ЭДВАРД БУЛЬВЕР-ЛИТТОН

THE LAST OF THE BARONS — COMPLETE

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Содержание

Edward Bulwer-Lytton
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DEDICATORY EPISTLE

I dedicate to you, my indulgent Critic and long-tried Friend, the work which owes its origin to your suggestion. Long since, you urged me to attempt a fiction which might borrow its characters from our own Records, and serve to illustrate some of those truths which History is too often compelled to leave to the Tale-teller, the Dramatist, and the Poet. Unquestionably, Fiction, when aspiring to something higher than mere romance, does not pervert, but elucidate Facts. He who employs it worthily must, like a biographer, study the time and the characters he selects, with a minute and earnest diligence which the general historian, whose range extends over centuries, can scarcely be expected to bestow upon the things and the men of a single epoch. His descriptions should fill up with colour and detail the cold outlines of the rapid chronicler; and in spite of all that has been argued by pseudo-critics, the very fancy which urged and animated his theme should necessarily tend to increase the reader's practical and familiar acquaintance with the habits, the motives, and the

modes of thought which constitute the true idiosyncrasy of an age. More than all, to Fiction is permitted that liberal use of Analogical Hypothesis which is denied to History, and which, if sobered by research, and enlightened by that knowledge of mankind (without which Fiction can neither harm nor profit, for it becomes unreadable), tends to clear up much that were otherwise obscure, and to solve the disputes and difficulties of contradictory evidence by the philosophy of the human heart.

My own impression of the greatness of the labour to which you invited me made me the more diffident of success, inasmuch as the field of English historical fiction had been so amply cultivated, not only by the most brilliant of our many glorious Novelists, but by later writers of high and merited reputation. But however the annals of our History have been exhausted by the industry of romance, the subject you finally pressed on my choice is unquestionably one which, whether in the delineation of character, the expression of passion, or the suggestion of historical truths, can hardly fail to direct the Novelist to paths wholly untrodden by his predecessors in the Land of Fiction.

Encouraged by you, I commenced my task; encouraged by you, I venture, on concluding it, to believe that, despite the partial adoption of that established compromise between the modern and the elder diction, which Sir Walter Scott so artistically improved from the more rugged phraseology employed by Strutt, and which later writers have perhaps somewhat overhackneyed, I may yet have avoided all material trespass upon ground which

others have already redeemed from the waste. Whatever the produce of the soil I have selected, I claim, at least, to have cleared it with my own labour, and ploughed it with my own heifer.

The reign of Edward IV. is in itself suggestive of new considerations and unexhausted interest to those who accurately regard it. Then commenced the policy consummated by Henry VII.; then were broken up the great elements of the old feudal order; a new Nobility was called into power, to aid the growing Middle Class in its struggles with the ancient; and in the fate of the hero of the age, Richard Nevile, Earl of Warwick, popularly called the King-maker, "the greatest as well as the last of those mighty Barons who formerly overawed the Crown," [Hume adds, "and rendered the people incapable of civil government,"—a sentence which, perhaps, judges too hastily the whole question at issue in our earlier history, between the jealousy of the barons and the authority of the king.] was involved the very principle of our existing civilization. It adds to the wide scope of Fiction, which ever loves to explore the twilight, that, as Hume has truly observed, "No part of English history since the Conquest is so obscure, so uncertain, so little authentic or consistent, as that of the Wars between the two Roses." It adds also to the importance of that conjectural research in which Fiction may be made so interesting and so useful, that "this profound darkness falls upon us just on the eve of the restoration of letters;" [Hume] while amidst the gloom, we perceive the

movement of those great and heroic passions in which Fiction finds delineations everlastingly new, and are brought in contact with characters sufficiently familiar for interest, sufficiently remote for adaptation to romance, and above all, so frequently obscured by contradictory evidence, that we lend ourselves willingly to any one who seeks to help our judgment of the individual by tests taken from the general knowledge of mankind.

Round the great image of the "Last of the Barons" group Edward the Fourth, at once frank and false; the brilliant but ominous boyhood of Richard the Third; the accomplished Hastings, "a good knight and gentle, but somewhat dissolute of living;" [Chronicle of Edward V., in Stowe] the vehement and fiery Margaret of Anjou; the meek image of her "holy Henry," and the pale shadow of their son. There may we see, also, the gorgeous Prelate, refining in policy and wile, as the enthusiasm and energy which had formerly upheld the Ancient Church pass into the stern and persecuted votaries of the New; we behold, in that social transition, the sober Trader—outgrowing the prejudices of the rude retainer or rustic franklin, from whom he is sprung—recognizing sagaciously, and supporting sturdily, the sectarian interests of his order, and preparing the way for the mighty Middle Class, in which our Modern Civilization, with its faults and its merits, has established its stronghold; while, in contrast to the measured and thoughtful notions of liberty which prudent Commerce entertains, we are reminded of the political fanaticism of the secret Lollard,—of the jacquerie of the

turbulent mob-leader; and perceive, amidst the various tyrannies of the time, and often partially allied with the warlike seignorie, [For it is noticeable that in nearly all the popular risings—that of Cade, of Robin of Redesdale, and afterwards of that which Perkin Warbeck made subservient to his extraordinary enterprise—the proclamations of the rebels always announced, among their popular grievances, the depression of the ancient nobles and the elevation of new men.]—ever jealous against all kingly despotism,—the restless and ignorant movement of a democratic principle, ultimately suppressed, though not destroyed, under the Tudors, by the strong union of a Middle Class, anxious for security and order, with an Executive Authority determined upon absolute sway.

Nor should we obtain a complete and comprehensive view of that most interesting Period of Transition, unless we saw something of the influence which the sombre and sinister wisdom of Italian policy began to exercise over the councils of the great,—a policy of refined stratagem, of complicated intrigue, of systematic falsehood, of ruthless, but secret violence; a policy which actuated the fell statecraft of Louis XI.; which darkened, whenever he paused to think and to scheme, the gaudy and jovial character of Edward IV.; which appeared in its fullest combination of profound guile and resolute will in Richard III.; and, softened down into more plausible and specious purpose by the unimpassioned sagacity of Henry VII., finally attained the object which justified all its villanies to the princes of its

native land,—namely, the tranquillity of a settled State, and the establishment of a civilized but imperious despotism.

Again, in that twilight time, upon which was dawning the great invention that gave to Letters and to Science the precision and durability of the printed page, it is interesting to conjecture what would have been the fate of any scientific achievement for which the world was less prepared. The reception of printing into England chanced just at the happy period when Scholarship and Literature were favoured by the great. The princes of York, with the exception of Edward IV. himself, who had, however, the grace to lament his own want of learning, and the taste to appreciate it in others, were highly educated. The Lords Rivers and Hastings [The erudite Lord Worcester had been one of Caxton's warmest patrons, but that nobleman was no more at the time in which printing is said to have been actually introduced into England.] were accomplished in all the "witte and lere" of their age. Princes and peers vied with each other in their patronage of Caxton, and Richard III., during his brief reign, spared no pains to circulate to the utmost the invention destined to transmit his own memory to the hatred and the horror of all succeeding time. But when we look around us, we see, in contrast to the gracious and fostering reception of the mere mechanism by which science is made manifest, the utmost intolerance to science itself. The mathematics in especial are deemed the very cabala of the black art. Accusations of witchcraft were never more abundant; and yet, strange to say, those who openly

professed to practise the unhallowed science, [Nigromancy, or Sorcery, even took its place amongst the regular callings. Thus, "Thomas Vandyke, late of Cambridge," is styled (Rolls Parl. 6, p. 273) Nigromancer as his profession.—Sharon Turner, "History of England," vol iv. p. 6. Burke, "History of Richard III."] and contrived to make their deceptions profitable to some unworthy political purpose, appear to have enjoyed safety, and sometimes even honour, while those who, occupied with some practical, useful, and noble pursuits uncomprehended by prince or people, denied their sorcery were despatched without mercy. The mathematician and astronomer Bolingbroke (the greatest clerk of his age) is hanged and quartered as a wizard, while not only impunity but reverence seems to have awaited a certain Friar Bungey, for having raised mists and vapours, which greatly befriended Edward IV. at the battle of Barnet.

Our knowledge of the intellectual spirit of the age, therefore, only becomes perfect when we contrast the success of the Impostor with the fate of the true Genius. And as the prejudices of the populace ran high against all mechanical contrivances for altering the settled conditions of labour, [Even in the article of bonnets and hats, it appears that certain wicked falling mills were deemed worthy of a special anathema in the reign of Edward IV. These engines are accused of having sought, "by subtle imagination," the destruction of the original makers of hats and bonnets by man's strength,—that is, with hands and feet; and an act of parliament was passed (22d of Edward IV.) to put

down the fabrication of the said hats and bonnets by mechanical contrivance.] so probably, in the very instinct and destiny of Genius which ever drive it to a war with popular prejudice, it would be towards such contrivances that a man of great ingenuity and intellect, if studying the physical sciences, would direct his ambition.

Whether the author, in the invention he has assigned to his philosopher (Adam Warner), has too boldly assumed the possibility of a conception so much in advance of the time, they who have examined such of the works of Roger Bacon as are yet given to the world can best decide; but the assumption in itself belongs strictly to the most acknowledged prerogatives of Fiction; and the true and important question will obviously be, not whether Adam Warner could have constructed his model, but whether, having so constructed it, the fate that befell him was probable and natural.

Such characters as I have here alluded to seemed, then, to me, in meditating the treatment of the high and brilliant subject which your eloquence animated me to attempt, the proper Representatives of the multiform Truths which the time of Warwick the King-maker affords to our interests and suggests for our instruction; and I can only wish that the powers of the author were worthier of the theme.

It is necessary that I now state briefly the foundation of the Historical portions of this narrative. The charming and popular "History of Hume," which, however, in its treatment of the reign

of Edward IV. is more than ordinarily incorrect, has probably left upon the minds of many of my readers, who may not have directed their attention to more recent and accurate researches into that obscure period, an erroneous impression of the causes which led to the breach between Edward IV. and his great kinsman and subject, the Earl of Warwick. The general notion is probably still strong that it was the marriage of the young king to Elizabeth Gray, during Warwick's negotiations in France for the alliance of Bona of Savoy (sister-in-law to Louis XI.), which exasperated the fiery earl, and induced his union with the House of Lancaster. All our more recent historians have justly rejected this groundless fable, which even Hume (his extreme penetration supplying the defects of his superficial research) admits with reserve. ["There may even some doubt arise with regard to the proposal of marriage made to Bona of Savoy," etc.—HUME, note to p. 222, vol. iii. edit. 1825.] A short summary of the reasons for this rejection is given by Dr. Lingard, and annexed below. ["Many writers tell us that the enmity of Warwick arose from his disappointment caused by Edward's clandestine marriage with Elizabeth. If we may believe them, the earl was at the very time in France negotiating on the part of the king a marriage with Bona of Savoy, sister to the Queen of France; and having succeeded in his mission, brought back with him the Count of Dampmartin as ambassador from Louis. To me the whole story appears a fiction. 1. It is not to be found in the more ancient historians. 2. Warwick was not at the time in

France. On the 20th of April, ten days before the marriage, he was employed in negotiating a truce with the French envoys in London (Rym. xi. 521), and on the 26th of May, about three weeks after it, was appointed to treat of another truce with the King of Scots (Rym. xi. 424). 3. Nor could he bring Dampmartin with him to England; for that nobleman was committed a prisoner to the Bastile in September, 1463, and remained there till May, 1465 (Monstrel. iii. 97, 109). Three contemporary and well-informed writers, the two continuators of the History of Croyland and Wyrcester, attribute his discontent to the marriages and honours granted to the Wydeviles, and the marriage of the princess Margaret with the Duke of Burgundy."—LINGARD, vol. iii. c. 24, pp. 5, 19, 4to ed.] And, indeed, it is a matter of wonder that so many of our chroniclers could have gravely admitted a legend contradicted by all the subsequent conduct of Warwick himself; for we find the earl specially doing honour to the publication of Edward's marriage, standing godfather to his first-born (the Princess Elizabeth), employed as ambassador or acting as minister, and fighting for Edward, and against the Lancastrians, during the five years that elapsed between the coronation of Elizabeth and Warwick's rebellion.

The real causes of this memorable quarrel, in which Warwick acquired his title of King-maker, appear to have been these.

It is probable enough, as Sharon Turner suggests, [Sharon Turner: History of England, vol. iii. p. 269.] that Warwick was disappointed that, since Edward chose a subject for his wife, he

neglected the more suitable marriage he might have formed with the earl's eldest daughter; and it is impossible but that the earl should have been greatly chafed, in common with all his order, by the promotion of the queen's relations, [W. Wyr. 506, 7. Croyl. 542.] new men and apostate Lancastrians. But it is clear that these causes for discontent never weakened his zeal for Edward till the year 1467, when we chance upon the true origin of the romance concerning Bona of Savoy, and the first open dissension between Edward and the earl.

In that year Warwick went to France, to conclude an alliance with Louis XI., and to secure the hand of one of the French princes [Which of the princes this was does not appear, and can scarcely be conjectured. The "Pictorial History of England" (Book v. 102) in a tone of easy decision says "it was one of the sons of Louis XI." But Louis had no living sons at all at the time. The Dauphin was not born till three years afterwards. The most probable person was the Duke of Guienne, Louis's brother.] for Margaret, sister to Edward IV.; during this period, Edward received the bastard brother of Charles, Count of Charolois, afterwards Duke of Burgundy, and arranged a marriage between Margaret and the count.

Warwick's embassy was thus dishonoured, and the dishonour was aggravated by personal enmity to the bridegroom Edward had preferred. [The Croyland Historian, who, as far as his brief and meagre record extends, is the best authority for the time of Edward IV., very decidedly states the Burgundian

alliance to be the original cause of Warwick's displeasure, rather than the king's marriage with Elizabeth: "Upon which (the marriage of Margaret with Charolois) Richard Nevile, Earl of Warwick, who had for so many years taken party with the French against the Burgundians, conceived great indignation; and I hold this to be the truer cause of his resentment than the king's marriage with Elizabeth, for he had rather have procured a husband for the aforesaid princess Margaret in the kingdom of France." The Croyland Historian also speaks emphatically of the strong animosity existing between Charolois and Warwick. —Cont. Croyl. 551.] The earl retired in disgust to his castle. But Warwick's nature, which Hume has happily described as one of "undesigning frankness and openness," [Hume, "Henry VI.," vol. iii. p. 172, edit. 1825.] does not seem to have long harboured this resentment. By the intercession of the Archbishop of York and others, a reconciliation was effected, and the next year, 1468, we find Warwick again in favour, and even so far forgetting his own former cause of complaint as to accompany the procession in honour of Margaret's nuptials with his private foe. [Lingard.] In the following year, however, arose the second dissension between the king and his minister,—namely, in the king's refusal to sanction the marriage of his brother Clarence with the earl's daughter Isabel,—a refusal which was attended with a resolute opposition that must greatly have galled the pride of the earl, since Edward even went so far as to solicit the Pope to refuse his sanction, on the ground of relationship. [Carte. Wm.

Wyr.] The Pope, nevertheless, grants the dispensation, and the marriage takes place at Calais. A popular rebellion then breaks out in England. Some of Warwick's kinsmen—those, however, belonging to the branch of the Nevile family that had always been Lancastrians, and at variance with the earl's party—are found at its head. The king, who is in imminent danger, writes a supplicating letter to Warwick to come to his aid. ["Paston Letters," cxcviii. vol. ii., Knight's ed. See Lingard, c. 24, for the true date of Edward's letters to Warwick, Clarence, and the Archbishop of York.] The earl again forgets former causes for resentment, hastens from Calais, rescues the king, and quells the rebellion by the influence of his popular name.

We next find Edward at Warwick's castle of Middleham, where, according to some historians, he is forcibly detained,—an assertion treated by others as a contemptible invention. This question will be examined in the course of this work; [See Note II.] but whatever the true construction of the story, we find that Warwick and the king are still on such friendly terms, that the earl marches in person against a rebellion on the borders, obtains a signal victory, and that the rebel leader (the earl's own kinsman) is beheaded by Edward at York. We find that, immediately after this supposed detention, Edward speaks of Warwick and his brothers "as his best friends;" ["Paston Letters," cciv. vol. ii., Knight's ed. The date of this letter, which puzzled the worthy annotator, is clearly to be referred to Edward's return from York, after his visit to Middleham in 1469. No mention is therein made

by the gossiping contemporary of any rumour that Edward had suffered imprisonment. He enters the city in state, as having returned safe and victorious from a formidable rebellion. The letter goes on to say: "The king himself hath (that is, holds) good language of the Lords Clarence, of Warwick, etc., saying 'they be his best friends.'" Would he say this if just escaped from a prison? Sir John Paston, the writer of the letter, adds, it is true, "But his household men have (hold) other language." very probably, for the household men were the court creatures always at variance with Warwick, and held, no doubt, the same language they had been in the habit of holding before.] that he betroths his eldest daughter to Warwick's nephew, the male heir of the family. And then suddenly, only three months afterwards (in February, 1470), and without any clear and apparent cause, we find Warwick in open rebellion, animated by a deadly hatred to the king, refusing, from first to last, all overtures of conciliation; and so determined is his vengeance, that he bows a pride, hitherto morbidly susceptible, to the vehement insolence of Margaret of Anjou, and forms the closest alliance with the Lancastrian party, in the destruction of which his whole life had previously been employed.

Here, then, where History leaves us in the dark, where our curiosity is the most excited, Fiction gropes amidst the ancient chronicles, and seeks to detect and to guess the truth. And then Fiction, accustomed to deal with the human heart, seizes upon the paramount importance of a Fact which the modern historian

has been contented to place amongst dubious and collateral causes of dissension. We find it broadly and strongly stated by Hall and others, that Edward had coarsely attempted the virtue of one of the earl's female relations. "And farther it erreth not from the truth," says Hall, "that the king did attempt a thing once in the earl's house, which was much against the earl's honesty; but whether it was the daughter or the niece," adds the chronicler, "was not, for both their honours, openly known; but surely such a thing WAS attempted by King Edward," etc.

Any one at all familiar with Hall (and, indeed, with all our principal chroniclers, except Fabyan), will not expect any accurate precision as to the date he assigns for the outrage. He awards to it, therefore, the same date he erroneously gives to Warwick's other grudges (namely, a period brought some years lower by all judicious historians) a date at which Warwick was still Edward's fastest friend.

Once grant the probability of this insult to the earl (the probability is conceded at once by the more recent historians, and received without scruple as a fact by Rapia, Habington, and Carte), and the whole obscurity which involves this memorable quarrel vanishes at once. Here was, indeed, a wrong never to be forgiven, and yet never to be proclaimed. As Hall implies, the honour of the earl was implicated in hushing the scandal, and the honour of Edward in concealing the offence. That if ever the insult were attempted, it must have been just previous to the earl's declared hostility is clear. Offences of that kind

hurry men to immediate action at the first, or else, if they stoop to dissimulation the more effectually to avenge afterwards, the outbreak bides its seasonable time. But the time selected by the earl for his outbreak was the very worst he could have chosen, and attests the influence of a sudden passion,—a new and uncalculated cause of resentment. He had no forces collected; he had not even sounded his own brother-in-law, Lord Stanley (since he was uncertain of his intentions); while, but a few months before, had he felt any desire to dethrone the king, he could either have suffered him to be crushed by the popular rebellion the earl himself had quelled, or have disposed of his person as he pleased when a guest at his own castle of Middleham. His evident want of all preparation and forethought—a want which drove into rapid and compulsory flight from England the baron to whose banner, a few months afterwards, flocked sixty thousand men—proves that the cause of his alienation was fresh and recent.

If, then, the cause we have referred to, as mentioned by Hall and others, seems the most probable we can find (no other cause for such abrupt hostility being discernible), the date for it must be placed where it is in this work,—namely, just prior to the earl's revolt. The next question is, who could have been the lady thus offended, whether a niece or daughter. Scarcely a niece, for Warwick had one married brother, Lord Montagu, and several sisters; but the sisters were married to lords who remained friendly to Edward, [Except the sisters married to Lord Fitzhugh

and Lord Oxford. But though Fitzhugh, or rather his son, broke into rebellion, it was for some cause in which Warwick did not sympathize, for by Warwick himself was that rebellion put down; nor could the aggrieved lady have been a daughter of Lord Oxford, for he was a stanch, though not avowed, Lancastrian, and seems to have carefully kept aloof from the court.] and Montagu seems to have had no daughter out of childhood, [Montagu's wife could have been little more than thirty at the time of his death. She married again, and had a family by her second husband.] while that nobleman himself did not share Warwick's rebellion at the first, but continued to enjoy the confidence of Edward. We cannot reasonably, then, conceive the uncle to have been so much more revengeful than the parents,—the legitimate guardians of the honour of a daughter. It is, therefore, more probable that the insulted maiden should have been one of Lord Warwick's daughters; and this is the general belief. Carte plainly declares it was Isabel. But Isabel it could hardly have been. She was then married to Edward's brother, the Duke of Clarence, and within a month of her confinement. The earl had only one other daughter, Anne, then in the flower of her youth; and though Isabel appears to have possessed a more striking character of beauty, Anne must have had no inconsiderable charms to have won the love of the Lancastrian Prince Edward, and to have inspired a tender and human affection in Richard Duke of Gloucester. [Not only does Majerus, the Flemish annalist, speak of Richard's early affection to Anne, but Richard's pertinacity in marrying her, at a time

when her family was crushed and fallen, seems to sanction the assertion. True, that Richard received with her a considerable portion of the estates of her parents. But both Anne herself and her parents were attainted, and the whole property at the disposal of the Crown. Richard at that time had conferred the most important services on Edward. He had remained faithful to him during the rebellion of Clarence; he had been the hero of the day both at Barnet and Tewksbury. His reputation was then exceedingly high, and if he had demanded, as a legitimate reward, the lands of Middleham, without the bride, Edward could not well have refused them. He certainly had a much better claim than the only other competitor for the confiscated estates, —namely, the perjured and despicable Clarence. For Anne's reluctance to marry Richard, and the disguise she assumed, see Miss Strickland's "Life of Anne of Warwick." For the honour of Anne, rather than of Richard, to whose memory one crime more or less matters but little, it may here be observed that so far from there being any ground to suppose that Gloucester was an accomplice in the assassination of the young prince Edward of Lancaster, there is some ground to believe that that prince was not assassinated at all, but died (as we would fain hope the grandson of Henry V. did die) fighting manfully in the field. —"Harleian Manuscripts;" Stowe, "Chronicle of Tewksbury;" Sharon Turner, vol. iii. p. 335.] It is also noticeable, that when, not as Shakspeare represents, but after long solicitation, and apparently by positive coercion, Anne formed her second

marriage, she seems to have been kept carefully by Richard from his gay brother's court, and rarely, if ever, to have appeared in London till Edward was no more.

That considerable obscurity should always rest upon the facts connected with Edward's meditated crime,—that they should never be published amongst the grievances of the haughty rebel is natural from the very dignity of the parties, and the character of the offence; that in such obscurity sober History should not venture too far on the hypothesis suggested by the chronicler, is right and laudable. But probably it will be conceded by all, that here Fiction finds its lawful province, and that it may reasonably help, by no improbable nor groundless conjecture, to render connected and clear the most broken and the darkest fragments of our annals.

I have judged it better partially to forestall the interest of the reader in my narrative, by stating thus openly what he may expect, than to encounter the far less favourable impression (if he had been hitherto a believer in the old romance of Bona of Savoy), [I say the old romance of Bona of Savoy, so far as Edward's rejection of her hand for that of Elizabeth Gray is stated to have made the cause of his quarrel with Warwick. But I do not deny the possibility that such a marriage had been contemplated and advised by Warwick, though he neither sought to negotiate it, nor was wronged by Edward's preference of his fair subject.] that the author was taking an unwarrantable liberty with the real facts, when, in truth, it is upon the real facts, as far as they can

be ascertained, that the author has built his tale, and his boldest inventions are but deductions from the amplest evidence he could collect. Nay, he even ventures to believe, that whoever hereafter shall write the history of Edward IV. will not disdain to avail himself of some suggestions scattered throughout these volumes, and tending to throw new light upon the events of that intricate but important period.

It is probable that this work will prove more popular in its nature than my last fiction of "Zanoni," which could only be relished by those interested in the examinations of the various problems in human life which it attempts to solve. But both fictions, however different and distinct their treatment, are constructed on those principles of art to which, in all my later works, however imperfect my success, I have sought at least steadily to adhere.

To my mind, a writer should sit down to compose a fiction as a painter prepares to compose a picture. His first care should be the conception of a whole as lofty as his intellect can grasp, as harmonious and complete as his art can accomplish; his second care, the character of the interest which the details are intended to sustain.

It is when we compare works of imagination in writing with works of imagination on the canvas, that we can best form a critical idea of the different schools which exist in each; for common both to the author and the painter are those styles which we call the Familiar, the Picturesque, and the Intellectual. By

recurring to this comparison we can, without much difficulty, classify works of Fiction in their proper order, and estimate the rank they should severally hold. The Intellectual will probably never be the most widely popular for the moment. He who prefers to study in this school must be prepared for much depreciation, for its greatest excellences, even if he achieve them, are not the most obvious to the many. In discussing, for instance, a modern work, we hear it praised, perhaps, for some striking passage, some prominent character; but when do we ever hear any comment on its harmony of construction, on its fulness of design, on its ideal character,—on its essentials, in short, as a work of art? What we hear most valued in the picture, we often find the most neglected in the book,—namely, the composition; and this, simply because in England painting is recognized as an art, and estimated according to definite theories; but in literature we judge from a taste never formed, from a thousand prejudices and ignorant predilections. We do not yet comprehend that the author is an artist, and that the true rules of art by which he should be tested are precise and immutable. Hence the singular and fantastic caprices of the popular opinion,—its exaggerations of praise or censure, its passion and reaction. At one while, its solemn contempt for Wordsworth; at another, its absurd idolatry. At one while we are stunned by the noisy celebrity of Byron, at another we are calmly told that he can scarcely be called a poet. Each of these variations in the public is implicitly followed by the vulgar criticism; and as a few years back our journals vied

with each other in ridiculing Wordsworth for the faults which he did not possess, they vie now with each other in eulogiums upon the merits which he has never displayed.

These violent fluctuations betray both a public and a criticism utterly unschooled in the elementary principles of literary art, and entitle the humblest author to dispute the censure of the hour, while they ought to render the greatest suspicious of its praise.

It is, then, in conformity, not with any presumptuous conviction of his own superiority, but with his common experience and common-sense, that every author who addresses an English audience in serious earnest is permitted to feel that his final sentence rests not with the jury before which he is first heard. The literary history of the day consists of a series of judgments set aside.

But this uncertainty must more essentially betide every student, however lowly, in the school I have called the Intellectual, which must ever be more or less at variance with the popular canons. It is its hard necessity to vex and disturb the lazy quietude of vulgar taste; for unless it did so, it could neither elevate nor move. He who resigns the Dutch art for the Italian must continue through the dark to explore the principles upon which he founds his design, to which he adapts his execution; in hope or in despondence still faithful to the theory which cares less for the amount of interest created than for the sources from which the interest is to be drawn; seeking in action the movement of the grander passions or the subtler springs of conduct, seeking

in repose the colouring of intellectual beauty.

The Low and the High of Art are not very readily comprehended. They depend not upon the worldly degree or the physical condition of the characters delineated; they depend entirely upon the quality of the emotion which the characters are intended to excite,—namely, whether of sympathy for something low, or of admiration for something high. There is nothing high in a boor's head by Teniers, there is nothing low in a boor's head by Guido. What makes the difference between the two? The absence or presence of the Ideal! But every one can judge of the merit of the first, for it is of the Familiar school; it requires a connoisseur to see the merit of the last, for it is of the Intellectual.

I have the less scrupled to leave these remarks to cavil or to sarcasm, because this fiction is probably the last with which I shall trespass upon the Public, and I am desirous that it shall contain, at least, my avowal of the principles upon which it and its later predecessors have been composed. You know well, however others may dispute the fact, the earnestness with which those principles have been meditated and pursued,—with high desire, if but with poor results.

It is a pleasure to feel that the aim, which I value more than the success, is comprehended by one whose exquisite taste as a critic is only impaired by that far rarer quality,—the disposition to over-estimate the person you profess to esteem! Adieu, my sincere and valued friend; and accept, as a mute token of gratitude and regard, these flowers gathered in the Garden where

we have so often roved together.

E. L. B.
LONDON, January, 1843.

PREFACE TO THE LAST OF THE BARONS

This was the first attempt of the author in Historical Romance upon English ground. Nor would he have risked the disadvantage of comparison with the genius of Sir Walter Scott, had he not believed that that great writer and his numerous imitators had left altogether unoccupied the peculiar field in Historical Romance which the Author has here sought to bring into cultivation. In "The Last of the Barons," as in "Harold," the aim has been to illustrate the actual history of the period, and to bring into fuller display than general History itself has done the characters of the principal personages of the time, the motives by which they were probably actuated, the state of parties, the condition of the people, and the great social interests which were involved in what, regarded imperfectly, appear but the feuds of rival factions.

"The Last of the Barons" has been by many esteemed the best of the Author's romances; and perhaps in the portraiture of actual character, and the grouping of the various interests and agencies of the time, it may have produced effects which render it more vigorous and lifelike than any of the other attempts in romance by the same hand.

It will be observed that the purely imaginary characters introduced are very few; and, however prominent they may

appear, still, in order not to interfere with the genuine passions and events of history, they are represented as the passive sufferers, not the active agents, of the real events. Of these imaginary characters, the most successful is Adam Warner, the philosopher in advance of his age; indeed, as an ideal portrait, I look upon it as the most original in conception, and the most finished in execution, of any to be found in my numerous prose works, “Zanoni” alone excepted.

For the rest, I venture to think that the general reader will obtain from these pages a better notion of the important age, characterized by the decline of the feudal system, and immediately preceding that great change in society which we usually date from the accession of Henry VII., than he could otherwise gather, without wading through a vast mass of neglected chronicles and antiquarian dissertations.

BOOK I. THE ADVENTURES OF MASTER MARMADUKE NEVILE

CHAPTER I. THE PASTIME-GROUND OF OLD COCKAIGNE

Westward, beyond the still pleasant, but even then no longer solitary, hamlet of Charing, a broad space, broken here and there by scattered houses and venerable pollards, in the early spring of 1467, presented the rural scene for the sports and pastimes of the inhabitants of Westminster and London. Scarcely need we say that open spaces for the popular games and diversions were then numerous in the suburbs of the metropolis,—grateful to some the fresh pools of Islington; to others, the grass-bare fields of Finsbury; to all, the hedgeless plains of vast Mile-end. But the site to which we are now summoned was a new and maiden holiday-ground, lately bestowed upon the townsfolk of Westminster by the powerful Earl of Warwick.

Raised by a verdant slope above the low, marsh-grown soil of Westminster, the ground communicated to the left with the Brook-fields, through which stole the peaceful Ty-bourne, and commanded prospects, on all sides fair, and on each side varied. Behind, rose the twin green hills of Hampstead and Highgate,

with the upland park and chase of Marybone,—its stately manor-house half hid in woods. In front might be seen the Convent of the Lepers, dedicated to Saint James, now a palace; then to the left, York House, [The residence of the Archbishops of York] now Whitehall; farther on, the spires of Westminster Abbey and the gloomy tower of the Sanctuary; next, the Palace, with its bulwark and vawmure, soaring from the river; while eastward, and nearer to the scene, stretched the long, bush-grown passage of the Strand, picturesquely varied with bridges, and flanked to the right by the embattled halls of feudal nobles, or the inns of the no less powerful prelates; while sombre and huge amidst hall and inn, loomed the gigantic ruins of the Savoy, demolished in the insurrection of Wat Tyler. Farther on, and farther yet, the eye wandered over tower and gate, and arch and spire, with frequent glimpses of the broad sunlit river, and the opposite shore crowned by the palace of Lambeth, and the Church of St. Mary Overies, till the indistinct cluster of battlements around the Fortress-Palatine bounded the curious gaze. As whatever is new is for a while popular, so to this pastime-ground, on the day we treat of, flocked, not only the idlers of Westminster, but the lordly dwellers of Ludgate and the Flete, and the wealthy citizens of tumultuous Chepe.

The ground was well suited to the purpose to which it was devoted. About the outskirts, indeed, there were swamps and fish-pools; but a considerable plot towards the centre presented a level sward, already worn bare and brown by the feet of the

multitude. From this, towards the left, extended alleys, some recently planted, intended to afford, in summer, cool and shady places for the favourite game of bowls; while scattered clumps, chiefly of old pollards, to the right broke the space agreeably enough into detached portions, each of which afforded its separate pastime or diversion. Around were ranged many carts, or wagons; horses of all sorts and value were led to and fro, while their owners were at sport. Tents, awnings, hostelries, temporary buildings, stages for showmen and jugglers, abounded, and gave the scene the appearance of a fair; but what particularly now demands our attention was a broad plot in the ground, dedicated to the noble diversion of archery. The reigning House of York owed much of its military success to the superiority of the bowmen under its banners, and the Londoners themselves were jealous of their reputation in this martial accomplishment. For the last fifty years, notwithstanding the warlike nature of the times, the practice of the bow, in the intervals of peace, had been more neglected than seemed wise to the rulers. Both the king and his loyal city had of late taken much pains to enforce the due exercise of "Goddes instrumente," [So called emphatically by Bishop Latimer, in his celebrated Sixth Sermon.] upon which an edict had declared that "the liberties and honour of England principally rested!"

And numerous now was the attendance, not only of the citizens, the burghers, and the idle populace, but of the gallant nobles who surrounded the court of Edward IV., then in the

prime of his youth,—the handsomest, the gayest, and the bravest prince in Christendom.

The royal tournaments (which were, however, waning from their ancient lustre to kindle afresh, and to expire in the reigns of the succeeding Tudors), restricted to the amusements of knight and noble, no doubt presented more of pomp and splendour than the motley and mixed assembly of all ranks that now grouped around the competitors for the silver arrow, or listened to the itinerant jongleur, dissour, or minstrel, or, seated under the stunted shade of the old trees, indulged, with eager looks and hands often wandering to their dagger-hilts, in the absorbing passion of the dice; but no later and earlier scenes of revelry ever, perhaps, exhibited that heartiness of enjoyment, that universal holiday, which attended this mixture of every class, that established a rude equality for the hour between the knight and the retainer, the burgess and the courtier.

The revolution that placed Edward IV. upon the throne had, in fact, been a popular one. Not only had the valour and moderation of his father, Richard, Duke of York, bequeathed a heritage of affection to his brave and accomplished son; not only were the most beloved of the great barons the leaders of his party; but the king himself, partly from inclination, partly from policy, spared no pains to win the good graces of that slowly rising, but even then important part of the population,—the Middle Class. He was the first king who descended, without loss of dignity and respect, from the society of his peers and princes, to join

familiarly in the feasts and diversions of the merchant and the trader. The lord mayor and council of London were admitted, on more than one solemn occasion, into the deliberations of the court; and Edward had not long since, on the coronation of his queen, much to the discontent of certain of his barons, conferred the Knighthood of the hath upon four of the citizens. On the other hand, though Edward's gallantries—the only vice which tended to diminish his popularity with the sober burgesses—were little worthy of his station, his frank, joyous familiarity with his inferiors was not debased by the buffooneries that had led to the reverses and the awful fate of two of his royal predecessors. There must have been a popular principle, indeed, as well as a popular fancy, involved in the steady and ardent adherence which the population of London in particular, and most of the great cities, exhibited to the person and the cause of Edward IV. There was a feeling that his reign was an advance in civilization upon the monastic virtues of Henry VI., and the stern ferocity which accompanied the great qualities of "The Foreign Woman," as the people styled and regarded Henry's consort, Margaret of Anjou. While thus the gifts, the courtesy, and the policy of the young sovereign made him popular with the middle classes, he owed the allegiance of the more powerful barons and the favour of the rural population to a man who stood colossal amidst the iron images of the Age,—the greatest and the last of the old Norman chivalry, kinglier in pride, in state, in possessions, and in renown than the king himself, Richard Nevile, Earl of Salisbury and Warwick.

This princely personage, in the full vigour of his age, possessed all the attributes that endear the noble to the commons. His valour in the field was accompanied with a generosity rare in the captains of the time. He valued himself on sharing the perils and the hardships of his meanest soldier. His haughtiness to the great was not incompatible with frank affability to the lowly. His wealth was enormous, but it was equalled by his magnificence, and rendered popular by his lavish hospitality. No less than thirty thousand persons are said to have feasted daily at the open tables with which he allured to his countless castles the strong hands and grateful hearts of a martial and unsettled population. More haughty than ambitious, he was feared because he avenged all affront; and yet not envied, because he seemed above all favour.

The holiday on the archery-ground was more than usually gay, for the rumour had spread from the court to the city that Edward was about to increase his power abroad, and to repair what he had lost in the eyes of Europe through his marriage with Elizabeth Gray, by allying his sister Margaret with the brother of Louis XI., and that no less a person than the Earl of Warwick had been the day before selected as ambassador on the important occasion.

Various opinions were entertained upon the preference given to France in this alliance over the rival candidate for the hand of the princess,—namely, the Count de Charolois, afterwards Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy.

"By 'r Lady," said a stout citizen about the age of fifty, "but I am not over pleased with this French marriage-making! I would

liefer the stout earl were going to France with bows and bills than sarcenets and satins. What will become of our trade with Flanders,—answer me that, Master Stokton? The House of York is a good House, and the king is a good king, but trade is trade. Every man must draw water to his own mill."

"Hush, Master Heyford!" said a small lean man in a light-gray surcoat. "The king loves not talk about what the king does. 'T is ill jesting with lions. Remember William Walker, hanged for saying his son should be heir to the crown."

"Troth," answered Master Heyford, nothing daunted, for he belonged to one of the most powerful corporations of London, —"it was but a scurvy Pepperer [old name for Grocer] who made that joke; but a joke from a worshipful goldsmith, who has moneys and influence, and a fair wife of his own, whom the king himself has been pleased to commend, is another guess sort of matter. But here is my grave-visaged headman, who always contrives to pick up the last gossip astir, and has a deep eye into millstones. Why, ho, there! Alwyn—I say, Nicholas Alwyn!—who would have thought to see thee with that bow, a good half-ell taller than thyself? Methought thou wert too sober and studious for such man-at-arms sort of devilry."

"An' it please you, Master Heyford," answered the person thus addressed,—a young man, pale and lean, though sinewy and large-boned, with a countenance of great intelligence, but a slow and somewhat formal manner of speech, and a strong provincial accent,—"an' it please you, King Edward's edict ordains every

Englishman to have a bow of his own height; and he who neglects the shaft on a holiday forfeiteth one halfpenny and some honour. For the rest, methinks that the citizens of London will become of more worth and potency every year; and it shall not be my fault if I do not, though but a humble headman to your worshipful mastership, help to make them so."

"Why, that's well said, lad; but if the Londoners prosper, it is because they have nobles in their gipsires, [a kind of pouch worn at the girdle] not bows in their hands."

"Thinkest thou then, Master Heyford, that any king at a pinch would leave them the gipsire, if they could not protect it with the bow? That Age may have gold, let not Youth despise iron."

"Body o' me!" cried Master Heyford, "but thou hadst better curb in thy tongue. Though I have my jest,—as a rich man and a corpulent,—a lad who has his way to make good should be silent and—But he's gone."

"Where hooked you up that young jack fish?" said Master Stokton, the thin mercer, who had reminded the goldsmith of the fate of the grocer.

"Why, he was meant for the cowl, but his mother, a widow, at his own wish, let him make choice of the flat cap. He was the best 'prentice ever I had. By the blood of Saint Thomas, he will push his way in good time; he has a head, Master Stokton,—a head, and an ear; and a great big pair of eyes always looking out for something to his proper advantage."

In the mean while, the goldsmith's headman had walked

leisurely up to the archery-ground; and even in his gait and walk, as he thus repaired to a pastime, there was something steady, staid, and business-like.

The youths of his class and calling were at that day very different from their equals in this. Many of them the sons of provincial retainers, some even of franklins and gentlemen, their childhood had made them familiar with the splendour and the sports of knighthood; they had learned to wrestle, to cudgel, to pitch the bar or the quoit, to draw the bow, and to practise the sword and buckler, before transplanted from the village green to the city stall. And even then, the constant broils and wars of the time, the example of their betters, the holiday spectacle of mimic strife, and, above all, the powerful and corporate association they formed amongst themselves, tended to make them as wild, as jovial, and as dissolute a set of young fellows as their posterity are now sober, careful, and discreet. And as Nicholas Alwyn, with a slight inclination of his head, passed by, two or three loud, swaggering, bold-looking groups of apprentices—their shaggy hair streaming over their shoulders, their caps on one side, their short cloaks of blue torn or patched, though still passably new, their bludgeons under their arms, and their whole appearance and manner not very dissimilar from the German collegians in the last century—notably contrasted Alwyn's prim dress, his precise walk, and the feline care with which he stepped aside from any patches of mire that might sully the soles of his square-toed shoes.

The idle apprentices winked and whispered, and lolled out their tongues at him as he passed. “Oh, but that must be as good as a May-Fair day,—sober Nick Alwyn’s maiden flight of the shaft! Hollo, puissant archer, take care of the goslings yonder! Look this way when thou pull’st, and then woe to the other side!” Venting these and many similar specimens of the humour of Cockaigne, the apprentices, however, followed their quondam colleague, and elbowed their way into the crowd gathered around the competitors at the butt; and it was at this spot, commanding a view of the whole space, that the spectator might well have formed some notion of the vast following of the House of Nevile. For everywhere along the front lines, everywhere in the scattered groups, might be seen, glistening in the sunlight, the armourial badges of that mighty family. The Pied Bull, which was the proper cognizance [Pied Bull the cognizance, the Dun Bull’s head the crest] of the Neviles, was principally borne by the numerous kinsmen of Earl Warwick, who rejoiced in the Nevile name. The Lord Montagu, Warwick’s brother, to whom the king had granted the forfeit title and estates of the earls of Northumberland, distinguished his own retainers, however, by the special request of the ancient Montagus.—a Gryphon issuant from a ducal crown. But far more numerous than Bull or Gryphon (numerous as either seemed) were the badges worn by those who ranked themselves among the peculiar followers of the great Earl of Warwick. The cognizance of the Bear and Ragged Staff, which he assumed in right of the Beauchamps, whom he

represented through his wife, the heiress of the lords of Warwick, was worn in the hats of the more gentle and well-born clansmen and followers, while the Ragged Staff alone was worked front and back on the scarlet jackets of his more humble and personal retainers. It was a matter of popular notice and admiration that in those who wore these badges, as in the wearers of the hat and staff of the ancient Spartans, might be traced a grave loftiness of bearing, as if they belonged to another caste, another race, than the herd of men. Near the place where the rivals for the silver arrow were collected, a lordly party had reined in their palfreys, and conversed with each other, as the judges of the field were marshalling the competitors.

"Who," said one of these gallants, "who is that comely young fellow just below us, with the Nevile cognizance of the Bull on his hat? He has the air of one I should know."

"I never saw him before, my Lord of Northumberland," answered one of the gentlemen thus addressed; "but, pardieu, he who knows all the Neviles by eye must know half England." The Lord Montagu—for though at that moment invested with the titles of the Percy, by that name Earl Warwick's brother is known to history, and by that, his rightful name, he shall therefore be designated in these pages—the Lord Montagu smiled graciously at this remark, and a murmur through the crowd announced that the competition for the silver arrow was about to commence. The butts, formed of turf, with a small white mark fastened to the centre by a very minute peg, were placed apart, one at each end,

at the distance of eleven score yards. At the extremity where the shooting commenced, the crowd assembled, taking care to keep clear from the opposite butt, as the warning word of "Fast" was thundered forth; but eager was the general murmur, and many were the wagers given and accepted, as some well-known archer tried his chance. Near the butt that now formed the target, stood the marker with his white wand; and the rapidity with which archer after archer discharged his shaft, and then, if it missed, hurried across the ground to pick it up (for arrows were dear enough not to be lightly lost), amidst the jeers and laughter of the bystanders, was highly animated and diverting. As yet, however, no marksman had hit the white, though many had gone close to it, when Nicholas Alwyn stepped forward; and there was something so unwarlike in his whole air, so prim in his gait, so careful in his deliberate survey of the shaft and his precise adjustment of the leathern gauntlet that protected the arm from the painful twang of the string, that a general burst of laughter from the bystanders attested their anticipation of a signal failure.

"'Fore Heaven!" said Montagu, "he handles his bow an' it were a yard-measure. One would think he were about to bargain for the bow-string, he eyes it so closely."

"And now," said Nicholas, slowly adjusting the arrow, "a shot for the honour of old Westmoreland!" And as he spoke, the arrow sprang gallantly forth, and quivered in the very heart of the white. There was a general movement of surprise among the spectators, as the marker thrice shook his wand over his head. But Alwyn, as

indifferent to their respect as he had been to their ridicule, turned round and said, with a significant glance at the silent nobles, "We springals of London can take care of our own, if need be."

"These fellows wax insolent. Our good king spoils them," said Montagu, with a curl of his lip. "I wish some young squire of gentle blood would not disdain a shot for the Nevile against the craftsman. How say you, fair sir?" And with a princely courtesy of mien and smile, Lord Montagu turned to the young man he had noticed as wearing the cognizance of the First House in England. The bow was not the customary weapon of the well-born; but still, in youth, its exercise formed one of the accomplishments of the future knight; and even princes did not disdain, on a popular holiday, to match a shaft against the yeoman's cloth-yard. [At a later period, Henry VIII. was a match for the best bowman in his kingdom. His accomplishment was hereditary, and distinguished alike his wise father and his pious son.] The young man thus addressed, and whose honest, open, handsome, hardy face augured a frank and fearless nature, bowed his head in silence, and then slowly advancing to the umpires, craved permission to essay his skill, and to borrow the loan of a shaft and bow. Leave given and the weapons lent, as the young gentleman took his stand, his comely person, his dress, of a better quality than that of the competitors hitherto, and, above all, the Nevile badge worked in silver on his hat, diverted the general attention from Nicholas Alwyn. A mob is usually inclined to aristocratic predilections, and a murmur of goodwill

and expectation greeted him, when he put aside the gauntlet offered to him, and said, "In my youth I was taught so to brace the bow that the string should not touch the arm; and though eleven score yards be but a boy's distance, a good archer will lay his body into his bow ['My father taught me to lay my body in my bow,' etc.," said Latimer, in his well-known sermon before Edward VI.,—1549. The bishop also herein observes that "it is best to give the bow so much bending that the string need never touch the arm. This," he adds, "is practised by many good archers with whom I am acquainted, as much as if he were to hit the blanc four hundred yards away."

"A tall fellow this!" said Montagu; "and one I wot from the North," as the young gallant fitted the shaft to the bow. And graceful and artistic was the attitude he assumed,—the head slightly inclined, the feet firmly planted, the left a little in advance, and the stretched sinews of the bow-hand alone evincing that into that grasp was pressed the whole strength of the easy and careless frame. The public expectation was not disappointed,—the youth performed the feat considered of all the most dexterous; his arrow, disdaining the white mark, struck the small peg which fastened it to the butts, and which seemed literally invisible to the bystanders.

"Holy Saint Dunstan! there's but one man who can beat me in that sort that I know of," muttered Nicholas, "and I little expected to see him take a bite out of his own hip." With that he approached his successful rival.

"Well, Master Marmaduke," said he, "it is many a year since you showed me that trick at your father, Sir Guy's—God rest him! But I scarce take it kind in you to beat your own countryman!"

"Beshrew me!" cried the youth, and his cheerful features brightened into hearty and cordial pleasure, "but if I see in thee, as it seems to me, my old friend and foster-brother, Nick Alwyn, this is the happiest hour I have known for many a day. But stand back and let me look at thee, man. Thou! thou a tame London trader! Ha! ha! is it possible?"

"Hout, Master Marmaduke," answered Nicholas, "every crow thinks his own baird bonniest, as they say in the North. We will talk of this anon an' thou wilt honour me. I suspect the archery is over now. Few will think to mend that shot."

And here, indeed, the umpires advanced, and their chief—an old mercer, who had once borne arms, and indeed been a volunteer at the battle of Towton—declared that the contest was over,—"unless," he added, in the spirit of a lingering fellow-feeling with the Londoner, "this young fellow, whom I hope to see an alderman one of these days, will demand another shot, for as yet there hath been but one prick each at the butts."

"Nay, master," returned Alwyn, "I have met with my betters,—and, after all," he added indifferently, "the silver arrow, though a pretty bauble enough, is over light in its weight."

"Worshipful sir," said the young Nevile, with equal generosity, "I cannot accept the prize for a mere trick of the craft,—the blanc

was already disposed of by Master Alwyn's arrow. Moreover; the contest was intended for the Londoners, and I am but an interloper, beholden to their courtesy for a practice of skill, and even the loan of a bow; wherefore the silver arrow be given to Nicholas Alwyn."

"That may not be, gentle sir," said the umpire, extending the prize. "Sith Alwyn vails of himself, it is thine, by might and by right."

The Lord Montagu had not been inattentive to this dialogue, and he now said, in a loud tone that silenced the crowd, "Young Badgeman, thy gallantry pleases me no less than thy skill. Take the arrow, for thou hast won it; but as thou seemest a new comer, it is right thou shouldst pay thy tax upon entry,—this be my task. Come hither, I pray thee, good sir," and the nobleman graciously beckoned to the mercer; "be these five nobles the prize of whatever Londoner shall acquit himself best in the bold English combat of quarter-staff, and the prize be given in this young archer's name. Thy name, youth?"

"Marmaduke Nevile, good my lord."

Montagu smiled, and the umpire withdrew to make the announcement to the bystanders. The proclamation was received with a shout that traversed from group to group and line to line, more hearty from the love and honour attached to the name of Nevile than even from a sense of the gracious generosity of Earl Warwick's brother. One man alone, a sturdy, well-knit fellow, in a franklin's Lincoln broadcloth, and with a hood half-drawn over

his features, did not join the popular applause. “These Yorkists,” he muttered, “know well how to fool the people.”

Meanwhile the young Nevile still stood by the gilded stirrup of the great noble who had thus honoured him, and contemplated him with that respect and interest which a youth’s ambition ever feels for those who have won a name.

The Lord Montagu bore a very different character from his puissant brother. Though so skilful a captain that he had never been known to lose a battle, his fame as a warrior was, strange to say, below that of the great earl, whose prodigious strength had accomplished those personal feats that dazzled the populace, and revived the legendary renown of the earlier Norman knighthood. The caution and wariness, indeed, which Montagu displayed in battle probably caused his success as a general, and the injustice done to him (at least by the vulgar) as a soldier. Rarely had Lord Montagu, though his courage was indisputable, been known to mix personally in the affray. Like the captains of modern times, he contented himself with directing the manoeuvres of his men, and hence preserved that inestimable advantage of coolness and calculation, which was not always characteristic of the eager hardihood of his brother. The character of Montagu differed yet more from that of the earl in peace than in war. He was supposed to excel in all those supple arts of the courtier which Warwick neglected or despised; and if the last was on great occasions the adviser, the other in ordinary life was the companion of his sovereign. Warwick owed his popularity to his own large, open,

daring, and lavish nature. The subtler Montagu sought to win, by care and pains, what the other obtained without an effort. He attended the various holiday meetings of the citizens, where Warwick was rarely seen. He was smooth-spoken and courteous to his equals, and generally affable, though with constraint, to his inferiors. He was a close observer, and not without that genius for intrigue, which in rude ages passes for the talent of a statesman. And yet in that thorough knowledge of the habits and tastes of the great mass, which gives wisdom to a ruler, he was far inferior to the earl. In common with his brother, he was gifted with the majesty of mien which imposes on the eye; and his port and countenance were such as became the prodigal expense of velvet, minever, gold, and jewels, by which the gorgeous magnates of the day communicated to their appearance the arrogant splendour of their power.

"Young gentleman," said the earl, after eying with some attention the comely archer, "I am pleased that you bear the name of Nevile. Vouchsafe to inform me to what scion of our House we are this day indebted for the credit with which you have upborne its cognizance?"

"I fear," answered the youth, with a slight but not ungraceful hesitation, "that my lord of Montagu and Northumberland will hardly forgive the presumption with which I have intruded upon this assembly a name borne by nobles so illustrious, especially if it belong to those less fortunate branches of his family which have taken a different side from himself in the late unhappy

commotions. My father was Sir Guy Nevile, of Arsdale, in Westmoreland."

Lord Montagu's lip lost its gracious smile; he glanced quickly at the courtiers round him, and said gravely, "I grieve to hear it. Had I known this, certes my gipsire had still been five nobles the richer. It becomes not one fresh from the favour of King Edward IV. to show countenance to the son of a man, kinsman though he was, who bore arms for the usurpers of Lancaster. I pray thee, sir, to doff, henceforth, a badge dedicated only to the service of Royal York. No more, young man; we may not listen to the son of Sir Guy Nevile.—Sirs, shall we ride to see how the Londoners thrive at quarter-staff?"

With that, Montagu, deigning no further regard at Nevile, wheeled his, palfrey towards a distant part of the ground, to which the multitude was already pressing its turbulent and noisy way.

"Thou art hard on thy namesake, fair my lord," said a young noble, in whose dark-auburn hair, aquiline, haughty features, spare but powerful frame, and inexpressible air of authority and command, were found all the attributes of the purest and eldest Norman race,—the Patricians of the World.

"Dear Raoul de Fulke," returned Montagu, coldly, "when thou hast reached my age of thirty and four, thou wilt learn that no man's fortune casts so broad a shadow as to shelter from the storm the victims of a fallen cause."

"Not so would say thy bold brother," answered Raoul de

Fulke, with a slight curl of his proud lip. “And I hold, with him, that no king is so sacred that we should render to his resentments our own kith and kin. God’s wot, whosoever wears the badge and springs from the stem of Raoul de Fulke shall never find me question over much whether his father fought for York or Lancaster.”

“Hush, rash babbler!” said Montagu, laughing gently; “what would King Edward say if this speech reached his ears? Our friend,” added the courtier, turning to the rest, “in vain would bar the tide of change; and in this our New England, begirt with new men and new fashions, affect the feudal baronage of the worn-out Norman. But thou art a gallant knight, De Fulke, though a poor courtier.”

“The saints keep me so!” returned De Fulke. “From overgluttony, from over wine-bibbing, from cringing to a king’s leman, from quaking at a king’s frown, from unbonneting to a greasy mob, from marrying an old crone for vile gold, may the saints ever keep Raoul de Fulke and his sons! Amen!” This speech, in which every sentence struck its stinging satire into one or other of the listeners, was succeeded by an awkward silence, which Montagu was the first to break.

“Pardieu!” he said, “when did Lord Hastings leave us, and what fair face can have lured the truant?”

“He left us suddenly on the archery-ground,” answered the young Lovell. “But as well might we track the breeze to the rose as Lord William’s sigh to maid or matron.”

While thus conversed the cavaliers, and their plumes waved, and their mantles glittered along the broken ground, Marmaduke Nevile's eye pursued the horsemen with all that bitter feeling of wounded pride and impotent resentment with which Youth regards the first insult it receives from Power.

CHAPTER II. THE BROKEN GITTERN

Rousing himself from his indignant revery, Marmaduke Nevile followed one of the smaller streams into which the crowd divided itself on dispersing from the archery-ground, and soon found himself in a part of the holiday scene appropriated to diversions less manly, but no less characteristic of the period than those of the staff and arrow. Beneath an awning, under which an itinerant landlord dispensed cakes and ale, the humorous Bourdour (the most vulgar degree of minstrel, or rather tale-teller) collected his clownish audience; while seated by themselves—apart, but within hearing—two harpers, in the king's livery, consoled each other for the popularity of their ribald rival, by wise reflections on the base nature of common folk. Farther on, Marmaduke started to behold what seemed to him the heads of giants at least six yards high; but on a nearer approach these formidable apparitions resolved themselves to a company of dancers upon stilts. There, one joculator exhibited the antics of his well-tutored ape; there, another eclipsed the attractions of the baboon by a marvellous horse that beat a tabor with his forefeet; there, the more sombre Tregetour, before a table raised upon a lofty stage, promised to cut off and refix the head of a sad-faced little boy, who in the mean time was preparing his mortal frame for the operation by apparently

larding himself with sharp knives and bodkins. Each of these wonder-dealers found his separate group of admirers, and great was the delight and loud the laughter in the pastime-ground of old Cockaigne.

While Marmaduke, bewildered by this various bustle, stared around him, his eye was caught by a young maiden, in evident distress, struggling in vain to extricate herself from a troop of timbrel-girls, or tymbesteres (as they were popularly called), who surrounded her with mocking gestures, striking their instruments to drown her remonstrances, and dancing about her in a ring at every effort towards escape. The girl was modestly attired as one of the humbler ranks, and her wimple in much concealed her countenance; but there was, despite her strange and undignified situation and evident alarm, a sort of quiet, earnest self-possession,—an effort to hide her terror, and to appeal to the better and more womanly feelings of her persecutors. In the intervals of silence from the clamour, her voice, though low, clear, well-tuned, and impressive, forcibly arrested the attention of young Nevile; for at that day, even more than this (sufficiently apparent as it now is), there was a marked distinction in the intonation, the accent, the modulation of voice, between the better bred and better educated and the inferior classes. But this difference, so ill according with her dress and position, only served to heighten more the bold insolence of the musical Bacchantes, who, indeed, in the eyes of the sober, formed the most immoral nuisance attendant on the sports of the time, and

whose hardy license and peculiar sisterhood might tempt the antiquary to search for their origin amongst the relics of ancient Paganism. And now, to increase the girl's distress, some half-score of dissolute apprentices and journeymen suddenly broke into the ring of the Maenads, and were accosting her with yet more alarming insults, when Marmaduke, pushing them aside, strode to her assistance. "How now, ye lewd varlets! ye make me blush for my countrymen in the face of day! Are these the sports of merry England,—these your manly contests,—to strive which can best affront a poor maid? Out on ye, cullions and bezonians! Cling to me, gentle donzel, and fear not. Whither shall I lead thee?" The apprentices were not, however, so easily daunted. Two of them approached to the rescue, flourishing their bludgeons about their heads with formidable gestures. "Ho, ho!" cried one, "what right hast thou to step between the hunters and the doe? The young quean is too much honoured by a kiss from a bold 'prentice of London."

Marmaduke stepped back, and drew the small dagger which then formed the only habitual weapon of a gentleman. [Swords were not worn, in peace, at that period.] This movement, discomposing his mantle, brought the silver arrow he had won (which was placed in his girdle) in full view of the assailants. At the same time they caught sight of the badge on his hat. These intimidated their ardour more than the drawn poniard.

"A Nevile!" said one, retreating. "And the jolly marksman who beat Nick Alwyn," said the other, lowering his bludgeon,

and doffing his cap. “Gentle sir, forgive us, we knew not your quality. But as for the girl—your gallantry misleads you.”

“The Wizard’s daughter! ha, ha! the Imp of Darkness!” screeched the timbrel-girls, tossing up their instruments, and catching them again on the points of their fingers. “She has enchanted him with her glamour. Foul is fair! Foul fair thee, young springal, if thou go to the nets. Shadow and goblin to goblin and shadow! Flesh and blood to blood and flesh!”—and dancing round him, with wanton looks and bare arms, and gossamer robes that brushed him as they circled, they chanted,—

> “Come, kiss me, my darling,
> Warm kisses I trade for;
> Wine, music, and kisses
> What else was life made for?”

With some difficulty, and with a disgust which was not altogether without a superstitious fear of the strange words and the outlandish appearance of these loathsome Delilahs, Marmaduke broke from the ring with his new charge; and in a few moments the Nevile and the maiden found themselves, unmolested and unpursued, in a deserted quarter of the ground; but still the scream of the timbrel-girls, as they hurried, wheeling and dancing, into the distance, was borne ominously to the young man’s ear. “Ha, ha! the witch and her lover! Foul is fair! foul is fair! Shadow to goblin, goblin to shadow,—and the devil will have his own!”

"And what mischance, my poor girl," asked the Nevile, soothingly, "brought thee into such evil company?"

"I know not, fair sir," said the girl, slowly recovering her self; "but my father is poor, and I had heard that on these holiday occasions one who had some slight skill on the gittern might win a few groats from the courtesy of the bystanders. So I stole out with my serving-woman, and had already got more than I dared hope, when those wicked timbrel-players came round me, and accused me of taking the money from them. And then they called an officer of the ground, who asked me my name and holding; so when I answered, they called my father a wizard, and the man broke my poor gittern,—see!"—and she held it up, with innocent sorrow in her eyes, yet a half-smile on her lips,—"and they soon drove poor old Madge from my side, and I knew no more till you, worshipful sir, took pity on me."

"But why," asked the Nevile, "did they give to your father so unholy a name?"

"Alas, sir! he is a great scholar, who has spent his means in studying what he says will one day be of good to the people."

"Humph!" said Marmaduke, who had all the superstitions of his time, who looked upon a scholar, unless in the Church, with mingled awe and abhorrence, and who, therefore, was but ill-satisfied with the girl's artless answer,

"Humph! your father—but—" checking what he was about, perhaps harshly, to say, as he caught the bright eyes and arch, intelligent face lifted to his own—"but it is hard to punish the

child for the father's errors."

"Errors, sir!" repeated the damsel, proudly, and with a slight disdain in her face and voice. "But yes, wisdom is ever, perhaps, the saddest error!"

This remark was of an order superior in intellect to those which had preceded it: it contrasted with the sternness of experience the simplicity of the child; and of such contrasts, indeed, was that character made up. For with a sweet, an infantine change of tone and countenance, she added, after a short pause, "They took the money! The gittern—see, they left that, when they had made it useless."

"I cannot mend the gittern, but I can refill the gipsire," said Marmaduke.

The girl coloured deeply. "Nay, sir, to earn is not to beg." Marmaduke did not heed this answer; for as they were now passing by the stunted trees, under which sat several revellers, who looked up at him from their cups and tankards, some with sneering, some with grave looks, he began, more seriously than in his kindly impulse he had hitherto done, to consider the appearance it must have to be thus seen walking in public with a girl of inferior degree, and perhaps doubtful repute. Even in our own day such an exhibition would be, to say the least, suspicious; and in that day, when ranks and classes were divided with iron demarcations, a young gallant, whose dress bespoke him of gentle quality, with one of opposite sex, and belonging to the humbler orders, in broad day too, was far more open to

censure. The blood mounted to his brow, and halting abruptly, he said, in a dry and altered voice: "My good damsel, you are now, I think, out of danger; it would ill beseem you, so young and so comely, to go farther with one not old enough to be your protector; so, in God's name, depart quickly, and remember me when you buy your new gittern, poor child!" So saying, he attempted to place a piece of money in her hand. She put it back, and the coin fell on the ground. "Nay, this is foolish," said he.

"Alas, sir!" said the girl, gravely, "I see well that you are ashamed of your goodness. But my father begs not. And once—but that matters not."

"Once what?" persisted Marmaduke, interested in her manner, in spite of himself.

"Once," said the girl, drawing herself up, and with an expression that altered the whole character of her face—"the beggar ate at my father's gate. He is a born gentleman and a knight's son."

"And what reduced him thus?"

"I have said," answered the girl, simply, yet with the same half-scorn on her lip that it had before betrayed; "he is a scholar, and thought more of others than himself."

"I never saw any good come to a gentleman from those accursed books," said the Nevile,—"fit only for monks and shavelings. But still, for your father's sake, though I am ashamed of the poorness of the gift—"

"No; God be with you, sir, and reward you." She stopped

short, drew her wimple round her face, and was gone. Nevile felt an uncomfortable sensation of remorse and disapproval at having suffered her to quit him while there was yet any chance of molestation or annoyance, and his eye followed her till a group of trees veiled her from his view.

The young maiden slackened her pace as she found herself alone under the leafless boughs of the dreary pollards,—a desolate spot, made melancholy by dull swamps, half overgrown with rank verdure, through which forced its clogged way the shallow brook that now gives its name (though its waves are seen no more) to one of the main streets in the most polished quarters of the metropolis. Upon a mound formed by the gnarled roots of the dwarfed and gnome-like oak, she sat down and wept. In our earlier years, most of us may remember that there was one day which made an epoch in life,—that day that separated Childhood from Youth; for that day seems not to come gradually, but to be a sudden crisis, an abrupt revelation. The buds of the heart open to close no more. Such a day was this in that girl's fate. But the day was not yet gone! That morning, when she dressed for her enterprise of filial love, perhaps for the first time Sibyll Warner felt that she was fair—who shall say whether some innocent, natural vanity had not blended with the deep, devoted earnestness, which saw no shame in the act by which the child could aid the father? Perhaps she might have smiled to listen to old Madge's praises of her winsome face, old Madge's predictions that the face and the gittern would not lack admirers

on the gay ground; perhaps some indistinct, vague forethoughts of the Future to which the sex will deem itself to be born might have caused the cheek—no, not to blush, but to take a rosier hue, and the pulse to beat quicker, she knew not why. At all events, to that ground went the young Sibyll, cheerful, and almost happy, in her inexperience of actual life, and sure, at least, that youth and innocence sufficed to protect from insult. And now she sat down under the leafless tree to weep; and in those bitter tears, childhood itself was laved from her soul forever.

"What ailest thou, maiden?" asked a deep voice; and she felt a hand laid lightly on her shoulder. She looked up in terror and confusion, but it was no form or face to inspire alarm that met her eye. It was a cavalier, holding by the rein a horse richly caparisoned; and though his dress was plainer and less exaggerated than that usually worn by men of rank, its materials were those which the sumptuary laws (constantly broken, indeed, as such laws ever must be) confined to nobles. Though his surcoat was but of cloth, and the colour dark and sober, it was woven in foreign looms,—an unpatriotic luxury, above the degree of knight,—and edged deep with the costliest sables. The hilt of the dagger, suspended round his breast, was but of ivory, curiously wrought, but the scabbard was sown with large pearls. For the rest, the stranger was of ordinary stature, well knit and active rather than powerful, and of that age (about thirty-five) which may be called the second prime of man. His face was far less handsome than Marmaduke Nevile's, but infinitely more

expressive, both of intelligence and command,—the features straight and sharp, the complexion clear and pale, and under the bright gray eyes a dark shade spoke either of dissipation or of thought.

"What ailest thou, maiden,—weepest thou some faithless lover? Tush! love renews itself in youth, as flower succeeds flower in spring."

Sibyll made no reply; she rose and moved a few paces, then arrested her steps, and looked around her. She had lost all clew to her way homeward, and she saw with horror, in the distance, the hateful timbrel-girls, followed by the rabble, and weaving their strange dances towards the spot.

"Dost thou fear me, child? There is no cause," said the stranger, following her. "Again I say, What ailest thou?" This time his voice was that of command, and the poor girl involuntarily obeyed it. She related her misfortunes, her persecution by the tymbesteres, her escape,—thanks to the Nevile's courtesy,—her separation from her attendant, and her uncertainty as to the way she should pursue.

The nobleman listened with interest: he was a man sated and wearied by pleasure and the world, and the evident innocence of Sibyll was a novelty to his experience, while the contrast between her language and her dress moved his curiosity. "And," said he, "thy protector left thee, his work half done; fie on his chivalry! But I, donzel, wear the spurs of knighthood, and to succour the distressed is a duty my oath will not let me swerve from. I will

guide thee home, for I know well all the purlieus of this evil den of London. Thou hast but to name the suburb in which thy father dwells."

Sibyll involuntarily raised her wimple, lifted her beautiful eyes to the stranger, in bewildered gratitude and surprise. Her childhood had passed in a court, her eye, accustomed to rank, at once perceived the high degree of the speaker. The contrast between this unexpected and delicate gallantry and the condescending tone and abrupt desertion of Marmaduke affected her again to tears.

"Ah, worshipful sir!" she said falteringly, "what can reward thee for this unlooked-for goodness?"

"One innocent smile, sweet virgin!—for such I'll be sworn thou art."

He did not offer her his hand, but hanging the gold-enamelled rein over his arm, walked by her side; and a few words sufficing for his guidance, led her across the ground, through the very midst of the throng. He felt none of the young shame, the ingenious scruples of Marmaduke, at the gaze he encountered, thus companioned. But Sibyll noted that ever and anon bonnet and cap were raised as they passed along, and the respectful murmur of the vulgar, who had so lately jeered her anguish, taught her the immeasurable distance in men's esteem between poverty shielded by virtue, and poverty protected by power.

But suddenly a gaudy tinsel group broke through the crowd, and wheeling round their path, the foremost of them daringly

approached the nobleman, and looking full into his disdainful face, exclaimed, "Tradest thou, too, for kisses? Ha, ha! life is short,—the witch is outwitched by thee! But witchcraft and death go together, as peradventure thou mayest learn at the last, sleek wooer." Then darting off, and heading her painted, tawdry throng, the timbrel-girl sprang into the crowd and vanished.

This incident produced no effect upon the strong and cynical intellect of the stranger. Without allusion to it, he continued to converse with his young companion, and artfully to draw out her own singular but energetic and gifted mind. He grew more than interested,—he was both touched and surprised. His manner became yet more respectful, his voice more subdued and soft.

On what hazards turns our fate! On that day, a little, and Sibyll's pure but sensitive heart had, perhaps, been given to the young Nevile. He had defended and saved her; he was fairer than the stranger, he was more of her own years and nearer to her in station; but in showing himself ashamed to be seen with her, he had galled her heart, and moved the bitter tears of her pride. What had the stranger done? Nothing but reconciled the wounded delicacy to itself; and suddenly he became to her one ever to be remembered, wondered at,—perhaps more. They reached an obscure suburb, and parted at the threshold of a large, gloomy, ruinous house, which Sibyll indicated as her father's home.

The girl lingered before the porch; and the stranger gazed, with the passionless admiration which some fair object of art

produces on one who has refined his taste, but who has survived enthusiasm, upon the downcast cheek that blushed beneath his gaze. "Farewell!" he said; and the girl looked up wistfully. He might, without vanity, have supposed that look to imply what the lip did not dare to say,—"And shall we meet no more?"

But he turned away, with formal though courteous salutation; and as he remounted his steed, and rode slowly towards the interior of the city, he muttered to himself, with a melancholy smile upon his lips, "Now might the grown infant make to himself a new toy; but an innocent heart is a brittle thing, and one false vow can break it. Pretty maiden! I like thee well eno' not to love thee. So, as my young Scotch minstrel sings and plays,—

> 'Christ keep these birdis bright in bowers,
> Sic peril lies in paramours!'"

[A Scotch poet, in Lord Hailes's Collection, has the following lines in the very pretty poem called "Peril in Paramours:"—

> "Wherefore I pray, in termys short,
> Christ keep these birdis bright in bowers,
> Fra false lovers and their disport,
> Sic peril lies in paramours."]

We must now return to Marmaduke. On leaving Sibyll, and retracing his steps towards the more crowded quarter of the space, he was agreeably surprised by encountering Nicholas

Alwyn, escorted in triumph by a legion of roaring apprentices from the victory he had just obtained over six competitors at the quarter-staff.

When the cortege came up to Marmaduke, Nicholas halted, and fronting his attendants, said, with the same cold and formal stiffness that had characterized him from the beginning, "I thank you, lads, for your kindness. It is your own triumph. All I cared for was to show that you London boys are able to keep up your credit in these days, when there's little luck in a yard-measure, if the same hand cannot bend a bow, or handle cold steel. But the less we think of the strife when we are in the stall, the better for our pouches. And so I hope we shall hear no more about it, until I get a ware of my own, when the more of ye that like to talk of such matters the better ye will be welcome,—always provided ye be civil customers, who pay on the nail, for as the saw saith, 'Ell and tell makes the crypt swell.' For the rest, thanks are due to this brave gentleman, Marmaduke Nevile, who, though the son of a knight-banneret who never furnished less to the battle-field than fifty men-at-arms, has condescended to take part and parcel in the sports of us peaceful London traders; and if ever you can do him a kind turn—for turn and turn is fair play—why, you will, I answer for it. And so one cheer for old London, and another for Marmaduke Nevile. Here goes! Hurrah, my lads!" And with this pithy address Nicholas Alwyn took off his cap and gave the signal for the shouts, which, being duly performed, he bowed stiffly to his companions, who departed with a hearty laugh, and coming

to the side of Nevile, the two walked on to a neighbouring booth, where, under a rude awning, and over a flagon of clary, they were soon immersed in the confidential communications each had to give and receive.

CHAPTER III. THE TRADER AND THE GENTLE; OR, THE CHANGING GENERATION

"No, my dear foster-brother," said the Nevile, "I do not yet comprehend the choice you have made. You were reared and brought up with such careful book-lere, not only to read and to write—the which, save the mark! I hold to be labour eno'—but chop Latin and logic and theology with Saint Aristotle (is not that his hard name?) into the bargain, and all because you had an uncle of high note in Holy Church. I cannot say I would be a shaveling myself; but surely a monk with the hope of preferment is a nobler calling to a lad of spirit and ambition than to stand out at a door and cry, 'Buy, buy,' 'What d'ye lack?' to spend youth as a Flat-cap, and drone out manhood in measuring cloth, hammering metals, or weighing out spices?"

"Fair and softly, Master Marmaduke," said Alwyn, "you will understand me better anon. My uncle, the sub-prior, died,—some say of austerities, others of ale,—that matters not; he was a learned man and a cunning. 'Nephew Nicholas,' said he on his death-bed, 'think twice before you tie yourself up to the cloister; it's ill leaping nowadays in a sackcloth bag. If a pious man be moved to the cowl by holy devotion, there is nothing to be said on the subject; but if he take to the Church as a calling, and wish

to march ahead like his fellows, these times show him a prettier path to distinction. The nobles begin to get the best things for themselves; and a learned monk, if he is the son of a yeoman, cannot hope, without a specialty of grace, to become abbot or bishop. The king, whoever he be, must be so drained by his wars, that he has little land or gold to bestow on his favourites; but his gentry turn an eye to the temporalities of the Church, and the Church and the king wish to strengthen themselves by the gentry. This is not all; there are free opinions afloat. The House of Lancaster has lost ground, by its persecutions and burnings. Men dare not openly resist, but they treasure up recollections of a fried grandfather, or a roasted cousin,—recollections which have done much damage to the Henries, and will shake Holy Church itself one of these days. The Lollards lie hid, but Lollardism will never die. There is a new class rising amain, where a little learning goes a great way, if mixed with spirit and sense. Thou likest broad pieces and a creditable name,—go to London and be a trader. London begins to decide who shall wear the crown, and the traders to decide what king London shall befriend. Wherefore, cut thy trace from the cloister, and take thy road to the shop.' The next day my uncle gave up the ghost.—They had better clary than this at the convent, I must own; but every stone has its flaw."

"Yet," said Marmaduke, "if you took distaste to the cowl, from reasons that I pretend not to judge of, but which seem to my poor head very bad ones, seeing that the Church is as mighty as ever, and King Edward is no friend to the Lollards, and that your uncle

himself was at least a sub-prior—"

"Had he been son to a baron, he had been a cardinal," interrupted Nicholas, "for his head was the longest that ever came out of the north country. But go on; you would say my father was a sturdy yeoman, and I might have followed his calling?"

"You hit the mark, Master Nicholas."

"Hout, man. I crave pardon of your rank, Master Nevile. But a yeoman is born a yeoman, and he dies a yeoman—I think it better to die Lord Mayor of London; and so I craved my mother's blessing and leave, and a part of the old hyde has been sold to pay for the first step to the red gown, which I need not say must be that of the Flat-cap. I have already taken my degrees, and no longer wear blue. I am headman to my master, and my master will be sheriff of London."

"It is a pity," said the Nevile, shaking his head; "you were ever a tall, brave lad, and would have made a very pretty soldier."

"Thank you, Master Marmaduke, but I leave cut and thrust to the gentles. I have seen eno' of the life of a retainer. He goes out on foot with his shield and his sword, or his bow and his quiver, while Sir Knight sits on horseback, armed from the crown to the toe, and the arrow slants off from rider and horse, as a stone from a tree. If the retainer is not sliced and carved into mincemeat, he comes home to a heap of ashes, and a handful of acres, harried and rivelled into a common; Sir Knight thanks him for his valour, but he does not build up his house; Sir Knight gets a grant from the king, or an heiress for his son, and Hob

Yeoman turns gisarme and bill into ploughshares. Tut, tut, there's no liberty, no safety, no getting on, for a man who has no right to the gold spurs, but in the guild of his fellows; and London is the place for a born Saxon like Nicholas Alwyn."

As the young aspirant thus uttered the sentiments, which though others might not so plainly avow and shrewdly enforce them, tended towards that slow revolution, which, under all the stormy events that the superficial record we call HISTORY alone deigns to enumerate, was working that great change in the thoughts and habits of the people,—that impulsion of the provincial citywards, that gradual formation of a class between knight and vassal,—which became first constitutionally visible and distinct in the reign of Henry VII., Marmaduke Nevile, inly half-regretting and half-despising the reasonings of his foster-brother, was playing with his dagger, and glancing at his silver arrow.

"Yet you could still have eno' of the tall yeoman and the stout retainer about you to try for this bauble, and to break half a dozen thick heads with your quarter-staff!"

"True," said Nicholas; "you must recollect we are only, as yet, between the skin and the selle,—half-trader, half-retainer. The old leaven will out,—'Eith to learn the cat to the kirn,' as they say in the North. But that's not all; a man, to get on, must win respect from those who are to jostle him hereafter, and it's good policy to show those roystering youngsters that Nick Alwyn, stiff and steady though he be, has the old English metal in him, if it comes

to a pinch; it's a lesson to yon lords too, save your quality, if they ever wish to ride roughshod over our guilds and companies. But eno' of me.—Drawer, another stoup of the clary—Now, gentle sir, may I make bold to ask news of yourself? I saw, though I spake not before of it, that my Lord Montagu showed a cold face to his kinsman. I know something of these great men, though I be but a small one,—a dog is no bad guide in the city he trots through."

"My dear foster-brother," said the Nevile, "you had ever more brains than myself, as is meet that you should have, since you lay by the steel casque,—which, I take it, is meant as a substitute for us gentlemen and soldiers who have not so many brains to spare; and I will willingly profit by your counsels. You must know," he said, drawing nearer to the table, and his frank, hardy face assuming a more earnest expression, "that though my father, Sir Guy, at the instigation of his chief, the Earl of Westmoreland, and of the Lord Nevile, bore arms at the first for King Henry—"

"Hush! hush! for Henry of Windsor!"

"Henry of Windsor!—so be it! yet being connected, like the nobles I have spoken of, with the blood of Warwick and Salisbury, it was ever with doubt and misgiving, and rather in the hope of ultimate compromise between both parties (which the Duke of York's moderation rendered probable) than of the extermination of either. But when, at the battle of York, Margaret of Anjou and her generals stained their victory by cruelties which could not fail to close the door on all conciliation;

when the infant son of the duke himself was murdered, though a prisoner, in cold blood; when my father's kinsman, the Earl of Salisbury, was beheaded without trial; when the head of the brave and good duke, who had fallen in the field, was, against all knightly and king-like generosity, mockingly exposed, like a dishonoured robber, on the gates of York, my father, shocked and revolted, withdrew at once from the army, and slacked not bit or spur till he found himself in his hall at Arsdale. His death, caused partly by his travail and vexation of spirit, together with his timely withdrawal from the enemy, preserved his name from the attainder passed on the Lords Westmoreland and Nevile; and my eldest brother, Sir John, accepted the king's proffer of pardon, took the oaths of allegiance to Edward, and lives safe, if obscure, in his father's halls. Thou knowest, my friend, that a younger brother has but small honour at home. Peradventure, in calmer times, I might have bowed my pride to my calling, hunted my brother's dogs, flown his hawks, rented his keeper's lodge, and gone to my grave contented. But to a young man, who from his childhood had heard the stirring talk of knights and captains, who had seen valour and fortune make the way to distinction, and whose ears of late had been filled by the tales of wandering minstrels and dissours, with all the gay wonders of Edward's court, such a life soon grew distasteful. My father, on his death-bed (like thy uncle, the sub-prior), encouraged me little to follow his own footsteps. 'I see,' said he, 'that King Henry is too soft to rule his barons, and Margaret too fierce to conciliate

the commons; the only hope of peace is in the settlement of the House of York. Wherefore, let not thy father's errors stand in the way of thy advancement;' and therewith he made his confessor —for he was no penman himself, the worthy old knight!—indite a letter to his great kinsman, the Earl of Warwick, commending me to his protection. He signed his mark, and set his seal to this missive, which I now have at mine hostelrie, and died the same day. My brother judged me too young then to quit his roof; and condemned me to bear his humours till, at the age of twenty-three, I could bear no more! So having sold him my scant share in the heritage, and turned, like thee, bad land into good nobles, I joined a party of horse in their journey to London, and arrived yesterday at Master Sackbut's hostelrie in Eastchepe. I went this morning to my Lord of Warwick; but he was gone to the king's, and hearing of the merry-makings here, I came hither for kill-time. A chance word of my Lord of Montagu—whom Saint Dunstan confound!—made me conceit that a feat of skill with the cloth-yard might not ill preface my letter to the great earl. But, pardie! it seems I reckoned without my host, and in seeking to make my fortunes too rashly, I have helped to mar them." Wherewith he related the particulars of his interview with Montagu.

Nicholas Alwyn listened to him with friendly and thoughtful interest, and, when he had done, spoke thus,—

"The Earl of Warwick is a generous man, and though hot, bears little malice, except against those whom he deems misthink

or insult him; he is proud of being looked up to as a protector, especially by those of his own kith and name. Your father's letter will touch the right string, and you cannot do better than deliver it with a plain story. A young partisan like thee is not to be despised. Thou must trust to Lord Warwick to set matters right with his brother; and now, before I say further, let me ask thee, plainly, and without offence, Dost thou so love the House of York that no chance could ever make thee turn sword against it? Answer as I ask,—under thy breath; those drawers are parlous spies!"

And here, in justice to Marmaduke Nevile and to his betters, it is necessary to preface his reply by some brief remarks, to which we must crave the earnest attention of the reader. What we call PATRIOTISM, in the high and catholic acceptation of the word, was little if at all understood in days when passion, pride, and interest were motives little softened by reflection and education, and softened still less by the fusion of classes that characterized the small States of old, and marks the civilization of a modern age. Though the right by descent of the House of York, if genealogy alone were consulted, was indisputably prior to that of Lancaster, yet the long exercise of power in the latter House, the genius of the Fourth Henry, and the victories of the Fifth, would no doubt have completely superseded the obsolete claims of the Yorkists, had Henry VI. possessed any of the qualities necessary for the time. As it was, men had got puzzled by genealogies and cavils; the sanctity attached to the

king's name was weakened by his doubtful right to his throne, and the Wars of the rival Roses were at last (with two exceptions, presently to be noted) the mere contests of exasperated factions, in which public considerations were scarcely even made the blind to individual interest, prejudice, or passion.

Thus, instances of desertion, from the one to the other party, even by the highest nobles, and on the very eve of battle, had grown so common that little if any disgrace was attached to them; and any knight or captain held an affront to himself an amply sufficient cause for the transfer of his allegiance. It would be obviously absurd to expect in any of the actors of that age the more elevated doctrines of party faith and public honour, which clearer notions of national morality, and the salutary exercise of a large general opinion, free from the passions of single individuals, have brought into practice in our more enlightened days. The individual feelings of the individual MAN, strong in himself, became his guide, and he was free in much from the regular and thoughtful virtues, as well as from the mean and plausible vices, of those who act only in bodies and corporations. The two exceptions to this idiosyncrasy of motive and conduct were, first, in the general disposition of the rising middle class, especially in London, to connect great political interests with the more popular House of York. The commons in parliament had acted in opposition to Henry the Sixth, as the laws they wrung from him tended to show, and it was a popular and trading party that came, as it were, into power under King Edward. It

is true that Edward was sufficiently arbitrary in himself; but a popular party will stretch as much as its antagonists in favour of despotism,—exercised, on its enemies. And Edward did his best to consult the interests of commerce, though the prejudices of the merchants interpreted those interests in a way opposite to that in which political economy now understands them. The second exception to the mere hostilities of individual chiefs and feudal factions has, not less than the former, been too much overlooked by historians. But this was a still more powerful element in the success of the House of York. The hostility against the Roman Church and the tenets of the Lollards were shared by an immense part of the population. In the previous century an ancient writer computes that one half the population were Lollards; and though the sect were diminished and silenced by fear, they still ceased not to exist, and their doctrines not only shook the Church under Henry VIII., but destroyed the throne by the strong arm of their children, the Puritans, under Charles I. It was impossible that these men should not have felt the deepest resentment at the fierce and steadfast persecution they endured under the House of Lancaster; and without pausing to consider how far they would benefit under the dynasty of York, they had all those motives of revenge which are mistaken so often for the counsels of policy, to rally round any standard raised against their oppressors. These two great exceptions to merely selfish policy, which it remains for the historian clearly and at length to enforce, these: and these alone will always, to a sagacious observer, elevate the Wars of

the Roses above those bloody contests for badges which we are at first sight tempted to regard them. But these deeper motives animated very little the nobles and the knightly gentry; [Amongst many instances of the self-seeking of the time, not the least striking is the subservience of John Mowbray, the great Duke of Norfolk, to his old political enemy, the Earl of Oxford, the moment the last comes into power, during the brief restoration of Henry VI. John Paston, whose family had been sufficiently harassed by this great duke, says, with some glee, "The Duke and Duchess (of Norfolk) sue to him (Lord Oxford) as humbly as ever I did to them."—Paston Letters, cccii.] and with them the governing principles were, as we have just said, interest, ambition, and the zeal for the honour and advancement of Houses and chiefs.

"Truly," said Marmaduke, after a short and rather embarrassed pause, "I am little beholden as yet to the House of York. There where I see a noble benefactor, or a brave and wise leader, shall I think my sword and heart may best proffer allegiance."

"Wisely said," returned Alwyn, with a slight but half sarcastic smile; "I asked thee the question because—draw closer—there are wise men in our city who think the ties between Warwick and the king less strong than a ship's cable; and if thou attachest thyself to Warwick, he will be better pleased, it may be, with talk of devotion to himself than professions of exclusive loyalty to King Edward. He who has little silver in his pouch must

have the more silk on his tongue. A word to a Westmoreland or a Yorkshire man is as good as a sermon to men not born so far north. One word more, and I have done. Thou art kind and affable and gentle, my dear foster-brother, but it will not do for thee to be seen again with the goldsmith's headman. If thou wantest me, send for me at nightfall; I shall be found at Master Heyford's, in the Chepe. And if," added Nicholas, with a prudent reminiscence, "thou succeedest at court, and canst recommend my master,—there is no better goldsmith,—it may serve me when I set up for myself, which I look to do shortly."

"But to send for thee, my own foster-brother, at nightfall, as if I were ashamed!"

"Hout, Master Marmaduke, if thou wert not ashamed of me, I should be ashamed to be seen with a gay springal like thee. Why, they would say in the Chepe that Nick Alwyn was going to ruin. No, no. Birds of a feather must keep shy of those that moult other colours; and so, my dear young master, this is my last shake of the hand. But hold: dost thou know thy way back?"

"Oh, yes,—never fear!" answered Marmaduke; "though I see not why so far, at least, we may not be companions."

"No, better as it is; after this day's work they will gossip about both of us, and we shall meet many who know my long visage on the way back. God keep thee; avise me how thou prosperest."

So saying, Nicholas Alwyn walked off, too delicate to propose to pay his share of the reckoning with a superior; but when he had gone a few paces he turned back, and accosting the Nevile,

as the latter was rebuckling his mantle, said,—

"I have been thinking, Master Nevile, that these gold nobles, which it has been my luck to bear off, would be more useful in thy gipsire than mine. I have sure gains and small expenses; but a gentleman gains nothing, and his hand must be ever in his pouch, so—"

"Foster-brother," said Marmaduke, haughtily, "a gentleman never borrows,—except of the Jews, and with due interest. Moreover, I too have my calling; and as thy stall to thee, so to me my good sword. Saints keep thee! Be sure I will serve thee when I can."

"The devil's in these young strips of the herald's tree," muttered Alwyn, as he strode off; "as if it were dishonest to borrow a broad piece without cutting a throat for it! Howbeit, money is a prolific mother: and here is eno' to buy me a gold chain against I am alderman of London. Hout, thus goes the world,—the knight's baubles become the alderman's badges—so much the better!"

CHAPTER IV. ILL FARES THE COUNTRY MOUSE IN THE TRAPS OF TOWN

We trust we shall not be deemed discourteous, either, on the one hand, to those who value themselves on their powers of reflection, or, on the other, to those who lay claim to what, in modern phrenological jargon, is called the Organ of Locality, when we venture to surmise that the two are rarely found in combination; nay, that it seems to us a very evident truism, that in proportion to the general activity of the intellect upon subjects of pith and weight, the mind will be indifferent to those minute external objects by which a less contemplative understanding will note, and map out, and impress upon the memory, the chart of the road its owner has once taken. Master Marmaduke Nevile, a hardy and acute forester from childhood, possessed to perfection the useful faculty of looking well and closely before him as he walked the earth; and ordinarily, therefore, the path he had once taken, however intricate and obscure, he was tolerably sure to retrace with accuracy, even at no inconsiderable distance of time, —the outward senses of men are usually thus alert and attentive in the savage or the semi-civilized state. He had not, therefore, over-valued his general acuteness in the note and memory of localities, when he boasted of his power to refind his way to

his hostelrie without the guidance of Alwyn. But it so happened that the events of this day, so memorable to him, withdrew his attention from external objects, to concentrate it within. And in marvelling and musing over the new course upon which his destiny had entered, he forgot to take heed of that which his feet should pursue; so that, after wandering unconsciously onward for some time, he suddenly halted in perplexity and amaze to find himself entangled in a labyrinth of scattered suburbs, presenting features wholly different from the road that had conducted him to the archery-ground in the forenoon. The darkness of the night had set in; but it was relieved by a somewhat faint and mist-clad moon, and some few and scattered stars, over which rolled, fleetly, thick clouds, portending rain. No lamps at that time cheered the steps of the belated wanderer; the houses were shut up, and their inmates, for the most part, already retired to rest, and the suburbs did not rejoice, as the city, in the round of the watchman with his drowsy call to the inhabitants, "Hang out your lights!" The passengers, who at first, in various small groups and parties, had enlivened the stranger's way, seemed to him, unconscious as he was of the lapse of time, to have suddenly vanished from the thoroughfares; and he found himself alone in places thoroughly unknown to him, waking to the displeasing recollection that the approaches to the city were said to be beset by brawlers and ruffians of desperate characters, whom the cessation of the civil wars had flung loose upon the skirts of society, to maintain themselves by deeds of rapine and plunder.

As might naturally be expected, most of these had belonged to the defeated party, who had no claim to the good offices or charity of those in power. And although some of the Neviles had sided with the Lancastrians, yet the badge worn by Marmaduke was considered a pledge of devotion to the reigning House, and added a new danger to those which beset his path. Conscious of this—for he now called to mind the admonitions of his host in parting from the hostelrie—he deemed it but discreet to draw the hood of his mantle over the silver ornament; and while thus occupied, he heard not a step emerging from a lane at his rear, when suddenly a heavy hand was placed on his shoulder. He started, turned, and before him stood a man, whose aspect and dress betokened little to lessen the alarm of the uncourteous salutation. Marmaduke's dagger was bare on the instant.

"And what wouldst thou with me?" he asked.

"Thy purse and thy dagger!" answered the stranger.

"Come and take them," said the Nevile, unconscious that he uttered a reply famous in classic history, as he sprang backward a step or so, and threw himself into an attitude of defence. The stranger slowly raised a rude kind of mace, or rather club, with a ball of iron at the end, garnished with long spikes, as he replied, "Art thou mad eno' to fight for such trifles?"

"Art thou in the habit of meeting one Englishman who yields his goods without a blow to another?" retorted Marmaduke. "Go to! thy club does not daunt me." The stranger warily drew back a step, and applied a whistle to his mouth. The Nevile sprang

at him, but the stranger warded off the thrust of the poniard with a light flourish of his heavy weapon; and had not the youth drawn back on the instant, it had been good-night and a long day to Marmaduke Nevile. Even as it was, his heart beat quick, as the whirl of the huge weapon sent the air like a strong wind against his face. Ere he had time to renew his attack, he was suddenly seized from behind, and found himself struggling in the arms of two men. From these he broke, and his dagger glanced harmless against the tough jerkin of his first assailant. The next moment his right arm fell to his side, useless and deeply gashed. A heavy blow on the head—the moon, the stars reeled in his eyes—and then darkness,—he knew no more. His assailants very deliberately proceeded to rifle the inanimate body, when one of them, perceiving the silver badge, exclaimed, with an oath, "One of the rampant Neviles! This cock at least shall crow no more." And laying the young man's head across his lap, while he stretched back the throat with one hand, with the other he drew forth a long sharp knife, like those used by huntsmen in despatching the hart. Suddenly, and in the very moment when the blade was about to inflict the fatal gash, his hand was forcibly arrested, and a man, who had silently and unnoticed joined the ruffians, said in a stern whisper, "Rise and depart from thy brotherhood forever. We admit no murderer."

The ruffian looked up in bewilderment. "Robin—captain—thou here!" he said falteringly.

"I must needs be everywhere, I see, if I would keep such

fellows as thou and these from the gallows. What is this?—a silver arrow—the young archer—Um."

"A Nevile!" growled the would-be murderer.

"And for that very reason his life should be safe. Knowest thou not that Richard of Warwick, the great Nevile, ever spares the commons? Begone! I say." The captain's low voice grew terrible as he uttered the last words. The savage rose, and without a word stalked away.

"Look you, my masters," said Robin, turning to the rest, "soldiers must plunder a hostile country. While York is on the throne, England is a hostile country to us Lancastrians. Rob, then, rifle, if ye will; but he who takes life shall lose it. Ye know me!" The robbers looked down, silent and abashed. Robin bent a moment over the youth. "He will live," he muttered. "So! he already begins to awaken. One of these houses will give him shelter. Off, fellows, and take care of your necks!"

When Marmaduke, a few minutes after this colloquy, began to revive, it was with a sensation of dizziness, pain, and extreme cold. He strove to lift himself from the ground, and at length succeeded. He was alone; the place where he had lain was damp and red with stiffening blood. He tottered on for several paces, and perceived from a lattice, at a little distance, a light still burning. Now reeling, now falling, he still dragged on his limbs as the instinct attracted him to that sign of refuge. He gained the doorway of a detached and gloomy house, and sank on the stone before it to cry aloud; but his voice soon sank into deep

groans, and once more, as his efforts increased the rapid gush of the blood, became insensible. The man styled Robin, who had so opportunely saved his life, now approached from the shadow of a wall, beneath which he had watched Marmaduke's movements. He neared the door of the house, and cried, in a sharp, clear voice, "Open, for the love of Christ!"

A head was now thrust from the lattice, the light vanished; a minute more, the door opened; and Robin, as if satisfied, drew hastily back, and vanished, saying to himself, as he strode along, "A young man's life must needs be dear to him; yet had the lad been a lord, methinks I should have cared little to have saved for the people one tyrant more."

After a long interval, Marmaduke again recovered, and his eyes turned with pain from the glare of a light held to his face.

"He wakes, Father,—he will live!" cried a sweet voice. "Ay, he will live, child!" answered a deeper tone; and the young man muttered to himself, half audibly, as in a dream, "Holy Mother be blessed! it is sweet to live." The room in which the sufferer lay rather exhibited the remains of better fortunes than testified to the solid means of the present possessor. The ceiling was high and groined, and some tints of faded but once gaudy painting blazoned its compartments and hanging pendants. The walls had been rudely painted (for arras [Mr. Hallam ("History of the Middle Ages," chap. ix. part 2) implies a doubt whether great houses were furnished with hangings so soon as the reign of Edward IV.; but there is abundant evidence to satisfy our

learned historian upon that head. The Narrative of the "Lord of Grauthuse," edited by Sir F. Madden, specifies the hangings of cloth of gold in the apartments in which that lord was received by Edward IV.; also the hangings of white silk and linen in the chamber appropriated to himself at Windsor. But long before this period (to say nothing of the Bayeux Tapestry),—namely, in the reign of Edward III. (in 1344),—a writ was issued to inquire into the mystery of working tapestry; and in 1398 Mr. Britton observes that the celebrated arras hangings at Warwick Castle are mentioned. (See Britton's "Dictionary of Architecture and Archaelogy," art. "Tapestry.")] then was rare, even among the wealthiest); but the colours were half obliterated by time and damp. The bedstead on which the wounded man reclined was curiously carved, with a figure of the Virgin at the head, and adorned with draperies, in which were wrought huge figures from scriptural subjects, but in the dress of the date of Richard II.,—Solomon in pointed upturned shoes, and Goliath, in the armour of a crusader, frowning grimly upon the sufferer. By the bedside stood a personage, who, in reality, was but little past the middle age, but whose pale visage, intersected with deep furrows, whose long beard and hair, partially gray, gave him the appearance of advanced age: nevertheless there was something peculiarly striking in the aspect of the man. His forehead was singularly high and massive; but the back of the head was disproportionately small, as if the intellect too much preponderated over all the animal qualities for strength in character and success in life. The

eyes were soft, dark, and brilliant, but dreamlike and vague; the features in youth must have been regular and beautiful, but their contour was now sharpened by the hollowness of the cheeks and temples. The form, in the upper part, was nobly shaped, sufficiently muscular, if not powerful, and with the long throat and falling shoulders which always gives something of grace and dignity to the carriage; but it was prematurely bent, and the lower limbs were thin and weak, as is common with men who have sparely used them; they seemed disproportioned to that broad chest, and still more to that magnificent and spacious brow. The dress of this personage corresponded with the aspect of his abode. The materials were those worn by the gentry, but they were old, threadbare, and discoloured with innumerable spots and stains. His hands were small and delicate, with large blue veins, that spoke of relaxed fibres; but their natural whiteness was smudged with smoke-stains, and his beard—a masculine ornament utterly out of fashion among the younger race in King Edward's reign, but when worn by the elder gentry carefully trimmed and perfumed—was dishevelled into all the spiral and tangled curls displayed in the sculptured head of some old Grecian sage or poet.

On the other side of the bed knelt a young girl of about sixteen, with a face exquisitely lovely in its delicacy and expression. She seemed about the middle stature, and her arms and neck, as displayed by the close-fitting vest, had already the smooth and rounded contour of dawning womanhood, while the face

had still the softness, innocence, and inexpressible bloom of a child. There was a strong likeness between her and her father (for such the relationship, despite the difference of sex and years),—the same beautiful form of lip and brow, the same rare colour of the eyes, dark-blue, with black fringing lashes; and perhaps the common expression, at that moment, of gentle pity and benevolent anxiety contributed to render the resemblance stronger.

"Father, he sinks again!" said the girl.

"Sibyll," answered the man, putting his finger upon a line in a manuscript book that he held, "the authority saith, that a patient so contused should lose blood, and then the arm must be tightly bandaged. Verily we lack the wherewithal."

"Not so, Father!" said the girl, and blushing, she turned aside, and took off the partelet of lawn, upon which holiday finery her young eyes perhaps that morning had turned with pleasure, and white as snow was the neck which was thus displayed; "this will suffice to bind his arm."

"But the book," said the father, in great perplexity—"the book telleth us not how the lancet should be applied. It is easy to say, 'Do this and do that;' but to do it once, it should have been done before. This is not among my experiments."

Luckily, perhaps, for Marmaduke, at this moment there entered an old woman, the solitary servant of the house, whose life, in those warlike times, had made her pretty well acquainted with the simpler modes of dealing with a wounded arm and a

broken head. She treated with great disdain the learned authority referred to by her master; she bound the arm, plastered the head, and taking upon herself the responsibility to promise a rapid cure, insisted upon the retirement of father and child, and took her solitary watch beside the bed.

"If it had been any other mechanism than that of the vile human body!" muttered the philosopher, as if apologizing to himself; and with that he recovered his self-complacency and looked round him proudly.

CHAPTER V. WEAL TO THE IDLER, WOE TO THE WORKMAN

As Providence tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, so it possibly might conform the heads of that day to a thickness suitable for the blows and knocks to which they were variously subjected; yet it was not without considerable effort and much struggling that Marmaduke's senses recovered the shock received, less by his flesh-wound and the loss of blood, than a blow on the seat of reason that might have despatched a passable ox of these degenerate days. Nature, to say nothing of Madge's leechcraft, ultimately triumphed, and Marmaduke woke one morning in full possession of such understanding as Nature had endowed him with. He was then alone, and it was with much simple surprise that he turned his large hazel eyes from corner to corner of the unfamiliar room. He began to retrace and weave together sundry disordered and vague reminiscences: he commenced with the commencement, and clearly satisfied himself that he had been grievously wounded and sorely bruised; he then recalled the solitary light at the high lattice, and his memory found itself at the porch of the large, lonely, ruinous old house; then all became a bewildered and feverish dream. He caught at the vision of an old man with a long beard, whom he associated, displeasingly, with recollections of pain; he glanced off to a fair face, with eyes that looked tender pity whenever he

writhed or groaned under the tortures that, no doubt, that old accursed carle had inflicted upon him. But even this face did not dwell with pleasure in his memory,—it woke up confused and labouring associations of something weird and witchlike, of sorceresses and tymbesteres, of wild warnings screeched in his ear, of incantations and devilries and doom. Impatient of these musings, he sought to leap from his bed, and was amazed that the leap subsided into a tottering crawl. He found an ewer and basin, and his ablutions refreshed and invigorated him. He searched for his raiment, and discovered it all except the mantle, dagger, hat, and girdle; and while looking for these, his eye fell on an old tarnished steel mirror. He started as if he had seen his ghost; was it possible that his hardy face could have waned into that pale and almost femininely delicate visage? With the pride (call it not coxcombry) that then made the care of person the distinction of gentle birth, he strove to reduce into order the tangled locks of the long hair, of which a considerable portion above a part that seemed peculiarly sensitive to the touch had been mercilessly clipped; and as he had just completed this task, with little satisfaction and much inward chafing at the lack of all befitting essences and perfumes, the door gently opened, and the fair face he had dreamed of appeared at the aperture.

The girl uttered a cry of astonishment and alarm at seeing the patient thus arrayed and convalescent, and would suddenly have retreated; but the Nevile advanced, and courteously taking her hand—

"Fair maiden," said he, "if, as I trow, I owe to thy cares my tending and cure—nay, it may be a life hitherto of little worth, save to myself—do not fly from my thanks. May Our Lady of Walsingham bless and reward thee!"

"Sir," answered Sibyll, gently withdrawing her hands from his clasp, "our poor cares have been a slight return for thy generous protection to myself."

"To thee! ah, forgive me—how could I be so dull? I remember thy face now; and, perchance, I deserve the disaster I met with in leaving thee so discourteously. My heart smote me for it as my light footfall passed from thy side."

A slight blush, succeeded by a thoughtful smile—the smile of one who recalls and caresses some not displeasing remembrance—passed over Sibyll's charming countenance, as the sufferer said this with something of the grace of a well-born man, whose boyhood had been taught to serve God and the Ladies.

There was a short pause before she answered, looking down, "Nay, sir, I was sufficiently beholden to you; and for the rest, all molestation was over. But I will now call your nurse—for it is to our servant, not us, that your thanks are due—to see to your state, and administer the proper medicaments."

"Truly, fair damsel, it is not precisely medicaments that I hunger and thirst for; and if your hospitality could spare me from the larder a manchet, or a corner of a pasty, and from the cellar a stoup of wine or a cup of ale, methinks it would tend more to restore me than those potions which are so strange to my taste

that they rather offend than tempt it; and, pardie, it seemeth to my poor senses as if I had not broken bread for a week!"

"I am glad to hear you of such good cheer," answered Sibyll; "wait but a moment or so, till I consult your physician."

And, so saying, she closed the door, slowly descended the steps, and pursued her way into what seemed more like a vault than a habitable room, where she found the single servant of the household. Time, which makes changes so fantastic in the dress of the better classes, has a greater respect for the costume of the humbler; and though the garments were of a very coarse sort of serge, there was not so great a difference, in point of comfort and sufficiency, as might be supposed, between the dress of old Madge and that of some primitive servant in the North during the last century. The old woman's face was thin and pinched; but its sharp expression brightened into a smile as she caught sight, through the damps and darkness, of the gracious form of her young mistress. "Ah, Madge," said Sibyll, with a sigh, "it is a sad thing to be poor!"

"For such as thou, Mistress Sibyll, it is indeed. It does not matter for the like of us. But it goes to my old heart when I see you shut up here, or worse, going out in that old courtpie and wimple,—you, a knight's grandchild; you, who have played round a queen's knees, and who might have been so well-to-do, an' my master had thought a little more of the gear of this world. But patience is a good palfrey, and will carry us a long day. And when the master has done what he looks for, why, the king—

sith we must so call the new man on the throne—will be sure to reward him; but, sweetheart, tarry not here; it's an ill air for your young lips to drink in. What brings you to old Madge?"

"The stranger is recovered, and—"

"Ay, I warrant me, I have cured worse than he. He must have a spoonful of broth,—I have not forgot it. You see I wanted no dinner myself—what is dinner to old folks!—so I e'en put it all in the pot for him. The broth will be brave and strong."

"My poor Madge, God requite you for what you suffer for us! But he has asked"—here was another sigh, and a downcast look that did not dare to face the consternation of Madge, as she repeated, with a half-smile—"he has asked—for meat, and a stoup of wine, Madge!"

"Eh, sirs! And where is he to get them? Not that it will be bad for the lad, either. Wine! There's Master Sancroft of the Oak will not trust us a penny, the seely hilding, and—"

"Oh, Madge, I forgot!—we can still sell the gittern for something. Get on your wimple, Madge—quick,—while I go for it."

"Why, Mistress Sibyll, that's your only pleasure when you sit all alone, the long summer days."

"It will be more pleasure to remember that it supplied the wants of my father's guest," said Sibyll; and retracing the way up the stairs, she returned with the broken instrument, and despatched Madge with it, laden with instructions that the wine should be of the best. She then once more mounted the rugged

steps, and halting a moment at Marmaduke's door, as she heard his feeble step walking impatiently to and fro, she ascended higher, where the flight, winding up a square, dilapidated turret, became rougher, narrower, and darker, and opened the door of her father's retreat.

It was a room so bare of ornament and furniture that it seemed merely wrought out of the mingled rubble and rough stones which composed the walls of the mansion, and was lighted towards the street by a narrow slit, glazed, it is true,—which all the windows of the house were not,—but the sun scarcely pierced the dull panes and the deep walls in which they were sunk. The room contained a strong furnace and a rude laboratory. There were several strange-looking mechanical contrivances scattered about, several manuscripts upon some oaken shelves, and a large pannier of wood and charcoal in the corner. In that poverty-stricken house, the money spent on fuel alone, in the height of summer, would have comfortably maintained the inmates; but neither Sibyll nor Madge ever thought to murmur at this waste, dedicated to what had become the vital want of a man who drew air in a world of his own. This was the first thing to be provided for; and Science was of more imperative necessity than even Hunger.

Adam Warner was indeed a creature of remarkable genius,—and genius, in an age where it is not appreciated, is the greatest curse the iron Fates can inflict on man. If not wholly without the fond fancies which led the wisdom of the darker ages to the

philosopher's stone and the elixir, he had been deterred from the chase of a chimera by want of means to pursue it! for it required the resources or the patronage of a prince or noble to obtain the costly ingredients consumed in the alchemist's crucible. In early life, therefore, and while yet in possession of a competence derived from a line of distinguished and knightly ancestors, Adam Warner had devoted himself to the surer and less costly study of the mathematics, which then had begun to attract the attention of the learned, but which was still looked upon by the vulgar as a branch of the black art. This pursuit had opened to him the insight into discoveries equally useful and sublime. They necessitated a still more various knowledge; and in an age when there was no division of labour and rare and precarious communication among students, it became necessary for each discoverer to acquire sufficient science for his own collateral experiments.

In applying mathematics to the practical purposes of life, in recognizing its mighty utilities to commerce and civilization, Adam Warner was driven to conjoin with it, not only an extensive knowledge of languages, but many of the rudest tasks of the mechanist's art; and chemistry was, in some of his researches, summoned to his aid. By degrees, the tyranny that a man's genius exercises over his life, abstracted him from all external objects. He had loved his wife tenderly, but his rapid waste of his fortune in the purchase of instruments and books, then enormously dear, and the neglect of all things not centred in the

hope to be the benefactor of the world, had ruined her health and broken her heart. Happily Warner perceived not her decay till just before her death; happily he never conceived its cause, for her soul was wrapped in his. She revered, and loved, and never upbraided him. Her heart was the martyr to his mind. Had she foreseen the future destinies of her daughter, it might have been otherwise. She could have remonstrated with the father, though not with the husband. But, fortunately, as it seemed to her, she (a Frenchwoman by birth) had passed her youth in the service of Margaret of Anjou, and that haughty queen, who was equally warm to friends and inexorable to enemies, had, on her attendant's marriage, promised to ensure the fortunes of her offspring. Sibyll at the age of nine—between seven and eight years before the date the story enters on, and two years prior to the fatal field of Towton, which gave to Edward the throne of England—had been admitted among the young girls whom the custom of the day ranked amidst the attendants of the queen; and in the interval that elapsed before Margaret was obliged to dismiss her to her home, her mother died. She died without foreseeing the reverses that were to ensue, in the hope that her child, at least, was nobly provided for, and not without the belief (for there is so much faith in love!) that her husband's researches, which in his youth had won favour of the Protector Duke of Gloucester, the most enlightened prince of his time, would be crowned at last with the rewards and favours of his king. That precise period was, indeed, the fairest that had yet dawned

upon the philosopher. Henry VI., slowly recovering from one of those attacks which passed for imbecility, had condescended to amuse himself with various conversations with Warner, urged to it first by representations of the unholy nature of the student's pursuits; and, having satisfied his mind of his learned subject's orthodoxy, the poor monarch had taken a sort of interest, not so much, perhaps, in the objects of Warner's occupations, as in that complete absorption from actual life which characterized the subject, and gave him in this a melancholy resemblance to the king. While the House of Lancaster was on the throne, the wife felt that her husband's pursuits would be respected, and his harmless life safe from the fierce prejudices of the people; and the good queen would not suffer him to starve, when the last mark was expended in devices how to benefit his country:—and in these hopes the woman died!

A year afterwards, all at court was in disorder,—armed men supplied the service of young girls, and Sibyll, with a purse of broad pieces, soon converted into manuscripts, was sent back to her father's desolate home. There had she grown a flower amidst ruins, with no companion of her own age, and left to bear, as her sweet and affectionate nature well did, the contrast between the luxuries of a court and the penury of a hearth which, year after year, hunger and want came more and more sensibly to invade.

Sibyll had been taught, even as a child, some accomplishments little vouchsafed then to either sex,—she could read and write; and Margaret had not so wholly lost, in the sterner North, all

reminiscence of the accomplishments that graced her father's court as to neglect the education of those brought up in her household. Much attention was given to music, for it soothed the dark hours of King Henry; the blazoning of missals or the lives of saints, with the labours of the loom, were also among the resources of Sibyll's girlhood, and by these last she had, from time to time, served to assist the maintenance of the little family of which, child though she was, she became the actual head. But latterly—that is, for the last few weeks—even these sources failed her; for as more peaceful times allowed her neighbours to interest themselves in the affairs of others, the dark reports against Warner had revived. His name became a by-word of horror; the lonely light at the lattice burning till midnight, against all the early usages and habits of the day; the dark smoke of the furnace, constant in summer as in winter, scandalized the religion of the place far and near. And finding, to their great dissatisfaction, that the king's government and the Church interfered not for their protection, and unable themselves to volunteer any charges against the recluse (for the cows in the neighbourhood remained provokingly healthy), they came suddenly, and, as it were by one of those common sympathies which in all times the huge persecutor we call the PUBLIC manifests when a victim is to be crushed, to the pious resolution of starving where they could not burn. Why buy the quaint devilries of the wizard's daughter?—no luck could come of it. A missal blazoned by such hands, an embroidery worked at such

a loom, was like the Lord's Prayer read backwards. And one morning, when poor Sibyll stole out as usual to vend a month's labour, she was driven from door to door with oaths and curses.

Though Sibyll's heart was gentle, she was not without a certain strength of mind. She had much of the patient devotion of her mother, much of the quiet fortitude of her father's nature. If not comprehending to the full the loftiness of Warner's pursuits, she still anticipated from them an ultimate success which reconciled her to all temporary sacrifices. The violent prejudices, the ignorant cruelty, thus brought to bear against existence itself, filled her with sadness, it is true, but not unmixed with that contempt for her persecutors, which, even in the meekest tempers, takes the sting from despair. But hunger pressed. Her father was nearing the goal of his discoveries, and in a moment of that pride which in its very contempt for appearances braves them all, Sibyll had stolen out to the pastime-ground,—with what result has been seen already. Having thus accounted for the penury of the mansion, we return to its owner.

Warner was contemplating with evident complacency and delight the model of a machine which had occupied him for many years, and which he imagined he was now rapidly bringing to perfection. His hands and face were grimed with the smoke of his forge, and his hair and beard, neglected as usual, looked parched and dried up, as if with the constant fever that burned within.

"Yes, yes!" he muttered, "how they will bless me for this! What Roger Bacon only suggested I shall accomplish! How it

will change the face of the globe! What wealth it will bestow on ages yet unborn!"

"My father," said the gentle voice of Sibyll, "my poor father, thou hast not tasted bread to-day."

Warner turned, and his face relaxed into a tender expression as he saw his daughter.

"My child," he said, pointing to his model, "the time comes when it will live! Patience! patience!"

"And who would not have patience with thee, and for thee, Father?" said Sibyll, with enthusiasm speaking on every feature. "What is the valour of knight and soldier—dull statues of steel—to thine? Thou, with thy naked breast, confronting all dangers,—sharper than the lance and glaive, and all—"

"All to make England great!"

"Alas! what hath England merited from men like thee? The people, more savage than their rulers, clamour for the stake, the gibbet, and the dungeon, for all who strive to make them wiser. Remember the death of Bolingbroke, [A mathematician accused as an accomplice, in sorcery, of Eleanor Cobham, wife of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, and hanged upon that charge. His contemporary (William Wyrcestre) highly extols his learning.]—a wizard, because, O Father!—because his pursuits were thine!"

Adam, startled by this burst, looked at his daughter with more attention than he usually evinced to any living thing. "Child," he said at length, shaking his head in grave reproof, "let me not say

to thee, 'O thou of little faith!' There were no heroes were there no martyrs!"

"Do not frown on me, Father," said Sibyll, sadly; "let the world frown,—not thou! Yes, thou art right. Thou must triumph at last." And suddenly, her whole countenance changing into a soft and caressing endearment, she added, "But now come, Father. Thou hast laboured well for this morning. We shall have a little feast for thee in a few minutes. And the stranger is recovered, thanks to our leechcraft. He is impatient to see and thank thee."

"Well, well, I come, Sibyll," said the student, with a regretful, lingering look at his model, and a sigh to be disturbed from its contemplation; and he slowly quitted the room with Sibyll.

"But not, dear sir and father, not thus—not quite thus—will you go to the stranger, well-born like yourself? Oh, no! your Sibyll is proud, you know,—proud of her father." So saying, she clung to him fondly, and drew him mechanically, for he had sunk into a revery, and heeded her not, into an adjoining chamber, in which he slept. The comforts even of the gentry, of men with the acres that Adam had sold, were then few and scanty. The nobles and the wealthy merchants, indeed, boasted many luxuries that excelled in gaud and pomp those of their equals now. But the class of the gentry who had very little money at command were contented with hardships from which a menial of this day would revolt. What they could spend in luxury was usually consumed in dress and the table they were obliged to keep. These were the essentials of dignity. Of furniture there

was a woful stint. In many houses, even of knights, an edifice large enough to occupy a quadrangle was composed more of offices than chambers inhabited by the owners; rarely boasting more than three beds, which were bequeathed in wills as articles of great value. The reader must, therefore, not be surprised that Warner's abode contained but one bed, properly so called, and that was now devoted to Nevile. The couch which served the philosopher for bed was a wretched pallet, stretched on the floor, stuffed with straw,—with rough say, or serge, and an old cloak for the coverings. His daughter's, in a room below, was little better. The walls were bare; the whole house boasted but one chair, which was in Marmaduke's chamber; stools or settles of rude oak elsewhere supplied their place. There was no chimney except in Nevile's room, and in that appropriated to the forge.

To this chamber, then, resembling a dungeon in appearance, Sibyll drew the student, and here, from an old worm-eaten chest, she carefully extracted a gown of brown velvet, which his father, Sir Armine, had bequeathed to him by will,—faded, it is true, but still such as the low-born wore not, [By the sumptuary laws only a knight was entitled to wear velvet.] trimmed with fur, and clasped with a brooch of gold. And then she held the ewer and basin to him, while, with the docility of a child, he washed the smoke-soil from his hands and face. It was touching to see in this, as in all else, the reverse of their natural position,—the child tending and heeding and protecting, as it were, the father; and that not from his deficiency, but his greatness; not because he was below

the vulgar intelligences of life, but above them. And certainly, when, his patriarchal hair and beard smoothed into order, and his velvet gown flowing in majestic folds around a figure tall and commanding, Sibyll followed her father into Marmaduke's chamber, she might well have been proud of his appearance; and she felt the innocent vanity of her sex and age in noticing the half-start of surprise with which Marmaduke regarded his host, and the tone of respect in which he proffered him his salutations and thanks. Even his manner altered to Sibyll; it grew less frank and affable, more courtly and reserved: and when Madge came to announce that the refection was served, it was with a blush of shame, perhaps, at his treatment of the poor gittern-player on the pastime-ground, that the Nevile extended his left hand, for his right was still not at his command, to lead the damsel to the hall.

This room, which was divided from the entrance by a screen, and, except a small closet that adjoined it, was the only sitting-room in a day when, as now on the Continent, no shame was attached to receiving visitors in sleeping apartments, was long and low; an old and very narrow table, that might have feasted thirty persons, stretched across a dais raised upon a stone floor; there was no rere-dosse, or fireplace, which does not seem at that day to have been an absolute necessity in the houses of the metropolis and its suburbs, its place being supplied by a movable brazier. Three oak stools were placed in state at the board, and to one of these Marmaduke, in a silence unusual to him, conducted the fair Sibyll.

"You will forgive our lack of provisions," said Warner, relapsing into the courteous fashions of his elder days, which the unwonted spectacle of a cold capon, a pasty, and a flask of wine brought to his mind by a train of ideas that actively glided by the intervening circumstances, which ought to have filled him with astonishment at the sight, "for my Sibyll is but a young housewife, and I am a simple scholar, of few wants."

"Verily," answered Marmaduke, finding his tongue as he attacked the pasty, "I see nothing that the most dainty need complain of; fair Mistress Sibyll, your dainty lips will not, I trow, refuse me the waisall. [I.e. waissail or wassal; the spelling of the time is adopted in the text.] To you also, worshipful sir! Gramercy! it seems that there is nothing which better stirs a man's appetite than a sick bed. And, speaking thereof, deign to inform me, kind sir, how long I have been indebted to your hospitality. Of a surety, this pasty hath an excellent flavour, and if not venison, is something better. But to return, it mazes me much to think what time hath passed since my encounter with the robbers."

"They were robbers, then, who so cruelly assailed thee?" observed Sibyll.

"Have I not said so—surely, who else? And, as I was remarking to your worshipful father, whether this mischance happened hours, days, months, or years ago, beshrew me if I can venture the smallest guess."

Master Warner smiled, and observing that some reply was

expected from him, said, “Why, indeed, young sir, I fear I am almost as oblivious as yourself. It was not yesterday that you arrived, nor the day before, nor—Sibyll, my child, how long is it since this gentleman hath been our guest?”

“This is the fifth day,” answered Sibyll.

“So long! and I like a senseless log by the wayside, when others are pushing on, bit and spur, to the great road. I pray you, sir, tell me the news of the morning. The Lord Warwick is still in London, the court still at the Tower?”

Poor Adam, whose heart was with his model, and who had now satisfied his temperate wants, looked somewhat bewildered and perplexed by this question. “The king, save his honoured head,” said he, inclining his own, “is, I fear me, always at the Tower, since his unhappy detention, but he minds it not, sir,—he heeds it not; his soul is not on this side Paradise.”

Sibyll uttered a faint exclamation of fear at this dangerous indiscretion of her father’s absence of mind; and drawing closer to Nevile, she put her hand with touching confidence on his arm, and whispered, “You will not repeat this, Sir! my father lives only in his studies, and he has never known but one king!”

Marmaduke turned his bold face to the maid, and pointed to the salt-cellar, as he answered in the same tone, “Does the brave man betray his host?”

There was a moment’s silence. Marmaduke rose. “I fear,” said he, “that I must now leave you; and while it is yet broad noon, I must indeed be blind if I again miss my way.”

This speech suddenly recalled Adam from his meditations; for whenever his kindly and simple benevolence was touched, even his mathematics and his model were forgotten. “No, young sir,” said he, “you must not quit us yet; your danger is not over. Exercise may bring fever. Celsus recommends quiet. You must consent to tarry with us a day or two more.”

“Can you tell me,” said the Nevile, hesitatingly, “what distance it is to the Temple-gate, or the nearest wharf on the river?”

“Two miles, at the least,” answered Sibyll.

“Two miles!—and now I mind me, I have not the accoutrements that beseem me. Those hildings have stolen my mantle (which, I perceive, by the way, is but a rustic garment, now laid aside for the super-tunic), and my hat and dague, nor have they left even a half groat to supply their place. Verily, therefore, since ye permit me to burden your hospitality longer, I will not say ye nay, provided you, worshipful sir, will suffer one of your people to step to the house of one Master Heyford, goldsmith, in the Chepe, and crave one Nicholas Alwyn, his freedman, to visit me. I can commission him touching my goods left at mine hostelrie, and learn some other things which it behooves me to know.”

“Assuredly. Sibyll, tell Simon or Jonas to put himself under our guest’s order.”

Simon or Jonas! The poor Adam absolutely forgot that Simon and Jonas had quitted the house these six years! How could he look on the capon, the wine, and the velvet gown trimmed with

fur, and not fancy himself back in the heyday of his wealth?

Sibyll half smiled and half sighed, as she withdrew to consult with her sole counsellor, Madge, how the guest's orders were to be obeyed, and how, alas! the board was to be replenished for the evening meal. But in both these troubles she was more fortunate than she anticipated. Madge had sold the broken gittern, for musical instruments were then, comparatively speaking, dear (and this had been a queen's gift), for sufficient to provide decently for some days; and, elated herself with the prospect of so much good cheer, she readily consented to be the messenger to Nicholas Alwyn. When with a light step and a lighter heart Sibyll tripped back to the hall, she was scarcely surprised to find the guest alone. Her father, after her departure, had begun to evince much restless perturbation. He answered Marmaduke's queries but by abstracted and desultory monosyllables; and seeing his guest at length engaged in contemplating some old pieces of armour hung upon the walls, he stole stealthily and furtively away, and halted not till once more before his beloved model.

Unaware of his departure, Marmaduke, whose back was turned to him, was, as he fondly imagined, enlightening his host with much soldier-like learning as to the old helmets and weapons that graced the hall. "Certes, my host," said he, musingly, "that sort of casque, which has not, I opine, been worn this century, had its merits; the vizor is less open to the arrows. But as for these chain suits, they suited only—I venture, with due deference, to declare—the Wars of the Crusades, where the

enemy fought chiefly with dart and scymetar. They would be but a sorry defence against the mace and battle-axe; nevertheless, they were light for man and horse, and in some service, especially against foot, might be revived with advantage. Think you not so?"

He turned, and saw the arch face of Sibyll.

"I crave pardon for my blindness, gentle damsel," said he, in some confusion, "but your father was here anon."

"His mornings are so devoted to labour," answered Sibyll, "that he entreats you to pardon his discourtesy. Meanwhile if you would wish to breathe the air, we have a small garden in the rear;" and so saying, she led the way into the small withdrawing-room, or rather closet, which was her own favourite chamber, and which communicated, by another door, with a broad, neglected grassplot, surrounded by high walls, having a raised terrace in front, divided by a low stone Gothic palisade from the green sward.

On the palisade sat droopingly, and half asleep, a solitary peacock; but when Sibyll and the stranger appeared at the door, he woke up suddenly, descended from his height, and with a vanity not wholly unlike his young mistress's wish to make the best possible display in the eyes of a guest, spread his plumes broadly in the sun. Sibyll threw him some bread, which she had taken from the table for that purpose; but the proud bird, however hungry, disdained to eat, till he had thoroughly satisfied himself that his glories had been sufficiently observed.

"Poor proud one," said Sibyll, half to herself, "thy plumage

lasts with thee through all changes."

"Like the name of a brave knight," said Marmaduke, who overheard her.

"Thou thinkest of the career of arms."

"Surely,—I am a Nevile!"

"Is there no fame to be won but that of a warrior?"

"Not that I weet of, or heed for, Mistress Sibyll."

"Thinkest thou it were nothing to be a minstrel, who gave delight; a scholar, who dispelled darkness?"

"For the scholar? Certes, I respect holy Mother Church, which they tell me alone produces that kind of wonder with full safety to the soul, and that only in the higher prelates and dignitaries. For the minstrel, I love him, I would fight for him, I would give him at need the last penny in my gipsire; but it is better to do deeds than to sing them."

Sibyll smiled, and the smile perplexed and half displeased the young adventurer. But the fire of the young man had its charm.

By degrees, as they walked to and fro the neglected terrace, their talk flowed free and familiar; for Marmaduke, like most young men full of himself, was joyous with the happy egotism of a frank and careless nature. He told his young confidante of a day his birth, his history, his hopes, and fears; and in return he learned, in answer to the questions he addressed to her, so much, at least, of her past and present life, as the reverses of her father, occasioned by costly studies, her own brief sojourn at the court of Margaret, and the solitude, if not the struggles,

in which her youth was consumed. It would have been a sweet and grateful sight to some kindly bystander to hear these pleasant communications between two young persons so unfriended, and to imagine that hearts thus opened to each other might unite in one. But Sibyll, though she listened to him with interest, and found a certain sympathy in his aspirations, was ever and anon secretly comparing him to one, the charm of whose voice still lingered in her ears; and her intellect, cultivated and acute, detected in Marmaduke deficient education, and that limited experience which is the folly and the happiness of the young.

On the other hand, whatever admiration Nevile might conceive was strangely mixed with surprise, and, it might almost be said, with fear. This girl, with her wise converse and her child's face, was a character so thoroughly new to him. Her language was superior to what he had ever heard, the words more choice, the current more flowing: was that to be attributed to her court-training or her learned parentage?

"Your father, fair mistress," said he, rousing himself in one of the pauses of their conversation—"your father, then, is a mighty scholar, and I suppose knows Latin like English?"

"Why, a hedge-priest pretends to know Latin," said Sibyll, smiling; "my father is one of the six men living who have learned the Greek and the Hebrew."

"Gramercy!" cried Marmaduke, crossing himself. "That is awsome indeed! He has taught you his lere in the tongues?"

"Nay, I know but my own and the French; my mother was a

native of France."

"The Holy Mother be praised!" said Marmaduke, breathing more freely; "for French I have heard my father and uncle say is a language fit for gentles and knights, specially those who come, like the Neviles, from Norman stock. This Margaret of Anjou—didst thou love her well, Mistress Sibyll?"

"Nay," answered Sibyll, "Margaret commanded awe, but she scarcely permitted love from an inferior: and though gracious and well-governed when she so pleased, it was but to those whom she wished to win. She cared not for the heart, if the hand or the brain could not assist her. But, poor queen, who could blame her for this?—her nature was turned from its milk; and, when, more lately, I have heard how many she trusted most have turned against her, I rebuked myself that—"

"Thou wert not by her side?" added the Nevile, observing her pause, and with the generous thought of a gentleman and a soldier.

"Nay, I meant not that so expressly, Master Nevile, but rather that I had ever murmured at her haste and shrewdness of mood. By her side, said you?—alas! I have a nearer duty at home; my father is all in this world to me! Thou knowest not, Master Nevile, how it flatters the weak to think there is some one they can protect. But eno' of myself. Thou wilt go to the stout earl, thou wilt pass to the court, thou wilt win the gold spurs, and thou wilt fight with the strong hand, and leave others to cozen with the keen head."

"She is telling my fortune!" muttered Marmaduke, crossing himself again. "The gold spurs—I thank thee, Mistress Sibyll! —will it be on the battle-field that I shall be knighted, and by whose hand?"

Sibyll glanced her bright eye at the questioner, and seeing his wistful face, laughed outright.

"What, thinkest thou, Master Nevile, I can read thee all riddles without my sieve and my shears?"

"They are essentials, then, Mistress Sibyll?" said the Nevile, with blunt simplicity. "I thought ye more learned damozels might tell by the palm, or the—why dost thou laugh at me?"

"Nay," answered Sibyll, composing herself. "It is my right to be angered. Sith thou wouldst take me to be a witch, all that I can tell thee of thy future" (she added touchingly) "is from that which I have seen of thy past. Thou hast a brave heart, and a gentle; thou hast a frank tongue, and a courteous; and these qualities make men honoured and loved,—except they have the gifts which turn all into gall, and bring oppression for honour, and hate for love."

"And those gifts, gentle Sibyll?"

"Are my father's," answered the girl, with another and a sadder change in her expressive countenance. And the conversation flagged till Marmaduke, feeling more weakened by his loss of blood than he had conceived it possible, retired to his chamber to repose himself.

CHAPTER VI. MASTER MARMADUKE NEVILE FEARS FOR THE SPIRITUAL WEAL OF HIS HOST AND HOSTESS

Before the hour of supper, which was served at six o'clock, Nicholas Alwyn arrived at the house indicated to him by Madge. Marmaduke, after a sound sleep, which was little flattering to Sibyll's attractions, had descended to the hall in search of the maiden and his host, and finding no one, had sauntered in extreme weariness and impatience into the little withdrawing-closet, where as it was now dusk, burned a single candle in a melancholy and rustic sconce; standing by the door that opened on the garden, he amused himself with watching the peacock, when his friend, following Madge into the chamber, tapped him on the shoulder.

"Well, Master Nevile. Ha! by Saint Thomas, what has chanced to thee? Thine arm swathed up, thy locks shorn, thy face blanched! My honoured foster-brother, thy Westmoreland blood seems over-hot for Cockaigne!"

"If so, there are plenty in this city of cut-throats to let out the surplusage," returned Marmaduke; and he briefly related his adventure to Nicholas.

When he had done, the kind trader reproached himself for

having suffered Marmaduke to find his way alone. “The suburbs abound with these miscreants,” said he; “and there is more danger in a night walk near London than in the loneliest glens of green Sherwood—more shame to the city! An’ I be Lord Mayor one of these days, I will look to it better. But our civil wars make men hold human life very cheap, and there’s parlous little care from the great of the blood and limbs of the wayfarers. But war makes thieves—and peace hangs them! Only wait till I manage affairs!”

“Many thanks to thee, Nicholas,” returned the Nevile; “but foul befall me if ever I seek protection from sheriff or mayor! A man who cannot keep his own life with his own right hand merits well to hap-lose it; and I, for one, shall think ill of the day when an Englishman looks more to the laws than his good arm for his safety; but, letting this pass, I beseech thee to avise me if my Lord Warwick be still in the city?”

“Yes, marry, I know that by the hostelries, which swarm with his badges, and the oxen, that go in scores to the shambles! It is a shame to the Estate to see one subject so great, and it bodes no good to our peace. The earl is preparing the most magnificent embassage that ever crossed the salt seas—I would it were not to the French, for our interests lie contrary; but thou hast some days yet to rest here and grow stout, for I would not have thee present thyself with a visage of chalk to a man who values his kind mainly by their thews and their sinews. Moreover, thou shouldst send for the tailor, and get thee trimmed to the mark. It

would be a long step in thy path to promotion, an' the earl would take thee in his train; and the gaudier thy plumes, why, the better chance for thy flight. Wherefore, since thou sayest they are thus friendly to thee under this roof, bide yet a while peacefully; I will send thee the mercer, and the clothier, and the tailor, to divert thy impatience. And as these fellows are greedy, my gentle and dear Master Nevile, may I ask, without offence, how thou art provided?"

"Nay, nay, I have moneys at the hostelrie, an' thou wilt send me my mails. For the rest, I like thy advice, and will take it."

"Good!" answered Nicholas. "Hem! thou seemest to have got into a poor house,—a decayed gentleman, I wot, by the slovenly ruin!"

"I would that were the worst," replied Marmaduke, solemnly, and under his breath; and therewith he repeated to Nicholas the adventure on the pastime-ground, the warnings of the timbrel-girls, and the "awsome" learning and strange pursuits of his host. As for Sibyll, he was evidently inclined to attribute to glamour the reluctant admiration with which she had inspired him. "For," said he, "though I deny not that the maid is passing fair, there be many with rosier cheeks, and taller by this hand!"

Nicholas listened, at first, with the peculiar expression of shrewd sarcasm which mainly characterized his intelligent face, but his attention grew more earnest before Marmaduke had concluded.

"In regard to the maiden," said he, smiling and shaking his

head, "it is not always the handsomest that win us the most,—while fair Meg went a maying, black Meg got to church; and I give thee more reasonable warning than thy timbrel-girls, when, in spite of thy cold language, I bid thee take care of thyself against her attractions; for, verily, my dear foster-brother, thou must mend and not mar thy fortune, by thy love matters; and keep thy heart whole for some fair one with marks in her gipsire, whom the earl may find out for thee. Love and raw pease are two ill things in the porridge-pot. But the father!—I mind me now that I have heard of his name, through my friend Master Caxton, the mercer, as one of prodigious skill in the mathematics. I should like much to see him, and, with thy leave (an' he ask me), will tarry to supper. But what are these?"—and Nicholas took up one of the illuminated manuscripts which Sibyll had prepared for sale. "By the blood! this is couthly and marvellously blazoned."

The book was still in his hands when Sibyll entered. Nicholas stared at her, as he bowed with a stiff and ungraceful embarrassment, which often at first did injustice to his bold, clear intellect, and his perfect self-possession in matters of trade or importance.

"The first woman face," muttered Nicholas to himself, "I ever saw that had the sense of a man's. And, by the rood, what a smile!"

"Is this thy friend, Master Nevile?" said Sibyll, with a glance at the goldsmith. "He is welcome. But is it fair and courteous, Master Nelwyn—"

"Alwyn, an' it please you, fair mistress. A humble name, but good Saxon,—which, I take it, Nelwyn is not," interrupted Nicholas.

"Master Alwyn, forgive me; but can I forgive thee so readily for thy espial of my handiwork, without license or leave?"

"Yours, comely mistress!" exclaimed Nicholas, opening his eyes, and unheeding the gay rebuke—"why, this is a master-hand. My Lord Scales—nay, the Earl of Worcester himself—hath scarce a finer in all his amassment."

"Well, I forgive thy fault for thy flattery; and I pray thee, in my father's name, to stay and sup with thy friend." Nicholas bowed low, and still riveted his eyes on the book with such open admiration, that Marmaduke thought it right to excuse his abstraction; but there was something in that admiration which raised the spirits of Sibyll, which gave her hope when hope was well-nigh gone; and she became so vivacious, so debonair, so charming, in the flow of a gayety natural to her, and very uncommon with English maidens, but which she took partly, perhaps, from her French blood, and partly from the example of girls and maidens of French extraction in Margaret's court, that Nicholas Alwyn thought he had never seen any one so irresistible. Madge had now served the evening meal, put in her head to announce it, and Sibyll withdrew to summon her father.

"I trust he will not tarry too long, for I am sharp set!" muttered Marmaduke. "What thinkest thou of the damozel?"

"Marry," answered Alwyn, thoughtfully, "I pity and marvel at

her. There is eno' in her to furnish forth twenty court beauties. But what good can so much wit and cunning do to an honest maiden?"

"That is exactly my own thought," said Marmaduke; and both the young men sunk into silence, till Sibyll re-entered with her father.

To the surprise of Marmaduke, Nicholas Alwyn, whose less gallant manner he was inclined to ridicule, soon contrived to rouse their host from his lethargy, and to absorb all the notice of Sibyll; and the surprise was increased, when he saw that his friend appeared not unfamiliar with those abstruse and mystical sciences in which Adam was engaged.

"What!" said Adam, "you know, then, my deft and worthy friend Master Caxton! He hath seen notable things abroad—"

"Which, he more than hints," said Nicholas, "will lower the value of those manuscripts this fair damozel has so couthly enriched; and that he hopes, ere long, to show the Englishers how to make fifty, a hundred,—nay even five hundred exemplars of the choicest book, in a much shorter time than a scribe would take in writing out two or three score pages in a single copy."

"Verily," said Marmaduke, with a smile of compassion, "the poor man must be somewhat demented; for I opine that the value of such curiosities must be in their rarity; and who would care for a book, if five hundred others had precisely the same?—allowing always, good Nicholas, for thy friend's vaunting and over-crowing. Five hundred! By'r Lady, there would be scarcely

five hundred fools in merry England to waste good nobles on spoilt rags, specially while bows and mail are so dear."

"Young gentleman," said Adam, rebukingly, "meseemeth that thou wrongest our age and country, to the which, if we have but peace and freedom, I trust the birth of great discoveries is ordained. Certes, Master Alwyn," he added, turning to the goldsmith, "this achievement maybe readily performed, and hath existed, I heard an ingenious Fleming say years ago, for many ages amongst a strange people [Query, the Chinese?] known to the Venetians! But dost thou think there is much appetite among those who govern the State to lend encouragement to such matters?"

"My master serves my Lord Hastings, the king's chamberlain, and my lord has often been pleased to converse with me, so that I venture to say, from my knowledge of his affection to all excellent craft and lere, that whatever will tend to make men wiser will have his countenance and favour with the king."

"That is it, that is it!" exclaimed Adam, rubbing his hands. "My invention shall not die!"

"And that invention—"

"Is one that will multiply exemplars of books without hands; works of craft without 'prentice or journeyman; will move wagons and litters without horses; will direct ships without sails; will—But, alack! it is not yet complete, and, for want of means, it never may be."

Sibyll still kept her animated countenance fixed on Alwyn,

whose intelligence she had already detected, and was charmed with the profound attention with which he listened. But her eye glancing from his sharp features to the handsome, honest face of the Nevile, the contrast was so forcible, that she could not restrain her laughter, though, the moment after, a keen pang shot through her heart. The worthy Marmaduke had been in the act of conveying his cup to his lips; the cup stood arrested midway, his jaws dropped, his eyes opened to their widest extent, an expression of the most evident consternation and dismay spoke in every feature; and when he heard the merry laugh of Sibyll, he pushed his stool from her as far as he well could, and surveyed her with a look of mingled fear and pity.

"Alas! thou art sure my poor father is a wizard now?"

"Pardie!" answered the Nevile. "Hath he not said so? Hath he not spoken of wagons without horses, ships without sails? And is not all this what every dissour and jongleur tells us of in his stories of Merlin? Gentle maiden," he added earnestly, drawing nearer to her, and whispering in a voice of much simple pathos, "thou art young, and I owe thee much. Take care of thyself. Such wonders and derring-do are too solemn for laughter."

"Ah," answered Sibyll, rising, "I fear they are. How can I expect the people to be wiser than thou, or their hard natures kinder in their judgment than thy kind heart?" Her low and melancholy voice went to the heart thus appealed to. Marmaduke also rose, and followed her into the parlour, or withdrawing-closet, while Adam and the goldsmith continued to converse

(though Alwyn's eye followed the young hostess), the former appearing perfectly unconscious of the secession of his other listeners. But Alwyn's attention occasionally wandered, and he soon contrived to draw his host into the parlour.

When Nicholas rose, at last, to depart, he beckoned Sibyll aside. "Fair mistress," said he, with some awkward hesitation, "forgive a plain, blunt tongue; but ye of the better birth are not always above aid, even from such as I am. If you would sell these blazoned manuscripts, I can not only obtain you a noble purchaser in my Lord Scales, or in my Lord Hastings, an equally ripe scholar, but it may be the means of my procuring a suitable patron for your father; and, in these times, the scholar must creep under the knight's manteline."

"Master Alwyn," said Sibyll, suppressing her tears, "it was for my father's sake that these labours were wrought. We are poor and friendless. Take the manuscripts, and sell them as thou wilt, and God and Saint Mary requite thee!"

"Your father is a great man," said Alwyn, after a pause.

"But were he to walk the streets, they would stone him," replied Sibyll, with a quiet bitterness.

Here the Nevile, carefully shunning the magician, who, in the nervous excitement produced by the conversation of a mind less uncongenial than he had encountered for many years, seemed about to address him—here, I say, the Nevile chimed in, "Hast thou no weapon but thy bludgeon? Dear foster-brother, I fear for thy safety."

"Nay, robbers rarely attack us mechanical folk; and I know my way better than thou. I shall find a boat near York House; so pleasant night and quick cure to thee, honoured foster-brother. I will send the tailor and other craftsmen to-morrow."

"And at the same time," whispered Marmaduke, accompanying his friend to the door, "send me a breviary, just to patter an ave or so. This gray-haired carle puts my heart in a tremble. Moreover, buy me a gittern—a brave one—for the damozel. She is too proud to take money, and, 'fore Heaven, I have small doubts the old wizard could turn my hose into nobles an' he had a mind for such gear. Wagons without horses, ships without sails, quotha!"

As soon as Alwyn had departed, Madge appeared with the final refreshment, called "the Wines," consisting of spiced hippocras and confections, of the former of which the Nevile partook in solemn silence.

CHAPTER VII. THERE IS A ROD FOR THE BACK OF EVERY FOOL WHO WOULD BE WISER THAN HIS GENERATION

The next morning, when Marmaduke descended to the hall, Madge, accosting him on the threshold, informed him that Mistress Sibyll was unwell, and kept her chamber, and that Master Warner was never visible much before noon. He was, therefore, prayed to take his meal alone. “Alone” was a word peculiarly unwelcome to Marmaduke Nevile, who was an animal thoroughly social and gregarious. He managed, therefore, to detain the old servant, who, besides the liking a skilful leech naturally takes to a thriving patient, had enough of her sex about her to be pleased with a comely face and a frank, good-humoured voice. Moreover, Marmaduke, wishing to satisfy his curiosity, turned the conversation upon Warner and Sibyll, a theme upon which the old woman was well disposed to be garrulous. He soon learned the poverty of the mansion and the sacrifice of the gittern; and his generosity and compassion were busily engaged in devising some means to requite the hospitality he had received, without wounding the pride of his host, when the arrival of his mails, together with the visits of the tailor and mercer, sent to him by Alwyn, diverted his thoughts into a new channel.

Between the comparative merits of gowns and surcoats, broad-toed shoes and pointed, some time was disposed of with much cheerfulness and edification; but when his visitors had retired, the benevolent mind of the young guest again recurred to the penury of his host. Placing his marks before him on the table in the little withdrawing parlour, he began counting them over, and putting aside the sum he meditated devoting to Warner's relief. "But how," he muttered, "how to get him to take the gold. I know, by myself, what a gentleman and a knight's son must feel at the proffer of alms—pardie! I would as lief Alwyn had struck me as offered me his gipsire,—the ill-mannered, affectionate fellow! I must think—I must think—"

And while still thinking, the door softly opened, and Warner himself, in a high state of abstraction and revery, stalked noiselessly into the room, on his way to the garden, in which, when musing over some new spring for his invention, he was wont to peripatize. The sight of the gold on the table struck full on the philosopher's eyes, and waked him at once from his revery. That gold—oh, what precious instruments, what learned manuscripts it could purchase! That gold, it was the breath of life to his model! He walked deliberately up to the table, and laid his hand upon one of the little heaps. Marmaduke drew back his stool, and stared at him with open mouth.

"Young man, what wantest thou with all this gold?" said Adam, in a petulant, reproachful tone. "Put it up! put it up! Never let the poor see gold; it tempts them, sir,—it tempts them." And

so saying, the student abruptly turned away his eyes, and moved towards the garden. Marmaduke rose and put himself in Adam's way. "Honoured sir," said the young man, "you say justly what want I with all this gold? The only gold a young man should covet is eno' to suffice for the knight's spurs to his heels. If, without offence, you would—that is—ahem!—I mean,—Gramercy! I shall never say it, but I believe my father owed your father four marks, and he bade me repay them. Here, sir!" He held out the glittering coins; the philosopher's hand closed on them as the fish's maw closes on the bait. Adam burst into a laugh, that sounded strangely weird and unearthly upon Marmaduke's startled ear.

"All this for me!" he exclaimed. "For me! No, no, no! for me, for IT—I take it—I take it, sir! I will pay it back with large usury. Come to me this day year, when this world will be a new world, and Adam Warner will be—ha! ha! Kind Heaven, I thank thee!" Suddenly turning away, the philosopher strode through the hall, opened the front door, and escaped into the street.

"By'r Lady," said Marmaduke, slowly recovering his surprise, "I need not have been so much at a loss; the old gentleman takes to my gold as kindly as if it were mother's milk. 'Fore Heaven, mine host's laugh is a ghastly thing!" So soliloquizing, he prudently put up the rest of his money, and locked his mails.

As time went on, the young man became exceedingly weary of his own company. Sibyll still withheld her appearance; the gloom of the old hall, the uncultivated sadness of the lonely

garden, preyed upon his spirits. At length, impatient to get a view of the world without, he mounted a high stool in the hall, and so contrived to enjoy the prospect which the unglazed wicker lattice, deep set in the wall, afforded. But the scene without was little more animated than that within,—all was so deserted in the neighbourhood,—the shops mean and scattered, the thoroughfare almost desolate. At last he heard a shout, or rather hoot, at a distance; and, turning his attention whence it proceeded, he beheld a figure emerge from an alley opposite the casement, with a sack under one arm, and several books heaped under the other. At his heels followed a train of ragged boys, shouting and hallooing, "The wizard! the wizard!—Ah! Bah! The old devil's kin!" At this cry the dull neighbourhood seemed suddenly to burst forth into life. From the casements and thresholds of every house curious faces emerged, and many voices of men and women joined, in deeper bass, with the shrill tenor of the choral urchins, "The wizard! the wizard! out at daylight!" The person thus stigmatized, as he approached the house, turned his face with an expression of wistful perplexity from side to side. His lips moved convulsively, and his face was very pale, but he spoke not. And now, the children, seeing him near his refuge, became more outrageous. They placed themselves menacingly before him, they pulled his robe, they even struck at him; and one, bolder than the rest, jumped up, and plucked his beard. At this last insult, Adam Warner, for it was he, broke silence; but such was the sweetness of his disposition, that

it was rather with pity than reproof in his voice, that he said,—

"Fie, little one! I fear me thine own age will have small honour if thou thus mockest mature years in me."

This gentleness only served to increase the audacity of his persecutors, who now, momently augmenting, presented a formidable obstacle to further progress. Perceiving that he could not advance without offensive measures on his own part, the poor scholar halted; and looking at the crowd with mild dignity, he asked, "What means this, my children? How have I injured you?"

"The wizard! the wizard!" was the only answer he received. Adam shrugged his shoulders, and strode on with so sudden a step, that one of the smaller children, a curly-headed laughing rogue, of about eight years old, was thrown down at his feet, and the rest gave way. But the poor man, seeing one of his foes thus fallen, instead of pursuing his victory, again paused, and forgetful of the precious burdens he carried, let drop the sack and books, and took up the child in his arms. On seeing their companion in the embrace of the wizard, a simultaneous cry of horror broke from the assemblage, "He is going to curse poor Tim!"

"My child! my boy!" shrieked a woman, from one of the casements; "let go my child!"

On his part, the boy kicked and shrieked lustily, as Adam, bending his noble face tenderly over him, said, "Thou art not hurt, child. Poor boy! thinkest thou I would harm thee?" While he spoke a storm of missiles—mud, dirt, sticks, bricks, stones —from the enemy, that had now fallen back in the rear, burst

upon him. A stone struck him on the shoulder. Then his face changed; an angry gleam shot from his deep, calm eyes; he put down the child, and, turning steadily to the grown people at the windows, said, "Ye train your children ill;" picked up his sack and books, sighed, as he saw the latter stained by the mire, which he wiped with his long sleeve, and too proud to show fear, slowly made for his door. Fortunately Sibyll had heard the clamour, and was ready to admit her father, and close the door upon the rush which instantaneously followed his escape. The baffled rout set up a yell of wrath, and the boys were now joined by several foes more formidable from the adjacent houses; assured in their own minds that some terrible execration had been pronounced upon the limbs and body of Master Tim, who still continued bellowing and howling, probably from the excitement of finding himself raised to the dignity of a martyr, the pious neighbours poured forth, with oaths and curses, and such weapons as they could seize in haste, to storm the wizard's fortress.

From his casement Marmaduke Nevile had espied all that had hitherto passed, and though indignant at the brutality of the persecutors, he had thought it by no means unnatural. "If men, gentlemen born, will read uncanny books, and resolve to be wizards, why, they must reap what they sow," was the logical reflection that passed through the mind of that ingenuous youth; but when he now perceived the arrival of more important allies, when stones began to fly through the wicker lattice, when threats of setting fire to the house and burning the sorcerer who

muttered spells over innocent little boys were heard, seriously increasing in depth and loudness, Marmaduke felt his chivalry called forth, and with some difficulty opening the rusty wicket in the casement, he exclaimed: "Shame on you, my countrymen, for thus disturbing in broad day a peaceful habitation! Ye call mine host a wizard. Thus much say I on his behalf: I was robbed and wounded a few nights since in your neighbourhood, and in this house alone I found shelter and healing."

The unexpected sight of the fair young face of Marmaduke Nevile, and the healthful sound of his clear ringing voice, produced a momentary effect on the besiegers, when one of them, a sturdy baker, cried out, "Heed him not,—he is a goblin. Those devil-mongers can bake ye a dozen such every moment, as deftly as I can draw loaves from the oven!"

This speech turned the tide, and at that instant a savage-looking man, the father of the aggrieved boy, followed by his wife, gesticulating and weeping, ran from his house, waving a torch in his right hand, his arm bare to the shoulder; and the cry of "Fire the door!" was universal.

In fact, the danger now grew imminent: several of the party were already piling straw and fagots against the threshold, and Marmaduke began to think the only chance of life to his host and Sibyll was in flight by some back way, when he beheld a man, clad somewhat in the fashion of a country yeoman, a formidable knotted club in his hand, pushing his way, with Herculean shoulders, through the crowd; and stationing himself before

the threshold and brandishing aloft his formidable weapon, he exclaimed, "What! In the devil's name, do you mean to get yourselves all hanged for riot? Do you think that King Edward is as soft a man as King Henry was, and that he will suffer any one but himself to set fire to people's houses in this way? I dare say you are all right enough in the main, but by the blood of Saint Thomas, I will brain the first man who advances a step,—by way of preserving the necks of the rest!"

"A Robin! a Robin!" cried several of the mob. "It is our good friend Robin. Harken to Robin. He is always right."

"Ay, that I am!" quoth the defender; "you know that well enough. If I had my way, the world should be turned upside down, but what the poor folk should get nearer to the sun! But what I say is this, never go against law, while the law is too strong. And it were a sad thing to see fifty fine fellows trussed up for burning an old wizard. So, be off with you, and let us, at least all that can afford it, make for Master Sancroft's hostelrie and talk soberly over our ale. For little, I trow, will ye work now your blood's up."

This address was received with a shout of approbation. The father of the injured child set his broad foot on his torch, the baker chucked up his white cap, the ragged boys yelled out, "A Robin! a Robin!" and in less than two minutes the place was as empty as it had been before the appearance of the scholar. Marmaduke, who, though so ignorant of books, was acute and penetrating in all matters of action, could not help admiring the address and dexterity of the club-bearer; and the danger being

now over, withdrew from the casement, in search of the inmates of the house. Ascending the stairs, he found on the landing-place, near his room, and by the embrasure of a huge casement which jutted from the wall, Adam and his daughter. Adam was leaning against the wall, with his arms folded, and Sibyll, hanging upon him, was uttering the softest and most soothing words of comfort her tenderness could suggest.

"My child," said the old man, shaking his head sadly, "I shall never again have heart for these studies,—never! A king's anger I could brave, a priest's malice I could pity; but to find the very children, the young race for whose sake I have made thee and myself paupers, to find them thus—thus—" He stopped, for his voice failed him, and the tears rolled down his cheeks.

"Come and speak comfort to my father, Master Nevile," exclaimed Sibyll; "come and tell him that whoever is above the herd, whether knight or scholar, must learn to despise the hootings that follow Merit. Father, Father, they threw mud and stones at thy king as he passed through the streets of London. Thou art not the only one whom this base world misjudges."

"Worthy mine host!" said Marmaduke, thus appealed to, "Algates, it were not speaking truth to tell thee that I think a gentleman of birth and quality should walk the thoroughfares with a bundle of books under his arm; yet as for the raptril vulgar, the hildings and cullions who hiss one day what they applaud the next, I hold it the duty of every Christian and well-born man to regard them as the dirt on the crossings. Brave soldiers term it

no disgrace to receive a blow from a base hind. An' it had been knights and gentles who had insulted thee, thou mightest have cause for shame. But a mob of lewd rascallions and squalling infants—bah! verily, it is mere matter for scorn and laughter."

These philosophical propositions and distinctions did not seem to have their due effect upon Adam. He smiled, however, gently upon his guest, and with a blush over his pale face, said, "I am rightly chastised, good young man; mean was I, methinks, and sordid to take from thee thy good gold. But thou knowest not what fever burns in the brain of a man who feels that, had he wealth, his knowledge could do great things,—such things!—I thought to repay thee well. Now the frenzy is gone, and I, who an hour ago esteemed myself a puissant sage, sink in mine own conceit to a miserable blinded fool. Child, I am very weak; I will lay me down and rest."

So saying, the poor philosopher went his way to his chamber, leaning on his daughter's arm.

In a few minutes Sibyll rejoined Marmaduke, who had returned to the hall, and informed him that her father had lain down a while to compose himself.

"It is a hard fate, sir," said the girl, with a faint smile,—"a hard fate, to be banned and accursed by the world, only because one has sought to be wiser than the world is."

"Douce maiden," returned the Nevile, "it is happy for thee that thy sex forbids thee to follow thy father's footsteps, or I should say his hard fate were thy fair warning."

Sibyll smiled faintly, and after a pause, said, with a deep blush, —

"You have been generous to my father; do not misjudge him. He would give his last groat to a starving beggar. But when his passion of scholar and inventor masters him, thou mightest think him worse than miser. It is an overnoble yearning that ofttimes makes him mean."

"Nay," answered Marmaduke, touched by the heavy sigh and swimming eyes with which the last words were spoken; "I have heard Nick Alwyn's uncle, who was a learned monk, declare that he could not constrain himself to pray to be delivered from temptation, seeing that he might thereby lose an occasion for filching some notable book! For the rest," he added, "you forget how much I owe to Master Warner's hospitality."

He took her hand with a frank and brotherly gallantry as he spoke; but the touch of that small, soft hand, freely and innocently resigned to him, sent a thrill to his heart—and again the face of Sibyll seemed to him wondrous fair.

There was a long silence, which Sibyll was the first to break. She turned the conversation once more upon Marmaduke's views in life. It had been easy for a deeper observer than he was to see that, under all that young girl's simplicity and sweetness, there lurked something of dangerous ambition. She loved to recall the court-life her childhood had known, though her youth had resigned it with apparent cheerfulness. Like many who are poor and fallen, Sibyll built herself a sad consolation out of her pride;

she never forgot that she was well-born. But Marmaduke, in what was ambition, saw but interest in himself, and his heart beat more quickly as he bent his eyes upon that downcast, thoughtful, earnest countenance.

After an hour thus passed, Sibyll left the guest, and remounted to her father's chamber. She found Adam pacing the narrow floor, and muttering to himself. He turned abruptly as she entered, and said, "Come hither, child; I took four marks from that young man, for I wanted books and instruments, and there are two left; see, take them back to him."

"My father, he will not receive them. Fear not, thou shalt repay him some day."

"Take them, I say, and if the young man says thee nay, why, buy thyself gauds and gear, or let us eat, and drink, and laugh. What else is life made for? Ha, ha! Laugh, child, laugh!"

There was something strangely pathetic in this outburst, this terrible mirth, born of profound dejection. Alas for this guileless, simple creature, who had clutched at gold with a huckster's eagerness! who, forgetting the wants of his own child, had employed it upon the service of an Abstract Thought, and whom the scorn of his kind now pierced through all the folds of his close-webbed philosophy and self forgetful genius. Awful is the duel between MAN and THE AGE in which he lives! For the gain of posterity, Adam Warner had martyrized existence,—and the children pelted him as he passed the streets! Sibyll burst into tears.

"No, my father, no," she sobbed, pushing back the money into his hands. "Let us both starve rather than you should despond. God and man will bring you justice yet."

"Ah," said the baffled enthusiast, "my whole mind is one sore now! I feel as if I could love man no more. Go, and leave me. Go, I say!" and the poor student, usually so mild and gall-less, stamped his foot in impotent rage. Sibyll, weeping as if her heart would break, left him.

Then Adam Warner again paced to and fro restlessly, and again muttered to himself for several minutes. At last he approached his Model,—the model of a mighty and stupendous invention, the fruit of no chimerical and visionary science; a great Promethean THING, that, once matured, would divide the Old World from the New, enter into all operations of Labour, animate all the future affairs, colour all the practical doctrines of active men. He paused before it, and addressed it as if it heard and understood him: "My hair was dark, and my tread was firm, when, one night, a THOUGHT passed into my soul,—a thought to make Matter the gigantic slave of Mind. Out of this thought, thou, not yet born after five-and-twenty years of travail, wert conceived. My coffers were then full, and my name was honoured; and the rich respected and the poor loved me. Art thou a devil, that has tempted me to ruin, or a god, that has lifted me above the earth? I am old before my time, my hair is blanched, my frame is bowed, my wealth is gone, my name is sullied. And all, dumb idol of Iron and the Element, all for thee! I had a wife

whom I adored; she died,—I forgot her loss in the hope of thy life. I have a child still—God and our Lady forgive me! she is less dear to me than thou hast been. And now"—the old man ceased abruptly, and folding his arms, looked at the deaf iron sternly, as on a human foe. By his side was a huge hammer, employed in the toils of his forge; suddenly he seized and swung it aloft. One blow, and the labour of years was shattered into pieces! One blow!—But the heart failed him, and the hammer fell heavily to the ground.

"Ay!" he muttered, "true, true! if thou, who hast destroyed all else, wert destroyed too, what were left me? Is it a crime to murder Alan?—a greater crime to murder Thought, which is the life of all men! Come, I forgive thee!"

And all that day and all that night the Enthusiast laboured in his chamber, and the next day the remembrance of the hooting, the pelting, the mob, was gone,—clean gone from his breast. The Model began to move, life hovered over its wheels; and the Martyr of Science had forgotten the very world for which he, groaning and rejoicing, toiled!

CHAPTER VIII. MASTER MARMADUKE NEVILE MAKES LOVE, AND IS FRIGHTENED

For two or three days Marmaduke and Sibyll were necessarily brought much together. Such familiarity of intercourse was peculiarly rare in that time, when, except perhaps in the dissolute court of Edward IV., the virgins of gentle birth mixed sparingly, and with great reserve, amongst those of opposite sex. Marmaduke, rapidly recovering from the effect of his wounds, and without other resource than Sibyll's society in the solitude of his confinement, was not proof against the temptation which one so young and so sweetly winning brought to his fancy or his senses. The poor Sibyll—she was no faultless paragon,—she was a rare and singular mixture of many opposite qualities in heart and in intellect! She was one moment infantine in simplicity and gay playfulness; the next a shade passed over her bright face, and she uttered some sentence of that bitter and chilling wisdom, which the sense of persecution, the cruelty of the world, had already taught her. She was, indeed, at that age when the Child and the Woman are struggling against each other. Her character was not yet formed,—a little happiness would have ripened it at once into the richest bloom of goodness. But sorrow, that ever sharpens the intellect, might only serve to sour the heart. Her

mind was so innately chaste and pure, that she knew not the nature of the admiration she excited; but the admiration pleased her as it pleases some young child; she was vain then, but it was an infant's vanity, not a woman's. And thus, from innocence itself, there was a fearlessness, a freedom, a something endearing and familiar in her manner, which might have turned a wiser head than Marmaduke Nevile's. And this the more, because, while liking her young guest, confiding in him, raised in her own esteem by his gallantry, enjoying that intercourse of youth with youth so unfamiliar to her, and surrendering herself the more to its charm from the joy that animated her spirits, in seeing that her father had forgotten his humiliation, and returned to his wonted labours,—she yet knew not for the handsome Nevile one sentiment that approached to love. Her mind was so superior to his own, that she felt almost as if older in years, and in their talk her rosy lips preached to him in grave advice.

On the landing, by Marmaduke's chamber, there was a large oriel casement jutting from the wall. It was only glazed at the upper part, and that most imperfectly, the lower part being closed at night or in inclement weather with rude shutters. The recess formed by this comfortless casement answered, therefore, the purpose of a balcony; it commanded a full view of the vicinity without, and gave to those who might be passing by the power also of indulging their own curiosity by a view of the interior.

Whenever he lost sight of Sibyll, and had grown weary of the peacock, this spot was Marmaduke's favourite haunt. It diverted

him, poor youth, to look out of the window upon the livelier world beyond. The place, it is true, was ordinarily deserted, but still the spires and turrets of London were always discernible,—and they were something.

Accordingly, in this embrasure stood Marmaduke, when one morning, Sibyll, coming from her father's room, joined him.

"And what, Master Nevile," said Sibyll, with a malicious yet charming smile, "what claimed thy meditations? Some misgiving as to the trimming of thy tunic, or the length of thy shoon?"

"Nay," returned Marmaduke, gravely, "such thoughts, though not without their importance in the mind of a gentleman, who would not that his ignorance of court delicacies should commit him to the japes of his equals, were not at that moment uppermost. I was thinking—"

"Of those mastiffs, quarrelling for a bone. Avow it."

"By our Lady, I saw them not, but now I look, they are brave dogs. Ha! seest thou how gallantly each fronts the other, the hair bristling, the eyes fixed, the tail on end, the fangs glistening? Now the lesser one moves slowly round and round the bigger, who, mind you, Mistress Sibyll, is no dullard, but moves, too, quick as thought, not to be taken unawares. Ha! that is a brave spring! Heigh, dogs, Neigh! a good sight!—it makes the blood warm! The little one hath him by the throat!"

"Alack," said Sibyll, turning away her eyes, "can you find pleasure in seeing two poor brutes mangle each other for a bone?"

"By Saint Dunstan! doth it matter what may be the cause of quarrel, so long as dog or man bears himself bravely, with a due sense of honour and derring-do? See! the big one is up again. Ah, foul fall the butcher, who drives them away! Those seely mechanics know not the joyaunce of fair fighting to gentle and to hound. For a hound, mark you, hath nothing mechanical in his nature. He is a gentleman all over,—brave against equal and stranger, forbearing to the small and defenceless, true in poverty and need where he loveth, stern and ruthless where he hateth, and despising thieves, hildings, and the vulgar as much as e'er a gold spur in King Edward's court! Oh, certes, your best gentleman is the best hound!"

"You moralize to-day; and I know not how to gainsay you," returned Sibyll, as the dogs, reluctantly beaten off, retired each from each, snarling and reluctant, while a small black cur, that had hitherto sat unobserved at the door of a small hostelrie, now coolly approached and dragged off the bone of contention. "But what sayst thou now? See! see! the patient mongrel carries off the bone from the gentleman-hounds. Is that the way of the world?"

"Pardie! it is a naught world, if so, and much changed from the time of our fathers, the Normans. But these Saxons are getting uppermost again, and the yard measure, I fear me, is more potent in these holiday times than the mace or the battle-axe." The Nevile paused, sighed, and changed the subject: "This house of thine must have been a stately pile in its day. I see but one side of the quadrangle is left, though it be easy to trace where the other

three have stood."

"And you may see their stones and their fittings in the butcher's and baker's stalls over the way," replied Sibyll.

"Ay!" said the Nevile, "the parings of the gentry begin to be the wealth of the varlets."

"Little ought we to pine at that," returned Sibyll, "if the varlets were but gentle with our poverty; but they loathe the humbled fortunes on which they rise, and while slaves to the rich, are tyrants to the poor."

This was said so sadly, that the Nevile felt his eyes overflow; and the humble dress of the girl, the melancholy ridges which evinced the site of a noble house, now shrunk into a dismal ruin, the remembrance of the pastime-ground, the insults of the crowd, and the broken gittern, all conspired to move his compassion, and to give force to yet more tender emotions.

"Ah," he said suddenly, and with a quick faint blush over his handsome and manly countenance,—"ah, fair maid—fair Sibyll —God grant that I may win something of gold and fortune amidst yonder towers, on which the sun shines so cheerly. God grant it, not for my sake,—not for mine; but that I may have something besides a true heart and a stainless name to lay at thy feet. Oh, Sibyll! By this hand, by my father's soul, I love thee, Sibyll! Have I not said it before? Well, hear me now,—I love thee!"

As he spoke, he clasped her hand in his own, and she suffered it for one instant to rest in his. Then withdrawing it, and meeting his enamoured eyes with a strange sadness in her own darker,

deeper, and more intelligent orbs, she said,—

"I thank thee,—thank thee for the honour of such kind thoughts; and frankly I answer, as thou hast frankly spoken. It was sweet to me, who have known little in life not hard and bitter,—sweet to wish I had a brother like thee, and, as a brother, I can love and pray for thee. But ask not more, Marmaduke. I have aims in life which forbid all other love."

"Art thou too aspiring for one who has his spurs to win?"

"Not so; but listen. My mother's lessons and my own heart have made my poor father the first end and object of all things on earth to me. I live to protect him, work for him, honour him; and for the rest, I have thoughts thou canst not know, an ambition thou canst not feel. Nay," she added, with that delightful smile which chased away the graver thought which had before saddened her aspect, "what would thy sober friend Master Alwyn say to thee, if he heard thou hadst courted the wizard's daughter?"

"By my faith," exclaimed Marmaduke, "thou art a very April,—smiles and clouds in a breath! If what thou despisest in me be my want of bookcraft, and such like, by my halidame I will turn scholar for thy sake; and—"

Here, as he had again taken Sibyll's hand, with the passionate ardour of his bold nature, not to be lightly daunted by a maiden's first "No," a sudden shrill, wild burst of laughter, accompanied with a gusty fit of unmelodious music from the street below, made both maiden and youth start, and turn their eyes; there,

weaving their immodest dance, tawdry in their tinsel attire, their naked arms glancing above their heads, as they waved on high their instruments, went the timbrel-girls.

"Ha, ha!" cried their leader, "see the gallant and the witch-leman! The glamour has done its work! Foul is fair! foul is fair! and the devil will have his own!"

But these creatures, whose bold license the ancient chronicler records, were rarely seen alone. They haunted parties of pomp and pleasure; they linked together the extremes of life,—the grotesque Chorus that introduced the terrible truth of foul vice and abandoned wretchedness in the midst of the world's holiday and pageant. So now, as they wheeled into the silent, squalid street, they heralded a goodly company of dames and cavaliers on horseback, who were passing through the neighbouring plains into the park of Marybone to enjoy the sport of falconry. The splendid dresses of this procession, and the grave and measured dignity with which it swept along, contrasted forcibly with the wild movements and disorderly mirth of the timbrel-players. These last darted round and round the riders, holding out their instruments for largess, and retorting, with laugh and gibe, the disdainful look or sharp rebuke with which their salutations were mostly received.

Suddenly, as the company, two by two, paced up the street, Sibyll uttered a faint exclamation, and strove to snatch her hand from the Nevile's grasp. Her eye rested upon one of the horsemen, who rode last, and who seemed in earnest

conversation with a dame, who, though scarcely in her first youth, excelled all her fair companions in beauty of face and grace of horsemanship, as well as in the costly equipments of the white barb that caracoled beneath her easy hand. At the same moment the horseman looked up and gazed steadily at Sibyll, whose countenance grew pale, and flushed, in a breath. His eye then glanced rapidly at Marmaduke; a half-smile passed his pale, firm lips; he slightly raised the plumed cap from his brow, inclined gravely to Sibyll, and, turning once more to his companion, appeared to answer some question she addressed to him as to the object of his salutation, for her look, which was proud, keen, and lofty, was raised to Sibyll, and then dropped somewhat disdainfully, as she listened to the words addressed her by the cavalier.

The lynx eyes of the tymbesteres had seen the recognition; and their leader, laying her bold hand on the embossed bridle of the horseman, exclaimed, in a voice shrill and loud enough to be heard in the balcony above, "Largess! noble lord, largess! for the sake of the lady thou lovest best!"

The fair equestrian turned away her head at these words; the nobleman watched her a moment, and dropped some coins into the timbrel.

"Ha, ha!" cried the tymbestere, pointing her long arm to Sibyll, and springing towards the balcony,—

"The cushat would mate

Above her state,
And she flutters her wings round the falcon's beak;
But death to the dove
Is the falcon's love!
Oh, sharp is the kiss of the falcon's beak!"

Before this rude song was ended, Sibyll had vanished from the place; the cavalcade had disappeared. The timbrel-players, without deigning to notice Marmaduke, darted elsewhere to ply their discordant trade, and the Nevile, crossing himself devoutly, muttered, "Jesu defend us! Those she Will-o'-the-wisps are eno' to scare all the blood out of one's body. What—a murrain on them!—do they portend, flitting round and round, and skirting off, as if the devil's broomstick was behind them! By the Mass! they have frighted away the damozel, and I am not sorry for it. They have left me small heart for the part of Sir Launval."

His meditations were broken off by the sudden sight of Nicholas Alwyn, mounted on a small palfrey, and followed by a sturdy groom on horseback, leading a steed handsomely caparisoned. In another moment, Marmaduke had descended, opened the door, and drawn Alwyn into the hall.

CHAPTER IX. MASTER MARMADUKE NEVILE LEAVES THE WIZARD'S HOUSE FOR THE GREAT WORLD

"Right glad am I," said Nicholas, "to see you so stout and hearty, for I am the bearer of good news. Though I have been away, I have not forgotten you; and it so chanced that I went yesterday to attend my Lord of Warwick with some nowches [buckles and other ornaments] and knackeries, that he takes out as gifts and exemplars of English work. They were indifferently well wrought, specially a chevesail, of which the—"

"Spare me the fashion of thy mechanicals, and come to the point," interrupted Marmaduke, impatiently.

"Pardon me, Master Nevile. I interrupt thee not when thou talkest of bassinets and hauberks,—every cobbler to his last. But, as thou sayest, to the point: the stout earl, while scanning my workmanship, for in much the chevesail was mine, was pleased to speak graciously of my skill with the bow, of which he had heard; and he then turned to thyself, of whom my Lord Montagu had already made disparaging mention. When I told the earl somewhat more about thy qualities and disposings, and when I spoke of thy desire to serve him, and the letter of which thou art the bearer, his black brows smoothed mighty graciously, and he

bade me tell thee to come to him this afternoon, and he would judge of thee with his own eyes and ears. Wherefore I have ordered the craftsman to have all thy gauds and gear ready at thine hostelrie, and I have engaged thee henchmen and horses for thy fitting appearance. Be quick: time and the great wait for no man. So take whatever thou needest for present want from thy mails, and I will send a porter for the rest ere sunset."

"But the gittern for the damozel?"

"I have provided that for thee, as is meet." And Nicholas, stepping back, eased the groom of a case which contained a gittern, whose workmanship and ornaments delighted the Nevile.

"It is of my lord the young Duke of Gloucester's own musical-vendor; and the duke, though a lad yet, is a notable judge of all appertaining to the gentle craft. [For Richard III.'s love of music, and patronage of musicians and minstrels, see the discriminating character of that prince in Sharon Turner's "History of England," vol. IV. p. 66.] So despatch, and away!"

Marmaduke retired to his chamber, and Nicholas, after a moment spent in silent thought, searched the room for the hand-bell, which then made the mode of communication between the master and domestics. Not finding this necessary luxury, he contrived at last to make Madge hear his voice from her subterranean retreat; and on her arrival, sent her in quest of Sibyll.

The answer he received was, that Mistress Sibyll was ill, and unable to see him. Alwyn looked disconcerted at this

intelligence, but, drawing from his girdle a small gipsire, richly broidered, he prayed Madge to deliver it to her young mistress, and inform her that it was the fruit of the commission with which she had honoured him.

"It is passing strange," said he, pacing the hall alone, —"passing strange, that the poor child should have taken such hold on me. After all, she would be a bad wife for a plain man like me. Tush! that is the trader's thought all over. Have I brought no fresher feeling out of my fair village-green? Would it not be sweet to work for her, and rise in life, with her by my side? And these girls of the city, so prim and so brainless!—as well marry a painted puppet. Sibyll! Am I dement? Stark wode? What have I to do with girls and marriage? Humph! I marvel what Marmaduke still thinks of her,—and she of him."

While Alwyn thus soliloquized, the Nevile having hastily arranged his dress, and laden himself with the moneys his mails contained, summoned old Madge to receive his largess, and to conduct him to Warner's chamber, in order to proffer his farewell.

With somewhat of a timid step he followed the old woman (who kept muttering thanks and benedicites as she eyed the coin in her palm) up the ragged stairs, and for the first time knocked at the door of the student's sanctuary. No answer came. "Eh, sir! you must enter," said Madge; "an' you fired a bombard under his ear he would not heed you." So, suiting the action to the word, she threw open the door, and closed it behind him, as Marmaduke

entered.

The room was filled with smoke, through which mirky atmosphere the clear red light of the burning charcoal peered out steadily like a Cyclop's eye. A small, but heaving, regular, labouring, continuous sound, as of a fairy hammer, smote the young man's ear. But as his gaze, accustoming itself to the atmosphere, searched around, he could not perceive what was its cause. Adam Warner was standing in the middle of the room, his arms folded, and contemplating something at a little distance, which Marmaduke could not accurately distinguish. The youth took courage, and approached. "Honoured mine host," said he, "I thank thee for hospitality and kindness, I crave pardon for disturbing thee in thy incanta—ehem!—thy—thy studies, and I come to bid thee farewell."

Adam turned round with a puzzled, absent air, as if scarcely recognizing his guest; at length, as his recollection slowly came back to him, he smiled graciously, and said: "Good youth, thou art richly welcome to what little it was in my power to do for thee. Peradventure a time may come when they who seek the roof of Adam Warner may find less homely cheer, a less rugged habitation,—for look you!" he exclaimed suddenly, with a burst of irrepressible enthusiasm—and laying his hand on Nevile's arm, as, through all the smoke and grime that obscured his face, flashed the ardent soul of the triumphant Inventor,—"look you! since you have been in this house, one of my great objects is well-nigh matured,—achieved. Come hither," and he dragged

the wondering Marmaduke to his model, or Eureka, as Adam had fondly named his contrivance. The Nevile then perceived that it was from the interior of this machine that the sound which had startled him arose; to his eye the THING was uncouth and hideous; from the jaws of an iron serpent, that, wreathing round it, rose on high with erect crest, gushed a rapid volume of black smoke, and a damp spray fell around. A column of iron in the centre kept in perpetual and regular motion, rising and sinking successively, as the whole mechanism within seemed alive with noise and action.

"The Syracusan asked an inch of earth, beyond the earth, to move the earth," said Adam; "I stand in the world, and lo! with this engine the world shall one day be moved."

"Holy Mother!" faltered Marmaduke; "I pray thee, dread sir, to ponder well ere thou attemptest any such sports with the habitation in which every woman's son is so concerned. Bethink thee, that if in moving the world thou shouldst make any mistake, it would—"

"Now stand there and attend," interrupted Adam, who had not heard one word of this judicious exhortation.

"Pardon me, terrible sir!" exclaimed Marmaduke, in great trepidation, and retreating rapidly to the door; "but I have heard that the fiends are mighty malignant to all lookers-on not initiated."

While he spoke, fast gushed the smoke, heavily heaved the fairy hammers, up and down, down and up, sank or rose the

column, with its sullen sound. The young man's heart sank to the soles of his feet.

"Indeed and in truth," he stammered out, "I am but a dolt in these matters; I wish thee all success compatible with the weal of a Christian, and bid thee, in sad humility, good day:" and he added, in a whisper—"the Lord's forgiveness! Amen!"

Marmaduke then fairly rushed through the open door, and hurried out of the chamber as fast as possible.

He breathed more freely as he descended the stairs. "Before I would call that gray carle my father, or his child my wife, may I feel all the hammers of the elves and sprites he keeps tortured within that ugly little prison-house playing a death's march on my body! Holy Saint Dunstan, the timbrel-girls came in time! They say these wizards always have fair daughters, and their love can be no blessing!"

As he thus muttered, the door of Sibyll's chamber opened, and she stood before him at the threshold. Her countenance was very pale, and bore evidence of weeping. There was a silence on both sides, which the girl was the first to break.

"So, Madge tells me thou art about to leave us?"

"Yes, gentle maiden! I—I—that is, my Lord of Warwick has summoned me. I wish and pray for all blessings on thee! and—and—if ever it be mine to serve or aid thee, it will be—that is—verily, my tongue falters, but my heart—that is—fare thee well, maiden! Would thou hadst a less wise father; and so may the saints (Saint Anthony especially, whom the Evil One was parlous

afraid of) guard and keep thee!"

With this strange and incoherent address, Marmaduke left the maiden standing by the threshold of her miserable chamber. Hurrying into the hall, he summoned Alwyn from his meditations, and, giving the gittern to Madge, with an injunction to render it to her mistress, with his greeting and service, he vaulted lightly on his steed; the steady and more sober Alwyn mounted his palfrey with slow care and due caution. As the air of spring waved the fair locks of the young cavalier, as the good horse caracoled under his lithesome weight, his natural temper of mind, hardy, healthful, joyous, and world-awake, returned to him. The image of Sibyll and her strange father fled from his thoughts like sickly dreams.

BOOK II. THE KING'S COURT

CHAPTER I. EARL WARWICK THE KING-MAKER

The young men entered the Strand, which, thanks to the profits of a toll-bar, was a passable road for equestrians, studded towards the river, as we have before observed, with stately and half-fortified mansions; while on the opposite side, here and there, were straggling houses of a humbler kind,—the mediaeval villas of merchant and trader (for, from the earliest period since the Conquest, the Londoners had delight in such retreats), surrounded with blossoming orchards, [On all sides, without the suburbs, are the citizens' gardens and orchards, etc. —FITZSTEPHEN.] and adorned in front with the fleur-de-lis, emblem of the vain victories of renowned Agincourt. But by far the greater portion of the road northward stretched, unbuilt upon, towards a fair chain of fields and meadows, refreshed by many brooks, "turning water-mills with a pleasant noise." High rose, on the thoroughfare, the famous Cross, at which "the Judges Itinerant whilome sate, without London." [Stowe.] There, hallowed and solitary, stood the inn for the penitent pilgrims, who sought "the murmuring runnels" of St. Clement's healing

well; for in this neighbourhood, even from the age of the Roman, springs of crystal wave and salubrious virtue received the homage of credulous disease. Through the gloomy arches of the Temple Gate and Lud, our horsemen wound their way, and finally arrived in safety at Marmaduke's hostelrie in the East Chepe. Here Marmaduke found the decorators of his comely person already assembled. The simpler yet more manly fashions he had taken from the provinces were now exchanged for an attire worthy the kinsman of the great minister of a court unparalleled, since the reign of William the Red King, for extravagant gorgeousness of dress. His corset was of the finest cloth, sown with seed pearls; above it the lawn shirt, worn without collar, partially appeared, fringed with gold; over this was loosely hung a super-tunic of crimson sarcenet, slashed and pounced with a profusion of fringes. His velvet cap, turned up at the sides, extended in a point far over the forehead. His hose—under which appellation is to be understood what serves us of the modern day both for stockings and pantaloons—were of white cloth; and his shoes, very narrow, were curiously carved into chequer work at the instep, and tied with bobbins of gold thread, turning up like skates at the extremity, three inches in length. His dagger was suspended by a slight silver-gilt chain, and his girdle contained a large gipsire, or pouch, of embossed leather, richly gilt.

And this dress, marvellous as it seemed to the Nevile, the tailor gravely assured him was far under the mark of the highest fashion, and that an' the noble youth had been a knight, the

shoes would have stretched at least three inches farther over the natural length of the feet, the placard have shone with jewels, and the tunic luxuriated in flowers of damacene. Even as it was, however, Marmaduke felt a natural diffidence of his habiliments, which cost him a round third of his whole capital; and no bride ever unveiled herself with more shamefaced bashfulness than did Marmaduke Nevile experience when he remounted his horse, and, taking leave of his foster-brother, bent his way to Warwick Lane, where the earl lodged.

The narrow streets were, however, crowded with equestrians whose dress eclipsed his own, some bending their way to the Tower, some to the palaces of the Flete. Carriages there were none, and only twice he encountered the huge litters, in which some aged prelate or some high-born dame veiled greatness from the day. But the frequent vistas to the river gave glimpses of the gay boats and barges that crowded the Thames, which was then the principal thoroughfare for every class, but more especially the noble. The ways were fortunately dry and clean for London, though occasionally deep holes and furrows in the road menaced perils to the unwary horseman. The streets themselves might well disappoint in splendour the stranger's eye; for although, viewed at a distance, ancient London was incalculably more picturesque and stately than the modern, yet when fairly in its tortuous labyrinths, it seemed to those who had improved the taste by travel the meanest and the mirkiest capital of Christendom. The streets were marvellously narrow, the upper stories, chiefly of

wood, projecting far over the lower, which were formed of mud and plaster. The shops were pitiful booths, and the 'prentices standing at the entrance bare-headed and cap in hand, and lining the passages, as the old French writer avers, comme idoles, [Perlin] kept up an eternal din with their clamorous invitations, often varied by pert witticisms on some churlish passenger, or loud vituperations of each other. The whole ancient family of the London criers were in full bay. Scarcely had Marmaduke's ears recovered the shock of "Hot peascods,—all hot!" than they were saluted with "Mackerel!" "Sheep's feet! hot sheep's feet!" At the smaller taverns stood the inviting vociferaters of "Cock-pie," "Ribs of beef,—hot beef!" while, blended with these multi-toned discords, whined the vielle, or primitive hurdy-gurdy, screamed the pipe, twanged the harp, from every quarter where the thirsty paused to drink, or the idler stood to gape. [See Lydgate: London Lyckpenny.]

Through this Babel Marmaduke at last slowly wound his way, and arrived before the mighty mansion in which the chief baron of England held his state.

As he dismounted and resigned his steed to the servitor hired for him by Alwyn, Marmaduke paused a moment, struck by the disparity, common as it was to eyes more accustomed to the metropolis, between the stately edifice and the sordid neighbourhood. He had not noticed this so much when he had repaired to the earl's house on his first arrival in London, for his thoughts then had been too much bewildered by the general

bustle and novelty of the scene; but now it seemed to him that he better comprehended the homage accorded to a great noble in surveying, at a glance, the immeasurable eminence to which he was elevated above his fellow-men by wealth and rank.

Far on either side of the wings of the earl's abode stretched, in numerous deformity, sheds rather than houses, of broken plaster and crazy timbers. But here and there were open places of public reception, crowded with the lower followers of the puissant chief; and the eye rested on many idle groups of sturdy swash-bucklers, some half-clad in armour, some in rude jerkins of leather, before the doors of these resorts,—as others, like bees about a hive, swarmed in and out with a perpetual hum.

The exterior of Warwick House was of a gray but dingy stone, and presented a half-fortified and formidable appearance. The windows, or rather loop-holes, towards the street were few, and strongly barred. The black and massive arch of the gateway yawned between two huge square towers; and from a yet higher but slender tower on the inner side, the flag gave the "White Bear and Ragged Staff" to the smoky air. Still, under the portal as he entered, hung the grate of the portcullis, and the square court which he saw before him swarmed with the more immediate retainers of the earl, in scarlet jackets, wrought with their chieftain's cognizance. A man of gigantic girth and stature, who officiated as porter, leaning against the wall under the arch, now emerged from the shadow, and with sufficient civility demanded the young visitor's name and business. On

hearing the former, he bowed low as he doffed his hat, and conducted Marmaduke through the first quadrangle. The two sides to the right and left were devoted to the offices and rooms of retainers, of whom no less than six hundred, not to speak of the domestic and more orderly retinue, attested the state of the Last of the English Barons on his visits to the capital. Far from being then, as now, the object of the great to thrust all that belongs to the service of the house out of sight, it was their pride to strike awe into the visitor by the extent of accommodation afforded to their followers: some seated on benches of stone ranged along the walls; some grouped in the centre of the court; some lying at length upon the two oblong patches of what had been turf, till worn away by frequent feet,—this domestic army filled the young Nevile with an admiration far greater than the gay satins of the knights and nobles who had gathered round the lord of Montagu and Northumberland at the pastime-ground.

This assemblage, however, were evidently under a rude discipline of their own. They were neither noisy nor drunk. They made way with surly obeisance as the cavalier passed, and closing on his track like some horde of wild cattle, gazed after him with earnest silence, and then turned once more to their indolent whispers with each other.

And now Nevile entered the last side of the quadrangle. The huge hall, divided from the passage by a screen of stone fretwork, so fine as to attest the hand of some architect in the reign of Henry III., stretched to his right; and so vast, in truth, it was, that

though more than fifty persons were variously engaged therein, their number was lost in the immense space. Of these, at one end of the longer and lower table beneath the dais, some squires of good dress and mien were engaged at chess or dice; others were conferring in the gloomy embrasures of the casements; some walking to and fro, others gathered round the shovel-board. At the entrance of this hall the porter left Marmaduke, after exchanging a whisper with a gentleman whose dress eclipsed the Nevile's in splendour; and this latter personage, who, though of high birth, did not disdain to perform the office of chamberlain, or usher, to the king-like earl, advanced to Marmaduke with a smile, and said,—

"My lord expects you, sir, and has appointed this time to receive you, that you may not be held back from his presence by the crowds that crave audience in the forenoon. Please to follow me!" This said, the gentleman slowly preceded the visitor, now and then stopping to exchange a friendly word with the various parties he passed in his progress; for the urbanity which Warwick possessed himself, his policy inculcated as a duty on all who served him. A small door at the other extremity of the hall admitted into an anteroom, in which some half score pages, the sons of knights and barons, were gathered round an old warrior, placed at their head as a sort of tutor, to instruct them in all knightly accomplishments; and beckoning forth one of these youths from the ring, the earl's chamberlain said, with a profound reverence, "Will you be pleased, my young lord, to conduct your

cousin, Master Marmaduke Nevile, to the earl's presence?" The young gentleman eyed Marmaduke with a supercilious glance.

"Marry!" said he, pertly, "if a man born in the North were to feed all his cousins, he would soon have a tail as long as my uncle, the stout earl's. Come, sir cousin, this way." And without tarrying even to give Nevile information of the name and quality of his new-found relation,—who was no less than Lord Montagu's son, the sole male heir to the honours of that mighty family, though now learning the apprenticeship of chivalry amongst his uncle's pages,—the boy passed before Marmaduke with a saunter, that, had they been in plain Westmoreland, might have cost him a cuff from the stout hand of the indignant elder cousin. He raised the tapestry at one end of the room, and ascending a short flight of broad stairs, knocked gently on the panels of an arched door sunk deep in the walls.

"Enter!" said a clear, loud voice, and the next moment Marmaduke was in the presence of the King-maker.

He heard his guide pronounce his name, and saw him smile maliciously at the momentary embarrassment the young man displayed, as the boy passed by Marmaduke, and vanished. The Earl of Warwick was seated near a door that opened upon an inner court, or rather garden, which gave communication to the river. The chamber was painted in the style of Henry III., with huge figures representing the battle of Hastings, or rather, for there were many separate pieces, the conquest of Saxon England. Over each head, to enlighten the ignorant, the artist had taken

the precaution to insert a label, which told the name and the subject. The ceiling was groined, vaulted, and emblazoned with the richest gilding and colours. The chimneypiece (a modern ornament) rose to the roof, and represented in bold reliefs, gilt and decorated, the signing of Magna Charta. The floor was strewed thick with dried rushes and odorous herbs; the furniture was scanty, but rich. The low-backed chairs, of which there were but four, carved in ebony, had cushions of velvet with fringes of massive gold; a small cupboard, or beaufet, covered with carpetz de cuir (carpets of gilt and painted leather), of great price, held various quaint and curious ornaments of plate inwrought with precious stones; and beside this—a singular contrast—on a plain Gothic table lay the helmet, the gauntlets, and the battle-axe of the master. Warwick himself, seated before a large, cumbrous desk, was writing,—but slowly and with pain,—and he lifted his finger as the Nevile approached, in token of his wish to conclude a task probably little congenial to his tastes. But Marmaduke was grateful for the moments afforded him to recover his self-possession, and to examine his kinsman.

The earl was in the lusty vigour of his age. His hair, of the deepest black, was worn short, as if in disdain of the effeminate fashions of the day; and fretted bare from the temples by the constant and early friction of his helmet, gave to a forehead naturally lofty yet more majestic appearance of expanse and height. His complexion, though dark and sunburned, glowed with rich health. The beard was closely shaven, and left in all its

remarkable beauty the contour of the oval face and strong jaw, —strong as if clasped in iron. The features were marked and aquiline, as was common to those of Norman blood. The form spare, but of prodigious width and depth of chest, the more apparent from the fashion of the short surcoat, which was thrown back, and left in broad expanse a placard, not of holiday velvet and satins, but of steel polished as a mirror, and inlaid with gold. And now as, concluding his task, the earl rose and motioned Marmaduke to a stool by his side, his great stature, which, from the length of his limbs, was not so observable when he sat, actually startled his guest. Tall as Marmaduke was himself, the earl towered [The faded portrait of Richard Nevile, Earl of Warwick, in the Rous Roll, preserved at the Herald's College, does justice, at least, to the height and majesty of his stature. The portrait of Edward IV. is the only one in that long series which at all rivals the stately proportions of the King-maker.] above him,—with his high, majestic, smooth, unwrinkled forehead, —like some Paladin of the rhyme of poet or romancer; and, perhaps, not only in this masculine advantage, but in the rare and harmonious combination of colossal strength with graceful lightness, a more splendid union of all the outward qualities we are inclined to give to the heroes of old never dazzled the eye or impressed the fancy. But even this effect of mere person was subordinate to that which this eminent nobleman created—upon his inferiors, at least—by a manner so void of all arrogance, yet of all condescension, so simple, open, cordial, and hero-like, that

Marmaduke Nevile, peculiarly alive to external impressions, and subdued and fascinated by the earl's first word, and that word was "Welcome!" dropped on his knee, and kissing the hand extended to him, said, "Noble kinsman, in thy service and for thy sake let me live and die!" Had the young man been prepared by the subtlest master of courtcraft for this interview, so important to his fortunes, he could not have advanced a hundredth part so far with the great earl as he did by that sudden, frank burst of genuine emotion; for Warwick was extremely sensitive to the admiration he excited,—vain or proud of it, it matters not which; grateful as a child for love, and inexorable as a woman for slight or insult: in rude ages, one sex has often the qualities of the other.

"Thou hast thy father's warm heart and hasty thought, Marmaduke," said Warwick, raising him; "and now he is gone where, we trust, brave men, shrived of their sins, look down upon us, who should be thy friend but Richard Nevile? So—so—yes, let me look at thee. Ha! stout Guy's honest face, every line of it: but to the girls, perhaps, comelier, for wanting a scar or two. Never blush,—thou shalt win the scars yet. So thou hast a letter from thy father?"

"It is here, noble lord."

"And why," said the earl, cutting the silk with his dagger —"why hast thou so long hung back from presenting it? But I need not ask thee. These uncivil times have made kith and kin doubt worse of each other than thy delay did of me. Sir Guy's mark, sure eno'! Brave old man! I loved him the better

for that, like me, the sword was more meet than the pen for his bold hand." Here Warwick scanned, with some slowness, the lines dictated by the dead to the priest; and when he had done, he laid the letter respectfully on his desk, and bowing his head over it, muttered to himself,—it might be an Ave for the deceased. "Well," he said, reseating himself, and again motioning Marmaduke to follow his example, "thy father was, in sooth, to blame for the side he took in the Wars. What son of the Norman could bow knee or vail plume to that shadow of a king, Henry of Windsor? And for his bloody wife—she knew no more of an Englishman's pith and pride than I know of the rhymes and roundels of old Rene, her father. Guy Nevile—good Guy—many a day in my boyhood did he teach me how to bear my lance at the crest, and direct my sword at the mail joints. He was cunning at fence—thy worshipful father—but I was ever a bad scholar; and my dull arm, to this day, hopes more from its strength than its craft."

"I have heard it said, noble earl, that the stoutest hand can scarcely lift your battle-axe."

"Fables! romaunt!" answered the earl, smiling; "there it lies, —go and lift it."

Marmaduke went to the table, and, though with some difficulty, raised and swung this formidable weapon.

"By my halidame, well swung, cousin mine! Its use depends not on the strength, but the practice. Why, look you now, there is the boy Richard of Gloucester, who comes not up to thy

shoulder, and by dint of custom each day can wield mace or axe with as much ease as a jester doth his lathesword. Ah, trust me, Marmaduke, the York House is a princely one; and if we must have a king, we barons, by stout Saint George, let no meaner race ever furnish our lieges. But to thyself, Marmaduke—what are thy views and thy wishes?"

"To be one of thy following, noble Warwick."

"I thank and accept thee, young Nevile; but thou hast heard that I am about to leave England, and in the mean time thy youth would run danger without a guide." The earl paused a moment, and resumed: "My brother of Montagu showed thee cold countenance; but a word from me will win thee his grace and favour. What sayest thou, wilt thou be one of his gentlemen? If so, I will tell thee the qualities a man must have,—a discreet tongue, a quick eye, the last fashion in hood and shoe-bobbins, a perfect seat on thy horse, a light touch for the gittern, a voice for a love-song, and—"

"I have none of these save the horsemanship, gracious my lord; and if thou wilt not receive me thyself, I will not burden my Lord of Montagu and Northumberland."

"Hot and quick! No! John of Montagu would not suit thee, nor thou him. But how to provide for thee till my return I know not."

"Dare I not hope, then, to make one of your embassage, noble earl?"

Warwick bent his brows, and looked at him in surprise. "Of our embassage! Why, thou art haughty, indeed! Nay, and so a

soldier's son and a Nevile should be! I blame thee not; but I could not make thee one of my train, without creating a hundred enemies—to me (but that's nothing) and to thee, which were much. Knowest thou not that there is scarce a gentleman of my train below the state of a peer's son, and that I have made, by refusals, malcontents eno', as it is?—Yet, bold! there is my learned brother, the Archbishop of York. Knowest thou Latin and the schools?"

"'Fore Heaven, my lord," said the Nevile, bluntly, "I see already I had best go back to green Westmoreland, for I am as unfit for his grace the archbishop as I am for my Lord Montagu."

"Well, then," said the earl, dryly, "since thou hast not yet station enough for my train, nor glosing for Northumberland, nor wit and lere for the archbishop, I suppose, my poor youth, I must e'en make you only a gentleman about the king! It is not a post so sure of quick rising and full gipsires as one about myself or my brethren, but it will be less envied, and is good for thy first essay. How goes the clock? Oh, here is Nick Alwyn's new horologe. He tells me that the English will soon rival the Dutch in these baubles. [Clockwork appears to have been introduced into England in the reign of Edward III., when three Dutch horologers were invited over from Delft. They must soon have passed into common use, for Chaucer thus familiarly speaks of them:—

> "Full sickerer was his crowing in his loge
> Than is a clock or any abbey orloge."]

The more the pity!—our red-faced yeomen, alas, are fast sinking into lank-jawed mechanics! We shall find the king in his garden within the next half-hour. Thou shalt attend me."

Marmaduke expressed, with more feeling than eloquence, the thanks he owed for an offer that, he was about to say, exceeded his hopes; but he had already, since his departure from Westmoreland, acquired sufficient wit to think twice of his words. And so eagerly, at that time, did the youth of the nobility contend for the honour of posts about the person of Warwick, and even of his brothers, and so strong was the belief that the earl's power to make or to mar fortune was all-paramount in England, that even a place in the king's household was considered an inferior appointment to that which made Warwick the immediate patron and protector. This was more especially the case amongst the more haughty and ancient gentry since the favour shown by Edward to the relations of his wife, and his own indifference to the rank and birth of his associates. Warwick had therefore spoken with truth when he expressed a comparative pity for the youth, whom he could not better provide for than by a place about the court of his sovereign!

The earl then drew from Marmaduke some account of his early training, his dependence on his brother, his adventures at the archery-ground, his misadventure with the robbers, and even his sojourn with Warner,—though Marmaduke was discreetly silent as to the very existence of Sibyll. The earl, in the mean

while, walked to and fro the chamber with a light, careless stride, every moment pausing to laugh at the frank simplicity of his kinsman, or to throw in some shrewd remark, which he cast purposely in the rough Westmoreland dialect; for no man ever attains to the popularity that rejoiced or accursed the Earl of Warwick, without a tendency to broad and familiar humour, without a certain commonplace of character in its shallower and more every-day properties. This charm—always great in the great—Warwick possessed to perfection; and in him—such was his native and unaffected majesty of bearing, and such the splendour that surrounded his name—it never seemed coarse or unfamiliar, but "everything he did became him best." Marmaduke had just brought his narrative to a conclusion, when, after a slight tap at the door, which Warwick did not hear, two fair young forms bounded joyously in, and not seeing the stranger, threw themselves upon Warwick's breast with the caressing familiarity of infancy.

"Ah, Father," said the elder of these two girls, as Warwick's hand smoothed her hair fondly, "you promised you would take us in your barge to see the sports on the river, and now it will be too late."

"Make your peace with your young cousins here," said the earl, turning to Marmaduke; "you will cost them an hour's joyaunce. This is my eldest daughter, Isabel; and this soft-eyed, pale-cheeked damozel—too loyal for a leaf of the red rose—is the Lady Anne."

The two girls had started from their father's arms at the first address to Marmaduke, and their countenances had relapsed from their caressing and childlike expression into all the stately demureness with which they had been brought up to regard a stranger. Howbeit, this reserve, to which he was accustomed, awed Marmaduke less than the alternate gayety and sadness of the wilder Sibyll, and he addressed them with all the gallantry to the exercise of which he had been reared, concluding his compliments with a declaration that he would rather forego the advantage proffered him by the earl's favour with the king, than foster one obnoxious and ungracious memory in damozels so fair and honoured.

A haughty smile flitted for a moment over the proud young face of Isabel Nevile; but the softer Anne blushed, and drew bashfully behind her sister.

As yet these girls, born for the highest and fated to the most wretched fortunes, were in all the bloom of earliest youth; but the difference between their characters might be already observable in their mien and countenance. Isabel; of tall and commanding stature, had some resemblance to her father, in her aquiline features, rich, dark hair, and the lustrous brilliancy of her eyes; while Anne, less striking, yet not less lovely, of smaller size and slighter proportions, bore in her pale, clear face, her dove-like eyes, and her gentle brow an expression of yielding meekness not unmixed with melancholy, which, conjoined with an exquisite symmetry of features, could not fail of exciting interest where

her sister commanded admiration. Not a word, however, from either did Marmaduke abstract in return for his courtesies, nor did either he or the earl seem to expect it; for the latter, seating himself and drawing Anne on his knee, while Isabella walked with stately grace towards the table that bore her father's warlike accoutrements, and played, as it were, unconsciously with the black plume on his black burgonet, said to Nevile,

"Well, thou hast seen enough of the Lancastrian raptrils to make thee true to the Yorkists. I would I could say as much for the king himself, who is already crowding the court with that venomous faction, in honour of Dame Elizabeth Gray, born Mistress Woodville, and now Queen of England. Ha, my proud Isabel, thou wouldst have better filled the throne that thy father built!"

And at these words a proud flash broke from the earl's dark eyes, betraying even to Marmaduke the secret of perhaps his earliest alienation from Edward IV. Isabella pouted her rich lip, but said nothing. "As for thee, Anne," continued the earl, "it is a pity that monks cannot marry,—thou wouldst have suited some sober priest better than a mailed knight. 'Fore George, I would not ask thee to buckle my baldrick when the war-steeds were snorting, but I would trust Isabel with the links of my hauberk."

"Nay, Father," said the low, timid voice of Anne, "if thou wert going to danger, I could be brave in all that could guard thee!"

"Why, that's my girl! kiss me! Thou hast a look of thy mother now,—so thou hast! and I will not chide thee the next time I hear

thee muttering soft treason in pity of Henry of Windsor."

"Is he not to be pitied?—Crown, wife, son, and Earl Warwick's stout arm lost—lost!"

"No!" said Isabel, suddenly; "no, sweet sister Anne, and fie on thee for the words! He lost all, because he had neither the hand of a knight nor the heart of a man! For the rest—Margaret of Anjou, or her butchers, beheaded our father's father."

"And may God and Saint George forget me, when I forget those gray and gory hairs!" exclaimed the earl; and putting away the Lady Anne somewhat roughly, he made a stride across the room, and stood by his hearth. "And yet Edward, the son of Richard of York, who fell by my father's side—he forgets, he forgives! And the minions of Rivers the Lancastrian tread the heels of Richard of Warwick."

At this unexpected turn in the conversation, peculiarly unwelcome, as it may be supposed, to the son of one who had fought on the Lancastrian side in the very battle referred to, Marmaduke felt somewhat uneasy; and turning to the Lady Anne, he said, with the gravity of wounded pride, "I owe more to my lord, your father, than I even wist of,—how much he must have overlooked to—"

"Not so!" interrupted Warwick, who overheard him,—"not so; thou wrongest me! Thy father was shocked at those butcheries; thy father recoiled from that accursed standard; thy father was of a stock ancient and noble as my own! But, these Woodvilles!—tush! my passion overmasters me. We will go to

the king,—it is time."

Warwick here rang the hand-bell on his table, and on the entrance of his attendant gentleman, bade him see that the barge was in readiness; then beckoning to his kinsman, and with a nod to his daughters, he caught up his plumed cap, and passed at once into the garden.

"Anne," said Isabel, when the two girls were alone, "thou hast vexed my father, and what marvel? If the Lancastrians can be pitied, the Earl of Warwick must be condemned!"

"Unkind!" said Anne, shedding tears; "I can pity woe and mischance, without blaming those whose hard duty it might be to achieve them."

"In good sooth cannot I! Thou wouldst pity and pardon till thou leftst no distinction between foeman and friend, leife and loathing. Be it mine, like my great father, to love and to hate!"

"Yet why art thou so attached to the White Rose?" said Anne, stung, if not to malice, at least to archness. "Thou knowest my father's nearest wish was that his eldest daughter might be betrothed to King Edward. Dost thou not pay good for evil when thou seest no excellence out of the House of York?"

"Saucy Anne," answered Isabel, with a half smile, "I am not raught by thy shafts, for I was a child for the nurses when King Edward sought a wife for his love. But were I chafed—as I may be vain enough to know myself—whom should I blame?—Not the king, but the Lancastrian who witched him!"

She paused a moment, and, looking away, added in a low tone,

"Didst thou hear, sister Anne, if the Duke of Clarence visited my father the forenoon?"

"Ah, Isabel, Isabel!"

"Ah, sister Anne, sister Anne! Wilt thou know all my secrets ere I know them myself?"—and Isabel, with something of her father's playfulness, put her hands to Anne's laughing lips.

Meanwhile Warwick, after walking musingly a few moments along the garden, which was formed by plots of sward, bordered with fruit-trees, and white rose-trees not yet in blossom, turned to his silent kinsman, and said, "Forgive me, cousin mine, my mannerless burst against thy brave father's faction; but when thou hast been a short while at court, thou wilt see where the sore is. Certes, I love this king!" Here his dark face lighted up. "Love him as a king,—ay, and as a son! And who would not love him; brave as his sword, gallant, and winning, and gracious as the noonday in summer? Besides, I placed him on his throne; I honour myself in him!"

The earl's stature dilated as he spoke the last sentence, and his hand rested on his dagger hilt. He resumed, with the same daring and incautious candour that stamped his dauntless, soldier-like nature, "God hath given me no son. Isabel of Warwick had been a mate for William the Norman; and my grandson, if heir to his grandsire's soul, should have ruled from the throne of England over the realms of Charlemagne! But it hath pleased Him whom the Christian knight alone bows to without shame, to order otherwise. So be it. I forgot my just pretensions,—

forgot my blood, and counselled the king to strengthen his throne with the alliance of Louis XI. He rejected the Princess Bona of Savoy, to marry widow Elizabeth Gray; I sorrowed for his sake, and forgave the slight to my counsels. At his prayer I followed the train of his queen, and hushed the proud hearts of our barons to obeisance. But since then, this Dame Woodville, whom I queened, if her husband mated, must dispute this roiaulme with mine and me,—a Nevile, nowadays, must vail his plume to a Woodville! And not the great barons whom it will suit Edward's policy to win from the Lancastrians—not the Exeters and the Somersets—but the craven varlets and lackeys and dross of the camp—false alike to Henry and to Edward—are to be fondled into lordships and dandled into power. Young man, I am speaking hotly—Richard Nevile never lies nor conceals; but I am speaking to a kinsman, am I not? Thou hearest,—thou wilt not repeat?"

"Sooner would I pluck forth my tongue by the roots."

"Enough!" returned the earl, with a pleased smile. "When I come from France, I will speak more to thee. Meanwhile be courteous to all men, servile to none. Now to the king."

So speaking, he shook back his surcoat, drew his cap over his brow, and passed to the broad stairs, at the foot of which fifty rowers, with their badges on their shoulders, waited in the huge barge, gilt richly at prow and stern, and with an awning of silk, wrought with the earl's arms and cognizance. As they pushed off, six musicians, placed towards the helm, began a slow and half

Eastern march, which, doubtless, some crusader of the Temple had brought from the cymbals and trumps of Palestine.

CHAPTER II. KING EDWARD THE FOURTH

The Tower of London, more consecrated to associations of gloom and blood than those of gayety and splendour, was, nevertheless, during the reign of Edward IV., the seat of a gallant and gorgeous court. That king, from the first to the last so dear to the people of London, made it his principal residence when in his metropolis; and its ancient halls and towers were then the scene of many a brawl and galliard. As Warwick's barge now approached its huge walls, rising from the river, there was much that might either animate or awe, according to the mood of the spectator. The king's barge, with many lesser craft reserved for the use of the courtiers, gay with awnings and streamers and painting and gilding, lay below the wharfs, not far from the gate of St. Thomas, now called the Traitor's Gate. On the walk raised above the battlemented wall of the inner ward, not only paced the sentries, but there dames and knights were inhaling the noonday breezes, and the gleam of their rich dresses of cloth-of-gold glanced upon the eye at frequent intervals from tower to tower. Over the vast round turret, behind the Traitor's Gate, now called "The Bloody Tower," floated cheerily in the light wind the royal banner. Near the Lion's Tower, two or three of the keepers of the menagerie, in the king's livery, were leading forth, by a strong chain, the huge white bear that made one of

the boasts of the collection, and was an especial favourite with the king and his brother Richard. The sheriffs of London were bound to find this grisly minion his chain and his cord, when he deigned to amuse himself with bathing or "fishing" in the river; and several boats, filled with gape-mouthed passengers, lay near the wharf, to witness the diversions of Bruin. These folks set up a loud shout of—"A Warwick! a Warwick!" "The stout earl, and God bless him!" as the gorgeous barge shot towards the fortress. The earl acknowledged their greeting by vailing his plumed cap; and passing the keepers with a merry allusion to their care of his own badge, and a friendly compliment to the grunting bear, he stepped ashore, followed by his kinsman. Now, however, he paused a moment; and a more thoughtful shade passed over his countenance, as, glancing his eye carelessly aloft towards the standard of King Edward, he caught sight of the casement in the neighbouring tower, of the very room in which the sovereign of his youth, Henry the Sixth, was a prisoner, almost within hearing of the revels of his successor; then, with a quick stride, he hurried on through the vast court, and, passing the White Tower, gained the royal lodge. Here, in the great hall, he left his companion, amidst a group of squires and gentlemen, to whom he formally presented the Nevile as his friend and kinsman, and was ushered by the deputy-chamberlain (with an apology for the absence of his chief, the Lord Hastings, who had gone abroad to fly his falcon) into the small garden, where Edward was idling away the interval between the noon and evening meals,—repasts to which

already the young king inclined with that intemperate zest and ardour which he carried into all his pleasures, and which finally destroyed the handsomest person and embruted one of the most vigorous intellects of the age.

The garden, if bare of flowers, supplied their place by the various and brilliant-coloured garbs of the living beauties assembled on its straight walks and smooth sward. Under one of those graceful cloisters, which were the taste of the day, and had been recently built and gayly decorated, the earl was stopped in his path by a group of ladies playing at closheys (ninepins) of ivory; [Narrative of Louis of Bruges, Lord Grauthuse. Edited by Sir F. Madden, "Archaelogia," 1836.] and one of these fair dames, who excelled the rest in her skill, had just bowled down the central or crowned pin,—the king of the closheys. This lady, no less a person than Elizabeth, the Queen of England, was then in her thirty-sixth year,—ten years older than her lord; but the peculiar fairness and delicacy of her complexion still preserved to her beauty the aspect and bloom of youth. From a lofty headgear, embroidered with fleur-de-lis, round which wreathed a light diadem of pearls, her hair, of the pale yellow considered then the perfection of beauty, flowed so straight and so shining down her shoulders, almost to the knees, that it seemed like a mantle of gold. The baudekin stripes (blue and gold) of her tunic attested her royalty. The blue courtpie of satin was bordered with ermine, and the sleeves, sitting close to an arm of exquisite contour, shone with seed pearls. Her features were straight and

regular, yet would have been insipid, but for an expression rather of cunning than intellect; and the high arch of her eyebrows, with a slight curve downward of a mouth otherwise beautiful, did not improve the expression, by an addition of something supercilious and contemptuous, rather than haughty or majestic.

"My lord of Warwick," said Elizabeth, pointing to the fallen closhey, "what would my enemies say if they heard I had toppled down the king?"

"They would content themselves with asking which of your Grace's brothers you would place in his stead," answered the hardy earl, unable to restrain the sarcasm.

The queen blushed, and glanced round her ladies with an eye which never looked direct or straight upon its object, but wandered sidelong with a furtive and stealthy expression, that did much to obtain for her the popular character of falseness and self-seeking. Her displeasure was yet more increased by observing the ill-concealed smile which the taunt had called forth.

"Nay, my lord," she said, after a short pause, "we value the peace of our roiaulme too much for so high an ambition. Were we to make a brother even the prince of the closheys, we should disappoint the hopes of a Nevile."

The earl disdained pursuing the war of words, and answering coldly, "The Neviles are more famous for making ingrates than asking favours. I leave your Highness to the closheys"—turned away, and strode towards the king, who, at the opposite end of the garden, was reclining on a bench beside a lady, in whose ear,

to judge by her downcast and blushing cheek, he was breathing no unwelcome whispers.

"Mort-Dieu!" muttered the earl, who was singularly exempt, himself, from the amorous follies of the day, and eyed them with so much contempt that it often obscured his natural downright penetration into character, and never more than when it led him afterwards to underrate the talents of Edward IV.,—"Mort-Dieu! if, an hour before the battle of Towton, some wizard had shown me in his glass this glimpse of the gardens of the Tower, that giglet for a queen, and that squire of dames for a king, I had not slain my black destrier (poor Malech!), that I might conquer or die for Edward Earl of March."

"But see!" said the lady, looking up from the enamoured and conquering eyes of the king, "art thou not ashamed, my lord? —the grim earl comes to chide thee for thy faithlessness to thy queen, whom he loves so well."

"Pasque-Dieu! as my cousin Louis of France says or swears," answered the king, with an evident petulance in his altered voice, "I would that Warwick could be only worn with one's armour! I would as lief try to kiss through my vizor as hear him talk of glory and Towton, and King John and poor Edward II., because I am not always in mail. Go! leave us, sweet bonnibel! we must brave the bear alone!" The lady inclined her head, drew her hood round her face, and striking into the contrary path from that in which Warwick was slowly striding, gained the group round the queen, whose apparent freedom from jealousy, the consequence

of cold affections and prudent calculation, made one principal cause of the empire she held over the powerful mind, but the indolent temper, of the gay and facile Edward.

The king rose as Warwick now approached him; and the appearance of these two eminent persons was in singular contrast. Warwick, though richly and even gorgeously attired, —nay, with all the care which in that age was considered the imperative duty a man of station and birth owed to himself,— held in lofty disdain whatever vagary of custom tended to cripple the movements or womanize the man. No loose flowing robes, no shoon half a yard long, no flaunting tawdriness of fringe and aiglet, characterized the appearance of the baron, who, even in peace, gave his address a half-martial fashion.

But Edward, who, in common with all the princes of the House of York, carried dress to a passion, had not only reintroduced many of the most effeminate modes in vogue under William the Red King, but added to them whatever could tend to impart an almost oriental character to the old Norman garb. His gown (a womanly garment which had greatly superseded, with men of the highest rank, not only the mantle but the surcoat) flowed to his heels, trimmed with ermine, and broidered with large flowers of crimson wrought upon cloth-of-gold. Over this he wore a tippet of ermine, and a collar or necklace of uncut jewels set in filigree gold; the nether limbs were, it is true, clad in the more manly fashion of tight-fitting hosen, but the folds of the gown, as the day was somewhat fresh, were drawn

around so as to conceal the only part of the dress which really betokened the male sex. To add to this unwarlike attire, Edward's locks of a rich golden colour, and perfuming the whole air with odours, flowed not in curls, but straight to his shoulders, and the cheek of the fairest lady in his court might have seemed less fair beside the dazzling clearness of a complexion at once radiant with health and delicate with youth. Yet, in spite of all this effeminacy, the appearance of Edward IV. was not effeminate. From this it was preserved, not only by a stature little less commanding than that of Warwick himself, and of great strength and breadth of shoulder, but also by features, beautiful indeed, but pre-eminently masculine,—large and bold in their outline, and evincing by their expression all the gallantry and daring characteristic of the hottest soldier, next to Warwick, and without any exception the ablest captain, of the age.

"And welcome,—a merry welcome, dear Warwick, and cousin mine," said Edward, as Warwick slightly bent his proud knee to his king; "your brother, Lord Montagu, has but left us. Would that our court had the same, joyaunce for you as for him."

"Dear and honoured my liege," answered Warwick, his brow smoothing at once,—for his affectionate though hasty and irritable nature was rarely proof against the kind voice and winning smile of his young sovereign,—"could I ever serve you at the court as I can with the people, you would not complain that John of Montagu was a better courtier than Richard of Warwick. But each to his calling. I depart to-morrow for Calais, and thence

to King Louis. And, surely, never envoy or delegate had better chance to be welcome than one empowered to treat of an alliance that will bestow on a prince deserving, I trust, his fortunes, the sister of the bravest sovereign in Christian Europe."

"Now, out on thy flattery, my cousin; though I must needs own I provoked it by my complaint of thy courtiership. But thou hast learned only half thy business, good Warwick; and it is well Margaret did not hear thee. Is not the prince of France more to be envied for winning a fair lady than having a fortunate soldier for his brother-in-law?"

"My liege," replied Warwick, smiling, "thou knowest I am a poor judge of a lady's fair cheek, though indifferently well skilled as to the valour of a warrior's stout arm. Algates, the Lady Margaret is indeed worthy in her excellent beauties to become the mother of brave men."

"And that is all we can wring from thy stern lip, man of iron? Well, that must content us. But to more serious matters." And the king, leaning his hand on the earl's arm, and walking with him slowly to and fro the terrace, continued: "Knowest thou not, Warwick, that this French alliance, to which thou hast induced us, displeases sorely our good traders of London?"

"Mort-Dieu!" returned Warwick, bluntly, "and what business have the flat-caps with the marriage of a king's sister? Is it for them to breathe garlic on the alliances of Bourbons and Plantagenets? Faugh! You have spoiled them, good my lord king, —you have spoiled them by your condescensions. Henry IV.

staled not his majesty to consultations with the mayor of his city. Henry V. gave the knighthood of the hath to the heroes of Agincourt, not to the vendors of cloth and spices."

"Ah, my poor knights of the Bath!" said Edward, good-humouredly, "wilt thou never let that sore scar quietly over? Ownest thou not that the men had their merits?"

"What the merits were, I weet not," answered the earl, —"unless, peradventure, their wives were comely and young."

"Thou wrongest me, Warwick," said the king, carelessly; "Dame Cook was awry, Dame Philips a grandmother, Dame Jocelyn had lost her front teeth, and Dame Waer saw seven ways at once! But thou forgettest, man, the occasion of those honours, —the eve before Elizabeth was crowned,—and it was policy to make the city of London have a share in her honours. As to the rest," pursued the king, earnestly and with dignity, "I and my House have owed much to London. When the peers of England, save thee and thy friends, stood aloof from my cause, London was ever loyal and true. Thou seest not, my poor Warwick, that these burgesses are growing up into power by the decline of the orders above them. And if the sword is the monarch's appeal for his right, he must look to contented and honoured industry for his buckler in peace. This is policy,—policy, Warwick; and Louis XI. will tell thee the same truths, harsh though they grate in a warrior's ear."

The earl bowed his haughty head, and answered shortly, but with a touching grace, "Be it ever thine, noble king, to rule as

it likes thee, and mine to defend with my blood even what I approve not with my brain! But if thou doubtest the wisdom of this alliance, it is not too late yet. Let me dismiss my following, and cross not the seas. Unless thy heart is with the marriage, the ties I would form are threads and cobwebs."

"Nay," returned Edward, irresolutely: "in these great state matters thy wit is elder than mine; but men do say the Count of Charolois is a mighty lord; and the alliance with Burgundy will be more profitable to staple and mart."

"Then, in God's name, so conclude it!" said the earl, hastily, but with so dark a fire in his eyes that Edward, who was observing him, changed countenance; "only ask me not, my liege, to advance such a marriage. The Count of Charolois knows me as his foe—shame were mine did I shun to say where I love, where I hate. That proud dullard once slighted me when we met at his father's court, and the wish next to my heart is to pay back my affront with my battle-axe. Give thy sister to the heir of Burgundy, and forgive me if I depart to my castle of Middleham."

Edward, stung by the sharpness of this reply, was about to answer as became his majesty of king, when Warwick more deliberately resumed: "Yet think well; Henry of Windsor is thy prisoner, but his cause lives in Margaret and his son. There is but one power in Europe that can threaten thee with aid to the Lancastrians; that power is France. Make Louis thy friend and ally, and thou givest peace to thy life and thy lineage; make Louis thy foe, and count on plots and stratagems and treason, uneasy

days and sleepless nights. Already thou hast lost one occasion to secure that wiliest and most restless of princes, in rejecting the hand of the Princess Bona. Happily, this loss now can be retrieved. But alliance with Burgundy is war with France,—war more deadly because Louis is a man who declares it not; a war carried on by intrigue and bribe, by spies and minions, till some disaffection ripens the hour when young Edward of Lancaster shall land on thy coasts, with the Oriflamme and the Red Rose, with French soldiers and English malcontents. Wouldst thou look to Burgundy for help?—Burgundy will have enough to guard its own frontiers from the gripe of Louis the Sleepless. Edward, my king, my pupil in arms, Edward, my loved, my honoured liege, forgive Richard Nevile his bluntness, and let not his faults stand in bar of his counsels."

"You are right, as you are ever, safeguard of England, and pillar of my state," said the king, frankly, and pressing the arm he still held. "Go to France and settle all as thou wilt."

Warwick bent low and kissed the hand of his sovereign. "And," said he, with a slight, but a sad smile, "when I am gone, my liege will not repent, will not misthink me, will not listen to my foes, nor suffer merchant and mayor to sigh him back to the mechanics of Flanders?"

"Warwick, thou deemest ill of thy king's kingliness."

"Not of thy kingliness; but that same gracious quality of yielding to counsel which bows this proud nature to submission often makes me fear for thy firmness, when thy will is, won

through thy heart. And now, good my liege, forgive me one sentence more. Heaven forefend that I should stand in the way of thy princely favours. A king's countenance is a sun that should shine on all. But bethink thee well, the barons of England are a stubborn and haughty race; chafe not thy most puissant peers by too cold a neglect of their past services, and too lavish a largess to new men."

"Thou aimest at Elizabeth's kin," interrupted Edward, withdrawing his hand from his minister's arm, "and I tell thee once for all times, that I would rather sink again to mine earldom of March, with a subject's right to honour where he loves, than wear crown and wield sceptre without a king's unquestioned prerogative to ennoble the line and blood of one he has deemed worthy of his throne. As for the barons, with whose wrath thou threatenest me, I banish them not. If they go in gloom from my court, why, let them chafe themselves sleek again."

"King Edward," said Warwick, moodily, "tried services merit not this contempt. It is not as the kith of the queen that I regret to see lands and honours lavished upon men rooted so newly to the soil that the first blast of the war-trump will scatter their greenness to the winds; but what sorrows me is to mark those who have fought against thee preferred to the stout loyalty that braved block and field for thy cause. Look round thy court; where are the men of bloody York and victorious Towton?—unrequited, sullen in their strongholds, begirt with their yeomen and retainers. Thou standest—thou, the heir of York—almost alone (save where the

Neviles—whom one day thy court will seek also to disgrace and discard—vex their old comrades in arms by their defection)—thou standest almost alone among the favourites and minions of Lancaster. Is there no danger in proving to men that to have served thee is discredit, to have warred against thee is guerdon and grace?"

"Enough of this, cousin," replied the king, with an effort which preserved his firmness. "On this head we cannot agree. Take what else thou wilt of royalty,—make treaties and contract marriages, establish peace or proclaim war; but trench not on my sweetest prerogative to give and to forgive. And now, wilt thou tarry and sup with us? The ladies grow impatient of a commune that detains from their eyes the stateliest knight since the Round Table was chopped into fire-wood."

"No, my liege," said Warwick, whom flattery of this sort rather angered than soothed, "I have much yet to prepare. I leave your Highness to fairer homage and more witching counsels than mine." So saying, he kissed the king's hand, and was retiring, when he remembered his kinsman, whose humble interests in the midst of more exciting topics he had hitherto forgotten, and added, "May I crave, since you are so merciful to the Lancastrians, one grace for my namesake,—a Nevile whose father repented the side he espoused, a son of Sir Guy of Arsdale?"

"Ah," said the king, smiling maliciously, "it pleaseth us much to find that it is easier to the warm heart of our cousin Warwick

to preach sententiaries of sternness to his king than to enforce the same by his own practice!"

"You misthink me, sire. I ask not that Marmaduke Nevile should supplant his superiors and elders; I ask not that he should be made baron and peer; I ask only that, as a young gentleman who hath taken no part himself in the wars, and whose father repented his error, your Grace should strengthen your following by an ancient name and a faithful servant. But I should have remembered me that his name of Nevile would have procured him a taunt in the place of advancement."

"Saw man ever so froward a temper?" cried Edward, not without reason. "Why, Warwick, thou art as shrewish to a jest as a woman to advice. Thy kinsman's fortunes shall be my care. Thou sayest thou hast enemies,—I weet not who they be. But to show what I think of them, I make thy namesake and client a gentleman of my chamber. When Warwick is false to Edward, let him think that Warwick's kinsman wears a dagger within reach of the king's heart day and night."

This speech was made with so noble and touching a kindness of voice and manner, that the earl, thoroughly subdued, looked at his sovereign with moistened eyes, and only trusting himself to say,—"Edward, thou art king, knight, gentleman, and soldier; and I verily trow that I love thee best when my petulant zeal makes me anger thee most,"—turned away with evident emotion, and passing the queen and her ladies with a lowlier homage than that with which he had before greeted them, left the garden.

Edward's eye followed him musingly. The frank expression of his face vanished, and with the deep breath of a man who is throwing a weight from his heart, he muttered,—

"He loves me,—yes; but will suffer no one else to love me! This must end some day. I am weary of the bondage." And sauntering towards the ladies, he listened in silence, but not apparently in displeasure, to his queen's sharp sayings on the imperious mood and irritable temper of the iron-handed builder of his throne.

CHAPTER III. THE ANTECHAMBER

As Warwick passed the door that led from the garden, he brushed by a young man, the baudekin stripes of whose vest announced his relationship to the king, and who, though far less majestic than Edward, possessed sufficient of family likeness to pass for a very handsome and comely person; but his countenance wanted the open and fearless expression which gave that of the king so masculine and heroic a character. The features were smaller, and less clearly cut, and to a physiognomical observer there was much that was weak and irresolute in the light blue eyes and the smiling lips which never closed firmly over the teeth. He did not wear the long gown then so much in vogue, but his light figure was displayed to advantage by a vest, fitting it exactly, descending half-way down the thigh, and trimmed at the border and the collar with ermine. The sleeves of the doublet were slit, so as to show the white lawn beneath, and adorned with aiglets and knots of gold.

Over the left arm hung a rich jacket of furs and velvet, something like that adopted by the modern hussar. His hat, or cap, was high and tiara-like, with a single white plume, and the ribbon of the Garter bound his knee. Though the dress of this personage was thus far less effeminate than Edward's, the effect of his appearance was infinitely more so,—partly, perhaps, from a less muscular frame, and partly from his extreme youth; for

George Duke of Clarence was then, though initiated not only in the gayeties, but all the intrigues of the court, only in his eighteenth year. Laying his hand, every finger of which sparkled with jewels, on the earl's shoulder—"Hold!" said the young prince, in a whisper, "a word in thy ear, noble Warwick!"

The earl, who, next to Edward, loved Clarence the most of his princely House, and who always found the latter as docile as the other (when humour or affection seized him) was intractable, relaxed into a familiar smile at the duke's greeting, and suffered the young prince to draw him aside from the groups of courtiers with whom the chamber was filled, to the leaning-places (as they were called) of a large mullion window. In the mean while, as they thus conferred, the courtiers interchanged looks, and many an eye of fear and hate was directed towards the stately form of the earl. For these courtiers were composed principally of the kindred or friends of the queen, and though they dared not openly evince the malice with which they retorted Warwick's lofty scorn and undisguised resentment at their new fortunes, they ceased not to hope for his speedy humiliation and disgrace, reeking little what storm might rend the empire, so that it uprooted the giant oak, which still in some measure shaded their sunlight and checked their growth. True, however, that amongst these were mingled, though rarely, men of a hardier stamp and nobler birth,—some few of the veteran friends of the king's great father; and these, keeping sternly and loftily aloof from the herd, regarded Warwick with the same almost reverential and yet

affectionate admiration which he inspired amongst the yeomen, peasants, and mechanics,—for in that growing but quiet struggle of the burgesses, as it will often happen in more civilized times, the great Aristocracy and the Populace were much united in affection, though with very different objects; and the Middle and Trading Class, with whom the earl's desire for French alliances and disdain of commerce had much weakened his popularity, alone shared not the enthusiasm of their countrymen for the lion-hearted minister.

Nevertheless, it must here be owned that the rise of Elizabeth's kindred introduced a far more intellectual, accomplished, and literary race into court favour than had for many generations flourished in so uncongenial a soil: and in this ante-chamber feud, the pride of education and mind retaliated with juster sarcasm the pride of birth and sinews.

Amongst those opposed to the earl, and fit in all qualities to be the head of the new movement,—if the expressive modern word be allowed us,—stood at that moment in the very centre of the chamber Anthony Woodville, in right of the rich heiress he had married the Lord Scales. As, when some hostile and formidable foe enters the meads where the flock grazes, the gazing herd gather slowly round their leader, so grouped the queen's faction slowly, and by degrees, round this accomplished nobleman, at the prolonged sojourn of Warwick.

"Gramercy!" said the Lord Scales, in a somewhat affected intonation of voice, "the conjunction of the bear and the young

lion is a parlous omen, for the which I could much desire we had a wise astrologer's reading."

"It is said," observed one of the courtiers, "that the Duke of Clarence much affects either the lands or the person of the Lady Isabel."

"A passably fair damozel," returned Anthony, "though a thought or so too marked and high in her lineaments, and wholly unlettered, no doubt; which were a pity, for George of Clarence has some pretty taste in the arts and poesies. But as Occleve hath it—

'Gold, silver, jewel, cloth, beddyng, array,'

would make gentle George amorous of a worse-featured face than high-nosed Isabel; 'strange to spell or rede,' as I would wager my best destrier to a tailor's hobby, the damozel surely is."

"Notest thou yon gaudy popinjay?" whispered the Lord of St. John to one of his Towton comrades, as, leaning against the wall, they overheard the sarcasms of Anthony, and the laugh of the courtiers, who glassed their faces and moods to his. "Is the time so out of joint that Master Anthony Woodville can vent his scurrile japes on the heiress of Salisbury and Warwick in the king's chamber?"

"And prate of spelling and reading as if they were the cardinal virtues?" returned his sullen companion. "By my halidame, I have two fair daughters at home who will lack husbands, I trow,

for they can only spin and be chaste,—two maidenly gifts out of bloom with the White Rose."

In the mean while, unwitting, or contemptuous, of the attention they excited, Warwick and Clarence continued yet more earnestly to confer.

"No, George, no," said the earl, who, as the descendant of John of Gaunt, and of kin to the king's blood, maintained, in private, a father's familiarity with the princes of York, though on state occasions, and when in the hearing of others, he sedulously marked his deference for their rank—"no, George, calm and steady thy hot mettle, for thy brother's and England's sake. I grieve as much as thou to hear that the queen does not spare even thee in her froward and unwomanly peevishness. But there is a glamour in this, believe me, that must melt away soon or late, and our kingly Edward recover his senses."

"Glamour!" said Clarence; "thinkest thou, indeed, that her mother, Jacquetta, has bewitched the king? One word of thy belief in such spells, spread abroad amongst the people, would soon raise the same storm that blew Eleanor Cobham from Duke Humphrey's bed, along London streets in her penance-shift."

"Troth," said the earl, indifferently, "I leave such grave questions as these to prelate and priest; the glamour I spoke of is that of a fair face over a wanton heart; and Edward is not so steady a lover that this should never wear out."

"It amates me much, noble cousin, that thou leavest the court in this juncture. The queen's heart is with Burgundy, the city's

hate is with France; and when once thou art gone, I fear that the king will be teased into mating my sister with the Count of Charolois."

"Ho!" exclaimed Warwick, with an oath so loud that it rung through the chamber, and startled every ear that heard it. Then, perceiving his indiscretion, he lowered his tone into a deep and hollow whisper, and griped the prince's arm almost fiercely as he spoke.

"Could Edward so dishonour my embassy, so palter and juggle with my faith, so flout me in the eyes of Christendom, I would—I would—" he paused, and relaxed his hold of the duke, and added, with an altered voice—"I would leave his wife and his lemans, and yon things of silk, whom he makes peers (that is easy) but cannot make men, to guard his throne from the grandson of Henry V. But thy fears, thy zeal, thy love for me, dearest prince and cousin, make thee misthink Edward's kingly honour and knightly faith. I go with the sure knowledge that by alliance with France I shut the House of Lancaster from all hope of this roiaulme."

"Hadst thou not better, at least, see my sister Margaret? She has a high spirit, and she thinks thou mightest, at least, woo her assent, and tell her of the good gifts of her lord to be!"

"Are the daughters of York spoiled to this by the manners and guise of a court, in which beshrew me if I well know which the woman and whom the man? Is it not enough to give peace to broad England, root to her brother's stem? Is it not enough

to wed the son of a king, the descendant of Charlemagne and Saint Louis? Must I go bonnet in hand and simper forth the sleek personals of the choice of her kith and House; swear the bridegroom's side-locks are as long as King Edward's, and that he bows with the grace of Master Anthony Woodville? Tell her this thyself, gentle Clarence, if thou wilt: all Warwick could say would but anger her ear, if she be the maid thou bespeakest her."

The Duke of Clarence hesitated a moment, and then, colouring slightly, said, "If, then, the daughter's hand be the gift of her kith alone, shall I have thy favour when the Lady Isabel—"

"George," interrupted Warwick, with a fond and paternal smile, "when we have made England safe, there is nothing the son of Richard of York can ask of Warwick in vain. Alas!" he added mournfully, "thy father and mine were united in the same murtherous death, and I think they will smile down on us from their seats in heaven when a happier generation cements that bloody union with a marriage bond!"

Without waiting for further parlance, the earl turned suddenly away, threw his cap on his towering head, and strode right through the centre of the whispering courtiers, who shrunk, louting low, from his haughty path, to break into a hubbub of angry exclamations or sarcastic jests at his unmannerly bearing, as his black plume disappeared in the arch of the vaulted door.

While such the scene in the interior chambers of the palace, Marmaduke, with the frank simpleness which belonged to his youth and training, had already won much favour and popularity,

and he was laughing loud with a knot of young men by the shovel-board when Warwick re-entered. The earl, though so disliked by the courtiers more immediately about the person of the king, was still the favourite of the less elevated knights and gentry who formed the subordinate household and retainers; and with these, indeed, his manner, so proud and arrogant to his foes and rivals, relapsed at once into the ease of the manly and idolized chief. He was pleased to see the way made by his young namesake, and lifting his cap, as he nodded to the group and leaned his arm upon Marmaduke's shoulder, he said, "Thanks, and hearty thanks, to you, knights and gentles, for your courteous reception of an old friend's young son. I have our king's most gracious permission to see him enrolled one of the court you grace. Ah, Master Falconer, and how does thy worthy uncle?—braver knight never trod. What young gentleman is yonder?—a new face and a manly one; by your favour, present him. The son of a Savile! Sir, on my return, be not the only Savile who shuns our table of Warwick Court. Master Dacres, commend me to the lady, your mother; she and I have danced many a measure together in the old time,—we all live again in our children. Good den to you, sirs. Marmaduke, follow me to the office,—you lodge in the palace. You are gentleman to the most gracious and, if Warwick lives, to the most puissant of Europe's sovereigns. I shall see Montagu at home; he shall instruct thee in thy duties, and requite thee for all discourtesies on the archery-ground."

BOOK III. IN WHICH THE HISTORY PASSES FROM THE KING'S COURT TO THE STUDENT'S CELL, AND RELATES THE PERILS THAT BEFELL A PHILOSOPHER FOR MEDDLING WITH THE AFFAIRS OF THE WORLD

CHAPTER I. THE SOLITARY SAGE AND THE SOLITARY MAID

While such the entrance of Marmaduke Nevile into a court, that if far less intellectual and refined than those of later days, was yet more calculated to dazzle the fancy, to sharpen the wit, and to charm the senses,—for round the throne of Edward IV. chivalry was magnificent, intrigue restless, and pleasure ever on the wing,—Sibyll had ample leisure in her solitary home to muse over the incidents that had preceded the departure of the young guest. Though she had rejected Marmaduke's proffered

love, his tone, so suddenly altered, his abrupt, broken words and confusion, his farewell, so soon succeeding his passionate declaration, could not fail to wound that pride of woman which never sleeps till modesty is gone. But this made the least cause of the profound humiliation which bowed down her spirit. The meaning taunt conveyed in the rhyme of the tymbesteres pierced her to the quick; the calm, indifferent smile of the stranger, as he regarded her, the beauty of the dame he attended, woke mingled and contrary feelings, but those of jealousy were perhaps the keenest: and in the midst of all she started to ask herself if indeed she had suffered her vain thoughts to dwell too tenderly upon one from whom the vast inequalities of human life must divide her evermore. What to her was his indifference? Nothing,—yet had she given worlds to banish that careless smile from her remembrance.

Shrinking at last from the tyranny of thoughts till of late unknown, her eye rested upon the gipsire which Alwyn had sent her by the old servant. The sight restored to her the holy recollection of her father, the sweet joy of having ministered to his wants. She put up the little treasure, intending to devote it all to Warner; and after bathing her heavy eyes, that no sorrow of hers might afflict the student, she passed with a listless step into her father's chamber.

There is, to the quick and mercurial spirits of the young, something of marvellous and preternatural in that life within life, which the strong passion of science and genius forms and feeds,

—that passion so much stronger than love, and so much more self-dependent; which asks no sympathy, leans on no kindred heart; which lives alone in its works and fancies, like a god amidst his creations.

The philosopher, too, had experienced a great affliction since they met last. In the pride of his heart he had designed to show Marmaduke the mystic operations of his model, which had seemed that morning to open into life; and when the young man was gone, and he made the experiment alone, alas! he found that new progress but involved him in new difficulties. He had gained the first steps in the gigantic creation of modern days, and he was met by the obstacle that baffled so long the great modern sage. There was the cylinder, there the boiler; yet, work as he would, the steam failed to keep the cylinder at work. And now, patiently as the spider re-weaves the broken web, his untiring ardour was bent upon constructing a new cylinder of other materials. "Strange," he said to himself, "that the heat of the mover aids not the movement;" and so, blundering near the truth, he laboured on.

Sibyll, meanwhile, seated herself abstractedly on a heap of fagots piled in the corner, and seemed busy in framing characters on the dusty floor with the point of her tiny slipper. So fresh and fair and young she seemed, in that murky atmosphere, that strange scene, and beside that worn man, that it might have seemed to a poet as if the youngest of the Graces were come to visit Mulciber at his forge.

The man pursued his work, the girl renewed her dreams, the dark evening hour gradually stealing over both. The silence was unbroken, for the forge and the model were now at rest, save by the grating of Adam's file upon the metal, or by some ejaculation of complacency now and then vented by the enthusiast. So, apart from the many-noised, gaudy, babbling world without, even in the midst of that bloody, turbulent, and semi-barbarous time, went on (the one neglected and unknown, the other loathed and hated) the two movers of the ALL that continues the airy life of the Beautiful from age to age,—the Woman's dreaming Fancy and the Man's active Genius.

CHAPTER II. MASTER ADAM WARNER GROWS A MISER, AND BEHAVES SHAMEFULLY

For two or three days nothing disturbed the outward monotony of the recluse's household. Apparently all had settled back as before the advent of the young cavalier. But Sibyll's voice was not heard singing, as of old, when she passed the stairs to her father's room. She sat with him in his work no less frequently and regularly than before; but her childish spirits no longer broke forth in idle talk or petulant movements, vexing the good man from his absorption and his toils. The little cares and anxieties, which had formerly made up so much of Sibyll's day by forethought of provision for the morrow, were suspended; for the money transmitted to her by Alwyn in return for the emblazoned manuscripts was sufficient to supply their modest wants for months to come. Adam, more and more engrossed in his labours, did not appear to perceive the daintier plenty of his board, nor the purchase of some small comforts unknown for years. He only said one morning, "It is strange, girl, that as that gathers in life (and he pointed to the model), it seems already to provide, to my fantasy, the luxuries it will one day give to us all in truth. Methought my very bed last night seemed wondrous easy, and the coverings were warmer, for I woke not with the cold."

"Ah," thought the sweet daughter, smiling through moist eyes, "while my cares can smooth thy barren path through life, why should I cark and pine?"

Their solitude was now occasionally broken in the evenings by the visits of Nicholas Alwyn. The young goldsmith was himself not ignorant of the simpler mathematics; he had some talent for invention, and took pleasure in the construction of horologes, though, properly speaking, not a part of his trade. His excuse for his visits was the wish to profit by Warner's mechanical knowledge; but the student was so rapt in his own pursuits, that he gave but little instruction to his visitor. Nevertheless Alwyn was satisfied, for he saw Sibyll. He saw her in the most attractive phase of her character,—the loving, patient, devoted daughter; and the view of her household virtues affected more and more his honest English heart. But, ever awkward and embarrassed, he gave no vent to his feelings. To Sibyll he spoke little, and with formal constraint; and the girl, unconscious of her conquest, was little less indifferent to his visits than her abstracted father.

But all at once Adam woke to a sense of the change that had taken place; all at once he caught scent of gold, for his works were brought to a pause for want of some finer and more costly materials than the coins in his own possession (the remnant of Marmaduke's gift) enabled him to purchase. He had stolen out at dusk, unknown to Sibyll, and lavished the whole upon the model; but in vain! The model in itself was, indeed, completed; his invention had mastered the difficulty that it had

encountered. But Adam had complicated the contrivance by adding to it experimental proofs of the agency it was intended to exercise. It was necessary in that age, if he were to convince others, to show more than the principle of his engine,—he must show also something of its effects; turn a mill without wind or water, or set in motion some mimic vehicle without other force than that the contrivance itself supplied. And here, at every step, new obstacles arose. It was the misfortune to science in those days, not only that all books and mathematical instruments were enormously dear, but that the students, still struggling into light, through the glorious delusions of alchemy and mysticism, imagined that, even in simple practical operations, there were peculiar virtues in virgin gold and certain precious stones. A link in the process upon which Adam was engaged failed him; his ingenuity was baffled, his work stood still; and in poring again and again over the learned manuscripts—alas! now lost—in which certain German doctors had sought to explain the pregnant hints of Roger Bacon, he found it inculcated that the axle of a certain wheel must be composed of a diamond. Now, in truth, it so happened that Adam's contrivance, which (even without the appliances which were added in illustration of the theory) was infinitely more complicated than modern research has found necessary, did not even require the wheel in question, much less the absent diamond; it happened, also, that his understanding, which, though so obtuse in common life, was in these matters astonishingly clear, could not trace any

mathematical operations by which the diamond axle would in the least correct the difficulty that had suddenly started up; and yet the accursed diamond began to haunt him,—the German authority was so positive on the point, and that authority had in many respects been accurate. Nor was this all,—the diamond was to be no vulgar diamond; it was to be endowed, by talismanic skill, with certain properties and virtues; it was to be for a certain number of hours exposed to the rays of the full moon; it was to be washed in a primitive and wondrous elixir, the making of which consumed no little of the finest gold. This diamond was to be to the machine what the soul is to the body,—a glorious, all-pervading, mysterious principle of activity and life. Such were the dreams that obscured the cradle of infant science! And Adam, with all his reasoning powers, big lore in the hard truths of mathematics, was but one of the giant children of the dawn. The magnificent phrases and solemn promises of the mystic Germans got firm hold of his fancy. Night and day, waking or sleeping, the diamond, basking in the silence of the full moon, sparkled before his eyes. Meanwhile all was at a stand. In the very last steps of his discovery he was arrested. Then suddenly looking round for vulgar moneys to purchase the precious gem, and the materials for the soluble elixir, he saw that MONEY had been at work around him,—that he had been sleeping softly and faring sumptuously. He was seized with a divine rage. How had Sibyll dared to secrete from him this hoard; how presumed to waste upon the base body what might have so profited the

eternal mind? In his relentless ardour, in his sublime devotion and loyalty to his abstract idea, there was a devouring cruelty, of which this meek and gentle scholar was wholly unconscious. The grim iron model, like a Moloch, ate up all things,—health, life, love; and its jaws now opened for his child. He rose from his bed,—it was daybreak,—he threw on his dressing-robe, he strode into his daughter's room; the gray twilight came through the comfortless, curtainless casement, deep sunk into the wall. Adam did not pause to notice that the poor child, though she had provoked his anger by refitting his dismal chamber, had spent nothing in giving a less rugged frown to her own.

The scanty worm-worn furniture, the wretched pallet, the poor attire folded decently beside,—nothing save that inexpressible purity and cleanliness which, in the lowliest hovel, a pure and maiden mind gathers round it; nothing to distinguish the room of her whose childhood had passed in courts from the but of the meanest daughter of drudgery and toil! No,—he who had lavished the fortunes of his father and big child into the grave of his idea—no—he saw nothing of this self-forgetful penury—the diamond danced before him! He approached the bed; and oh! the contrast of that dreary room and peasant pallet to the delicate, pure, enchanting loveliness of the sleeping inmate. The scanty covering left partially exposed the snow-white neck and rounded shoulder; the face was pillowed upon the arm, in an infantine grace; the face was slightly flushed, and the fresh red lips parted into a smile,—for in her sleep the virgin dreamed,—

a happy dream! It was a sight to have touched a father's heart, to have stopped his footstep, and hushed his breath into prayer. And call not Adam hard—unnatural—that he was not then, as men far more harsh than he—for the father at that moment was not in his breast, the human man was gone—he himself, like his model, was a machine of iron!—his life was his one idea!

"Wake, child, wake!" he said, in a loud but hollow voice. "Where is the gold thou hast hidden from me? Wake! confess!"

Roused from her gracious dreams thus savagely, Sibyll started, and saw the eager, darkened face of her father. Its expression was peculiar and undefinable, for it was not threatening, angry, stern; there was a vacancy in the eyes, a strain in the features, and yet a wild, intense animation lighting and pervading all,—it was as the face of one walking in his sleep, and, at the first confusion of waking, Sibyll thought indeed that such was her father's state. But the impatience with which he shook the arm he grasped, and repeated, as he opened convulsively his other hand, "The gold, Sibyll, the gold! Why didst thou hide it from me?" speedily convinced her that her father's mind was under the influence of the prevailing malady that made all its weakness and all its strength.

"My poor father!" she said pityingly, "wilt thou not leave thyself the means whereby to keep strength and health for thine high hopes? Ah, Father, thy Sibyll only hoarded her poor gains for thee!"

"The gold!" said Adam, mechanically, but in a softer voice,

—"all—all thou hast! How didst thou get it,—how?"

"By the labours of these hands. Ah, do not frown on me!"

"Thou—the child of knightly fathers—thou labour!" said Adam, an instinct of his former state of gentle-born and high-hearted youth flashing from his eyes. "It was wrong in thee!"

"Dost thou not labour too?"

"Ay, but for the world. Well, the gold!"

Sibyll rose, and modestly throwing over her form the old mantle which lay on the pallet, passed to a corner of the room, and opening a chest, took from it the gipsire, and held it out to her father.

"If it please thee, dear and honoured sir, so be it; and Heaven prosper it in thy hands!"

Before Adam's clutch could close on the gipsire, a rude hand was laid on his shoulder, the gipsire was snatched from Sibyll, and the gaunt, half-clad form of old Madge interposed between the two.

"Eh, sir!" she said, in her shrill, cracked tone, "I thought when I heard your door open, and your step hurrying down, you were after no good deeds. Fie, master, fie! I have clung to you when all reviled, and when starvation within and foul words without made all my hire; for I ever thought you a good and mild man, though little better than stark wode. But, augh! to rob your child thus, to leave her to starve and pine! We old folks are used to it. Look round, look round! I remember this chamber, when ye first came to your father's hall. Saints of heaven! There stood

the brave bed all rustling with damask of silk; on those stone walls once hung fine arras of the Flemings,—a marriage gift to my lady from Queen Margaret, and a mighty show to see, and good for the soul's comforts, with Bible stories wrought on it. Eh, sir! don't you call to mind your namesake, Master Adam, in his brave scarlet hosen, and Madam Eve, in her bonny blue kirtle and laced courtpie? and now—now look round, I say, and see what you have brought your child to!"

"Hush! hush! Madge, bush!" cried Sibyll, while Adam gazed in evident perturbation and awakening shame at the intruder, turning his eyes round the room as she spoke, and heaving from time to time short, deep sighs.

"But I will not hush," pursued the old woman; "I will say my say, for I love ye both, and I loved my poor mistress who is dead and gone. Ah, sir, groan! it does you good. And now when this sweet damsel is growing up, now when you should think of saving a marriage dower for her (for no marriage where no pot boils), do you rend from her the little that she has drudged to gain!—She! Oh, out on your heart! And for what,—for what, sir? For the neighbours to set fire to your father's house, and the little ones to—"

"Forbear, woman!" cried Adam, in a voice of thunder; "forbear! Heavens!" And he waved his hand as he spoke, with so unexpected a majesty that Madge was awed into sudden silence, and, darting a look of compassion at Sibyll, she hobbled from the room. Adam stood motionless an instant; but when he felt

his child's soft arms round his neck, when he heard her voice struggling against tears, praying him not to heed the foolish words of the old servant,—to take—to take all, that it would be easy to gain more,—the ice of his philosophy melted at once; the man broke forth, and, clasping Sibyll to his heart, and kissing her cheek, her lips, her hands, he faltered out, "No! no! forgive me! Forgive thy cruel father! Much thought has maddened me, I think,—it has indeed! Poor child, poor Sibyll," and he stroked her cheek gently, and with a movement of pathetic pity—"poor child, thou art pale, and so slight and delicate! And this chamber —and thy loneliness—and—ah! my life hath been a curse to thee, yet I meant to bequeath it a boon to all!

"Father, dear father, speak not thus. You break my heart. Here, here, take the gold—or rather, for thou must not venture out to insult again, let me purchase with it what thou needest. Tell me, trust me—"

"No!" exclaimed Adam, with that hollow energy by which a man resolves to impose restraint on himself; "I will not, for all that science ever achieved,—I will not lay this shame on my soul! Spend this gold on thyself, trim this room, buy thee raiment,—all that thou needest,—I order, I command it! And hark thee, if thou gettest more, hide it from me, hide it well; men's desires are foul tempters! I never knew, in following wisdom, that I had a vice. I wake and find myself a miser and a robber!"

And with these words he fled from the girl's chamber, gained his own, and locked the door.

CHAPTER III. A STRANGE VISITOR.—ALL AGES OF THE WORLD BREED WORLD-BETTERS

Sibyll, whose soft heart bled for her father, and who now reproached herself for having concealed from him her little hoard, began hastily to dress that she might seek him out, and soothe the painful feelings which the honest rudeness of Madge had aroused. But before her task was concluded, there pealed a loud knock at the outer door. She heard the old housekeeper's quivering voice responding to a loud clear tone; and presently Madge herself ascended the stairs to Warner's room, followed by a man whom Sibyll instantly recognized—for he was not one easily to be forgotten—as their protector from the assault of the mob. She drew back hastily as he passed her door, and in some wonder and alarm awaited the descent of Madge. That venerable personage having with some difficulty induced her master to open his door and admit the stranger, came straight into her young lady's chamber. "Cheer up, cheer up, sweetheart," said the old woman; "I think better days will shine soon; for the honest man I have admitted says he is but come to tell Master Warner something that will redound much to his profit. Oh, he is a wonderful fellow, this same Robin! You saw how he turned the cullions from burning the old house!"

"What! you know this man, Madge! What is he, and who?"

Madge looked puzzled. "That is more than I can say, sweet mistress. But though he has been but some weeks in the neighbourhood, they all hold him in high count and esteem. For why—it is said he is a rich man and a kind one. He does a world of good to the poor."

While Sibyll listened to such explanations as Madge could give her, the stranger, who had carefully closed the door of the student's chamber, after regarding Adam for a moment with silent but keen scrutiny, thus began,—

"When last we met, Adam Warner, it was with satchells on our backs. Look well at me!"

"Troth," answered Adam, languidly, for he was still under the deep dejection that had followed the scene with Sibyll, "I cannot call you to mind, nor seems it veritable that our schooldays passed together, seeing that my hair is gray and men call me old; but thou art in all the lustihood of this human life."

"Nathless," returned the stranger, "there are but two years or so between thine age and mine. When thou wert poring over the crabbed text, and pattering Latin by the ell, dost thou not remember a lack-grace good-for-naught, Robert Hilyard, who was always setting the school in an uproar, and was finally outlawed from that boy-world, as he hath been since from the man's world, for inciting the weak to resist the strong?"

"Ah," exclaimed Adam, with a gleam of something like joy on his face, "art thou indeed that riotous, brawling, fighting,

frank-hearted, bold fellow, Robert Hilyard? Ha! ha!—those were merry days! I have known none like them—" The old schoolfellows shook hands heartily.

"The world has not fared well with thee in person or pouch, I fear me, poor Adam," said Hilyard; "thou canst scarcely have passed thy fiftieth year, and yet thy learned studies have given thee the weight of sixty; while I, though ever in toil and bustle, often wanting a meal, and even fearing the halter, am strong and hearty as when I shot my first fallow buck in the king's forest, and kissed the forester's pretty daughter. Yet, methinks, Adam, if what I hear of thy tasks be true, thou and I have each been working for one end; thou to make the world other than it is, and I to—"

"What! hast thou, too, taken nourishment from the bitter milk of Philosophy,—thou, fighting Rob?"

"I know not whether it be called philosophy, but marry, Edward of York would call it rebellion; they are much the same, for both war against rules established!" returned Hilyard, with more depth of thought than his careless manner seemed to promise. He paused, and laying his broad brown hand on Warner's shoulder, resumed, "Thou art poor, Adam!"

"Very poor,—very, very!"

"Does thy philosophy disdain gold?"

"What can philosophy achieve without it? She is a hungry dragon, and her very food is gold!"

"Wilt thou brave some danger—thou went ever a fearless boy

when thy blood was up, though so meek and gentle—wilt thou brave some danger for large reward?"

"My life braves the scorn of men, the pinchings of famine, and, it may be, the stake and the fagot. Soldiers brave not the dangers that are braved by a wise man in an unwise age!"

"Gramercy! thou hast a hero's calm aspect while thou speakest, and thy words move me! Listen! Thou wert wont, when Henry of Windsor was King of England, to visit and confer with him on learned matters. He is now a captive in the Tower; but his jailers permit him still to receive the visits of pious monks and harmless scholars. I ask thee to pay him such a visit, and for this office I am empowered, by richer men than myself, to award thee the guerdon of twenty broad pieces of gold."

"Twenty!—A mine! a Tmolus!" exclaimed Adam, in uncontrollable glee. "Twenty! O true friend, then my work will be born at last!"

"But hear me further, Adam, for I will not deceive thee; the visit hath its peril! Thou must first see if the mind of King Henry, for king he is, though the usurper wear his holy crown, be clear and healthful. Thou knowest he is subject to dark moods, —suspension of man's reason; and if he be, as his friends hope, sane and right-judging, thou wilt give him certain papers, which, after his hand has signed them, thou wilt bring back to me. If in this thou succeedest, know that thou mayst restore the royalty of Lancaster to the purple and the throne; that thou wilt have princes and earls for favourers and protectors to thy learned life;

that thy fortunes and fame are made! Fail, be discovered,—and Edward of York never spares!—thy guerdon will be the nearest tree and the strongest rope!"

"Robert," said Adam, who had listened to this address with unusual attention, "thou dealest with me plainly, and as man should deal with man. I know little of stratagem and polity, wars and kings; and save that King Henry, though passing ignorant in the mathematics, and more given to alchemists than to solid seekers after truth, was once or twice gracious to me, I could have no choice, in these four walls, between an Edward and a Henry on the throne. But I have a king whose throne is in mine own breast, and, alack, it taxeth me heavily, and with sore burdens."

"I comprehend," said the visitor, glancing round the room, —"I comprehend: thou wantest money for thy books and instruments, and thy melancholic passion is thy sovereign. Thou wilt incur the risk?"

"I will," said Adam. "I would rather seek in the lion's den for what I lack than do what I well-nigh did this day."

"What crime was that, poor scholar?" said Robin, smiling.

"My child worked for her bread and my luxuries—I would have robbed her, old schoolfellow. Ha, ha! what is cord and gibbet to one so tempted?"

A tear stood in the bright gray eyes of the bluff visitor. "Ah, Adam," he said sadly, "only by the candle held in the skeleton hand of Poverty can man read his own dark heart. But thou, Workman of Knowledge, hast the same interest as the poor who

dig and delve. Though strange circumstance hath made me the servant and emissary of Margaret, think not that I am but the varlet of the great." Hilyard paused a moment, and resumed,—

"Thou knowest, peradventure, that my race dates from an elder date than these Norman nobles, who boast their robber-fathers. From the renowned Saxon Thane, who, free of hand and of cheer, won the name of Hildegardis, [Hildegardis, namely, old German, a person of noble or generous disposition. Wotton's "Baronetage," art. Hilyard, or Hildyard, of Pattrington.] our family took its rise. But under these Norman barons we sank with the nation to which we belonged. Still were we called gentlemen, and still were dubbed knights. But as I grew up to man's estate, I felt myself more Saxon than gentleman, and, as one of a subject and vassal race, I was a son of the Saxon people. My father, like thee, was a man of thought and bookcraft. I dare own to thee that he was a Lollard; and with the religion of those bold foes to priest-vice, goes a spirit that asks why the people should be evermore the spoil and prey of lords and kings. Early in my youth, my father, fearing rack and fagot in England, sought refuge in the Hans town of Lubeck. There I learned grave truths, —how liberty can be won and guarded. Later in life I saw the republics of Italy, and I asked why they were so glorious in all the arts and craft of civil life, while the braver men of France and England seemed as savages by the side of the Florentine burgess, nay, of the Lombard vine-dresser. I saw that, even when those republics fell a victim to some tyrant or podesta, their

men still preserved rights and uttered thoughts which left them more free and more great than the Commons of England after all their boasted wars. I came back to my native land and settled in the North, as my franklin ancestry before me. The broad lands of my forefathers had devolved on the elder line, and gave a knight's fee to Sir Robert Hilyard, who fell afterwards at Towton for the Lancastrians. But I had won gold in the far countree, and I took farm and homestead near Lord Warwick's tower of Middleham. The feud between Lancaster and York broke forth; Earl Warwick summoned his retainers, myself amongst them, since I lived upon his land; I sought the great earl, and I told him boldly—him whom the Commons deemed a friend, and a foe to all malfaisance and abuse—I told him that the war he asked me to join seemed to me but a war of ambitious lords, and that I saw not how the Commons were to be bettered, let who would be king. The earl listened and deigned to reason; and when he saw I was not convinced, he left me to my will; for he is a noble chief, and I admired even his angry pride, when he said, 'Let no man fight for Warwick whose heart beats not in his cause.' I lived afterwards to discharge my debt to the proud earl, and show him how even the lion may be meshed, and how even the mouse may gnaw the net. But to my own tragedy. So I quitted those parts, for I feared my own resolution near so great a man; I made a new home not far from the city of York. So, Adam, when all the land around bristled with pike and gisarme, and while my own cousin and namesake, the head of my House, was winning

laurels and wasting blood—I, thy quarrelsome, fighting friend—lived at home in peace with my wife and child (for I was now married, and wife and child were dear to me), and tilled my lands. But in peace I was active and astir, for my words inflamed the bosoms of labourers and peasants, and many of them, benighted as they were, thought with me. One day—I was absent from home, selling my grain in the marts of York—one day there entered the village a young captain, a boy-chief, Edward Earl of March, beating for recruits. Dost thou heed me, Adam? Well, man—well, the peasants stood aloof from tromp and banner, and they answered, to all the talk of hire and fame, 'Robin Hilyard tells us we have nothing to gain but blows,—leave us to hew and to delve.' Oh, Adam, this boy, this chief, the Earl of March, now crowned King Edward, made but one reply, 'This Robin Hilyard must be a wise man,—show me his house.' They pointed out the ricks, the barns, the homestead, and in five minutes all—all were in flames. 'Tell the hilding, when he returns, that thus Edward of March, fair to friends and terrible to foes, rewards the coward who disaffects the men of Yorkshire to their chief.' And by the blazing rafters, and the pale faces of the silent crowd, he rode on his way to battle and the throne!"

Hilyard paused, and the anguish of his countenance was terrible to behold.

"I returned to find a heap of ashes; I returned to find my wife a maniac; I returned to find my child—my boy—great God!—he had run to hide himself, in terror at the torches and the grim

men; they had failed to discover him, till, too late, his shrieks, amidst the crashing walls, burst on his mother's ear,—and the scorched, mangled, lifeless corpse lay on that mother's bosom!"

Adam rose; his figure was transformed. Not the stooping student, but the knight-descended man, seemed to tower in the murky chamber; his hand felt at his side, as for a sword; he stifled a curse, and Hilyard, in that suppressed low voice which evinces a strong mind in deep emotion, continued his tale.

"Blessed be the Divine Intercessor, the mother of the dead died too! Behold me, a lonely, ruined, wifeless, childless wretch! I made all the world my foe! The old love of liberty (alone left me) became a crime; I plunged into the gloom of the forest, a robber-chief, sparing—no, never-never—never one York captain, one spurred knight, one belted lord! But the poor, my Saxon countrymen, they had suffered, and were safe!

"One dark twilight—thou hast heard the tale, every village minstrel sets it to his viol—a majestic woman, a hunted fugitive, crossed my path; she led a boy in her hand, a year or so younger than my murdered child. 'Friend!' said the woman, fearlessly, 'save the son of your king; I am Margaret, Queen of England!' I saved them both. From that hour the robber-chief, the Lollard's son, became a queen's friend. Here opened, at least, vengeance against the fell destroyer. Now see you why I seek you, why tempt you into danger? Pause, if you will, for my passion heats my blood,—and all the kings since Saul, it may be, are not worth one scholar's life! And yet," continued Hilyard, regaining his

ordinary calm tone, "and yet, it seemeth to me, as I said at first, that all who labour have in this a common cause and interest with the poor. This woman-king, though bloody man, with his wine-cups and his harlots, this usurping York—his very existence flaunts the life of the sons of toil. In civil war and in broil, in strife that needs the arms of the people, the people shall get their own."

"I will go," said Adam, and he advanced to the door. Hilyard caught his arm. "Why, friend, thou hast not even the documents, and how wouldst thou get access to the prison? Listen to me; or," added the conspirator, observing poor Adam's abstracted air, "or let me rather speak a word to thy fair daughter; women have ready wit, and are the pioneers to the advance of men! Adam, Adam! thou art dreaming!"—He shook the philosopher's arm roughly.

"I heed you," said Warner, meekly.

"The first thing required," renewed Hilyard, "is a permit to see King Henry. This is obtained either from the Lord Worcester, governor of the Tower, a cruel man, who may deny it, or the Lord Hastings, Edward's chamberlain, a humane and gentle one, who will readily grant it. Let not thy daughter know why thou wouldst visit Henry; let her suppose it is solely to make report of his health to Margaret; let her not know there is scheming or danger,—so, at least, her ignorance will secure her safety. But let her go to the lord chamberlain, and obtain the order for a learned clerk to visit the learned prisoner—to—ha! well thought of—this strange machine is, doubtless, the invention of which thy neighbours speak; this shall make thy excuse; thou wouldst

divert the prisoner with thy mechanical—comprehendest thou, Adam?"

"Ah, King Henry will see the model, and when he is on the throne—"

"He will protect the scholar!" interrupted Hilyard. "Good! good! Wait here; I will confer with thy daughter." He gently pushed aside Adam, opened the door, and on descending the stairs, found Sibyll by the large casement where she had stood with Marmaduke, and heard the rude stave of the tymbesteres.

The anxiety the visit of Hilyard had occasioned her was at once allayed, when he informed her that he had been her father's schoolmate, and desired to become his friend. And when he drew a moving picture of the exiled condition of Margaret and the young prince, and their natural desire to learn tidings of the health of the deposed king, her gentle heart, forgetting the haughty insolence with which her royal mistress had often wounded and chilled her childhood, felt all the generous and compassionate sympathy the conspirator desired to awaken. "The occasion," added Hilyard, "for learning the poor captive's state now offers! He hath heard of your father's labours; he desires to learn their nature from his own lips. He is allowed to receive, by an order from King Edward's chamberlain, the visits of those scholars in whose converse he was ever wont to delight. Wilt thou so far aid the charitable work as to seek the Lord Hastings, and crave the necessary license? Thou seest that thy father has wayward and abstract moods; he might forget that Henry of

Windsor is no longer king, and might give him that title in speaking to Lord Hastings,—a slip of the tongue which the law styles treason."

"Certes," said Sibyll, quickly, "if my father would seek the poor captive, I will be his messenger to my Lord Hastings. But oh, sir, as thou hast known my father's boyhood, and as thou hopest for mercy in the last day, tempt to no danger one so guileless!"

Hilyard winced as he interrupted her hastily,

"There is no danger if thou wilt obtain the license. I will say more,—a reward awaits him, that will not only banish his poverty but save his life."

"His life!"

"Ay! seest thou not, fair mistress, that Adam Warner is dying, not of the body's hunger, but of the soul's? He craveth gold, that his toils may reap their guerdon. If that gold be denied, his toils will fret him to the grave!"

"Alas! alas! it is true."

"That gold he shall honourably win! Nor is this all. Thou wilt see the Lord Hastings: he is less learned, perhaps, than Worcester, less dainty in accomplishments and gifts than Anthony Woodville, but his mind is profound and vast; all men praise him save the queen's kin. He loves scholars; he is mild to distress; he laughs at the superstitions of the vulgar. Thou wilt see the Lord Hastings, and thou mayst interest him in thy father's genius and his fate!"

"There is frankness in thy voice, and I will trust thee," answered Sibyll. "When shall I seek this lord?"

"This day, if thou wilt. He lodges at the Tower, and gives access, it is said, to all who need his offices, or seek succour from his power."

"This day, then, be it!" answered Sibyll, calmly.

Hilyard gazed at her countenance, rendered so noble in its youthful resignation, in its soft firmness of expression, and muttering, "Heaven prosper thee, maiden; we shall meet tomorrow," descended the stairs, and quitted the house.

His heart smote him when he was in the street. "If evil should come to this meek scholar, to that poor child's father, it would be a sore sin to my soul. But no; I will not think it. The saints will not suffer this bloody Edward to triumph long; and in this vast chessboard of vengeance and great ends, we must move men to and fro, and harden our natures to the hazard of the game."

Sibyll sought her father; his mind had flown back to the model. He was already living in the life that the promised gold would give to the dumb thought. True that all the ingenious additions to the engine—additions that were to convince the reason and startle the fancy—were not yet complete (for want, of course, of the diamond bathed in moonbeams); but still there was enough in the inventions already achieved to excite curiosity and obtain encouragement. So, with care and diligence and sanguine hope the philosopher prepared the grim model for exhibition to a man who had worn a crown, and might wear again. But with that

innocent and sad cunning which is so common with enthusiasts of one idea, the sublime dwellers of the narrow border between madness and inspiration, Adam, amidst his excitement, contrived to conceal from his daughter all glimpse of the danger he ran, of the correspondence of which he was to be the medium,—or rather, may we think that he had forgotten both! Not the stout Warwick himself, in the roar of battle, thought so little of peril to life and limb as that gentle student, in the reveries of his lonely closet; and therefore, all unsuspicious, and seeing but diversion to Adam's recent gloom of despair, an opening to all his bright prospects, Sibyll attired herself in her holiday garments, drew her wimple closely round her face, and summoning Madge to attend her, bent her way to the Tower. Near York House, within view of the Sanctuary and the Palace of Westminster, they took a boat, and arrived at the stairs of the Tower.

CHAPTER IV. LORD HASTINGS

William Lord Hastings was one of the most remarkable men of the age. Philip de Comines bears testimony to his high repute for wisdom and virtue. Born the son of a knight of ancient lineage but scanty lands, he had risen, while yet in the prime of life, to a rank and an influence second, perhaps, only to the House of Nevile. Like Lord Montagu, he united in happy combination the talents of a soldier and a courtier. But as a statesman, a schemer, a thinker, Montagu, with all his craft, was inferior to Hastings. In this, the latter had but two equals,—namely, George, the youngest of the Nevile brothers, Archbishop of York; and a boy, whose intellect was not yet fully developed, but in whom was already apparent to the observant the dawn of a restless, fearless, calculating, and subtle genius. That boy, whom the philosophers of Utrecht had taught to reason, whom the lessons of Warwick had trained to arms, was Richard, Duke of Gloucester, famous even now for his skill in the tilt-yard and his ingenuity in the rhetoric of the schools.

The manners of Lord Hastings had contributed to his fortunes. Despite the newness of his honours, even the haughtiest of the ancient nobles bore him no grudge, for his demeanour was at once modest and manly. He was peculiarly simple and unostentatious in his habits, and possessed that nameless charm which makes men popular with the lowly and welcome to the

great. [On Edward's accession so highly were the services of Hastings appreciated by the party, that not only the king, but many of the nobility, contributed to render his wealth equal to his new station, by grants of lands and moneys. Several years afterwards, when he went with Edward into France, no less than two lords, nine knights, fifty-eight squires, and twenty gentlemen joined his train.—Dugdale: Baronage, p. 583. Sharon Turner: History of England, vol. iii. p. 380.] But in that day a certain mixture of vice was necessary to success; and Hastings wounded no self-love by the assumption of unfashionable purism. He was regarded with small favour by the queen, who knew him as the companion of Edward in his pleasures, and at a later period accused him of enticing her faithless lord into unworthy affections. And certain it is, that he was foremost amongst the courtiers in those adventures which we call the excesses of gayety and folly, though too often leading to Solomon's wisdom and his sadness. But profligacy with Hastings had the excuse of ardent passions: he had loved deeply, and unhappily, in his earlier youth, and he gave in to the dissipation of the time with the restless eagerness common to strong and active natures when the heart is not at ease; and under all the light fascination of his converse; or the dissipation of his life, lurked the melancholic temperament of a man worthy of nobler things. Nor was the courtly vice of the libertine the only drawback to the virtuous character assigned to Hastings by Comines. His experience of men had taught him something of the disdain of the cynic, and he scrupled

not at serving his pleasures or his ambition by means which his loftier nature could not excuse to his clear sense. [See Comines, book vi., for a curious anecdote of what Mr. Sharon Turner happily calls "the moral coquetry" of Hastings,—an anecdote which reveals much of his character.] Still, however, the world, which had deteriorated, could not harden him. Few persons so able acted so frequently from impulse; the impulses were for the most part affectionate and generous, but then came the regrets of caution and experience; and Hastings summoned his intellect to correct the movement of his heart,—in other words, reflection sought to undo what impulse had suggested. Though so successful a gallant, he had not acquired the ruthless egotism of the sensualist; and his conduct to women often evinced the weakness of giddy youth rather than the cold deliberation of profligate manhood. Thus in his veriest vices there was a spurious amiability, a seductive charm; while in the graver affairs of life the intellectual susceptibility of his nature served but to quicken his penetration and stimulate his energies, and Hastings might have said, with one of his Italian contemporaries, "That in subjection to the influences of women he had learned the government of men." In a word, his powers to attract, and his capacities to command, may be guessed by this,—that Lord Hastings was the only man Richard III. seems to have loved, when Duke of Gloucester, [Sir Thomas More, "Life of Edward V.," speaks of "the great love" Richard bore to Hastings.] and the only man he seems to have feared, when resolved to be King

of England.

Hastings was alone in the apartments assigned to him in the Tower, when his page, with a peculiar smile, announced to him the visit of a young donzell, who would not impart her business to his attendants.

The accomplished chamberlain looked up somewhat impatiently from the beautiful manuscripts, enriched with the silver verse of Petrarch, which lay open on his table, and after muttering to himself, "It is only Edward to whom the face of a woman never is unwelcome," bade the page admit the visitor. The damsel entered, and the door closed upon her.

"Be not alarmed, maiden," said Hastings, touched by the downcast bend of the hooded countenance, and the unmistakable and timid modesty of his visitor's bearing. "What hast thou to say to me?"

At the sound of his voice, Sibyll Warner started, and uttered a faint exclamation. The stranger of the pastime-ground was before her. Instinctively she drew the wimple yet more closely round her face, and laid her hand upon the bolt of the door as if in the impulse of retreat.

The nobleman's curiosity was roused. He looked again and earnestly on the form that seemed to shrink from his gaze; then rising slowly, he advanced, and laid his band on her arm. "Donzell, I recognize thee," he said, in a voice that sounded cold and stern. "What service wouldst thou ask me to render thee? Speak! Nay! I pray thee, speak."

"Indeed, good my lord," said Sibyll, conquering her confusion; and, lifting her wimple, her dark blue eyes met those bent on her, with fearless truth and innocence, "I knew not, and you will believe me,—I knew not till this moment that I had such cause for gratitude to the Lord Hastings. I sought you but on the behalf of my father, Master Adam Warner, who would fain have the permission accorded to other scholars, to see the Lord Henry of Windsor, who was gracious to him in other days, and to while the duress of that princely captive with the show of a quaint instrument he has invented."

"Doubtless," answered Hastings, who deserved his character (rare in that day) for humanity and mildness—"doubt less it will pleasure me, nor offend his grace the king, to show all courtesy and indulgence to the unhappy gentleman and lord, whom the weal of England condemns us to hold incarcerate. I have heard of thy father, maiden, an honest and simple man, in whom we need not fear a conspirator; and of thee, young mistress, I have heard also, since we parted."

"Of me, noble sir?"

"Of thee," said Hastings, with a smile; and, placing a seat for her, he took from the table an illuminated manuscript. "I have to thank thy friend Master Alwyn for procuring me this treasure!"

"What, my lord!" said Sibyll, and her eyes glistened, "were you—you the—the—"

"The fortunate person whom Alwyn has enriched at so slight a cost? Yes. Do not grudge me my good fortune in this. Thou

hast nobler treasures, methinks, to bestow on another!"

"My good lord!"

"Nay, I must not distress thee. And the young gentleman has a fair face; may it bespeak a true heart!"

These words gave Sibyll an emotion of strange delight. They seemed spoken sadly, they seemed to betoken a jealous sorrow; they awoke the strange, wayward woman-feeling, which is pleased at the pain that betrays the woman's influence: the girl's rosy lips smiled maliciously. Hastings watched her, and her face was so radiant with that rare gleam of secret happiness,—so fresh, so young, so pure, and withal so arch and captivating, that hackneyed and jaded as he was in the vulgar pursuit of pleasure, the sight moved better and tenderer feelings than those of the sensualist. "Yes," he muttered to himself, "there are some toys it were a sin to sport with and cast away amidst the broken rubbish of gone passions!"

He turned to the table, and wrote the order of admission to Henry's prison, and as he gave it to Sibyll, he said, "Thy young gallant, I see, is at the court now. It is a perilous ordeal, and especially to one for whom the name of Nevile opens the road to advancement and honour. Men learn betimes in courts to forsake Love for Plutus, and many a wealthy lord would give his heiress to the poorest gentleman who claims kindred to the Earl of Salisbury and Warwick."

"May my father's guest so prosper," answered Sibyll, "for he seems of loyal heart and gentle nature!"

"Thou art unselfish, sweet mistress," said Hastings; and, surprised by her careless tone, he paused a moment: "or art thou, in truth, indifferent? Saw I not thy hand in his, when even those loathly tymbesteres chanted warning to thee for loving, not above thy merits, but, alas, it may be, above thy fortunes?"

Sibyll's delight increased. Oh, then, he had not applied that hateful warning to himself! He guessed not her secret. She blushed, and the blush was so chaste and maidenly, while the smile that went with it was so ineffably animated and joyous, that Hastings exclaimed, with unaffected admiration, "Surely, fair donzell, Petrarch dreamed of thee, when he spoke of the woman-blush and the angel-smile of Laura. Woe to the man who would injure thee! Farewell! I would not see thee too often, unless I saw thee ever."

He lifted her hand to his lips with a chivalrous respect as he spoke; opened the door, and called his page to attend her to the gates.

Sibyll was more flattered by the abrupt dismissal than if he had knelt to detain her. How different seemed the world as her light step wended homeward!

CHAPTER V. MASTER ADAM WARNER AND KING HENRY THE SIXTH

The next morning Hilyard revisited Warner with the letters for Henry. The conspirator made Adam reveal to him the interior mechanism of the Eureka, to which Adam, who had toiled all night, had appended one of the most ingenious contrivances he had as yet been enabled (sans the diamond) to accomplish, for the better display of the agencies which the engine was designed to achieve. This contrivance was full of strange cells and recesses, in one of which the documents were placed. And there they lay, so well concealed as to puzzle the minutest search, if not aided by the inventor, or one to whom he had communicated the secrets of the contrivance.

After repeated warnings and exhortations to discretion, Hilyard then, whose busy, active mind had made all the necessary arrangements, summoned a stout-looking fellow, whom he had left below, and with his aid conveyed the heavy machine across the garden, to a back lane, where a mule stood ready to receive the burden.

"Suffer this trusty fellow to guide thee, dear Adam; he will take thee through ways where thy brutal neighbours are not likely to meet and molest thee. Call all thy wits to the surface. Speed

and prosper!"

"Fear not," said Adam, disdainfully. "In the neighbourhood of kings, science is ever safe. Bless thee, child," and he laid his hand upon Sibyll's head, for she had accompanied them thus far in silence, "now go in."

"I go with thee, Father," said Sibyll, firmly. "Master Hilyard, it is best so," she whispered; "what if my father fall into one of his reveries?"

"You are right: go with him, at least, to the Tower gate. Hard by is the house of a noble dame and a worthy, known to our friend Hugh, where thou mayest wait Master Warner's return. It will not suit thy modesty and sex to loiter amongst the pages and soldiery in the yard. Adam, thy daughter must wend with thee."

Adam had not attended to this colloquy, and mechanically bowing his head, he set off, and was greatly surprised, on gaining the river-side (where a boat was found large enough to accommodate not only the human passengers, but the mule and its burden), to see Sibyll by his side.

The imprisonment of the unfortunate Henry, though guarded with sufficient rigour against all chances of escape, was not, as the reader has perceived, at this period embittered by unnecessary harshness. His attendants treated him with respect, his table was supplied more abundantly and daintily than his habitual abstinence required, and the monks and learned men whom he had favoured, were, we need not repeat, permitted to enliven his solitude with their grave converse.

On the other hand, all attempts at correspondence between Margaret or the exiled Lancastrians and himself had been jealously watched, and when detected, the emissaries had been punished with relentless severity. A man named Hawkins had been racked for attempting to borrow money for the queen from the great London merchant, Sir Thomas Cook. A shoemaker had been tortured to death with red-hot pincers for abetting her correspondence with her allies. Various persons had been racked for similar offences; but the energy of Margaret and the zeal of her adherents were still unexhausted and unconquered.

Either unconscious or contemptuous of the perils to which he was subjected, the student, with his silent companions, performed the voyage, and landed in sight of the Fortress-Palatine. And now Hugh stopped before a house of good fashion, knocked at the door, which was opened by an old servitor, disappeared for a few moments, and returning, informed Sibyll, in a meaning whisper, that the gentlewoman within was a good Lancastrian, and prayed the donzell to rest in her company till Master Warner's return.

Sibyll, accordingly, after pressing her father's hand without fear—for she had deemed the sole danger Adam risked was from the rabble by the way—followed Hugh into a fair chamber, strewed with rushes, where an aged dame, of noble air and aspect, was employed at her broidery frame. This gentlewoman, the widow of a nobleman who had fallen in the service of Henry, received her graciously, and Hugh then retired to complete his

commission. The student, the mule, the model, and the porter pursued their way to the entrance of that part of the gloomy palace inhabited by Henry. Here they were stopped, and Adam, after rummaging long in vain for the chamberlain's passport, at last happily discovered it, pinned to his sleeve, by Sibyll's forethought. On this a gentleman was summoned to inspect the order, and in a few moments Adam was conducted to the presence of the illustrious prisoner.

"And what," said a subaltern officer, lolling by the archway of the (now styled) "Bloody Tower," hard by the turret devoted to the prisoner, [The Wakefield Tower] and speaking to Adam's guide, who still mounted guard by the model,—"what may be the precious burden of which thou art the convoy?"

"Marry, sir," said Hugh, who spoke in the strong Yorkshire dialect, which we are obliged to render into intelligible English —"marry, I weet not,—it is some curious puppet-box, or quiet contrivance, that Master Warner, whom they say is a very deft and ingenious personage, is permitted to bring hither for the Lord Henry's diversion."

"A puppet-box!" said the officer, with much animated curiosity. "'Fore the Mass! that must be a pleasant sight. Lift the lid, fellow!"

"Please your honour, I do not dare," returned Hugh,—"I but obey orders."

"Obey mine, then. Out of the way," and the officer lifted the lid of the pannier with the point of his dagger, and peered within.

He drew back, much disappointed. “Holy Mother!” said he, “this seemeth more like an instrument of torture than a juggler’s merry device. It looks parlous ugly!”

“Hush!” said one of the lazy bystanders, with whom the various gateways and courts of the Palace-Fortress were crowded, “hush—thy cap and thy knee, sir!”

The officer started; and, looking round, perceived a young man of low stature, followed by three or four knights and nobles, slowly approaching towards the arch, and every cap in the vicinity was off, and every knee bowed.

The eye of this young man was already bent, with a searching and keen gaze, upon the motionless mule, standing patiently by the Wakefield Tower; and turning from the mule to the porter, the latter shrunk, and grew pale, at that dark, steady, penetrating eye, which seemed to pierce at once into the secrets and hearts of men.

“Who may this young lord be?” he whispered to the officer.

“Prince Richard, Duke of Gloucester, man,” was the answer. “Uncover, varlet!”

“Surely,” said the prince, pausing by the gate, “surely this is no sumpter-mule, bearing provisions to the Lord Henry of Windsor. It would be but poor respect to that noble person, whom, alas the day! his grace the king is unwillingly compelled to guard from the malicious designs of rebels and mischief-seekers, that one not bearing the king’s livery should attend to any of the needful wants of so worshipful a lord and guest!”

"My lord," said the officer at the gate, "one Master Adam Warner hath just, by permission, been conducted to the Lord Henry's presence, and the beast beareth some strange and grim-looking device for my lord's diversion."

The singular softness and urbanity which generally characterized the Duke of Gloucester's tone and bearing at that time,—which in a court so full of factions and intrigues made him the enemy of none and seemingly the friend of all, and, conjoined with abilities already universally acknowledged, had given to his very boyhood a pre-eminence of grave repute and good opinion, which, indeed, he retained till the terrible circumstances connected with his accession to the throne, under the bloody name of Richard the Third, roused all men's hearts and reasons into the persuasion that what before had seemed virtue was but dissimulation,—this singular sweetness, we say, of manner and voice, had in it, nevertheless, something that imposed and thrilled and awed. And in truth, in our common and more vulgar intercourse with life, we must have observed, that where external gentleness of bearing is accompanied by a repute for iron will, determined resolution, and a serious, profound, and all-inquiring intellect, it carries with it a majesty wholly distinct from that charm which is exercised by one whose mildness of nature corresponds with the outward humility; and, if it does not convey the notion of falseness, bears the appearance of that perfect self-possession, that calm repose of power, which intimidates those it influences far more than the imperious

port and the loud voice. And they who best knew the duke, knew also that, despite this general smoothness of mien, his temperament was naturally irritable, quick, and subject to stormy gusts of passion, the which defects his admirers praised him for labouring hard and sedulously to keep in due control. Still, to a keen observer, the constitutional tendencies of that nervous temperament were often visible, even in his blandest moments, even when his voice was most musical, his smile most gracious. If something stung or excited him, an uneasy gnawing of the nether lip, a fretful playing with his dagger, drawing it up and down from its sheath, [Pol. Virg. 565] a slight twitching of the muscles of the face, and a quiver of the eyelid, betokened the efforts he made at self-command; and now, as his dark eyes rested upon Hugh's pale countenance, and then glanced upon the impassive mule, dozing quietly under the weight of poor Adam's model, his hand mechanically sought his dagger-hilt, and his face took a sinister and sombre expression.

"Thy name, friend?"

"Hugh Withers, please you, my lord duke."

"Um! North country, by thine accent. Dost thou serve this Master Warner?"

"No, my lord, I was only hired with my mule to carry—"

"Ah, true! to carry what thy pannier contains; open it. Holy Paul! a strange jonglerie indeed! This Master Adam Warner,—methinks, I have heard his name—a learned man—um—let me see his safe conduct. Right,—it is Lord Hastings's signature." But

still the prince held the passport, and still suspiciously eyed the Eureka and its appliances, which, in their complicated and native ugliness of doors, wheels, pipes, and chimney, were exposed to his view. At this moment, one of the attendants of Henry descended the stairs of the Wakefield Tower, with a request that the model might be carried up to divert the prisoner.

Richard paused a moment, as the officer hesitatingly watched his countenance before giving the desired permission. But the prince, turning to him, and smoothing his brow, said mildly, "Certes! all that can divert the Lord Henry must be innocent pastime. And I am well pleased that he hath this cheerful mood for recreation. It gainsayeth those who would accuse us of rigour in his durance. Yes, this warrant is complete and formal;" and the prince returned the passport to the officer, and walked slowly on through that gloomy arch ever more associated with Richard of Gloucester's memory, and beneath the very room in which our belief yet holds that the infant sons of Edward IV. breathed their last; still, as Gloucester moved, he turned and turned, and kept his eye furtively fixed upon the porter.

"Lovell," he said to one of the gentlemen who attended him, and who was among the few admitted to his more peculiar intimacy, "that man is of the North."

"Well, my lord?"

"The North was always well affected to the Lancastrians. Master Warner hath been accused of witchcraft. Marry, I should like to see his device—um; Master Catesby, come hither,—

approach, sir. Go back, and the instant Adam Warner and his contrivance are dismissed, bring them both to me in the king's chamber. Thou understandest? We too would see his device,—and let neither man nor mechanical, when once they reappear, out of thine eye's reach. For divers and subtle are the contrivances of treasonable men!"

Catesby bowed, and Richard, without speaking further, took his way to the royal apartments, which lay beyond the White Tower, towards the river, and are long since demolished.

Meanwhile the porter, with the aid of one of the attendants, had carried the model into the chamber of the august captive. Henry, attired in a loose robe, was pacing the room with a slow step, and his head sunk on his bosom,—while Adam with much animation was enlarging on the wonders of the contrivance he was about to show him. The chamber was commodious, and furnished with sufficient attention to the state and dignity of the prisoner; for Edward, though savage and relentless when his blood was up, never descended into the cool and continuous cruelty of detail.

The chamber may yet be seen,—its shape a spacious octagon; but the walls now rude and bare were then painted and blazoned with scenes from the Old Testament. The door opened beneath the pointed arch in the central side (not where it now does), giving entrance from a small anteroom, in which the visitor now beholds the receptacle for old rolls and papers. At the right, on entering, where now, if our memory mistake not, is placed

a press, stood the bed, quaintly carved, and with hangings of damascene. At the farther end the deep recess which faced the ancient door was fitted up as a kind of oratory. And there were to be seen, besides the crucifix and the Mass-book, a profusion of small vessels of gold and crystal, containing the relics, supposed or real, of saint and martyr, treasures which the deposed king had collected in his palmier days at a sum that, in the minds of his followers, had been better bestowed on arms and war-steeds. A young man named Allerton—one of the three gentlemen personally attached to Henry, to whom Edward had permitted general access, and who, in fact, lodged in other apartments of the Wakefield Tower, and might be said to share his captivity—was seated before a table, and following the steps of his musing master, with earnest and watchful eyes.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.