

VARIOUS

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Volume 59, No. 363, January, 1846**

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SIR WILLIAM FOLLETT

The disappearance from the legal hemisphere of so bright a star as the late Sir William Follett, cast a gloom, not yet dissipated, over the legal profession, and all classes of society capable of appreciating great intellectual eminence. He died in his forty-seventh year; filling the great office of her Majesty's Attorney-general; the head and pride of the British Bar; a bright ornament of the senate; in the prime of manhood, and the plenitude of his extraordinary intellectual vigour; in the full noontide of success, just as he had reached the dazzling pinnacle of professional and official distinction. The tones of his low mellow voice were echoing sadly in the ears, his dignified and graceful figure and gesture were present to the eyes, of the bench and bar – when, at the commencement of last Michaelmas term, they re-assembled, with recruited energies, in the ancient inns of court, for the purpose of resuming their laborious and

responsible professional exertions in Westminster Hall. It was impossible not to think, at such a time, of Sir William Follett, without being conscious of having sustained a grievous, if not an irreparable, loss. Where was he whose name was so lately a tower of strength to suitors; whose consummate logical skill – whose wonderful resources – taxed to the uttermost those of judicial intellect, and baffled and overthrew the strongest who could be opposed to him in forensic warfare? Where, alas, was Sir William Follett? His eloquent lips were stilled in death, his remains were mouldering in the tomb – yes, almost within the very walls of that sacred structure, hallowed with the recollections and associations of centuries, in which his surviving brethren were assembled for worship on Sunday the 2d day of November 1845 – the commencement of the present legal year – at that period of it when *his* was erewhile ever the most conspicuous and shining figure, *his* exertions were the most interesting, the most important, *his* success was at once the most easy, decisive, and dazzling. Yes, there were assembled his brethren, who, with saddened faces and beating hearts, had attended his solemn obsequies in that very temple where was "committed his body to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust," where all, including the greatest and noblest in the land, acknowledged, humbly and mournfully, at the mouth of his grave, *that man walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain; he heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them!* Surely these are solemnizing and instructive reflections;

and many a heart will acknowledge them to be such, amidst all the din, and glare, and bustle of worldly affairs, in the awful presence of Him *who turneth man to destruction, and sayeth, Come again, ye children of men!*

Sir William Follett has now lain in his grave for six months. During this interval, the excitement which his death created amongst those who had been in constant intercourse with him for years, has subsided; leaving them better able to take a calm and candid view of his character, acquirements, and position, and form a sober estimate of the nature and extent of his reputation while living, and the probability of its permanently surviving him.

When summoned from the scene of his splendid and successful exertions, he was unquestionably the brightest ornament of the British bar. Immediately afterwards the press teemed with tributes to his memory: some of them characterised by great acuteness and discrimination, several by exaggerated eulogy, and one or two by a harsh disingenuousness amounting to misrepresentation and malevolence. Nothing excited more astonishment among those who had thoroughly known Sir William Follett, than the appearance of these attacks upon his memory, and the bad taste and feeling which alone could have prompted the perpetration of them, at a moment when the hearts of his surviving relatives and friends were quivering with the first agonies of their severe bereavement; when they had just lost one who had been the pride of their family, the pillar of their hopes, —

and who was universally supposed to have left behind him not a single enemy – who had been distinguished for his courteous, mild, and inoffensive character, and its unblemished purity in all the relations of private life. Certain of the strictures here alluded to, were petty, coarse, and uncandid; and with this observation they are dismissed from further notice. Sir William Follett had undoubtedly his shortcomings, in common with every one of his fellow men; and, as a small set-off against his many excellences of temper and character, one or two must be glanced at by any one essaying to present to the public, however imperfectly, a just account of this very eminent person. The failing in question formed the chief subject of vituperation —*vituperation of the dead!*— by the ungracious parties to whom brief reference has just been made; and consists, in short, in the excessive eagerness to accumulate money, by which it was alleged that the late Sir William Follett was characterised. This charge is certainly not without foundation; but while this frank admission is made, an important consideration ought to accompany it in guiding the judgment of every person of just and generous feeling; and will relieve the memory of the departed from much of the discredit sought to be attached to it.

The life of Sir William Follett appears to have been, from the first, of frail tenure. Could he have foreseen the terrible tax upon his scanty physical resources which would be exacted by the profession which he was about to adopt, he would probably have abandoned his intentions, justly conscious though he might

have been of his superior mental fitness for the Bar, and would have betaken himself to some more tranquil walk of life, which he might have been at this moment brightly adorning. He devoted himself, however, to the law, with intense and undivided energy; and, at a very early period of his professional career, was compelled to retire for a time from practice, by one of the most serious mischances which can befall humanity – it is believed, the bursting of a bloodvessel in the lungs. Was not this a very fearful occurrence – was it not almost conclusive evidence of the unwise choice which he had made of a profession requiring special strength in that organ – was it not justly calculated to alarm him for his future safety? And yet, what was he to have done? To have abandoned a profession for which alone he had qualified himself by years of profound and exclusive thought and labour? What Office would, under such circumstances, have insured the life of young Mr Follett, who, with such a fatal flaw in his constitution, was nevertheless following a profession which would hourly attack his most vulnerable part? Poor Follett! who can tell the apprehensions and agonies concerning his safety, to which he was doomed, from the moment of his first solemn summons to the grave, on the occasion alluded to? What had happened, he too well knew, might happen again at any moment, and hurry him out of life, leaving, in that case, comparatively destitute those whom he tenderly loved – for whom he was bound to provide – his widow and children. And for the widow and children of such a man as he knew that he had become, he felt that he

ought to make a suitable provision: that those who, after he was gone, were to bear his distinguished name, might be enabled to occupy the position in which he had placed them with dignity and comfort. Was such an illegitimate source of anxiety to one so circumstanced, and capable of Sir William Follett's superior aspirations? Was it not abundantly justified by his splendid qualifications and expectations? Why, then, should he not toil severely – exert himself even desperately – to provide against the direful contingency to which his life was subject? Alas! how many ambitious, honourable, high-minded, and fond husbands and fathers are echoing such questions with a sigh of agony! Poor Follett! 'twas for such reasons that he lived with an honourable economy, eschewing that extravagance and ostentation which too often, to men in his dazzling position, prove irresistible; it was for such reasons that he *rose up early, and went to bed late, and ate the bread of carefulness*. Had he been alone in the world – had he had none to provide for but himself, and yet had manifested the same feverish eagerness to acquire and accumulate money – had he loved money for money's sake, and accumulated it from the love of accumulation, the case would have been totally different. He might then have been justly despised, and characterized as being *of the earth, earthy*– incapable of high and generous sentiments and aspirations – sordid, grovelling, and utterly despicable. Sir William Follett had, during twenty years of intense and self-denying toil, succeeded in acquiring an ample fortune, which he disposed of, at his death, justly

and generously; and how many hours of exhaustion, both of mind and body, must have been cheered, from time to time, by reflecting upon the satisfactory provision which he was making – which he was daily augmenting – for those who were to survive him! Who can tell how much of the bitterness of death was assuaged by such considerations! When his fading eyes bent their aching glances upon those who wept around his death-bed, the retrospect of a life of labour and privation spent in providing for their comfort, must indeed have been sweet and consolatory! Surely this is but fair towards the distinguished dead. It is but just towards the memory of the departed, to believe his conduct to have been principally influenced by such considerations. All men have many faults – most men have grave faults. Is parsimony intrinsically more culpable than prodigality? Have not most of mankind a tendency towards one or the other? for how few are ennobled by the ability to steer evenly between the two! And even granting that Sir William Follett had a *tendency* towards the former failing, it was surely exhibited under circumstances which warrant us in saying, that "even his failings leaned to virtue's side."

Connected with and immediately dependent upon this imputation upon the late Sir William Follett, is another which cannot be overlooked. He is charged with having made a profit of his prodigious popularity and reputation, by discredibly and unconscientiously receiving fees from clients for services which he well knew at the time that he could not possibly render to

them; in short, with taking briefs in cases to which he had no reasonable hope of being able to attend. This is a very grave accusation, and requires a deliberate and honest examination. It is a long-established rule of English law, that barristers have no legal means of recovering their fees, even in cases of most arduous and successful exertion, except in the very few instances where a barrister may consider it consistent with the dignity of his position to enter beforehand into an express agreement with his client for the payment of his fees¹. A barrister's fee is regarded, in the eye of the law, as *quiddam honorarium*; and is usually – and ought to be invariably – paid beforehand, on the brief being delivered. A fee thus paid, a rule at the bar forbids being returned, except under very special circumstances; and the rule in question is a very reasonable one. As counsel have no legal title to remuneration, however laborious their exertions, what would be their position if they were expected or required to return their fees at the instance of unreasonable and disappointed clients? Where ought the line to be drawn? Who is to be the judge in such a case? A client may have derived little or no benefit from his counsel's exertions, which may yet have been very great; an accident, an oversight may have intervened, and prevented his completing those exertions by attending at the trial either at all, or during the whole of the trial; he may have

¹ This has been recently the subject of a decision of the Court of Queen's Bench, in the case of *Egan v. The Guardians of the Kensington Union*, 3 Queen's Bench Reports, p. 935, note (a). The same rule applies to physicians. *Veitch v. Russell*, *ib.* 928.

become unable to provide an efficient substitute; through the sudden pressure of other engagements, he may be unable to bestow upon the case the deliberate and thorough consideration which it requires – an unexpected and formidable difficulty may prove too great for his means of overcoming it, as might have been the case with men of superior skill and experience; – in these and many other instances which might be put, an angry and defeated client would rarely be without some pretext for requiring the return of his fees, and counsel would be subject to a pressure perfectly intolerable, most unreasonable, most unfair to themselves, leading to results seriously prejudicial to the interests of their clients; and a practice would be introduced entailing great evils and inconveniences, affecting the credit and honour of both branches of the legal profession. The rule in question rests upon the above, among many other valid reasons, and is generally acted upon. No one, however, can have any practical knowledge of the bar, without being aware of very many instances of counsel disregarding that rule, and evincing a noble disinterestedness in the matter of fees, either returning or declining to accept them, at a severe sacrifice of time and labour, after great anxiety and exertion have been bestowed, and successfully bestowed. The rule in question is rigidly adhered to, subject to these exceptions by eminent counsel, on another ground; viz. for the protection of junior counsel, who would be subject to incessant importunities if confronted by the examples of their seniors. Take, now, the case of a counsel who has eclipsed most, if not every one, of

his competitors, in reputation, for the skill and success of his advocacy – who is acute, ready, dexterous, sagacious, eloquent, and of accurate and profound legal knowledge: that is the man whose name instantly occurs to any one involved, or likely to be involved, in litigation – such an one must be instantly secured —*at all events, taken from the enemy*— at any cost. The pressure upon such a counsel's time and energies then becomes really enormous, and all but insupportable. As it is of the last importance either to secure his splendid services, or deprive the enemy of them, such a counsel – and such, it need hardly be said, was Sir William Follett – is continually made the subject of mere speculation by clients who are content to take the *chance* of obtaining his attendance, with the *certainty* of securing his absence as an opponent. When, however, the hour of battle has arrived, and, with a compact array visible upon the opposite side, the great captain is *not* where it had been hoped – or thought possible that he might have been – when, moreover, no adequate provision has been made against such a serious contingency – when the battle has been fought and lost, and great interests are seriously compromised, or for ever sacrificed —*then* the client is apt, in the first smarting agony of defeat, to forget the *chance* which he had been content to run, and to persuade himself that he had from the first calculated as a matter of *certainty* on the great man's attendance – and intense is that client's chagrin, and loud are his complaints. Can it be supposed that this eminent counsel is not sufficiently aware of the true state of the case? It is but fair

to give him credit for being under the impression, that all which is expected from him, in many cases, is his best exertions to attend the trial or hearing – to provide an effective substitute, if unable to attend – and give due attention to the case at consultation. For counsel to act otherwise, deliberately to receive a brief and fee, in a case which he *knows* that he cannot possibly attend, without in the first instance fairly intimating as much to the client – to do so, in cases of importance, and habitually – is surely most foully dishonourable, dishonest, and cruel; and conduct which there is no pretence for imputing to the members of the bar. It cannot, however, be denied, that very serious misunderstandings occasionally arise on such occasions; but there are many ways of accounting for them, without having recourse to a supposition involving such serious imputations upon the honour of counsel – arising out of *bonâ fide* accident and mistake – the unavoidable hurry and sudden emergencies of business – misunderstandings between a counsel and his clerks;² between either or both, and

² Leading counsel, indeed all counsel much engaged in business, necessarily place their time almost altogether at the disposal of their clerks, whose duty it is to keep an exact record of their employer's engagements, and see that no incompatible ones are made for him. Counsel find quite enough to do, in adequately attending to the matters actually put before them by their clerks, without being harassed by adjusting the very troublesome arrangements and appointments, for time and place, where their duties are to be performed or, at all events, doing more than keeping a general superintendence over their arrangements thus made. To all this must be added those innumerable contingencies in the arrangements of the courts, and the course of business, which no one can possibly foresee; and which often derange a whole series of arrangements, however cautiously and prudently made, and render counsel unable, after having carefully mastered their cases, to attend at the trial or argument.

the client – and the perplexity and confusion almost necessarily attending the movements of very eminent counsel. On such occasions every thing is usually done which can be dictated by liberality and honour, and fees are returned without hesitation. If, however, the case can be looked at from another point of view – if the eager client be fairly apprised by the clerk, that Sir – or Mr – "may not be able to attend" – or, "there is a *chance* of his attending" – or "he is very likely to be elsewhere" – and, aware of the multifarious and conflicting calls upon the time of Sir – or Mr – , will be content to take his "chance," and deliver his brief, and pay his fee; in such a case the client will have had all which he had a right to expect, – viz. the chance, not the certainty; there will be no pretence for alleging careless misunderstanding or deception.

If ever there were a member of the English bar who may be said to have been overwhelmed by the distracting importunities of clients to secure his services, at all hazards and at any cost, it was the late Sir William Follett; and how he contrived to satisfy the calls upon him, to the extent which he did, is truly wonderful. How can one head, and one tongue, do so much, so admirably? is a question which has a thousand times occurred to those of his brethren at the bar, who knew most of his movements, and were least likely to form an exaggerated estimate of his exertions. The litigant public seemed to feel that every moment of this accomplished and distinguished advocate's waking hours was their own, and they were restricting his sleeping hours within the very narrowest limits. Every one would have had Sir William

every where, in every thing, at once! Whenever, during the last fifteen years of his life, there was a cause of magnitude and difficulty, there was Sir William Follett. What vast interests have been by turns perilled and protected, according as Sir William Follett acted upon the offensive or defensive! Misty and intricate claims to dormant peerages, before committees of privileges, in the House of Lords; appeals to the High Court of Parliament, from all the superior courts, both of law and equity, in the United Kingdom, involving questions of the greatest possible nicety and complexity – and that, too, in the law of Scotland, both mercantile and conveyancing, so dissimilar to that prevailing in other parts of the kingdom; appeals before the Privy Council, from the judicial decisions of courts in every quarter of the globe where British possessions exist, and administering varying systems of law, all different from that of England; the most important cases in the courts of equity, in courts of error, and the common law courts in *banc*; all the great cases depending before parliamentary committees, till he entered the House of Commons; every special jury cause of consequence in London and Middlesex, and in any of the other counties in England, whither he went upon special retainers; compensation cases, involving property to a very large amount; – in all these cases, the first point was – to secure Sir William Follett; and, for that purpose, run a desperate race with an opponent. Every morning that Sir William Follett rose from his bed, he had to contemplate a long series of important and pressing engagements

filling up almost every minute of his time – not knowing where or before what tribunal he might be at any given moment of the day – and often wholly ignorant of what might be the nature of the case he would have to conduct, against the most able and astute opponents who could be pitted against him, and before the greatest judicial intellects of the kingdom: aware of the boundless confidence in his powers reposed by his clients, the great interests entrusted to him, and the heavy pecuniary sacrifices by which his exertions had been secured. Relying with a just confidence on his extraordinary rapidity in mastering all kinds of cases almost as soon as they could be brought under his notice, and also on the desire universally manifested by both the bench and the bar to consult the convenience and facilitate the business arrangements of one, himself so courteous and obliging to all, and whom they knew to be entrusted at a heavy expense to his clients, with the greatest interests involved in litigation; relying upon these considerations, and also upon those others which have been already alluded to, Sir William Follett undoubtedly permitted briefs to be delivered to him, *all* of which he must have suspected himself to be incapable of personally attending to. It must be owned that on many such occasions he may not – distracted with the multiplicity of his exhausting labours – have given that full consideration to those matters which it was his bounden duty to have given to them; and his conduct in this respect has been justly censured by both branches of the high and honourable profession to whom the public

entrusts such mighty interests. Still he turned away business from his chambers which would have made the fortunes of two or three even eminent barristers, and has been known to act with spirit and liberality in cases where his imprudence on the score alluded to had been attended with inconvenience and loss to his clients. Nor was he *always* so fortunate, as latterly, with respect to his clerks; who had, equally with himself, a direct pecuniary interest³ on every brief which he accepted, and consequently a strong motive for listening with a too favourable ear to the importunities of clients. The necessary consequence of all this was occasionally the bitter upbraiding of Sir William Follett's desperately disappointed and defeated clients. Still, however, he did make most extraordinary efforts to satisfy all the claims upon his time and energies, and at length sacrificed himself in doing so; to a very great extent foregoing domestic and social enjoyments – sparing himself neither by night nor by day, neither in mind nor body. Crowded with consultations as was almost every hour of the day not actually spent in open business in court – from the earliest period in the morning till the latest at night – it was really amazing that he contrived to obtain that perfect mastery of his ponderous and intricate briefs, which secured him his repeated and splendid triumphs in court. Till within even the last eighteen months, or two years, if you had gone down

³ The clerk of a barrister has a fee on every fee of his employer, in a long-settled proportion of 2s. 6d. on all fees under five guineas; from, and inclusive of five guineas, up to ten guineas, 5s.; from ten guineas, 10s., and so on for higher fees.

one morning at half-past nine to Westminster, you might have heard him opening with masterly ease, clearness, and skill, a patent case, or some other important matter, before a special jury; and immediately after resuming his seat, you would see him go perhaps into an adjoining court of Nisi Prius, in which also he was engaged as leading counsel, and where he would quickly ascertain the exact position of the case – and effectively cross-examine or re-examine a witness, or object to or support the admissibility of evidence; – then if you followed his footsteps, you would find him in the Lord Chancellor's Court, engaged in some equity case of great magnitude and difficulty. Some time afterwards he might be seen hastening to the Privy Council – and by about two or three o'clock at the bar of the House of Lords, in the midst of an admirable reply in some great appeal or peerage case. When the House broke up, Sir William Follett would doff the full-bottomed wig in which alone Queen's counsel are allowed to appear before the House of Lords, and, resuming his short wig, reappear in either – or by turns in both – the Courts of Nisi Prius, where he had left trials pending, having directed himself to be sent for if there should arise any necessity for it. Then he would in a very few moments calmly possess himself of the exact state of the cause, and resume his personal conduct of it, as effectively as if he had never quitted the Court. If he could be spared for a quarter of an hour, he would glide out, followed by one or two counsel and attorneys, to hold one, or perhaps two consultations, in cases fixed for the next day.

On the court's rising – perhaps about six or seven o'clock, he would go home to swallow a hasty dinner; then hold one, two, or even three consultations at his own house; read over – as none but he could read – some briefs; and about eleven or twelve o'clock make his appearance in the House of Commons, and perhaps take a leading part in some very critical debate – listened to with uninterrupted silence, and with the admiration of both friends and foes. The above, with the exception of taking part in the debate of the House of Commons, was an average day's work of the late Sir William Follett! And was it not the life of a galley-slave chained to the oar? He had, however, chosen it, and would not quit his seat but at the icy touch of death. Such appears to be a fair and temperate account of the real state of the case, with reference to Sir William Follett's great anxiety to acquire money, and his over-eagerness in accepting briefs. Great allowances ought undoubtedly to be made for him, on the grounds above suggested; and, with reference to the former case, another consideration occurs, which ought to have been already more distinctly adverted to. Sir William Follett had a right to regard his elevation to the peerage as a matter almost of course. Had he lived possibly only a few months longer, he would, in all probability, have become a peer of the realm; and he ought to be given credit for an honourable ambition to avoid the imputation of having inflicted a pauper peerage upon the country. Frail he knew his health to be; and doubtlessly contemplated the necessity of providing suitably for the family whom he was to leave

behind him, and which he had ennobled. But what was involved in providing, under such circumstances, "*suitably*" for a noble family? What ample means would have to be secured by one who had inherited no fortune himself, but was, on the contrary, the sole architect of his fortunes? What prodigious efforts are necessary for a lawyer to realise, by his own individual exertions, an amount which would produce an income of five, four, or even three thousand a-year? And let any one of common sense, and ordinary knowledge of the world, ask himself – whether the highest of those amounts is more than barely sufficient, without undue economy, to provide for a dowager peeress and a young family! That such considerations were not lost sight of by Sir William Follett, but, on the contrary, were stimulants to his intense, unremitting, and exhausting labours, it is easy to understand; and they sprang out of a high, and honourable, and a legitimate ambition. But whatever weight may be attached to these considerations – and generosity and forbearance towards the dead will attach great weight to them – they are no answer to much of the charge brought against the late Sir William Follett, and which ought not to be glossed over and explained away – that, in his excessive eagerness to accomplish his object, he was hurried into an occasional forgetfulness of that nice and high sense of moral principle which ought to regulate every one's conduct – especially those in eminent positions – for the sake of illustrious example, and, in a man's own case, with reference to the awful realities of hereafter: for a man should strive so to pass

through things temporal, as not to lose sight of things eternal.

Let us now, however, endeavour to point out some of the excellences of Sir William Follett's character; and perhaps the most prominent of them was his admirable temper. Continually in collision with others, on behalf of important interests entrusted to him, and exposed to a thousand trials and provocations – that temper, nevertheless, scarce ever failed him. Serene and unruffled on the most exciting occasions, his manners were perfectly fascinating to all those who came in contact with him. A rude or unkind expression may be said never to have fallen from his lips towards an opponent – or, indeed, any one; towards juniors and inferiors he was always good-natured and considerate; and towards the judicial bench he exhibited uniformly a demeanour of dignified courtesy and deference. He was very tenacious of his own opinions – confident in the propriety of his view of a case —*apparently so, always*, for he could assume a confidence though he had it not – and would persevere in his efforts to overcome the adverse humour of judges and juries, to an extent never exceeded; yet withal so blandly, so unassumingly, so mildly, that he never irritated or provoked any one. His temper and self-possession were unequalled, and approached, as nearly as possible, to perfection. Amidst all the distracting multiplicity of his engagements – the sudden and harassing emergencies arising incessantly out of his prodigious practice – he preserved an urbane tranquillity which gave him on all occasions the

full possession of his extraordinary faculties, enabled him to concentrate them instantly upon whatever was submitted to his attention, however suddenly – and to conquer without irritating or mortifying even the most eager and sensitive opponent. He never suffered himself to be in a *hurry*, or *fidgeted*; however sudden and serious the emergency which frightened others from their propriety, he retained and exhibited complete composure; surveying his position with lightning rapidity, and taking his measures with consummate caution – with prompt and bold decision. His guiding energies kept frequently half a dozen important causes all going on at once in their proper course. He would glide in at a critical moment – paying, in his agitated client's view, "an angel's visit" – and with smiling ease seize advantages seen by none but himself, repair disasters appearing to others irreparable, and with a single blow demolish the entire fabric which in his absence had been laboriously and skilfully raised by his opponent. No impetuosity or irritability, on the part of others, could provoke him to retaliate, or sufficed to disturb that marvellous equanimity of his, which enabled him the rather good-naturedly to convert impetuosity and loss of temper in others, into an instrument of victory for himself. When others, not similarly blessed, would, in like manner, essay to rush to the rescue, their hurried and confused movements served only to place them more completely prostrate before him. The instant after the issue had been – perhaps suddenly – decided in Sir William's favour – through some unexpected masterstroke of his – he would turn with an

arch smile to his opponent, and whisper – "How did you come to let me do it?" If his advance were met sulkily, he would add, with unaffected good humour, "Come, don't be angry; I dare say you will serve me in the same way to-morrow!" Towards adverse and frequently interrupting judges – towards petulant counsel – towards impudent, equivocating, dishonest witnesses, Sir William Follett exhibited unwavering calmness and self-possession; and withal a dignity of demeanour by which he was remarkably distinguished, and which lent importance to even the most trivial cases which could be intrusted to his advocacy. Perhaps no man ever defeated a greater number of important cases, by unexpected objections of the very extremest technical character, than Sir William Follett; but he would do it with an air and manner so courteous and imposing, as to lead the uninitiated into the belief that there were doubtless good reasons by which such a course having been reluctantly adopted, was morally justified. This topic naturally leads to some observations upon the consummate skill, the wonderful rapidity of perception, precision of movement, and unfaltering vigilance, which characterized Sir William Follett's conduct of business. Doubtless his own consciousness of possessing powers and resources far beyond those of the majority of counsel opposed to him, as evidenced in his extraordinary successes, contributed, in no small degree, to his maintenance of that composed self-reliance, and forbearance towards others, by which he was so peculiarly distinguished, and which was aided

by a naturally tranquil temperament. What advantage could escape one so uniformly and surprisingly calm, vigilant, and guarded as Sir William Follett? It might have been supposed that a man so overwhelmed with all but incompatible professional engagements, could not give to each case that full and undivided attention which were requisite to secure success, especially against the ablest members of the bar, who were constantly opposed to him. It was, however, very far otherwise. No one ever ventured to calculate upon Sir William Follett's overlooking a slip or failing to seize an advantage. *Totus teres atque rotundus* must indeed have been the case which was to withstand his onslaughts. So accurate and extensive was his legal knowledge, so acute his discrimination, so dexterous were all his movements, so lynx-eyed was his vigilant attention to what was going on, that the most learned and able of his opponents were never at their ease till after victory had been definitively announced from the bench – from a Court of Error – or even the House of Lords. They were necessarily on the *qui vive* to the very latest moment. Some short time before he was compelled to relinquish practice, a certain counsel was engaged with him as junior in a case before the Privy Council, which it was deemed of great moment that Sir William Follett should be able to attend to.

"I don't exactly know how I stand in the Queen's Bench to-morrow morning," said he, at the consultation late over-night – "but I fear that that long troublesome case of the – Railway will be brought on by – at the sitting of the court. I'm afraid I can't

get him to put it off – but I'll try; and if he won't, I may yet be able to *settle* the case before he has got far into it – for it will be very strange if all their proceedings are right."

On this slender chance rested the likelihood of Sir William's attendance at the Privy Council. The next morning at ten o'clock, beheld all the counsel on both sides ready for action.

"You're not going to bring on the – case this morning, are you?" whispered Sir William Follett, as soon as he had taken his seat, to his opponent who was arranging his papers.

"I am indeed, and no mistake whatever about it."

"Can't we bring it on to-morrow, or some day next week? It would greatly oblige me – I really have scarcely read my papers, and, besides, want to be elsewhere."

"I'll see what my clients say," – and then he consulted them, and resumed – "No – my people are peremptory."

"Very well. Then keep your eyes wide open. I must bring you down as soon as possible, for I want to be elsewhere."

"Ah – I must take my chance about that" – then, turning round to an experienced and learned junior, he whispered – "You hear what Follett says? – Are we really all right?"

"Oh, pho! never mind him – we are as right as possible."

A few moments afterwards, up rose – , and soon got into his case, and very soon, also, to the end of it. The case had not been heard more than half an hour, Sir William Follett at once attentively listening to his opponent, and hastily glancing over his own papers, when he rose very quietly, and said – "If my

learned friend will pardon me, I think, my Lord, I can save the court a very long and useless enquiry – for there is clearly a fatal objection *in limine* to these proceedings."

"Let us hear what it is," said the court.

Sir William had completely checkmated his opponent! A statutory requisition had not been complied with; and in less than ten minutes' time the enemy were all prostrate – their expensive and elaborate proceedings all defeated – and that, too, permanently, unless on acceding to the terms which Sir William Follett dictated to them, and which, it need hardly be observed, were somewhat advantageous to his own client!

"Really this is too bad, Follett," might have been heard whispered by his opponent, as the next case was called in.

"Not at all – why didn't you let it stand over as I asked you?"

"Oh – you would have done just the same then as you have now."

"I don't know that," replied Sir William Follett with a significant smile. "But why won't your people be more careful?" And then turning to his junior, said – "Now for the Privy Council!" And all this with such provoking, easy, smiling *nonchalance*!

Heaven forbid that any thing here said should favour the attempt to defeat justice by technical objections; but there is, at the same time, much vulgar error on that subject, grounded on reasons which would tend to subvert all rules of law and legal procedure whatever. In the case above mentioned, the

legislature had thought fit to impose on applicants for redress under the statute in question, a duty, which through haste or negligence had been overlooked, and which Sir William Follett's clients had a perfect right to take advantage of, as soon as his acuteness had detected it. To return, however. No member of the bar, let his experience and skill have been what they might, was ever opposed to Sir William Follett without feeling, as has been already intimated, the necessity of the greatest possible vigilance and research to encounter his boundless resources; his dangerous subtlety and acuteness in detecting flaws, and raising objections; his matchless art in concealing defects in his own case; and building up, with easy grace, a superstructure equally unsubstantial and imposing, and defeating all attempts to assail or overthrow it. Even very strong heads would be often at fault, conscious that they were the victim of some subtle fallacy, which yet they could not *then and there* detect and expose; and by their hazy and inconsistent efforts to do so, only supplied additional materials for the use of their astute and skilful enemy, to whom nothing ever seemed to come amiss; who converted every thing into ingredients of success; whom scarce any surprise or mischance could defeat or overthrow. A very short time before he withdrew from practice, he was engaged at Liverpool, whither he had gone upon a special retainer, in a very intricate and important ejection case.

Unexpectedly he discovered, when about half-way through the case, that his client (the plaintiff) had omitted to serve a

notice upon the defendant's attorney to produce a certain critical document, at the contents of which it was necessary to get, in order to make out the plaintiff's case. The objection was promptly taken by his opponent – and to the dismay of Sir William's clients. Not so with him, however.

"You have not given a notice to produce them, eh?" he calmly whispered to his client, and was answered with a disturbed air in the negative; and all the court saw that Sir William was in the very jaws of a non-suit.

"You ought to have done so, but it does not much signify," said he, very quietly – "what's the name of the defendant's attorney?" and, on being told it, that gentleman, doubtless chuckling with delight in his anticipated triumph, was somewhat astounded by being suddenly called as a witness by Sir William Follett; who coolly asked him to produce the document in question – and on his refusal, with one or two artful questions, which completely concealed his real object, elicited the fact that he had no such document, had searched every where for it, both in his own office, and among his clients' papers, and elsewhere, but in vain.

"Now, then, my lord," said Sir William Follett, "I am entitled to give secondary evidence of its contents!"

The Judge assented.

Sir William extracted from his own witness all that was necessary – and out of the nettle danger plucking the flower *safety*, won the verdict. Every one, however, who has had opportunities of observing, can give many instances

of Sir William Follett's extraordinary tact and readiness in encountering unexpected difficulty, and defeating an opponent by interposing successive unthought-of obstacles. In the most desperate emergencies, when the full tide of success was arrested by some totally unlooked-for impediment, Sir William Follett's vast practical knowledge, quickness of perception, unerring sagacity, and immovable self-possession, enabled him, without any apparent effort or uneasiness, to remove that impediment almost as soon as it was discovered, and conduct his case to a triumphant issue. He was, indeed, the very perfection of a practical lawyer. Whatever he did, he did as well as even his most exacting client could have wished – he won the battle, won it with little apparent effort, and won it with grace and dignity of demeanour. A gentleman felt proud of being represented by such an advocate – who never descended into any thing approaching even the confines of vulgarity, coarseness, or personality – who lent even to the flimsiest case a semblance of substance and strength – whose consummate and watchful adroitness placed weak places quite out of the sight and reach of the shrewdest opponent, and never perilled a good case by a single act of incaution, negligence, rashness, or supererogation. When necessary, he would prove a case barely up to the point which would suffice to secure a decision in his favour, and then leave it – equally before the court, and a jury – the result afterwards showing with what consummate judgment he had acted in running the risk – the latent difficulties to have been afterwards

encountered which he had avoided, the collateral interests which he had shielded from danger. He possessed that sort of intuitive sagacity which enabled him to see *safety* at the first instant of its existence – to be confident of having the judgment of the court, or the verdict of the jury, when others deeply interested and concerned in the cause imagined that they were making no way whatever. "Now, I've knocked him," his opponent, "down" – he would say at such a moment to his junior – "don't let him get up again! I must go off to the House of Lords – and will come back if you want me! But mind, if he attempt to do so or so – to put in such and such a paper, on no account allow it; send for me, and fight till I come." He possessed, to an extraordinary degree, the power of rapidly transferring his undivided and undisturbed attention to every thing, great and small, which could be brought before it. A single glance of his eye penetrated the most obscure and perplexing parts of a case – a touch of his master-hand disentangled apparently inextricable complexities. He could apply, with beautiful promptitude and precision, some maxim or principle which had not occurred to those who had devoted long and anxious attention to the case, and which at once dissolved the difficulty. Whether acting on the offensive or defensive, he was equally characterised by the great qualities essential to successful advocacy; but perhaps, when acting on the offensive, he displayed more formidable powers. He tripped up the heels of the most wary and experienced antagonists, just when they imagined themselves in the very act of throwing him.

It was almost useless to quote a "*case*" against him. Though the party doing so deemed it precisely in point in his favour, and on that ground was stopped by the court from proceeding further, Sir William Follett would ask for the case; and rising up, after a momentary glance at it, show that it was perfectly distinguishable from that before the court, and, in a few minutes' time, would be interrupted by the court, with – "We think, Mr – , that you had better resume your argument!" If, on such occasions, Sir William's opponent were not a ready and dextrous legal logician, his client would wish that he had secured Sir William Follett. His power of drawing distinctions and detecting analogies – and that, too, on the spur of the moment – was almost unequalled. It was in vain for an opponent to *feel* that the suggested distinction was without a difference – he could not *prove* it to be so – he could not demonstrate the fallacy which had been imposed on even a strong court by that exquisite astuteness which, however sinister, was carried off by a charming air of frankness and confidence in the validity of the distinction. On such an occasion, directly the cause was over he would turn round and say, laughingly, to his discomfited opponent, "You haven't your wits about you this morning – why didn't you quote such and such case?" or "say so and so?" Such things were never said in an unpleasant manner – never truculently – never triumphantly – but simply with a good-humoured, cheerful air of *badinage*, which, so far from irritating you, took off the edge of vexation, and set you almost laughing at yourself for having suffered yourself to be so

completely circumvented.

While thus paying a just tribute to the skill and wonderful resources of this eminent advocate, another of his great merits, which shall be noticed, will afford an opportunity for doing justice to the junior bar, with reference to the invaluable, and – to the public – often totally unperceived, assistance which they afford to their leaders. Sir William Follett was pre-eminently characterised by the rapidity with which he availed himself of the suggestions and labours of others. A whisper – a line or two – would suffice to suggest to him a truly admirable and conclusive argument, which he instantly elaborated as if he had prepared it deliberately beforehand in his chamber; and he would put the point with infinitely greater cogency than could have been exhibited by him who suggested it, and defend it from the assaults of his opponents and the bench with truly admirable readiness and ingenuity. He exhibited great judgment and discrimination, however, on these occasions. A false or doubtful point he quietly rejected *in limine*, and would afterwards point out to him who had suggested it, the impolicy of adopting it. Sir William Follett, as is the case with all eminent leaders, was under very great obligations, in his successful displays, to the learning and skill of his juniors, and of the gentlemen who practise under the bar as special pleaders. It is to them that is intrusted the responsible and critical duty of preparing and advising upon pleadings, and shaping them in the way in which they ought to be presented in court. Their "opinions" and "arguments" are often of the greatest

possible value – often very masterly; and no one more highly estimated, or was more frequently and largely indebted to them, than Sir William Follett; but who could do such complete justice to them and so suddenly – as he? A hasty glance over, in court, such an analysis of pleadings, or affidavits, or legal documents of any kind, as has been spoken of – in a cause to which he had been, up to that moment, entirely a stranger – would suffice to put him in full possession of the true bearings of the most complicated case; and his own great learning, surpassing power of arrangement, and masterly argumentation, would do the rest. If he were taken quite unawares in such a case, and could not possibly procure its postponement, an instant's whisper with a junior – a moment's glance at his papers – would make him apparently master of the case; and, by some unexpected adroit manœuvre, he would often contrive to throw the labouring oar upon his opponent – and then, *from him*, would acquire that knowledge of the facts of the case which Sir William Follett rarely failed to turn to his own advantage, so as to secure him success. Great as were his natural endowments, how could incessant exercise, during twenty years' hourly conflict with the ablest of his brethren and of the bench, fail of developing his splendid energies to the uttermost, even up to a point of which we may conceive as little short of perfection? The strength of his reasoning faculties was equalled, if not exceeded, by that of his memory, which was equally susceptible, tenacious, and ready; qualities these, which, as Dugald Stewart has observed,

are rarely united in the same person,⁴ and which, in the case of an advocate, give him immense advantages; while he possessed that accurate practical knowledge which enabled him to detect the minutest errors in the conduct of a cause, his comprehensive grasp of mind enabled him to take in the whole of the greatest cause, with all its dependencies; and while he fixed his own eye, with unwavering steadfastness, on the object which he had in view, he could lead his opponent and keep him far away from *his*; and address himself to every passing humour of the judicial mind, supporting favourable, and repelling adverse intimations, with reasons so plausible as to appear absolutely conclusive. Whoever might forget facts, or lose the drift of the argument, Sir William Follett never did; and when he had *the last word*, he was almost always irresistible. He required, for the purposes of justice, to be followed by a watchful and strong-headed judge, who could detect the cunning fallacy, or series of fallacies, which had led the jury quite astray from the real points – the true merits of the case; and even such a person was often unable to remove the impression which had been produced by the subtle and persuasive advocate whose voice had preceded his. That voice was one indeed lovely to listen to. It was not loud, but low and mellow, insinuating its faintest tones into the ear, and filling it with gentle harmony. His utterance was very distinct – a capital requisite in a speaker – and he had the art of varying his tones, so as to sustain the attention of both judges and

⁴ *Phil. c. vi. sec. 7.*

juries for almost any length of time. His person and attitudes, also, were most prepossessing. Their chief characteristics were a calmness and dignity which never disappeared in even the most exciting moments of contest, and of irritability, and provoking interruption. Woe, indeed, to one who ventured to *interrupt* him! However plausible, cogent, or even just, might be the suggestion thrown in by his adversary, Sir William Follett contrived to make it tell terribly against him, either harmonising it with his own case, or showing it to be utterly inconsistent with that of the interrupting party. – Sir William Follett, who was above the middle size, always stood straight upright, as every one ought to do while addressing either judge or juries. He seldom used his left hand in speaking, but the play of his right hand was very graceful, easy, and natural. His countenance was by no means handsome, yet of very striking expression – decisively indicative of great intellectual power, particularly about the forehead, which was very strongly developed. His eyes were grey, rather small, and deep-set; but they had a power of riveting the attention of any one whom he was addressing, particularly in public. You felt him to be a man whom you could neither neglect nor trifle with; who was addressing your intellect in weighty words, fathoming your intentions, and detecting your inclinations and prepossessions, and leading you in some given direction with gentle but irresistible force. He would often startle you with the boldness of his propositions, but never till he had contrived, somehow or other, to predispose you in favour of

that view of the case which he was presenting. He had a most seductive smile; truth, candour, and gentleness seemed to beam from it upon you; and you were convinced that he felt perfect confidence in the goodness of his cause. He evinced a sort of intuitive sagacity, in adapting himself to the character and mode of thinking of those whom he addressed. If he were standing before four judges, all of different but decided characters – and all continually interrupting him with questions and suggestions, a close experienced observer could detect, in full play, in this wily advocate, the quality which has just been mentioned. He was never irritable, or disrespectful to the bench, however trying their interruptions; but calm determination was always accompanied with courteous deference for judicial authority. It is believed that no one ever heard a sharp expression fall on Sir William Follett from the bench. Foreigners coming to our courts, have frequently expressed admiration at his tone and bearing, as calm, graceful, and dignified, even though what he said could not be understood by them. His language was chaste, simple, and vigorous, but never ornate. He always came direct to the point; and the severest critics could find no fault in his diction. If he had read extensively, his speeches never bore witness of that fact; for he was, perhaps, never heard to use a quotation, either in verse or prose – except, of course, in the latter instance, books of legal authority, treatises, and reports of cases. Of fancy, of imagination, he appeared quite destitute. If originally possessed of any, it must for many years have been overpowered and extinguished, by the

incessant and exclusive exercise of his memory and reasoning powers, for the purposes of business. Yet was he capable, on great and interesting occasions, when addressing either the full court or a jury, of riveting the attention and exciting the emotions of his hearers. Trickery, however compact and strong its meshes, he tore to pieces contemptuously, and with scarce an effort; nothing could escape his penetrating eye; it detected those faint vanishing traces of fraud, which were invisible to all other eyes. If there be genius in advocacy, Sir William Follett was undoubtedly a man of genius; and genius may perhaps be taken to signify great natural powers, accidentally directed – or, a disposition of nature, by which any one is qualified for some peculiar employment. What intellectual qualifications and resources are not requisite to constitute a first-rate advocate? If the Duke of Wellington has a genius for military affairs, so had Sir William Follett for advocacy – and genius of a very high order, as will be testified by all those before whom, or on whose behalf, he exhibited it – alike by clients or judges – as by opponents. If he were a very subtle sophist himself, he was himself one on whom no sophistry could impose. It fled before the penetrating glance of his aquiline eye. Faculties such as his must have secured him eminence in any pursuit or walk in life to which he might have devoted himself; particularly to the military profession, to which it is believed he always had a strong inclination. Who can doubt that if his lot had been placed from the first in political life, he would quickly have become pre-eminent in the senate, and as a statesman? Who that

knew him, but would pronounce him to have been pre-eminently fit for political life, to govern men of intellect, to deal with great affairs and mighty interests – to detect and discomfit the adversaries of peace and order, to vindicate the laws, and uphold the best interests of society? All this he might have been; *sed dīs aliter visum*— he devoted himself, heart and soul, throughout life, to the labours of the bar, and the acquisition by them of a rapid and large fortune, and official distinction. In all these aims he must have succeeded to his heart's content; for he was for many years the most distinguished and popular of advocates; he became the Queen's Attorney-general, and died in the prime of life, leaving behind him a fortune of some two hundred thousand pounds. That great class of persons who constituted his clients, will always remember his brilliant and successful exertions with gratitude. His brethren who were opposed to him, heartily acknowledge the pre-eminence of his abilities and professional acquirements; and they, as well as the junior bar, who for years watched his brilliant exertions, must acknowledge that the one in struggling with him, and the other in witnessing those struggles, have witnessed an instructive exhibition of forensic excellence – a model of advocacy. To prepare for a contest with Sir William Follett, and to contend with him, called forth all a man's energies, and formed a severe and salutary discipline for the strongest. "Their antagonist was their helper: they that wrestled with him, strengthened their nerves, and sharpened their skill: that conflict with difficulty obliged them to an intimate

acquaintance with their object, and compelled them to consider it in all its relations, and would not suffer them to be superficial."⁵ In him they saw daily in exercise, many of the greatest qualities of advocacy – and beheld it triumphing over every imaginable kind end degree of obstacle end difficulty. He showed them how to maintain the bearing of gentlemen, in the moments of hottest exasperation and provocation which can arise in forensic warfare. He taught them how to look on success undazzled – to bear it with modesty of demeanour, and subordination of spirit. He exhibited to them the inestimable value of early acquiring accurate and extensive local knowledge – of being thoroughly imbued with the *principles* of jurisprudence, and habituating the mind to close and correct reasoning. The traces of his surpassing excellence in these matters, are now to be found nowhere but in the volumes of Law Reports, where the essence of his innumerable masterly arguments will be found collected and preserved by gentlemen of patient attention and learning competent for the task, and on whose modest but valuable labours will hereafter depend all that posterity will know of Sir William Follett. These are the legitimate records of his intellectual triumph; as are the prosperous circumstances in which he has left his family, *to them* a solid and noble testimonial of his affectionate devotion to their interests. Their fortune was the purchase of his life's blood. The acquisition of that fortune absorbed the whole of his time, and of his energies; it deprived him of thousands of opportunities

⁵ Adapted from Edmund Burke.

for relaxation and enjoyment, and also – it must be added – for the exercise of virtues which probably he possessed, but gave himself little or no time for calling into action – of those virtues which elevate and adorn the individual, while they benefit our fellow-creatures and society – for performing the duties which God Almighty has imposed upon his creatures, proportionately to their endowments and opportunities, himself telling us, that *to whom much is given, of him shall much be required*. To the young, eager, and ambitious lawyer, the contemplation of Sir William Follett's career is fraught with instruction. It will teach him the necessity of *moderation*, in the pursuit of the distinctions and emoluments of his profession. By grasping at too much often every thing is lost. Was not Sir William Follett's life one uninterrupted scene of splendid slavery, the pressure of which at length broke him down in the meridian of his days? Had he been able to resist the very strong temptations by which he was assailed – temptations, too, appealing powerfully to his love of family and offspring – a long life's evening of tranquillity, of unspeakable enjoyment, might have rewarded a day of great, yet not excessive, labour. He might also have devoted his powerful talents to the public benefit, in such a way as to secure the lasting gratitude and admiration of posterity, by remedying some great existing defect in his country's jurisprudence, by making some solid contribution to the safeguards of the constitution. But did he ever do so? All his great experience, talents, and learning, might never have existed, for any trace of them remaining in the

records of his country's constitution. What page in the statute-book attests his handiwork? And what did he ever do to advance the interests of the profession to which he belonged? These are questions asked with sorrowful sincerity and reluctance, and with every disposition to make the amplest allowances for those failings of Sir William Follett, which undoubtedly detracted somewhat from his excellence and eminence. He was a man of modest, mild, inoffensive character, who spoke ill of, and did harm to, no one; but, at the same time, was not distinguished by that active and energetic benevolence, liberality, and generosity, which secure for the memory of their exhibitant, ardent, enduring gratitude and reverence. His excellence was of a negative, rather than a positive kind. He did harm to no one, when he might have done so with impunity, and was possibly sometimes tempted to do so; but then he did not do good, at all events, to the extent which might have been expected from him. He was, however, by no means of a mean or selfish nature; but in his excessive, and to a certain extent pardonable, eagerness to make what he deemed a suitable provision for himself and his family, gave himself the appearance of being comparatively indifferent to the interests or welfare of others. It is, however, only fair to his memory to acknowledge, that legal eminence is too often liable to the same imputations – that professional pursuits have certainly a strong tendency to warp amiable and generous natures – to keep the eye of ambition, amidst the intense fires of rivalry and opposition, fixed exclusively upon one object

– the interest and advancement of the individual. Nothing can effectually control or counteract this tendency, but a lively and constant sense of religious principle; which enlarges the heart till it can *love our neighbour as ourself*, which brightens the present with the hopes of the future, which purifies our corrupt nature, and elevates its grovelling earthward tendencies by the contemplation of an eternal state of being dependent upon our conduct in this transient state of trial. Who can tell the extent to which these and similar considerations are present to the minds of the dying great ones of the earth, who, suddenly plucked from amidst the dazzling scenes of successful ambition, are laid prostrate upon the bed of death – their *pale faces turned to the wall*, with hereafter alone in view, and under an aspect equally *new* and awful? Let us, therefore, be wise, and be wise in time, nor haughtily disregard the earnest voice of warning, however humble and obscure may be the quarter whence it comes.

Sir William Follett belonged to a respectable family in Devonshire, and was born on the 2d December 1798. In 1814 he went to Trinity College, Cambridge, and took the degree of B.A. in 1818, without any attempt to obtain *honours*; quitting college in this latter year, and entering the Inner Temple, he prosecuted the study of the law in the chambers of eminent practitioners, where he continued for three years – and then practised for about three years as a special pleader. He was called to the bar in 1824, and went the western circuit, but for one or two years was much disheartened by his want of success. He

expressed, on one occasion, his readiness to accept of the place of police magistrate, if it were offered! His progress was, soon afterwards, signal, and all but unprecedentedly rapid. He was appointed Solicitor-general in 1834, while yet behind the bar, and in 1835 was returned for Exeter, for which place he sat till his death. He quitted office with Sir Robert Peel in 1835, but returned with him to it in 1841, and became Attorney-general in 1844, on the promotion of Sir Frederick Pollock to the chief seat in the Court of Exchequer. For several years before Sir William Follett's decease, his constitution, never of the strongest, was broken by his incessant and severe labours; and in 1844, having been obliged to give up practice altogether, he went to Italy at the close of the session – having attended at the bar of the House of Lords, to lead for the Crown in the O'Connell case. He was, however, quite unfit for the task. His spine was then so seriously affected, that he was obliged to sit upon a raised chair while addressing the House, the Chancellor and the other Lords, out of great consideration for the distinguished and enfeebled speaker, moving down to the lower end of the House, close to the bar, in order to occasion him as little exertion and fatigue as possible. He did not speak long, and the effort greatly exhausted him; and it was not without difficulty, owing to something like partial paralysis of the lower extremities, that he could walk from the House. He returned from the Continent in March 1845, a little better than when he had gone, and endeavoured to resume the discharge of such of his less onerous, professional, and official

duties as admitted of their being attended to at his own house. He continued to listen to patent cases, attended by counsel, till within a short period of his being finally disabled; but every one saw with pain the total exhaustion under which he was suffering. Finding himself rapidly declining, in May 1845, he wrote a letter to the Prime Minister, proffering the resignation of his office of Attorney-general.

He soon afterwards retired, for the advantage of some little change of air, to the house of a relative in the Regent's Park, where he enjoyed the soothing attentions of his family, and reverently received the consolations of religion. The public manifested great anxiety to have the state of his health, and the morning and evening newspapers contained regular announcements on the subject, as in the case of persons of the highest distinction. Her Majesty, Prince Albert, also, with numbers of the nobility, sent daily to enquire concerning him. For the last day, or possibly two days of his life, he became unconscious, and slightly delirious – and expired, without apparent pain, on Saturday afternoon, the 28th June 1845. For a long series of years, the death of no member of the legal profession had excited a tithe of the public concern which followed that of Sir William Follett, the Attorney-general. The bar felt that its brightest light had been almost suddenly extinguished. Its most gifted members, and those of the judicial bench, heartily acknowledged the transcendence of his professional qualifications, and the unassuming peacefulness

with which he had passed through life. Had he lived to occupy the highest judicial seat – the woolsack – few doubted that, when relieved from the crushing pressure of private practice, he would have displayed qualities befitting so splendid a station, and earned a name worthy of ranking with those of his great predecessors.

His funeral took place on Friday, the 4th of July, at the Temple church. He was a bencher of the Inner Temple, and his remains repose in the vault at the south-eastern extremity of the church. For nearly two hours before the funeral took place, the church – a chaste and splendid structure – had been filled with members of the bar, and a few others, all in mourning, and awaiting, in solemn silence, the commencement of the mournful ceremony. At length the pealing of the organ announced the arrival of the affecting moment when the body of Sir William Follett – himself having been not very long before a worshipper in the church – was being borne within its walls, preceded by the surpliced choir, chanting the service, in tones which still echo in the ears of those who heard them. All rose silently, with moistened eyes, and beating hearts, as they beheld, slowly borne through the aisle, the coffin which contained the prematurely dead – him whose figure, erect and graceful in forensic robes, and dignified in gesture, had so recently stood among them, their cheerful and gifted associate in the anxious business of life – from whose lips, now closed for ever, had but lately issued that rich, harmonious voice, whose tones had scarce, even then, died

away! They were bearing him to his long home, with all the solemn pomp and circumstance which testify the reverence paid to departed eminence: and when the coffin was placed beside the altar, at the mouth of the vault, no language can adequately describe the affecting and imposing scene which presented itself. The pall had been borne by the Prime Minister, (Sir Robert Peel,) the Lord Chancellor, one of the Secretaries of State, (Sir James Graham,) and the Vice-Chancellor of England; and amongst those who followed, were Lord Brougham, Lord Langdale, the Chief-Justice of the Common Pleas, and many of the judges, (almost all the courts, both of law and equity, having suspended their sittings on account of the funeral;) while in the body of the church were to be seen nearly all the distinguished members of the bar, who had been, up to a very recent period, opposed to, or associated with, him whose dust was now on the point of being committed to its kindred dust. Nearest to the body sat the three great ministers of the Crown, who had come to pay their tribute of respect to the remains of their gifted and confidential adviser; and their solemn countenances told the deep impression which the scene was making upon them, so illustrative of the fleeting shadowiness of earthly greatness! and their reflections must have been akin to those which – as may have occurred to them – their own obsequies might, at some future period, excite in the spectators – reflections such as those with which a great one, departed,⁶ closed his grandest labours.

⁶ Sir Walter Raleigh — *History of the World*, last paragraph.

"Oh, eloquent, just, and mighty death! whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded; what none hath dared, thou hast done: and whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised. Thou hast drawn together all the far-stretched greatness, all the pride, cruelty, and ambition of man, and covered it all over with these two narrow words – Hic Jacet!"

LET NEVER CRUELTY DISHONOUR BEAUTY

The words chosen as the subject of the following verses, form the first line of an antiquated song, of which the remainder seems not to have been preserved. — See Mr Dauneys "Ancient Scottish Melodies," p. 227.

"Let never Cruelty dishonour Beauty" —
Be no such war between thy face and mind.
Heaven with each blessing sends an answering duty:
It made thee fair, and meant thee to be kind.

Resemble not the panther's treacherous seeming,
That looks so lovely to beguile its prey;
Seek not to match the basilisk's false gleaming,
That charms the fancy only to betray.

See the great Sun! God's best and brightest creature —
Alike on good and ill his gifts he showers:
Look at the Earth, whose large and liberal nature
To all who court her offers fruits or flowers.

Then, lady, lay aside that haughty scorning —
A robe unmeet to deck a mortal frame;
Mild be thy light, and innocent as morning,

And shine on high and humble still the same.

Bid thy good-will, in bright abundance flowing,
To all around its kindly stream impart;
Thy love the while on One alone bestowing,
The fittest found, the husband of thy heart!

THE LAST HOURS OF A REIGN

A Tale in Two Parts. – Part II

Chapter III

"A deep and mighty shadow
Across my heart is thrown,
Like a cloud on a summer meadow,
Where the thunder wind hath blown!"

Barry Cornwall.

At this period of French history, and even up to a period much later, the bridges which crossed the Seine, and connected the two separate parts of the city of Paris, were built over with houses, and formed narrow streets across the stream. These houses, constructed almost entirely of wood, the beams of which were disposed in various directions, so as to form a sort of pattern, and ornamented with carved window-sills and main-beams, were jammed together like figs in a cask, and presented one gable to the confined gangway, the other to the water, which, in many cases, their upper story overhung with a seemingly hazardous spring outward. Towards the river, also, many were adorned with wooden balconies, sheltered by the far-advancing angles of the roofs; whilst beneath, upon the water, the piles of the bridge were encumbered by many water-mills, to the incessant noise of which, habit probably reconciled the inhabitants of the houses above.

In an upper room in one of the houses which, after this

fashion, lined the *Pont au Change*, sat, on the evening of the day on which Philip de la Mole had escaped from the Louvre, three persons, the listlessness of whose attitudes showed that they were all more or less pre-occupied by painful reflections.

The principal personage of this group – a woman between fifty and sixty years of age – lay back on a large wooden chair, her eyes fixed on vacancy. Her dress was of simple dark stuff, very full upon the sleeves and below the waist, and relieved by a small white standing collar; a dark coif, of the fashion of the period, covered the grizzled hair, which was drawn back from the forehead and temples, leaving fully exposed a face, the rude features and heavy eyebrows of which gave it a stern character. But in spite of this severity of aspect, there naturally lurked an expression of goodness about the mouth and eyes, which spoke of a kindness of disposition and tenderness of heart, combined with firmness and almost obstinacy of character. Those eyes, however, were now vacant and haggard in expression; and that mouth was contracted as if by some painful thought.

By her side, upon a low stool, was seated a fair girl, whose attire was as plain as that of the more aged woman; but that lovely form needed no aids of the toilet to enhance its beauty. The fair brown hair brushed off from the white brow, in the graceless mode of the day, hid nothing of a face which had all the purity of some beautiful Madonna; although the cheek was pale, and the lines of the physiognomy were already more sharpened than is usual at years so young. Her head, however, was now bent down

over a large book which lay upon her knees, and from which she appeared to have been reading aloud to the elder woman; and, as she sat, a tear dropped into its pages, which she hastily brushed away with her fair hand.

The third person, who completed the group, was a young man scarcely beyond the years of boyhood. His good-looking round face was bronzed and ruddy with fresh colour, and his dark eyes and full mouth were expressive of natural gaiety and vivacity. But he, too, sat leaning his elbows upon his knees, and gazing intently, and with a look of anxiety, upon the fair girl before him; until, as he saw the tear fall from her eye, he turned impatiently upon his stool, and proceeded to polish, with an animation which was not that of industry, the barrel of a gun which lay between his knees.

The room which formed the groundwork to the picture composed of these three personages, was dark and gloomy, as was generally the interior of the houses of the time; a large wardrobe of black carved wood filled a great space of one of the walls; presses and chests of the same dark and heavy workmanship occupied considerable portions of the rest of the room. The low casement window, left open to admit the air of a bright May evening, looked out upon the course of the rapid Seine, and gave a cheering relief to the dark scene. The hazy rays from the setting sun streamed into the room; and from below rose up the sound of the rushing waters, and the wheels of the mills, mixed with occasional cries of men upon the river, and the more

distant murmur of the city. The scene was one of calmness; and yet the calmness of those within that room was not the calmness of repose and peace.

It was the youth who first spoke.

"Jocelyne," he said in a low tone, approaching his stool nearer to that of the fair girl, and then continuing to polish his gun-barrel without looking her in the face – "if you knew how it grieves me to see you thus! You sit and droop like a bird upon the wintry branch, when I would fain see you lift your head and chirp, as in days gone by, now that summer begins to gladden around us."

The maiden thus addressed looked at him with a languid smile, and then faintly shook her head.

"How would you have me gay, Alayn," she said softly, "when our grandmother continues thus?"

Alayn made a gesture of doubt, as if he would have said, that solicitude for her grandmother was not the only cause of Jocelyne's sadness; but he made no observation to that effect, and, nodding his head towards the older woman, asked in a low tone —

"How is Dame Perrotte to-day? She did not answer my greeting on my entrance; and during your reading from that forbidden book of Scripture, she has uttered not a word."

"You may speak aloud," replied Jocelyne. "When she is in this state, she does not hear us. She is fully absorbed in her sad thoughts. I have seldom seen her more troubled than she has been for some few days past. One would suppose that the return

of sunny summer days recalls more fearfully to her mind that epoch of carnage and destruction at the fête of St Bartholomew, when the heavens above were so joyous and bright, whilst below the earth was reeking with blood, and your poor father perished, Alayn, for his religion's sake. I have ever remarked, when the sun shines the cheeriest, her spirit is the darkest."

"Will she not speak to me?" enquired Alayn.

"No," replied his cousin. "When in these deepest moods of melancholy, she will not speak but upon the subject of those fatal days, or if her attention be aroused by the mention of her slaughtered kindred; and Heaven forbid that an unguarded word from me should excite so terrible a crisis as would ensue!"

"And she remains always thus now?" asked the youth.

"Not always," answered Jocelyne. "There are times when she is as of old, and speaks to me with calmness. But at these better hours she makes no mention of the past."

"She never talks, then, of returning to the palace?" continued Alayn, with an evident air of satisfaction upon his round ruddy face.

"Never," replied the girl, with an involuntary sigh.

"And yet her foster-son, the king, has often sent for her."

"Hush!" interrupted Jocelyne. "Let not that name strike upon her ear. Although she hears us not, the very word might, perchance, call up within her recollections I would were banished from her mind for ever. The name of her nursling, whom she once loved as were she his own mother, and he had not worn

a crown, is now a sound of horror to her. Often has she cursed him in the bitterness of her heart," she continued in a low tone of mystery, as if fearful lest the very walls should hear her confidence, "as the slayer of the righteous. She never can forgive him the treacherous order given for that murderous deed of slaughter and destruction."

"But he protected her from all harm in that general massacre of our party in religion, from which so few of us escaped," said Alayn.

"She would rather have died, I verily believe," pursued the fair girl shuddering, "than have lived to see her own son fall, so cruelly murdered by the son of her fostering care."

"And she never will return to him again?" enquired the young man with another gleam of satisfaction.

Jocelyne shook her head.

"So much the better. So much the better," pursued Alayn stoutly. "For then I can see you when I will, fair cousin Jocelyne, and come and sit by your side as I do now, to continue my work with the permission of my master the armourer, who, whatever he may say, is as good a Calvinist at heart as ourselves, I am sure. And you will return no more with my grandmother among those villanous popinjays about the court, who are ever for telling you soft tales of love, and swearing that your eyes are the brightest in creation – as, to be sure, they are; and that never such an angel walked the earth – as, to be sure, there never did; but who mean it not well with you, cousin Jocelyne, and would but have their

will to desert you and leave you to sorrow, and who, with all their gilded finery, are not worth one inch of the coarse stuff of a stout-hearted honest artisan who loves you, and would see you happy; although I say it, who should not say it."

Jocelyne drew up her head proudly as if about to speak; but, as her melancholy pale hazel eyes met those of her cousin, sparkling with animation and good-humour, she only turned herself away, whilst a bright flush of colour overspread that cheek but a moment before so pale.

"Why, look ye, cousin Jocelyne," continued the youth once more, after a moment's pause; "it will out, in spite of me, all that I have got to say. I cannot see your pale cheek and tearful eye, and hear the sigh that ever and anon breaks so painfully from your bosom, but that, all simple as I be, I can tell it is not only for our poor grandmother you sorrow. Mayhap I have heard what I have heard, and seen what I have seen besides; but never mind that. Believe me, you sorrow for those who love you not truly as there are others who love you – you pain your heart until you will break it, for those who play you false."

"Alayn, I can hear no more of this! You know not what you say!" cried the fair girl hastily; and, laying down upon the table her book, she arose and walked away from him to lean out of the window.

"Nay, pardon me, cousin Jocelyne," exclaimed the youth in a pained tone, also rising and advancing towards the window. "I do but speak as I should and must speak, being your well-wisher –

I mean you well, God knows. And the time will come when you too will know *how* well!"

Jocelyne turned her eyes, which were moist with tears, to her cousin; and, stretching out her hand to him, she said, with all that romantic fervour of the ingenuous girl which almost wears the semblance of inspiration —

"Alayn, I know you love me, and that you mean it well with me. You are a kind and sincere brother to me. But, oh! you cannot read the deep deep feelings of the heart, or judge how little words have the power, like the charms we read of, to heal its wounds and wrench asunder the chains that bind it for ever and ever! The ivy, when torn from the stem to which it clings, may wither and die, but it cannot be attached to another trunk, however skilful the hand of the gardener who would attach it."

The youth took her hand, and, as she again turned to the window to hide her increasing emotion, shook his head sadly and doubtfully; then, returning to his stool, he took the gun-barrel between his knees with a movement of impatience, and continued his occupation of polishing it, although his eyes were constantly fixed askance upon the graceful form of the girl as she leant upon the window sill.

Presently the old woman moved uneasily in her chair, and, placing her hands firmly upon its arms, as if about to rise from her seat, she exclaimed aloud —

"Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, and I will avenge the blood of the righteous!"

Both Jocelyne and Alayn turned; but, before the fair girl could hurry to her grandmother's side, she had sunk down again into her chair, murmuring —

"No, no! enough of blood! enough of vengeance! God pardon him, and turn the hearts of those who counseled him to this deed."

"Give me my Bible, Jocelyne my girl," said again the old woman after a pause. "It seems I have not read it for many a long hour. God forgive me! But my poor head wanders strangely. Ah! is it you Alayn? Good-day to you," she continued, as if she had then first become aware of the presence of her grandson.

Jocelyne hastily gave her grandmother the volume which she had laid down upon the table; and whispering in her cousin's ear, as she passed, "She has spoken, she will be better now," sat down once more by her side.

A silence again pervaded that still room, when suddenly a noise of steps resounded upon a wooden stair. They approached the door, upon which a hurried knocking was now heard. Before Jocelyne, who, at the sound of these steps, had clasped her hands before her, with an expression of surprise and almost of alarm, had fully risen from her seat, the door was flung open, and a man enveloped in a cloak, and with a jewelled hat sunk low upon his brow, entered hastily.

He closed the door, and then gazed with a rapid glance around him.

Jocelyne had sprung up with a suppressed cry.

"Ah! I am not mistaken," said the man advancing, and removing his hat. "Jocelyne! Dame Perrotte! I am a fugitive, and I seek a shelter at your hands. I could not trust myself to those who call themselves my friends; others who might have protected me, I know not where to find, but I bethought myself of you – of you, Jocelyne – and" —

"Philip! Monseigneur," stammered the astonished girl. "You – here – and a fugitive!"

"Do you not know me?" said the fugitive to Dame Perrotte, who had risen from her chair, and stood staring at him as if with a return of troubled intellect.

"Not know you?" exclaimed the old woman rising. "I know you well, Philip de la Mole! And is it you, the Catholic, who seek a shelter beneath the roof of the proscribed and outlawed Huguenot?"

"But it is in the cause of your religion that I have conspired, my good woman, and that I am now compelled to fly," replied La Mole; "it was for one, who, as chief of your party, would have espoused your quarrel, and re-established your influence in the land."

"Ay, for your master, the shallow Duke of Alençon," responded Perrotte coldly. "False, hollow ambition all! And ye call that the cause of religion – Mockery! Yes, I know you well, Philip de la Mole, who in the hour of bloodshed," she continued, growing more and more excited, "could approve the hellish deed, and who now can babble of sacrifice and self-offering in the

cause of our religion."

"You belie me, woman," said La Mole proudly.

"Yes, I know you, Philip de la Mole," pursued the old woman with knitted brows and flashing eyes; "you, who, to amuse your hours of idleness, could talk of love to a poor trusting girl, heedless how you destroyed her peace of mind, had you but your pastime and your jest of it."

"Grandmother!" cried Jocelyne in the bitterest distress.

"It was he, then!" exclaimed Alayn, advancing upon the fugitive nobleman, with the gun-barrel raised in his arm.

"If you love me, forbear!" screamed his cousin, flinging herself before him.

"I had hoped to have found shelter among honest hearts, whom misfortune should have taught pity," said the fugitive proudly, and unmoved; "and I have erred – unjust hate, prejudice, inhospitality, are the only virtues practised beneath this roof. I will again brave the danger, and seek elsewhere that kindly feeling I find not here. Jocelyne, my sweet pretty Jocelyne, farewell!"

With these words La Mole moved towards the door. The old woman regarded him motionless, and with the same cloud of irritation on her brow. Alayn seemed equally inclined to prosecute his first hostile intention; but Jocelyne sprang after the retreating nobleman and caught him by the arm.

"Grandmother," she said, drawing herself up to her full height, and leaning fondly against La Mole – "if any one have erred,

it is I, and I alone. It was I chose him *forth* as the noblest, the brightest, the best among those who glittered about the court, in which we humbly lived. I had given him my heart ere he had deigned to cast a look upon me. If I have loved him – if I love him still – it is because I alone have sought it should be so."

"Jocelyne! be still, sweet girl," said La Mole, affected, and moving towards the door.

"And were he our bitterest enemy," continued the excited girl, still clinging to his arm, "he is now a proscribed fugitive – no matter why – God sends him to us – and it is ours to save, not to condemn him."

"But it is said, that the enemy of the righteous shall perish from the earth," said her grandmother sternly; "it is not I condemn or kill him. If it be the will of God that his cause of error cease, let him go forth and die."

"If he die, mother," exclaimed Jocelyne with energy, "I shall die too. I have given him my heart, my life, my soul – punish me as you will – trample me at your feet. But I love him, mother; and, if you drive him forth to be hunted by his enemies to the death, your child will not survive it."

Alayn had turned away in bitterness of heart, and the old Huguenot woman, although giving way more and more to that excitement, which, at times, fully troubled her reason, only wrung her hands, as if moved by the address of the agitated girl.

"Stay! stay, Monseigneur," continued Jocelyne, as La Mole again pressed her hand and turned to depart. "She relents – she

has a kind heart; and she would not, surely, deliver up the guest who begs shelter at her threshold, into the hands of those who seek to capture and to kill him."

"Let me go forth, Jocelyne! farewell!" repeated La Mole.

"Mother!" again commenced the unhappy girl, throwing herself down to clasp the knees of her grandmother, who, overcome by the violence of her feelings, had sunk back again into her chair. "Mother! would your husband, or your son, have driven even their deadliest enemy from their door?"

"Speak not of my son, girl; or you will drive me mad!" cried Perrotte, clasping her hands before her face.

Jocelyne sprang up with a look of despair, and returned to detain once more La Mole.

As they thus stood, and before the old woman had again stirred, or Alayn interfered, a rumour from the street formed by the bridge, caught the ear of the excited girl.

"What is that?" she exclaimed, starting in alarm.

"The agents of the Queen-mother sent in my pursuit, probably," replied La Mole coolly, and disengaging himself from the convulsive embrace of Jocelyne. "How they have tracked me, I know not. So be it, then. I had hoped for the sake of others to avoid their hands; but I am prepared to meet my fate."

"No, no," screamed Jocelyne. "It cannot be! Mother – mother, would you see him made a prisoner in your own house – murdered, perhaps, before your very face!"

Alayn moved towards the door; and the girl sprang to intercept

him.

"Would you be so base? Would you have me hate you?" cried the poor girl in despair, to her cousin.

Many steps were now heard ascending the lower stair. The old woman, who trembled in every limb, stirred not from her chair; but, removing one hand from her face, she stretched it out towards a corner of the room.

"Ah! I understand you, mother," exclaimed Jocelyne. "That secret closet where our books of religion are deposited, where our old priest, during the massacre, was hid!"

"Whilst my son perished – a victim – a martyr!" groaned the old woman, fearfully agitated.

"Come, come, Monseigneur," pursued the excited girl; and, in spite of the unwillingness of La Mole to profit by a hospitality thus bestowed, she dragged him to one corner of the room, and pushing back the spring of one of those secret recesses then so commonly constructed in all houses, as well of the bourgeois as the nobles, on account of the troubles and dangers of the times, she compelled him by her entreaties to enter a dark nook – then hastily closing the aperture, she exclaimed, "God shield him!" and sank down into the stool by her grandmother's side.

"Alayn!" she said, in a low hurried tone, as the heavy steps still mounted the stairs, "you will be silent, will you not? You will not betray him, and see the poor girl, whom you profess to love, die at your feet!"

The youth shook his head with a gesture of resignation,

although the frown upon his brow showed how painful were the feelings that he suppressed.

"Mother!" whispered Jocelyne once more to the old woman. "Calm your agitation – oh! let not a word, a gesture, betray our secret! Stay! I will read to you!" And she seized the Bible, then a dangerous book to produce thus openly before Catholic agents of the court, and took it on her lap.

Perrotte answered not a word, but continued to rock herself with much agitation from side to side in her chair.

The noise of the arquebuses of soldiery was now, in truth, heard on the landing-place. A heavy blow was given on the panels of the door; and, without waiting for permission to enter, a man in the military accoutrements of the period, whose head was crowned with a high hat, adorned with a short red feather, advanced into the room with an air which betrayed at once a strange mixture of effrontery and hypocrisy.

"Landry!" exclaimed together both Jocelyne and Alayn.

"Captain Landry, at your service," said the man; "or, if you will, at the service of her majesty the Queen-mother. Good-day, my gentle cousins both. Good-day to you, my good aunt Perrotte. How goes it with her now? Her head was somewhat ailing as I heard, since she had left the court." And he touched his forehead significantly with his finger.

"She is well!" answered Jocelyne hastily, trembling in spite of her efforts to be calm.

"But this is no visit of ceremony, my good friends," continued

Captain Landry, with some haughtiness of manner. "I come upon state affairs. A criminal of rank, who has conspired against the life and person of the king, has escaped; and we are sent in his pursuit. We have contrived to track him of a surety to this neighbourhood; and, as I bethought me that this same delinquent was a friend of my fair cousin Jocelyne, who, although she has received my offers of affection with disdain, could look upon another with more favour, I doubted not that I should find news of him in her company. Know you of none such here, sweet cousin?"

"I know not of whom you speak," said Jocelyne, her colour varying from the flush of emotion to the deadly paleness of fear.

"And you, Alayn, boy, since our fair cousin's memory is so short, can doubtless tell me. Has no one entered here within the last half hour?"

"No one!" answered Alayn sturdily; but he then turned and moved to the window to hide his confusion.

The Queen's agent shrugged his shoulders.

"And my good aunt has had no visitors?" he resumed, advancing towards the old woman.

Perrotte lifted her head, and regarded the captain fixedly, and with a look of scorn, but said not a word.

"Search!" said the officer, turning to the soldiers, who had waited without.

The men entered; and in a few instants the scanty and small rooms attached to the principal apartment were examined. The

captain was informed that no one could be found. For a moment he looked disappointed, and paused to reflect.

"Their trouble is evident," he murmured to himself. "He may still be here. The reward for his capture is too great to be given up lightly; and, besides, I hate the fellow for the love she bears him – I will leave no stone unturned."

"Dame Perrotte!" he said returning to the old woman, and speaking to her in a low tone of voice – "A criminal of state has escaped from the king's justice. In spite of the protestations of your grandchildren, I cannot doubt that he is concealed hereabouts; and you must know where. You will not fail, I am sure, to indicate the place of his retreat, when you know that, as the friend of those who have proved the bitterest enemies of your religion, he must also be your deadly enemy."

"And is it Landry, the recreant, the apostate, the only seceder of our family from the just cause, who speaks thus?" said the old woman lifting her head with a haggard expression.

"The necessary policy of the times," whispered the captain, sitting down on the stool by her side, and approaching himself confidentially nearer, "has compelled me, like many others, to be that in seeming which we are not in heart. Has not our chief, Henry of Navarre, yielded also to the pressure of the circumstances in which he lives? Judge me not so harshly, good aunt. But this criminal – he is one of those who have hunted and destroyed, who have cried – 'Down with them; down with the Huguenots – pursue and kill;' and you would withdraw him from

the punishment he merits?"

"He! he! Was it, so?" muttered Perrotte, with eyes staring at the vacancy before her.

"Do you not fear to pass for the accomplice of his crimes?" continued Captain Landry in her ear. "Know you not that he has attained the life of your nursling by deeds of sorcery, and that Charles IX., our king, now lies upon his death-bed."

"Who speaks of Charles?" exclaimed the old woman with increasing wildness and excitement. "Charles and death! Yes, they go hand in hand!"

"Landry! You shall not torture our poor mother thus," cried Jocelyne springing towards them, in order to interrupt a conversation which she had been witnessing in agony, although she could not hear it, and the effect of which upon her grandmother's unsettled mind became every moment more visible.

"Fair cousin, with your leave!" replied the captain. "I am bound to do the duties of my office. I shall be grieved to use constraint." And, waving his hand to her to withdraw, he made a sign to the soldiers to approach both Jocelyne and Alayn, and prevent their interference.

Jocelyne wrung her hands.

"Do you not fear the reproaches of your murdered son?" continued Captain Landry, turning to Perrotte, with an expression of perfidious hypocrisy in his eyes, and again pouring his words lowly, but distinctly, into her ear. "Do you not fear that

he should rise from his tomb, and, showing the bloody wounds of that fatal night, cry for vengeance on his murderers, and curse the weakness of that mother who would screen and shelter them? Do you not fear that Heaven should condemn you as a friend to the destroyers of the righteous? Think on your slaughtered kindred, woman!"

"Mercy! mercy! my son!" cried the old woman, springing up with her hands outstretched, as if to repel a spectre. "Oh! hide that streaming blood! Look not so angry on me! Blood shall have blood, thou say'st; so be it. Vengeance is the Lord's! and He shall avenge his people!"

"Where is he?" enquired Landry, also rising, and watching her every movement.

"There! there!" exclaimed the excited woman, pointing to the corner of the room.

In spite of the attempt of Jocelyne, who was now restrained by the soldiers, to interrupt him, Captain Landry walked to the corner indicated, and after a few attempts succeeded in discovering the secret of the concealed recess.

"Count Philip de la Mole, you are my prisoner, under warrant of his majesty the King, and by order of the Queen-mother," he said, as the young nobleman appeared to view.

Jocelyne uttered a cry of despair.

"Conduct me where you are bidden, sir," said La Mole, offering his sword. "My sweet Jocelyne, farewell! – your kindly interest in my fate I shall never forget. But we shall meet again.

Fear nothing for me; I will prove my innocence."

The unhappy girl fell at the feet of the captured nobleman, and wetted his outstretched hand with her tears, as she pressed it to her lips.

"My strict orders," said Captain Landry, "were to arrest all those who should be convicted of harbouring the criminal. Forget not, then, cousin Jocelyne, that I spare you so hard a lot. But my duty compels me to adopt other measures. Come, sir!"

When Philip de la Mole had been conducted from the room by the agents of the Queen-mother, Jocelyne turned to her grandmother, without rising from the ground, and exclaimed in the bitterest despair —

"Mother – mother – you have killed me!"

"Who spoke of Charles? Who said he lay upon his death-bed?" cried Perrotte, walking up and down with the uncertain step of the deranged of mind, and unheeding her unhappy grandchild; "Charles dying! and I shall see him no more – shall he die without a warning word from her who loved and cherished him so long – die without repentance? What was that voice that tortured my very soul? Who said he was about to die, and that I should see him no more?"

Jocelyne sprung up from the ground, as if a sudden thought had crossed her mind.

"Yes, mother, yes," she cried, "the king is dying. Come to him. See him once more. He will hear your words upon his death-bed, and extend his pardon to the innocent – for Philip de la

Mole is innocent, my mother. He will save him who is unjustly condemned; and you will save his repentant soul. Come, mother, come – come," she continued, as if speaking to a child, "the king is waiting for you!"

"Charlot – my nursling – dying!" murmured the old woman – "Yes – let us go."

"Alayn will accompany us," said Jocelyne, turning to the youth, who stood at the window unhappy and confused.

Without waiting for any addition to their dress, the eager girl seized her grandmother's hand, and led her to the door.

When it was opened, two soldiers appeared upon the threshold, stationed to prevent all egress of the inhabitants; and one of them, placing his arquebuse across the door-stall, cried, in a rude voice —

"On ne passe pas."

The two women drew back in alarm.

CHAPTER IV

"Sweet Isabel, take my part;
Lend me your knees, and all my life to come
I'll lend you all my life to do you service."

Shakspeare.

"Your suit's unprofitable; stand up, I say."

Idem.

Again the scene changes to the palace of the Louvre, where so many dark intrigues surrounded the rich chamber of the dying king; where, instead of the sympathy of friends, and the tears of relations, jarring ambition, and rivalry, and hatred, between brethren and kindred, between mother and children, escorted him on his passage to the tomb, and darkened the *last hours of his reign*. Such might have been supposed by a moralist to be the punishment, inflicted, even upon this earth, on him, who, if he did not instigate, ordained and prosecuted the horrible massacre of St Bartholomew.

The state of the miserable Charles grew hourly worse, and he rapidly approached his last moments. None knew better than his heartless mother, as she had herself admitted, that he *must die*; but yet, with so much artifice and intrigue did she envelope in

mystery his lost condition, that, even in the Palace of the Louvre, his own nearest relations were ignorant how near approached the hour, which, by leaving the crown as heirloom to a successor far away in a distant country, opened a field to the ambitious designs of so many struggling parties in the state.

Unconscious, as many others, of the rapid advance of that fatal event, sat in her chamber Margaret of Valois, Queen of Navarre, the sister of the dying king. Her beautiful head was reclined languidly against the tapestry of the wall, the dark colours of which formed an admirable background to that brilliant and bejewelled portrait. A lute, of the fashion of the day, lay upon her lap; music, dresses, scraps of poetry in her own handwriting, caskets with jewellery, manuscripts, and illuminated volumes, were littered in various parts of the room. A handsome spaniel slumbered at her feet; whilst two of her ladies sat on chests at a respectful distance, occupied in embroidery. A look of soft pensiveness pervaded the delicate and highly expressive features of the young Queen; but her thoughts were not bent, at that moment, either on her suffering brother, or on those ambitious views for her husband, which, spite of her little affection for him, she entertained, partly out of a sort of friendship for the man she esteemed, although her hand had been so unwillingly bestowed upon him; partly out of that innate ambition and love of intrigue, which formed, more or less one ingredient in the character of all the children of the crafty Catherine de Medicis. No! they rambled unrestrained upon the souvenir of an object of woman's

preference and princess's caprice, who for some time past had no more crossed her path. It was on that account her brow was clouded, and that a trait of sadness shaded her smiling mouth.

As she still lay thus languidly, one of the ladies was called by an officer from the room, and shortly returned to announce that there was a young girl without, who besought, with earnest supplication, to see her Majesty.

Although astonished at this request, Margaret, eager for any subject of passing occupation that might enliven, even for a moment, an hour's ennui, desired that she might be admitted; and shortly after a simply dressed girl, whose sunken head could not conceal her exquisite beauty, was ushered in. Her step as ill-assured and trembling; her face was deadly pale.

"What would you, maiden, with the Queen of Navarre?" said Margaret kindly. "How came you here?"

The girl raised her head, but still struggled with her emotion before she could speak.

"Ah! I remember me," pursued the princess with a smile. "You are the pretty Jocelyne, the fair grand-daughter of my brother Charles's favourite old nurse, Dame Perrotte; you are she of whom all our gallants spake with so much praise, to the great detriment and neglect of all our ladies of the court. Nay, blush not – or rather blush – blush, it becomes your pale face well, my dainty one. But I thought that you had left the court with Dame Perrotte, the sturdy Huguenot, ever since. Oh yes! I recall it all now," she continued, checking herself with a sort of shudder.

"But what brings you hither? Speak. Have you any favour to ask that the Queen of Navarre can grant?"

"I would speak with you, madam, and alone, upon a matter of urgency and importance," stammered Jocelyne.

The thought, that as the fair girl before her belonged to a Huguenot family, she might have been used by the Calvinist party as a secret agent to convey her some intelligence connected with the various plots ripe at that period to place Henry of Navarre in a post of influence about the crown, if not upon the throne, crossed the mind of Margaret, and she gave instant orders that her ladies should retire. To her surprise, as soon as they were left alone, the lovely girl threw herself sobbing at her feet.

"Save him! save him!" cried Jocelyne, with outstretched arms. "You have influence – you can approach the king – you can save him if you will. And you will save him – will you not?"

"Of whom do you speak, my pretty maiden?" said the princess in surprise.

"Of Monseigneur the Count Philip de la Mole!" sobbed Jocelyne.

"Philip de la Mole!" exclaimed Margaret aghast. "What ails him, girl? You bid me save him – Why? What mean you?"

"Oh! madam, know you not," pursued the sobbing girl, "that he has been arrested for treason – for a conspiracy against the life of the king? that he is at this moment a prisoner, and that his life is threatened?"

"La Mole! arrested! accused of attempting the life of

Charles!" cried the Queen of Navarre in the highest agitation. "And I knew naught of this? Is it true? How did you learn the story? Do you come from him? Speak, girl, speak, I say!"

"He was arrested, madam, in our very house," stammered Jocelyne, wringing her hands. "He had sought a refuge there – and he there lay concealed. But, alas! my poor grandmother, her wits are at times unsettled. Oh! she knew not what she did. Believe me she did not know. A treacherous villain worked upon her wavering mind – she betrayed him. They took him from the room a prisoner. I would have led my grandmother to seek his pardon at the feet of the king, who loved her so well that he would refuse her nothing; but soldiers guarded our doors; they would not let us pass. Then I bethought myself of the window. Our house is on the bridge, and looks upon the river. Below was a mill and the miller's boat. He is a good man, and kind of heart. I knew that he would row me to the shore. Alayn, my cousin, would have prevented me; but I would not hear him. What was the rushing stream, or the whirling mill-wheel to me? I saw not danger when I thought I could save the noble Count."

"Brave girl! brave girl!" interrupted Margaret, in palpitating excitement.

"There were beams and posts that descended to the water's edge," pursued Jocelyne, her eyes sparkling and her cheek now flushed with the animation of her tale. "Alayn aided me, although unwillingly, with cord and linen. I reached the mill – the boat. The miller rowed me to the shore. I knew I could not approach

the king; but I bethought me of you, madam – for they say – they say, you love him well." At these words Jocelyne hesitated, with a mixture of feelings, in which bashful timidity struggled with her jealousy of the great lady before whom she knelt.

"Pursue, girl, pursue," said Margaret, an instantaneous blush again colouring that cheek, from which alarm had driven all colour.

"Yes; and I knew that you would save him," continued the excited girl, stretching out her hands in anguish. "He is your own brother – he – the king, the dispenser of life and death; and he will listen to you. And you will save the Count, will you not?"

"Yes – yes, girl! I will do all I can!" said the princess walking up and down in agitation. "Rise, rise – your tale is confused. I know not what all this may mean; but the truth is there. He is a prisoner! Oh, La Mole! La Mole! Whether has your imprudence driven you? And were it for me that he has done thus. Yes – yes I will to my brother Charles – I will learn all – supplicate – save him!"

With these words, half murmured to herself, half addressed to Jocelyne, the Queen of Navarre paced her room. Then making another sign to the unhappy girl to rise and remain, she took a whistle lying on a table, and whistled to call those without.

The hangings of the door were parted. But instead of one of her attendant ladies, it was the calm imposing form of Catherine de Medicis that entered the apartment.

Margaret started back as if she had seen a spectre.

"My mother!" burst involuntarily from her lips in a tone of alarm; for she divined, by rapid instinct, that such a visit could bode naught but evil.

The Queen-mother cast a searching glance over the two agitated females, and smiled as if, with that quickness of intelligence which characterised her cunning mind, she had discovered at once the meaning of the scene before her. With an imperious wave of the hand she signified her desire that the damsel should leave the room, since she would speak with her daughter. In spite of her agitation and distress, Margaret of Valois, with that implicit obedience to her mother's will which, in common with all the children of Catherine de Medicis, (except the unhappy Charles in the latter years of his hardly wrought and dearly paid emancipation from her authority,) she never ventured to refuse. She bid Jocelyne leave them; and the fair girl retired with trembling steps and sinking heart. The apparition of the Queen-mother had appalled her.

Catherine motioned to her daughter to be seated on a low stool, and taking herself a high-backed chair, smiled with her usual bland and treacherous smile.

"You seem agitated, Margaret, *ma mie*," commenced the Queen-mother, after a due pause. "I have come to condole and sympathise with you in your distress. Much as I may have blamed your misplaced and unbecoming attachment to an obscure courtier, almost an adventurer in this palace, I cannot but feel that you must suffer from the discovery of the utter baseness

of this man. Look not thus surprised. I see you have already learned his arrest – your whole manner betrays it."

"You speak of – ," stammered Margaret, trembling.

"I speak of Philip de la Mole," said the Queen coldly.

"It is true, then?" pursued her daughter. "He is arrested on a charge of treason. Oh, no! It cannot be! He is innocent!"

"He is guilty!" said Catherine coldly. "I have evidence the most incontrovertible, that he has conspired against the life of the king, your brother, by the foulest acts of sorcery. A wax figure, fashioned as a king, pierced to the heart by his very hand, has been laid before me. Your brother's illness, his mortal pains, his malady so incomprehensible, all declare that the hellish deed has but too much succeeded up to this hour."

Margaret shook her head with a smile of contempt and doubt.

"But for what purpose was designed this murderous act?" pursued the Queen-mother. "In despite of the rights of Henry of Anjou, to place his master, your brother, the Duke of Alençon, upon the throne upon the death of Charles. We have every proof that so it was."

"For Alençon!" stammered the princess.

"It was for him," continued Catherine, unheeding this interruption, but with an increasing smile of satisfaction, "that these treasonable plots were designed, and partly executed. The ambitious favourite thought, by his master's hand, to rule the destinies of France. But the traitor will now reap the fruits of his black treachery."

"For Alençon!" repeated Margaret in a tone of regret.

"Doubt not that I sympathise in all your sorrow at this discovery, my child," resumed the Queen-mother. "Bitterly indeed must you feel how the base traitor has betrayed and forgotten the woman who loved him so fondly, so imprudently."

"For Alençon!" again muttered Margaret with sunken head.

"Be this the punishment of your folly, and its reparation," pursued Catherine, after a pause. "Long ago should you have ceased to cherish an attachment for one so unworthy. But you have too soft a heart, Margaret, my girl; you are too kind. I wonder and admire the sacrifice of your own feelings, and the woman's weakness with which you could hear and compassionate the supplications of his mistress."

"Madam!" said the princess lifting her head in surprise.

"But even now I saw her at your feet," continued her mother, with a slight sneer, "begging you to intercede to obtain his pardon."

"His mistress! speak you of La Mole, madam?" exclaimed Margaret.

"What! you knew not, child, what all the court can tell you," replied Catherine, "that of this chit-faced grandchild of that old Huguenot, whom Charles so favoured, Philip de la Mole had made his light o' love? Ay, so it was. It was the talk and scandal of the palace. Where was he discovered on his arrest? In the girl's chamber, as I hear. And now she dares to come and tear her hair, and whine out for mercy for her paramour, at your feet – at yours!"

Effrontery could go no further!"

"Philip! could he be so base?" murmured Margaret to herself. "But yes – her tears – her agony! Oh! it is true! And he must love her well, that she should thus, at the hazard of her life" —

The Queen-mother smiled with satisfaction, as she saw that mistrust had entered Margaret's mind; but to make her purpose sure, she remained long, to comfort and console her daughter, as she said, with words of false sympathy, and hypocritical advice.

When at last she saw Margaret thus convinced of La Mole's utter unworthiness, and knew that injured pride and offended dignity had usurped in her heart the place, where, so shortly before, love alone had throned, Catherine de Medicis rose and retired.

Margaret did not weep. She was one lightly moved by the more violent as the tenderer feelings of a woman's heart, and she was proud. She sat still, unmoved, with her hands clenched before her, when a slight movement in the apartment startled her. Upon raising her head she saw Jocelyne before her.

"You here, my mistress?" she exclaimed in anger.

"They would have bid me begone," said Jocelyne timidly; "but I concealed myself; and when her majesty the Queen-mother had gone forth, I returned unperceived."

"And you again dare to affront my presence?" said Margaret rising. "This is unheard of insolence."

"Alas, madam!" replied Jocelyne trembling, "I did but seek a last assurance that you would save him."

"Away with you, mistress," continued the princess, her eyes flashing with anger. "La Mole is but a traitor, as are men all. Let him meet his deserts. But I wonder at myself that I should bandy words with you. Go to your lover, girl, and comfort him as best you may."

"My lover! he!" murmured Jocelyne; "alas! he never loved me!"

Overwhelmed with the rude reception she had so unexpectedly received from the princess, who, but a short time before, had listened to her with so much eager interest, the poor girl moved with unsteady step towards the door.

"He loved you not, say you?" burst forth Margaret as to recall her. "Speak! He loved you not – this – young Count?"

"Madam," said Jocelyne, turning her head, but with downcast eyes, "in this dreadful moment, when he lies a prisoner, his life in danger, I can avow, what I could scarcely dare avow even to myself, that I loved him with a passionate and unrequited love. I loved him with an eager and devoted affection, although his heart was not mine – poor simple uncourtly girl as I am – although it was another's. He too loved, I know – but it was a great and noble lady, more worthy of him than was I. Pardon me, madam, if I dared to think she loved him too."

"Come hither, maiden, once again," said the princess in agitation. "He loved another, you say – this Count de la Mole – and who was she?"

"Madam," replied Jocelyne in embarrassment, "I have already

craved your pardon that I should have ventured even to surmise it!"

"Ah!" sighed forth Margaret with a gleam of satisfaction in her face. "Come back, my girl, come back!" she resumed. "I have treated you harshly. I knew not what I did. Hear me – this Count has proved a traitor to his king; perhaps, I may fancy, a traitor to others also; he has conspired to turn away the rightful succession of the crown. But I believe him not guilty of all the black arts of which he is accused. I would save him from the unhappy consequences of his error, if I could. But what can I do? My mother is fearfully incensed against him!"

"Oh, madam, you have access to the king!" cried Jocelyne imploringly. "He is your brother – and the power to save or to destroy is his. He will not refuse you, if you entreat his pardon and mercy for the Count."

Margaret shook her head doubtfully.

"Alas!" she said, with a look of distress, "other influences are at work which mine cannot resist. I knew not all – but now I tremble."

Jocelyne still entreated, in all the agony of despair; and the young Princess, again calling to her ladies, and learning that the Queen-mother had returned to her own apartment, at last departed from her chamber, bidding her fair suppliant await her return.

Long, eternally long, appeared those minutes, as the unhappy girl still waited for that return which she imagined was to bring

her the news of life or death. To calm the agitation of her mind, she prayed. But her thoughts were far too disturbed for prayer; and the prayer brought her no comfort.

At length the Queen of Navarre came back to her apartment – as Jocelyne looked in her face, she could scarcely repress a scream; that face was one of sorrow, and disappointment – the poor girl trembled in every limb, and did not dare to speak.

"I have done all I could," said Margaret – "His door was obstinately closed to me – I could not see him – it was she – it was my mother, who has done this. I know it well."

"What is to be done? whether turn for help?" cried Jocelyne in despair. "Oh! would that I could lay down my life to save his."

"Noble girl!" exclaimed the princess. "Thus devoted, whilst he loves another! How far more generous than was I; ay, I believe thee – couldst thou lay down thy life for him, thou wouldst do it."

"And is there no hope of seeking pardon at his hands?" resumed the afflicted girl.

"In time, perhaps – at another opportunity," replied Margaret; "but now my mother's influence triumphs."

"Another opportunity!" sobbed Jocelyne. "In time! Alas! such words are words of mockery – the king is dying – at his death the Queen-mother will command; and what have we then to hope?"

"Dying? the king – my brother!" exclaimed the Queen of Navarre – you rave, girl! he is ill – I know, but" —

"Know you not, madam," interrupted Jocelyne, "what all the city of Paris knows – that the king cannot live long – not many

hours, perhaps – that he lies upon his death-bed?"

"Charles – dying! And my mother has concealed it from me!" cried Margaret. "I see through all her designs! she would keep us from his presence, that he bestow not upon my husband, whom he loves, the reins of power at his death. Charles – dying! Then there lies our only hope. If he die, let Henry of Navarre be Regent – he will listen to my prayer – and La Mole is saved. Yes, there lies the only chance. I will to my husband. We may have still time to effect our purpose, and secure the Regency, in these few *last hours of the reign.*"

CHAPTER V

"O cousin, thou art come to set mine eye;
The tackle of my heart is crack'd and burn'd;
And all the shrouds, wherewith my life should sail,
Are turned to one thread, one little hair;
My heart hath one poor string to stay it by —

* * *

"All this thou see'st is but a clod,
And module of confounded royalty."

* * *

"But now a king — now thus —
This was now a king, and now is clay."

Shakspeare.

The miserable king lay, indeed, upon his bed of death. He had refused to quit the room which he usually occupied, all

encumbered as it was with his favourite hounds, his hunting accoutrements, and these horns, the winding of which had been his favourite amusement, and had contributed so powerfully to affect his lungs, and undermine his constitution. A sort of couch had been prepared for him of mattresses and cushions upon the floor; and upon that rude bed was the emaciated form of the dying monarch extended. To his customary attacks of blood-spitting, had succeeded a strange, and, until then, unknown symptom of malady, from which the very physicians recoiled with horror. Drops of red moisture, which bore all the appearance of blood, had burst, like perspiration, from the pores of the body; and there were moments when the wretched man writhed on his couch in the double anguish of body and mind, that, in spite of the efforts of the physicians to remove this extraordinary appearance, he might have been thought to be bathed in gore.

It was indeed an agony, and a bloody sweat!

The physicians had long since declared that there was no hope. In one of those fitful bursts of anger, in which Charles from time to time indulged, even in his state of exhaustion and in his dying moments, he had desired to be left by his doctors and attendants, and he slumbered his last slumber in this world, before closing his eyes for ever in the great sleep of death, to wake upon another. One person alone sat by the side of his couch; and that person was one, whom the incessant intriguing efforts of his mother would have taught him was his bitterest enemy.

That ivory paleness which had been so characteristic a trait of Charles, and had added at once to the melancholy and majesty of his face, was now of a yellow waxen colour, which might be said to increase from minute to minute in lividness of hue. His large nose stood frightfully prominent from those hollow sunken cheeks; his lips, in life, red almost to bleeding, were now ashy pale. Beneath his thin lids, the eyeballs, sunken into the deep cavities of his eyes, might be seen to roll and palpitate; whilst from his open and distorted mouth burst forth, even in his troubled sleep, moans, and then words of anguish.

The man who sat by his side, listened with varying feelings. Sometimes he started back with a movement of horror; sometimes he again bent forward in compassion, and with a kerchief lightly wiped away that fearful perspiration which burst from the hollow temples of the young man. The aspect of this personage was noble; his forehead was bold; his nose formed with that eagle curve which seems fashioned for command. The expression of his grey eyes denoted both resolution and wariness; whilst a general look of good temper and openness, which amounted almost to *insouciance*, pervaded the whole face. He was clothed in black. It was Henry of Navarre, the ill-used and betrayed victim of Catherine's policy.

During the whole reign of Charles IX., the Queen-mother had used every effort to instil into his mind suspicions of the loyalty of the man, who, were the Valois to die childless, would be heir to the throne of France; and whom the decrees of Providence

finally led, through the wiles and plots set to snare his liberty and his life, and in the midst of the clashing of contending parties, to rule the destinies of the country, as Henry the Fourth. Henry of Navarre, whom the artifice and calumny of a Medicis had done their best to separate and estrange from his king and brother-in-law during life, was now the only attendant upon his last moments – the only friend to press his dying hand and close his eyes. By a last exercise of his authority, Charles had declared that it was his will that Henry of Navarre, and he alone, should be permitted to approach his couch, and receive his last instructions; and in spite of all the manœuvres of the crafty Catherine, who no longer ventured openly to oppose her son's commands, the two princes were united in this supreme and awful hour.

And now Henry of Navarre sat and watched his dying relation with oppressed and anxious heart, aware that, were the king to die without providing for his safety by a last exercise of his power, his liberty, and even his life, would be in danger from the manœuvres of the revengeful Catherine; that his only chance of escape was in flight before the death of the expiring king; and yet, too noble and generous to leave the man who, at such a time, had called him to his side, he sat and watched.

Presently the king rolled convulsively upon his couch; his parted lips quivered horribly; and with a mutter, which increased at last into a distinct and piercing scream, he let fall the words —
"Away – away – torment me not! Why do you haunt me thus? Fire – fire! Kill – kill! No – spare them – spare them, and spare

me a hopeless misery. Ah! they fly – they bleed – they fall. And the poor old Admiral – his grey hairs are dabbled with blood. Away – away – it was not I – not I! Ah!" —

With a sudden start of horror, the king lifted his head from his pillow, and for a time gazed with staring and glassy eyes, as if the hideous vision which had tortured his sleep were still before him. Then with a bitter groan, he again fell back upon his couch. Again he raised his head, and, looking upon Henry, said, with a faint and plaintive voice, that contrasted strangely with these brusque and harsh tones which were natural to him,

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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