WILLIAM AINSWORTH

THE MANCHESTER REBELS OF THE FATAL '45

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Ainsworth W.

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Содержание

William Harrison Ainsworth
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With faltering voice, she weeping said,
"O, Dawson, monarch of my heart!
Think not thy death shall end our loves,
For thou and I will never part!"

SHENSTONE.

PREFACE

All my early life being spent in Manchester, where I was born, bred, and schooled, I am naturally familiar with the scenes I have attempted to depict in this Tale.

Little of the old town, however, is now left. The lover of antiquity – if any such should visit Manchester – will search in vain for those picturesque black and white timber habitations, with pointed gables and latticed windows, that were common enough sixty years ago. Entire streets, embellished by such houses, have been swept away in the course of modern improvement. But I recollect them well. No great effort of imagination was therefore needed to reconstruct the old town as it existed in the middle of the last century; but I was saved from the possibility of error by an excellent plan, almost of the precise date, designed by John A. Berry, to which I made constant reference during my task. Views are given in this plan of the principal houses then recently erected, and as all these houses were occupied by Prince Charles and the Highland Chiefs during their stay in Manchester, I could conduct the Rebel leaders to their quarters without difficulty. One of the houses, situated in Deansgate, belonged to my mother's uncle, Mr. Touchet. This is gone, as is Mr. Dickenson's fine house in Market Street Lane, where the Prince was lodged. Indeed, there is scarcely a house left in the town that has the slightest historical association belonging to it.

When I was a boy, some elderly personages with whom I was acquainted were kind enough to describe to me events connected with Prince Charles's visit to Manchester, and the stories I then heard made a lasting impression upon me. The Jacobite feeling must have been still strong among my old friends, since they expressed much sympathy with the principal personages mentioned in this Tale – for the gallant Colonel Townley, Doctor Deacon and his unfortunate sons, Jemmy Dawson, whose hapless fate has been so tenderly sung by Shenstone, and, above all, for poor Tom Syddall. The latter, I know not why, unless it be that his head was affixed on the old Exchange, has always been a sort of hero in Manchester.

The historical materials of the story are derived from the Chevalier de Johnstone's *Memoirs of the Rebellion*, and Dr. Hibbert Ware's excellent account of Prince Charles's sojourn in the town, appended to the *History of the Manchester Foundations*. But to neither of these authorities do I owe half so much as to Beppy Byrom's delightful Journal, so fortunately discovered among her father's papers at Kersal Cell, and given by Dr. Parkinson in the *Remains of John Byrom*, published some twenty years ago, by the Chetham Society. Apart from the vivid picture it affords of the state of Manchester at the period, of the consternation into which the inhabitants were thrown by the presence of the Rebel Army, and the striking description given in it of the young Chevalier and his staff, the Journal is exceedingly interesting, and it is impossible to read it without feeling as if one were listening to the pleasant chat of the fair writer. Pretty Beppy is before us, as sprightly and as loveable as she was in life. In no diary that I have read is the character of the writer more completely revealed than in this.

Of Beppy, the bewitching, and her admirable father, I have endeavoured to give some faint idea in these pages.

While speaking of the Chetham Society, which has brought out so many important publications, edited with singular ability by the learned President Mr. James Crossley, Dr. Hibbert Ware, Mr. William Beamont, Canon Raines, and others, I desire to express the great satisfaction I feel at learning that a very large collection of the letters of Humphrey Chetham, and some of his friends and contemporaries, have been placed, for publication, in the hands – and in no better hands could they have been placed – of Canon Raines.

Unquestionably, this will be the crowning work of the Chetham Society, and at last, from the able editor of *The Journal of Nicholas Assbeton, of Downham*, we shall no doubt receive an adequate biography of the great Lancashire worthy.

To return to my tale. I must not omit to mention that the tragic incident I have connected with Rawcliffe Hall really occurred – though at a much more remote date than is here assigned to it – at Bewsey House, an old moated mansion, near Warrington, still, I believe, in existence.

At one circumstance I must needs rejoice. Since the publication of this Tale, and incited, I am told, by its perusal, Mr. Samuel Brierley, of Rochdale, has put together a very interesting collection of anecdotes relating to the visit of Lochiel, with a small portion of the Highland Army, to Rochdale, in 1745.[1]

These stories, I understand, were narrated to Mr. Brierley by his great grandmother, who died in 1806, aged ninety-three. That they were well worth preserving will be apparent from some extracts which I propose to make from the little work.

Here is a well-told incident which might be entitled "Lochiel and the Lancashire Lad."

"On the 25th November, 1745, the rebel army, supposed to be 5,000 or 6,000 strong, and composed of cavalry, infantry, and artillery, arrived at Lancaster, under the personal command of Prince Charles, who gave instructions that the greater portion of this force should, on its arrival at Preston, proceed to Manchester by way of Wigan, and the smaller part through Blackburn and Rochdale, and thus concentrate the main body at Manchester. The latter portion was seen marching over Ashworth Moor, under the command of Lochiel of Glengarry, where they halted to have refreshment, which consisted of oatmeal steeped in water. Most of the country people fled on their approach, but there was one who stood looking on, and that was James Lomax, of Woolstenholme; he was asked to join the army but feigned not to understand the question, but said he would jump agen the measter (pointing to Glengarry) o'er that big stone fence, for a gallon of ale. The bet was accepted, and Lomax had the first jump. Being a lithe and supple fellow, he cleared it at a bound, ran down the back of the fence wall, and was no more seen. The officers and men laughed at this incident; and Lochiel, on turning round, perceived a streak of smoke rising from the top of Knowle Hill. This and Lomax disappearing so suddenly, caused great perplexity to those in command; and suspecting that there might be a surprise before they got to the town, the troops were ordered to fall in and make ready, and the advanced scouts to keep a watchful eye both right and left of the road."

Another very amusing story relates to a Highlander who was billeted at the Union Hotel.

"One of the privates, a kilted man, went into the kitchen and spoke to Betty the cook, told her she was a bonnie lassie, and said, 'Wull ye let me put a piece of bread in the drippin?' pointing to the beef on the spit; she replied, 'Naw, haw winnut,' but at the same time he threw a piece of black bannock into the dripping pan, and cook said in a loud voice, 'Hom noan gooin to hav ony o thaw impidunce,' at the same time throwing out the bread with her basting spoon, into the ashes. This so exasperated the Scot that he placed his hand on his sword, but Betty, as quick as thought, got the basting spoon full of hot dripping, and threw it at him, covering his face, hands, and bare knees with it, thereby causing him to scream with the burning pain; at the same moment Mally Garlick, who had been paring potatoes, said, 'Do go away, for this dog is breakin out of his cage,' – she had privately opened the door, and the dog rushed at the Scot, and chased him out of the house, tore a large piece out of the back part of his kilt, which he had to get repaired before he could decently attend another parade. But the scalds or burns inflicted upon him proved more serious than was anticipated, and he was placed under the medical skill of Doctor Moult. The doctor recommended a short rest from his laborious duties; this rest, with the unremitting attentions bestowed upon him by the relenting cook, led to mutual affection, and when he recovered he never rejoined the invading force, but married her who had caused his injuries, settled in the town, became a thriving tradesman, and has descendants here who are highly respectable and wealthy."

Our last extract describes the interview of Valentine Holt, a young volunteer in the Stuart cause, with Prince Charles.

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[1] "Rochdale in 1745 and 1746." By an Old Inhabitant. Rochdale, John Turner, Drake Street, 1874.

"After a little conversation, Lochiel wrote him a note and told him to go to Manchester forthwith, and present it at the house of Mr. Dickenson, at the top of Market Street Lane, which is now called the Palace Inn, and wait for an answer – the interview lasted only a few minutes. Clegg and Holt then went into the churchyard, and the latter looked upon his native town and the hills surrounding, and said with a sigh, 'I feel a presentiment that I shall never see my native town again. Ah, my dear mother, do forgive the many faults of an erring son. I confess I have caused thee many pangs of sorrow, and I leave the town with an idea that if I get weaned from my wild companions, I may become a wiser and a better man.' These and other sorrowful thoughts came crowding upon his mind, and Clegg observing that he was in deep thought, proposed to have a parting glass in the neighbouring tavern; after which he departed for Manchester, along what are now called the back lanes of Castleton, as at this time there was no road by Pinfold. He arrived at Manchester late in the evening, and was stirring early on the morrow; being at the house aforementioned at 10 a.m., he presented the letter given to him by Lochiel (which was directed in such a way that Holt was unable to imagine who it was for) to the orderly standing at the door; the latter appeared astonished, looking at Holt with a scrutinising eye, and told him he must wait at the door until he delivered the letter. He returned in a few minutes and ushered Holt into a room in which was seated a young man, tall, well-built, with a handsome face, auburn hair, and good eyes; the latter speaking to Holt, said, 'You are the young man from Rochdale (this was no less a person than the Prince himself) who has offered to join our cause?' Holt replied 'I am.' 'I hear you use the rifle with unerring aim.' The Prince taking up a loaded rifle that was in the corner, said, 'You see that jackdaw on the ridge of the house opposite, try to bring it down!' Holt fired, and it rolled down the roof. 'Ah! very good,' exclaimed the Prince, and calling in the orderly, said, 'Tell Dickson that he must enrol this man as Sergeant in the Manchester contingent.'"

BOOK I.
ATHERTON LEGH

CHAPTER I.
HOW THE INFANT HEIR WAS STOLEN

About midnight, in the autumn of 1724, two persons cautiously approached an old moated mansion, situated in Cheshire, though close to the borders of Lancashire. The night being almost pitch-dark, very little of the ancient fabric could be distinguished; but the irregular outline of its numerous gables showed that it was of considerable size. It was, in fact, a large picturesque hall, built in the early days of Elizabeth, and was completely surrounded by an unusually broad, deep moat. The moat was crossed by a drawbridge, but this being now raised, access to the mansion could only be obtained by rousing the porter, who slept over the gateway. All the inmates of the house seemed buried in repose. Not a sound was heard. No mastiff barked to give the alarm.

A melancholy air had the old hall, even when viewed by daylight. Of late years it had been much neglected, and portions were allowed to go to decay. Several rooms were shut up. Its owner, who died rather more than a year before the date of our story, preferred a town residence, and rarely inhabited the hall. Extravagant, and fond of play, he had cut down the fine timber that ornamented his park to pay his debts. Death, however, put an end to his career before he had quite run through his fortune. He left behind him a wife and an infant son – the latter being heir to the property. As there would be a long minority, the estates, by prudent management, might be completely retrieved. On the demise of her husband, the widow quitted her town house, and took up her abode with her child at the old hall. With a greatly reduced establishment, she lived in perfect seclusion. As she was young, very beautiful, and much admired, people wondered that she could thus tear herself from the world. But her resolution remained unchanged. Her affections seemed centred in her infant son. She had few visitors, declined all invitations, and rarely strayed beyond the limits of the park.

She had got it into her head that her child would be taken from her, and would not, therefore, let him out of her sight. The infant was as carefully watched as if he had been heir to a dukedom; and at night, for fear of a surprise, the drawbridge was always raised. In the event of the young heir dying under age, the estates passed to the brother of her late husband, and of him she entertained dark suspicions that did not seem altogether unwarranted.

Having offered this brief explanation, we shall return to the mysterious pair whom we left making their way to the hall. As their design was to enter the house secretly, they did not go near the drawbridge, being provided with other means of crossing the moat. One of them carried a coracle – a light boat formed of a wicker framework covered with leather.

Though they had now reached the margin of the moat, which was fringed with reeds and bulrushes, they did not put their plan into immediate execution, but marched on in silence, till a light was observed glimmering from one of the windows. A taper had been thus placed to guide them, proving that they had a confederate in the house.

On perceiving this light, which streamed from the partly-opened casement on the dusky water beneath it, the foremost of the twain immediately halted. He was a tall man wrapped in a long black cloak, with a broad-leaved hat pulled over his brows, and was well-armed.

As soon as the coracle was launched, he stepped into it, and was followed by his attendant, who pushed the frail bark noiselessly across the moat.

On reaching the opposite side, the chief personage sprang ashore, leaving his follower in the boat, and made his way to a postern, which he found open, as he expected. Before entering the house, he put on a mask.

The postern communicated with a back staircase, up which the midnight visitor quickly mounted, making as little noise as possible. The staircase conducted him to a gallery, and he had not advanced far when a door was softly opened, and a young woman, who had hastily slipped on a dressing-gown, came forth, bearing a light. It was the nurse. She almost recoiled with terror on beholding the masked figure standing before her.

"What's the matter with you, Bertha? Don't you know me?" asked the mysterious personage in a low voice.

"Yes, I know you now, sir," she rejoined in the same tone. "But you look like – I won't say what."

"A truce to this folly. Where is the child?"

"In his mother's bed. I offered to take him, but she would not part with him to-night."

"She will be obliged to part with him. I must have him."

"Oh, sir! I beseech you to abandon this wicked design. I am certain it will bring destruction upon all concerned in it. Do not rob her of her child."

"These misgivings are idle, Bertha. Bring me the child without more ado, or I will snatch it from its mother's arms."

"I cannot do it. The poor soul will go distracted when she finds she has lost her darling."

"What means this sudden change, Bertha?" he said, surprised and angry. "You had no such commiseration for her when we last talked over the matter. You were willing enough to aid me then."

"You tempted me by your offer; but I now repent. I understand the enormity of the offence, and will not burden my soul with so much guilt."

"You have gone too far to retreat. Having made a bargain you must fulfil it."

"Swear to me that you will not injure the child, or I will not bring it to you."

"I have already told you I do not mean to harm it."

"But swear by all you hold sacred that you have no design upon the child's life. Do this, or I will give the alarm."

"Attempt to utter a cry and I will kill you," he said, sternly. "I have not come here to be thwarted in my purpose. Go in at once."

Terrified by the menacing tone in which the order was given, Bertha obeyed, and returned to the room from which she had issued. Perhaps she might have fastened the door if time had been allowed, but the man in the mask followed her too quickly.

It was an antechamber which she occupied as nurse. A door communicating with the inner apartment stood partly open, and in obedience to an imperious gesture from the terrible intruder, she passed through it.

She was now in a large antique bed-chamber, imperfectly lighted up by a lamp placed on a small table near the bed, in which lay one of the fairest creatures imaginable. The contour of the sleeper's countenance was exquisite, and her raven tresses, which had not been confined, flowed over her neck, contrasting strongly with its dazzling whiteness.

Close beside her, with its little head resting upon a rounded arm that might have served a sculptor as a model, slept her babe. A smile seemed to play upon the slumbering mother's lips, as if her dreams were pleasant.

The sight of this picture smote Bertha to the heart. Only a fiend, it seemed to her at that moment, could mar such happiness. Could she turn that smile to tears and misery? Could she requite the constant kindness shown her, and the trust placed in her, by the basest ingratitude and treachery? She could not do it. She would rather die. She would return to the terrible man who was waiting for her, and brave his fury.

But she found herself quite unequal to the effort, and while she remained in this state of irresolution he entered the room with his drawn sword in his hand.

He signed to her to go to the bed and take the child, but she did not obey. Half paralysed with terror, she could neither move nor utter a cry.

At once comprehending the state of the case, he determined to act alone, and stepping softly forward he extinguished the lamp that was burning on a small table beside the bed, and seizing the child enveloped it in his cloak.

The daring deed was so rapidly executed that the poor lady did not wake till she was robbed of her treasure. But becoming instantly aware that her child was gone, and hearing footsteps in the room, she raised herself, and called out in accents of alarm, "Is it you, Bertha?"

"Make no answer, but follow me quickly," whispered the terrible intruder to the nurse.

But she had now burst the spell that had hitherto bound her, and seizing him before he could reach the door held him fast.

Finding his departure effectually prevented, the remorseless villain unhesitatingly liberated himself by plunging his sword into Bertha's breast.

The wound was mortal. The unfortunate woman fell speechless, dying, just as her mistress, who had sprung from the couch, came up; while the assassin escaped with his prize.

The poor lady understood what had happened, but fright almost deprived her of her senses. She uttered scream after scream, but before any of the household came to her assistance all was silent.

When they ventured into the room a shocking spectacle greeted them. Their young mistress was lying in a state of insensibility by the side of the slaughtered nurse. The child could not be found.

How the perpetrator of this dark and daring deed entered the house remained a mystery. No one supposed that poor murdered Bertha, who had paid the penalty of her crime with life, had been his accomplice. On the contrary, it was believed that she had flown to her mistress's assistance, and had perished in the attempt to save the child.

How the murderer had crossed the moat was likewise a mystery, for the coracle was carried away when its purpose had been fulfilled. On examination, the postern-door was found to be locked and the key taken out. Nothing had been seen of the terrible visitor, the gloom of night shrouding his arrival and departure. Thus he remained wholly undiscovered.

When the poor lady recovered from the fainting fit into which she had fallen, her senses were gone. Nor did she long survive the dreadful shock she had sustained.

CHAPTER II.
MANCHESTER IN 1745

When Dr. Stukeley visited Manchester in 1724, he described the town, from personal observation, as "the largest, most rich, populous, and busy village in England." In twenty years from that date, it could no longer be called a village. Its population had doubled, and the number of houses had greatly increased. Many new streets had been completed, an Exchange built, and a fine new square laid out.

But though the town had thus grown in size and wealth, it had not yet lost its provincial air. The streets had a cheerful, bustling look, denoting that plenty of business was going on, but they were not crowded either with carts or people. The country was close at hand, and pleasant fields could be reached in a few minutes' walk from the market-place.

Seen from the ancient stone bridge spanning the Irwell, the town still presented a picturesque appearance. The view comprehended the old collegiate church (which wore a much more venerable air than it does now, inasmuch as it had not been renovated), the old houses on Hunt's Bank, Chetham Hospital crowning the red sandstone banks of the Irk, just beyond its junction with the larger river, the old water-mill, and the collection of black and white plaster habitations in the neighbourhood of the church.

This was the oldest part of the town, and its original features had not been destroyed. In all the narrow streets surrounding the collegiate church the houses bore the impress of antiquity, having served as dwelling-places for several generations. In Mill-gate, in Toad-lane, in Hanging Ditch, and Cateaton-street, scarcely a modern habitation could be descried. All the houses, with their carved gables, projecting upper stories, and bay-windows, dated back a couple of centuries. In Deansgate similar picturesque old structures predominated. Two new churches formed part of the picture – Trinity Church in Salford, and St. Ann's in the square we have already mentioned – and of course many other modern buildings were discernible, but from the point of view selected the general air of the place was ancient.

From this glance at Manchester in 1745, it will be seen that it formed an agreeable mixture of an old and new town. The rivers that washed its walls were clear, and abounded in fish. Above all, the atmosphere was pure and wholesome, unpolluted by the smoke of a thousand factory chimneys. In some respects, therefore, the old town was preferable to the mighty modern city.

The inhabitants are described by a writer of the period "as very industrious, always contriving or inventing something new to improve and set off their goods, and not much following the extravagance that prevails in other places, by which means many of them have acquired very handsome fortunes, and live thereupon in a plain, useful, and regular manner, after the custom of their forefathers."

Their manners, in fact, were somewhat primitive. The manufacturers kept early hours, and by ten o'clock at night the whole town might be said to be at rest. There were two political clubs, Whig and Tory, or Jacobite, the latter being by far the most numerous and important. The members met at their favourite taverns to drink punch, and toast King or Pretender, according to their predilections. Only four carriages were kept in the town, and these belonged to ladies. There were no lamps in the streets, lanterns being carried by all decent folks on dark nights.

In regard to the amusements of the place it may be mentioned that the annual horse-races, established at Kersal Moor in 1730, had latterly been discontinued, but they were soon afterwards revived. Under the patronage of Lady Bland – a person of great spirit – public assemblies were given at a ball-room in King-street – then, as now, the most fashionable street. A famous pack of hounds, of the old British breed, was kept near the town, and regularly hunted in the season. The leading merchants lived in a very unostentatious manner, but were exceedingly hospitable. Many of them were far more refined and much more highly educated than might have been expected; but this is

easily accounted for when we state that they belonged to good county families. It had been the custom for a long period with the Lancashire and Cheshire gentry, who could not otherwise provide for their younger sons, to bring them up to mercantile pursuits, and with that object they apprenticed them to the Manchester merchants. Thenceforward a marked improvement took place in the manners and habits of the class.

CHAPTER III.
INTRODUCES DR. DEACON, DR. BYROM, AND COLONEL TOWNLEY

Descended from Cavaliers, it was certain that the Manchester merchants would embrace the political opinions of their fathers, and support the hereditary claims of the House of Stuart. They did so enthusiastically. All were staunch Jacobites, and more or less concerned in a plot which had long been forming for the restoration of James the Third to the throne. Constant meetings were held at a small inn at Didsbury, near the ferry, where the conspirators drank "The King over the Water." A secret correspondence was kept up with the exiled court, and assurances were given to the Chevalier de St. George that the whole population of the town would rise in his favour whenever the expected invasion took place.

The great spread of Jacobite opinions throughout the town could be traced to two or three influential individuals. Chief among these was Dr. Deacon – a very remarkable man, whose zeal and earnestness were calculated to extend his opinions, and make converts of those opposed to him. Dr. Deacon had been concerned in the former rebellion, and in his quality of a Nonjuring priest had assisted at the dying moments of the Reverend William Paul and Justice Hall, who were executed in 1716. The declaration delivered by them to the sheriff was written by Dr. Deacon, and produced an immense effect from its force and eloquence. Having incurred the suspicion of the Government, Dr. Deacon deemed it expedient to change his profession. Repairing to Manchester, he began to practise as a physician, and with considerable success. But this did not prevent him from carrying on his spiritual labours. He founded a Nonjuring church, of which he was regarded as the bishop. His fervour and enthusiasm gained him many disciples, and he unquestionably produced an effect upon the clergy of the collegiate church, all of whom, except the warden, Dr. Peploe, adopted his opinions, and inculcated Jacobitism from the pulpit. Though a visionary and mystic, Dr. Deacon was a man of great erudition, and a profound theologian. He had three sons, all of whom shared his political and religious opinions.

Another person quite as zealous as Dr. Deacon in promoting the cause of the Pretender, though he observed much greater caution in his proceedings, was Dr. John Byrom, whose name is still held in the greatest respect in Manchester. A native of the town, and well connected, Dr. Byrom occupied an excellent social position. He was a man of great versatility of talent – a wit, a scholar, a linguist, and a charming poet. But his witty sayings were playful, and, though smart, entirely divested of ill-nature. Clever at most things, he invented a new system of short-hand, which he taught, so long as it was necessary for him to improve his income; but on the death of his elder brother he succeeded to the family property, Kersal Cell, situated in the neighbourhood of the town. His diary and correspondence, published by the Chetham Society, give a complete insight into his truly amiable character, and not only display him in the most pleasing colours, but place him in the first rank as a letter-writer. Dr. Byrom contributed two papers to the *Spectator*, and wrote many delightful songs and humorous poems, but he will be best remembered by his admirable letters. He was fortunate in his wife, and equally fortunate in his children – a son and daughter – and it is to these members of his family, to whom he was tenderly attached, that most of his letters are addressed.

At the time of our story, Dr. Byrom was between fifty and sixty – a striking-looking person, tall, thin, erect. Without being handsome, his features were pleasing and benevolent in expression. His manner was singularly courteous, and his temper so even that it could scarcely be ruffled.

A third person, who made his appearance in Manchester immediately after the outbreak of the rebellion in Scotland, was Colonel Francis Townley. He belonged to an old Lancashire Roman

Catholic family, the head of which, Richard Townley, of Townley Hall, took part in the rebellion of 1715, and was tried before Judge Powis, but acquitted.

Born at his father's house near Wigan, Frank Townley, at the period of our story, was just thirty-eight. Some seventeen years previously he went over to France, and being remarkably handsome, made a figure at the court of Versailles. Befriended by the Duke of Berwick, he received a commission from Louis the Fifteenth, served at the siege of Philipsburg, and was close beside the duke when the latter was killed by a cannon-shot. Subsequently he served under Marshal de Broglie in the campaign against Austria, and was present at several sieges and actions, in all of which he displayed great spirit and intrepidity, and acquired a very brilliant military reputation.

Frank Townley continued in the French service for fifteen years, and then returned to England, living for some little time in retirement. When the young Chevalier landed in Scotland, and an invasion was meditated by France, Louis sent him a colonel's commission to enable him to raise forces for the prince. With this design he came to Manchester, thinking he should have no difficulty in raising a regiment, but he was not so successful as he anticipated.

A simultaneous rising of the Jacobites in the northern counties and in some of the larger towns had been confidently looked for by the partisans of the House of Stuart, but as this did not take place, the excitement in the prince's behalf, which had been roused in Manchester, began quickly to subside. The intelligence that the victor of Preston Pans was marching southward at the head of an army of five thousand Highlanders, though it raised the hopes of some of the bolder spirits, carried consternation among the bulk of the towns-people – not only among those who were loyal, but among the disaffected. The Jacobites wished well to the Pretender, but declined to fight for him. Numbers left the town, and the shopkeepers began to remove their goods and valuables. The Presbyterians were especially alarmed, and sent away their wives and families.

News that the prince had reached Carlisle increased the excitement. The militia was quartered in the town for its defence; but the men were disbanded before the insurgent army appeared. The bridge at Warrington was destroyed to impede the march of the rebels; other bridges were blown up; and Salford Bridge was threatened, but escaped destruction.

In the midst of the general alarm and confusion now prevailing in the place, Colonel Townley found it impossible to enrol a sufficient number of men to form a regiment. All those who had been lavish in promises made excuses, or got out of the way.

By this time Carlisle had surrendered, and the prince, whose army moved in two divisions, was marching southward. Greatly disappointed by his ill success, Colonel Townley resolved to set out and meet him at Lancaster, in order to prepare him for his probable reception at Manchester.

On the night before his departure on this errand, the colonel had a conference with Dr. Deacon and Dr. Byrom at the Bull's Head in the market-place – a tavern frequented mainly by the High Church Tories and Jacobites; just as the Angel Inn in Market Street Lane was resorted to by Whigs and Presbyterians.

The party met in a private room at the back of the house. A cheerful fire blazed on the hearth – it must be borne in mind that it was then in November – and a flask of claret stood on the table; but the serious looks of the three gentlemen betokened that they had not met merely for convivial purposes.

With the tall, thin figure, benevolent countenance, and courteous manner of Dr. Byrom, we have endeavoured to familiarise the reader. The doctor was attired in a murrey-coloured coat with long skirts, and wore a full-bottomed tie-wig, and a laced cravat, but had laid aside his three-cornered hat.

Dr. Deacon was somewhat advanced in years, but seemed full of vigour, both of mind and body. He had a highly intellectual physiognomy, and a look about the eyes that bespoke him an enthusiast and a visionary. He was dressed in black, but his costume was that of a physician, not a divine. Still, the Nonjuring priest could not be wholly disguised.

Colonel Townley had a very fine presence. His figure was tall, well-proportioned, and commanding. He might easily have been taken for a French officer; nor was this to be wondered at, considering his fifteen years' service in France. A grey cloth riding-dress faced with purple displayed his lofty figure to advantage. An aile-de-pigeon wig, surmounted by a small cocked hat edged with silver lace and jack-boots, completed his costume.

"Now, gentlemen," said the colonel, drawing his chair closer to them, "before I join the prince at Lancaster, I desire to have your candid opinion as to the chance of a rising in his favour in this town. Latterly I have met with nothing but disappointment. The conduct of your leading merchants fills me with rage and disgust, and how they can reconcile it with the pledges they have given his royal highness of support, I cannot conceive. Still, I hope they will act up to their professions, and maintain the honourable character they have hitherto borne. How say you, gentlemen? Can the prince calculate on a general declaration in his favour? You shake your heads. At least he may count on a thousand recruits? Five hundred? Surely five hundred Manchester men will join his standard?"

"A few weeks ago I firmly believed half the town would rise," replied Dr. Deacon. "But now I know not what to say. I will not delude the prince with any more false promises."

"'Twill be an eternal disgrace to Manchester if its inhabitants desert him at this critical juncture," cried the colonel, warmly. "Is this to be the miserable conclusion of all your plots and secret meetings? You have invited him, and now that he has complied with the invitation, and is coming hither with an army, you get out of the way, and leave him to his own resources. 'Tis infamous!"

"I still hope my fellow-townsmen may redeem their character for loyalty," said Dr. Deacon. "Perchance, when his royal highness appears, he may recall them to their duty."

"I doubt it," observed the colonel.

"I will not attempt to defend the conduct of the Manchester Jacobites," observed Dr. Byrom; "but they are not quite so culpable as they appear. They ought not to have invited the prince, unless they were resolved to support him at all hazards. But they have become alarmed, and shrink from the consequences of their own rashness. They wish him every success in his daring enterprise, but will not risk their lives and fortunes for him, as their fathers did in the ill-starred insurrection of 1715."

"In a word, they consider the prince's cause hopeless," said the colonel.

"That is so," replied Dr. Byrom. "You will do well to dissuade his royal highness from advancing beyond Preston, unless he is certain of receiving large reinforcements from France."

"Dissuade him from advancing! I will never give him such dastardly counsel. Were I indiscreet enough to do so, he would reject it. His royal highness is marching on London."

"So I conclude. But I fear the Duke of Cumberland will never allow him to get there."

"Bah! He will beat the Duke as he beat Johnnie Cope at Preston Pans. But he need not hazard a battle. He can easily elude the duke if he thinks proper."

"Not so easily, I think; but, should he do so, he will find the Elector of Hanover prepared for him. The guards and some other regiments are encamped at Finchley, as we learn by the last express, for the defence of the capital."

"You are just as timorous as the rest of your fellow-townsmen, sir. But no representations of danger will deter the heroic prince from his projected march on London. Ere long, I trust he will drive out the usurper, and cause his royal father to be proclaimed at Westminster."

"Heaven grant it may be so!" exclaimed Dr. Deacon, fervently. "'Twill be a wondrous achievement if it succeeds."

"I do not think it can succeed," said Dr. Byrom. "You think me a prophet of ill, colonel, but I am solely anxious for the prince's safety. I would not have him fall into the hands of his enemies. Even retreat is fraught with peril, for Field-Marshal Wade, with a strong force, is in his rear."

"Better go on, then, by your own showing, sir. But retreat is out of the question. I am at a loss to understand how you can reconcile your conduct with the principles you profess. The prince has

need of zealous adherents, who will sacrifice their lives for him if required. Yet you and your friends, who are pledged to him, keep aloof."

"I am too old to draw the sword for the prince," said Dr. Deacon; "but I shall identify myself with his cause, and I have enjoined my three sons to enrol themselves in the Manchester Regiment."

"You have done well, sir, but only what might have been expected from you," said Colonel Townley. "Your conduct contrasts favourably with that of many of his self-styled adherents."

"I can bear the taunt, colonel," said Dr. Byrom, calmly. "Whatever opinion you may entertain to the contrary, my friends and myself are loyal to the House of Stuart, but we are also discreet. We have had our lesson, and mean to profit by it. To be plain with you, Colonel Townley, we don't like the Highlanders."

"Why not, sir? They are brave fellows, and have done no mischief. They will do none here – on that you may depend."

"Maybe not, but the people are desperately afraid of them, and think they will plunder the town.

"Mere idle fears," exclaimed Colonel Townley.

"Have you a list of recruits, colonel?" inquired Dr. Deacon.

Colonel Townley replied in the affirmative, and produced a memorandum-book.

"The list is so brief, and the names it comprises are so unimportant, that I shall feel ashamed to present it to the prince," he said. "The first person I have set down is James Dawson."

"Jemmy Dawson is a young man of very respectable family – in fact, a connexion of my own," observed Dr. Byrom. "He belongs to St. John's College, Cambridge."

"Next on the list is Mr. Peter Moss, a gentleman of this county," pursued the colonel. "Then come Mr. Thomas Morgan, a Welshman, and Mr. John Saunderson, a Northumberland gentleman. All those I have enumerated will be officers, and with them I shall couple the names of your sons, Dr. Deacon – Thomas Theodorus, Charles, and Robert."

"All three are prepared to lay down their lives in asserting the rights of their only lawful sovereign, King James the Third," said the doctor. "They have constantly prayed that Heaven may strengthen him so that he may vanquish and overcome all his enemies, that he may be brought to his kingdom, and the crown be set upon his head."

"In that prayer we all join," said the colonel. "I shall not fail to mention your sons to the prince. Then we have a young parson named Coppock, who desires to be chaplain of the regiment. From his discourse he seems to be a good specimen of the church militant."

"He will give up a good benefice if he joins you," remarked Dr. Byrom.

"He will be rewarded with a bishopric if we succeed. With a few exceptions, the rest are not persons of much rank – Andrew Blood, George Fletcher, John Berwick, Thomas Chadwick, and Thomas Syddall. The last is a member of the Nonjuring church, I believe, Dr. Deacon?"

"I am proud of him, though he is only a barber," replied the doctor. "He has never sworn allegiance to the usurper, and never will. He is the son of that Thomas Syddall who was put to an ignominious death in 1716, and his head fixed on the market-cross of this town. Thomas Syddall, the younger, inherits his father's loyalty and courage."

"He shall be an ensign," said the colonel. "Next, there is a young man, whom I have put down, though I don't feel quite sure of him. He is the handsomest young fellow I have seen in Manchester, and evidently full of spirit."

"I think I can guess whom you mean," said Dr. Byrom. "'Tis Atherton Legh."

"Right! that is the youngster's name. He was introduced to me by Theodore Deacon. Who is he? He looks as if he belonged to a good family."

"Atherton Legh is Atherton Legh – that is all I know of his family history, and I believe it is all he knows himself," replied Dr. Deacon.

"I can tell you something more about him," said Dr. Byrom. "He was brought up by a small tradesman, named Heywood, dwelling in Deansgate, educated at our grammar-school under Mr.

Brooke, and afterwards apprenticed to Mr. Hibbert, a highly respectable merchant; but as to his parentage, there is a mystery. Beyond doubt, he has some wealthy relative, but he has prudently abstained from making inquiries, since it has been intimated to him that, if he does so, the present liberal allowance, which is regularly paid by some person who styles himself his guardian, will cease."

"A very good reason for remaining quiet," observed the colonel. "But I suppose Heywood is acquainted with the guardian?"

"He has not even heard his name. Atherton's allowance is paid through a banker, who is bound to secrecy. But you shall hear all I know about the matter. Some eighteen years ago, an elderly dame, who described herself as Madame Legh, having the appearance of a decayed gentlewoman, and attired in mourning, arrived in Manchester, and put up at this very inn. She had travelled by post, it appeared, from London, and brought with her a very pretty little boy, about three years old, whom she called her grandson, stating that his name was Atherton Legh. From this, it would seem, there was no disguise about the old dame, but there is every reason to believe that the names given by her were fictitious. Having made some preliminary inquiries respecting the Heywoods, and ascertained that they had no family, Madame Legh paid them a visit, taking her little grandson with her, and after some talk with Mrs. Heywood, who was a very kind-hearted woman, easily prevailed upon her to take charge of the child. All the arrangements were very satisfactorily made. Mrs. Heywood received a purse of fifty guineas, which she was told came from the boy's guardian – not his father. She was also assured that a liberal allowance would be made by the guardian for the child's maintenance and education, and the promise was most honourably fulfilled. All being settled, Madame Legh kissed her little grandson and departed, and was never seen again. The child quickly attached himself to the worthy pair, who became as fond of him as if he had been their own son. In due time, Atherton grew into a fine spirited lad, and, as I have just intimated, was sent to the grammar-school. When his education was completed, in compliance with the injunctions of his mysterious guardian, conveyed through the banker who paid the allowance, the youth was apprenticed to Mr. Hibbert – the fee being five hundred pounds, which, of course, was paid. Thenceforth, Atherton resided with Mr. Hibbert.

"Such is the young man's history, so far as it is known, and it is certainly curious. No wonder you have been struck by his appearance, colonel. He has decidedly a fine physiognomy, and his look and manner proclaim him the son of a gentleman. Whether he will venture to enrol himself in your regiment without his guardian's consent, which it is next to impossible for him to obtain, is more than I can say.

"It does not seem to me that he is bound to consult his guardian on the point," remarked Dr. Deacon. "I have told him so; but he has some scruples of conscience, which I hope to remove."

"If his guardian is a Hanoverian, he ought to have no authority over him," said the colonel. "You must win him over to the good cause, doctor. But let us have a glass of claret," he added, helping himself, and pushing the bottle towards Dr. Byrom, who was nearest him.

CHAPTER IV.
SIR RICHARD RAWCLIFFE

"By-the-bye," continued Colonel Townley, looking at his watch. "I forgot to mention that I expect Sir Richard Rawcliffe, of Rawcliffe Hall, to-night. He will be here anon. 'Tis about the hour he named. You know him, I think?"

"I knew him slightly some years ago," replied Dr. Byrom. "But I dare say he has quite forgotten me. He rarely, if ever, comes to Manchester. Indeed, he leads a very secluded life at Rawcliffe, and, as I understand, keeps no company. He has the character of being morose and gloomy, but I daresay it is undeserved, for men are generally misrepresented."

"Sir Richard Rawcliffe is certainly misrepresented, if he is so described," said Colonel Townley. "He is haughty and reserved, but not moody. When I left for France he had only just succeeded to the title and the property, and I knew little of him then, though he was an intimate friend of my uncle, Richard Townley of Townley."

"He was not, I think, engaged in the insurrection of 1715?" remarked Dr. Deacon.

"Not directly," replied the colonel. "His father, Sir Randolph, who was friendly to the Hanoverian succession, was alive then, and he did not dare to offend him."

"I thought the Rawcliffes were a Roman Catholic family?" remarked Dr. Deacon.

"Sir Randolph abjured the faith of his fathers," said Colonel Townley; "and his elder son, Oswald, was likewise a renegade. Sir Richard, of whom we are now speaking, succeeded his brother Sir Oswald on the failure of the heir."

"It has never been positively proved that the heir is dead," observed Dr. Byrom. "Sir Oswald Rawcliffe married the beautiful Henrietta Conway, and had a son by her, who was carried off while an infant in a most mysterious manner, and has never been heard of since. This happened in '24, but I cannot help thinking the true heir to Rawcliffe Hall may yet be found."

"Meantime, Sir Richard is in possession of the title and property," said Colonel Townley.

As he spoke, the door was opened by the landlord, who ushered in a tall personage, whom he announced as Sir Richard Rawcliffe.

Bowing to the company, all of whom rose on his entrance, Sir Richard sprang forward to meet Colonel Townley, and a hearty greeting passed between them.

It would have been difficult to determine the new-comer's age, but he was not fifty, though he looked much older. His features were handsome, but strongly marked, and had a sombre expression, which, however, disappeared when he was animated by converse. His eyes were dark and penetrating, and overhung by thick black brows. His pallid complexion and care-worn looks seemed to denote that he was out of health. Altogether, it was a face that could not be regarded without interest. He wore a dark riding-dress, with boots drawn above the knee. A black peruke descended over his shoulders, and a sword hung by his side.

Habitually, Sir Richard Rawcliffe's manner was haughty, but he was extremely affable towards the present company, expressing himself delighted to meet Dr. Byrom again. Towards Dr. Deacon he was almost deferential.

While they were exchanging civilities, Diggles, the landlord, re-appeared with a fresh bottle of claret and clean glasses; and bumpers being filled, Colonel Townley called out, "Here's to our master's health!"

The toast having been drunk with enthusiasm, Diggles, preparatory to his departure, inquired whether the gentlemen desired to be private.

"No," replied Colonel Townley. "I will see my *friends*. I don't think you will introduce a Hanoverian, Diggles."

"You may trust me, colonel," said the landlord. "No Whig shall enter here."

After another glass of wine, Colonel Townley said to the baronet —

"Now, Sir Richard, let us to business. I hope you bring us some recruits. We are terribly in want of them."

"I am surprised to hear that," replied Sir Richard; "and I regret that I cannot supply your need. All my tenants refuse to go out. 'Tis to explain this difficulty that I have come to Manchester. Money I can promise his royal highness, but not men."

"Well, money will be extremely useful to him. How much may I venture to tell him you will furnish?"

"A thousand pounds," replied Sir Richard. "I have brought it with me. Here 'tis," he added, giving him a pocket-book.

"By my faith, this is very handsome, Sir Richard, and I am sure the prince will be much beholden to you. I am about to join him at Lancaster, and I will place the money in the hands of his treasurer, Mr. Murray. If every Jacobite gentleman in Cheshire would contribute a like sum his royal highness would not lack funds."

Both Dr. Byrom and Dr. Deacon expressed their sense of the baronet's liberality.

"I am amazed by what you just stated about your want of recruits," said Sir Richard. "I understood that some thousands had been enrolled in Manchester."

Significant looks passed between the others, and Colonel Townley shrugged his shoulders.

"I am sorry to be obliged to undeceive you, Sir Richard," he said. "The enrolment has proceeded very badly."

"But you have the leading merchants with you. They are all pledged to the House of Stuart."

"They are indifferent to their pledges."

"Zounds!" exclaimed Sir Richard. "I was wholly unprepared for this. At all the Jacobite meetings I have attended, the boldest talkers were your Manchester merchants. How many campaigns have they fought over the bottle! But are there no young men in the town who will rally round the prince's standard?"

"Plenty, I am sure, Sir Richard," replied Dr. Deacon. "When the drum is beaten, numbers will answer to the call."

"Better they should enrol themselves beforehand, so that we might know on whom we can count. You have so much influence, Dr. Deacon, that you ought to be able to raise a regiment yourself. Your sons might lend you aid. They must have many friends."

"Theodore Deacon has already found me a fine young fellow, whom I should like to make an officer," observed Colonel Townley.

"Ah! who may that be?"

"You will be little the wiser when I mention his name, Sir Richard. 'Tis Atherton Legh."

"Atherton Legh. Is he of a Lancashire family?"

"I am unable to answer that question, Sir Richard. In fact, there is a mystery about him. But he is a gentleman born, I'm certain. You would say so yourself were you to see him. Ah! the opportunity offers – here he is."

As he spoke the door was opened, and the young man in question was ushered in by the landlord.

CHAPTER V.
INTRODUCES OUR HERO

Atherton Legh had a fine, open, intelligent countenance, clear grey eyes, classically moulded features, a fresh complexion, and a tall graceful figure. His manner was frank and prepossessing. His habiliments were plain, but became him well, and in lieu of a peruke, he wore his own long, flowing, brown locks. His age might be about one-and-twenty.

Such was the tall, handsome young man who stood before the company, and it may be added that he displayed no embarrassment, though he felt that a scrutinising look was fixed upon him by the baronet.

"Was I not right, Sir Richard?" whispered Colonel Townley. "Has he not the air of a gentleman?"

The baronet assented; adding in an undertone, "Tell me, in a word, who and what he is?"

"I have already stated that a mystery attaches to his birth, and so carefully is the secret kept, that, although he has a guardian who supplies him with funds, he is not even acquainted with his guardian's name."

"Strange!" exclaimed the baronet.

"Shall I present him to you, Sir Richard?"

"By all means," was the reply.

Colonel Townley then went up to the young man, shook hands with him, and after a little talk, brought him to Sir Richard, who rose on his approach, and received him very graciously.

But though the baronet's manner was exceedingly courteous, Atherton felt unaccountably repelled. Sir Richard's features seemed familiar to him, but he could not call to mind where he had seen him.

"I hope you have come to signify to Colonel Townley your adhesion to the cause of King James the Third?" remarked Sir Richard.

"Yes, yes, he means to join us," cried Colonel Townley, hastily. "I am enchanted to see him. Say that you will belong to the Manchester Regiment, Mr. Atherton Legh – say the word before these gentlemen – and I engage that you shall have a commission."

"You are too good, sir," said the young man.

"Not at all," cried the colonel. "I could not do his royal highness a greater service than to bring him such a fine young fellow."

"I shall seem but ill to repay your kindness, colonel," said Atherton, "when I decline the honourable post you offer me. I would serve in the ranks were I a free agent. You are aware that I have a guardian, whom I feel bound to obey as a father. Since you spoke to me this morning I have received a letter from him, peremptorily forbidding me to join the prince. After this interdiction, which I dare not disobey, I am compelled to withdraw the half promise I gave you."

"Were I in Colonel Townley's place I should claim fulfilment of the promise," observed Sir Richard. "As a man of honour you cannot retract."

"Nay, I must say Mr. Atherton Legh did not absolutely pledge himself," said Colonel Townley; "and he is perfectly at liberty, therefore, to withdraw if he deems proper. But I hope he will reconsider his decision. I shall be truly sorry to lose him. What is your opinion of the matter, sir?" he added, appealing to Dr. Deacon. "Is Mr. Atherton Legh bound to obey his guardian's injunctions?"

"Assuredly not," replied the doctor, emphatically. "Duty to a sovereign is paramount to every other consideration. A guardian has no right to impose such restraint upon a ward. His authority does not extend so far."

"But he may have the power to stop his ward's allowance, if his authority be set at defiance," remarked Dr. Byrom. "Therefore, I think Mr. Atherton Legh is acting very prudently."

"My opinion is not asked, but I will venture to offer it," observed Sir Richard. "Were I in Mr. Atherton Legh's place, I would run the risk of offending my guardian, and join the prince."

"I am inclined to follow your counsel, Sir Richard," cried the young man.

"No, no – you shall not, my dear fellow," interposed Colonel Townley. "Much as I desire to have you with me, you shall not be incited to take a step you may hereafter repent. Weigh the matter over. When I return to Manchester you can decide. Something may happen in the interim."

Atherton bowed, and was about to retire, when Sir Richard stopped him.

"I should like to have a little talk to you, Mr. Atherton Legh," he said, "and shall be glad if you will call upon me to-morrow at noon. I am staying at this inn."

"I will do myself the honour of waiting upon you, Sir Richard," replied the young man.

"I ought to mention that my daughter is with me, and she is an ardent Jacobite," remarked Sir Richard.

"If I have Miss Rawcliffe's assistance, I foresee what will happen," remarked Colonel Townley, with a laugh. "Her arguments are sure to prove irresistible. I consider you already enrolled. Au revoir!"

CHAPTER VI.
ADVICE

Atherton Legh had quitted the inn, and was lingering in the market-place, not altogether satisfied with himself, when Dr. Byrom came forth and joined him.

"Our road lies in the same direction," said the doctor. "Shall we walk together?"

"By all means, sir," replied the young man.

It was a beautiful night, calm and clear, and the moon shone brightly on the tower of the collegiate church, in the vicinity of which Dr. Byrom resided.

"How peaceful the town looks to-night," observed Byrom. "But in a few days all will be tumult and confusion."

"I do not think any resistance will be offered to the insurgents, sir," replied Atherton; "and luckily the militia is disbanded, though I believe a few shots would have dispersed them had they attempted to show fight."

"No, there will be no serious fighting," said Byrom. "Manchester will surrender at discretion. I don't think the prince will remain here long. He will raise as many recruits as he can, and then march on. I have no right to give you advice, young sir, but I speak to you as I would to my own son. You have promised to call upon Sir Richard Rawcliffe to-morrow, and I suppose you will be as good as your word."

"Of course."

"Then take care you are not persuaded to disobey your guardian. There is a danger you do not apprehend, and I must guard you against it. Miss Rawcliffe is exceedingly beautiful, and very captivating – at least, so I have been informed, for I have never seen her. Her father has told you she is an ardent Jacobite. As such she will deem it her duty to win you over to the good cause, and she will infallibly succeed. Very few of us are proof against the fascinations of a young and lovely woman. Though Sir Richard might not prevail, his daughter will."

"I must go prepared to resist her," replied Atherton, laughing.

"You miscalculate your strength, young man," said Byrom, gravely. "Better not expose yourself to temptation."

"Nay, I must go," said Atherton. "But I should like to know something about Sir Richard Rawcliffe. Has he a son?"

"Only one child – a daughter. Besides being very beautiful, as I have just described her, Constance Rawcliffe will be a great heiress."

"And after saying all this, you expect me to throw away the chance of meeting so charming a person. But don't imagine I am presumptuous enough to aspire to a wealthy heiress. I shall come away heart-whole, and bound by no pledges stronger than those I have already given."

"We shall see," replied Dr. Byrom, in a tone that implied considerable doubt.

They had now arrived at the door of the doctor's residence – a tolerably large, comfortable-looking house, built of red brick, in the plain, formal style of the period.

Before parting with his young companion, Dr. Byrom thought it necessary to give him a few more words of counsel.

"It may appear impertinent in me to meddle in your affairs," he said; "but believe that I am influenced by the best feelings. You are peculiarly circumstanced. You have no father – no near relative to guide you. An error now may be irretrievable. Pray consult me before you make any pledge to Sir Richard Rawcliffe, or to Dr. Deacon."

There was so much paternal kindness in his manner that Atherton could not fail to be touched by it.

"I will consult you, sir," he said, in a grateful tone; "and I thank you deeply for the interest you take in me."

"Enough," replied Dr. Byrom. "I shall hope to see you soon again. Give me your impressions of Constance Rawcliffe."

He then bade the young man good-night, rang the door bell, and entered the house.

CHAPTER VII.
RENCOUNTER NEAR THE OLD TOWN CROSS

A path led across the south side of the large churchyard surrounding the collegiate church, and on quitting Dr. Byrom, Atherton took his way along it, marching past the old gravestones, and ever and anon glancing at the venerable pile, which, being completely lighted up by the moonbeams, presented a very striking appearance. So bright was the moonlight that the crocketed pinnacles and grotesque gargoyles could have been counted. The young man was filled with admiration of the picture. On reaching the western boundary of the churchyard, he paused to gaze at the massive tower, and having contemplated its beauties for a few minutes, he proceeded towards Salford Bridge.

It has already been stated that this was the oldest and most picturesque part of the town. All the habitations were of timber and plaster, painted black and white, and those immediately adjoining the collegiate church on the west were built on a precipitous rock overlooking the Irwell.

Wherever a view could be obtained of the river, through any opening among these ancient houses – many of which were detached – a very charming scene was presented to the beholder. The river here made a wide bend, and as it swept past the high rocky bank, and flowed on towards the narrow pointed arches of the old bridge, its course was followed with delight, glittering as it then did in the moonbeams.

The old bridge itself was a singular structure, and some of the old houses on the opposite side of the river vied in picturesque beauty with those near the church.

Atherton was enraptured with the scene. He had made his way to the very edge of the steep rocky bank, so that nothing interfered with the prospect.

Though the hour was by no means late – the old church clock had only just struck ten – the inhabitants of that quarter of the town seemed to have retired to rest. All was so tranquil that the rushing of the water through the arches of the bridge could be distinctly heard.

Soothed by the calmness which acted as a balm upon his somewhat over-excited feelings, the young man fell into a reverie, during which a very charming vision flitted before him.

The description given him of the lovely Constance Rawcliffe had powerfully affected his imagination. She seemed to be the ideal of feminine beauty which he had sought, but never found. He painted her even in brighter colours than she had been described by Dr. Byrom, and with all the romantic folly of a young man was prepared to fall madly in love with her – provided only she deigned to cast the slightest smile upon him.

Having conjured up this exquisite phantom, and invested it with charms that very likely had no existence, he was soon compelled to dismiss it, and return to actual life. It was time to go home, and good Widow Heywood, with whom he lodged, would wonder why he stopped out so late.

Heaving a sigh, with which such idle dreams as he had indulged generally end, he left the post of vantage he had occupied, and, with the design of proceeding to Deansgate, tracked a narrow alley that quickly brought him to Smithy Bank. The latter thoroughfare led to the bridge. Lower down, but not far from the point of junction with Deansgate, stood the old Town Cross.

Hitherto the young man had not seen a single individual in the streets since he left the Bull's Head, and it therefore rather surprised him to perceive a small group of persons standing near the Cross, to which allusion has just been made.

Two damsels, evidently from their attire of the higher rank, attended by a young gentleman and a man-servant – the latter being stationed at a respectful distance from the others – were talking to a well-mounted horseman, in whom Atherton had no difficulty in recognising Colonel Townley. No doubt the colonel had started on his journey to Lancaster. With him was a groom, who, like his master, was well mounted and well armed.

Even at that distance, Atherton remarked that Colonel Townley's manner was extremely deferential to the young ladies – especially towards the one with whom he was conversing. He bent low in the saddle, and appeared to be listening with deep interest and attention to what she said. Both this damsel and her fair companion were so muffled up that Atherton could not discern their features, but he persuaded himself they must be good-looking. A fine shape cannot easily be disguised, and both had symmetrical figures, while the sound of their voices was musical and pleasant.

Atherton was slowly passing on his way, which brought him somewhat nearer the group, when Colonel Townley caught sight of him, and immediately hailed him.

By no means sorry to have a nearer view of the mysterious fair ones, the young man readily responded to the summons, but if he expected an introduction to the damsels he was disappointed.

Before he came up, it was evident that the colonel had been told that this was not to be, and he carefully obeyed orders.

The young lady who had especially attracted Atherton's attention proved to be very handsome, for, though he could not obtain a full view of her face, he saw enough to satisfy him she had delicately formed features, magnificent black eyes, and black tresses.

These splendid black eyes were steadily fixed upon him for a few moments, as if she was reading his character; and after the rapid inspection, she turned to Colonel Townley, and made some remark to him in a whisper.

Without tarrying any longer, she then signed to her companions, and they all three moved off, followed by the manservant, leaving Atherton quite bewildered. The party walked so rapidly that they were almost instantly out of sight.

"If it is not impertinent on my part, may I ask who those young ladies are?" inquired Atherton.

"I am not allowed to tell you, my dear fellow," replied the colonel, slightly laughing. "But I dare say you will meet them again."

"I must not even ask if they live in Manchester, I suppose?"

"I cannot satisfy your curiosity in any particular. I meant to present you to them, but I was forbidden. I may, however, tell you that the young lady nearest me made a flattering observation respecting you."

"That is something, from so charming a girl."

"Then you discovered that she is beautiful!"

"I never beheld such fine eyes."

Colonel Townley laughed heartily.

"Take care of yourself, my dear boy – take care of yourself," he said. "Those eyes have already done wonderful execution."

"One question more, colonel, and I have done. Are they sisters?"

"Well, I may answer that. They are not. I thought you must have known the young man who was with them."

"I fancied he was Jemmy Dawson. But I own I did not pay much attention to him."

"You were engrossed by one object. It was Jemmy Dawson. He is to be one of my officers, and I feel very proud of him, as I shall be of another gallant youth whom I count upon. But I must loiter no longer here. I shall ride to Preston to-night, and proceed to-morrow to Lancaster. Fail not to keep your appointment with Sir Richard Rawcliffe. You will see his daughter, who will put this fair unknown out of your head."

"I scarcely think so," replied Atherton.

"Well, I shall learn all about it on my return. Adieu!"

With this, the colonel struck spurs into his horse and rode quickly across the bridge, followed by his groom, while Atherton, whose thoughts had been entirely changed within the last ten minutes, proceeded towards his lodgings in Deansgate.

CHAPTER VIII.
BEPPY BYROM

Next morning, in the drawing-room of a comfortable house, situated near the collegiate church, and commanding from its windows a view of that venerable fabric, a family party, consisting of four persons – two ladies and two gentlemen – had assembled after breakfast.

Elegantly furnished in the taste of the time, the room was fitted up with japanned cabinets and numerous small brackets, on which china ware and other ornaments were placed. A crystal chandelier hung from the ceiling, and a large folding Indian screen was partly drawn round the work-table, beside which the two ladies sat. The gentlemen were standing near the fireplace.

The mistress of the house, though no longer young, as will be guessed when we mention that her daughter was turned twenty-one, while her son was some two or three years older, still retained considerable personal attractions, and had a most agreeable expression of countenance.

We may as well state at once, that this lady, who had made the best helpmate possible to the best of husbands, was the wife of our worthy friend Dr. Byrom, who had every reason to congratulate himself, as he constantly did, on the possession of such a treasure.

Very pretty, and very lively, was the younger lady – Elizabeth Byrom – Beppy as she was familiarly called. We despair of giving an idea of her features, but her eyes were bright and blue, her complexion like a damask rose, her nose slightly retroussé, and her teeth like pearls. When she laughed, her cheek displayed the prettiest dimple imaginable. Her light-brown locks were taken from the brow, and raised to a considerable height, but there were no artificial tresses among them.

Her costume suited her extremely well – her gown being of grey silk, looped round the body; and she wore a hoop petticoat – as every other girl did at the time who had any pretension to fashion.

Beppy was not a coquette – far from it – but she tried to please; nor was she vain of her figure, yet she liked to dress becomingly. Accomplished she was, undoubtedly; sang well, and played on the spinet; but she was useful as well as ornamental, and did a great many things in the house, which no girl of our own period would condescend to undertake.

With much gaiety of manner, a keen sense of the ridiculous, and a turn for satire, Beppy never said an ill-natured thing. In short, she was a very charming girl, and the wonder was, with so many agreeable qualities, that she should have remained single.

Our description would be incomplete if we omitted to state that she was an ardent Jacobite.

Her brother, Edward, resembled his father, and was gentleman-like in appearance and manner. He wore a suit of light blue, with silver buttons, and a flaxen-coloured peruke, which gave him a gay look, but in reality he was very sedate. There was nothing of the coxcomb about Edward Byrom. Nor was he of an enthusiastic temperament. Like all the members of his family, he was well inclined towards the House of Stuart, but he was not disposed to make any sacrifice, or incur any personal risk for its restoration to the throne. Edward Byrom was tall, well-made, and passably good-looking.

Mrs. Byrom was dressed in green flowered silk, which suited her: wore powder in her hair, which also suited her, and a hoop petticoat, but we will not say whether the latter suited her or not. Her husband thought it did, and he was the best judge.

"Well, papa," cried Beppy, looking up at him from her work, "what do you mean to do to-day?"

"I have a good deal to do," replied Dr. Byrom. "In the first place I shall pay a visit to Tom Syddall, the barber."

"I like Tom Syddall because he is a Jacobite, and because his father suffered for the good cause," said Beppy. "Though a barber is the least heroic of mortals, Tom Syddall always appears to me a sort of hero, with a pair of scissors and a powder-puff for weapons."

"He has thrown dust in your eyes, Beppy," said the doctor.

"He has vowed to avenge his father. Is not that creditable to him, papa?"

"Yes, he is a brave fellow, no doubt. I only hope he mayn't share his father's fate. I shall endeavour to persuade him to keep quiet."

"Is it quite certain the prince will come to Manchester?" asked Mrs. Byrom, anxiously.

"He will be here in two or three days at the latest with his army. But don't alarm yourself, my love."

"Oh, dear!" she exclaimed. "I think we had better leave the town."

"You are needlessly afraid, mamma," cried Beppy. "I am not frightened in the least. It may be prudent in some people to get out of the way; but depend upon it *we* shan't be molested. Papa's opinions are too well known. I wouldn't for the world miss seeing the prince. I dare say we shall all be presented to him."

"You talk of the prince as if he had already arrived, Beppy," observed Edward Byrom, gravely. "After all, he may never reach Manchester."

"You hope he won't come," cried his sister. "You are a Hanoverian, Teddy, and don't belong to us."

"'Tis because I wish the prince well that I hope he mayn't come," said Teddy. "The wisest thing he could do would be to retreat."

"I disown you, sir," cried the young lady. "The prince will never retreat, unless compelled, and success has hitherto attended him."

"Are you aware that the townspeople of Liverpool have raised a regiment seven hundred strong?"

"For the prince?"

"For King George. Chester, also, has been put into a state of defence against the insurgents, though there are many Roman Catholic families in the city."

"I won't be discouraged," said Beppy. "I am certain the right will triumph. What do you think, papa?"

Dr. Byrom made no response to this appeal.

"Your papa has great misgivings, my dear," observed Mrs. Byrom; "and so have I. I should most heartily rejoice if the danger that threatens us could be averted. Rebellion is a dreadful thing. We must take no part in this contest. How miserable I should have been if your brother had joined the insurgents!"

"Happily, Teddy has more discretion," said Dr. Byrom, casting an approving look at his son. "Some of our friends, I fear, will rue the consequences of their folly. Jemmy Dawson has joined the Manchester Regiment, and of course Dr. Deacon's three sons are to be enrolled in it."

"Were I a man I would join likewise," cried Beppy.

"My dear!" exclaimed her mother, half reproachfully.

"Forgive me if I have hurt your feelings, dearest mamma," said Beppy, getting up and kissing her. "You know I would do nothing to displease you."

"Jemmy Dawson will incur his father's anger by the step he has taken," remarked Edward Byrom. "But powerful influence has been brought to bear upon him. A young lady, quite as enthusiastic a Jacobite as you are, Beppy, to whom he is attached, has done the mischief."

"Indeed! I should like to know who she is?" said his sister.

"Nay, you must not question me. You will learn the secret in due time, I make no doubt."

"I have guessed it already," said Beppy. "'Tis Monica Butler. I have seen Jemmy with her. She is just the girl who could induce him to join the insurrection, for she is heart and soul in the cause."

"You are right. Monica Butler is Jemmy's fair enslaver. His assent was to be the price of her hand. I believe they are affianced."

"I hope the engagement will end well, but it does not commence auspiciously," said Dr. Byrom. "Their creeds are different. Monica is a Roman Catholic – at least, I conclude so, since her mother belongs to that religion."

"Mrs. Butler is a widow, I believe?" remarked Mrs. Byrom.

"She is widow of Captain Butler, and sister of Sir Richard Rawcliffe. Consequently, Monica is cousin to the beautiful Constance Rawcliffe. Though so well connected, Mrs. Butler is far from rich, and lives in great privacy, as you know, in Salford. She is very proud of her ancient descent, and I almost wonder she consented to Monica's engagement to young Dawson. By-the-bye, Sir Richard Rawcliffe and his daughter are now in Manchester, and are staying at the Bull's Head. I met Sir Richard last night. He is very anxious to obtain recruits for the prince, and tried hard to enlist Atherton Legh. The young man resisted, but he will have to go through a different ordeal to-day, for he will be exposed to the fascinations of the fair Constance. I shall be curious to learn the result."

"So shall I," said Beppy, with some vivacity.

"Do you take any interest in the young man?" asked her father.

"I think him very handsome," she replied, blushing. "And I think he would be a very great acquisition to the prince. But it would certainly be a pity – "

"That so handsome a young fellow should be executed as a rebel," supplied the father. "I quite agree with you, Beppy, and I therefore hope he will remain firm."

CHAPTER IX.
THE TWO CURATES OF ST. ANN'S

Just then a female servant ushered in two young divines, both of them assistant curates of St. Ann's – the Rev. Thomas Lewthwaite and the Rev. Benjamin Nichols. Mr. Hoole, the rector of St. Ann's, was inclined to Nonjuring principles, which he had imbibed from Dr. Deacon, and was very popular with the High Church party, but his curates were Whigs, and belonged to the Low Church, and had both preached against rebellion. Mr. Lewthwaite was a suitor to Beppy, but she did not give him much encouragement, and, indeed, rather laughed at him.

Both the reverend gentlemen looked rather grave, and gave a description of the state of the town that brought back all Mrs. Byrom's alarms.

"An express has just come in," said Mr. Lewthwaite, "bringing word that the rebels have reached Lancaster, and that Marshal Wade has turned back to Newcastle. The rebel force is estimated at seven thousand men, but other accounts affirm that it now amounts to thirty thousand and upwards."

"I hope the latter accounts are correct," observed Beppy.

"We shall certainly have the Pretender here in a couple of days," pursued the curate.

"Pray don't call him the Pretender, sir," cried Beppy. "Speak of him with proper respect as Prince Charles Edward."

"I can't do that," said Mr. Lewthwaite, "being a loyal subject of King George."

"Whom some people regard as a usurper," muttered Beppy.

"The news has thrown the whole town into consternation," said Mr. Nichols. "Everybody is preparing for flight. Almost all the warehouses are closed. Half the shops are shut, and as Mr. Lewthwaite and myself passed through the square just now, we didn't see half a dozen persons. Before night the place will be empty.

"Well, we shan't go," said Beppy.

"The Earl of Warrington has sent away all his plate," pursued Mr. Nichols.

"I have very little plate to send away," observed Dr. Byrom. "Besides, I am not afraid of being plundered."

"You may not feel quite so secure, sir, when I tell you that the magistrates have thrown open the doors of the House of Correction," said Mr. Nichols.

"Very considerate of them, indeed," said Dr. Byrom. "The townspeople will appreciate their attention. Have you any more agreeable intelligence?"

"Yes; the postmaster has started for London this morning to stop any further remittances from the bankers, lest the money should fall into the hands of the rebels."

"That looks as if the authorities were becoming really alarmed," observed Edward Byrom.

"They are rather late in bestirring themselves," said Mr. Nichols. "The boroughreeve and constables have learnt that a good deal of unlawful recruiting for the Pretender has been going on under their very noses, and are determined to put an end to it. Colonel Townley would have been arrested last night if he had not saved himself by a hasty departure. But I understand that an important arrest will be made this morning."

"An arrest! – of whom?" inquired Dr. Byrom, uneasily.

"I can't tell you precisely, sir," replied Mr. Nichols. "But the person is a Jacobite gentleman of some consequence, who has only just arrived in Manchester."

"It must be Sir Richard Rawcliffe," mentally ejaculated Dr. Byrom. "I must warn him of his danger without delay. Excuse me, gentlemen," he said, "I have just recollected an appointment. I fear I shall be rather late."

And he was hurrying out of the room, but before he could reach the door, it was opened by the servant, and Atherton Legh came in.

Under the circumstances the interruption was vexatious, but quickly recovering from the confusion into which he was thrown, the doctor exclaimed, "You are the person I wanted to see."

Seizing the young man's arm, he led him to a small adjoining room that served as a study.

"You will think my conduct strange," he said, "but there is no time for explanation. Will you take a message from me to Sir Richard Rawcliffe?"

"Willingly," replied Atherton, "I was going to him after I had said a few words to you."

"Our conference must be postponed," said the doctor.

He then sat down and tracing a few hasty lines on a sheet of paper, directed and sealed the note, and gave it to Atherton.

"Take this to Sir Richard, without loss of time," he said. "You will render him an important service."

"I shall be very glad to serve him," replied the young man. "But may I not know the nature of my mission?"

"Be satisfied that it is important," said the doctor. "I shall see you again later on. Perhaps Sir Richard may have a message to send to me."

Dr. Byrom then conducted the young man to the hall-door, and let him out himself; after which he returned to the study, not caring to go back to the drawing-room.

Great was Beppy's disappointment that Atherton was carried off so suddenly by her father; but she had some suspicion of the truth. As to the two curates, they thought the doctor's conduct rather singular, but forebore to make any remarks.

CHAPTER X.
CONSTANCE RAWCLIFFE

On quitting Dr. Byrom's house, Atherton proceeded quickly along Old Mill Gate towards the market-place.

This street, one of the oldest and busiest in the town, presented a very unwonted appearance – several of the shops being shut, while carts half-filled with goods were standing at the doors, showing that the owners were removing their property.

Very little business seemed to be going on, and there were some symptoms of a disturbance, for a band of rough-looking fellows, armed with bludgeons, was marching along the street, and pushing decent people from the narrow footway.

In the market-place several groups were collected, eagerly discussing the news; and at the doors of the Exchange, then newly erected, a few merchants were assembled, but they all had an anxious look, and did not seem to be engaged on business.

Except the Exchange, to which we have just adverted, there was not a modern building near the market-place. All the habitations were old, and constructed of timber and plaster. In the midst of these, on the left, stood the Bull's Head. The old inn ran back to a considerable distance, and possessed a court-yard large enough to hold three or four post-chaises and an occasional stage-coach.

Entering the court-yard, Atherton sought out Diggles, the landlord, and inquired for Sir Richard Rawcliffe, but, to his great disappointment, learnt that the baronet had just gone out.

"That is unlucky," cried the young man. "I have an important communication for him."

"He will be back presently," said the landlord. "But perhaps Miss Rawcliffe will see you. She is within. Her cousin, Miss Butler, is with her."

Atherton assented to this proposition, and was conducted by the host to a room on the first floor, and evidently situated in the front part of the house.

Tapping at the door Diggles went in, and almost immediately returned to say that Miss Rawcliffe would be happy to receive Mr. Atherton Legh.

Atherton was then ushered into the presence of two young ladies – one of whom rose on his appearance and received him very courteously.

Could he believe his eyes? Yes! it must be the fair creature he had seen on the previous night, who had made such a powerful impression upon him. But if he had thought her beautiful then, how much more exquisite did she appear now that her charming features could be fully distinguished.

While bowing to the other young lady, whose name he had learnt from the landlord, he felt equally sure that she had been Miss Rawcliffe's companion on the previous night.

Monica Butler offered a strong contrast to her cousin – the one being a brunette and the other a blonde. But each was charming in her way – each set off the other. Constance's eyes were dark as night, and her tresses of corresponding hue; while Monica's eyes were tender and blue as a summer sky, and her locks fleecy as a summer cloud.

"I see you recognise us, Mr. Atherton Legh," said Miss Rawcliffe, smiling. "It would be useless, therefore, to attempt any disguise. My cousin, Monica Butler, and myself were talking to Colonel Townley when you came up last night. He would fain have presented you to us, but I would not allow him, for I did not think it quite proper that an introduction should take place under such peculiar circumstances. As you may naturally wonder why two young damsels should be abroad so late, I will explain. Wishing to have Monica's company during my stay at this inn, I went to fetch her, escorted by your friend Jemmy Dawson. As we were coming back, we accidentally encountered Colonel Townley near the Cross. All the rest you know."

"I am very agreeably surprised," said Atherton. "I have been dying to know who you both were, for Colonel Townley refused to gratify my curiosity."

"I am glad to find he obeyed my orders," observed Miss Rawcliffe, smiling. "At that time I did not imagine I should ever see you again. But this morning papa told me he had made an appointment with you at noon. I ought to apologise for his absence – but you are rather before your time."

"'Tis I who ought to apologise," said Atherton. "But I am the bearer of a note to Sir Richard," he added, handing it to her. "'Tis from Dr. Byrom, and I believe it contains matter of urgent importance. At all events, Dr. Byrom requested me to deliver it without delay."

"I hope it contains good news," said Constance. "Pray take a seat. You must please to await papa's return. He much wishes to see you; and I may tell you he hopes to induce you to join the prince's army. We are all ardent Jacobites, as you know, and anxious to obtain recruits. If I had any influence with you I would urge you to enrol yourself in Colonel Townley's regiment. Jemmy Dawson has just joined. Why not follow his example?"

"I have already explained to Colonel Townley why it is impossible for me to comply with his request."

"Your reasons have been mentioned to me, but I confess I do not see their force. Jemmy Dawson has not been swayed by such feelings, but has risked his father's displeasure to serve the prince. He did not hesitate when told that a young lady's hand would be the reward of his compliance with her request."

"Till this moment I did not know why Jemmy had joined, having heard him express indifference to the cause. May I venture to ask the name of the fair temptress?"

"Excuse me. You will learn the secret in due time."

"He shall learn it now," interposed Monica. "I do not blush to own that I am the temptress. I am proud of my Jemmy's devotion – proud, also, of having gained the prince so important a recruit."

"You may well be proud of Jemmy, Monica," said Constance. "He has many noble qualities and cannot fail to distinguish himself."

"He is as brave as he is gentle," said Monica – "a veritable preux et hardi chevalier, and will live or die like a hero."

"You are an enthusiastic girl," said Constance.

"In my place you would be just as enthusiastic, Constance," rejoined the other.

Atherton listened with a beating heart to this discourse, which was well calculated to stir his feelings.

Just then, however, an interruption was offered by the entrance of Sir Richard Rawcliffe.

"Very glad to see you, sir," cried the baronet, shaking hands with Atherton. "I perceive you have already made the acquaintance of my daughter and her cousin, Miss Butler, so I needn't introduce you. Are you aware that my niece is engaged to your friend, Jemmy Dawson?"

"Yes, Mr. Atherton Legh knows all about it, papa," said Constance. "He has brought you a letter from Dr. Byrom," she added, giving it to him.

"Excuse me," said Sir Richard, opening the note.

As he hastily scanned its contents, his countenance fell.

"Has something gone wrong, papa?" cried Constance, uneasily.

"I am threatened with arrest for treasonable practices," replied Sir Richard. "Dr. Byrom counsels immediate flight, or concealment. But where am I to fly? – where conceal myself?" he added, looking quite bewildered.

"You had better leave the inn at once, papa," said Constance, who, though greatly alarmed, had not lost her presence of mind.

At this moment, a noise was heard outside that increased the uneasiness of the party.

CHAPTER XI.
THE BOROUGHREEVE OF MANCHESTER

Situated in the front of the house, the room commanded the market-place. Atherton rushed to the window to ascertain what was taking place, and was followed by the baronet.

"Do not show yourself, Sir Richard," cried the young man, motioning him to keep back. "The chief magistrates are outside – Mr. Fielden, the boroughreeve, and Mr. Walley and Mr. Fowden, the constables. They have a posse of peace-officers with them."

"They are come to arrest me!" exclaimed Sir Richard.

"Save yourself, papa! – save yourself!" cried Constance. "Not a moment is to be lost."

Her exhortations were seconded by Monica and Atherton, but Sir Richard did not move, and looked quite stupefied.

"'Tis too late!" cried Atherton. "I hear them on the stairs."

As he spoke the door burst open, and Diggles rushed in – his looks betokening great alarm.

"The magistrates are here, Sir Richard, and their purpose is to arrest you. Flight is impossible. Every exit from the house is guarded. I could not warn you before."

"If you have any letters or papers that might compromise you, papa, give them to me," said Constance.

Sir Richard hesitated for a moment, and then produced a packet, saying, as he gave it to her, "I confide this to you. Take every care of it."

She had just concealed the packet when the magistrates entered the room. The officers who followed them stationed themselves outside the door.

Mr. John Fielden, the boroughreeve, who preceded the two constables, was a man of very gentleman-like appearance and deportment. After saluting the baronet, who advanced a few steps to meet him, he said, in accents that were not devoid of sympathy —

"I have a very unpleasant duty to discharge, Sir Richard, but I must fulfil it. In the king's name I arrest you for treasonable practices."

"Of what treasonable practices am I accused, sir?" demanded the baronet, who had now gained his composure.

"You are charged with wickedly and traitorously conspiring to change and subvert the rule and government of this kingdom; with seeking to depose our sovereign lord the king of his title, honour, and royal state; and with seeking to raise and exalt the person pretending to be, and taking upon himself the style and title of King of England, by the name of James the Third, to the imperial rule and government of this kingdom."

"What more, sir?" said Sir Richard.

"You are charged with falsely and traitorously inciting certain of his Majesty's faithful subjects to rebellion; and with striving to raise recruits for the son of the Popish Pretender to the throne, who is now waging war against his Majesty King George the Second."

"I deny the charges," rejoined the baronet, sternly.

"I trust you can disprove them, Sir Richard," said the boroughreeve. "To-morrow your examination will take place, and, in the meantime, you will be lodged in the Old Bailey."

"Lodged in a prison!" exclaimed Constance, indignantly.

"It must be," said the boroughreeve. "I have no option. But I promise you Sir Richard shall undergo no hardship. His imprisonment, I hope, may be brief."

"I thank you for your consideration, sir," said the baronet. "May I be allowed a few minutes to prepare?"

"I am sorry I cannot grant the request, Sir Richard."

"Then farewell, my dear child! – farewell, Monica!" cried the baronet, tenderly embracing them. "My captivity will not be long," he added, in a low voice to his daughter. "I shall be set at liberty on the prince's arrival – if not before."

Constance maintained a show of firmness which she did not feel, but Monica was much moved, and could not repress her tears.

After bidding adieu to Atherton, Sir Richard signified to the boroughreeve that he was ready to attend him, and passed out.

As he did so, the officers took charge of him, and the door was shut.

Constance's courage then entirely forsook her, and uttering a cry, she sank into a chair. Monica strove to comfort her – but in vain.

"I shall go distracted," she cried. "I cannot bear the thought that papa should be imprisoned."

"Make yourself easy on that score, Miss Rawcliffe," said Atherton. "Imprisoned he shall not be. I will undertake to rescue him."

"You!" she exclaimed, gazing at him through her streaming eyes. "If you could save him this indignity, I should be for ever beholden to you. But no! – you must not attempt it. The risk is too great."

"I care not for the risk," cried Atherton. "I will do it. You shall soon learn that your father is free."

And he rushed out of the room.

"A brave young man," cried Monica. "He has all my Jemmy's spirit. I feel sure he will accomplish what he has undertaken."

"I hope no harm will befall him," said Constance.

Shortly afterwards a great disturbance was heard in the market-place, and flying to the windows, they witnessed a very exciting scene.

CHAPTER XII.
THE RESCUE

The visit of the boroughreeve and constables to the Bull's Head attracted a considerable crowd to the market-place – it being rumoured that the magistrates were about to arrest an important Jacobite gentleman.

A political arrest at this juncture, when the town was in such an inflamed state, seemed to most persons, whatever their opinions might be, an exceedingly ill-advised step, and the magistrates were much blamed for taking it.

Murmurs were heard, and some manifestations of sympathy with the luckless Jacobite would undoubtedly have been made by the assemblage had they not been kept in awe by the strong body of constables drawn up in front of the inn.

As might be expected, the lower orders predominated in the concourse, but there were some persons of a superior class present, who had been brought thither by curiosity. The crowd momently increased, until the market-place, which was not very spacious, was more than half full, while the disposition to tumult became more apparent as the numbers grew.

At length a large old-fashioned coach was seen to issue from the entrance of the court-yard, and it was at once conjectured that the prisoner was inside the vehicle, from the fact that a constable was seated on the box beside the coachman, while half a dozen officers marched in front, to clear a passage through the throng.

But this could not be accomplished without the liberal use of staves, and the progress of the coach was necessarily slow. Groans, hootings, and angry exclamations arose from the crowd, but these were directed against the constables and not at the prisoner, who could be seen through the windows of the coach. Sir Richard was recognised by some of the nearest spectators, and his name being called out to those further off, it speedily became known to the whole assemblage, and the noise increased.

At this moment Atherton Legh rushed from the door of the inn and shouted in a loud voice, "A rescue! – a rescue!"

The cry thus raised was echoed by a hundred voices, and in another minute all was confusion.

"A rescue! – a rescue!" resounded on all sides. The coachman tried to extricate himself from the throng, but the heads of the horses being seized, he could not move on.

The constables endeavoured to get near the coach, as well to guard the prisoner as to protect the magistrates, who were inside the roomy vehicle with him.

But Atherton, who was remarkably athletic, snatched a truncheon from one of them, and laying about him vigorously with this weapon, and being supported by the crowd, soon forced his way to the door, and was about to pull it open, when the boroughreeve thrust his head through the window, and called out to him to forbear.

"Beware how you violate the law, young man," cried Mr. Fielden, in a firm and authoritative voice, that showed he was not daunted. "You must be aware that in constituting yourself the leader of a riotous mob, and attempting to rescue a prisoner, you are committing a very grave offence. Desist, while there is yet time. You are known to me and my brother magistrates."

"We do not intend you any personal injury, Mr. Fielden – nor do we mean to injure your brother magistrates," rejoined Atherton, resolutely. "But we are determined to liberate Sir Richard Rawcliffe. Set him free, and there will be an end to the disturbance. You must plainly perceive, sir, that resistance would be useless."

While this was going on, the band of desperadoes, already alluded to, had hurried back to the market-place, and now came up flourishing their bludgeons, and shouting, "Down with the Presbyterians!" "Down with the Hanoverians!" And some of them even went so far as to add "Down with King George!"

These shouts were echoed by the greater part of the concourse, which had now become very turbulent and excited.

Mr. Fielden called to the constables to keep back the mob, and move on, but the officers were utterly powerless to obey him. If a riot commenced, there was no saying where it would end; so, addressing a final remonstrance to Atherton, which proved as ineffectual as all he had said before, the boroughreeve withdrew from the window.

Atherton then opened the coach door, and told Sir Richard, who had been anxiously watching the course of events, that he was free.

On this the baronet arose, and bade a polite adieu to the magistrates, who made no attempt to prevent his departure.

As Sir Richard came forth and stood for a short space on the step of the carriage, so that he could be seen by all the assemblage, a deafening and triumphant shout arose.

"I thank you, my good friends, for delivering me," vociferated the baronet. "I have been illegally arrested. I am guilty of no crime. God bless the king!"

"Which king?" cried several voices, amid loud laughter and applause.

"Choose for yourselves!" responded Sir Richard. "You have rendered me a great service; but if you would serve me still more, and also serve the good cause which I represent, you will retire quietly. Bide your time. 'Twill soon come."

This short harangue was greeted by a loud cheer, amid which the baronet descended, and shook hands heartily with Atherton, who was standing near him.

"I owe my deliverance to you," he said; "and be sure I shall ever feel grateful."

Just then a rush was made towards them by the constables, who were, however, kept back by the crowd.

"Meddle not with us, and we won't meddle with you," cried Atherton.

Prudently acting upon the advice, the constables kept quiet.

Every facility for escape was afforded Sir Richard by the concourse. A narrow lane was opened for him, through which he passed, accompanied by Atherton.

Without pausing to consider whither they were going, they hurried on, till they reached Smithy Doer – a narrow street, so designated, and leading from the bottom of the market-place, in the direction of Salford Bridge.

Feeling secure, they then stopped to hold a brief consultation.

"It won't do for me to return to the inn," observed Sir Richard. "Nor is it necessary I should return thither. My daughter and her cousin are in no danger, and I shall easily find some means of communicating with them. They will know I am safe."

"Were I able to do so, I would gladly take a message from you to Miss Rawcliffe, Sir Richard," said Atherton. "But I am now in as much danger as yourself. I am known to the magistrates, and they will certainly send the officers in search of me."

"You shall run no more risk on my account," said Sir Richard. "My daughter is so courageous that she will feel no alarm when she learns I have escaped. You must find a hiding-place till the prince arrives in Manchester, and then all will be right. If I could procure a horse, I would ride on to Preston. I have a couple of hunters in the stables at the Bull's Head, but they are useless to me now."

As he spoke, a young man was seen approaching them, mounted on a strong roadster. Both recognised the horseman, who was no other than Jemmy Dawson, of whom mention has already been made.

A very handsome young fellow was Jemmy Dawson – tall, rather slightly built, but extremely well made, and looking to advantage in the saddle.

On this occasion Jemmy wore a green cloth riding-dress, made in the fashion of the time, with immense cuffs and ample skirts; the coat being laced with silver, and having silver buttons. His cocked hat surmounted a light bob peruke. He had a sword by his side, and carried a riding-whip in his hand.

On descrying Sir Richard, he instantly accelerated his pace, and no sooner learnt how the baronet was circumstanced than he jumped down, and offered him his horse.

Sir Richard unhesitatingly sprang into the saddle which the other had just quitted.

"Here is the whip," said Jemmy, handing it to him. "But the horse needs neither whip nor spur, as you will find, Sir Richard. He will soon take you to Preston."

"I hope to bring him back safe and sound, Jemmy," said the baronet. "But if aught happens, you shall have my favourite hunter in exchange. As soon as the crowd in the market-place has dispersed, go to the Bull's Head, and let the girls know how well you have mounted me, and whither I am gone."

Addressing a few parting words to Atherton, he then dashed off, clattering over the stones as he shaped his course towards Salford Bridge.

"I envy you your good fortune, Atherton," said Jemmy, as they were left together. "The part you have played belonged of right to me, but I should not have performed it half so well. I wish you could go back with me to receive Constance Rawcliffe's thanks for the service you have rendered her father; but that must not be. Where shall I find you?"

"I know not, for I cannot return to my lodgings. You will hear of me at Tom Syddall's. He will help me to a hiding-place."

"Ay, that he will. Our Jacobite barber is the trustiest fellow in Manchester. You will be perfectly safe with him. But take care how you enter his shop. 'Tis not unlikely you may be watched. We must not have another arrest."

They then separated – Atherton proceeding quickly towards the bridge, not far from which the barber's shop was situated, while Jemmy Dawson mingled with the crowd in the market-place. The magistrates were gone, but the constables blocked up the approaches to the Bull's Head. However, they readily allowed him to enter the inn.

CHAPTER XIII.
CONSTANCE MAKES A DISCOVERY

From the deep bay-windows of the old inn Constance and Monica witnessed all that had occurred, and were both filled with admiration at the gallantry and spirit displayed by Atherton.

Miss Rawcliffe especially was struck by the young man's courageous deportment as he confronted the boroughreeve, and without reflecting that he was violating the law, saw in him only her father's deliverer.

"Look, Monica!" she cried. "Has he not a noble expression of countenance? He is taller than any of those around him, and seems able to cope with half a dozen such varlets as have beset him."

"He has certainly shown himself more than a match for the constables, if you mean to describe them as 'varlets,'" rejoined Monica.

"They did not dare to lay hands upon him," cried Constance. "But see, papa is coming out of the coach, and is about to address the assemblage. Let us open the window to hear what he says."

This was done, and they both waved their handkerchiefs to Sir Richard when he concluded his harangue.

Atherton looked up at the moment, and received a similar greeting. Constance's eloquent glances and approving smiles more than repaid him for what he had done.

From their position the two damsels could discern all that subsequently took place. They beheld Sir Richard and the gallant youth who had rescued him pass safely through the crowd, and disappear at the lower end of the market-place.

Then feeling satisfied that the fugitives were safe, they retired from the window, nor did they look out again, though the shouting and tumult still continued, till Jemmy Dawson made his appearance. Both were delighted to see him.

"Oh, I am so glad you are come, Jemmy!" cried Monica. "What is going on? I hope there won't be a riot?"

"Have you seen papa and Mr. Atherton Legh?" asked Constance.

"Yes, I have seen them both; and I am happy to be able to relieve your anxiety respecting Sir Richard. He is out of all danger. By this time I trust he is a mile or two on the road to Preston. I have provided him with a horse."

"Heaven be thanked!" she exclaimed. "But what of young Atherton Legh? I hope there is no chance of his falling into the hands of the enemy. I should never forgive myself if anything were to happen to him, for I feel that I incited him to this hazardous attempt."

"No doubt you did, Constance," observed Monica.

"You need not make yourself uneasy about him," said Jemmy. "He will easily find a secure retreat till the prince appears."

There was a moment's pause, during which the lovers exchanged tender glances, and Constance appeared preoccupied.

"Who is Atherton Legh?" she inquired, at length. "I begin to feel interested about him."

"I would rather you didn't ask me the question," replied Jemmy. "I can't answer it very readily. However, I will tell you all I know about him."

And he proceeded to relate such particulars of the young man's history as the reader is already acquainted with.

Constance listened with great interest.

"It appears, then, from what you say, that he is dependent upon a guardian whom he has never seen, and of whose very name he is ignorant."

"That is so," replied Jemmy. "But I am convinced he is a gentleman born."

"The mystery attaching to his birth does not lessen my interest in him," said Constance.

"I should be surprised if it did," observed Monica. "You can give him any rank you please. I am sorry to disturb your romantic ideas respecting him, but you must recollect he has been an apprentice to a Manchester merchant, and has only just served his time."

"His career now may be wholly changed, and he may never embark in trade," said Constance. "But if he were to do so I cannot see that he would be degraded, any more than he is degraded by having been an apprentice."

"Cadets of our best Lancashire and Cheshire families are constantly apprenticed, so there is nothing in that," remarked Jemmy. "I repeat my conviction that Atherton is a gentleman born. Dr. Byrom is of the same opinion."

"Dr. Byrom may be influenced by partiality. I fancy he would like the young man as a son-in-law," said Monica. "Beppy Byrom certainly would not object to the arrangement," she added, with a significant smile that conveyed a good deal.

"Is Beppy Byrom pretty?" asked Constance.

"Decidedly so – one of the prettiest girls in Manchester," rejoined Monica.

"And is Mr. Atherton Legh insensible to her attractions?" inquired Constance, as carelessly as she could.

"That I can't pretend to say," returned her cousin. "But I should scarcely think he can be so."

"At all events, he pays her very little attention," remarked Jemmy.

Constance cast down her magnificent eyes, and her countenance assumed a thoughtful expression that seemed to heighten its beauty.

While she remained thus preoccupied, Monica and her lover moved towards the window and looked out, or appeared to be looking out, for it is highly probable they only saw each other.

Presently Constance arose, and saying she desired to be alone for a few minutes, left them together.

Proceeding to her own chamber, she sat down and began to review as calmly as she could the strange and hurried events of the morning, in which Atherton Legh had played a conspicuous part, and though the rest of the picture presented to her mental gaze appeared somewhat confused, his image rose distinctly before her.

The young man's singular story, as related by Jemmy Dawson, had greatly stimulated her curiosity, and she indulged in many idle fancies respecting him – such as will flash through a young girl's brain – sometimes endeavouring to account for the mystery of his birth in one way, sometimes in another, but always feeling sure he was well-born.

"If any one ever proclaimed himself a gentleman by look and manner, it is Atherton Legh," she thought. "And as to his courage it is indisputable. But I have been thinking only of this young man all the time," she reflected, with a feeling of self-reproach, "when I ought to have been thinking of papa. I ought to have locked up the packet of important papers that he confided to me before his arrest. I will repair my neglect at once."

With this resolve she arose, and taking out the packet was about to place it in her writing-case, when a letter fell to the ground.

The letter was partly open, and a name caught her eye that made her start.

The impulse to glance at the contents of the letter was irresistible, and she found, to her infinite surprise, that the communication related to Atherton Legh, and was addressed by a Manchester banker to Sir Richard Rawcliffe, leaving no doubt whatever on her mind that her father was the young man's mysterious guardian.

In fact, Mr. Marriott, the banker in question, stated that, in compliance with Sir Richard's order, he had paid a certain sum to Mr. Atherton Legh, and had also delivered the letter enclosed by the baronet to the young man.

Astonishment at the discovery almost took away her breath, and she remained gazing at the letter as if doubting whether she had read it aright, till it dropped from her hands.

"My father Atherton's guardian!" she exclaimed. "How comes it he has never made the slightest allusion to his ward? Why have I been kept so completely in the dark? Till I came to Manchester last night I had never heard there was such a person as Atherton Legh. Chance seems to have revealed the secret to me. Yet it must have been something more than chance. Otherwise, the letter could never have fallen into my hands at this particular juncture. But what have I discovered? Only that my father is Atherton's mysterious guardian – nothing respecting the young man's parentage. That is the real secret which I fear will never be cleared up by my father – even if I venture to question him. Let me reflect. The reason why this young man has been brought up thus must be that he belongs to some old Jacobite family, the chief members of which have been banished. That would account for all. My father corresponds with several important persons who were engaged in the last rebellion, and are now abroad. I need not seek further for an explanation – yet I am not altogether satisfied. I must not breathe a word to Monica of the singular discovery I have made, for the secret, I feel, would not be safe with her. But methinks my father might have trusted me. Till I see him again, my lips shall be sealed – even to Atherton, should I happen to meet him. Doubtless these letters," she continued, taking up the packet, and examining it, "would afford me full information respecting the young man, but, though strongly tempted, I will read nothing more, without my father's sanction."

She then replaced the letter she had dropped with the others, and had just locked up the packet in a small valise, when her cousin came in quest of her.

CHAPTER XIV.
ST. ANN'S SQUARE

"The crowd in the market-place has dispersed, and all seems quiet," said Monica. "Shall we take an airing in St. Ann's Square? Jemmy will escort us. 'Tis a fine day – as fine a day, at least, as one can expect in November."

Constance assented, and they forthwith prepared for a walk – each arraying herself in a black hood and scarf, and each taking a large fan with her, though the necessity for such an article at that late season of the year did not seem very obvious. But at the period of which we treat, a woman, with any pretension to mode, had always a fan dangling from her wrist.

Attended by Jemmy Dawson, who was looked upon as one of the beaux of the town, they sallied forth, and passing the Exchange, where a couple of porters standing in the doorway were the only persons to be seen, they took their way through a narrow alley, called Acres Court, filled with small shops, and leading from the back of the Exchange to the square.

Usually, Acres Court was crowded, but no one was to be seen there now, and the shops were shut.

Not many years previous to the date of our history, St. Ann's Square was an open field – Acres Field being its designation.

The area was tolerably spacious – the houses surrounding it being some three or four stories high, plain and formal in appearance, with small windows, large doorways, and heavy wooden balustrades, meant to be ornamental, at the top. Most of them were private residences.

On either side of the square was a row of young plane trees. At the further end stood the church, of the architectural beauty of which we cannot say much; but it had its admirers in those days, and perhaps may have admirers in our own, for it still stands where it did. In fact, the square retains a good deal of its original appearance.

Here the beau monde of the town was wont to congregate in the middle of the last century – the ladies in their hoop petticoats, balloon-like sacques, and high-heeled shoes, with powder in their locks, and patches on their cheeks; and the gentlemen in laced coats of divers colours, cocked hats, and periwigs, ruffles at the wrist, and solitaires round the throat, sword by the side, and clouded cane in hand. Here they met to criticise each other and talk scandal, in imitation of the fine folks to be seen on the Mall at St. James's.

But none of these triflers appeared in St. Ann's Square when Miss Rawcliffe and her companions entered it. Only one young lady, attended by a couple of clergymen, could be descried pacing to and fro on the broad pavement.

In this damsel Monica at once recognised Beppy Byrom, but she made no remark on the subject to Constance, and stopped Jemmy, who was about to blab.

Presently, Beppy turned and advanced towards them, and then Constance could not fail to be struck by her good looks, and inquired who she was?

"Can't you guess?" cried Monica.

"Is it Beppy Byrom?" said Constance, colouring.

Monica nodded. "What do you think of her?"

Before a reply could be made, Beppy came up, and an introduction took place. Beppy and Constance scrutinised each other with a rapid glance. But no fault could be detected on either side.

"Allow me to congratulate you on Sir Richard's escape, Miss Rawcliffe," said Beppy. "Papa sent a warning letter to him, as no doubt you know, but Sir Richard did not receive it in time to avoid the arrest. How courageously Mr. Atherton Legh seems to have behaved on the occasion."

"Yes, papa owes his deliverance entirely to Mr. Legh," rejoined Constance. "We have good reason to feel grateful to him."

"'Tis perhaps a superfluous offer," said Beppy. "But since Sir Richard has been compelled to fly, can we be of any service to you? Our house is roomy, and we can accommodate you without the slightest inconvenience."

"You are extremely kind," said Constance. "I shall probably remain at the inn; but if I do move, it will be to my Aunt Butler's."

"Yes, mamma would be hurt if my Cousin Constance did not come to her," interposed Monica. "We are going to her presently. She is out of the way of these disturbances, and has probably never heard of them."

"Your mamma, I believe, is a great invalid, Miss Butler?" remarked Beppy. "I have heard Dr. Deacon speak of her."

"Yes, she rarely leaves the house. But she has a most capital nurse – so that I can leave her without the slightest apprehension."

"That is fortunate," said Beppy. "I hope you will soon have good tidings of Sir Richard, Miss Rawcliffe?"

"I don't expect to hear anything of him till he re-appears with the prince," replied Constance, in a low tone. "I am under no alarm about him."

"Well, perhaps, the person in greatest jeopardy is Atherton Legh," said Beppy. "I should like to feel quite sure he is safe."

"Then take the assurance from me, Miss Byrom," observed Jemmy.

"Do tell me where he is?" she asked.

"He has taken refuge with Tom Syddall," was the reply, in an undertone.

"She takes a deep interest in him," thought Constance.

The two clergymen, who were no other than Mr. Nichols and Mr. Lewthwaite, and who had stood aside during this discourse, now came forward, and were presented to Miss Rawcliffe.

The conversation then became general, and was proceeding pleasantly enough, when a very alarming sound put a sudden stop to it.

It was a fire-bell. And the clangour evidently came from the tower of the collegiate church.

The conversation instantly ceased, as we have said, and those who had been engaged in it glanced at each other uneasily.

"Heaven preserve us!" ejaculated Mr. Lewthwaite. "With how many plagues is this unfortunate town to be visited? Are we to have a conflagration in addition to the other calamities by which we are menaced?"

Meantime, the clangour increased in violence, and shouts of "Fire! fire!" resounded in all directions.

But the alarm of the party was considerably heightened when another fire-bell began to ring – this time close to them.

From the tower of St. Ann's Church the warning sounds now came – stunning and terrifying those who listened to them; and bringing forth many of the occupants of the houses in the square.

"It must be a great fire! – perhaps the work of an incendiary!" cried Mr. Nichols. "I will not attribute the mischief to Jacobite plotters, but I fear it will turn out that they are the instigators of it."

"It looks suspicious, I must own," remarked Mr. Lewthwaite.

"You have no warrant for these observations, gentlemen," said Jemmy, indignantly.

Still the fire-bells rang on with undiminished fury, and numbers of people were seen running across the square – shouting loudly as they hurried along.

"Where is the fire?" cried Beppy.

"It must be in the neighbourhood of the collegiate church," replied Mr. Lewthwaite. "All the houses are old in that quarter, and built of timber. Half the town will be consumed. That will be lamentable, but it will not be surprising, since the inhabitants have assuredly called down a judgment upon their heads from their propensity to rebellion."

Jemmy Dawson, who had great difficulty in controlling his anger, was about to make a sharp rejoinder to this speech, when a look from Monica checked him.

Just then several men ran past, and he hailed one of them, who stopped.

"Can you tell me where the fire is?" he asked.

"There be no fire, sir," replied the man, with a grin.

"No fire!" exclaimed Jemmy, astounded. "Why, then, are the fire-bells being rung thus loudly?"

"To collect a mob, if yo mun know," rejoined the man.

"For what purpose?" demanded Jemmy.

"Rebellion! rebellion! Can you doubt it?" said Mr. Lewthwaite.

"Ay, yo may ca' it rebellion an yo like, but this be the plain truth," said the man. "T' magistrates ha' just gi'en orders that Salford Bridge shan be blowed up to hinder t' Pretender, as yo ca' him, or t' prince, as we ca' him, fro' comin' into t' town, wi' his army. Now we Jacobites won't let the bridge be meddled with, so we han had the fire-bells rung to rouse the townsfolk."

"And you mean to resist the authorities?" cried Mr. Lewthwaite.

"Ay, that we do," rejoined the man, defiantly. "They shan't move a stone of the bridge."

"Beware what you do! You are rebelling against your lawful sovereign as represented by the magistrates. Forget not that rebellion provokes the Lord's anger, and will bring down his vengeance upon you."

"I canna bide to listen to a sarmon just now," rejoined the man, hurrying off.

"Can't we obtain a sight of what is going on at the bridge from the banks of the river?" said Constance.

"Yes, I will take you to a spot that commands a complete view of the bridge," rejoined Jemmy; "where you can see all that is to be seen, and yet not run the slightest risk."

"Shall we go, Monica?" said Constance.

"By all means," cried the other.

"I should like to make one of the party," said Beppy, who had just recollected that Tom Syddall's shop, where she knew Atherton had taken refuge, adjoined the bridge, and she thought it almost certain the young man would take part in this new disturbance.

"I advise you not to go, Miss Byrom," said Mr. Lewthwaite. "Neither Mr. Nichols nor myself can sanction such a lawless proceeding by our presence."

"As you please," said Beppy.

"Pray come with us, Miss Byrom," cried Jemmy. "I will engage that no harm shall befall you."

So they set off, leaving the two curates behind, both looking very much disconcerted.

CHAPTER XV.
HOW SALFORD HOUSE WAS SAVED FROM DESTRUCTION

By this time the fire-bells had ceased to ring, but the effect had been produced, and a great crowd, much more excited than that which had previously assembled in the market-place, was collected in the immediate neighbourhood of the bridge.

Salford Bridge, which must have been a couple of centuries old at the least, was strongly built of stone, and had several narrow-pointed arches, strengthened by enormous piers. These arches almost choked up the course of the river. Only a single carriage could cross the bridge at a time, but there were deep angular recesses in which foot-passengers could take refuge. It will be seen at once that such a structure could be stoutly defended against a force approaching from Salford, though it was commanded by the precipitous banks on the Manchester side. Moreover, the Irwell was here of considerable depth.

Before commencing operations, the magistrates, who were not without apprehension of a tumult, stopped all traffic across the bridge, and placed a strong guard at either extremity, to protect the workmen and engineers from any hindrance on the part of the populace.

A couple of large caissons, containing, it was supposed, a sufficient quantity of powder to overthrow the solid pier, had been sunk under the central arch of the bridge. Above the spot, in a boat, sat two engineers ready to fire the powder-chests when the signal should be given.

But the preparations had been watched by two daring individuals, who were determined to prevent them. One of these persons, who was no other than Tom Syddall, the Jacobite barber – a very active, resolute little fellow – ran up to the collegiate church, which was at no great distance from his shop, and soon found the man of whom he was in search – Isaac Clegg, the beadle.

Now Isaac being a Jacobite, like himself, was easily persuaded to ring the fire-bell; and the alarm being thus given, a mob was quickly raised. But no effectual opposition could be offered – the approach to the bridge from Smithy Bank being strongly barricaded. Behind the barricades stood the constables, who laughed at the mob, and set them at defiance.

"The boroughreeve will blow up the bridge in spite of you," they cried.

"If he does, he'll repent it," answered several angry voices from the crowd, which rapidly increased in number, and presented a very formidable appearance.

Already it had been joined by the desperadoes armed with bludgeons, who had figured in the previous disturbance in the market-place, and were quite ready for more mischief.

The usual Jacobite cries were heard, but these were now varied by "Down with the boroughreeve!" "Down with the constables!"

Mr. Fielden himself was on the bridge, with his brother magistrates, superintending the operations, and irritated by the insolent shouts of the mob, he came forward to address them.

For a few minutes they would not listen to him, but at last he obtained a hearing.

"Go home quietly," he cried, in a loud voice. "Go home like loyal and peaceful subjects of the king. We mean to destroy the bridge to prevent the entrance of the rebels."

On this there was a terrific shout, accompanied by groans, yells, and hootings.

"Down with Fielden! – down with Fielden!" cried a hundred voices. "He shan't do it!"

"Mark my words," vociferated the boroughreeve, who remained perfectly unmoved amid the storm, "in five minutes from this time the central arch will be blown up."

"We will prevent it," roared the mob, shaking their hands at him.

"You can't prevent it," rejoined the boroughreeve, contemptuously. "Two large boxes filled with gunpowder are sunk beneath the arch, and on a signal from me will be fired."

Surprise kept the mob quiet for a moment, and before another outburst could take place, the boroughreeve had turned on his heel, and marched off.

Meantime, the three young damsels, under the careful guidance of Jemmy Dawson, had made their way, without experiencing any annoyance, to the precipitous rock on which Atherton Legh had stood, while contemplating the same scene on the previous night.

From this lofty position, as the reader is aware, the bridge was completely commanded. Another person was on the rock when they reached it. This was Isaac Clegg, the beadle, who was well known to Beppy. He instantly made way for her and her friends, and proved useful in giving them some necessary information.

He told them exactly what was going on on the bridge – explained how the angry mob was kept back by the barricade – pointed out the boroughreeve – and finally drew their attention to the engineers in the boat beneath the arch ready to fire the caissons.

As will readily be supposed, it was this part of the singular scene that excited the greatest interest among the spectators assembled on the rock. But, shortly afterwards, their interest was intensified to the highest degree.

A boat was suddenly seen on the river, about a bow-shot above the bridge. It must have been concealed somewhere, for its appearance took all the beholders by surprise. The boat was rowed by two men, who seemed to have disguised themselves, for they were strangely muffled up. Plying their oars vigorously, they came down the stream with great swiftness.

From the course taken it would almost seem as if they were making for the central arch, beneath which the engineers were posted. Evidently the engineers thought so, for they stood up in their boat and shouted lustily to the others to keep off. But the two oarsmen held on their course, and even increased their speed.

Though the two men had disguised themselves, they did not altogether escape detection, for as they dashed past the rock on which Constance and the others were stationed, the foremost oarsman momentarily turned his head in that direction, and disclosed the features of Atherton Legh; while Isaac Clegg declared his conviction that the second oarsman was no other than Tom Syddall.

"'Tis Tom, I be sartin," said Isaac. "He has put on a different sort of wig from that he usually wears, and has tied a handkerchief over his keven-huller, but I'd swear to his nose. What can have induced him to make this mad attempt?"

It was a moment of breathless suspense, for the purpose of the daring oarsmen could no longer be doubted. Not only were they anxiously watched by the spectators on the rock, but the gaze of hundreds was fixed upon them.

Mingled and contradictory shouts were raised – "Keep off!" "Go on!" But the latter predominated.

The engineers prepared to receive the shock they could not avert. In another instant, the boat propelled by all the force the rowers could exert, dashed into them, and staved in the side of their bark.

No longer any question of blowing up the arch. The engineers were both precipitated into the river by the collision, and had to swim ashore.

Leaving them, however, to shift for themselves, the two daring oarsmen continued their rapid course down the stream, amid the deafening shouts of the crowd on Smithy Bank.

Such excitement was caused by this bold exploit that the mob could no longer be kept back.

Breaking through the barricade, and driving off the guard, after a short struggle, they took possession of the bridge – declaring their fixed determination not to allow it to be damaged. Compelled to beat a hasty retreat into Salford, the magistrates were glad to escape without injury.

CHAPTER XVI.
TOM SYDDALL

For some time the two oarsmen rowed on as swiftly as they could, fancying they should be pursued, but finding this was not the case, they began to relax their efforts, and liberated themselves from their disguises.

When divested of the handkerchief tied round his head, and of some other coverings concealing the lower part of his visage, Tom Syddall was fully revealed.

'Twas a physiognomy not easily to be mistaken, owing to the size of the nose, which, besides being enormous, was singularly formed. Moreover, Tom's face was hatchet-shaped.

He had a great soul in a small body. Though a little fellow, he was extremely active, and full of spirit – capable, in his own opinion, of great things. A slight boaster, perhaps, but good-tempered, rarely taking offence if laughed at. Tom despised his vocation, and declared he was cut out for a soldier, but he also declared he would never serve King George – so a barber he remained.

Though there was something ludicrous in his assumption, no one who knew him doubted that he would fight – and fight manfully, too – for the Stuarts, should the opportunity ever be offered him.

Ordinarily, Tom Syddall's manner was comic, but he put on a sombre and tragic expression, when alluding to his father, who was executed for taking part in the rebellion of 1715 – his head being fixed upon a spike in the market-place. Tom had vowed to avenge his father, and frequently referred to the oath. Such was Tom Syddall, whose personal appearance and peculiarities rendered him a noticeable character in Manchester at the time.

His companion, it is scarcely necessary to say, was Atherton Legh.

As they rested for a moment upon their oars they both laughed heartily.

"We may be proud of the exploit we have performed," cried Tom. "We have served the prince, and saved the bridge. Three minutes later and the arch would have been blown up. The scheme was well-designed, and well-executed."

"You deserve entire credit both for plan and execution, Tom," rejoined Atherton.

"Nay, sir," said Syddall with affected modesty. "'Twas a bold and well-conceived scheme I admit, but I could not have carried it out without your aid. I trust we may always be successful in our joint undertakings. With you for a leader I would not shrink from any enterprise, however hazardous it might appear. I was struck with your coolness. 'Tis a good sign in a young man."

"Well, I think we are both taking it easily enough, Tom," said Atherton. "We are loitering here as calmly as if nothing had happened. However, I don't think any pursuit need be apprehended. The boroughreeve will have enough to do to look after the mob."

"Ay, that he will," said Syddall. "He has but a very short tenure of office left. The prince will soon be here, and then all will be changed. Did you notice those ladies on the rock near the bridge? They seemed greatly excited, and cheered us."

"Yes, I saw them, and I am glad they saw us, Tom. One of them was Sir Richard Rawcliffe's daughter. I felt my arm strengthened when I found she was watching us. I think I could have done twice as much as I did."

"You did quite enough, sir," observed Syddall, smiling. "But shall we land, or drop quietly down the river for a mile or two, and then return by some roundabout road?"

"Let us go on," said Atherton. "I don't think it will be safe to return just yet."

By this time, though they had not left the bridge much more than half-a-mile behind, they were completely in the country. On the right the banks were still high and rocky, narrowing the stream, and shutting out the view.

But though the modern part of the town extended in this direction, two or three fields intervened between the houses and the river. On the left, the banks being low, the eye could range over

pleasant meadows around which the Irwell meandered, forming a charming prospect from the heights overlooking the wide valley through which it pursued its winding course.

So nearly complete was the circle described by the river, that the upper part of the stream was here not very far distant from the lower.

But our object in depicting this locality is to show how wonderfully it is changed. The meadows just alluded to, intersected by hedgerows, and with only two or three farm-houses to be seen amidst them, are now covered with buildings of all kinds – warehouses, mills, and other vast structures. Bridges now span the river; innumerable houses are reared upon its banks; and scarce a foot of ground remains unoccupied.

In a word, an immense and populous town has sprung up, covering the whole area encircled by the Irwell, and the pleasing country scene we have endeavoured to describe has for ever vanished. Few persons would imagine that the polluted river was once bright and clear, and its banks picturesque, and fringed with trees. Yet such was the case little more than a century ago.

Salford at that time was comprised within very narrow limits, and only possessed a single street, which communicated with the old bridge. In Manchester, between the upper part of Deansgate and the river, there were fields entirely unbuilt upon, and a lane bordered by hedges ran down through these fields to the quay.

The quay itself was very small, and consisted of a wharf with a house and warehouse attached to it.

It seems astonishing that a town so important as was Manchester in 1745, should not have had a larger storehouse for goods, but apparently the merchants were content with it. Barges were then towed up the river as far as the quay, but not beyond.

As Atherton and his companion rowed slowly down the river, they did not encounter a single boat till they came in sight of the wharf, where a barge and a few small craft were moored. They now debated with themselves whether to land here or go lower down: and at length decided upon halting, thinking there could be no danger. But they were mistaken. As they drew near the wharf, three men armed with muskets suddenly appeared on the deck of the barge, and commanded them to stop.

"You are prisoners," cried one of these persons. "We have just received information by a mounted messenger of the occurrence at Salford Bridge, and we know you to be the men who ran down the engineers. You are prisoners, I repeat. Attempt to move off and we will fire upon you."

As the muskets were levelled at their heads from so short a distance, Atherton and his companion felt that resistance would be useless, so they surrendered at discretion, and prepared to disembark. Some other men, who were standing by, took charge of them as they stepped ashore.

CHAPTER XVII.
HOW TOM SYDDALL WAS CARRIED HOME IN TRIUMPH

In another minute the person who had addressed them from the barge came up, and Tom Syddall, who now recognised him as Matthew Sharrocks, the wharf-master, inquired what he meant to do with them.

"Detain you till I learn the magistrates' intentions respecting you," replied Sharrocks. "The boroughreeve will be forthwith acquainted with the capture. The messenger is waiting. Do you deny the offence?"

"No, I glory in the deed," rejoined Syddall."'Tis an action of which we may be justly proud. We have saved the bridge from destruction at the risk of our own lives."

"You will be clapped into prison and punished for what you have done," said Sharrocks.

"If we should be imprisoned, Sharrocks, which I doubt," rejoined Syddall, confidently, "the people will deliver us. Know you who I am?"

"Well enough; you are Tom Syddall, the barber," said the other.

"I am the son of that Tom Syddall who approved his devotion to the royal House of Stuart with his blood."

"Ay, I recollect seeing your father's head stuck up in the market-place," said Sharrocks. "Take care your own is not set up in the same spot."

He then marched off to despatch the messenger to the boroughreeve, and on his return caused the prisoners to be taken to the great storehouse, from an upper window of which was suspended a flag, emblazoned with the royal arms.

"I tell you what, Sharrocks," said Syddall, "before two days that flag will be hauled down."

"I rather think not," rejoined the wharf-master dryly.

Atherton Legh took no part in this discourse, but maintained a dignified silence.

The prisoners were then shut up in a small room near the entrance of the storehouse, and a porter armed with a loaded musket was placed as a sentinel at the door.

However, except for the restraint, they had no reason to complain of their treatment. A pint of wine was brought them, with which they regaled themselves, and after drinking a couple of glasses, Tom, who had become rather downcast, felt his spirits considerably revive.

Knocking at the door, he called out to the porter, "I say, friend, if not against rules, I should very much like a pipe."

The porter being a good-natured fellow said he would see about it, and presently returned with a pipe and a paper of tobacco. His wants being thus supplied, Tom sat down and smoked away very comfortably.

Atherton paid very little attention to him. Truth to say, he was thinking of Constance Rawcliffe.

Rather more than an hour had elapsed, and Mr. Sharrocks was expecting an answer from the boroughreeve, when he heard a tumultuous sound in the lane, already described as leading from the top of Deansgate to the quay.

Alarmed by this noise, he hurried to the great gate, which he had previously ordered to be closed, and looking out, perceived a mob, consisting of some three or four hundred persons, hurrying towards the spot.

If he had any doubt as to their intentions it would have been dispelled by hearing that their cry was "Tom Syddall!" Evidently they were coming to liberate the brave barber.

Hastily shutting and barring the gate, and ordering the porters to guard it, he flew to the room in which Tom and his companion were confined, and found the one tranquilly smoking his pipe, as we have related, and the other seated in a chair opposite him, and plunged in a reverie.

"Well, Sharrocks," said Tom, blowing a whiff from his mouth, and looking up quietly at him, "have you come to say that the boroughreeve has ordered us to be clapped in prison? ha!"

"I have come to set you free, gentlemen," said the wharf-master, blandly. "You are quite at liberty to depart."

"Ho! ho!" cried Tom. "You have altered your tone, methinks, Sharrocks."

"I am in no hurry," said Atherton. "I am quite comfortable here."

"But you *must*, and *shall* go," cried Sharrocks.

"Must! and shall!" echoed Atherton. "Suppose we refuse to stir! – what then?"

"Yes, what then, Sharrocks?" said Tom, replacing the pipe in his mouth.

The wharf-master was about to make an angry rejoinder, when a loud noise outside convinced him that the porters had yielded to the mob, and thrown open the gates.

"Zounds! they have got into the yard!" he exclaimed.

"Who have got in?" cried Atherton, springing to his feet.

"Your friends, the mob," replied Sharrocks.

"Hurrah!" exclaimed Syddall, jumping up likewise, and waving his pipe over his head. "I knew the people would come to release us. Hurrah! hurrah!"

Almost frantic with delight, he ran out into the yard, followed by Atherton – Sharrocks bringing up the rear.

Already the yard was half-full of people, most of whom were gathered thickly in front of the storehouse, and the moment they perceived Tom Syddall and Atherton, they set up a tremendous shout.

But Tom was their especial favourite. Those nearest placed him on the top of an empty cask, so that he could be seen by the whole assemblage, and in reply to their prolonged cheers, he thanked them heartily for coming to deliver him and his companion, telling them they would soon see the prince in Manchester, and bidding them, in conclusion, shout for King James the Third and Charles, Prince Regent – setting them the example himself.

While the yard was ringing with treasonable shouts and outcries, Tom quitted his post, but he soon reappeared. He had made his way to the upper room of the building, from the window of which the obnoxious flag was displayed. Hauling it down, he tore off the silken banner in sight of the crowd, and replacing it with a white handkerchief, brought down the rebel flag he had thus improvised, and gave it to one of the spectators, who carried it about in triumph.

Hitherto the mob had behaved peaceably enough, but they now grew rather disorderly, and some of them declared they would not go away empty-handed.

Fearing they might plunder the store-house, which was full of goods of various kinds, Sharrocks came up to Tom Syddall and besought him to use his influence with them to depart peaceably.

"I'll try what I can do, Sharrocks," replied Tom. "Though you made some uncalled-for observations upon me just now, I don't bear any malice."

"I'm very sorry for what I said, Mr. Syddall," rejoined the wharf-master, apologetically – "very sorry, indeed."

"Enough. I can afford to be magnanimous, Sharrocks. I forgive the remarks. But you will find you were wrong, sir – you will find that I *shall* avenge my father."

"I have no doubt of it, Mr. Syddall," rejoined Sharrocks. "But in the meantime, save the storehouse from plunder, and you shall have my good word with the boroughreeve."

"I don't want your good word, Sharrocks," said Tom, disdainfully.

With Atherton's assistance he then once more mounted the cask, and the crowd seeing he was about to address them became silent.

"I have a few words to say to you, my friends," he cried, in a voice that all could hear. "Don't spoil the good work you have done by committing any excesses. Don't let the Hanoverians and Presbyterians have the power of casting reproach upon us. Don't disgrace the good cause. Our royal prince shoots

every Highlander who pillages. He won't shoot any of you, but he'll think better of you if you abstain from plunder."

The commencement of this address was received with some murmurs, but these ceased as the speaker went on, and at the close he was loudly cheered, and it was evident from their altered demeanour that the crowd intended to follow his advice.

"I am glad to find you mean to behave like good Jacobites and honest men. Now let us go home quietly, and unless we're assaulted we won't break the peace."

"We'll carry you home safely," shouted several of the bystanders. "A chair! a chair! Give us a chair!"

These demands were promptly complied with by Sharrocks, who brought out a large arm-chair, in which Tom being installed, was immediately hoisted aloft by four sturdy individuals.

Thus placed, he bowed right and left, in acknowledgement of the cheers of the assemblage.

Not wishing to take a prominent part in these proceedings, Atherton had kept aloof, but he now came up to Syddall, and shaking hands with him, told him in a whisper that he might expect to see him at night.

The brave little Jacobite barber was then borne off in triumph, surrounded by his friends – a tall man marching before him carrying the white flag.

The procession took its way up the lane to Deansgate, along which thoroughfare it slowly moved, its numbers continually increasing as it went on, while the windows of the houses were thronged with spectators.

Thus triumphantly was Tom conveyed to his dwelling. Throughout the whole route no molestation was offered him – the magistrates prudently abstaining from further interference.

Before quitting him, the crowd promised to come to his succour should any attempt be made to arrest him.

Atherton did not join the procession, but took a totally different route.

Leaving the boat with the wharf-master, who volunteered to take care of it, he caused himself to be ferried across the river, and soon afterwards entered a path leading across the fields in the direction of Salford.

He walked along very slowly, being anxious to hold a little self-communion; and stopped now and then to give free scope to his reflections.

CHAPTER XVIII.
THE MEETING IN THE GARDEN

From these fields, the town, which was scarcely a mile distant, could be seen in its full extent. In saying "town," we include Salford, for no break in the continuity of the houses was distinguishable. The buildings on either side of the Irwell seemed massed together; and the bridge was entirely hidden.

It was not a very bright day – we must recollect it was November – but the lights chanced to be favourable, and brought out certain objects in a striking manner. For instance, the collegiate church, which formed almost the central part of the picture, stood out in bold relief, with its massive tower against a clear sky. A gleam of sunshine fell upon St. Ann's Church and upon the modern buildings near it, and Trinity Church in Salford was equally favoured. Other charming effects were produced, which excited the young man's admiration, and he remained gazing for some time at the prospect. He then accelerated his pace, and soon reached the outskirts of Salford.

At the entrance of the main street stood Trinity Church, to which we have just alluded – a modern pile of no great beauty, but possessing a lofty tower ornamented with pinnacles, and surmounted by a short spire. The row of houses on the right side of the street formed pleasant residences, for they had extensive gardens running down to the banks of the river.

Opposite the church, but withdrawn from the street, stood an old-fashioned mansion with a garden in front, surrounded by high walls. The place had a neglected air. Large gates of wrought iron, fashioned in various devices, opened upon the garden. Recollecting to have heard that this old mansion was occupied by Mrs. Butler – Monica's mother and Constance's aunt – Atherton stopped to look at it, and while peering through the iron gates, he beheld Miss Rawcliffe herself in the garden.

She was alone, and the impulse that prompted him to say a few words to her being too strong to be resisted, he opened the gates and went in. She had disappeared, but he found her seated in an arbour.

On beholding him she uttered a cry of surprise, and started up. For a moment the colour deserted her cheek, but the next instant a blush succeeded.

"I am glad to see you, Mr. Atherton Legh," she said. "But how did you learn I was here?"

"Accident has brought me hither," he replied. "While passing the garden gates I chanced to see you, and ventured in. If I have been too bold, I will retire at once."

"Oh, no – pray stay! I am delighted to see you. But you are very incautious to venture forth. You ought to keep in some place of concealment. However, let me offer you my meed of admiration. I was wonderstruck by your last gallant exploit."

"You helped me to accomplish it."

"*I* helped you – how? I was merely a spectator."

"That was quite sufficient. I felt your eyes were upon me. I fancied I had your approval."

"I most heartily wished you success," she rejoined, again blushing deeply. "But I think you are excessively rash. Suppose the caissons had been fired, you would have been destroyed by the explosion."

"In that case I might have had your sympathy."

"Yes, but my sympathy would have been worth very little. It would not have brought you to life."

"It would have made death easy."

"With such exalted sentiments, 'tis a pity you did not live in the days of chivalry."

"If I had I would have maintained the peerless beauty of the dame I worshipped against all comers."

"Now you are beginning to talk high-flown nonsense, so I must stop you."

But she did not look offended.

Presently she added, "Do you desire to win distinction? Do you wish to please me?"

"I desire to please you more than any one on earth, Miss Rawcliffe," he rejoined, earnestly. "I will do whatever you ask me."

"Then join the prince. But no! I ought not to extort this pledge from you. Reflect! reflect!"

"No need of reflection. My decision is made. I will join the Manchester Regiment."

"Then I will place the sash on your shoulder, and gird on your sword," she said.

A fire seemed kindled in the young man's breast by these words. Casting an impassioned glance at the fair maiden, he prostrated himself at her feet, and taking her hand, which she did not withhold, pressed it to his lips.

"I devote myself to you," he said, in a fervent tone.

"And to the good cause?" she cried.

"To the good cause," he rejoined. "But chiefly to you."

Before he could rise from his kneeling posture, Monica and Jemmy Dawson, who had come forth from the house, approached the arbour, but seeing how matters stood, they would have retired; but Constance, who did not exhibit the slightest embarrassment, advanced to meet them.

"I have gained another recruit for the prince," she said.

"So I see," replied Monica. "His royal highness could not have a better officer."

"I am sure not," said Jemmy Dawson.

And embracing his friend, he cried, "I longed for you as a companion-in-arms, and my desire is gratified. We shall serve together – conquer together – or die together. Whatever it may be, apparently our destiny will be the same."

"You are certain of a rich reward," said Atherton. "But I – "

"Live in hope," murmured Constance.

"Not till I have discovered the secret of my birth will I presume to ask your hand," said the young man.

Constance thought of the packet confided to her by her father – of the letter she had read – and felt certain the mystery would be soon unravelled.

Just then Monica interposed.

"Pray come into the house, Mr. Atherton Legh," she said. "Mamma will be much pleased to see you. We have been extolling you to the skies. She is a great invalid, and rarely leaves her room, but to-day, for a wonder, she is downstairs."

Atherton did not require a second bidding, but went with them into the house.

CHAPTER XIX.
MRS. BUTLER

In a large, gloomy-looking, plainly-furnished room might be seen a middle-aged dame, who looked like the superior of a religious house – inasmuch as she wore a conventual robe of dark stuff, with a close hood that fell over her shoulders, and a frontlet beneath it that concealed her locks – blanched by sorrow more than age. From her girdle hung a rosary. Her figure was thin almost to emaciation, but it was hidden by her dress; her cheeks were pallid; her eyes deep sunk in their sockets; but her profile still retained its delicacy and regularity of outline, and showed she must once have possessed rare beauty. Her countenance wore a sweet, sad, resigned expression.

Mrs. Butler – for she it was – suffered from great debility, brought on, not merely by ill-health, but by frequent vigils and fasting. So feeble was she that she seldom moved beyond a small room, adjoining her bed-chamber, which she used as an oratory; but on that day she had been induced by her daughter to come down-stairs.

She was seated in a strong, oaken chair, destitute of a cushion, and propped up by a pillow, which she deemed too great an indulgence, but which was absolutely requisite for her support. Her small feet – of which she had once been vain – rested on a fauteuil. On a little table beside her lay a book of devotion.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.