells at the bare idea,” rejoined the princess. “Cheer up, dear brother—or I ought rather to say, my gracious lord and master, for you are so now. How strange that sounds, Edward! Marry! it must be mighty fine to be king—to wear the diadem, and sit in state, to swear great oaths, and have all tremble at your frown—as they used to do at our father’s.”

“Elizabeth!” said Edward, with something of reproach. “Is this a season for jesting?”

“Nay, I do not jest,” she replied, seriously. “I but gave utterance to thoughts that arose unbidden in my breast. I have ever spoken without restraint to you, dearest brother.”

“And I trust you ever will do so,” he rejoined, affectionately. “I love you, sweet Bess. You shall be my chief counsellor. I will confide all my secrets to you.”

“Your uncle Hertford will not let you,” she returned. “He is watching us narrowly now—trying to make out what you are saying to me. Have a care of him, Edward.”

“I would my uncle Sir Thomas Seymour were here,” said the young king; “but I am told he has been denied access to me.”

“By whom?—by my lord of Hertford?” demanded Elizabeth.

“Very likely,” returned Edward. “But I *will* see him now I am king. Sir Thomas is a great favourite of yours, Bess?—ha!”

“Sir Thomas discourses pleasantly, dances well, and hath an excellent ear for music,” she replied.

“And is very handsome withal—own you think so, Bess?”

“Nay, I have never bestowed enough consideration upon him to declare if he be handsome or otherwise,” she replied, blushing slightly.

“Out on my unruly tongue for leading me thus astray!” exclaimed Edward, suddenly checking himself. “A moment ago I chided you for unseasonable levity, dear Bess, and I now am indulging in it myself. Come with me to my uncle Hertford.”

With this he took her hand, and the young pair slowly, and with much dignity, directed their steps towards the earl, who instantly advanced with Sir Anthony to meet them.

“I am glad to see your Grace look somewhat lighter of heart,” said Hertford, bowing profoundly; “for though grief at so great a loss is natural, and indeed commendable, you have many necessary duties to fulfil which cannot be delayed, and the discharge whereof will serve to distract you from the thoughts of your bereavement. I am come, with Sir Anthony Brown, your master of the horse, to escort your Majesty to Enfield, where you will sleep to-night. To-morrow you will be conducted to the Tower, there to meet all the lords, spiritual and temporal, who will assemble to tender their allegiance. Have you much preparation to make ere setting out?”

“Not much, my lord—not any indeed,” replied Edward. “I am ready to attend you now. But I would fain bid farewell to my preceptors—unless they are to go with me, which I should much prefer.”

“They shall follow anon,” returned Hertford. “But you will have so much to do at first, that you must, perforce, discontinue your studies for a while. Your Grace will be pleased to say nothing to your preceptors as to what takes you hence, for the proclamation will not be made before to-morrow, and till then, for reasons I will presently explain, the utmost secrecy as to the demise of your royal father must be observed. This premised, I will cause them to be summoned. Ho, there!” he added to an attendant. “Let Sir John Cheke and Doctor Cox be called. His Highness is about to set forth for Enfield.”

“Nay, I will go to them,” cried Edward.

“Your Majesty’s pardon,” rejoined Hertford, in a low tone; “they must now wait on you.”

Presently afterwards two ancient personages, of very

thoughtful and studious aspect, clad alike in long black gowns bordered with fur, and having velvet caps on their bald heads, entered the hall. The foremost of them, the learned Sir John Cheke, carried a ponderous folio under his arm; the other was the no less erudite Doctor Cox. Being afflicted with gout, and requiring the support of a staff, Doctor Cox came on rather more slowly than his fellow-tutor.

Sprung from an ancient family, a ripe scholar, a proficient in oratory, and remarkably well versed in the Platonic philosophy, Sir John Cheke was the author of several learned treatises, and is described by Doctor Thomas Wilson, secretary of state to Queen Elizabeth, who knew him well, as "that rare learned man, and singular ornament of the land." His sister was wedded to Cecil, afterwards the great Lord Burleigh. To philosophy, Cheke's fellow-preceptor, Doctor Cox, added a profound knowledge of divinity. Both Edward's tutors were extremely zealous Reformers, and it was no doubt owing to their judicious training that the young king became one of the brightest ornaments and most effectual supporters of the Protestant cause.

Edward flew to meet his preceptors, and, running up to Doctor Cox, cried, "Lean on me, good Doctor—lean on me!"

Cox respectfully declined his aid, but suffered him to take his hand, and so lead him towards the Earl of Hertford, who was in the act of courteously saluting Sir John Cheke.

"My royal pupil tells me your lordship is about to take him hence," said Doctor Cox, bowing to the earl. "I am sorry his studies will be interrupted."

"They will only be interrupted for a time, Doctor," replied Hertford. "Most like he will not return here," he added, with a certain significance, "but you and Sir John Cheke will rejoin him. His Highness derives too much benefit from the able tuition of ye both to be longer deprived of it than is absolutely needful. Ye spare no pains with him, learned sirs, of that I am well satisfied."

"Few pains are needed, my Lord," replied Cheke. "More credit is due to his Highness than to us for the rapid progress he hath made. Trouble or difficulty with

him we have none, for he hath a rare capacity for learning, and zeal and industry equal to his ability; and that is saying no light thing. He never tires of reading, but turns from profane history to philosophy, and from philosophy to the Holy Scriptures and theology. He is mastering all the liberal sciences. Logic he hath studied, as your Lordship knows, and at this present he is learning Aristotle's Ethics in Greek, and, having finished with it, he will take up the Rhetoric."

"I can corroborate all Sir John hath advanced," observed Doctor Cox. "His Highness needs no spur to study—nay, his application is so great that he rather requires to be checked than stimulated. He hath recently read Cato, the *Satellitium* of Vives, and the fables of Æsopus. As to Latin, he knows it better than many an English boy of his age knows his mother tongue. Peradventure, your Lordship hath seen his letters in that language to the king his father?"

"I pray you speak not of them, dear Doctor," cried Edward, bursting into tears.

"I cravo your Highness's pardon!" exclaimed the worthy man, who was most tenderly attached to his royal pupil. "I would not pain you for the world."

"I know it," replied Edward, regarding him through his streaming eyes with almost filial affection; "but my heart is too full just now, and will overflow."

"Your accounts of my royal nephew's progress are most gratifying, learned sirs," observed Hertford, anxious to turn the discourse. "That you have avouched nothing more than the truth, I am sure; yet ye almost make him out a prodigy."

"And a prodigy he is," cried Sir John Cheke, with enthusiasm. "Few there be like him."

"Nay, my good uncle, you must distrust what my kind preceptors are pleased to say of me," remarked Edward. "They view me with too partial eyes."

At this juncture an interruption, anything but agreeable to Hertford, was offered by the unexpected entrance of Sir Thomas Seymour, evidently, from his looks and the state of his apparel, fresh from a rapid journey. Disregarding the angry glances directed against him by his brother,

Sir Thomas doffed his cap, flung himself on his knee before Edward, and, taking the youthful monarch's hand, exclaimed, "God save your Grace! I hoped to be first to tell you that the sovereignty of this realm hath devolved upon you, but I find I have been anticipated."

"I thank you heartily, gentle uncle," replied Edward, "not for your news," he added, sadly, "for I had liefer you had brought me any other, but for your display of loyalty and attachment."

"Have I and my fellow-preceptor been standing all this while in the presence of our gracious sovereign without knowing it?" exclaimed Sir John Cheke, as Seymour arose. "I pray you pardon us, and accept our homage."

So saying, he and Doctor Cox knelt down before the young king, who gave them each a hand.

"I now see my inadvertence," said Cox, "and I again pray your Majesty to pardon it."

"Think of it no more," replied Edward. "Arise, my beloved monitors and preceptors. It is true I am your sovereign lord, but you must still only regard me as a pupil."

"You have done wrong in coming here, sir, without authority," said the Earl of Hertford, in a stern tone, to his brother, "and will incur the displeasure of the council."

"So I incur not his Majesty's displeasure, I shall rest perfectly easy as to the council's anger," rejoined Seymour, in a tone of haughty indifference.

"Having discharged an errand which you have most officiously and unwarrantably taken upon yourself," pursued the earl, with increasing wrath, "you will be pleased to depart.—How! do you loiter?"

"His Majesty has not commanded me to withdraw, and I only obey him," returned Seymour, carelessly.

"Nay, my good Lord," said Edward to the earl, "my uncle Sir Thomas seems to have ridden hard, and must need some refreshment after his hasty journey. That obtained, he can accompany us to Enfield."

"He cannot go with us," cried Hertford, forgetting himself in the heat of the moment.

“How?” exclaimed Edward, a frown crossing over his face, and giving him a slight look of his father. Without another word he then turned to Sir Thomas, and said, “Prithee, make haste, gentle uncle. Get what you lack, and then prepare to ride with us to Enfield.”

“All thanks to your Majesty, but I want nothing,” rejoined Seymour. “I am ready to set forth with you at once.”

The Princess Elizabeth, who had been standing a little apart with Sir Anthony Brown, and who appeared highly pleased with her royal brother’s assumption of authority, here clapped her hands for an attendant, and commanded a cup of wine for Sir Thomas Seymour.

“I will not refuse this,” said Seymour, when the wine was brought. “May your Majesty reign long and prosperously!” he added, raising the goblet to his lips.

Having bidden adieu to his preceptors, and taken a tender leave of his sister, telling her to be of good cheer, and assuring her that their separation should not be long, Edward then informed the Earl of Hertford that he was ready to set forth, who thereupon ceremoniously conducted him to the door. They were followed by Sir Anthony Brown and Sir Thomas Seymour, the latter of whom lingered for a moment to whisper a few words to the Princess Elizabeth.

Horses and an escort were in readiness outside; and thus the youthful king, accompanied by both his uncles, rode to Enfield, where he rested that night.

II.

HOW KING EDWARD THE SIXTH WAS PROCLAIMED AT WESTMINSTER; HOW HE RODE FROM ENFIELD TO THE TOWER OF LONDON; AND HOW THE KEYS OF THE TOWER WERE DELIVERED TO HIM BY THE CONSTABLE.

NEXT morning, Henry's demise was published abroad, and as soon as the news, which spread like wildfire, became generally known, an immense crowd collected before the palace of Westminster, where barriers were erected, and other preparations made, for proclaiming his youthful successor.

A hard frost prevailed, and the day was clear and bright, though extremely cold. The general aspect of the crowd was anything but sorrowful, and few regrets were expressed for the departed monarch, though Henry had been by no means unpopular with the middle and lower ranks of his subjects, who approved of his severity so long as it did not touch themselves, but was merely exercised against the nobility. They did not however like his "Whip with Six Lashes," as the terrible statute of the Six Articles was commonly designated, for it cut right and left, and might hit any of them. All were glad he was gone, and many a remark was boldly uttered which would have caused the speaker to become acquainted with the Marshalsea or the Fleet in the king's lifetime. Most of the women—and there were plenty of them amidst the throng—loaded his memory with opprobrium on account of his treatment of his spouses; but their husbands jestingly retorted that he had therein showed his wisdom, since the readiest way of getting rid of a troublesome wife was to cut off her head.

But by far the most audacious speech was uttered by a tall gaunt monk in the habit of a Franciscan friar, who, mounting a flight of steps, thus harangued the crowd in a loud voice: "Know ye me not, good folk?" he said. "I am that priest who preached before the king, now lying dead in yonder palace. I am that Father Peto who preached before King Henry in his chapel at Greenwich,

and who told him to his face that heavy judgments would come upon him for his sinful doings—I am he who fearlessly told the king that many lying prophets had deceived him, but that I, as a true Micaiah, warned him that the dogs should lick his blood, even as they had licked the blood of Ahab. For the which prophetic words I was condemned as a rebel, a slanderer, a dog, and a traitor. Nevertheless, my words shall come to pass. Henry, the Ahab of England, is dead, and dogs will lick his blood.”

Awe-stricken and astounded at the boldness of the Franciscan, many of the crowd looked round, expecting a pursuivant to ride up and arrest him. But the officers chanced to be otherwise engaged at the moment, and Father Peto, slowly descending from the steps, mingled with the throng, and was soon lost to view. The incident however produced a deep impression upon the assemblage, and the monk's words were long afterwards remembered.

Meanwhile a lofty stage had been reared within the barriers in front of the palace. The throng was kept back, and order preserved, by porters of the royal household, who made good use of their staves upon the costards of such as pressed forward too rudely, by tall yeomen of the guard, having the king's cognisance worked in gold on their breasts, and halberds in their hands, and by mounted pursuivants of arms, who rode constantly from point to point. Around the stage, upon the ground, was drawn up a bevy of trumpeters in embroidered coats, and with silken banners on their trumpets. All being, at last, in readiness, five heralds in coats of arms mounted the platform, and stationed themselves upon it, awaiting the lords coming forth from the Parliament House; and when this occurred, one of the trumpets blew thrice, making the palace walls echo with the shrill blasts. Then there was a deep silence throughout the hitherto noisy multitude, in the midst of which Somerset herald stepped forward, and in a loud voice made proclamation in the following terms: “Edward the Sixth, by the grace of God King of England, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, and of the Church of England, and also Ireland, in earth Supreme Head, greeting,—Whereas it hath pleased Almighty God on Friday last to call to his infinite mercy the most excellent high and mighty Prince Henry, of most noble and famous memory, our

most dear and entirely beloved father, whose soul God pardon!—”

Thereupon the herald stopped, and immediately the whole band of trumpets blew a loud and courageous blast, stirring up every bosom. When this ceased, Garter advanced, and, at the top of his voice, cried out, “God save our noble King Edward!” upon which a tremendous shout rent the air. Many a fervent ejaculation was uttered for the young king’s prosperity; but some old folk who had the reputation of wisdom shook their heads, and said, bodingly, in the language of Scripture, “Woe to the country whose king is a child!”

In the midst of these various expressions of sentiment, while some were full of joyful anticipations, and others, though very few in comparison with the rest, indulged in gloomy forebodings, while the lords, who had tarried for the proclamation, were moving away, and the heralds descending from the stage, a distant roar of ordnance was heard from the east, and a cry arose that the young king was going to the Tower; upon which the assemblage began to disperse, and a large portion moved off in the direction of the old fortress, such as could afford it taking boat at Westminster and going down the river to London-bridge, but the majority marching past the fair cross of Charing, erected by Edward I. to his queen, Eleanor, and along the Strand, to the City. Many of the lords entered the barges at the privy-stairs, near the palace, while others, anxious to make greater display, rode through the streets to the Tower, attended by large retinues of servants. The river was alive with craft of all sorts and sizes, from the stately and gilded barge, propelled by two ranks of rowers, to the small but crowded wherry. But it was below bridge, and near the Tower, that the greatest stir and excitement prevailed. Here the river was thronged, and much difficulty was experienced by the smaller barks either in remaining stationary or in approaching the landing-places. All the barges, balingers, pinnaces, caravels, and great ships moored off the Tower, many of which had painted and gilded masts, were decorated with flags and streamers. Amongst the larger vessels were the *Mary Rose* and the famous *Harry Grace à Dieu*, the latter standing out of the water like a castle, with two towers at the stern. No sooner did the

ordnance of the fortress announce the approach of the young king, than all of these ships replied with their heavy guns, which they then carried on the upper deck only, the sides of the vessels not being pierced. By these discharges the tall ships, Traitors' Gate and the dominant White Tower itself, above which floated the royal standard, were shrouded in smoke.

Simultaneously with the proclamation of the new king at Westminster, a like announcement had been made by sound of trumpet in the City of London, under the authority of a sealed commission, by four heralds in their coats of arms—namely, Clarencieux, Carlisle, Windsor, and Chester—assisted by the lord mayor, the aldermen, and the sheriffs in their scarlet robes. Not a single dissentient voice was heard, but, on the contrary, the proclamation was received with immense cheering.

On the same day, about noon, the youthful prince, on whom the crown had devolved, set forth from the palace of Enfield for the Tower, accompanied by his two uncles, by his master of horse, and a large party of noblemen, knights, pensioners, esquires, and others, all very richly attired, and making an extremely gallant show. From his youth and beauty, Edward excited the admiration of all who beheld him. He was arrayed in a gown of cloth of silver, embroidered with damask gold, and wore a doublet of white velvet, wrought with Venice silver, garnished with rubies and diamonds. His velvet cap, with a white feather in it, was ornamented with a brooch of diamonds; his girdle was worked with Venice silver, and decked with precious stones and knots of pearls, and his buskins were of white velvet. His milk-white charger, a noble-looking but easy-paced animal, was caparisoned in crimson satin, embroidered with pearls and damask gold, and the bridle had wide reins of red leather. For his years, Edward rode remarkably well, maintaining his seat with much grace, and promising in time to become a consummate horseman, like his uncle Sir Thomas Seymour. By the young king's express command, in contravention of the Earl of Hertford's arrangements, his favourite uncle rode close behind him, and was not unfrequently called forward to his royal nephew's side. Mounted on a fiery Arabian courser, black as jet, but whose movements he controlled apparently by his will,

magnificently attired, as his wont, in embroidered velvet cassock and silken doublet, by the stateliness of his person and the haughtiness of his bearing, Seymour threw into shade all the other nobles composing the king's train, and drew all eyes upon himself, after Edward had been gazed upon. Elated by his royal nephew's notice, his breast swelled with secret aspirations, and he listened to the promptings of his towering and insane ambition. Whenever he encountered the stern looks of his brother, he replied by a glance of fierce defiance.

In this way the royal cavalcade passed through Tottenham, where a large assemblage was collected, and where numerous clerks and priests were stationed near the High Cross, bearing censers, with which they censured the young king as he rode by. Other villages succeeded, and brought fresh crowds, fresh greetings, more priests, and more censuring. Fortunately, as we have already mentioned, the day was extremely fine, so the procession lost none of its effect.

Ere long, the ancient, and at that time most picturesque City of London came fully in view, protected by its grey walls, only to be entered through its gates, and remarkable for its many churches, amidst which the lofty spire of old Saint Paul's was proudly conspicuous. Joyously were the bells ringing in all these churches; but deepest and loudest in tone, and plainly distinguished above the rest, were the great bells of the cathedral. Bombards, falconets, and sakers were likewise discharged from the City walls and gates. Greatly pleased by these sounds, the youthful monarch smiled graciously, as Sir Thomas Seymour told him it was evident that his loyal subjects, the good citizens of London, meant to give him a hearty welcome.

Crossing Finsbury fields, the cavalcade entered the City by Bishopsgate. There a short pause occurred, the young king being met by the lord mayor—high Henry Hubblethorne—and the civic authorities, and being obliged to listen to an oration, to which he replied. Acclamations greeted him on all hands as he rode slowly through Bishopsgate-street Within, and blessings were showered upon his head. Not perhaps expecting so much enthusiasm, or at all events unaccustomed to such a display of it towards himself, the young sovereign was much moved; but he nevertheless acknowledged the hearty reception given him

with infinite grace, bowing repeatedly right and left. His youth and gentle deportment won every heart, and all hoped that a prince so gracious and full of promise might meet with good counsellors. Time had not allowed much preparation to be made for the young king's passage through the City, but several of the houses were gaily hung with pieces of tapestry and cloths of gold and silver, while embroidered cushions were set in the windows, from which comely citizens' wives and their blooming daughters looked down upon the fair young king, and on his handsome uncle.

Near the church at the top of Gracechurch-street Edward was met by a solemn procession from Saint Paul's, consisting of a number of persons carrying silver crosses, the priests and choir of the cathedral in their vestments and robes, followed by several of the City companies in their liveries.

As the royal cavalcade proceeded along Fenchurch-street, the popular enthusiasm increased, until the clamour became almost deafening, and the crowd pressed so much upon the young monarch, that it was with difficulty he could move on. However, the kindly tone in which he besought those nearest him to stand back, opened a way for him almost as readily as the halberds of the yeomen of the guard could clear it. The Earl of Hertford, who ever courted popular applause, smiled upon the crowd in vain. Attention was exclusively directed to the new king, and to the splendid-looking personage who immediately followed him; and it would be difficult to say which of the two was most admired, though doubtless far the greater amount of interest attached to Edward. But Hertford had the mortification of finding himself completely overlooked at a moment when he especially desired to be an object of attention.

Amid these manifestations of general enthusiasm and delight, which could not fail to be gratifying to him, Edward reached Tower Hill, where the populace was kept within due limits by a strong detachment of the mounted City guard. Here the ancient palace-fortress of his predecessors, wherein his august father had commenced his reign, and wherein he himself was about to keep his court for a while and hold his councils, burst upon his youthful gaze. No sooner was the young king discerned by those upon the

watch for his coming, than from the summit of the White Tower burst forth a thundering welcome. The ordnance on the wharf before the fortress, on Traitors' Gate, on the By-ward Tower, on the barbican and the bastions, followed, and the roar was prolonged by the guns of the ships moored close at hand in the river.

"There spoke old *Harry Grace à Dieu!*" cried Seymour. "I know his tremendous tones well enough."

"'Tis the first time I have heard those guns," observed Edward. "In sooth, they have a terrible sound."

"Your enemies think so, sire," rejoined Sir Thomas, with a laugh. "Few who withstood the shot of those guns would care to hear them again. But you will have more of it presently. The cannoniers I see are once more ready on the White Tower. Heaven grant your Highness be not deafened by the din!"

"Nay, I like it, gentle uncle," replied the young king, with boyish delight.

As he spoke, the ordnance from the Tower belched forth again; the roar being continued by the guns of the various ships, and closed by the deep-voiced cannon of the great *Harry*.

"'Tis a grand sound!" exclaimed Edward, with a glowing countenance. "I should like to witness a siege, uncle."

"Perchance your Highness may have your wish," replied Seymour. "The French are like to give us somewhat to do at Calais and Bouloign, ere long; and if they fail, the Scots are certain to find us employment. Your Grace must visit Berwick. But here comes the Constable of the Tower to conduct you to the fortress."

As the second roar of ordnance died away, Sir John Gage, mounted upon a powerful sorrel charger, very richly caparisoned, issued forth from the Bulwark Gate. He was closely followed by the Lieutenant of the Tower, Sir John Markham, two esquires, likewise on horseback, and by a long train on foot, headed by the chaplain of the Tower in his surplice, attended by the verger bearing the cross, and consisting of the chief porter, the gentleman-gaoler, and other officers, with forty yeomen of the guard, armed with halberds, and clad in their scarlet liveries, with the Rose and Crown embroidered upon the back—the latter walking two and two.

When within a short distance of the youthful sovereign, Sir John dismounted, and committing his charger to an esquire, bent the knee before Edward, and welcomed him to the Tower. The Lieutenant followed the example of his superior, after which the chaplain pronounced a solemn benediction. This done, the Constable and Lieutenant remounted their steeds; the yeomen of the guard and the others wheeled round, and returned as they had come, while Sir John Gage preceded the young monarch to the fortress.

On the stone bridge, built across the moat between the barbican and the By-ward Tower, were collected all the illustrious persons constituting the upper and lower councils appointed by the late king's will, except such as were actually in attendance at the moment. Chief amongst them were the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Durham, and the Lord Chancellor; the two former being in full ecclesiastical costume, and the latter in his robes of office, with the collar of the Garter round his shoulders. Instead of sharing in the general animation, Wriothesley looked on with lowering brows, and to judge from the sternness of his visage and the coldness of his manner towards his companions, he meditated some hostile course against them. In the next rank were the Earl of Arundel, the venerable Lord Russell, the Earl of Essex, brother to Queen Catherine Parr, and the Lords St John and Lisle. Most of these wore the Garter, and Lord Lisle was attired with extraordinary splendour. Behind them were the three judges in their robes, Montague, North, and Bromley. The rest of the brilliant assemblage consisted of Sir William Paget, chief secretary of state; Sir Anthony Denny and Sir William Herbert, chief gentlemen of the privy-chamber; the vice-chamberlain, the treasurer, and several others. Yeomen of the guard bearing halberds, trumpeters sounding loud flourishes, bearers of standards, banners, and pennons, heralds in coats of arms, pursuivants of arms and marshals of arms with maces, came first, and the members of the council drew back on either side to allow them passage.

Next came the Constable of the Tower, compelling his charger to move backwards along the whole length of the bridge, until he brought him under the vaulted archway of

the By-ward Tower, where horse and rider remained motionless as an equestrian statue. While this feat was performed with so much address that no disturbance was caused to the by-standers, amid loud cheers from the beholders gathered on the walls and towers of the fortress, the king rode upon the bridge, and had got about half way across it, when the lords of the council, headed by Cranmer, advanced to pay him homage. A short address, concluding with a benediction, was pronounced by the primate, during which all the others, except Tunstal, knelt down. The blessing over, the kneeling lords arose, and exclaimed with one voice, "Vive le noble roi Edouard!" And the same cry was repeated with the utmost enthusiasm by Sir Thomas Seymour, who was close behind his royal nephew, by the Earl of Hertford, Sir Anthony Brown, and all upon the bridge.

Edward thanked them, in his clear musical voice, for these demonstrations of their loyalty and attachment. Then followed the ceremonial of the delivery of the keys of the Tower, which was thus accomplished. Attended by the chief porter bearing the keys on an embroidered cushion, the Constable of the Tower rode forth from beneath the gateway, and approached the king—the lords of the council drawing back on either side. The bearer of the keys then knelt down and proffered them to his Majesty, who graciously thanked him, but desired they might remain in the custody of his right trusty and well-beloved cousin and councillor, Sir John Gage, seeing they be in no better hands. Thereupon, the Constable bowed to the saddle-bow, and, without more ado, backed his charger through the Tower gates, which were flung wide open, and so into the lower ward; the lords of the council forming themselves into a procession, and following as Gage retreated, and the king and his retinue slowly advancing, amid the reiterated acclamations of the beholders, so that after a while all had entered the fortress.

A striking sight greeted the young monarch as he passed through the gates. From the By-ward Tower to the Bloody Tower the whole of the lower ward was filled with archers and arquebusiers of the royal guard in their full accoutrements, drawn up in two lines—the archers on the right, and the arquebusiers on the left.

All these were picked men, of very tall stature, and their morions, breastplates, and tassettes were well burnished. Captains and other officers of the guard, distinguishable from their splendid equipments, were stationed at intervals. The sight of these stalwart fellows, who had been his father's guard in ordinary, and had attended the late king to France, as Sir Thomas Seymour informed Edward, delighted the youthful sovereign. He had much military ardour in his composition, and might have displayed it in action, if circumstances had permitted. As it was, the veterans upon whom he now admiringly smiled as he rode past them, occasionally expressing a word of commendation that sank deep into the heart of him to whom it was addressed, predicted that he would become a hero.

Thus making his way, he passed through the gloomy gateway of the Bloody Tower, glancing at the iron teeth of the huge portcullis by which it was defended, and, mounting the hill, turned off on the right and entered a court, at that time existing between the White Tower and the palace, and which was now densely filled by the various personages composing the procession. Here alighting, he was ceremoniously ushered into the palace.

III.

HOW THE EARL OF HERTFORD WAS MADE LORD PROTECTOR OF THE REALM, AND GOVERNOR OF THE KING'S PERSON DURING HIS NONAGE.

SHORTLY after Edward's arrival at the Tower, and while the young monarch was preparing to receive all the lords, spiritual and temporal, who had flocked thither to swear allegiance to him, a conference took place in the lesser council-chamber of the White Tower (now used as a depository for state papers and records), to which none but members of the upper and lower councils were admitted. The lower council could not vote, but they were allowed to assist at the deliberation. At the opening of the meeting,

a resolution was moved by the Lord Chancellor, who had his own motives for making the proposition, that they should all solemnly swear to maintain inviolate every part and article of the last will and testament of their late sovereign lord and master. This motion, though displeasing to some, could not be opposed, and the oath was administered accordingly.

“The oath has been taken,” muttered Wriothesley, glancing at Hertford. “We shall now see who will attempt to break it.”

He had not to wait long, for Sir William Paget, chief secretary of state, and Hertford’s principal associate, rose from his seat, and craving their attention, said :

“Before we proceed further, my lords and gentlemen, I may remark that it will be highly embarrassing to the people, and especially to foreign ambassadors, if they are compelled to address themselves on every occasion to sixteen persons, all of them clothed with the same authority. I therefore propose to you, as a preliminary measure, that we select from our number the worthiest and fittest amongst us to be chief and president, conferring upon him the title of Lord Protector of the Realm. By such means there will be infinitely speedier despatch of business, while no change whatever can take place in the established form of government, inasmuch as an express condition shall be annexed to the dignity, that the Lord Protector shall do no act without the concurrence of the entire body of the council.

“Your motion cannot be entertained, good master secretary,” cried the Lord Chancellor, rising, and speaking with much warmth. “It is in direct contradiction of the late king’s will, which you have just sworn to uphold, and which you cannot infringe in any particular without unfaithfulness to your trust. We will have no chief, president, or Lord Protector. No such appointment was contemplated by our late royal master. I defy you to show it. Equal authority was given by him to us all, and I refuse to transfer any portion of mine to another executor, be he whom he may.” And he glanced menacingly at Hertford, who however seemed perfectly easy as to the result.

“But if our choice should fall on you, my Lord, would

your objections to the step be equally strong?" said Sir Richard Rich, another of Hertford's partisans, rising.

"Ay, marry would they!" rejoined Wriothesley. "I wot well you have no thought of choosing me, Sir Richard; but if you had, you could not lawfully do it, neither would I accept the office of Lord Protector if offered me, knowing it to be contrary to the intentions of our late sovereign lord and master that any one of us should have higher powers than his fellows. You must take the will as it is—not as you would have it."

"Far be it from me to propose aught contrary to the true intent and meaning of our lamented master's testamentary injunctions," said Paget; "but despatch of business and the convenience of the government generally require that we should have a head. Otherwise there will be nothing but perplexity and confusion. Moreover since the Lord Protector will in reality have no power except such as is derived from us all, I can see no harm in the appointment—but much good. I therefore claim your voices for his Majesty's elder uncle, the Earl of Hertford, whom I look upon as the fittest person to be our chief. If you consult your own dignity, you will grace him with the title of Lord Protector, and as he is nearest in relationship to the king that now is, and must have his Majesty's interest at heart more than any other, you cannot do better than appoint him governor of the king's person during his non-age."

"It cannot be done, I say," cried Wriothesley, stamping furiously on the ground. "I will never agree to it—and, at least, the election must be unanimous."

"Not so, my Lord. A plurality of voices will suffice," rejoined Paget.

"Be calm, I entreat you, my Lord," said Sir Anthony Brown, in a low voice, to the Lord Chancellor. "Your opposition will avail nothing, but your adhesion will make you Earl of Southampton."

"Ha! say you so?" exclaimed Wriothesley, becoming suddenly appeased, and sitting down.

"Proceed without fear," whispered Sir Anthony to Paget. "I have stopped the Lord Chancellor's mouth with an earldom."

"It is well," returned the other, in the same tone.

Then looking round the assemblage, he added, "If I understand aright, my lords and gentlemen, you all agree with me that it is meet my Lord of Hertford be appointed President of the Council, with the title of Lord Protector of the Realm, and Governor of the King's Person during his minority. Be pleased to signify your assent by your voices."

"Hold yet a moment!" interposed the Lord Chancellor, again rising. "Couple with your proposal the condition that the Lord Protector shall do nothing save with the assent of all the other councillors. On that understanding I am content to withdraw my opposition."

"It is distinctly so understood, my Lord, and I thank you for your adhesion," replied Paget, bowing. "Are all the rest agreed?" he added.

Upon which the others arose, exclaiming with one accord, "that no one was so fit to be Lord Protector as the Earl of Hertford, and that they were well content with the appointment."

"I meddle not with secular matters," observed Cranmer, "for the conduct whereof I am little fitted. But feeling well assured that the affairs of the government will be managed with wisdom and ability by my Lord of Hertford; and feeling also certain that no efforts on his part will be spared to purge and purify the Church, and establish the pure doctrines of Christianity, I have given my voice for him."

"I have concurred in my Lord of Hertford's appointment," said Tunstal, "in the belief that it is essential there should be a head to the government; and in the firm belief also that no better person than his Lordship can be found for the office. But still adhering, as I do, to the old religion, though I have been content, for the sake of peace, to conform to many changes wrought in it by our late sovereign lord and master, I am strongly adverse to any further Reformation, as it is called, and I shall deeply regret the vote I have given if I find the Lord Protector take advantage of the power just conferred upon him to push for further separation from the See of Rome, and to widen and deepen the breaches already unhappily made in the Church."

"No fear of that, my Lord of Durham," said Wrioth-

ley ; “ the cause of Rome is too ably supported in the upper council by yourself, by my Lords of Arundel and St John, by Sir Edward Wotton, Sir Anthony Brown, and Doctor Nicholas Wotton ; and in the lower council by Sir John Gage, Sir William Petre, Sir John Baker, and Sir Thomas Cheyney. I say nothing of myself—but you may count on all my zeal. We will resist—strenuously resist—any further interference with our religion.”

“ You have spoken our sentiments, my Lord,” said Sir Anthony Brown, and other friends of the old belief. “ We are disposed to make up the breach with the See of Rome, not to widen it.”

“ Nay, my good lords and gentlemen, let there be no disagreement amongst us,” said Hertford, in a bland and conciliatory voice. Then bowing around, he added, “ Accept, I pray you all, my hearty thanks for the high and important offices just conferred upon me. My best endeavours shall be used to satisfy you all. I shall strive to reconcile differences, not to heighten them ; I shall be moderate and tolerant, rather than over-zealous ; and I cannot far err, seeing I must be guided and controlled by your collective opinions and wisdom.” This speech producing the effect desired by the new Lord Protector, he went on. “ And now, my lords and gentlemen, there is a matter wherein many of ye are concerned to which I would direct your present attention, though the full accomplishment thereof must necessarily be deferred to another time. As you are all doubtless aware, there is a clause in the late king’s will requiring us, his executors, to make good all his promises of any sort or kind. What these promises were it will be needful to ascertain without delay. As a means thereto, I will call upon one who, being greatly trusted, had the best opportunities of knowing his Majesty’s intentions, to declare. I address myself to you, Sir William Paget, and require you to state explicitly as much as you know of the late king’s designs.”

“ I can answer your inquiries without difficulty, my Lord,” replied the chief secretary, “ for I have a book wherein the king’s wishes were set down by myself, under his Majesty’s direction, by whom, as ye will see, the memoranda are signed. Here it is,” he added, exhibiting the book. “ From this ye will learn the honours and rewards

meant to be conferred by him upon his faithful servants. Herein ye will find it written, that the Earl of Hertford shall be created Lord High Treasurer and Earl Marshal, with the title of Duke of Somerset, and his son Earl of Hertford; in support of which titles, yearly revenues are to arise to the duke and his son out of the next bishop's land that shall fall due."

"That may be Durham," observed Tunstal. "His Majesty hath shown as little scruple towards us of the superior clergy, as he did towards the monasteries."

"Nay, I trust my revenues will not arise from your diocese, my Lord," said Hertford, "though it be the richest and most considerable in the kingdom. What more, good master secretary?"

"The Earl of Essex is set down to be Marquis of Northampton," pursued Paget; "the Lord Lisle to be Earl of Warwick; the Lord Wriothesley"—and he paused to glance at the Lord Chancellor—"to be Earl of Southampton; Sir Richard Rich to be Baron Rich; and Sir Thomas Seymour to be Baron Seymour of Sudley, and Lord High Admiral of England."

The latter announcement was received with considerable applause, especially from those of the lower council, and the subject of it was warmly congratulated by his companions. Seymour however looked discontented, and evidently thought he had been inadequately rewarded. One person only in the upper council took umbrage at the appointment. This was the existing Lord High Admiral, Lord Lisle.

"How is this?" he cried, angrily. "Am I to be deprived of my office?"

"Only to have something better," replied the Lord Protector. "Resign your patent in my brother's favour, and I will indemnify you with the post of Grand Chamberlain, which I now hold."

"I am quite content with the exchange, my Lord," replied Lisle, his angry looks giving way to smiles.

"What of Sir John Gage?" demanded the Lord Protector. "Is not he to be exalted?"

"No mention is made of him," replied Paget, shaking his head.

"I rejoice to hear it," resounded the deep voice of the

Constable of the Tower, from the lower part of the chamber.

“Is there no title bestowed on yourself, good master secretary?” inquired the Lord Protector.

“Your Lordship will see when you look over the book,” replied Paget.

“Being in waiting when these memoranda were made,” observed Sir Anthony Denny, “I told his Majesty that master secretary remembered all but himself; whereupon the king desired me to write him down for a yearly revenue, as appeareth in the book.”

“Revenues were granted to all whom the king designed to honour,” said Paget, “and were destined to spring from the forfeit estates of the Duke of Norfolk; but this plan has been defeated by the duke, who, as ye know, prevailed upon his Majesty to settle the estates on his son, our present sovereign. Consequently, the revenues must be derived from other sources.”

“All shall be ordered in due time,” rejoined the Lord Protector. “After the coronation of his present Majesty, all the creations appointed by the late king shall be made. Until then, those who are most interested must be content to wait. And now, my lords and gentlemen, let us to the king, who by this time must have entered the presence-chamber. I pray your Grace to come with me.”

This he addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who however held back to let him pass forth first. The rest of the council, of both degrees, followed them out of the chamber.

IV

HOW THE YOUTHFUL KING WAS KNIGHTED BY THE LORD PROTECTOR; AND HOW THE LORD MAYOR OF LONDON WAS KNIGHTED BY THE KING.

YOUNG Edward's first reception was held in the council-chamber of the White Tower—a vast apartment still existing, and which, if its height were only proportionate to its length and width, would almost be without equal. As it is, the chamber is very noble, with a massive timber roof, flat, and of immense weight, supported by double ranges of stout oak pillars. Around this chamber run narrow stone galleries, arched and vaulted, constructed within the thickness of the walls, and having large semi-circular openings for the admission of light.

Fitted up as it was for the grand ceremonial about to take place within it, the presence-chamber, for so it was then styled, looked really magnificent; neither was it at all too large for the accommodation of the numerous ecclesiastics of the highest order, nobles, knights, City authorities—the lord mayor, aldermen, and sheriffs to wit—pensioners, esquires, henchmen, pages, yeomen of the guard, marshals of arms, pursuivants, trumpeters, and others, by whom it was thronged. So over-crowded was it, in fact, that the stone galleries previously mentioned were filled.

The walls were hung with costly tapestry, and the pillars garnished with cloth of gold, the sides of the chamber and the roof being thickly set with banners of arms and descents, together with bannerols of the king's dominions, while the floor was deeply strewn with rushes.

At the upper end there was a cloth of estate, beneath which, upon a dais with three steps, sat the youthful monarch; a wide open space, covered with a carpet, being kept in front of the throne by silken cords drawn from side to side, at the entrance to which space stood the vice-chamberlain and other court officials, while the exit was guarded by gentlemen ushers.

Within these privileged precincts only two persons had as yet been admitted—the Archbishop of Canterbury and

the newly-made Lord Protector. In his quality of grand chamberlain, Hertford stood on the right of the king, bearing the wand of office, while the primate occupied a place on the left.

It was a moment of intense excitement to the young king, whose breast was filled with emotions such as he had never before experienced; but though much agitated internally, he maintained an outward appearance of composure, and performed the new and difficult part he was required to enact in a manner that won him universal admiration. Once or twice he glanced at his uncle, the Lord Protector, somewhat timidly, wishing Sir Thomas Seymour were in his place, but Hertford's bland and courtier-like manner quickly reassured him. Edward's face was flushed, and his eyes unusually brilliant, for his pulse beat fast; and though his deportment might want the majesty that years alone can impart, it had something infinitely more charming in the almost child-like grace of the young monarch, and in the sweetness and simplicity of his looks.

The queen-dowager, who, surrounded by her ladies of honour—the Marchioness of Dorset, the Countess of Hertford, Lady Herbert, Lady Tyrwhitt, and others—sat beneath a lesser canopy on the right side of the room, regarded him with almost maternal pride and affection. The widowed queen had been summoned from the privacy to which she had retired on the demise of her royal husband, and was now lodged within the Tower.

All needful preliminaries having been gone through, the whole of the council, headed by the Lord Chancellor, entered the reserved space, and passing one by one before Edward, who arose to receive them, knelt down, kissed the youthful sovereign's hand, and vowed allegiance to him. Such a ceremony must be always interesting, but it was never perhaps more interesting than on the present occasion, when the extreme youth and beauty of the monarch lent it a peculiar charm.

As Sir Thomas Seymour approached, Edward, who had not hitherto spoken, observed with a smile,

“You have already vowed fidelity to me, gentle uncle.”

“Gramercy for the reminder, my gracious liege,” replied Seymour. “Yet shall not that vow, which I will most religiously keep, prevent me from taking the oath of

allegiance from subject to sovereign." And kneeling down, he went through the ceremony like the others, but with even more fervour.

The whole of the council having thus sworn fidelity to the king, the Lord Chancellor advanced, and making a profound obeisance to Edward, informed him, in a voice distinctly audible throughout the whole of the vast and crowded chamber, that they had unanimously elected the Earl of Hertford to be Lord Protector.

"You have done well," replied Edward. "I approve the council's choice. But you have more to say. Proceed, my Lord."

"Considering the tender years of your Highness," rejoined Wriothesley, "we have deemed it expedient to appoint a governor of your royal person during your non-age."

"I am right glad of it," said Edward, fixing his eye upon Sir Thomas Seymour. "And you have chosen—"

"As your Majesty will naturally anticipate, we have chosen the Earl of Hertford for your governor," replied Wriothesley.

"How?" exclaimed Edward, unable to conceal his disappointment. "Marry, this is not what I expected!"

"Does not our choice give your Highness satisfaction?" inquired the Lord Chancellor, with secret malice. "The Earl of Hertford is your uncle."

"But I have another uncle," cried Edward, with much vivacity. "Marry, you should have chosen him."

"By my life, the boy is his father's true son," whispered Sir John Gage to Seymour; "he *will* have you for governor."

"He will, if they will let him have his way," replied Sir Thomas, doubtfully.

"And he will have it, if he holds firm," rejoined the Constable.

Several of the upper council had exchanged looks at the vivacious expression of the young king's sentiments and inclinations, and seemed shaken in their resolve. Seymour began to think his grand point was gained. The Lord Protector looked uneasy, but Cranmer came to the rescue.

"I can easily understand your Highness's preference of

your younger uncle," observed the primate to the young king; "but age, experience, and I may add high station, render the Earl of Hertford the more suitable of the two to be your governor."

"The last defect might be easily amended, your Grace," rejoined Edward, in a tone of pique, "though I cannot so readily give my uncle Sir Thomas my Lord of Hertford's years and experience. But be it as ye will. Ye are the best judges of what is fittest for me. I heartily thank your Grace and the lords and gentlemen of the council for the care taken of me."

Thus were Seymour's hopes rudely dashed to the ground. But he was somewhat cheered by a significant look directed towards him by his royal nephew—a look that did not escape the vigilance of the Lord Protector.

"If I cannot be governor of his person, at all events I shall have unlimited influence over him in secret," mentally ejaculated Seymour.

Their business over, the Lord Chancellor and the rest of the council retired. They were succeeded by the lords spiritual, headed by Gardiner, who, as chief prelate, walked first. Tunstal having departed with the council, the Bishop of Winchester was followed by Doctor Bonner, Bishop of London, and the long list of church dignitaries was closed by Doctor Bush, Bishop of Bristol.

Then came the lords temporal, foremost of whom was the Marquis of Dorset. The Earls of Oxford, Shrewsbury, Derby, and Sussex, succeeded. Each noble as he arose from paying homage, exclaimed with a loud and earnest voice, "God save your Grace!" Then came Lord Morley, Lord Daere of the North, and the Lords Ferrers, Clinton, Gray, and Scrope. These were succeeded by the Lords Abergavenny, Conyers, Latimer, Fitzwalter, and Bray, with a multitude of others whom it would be tedious to particularise; neither can we call over the long roll of knights and esquires who subsequently vowed allegiance to their youthful sovereign.

Suffice it to mention that among those who thus swore fidelity to the new king were the Lord Mayor of London, and the aldermen and sheriffs in their scarlet robes.

It was while the civic authorities were yet in Edward's presence, that he prayed them to tarry a moment, and,

descending from the throne, besought his elder uncle to knight him.

Whereupon, the Lord Protector immediately drew his sword and dubbed the king; after which, the youthful monarch took his uncle's sword, and, commanding the Lord Mayor to kneel, struck him on the shoulder with the blade with right good will, bidding him arise Sir Henry Hubblethorne.

Being a very portly personage, the Lord Mayor had much ado to get up again, but, having accomplished the feat, with considerable embarrassment he proffered his thanks to the youthful king, who could scarce forbear from laughing at his confusion.

Then the young monarch again gracefully ascended the throne. As soon as he faced the assemblage, they all cried out together, "God save the noble King Edward!"

The trumpets were then sounded.

Then the young king took off his cap with much majesty of action, and stood erect before them all.

Silence immediately ensued—a tag might have been heard to fall. Amidst this deep hush, in tones that vibrated through every breast, and stirred up the strongest feelings of loyalty and devotion, the young king said:

"We heartily thank you, my Lords all. Hereafter, in all that ye shall have to do with us for any suit or causes, ye shall be heartily welcome."

Once more the trumpets were sounded. Cannon replied from without. And so the ceremony ended.

A grand banquet followed, at which all the lords assisted—the queen-dowager sitting on the king's right, and the Lord Protector on the left.

That night, and for some time afterwards, the whole of the council, upper and lower, with many of the nobles and knights and their attendants, were lodged within the Tower.

V

HOW KING EDWARD VI. WENT FORTH BETIMES INTO THE PRIVY GARDEN OF THE TOWER.—HOW HE THERE ENCOUNTERED THE YOUTHFUL LADY JANE GREY, AND OF THE PROFITABLE DISCOURSE THAT ENSUED BETWEEN THEM.

DURING the latter part of the reign of Henry VIII., the Tower had been little more than a strongly-fortified, well-garrisoned state prison. Its dungeons were crowded with sufferers from the terrible statute of the "Six Articles," and with important state-delinquents; but the grand apartments of the palace were closed, and the council-chambers in the White Tower but rarely visited. Never indeed since the luckless Catherine Howard was brought to the block, had the ruthless monarch set foot within the fortress. Well might he avoid the Tower, for its very stones would have cried out against him! He could not have passed over the open space in front of Saint Peter's Chapel, and have marked that blood-sprinkled spot, where, according to tradition, no grass will grow, without thinking of the two lovely women who had there been put to death, after vainly suing to him for mercy. He could not have looked around at the various towers girding the inner ward, without recalling the hundreds whom he had there imured. To him the Tower must have been full of dreadful memories—memories of the noble, the wise, the good, the beautiful and once-beloved, whom he had held in durance in its cells, or delivered over to the headsman. If all those who had perished by his decrees, by the axe, or at the stake, could have been collected together on Tower-green, they would well-nigh have filled that spacious area. No wonder Henry, proof as he was against remorse, should shun the scene of his atrocities.

But the gloom that had so long hung over the blood-stained fortress, making it an object of dread to all who gazed upon it, was now for a time dispelled. Sounds of revelry and rejoicing, as we have shown, were once more heard within its courts. All the state apartments in the

palace—a structure that, unfortunately for the love of antiquity, has totally disappeared—were decorated anew, and thrown open. The court was now held at the Tower, and such was the throng of visitants brought thither by the circumstance, that every available chamber in the fortress had an occupant, and many chambers—and these none of the largest—had several.

But not only were there more guests within the palace and in the different lodgings connected with it, but the military force ordinarily maintained within the Tower was trebled. These precautions were taken for the security of the young king's person. Not that any rising on the part of the citizens was apprehended; but such was the course usually adopted at that time on the accession of a monarch to the throne. Thus, in addition to the nobles and their retinues, the Tower was so crowded with archers and arquebusiers that it was wonderful where so many persons could be bestowed. The bastions bristled with cannon, and the ramparts were thronged with men-at-arms. Yeomen of the guard paraded within the outer ward, while troops of henchmen, sergeants of office, clerks of the king's house, marshals of the hall, ushers and sewers of the hall and chamber, minstrels, and serving-men, in rich and varied liveries, were collected in the courts of the palace, or at various points of the wide inner ward. Within and without, all was stir and animation. And if the hapless prisoners still languishing in the dungeons did not share in the general rejoicing, they did not interfere with it, since none save the gaolers troubled themselves about them.

Early on the morning after Edward's arrival at the Tower, while the extraordinary bustle just described prevailed throughout the fortress, the object of all this unwonted stir was walking, almost alone, in the privy garden attached to the palace. Garden and palace have long since disappeared, but at that time the former occupied a large triangular space between the Lanthorn Tower, the Salt Tower, and the Well Tower, and being enclosed by the high ballium wall, had a very secluded air. It was pleasantly laid out with parterres, walks, a clipped yew-tree alley, and a fountain, and boasted two or three fine elms, and an ancient mulberry-tree. But it must be recollected that it was now winter, and consequently the place was not seen

to advantage: the trees were leafless, the water in the fountain congealed, the clipped alley covered with hoarfrost. Whenever the Tower was used as a royal residence, the privy garden was reserved exclusively for the king. Edward therefore had no reason to apprehend intrusion while taking exercise within it.

Notwithstanding the fatigue and excitement of the previous day, Edward quitted his couch long before it became light, and having finished his devotions, and heard a homily from his chaplain, which occupied some time, he repaired by a private passage, and attended by a single gentleman of the chamber, to the palace garden, where he supposed he should be undisturbed. The diligent young monarch, who never wasted a moment, did not seek this quiet retreat merely for the purpose of exercise, but, while walking to and fro, employed his time in studying the Institutes of Justinian, while another ponderous tome, namely, the venerable Bracton's treatise "*De legibus et consuetudinibus Angliæ*," was borne by his attendant for occasional consultation. Wrapped in a velvet gown, lined and bordered with sable, Edward did not seem to feel the cold half so much as his attendant, but continued to pore upon his book as unconcernedly as if it had been a morning in June, sometimes moving very slowly, and occasionally coming to a stand-still, if a passage perplexed him.

The person with him, whom he addressed as John Fowler, had nothing very noticeable in his appearance. He was short and stout, by no means ill-favoured, and wore a reddish sugar-loaf beard. Fond of good cheer, he had usually a ruddy, jovial look, and a droll, good-humoured expression of countenance; but his face was now pinched with cold, and his nose, large, knobbed, and mulberry-coloured, was literally blue with cold, and he had much ado to prevent his teeth from chattering. He did not dare to utter a complaint, and, as a matter of course, was obliged to stop whenever his royal master stopped, and keep up his circulation in the best way he could. While Edward was buried in Justinian, how Master Fowler longed to be back at the great fire in the hall, heaped up with logs, which he had so recently quitted! how he promised to solace himself for his present suffering by a deep draught of mulled sack, and a plentiful breakfast on pork-chine, roast capon, and

baked red-deer! Fowler had occupied the post he now filled during the late king's lifetime. Much trusted by the Lord Protector, he was placed near Edward in order that all the young king's doings might be reported to his uncle. Whether Fowler merited the confidence reposed in him by his employer will be seen hereafter.

Nearly an hour passed by in this manner, and all the creature-comforts so anxiously looked forward to by the half-frozen gentleman of the privy chamber seemed as far distant as ever. The young king still continued occupied with Justinian, and showed no signs of returning to the palace. He had come to a stand, and was conning over a passage of unusual perplexity, when another person entered the garden. This was a young girl of extraordinary beauty, wrapped like the king in a furred mantle to defend her tender person from the severity of the weather, and, like him, provided with a book, on which her eyes were studiously fixed—so studiously indeed that she did not appear to observe the young monarch and his attendant. On his part, also, Edward was equally unconscious of her approach, and never once raised his eyes to look at her.

It was the duty of the gentleman of the chamber to warn the fair intruder from the royal presence; but either he was too cold to discharge his office properly, or curious to see what would happen, for he contented himself with coughing slightly, and failing to arouse the king's attention, he took no other means of checking her advance.

By this time the fair young creature was within a short distance of Edward, who, hearing footsteps, lifted his eyes from his book, and regarded her with some astonishment, but with anything rather than displeasure.

At the same moment the young maiden looked up, exhibiting a countenance of wondrous loveliness. A slight blush suffused her features, and heightened, if possible, their beauty. She might have been a year older than the king—at all events, she was the taller of the two. Her high birth was proclaimed in her lineaments, in her carriage—which had a most charming dignity about it—and in her attire, which was such as became the daughter of one of the most powerful nobles of the land. Serene and gentle in expression, full of thought, and apparently free from any taint of humanity, her physiognomy presented that rare

union of intelligence and beauty, which, when seen in perfection, as in the present instance, seems to raise its possessor to a level with beings of a higher and purer order than those of earth. Her look and smile were little less than seraphic. Such was the youthful Lady Jane Grey, daughter of the Marquis of Dorset, great-niece of Henry VIII., and grand-daughter of his beautiful sister Mary, wedded first to Louis XII. of France, and secondly to the illustrious Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk.

“Good morrow, sweet cousin,” said the youthful king, graciously returning Jane’s lowly obeisance. “Marry, you are early astir. I should have thought, that on a frosty morn like this, a seat by the warm hearth would have been fitter for one so delicate as yourself than exposure to the keen air. But you seem to bear the cold bravely.”

“I do not feel it,” replied the young Lady Jane; “I am accustomed to exposure to all weathers, and take no hurt from it. Your Majesty is mistaken in supposing that I am at all delicate. I am far hardier than the slightness of my frame would seem to warrant. When I am at Bradgate, in Leicestershire, I ride to the chase with my father, and am never wearied by a long day’s sport. Sport did I call it?” she added, with a half-sigh—“hunting the deer is no pastime to me; but such it is generally considered, and so I must perforce style it. Then I rise betimes, for I am no lag-a-bed, and take my book, and stroll forth into the park, if it be summer, or into the garden if winter, and read and meditate till summoned to my slender repast.”

“Much the same mode of life as I have passed myself,” replied Edward, “though I have never yet had my fill of the chase. Now I am king I mean to gratify my inclinations, and kill plenty of deer in Windsor Forest and in Enfield Chase. But if you like not hunting, sweet coz, surely you must be fond of hawking? ’Tis a noble pastime!”

“May be so,” rejoined Jane, gravely, “but I like it no better than hunting; and I like coursing with greyhounds less than hawking, and angling less than coursing. Your Majesty will smile when I tell you that I deem all these sports cruel. They yield me no delight. I cannot bear to have harmless creatures tortured to make sport for me. It sickens me to see a noble hart pulled down, and I have

rescued more than one poor crying hare from the very jaws of its pursuers. Poor beasts, I pity them. I pity even the mischievous otter."

"I do not share your sentiments, Jane," said the king; "but I admire them, as they show the tenderness of your disposition. For my own part, while hunting or hawking, I become so excited that I feel little for beast or bird. I have small liking for angling, I must needs confess, for that sport does not excite me, but I read by the river-side while my preceptors ply the rod and line. But, as I just now said, I will have a grand chase in Windsor Forest, which my uncle, Sir Thomas Seymour, shall conduct; and you shall come and see it, if you list, sweet cousin."

"I pray your Majesty to hold me excused," replied Jane. "I have more hunting than I care for at Bradgate. But I should delight in roaming through Windsor Forest, which, they tell me, is a right noble wood."

"Have you not seen it?" cried Edward. "Nay, then, there is a great pleasure in store for you, sweet coz. Marry, there are no such groves and glades at Bradgate as you shall find there."

"That I can readily believe," rejoined Jane; "and the castle itself hath much interest to me."

"I shall not visit it until after a sad ceremony hath taken place in Saint George's Chapel," observed Edward, with much emotion, "and the king, my lamented father—on whose soul may Jesu have mercy!—hath been placed by the side of my sainted mother in its vaults. But when this season of gloom is past, when I have been crowned at Westminster, when the Lord Protector and the council will let me remove my court to Windsor, then, sweet cousin, you must come to the castle. Marry, it will content you. 'Tis far better worth seeing than this grim old Tower, which looks more like a dungeon than a palace."

"Nay, my liege," replied Jane, "Windsor Castle, however grand and regal it may be, can never interest me more than this stern-looking fortress. Within these walls what tragedies have been enacted! what terrible occurrences have taken place! It must be peopled by phantoms. But I will not dwell longer on this theme, and I pray you pardon the allusion. Strange to say, ever since I set foot within the Tower, I have been haunted with the notion,

which I cannot shake off, that I myself shall, one day, be a prisoner in its cells, and lose my life on its green."

"That day will not occur in my time, sweet cousin," replied Edward. "It is not a place to inspire lively thoughts or pleasant dreams, and I must needs own that I slept ill myself last night. I dreamed of the two children of my namesake, Edward V., and their murder in the Bloody Tower. I hope you had no such dreams, Jane?"

"Indeed, my liege, I had—dreams more terrible, perchance, than your own," she rejoined. "You will guess what I dreamed about when I tell you that, on awaking, I was rejoiced to find my head still on my shoulders. Hath your Grace any faith in omens?"

"Not much," answered Edward. "But why do you ask, sweet coz?"

"Your Majesty shall hear," she returned. "When I entered the Tower yesterday with the noble lord my father, and your Grace's loving cousin my mother, we crossed the inner ward on our way to the palace, and amongst the crowd assembled on the green I noticed a singularly ill-favoured personage, whose features and figure attracted my attention. The man limped in his gait, and was clad in blood-red serge, over which he wore a leathern jerkin. Black elf-locks hung on either side of his cadaverous visage, and there was something wolfish and bloodthirsty in his looks. On seeing me notice him, the man doffed his cap, and advanced towards me, but my father angrily ordered him back, and struck him with his horsewhip. The man limped off, glaring malignantly at me with his red, wolfish eyes, and my father then told me it was Mauger, the headsmen, and, as it was deemed unlucky to encounter him, he had driven him away. Doth not your Majesty think that the meeting with such a man, on such a spot, was an ill omen?"

"Heaven avert it!" exclaimed the young king. "But let us change the topic. Tell me the subject of your studies, my learned cousin?"

"I can lay no claim to the epithet your Majesty hath bestowed upon me," she replied. "But the book I am reading is Martin Bucer's 'Commentary on the Gospels.'"

"I have heard of it from my tutor, Doctor Cox, who describes it as an admirable treatise. You shall expound

it to me, Jane. Doubtless you have read Bucer's 'Commentary on the Psalms?'"

"I have, my liege, and I will essay to expound that work to you, as also the 'Pirskoavol' of Paul Fagius, which I have been lately reading, if you be so minded."

"You could not please me better. I am certain to derive profit and instruction from your comments, Jane. The preparation is needful, for it is my purpose to invite Bucer and Fagius to England. His Grace of Canterbury hath already spoken to me concerning them. It shall be my aim to make my court the resort of learned and pious men, and, above all, of such as are most zealous for the reform of the Church, and its complete purification from the errors of Popery."

"Bucer and Fagius are both men of great learning and piety, sound and severe controversialists, able and ready to refute and assail, if need be, the adversaries of the good cause, and I am rejoiced that your Grace intends to invite them to your court. You will do yourself honour thereby. But there is another person, not unknown to your Highness, whom I think might be of service in carrying out the mighty work of the Reformation which you project. I mean the Princess Elizabeth's instructor, worthy Master Roger Ascham."

"I have not overlooked him," replied Edward. "Ascham merits promotion, and he shall have it. A man must needs be master of Greek to fill a professor's chair in St John's College, Cambridge, as Ascham hath filled it, and his knowledge of divinity is equal, I am told, to his scholarship. My wise and well-beloved father chose him from his acquirements to be Elizabeth's instructor—she is now reading Sophocles and Cicero with him—and when his task with her is finished, as it must be ere long, for she is a quick and willing scholar—I will have him near me."

"Your Grace will do well," rejoined Jane. "Roger Ascham ought to be one of the luminaries of our age; and, above all, he is a godly man, and without guile. His latinity is remarkably pure."

"It must be so, if you commend it, my learned cousin," remarked the king, "for you are a very competent judge. Both Sir John Cheke and Doctor Cox lauded your Latin

letters to me, and said they were written with classic elegance and purity."

"Your Grace will make me vain," rejoined Jane, slightly colouring; "but I am bound to state that my own worthy tutor, Master Elmer, made the same remarks upon the letters with which you have honoured me. Talking of my correspondents—if I may venture to speak of any other in the same breath as your Majesty—I am reminded that there is another person worthy of your attention, inasmuch as he would be a humble but zealous co-operator in your great design. The person I refer to is Henri Bullinger, disciple and successor of Zwinglius, and at this present a pastor at Zurich. Bullinger hath suffered much persecution, and would endure yet more if needful."

"Bullinger is an ardent Reformer," observed Edward. "He assisted, I remember, at the famous conference at Berne. You shall tell me more about him on some other occasion, and if you will favour me with a sight of his letters to you I shall be well pleased. Meanwhile, you may rest satisfied that he shall not be forgotten. You are a very zealous advocate for the Reformed faith yourself, cousin Jaue."

"I have that in me which would enable me to die for the religion I profess, sire," she cried, looking upwards.

"I do not doubt your constancy, sweet cousin, but I trust it will never be put to the proof," said the young king, approvingly. "I came out to study Justinian and Bracton, but you have given me a far better lesson than any law-maker could afford. You must come often to our court, Jane, whether we be at Westminster, Shene, or Windsor."

"It will gladden me to comply with your Majesty's injunctions, if I have my father's permission," she replied; "but he will probably think me much too young to appear at court. I have lived almost wholly in retirement hitherto, my education being far from complete."

"But if I command, my Lord of Dorset must obey; and so must you, fair cousin," cried Edward, with a slight touch of his father's imperious manner.

"Your Grace will command nothing that a loyal subject cannot comply with—of that I am certain," rejoined Jane.

“But your Majesty seems to forget that you have a governor—and a strict one, if what I hear be true. Are you quite sure that the Lord Protector will allow you to choose your own companions?”

“Peradventure not, unless they are agreeable to him,” returned Edward; “but he cannot object to you, fair cousin, or to my sister Elizabeth. I will not ask him to let my sister Mary come often to me, unless she will abjure her errors, and conform to the new doctrines.”

“Gentle persuasion may lead the Lady Mary’s Grace into the right path,” said Jane. “No pains should be spared with one so richly endowed. Such a convert would be worthy of your Majesty, and redound greatly to your honour.”

“I despair of making a convert of Mary,” replied Edward. “So stiff-necked and bigoted is she, that even the strong-willed king my father had enough to do to bring her to submission; and for a time she set his rightful authority at defiance. His Grace of Canterbury will advise me as to the course that ought to be pursued with her, and I shall be guided by his counsel.—Know you my younger uncle, Sir Thomas Seymour, Jane?”

“But little,” she answered. “I have seen him with my father, and I could not fail to notice him yesterday, for by common assent he was judged the noblest-looking personage who vowed fealty to you. Now I bethink me, her Highness the queen-dowager called my attention to him, and asked me what I thought of him. I told her I deemed him wondrous handsome, whereat she smiled very graciously upon me.”

“He *is* wondrous handsome!” cried Edward, enthusiastically; “and I marvel not her Majesty should smile to hear him praised, for he is a favourite with her, as indeed he is with my sister Elizabeth, and with most people, except the Lord Protector. To speak plain—for I dare speak plain to you, sweet cousin—I think the Lord Protector is jealous of him, and of his fancied influence over me. I would Sir Thomas Seymour had been chosen my governor. My elder uncle is good and kind, but he is austere, and—not exactly like Sir Thomas. He will keep all the power in his own hands, and leave little more than the name to me.”

“Perhaps it is for the best. Your Grace is very young, and can have had but slight experience in state affairs.”

“But I shall not like the Lord Protector’s control,” cried Edward. “I feel impatient already, though he has scarcely begun to exercise it. But I *could* obey Sir Thomas without a murmur.”

“I begin to perceive that Sir Thomas’s influence over your Majesty is by no means imaginary, and that the Lord Protector may have good cause for jealousy of his younger brother,” observed Jane, smiling. “But I must crave your Majesty’s permission to retire. I have sufficiently interrupted your studies already, and will not trespass further on your valuable time.”

“Nay, I hold your discourse to be more profitable than my studies, as I just now told you, fair coz,” rejoined the youthful king. “I shall read no more now. Do not burden yourself longer with that book, but let Fowler carry it for you.”

And as at a sign from his Majesty the gentleman in attendance respectfully advanced to take the books from his royal master and the Lady Jane, Edward observed that he looked very cold.

“I am well-nigh starved, an please your Majesty,” replied Fowler. “I have no inward fire, like your Highness and the Lady Jane Grey, to warm me withal.”

“What inward fire dost thou speak of, Fowler?” demanded the king, smiling.

“The fire of intellect, an please your Majesty,” replied the other, “which burns so brightly in your Grace and my Lady Jane, that you have no need of any grosser element to warm you—at least, it would seem so. For my own part, the little wit I possess is frostbitten, like the point of my nose—if so blunt a nose can be said to have a point—and, if I tarry here much longer, I am like to lose both wit and nose.”

“Thou shouldst have advised me of thy sorry case before, good fellow,” said the king, laughing. “Let us in, sweet cousin; or, while we discourse here at our ease, this dainty gentleman will be turned to ice.”

“Of a verity shall I, my gracious liege,” rejoined Fowler; “an I be not speedily delivered hence, I shall be fixed to the spot like yonder frozen fountain.”

“And albeit thou mightst ornament the garden as a statue, I cannot afford to lose a good servant, so I will take compassion upon thee. Come, fair coz.”

So saying, the young king gave his hand to the Lady Jane, and led her towards the entrance of the palace, followed by Fowler, upon whose features the anticipation of a warm fire and a plenteous repast had produced a very pleasurable expression.

VI.

OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE LORD PROTECTOR AND SIR THOMAS SEYMOUR, AND HOW IT WAS ADJUSTED.

THE privy garden was bounded on the north by a long stone gallery, extending from the Lanthorn Tower to the Salt Tower, and communicating by a corridor with the royal apartments. From an upper window in this gallery two persons had for some time been looking down upon the youthful pair, and the window luckily being open, no part of their discourse escaped them. They listened to it with the greatest attention, and both seemed equally well pleased with what they heard. Though these eavesdroppers were wholly unobserved by the young monarch and his companion, they were not unnoticed by Fowler, who, having nothing else to do, was casting his eyes about in every direction; but, as he recognised in them the Marquis of Dorset, the Lady Jane's father, and Sir Thomas Seymour, he did not think it necessary to give his royal master a hint of their proximity. Moreover, a sign from Seymour, with whom he seemed to have a secret understanding, served to make him hold his tongue.

Just at the point when Edward called to his attendant to relieve him and the Lady Jane from the books, the listeners withdrew from the window, and the gallery being empty at the time, Seymour said to the marquis, with a proud smile,

“What think you of what you have heard, my Lord?”

How stand I with his Majesty? Have I overrated my influence with him?"

"Not a jot," replied Dorset. "You stand so well with your royal nephew, that it will be your own fault if you be not the first peer of the realm."

"What! do you place me above the Lord Protector?" cried Seymour. "Bethink you that the council have given him all the power."

"I am not unmindful of it," replied the marquis; "but you have the king on your side, and unless the Lord Protector contrives to wean his Highness's love from you, you must ere long gain the ascendancy."

"You are in the right, my Lord of Dorset," said Seymour; "I shall both gain it and maintain it. And as I rise, others shall rise with me—that you may reckon on. A thought crossed me while listening to you pretty pair, and I will make you privy to it. They seem made for each other. Why should they not be wedded when they arrive at a suitable age?"

"Even if I dared indulge the thought," replied the marquis, evidently well pleased by the suggestion, though striving to appear unconcerned, "his Majesty's extreme youth and my daughter's tender years forbid it."

"What is to hinder their affiancement?" rejoined Seymour. "The alliance may be brought about, I tell you, my Lord. Nay, to be plain, it *shall* be brought about, if we fairly understand one another."

"Nay, good Sir Thomas, there is nothing I would not do, if I felt sure my daughter would be queen; and I will own to you, since you put it to me thus, that my lady marchioness hath broached the matter to me. Women will talk idly, as you wist. After all, the match would not be unsuitable, seeing that the Lady Jane herself is of the blood-royal."

"The match *can* be made, and *shall* be made, I repeat, my Lord Marquis," said Seymour; "but I must have the disposal of your daughter's hand. My plans must not be interfered with. You must commit the Lady Jane entirely to my charge."

"To your charge, Sir Thomas?" exclaimed the marquis, greatly surprised.

"To mine," rejoined Seymour—"that is, to the charge

of my wife, when I get one. I design to marry ere long, my Lord, and then I shall be able to receive your daughter."

"Accept my congratulations, Sir Thomas," said Dorset. "I doubt not that your choice hath been well made; nay, if it hath lighted on the very highest, it would not amaze me."

"I cannot let you into the secret as yet, my Lord," replied Seymour, smiling; "but thus much I will tell you. My marriage will assuredly not diminish my influence with my royal nephew or with the nobility. My rule, as you wot, is to make no step save in advance. You will hold it no discredit, but the reverse, to commit your daughter to the charge of her who may, perchance, condescend to take me for a husband."

"Methinks I can read your riddle, Sir Thomas, but I will not try," observed Dorset. "Enough, that you have convinced me. Have I your permission to consult the marchioness on this important matter?"

"Not as yet, my Lord," rejoined Seymour. "Women are ill at keeping a secret; and though my Lady Marchioness be the discreetest of her sex, yet hath she, I doubt not, a certain proueness to talk, given her by nature, which would render her an unfit depository of a matter of this moment. Till all be settled, I must enjoin profound secrecy. I will give you a hint when to speak. Till then, let a seal be placed upon your lips.—But see! the king and the Lady Jane are entering the gallery. Let us hasten to pay our devoirs to his Majesty."

The undisguised delight manifested by the young king on seeing his favourite uncle would have satisfied the Marquis of Dorset of the place held by Seymour in his royal nephew's affection, if the conversation he had just overheard in the garden had left that cautious nobleman any doubt on the subject.

Hearing quick footsteps behind him, Edward turned to ascertain whence they proceeded, and the instant he beheld Sir Thomas, he quitted the Lady Jane's hand, which he had hitherto retained, and disregarding all ceremony—perhaps even forgetting in the impulse of the moment that ceremony was needful—he flew to meet his uncle, and without allowing him time to make any obeisance, or utter a word

of remonstrance, he sprang towards him, and threw his arms affectionately round his neck.

Never perhaps did that ambitious man's heart beat higher than when he returned his royal nephew's fond embrace. He felt the effect produced by the demonstration on Dorset and his daughter, and though scarcely able to repress his exultation, he feigned to be overwhelmed by the king's condescension.

"Your Majesty honours me far too much," he said. "Near as I am to you by relationship, dear as you are to me as a nephew, I am bound to remind you that the distance between us is much greater than it was, and that the marks of affection which you have been accustomed to lavish upon me, and for which I shall ever feel proud and grateful, ought now, by right, to be discontinued."

"Why so, gentle uncle?" rejoined Edward. "You do not love me less because I am king, do you? Certes, my love for you is not diminished by the circumstance. Wherefore should I put a mask upon my regard? Rather let me rejoice that I am now better able to prove its strength."

"I want words to thank your Highness," said Seymour, with every appearance of the most fervent gratitude; "but the preference for me, which you so graciously exhibit, will, I fear, be distasteful to your new governor, who will expect you to reserve all your affection for him."

"I see not why he should; but if he does, he will be disappointed," rejoined Edward. "I may show him obedience, but I am not bound to give him the first place in my regard. I shall never love him so well as you, gentle uncle; that I can promise him. I have not yet had an opportunity of telling you how much my satisfaction was marred yesterday by learning that the council had not chosen you as my governor. Meseems I ought to have been consulted on the matter."

"Had your Grace loved me less, or had I been less deserving of your love, because not so entirely devoted to you as I am, the council might—nay, would—have chosen me. But your uncle Hertford viewed me with a jealous eye, and the council were governed by his opinion."

"So I guessed," replied the king. "My Lord of Hertford has gone too far. He will gain nothing by his oppo-

sition to my expressed desires. He knew full well whither my inclinations tended."

"And therefore 'twas he thwarted them," rejoined Seymour. "Your Highness must dissemble your regard for me, if you would keep peace between me and the Lord Protector."

"I hate dissimulation," said Edward, "and 'twill be hard to practise it. Yet I will try to do so to prevent all chance of difference betwixt you and my Lord of Hertford, which would be greatly to be deplored."

"May it please your Grace, his Highness the Lord Protector comes this way," said the Marquis of Dorset, stepping forward.

As he spoke, the Earl of Hertford was seen advancing from the corridor, already described as communicating with the state apartments of the palace. From the magnificence of his apparel, and the splendour of his train, the Lord Protector would appear to have assumed a perfectly regal state. Preceded by a gentleman usher, and followed by a throng of esquires, henchmen, and pages, in superb habiliments, he was accompanied by the Constable of the Tower and Lord Lisle. His deportment was haughtier than it used to be, and now that he felt secure of his position, he seemed determined to assert his importance to the full.

"On my fay!" exclaimed Edward, "my uncle bears him bravely. One would think he were king, and not Lord Protector."

"Lord Protector is only another name for king, your Highness," observed Seymour, dryly.

"Stay with me, gentle uncle," said Edward. "His Highness looks angry. I hope he will not chide me."

"Chide you, my liege!" exclaimed Seymour, almost fiercely. "He will not dare!"

"I am not so sure of it," rejoined Edward. "But stand nigh me, and then I shall not heed him."

"I do not quit your person without your Majesty's commands," answered Seymour.

As he drew nearer, it was evident that the Lord Protector was much chafed, and unable to conceal his displeasure. Sir John Gage addressed some observations to him, to which he made a very brief reply, keeping his eye all the while intently fixed upon the king and Sir Thomas. The

latter hoped there might be an explosion of rage on the part of his brother, by which he could not fail to profit, but Hertford was too wary to damage himself by any such display of passion.

Making way for the Lord Protector and his train, the Marquis of Dorset and the Lady Jane Grey stationed themselves near Edward, while the luckless Fowler, who had not yet been dismissed, remained standing behind the young monarch. Sir Thomas Seymour did not move from his royal nephew's side, but drew himself up to his full height, as if prepared for the encounter.

Arrived at the proper distance from the king prescribed by court forms, the Constable of the Tower and Lord Lisle came to a halt; but the Lord Protector stepped forward, and after a profound salutation, which was courteously returned by his royal ward and nephew, said, with forced composure, "I have just been to your Grace's chamber, and it greatly surprised me to learn from your chaplain that you had gone forth, nearly an hour ago, almost unattended, to walk and read within the privy garden. Permit me to observe to your Highness that such a proceeding, not being altogether in accordance with princely decorum and needful self-restraint, it will be incumbent upon you, henceforth, to keep your room until I am able to wait upon you, when I will decide how it is meet your Majesty should go forth, and whither."

"By Heaven! he will have your Grace in leading-strings next," muttered Seymour.

"Does your Highness mean to deny me all freedom of action?" cried Edward, somewhat sharply. "May I not walk forth at any hour I please—especially when disengaged? If so, I had better be back at Hertford than a prisoner in the Tower."

"Far be it from me to place any restraint upon your Highness's movements," rejoined the Lord Protector; "and if it be your pleasure to walk forth early, you shall have no interference from me. Only I must give directions that you be properly attended, and that no one"—and he glanced menacingly at his brother—"be allowed to approach you without my consent."

"No one has approached me except my cousin, the Lady Jane Grey, and my uncle, Sir Thomas," rejoined the

king. "Fowler will explain all to your Highness if you question him."

"That will I," replied the gentleman of the privy-chamber, advancing a few steps, and bowing profoundly. "The Lady Jane Grey came forth to read in the garden, and there encountered his Highness, who was similarly engaged. It would have done your Highness good to see how little those two exalted personages heeded the cold, though I was half-perished by it."

"What makes the Lady Jane Grey abroad so early?" demanded the Lord Protector, bending his brows upon Dorset. "You should keep her within her chamber, my Lord. The privy garden is for the king's sole use, and none but he may enter it."

"I am well aware of that, your Highness," replied the marquis. "I knew not that my daughter had so trespassed, and am sorry for it. Bear in mind what the Lord Protector has said, Jane."

"Doubt it not," she replied, meekly. "I am not likely to forget the reproof administered by his Highness; but it was in ignorance that I offended."

"You will walk in the privy garden whenever you list, Jane, so long as you remain in the Tower," said Edward, taking her hand. "I, the king, give you permission—let who will say you nay. You need not fear disturbing me, for I shall go there no more."

The Lord Protector bit his lips, and looked perplexed; but perceiving that his brother was enjoying his confusion, he turned his rage against him.

"How is it that I find you with the king, sir?" he demanded, sharply.

"Because I chance to be with his Highness when you seek me, brother. I know no better reason," replied Seymour, coolly.

"I do not seek you, but I find you where I would not have you," rejoined Hertford, sternly. "Take heed, sir. As governor of the king's person, it is for me, and for me alone, to decide who is fit, or unfit, to approach him. I do not deem you a judicious counsellor, and therefore forbid you to come nigh his Grace without my sanction."

The only answer vouchsafed by Seymour was a disdainful smile.

Still more enraged, the Lord Protector went on: "After this warning, if you seek by any indirect means to obtain an interview with his Highness, I will have you before the council, to whom you shall answer for your disobedience to my mandates."

Seymour glanced at his royal nephew, whose spirit being now roused, he promptly responded to the appeal.

"Your Highness is mistaken," said Edward, addressing the Lord Protector with great firmness: "my entirely-beloved uncle Sir Thomas always gives me the best advice, and such as your Grace and the council must approve, if you were made acquainted with it. I will not be debarred of his society. Tell the council so. Nay, I will tell them so myself, if needed."

"There are some of the council now present, who will doubtless report to their colleagues what your Highness hath declared," said Seymour, glancing at the Constable of the Tower and Lord Lisle.

"Assuredly the council will take the matter into immediate consideration, if his Majesty shall express any such desire," said Sir John Gage: "but bound as they are to uphold the authority of him they have appointed governor to his Grace, I can little doubt their decision. I trust however that his Highness the Lord Protector, in his wisdom and discretion, will withdraw the interdict he hath imposed on his brother Sir Thomas Seymour—the rather that it seems to me harsh and uncalled for, and liable to censure."

"I am of the same opinion with yourself, Sir John," said Lord Lisle. "If this interdict is bruited abroad, it will be said, and with apparent reason, that there is little brotherly amity between his Majesty's uncles."

"I would not have that said, since it is not the truth—at least, so far as I am concerned," rejoined Hertford. "I therefore yield to your advice, Sir John Gage, which is ever judicious as honest, and leave my brother free intercourse, as heretofore, with my royal ward, only cautioning him not to put into his Majesty's head a misliking of the government of the realm, or of my doings, so as to deprive my authority of its weight, and my counsels of their proper effect."

“That I will promise for Sir Thomas,” said Edward. “May I not, gentle uncle?”

“Indeed you may, my gracious liege,” replied Seymour. “I will instil nothing into your mind but what is right and just, and any influence I may possess with your Highness will ever be directed towards preparing you for the exercise of the power you are one day fully to assume. Such conduct the council and his Highness the Lord Protector cannot fail to approve.”

“I am heartily glad you are reconciled, my good uncles both,” said Edward, looking from one to the other, “and I trust no further difference will arise between you on my account, or any other.”

VII.

OF THE AFFRONT OFFERED BY QUEEN CATHERINE PARR TO THE COUNTESS OF HERTFORD; AND HOW UGO HARRINGTON WAS SENT TO CONDUCT THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH TO THE TOWER.

THE reconciliation between the two Seymours was so evidently hollow, that it imposed on no one—not even upon their royal nephew. The arrogant and domineering tone suddenly adopted by the Lord Protector towards his brother would scarcely have been brooked by Sir Thomas, even if his nature had been less fiery; while the haughty and insolent manner of the younger Seymour was equally intolerable to Hertford, who now seemed to expect the submission ordinarily paid to the will of a sovereign. Instead of being allayed, therefore, their animosity was merely masked, and threatened a fresh and more decided outbreak.

Though quite aware how matters stood with his uncles, the amiable young monarch fondly persuaded himself he could keep peace between them; but besides having to deal with impracticable subjects, he himself unwittingly heightened the discord. From the ingenuousness of his

nature, and from his extremely affectionate disposition, he was utterly unable to disguise the preference he felt for his younger uncle, and instead of soothing the Lord Protector's irritation, he still further exasperated him against one whom he was unable to regard in any other light than that of a dangerous rival. Already Hertford had resolved to remove his brother, as soon as opportunity offered: already Sir Thomas Seymour had determined, at any cost, to supplant the Lord Protector.

Another grand banquet was given that day, to which the young king, with the Lord Protector, the council, and all the nobles, knights, and ladies within the Tower, sat down. It was served with all the profusion and state of the times. A long grace in Latin was delivered by the Tower chaplain, both before and after the meal, to which Edward listened with devout attention, distinctly pronouncing the word "Amen," on both occasions, at the close of the prayer. The young king would willingly have dispensed with the services of the numerous marshals and ushers, the officious cup-bearers and other officers of the table, but he endured their attendance with a very good grace. Excessively temperate in his habits, Edward drank nothing stronger than water, and did but scanty justice to the good cheer provided for him by the clerk of the kitchen.

At the commencement of the feast, a trifling incident occurred which somewhat marred the harmony of the proceedings, and gave the Lord Protector new ground of offence against his brother. The Countess of Hertford, a very beautiful and exceedingly proud woman, had fancied herself slighted at the banquet on the preceding day by the queen-dowager, of whom, in consequence of her husband's elevation to almost regal state, she thought herself entitled to take precedence. She therefore persuaded her husband, who was greatly under her governance, to assign her a seat near the king at the next banquet. The Lord Protector gave the requisite instructions to the chief usher, and the matter appeared to be arranged; but before Lady Hertford could occupy the coveted position, the queen-dowager appeared, and haughtily declining the seat offered her by the usher, took her customary place beside the king. In the execution of this step she was aided by Sir Thomas Seymour, who prevented his sister-in-law from sitting down,

and ceremoniously ushered the queen to her chair. If the affront to Lady Hertford on the previous night had been undesigned on the queen's part, the same excuse could not be offered for her Majesty's behaviour on this occasion. She was pointedly rude to the countess, and made several cutting remarks on the Lord Protector, which he was unable to resent. Additional effect was given these sarcasms by Sir Thomas Seymour, who remained standing behind the queen's chair for some time to enjoy his sister-in-law's discomfiture, and exerted all his great powers of wit and raillery to lend force and pungency to her Majesty's observations. Lady Hertford was even more mortified than her husband, but her indignation was chiefly directed against the queen, on whom she resolved to be revenged at the earliest opportunity. She also internally resolved to call the Lord Protector to task for not sufficiently asserting his dignity, and her own. As to Sir Thomas Seymour, the position he had taken up enabled him to divide his attention between the queen-dowager and his royal nephew, and he performed his part so adroitly as to delight both.

The youthful Lady Jane Grey occupied a seat at the royal board next to her father, and not so far removed from Edward but that he was able, occasionally, to exchange a word with her. Jane ate as little as the abstemious young monarch himself, a point of resemblance between them not unnoticed by Seymour, who called the queen-dowager's attention to the circumstance. Catherine appeared greatly pleased with the young maiden, and, when the repast was ended, called her to her, bidding her come with her to her private apartments, and adding graciously that she had heard much of her, and desired to know her better. The invitation was equally agreeable to Jane and to the Marquis of Dorset, though the latter fancied he could tell by whom it had been prompted.

As the king was quitting the banqueting chamber with the Lord Protector, he expressed a desire that his sister Elizabeth should be sent for to the Tower; and furthermore that his two preceptors, Sir John Cheke and Doctor Cox, should accompany the princess. Though the request did not seem to be relished by his uncle, he made no objections to it; and Sir Thomas Seymour, who was evidently delighted by the notion, volunteered to go to Hertford for

the princess. This proposal however was peremptorily rejected by the Lord Protector, but he at length agreed that his brother's esquire, Ugo Harrington, should be despatched on the errand with a sufficient escort.

"I will go seek Ugo," cried Seymour, as soon as his brother's consent had been obtained, "and despatch him at once to Hertford."

A grateful look from his royal nephew thanked him for his zeal.

But his haste to depart seemed to surprise and displease the queen-dowager, for she called out to him somewhat sharply, "Whither so fast, Sir Thomas? Methinks I have not yet dismissed you, and I counted upon your attendance for some little while longer."

"I pray you have me excused, gracious madam," he replied, in a deeply deferential tone. "I have his Majesty's commands to send off an escort to bring the Princess Elizabeth from Hertford. As soon as I have executed my commission I will return."

"Is Elizabeth coming to the Tower?" inquired Catherine, with a look of annoyance.

"Ay, madam," answered Edward. "The Lord Protector has kindly yielded to my desire to have my sister near me."

"I do not altogether approve of her Highness's coming," observed Hertford; "but I cannot say 'nay' to your Majesty."

While this was going on, Seymour made a profound reverence to the king, bowed with equal respect to Catherine—contriving at the same time to direct a very devoted glance towards her—and departed.

Making his way as quickly as he could through the crowd of gentlemen ushers, henchmen, grooms of the chamber, yeomen of the guard, and others that beset the corridors and passages which he traversed, he at last reached the apartments assigned to him in the Wardrobe Tower; a structure at that time connected with a portion of the palace known as the "King's Lodgings." On entering a circular stone chamber, garnished with arras, and so richly furnished that its original dungeon-like look was completely changed, Seymour found the person of whom he was in quest seated beside a table, on which a flask of

wine and a silver goblet were placed. He was singing an Italian canzonet with much taste and execution, his voice being a very fine tenor, and accompanying himself on a cittern. On seeing his patron he instantly discontinued his song, laid down the instrument, and arose.

Tall and gallant-looking, Ugo Harrington might have been considered very handsome, had not a sinister expression detracted materially from his good looks. His age was somewhat under thirty. His frame was slight but very muscular, his complexion olive, his eyes dark and quick, his teeth beautifully even and white, and in strong contrast with his short, silky, raven-black moustaches and beard. His looks were more those of an Italian than an Englishman; and indeed his mother was a Florentine, while he himself had passed most of his youth in the Tuscan capital and Rome. He was richly attired in a doublet of russet velvet, with hose to match, and a furred velvet mantle was lying beside him, ready to be put on when he went forth. On the mantle were laid a long rapier and a poniard, both forming part of the gallant esquire's ordinary equipments.

Respectfully saluting Sir Thomas, he waited till the latter had hastily explained his business to him, and then declaring he was ready to proceed on the errand at once, inquired if his patron had any further commands.

"Thou shalt take a short missive from me to the princess, Ugo," replied Sir Thomas. "Thou canst make such preparations for the journey as are needful while I prepare it."

Signifying his ready assent, the esquire retired to an inner chamber, while Seymour sat down at a table on which writing materials were placed, and commenced the letter.

Apparently, what he wrote did not satisfy him, for, on reading it, he tore up the paper, and threw it into a wood fire, which was blazing cheerily on the hearth. He then began anew, but the second letter pleased him no better than the first, and was likewise consigned to the flames. The third essay proved more successful. Glancing over the note with a complacent smile, he muttered, "Methinks this will do!" and then placed it in a cover, secured the tender despatch with a silken thread, and sealed it with his signet ring.

While he was writing the third letter, his esquire, habited for the journey, returned to the room, but remained standing at a respectful distance, watching him with a very singular expression of countenance.

"Deliver this into the princess's own hands, Ugo, at a convenient opportunity. Thou understandest?—ha!" said Seymour, giving him the missive.

"Perfettamente, monsignore," replied Harrington. "But I confess I did not expect to be the bearer of a biglietto amoroso at this moment, when I had reason to believe your Lordship to be on the brink of an engagement in another quarter."

"Thy conclusion that it is a billet d'amour with which I have charged thee is altogether erroneous, Ugo," said Seymour, with a smile. "I have merely indited a few words of good counsel to the princess, which I think she ought to receive before she arrives at the Tower. Presume not too much on my familiarity towards thee, amico, and, above all, never seek to penetrate my secrets. Be content to act as I direct thee, without inquiring into the motive. The time will come when thou wilt be well rewarded for any services thou mayst render me now."

"Per Sant' Antonio! I am sufficiently rewarded already," rejoined Harrington. "You have been a most munificent patron to me, monsignore."

"Nothing to what I will be, Ugo. But I must have blind obedience to my behests."

"You have only to command, monsignore. But I would I might prevail upon you to abandon this dangerous game, in which, I fear me much, you will fail; while you will assuredly jeopardise that of which you are at present secure. It seems to me a vain pursuit—gettare la sustenza e prendere l'ombra."

"I am resolved to risk it," cried Seymour, "be the consequences what they may. To speak truth, Ugo, I am so madly in love with the charming princess that I cannot endure the thought of yoking myself to another."

"Your Lordship was wont to be more prudent," observed the esquire, shrugging his shoulders. "E perchè questa subita mutazione?—Una pollastrina non ancora buona per la tavola."

"Hold thy ribald tongue!" cried Seymour. "My pas-

sion may overmaster my reason. But setting aside my uncontrollable love for the princess, which would carry me to any lengths, however desperate, she is a far richer prize than the other. Possession of her hand would place me near the throne."

"You are irresistible, monsignore—that I well know—and the princess, like any other donzella, will no doubt accept you. But that will avail you little. The council will never sanction the match, and by the late king's will their consent must be obtained."

"Thou prat'st in vain, Harrington. I am immovable. Let me win the princess's consent, and all the rest will follow. And, by my halidame! I *shall* win it."

"To resolve to win, is to be sure to win, monsignore. I am all obedience. Not only shall this letter be delivered with the utmost discretion to the adorable princess with the tresses of gold, which seem to have ensnared your Lordship, and which I must needs own are most ravishingly beautiful, but I will lose no opportunity of sounding your praises in her ear."

"Note her slightest word and look when thou speakest of me, Ugo, and report them."

"You shall have every blush, every downcast look, every half-sigh of the divinity faithfully rendered, monsignore. 'Tis a pity I cannot take my cittern with me, or I might sing her a love-strain which could not fail to move her. Luckily, the enchanting princess speaks Italian fluently, and if she will only encourage me, I will converse with her in that language of love, and then I shall be able to say more than I should dare utter in our rude northern tongue."

"Go, then, and success go with thee!" cried Seymour. "Thou must reach Hertford with the escort to-night, and set forth on thy return at as early an hour to-morrow as may suit the princess. Remember, her Highness's governess, Mistress Catherine Ashley, and the king's preceptors are to come with thee, and make it thy business to stir up the two learned drones, that they occasion thee no needless delay."

"It shall be done, monsignore," replied Harrington, buckling on his rapier, and attaching the poniard to his

girdle. Throwing his mantle over his shoulder, he then followed his patron out of the chamber.

An escort of some five-and-twenty well-mounted arquebusiers was quickly provided by Seymour, who at the same time ordered his own charger to be saddled for Harrington. All being soon in readiness, the gallant esquire crossed the stone bridge at the head of his troop, rode forth from the Bulwark Gate, and took his way towards Hertford, accomplishing the distance, about one-and-twenty miles, in less than three hours, which, in those days, and in the winter season, was not bad travelling.

VIII.

HOW XIT WAS APPOINTED THE KING'S DWARF; AND HOW
OG, GOG, AND MAGOG CRAVED A BOON OF THE KING.

AT noon on the day following, the youthful king, with the Lord Protector, and all the members of the upper and lower councils, met for deliberation within the great council-chamber in the White Tower. Though Edward sat in a chair of state, and ostensibly presided over the assemblage, it was quite evident that his voice had little weight, and that the real ruler was Hertford. All measures were proposed by the Lord Protector—all questions settled by him. As a matter of form, every matter deliberated upon by the council was submitted to the throne; but the king's advice was so asked, that the answer could only be given in the way desired by the Lord Protector.

Generally, the council seemed willing to act as Hertford desired, with the exception of the Lord Chancellor; but as yet he had merely exhibited a few symptoms of hostility, no matter having arisen of sufficient importance to justify decided opposition. Slight as they were, these indications were sufficient for the Lord Protector, and he resolved to be beforehand with his opponent, and to find a speedy pretext for his removal from the council.

After the main causes had been determined, two other matters were brought forward by the Lord Protector, which, it might naturally be presumed, would be of especial interest to the king—namely, the interment of his late royal father, and his own coronation. The former ceremonial was appointed to take place in the chapel of Saint George, in Windsor Castle, on Wednesday, the 16th of February; while the latter was fixed for February the 20th, the Sunday after the funeral.

Some time was occupied in discussing the arrangements of both these ceremonies. Nothing was determined upon with regard to the coronation, save that, on account of the king's tender years, it ought to be materially abridged, while several important alterations in the forms were proposed by the Archbishop of Canterbury—but these were left for future consideration. It was decided however that Henry's interment should be conducted upon a scale of unheard-of magnificence, and with all the pomp and solemnity befitting so renowned a monarch. This design was to be fully carried out, if even the exchequer should be drained by the cost.

Edward seemed comparatively indifferent to the ordering of the solemn act that was to place the crown upon his brows, but he exhibited marked anxiety that the utmost respect should be paid to the memory of his mighty father; and entirely concurred in the propriety of making due provision to give unwonted solemnity and grandeur to his interment. "As my father was the noblest and greatest of kings during his life," he said, "so it is meet he should be borne more honourably than any other to the grave."

Little share was taken in these deliberations by Sir Thomas Seymour, but he was not idle. He employed his time in the advancement of his ulterior designs, and strove by every means in his power to ingratiate himself with his colleagues. Perceiving the covert hostility of the Lord Chancellor, he made cautious overtures to him, but these were haughtily repelled by Wriothesley, who showed no disposition to act in concert with him.

At the bottom of the ill-feeling subsisting between the two Seymours lay Lord Lisle. By his arts, he had sharpened their mutual dislike into hatred, their jealousy into

active animosity, and their want of forgiveness for slight wrong into fierce vindictiveness.

Lord Lisle had long since perceived the growing animosity between the brothers, and cautiously fostered it, in the hope that the designs of the younger brother to supplant the elder might occasion the downfall of both, and leave the stage free to himself. He therefore gave all the encouragement he could do, without committing himself, to Sir Thomas's aspiring projects, and led him to conclude he would join any cabal formed against the Lord Protector. With the elder Seymour his course was simpler. By inflaming Hertford's jealousy, and poisoning his mind against his turbulent brother, he rendered a good understanding between them impossible. It was Lisle who informed the Lord Protector that the young king had stolen from his chamber at an early hour in order to obtain a private interview with his favourite uncle; and though the maker of the mischief joined with Sir John Gage in the good Constable's efforts to heal the difference between the brothers, he knew he could easily undo the work, and widen the breach he pretended to repair.

So far from suspecting Lisle of treachery, or in any way distrusting him, Hertford regarded him as one of the firmest of his partisans. He knew him to be rapacious, daring, and unscrupulous, but he had no conception of the towering nature of his ambition, or of the mark at which he aimed. Deceived by the other's professions of gratitude, and fancying he had purchased his fidelity, Hertford took him entirely into his confidence, and laid open his breast to him. At this moment it would have been easy to crush such a foe; but the Lord Protector unwittingly let the opportunity pass by.

On the present occasion, Lisle did not fail to point out to the Lord Protector that his brother was intriguing with certain members of the council against him, and he advised him to beware. Hertford replied, with a significant look, that he would not neglect the caution.

On the breaking up of the assemblage, Edward signified his intention of visiting certain portions of the fortress, and directed Sir John Gage and his younger uncle to attend him during the inspection. The Lord Protector,

whom it was needful to consult, even on so unimportant a matter, at once assented to the arrangement, but somewhat marred his royal nephew's satisfaction by offering to join the party with Lord Lisle.

The day was exceedingly fine, and very favourable for the promenade. Indeed ever since Edward's accession to the throne, the weather had been most propitious. A sharp frost had now lasted for more than a week, and the atmosphere, though keen, was dry and wholesome. Moreover, the sun was shining brightly, and gave a pleasant and lively character to the scene, depriving the hoary walls of the keep and the grim-looking towers surrounding the inner ward of much of their customary gloomy character. The spacious area, known as Tower-green, was at this time, as we have already shown, thronged from morn to eve; but it chanced to be more crowded than usual at the moment when Edward issued from the portals of the White Tower with his two uncles and his other attendants. As soon as the assemblage became aware of the young sovereign's presence amongst them, loud acclamations resounded on all sides, and a great rush was made in the direction of the royal party.

While Edward was moving slowly along through the crowd, his attention was caught by a fantastic little figure, which at first he took for a monkey, but on examining the grotesque object more narrowly, he found it to be human—though the smallest specimen of full-grown humanity he had ever set eyes upon. Attired in a tiny doublet of bright orange-coloured satin puffed out with white, with hose to match, the mannikin wore a scarlet cloth mantle lined with sky-blue silk, about large enough to cover the shoulders of a Barbary ape. In his hand the little being held a flat bonnet of green velvet, which he waved enthusiastically to the king. The dwarf's features were decidedly of a simious character, the nose being flat, with wide nostrils, and having a long interval between it and the mouth, and the hair being of a tawny hue, with a marked resemblance to fur. The position occupied by this grotesque little personage was such as enabled him to overlook the royal party; he being perched on the broad shoulders of a gigantic warder, whose colossal frame towered far above the heads of the by-standers.

This tremendous son of Anak was quite as noticeable in his way as his pigmy companion—more so, perhaps. His features were broad and good-humoured, and mightily pleased the king, who could not help regarding him with a certain degree of wondering admiration. Clad in the scarlet cassock of a warder, with the rose and crown embroidered on the front and back, the giant carried a partisan almost as long as the spear of Goliath of Gath.

“Marry, that should be one of the three giants of the Tower of whom I have heard tell,” observed Edward to Sir John Gage, halting as he spoke; “but who is the pigmy upon his shoulders?”

“Hath not your Highness heard of Xit, the famous dwarf of the Tower?” cried the mannikin, anticipating the Constable’s reply. “I am he. And it rejoices me thus to be able to wish your Majesty a long and prosperous reign. Long live the noble king Edward!” he exclaimed, at the top of his shrill voice, waving his cap to the crowd, who loudly repeated the cry. “This overgrown fellow, an please your Majesty, is Og—not Og, King of Basan,—but Og of the Tower,” he continued, patting the giant’s head, which was almost on a level with his own; “and yonder, on either side of the gate of the Cold Harbour Tower, stand his two brothers, Gog and Magog. There is not much difference of size amongst them, but, if anything, Og, though the eldest, is the lesser of the three; howbeit he is the broadest across the shoulders.”

“If Nature hath given thee but a small frame, she appears to have furnished thee with a glib tongue, sirrah,” replied the king, laughing.

“I complain not of Nature, my gracious liege,” rejoined Xit. “True ’tis she hath stinted me of my fair proportions, but if she hath denied me lofty stature, she hath given me in revenge more brains than she hath lodged in the thick skull of this mighty Anakim.”

“Peace, thou saucy jackanapes, or I will dash thee to the ground,” cried Og, angry at the laughter of the bystanders.

“That shouldst thou not wert thou as powerful as thy namesake of Basan,” cried Xit, clinging with great tenacity to his locks. “I descend not from my station unless at his Highness’s bidding. Remove me an thou dar’st!”

“Set him down before me,” said Edward, much diverted by the scene, “and take heed thou dost not harm him.”

“Hear’st thou not his Majesty’s command, base giant?” cried Xit, pulling him by the ear. “Place me on the ground gently and gracefully.”

Thus enjoined, Og stepped forward, and bent down in order to allow Xit to spring from his shoulder.

But though the giant stooped his huge frame as much as he conveniently could, Xit had still rather a high jump to make, and his foot unluckily catching in the puffed-out wing of Og’s cassock, he alighted upon his head, amid the irrepressible laughter of the beholders.

Luckily, the dwarf’s head was tolerably thick, so no great damage was done him, neither was he much disconcerted. Picking himself quickly up, he rated Og for his clumsiness, sharply reprov’d the bystanders for their unseemly merriment, which caused them to laugh the more, and then made a profound, and, as he conceived, courtier-like obeisance to the king.

“What office dost thou fill in the Tower, sirrah, if there be an office small enough to fit thee?” inquired Edward.

“Any office would fit me, an please your Majesty, since my capacity is equal to the greatest,” answered Xit, readily; “but desert, as I need not remind so wise a prince, doth not always meet reward. At this moment I am out of office, or rather, I should say, I have been unaccountably overlooked. Honours and posts have fallen on taller men’s heads, but not on mine, which they would have suited equally well—mayhap better.”

“Your Majesty’s august father always kept a fool—nay, three—to make him merry with quip and quirk,” remarked Sir Thomas Seymour. “Will Somers, Sexton, and Patch, are out of date; but this conceited dandiprat might fill the place of one of them, and serve to divert your Grace.”

“By the rood! I like your notion well, gentle uncle,” rejoined Edward, with boyish delight. “Thou shalt be my fool, sirrah, if thou wilt,” he added to Xit.

“I will be aught your Majesty may deign to make me,” responded the dwarf, “and I thank you, in all humility, for your goodness; but I would fain have the designation of mine office slightly changed. Half-witted buffoons, like

Will Somers and his compeers, might well be styled 'fools,' seeing they were little better; but for me, I have ever been noted for sprightliness and wit, and I hope to divert your Highness in a very different sort from dullards like to those."

"If thou lik'st not to be called 'court fool,' will 'court jester' suit thee better, thou malapert little knave?" asked Sir Thomas Seymour.

"It may suit me, yet I like it not," replied Xit. "If I sought to be styled 'jester' instead of 'fool,' it would prove me a great fool and a sorry jester—a jester being the greatest of fools, since every man may make game of him, which, I promise your worship, no man shall do with me."

"Aha! thou art as difficult to please as a breeding dame, thou saucy little varlet," laughed Seymour. "What title will please thee?"

"An I be simply termed his Majesty's faithful dwarf, I shall be well satisfied," returned Xit, bowing obsequiously.

"Have thy wish, then," said Edward, delighted by the mannikin's readiness. "Henceforth I take thee into my service under that designation. Thou shalt have a dwarf's wages and a dwarf's livery."

"Let my wages be full-grown, though my livery be never so scant, an please your Majesty," rejoined Xit. "If my hire be proportioned to my size, it will come to little. Measure it rather by yonder giant. Howbeit, in any case, I humbly thank your Highness. Grant me a sword, and my happiness will be complete."

"A bodkin would suit thee better," observed Seymour. "What should such a jackanapes as thou do with a sword?"

"Use it in his Majesty's defence, and in the maintenance of mine own honour," replied Xit, with the pride of an offended Castilian.

"Nay, if a sword will make thee happy, my cutler shall provide thee one," said the king. "Hie thee and bring those giant warders before me. I am curious to behold them."

"Your Highness's commands shall be promptly obeyed," replied Xit, darting off towards the Wardrobe Tower.

"Ho there! ye dull and sluggish Titans," vociferated the dwarf, as he drew near the gateway beside which Gog

and Magog were stationed. "Ho there, I say! Are ye deaf as well as stupid? Come with me instantly!"

"Wherefore should we go with thee, thou restless gad-about?" rejoined Gog, leaning on his tall partisan, and looking down good-humouredly at him.

"Question not, but follow," cried Xit, authoritatively.

"Even if we cared to comply, we could not," rejoined Magog, the youngest and largest of the three giants. "Our post is at this gate, and we may not quit it till the guard be relieved."

"But I am sent by the king's Majesty to bring you to him, rebellious Titans," cried Xit. "Obey at your peril!"

"Is this one of the gamesome little bawcock's jests, think'st thou, Gog?" said the younger giant.

"I know not," replied the other. "His Majesty is yonder—but if we stir from our posts without the Lieutenant's license we shall be reprimanded."

"But my order is from a greater than the Lieutenant, or even than the Constable, and ye had best not neglect it," cried Xit, stamping his tiny foot impatiently on the ground. "Know, ye incredulous bawsons, that I am now one of the royal household."

"Nay, an thou affirmest that, I doubt all the rest," said Magog. "I stir not hence."

"Neither do I," added Gog. "Thou must invent a better tale than this, thou false imp, to lure us from our duty."

"On my soul! your stupidity is on a par with your stature, ye huge puzzle-pates," cried Xit. "Ye are keeping the king's Majesty waiting all this time. Ye shall ride the wooden horse and brook the stinging lash, if you detain me much longer."

"An it be true that the king hath sent for us, we ought to go," observed Magog, with a perplexed look.

"Assuredly," returned Gog; "but we have no eertitude on the point. Ha! here comes Og to help us in this dilemma. What must we do, brother?" he added, as the third giant approached them with mighty strides.

"Stay where you are," replied Og. "The king will be here anon. Nay, Xit hath not deceived you," he added, seeing them look at the dwarf; "he was sent to bring you into the royal presence, but since then, his Majesty having

been informed by the Constable of the Tower that you are on duty here, would not have you disturbed, but is coming hither himself."

"His Highness will be here in a trice," said Xit, perceiving that the royal party was drawing nigh. "Take pattern by me, and demean yourselves properly."

In another moment, Edward and his attendants came up. The three gigantic warders were now standing together, and as their big burly frames were bent towards the youthful and fragile-looking king, it was like three sturdy oaks inclining to a slender reed.

"A boon! a boon! an please your Majesty!" exclaimed the three giants, in concert. "A boon we crave at your royal hands."

"Name it, good fellows," replied Edward, well pleased by their appearance.

"Fain would we be allowed some part, however humble, at your Majesty's approaching coronation," said Magog, who acted as spokesman for the others.

"The request is granted as soon as preferred," replied Edward, graciously. "The lord chamberlain shall assign you a fitting part in the ceremony."

"Gramerey, my gracious liege," cried the three giants together.

"Bestow upon them ten broad pieces each, Sir John," said Edward to the Constable, "as an earnest of our future favour."

"Your Majesty is over-bountiful," rejoined Magog, modestly. "Howbeit, I make bold to say that your Highness hath not three trustier subjects than my brothers and myself."

"Not three taller subjects, certes," rejoined Edward; "and I doubt not trusty as tall. There must be no pageant or court show without these lusty fellows," he added to Sir John Gage.

"Tis what they are specially fit for, my gracious liege," said the Constable. "Your august father loved to see their burly figures in a pageant."

"Your Majesty's condescension makes us proud," said Gog. "We shall hold our heads higher ever afterwards."

"No occasion for that," rejoined Xit. "Marry, your heads are too much i' the air already."

“Let us now to the Bloody Tower, good Sir John,” said Edward to the Constable. “You promised to show me the chamber where the murder of the young princes was done.”

“I will conduct your Highness thither at once,” replied Gage.

“Nay, I must have thy company, my merry little knave,” cried Edward, seeing Xit look at him beseechingly. “I have conceived a liking for thee. Thy humour pleases me. Follow in my train.”

Made supremely happy by the permission thus graciously accorded him, Xit strutted after the royal party like a peacock with its tail displayed in the sun.

IX.

IN WHAT MANNER MAUGER, THE HEADSMAN, FORETOLD
THAT CERTAIN LORDS SHOULD DIE BY HIS HAND.

ON reaching the wide, deep archway of the Bloody Tower, then secured at either end by strong gates and a ponderous portcullis, the royal party came to a halt, and a few moments were occupied by Edward in examining the beautiful groining and tracery of the vaulted roof. His curiosity satisfied in this respect, the young monarch was conducted by Sir John Gage to a postern on the east side of the gateway, which led to a small gloomy stone chamber, or rather vault, wherein, according to tradition, the victims of the ruthless Gloucester's cruelty were interred.

The Constable would fain have dissuaded the young king from entering this dismal vault, and the gate-porter who was with them appeared extremely reluctant to show it, but Edward had set his mind upon seeing the place, and was resolved to go in. There was nothing in the appearance of the chamber to reward the young monarch's curiosity. It was built of stone with a ribbed ceiling, and looked confined and gloomy, being imperfectly lighted by two narrow grated embrasures. But it had a very strange

occupant, and, on beholding him, Edward at once comprehended why admittance had not been more readily accorded him.

The aspect and demeanour of this personage were savage and repulsive, and even the king's presence did not seem to inspire him with much awe, though he rose on Edward's appearance, and made a clumsy attempt at an obeisance. The upper part of his frame was strongly, though not stoutly built, the arms being remarkably muscular, but his lower limbs were less powerful, and he seemed to be halt of the right leg. His physiognomy was singularly repulsive, the nose being broad and flat, and the eyes fierce and bloodshot; the forehead bald, and the hue of the skin dull and earthy. His cheeks were clothed with a shaggy black beard, and the sable locks left on either side of his head were wild and unkempt. His habiliments were of red serge, but above his doublet he wore a leathern jerkin, which was sullied with dark stains, as if of gore. On his right hip he carried a broad two-edged knife, protected by a sheath. But the implement that proclaimed his revolting office was an executioner's axe. This he had not the grace to lay aside, but continued to lean upon it while standing before the king. Another axe, similar in size and form, was reared against the wall, and near it stood a two-handed sword, sometimes, though but rarely, employed in capital punishments. When the headsman arose, it instantly became apparent that the seat he had occupied was the block—and moreover that it was a block which had been frequently used.

While Edward gazed at the executioner with feelings of mingled horror and loathing, he bethought him of the Lady Jane Grey's description of the hideous caitiff, and recognised its justice. At the same time, Sir John Gage sharply rebuked the porter for allowing his Majesty to be offended by such a sight.

"Nay, the fault was mine own, good Sir John," interposed Edward; "the man tried to hinder me, but I would come in. Is it sooth that the two hapless princes were buried here?"

"Here where I stand, sire," replied Mauger, striking the floor with his heel. "Their tender bodies were laid in the earth beneath this stone."

“Hold thy peace, fellow, unless his Grace addresses thee,” cried the Constable, angrily.

“Nay, I meant no offence,” growled the headsman; “his Majesty’s royal father was wont to talk to me, and I thought I might do the same with King Harry’s royal offspring. I once gave his late Majesty a proof of my power which greatly amazed him, and I will do as much for his present Highness if it shall please him to command me.”

“Again I bid thee hold thy peace,” said the Constable, sternly. “Hath your Grace seen enough of this dismal chamber?”

“Ay; but, before quitting it, I would fain know what proof of power the varlet proposed to display to me,” rejoined Edward, whose curiosity was awakened.

“Some juggling trick, most likely, your Highness,” said Gage.

“Not so, Sir John,” rejoined Mauger. “I am no soothsayer, but long practice hath given me a certain skill, and I can tell by a man’s looks if he be to die by my hand.”

Edward looked surprised, and glanced at the Constable, who shook his head sceptically.

“Will it please your Majesty to put me to the test?” demanded Mauger. “But I must be permitted to speak freely and without respect to persons, else I dare not do it.”

“Are there any here willing to submit to the ordeal?” inquired Edward, turning to his attendants, all of whom had entered the chamber.

Several voices replied in the affirmative.

“I am to be free from all consequences if I proclaim the truth?” pursued Mauger.

“Thou hast my royal word for it,” replied Edward.

“Then let any one who will advance, place his foot upon the block, and look at me steadily,” rejoined Mauger.

“I will go first, having neither fear nor faith,” said the Constable. And he did as Mauger had directed.

After looking fixedly at him for a moment, the executioner observed with a grim smile, “Your head will never be mine, Sir John.”

“I never deemed it would, thou fell hound,” replied the Constable, turning away.

“I will make the next essay,” said Sir Thomas Seymour,

stepping lightly forward, and placing his foot gracefully upon the block.

The headsman fixed his eyes upon him keenly for a moment, and then struck the flag with his axe.

A hollow and ominous sound was returned by the stone, as if the repose of the dead had been disturbed.

“That signifies that thou art to handle me on the scaffold, thou vile caitiff—ha?” cried Seymour, with a contemptuous laugh. “My nerves are unshaken. Does your Highness hesitate?” he added to the Lord Protector.

“Not I, forsooth,” rejoined Hertford, taking his place. “I have no more misgiving than yourself.”

“Desist, I pray your Highness. I like it not,” cried Edward.

“Nay, I must needs disobey your Grace, or my brother will say I am afraid,” returned Hertford.

“That shall I, and think so too,” cried Seymour.

“I pray your Highness look me straight in the face,” said Mauger.

And as the Lord Protector complied, he again struck the stone with his axe, occasioning the same hollow resonance as before.

“Soh! your Highness is likewise doomed!” exclaimed Sir Thomas Seymour, with a laugh.

“It would appear so,” rejoined Hertford, with a forced smile.

“Let us see what my destiny will be,” said Lord Lisle, advancing.

And, setting his foot on the block, he gazed with exceeding sternness at the headsman, hoping to terrify him. Mauger however did not quail before the look, but, after a brief scrutiny of the other’s countenance, again smote the stone with his fatal axe.

This time the sound proceeding from the flag was deeper and more awful than on the previous occasions.

“The knave ought to pay for his insolence with his ears,” cried Sir John Gage, angrily.

“I have his Majesty’s word that I am to go scot-free,” rejoined Mauger. “I cannot alter the decrees of fate, and am no more responsible for what may ensue than the senseless weapon I strike withal. But I do grieve sometimes; and it saddens me to think that a fair and noble young

creature, whom I beheld for the first time in the Tower only three days ago, will most like claim mine office."

Edward shuddered on hearing this remark, for he could not help fearing that the caitiff alluded to the Lady Jane Grey. However he forbore to question him.

"Are there any more who desire to make the experiment?" pursued Mauger.

"Ay, I would fain ascertain if my death is to be by decapitation," cried Xit, leaping on to the block, and regarding the executioner with ludicrous sternness.

"Hence!" exclaimed Mauger, pushing him with the handle of his axe, and causing him to skip off with all haste. "No such honourable ending is reserved for thee."

This incident, which created some merriment, dissipated the unpleasant effect produced by the previous trials; and directing that half-a-dozen rose-nobles should be given to Mauger, the king quitted the vault with his attendants.

X.

HOW KING EDWARD VISITED THE DUKE OF NORFOLK IN THE BEAUCHAMP TOWER.

PRECEDED by Sir John Gage, and followed by the rest of his attendants, Edward next ascended a short spiral staircase communicating with an upper apartment in the Bloody Tower, wherein the dark deed was done that has conferred such fearful celebrity on the structure; and after examining the mysterious chamber, and listening to the Constable's details of the tragical affair, he tracked a narrow passage, constructed in the inner ballium wall, leading to the Lieutenant's lodgings. On arriving there, he was received with great ceremony by Sir John Markham, and shown over the building.

Throughout his investigations, the young monarch allowed no object of interest, historical or otherwise, to escape him, and displayed a quickness and a fund of knowledge surprising in one so young. Inquiries having been

made by the king of the Constable respecting the state-delinquents at that time imprisoned in the Tower, Sir John Gage seized the opportunity of asking whether it would please his Majesty to visit any of them, and especially the Duke of Norfolk. As may be conjectured, the proposition was not made without a latent motive on the part of the worthy Constable, who, being warmly attached to the duke, hoped that Edward's compassion might be so much moved by the sight of the illustrious captive, that he would grant him a pardon. The Lord Protector evidently entertained a like impression, and his dread lest his royal nephew's clemency might be exercised in behalf of the unfortunate nobleman was so great, that he would have opposed the visit had he not feared to incense Sir John Gage, with whom, for many reasons, he desired to continue on good terms. He therefore raised no objections when Edward agreed to go at once to the Beauchamp Tower, where the Duke of Norfolk was confined, but bowing gravely in token of acquiescence, observed, "Your Majesty must steel your heart. Efforts, I foresee, will be made to move it. But you must not forget that the Duke of Norfolk is a condemned traitor, and still under sentence of death."

"I shall not forget it," replied Edward.

It was not necessary for the royal party to go forth in order to reach the tower in question, since a communication existed between it and the Lieutenant's lodgings by means of a paved footway along the summit of the inner ballium wall, and by which the chief officer of the fortress could visit the prisoners unperceived. This mode of access, which still exists, soon brought them to the chamber wherein the duke was immured.

No intimation was given the prisoner of the king's approach. The door was unbarred by Tombs the gaoler, and Edward and his attendants admitted.

The apartment entered by them was spacious, and sufficiently well adapted to the purpose to which it was applied. Connected with it were two cells, which could be locked at night, and the walls, which were built of stone and of immense thickness, were pierced by four deep recesses, with narrow apertures strongly grated without. That the chamber had had many previous tenants was proved by the numerous melancholy memorials covering its walls. Its

present unfortunate occupant had sought to beguile the weary hours by similar employment, and at the moment when the royal party invaded his solitude, he was engaged in carving a large crucifix on the stones.

Despite the terrible reverses he had experienced, and the weight of years—he was then considerably past seventy—the Duke of Norfolk was still a very noble-looking personage. Though shorn of wealth and honours, disgraced and attainted of high treason, his grandeur of soul enabled him to bear his unmerited misfortunes with dignity and fortitude. His lofty and stately figure was still proud and erect as in the summer season of his prosperity. He had fallen on evil days, but calamity had no power to shake him. His looks had ever been proud, as was not unnatural in the first peer of the realm, and his deportment singularly majestic; and both looks and deportment continued the same under the present trying circumstances. It is true that deep traces of care were visible on his pallid brow, and that his features were stamped with profound melancholy, but these changes only heightened the interest of his noble countenance. His grey beard had been allowed to grow to great length, and his hoary locks were untrimmed. On his head he wore a flat velvet cap, destitute of brooch, jewel, or plume. No collar of the Garter, bestowed on him by his own sovereign—no collar of St Michael, given him by Francis the First, were placed round his neck. His attire was without ornament, and consisted of a long, loose, philemot-coloured velvet gown, furred with sables, with a high collar and wide hanging sleeves, beneath which the tight sleeves of a russet doublet were discernible.

On hearing the entrance of the royal party he ceased his occupation, and at once perceiving it was the king, he laid down the mallet and chisel, and doffing his cap, cast himself at Edward's feet.

It was a touching spectacle to behold this reverend and noble-looking prisoner prostrate before the youthful monarch; but with the exception of Sir John Gage it failed to move any of the beholders with pity. Even Edward himself seemed to have followed his uncle's stern counsel, and to have hardened his heart against the unfortunate duke.

Norfolk essayed to speak, but his emotion was too

great to enable him to give utterance to his words, and a convulsive sob alone escaped him.

"Arise, my Lord Duke," said Edward, coldly. "And I pray you put some constraint upon your feelings."

"Will not your Highness suffer me to kiss your hand and pay you homage?" rejoined the duke, retaining his humble position.

"Attainted of high treason as thou art, Thomas Howard, thou art incapable of rendering homage, and his Highness cannot receive it from thee," interposed the Lord Protector, severely. "This thou shouldst know. Arise, as thou art bidden."

Recalled to himself by this harsh treatment, Norfolk got up, and said, in a mournful voice, "This, then, is the end of my long services to the king my master! Heaven grant me patience—I have sore need of it!"

Edward could not fail to be touched by the duke's distress, and would have spoken to him had not Hertford again interposed. "Thou forgettest the heinous offences laid to thy charge, Thomas Howard," he said, "and of which thou didst confess thyself guilty in thy submission made to his late Majesty. Thy offences against thy royal master far outweighed any services rendered by thee towards him, and justly provoked his ire. Had the late king been spared another day, thou wouldst not be here now."

"I know it," rejoined the duke; "but another and a mightier hand than thine, Edward Seymour, was at work for my preservation. My death-warrant was prepared at thy instigation, but it was not given to thee to accomplish thy work. My life has been wondrously spared—it may be for some good purpose. Thou, who mockest me in my distress, mayst be the first to perish."

"Your Highness has brought this upon yourself, I must needs say," observed Sir John Gage to the Lord Protector.

"In regard to my confession," pursued Norfolk, "no one knows better than thou dost, Edward Seymour, by what devices it was wrested from me, and if it shall please the king's Majesty to question me, I will explain why I was led to make acknowledgment of crimes whereof I was guiltless, and to sue for pardon when I ought to have been honourably absolved. Faults I may have had—as who

amongst us is free from them?—but want of fidelity and devotion to my late royal master—on whose soul may Jesu have mercy!—was not amongst them. Witness for me the victories I have won for him over the Scots and French. Witness my wounds received at the siege of Jedworth and the assault and taking of Montdidier. Witness for me my expedition to Ireland, now some five-and-twenty years ago, when you, my Lord Protector, were humble enough, and proud of a smile from me—witness, I say, that expedition, wherein I succeeded in compelling the submission of O'Moore, and in pacifying the insurgents—for the which I received my sovereign's grateful thanks. Witness for me my missions to Francis the First, to prevent a complete rupture with his Holiness the Pope. My royal master was well pleased with me on both occasions, and so I may presume was the French king also—seeing that the latter decorated me with the collar of St Michael. The collar is gone, but ye cannot say I had it not. Witness also for me the quelling of the dangerous rebellion in the North, and the dispersion of the so-called Pilgrimage of Grace. Owing to my determined measures it was, that a second insurrection was crushed. My royal master thanked me then, and termed me 'his right hand.' Witness for me five-and-thirty years passed wholly in my master's service. Witness full fourteen years passed in the service of that master's father. And, if it had been permitted me, the remainder of my days should have been spent in the service of my master's royal son, whom Jesu preserve!"

"I thank your Grace with all my heart," said Edward.

"The best counsel my judgment could furnish hath been ever offered to your august father, sire," pursued Norfolk; "and it was offered disinterestedly. On more than one occasion I have poured out my best blood for him, and I would joyfully pour out the rest for your Majesty."

"What says your Highness to this?" demanded Edward of the Lord Protector.

"In enumerating his services to his sovereign," replied Hertford, "the Duke of Norfolk hath carefully omitted all mention of the pernicious counsels given by him against the professors of the Reformed faith, and of the secret efforts he hath made to bring the Church again under subjection to the See of Rome. He has forgotten to state that

he was the principal deviser of the sanguinary Statute of the Six Articles, and that he was the grand persecutor of all professing the new opinions. Neither has he stated that in his last expedition to Scotland, in 1542, when he went thither as captain-general of the forces at the head of twenty thousand men, the campaign was without result, and the king deeply dissatisfied with him. Equally inglorious would have been the expedition to France in 1544, had not the king conducted it in person."

"At that time my enemies were at work against me," said Norfolk. "They envied me my master's favour, and were resolved to rob me of it. Foremost amongst my detractors and enemies hast thou ever been, O Edward Seymour! The axe has been laid by thee at the root of one of the goodliest trees that ever grew on English soil, and thou hast hewn it down remorselessly. Beware of the axe thyself! Thou hast robbed me of my brave and chivalrous son Surrey, the soul of honour and loyalty! Never shall he be replaced! Never shall the young king's Highness find such another, search where he may! I weep for my son," he continued, in a broken voice, "though I weep not for myself. A father's curse light on thee, Edward Seymour!"

"Your Majesty will perceive what vindictive sentiments the arch-traitor nourishes," observed the Lord Protector.

"Some allowance must be made for a father's feelings," said Sir John Gage. "The loss of such a son as the Earl of Surrey may excuse much passionate grief on the duke's part."

"I thank you, good Sir John," said Norfolk. "Much courage is required to plead for the unfriended captive. One word more with thee, Edward Seymour, and I have done. Thou didst think to obtain possession of my estates. But I have balked thy rapacity. My royal master yielded to my prayer, and allowed me to bestow them upon the prince his son—and they were a gift that not even a monarch might disdain."

"We thank you much for your consideration of us, my Lord Duke," said Edward, "though we had rather you had been influenced by better motives than appear to have governed your conduct in the affair. Howbeit, we are be-

holden to you, and to prove our gratitude we hereby offer you a full pardon."

"Sire!" exclaimed Hertford, startled.

"Interrupt us not, we pray your Highness," continued the king, with much dignity. "We offer your Grace a free pardon," he added to the duke, who awaited the conclusion of his address with deep anxiety, "but we must clothe it with the condition that you renounce your errors, and embrace the Protestant faith."

"Your Majesty hath said well," observed the Lord Protector, approvingly.

"What answer makes your Grace?" asked Edward of the duke.

"Your Majesty's pardon will avail me little," replied Norfolk, shaking his head. "I attribute the heavy afflictions with which it has pleased Heaven to visit me to my toleration of many matters contrary to my conscience—but I will sin no more in this manner. I will not change the belief in which I have been nurtured, even to purchase liberty and the restoration of my wealth and honours."

"Your Grace is very stubborn," remarked Edward, with a look of displeasure.

"It is idle to argue with him, sire," said the Lord Protector. "Severer measures might work his conversion, and these shall be adopted if your Highness wills it."

"Try them," cried Norfolk. "Bring the sworn tormentor here, and let him essay his implements upon me. He may wrench my joints asunder, but he shall not tear me from the opinions to which I cling. The crucifix is graven on my heart as deeply as on yonder wall, and cannot be plucked forth, save with life."

At this juncture Sir John Gage felt it behoved him to interpose in behalf of the unfortunate duke.

"If your Majesty will listen to one who ever spoke fearlessly to your august father," said the worthy Constable, "and whose sincerity was never questioned, though his bluntness may sometimes have given offence, you will abandon all idea of making the Duke of Norfolk a proselyte. Neither by fair means nor foul will his Grace's conversion be wrought."

"You are in the right, good Sir John," cried the duke. "I will die for my faith, if need be, but I will not forsake it."

“It will be labour in vain, therefore,” continued the Constable, “to proceed in a task impossible of accomplishment. More than this, the course will be fraught with consequences inauspicious to the commencement of your reign, as I will venture to point out. The adherents to the old faith—of whom I am one—would consider any undue rigour shown their chief, as they still regard his Grace of Norfolk, on account of his religion, as a blow aimed at themselves, and as an ensample of what they may in turn expect; whereby the minds of half, nay more than half, your now loving and loyal subjects will be estranged, discontent will speedily manifest itself, and troubles ensue, not easily quelled, and greatly perplexing to the government. Entertaining this view of the matter, I humbly advise your Majesty not to meddle with his Grace of Norfolk’s religion. By making a martyr of him, you will only serve the cause you desire to put down.”

“If your Highness is bent on making a proselyte of the duke, try what reasoning and persuasion will do before having recourse to extreme measures,” remarked Sir Thomas Seymour. “Let his Grace of Canterbury be sent to him.”

“I will not see Cranmer,” cried Norfolk, sharply. “He is my abhorrence. If he be forced upon me I will shut mine ears to his discourse, and utter no word in reply.”

“What is to be done with such a stiff-necked bigot?” exclaimed the Lord Protector, shrugging his shoulders. “Compassion is thrown away upon him.”

“If the duke’s long services cannot procure him any mitigation of his sentence,” remarked the Constable, “at least let him enjoy his opinions undisturbed. Here, in this dungeon, they can harm no one save himself.”

“I love his Grace of Norfolk sufficiently to feel great concern for the welfare of his soul,” observed Edward. “I do not despair of opening his eyes to his errors, and rescuing him, even at the eleventh hour, from perdition. The separation of one so eminent from the communion of Rome would redound to the honour of the Reformed Church, and I have set my heart upon effecting it. The greater the difficulty, the greater will be the merit.”

“I am glad to hear your Highness announce such praiseworthy intentions,” said Hertford. “They are sure to give satisfaction to the majority of your subjects.”

“Again I implore your Majesty to forbear,” cried Gage. “You are ill advised to commence your rule with persecution.”

“How, Sir John!” exclaimed the Lord Protector. “Do you dare impugn my counsel?”

“Ay,” rejoined the Constable, firmly. “Moreover, I dare bid you take heed, lest you pull about your ears the house you have but newly reared. Body o’ me! I dared speak my mind to King Harry, of whom I stood in some awe; and think you I shall not dare to utter it to your Highness, of whom I stand in none? Nay, marry, but I will.”

“Sir John! good Sir John! I pray you moderate yourself,” cried Norfolk. “If I should unhappily be the means of dragging you into the pit into which I have fallen myself, it will aggravate my affliction. Let my enemies work their will against me. I can bear it all without a murmur. But let me not feel that I have harmed a friend.”

“Let me join my entreaties to those of Sir John Gage, that your Highness pursue this matter no further for the present,” said Sir Thomas Seymour. “Above all, let not any warmth of temper which the worthy Constable may have displayed prejudice him in your eyes.”

“Nay, if my wise father could overlook Sir John’s impetuosity, in consideration of his worth, I am not like to be more particular,” replied Edward. “But he should reflect, that by over-zeal he may injure his own cause.”

“Rebuke so just and yet so temperate, proceeding from lips so young, shows what may be expected from your Highness’s mature judgment,” replied the Constable. “I thank you for the lesson, and will lay it carefully to heart.”

“Let me not be backward in acknowledging that my own hastiness occasioned Sir John’s display of temper,” said the Lord Protector, “and therefore your Majesty’s just rebuke applies to me as well as to him. I pray you forgive me, good Sir John.”

“Nay, your Highness makes more of the matter than it needs,” rejoined the Constable, heartily.

“Since they are all making friends, the real cause of the quarrel will be overlooked,” whispered Xit, who was still with the royal party, to Sir Thomas Seymour.

“Peace, knave!” cried the latter, sharply.

“My indiscretion, I trust, hath not prejudiced the duke’s cause with your Majesty,” said Sir John Gage. “If so, I shall deeply lament it.”

“Set your mind at ease on that score, good Sir John,” returned Edward. “Second thoughts, they say, are best, and, on reflection, I have decided upon leaving his Grace of Norfolk to the free indulgence of his own religious opinions, erroneous and pernicious as I feel them to be. If any change comes over him, I shall hail it with the liveliest satisfaction—with the joy of the shepherd at the return of a lost sheep. Means shall not be wanting towards this end, and good books shall be provided for him. It grieves me that I cannot hold out any promise of liberation to his Grace. So long as he entertains these opinions he must remain a prisoner. It might be injurious to the well-being of our Church to let so powerful an enemy go free.”

“I am content, and humbly thank your Majesty,” replied the duke, bowing his head in resignation.

“I must repeat,” said Edward, preparing to depart, “that it will be your Grace’s own fault if you be not speedily liberated, and restored to favour.”

Norfolk shook his head mournfully, and bowed reverentially as the king and his attendants departed.

Soon afterwards, the door was barred on the outside by Tombs. On hearing the noise of the bolts shot into their sockets the unfortunate prisoner heaved a deep sigh, and then took up his mallet and chisel.

“Men’s hearts are harder than this stone,” he muttered, as he resumed his sad and solitary task. “Something tells me that boy’s reign will be a short one. If it shall please Heaven to spare me to see the right succession restored in the person of Mary, and the old belief brought back, I shall die happy!”

XI.

SHOWING HOW SIR THOMAS SEYMOUR PROSPERED IN HIS SUIT.

TOWARDS evening, on the same day, the Princess Elizabeth and her escort, accompanied by her governess, Mistress Catherine Ashley, and the young King's preceptors, Sir John Cheke and Doctor Cox, arrived at the Tower. Sir Thomas Seymour, who had been on the watch for more than an hour, and whose impatience by this time had risen almost to fever heat, no sooner beheld the troop of arquebussiers, with the princess at its head, crossing Tower Hill, than he flew to meet her, and continued by the side of her palfrey as she entered the gates of the fortress.

Elizabeth blushed deeply as her handsome suitor drew nigh, and exhibited a confusion from which Seymour drew a favourable augury. Moreover, his anticipations of success were confirmed by the glance he received from his esquire, who rode behind the princess with Mistress Ashley and the young King's preceptors—a glance that proclaimed as plainly as words, that all had gone on smoothly and satisfactorily.

Never had Seymour looked more captivating to female eye than on this occasion. When he chose to exert the full force of his remarkable attractions, he was almost—as his esquire had described him—irresistible. Elizabeth now found him so.

Some months previously, during the late king's lifetime, perceiving that the fair young princess deigned to cast her regards upon him, Sir Thomas, whose temerity was equal to his good looks, had not hesitated to declare his passion. The declaration however was but coldly received, and he subsequently yielded to the temptings of ambition which pointed out the queen-dowager as the better match. At the last moment, however, and when he was all but committed to Catherine, his passion for Elizabeth revived with greater intensity than ever, and, as we have seen, decided him, at the risk of losing the prize of which he felt secure, to make a final attempt to win her.

On the princess's part, whatever prudent resolutions she might have formed, and however decided the refusal she designed to give, her determination failed her at the sight of her resistless admirer, and she listened to his honeyed words with a complacency that seemed to warrant the conclusions he drew as to her improved disposition towards him.

"Your esquire, Signor Ugo, is an Italian, it would seem, Sir Thomas?—at least, he chiefly spoke that language to me," she observed, as they passed through the gateway of the By-ward Tower.

"Mezzo-Italiano, altezza," replied Seymour, smiling. "A Tuscan on the mother's side."

"By my fay, a sprightly galliard!" she rejoined; "and much devoted to you, I should judge. He could talk of little else save his lord's merits and noble qualities, and harped so much upon the theme, that I was obliged at last to bid him change it, or hold his tongue."

"I am sorry he has offended your Highness," returned Seymour. "In future, his manners shall be amended, or he shall no longer continue esquire of mine. But he hath heard me speak so often of you, and in such terms, that he may have fancied himself in duty bound to extol me to your Highness. I gave him credit for more discretion."

"Nay, I might have been content to listen to his praises of you, Sir Thomas," observed the princess, blushing. "But when he repeated what you had said of me, I deemed it time to check him. Methinks you make too great a confidant of this galliard. They of his country are proverbially faithless."

"But Ugo is only half Italian, as I have just said," rejoined Seymour, "and I have bound him to me by ties of deepest gratitude. I have every reason to believe him faithful; but your Highness may rely upon it, I will not trust him further than can be done with safety. And there are some secrets I shall keep sedulously guarded from him."

"You have given him a key to one he ought never to have been intrusted withal," remarked Elizabeth, half-reproachfully.

"Nay, if your Highness views the matter thus gravely, I shall indeed be angry with the knave," rejoined Seymour.

“But you may rest quite easy—whatever he may suspect, he knows nothing of a certainty.”

“I am not to be deceived on that score,” returned Elizabeth. “No man ever spoke as that galliard did, without authority for what he uttered.”

“Hum! the impudent varlet must have gone too far,” mentally ejaculated Seymour. “He shall never offend again in like sort,” he added, aloud.

“To chide him will not mend matters,” said the princess. “If anybody deserves reproof for presumption, it is yourself, Sir Thomas. Signor Ugo is the mere tool of his lord.”

“Signor Ugo shall pay dearly for it, if he loses me only a feather’s weight of your Highness’s good opinion, which I value more than my life,” cried Seymour. “If I have been too bold, the force of my passion must plead my excuse. Since I last beheld your Highness at Enfield, your charms have had such an effect upon me that my judgment has been given to you—every emotion has been influenced by you. My existence hangs on your breath. It is for you to make me the proudest and the happiest of men, or to plunge me into the lowest depths of despair.”

“No more of this, I pray you, Sir Thomas,” replied the princess, her bosom palpitating quickly, for she was not insensible to his ardour. “You will draw the eyes of the by-standers upon us, and some sharp and curious ear may catch your words.”

“Nay, condemn me not to silence till I have learnt my fate!” cried Seymour, in accents trembling with emotion, which was communicated to the princess as he approached her saddle. “*Idolo del mio cuore!* what response do you vouchsafe to my letter? Speak, I implore you, and put me out of my misery.”

“To-morrow I will decide,” said Elizabeth, in tones almost as tremulous as his own.

“No, now—now, adorata!” cried Seymour, pressing still closer towards her, and essaying to take her hand.

At this critical juncture the warning voice of his esquire reached him. They were now not far from the entrance of the palace.

“Zitto! zitto! monsignore,” cried Ugo. “Eccola là! —alla finestra del palazzo—la Regina Caterina!”

Roused by the caution, Seymour looked up, and, to his infinite annoyance and dismay, beheld Queen Catherine Parr, with the Countess of Hertford, the Marchioness of Dorset, Lady Jane Grey, and some other court dames, looking down upon them from the open casements of the palace. Though it did not seem possible that the queen-dowager could have heard what was passing between the pair, yet the enamoured deportment of Seymour, his propinquity to the princess, and the blushes and downcast looks of the latter, seemed scarcely to leave a doubt as to the subject of their discourse. The scornful and indignant glance given by Catherine to Sir Thomas, satisfied him that her jealousy was awakened. Elizabeth looked up at the same moment, and was covered with confusion on perceiving so many eyes directed towards her.

“Retire instantly, I entreat you, Sir Thomas,” she said, hastily—“you have placed me in a very embarrassing situation.”

“Heed them not, fair princess!” he rejoined, complying however with her injunctions, and removing from her side; “they will merely think some light and trivial discourse hath been passing between us.”

“The queen, my stepmother, looked as if she had a shrewd notion of the truth,” rejoined Elizabeth.

“It may be well to hull her suspicions,” said Seymour. “Treat the matter lightly, and laugh it off, if she questions your Highness, as peradventure she may. She can have overheard nothing, so you are quite safe on that head.”

In another moment they reached the entrance of the palace, near which the three gigantic warders were stationed, Edward having expressly commanded that, during his stay at the Tower, they should be constantly placed on guard there. A crowd of henchmen, pages, ushers, grooms, and other functionaries had issued from the palace as soon as the princess's arrival at the fortress was announced, and they were now drawn up at the foot of the perron leading to the principal door to receive her. Alighting from her palfrey with the aid of Sir Thomas Seymour, Elizabeth entered the palace with Mistress Ashley, and was ceremoniously ushered by the marshal of the hall into the apartment

assigned her. After making some slight change in her apparel, she descended to one of the state-rooms, where she was informed by Fowler she would find her royal brother. Edward was impatiently expecting her, and on her appearance he flew to meet her, embraced her tenderly, and gave her a hearty welcome to the Tower.

Scarcely had the amiable young monarch's raptures at the sight of his dearly-loved sister subsided into calm satisfaction, when he found a new subject for delight in the appearance of his two tutors. To the infinite astonishment of Fowler, who would have expressed his courtly dissatisfaction at the proceeding if he had dared, he ran towards them as he had flown to Elizabeth, and gave them both a very affectionate and unceremonious greeting. Taking them kindly by the hand, he prevented them from kneeling, saying with much benignity, "I have received you in private, my respected preceptors, because I wish all ceremony to be dispensed with in regard to friends I so entirely love and esteem as yourselves. As far as possible, I desire our old relations to continue. At the earliest opportunity I shall resume my studies with you, and while so employed I shall altogether lay aside the king, and be again your pupil."

"Such words have rarely issued from royal lips, sire," replied Sir John Cheke, "and do as much credit to your head as to the heart that prompted their utterance."

"Do not flatter me, worthy Sir John," rejoined Edward, smiling. "Now that I have got you with me, my dear preceptors, and my sister Elizabeth," he added, looking affectionately at her, "I shall be perfectly happy, and care not how long I may remain at the Tower. Since I have been here, Elizabeth," he continued to the princess, who had now joined the group, "I have formed a strict friendship with our cousin, the Lady Jane Grey. Her tastes, in all matters, coincide with my own. She likes reading, and is very devout. I am sure you will love her."

"I am quite sure I shall if your Highness loves her," replied the princess.

"You will be able to form an opinion upon her at once, for here she comes," observed Edward, as the subject of their discourse entered the chamber with the queen-dowager, the Marchioness of Dorset, the Countess of Hert-

ford, and most of the other court dames who had witnessed the princess's arrival from the windows of the palace.

Catherine's manner towards her stepdaughter was cold and constrained, and her greeting anything but cordial. On her side, Elizabeth was no less distant and haughty. Her pride was instantly roused by the queen-dowager's treatment, and she resented it with great spirit. Besides, she instinctively recognised a rival, and this feeling sharpened her sense of injury.

As yet Catherine had not had opportunity of upbraiding her fickle suitor by word or look, but in the very midst of the scene we have described he entered the chamber. To keep aloof from the dispute would have seemed to be Sir Thomas's wisest course, but he knew better. He did not miscalculate the extent of his influence upon either party. At a reassuring smile from him, the frowns vanished as if by magic from Catherine's brow, and her countenance resumed its wonted serenity. At a glance, perceptible only to herself, Elizabeth was instantly softened, and assumed a more conciliatory manner and tone towards her stepmother. Lady Hertford noticed this sudden and striking change, and failed not to attribute it to the true cause. An unguarded exclamation of Catherine on beholding Sir Thomas's marked attention to the princess on the arrival of the latter at the Tower, had led Lady Hertford to suspect the truth, and subsequent observations confirmed the surmise. Still smarting from the affronts she had received from the queen-dowager, she now felt that revenge was in her power.

Catherine's coldness and asperity towards his sister had much pained the amiable young monarch, and he was just about to interfere, when Seymour's appearance dispelled the clouds, and turned the gloom into sunshine.

"On my faith, gentle uncle," he said, with a smile, "you bring good-humour with you. We seemed on the verge of some incomprehensible misunderstanding here, which your presence has sufficed to set right. What witchery do you practise?"

"None that I am aware of, my gracious liege," replied Sir Thomas. "But were I an enchanter, my spells should undo mischief, not work it. I would put trust in the place of groundless suspicion, and gentleness in that of incon-

siderate heat. By so doing, I might justly merit your Majesty's commendation."

"You give yourself a good character, Sir Thomas," observed Catherine, with some remains of pique.

"Not better than he is fairly entitled to, gracious madam," observed Edward. "If my uncle always exercises his talent for pleasing as beneficially as on the present occasion, he has a right to be vain of it."

"An please your Majesty," said Fowler, advancing and bowing profoundly, "the marshal of the hall hath just entered to announce to your Grace that the banquet is served."

"Marry, then, we will to it at once," replied Edward. "Fair cousin, your hand," he added to the Lady Jane Grey, "and do you, gentle uncle, conduct our sister to the banqueting-hall."

Secretly delighted, though drawing a discreet veil over his satisfaction, Seymour immediately tendered his hand to the princess, much to the mortification of Catherine; after which the whole party, preceded by a troop of pages, henchmen, ushers, and marshals, repaired to the banqueting-hall, and entered it amid lively flourishes from the trumpeters stationed near the door.

At the banquet the queen-dowager occupied the seat next the king, to which she had asserted her claim in the manner heretofore narrated, and of which no further attempt was made by the Lord Protector to deprive her. Sir Thomas Seymour however no longer stood behind her Majesty's chair, but placed himself between the Princess Elizabeth and the Countess of Hertford. Nothing of moment occurred at the entertainment, which was on the same scale of grandeur and profusion as those preceding it, and which numbered as guests all the members of the council, and all the nobles and other persons of distinction then staying at the Tower; but Catherine's jealousy was re-awakened by the ill-disguised attentions of Seymour to her youthful rival—attentions which, it was quite evident, were anything but disagreeable to the princess. The slighted queen longed for an opportunity of launching her anger against them, but no pretext for such an outbreak being afforded her, she was obliged to devour her rage in silence.

Either Sir Thomas's prudence had deserted him, or the violence of his passion deprived his judgment of its due control, for at the close of the banquet he made no attempt to join Catherine, but again gave his hand to the princess, and without casting even a look at the neglected queen, or, it may be, not even thinking of her, followed his royal nephew and the Lady Jane Grey out of the hall. Catherine stood still as if stupified by his conduct, and pressed her hand against her heart to keep down the force of her emotions. She had not entirely recovered when Lady Hertford approached her.

"Methinks I can guess what is passing in your Highness's breast," observed the countess.

"What insolence is this?" cried Catherine, haughtily. "By what right do you pretend to penetrate the secrets of my breast?"

"Nay, it is your Highness's unguarded manner that betrays the state of your feelings," rejoined Lady Hertford. "Little penetration is requisite to discover that which must be apparent to all. My friendly intentions did not deserve this rebuff. I came to warn you that you are deceived—basely deceived by him in whom you place your trust. I overheard enough at the banquet to convince me of this. I could tell more—but my lips are now sealed."

"No! no! speak!—speak! I implore you, dear countess," cried Catherine, in extreme agitation. "You sat next him, and must have heard what passed—in pity, speak!"

"Compose yourself, I pray your Highness," replied Lady Hertford, secretly enjoying her distress, though feigning sympathy. "I feel for your situation, and will lend you help, if you are disposed to receive it. If you would effectually cure yourself of this unworthy passion—for so I must needs call it, though Sir Thomas is my husband's brother—which you have allowed to obtain dominion over you, go to-morrow at noon to Lady Herbert's chamber in the north gallery, and you shall hear enough to convince you of your lover's perfidy."

"Hath Elizabeth agreed to meet him there?" demanded Catherine, becoming as white as ashes.

"Your Highness will see," rejoined Lady Hertford. "If you will leave the matter to me, I will contrive that

you shall be an unseen and unsuspected witness of the interview."

"Do what you will, countess," said Catherine. "Prove him forsworn, and I will stifle every feeling I have for him, even if I expire in the effort."

"Proof shall not be wanting, trust me," replied Lady Hertford. "But I do this in the hope of curing your Highness, and from no other motive."

"I know it, and I shall be for ever beholden to you," rejoined the wounded queen, gratefully.

"It will be needful to the full success of the plan that your Highness put constraint upon yourself during the rest of the evening," observed Lady Hertford. "Let not Sir Thomas or the Lady Elizabeth fancy they are suspected."

"The task will be difficult," sighed Catherine, "but I will strive to perform it."

"Doubt not I will be as good as my word," said Lady Hertford. "Your Highness shall be present at the rendezvous, and shall have the power to surprisè them, if you see fit. I now humbly take leave of your Grace." And she mentally ejaculated, as she quitted the queen, "At length I have avenged the affront! No, not altogether—but to-morrow it shall be fully wiped out."

XII.

OF THE INTERVIEW BETWEEN SIR THOMAS SEYMOUR AND THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH; AND HOW IT WAS INTERRUPTED.

NEXT morning, Sir Thomas Seymour did not quit his chamber in the Wardrobe Tower until close upon the hour appointed for his interview with the Princess Elizabeth. Full of ardour, and confident of success, he then prepared to set forth. Ugo Harrington, who had assisted him to decorate his person, and just before his departure had handed him a pair of perfumed gloves, attended him to the door,

and wished him "buona riuscita." But it may be doubted whether the esquire's look was in entire accordance with the sentiment he expressed. There was more of malice in his smile than good will.

As Seymour traversed the long and winding corridors of the palace in the direction of the apartments assigned to his sister, Lady Herbert, his stately figure and superb attire attracted the admiration of the various subordinate officers of the household thronging the galleries, and, with one accord, they agreed that he was the noblest personage about the court.

"Sir Thomas looks as brave as a king," observed a master-cook, who was dressed in damask satin, with a chain of gold about his neck.

"His Highness the Lord Protector cannot compare with him," remarked an equally gaily-attired clerk of the kitchen.

"All the court ladies and gentlewomen, they say, are dying of love for him—and no wonder!" said a spruce clerk of the spicery.

"You should see him in the tilt-yard, good sirs," quoth a fat sewer of the hall.

"Or in the manage, or the fencing school," observed a tall henchman. "No man can put a horse through his paces, or handle the rapier, like Sir Thomas Seymour."

"The king's Highness ought to bestow the Lady Elizabeth's Grace in marriage upon him," observed a simpering page. "There is none other so worthy of her."

"That may be, or it may not," said Xit, who was standing among the group. "When the curtain is raised, then what is behind it shall be disclosed," he added, mysteriously.

"What mean'st thou by that, little Solon?" cried the page. "Wouldst intimate that thou knowest more than we who are in constant attendance on his Majesty?"

"What I know, I know—and it shall never be confided to thee, on that thou mayst depend," rejoined Xit.

"This dandiprat's conceit is insufferable," cried the page. "Since he hath been appointed the king's dwarf, he gives himself the airs of a Spanish grandee. I vote we drive him from our company."

"Attempt it at thy peril, proud minion," retorted Xit,

fiercely, laying his hand upon the hilt of the miniature weapon with which he had been provided. "I stir not, and, by our lady! he who touches me shall rue his rashness."

"Ha! what is this?" cried Fowler, who chanced to be passing at the moment—"a brawl near the presence-chamber! By the rood! you must mend your manners, my masters, or some of ye will smart for it. Ah! art thou there, my merry dapperling?" he added, noticing Xit. "Come with me. The king hath asked for thee."

"Dost mark that, sirrah page?" cried Xit, scornfully, to his opponent. "If I be not fit company for thee, I am for thy sovereign lord and master. An thou wait'st till his Majesty sends for thee, thou wilt tarry long enough. I follow on the instant, worshipful Master Fowler," he added, strutting after the gentleman of the privy-chamber, amid the laughter and jeers of the pages and henchmen.

Meanwhile, Sir Thomas Scymour had reached his destination, and with a throbbing heart entered the waiting-chamber of Lady Herbert's apartments. Here he found an old porter, who, bowing respectfully, informed him that her Ladyship, his sister, was without at the moment, but would return anon.

"I will await her coming, Thopas," said Sir Thomas, proceeding towards the inner apartment.

"Nay, there are two ladies in that room, Sir Thomas," cried the porter.

"Are they young or old, Thopas?" inquired Seymour.

"As to the matter of that, Sir Thomas, I should judge one of them to be neither old nor young, but betwixt and between, as we may say, though she is still a comely dame. But the other I take to be young, though I cannot speak positively, seeing that her face was muffled up, but her gait and figure were those of a buxom damsel."

"I will in and resolve the point," said Seymour, smiling at the old man's description of the princess and her governess. And lifting aside the arras, he entered the adjoining chamber.

It was a large room, hung with costly tapestry and silken stuffs, the latter embellished with golden birds deftly wrought in needlework, while the arras was covered with roses, fleurs-de-lys, and lions. Over the high carved chimney-piece was placed a life-like portrait of Henry VIII.,

painted by Holbein, by whom the chimney-piece had likewise been designed. The roof was of oak, ornamented with grotesque figures. The chamber was lighted by a deep oriel window filled with stained glass, and in this recess, at a table covered with a Turkey carpet, sat two ladies, one of whom, it is almost needless to state, was the Princess Elizabeth, and the other her governess, Mistress Ashley. Of the latter it may be observed, that she was amiable and accomplished, but foolishly indulgent to the caprices of her somewhat headstrong pupil, of whom she was dotingly fond, and who did just what she pleased with her.

Mistress Ashley was seated at the bottom of the recess, and was so much occupied with her book that it is to be presumed she did not remark Sir Thomas Seymour's entrance. At all events, she neither looked up then, nor raised her eyes during the subsequent interview between the princess and her suitor. What use she made of her ears we pretend not to determine. The lovers gave themselves little concern about her.

On beholding Sir Thomas, Elizabeth arose and came forward to meet him. Seymour immediately threw himself at her feet.

"Rise, Sir Thomas," she cried. "I cannot listen to you in this posture."

"Pardon me if I disobey you, sweet saint!" cried Seymour, passionately. "A suppliant at your shrine, I cannot rise till my prayers are heard. Forbid me not thus humbly to pay my vows to you—to tell you how deeply and devotedly I love you!"

"Nay, in good sooth, I must be obeyed," rejoined Elizabeth, in a tone not to be disputed.

"Have I become indifferent to you?" cried Seymour, rising, and assuming a despairing tone. "Have I deluded myself with the notion that my love was requited?"

"If I loved you not, Sir Thomas, I should not be here," she rejoined.

It was with difficulty that Seymour refrained from casting himself again at her feet.

"Never were syllables more grateful to mortal ear than those you have uttered, sweet princess," he cried. "Repeat them! oh repeat them! I can scarce believe I have heard aright."

“You make me feel I have said too much already, Sir Thomas. And yet I desire to deal frankly with you. 'Tis my nature to be candid.”

“I know it! I know it! Gladden me once more with those words, I beseech you! My heart thirsts for them.”

“Then, for the second time, I will own I love you, Sir Thomas. Will that suffice?”

“Oh! how shall I thank you for the happiness you confer upon me! What terms can I employ to express my admiration of your matchless beauty! What vows can I utter to attest my devotion! A life will not suffice to prove it—but my whole life shall be dedicated to you!”

“You would have me then believe that I am the sole object of your affections, Sir Thomas?” she said, looking searchingly at him.

“Can you for a moment doubt it, fair princess?” he rejoined. “No! my whole heart is given to you.”

“Perchance my suspicions may be unfounded, so I will try to dismiss them. Report speaks of you as a general admirer of our sex, Sir Thomas.”

“Report speaks falsely, as it ordinarily does, fair princess, if it would imply that I admire a beautiful woman more than I should a glorious picture or a nobly-sculptured statue. A lovely woman delights my eye, but only as a fair object to gaze upon.”

“Do you class the queen, my stepmother, among the fair women whom you merely gaze upon as you would at a picture or a statue, Sir Thomas?” demanded Elizabeth.

“Undoubtedly,” he replied. “Her Majesty’s beauty excites no stronger feeling in me. But I cannot look upon you unmoved, fair princess.”

Something like a sigh at this moment reached the ears of the pair, but they did not heed it, supposing the aspiration to proceed from Mistress Ashley.

“Mistrust me not, I implore you, fair princess!” continued Seymour, anxious to dispel any doubts yet lingering in Elizabeth’s breast. “Queen Catherine’s gracious manner towards me has, perchance, called forth a fervent expression of gratitude on my part, which may have been mistaken for a warmer feeling. I say not that it is so, but such may be the case.”

“The queen persuades herself you love her—of that I

am certain," said Elizabeth. "Is she self-deceived, or deceived by you?"

"Certes, she is not deceived by me. But I cannot answer for any self-delusion practised by her Highness."

"Hist! what was that?" exclaimed Elizabeth. "Methought I heard a sigh."

"Your governess must be much moved by the book she is reading," observed Seymour. "'Tis the second sigh she has heaved. But now that you have received every possible assurance of my truth and constancy, keep me no longer, I beseech you, in suspense. Am I to leave this chamber blest with the consciousness that I may call you mine, or must I hide my head in despair?"

"I would not have you wholly despair, Sir Thomas. But you must be content to wait. I am too young to think of nuptials yet. Some years must clapse ere I can take a husband. But I love you now, and do not think I shall change my mind. That is all I can say."

"Princess!" he exclaimed.

"I am a daughter of Henry the Eighth," continued Elizabeth, proudly, "and as such will do nothing unworthy of my great father, or of myself. Of all men I have ever beheld, you are the noblest-looking, Sir Thomas. To you, as I have already frankly confessed, my virgin heart hath been yielded. But to win my hand you must rise, for I will never wed with one inferior to myself in degree. Were you in your brother's place—were you Lord Protector of the realm—I would not say 'nay' to your suit. But unless you can attain a position equally eminent, I must conquer the love I bear you."

"If my ambition needed any spur, your words would furnish it, princess," cried Sir Thomas. "That I have dared to raise my eyes to your Highness is a proof that I aspire to greatness, and that no obstacle, however seemingly insurmountable, shall prevent me from obtaining it. I need scarcely tell you," he added, lowering his voice, "that I am the king your brother's favourite uncle, and that if I choose to exert the influence I have over my royal nephew, the dignity you have pointed out as needful to the claimant of your hand must be mine. As my consort, your Highness shall be second to none in the kingdom."

"But Edward may oppose our union" said Elizabeth.

“His Majesty will refuse me nothing—not even your hand,” he rejoined.

“But the Lord Protector—and the council?”

“All obstacles must yield to determination.”

“If Edward remains under the Lord Protector’s control, you will soon lose your influence over him,” observed Elizabeth.

“Be that my care to prevent,” he rejoined, significantly. “I am resolved to play for the highest stake, and to win it, or lose all. But to gain power without the prize that alone would render power valuable, would be to accomplish nothing. I am content to wait till such time as my position shall enable me to ask your hand in marriage. Meanwhile, as an incitement to present effort, and as a security for the future, I pray you let us plight our troth together.”

“I like not to bind myself so,” hesitated Elizabeth.

“Nay, I beseech you, refuse me not?” urged Seymour.

After a brief internal struggle, during which her lover pleaded yet more ardently, Elizabeth yielded, saying, “Be it as you will. What I have said I will abide by. Mistress Ashley shall witness our betrothal.”

With this, she gave her hand to Seymour, who pressed it to his lips, and they were proceeding together towards the recess in which the governess was still seated, when a piece of arras on the right of the chamber was suddenly drawn aside, and Queen Catherine stood before them.

XIII.

HOW THE COUNTESS OF HERTFORD WAS BALKED OF HER REVENGE; AND IN WHAT MANNER SHE SOUGHT TO DIVERT THE KING.

THE injured queen was pale as death. But her eyes flashed lightnings upon the startled pair, and she looked as if she would willingly annihilate them. Catherine indeed was very terrible at this moment, and it required no little courage to meet her glances. This courage Elizabeth

possessed in an eminent degree, and though somewhat alarmed on the infuriated queen's first appearance, she almost instantly recovered herself, and eyed Catherine with a glance almost as ireful and vindictive as her own.

Sir Thomas Seymour's position was very different, and infinitely more embarrassing. By this unexpected occurrence he had every reason to fear he should lose both Elizabeth and the queen. By the latter his perfidy had evidently been detected—immediate exposure to the princess in all probability awaited him. But he was not easily daunted, and though the situation was in the highest degree perplexing, almost desperate, he did not for a moment lose his presence of mind.

“Hold!” cried Catherine, extending her hand menacingly towards them, as they recoiled on beholding her. “No trothplight can take place between you. I forbid it in the name of the council. Such a contract would be in direct violation of your august father's will, Elizabeth; and by the reverence you owe his memory, I charge you to forbear.”

“You have much reverence for the king my father's memory, I must needs own, madam,” rejoined the princess, scornfully.

“I deserve the taunt, but it comes with an ill grace from your lips,” said Catherine.

“Why with an ill grace from mine?” cried Elizabeth. “Methinks no one hath greater right than myself to reproach King Henry's widow, who, forgetful alike of decency and duty, seeks to dishonour his memory—so far as dishonour can attach to a memory so glorious—by a marriage with another ere yet her royal husband's body is laid in the tomb.”

“Princess!” interposed Seymour, “you mistake.”

“What makes her Majesty here, if she be not brought by jealousy?” cried Elizabeth. “No, I do not mistake. When her Grace and I met yesterday, I felt I had a rival. Let her deny it if she can.”

“I shall not attempt to deny it,” replied Catherine, with dignity. “I have been deeply, basely deceived, and bitterly do I grieve that I listened to the voice of the tempter. But my present sufferings may serve to expiate my error, great though it be. May you, Elizabeth, never

feel the humiliation, the self-reproach, the anguish I now experience! I will not attempt to palliate my conduct, but I may say that throughout this kingdom more miserable wife did not, and could not, exist than the unfortunate Catherine Parr, the envied consort of your father, King Henry. Evil was the hour that, dazzled by the splendour of a crown, and confident in my own firmness of principle, I consented to become his spouse! Since that fatal moment I have known little peace. Anxiously as I studied my fickle husband's lightest humours, I found it scarcely possible to please him, and to anger him would have insured my destruction. Surrounded by enemies, I was constantly exposed to secret machinations, and with difficulty escaped them, because the king ever lent ready credence to charges brought against me. Mine was a wretched existence—so wretched that, though clothed with the semblance of power, I would gladly have exchanged lots with the meanest of my subjects. No love could outlast such usage. Terror trampled out the embers of expiring affection. I never approached my terrible husband but with constraint and dread, uncertain whether I might not quit him for the scaffold. What wonder, after well-nigh four years of such misery, when the days of my suffering drew towards a close, I should not be wholly insensible to the attentions of one who seemed to pity me, and feigned to adore me? What wonder, when death at last released me from tyranny almost insupportable, I should have forgotten that I was the widow of a great king, but a cruel husband, and ere he, who had more than once menaced me with death, and had even ordered the warrant for my execution, was laid in the grave, should have half-promised my hand to him who had sworn to efface my previous sufferings by a life of devotion? What wonder I should be beguiled by Sir Thomas Seymour, who hath the glozing tongue of the serpent, and who is as fair-spoken and specious as he is perfidious? No epithet is strong enough to express the scorn I hold him in. My conduct may not be wholly free from censure, and some, as you have done, Elizabeth, may call it indecorous. But what respect do I owe to the memory of one who could treat me as your royal father treated me? Levity was never laid to my charge, and I was ever faithful and obedient and conformable to the king

in all things. But all ties between us are now sundered. I owe him nothing—not even regret. I seek not to compare myself with the unhappy queens who have gone before me, but it ill becomes the daughter of Anne Boleyn to reproach Catherine Parr.”

“I pray your Majesty to pardon me for adding to your affliction,” said Elizabeth, “but I have been as basely deceived as yourself,” she added, with a disdainful glance at Seymour.

“Before your Highness condemns me, at least hear what I have to urge in my defence,” implored Sir Thomas, humbly.

But Elizabeth did not even bestow a look upon him. Turning towards Catherine, she said, “Your Majesty is right in your judgment of this man. He is subtle and perfidious as the serpent, but he is baser than that reptile. He has deceived us both. Let us make common cause against him, and crush him!”

“You are vindictive, fair princess,” cried Seymour, “but I would counsel both you and her Majesty to think twice ere you make any such attempt.”

“Ah! now we see him in his true character,” exclaimed Elizabeth. “The serpent hath found its sting.”

“Enough! we have unmasked him,” rejoined Catherine. “It shall be my business to forget him,” she added, with a sigh.

“Her Majesty relents,” muttered Seymour, watching her narrowly. “All is not yet lost in that quarter. Were she alone, I should not despair of retrieving my position at once.”

For a moment it seemed as if this chance would be given him. Calling to her governess, who had listened to the scene in affright, not knowing how it might terminate, Elizabeth prepared to depart, and looked at the queen-dowager, as if expecting she would accompany her. Catherine however remained irresolute, and Seymour made sure of recovering the ground he had lost.

At this juncture a page entered the room, and announced “The king!”

On this, the princess and her governess stood still.

“What brings the king here?” said Catherine. “Ah!

I understand. Is his Grace unattended?" she added to the page.

"The Countess of Hertford is with him, an please your Majesty," replied the page.

"'Tis as I suspected," thought Catherine; and, advancing towards the princess, she whispered, "Be cautious. Mischief enough has been done already by the countess. She must not triumph over us."

"Fear me not," rejoined Elizabeth, in the same tone. "No word of mine shall betray your Majesty."

While this was passing, a second page entered, and called out as the first had done, "The king!" Then followed a gentleman usher, bearing a wand, who made a similar announcement. After which, the tapestry covering the doorway was drawn aside, and Edward, accompanied by the Countess of Hertford, stepped into the room. Behind the young monarch came Fowler and Xit.

On entering the chamber Lady Hertford's first glance was directed towards Catherine, and she was surprised and mortified to see her exhibit so much calmness of manner and look. By a great effort the queen had succeeded in recovering her composure. Neither did Elizabeth betray any symptoms of agitation. As to Sir Thomas Seymour, he appeared so perfectly easy and unconcerned, that no one could imagine he had been the principal actor in such a scene as had just occurred. The only person who could not entirely shake off her perturbation was Mistress Ashley. But of her Lady Hertford took little heed.

Having received the obeisances of all the party whom he found in the room, Edward turned to Lady Hertford, and said, "When you begged me to come hither, good aunt, you promised me an agreeable surprise, and some diversion. In what does the surprise consist?"

"My good sister would appear to be surprised herself, to judge from her looks," observed Sir Thomas Seymour, "though, it may be, not so agreeably as she expected. In any case, I am indebted to her for bringing your Majesty here, though I fear it will be trouble taken for little gain."

"Perhaps my presence was the agreeable surprise intended for your Majesty," observed the queen-dowager. "If so, I shall feel highly flattered."

“Or mine,” added Elizabeth, “though Lady Hertford could scarce know I was here.”

“There your Highness is mistaken,” rejoined the countess. “I was fully aware you were here. Perhaps Sir Thomas will account for being here likewise?”

“Nothing more easy, good sister,” replied Seymour. “I came hither to see my sister Herbert, and learning she had gone to another part of the palace, I should have departed instantly, had I not found the Lady Elizabeth’s Grace and Mistress Ashley in possession of the room, and I remained in converse with them for a few minutes, when her Majesty the queen-dowager arrived, and detained me until now.”

“A likely story!” exclaimed Lady Hertford. “I can give another version of it.”

“Indeed! then pray do so, good aunt!” cried Edward.

But the countess’s reply was checked by a very menacing glance fixed upon her by Seymour.

“I have bethought me, and must decline to say more on the subject,” replied Lady Hertford.

“Nay, good aunt, that will not satisfy us,” cried Edward. “You impugn Sir Thomas’s veracity, and yet are unable, or unwilling, to prove him wrong.”

“Press not my sister further, sire,” said Seymour. “See you not she meditated some jest at my expense, which the plain statement I have given has robbed of its point?” And he again looked sternly at Lady Hertford.

“Ah! is it so, dear aunt?” said Edward, laughing. “Confess you have failed.”

“That cannot be denied, sire,” replied the countess.

“Ill-success should ever attend the mischief-maker,” said Catherine.

“Nay, your Majesty is too severe,” rejoined Edward. “Our good aunt had no mischievous design in what she proposed.”

“So your Grace thinks, and it is well you should continue to think so,” returned the queen.

Any rejoinder by the countess to the queen-dowager’s imprudent sarcasm was prevented by Sir Thomas Seymour, who kept his eye steadily fixed on his sister-in-law.

At this juncture Xit stepped forward, and, with an obeisance, said, “Your Majesty came here to be surprised

and diverted. 'Twere a pity you should be disappointed. Your amiable nature also delights in reconciling differences where any unfortunately exist. Will it please you to lay your commands upon the Countess of Hertford to give her hand to her Grace the queen-dowager?"

"Sire!" exclaimed the countess, "you will not suffer this?"

"Nay, let it be so, good aunt," interrupted the king. "The knave has some merry design which we would not spoil by a refusal."

Thus enjoined, Lady Hertford very reluctantly advanced towards the queen. But Catherine drew herself up proudly and coldly, and repelled her by a look.

"So!—so!" cried Xit, with a comical look at the king. "Peradventure, we shall succeed better in the next attempt. Will your Majesty enjoin Sir Thomas Seymour to take the hand of the Lady Elizabeth's Grace?"

"To what purpose?" demanded Edward.

"You will see, sire," replied the dwarf.

"Dar'st thou jest with me, thou saucy knave?" exclaimed the princess, giving him a sound box on the ears.

"Pity so soft a hand should strike so shrewdly," observed Xit, rubbing his cheek. "But I have not yet done, sire. For the last essay, I pray that Sir Thomas may be directed to give his hand to her Majesty the queen-dowager."

"The command will be unavailing," cried Catherine. "I will not suffer him to approach me."

"The secret is out," exclaimed Xit, triumphantly. "There has been a quarrel. This, then, was the pleasant surprise designed for your Majesty."

"On my faith, I believe the cunning varlet is right," said Edward.

"Thou givest thyself strange licence, sirrah," said Seymour to the dwarf; "but if thou takest any more such liberties with me, thine ears shall pay for thine impertinence."

"One of them has paid for it already," rejoined Xit, taking refuge behind the youthful monarch. "Mine ears are the king's, and if your Lordship deprives me of them you will do his Majesty a wrong. Saving your presence, sire, you have been brought here on a fool's errand, and it

is for your faithful dwarf to bring you off with credit—as he hath done.”

“Wisdom sometimes proceeds from the lips of fools,” observed Edward; “and we have learnt more from thy folly than we might have done from our discernment. That some misunderstanding exists is evident—whence originating we care not to inquire—but it must be set to rights. Come, good aunt,” to Lady Hertford, “you shall go back with us. As to you, gentle uncle,” he added, with a gracious smile, to Sir Thomas, “since neither the queen our mother, nor the princess our sister, seem to desire your company, we will relieve them of it, and will pray you to attend us in an inspection of our armoury.”

Saluting the queen-dowager and Elizabeth, he quitted the chamber with Lady Hertford and Sir Thomas; the pages and henchmen, with Xit and Fowler, following him.

Sir Thomas Seymour remained for some time in attendance upon his royal nephew, and though by no means in a lively mood, he contrived to disguise his feelings so effectually, and conversed with such apparent gaiety and animation, that it was quite impossible to suspect he had any secret cause of uneasiness.

Accompanied by his uncle, the young king visited the Tower armoury and examined the formidable store of military engines at that time collected within it—bombards, culverins, sakers, and falconets, with portable fire-arms, as arquebuses, demi-haques, and dags. Edward next turned his attention to the armour, noting the breastplates of the globose form then in use, with the cuisses, casques, and gauntlets. Swords of all shapes and sizes, from the huge two-handed blade to the beautiful damascened rapier, next underwent a careful inspection, with other offensive weapons then in use, as lances, battle-axes, partisans, and martels. While pointing out such of these implements as were most worthy of the young king’s notice, Seymour endeavoured to profit by the occasion to inflame his breast with a love of military renown, and to a certain extent succeeded. Edward’s cheek glowed and his eye flashed as he listened to his uncle’s soldier-like details of certain incidents in the late war with France.

“In time I doubt not your Majesty will lead your armies in person,” observed Seymour, in conclusion, “and

then our foes may find that England possesses another Edward, valiant as the third of that name, or as the Black Prince, his warrior son."

"Hereafter it may be so," returned the king, with a gracious smile. "But, meanwhile, we must intrust the command of our armies to those better able to lead them than ourself."

"Ah! here is a-weapon that merits your Majesty's attention," exclaimed Seymour, taking down a large two-handed sword. "With this very blade your august sire often fought at the barriers with the Duke of Suffolk, who alone was his match. Your Highness will scarce wield it."

"Let me try," cried Edward, taking the mighty weapon, and vainly endeavouring to make a sweep with it. "Nay, in good sooth it is above my strength," he added, resigning the weapon to his uncle.

"I will teach your Majesty so to handle it that it shall defend you against ten ordinary blades," cried Sir Thomas. "As thus;" and stepping backwards to a sufficient distance, he whirled round the immense blade with extraordinary quickness—delivering a thrust with it and instantly afterwards a downright blow. "An enemy would have fallen for each of those blows," he continued, laughing. "But the sword may be held with the left hand, and a thrust delivered in this manner," accompanying the words with a suitable action. "But there is danger that your adversary may seize the blade, and pluck it from you."

"So I should judge," replied Edward. "Dost think thou couldst lift that sword?" he added to Xit, who was regarding Sir Thomas Seymour's performance with admiration.

"I nothing doubt my ability to wield it, sire; ay, and to deliver a thrust with it for the matter of that," replied the dwarf, confidently. "I have borne Og's partisan, which is a larger weapon."

"Give it him, gentle uncle," said the king.

"'Tis not a toy for his hands," cried Sir Thomas, flinging down the mighty sword with a clatter that made Xit skip backwards in affright. But he presently returned, and grasping the pommel with both hands, strove, but ineffectually, to describe a circle with the weapon. After repeated efforts, which put his own head in some danger,

and caused the king much merriment, Xit was obliged to desist, and confess that the sword was too heavy for him.

Sir Thomas next explained to the king the various wards, thrusts, and blows that could be practised with bill, partisan, and halberd, illustrating his remarks with the weapons in question, which he handled with the greatest dexterity. The lesson over, Edward returned to the palace, and sending for Sir John Cheke and Doctor Cox, applied himself diligently to his studies, while Seymour, glad to be released, proceeded to the Wardrobe Tower.

XIV

SHOWING HOW UGO HARRINGTON WAS ADMITTED INTO
SIR THOMAS SEYMOUR'S CONFIDENCE.

ON entering his own chamber, Sir Thomas at once threw off the mask, and his esquire, perceiving from the expression of his countenance that something had gone wrong, forbore to address him, but watched him with a strange sort of smile as he flung himself angrily on a couch. After awhile, Seymour broke the silence.

"Thou canst partly guess what has happened, Ugo," he said. "But it is worse than even thy imagination can conceive. I have lost them both."

"Diavolo! both! In what way, monsignore?"

"The last person on earth I should have desired or looked for was a secret witness of my interview with the princess; and at the very moment I made sure of the prize, it was snatched from my grasp. When I tell thee that Queen Catherine stepped from behind the arras, where she had lain *perdue*, listening to all my love-speeches to the princess, and registering all my vows, thou wilt conceive the scene that followed. Her Majesty looked as if she could have poniarded me, as thy amiable Florentines sometimes do their faithless lovers. But this was nothing to the reproaches I had to endure on both sides. They are ringing in my ears even now."

“The situation must have been the reverse of pleasant. And you failed in reconciling yourself with either of the fair ones, eh, monsignore?”

“Failed utterly, Ugo. The princess is certainly lost; and I fear the queen also.”

“Per dio! that is unlucky. You will remember I had misgivings when your Lordship embarked on this adventure.”

“Would I had followed thy counsel, Ugo, and remained constant to Catherine. But I was enslaved by the charms of the bewitching Elizabeth, whom even now that she scorns me I adore.”

“You say she is lost?”

“Alas! yes, Ugo—irrecoverably lost.”

“In that case, think of her no more, but turn your thoughts wholly on the queen—that is, if you have any hope of retrieving your position with her Majesty.”

“I do not entirely despair of a reconciliation, Ugo. But it will be difficult to effect.”

“Via, via, monsignore. Every great object is difficult of attainment. You have often told me your ruling passion is ambition. But you appear to have misjudged yourself.”

“I told thee the truth,” cried Seymour, springing from the couch. “Ambition is my ruling passion, and all others must bow to it. Henceforth, I shall think only of my advancement. Hark thee, Ugo, thou knowest something of my projects, but thou shalt know more, for I can trust thee.” The esquire bowed and smiled. “I owe the Lord Protector little brotherly love, for he has ever shown himself my enemy. For years he has striven to keep me down, but unsuccessfully, for I have risen in spite of him. Had my sister, Queen Jane, lived, I should have mounted rapidly, for she preferred me to her elder brother; but when I lost her, I lost much of Henry’s favour. And why?—because my brother Edward feared I should supplant him. Thus, when Henry would have ennobled me and enriched me, as he had ennobled and enriched Edward, I was passed by as of no account. Can I forget such treatment? Never!”

“I marvel not at your resentment, monsignore.”

“Neither wilt thou marvel at the reprisals I mean to

take for the wrong I have endured. Hertford's jealousy pursued me to the last with the king. He could not prevent certain marks of favour being bestowed upon me, nor altogether check the liking Henry had for me, and which manifested itself in various ways, but he so misrepresented me, that I never obtained the king's confidence—neither would his Majesty confer any important trust upon me. Many posts for which I was specially fitted became vacant while Hertford was at the head of affairs, but his malignant influence was ever at work with the king, and I was overlooked. By my brother's arts, and his alone, I was excluded from the list of Henry's executors, and degraded to the lower council, though my rightful place was with the upper. But this last injustice would have been redressed had Henry lived a short space longer. Sir John Gage and myself were kept from the dying king's presence till he could no longer cause his behests to be obeyed. Something strange there was in the signing of the will, Ugo, that inclines me to suspect all was not right; and Sir John is of my opinion, though he keeps a close tongue about the matter. In my belief the king was dead, or dying, when the will was stamped—for stamped it was, not signed."

"If such were the case, monsignore, the perpetrators of the fraud shall scarce escape the punishment due to their offence."

"Neither in this world nor the next shall they escape it," rejoined Scymour, sternly. "What Henry's intentions were I know from Sir John Gage—how they were frustrated is best known to my brother. But not only has Hertford made me no reparation for the great wrong done me by him, but his jealousy has latterly increased to positive hate. My influence, he feels, is greater with our royal nephew than his own. Therefore he fears me, and would remove me altogether if he could. Luckily, that is not in his power. I am too strong for him now," he added, with a bitter smile, "and he will find it difficult to crush me, or even keep me down much longer. He thinks to appease me by making me Baron Seymour of Sudley, and High Admiral of England. That is something, and I shall refuse neither the title nor the post. But they will not content me. Hertford would have all power and greatness centre in himself, and leave little save the skirts to me.

He hath made himself Lord Protector and governor of the king's person—the latter office should be mine—would be mine now, if the king had his way—shall be mine hereafter!”

“May your expectations be fulfilled, monsignore!” exclaimed Ugo.

“Thou wilt see,” rejoined Seymour, with a significant smile. “But to make an end of my grievances. Not only has Hertford taken the two most important offices in the state to himself, but he means to add to them the dignities of Lord High Treasurer and Earl Marshal, forfeited by the Duke of Norfolk's attainder, with the style and title of Duke of Somerset.”

“His Highness takes good care of himself, it must be owned,” observed Ugo.

“Let him look well to his seat if he would keep it,” rejoined Seymour, “for by my father's head I will not rest till I supplant him and instal myself in his place. What he fears will come to pass. By surrendering to me half the spoil, he might have kept me quiet, but now I will be satisfied only with the whole. I will be Duke, Protector, Governor, Lord High Treasurer, Earl Marshal—all. And he shall be—less than I am now!”

“His Highness will richly have deserved his fate should it so befall him.”

“The condition of parties is favourable to my project,” pursued Seymour. “Beneath the crust of the volcano lurks a fire ready to burst forth on the slightest disturbance of the surface. The ancient nobility hate my brother, and unwillingly submit to him; while, on the contrary, they are friendly to me. With the Romanists I stand far better than he does, because, though I profess the New Faith, I am tolerant of the Old, and care not to pursue the Reformation further. My plan will be that of the late king, who showed his sagacity in the course he pursued, namely, to make one sect balance the other, and give neither the preponderance. By allying himself so closely with the Reformers, Hertford will incur the bitter hostility of the Papists, and on this I count. My faction will soon be stronger than his. And he must walk warily if I cannot catch him tripping. Then let him look to himself.”

“Your Lordship's influence with the king is the best

guarantee for the success of your project," remarked Ugo. "If the council could likewise be won, the rest were easy."

"I have already sounded several of them, but I must proceed cautiously, lest I awaken my brother's suspicions. The Lord Chancellor is discontented; and the Earl of Arundel, Lord St John, the Bishop of Durham, and Sir Anthony Brown, are sure to become alienated when further attempts are made by Cranmer to deepen the quarrel with the See of Rome. Disunion must ensue, and at that critical juncture I shall step in at the head of a powerful party, and grasp the reins of government. In anticipation of such an event, it shall be my business to secure the king's person. I do not desire to stir up rebellion, but rather than miss my mark I will do so; and if a revolt occurs, it shall not want a leader."

"Your Lordship is a conspirator on a grand scale—a second Catiline!" observed Ugo, smiling in his singular way.

"This is a time when plots must needs be rife, for all is disjointed and unsettled," observed Seymour. "A king on the throne who is king only by name—ministers who would usurp supreme authority—conflicting parties both in Church and State—an old nobility detesting those recently created—a new nobility rapacious and insatiable—a discontented, oppressed, and overtaxed people,—out of these troubled elements plots and conspiracies must arise—and some besides my own I can already see are hatching."

"Da vero, monsignore?" exclaimed Ugo, with an inquiring look.

"Ay, indeed," rejoined Seymour. "My brother is not firm enough to hold his place against the difficulties and dangers certain to beset him, even if he had nothing to fear from me," observed Seymour. "Lord Lisle feigns to be his friend, but I suspect he nourishes secret designs against him."

"Methought Lord Lisle was a partisan of your Lordship," remarked Ugo, with a certain disquietude.

"I will not trust him further till I feel more sure of him. What is thy opinion of Lisle, Ugo? Speak out. Thou know'st him."

"Not enough to judge him correctly, monsignore,"

replied the esquire. "But I am sure he could help you greatly if he would."

"Not a doubt of it," replied Seymour. "Lisle is precisely the man for my purpose; he is daring, ambitious, and troubled with few scruples. See what thou canst do with him, Ugo, but do not commit me."

"Rest easy, monsignore."

"Be liberal in thy offers; hold out any temptation thou pleasest."

"All shall be done as you desire. But hark! there is some one in the waiting-chamber."

"'Tis Dorset! I know his voice," cried Seymour. "What brings him here? Pray Heaven he has not heard of my quarrel with the queen!"

"That is not likely," replied the esquire. "Her Majesty will keep her own counsel. But here comes his Lordship. Shall I retire, monsignore?"

"Ay, but remain within call."

As Ugo withdrew, the marquis was ushered in by a page, and very heartily welcomed by Sir Thomas.

"I have come to inquire after your health, good Sir Thomas," observed Dorset. "Methinks you look wondrous well."

"Never better, my dear marquis—never better. How fares my lady marchioness, and your daughter, the fair Lady Jane? Have you reflected on my proposition?"

"Ahem?—yes," hesitated the other. "I almost fear I shall be obliged to decline it."

"He *has* heard of the quarrel," thought Seymour. "Your Lordship is the best judge of your own affairs," he said, in an indifferent tone. "Without me the union we spoke of will not take place. You are aware, I suppose, that the Lord Protector intends to affiance the king to the infant Queen of Scots, who promises to be of extraordinary beauty."

"Ay, but the Scots refuse the treaty of marriage proposed by the late king for their infant queen," replied Dorset. "If Henry the Eighth failed, the Lord Protector is not likely to prove successful."

"The acceptance of the treaty may be enforced by the sword—a mode of settlement which the Lord Protector will assuredly try, if he be not prevented."

“But other powers will not permit the alliance. King Francis is opposed to it.”

“His Most Christian Majesty will not long outlast his royal brother, Henry, if what I hear of him from his ambassador be true. The opposition of France will be useless. Rather than suffer the horrors of war, the Scots will consent to the treaty. My royal nephew’s affiancement with the youthful Queen Mary, I repeat, *will* take place—if it be not prevented.”

“But who shall prevent it?” cried the marquis.

Seymour smiled, as who should say, “I can prevent it, if I choose.” But he did not give utterance to the words.

“I fear you somewhat overrate your power, Sir Thomas.”

“Not a whit, my dear marquis. I promise nothing that I will not perform.” Approaching close to Dorset, he said in his ear, “I undertake to marry your daughter, the Lady Jane, to my royal nephew. But she must be committed to my charge.”

“But you must be wedded before you can take charge of her—well wedded, Sir Thomas. An exalted personage like her Majesty the queen-dowager, for instance, would be precisely the guardian I should desire for my daughter.”

“I was certain he had heard of the quarrel,” thought Seymour. “Well, marquis,” he said, “suppose the Lady Jane Grey should be intrusted to her Majesty?”

“Ah! then, indeed—but no! that cannot be.”

“Why not? I see what has happened. My mischief-making sister-in-law, Lady Hertford, has informed the marchioness that there has been a trifling misunderstanding between the queen and myself.”

“Not a trifling misunderstanding, as I hear—for I will confess that a hint of the matter has been given me—but a violent quarrel, caused by her Highness’s jealousy of the princess. Ah! Sir Thomas—what it is to be the handsomest man at court! But you have thrown away a great chance of aggrandisement.”

“Nonsense! I have thrown away no chance, as you will find, my dear marquis. My amiable sister-in-law has made the most of the quarrel, which was of her own contrivance, and designed not to annoy me, but the queen, whose affronts to her at the banquet Lady Hertford seeks

to avenge. The disagreement between myself and her Majesty is of no moment—a mere lover's quarrel—and will be speedily set right."

"Right glad am I to hear you say so, Sir Thomas—right glad for your own sake."

"And for yours as well, my dear marquis. If I marry not the queen, your daughter marries not the king."

"That is coming to the point, Sir Thomas."

"I never go round-about when a straight course will serve my turn. And now, marquis, am I to have the disposal of the Lady Jane's hand?"

"Ah, marry, Sir Thomas, and I shall be greatly beholden to you."

"Is there aught more I can do to content your Lordship?"

"I do not like to trouble you too much, Sir Thomas, but I happen at this moment to have occasion for a few hundred pounds—say five hundred—and if you can, without inconvenience, lend me the amount, I shall be infinitely indebted to you. Any security you may require—"

"No security is needed, marquis. Your word will suffice. I am enchanted to be able to oblige you—not now, but at all times. What ho, Ugo!" he cried; adding, as the esquire, who was within ear-shot, promptly answered the summons, "Here is the key of my coffer. Count out five hundred pounds in gold, and let that sum be conveyed to the Marquis of Dorset's apartments."

Ugo took the small gold key from his patron, bowed, and retired.

"If I had asked him for double the amount he would have given it," muttered Dorset. "But I will have the rest at some other time." "You are very confident in your esquire's honesty, Sir Thomas?" he added, aloud.

"With good reason, my Lord. I have proved it."

At this moment a page entered, and announced: "The king!" Immediately afterwards Edward was ceremoniously ushered into the chamber by Fowler. The rest of the young monarch's attendants, amongst whom was Nit, remained in the ante-chamber.

"Having finished my studies, gentle uncle," he cried, "I am come to have an hour's recreation with you. Shall we walk forth upon the ramparts?" Sir Thomas bowed

assent. "I would have had my sister Elizabeth's company, but she is out of sorts, and prayed to be excused. Ah! gentle uncle, you are to blame there. You have done something to offend her. But I must have you friends again. I cannot let two persons I love so much remain at variance."

"Nay, your Majesty, there is no difference between us."

"I am sure there is, and between the queen, our mother, also—but we will set it right. You also shall bear us company in our walk, if you will, my Lord of Dorset. How doth our fair cousin, the Lady Jane?"

"My daughter is well—quite well, my gracious liege," replied Dorset. "Like your Majesty, she pursues her studies even in the Tower. I left her but now reading the *Phæd* of Plato."

"Then we will not disturb her, for she cannot be better employed. Otherwise, we should have been glad to converse with her during our walk."

"Nay, I am sure the Lady Jane would prefer your Majesty's society to that of the greatest heathen philosopher—even than that of the divine Plato," observed Seymour.

"I know not that," replied Edward, smiling. "Our cousin Jane loves books better than society. Ere long, you will have good reason to be proud of your daughter's erudition, my Lord Marquis."

"I will say for the Lady Jane Grey what her father could not say for her," interposed Seymour, "that she is pious as wise, and gentle as pious. Her virtues fit her for a throne."

"You speak enthusiastically, gentle uncle," said Edward. "Yet you go not beyond the truth. Such is my own opinion of my cousin. But she must not study over much. A little exercise will do her good. How say you, my Lord of Dorset?"

"I will bring her to your Majesty forthwith," replied the marquis. "Twill delight her to obey you."

"You will find us on the northern ramparts," said Edward, as Dorset, with a profound obeisance, withdrew. "You are right, gentle uncle," he observed, as soon as they were alone. "My cousin Jane would adorn a throne. I would I might wed such another."

“Why not wed the Lady Jane herself, my liege?” demanded Seymour.

“My uncle the Lord Protector designs to affiance me to the infant Queen of Scots.”

“But if your Majesty prefers the Lady Jane?”

“I shall have no choice,” sighed Edward.

“Consult me before you assent to any betrothal, sire.”

“I will,” replied Edward, with a smile, as he went forth with his uncle.

XV

OF XIT'S PERILOUS FLIGHT ACROSS THE TOWER MOAT ON PACOLET'S HORSE.

ACCOMPANIED by Seymour, and followed by Fowler and Xit, with a train of pages and henchmen, Edward ascended to the outer ballium wall by a flight of stone steps opposite the Broad Arrow Tower, and proceeded slowly towards the large circular bastion, known as the Brass Mount, situated on the north-eastern extremity of the ramparts. Here he halted, and tried to keep up a conversation with his uncle, but it was evident, from his heedless manner, that his thoughts were absent. At length Jane appeared upon the ramparts with her father, and uttering an exclamation of delight, the young king hurried off to meet her. When within a few paces of his fair cousin, however, he stopped, as if struck by the indecorum of the proceeding, his cheeks all a-flame, yet not burning a whit more brightly than those of the Lady Jane, who stopped as he stopped, and made him a lowly obeisance. The bashfulness with which Edward had been suddenly afflicted continued until the arrival of Sir Thomas Seymour, whose light laughter and playful remarks soon dissipated it, and he became voluble enough. By his desire the Lady Jane walked on with him, and he at once engaged her in discourse, not upon light and trivial themes, but on grave subjects such as he had discussed with her in the privy-garden.

It was good to see them thus occupied, but it would have been better to have listened to their talk. Two such children have rarely come together. Two beings more perfectly adapted to each other could not be found, and yet—But we will not peer into futurity. The Marquis of Dorset and Sir Thomas Seymour followed at a respectful distance, both enchanted at what was taking place. The latter felt confident of the realisation of his ambitious designs; the former regarded his daughter as already queen.

Nearly an hour passed in this way—the progress of time being unnoted by the young king and his fair companion—when Edward, who had been hitherto almost unobservant of aught save his cousin, remarked that something unusual was taking place on the opposite side of the Tower moat. A large circle had been formed, in the midst of which a mountebank was performing some feats, which seemed, from the shouts and applause they elicited, to astonish and delight the beholders. What the feats were the king could not make out. Soon afterwards the crowd began to disperse, and the mountebank was seen carrying off a wooden horse, with which no doubt he had been diverting the spectators.

“What tricks hath the fellow been playing with that wooden horse?” inquired the king of Seymour.

“Nay, my liege, it passeth my power to satisfy you,” answered Sir Thomas.

“An please your Majesty, I can give you the information you seek,” said Xit, stepping forward. “’Tis Paolet, the French saltinbanco, and his Enchanted Steed. To ordinary observation the horse seems made of wood; but Paolet declares it is endowed with magic power, and will fly with its rider through the air. I have never seen the feat done, so I dare not vouch for the truth of the statement.”

“Why, thou simple knave, ’tis an old tale thou art reciting,” observed the Lady Jane. “Paolet’s enchanted horse is described in the French romance of Valentine and Orson.”

“I know not how that may be, most gracious lady, for I am not well read in French romance,” replied Xit, “but yonder fellow is Paolet, and that is his horse, and a wonderful little horse it is. Your Majesty may smile, but I suspect there is magic in it.”

“If so, the magician ought to be burned,” observed Edward; “but I do not think he is a real dealer in the black art.”

“What will you say, sire, when I tell you that this sorcerer—this Pacolet—affirms that his horse can carry me across the Tower moat?”

“When I see it done, I will own that Pacolet is really the magician thou proclaimest him,” replied the king. “I am half inclined to test the truth of the fellow’s assertion. How say you, fair cousin?” he added to Lady Jane. “Shall we have this Pacolet here, and make him exhibit the wondrous power of his steed?”

“’Twould be a curious sight, no doubt, if the man himself were not put in jeopardy,” she replied.

“Nay, if the horse be brought, I crave your Majesty’s permission to ride him?” said Xit. “I have an extraordinary desire to perform the feat.”

“But thou mayst break thy neck, and I have no desire to lose thee.”

“Your Majesty is most gracious, but the risk is nothing compared with the honour to be acquired.”

“Let the knave have his way, good my liege,” observed Sir Thomas Seymour. “No harm shall befall him. Tomorrow afternoon, at this hour, I will have Pacolet and his steed brought hither, and if it shall please your Majesty to attend, I will promise you good sport.”

“We will not fail you, gentle uncle; and we hope our fair cousin will condescend to be present likewise?”

As may be supposed, the Lady Jane did not refuse her assent, and after another short turn upon the ramparts, the king and those with him returned to the palace.

On the following afternoon Edward, who had been looking forward with some eagerness to the diversion promised him by his uncle, again appeared on the ramparts, but with a much more numerous retinue than on the previous occasion. In addition to Sir Thomas Seymour and the Marquis of Dorset, the royal party now comprised the Earl of Arundel, lord chamberlain, Sir John Gage, and Sir John Markham. Amongst the ladies, besides the Marchioness of Dorset and her daughter, the Lady Jane Grey, were the Princess Elizabeth and the queen-dowager. The two latter were bidden to the exhibition by the amiable young

monarch with the express design of composing the differences which he saw still existed between them and his uncle. But he failed in effecting a reconciliation. Both his sister and the queen remained immovable. Elizabeth treated Sir Thomas with the utmost disdain, and would not vouchsafe him either a word or a look. Though not so scornful in manner as the princess, Catherine was equally cold and reserved, and haughtily repelled her faithless suitor's advances. Unable to comprehend the cause of the quarrel, Edward was nevertheless much distressed by it, and expressed his regrets to his uncle, who shrugged his shoulders carelessly, as if it were a matter that gave him very little concern. Secretly however Sir Thomas had used every endeavour to re-establish himself in the queen's good graces. He had besought a private interview, but the request was refused. He had written to her more than one moving epistle, full of regrets, despair, prayers, protestations, and promises. These missives were conveyed by the trusty hand of his esquire, but no response came back. Still Sir Thomas, though rebuffed, was not discouraged. The storm would soon blow over, he thought. After the sharpest frost must come a thaw. The storm however was of some duration, and the frost lasted longer than he anticipated.

Whatever might be passing within, Sir Thomas took care not to let his appearance or manner be affected by it. Gay and full of spirit as ever, he seemed only anxious about his royal nephew's amusement. Seymour's chief aim, in fact, seemed to bring Edward and the Lady Jane together, and if he failed in all else, in this he entirely succeeded. During the whole time he remained on the ramparts, Edward kept his fair cousin near him, and seemed completely engrossed by her, much to the delight of the Marchioness of Dorset, who could not sufficiently express her gratitude to the contriver of the meeting.

But it is time to ascertain what preparations had been made for Xit's aerial expedition. The Brass Mount had been selected as the starting-point of the magic steed. The summit of this bastion, the largest, the loftiest, and the strongest of the Tower fortifications, was capable of accommodating a great number of persons, but only the royal party and those engaged in the exhibition were ad-

mitted upon it. The Brass Mount was defended by high embattled walls, on the inner side of which was a platform, whereon some of the heaviest guns in the fortress were placed, with their muzzles protruding through the crenelated walls. One of these guns had been dismantled, and its carriage appropriated to the Enchanted Horse, which was now set upon it, with its head towards the opening in the parapet, as if ready for flight.

A strange-looking steed it was! ugly as a hobgoblin—large enough undoubtedly for a rider of Xit's proportions, yet not equal in size to a full-grown Shetland pony. It had a singularly weird and wicked-looking head, befitting an animal possessed of supernatural powers, horns as well as ears, and immense eyes, which it could open and shut and turn in any direction. Only the head, neck, and tail were visible, the body of the horse being covered with red and yellow striped trappings that reached to the ground. On its head was a shaffron of blood-red plumes. It was furnished with a bridle having very broad reins, and a saddle with a very high peak and crupper; but in lieu of stirrups a funnel-topped boot dangled on either side. Such was Pacolet's horse.

The enchanter himself was a swarthy-complexioned man, with quick, black eyes, and gipsy features, and probably belonged to the wandering tribe. Habited in a tight-fitting dress of tawny silk, and wearing a brass girdle inscribed with mystic characters, and a tall pointed cap covered with similar figures, he carried a white rod, with a small gilt apple on the top.

On either side of the magic steed, with their huge parrisans in hand, stood Gog and Magog. The laughter playing about their broad features showed they were in high good humour, and expectant of entertainment. The dwarfish hero of the day had not yet made his appearance, he being in the king's train.

While the royal party were taking up a position on the platform contiguous to the magic steed, the fantastic appearance of which caused much merriment, Sir Thomas Seymour went up to Pacolet, and after a few words with him, clapped his hands to intimate that all was ready. At this signal the diminutive figure of Xit instantly detached itself from the group of laughing pages and henchmen.

Marching with a very consequential step, and bowing ceremoniously to the king as he passed, the dwarf was met half way by Pacolet, who, taking him by the hand, lifted him on to the platform.

"My steed is ready, if you are, good master Xit," said the courteous enchanter. "Will it please you to mount him at once?"

"Not so fast, worthy Pacolet," rejoined Xit, conscious that all eyes were upon him, and anxious to display himself. "Give me a moment to examine thy horse. By my troth! he hath a vicious-looking head."

"You will find him tractable enough when you are on his back," observed Pacolet, displaying two ranges of very white teeth.

"May be so; yet I like not the expression of his eye. It hath malice and devilry in it, as if he would rejoice to throw me. Saints protect us! the beast seemed to wink at me."

"Not unlikely," replied Pacolet, who had placed one hand on the horse's head; "he has a habit of winking when he is pleased."

"Is that a sign of his satisfaction?" observed Xit. "I should have judged the contrary. How is the creature designated?"

"He is called Dædalus—at your service, good master Xit."

"Dædalus!" exclaimed Xit, startled. "Pray Heaven he prove me not an Icarus. I like not the name. 'Tis of ill omen."

"'Tis a name like any other," observed Pacolet, shrugging his shoulders. "So ho! Dædalus—so ho, sir! You see he is eager for flight."

"If thou art afraid to mount, say so at once, and retire," cried Gog, gruffly. "His Majesty will be wearied with this trifling."

"I afraid?" exclaimed Xit, indignantly. "When didst ever know me shrink from danger, base giant? One more question, worthy Pacolet, and I have done. What mean those boots?"

"They are designed to encase thy legs, and keep thee in thy seat," rejoined the enchanter.

“But I can maintain my seat without them,” returned Xit, with a displeased look.

“A truce to this! Off with thee without more ado!” cried Magog. And seizing the dwarf, he clapped him in the saddle, while Pacolet, without a moment’s loss of time, thrust his legs into the boots. Xit was disposed to be rebellious during the latter proceeding, but his strength availed him little, and he was obliged to yield with the best grace he could. At last, Pacolet left him, and went to the rear of the horse.

On this, Xit took his cap, and waving an adieu to the royal party, all of whom looked much diverted with the scene, kicked his boots against the horse’s sides, and shouted, “Away with thee, Dædalus!—away!”

But though he continued the application with increased vigour, the horse would not stir, but emitted an angry snorting sound.

“Pest take him!” cried the dwarf. “He won’t move.”

“Methought thou hadst been aware of the secret,” rejoined Pacolet. “Turn the pin on his right shoulder, and he will move quickly enough.”

Xit followed the enchanter’s instructions, and Dædalus immediately began to glide through the opening in the parapet, not so quickly, though, but that his adventurous little rider was again enabled to wave his cap to the king. In another moment the dwarf had disappeared, and a hurried movement was made to the edge of the battlements to see what had become of him.

It was then perceptible to those nearest to the point of departure how the flight was to be accomplished. Two long pieces of wire, sufficiently strong to sustain the weight required, but nearly invisible at a short distance, were drawn across the moat from the bastion to the opposite bank, and along these wires the enchanted horse slipped, being guided in its descent by a cord fixed to its crupper—which cord was held by Pacolet. A large crowd was collected on the banks of the moat; but the spot where the wires were fastened down, and where it was expected the dwarf would descend, was kept clear by Og and half a dozen tall yeomen of the guard.

No sooner did Xit, mounted on the wooden horse, issue from the battlements, than a loud shout was raised by the

beholders, to which the delighted dwarf responded by waving his hat to them, and he then commenced his downward course in the most triumphant manner. His exultation increased as he advanced; but it cost him dear. While replying to the cheers with which he was greeted, he leaned too much towards the left, and the horse immediately turned over, leaving his rider hanging head downwards over the moat.

The shouts of laughter were instantly changed to cries of affright, but no assistance could be rendered the unfortunate dwarf, for Pacolet vainly tried to pull him up again. The spectators however were not kept long in suspense. Xit's struggles soon disengaged his legs from the boots, and he dropped headlong into the moat, and disappeared beneath the tide.

But rescue was at hand. With the utmost promptitude Og dashed into the fosse, and waded out to the spot where Xit had sunk, which was about the middle of the moat. Though the water quickly reached up to his shoulders, the giant went on until the head of the mannikin suddenly popped up beside him. With a shout of satisfaction Og then seized him, held him aloft like a dripping water-rat, and bore him safely ashore, amid the laughter and acclamations of the beholders.

XVI.

IN WHAT MANNER THE OBSEQUIES OF KING HENRY VIII. WERE CELEBRATED.—SHOWING HOW THE FUNERAL PROCESSION SET FORTH FROM THE PALACE AT WESTMINSTER.

THE time appointed for placing the late king within the tomb now drew nigh, and as the obsequies were the most magnificent ever celebrated in this country, or perhaps in any other, we may be excused for dwelling upon them at some length; the rather, that besides presenting a very striking illustration of the customs of an age that

delighted in shows and solemnities of all kinds, the extraordinary honours paid to Henry on his interment prove the estimation in which his memory was held by his subjects; and that notwithstanding the tyranny of his rule, he was regarded as a mighty monarch. By its unprecedented splendour, his burial worthily closed a reign which was one long pageant—a pageant for the most part gorgeous; sometimes gloomy, tragical, and even awful; but ever grand and imposing. Luckily, ample materials for accurate description are provided for us, and we shall avail ourselves freely of them, in order to present a full account of the most remarkable Royal Funeral on record.

Embalmed by apothecaries and chirurgeons of greatest skill in the art, wrapped in cerecloth of many folds, and in an outer cover of cloth of vairy and velvet, bound with cords of silk, the corpse of the puissant monarch was at first laid out on the couch wherein he had expired, with a scroll sewn on the breast containing his titles and the date of his demise, written in large and small characters. The body was next cased in lead, and deposited in a second coffin of oak, elaborately sculptured, and of enormous size.

Enveloped in a pall of blue velvet, whereon was laid a silver cross, the ponderous coffin was removed to the privy-chamber, and set upon a large frame covered with cloth of gold, where it remained for five days; during which time lights were constantly burning within the chamber, a watch kept night and day by thirty gentlemen of the privy-chamber, and masses and orisons offered for the repose of the soul of the departed monarch by the chaplains.

Meanwhile, all the approaches to the chapel within the palace were hung with black, and garnished with escutcheons of the king's arms, descents, and marriages; while in the chapel itself the floor and walls were covered with black cloth, the sides and ceiling set with banners and standards of Saint George, and the high altar covered with black velvet, and adorned with magnificent plate and jewels. In the midst of the sacred apartment, surrounded by barriers, clothed with black, with a smaller altar at its foot, adorned like the high altar with plate and jewels, was set a superb catafalque, garnished with pensils and escutcheons, and having at each corner the banner of a saint beaten in fine gold upon damask. A majesty of rich cloth of gold,

with a valance of black silk fringed with black silk and gold, canopied this catafalque, which was lighted by fourscore square tapers, each two feet in length, and containing altogether two thousand pounds' weight of wax.

In regard to some of the accessories here particularised, or which will be subsequently mentioned, it may be remarked, that the "Banner," which could be borne by none of inferior degree to a banneret, was square in form, and displayed the arms of the sovereign all over it. The "Standard" differed in shape from the banner, being much longer, and slit at the extremity. This ensign did not display armorial bearings. The "Pennon" was less than the standard, rounded at the extremity, and charged with arms. "Bannerols" were banners of great width, representing alliances and descents. "Pensils" were small flags shaped like the vanes on pinnacles. Banners of saints and images were still used at the time of Henry's interment, when, as will be seen, many of the rites of the Church of Rome were observed.

On Wednesday, 2nd of February, 1517, being Candlemas-day, during the night, the coffin, having been covered with a rich pall of cloth of tissue, crossed with white tissue, and garnished with escutcheons of the king's arms, was removed with great ceremony and reverence to the chapel, where it was placed on the catafalque, all the tapers about which had been previously lighted. A rich cloth of gold, adorned with precious stones, was then thrown over the coffin.

On the day after the removal of the royal corpse, the Marquis of Dorset, as chief mourner, with twelve other noblemen, foremost among whom were the Earls of Arundel, Oxford, Shrewsbury, Derby, and Sussex, assembled in the pallet-chamber, arrayed in sable weeds, with hoods over their heads, and thence proceeded in order, two and two, to the chapel—the chief mourner marching first, with his train borne after him. Officers of arms and gentlemen ushers headed the solemn procession, which was closed by the vice-chamberlain and other officials, all in suits of woe. On arriving at the catafalque, the Marquis of Dorset knelt down at its head, and his companions on either side of it.

Then Norroy, king of arms, appearing at the door of the choir, cried with a loud voice, "Of your charity pray

for the soul of the high and most mighty prince, our late sovereign, lord, and king, Henry VIII."

Next, Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, Tunstal, Bishop of Durham, and Bouner, Bishop of London, came forth from the revestry in their full robes, and proceeding to the high altar, a solemn requiem was sung, the whole choir joining in the hymn.

Here the body remained for three days, constant watch being kept about it, and the tapers continuing ever burning. The solemnities connected with the burial were to occupy as many more days. The royal corpse was to be conveyed with all possible ceremony to Windsor Castle. The first day's halt was to be at the convent of Sion. On the second day, Windsor was to be reached. On the third day, the interment was to take place in Saint George's Chapel.

At an early hour on the morning of Monday, 14th February, the solemn ceremonial began. The shades of night had not yet wholly fled, but abundance of flaming torches cast a strange and lurid light on the gates, towers, and windows of the palace, and on the numerous dusky groups collected in its courts.

Before the great hall door was drawn up a right noble funeral chariot, whereunto were harnessed seven Flanders horses of the largest size, wholly trapped in black velvet down to the pasterns, each horse bearing four escutcheons of the late king's arms, beaten in fine gold upon double sarcenet, upon his trappings, and having a shaffron of the king's arms on his head. The car was marvellous to behold. It was of immense size, and its wheels, being thickly gilt, looked as if made of burnished gold. The lower part of the vehicle was hung with blue velvet, reaching to the ground between the wheels; and the upper part consisted of a stupendous canopy, supported by four pillars overlaid with cloth of gold, the canopy being covered with the same stuff, and having in the midst of it a richly gilt dome. Within the car was laid a thick mattress of cloth of gold and tissue fringed with blue silk and gold.

After the funeral car had thus taken up its station, there issued from the chapel a solemn train, consisting of mitred prelates in their copes, and temporal lords in mourning habits, the bishops walking two and two, and reciting

prayers as they moved along. Then came the coffin, borne by sixteen stout yeomen of the guard, under a rich canopy of blue velvet fringed with silk and gold, sustained by blue staves with tops of gold, each staff being borne by a baron — namely, the Lords Abergavenny, Conyers, Latimer, Fitzwalter, Bray, and Cromwell. After the coffin followed the Marquis of Dorset and the twelve mourners, the latter walking two and two. Many torch-bearers attended the procession, the greater number marching on either side of the body. When the coffin had been reverently placed within the chariot, a pall of cloth of gold was cast over it.

Then was brought forward an object, considered the grand triumph of the show, which excited wonder and admiration in all who looked upon it. This was an effigy of the departed monarch, beautifully sculptured in wood by the most skilful carver of the day, and painted by a hand no less cunning than that of Holbein himself. Bedecked in Henry's own habiliments of cloth of gold and velvet, enriched with precious stones of all kinds, this image had a marvellous and life-like effect. In the right hand was placed a golden sceptre, while the left sustained the orb of the world with a cross. Upon the head was set a crown imperial of inestimable value. Over the shoulders was the collar of the Garter, and below the knee was the lesser badge of the order as worn by the king himself in his lifetime. The attitude of the figure was noble and commanding, and exactly like that of the imperious monarch.

Borne by the three gigantic warders of the Tower, who seemed not a little proud of their office, this image was placed in the chariot under the superintendence of Fowler and other gentlemen of the privy-chamber, its feet resting upon a cushion of cloth of gold, and its upright position being secured by silken bands fastened to the four pillars of the car.

The effigy of the king being fixed in its place, six bannerols of marriages and descents were hung on either side of the chariot, and one bannerol at each end. All being now arranged, Sir Anthony Denny and Sir William Herbert, chief gentlemen of the privy-chamber, entered the car, stationing themselves, the one at the head of the coffin, and the other at its foot.

During these preparations, which occupied a consider-

able time, a vast crowd had collected within the precincts of the palace, and this assemblage began now to manifest impatience in various ways. Even the solemnity of the occasion did not prevent many quarrels and scuffles, which the halberdiers and mounted pursuivants of arms strove in vain to check. As the time advanced, and the crowd grew denser, these disturbances became more frequent, and the guard had enough to do to keep the tumultuous and noisy throng outside the barriers, which extended from the palace gates beyond Charing-cross, the whole of this space being filled by countless spectators, while every window was occupied and every roof had its cluster of human beings.

Just as the bell of Westminster Abbey tolled forth the hour of eight, the great bell of Saint Paul's, never rung save on the death or funeral of a monarch, began its awful boom, and amidst the slow and solemn sounding of bells from every adjacent steeple, coupled with the rolling of muffled drums, the funeral procession set forth from the courts of the palace.

First rode two porters of the king's house, bearing long black staves; after them came the serjeant of the vestry, with the verger; next, the cross, with the children, clerks, and priests of the chapel, in their surplices, singing orisons. On either side of this train, from the cross to the dean of the chapel, walked two hundred and fifty poor men, in long mourning gowns and hoods, having badges on the left shoulder—the red and white cross, in a sun shining, with the crown imperial above it. Each of these men carried a long blazing torch, and the number of these flambeaux made an extraordinary show. Two carts laden with additional torches for use during the progress of the procession, attended them. This division was closed by the bearer of the Dragon standard, with a serjeant-at-arms holding a mace on either side of him. Backwards and forwards along the line rode mounted pursuivants to keep order.

Next came a long train of harbingers, servants of ambassadors, trumpeters, chaplains, esquires, and officers of the household, according to degree.

After this miscellaneous troop came the standard of the Greyhound, borne by Sir Nicholas Stanley, with a serjeant-of-arms on either side. Next followed the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London, and after them the knights,

bannerets, chaplains of dignity, and all those of the king's household who were knights, with other notable strangers. This division was under the conduct of two heralds and other officers, who rode from standard to standard to keep order.

Next came the standard of the Lion, borne by Lord Windsor, hooded and trapped, and attended by two sergeants with maces. He was followed by the lower council, walking two and two; by the lords of the council; and by a long line of noble strangers and ambassadors. With the ambassador of the Emperor Charles V came the Archbishop of Canterbury. Order was maintained by four mounted heralds.

Next came the embroidered Banner of the King's Arms, borne by Lord Talbot, with his hood drawn over his head, and his horse trapped in black. Then followed Carlisle, herald of arms, bearing the king's helm and crest, his horse being trapped and garnished. Then Norroy, king at arms, bearing the target. Then Clarendieux, with the king's rich coat of arms curiously embroidered. All these had escutcheons on the trappings of their horses, and were under the guidance of sergeants-of-arms, furnished with maces.

The funeral car now came in sight. Before it were carried twelve banners of descents, the bearers walking two and two. Led by grooms in mourning apparel, the seven great horses appointed to drag along the ponderous machine were ridden by children of honour, arrayed in black, with hoods on their heads, each of them carrying a bannerol of the king's dominions and of the ancient arms of England. On either side of the horses walked thirty persons in sable attire, holding tall flaming staff-torches. Besides these there were numerous grooms and pages.

At each corner of the car walked a knight, with a banner of descents; and on either side of it rode three others, cloaked and hooded, their steeds being trapped in black to the ground. Those on the right were Sir Thomas Seymour, Sir Thomas Heneage, and Sir Thomas Paston; those on the left were Sir John Gage, Sir Thomas Darcy, and Sir Maurice Berkeley.

In the rear of the funeral car rode the chief mourner, the Marquis of Dorset, alone, with his horse trapped in

black velvet, and after him came the twelve mourners, with their steeds trapped to the ground. After the mourners rode the Earl of Arundel, lord chamberlain of the household, with his hood on his shoulder, to intimate that he was not a mourner. After the lord chamberlain came Sir Anthony Brown, master of the horse, bare-headed, and leading the king's favourite milk-white steed, trapped all in cloth of gold down to the ground.

Nine mounted henchmen followed next, clad in suits of woe and hooded, their horses trapped to the ground, and having shaffrons on their heads, and themselves bearing bannerols of the arms of England before the Conquest.

Then followed Sir Francis Bryan, master of the henchmen. Then Sir Anthony Wingfield, vice-chamberlain and captain of the guard, followed by a large company of the guard, in black, marching three and three, each with a halberd on his shoulder with the point downwards. A long line of noblemen's servants and others closed the cortége.

It was now broad day, though dull and foggy, but the countless torches lighted up the procession, and gave it a strange, ghostly look. Thus seen, the black, hooded figures appeared mysterious and awful. But it was upon the stupendous funeral car that all regards were concentrated. So wonderfully life-like was the effigy of the king, that not a few among the credulous and half-informed spectators thought Henry himself had returned to earth to superintend his own funeral ceremony; while on all hands the image was regarded as a miracle of art. Exclamations of wonder and delight arose on all sides as it went by, and many persons knelt down as if a saint were being borne along. The head of the cortége had passed Spring Gardens some time before the rear issued from the courts of the palace, and, seen from Charing-cross, the long line of dusky figures, with the standards, banners, torches, and chariot, presented such a spectacle as has never since been seen from that spot, though many a noble procession has in after times pursued the same route.

At the foot of the noble Gothic cross a crowd of persons had been collected from an early hour. Amongst them was a tall Franciscan friar, who maintained a moody silence, and who regarded the pageant with so much sternness and scorn that many marvelled he should have come

thither to look upon it. When the ponderous funeral car, after toiling its way up the ascent, came to the Cross, a brief halt was called, and during this pause the tall monk pressed forward, and throwing back his hood, so as fully to display his austere and death-pale features, lighted up by orbs blazing with insane light, stretched out his hand towards the receptacle of the royal corpse, and exclaimed, with a loud voice, "In the plenitude of his power I rebuked for his sinfulness the wicked king whom ye now bear to the tomb with all this senseless pomp. Inspired from above, I lifted up my voice, and told him, that as his life had been desperately wicked, so his doom should be that of the worst of kings, and dogs would lick his blood. And ere yet he shall be laid in the tomb my words will come to pass."

At this juncture two pursuivants rode up and threatened to brain the rash speaker with their maces, but some of the crowd screened him from their rage.

"Strike him not!" cried an elderly man of decent appearance. "He is crazed. 'Tis the mad Franciscan, Father Peto. Make way for him there! Let him pass!" he added to those behind, who charitably complying, the monk escaped uninjured.

XVII.

WHAT WAS SEEN AND HEARD AT MIDNIGHT BY THE
WATCHERS IN THE CONVENTUAL CHURCH AT SION.

BEAUTIFULLY situated on the banks of the Thames, between Brentford and Isleworth, and about midway between the metropolis and Windsor, stood the suppressed Convent of Sion, selected as the first halting-place of the funeral cortége. In this once noble, but now gloomy and desecrated monastery, which had been stripped of all its wealth and endowments by the rapacious monarch, was confined the lovely but ill-fated Catherine Howard, who had poured forth her unavailing intercessions for mercy from on high at the altar near which, later on, the body of her tyrant

husband was to rest, and who had been taken thence, half frantic with terror, to die by his ruthless decree on the scaffold. Guilt she might have, but what was her guilt compared with that of her inexorable husband and judge!

Shortly after the events about to be narrated, Sion was bestowed by Edward VI. on his uncle, the Lord Protector; but from the time of its suppression up to this period, it had been, comparatively speaking, deserted. Reverting to the crown, the estate was next granted to the Duke of Northumberland, on whose attainder it was once more forfeited. The monastery was restored and re-endowed by Mary—but it is needless to pursue its history further.

Mighty preparations had now been made within the neglected convent for the lodging and accommodation of the immense funeral retinue. Luckily, the building was of great extent, and its halls and chambers, though decaying and dilapidated, capable of holding an incredible number of persons. Their capacity in this respect was now about to be thoroughly tested. Hospitality, at the period of our history, was practised at seasons of woe on as grand and profuse a scale as at festivities and rejoicings, and the extraordinary supplies provided for the consumption of the guests expected at Sion were by no means confined to funeral baked meats. Cold viands there were in abundance—joints of prodigious size—chines and sirloins of beef, chines of pork, baked red-deer, baked swan, baked turkey, baked sucking-pig, gammon of bacon pie, wild-boar pie, roe pie, hare pie, soused sturgeon, soused salmon, and such like—but there was no lack of hot provisions, roast, boiled and stewed, nor of an adequate supply of sack, hippocrass, Rhenish, Canary, and stout October ale.

Every care was taken that the lords spiritual and temporal, with the foreign ambassadors and other persons of distinction, should be suitably lodged, but the majority of the actors in the gloomy pageant were left to shift for themselves, and the dormitories of the convent, even in its most flourishing days, had never known half so many occupants. The halls and principal chambers of the ancient religious structure were hung with black and garnished with escutcheons, and the fine old conventual church, refitted for the occasion, was likewise clothed with mourning, the high altar being entirely covered with black velvet, and

adorned with all the jewels and gold and silver plate of which the shrines of the monastery had been previously plundered. In the midst of the choir, protected by double barriers, was placed a catafalque even more stately than that provided in the chapel of the palace at Westminster, with a lofty canopy, the valance whereof was fringed with black silk and gold, and the sides garnished with pensils, escutcheons, and bannerols. Around this catafalque burnt a surprising number of large wax tapers.

The progress of the funeral cortége was necessarily slow, and it was past one o'clock ere it reached Brentford, at which place a number of nobles, knights, and esquires, together with the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London, rode on towards Sion, and arranged themselves in long lines on either side of the convent gates. About two o'clock, the funeral car drew up at the west door of the church, and the effigy of the king was first taken out by the three gigantic warders, and carried by them with befitting care and reverence to the revestry. After which the coffin was ceremoniously brought out, and conveyed through two lines of nobles and ambassadors to the receptacle provided for it within the choir—the bishops in their mitres and copes preceding it. Thus deposited, the coffin was covered with a blue velvet pall, having a white cross embroidered upon it. At the head of the pall were laid the king's helm and crest, on the right and left his sword and targe, and his embroidered coat at the foot. All round the exquisitely carved choir were ranged the various banners and standards used in the procession.

Illumined by a thousand tapers, crowded with mourners of the highest rank, and with ecclesiastical dignitaries occupied in their sacred functions, with chaplains, choristers, and others, the appearance of the choir, decorated as already described with banners and escutcheons, was singularly striking, and when a solemn dirge was performed by the Bishop of London and the choristers, the combined effect of spectacle and hymn was almost sublime. Not only was the choir crowded, but the entire body of the large conventual church was filled to inconvenience by those engaged in the ceremony.

No sooner however was the service ended than the church was speedily cleared of all save the watchers, and

the demolition of the good cheer prepared for them in the halls and refectory commenced in right earnest. Eating and drinking there was from one end of the monastery to the other, and the purveyors, grooms, and yeomen of the kitchen, larder, cellar, and buttery, had enough to do to answer the incessant demands made upon them. Much merriment, we regret to say, prevailed among the mourners, and some ditties, that did not sound exactly like doleful strains, were occasionally heard. Provisions were liberally given to all comers at the convent gates, and alms distributed to the poor.

Constant watch was kept about the body, and the guard was relieved every hour. But, notwithstanding the vigilance exercised, a singular incident took place, which we shall proceed to relate.

A little before midnight it came to the turn of the three gigantic warders to take their station beside the body, and as the elder brother stood on the left of the bier, leaning on his enormous halberd, he remarked that a dark stream had issued from beneath the pall covering the coffin, and was slowly trickling down the escutcheoned side of the catafalque. Horror-stricken at the sight, he remained gazing at this ensanguined current until some drops had fallen upon the ground. He then uttered an exclamation, which quickly brought his brothers to him.

“What alarms thee, Og?” cried the two giants.

“Look there!” said the other. “’Tis the king’s blood. The coffin has burst.”

“No doubt of it!” exclaimed Gog. “’Tis a terrible mischance—but we cannot be blamed for it.”

“A truce with such folly!” cried Magog. “’Tis the rough roads between this and Brentford, which shook the car so sorely, that are in fault, and not we! But what is to be done? Methinks the alarm ought to be given to the grand master.”

“Ay,” replied Og; “but the flow of blood increases. We ought to stay it.”

“How can that be done?” cried Gog. “Can we mend the bursten coffin?”

“Others may if we cannot,” cried Og. “No time must be lost in obtaining aid. These fearful stains must be effaced ere the bearers come to-morrow.”

Without more ado he hurried towards the great western door of the church, and was followed by his brothers, who seemed quite bewildered by the occurrence. But they had scarcely reached the door, when they were suddenly arrested by a fierce barking, as of hounds, apparently proceeding from the choir.

Appalled by the sound, they instantly stopped, and, turning round, beheld a spectacle that transfixed them with horror. Within the barriers, and close beside the coffin on the side of the catafalque down which the loathy current had flowed, stood a tall, dark figure, which, under the circumstances, they might well be excused for deeming unearthly. With this swart figure were two large coal-black hounds of Saint Hubert's breed, with eyes that, in the imagination of the giants, glowed like carbuncles. Encouraged by their master, these hounds were rending the blood-stained cover of the catafalque with their teeth.

"'Tis Satan in person!" exclaimed Magog. "But I will face him, and check those hell-hounds in their infernal work."

"I will go with thee," said Og. "I fear neither man nor demon."

"Nay, I will not be left behind," said Gog, accompanying them.

But, notwithstanding their vaunted courage, they advanced with caution, and ere they gained the entrance of the choir the dark figure had come forth with his hounds, which stood savagely growling beside him. They then perceived that the fancied infernal being was a monk with his hood drawn closely over his grim and ghastly features.

Stretching out his hands towards them, the monk exclaimed, in tones that thrilled his hearers with new terror, "My words have come to pass. Henry sold himself to work wickedness, and I warned him of his doom as Elijah the Tishbite warned Ahab. The judgment of Ahab hath come upon him. On the self-same spot where Catherine Howard knelt before her removal to the Tower, dogs have licked the wife-slayer's blood—even his blood!"

Before the giants recovered sufficiently from their stupefaction to make an attempt to stay him, Father Peto, with his hounds, effected a retreat by a lateral door, through which it is to be presumed he had entered the church.

Filled with consternation, the giants were debating what ought to be done, when the wicket of the great western door was opened, and the Lord St John, grand master, with three tall yeomen of the guard, entered the church. The torn hangings of the catafalque rendered concealment impossible, even if the giants had felt inclined to attempt it, but they at once acquainted Lord St John with the mysterious occurrence.

While listening to the strange recital, the grand master looked exceedingly angry, and the giants fully expected a severe reprimand at the least, if not punishment, for their negligence. To their surprise however the displeasure of their auditor changed to gravity, and without making any remark upon their relation, he proceeded to examine the condition of the catafalque. Having satisfied himself of the truth of the extraordinary statement he had received, the grand master gave orders for the immediate repair of the coffin, the restoration of the torn hanging, and the cleansing of the floor, charging the giants, on pain of death, not to breathe another word as to the mysterious appearance of Father Peto and the hounds.

Strict watch was kept throughout the rest of the night, and care taken to prevent further intrusion.

XVIII.

HOW THE ROYAL CORPSE WAS BROUGHT TO SAINT GEORGE'S CHAPEL.

NEXT morning the numerous occupants of the convent arose betimes, and prepared for the journey to Windsor. The majority of the persons composing the procession had been obliged to sleep on stools or benches, or on the rushes with which the floors were thickly strewn. However all were astir long before break of day. In those hearty times, breakfast differed but slightly from dinner or supper, and a very substantial repast, wound up with spiced wines and

cates, was set before the guests preparatory to their setting forth.

Precisely at seven o'clock the funeral procession started from the convent gates in the same order as before, accompanied by a like number of flaming torches. The bells were tolled in Isleworth church as the lugubrious train approached the village, and priests and clerks came forth to cense the royal corpse. Similar ceremonies were observed in every hamlet subsequently passed through.

At length the cortège reached Eton, then as now surrounded by stately groves. Near the gates of the noble college, founded about a century previously by the unfortunate Henry VI., stood Doctor Robert Aldrich, Bishop of Carlisle and Provost of Eton, in full pontificals, attended by the masters and fellows of the church in their vestments and copes, and by the scholars of the college in white surplices. The latter, who were extremely numerous, some of them being of very tender years, were bareheaded, and carried lighted tapers. As the corpse went by, they knelt down and censed it, chanting the *De Profundis*, their young voices giving a touching effect to the solemn psalm.

From the northern terrace of Windsor Castle, the sombre procession slowly making its way from Eton to the bridge across the Thames, presented a remarkable and deeply interesting sight; but few were there to witness it. Most of the inmates of the Castle were engaged in preparing for the arrival of their expected guests, and such as were not so occupied had repaired to the bridge across the Thames, at the foot of which were stationed the Mayor of Windsor, the aldermen, benchers, and burgesses, and the priests and clerks of the church of Saint John the Baptist within the town. From this point to the Horseshoe Cloisters within the Castle, the road was railed on either side, the rails being hung with black cloth to the ground, and covered with escutcheons of arms and marriages. As at the Convent of Sion, though on a far more sumptuous and extensive scale, preparations were made at the Castle for the numerous and important visitors and their attendants. All the apartments assigned to the principal nobles and ambassadors were hung with black, as were Saint George's Hall, and the interior of the Garter Tower.

The royal standard on the keep was furled, and an im-

mense hatchment of black velvet, emblazoned with the king's arms, worked in gold, was placed on the outer side of the gate of the lower ward, the battlements of which were thickly hung with banners. Numberless spectators thronged the barriers throughout their entire extent, and the windows of all the habitations in Thames-street were densely occupied. Slowly did the long train make its way to the Castle gate, and it was with great difficulty that the seven powerful horses could drag the ponderous funeral car up the steep ascent. At last however the feat was accomplished; the car entered the broad court of the lower ward, and was brought in safety to the western door of the chapel of Saint George.

Meanwhile, all the attendants upon the ceremonial, porters, servants of the royal household, harbingers and pursuivants, with a multitude of others, including the two hundred and fifty poor men in mourning habits, had entered the church, and stationed themselves in the nave—a wide passage being left from the western door to the choir, to be traversed by the bearers of the coffin. The more important personages however remained in the area of the Horseshoe Cloisters, awaiting a summons to enter the church.

Fairer ecclesiastical fabric does not exist than the collegiate chapel of Saint George at Windsor; and at the period in question the goodly structure was seen at its best. No desecrating hands had then marred its beauty. Externally, it was very striking—the numerous crocketed pinnacles being adorned with glittering vanes supported by gilt lions, antelopes, greyhounds, and dragons. The interior corresponded with the outward show, and luckily the best part has undergone little mutilation. Nothing more exquisite can be imagined than the richly decorated stone ceiling, supported by ribs and groins of incomparable beauty—than the light and graceful pillars of the nave—than the numerous chapels and chantries—or than the matchless choir. Within the nave are emblazoned the arms of Henry VIII. and those of his renowned contemporaries and survivors, Charles V and Francis I., both of whom were companions of the Order of the Garter. At the period of which we treat all the windows were filled

with deep-stained glass, glowing with the mingled and gorgeous dyes of the ruby, the topaz, and the emerald, and casting a "dim religious light" on the architectural marvels of the fane. Commenced in the previous century by Edward IV., continued and further embellished by Henry VII., who contributed the unequalled roof of the choir, the finishing stroke to the noble pile was given by Henry VIII., traces of whom may be found in the heraldic insignia decorating the splendid ceiling of the body of the church, and in other parts of the structure.

In preparation for the ceremony about to take place within its walls, portions of the body of the church were hung with black, the central pavement of the nave being spread with black cloth, and the pillars of the aisles decorated with banners and escutcheons. The floor of the choir was likewise carpeted with black, and the pedestals of the elaborately carved stalls of the knights companions of the Garter clothed with sable velvet. The emblazoned banners of the knights still occupied their accustomed position on the canopies of the stalls, but the late sovereign's splendid banner was removed, his stall put into mourning, and a hatchment set in the midst of it. The high altar was hung with cloth of gold, and gorgeously ornamented with candlesticks, crosses, chalices, censers, ships, and images of gold and silver. Contiguous to it on the right was another and lesser altar, covered with black velvet, but destitute of ornament.

In the midst of the choir, surrounded by double barriers, stood a catafalque, larger and far more sumptuous than either of those used at the palace of Westminster or in the conventual church of Sion. Double-storied, thirty-five feet high, having eight panes and thirteen principals, curiously wrought, painted and gilded, this stately catafalque was garnished with a rich majesty and a double-valanced dome, around which were inscribed the king's name and title in beaten gold upon silk. Fringed with black silk and gold, the whole frame was covered with tapers (a consumption of four thousand pounds' weight of wax having been calculated upon), and was garnished with pensils, scutcheons of arms and marriages, hatchments of silk and gold; while bannerols of descents depended from

it in goodly wise. At the foot of the catafalque was a third altar covered with black velvet, and decorated with rich plate and jewels.

Beneath this stately catafalque lay the sepulchre, into which the royal corpse was ere long to be lowered by means of an apparatus somewhat resembling that now common to our cemeteries. In this vault was already deposited the once lovely Jane Seymour, by whose side Henry had directed his remains to be laid. Here also, at a later period, was placed the body of the martyred Charles I.

By his will Henry had given particular directions that he should be interred in the choir of Saint George's Chapel, "midway between the state and the high altar," enjoining his executors to prepare an honourable tomb for his bones to rest in, "with a fair grate about it, in which tomb we will that the bones and body of our true and loving wife, Queen Jane, be put also." Thus much of his instructions was fulfilled, but he desired more than any executor could achieve. "We will and ordain," he appointed, "that a convenient altar be there honourably prepared, and apparelled with all manner of things requisite and necessary for daily masses, there to be said perpetually, while the world shall endure."

While the world shall endure! Alas for the vanity of human designs! Who heeds that fiat now? Who now says daily masses for Henry's soul?

Moreover, full instructions were left by the king for the erection of a most magnificent monument to himself and his third, and best-loved, consort, Jane Seymour, within the manseum so lavishly embellished by Cardinal Wolsey. On the white marble base of this monument, which was intended to be nearly thirty feet high, and adorned with one hundred and thirty-four statues and forty-four bas-reliefs, were to be placed two black touchstone tombs, supporting recumbent figures of the king and queen, not as dead but sleeping, while their epitaphs were to be inscribed in gold letters beneath.

Vain injunction! the splendidly-conceived monument was not even commenced.

To resume. All being arranged within the choir, and the thousand great tapers around the catafalque lighted, the effigy of the king was first brought in at the western

door of the church by the three gigantic warders, and conveyed by them to the choir; after which, the coffin was carried by tall yeomen of the guard down the alley reserved for its passage, the canopy being borne by six lords. The Bishop of Winchester, with other mitred prelates in their copes, marched before it to its receptacle, wherein it was reverently deposited. This done, it was covered with two palls, the first being of black velvet, with a white satin cross upon it, and the other of rich cloth of tissue. The effigy was then set upon the outer pall.

No sooner had the funeral car quitted its station at the western door of the church than the procession, which had been previously marshalled in the Horseshoe Cloisters, began to stream into the sacred edifice. After a throng of knights, banncrets, barons, viscounts, earls, and ambassadors, came the Archbishop of Canterbury in his full robes, and attended by his crosses. After him marched the mourners, two and two, with their hoods over their heads, followed by the chief mourner, who in his turn was followed by Garter in the king's gown, the train of the latter being borne by Sir Anthony Wingfield, vice-chamberlain. On reaching the catafalque, the mourners took up their customary places beside it.

Meanwhile, the Bishop of Winchester, on whom, as chief prelate, devolved the performance of the sacred offices, had stationed himself at the high altar, on either side whereof stood the rest of the bishops. The council, with the Lord Protector at its head, and immediately behind him the Lord Chancellor, now entered the choir, and seated themselves on either side of it, the Archbishop of Canterbury occupying a place nearest the high altar.

The four saints having been set, one at each corner of the catafalque, the Lord Talbot, with the embroidered banner, took a place at its foot. Before him was the standard of the Lion, on the right the Dragon, and on the left the Greyhound. A multitude of other bearers of banners were grouped around the receptacle of the coffin.

At this juncture, a movement was heard in the gallery above, and the queen-dowager, preceded by two gentlemen ushers, entered the royal closet. Attired in black velvet, and bearing other external symbols of woe, Catherine looked somewhat pale, but bore no traces of deep affliction

in her countenance. She was attended by the Marchioness of Dorset and her daughter, the Lady Jane Grey, the Countess of Hertford, Lady Herbert, and other ladies and gentlewomen, all in deep mourning. Behind appeared a throng of ambassadors and other strangers of distinction. But neither the Princess Mary nor the Princess Elizabeth were present. Moreover, as will have been remarked, the youthful king took no part in the funeral ceremony.

As the queen-dowager sat down alone in front of the closet, all the other ladies remaining standing, Norroy advanced, and in his accustomed formula besought their charitable prayers for the repose of the departed king's soul. A requiem was next chanted, and mass performed by the Bishop of Winchester and the other prelates.

On the conclusion of the service the whole assemblage quitted the church, leaving the choir vacant of all save the watchers by the body, the number of whom was greatly increased.

Profuse as had been the display of hospitality at Sion, it was far exceeded at Windsor. A grand banquet was given to the nobles and other distinguished personages in Saint George's Hall, the Lord Protector, with the council, the mourners, and the ambassadors, occupying seats on the dais. Tables were likewise spread in the various refectories, at which the numerous esquires, captains of the guard, heralds, pursuivants, and others, sat down. The four enormous fire-places in the great kitchen scarcely sufficed to supply the wants of so many guests. Our three giants found their way to the larder, and were well cared for by the yeomen and grooms. Prodigious was the quantity they consumed.

Night had far advanced ere the feasting had ended. Even then there were lingerers at some tables. Much bustle moreover still prevailed, not only within but without the Castle. In the courts of both upper and lower wards, yeomen, ushers, grooms, and serving-men of all descriptions, were continually passing and repassing.

The terraces however were deserted, though the extreme beauty of the night might well have tempted some of the many guests to enjoy a moonlight walk upon them. Towards midnight a postern door in one of the towers on the south side of the Castle opened, and Sir Thomas Seymour

and his esquire issued from it. Both were wrapped in black velvet mantles furred with sable. They proceeded quickly towards the eastern terrace, without pausing to gaze at the glorious prospect of wood and glade that lay stretched out beneath them, and, having made the half circuit of the walls, reached the northern terrace, which was thrown into deep shade, the moon being on the opposite side of the heavens. Far out into the meads below was projected the irregular shadow of the mighty pile, but the silver Thames glittered in the moonlight, and the collegiate church of Eton slumbered peacefully amidst its groves. A holy calm seemed to rest upon the scene, but Seymour refused to yield to its influence. He had other matter in hand, which agitated his soul. Roused by the bell striking midnight, he passed, with his esquire, through an archway communicating with the lower ward, and proceeded to Saint George's Chapel. Making for the lateral door on the left of the Bray Chapel, he found several yeomen of the guard stationed at it, together with two gentlemen ushers belonging to the queen-dowager's suite. On beholding the latter, his heart leaped with joy. He knew that Catherine was within the church, and he at once entered it with his esquire. The aisles and nave were plunged in gloom, and looked all the more sombre from the contrast they offered to the choir, which was brilliantly illumined. The watchers were stationed around the catafalque; chaplains were standing at the high altar; and a dirge was being sung by the choristers. Halting near a pillar in the south aisle, Seymour despatched Ugo to the choir. After a short absence the esquire returned, and said, "The queen is there—kneeling at the altar beside the coffin."

"I will await her coming forth. Retire, until I summon thee."

Full quarter of an hour elapsed ere Seymour's vigilance was rewarded. At the end of that time Catherine issued from the choir. As Sir Thomas expected, she was wholly unattended, and was proceeding slowly towards the door near the Bray Chapel, when Seymour stepped from behind the pillar, and placed himself in her path.

"Pardon me, Catherine! pardon me, queen of my heart!" he cried, half prostrating himself before her.

Much startled, she would have retired, but he seized her hand and detained her.

"You must—you shall hear me, Catherine," he cried.

"Be brief then," she rejoined, "and release my hand."

"I know I do not deserve forgiveness," he cried, "but I know, also, that your nature is charitable, and therefore I venture to hope. Oh! Catherine, I have recovered from the frenzy into which I had fallen, and bitterly repent my folly. You have resumed entire empire over my heart, and never again can be dethroned."

"I do not desire to reign over a heart so treacherous," rejoined Catherine, severely. "You plead in vain, Seymour. Perfidy like yours cannot be pardoned."

"Say not so, fair queen," he cried, passionately. "Doom me not to utter despair. Show me how to repair my fault, and I will do it. But condemn me not to worse than death."

"Having proved you false and forsworn, how am I to believe what you now utter? Can I doubt the evidence of my own senses? Can I forget what I overheard?"

"But I am cured of my madness, I declare to you, Catherine. My fault shall be atoned by years of devotion. I will submit to any punishment you choose to inflict upon me—so that a hope of ultimate forgiveness be held out."

"Would I could believe you!" sighed the queen. "But no!—no!—it must not be. I will not again be deceived."

"On my soul I do not deceive you!" he cried, pressing her hand to his lips. "Grant me but another trial, and if I swerve from my present professions of unalterable attachment, cast me off for ever."

There was a slight pause; after which Catherine said, in a relenting tone, "I must have time for reflection."

"Till when?" he cried, imploringly.

"I cannot say. Not till the tomb has closed over Henry will I speak more on this subject. I give you good night, Sir Thomas."

"Good night, fair queen. Heaven grant your decision prove favourable!" exclaimed Seymour, as she departed.

And as his esquire cautiously approached him, he said exultingly, "Vittoria! Ugo, è fatto!"

XIX.

PULVIS PULVERI, CINIS CINERI.

AT six o'clock next morn, all the knights companions of the Garter attendant upon the funeral repaired to the revestry of Saint George's Chapel. The assemblage comprised the Lord Protector, Lord Chancellor Wriothesley, the Earls of Essex, Arundel, Shrewsbury, and Sussex, the Lords Saint John, Lisle, Abergavenny, and Russell, with Sir John Gage, Sir Anthony Brown, Sir Anthony Wingfield, Sir Anthony St Leger, and Sir Thomas Cheney. Having arrayed themselves in the rich sky-blue mantles of the order, and put on their hoods, they proceeded to the choir to hear matins, and make their oblations.

The service was performed by the Dean of Windsor, Doctor Franklin, and the canons. At its conclusion, after divesting themselves of the habits of their order, the knights adjourned to the deanery, where a goodly breakfast had been provided them by the portly dean. During this repast some conversation took place between Doctor Franklin and the Lord Protector touching a bequest by the late king of certain manors and lands to the dean and canons to the value of six hundred pounds a year—a considerable sum in those days—and the dean respectfully inquired whether he had been rightly informed as to the amount.

“Ay, forsooth, good master dean,” replied the Protector. “His late Majesty—whose soul may Jesu pardon!—hath by his will left you and your successors lands, spiritual endowments, and promotions of the yearly value you mention, but on certain conditions.”

“What may be the conditions, I pray your Highness?” asked the dean. “I have not heard them.”

“They are these,” rejoined the Protector. “That you find two priests to say masses at an altar to be erected before his Majesty's tomb; that you hold four solemn orbits annually for the repose of his soul within the chapel; that at every orbit ye bestow ten pounds in alms to the poor; that ye give twelve pence a day to thirteen indigent but

deserving persons, who shall be styled Poor Knights, together with garments specified by the will, and an additional payment to the governor of such poor knights. Other obligations there are in the way of sermons and prayers, but these I pretermitt."

"His Majesty's intentions shall be religiously fulfilled," observed the dean, "and I thank your Highness for the information you have so graciously afforded me."

As Henry's tomb however was never erected, as we have already mentioned, it may be doubted whether the rest of his testamentary instructions were scrupulously executed.

While the Knights of the Garter were breakfasting at the deanery, feasting had recommenced in the various halls and refectories of the Castle. Our giants again found their way to the larder, and broke their fast with collops, rashers, carbonados, a shield of brawn and mustard, and a noble sirloin of beef, making sad havoc with the latter, and washing down the viands with copious draughts of humming ale.

However the bell began to toll, and at the summons each person concerned in the ceremony hied to Saint George's Chapel. Ere long all were in their places. Around the illumined catafalque within the choir were congregated the mourners in their gowns. The council, with the Archbishop of Canterbury at their head, were seated in the stalls. The Bishop of Winchester, in his full pontificals, with the other prelates, were at the high altar. The queen-dowager was in her closet, with her ladies ranged behind her. No one was absent.

Thereupon mass was commenced, at which the bishops officiated. At the close of the requiem, the Marquis of Dorset advanced to the altar, and, with much humility and reverence, offered a piece of gold as the mass-penny; after which he returned to his place at the head of the corpse. The king's embroidered coat of arms was next delivered by Garter to the Earls of Arundel and Oxford, by whom it was reverently offered to the Bishop of Winchester; which ceremony being performed, the coat was placed by Garter on the lesser altar. The royal target was next consigned to the Earls of Derby and Shrewsbury, offered by them to the bishop, and placed beside the coat by the herald. Nor-

roy then presented the king's sword to the Earls of Sussex and Rutland, which was offered and laid upon the altar. Carlisle gave the helm and crest to the same nobleman who had carried the target, and these equipments were offered and placed beside the others.

Then occurred the most striking part of the ceremonial. Some commotion was heard in the nave, and those within the choir, who could command this part of the church, which was thronged with various officials, beheld a knightly figure, in complete steel, except the head-piece, and mounted on a black, richly-barbed war-horse, enter the open western door, and ride slowly along the alley preserved by the assemblage. Flaming torches were borne by the foremost ranks of the bystanders on either side, and their light, gleaming on the harness of the knightly figure and the caparisons of his steed, added materially to the effect of the spectacle. The rider was Chidiock Pawlet, King Henry's man-at-arms, a very stalwart personage, with handsome burly features clothed with a brown bushy beard. In his hand he carried a pole-axe, with the head downwards. As Pawlet reached the door of the choir, and drew up beneath the arch, all eyes were fixed upon him. It was strange, almost appalling, to behold an equestrian figure in such a place, and on such an occasion. For a brief space, Pawlet remained motionless as a statue, but his horse snorted and pawed the ground. Then Lord Morley and Lord Dacre advanced, and aided him to alight. Consigning his steed to a henchman, by whom it was removed, Pawlet next proceeded with the two lords to the altar, and offered the pole-axe to the bishop, with the head downwards. Gardiner took the weapon, turned the point upwards, and delivered the pole-axe to an officer of arms, who laid it on the altar.

Then Richard Pawlet, brother to Chidiock, with four gentlemen ushers, brought in each a pall of cloth of gold of bawdkin, which they delivered to Garter and Clarendieux, by whom these palls were placed at the foot of the king's effigy.

Hereupon, the emperor's ambassador, with the ambassadors of France, Scotland, and Venice, were conducted by the gentlemen ushers to the altar, to make their offering. Then the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Protector, the Lord Chancellor, and the rest of the council offered.

Lastly, Sir Thomas Cheney, treasurer, and Sir John Gage offered.

After all the offerings had been made, a pulpit was set directly before the high altar, and the Bishop of Winchester, mounting it, commenced a sermon, taking this text from the Revelations: "*In diebus illis, audivi vocem de cœlo, dicentem mihi, Scribe, Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur. A modo jam dicit Spiritus, ut requiescant à laboribus suis. Opera enim illorum sequuntur illos.*"

A fervid and fluent preacher, Gardiner deeply moved his auditors by his discourse, which was as remarkable for learning as for eloquence. At the close of the sermon the mass proceeded, and as the words "*Verbum caro factum est*" were pronounced, Lord Windsor offered the standard of the Lion; Lord Talbot the standard of the embroidered banner; and the rest of the standards and banners were offered in their turn.

After this, the Dean of Windsor and the canons took the palls which had been placed at the feet of the king's effigy, and conveyed them to the revestry. The image itself was next removed by the three gigantic warders, and carried to the same place.

The solemn moment had now arrived. Gardiner and the other officiating prelates descended from the high altar to the catafalque, and the Archbishop of Canterbury took up a station a little behind them with his crosses. The whole choir burst forth with the "*Circumdederunt me,*" the bishops meanwhile continuing to cense the corpse.

Ere the solemn strains had ceased, the mouth of the vault opened, and the coffin slowly descended into the sepulchre.

Thus vanished from the sight of men all that was left of a great monarch.

Amid the profound silence that ensued, Gardiner advanced to the mouth of the vault. He was followed by all the chief officers of the household—namely, the lord great master, the lord chamberlain of the household, the treasurer, comptroller, gentleman porter, and the four gentlemen ushers. These personages carried their staves and rods, and ranged themselves around the aperture.

Earth being brought to the bishop, he cast it into the sepulchre, and when he had pronounced the words "*Pulvis*

pulveri, cinis cineri," Lord Saint John broke his staff over his head, exclaiming dolefully, as he threw the pieces into the vault, "Farewell to the greatest of kings!"

The Earl of Arundel next broke his staff, crying out with a lamentable voice, "Farewell to the wisest and justest prince in Christendom, who had ever England's honour at heart!"

Sir John Gage next shivered his staff, exclaiming in accents of unaffected grief, "Farewell to the best of masters, albeit the sternest!"

Like sorrowful exclamations were uttered by William Knevet, the gentleman porter, and the gentlemen ushers, as they broke their rods.

There was something inexpressibly affecting in the destruction of these symbols of office, and the casting the fragments into the pit. Profound silence prevailed during the ceremony, but at its close a universal sigh broke from the assemblage.

At this moment, Sir Thomas Seymour, who was standing in a part of the choir commanding the queen's closet, looked up. Catherine had covered her face with her handkerchief, and was evidently weeping.

De profundis was then solemnly chanted, amidst which the chasm was closed.

At the conclusion of the hymn, Garter, attended by Clarencieux, Carlisle, and Norroy, advanced to the centre of the choir, and with a loud voice proclaimed, "Almighty God, of his infinite goodness, give good life and long to the most high and mighty Prince, our sovereign Lord, Edward VI., by the grace of God King of England, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, and in earth, under God, of the Church of England and Ireland, the supreme Head and Sovereign, of the most noble Order of the Garter."

This proclamation made, he shouted lustily, "Vive le noble roi Edouard!" All the assemblage joined in the shout, which was thrice repeated.

Then the trumpeters stationed in the rood-loft blew a loud and courageous blast, which resounded through the pile.

So ended the obsequies of the right high and puissant king Henry VIII.

Thus far the First Book.

BOOK II.

THE LORD HIGH ADMIRAL OF ENGLAND.

I.

HOW EDWARD PASSED HIS TIME WHILE LEFT TO HIMSELF WITHIN THE TOWER.

THE three days devoted to the solemnisation of Henry's obsequies were passed by his son in strictest privacy at the Tower. The freedom from restraint afforded the youthful monarch by the absence of his court was especially agreeable to him at this juncture. Not only had he to mourn for his father, but to prepare, as he desired to do by meditation and prayer, for the solemn ceremony in which he himself would soon be called upon to play the principal part.

The near approach of his coronation, which was fixed for the Sunday after the funeral, filled him with anxious thought. It might naturally be supposed that one so young as Edward would be dazzled by the magnificence of the show, and lose sight of its real import; but such was not the case with the devout and serious-minded prince, who, as we have already shown, possessed a gravity of character far beyond his years, and had been too well instructed not to be fully aware of the nature of the solemn promises he would have to make to his people while assuming the crown.

Daily did he petition Heaven that he might adequately discharge his high and important duties, and in no wise abuse the power committed to him, but might exercise it wisely and beneficently, to the maintenance and extension of true religion, and to the welfare and happiness of his subjects. Above all, he prayed that he might be made the instrument of establishing the Protestant Church on a secure foundation; of delivering it entirely from its enemies; and purifying it from the idolatries and superstitious practices that still clung to it.

The bustle and confusion lately prevailing within the Tower had now ceased. All the nobles and important personages who had flocked thither to do homage to the young king, had departed, taking with them their troops of attendants. The courts were emptied of the crowd of esquires and pages who had recently thronged them. No merry hubbub was heard; but, on the contrary, a general gloom pervaded the place.

Orders had been given by the king that the three days of his father's funeral were to be observed as a period of deep mourning, and consequently every countenance wore an expression of grief—whether simulated or not, it is needless to inquire. Edward and all his household were habited in weeds of woe, and their sable attire and sad looks contributed to the sombre appearance of the place. Ushers and henchmen moved about like ghosts. Festivity there was none, or if there were, it was discreetly kept out of the king's sight. Edward's time was almost entirely passed in devotional exercises. He prayed in secret, listened to long homilies from his chaplain, discoursed on religious matters with his tutors, and regularly attended the services performed for the repose of his father's soul within Saint John's Chapel.

Built in the very heart of the White Tower, and accounted one of the most perfect specimens of Norman architecture extant, the beautiful chapel dedicated to Saint John the Evangelist might still be beheld in all its pristine perfection, were it not so encumbered by presses and other receptacles of state records, that even partial examination of its architectural beauties is almost out of the question.

Consisting of a nave with a semicircular termination at the east, and two narrow side aisles, separated from the body of the fabric by twelve circular pillars of massive proportion, this ancient shrine also possesses a gallery reared above the aisles, with wide semicircular-headed openings, looking into the nave. The ceiling is coved, and the whole building is remarkable for extreme solidity and simplicity. It has long since been despoiled of its sacred ornaments, and applied to baser uses, but as most of our early monarchs performed their devotions within it while sojourning at the Tower, that circumstance alone, which confers upon

it a strong historical interest, ought to save it from neglect and desecration.

During the three days in question, masses were constantly said within the chapel. The pillars were covered with black cloth, and decked with pensils and escutcheons, while banners were hung from the arched openings of the gallery. Tall tapers burned before the altar, which was richly adorned with jewels, images, crucifixes, and sacred vessels.

Edward never failed to attend these services, and was always accompanied by his tutors, to whom, as zealous Reformers, many of the rites then performed appeared highly objectionable. But as masses for the repose of his soul had been expressly enjoined by the late king's will, nothing could be urged against them at this moment, and the two preceptors were obliged to content themselves with silent disapproval. Though sharing their feelings, reverence for his father's memory kept Edward likewise silent. Some observations, however, which he chanced to make while returning from mass on the third day, gave an opportunity to Sir John Cheke of condemning the practice of image-worship which was still tolerated.

"Those Romish idols are an abomination in my sight," he cried, "and I hope to see our temples cleared of them, and of all pictures that have been abused by heathenish worship. The good work has begun, for I have heard this very day that the curate of Saint Martin's, in Ironmonger-lane, has caused all the images and pictures to be removed from his church, and texts from Scripture to be painted on the walls. Peradventure, the man may be over-zealous, yet I can scarce blame him."

"He has but anticipated my own intentions," observed Edward; "our temples shall no longer be profaned by false worship."

"Right glad am I to hear your Majesty say so," rejoined Cheke. "Under your gracious rule, I trust, the Romish missals and mass-books will be entirely abolished, and a liturgy in the pure language of Scripture substituted. Uniformity of doctrine and worship, uniformity of habits and ceremonies, abandonment of the superstitious and idolatrous rites of Rome, and a return to the practices of the Primitive Christian Church—these are what we of the

Reformed Church seek for—these are what, under a truly Protestant king like your Majesty, we are sure to obtain.”

“Fully to extirpate the pernicious doctrines of Rome, conformity among the clergy must be made compulsory,” observed Cox; “otherwise, there will always be danger to the well-doing of the Protestant Church. I do not desire to recommend severe measures to your Majesty, but coercion must be applied.”

“I hope it will not be needed, good doctor,” observed Edward. “I desire not to commence my reign with persecution.”

“Heaven forbid that I should counsel it, sire!” replied the doctor. “Far rather would I that your reign should be distinguished for too much clemency than severity; but a grand object has to be attained, and we must look to the end rather than to the means. Strong efforts, no doubt, will be made by the Bishop of Rome to regain his ascendancy, and the adherents of the old doctrine, encouraged by the removal of the powerful hand that has hitherto controlled them, will strive to recover what they have lost. Hence there is much danger to the Protestant Church, of which your Majesty is the supreme head, and this can only be obviated by the complete repression of the Popish party. Much further reform is needed, and this, to be thoroughly efficacious, ought to be proceeded with without delay, ere the adverse sect can have time to recruit its forces.”

“But you do not apprehend danger to the Church, good doctor?” inquired Edward, with some anxiety.

“There is danger in delay,” replied Cox. “Men’s minds are unsettled, and advantage will certainly be taken of the present crisis to turn aside the ignorant and half-instructed from the truth. His Grace of Canterbury, I am aware, is for gradual reform, entertaining the belief that men must become accustomed to the new doctrines ere they will sincerely embrace them. Such is not my opinion. I would uproot error and schism as I would weeds and noxious plants from a fair garden, and burn them, so that they may do no further harm.”

“Yet, perchance, his Grace of Canterbury may be right,” observed Edward, thoughtfully. “I would show no indulgence to the adherents of the Church of Rome, but my object being to reclaim them, and bring them over

to the true faith, I must consider by what means that most desirable object can best be accomplished."

"Gentle means will fail, sire, and for a reason which I will explain," rejoined Sir John Cheke. "In dealing with the Bishop of Rome you have to do with a powerful and unscrupulous enemy, who will not fail to take advantage of any apparent irresolution on your part. Moderation will be construed into timidity, conciliation into yielding and weakness. Prompt and energetic measures must therefore be adopted. A blow must be struck at Popery from which it will never recover. I applaud the design which I know you entertain of inviting the most eminent foreign Reformers to your court. Pious and learned men like Peter Martyr, Martin Bucer, Paul Fagius, Ochinus, and Bernardus, whose lives have been devoted to the glorious work of religious reform, would be of incalculable advantage to you at this moment. Not only would they aid you in removing the errors and abuses of the Church, but they would justify and defend the measures you design to adopt. Moreover, they would be of signal service at the universities, at which seats of learning men of great controversial power, able to refute the caviller, to convince the doubter, and to instruct the neophyte, are much wanted."

"Sir John says well," observed Doctor Cox. "Conferences and disputations on religious subjects are requisite now, in order to refute error and convince men's understanding. Nowhere can such discussions be more advantageously held than at your Majesty's universities of Oxford and Cambridge."

"Our cause is so good, that it should need neither justification nor defence," rejoined Edward. "Nevertheless, at a season of difficulty and danger no precautions ought to be neglected. To secure the permanent establishment of the Protestant Church, all its ablest and stoutest supporters must be rallied round it. Pre-eminent amongst these are the wise and good men you have mentioned, whose lives give an assurance of the sincerity of their opinions. The Protestant leaders are much harassed in Germany, as I hear, and they may, therefore, be glad of an asylum here. It will rejoice me to see them, to profit by their teaching, and to be guided by their judgment and counsels. His Grace of Canterbury shall invite them to

England, and if they come, they shall have a reception which shall prove the esteem in which they are held. Peter Martyr would fill a theological chair as well at Oxford as at Strasburg, and I will find fitting posts for Bucer and the others."

At this point the conversation dropped. Seeing the king disinclined for further discussion, his preceptors did not press the subject, and he soon afterwards retired to his own chamber.

II.

FROM WHICH IT WILL BE SEEN THAT THE PRINCESS
ELIZABETH WAS NOT ENTIRELY CURED OF HER PASSION.

LIKE her royal brother, the Princess Elizabeth had been an inmate of the Tower during the time of her august father's funeral, but as she kept her chamber, owing to indisposition, as it was alleged, Edward saw nothing of her until on the evening of the third day, when she sent to beg him to come to her.

The amiable young monarch at once complied with the request. On his arrival at his sister's apartments, he found Mistress Ashley with her, but on seeing him the governess withdrew. The young pair were then alone together, for Edward had left his own attendants in the waiting-chamber. Elizabeth looked ill, and had evidently been weeping. Much distressed by her appearance, Edward flew to her, embraced her tenderly, and inquired, with great solicitude, what ailed her?

"I do not think the air of the Tower agrees with me," she replied, with a faint smile. "I have never been well since I came here. I would pray your Majesty's permission to depart to-morrow for Hatfield."

"I shall be sorry to lose you, dear Bess," replied the king, affectionately; "but, in good sooth, you do not look well, and if you think change of air will be of service to you, e'en try it. I hoped you would accompany me to

Whitehall, in order to attend my coronation. I promise you it will be a goodly show."

"I do not doubt it," she rejoined. "But I am not in spirits for grand solemnities at present, and quite shrink from them. Therefore, with your Majesty's leave, I will be gone to-morrow. Most of the court, they tell me, will return from Windsor to-night, and, as I care not to mingle with them again, I will depart betimes."

"Be it as you please, dear Bess. I will not force you to do aught against your inclinations, even though I myself shall be the loser. Depart at any hour you please. A fitting escort shall attend you. Sir Thomas Seymour, with the rest of the court, will be back from Windsor to-night. Shall I bid him go with you?"

"On no account," replied Elizabeth, hastily; blushing deeply as she spoke.

"Wherein has Sir Thomas offended you, Bess? You used to like him better than any other. What has occasioned this sudden change of feeling? Can I not set matters right between you?"

"There is nothing to be set right. That I have completely altered my opinion of Sir Thomas Seymour, I will not deny—that I have quarrelled with him, is also true—but he is now perfectly indifferent to me."

"Hum! I am not so sure of that, Bess. But if you refuse to confide the cause of your quarrel to me, I cannot tell whether you are right or wrong."

"Your Majesty will never believe Sir Thomas Seymour to be in fault—that I know. But you will find him out in time. He has deceived others, take heed he does not deceive you."

"Whom has he deceived, Bess?—not you, I hope?" demanded Edward, looking at her fixedly.

"No, not me," she answered, in some confusion. "But I have heard that of him which causes distrust. Therefore I deem it right to warn your Majesty."

"You bear resentment against him for some cause, real or imaginary, that I can plainly perceive. Come, come! let there be an end of this quarrel, Bess. You and Sir Thomas are both dear to me, and I would have you friends. If he has offended you, he shall apologise—as humbly as you please. Will that suffice?"

"I thank your Majesty for your gracious interference, and fully appreciate the motives whence it proceeds, but your kindly efforts are thrown away. I require no apologies from Sir Thomas, and will accept none."

"On my faith, you are very perverse, Elizabeth. And I must needs confess that your strange conduct makes me think you must be to blame in the matter."

"I shall not attempt to justify myself," she rejoined, "neither shall I endeavour to shake the opinion your Majesty entertains of Sir Thomas Seymour."

"You would hardly succeed in the latter effort, Bess. But let us change the subject, since it is not agreeable to you."

"Before doing so, let me ask you a question. How would you like it were the queen-dowager to bestow her hand upon your favourite uncle?"

"Is such an event probable?" demanded Edward, surprised.

"Suppose it so," she rejoined.

"There is nothing to prevent such a marriage, that I am aware of," observed Edward, after a short pause. "If the queen must marry again, she could choose no one more acceptable to me than my uncle Sir Thomas Seymour."

"But she ought not to marry again!" exclaimed Elizabeth, angrily. "She has had three husbands already; the last a great king, for whom she ought ever after to remain in widowhood. Thus much, at least, she owes our father's memory."

"If she had forgotten two husbands before wedding the king our father, she is not unlikely to forget him," observed Edward. "Such is the way with women, Bess; and her Grace will not be more blameworthy than the rest of her sex."

"But your Majesty will not permit such an unsuitable marriage, should it be proposed?"

"I do not think the marriage so unsuitable, Bess; and I see not how I can hinder it."

"Not hinder it! You are far more patient than I should be, were I in your Majesty's place. I would banish Sir Thomas Seymour rather than this should occur."

"To banish him would be to rob myself of one whose society I prefer to that of any other. No, I must adopt

some milder course, if on reflection I shall judge it expedient to interfere at all."

Seeing the king was not to be shaken, and perceiving also that she had unintentionally served Sir Thomas Seymour by alluding to the probability of his marriage with the queen-dowager, of which Edward had previously entertained no suspicion, Elizabeth let the subject drop, and after some further conversation the young monarch took an affectionate leave of his sister, again expressing great regret at losing her so soon, and promising that an escort should be provided by the Constable of the Tower to attend her at any hour she pleased on the morrow.

III.

HOW THE EARL OF HERTFORD WAS MADE DUKE OF SOMERSET; AND HOW SIR THOMAS SEYMOUR WAS ENNOBLED.

At a late hour on that night all the principal personages who officiated at the funeral solemnities at Windsor Castle, returned to the Tower.

Next day, a general meeting was held in the grand council-chamber in the White Tower. Certain new creations of peers were about to be made, in accordance, it was said, with the late king's directions; and other noble personages were to be yet further dignified. The young king sat in his chair of state beneath a canopy, and on his right stood the Lord Protector. Though the long-looked for moment of aggrandisement had arrived to Hertford, he allowed no manifestation of triumph to escape him, but assumed an air of deep humility.

After some preliminary proceedings, the king arose, and turning towards the Lord Protector, said, with much dignity,

"In pursuance of our dear father's directions, whose latest wish it was to reward those who had served him well and faithfully, it is our sovereign will and pleasure, not only to add to the number of our peers by certain new

creations, but further to honour and elevate some who are already ennobled, and whose exalted merits entitle them to such distinction. We will commence with our dearly-beloved uncle Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford, Lord Protector of the realm, and governor of our person, whom we hereby create Duke of Somerset, and appoint to be Lieutenant-General of all our armies both by land and sea, Lord High Treasurer and Earl Marshal of England, and Governor of the Isles of Guernsey and Jersey."

"Most humbly do I thank your Majesty," said the newly-made duke, bending the knee before his royal nephew, while the chamber rang with acclamations.

"Arise, your Grace," said Edward. "We cannot linger in a task so agreeable to us. My Lord of Essex," he added to that nobleman, "you are created Marquis of Northampton—my Lord Lisle, you are now Earl of Warwick, with the office of Lord Great Chamberlain—Lord Chancellor Wriothesley, you are henceforth Earl of Southampton—Sir Richard Rich, you are made Lord Rich—Sir William Willoughby, you are Baron Willoughby of Parham—Sir Edmund Sheffield, you are Baron Sheffield of Buttonwick—and you, our entirely-beloved uncle Sir Thomas Seymour, are created Baron Seymour of Sudley, with the office of Lord High Admiral of England. To these titles it is our design to add ample revenues, to accrue from sources which we shall hereafter point out, so that the honours bestowed by our much-lamented father upon his faithful servants may not be barren honours."

At the close of this gracious address, which was delivered with great dignity, another burst of approbation rose from the assemblage. One after the other the newly-created peers, and those who had gained additional rank, then bent the knee before the throne, and thanked the young monarch for his goodness towards them. As Lord Seymour of Sudley knelt to his royal nephew, Edward said to him, "Are you content, gentle uncle?"

"I am honoured more than I deserve, sire," replied Seymour; "but I should have been better pleased with some office which would have enabled me more completely to manifest my attachment and devotion to you."

"Such as the governorship of our person during our nonage?" observed Edward, with a smile. "Perhaps we

may induce our elder uncle to resign the post to you. What says your Highness?" he added to the Lord Protector. "Shall not Lord Seymour be our governor?"

"It grieves me that I cannot comply with your Majesty's request," replied Somerset.

"Wherefore not, good uncle?" rejoined the king. "Methinks we have showered favours enow upon your head to merit some slight return. Be good-natured, we pray you, and concede the matter?"

"I cannot resign an office conferred upon me by the council, even if I chose to do so," observed Somerset.

"Say frankly you do not choose, brother," cried Seymour, impatiently.

"Frankly, then, I do not," rejoined the duke. "Were I even called upon to resign, I should protest against your appointment, for I do not deem you a fitting person to have charge of his Majesty."

"Enough, your Highness," interposed Edward. "We will not pursue this matter further. A time will come when we can choose for ourselves those we would have for directors and advisers. Meantime, we submit to the will of the council."

"The council will soon have but little authority," muttered Seymour. "Unless I am greatly mistaken, it will speedily be bereft of all power."

Meanwhile, the greater part of the assemblage had departed, the members only of the two councils being left. The doors were then closed, upon which the Lord Protector thus spoke:

"Before we separate, my Lords, it is necessary that I should point out to you a difficulty in which I am placed, and to ask your aid to remedy it. Doubts have been expressed whether you, as the council, have power to appoint a Protector; and the ambassadors of France and Germany have declared to me in private that they could not treat with me while there was any chance of my authority being disputed. To remedy this defect, and make matters sure, I now demand letters-patent from his Majesty under the great seal, confirming my authority as Protector of the Realm, and Governor of the royal Person."

Several of the council immediately expressed their as-

sent to the request, but the newly-made Earl of Southampton rose to oppose it.

“What further authority does your Highness require?” he said. “Methinks you have enough already.”

“I have explained that there is much inconvenience attendant upon mine office as at present constituted,” observed Somerset. “Its origin has been questioned, as I have told you, and this should not be—nay, it must not be. Unless I can treat independently with foreign powers, I am nothing. By his letters-patent, as I propose, his Majesty will give me authority to act according to my judgment and discretion for the welfare and advantage of his person and dominions.”

“In other words, he will make himself king in your stead,” whispered Seymour to Edward. “Do not grant these letters-patent.”

“But the measure you propose will deprive the council of all control,” pursued Southampton. “We may not approve your acts. I am for no further change. We have made too much concession already.”

“It was found impracticable to carry on the business of the government during his Majesty’s minority without a head,” observed Sir William Paget, “and therefore the Lord Protector was appointed. But the office will be ineffectual if not clothed with sufficient power.”

“These are my own arguments against the appointment,” cried Southampton. “The Lord Protector shall not be our master. According to this scheme, he might annul all our acts, appoint his own council, set aside the late king’s will, and assume almost regal power himself.”

“Hold, my Lord; you go too far,” cried Northampton. “Recollect in whose presence you stand.”

“It appears to me, my Lords,” remarked the Earl of Warwick, “that we have no choice in the matter. I am not for abridging our powers, or for transferring them to the Lord Protector. But we must either enable him to act, or abolish the office.”

“You have put the matter rightly,” said Lord Rich. “The present discussion is a clear proof that there will be little unanimity amongst us. I would therefore beseech his Majesty’s gracious compliance with the Lord Protector’s request.”

"I add my voice to yours," said Lord Northampton.

"And so do we," cried several others.

"What says his Grace of Canterbury?" demanded the king.

"I meddle not with secular matters," replied the primate; "but it seems that the Lord Chancellor's objections to the additional power to be conferred upon the Lord Protector are ill grounded, and that your Majesty will do well to accede to the expressed wishes of the majority of the council."

"There is only one dissentient voice, that of Lord Southampton himself," observed Sir William Paget. "But I trust he will withdraw his opposition."

"Never!" cried Southampton. "I foresaw this danger from the first, and was therefore averse to the appointment. Such an extension of power is not only pernicious in itself, but in express violation of the late king's will. I implore his Majesty to hesitate ere yielding compliance with the suggestion."

"The Lord Chancellor is looked upon as the head of the Romish party," observed Cranmer, in a low voice to the king. "He evidently fears that the Lord Protector will use the additional power he may acquire in the repression of Papacy. Your Majesty will do well not to listen to him."

"We thank your Grace for the hint," rejoined Edward. "Your Highness shall have the letters-patent," he added to the Lord Protector. "Let them be prepared without delay," he continued to Paget.

Soon after this the council broke up, and as the Lord Protector departed with his royal nephew, he cast a triumphant glance at his discomfited adversary, who replied by a look full of scorn and defiance.

"That man must be removed—and quickly," thought Somerset. "He is dangerous."

On his return to the palace, the king was attended by Lord Seymour, whom he held in converse, so as to keep him by his side, much to the annoyance of the Lord Protector, who was obliged to follow with the Earl of Warwick.

As they were proceeding in this manner, Edward remarked, somewhat abruptly, "Have you any thought of marriage, gentle uncle?"

“If I might venture so to reply, I would inquire why your Majesty puts the question?” rejoined Seymour, surprised.

“You are reluctant to speak out, gentle uncle, and perhaps fear my displeasure. But you are needlessly alarmed. Let me ask you another question. Do you think it likely our mother, the queen-dowager, will marry again?”

“In sooth, I cannot say, my liege. Not as yet, I should suppose.”

“No, not as yet—but hereafter. If she should—I say if she should—it would not surprise me if her choice were to fall on you.”

“On me, sire!” exclaimed Seymour, affecting astonishment.

“Ay, on you, gentle uncle. Nay, you need not affect mystery with me. I am in possession of your secret. Rest easy. If such a marriage were contemplated, I should not object to it.”

“What is this I hear?” cried the Lord Protector, who had overheard what was said. “Have you dared to raise your eyes to the queen-dowager?” he added to his brother.

“By what right does your Highness put the question to me?” demanded Seymour, haughtily.

“By every right,” rejoined Somerset, furiously. “If the notion has been entertained, it must be abandoned. Such a marriage never can take place.”

“Wherefore not?” demanded Edward, sharply.

“For many reasons, which it is needless now to explain to your Majesty,” rejoined Somerset. “But to make an end of the matter, I forbid it—peremptorily forbid it.”

“It will require more than your prohibition to hinder it, should it be in contemplation,” rejoined Seymour.

“Beware, lest pride and presumption work your ruin!” cried Somerset, foaming with rage.

“Take back the warning,” rejoined Seymour, with equal fierceness. “You have more need of it than I.”

“My inadvertence has caused this,” cried Edward, much pained by the quarrel. “But it must proceed no further. Not another word, I charge your Grace, on your allegiance,” he added to the Lord Protector.

And still keeping his favourite uncle beside him, he proceeded to the palace,

IV

HOW LORD SEYMOUR OF SUDLEY WAS CLANDESTINELY MARRIED TO QUEEN CATHERINE PARR, IN SAINT PETER'S CHAPEL IN THE TOWER.

ON quitting the king, Lord Seymour proceeded to the Wardrobe Tower, where he found his esquire awaiting him. Ugo began to express his delight at his patron's elevation, when Seymour cut him short impatiently, exclaiming,

"Basta! Ugo. Reserve thy congratulations for another opportunity. I have got the title I coveted and the office. I am Lord High Admiral of England—"

"And therefore in possession of an office of the highest honour and emolument, monsignore," interrupted Ugo, bowing.

"I will not gainsay it. My importance is doubtless increased, but I am likely to lose the prize I thought secure. The Lord Protector has found out that I aspire to the hand of the queen-dowager, and will use all his power to prevent the marriage." And he proceeded to detail the quarrel that had just occurred between himself and his brother in the king's presence. "His Majesty good-naturedly endeavoured to patch up the dispute," he continued; "but I know Somerset will not forgive me, and will do his utmost to thwart my project. It is well he made not this discovery sooner," he added, with a laugh, "or I should not have been in the list of those who have this day gained a peerage. Thus much I have secured, at all events."

"And believe me it is no slight matter, my Lord. Have you any reason to fear the consequences of a secret marriage with the queen?"

"Once wedded to her Majesty, I should fear nothing—not even my omnipotent and vindictive brother, who is taking steps to clothe himself with regal power. I do not fear him as it is—but he may thwart my schemes. Thy hint is a good one, Ugo,—the marriage must be secret."

"Speedy as well as secret, monsignore. The sooner it takes place the better. You have other enemies besides the Lord Protector, who will work against you. Have you

influence sufficient with the queen, think you, to prevail upon her to consent to such a step?"

"Methinks I have," rejoined Seymour. "But I will put her to the proof—and that right speedily. She has agreed to grant me an interview this very morning, and if my reception be favourable, I will urge the imperative necessity of the course thou hast suggested, backing my suit with all the arguments in my power."

"Per dio! it would be vexatious to lose so rich a prize. Not only does her Majesty commend herself to your Lordship by her beauty, her exalted rank, and her many noble qualities, but also by her rich dower and her store of jewels. As to the latter I myself can speak, for I have seen the inventory—such balaces of emeralds and rubies—such flowers and crosses of diamonds—such chains of gold and brooches—such tablets of gold and girdles—such rings, bracelets, and carcanets—enough to make one's mouth water. 'Twould be a pity, I repeat, to lose a queen with such a dower, and such jewels."

"She must not be lost! I will about the affair at once. Thou shalt aid me to make a slight change in my attire—for I would produce the best possible impression upon her Majesty—and I will then ascertain my fate. Who knows? The marriage may take place sooner than we anticipate."

"Were it to take place this very day it would not be too soon, monsignore."

Seymour laughed, but made no reply. Having completed his toilette to his satisfaction, he repaired to the queen-dowager's apartments. He was detained for a short time in the ante-chamber, but when admitted into the inner room by a gentleman usher, he found Catherine alone. She was attired in black velvet, which set off her superb person and fair complexion to the greatest advantage, and wore a diamond-shaped head-dress, richly ornamented with pearls, with a careanet round her throat. Never had she looked more captivating.

Seymour's reception was quite as favourable as he had expected—far more so than he merited. But Catherine, though strong-minded, was but a woman. She listened to his protestations of repentance, his vows, his professions of unalterable fidelity—and forgave him. Nay more, when he urged the necessity of a clandestine union, she seemed

half disposed to assent to it. Emboldened by his success, Seymour resolved to bring the matter to the immediate issue suggested by his esquire.

“Why should our happiness be longer delayed?” he urged. “Why should not our marriage take place this very night—here in the Tower—in Saint Peter’s Chapel?”

“Impossible!” exclaimed Catherine.

“Nay, the thing is quite possible, and only wants your consent to its fulfilment. The chaplain of the Tower will unite us. We shall then be secure against all danger, and may defy our enemies.”

“But this is too sudden, Seymour. I cannot prepare myself in so short a time.”

“No preparation is needed,” he cried. “Decision only is required, and you *have* decided in my favour, that I feel, my queen!” And throwing himself at her feet, he pressed her hand passionately to his lips. “Why should we trust to the future when the present is ours?” he continued, fervently. “To-morrow, unforeseen obstacles and difficulties may arise. Let us seize upon happiness while it is yet within reach.”

“It is very hasty!” murmured Catherine, but in a tone that showed she meant to yield.

“It seems so; but since we cannot control circumstances, we must bend to them. To-night! let it be to-night, Catherine!”

The queen consented. Her judgment was not blinded. She knew the imprudence of the step she was about to take. She knew the character of the man who sought her hand. Yet she agreed to a sudden and secret marriage with him. Her love overmastered her discretion. Some excuse may be found for her in the resistless manner and extraordinary personal attractions of her suitor. Few of her sex would have come off scathless from the ordeal to which she was subjected. Seymour seemed created to beguile, and on this occasion his power of fascination certainly did not desert him. As he arose from his kneeling posture, with a countenance flushed with triumph, he looked so superbly handsome that it was impossible to regard him without admiration.

“Heaven forgive me if I have done wrong in thus yielding!” cried Catherine. “My heart fails me, yet I must

go on. I trust all my happiness to you, Seymour. Do not again deceive me!"

"Have no misgiving, Catherine," he rejoined. "My life shall be devoted to you."

It was then arranged that Catherine should attend vespers in Saint Peter's Chapel that evening. She was to be accompanied by Lady Herbert, Seymour's sister, who, as we have seen, was devoted to her brother, and on whom entire reliance could be placed. Seymour also would be in the chapel with the Marquis of Dorset, on whose aid he could count, and Ugo Harrington. When vespers were over, and the chapel cleared, the doors could be locked, and the marriage securely accomplished. No difficulty was apprehended in regard to the chaplain. Seymour undertook to secure his services on the occasion, and subsequent silence, so long as secrecy was required. This arrangement being assented to by the queen, with fresh protestations of devotion Seymour took his departure, greatly elated by his success.

But his exultation was quickly dashed. While traversing a corridor on his way to the Wardrobe Tower, he unexpectedly encountered the Princess Elizabeth. The princess was attended by her governess and Sir John Gage, and was in the act of quitting the Tower, an escort being in readiness for her without. Up to this moment she had looked exceedingly pale, but her cheek flushed as she met Seymour's gaze. But she gave no other sign of emotion. Coldly returning his profound salutation, she passed proudly on, without a word.

"I would I had not beheld her at this moment. The sight of her shakes my purpose," he exclaimed, gazing after her. "'Tis strange how she still clings to my heart. But I must have done with this folly. 'Tis idle to think of her more."

And he went on. But Elizabeth's image haunted him still.

That evening however the marriage took place in the manner arranged; the chaplain's connivance and services being secured by Ugo. The queen and Lady Herbert were in Saint Peter's Chapel; so also was Seymour, with his esquire and the Marquis of Dorset.

When all fear of intrusion or interruption was over, the

ceremony was performed and the widow of Henry VIII. became the spouse of the new-made Lord Seymour of Sudley.

Close beside the altar where they were wedded were laid two of Henry's slaughtered queens—Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard. Little did Seymour dream at that hour that at no distant day he would have a place beside them. Little did he dream, as he uttered his vows at the altar—vows so ill kept!—that he stood within a few paces of his own grave.

V

HOW KING EDWARD RODE FROM THE TOWER TO THE PALACE OF WHITEHALL.

APPOINTED for Shrove Sunday, 1547, Edward's coronation was to be celebrated with great pomp; but divers old observances and formalities were to be discontinued, lest, as declared by the order of the council, "the tedious length of the same should weary, and be peradventure hurtsome to the king's Majesty, being yet of tender age. And also for that many points of the same are such as by the laws of the realm at this present are not allowable." These alterations and omissions, relating chiefly to the papal supremacy, were proposed by Cranmer, and vehemently objected to by the Lord Chaucellor, Tunstal, Bishop of Durham, the Earls of Arundel and St John, and other adherents to the Church of Rome in the council, but after much deliberation and discussion, were eventually agreed upon. Several changes indeed were indispensable, since Edward was the first monarch who had assumed the crown subsequent to the throwing off of the Pope's authority.

Unusual interest attached to the ceremony owing to Edward's extreme youth, coupled with the circumstance of his being the first Protestant monarch who had assumed the crown. The latter circumstance led to much discussion with those of the opposite faith, and the proposed innovations were warmly discussed, but however divided the two

sects might be on points of doctrine, each looked forward with interest to the young monarch's coronation, and both were disposed to regard it as an auspicious event.

In order that the new reign might be marked by clemency, a general pardon was proclaimed, from which however two distinguished persons were excepted—namely, the Duke of Norfolk and Cardinal Pole; with some others of less note, as Edward Courtenây, Earl of Devonshire, Thomas Pate, Archdeacon of Lincoln, with two gentlemen named Fortescue and Throckmorton, all of whom had been attainted of treason in the late reign. It was asserted that the Lord Protector feared to liberate the Duke of Norfolk, and that Cranmer had an equal dread of Pole.

Edward having announced his intention of preceeding to the palace of Whitehall on the day before his coronation, great preparations were made by the citizens to give effect to his progress. Luckily, the weather was propitious. The day was kept as a general holiday, and was ushered in by the joyous pealing of church bells, and by the discharge of cannon.

At the Tower the note of preparation was sounded betimes, and the guard of honour, with the archers and arquebusiers, appointed to attend the king, were drawn up on the green in front of the palace. Amongst the first to depart was Queen Catherine, who, with her ladies, was conveyed by water to Whitehall. The Duchess of Somerset, the Marchioness of Dorset, and others, followed in the same manner.

Precisely at noon Edward set forth. Cannon were fired from the summit of the White Tower as he issued from the portals of the palace and mounted his milk-white palfrey, which was superbly caparisoned with damask gold deeply purpled with ermine. His own attire was of corresponding magnificence, for having laid aside his mourning, he now wore a robe of crimson velvet trimmed with ermine, a jerkin of raised gold, with a placard studded with diamonds, emeralds, rubies, and pearls, and a gold chain, similarly ornamented, thrown over his shoulders. His hat, with a white feather in it, was looped with diamonds. Additional effect was given to the splendour of his appearance by a canopy of cloth of gold, which was borne above him by four barons of the Cinque Ports apparelled in scarlet.

An advanced guard having set forward to clear the way, the royal cavalcade was put in motion. At its head rode the Duke of Somerset, habited in gold tissue, embroidered with roses, with the collar of the Garter round his neck. The trappings of his steed were of crimson velvet, worked with bullion gold, curiously wrought. The duke was followed by the nine children of honour, apparelled in blue velvet, powdered with fleurs-de-lys of gold, and having chains of gold round their necks. Their horses were richly trapped, and on each was displayed one of the king's titles, as France, Gascoigne, Guienne, Normandy, Anjou, Wales, Cornwall, and Ireland.

Then came the Marquis of Dorset, specially appointed for the occasion Constable of England, bearing the sword. He was mounted on a great courser, richly trapped and embroidered. On his right, but a little behind him, rode the Earl of Warwick, now Lord Great Chamberlain, likewise very magnificently attired; and on the left the Earl of Arundel, Lord Chamberlain, but now temporarily filling the post of Earl Marshal, as deputy of the Duke of Somerset.

Next came the king on his palfrey, with the canopy of state borne over his head, as already described.

After his Majesty rode Sir Anthony Brown, Master of the Horse, richly arrayed in tissne of gold, and leading the king's spare charger, barbed and sumptuously trapped.

Then came the Lord High Admiral, Lord Seymour of Sudley, resplendent in cloth of gold, velvet, and gems, his charger trapped in burned silver, drawn over with cords of green silk and gold, and fringed with gold. Beyond all question the most splendid-looking personage in the procession, Lord Seymour attracted universal attention.

Then followed a long array of nobles, knights, esquires, and gentlemen, all well mounted, and richly apparelled in cloth of gold, cloth of silver, tinsel, and embroidered velvet. A company of halberdiers formed the rear-guard. With these marched the three gigantic warders.

To his infinite delight, Xit was permitted to accompany the procession. He was provided with a pony about the size of Pacolet's horse, which had occasioned him such dire mischance. Trapped like a larger steed, this spirited little animal exactly suited his rider, being full of tricks and

mischief. Xit rode with the pursuivants, whose duty it was to keep order in the procession, attending them whithersoever they went, and causing much amusement by his assumption of authority.

A brief halt was made by the young monarch at the gate of the Byward Tower, where he addressed a few gracious words to Sir John Gage, Sir John Markham, the gentleman porter, and other officers of the fortress, who were there drawn up.

“We thank you heartily, our trusty Constable,” he said, “and you, our worthy Lieutenant, and you too, gentlemen, for the care ye have taken of us during our sojourn at the Tower. We will not say farewell to you, Sir John Gage, since we shall have you with us at Whitehall. But to you, Sir John Markham, and you, gentlemen, we must bid adieu for a while, committing our fortress to your custody.”

Bending gracefully in return for the salutations addressed him, he then moved on, while Sir John Gage, mounting a richly-trapped charger, which was held in readiness for him by an esquire, took his place in the procession by the side of Lord Seymour.

While glancing round at the burly yeomen of the guard stationed near the barbican, Edward remarked amidst the throng the repulsive and ill-omened countenance of Mauger, and with an irrepressible thrill of horror instantly averted his gaze. So perceptible was the movement, and so obvious the cause of it, that some of the yeomen laughed, and one of them observed to the executioner, “His Majesty likes not thy looks, gossip.”

“I cannot help it,” rejoined Mauger, gruffly. “I cannot amend my visage to please him. But though he turns away from me now in disgust, he will lack my aid hereafter. Two of the proudest of those who have just gone by shall mount Tower-hill one of these days in very different guise from that in which they are proceeding thither now.”

“Have done with thy croaking, thou bird of ill omen!” exclaimed the yeoman, shuddering at his words.

“There goes a third!” cried Mauger, without heeding the remark.

“Why, that is the Lord High Admiral of England, his Majesty’s favourite unele,” observed his companion.

“What of that?” rejoined Mauger, with a grim look. “Greater than he have died by the axe. I tell thee it is his destiny to perish on Tower-hill. If thou liv’st long enough, thou wilt find my prediction verified.”

Disturbed by no dread of the future, but, on the contrary, full of high and ambitious hopes, Lord Seymour rode on by the side of the Constable, his gay looks, affable manner, and splendid attire, contrasting strongly with the grave deportment and stern countenance of the latter.

Cannon thundered from the battlements of the fortress, and from the great ships moored in the river, as the king issued from the outer gate, and deafening cheers arose from the crowd assembled to see him pass by. All the streets through which the royal procession had to wend its way were railed to keep off the multitude, and gravelled to prevent the horses from slipping. Barriers also were erected at certain points.

Shaping its course along Tower-street, the cavalcade struck off on the right into Gracechurch-street, and passing through Lombard-street, reached Cornhill. As upon the occasion of Edward’s first entrance to the city, the fronts of the houses were hung with tapestry and rich stuffs. In Lombard-street especially, which was almost entirely inhabited by wealthy goldsmiths, there was a magnificent display of cloths of gold, silver, and other tissues.

Stages were erected for the different City companies, on which stood the wardens and their assistants in their gowns and liveries. Most of the companies had minstrels with them, but the best display was made by the Goldsmiths, who had a bevy of beautiful young maidens, dressed in white, and bearing silver branches containing burning tapers, ranged in front of their stage. Moreover, a pageant was exhibited by this company with which the young monarch appeared greatly pleased.

This was the manner of it. On a platform adjoining the stage just described, sat Saint Dunstan, the patron saint of the company, arrayed in a robe of white lawn, over which was a cope of bright cloth of gold hanging to the ground. The hoary locks of this saintly figure were crowned with a golden mitre set with topazes, rubies, emeralds, amethysts, and sapphires. In his left hand he held a crosier of gold, and in his right a large pair of goldsmith’s

tongs, likewise of gold. Opposite the elevated seat occupied by Saint Dunstan was a forge, at which a workman was blowing with a huge pair of bellows. In another part artificers were beating out plate with hammer and anvil; while a third party were employed in forging and shaping vessels of gold and silver. At the back there was an open cupboard filled with glittering cups and dishes, and near it a stand piled with ingots of costly metals. Then there were assayers, finers, and chasers; and finally, there was Beelzebub himself, who, after playing sundry diverting tricks with the artificers, was caught by the nose by Saint Dunstan's golden tongs, and held captive for a time, roaring most lustily while so detained.

But this was not the only pageant prepared for the young king's delectation. In Cheapside, not far from the Cross, where the Lord Mayor and aldermen, with the rest of the civic authorities, were assembled to give expression to their loyalty and devotion, was exhibited the device of a golden mountain, with a tree on the summit covered with fruit, like that grown, as poets feign, in the gardens of the Hesperides. On Edward's approach this golden mount, which was reared on a lofty stage, burst open, and a sylph-like figure in thin gauzy attire, attended by a number of little sprites, fantastically arrayed, issued from it. Having executed a merry dance upon the stage, these elves retired with their queen, and the mountain closed upon them.

Other devices there were, very gorgeous and curious, but we cannot pause to particularise them. The populace were in high good humour, largesse being liberally distributed by the heralds; while all who listed could drink the king's health, for the conduits ran wine instead of water. Cheers of the most enthusiastic kind attended the youthful monarch during his progress, and blessings were showered on his head.

At length, after repeated delays, the cavalcade approached Saint Paul's, then a noble Gothic pile, with which the modern cathedral can in no wise be compared. Independently of its magnitude and beauty, the ancient cathedral possessed at this time the loftiest steeple in Europe, its height being five hundred and twenty feet from the ground, while the spire itself, which was of wood, and which was destroyed by fire in the subsequent reign of

Elizabeth, sprang two hundred and sixty feet above the tower. From the summit of this lofty tower, strains, which might well be termed seraphic, now resounded. Thither the well-trained choir of the cathedral had mounted, and pouring down their voices on the assemblage beneath, ravished the ears of all who listened to them.

As these strains ceased, the great door of the cathedral was thrown open, allowing the deep diapasons of the organ to be heard, amid which, preceded by his cross, came forth the Bishop of London, in his mitre and robes, and bearing his crosier. He was followed by the dean, canons, and chaplains in their copes and surplices, and proceeded to cense the king.

To this impressive ceremony succeeded an exhibition of a widely different character. We omitted to mention that from the battlements of the great tower a cable had been drawn, which was made fast to a ring fixed in the masonry of the dean's gate. While Edward, who had been enchanted by the almost angelic music he had heard, was looking upwards, as if in expectation of further melody of the same nature, he perceived a man step forth upon the giddy verge of the tower battlements with a small silk flag in either hand, which he waved to the assemblage below. The appearance of this personage, who, seen from that great height, looked like one of the grotesque stone sculptures of the edifice, was greeted with loud shouts by the spectators.

At this juncture, Xit, who had contrived to work his way to the king, called out, "'Tis Pacolet, sire. I know him even at this distance."

Just as the words were uttered, the mountebank—for it was he—threw himself with his breast on the cable, and stretching out his hands, which still grasped the flags, shot down the rope with amazing swiftness, but happily reached the ground unhurt. The rapidity of Pacolet's descent, which resembled the flight of a meteor, took away the breath of the spectators, but as soon as he was safely landed a tremendous shout arose. The applause was redoubled as the mountebank, nothing daunted by his perilous exploit, nimbly reascended the cable, and when he had attained a sufficient altitude for his purpose, began to execute various extraordinary and hazardous-looking feats. Perhaps no one of the thousand spectators who witnessed it was more

delighted with the performance than Xit. He screamed like a child with delight; and his satisfaction was completed, when he was ordered by the king to see a dozen marks bestowed upon the adventurous mountebank.

Quitting the cathedral, the cavalcade then went on. At Ludgate however another brief stoppage occurred, for here a fresh pageant had to be exhibited.

From this part of the old city walls an admirable view was commanded of the procession both on its approach from Saint Paul's and during its descent of Ludgate-hill. The long line of gorgeously-attired horsemen could be seen crossing the narrow bridge over the Fleet, and proceeding slowly along Fleet-street. In other respects however the view from this point was exceedingly striking. As the spectator looked eastward, the noble cathedral in all its grandeur rose before him. Nearer, at the foot of the majestic pile, was Paul's Cross, where homilies were now constantly preached. Turning in the opposite direction, after surveying the then sharp descent of Ludgate-hill, and the open ground watered by the Fleet, he could plunge his gaze through the narrow but picturesque streets almost as far as Temple-bar.

In this quarter were situated some of the oldest and most curious habitations in the metropolis. The streets were narrow, the houses lofty, with high roofs and quaintly-carved gables, each story projecting beyond the other, so that the occupants of the higher rooms could almost shake hands with their opposite neighbours; but with all these objections, and many others that might be raised to them, there can be no doubt that these ancient structures were highly picturesque in appearance, and that to an artist the London of the sixteenth century would have been preferable to the London of our own era.

Down precipitous Ludgate-hill, with its houses climbing to the skies as we have described, and almost meeting above; across Fleet-bridge—the space on either side of the stream being thronged by spectators—did the splendid cavalcade move on.

Here, again, the scene was striking and picturesque, and immeasurably in favour of old London. On the banks of the Thames, on the left, stood Baynard's Castle, a vast and stern-looking structure; further on, on the same side,

was the ancient palace of Bridewell. On the right, amidst a host of quaint old buildings, was the large and gloomy prison which took its name from the little river that washed its walls.

At Temple Bar, the Lord Mayor and aldermen, who had accompanied the procession from Cheapside, took their leave, and the cavaleade moved at a somewhat quicker pace along the Strand.

Here fresh crowds welcomed the young monarch, and greetings as hearty and enthusiastic as those he had received in the City saluted him. Though the houses were not so richly set forth as those of the wealthy goldsmiths of Lombard-street, still there was no lack of decoration— and arras and painted hangings were plentiful enough.

Amid cheers and blessings the young king reached Charing-cross, and passing through the beautiful gate of Whitehall, then but recently erected, immediately afterwards dismounted at the principal entrance of the palace.

Somewhat fatigued by his ride, which, owing to the many delays, had occupied nearly four hours, and anxious to reserve his forces for the morrow, Edward withdrew to his own chamber, and did not appear again on that day.

VI.

HOW KING EDWARD VI. WAS CROWNED IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

WITHIN the ancient abbey of Westminster, where his sire and grandsire had been crowned, and where so many of his predecessors had been consecrated and anointed kings, all needful preparations were made for the youthful Edward's coronation.

In the midst of the choir, and opposite the high altar, was reared a lofty stage, the floor of which was covered with rich carpets, and the sides hung with cloth of gold. Two-and-twenty broad steps led to the summit of this stage from the west, but the descent to the altar comprised little

more than half that number. The altar itself made a magnificent show, being covered with vessels of silver and gold, and having a gorgeous valance decked with jewels. The ancient tombs of King Sebert, Aymer de Valence, and Edmund Crouchback, were shrouded with curtains of golden arras. Many other parts of the choir were similarly decorated, as were the noble pillars in the body of the edifice, which were partially covered with red and white velvet, and hung with banners and escutcheons.

At an early hour in the morning all the approaches to the abbey were thronged by thousands eager to gain admission, and before eight o'clock every available position in the vast building, not reserved for those about to be engaged in the solemnity, was occupied.

About nine o'clock, the sense of tediousness which had begun to afflict the assemblage was somewhat relieved by the appearance of the choristers. These were attired in their copes, and had six large silver crosses with them. Next came forth the children of the king's chapel, arrayed in scarlet, with surplices and copes. Then appeared the chaplains in surplices and grey amices, who were followed, after a short interval, by ten bishops, mitred, clothed in scarlet, with rochets and copes, and each carrying a crosier. After another short pause, the Archbishop of Canterbury himself appeared, mitred likewise, and in his full pontificals, and having his crosses borne before him.

Apparently wholly unconscious of the great interest he excited, Cranmer looked exceedingly grave, as if deeply impressed with the solemn nature of the ceremony on which he was engaged.

Having formed themselves into a procession, the various ecclesiastics marched forth from the great door opening upon the body of the fane for the purpose of conducting the king to the abbey. From this door cloth of raze was laid down to the principal entrance of the palace. This privileged path was railed, and lined on either side by archers and halberdiers. Marshals, standard-bearers, and other officers were ranged at short distances from each other along the lines.

The spectacle was magnificent. A bright sunshiny morning exhilarated the vast multitude collected around the abbey and within the courts of the palace, and kept

them all in good humour. Not a single untoward circumstance occurred to disturb the general harmony.

Meanwhile the Archbishop of Canterbury, with the prelates and their train, had entered the palace, and every eye was fixed on the grand portal, the steps of which were lined by ushers and officers of the royal household.

At length, loud flourishes of trumpets announced the king's approach. First came forth the trumpeters in their embroidered coats, having their clarions adorned with silken pennons. Next followed the heralds in their coats of arms. Then came the pursuivants with their maces, and a little after them marched Xit, staggering under the weight of a silver mace larger than himself, and causing much diversion by his efforts to carry it. Next came Og, Gog, and Magog, followed by nine other tall yeomen of the guard, whom the giants overtopped by a head. Then followed the children of the king's chapel, the choir, the chaplains, the bearers of the crosses, the ten bishops, and lastly, the dignified and venerable-looking Cranmer.

Again loud flourishes resounded, and following another band of trumpeters, apparelled like the first, came the Earl of Northampton, in a rich robe, bareheaded, and carrying a pair of gilt spurs—as a symbol of knighthood. After him came the Earl of Arundel, equally splendidly arrayed, holding a bare and pointless sword—signifying mercy. Next came the Earl of Dorset, bearing the Constable's mace. A second sword, sharpened at the point, to signify justice to the temporalty, was borne by the Earl of Warwick. A third sword, likewise pointed, and denoting justice to the clergy, was borne by the Earl of Derby. Then followed the Earl of Oxford with the sceptre, to signify peace. Then came Shrewsbury, bearing the ball and cross, signifying monarchy. Then came Lord Seymour of Sudley, magnificently attired, bearing the sword of state in its scabbard. Then followed Barons Rich, Sheffield, and Willoughby, marching together. After them came Garter King at Arms, in his rich coat, with the Lord Mayor on his left, carrying a mace, and the Constable of the Tower on his right. Then came the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Treasurer, and the Lord Privy Seal, in their full robes. Then followed the Lord Protector, carrying the crown of

Saint Edward on a crimson velvet cushion. All these noble personages were bareheaded.

The crowd had looked on with wonder and delight, and had loudly expressed their admiration of the Lord High Admiral's splendid appearance, but a tremendous shout rent the air as the young king now came forth beneath his canopy borne by four barons of the Cinque Ports. He was apparelled in a robe of purple velvet deeply bordered with ermine, and his train was borne by six pages in white satin. As Edward marched on towards the abbey, smiling to the right and left in reply to the cheers with which he was greeted, it required the halberdiers to stand firm in order to resist the pressure of the crowd.

The trumpet-blasts and the tremendous cheering had apprised those within the abbey that the king was at hand, and all were on the tiptoe of expectation; but before describing the entrance of the procession, let us cast a hasty glance around the magnificent building. Magnificent, in sooth, it looked on this occasion. A spectacle of extraordinary splendour and beauty burst upon the beholder as he passed through the great doorway and looked towards the choir. With the exception of the railed and carpeted space in the centre of the pavement, the whole body of the pile was thronged with spectators clad in the variegated and picturesque costumes of the period. Robes, cloaks, and doublets there were of cloth, silk, velvet, and other stuffs, of as many hues as the rainbow. Additional depth of dye was imparted to these many-coloured garments from the light streaming down upon them from the richly-painted windows. Amidst the closely-packed crowd rose the tall grey pillars lining the aisles, decked with banners and escutcheons, as before described. The effect of the choir was marvellous. The doors were left wide open, so that the splendid estrade on which the ceremony was to be performed could be seen from all points. Nave, aisles, and galleries were thronged; so were the transepts on either side of the choir, so were the ambulatories adjoining the chapel of Saint Edmund the Confessor; so were many other places which could by no possibility command a view of the solemnity. In Saint Edmund's Chapel, which communicated with the choir by two doorways near the altar,

were congregated the nobles about to do homage to the king. Even Henry the Seventh's Chapel was filled by those who had been unable to obtain accommodation elsewhere.

By this time, the foremost part of the procession had poured into the nave, and, amid loud blasts from the trumpeters, the young king at last set foot within the abbey. His canopy was still held over him, and with much dignity of deportment he proceeded towards the choir, where he was met by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lord Protector, and conducted to the chapel of Saint Edmund the Confessor.

After tarrying there for a short time, he was brought forth seated in a chair of crimson velvet, which was carried by Lord Seymour and Sir John Gage, and conveyed to the summit of the estrade, at the north end of which he was set down by his bearers.

Cranmer, who, with the Lord Protector, had followed him, then advanced, and looking at the assemblage, which had become perfectly silent, called out in a sonorous voice, "Sirs, I here present unto you King Edward, the rightful inheritor to the crown of this realm. Therefore all ye that be come this day to do your homage, service, and bounden duty, be ye willing to do the same?"

An enthusiastic response was instantly made—the assemblage crying out with one accord, "Yea! yea!—King Edward! King Edward!"

A similar address was made by the archbishop at each of the other corners of the stage, and like responses returned.

After this, the Bishops of London and Westminster ascended the stage, and raising the king from his seat, conducted him to the high altar, where he reverently knelt down, but after a short prayer rose again, and offerings being brought him by the Earl of Warwick, he laid them upon the altar. This done, he prostrated himself on his face, while the Archbishop of Canterbury recited the collect, *Deus humilium*.

Aided by the prelates, the king then arose and returned to his chair, which had meanwhile been so placed as to face the altar. Seating himself within it, he steadily regarded the primate, who thus interrogated him in tones calculated

to be heard by all those near at hand: "Dread sire, do you engage to your people that the laws and liberties shall be respected and upheld?"

"I solemnly promise it," replied the young king, in a distinct voice.

"Do you engage to keep peace with the Church of God, and with all men?" proceeded Cranmer.

"This also I solemnly promise," was Edward's reply.

"Do you engage to administer justice in all your dooms and judgments, tempered with mercy?"

"I will never swerve from justice," responded Edward, in his clear silvery voice, which penetrated all hearts; "yet will I ever be merciful."

"Do you engage to make no laws but such as shall be to the honour and glory of God, and to the good of the Commonwealth?—And to make such laws only with the consent of your people?"

"Such laws alone will I make as shall be acceptable in the sight of God, and to my people," replied Edward, emphatically.

The archbishop having finished his interrogations, Edward arose, and being conducted to the altar by the two prelates, a solemn oath upon the sacrament was proposed to him in these terms by Cranmer: "All things which I have promised I will observe and keep. So may God help me, and so the holy Evangelists by me bodily touched upon the altar!"

This oath being taken, Edward prostrated himself with the same humility as before, while the archbishop began with a loud voice the *Veni Creator spiritus*.

Cranmer then arose, and standing over the still prostrate king, said the *Te invocamus*. This done, Edward was again assisted to his feet by the prelates; after which, the Earl of Warwick advanced, and divested him of his robe and jerkin, so that a crimson satin shirt was alone left upon his shoulders. A pall of red cloth of gold was then held over him by Sir Anthony Denny and Sir William Herbert, while the archbishop proceeded to anoint him, first on the palms of the hands, next on the breast, then on the back and arms, and finally on the head, making a cross as he did so with the holy chrism. While this portion of the ceremony was performed, solemn notes from the organ

pealed through the fane, and the whole choir chanted *Ungebant regem*.

The ceremonial of inunction being completed, Edward arose, and the archbishop arrayed him in a tabard of tanton-white, shaped like a dalmatic, placing a gold coif on his head, which was brought by the Earl of Warwick. He was next girt with a sword, the weapon being afterwards laid reverently upon the altar to signify that his power was derived from heaven. This done, he again sat down, whereupon regal sandals and spurs were placed upon his feet by the Lord Chamberlain—the latter being immediately afterwards removed, lest they should incommode him.

Saint Edward's crown was then delivered by the Lord Protector to Cranmer, and placed by the archbishop on the young king's brows. At the same time, the sceptre was placed in the king's left hand, and the orb and cross in his right. After Edward had worn the crown for a moment, it was taken off, and replaced by the crown of France, which was likewise furnished by the Duke of Somerset. A third crown, that of Ireland, was next put on the young king's head, and this being removed, the crown of England was brought back, and worn by Edward during the remainder of the ceremony.

Trumpets were now blown lustily from the rood-loft; the organ pealed forth its loudest notes; and the whole choir sang *Te Deum laudamus*.

Then all the lords, spiritual and temporal, beginning with the Lord Protector, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Lord Chancellor, knelt down before the king, one after the other, according to their degrees, and did homage to him, kissing his right foot and his left cheek, and holding their hands between the king's hands.

Owing to the great number of nobles present, this part of the ceremony occupied a considerable time; but when all had rendered homage, they cried with one voice, "God save King Edward!" and the vast assemblage joined heartily in the shout.

High mass was then performed, and at its close Edward, still wearing the crown, and attended by the Lord Protector and the whole of the nobles, quitted the abbey amid manifestations of the greatest enthusiasm, and returned to the palace of Whitehall.

VII.

OF THE ROYAL BANQUET IN WESTMINSTER HALL. HOW THE KING'S CHAMPION MADE HIS CHALLENGE THERE-AT; AND HOW HIT FOUGHT WITH A WILD MAN.

WITHIN the mighty hall built by William Rufus, and renovated and enlarged by Richard II., by whom the marvellous and unequalled Gothic roof was added, preparations had been made on the grandest scale for a banquet to be given by the king to his nobles immediately after the coronation.

This vast chamber—supposed to be the largest in the world unsupported by pillars, and the size of which may be estimated from the fact that six thousand persons have been entertained within at one time—was magnificently decorated for the occasion. The walls were hung with arras to about half their height. Banners depended from the huge chesnut beams of the roof, and the sculptured angels supporting the rafters were furnished with escutcheons of the king's arms.

Three long tables, each capable of accommodating three hundred guests, were laid within the body of the hall. Upon the dais, at the upper end, was set a table intended for the king and the chief nobles, covered with the fairest napery, and literally blazing with vessels of gold and silver of rarest workmanship and device. Over the royal chair was a canopy of cloth of gold, embroidered with the king's arms, and at either end of the table stood an open cupboard, nine stages high, filled with glittering salvers, costly ornaments of gold and silver, goblets, and other drinking-vessels.

About half way down the hall, on the left, a platform was erected for the minstrels, and on the opposite side was a similar stage for the carvers.

No sooner was the solemnity within the abbey at an end, than all who had invitations to the banquet—and they were upwards of a thousand persons—proceeded to Westminster Hall, and were promptly conducted by the marshals and ushers to their places. Not a seat at either of

the three long tables was soon left vacant ; and what with gentlemen waiters, and yeomen waiters, marshals, ushers, grooms, and serving-men, the body of the hall was quite full.

Loud flourishes of trumpets from the upper end of the spacious chamber then proclaimed the king's approach. First of all the nobles entered, and were ushered to their places by the vice-chamberlain, Sir Anthony Wingfield ; then the Lord Chancellor, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Lord Protector, and lastly, the king. Cranmer sat on the right of the royal chair, and the Lord Protector on the left.

Grace having been solemnly said, the trumpets were again sounded, and as the first course was brought in by a vast train of attendants, the Earl of Warwick, lord great chamberlain, and the Earl of Arundel, lord chamberlain of the household, magnificently arrayed, and mounted on horses trapped in cloth of gold and velvet, entered the hall by the great door, and rode between the long tables to the dais to superintend the service.

It would be superfluous to describe the dishes either at the king's table or at those assigned to the less important guests. It will be enough to say that the banquet was ordered in right regal fashion, with many subtleties and strange devices ; that the meats were of the daintiest, and the wines of the best and rarest. " What should I speak or write of the sumptuous, fine, and delicate meats prepared for this high and honourable coronation," quoth an old chronicler, " or of the honourable order of the services, the clean-handling and breaking of meats, the ordering of the dishes, with the plentiful abundance, so that no worshipful person went away unfeasted ? "

When the second course was served, which was yet more sumptuous than the first, the great door of the hall was again thrown wide open to admit the king's champion, Sir John Dymoke. Armed, cap-à-pied, in burnished steel, having a plume of white ostrich feathers in his helm, and mounted on a charger, trapped in gold tissue, embroidered with the arms of England and France, the champion rode slowly up the centre of the hall, preceded by a herald. The champion might well be splendidly equipped and proudly mounted, since, by his office, he was allowed the king's

best suit of armour, "save one," and the best charger from the royal stables, "save one," with trappings to boot.

As Sir John Dymoke approached the dais, he was encountered by Garter King at Arms, who called out to him in a loud voice, "Whence come you, Sir Knight, and what is your pretence?"

"That you shall hear anon," replied the champion, courteously. And addressing his own herald, he commanded him to make proclamation, who, after thrice exclaiming "Oyez!" thus proceeded: "If there be any person here, of whatsoever state or degree, who shall declare that King Edward the Sixth is not the rightful inheritor of this realm, I, Sir John Dymoke, the king's champion, offer him my glove, and will do battle with him to the utterance."

As the herald concluded, Sir John took off his gauntlet and hurled it on the ground. This challenge was afterwards repeated in different parts of the hall. As the defiance however was not accepted, the champion rode towards the dais, and demanded a cup of wine. A large parcel-gilt goblet, filled with malmsey, was then handed him by the chief cupbearer, and having drunk from it, he claimed the cover, which being given him, he retired.

The banquet then proceeded. The trumpets sounded for the third course, and when it had been brought in, a side door on the right of the hall was opened, and gave admittance to a device of a very unusual character. Three colossal figures, clad in Anglo-Saxon armour of the period of the Conquest, such as may be seen in ancient tapestry, and consisting of mingled leather and steel, and wearing conical helmets, with fantastic nasal projections, shaped like the beak of a bird, entered, carrying over their heads an enormous shield, the circumference of which was almost as large as King Arthur's famous Round Table, as it had need to be, since it formed a stage for the display of a fully-equipped knight mounted on a charger, barbed and trapped. These huge Anglo-Saxon warriors, it is scarcely necessary to say, were the gigantic warders of the Tower, while the knight they bore upon the shield, it is equally needless to add, was the king's dwarf. Mounted on his pony, which, as we have said, was trapped like a war-horse, **X**it carried a tilting-lance in his hand, and a battle-axe at

his saddle-bow. As he was borne along the hall in his exalted position, he looked round with a smile of triumph. After the giants came another fantastic personage, partially clad in the skins of wild animals, with a grotesque mask on his face, sandals on his feet, and a massive-looking club on his shoulder. This wild-looking man was Pacolet.

As the knightly dwarf was brought within a short distance of the royal table, which, from his eminent position, he quite overlooked, he was met by Garter, who demanded his title and pretence.

"I am called Sir Pumilio," replied Xit, in a shrill voice, "and the occasion of my coming hither is to do battle with a wild man in the king's presence, if I be so permitted."

"His Majesty greets thee well, Sir Pumilio," rejoined Garter, with difficulty preserving his countenance. "Do thy devoir as becomes a valiant knight."

"I will essay to do so," cried Xit. "Where lurks the fierce savage?" he added.

"Behold him!" cried Pacolet.

While Xit was talking to Garter, the agile mountebank had climbed the shoulders of a tall yeoman of the guard who was standing near, and he now sprang upon the shield. Xit immediately charged him, and strove to drive him off the stage, but Pacolet adroitly avoided the thrust, and the dwarf had well-nigh gone over himself. The combatants had not a very large arena for the display of their prowess, but they made the best of it, and Pacolet's tricks were so diverting that they excited general merriment. After the combat had endured a few minutes, Pacolet, apparently sore pressed, struck the shield with his club, and instantly afterwards leaped to the ground. Scarcely was he gone than the rim of the shield rose as if by magic, developing a series of thin iron bars, which enclosed the dwarf like a rat in a trap. Great was Xit's surprise and rage at this occurrence, for which he was wholly unprepared. He struck the bars of his cage with his lance, but they were strong enough to resist his efforts; he commanded the giants to liberate him, but in vain. At last he was set free by Pacolet, and carried off amid inextinguishable laughter.

Preceded by trumpeters, making a loud bruit with their clarions, and attended by Norroy and Clarencieux, Garter next made proclamation of the king's titles in different

parts of the hall. At each proclamation, the heralds called out, "Largesse! largesse!" whereupon, many costly ornaments were bestowed upon them by the nobles, knights, and esquires.

Towards the close of the feast, the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Henry Hubblethorne, who it will be remembered was the first knight dubbed by the king on his arrival at the Tower, arose from his seat at the upper table, and kneeling before the young monarch, offered him a silver cup, encrusted with gems, and filled with hippocrass. Edward received him very graciously, and having drunk to the prosperity of the good city of London, returned him the cup, bidding him keep it in remembrance of the occasion.

So ended this grand and memorable banquet.

The king then repaired to the palace, where the jousts and tilting matches were held in the courts, at which Lord Seymour, to his royal nephew's great contentment, bore away the chief prize.

VIII.

HOW THE LORD CHANCELLOR WAS DISGRACED.

THOUGH the crown had been placed on the youthful Edward's brows, supreme authority rested with the Lord Protector. His only formidable opponent was Southampton, and the removal of the latter, as already intimated, had been resolved upon. A plan for effectually getting rid of him was hit upon by Paget, and unfortunately for the Lord Chancellor, his own imprudence furnished a pretext for his overthrow and disgrace.

Wholly unconscious however of the critical position in which he stood, and unaware of the projects of his enemies, Southampton attended the first council held within the palace, and commenced by fiercely attacking Somerset for his usurpation of power, and disregard of the king's will. He had not proceeded far when he was interrupted by Paget, who called, "Hold, my Lord; before accusing his

Highness the Lord Protector, you must answer certain grave charges which I have to prefer against yourself."

"What charges be they?" demanded the Lord Chancellor, haughtily.

"My Lord, I accuse you of gross neglect of duty," rejoined Paget, "in putting the seal in commission, and deputed to certain masters in Chancery the power to hear causes and pronounce decisions; duties which ought by right to be discharged by yourself alone. This you have done without license or authority from the king's Majesty, the Lord Protector, or the lords of the council."

"No warrant was needed for what I have done," replied Southampton, in a proud and defiant tone. "My attention cannot be given at one and the same time to affairs of state and to the business of the Court of Chancery, and I have therefore chosen to devote myself chiefly to the former. But all decisions of the masters will be ratified by myself before enrolment."

"You have outstripped your authority, my Lord, in what you have done," observed Somerset, sternly. "The judges have been consulted upon the matter, and their well-considered answer is, that you, my Lord Chancellor, ought not, without warrant from the council, to have set the seal to such a commission. They regard it as a precedent of very high and ill consequence, and as an indication that a change in the laws of England is intended by you."

"Tut! tut! their fears are groundless," remarked Southampton, contemptuously.

"Hear me out, I pray you, my Lord," pursued Somerset. "The judges unanimously declare that by the unwarrantable and illegal act committed by you, you have forfeited your place to the king, and rendered yourself liable to fine and imprisonment at his Majesty's pleasure."

"What say you to this, my Lord?" cried Paget, in a taunting tone.

"I say the judges are in error, or have been basely tampered with, to deliver such an opinion," rejoined Southampton, furiously. "But the scheme is too transparent not to be seen through at a glance. 'Tis a weak device of the Lord Protector to get rid of me. But I tell him to his face that I hold my office by a better authority than he holds his own."

“How by a better authority, my Lord?” cried Somerset.

“Because it was conferred upon me by my late royal master,” returned Southampton, “who not only made me what I am, Lord Chancellor, but one of the governors of the realm during his son’s minority, of which office your Highness seeks to deprive me. But you cannot do it, for the king’s will must be observed, and by that will, as you well know, none of you have power over the others, or can cause their dismissal. Declare the commission void, if you will. I am content. But think not to deprive me of my office for no fault, or to remove me from the government, for you cannot do it.”

“The arguments you have used, my Lord, are of little weight,” observed Lord Rich. “Each executor under the late king’s will is subject to his colleagues, and cannot do any act on his own responsibility. Thus, if one of our number should be guilty of high treason or rebellion, he would be clearly punishable, and could not shelter himself under the plea that he was a member of the council, and therefore absolved from his act. If you can show that you have any warrant for what you have done, you will be held excused, but not otherwise.”

“Ay, produce your warrant, my Lord, if you have it?” demanded Paget, sarcastically

The Lord Chancellor made no reply. He saw that he was caught in the toils of his enemies.

“Can you advance aught in your justification, my Lord?” said the king, who had not hitherto spoken. “If so, we are willing to hear you.”

“I should speak to little purpose, sire,” replied Southampton, with dignity, “for my enemies are too strong for me. But I take Heaven to witness that I acted for the best.”

“You had best make your submission, my Lord,” observed Lord Seymour. “This haughty tone will only make matters worse.”

“Is it you who counsel submission, my Lord Admiral?” cried Southampton, almost fiercely. “I have declared that I had no ill design in what I did. I believed, and still believe, that I had power to act as I have acted; but you all declare otherwise. I therefore submit myself humbly to

the king's mercy. If I am to be deprived of mine office, I pray that, in consideration of past services, I may be dealt with leniently."

"Strict justice shall be done you, doubt it not, my Lord," said Edward. "Withdraw, we pray you, while we deliberate upon the matter."

Upon this intimation, the Lord Chancellor quitted the council-chamber.

After the council had deliberated for some time, Lord Rich thus addressed the king: "Considering the prejudice that might ensue if the seals were allowed to continue in the hands of so arrogant a person as Lord Southampton, we are of opinion that he should be deprived of his office, and fined, and remain a prisoner in his own house at your Majesty's pleasure."

"Is that the opinion of the whole council?" demanded Edward.

"It is, my liege," replied Somerset. "You cannot pardon him," he added, in a low tone.

"On whom shall the seals be bestowed?" inquired the king.

"None were more fitting for the office than the Lord St John," replied Somerset.

"Be it as you suggest," rejoined the king. "Let Lord Southampton be recalled."

As the Lord Chancellor re-entered the council-chamber, he saw from the looks of all around him that the decision was against him. He therefore attempted no defence, but, with his arms folded upon his breast, listened calmly while his sentence was pronounced. A deep flush however suffused his swarthy features when he heard that the great seal was to be delivered to Lord St John.

"His Majesty will not gain much by the exchange," he muttered; "but the Lord Protector will. He will find the new Lord Chancellor sufficiently subservient. I pray your Majesty to let me be removed at once."

His request was acceded to; and he was conducted by a guard to his own residence, Ely House, where he was detained a close prisoner.

IX.

IN WHAT MANNER THE LORD HIGH ADMIRAL DISCHARGED
THE DUTIES OF HIS OFFICE.

FREED from his most dangerous foe, Somerset felt perfectly secure. So slavishly subservient to his will were the council, that he did not always deem it necessary to consult them. In many important matters he acted without other authority than his own. Both civil and military appointments were made by him. He signed warrants for arrest and imprisonment, and issued mandates under his own seal. He held private conferences with foreign ambassadors, and did not always disclose the nature of the negotiations concluded with them. Maintaining a perfectly regal state, he assumed a haughtiness of deportment, and an arrogance of tone, especially disagreeable to the old nobility, whose hatred of him was increased by his undisguised efforts to ingratiate himself with the Commons.

Called upon to fulfil his lavish promises to his adherents, Somerset found it no easy matter to satisfy their importunities. But he had a resource which in those days could readily be made available. The Church had been largely stripped of its possessions by the late king, but a good deal yet remained of which it might be deprived. A bill was hastily passed, by which nearly three thousand charities, colleges, free-chapels, and other religious establishments, were suppressed, and their rents and revenues confiscated, and transferred to the Crown. Out of the funds thus obtained, the Lord Protector enriched himself and rewarded his associates.

Calculating upon a long lease of power, Somerset determined to build himself a palace which should surpass that of Whitehall. Accordingly, he selected a site on the banks of the Thames, and recking little that it was occupied by the ancient church of St Mary-le-Strand and other time-honoured monastic structures, he sacrilegiously ordered their demolition. With as little scruple as had actuated him in the choice of a situation for his proposed palace, he set to work to procure building materials. There

were plenty of churches to supply him with masonry. Without hesitation he pulled down the large church of Saint John of Jerusalem, with its noble tower, the cloisters on the north side of Saint Paul's, with the charnel-house and chapel, and appropriated the wreck to his own use. These sacrilegious proceedings were generally condemned, and the superstitious believed they would bring him ill luck. In spite however of this disapprobation, Somerset House was commenced, and eventually completed.

While the Lord Protector was thus exercising the power he had so unscrupulously obtained, holding a court, lording it over the council, controlling their decrees, and occasionally sharply reproving them, conferring with foreign ambassadors, signing decrees and warrants, disposing of offices and treasures, making presentations and promotions, ordering arbitrary arrests and imprisonments, after the fashion of the imperious Harry, and in all other respects comporting himself like a king, his younger and no less ambitious brother had begun to discharge the functions of the important office conferred upon him.

Discontinued of late years, the office of Lord High Admiral was one of great trust, honour, and profit, and was usually conferred upon princes of the blood, or upon the most important of the nobility. Supreme judge of all done upon the main or upon the coasts, the Lord High Admiral had power to commission all naval officers, to impress seamen, to collect penalties and amercements of all transgressions at sea, to seize upon the effects of pirates, to receive all wrecks, a certain share of prizes, with many other privileges. That Lord Seymour entered upon this honourable and very lucrative office with the sole design of using it as a stepping-stone to yet higher honours, we know; but, in the mean time, he was determined that it should yield him all the influence, power, and profit possible. From a variety of sources, the Admiral had suddenly become exceedingly wealthy. Large revenues had been bestowed upon him by his royal nephew, together with a grant of the rich manor of Sudley, in Gloucestershire. Moreover, Queen Catherine's dowry was at his disposal. Thus abundantly furnished with means of display, he affected a degree of magnificence only second to that of the Lord Protector. At Seymour House, for so was his residence styled, he main-

tained a princely retinue of servants, grooms, pages, ushers, henchmen, and others, all sumptuously apparelled, and surrounded himself by a body of young gentlemen who served him as esquires. His ostentatious mode of living was highly displeasing to the Lord Protector, who remonstrated with him upon it, but ineffectually.

About a month after his instalment, the Lord High Admiral was seated one day in a large chamber looking upon the Thames, in which he usually transacted his affairs. This chamber did not belong to his private residence, but appertained to a suite of apartments assigned him at Whitehall for the conduct of his office. The walls were covered with large maps and plans of the principal English, Irish, Scottish, and French seaports, while the tapestry represented ancient and modern naval engagements. Spacious as was the chamber, it was so encumbered by models of ships, implements of naval warfare, and great chests, that it was no easy matter to move about it. At the moment of our visit to him, the Admiral was alone, and occupied in writing letters, but shortly afterwards another person entered the room, and respectfully approached him. This was Ugo Harrington, who now officiated as his chief secretary. As Ugo drew near, the Admiral looked up, and inquired what he wanted.

“Is it your Highness’s pleasure to see those merchantmen, who are about to sail for the Mediterranean?” inquired Ugo, bowing.

“Hast thou given them to understand that they may not trade with any port in the Mediterranean without my permission?” rejoined the Admiral.

“I have, your Highness, and I have also intimated to them that they must pay—pay well—for such license.”

“And what reply do they make?”

“They one and all protest against the claim, and declare such a demand was never before made.”

“That is no reason why it should not be made now,” rejoined the Admiral, laughing. “I will have the tribute, or they shall not sail. Tell them so.”

Ugo bowed, and withdrew. Seymour resumed his correspondence, but had not been long so occupied, when his esquire returned.

“Well, are the merchantmen gone?” inquired the Admiral, looking at him.

“Ay, your Highness,” replied Ugo. “They have each paid fifty marks, which I have deposited in your coffers. They grumbled a good deal at the extortion, as they termed it, but I would not let them have the licenses till they complied.”

“Henceforth, no vessel shall carry merchandise out of these dominions without payment of an impost proportionate to the value of the cargo. Be it thy duty to see this regulation strictly enforced.”

“Your Highness’s commands shall be obeyed to the letter. What is to be done with all those goods and rich stuffs taken from the pirates who plundered the Portuguese merchant at the mouth of the Channel? Application has been made for them by the owner. Are they to be restored to him?”

“I marvel that a man of thy shrewdness and discernment should ask so simple a question, Ugo. Restore the goods! No, by Saint Paul! not any part of them. Help thyself to what thou wilt, and distribute the rest among thy fellows. The taste of spoil will quicken their faculties, and make them eager for more. Send away this Portuguese merchant, and recommend him to be content with his loss. If he complains, threaten him with the Fleet. These pirates are most serviceable to us, and though we may ease them of their booty, we must not put a stop to their trade.”

“That reminds me that one of the most daring pirates that ever infested these northern seas, Captain Nicholas Hornbeak, has lately been captured. What will your Highness have done with him?”

“Hum! I must consider,” replied the Admiral, musing. “Hornbeak is a bold fellow. ’Twould be a pity to hang him. I must talk with him. Is he in safe custody?”

“He is lodged in the Gatehouse prison, your Highness.”

“Let him be brought before me to-morrow.”

“I see that Captain Hornbeak has a good chance of commanding another crew of desperadoes,” observed Ugo.

“All will depend upon himself,” rejoined the Admiral. “I have work to do, which men of Hornbeak’s stamp can

accomplish better than any other. Ere long, I shall be lord of the Scilly Islands, Ugo. They are strong enough by nature, but I mean to make them impregnable. To those islands I design to convey stores and treasure, so that, if driven to extremities, I can retire thither with safety. These pirate vessels will then defend me from attack, and if a rebellion should break out in the land they would materially aid it—if properly directed.”

“I begin to comprehend your Highness’s design,” observed Ugo. “Tis a terrible conspiracy you are hatching.”

“Thou wilt say so, when thou art made acquainted with all its ramifications. I have a strong castle in Denbighshire, Holt, which I design to fortify, and make it another depository of arms and stores. In two months I shall have a dozen counties in my favour. Am I wrong in making provision by the readiest means in my power for the outbreak?”

“Assuredly not, my Lord; you are quite right to use any implements that will serve your purpose.”

At this juncture an usher entered, and with a respectful obeisance, stated that the Marquis of Dorset was without, and craved a moment’s private audience of the Lord Admiral.

“Admit his Lordship instantly,” said Seymour to the usher. “Retire, Ugo,” he added to his esquire, “but wait within the ante-chamber. I may have need of thee. I can partly guess what brings Dorset hither.”

And as his esquire withdrew, the Admiral arose.

“Welcome back to court, my Lord,” he cried to Dorset; “you have been too long absent from us.”

“Not more than a month, my good Lord,” replied the Marquis; “but I am flattered to find that I have been missed. Has his Majesty deigned to speak of me during my absence?”

“Very often, my Lord; and he has never failed to inquire whether you intended to bring your daughter, the Lady Jane Grey, with you on your return. I trust you have done so.”

“My daughter and the marchioness return from Bradgate to-morrow. You delight me by what you tell me respecting his Majesty’s continued interest in my daughter. I feared he had ceased to think of her.”

“As yet, the impression she has made upon his youthful mind is strong as ever,” rejoined Seymour; “but if she had remained away much longer, it might have been effaced. I am rejoiced therefore to hear of her speedy return. But pray be seated, marquis. We can talk more at our ease, and I have much to say to you. The time has come for carrying out our arrangement in reference to the guardianship of your daughter. You have not changed your mind upon that score, I presume, but are still willing to resign her to my custody?”

“I am quite willing to fulfil my agreement with you, my Lord Admiral, but are you in a condition to receive her? Your secret marriage with her Highness the queen-dowager is not yet acknowledged. Unforeseen difficulties may arise with the council, with the Lord Protector, or even with the king, and till that matter is settled you must excuse some hesitation on my part.”

“My marriage with the queen will be formally announced to my royal nephew and the Lord Protector tomorrow, and you shall have an opportunity, if you desire it, of seeing how the announcement is received. You will then be able to decide as to the policy of committing the Lady Jane to my care.”

“Your Highness has no fears, then, of the king’s displeasure, or of the Lord Protector’s anger?”

“I have no fear whatever, marquis. That Somerset will be in a furious passion when he learns the truth, I do not in the least doubt. But what matters that? I am accustomed to his explosions of rage, and treat them with contempt. The matter is past prevention, and must therefore be endured.”

“You have not yet disclosed the secret to the king, I suppose?” inquired Dorset.

“I have not acquainted him with the marriage, but I have obtained his consent to it, and that amounts to the same thing. His Majesty has even been gracious enough to write to the queen-dowager, praying her to listen to my proposals.”

“Then there is no fear of displeasure on his part,” observed Dorset, laughing. “But are you equally certain of the council?”

“What can the council do?” rejoined Seymour, shrug-

ging his shoulders. "The matter is past repair, as I have just said. They must reconcile themselves to it, as they can. However, I have reason to think that the majority of them are favourable to me. I have sounded Warwick and Russell, and one or two others, and find them well enough disposed."

"What says her Majesty's brother, the Earl of Northampton? Have you hinted the matter to him?"

"I have not judged it prudent to do so. But for his sister's sake he will be friendly. Her Highness has great influence with him, and will not fail to exercise it at the right moment. Thus you see, marquis, I am perfectly secure."

"I rejoice to find you so confident, Admiral, and trust nothing untoward may occur. But in regard to my daughter, methinks the aspect of affairs is not quite so promising. The Lord Protector, as I hear, is determined upon enforcing the treaty of marriage proposed by his late Majesty between our youthful sovereign and the young Queen of Scotland, and since compliance with his demands has been refused, is about to declare war upon that country."

"Your Lordship has been rightly informed. The Duke of Somerset is now actively preparing for an expedition into Scotland, and only awaits the return of Sir Francis Brian, who has been sent to France to secure, if possible, the neutrality of that country. Most assuredly, the expedition will be undertaken, and it is almost equally certain that the Scots will be worsted, and yet the treaty will come to nought."

"How so?" demanded Dorset. "It seems to me, if the treaty be once executed, that it has a good chance of being fulfilled."

"It will not be fulfilled, because the party principally concerned is averse to it. He will choose a consort for himself, and not be bound by any treaty. Now do you understand, marquis?"

"But he may be overruled, or yield to considerations of state policy."

"Granted; but if I have any influence with him, he will do neither one nor the other."

"Well, my Lord Admiral, you have removed my misgivings. I am with you. Let but your marriage be ac-

knowledged in the king's presence, and my daughter shall be committed to Queen Catherine's care, and her hand left to your disposal."

"The acknowledgment will take place at Seymour House to-morrow, marquis, and you yourself shall witness it, if you list. The king honours me with his presence at a banquet, and the Lord Protector, with the council and many of the nobles, are invited to meet him. I shall make it the occasion of introducing my royal consort to them."

"'Tis a plan worthy of you," replied Dorset. "I can imagine the scene—the Lord Protector's surprise and indignation, and the embarrassment of the council; but since you have the king with you, all must end satisfactorily. I am much beholden to your Lordship for allowing me to be present on so interesting an occasion, and will not fail to attend upon you."

Upon this he arose as if about to take his leave, but after a little hesitation, added, "I was about to put your friendship to a further test, but will delay doing so to a more convenient opportunity."

"No time can be more convenient than the present marquis," said the Admiral, who guessed what was coming. "How can I serve you? Only point out the way."

"You have already lent me five hundred pounds. I like not to trespass further on your good nature."

"Nay, you confer a favour upon me by enabling me to prove the sincerity of my regard for you, marquis. How much do you need?"

"If I might venture to ask for other five hundred pounds?"

"How, venture? Have I not said that I shall be the person obliged? Are you quite sure that five hundred pounds will suffice?"

"Quite sure. They will amply suffice—for the present," he added to himself.

"Ugo Harrington shall cause the sum to be conveyed to Dorset House," said the Admiral. "I count upon your support to-morrow."

"Not merely to-morrow, but at all other times, my dear Lord," rejoined Dorset, bowing and departing.

When he was left alone, Seymour thus gave utterance to his sentiments: "He estimates the disposal of his

daughter's hand at a thousand pounds. He knows not its value. 'Tis worth all Somerset's titles and revenues, and shall make me ruler in his stead."

X.

HOW QUEEN CATHERINE PARR PASSED HER TIME AT CHELSEA MANOR-HOUSE.

ABSENTING herself entirely from court so long as her marriage with the Lord Admiral continued unavowed, the queen-dowager dwelt in perfect retirement at her manor-house at Chelsea—a delightful residence, forming part of the rich jointure settled upon her by her late royal husband.

Built by Henry VIII. on the site of an ancient edifice bestowed upon him by Lord Sandys, Chelsea Manor-House was originally designed by the monarch as a nursery for his younger children, and to that end he provided the place with extensive and beautiful gardens, abounding with smooth green lawns, trim gravel walks and terraces, knots, parterres, alleys, fountains, mounts, labyrinths, and summer-houses. These fair gardens were surrounded by high walls except on the side facing the river, where a broad terrace, protected by a marble balustrade, offered a delightful promenade, and commanded a wide reach of the Thames, with a distant view of Westminster Abbey, Whitehall, the Gothic cathedral of Saint Paul's, with its lofty spire, Baynard's Castle, old London Bridge, and the Tower. The grounds were well-timbered, and park-like in appearance, and the house was large and commodious, and possessed many noble apartments. Quadrangular in shape, it possessed a spacious court, and, with the outbuildings, covered a vast area. Such was Chelsea Manor-House when inhabited by Queen Catherine Parr.

A few years later this delightful mansion fell into the hands of the all-grasping Duke of Northumberland, who had coveted it even while it was in Catherine's possession,

but he did not enjoy it long. His widow however died here. Its next important occupant was the famous Charles Howard, Earl of Nottingham, Lord High Admiral in Elizabeth's time, by whom the redoubtable Spanish Armada was dispersed and destroyed. Here Nottingham was often visited by his royal mistress, who loved the place from old, and perhaps tender, recollections, for in its bowers and shady walks she had listened to much amorous converse (as we shall learn presently) from the impassioned and irresistible Seymour.

After the lapse of nearly a century and a half, during which the old manor-house underwent many changes, it came into the occupation of Sir Hans Sloane, who formed within it that noble library and large collection of objects connected with natural history which led to the foundation of the British Museum. On Sir Hans Sloane's death, in 1753, and the removal of his library and museum to Montague House, the ancient structure was pulled down, and a row of houses, now forming part of Cheyne Walk, erected in its stead.

The neighbourhood is still pleasant, and seems to wear a bright sunshiny aspect, but it had a brighter and sunnier look in days long gone by, when the picturesque old edifice, with its pointed roofs, carved gables, large bay-windows, and great porch, could be seen from some gilded barge, propelled by oarsmen in rich liveries through the then pellucid waters of the Thames; when august personages and high-born dames could be seen pacing its terraces, or issuing from its quaintly-clipped alleys, while royal children disported upon its lawns. It may be mentioned, that in the vicinity of Chelsea Manor-House stood the residence of one of Henry's noblest victims—the wise and good Sir Thomas More.

To Catherine, the quietude she enjoyed in this charming retreat was inconceivably delightful. Never from the hour when she had become the suspicious and inexorable Henry's bride until death released her from his tyranny, had she been free from dread. Now she could once more call her life her own, and could pursue her own inclinations without trembling for the consequences.

The sole drawback to her complete felicity was that she was necessarily deprived of so much of her husband's so-

ciety. The utmost caution had to be observed in their intercourse during this period. Only two faithful servants were intrusted with the important secret. Seymour's visits were paid at night, long after the household had retired to rest. The river offered a secure approach to the garden. Screened by an overhanging willow, his light, swift bark, manned by trusty boatmen, awaited his return. A postern, of which he alone possessed the key, and a secret staircase, admitted him to the queen's apartments.

With what rapture was he welcomed by Catherine! How anxiously she expected his coming! how she counted the moments if he was late! How she sprang to meet him when his footstep was heard! How she strained him to her bosom when he appeared! With what pride, with what admiration, did she regard him! His noble lineaments seemed to grow in beauty, his stately figure to acquire fresh grace, the oftener she gazed upon him!

Deeply, devotedly did Catherine love her husband. And was her tenderness returned? Let us not ask the question. Perhaps Seymour deemed he loved her then. At all events, Catherine was deluded into that belief. Alas! poor queen! It was well she could not see into the future.

A month had flown by, when Catherine was seated alone one night in her chamber, anxiously expecting her husband. It was long past the hour at which he usually came. What could have detained him? She arose, and went to the large bay-window looking upon the garden, but the night was dark, and she could make out nothing but the sombre masses of the trees, and the darkling river beyond.

Returning, she took up a volume that was lying on the table, and applied herself to its perusal. But her thoughts wandered away from the subject, and finding it vain to attempt to fix them upon the book, she resolved to essay the soothing effect of music, and sat down to the virginals.

The apartment in which we have thus found her was situated in the west wing of the house, and its windows, as we have intimated, looked upon the terrace and on the expansive reach of the river. It was spacious, with a beautifully moulded ceiling, and wainscots of black polished oak. Several paintings adorned the walls, noticeable among

which were portraits of Henry the Eighth's three children—Edward, Mary, and Elizabeth—as well as of the Duke of Richmond.

Catherine was still seated at the instrument, playing a half-melancholy tune, which harmonised with her feelings, when the hangings that covered the doorway were suddenly drawn aside, and her husband stood before her. While he divested himself of the long dark cloak in which he was enveloped, and threw it, with his crimson velvet cap, on a chair, she flew towards him with an exclamation of delight, and flung her arms about his neck.

“So you are come at last, Seymour,” she cried. “I feared some mischance had befallen you.”

“I have had much to do to-night, sweetheart,” he replied. “But I bring you good news. Come and sit by me,” he added, flinging himself into a couch, “and you shall hear it.”

Catherine delightedly complied. “Has his Majesty bestowed some new honour upon you?” she inquired.

“I am to have the Garter in a few days, with Dorset and the Earl of Derby,” he said: “but it is not to that I refer.”

“What is it, then?” cried Catherine. “Nay, let me guess. I have it! You are to be made governor of the king's person! The Protector will retire in your favour!”

“Alas' no,” rejoined the Admiral. “That is a piece of good fortune not likely to occur to me. But the matter in question concerns you quite as much as myself, Kate.”

“All that concerns you must needs concern me,” she answered. “But since what you have to tell relates partly to myself, I suppose you must allude to the acknowledgment of our marriage.”

“Now you have hit it, sweetheart. If it meets your approval, the avowal shall be made to-morrow.”

“You are the best judge, my Lord, whether the step be prudent, and whether you are in a position to brave your brother's anger, for I suppose nothing has occurred to cause a change in his sentiments. To me it must naturally be agreeable to have an end put to mystery and concealment foreign to my character and feelings: but I am content to continue as I am for some time longer, rather than you should incur the slightest risk from the Lord

Protector and the council. Satisfied that I am bound to you by sacred ties, which can never be sundered save by death, I am in no hurry for the disclosure."

"Delay will not improve matters—peradventure, it may make them worse," he rejoined. "The present juncture seems favourable for the avowal."

"Be it as you will—you have but to command. Yet I again beg you to put me entirely out of the question, and adopt only such a course as will be most beneficial to yourself."

"It is due to your fair fame, Kate, which may suffer, it is due to myself, and it is due also to the king, that our marriage should no longer be concealed. My plan is this, sweetheart. To-morrow, as you know, I give a fête at Seymour House, and I propose to make it the occasion of introducing you as my consort to the king."

"But will Edward like to be thus taken by surprise? Would it not be better to prepare him?"

"I do not think so. By making a confidant of my royal nephew I should still further incense my brother. Besides, nothing would be gained, for it is certain Edward will not disapprove of the marriage."

"Well, perhaps you are right. I will do as you direct; though, were I to consult my own feelings, I would continue this life of retirement, and shun court gaities and revels, which have become distasteful to me."

"Hereafter you may withdraw into privacy, if you list, Kate, but for the present you must aid me in the important part I have to play."

"Would you were less ambitious, Seymour! My chance of happiness, I feel, would be greater."

"Pshaw! if I succeed, and raise myself to the point at which I aim, you will have everything to make you happy, Kate. If I am all but king, you will be prouder, happier than you were as the spouse of Henry VIII."

"'Tis to be hoped so, Seymour," she sighed; "for I was anything but happy then. In good truth, I almost dread to enter the great world again. But your will is law with me."

"You are a good and dutiful wife, Kate," he cried, pressing his lips to her brow. "As I have said, you can do much for me at this moment. Dorset has been with

me to-day. He has just returned from Bradgate. I had some talk with him about his daughter, and he has agreed to consign her to your care as soon as our marriage is avowed."

"Nothing could please me better," replied Catherine. "The Lady Jane Grey, as you know, is an especial favourite of mine."

"And with good reason, sweetheart, for she is a paragon of perfection—marvellously beautiful, and marvellously wise. In due time, we must provide a suitable husband for her."

"Have you not one already in your eye, Seymour?"

"I will not deny it," he replied. "Jane's merits are so transcendent that I only know one person worthy of her—my royal nephew; and though there are many obstacles in the way, yet I am certain the match may be brought about. Edward has conceived a kind of boyish passion for her; and were he to search the world, he could find no better wife than Jane Grey would make him."

"That I firmly believe," replied Catherine. "Jane is wiser than women usually are—virtuous and pious—and would be the brightest jewel in Edward's crown. It will delight me to promote this scheme, because I am sure that by so doing I shall further Edward's happiness."

"You can do him no greater service than to aid in procuring him such a wife—nor better serve your country than in giving it such a queen," rejoined Seymour. "But I must be gone, sweetheart. A cup of wine, and then adieu!"

"So soon!" she exclaimed, reproachfully.

"It is late, and I must perforce tear myself away. But it is a consolation to think that it is the last time we shall need to separate thus. To-morrow you will come to Seymour House as a guest, but you will remain as its mistress. Adieu, sweetheart!"

Tenderly embracing her, he then resumed his cap and cloak, and departed.

Descending the secret staircase, he shortly afterwards issued from the postern, and set off towards the spot where his boat awaited him. The night was profoundly dark, but notwithstanding the obscurity, Scymour fancied he

perceived a figure standing directly in his path. On this he halted, but after a moment's hesitation went on.

Meanwhile the dark figure remained stationary. As the Admiral advanced, he saw that the personage, whoever he might be, was not alone, but that behind him were two other persons, who, as far as could be discerned in the obscurity, were armed. Though he would willingly have shunned an encounter at such a moment, Seymour was not the man to turn back. He therefore called out to them, and drew his sword.

"'Tis he!—'tis the Admiral!" exclaimed the foremost personage. "I am satisfied. We may retire."

"Not till you have explained your business," cried Seymour, springing upon him and seizing him by the throat.

"Take your hands from me, my Lord," cried the person he had seized, in a stern voice, which was quite familiar to Seymour.

"How is this?—my Lord of Warwick here!" he exclaimed. "Has your Lordship condescended to play the spy?"

"I came here to satisfy myself concerning a report that has reached me," rejoined Warwick. "I have seen enough to satisfy me that what I heard was correct."

"Think not to depart thus, my Lord," cried Seymour. "You have chosen to pry into my affairs, and must pay the penalty of a detected meddler. Either pledge your word to silence, or I will put it out of your power to prate of what concerns you not. Look to yourself, I say."

"I will not balk you, my Lord," rejoined Warwick, drawing his sword; "so come on! Stand off, gentlemen," he added to the others, who advanced towards him; "I can give the Admiral his *quietus* without your aid."

In another instant his blade was crossed with that of Seymour. Both were expert swordsmen, and if there had been light enough the conflict might have been of some duration, but the Admiral pressed his antagonist with so much vigour, that the latter stumbled while retreating, and the next moment the point of his opponent's weapon was at his throat. The Admiral however forbore to strike.

"Take your life, my Lord," said Seymour, stepping back. "Your sense of honour will now keep your lips

closed, and I trust to you to impose silence upon your followers."

"Fear nothing either from them or me, my Lord Admiral," replied Warwick. "I own I did wrong in coming here at all; and having said so, you will not refuse me your hand."

"Enough, my Lord," rejoined the Admiral, grasping the hand extended to him. "I shall hope to see you at Seymour House to-morrow night, when all this mystery shall be satisfactorily cleared. Till then, I count upon your discretion."

"Doubt me not, my Lord," replied Warwick. "I will not attempt to read your riddle, though I think I could guess it. Good night. My horses are at the garden gate."

"And my boat is yonder—beneath the trees. Good night, my Lord."

With this they separated, the Admiral speeding towards the river, and Warwick, with his attendants, shaping his course in the opposite direction.

As he went on, Seymour muttered to himself, "I had enough to do to stay my hand just now when Warwick lay at my mercy, for I suspect him of treachery. Yet I did right to spare him. To have slain him here would have led to ill consequences. If he crosses me again, I will find other and safer means of dealing with him."

Warwick's reflections were not widely different.

"But for the cursed chance that caused my foot to slip I should have slain him," he thought. "And now I owe my life to him. But I would not have him count too much upon my gratitude. My hatred of him is not a whit diminished by his fancied generosity—rather increased. After all, it is well the encounter ended as it did. Better he should perish by the headsman's hand than mine."

XI.

OF THE FÊTE GIVEN AT SEYMOUR HOUSE BY THE LORD ADMIRAL.

SEYMOUR HOUSE, the Admiral's private residence, as we have already intimated, was magnificently furnished. Besides being gorgeously decorated with rich arras and embroidered stuffs, the spacious apartments and galleries were crowded with paintings, statues, and works of art. It was a marvel that the Admiral should have been able to collect together so many rarities in so short a space of time; but then, as we have seen, he had more opportunities of doing so than other people.

In those days of display it was the aim of every wealthy nobleman to distinguish himself by the number of his retainers, all of whom were clothed and maintained at his expense. But the Lord Admiral went far beyond his competitors. His household was almost regal, and vied with that of the Lord Protector. He had a high chamberlain and a vice-chamberlain, both attired in rich gowns, and provided with white staves, a dozen gentlemen ushers, likewise richly arrayed, six gentlemen waiters, three marshals, a chaplain, an almoner, a cofferer, a clerk of the kitchen and clerk of the spicery, a master cook and his assistants, besides a multitude of yeomen ushers, grooms, cup-bearers, carvers, and sewers. In addition to these, he had a large body of young gentlemen of good families, who served him as pages and esquires, and who all wore his livery. Furthermore, he had a band of tall yeomen, armed and attired like the yeomen of the king's body-guard. Altogether, his household did not number less than three hundred persons. Tables were laid daily for his officers, who sat down with almost as much ceremony as was observed at Whitehall. The cost of such an establishment, in all respects so sumptuously conducted, may be readily surmised. But the Lord Admiral had an object in all this display. He wished to be regarded as the chief noble at his royal nephew's court, so that no position he might hereafter obtain should seem too exalted for him.

With a house thus splendidly ordered and appointed, and with such magnificent ideas as we are aware he entertained, it will not seem surprising that the fête prepared for the king and the court by the Admiral should be on a scale of extraordinary splendour.

All the principal apartments were brilliantly illuminated with wax tapers. Attired in doublets of crimson velvet, with chains of gold round their necks, and bearing white staves in their hands, the chamberlain, vice-chamberlain, steward, treasurer, and gentlemen ushers were drawn up in the entrance-hall, ready to receive the various important guests on their arrival. Besides these, there was a crowd of esquires, pages, marshals, and grooms, all in rich liveries, intermingled with yeomen bearing gilt poleaxes. But wherever the guests wandered—up the grand staircase, with its elaborately sculptured posts, adown the long corridor, through the spacious chambers—there were other officers of the household to be met with—marshals, esquires, pages, and grooms, as at Whitehall.

Nothing was wanting that could minister to the gratification of the company. In an orchestra in the largest room musicians were placed, and here brawls, galliards, lavoltos, passameasures, pavans, sauteuses, cushion-dances, and kissing-dances were performed by the company.

At a much earlier hour than would be consistent with modern arrangements, the Admiral's guests, comprehending all the principal personages of the court, of both sexes, had begun to arrive, and they had succeeded each other so rapidly, that ere long the rooms, vast as they were, looked full. But more came, and it seemed as if the arrivals would never cease.

All the guests were ceremoniously received in the great entrance-hall by the various officers of the household, and were then ushered on by troops of marshals and pages to a presence-chamber, where the Lord Admiral, sumptuously arrayed in habiliments of white satin, adorned with pearls, very graciously received them. Many of the ladies wore small visors of black velvet, while some of them were habited in fanciful attire.

The Admiral's manner to his guests was extraordinarily affable and engaging. He had an eye for every one, and distributed his attentions so generally, that all were pleased.

We have already said that he was infinitely more popular with the old nobility than the Protector, and many representatives of the proudest families were present on this occasion, who would not have honoured Somerset with their company. Moreover there was a complete gathering of the Popish party, and this circumstance tended to confirm the opinion entertained by some that Seymour meant to league himself with the Romanists in opposition to his brother.

Never had the Admiral presented a more superb appearance. The rich habiliments in which he was clad set off his symmetrical person to the utmost advantage. Those who contrasted him on this occasion with his brother, the Duke of Somerset, were forced to admit that, so far as personal appearance and grace and captivation of manner were concerned, the younger Seymour had decidedly the advantage over the elder.

Amongst the earliest comers were the Marquis of Dorset, with the marchioness and the Lady Jane Grey, but the rooms were quite full, and the revel had fairly commenced, before the arrival of the Duke and Duchess of Somerset. The Lord Protector was arrayed in cloth of gold of bawdikin, the placard and sleeves of his doublet being wrought with flat gold, and the duchess was equally splendidly attired. Her head-gear and stomacher flamed with diamonds and precious stones. Somerset was attended by the Earls of Warwick and Arundel, both of whom were splendidly habited. The duke had a gloomy look, and by no means cordially returned the greeting given him by the Admiral, but passed on with the duchess and the lords in attendance upon him.

Whatever annoyance the Admiral might have felt at his brother's deportment towards him, it was speedily dispelled by the arrival of the king, whose manner was as gracious as the Lord Protector's had been cold and unpleasant. Edward wore a doublet of cloth of silver, culponed with cloth of gold of damask, and his surcoat was of purple velvet, richly set with pearls and precious stones. When the Lord Admiral had expressed his gratitude to his royal nephew for the high honour he had conferred upon him by the visit, Edward graciously answered, "We thank you heartily for your welcome, gentle uncle. But you will have

more guests than you counted on, for we have brought with us two fair ladies, who wished to be present at your assembly. Have we taken too great a freedom with you?"

"Oh, sire!" exclaimed the Admiral. "My house, and all within it, are at your Majesty's disposal."

"Here they are," cried the king, pointing to two ladies close behind him, both of whom were wrapped in loose cloaks of black satin, and wore black velvet visors on their faces. "Can you guess who they are?"

"I will essay, sire," cried the Admiral, advancing towards them. "By my halidom!" he continued, "I am highly honoured. This fair lady, or I am much mistaken, must be her Highness the Princess Elizabeth; and this, if I err not, is Mistress Ashley."

"You are right, gentle uncle," cried the king, laughing. "Nay, there is no need for further concealment. The Admiral has found you both out, so you may e'en take off your masks."

"We did not intend to discover ourselves for the present to your Lordship," said Mistress Ashley, removing her visor, "but his Majesty has spoiled our plan."

"I knew my uncle would be right glad to see you both, and therefore I would not delay his gratification," rejoined Edward.

"Your Majesty has judged well," said the Admiral. "Will not your Highness unmask?" he added to Elizabeth.

"Since his Majesty commands it, I must needs obey," she replied, removing her visor, and revealing a countenance covered with blushes.

Elizabeth looked very beautiful. She was exquisitely attired in a dress of white damask embroidered with pearls, and her golden tresses and dazzlingly fair complexion produced all their former effect upon the Admiral.

"I knew not you had returned to court, princess," he said, "or I should have craved the honour of your company at my poor supper."

"I am here by the king's commands," replied Elizabeth. "I am but newly returned from Hatfield. His Majesty was resolved, it seems, that I should be present at your fête."

"I am greatly beholden to him," replied Seymour. "I

did not deem my revel would be so richly graced. Will it please you to walk on, and see the rooms?"

"Right willingly," the king replied. "You term your revel a 'poor supper,' gentle uncle. To my mind, 'tis a very goodly entertainment. We could scarce match it. What think you of the assembly, Elizabeth?"

"'Tis very splendid," she replied. "You have princely notions, my Lord Admiral."

"I once had," he rejoined, in a low tone, "but they are gone." While Edward was gracefully acknowledging the obeisances of those who respectfully drew back to allow him passage, his eye suddenly alighted on the Marchioness of Dorset and her daughter, and the colour mounted to his cheeks.

"That should be the Lady Jane Grey!" he exclaimed. "I did not expect to meet her."

"I will not pretend that I meditated a surprise for your Majesty," replied the Admiral, smiling; "but I am right glad that my Lord of Dorset's return from Bradgate has enabled me to include his daughter among my guests."

"By our Lady! I am right glad, too," rejoined the king.

At a sign from the Admiral, the Marquis of Dorset here advanced, and, with a profound obeisance, presented the marchioness and his youthful daughter to the king. As the latter made a lowly reverence to him, Edward raised her, and detaining her hand as he spoke, said:

"We looked to pass a pleasant evening with our uncle, but it will be pleasanter far than we expected, since it is graced by your presence, fair cousin."

"Your Majesty is too good," she replied, blushing deeply.

"Nay, you must stay with us," cried Edward, detaining her. "We cannot part with you so soon. But it may be you desire to dance?"

"I never dance, my liege," replied Jane. "It is a pastime in which I care not to indulge."

"Perchance you object to it?" said Edward, looking inquiringly at her.

"Not exactly," she rejoined; "but I hold it to be somewhat vain and frivolous."

"I do not think I will dance again," said Edward.

"A very praiseworthy resolution, sire!" cried the

Admiral; "but I hope you will not interdict such of your less seriously inclined subjects as may see no harm in it from indulging in the recreation. May I venture to claim your Highness's hand for the couranto which is just about to commence?" he added to Elizabeth.

"I will dance the couranto with you with pleasure, my Lord," replied the princess. "I have a passion for it."

And she accorded her hand to the Admiral, who led her towards the middle of the room, while the hautboys struck up, and they were soon engaged in the animated dance. Elizabeth danced with remarkable grace, as did the Admiral, and their performance excited universal admiration. At its close, Seymour, unable to resist the witchery still exercised over him by the princess, led her towards a side chamber, where they could converse without interruption.

"Have you quite forgiven me, princess?" he said.

"Oh yes," she replied, with a forced laugh. "I have forgotten what passed between us."

"Would I could forget it!" cried Seymour. "But I have been properly punished. I did not deserve the happiness which might have been mine."

"Do not renew the subject, my Lord," said Elizabeth. "You never loved me!"

"Never loved you!" he exclaimed, passionately. And then suddenly checking himself, he added, "You do me an injustice, princess. I loved you only too well."

"If I could believe this, I might forgive you," she said. "But your subsequent conduct has been inexplicable. You have attempted no explanation—have sent me no letter."

"I thought explanation would be unavailing—that you had cast me off for ever," rejoined Seymour, in a troubled tone.

"But at least the attempt might have been made," she said, in a tone of pique. "You could not tell what might happen till you tried."

"Do you, then, give me a hope?" he cried, rapturously. "But I forget myself," he added, moodily.

"You think me still angry with you," said the princess. "But you are mistaken. I have reasoned myself out of my jealousy. How is it that the queen-dowager is not here to-night?"

"She will be here anon," replied Seymour, gloomily.

"Oh, she is expected, then?" cried Elizabeth. "Do you still nourish the ambitious projects you once entertained, my Lord Admiral?"

"I am as ambitious as ever, princess," he rejoined, vehemently, and almost sternly; "but I have lost that which would have been the chief reward of my struggle."

"How know you that?" she rejoined. "If you make no effort to regain what you have lost, the fault rests with yourself."

"Princess!" exclaimed Seymour, in a voice trembling with emotion, "you drive me to despair. You revive all my passion. Yet it must be crushed."

"But I do not bid you despair," said Elizabeth. "I am half inclined to forgive your perfidy, provided you swear never to deceive me in future."

"No more, I pray you, princess," cried Seymour. "You tear my very heart asunder. I love you better than life. For you I would give up all my ambitious projects, for you I would sacrifice every earthly object. And yet—"

"What remains?" exclaimed Elizabeth. "But I will trifle with you no longer. Your manner convinces me that you really love me, and I will therefore own that you still remain master of my heart."

Seymour could not control the impulse that prompted him to seize Elizabeth's hand, and press it fervently to his lips; but he repented as soon as he had done so, and let it drop.

"This torture is beyond endurance," he exclaimed. "I can bear it no longer."

"What is the matter?" she exclaimed.

"I cannot speak," he replied. "You will know all anon. Pity me! pity me!"

"In Heaven's name calm yourself, my Lord, or you will attract attention to us," said Elizabeth. "What means this extraordinary agitation? What has happened?"

"Question me not, princess. I cannot answer you," replied Seymour. "Think the best you can of me—think that I ever have loved you—that I ever shall love you."

With this, he respectfully took her hand, and led her into the crowded chamber.

XII.

IN WHAT MANNER THE LORD ADMIRAL'S MARRIAGE WITH
THE QUEEN WAS ANNOUNCED.

MEANWHILE, the Lord Protector, accompanied by the Earl of Warwick, continued to walk through the apartments, noting their splendour with a jealous eye. Perceiving what was passing in his mind, Warwick sought still further to inflame his anger.

"What thinks your Highness of this fête?" he asked. "'Tis a sumptuous affair. The Lord Admiral will ruin himself if he gives many such."

"His prodigality is unbounded," cried Somerset.

"Yet he has an object in it," pursued Warwick. "He would have all eyes turned on him as towards the rising sun. Your Highness will do well to be on your guard, for you may rest assured that all this display is only part of a deep-laid scheme to supplant you. Do you not note how your brother has gathered round him all those of the old nobility who are known to be unfriendly to your Highness? Do you not see that he is trying to propitiate the Romish party? With what intent are Gardiner and Tunstal here?"

"His design is plain enough. But I fear him not."

"Your Highness had best not be too confident. Do not let him strengthen himself too much, or he may become too powerful for you."

"I would deprive him of his post at once," cried Somerset, "but he has so much influence with the king that such a step might be dangerous. I must have an excuse for severity. But let us to his Majesty. Dorset, I see, has returned with my lady marchioness and his daughter."

"The king seems wondrously fond of the Lady Jane Grey. Mark how he hangs upon her words, and what a lover-like attitude he assumes! Dorset, I am sure, persuades himself his daughter will one day be Queen of England."

"If he indulges any such notion he will find himself

mistaken. But the king is too young to have any such thoughts as yet."

"Others may, though he has not," replied Warwick.

With this, they moved on to that part of the chamber where Edward was standing with the Lady Jane Grey. The young monarch was so engrossed by his fair companion that he scarcely noticed the Lord Protector's approach.

"Your Majesty appears much interested," observed Somerset, dryly.

"I cannot fail to be by my fair cousin's discourse," Edward replied. "I tell her that we cannot part with her again; that if my lady marchioness, her mother, returns to Bradgate, she must remain with some lady of our court. Her Grace of Somersset will take charge of her—will you not, dear aunt?"

"With the greatest pleasure, sire, if her mother chooses to confide her to me," rejoined the duchess.

"Her mother will scarce like to part with her," interposed the Lord Protector, coldly.

"I am infinitely obliged to your Grace," said the marchioness, "but I have other designs for her."

"What other designs?" cried Edward, quickly. "Not to take her away, I hope?"

"No, sire, not to take her away—but the fact is, another exalted personage, whom I am not permitted to name, has undertaken to take charge of her."

"Hum! what means this?" muttered Somerset, suspiciously. "Why is he so anxious that the Lady Jane should remain at court? Have they contrived to put some foolish thoughts into his head? We shall see. I have some news for your Majesty," he added, aloud. "You will have a war on your hands ere long. The Scots refuse to ratify the treaty of marriage between your Highness and their infant queen."

"I am glad of it," cried Edward.

"Then your Majesty desires war?" observed Somerset.

"Not so; but I do not wish to be tied by any treaty, and I am glad therefore that it is at an end."

"But it will be enforced," cried the Protector, "and then your Majesty must needs abide by it."

"Must abide by it!" exclaimed Edward. "By my faith, it seems that the treaty is to be forced upon me as

well as the young Queen of Scots. But I happen to have a will of my own, and in this instance I shall exercise it. Whatever your Highness may think of it, I will not be bound by this treaty."

"Sire!" exclaimed the Lord Protector.

"Make the war if you please, and use this treaty as a pretext, if you are so minded, but do not expect me to betroth myself to Mary Stuart."

"Amazement!" exclaimed Somerset. "I can scarce credit what I hear."

At this moment the Admiral came up with the Princess Elizabeth.

"Oh! you are come, gentle uncle," cried Edward. "Give me your opinion. Is it right I should be affianced to one whom I have never seen?"

"I pray your Majesty to excuse me," returned the Admiral, evasively. "'Tis a question I would rather not answer."

"Then I will answer it myself," said the king. "'Tis a self-sacrifice I am not called upon to make. I will never plight my faith to one whom I should not care to wed."

"Such a resolve is worthy of you, sire, and I cannot but applaud it," cried the Admiral.

"Your Majesty will think differently, I am persuaded, when the time comes for decision," remarked the Protector. "Meantime, your august father's instructions will be carried out, and the fulfilment of the treaty enforced by the sword."

"These matters are too grave for an occasion like the present, and must be reserved for a more fitting opportunity," said the Admiral.

A seasonable interruption was here offered by an usher, who announced the queen-dowager, and immediately afterwards Catherine appeared, accompanied by her brother, the Earl of Northampton. She was attired in white cloth of tissue, and her head-gear was garnished with a triple row of orient pearls. Advancing to meet her, and with a profound obeisance, the Admiral took her hand, and led her slowly towards the king. They were preceded however by the Earl of Northampton, who, inclining himself reverently before Edward, said,

“Sire, it is no longer as the widow of your august father that my sister, Queen Catherine, appears before you, but as the bride of your uncle, Lord Seymour of Sudley.”

“The Admiral’s bride!” exclaimed Edward, in astonishment, while the utmost surprise was manifested by all who heard the announcement.

The Princess Elizabeth became pale as death, and with difficulty repressed a cry

“You are not jesting with us, we trust, my Lord?” said Edward to Northampton.

“Nay, my liege, his Lordship has advanced nothing more than the truth, as I can certify,” said the Marquis of Dorset; “for I was present at the ceremony, which took place in St Peter’s Chapel in the Tower about a month ago, though I have hitherto kept silence on the subject, being bound to secrecy.”

“As was the case with myself, sire,” added Northampton. “I pray you pardon me.”

“Why do they hesitate to approach us?” said Edward.

“Sire, they dare not enter your presence till assured of your forgiveness,” replied Northampton.

“Tell them they have it,” replied the king.

This joyful intelligence being communicated to the Admiral and his consort, they came forward hand in hand, and made a profound reverence to the young monarch.

“Sire,” said Lord Seymour, “I here present to you my bride, and we both entreat your forgiveness for having kept our marriage secret from you.”

“You might have trusted me, methinks?” rejoined Edward, with a gracious smile.

“I have not forfeited your good opinion by the step I have taken, I trust, sire?” said Catherine.

“By no means, madam,” rejoined Edward, kissing her on the brow, and raising her. “You have an additional title to our regard. We only blame you for not confiding in us from the first. However we will not chide you. You are freely and fully forgiven.”

These gracious words overwhelmed the Admiral and his bride with gratitude.

Meanwhile the Protector looked on with lowering brows. Seeing his brother about to present his consort to him, he turned to move away, but the king detained him.

“I pray your Highness to remain,” he said. “Nay, I command it,” he added, authoritatively.

On this the Protector stopped. Turning to the Admiral, he thus addressed him in a stern tone:

“You have been guilty of great presumption, my Lord, and though his Majesty, who is too young to judge your indecorous conduct properly, has graciously pardoned you, do not expect like leniency from me. By taking me by surprise you hoped to avert the full force of my displeasure, but you will gain nothing by the expedient.”

“I am sorry to have offended your Highness,” rejoined the Admiral, with mock humility, “but since I have his Majesty’s pardon, I must endeavour to bear the weight of your displeasure.”

“You will have to answer to the council for what you have done,” cried Somerset, furiously.

“I shall be ready, whenever required, to give an account of my actions,” replied Seymour, proudly.

“And I trust the lords of the council will also hear my explanation,” said Catherine, “ere they censure the choice I have made.”

“They will not censure you, madam, since they know my pleasure,” said the king, with great dignity. “In this matter your Highness will allow me to judge,” he added to the Lord Protector. “If I do not disapprove of the marriage between my father’s widow and my uncle, I see not why you should condemn it so strongly, or reprimand him so sharply. The Lord Admiral is as near to me, and as dear to me, as your Highness—perchance dearer—and he shall not want my support. So your Grace will look to it—you will look to it, I say.”

Uttered in a tone and with a gesture forcibly recalling the manner of the late king, these words did not fail to produce an effect on Somerset.

“Ay, look to it, brother—look to it, you had best,” repeated Seymour, derisively.

“Let the harmony of this meeting be no more disturbed,” pursued Edward. “It is our sovereign will and pleasure that the marriage of our uncle the Lord Admiral with her Majesty the queen be no further questioned or discussed. We approve it. Let that suffice.”

On this emphatic declaration on the part of the young monarch there was a loud burst of applause, and many who had held aloof pressed eagerly forward to offer their congratulations to the Admiral. Seeing that the tide was running too forcibly against him to be resisted, Somerset deemed it prudent to turn round, but he did so with an ill grace.

“Since your Majesty will have it so, I must yield,” he said. “But I should have ill discharged my duty had I not remonstrated. One thing is quite certain, that the Admiral would never have obtained my consent, nor that of the council, to the alliance.”

“It is well, then, that he did not ask it,” remarked Edward, with a smile. “But since you refer to the council, we will have the opinion of some of them without more ado. How say you, my Lords?” he said to several, who were standing nigh—“do you blame my Lord Admiral for his marriage? Do you blame him, my Lord of Warwick?—or you, my Lord of Arundel?”

“So far from blaming him, my liege, I give him infinite credit for what he has done,” said Warwick. “I would the chance had been mine own.”

“He has gained a prize of which he may well be proud,” added Arundel.

“What says Sir John Gage?” demanded Edward of the Constable of the Tower, who stood near him.

“I have nothing to say against the marriage, since it meets with your Majesty’s approval,” replied Sir John. “The Lord Admiral is bold and fortunate.”

“Are there any dissentient voices?” inquired the king.

“None, sire—none!” cried the rest of the council.

“That is well,” said Edward. “But we must leave nothing undone. Where is our sister? Oh! you are here. Will you not offer your congratulations to the queen, Elizabeth?”

Seymour did not venture to raise his eyes towards the princess as this request was made.

“With all my heart, sire,” replied Elizabeth, who by this time had entirely recovered her composure; “I congratulate her Majesty and the Lord Admiral on their union. Her Highness, I am persuaded, could not have found a better or more devoted husband; while on his part the

Admiral may justly esteem himself the most fortunate of men."

Catherine next received the congratulations of the Marchioness of Dorset and the Lady Jane Grey. After a brief converse with them she turned to the king, and said, "When your Majesty honours me with a visit, you will always have a companion of your own age."

"How so, madam?" inquired Edward.

"Because the Lady Jane Grey is henceforth to be my daughter," replied Catherine. "Her mother has consented to place her under my custody."

"I am right glad to hear it," exclaimed the king. "Your Ladyship could not have done better," he added to the marchioness.

"The Lord Admiral is to be her guardian, and to have the disposal of her hand in marriage, if it meets with your Majesty's approval," observed Dorset.

"Nay, my Lord Marquis, you are the best judge in the matter," replied Edward; "and if you choose to consign so precious a charge to him, I cannot object to it."

"The Admiral to be her guardian, and have the disposal of her hand!" muttered Somerset. "I now see why the duchess's offer was declined. 'Tis a preconcerted scheme."

At this moment an usher, accompanied by the chamberlain and vice-chamberlain, with several other officers of the household, bearing white wands, ceremoniously approached the Admiral, and informed him that the supper was served in the banqueting-chamber.

"Will it please your Majesty to proceed thither?" said Seymour.

Edward bowed a gracious assent, and tendering his hand to the queen, said, "Let us conduct you to it, madam."

"Is this as it should be?" said the Duchess of Somerset, aside to her lord. "Ought she now to take precedence of me?"

"Seek not to contest the point," he rejoined. "Ere long her pride shall be lowered."

Trumpets were sounded as the king entered the banquet-hall with the queen-dowager. A cloth of state, embroidered with the royal arms, was placed over the seat assigned to his Majesty. On his right sat the queen-dowager, and on the other side the Lord Protector. Special

care was taken by the Admiral that the Lady Jane Grey should be placed opposite the king.

The supper was magnificent, and was marked by the same unbounded luxury and prodigality that had distinguished the whole entertainment. Though the guests were very numerous, all were well served. The Admiral himself waited upon the king.

When the surnap had been removed, and spices and wafers were placed before the guests, the chief usher called out with a loud voice that the king drank to the health of his host and hostess, and desired that all would join him in the toast. The proposal was received with acclamations. Every goblet was instantly drained, and the hall resounded with shouts of "Long live the Lord High Admiral and the Queen!"

XIII.

HOW THE ADMIRAL'S PASSION FOR THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH WAS REVIVED.

MUCH additional importance was given to the Lord Admiral by his marriage with the queen-dowager, though the suddenness with which it followed the king's death caused considerable scandal. Many allowances however were made for the queen. It was felt that her existence during the latter days of the king's life must have been wretched—that his tyranny was almost intolerable—and that if she had made too speedy use of her freedom, she could scarcely be blamed. Moreover the strong support given by Catherine to the members of the Reformed faith, and the risk she had incurred for them in the late king's life, operated in her favour. Her conduct was therefore viewed in the best light possible, and though such haste to forget him was not very flattering to the king's memory, still it was quite intelligible. Had not Henry himself set the example of hasty marriages? No wonder his widow should marry again so soon as she had the opportunity.

The Admiral continued his magnificent mode of life,

but Catherine, who had had enough of splendour, did not pass much of her time at Seymour House, but made Chelsea Manor-House her chief abode. Having the Lady Jane Grey now under her care, she soon became as much attached to her as if she had been her own daughter; while on her part the Lady Jane repaid her by almost filial affection. Jane's character was well suited to Catherine, who, studious and devout herself, could not fail to admire these qualities in her charge. At his uncle's invitation the young king was a frequent visitor to Chelsea Manor-House, sometimes proceeding thither in his barge, sometimes riding thither with the Admiral. The frequency of these visits soon however alarmed the Lord Protector, who put a stop to them altogether.

But though the Admiral was engrossed with ambitious designs almost to the exclusion of every other consideration, and though he was bound to banish such a feeling from his breast, the fatal passion for Elizabeth, which had been suddenly revived by the discovery he had made that she yet loved him, still tormented him, and would not be dismissed. To do him justice, he made strong efforts to shake it off. In spite of himself however he could not help instituting comparisons between her youthful attractions and the waning charms of the queen. Then Catherine's grave and sedate manner, as contrasted with the liveliness of Elizabeth, appeared to disadvantage. The golden tresses of the princess, which he had so much admired, were as much a snare to him as ever. In short, he began to feel that he had never really loved the queen, whom he had made his wife, while he was desperately in love with Elizabeth. As every month flew by, it seemed to him that the princess acquired fresh charms. Her eyes appeared brighter, her complexion more radiantly fair, her locks more like sunbeams than ever.

Happy in the possession of the husband she loved, Catherine had long since forgotten her jealousy of Elizabeth; and when the Admiral proposed that the princess should stay with them for a while at Chelsea, she readily acceded to the arrangement. Elizabeth was invited, and came.

She came attended by her governess, Mistress Ashley. If the queen had forgotten the past, Elizabeth did not appear to remember it. But, in reality, she remembered it

only too well. She had no more been able to conquer her love for the Admiral than he had been able to subdue the passion with which she had inspired him. But if such were the state of her feelings, why should she expose herself to so much risk? Why, indeed? As well ask the moth why it rushes into the destructive flame! Elizabeth was as little mistress of herself as the infatuated insect. Persuading herself that the best way to become indifferent to the Admiral was to renew her intimacy with him, she went to Chelsea.

The result, naturally to be expected from a step so imprudent, soon followed. Instead of finding her passion for the Admiral decrease, she perceived that it gained fresh ardour, while on his part Seymour became more desperately enamoured than ever. Constantly thrown together, it was impossible they could be blind to each other's feelings. Again, as in days gone by, when he was bound by no sacred ties, the Admiral began to breathe words of love: again, forgetting the wrong she was now doing another, Elizabeth listened to him.

Unconscious of what was going on, unaware that she was allowing her own happiness to be undermined, Catherine, instead of checking it, foolishly encouraged this dangerous intimacy. Incapable of levity herself, she could perceive no harm in her husband's attentions to the princess.

But if the queen was thus unobservant and unsuspecting, there were others who were more quick-sighted, and who saw clearly enough how matters stood, and among these was Ugo Harrington, who ventured to remonstrate with his lord on the dangerous passion he was indulging, expressing his opinion that if an end was not put to the love affair, it must be found out by the queen, and the discovery would lead to fearful consequences.

"Would I could undo what I have done, Ugo," cried the Admiral. "Would I were free once more! It was by thy advice that I wedded the queen so precipitately. Madman that I was to listen to thy counsel!"

"Yet the counsel was good, and I will uphold it," replied Ugo. "Your Highness is far better off than you would have been if you had married the princess. The queen has given you wealth, power, position, but the prin-

cess would have brought you little more than her charms of person. Nay, she might have caused your downfall."

"But I love her so desperately that I would almost barter my soul to obtain her," pursued Seymour. "She engrosses all my thoughts, and puts to flight all my projects. Turn which way I will, her image stands before me. My love for her makes Catherine hateful to me."

"Her Majesty ought to excite other feelings in your breast. She is a good and loving wife."

"I say not a word against her, but she is in the way of my happiness, and therefore, if I could, I would have her removed."

"Removed!" echoed Ugo. "Is it come to this already? Scarce six months married, and you are anxious to be unwed. You seem as quickly tired of your consort as King Henry was of his spouses, but he had means of getting rid of them which your Highness will scarcely be able to put in practice. Therefore you must bend to circumstances, and wear your chains as lightly as you can. They will gall you less if you do not think about them. If I may presume to say so, you allow the princess to exercise too much influence over you. You are too much with her. Abstain from her society. Devote yourself to your affairs with your former energy. Break through these silken meshes that enthrall you, and be yourself again."

"Thou art right, Ugo!" cried the Admiral. "I am bewitched. My sole chance of safety is in flying from the sorceress who has cast her spells over me. But it will cost a terrible effort."

"Cost what it may, the effort must be made," said Ugo. "Console yourself with the reflection that a time may come hereafter when you may wed the princess. Some unforeseen circumstance may occur—the queen may be suddenly carried off. In Italy our princes work in a different manner from the late king. They do not strike with the axe, but the blow is no less effectual, though dealt more silently."

"I comprehend thy dark suggestion," said the Admiral; "but I will have nought to do with thy damnable Italian practices."

"Nay, my Lord, I had no thought of suggesting poison to you, but if you grow tired of waiting—"

“No more of this!” interrupted Seymour, sternly, “or thou wilt for ever forfeit my favour.”

“I pray your Highness to forgive me if I have offended you, and set it down to my devotion.”

“Leave me!” exclaimed Seymour, fiercely. “Thou hast roused the furies in my breast. I would be alone.”

Without a word, Ugo bowed and retired; but as he was passing out of the door, he cast a look at the Admiral, and saw him fling himself into a chair, and cover his face with his hands.

“Notwithstanding all his pretended dislike to the deed, he will do it,” he muttered.

XIV

HOW THE LORD ADMIRAL SUPPLIED HIS ROYAL NEPHEW WITH MONEY.

COULD Lord Seymour have been content with the exalted position he had now attained, he might have lived happy and honoured, but, consumed by an insatiable ambition, which would not let him rest, he continued his intrigues as actively as ever.

Alarmed, at length, by his evident design to monopolise the young king's affections, and engross his confidence, the Lord Protector carried into effect his oft-repeated threat, and strictly prohibited any personal intercourse between him and his royal nephew. This order, which was rigorously enforced, was a heavy blow to Seymour; but he found means of defeating it to a certain extent, and contrived to keep up a secret correspondence with Edward through the agency of Fowler, who, though much trusted by the Protector, was in reality in the Admiral's pay.

Furtive visits were frequently paid by the gentleman of the privy-chamber to Seymour House. One morning he presented himself at an unusually early hour; but though the Admiral at the time was engaged on his toilette, he ordered him to be instantly admitted.

“Give you good day, Fowler,” he exclaimed, as his secret agent was shown into the room. “I am right glad to see you. Do you bring me any message or letter from his Majesty?”

“Only this short missive, your Highness,” replied Fowler, bowing as he handed him a small slip of paper.

“Faith, ’tis brief enough!” exclaimed the Admiral. “Let Fowler have what money he needs’—thus runs it. How much dost thou require?”

“For myself I require nothing,” replied the gentleman of the privy-chamber. “But his Majesty hath immediate need of two hundred pounds.”

“He shall have it, and more if it be wanted,” replied the Admiral. “Ugo will furnish thee with the amount. By my soul, the Lord Protector keeps his Majesty very bare!”

“The king hath but little in his purse save what comes from your Highness,” remarked Fowler. “If he asks for money, he is always put off on some plea or other. I never lose an opportunity of contrasting your Highness’s generosity with the niggardliness, if I may so venture to term it, of the Lord Protector. I say to his Majesty thus: ‘Sire, you would be well off if you had your younger uncle, the Lord Admiral, for your governor. His Highness hath an open hand, and would never stint you as your elder uncle doth, and you would then have wherewithal to reward your men handsomely.’”

“And what said the king to that, Fowler?” demanded the Admiral. “What said he to that?”

“He answered that he should be right glad your Lordship should be made his governor, but he feared the thing was impossible. Whereupon, I told him he might bring it about if he set to work in earnest.”

“And so he can—and so he shall, good Fowler. Said he anything further?”

“Not much, your Highness. To speak truth, I think his Majesty is afraid of the Lord Protector, who waxes very violent if his will be opposed. Were he to find out that I gave any secret information to your Highness, I should not only lose my post, but be clapped in the Fleet.”

“Act warily, Fowler, and thou need’st be under no apprehension. But as some risk must needs be run, thy re-

ward shall be proportionate. While receiving the money for my royal nephew, take another hundred pounds for thyself."

"Oh! your Highness, that is too much for any slight service I can render you. 'Tis true I never lose sight of your interests, and whenever a word can be said in your behalf I fail not to utter it."

"Dost think thou canst procure me a secret interview with his Majesty to-morrow Fowler?"

"'Twill be very difficult," rejoined the other; "for, as your Highness is aware, the Lord Protector has given strict orders to all the household that admittance shall be denied you. But perhaps it may be managed. I will send you word by a faithful messenger."

On this, with fresh expressions of gratitude, Fowler then took his leave. But he did not go away empty-handed.

At a later hour in the day, while the Admiral was alone in his cabinet, Ugo entered, followed by Xit. Smiling at the dwarf's consequential manner, Seymour demanded his business.

"My message is for your Highness's private ear," replied Xit, glancing at Ugo.

Upon this, Seymour signed to his esquire, who immediately withdrew.

"Now, knave, what hast thou to tell me?" demanded the Admiral.

"His Majesty will see your Highness to-morrow evening, but you must condescend to come by the back staircase. I will be there to open the private door in the gallery for you."

"The plan will do well enough," observed Seymour. "What hour hath his Majesty appointed?"

"The hour of nine," replied the dwarf. "Your Highness may rely on my punctual attendance."

"Art thou to be trusted, knave?" said the Admiral, looking hard at him.

"My discretion hath never been questioned," replied Xit, proudly. "I would your Highness would put it to the proof."

"Thou art much with the king—ha?"

"Constantly in attendance upon him, your Highness."

“In what terms doth his Majesty speak of me? Fear not to tell me, I shall not be offended with the truth.”

“The truth, in this instance, cannot be otherwise than agreeable to your Highness, since his Majesty speaks of you in terms of the utmost affection.”

“I am glad to hear it,” rejoined the Admiral, smiling. “Doth he speak in the same terms of the Lord Protector?”

“Hum! not quite, your Highness,” replied the dwarf, hesitating.

“Speak out, without fear,” cried the Admiral.

“Well, then, his Majesty complains that he is very scantily supplied with money, owing to which he is unable to reward his men, as he desires to do, for any slight service they may render him.”

“Such as thy present errand,” observed the Admiral. “However thou shalt have no reason to complain in this instance. Take this as coming from the king.”

And he tossed him a purse, which Xit caught with the dexterity of a monkey, weighing it in his hand, and feasting his eyes upon its glittering contents.

“It is not the only purse that shall find its way to thy pouch, if thou attendest carefully to my instructions,” said the Admiral.

“Your Highness has but to tell me what I am to do,” replied Xit, securing the purse within his doublet.

“I do not desire thee to play the spy upon my royal nephew, for such an office, I know, would be repugnant to thee, but I would have thee use thine eyes and ears, and bring me the intelligence they furnish thee withal. ’Tis important to me to know precisely how the king is affected towards me—and towards the Lord Protector.” The latter part of the speech was uttered with a certain significance, which was not lost upon the quick-witted dwarf.

“I understand the part I am to play,” he said, “and will discharge it to the best of my ability. I will bring up your Highness’s name as often as I can before his Majesty, and never without the commendation to which it is so justly entitled; while, if I cannot speak quite so highly of the Lord Protector, it is because his merits are not made equally clear to me.”

“Thou art a shrewd little fellow,” observed the Admiral, laughing, “and hast more wit in thee than falls to the

share of many a larger man. Commend me to his Majesty, and say that I hope ere long to arrange all to his satisfaction."

"I will not fail," replied Xit.

And with a ceremonious bow he retired.

As soon as he was left alone, the Admiral wrote down several names upon a slip of paper, after which he summoned Ugo by striking upon a small bell.

"Let all the persons mentioned in this list be convened here at noon to-morrow."

"It shall be done, your Highness," replied Ugo, glancing at the paper.

XV

HOW THE ADMIRAL'S LETTER WAS COPIED BY THE KING.

FROM what has been narrated in the previous chapter, it will be seen that the state of subjection in which the young king was kept, and the total want of deference paid to his inclinations and requests, had gradually alienated his affections from his elder uncle. Edward's great desire was now to emancipate himself from the Lord Protector's guardianship, and this object he hoped to accomplish by the Admiral's help. With this view, the letter to the Houses of Parliament, complaining of his grievances, was concocted. Fowler, to whom the draft of the intended address was intrusted, waited till the king retired to his cabinet, and then delivered it to him, saying that it came from the Admiral, and that if his Majesty approved it on perusal, he was to transcribe it and sign it.

"Let me look at it, Fowler," replied Edward, opening the paper, and scanning its contents. "'Tis well worded," he added, "and I do not think my request can be refused."

"I hope not," rejoined Fowler. "All will be well if the Admiral should be appointed your guardian. Ah, how different he is from your Majesty's elder uncle! The one is all affability and condescension,—generous, kindly, and

noble; the other, austere, severe, rapacious, and parsimonious."

"Nay, Fowler, you must not malign the Lord Protector," said Edward.

"I do not malign him, my gracious liege," replied Fowler. "I speak nothing but the truth. But I cannot bear to see your Majesty thus treated. With the Lord Admiral you would not be kept in this sort of durance, only allowed to go forth at stated times, and in a stated manner, deprived of all pleasant companionship, and compelled to study, study, study, till your brain must be quite addled."

"Nay, not quite so bad as that, good Fowler," rejoined Edward; "but in sooth I begin to find the life I lead somewhat wearisome. There is a strange contrariety in the Lord Protector's disposition for which I cannot account. He seems to delight in thwarting my inclinations. If I prefer a request, I am certain to have it refused. If I would do one thing, he would have me do another. If I would go here, he makes me go there. He refuses me money, because he says I am too lavish with it. Every day some new restriction is placed upon me, till, if this system be continued much longer, I shall have no power whatever left."

"That is quite certain," remarked Fowler.

"At what hour shall I see the Admiral to-morrow night, Fowler?"

"At nine o'clock, your Majesty. He is to be introduced by the back staircase as soon as your chaplain and tutors have left you. It may be well to copy the letter beforehand."

"I will transcribe it at once," rejoined the king. "Stay with me while I do it."

With this Edward sat down to a desk on which writing materials were placed, and was engaged in the task, when Xit suddenly entered, and called out in a warning voice that the Lord Protector was close at hand.

"If he sees this letter I am undone!" exclaimed Edward, in alarm. "Where shall I hide it?"

"Give it to me, sire," cried Fowler, snatching the papers, and thrusting them into his doublet. Scarcely was this accomplished, when the Duke of Somerset abruptly entered the closet. Without troubling himself to make

more than a slight obeisance, he looked sternly and inquiringly at his royal nephew.

"Your Majesty appears confused," he said.

"I may well be so when your Highness enters thus unceremoniously," rejoined Edward.

"I would not suffer the henchmen to announce me," said Somerset, "because in a hasty visit like the present form may be dispensed with. I have only a few words to say to your Majesty."

"Be pleased to say them, then," rejoined Edward.

"What I have to say relates to the Lord Admiral. I am told he is much offended because I will not allow him to approach your Majesty."

"Your Highness can scarcely be surprised at that. I hope you are come to tell me that you have removed the interdiction."

"On the contrary, I regret that it will be necessary to adopt measures yet stricter. No more letters must be written by your Majesty to your uncle, nor any from him be delivered. D'ye mark me?" he added to Fowler.

"Perfectly, your Highness," replied the gentleman of the privy-chamber, bowing.

"See, then, that my injunctions are strictly obeyed," cried Somerset, sternly.

"Why this additional severity?" inquired Edward. "What has my uncle done—what have I done, to deserve it?"

"Certain proceedings on the part of the Lord Admiral have given umbrage to the council," rejoined Somerset, "and unless he attends to their admonitions it will fare hardly with him. For the present, as I have said, I must forbid all correspondence between him and your Majesty."

"I would your Highness showed more brotherly love towards my uncle," observed Edward.

"I show him more love than he deserves," rejoined Somerset. "I now take my leave of your Majesty."

And he quitted the chamber.

"By my father's head I will not be treated thus!" exclaimed Edward, stamping on the ground with rage. "He deems me a child, but he shall find I have the spirit of a man. I will submit to this usage no longer."

"I am glad to hear your Majesty say so," cried Fowler.

“Maintain that bearing with him, and he must give way.”

“To tell me to my face that I must not write to my uncle,” cried Edward, pacing quickly to and fro. “But I *will* write—I *will* see him. Moreover I *will* see my cousin Jane,” pursued the king, continuing to pace about. “I am more than half inclined to go to Chelsea to-day.”

“Do nothing hastily I implore you, sire, or you may regret it,” cried Fowler. “You have much to anger you, I grant; but by acting in direct opposition to the Lord Protector’s commands you will seem to justify his conduct. Wait till you have seen the Lord Admiral to-morrow night, and be guided by his counsel.”

“Thou art right, Fowler,” said Edward, checking himself. “I must act with prudence, or I shall damage my own cause, and give the Lord Protector the advantage. I will do nothing till I have seen the Admiral. Meanwhile I will prepare for him. Give me the papers that I may complete the transcript of the letter.”

With this, he again sat down to his task, and finished it without further interruption.

XVI.

HOW THE ADMIRAL PROPOSED TO LAY THE KING’S GRIEVANCES BEFORE PARLIAMENT.

ALL the noblemen and gentlemen particularised in the Admiral’s list assembled at Seymour House at noon on the following day. They were upwards of twenty in number, and included four members of the council, namely, the Marquis of Northampton (brother to the queen-dowager), the Earl of Arundel, the venerable Lord Russell, Sir William Herbert (Seymour’s brother-in-law), and Sir John Gage. Besides these, there were the Marquis of Dorset, the Earl of Shrewsbury, Lord Clinton, Sir George Blagge, and several other noblemen and gentlemen, all the latter being members of the Lower House of Parliament. Not till all had arrived did the Admiral make his appearance.

His habiliments were of black velvet, and he wore the collar of the Garter round his neck. After bowing to the assemblage, he thus addressed them :

“ You marvel, no doubt, why I have sent for you, my Lords, but as I would do nothing unadvisedly, so I desire to consult with you, whom I know to be my friends, before taking a step, as I conceive, of the greatest importance to the welfare of the king’s Majesty and the security of the state.”

“ Proceed, my Lord,” said Lord Clinton ; “ we are ready to listen to you, and when made acquainted with your intentions will give you the best advice in our power.”

“ I thank your Lordship,” rejoined the Admiral. “ Thus, then, stands the matter. I need make no appeal, I am persuaded, to your loyalty and devotion to the king, for I know what your feelings are towards him, and that you are ready to manifest them in action. The time is come for such display, for I here proclaim to you, loudly and boldly, that my royal nephew is unworthily dealt with by the Lord Protector.”

“ This is strong language, my Lord,” cried Lord Russell.

“ My language is not a jot too strong,” rejoined the Admiral. “ I will maintain what I have advanced. My affection to my royal nephew, my duty to my sovereign, demand that I should speak out. The king, who, as you are well aware, has a wisdom far beyond his years, is treated like a mere child—a puppet. He is denied all liberty of action, shut up with his tutors, and debarred from the society of those nearest to him in kin, and dearest in his regards. He is powerless, as you know, in the council, and since the Lord Protector hath provided himself with a stamp, even the royal signature is ordinarily dispensed with. But this is not all. His Majesty’s privy purse is so scantily and inadequately supplied, that he hath not wherewithal to reward his servants. Is this to be endured ? Is the son and successor of the great Henry VIII. to be thus scandalously treated ? ”

“ I say no,” replied the Marquis of Dorset. “ The Lord Protector carries matters with far too high a hand. We have a king, though he be a minor. I can confirm what the Lord Admiral has just stated as to the needless restric-

tion placed upon the king's society He is not allowed to choose his own companions, and even my own daughter is among the interdicted."

"I have remonstrated with my brother the Lord Protector," continued the Lord Admiral, "but my remonstrances have proved ineffectual. He will listen to nothing I have to say. But, by Heaven! he *shall* hear me. I will find a way to move him."

"What does your Lordship propose to do?" demanded Lord Russell.

"In a word, I mean to free my royal nephew from his present unworthy thralldom," rejoined the Admiral. "The Lord Protector must no longer be governor of his person. He has proved himself unfit for the office."

"Whom would you substitute, my Lord—yourself?" demanded Sir John Gage, gruffly.

"Ay, marry—none were so fit," cried the Marquis of Dorset. "The Lord Admiral is his Majesty's favourite uncle, and is in all respects better suited to be governor of his person than the stern and moody Lord Protector."

"I have searched old chronicles for precedents," pursued the Admiral, "and I find that heretofore the offices of Lord Protector and Governor of the King's Person never have been united; neither can they rightly be combined. Thus, at one time, there was a protector of England and a regent of France, while the Duke of Exeter and the Bishop of Winchester were made governors of the king, incontestably proving that the offices ought not to be conjoined."

"Do not forget, my Lord, that you voted for your brother's appointment to both offices," observed the Constable.

"Right sorry am I that I did so," rejoined the Admiral. "'Twas a most ill-judged act. But because I have done wrong, there is no reason why the error should not be repaired. I have shown you that the Duke of Somerset ought no longer to hold the office. You may choose a better governor for his Majesty than myself, but you can choose no one who loves him better, or will more studiously consult his welfare."

"That we nothing doubt," remarked Sir John Gage. "But you may rely upon it, your brother will never sur-

render the post, save on compulsion—and to your Lordship last of all.”

“The Lord Protector’s unfounded and unbrotherly jealousy must not be allowed to operate to his Majesty’s disadvantage,” cried Dorset. “No one is so well qualified for the post as the Lord Admiral.”

“Have I your support, then, my lords and gentlemen?” said Seymour.

“You have mine, most heartily,” cried Dorset.

“And mine!—And mine,” cried several other voices.

“If the change could be accomplished quietly, I should not object to it,” observed Sir John Gage; “but I fear the attempt will disturb the government.”

“Is it the king’s desire that the change should be made?” inquired Lord Russell.

“His earnest desire,” replied the Admiral. “It is his Majesty’s design to address a letter to the Houses of Parliament on the subject.”

“Indeed!” exclaimed Lord Russell.

“Ay, indeed!” echoed the Admiral. “And if you will all stand by me, we shall be too strong for any opposition. I have plenty of other supporters in both Houses to make a bruit about the matter.”

“How if you be thwarted in your designs, my Lord Admiral?” said Lord Clinton.

“I do not think I shall be,” rejoined Seymour. “But by God’s precious soul!” he continued, fiercely, “if I be thwarted, I will make this the blackest Parliament that ever was in England.”

“You seem to threaten us, my Lord,” observed Lord Clinton.

“I pray you pardon me, my Lord,” rejoined the Admiral, controlling himself. “I am galled by the ill usage that my royal nephew has received, and spoke intemperately.”

“I am a plain, blunt man, as you know, my Lord Admiral, and speak my mind freely,” observed the Constable. “I cannot approve of the course you are about to pursue.”

“Wherefore not, good Sir John?” inquired Seymour.

“Twere better, if possible, the matter should be peaceably and quietly arranged. If publicly discussed, it may breed scandal. Besides, in a struggle of this nature with

your brother, you may get the worst of it, and if so, he will not spare you."

"Give yourself no concern about me, Sir John," said Seymour. "The Lord Protector hath more reason to fear me than I have to fear him. And this you will find. I *will* have the king better ordered, and not kept so close that no man may come near him."

"Then you have made up your mind to an open quarrel with your brother?" said the Constable.

"I have, Sir John," replied the Admiral. "His Majesty's letter shall be laid before both Houses, and methinks there are few of his loyal subjects but will eagerly respond to it."

"Who will deliver the letter?" demanded Lord Russell.

"I myself," replied the Admiral. "Some of you, I perceive, are inclined to hang back, as if alarmed at the notiou of a quarrel with the Lord Protector. You overrate his power. He is not so strong as you imagine. You will see what the result of this step will be."

"Ay, ay; we shall see, and will be guided by what occurs," observed Lord Russell.

"A prudent resolution," cried Dorset, contemptuously. "I will stick by the Lord Admiral, whatever may betide."

"And so will we," cried several voices.

"I thank you heartily, my good friends," rejoined Seymour.

After some further discussion, the conference broke up. While the others were departing, Sir John Gage approached the Admiral, and said,

"'Tis a friend's part to warn you. You are rushing on a great peril. Of a certainty the Lord Protector will clap you in the Tower!"

"Tut! Sir John; he dares not do it."

"Ay, but if he *should*, you will find it no easy matter to get out."

"I tell you, Sir John, my brother will not dare to proceed to such extremities with me. You may rest perfectly easy on that score."

"Well, I have done my best to settle the matter peaceably," observed the Constable. "If ill comes of it, 'tis not my fault."

With this he took his departure.

One person only was now left, the Marquis of Dorset. Seymour thanked him warmly for his support.

"If I stood not by your Lordship at a critical juncture like the present, my friendship were worth little," said Dorset. "But I do not think that fortune, that has hitherto favoured you, will desert you now."

"If I am successful, as I hope to be, you will be a gainer as well, marquis. Meantime, is there anything I can do for you? You know you can command me."

"Your Lordship has already made me very extensively your debtor. But, in sooth, I am almost as much straitened for money as our young king appears to be. I am ashamed to allude to the circumstance. You will think I am always borrowing from you."

"I think only of the pleasure of serving you, marquis. Will you have five hundred more?"

"You are a great deal too good. Half the amount will suffice."

"Pooh! why divide so paltry a sum?—Ho there, Ugo," he shouted. "Count out five hundred pounds, and let it be forthwith conveyed to Dorset House. Adieu, marquis."

"Adieu, my Lord Admiral. Success attend you!"

Shortly afterwards, Ugo was again summoned by his Lord.

"I am going upon a dangerous enterprise to-night, Ugo," said the Admiral. "If anything goes wrong, let this packet be delivered instantly to the queen—but not otherwise. She will know how to act."

"It shall be done, my Lord."

"Take great care of it," repeated the Admiral. "My safety may depend upon its production."

Ugo reiterated his assurances, and withdrew.

XVII.

HOW THE PROTECTOR AND THE ADMIRAL WERE AGAIN RECONCILED.

AT the appointed hour that night, the Admiral was secretly introduced into the king's closet. On beholding him Edward sprang towards him, and embraced him most affectionately.

"How long it seems since we met, dear uncle!" he exclaimed. "How doth the queen your consort, and your ward and my sweet cousin, the Lady Jane?"

"I will answer the last question first, sire," replied the Admiral. "Jane is somewhat delicate, and I half suspect she is pining because she is not allowed to see your Majesty."

"I am equally unhappy," rejoined Edward. "But the separation, I trust, will not endure much longer. Things must be changed."

"It is time they were so, sire," cried Seymour, "for, in good truth, you are not treated like a king. Is it right or fitting that I, your uncle, should be denied admittance to you, and should be compelled to approach you thus stealthily?"

"Indeed it is not, dear uncle," replied the king; "and I could almost weep to think of it."

"Sire," cried the Admiral, "I need not say how deeply devoted I am to you, that I love you as a nephew, that I honour you as a sovereign, and that I am prepared at any time to lay down my life for you. If the course of action that I may advise you to pursue should alarm you, be assured it is dictated by the strongest feelings of regard for your welfare. You are not treated as becomes the son of your august father. With what motives I will not now pause to inquire, it is obvious that the Lord Protector is determined to deprive you of all power. He excludes from you all those who love you and would give you good counsel, and places those around you who are mere instruments of his own. You must throw off this yoke. You must learn to rule and govern as other kings do."

"I am well enough inclined to do so, dear uncle, and methinks I could discharge some of my kingly functions fittingly, if I were allowed."

"It shall be mine to accomplish this for you, sire," rejoined the Admiral. "You have shown too much submission to your uncle, and piece by piece he has stripped you of all your regal attributes till he has left you the mere name of king. I say not this to rouse your anger, but it is the truth, and you ought to know it. While my brother fills his own coffers from the royal revenues, he will not give you wherewithal to reward your men. And why does he keep you thus bare? Not from parsimony, for he can be profuse enough when it suits him, but because, by depriving you of money, he deprives you of power. Shame on him, I say! However there is one comfort. He is old, and cannot last long."

"Would he were dead!" exclaimed Edward. "No, that was a wicked wish," he added, checking himself, "and I am sorry I gave utterance to it."

"I am not surprised you wish him gone," rejoined the Admiral. "As long as he remains at the head of affairs you will have no authority, and should he be alive and in his present position when your minority ceases you will have some trouble in assuming your own."

"But that is a long time off, good uncle," observed Edward. "Meantime I would be king, and not the mere puppet I am made."

"In good truth, your Majesty is but a beggarly king—almost an object of pity to your household."

"Pitied by my household!" cried Edward. "Am I reduced so low as that?"

"The Lord Protector has brought it to this pass by his arts," cried Seymour. "And so long as your Majesty is content it will continue, if not become worse."

"Worse it can scarce become," rejoined Edward. "But how am I to free myself? What is to be done?"

"While the Duke of Somerset continues governor of your person nothing can be done," said the Admiral. "The first step is to remove him from the office. To this the council will never consent unless strong pressure is brought to bear upon them, and this can only be done by parlia-

ment. Have you copied that letter, of which I sent you a draught by Fowler?"

"I have—it is here," replied the king, giving him the paper. "But will this message be attended to, think you, dear uncle?"

"It *shall* be attended to," replied the Admiral. "If I can once free you from the Lord Protector's grasp all the rest will be easy. With me for your governor, you shall indeed be king. You shall not be shut up like a caged bird, and be deprived of the society of those you love. No unnecessary restraint of any kind shall be imposed upon you. You shall mingle as freely with your subjects as your august father was wont to do. And it shall be my study to form your character on the best and noblest model, so that when you do come to reign you may be a great and good king."

"A good king I will be—a great king, if it shall please Heaven to make me one," rejoined Edward. "They tell me you are not so earnest for the Protestant faith as the Lord Protector, and that you favour the adherents of the old religion."

"Who has told you this, sire?" demanded the Admiral.

"My preceptors," replied the king.

"It is not true. I am as heartily in favour of the Reformation as Cranmer himself, but policy requires that I should stand well with the Romish party. But let me once have the care of your Majesty, and you shall not complain of any lukewarmness on my part in the cause of religious reform. The queen, my wife, and your cousin Jane, shall aid us with their counsels."

"Nay, there cannot be a more ardent reformer than Jane," observed Edward, smiling. "I pray you commend me heartily to her, and to the queen, your consort."

"I will not fail to do so," replied Seymour. "I trust your Majesty will soon see them both at Chelsea—or here. I will set about the work to-morrow, and let you know how I prosper."

With this he was about to retire, but ere he could do so he was stopped by the sudden entrance of the Lord Protector, accompanied by the Earls of Warwick and Arundel, Lord Russell, Sir William Paget, and Sir John Gage. For

a moment the Admiral was taken aback, but quickly recovering himself, he drew himself up to his full height, and regarded his brother with a glance of defiance.

"Soh! you are here, my Lord, in direct defiance of my injunctions," cried Somerset.

"My uncle is here at my request," cried Edward, throwing himself between them. "I sent for him."

"Your Majesty will not be able to screen him," observed Somerset. "I am too well informed of his plots. He will be brought to account for his treasonable designs."

"Treasonable!" exclaimed Edward. "Nay, your Highness, the Admiral has been guilty of no treason in coming to me."

"He will have to answer to the council for what he has done," rejoined the Protector, "and it will be for them to decide whether his designs are treasonable or not. I charge him with a flagrant disobedience of my commands and authority—with constantly labouring and studying to put into your Majesty's head a dislike of the government of the realm and of my doings. I charge him with endeavouring as much as in him lies to persuade your Majesty, being of too tender years to direct your own affairs, to take upon yourself the government and management of the realm, to the danger of your own person, and the peril of the whole kingdom. Let him deny these charges if he can."

"I will answer them at once," replied the Admiral, boldly. "It is no treason to be here with the king my nephew in disobedience to your Grace's mandate. I deny that I have sought to create a dislike of the government in my royal nephew's mind; but I will not deny that I have said that his affairs might be better managed, and that he himself ought to be better ordered—and that I would do my best to have him better ordered."

"You are an audacious traitor, and glory in your guilt," cried the Protector. "But you have crowned your offences by obtaining a letter from the king whereby you seek to accomplish your object of supplanting me in the governorship of the royal person. But you will be balked in your design."

"What paper hath your Lordship in your hand?" demanded the Earl of Warwick of the Admiral.

"A letter to the Houses of Parliament, which I myself

shall deliver to-morrow. 'Tis written by his Majesty, and signed by him, as ye may see."

"But drawn up by yourself," remarked Warwick. "My Lord, you have done wrong."

"In what respect?" cried the Admiral, fiercely. "The king is dissatisfied with the governor of his person, and would change him."

"Who has made him so dissatisfied?" asked Warwick.

"Not I," rejoined the Admiral. "You would seem to infer that his Majesty cannot judge for himself; that he cannot tell whether he is well or ill ordered; that he is willing to be kept in subjection, to be deprived of the society he most affects, and to be stinted in his purse. You think he cannot find out all these things without my aid. But I tell you, my Lord of Warwick, that his Majesty *has* found them out, and is determined to have redress, if not from you, from parliament."

"My Lord Admiral, you will never deliver that letter," observed Warwick, in a stern tone.

"Your Lordship is mistaken," rejoined Seymour.

"In the name of the council, I command you to give it up to his Highness the Lord Protector," said Warwick.

"What if I refuse?" rejoined Seymour.

"We will order your immediate arrest," said the earl.

"Sooner than surrender it to him I will destroy it," cried the Admiral, tearing the letter in pieces.

"What have you done, my Lord?" cried the king, alarmed at the proceeding.

"You will destroy yourself if you go on thus, my Lord," observed Sir John Gage, in a low tone to the Admiral. "The authority of the council is not to be braved with impunity."

"I am not to be frightened, good Sir John," rejoined Seymour, haughtily. "I fear neither the council nor the Lord Protector. They will not molest me."

"I leave this arrogant and impracticable man in your hands, my Lords," said Somerset. "Act towards him as ye deem right."

Hereupon the members of the council deliberated together for a short space, after which the Earl of Warwick said,

"Our decision is, that the Lord Admiral be deprived of

his offices, and be committed to the Tower to answer the grave charges which will be brought against him."

"You cannot have so decided, my Lords," cried Edward. "Your Highness will not allow your brother, and my uncle, to be sent to the Tower."

"I cannot interfere," rejoined Somerset, in an inflexible tone.

"Make your submission at once, my Lord, or you are lost," said Sir John Gage, approaching the Admiral, and speaking in a low voice.

"I am not in such jeopardy as you deem, Sir John," rejoined Seymour, confidently. "Before I am removed, will your Highness grant me a word in private?" he added to the Lord Protector.

"I will not refuse you a hearing if you have aught to allege in your exculpation," replied Somerset, walking apart with him.

"Now, what have you to say?" he demanded, in a low, stern tone.

"Merely that this decision of the council must be overruled," replied the Admiral.

"Must be overruled!" cried the Protector, contemptuously.

"Ay, *must!* You will do well to pause before taking any steps against me, for the mischief you do me will recoil with double effect on your own head. If I fall, I will pluck you with me."

"Go to! you threaten idly," cried the Protector, though with secret misgiving.

"Not so," rejoined the Admiral. "Mark well what I say, brother," he continued, speaking very deliberately, and with stern emphasis. "I can prove that all the acts done by you and by the council are illegal and of no effect. The royal stamp was not affixed to Henry's will during his lifetime; consequently, the instrument is wholly inoperative."

"This is mere assertion, and will obtain credit from no one," cried Somerset, feigning contempt, but unable to hide his apprehension. "Its motive is too obvious."

"I have your confederate Butts's confession of the whole affair, which shall be produced to confound you," cried Seymour. "Now, what say you, brother? Am I to be deprived of my offices, and sent to the Tower?"

"I thought the secret had died with Butts," said Somerset, trembling in spite of himself.

"No, it lives to blast you," rejoined the Admiral. "Knowing that I ran some risk to-night, I took the precaution of placing the confession in such hands, that, if aught befalls me, its production will be certain. Send me to the Tower if you will. You will speedily follow me thither."

Somerset was visibly embarrassed, and quailed beneath the Admiral's looks.

"Make up your mind quickly, brother," continued Seymour, "either for peace or war. A word from me will shake your government to pieces."

"But you will destroy yourself in uttering it," said the Protector.

"I will take my chance of that. In any case, I am certain of revenge."

At this moment, the king, who had been anxiously watching them, stepped forward.

"I hope your Highness relents," he said to the Protector.

"Let your uncle submit, and he shall not find me unforgiving," observed Somerset.

"Why should I submit?" rejoined the Admiral. "If I have erred at all, it has been from excess of devotion to your Majesty."

"For my sake, yield?" cried Edward, imploringly.

"Thus urged, I cannot refuse," replied the Admiral. "Brother, I am content to own myself in the wrong, and to ask your forgiveness."

And he bent his proud neck with an affectation of submission.

"I am satisfied," rejoined the Protector. "My Lords," he added, turning to the council, "you may blame my weakness. But I cannot proceed further against my brother. He has expressed his contrition, and I am therefore willing to pardon his offence, and beseech you to do the same."

"Since your Highness so wills it, we are content to proceed no further in the matter," replied the Earl of Warwick. "But we must have a promise from the Lord Admiral that he will abstain from all such practices in future."

“I will answer for him,” replied the Protector. “It is my earnest desire to please your Majesty in all things,” he continued; “and if there be aught not done to your satisfaction, it shall be amended.”

“That is the sum of my treasonable designs,” observed the Admiral. “All I have laboured for is, that his Majesty should be properly treated.”

“His Majesty shall have no reason to complain,” observed the Lord Protector. “To prove to you how much you have misjudged me, brother, and how sincerely I desire to promote a good understanding between us, an addition shall be made of a thousand a year to your revenue from the royal treasure.”

“I thank your Highness,” replied the Admiral, bowing.

“But you must forego all pretension to be made governor of his Majesty’s person—for such will never be permitted.”

“All I desire is free intercourse with my royal nephew,” said the Admiral.

“And this shall be accorded you so long as the license is not abused,” rejoined the Protector.

While this was passing, the Earl of Warwick and the Lord Russell conferred apart.

“What has caused this sudden change in the Lord Protector’s disposition towards his brother?” observed Russell.

“I know not,” replied Warwick. “But it is plain the Admiral has some hold upon him. Instead of being sent to the Tower he is rewarded. Somerset is wrong to temporise thus. His brother will never cease plotting. Better crush him now than let him live to do more mischief.”

“I am of your opinion,” said Russell. “This leniency is ill judged.”

After the departure of the Lord Protector and the others, the Admiral tarried for a short time with his royal nephew, and while he was taking his leave, Edward said to him,

“We have both gained something by this struggle, gentle uncle. I have obtained my liberty, and you have got a thousand a year added to your revenue. You cannot be governor of our person, but you will ever hold the first place in our regard.”

“That is all I aspire to, my gracious liege,” rejoined the Admiral, kissing his hand. And he added to himself as he retired: “Somerset thinks to conciliate me with this paltry bribe. Were he to offer me half his own revenues, he should not induce me to forego my purpose.”

Thus far the Second Book.

BOOK III.

PLOT AND COUNTERPLOT.

I.

OF THE ARRANGEMENT MADE BY THE ADMIRAL WITH
THE MASTER OF THE MINT AT BRISTOL.

SEVERAL months flew by, during which no further difference occurred between the Lord Protector and the Admiral. A semblance of good understanding was maintained between them, both being exceedingly careful to do no act to betray the secret animosity they still nourished towards each other. Somerset strove to conciliate his brother by fresh favours, but ineffectually. The Admiral's greedy ambition was not to be thus easily satisfied, though he professed unbounded gratitude.

Towards the end of August, 1547, the Protector had completed his preparations for his long meditated warlike expedition against Scotland. The invading army comprised about twenty thousand men, more than a third of whom however consisted of German, Spanish, and Italian mercenaries. Some apprehension being entertained of an invasion from France, aid having been promised by the reigning monarch, Henri II., to the Scots, all needful precautions were taken for the security of the English shores. The Admiral was appointed Lord-Lieutenant of the South, and the defence of the whole south coast was intrusted to him. He had indulged the hope that during his absence his brother would delegate his powers to him, but the Protector was far too wary, preferring to place the temporary government of the kingdom in the hands of the council. Consequently, the chief management of affairs was intrusted to Sir William Paget, principal secretary of state, in whom Somerset had entire reliance.

All arrangements being made, and a numerous and well-manned fleet, under the command of Lord Clinton,

designed to attend the army on its march along the coast, having set sail, the Lord Protector, accompanied by the Earl of Warwick as second in command, took formal leave of his royal nephew, and set forth on the expedition.

By the departure of his brother, the stage was left free to the Admiral, and he availed himself of the opportunity to prosecute his machinations more actively than ever. Aware however that he was surrounded by the spies of the council, and that all his proceedings would be reported to his brother by Sir William Paget, he observed extreme caution. In a scheme so gigantic as that on which he was engaged, the possession of large supplies of money was indispensable, but how were these to be promptly obtained? At last he hit upon an expedient which he put in practice without hesitation. Having received private information from one of the officers that Sir William Sharington, master of the mint at Bristol, had been guilty of certain fraudulent practices, he judged him to be a man fit for his purpose, and accordingly despatched Ugo Harrington to him with a letter, ordering him to come up to London at once. Sharington complied, and, returning with the messenger, immediately waited on Seymour.

He was received very coldly, the Admiral's object being to work upon his fears. Motioning him to take a seat, Seymour forbore to address him till they were alone.

Sir William Sharington was a man of middle age, tall, well proportioned, sallow complexioned, bald, with a black beard slightly tinged with grey. His eyes were dark and quick, and though his features were good, there was something equivocal in his look. He was plainly but handsomely attired in a murrey-coloured velvet doublet, over which he wore a gown of the same colour, lined and faced with sable. Eyeing the Admiral keenly, he perceived that mischief was intended him.

"Sir William Sharington," said Seymour, in a stern tone, and with a severe look, "your malpractices have been revealed to me by your assay-master. You have alloyed the gold and silver intrusted to you. Attempt not to deny your guilt, or I will have you taken to the Tower, where the torture will soon wring a full confession from you."

"Have mercy upon me!" cried Sharington, in extremity of terror. "I will repair the wrong I have done—I

will give up all my possessions. Do not let me be put to the torture."

Seymour shook his head sternly.

"All thy possessions will be confiscated by the Crown," he said, "and thou thyself wilt be hanged."

"Pity me! pity me!" cried Sharington, falling upon his knees before him. "Take all I have, and let me go."

Having sufficiently terrified him for his purpose, the Admiral said:

"Thou seest that thy life is in my power. What wilt thou do if I save thee?"

"I will do whatever your Highness commands," replied Sharington, beginning to breathe more freely.

"Well, then, I have occasion for ten thousand pounds. Canst thou procure it for me?"

"Ten thousand pounds!" exclaimed Sharington, in despair. "Your Highness is too hard upon me. I have not the half, nor the third of that sum. Will not less content you?"

"I tell thee I must have ten thousand," rejoined the Admiral. "Nay, before I have done with thee, I must have forty thousand."

"Better send me to the Tower at once," groaned Sharington. "'Tis impossible for me to comply with your Highness's conditions."

"Hark ye, Sharington," cried the Admiral, altering his tone, "I will trifle with you no longer. It is true that your life is in my power, but I do not mean to harm you. Let us understand each other."

"I am all anxiety to learn your Highness's wishes," said Sharington, eagerly.

"You are master of the mint at Bristol. The whole of the officers are under your control. The pix is in your keeping, and you have charge of all the gold and silver in bullion."

"All this is true, your Highness."

"'Tis plain you are not overburdened by any foolish scruples, therefore what I have to propose will not shock you. You have already alloyed the gold for your own benefit—you must continue to alloy it for mine. Nay, you must do more. You must clip all the gold and silver

pieces, the rials, angels, rose-nobles, and marks that fall into your hands. Moreover, you must coin base money."

"All this I would willingly do to pleasure your Lordship. But such practices, if long continued, would be sure to be discovered by the moneyers, melters, and blanchers."

"Your present officers must be dismissed, and others more tractable found. I will silence the assay-master who has dared to denounce you. He shall pass a few months at the Fleet."

"Nay, if I have your Highness's support, and I can find cunning artificers to aid me, I doubt not but it may be done, and that I may be able to provide you with the large sum you mention. Forty thousand, I think your Highness said?"

"Forty or fifty thousand, Sir William. You will employ your time badly if you make not as much for yourself."

"I will do the best I can, your Highness, but there will be heavy fees to the moneyers and melters, and such as sweat and pare the coin. They will not do the work for nothing."

"It cannot be expected. But you may proceed without fear, Sir William. Ere another year is over our heads the government of this realm will be in my hands, and I will take good care you are not molested."

"Ah! if your Highness should be once at the head of affairs all will be well," cried Sharrington. "Meantime you will not, perhaps, object to give me an order."

"An order for what?"

"For the money you require. It will prevent my being called in question hereafter."

"You are a cunning knave," cried the Admiral. "Well, you shall have the order."

And he wrote it out and gave it him.

"I shall preserve this carefully," said Sharrington, securing it in his doublet.

"Return to Bristol," pursued Seymour, "and commence operations forthwith. Within a week I shall expect ten thousand pounds."

"I hope to be able to satisfy your Highness, but if any unforeseen difficulties should arise—"

“I will have no excuses. If you are not punctual, I will enforce payment in a manner that may not be agreeable to you. I have a long arm, and can easily reach those who displeas me. The next time you are sent for it will not be to talk matters over thus.”

Sharington made no reply, but, bowing respectfully to the Admiral, withdrew.

“I have found a useful instrument in that man,” thought Seymour, as he was left alone, “but I must keep a wary eye upon him. He looks treacherous.”

Shortly afterwards, Ugo Harrington entered the cabinet.

“How now?” demanded the Admiral. “Any more wrecks seized?”

“No, your Highness; but Captain Hornbeak, whom you liberated, has arrived at Gravesend with a large booty, and requires an order to land it.”

“Well, let him have the order,” replied the Admiral. “Assign him his portion of the spoil, and see that the remainder be safely bestowed. As soon as his pinnace is fitted out again he must sail for the Scilly Isles.”

“Your Highness has then got possession of those long-coveted islands?”

“I am about to take possession of them,” replied Seymour, with a smile. “I have already despatched a small fleet of pirate vessels thither under the command of Captain Blades, and as the bulk of the navy is now employed off the coast of Scotland, they are not likely to meet with interruption. I mean to make the Scilly Isles a depository for stores and arms.”

“No safer place could be found,” replied Ugo; “and, as your Highness once observed, those islands may prove a refuge for you in case of need.”

“Such a necessity, I trust, will not arise,” replied the Admiral. “I ought to go down to Holt to see that the castle is kept constantly provisioned; but I must trust to my deputy-governor, for I like not to be absent from London at this juncture.”

A sudden interruption was here offered to their conversation by the discharge of ordnance, evidently proceeding from the Tower. Immediately afterwards the guns of the palace responded, the bells of all the churches began to peal merrily, while shouts and acclamations were heard.

“Those sounds denote that a victory has been won by our army in Scotland,” cried the Admiral. “An engagement, I know, was imminent. Hie thee forth, Ugo, and let me know what has happened.”

The esquire obeyed; and during his absence the ringing of bells and shouting continued, increasing Seymour's impatience to learn the news. After a while, Ugo returned, with looks plainly indicating that he had most important intelligence to communicate.

“A great victory has been gained by the Lord Protector,” he said, “over the Scots on the field of Pinkey, near Musselburgh. The Scottish army is totally routed, about fourteen thousand of them being slain, and fifteen hundred made prisoners, among whom is the Earl of Huntly, with many gentlemen. The Protector is master of Edinburgh, except the castle, which must speedily surrender.”

“My brother's star is in the ascendant,” observed the Admiral, moodily.

“The news runs, that his Highness will return at once to London, and leave the command of the army to the Earl of Warwick,” pursued Ugo.

“What brings him back so suddenly, I marvel?” said the Admiral.

“Possibly he may have received some intimation of your Lordship's proceedings, and may deem his presence necessary to check them,” said Ugo.

“It may be so,” rejoined Seymour, thoughtfully. “At any rate, the enterprise must be deferred to a more propitious opportunity. 'Twill not be the moment to cope with him when he comes back covered with glory.”

“Had he been defeated, your Highness's chance would undoubtedly have been greater,” observed Ugo. “The whole realm will ring with his triumphs for some time to come, and his name will be uppermost in all men's minds. The Lord Mayor and the citizens will, no doubt, give him a magnificent reception. Your Lordship is discreet to bide your time.”

“When his popularity wanes, the blow shall be struck,” said the Admiral. “But I must to the palace, and offer my congratulations to the king on the glorious victory of Pinkey.”

As he went forth, he found the whole populace astir,

and making extravagant demonstrations of delight. His brother's name was on every man's lips. Somerset's reputation had risen to such an immeasurable height as to render any immediate attempt against him futile.

II.

SUDLEY CASTLE.

ABOUT a year must now be allowed to elapse with very brief mention of what occurred during that interval. The brilliant victory gained over the Scots at Pinkey, alluded to in the previous chapter, consolidated the Lord Protector's power, and his popularity rose to such a height as to defy all opposition.

During the twelve months to which we refer, considerable progress had been made with the Reformation, and strong coercive measures put in force against the Romanists. Great opposition was made to these changes by Bishops Gardiner, Bonner, and Tunstal, and the Princess Mary declared herself strenuously against them, but Cranmer proceeded zealously in his task, being aided by Doctor Ridley, who was now made Bishop of Rochester, and by Doctor Hugh Latimer, who had resigned the bishopric of Worcester during the late reign because he would not sign the obnoxious statute of the Six Articles, but who had lately been called from his retirement.

A general visitation of the churches throughout England was commanded by the king. A book of homilies was compiled, and placed in the hands of every minister. The paraphrase of the New Testament by Erasmus was translated and appointed for use. All images, statues, and ornaments profaned by superstitious rites were ordered to be removed; the Holy Scriptures were enjoined to be read only in English; and efforts were made to render the lives of the clergy more exemplary. The terrible statute of the Six Articles, passed by the late king, was repealed. Many old superstitious rites were abolished. An order of the

council was procured by Cranmer against the carrying of candles on Candlemas-day, of ashes on Ash-Wednesday, and palms on Palm-Sunday. The whole church service was appointed to be in the vulgar tongue, and the Liturgy was compiled. Notwithstanding all this, a good deal of discontent prevailed throughout the country, and insurrections were threatened in several counties.

Bonner and Tunstal found it necessary to conform; but Gardiuer, who was made of more stubborn material, resisted, and was first of all imprisoned in the Fleet, and subsequently in the Tower. After a long confinement however he was liberated, but threatened with the deprivation of his bishopric if he continued contumacious. Two other recsant prelates were sent to the Tower,—Heath, Bishop of Worcester, and Day, Bishop of Chichester.

During this time, as may be supposed, the pious young king had devoted himself sedulously to the work of religious reform, and leaving secular matters altogether to his uncle the Lord Protector, passed his time chiefly in conferences with Cranmer, in listening to the homilies of Ridley and Latimer, and other zealous Protestant divines, and in devising means to free his dominions utterly from the errors of Popery, and the establishment of pure doctrines in their stead.

Edward had now been nearly two years upon the throne, and during that space, through his instrumentality, much good had been accomplished. Though the war with Scotland was still carried on in a desultory manner, the great bone of contention had been withdrawn, by the removal of the young Queen of Scots to France, where she was subsequently betrothed to the dauphin, François de Valois. This latter circumstance was satisfactory to Edward, as it left him free to make his own choice of a consort.

And here we may mention that his attachment to the Lady Jane Grey continued undiminished. Never was he so happy as in her society. He frequently consulted her on measures of religious reform, and always found her counsel wise and good. The marked preference exhibited by his royal nephew for the Lady Jane could not escape the penetration of the Lord Protector; but though he had formerly been averse to the possibility of such an alliance, he now seemed to view it with more favour, and it began

to be whispered that ere long the young king would be contracted to the Lady Jane Grey. But this event never occurred.

Not for a moment during the twelve months to which we have adverted had the Admiral abandoned his secret designs, though forced to defer their execution. All his plans were systematically carried on. Through the agency of Sharington and of the pirates whom he employed, he hesitated not to defraud the government to an immense extent, and in this unscrupulous manner possessed himself of large sums. He turned his office to the same account; took bribes, and extorted money on various pretences. All wrecks that fell into his hands helped to enrich his own coffers. Though complaints for these wrongs were frequently made, such were his craft and audacity that redress could never be obtained. Several of the gentlemen and grooms of the privy-chamber were in his pay, and regularly reported to him what passed in the royal presence. Already, as we have seen, he had a vast number of retainers, but he was constantly adding to them, and always sought to have young gentlemen of good family for his esquires. By every means in his power he strove to ingratiate himself with the old nobility, and secretly sided with all those who were disaffected towards the Lord Protector or jealous of his power. But it was chiefly in the country that he sought to extend his influence. Contriving to get an extraordinary number of lordships into his hands, he appointed stewards to them who were in his interest, and whose business it was to strengthen his party. By these and like means were the ramifications of the gigantic conspiracy he was hatching extended. He could now fairly estimate his adherents at ten thousand men, but in the event of a rising, he felt sure he should be able to muster double or treble that number. With this design, he counselled all the discontented nobles to retire to their country residences, and there strengthen themselves as much as possible, holding themselves in readiness for any emergency. The manner of his proceeding will be best exemplified by relating a discourse which he had with the Marquis of Dorset previous to the departure of the latter for Bradgate in Leicestershire.

“Make yourself strong, marquis—make yourself

strong," he said. "There is no saying what may happen. If a rising should take place, you will be prepared. Have you many friends about you?"

"I have many retainers, gentlemen of no great means, who are content to serve me," replied Dorset.

"Trust not too much to them," rejoined the Admiral, "but secure, if you can, the yeomen and the franklins—they will aid you best. Find out the ringleaders and those who have most influence with the commonalty, and spare no efforts to win them over. Be familiar with them. Go to their houses. Flatter their wives and daughters. Take with you a flask or two of wine, a venison pasty, a cold capon, or such matters, and sit down with them. In this manner you will win their hearts, and have them at your commandment. D'ye note me, marquis?"

"Right well, Admiral," he replied. "You are a rare plotter."

"You will find the plan efficacious," said the Admiral; "and so well do I think of it, that I intend to pursue it myself."

Other hints were given, which Dorset promised to turn to account. As usual, he was in want of money, and before taking leave of the Admiral, had increased his debt to him by another five hundred pounds.

Pursuing the plan he had recommended to Dorset, Seymour spent a portion of his time at Sudley Castle, in Gloucestershire, where he kept up a princely establishment, and by his hearty and engaging manner won the good opinion of all the yeomen and franklins in the neighbourhood.

Situated about a mile from Winchcombe, amid the beautiful hills of Gloucestershire, this magnificent castle was erected by Lord Boteler, who subsequently assumed the title of Sudley, in the reign of Henry VI., on the site of a still more ancient edifice, constructed by Radulphus, Earl of Hereford, at the time of the Conquest. "The Lord Sudley who builded the castle," says old Leland, "was a famous man of war in King Henry V and VI.th's days; and was an Admiral, as I have heard, on sea; whercupon it was supposed and spoken, that it was partly builded *ex spoliis Gallorum*; and some speak of a tower in it called Portmare's Tower, that it should be made of a ransom of his. One

thing was to be noted in this castle, that part of the windows of it were glazed with beryls. King Edward IV bore no good will to the Lord Sudley, as a man suspected to be in heart devoted to King Henry VI., whereupon, by complaints he was attached, and going up to London, he looked from the hill to Sudley, and said, 'Castle of Sudley, thou art the traitor, not I!' Afterwards, he made an honest declaration, and sold his castle to King Edward IV."

This splendid structure, described by another quaint old writer, Fuller, as "of subjects' castles the most handsome habitation, and of subjects' habitations the strongest castle," continued in the possession of the Crown till the accession of Edward VI., when it was bestowed, as we have seen, upon Lord Seymour. Large sums were expended by the Admiral upon its enlargement and improvement, and, while heightening its beauty, he contrived, at the same time, materially to increase its strength. It contained many noble apartments, all of which were furnished with the gorgeous taste characteristic of its possessor. The chapel attached to the castle was exquisitely beautiful; the windows of the lovely fane, as mentioned by Leland, being filled with beryls.

Sudley Castle, as we have just stated, was within a mile of the ancient and picturesque town of Winchcombe, which up to the time of Henry VIII. had boasted a mitred abbey. Its domains were watered by the little river Isborne. Surrounded by lovely hills, and embosomed in stately groves, from the midst of which sprang its lofty towers, the princely edifice commanded enchanting prospects. Its size, strength, and the richness and beauty of its architecture, rendered it one of the noblest specimens of a castellated mansion to be met with in the kingdom. Unluckily, but few remains of its former grandeur are left. Taken by the Republican party in 1642, it was partially destroyed by them, its halls dismantled, its beautiful chapel unroofed, the windows of the fane rifled of their beryls, and the repose of the dead lying within its walls profaned. Still, though the castle is now but a ruin, and the stars look down into the roofless aisles of the desecrated chapel, enough is left to attest its former grandeur and magnificence; while a glorious western window, with a canopied niche on either side, shows

what the chapel must have been when beautified by Lord Seymour.

In this noble castellated mansion, which he maintained with truly baronial splendour, the Admiral passed a certain portion of his time—not inactively, as we have shown. But he had another and yet more important stronghold to which he sometimes repaired, and where his preparations had been made on a still more extensive and formidable scale than at Sudley. This was Holt Castle, in Denbighshire. Built on the banks of the Dee, which offered facilities for the introduction of arms and stores, this second fortress was of great size and strength, pentangular in shape, with a bastion tower on each angle. On all sides, except that of the river, which formed a natural defence, it was surrounded by a broad, deep moat, and was approached by a drawbridge, protected by a strong square tower, provided with portcullises, and flanked with machiolated parapets. The possession of such a stronghold as this was of the last importance to Lord Seymour. He kept it in a constant state of defence, garrisoned it with a large number of men, victualled it with wheat, malt, and provisions as if for a long siege, planted ordnance on its walls, and converted it into a complete depository for warlike stores. He was in constant communication with the deputy-governor of the fortress, on whose fidelity he could rely, but he now and then paid it a visit, when least expected, to satisfy himself that all was going on according to his orders. As no events however connected with this history occurred at Holt Castle, it will not be necessary to describe it further, and we will therefore return to the proud and beautiful castle of Sudley, where a tragical circumstance took place.

Neglected, as we have seen, by her careless and ambitious husband, Queen Catherine Parr passed a life of great seclusion, and Sudley Castle offering her a retreat even more to her taste than the manor-house at Chelsea, she withdrew thither altogether. Removed from the great world in which she had once occupied so exalted a position, she gave herself up entirely to quiet pursuits, to reading, and to the exercises of devotion; and if she was not perfectly happy, at least she was tranquil. It must not how-

ever be imagined that she led a solitary life. Parsimony formed no part of the Admiral's failings. Though paying his consort little personal attention, he abridged none of her rights, but treated her in every respect like a queen, kept up a household on a perfectly regal scale, had a number of gentlemen to attend upon her, with pages, ushers, marshals, grooms, and other servitors. She had also her chaplain. Her chief companions were the Lady Jane Grey, for whom she entertained an almost maternal attachment, and Lady Tyrwhyt. The latter had been her attendant during the lifetime of her former husband, King Henry, and had remained with her ever since. Hers was the only bosom into which she could pour her secret sorrows.

Early in the summer of 1548, Queen Catherine proceeded to Sudley Castle, and she remained there until the end of August. Daily expecting to become a mother, her removal, under such circumstances, was out of the question. But she did not even desire to remove. She loved the lordly castle, the woods that sheltered it, the beautiful hills encompassing it, and delighted to wander at morn and eventide by the banks of the Isborne. The Lady Jane Grey had recently left her, having been summoned to Bradgate, but Lady Tyrwhyt was in constant attendance. Catherine, whose love for her husband could be changed by no neglect, persuaded herself that anxiety as to her well-doing would bring the Admiral to Sudley. But in this natural expectation she was doomed to disappointment. He came not. Messengers were despatched to him, but in vain. He did not even write, but sent Ugo Harrington to make his excuses. The queen had fretted so much, and had wrought herself into such a state of anxiety, that her attendants were almost apprehensive of the consequences. They did their best to calm her, but their efforts produced but little effect.

"What message bring'st thou from my lord?" she demanded, as Ugo presented himself before her. "Will he not come?"

"His Highness charged me to commend him most tenderly to your Majesty," replied Ugo. "Had he been his own master, he would have flown to you on the wings of swiftness, but he is compelled to be in attendance upon his Majesty at Windsor."

"That is a mere idle excuse," rejoined Catherine, angrily. "The king would never detain him against his will. There must be some special attraction at Windsor at present. Ha! thou smil'st."

"Nay, your Highness, I meant nothing if I did."

"Is the Princess Elizabeth at Windsor? No equivocation, fellow. Answer me truly."

"I would rather not answer the question," he rejoined.

"She is, then!" exclaimed the queen, passionately. "This, then, is the reason why he will not come to me. Oh, Tyrwhyt!" she added, with an hysterical burst of affliction very painful to witness, "I am indeed most miserable."

"A pest on thy tongue, thou false knave!" exclaimed Lady Tyrwhyt to the esquire. "Seest thou not what mischief thou hast done?"

"'Twas wholly unintentional on my part," said Ugo, with an appearance of great concern. "I knew not that her Highness disliked the Princess Elizabeth."

"Hold thy peace, fellow!" exclaimed the queen. "Mention not that detested name again."

Upon which, her agitation became yet more violent. She uttered wild shrieks; and in this alarming state was borne to her chamber.

"If any calamity happens, as I fear it will," observed one of the attendants to Ugo, "thou wilt be to blame for it."

"I deplore my inadvertence," replied Ugo. "But how was I to know that her Majesty was so jealous?"

The queen's condition was very serious, and for some hours she was in great danger. Her physician, Doctor Hewke, was never absent from her for a moment. That night she was prematurely delivered of a daughter. Her anxiety to see her husband increased, and the impossibility of gratifying her desires, or even soothing her, brought on fever, and rendered her condition very precarious. Her women, who were devoted to her, were in despair, and Lady Tyrwhyt was almost distracted.

Next day, Ugo was summoned to the chamber of the suffering queen. The cloth of gold curtains were drawn so closely round the bed that the esquire could see nothing of its occupant, but he heard her moans and feeble accents.

"Is he come?" she inquired.

“Ay, your Majesty,” replied Lady Tyrwhyt.

“It is well,” replied the queen. “Leave us alone for a moment.”

Upon this, Lady Tyrwhyt, with Doctor Hewke and the rest of the attendants, withdrew.

“Ugo,” said the queen, “thou must go instantly to my Lord and husband, and bid him come to me without delay, if he would see me again alive. Take the best horse within the stable, and ride for thy life.”

“I will do it, madam,” replied the esquire.

“Fail not to bring my Lord to me,” she continued, in an agonized voice. “Thou dost not doubt his coming?”

“I am sure he will come,” replied Ugo.

“Blessings on thee for thy comfortable words,” she exclaimed. “Tell him I have brought him a beautiful daughter. She hath his features, Ugo. If he cares not to behold me, he may wish to see her.”

“I pray your Majesty not to excite yourself,” said Ugo. “I will not fail in my commission.”

“There should be a ring with a great ruby in it on that table,” said the queen. “Dost perceive it?”

“I do,” he replied.

“Take it,” pursued Catherine, “and let it quicken thy zeal for me.”

“I need not such a gift to quicken it; nevertheless, I am greatly beholden to your Majesty.”

On a small table near the couch stood a silver flagon, evidently containing a potion intended for the queen. On this cup Ugo had for some time fixed his gaze. As he advanced to take the ring bestowed upon him by Catherine, he hastily drew from his doublet a small phial, and poured a few drops from it into the beverage.

“She is scarcely likely to live,” he thought; “but this will make all secure.”

“Begone, and summon my women,” cried the queen. “Why dost thou linger? Each moment is precious.”

As Ugo stepped towards the door, Lady Tyrwhyt and the others entered.

“Give me to drink,” said Catherine, in a faint voice.

Drawing aside the curtains, Lady Tyrwhyt took the goblet and held it to her lips. Ugo could not help looking

back, and saw that the poor queen drank with feverish avidity.

“She little recks that *acqua tuffania* is mingled with her potion,” he muttered. “There will soon be no obstacle to my Lord’s marriage with the Princess Elizabeth.”

III.

HOW THE LORD ADMIRAL BECAME A WIDOWER.

UGO HARRINGTON lost no time on the road, but, on reaching London, found that his lord had suddenly departed for Holt Castle, and at once followed him thither. Owing to these delays, though the utmost expedition was used consistent with the mode of travelling at the time, more than a week elapsed before the Admiral arrived at Sudley Castle, and when he did so, the queen was in a very alarming state. Doctor Hewke was wholly unable to account for some of the symptoms she exhibited, and was perplexed to find that his remedies were ineffectual. She appeared to be gradually sinking. No sooner however was her husband’s arrival announced, than new life seemed imparted to her, and she sent her physician to entreat him to come to her instantly.

As the Admiral entered her chamber, she arose from the chair in which she was seated, and, with a cry of delight, which went to the hearts of all those who heard it, threw herself into his arms.

Though love had long since been extinct in Seymour’s breast, it was impossible he could be unmoved by this display of affection, and as he gazed on his consort’s altered lineaments his heart smote him. Catherine indeed was woefully changed, and looked the mere shadow of her former self. But there was now a flush in her pale cheek, and an almost unearthly brightness in her eye, that lent a strange beauty to her countenance. She tried to speak, but words failed her, and she sank, sobbing, on her husband’s shoulder.

"Calm yourself, sweetheart, I implore you," said Seymour. "This agitation will do you harm."

"Oh! I am so glad you are come!" she cried. "I feared I should never behold you again. I will not reproach you, but you have been long—long—in coming. I have counted the hours since Ugo left. Methinks if you had used despatch you might have been here four days ago."

"And so I should, sweetheart, had I not unluckily started for Holt before Ugo's arrival in London. Believe me, I have hurried to you on the wings of love and fear."

"Heaven be thanked you are not too late!" exclaimed Catherine, in a voice that thrilled through her husband's frame. "But you must see our babe, Seymour. 'Tis a pretty flower!"

"Does your Majesty desire me to bring the little cherub here?" asked Lady Tyrwhyt.

"Ay, do," rejoined Catherine. "My Lord must see it."

On this, Lady Tyrwhyt left the room, and shortly afterwards returned accompanied by a nurse bearing a large velvet pillow in her arms, on which the infant was laid, very richly attired. As the Admiral bent down to gaze upon its tiny features, it opened its eyes and seemed to smile upon him.

"Bless its dear heart!" exclaimed the nurse. "It seems to know your Highness."

"'Tis a very pretty infant!" said the Admiral. "But I would rather have had a boy."

"I am sure your Highness has no cause to complain," said the nurse, sharply. "A sweeter babe was never seen."

"How shall we name her, Kate?" said the Admiral. "After yourself?"

"No, not after me," she rejoined. "Nor yet after the Princess Elizabeth," she was about to add. But she checked herself, and a blush overspread her pale features, and betrayed her secret. "Let her be called Mary. 'Tis a name I love. You will be a fond father to her, Seymour, when I am gone."

"I trust you will live to see her come to years of womanhood; ay, and well married."

"May she be happily married!" exclaimed Catherine,

with a sigh. "Better she should die single than wed to grandeur and misery!"

She then gazed wistfully at the child for some moments, and exclaimed,

"Heaven bless thee, my babe! May thy lot be happier than thy mother's. Take her hence, good nurse. And leave me, all of you," she added to the others, "I desire to speak with my husband."

Her women having placed her in her chair, and arranged all matters for her convenience, quitted the room. For some little time after they were alone there was a profound silence, which neither seemed inclined to break. At last, the queen said,

"I shall not live long, Seymour. This will not be very afflicting news to you, for I am certain you are anxious to get rid of me."

"Nay, sweetheart, you wrong me! On my soul you do," cried the Admiral. "I have no such wish."

"I am not to be deceived," said Catherine, looking at him fixedly; "you want to get rid of me that you may wed Elizabeth. Do not seek to deny it. I know it is so. But mark me, Seymour! mark what I say to you! That unhallowed marriage will never be!" And with a solemnity which awed and almost appalled him, she added, "In her dead father's name I forbid it—in my own name I forbid it! If you proceed further in this matter you will incur Heaven's vengeance. Delude not yourself by the supposition that by crime you can accomplish your purpose."

"By crime!" exclaimed the Admiral. "What mean you by that dark suggestion, Catherine? Surely you do not suspect that I would harm you?"

"I have not been fairly dealt with," she replied.

"Say by whom! Give words to your suspicions at once," cried the Admiral. "What has been done to you?"

"Poison has been administered to me," rejoined Catherine. "Heaven pardon you if it was done by your order."

"Poison!" exclaimed Seymour, horror-stricken. "Is it possible you can suspect me of so foul a deed? So far from desiring your death, I would lay down my life for you. But it is a delusion by which you are possessed. You are labouring under a severe and torturing illness, and attribute your sufferings to wrong causes."

"It is no delusion, Seymour," she replied. "I am certain that poison has been given me."

"But by whom?—whom do you suspect?"

"My suspicions attach to your confidential servant, Ugo. 'Twas by his hand, I am sure, and no other, that the subtle poison was administered."

"But, even supposing him capable of such a crime, how could he find the means of accomplishing it unobserved? No, no, Catherine! You wrong him—indeed you do!"

"Heaven forgive me, if I do wrong him!—and Heaven forgive him, if he be guilty as I think him! But he had the opportunity of perpetrating the crime. Before starting on his journey to you he was alone with me for a few minutes in this chamber. The cup containing my potion was within his reach; and I am certain—as certain as if I had seen him do it—that he mingled poison with the drink, for I had not long swallowed it when I became a prey to dreadful tortures."

"But did you not mention your suspicions to Hewke?"

"No," she replied. "I bore my sufferings in silence, because I felt that if I accused Ugo, the charge would fall on your head. What motive could Ugo have for my destruction? Why should he desire my death? He is merely your instrument."

"Oh! Catherine, I implore you not to think me capable of injuring you! But I still believe you are in error. You will speedily get well again, and then you will acquit Ugo and myself of the terrible crime you impute to us."

"If I *do* get well, I will acquit you, my Lord, and humbly implore your pardon. But there is no hope for me. I am sinking fast. Ere many hours you will have no wife to trouble you."

"I trust your fears will not be realised, Catherine, but that you may live for many years to bless me."

"Such words, earlier uttered, might have effected my cure. But they are too late now. Let me speak to you while strength is left me, and may Heaven give you grace to profit by my counsel. That I owe my death to your expressed wishes is, I fear, too true."

"Oh! Catherine, I beseech you to dismiss these cruel and unjust suspicions!"

"I cannot dismiss them. They have grown to convic-

tion. Listen to me, Seymour. You know how deeply I have loved you, and what sacrifices I have made for you. You know that I have ever been a faithful and obedient wife."

"You have!—you have!" he exclaimed.

"I will not reproach you. I will not recall your harsh usage—your neglect—almost abandonment. I refer to your treatment of me only to say that I forgive you. But my latest words to you must be words of warning. I know you are conspiring against the state—that you meditate some desperate attempt against the government—and that by plunging the kingdom into civil war you hope to overthrow and supplant your brother. Be warned by me, Seymour. If you persist in these criminal designs, you will come to a terrible and bloody ending. Be warned, I say, and abandon them while there is yet time. Devote yourself to Heaven, and strive by penitence and prayer to expiate your many and deep offences! Obey no longer the impulses of pride and ambition, which will lead you to certain destruction, but give yourself up to holy meditation. Will you do this?"

"I can make no such promise, Catherine. If I did, I might not keep it."

"Alas! alas! then you are lost. Yet let me try to move you."

"You will try in vain," he rejoined. "My purpose is fixed."

"And what do you hope to gain, Seymour?"

"The second place in the kingdom. Perchance the first."

"You deceive yourself," she rejoined, with a solemn and almost prophetic look. "Your efforts will only conduct you to the scaffold. Bethink you of my warning when you are brought thither."

"I am not to be deterred from my course by idle fancies," he rejoined. "I know the risk I run, and am not appalled by it. I learned to consider life uncertain in the days of your former husband, Catherine. What fate may have in store for me I cannot tell. It may be increase of power—or it may be the headsman's axe. But my resolution is taken. I go on."

"Heaven pardon you! and soften your heart!" mur-

mured Catherine. "But do not refuse my dying request, Seymour. 'Tis the last I shall ever make to you."

"What is it?" he rejoined.

"Abandon all thoughts of Elizabeth. Seek not her hand. Promise me this!—oh! promise it to me."

But Seymour was silent, and averted his head.

"Will you not promise it?" she cried, imploringly.

"I cannot," he replied.

The poor queen fell backwards, and for some moments remained silent.

"Have you any further injunctions for me, Catherine?" inquired Seymour.

"Only this," she replied. "Be kind to the little innocent I have so lately brought into the world. I do not think it will live long to trouble you."

"While I am spared to watch over it, it shall never want a father's love. But you indulge in sad forebodings, Catherine, none of which, I trust, will be realised. Have a better heart in regard to yourself. You are not so dangerously ill as you suppose."

"All is well-nigh over with me, Seymour," she groaned. "Give me your hand. Mine has been a wretched life, and I am not sorry it draws to a close. Vainly have I looked for happiness in the married state—in each instance I have been disappointed, but in none so deeply and so wofully as in the last. The disappointment has been all the more bitter because I expected so much. Who would believe that one so richly graced in mind and body as you, Seymour, could be so faithless, so cruel? Even Henry's tyranny has been less terrible than yours."

"What have I done, Catherine?" cried Seymour, distractedly. "What have I done?"

"You have killed me," she replied, raising herself by a last effort, and fixing her eyes upon him, "if not by poison, by unkindness."

"Oh! unsay your words, Catherine," he exclaimed. "Recall that dreadful accusation."

But it was out of her power to recall it. The fierce light that burnt for a moment in her eyes became suddenly extinct—the hue of her features changed to that of death, and with a groan she sank backwards. The unhappy queen's troubles were over.

With a loud cry Seymour flung himself on his knees beside her, and, clasping her hand, cried in a lamentable voice, "Look down upon me, Catherine, and forgive me!"

His grief was real. His nature was not all evil, and the good within was for the moment touched. A prey to keenest self-reproach, if it had been in his power to recall his unhappy wife to existence, at that moment he would have done so.

So overpowered was he by anguish and remorse that he was unconscious of the entrance of the physician, accompanied by Lady Tyrwhyt, and others of the queen's women. Instantly perceiving that all was over, Doctor Hewke communicated the sad intelligence to Lady Tyrwhyt and the rest, praying them not to give loud expression to their grief. But they were too strongly attached to their royal mistress to be able thus to control themselves, and the chamber resounded with doleful cries.

At last Hewke approached the Admiral, and said, "If your Highness will be governed by me you will withdraw for a while to your own chamber, and leave the care of what was the queen to her women."

"I will obey you, good master Hewke," replied Seymour, rising.

"Her Grace, I trust, had an easy ending?" said Lady Tyrwhyt, speaking through her tears.

"A very easy ending," replied Seymour. "Heaven have mercy upon her soul!"

"As Heaven assuredly will," replied Lady Tyrwhyt. "A worthier lady never trod the earth."

"You are right," rejoined Seymour. "I discern her merits more clearly since I have lost her. I commit her to your charge."

With this he withdrew to his own chamber and shut himself within it for some time. At last Ugo ventured to present himself, and inquired whether he could do anything for him. Seymour sternly replied in the negative.

"Hath your Highness no directions to give me?" pursued Ugo.

"None whatever," replied Seymour.

"Hum! I expected to see your Highness in a different frame of mind now that you are freed from your fetters."

"Out of my sight, caitiff!" exclaimed Seymour, fiercely.

“Is this all the return I am to get for serving you?” demanded Ugo.

“Thy reward ought to be the gallows,” rejoined the Admiral. “Begone! and come near me no more.”

On this Ugo withdrew, muttering as he went away, “He will be in a different mood to-morrow.”

Whether the Admiral really felt the profound affliction he continued to display may be doubted. But, at all events, he imposed upon his attendants, who believed that he sincerely deplored the consort he had lost.

The remains of the unhappy queen were interred with much ceremony within the beautiful chapel appertaining to the castle, and many a tear was shed upon the marble slab covering her grave. The pretty babe she had left was most carefully tended; but though the little creature survived its father, it was nipped in the bud.

The Admiral remained at Sudley Castle in retirement for a month, at the expiration of which term he returned to Seymour House, accompanied by Ugo, who by this time was fully restored to favour.

IV

HOW THE ADMIRAL PROPOSED A SECRET MARRIAGE TO THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH.

EDWARD had been much grieved by the death of Queen Catherine, to whom he was sincerely attached, and immediately after his uncle's return to Seymour House he called to condole with him upon his loss. The Lord Protector likewise paid his brother a similar visit, as did all the principal nobility. Unfeigned regret indeed was felt by the whole court, as well as by the public at large, for the queen, who was greatly beloved and respected.

The whole of the Admiral's large household was put into mourning, and he himself appeared clad in habiliments of deepest woe. But whatever external symbols of grief he might assume, and however much he might profess to

regret the queen, it is quite certain that by this time his chief anxiety was to provide himself with another bride, and that his thoughts turned towards the Princess Elizabeth.

Elizabeth was then residing at Hatfield, and thither, about a month after his return to town, the Admiral rode, attended only by Ugo. His visit was not unexpected, the princess having been prepared for it by a letter. She received him very graciously, and after some little discourse, Mistress Ashley, by whom she was attended, discreetly withdrew. No sooner were they alone together, than the Admiral, flinging himself on his knees before her, and seizing her hand, exclaimed, in passionate tones,

"I am come to claim you, Elizabeth. There is now no obstacle to our union. The bar that stood between us is removed. You will be mine—mine!"

"Not clandestinely, as you propose in your letter, my Lord," she rejoined. "I will never consent to secret nuptials, such as took place between you and the queen. On that I am decided, so you will strive in vain to move me."

"Your decision amounts to a refusal," cried Seymour. "Were I to demand your hand formally in marriage, neither the Lord Protector, nor the council, nor even the king, your brother, would consent. Such an attempt would be madness, and would effectually frustrate our object. You have often told me you hoped the time would come when we might be free to wed each other. The happy moment has arrived. Why postpone it? If you love me as much as ever, why should we not be secretly united, and await a favourable opportunity of avowing the marriage?"

"Because such a course would be unworthy of a daughter of Henry the Eighth," replied Elizabeth, proudly. "A secret marriage brought little happiness to the queen, your late consort, and might bring less to me; but be that as it might, I will not make the experiment. My hand must be formally demanded."

"Of whom?" said Seymour.

"Of the executors of my royal father's will."

"And what answer do you expect them to return? Such a demand on my part would be treated with scorn, and I should be sharply rebuked for my presumption."

"Do you not perceive, my Lord, that you are arguing

against yourself? If your demand is sure to be treated with scorn, by the council and the Lord Protector, ought I not to adopt a like tone? Ought I not to treat your offer as presumptuous?"

"Princess!" exclaimed Seymour.

"Ought I not to say, 'You forget yourself, my Lord. You are no fitting husband for Elizabeth Tudor, daughter of Henry the Eighth, of glorious memory, and second inheritor of the crown?' This is what I ought to say—and what I *shall* say, if you continue to urge your insulting proposition—for such I must regard it—of a clandestine marriage."

"Then there is nothing left for me but to withdraw altogether," said Seymour, rising. "That I have been presumptuous I own—but it is your encouragement that has made me so. You told me you loved me—and promised—solemnly promised—to be mine."

"And so I will be yours, my Lord, when you dare claim my hand in the face of the world—not otherwise," rejoined Elizabeth.

"What would you have me do?" cried Seymour. "Show me the way to win you. I will shrink from nothing—I will dare anything so that my guerdon may be your hand. But it is idle to make a demand which will only be met by a refusal."

"Place yourself in such a position, my Lord, that your demand must be acceded to," rejoined Elizabeth. "You once told me your ambition soared to such a height that you would be second to no one in the realm, except the king. That point attained, the council could not withhold their consent, for they must necessarily do your bidding as they now do that of the Duke of Somerset."

"And by Heaven! I will attain it," cried the Admiral. "Nor will I renew my proposition till it can be certainly carried out in the manner you desire."

"In that case my hand shall be yours," replied Elizabeth; "and my promise will be as binding to me as if I were solemnly affianced to you. I have never loved any one but yourself, my Lord, and am not likely to change. If I wed not you, I will wed no other."

"And I will either win you for my bride or lay my head upon the block," cried Seymour. "Hear me, Elizabeth!"

I have a great and daring project in hand, which, if it succeeds—and that it *will* succeed I nothing doubt—will set me in the position you would have me occupy. It is not needful that I should be more explicit. You will understand the sort of enterprise on which I am engaged.”

“You have said enough to satisfy me it is full of peril.”

“All such enterprises must be hazardous. But I have no fear. And I have now a double incitement to go on. My preparations will be speedily completed. When they are, you will hear of events that will surprise you.”

“In this enterprise, you have no design against the king, my brother?”

“None,” rejoined Seymour. “My sole aim is against the Lord Protector. I want his post. And since he will not yield it peaceably, I mean to take it. ’Twill be a death-struggle between us.”

“And you mean to strike this blow speedily?”

“As speedily as may be. In a few weeks—perhaps in a few days. We must not meet again till the struggle is over. I would not have you compromised. Should I fall, will you sometimes bestow a thought upon me, Elizabeth?”

She made no reply, but fell upon his bosom. Straining her in his arms, he bade her a passionate farewell; then tore himself from her embrace, rushed out of the room, mounted his steed, and returned with his esquire to London.

V.

HOW THE ADMIRAL SOUGHT TO GAIN POSSESSION OF THE TOWER.

WE must pass on to the early part of January, 1549. Ever since his interview with the Princess Elizabeth, which had lighted an inextinguishable fire in his breast, the Admiral had been actively engaged in preparing his plans, and had now, as he conceived, well-nigh brought them to maturity. The daring nature of his project will be understood from a conversation which occurred about this time

between him and his confidant, Ugo, who had just returned from Bristol, where he had been to procure a large sum of money from Sir William Sharington.

“How much hast thou brought me, Ugo?” demanded the Admiral; “the whole ten thousand pounds, I hope?”

“Only a thousand pounds, I am sorry to say, my Lord,” replied the esquire. “But Sir William promises the remainder in a few days.”

“Curses on him for the delay!” cried the Admiral, with a look of disappointment. “I want all the money I can get together. I am drained at every pore, and unless I continue to pay them, my adherents will drop off. My coffers are well-nigh exhausted, and how to replenish them I cannot tell. That wreck on the Cornish coast only produced a few hundred pounds, and the Spanish galleon, which Hornbeak and Blades ought to have secured, has slipped out of their hands. I lack treasure, Ugo, and must have it.”

“Your Highness must be content to wait till Sharington is able to supply you, or till some prizes fall into your hands. We have been rather unlucky of late; but doubtless fortune will change.”

“I cannot afford to wait. Ten thousand men are ready to rise when I give them the signal—but I want wherewithal to pay and maintain them.”

“You have enough for present purposes, methinks, my Lord,” rejoined Ugo; “and your men will pay and maintain themselves, if you will let them.”

“I would not have them plunder,” said the Admiral. “Yet I see not how it can be avoided. I have an important post for thee, Ugo, and I know thou wilt discharge it well.”

“What is it, my Lord?”

“No less than the command of Holt Castle. Thou must hold it in my name when the rising takes place. The fortress has five hundred men, and is well provided with stores and ammunition.”

“I am aware of that, my Lord, and feel the importance of the trust you confide in me.”

“I have partisans in Cheshire, Lancashire, and Yorkshire, who will rouse the disaffected in those counties,” pursued the Admiral. “My adherents are also numerous

and strong in Norfolk and Suffolk; and in Gloucestershire and Wiltshire, as thou knowest, there are hundreds who will flock round my standard when it is raised. The insurrection will be general and simultaneous."

"But how is the signal for it to be given, my Lord?" inquired Ugo.

"Thou shalt hear. My first object is to secure the person of my royal nephew—as from him all decrees must emanate—and having the king with me, I can defy opposition. At one time I thought of carrying him off to Holt, but there are many, and almost insuperable, difficulties in that design, which compelled me to abandon it, and I have since conceived a bolder plan. I mean to obtain possession of the Tower, Ugo, and to keep the king within it till all shall be accomplished."

"A bold plan indeed!" exclaimed Ugo. "But how does your Highness hope to obtain possession of the Tower?"

"Through the instrumentality of Sir John Gage," replied the Admiral.

"What, has Sir John Gage joined your Highness?" cried Ugo.

"He will do," replied the Admiral, smiling significantly. "We will suppose the Tower gained—no matter how, or by whom," he said, "and the king secured within it. My first business will be to issue a proclamation to the effect that, it having been discovered that the document purporting to be the will of his late Majesty is false and fraudulent, the council appointed by that instrument is dissolved, and the Lord Protector deposed from his office. Furthermore, that the Lord Protector being charged with high treason and other heinous crimes and misdemeanours, shall, with his abettors, be brought to speedy trial. This proclamation will be the signal for the rising."

"Should it be made, it will doubtless produce the effect anticipated by your Highness—but how will you prove the charge you intend to make against the Lord Protector?—how will you show that the king's will was fraudulently prepared?"

"By producing the confession of Doctor Butts, who aided in the scheme," said Seymour. "Thou mayst remember that I intrusted a packet to thee some while ago, Ugo,

charging thee to deliver it to the queen in case of need. That packet contained the confession."

"Indeed!" he exclaimed. "Would I had known it!" he added, to himself.

"Butts's confession did me some service then," continued the Admiral, with a laugh. "But it shall do me more ere long. What will the people say, think you, when they learn that the Lord Protector has risen to greatness by means like this? Will they support him? No! his cause will instantly be abandoned; his followers will shrink from him, and deliver him up to justice."

"It may be so," rejoined Ugo, thoughtfully

"May be!—I tell thee it *will!*" cried the Admiral. "Let Somerset look well to his seat, if he would keep it, for many hands will ere long be eager to pluck him from it."

"Your plan promises well, I must needs own, my Lord," said Ugo. "But you have not—as far as I understand—yet gained over the Constable of the Tower."

"But I shall do so," rejoined the Admiral. "I will forthwith set about the task. Sir John is now at the Tower. I will go thither at once, and thou shalt accompany me."

"I pray your Highness to excuse me. I have some slight matters of mine own to see to."

"Well, as thou wilt. But get thy business done, as on my return I may need thee."

Ugo bowed, and assisted his lord to put on his cloak, after which the Admiral, attended by a dozen stalwart retainers armed to the teeth, without whom he now never stirred abroad, proceeded to Whitehall stairs, where his barge was waiting for him, and entering it, ordered the men to row to the Tower.

On arriving at the fortress, he found that Sir John was at the Lieutenant's lodgings. Proceeding thither, and stating that he desired to speak with the Constable in private, he was shown into a large chamber, wainscoted with black oak, where state delinquents were usually examined, and where Sir John shortly afterwards joined him.

After a little preliminary discourse, the Admiral opened his business.

"It is a matter of the utmost importance on which I

have come to you, Sir John," he said, "and concerns the welfare of the king and the security of the realm. You may remember that you and I were excluded from the late king's presence when the will was signed, or rather stamped?"

"I remember the circumstance well enough," rejoined the Constable. "What of it?"

"At that time Henry was insensible," pursued Seymour, "and the document was stamped without his orders—nay, contrary to his previously expressed wishes."

"How know you this, my Lord?"

"From one who had a share in the transaction, but who has since gone to his account—Doctor Butts. He wrote down his confession, and delivered it to me. That the truth of the statement could not be denied by Somerset will be apparent when I tell you that it enabled me to make terms with him when he threatened to send me here as a prisoner. If Henry's will falls to the ground, all that has been based upon it falls likewise. All the arrangements made by the Protector burst like a bubble. His acts are illegal, and the council is at an end. In fact, there are no council and no Protector."

"Then let the matter be," cried the Constable. "Things have gone too far to be set right now."

"You are mistaken, good Sir John. It is my intention to set them right, and I want your assistance in the task."

"Let me hear what you propose to do," said the Constable.

"I mean to strike a blow which shall annihilate Somerset's usurped authority. But while this is done, regard must be had to the king's safety. We must have him in the Tower, Sir John, under your charge."

"And when you have got him here, what step will next be taken?"

"A proclamation will be issued in his Majesty's name, disclosing Somerset's false practices in regard to the will, and charging him and his abettors with high treason—annulling all their acts, depriving them of their posts, and appointing others in their stead."

"Chief amongst whom will doubtless be your Highness?"

"Certes, Sir John. Who else could be Lord Protect-

or? But you shall not be forgotten. You shall be Grand Master, or Lord Great Chamberlain, with a peerage."

"As the price of my desertion of your brother and his friends? Umph!" exclaimed the Constable.

"To adhere to them would be treason to the king," said Seymour.

"Nay, I can scarce view it in that light," rejoined the Constable. "But you do not think that such a change as you propose will be accomplished without a struggle—that the Duke of Somerset will surrender his post without an effort to maintain it? Most like the army will stand by him, and he has a large band of foreign mercenaries on whom he can certainly count."

"There you are wrong, Sir John. The foreign mercenaries can be bought. As to the army, we must take our chance. I have plenty of partisans who will rise when I give them the signal."

"Why, this is downright rebellion!" cried the Constable. "We shall have a civil war."

"Rebellion against whom—against an arch-traitor, who has too long usurped the chief place in the state. 'Tis in the king's behalf that we shall fight, and not against him. We shall free him from those who have assumed a control over him for which they have no title. We shall unmask treason, and punish it."

"Still, I am not satisfied," rejoined the Constable. "I like not the plan you propose."

"But if I bring the king hither—will you deliver the fortress to him? Will you close the gates—and put the place in a state of defence?"

"Were his Majesty himself to command me to do this, I must needs obey. But I do not think he will."

"You do not know the king as well as I know him, Sir John. I will bring him here ere many days are over our heads. Be prepared to act as he shall direct."

"I make no promises," rejoined the Constable; "and if my advice were likely to be listened to, I would recommend your Lordship to proceed no further with your design."

"You will breathe no word of what has passed between us, Sir John?" said Seymour.

“Fear no betrayal on my part,” rejoined Gage. “I will say nothing till I have seen the king.”

Seeing that nothing more was to be done with the Constable, Seymour soon afterwards took his departure, and, re-entering his barge, was rowed back to Whitehall.

VI.

IN WHICH UGO HARRINGTON APPEARS IN HIS TRUE COLOURS.

WHILE the Admiral was engaged at the Tower in the manner just related, Ugo Harrington repaired to Whitehall, with the design of seeking an immediate interview with the Earl of Warwick. In this object he was successful. At the moment when the esquire sought him, Warwick, to whom, as lord great chamberlain, a suite of apartments was assigned in the palace, was alone and in his private cabinet. Some understanding seemed to subsist between Ugo and the henchmen, since they did not detain him a moment in the waiting-chamber, but ushered him at once into the earl's presence.

Warwick, who was seated at a table, writing, received his visitor very formally, but the moment they were alone together his manner changed to one of great familiarity.

“I see by the expression of your countenance that you bring me important intelligence,” he remarked.

“I do, my Lord,” replied Ugo. “My Lord is gone to the Tower to endeavour to prevail upon the Constable to deliver the fortress up to him.”

“Ha!” exclaimed Warwick. “Does he aim at that? But he will fail. Sir John Gage is as true as steel, and will never betray his trust. But how stand matters now? Is the time come for the explosion?”

“It will not be long delayed, my Lord,” rejoined Ugo.

“So much the better,” cried Warwick, rubbing his hands gleefully. “The Admiral has been so long about it that I have got quite tired with waiting.”

“With all deference to your Lordship, I think you are wrong in your calculations,” said Ugo. “You intend to let this rising take place?”

“I do,” replied Warwick. “I would have the Admiral commit himself irretrievably, so that his fall may be certain.”

“’Tis on that point I differ with your Lordship. Have you never considered that he may succeed? His plans are well organised.”

“May be so,” rejoined Warwick. “But the insurrection will be instantly crushed.”

“I do not think so,” said Ugo, “and I will give you the grounds of my opinion. The Lord Protector, as you know, has lost all the popularity he acquired by the Scottish war. That is one point in my Lord’s favour. In the struggle which is likely to arise between the brothers, the king is certain to side with his younger uncle. This alone will give him an immense advantage. But, as I have just said, my Lord’s plans are so well taken that he is likely to come off victorious. He himself is confident of success. He has an army of ten thousand men, ready to rise at his signal, and friends who will treble that number. The leaders of the German lansquenets are corrupted, and will bring over their men. Moreover, my Lord has two strong castles, Holt and Sudley, the former strongly garrisoned and well stored, and he has the Scilly Islands to retire to in case of need. With all these advantages, if he is able to secure the person of the king, I cannot doubt his success.”

“Ay, *if* he could secure the king, I grant you he might succeed,” rejoined Warwick; “but that he never will do.”

“Your Lordship underrates his power. You will find him a far more formidable foe than you imagine. If he should gain the day, he will not be merely content with supplanting the Protector, but will overthrow the whole government. What if he should be able to set aside the late king’s will, on the ground that it was stamped while his Majesty was dying and incapable of speech? Will not all subsequent acts become illegal, all appointments void?”

“Undoubtedly. But he cannot prove this.”

“He has Doctor Butts’s confession of the whole affair, the production of which will condemn the Lord Protector

to the block, and will drag all his partisans—your Lordship amongst the number—down with him.”

“Confusion!” exclaimed Warwick, rising from his chair, and hurriedly pacing the room. “You are right, Ugo. The outbreak must never take place. My intention was to let the mine explode, certain that the explosion would destroy him, and perchance the Protector likewise; but I now see it would be dangerous to myself.”

“I felt sure your Lordship would come round to my views. That confession is a terrible weapon, and has already been used with great effect. Your Lordship will easily understand on what occasion.”

“Ah, I see!” exclaimed Warwick. “Bring that document to me if you can, Ugo; bring it, and name your own fee. Immediate steps must be taken with the Admiral. I will consult with my colleagues forthwith. He must be arrested, and his papers seized.”

“But the document in question may fall into wrong hands,” said Ugo. “Your Lordship must proceed with the utmost caution. My Lord is vigilant and alert, and will not be easily taken. He never moves without a guard, and has more than three hundred armed retainers at Seymour House, who will defend him to the last. If he escapes, and flies to Sudley or Holt, the insurrection will break out, and the whole country will be in a flame. A civil war will be the result. His arrest should be made when he is wholly unprepared.”

“It shall be so,” rejoined Warwick. “Yet, if he be arrested now, what proof shall we be able to bring of his guilt? Will you bear evidence against him?”

“If I am interrogated by the council I must needs answer,” replied Ugo. “But the best course to pursue will be to arrest Sir William Sharrington, master of the mint at Bristol, and question him as to his dealings with my Lord. If he proves obstinate, the rack will make him speak, and you will then have good grounds for arresting the Admiral. Sharrington has clipped gold and silver, coined base money, and committed other frauds at my Lord’s instance and for his benefit.”

“You are right, Ugo. We will begin with Sharrington. Officers shall be despatched forthwith to Bristol to arrest him, after which he shall be clapped in the Tower.”

“Be careful not to alarm the Admiral, my Lord, or your plan will be defeated. I must now take my leave, or I myself may incur suspicion. Rely on my watchfulness. If I can purloin Butts’s confession, your Lordship shall have it.”

So saying, Ugo withdrew.

VII.

HOW SIR WILLIAM SHARINGTON WAS EXAMINED BY THE COUNCIL AND PUT TO THE TORTURE.

FEELING that no time ought to be lost, Warwick sought out the Lords Russell and Arndel, Sir William Paget, and some other members of the council on whom he could rely, and without further explanation at the moment than that he had discovered that Sir William Sharrington had been guilty of treasonable frauds, which were likely to implicate a personage of importance, he at once obtained their sanction to his arrest.

The warrant was signed, and given by Warwick himself to the officers, with special instructions, and such despatch was used that ere the following morning Sharrington was brought up to London and lodged in the Tower.

On the same day, Warwick and the council repaired to the fortress, and assembling together at the Lieutenant’s lodgings, had the prisoner brought before them. He resolutely denied the charges brought against him, and could not be got to make any admission tending to criminate the Admiral.

Determined however not to be foiled, Warwick, who, as we have said, conducted the examination, menaced him with the rack, but as even this threat proved ineffectual, he ordered him to be taken to the torture-chamber, and the question ordinary and extraordinary to be applied.

On this Sharrington was removed by the officers.

The council remained where they were, awaiting the re-

sult of the application ; but more than an hour elapsed before the gaoler reappeared.

“ Well, have you subdued his obstinacy, good Master Tombs ? ” cried Warwick. “ Will he speak now ? ”

“ Ay, my Lord, we have made him alter his tone,” replied Tombs. “ But it required some shrewd turns of the rack to shake him. Your Lordships must needs go to him if you would interrogate him, for his joints have been so stretched by the engine that he cannot move.”

Upon this, the council adjourned to the torture-chamber ; a large vault, constructed of stone, and situated midway between the Beauchamp Tower and the Devilin Tower. It was approached by a subterranean passage communicating with the Lieutenant’s lodgings.

This damp and dismal chamber, the aspect of which was calculated to inspire horror, was dimly lighted by an iron lamp, suspended by a chain from the keystone of the groined roof. Dull as it was however the light sufficed to reveal many frightful objects. At one side stood the hideous apparatus on which the prisoner had been stretched—a wooden frame, containing a leathern couch, and furnished with a wheel, cords, and roller. The walls were garnished with thumb-screws, pincers, knives of strange shape, saws, and other horrible-looking implements.

On a wooden stool, adjoining the rack, was placed the unfortunate prisoner. The whole of his habiliments had been removed when the torture was applied, and they could not now be restored, but a cloak was thrown over his limbs. His ghastly—almost death-like—looks showed the severe suffering he had endured. His joints had, in fact, been wrenched from their sockets and his sinews almost cracked by the terrible application. He was supported by the chirurgeon, who was bathing his temples with cold water, and near him stood the tormentor—an uncouth, powerfully-built varlet, with savage features and a great fell of red hair. There was another person who with the gaoler had been present during the proceeding. This was Mauger the headsmen.

As the council entered the vault Sharrington made a vain attempt to lift his head. The effort was so painful that a groan burst from him. None of the council how-

ever seemed moved by the unfortunate man's appearance, but regarded him with stern and inflexible looks.

"Are you now disposed to answer our questions without equivocation or reserve?" demanded Warwick.

"I am," replied Sharington, with a groan.

"You confess, then, that you have defrauded the king's Majesty of many thousand pounds by clipping and otherwise tampering with the gold and silver intrusted to your charge, and by coining base money?"

"I own it," rejoined Sharington, faintly.

"By whom have you been instigated to these great and treasonable frauds?" pursued Warwick.

"By his Highness the Lord High Admiral, to whom the greater part of the money was given," answered Sharington.

"This is your solemn declaration?" demanded Warwick.

"I swear it to be the truth," replied the prisoner.

"Let his confession be taken down," said Warwick to a secretary, who was in attendance with writing materials, and who sat down on the edge of the rack to fulfil the earl's behest.

When drawn up the confession was presented to the prisoner, who with the greatest difficulty signed it. This done, the council quitted the vault.

"Sharington's accomplice must be next arrested," observed Warwick with a grim smile to Lord Russell, as they tracked the subterranean passage.

VIII.

THE COUNTERPLOT.

HITHERTO, Warwick had abstained from disclosing to the Lord Protector the discoveries he had made relative to his brother's treasonable practices, as he feared the irresolution manifested by Somerset on a former occasion might be again displayed; but now, being armed with proofs po-

sitive of the Admiral's guilt, he resolved to lay the whole matter before him.

Accordingly, a special meeting of the council was appointed for that night, intimation of which being given to the Duke of Somerset, he of course attended, when full particulars of this gigantic conspiracy were laid before him.

Confounded and amazed by the details, Somerset almost refused to credit them; but when Sharrington's confession was read he could no longer doubt. Warwick's statements also were corroborated by Ugo Harrington, who was brought forward, and who revealed all he knew concerning his lord's proceedings.

A long deliberation followed. By the Earl of Southampton (who, having regained Somerset's favour, had again joined the council) and Lord Clinton, it was proposed that Seymour should be at once arrested, and brought before them for examination; but against this it was urged, chiefly on the representation of Ugo Harrington, that the most determined resistance would be offered by the Admiral—and that probably he might escape. If he did so, and succeeded in reaching either of his castles, an insurrection, which it might be difficult, if not impossible, to crush, was sure to arise, and civil war ensue.

"If your Highness will be guided by me," said Ugo, addressing the Protector, "I will show you how you may take him without difficulty, and effectually prevent any popular disturbance."

"Let us hear thy plan?" rejoined Somerset.

"Under pretence of showing his Majesty some new pieces of ordnance, my Lord hath obtained the king's promise to accompany him to the Tower to-morrow. Once there, he will use all his efforts to induce his Majesty to change his present government, and he hopes to succeed by representing to him that his royal father's will was fraudulently stamped—"

"Ha!" exclaimed Somerset.

"Such is the assertion he will make," pursued Ugo; "and he proposes to support it by some confession he pretends to have obtained. Be this as it may, he hopes to prevail upon the king to remain within the Tower, and to

give him the command of the fortress and the eustody of his person."

"A boldly-conceived project, on my faith!" cried Warwick; "and, if the king consented, might prove successful."

"But his Majesty never would consent—of that I am certain," said Somerset.

"But should persuasion fail," pursued Ugo, "my Lord will resort to force, and will seize upon the person of the king, and possess himself of the fortress."

"Ha! does he meditate this desperate treason?" exclaimed the Protector. "But 'tis a rash and insane design, which none but he would conceive."

"'Tis not so rash as it seems," replied Ugo. "He will go to the Tower with a large and well-armed escort—and he has many friends in the fortress who will lend him their aid. For my own part, I nothing doubt his ability to execute his design."

"What, to seize upon the king, and hold the Tower?" cried Somerset.

"Ay, your Highness, hold it long enough to change the government," rejoined Ugo. "But with proper precautions there will be no danger, and my Lord can be taken in his own toils. Here is a list of his adherents in the Tower. Let all these be removed without delay, and trusty officers substituted, and no fear need be entertained. It is not for me to point out to your Highness and to the lords of the council how the arrest should be made. You will make your own decision. But once within the Tower, my Lord ought never to go forth again—except to the scaffold on Tower-hill."

"The trap will be well baited," said Somerset, "and if caught in it, he shall not break loose. We owe thee much for thy serviceable disclosures. Thou hast made ample amends for any share thou mayst have had in this conspiracy, and mayst calculate not only upon pardon but reward."

"I care not for reward, your Highness," replied Ugo; "I shall be satisfied if I bring Lord Seymour to the scaffold."

"What hath thy lord done to incur such deadly animosity on thy part?" asked Lord Russell.

"Ask me not to publish mine own shame," cried Ugo, fiercely. "Enough that he hath inflicted an injury upon me which can only be washed out by blood. He should

have died by my hand long ago, but that I preferred that he should die on the scaffold."

"Thy desire will be gratified," said Warwick.

"After the disclosures we have heard," said Somerset, "there can be no doubt of the existence of a great and terrible conspiracy, contrived, I lament to say, by my own brother. But I shall close my heart towards him, and judge him with Roman stoicism and severity. Many arrests will have to be made to-morrow. Are there any others whom thou canst denounce?" he added to Ugo.

"There are several in the royal household who are in his pay," replied the other, "but the chief of them is Fowler, a gentleman of the privy-chamber."

"What! has Fowler played me false?" cried the Protector. "He shall be arrested."

"If your Highness will cast your eye over this list," said Ugo, delivering him a paper, "you will find the names of all such nobles as belong to my Lord's faction, and are disaffected towards yourself."

"Foremost among them I find the Marquis of Dorset," returned Somerset, glancing at the list. "He shall undergo examination, as shall all the rest. Hast thou aught more to disclose?"

"No, your Grace. I have revealed all I know."

"Thou art free then to depart," said the Protector. "I need not bid thee be cautious, since for thy own sake thou art sure to be so. To-morrow thou wilt accompany the Admiral to the Tower."

"I have already received my orders," replied Ugo.

"On thy arrival there I will find means of secretly communicating with thee," said Somerset. "None of us will appear until the right moment, and then only when least expected."

"I understand, your Grace." And with a profound obeisance to the Lord Protector and the council, he departed.

"That fellow is a double-dyed traitor," observed Warwick; "but he is serviceable. Without him this conspiracy would never have been detected."

"Strange that the Admiral should place such faith in him," observed Lord Russell, "Traitor is written in his countenance"

“Is it your Highness’s intention to disclose this plot to the king?” inquired Southampton.

“No, my Lord,” replied the Protector. “My deeply-designing brother hath obtained such a hold upon his royal nephew’s affections, that there is no telling how he might act. His Majesty must be kept in profound ignorance both of the plot and counterplot to the last. Any efforts he may then make to save his guilty uncle will be vain. To-morrow, my Lords, we must all secretly assemble at the Tower.”

On this, the council broke up, but the Protector and Warwick remained for some time longer in deep debate.

IX.

HOW THE KING WAS TAKEN TO THE TOWER BY THE ADMIRAL, AND WHAT HAPPENED THERE.

THE important day arrived which was to mar or make the Admiral’s fortunes.

Though he had no misgivings as to the result of his daring project, and entertained no suspicion that he had been betrayed, he was weighed down by that extraordinary depression which is not unfrequently the forerunner of dire calamity. His slumbers had been disturbed by ominous dreams, and quitting his uneasy couch at an early hour, he occupied himself in writing many letters, which he subsequently sent off by trusty emissaries.

Amongst those to whom he wrote was the Princess Elizabeth, and his letter to her was full of passionate love. Without entering into particulars of his project, which it might not have been safe to communicate, he told her that she might soon expect to hear important news, and that he hoped, ere long, to be in a position to claim fulfilment of her promise.

This correspondence finished and despatched, he sent for the principal officers of his household, and gave them such instructions as he deemed expedient. Other neces-

sary business occupied the early part of the morning. Before the hour had arrived when he had appointed to attend at Whitehall, his gloom and despondency had given way to ardour and impatience.

Clad in a suit of black armour inlaid with gold, having a black plume in his helmet, and mounted on a powerful steed richly caparisoned, he repaired to Whitehall at the head of an escort of some fifty or sixty well-armed and well-mounted men. A retinue so numerous would have excited astonishment and roused suspicion as to its object in any one but the Admiral, but he had been so long in the habit of moving about with an almost royal guard, that little surprise was manifested at the number of his attendants.

It was remarked however that the escort was more completely armed than usual, most of the men being provided with corslets with steel skirts and morions, and all of them being furnished with arquebuses or demi-lances. Close behind his lord rode the treacherous Ugo Harrington, secretly exulting that his hour of vengeance was well-nigh come.

The day was raw and dull, a frost of some weeks' duration having just broken up, and it seemed just possible that the king might put off his visit to the Tower on account of the unpleasant state of the weather. Any apprehensions however which the Admiral might have entertained on this score, were dispelled by the appearance of Edward himself, who, wrapped in a purple velvet mantle, embroidered with gold, and lined and bordered with ermine, met him as he entered the palace.

Mounted on his milk-white palfrey, and defended by his well-lined mantle against the cold, Edward rode by his uncle's side to the Tower. He was unattended by his own body-guard, the Admiral's large escort appearing sufficient for his protection. Little did he anticipate the strange part he would be called upon to play; little did he think that he was being led almost as a captive to the Tower, and that it was his aspiring uncle's intention forcibly to detain him there unless he complied with his wishes. On his part, the Admiral was so eager to secure his prize, that he hurried on his royal nephew almost faster than was quite consistent with etiquette. An advanced guard cleared the way for them, so that no delay occurred. But though the

Admiral rode on thus rapidly, and compelled the king to keep pace with him, he did not fail to notice certain personages stationed at the corners of particular streets in the City, with whom he exchanged signs.

Half an hour brought them to Tower-hill, and as the grim old fortress rose before them, Seymour's breast beat high. Could he have foreseen what awaited him there—could he have suspected the snare laid for him—he would never have entered those gates, but, turning hastily about, and calling to his men to follow him, would have clapped spurs into his steed, and ridden for very life. The grey walls of the fortress looked stern and menacing, but they had no terrors for him. Beside him were the tall wooden posts of the scaffold, but he would not even have noted them, had not the king called his attention to a dark figure standing beside them, remarking, with a shudder, that he thought it was the headsman.

“It is Mauger, sire,” replied the Admiral. And he added to himself, “I will find him work to do anon.”

Passing through the two outer gates, and crossing the bridge across the moat, the young monarch and his uncle were met at the By-ward Tower by Sir John Gage and the Lieutenant of the Tower.

After reverently saluting the king, the Constable looked earnestly at Seymour, and seemed very desirous of saying a word to him in private, but the Admiral gave him no opportunity of doing so, but rode after the king into the lower ward. Here however Sir John overtook him, and coming close up to him, said, in a low tone,

“Be advised by me, and go back. There is yet time—I will help you to retreat.”

“I have no intention of retreating, Sir John,” replied Seymour. “You can guess why I have brought his Majesty here.”

“You have brought him to your own destruction,” muttered the Constable. “Fly instantly, if you would save yourself.”

“You think to frighten me,” rejoined Seymour; “but I am not to be turned from my purpose.”

“The gates are closed—it is too late,” said Gage. And he moved on towards the king.

Edward rode on towards the palace, where he dismounted, and, attended by the Admiral and the Constable, entered the building.

The palace had a gloomy air, being almost unoccupied at the time, but a large fire was lighted in the great tapestried chamber, to which they proceeded, and gave it a more cheerful look. Having warmed himself for a moment at the fire, Edward turned to his uncle, who was standing at a little distance from him, and observed, "You have something to say to us, gentle uncle. Was it necessary we should come to the Tower to hear it?"

"Your Majesty will judge," rejoined the Admiral. "The real motive of my bringing you here shall now be disclosed. I would have you in a place of safety, where you can issue your decrees without coercion. At Whitehall you are under the control of the Lord Protector and his officers. Here you can do as you please. Once before I made an effort to free you from your uncle's thralldom. I was baffled then, but I shall not be baffled now, if your Majesty will but stand firm—and never had you more need of firmness than at the present juncture."

"I will summon up all my resolution when I know for what emergency it is required," said Edward, regarding him fixedly.

"Listen to me, sire, and rest satisfied that the statements I am about to make to you can be fully substantiated. Since your august father's death all acts and appointments have been made by his executors. By them a president has been appointed, invested with almost sovereign powers, under the title of Lord Protector; by them and by the Protector councils have been held, and affairs of state administered. But all their authority was derived from the royal testament."

"True. The king my father ordained that the sixteen persons whom he named as executors should form the privy council, and execute all the authority of the Crown during my minority."

"Your royal father so intended, sire, but—"

"But what?" demanded Edward. "Have not his intentions been fully carried out?"

"Listen to me, sire. The king your father had his will

carefully prepared and written out, but being of a somewhat changeful temper, he delayed the signing of it—till too late.”

“Too late!” exclaimed Edward, in amazement. “Was not the will signed?”

“It was stamped while his Majesty was incapable of speech or movement—in fact, expiring. The will is consequently void, and, being void, all acts founded upon it are likewise void. There are no executors, no privy council, no Lord Protector. Failing the will, the Crown and all authority attached to it devolves upon the king’s undoubted heir, your Majesty. You are uncontrolled by guardians or executors.”

“But is my uncle the Lord Protector aware of this fatal defect in the testament?” demanded Edward.

“Aware of it!” cried Seymour. “’Twas by his contrivance that the will was stamped. All his hopes of power and aggrandisement were based upon this document, and finding himself bereft of them by the king’s neglect, he took this desperate means of remedying the error. He was aided in the fraudulent proceeding by Doctor Butts, whose conscience, borne down by the weight of his heinous crime, could only be relieved before his death by a written confession, which confession is in my custody, and shall be laid before your Majesty.”

“This is a dreadful accusation to bring against your brother, my Lord,” observed Edward. “But you say you can substantiate it?”

“In all particulars. Butts’s confession is most ample. Sir John Gage and myself entered the royal chamber the moment after the will was stamped, and we can both testify to the king’s appearance. He must have been long insensible. Was it not so, Sir John?” he added to the Constable, who was standing at a respectful distance.

“I cannot deny it,” replied Gage.

“This is sad indeed!” observed Edward.

“’Tis a great wrong, and must be set right,” pursued the Admiral. “To that end I have brought your Majesty hither. The Lord Protector must be hurled from his place—the council dismissed. Leave the management of the business to me. Popular disturbances may occur, but by the energetic measures which I propose to adopt, they will

be speedily quelled. Your Majesty must consent to remain within the Tower till all is over. At most, 'twill only be a few days' restraint, and you will then enjoy a freedom such as you have not as yet experieneed."

"Then you would not have me go back to Whitehall?"

"Not till the work be done, sire," replied the Admiral. "Here, in the event of tumult, or of any desperate attempt on the part of the Protector or his fautors to obtain possession of your person, you will be in perfect safety. I have prepared a mandate for your signature, empowering me to act for you. This is all the authority I need."

And he produced a scroll and laid it before the king.

At this moment Sir John Gage, who had hitherto remained standing at a respectful distance, advanced and said, "It is time I should interfere. Your Majesty must not sign that mandate."

"Must not sign it, Sir John!" exclaimed the Admiral. "Do you dare to dictate to your sovereign?"

"At such a moment I dare advise him. As to you, my Lord, I am bound to tell you that you stand on the brink of a precipice, from which another step will plunge you headlong."

"You are thinking of the Lord Protector, not of me, good Sir John," rejoined the Admiral, in a contemptuous tone.

"His Highness has a firmer footing than you suppose, my Lord," replied the Constable. "But you have spoken of a confession by Doctor Butts. Can you produce it?"

"I can," replied the Admiral, searching the velvet bag depending from his girdle. "Ha! it is gone."

"That is unlucky, my Lord," observed the Constable. "The production of the confession might have set all doubts at rest."

"Have you any doubts of the truth of my statement, Sir John?" cried Seymour, fiercely.

"Such a terrible accusation ought not to be made without proof," observed the Constable.

"That is true," said the king.

"The document has been abstracted from my person," cried Seymour.

"Again I say, its loss is unlucky—most unlucky—for such a document might have helped you at your need. My

Lord, let me urge you to throw yourself upon the king's protection, and implore his grace. Without it, you are utterly lost."

"What mean you, Sir John?" cried Seymour, fiercely. "Have you betrayed me?"

"You have been betrayed—but not by me," replied the Constable. "The Lord Protector and the council are here. I warned you when you entered the Tower. But you would not listen to me."

"Fly, dear uncle!—fly, while there is yet time," cried Edward.

"Flight is impossible, sire," said the Constable. "If the Admiral leaves this room he will be arrested. Guards are placed within the ante-chamber and in the corridor, and all the outlets of the fortress are closed by the Lord Protector's command."

There was a brief and terrible pause. Notwithstanding the extreme peril in which he stood, the Admiral's courage did not desert him, and he seemed to be preparing for a desperate effort. At last the king spoke.

"Sir John Gage," he said, resolutely, "my uncle, Lord Seymour, shall not be arrested. D'ye mark what I say, Sir John? Lord Seymour must not be arrested. You must prevent it."

"Alas, sire! you ask more of me than I can perform," rejoined the Constable. "The Lord Protector is omnipotent here."

"You hear that, sire?" cried Seymour. "'Tis as I told you. The Lord Protector is everything—your Majesty nothing. I would have delivered you from this bondage, but I must now pay with my life for my devotion to you."

"You shall not fall into his power if I can prevent it, uncle," rejoined Edward. "Sir John Gage, on your allegiance, I command you to obey me. Aid the Admiral to fly."

"Beseech you, sire, to forgive me," cried the Constable, flinging himself at the king's feet. "I cannot—dare not obey you."

"Dare not! Sir John. Little did I expect such an admission from you."

"My head would pay the penalty of such violation of my duty. That I will freely give. But I cannot assist

treason and rebellion. A warrant has been issued by the council for the Admiral's arrest, and I dare not oppose it."

"Sir John," continued the king, authoritatively, "I command you to set him free."

"But, sire—"

"I will have no refusal. If the Tower gates are shut in the Lord Protector's name, cause them to be opened in mine. Let him go forth."

"It will be useless, sire. My orders will be disobeyed. The guard will refuse to open the gates."

"Not if you show them my signet," he replied, taking the ring from his finger, and giving it to the Constable.

"I will obey your Majesty," said Sir John Gage, rising; "but only on the condition that the Admiral pledges me his word, that, if I set him free, he will relinquish his designs against his brother."

"I will give no such pledge," cried Seymour, fiercely. "It is for you to obey the king's orders, Sir John, and not to impose conditions."

"Waste no more time in these objections, Sir John," said Edward, "but do as I command you. You are in no danger. My signet will protect you."

"I heed not the danger," said the Constable. "Since your Majesty will have it so, I obey."

"Give me my horse, Sir John. Go with me to the gates—that is all I need," cried Seymour.

"I know not if I can find your steed," replied the Constable. "Most probably your escort has been dispersed. Orders, I know, were given to that effect."

"But my palfrey must be there," cried Edward. "Take that, or any horse you can obtain. Go—go!—we shall have them here."

"We cannot pass through the ante-chamber; 'tis guarded, as I have said," remarked the Constable, stepping towards the side of the room, where, raising a piece of tapestry, he disclosed a secret door.

"Farewell, my gracious liege!" cried Seymour, with a profound obeisance to his royal nephew. "You shall hear from me ere long."

With this, he passed through the secret door with the Constable, and the hanging fell to its place.

Scarcely had the king time to seat himself, when the

great door was thrown open, and the Lord Protector, followed by Warwick and the rest of the council, entered the room. Behind the latter came a guard of halberdiers, at the head of which was Ugo Harrington. Astonishment and dismay were painted on the countenances of the whole party when it was discovered that the king was alone. Somerset could not conceal his rage and disappointment.

“Where is the traitor?” he cried, furiously.

“If your Highness refers to the Lord Admiral,” replied the king, calmly, “he is gone, under my safeguard. I have charged Sir John Gage to see him safely out of the Tower.”

“Sir John will answer to the council and to myself for this gross disobedience to our orders,” rejoined the Protector. “He knew that a warrant had been issued for the Admiral’s arrest.”

“He obeyed my orders,” said Edward, with dignity.

“Your Majesty is not aware of the heinous offences of which the Admiral has been guilty, or you would never have aided his escape,” said the Protector.

“Are those who make these accusations against him themselves free from guilt?” rejoined Edward, sternly.

“What would your Majesty insinuate?” cried the Protector.

“We shall find more fitting opportunity of speaking our mind,” said Edward. “Meantime, your Highness will do well to examine your own breast, and see that nothing be hidden within it which you would blush to have drawn forth.”

Somerset looked embarrassed, and knew not what reply to make. At this juncture, the Earl of Warwick advanced towards him, and said, in a low tone, “While we talk, the Admiral escapes. If he gets out of the Tower, an insurrection will assuredly take place, and then I will answer for none of our heads.”

“What is to be done?” replied Somerset, in the same tone. “The king has set him free.”

“Heed not that,” said Warwick. “We shall share with you the responsibility of his arrest. If he escapes, we are all undone.”

While they were thus conferring, Ugo Harrington came up to them.

“Pardon me for interrupting your Highness,” he said,

“but each moment is precious. If you desire it, at any hazard I will arrest him.”

“Do it at once, then, good fellow,” cried Warwick. “His Highness will thank thee, and reward thee. Here is the warrant—go!”

“Ay, go, and take a guard with thee,” said the Protector.

Upon this, Ugo, ordering half a dozen halberdiers to follow him, quitted the room.

X.

HOW THE ADMIRAL WAS ARRESTED.

MEANWHILE Sir John Gage and the Admiral were making their way as expeditiously as they could towards the court. In order to reach it without interruption, they were obliged to take a circuitous route, to traverse several long passages, and finally to descend a back staircase in the east wing of the palace.

This brought them to the eastern end of the court, which was entirely deserted, and they then perceived that the escort had been dispersed; but the Admiral's steed, with the king's palfrey, and some half-dozen other horses, were still left in charge of the grooms near the principal entrance of the palace.

Uttering an exclamation of joy, Seymour hurried on in the direction of the horses, closely followed by the Constable. But ere they got up several halberdiers descended from the steps, and placed themselves in the way.

“You cannot pass, my Lord,” said the chief of this party, recognising the Admiral. “We have the Lord Protector's order to detain you.”

“Out of my way, fellow! thou hadst best!” cried Seymour. “My authority is superior to thine. Show him the king's signet, Sir John.”

“His Majesty's orders are that the Lord Admiral be permitted to depart upon the instant,” said the Constable.

“Behold the royal signet!” he added, displaying the ring.

“Enough, Sir John,” rejoined the halberdier. “You will hold us harmless if we do wrong.”

On this the men drew aside, and the Admiral and his companion passed on.

“My horse,” cried Seymour to the groom, who looked alarmed and irresolute.

“Give it him, fellow,” cried the Constable. “’Tis by the king’s commands.”

In another instant Seymour had reached his steed, who neighed exultingly as his master sprang upon his back. At the same instant Sir John Gage vaulted into the saddle of another horse, and they both dashed out of the court, and rode down the descent leading to the Bloody Tower.

“Confusion! the gate is closed,” cried Seymour, as they approached. “What ho! warder,” he shouted. “Let us through, in the king’s name.”

The warder who had come forth, hearing the injunction repeated by the Constable, prepared to comply, when suddenly a cannon was fired from the summit of the Cold-harbour Tower—a structure which, it may be remembered, closely adjoined the palace—while almost simultaneously loud shouts were heard proceeding from the same direction.

“What shall I do, Sir John?” demanded the warder, hesitating.

“Open the gate instantly,” roared the Admiral.

At this moment two or three horsemen, accompanied by several yeomen of the guard, were seen at the summit of the acclivity. All these persons were hurrying towards the gate, and vociferating to the warder not to open it.

One of the horsemen rode on more quickly than the others, and as he advanced, Seymour perceived to his astonishment that it was Ugo Harrington. There was something in the esquire’s looks and gestures that showed his purpose to be hostile, but all doubts on the subject were ended as he came up.

Flight was now impossible to Seymour, for the warder, declining to open the gate, had retreated to the tower, from a grated window in which he reconnoitred the different parties. Turning to face his opponents, who were now

coming on in considerable numbers, the Admiral regarded them sternly.

"How comes it that I see thee with this rout, Ugo?" he cried, "and hear thy voice raised against me? Art thou a traitor?"

"No, an enemy to traitors," rejoined the esquire. "I am sent to arrest you, my Lord, and I call upon Sir John Gage and all others who are nigh to aid me."

"Thou sent to arrest me!" cried Seymour, with a scornful laugh. "Could none other but my own servant be found to do the office?"

"I sought it, and it was granted me, in consideration of services I have rendered to the Lord Protector," rejoined Ugo. "This is my vengeance for the wrong you did me three years ago. I have revealed all your treasonable practices to the council, and in return they have charged me to arrest you."

"Have you the warrant?" demanded the Constable.

"'Tis here," replied Ugo, producing it. "My Lord Admiral, I arrest you of high treason in the name of the Lord Protector and the council. Resistance will avail you nothing. Yield yourself therefore a prisoner, and deliver up your sword."

"Take it to thy heart, vile traitor!" cried Seymour, plunging his rapier with such force into the esquire's body that the hilt smote against his breast. Uttering a fearful cry, Ugo fell backwards, and, unable to keep his seat in the saddle, rolled heavily to the ground, where he lay, breathing curses against his slayer.

For a moment, the yeomen of the guard, who had witnessed this terrible act of retribution, looked on in horror and consternation, but the next instant they closed round the Admiral, and seizing his bridle, and presenting their halberds at his breast, prevented him from making any further movement. Sir John Gage also interposed.

"Give me the warrant," he shouted.

"Take it," said the dying man to the halberdier who approached him. "It will avenge me."

"My Lord Admiral," said Gage, as he received the parchment, which was sprinkled with blood, "I must now discharge the office of the man you have just wounded unto death. You are my prisoner. Dismount, I pray you."

Seeing resistance fruitless, the Admiral complied. As he alighted, he found himself close beside his bleeding victim, whose dying gaze was fixed upon him.

“Take charge of the prisoner,” said Sir John Gage, “and conduct him to the palace, that the Lord Protector’s pleasure concerning him may be ascertained.”

While the guard were placing themselves on either side of the Admiral, Ugo raised himself slightly by a last effort, and cried, “You cannot escape now. I vowed that your head should fall upon the block—and so it will. I die content.”

And with a laugh of exultation, he fell backwards and expired.

“Vindictive wretch! thou hast well deserved thy fate!” ejaculated the Constable. “Remove the body to Mauger’s vault yonder—beneath the Bloody Tower,” he continued. “’Tis a fitting place for it. And let these sanguinary stains be effaced. Ere long, in all likelihood, his Majesty will pass this way. Now, bring on the prisoner. To the palace!”

With this, he rode slowly up the ascent, followed by the Admiral, whose courage seemed wholly unshaken by the sudden reverse he had experienced, and who marched with a firm step and haughty front in the midst of the guard.

Dismounting at the grand portal, the Constable caused his prisoner to be taken in, and then entering himself, proceeded with the Admiral and the guard to that part of the palace where he had left the king, and where he was informed that his Majesty still remained.

As may be imagined, the arrest of so important a personage as the Admiral caused a vast deal of excitement amongst all those who saw him brought in. Strange looks and whispers were interchanged. Seymour however was known to stand so high in his royal nephew’s favour, that all anticipated his speedy release.

On arriving at the ante-chamber, the Constable ordered the guard to remain there with the prisoner, while he went in to the king.

“Leave me not here, I pray you, good Sir John,” said the Admiral, “but take me at once before his Majesty.”

“I must first ascertain the Lord Protector’s pleasure,” rejoined the Constable. And he entered the inner room.

After a short absence he returned, and, approaching the Admiral, said, “Admittance is denied you, my Lord. His Majesty, who is greatly moved in your behalf, would fain have you brought in, but the Lord Protector is inflexible upon the point, and the whole of the council support him.”

“Alas! poor king! he will never have a will of his own,” exclaimed Seymour. “But I must see him, good Sir John. I must have a word with him.”

“It cannot be, my Lord,” rejoined the Constable. “My orders are peremptory. I must take you hence forthwith, and place you in confinement.”

“But the king must needs pass through this chamber. Let me stay here till he comes forth. Fortune frowns upon me at this moment, but she will smile again ere long, and then I shall not forget the service.”

“I cannot do it—I dare not do it, my Lord. I have already incurred the Protector’s displeasure by what I have done. Guards, bring on the prisoner.”

“I will not stir,” cried the Admiral, fiercely. “I *will* see the king.”

“My Lord, you cannot. Ha! his Majesty comes forth.”

And, as he spoke, the doors of the inner chamber were thrown open by the henchmen, and immediately afterwards Edward came out, closely attended by the Lord Protector, and followed by the council.

The young monarch was evidently much distressed. His eyes were fixed upon the ground, and he did not notice the Admiral and the guard.

Not so Somerset. Instantly perceiving his brother he cast an ireful look at Sir John Gage.

“Stand aside, my Lord,” said the Constable to Seymour. “You have done me a great injury. You must not speak to the king.”

And he signed to the halberdiers to keep him back. But the Admiral would not be restrained. Ere the king had advanced many paces, he broke from the guard, and prostrated himself before his royal nephew.

“Protect me, sire!—protect me from my enemies!” he cried.

Edward regarded him with deep commiseration, and would have raised him, if Somerset had not stepped quickly forward, and rudely pushed his brother aside.

"Forbear!" he cried, "thou monstrous traitor. Dare not to approach the king thou hast so deeply injured. Thy heinous treasons and misdemeanours have justly steeled his heart against thee. Turn a deaf ear to his prayers, sire, and pass on. He deserves not a moment's consideration."

"And what art thou, who dar'st to call me traitor?" cried Seymour, springing to his feet. "Treason in thy case has assumed gigantic proportions such as it never heretofore attained. Falsest of traitors hast thou been to thy late sovereign lord and master, who loved and trusted thee, and loaded thee with honours. False and traitorous wert thou to King Henry in regard to his will, which by thy machinations was fraudulently stamped while he lay helpless, speechless, dying. False and traitorous hast thou been to thy royal nephew, whose youth and inexperience thou hast abused, and whom thou hast sought to deprive of his power and authority. Thou chargest me with treasons and misdemeanours! Thine own are of such magnitude that others are dwarfed beside them. Thou hast usurped thy present post, and wilt usurp the crown itself, if thou be'st not prevented."

"I disdain to answer these idle charges," said Somerset; "but there is one so grave, that, since it is made publicly, must and shall be instantly refuted. You tax me with causing the late king's will to be fraudulently stamped. Those who witnessed it—and they are several in number—can prove that the accusation is false. But on what pretence do you dare to make so scandalous, so atrocious a charge?"

"On the confession of your accomplice, Doctor Butts."

"Where is the confession?" demanded Somerset. "Produce it."

"Ay, produce it—if you can?" said Warwick, in a derisive tone.

"The document has been purloined from me—no doubt by my villanous servant, Ugo Harrington, whom I have punished for his perfidy," rejoined Seymour. "But what I avouch is true."

"Tut! tut!" exclaimed Warwick. "'Tis evident your

charge cannot be supported, and must be regarded as false and malicious. In your own case, on the contrary, we have abundant proof of treasonable practices. Learn to your confusion that your accomplice, Sir William Sharington, is a prisoner here in the Tower, and has confessed his guilt, and your participation in his offences."

This was a heavy and unexpected blow to the Admiral, and it was plain he felt it; but he quickly recovered, and said, with great audacity, "Any charge that Sharington may bring against me can be refuted. Let me be confronted with him."

"That you shall be anon, and with your other confederates in treason," said the Protector. "But you must be content to await your examination by the council."

"Your Majesty will not allow me to be sacrificed by my enemies?" cried Seymour, appealing to the king, who, though he looked compassionately at him, had not hitherto spoken.

"Justice must take its course," interposed the Protector. "His Majesty cannot interfere."

"Alas! I cannot," exclaimed Edward, in a voice of deep emotion.

"Do you abandon me in this dire extremity, sire?" cried the Admiral. "A word from you, and I am free."

"You are mistaken, my Lord," said Warwick. "It is not even in his Majesty's power to free you now. You must be brought to trial for the heinous offences with which you are charged. To pardon you would be to encourage treason and rebellion."

"I am neither traitor nor rebel," cried Seymour. "Would you all were as loyal and devoted to the king as I am. Sire, will you see me crushed without a word to save me?"

"Peace! your appeals are vain," rejoined Somerset. "Come, sire!"

"Farewell! my Lord," said Edward. "Heaven grant you may be able to clear yourself!"

Casting a compassionate look at the Admiral, he then moved on, attended by the Protector, and followed by the council. Before quitting the room, he gave another farewell look at his uncle, who continued gazing imploringly and half reproachfully at him.

In another moment he was gone—for ever, as far as Seymour was concerned. He never beheld him more.

For a moment the Admiral remained stupified. But quickly recovering himself, he assumed all his customary haughtiness of deportment and fearlessness of look.

“The chances are against me for the moment, Sir John,” he observed to the Constable. “But all is not lost. The worst that can befall me is long imprisonment, like Norfolk’s, or exile. My brother will not venture to bring me to the scaffold. The curse of Cain would be on him, were he to shed my blood!”

“Had you succeeded in your attempt and overthrown him, would you have spared your brother, my Lord?” demanded the Constable.

Seymour made no reply.

“You would not,” pursued Gage. “Then judge him not too severely. You have tried him sorely. But it is now my painful duty to see you taken to your prison-lodging. May it be mine, also, to assist at your liberation. Guards, to the Bowyer Tower!” The Admiral was then surrounded by the halberdiers, in the midst of whom he marched across the green towards a tower at the north side of the inner ward.

By this time, the king, with the Lord Protector, the lords of the council, and their attendants having departed, there were but few witnesses of the scene; and none whom Seymour heeded. Spectacles of this kind had been too frequent during the late reign to excite much wonder. But all who beheld the Admiral marvelled at his proud deportment and confident looks.

On arriving at the Bowyer Tower, he was consigned to the charge of Tombs, the gaoler, who, unlocking a strong oaken door, strengthened with plates of iron, and studded with flat-headed nails, ushered him into the very cell in which the Earl of Surrey had been confined. The recollection of his interview with the unfortunate nobleman on the night before his execution rushed upon Seymour’s mind, and filled him with dread.

“I like not this cell, Sir John,” he observed to the Constable, who had accompanied him. “Can I not have another lodging?”

“Is there any other cell vacant, Tombs?” demanded the Constable.

“None that would suit his Lordship,” replied the gaoler. “His Grace of Norfolk is in the Beauchamp Tower, the Earl of Devonshire is in the Devilin Tower, Bishop Gardiner in the Flint Tower, and Bishop Heath in the Brick Tower. Sir William Sharington is in the Constable’s Tower. There is a cell unoccupied in the Martin Tower, but it is not so comfortable as this. The Bowyer Tower hath always been reserved for the highest nobles. The last person who lodged here, as your Lordship may remember,” he added to Seymour, “was the Earl of Surrey.”

“For that reason I like it not,” rejoined the Admiral. “But no matter. What signifies it who occupied the dungeon?”

“True; as your Lordship observes, it matters little,” said Tombs. “You will find the chamber very comfortable.”

“I would I could do better for you, my Lord,” observed the Constable; “but you will be as well here as anywhere else—perhaps better. See that his Lordship is well cared for, and that all his reasonable requests are attended to,” he added to the gaoler.

Tombs promised strict compliance, and by Gage’s directions proceeded to divest the Admiral of his armour, carrying the different pieces composing it out of the cell.

Promising to send the prisoner changes of apparel and other matters which he required, the Constable took his departure; the door of the dungeon was locked outside by Tombs; and Seymour was left to his meditations.

Thus far the Third Book.

BOOK IV

THE BOWYER TOWER.

I.

HOW SIR WILLIAM SHARINGTON WAS CONFRONTED WITH
THE ADMIRAL.

A PRISONER in the Tower!

Sudden and sad was the change that had come over the haughty Seymour—that morn one of the most powerful nobles in the land, with hundreds ready to obey him—at eve a prisoner in the Tower.

A prisoner!—he a prisoner! 'Twas hard to realise the dread idea. Yet, as he gazed around his narrow cell, the terrible conviction forced itself upon him, and a sickness like that of death came over him. Remorse, suddenly roused within his breast, added to the mental anguish he endured. With a conscience burdened with many crimes, the enormity of which he could not hide from himself, he yet felt no contrition. Perceiving not that the chastisement he endured was justly inflicted for his sinfulness, he murmured against the wrath he had provoked.

No more fearful state of mind can be conceived than that which the unhappy man now experienced. The furies seemed to lash him with all their whips, and to goad him to madness. So acute indeed were his sufferings, that finding reflection intolerable, he threw himself on a pallet which was laid in a deep recess, and sought forgetfulness in sleep. But his slumbers were not undisturbed, his dreams being scarcely less terrible than his waking thoughts.

Another day passed much in the same manner as the first. Its dreary monotony was unrelieved by any event, save the appearance, at stated intervals, of the gaoler, who brought him the changes of apparel and other matters promised by Sir John Gage.

No information as to the intentions of the council could be obtained by the prisoner from Tombs. Seymour had hoped that he might be speedily examined, but in this expectation he was disappointed. His enemies could scarcely have devised greater torture than by leaving him a prey to his own bitter reflections.

The keenest pang however that he endured—keener than the loss of power and position—was the thought that he was debarred from seeing the Princess Elizabeth, or hearing from her. If he could but behold her once more, he should be content; if he could but hear from her, it would soothe his anguish. She must needs be aware of his fall, and perchance might find some means of communicating with him. But no letter or message came.

Sir John Gage did not even make his appearance. Had the council interdicted him from visiting the prisoner? When questioned on the subject, the gaoler answered that he thought so. Not till he became a captive himself had Seymour any notion of the horrors of captivity. Solitary confinement was inexpressibly irksome to him—well-nigh intolerable.

Leaving the unhappy man to himself for a while, we will now see what proceedings had been taken by his enemies.

On the day following the Admiral's imprisonment in the Tower, the seal of his office was sent for and placed in the hands of one of the secretaries of state. All his private papers and correspondence were secured, and several officers of his court, known to be in his confidence, and supposed to be able to make disclosures against him, were arrested. His two residences, Seymour House and Chelsea Manor-House, were seized by the officers of the Crown, the former with all its rich furniture and objects of art being appropriated by the Lord Protector, and the latter, soon afterwards, being bestowed upon the Earl of Warwick, as the price of his assistance to Somerset.

Messengers of state, accompanied by sufficient force to enable them to execute their purpose, were sent to take possession of Seymour's princely mansion, Sudley Castle, and of his fortress, Holt Castle. These places were occupied without resistance, for on hearing that the Admiral was arrested, all his partisans lost heart. Both castles

were escheated to the Crown, the former being given to the Marquis of Northampton (brother, it will be remembered, to the unhappy Queen Catherine Parr), and the latter converted into a garrison for the king's troops.

Six of the swiftest-sailing ships of war were despatched to the Scilly Islands to take possession of all the stores laid up there by the grand conspirator, and to capture and destroy the piratical vessels in his pay. Vigorous measures were also taken to repress risings in the different counties known to be favourable to the Admiral, and several ring-leaders were arrested and subsequently hanged.

By these prompt and decisive steps, which were taken on the advice and under the direction of Warwick, the insurrection was effectually crushed. Terror-stricken by the fall of their leader, the bands upon whom he had counted quickly dispersed. A slight demonstration in his behalf was made in the city of London, where the apprentices, incited by his partisans, cried out against his arrest, but the rioters were speedily put down by the train-bands.

Thus was one of the most daring and extraordinary conspiracies ever planned brought to an end before it had time to explode. Thus with Lord Seymour fell the entire edifice he had been at so much pains to construct.

All these proceedings however were kept carefully concealed from the contriver of the plot, and whatever he might suspect, he knew not how completely his work had been undone.

On the sixth day of his imprisonment it was intimated to the Admiral by Tombs that he would be examined by the council, and the intelligence was satisfactory to him. By this time he had fully recovered from the shock occasioned by his fall; all his courage had returned, and hope was again kindled in his breast. Having prepared for his defence, he persuaded himself he should be able to baffle his enemies.

Arrayed in habiliments of black velvet, he impatiently awaited the summons of the council. It was brought by the Constable of the Tower in person, who came with a guard to conduct him to the Lieutenant's lodgings, where the council were assembled. Sir John looked grave and stern, and declined to answer any questions put to him.

After a short detention in the ante-room, Seymour was

taken into the large wainscoted chamber already described, where he found all the members of the council, with the exception of Cranmer, seated round a table covered with green cloth. Before them were piles of letters and other papers, which he knew at a glance related to himself.

At the upper end of the table sat the Earl of Warwick, with the Earl of Southampton on his right hand, and Lord Russell on his left. The countenances of the assemblage boded him little good. But Seymour was not to be daunted by the stern and menacing looks fixed upon him. Standing between two halberdiers, he surveyed the assemblage with a glance of defiance, and making a haughty inclination to them, drew himself up to his full height.

"My Lord," said Warwick, "we trust—though your proud and assured deportment seems scarcely to warrant such a conclusion—that the confinement you have undergone has wrought in you a penitent spirit, and that you are prepared to confess the heinous offences and treasons of which you have been guilty—and of which we may tell you we have proof—and throw yourself upon your offended sovereign's mercy."

"I have nothing to confess, my Lord," rejoined the Admiral, sternly. "I have been guilty of no crimes!"

"We have the depositions of various witnesses against you," said Warwick. "They shall be read, and you can then disprove them, if you have the power."

"I demand an open trial," rejoined Seymour. "I refuse to answer any interrogations which you, my Lord of Warwick, or your colleagues, may put to me, knowing you to be my mortal enemies."

"Do you venture to impugn the justice of the council?" said Warwick.

"I do," rejoined Seymour. "You may spare yourselves the trouble of reading those depositions to me. I shall not reply to them."

"We will find a way to move you, if you continue thus stubborn, my Lord," remarked Southampton. "The rack may make you speak."

"Not if you turn the wheel yourself, my Lord, with as much zeal as you did against poor Anne Askew," retorted Seymour. "How know I by what means these depositions against me have been procured? Let my accusers be con-

fronted with me, and we shall then see whether they will maintain their charges to my face."

"We might well refuse your demand," replied Warwick. "But to prove that we are not so inimical as you represent us, it shall be granted. Let Sir William Sharington be brought in."

After a short pause, the unfortunate master of the mint was introduced by a side door. Wholly unable to walk without support, he had to be accommodated with a chair. He gave a terrified and half-imploring look at the Admiral, and then cast down his eyes.

"Sir William Sharington," said Warwick, "you have already confessed that you have coined ten thousand pounds of false money, and clipped coin to the extent of forty thousand pounds. At whose instigation, and for whose benefit, did you commit these offences?"

"Before you answer, Sir William," cried Seymour, "I desire you will look me straight in the face."

"Speak!" cried Warwick, "and declare the truth."

"I cannot speak," said Sharington, quailing beneath the Admiral's terrible gaze. "His glances pierce into my soul."

"You have wrung this confession from him by torture," cried Seymour. "He has accused me to save himself. Is it not so, Sir William?"

"Do not let him intimidate you, sir, but avow the truth," said Warwick. "You cannot deny your own confession."

"Was it not extorted by the rack?" cried Seymour.

"Ay, marry was it," replied Sharington; "else I had confessed nothing. I pray you forgive me, my Lord, for what I have done."

"I freely forgive you," rejoined the Admiral, "though you have placed a weapon against me in the hands of my enemies. But they cannot use it now."

"The council cannot be trifled with in this manner, sir," observed Southampton to the master of the mint. "Are the charges you have made against Lord Seymour true, or false? Answer!"

"Take me hence, and place me again upon the rack, if you will," cried Sharington. "I would rather die than submit to these interrogations."

“Thou wilt die by the hangman’s hand, thou false and equivocating knave!” cried Warwick. “But we have thy confession—signed by thine own hand—and that is enough. Take him hence!” he added to the guard.

And, much to his own relief, the unfortunate man was removed.

“Your first accusation falls to the ground, my Lords,” said Seymour, triumphantly. “And I doubt not all the rest will do so.”

“Do not delude yourself with any such notion, my Lord,” said Southampton. “We are all satisfied of the truth of Sir William Sharrington’s confession, and it is sufficient to condemn you. But your crimes are manifold, as they are heinous. Thirty-six articles of high treason and other misdemeanours against the Crown will be exhibited against you. You are charged with using all your natural influence over our youthful sovereign’s mind to dissatisfy him with the government, and to get the control of affairs into your own hands—with corrupting by bribes certain gentlemen of the privy-chamber and others—with promising his Majesty’s hand in marriage—with endeavouring to obtain possession of his person, to the infinite peril of the realm—with confederating with divers disaffected noblemen and gentlemen—with secretly raising an army of ten thousand men, and providing money and supplies for that force for one month. You are also charged with putting your castle of Holt, in Denbighshire, into a state of defence, with providing it with a strong garrison and stores of war, with fortifying your castle of Sudley, in Gloucestershire, and with possessing yourself of the strong and dangerous Isles of Scilly, to which you purposed to retreat. All this you have done with the design of exciting rebellion, and causing civil war. In addition to these atrocious crimes, you are charged with others of a more dishonourable nature, and which must stamp your name with perpetual infamy. Not only are you taxed with inciting and abetting the gigantic frauds perpetrated by Sir William Sharrington, but it is objected against you, and can be proved, that you have abused the high office with which you have been intrusted by extorting money from merchantmen under various false pleas and pretences, by seizing upon wrecks and refusing restitution to the rightful owners, and by conspir-

ing with pirates and sharing their plunder. To this long catalogue of offences it may be added that you have secretly attempted to obtain the hand in marriage of his Majesty's sister, the Princess Elizabeth, second inheritor of the crown, well knowing that such marriage would be against the late king's will, and could not be contracted without consent of the council. What answer make you to these charges?"

"I deny them all," replied Seymour, boldly.

"Your denial will avail nothing. We have damnatory proofs against you. We have the statements of Ugo Harrington, the wretched man slain by you—the depositions of the Marquis of Dorset—of Fowler of the privy-chamber—of Hornbeak, Blades, and other pirates with whom you have conspired, and who are now lodged in the Fleet—and of the Princess Elizabeth's governess, Mistress Ashley. Of the long list of offences with which you are charged, there is not one but can be proved."

"Still I repeat my emphatic denial of them all," said the Admiral. "I will answer every accusation brought against me, but not here. I demand an open trial, and, in justice, you cannot refuse it."

"Crimes of such magnitude as yours cannot be publicly discussed with safety to the state," rejoined Southampton. "Following the precedents afforded in such cases during the late reign, a bill of attainder will be brought against you."

"In other words, you mean to destroy me," interrupted Seymour. "I am to be condemned unheard. Finish this mockery of justice, and sentence me at once to the block."

"If you are convicted of your crimes, my Lord, your sentence will follow quickly enough," observed Warwick—"more quickly perchance than you may desire. The articles of treason objected against you shall be left with you, and you can answer them as you see fit. This is all the grace we deign to confer. We are satisfied of your guilt, and your bold denial of the charges does not shake our conviction. Ever since your royal nephew came to the throne you have been plotting and contriving for increase of power, and if Heaven had not thwarted them, infinite danger to the king's person, and subversion of the whole state of the realm, might have followed your traitorous de-

signs. We can hold out no hope to you. Leze-majesty and other high crimes and misdemeanours have been proved against you, and you will meet a traitor's doom."

"I will meet my death resolutely, come how or when it may," rejoined Seymour. "I spared your life, my Lord of Warwick, when you were in my power, and it is thus you requite me. Your aim is to destroy me. But you will fail. The king will not see me perish."

"The king cannot pardon a convicted traitor," said Warwick. "Once more, do you persist in your refusal to answer our interrogations?"

"Resolutely," said Seymour.

"Then the examination need be no further continued," pursued Warwick. "Let the prisoner be removed, Sir John."

On this the Admiral was withdrawn, and taken back to the Bowyer Tower.

II.

BY WHOSE AID THE ADMIRAL SENT A LETTER TO THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH.

THREE days after the examination just described, Seymour was visited in his cell by the Earl of Warwick and some others of the council, who came to receive his answers to the articles of impeachment. He had cautiously limited himself, it appeared, to a few brief rejoinders, explanatory of his motives for supplying the king with money, and bestowing presents upon Fowler and other grooms of the chamber. To the more serious charges a simple and emphatic denial was all he deigned to return.

Throughout this second interview, Seymour conducted himself with the same spirit and determination which he had heretofore evinced. No menaces could shake him. Peremptorily refusing to answer the articles in detail, and objecting even to sign the short rejoinders he had made, he persisted in his demand for an open trial, and inveighed

against the secret and inquisitorial examinations to which he was subjected, declaring that he would answer no more interrogations. Thereupon Warwick and the others left him.

Shortly after this, the bill of attainder was brought into the House of Lords, and passed without delay. When transmitted to the Commons, it encountered strenuous opposition at first, but this was overruled by the Lord Protector's influence, and the bill likewise passed the Lower House. But not without considerable persuasion from the council, in which even Crammer joined, was the royal assent obtained. This was given on the 10th March, 1549.

Seymour had been now nearly two months a prisoner in the Tower. Though his fortitude remained unshaken, his proud and impatient spirit chafed sorely against his confinement. No one was allowed to see him unless with a written order from the Constable of the Tower, and then only in the presence of the gaoler. Apprehensions being entertained lest he might find means of secretly conveying a letter to his royal nephew, the writing materials which had been left with him, when it was hoped he might answer the articles of impeachment, were removed. No entreaties or promises could prevail upon Tombs to supply him with them again.

Cut off from communication with the outer world; deprived of all books, save a few godly tracts left with him by Latimer, by whom he was occasionally visited, and who pronounced him in a most sinful, hardened, and deplorable condition; devoured by ambition; tormented by an incurable passion; the Admiral, it will easily be imagined, passed his time wretchedly enough. Still, he was true to himself; still, he continued haughty and unyielding.

On the night of that unlucky day when the bill of attainder received the royal assent, of which circumstance he was informed by Tombs, he remained seated beside his table to a late hour, with his face covered by his hands.

All at once a noise, proceeding, as it seemed, from a loophole some feet from the ground, caused him to raise his eyes, and to his great astonishment he beheld, by the dim light of the iron lamp illumining the cell, a diminutive figure standing within the aperture. While he was staring at this apparition, the little personage called out,

“’Tis I, my Lord—Xit, his Majesty’s sometime dwarf. Aid me to descend, I beseech you. An I leap I shall break my neck, and that is not a death I desiderate.”

On this Seymour advanced towards the aperture, and catching the dwarf, who sprang towards him, in his arms, set him on the ground.

“What brings thee here?” said the Admiral. “Know’st thou not it is as much as thy life is worth to visit me thus privily?”

“I know that right well, my Lord,” replied Xit; “and I have adventured my life to serve you. Your generosity towards me demanded a return, and I determined to prove my gratitude. Having been discharged from my post near his Majesty by the Lord Protector, because he found out that I had conveyed messages to your Lordship, I have once more become an inmate of the Tower, and now lodge with the three giant warders. It was by the aid of Og, the elder of the brethren, that I obtained admission to your cell. He placed me on his shoulders, whence I clambered to yon loophole; and though it was no easy matter, even for one of my slender proportions, I contrived to squeeze myself through the bars. Og is standing outside to aid me on my return.”

“I owe thee much for thy fidelity,” replied Seymour, greatly touched by the dwarf’s devotion. “Of all who have profited by my bounty, thou art the only one who has exhibited gratitude. But how dost thou propose to aid me?”

“I thought your Lordship might desire to have some letter or message conveyed for you, and as I knew Master Tombs would neither do your will, nor allow it to be done, I have come thus privily to offer myself as your messenger.”

“I am much beholden to thee,” said Seymour. “I have not the means of writing a letter, or I would confide one to thee. My tablets are left me, but I have neither pen nor pencil.”

“That is most unlucky,” said Xit. “But I will come again—and better provided!”

“Stay!” cried Seymour; “a plan occurs to me. This point shall answer my purpose.”

And plucking a sharp aglet from his dress, he punctured

his arm with it, and proceeded to trace a few passionate words with his blood on a leaf of the tablets.

This done, he closed the book, tied it with a ribbon, and gave it to Xit.

"Deliver this, I pray thee, to the Princess Elizabeth," he said. "Guard it as thy life. Hast thou any knowledge where her Highness now is?"

"I have heard that she is at Shene," replied Xit. "If so, I will engage that your Lordship's missive shall be delivered into her own hands to-morrow morning."

"Thou wilt do me the greatest possible service," cried the Admiral. "Whatever betide, let me see thee again on the morning of my execution. I may have another letter or message for thee."

"I will not fail," replied Xit.

Seymour was about to tear some ornament from his attire in order to reward his little envoy, when Xit stopped him, saying he would accept nothing till he had executed his mission.

"I must now entreat your Lordship's aid to reach the loophole," he said.

On this, Seymour lifted him from the ground, and the ascent was quickly and safely accomplished.

This done, Xit pressed his hand to his heart in token of devotion, and disappeared.

III.

HOW THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH VISITED THE ADMIRAL IN HIS CELL.

ON the following day, the Admiral was again visited by Latimer, who strove, but ineffectually, to bend his haughty spirit, and bring him to a state of penitence. Not being in a mood to listen to homilies, Seymour impatiently interrupted the divine, and bade him leave him in peace. Finding all his efforts fruitless, Latimer desisted, and took his departure, recommending the obdurate man to make his peace with Heaven, for his time was short.

Again night arrived. Seymour was pacing his cell, full of gloomy thought, when the door was unbarred, and the Constable of the Tower entered. But not alone. He was attended by a young personage wrapped in an ample velvet mantle, whose features were so muffled up that by the dim light of the lamp it was difficult to determine whether they belonged to youth or maiden. But though the gaoler and others might have been deceived by this disguise, Seymour was not. He instantly recognised his beloved Elizabeth, and springing towards her, cried out, "Oh! you are come, princess!—you are come!" while she, throwing off her disguise, and disregarding the presence of the Constable, flung herself into his arms.

Their first transports of delight had scarcely subsided, and they were still gazing at each other with unutterable fondness, almost unconscious where they were, when Sir John Gage deemed it necessary to interfere, and remind them that their interview must be brief.

"I am disobeying the Lord Protector and the council in allowing this visit," he said; "but I could not resist the princess's entreaties. However, I cannot give you many minutes. During that time I will remain outside."

On this, he withdrew, and closed the door after him.

"Oh! Seymour!" exclaimed Elizabeth, looking passionately at him, "with what mingled feelings of rapture and anguish do I behold you again! When last we parted I thought you would return to me in triumph, and demand my hand. And now!—Oh! this is more than I can bear!" And she burst into a passionate flood of tears.

"Calm yourself, dearest Elizabeth," said Seymour. "Your grief unmans me, and I have need of all my firmness."

"Yes, I will be calm," she rejoined. "I will smile and be cheerful, though my heart is breaking. Oh!"—and she placed her hand upon her bosom—"think not that I have been indifferent to you, Seymour. No tongue can tell the anguish I have endured since your arrest. But the Protector's vigilance rendered it impossible for me to write to you, or convey any message, neither have I been permitted to see the king—or even to write to him—so that I could not plead in your behalf. The dreadful news of yesterday—that Edward had given his assent to the bill of attainder

—had just reached me, and overwhelmed me with grief, when your faithful little messenger found me out, and delivered your tablets. Then I was resolved at all hazards to see you. Heedless of consequences, I left Shene this afternoon with the trusty dwarf, who served me with the utmost devotion, and through his agency obtained admittance to Sir John Gage, who, while blaming my rashness, yielded at length to my entreaties, and brought me hither.”

“Heaven bless him for it!” exclaimed Seymour. “He has given me more happiness than I ever expected on earth. The thought of this meeting will cheer me on the scaffold.”

“You shall not die, Seymour,” shrieked Elizabeth. “’Tis horrible to think that a foul and murderous caitiff should disfigure a godlike form like yours, and sever such a head from such a frame! No—no—it cannot—shall not be. I will intercede for you with Edward. I know he loves me, and I think he will yield to my entreaties, and spare your life.”

“He loved me once, too,” said Seymour, bitterly. “But my enemies have turned his heart from me by their calumnies. Whatever his will may be, Edward cannot save me. The Lord Protector and the council control him, and they are bent, it is plain, on my destruction.”

“Then I will go to *them*,” cried Elizabeth. “I will plead for you on my knees. They cannot refuse me.”

Seymour shook his head.

“Such an avowal of your love for me will be to them an additional motive for my destruction,” he said.

“What is to be done?” cried Elizabeth, distractedly. “You must not—shall not die.”

At this moment the door of the cell opened, and Sir John Gage stepped in.

“It grieves me to interrupt you,” he said, in accents of profound sympathy. “But the moment of separation is arrived. You must part for ever.”

“Not for ever, Sir John!” cried Elizabeth. “I shall bring Lord Seymour a pardon. The king my brother, the Lord Protector, and the council, will listen to my prayers.”

“Indulge no false hopes, princess,” said Gage. “The Lord Protector and the council are inexorable.”

“Then I will not go hence,” shrieked Elizabeth. “I will stay here and die with him.”

“Princess, I pray you, come with me,” cried the Constable.

“I will not go,” she rejoined, clinging desperately to Seymour. “Hold me fast, my loved Lord!—hold me fast! Let him not tear me hence!”

“Do not forget yourself, princess, I implore you?” cried the Constable. “Do not compel me to employ force.”

“Stand off, Sir John!” cried Elizabeth, impetuously. “Stand off, I command you! Hear what I have to say, and let it abide in your recollection. I here solemnly affiance myself before Heaven to Lord Seymour, and I register a vow that if he be put to death by his brother, I will wed no other man.”

“Retract this rash oath, princess, I implore you,” said the Constable. “Hereafter, in calmer moments, you will rue it.”

“Never,” rejoined Elizabeth, emphatically. “Heaven so help me, as I keep it religiously.”

“I have not merited this love,” cried Seymour, in a voice suffocated by emotion. “But the cup of happiness is presented to me only to be dashed from my lips.”

“My Lord,” said the Constable to Seymour, “it rests with you to put an end to this painful scene. To prolong it will but increase your distress. The princess must go hence.”

“Will you have it so?” cried Elizabeth, still clinging fondly to him.

“It must be,” he rejoined, despairingly. “One last embrace,” he added, straining her to his bosom. “Take her, good Sir John.”

Elizabeth made no further opposition. Half fainting, she almost fell from his arms. Hastily enveloping her in the mantle, and wrapping the *couvre-chef* about her head, the Constable led her towards the door. Before going forth, she cast one farewell look at Seymour, who stood as if transfixed by despair.

The clangour of the closing door roused him from this stupor. The pang he felt was intolerable. With a wild cry he threw himself on his pallet. Death could have no greater bitterness for him

IV

HOW THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH INTERCEDED FOR THE ADMIRAL WITH THE KING; AND HOW THE DEATH-WARRANT WAS SIGNED.

NOTWITHSTANDING the endeavours of Sir John Gage to dissuade her from the attempt, and the assurances of the worthy Constable that it would be fruitless, Elizabeth was resolved to solicit the Admiral's pardon from the king, and by her tears and entreaties succeeded in wringing consent from Gage to procure her an interview with her royal brother.

Accordingly, on the following day, the Constable met her at the entrance of the palace of Whitehall, and conducted her to the royal apartments. Had the princess not been thus attended she would have been refused admittance; but the authority of Sir John Gage, as comptroller of the household, was sufficient to procure her ingress, and they reached the ante-chamber without obstruction.

The princess's unexpected appearance filled the pages and henchmen there assembled with surprise and consternation, and the chief usher advancing towards her, and making her a profound obeisance, informed her gravely, but with much respect, that it was impossible she could see the king at this moment.

"But I *will* see him," she cried, resolutely. "No blame shall attach to you, sir—I will take it on myself."

"Pardon me, gracious princess, if I am compelled to refuse you admittance," rejoined the usher. "The Lord Protector and the council are now deliberating amongst themselves in an adjoining chamber, and as soon as their consultation is ended they will return to his Majesty."

The significant look given by the usher to Sir John Gage did not escape Elizabeth.

"They are deliberating about the Lord Admiral's execution. Is it not so?—speak!"

"Your Highness has guessed right," replied the usher, reluctantly.

"Then I must see the king my brother without delay," cried the princess.

"I guess your object, gracious Lady, and would willingly further it," said the usher, in a tone of deep sympathy; "but I dare not disobey my orders."

"Is his Majesty alone?" inquired the Constable.

"He is, Sir John," answered the usher. "The Bishop of Ely and Doctor Latimer have just left him. But the Lord Protector and the council may return at any moment, and then—"

"You hear, princess?" said the Constable.

"I do," she replied. "But you promised to bring me to the king. I call upon you to make good your word."

"Nay, then, I must needs comply," returned the Constable. "You shall not suffer for this, sir, with the Lord Protector," he added to the usher; "the fault is mine, and I will bear the blame. There is no need to announce her Highness."

With this, he took Elizabeth's hand, and led her on. The doors were thrown open, and they entered a spacious chamber, at the upper end of which Edward was discovered, seated beside a table. A book was open before him, but it was evident he was not engaged in its perusal.

On seeing Elizabeth he arose, and advanced slowly to meet her. He was magnificently attired in a jerkin of cloth of gold raised with purple velvet and tissue, over which he wore a purple velvet gown, embroidered with gold, and lined and trimmed with ermine. His cap was of black velvet, richly ornamented with diamonds, rubies, and other precious stones, and having a white feather in it, inclining towards the right ear. His splendour however accorded ill with his looks. He moved feebly, and looked pale, careworn, and unhappy. Never before had he greeted Elizabeth as he greeted her now. In a sharp, almost angry voice, he demanded why she came there, and how she had obtained admittance.

"It is my fault, sire," interposed the Constable. "I have ventured to disobey orders."

"Then you have done wrong—very wrong, Sir John. Know you not?—" And he suddenly stopped.

"I know it all, sire," said Elizabeth, casting herself at

his feet. "I come as a suppliant for the Admiral, and will not quit this posture till you consent to spare him."

"Alas! Elizabeth," rejoined Edward, sadly, "you ask a grace which it is impossible for me to bestow. My unhappy uncle is attainted and condemned by the Parliament, and I have been compelled, though sorely against my will, to ratify the sentence. The high crimes and misdemeanours of which he has been guilty leave him no hope of pardon."

"No hope, sire!" cried Elizabeth. "Oh, say not so. One word from you will save him. Pronounce it, royal brother, for my sake—for the sake of your future peace, for your breast will never be free from remorse if you suffer him to perish."

"I have not judged my uncle," said Edward. "He has been justly condemned. His terrible designs were happily frustrated, but if they had succeeded, the whole state would have been subverted, the kingdom devastated by civil war, and I myself perchance driven from the throne—to make way for him."

"These are the charges of the Admiral's enemies, sire," rejoined Elizabeth. "He has had no opportunity of disproving them, for an open trial, which he demanded, was refused him. His aim was to free your Majesty, to whom he is devoted, from the thralldom in which you are placed. For this he is to be sacrificed. But no, sire, you will not do it. Your noble and generous nature must revolt at such injustice. You will not aid the Lord Protector in his fratricidal schemes."

"Peace, Elizabeth; you go too far."

"No, sire, I speak the truth, and it shall out. Nothing but his brother's life will content the Duke of Somerset. 'Tis he who, by his artful misrepresentations, has steeled your breast against your once-loved uncle—'tis he who has procured this bill of attainder against him—who has stifled his cries—and would now force you to aid him in the work of destruction. Is not the Admiral bound to you by ties of near relationship? Will you sunder those ties? Will you allow the Lord Protector to imbrue his hands in his brother's blood, and compel you to share his guilt? Have patience with me, sire. I am half distracted."

“What mean these passionate supplications, Elizabeth? You plead for him as for a husband.”

“He is almost my husband, sire. I have affianced myself to him.”

“Ha!” exclaimed Edward, with a look of displeasure.

“You have hurt your cause by that admission,” whispered the Constable.

“I am sorry to hear what you tell me, Elizabeth, because such a marriage never could take place. ’Tis against our royal father’s will. You must reconcile yourself to the Admiral’s fate.”

“Then your Majesty is resolved to destroy him?” cried the princess.

“Justice must take its course,” rejoined Edward, somewhat sternly. “Heaven knows how dearly I loved my uncle, Lord Scymour,” he continued, in a more softened tone; “but I have been greatly deceived by him. His true character has been revealed to me—not by the Lord Protector, whom you unjustly charge with sinister designs—but by others.”

“By whom, sire?”

“By Archbishop Cranmer—by the Bishop of Ely—by Doctor Latimer. He is restless, turbulent, dangerous—too restless and too dangerous to be spared. I would he could be brought to a better frame of mind, for I hear he refuses all religious instruction and consolation.”

“Then cut him not off in a state of sin, sire. Give him time for repentance.”

“’Tis for the council, not for me, to appoint the time of execution,” replied Edward, sadly.

“The council should obey you, sire—not you them. But if you will not grant him a free pardon—at least spare his life. Doom him to exile—to imprisonment—but not to the block.”

“His crimes are of too deep a dye to allow of any leniency,” responded Edward.

“Then I have done, sire,” cried Elizabeth, rising. “Heaven grant you the pardon which you refuse to him.”

At this moment, the doors were thrown open, and an usher entered, announcing the Lord Protector and the council.

It was now too late for Elizabeth to retire, but so far from being intimidated by the frowns of Somerset, she replied by glances as menacing as his own.

"I would counsel you to withdraw, princess," he said, sternly.

"I thank your Highness," she rejoined, "but I design to remain here."

"Nay, stay if you will," he answered. "I meant but to spare your feelings."

On the entrance of the council, Edward moved slowly towards a chair of state placed beneath a canopy, and took his seat upon it. The Lord Protector, followed by the Earls of Warwick and Sonthampton, then advanced towards him. In his hand Somerset held a parchment, the sight of which chilled the life-blood in Elizabeth's veins. She knew it to be the Admiral's death-warrant.

"Sire," said Somerset, "after dne deliberation, the council has decided that the execution shall take place to-morrow morning on Tower-hill."

At this dread announcement Elizabeth with difficulty repressed a scream.

"So soon!" exclaimed Edward. "'Twere better he should live a few days longer. 'Twill give him more time for repentance."

"Such grace would little profit him, sire, while there are many cogent reasons why the execution should not be deferred," rejoined the duke.

"Can aught be advanced in mitigation of his sentence?" demanded Edward.

"Nothing, sire, or I should be the first to suggest it."

He then called for a pen, and offering the warrant to the king, pressed him to sign it.

"Cannot my signature be dispensed with?" rejoined Edward, averting his head. "He is my uncle, and I like not to doom him thus."

"He is also my brother," rejoined Somerset. "Yet I shall not hesitate to sign the warrant. A few strokes of the pen, sire, and it is done," he continued, again proffering the warrant.

"But those few strokes will destroy one whom I have dearly loved—and whom I still love," cried Edward. "I cannot do it."

And he burst into tears.

"Heaven be praised, his heart is touched! He will spare him!" muttered Elizabeth.

"If this opportunity passes by, our prey will escape," whispered Warwick.

"Be firm, sire," said the Protector. "You must not yield to this weakness."

"Give me the pen," cried Edward. And he hurriedly signed the warrant. "Take it hence," he cried, with a look of horror, and feeling as if he had committed a crime.

The warrant was then countersigned by the Protector and the whole of the council, after which it was delivered to the Constable by Somerset, who bade him see it executed on the morrow, between the hours of nine and twelve in the forenoon, on Tower-hill.

"It shall be done," replied the Constable, in a sombre tone. "Princess," he added to Elizabeth, "your errand here is accomplished. Come with me, I pray you."

While Somerset and Warwick were glancing at each other with ill-disguised satisfaction, Elizabeth approached them ere they were aware, and fixing a piercing look on the Protector, said in a low, freezing tone, "Fratricide! your own turn will come soon."

Then perceiving a smile flit across Warwick's sombre countenance, she added to him,

"Ha! you smile, my Lord. I read the secret of your soul. You would destroy both that you may rise and rule in their stead. But tremble! you will not walk steadily where the path is slippery with blood. You will fall likewise."

And she quitted the chamber with Gage.

V

THE NIGHT BEFORE THE EXECUTION.

NOT unprofitably may the Admiral's last hours be contrasted with those of another noble captive, who, only two years before, had occupied the selfsame cell in the Bowyer Tower. Equally comely with Seymour was that illustrious captive—equally proud, daring, and perhaps ambitious, but yet more highly born, more richly endowed in mind, and far less guilty than the Admiral.

Often did Seymour, in his long and lonely hours, think of him—often did he recall their last interview, and the prophetic denunciation uttered by the ill-fated Surrey. But far more sadly, far more painfully, passed the last hours of Seymour's existence than Surrey's had done. The latter had no guilt upon his soul, but had the consolations of religion and philosophy to support him. He could pray—could make his shrift to his confessor and receive absolution. To Surrey it was hard to die—but he was prepared. Seymour's conscience was heavily laden, yet could not be unburthened. Within him was a hell of fierce and conflicting passions, which he was compelled to endure. His pride sustained him, or he must have sunk beneath this mental torture. Groans and fierce imprecations burst from him—but he could not pray. He rejected, as we have seen, the efforts of Latimer and the Bishop of Ely. 'Twould be in vain, he thought, to supplicate Heaven for forgiveness—his offences were too great. To man he would never acknowledge his guilt.

Thus passed the dreary hours of his last day on earth. He knew not that it was his last, because intimation had not yet been given him that the execution was appointed for the morrow, and hope, not yet wholly extinct within his breast, suggested that his life might be spared. But he was more perturbed in spirit than he had ever hitherto been. Only rarely did he sit down; but for the most part continued to pace fiercely to and fro within his cell, like a tiger in its cage.

Towards night he became somewhat calmer, and, feeling

exhausted, sat down upon his chair, when sleep insensibly stole over him. His dreams instantly carried him away from his prison, and brought him back to all the splendours of his gorgeous palace. Once more he was at the head of a princely retinue—once more in a spacious and richly-furnished apartment—once more Elizabeth smiled upon him, and showed him how to win her hand.

From this bright dream he was suddenly and cruelly aroused by the drawing back of the ponderous bolts. The door opened, and the Constable of the Tower came in with the warrant in his hand. His sad aspect, as revealed by the dim light of the lamp on the table, left no doubt as to the nature of his errand.

“Good night, Sir John,” cried Seymour, rising, and speaking with forced composure. “I can guess the tidings you bring me.”

“My Lord,” said Sir John, gravely, yet kindly, “you must prepare for eternity, for you will not see another night on earth. Your execution is fixed for to-morrow morning. It will take place on Tower-hill, and your remains will afterwards be buried in Saint Peter’s Chapel in the Tower.”

“Where I was married to the queen,” murmured Seymour, almost mechanically.

“Where you were married to the queen,” repeated the Constable. “Here is the warrant,” he added, laying it before him.

“’Tis signed by the king!” cried Seymour, staring at it. “I thought he loved me too well to do this. But there is no faith in princes. Did the Princess Elizabeth speak with him, as she promised, Sir John?”

“She did, my Lord; but she could not move him. His Majesty seemed persuaded of your guilt. I can give you no further hope, but recommend you a patient suffering of justice, and preparation to meet your Supreme Judge.”

“Remain with me a few minutes, I pray you, good Sir John,” said the Admiral, somewhat faintly. “The shock, though not unexpected, is severer than I deemed it would be.”

“You are a brave man, I know, my Lord,” observed the Constable, looking at him with surprise, “and I fancied you had no fear of death.”

"Neither have I," replied Seymour; "but I have not yet lost my love of life. One tie binds me to earth, which nothing but the axe can sever. How looked the princess to-day, good Sir John? Did she send any message to me?"

"She bade you a tender farewell, and sent you this embroidered handkerchief, to which her lips have been pressed," replied the Constable.

"Give it me, Sir John," cried Seymour, kissing it rapturously.

"Dismiss her image, if you can, from your mind, my Lord," said Gage, "and make up your account with Heaven. You have much, I fear, to do, and but short time to do it in. Will you see Doctor Latimer to-night?"

"No, Sir John. He troubles me more than he instructs or consoles me. I can pray to Heaven without his aid."

"But if you have any undivulged sin, 'twere well you eased your conscience by confession," remarked the Constable.

"Since Heaven can read the secrets of all hearts, mine must be known to it," rejoined Seymour. "Why should I reveal them to man?"

"Heaven's ministers can give you absolution for your sins," said Gage. "Have compassion upon your soul, I implore you, and save it alive. If you will not see a minister of the gospel, let me send a Romish priest to you. Ha! why do you stare so into the vacancy?"

"Do you not see him?" cried Seymour, with horror-stricken looks, and pointing as he spoke. "There! close behind you!"

"Whom do you imagine you behold?" asked the Constable, not altogether free from the superstitious terrors that affected his companion.

"A former inmate of this cell," replied Seymour, "who died, as I shall die, on Tower-hill."

"The Earl of Surrey!" exclaimed Gage.

"Ay, Surrey," rejoined the Admiral. "He points to his bleeding throat, as if to show me what my fate will be. Look at him, Sir John! Look at him!"

"I can behold nothing," replied the Constable, looking in the direction to which the Admiral pointed,

“Ha! he vanishes!” exclaimed Seymour. “But in his place another phantom rises. ’Tis the injured queen, my consort.”

“Queen Catherine!” exclaimed Gage, in amazement.

“Her features are death-like, and she is wrapped in a shroud; but I know her,” pursued Seymour. “Her looks are full of woe and pity. Oh! forgive me, injured queen! forgive me! I cannot bear those looks.” And he covered his face with his hands.

There was a pause, during which Gage made no remark, but regarded his companion with mingled commiseration and wonder.

After awhile, Seymour looked up again.

“She is gone!” he cried, greatly relieved. “But what is this? Another spectre rising to blast me? Hence, hence! accursed fiend! Thou wert the cause of all.”

“Whose spirit troubles you now, my Lord?” said the Constable.

“That of my malignant and treacherous servant, Ugo Harrington,” replied Seymour. “He points to a yawning wound in his breast, from which blood is streaming, and seems to charge me with his slaughter. ’Tis true I did it, and I would slay him again were it to do. He smiles upon me with a devilish grin, and disappears.”

“Have these phantoms ever visited you before, my Lord?” demanded the Constable.

“Never thus,” replied Seymour, “though I have had dreadful dreams.”

“Let me once more recommend you to make your peace with Heaven,” said the Constable. “These visions show how heavily laden must be your soul, and how needful it is it should be cleansed of its offences. Take what I say to you in good part, I pray you, my Lord. ’Tis well meant.”

“I know it, and I thank you,” replied Seymour, earnestly. “I will strive to profit by your counsel.”

“And now good-night, my Lord,” said the Constable, rising. “To-morrow I will be with you at the appointed hour.”

“You will find me ready,” answered Seymour.

On this Gage took his departure.

As soon as he was left alone, Seymour fell upon his knees, and for the first time since his imprisonment, prayed

long and fervently. Much comforted, he then threw himself on his pallet, and slept tranquilly till the gaoler entered his cell next morning.

"What time is it?" he demanded.

"Tis seven o'clock," replied Tombs. "Your Lordship has but three hours left. At ten the procession sets forth."

"Is the day fair?" inquired the Admiral.

"Somewhat cloudy, but I do not think there will be rain," rejoined the gaoler. "On a melancholy occasion like the present, 'tis meet the weather should correspond. I like not to see the sun shine on an execution."

"To me the weather is indifferent," replied Seymour. "Yet I shall less regret to quit the world if the skies frown on me. Thou must help to attire me presently. 'Tis the last time I shall trouble thee."

"Ay, your Lordship will do well to put on your bravest apparel. You will not die unobserved. There is a great crowd on Tower-hill already."

"Already!" exclaimed Seymour, scarcely able to repress a shudder. "They are eager for the spectacle."

"Ay, many of them came over-night, so Mauger tells me," rejoined Tombs. "He is without, if your Lordship desires to see him."

"Bring him in," said Seymour. And as he rose from his couch, and hastily enveloped himself in a black velvet robe, the headsman entered the cell. With him also came Xit, but as the dwarf kept in the background, Seymour did not at first notice him.

"So thou hast brought the weapon of death with thee, I perceive, fellow?" cried the Admiral, glancing sternly at Mauger, who was clad in a jerkin of blood-red serge, and carried the axe on his shoulder.

"I thought your Lordship might like to examine it," replied Mauger, offering him the weapon. "If you will try the edge with your thumb, you will find it keen."

"I shall try its edge soon enough," rejoined Seymour. "Meantime, I will take thy word for its sharpness. What concerns me most is, that thou shouldst not do thy devoir clumsily."

"Your Lordship shall have no cause to complain of me," said Mauger. "If I take not off your head at one blow, never trust me more."

“I shall not require to trust thee more, good fellow,” replied the Admiral, with a half-smile. “I have not much to give thee,” he added, detaching some gold ornaments from his apparel. “But thou art welcome to these.”

“I thank your Lordship,” replied Mauger, as he took them. “I told you you would die by my hands, and my prediction, you see, has come to pass.”

“But you predicted also that two others would perish in the same manner?”

“And so they will.”

“I could almost forgive thee the blow thou art about to deal me, were I certain of this.”

“Then your Lordship may rest as easy as if you saw it done,” replied Mauger, with a grim smile. “Both their heads will fall by this axe.”

And with an uncouth reverence he drew back, and, while doing so, discovered Xit.

“Ha! thou art come, my little knave?” cried Seymour, on perceiving him. “I am glad to see thee.”

“I am come to take leave of your Lordship,” replied Xit, “and to crave some slight relic in remembrance of you.”

“Here is a brooch,” replied Seymour, detaching it from his cap.

“I would fain have something that your Lordship may wear on the scaffold,” said Xit, with a certain significance.

“All his Lordship’s apparel will belong to me,” observed Mauger.

“True,” replied Seymour, “but thou wilt not begrudge him my velvet slippers?”

“Marry, I do begrudge them; but, since your Lordship desires it, he shall have them,” rejoined Mauger, gruffly.

“Prithee, let him also have the handkerchief with which I bind mine eyes?” said the Admiral.

Mauger returned a gruff assent.

As the dwarf approached to take leave, the Admiral whispered to him,

“Within the sole of one of these slippers thou wilt find a letter to the Princess Elizabeth. See it conveyed to her Highness. Give her also the handkerchief.”

“Your Lordship’s injunctions shall be fulfilled,” replied Xit, pressing his hand upon his heart,

And he quitted the cell with Mauger.

For nearly an hour the Admiral was left to himself, and this interval he passed in prayer. He then attired himself with as much care as if preparing for a fête, and Tombs, who appeared while he was thus engaged, aided him in making his toilette. His habiliments consisted of a doublet and hose of black velvet, with a robe of the same material. His cap was likewise of black velvet, adorned with a red plume.

Shortly before the hour of ten, the awful rolling of muffled drums was heard outside, accompanied by the heavy tread of armed men. A body of yeomen of the guard, it was evident, was collected in front of the Bowyer Tower. As the bell tolled forth the fatal hour, the Constable of the Tower, accompanied by the Lieutenant, entered the cell. Seymour rose to meet them, and said, with a smile,

“Good-morrow to you, Sir John Gage, and to you too, good Sir John Markham. I am glad to see you both. I will not keep you waiting.”

But few more words passed between them. The little however that was said strongly impressed both the Constable and the Lieutenant with Seymour's composure and firmness, and they felt assured that he would die with great constancy.

“Have you any charge to give me, my Lord, ere we set out?” inquired the Constable, kindly.

“Only this, good Sir John,” replied Seymour, “and I am sure, from old friendship, you will see it done for me. You are aware,” he continued, in a voice of deep emotion, “that I have an infant daughter, the offspring of my marriage with Queen Catherine. 'Tis a pretty child, but tender and delicate, and I much fear will not grow to maturity. My estates and possessions being forfeited to the Crown, I have not wherewithal to provide for my child.”

“Give yourself no concern on this score, my Lord,” observed the Constable. “Your sister-in-law, the Duchess of Somerset, I am sure will take care of your infant daughter.”

“I would not have her committed to the duchess's care—nay, I forbid it,” rejoined the Admiral, sternly. “Let her be given to the Marchioness of Dorset, who, for my

sake, I am certain, will treat her kindly. Give my child my blessing, good Sir John, and see my dying wish complied with."

"It shall be done, my Lord," replied the Constable.

While they were thus conversing, the door of the cell opened, and an austere-looking personage, habited in a cassock of dark stuff, and wearing the peculiar cap adopted by the reformed clergy, came in. This was Doctor Hugh Latimer, who, as already mentioned, had several times before visited the Admiral during his imprisonment. A long, grey, pointed beard imparted a venerable character to the divine's somewhat sour physiognomy. A pair of large spectacles were suspended by a cord round his neck, and from his surcingle, in a black leathern case, hung the Bible.

"I am come to attend you to the scaffold, my Lord," he said, coldly saluting the Admiral, "and I trust you are better prepared to appear before your Heavenly Judge than when I last parted from you."

"At least, I am penitent," rejoined the Admiral; "but little time is now left me for amendment."

"Enough, my son, if you use it well," said Latimer, in a more softened tone.

"My Lord, I must pray you to set forth," said the Constable, throwing open the door, and passing out.

"I am ready," replied Seymour, following him with a firm footstep.

VI.

TOWER-HILL.

OUTSIDE, as we have intimated, was waiting a large body of yeomen of the guard, armed with halberds. In the midst of them stood Mauger, leaning on his axe, his features being concealed by a hideous black and bearded mask. Two chargers, trapped in black, were likewise in waiting for the Constable and the Lieutenant.

Having mounted his steed, Sir John Gage gave the word to move on, and the mournful procession, which had been rapidly formed, set forward. At its head rode the Constable, the sorrowful expression of his countenance showing how profoundly he was affected. His charger seemed to sympathise with him, and exhibited none of its customary spirit. Then followed the chaplain of the Tower in his robes, with an open Prayer-book in his hand, on which his eyes remained fixed as he moved along. Then came the trumpeters, *with* their clarions, which they did not sound, suspended from their necks. After them came the drummers, *beating* their muffled drums. Then came thirty yeomen of the guard, marching three abreast, and headed by the three gigantic warders. Then, after a short interval, came Mauger, masked, limping in his gait, and carrying the axe with its edge towards the prisoner, who marched with firm step and undaunted deportment a short distance behind him. The Admiral was closely followed by Latimer. Another detachment of yeomen of the guard, preceded by the Lieutenant of the Tower on horseback, brought up the rear.

Many persons were collected on the green, on the walls, and at different other points, curious to see how the Admiral would demean himself on this trying occasion. All were astonished at his fortitude. His countenance was wan from anxiety and long confinement, but his figure was erect as ever, his carriage stately and dignified, and his looks haughty and unbending. Nothing that was passing within could be read from his features. But what memories of other and brighter days were wakened as he passed along the wide open space in front of the White Tower, and gazed at the palace beyond it! To check the painful current of his thoughts, he looked in the opposite direction.

At that moment he was close to the Beauchamp Tower, and, casting his eyes upon the frowning structure, he beheld the Duke of Norfolk gazing at him through a strongly-grated window. Their glances met, and how much did that single look convey! There was no exultation over a fallen foe in the duke's glance—no smile of gratified vengeance lighted up his venerable features—but he shook his head mournfully. Seymour faltered for a moment, but in-

stantly recovering himself, strode on with as much firmness as before. Norfolk's look and mournful shake of the head however continued to haunt him. "I would I had not seen him," he thought.

The procession now passed beneath the gloomy arch of the Bloody Tower, and in the outer ward more spectators were congregated, grouped on either side of the way. Many of these audibly expressed their commiseration for the Admiral, but were rebuked both by word and gesture by Latimer, who shook his staff at them. But the ire of the austere divine was yet more vehemently roused by an incident which shortly afterwards occurred. The first detachment of the guard had passed through the gateway of the By-ward Tower, and Seymour was just approaching it, when Xit, who was stationed among the bystanders, sprang forward, and ere he could be prevented, threw himself at his feet. In another moment the poor dwarf was removed by one of the guard, who pushed him aside with the pole of his halberd, but he sobbed out a piteous farewell.

The most trying part of the ceremony had now to be undergone, and Seymour braced his nerves firmly for it. Already the horrible roar of the vast multitude collected near the outer gate of the fortress and on Tower-hill could be distinctly heard. There was something awful in this sound, and for a moment Seymour felt appalled by it, but the feeling instantly passed away, and by the time he was exposed to the gaze of those thousand inquisitive spectators, whose eyes were eagerly fixed upon him, devouring his every look and gesture, and commenting upon them as a Roman concourse might upon a gladiator, he was as full of intrepidity as before. Nor did his extraordinary power of fascination fail him at this supreme moment. As he marched slowly on, looking to the right and left in search of friendly faces, loud murmurs arose among the crowd, cries began to be raised, many persons pressed forward, and it required the utmost efforts of the arquebusiers, who were arranged in double lines all the way to the scaffold, to keep back the throng.

"Be patient, my good friends," cried Seymour, waving them back. "You will harm yourselves, and not serve me."

But this, instead of allaying the excitement of the crowd, increased it, and the tumult threatening to become dangerous, Sir John Gage, fearing a rescue might be attempted, ordered the guard to close round the prisoner, and accelerate their pace. This was done, and not a moment too soon, for the lines of halberdiers were broken in two or three places by the rabble, who, disappointed in their expectations of reaching the Admiral, attacked the guard, wrested their halberds from them, and a sharp conflict ensued, in the course of which some persons were killed, and many others grievously wounded. Loud and fierce execrations were uttered against the Lord Protector, and he was denounced as the murderer of his brother.

In anticipation of some such disturbances as actually took place, a company of German lansquenets had been placed around the scaffold, and these were strengthened by the mounted City train-bands, so that the place of execution was completely invested. An enormous multitude was collected. The whole area of Tower-hill was thronged, and in the vicinity of the scaffold, which stood on the highest ground on the north-west of the fortress, scarce an inch of ground was unoccupied.

Owing to the precautions taken by the Constable, Seymour was brought to the scaffold in safety, and when he soon afterwards mounted the steps and appeared upon it, a tremendous shout arose from the beholders.

Hitherto the day had been dull and gloomy, but at that moment a slight burst of sunshine fell upon him, and illumining his noble countenance, rendered him yet more conspicuous to the vast assemblage, whose eyes were strained towards him. Not in his proudest moments had he looked more majestic than he did now that he stood upon those fatal boards, nor perhaps, for one instant, more elated. But the smile which had played upon his features quickly faded away, as did the sunshine that had lighted them up, and left them pale and rigid-looking as marble.

He had been preceded upon the scaffold by the Constable and the Lieutenant, together with Mauger. By this time Latimer had mounted the steps, and stood beside him. No other person was allowed upon the scaffold.

It had been the Admiral's intention to address the

crowd, and for this purpose he advanced towards the edge of the scaffold, and, bowing to the bystanders, began to speak, but such a tumult arose, and so many vociferations were raised, that his words were completely drowned, and he yielded—though with manifest reluctance—to the Constable's entreaties to him to desist. Taking off his cap, he cried in a sonorous voice that rose loud above the disturbance, "Long live King Edward!" The shout was received with acclamations, followed by fresh groans and hootings against the Lord Protector.

Latimer then approached him, and asked if he sincerely repented his sins, and placed his hope in the Saviour? But Seymour, scarcely heeding him, and anxious, as it seemed, to get done with the scene, called fiercely to the executioner to make haste, and throwing off his gown revealed a figure which, for symmetry, was unrivalled.

Again Latimer approached him, and was again repulsed.

Seymour then knelt down, and deep silence fell upon the multitude.

His prayers, which did not occupy many minutes, being ended, he signed to Mauger that he was ready. Then, approaching the block, he knelt down beside it, took the brodered handkerchief sent him by Elizabeth from his doublet, pressed his lips to it, and fastened it over his eyes.

At this moment Latimer advanced, and cried out in his ear, "Repent!"

"Away!" cried the Admiral. "You distract me."

He then laid his comely neck upon the block, and the axe descended.

Thus perished the guilty and aspiring Seymour. According to Latimer, he died "very dangerously, irksomely, horribly." Others however judged him more charitably, and thought he made a brave ending. No doubt he suffered justly.

Under the superintendence of the worthy Constable his mutilated remains were interred in Saint Peter's Chapel in the Tower.

Three years later, his brother, the Duke of Somerset—likewise decapitated—was laid beside him. Eighteen

months after that, the ambitious Duke of Northumberland, known in this chronicle as the Earl of Warwick, also beheaded, was buried in the same place, within a few paces of the brothers whose destruction he had contrived.

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