

THE
H I S T O R Y
OF THE
King and the Cobler.

IN TWO PARTS.

PART I. Shews how King Henry VIIIth used to visit the Watches in the City; his acquaintance with a merry Cobler; how he was entertained in the Cobler's cellar, and what bad like to have befallen them: how upon parting the King invited him to court and what befell him there.

PART II. Informs what passed betwene the Cobler and his Wife Joan on his return from court; also how the Queen, bearing off their mirth which the Cobler made, was desirous of seeing him; upon which the King disguised himself as a Tanner and went to sell the Cobler some leather, and took the Queen with him, as a young country maid: how the King invited the Cobler and his Wife to dine with them at an Inn, and what passed there, and lastly how the Cobler was put in fear of his life and came off with flying colours.

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THE
HISTORY
OF THE
KING and the COBLER.
PART I.

CHAP. I.

How King Henry VIII. used to visit the watchmen in the city, and how he became acquainted with a merry jolly Cobler.

IT was the custom of KING HENRY VIII. late in the night, to walk the streets in disguise, to take notice how the constables and watch performed their duty in guarding the gates, and watching the inward parts of the city, to prevent those disturbances and casualities which often happen by night, in great and populous cities. This he did often without the least discovery; always returning home to Whitehall early in the morning. Once, on his return, coming through the Strand, he took notice of a certain cobbler, who was constantly up at work, whistling and singing every morning. He resolved to see him, and be acquainted with him, in order to which, he immediately knocked off the heel of his shoe by striking it against a stone; and having so done, he bounced into the cobbler's stall.

Who's there? cries the cobbler,

Here's one, said the King.

With that the cobbler opened the stall door, and the king asked him, if he could put on his heel.

'Yes, that I can,' says the cobbler; 'come in, honest fellow, and sit thee down by me, and I will do it for thee straight.' The cobbler scraped his old shoes to one side, with his awl, to make room for the king to sit by him.

KING AND THE COBLER.

The king being hardly able to forbear laughing at the kindness of the cobbler, asked him if there was not a house hard by which sold a cup of good ale, and if the people were up?

'Yes' said the cobbler, 'there is an inn ^{eye} the way there, I believe the folk are up, for th^e carriers go from thence very early in the morn^{ing}.'

With that the king borrowed an old shoe of the cobbler's, and went over to the inn, desiring the cobbler to bring his shoe thither to him, as soon as he had put on his heel, again: the cobbler promised he would; so making what haste he could to put the heel on, he carried it over to the king, saying, 'Honest blade, here is thy shoe, I'll warrant thee it will not come off again in haste.'

'Very well,' said the king, 'what must you have for your pains?'

'A couple of pence,' answered the cobbler.

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

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

So the cobbler sat down by the king and was very merry, and drank off the liquor freely. He also sung some of his merry songs and catches whereat the king laughed heartily, and was very pleasant and jocund with the cobbler, telling him withal that his name was *Harry Tudor*, and that he belonged to the court; and that if he would come and see him there, he would make him very welcome, because he was such a merry fellow; and charged him to be there and not to forget his name, and to ask any one about the court for him, and they would bring him to him: For said the king, I am very well known there.

Now the cooler little dreamed that he was the king who spoke to him, much less that the king's deal of confidence, he stands up and pulls off his hat, and makes two or three scraps with his foot, and gives the king many thanks, telling him that he was one of the honestest fellows he ever met with in all his life time; and though he had never been at court, yet it should not be long before he would make a holy day to come and see him.

Whereupon the king discharged the house for what they had drank, would have taken his leave of the cobler,

But the cobler not being willing to part with the king, took him by the hand, and said, 'By my faith, you must not go yet: you shall first go and see my poor habitation; I have there a tub of good brown ale that was never tapp'd, you must needs go and taste of it, for you are the honestest blade that I ever met withal; and I love an honest merry companion with all my heart.'

G H A P. II.

How the Cobler entertained the King in his cellar, and of the disturbance they'd like to have had by the Cobler's Wife Joan.

SO the cobler took the king with him over the way, where he had a cellar adjoining to the stall, which was handsomely and neatly furnished for a man of his profession; into this cellar he had the king; 'There,' said he, 'sit down, you are very welcome, But I must desire you to speak softly for fear of awakening my wife Joan, who lies here hard by,' shewing the king a close bed made up neatly at the corner of the cellar, much like unto a closet, 'for if she should wake, she will make your ears ring again.'

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

Wherupon the cobler kindled the fire, and fetched out a brown loaf; from which he cut a sulty toast, which he set a baking at the fire, then he brought out his Cheshire cheese. Come said he, will you eat some Cheshire cheese; there is as good fellowship in eating as drinking.

This made the king admire the honest freedom of the cobler so having eaten a bit, the cobler began a health to all true hearts, and merry companions; at which the king smiling, said, 'Good merry friend, I'll pledge thee.'

In this manner they ate and drank together until it was almost break of day. The cobler being very free of his liquor, and delighting the king with several of his old stories, in so much, that the king was highly pleased with the manner of the cobler's entertainment; when on a sudden the cobler's wife Joan began to awake: 'I, faith, says the cobler, you must be gone, my wife Joan begins to grumble, she will awake presently, and I would not for half the shoes in my shop she would find you here.'

So taking the king by the hand, he led him up stairs, saying, 'Farewell honest blade, it shall not be long before I make a holy day, and come to see the court.'

'You shall be kindly welcome,' replied the king. So they parted the king on his way to Whitehall and the cobler to his cellar and there having put all things to rights, before his wife Joan got up, he fell to work again, whistling and singing as merry as he used to do, being much satisfied that he had happened on so good and jovial a companion, and still carefessing in his thoughts how merry he should be when he came to court.

C H A P. III.

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

NOW as soon as the king came home, he sent orders out about the court, that if any one enquired for him, by the name of Harry Tudor, they should immediately bring the person before him, whatever he was, without any further examination of him. Now the cobbler thought every day a month till he had been at court to see his new acquaintance, and was much troubled how he should get leave of his wife Joan, for he could not go without her knowledge; because he resolved to make himself as fine as he could, and the wife always kept the key of his holyday clothes.

Whereupon, one evening, as they sat at supper, finding her in a very good humour, he began to open his mind to her, telling her the whole story of their acquaintance and repeating over and over again that, 'He was the honestest fellow that ever I met with.' 'Husband, quoth she, because you have been so ingenious as to tell me the whole truth. I will give you leave to make a holyday for this once: You shall go to court, and I will make you as fine as I can.'

So it was agreed that he should go the next day, whereupon Joan rose, betimes the next morning to brush up her husband's holyday clothes, and to make him as snug as she could, washed and ironed the laced band and made his shoes shine that he might see his face in them; having done this, she made her husband rise and put off his shirt, then she washed him with warm water from head to foot, putting on him a clean shirt, afterwards she dressed him in his holyday clothes, pinning his laced band in place.

C H A P. IV.

The Cobler's reception at Court, with the manner of his behaviour before the King.

THE cobler being thus set forth, strutted thro' the streets like a crow in a gutter, thinking himself as fine as the best of them all: in this manner he came to court, staring on this body and that body as he walked up and down and knowing no body to ask for Harry Tudor: At last he espied one, as he thought, in the habit of a servant man, to him he made his address, saying, 'Dost thou hear, honest fellow, do you know one Harry Tudor, who belongs to the court.'

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

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

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

So the cobler followed the yoeman, much admiring the finery of the rooms he went through: and thinking within himself that the yoeman was mistaken in the person he enquired after

'For, said he, the man whom I look for, is a plain merry honest fellow, his name is Harry Tudor, we drank two pots together not long since, I suppose he may belong to some lord or other about the court

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

So going forward, he came to the room where the king was; accompanied with several of the nobles.

As soon as the yoeman had put by the array he

spoke aloud, saying ' May it please your Majesty,
 ' Here is one who enquires for Harry Tudor.' The
 cobbler hearing this, thought he had committed no
 less than treason; therefore he up with his heels
 and ran for it, but not being acquainted with the se-
 veral turnings and rooms through which he came,
 he was soon overtaken and brought before the king,
 whom the cobbler little thought to be the person he
 enquired after, therefore, in a trembling condition,
 he fell down upon his knees, saying, ' May it please
 ' your Grace, may it please your Highness, I am a
 ' poor cobbler, and enquired for one Harry Tudor,
 ' who is a very honest fellow; I mended the heel
 ' of his shoe not long since, for which he paid me
 ' nobly, and gave me two pots to boot, but I had
 ' him over afterwards to my cellar, where we drank
 ' part of a cup of nappy ale, and were very merry,
 ' until my wife Joan began to grumble, which put
 ' an end to our merriment for that time, but I told
 ' him I would come to the court and see him as
 ' soon as I conveniently could.'

' Well, said the king, Be not troubled: would
 ' you know this honest fellow again, if you saw
 ' him? The cobbler replied ' Yes, that I would
 ' from a thousand.' Then said the king, ' Stand up,
 ' and be not afraid, look well about you, peradven-
 ' ture, you may find the fellow in this company.,

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

He therefore told the king, ' He did not expect
 ' to find Harry Tudor among such fine folks as he
 ' saw there; but that the person he looked for was

KING AND THE COBLER.

‘ a plain, honest, and true hearted fellow; adding
 ‘ withal, that he was sure, did Harry Tudor but
 ‘ know that he was come to court, he would make
 ‘ him very welcome. At which speech of the cob-
 ‘ ler’s the king had much ado to forbear laughing out
 ‘ right, but keeping his countenance as steady as he
 ‘ could, he said to the yeoman of the guard, ‘ Here
 ‘ take this honest cobbler down into my cellar, and
 ‘ let him drink my health, and I will give orders
 ‘ that Harry Tudor shall come to him presently.’

So away they went, the cobbler ready to leap out
 of his skin for joy not only that he came so well off,
 but also that he should find his friend Harry Tudor.

C H A P. V.

*The cobbler’s entertainment in the king’s cellar; how
 he met with his new friend Harry Tudor, and
 how he came to know him to be the king.*

THE cobbler had not been long in the king’s cel-
 lar, before the king came to him in the same
 dress and habit, he had on when the cobbler mended
 his shoe, whereupon the cobbler knew him and ran
 and kissed him, saying, ‘ Honest Harry, I have
 ‘ made a holyday to see you, but I had much ado
 ‘ to get leave of my wife, who was loth that I
 ‘ should lose so much time from my work, but I was
 ‘ resolved to see you, I therefore made myself as fine
 ‘ as I could; but I’ll tell you Harry, when I came to
 ‘ the court I was in a peck of trouble how to find
 ‘ you out, but at last I met with a man who told me
 ‘ he knew you very well and that he would bring
 ‘ me to you, but instead of doing so, he brought
 ‘ me before the king, which affrighted me out of
 ‘ my seven senses; but good friend, added he, I am
 ‘ resolved to be merry with you, since I have had
 ‘ the good fortune of meeting with you at last.

‘ Ay, that you shall, replied the king, we’ll be
 ‘ as merry as princes.’ With that he called for
 a large glass of wine and drank to the cobbler and
 the king’s good health; said the cobbler, ‘ Honest
 ‘ Harry I will pledge thee with all my heart.’ Now
 after the cobbler drank four or five good healths, he
 began to be merry, and fell singing his old songs
 and catches, which pleased the king very much,
 and made him laugh heartily; when on a sudden,
 several of the nobles came into the cellar, extra-
 ordinary rich in apparel, who stood bare at Harry
 Tudor, which put the cobler into a great amazement
 at first, but recovering himself, he looked more
 wishfully upon Harry Tudor, when presently he
 knew him to be the king, whom he saw in the pre-
 sence chamber, though in another habit. He im-
 mediately fell upon his knees, saying, May it
 ‘ please your Grace, Highness, I am an honest poor
 ‘ cobbler and mean no harm.’

‘ No, no said the king, nor shall you receive any
 ‘ here.’ He commanded him therefore to rise up,
 and be as merry as before, and that he should use
 the same freedom with him as he did before, when
 he mended the heel of his shoe. This kind speech
 of the king’s and three or four glasses of more wine,
 made the cobbler to be in as good humour as he was
 before; telling the king several of his pretty stories,
 and singing some of his best songs, very much to
 the satisfaction of the king and his nobles.

The COBLER’S SONG in the KING’S Cellar.

TUNE—JENNY GIN.

COME let us drink the other pot,
 Our sorrows to confound :
 We’ll laugh and sing before the king,
 So let his health go round.

For I'm as bold as bold can be,
 No cobbler e'er was ruder,
 Then here, good fellow, here's to thee,
 Remember Harry Tudor.

When I'm at work within my stall,
 Upon him I shall think:
 His kindness I to mind will call
 When'er I eat or drink.
 His kindness was to me so great,
 The like was never known;
 His kindness I will still repeat,
 And so shall my wife Joan.

I'll laugh when I sit in my stall,
 And merrily I will sing:
 That I with my poor last and awl,
 Am a fellow with a king.
 But it is more I must confess,
 Then I at first did know,
 But Harry Tudor ne'ertheless,
 Resolv'd it should be so.

And farewell unto Whitehall,
 I homeward must retire,
 To sing and whistle in my stall,
 My wife will me desire.
 I do but think how she will laugh,
 When she hears of this thing,
 How he who drank her nut-brown ale
 Was England's royal King.

C H A P VI.

How the Cobbler became a Courtier.

NOW the king considering the pleasant humour
 of the cobbler, how innocently merry he was,
 and free from any designs: that he was a per-
 son that laboured very hard and took a great deal
 of pains for a small livelihood, was pleas'd, out

of his princely grace and favour, to allow him a liberal annuity of forty merks a year for better support of his jolly humour, and the maintenance of his wife Joan, and that he should be admitted one of his courtiers, and might have freedom of his cellar whenever he pleased: which being so much beyond expectation, did high'y exalt the cobbler's humour, much to the satisfaction of the king.

P A R T II.

C H A P. I.

Of the Cobbler's return from court, to his wife Joan, and the comical discourse that pass between them.

C hristopher Crispin, for so was the cobbler named, with whom King Henry the Eighth had made himself so exceeding familiar: this cobbler, I say, having been at court where he made much mirth, and was much made of on account of that mirth, returned home in the afternoon full fraughted with wine, and wonderful expectations; his heart and head being light; he went capering along, flinging up his cap, crying 'Long live Harry Tudor long live Harry Tudor,' with a hundred boys at his heels, hooping and hallowing; his wife standing at the door, and seeing him prancing along in such a posture, immediately put on one of her accustomed crabbed looks, crying 'High, tittie, What's come to you now? Ill Harry Tudor you with a vengeance? was it for this that I dress you up in pimlico, in all your best apparel, to have you come home like one just out of Bedlam?' 'Peace, wife, quoth the cobbler, for I am upon perfection, I am promised to be made a courtier, that I am.' 'A courtier, quoth Joan, ad-foot, more likely a cuckold, you drunken scoundril.'

‘ Nay, quoth the cobler, You must know that it is from you that I must have that favour, if it be conferred upon me. Cease your prattling, quoth Joan, and get you to bed, that you may rise in the morning and fall to your business, for this wicked course of life will never do.’ With these and other like reprimands, the conquered poor Crispin, who for quietness sake, forthwith went to bed; where we will leave him to take his rest. Let us now return to the court and say something of what pass’d between the king, queen, and nobles, relating to that day’s comical adventure.

C H A P. II.

How the Queen upon bearing much mirth at Court, came with her maids of honour to know the cause thereof, and how cardinal Wolsey, the proud prelate, curbed the King, for being, as he said, too free with a poor Cobler.

NOW it is to be noticed, that the cobler was no sooner gone, but the king with his nobles, began to renew their mirth, by rehearsing the many comical fancies and pleasant pranks with which the cobler entertained them; and what added the more to their recreation and sport was a certain lord, who put himself into a country habit, and imitated the cobler so to the life, that the king and the rest of the nobles fell into a fit of laughter, which lasted for a considerable time without any intermission; whereupon the queen with her maids of honour, came to enquire into the cause of such general mirth.

‘ My liege, said the queen, I’m glad to hear you and your nobles so merry; and would we as glad to know what fancies have been the occasion of so much laughter.’ ‘ My Lady, quoth the king, we have had the company of a comical cobbler, the like of whom never came to court since

‘ the conquest ; for his downright honest simplicity
 ‘ has afforded us much pastime.’ Then said the
 queen, ‘ I wish I had been there to have been par-
 ‘ taker of this mirth.’ Then the king replied, ‘ It
 ‘ may not be too late as yet ; for I will contrive
 ‘ with the very first opportunity to give you a sight
 ‘ of him under some disguise ; by which we will
 ‘ soon have new proofs of his pleasant pastime.’

But then said the proud prelate Cardinal Wol-
 fey, ‘ How do these frolics agree with your king-
 ly dignity ? what will your friends and allies say,
 when they will hear how you converse and take
 pleasure in the company of a poor cobbler ?’ Why,
 said the king, ‘ Wolsey, have you not heard of the
 industrious bee, that extracts honey as well from the
 meanest flowers, as the richest blossoms ? and if so,
 why may not I experience the fidelity of my people
 by conversing with a poor cobbler, as well as I may
 by the crafty policy of a proud cardinal.

This choak pear stopped the mouth of cardinal
 Wolsey, whilst the king, queen and nobles, pursued
 their mirth to the height of their satisfaction.

C H A P. III.

*How the Cobbler the next morning was thunder-struck
 by his wife, and how, upon singing a new song,
 which he had made, she once took him to coram-no-
 bis. With many other things very remarkable.*

YOU may remember how the cobbler at his fro-
 licksome return home from court, was summo-
 ned to bed by the strict orders of Joan his com-
 manding wife, where he slept secure till towards the
 morning when she suddenly made him start with a
 thunder clap of, ‘ Thou drunken swine, and whim-
 ‘ sical wood-cock, is it not time to rise ? Is this the
 ‘ course of life you intend to lead ?’ at which words
 poor cobbler awakened, and that he might get
 of the hearing of this certain lecture, he leaped

out of bed. put on his clothes, and his considering cap; so passing away to his stall, he fell to work upon his old shoes and boots as fierce as a fury, and as blythe as a bird in the returning spring; pleasing his fancy with a song of his own making.

HIS SONG.

THOUGH now I sit within my stall,
 Old soles and slippers mending,
 I to the court shall have a call,
 There's hope depending.
 I do not value crusty Joan.
 Though once in tears I woo'd her,
 I have the favour, 'tis well known,
 Of honest Harry Tudor;
 He gives me forty merks a year,
 Which is a deal of treasure;
 Besides all this there is no fear
 Of having courtly pelasure.
 I wish old Joan she would die,
 Though once with tears I woo'd her:
 I'd go to court and there live by
 My dear friend Harry Tudor.

Now whilst the cobbler was making himself merry with singing this new made song, Joan suddenly chop'd upon him, and bearing him mention the name of Tudor, salutes him in this manner, 'Out you drunken scoundril are ye going a Tudoring it again, I thought ye had got enough yesterday. Come down to breakfast, you blockhead.' With that he immediately follows her like a patient man, whilst she continued scolding in this manner, 'I need not ask you whether or not you met with your pot companion, for I think you gave me full enough proof that you did by the drunken condition you came home in; I think you told me he was something of a courtier but I rather take him to be a carman or a drunken porter, Pray where's

' the money you carried out with you? you had
 ' fourpence halfpenny of me that I let you have
 ' out of my own pocket. because I would have you
 ' appear like a man; and besides what you took
 ' of Johnson the old joiner, and likewise of Simion
 ' Soufecrown the sadler for two pair of heelpieces,
 ' und now come let me see what you have left?' a-
 ' las, said the cobler, ' My friend was so far from
 ' letting me spend any thing that he has given me
 ' what may be the making of us both.' ' Why
 ' husband, quoth Joan, What has he given you?
 ' Why, to tell you the truth, my sweet wife, he has
 ' settled forty merk on you and me, and as a sure
 ' token of his goodness, he has given me these two
 ' broad pieces of gold.' ' O me! quoth Joan, did
 ' thy friend give thee all this? Well, God's blessing
 ' on his loving heart he's an honest fellow I'll war-
 ' rant him.' ' Who do you call fellow! quoth her
 ' husband, he that is so particular a friend of mine
 ' is no worse a person than our gracious King Hen-
 ' ry, and, were he to know what you have said of
 ' him to me, you might happen to die upon the
 ' fruit of hemp seed by which I might be rid of a
 ' Sirew.' ' Sweet husband, quoth Joan, pardon
 ' what I have said through my ignorance, and never
 ' divulge my unfortunate sayings as you love me,
 ' and I will never call you ill names for the future,
 ' during my life.' ' Be sure, quoth he you keep your
 ' promise, and I will assure you that all will be well

*How the King took to himself the title of a Tanner,
 and come to the Cobler to sell him a piece of lea-
 ther, and how the Queen, in the disguise of a coun-
 try maid, passed for his kinswoman, who wanted
 service, with other passages of very much mirth.*

KING Henry, as you have heard promised the
 Queen that she should be accommodated with

some of the cobbler's figaries, now his care was how to make good his promise; that is to say, how he might bring himself into the cobbler's company without the honest cobbler knowing who he was. Many thoughts came into his head, but amongst the rest, one he resolves upon, which is this, The king sends a man and a horse down into the country, there to buy leather fit for shoe-makers, and to send it to London by the carrier, who came to the same inn, which was over against the foresaid cobbler. This was accordingly done; the king in the habit of a plain country man came to the inn with his queen, who, in the dress of an innocent country maiden, pass for his kinswoman; he passing for a tanner that was come to receive and sell the leather; the king having paid the carrier for bringing his parcel, calls for some of the best liquor the house afforded; which being brought, he asked the inn-keeper whether or not he could help him to a chapman for his leather; who answered, ' There is an honest fellow of a cobbler over the way, I'll send for him, he'll either buy it, or help you to a chapman for it no doubt.' Then the king said, ' Pray thee send for him.' Whereupon the cobbler was called, who came capering like a morrice-danceer, saying, ' Who wants me?' ' This gentleman, said the inn-keeper, he has a parcel of leather to sell.' ' I'll buy it, said the cobbler, if it be for my turn.' Now having looked over it, he asked the price: the king not knowing what it was worth, asked him forty shillings. ' Harry! quoth he, I wish you may have come honestly by it, for though I am the buyer, I must tell you it is worth a great deal more.' ' That is neither here nor there, said the king, I am for selling it off, which when I have done, I don't think to deal in leather for the future any more, for I am for a place at the court, and this young maid my kinswoman, is likewise desirous

' to wait on some lady ' ' Mary, quoth the cob-
 ' ler if it be so, perhaps I may do you a piece of
 ' service, for as simple as I sit here: though I say
 ' it myself, I am well acquainted with the king;
 ' and as you seem to have both good honest faces,
 ' I do protest I will do you all the good I can, that
 ' I will; and there's my hand on the same.' ' Thou
 ' sayest well, quoth the king, and if thou do me
 ' any kindness, I do not matter if I give thee that
 ' leather as a reward of thy goodness, and so here's
 ' to thee.' ' I thank thee,' quoth the cobbler, and
 by the time he had drunk three or four carouses,
 his heart grew light, and he told the king he would
 sing him a song of his own making. At which the
 queen, when she heard it, laughed heartily; for he
 had many jokes, and pleasant songs; he delighted
 the queen more than any thing she had seen or met
 with in her life. At length it grew towards noon,
 the cobbler was for going with them towards the
 court; but he must dress himself, for he would not
 appear before the king in his cobbler's clothes, for
 all the shoes in his shop.

C H A P. V.

*How the King invited the Cobbler and his wife to
dinner, and the discourse that passed thereupon.*

THE cobbler being gone, the king turned himself
 to the queen, saying, ' How like you the
 conversation of this comical Crispin? The queen
 said, ' right well, besides I see something of a prin-
 ' ciple in him, which in my judgment, seems to out-
 ' shine his poverty; for, my leige when you offered
 ' the leather to him at a low price he let you know
 ' it was worth much more, and therefore was loth
 ' to meddle with it, fearing you came not honestly
 ' by it, and what I observed in him is that he had
 ' a right heart, brisk and merry; and for ought I
 ' know, enjoys more happiness in his course and

‘homely cottage, then a courtier, or a colonel
‘with all their great accomplishments.’

‘Not too much of that,’ quoth the king, ‘for
‘I well remember thst when he had me down in-
‘to his lower cellar to drink a cup of nappy ale,
‘and ate some of his bread and cheefe, all on a
‘sudden his wife, Joan began to rouse from her
‘night’s rest, and I found he began to be afraid;
‘for he said, Friend, you must be gone; I would
‘not that Joan my wife should catch you here, no
‘not for all the shoes in my shop. And thereupon
‘rather than the cobbler shou d be cudgelled by his
‘wife, got away with us great speed as might be’
‘My leige,’ said the queen. ‘you were hard put
‘to it.’ In troth,’ quoth the king, ‘so I was.’
Then with a smile her mzejesty said, ‘I would wil-
‘lingly see her.’ ‘She shal be sent for,’ said the
king, and thereupon called the innkeeper to let
them know what he would let them have for din-
ner? who told them he had a shoulder of mutton,
which should be ready in half an hour.

‘That will do,’ said the king, ‘and therefore
‘call the cobbler and his wife, for I desire they may
‘both dine with me.’ The innkeeper having de-
livered his message, Joan set up a railing, saying,
‘What sot is this that has sent for you now; I
‘shall have you drunk again, that I shall.’

‘Why, quoth the cobbler, did you not tell me
‘the other day that you would never scold me a-
‘gain, if I would but keep your counsel, and do
‘you begin already? Go put on your best red pet-
‘ticoat and waistcoat whilst I dress myself, for I
‘do not know but we may take a walk to court af-
‘ter dinner; and it will be for your credit to see
‘the king in your best apparel.’ Now Joan having
a fear for what she had formerly said, doubting that
he might out with all, poor creature, she was fain
to bridle her unruly tongue, and turn her crabbed

frown into a sweet and pleasant smile; all with obedience to her husband, she made herself as fine as a London milk maid upon a May-day, and Crispin likewise brushed up his beard and then went over with Joan as pert as a pea-monger. The king taking the glass drank to the cobbler's wife, who simpering like a firmity kettle, said, I thank you Sir. Then passing it to her husband, he filled up a bumper, and drank to the queen, with this compliment, 'Young woman you are welcome to London and I don't question but to help you to a service that may be to your heart's content.

Now by the time the glass had gone round, dinner was ready, the cobbler craved leave to say the grace: it was short, and when ended, the king carved for the queen and himself, and bade the cobbler and his wife do the like; Quoth Joan, 'I know my husband is for the cugkold's bit, and so here it is let him have it.' At which saying, the king and queen smiled, her majesty being much more pleased with the mirth than the meat, fed sparingly; at which the cobbler merrily said, 'Young woman, if you come to dine with the servants of a nobleman's family, adfuku, you must lay about you better than you do, or they will make you as fat as a hen in the forehead,

With this and the like discourse they passed away the time for an hour, and the king and queen withdrew into another room there to consult about finishing the comical adventure.

C H A P. VI.

How the Cobbler was put in fear of his life, and how he came off with flying colours.

NOW the king had formerly told the secretary of state, that he would send his royal signet to him, by a messenger, whom he should secure in order to give an account, upon examination, how

he came by it. Wherefore he presently calls for pen ink and paper, and writes the letter, wherein he incloses the signet aforesaid; and having directed the letter, he desired the cobbler to carry it, who was ready to serve him. Now Joan was resolved to go with him, and did so because she would keep him from being drunk.

They had no sooner gone out, but the king called for the reckoning, and having paid it; he and his queen went privately by water to their palace, where they pulled off their disguise, and appeared in their royal apparel; the king with his nobles, and the queen with her maids of honour. By this time the cobbler and his wife delivered the letter to the secretary, who opened the same seemed to startle and with a frowning countenance, said 'Behold here is the king's signet; how came you by it!'

'Why,' say the cobbler, 'I had the letter, and whatever was in it I know not, only I had the letter from a tanner.' The secretary replied, 'if you do not bring the tanner to me, take my word for it, we shall make an example of you.' 'Why,' quoth Joan, 'you will not hang my husband will ye?' quoth the secretary, 'it will go hard with him if he do not find the tanner.' 'I'll fetch him presently' quoth Joan. But coming to the inn, and finding they were gone, poor Joan fell into a violent fit of the tanterians, tearing her hair and wringing her hands, crying, 'What will become of my poor cobbler, he will be hanged.' 'For what?' said the inn keeper; but Joan had not the patience to tell him her lamentation, crying, 'O the tanner. O the tanner, O the tanner is gone!' and in this condition raving like a fury, or like a lunatick person broken out of bedlam; she ran back again to Westminster with a multitude of men, women and children after

her, who wanted to know the cause; but Joan continued, crying 'O the tanner is gone! and my poor Crispin what will become of thee?' Which words her husband heard just as she was entering the door; he cried, 'Dear Joan, have you brought them with you?' With me, quoth Joan, 'No, no; they are gone, and you are left to suffer: now it had been better for you to mind your work, than to follow every one that sends for you now you may see what you have brought yourself to; nothing would serve you, it seems, the other day, but to be a courtier, such was your ambitious fancy; but let me tell you if they have a fancy to hang you, that I may say you have made fine work on't, and I doubt not but it will be a warning to you for the future; I cannot but think now like a courtier you look now in this melancholly condition.'

While she was thus insulting poor Crispin, the king was told of these transactions, and therefore sent that he might be brought before him, which was accordingly done; but as the cobbler approached the presence of the king, every joint of him trembled, for he expected to find no favour. Now he came before the king, who, with an angry countenance said, 'cobbler, how came you by my signet?' The poor cobbler falling on his knees, and wringing his hands cried, 'May it please your Grace, may it please your honour, I had it from a tanner, who sent for me to the Bell, in the Strand, to buy a parcel of leather he had brought out of the country.' And whereupon he told the king the whole story, from the beginning of their meeting till his sending him away with the letter. The king replied, 'This is a pleasant story, and well compacted together: but it seems you cannot produce this tanner, wherefore I'll leave you

‘ to the law, and if you are hanged according to
 ‘ law, you must take it for your pains.’

Joan, hearing the talk of hanging, fell upon her
 knees, crying, ‘ Good sir King, pray Sir King,
 ‘ don’t hang my poor Crispin, I beseech you, he is
 ‘ an honest man, and has but one fault’ ‘ What
 ‘ fault is that? quoth the king’ ‘ May it please
 ‘ your grace,’ quoth Joan, ‘ he will not be ruled by
 ‘ his wife, but is always ready to run away like a
 ‘ monkey after any man who will give him drink.’
 ‘ That’s neither here nor there, said the king, he
 ‘ must die; nevertheless, as you have begged that
 ‘ he may not be hanged, upon the word of a king
 ‘ he shall not, but I will allow him the favour to
 ‘ chuse his own death.’

‘ Why then, quoth the cobbler, let me die the
 ‘ death of my father and great grandfather.’ How
 ‘ was that?’ quoth the king. ‘ It was on a death-
 ‘ bed, and in a good old age.’ At which choice of
 the cobbler’s the king, queen, and the Nobles laughed
 very heartily, and Crispin and his wife, by the king’s
 command, were locked up in a room half an hour,
 there to attend the king’s further pleasure.

No sooner were they again confined, but the cob-
 bler, with a trembling voice, said, ‘ Sweet wife, I
 ‘ wonder what the king intends to do with us now.’
 Quoth Joan, ‘ pray thee be of comfort, I am per-
 ‘ suaded that the king is the Tanner, and the
 ‘ queen is the Kinswoman. ‘ Adsfoot have a care
 ‘ of what you say, I shall have you speak treason,
 ‘ and then we shall both be hanged I’faith after all.’
 ‘ Fear not husband, I can see as far into a millstone
 ‘ as he that picks it, I am sure tho’ they changed
 ‘ their apparel, they would not change their com-
 ‘ plexion.’ Whilst they were in this dispute, the
 ‘ King and queen dressed in their former disguise,
 entered the room, attended by nobles and maids of
 honour; at which the king, said Crispin, since you

could not find the tanner, I have brought him to you. At which words he fell on his knees and cried.

Long live our gracious sovereign king and queen
Who did their royal persons so demean,
As in familiar sort to joke with us,
And I rejoice to find it is no worse.

‘ Arise honest cobbler,’ quoth the King, ‘ and
‘ merry be thy heart. I have tried thy patience,
‘ and will prove thy friend and thy forty marks
‘ *per annum*, which I formerly gave thee, shall be
‘ much more by my bounty.’

Thou shalt have fifty pounds a-year in land,
Which lies upon the south side of the Strand;
I am the royal giver, thou the taker,
And I will have it call'd the cobbler's-Acre.

Poor Crispin and his wife were transported with joy at this glorious coming off and the more at the queen's gift, which was a purse of gold. They then presented the court with a comical farce, called, *The Forked Friends* or the *Fiddler and his Wife*, wherewith they finished the day, to the great joy of all the beholders. Being dismissed, with great applause the cobbler and Joan returned home, where, in a short time he built a row of houses, calling the place, *The Cobbler's-Acre*, according to the king's request; which name continued after the Cobbler's death but at this time it is turned a more magnificent building, and has lost it's former name.

Yet during life the Cobbler at the court,
Was well beloved and freely entertain'd,
Where he afforded much delightful sport,
So long as Harry Tudor liv'd and reign'd.
The King died first, the Cobbler followed after,
But not till he had often fill'd the court with laughter

F I N I S.