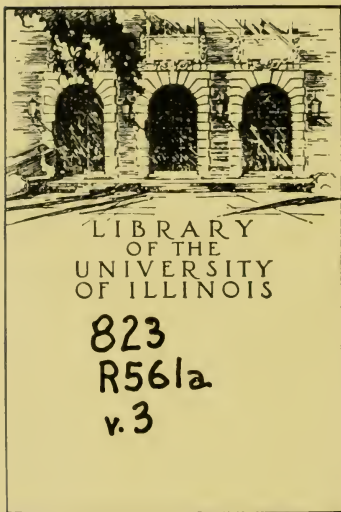





1850.





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THE  
ARMOURER'S DAUGHTER.

OR, THE  
BORDER RIDERS.

A Nobel

IN THREE VOLUMES.—VOL. III.

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1850.



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THE

# ARMOURER'S DAUGHTER.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE MALCONTENTS.

The next sedition lay, nor like the rest  
Was he attired, nor in his looks exprest  
Hatred to heaven and virtue's laws ; but he  
Pretends religion, law, or liberty ;  
Seeming t' adore what he did most o'erthrow,  
And would persuade virtue to be a foe  
To peace and lawful power.

UPWARDS of a twelvemonth had elapsed  
since the occurrences narrated in the last

chapter, and although the Adventurer's fortunes had not become more flourishing, he still contrived to maintain his pretensions and collect around him some appearance of a royal following.

A brief retrospect of the historical events of the day may be advisable, in order to explain his position with any clearness.

The King of Scotland had at length, through the intercession of the Bishop of Durham, and the Spanish Ambassador, entered into a truce for seven years with the English monarch; this alliance was hereafter to be strengthened and confirmed by the betrothal of James to Margaret, Henry Tudor's daughter; from which marriage afterwards sprang the union of the two crowns. Several minor points of disagreement were to be submitted to the arbitration of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain.

The greatest obstacle to the conclusion of the treaty existed in the continued residence of the self-styled Richard of York at the Court of Edinburgh; it was impossible



that Henry VII. could seriously propose to become the father-in-law of a sovereign who openly sanctioned the claims of a rival to his throne; and James, from a natural feeling of generosity was unwilling to dismiss from his kingdom one who had sought it as a place of refuge against the storms of adverse fate; however moved at last by the suggestions of such of his counsellors as advocated the policy of an honorable peace, the Scottish King summoned the Pretender to his presence, and enumerating the various futile efforts made to support his cause, declared the impossibility of placing on his head the crown of England without the concurrence of her people; he then advised him to adopt some more feasible mode of prosecuting his design, and recommended him to fix his abode in some other country where his presence would not be accounted as a beacon of war; at the same time James offered to accommodate him both with ships and money to convey him whithersoever he would.

Richard's reply was worthy of his supposed high birth; with many thanks to the monarch for his former courtesies, and numerous princely acts of favor, he expressed his determination not to out-stay his welcome; and taking leave of the King of Scotland, setsail for Ireland, accompanied by his devoted young wife, and attended by a few zealous adherents. A momentary enthusiasm from the Yorkists of Cork greeted his arrival on the Hibernian coast. But the Pretender was not long allowed to remain in a state of inactivity; before the conclusion of the treaty with Scotland, Henry's short-sighted and insatiable avarice induced him to levy an impost on his subjects, for the purpose of raising a subsidy for carrying on the war in the north; the men of Cornwall flew to arms to resist the payment of the tax, declaring with some justice that the rich fiefs of the crown should furnish the funds for the maintenance of its security, in preference to imposing

fresh exactions on those whose circumstances were ill calculated to endure the burden.

A blacksmith, popular among his fellows, and a turbulent lawyer, Flammock by name, fomented the disturbances; Lord Audeley, a factious nobleman, placed himself at the head of the disaffected; and the insurgents marched towards London; however on their route they encountered the royal troops and sustained a total defeat.

Lord Audeley, with the other ring-leaders, were taken prisoners and put to death, and the rest were pardoned. But this lenity appeared to have no other effect on the Cornish rebels than that of inspiring them with an utter contempt for the King's authority; and as the grievance of which they complained had not been redressed, they sent over a deputation to Ireland, inviting Richard to make a descent on the southern coast, promising to enrol under his standard, and assuring him of general support. This summons reached the Adventurer as he began to despair of arousing

the Irish to make any serious demonstrations in his favor; accepting therefore the invitation with much alacrity, he landed in Cornwall about the latter end of autumn, 1499.

On a wide common, situated between Exeter and Oakhampton, a vast concourse of persons, of both sexes, and all ages, had assembled. There were fierce men, unshoon and unshaken, their rough hands grasping any weapon of offence that they had been able to obtain, and their sun-burnt faces wrought to an expression of stern defiance as they argued on the rights of the people; ragged urchins with their tiny voices swelled the general outcry, and women with babes in their arms, who should have been content to abide beside their own quiet hearths, were foremost in the press, exciting husbands and brothers to contention and uproar; old men, whose grey hairs should have thatched wiser brains, debated in little knots on the oppression of their rulers. One unanimous

sentiment pervaded the assemblage—a feeling, so exceedingly contagious in the human breast, that a breath spreads it like wild-fire—viz, the consciousness that our condition is an evil one, and ought to be amended, and that others of less desert are in the enjoyment of a more honorable state—such opinions in every day life produce sullen discontent; and in times of public trouble and commotion, they commonly lead to treason.

A temporary stage, composed merely of a few planks, in the centre of the throng, was occupied by a popular speaker, whose slouching gait and unprepossessing demeanour scarcely accorded with the florid eloquence that flowed like a torrent from his lips—this was the brother of that Flammock, who had perished on the scaffold at the close of the former insurrection; the example at least had not acted as a warning.

The orator declaimed, with indignant vehemence and impassionate gesticulations,

on the scant justice always awarded to the commons, on the tyrannical oppression of their governors, and the crying iniquity that had imposed a tax to raise money for the maintenance of a war which had long since terminated.

“What further do they seek?” continued the speaker. “Have you not already given the strength of your manhood, your sinews, and your blood to the service of the state; is it not enough that at the summons of the lords of the soil, you yield your bodies to be hacked about for the defence of the castles, and the aggrandizement of a power that would level you with the dust? Such sacrifice will no longer suffice; now they exact the very bread you have earned for your wives and little ones by the sweat of the brow;” here the discordant shrieks of the women became so vociferous, that Flammock was compelled to pause until the tumult had somewhat abated. “Look you, my fellow slaves,” continued he, “by what authority do your

masters claim the lordship of their princely domains? is not their claim to their hereditary possessions founded aforetime on the right of conquest? Well! we are not less able than were their ancestors; we will do as much for ourselves and children; our right arms, also, shall win for us gold and broad estates; here," and Flammock, as he spoke, placed his hand on the shoulder of a gigantic smith, who chanced to stand near him, and who might have served as a model for a Hercules—"here is one of nature's barons; in his stout limbs may be read his title to the land he shall acquire for himself—and if the nobles gainsay our right to hold what we may gain, this shall be our answer—

“As your forefathers have done, so will we do; the strong hand shall win its own title deeds to wealth and rule.”

It is needless to say that the orator's inflammatory harangue was received with the loudest plaudits by the half-clad, and in many instances, starving multitude.

“Flammock has a glib tongue, and loves the people,” exclaimed one, “he will teach us how to avenge our wrongs.”

“There is as much wit in his head, as would serve to furnish a council of state,” said an old man with a look of stolid wonder.

“Alack! good sirs,” cried a woman whose comely aspect and pleasant, laughing eye, ill-befitted such a scene; “these be brave words we have heard, but they will not bring us bread, unless they are backed by good blows.”

“Bide quiet awhile, Margery,” said a young man, who had remained stationary at her side during the meeting; “you shall see a show of our mettle presently—list what the reverend priest is about to say.”

At the conclusion of Flammock's address, the spare, erect figure of Father Hubert might have been seen gliding among the different groups that composed the motley assemblage, persuading them to preserve their independence, exhorting them to re-



sistance, and promising them arms, money, and ammunition to assist their enterprise. At a moment when the turbulent enthusiasm of the mob had obtained the highest pitch, the priest seized the opportunity to announce the landing of Richard of York on the previous night; and since their expedition wanted a leader, he recommended them to seek the Adventurer's encampment, and swear allegiance to him, engaging that by him every grievance should be promptly redressed.

A few secret assurances of preferment and emolument soon secured Flammock in the Pretender's interest, and as the eyes of the rest were directed towards him to learn his opinion before they decided what course, should be adopted, the orator again mounted the platform, and thundered forth a fresh appeal to the people, in stentorian tones that could not fail to be audible even to those who stood on the outskirts of the crowd, it mattered little that the tenor of his present speech differed so materially

from the last; consistency and popularity do not always move in conjunction.

“Glorious news have reached us,” cried Flammock, waving his hand on high; “a lineal descendent of the line of York has taken the field to expel the Tudor miser from the throne—we will lend him our aid—he shall compensate your wrongs—there are many here who must recollect that the princes of York have ever been accounted friendly to the commons—under their sway ye shall once more enjoy peace and plenty—we will build for ourselves a right to a monarch’s gratitude—those who succour Richard in the hour of need, will hereafter achieve dignity and honorable credit—let us then throw off the yoke of the tyrant, and cleave henceforth to York.”

A loud, hoarse, long-continued shout resounded far and wide, as the multitude vociferated success and life to Richard the Fourth. After some further discussion and explanations, mingled with directions on the part of Father Hubert, the rabble rout

slowly retired ; some hurried to deposit their wives and children in a place of security, that anxiety for their safety might not interfere with their own proceedings, while others went to seize arms, wherever they could find them, that they might not join their new leader empty-handed. Long after the crowd had separated, the priest lingered on the spot in deep meditation; his restless ambition and scheming brain were still at work for the cause that had for such a length of time engaged all his energies; the point at which he aimed was neither the overthrow of Henry Tudor nor the elevation of York, but rather the rule of the fair realm of England in his own person, through the weak instrument he proposed to decorate with the ensigns of power. Sanguine as was his character, he could not but feel that the fickle and undisciplined multitude, from whom he had just parted, would prove no very valuable auxiliaries ; their constancy was even less to be relied on than their experience.

“And yet,” he mused, “these mean tools must not be despised; they will serve at least to swell our numbers—it is natural with the common herd to follow the fashion of their fellows, and their example may well afford a copy. I fear Richard will not receive the ragged troop over courteously—that boy is a strange compound—at one moment proud and haughty as ever was Eastern despot, and then bewailing his errors like a scourged school-boy. I am sometimes fain to think he would even now withdraw from the enterprise, an it were not for his fair young wife—be this as it may, repentance comes too late.”

## CHAPTER II.

## THE GATHERING OF THE INSURGENTS.

Besides, the king has wasted all his rods  
On late offenders, that he now doth lack  
The very instruments of chastisement :  
So that his power, like a fangless lion,  
May offer, but not hold.

*Shakespeare.*

THE Adventurer's encampment, situated some few miles from Bodmin, presented a strange scene of confusion and tumult the

day after his landing; every hour fresh troops of recruits came pouring in from the adjacent districts. It must not be supposed that the noisy mob just described, had any share in the invitation that summoned the Pretender to make a descent on the English coast. The Cornish insurgents had already taken the field, and met him on his arrival, and as they had served in the previous campaign, constant training had imparted to them somewhat of soldierly bearing, and some notions of military discipline. In number they amounted to about four thousand, and from the sturdy spirit distinguishable in the corps, there was reason to suppose they might do some service in front of the foe.

During the last few months, the Burgundian mercenaries had disbanded of their own accord, finding there was little hope of the payment of the arrears already due. Thus Richard's forces now comprised only the Cornish volunteers, and the devoted partisans of the White Rose, who had

originally attached themselves to his standard, and whose fealty was not to be shaken by peril or reverses.

Although these Yorkists had certainly been made the dupes of a well-laid conspiracy, and had sacrificed all that man holds dear at the shrine of a false faith, it was impossible not to respect a fidelity founded on the belief that their legitimate monarch claimed their aid; to uphold his rights they were ready to fight and die. This small band had been purified by the secession of those who had joined it from ambition, or merely interested motives; such had fallen away when the enterprise began to assume a less hopeful character, and had purchased for themselves pardon by a well-timed submission to Henry VII..

Sir Ronald Graham still continued to attend the expedition, in command of a few of the Earl of Huntly's most trusted retainers, whom the old noble had placed near the person of his daughter, as her more immediate guard. Sir Ronald could not

voluntarily tear himself from a position, which presented a chance of beholding the beloved being whose very image was to him an object of the fondest idolatry; to see her soft smile, though it beamed on another, to hear her sweet voice, though its accents were not addressed to him; these were the only consolations his impassioned heart knew, and these dangerous indulgences fed the disease they seemed to charm away.

Lady Katherine, accustomed to homage from her birth, did not remark the adoration of her silent worshipper; and sooth to say the young man did his utmost to throw a veil over the feelings pent within his bosom. Sometimes even the lady found a melancholy pleasure in conversing with Sir Ronald of days gone by, of his native land, of the ancient castle which had witnessed the sports of her youth. Exiled from her home and kindred, such recollections were peculiarly dear to her, and while she dwelt so minutely on these associations of the past, little did she guess the violence



of the passions that the young cavalier continued to conceal under a composed exterior.

The first man to greet Richard, when he set foot on the English shore, was Dalton; latterly his presence had been of rare occurrence in the adventurous host, and the mind of Father Hubert had never disconnected him with the betrayal of Sir William Stanley, and other unhappy gentlemen, whose career had terminated on the scaffold, without many apparent proofs of the justice of the sentence. The Pretender gave no ear to this belief, which he attributed to the confessor's easily conceived displeasure against any one who appeared to hold the slightest influence over himself. This idea, from the perversity natural to the human character, inclined Richard to consult the English volunteer more frequently than he might otherwise have done; and now when the business of the day was completed, and the new recruits had been reviewed, equipped as well as circumstances

would permit, and appointed to their different quarters, the Adventurer and Dalton strolled together from the encampment, pausing occasionally in lighter discourse to remark if, by any change of situation, their position could be rendered stronger.

“Once more I tread on English ground,” said Richard, thoughtfully; “who can say how soon I may be compelled to quit it?”

“Let us hope, my good lord,” answered his companion; “that you will never leave it more.”

“Ah, it may indeed be so, since this island may contain for me a tomb far more easily won than a crown.”

“Despond not, my lord—all goes cheerily at present; the malcontents of Cornwall have some show of manhood; by my troth! they are sturdy varlets, and I predict will not be found wanting in the field. Flammock will be here shortly with his ragged crew, and though dependence cannot be placed on them; they will serve for targets in lieu of better men. Believe me, you will live to enter London with flying

banners, at the head of a victorious host!"

"Should such a moment of triumph be reserved for me, I shall not forget the debt of service owing to my trusty friend," said the Pretender warmly, for he felt a painful sense of gratitude to those faithful followers who had hazarded everything for his sake.

"You will recollect to have heard, my lord," said Dalton, suddenly; "how your royal father, the fourth Edward, landed in Yorkshire with scarce five hundred men, to regain the kingdom he had lost. I was but a youth in that day, and stood by his side then, as I now do by yours, and fought with him and for him, until he reigned again a crowned king in his own palace at Westminster."

"And the sovereign remembered your fidelity?" demanded Richard, eagerly, "you shared his prosperity as you had done his adverse fortunes?"

"I was well repaid," answered Dalton,

in a low tone ; “ more than either I expected or deserved.”

The companions' returning steps were now directed towards the encampment, where the pitched tents and unfurled pennons flaunted gaily in the distance ; while the busy hum of men broke the general stillness of the evening hour.

At last, the Adventurer quitted Dalton, and the latter seated himself on the prostrate trunk of a tree that had been hewn down with the lavish waste exercised by many when the gifts of nature, or the possessions of others, are concerned.

He was shortly joined by Sir Ronald Graham, whose greeting was, perhaps, a shade less cordial than it was wont to be. If it were so, the other did not seem to notice it, but inquired in a friendly accent, of the late occurrences in the invading band.

“ Our leader,” continued the Englishman, “ is scarce sanguine of the result, although the people flock round him far

more freely than in the insurrection of the north."

"Possibly," returned Sir Ronald, with an air of indifference, "still he may recollect that these gentry have taken the field rather for the redressal of their own grievances, than the establishment of the line of York."

"The motive is of no account, should the end be equally attained. As the young Richard spoke to me, but now, of thanks and gratitude due to those who faithfully serve him, with eye and brow so frank and open, that to doubt their truth, would be almost impossible ; he looked so verily the image of his ingrate father, that memory nigh slipped back a score of years, and I could well have believed that the arch deceiver stood once more before me. The boy inherits his sire's winning graces, and bears, I doubt not, the same false, cruel heart. The young tiger will not belie his breeding."

“He has shown no evil disposition at present,” observed the Scot.

“Opportunity is wanting, nothing more,” said Dalton, “’tis that which often makes villains—and sometimes heroes,” he added, after a pause.

“At least,” returned Sir Ronald, “Richard has displayed military talent in all its branches. He has also a soldier’s virtues—fortitude to bear, constancy to endure.”

“I did not think to hear his praises from your lips,” answered the Englishman half sarcastically. “Now, tell me, how it fares with the Lady Katherine—does her courage mount with the occasion, or droops she for the ease and comfort of her princely home?”

“Her high spirit bears her through all difficulty and danger, and her noble mind regards not privation. I am sometimes fain to marvel that one so delicately nurtured should be able to sustain the trials

and hardships she has been compelled to undergo. It is still to her that all men look for encouragement and auguries of hope when our enterprise looks least prosperous."

"Surely, you have turned to account the many moments you have passed near the fair goddess of your affection?" demanded Dalton, with a scrutinizing glance. "Does she still delight to talk with her early playmate? and has not former favor grown to more decided preference?"

"I know nought of what you say," replied the young man, petulantly, half averting his countenance from the other's gaze; a moment afterwards he resumed with grave emphasis—"At last I have learned to recognize the mad presumption of my youthful dreams; the Lady Katherine will never smile save where duty binds her; yet there is no sin towards her in the thought that had she been mistress of her will—it might have been otherwise."

Sir Ronald rose as he spoke, and hurried

away with rapid strides, as though the motion might have power to divert the harrowing sensations within. Once he had hoped that the Lady Katherine could have been won to bestow an undue portion of regard upon himself; but who could be a daily witness of her love to her wedded lord, and her unbounded devotion to his wishes, and continue in the creed that her pure faith might be successfully assailed? Nevertheless, he still cherished the harmless belief, that her heart was favorably inclined towards him at the time when her sovereign's arbitrary decree bestowed her hand upon another. How this might have been we know not; but if he mistook the lady's familiar kindness for a tenderer feeling, he paid dearly for his error.

Formerly Sir Ronald Graham had half entered into Dalton's plots to compass the Adventurer's ruin, and had lent an unreluctant ear to his denunciations against him; but now a better spirit reigned in his breast; the virtue he worshipped so fer-



vently began to exercise an influence over him ; the Englishman's absence contributed to lessen the evil ascendancy previously possessed by him ; Dalton's schemes became adhorrent to the young man's mind ; and he now felt that he would forfeit life itself rather than run the risk of endangering the happiness and security of her he loved.

## CHAPTER III.

EXETER.

The King hath note of all that they intend  
By interception, which they dream not of.

SHAKESPEARE.

SOME days after the Adventurer's landing, the good town of Exeter, firm in its allegiance to Henry VII., was thrown into a state of unwonted excitement by the rumour that the invading host was on the

advance from Taunton, and might shortly be expected at the city gates.

The mayor, Master Jacob Simmons, distinguished for his loyalty to Tudor, and his consequent enmity to York, expressed his resolution to stand a siege; and convened a meeting of his fellow townsmen in the great market-place, in order to decide on their future proceedings.

The worthy citizens, with a valour unusual in men of their peaceful avocations, determined unanimously on resistance unto death; it was half ludicrous, even while affording matter for commendation, to note the good folks bringing forth their rusty armour, and practising the sword exercise, or the hurling of missiles from the walls; their zeal did not extend merely to personal exertion; money was promptly brought forward for the general public expenditure in so dangerous an emergency; barricades were thrown up on all sides, at which young and old worked night and

day to complete the preparations for defence.

The mayor, honest Jacob Simmons, had dismissed a private council of the elders of the town, and was plunged into a military disquisition with his old domestic who had formerly seen service in the war of the Roses, and whose advice was consequently highly valued on the present occasion—when the general inexperience, exalted into a hero any one who had actually made a charge in the face of an enemy—this discussion was interrupted by the announcement that a stranger demanded an audience; it was not a time when any application for admission could be denied, since information was frequently derived from most unexpected quarters. Accordingly the mayor threw aside the plan of the outworks, to which his attention had been directed, and hurried into an adjoining apartment, where the stranger was ushered in to him.

Without making known his name, the

new comer delivered letters of credence from Lord d'Aubigny, who had just been appointed chief commander of the forces, that Henry was about to summon from the north to quell the insurrection in Cornwall. These papers also gave instructions in what manner the town was to be defended, and promised to afford opportune succour; the unknown individual who bore the General's despatches undertook to acquaint the citizens from time to time with what was going forward in the camp of the assailants.

The mayor listened to these accounts in perturbation; although he was intelligent enough in matters that involved his more immediate duties, he was totally unlearned in the details of a military life, notwithstanding the martial spirit that had sprung up so suddenly in his bosom. Again the stranger went over the same ground, until the explanations were thoroughly understood.

Towards the close of the interview a beam of considerable satisfaction lighted up Jacob

Simmons' broad English countenance, as he said to his departing visitor—

“ And did my Lord, the King, verily send commendation to his poor servant for the zeal felt in his cause?”

“ Even so—doubtless his Grace will confer knight-hood on one who has testified such disinterested devotion to his line,” was the reply of the mysterious agent of authority.

While grave business was being transacted in the residence of the loyal mayor, the streets were thronged with anxious but resolute faces. A few of the more timid citizens indeed had collected together their effects, and were hurrying from Exeter to some place of abode that promised greater security, but this example was very slenderly followed. At the gates of the town a large crowd had gathered round the sentinel, a worthy townsman who had assumed sword and pike for the nonce, and whose notions of discipline did not prevent him from exchanging news with the passers-by.

Just beyond the entrance of the city, somewhat apart from the high road, stood two men, old acquaintances of our reader, who cannot marvel more than they did themselves at what could have brought them so far afield from their ordinary haunts. In truth, Dick Lilburn and Robin Starhed, the individuals in question, had never before travelled towards the south of England, and as they eyed the surrounding groups with as much curiosity as if they appertained to some foreign land, they privately discussed what could be their Chief's errand in that distant quarter of the country.

"It seems strange enow to find ourselves so far from the Tweed," said Lilburn, "I scarce breathe here as free as on the Borders—and what John Heron seeks I am at a loss to say."

"Have you never formed an idea of his object?" asked Rob, with an absent air.

"None in the world—have you?" answered the Border-rider, looking at his young companion as if he were a veritable wizard.

“ I have sometimes thought that the heart of the Chief is not as much at ease as it was wont to be—do you recollect, Dick, the poor orphan girl who abode with us during the siege of the Heron's Haunt, and afterwards remained behind with the Pretender's host?”

“ The armourer's daughter!” said Lilburn, “ I remember well; she was passably fair, but over slight to please my fancy.”

To speak truth, the Border-rider's heart was hard as a nether mill-stone where woman's charms were concerned.

Starhed smiled involuntarily at the other's observation, and continued—

“ Since their separation the Chief has not been the same man; on one occasion I rode post to the Convent of Saint Bride to spear for tidings of the maiden, but the journey was for nought. To my thinking, he still lingers after her memory.”

“ Tush! Rob, I never heard such arrant folly from your lips before; if the twain were of the same mind, why were they not



wed? If the lass liked him not, he had no cause to grieve as they were not yoked together. But what has this mad tale to do with our progress hitherward?"

"I believe he is still on her track; it is now a week since he received news which lightened the cloud on his brow."

There was a pause, and then Lilburn observed in a low tone,

"In my idea John Heron has never been so blithe of cheer since that unhappy fray wherein Sir Robert Ker fell."

"I fear it is so," answered Starhed quickly. "Although on my own score I shall never repent the shot that laid him low, I am half tempted to wish it undone, when I call to mind the perils and difficulties that have since surrounded our Chief—nothing has prospered with us from that fated night—at times I have resolved to deliver myself up, and avow that I alone was to be held accountable for the deed of vengeance—but the sacrifice must have been bootless—for who would credit that John Heron

had no part in the matter, when the Warden's retainer saw them engaged hand to hand?"

"Your life would have paid the forfeit, without exculpating our leader," replied Lilburn.

The conversation had reached this point, when the stranger who had just obtained so long and private an audience with the loyal mayor, passed through the city gates; his quick eye glanced keenly about him as he made his way through the press, and when it chanced to fall on the two Border-riders, he gave a start of surprise, and his steps were immediately turned towards them.

"My brave lad," said he addressing Robin, "can you tell me where I may hold a few words with your Chief?"

"Who are you that seek to know?" answered Starhed, for he failed to recognize, in his questioner, one whom he had previously seen at the Heron's Haunt in friendly intimacy with the owner—the stranger had assumed a horseman's cloak in

order to conceal his person during his visit to Exeter.

“If you would speak with the Heron,” continued Rob, “you may easily have your wish, for hither he comes.”

And as he spoke, the Border Chief brushed through the crowd, and hastily approached.

“Ha! Dalton,” he exclaimed, grasping the other's hand with much cordiality—little did I dream to meet you here.”

“The greater marvel is mine,” replied his friend, returning the Borderer's greeting—and they walked onward together, while the two Border-riders followed at a tolerable distance.

“I need not ask news of the Heron's Haunt,” remarked Dalton, “for I have already heard that in a second outbreak of the Scots, Sir Andrew Ker carried the fortress, and razed it to the ground.”

“I had not even time to collect again the poor remnant of my band,” said John Heron,” ere the deed was done. It was a

justifiable feud on the part of the young heir of Ker, and I have no right to murmur at the act of reprisal. But I should like well to hear something of your own affairs," continued the Border-rider dropping the theme which was evidently not acceptable to him. I had believed that you had returned to your solitude."

"Inconsistent fool that I am!" broke in Dalton, "veering with every wind—once more I have sought Richard's host."

"Would for your honor that you had never done so!"

"Honor and I have long ago parted, for we jog not on the same road, since I have taken revenge as the partner of my way—if I prey on my fellows, 'tis but what they have done to me aforetime—John Heron, you partly know my wrongs, but you cannot guess the long years of blank despair that rolled over my head, the dreamless apathy, the same unbroken current of torpid wretchedness that admitted scarce a thought of the future—the unobservant might have termed

it resignation—how seldom do we read another rightly!—the fiery flood pent up within my bosom, lacked free vent; I have now an object in life, I cannot toil, and scheme, and share the active labours of other men save with one view—as I gaze on Richard, so complete a copy of his tyrant father, I feel my mortal hate grow to so high a pitch, that I am compelled to rush from his presence, lest my sword should leap perforce from its scabbard, and wreak my vengeance ere the harvest be ripe.”

“Still,” returned the Chief, “there have been moments when you have abandoned your purpose.”

“Not so,” answered Dalton; “my intent has ever been the same, though my course to attain it has been variable. Through my fickle folly I have lost a vantage which cannot be easily regained, and I fear one portion of my scheme will, in consequence, fall to the ground. But you will comprehend nothing of this—only I would have you to know that you judge me ill when

you think I shall abandon my purpose until revenge has met its fulfilment!"

"Yet why," asked the Borderer, "do you reserve all the vials of your wrath to be poured on the descendent of the royal oppressor? Have you forgotten the instrument of your undoing?—the more immediate cause—?"

"Your words point at Sir Herbert Col-dinghame," interrupted the other, in low, passionate accents. "The cowardly, un-manly caitiff!—the destroyer of the loveliest and dearest of earth's created beings! I would give my body on the rack, to have dealt with him as he merited. The wish is vain; to the best of my belief he is dead—for my most strenuous efforts have never enabled me to glean the slightest intelligence concerning him."

"Since you have never encountered your enemy face to face, his person must be unknown to you; it is therefore possible that he may yet live, and bear a feigned name."

"It may be as you say. When I re-

covered from my long delirium, the change of dynasty had thrown all things into confusion and anarchy. No time did I lose in the endeavour to track my foe. Sir Herbert Coldinghame's estates had passed into the hands of one who owned a different allegiance, and I was at last brought to believe their former master had perished in the field—yet it may be as you say.”

And Dalton fell into a fit of deep and painful musing.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THEY MEET ONCE MORE.

I sit me down, and think  
Of all thy winning ways,  
And almost wish, with sudden shrink,  
That I had less to praise.

Hood.

A SHORT half hour was passed by the Borderer and Dalton in private conference, and then, after a friendly farewell, each took a separate route.



The two Border-riders were dismissed from their attendance, and appointed to rendezvous, some hours later, at a place indicated. While climbing to the summit of a steep ascent, the Chief suddenly paused, as if to survey the surrounding scenery, although the bare fields, whose rich produce had been recently gathered in, presented nothing picturesque to the view. The mind roved with the eye only when the latter fixed itself on a long, irregular group of buildings to which he was rapidly approaching; but as his errand is not intended to be a mystery, we shall forthwith develop the cause of his proceedings.

When Viola Hatherton's abrupt departure from the Heron's Haunt became known to the Chief, he made many ineffectual efforts to discover her place of abode, moved by a yearning solicitude to learn her fate, and also by a reasonable desire to fulfil the Flemish Osbeck's dying behest, the clue for which was only to be obtained from the armourer's daughter, who it was supposed

might be able to furnish some information concerning her father's former apprentice.

In the midst of warlike projects and other important interests, John Heron never relaxed his endeavours to find out the maiden's retreat; he was at length rewarded with success; satisfactory intelligence reached him that Viola was under the roof of a noble and charitable gentlewoman, some miles distant from Exeter. Immediately he was in the saddle in pursuit, accompanied by two of his faithful adherents.

The journey had been accomplished with as much speed as a due regard to the condition of their horses would permit; and as the Borderer stood before the high gateway and preferred his claim for admittance, his manly heart beat with a wild, tumultuous throb it had never known in the excitement of deadly peril. The information that guided his steps thither had not misled him; Mistress Viola Hatherton was within, and he was ushered silently into the substantial dwelling-house.

So agitated was he at the prospect of the approaching interview, that he was scarcely sensible of what passed around him, until he stood once more in the presence of the beloved being who had the power to convert earth into a paradise, or to cast a withering blight over every blessing that fortune might bestow.

Perhaps he might reasonably have entertained some doubt of his reception, when he recollected their parting, but his frank, ingenuous nature would not allow him to suspect another of intentional ingratitude.

Shaken with strong emotion, the Chief barely heard the low cry of surprise that broke from Viola as he entered, nor the light step with which she flew to greet him. Glad welcome, not to be misunderstood, might be read on eye and lip, as she surrendered both her hands to his tremulous pressure.

It had always been at moments when he was the object of her gentle confidence or

soothing kindness, that the Borderer felt his fortitude most severely tried—the rejection and repulse of his suit gave him far less pain—While he was struggling to regain his composure, we will seize the opportunity to recount how Viola chanced to be found in a position so unexpected.

It will be remembered that on her departure from the Heron's Haunt, the maiden had conceived some suspicion of the motives that had impelled Father Hubert to advise, so strenuously, the choice of a life of conventual seclusion, and she resolved not to follow his direction as to her place of retirement, but to abide by her first design, and seek a refuge in the convent of Saint Bride, whose Lady Abbess had known her father, and would in consequence afford her powerful protection. Her apprehensions had certainly not magnified the danger, and were increased to a fearful extent, when, in spite of her vehement remonstrances, and in opposition to her distinct orders with regard to her destination, the

two Burgundian soldiers who escorted her conducted her to a religious house in Staffordshire, in compliance with the commands of their employer. The Prioress, of a stern, cold, and unpitying character, had received a missive from the priest, affirming that the new novice was occasionally infirm of intellect, and would require the strictest surveillance, at the same time a considerable pecuniary benefaction was promised to the convent whenever she could be prevailed on to take the veil.

Indignant threats and humble entreaties were vainly employed by Viola to obtain her freedom; alarm and anxiety at so unwarrantable a detention prostrated her at length on a bed of sickness, where she was tended with the most sedulous care.

During the course of her recovery, when the vigilance of the watch was temporarily relaxed on account of her supposed weakness, she contrived to avail herself of this remissness on the part of her gaolers to make her escape from the hated walls

wherein she had so long been condemned to a compulsory residence.

Having successfully eluded pursuit, she would inevitably have sunk a victim to difficulties in another form, had she not by good fortune encountered the noble lady aforesaid, who chanced to be the sister of the Abbess of Saint Bride, and who was therefore acquainted, in her own person, with the Hatherton family. Touched by the youth and misfortunes of the lovely suppliant, the well-endowed gentlewoman willingly accorded her protection, until such time as she could herself place her among the holy sisterhood of Saint Bride.

It was under these circumstances that Viola accompanied her patroness to a large manor-house in the south of England, where the latter had an estate that required superintendence, and where she made it a point of duty to remain for some months every season.

During the twelvemonth we have lost sight of the Armourer's Daughter, her

gentle loveliness had but expanded into richer bloom; and to the Borderer's partial judgment, the spell of her beauty was more irresistibly attractive than ever. The variety of trials she had undergone, had strengthened her spirit, and caused her to value doubly her present sense of security.

The sweet smile, formerly so rare, now frequently lighted up her joyous countenance with joyous animation; and even in her graver moments the pensive charm which might be termed the general expression of her features, had now lost all shade of sadness or suffering. She had cast from her the one weakness of her noble mind, the cherished attachment which had established its empire during those years of girlhood, when the fancy is over apt to usurp the rule of reason. The unworthy object of her first affections was dismissed from her regard, and while she mourned for the erring one, no lingering tenderness mingled with her sorrow.

While Viola Hatherton poured forth her expressions of welcome, and assurances of ceaseless regret at the abrupt nature of their separation, and her own seemingly thankless conduct, the Chief listened with a mixed sensation of pain and pleasure. When she came to a pause, he said—

“So, you have not forgotten me, mistress Viola; and it is pleasant to hear it from your own lips, although I never doubted but your kind heart would keep me a place in your remembrance. Yet I have not come thus far to gratify myself by the sight of your fair presence; I have a commission to fulfil that will require your aid for its discharge. Had not your father formerly an apprentice of the name of Perkin Warbeck?”

“He had,” answered Viola; and surprise at the sudden question crimsoned her cheek and brow with the tell-tale blood, as the once loved name sounded on her ear. The Borderer witnessed her emotion with a



sharp pang, for some suspicion of an attachment on her part to the youth in question, crossed his mind.

Preserving, however, an outward aspect of calmness, he continued—

“Can you tell me where the young handicraftsman may be met with? he thinks himself a foundling, if I mistake not; but here I hold a packet which will acquaint him with his parentage.”

The maiden hesitated for some minutes very perceptibly, as if doubtful of her reply, but confident of the discretion and friendly judgment of the Border Chief, she resolved to unfold the tale of perfidy, whose secret knowledge had burdened her youthful bosom so heavily. She spoke of Perkin Warbeck, the most skilful apprentice in her father's workshop, as one endued with many good parts, and a natural breeding above his station; she mentioned his wounded hand—her own careful tendance—their close intimacy—then came his mysterious disappearance, and the ruby

cross sent to her as a farewell token, and delivered by the court confessor; in fact, her simple narrative omitted nothing that had occurred—if she did not confess the exact portion of regard she had bestowed upon the well-favored artisan, her attentive hearer had little difficulty in adding the sequel to her recital.

When the maiden recounted her next rencontre with Perkin Warbeck, in the character of Richard of York, and described his successful personation of the unhappy prince, which almost challenged the testimony of her senses—John Heron's astonishment grew irrepressible, and he was fain to interrupt her, exclaiming—

“If I had heard this from any other tongue than your own, I had misdoubted the tale—so parlous a likeness does the Pretender bear to Edward, that against my own wishes I became convinced of his identity. Art sure, fair mistress, there is no possibility of error in your statement?”

“Would it were indeed so!” answered

Viola; and then she proceeded to relate her recognition of the Adventurer from the scar on his hand, and, furthermore, her parting interview with him, in which he barely attempted to disown his former condition. "It is evident," she concluded, "that his unaccountable resemblance to the last King of the line of York, was the cause of his being selected as the head of this infamous conspiracy."

"It must be as you say," returned the Chief; "but surely the disinterested act of clemency he exercised towards myself did not bespeak the double knave who could compass so lying a scheme, so bare-faced a villany. In faith, it is a riddle hard to read."

"Indeed," cried Viola, earnestly, "his nature was aforetime true, noble, and generous; how he fell, I know not; perchance, his overweening pride may have led him, by degrees, from discontented murmurings to falsehood and guilt; but I can

well aver that he was once frank, and innocent, and worthy of regard."

"Had he ever a claim on yours?" demanded the Border Chief, quickly.

But the moment after, regretting the uncontrollable impulse which had prompted the question, he added—

"Forgive my boldness—I have no right—no wish—to ask further."

Viola raised her clear, bright eyes to his anxious and abashed countenance, while the colour mantled fitfully on her delicate cheek, as she replied in low but firm tones—

"Whatever I may have felt—whatever girlish folly may have inclined my heart to Master Warbeck, be sure it is now cleansed from such unworthy preference. In my judgment, love keeps no footing without esteem. Upright manhood, and unassailable honor are the magic arts that should alone purchase regard."

A wild, momentary idea, scarcely

amounting to a hope, sprang into the Borderer's mind, that the maiden's affections being now disengaged, he might yet win them to himself; if he again proffered his suit, in time it might perhaps be accepted. But the thought was arrested as soon as formed by her immediate allusion to her proposed intention of embracing a monastic life.

She explained, that on the morrow her protectress was bound to London, for the settlement of some intricate concerns; Viola Hatherton was to bear her company, and remain with her until she had leisure to journey into Yorkshire, and deposit the maiden in the convent of Saint Bride, of which religious house she desired to become a professing sister.

Changing the subject with a half-checked sigh, the Borderer referred to his interview with Osbeck, and the charge he had undertaken to fulfil.

"This packet," said he, "I have sworn to place in the youth's hands; I believe it

will acquaint him with the history of his birth."

"How often would he mourn," cried Viola, "that his fate was so utterly desolate, that kindred blood flowed in the veins of no other human being! The revelation now can scarcely be welcome; but in the hour of adversity it may aid to reclaim him. When he can no longer maintain his pretensions with any reasonable expectation of success, he may be persuaded to terminate the rebellion by their abdication. Yet how can we meet with him?"

"The task may be a difficult one—but I will find opportunity to achieve it."

The Border Chief was half disposed to proffer to the maiden his arm and service in case of need; but the words died away on his lips, as he called to mind that the offer would be equally useless, under the able protection she at present enjoyed, or in the peaceful seclusion to which her own wish destined her.

With a cheerful mien and heavy spirit,

he took his leave. Viola gazed sadly after his receding form, as she thought:

“There is more natural honor, and true nobility in that untaught heart, than may often be found under the ermine of the mighty of the land. Would his fate were a happier one!”

## CHAPTER V.

## THE MARCH.

Why have those banished and forbidden legs  
Dared once to touch a dust of English ground ?  
But then more why ? Why have they dared to  
march

So many miles upon her peaceful bosom,  
Frighting her pale-faced villages with war  
And ostentation of despised arms ?

SHAKSPEARE.

WHILE the good citizens of Exeter, with  
laudable activity, looked to their defences,



and put themselves into military training, foreign alike to their habits and inclinations, the Adventurer's force, assembled at Taunton, augmented in numbers from the daily accession of the malcontents of the adjoining counties ; and although the volunteers displayed little affection for the cause they professed to have adopted, the hardy knaves would not easily be baulked in their humour for a fray.

The invading array now mustered upwards of six thousand men. Many gentlemen of condition had offered their fealty ; and these were advantageously employed in the instruction and inspection of the inexperienced recruits. It had been unani- mously decided that the Adventurer should advance on the town of Exeter ; since it was known that no regular troops were within the walls, and, therefore, an able resistance could not be anticipated.

It yet remained to be proved what Englishmen could do in defence of their hearths and homes ; not easily kindled to enthusi-

asm when the object is to attack the possessions of another ; touch but their own, and a spirit is aroused that no dangers can daunt, no obstacles check, and few opponents withstand.

On a bleak autumn day, the Pretender's host left the neighbourhood of Bodmin, and marched slowly forward in the direction of Exeter.

The first night they halted at Needlesham, a small unimportant hamlet—for it was considered a matter of impolicy to fatigue the forces by over exertion on the road.

The village consisted of a few scattered cottages ; and in these some of the captains quartered themselves, treating the legitimate owners with every possible civility—one tenement, which promised superior accommodation to the rest, was appropriated to the use of Katherine and her attendants.

Rough as was the abode, Richard's noble wife was so inured to the lack of common

conveniences, that she noted not such privation; indeed, since her ill-starred marriage, she had not frequently, enjoyed the luxuries due to her station. It is true, the graceful joyousness that was wont to exhilarate all within its sphere, had quite disappeared—her gay laugh was now seldom heard—manifold anxieties had paled the roses on her cheek, and sobered her once bounding step—deep thought had imparted a softer radiance to the depths of her sparkling eyes—still, how femininely fair in her loveliness, unmindful of the appanage of splendour in which she had been reared? How gloriously radiant, in her queenly beauty, did she appear! as through every vicissitude of fortune she fulfilled the duties of her trying career.

The parental feelings of the Earl of Huntly had not yet cause to mourn the lot of his child; happy at least in the love of her husband—in the accomplishment of her destiny—she was soothed by affection, and

supported by hope—and her woman's heart sighed for no more.

Somewhat weary with the day's journey, Katherine dismissed her handmaids when they had closed the narrow casement, placed a fagot on the hearth, and made every possible arrangement for her comfort. Treading lightly the rough, uneven floor, she seated herself in a musing attitude by the the blazing fire. A cloud of sadness overshadowed her countenance—it had gathered there with the idea that fresh dangers awaited her lord in this renewal of his enterprise, this unequal conflict for power—a presentiment of a fatal issue seemed suddenly to have seized her, and she felt, almost with a pang of self-reproach, that she had ever been foremost in urging her husband to the enforcement of his claims, and that through the promptings of her lofty ambition, in his endeavours to secure a crown his life might probably be called to pay the forfeit.

As these reflections pressed upon her, her courage for the first time gave way, and the tears glistened in her eyes. But Richard's step crossed the passage and approached the door; with him she was never sad, and dispelling all traces of her momentary weakness, she hurried to greet him cheerily.

"Does my Kate think she can find good rest in such poor lodgment?" demanded the Adventurer, tenderly kissing her soft cheek.

"In truth, I marked it not," answered Katherine looking round on the uneven floor, white-washed walls and wooden settles. "This will be to me a palace while you are here to share it. But my dear lord, what has chanced? I have not seen you look so gay of cheer since we left the court of Scotland."

"Once more," pursued he, "I have taken Hope for my travelling companion. Our men are in the highest flush of spirits; tomorrow we shall reach Exeter, and if the

town yields easily, I entertain good expectation that the tall men of Dorset and Wiltshire will add themselves to our array. One undoubted victory might open for us the road to London—'tis ever the fashion of the common herd to follow fortune as the flowers open to the sunbeams."

"Is not General d'Aubigny, by Henry Tudor's command, employed in levying forces to make head against us?" demanded the lady anxiously.

"Even so; but ere he shall have made a move, the White Rose will have taken such deep root that mortal might shall not tear it from the soil."

"Say you so?" returned Katherine, making an effort to return his triumphant smile; "it would be treason then to think otherwise. Still, if we join battle with our foes—or in the coming siege—forget not, Richard, that on your life pend the hope of a nation; you have none to heir your claims; with you the cause of York must be blotted from the annals of England; so I beseech

you be not over reckless; though you may not shun the post of danger, I would not have you seek it—for the sake of the general weal, bear in mind the needlessness of too rash an exposure.”

“Why Kate, sweetheart, what is this? Such words sound strangely from your lips. How long is it that you have become possessed of these idle fears? Where is the valiant spirit I have vaunted so oft as my own inspiration? What has come over you?”

“I know not,” answered Katherine, unable to repress her tears, and casting herself into his arms. “A woman’s fitful weakness it may be—but I do truly fear that in my eagerness to urge you to uphold your rights to the sovereignty of these realms—yours by such long descent—I have overlooked the peril to your person, and thrust in jeopardy a safety so far dearer than my own.”

“Nay,” said the Adventurer soothingly; “bethink you, love, that the meanest soldier in our camp has some true heart that

hangs on his support; while our men risk all in our behalf, we must not be backward to maintain our own title."

"You say rightly," returned the lady, raising her head. "My feebleness of purpose calls the blush to my cheek. You shall see no more of this mis-timed despondency."

This promise was rigidly kept. On the following morning, when the troops were drawn out in readiness for the march, Lady Katherine, resting on her husband's arm, passed through the serried ranks, bestowing words of confidence and encouragement and praying them to do their duty manfully in the service of her lord.

Loyal shouts, murmurs of approbation, and oaths of fealty, ran through the lines as she moved along, and some of softer mould than the rest, felt that they would willingly follow, to the death, at the bidding of that messenger.

Maurice Vipont stepped forward, as the noble pair approached, and gazed with re-



verential admiration on the lady as he paid his homage; but it was of his prince he thought, while he replied to her spirited exhortations.

“Honored madam,” said he, “I am the sworn subject of the White Rose; under its standard will I live or die.”

When Katherine reached the small band of Scots, her expressions naturally assumed a more familiar tone—for every face there had been known to her from childhood—and the retainers of the Earl of Huntly, had ever regarded her with the most unbounded devotion.

She commended their array—she assured them that, with such defenders, she feared no danger; and falteringly, whispered that her heart warmed at the very sight of their national garb; while the rough veterans could but murmur, with choked voices, their benisons on her beloved head.

During the above scene, Ronald Graham leaned indifferently on his mettlesome war-

horse—not a muscle of his countenance changed—and his eyes were fixed steadfastly on the ground. Observing the stern gravity of his appearance, Katherine quitted her husband's arm, and advanced towards him.

She was aware that Richard was not regarded with a favorable eye by the young Scot; but this she attributed to a species of national antipathy and disinclination to serve under his leading in the ranks of the Southrons; and knowing all the waywardness of his disposition, and the natural violence of his prejudices, she was not surprised at his resolute avoidance of Richard; and was only disposed to deal the more graciously with him, since she accounted him an adherent whom the wish of her father had induced to accept an irksome duty.

“Sir Ronald,” said Lady Katherine, “I am here to take a survey of our host before the march; and proud am I to feel that my own troop is not shamed by a comparison

with these Southrons in points of discipline and training. Said I not soothly but now, when I augered that my brave Scots would ever be found in the van, where the tide of war wages fiercest? In sport, I have been wont to term myself the captain of this little band—who shall dispute the title, since these gallant spirits are all obedient to your hest, and you are ready to avow my sway, my faithful follower?"

"Yours; none but yours," replied the cavalier, fervently, kneeling to kiss her hand.

Katherine started at the sudden emphasis with which these words were pronounced; a grave expression cast a momentary shade over her countenance, and she instantly resumed:

"Sir Ronald, you have owned subjection and deference to my rule; this is well, but I require yet more. I have no hope, no wish apart from the establishment of my husband's sovereignty in his native kingdom. Here I will reign a Queen or—

but I cannot contemplate a failure. I would now transfer your allegiance from myself to the cause I have so much at heart. Will you swear fidelity to York and the White Rose?"

The young man hesitated, and shook his head.

"His cheek flushed darkly, and he attempted to rise from the ground, but Katherine's upraised finger arrested him, and he remained stationary.

"Yon disown my influence then—you reject my application—you deny my power. You will not overcome your pride—even for my sake?"

The cavalier wavered no longer. He drew forth his sword, and kissed the cross upon the hilt, while he repeated the lady's words, and vowed fealty to York and the White Rose.

With thanks and expressions of approval, Katherine moved away to rejoin her husband. Having completed the review of

the troops, she was about to enter her litter, when Father Hubert accosted her.

“Noble madam,” said he, “did every one in our camp possess your energy and unflinching courage, our task would be easier, and I should feel less doubt of the result.”

“Your commendation has value in my eyes, good Father,” returned Katherine, “for I learn from Richard, that he has no adherent more attached to his person, or more zealous for his interest than yourself.”

The priest mused for some time. He had noted the lady's eye kindle as she addressed the soldiery—he had marked her ambition still pointing onward—and when he called to mind the frequent untoward conduct of the Adventurer, and his impatience of his counsels, the priest began almost to doubt the policy of keeping Katherine so strictly in the dark concerning her lord's position. As it was, the lady seldom distinguished the confessor with her

notice, and if Richard ever gained the throne, she might be the first to undermine his influence, or urge his dismissal. Whereas, had she been acquainted with the reality of their situation, her very thirst for empire and love of power, would induce her to bow to his authority, and through her instrumentality, he might retain a firmer hold on Richard's wavering confidence.

The priest might have been skilled in policy, and the tortuous windings of subtler bosoms, but ill could he read ('twas a language unknown to him) the high heart and noble spirit of the White Rose of Scotland.

## CHAPTER VI.

## SCHEMES OF REVENGE.

One sole desire, one passion now remains  
To keep life's fever still within his veins,  
Vengeance!—dire vengeance on the wretch who cast  
O'er him and all he loved that ruinous blast.

MOORE.

SHORTLY before night-fall the Pretender's army had taken up a strong position before the town of Exeter; the worthy citizens were immediately summoned to open their

gates to Richard the Fourth, the legitimate King of England; but the loyal mayor bade that they should bring no more such traitorous messages, or he would not be responsible for the safety of the envoys. This spirited reply excited great astonishment, and was received rather contemptuously by the besieging host.

The busy hum of the soldiers, as they talked over the events of the day, had gradually been succeeded by the deep stillness attendant on general repose, when Dalton took his way alone to the quarters of Sir Ronald Graham. The young Scot had not retired to rest, he looked haggard, and ill at ease, and he replied but coldly to the greeting of his friend.

“ I judged you would not be a bed,” commenced the latter, “ and therefore chose this moment to hold some discourse with you without the chance of interruption.”

“ I am in no mood for company,” returned Sir Ronald, sullenly. “ I care not to learn your thoughts, and mine are none



so enviable that you should wish to share them."

"Tush! man, this peevishness is but an inducement for me to proceed. 'Tis as though a wounded man shrank from the sight of the chirurgeon about to probe his hurt; if I lay finger on the ulcer of your soul, it will be with the hope to heal it."

"I tell you, Dalton," cried Sir Ronald, impatiently, "I seek not your confidence, and I pray you not to pry into feelings you cannot fathom, and matters that concern you not."

There was a long pause, which was at last broken by Dalton.

"Am I then to understand," demanded he, "that you have changed the object of your pursuit?"

"Understand what you will," exclaimed the Scot, with a sudden burst of passion, "but torment me no more."

"Fickle as the wind," continued Dalton; "you think no more of your former idol, the Lady Katherine—"

“ Utter not her name, vile caitiff!” thundered Sir Ronald Graham, furiously ; “ from your tongue it is degradation.”

Still Dalton was not silenced, for he was well accustomed to the fiery humour of his companion, and knew that when it had found a vent, he would regain his composure.

“ Then,” persisted he, you love her no longer ; this is well, and as it should be. Since you seem rather to affect privacy, I will now withdraw, for the friendly intention that led me hither will be of no avail, willing as I find you to renounce—”

“ Fool!” interrupted Sir Ronald—“ why talk to me of changing affection ; I live, feel, breathe but in her presence—I worship her very footsteps—apart from her, the whole earth seems to me a desert—near her, every nerve trembles with delirious transport, while I am compelled to assume an iron mask, lest my countenance betray my secret. Would indeed I could quench the flame that consumes my unruly heart!

Of a truth I do sometimes think it is not love but incurable madness that possesses me."

These last words were pronounced by the young man in a tone of indescribable melancholy, for his fury had now expended itself.

"Since such is your state of feeling," resumed Dalton, "you will not be reluctant to co-operate with me in that which may minister to your wishes."

"Beware!" returned Graham—"I warn you not to confide your plots to me; I will not pledge myself to their concealment."

"I will run the hazard."

"Again I would advise you to trust me with nought that requires secrecy. My mind is at times so crazed by the constant struggle within, that I cannot even answer for myself."

"Do you call to remembrance," demanded Dalton, abruptly, "that once you engaged,

if the league of amity between James and Richard should be dissolved, that you would no longer hold yourself bound to the White Rose?"

Sir Ronald made no sign, and the other continued.

"Such time is now come—the Scottish Monarch feels no interest in the success of Richard of York, and by an adherence to your engagement with me, you may serve my plans, and attain what your wild desires aim at; will you not reach out your hand to secure the costly boon almost within your grasp?"

"What is your purpose?" asked the young man.

Dalton slowly perused the features of his companion, for they wore an expression incomprehensible to him. Still he resolved to proceed, knowing well the weakness of Graham's character, on which he had frequently played to advantage. While he recollected the influence he had formerly

exercised over his friend, he did not perhaps calculate that his frequent absences might have diminished his empire.

“ You know,” said Dalton, how fixed my hatred, and with what just cause, to the house of York; my revenge draws near its fulfilment; with what patience have I awaited this moment; the boy-prince is now in the toils; struggle as he may, he shall not escape me—while he remained in Ireland he was beyond my power; the instant he set foot on English ground, his ruin was sealed. He believes that this city of Exeter will speedily fall before his arms, but the good townsmen will be supplied with information that shall enable them to hold out until General d’Aubigny march hitherward at the head of Henry Tudor’s newly levied army. My object will be to detain Richard at the siege till his retreat is completely cut off by the enemy; false intelligence will be furnished from quarters that he will not suspect; a conflict with such an overpowering force must terminate in

his destruction. It will be my care to prevent his falling on the battle-field—such a fate will be too merciful for his father's son—flight also shall be precluded; in his own host I have found tools to serve my will; bound and helpless, he shall be delivered to the keeping of Henry Tudor. Deserted by all, betrayed by those he holds most in trust, the scoff of the people he would have ruled, his harsh captivity shall only be exchanged for the headsman and the block.”

“The scheme is worthy of the traitorous head that devised it,” said Sir Ronald. “But wherefore should my name be coupled with yours in so infamous a conspiracy—I have no wrongs to avenge.”

“True. Yet one with soul less gall-less might be supposed to entertain a grudge against the man who stepped in between you and your love, and won the heart on which your passion was beginning to make impression. Since by-gones cannot move you, I will withdraw the veil from the future, and prove that by lending assistance

to my plans, you may secure to yourself that which you so earnestly covet."

The young man found it difficult to preserve his air of indifference, and his eyes rested eagerly on his companion, who continued :

"While Richard of York pays the penalty of his father's sins, to you shall be assigned the task of protecting the Lady Katherine from the dangers that will surround her; when all is over, she will naturally turn to you for consolation—surely it will not be impossible to convert her gratitude into a softer feeling. How say you—will you reject this office?"

"What other part should I be expected to perform?" demanded Graham bitterly. "For I cannot imagine you have named all you propose me to undertake."

"Your happiness will be purchased on easy terms; I shall require your aid in some small matters, it is true, but of these we shall speak hereafter. And now your answer?"

Sir Ronald Graham paused, hesitated, and thought of Katherine. There was rapture in the idea of possessing her on any conditions.

“Remember,” continued the tempter, “how certain will be your success with your lady love—and what tie of interest can bind you to the White Rose of York.”

These words produced on the hearer an effect quite opposite to that which was intended; they recalled to Sir Ronald the vow of fealty exacted from him by the Lady Katherine, and the evil spirit was half expelled from his bosom; he imaged her agony and despair at the fate destined for her lord, and he was totally disarmed; a generous feeling of self-immolation to the object of his worship, gained the mastery over his impetuous passions, and he wavered no longer.

“Bankrupt in honor as you have a right to deem me,” said the young man firmly, “I can scarce marvel that you have chosen me as your accomplice in a plot so base in



its conception, so cowardly in its execution, and so direful in its consequences. I have, indeed, approved myself worthy of the distinction. But I see you await my reply. Know then that I will take no part in your treacherous intrigues, and most perfidious schemes—if the prize you offer me can only be bought at the expenditure of so much misery—I could not work such depth of woe to the being I adore, neither shall you. I loathe your fierce purpose, and will have no share in't. I cannot stand mutely by while our leader's ruin is hatched. So I bid you take heed how you step, for a watchful eye is on you; attempt not to proceed in your villanous designs, or I make known all."

"Your assistance I need not, and your enmity I defy," answered Dalton contemptuously.

"Provoke me not to your undoing. If you require not my succour, why have you come hither to unfold your iniquitous plans, and seek my acquiescence?"

“Short-sighted boy!” returned the Englishman, “see you not that I would fill my foe’s cup of bitterness to the brim—ay! and let him quaff it to the very dregs. While Richard of York wastes his days in hopeless imprisonment, I would have him learn that his fair wife is consoled by the lips of another—the desertion would sting worse than death—this would be a revenge worthy of my wrongs. I have made you the sharer of my mind’s projects, because I destined you to be their instrument. Did you possess one spark of manhood, you would achieve such end—with every point of vantage in your favor—the lady’s early predilections, the fallen fortunes of her husband, whose person was never her choice, but was thrust upon her as the accompaniment of greatness—success would have been certain. Go to, poor of heart! your failure will cost me the dearest portion of my vengeance.”

“Cold-blooded fiend!” muttered Sir Ronald between his clenched teeth. “By

Heaven, it shall not be; Desist from the pursual of your pitiless intentions, or I denounce you to Richard."

"Out on your folly!" interrupted the Englishman. Reserve your menaces for those who fear them. Think you I should be sufficiently simple to trust myself unarmed in your power. Breathe but a word of your suspicions, and Richard shall know how kind a favor you bear to his comely wife; he is over young a bridegroom to learn this with indifference. Moreover who will believe your report, when I shall readily make it appear that the foul slander is fabricated merely to throw discredit on my witness of your guilty passion for the Lady Katherine."

"Leave me," gasped the young man, in a choked voice, as he recognized the truth of this statement. "Out of my presence, lest I do a mischief to you, or to myself."

Dalton took his departure without another word—disguising as best he might his sentiments of inward mortification. He

felt not a little indignant that his dupe should at last have assumed to act on his own judgment, although he entertained no fear of his want of secrecy; and his busy mind immediately employed itself in the renewal of his infernal machinations through some other medium.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE COMBAT.

And twice the warrior turned again  
And cursed the arm that now in vain,  
Wounded and faint, essayed to grasp  
The sword that trembled in its clasp.

L. E. L.

FOR some days the Adventurer continued to besiege the town of Exeter without much success; contrary to all expectation the garrison made a most gallant and effectual resistance; it appeared as if by intuition, they were acquainted with the intended movements of their enemies. Wherever the assailants planned an attack, the citizens

had not failed, in that quarter, to have assembled their most vigorous means of defence.

The affair was becoming of serious importance. Rumour announced the near approach of General d'Aubigny, and as the Pretender could not hope to stand against the overwhelming numerical superiority of the King's army, he would be compelled to raise the siege and withdraw into an adjacent county, where, he had been assured, a strong reinforcement awaited him.

While the question was yet under discussion, some fugitive countrymen were detained, and brought before the Adventurer's council—according to their report, the General was merely advancing towards the disturbed districts with his vanguard; the new levies had not received orders to march from London, their equipments not being fully completed, and the troops in the north were obliged to remain there in order to suppress a sudden outbreak in Yorkshire. This good news, so consonant with the

wishes of Richard and his supporters, obtained easy credit, and notwithstanding the strenuous opposition of Sir Ronald Graham, it was finally decided that they should remain some few days longer before the town of Exeter, in hopes of carrying a place so desirable as a store-house, magazine, and haven of refuge during the rest of the campaign.

Meantime the Border Chief had not forgotten that he had engaged to deliver to Perkin Warbeck the packet confided to him by Osbeck; but his time had been otherwise occupied. The noble gentlewoman, who had extended her protection to Viola Hather-ton, had deferred her departure for London, until she could command a more efficient escort to cope with any dangers that might assail them on the road, and under some pretext or another, John Heron contrived daily interviews with the maiden. His love-plea was not again proffered, but her gentle smiles awoke no hope. And how felt Viola, now that she had become fancy-

free?—She sighed as she compared the difference in worth of the suitor she had rejected, and the juggling deceiver whose false image she had so long cherished.

At length Mistress Aston set forth on her way to the capital with her orphan charge, and the Borderer, shaking off his apathy, and half ashamed of his late life of inactivity, resolved to execute his mission without further delay. So engrossed had he been by the passion that bowed his unre-sisting heart, that he had paid no heed to the progress of the rebellion, or civil war, as some might term it, which raged so near him. Having acquainted himself with the exact position of Richard's array, he determined to make his way thither, and then be guided by circumstances. Perhaps he might be fortunate enough to obtain an accidental meeting with the Adventurer, or in any case he might state his errand, and demand to be led to his presence. Arming himself most carefully, and attended by Starhed and Lilburn, he rode forth at a



leisurely pace in the direction of the encampment.

The hour was approaching noon, and the sickly sun-beams in vain endeavoured to struggle through the heavy mist that topped the landscape, and overpowered their radiance. The Chief proceeded onward, wrapped in silent meditation, and the two Border-riders, reluctant to disturb its current, followed at sufficient distance to enjoy their gossip without molesting him.

“Read I not the riddle aright?” whispered Robin, “when I told you that a fair face had changed the character of the Heron, and turned his buxom mirth into melancholy gloom?”

“I am weary of such vagaries,” said Lilburn. “Why cannot a plain man choose a mate without these playings at hide and seek. I understand nothing of such moon-struck madness.”

“Ay, Dick, your slow brain can ill compass the antics of a love-sick fantasy—but believe me, there is some subtle mystery

in't that neither of us can fathom. Certes, this love is a strange trick of nature that besets the great and wise full as readily as the lowly and simple."

"It may be so, and yet I do account it most superlative folly, though all the world should stumble in the same bog. But Master Soothsayer, can your wisdom tell us whither we are bound—there is no runagate damsel in the wind now."

"Indeed I know not," replied Robin; "we have made a long circuit through the country, which has brought us out the other side of Exeter—and look yonder—the tents of the rebels are pitched on the breast of that steep hill—methinks we are about to thrust our head into the lion's jaws, unless we mean to enlist among the Yorkists."

"It is my trade to obey orders, whatever they may be, but I must confess I shall be pleased enough when we are bidden to turn our bridles back again to the north."

"Pray all the saints you reach there with untwisted neck. See, here comes an

iron-clad knight, who puts his horse to speed at sight of us ; he has four followers in his train, wearing the badge of the White Rose—we had best close round our Chief.”

With one impulse the Border-riders galloped forward towards John Heron, who abated not a jot of his air of indifference as the opposite party drew up in his front.

“What seek you here?” asked the stranger horseman, in a peremptory tone. “Avow your name, or I forbid your passage.”

“A demand so discourteously framed,” said the Chief, “merits a rougher reply than my peaceful errand will permit. Make known who is my questioner, and then, at least, I will declare my purpose.”

“I am Sir Ronald Graham,” replied the cavalier briefly, “a subject of Scotland, and serving at present in the ranks of York against Tudor. Now by what title shall I welcome you as a friend, or encounter you as a foe?”

"I came as neither, Sir Scot," returned the Borderer. "I bear a private message to your leader, and would crave your guidance to his presence."

"It may not be. I cannot be surety for your safe passport on such terms, nor will a nameless rover gain admission to the Prince of York through my means."

"I will be my own warranty from harm," said the Chief, haughtily, for he found it a hard matter to control his rising temper. "Point out the way to your commander's tent, and I shall need no gentleman-usher to effect a meeting."

"I doubt not that your audacity would even carry you so far; but such lack of ceremonial is not the usance of royalty."

"My experience is rather in camps than courts," answered the Heron with a contemptuous smile; "however, since your leader keeps such state, I will forthwith despatch a herald to lay my credentials at his feet."

"A truce to your mistimed jesting,"

cried Sir Ronald. "Give me your name, or turn back the way you came."

The Border Chief recollected in time that if he would attain his object, he must not engage in a quarrel at the outset of his adventure, and with a sudden effort suppressing the burst of passion that swelled his bosom, and darkened his brow, he replied, in a constrained tone—

"Will it not suffice you that I ask to be taken, unarmed, to your camp—yourself can keep ward that I sow no treason in your host, and your general's lips shall adjudge my fate when our interview is closed."

There was so fair a show of reason in this argument, that Sir Ronald Graham could scarcely gainsay it; but the young man's hot humour had been chafed beyond endurance by a succession of aggravated annoyances, and he felt satisfaction at the moment in continuing the contention he had provoked.

"I say not," he returned, "that, thus

guarded, you might not visit our quarters without danger; still none but an ignoble churl would deny so perversely to announce his name, unless some black stigma were appendaged thereto; and by my honor! I do believe this to be the case with yourself, Sir Unknown."

"Injurious knight, I will do battle with you hereafter in this cause, if you dare to meet me. I trow, it will be a more natural sight to see Scot and English breast to breast than side by side."

"That is open truth, though the foul fiend said it. But anon we may be hindered; here let our quarrel be adjusted."

"When I have performed my mission, I will hold myself at your disposal," replied the Chief; "and it required some exertion of fortitude to repress his burning desire to chastise the young cavalier's overbearing insolence.

"Ha! think you to escape me?" exclaimed Sir Ronald Graham, vehemently; but at the moment one of his attendants

rode up, and explained that the stranger was no other than the Bastard Heron, whose person was well-known to him, and whose name spoke to Scottish ears, of blood treacherously shed, crying out for vengeance.

“Murderer of Sir Robert Ker!” cried Sir Ronald. “Scum of the earth! Small marvel is it that so double-dyed a malefactor sought disguise from the sight of honest men. Come on—I wait no further—this very hour will I send your guilty soul to judgment to answer for its misdeeds.”

These opprobrious epithets, and the insulting accent in which they were vociferated, produced no retort in kind from the Border Chief; he replied, huskily, I must first do mine errand, and then I swear to give you the meeting wherever it may please you to appoint.”

A loud peal of scornful laughter broke from the lips of the Scot.

“Believe you that I shall herald your way to the Prince of York’s tent, that another

noble life may abide the stroke of your dagger? Violator of truces! forsworn and bloodstained!—fight or fly!—for here you pass not, save over my breathless body.”

Without answering a word, John Heron turned his horse's bridle, and took his spear from the hand of Lilburn, for he seldom stirred abroad without his full military accoutrements, and on the present occasion none had been omitted.

Sir Ronald also grasped his lance, and the adherents on both sides were commanded not to interfere in the coming strife, by sign or deed.

With such hearty good-will for the conflict, but a few minutes elapsed before the combatants had charged and met in mid-career. The lance of Sir Ronald glanced harmlessly from the Borderer's coat of mail, but the Scot's steed was far less powerful than that of his opponent, and unable to sustain the weight of the shock, both man and horse were hurled to the ground with irresistible violence.



At this sight, forgetful of the prohibition to the contrary, Sir Ronald's followers hurried towards their lord; Starhed and Lilburn interposed to prevent the movement, and all were soon engaged in deadly encounter.

Uninjured by the fall, Sir Ronald had sprung instantly to his feet, and the Chief, unwilling to take an ungenerous advantage, likewise dismounted, and drawing their swords, the combat was renewed hand to hand. The ripe manhood and personal strength of the Borderer availed him not much here, for skill was more requisite than force in this trial of arms—but truer eye and hand than John Heron's were never known, and never did defter swordsman hold a weapon. Neither was the young Scot without experience in the art, and his extreme agility stood him in more stead than his adversary's muscular power. Thus, in natural gifts, they were not unfairly matched; but constant habit had endowed the Chief with coolness of nerve and self-command in

scenes of danger, which the other's fiery impetuosity would have found it difficult to acquire.

Thick as hail rained the strokes of Sir Ronald's sword, which the Englishman quietly parried, and ever and anon the latter made a pass at his adversary, which failed not to draw blood. Stung with rage and pain, the young cavalier increased his exertions; still his blows were successfully repulsed without much effort on the part of his opponent. At length, fury rendered him reckless, and his rash onset continually exposed his person, and he received in consequence repeated wounds. Exhausted, on a sudden, by his own violence, his attack grew feebler; the Borderer then in his turn became the assailant. Beat down on one knee, Sir Ronald still endeavoured to defend himself, but a rapid blow from his antagonist shivered the sword in his grasp—the terrible weapon of the Border Chief played above his unprotected head as he called to him to yield; but the summons was ad-

dressed to a dulled ear, and the unfortunate cavalier, covered with wounds, sank to the ground in a state of insensibility.

The thundering voice of the Heron soon separated the Scotch and English retainers, who had rushed to the affray with true national zest, although the great odds against the latter must shortly have rendered it a dangerous pastime. Eyeing each other with an expression of sullen dissatisfaction, the combatants reluctantly came to a pause at the imperative command of the Chief, and turned to observe how the fortune of the day had gone with their superiors.

At the piteous spectacle presented by Sir Ronald Graham, all simultaneously leaped from the saddle and gathered round his senseless body. The tide of life welled fearfully from innumerable wounds, and the unearthly pallor of the upturned countenance looked still more ghastly in contrast with that crimson stream.

The Borderer bent half remorsefully over

the inanimate form as his experienced judgment told him that the injuries were mortal, although life was not yet completely extinct.

“He did but his devoir,” murmured the Chief, “in calling to account a felon murderer. He is young to meet so sudden a doom, yet I could find it in my heart to envy his fate, for at least he dies not dishonoured.”

By the Borderer's direction, Starhed applied himself to stanch the vital effusion, and bound up the wounds with considerable dexterity and care. The Chief then recommended Sir Ronald Graham's followers to procure a litter, place their luckless master thereon, and bear him gently to the encampment, although there was scarcely a hope that he could reach it alive. Gleaming over the top of the hill might now be seen a bright line of spears, as the attention of a troop of horsemen had been attracted to the affray. The Border Chief

dared no longer linger; he felt that to push his way to the Pretender's presence at the present moment, would be to run unnecessary hazard, and mounting his horse, followed by his Border-riders, he rode rapidly from the scene of battle.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONFESSION.

The world itself was changed, and all  
That I had loved before  
Seemed as if gone beyond recall,  
And I could hope no more ;  
The scar of fire, the dint of steel,  
Are easier than Love's wounds to heal.

L. E. L.

THE Adventurer's tent, situated in the centre of the encampment, worn and stained

as it was by time and travel, still retained some vestiges of its pristine magnificence. England's proud standard waved before it, and the royal insignia of York were emblazoned on the curtains that fell over the rough canvass. The plot of greensward in front of the tent was fresh and untrodden where all around was bare—for the spot was heedfully preserved from the intrusion of the soldiery—there was also another mode of egress used by those who sought Richard on matters of business. The two principal compartments of this moveable pavilion appropriated to the accommodation of Katherine, and her privacy was never invaded. The lady had drawn aside the outer curtain of the tent, and looked forth on the lowering sky, where the sun's lurid beams were gradually succumbing beneath the mists of the leaden vapours that seemed to pervade all things.

No happy omen could be read by those who sought to gather portents from the aspect of the firmament. Katherine then

glanced towards the spires of the distant town of Exeter, which had so long bidden defiance to her husband's arms, and she shuddered to reflect how many gallant spirits both within and without the walls must be laid low before the city could be won.

Civil war is fearful and terrible to contemplate, even in its least destructive guise. Still, thought Katherine, could her lord's royalty of birth and inalienable rights to inherit the land where his sire reigned—could these be laid aside that the lives of his countrymen might be spared—justice, honor, even mercy on those who groaned beneath the tyrant's yoke, forbade the abdication of his rights. And Richard's bride inwardly ejaculated:

“May Heaven's avenging lightnings fall only on the head of the usurper, for whose insatiate and unlawful ambition so much blood will be expended in this direful strife!” was the prayer of the fond wife duly recorded.



Engaged in these thoughts, she noted not the passage of time until her reverie was broken by a loud clamour of voices, accompanied by a sound of wailing and lamentation. A group of persons had just entered within the barrier, bearing in their arms a burden resembling a human body; the train slowly advanced towards the green-sward, and it would appear that some overwhelming object of solicitude had caused the throng to disregard the strict injunctions issued that none should trespass on the open space contiguous to the royal tent. Moved by a feeling stronger than curiosity, the Lady Katherine stepped forth, and summoning a soldier of the guard, enquired the nature of the tumult.

From his answer she gathered that a wounded knight was being conveyed to his quarters—and as the slightest movement occasioned him severe anguish, they had brought him through the forbidden precincts, since it afforded a shorter road to his destination.

Meantime, the mournful procession advanced towards the spot where Katherine stood, and the men-at-arms, coming to a halt, made their obeisance, and narrated the cause of the mischance. The lady moved forward, and as the crowd respectfully receded on either side, she saw, extended before her, the bleeding form of Sir Ronald Graham, the playmate of her infancy—the favorite and trusted follower of the Earl, her father, and her own devoted knight. A heavy groan burst from the dying youth when the party was again set in motion, and Katherine, deeply affected, made a signal for the men to bear the litter to the royal pavilion, and deposit their burden there. Her order was promptly obeyed. Women's hearts were not made of sterner fabric in those days of yore; but the custom that rendered them such frequent witnesses of scenes of blood, inured them to the sight, and while it excited in them less shrinking of the nerves or outward demonstrations of horror, they were by no means deficient in

sensibility and feminine tenderness—thus in peril and suffering they were usually chief actors in lieu of helpless spectators. With alacritous haste, Katherine sought the remedies she judged best suited to ease the pain of the sufferer ; commanding the assistance of her hand-maidens—his gaping wounds were dressed—his hacked armour in part removed, and a powerful restorative administered.

The curious crowd had quietly dispersed, and the Scottish retainers were directed to keep watch without the tent, that they might be ready to lend their aid in case of need. Intent on her charitable employment, the lady had hitherto found no leisure to give way to emotions of sorrow ; but when all could be done that her experience and judicious care could suggest, and she stooped down to bathe the brow of the dying youth with aromatic essence, the tears streamed unwittingly from her eyes, and fell unheeded on the coverlid which had been carefully adjusted over his quivering limbs.

At this moment, Sir Ronald Graham opened his haggard eyes; the cordial had temporarily summoned his fainting spirit back to life, and he was conscious that busy hands had ministered to the assuagement of his anguish.

“Kind friends,” he murmured, “your tendance is vain. I feel I shall not outlive the hour. Good Christians, whoever you may be, spend no further pains on one whose moments are numbered.”

A feeble movement of the head now enabled him to obtain a glimpse of the well-known figure that bent over him, and he continued in a more agitated tone,

“Have my wounds so maddened me that I rave? or am I yet among the blessed in Paradise, for I could swear that I see before me the form most loved on earth.”

“Sir Ronald, you err not, if you recognise in me the wife of the Prince of York; you have been brought hither to your leader’s tent, that I might give what succour my poor skill could suggest.”

These words were not uttered by Katherine rebukingly, for in her excitement and anxiety she had not noted the exclusive measure of preference addressed to herself.

The wounded man turned restlessly on his rude couch; and when he next spoke, it was to falter forth his thanks for the attention bestowed on him; and his glance endeavoured to fix itself on the tearful countenance of his benefactress.

‘Lady, you weep for me,’ he uttered faintly, ‘and your tears fall like precious balm on my broken spirit. Your gentle compassion softens but cannot change my doom.’

This was said slowly and sadly, for the speaker entertained a firm conviction that his hour was come—indeed, his own knowledge of chirurgery sufficed to assure him that he had been wounded in a vital part.

‘Can nothing further be done to alleviate your sufferings?’ demanded Katherine,

eagerly. "Have you any desire unfulfilled? Does the camp contain no one with whom you would seek an interview? Your English friend, Master Dalton, shall I summon him?"

There was a long pause, while a sudden spasm contracted Sir Ronald's features; at length he asked abruptly—

"Are we alone?"

"Nay! there are none here but my handmaidens, who have been active in your service; in their presence you may say your mind fearlessly, and without hindrance. What would you?"

"Noble lady, I have a few words for your private ear. Dismiss these damsels of your train, and vouchsafe, I beseech you, to let me have speech with you alone."

Katherine hesitated, for she suddenly recalled the suspicion that had passed across her mind, some days previous, of the cavalier's secret admiration for herself, and she replied, gravely—

"There is no need of such precaution,

Sir Knight, here you may safely unfold your dearest secret; I will be responsible for the discretion of my women."

"As you will; yet, madam, you may repent your unkind perversity; that which I have to disclose will not be breathed save in private conference with yourself."

This pertinacity perplexed the hearer; however, one glance at the cavalier's dying frame decided the question, and the lady bade her attendants retire, and remain within call though out of earshot.

"Stay!" cried the young man, eagerly, "I am athirst, and lack strength. I pray you, bid them bring me a cup of wine; I reckon not if it shorten the remnant of my minutes, provided it will chase this fainting weakness that dims my eyes, and curdles the blood in my veins."

By the direction of Katherine a draught was prepared which stimulated and, at the same time, soothed, and then the attendants withdrew, and the lady was left alone with the wounded man.

Sir Ronald continued so long silent, that Katherine began to fear his powers were unequal to the effort he had meditated, and was about to re-summon her women, when, anticipating the projected movement, he hurriedly commenced—

“Dear lady, will you not deign to approach that I may gaze my last where I have loved the most.”

Katherine advanced at this appeal, and stood close beside the cavalier; her glorious eyes were calmly bent upon him, and in their expression might be read more than compassion; there was warning; he understood well the language of those starry orbs, and sighed heavily as he resumed—

“Be not so impatient that I encroach on your time, that time which will soon end for me on earth; your tongue is mute; but look not such disdain; bear with me awhile, and I will rally strength to tell you that which much concerns your lord.”

“What of him?” cried Katherine, anx-



iously. "Speak you of danger to my royal Richard?"

"Danger most deadly and most certain; which I alone can point out the means to avert."

"In what form comes it?"

"The Avenger has enmeshed the unwary victims in his intricate toils, and the prey is marked for destruction."

"Your brain wanders, Sir Ronald," replied the lady endeavouring to maintain her equanimity, although the colour had faded from her cheek. "The fever-fit has surely distempered your senses. No man has ever received wrong from the hand of my noble husband; and he has no enemy who could pursue him with such extremity of hate. Go to—this is but a fable to play on a fond wife's fears. I dread no peril for my lord save that which appears in the shape of an open adversary, and with such he must cope as best he may."

"Ay! but the vengeance of which I speak is an inheritance—a debt transmitted

from sire to son—the crime was the work of Edward, and the penalty must be borne by his descendent, who guesses not that he heirs so unquenchable an enmity. This secret foe wears the badge of York, while he has sworn the downfall—nay! the death of its prince.”

“Ha! a betrayer in our very camp—I cannot divine at whom you point. In my judgment, all have the semblance of true and loyal men—though haply I like not some—yet I would have trusted all. Unless you have aroused my doubts simply to make you sport, I pray you, Sir Ronald, to name the foul, dishonored traitor.”

“The Englishman, Dalton,” answered the cavalier, while he turned aside his head.

“Art sure of this, Sir Knight? What! the counsellor whose sagacity my good lord relies on most firmly and consults most freely—your own bosom friend! How can it be? Such an invention would not win belief from a child.”

“Yet it is true, lady. Aforetime I have heard the dark history of this man's wrongs, and oft has he hinted at his schemes of treachery. Foully and cruelly has he been injured, deep and relentless will be his revenge. Much I doubt that he furnishes information to the rebels of Exeter which has enabled them hitherto to repel our arms, but at least, I can safely aver that false intelligencers, hired by him for the purpose, were brought before the council, and spread report that General d'Aubigny marched hitherward with but the vanguard of his army.”

“His object?” cried Katherine breathlessly.

“His object being to detain you here before the walls of the town, until Henry Tudor's countless host, now advancing with rapid strides, shall have scattered over the surrounding country, and precluded all hope of escape—your lord's small array will then fall an easy spoil into the power of the victors.”

“And you can avouch the truth of this?” exclaimed Katherine, woman’s scorn flashing in vivid lightnings from her eyes, and causing her even to forget the disabled state of the young Scot. “You knew that a spy was in our councils, a traitor at our board—and raised no voice to warn and save, although a breath would have done it—you whom the Earl my father so honored and besought to watch over the security of his child—well did he choose a safeguard!—you whom I would have trusted as my second self—have vaunted as my own sworn knight, you could have joined—”

“I joined in nought,” interrupted Sir Ronald confusedly. “I did but keep silence as to what I knew.”

“More cowardly and base therein than he who plotted our ruin. He, at least, took the hazard of the venture like a man—’tis as though you held the light while another did sharpen the steel that was to be dyed in our blood—you saw us penned in the shambles, and made no sign. You

tell me our betrayer had received injuries from York, had causes of grievance—Heaven knows I wot not their nature—but what hadst thou?”

Sir Ronald writhed beneath her words in mental agony that far exceeded the anguish of the body, and low groans broke from him at intervals.

“Ransack the past,” resumed Katherine with the same unabated energy. “Confidence, reliance, friendship, and esteem—these are our sole aggressions to yourself. Say, were our lives priced that you gave them to the block? Was it gold, or rank, or power that guerdoned your faithlessness?”

The young cavalier had borne thus far without reply, for he felt unequal to contend against the torrent of indignation he had aroused; but endurance has its limits, and now shaking off his feebleness, he suddenly reared himself on his elbow, and the exertion caused his gory wounds to open and bleed afresh.

“Wife of Richard of York!” he exclaimed bitterly, while his blood-shot eye no longer shunned hers. “I would have perished to avert the chance of evil from yourself—neither have I conspired against your lord—I sought not to be an agent in his overthrow—you seek to know my motive for the concealment of treachery which until lately I but guessed—you have asked the cause, and you shall hear me now, hear me to the end. Learn then, kinswoman of royalty—bride of the Plantagenet, that I have dared to love where a prince was proud to woo—I have raised my eyes to your peerless loveliness, and have worshipped in secret and in silence the betrothed of another—at least let me say in excuse that I loved so madly before the mandate of King James bestowed your hand on your appointed lord. Indeed how could it be otherwise—and when did I not love? Far back as memory can reach, my heart owned no other idol—what wild hope filled my dreams I will not now hint at—my youth-

ful passion forgot the difference of our stations, and overleaped the ceremonial boundary that should have hedged in the great Earl's daughter—I presumed to adore Katherine Gordon, and for herself alone—I remembered not that her birth, and lands, and appanage, entitled her to a royal alliance; but the throbbings of my beating breast acknowledged that her dower of grace and beauty should have fitly made her empress of the world."

"I knew nought of all this," observed the lady in a low accent, "never suspected it."

"Heaven's benison on you for that gentle tone! You would have pitied me had you known the utter wretchedness, the deep despair that seized me when your betrothal was publicly announced. Then first I recognized the full measure of my presumptuous folly."

"Yet," said Katherine, "you never preferred a word that could have led me to guess the truth. I ever considered you in

the light of a favorite kinsman. Frequently I have found you wayward and petulant—sometimes cold—”

“Cold! Fires of Etna that burned unceasingly into heart and brain—was not I mis-read? when I would have hazarded body and soul to do you pleasure?”

The young man stretched forward, seized Katherine's hand, and pressed it passionately to his lips. She gently disengaged herself from his fervent clasp, and bade him continue his extenuation or exculpation, whichever it might be termed, as her present sense of danger to her husband would prevent her longer tarriance by his side. There was dignity in her manner without a touch of haughtiness, reproof unmingled with severity.

A change had swept over Sir Ronald's countenance, which was now of livid hue: the recent excitement had visibly abridged the short span that remained to him, and with some difficulty he resumed—

“With feelings like mine, was it a



marvel that I liked not the Prince of York, although I vow to you I should have served him faithfully, had not the ready tempter been busy at my ear, the subtle serpent crept into my confidence, then whispered all could yet be well, and the past repaired—Richard might fall, and Katherine might live and be won to share some humbler lot; his plans were securely laid; it seemed I had but to acquiesce in my own unexampled bliss; the thread of my destiny was in my grasp.”

“And you?” asked the hearer.

“I rejected, spurned his offer, and refused to aid him; it was for your sake, lady; I know not if I should have revolted from the deed, on account of its baseness; but I could not buy happiness at the cost of your tears.”

“Wherefore did you conceal from us a secret so vital to our safety?” demanded Katherine.

“I cannot say. Believe that I was crazed — distraught — but not wilfully

treacherous. At times, I despaired of obtaining impartial hearing, for, I could not prove my words; and Dalton threatened to make known to Richard my secret adoration of yourself. Again I would resolve to let events take their course, and act hereafter on the impulse of the moment. Perhaps, too, I might have thought that this guilty project would blossom into pleasant fruit, without even my stepping aside to shake the bow. All was jarring tumult in my heart and head; and the tempest that convulsed my soul to the centre seemed only to leave me the faculty of suffering."

"You are ready to make oath that what you aver is true?" said Katherine.

"By my honor! Nay, that is lost beyond redemption; then will I swear it by my love to yourself, which has swallowed up each pettier passion in its fathomless depths. Katherine—"

As the last word was pronounced with startling energy, he fell back heavily, and quick convulsions distorted his quivering frame.

The lady promptly recalled her attendants, and every remedy was applied in vain ; he still breathed, but in a kind of unconscious stupor ; and it was most probable his present state of insensibility would only be exchanged for the still nothingness of death.

Katherine now felt the imperative necessity of communicating to her husband the intelligence she had so strangely received, and bidding her women tend heedfully the dying cavalier, she proceeded to seek her lord in that quarter of the tent where he usually transacted business with his counsellors. Her gait was uneven and slow, for she had been agitated more than outwardly appeared by the history of the companion of her childhood, his errors and his sufferings ; and she shuddered to remember the dangers that still encompassed her kingly Richard ; but with a sudden reaction of the mind her whole aspect changed—she would place firm reliance on the justice of his cause, she would not

tremble for one whose rights and virtues must have enlisted Heaven itself in his favor; neither did she fear that in his anger he would curse the memory of the delinquent for an infirmity his nobler spirit could never have known. So on she passed with a lighter step and calmer brow. Alas, for that proud and loving heart! Will it ever throb again in such healthful strain?

She approached the compartment specially appropriated by Richard to the discussion of state affairs; voices were heard within; but her errand admitted of no delay, and drawing aside the voluminous hangings, she stood upon the threshold.

CHAPTER IX.

MASTER AND PUPIL.

Oh ! coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me !

*Shakespeare.*

WE must pause here to make some remark on the other characters of our history. The intelligent reader will easily divine that Father Hubert was no unmoved spectator of the ill-success of their arms in conducting the operations of the siege.

After the fugitive countrymen had

been questioned before the council, and had announced that but a small portion of the royal army was advancing to the relief of the town, the priest had examined them in private; but the closest investigation could discover no discrepancy in their statements.

Nevertheless their evidence was certainly discredited by him, although it seemed even to himself that his principal reason for doing so, was that Dalton relied so fully on their testimony, and advocated so staunchly the wisdom of the Adventurer's host continuing to occupy their present position, that the priest from sheer opposition doubted the policy of the measure. Resolute to obtain farther information, and confident that his churchman's garb would absolve him from injury, he set forth to pursue his inquiries at some distance from the encampment. His apprehensions were quickly aroused by the tidings he gathered from the scared peasantry, who proclaimed the approach of an immense armament, not the

advanced guard merely, but the mighty array of a powerful king.

Such an enemy must render the Pretender's situation extremely hazardous, and the necessity of instantly shifting their ground was obvious. If the confessor had previously been jealous of Dalton's influence, or suspicious of his motives, he was now doubly incensed that the Englishman's counsel had been adopted in preference to his own, in a matter which involved the safety of the whole expedition.

As the priest hurriedly dismounted from his palfrey on his return to the encampment, there was a hot flush on his cheek, and a rapid impatience in his movements, very unlike his usual tranquil demeanour. Having selected a messenger from a band of busy soldiery, actively employed in repairing some palisades that had been overthrown in a recent sortie of the garrison, he desired that Richard of York should be informed he humbly craved an audience.

Several minutes elapsed, and the emissary

did not return, and unable to curb his anxiety, the priest threaded his passage through the maze of outworks, and found his way to a spot occupied by a group, whose most prominent figure was the Adventurer, who was personally directing the slinging of a huge engine of war that was shortly to be levelled against the gates of the besieged—when not engaged in issuing orders, he conversed in low, confidential tones with Dalton, who stood by his side. The priest paused to observe them, and the sight aggravated his irritation of feeling. When he drew near, the Adventurer turned to him with a smiling lip—making a profound inclination of the head, the confessor inquired if his message had been delivered.

“Truly, good Father,” answered Richard, “your business must wait awhile; I cannot attend your pleasure until later in the noon, for these men are not so expert in their work that they can dispense with my superintendence.”

“May it please you,” persisted the



priest, "a weighty affair claims your attention, and I must beseech you to give me instant hearing."

There was an emphasis laid on the word "instant", and a significant meaning in his tones, which evinced that the request could not safely be denied; the Adventurer muttered a half sullen acquiescence, and desired Dalton to have an eye on the operations of the engine, and he would himself return anon.

"Nay! my good lord," said the Englishman, "if your Highness' conscience require so absolute a charge as this holy man would assume, it is impossible to divine how long may be the penance."

The Adventurer coloured, and bit his lip, and made no reply.

"Unmannerly and irreverend scoffer!" exclaimed the priest, fiercely, "know that the consciences of others may chance to come under my lash before the day is out. See to it."

Dalton gave him a sharp, scrutinizing

glance, and was about to respond, when Richard interposed authoritatively,

“Peace, sirs!—you should both be peace-loving men, and these gibes are nothing worth. Lead on to the tent, Father Hubert, I am with you; and you, my friend, remain and keep watch that these men sloven not their work.”

Certainly this mandate did not gain strict obedience, for no sooner had the others disappeared, than Dalton walked thoughtfully away from his post. While within the ken of the workmen, he strolled along leisurely enough, but when he had got beyond the range of their observation, his manner suddenly lost its appearance of hesitation, and he bent his steps to the quarters of Sir Ronald Graham, with whom he had not held friendly communication since the Scot's indignant refusal to participate in his guilty plots of vengeance.

The news of Sir Ronald's mischance had just been received, and at every turn the Englishman encountered faces full of con-

sternation. A few well-chosen interrogatories soon acquainted him with the dangerous nature of the young cavalier's wounds, and likewise showed him it was most probable the report had not yet reached Richard, who had proceeded straight to the tent.

Some minds require a long time for consideration, before they can determine their course of action, but there are others that embrace at one *coup-d'œil* each point of a question, and seize the most fitting conduct as if intuitively—Dalton belonged to the latter class, and even while he framed some sentences of concern, his mind was made up, and a few minutes afterwards he was on horseback; without a word he passed the sentinels, who offered no interruption to his movements, and rode forth into the open country.

Return we to the conference in the tent. Displeasure and mortification at so abrupt and imperative a summons, swelled the bosom of the Adventurer, as he reluctantly

followed his companion, nor was the priest agitated by feelings of a more soothing nature, while he recalled how frequently he had been set aside for newer confidants. Such was the mood in which the two confederates now confronted each other. Richard was the first to speak.

“Methinks, Father Hubert, it would at least have been wise to display more regard to the puppet you have tricked out, and thrust upon the stage—why seek to show the world whose hand pulls the wires?”

“That hand is not mine,” returned the priest, “I have long since learned that acquaintances of fresher date win your ear more easily than ancient, tried, and still-continued service.”

“I guess not what you dive at—in matters where our judgments differed, I own I have sometimes dared to follow my own—if this offends, I can but say that when more used thereto, you will haply grow to mislike it less.”

“Feign not to misinterpret my cause of complaint—you know full well whose insidious influence I would deprecate, and even now—” but he recollected the danger of dissension, and with a sudden resumption of the self-restraint usually practised by him, softened his voice, and smoothed his brow—“even now, I have that to lay before you, my lord, which will excuse my intemperate heat, and convince you that you have given too implicit credence to the counsels of a covert foe.”

Father Hubert then explained his original doubts of the countryman's report, and his determination to ascertain the truth of their witness; he recounted his expedition of the morning, and the intelligence that he gathered in all directions, of the march of General d'Aubigny at the head of Henry Tudor's entire army. In such a case, utter extirpation must be the fate of their own handful of men, unless they instantly struck their tents, and avoided a collision with so overpowering an enemy. In Wilt-

shire, Hampshire, and other southern counties, strong reinforcements had been promised, and these on the Adventurer's approach would immediately declare in favor of York. Was it not then obviously the best plan, argued the priest, to break up the siege, and proceed forthwith into the friendly districts where so important an accession of numbers awaited them. Still the Adventurer remained unconvinced.

"I grant you," said he, "that your reasoning bears weight, but only provided the whole array of our opponents is marching hitherward—and sooth to say I see not why your reporters are more to be accredited than those who were questioned the other morn before the council,"

"But I will affirm that my intelligence was collected in twenty different directions, and everywhere the same account was rendered me. Moreover, I doubt much that the first lying witnesses were suborned by that false traitor Dalton."

"You have no warranty for what you

say," returned the young man. "Pliant tool as you have found me, I am not weak enough to convict a friend on your bare suspicion. Slander of one who has served me well, jars with my humour."

"The day will come when you may rue this misplaced confidence."

"Unless you can bring proof of Dalton's treachery, I will uphold him innocent, and will follow his counsel when it suits my will. If you have brought me here but to listen to so distasteful a theme, I pray you to give way and let me pass, for there is that without which demands my presence."

The priest placed himself before the only way of egress from the tent.

"Stay, young sir—I have not yet done, and you shall hear me out. You must learn that you have to contend with a stronger, abler, subtler spirit, beneath which your own must bend or break."

"Say on," cried the Pretender, with a calmness more galling to his companion than the most violent ebullitions of fury;

“say on—your wrath moves me not a whit, I will brave it, even though you brawl louder than an angered woman.”

“Headstrong boy! the height to which you have climbed, by my aid, has turned your head; but I will find the means to tame and sober you, or otherwise will fling you into an abyss from whence there is no return.”

“Ha! you threaten! Take heed to your words, for I warn you that I mark them.”

“Aye, be it so; and the record shall choke your pride when you con over what you have been compelled to stomach.”

“This insolence surpasses patience,” muttered the young man. “Leave me, Father Hubert, lest I be tempted to forget the past, and mete out the chastisement the present has so amply earned.”

“The past—it is well that you bethink you sometimes of the past. Do you then remember the abject state from which I raised you?—the mean garb—the loutish port, and narrow soul—I made you what



you are, and have more than a parent's right to your submission; you are the work of my own creation—the invention of my brain—”

The Adventurer interrupted him sharply.

“Although my life is one long wish that we had never met—that you had not corrupted the healthful emotions of an honest heart into the restless cravings of ambition—although you have reared me on a pedestal where I cannot see virtue, it is so far above or below me; and good faith, I am in such a straight that to act rightly is impossible—still I upbraid you not; but do not demand gratitude, for I avow I feel it not towards the author of my undoing—the slayer of my honour—the artificer of my evil fate.”

“Honour forsooth! Prate not of that which you have never known; neither formerly, in your mean mechanic calling, nor now, bedizened as you are in the braveries

of a prince. Go to—return to reason—yield to my wishes, or you may discover that the tenure of your state hangs but on my sufferance.”

“Do your worst,” answered Richard moodily. “You chose your agent ill if you sought one of such plastic mould as to be ever formed to your purpose. An iron spirit seems of a sudden infused into my soul; I would rather die the next hour than live to be the slave of your will. Your menaces I scorn, and your power I defy!”

Passions mighty and overmastering were churning in the breast of the priest as he glared on his former pupil, who now dared to assert his independence, and spurn the control to which he had hitherto submitted—the pent-up violence of a hundred tempests seemed to burst forth in the peal of rage that followed; his face paled and flushed alternately; a light foam gathered on his livid lip, and from his usually quiet eye living streams of fire appeared to dart, as he shouted,

“Remember, outcast of the earth! that a breath of mine can mar your proudest hopes! The thing that I have made I can undo! Base-born churl! beware—and tremble!”

CHAPTER X.

DISCOVERY.

Oh, that a dream so sweet—so long enjoy'd  
Should be so sadly, cruelly destroy'd!

MOORE.

KATHERINE stood on the threshold; loud voices, raised to the highest pitch of excitement were heard within, but unaccustomed as she was to break in on her husband's hours of business, her mind was now so full of concern at the grave news she had to

impart, that she was not easily to be diverted from her purpose—she made no pause, but quickly withdrew the rich draperies that impeded her entrance; she then remained transfixed in amazement at the scene that met her sight.

Close to her was Father Hubert, the self-restraint of years thrown off, his whole person convulsed by the mastership of passion, while he fulminated his wrath against Richard, who strode to and fro, as if to keep down his mounting ire.

The priest's back was towards Katherine, and he raised his arm threateningly, while he thundered forth,

“Base-born churl! beware—and tremble!”

The Adventurer turned sharply round—and he did tremble, for at that instant he encountered the astonished glance of his wife. Another moment, and Katherine had glided forward and passed her arm through that of her husband.

There was a lull in the storm; the priest's

fury had received a sudden check, and as it subsided, the fine-spun policy which had so long guided his actions regained its ascendancy—a hundred thoughts pressed upon him with that wonderful rapidity which every one must have felt and marvelled at, when the mind seems to range from pole to pole in a space of time so brief that words could not have framed therein more than the expression of one connected idea.

Father Hubert reviewed the Adventurer's gradual declension of regard to himself, and the superior influence exercised by others in opposition to his own; then again he felt that after the Lady Katherine's present discovery of his unbridled violence, it would be vain to expect any open reconciliation with Richard, or any exhibition of future consideration from him; consistency must banish the offender from his presence, unless indeed—and quick as lightning the thought flashed through his mind that his only reasonable method of salvation from

an ignominious dismissal, which he might avenge but could not prevent, was to make Katherine acquainted with her husband's true position, then her ambition, her pride, and even her affection would be his ministers, to work out his ends—these would impel her to incite her husband to maintain secrecy, and make every possible sacrifice to secure the amity of the only individual, whose knowledge of his former life could be used to his disadvantage.

The priest's course was at once decided.

The silence that succeeded Katherine's entrance was first broken by her soft, melodious voice, as she turned to her husband.

“Richard, my dear lord, what means you insolent priest? How does he dare address his uncurbed effrontery to one so far above him? Or is he in truth distraught?”

Here Father Hubert interposed half sullenly, for although the fire of intemperate passion was momentarily extinguished in his breast, the ashes still glowed.

“Honored madam,” said he, “I cry you mercy that you see me thus moved—I pray you to believe I guessed not you were so nigh at hand, or I had bitten out my tongue rather than utter the revelation of a secret not intended for your ear.”

“Secret!” echoed the lady. “What can he aim at? Richard—this man called you anon a base-born churl—you, a prince and a Plantagenet! Tell me the motive of his unexampled insolence; or is it as I suspect, that his folly proceeds from a dis-tempered brain!”

“I cannot say,” groaned the young man—“I know nought but that I am like to go mad myself.”

Katherine answered, with some spirit—

“My lord, since you will not question the meaning of such bold license, I will myself demand its cause. Father Hubert,”—turning to the confessor—“you spoke but now of a secret not designed for my hearing; I give you my word I heard none; but I command you to unfold wherefore you



presumed to apply such opprobrious falsehood to my noble husband?"

A vindictive gleam of light shone in the priest's keen eyes, as though the cruel task he had assumed was far from displeasing to him.

"Lady, base-born was the term I used, and in that I lied not."

"Richard, hear you this slanderer? Why answerest thou not?" cried Katherine, and her small foot actually beat the ground in her impatience. "My lord, I know not what of dread creeps over me; yet there can be no mystery here; if you love me, break this dumb show, and give reply."

She raised her eyes to her husband's countenance, and those beloved features wore an expression that perplexed and startled her. His downcast eye, bowed figure, and pallid face, indicated shame, despair, and Katherine shuddered as she even seemed to trace there the agony of guilt. A sickening sensation stole over her, but resolute to know the worst, she

rallied her failing energies, and placed herself before the Adventurer, to make a last effort to learn the truth, and as she spoke her solemn voice thrilled through every fibre of his frame.

“ In the name of all that is sacred, speak! Man—what are you?”

There was a long pause; then Richard slowly raised his hand, and pointed to the priest, while he murmured in broken, hollow tones—

“ Ask him—he knows all.”

Father Hubert met the fearful, straining gaze of the young wife, and drew some steps nearer and dropped his voice as he replied to it.

“ Noble madam,” said he, “ since I am destined to impart a disclosure which cannot fail to wound, I would wish to couch it in terms as gentle and brief as the case admits. Know then that yonder youth—my pupil—is of humble birth; his personal similarity to Edward the Fourth caused him to be selected to enact the part he plays,

for which my long training has well adapted him—nor is this imposition maintained with ill intent, for by this means the oppressed English—”

What he would have said further was never known, for the agonised, heart-rending shriek that burst from Katherine, rang piercingly through the tent, as she darted forward and clasped the hands of her husband in her own.

“Richard of York,” she cried, wildly; “reply to this charge—this madman’s fable should, at least, meet denial. I grow faint—if you would not see me die at your feet, tell him he lies—one word from your truthful tongue, and I ask no other proof—open but your arms, and I will fling myself upon that princely breast in joy and confidence.”

Breathlessly she awaited an answer—the young man’s quivering lips moved, but no sound issued from them—she put back her sunny curls in the attitude of listening—not a syllable broke the silence—nought, save a thick sob that burst from the Ad-

venturer's heaving bosom—nature could endure no more—her light form wavered—and, without a cry, as though struck by lightning, she sank senseless to the ground.

## CHAPTER XI

## RETRIBUTION.

Oh ! colder than the wind that freezes  
Founts that but now in sunshine play'd,  
Is that congealing pang which seizes  
The trusting bosom, when betray'd.

MOORE.

ON a couch of somewhat rude workmanship, reclined the figure of the beautiful Lady Katherine—pale as a statue—without motion or semblance of life—and it

might well have been esteemed a mercy if those waxen eye-lids had never again unclosed on this world of sin and suffering. Beside her unconscious form knelt one anxious watcher—the unknown foundling—the armourer's apprentice—the feigned prince—the wedded husband of the far-descended and richly-dowered daughter of the Earl of Huntly.

Distracted by remorse, he gazed on the victim of his treachery—how he yearned to hear her voice once more, even though it was raised but to load him with reproaches.

He rose, and timidly pressed his lips upon that brow of snowy whiteness—it would seem that the warm pressure had the power to restore animation—for, at that moment, she heaved a gentle sigh, and gradually a faint colour revisited her cheek. The Adventurer quickly withdrew a few paces—for he felt that his presence might, henceforth, be considered an unwelcome presumption.

Katherine's revival was slow, and some minutes elapsed before her stunned senses became alive to her situation. By degrees, recollection returned to her exhausted mind—she ran over the past and present and a slight shiver vibrated through her delicate frame—she thought of the future, and starting up, she looked wildly around.

Father Hubert had disappeared—and seated beside a distant table was the Pretender; his arms were crossed before him, and his head had sunk upon them, perhaps, with a view to conceal the workings of his agonized countenance.

Katherine's soft tones murmured—

“Richard.”

The young man raised his head, but did not attempt to approach.

“Richard—this is then no frightful dream! I read in your averted face the fatal truth. But tell me, I charge and implore you, were you not, at first, yourself, the dupe of yonder designing man—you were not a willing

partner in this act of cozenage; at the time we wedded, you knew not the imposition that had been practised, and believed yourself to be what you assumed."

"Not so," replied the Adventurer, firmly, although his very soul trembled at the indignation his answer could not fail to excite. "I was tempted sorely, it is true; but the choice was free before me whether to pursue honest industry, or accept splendour and grandeur linked with crime. I took the latter course, and can urge nought to extenuate."

"Heaven send me patience!" cried Katherine, distractedly, as she pressed her hands to her throbbing temples; "for I am, indeed, bereft of every hope—of every friend. Where shall I fly to escape from memory? Whereon can I anchor my sinking spirit?"

"You have yet a father," said Richard, sadly and humbly, for he felt he had no just claim to the love and obedience sworn



to him under circumstances so widely different.

“My noble father!” echoed the lady. “How will his honored age be blasted by this tale!”

“Will it please you, Lady Katherine, to place you under his protection? Name but the wish, and it shall be implicitly obeyed!”

This was spoken in strong anxiety, for the Pretender could not but entertain the hope that the deep love of his young wife had not been utterly extinguished; and that, when her passion had expended itself, she might be led, through the medium of her affections, to forgiveness and reconciliation; at the same time he inwardly acknowledged her right to follow her own path; and, if she insisted on immediate separation, he resolved that this poor justice should be accorded without a word of opposition, however severe a pang it would inflict on himself.

“Return—never!” sighed Katherine,

“Rather let me hide my head in the meanest hovel that will afford shelter to one so entirely wretched. The scenes of my happy youth would madden me now. Shall I take back my shipwrecked hopes—my blighted brain, and broken heart, to become an object of pity to kinsfolk of every degree? The noble Earl of Huntly, who sent forth his child to reign a queen, how will he bear to hear that he has wedded her—” she paused, and then added abruptly, “to whom?—for, in truth, I know not, and, methinks, I have a right to ask?”

“I never saw my parents,” commenced the Pretender.

“Were they reputed to be gentle?” asked the lady, who still clung to the belief that the young man’s graceful mien, and distinguished appearance indicated high lineage.

“I know not,” replied Richard. “Either they deserted me, or I was reft from them. I owe my nurture to strangers.”

“How was your childhood spent?”

“I have seen many changes. Poverty, hardship, and contumely, have ever been the foundling's lot.”

As Richard spoke, his constrained voice alone betrayed how acutely he writhed beneath this questioning.

“But your associates, who were they? Of what class I would say?” persisted Katherine who, bred in courts and palaces, could form but a vague idea of the lowliness of fortune to which her husband alluded.

“I have served in many different fashions.”

“But with whom were you at last—before—when—” she could not continue—she gasped for breath—and, with some effort, she contrived to shake off the sudden faintness that oppressed her.

The Adventurer caught readily at her meaning, and replied briefly,

“A plain mechanic was I, and some two years' apprentice to the armourer of Saint Evert in Burgundy.”

“What was the name you bore?”

“Perkin Warbeck,” was the reply.

The lady seemed, for a moment, buried in perplexed thought, and then broke into a laugh of bitter derision.

“Ha! I see it all now. The star-gazer lied not. You are then the artisan we encountered as we left the astrologer's presence. His prediction said sooth, and my evil destiny was well foretold. Simple that I was, to marvel as I have ofttimes done at the resemblance I tracked between you and your former self. But who could have dreamed that open brow was the title page of a history of such perfidy and cruel deception? Yet say, how did you lose your clownish bearing, and acquire an art of speech and dignity of demeanour which have served to blind those most versed in the fashions of royalty?”

“You heard but now that Father Hubert had me bred to this kingly craft—and it was natural to me to aspire—but I take shame to myself for the perfection I at-

tained—the better skilled the actor, the deeper was the guile.”

“And did you never bethink you of the injury you inflicted on this bleeding country by so unnatural a contest ; did you never repent the grievous wrong you measured out to her whom you betrayed at the altar? Alas! why did you feign such devoted love that my heart grew to yours until it is almost death to part. Why did your tutor's subtle policy direct your suit to James Stuart's unhappy kinswoman? Would, at least, that you had never employed your arts to win the love you could not value!”

The Adventurer could endure no further; he had resolved to abide in patient silence the upbraidings so justly his due; but when he heard the love, with which every pulse beat so faithfully, derided and set at nought, he started to his feet—his whole countenance seemed instinct with the feeling of the moment—his eyes glowed—

he drew his person to its utmost height, as he stood before the proud Earl's daughter.

“Lady,” said he, “you are high-born, and the blood that flows in your veins is akin to nobles and warriors; I am of ignoble origin, deserted by those who brought me into the world, and then left me a victim to its scorn; you have been nursed in splendour, the idol of all who approached; I have ever been the football of fortune, heirless even of a name, debarred from communion with aught that was noble or great—an outcast even from the charities of life—yet elevated as you are, above me in station, more peerless in the majesty of your lovely womanhood than the page of heraldry can proclaim you, still I am a man, in form and feature, such as nature created me; in flesh and sinew, such as kings are made withal, for have I not mingled in their sphere, and felt myself no whit inferior? I would not shun comparison with the lordliest he, who can trace

back his sires to the Conquest. Let the haughty scorers of the low-born read a lesson in the success of my imposture. So lady, flout not at my birth, for I have proved that in strength and daring, soul and body, I am equal to the part I have undertaken. Yet, when I say this, think not that I misjudge my crime, and estimate its baseness over lightly. Not so; I own the meanest peasant, whose toil earns his honest bread, is worthier of regard than the leader of this host. I have erred—deeply—inexcusably—inexpiably—I know it—still in the pride of virtue, do not trample on a heart which is all your own, wherein love for yourself will end only with life. You do not, cannot doubt this. Give me, at least, this assurance, and I will try to bear even your disdain.”

Katherine glanced at the graceful, manly figure and glowing countenance of the Adventurer with a softened aspect, his voice, thrilled to her inmost sense; but then the recollection pressed upon her how

cruelly she had been outraged, how remorselessly she had been sacrificed, and she sank back upon the couch, and covered her eyes with her hands, as she faltered—

“ You mock me now as you have deceived me ever. Of what worth are your oaths and vows? They break hearts, and wean men from their true allegiance; but they cost you nought; yet learn, that with me the wand of your power is broken, for I believe no longer in the truth of the spell which subdued and enchained me.”

By nature and education, Katherine was proud, and therefore this fearful blow fell on her with double violence. She still clung to the old belief, that from the knightly and the noble only, could glorious deeds and acts of lofty virtue be expected; and while Richard triumphantly instanced his successful personation of the Prince of York as a proof of the natural equality of man, she murmured inwardly that one of high descent would never have sullied his



name by such falsehood to attain an empire.

As she lay revolving these thoughts, the Pretender could not divine what dire warfare shook that delicate frame, outwardly so still—composed—and deathlike in its fixed tranquillity, while within, love and scorn, pity and indignation contended together in unceasing strife. Yet, though it was but for an instant, the young man had caught one kindly glance, and this re-animated his hopes, and gave him energy to proceed.

“I will bare my soul to you,” said he, “and you shall see that the chief aim of my existence has been to achieve yourself—I told you that Father Hubert was the tempter who first dazzled my youthful fancy by visions of future grandeur—you cannot guess how utterly friendless and forlorn he found me—I was akin to none—shut out from all but the most menial offices, I was forbidden to rise—ambition

impelled me onward, but my hard fate held me chained down with bands of iron. And then a new passion began to enthral my senses with its intoxicating fervor. You will remember when by the side of Margaret of Burgundy, you made your entrance into Saint Evert; I was among the throng of mechanics whose shouts greeted your passage—but, Katherine, my mind could not have been formed like theirs for the coarse, common things of this earth, for while their eyes roved in vulgar marvel on the gaudy trappings of the gay procession, my sight was rivetted on your most heavenly beauty. From that hour I knew no peace, I would no longer try to be resigned to the lot which hitherto I had at least endured without repining. Again we met—you have already alluded to the occasion—and your image, before but shadowed on my heart, was then distinctly mirrored there for ever—I could as soon have bade the waves be still, as torn it thence. In this mood the priest encountered me.

His subtle ingenuity soon drew from me a confession of my state of feeling, and afterwards he warped and moulded me to his will. Maddened by my own evil fortune, blinded by his reasonings, and seduced by his promises of future glories, I yielded to his persuasions. Yet I swear to you, Katherine, that it was not thirst of power, or despair at my own nothingness, which tempted me to my destruction—your eyes were the guiding beam whose light dazzled until I could no longer discern right from wrong. Father Hubert had fathomed my soul, and held out a bribe I could not resist—your hand was to be my reward, a prize I coveted more than life. Can you wonder that I paused not to calculate the depth of the injury I was about to inflict? I dreamed that my vivid, watchful love and untiring affection would form your happiness, while my guilty secret would never reach your ear. I now see and bewail my error. You may not forgive me, Katherine, but degraded as I am, you will believe that I

have ever loved you wholly, faithfully, devotedly, and for yourself alone."

As the Adventurer said this, he bent forward and seized his wife's hand, which he covered with kisses. Katherine had listened silently, and the fast-falling tears bedewed her pallid cheeks. The modulations of that dearly-loved voice had stirred the softer emotions of her heart. Her hand remained passive in his grasp, she did not disengage it, neither did she attempt to return his caresses. At length Richard released it and turned away.

"I see," said he in a melancholy tone, "that I may not expect you to overlook the past—I will relieve you from my hated presence; at least I will save you that further trial."

And he began to draw aside the hangings which concealed the entrance of the tent. A sudden fear shot through Katherine's mind, that he was about to quit her never to return. Ah! when was pride a counter-

poise to true love? She started from her couch and flew towards him—

“Richard—leave me not—I cannot bear to part—I will submit—I will never more upbraid—but hark ye, bend down your ear—you must atone the wrong that has been done—these false pretensions must be abandoned—I cannot cling to dishonor—you will swear to do this?”

The Adventurer's reply was almost inaudible, but she comprehended that choked utterance.

“Then take back your wife,” she murmured, “who needs no other blessing than your affection. Richard—love—husband—I am yours and yours only.”

She clung to his breast, her fair hair streamed in rich luxuriance on his coat of mail, her arms twined round his neck, her lips were pressed to his—in that passionate embrace all was forgotten and forgiven.

Here let us draw the curtain.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DELIVERY OF THE PACKET.

Thou shun'st no question—Ponder ! is there none  
Thy heart must answer, though thine ear would shun.

BYRON.

THE same hour that witnessed the reconciliation of the Adventurer and his high-born wife, Sir Ronald Graham breathed his last—the unfortunate cavalier never re-

covered his senses after Katherine left him, and his remains were duly consigned to the reverential care of his Scottish attendants.

In the interim the besieged were in high spirits at the unlooked for success of their defence; and the repeated assurances of relief they received from General d'Aubigny lent them courage to defy any further assault.

The grey twilight of early dawn had just succeeded the sable shadows of night, when the young citizen, whose turn of duty it was to keep ward over the gates of Exeter, looked forth from the temporary watch-tower which had been erected, not only to serve as a shelter, and protection to their sentinels, but also as a means of espial on the movements of their enemies. The youth rubbed his eyes in astonishment, as though he could scarce credit their vision—the tents of the Adventurer no longer flaunted in the distance—his whole array had disappeared—and the smouldering watch-fires alone denoted where the encamp-

ment had been. An instant report of this intelligence set the town in the most lively commotion. Still the gallant townsmen could not believe that this sudden disappearance was any other than a stratagem on the part of their opponents, in order to throw them off their guard, or decoy them into the open plain. Accordingly not a creature was allowed to issue from the gates during the entire day, and a keen look-out was maintained to guard against surprisal.

On the following morning, however, the mystery was solved—marching over the breast of the hill came the host of Henry Tudor, their gay standards fluttering in the breeze, and their polished armour reflecting brightly the beams of the rising sun. If the besieged had previously been dubious of the motives of the Yorkists, no explanation was now necessary to show the cause of their precipitous departure, which was evidently to be attributed to some information concerning the approach of their adversaries.



Great was the triumph and mutual gratulation of the honest citizens as they foresaw the termination of their dangers, and the close of the campaign; the laurels they had so gallantly won were borne by them with a somewhat ludicrous assumption of humility. In considerable anxiety not to disgrace the martial repute they had acquired, everything within the walls was arranged in as warlike a guise as their haste would permit, and when all was prepared for the reception of their military guests, a deputation sallied forth to welcome and pay due homage to the king's commissioned representative.

General d'Aubigny, who rode at the head of this powerful armament, first made himself briefly acquainted with an authentic account of the proceedings of his enemies; and then acknowledging the fruitlessness of pursuit, since they had got a day's start of him, he accepted, with much courtesy of speech, the proffered hospitality of the citi-

zens of Exeter, which was the more welcome, as his troops were not a little wearied by the rapidity of the forced march.

It was a proud moment for the worthy mayor and his supporters, when the lordly general, in good set terms, commended the valour they had displayed; and tendered them public thanks, in the name of his sovereign, for the service they had done the State in expelling the rebels from their walls.

The carousal with which the townsmen celebrated the triumph of their arms, would be well worthy of detail; however, we have no space for similar representations, which bear no reference to our tale, and we must now change the scene to the outskirts of the New Forest, whither the Adventurer had led his troops when he abandoned the siege of Exeter, apparently with the motive to avoid a collision with the royal army, and obtain some reinforcement to his own, by the

addition of the malcontents of Hampshire.

Father Hubert, since the betrayal of the Pretender's identity to his wife, had not ventured to accost him, save in the presence of witnesses; and then there was a melancholy resignation in the young man's deportment, which the priest could not fathom. He could only discern that some resolution had been taken, and some course of conduct was about to be adopted, concerning which he was not to be consulted.

Apprehensive that the slightest move on his part might precipitate the ruin he dreaded, he remained watchful and alert to seize the first opening for reconciliation which presented itself.

The unhappy death of Sir Ronald Graham, so long and intimately known to the leaders of the expedition, temporarily depressed the spirits of all; and to the same account was generally attributed the expression of concern and anxiety visible in

the aspect of the Lady Katherine, in lieu of her wonted airy cheerfulness. With regard to the Adventurer himself—notwithstanding the humiliation of his position in the sight of her whose favorable regard was dearer to him than that of the whole world beside—he had some consolation in the reflection that there no longer existed any necessity for mystery or concealment.

When people are compelled to make a confession of error, how frequently do their half explanations fail to relieve them entirely of embarrassment; some portion of the evil is suppressed, and from thence, springs a constant source of uneasiness—such, however, had not been the case with Richard—he had made a clean breast of it—his previous acquaintance with Viola Hatherton—her recognition of him—all had been made known; and, at least, and in despite of these acknowledgments, he enjoyed, intensely, the consciousness that he was loved for himself alone.

Listening to the suggestions of his noble-

hearted wife, he became daily convinced of the base injustice of his pretended claims. There was one point, however, on which he was resolute, he could not face the obloquy which would attend the resignation of his pretensions while Katherine was beside him; he did not deceive himself as to the imputation of cowardice which would necessarily be affixed to his name; he knew his own weakness, and could not endure that she should witness the agony of shame that would bow him to the earth, and he felt that even her tender endearments would chafe, rather than soothe his ruffled spirit. Under these circumstances, he proposed a temporary separation—to the loving wife this prospect was most painful—but as she had never thwarted his wishes previous to the revelation of his ignoble origin, she now determined to be ruled by him in all things lawful; and, therefore, with much inward reluctance, acquiesced in the scheme.

Accordingly, on the following morning, the Lady Katherine set forth, under the

protection of her native Scottish guard, to St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall—where, for the present, she was to seek an asylum. Meanwhile, it was an ascertained fact, that General d'Aubigny had quitted the town of Exeter, and was speedily advancing in the track of the rebels, and a general expectation circled through the Yorkist camp, that their youthful leader would instantly issue orders for a retreat to some other of the disturbed counties.

On the evening of the day succeeding Katherine's departure, the Adventurer shook off his attendants, and wandered alone through one of the many woodland paths which wound into the very heart of the New Forest. The ground was strewed with the sere and crisped leaves, the sole vestiges of the last summer's brilliant reign; the trees mighty in girth, and various in tribe, reared overhead their skeleton branches in a thousand fantastic forms, as the wind sighed moaningly through their midst.

The Pretender heeded neither the keen blast, nor the isolation of nature, his thoughts were of the evil issue of his own ungoverned passions, and the ruin of his ambitious projects. Still, steadfast in his contrition, he never entertained an idea of retaining the feigned title he had pledged himself to abandon, although that very day he had received offers of fealty from a crowd of fresh adherents, whose support would have rendered his hopes less chimerical than they had hitherto been.

At length, the young man seated himself on a knoll of twisted roots, with his head bent downwards, buried in a reverie, when he felt the pressure of a hand suddenly laid upon his shoulder.

Slightly marvelling at the familiarity of the act, which few would practise wittingly on Richard of York, he started to his feet, and faced the intruder, whose fine outline of feature seemed vividly impressed upon his memory, while he failed to recal where

they had met. The stranger was attired in a half military fashion, and the weapon at his side was placed there evidently rather for use than show, yet was there nothing menacing in his voice or aspect, as he said in frank, cheerful tones—

“A word with you, good master.”

“I think you are in error, friend,” returned Richard; “you have mistaken your man; I cannot believe your business lies with me.”

“I cry your pardon—this is not our first meeting. Ere this we have encountered at the sword's point. Do you recollect me now?”

“Ay—that I do,” answered the Adventurer, a sudden gleam of light from the past flashing across his mind. “The brave Border Chief who kept us so long in check at the siege of his castle in the north; I remember the moment when your blade was nigher my breast than I could have desired; but my followers rushed be-



tween in good time for my safety; we love a gallant foe. What would you at my hands?"

"I have a sacred trust to fulfil. I have undertaken to convey to you the last charge of a dying kinsman."

"Of whom speak you? Kin have I none. I am the last of my race. You have been deceived, valiant Chief. This is some daring impostor."

The Pretender spoke with considerable warmth and vehemence, for habit, at the first instant, stronger even than nature, excited in him a burst of indignation, such as would have been natural in a scion of York, that any should attempt to palm upon him so false a tale.

The Borderer listened to his exclamation with a peculiar smile.

"Rein in your ire, until a fitting occasion; although I blame not that you chafe at the thought of successful imposture, so wedded to dishonor, so repugnant to the bent of every noble mind."

There was a slight touch of sarcasm in the Chief's manner which startled and embarrassed our Adventurer.

"Give me the message," said he, "that I may better judge of the truth of your statement, although I much suspect that you know little of what you speak."

"I know more of you, young sir, than you wot of—and by this token—that he who crossed weapons with me at the postern of the Heron's Haunt, has learned more crafts than one."

"Where heard you that? What mean you? How could you divine—"

He paused abruptly, mastered by emotions that it would be hardly possible to analyse. The blood mounted to his face, and in vain did he endeavour to meet unblenchingly the bold glance of the Border Chief.

"I owe you some service," resumed the latter, gravely, "for the mercy that spared my life, and gladly would I requite it in any matter that infringes not my loyalty,

but my allegiance to my sovereign bids me warn you that the double part you play will lead to ruin ; change then your course while there is yet time ; quit this masquerade, and seek some honester employ. I am about to place in your hands the packet I received from your aged grandsire."

" My grandsire !" exclaimed Richard, as a cold sweat issued from every pore. How often in former days had he yearned for the knowledge that there lived one human being with whom he might claim kindred ! and now what additional anguish and remorse would the belief convey. He could not, would not credit that his true origin was about to be disclosed. He leaned for support against the trunk of a tree, and faltered—

" You do but mock me ; I tell you I have no kindred ; this is some jugglery you would practise on me."

" I swear, by my honor, that I speak truth. The poor old man obtained speech of me half an hour before he was hung

up, on a false charge, I verily believe."

"When and where did this occur?" demanded the Adventurer, eagerly.

"About a twelvemonth since—a few miles from the Heron's Haunt, and a few days after its surrender."

The Borderer then proceeded to narrate how the captive had commissioned him to seek out his grandson, and deliver to him the sealed packet which should acquaint him with the authors of his being—but the Pretender heard him not—the scene of Osbeck's fatal execution flitted before his dim eyes—he recalled the old man's strained gaze, and inexplicable utterance of the apprentice's former name—and Richard gasped for breath, and shook with suppressed emotion, as he reflected on the possibility that his aged kinsman might thus have perished while a word from his lips would have averted his doom.

The Border Chief witnessed the other's internal agitation, and without further

comment, drew forth the packet he had undertaken to deliver, and placing it in the young man's trembling hands, made a signal of adieu, and strode rapidly away.

CHAPTER XIII.

DISMAY.

Thus do the hopes we have in him touch ground  
And dash themselves to pieces.

SHAKSPEARE.

ON the following morning at an early hour the insurgent encampment was astir; the outposts had come riding in with the notification of the approach of the royal troops, and aware that they could not dispute the field with so superior a force, the Yorkists

were in active preparation for a rapid march.

Here it may be as well to observe that Dalton had not been heard of since the death of Sir Ronald Graham; his disappearance did not occasion much surmise, since in his character of agent in the cause of the White Rose, it was his habit to pass to and fro as he pleased, holding secret communication with the disaffected in every corner of the kingdom.

The revelation of his treachery made by his former friend, the unfortunate Scot cavalier, was of course imparted by Katherine to her husband, but the tale remained confined to their own bosoms, although it had certainly the effect of raising the siege of Exeter, which the remonstrances of Father Hubert had been unable to attain.

For upwards of a couple of hours the different captains, having marshalled their men, remained in momentary expectation of a summons from the Adventurer. In the midst of their loud-voiced discussions,

their restless glances were turned evermore on their leader's tent, the curtains of which continued closely drawn; the solitary sentinel paced before it as usual, and at length, unable to restrain their impatience, they gathered round him with one accord, and the answers elicited by their eager questioning appeared to increase their astonishment; and then all hung back, as if none liked to assume the responsibility of pushing their enquiries further.

At this juncture Father Hubert took the lead. Without hesitation he darted into the tent, closely followed by some of the others; hurriedly they traversed the several compartments, but their leader was evidently not there. In the furthestmost recess that contained the private mode of egress, stood a plainly clad yeoman, well known to be a favorite personal attendant of Richard. He listened with a puzzled look to the torrent of interrogations directed towards him, and at length remarked,

“ See ye, my masters, I have here a scroll



for some of ye. I was to deliver it two hours after sunrise—the time is scarce arrived, but methinks I cannot act amiss in producing it.”

Whatever might have been the honest yeoman's scruples, he was not allowed much leisure for deliberation, for nō sooner did Father Hubert catch sight of the paper than he snatched it hastily from the man's doubtful hand. The scroll bore the following superscription:—“To the Captains of the Yorkist host.”

In another moment every leader in the camp had assembled round the priest, and a breathless silence ensued while the latter opened the scroll, which had been carefully fastened with a silken cord. So intense was the confessor's eagerness, that he found it difficult to preserve his usually calm, equable accents.

The enclosure was indited by the Adventurer, and was to the purport that after a mature consideration of the state of affairs, he had come to the opinion that their enterprise

must terminate in failure, since the rising in the country was not sufficiently general to make head against their adversaries; in such a case, a common regard to humanity inclined him to the course he was about to adopt. He briefly thanked his followers for their faithful adherence, and earnestly advised, nay, implored them to lay down their arms and tender their submission to Henry Tudor. For his own part, he abdicated any claim they might consider he possessed on their allegiance, and had resolved to take sanctuary at Beaulieu. Once more commending them to an unconditional surrender, the epistle terminated.

The Babel of sounds that succeeded it would be almost impossible to describe. Some cursed the Adventurer for a coward, others—and such were most deeply implicated in the rebellion—declared they would rather die than yield; many advised an instant dispersion of their forces, and a few retired forthwith to make provision for their own security.

Maurice Vipont alone stepped forward to challenge the authenticity of the document.

“Stay, sirs!” he cried; “think you not this may be some well-concerted forgery? Who will credit that our Richard’s lion heart could throb with such fears as yon lying scroll purports?—that will I never. Could brave men desire a more daring, hopeful, valiant leader than the Prince of York has ever proved himself? Was his the mind to falter, or the cheek to pale, when danger drew nigh? Would he have deserted us in this strait? By my soul! I do believe that paper belies him.”

Maurice paused, for he saw that his view of the case obtained no converts, and Father Hubert readily relinquished the scroll to the youth’s outstretched hand. His eye ran sharply over the contents—whether it was that he discerned no flaw in the hand-writing, or that on calm reflection some former recollections made him apprehend that his leader was less stable, or less

sanguine than his partiality depicted—certainly, after the perusal, he did not renew his remonstrances, but remained for some minutes in a deep fit of musing, regardless of the violent gesticulations and useless vituperation of those around him. Then he turned once more to question the yeoman—after another anxious survey of the position in which things had been left, as though they could give him an insight into the motives of their owner, he quitted the tent; but short time as he had tarried, there was one who was beforehand with him, bound on the same errand.

As Maurice Vipont shouted to his attendants to saddle him a horse with all speed, Father Hubert rode from the encampment, and plunged into the depths of the Forest.

If the step taken by the Adventurer had been dictated by a wish that his followers should lay down their arms, and return to their old allegiance, it was certainly well-timed. On the other hand, had the ab-

dication of his false pretensions been put in execution at the instant that he first formed the design of doing so, and while the enemy still remained in the distance, it is probable that the insurgents would have ranged themselves under another captain, and thus the insurrection would inevitably have been protracted, and could only have terminated in much useless bloodshed. The approach of General d'Aubigny, and their own acknowledged impotency to contend with the royal army, rendered submission the only reasonable policy.

The morning was far advanced before the deliberations of the ring-leaders had finally closed, and then the greater number decided on immediate surrender. This majority included all who had anything to hope from the clemency of Henry VII.,—while, on the contrary, such as considered themselves to have erred past forgiveness, or had been distinguished in the previous rebellion as favourers of the opposite faction, sought safety in flight. The malcontents,

whose grievances were chiefly on the score of taxation, saw no present prospect of carrying out their designs, and speedily took to their heels, quietly returning to their usual avocations, in the hope that their insignificance might prove their shield. When General d'Aubigny marched into the field he found no foe to offer resistance, and thus the rebellion might be said to have terminated.

An hour's sharp riding brought Father Hubert within sight of the Sanctuary of Beaulieu—his course would have been still more rapid, had not the branches intersecting each other over head, and the tangled furze that crossed his path, presented continual obstacles to his progress. One thought—one hope—occupied his mind—if he could obtain an interview with the Adventurer, he yet believed that his persuasions might induce his return, and provided this could be effected before the dispersion of the Yorkist force, all might be redeemed.

It is extraordinary to observe with what pertinacity men in that iron age would cling to the cause they had adopted, even when it held out but a feeble guarantee of success—prejudice and party feeling influenced some; but very many were actuated by the spirit of speculation now abroad in a different form—the interest of the hazard maintained a mental excitement almost indispensable to some temperaments—and while ruin, confiscation, and exile awaited the losers; honours, power, and title composed the stake to be awarded to the winners in the momentous game. So many sudden changes and rapid revolutions had been witnessed by England in the course of the fifteenth century, that as long as a claimant to the crown existed, few saw reason to despair because their adversaries had momentarily the upper hand.

Such at least was the reflection of Father Hubert as he drew the rein opposite the porch of the Abbey of Beaulieu, in whose far-famed Sanctuary, traitor and criminal

alike could find security, whatever the nature of the charge preferred against them.

A lay brother answered the priest's hasty summons. Having made the necessary enquiries to ascertain that Richard had entered Beaulieu, the confessor earnestly entreated that the refugee might be made acquainted with his own arrival, and anxious wish to see him. The lay brother did the visitor's bidding, but a most decided negative was returned to the demand. A second message met with no better success. Turning away with a muttered ejaculation of disappointment and impatience, the priest descried Maurice Vipont spurring down the avenue at a furious rate; so self-engrossed was the young volunteer, that if he saw Father Hubert he seemed scarcely to recognize him, and dashing past, he was just in time to arrest the attention of the lay brother, who was about to close the wicket.

Father Hubert paused, desirous to learn the result of this fresh application.



Again the porter departed to inquire if the second stranger was to be admitted. Once he returned with a reply in the negative.

"I do pray of you, good friend," exclaimed Maurice eagerly, "to seek your guest's presence, and tell him that his sworn servant Maurice Vipont, beseeches, implores an audience. He will not, cannot deny me this small grace, when I am ready to lay down life in his service."

The old man shook his head doubtfully.

"I know not that," said he, "I have dismissed one petitioner anon for the same purpose, and I trow your quest will be fruitless as his."

"Nevertheless I do entreat that you will deliver my message."

"Well! I will do your errand, young master, but blame not me, if you gain not your ends."

He hobbled off, and Vipont was left in a state of the most anxious expectation. He could no longer doubt the reality of the

Adventurer's resignation of his claims, but he was as perplexed as ever to discover the clue to his conduct, he could not attribute it to cowardice, and yet to what else could he ascribe his desertion of the post to which his birth entitled him. We have already mentioned Vipont's exceeding personal attachment to the supposed Prince of York; hence was it he felt stung to the quick that Richard should have taken a step which must deal so mortal a blow to his fame.

During Maurice's dialogue with the porter, Father Hubert had remained an attentive listener.

Some minutes had elapsed when the lay brother returned, bearing a peremptory refusal of admission, and conveying the leaf of a tablet from Richard, wherein he sent a written recommendation to his young follower to fly without delay, lest in a few hours the enemy might intercept his passage.

"I will not go until I have seen him," cried Maurice vehemently. "Here I will

abide, and be captured in his very sight, if he admit me not. Can you devise no expedient, good brother?"

"I see none; unless indeed you would yourself enter the sanctuary; in such case it would be scarce possible to keep you asunder."

Ha! you say well—I thought not of that. My life is also in imminent peril from my pursuers. What should deter me from taking refuge here?"

"Maurice Vipont, beware!" exclaimed Father Hubert riding forward, and laying his hand on the young man's shoulder, "the moment it is known that the Yorkist leader has found shelter here, although they may not touch a hair of his head while under this roof, the place will be so closely beleagured that not a mouse shall pass from the walls unobserved. Your lot will then be to linger hopelessly on, until weary of confinement, you break bounds, and make a bold effort to escape, when beset by foes

on all sides, you will fall a helpless victim into their hands."

"Believe you this in truth?" asked Vipont hesitatingly.

"I pledge you my word I have in no way magnified the hazard."

"You have resolved me then," replied Maurice. "Henceforth I share Richard's fate, whatever that may be."

"Infatuated fool!" muttered the priest contemptuously, and setting spurs to his horse, he galloped off without another word, while Maurice Vipont rode slowly through a side gate into the outer court of the Abbey.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE SANCTUARY.

In Saxon strength the Abbey frown'd,  
With massive arches broad and round,  
That rose alternate, row and row,  
On ponderous columns, short and low,  
Built ere the art was known,  
By pointed aisle, and shafted stalk,  
The arcades of an alley'd walk,  
To emulate in stone.

SCOTT.

SEVERAL hours glided by after Vipont's admission to the Sanctuary, and still he

found himself no further advanced in his project of obtaining an interview with Richard. The Adventurer remained secluded in his chamber, and would not permit any interruption to his solitude. His young follower paced the long galleries of the abbey in silent dejection, half repentant that he had not taken the counsel of Father Hubert—for, to his stirring temperament, the active dangers of the open field would be preferable to skulking beneath the protection of a few ease loving churchmen.

The lengthening shadows betokened the close of day; and the wind rushed in fierce gusts round the sacred edifice, when, on a sudden, above the crash of falling branches, occasioned by the furious element, the peal of a trumpet rang distinctly through the air, succeeded by a continuation of heavy blows at the outer gate.

Then came a long parley of many voices, and it appeared that the intruders were threatening to make a forcible entrance. The frightened menials thronged

the passages, reporting, as they fled, that the abbey was surrounded by an innumerable warlike array, while its leaders made a summons from without.

The Abbot and other minor dignitaries, clothed in their sacerdotal robes, were already assembled in the small, but beautifully decorated chapel, in readiness for the performance of vespers—thither flocked the monks, apparently for the exercise of their holy offices; but, in reality, as to the spot which promised the greatest security.

There also repaired Maurice Vipont, after he had ascertained, for himself, that the general report was a true one, and that their enemies had, indeed, tracked Richard out, and had begirt the building in such a way as to preclude all chance of escape.

Opposite to the entrance of the chapel, the Abbot had stationed himself, bearing in his hand a cross of solid gold. Habitual authority was in his whole aspect and demeanour; he was a tall, powerful man; and in the firm immoveable bend of his haughty

lip, might be traced a strength of character and decision of purpose—accustomed to trample on difficulties rather than be overcome by them.

Close to the altar, stood the young Adventurer, who had descended from his apartment on the first signal of the tumult outside; his face was grave and pale, and his usual magnificent apparel had been discarded as misbeseeming the present occasion; but still, in the midst of gloom and sadness, his noble air could not be laid aside; and, despite all disadvantages, his princely dignity of mien shone conspicuous in his slightest gesture.

The uproar without augmented every moment; and a few dismayed attendants hurriedly entered to announce that General d'Aubigny, attended by an armed band, had forcibly pushed their way into the court, and threatened to violate the sanctuary.

Richard stepped forward.

“My Lord Abbot,” said he, “it is useless to wrestle with fate. I am the object



sought, and I will yield myself to my pursuers that they may depart in peace, without inflicting injury on others."

"Think you," cried the churchman, indignantly, "that I will permit an infringement of privileges maintained unchallenged for years innumerable? Shall our immunities suffer abatement under my rule? Hark you," he added, as voices, raised in eager contention broke again upon his ear; "admit these strangers, since they will take no denial—at least, I will teach them to respect our rights—throw open the doors."

The order was speedily obeyed, and instantly General d'Aubigny, who had previously dismounted, accompanied by several of the other royal commanders, entered the chapel.

The clang of their armed heels emitted a sound very unwonted in that sacred place—and even they, themselves, seemed to feel abashed at their trespass. Both the outer and inner court were occupied by dark

masses of horsemen, who had been posted there with a view to overawe the peaceful community who had afforded shelter to the Yorkist leader.

Candles of unusual size illuminated the richly-wrought altar piece; and the glare of countless torches, threw a strong, though flickering, light over the scene. General d'Aubigny, who headed the intruders, was of sinewy and athletic frame, with a countenance harsh and repulsive, and the quick, arbitrary manner acquired in camps.

To him the abbot addressed himself.

"Unknightly and discourteous stranger," said he, "wherefore have you dared to thrust your mailed band into these holy precincts? Such aspect as yours, does ill become our solemn services."

"Sir Abbot," returned the general, "I come not to mock your authority, or offer interruption to the rites of your church—which none hold in greater reverence than I—here have I entered but to seize, and make captive, the rebel chief—the base

impostor—the lying dastard who fled at the first wave of our banners. In the name of our anointed sovereign. I ask you, where is the false traitor who led, so lately, the insurgent host?”

“Behold him,” cried the Abbot, pointing to the Adventurer. “There he stands! But you may not set finger on him against his pleasure—for he is under the shelter of Beaulieu; and our abbey possesses privileges which the King himself cannot annul!”

“Say you so?” returned d’Aubigny, while he surveyed intently, for the first time, the self-styled Prince of York. “I will pluck him thence, though your whole priesthood stood in their way. Traitor, step forth! or it shall be the worse for you hereafter!”

“I have claimed the protection of the sanctuary,” replied Richard, as he planted one foot firmly on the first step of the altar, and gazed, unshrinkingly, on the menacing

forms of his foes, who crowded the doorway.

“Shall this be endured?” said the general, turning to his companions. “Our duty to our king, forbids that this rebel should go scathless to rekindle the fire-brand of civil war in this distracted country. Shed no blood here—but bind him, and bear him off, that he may receive judgment elsewhere. A price is set on his head, which is valued at twice its weight in gold. So, my good friends, away with womanish scruples. Forward!”

“Back, all of ye!” thundered the Abbot, raising the cross aloft. “Advance not a single foot, on your soul’s peril. Commit this outrage, and the ban and curse of the Church shall cleave to you now and for ever.”

“You will not be thus bearded from your prey?” exclaimed d’Aubigny to the rest, who gazed doubtfully on each other at the priest’s threat. “Or if your hearts feel faint

with superstitious terrors—which I have never known—let some of you keep me a passage to the door; and, single-handed, I will, myself, seize the caitiff, and carry him off, though every shaven head here should wag in curses on the deed.”

“Irreverend heathen!” cried the Abbot, advancing a few paces rather than receding at the other’s avowed purpose. “Yonder youth has appealed to the power of the Sanctuary, and I will maintain its privilege to give refuge with the last drop of my blood. Move towards the altar if you will; but first you must trample under foot my dead body—to the death will I resist you, and ages hence shall execrate the memory of the barbarous leader whose sacrilegious hands slew the minister of Heaven even in the very place of worship. Come on then, if it so please you—as a soldier for his prince, or a patriot for his country—so am I ready to die in defence of the rights of our community.’

A breathless silence ensued, as the priest

and soldier stood confronting each other, and on the former's towering brow might be read the inflexible determination of his character, assuring the spectator that his was no empty vaunt. Watchful and fearless, Richard retained his original attitude, resolute however to surrender himself rather than permit any act of violence to be perpetrated against the person of his protector.

Quickly repenting his momentary hesitation, d'Aubigny made an impetuous movement forward—the priest stood firm and erect in his path—he was about forcibly to rid himself of this impediment, when a loud murmur from his own companions arrested his upraised hand, and he felt he should have no abettors in the outrage he proposed.

Two or three of the more influential commanders then drew him aside, and in a low tone, reminded him how irate would be Henry Tudor himself, if a scene of bloodshed enacted in that sacred fane should be

the cause of any feud between the crown of England and the powerful church of Rome.

D'Aubigny listened in sullen silence, and at length Lord Oxford, a man of cool wisdom and unerring sagacity, proposed that he should use his utmost endeavors to persuade the Pretender to yield himself a prisoner, as a measure that must finally be adopted, and the longer it was deferred, the less consideration would be shown him.

“Do as you will,” muttered the general; “but I warn you that I stir not hence without my prisoner.”

Lord Oxford then turned to the Abbot, and demanded his acquiescence in so peaceable a proposal.”

“Uncover your head,” said the dignified churchman, “and plight me the word of a Christian soldier, that you will not injure the youth, and you shall do as you desire.”

Lord Oxford removed his helm, and gave the required promise, and in another minute he was by the Adventurer's side,

urging him to surrender without further struggle.

Notwithstanding the thronged state of the chapel, from motives of respect, a considerable space had been left clear about the altar, and, therefore, the discourse between the nobleman and the fugitive, conducted as it was in an under key, was not distinctly heard by the bystanders, although the few disconnected sentences that reached them, afforded a sufficient clue to allow them to understand what was passing. Lord Oxford pointed out to Richard how relentless would be the pursuit of his enemies, and how inevitable must be his doom. Present submission alone could entitle him to some show of mercy—sooner or later, capture would be certain, for so closely would the royal troops beleaguer Beaulieu, that the slightest movement would throw the refugee into their hands. He recapitulated the annoyance and embarrassment that this state of siege must infallibly occasion his protectors; and lastly, he whispered his



apprehensions that the fiery d'Aubigny would not be persuaded to leave the Sanctuary unmolested; in which case, from the determined spirit of the Abbot, a collision of some fearful nature was to be augured.

These arguments certainly carried some weight, and the Adventurer seemed to ponder them well; again Lord Oxford interposed, and offered to pledge his honor that if Richard would yield himself their prisoner, the most honorable, personal treatment should be accorded during his journey to the capital.

The young man appeared to be wavering, but these last words were uttered by Lord Oxford in a louder tone than he had before used, and they caught the ear of one who stood on the outskirts of the press, and had been an eager witness of what was taking place.

With two or three vigorous bounds Maurice Vipont dashed through the throng, crossed the open space, and threw himself

before the Adventurer, in an attitude of supplication.

“I do conjure you, my lord,” said he, “not to be beguiled into an acceptance of this offer. Quit not your present refuge, for my soul presages that evil will come of it. While under this roof you are safe, be sure of it, or so much breath would not be expended to lure you hence.”

“You here, Maurice Vipont,” returned the Pretender, half reproachfully, as he extended his hand, which the other pressed with emotion to his lips. “Does my unhappy fate overshadow all whom I have known and loved?”

“Not so, noble Richard; voluntarily did I enter Beaulieu that I might share your fate in storm as in sunshine. I beseech you, be warned in time; the tyrant dare not spare the last scion of York; if thus you act, your doom is fixed.”

Kindly but peremptorily the Adventurer motioned back his young adherent; and turning to Lord Oxford, demanded whether,

if he delivered himself up, the royal troops would retire without harassing any other fugitives who might have taken shelter in the Sanctuary.

Lord Oxford replied, that when the person of the ringleader was secured, the capture of a few solitary individuals would appear of small importance.

Again Richard mused deeply.

“My son,” said the Abbot, advancing to his side, “decide not hastily on this matter; take due leisure for consideration.”

It was, at length, arranged that the Adventurer should render his answer on the morrow. Slowly and reluctantly was d'Aubigny persuaded to withdraw; and during the whole of that night he remained himself a watcher, although his forces were posted so thickly round the Abbey, that it was impossible his victim could escape him.

CHAPTER XV.

THE PRISONER.

Go, some of you, convey him to the Tower.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE sun stood high at noon, when Lord Oxford accompanied by a few attendants, re-entered the Sanctuary of Beaulieu, in order to learn the Pretender's determination. It was all that he could desire. Notwithstanding the urgent entreaties of

Maurice Vipont, the Adventurer had resolved on immediate surrender. It would be difficult to assign the exact motives of such a proceeding. It might have been that he believed his submission would cause him to be regarded more leniently, while it purchased indemnity for his followers; or, probably, he fully despaired of being enabled to escape from the toils spread for him, and preferred to terminate his actual state of suspense. Be this as it may, he declared his resolution to yield.

The peace-loving monks heard his purpose with half-suppressed satisfaction, for the threatening aspect of the military invaders filled them with indefinite dread. Even the lofty-minded Abbot, although he used no influence in the matter, was secretly well pleased that his religious community should be relieved of so dangerous a charge, while he felt that he had nobly maintained the independence of his order, and the privilege of the Sanctuary.

Commending Maurice Vipont to look to

his own safety, when the royal forces had withdrawn, and courteously thanking the Abbot for the protection extended to him, Richard mounted the horse appointed for his use, and rode forth from the Abbey of Beaulieu, a disarmed and helpless prisoner. However the word of Lord Oxford was given for his security, and this was a pledge not lightly to be violated. Under that nobleman's command, a strong detachment conducted the Adventurer to the capital, while the greater part of Henry Tudor's army swept through the disaffected districts, in order to prevent the assemblage of any bodies of insurgents.

There is no occasion to describe minutely the prisoner's journey to London, which to him was full of melancholy anticipations.

Every personal attention was paid to his comfort, consistent with his safe keeping, but his mind was too much occupied with the contemplation of his unfortunate and erring career, to find consolation in minor matters. As his escort approached the

capital, the people, politically inimical to the house of York, lined the highways, and rent the air with hisses and execrations.

It was a bright, frosty morning when the procession, triumphant to all but the chief actor therein, entered London. The streets were literally wedged with curious spectators, and the horsemen could with difficulty push through the undulating masses. In consequence of the numerous obstructions, their progress was slow, and sometimes even they were compelled to halt. On one of these occasions, a shout of detestation, succeeded by a volley of abuse, and derisive epithets applied to the prisoner, broke from the excited multitude—not satisfied with these verbal demonstrations of enmity, they soon proceeded to more violent measures, and missiles began to be hurled. In vain the soldiers endeavoured to keep back the throng. At length a large stone struck the Adventurer's cap from his head.

“Fall back—cowardly curs!” shouted a

voice from the crowd. "Shame ye not to touch a disarmed prisoner, with whom haply ye would not have dared to exchange a blow when his hands were freed?"

As Richard chanced to catch these bold words, he half turned on his saddle to get a glimpse of the speaker, in whom he quickly recognized the Border Chief, who had delivered to him, some days since, Osbeck's parting charge. Probably the bystanders would have resented the imprudent interference of the Borderer, had they not been deterred by his athletic appearance, backed as it was by the colossal bulk of Dick Lilburn. Presently the soldiers forcibly drove back the mob, and the procession moved on. They paused not again until they had passed beneath the gloomy arch of the Tower, called the Traitor's Gate, through which those committed for state offences were usually conducted. Some delay occurred while the warder was being summoned.

As Richard surveyed the sombre edifice, wherein he was probably to be incarcerated



for the remainder of his days, a quick shudder passed through his frame, a fearful presentiment of his coming fate overshadowed him. With an air of deep dejection he uttered his farewell to Lord Oxford. Had the Adventurer been aware whose eye was fixed upon him, watching keenly each variation of his countenance, pride might have thrown a mask over its expression.

Close to a loophole, purposely opened in the body of the building, Henry Tudor had stationed himself that he might unobserved obtain a distinct view of his captive. The visage of the King had never been open and gracious even in youth, and was now particularly frigid and repulsive—talent but not genius beamed in his cold, grey eye—he had many supporters but few friends—many counsellors but few confidants—the wife of his bosom, a descendent of York, shared neither his trust nor affections.

Sternly, fixedly, it might even be pity-

ingly, although his motionless features showed it not, did Henry gaze on the rebel who, with the aid of Scotland, had threatened at one moment to become a formidable rival. Knowing his own small claim to the throne when he pushed crook-backed Richard from his seat, he felt, perhaps, some excuse for the hardihood of the would-be usurper, but when he recollected the false character assumed by the Adventurer, his perjury and deception, the King's heart became steeled, and the faint germ of compassion grew for ever extinct. The Pretender had now dismounted, and courteously but sadly addressed a few questions to the warder relative to his final destination. On the present occasion, King Henry's only companion and attendant, was an aged knight, Sir Walter Arnton, whose countenance was equally imperturbable but less saturnine than that of his master.

"A fair youth—proper in limb—and comely in aspect," murmured the sovereign as he scrutinized the Pretender. "So are

they formed who win the people's love, for they look no further than the shell. Step hither, Arnton; see ye not how close a picture the caitiff bears to the butchers of York—did we not know, from proof undeniable, that bloody Richard slew both his helpless kinsmen, we might ourself incline to think that one of them had escaped to contest once more our royal crown. By my father's sword! he shall avouch his parentage, or the torture shall wrench it from him."

"As says your Highness, the youth seems a leader whom brave men might like well to serve," returned Arnton, after solemnly scanning the group below, for he was not courtier enough to devise any answer more pleasing to the sovereign. Henry turned on him his quiet glance, but vouchsafed no reply.

Presently the Monarch's attention was intently directed to the scene beneath. The Adventurer was faltering forth his

acknowledgments to his honourable escort. The words were inaudible, but the gesture could not be misunderstood.

“Look you,” exclaimed Henry in a low tone, “how more than courteous is my Lord Oxford’s parting with the rebel; his air is full of pitiful sadness, and doubt not that his tongue moves in concert to his looks—’tis strange our own General should hold so fond an intercourse with the traitor.”

“Surely Your Grace cannot misdoubt so tried a friend as Oxford, who led the van in the first field Your Highness ever fought?”

“Ay, and he has everything to lose, and little to gain by a change of dynasty,” returned the Monarch thoughtfully. And the momentary suspicion disappeared in the thought that it would not be to the interest of his most proven friend to betray him.

As he spoke, Richard bowed his head slightly to the soldiers, and followed the warder into that gloomy and ill-fated pile,

from whence, in former days, so many had gone forth to execution. The ponderous gates were closed with a clang that sounded as the knell of hope to the prisoner's ear.

The King then retired from his post of observation.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BITTER FOES.

Not the gaunt lion's hug, nor boa's clasp,  
Could match that gripe of vengeance, or keep pace  
With the fell heartiness of Hate's embrace!

MOORE.

WE must now turn to other scenes.

When Father Hubert quitted the Abbey of Beaulieu, after finding it impossible to obtain an interview with the Adventurer, he abandoned all idea of carrying on his enterprise, and determined to provide for

his own safety, although his holy garb might in some measure be considered a safe-guard. Probably he then began to recognize the full extent of his folly in betraying the secret of the Pretender's deception to the Lady Katherine. The very means he had adopted to fasten more closely the victim's fetters, had broken the chain that bound him.

The priest had read aright the towering ambition of Richard's high-born wife, but he had misinterpreted its nature. In his opinion, nobility of blood and nobility of action were as essentially different as those possessed of the former too frequently prove them to be.

Sorely repenting his error, to which a moment of passion had contributed, Father Hubert turned his horse's head from the spot where the insurgents were that morning encamped, and directed his course in a totally opposite quarter. Leaving behind him the New Forest, and shunning the highway, he followed a bridle-path which, as he concluded, descended circuitously to

the sea-coast, where he expected to engage, on payment of a small sum of money, some skiff or fishing-smack which would secure him a free passage from the country.

Perseveringly did the confessor pursue this track, until bodily exhaustion warned him that he could go no further without repose and refreshment. His object was to obtain the relief to his necessities, without being compelled to enter town or hamlet where he might be detained and questioned. This threatened to be a matter of some difficulty, but at length he descried, in the distance, a small, ill-constructed cabin, where the smoke issuing from the single chimney gave signs of habitation. Hurriedly the priest spurred his jaded horse to the desired haven; as he approached, loud voices within warned him that the hovel was fully tenanted.

Nimbly dismounting, Father Hubert crept to the solitary window, and took a view of what was passing inside. Four men of ferocious exterior, occupied the half ruinous tenement. But shortly the priest



recollected to have seen two of them in the insurgents' encampment, and instantly he imagined that like himself they were seeking refuge from pursuit. Thus reassured from his apprehensions, he approached the closed door, and demanded admission.

After he had undergone a close examination through the crevice in the door, the men held together a long whispered consultation. At length the door was opened. The priest entered, and turning to the man who appeared to be the owner of the hut, he made enquiry if his tired horse could be fed and stabled for an hour or so in the adjacent shed.

"I will see to him," growled the man, surlily, "for he will not be ridden again this day."

These words were ominous enough, but retreat was out of the question; so assuming an air of calm composure, he advanced towards a vacant bench, and quietly seated himself.

Without taking any more notice of him,

the men continued their preparations for a repast, which seemed principally to consist of broiled fish. At last, weary of the protracted silence, and anxious to terminate his present state of suspense, Father Hubert asked if the meal would soon be ready, as otherwise he should be compelled to pursue his journey fasting.

“Reckon not on that, good master, for you cannot stir until you have seen our leader,” answered one of the men.

“And who may he be?” enquired the priest, without remarking on the peremptory manner of the speaker.

“By good hap here he comes,” replied the individual thus appealed to.

A horse's footfall was then audible outside. With much anxiety Father Hubert awaited the entrance of the new comer, whose dictum was apparently to decide his own fate. A few hasty directions were given in a voice whose tone he seemed to recognize, and in another moment Dalton stood before him.

“ Well met,” said the latter; “ although methinks you scarcely guessed who was to be your host.”

“ At least I do not fear to learn it,” answered the priest undauntedly. “ In the name of that cause we have both appeared to serve in common, for the sake of humanity, and by the reverence you bear to earthly honor, the rights of hospitality, and the sanctity of the church, I claim free passage from hence.”

“ And I,” returned Dalton, half contemptuously, “ arrest you on the charge of treason, in the name of my sovereign liege, King Henry. Prove to me your innocence, and I detain you not another instant.”

“ Rather is it for you to bring evidence of my guilt. Until this is made clear, I demand the usance of such courtesy as my calling should command.”

“ Leave us,” said Dalton to the men, who appeared to be absolutely under his control. “ Close the door, but keep within call.”

The order met with immediate obedience.

“ Can your clerkly skill tell me,” resumed the Englishman, “ why I should not cause my fellows to hang you on the first tree fitted for the service, as a traitorous varlet whose employ has been to stir men’s minds against my lord the King ?”

“ For your life you durst not.”

“ Who would heed where a foreign shaveling monk encountered death ?” asked Dalton, scornfully.

“ There you err,” replied the priest; “ I am English born, although much of my boyhood was passed abroad, I claim just judgment from my fellows.”

“ Your fellows ! if martial law will not suffice you, I will bring a score of bold yeomen ready and meet to adjudge you to the gibbet.”

“ I come of gentle blood,” returned Father Hubert, proudly, “ and demand to be tried by my equals. The gibbet is for the ignoble ; if I suffer the death of the

traitor, I will die by the axe, and not by the cord."

"Think you to deceive me by so meagre an invention? This is but a subterfuge to gain time, yet I would fain learn by what title you hope to obtain exemption from the summary justice so amply your due. What name held you before you entered the service of the church?"

"I have long preserved it secret," answered Father Hubert, reluctantly.

"Your name—give me your name," cried Dalton, eagerly. "Palter not with me. As I live, if you make not manifest your right to be otherwise dealt with, you shall never see another sunset. Prove to me that you are noble, and I intermeddle not with your award, which shall be delivered from other lips."

Delay that might offer some chance of escape was of infinite worth in the opinion of the confessor, for knowing the malevolence entertained for him by his companion, he felt that nothing would deter

him from fulfilling the intention he had expressed.

“My name,” said the priest, with a heavy sigh, “is probably remembered but by few—for good and for evil has it been known—Knight and soldier have I fought as brave men should—stern and relentless I turned not from my path for man’s curse or woman’s prayer—there are deeds that all would wish to have blotted out from memory’s roll; some such I may have done—the remembrance of one of these drove me from my native country, I journeyed into Burgundy—meantime England again changed rulers; my lands were confiscated, my person attainted, so I continued to maintain concealment. In a season of gloomy penitence I became a priest—the remorse soon passed away, but the vows were on me—my new life, however, was not without its object—the love of pleasure yielded to the thirst of ambition—I am now used to cowl and breviary as I was formerly to mail and war-horse, and few would recognise in the

grave presence of Father Hubert, the once bold and gay Sir Herbert Coldinghame."

One moment of boding, breathless, motionless silence—one moment in which a life's history was pictured—and then with the cry of a famished panther Dalton sprang upon his enemy, and grasping his throat, shouted—

"Have we met at last?—Fiend! I am Reginald de Bohun, the Avenger."

Quick as lightning the priest comprehended the full extent of his danger, and prepared himself to meet it. There was no time for speech. Both were unarmed, but under such circumstances the deadly struggle between man and man is far fiercer and more fearful to contemplate than the contest of the untamed beasts of the forest. Father Hubert was stronger, more expert and robust than his adversary, but a madman's strength nerved Dalton's attenuated frame, wasted as it was by sickness and confinement. Their hands were fixed on each other's throats—with teeth clenched

and glowering eyes—their brows knit, and their lips livid with implacable hate—their hot breath mingling in one foul steam—not a cry was uttered as they grappled together—not a sound was audible save the trampling of their feet as their bodies swayed to and fro from side to side of the narrow arena. At last both fell together to the ground with the crash of a falling rock—but still neither relinquished his hold—the noise alarmed the watchers outside, who, regardless of orders, rushed into the cabin. Literally the combatants were torn asunder by the exertion of main force, and when this was accomplished, both slowly arose, bleeding, panting, and defiance still glaring from their blood-shot eyes.

“Bind him,” muttered Dalton, hoarsely, “bind him hand and foot—Yet stay! I would first question him awhile; but guard him closely that he escape not.”

The men complied, and ranged themselves round the priest, who, far less exhausted than his antagonist, had sunk upon



a seat in sullen submission to the doom he now saw was inevitable.

“My vengeance will soon be sated,” pursued Dalton, as he planted himself before his foe, “but tell me, man or devil, how you have so long contrived to elude my quest.”

“I shunned you not, and dreaded you not,” replied the priest; “say rather for what crooked purpose you have yourself assumed a borrowed name.”

“Guess you not wherefore I joined the host of Richard of York?—as in youth I ranged myself in the ranks of the partizans of the White Rose—but with feelings how different! then free and joyous, the very soul of loyalty—for my king I would gladly have sacrificed a life full to overflowing of bright anticipations—now I sought his son but to betray. Often have I counselled the inconsiderate youth to his undoing, and taught him to hold lightly your graver admonition—therein how like his father—to abandon a true friend for a doubtful favor-

ite. I was his fate, although he knew it not. When first I beheld him, I swore his death—had it been compassed by any other hand, my vengeance had lost its sweetness. I concerted measures with his enemies, I stirred up the insurgents to invite Richard to repeat his invasion, lest afar from England he should die in security and peace. I have plotted, planned and toiled but for this end—day by day I led him on to his ruin; and at last I have delivered him, bound, into the hands of the hunters. When Richard's head falls on the block, I will be there to see my triumph. Indifferent am I what hopes I trample on—what blood is shed in the execution of my will, never shall I repay to man the cruelty, faithlessness and outrage I have received from all. Herbert Coldinghame, one marvel yet remains, that when I looked on you, my heart whispered not its enemy was near."

"With sharper instinct," returned the confessor, "I have ever loathed your presence with a depth of detestation for which

I could not account to myself, save that I recognized in you a secret foe. Dishonored traitor! know that my hate is fierce and undying as your own, for while I held the hand of Edith of Borodaile, did not her love cling to the weak youth to whom her early faith was plighted?"

"Profane not the name of the angel dead," murmured Dalton huskily, while his ghastly cheek betokened the intensity of his suffering. "It maddens me afresh when I recall what must have been the agony of her pure and gentle spirit when she found none to aid her in her dire extremity. The king I had served—the friends I trusted—turned from her when she preferred my absent claim; were there no men's hearts in that courtiert hrong to succour woman's helpless innocence! Oh, I could scorn myself that I wear a human form the same as theirs who bore such dastard and ignoble souls! And you, chief cause and agent in this work of woe—ruthless destroyer of all I have ever loved! demon, blacker far than those you

shall shortly join in hell! if I slay you not, it is that you are reserved to a darker doom. For each agonized throb of her breaking heart the rack shall rend your mangled limbs with some fresh torture. I am half reconciled to the fortune that has thus decreed the downfall of both my foes. Edith, you shall be doubly avenged!"

"I defy you, and may baffle you yet!" exclaimed Father Hubert, while his eyes gleamed with a ferocity which showed that the long-imposed restraint of monastic discipline had completely yielded to the fiery impetuosity of earlier habits.

"I dare you to the trial!" returned Dalton confidently.

At this moment voices and steps were heard approaching the cabin; the men rushed to the door to bar the passage and deny admission, but so eager were the foes in their personal contention, that they scarcely heeded the sounds.

"Hearken!" continued Father Hubert.  
"You triumph in the thought that by con-

spiring the death of Richard you avenge yourself on Edward—such I believe to be your aim; learn then how baseless! Richard is no descendent of York, but a wretched foundling whom I have reared to play the part of prince. Hence, you have schemed and wrought in vain—you have betrayed the trusting, and stirred up feud and civil war—with what avail? You have but consigned a nameless outcast to the gibbet, for Edward left no heir to inherit your boundless hate! What say you now?”

“Falsehood is on your tongue—you do but mock me!” muttered Dalton, glancing uneasily at the door which shook on its hinges beneath the repeated blows of those outside.

“It is truth,” cried Father Hubert, “I swear by my love for the dead, and my hatred to the living, that it is truth.”

Dalton tottered to a seat. At the same instant, the door yielded to the pressure of the assailants, and fell inwards with a des-

perate crash, and a group of armed countrymen crowded into the cabin.

Immediately the priest directed towards them a look of recognition—for they were well known to him as ringleaders of the Cornish malcontents, with Flammock at their head—doubting that Henry's displeasure would be easily appeased, they had resolved to leave their native land until the storm had blown over.

Journeying towards the sea coast, they had paused at the cabin to procure refreshment, and finding admission refused them, had forced an entrance. Hurriedly Father Hubert explained his situation, claimed their aid, and conjured them not to abandon him to the power of their mutual enemies. Such desertion had not entered the minds of the new comers.

Dalton and his men surrounded their prisoner, and opposed his removal in a close struggle of some minutes' duration; but, as superior force was on the side of the rescuers, Dalton's followers began to see the

folly of being cut to pieces without gaining their point, and came to a parley, regardless of the imprecations hurled on them by their leader.

It was soon agreed that Father Hubert was to be set free, and allowed to accompany his friends, who were to retire instantly without a renewal of violence.

Dalton would have flung himself on his enemy to prevent his departure, but he was withheld by his own men, and the door was closed after the retreating party. Opposite to the cabin's single window was the half-ruinous shed, where the priest's horse had been conducted, thither he now repaired with a rapid step to seek his steed.

Dalton observed the movement—quick as thought he seized an ancient cross-bow, appertaining to the owner of the hovel, flung open the casement, and awaited, in silent expectation, the re-appearance of his foe. After some short delay, Father Hubert

led forth his horse, ready equipped for the road.

“Free once more,” he cried, half aloud, as he leaped into the saddle.

At the same time, he caught sight of Dalton's vengeful countenance at the open window. The priest waved aloft his arm and broke into a burst of derisive laughter. But the triumphant smile was arrested on his lip—his arm sank powerless to his side—an arrow had pierced him to the heart, and he fell to the ground with a heavy groan.

His startled horse dashed forward, dragging after him, the lifeless form of his rider—one of whose feet was helplessly entangled in the stirrup; when the animal was stopped, it was discovered that the fierce, hard spirit of Father Hubert had passed away. And so, Edith was avenged.



CHAPTER XVII.

THE SENTENCE.

Those that can pity, here  
May, if they think it well, let fall a tear ;  
The subject will deserve it.

*Shakespeare.*

OUR narrative is now about to take a short stride, and the reader must suppose several months to have elapsed, during whose chequered course, the positions of the various

personages of our history, have naturally undergone some slight change.

The young Adventurer is still an inmate of the Tower; but he is now a doomed prisoner—tried—condemned, and sentenced to execution. In the first instance, he was promised both security and release, if he would make an ample confession of his imposture—urged by this hope, and probably, influenced likewise by a more disinterested motive, the unfortunate young man made the required disclosure—whether his supposed claim of relationship to Edward IV.—even through an illegitimate channel, aroused Henry's jealousy, or whether an error in judgment induced the King first to suppress the prisoner's confession, and afterwards, to cause it to be published, it is certain that such garbled statements of the facts, were presented to the world, so many contradictory reports were accredited by lawful authority, that a great number of men remained in the belief that the Pretender was the real Prince of York, who had

been compelled to disclaim his title for the preservation of life.

So unsatisfactory was the result of the confession, that the promise of pardon and freedom was withdrawn; a plot was then formed by the Adventurer's adherents for his escape, and the scheme for his rescue was to include his unhappy fellow-captive, the young Earl of Warwick, grandson of Warwick, the king-maker, and son of that Duke of Clarence, drowned by order of his brother Edward, in his favorite wine. This youth's veritable royalty of birth marked him out from childhood as the victim of tyranny, oppression, and usurpation, until confinement and ill-usage had created moral and physical infirmities, which rendered him an object of pity to all; but his destiny of woe was fast approaching its termination.

It is not necessary to dwell on the details of the plot formed for the release of the captives—suffice it to say—it failed;

the chief agents, among whom Maurice Vipont had been zealously conspicuous, were captured. Henry's suspicion and mistrust increased, for he began to fear that the conspiracy set on foot for the escape of the prisoners, would, at last, be directed against his own life; the Adventurer and the Earl of Warwick were arraigned for treason, and adjudged to die—seven days only were to elapse between the utterance and the execution of the sentence; meantime, so strict a ward was maintained over the doomed men, that it was useless for them to entertain a hope of eluding the vigilance of their enemies. It is at this period that we resume the thread of our narrative.

In a small, ill-furnished chamber, in a dark, narrow street, sat the Lady Katherine, the once haughty daughter of the Earl of Huntly, and now the hapless wife of the condemned traitor. Forcibly though courteously she had been removed from the

asylum she had chosen at Saint Michael's Mount in Cornwall, and conducted to the capital.

After a long confinement, and various tedious examinations, from which nothing could be elicited, she was lodged in her present abode; no watch was held over her, for her detention was of no considerable importance; and even had it been otherwise, while the Tower contained the form of her living husband, his keepers might well account him as a hostage for her presence.

Katherine was strangely altered since last she came before the reader's notice; her youthful and fresh loveliness was now converted into an ethereal beauty that seemed almost painful to contemplate. There was such a wild and touching melancholy in her soft blue eyes—those eyes once the very fountains of joy—and her cheek, less rounded than of yore, varied alternately from the deepest flush of the red rose to the most transparent paleness. She had not seen her husband since his sentence,

although on her first arrival in the capital, she had been permitted the sad consolation of visiting him—in the attempt made to effect his escape, she had taken no part, for it occurred during the period of her own detention.

Inexorable time still pursued his onward course, and three days only were to elapse before the Adventurer paid the forfeit of his errors on the scaffold; his mourning wife had obtained permission to have an interview with him on the morrow.

Katherine was seated in a low, rush chair, her head was bowed on her trembling hands—her sunny curls had been turned back from her pallid brow as if their weight oppressed—her eyes were closed, and the dark lashes rested on a cheek of marble whiteness, yet she slept not—a dull, dreamy apathy, almost approaching to insensibility, had succeeded to a paroxysm of grief, which had completely exhausted her fragile frame. The hot summer air penetrated stiflingly the closed

curtains, and the clamour from the street below, with its various sounds of life and business, ascended discordantly to the chamber of woe.

On a sudden the door was softly opened, shut as noiselessly, a light form glided into the darkened room, and Viola Hatherton stood once more beside the wife of the object of her youthful preference. Fancying the mourner slept, the young maiden seated herself on a stool at her feet, and quietly expected her awaking.

At length, a faint groan broke from Katherine's pale lips, and a slight contraction of the features betokened inward suffering; then Viola pressed her lips upon her hand, and attempted gently to draw it towards her. Katherine felt the movement, raised her head, and looked round her with a bewildered glance.

"Where am I?" she murmured, "I thought I was alone."

The tone of her voice was strained and

unnatural, and struck painfully on the ear of her companion.

“Dear lady,” said Viola earnestly, “you are with one who loves you well, who has received kindness from you in bygone days, and would gladly tend you now with grateful affection. I am come to weep with you.”

Viola judged rightly when she spoke not of consolation to one so utterly heart-broken—sympathy bears a far different signification.

“I recollect you now,” said the lady languidly, “you are the daughter of the honest Armourer whom my husband knew in Burgundy.”

“Ay, madam, even as you say,” returned Viola, and she paused, for she doubted how far the wife was acquainted with the real circumstances of the case, and she dreaded to fix an additional pang on that burdened spirit.

“I know all,” whispered Katherine, “he has told me all—his lowly life—his early



ambition, his temptation and his fall—you too, Viola, may judge of his sins—but you cannot guess his penitence, his deep remorse, his prayers for pardon, his wish to expiate. And he must not live to show amendment for the past,” she added abruptly, “this world contains for him no future. Know you not, Viola, that he is condemned to die? Not as the brave and gently-born should meet death—he will perish on the gibbet—the scoff of the hooting mob, the gape of the holiday-seekers—his proud heart will not brook the shame—I see it all. Where shall I hide me from the vision? When my eyes close in rest, a dream shows me that which is to come—the vile hangman’s noose to clasp the neck round which these arms would cling for ever—the sea of upturned faces—my Richard’s noble form; the outward calm and inward agony—his parting look at earth and sky—oh, help him Heaven!”

As Katherine spoke, she flung herself on her knees, and rocked her body convulsively

to and fro, while she uttered a few low moans; but not a tear softened the fiery lustre of her eye—that relief was denied her.

“Can nothing be done?” asked Viola sadly. “Is there no appeal?”

“Think you I could live without hope?” returned the lady. “I cherish yet one faint spark in my bosom, or I should go mad indeed. While something remains to be done, I do not quite yield to despair. To-morrow evening King Henry returns to London, and before he re-enters his palace, I will throw myself at his feet, and ask his pity on the neediest beggar who ever prayed an alms, for they crave succour for the body, but I do lack the life of my heart; the support on which my soul pends. Henry can but spurn me.”

“Would it not be more advised to intercede with the Queen? She is ever reputed to be gracious and full of all royal benevolence.”

“I have thought of it, but it is so diffi-

cult to obtain access, and her Grace stirs so seldom abroad."

Half hesitatingly Viola suggested that she had a friend, through whose medium it might be possible for the Lady Katherine to gain admission into the palace, and be stationed where she should have an interview with the Queen. Cheered by this suggestion, the lady eagerly embraced it.

"But you must not fail me, Viola—there must be no tarrance—his time is fixed. To-morrow I shall see him once more, and be pressed to that loving heart whose pulses will so soon be still. My ear thirsts, pines for the sound of his loved voice. Would that the morrow were come! But no—his young life wears near the close—rather let me wish to put back the sun, and drag out and lengthen the tedious minutes that are to be his sum of existence. Oh that I might die in his stead! how gladly would I bed me in the grave!"

With gentle tenderness Viola endeavoured

to soothe, and tried to speak of her native land, and the kindred ties that awaited her there, but Katherine recoiled impulsively from the thought.

“ I will never return,” said she. “ My father would curse *his* memory, and that would be torture worse than death. Or if his lips refrained, his utter silence would upbraid with tenfold force. The proud Earl could not brook to have been made a dupe, nor to see the child so dear sunk to such degradation—he shall be spared that pang. Afar from all human eyes will I hide my weary head—it will not be for long—I would ever be left alone with my despair.”

“ All is not yet over,” murmured Viola, “ struggle against this grief, I beseech you, for you will need your strength to carry you through the interview you propose with her Highness the Queen.”

“ I will be patient and calm,” returned the lady, “ only, dear Viola, if money is

wanting to win my way into the palace, let it not be spared—I have jewels of worth that I shall never wear again. They tell me I am a pensioner on the Queen's bounty for lodgment and expenditure; I would have rejected this, but I feared it might give displeasure, and injure my husband's cause." As Katherine said this, the rebellious blood mounted even to her forehead, for old prejudice was strong within her, but the feeling was quickly checked, and she added meekly. "Pride is still stirring at my heart, I fear, although I had believed it was crushed for ever; it ill becomes me now—I try to be grateful for the kindness of those to whom such sinful wrong has been done. I have no right to resent that a traitor's doom has been awarded to one who—Oh, Richard! it would be mercy at least not to separate us in death."

"Take comfort, dear Lady," whispered Viola, "your husband repents, and has made confession—there is a future for both in another world."

At last the right key was touched, the fountain of tears was unlocked, and Katherine wept unrestrainedly as she listened to the affectionate persuasions of her young companion.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE OUTLAW.

The Scots can rein a mettled steed,  
And love to couch a spear ;—  
St. George ! a stirring life they lead,  
That have such neighbours near.

SCOTT.

IT may be a matter of surprise that Viola Hatherton was still to be found in the exercise of the active charities of life, in lieu of being secluded among the living dead of the holy sisterhood of Saint Bride; but her

gentleness, gratitude, and other noble qualities had so endeared her to her protectress, that the convent was only mentioned as an event, which, at some distant and undefined period, was to cause an unwelcome separation between the benevolent benefactress and her attached charge.

Viola had heard with pitiful interest, the condemnation of the Pretender, the detention of Katherine, and her subsequent release, but her utmost efforts had failed to discover the obscure residence of the latter, until the Border Chief, learning her solicitude, had tracked out the Lady's abode. As we have seen, Viola's first impulse led her to visit the sorrowing wife, and since in those days of suspicion Mistress Aston was apprehensive of giving umbrage to the authorities by appearing to espouse the cause of the rebels, the maiden was compelled to go forth on her mission secretly, under the guidance and guardianship of John Heron. It was to him that the maiden referred when she spoke of the possibility



of procuring admission into the royal dwelling of Westminster, for she relied with confidence on his wish to serve, and she knew he had influence with Sir Reginald Bray, by whom so slight a boon would not be denied.

It must not be supposed that during the many months we have lost sight of the Border Chief, his time had been passed in idle dalliance in the capital—not so, a stirring and adventurous life had he led on the Borders, those troubled regions where quiet seldom reigned, and where peace was never completely recognized, until long after a cessation of hostilities had taken place between the kingdoms. At the present time so many acts of reprisal were constantly occurring, that John Heron found full employ in righting the wronged; and endeavouring to defend the weak against the Scotch foragers who failed not to muster in strong force wherever spoil was to be won. Retaliations for these outrages were of daily commital, which had the common

effect of bequeathing the feud with its fatal consequences to the following generation. If not in the character of an aggressor, our Border Chief was always in the field as the champion of his oppressed countrymen—no name was dreaded far and wide among the reivers of the more northern nation, like that of the Bastard Heron. His perilous adventures formed the subject of many a ballad, and his numerous escapes astonished his own Riders almost as much as they incensed his antagonists. On one occasion when closely hemmed in by his enemies, so that it appeared inevitable he must fall into their hands, he contrived to pass through the midst of them in a coffin, and was in this manner carried through Etrick and Annandale, and deposited safely on the English side of the Tweed—at another time after being captured, he severely wounded his gaoler, gagged him, and left him locked up in his stead. In the midst of this bold career, an affair which had long weighed heavily on the Borderer's

mind, summoned him to the capital. After the affray, in which Sir Robert Ker fell, a sentence of outlawry had been passed against the Bastard Heron and his supposed accomplices—however, the due legal forms had never been carried out, owing to the immediate declaration of war with Scotland. It was the hope of the reversal of this decree that had now caused the Chief's journey to London. The secret approbation of Henry Tudor had been frequently conveyed to him through the medium of the Wardens, and these tokens of favorable regard, added to his long train of services, encouraged the Borderer's expectation that his petition for the repeal of the act of outlawry would not be denied, and he should obtain a free pardon for the past which would bury his offence in oblivion. Moreover he was not without powerful friends, who would do their utmost to support and forward his cause—in particular Sir Reginald Bray, one of the King's most favoured counsellors,

had distinguished the Bastard Heron by his good will.

Thus the Chief lingered on from day to day in the capital, and still the decision of his suit was protracted. Under these circumstances he renewed his intimacy with Viola Hatherton. The reader may be tempted to inquire whether the Borderer still retained the hapless attachment which appeared to have taken such deep root in his manly nature—it is a question difficult to solve, and one that Viola sometimes propounded to herself as she witnessed the anxious friendliness with which he sought to please or protect her. But in his watchful care there was no sign nor word of love—had the indomitable Border Chief vanquished also the tyrant Love, that despot of the human heart?

When Viola quitted the Lady Katherine, and made her way into the crowded street, she was quickly joined by the Borderer, and then in moving terms she related the

affliction of the mourner, and besought his aid and interest in procuring the desired interview with her Grace the Queen.

“It shall be done,” answered John Heron; “but I warn you, that the King’s mind is fixed, and there will be no remission of the sentence.”

“Must the prisoner die then?” said Viola, sadly. “So young and seemingly so penitent! Is it not harsh judgment, noble Heron?”

“While he still lives there will ever be evil doers to stir up occasion for strife; I grieve for the youth whose nature gives proof he might have been moulded to better things; but his blood alone can atone for his crime.”

“Yet,” persisted the maiden, “it will be an everlasting consolation to the fond wife to recal that no effort was untried to avert his doom; and even, at the present moment, the exertion may serve to divert her despair.”

The Borderer turned his eyes on her imploring countenance, to which an expression of earnest sympathy lent a new and interesting charm, and he replied, after a pause—

“The boon you now seek shall be demanded forthwith ; I am even now bound to Sir Reginald Bray, the Queen’s chamberlain, on matters of private concernment.”

“Does your own suit prosper?” asked Viola.

“It is delayed, strangely delayed ; but my hope runs high. I cannot think my petition for the reversal of the sentence of outlawry will be refused. After the committal of the offence, which branded me as a felon, was I not openly sanctioned by the highest authority in the realm ; did I not receive commission in the King’s name to hold out my fortress, while the royal levies took breathing space to arm and equip ; I lost my castle ; but my engagement was

more than fulfilled. His Highness will not forget all this, and my good friend will be my advocate."

"It cannot fail to be as we wish," said Viola, in a low tone. "Ah! how often do I bewail that most disastrous day that reft my father of life, and emperilled your honor! Would it not be accounted some plea of defence that you raised your arm to succour the helpless? did you state for what unworthy object—"

"Fair mistress, no. Such whining excuse John Heron cares not to make. Who heeds the immediate motive of the affray? Enough that on a day of truce I engaged hand to hand with the Scottish Warden, and by the aid of my followers, despatched him on the spot. Twist the case as you will, it wears no other facing. I attempt not to exculpate, but found my expectations of pardon on recent service."

"I must ever regard myself as the cause of this unmerited reproach," answered Viola, "with ceaseless regret."

“Regret nothing, kind maiden, in which I am concerned. I have to thank my own ungoverned humour for the fatal event that has clouded my honor, and marked me as an outlaw. Now, if it please you, we will let this matter drop, and speak of other things.”

Accordingly the subject was not resumed; and after some discussion on other points, in answer to Viola's inquiries, the Chief recounted the conflagration, and destruction of the Heron's Haunt by young Andrew Ker immediately after its abandonment by the Pretender.

The maiden deplored the fate of the ancient fortress, for she recollected well and thankfully how securely she had been protected, and heedfully she had been soothed and tended within those dingy walls.

“I should not have guessed that you bore the old place in memory,” returned John Heron, with a well-pleased smile. “For myself, I never pass the half-burnt



ruins without a sigh for the days that are gone."

"Where is your present abode?" asked Viola.

"I have an eyrie not many miles from Berwick; there my band assembles as of yore. This stronghold is less spacious than the Heron's Haunt, but far more commodious, and possesses some claim even to a Borderer's liking."

These words brought them to the door of Mistress Aston's dwelling, and there they parted. The Chief then bent his steps to the residence of his friend and patron, Sir Reginald Bray.

There is nothing more tedious than the progression of a suit dependent on court intrigue or personal favor; even the most buoyant spirits will, at last, be worn out by the wearisome delays which seem to occur when almost on the very verge of success.

The Borderer felt this, and was often half tempted to return whence he came,

and leave the result of his petition to chance ; after all he had done and suffered in the royal cause, he could not believe that the act of outlawry would be allowed to take effect ; indeed, when once on the Borders, he cared not a doit for the sentence, since no officer of the law would be bold enough to lay finger on him there ; but as soon as he removed inland, there was a probability that some secret enemy might deliver him to justice.

However, it was his pride rather than his apprehensions that had aroused him to make his present appeal, and notwithstanding his hopes were so long deferred, he had no doubt of a favorable issue.

When the Borderer reached Sir Reginald Bray's residence, he was somewhat surprised to find its master was not within, neither had he left any message to assign his reason for breaking an appointment expressly made by himself. More disappointed than he chose to avow, the Chief proceeded along one of the great thorough-

fares that led to the water-side ; he walked without an object ; gradually the crowd thickened, and it became evident that some matter of interest was going forward. Yielding to the tide, he moved on with the multitude, and soon found himself following a procession of richly attired cavaliers, with their band of armed retainers.

This long train directed its course to Westminster Palace. It was the Scottish Ambassador going in state to receive audience from Henry VII.

The Borderer eyed the group with his usual national antipathy ; in another moment he turned away with a clouded brow for among the cavaliers he plainly descried the dark physiognomy of young Sir Andrew Ker.

The cavalcade passed within the gates of the palace. The Border Chief did not guess that while the northern envoy was charged to negotiate the marriage of James Stuart with the youthful Margaret, daughter of Henry Tudor, one of the principal

demands of the son-in-law elect, was the surrender of the person of the Bastard Heron, that he might suffer death for the murder of the Scottish warden. Could the cry for justice be denied?—Blood for blood!

CHAPTER XIX.

THE TOWER.

O, 'tis too true! how smart  
A lash that speech doth give my conscience.

SHAKSPEARE.

BRIGHTLY shone the morning sun over this fair earth with its varied furniture of hill and dale, and tree and flower; nature exulted beneath the influence of that glorious orb, and one straggling beam pierced even the barred window of the lone chamber in the

Tower, where the condemned captive awaited his doom.

It was a spacious and dreary prison-room; a mean pallet occupied one corner, two chairs and a rough table comprised the rest of the accommodations. The walls were covered with rude attempts at versification made by former tenants, and the aperture answering the purpose of a window was placed so high that it offered no other prospect than a patch of the deep blue heavens.

The unfortunate Adventurer paced slowly to and fro this narrow domain; what would he not now give for the rude freedom of the peasant boy, although it were linked to the lowly lot and daily drudgery of the poorest hind that ever tilled the ground; he thought of the days when he too roved unfettered in body and mind, when the pure summer air, that played upon his youthful head, came not as if by stealth through bolt and bar—these boons, once common to him as to all, he had exchanged for

a blasted name, a guilty conscience, an ignominious death. Yet he would have patience, nor rail at fortune, nor upbraid the justice that sentenced him—submission to his fate was henceforth the only atonement he could make for his error. The bold, frank, heedless youth, who directed the sports of his fellow artisans at Saint Evert, could little have imagined what extremity of evil and suffering he should bring down on all who regarded or served him.

At the very thought of Katherine a pang of agony shot through his heart—the gentle, devoted wife, the firm and noble counsellor, the fond and trusting woman—she had loved him, and what was her reward? He dared not pursue further this train of idea, lest he should be quite unmanned.

The hour drew nigh when Sir William Kingston, the Governor of the Tower, was accustomed to pay his daily visit: his gaolers must not see his weakness.

Some days previously the Pretender had

been made acquainted with the capture of Maurice Vipont, who had been actively employed in endeavouring to effect his leader's escape. Had his plans succeeded, the Tower would have fallen into the hands of himself and his accomplices, but their failure brought his head in danger of the block.

Henry VII. was disposed to regard this young man with peculiar clemency; notwithstanding the adherence of his own branch of the family to the Yorkist party, he had connections on the maternal side high in the royal favor, who were not backward in exerting their interest in his behalf.

Accordingly, he underwent a strict examination before a private tribunal, at which the monarch was secretly present. The open, loyal, and intelligent countenance of the young volunteer, considerably prepossessed the sovereign, and he was naturally anxious to bind to himself one whose fidelity had been untinged by all motives of self-interest or personal ambition.



With this view, amnesty for his former acts of rebellion, and promotion for the future, were offered to Maurice Vipont, if he would solemnly swear allegiance to Henry Tudor.

Firmly, but temperately, the young man rejected these flattering overtures; he could not abandon the cause he had espoused, while any descendent of that line survived to claim his fealty—neither would he ever enter the service of a king to whom could be attributed the destruction of the supposed Richard of York.

In vain, was he assured of the Pretender's confession; the tale obtained no credit with him, and the documents exhibited, brought no conviction, but were rather considered by him, to have been procured by force.

However leniently Henry might have been disposed to deal with Vipont, it seemed almost impossible to spare so determined and avowed an enemy. The youth was remanded.

These particulars were duly reported to the Pretender by Sir William Kingston, and made a profound impression on his mind. Was the false mission he had assumed to be sealed with the blood of his truest and most zealous friend? Filled with solicitude to terminate the fatal delusion, that would inevitably bring the incorruptible Yorkist adherent to the scaffold, the Adventurer earnestly besought leave to address a letter to Maurice Vipont, in case an interview could not be permitted, engaging to make the recusant accept the pardon proffered to him by the generous clemency of the King.

No answer had, as yet, been returned to this request; and the silence preserved on the subject by the governor, considerably aggravated the prisoner's inquietude.

Since his confinement, the adventurer had heard no tidings of Father Hubert; and, unconscious of his well-merited fate, concluded that he had seasonably provided for his own safety by flight.

On this score, at least, he entertained no remorse. Unexpected as had been Dalton's treachery; it appeared a singular species of retribution, that the principal agent in the Pretender's overthrow should be one who, sought to avenge, in his person, the cruel outrage he had sustained from Edward IV.; thus, in every way, through the medium both of love and hatred; his deception had wrought out twofold ruin. The victim of a mistaken revenge, felt that he had scarce the right to curse his betrayer.

It was the day but one, before that appointed for the execution of Richard—for so we shall continue to call him—and in lieu of the appearance of Sir William Kingston at the accustomed time, two armed attendants passed through the unbarred door, and motioned to the Adventurer to follow them.

This order was willingly obeyed; for any thing that broke his iron solitude, or promised diversion to his current of dreary

thoughts, was regarded by the captive as a change to be desired.

No explanations were given; but escorted by a vigilant guard on either side, he passed through several untenanted chambers—descended a flight of stairs, and entered a long, narrow gallery, which they had but half traversed, when the sound of steps was heard approaching from the opposite extremity.

The guides looked as if they would gladly have withdrawn with their prisoner, but it was too late to effect a retreat unseen, so they were compelled to halt and draw on one side, to allow free passage for the coming party. It consisted of a prisoner, also surrounded by attendants.

The Adventurer gazed anxiously on him—they had never met before, but from the other's appearance, Richard easily recognised his name and condition. The stranger thus closely guarded, was a very young man of low stature, gorgeously apparelled

for he inherited his father's love of show and gay attire, and his humour, in this respect, had been freely indulged.

He had a light, wandering eye, that roved hither and thither with a meaningless, vacant expression ; and as he drew near, it was evident there was some defect in his gait, for he leaned heavily on a man who walked on his right hand. This was the unhappy Earl of Warwick, destined to be the Pretender's fellow-sufferer on the scaffold ; his keepers were re-conducting him to his cell from the court-yard, where he was daily permitted to take the air.

As the imbecile Earl approached the group that had paused to make way for him he exclaimed, angrily—

“ Unbonnet, knaves! wot ye not I am of royal blood, and should have observance?”

The Adventurer complied, and accompanied the act with a deferential inclination of the head, which appeared to have given satisfaction, for now in a confidential man-

ner the brain-sick youth stooped forward, and whispered hurriedly—

“ They say I am a conspirator, and the King, my cousin, wills to have my head. Beshrew me! but he is royally welcome, if he will give me its worth in exchange.”

Here the attendants interposed, and forcibly impelled the young Earl forward, while at the same time Richard was urged by his guards in a contrary direction, so that the prisoners were soon out of each other's sight and hearing.

The Pretender sighed to think that had it not been for the unsuccessful attempt for his liberation, which was to include that of his supposed relative, the Earl of Warwick, this poor witless youth might have lived out his natural life in the possession of such blessings as he was still capable of enjoying.

Without farther pause Richard's guards hurried him on, until they reached a large vaulted hall, with roof and walls of stone, and two sides of which were enclosed by

heavy curtains, very probably for the purpose of accommodating some lurking listener. The hall being at present untenanted, the Adventurer took this opportunity to look around him with some curiosity, and we will also seize the occasion to make some remark on the alteration visible in his aspect, since last we encountered him at the head of the insurgent host. Long imprisonment had left undoubted traces of its hardships on his youthful frame, although it had not abated his proud port—his hollow cheek spoke of suffering, but the bold, bright eye showed it had been met in no craven spirit; in person he was considerably attenuated, and it would have been a difficult matter for a casual spectator to recognize the Yorkist leader of other days, in the wan, haggard prisoner who now surveyed with undissembled interest what was taking place at the opposite extremity of the hall.

Through an entrance at the further end, preceded by numerous attendants, Sir William Kingston, the Governor of the Tower,

made his appearance. After a short delay another prisoner was ushered in, whose familiar features aroused a mingled emotion of pain and pleasure in Richard's bosom. The young Yorkist caught sight of the Adventurer, and heedless of the many witnesses around him, or rather in defiance of them, he sprang forward, and throwing himself at the Pretender's feet, raised his hand to his lips with that homage of the heart which a veritable prince might have been proud to have commanded. In vain did Richard attempt to forbid this demonstration; the other's impetuosity would yield to no remonstrance.

Sir William Kingston then advanced, and explained that the present interview had been mercifully accorded, for the purpose of convincing Master Vipont of the necessity and justice of acknowledging the supremacy of his anointed and legitimate sovereign, Henry VII.

The Governor next enquired if his former leader would undertake to bring the recu-



sant to reason on the point, according to the desire he had previously expressed; Richard bowed his head in token of assent and then Sir William Kingston slowly retired, having first stationed guards at the upper end of the hall, with orders to allow the captives a few minutes' uninterrupted conference, and not to approach them unless they showed the intention to escape.

When the prisoners were left alone, Maurice Vipout did not note his companion's embarrassment, so occupied was his glance in scanning regretfully the worn expression of his noble countenance, which had ever appeared to the young partisan as the mirror of his lofty and princely mind. With regard to himself, his confinement was of such recent date that it had not impaired his vigorous constitution, or weakened his athletic limbs. Maurice was the first to speak.

“My dear lord,” cried he, “sad am I to see you thus—although I barely ex-

pected the satisfaction of meeting you again—our last hope has failed.”

“Your own fate is scarce brighter than mine,” returned Richard with a kindly glance at his friend.

“It may be so. Imprisonment for life, or beheading and hanging will now be the doom of every true man.”

“I know not that. Timely submission might yet avert from you the impending sentence, you have kinsmen high in consideration with Henry Tudor, and their influence might well avail you.”

“Aye, but at what price? I must buy their mercy by the renunciation of all I most venerate—I would rather slay myself with my own hand than accept safety on such terms.”

“Still if the line of York were extinct, you would then make no scruple of tendering your allegiance to the reigning King.”

“I would never vow fidelity to the murderer of my prince, and the usurper of his crown.”

There was a pause of some moments—Richard felt an unconquerable reluctance to enter on the task he had undertaken, yet the precious minutes were gliding by, and the only chance of procuring personal security to Maurice Vipont, was by bringing him to a full conviction of the false nature of the impostor's claims.

“Vipont,” he exclaimed at last with a sudden and abrupt effort, “you have doubtless been informed by your gaolers that I have acknowledged how ill-founded were my pretensions to the throne—they have told you—”

“I have heard lies sufficient to sink their framers into endless perdition,” interrupted the young man vehemently, “but think not, noble Richard, their calumnies had weight with me—I guessed their falsehood, and I knew your truth.”

“But if the history of my confession is no slander—how then?”

“I shall grieve, my dear lord, that the threats of your enemies had induced you

to employ so weak a subterfuge—but yet the momentary error could be repaired, and you would die as you had lived, a worthy Plantagenet.”

“I shall die as I have lived, a worthless impostor, an unsuccessful juggler. Draw near, Vipont, you have looked your last on Richard of York—the delusion may last no longer—prince am I none, but a base-born deceiver who has won your homage with cozenage and falsehood. The meanest in the ranks I led had equal claims.”

“I would not credit it,” cried Maurice “though angels did trumpet the tale from the four corners of the earth—this is but to prove my faith, or maybe you are moved by generous compassion to save a life, which I hold of so little account that I would gladly peril it a thousand times for the faintest chance of rescue to yourself.”

“Your devotion deserves a better reward—and it is scant justice that I should secure your safety at the cost of your esteem. That which I am about to narrate is true,

I swear it by the Heaven that spans this earth, by all I hold dear here or hereafter! Listen, and you shall learn the history of my temptation and my fall."

Maurice Vipont motioned to his companion to proceed, he would have spoken, but his tongue clove to his palate, the perspiration stood in large beads on his brow, and his eyes were intently fixed on Richard's flushed countenance, as the latter related with painful distinctness the various changes of his adventurous life, his encounter with Father Hubert, and the arguments employed by the crafty priest to win him to his purpose, his short-lived triumph, subsequent remorse and determination to atone for the past as far as was in his power, by an ample confession of his guilt—nothing was withheld that could substantiate the truth, and convince his former follower of the reality of the deception that had been practised.

"You have now heard all," concluded Richard, "and can no longer hesitate to transfer your allegiance to your lawful

sovereign, Henry Tudor. Load me with reproaches, upbraid me as you will, you cannot devise harsher terms than my conscience has already whispered."

"I stand as in a dream," exclaimed Maurice Vipont slowly. "What avails this tardy penitence? Was it indeed for so pitiful a hind that the noble bent the knee, and the brave shed their blood? Villain! you have robbed me of my faith in man. Caitiff! your arts have rendered me a traitor only less deeply dyed in crime than yourself. I would rather have perished in my false confidence than live to learn I had been made so weak a gull! I would leave with you my curse, but a heart of such evil nature must bring its own chastisement. Ho, guards!—I am weary of this conference; my blood burns like lava. Bear me back to my dungeon! darkness and solitude will be welcome, so that there I look not on the face of human treachery!"

At this appeal the soldiers started from their erect posture, and apparently Sir Wil-

liam Kingston was also within hearing, for the next moment the door of the hall was flung open, and he made his appearance, preceded as before.

“Stay, Vipont!” cried Richard huskily; “part not thus—give me your hand in token of pardon. Spurn me not from you!”

“Away!” cried Maurice vehemently; “touch me not, lest I be tempted to commit some act of fatal madness! You have my forgiveness, for we both stand on the verge of the grave, and it might be sinful to deny it; but never again will I clasp your hand in amity!”

The Adventurer turned slowly away, and the prisoners were re-conducted to their cells.

## CHAPTER XX.

## THE PARTING.

No, hapless pair—you've looked your last ;  
Your hearts should both have broken then ;  
The dream is o'er—your doom is cast—  
You'll never meet on earth again !

MOORE.

THE sun was veering westward, and the heat of noon was becoming gradually less oppressive, when two female forms approached the wide private portal of the



gloomy and ominous Tower of London. The one appeared to be an attendant, rather advanced in years, while the other was evidently a lady of superior rank, whose face was concealed from view, but whose youthful figure, exquisitely moulded, with its noble and graceful outline, could not fail to attract remark.

As the ponderous gates were opened to them, a sudden faintness overcame the fair dame, who seemed scarcely fitted for so dreary and unprotected a position, and she leaned momentarily for support on her companion. However, soon rallying her energies, they continued their progress. The soldier of the guard scanned heedfully the written pass exhibited to him, and then consigned them to the charge of a drowsy porter, who conducted them through various passages and galleries, until they approached that portion of the building which comprised the wards of the state prisoners.

Here the lady paused, and desiring her

attendant to await her return, she proceeded onwards.

Anxiety had caused her to shake off every appearance of febleness, and her guide found it difficult to keep pace with her fleet step.

We will now anticipate the hurried movements of the veiled stranger, and take a glance into the Adventurer's prison-chamber. His head was buried between his hands, and he recalled with pain and humiliation his recent interview with Maurice Vipont; the latter's well-merited indignation had inflicted a severe pang on Richard, who could not readily forget the scorn visible on the honest countenance of his former friend as he turned from him.

The work of retribution was now nearly accomplished—the only heart, perhaps, in the insurgent host, that had been truly attached to his person, and disinterestedly devoted to his interest, was now steeled against him, and felt shame that it had ever

known such weakness—the trial was hard to bear.

The Pretender's melancholy musings were disturbed by the turning of a key in the locks; the bolts of the door were withdrawn, and the iron bars removed—but Richard did not raise his head—concluding the interruption to be occasioned by some of his keepers, who visited him frequently, seemingly for the purpose of inquiry if his personal wants were duly attended to.

The door was carefully re-closed, and the next instant the Lady Katherine, with a faint cry, sprang forward and threw herself on her husband's neck—her soft arms were twined round him, and her wild kisses were pressed, with frantic vehemence, on his burning lip and brow.

“Kate, my own Kate!” murmured Richard, returning her passionate caresses. “Blessed am I still, while I can hold you to my heart, and read unshaken love in those dear eyes.”

“At last,” cried the wife, “I see you—I clasp you in my arms—in vain have I wept and prayed to be admitted to you; they told me it might not be—and I have tried to endure all as a penance for the past, but my heart is well-nigh broken in the struggle.”

“And I, too, have found that separation has been the worst portion of my doom.”

“But, Richard, you are pale and wan—or do my tears blind me, that I see amiss? Yet, I feel you are near me, and I could be content to die thus—you must have suffered much in this drear dungeon!”

“I am better lodged than was due to my deserts,” answered the Pretender, cheerfully.

And he drew Katherine to the corner of the chamber, illumined more clearly than the rest, by a stream of light from a narrow window; his hand gently raised the shining hair that drooped over her faultless features; and then, with love's anxious scrutiny, he

perused the traces that sorrow had left on her beautiful countenance.

Richard turned away from the inspection with a heavy sigh, and impugned not his manhood if he brushed a glittering drop from his eye.

Katherine could only murmur, at intervals—

“Would we might die together; that, at least, were mercy!”

The Adventurer placed her on a rough chair, and bent tenderly over her.

“Speak of this no more, if you would not wring my heart until its strings crack. When I look on the ruin I have wrought—the dark thread I have woven in your young destiny—the woe and shame I have piled on your beloved head, I am as one bereft of reason. For my sake, strive to wrestle with this despair, and be as you have ever been, my prop and comfort. My noble Kate, dearest and truest love, I beseech you, aggravate not my condemna-

tion by your hopeless wretchedness—let me not think I leave you a life-long mourner—it is my dying wish, and will be my last prayer.”

With many similar arguments, Richard endeavoured to soothe or compel into resignation, but Katherine shook her head sadly, while the tears flowed, with faster gush, down her pallid cheeks.

“Calm yourself, sweetheart,” continued her husband, “forgot not what I have said, and when we meet again—”

“How! when! where may that be?” almost shrieked Katherine.

“I have yet another morrow to dawn and set, before the day of doom. They will not deny us a last embrace.”

“To-morrow!” repeated the lady, hurriedly, pressing her hand upon her brow. “I recollect now, but my head wanders sadly, or I should have told you sooner, that to-morrow, I have been promised admission to the palace of Westminster—and shall be

stationed where I may obtain speech of Henry Tudor's consort, the good Queen Elizabeth. I will throw myself at her feet and implore her intercession with the King. I will plead in such sort as will touch a heart of flint. I will not rise until she accepts my prayers; Elizabeth of York is of gentle and royal nature, and will move the King in our behalf—then—”

“My poor Kate,” interrupted the Adventurer, tenderly, “put not any faith in this appeal—believe me it will be in vain—indeed, I would pray you not to expend your remaining strength in an effort that must be useless.”

“Forbid me not the venture—it is the shadow of a hope that saves me from destruction.”

“Do as you will. But hark! I hear voices and steps without. I fear they come to separate us; my soul's treasure, must we part?”

It was even so; the allotted time had expired—the hour fixed for strangers to

leave the prison had arrived—and the regulations on this subject were most strict—a couple of keepers now stood in the doorway ready to enforce them.

The Pretender, at least, felt that it would be wise to abridge the agony of that farewell, but Katherine clung to him the more closely.

“Have pity!” she cried, “grant me but a few minutes—it is all I ask. Have pity!”

One of the keepers now approached with a gesture and tone of compassion.

“Impossible, lady,” said he, “the rules here are absolute, and your attendant waits without. Moreover, take my word for it, that delay in these matters does but bring more pain.”

“You are right, friend,” returned the Adventurer. “To prolong this torture would be madness.”

Katherine's low sobs sounded mournfully through the chamber.



The other keeper advanced with a scowling mien.

“Come, madam, cease that whining. The laws of the prison must not be broken, and honest men brought to rebuke on your account. Move off, or I must find means to compel you.”

“Richard—my love—let them not touch me, I am ready to obey,” murmured the ill-fated wife.

The Adventurer drew her somewhat apart from the gaze of the others—he folded her in his arms, and the heaving bosom on which she rested, shook beneath the light pressure of that delicate frame—he enclosed her for some moments in his convulsive embrace—and then the fair arm which clasped his neck gradually relaxed its hold, and dropped powerless to her side—she had fainted.

Richard hailed this state of insensibility as a temporary relief from suffering—the husband's lips were rivetted once more, and for the last time on that marble brow—then

with indescribable emotion he placed her unconscious form in the arms of the friendly keeper, who bore her rapidly to the adjoining passage, where her attendant was in readiness to render her assistance. The door closed, and with a heavy groan Richard sank into a seat.

CHAPTER XXI

THE PETITION.

Wilt thou draw near the nature of the Gods ?  
Draw near them then in being merciful :  
Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge.

SHAKESPEARE.

ELIZABETH of York, Queen of Henry VII., was selected as his partner by her royal wooer, from mere motives of policy, and was afterwards regarded with indifference and coldness by her lord, for the very reason

that her hereditary name and many virtues might be supposed to exercise some influence in bending the minds of the people to his sway. The jealous pride of the monarch could not endure to owe anything to the family of York, or his gentle consort's popularity; and although outwardly his deportment towards her was marked by the highest consideration, she could not but be sensible that this extreme observance was unmingled with the slightest feeling of tenderness. During the first few months of their union this coldness cost the young bride many tears, but habit accustoms us to all things, and gradually Elizabeth became resigned, if not contented with her lot; her mother's heart fixed itself on the growing beauty of her children; and her weak health affording her a sufficient pretext for seclusion, she seldom attended any of the public ceremonials of the day. There was one duty, however, which she never omitted—a daily attendance on mass; and it was during the Queen's progress to the chapel

that the Lady Katherine was to be stationed in her passage, and present the petition to which she attached such incalculable importance.

In a lower room, awaiting the summons to the corridor, where she was to address the Queen, was the Adventurer's unfortunate wife; Viola Hatherton was, on the present occasion, beside her: on the previous day, in her melancholy visit to the Tower, her elderly attendant had been appointed to accompany her by royal forethought. By an exertion of her lofty soul, the impetuous passions which habitually governed her physical frame, were now hushed to rest; her whole mind was concentrated in the one chance, fragile as it was, that might yet avert the sentence of death from her beloved husband. Her weary eyes had not been closed in sleep; but she had nevertheless partaken of food, that she might have strength to go through what was before her. She was attired in black, as best became the character of a

petitioner ; her hair was carefully arranged beneath a plain coif—pale as a statue, with motionless lip and fixed eye, she might well have been taken for some exquisite model of art, had not her breathing shown that life animated that beautiful and drooping form.

Viola gazed anxiously on her companion, in secret surprise at the composure of her look ; and fearing, by a word, to disturb so necessary an equanimity, she offered no other expression of sympathy than an occasional pressure of the fair hand that hung listlessly by her side. It was a sad picture, those funeral robes enfolding the once gay child of prosperity—the bright face of former days marked by the mourner's rigid despair until it was scarcely recognizable ; the pride and ornament of court and hall converted into the suppliant wife of the condemned criminal.

Suddenly an attendant entered the chamber, and intimated that the moment had arrived for the petitioner to take her station,

and await the approach of the Queen. Viola was not permitted to accompany her. Katherine bent forward, and kissed the maiden's forehead.

"Dear Viola, pray for me," she whispered, and then calmly followed her guide.

The spot to which she was conducted was a long corridor, for the present untenanted, except that a page was on duty at either end. The gay sun-shine streamed in through the windows, and flung a rich halo of light over the touching loveliness of the Lady Katherine, as she leaned for support against the wall. Fortunately for her powers of endurance, she was not detained long in suspense; steps were heard approaching; there was a subdued murmur of female voices, and preceded by an usher, and followed by two ladies of her bed-chamber, Elizabeth of York entered the corridor.

In her youth, she had been distinguished for her beauty, and even now her clear hazel eye, pale gold hair, and general sweet-

ness of expression could hardly have failed to extort admiration from the beholder. Elizabeth was arrayed, as was her custom, in a rich velvet surcoat, trimmed with ermine, and to her hood were attached lappets, thickly sown with gems that pended glitteringly on either side her slender throat.

The royal dame advanced, apparently engaged in earnest discourse with her attendant ladies.

Katherine's pulses beat almost audibly, until every nerve appeared to be endued with a separate sense of agony; her eye-lashes dropped, as though glued to the soft cheek beneath; the curdling blood receded from her heart; her feet seemed to cleave to the ground; the Queen approached; for an instant it was doubtful if Katherine would have strength to avail herself of the desired opportunity, then, suddenly arousing her fainting energies, she tottered forward, and sank on her knees before Elizabeth; her hands were raised



and clasped; she spoke no word, but her eyes beamed with a wild supplication not to be misunderstood.

The Queen surveyed the suppliant at first without recognition, but when she recalled to her recollection those woe-stricken features, so changed even during the last few months, she endeavoured to raise the mourner, and promised in kindly tones to serve her in any way within the compass of her ability.

But Katherine would not rise.

“Mercy—great Queen—Mercy!” broke from her lips.

“It is not for yourself you plead,” said Elizabeth, gently, “or I would not hesitate to accord pardon to so young an offender. What is it you seek?”

“A husband’s life,” answered the petitioner, in tremulous accents.

“Nay! this matter is beyond my meddling; yet believe me, I would aid you if I could; but my Liege’s wisdom has decided that the prisoner must suffer the death to

which he has been adjudged by his fellow-countrymen. Your suit is nought."

Elizabeth made an impatient movement forward, as if about to proceed, but Katherine's powers rose with the emergency, and clasping the Queen's robe, she continued with the most touching earnestness—

"Dismiss me not, royal lady, without a hearing. As there is a throne of grace to which all alike address themselves, I do conjure you, hear and pity me, a most wretched and despairing wife. The King has said the prisoner must die; but may not his Highness be moved to clemency if your gracious self would undertake the task? Would that Heaven may send words to my tongue that shall win you to advocate our cause! Must my husband die?—he has no friend but the one broken-hearted woman who now implores your Grace's generous compassion. First and greatest of Queens, you are still a woman, and had her nature ere you wore a crown—deign then for a few minutes to forget your high estate, and in-

cline your gentle heart to listen to my prayer. It is but one life that I ask—a breath will do it—to the King this life is but as the falling of a summer leaf, but it is my world—my all. Oh! Madam, plead for us with your royal lord—A people's blessings have long hallowed your name, and this work of charity shall endear it more. You weep, noble lady—you are moved—you do not reject my petition—you will grant your intercession, and my husband will be saved.”

That earnest suppliant spoke truly; Queen Elizabeth was touched by her appeal—drops of soft compassion suffused her eyes, but she knew her total inability to obtain the coveted boon, and hastened to extinguish the hope her emotion had occasioned.

“ You know not what you ask,” said she, “ nothing can be done—I cannot, dare not interpose to interrupt the course of the King's justice.”

“ My husband is guilty, Madam,” replied

Katherine, meekly folding her arms upon her bosom, "and has no plea for lenient judgment, save what may be wrung from his Highness' clemency—still the deeper are his errors, the greater need has he of time for penitence. Oh! can your Grace give me no hope that his life may be spared?"

"It would be needless cruelty to prolong your suspense," answered Elizabeth, quickly. "I grieve to say, Lady Katherine, your sad errand is fruitless. I have already used importunity in behalf of one condemned to the axe, a kinsman of my own, and my mediation was in vain. I pity your distress, but am powerless to relieve it."

Katherine was not yet repulsed, she felt an inward conviction that her suit was rejected, and further appeals would be useless, still she relaxed not her efforts—her almost hueless check grew, if it were possible, a shade more pale, and her voice seemed laden with tears, while her unwet eyes were strained in burning solicitude on the Queen's

agitated countenance, as in heart-rending accents she continued to supplicate for a life so inexpressibly dear.

“ Noble lady,” she cried at last, in frantic desperation, “ if you may not intercede, give permission I may be conducted to the King, at his feet I will implore—”

But Elizabeth raised her hand to impose silence, and at the moment a concealed door in the tapestry was thrown open, and Henry Tudor himself stepped into the corridor, attended by several of his nobles. In a former interview of Katherine with the Monarch, his conduct had been marked towards her by unwonted graciousness, which her youth, beauty, misfortunes, and high birth naturally commanded; but now the case was altered; it is probable that the King had been an unseen auditor of the above scene, for his features wore an expression of indomitable sternness, as though he had steeled himself to the execution of some inexorable purpose. Without a glance at the kneeling figure of the suppliant wife,

he strode by, and seizing the Queen's hand, dragged her forcibly onward, saying, harshly—

“We have tarried for you, madam.”

Katherine endeavoured to detain him, but Henry heeded neither her imploring gesture, nor her phrensied cry; she struggled to rise to her feet, but her senses reeled, she staggered, and sank to the ground.

The royal pair had disappeared from view; and then, when all hope was extinct, shriek upon shriek burst from the agonized lips of the despairing Katherine—the incoherence of delirium mingled with those broken cries—there, stretched on the ground, lay the White Rose of Scotland—her fair hair, escaped from the coif which had hitherto confined it, fell in clusters over her neck and shoulders—her brow convulsed with agony, and her ear-piercing screams only exchanged for the low, fitful moans of patient suffering. Lords and ladies collected pityingly round that recumbent figure, and at length by royal command

Katherine was gently raised, and conveyed to a more private apartment, where every care and attention were lavished on the stricken wife.

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Following the example of the ancient Greek master, at the risk of incurring the charge of abruptness, we will draw the veil over scenes of anguish that it would be impossible to depict.

On the ensuing morning, Perkin Warbeck, who bore so long the title of Richard of York, was hanged at Tyburn, amid the hootings and execrations of an immense concourse of people. He met his fate with calm resignation, and manly courage; on the scaffold he renewed the acknowledgment of his errors, and made once more a confession of his imposture. Notwithstanding this, contentions relative to his identity were carried on during several succeeding reigns.

The Lady Katherine hung for months on the verge of the grave, and when at last, and by slow degrees, she became restored to life and reason, the bloom of youth had passed from her, and in her pensive air, and changeless melancholy might be read the undying sorrow that rankled in her heart.

\* \* \* \* \*

We must now return to the period of Warbeck's execution.

Lights were in the spacious hall of the Palace of Westminster; music and mirth resounded through the lofty chambers; courtiers flocked eagerly to the festival, which was unusually brilliant, and never had the King been seen in a more gracious mood. His visage was almost animated with a sentiment of pleasure, as he moved through the courtly throng, and received the homage of the nobles. That day the desire dearest to his heart had been accomplished,



and a gorgeous assemblage had witnessed the betrothal of his daughter, the princess Margaret, to James IV. of Scotland, in the person of his Ambassador.

On this occasion Elizabeth of York was present, although her eyes were evidently red with weeping, but a wish from her husband's lips implying a command, secured her appearance. Her air of dejection was readily accounted for by the spectators, who remembered that on the previous day her imbecile cousin, the Earl of Warwick, had been beheaded on Tower Hill, despite her repeated intercessions, and the thought of his hapless doom contracted her brow, and saddened her whole mien. Her eye brightened only when it rested on her beautiful Margaret, the youthful betrothed.

At this time, the princess was but eleven years of age; and, notwithstanding the heavy velvet and ermine and misplaced ornaments, that encumbered her slight figure; this sweet blossom promised, already,

the perfection of beauty, for which she was afterwards distinguished.

With intelligence and grace beyond her years, Margaret answered the flatteries addressed to her. Among the most honored of the guests, the Scottish ambassador was conspicuous.

In his train might have been seen the young Sir Andrew Ker, and one the blithest there—for he had, at length, obtained that for which he had so long panted—he had been promised, on the morrow, under the royal sign and seal, a warrant for the seizure of all persons connected with the murder of Sir Robert Ker, in whatever quarter of the English monarch's dominions they might be found.

Sir Andrew knew that the Bastard Heron was in London; and armed with such authority, he made not the smallest doubt that a few hours would place his unsuspecting foe in his power.

This mandate had been reluctantly extorted from Henry, lest the treaty with

Scotland might otherwise be endangered—in vain did Sir Reginald Bray represent that the many services of John Heron entitled him to indemnity for the past—these assurances aggravated the King's mortification, but did not shake his purpose.

CHAPTER XXII.

ALL THINGS HAVE AN END.

Fortune, thou now hast made amends for all  
Thy past unkindness : I absolve my stars.

ADDISON.

DURING the first days of the Lady Katherine's illness, Viola Hatherton vainly endeavoured to obtain admission to her, but the attendants, who waited on her, were all supplied by the royal command; and the

maiden was fain to rest content with the knowledge that everything possible was done to comfort the sufferer and alleviate her anguish both of mind and body.

Meantime, Mistress Aston had been pressed by her sister, the Abbess of Saint Bride, to join her in Yorkshire ; and had consented shortly to do so ; and it was tacitly understood that the Armourer's daughter was then to enter the sisterhood.

On the morning after the betrothal of the Princess Margaret to the Scottish monarch, Viola was pensively bending over her tapestry, with thoughts as varied as the many-dyed silks that passed beneath her busy fingers, when, on a sudden, a tumult was heard in the hall, as though the aged domestic stationed there, was endeavouring to expel some intruder—apparently, such was the case, and the effort was unsuccessful—for, in another moment, the door of the apartment, tenanted by Viola, was flung open, and the small figure of Robin Star-

hed forcibly pushed his way through the entrance.

Panting and breathless, his long hair streaming over his flexible countenance, the young Border-rider contrived, with some dexterity, to elude the grasp of the portly attendant, who desired to make a violent ejection.

With a quick gesture the maiden arrested this movement; and, as the youthful emissary pleaded volubly to be heard—declaring he had a message of import to deliver, Viola acceded forthwith to his demand, and bade the astonished menial withdraw. When the door was closed, she desired him to make known his tidings.

Rob paused until the sound of the domestic's retreating footsteps had died away, and then darting towards the maiden, he grasped her robe and said hurriedly,

“Kind lady, forgive my boldness; but if ever you received kindness from the hand of John Heron, hear me, and aid him now.”

“Is he then in danger? What has

chanced?" asked Viola, as the color wavered in her delicate cheek.

The youth watched her keenly for a moment, and then continued :

" You will not have forgotten that in the affray wherein Sir Robert Ker fell by my hand, the person of our Chief was recognized—the deed was mine, but the feud became his. A sentence of outlawry was passed upon him for the violation of the truce—you bear all this in remembrance?"

Viola impatiently assented.

" The war that burst forth with Scotland prevented the penalty from being fully carried out—none can tell better than I how freely the Heron has fought and bled for Henry Tudor; peace being now restored, he has journeyed to London with a view to obtain the reversal of the sentence—he never even dreamed of disappointment, when yesternight this ingrate king promises to young Ker a warrant for the apprehension of all concerned in the death of the Warden—doubtless such concession is to win the favor

of the Scot bridegroom they have bought for our young princess. Straightway notice of what is impending was sent to our Chief by his good friend, Sir Reginald Bray, who counsels him to make no delay, but to set out instantly for the Borders, where no man dare touch a hair of his head; this well-meant advice is given to the winds—John Heron refuses to budge a step for friend or foe, and will abide where he is until hounded to death by his insatiate enemy. You turn pale, gentle lady—see you not his deadly peril?”

“But wherein can I succour him, or wherefore have you appealed to me?” demanded the maiden.

“A word from your lips,” said Rob quickly, with an acuteness which did him credit, “might double to John Heron the value of that life he is about to fling away. You have a kind heart, lady, and will not refuse the employ of your influence over one who has well proven himself worthy your regard.”



“ You miscalculate my power,” said Viola hesitatingly; “ I have none such.”

But the young advocate was not so silenced.

“ Have not I seen,” said he, “ the Chief's high spirit bowed beneath your coldness?—his strong nature shaken at the mention of your name? You can do with him what you will; then haste you, lady—let me bring you to his presence, or it may be too late to save.”

For one instant Viola stood irresolute, and then throwing aside all considerations that sprang not from the impulse of gratitude, she muffled herself in her mantle and hood, and accustomed to act as her own mistress, made use of her liberty to quit the house, under the guidance of Starhed, whose eager step she followed at a pace hardly less rapid than his own.

In one of the low, straggling houses which hung as it were over the water side, the Border Chief had fixed his lodgment—there he fancied he could breathe with greater

freedom than if he were cooped up in the crowded streets, and moreover, his position afforded peculiar facility for escape.

This, however, was an advantage of which it seemed in the present instance he disdained to avail himself. The intelligence that a warrant was about to be issued for his apprehension came like a thunder-clap on John Heron—the striking ingratitude of the monarch whose cause he had defended so gallantly, stung him to the quick, and neither persuasion nor entreaty could induce him to provide in any way for his security; the friendly notice afforded by Sir Reginald Bray was indeed prompted by the double policy of the king, who thought by this means to satisfy his new ally, while at the same time he saved his faithful servitor.

The Borderer's displeasure continued unappeased even when it was intimated to him that the warning to seek safety in flight had been sent to him by the royal command.

“Let the shame of my capture rest on those who planned it,” said the Borderer,

sternly,; “it is a small penance for an unthankful deed; I will do nought to change the issue.”

When Robin Starhed, whose attachment to his leader was the only redeeming trait of his otherwise callous character, found that his passionate remonstrances produced no effect, he called to mind the spell that the beauty of the armourer's orphan daughter had been wont to exercise on the untutored heart of the Border Chief; and, as a last hope, Rob had recourse to Viola Hatherton.

Even after the warrant was duly made out and delivered, some hours must probably elapse ere Sir Andrew Ker would succeed in tracking out his foe.

John Heron sat in his chamber, looking on the lead-coloured waters below, which, thick with impurity, refused to mirror back the gay sun-beams that flickered on their surface; he was fully armed, prepared for whatever might impend, and doggedly re-

solute to resist to the death any attempt of Sir Andrew Ker upon his liberty.

It would be impossible to depict a feeling of mortification more profound than that which agitated his spirit, when he reflected on the thankless manner in which his fidelity had been rewarded. His gloomy meditations were interrupted by the sound of a light step on the creaking stair, he recognized the footfall of Robin Starhed, and presently the door was opened by the young Border-rider; but he crossed not the threshold, and a slight muffled figure glided quickly past him.

The Chief felt the heart leap in his bosom with uncontrollable emotion, at the sight of that hooded form, which the eye of love failed not to recognize, and when the maiden flung aside her mantle and veil, and revealed the beloved features of Viola Hatherton, he could scarcely repress an exclamation of delighted astonishment. Recovering rapidly from his state of marvel,

the cause to which he ascribed her presence was quickly shown by the first sentence that burst from him,

“Fair mistress, how can I serve you?”

“Noble Heron,” answered Viola, “I owe you too much already; it is the service you rendered me aforetime that has brought you to this present peril; and hither have I now come to conjure you to avoid its fatal consequences, to beseech you to save yourself.”

The brow of the Chief grew dark and stern; Viola had never seen him wear such a look before, and she shrunk timidly from his side.

“My course is taken,” said he. “Let the ungrateful King despatch the warrant, and send forth his myrmidons of the law to seize me, I shall not flee, and will surrender myself peaceably, as I have never disobeyed the mandate of my liege; but if he deliver me into the hands of the Scots, by the Heaven above us! let them look to

it, for they take not my body while a breath of life is in it."

"Have I not heard," urged the maiden, "that it was the King himself who gave intimation of the order for your apprehension that had been wrung from him by the importunity of the Scottish Monarch; does not this prove how anxious is his wish to spare your life?"

"It proves, at least, that the sovereign deals out to me a meed he knows I have not earned. Had the sentence been passed and executed as an act of retribution for my offence, I had been the last to dispute its justice; but was it king-like to give to the outlaw a royal commission to bear arms, and then, when he had hazarded all in defence of the crown, to deliver him bound to the vengeance of his enemies? Can you marvel that my wild Border blood chafes at the outrage?"

"Wherefore," asked Viola, "made you not your own conditions ere you drew the sword at Henry's bidding?"

“Nay!” replied the Chief, proudly, “I put not my blood to traffic; neither could I deny to serve my King in his necessity until my hire was paid. Another time I might show more wisdom. But now, sweet mistress Viola, I pray you, linger not here, for in truth this is a scene scarce fitted for your gentle presence.”

“At what hour might your pursuers be expected?” demanded the maiden anxiously.

“If the Scots are on the right scent, I trow that ere nightfall some of them will have to rue the meeting, and the King will have lost a faithful servant.”

As he spoke, he glanced complacently at the variety of weapons that lay scattered about the apartment in every possible direction.

“But your life must fall the sacrifice,” murmured Viola wringing her hands, while the tears overbrimmed her eloquent eyes.

“Kind maiden,” said the Borderer in a softened tone, “your errand is fruitless, but I thank you not the less for your pity.

That you have felt interest in my fate is some consolation, whatever may betide.'

"Could I do otherwise for one who has so well-founded a right to my regard, and whose generous protection of myself has cost so dear?"

"Aye, it is ever thus," returned the Chief impatiently. "The old tale of former service is still on your lips. Would at least I could think you had forgotten it!"

"Rather wish that I could find the means to repay it," whispered Viola, and her soft eye sank, and the colour deepened on her cheek.

The Borderer surveyed intently the young blushing countenance beside him, and then struggling with his feelings, he averted his head, strode to the window, and flung himself into a seat.

"May I not hope to prevail?" pleaded Viola once more. "Shall this stubborn pride lose so noble and precious a life?"

"I leave none behind to bewail my loss—I have no ties to forbid the sacrifice."



“Yet if you could believe there was one to whom your safety was dear, would you relent?”

“Perchance—I know not—Nay! if such fortune were mine, I should be compelled to yield, for I could not rend the heart that loved me.”

“Will you not yield now for my sake?” faltered the maiden, as she placed gently her soft, white hand in his gigantic palm.

“I can endure this no longer. Viola, you know not what you do—tempt me no more, I beseech you, for I would rather fling myself into the waters below than give you displeasure. Leave me now—this instant—while I have strength to say farewell, and peace be with you.”

With sudden determination he drew his hand from the maiden's gentle grasp, and turned resolutely away. Dejectedly Viola withdrew a few paces—at that moment the happiness of both hung in the balance—a hair would turn the scale.

“Dear Mistress Viola,” continued the

Borderer, "be not angered at my ungentle speech, you cannot guess the feeling that prompts it. Go then, I pray you, but quit me not in displeasure—say yet one kindly word in adieu."

"I cannot, will not leave you thus," cried the maiden, springing towards him.

She forcibly dragged away the reluctant hand that shaded his features from view; slowly he raised his eyes to hers, and the expression of his working countenance changed as if by magic. Her arm rested lightly on his shoulder, and the fair, young face that bent over him was flushed with emotion—he clasped her slender waist, and drew towards him her unresisting form, softly he pressed his lips upon her burning brow, the caress was not rejected; his arm encircled her more closely, her head drooped lower, and sank upon his beating breast.

"May I, dare I hope that you will be mine?" whispered the Borderer, "yet remember, I accept nought from gratitude."

The exact answer to this inquiry we

must leave to the reader's imagination, suffice it to say that it contented the true-hearted wooer.

A mutual promise was exchanged to the effect that the Borderer should provide for his safety by an immediate return to the Borders; while Viola Hatherton was shortly to rejoin him there, to become the partner of his future fate.

Thus did the Border-Chief win his bride.

One hour afterwards a light boat skimmed the bosom of the Thames, bearing John Heron and his two faithful followers afar from the pursuit of their enemies.

\* \* \* \*

In the record of events of more importance, we must not pass over, in silence, the solemn bestowal of the honour of knighthood conferred on the person of the worthy mayor of Exeter, by the hand of his sovereign, accompanied by many royal encomiums on the

valorous conduct of his fellow townsmen; on the day of the ceremonial, a Latin memorial, full of dutiful congratulation, and a purse, lined with gold coin, were presented by the citizens of Exeter to their Liege.

Through the intercession of his powerful connections, Maurice Vipont was released from imprisonment; and the confession of Perkin Warbeck having swept from his mind the delusion which had brought him so nigh the scaffold, he tendered his vows of allegiance to Henry—his pardon was duly made out—and, in the course of time, his estates were restored—henceforth, he lived as a loyal subject—rose to distinction, and served his country in peace and war, with the fidelity natural to his manly and independent character.

We have taken some trouble to discover the fate of the individual who, in our narrative, has borne the name of Dalton; we cannot, however, throw much light on the subject—in a village in one of the midland counties, in an obscure burial-ground, was

a simple tomb-stone inscribed with the name of Edith—over this unpretending grave, there daily hovered a man, hollow-eyed, emaciated, and of ghastly paleness of complexion, answering, in most respects, to the appearance of Dalton; it was evident, from his singular conduct, that his intellect was unsettled—when, at length, he drooped and died, he desired that his remains should be deposited near those of Edith. It is probable that the unknown stranger was the Avenger.

\* \* \* \* \*

Several months after the conclusion of the peace with Scotland, the disturbances in the Border land continued unabated. Sir William Heron, the head of that ancient house, and Warden of the Marches at the period of the murder of Sir Robert Ker, had been sent by his sovereign to the Court of Edinburgh, there to remain during the King of Scotland's pleasure, as a

prisoner on parole, however, with a tacit understanding that he was to be treated with the most honourable distinction—this concession had, at last, been accorded by Henry to appease the injured pride of James Stuart.

On the very edge of the county of Cumberland; and, in the least populous district, there stretched a wood of considerable extent, surrounded by clumps of embowering trees—which, in summer prime, afforded a grateful shade, a woodman's hut had been erected.

Its owner had long deserted it; but, although of simple construction, it was strongly built, and moss-grown, and weather-stained as it was, it showed no other marks of Time's defacing fingers.

On a bleak December night, this shelter was entered by the youthful Border-rider, Robin Starhed, who sought a refuge from the inclemency of the weather without. Belated and on foot, the youth determined to find repose there, and await the morning

light, before he proceeded on his onward path.

Quickly kindling a fire, Rob tried with instinctive caution, to fasten the door of the hut, but the bar had been long since removed, and he was obliged to abandon the attempt.

Having unthawed his frozen limbs, he flung himself on the ground, and shortly sank into a heavy sleep. So profound was the slumber, that the gentle opening of the cabin door moved him not—neither did he stir when two savage-looking individuals strode into the hut, while a third, evidently of superior rank, occupied the gangway. The men bent over the sleeper.

“Wake him, Tait,” exclaimed the stern voice of Sir Andrew Ker, “that he may know for what offence he dies.”

A rough shake aroused the youth to consciousness, and he opened his bewildered eyes to find himself helpless in the power of his enemies.

The young Border-rider glanced at the

stern countenance of Sir Andrew Ker, and instantly resigned himself to his fate. There was no useless struggle for life—no whining petition for mercy; Sir Andrew Ker momentarily turned away while the knives of his myrmidons dealt the work of death on the body of his unresisting victim—fearless and unrepentant, Robin Starhed died as he had lived.

The fate of Dick Lilburn was not more to be envied than that of his comrade—shortly afterwards he was seized by the Scots, and carried off to the fortress of Fastcastle, where he remained in imprisonment until his death.

But still the personal prowess of the Bastard Heron, and the fidelity of his warlike band, enabled him to elude and defy the vengeance of his foes.

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Several years had glided by, Henry Tudor was gathered to his fathers, and the eighth



Henry reigned in his stead. We have not sufficient space ; neither is it necessary, to chronicle the various causes of complaint and aggravation that roused to deadly animosity the fiery spirits of the Scottish and English Monarchs, and war was again proclaimed.

Contrary to the counsel of the wisest and most experienced of his advisers, James Stuart resolved to take the field in person, and he possessed sufficient influence among his vassals and barons to assemble an army led by the very flower of his nobility.

In vain did Douglas remonstrate against the impolicy of the measure, his arguments were rejected, and he retired in disgust. Lord Lindsay also incurred his sovereign's displeasure by comparing the hazard of the Scots to that of the gamester, who risked his precious rose-noble against a crooked halfpenny—for in the coming encounter the life of the King of Scotland would be risked, while the general of their opponents was by no means his equivalent in dignity

and rank. Lord Lindsay recommended, therefore, that the Monarch should withdraw; but James, highly incensed, broke in on the council, declared his resolve to fight the English, if all the rest deserted him, and vowed that he would hang Lord Lindsay before his own gate on his return to Edinburgh.

The Earl of Surrey commanded the English forces, which mustered twenty-six thousand strong, and the night before the battle of Flodden Field, their head quarters were pitched at Barmoor wood. The Scots were posted on the ridge of Flodden, an eminence slightly separated from the hills of Cheviot. A marsh defended the position of James on one side, and in his front, and between the Scot and English armies rolled the river Till. Intrenched in this impregnable situation, he resisted every attempt to lure him from it. Anxious as was the English general to bring on an action, he could not venture to assault an enemy so advantageously posted, and, therefore,

formed the bold project of crossing the Till, which he had heard was fordable in some places, and then marching his forces to the rear of King James's encampment, all communication between the latter and his own kingdom would be effectually intercepted.

This manœuvre, he judged, might induce the Scots to descend from the heights, and give battle. A sure guide, well acquainted with the country, was, however, indispensable for the execution of his plan ; several emissaries were sent forth to seek one ; but as his fidelity must be implicitly relied on, the task was difficult.

The Earl of Surrey himself, attended by his sons, and several other nobles, had ridden forth to reconnoitre, when an armed horseman approached at full gallop ; he checked his horse as soon as he recognized the Earl, dismounted, and knelt down before the English general—he then offered to guide the army through the different passes, provided he might be admitted into the

ranks of the English in the battle, and receive in return the promise of the royal pardon for a deed in which he had formerly participated.

“I pledge you my word,” answered the Earl, “that your services as a guide shall earn his Grace’s clemency, provided that the offence you speak of, was not treason to the King of England, nor some outrage committed against a lady; such are acts which my knighthood forbids me to overlook.”

“Neither of these have I done,” returned the stranger; “I was but present at the death of a Scotsman who ruled our Borders too strictly, and often oppressed the English.”

“By my troth!” replied the Earl, laughing, “you have nought to fear on that account now—that crime will be easily pardoned—so make yourself known without further parley, sir stranger.”

The petitioner immediately lowered the vizor of his helmet, and revealed to view

the well-known features of the Bastard Heron.

Right heartily did the Earl of Surrey greet the Chief, for no man was better acquainted with every rood of ground on either side the Cheviot. Under his able guidance, the English forded the Till, and by a flank movement, stationed themselves so as to cut off the Scottish King from his dominions.

The Earl then began to harry and waste the adjacent district. James could not long endure this spectacle, and at length descending from the heights, gave the signal of battle.

It is foreign to our intention to describe the conflict with any minuteness.

While the body of Highlanders were put to the rout by Sir Edward Stanley, and the men of Chester—while the second division commanded by the Lord High Admiral of England, bore down and defeated the opposing squadrons, led by Montrose and Crawford, who were both slain—the right

wing of the English was completely overpowered and thrown into disorder by the united attack of the Earl of Huntly and Lord Home; it was at this moment that the Bastard Heron, at the head of his gallant band, joined the contest; when the leader of the division, Sir Edmund Howard, was beaten down, it was the Border Chief who rescued him, regained his standard, and checked and turned the fortune of the day in that quarter.

The Scottish reserve, under the Monarch's own eye, fought with the most determined courage; and it was not until night had closed in, and James had fallen, surrounded by his loyal peers, that the remnant of the Scottish army drew off from the bloody field; and thus was this great victory achieved, in which the victors lost five thousand men, and the Scots twice that number, the list of their slain comprising many of their choicest nobles and gentlemen.

It was the day after the battle of Flodden; and from the turrets of John Heron's

mountain fortress the wife of the Borderer maintained her anxious watch ; rumour had brought to her varied accounts of the bloody and well-contested field, and she awaited her husband's return in unspeakable solicitude. Beside her peeped the full, rosy countenance of Janet Hurst. Time had dwelt kindly with Viola's form and face, and she was still incomparably fair.

As her earnest gaze was directed towards the north, shouts were suddenly heard in the distance, and then a long train of Border Riders dashed through the winding valley below, at the top of their speed. The devoted watchers hurriedly descended to the drawbridge.

John Heron rode in front of the band ; he caught sight of Viola's fluttering robe, and dismounting from his horse, sprang to meet her.

He had not escaped without some slight wounds, but his triumphant glance spoke of joy and victory. He had fought for his country, and her annals must henceforth

record his name as one of her heroic defenders.

The royal pardon had been obtained ; and an outlaw no longer, Viola was clasped to the heart of the Border Chief. \*

THE END.



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