Ainsworth William Harrison

The Tower of London: A Historical Romance, Illustrated

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Содержание

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PREFACE

It has been, for years, the cherished wish of the writer of the following pages, to make the Tower of London – the proudest monument of antiquity, considered with reference to its historical associations, which this country or any other possesses, – the groundwork of a Romance; and it was no slight satisfaction to him, that circumstances, at length, enabled him to carry into effect his favourite project, in conjunction with the inimitable Artist, whose designs accompany the work.

Desirous of exhibiting the Tower in its triple light of a palace, a prison, and a fortress, the Author has shaped his story with reference to that end; and he has also endeavoured to contrive such a series of incidents as should naturally introduce every relic of the old pile, – its towers, chapels, halls, chambers, gateways, arches, and drawbridges – so that no part of it should remain unillustrated.

How far this design has been accomplished – what interest has been given to particular buildings – and what mouldering walls have been informed with life – is now to be determined: – unless, indeed, it may be considered determined by the numbers who have visited the different buildings, as they have been successively depicted by pen and pencil, during the periodical appearance of the work.

One important object the Author would fain hope his labours may achieve. This is the introduction of the public to some parts of the fortress at present closed to them. There seems no reason why admission should not be given, under certain restrictions, to that unequalled specimen of Norman architecture, Saint John's Chapel in the White Tower, – to the arched galleries above it, – to the noble council-chamber, teeming with historical recollections, – to the vaulted passages – and to the winding staircases within the turrets – so perfect, and so interesting to the antiquary. Nor is there stronger reason why the prison-chamber in the Beauchamp Tower, now used as a mess-room, the walls of which, like a mystic scroll, are covered with inscriptions – each a tragic story in itself, and furnishing matter for abundant reflection – should not likewise be thrown open. Most of the old fortifications upon the inner ballium-wall being converted into private dwellings, – though in many cases the chambers are extremely curious, and rich in inscriptions, – are, of course, inaccessible. But this does not apply to the first-mentioned places. They are the property of the nation, and should be open

to national inspection.

It is piteous to see what havoc has already been made by alterations and repairs. The palace is gone – so are many of the towers – and unless the progress of destruction is arrested, the demolition of others will follow. Let us attempt to preserve what remains.

Opposite the matchless White Tower – William of Orange by the side of William the Conqueror, – is that frightful architectural abomination, the Grand Store-House.

It may not be possible to remove this ugly and incongruous structure. It is not possible to take away others that offend the eye at every turn. It is not possible to restore the Tower to its pristine grandeur. But it *is* possible to prevent further mutilation and desecration. It *is* possible to clear the reverend and massive columns of Saint John's Chapel, which look like giants of departed days, from the thick coat of white-wash in which they are crusted, – to sweep away the presses with which its floors are cumbered, and to find some other equally secure, but less interesting – less sacred, in every sense, depository for the Chancery rolls. It *is* possible to render the same service to the magnificent council-chamber, and the passages leading to it, – it *is* possible to clear the walls of the Beauchamp Tower, – and it *is*, also, possible and desirable, that the public should be admitted to these places, in which they have so strong an interest. The visiter to the Tower sees little – and *can* see little of its most curious features. But it is the hope of the writer, that the day is not far

off, when all that is really worth seeing will be accessible. In this view, the present publication may not be without use.

To those, who conceive that the Author has treated the character of Queen Mary with too great leniency, he can only affirm that he has written according to his conviction of the truth. Mary's worst fault as a woman – her sole fault as a sovereign – was her bigotry: and it is time that the cloud, which prejudice has cast over her, should be dispersed. "Let us judge of her dispassionately and disinterestedly," says Griffet[1]; "let us listen to the testimony of those who have known her, and have had the best means of examining her actions and her discourse. Let us do this, and we may perhaps discover that the reproaches which Protestant writers have heaped upon her have been excessive; and after a strict and impartial examination of her character, we may recognise in her qualities worthy of praise." To this authority may be added that of Mr. Patrick Fraser Tytler, and Sir Frederick Madden, the latter of whom, in his able introduction to the "*Privy Purse Expenses of the Princess Mary*," has most eloquently vindicated her.

Presuming upon the favour which the present work has experienced, the Author begs to intimate that he has other chronicles of the old fortress in contemplation, which he hopes to find leisure to produce. Those who desire further insight into its history and antiquities, are referred to Mr. Bayley's excellent and

[1] Nouveaux Eclaircissements sur l'Histoire de Marie, Reine d'Angleterre. Adressés à M. David Hume. 1760.

comprehensive work on the subject, – a publication not so much known as it deserves to be, and from which much important information contained in the present volume has been derived.

It would be unpardonable in both Author and Illustrator, were they to omit to allude to the courtesy and attention they have experienced from the gentlemen connected with the different departments of the Tower, as well as from the occupants of the various fortifications. They beg, therefore, to offer their cordial acknowledgments to Major Elrington, fort-major and acting governor; to Edmund L. Swift, Esq., keeper of the regalia; to Robert Porrett, Esq., F. S. A., of the Principal Store-keeper's Office; and George Stacey, Esq., of the same; to Thomas Hardy, Esq., F. S. A., keeper of the records in the Tower; to Lieutenant Hall, barrack-master; and to many others.

The Author's best thanks are, also, due to Sir Henry Bedingfeld, Bart., of Oxburgh Hall, Norfolk, (the lineal descendant of the Lieutenant of the Tower introduced in the following pages,) for his obliging communications respecting his ancestor.

"And so," to adopt the words of old Stow, in his continuation of Holinshed's Chronicle, "craving a favourable acceptation of this tedious travail, with a toleration of all such faults, as haply therein lie hidden, and by diligent reading may soon be spied (especially by the critics), we wish that they which best may, would once in their life grow resolute and at a point in this laudable kind of study, most necessary for common knowledge,

little or much to exercise their head and hand. Finally, beseeching God to bless these realms, and its ever precious jewel, our gracious Queen Victoria, and the infant princess newly given to us; to save them as the apple of his eye; and to protect them with the target of his power against all ill, – the Chronicler, in all humility, takes his leave."

Kensal Lodge, Harrow Road, November 28, 1840.

BOOK ONE

I. – OF THE MANNER IN WHICH QUEEN JANE ENTERED THE TOWER OF LONDON

ON the 10th of July, 1553, about two hours after noon, a loud discharge of ordnance burst from the turrets of Durham House, then the residence of the Duke of Northumberland, grand-master of the realm, and occupying the site of the modern range of buildings, known as the Adelphi; and, at the signal, which was immediately answered from every point along the river where a bombard or culverin could be planted, – from the adjoining hospital of the Savoy, – the old palace of Bridewell, recently converted by Edward VI., at the instance of Ridley, bishop of London, into a house of correction, – Baynard's Castle, the habitation of the Earl of Pembroke, – the gates of London-bridge, – and, lastly, from the batteries of the Tower, – a gallant train issued from the southern gateway of the stately mansion abovenamed, and descended the stairs leading to the water's edge, where, appointed for their reception, was drawn up a squadron of fifty superbly-gilt barges, – some decorated with banners and streamers, – some with cloth-of-gold and arras,

embroidered with the devices of the civic companies, – others with innumerable silken pennons to which were attached small silver bells, "making a goodly noise and a goodly sight as they waved in the wind," – while others, reserved for the more important personages of the ceremony, were covered at the sides with shields gorgeously emblazoned with the armorial bearings of the different noblemen and honourable persons composing the privy council, amid which the cognizance of the Duke of Northumberland, – a lion rampant, or, double quevée, *vert*, – appeared proudly conspicuous. Each barge was escorted by a light galley, termed a foist or wafter, manageable either by oar or sail as occasion demanded, and attached to its companion by a stout silken tow-line. In these galleys, besides the rowers, whose oars were shipped, and in readiness to be dropped, at an instant's notice, into the tide, and the men-at-arms, whose tall pikes, steel caps, and polished corslets flashed in the sun-beams, sat bands of minstrels provided with sackbuts, shalms, cornets, rebecs, and other forgotten musical instruments. The conduct of the whole squadron was entrusted to six officers, whose business it was to prevent confusion, and who, in the small swift wherries appointed to their use, rowed rapidly from place to place, endeavouring by threats and commands to maintain order, and keep off the crowd of boats and craft of all sorts hurrying towards them from every quarter of the river. It was a brilliant and busy scene, and might be supposed a joyous and inspiriting one – more especially, as the object which had called together this assemblage was

the conveyance of a young and lovely sovereign to her throne within the Tower. But it was not so. Young and lovely as was that sovereign, – rich, – richer, perhaps, than any of her sex, – in endowments of mind and person, – illustrious and royal in birth, – professing and supporting a faith, then newly established throughout the country, and which it was feared, and with reason, might be greatly endangered, if not wholly subverted, if another and nearer claimant of the crown, the Princess Mary, had succeeded to the inheritance; still, with all these high recommendations, – though her rights were insisted upon by the ablest and most eloquent divines from the pulpit, though her virtues, her acquirements, and her beauty were the theme of every tongue; – as she was not first in the succession, and, above all, as she had been invested with regal authority by one who, from his pride, was obnoxious to all men, – her father-in-law, the Duke of Northumberland, – the Lady Jane Dudley's accession was viewed by all ranks and all parties with mistrust and apprehension. In vain had the haughty duke brought her with a splendid cavalcade from Sion House to his own palace. No cheers greeted her arrival – no rejoicings were made by the populace, but a sullen and ominous silence prevailed amongst those who witnessed her entrance into the capital. It is true that her youth and surpassing beauty excited the greatest interest. Murmurs of irrepressible admiration arose at her appearance; but these were immediately checked on the approach of Northumberland, who, following closely behind her, eyed the concourse as if he

would enforce their applauses; and it was emphatically said, that in pity of the victim of his soaring ambition, more tears were shed on that occasion, than shouts were uttered. On the 9th of July, Lady Jane Dudley – better known by her maiden title of Lady Jane Grey – had been made acquainted with her exalted, but, as she herself (with a sad presentiment of calamity) pronounced it, her fatal destiny. Edward the Sixth had breathed his last, three days previously. His death had been kept carefully concealed by Northumberland, who hoped, by despatching false messages, to have secured the persons of the princesses Mary and Elizabeth. But intelligence of her brother's death having been communicated to the latter, she avoided the snare; and the duke, finding further dissimulation useless, resolved at once to carry his plan into execution, and proclaim his daughter-in-law queen. With this view, and accompanied by several members of the privy-council, he proceeded to Sion House, where she was then living in retirement, and announced to her that the late monarch had declared her by his letters-patent (an instrument which he had artfully obtained) his successor. Jane refused the proffered dignity, urging the prior claims of Edward's sisters; and adding, "I am not so young, nor so little read in the guiles of fortune, to suffer myself to be taken by them. If she enrich any, it is but to make them the subject of her spoil. If she raise others, it is but to pleasure herself with their ruins. What she adorned but yesterday, is to-day her pastime: and if I now permit her to adorn and crown me, I must to-morrow suffer her to crush and tear me

to pieces. Nay, with what crown does she present me? A crown which has been violently and shamefully wrested from Catherine of Arragon, made more unfortunate by the punishment of Anne Boleyn, and others who wore it after her; and why then would you have me add my blood to theirs, and be the third victim from whom this fatal crown may be ravished, with the head that wears it?" In this forcible and feeling language she couched her refusal; and for some time she adhered to her resolution, until at length, her constancy being shaken by the solicitations of her relatives, and above all by the entreaties of her husband Lord Guilford Dudley, to whom she was passionately attached, she yielded a reluctant assent. On the following morning, she was conveyed, as has been just stated, with great pomp to Durham House, in the Strand, where she received the homage of her subjects, partook of a magnificent banquet, and tarried sufficiently long to enable the duke to collect his retinue to conduct her in state to the Tower: it being then the custom for the monarchs of England to spend the first few days of their reign within this ancient fortress. It is with the moment of her departure for this palace and prison of crowned heads, that this chronicle commences.

The advanced guard of the procession was formed by a troop of halberdiers dressed in striped hose of black and tawny, velvet caps decked at the side with silver roses, and doublets of murrey and blue cloth, embroidered on the front and at the back with the royal blazon, woven in gold. Their halbert staves were covered with crimson velvet, fastened with gilt nails, and ornamented

with golden tassels. Filing oft on the right and left, they formed two long lines, extending from the gateway of the palace to the foot of the plank communicating with the barge nearest the shore. A thick rayed cloth was then unfolded, and laid down between them by several attendants in the sumptuous liveries of the Duke of Northumberland. This done, a flourish of trumpets resounded from within; a lively prelude arose from the musicians on the water; and two ushers with white wands marched at a slow and stately pace from the portal. They were followed by an officer bearing the mace; after whom came another carrying the sword of state; then several serjeants of the city guard, in their full accoutrements, and with badges on their sleeves; then the garter king-at-arms in his tabard; then several knights of the Bath, each having a white laco on his sleeve; then their esquires; then the judges, in their robes of scarlet and coifs; then the bishop of Ely, who, in his character of lord high chancellor, wore a robe of scarlet, open before, and purfled with minever; then the aldermen, likewise in cloaks of scarlet; the sheriffs; and, finally, the lord mayor, Sir George Beame, in a gown of crimson velvet, and wearing the collar of SS.

Sufficient time having been allowed for the embarkation of these important personages, who, with their attendants, filled several barges, another flourish of trumpets was heard, fresh symphonies resounded from the river, and the heads of the different civic companies, in their robes of state, descended and departed. Many an eye tracked their course along the river, which

flamed like a sheet of molten gold beneath its glittering burthens. Many an ear listened to the measured sweep of their oars, and the softening cadences of their minstrelsy; lingering, enchanted, on the sight and sound till both faded away in the distance. Still, though a thousand pulses beat high, and a thousand hearts throbbed, not an acclamation was raised, not a. cap thrown in the air, not a scarf waved. The same silence, that had prevailed during the morning, prevailed now. Queen Jane, it was evident, was not the choice of her people.

Meanwhile, two venerable persons had presented themselves on the stair-head. These were Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, and Ridley, bishop of London. They were attired in the scarlet simar, and surplice with its snowy lawn sleeves, proper to their order, and were engaged in deep converse together. The austere course of life prescribed to, and pursued by, the fathers of the Reformed Church, had stamped itself in lines of unusual severity on their countenances. Their demeanour was grave and singularly dignified, and such as well beseemed their high ecclesiastical rank. Arrived at the last step, Cranmer raised his eyes, and, after glancing around as if in expectation of some greeting from the multitude, observed to his companion, "This silence of the people likes me not, my lord: disaffection, I fear, is abroad. This is not the way in which our good citizens are wont to receive a triumph such as his Grace of Northumberland has prepared."

"Your Grace is in the right," replied Ridley. "The assemblage

before whom I pronounced a solemn exhortation this morning at St. Paul's Cross, – when I proved, as I trust, satisfactorily, that Mary and Elizabeth are excluded from the succession on the score of illegitimacy, – received my discourse with murmurs of disapprobation. Vainly did I tell them if they accepted Mary they would relapse into darkness and idolatry: vainly did I enlarge on our young queen's virtues, and show them that she was prepared to carry into effect the wise ordinations of her pious predecessor. They made no answer, – but departed, as men resolved not to be convinced of their error."

"These are signs indeed of troublous times," sighed Cranmer; "and, though it is not given to us to foresee the future, I cannot but fear that a season of bitter persecution of our church is at hand. Heaven avert the day! Heaven preserve queen Jane, who will prove our surest safeguard! Had Mary ruled – "

"Had that false bigot ruled," interrupted Ridley, frowning at the idea, "your grace and I should, ere this, have changed places in the Tower with Gardiner and Bonner. But should what you fear come to pass; should evil times arise, and Rome and her abominations again prevail; should our church need a martyr, she shall find one in me."

"And in me," rejoined Cranmer, fervently.

While this was passing, twelve French gentlemen in splendid habiliments, consisting of pourpoints of white damask, barred with gold, short mantles of crimson velvet, lined with violet taffeta, and carnation-coloured hauts-de-chausses, took their way

down the steps. These galliards, who formed the suite of M. Antoine de Noailles, ambassador from Henry the Second of France, were succeeded by a like number of Spanish cavaliers, the attendants of M. Simon Renard, who fulfilled the like high office for the emperor Charles the Fifth. Dressed in suits of black velvet, entirely without ornament, the Spaniards differed as much from the airy and elegant Frenchmen in gravity and reserve of manner, as in simplicity of apparel. Their leader, Simon Renard, was as plainly attired as his followers, his sole decoration being the Toison d'Or: but of all that brilliant assemblage, perhaps there was none so likely to arrest and rivet attention as this remarkable man; and as he is destined to play no inconsiderable part in this history, it may be worth while to take a narrower survey of his personal appearance. Somewhat above the middle height, and of a spare but muscular frame, he had a dark complexion, rendered yet more sombre in its colour from the contrast it presented to his grizzled board and moustaches. His eye was black and flaming, his nose long and hooked, and he had astern searching glance, which few could withstand. There was something mysterious both in his manner and character which made him universally dreaded; and as he never forgave an offence, nor scrupled at any means of gratifying his vengeance, it was not without reason that he was feared. A subtle politician and skilful diplomatist, high in the favour of the most powerful sovereign in Europe, with apparently inexhaustible funds at his command; inexorable in hatred, fickle in friendship, inconstant in

affairs of gallantry, suspected of being mixed up in every political intrigue or conspiracy, Simon Renard had been for some time the terror and wonder of Edward's court, and had been regarded with suspicion and jealousy by Northumberland, who looked upon him as a dangerous opponent. During Edward's lifetime frequent quarrels had occurred between these two crafty statesmen; but now, at this desperate conjuncture, the duke deemed it prudent to forget his animosity, and to conciliate his antagonist. More of a courtier, and not less of a diplomatist, but without the skill, the resolution, or the cunning of his brother ambassador, De Noailles would have been no match for Renard had they been opposed: and, indeed, his inferiority was afterwards signally manifested. But they were now united by common bonds of animosity: both were determined enemies of Northumberland – both resolved upon his overthrow, and that of the queen he had placed upon the throne.

No sooner had the ambassadors entered their barge, than withdrawing out of earshot of their attendants, they commenced a conversation in a low tone.

"How long will this farce last, think you?" inquired De Noailles, with a laugh.

"Not a day – not an hour," rejoined Simon Renard, "if these suspicious and timorous English nobles will but act in concert, and confide in me."

"Confide in *you?*" said De Noailles, smiling. "They fear you more than Northumberland."

"They will not succeed without me," returned Renard, coldly. "Mark me, De Noailles, I, Simon Renard, simple bailli of Amont in the Franche-Comte, and an unworthy representative of his Majesty Charles the Fifth, hold in my right hand the destiny of this fair land of England."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed De Noailles. "You have learnt to rhodomontade at the court of Madrid, I perceive, Monsieur le Bailli."

"This is no rhodomontade, messire," rejoined the other, sternly; "were I to join with Northumberland and Suffolk, I could establish Jane upon the throne. Acting with the privy council, who, as you well know, are, like ourselves, the duke's secret enemies, I shall strike the sceptre from her grasp, and place it in the hand of Mary. Nay more, I will tell you that if I had not wished to ensure Northumberland's destruction, I would not have suffered him to proceed thus far. But he has now taken a step which nothing can retrieve."

"My hatred of him is as great as your own, M. Renard," observed De Noailles, gravely; "and I shall rejoice as heartily as yourself, or any of his enemies, in his downfall. But I cannot blind myself to his power. Clinton, the Lord High Admiral, his fast friend, is in possession of the Tower, which is full of armed men and ammunition. The royal treasures are in his hands; the troops, the navy, are his – and, as yet, the privy council have sanctioned all his decrees – have sworn obedience to Jane – have proclaimed Mary illegitimate, and deprived her of her inheritance."

"They shall eat their own words," replied Renard, in a sarcastic tone. "But it is time, De Noailles, to admit you to my full confidence. First, swear to me, by the holy Evangelists, that I may trust you."

"I swear it," replied De Noailles, "provided," he added, smiling, "your scheme has nothing treasonable against my liege lord, Henry the Second."

"Judge for yourself," answered Renard. "There is a plot hatching against the life of Northumberland."

"Mortdieu!" exclaimed the French ambassador; "by whom?"

"To-night you shall meet the conspirators," replied Renard.

"Their names?" demanded De Noailles.

"It matters not," answered the other; "I am their leader. Will you make one of us?"

"Willingly," rejoined the Frenchman. "But how is the duke to be put to death?"

"By the headsman," replied Simon Renard. "He shall die the death of a traitor."

"You were ever mysterious, messire," observed De Noailles, drily; "and you are now more mysterious than ever. But I will join your plot with all my heart. Pardieu! I should like to offer Northumberland's head to Queen Mary. It would be as acceptable as that of Cicero to Fulvia."

"My gift shall be yet more acceptable," rejoined Simon Renard, sternly. "I will offer her the fairest and the wisest head in England – that of Queen Jane."

During this conference, the procession had been increased by several members of the privy-council, consisting of the Earls of Arundel, Shrewsbury, Huntingdon, and Pembroke, the Lords Cobham and Rich, with divers other noble and honourable persons, among whom Sir William Cecil, principal secretary of state, (afterwards, the great Lord Burghley.) must not pass unnoticed. Pembroke and Cecil walked together; and, in spite of their forced composure, it was evident that both were ill at case. As a brief halt took place amongst the foremost party, Cecil seized the arm of his companion, and whispered hurriedly in his ear, "We are lost, my lord. Your messengers to the queen have been arrested; so have my trusty servants, Alford and Cayewood. Luckily, their despatches are in cipher. But Northumberland's suspicions once aroused, his vengeance will not be slow to follow. There is yet time for escape. Can we not frame some excuse for landing at your lordship's residence, Baynard's Castle? Once within the Tower, I tremble for our heads."

"My case is not so desperate as yours," returned the earl, firmly; "but were it so, I would never fly while others are left to pay the penalty of my cowardice. We have advanced too far to retreat – and, be the issue of this project what it may, I will not shrink from it. Simon Renard is leagued with us, and he alone is a match for Northumberland, or for the fiend himself, if opposed to him. Be of good cheer. The day will yet be ours."

"Were I assured of Renard's sincerity," replied Cecil, "I might, indeed, feel more confidence. But I have detected too many

of his secret practices – have had too much experience of his perfidy and double-dealing, to place any faith in him."

"You wrong him," rejoined Pembroke; "by my soul you do! As we proceed, I will give you proofs that will remove all apprehensions of treachery on his part from your mind. He has proposed a plan. – But of this anon – for, see! – all, save ourselves, have entered the barge. Do you mark how suddenly the weather has changed? A thunder-storm is gathering over the Tower. 'Tis a bad omen for Northumberland."

"Or for us," rejoined Cecil, gloomily.

The sudden change in the weather, here alluded to, was remarked and commented upon by many others besides the Earl of Pembroke; and by most it was regarded as an evil augury against the young queen. The sky had become overcast; the river, lately so smiling, now reflected only the sombre clouds that overshadowed it; while heavy, leaden-coloured masses, arising in the north-east, behind the Tower, seemed to threaten a speedy and severe storm in that quarter. Alarmed by these signs, several of the more prudent spectators, who preferred a dry skin to the further indulgence of their curiosity, began to urge their barks homewards. The majority of the assemblage, however, lingered: a glimpse of a queen so beautiful as Jane was reputed, appeared to them well worth a little personal inconvenience.

Meanwhile, a loud and prolonged trumpet-blast proclaimed the approach of the Duke of Northumberland. He was accompanied by the Duke of Suffolk, the father of the queen.

Nothing more majestic can be conceived than the deportment of the former – nothing more magnificent than his attire. His features, though haughty and disdainful, with a fierce expression about the mouth and eyes, were remarkably handsome and well-formed. His figure was tall and commanding, and there was something which is generally associated with the epithets chivalrous and picturesque in his appearance. John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, who by his genius and rare abilities as a statesman had elevated himself to the lofty position which he now held, could not be less in age than fifty. But he had none of the infirmity of years about him. His forehead was bald, but that only gave expanse to his noble countenance; his step was as firm as a young man's; his eye as keen and bright as that of an eagle. He was habited in a doublet of white satin, with a placard or front-piece of purple cloth of tissue, powdered with diamonds and edged with ermine. Over this he wore a mantle of cloth of silver, pounced with his cipher, lined with blue velvet, set with pearls and precious stones, and fastened with a jewelled clasp. From his neck was suspended the order of the Garter, while in his hand he carried the silver verder belonging to his office as grand-master of the realm. The Duke of Suffolk was scarcely less magnificently arrayed, in a doublet of black cloth of gold, and a cloak of crimson satin flowered with gold, and ribanded with nets of silver. He also wore the order of the Garter. Suffolk was somewhat younger than his companion, of whom he stood, as indeed did all the other nobles, greatly in awe. He had

well-formed features, a fine figure, a courtly air, and affable and conciliating manners; but though a man of unquestionable ability and courage, he wanted that discernment and active resolution which alone could have preserved him from the dangers and difficulties in which he was afterwards involved. His qualities have been admirably summed up by Holinshed, who describes him as "a man of high nobility by birth, and of nature to his friend gentle and courteous; more easy indeed to be led than was thought expedient, nevertheless stout and hardy; hasty and soon kindled, but pacified straight again, and sorry if in his heat aught had passed him otherwise than reason might seem to bear; upright and plain in his private dealings; no dissembler, nor well able to bear injuries; but yet forgiving and forgetting the same, if the party would but seem to acknowledge his fault and seek reconcilement; bountiful he was, and very liberal; somewhat learned himself, and a great favourer of those that were learned, so that to many he showed himself a very Maecenas; as free from covetousness, as devoid of pride and disdainful haughtiness of mind, more regarding plain-meaning men than clawback flatterers." Such, as depicted by the honest old chronicler above-named, was Henry Grey, Duke of Suffolk, father of Queen Jane.

Just as the two dukes emerged from the portal, a slight commotion was heard in the outer court, and a valet, stepping forward, made a profound reverence to Northumberland, and presented him with a paper. The duke broke the silken thread and seal with which it was fastened, and ran his eye rapidly over

its contents. His brow darkened for an instant, but as speedily cleared, and a smile of fierce satisfaction played upon his lips. "Traitors!" he ejaculated in an under tone, turning to Suffolk; "but I have them now; and, by God's precious soul! they shall not escape me."

"What new treason has come to light, brother!" demanded the Duke of Suffolk, uneasily.

"Nothing new, – nothing but what I suspected. But their plots have taken a more dangerous and decided form," replied Northumberland, sternly.

"You do not name the traitors, – but you speak of the privy-council, I conclude?" observed Suffolk.

"Ay, brother, of the privy-council. They are all *my* enemies, —*your* enemies, – the *queen's* enemies. This scroll warns me that a conspiracy is forming against my life."

"Heaven forbid!" ejaculated Suffolk. "Surely, our English nobles are not turned assassins."

"The chief mover in the dark scheme is not an Englishman," returned Northumberland.

"It cannot be the light-hearted De Noailles. Ha! I have it: it is the plotting and perfidious Simon Renard."

"Your Grace is in the right," replied Northumberland; "it *is* Simon Renard."

"Who are his associates?" inquired Suffolk.

"As yet I know not," answered the other; "but I have netted them all, and, like the fowler, will spare neither bird of prey nor

harmless songster. I have a trick shall test the true metal from the false. What think you, brother? – a letter has arrived from Mary to this false council, claiming the crown.".

"Ha!" exclaimed Suffolk.

"It is here," continued Northumberland, pointing to a paper folded round his silver staff. "I shall lay it before them anon. Before I depart, I must give orders for the proclamation. Bid the heralds come hither," he added to the attendant; who instantly departed, and returned a moment afterwards, followed by two heralds in their coats of arms. "Take this scroll," continued the duke, "and let the Queens Highness be proclaimed by sound of trumpet at the cross at Charing, in Cheapside, and in Fleet-street. Take with you a sufficient guard, and if any murmuring ensue let the offenders be punished. Do you mark me?"

"We do, your Grace," replied the heralds, bowing. And, taking the proclamation, they departed on their behest, – while the duke, accompanied by Suffolk, entered his barge.

Preceded by two trumpeters, having their clarions richly dressed with fringed silk bandrols, displaying the royal arms; a captain of the guard, in a suit of scarlet bound with black velvet, and with a silver rose in his bonnet, next descended the stairs, and announced, in a loud and authoritative voice, that her Highness the Queen was about to embark: an intimation, which, though received with no particular demonstration of enthusiasm or delight by the spectators, was, nevertheless, productive of considerable confusion among them. The more

distant wherrymen, who had been hitherto resting tranquilly on their oars, in their anxiety to secure a better position for their fares, now pressed eagerly forward; in consequence of which many violent collisions took place; great damage was sustained by the foremost boats, some being swamped and their owners plunged in the tide; while others, bereft of their oars, were swept away by the rapid current. Amid this tumult, much struggling and scuffling occurred; shrieks and oaths were uttered; and many blows from sword, dagger, and club were dealt, and requited with the heartiest good-will. Owing, however, to the exertions of the officers, no lives were lost. The drowning persons were picked up and carried ashore; and the disputants compelled to hold their peace, and reserve the adjustment of their differences to another, and more favourable opportunity. By the time Jane appeared, all was comparatively quiet. But the incident had not tended to improve the temper of the crowd, or create a stronger feeling in her favour. Added to this, the storm seemed fast advancing and ready to burst over their heads; the sky grew darker each moment; and when a second discharge of ordnance was bred from the palace walls, and rolled sullenly along the river, it was answered by a distant peal of thunder. In spite of all these adverse circumstances, no delay occurred in the procession. A magnificent barge, with two large banners, beaten with the royal arms, planted on the foreship, approached the strand. Its sides were hung with metal scutcheons, alternately emblazoned with the cognizances of the queen and her consort; and its decks

covered with the richest silks and tissues. It was attended by two smaller galleys – one of which, designated the Bachelors' barge, was appropriated to the younger sons of the nobility: the other was devoted to the maids of honour. In the latter was placed a quaint device, intended to represent a mount with a silver tree springing from it, on which was perched a dove with a circlet of diamonds around its neck, bearing an inscription in honour of the queen, and a crown upon its head. No sooner had the royal barge taken up its position, than a train of twenty gentlemen, in doublets of black velvet and with chains of gold, stepped towards it. They were followed by six pages in vests of cloth of gold; after whom came the Earl of Northampton, lord high chamberlain, bareheaded, and carrying a white wand; and after the chamberlain, appeared the Lady Herbert, younger sister of the queen, a beautiful blonde, with soft blue eyes and silken tresses, accompanied by the Lady Hastings, younger sister of Lord Guilford Dudley, a sprightly brunette, with large orient orbs, black as midnight, and a step proud as that of a Juno. Both these lovely creatures – neither of whom had attained her fifteenth year – had been married at the end of May – then, as now, esteemed an unlucky month, – on the sumo day that the nuptials of the Lady Jane Grey took place. Of these three marriages there was not one but was attended with fatal consequences.

Immediately behind her sisters, with the laps of her dress supported by the bishops of Rochester and Winchester, and her

train, which was of great length and corresponding magnificence, borne by her mother, the duchess of Suffolk, walked queen Jane. Whatever disinclination she might have previously shown to undertake the dangerous and difficult part she had assumed; however reluctantly she had accepted the sovereignty; nothing of misgiving or irresolution was now to be discerned. Her carriage was majestic; her look lofty, yet tempered with such sweetness, that while it commanded respect, it ensured attachment. Her attire – for the only point upon which Jane did not conform to the rigid notions of the early religious reformers was in regard to dress – was gorgeous in the extreme; and never, assuredly, was rich costume bestowed upon a more faultlessly beautiful person. Her figure was tall and slight, but exquisitely formed, and gave promise, that when she attained the full maturity of womanhood – she had only just completed her sixteenth year, and (alas!) never *did* attain maturity – her charms would be without a rival. In mental qualifications Jane was equally gifted. And, if it is to be lamented that her beauty, like an opening flower, was rudely plucked and scattered to the breezes, how much more must it be regretted, that such faculties as she possessed should have been destroyed before they were fully developed, and the fruit they might have produced lost for ever! Reared in the seclusion of Bradgate, in Leicestershire, Jane Grey passed hours which other maidens of her tender age are accustomed to devote to amusement or rest, in the severest study; and, long before she was called upon to perform the arduous duties of her brief life,

she had acquired a fund of knowledge such as the profoundest scholars seldom obtain. If this store of learning did little for the world, it did much for herself: – it taught her a philosophy, that enabled her to support, with the constancy of a martyr, her after trials. At the moment of her presentation to the reader, Jane was in all the flush and excitement of her new dignity. Everything around her was dazzling and delusive; but she was neither dazzled nor deluded. She estimated her position at its true value; saw through its hollowness and unsubstantiality; and, aware that she only grasped the shadow of a sceptre, and bore the semblance of a crown, suffered neither look nor gesture to betray her emotions. Her dress consisted of a gown of cloth of gold raised with pearls, a stomacher blazing with diamonds and other precious stones, and a surcoat of purple velvet bordered with ermine. Her train was of purple velvet upon velvet, likewise furred with ermine, and embroidered with various devices in gold. Her slender and swan-like throat was encircled with a carcanet of gold set with rubies and pearls, from which a single and almost priceless pearl depended. Her head-dress consisted of a coif of velvet of the peculiar form then in vogue, adorned with rows of pearls, and confined by a circlet of gold. At her right walked Lord Guilford Dudley – a youthful nobleman, who inherited his father's manly beauty and chivalrous look, with much of his ambition and haughtiness, but without any of his cunning and duplicity, or of his genius. He was superbly attired in white cloth of gold, and wore a collar of diamonds. Behind the queen marched a

long train of high-born dames, damsels, youthful nobles, pages, knights, esquires, and ushers, until the rear-guard was brought up by a second detachment of halberdiers. Prepared as the mass of the assemblage were to evidence their dissatisfaction by silence, an involuntary burst of applause hailed her approach, and many, who thought it a sort of disloyalty to Mary to welcome a usurper, could not refuse to join in the cheers.

At the moment Jane was crossing the railed plank leading to her galley, a small wherry, rowed by a young man of slight sinewy frame, clad in a doublet of coarse brown serge, and wearing a flat felt cap, on which a white cross was stitched, shot with marvellous rapidity from out the foremost line of boats, and, in spite of all opposition, passed between the state barges, and drew up at her feet. Before the daring intruder could be removed, an old woman, seated in the stern of the boat, arose and extended her arms towards Jane. She was dressed in mean attire, with her grey locks gathered beneath an ancient three-cornered coif; but her physiognomy was striking, and her manner seemed far above her lowly condition. Fixing an imploring glance on the queen, she cried – "A boon! a boon!"

"It is granted," replied Jane, in a kind tone, and pausing. "What would you?"

"Preserve you," rejoined the old woman. "Go not to the Tower."

"And wherefore not, good dame?" inquired the queen.

"Ask me not," returned the old woman, – her figure dilating,

her eye kindling, and her gesture becoming almost that of command, as she spoke, – "Ask me not; but take my warning. Again, I say – Go not to the Tower. Danger lurks therein, – danger to you – your husband – and to all you hold dear. Return, while it is yet time; return to the retirement of Sion House – to the solitudes of Bradgate. – Put off those royal robes – restore the crown to her from whom you wrested it, and a long and happy life shall be yours. But set foot within that galley – enter the gates of the Tower – and another year shall not pass over your head."

"Guards!" cried Lord Guilford Dudley, advancing and motioning to his attendants – "remove this beldame and her companion, and place them in arrest."

"Have patience, my dear lord," said Jane, in a voice so sweet, that it was impossible to resist it – "the poor woman is distraught."

"No, lady, I am not distraught," rejoined the old woman, "though I have suffered enough to make me so."

"Can I relieve your distresses?" inquired Jane, kindly.

"In no other way than by following my caution," answered the old woman. "I want nothing but a grave."

"Who are you that dare to hold such language as this to your queen?" demanded Lord Guilford Dudley, angrily.

"I am Gunnora Braose," replied the old woman, fixing a withering glance upon him, "nurse and foster-mother to Henry Seymour, Duke of Somerset, lord protector of England, who perished on the scaffold by the foul practices of your father."

"Woman," rejoined Lord Guilford, in a menacing tone, "be warned by me. You speak at the peril of your life."

"I know it," replied Gunnora; "but that shall not hinder me. If I succeed in saving that fair young creature, whom your father's arts have placed in such fearful jeopardy, from certain destruction, I care not what becomes of me. My boldness, I am well assured, will be fearfully visited upon me, and upon my grandson at my side. But were it the last word I had to utter, – were this boy's life," she added, laying her hand on the youth's shoulder, who arose at the touch, "set against hers, I would repeat my warning."

"Remove your cap in presence of the queen, knave," cried one of the halberdiers, striking off the young man's cap with his staff.

"She is not my queen," rejoined the youth, boldly; "I am for Queen Mary, whom Heaven and Our Lady preserve!"

"Peace, Gilbert!" cried Gunnora, authoritatively.

"Treason! treason!" exclaimed several voices – "down with them!"

"Do them no injury," interposed Jane, waving her hand; "let them depart freely. Set forward, my lords."

"Hear me, sovereign lady, before I am driven from you," cried the old woman, in accents of passionate supplication – "hear me, I implore you. You are going to a prison, not a palace. – Look at yon angry sky from which the red lightning is flashing. A moment since it was bright and smiling; at your approach it has become black and overcast. It is an omen not to be despised."

"Hence!" cried Lord Guilford.

"And you, Lord Guilford Dudley," continued Gunnora, in a stern tone, – "you, who have added your voice to that of your false father, to induce your bride to accept the crown, – think not you will ever rule this kingdom, – think not the supreme authority will be yours. You are a puppet in your father's hands; and when you have served his turn, he will cast you aside – or deal with you as he dealt with Lord Seymour of Dudley, – with the lord protector, *by the axe*, – or, as he dealt with his sovereign, Edward the Sixth, *by poison*."

"This passeth all endurance," exclaimed Lord Guilford; – "away with her to prison."

"Not so, my dear lord," said Queen Jane. "See you not that her supposed wrongs have turned her brain? She is faithful to the memory of the lord protector. If my reign prove as brief as she would have me believe it will be, it shall never be marked by severity. My first act shall be one of clemency. Take this ring, my poor woman," she added, detaching a brilliant from her taper finger, "and when you need a friend, apply to Queen Jane."

Gunnora received the costly gift with a look of speechless gratitude; the tears started to her eyes, and she sank upon her knees in the boat, burying her face in her hands. In this state, she was rowed swiftly away by her grandson, while the loudest shouts were raised for the munificence and mercy of Jane, who was not sorry to hide herself behind the silken curtains of her barge.

At this moment, a loud and rattling peal of thunder burst

overhead.

Seated beneath a canopy of state, supported by the richest silken cushions, and with her tiny feet resting upon a velvet footstool, adorned with her cipher and that of her husband interwoven with love-knots, Jane proceeded along the river; her heart oppressed with fears and forebodings, to which she gave no utterance, but which the storm now raging around with frightful violence was not calculated to allay. The thunder was awfully loud; the lightning almost insupportably vivid; but fortunately for those exposed to the tempest, it was unattended with rain. Lord Guilford Dudley was unremitting in his assiduity to his lovely consort, and bitterly reproached himself for allowing her to set forth at such a season. As they approached that part of the river from which the noble old gothic cathedral of St. Paul's – one of the finest structures in the world, and destroyed, it is almost needless to say, by the Fire of London, when it was succeeded by the present pile – was best seen, Jane drew aside the curtains of her barge, and gazed with the utmost admiration upon the magnificent fane. The storm seemed to hang over its square and massive tower, and flashes of forked lightning of dazzling brightness appeared to shoot down each instant upon the body of the edifice.

"Like me, it is threatened," Jane mentally ejaculated; "and perhaps the blow that strikes me may strike also the religion of my country. Whatever betide me, Heaven grant that that noble pile may never again be polluted by the superstitious ceremonies

and idolatries of Rome!"

Viewed from the Thames, London, even in our own time, presents many picturesque and beautiful points; but at the period to which this chronicle refers, it must have presented a thousand more. Then, gardens and stately palaces adorned its banks; then, the spires and towers of the churches shot into an atmosphere unpolluted by smoke; then, the houses, with their fanciful gables, and vanes, and tall twisted chimneys, invited and enchained the eye; then, the streets, of which a passing glimpse could be caught, were narrow and intricate: then, there was the sombre, dungeon-like strong-hold already alluded to, called Baynard's Castle; the ancient tavern of the Three Cranes; the Still-yard; and above all, the Bridge, even then old, with its gateways, towers, drawbridges, houses, mills, and chapel, – enshrined like a hidden and cherished faith within its inmost heart. All this has passed away. But if we have no old St. Paul's, no old London Bridge, no quaint and picturesque old fabrics, no old and frowning castles, no old taverns, no old wharfs – if we have none of these, we have still *the Tower*; and to that grand relic of antiquity, well worth all the rest, we shall, without further delay, proceed.

Having passed beneath the narrow arches of London Bridge, the houses on which were crowded with spectators, and the windows hung with arras and rich carpets, the royal barge drew up at the distance of a bow-shot from the Tower. Jane again drew aside the curtain, and when she beheld the sullen ramparts of the fortress over which arose its lofty citadel (the White Tower), with

its weather-whitened walls relieved against the dusky sky, and looking like the spectre of departed greatness, – her firmness for an instant forsook her, and the tears involuntarily started to her eyes. But the feeling was transient; and more stirring emotions were quickly aroused by the deafening roar of ordnance which broke from the batteries, and which was instantly answered from the guns of several ships lying at anchor near them. By this time, the storm had in a great measure subsided; the thunder had become more distant, and the lightning only flashed at long intervals. Still, the sky had an ominous appearance, and the blue electric atmosphere in which the pageant was enveloped gave it a ghostly and unsubstantial look. Meanwhile, the lord mayor and his suite, the bishops, the privy council, the ambassadors, and the Dukes of Northumberland and Suffolk, having disembarked, the wafter having the charge of the royal galley drew it towards the land. Another "marvellous great shot," as it is described, was then fired, and amid flourishes of trumpets, peals of ordnance, and ringing of bells, Jane landed. Here, however, as heretofore, she was coldly received by the citizens, who hovered around in boats, – and here, as if she was destined to receive her final warning, the last sullen peal of thunder marked the moment when she set her foot on the ground. The same preparations had been made for her landing as for her embarkation. Two lines of halberdiers were drawn up alongside the platform, and between them was laid a carpet similar to that previously used. Jane walked in the same state as before, – her train supported by her

mother, – and attended on her right hand by her husband, behind whom came his esquire, the young and blooming Cuthbert Cholmondeley.

Where there are so many claimants for attention, it is impossible to particularize all; and we must plead this as an apology for not introducing this gallant at an earlier period. To repair the omission, it may now be stated that Cuthbert Cholmondeley was a younger branch of an old Cheshire family; that he was accounted a perfect model of manly beauty; and that he was attired upon the present occasion in a doublet of white satin slashed with blue, which displayed his slight but symmetrical figure to the greatest advantage.

Proceeding along the platform by the side of a low wall which guarded the southern moat, Jane passed under a narrow archway formed by a small embattled tower connected with an external range of walls facing Petty Wales. She next traversed part of the space between what was then called the Bulwark Gate and the Lion's Gate, and which was filled with armed men, and passing through the postern, crossed a narrow stone bridge. This brought her to a strong portal, flanked with bastions and defended by a double portcullis, at that time designated the Middle Tower. Here Lord Clinton, Constable of the Tower, with the lieutenant, the gentleman porter, and a company of warders, advanced to meet her. By them she was conducted with much ceremony over another stone bridge, with a drawbridge in the centre, crossing the larger moat, to a second strong barbican, similarly defended

and in all other respects resembling the first, denominated the Gate Tower. As she approached this portal, she beheld through its gothic arch a large assemblage, consisting of all the principal persons who had assisted at the previous ceremonial, drawn up to receive her. As soon as she emerged from the gateway with her retinue, the members of the council bent the knee before her. The Duke of Northumberland offered her the keys of the Tower, while the Marquess of Winchester, lord treasurer, tendered her the crown.

At this proud moment, all Jane's fears were forgotten, and she felt herself in reality a queen. At this moment, also, her enemies, Simon Renard and De Noailles, resolved upon her destruction. At this moment, Cuthbert Cholmondeley, who was placed a little to the left of the queen, discovered amid the by-standers behind one of the warders a face so exquisitely beautiful, and a pair of eyes of such witchery, that his heart was instantly captivated; and at this moment, also, another pair of very jealous-looking eyes, peering out of a window in the tower adjoining the gateway, detected what was passing between the youthful couple below, and inflamed their owner with a fierce and burning desire of revenge.

II. – OF THE INDIGNITY SHOWN TO THE PRIVY COUNCIL BY THE DUKE OF NORTHUMBERLAND; AND OF THE RESOLUTION TAKEN BY SIMON RENARD TO AVENGE THEM

When the ceremonial at the Tower gate was ended, Queen Jane was conducted by the Duke of Northumberland to an ancient range of buildings, standing at the south-east of the fortress, between the Lanthorn Tower, now swept away, and the Salt Tower. This structure, which has long since disappeared, formed the palace of the old monarchs of England, and contained the royal apartments. Towards it Jane proceeded between closely-serried ranks of archers and arquebusiers, armed with long-bows and calivers. The whole line of fortifications, as she passed along, bristled with partizans and pikes. The battlements and turrets of St. Thomas's Tower, beneath which yawned the broad black arch spanning the Traitor's Gate, was planted with culverins and sakers; while a glimpse through the grim portal of the Bloody Tower, – which, with its iron teeth, seemed ever ready to swallow up the victims brought through the fatal gate opposite it, – showed that the vast area and green in front of the White Tower was filled with troops. All these defensive preparations,

ostentatiously displayed by Northumberland, produced much of the effect he desired upon the more timorous of his adversaries. There were others, however, who regarded the exhibition as an evidence of weakness, rather than power; and amongst these was Simon Renard. "Our duke, I see," he remarked to his companion, De Noailles, "fears Mary more than he would have us believe. The crown that requires so much guarding cannot be very secure. Ah! well, he has entered the Tower by the great gate to-day; but if he ever quits it," he added, glancing significantly at the dark opening of Traitors Gate, which they were then passing, "his next entrance shall be by yonder steps." Jane, meanwhile, had approached the ancient palace with her train. Its arched gothic doorway was guarded by three gigantic warders, brothers, who, claiming direct descent from the late monarch, Harry the Eighth, were nicknamed by their companions, from their extraordinary stature, Og, Gog, and Magog. Og, the eldest of the three, was the exact image, on a large scale, of his royal sire. By their side, as if for the sake of contrast, with an immense halbert in his hand, and a look of swelling importance, rivalling that of the frog in the fable, stood a diminutive but full-grown being, not two feet high, dressed in the garb of a page. This mannikin, who, besides his dressed figure, had a malicious and ill-favoured countenance, with a shock head of yellow hair, was a constant attendant upon the giants, and an endless source of diversion to them. Xit – for so was the dwarf named – had been found, when an infant, and scarcely bigger than a thumb, one morning at Og's door,

where he was placed in the fragment of a blanket, probably out of ridicule. Thrown thus upon his compassion, the good-humoured giant adopted the tiny foundling, and he became, as has been stated, a constant attendant and playmate – or, more properly, plaything – of himself and his brethren. Unable to repress a smile at the ludicrous dignity of the dwarf, who, advancing a few steps towards her, made her a profound salutation as she passed, and bade her welcome in a voice as shrill as a child's treble; nor less struck with the herculean frames and huge stature of his companions, – they were all nearly eight feet high, though Magog exceeded his brethren by an inch; – Jane ascended a magnificent oaken staircase, traversed a long gallery, and entered a spacious but gloomy-looking hall, lighted by narrow gothic windows filled with stained glass, and hung with tarnished cloth of gold curtains and faded arras. The furniture was cumbrous, though splendid, – much of it belonging to the period of Henry the Seventh, though some of it dated as far back as the reign of Edward the Third, when John of France was detained a prisoner within the Tower, and feasted by his royal captor within this very chamber. The walls being of great thickness, the windows had deep embrasures, and around the upper part of the room ran a gallery. It was in precisely the same state as when occupied by Henry the Eighth, whose portrait, painted by Holbein, was placed over the immense chimney-piece; and as Jane gazed around, and thought how many monarchs had entered this room before her full of hope and confidence, – how with all their greatness

they had passed away, – she became so powerfully affected, that she trembled, and could with difficulty support herself. Remarking her change of colour, and conjecturing the cause, Northumberland begged her to retire for a short time to repose herself before she proceeded to the council-chamber within the White Tower, where her presence was required on business of the utmost moment. Gladly availing herself of the suggestion, Jane, attended by her mother and her dames of honour, withdrew into an inner chamber. On her departure, several of the privy-councillors advanced towards the duke, but, after returning brief answers to their questions, in a tone calculated to cut short any attempt at conversation, he motioned towards him two ushers, and despatched them on different errands. He then turned to the Duke of Suffolk, who was standing by his side, and was soon engaged in deep and earnest discourse with him. Aware that they were suspected, and alarmed for their safety, the conspiring nobles took counsel together as to the course they should pursue. Some were for openly defying Northumberland, – some for a speedy retreat, – some for the abandonment of their project, – while others, more confident, affirmed that the Duke would not dare to take any severe measures, and, therefore, there was no ground for apprehension. Amid these conflicting opinions, Simon Renard maintained his accustomed composure. "It is plain," he said to the group around him, "that the Duke's suspicions are awakened, and that he meditates some reprisal. What it is will presently be seen. But trust in me, and you shall

yet wear your heads upon your shoulders."

At the expiration of a quarter of an hour, the Queen, who had been summoned by Lord Guilford Dudley, reappeared. The great door was then instantly thrown open by two officials with white wands, and, attended by Northumberland, to whom she gave her hand, traversing a second long gallery, she descended a broad flight of steps, and entered upon another range of buildings, which has since shared the fate of the old palace, but which then, extending in a northerly direction, and flanked on the right by a fortification denominated the Wardrobe Tower, connected the royal apartments with the White Tower. Taking her way through various halls, chambers, and passages in this pile, Jane, at length, arrived at the foot of a wide stone staircase, on mounting which she found herself in a large and lofty chamber, with a massive roof crossed and supported by ponderous beams of timber. This room, which was situated within the White Tower, and which Jane was apprised adjoined the council-chamber, was filled with armed men. Smiling at this formidable assemblage, Northumberland directed the Queen towards a circular-arched opening in the wall on the right, and led her into a narrow vaulted gallery formed in the thickness of the wall. A few steps brought them to another narrow gallery, branching off on the left, along which they proceeded. Arrived at a wide opening in the wall, a thick curtain was then drawn aside by two attendants, and Jane was ushered into the council-chamber. The sight which met her gaze was magnificent beyond description. The vast hall,

resembling in all respects the antechamber she had just quitted, except that it was infinitely more spacious, with its massive roof hung with banners and its wooden pillars decorated with velvet and tapestry, was crowded to excess with all the principal persons and their attendants who had formed her retinue in her passage along the river, grouped according to their respective ranks. At the upper end of the chamber, beneath a golden canopy, was placed the throne; on the right of which stood the members of the privy-council, and on the left the bishops. Opposite to the throne, at the lower extremity of the room, the walls were hung with a thick curtain of black velvet, on which was displayed a large silver scutcheon charged with the royal blasen. Before this curtain was drawn up a line of arquebusiers, each with a caliver upon his shoulder.

No sooner was the Queen seated, than Northumberland, who had placed himself at the foot of the throne, prostrated himself, and besought her permission to lay before the lords of the council a despatch, just received from the Lady Mary; which being accorded, he arose, and, turning towards them, unfolded a paper, and addressed them in a stern tone as follows: – "My lords," he began, "it will scarcely surprise you to be informed that the Lady Mary, in the letter I here hold, given under her signet, and dated from Kenninghall in Norfolk, lays claim to the imperial crown of this realm, and requires and charges you, of your allegiance, which you owe to her, and to none other, – it is so written, my lords, – to employ yourselves for the honour and surety of her

person only; and furthermore, to cause her right and title to the crown and government of the realm to be proclaimed within the city of London and other places, as to your wisdoms shall seem good. Now, my lords, what say you? What answer will you make to these insolent demands – to these idle and imaginary claims?"

"None whatever," replied the Earl of Pembroke; "we will treat them with the scorn they merit."

"That may not be, my lord," observed Queen Jane; "your silence will be misconstrued."

"Ay, marry will it," rejoined Northumberland, glancing fiercely at the Earl; "and your advice, my lord of Pembroke, savours strongly of disloyalty. I will tell you how you shall answer this misguided lady. You shall advertise her, firstly, that on the death of our sovereign lord, Edward the Sixth, Queen Jane became invested and possessed with the just and right title in the imperial crown of this realm, not only by good order of ancient laws, but also by our late sovereign lord's letters patent, signed with his own hand, and sealed with the great seal of England, in presence of the most part of the nobles, councillors, judges, and divers other grave and sage personages, assenting to and subscribing the same. You shall next tell her, that having sworn allegiance to Queen Jane, you can offer it to no other, except you would fall into grievous and unspeakable enormities. You shall also remind her, that by the divorce made between the king of famous memory, King Henry the Eighth, and the lady Catherine her mother, confirmed by sundry acts of parliament yet in force,

she was justly made illegitimate and unheritable to the crown of this realm. And lastly, you shall require her to surcease, by any pretence, to vex and molest our sovereign lady Queen Jane, or her subjects from their true faith and allegiance unto her grace. This, my lords, is the answer you shall return."

"We will consider of it," cried several voices.

"Your decision must be speedy," returned the Duke, scornfully; "a messenger waits without, to convey your reply to the Lady Mary. And to spare your lordships any trouble in penning the despatch, I have already prepared it."

"Prepared it!" ejaculated Cecil.

"Ay, prepared it," repeated the Duke. "It is here," he added, producing a parchment, "fairly enough written, and only lacking your lordships' signatures. Will it please you, Sir William Cecil, or you, my lord of Pembroke, or you, Shrewsbury, to cast an eye over it, to see whether it differs in aught from what I have counselled as a fitting answer to Mary's insolent message? You are silent: then, I may conclude you are satisfied."

"Your grace concludes more than you have warrant for," rejoined the Earl of Pembroke; "I am *not* satisfied, nor will I subscribe that letter."

"Nor I," added Cecil.

"Nor I," repeated several others.

"We shall see," returned Northumberland: "bring pen and ink," he added, motioning to an attendant, by whom his commands were instantly obeyed. "Your grace of Canterbury,"

he continued, addressing Cranmer, "will sign it first. 'Tis well. And now, my lord Marquess of Winchester, your signature; my lord Bedford, yours; now yours, Northampton; yours, my lord chancellor; next, I shall attach my own; and now yours, brother of Suffolk. You see, my lords," he said, with a bitter smile, "you will be well kept in countenance."

While this was passing, Simon Renard, who stood among the throng of privy-councillors, observed in a whisper to those nearest him, – "If this despatch is signed and sent forth, Mary's hopes are ruined. She will suspect some treachery on the part of her friends, and immediately embark for France, which is what Northumberland desires to accomplish."

"His scheme shall be defeated, then," replied Pembroke; "it never shall be signed."

"Be not too sure of that," rejoined Renard, with a scarcely-repressed sneer.

"And now, my lord of Arundel," said the Duke, taking the document from Suffolk, "we tarry for your signature."

"Then your grace must tarry still longer," replied Arundel, sullenly, "for I am in no mood to furnish it."

"Ha!" exclaimed Northumberland, fiercely, – but, instantly checking himself, he turned to the next peer, and continued: "I will pass on, then, to you, Lord Shrewsbury. I am assured of *your* loyalty. What! do you, too, desert your queen? God's mercy! my lord, I have been strangely mistaken in you. Pembroke, you can now prove I was in error. You fold your arms – 'tis well! I

understand you. Rich, Huntingdon, Darcy, I appeal to you. My lords! my lords! you forget to whom you owe allegiance. Sir Thomas Cheney, – do you not hear me speak to you, Sir Thomas? Cecil, my politic, crafty Cecil, – a few strokes of your pen is all I ask, and those you refuse me. Gates, Petre, Cheke, – will none of you move? will none sign?"

"None," answered Pembroke.

"It is false," cried Northumberland, imperiously; "you shall *all* sign, —*all!* vile, perjured traitors that you are! I will have your hands to this paper, or, by God's precious soul! I will seal it with your blood. Now, will you obey me?"

There was a stern, deep silence.

"Will you obey him?" demanded Renard, in a mocking whisper. "No!" answered Pembroke, fiercely.

"Guards!" cried Northumberland, "advance, and attach their persons."

The command was instantly obeyed by the arquebusiers, who marched forward and surrounded them.

Jane fixed an inquiring look upon Northumberland, but she spoke not.

"What next?" demanded Pembroke, in a loud voice.

"The block," replied Northumberland.

"The block!" exclaimed Jane, rising, while the colour forsook her cheek. "Oh! no, my lord, – no."

"But I say yea," returned the Duke, peremptorily. "'Fore Heaven! these rebellious lords think I am as fearful of shedding

blood as they are of shedding ink. But they shall find they are mistaken. Away with them to instant execution."

"Your grace cannot mean this!" cried Jane, horror-stricken.

"They shall have five minutes for reflection," returned the Duke, sternly. "After that time, nothing shall save them.'"

An earnest consultation was held among the council. Three minutes had expired. The Duke beckoned a sergeant of the guard towards him.

"You had better sign," whispered Simon Renard; "I will find some means of communicating with her highness."

"We have reflected," cried the Earl of Pembroke, "and will do your grace's behests."

"It is well," answered Northumberland. "Set them free." As soon as the guard had withdrawn, the council advanced, and each, in turn, according to his degree, subscribed the despatch. This done, Northumberland delivered it to an officer, enjoining him to give it instantly to the messenger, with orders to the latter to ride for his life, and not to draw bridle till he reached Kenninghall.

"And now," continued the Duke, addressing another officer, "let the gates of the Tower be closed, the drawbridges raised, and suffer none to go forth, on pain of death, without my written order."

"Diable!" exclaimed De Noailles, shrugging his shoulders.

"Prisoners!" cried several of the privy-councillors.

"You are the queen's guests, my lords," observed the Duke,

drily.

"Do you agree to my scheme now?" asked Renard, in a deep whisper. "Do you consent to Northumberland's assassination?"

"I do," replied Pembroke. "But who will strike the blow?"

"I will find the man," answered Renard.

These words, though uttered under the breath of the speakers, reached the ears of Cuthbert Cholmondeley.

Shortly afterwards, the council broke up; and Jane was conducted with much state to the royal apartments.

III. – OF THE THREE GIANTS OF THE TOWER, OG, GOG, AND MAGOG; OF XIT, THE DWARF; OF THE FAIR CICELY; OF PETER TRUSBUT, THE PANTLER, AND POTENTIA HIS WIFE; OF HAIRUN THE REARWARD, RIBALD THE WARDER, MAUGER THE HEADSMAN, AND

NIGHTGALL THE JAILOR: AND OF THE PLEASANT PASTIME HELD IN THE STONE KITCHEN

Cuthbert Cholmondeley, it may be remembered, was greatly struck by a beautiful damsel whom he discovered among the crowd during the ceremonial at the Gate Tower; and, as faithful chroniclers, we are bound to state that the impression was mutual, and that if he was charmed with the lady, she was not less pleased with him. Notwithstanding her downcast looks, the

young esquire was not so inexperienced in feminine arts as to be unconscious of the conquest he had made. During the halt at the gate, he never withdrew his eyes from her for a single moment, and when he was reluctantly compelled to move forward with the procession, he cast many a lingering look behind. As the distance lengthened between them, the courage of the damsel seemed to revive; she raised her head, and before her admirer had reached the extremity of the lofty wall masking the lieutenant's lodgings, he perceived her gazing fixedly after him. She held by the hand a little curly-haired boy, whom Cholmondeley concluded must be her brother, – and he was perplexing himself as to her rank, – for though her beauty was of the highest order, and her lineaments such as might well belong to one of high birth, her attire seemed to bespeak her of no exalted condition, – when an incident occurred, which changed the tenor of his thoughts, and occasioned him not a little uneasiness. While she remained with her eyes fixed upon him, a tall man in a dark dress rushed, with furious gestures and an inflamed countenance, out of the gateway leading to the inner line of fortifications on the left, and shaking his hand menacingly at the esquire, forced her away. Cholmondeley saw her no more; but the imploring look which she threw at him as she disappeared, produced so powerful an effect upon his feelings that it was with difficulty he could prevent himself from flying to her assistance. So absorbed was he by this idea, that he could think of nothing else; – the pageant, at which he was assisting, lost all interest for him, and amid

the throng of court beauties who surrounded him, he beheld only the tender blue eyes, the light satin tresses, the ravishing countenance, and sylph-like person of the unknown maiden. Nor could he exclude from his recollection the figure of the tall dark man; and he vainly questioned himself as to the tie subsisting between him and the damsel. Could he be her father? – Though his age might well allow of such a supposition, there was no family resemblance to warrant it. Her husband? – that he was scarcely disposed to admit. Her lover? – he trembled with jealous rage at the idea. In this perplexity, he bethought himself of applying for information to one of the warders; and, accordingly, he addressed himself to Magog, who, with Xit, happened to be standing near him. Describing the damsel, he inquired of the giant whether he knew anything of her.

"Know her!" rejoined Magog, "ay, marry, do I. Who that dwells within this fortress knows not fair Mistress Cicely, the Rose of the Tower, as she is called? She is daughter to Dame Prudentia Trusbut, wife of Peter the pantler – "

"A cook's daughter!" exclaimed Cholmondeley, all his dreams of high-born beauty vanishing at once.

"Nay, I ought rather to say," returned the giant, noticing the young mans look of blank disappointment, and guessing the cause, "that she *passes* for his daughter."

"I breathe again," murmured Cholmondeley.

"Her real birth is a mystery," continued Magog; "or, if the secret is known at all, it is only to the worthy pair who have

adopted her. She is said to be the offspring of some illustrious and ill-fated lady, who was imprisoned within the Tower, and died in one of its dungeons, after giving birth to a female child, during the reign of our famous king, Harry the Eighth," and he reverently doffed his bonnet as he pronounced his sire's name; "but I know nothing of the truth or falsity of the story, and merely repeat it because you seem curious about her."

"Your intelligence delights me," replied Cholmondeley, placing a noble in his hand. "Can you bring me where I can obtain further sight of her?"

"Ay, and speech too, worshipful sir, if you desire it," replied the giant, a smile illuminating his ample features. "When the evening banquet is over, and my attendance at the palace is no longer required, I shall repair to the Stone Kitchen at Master Trusbut's dwelling, where a supper is provided for certain of the warders and other officers of the Tower, to which I and my brethren are invited, and if it please you to accompany us, you are almost certain to behold her."

Cholmondeley eagerly embraced the offer, and it was next arranged that the dwarf should summon him at the proper time.

"If your worship requires a faithful emissary to convey a letter or token to the fair damsel," interposed Xit, "I will undertake the office."

"Fail not to acquaint me when your master is ready," replied Cholmondeley, "and I will reward you. There is one question," he continued, addressing Magog, "which I have omitted to ask. –

Who is the tall dark man who seems to exercise such strange control over her? Can it be her adoptive father, the pantier?"

"Of a surety no," replied the giant, grinning, "Peter Trusbut is neither a tall man nor a dark; but is short, plump, and rosy, as beseems his office. The person to whom your worship alludes must be Master Lawrence Nightgall, the chief jailor, who lately paid his suit to her. He is of a jealous and revengeful temper, and is not unlikely to take it in dudgeon that a handsome gallant should set eyes upon the object of his affections."

"Your description answers exactly to the man I mean," returned Cholmondeley, gravely.

"Shall I bear a cartel to him from your worship?" said Xit. "Or, if you require a guard, I will attend upon your person," he added, tapping the pummel of his sword.

"I do not require your services in either capacity, as yet, valiant sir," replied the esquire, smiling. "After the banquet I shall expect you."

Resuming his place near Lord Guilford Dudley, Cholmondeley shortly afterwards proceeded with the royal cortege to the council-chamber, where, being deeply interested by Northumberland's address to the conspiring lords, he for an instant forgot the object nearest his heart. But the next, it returned with greater force than ever; and he was picturing to himself the surprise, and, as he fondly hoped, the delight, he should occasion her by presenting himself at her dwelling, when Simon Renard's dark proposal to the Earl of Pembroke reached his ear. Anxious

to convey the important information he had thus obtained to his master, as soon as possible, he endeavoured to approach him, but at this moment the council broke up, and the whole train returned to the palace. During the banquet that followed, no opportunity for an instant's private conference occurred – the signal for the separation of the guests being the departure of the Queen and her consort. While he was considering within himself what course he had best pursue, he felt his mantle slightly plucked behind, and, turning at the touch, beheld the dwarf.

"My master, the giant Magog, awaits you without, worshipful sir," said Xit, with a profound reverence.

Weighing his sense of duty against his love, he found the latter feeling too strong to be resisted. Contenting himself, therefore, with tracing a hasty lino of caution upon a leaf torn from his tablets, he secured it with a silken thread, and delivering it to an attendant, commanded him instantly to take it to the Lord Guilford Dudley. The man departed, and Cholmondelcy, putting himself under the guidance of the dwarf, followed him to the great stairs, down which he strutted with a most consequential air, his long rapier clanking at each step he took. Arrived at the portal, the young esquire found the three giants, who had just been relieved from further attendance by another detachment of warders, and, accompanied by them, proceeded along the ward in the direction of the Gate-Tower. Sentinels, he perceived, were placed at ten paces' distance from each other along the ramparts; and the guards on the turrets, he understood from his

companions, were doubled. On reaching the Gate-Tower, they found a crowd of persons, some of whom, on presenting passes from the Duke of Northumberland, were allowed to go forth; while others, not thus provided, were peremptorily refused. While the giants paused for a moment to contemplate this novel scene, an officer advanced from the barbican and acquainted the keepers of the inner portal that a prisoner was about to be brought in. At this intelligence, a wicket was opened, and two heralds, followed by a band of halberdiers, amidst whom walked the prisoner, stepped through it. Torches were then lighted by some of the warders, to enable them to discern the features of the latter, when it appeared, from his ghastly looks, his blood-stained apparel, and his hair, which was closely matted to his head by the ruddy stream that flowed from it, that some severe punishment had been recently inflicted upon him. He was a young man of nineteen or twenty, habited in a coarse dress of brown serge, of a slight but well-proportioned figure, and handsome features, though now distorted with pain and sullied with blood, and was instantly recognised by Cholmondelcy as the individual who had rowed Gunnora Braose towards the Queen. On making the discovery, Cholmondeley instantly demanded, in a stern tone, of the heralds, how they had dared, in direct opposition to their sovereign's injunctions, to punish an offender whom she had pardoned.

"We have the Duke of Northumberland's authority for what we have done," replied the foremost herald, sullenly; "that is

sufficient for us."

"The punishment we have inflicted is wholly disproportioned to the villain's offence, which is little short of high treason," observed the other. "When we proclaimed the Queen's Highness at Cheapside, the audacious knave mounted a wall, flung his cap into the air, and shouted for Queen Mary. For this we set him in the pillory, and nailed his head to the wood; and he may think himself fortunate if he loseth it not as well as his ears, which have been cut off by the hangman."

"Ungrateful wretch!" cried Cholmondeley, addressing the prisoner, his former commiseration being now changed to anger; "is it thus you requite the bounty of your Queen?"

"I will never acknowledge a usurper," returned Gilbert, firmly.

"Peace!" cried the esquire; "your rashness will destroy you."

"It may so," retorted Gilbert, boldly; "but while I have a tongue to wag, it shall clamour for Queen Mary."

"Where are you going to bestow the prisoner?" inquired Gog from the foremost herald.

"In the guard-room," replied the man, "or some other place of security, till we learn his grace's pleasure."

"Bring him to the Stone Kitchen, then," returned Gog. "He will be as safe there as anywhere else, and you will be none the worse for a can of good liquor, and a slice of one of Dame Trusbut's notable pasties.'"

"Agreed;" rejoined the heralds, smiling; "bring him along." While this was passing, Cholmondeley, whose impatience could

brook no further delay, entreated Magog to conduct him at once to the habitation of the fair Cicely. Informing him that it was close at hand, the giant opened a small postern on the left of the gateway leading to the western line of fortifications, and ascending a short spiral staircase, ushered his companion into a chamber, which, to this day, retains its name of the Stone Kitchen. It was a low, large room, with the ceiling supported by heavy rafters, and the floor paved with stone. The walls were covered with shelves, displaying a goodly assortment of pewter and wooden platters, dishes and drinking-vessels; the fire-place was wide enough to admit of a whole ox being roasted within its limits; the chimney-piece advanced several yards into the room, while beneath its comfortable shelter were placed a couple of benches on either side of the hearth, on which a heap of logs was now crackling. Amid the pungent smoko arising from the wood could be discerned, through the vast aperture of the chimney, sundry hams, gammons, dried tongues, and other savoury meats, holding forth a prospect of future good cheer. At a table running across the room, and furnished with flagons and pots of wine, several boon companions were seated. The chief of these was a jovial-looking warder who appeared to be the life and soul of the party, and who had a laugh, a joke, or the snatch of a song, for every occasion. Opposite to him sat Peter Trusbut, the pantler, who roared at every fresh witticism uttered by his guest till the tears ran down his cheeks. Nor did the warder appear to be less of a favourite with Dame Potentia, a stout buxom

personage, a little on the wrong side of fifty, but not without some remains of comeliness. She kept his glass constantly filled with the best wine, and his plate as constantly supplied with the choicest viands, so that, what with eating, drinking, singing, and a little sly love-making to Dame Trusbut, Pibald, for so was the warder named, was pretty well employed. At the lower end of the table was placed a savage-looking person, with red bloodshot eyes and a cadaverous countenance. This was Mauger, the headsman. He was engaged in earnest conversation with Master Hairun, the bearward, assistant-keeper of the lions, – an office, at that time, of some consequence and emolument. In the ingle nook was ensconced a venerable old man with a snowy beard descending to his knees, who remained with his eyes fixed vacantly upon the blazing embers. Seated on a stool near the hearth, was a little boy playing with a dog, whom Cholmondeley perceived at once was Cicely's companion; while the adjoining chair was occupied by the fair creature of whom the enamoured esquire was in search. Pausing at the doorway, he lingered for a moment to contemplate her charms. A slight shade of sadness clouded her brow – her eyes were fixed upon the ground, and she now and then uttered a half-repressed sigh. At this juncture, the jolly-looking warder struck up a Bacchanalian stave, the words of which ran as follows: —

> With my back to the fire and my paunch to the table,
> Let me eat, – let me drink as long as I am able:

Let me eat, – let me drink whate'er I set my whims on,
Until my nose is blue, and my jolly visage crimson.

The doctor preaches abstinence, and threatens me with dropsy,
But such advice, I needn't say, from drinking never stops ye:
—
The man who likes good liquor is of nature brisk and brave, boys,
So drink away! – drink while you may! —
There's no drinking in the grave, boys!

"Well sung, my roystering Pibald," cried Magog, striding up to him, and delivering him a sounding blow on the back – "thou art ever merry, and hast the most melodious voice and the lustiest lungs of any man within the Tower."

"And thou hast the heaviest hand I ever felt on my shoulder, gigantic Magog," replied Ribald; "so we are even. But come, pledge me in a brimmer, and we will toss off a lusty measure to the health of our sovereign lady, Queen Jane. What say you, Master Trusbut? – and you, good Hairun – and you, most melancholic Mauger, a cup of claret will bring the colour to your cheeks. A pot of wine, good dame, to drink the Queen's health in. But whom have we yonder? Is that gallant thy companion, redoubted Magog?"

The giant nodded an affirmative.

"By my faith he is a well-looking youth," said Ribald – "but

he seems to have eyes for no one excepting fair Mistress Cicely."

Aroused by this remark, the young damsel looked up and beheld the passionate gaze of Cholmondeley fixed upon her. She started, trembled, and endeavoured to hide her confusion by industriously pursuing her occupation of netting. But in spite of her efforts to restrain herself, she could not help stealing a sidelong glance at him; and emboldened by this slight encouragement, Cholmondeley ventured to advance towards her. It is scarcely necessary to detail the common-place gallantries which the youth addressed to her, or the monosyllabic answers which she returned to them. The language of love is best expressed by the look which accompanies the word, and the tone in which that word is uttered; and this language, though as yet neither party was much skilled in it, appeared perfectly intelligible to both of them. Satisfied, at length, that she was not insensible to his suit, Cholmondeley drew nearer, and bending his head towards her, poured the most passionate protestations in her ear. What answer she made, if she made answer at all to these ardent addresses, we know not, but her heightened complexion and heaving bosom told that she was by no means insensible to them. Meanwhile, Og and Gog, together with the heralds and one or two men-at-arms, had entered the chamber with the prisoner. Much bustle ensued, and Dame Potcntia was so much occupied with the new-comers and their wants, that she had little time to bestow upon her adoptive daughter. It is true that she thought the handsome stranger more attentive than

was needful, or than she judged discreet; and she determined to take the earliest opportunity of putting a stop to the flirtation – but, just then, it happened that her hands were too full to allow her to attend to minor matters. As to Peter Trusbut, he was so much entertained with the pleasantries of his friend Ribald – and so full of the banquet he had provided for the Queen, the principal dishes of which he recapitulated for the benefit of his guests, that he saw nothing whatever that was passing between the young couple. Not so a gloomy-looking personage shrouded behind the angle of the chimney, who, with his hand upon his dagger, bent eagerly forward to catch their lightest whisper. Two other mysterious individuals had also entered the room, and stationed themselves near the doorway. As soon as Dame Trusbut had provided for the wants of her numerous guests, she turned her attention to the prisoner, who had excited her compassion, and who sat with his arms folded upon his breast, preserving the same resolute demeanour he had maintained throughout. Proffering her services to the sufferer, she bade her attendant, Agatha, bring a bowl of water to bathe his wounds, and a fold of linen to bind round his head. At this moment, Xit, the dwarf, who was by no means pleased with the unimportant part he was compelled to play, bethought him of an expedient to attract attention. Borrowing from the herald the scroll of the proclamation, he mounted upon Og's shoulders, and begged him to convey him to the centre of the room, that he might read it aloud to the assemblage, and approve their loyalty. The good-

humoured giant complied. Supporting the mannikin with his left hand, and placing his large two-handed sword over his right shoulder, he walked forward, while the dwarf screamed forth the following preamble to the proclamation: – "*Jane, by the grace of God Queen of England, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, and of the Church of England, and also of Ireland, under Christ on earth the supreme head. To all our loving, faithful, and obedients, and to every of them, greeting.*" Here he paused to shout and wave his cap, while the herald, who had followed them, to humour the joke raised his embroidered trumpet to his lips, and blew a blast so loud and shrill, that the very rafters shook with it. To this clamour Og added his stunning laughter, while his brethren, who were leaning over a screen behind, and highly diverted with the incident, joined in lusty chorus. Almost deafened by the noise, Dame Trusbut, by way of putting an end to it, raised her own voice to its utmost pitch, and threatened to turn Xit, whom she looked upon as the principal cause of the disturbance, out of the house. Unfortunately, in her anger, she forgot that she was engaged in dressing the prisoner's wounds, and while her left hand was shaken menacingly at the dwarf, her right convulsively grasped the poor fellow's head, occasioning him such exquisite pain, that he added his outcries to the general uproar. The more Dame Trusbut scolded, the more Og and his brethren laughed, and the louder the herald blew his trumpet – so that it seemed as if there was no likelihood of tranquillity being speedily restored – nor, in all probability would it have

been so without the ejectment of the dwarf, had it not been for the interference of Ribald, who at length, partly by cajolery, and partly by coercion, succeeded in pacifying the angry dame. During this tumult, the two mysterious personages, who, it has been stated, had planted themselves at the doorway, approached the young couple unobserved, and one of them, after narrowly observing the features of the young man, observed in an undertone to his companion, "It *is* Cuthbert Cholmondeley – You doubted me, my lord Pembroke, but I was assured it was Lord Guilford's favourite esquire, who had conveyed the note to his master, warning him of our scheme."

"You are right, M. Simon Renard," replied the earl. "I bow to your superior discernment."

"The young man is in possession of our secret," rejoined Renard, "and though we have intercepted the missive, he may yet betray us. He must not return to the palace."

"He never *shall* return, my lords," said a tall dark man, advancing towards them, "if you will entrust his detention to me."

"Who are you?" demanded Renard, eyeing him suspiciously. "Lawrence Nightgall, the chief jailor of the Tower."

"What is your motive for this offer?" pursued Renard.

"Look there!" returned Nightgall. "I love that damsel."

"I see;" replied Renard, smiling bitterly. "He has supplanted you."

"He has," rejoined Nightgall; "but he shall not live to profit by his good fortune."

"Hum!" said Renard, glancing at Cicely, "the damsel is lovely enough to ruin a man's soul. We will trust you."

"Follow me, then, without, my lords," replied Nightgall, "and I will convey him where he shall not cause further uneasiness to any of us. We have dungeons within the Tower, from which those who enter them seldom return."

"You are acquainted, no doubt, with the secret passages of the White Tower, friend?" asked Renard.

"With all of them," rejoined Nightgall. "I know every subterranean communication – every labyrinth – every hidden recess within the walls of the fortress, and there are many such – and can conduct you wherever you desire."

"You are the very man I want," cried Renard, rubbing his hands, gleefully. "Lead on."

And the trio quitted the chamber, without their departure being noticed.

Half an hour afterwards, as Cuthbert Cholmondeley issued from the postern with a heart elate with rapture at having elicited from the fair Cicely a confession that she loved him, he received a severe blow on the head from behind, and before he could utter a single outcry, he was gagged, and forced away by his assailants.

IV. – OF THE MYSTERIOUS OCCURRENCE THAT HAPPENED TO QUEEN JANE IN SAINT JOHN'S CHAPEL IN THE WHITE TOWER

On that night Lord Guilford Dudley was summoned to a secret council by his father, the Duke of Northumberland, and as he had not returned at midnight, the Lady Hastings, who was in attendance upon the Queen, proposed that, to while away the time, they should pay a visit to St. John's Chapel in the White Tower, of the extreme beauty of which they had all heard, though none of them had seen it. Jane assented to the proposal, and accompanied by her sister, the Lady Herbert, and the planner of the expedition, Lady Hastings, she set forth. Two ushers led the way through the long galleries and passages which had to be traversed before they reached the White Tower; but on arriving at the room adjoining the council-chamber which had so lately been thronged with armed men, but which was now utterly deserted, Jane inquired from her attendants the way to the chapel, and on ascertaining it, commanded her little train to await her return there, as she had determined on entering the sacred structure alone. In vain her sisters remonstrated with her – in vain the ushers suggested that there might be danger in trusting herself in such a place at such an hour without protection – she remained

firm – but promised to return in a few minutes, after which they could explore the chapel together.

Taking a lamp from one of the attendants, and pursuing the course pointed out to her, she threaded a narrow passage, similar to that she had traversed with the Duke in the morning, and speedily entered upon the gallery above the chapel. As she passed through the opening in the wall leading to this gallery, she fancied she beheld the retreating figure of a man, muffled in a cloak, and she paused for a moment, half-inclined to turn back. Ashamed, however, of her irresolution, and satisfied that it was a mere trick of the imagination, she walked on. Descending a short spiral wooden staircase, she found herself within one of the aisles of the chapel, and passing between its columns, entered the body of the fane. For some time, she was lost in admiration of this beautiful structure, which, in its style of architecture – the purest Norman – is without an equal. She counted its twelve massive and circular stone pillars, noted their various ornaments and mouldings, and admired their grandeur and simplicity. Returning to the northern aisle, she glanced at its vaulted roof, and was enraptured at the beautiful effect produced by the interweaving arches.

While she was thus occupied, she again fancied she beheld the same muffled figure she had before seen, glide behind one of the pillars. Seriously alarmed, she was now about to retrace her steps, when her eye rested upon an object lying at a little distance from her, on the ground. Prompted by an undefinable feeling of curiosity, she hastened towards it, and holding forward

the light, a shudder ran through her frame, as she perceived at her feet, *an axe!* It was the peculiarly-formed implement used by the headsman, and the edge was turned towards her.

At this moment, her lamp was extinguished.

V. – OF THE MISUNDERSTANDING THAT AROSE BETWEEN QUEEN JANE AND HER HUSBAND, LORD GUILFORD DUDLEY

NOT appearing, and some time having elapsed since her departure, her sisters, who were anxiously awaiting her return in the room adjoining the council-chamber, became so uneasy, that, notwithstanding her injunctions to the contrary, they resolved to go in search of her. Accordingly, bidding the ushers precede them, they descended to the chapel; and their uneasiness was by no means decreased on finding it buried in darkness, and apparently empty. As they gazed around in perplexity and astonishment, a deep-drawn sigh broke from the northern aisle; and, hurrying in that direction, they discovered the object of their search, who had been hidden from view by the massive intervening pillars, extended upon a seat, and just recovering from a swoon into which she had fallen. Revived by their assiduities, Jane was soon able to speak, and the first thing she uttered was a peremptory order that no alarm should be given, or assistance sent for.

"I am now well – quite well," she said, with a look and in a tone that belied her words, "and require no further aid. Do not question me as to what has happened. My brain is too confused

to think of it; and I would fain banish it altogether from my memory. Moreover, I charge you by your love and allegiance, that you mention to no one – not even to my dear lord and husband, should he interrogate you on the subject, – how you have just found me. And if my visit here be not remarked by him – as is not unlikely, if he should remain closeted with the Duke of Northumberland, – it is my will and pleasure that no allusion be made to the circumstance. You will not need to be told, dear sisters, that I have good reasons for thus imposing silence upon you. To you, sirs," she continued, addressing the ushers, who listened to her with the greatest surprise, "I also enjoin the strictest secrecy; – and look well you observe it."

The solemn and mysterious manner in which the Queen delivered her commands quite confounded her sisters, who glanced at each other as if they knew not what to think; – but they readily promised compliance, as did the ushers. Supporting herself on the arm of Lady Herbert, Jane then arose, and proceeded at a slow pace towards the eastern stair-case. As she was about to turn the corner of the aisle, she whispered to Lady Hastings, who walked on her left – "Look behind you, Catherine. Do you see nothing on the ground?"

"Nothing whatever, your highness," replied the other, glancing fearfully over her shoulder. "Nothing whatever, except the black and fantastic shadows of our attendants."

"Thank Heaven! it is gone," ejaculated Jane, as if relieved from a weight of anxiety.

"What is gone, dear sister?" inquired Lady Herbert, affectionately.

"Do not ask me," replied Jane, in a tone calculated to put an end to further conversation on the subject. "What I have seen and heard must for ever remain locked in my own bosom."

"I begin to think a spirit must have appeared to your majesty," observed Lady Herbert, whose curiosity was violently excited, and who, in common with most persons of the period, entertained a firm belief in supernatural appearances. "Every chamber in the Tower is said to be haunted, – and why not this ghostly chapel, which looks as if it were peopled with phantoms? I am quite sorry I proposed to visit it. But if I am ever caught in it again, except in broad daylight, and then only with sufficient attendance, your majesty shall have free leave to send me to keep company with the invisible world for the future. I would give something to know what you have seen. Perhaps it was the ghost of Anne Boleyn, who is known to walk; – or the guilty Catherine Howard, – or the old Countess of Salisbury. Do tell me which it was – and whether the spectre carried its head under its arm?"

"No more of this," said Jane, authoritatively. "Come with me to the altar."

"Your majesty is not going to remain here?" cried Lady Hastings. "I declare positively *I* dare not stop."

"I will not detain you longer than will suffice to offer a single prayer to Heaven," rejoined the Queen. "Be not afraid. Nothing will injure, or affright you."

"I am by no means sure of that," replied Lady Hastings. "And now I really *do* think I see something."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Jane, starting. "Where?"

"Behind the farthest pillar on the right," replied Lady Hastings, pointing towards it. "It looks like a man muffled in a cloak. There! – it moves."

"Go and see whether any one be lurking in the chapel," said Jane to the nearest usher, and speaking in a voice so loud, that it almost seemed as if she desired to be overheard.

The attendant obeyed; and immediately returned with the intelligence that he could find no one.

"Your fears, you perceive, are groundless, Catherine," observed Jane, forcing a smile.

"Not altogether, I am persuaded, from your manner, my dear sister, and gracious mistress," rejoined Lady Hastings. "Oh! how I wish I was safe back again in the palace."

"So do I," added Lady Herbert.

"A moment's patience and I am ready," rejoined Jane.

With this, she approached the altar, and prostrated herself on the velvet cushion before it.

"Almighty Providence!" she murmured in a tone so low as to be inaudible to the others, "I humbly petition thee and supplicate thee, that if the kingdom that has been given me be rightly and lawfully mine, thou wilt grant me so much grace and spirit, that I may govern it to thy glory, service, and advantage. But if it be otherwise – if I am unlawfully possessed of it, and am

an hindrance to one who might serve thee more effectually, remove, O Lord, the crown from my head, and set it on that of thy chosen servant! And if what I have this night beheld be a fore-shadowing and a warning of the dreadful doom that awaits me, grant me, I beseech thee, strength to meet it with fortitude and resignation; so that my ending, like my life, may redound to thy honour, and the welfare of thy holy church." While Jane was thus devoutly occupied, her sisters, who stood behind her, could scarcely control their uneasiness, but glanced ever and anon timorously round, as if in expectation of some fearful interruption. Their fears were speedily communicated to the ushers; and though nothing occurred to occasion fresh alarm, the few minutes spent by the Queen in prayer appeared an age to her companions. There was something in the hour – it was past midnight, – and the place, calculated to awaken superstitious terrors. The lights borne by the attendants only illumined a portion of the chapel; rendering that which was left in shadow yet more sombre; while the columned aisles on either side, and the deeply-recessed arches of the gallery above, were shrouded in gloom. Even in broad day, St. John's Chapel is a solemn and a striking spot; but at midnight, with its heavy, hoary pillars, reared around like phantoms, its effect upon the imagination will be readily conceived to be far greater.

Already described as one of the most perfect specimens of Norman ecclesiastical architecture, this venerable structure, once used as a place of private worship by the old monarchs of

England, and now as a receptacle for Chancery proceedings, has, from its situation in the heart of the White Tower, preserved, in an almost unequalled state, its original freshness and beauty; and, except that its floors are encumbered with cases, and its walls of Caen stone disfigured by a thick coat of white plaster, it is now much in the same state that it was at the period under consideration. It consists of a nave with broad aisles, flanked (as has been mentioned) by twelve circular pillars, of the simplest and most solid construction, which support a stone gallery of equal width with the aisles, and having an arcade corresponding with that beneath the floor is now boarded, but was formerly covered with a hard polished cement, resembling red granite. The roof is coved, and beautifully proportioned; and the fane is completed by a semicircular termination towards the east.

Old Stowe records the following order, given in the reign of Henry the Third, for its decoration: – "And that ye cause the whole chapel of St. John the Evangelist to be whited. And that ye cause three glass windows in the same chapel to be made; to wit, one on the north side, with a certain little Mary holding her child; the other on the south part, with the image of the Trinity; and the third, of St. John the Apostle and Evangelist, in the south part. And that ye cause the cross and the beam beyond the altar of the same chapel to be painted well and with good colours. And that ye cause to be made and painted two fair images where more conveniently and decently they may be done in the same chapel; one of St. Edward, holding a ring, and reaching it out

to St. John the Evangelist." These fair images – the cross – the rood, – and the splendid illuminated window, are gone – most of them, indeed, were gone in Queen Jane's time – the royal worshippers are gone with them; but enough remains in its noble arcades, its vaulted aisles, and matchless columns, to place St. John's Chapel foremost in beauty of its class of architecture.

Her devotions over, Jane arose with a lighter heart, and, accompanied by her little train, quitted the chapel. On reaching her own apartments, she dismissed her attendants, with renewed injunctions of secrecy; and as Lord Guilford Dudley had not returned from the council, and she felt too much disturbed in mind to think of repose, she took from among the books on her table, a volume of the divine Plato, whose Phædo, in the original tongue, she was wont, in the words of her famous instructor, Roger Ascham, "to read with as much delight as some gentlemen would take in a merry tale of Boccace," and was speedily lost in his profound and philosophic speculations.

In this way the greater part of the night was consumed; nor was it till near day-break that she was aroused from her studies by the entrance of' her husband.

"Jane, my beloved queen!" he exclaimed, hastening towards her with a countenance beaming with delight. "I have intelligence for you which will enchant you."

"Indeed! my dear lord,"' she replied, laying down her book, and rising to meet him. "What is it?"

"Guess," he answered, smiling.

"Nay, dear Dudley," she rejoined, "put me not to this trouble. Tell me at once your news, that I may participate in your satisfaction."

"In a word, then, my queen," replied Lord Guilford, – "My father and the nobles propose to elevate me to the same dignity as yourself."

Jane's countenance fell.

"They have not the power to do so, my lord," she rejoined gravely; "I, alone, can thus elevate you."

"Then I am king," cried Dudley, triumphantly.

"My lord," observed Jane, with increased gravity, "you will pardon me if I say I must consider of this matter."

"Consider of it!" echoed her husband, frowning; "I must have your decision at once. You can have no hesitation, since my father desires it. I am your husband, and claim your obedience."

"And I, my lord," rejoined Jane, with dignity, "am your queen; and, as such, it is for me, not you, to exact obedience. We will talk no further on the subject."

"As you please, madam," replied Lord Guilford, coldly. "To-morrow you will learn the Duke's pleasure."

"When I do so, he shall know mine," rejoined Jane.

"How is this?" exclaimed Dudley, gazing at her in astonishment. "Can it be possible you are the same Jane whom I left – all love – all meekness – all compliance? – or have a few hours of rule so changed your nature, that you no longer love me as heretofore?"

"Dudley," returned Jane, tenderly, "you are dear to me as ever; and if I accede not to your wishes, do not impute it to other than the right motive. As a queen, I have duties paramount to all other considerations, – duties which, so long as I *am* queen, I will fulfil to the best of my ability, and at every personal sacrifice. Be not wholly guided by the counsels of your father, – be not dazzled by ambition. The step you propose is fraught with danger. It may cost me my crown, and cannot ensure one to you."

"Enough," replied her husband, apparently convinced by her arguments. "We will postpone its further consideration till to-morrow."

When that morrow came, Dudley's first business was to seek his father, and acquaint him with the manner in which his communication to the Queen had been received. The haughty Duke appeared surprised, but imputed the failure to his son's mismanagement, and undertook to set it right. With this view, he repaired to the Queen's apartments, and on obtaining an audience, informed her that he and the lords of the council had resolved to place her husband on the throne beside her. Her answer differed in nothing from that which she had returned to Lord Guilford, except that it was couched in a firmer tone; but it had this addition, that she was well aware of his Grace's object in the proposal, which was, in effect, to obtain possession of the supreme power. In vain arguments, entreaties, and even threats, were used by the Duke: Jane continued inflexible. Northumberland was succeeded by his no

less imperious spouse, who, with all the insolence of her arrogant nature, rated her daughter-in-law soundly, and strove to terrify her into compliance. But she, too, failed; and Lord Guilford was so enraged at his consort's obstinacy, that he quitted the Tower, and departed for Sion House, without even taking leave of her.

Perplexed as he felt by Jane's conduct, Northumberland was too well versed in human nature not to be aware that a character however soft and pliant may, by the sudden alteration of circumstances, be totally changed, – but he was by no means prepared for such a remarkable display of firmness as Jane had exhibited. The more he considered the matter, the more satisfied he became that she had some secret counsellor, under whose guidance she acted, and with the view of finding out who it was, he resolved to have all her motions watched. No one appeared so well fitted to this office as his daughter, the Lady Hastings; and sending for her, he extracted from her, in the course of conversation, all particulars with which she was acquainted of the mysterious occurrence in St. John's Chapel. This information filled Northumberland with new surprise, and convinced him that he had more to dread than he at first imagined, and that the schemes of his enemies must be in full operation. His suspicions fell upon Simon Renard, though he scarcely knew how to connect him with this particular occurrence. Dismissing his daughter with full instructions for the part he desired her to play, he continued for some time brooding over the mystery, and vainly trying to unravel it. At one time, he resolved to interrogate Jane; but the

reception he had recently experienced, induced him to adopt a different and more cautious course. His thoughts, however, were soon diverted from the subject, by the onerous duties that pressed upon him. Amongst other distractions, not the least was the arrival of a messenger with the intelligence that Mary had retired from Kenninghall in Norfolk, whither he had despatched a body of men to surprise her, and retreated to a more secure post, Framlingham Castle – that she had been proclaimed in Norwich – and that her party was hourly gaining strength in all quarters. Ill news seldom comes alone, and the proud Duke experienced the truth of the adage. Other messengers brought word that the Earls of Bath, Sussex, and Oxford, Lord Wentworth, Sir Thomas Cornwallis, Sir Henry Jerningham, and other important personages, had declared themselves in her favour.

While he was debating upon the best means of crushing this danger in the bud, a page from Lady Hastings suddenly presented himself, and informed him that the Queen was at that moment engaged in deep conference with M. Simon Renard, in St. Peter's Chapel. On inquiry, the Duke learned that Jane, who had been greatly disturbed in mind since her husband's departure, had proceeded to St. Peter's Chapel – (a place of worship situated at the north end of the Tower Green, and appropriated to the public devotions of the court and household,) – accompanied by her mother, the Duchess of Suffolk, and her sisters, the Ladies Herbert and Hastings; and that the train had been joined by the Earls of Pembroke and Arundel, De Noailles, and Simon Renard

– the latter of whom, when the Queen's devotions were ended, had joined her. Tarrying for no further information, the Duke summoned his attendants, and hastened to the Tower Green. Entering the chapel, he found the information he had received was correct. The wily ambassador was standing with the Queen before the altar.

VI. – OF THE SOLEMN EXHORTATION PRONOUNCED TO THE GIANTS BY MASTER EDWARD UNDERHILL, THE "HOT-GOSPELLER," AT THEIR LODGING IN THE BY-WARD TOWER; AND OF THE EFFECT PRODUCED THEREBY

In spite of the interruption occasioned by the dwarf, the evening at the Stone Kitchen passed off pleasantly enough. Dame Potentia was restored to good humour by the attentions of the jovial warder, and the giants in consequence were regaled with an excellent and plentiful supper, of which Xit was permitted to partake. Whether it was that their long fasting, or their attendance at the state-banquet, had sharpened the appetites of the three gigantic brethren, or that the viands set before them were of a more tempting nature than ordinary, we pretend not to say, but certain it is that their prodigious performances at the table excited astonishment from all who witnessed them, and elicited the particular approbation of Ribald, who, being curious to ascertain how much they *could* eat, insisted on helping them to everything on the board, and, strange to say, met with no refusal.

With the profuse hospitality of the period, all the superfluities

of the royal feast were placed at the disposal of the household; and it may therefore be conceived that Peter Trusbut's table was by no means scantily furnished. Nor was he disposed to stint his guests. Several small dishes which had been set before them having disappeared with marvellous celerity, he called for the remains of a lordly baron of beef, which had recently graced the royal sideboard. At the sight of this noble joint, Og, who had just appropriated a dish of roast quails, two of which he despatched at a mouthful, uttered a grunt of intense satisfaction, and abandoning the trifling dainties to Xit, prepared for the more substantial fare.

Assuming the part of carver, Peter Trusbut sliced off huge wedges of the meat, and heaped the platters of the giants with more than would have satisfied men of ordinary appetites. But this did not satisfy them. They came again and again. The meat was of such admirable quality – so well roasted – so full of gravy, and the fat was so exquisite, that they could not sufficiently praise it, nor do it sufficient justice. The knife was never out of Peter Trusbut's hands; nor was he allowed to remain idle a moment. Scarcely had he helped Og, when Gog's plate was empty; and before Gog had got his allowance, Magog was bellowing for more. And so it continued as long as a fragment remained upon the bones.

Puffing with the exertion he had undergone, the pantler then sat down, while Ribald, resolved not to be balked of his pastime, entreated Dame Potentia to let her guests wash down their food

with a measure of metheglin. After some little solicitation, she complied, and returned with a capacious jug containing about three gallons of the balmy drink. The jug was first presented to Magog. Raising it to his lips, he took a long and stout pull, and then passed it to Gog, who detained it some seconds, drew a long breath, and returned it to Dame Trusbut, perfectly empty. By dint of fresh entreaties from the warder, Dame Potentia was once more induced to seek the cellar; and, on receiving the jug, Og took care to leave little in it for his brethren, but poured out what was left into a beaker for Xit.

They were now literally "giants refreshed;" and Peter Trusbut, perceiving that they still cast wistful glances towards the larder, complied with a significant wink from Ribald, and went in search of further provisions. This time he brought the better half of a calvered salmon, a knuckle of Westphalia ham, a venison pasty with a castellated crust of goodly dimensions, a larded capon, and the legs and carcass of a peacock, decorated with a few feathers from the tail of that gorgeous bird. Magog, before whom the latter dainty was placed, turned up his nose at it, and giving it to Xit, vigorously assaulted the venison pasty. It soon became evident that the board would again be speedily cleared; and though he had no intention of playing the niggardly host on the present occasion, Peter Trusbut declared that this was the last time such valiant trenchermen should ever feed at his cost. But his displeasure was quickly dispelled by the mirth of the warder, who laughed him out of his resolution, and encouraged the giants

to proceed by every means in his power. Og was the first to give in. Throwing back his huge frame on the bench, he seized a flask of wine that stood near him, emptied it into a flagon, tossed it off at a draught, and declared he had had enough. Gog soon followed his example. But Magog seemed insatiable, and continued actively engaged, to the infinite diversion of Ribald, and the rest of the guests.

There was one person to whom this festive scene afforded no amusement. This was the fair Cicely. After Cholmondeley's departure – though wholly unacquainted with what had befallen him – she lost all her sprightliness, and could not summon up a smile, though she blushed deeply when rallied by the warder. In surrendering her heart at the first summons of the enamoured esquire, Cicely had obeyed an uncontrollable impulse; but she was by no means satisfied with herself for her precipitancy. She felt that she ought to have resisted rather than have yielded to a passion which, she feared, could have no happy result; and though her admirer had vowed eternal constancy, and pleaded his cause with all the eloquence and fervour of deep and sincere devotion – an eloquence which seldom falls ineffectually on female ears – she was not so unacquainted with the ways of the world as to place entire faith in his professions. But it was now too late to recede. Her heart was no longer her own; and if her lover had deceived her, and feigned a passion which he did not feel, she had no help for it, but to love on unrequited.

While her bosom alternately fluttered with hope, or

palpitated with fear, and her hands mechanically pursued their employment, she chanced to raise her eyes, and beheld the sinister gaze of Lawrence Nightgall fixed upon her. There was something in his malignant look that convinced her he read what was passing in her breast – and there was a bitter and exulting smile on his lip which, while it alarmed her on her account, terrified her (she knew not why) for her lover.

"You are thinking of the young esquire who left you an hour ago," he observed sarcastically.

"I will not attempt to deny it," replied Cicely, colouring; "I am."

"I know it," rejoined the jailer; "and he dared to tell you he loved you?"

Cicely made no reply.

"And you? – what answer did you give him, mistress?" continued Nightgall, furiously grasping her arm. "What answer did you give him, I say?"

"Let me go," cried Cicely. "You hurt me dreadfully. I will not be questioned thus."

"I overheard what you said to him," rejoined the jailer. "You told him that you loved him – that you had loved no other – and would wed no other."

"I told him the truth," exclaimed Cicely. "I do love him, and will wed him."

"It is false," cried Nightgall, laughing maliciously. "You will never see him again."

"How know you that?" she cried, in alarm.

"He has left the Tower – for ever," returned the jailer, moodily.

"Impossible!" cried Cicely. "The Duke of Northumberland has given orders that no one shall go forth without a pass. Besides, he told me he was returning to the palace."

"I tell you he is gone," thundered Nightgall. "Hear me, Cicely," he continued, passionately. "I have loved you long – desperately. I would give my life – my soul for you. Do not cast me aside for this vain court-gallant, who pursues you only to undo you. He would never wed you."

"He has sworn to do so," replied Cicely.

"Indeed!" cried Nightgall, grinding his teeth, "The oath will never be kept. Cicely, you must – you *shall* be mine."

"Never!" replied the maiden. "Do you suppose I would unite myself to one whom I hate, as I do you?"

"Hate me!" cried the jailer, grasping her arm with such force that she screamed with pain. "Do you dare to tell me so to my face?"

"I do," she rejoined. "Release me, monster!"

"Body of my father! what's the matter?" roared Magog, who was sitting near them. "Leave go your hold of the damsel, Master Nightgall," he added, laying down his knife and fork.

"Not at your bidding, you overgrown ox!" replied the jailer. "We'll see that," replied the giant. And stretching out his hand, he seized him by the nape of the neck, and drew him forcibly

backwards.

"You shall bleed for this, caitiff!" exclaimed Nightgall, disengaging himself, and menacing him with his poniard.

"Tush!" rejoined Magog, contemptuously, and instantly disarming him. "Your puny weapon will serve me for a toothpick," he added, suiting the action to the word. And, amid the loud laughter of the assemblage, the jailer slunk away, muttering interjections of rage and vengeance.

Nightgall's dark hints respecting Cholmondeley were not without effect upon Cicely, who, well aware of his fierce and revengeful character, could not help fearing some evil; and when he quitted the Stone Kitchen, an undefinable impulse prompted her to follow him. Hastily descending the stairs, on gaining the postern she descried him hurrying along the road between the ballium wall and the external line of fortifications, and instantly decided on following him.

On reaching the projecting walls of the Beauchamp Tower, behind which she sheltered herself, she saw that he stopped midway between that fortification and the next turret, then known as the Devilin, or Robin the Devil's Tower, but more recently, from having been the prison of the unfortunate Earl of Essex, as the Devereux Tower. Here he disappeared. Hastening to the spot, Cicely looked for the door, through which he must have passed; and after some little search, discovered it. Pushing against it, it yielded to the pressure, and admitted her to a low passage, evidently communicating with some of the subterranean

dungeons which she knew existed under this part of the fortress.

She had scarcely set foot within this passage, when she perceived the jailor returning; and had barely time to conceal herself behind an angle of the wall, when he approached the spot where she stood. In his haste he had forgotten to lock the door, and he now, with muttered execrations, hastened to repair his error; cutting off by this means the possibility of Cicely's retreat. And here, for the present, it will be necessary to leave her, and return to the Stone Kitchen.

The attention which must otherwise have been infallibly called to Cicely's disappearance was diverted by the sudden entrance of a very singular personage, whose presence served somewhat to damp the hilarity of the party. This was Master Edward Underhill – a man of some ability, but of violent religious opinions, who, having recently been converted to the new doctrines, became so zealous in their support and propagation, that he obtained among his companions the nick-name of the "Hot-gospeller." He was a tall thin man, with sandy hair, and a scanty beard of the same colour. His eyes were blear and glassy, with pink lids utterly devoid of lashes, and he had a long lantern-shaped visage. His attire was that of a gentleman-pensioner.

Rebuking the assemblage for their unseemly mirth, and mounting upon a stool, Master Underhill would fain have compelled them to listen to a discourse on the necessity of extirpating papacy and idolatry from the land – but he was compelled, by the clamour which his exordium occasioned,

to desist. He was, moreover, brought down, with undue precipitation, from his exalted position by Xit, who creeping under the stool, contrived to overset it, and prostrated the Gospeller on the floor, to the infinite entertainment of the guests, and the no small damage of his nose.

This incident, though received in good part even by the principal sufferer, served to break up the party. Apprehensive of some further disturbance, and not without fears that the giants might indulge as freely with the fluids as they had done with the solids, Dame Trusbut took advantage of the occurrence to dismiss her guests, which she did without much ceremony.

It was then for the first time that she noticed the absence of Cicely. Not being able to find her, the recollection of the handsome esquire, and of the attention he had paid her, rushed to her mind; and with a dreadful foreboding of impending misery, she despatched her husband to the palace to make inquiries after him; while she herself went to the gate – to the ramparts – everywhere, in short, that she thought it likely she could gain any information, – but everywhere without success.

The giants, meanwhile, with Xit, betook themselves to their lodgings in the By-ward Tower. The herald and the men-at-anns, who, it may be remembered, had charge of the prisoner Gilbert, not having received any further instructions respecting him, accompanied them thither. They were also attended by Master Edward Underhill, who was bent upon admonishing them, having been given to understand they were relapsing into papacy.

Arrived at the entrance of the By-ward Tower, the giants volunteered to take charge of the prisoner till the morning – an offer which was gladly accepted by the herald, who, intrusting him to their care, departed. But the Gospeller was not to be got rid of so easily. He begged to be admitted, and, partly by entreaties, partly by a bribe to the dwarf, succeeded in his object. The first care of the giants, on entering their abode – an octagonal chamber of stone, about sixteen feet wide, and twenty high, with a vaulted coiling, supported by sharp groined arches of great beauty, springing from small slender columns, – was to light a candle placed in front of an ancient projecting stone fireplace. Their next was to thrust the prisoner into the arched embrasure of a loop-hole at one side of it.

The walls of the chamber were decorated with the arms and accoutrements of the gigantic brethren, – the size of which would have been sufficient to strike any chance-beholder with wonder. Over the embrasure in which they had placed the prisoner, hung an enormous pair of gauntlets, and a morion of equal size. Here was a quiver full of arrows, each shaft far exceeding a cloth-yard in length – there a formidable club, armed with sharp steel spikes; while the fire-place was garnished with a couple of immense halberts. Having drawn a large pot of wine, which they first offered to their guest, who refused it, they each took a deep draught; and informing Underhill, if he was still resolved to hold forth, he had better commence without further delay, they disposed themselves to listen to him.

Placing a small table in the centre of the chamber, Og seated himself opposite it, and took Xit upon his knee; while Gog sat down beside him, and Magog supported his huge bulk against the wall. Divesting himself of his cap and sword, and placing an hour-glass on the table, the Hot-gospeller then opened a small volume, which he took from beneath his cloak; from which he began to read certain passages and to comment upon them in a vehement tone.

His exhortation opened with a burst of rejoicing on the accession of Queen Jane – in which he pronounced terrible anathemas against all those who sought to restore the fallen religion. Perceiving the fierce gaze of the prisoner fixed upon him, he directed his chief thunders against him, and, excited by his subject, soon worked himself into a state approaching to frenzy.

In this strain he continued for some time, when a sound arose which drowned even his vehemence. Overcome with drowsiness, the three giants, who for a short time vainly endeavoured to attend to the discourse of the Gospeller, had now sunk into a comfortable slumber – and the noise which they made was tremendous. In vain Underhill endeavoured to rouse them by thumping the table. Gog gazed at him for an instant with half-shut eyes, and then leaning on Og's shoulder, who, with head dropped back and mouth wide open, was giving audible proof of his insensible condition, he speedily dropped asleep again. Such was the astounding din, that the Gospeller could not even make

himself heard by the dwarf, who, perched on Og's knee at a few paces' distance, stared in amazement at his gesticulations.

More than an hour having passed in this manner, the Hot-gospeller, whose energies were wholly exhausted, came to a pause; and after menacing his insensible audience with proportionate punishment in the next world – especially the idolatrous prisoner, whom he threatened with gesture as well as with word – he closed his volume, and prepared to depart. With some difficulty the three giants were awakened; and it was only by the assistance of Xit, who tweaked their noses and plucked their beards, that this could be accomplished.

Just as Master Underhill was taking his leave, Dame Trusbut arrived in the greatest tribulation. The fair Cicely was nowhere to be found. Her husband had been to the palace. Nothing could be heard of the young esquire; nor could Lawrence Nightgall be met with. In this emergency, she had come to entreat the giants to aid her in her search. They agreed to go at once – and Xit was delighted with the prospect of such employment. Accordingly, the door was locked upon the prisoner, and they set forth with the distracted dame.

As soon as he was left alone, Gilbert surveyed the chamber to sec if there was any means by which he might effect his escape. An idea speedily occurred to him: by the help of one of the halberts he contrived to free himself from his bonds, and then clambered up the chimney.

VII. – HOW CUTHBERT CHOLMONDELEY WAS THROWN INTO A DUNGEON NEAR THE DEVILIN TOWER; AND HOW A MYSTERIOUS FEMALE FIGURE APPEARED TO HIM THERE

On recovering from the stunning effects of the blow he had received, Cuthbert Cholmondeley found himself stretched on the floor of a gloomy vault, or dungeon, for such he judged it. At first, he thought he must be dreaming, and tried to shake off the horrible nightmare by which he supposed himself oppressed. But a moment's reflection undeceived him; and starting to his feet, he endeavoured to explore the cell in which he was confined. A heavy chain, which bound his leg to the floor, prevented him from moving more than a few paces; and, convinced that escape was impossible, he sank upon the ground in despair.

Unable to assign any cause for his imprisonment, and wholly at a loss to imagine what offence he had committed, he taxed his brain as to everything that had recently happened to him. This naturally directed his thoughts to the fair Cicely – and with her gentle image came the recollection of the malicious countenance and threatening gestures of Lawrence Nightgall. Remembering

what Magog had told him of the jealousy and vindictive nature of this person, and remembering also that he had heard him described as the chief jailer, he felt that he need seek no further for the motive and the author of his imprisonment.

The assurance, however, which he had thus gained, afforded him no consolation, but rather tended to increase his disquietude. If he had been a prisoner of state, he might have hoped for eventual release; but placed in the hands of so remorseless and unscrupulous an enemy as Nightgall had shown himself, he felt he had little to hope. This consideration filled him with anguish, which was heightened as he thought of the triumph of his savage rival, who by some means – for he seemed desperate enough to have recourse to any expedient – might possess himself of the object of his passion. Fired by this thought, Cholmondeley again sprang to his feet, and strove with all his force to burst his bondage. But the effort was fruitless; and by lacerating his hands, and straining his limbs, he only added bodily torture to his mental suffering. Exhausted at length, he sank once more upon the floor.

By this time, having become habituated to the gloom of the place, he fancied he could make out that it was an arched cell of a few feet in width, and corresponding height. The only light admitted was from the entrance, which appeared to open upon a passage branching off on the left, and upon a further range of dungeons extending in the same direction.

Not altogether unacquainted with the prisons of the Tower, Cholmondeley felt against the walls to try whether he could

find any of those melancholy memorials which their unfortunate inmates delighted to bequeath to their successors, and which might serve as a clue to the particular place of his confinement. But nothing but the smooth surface of the stone met his touch. This circumstance, however, and the peculiar form of the cell, induced him to think that it must be situated beneath, or at no great distance from the Devilin Tower, as he had heard of a range of subterranean dungeons in that quarter: and, it may be added, he was right in his conjecture.

The cell in which he was thrown was part of a series of such dreadful receptacles, contrived in the thickness of the ballium wall, and extending from the Beauchamp Tower to the Devilin Tower. They were appropriated to those prisoners who were doomed to confinement for life.

Horrible recollections then flashed upon his mind of the dreadful sufferings he had heard that the miserable wretches immured in these dungeons underwent – how some were tortured – some destroyed by secret and expeditious means – others by the more lingering process of starvation. As the latter idea crossed him, he involuntarily stretched out his hand to ascertain whether any provisions had been left him; but he could find none.

The blood froze in his veins as he thought of dying thus; his hair stiffened upon his head; and he was only prevented from crying out to make his lamentable case known to the occupants of any of the adjoining cells, by the conviction of its utter futility. But this feeling passed away, and was succeeded by calmer

and more consolatory reflections. While in this frame of mind, Nature asserted her sway, and he dropped asleep.

How long he remained thus, he knew not; but he was awakened by a loud and piercing scream. Raising himself, he listened intently. The scream was presently repeated in a tone so shrill and unearthly, that it filled him with apprehensions of a new kind. The outcry having been a third time raised, he was debating within himself whether he should in any way reply to it, when he thought he beheld a shadowy figure glide along the passage. It paused at a short distance from him. A glimmer of light fell upon the arch on the left, but the place where the figure stood was buried in darkness. After gazing for some time at the mysterious visitant, and passing his hand across his brow to assure himself that his eyesight did not deceive him, Cholmondeley summoned courage enough to address it. No answer was returned; but the figure, which had the semblance of a female, with the hands raised and clasped together as if in supplication or prayer, and with a hood drawn over the face, remained perfectly motionless. Suddenly, it glided forward, but with a step so noiseless and swift, that almost before the esquire was aware of the movement, it was at his side. He then felt a hand cold as marble placed upon his own, and upon grasping the fingers they appeared so thin and bony, that he thought he must have encountered a skeleton. Paralysed with fright, Cholmondeley shrunk back as far as he was able; but the figure pursued him, and shrieked in his ear – "My child, my child! – you have taken my child!"

Convinced from the voice that he had a being of this world to deal with, the esquire seized her vestment, and resolved to detain her till he had ascertained who she was and what was the cause of her cries; but just as he had begun to question her, a distant footstep was heard, ands uttering a loud shriek, and crying – "He comes! – he comes!" – the female broke from him and disappeared.

Fresh shrieks were presently heard in a more piteous tone than before, mixed with angry exclamations in a man's voice, which Cholmondeley fancied sounded like that of Nightgall. A door was next shut with great violence; and all became silent.

While he was musing on this strange occurrence, Cholmondeley heard footsteps advancing along the passage on the left, and in another moment Lawrence Nightgall stood before him.

The jailer, who carried a lamp, eyed the captive for a few moments in silence, and with savage satisfaction.

"It is to you, then, I owe my imprisonment, villain," said Cholmondeley, regarding him sternly.

"It is," replied the jailer; "and you can readily conjecture, I doubt not, why I have thus dealt with you."

"I can," resumed the esquire; "your jealousy prompted you to the deed. But you shall bitterly rue it."

"Bah!" exclaimed Nightgall. "You are wholly in my power. I am not, however, come to threaten, but to offer you freedom."

"On what terms?" demanded Cholmondeley.

"On these," replied the jailer, scowling – "that you swear to abandon Cicely."

"Never!" replied the esquire.

"Then your fate is sealed," rejoined Nightgall. "You shall never quit this spot."

"Think not to move me by any such idle threat," returned Cholmondeley. "You dare not detain me."

"Who shall prevent me?" laughed the jailor, scornfully. "I, alone, possess the key of these dungeons. You are their sole occupant."

"That is false," retorted the esquire. "There is another captive, – a miserable female, – whom I, myself, have seen."

"Has she been here?" cried Nightgall, with a look of disquietude.

"Not many minutes since," replied the other, fixing a scrutinizing glance upon him. "She came in search of her child. What have you done with it, villain?"

Cholmondeley had no particular object in making the inquiry. But he was astonished at the effect produced by it on the jailer, who started and endeavoured to hide his confusion by pulling his cap over his brows.

"She is a maniac," he said, at length, in a hoarse voice.

"If it be so," rejoined the esquire, severely; "she has been driven out of her senses by your barbarous usage. I more than suspect you have murdered her child."

"Entertain what suspicions you please," replied Nightgall,

evidently relieved by the surmise. “I am not accountable for the ravings of a distracted woman.”

“Who is she?” demanded the esquire.

“The names of those confined within these cells are never divulged,’” returned the jailer. “She has been a prisoner of state for nineteen years.”

“And during that term her child was born – ha?” pursued Cholmondeley.

“I will answer no further questions,” replied Nightgall, doggedly. “One word before I depart. I am not your only enemy. You have others more powerful, and equally implacable. You have incurred the displeasure of the Privy Council, and I have a warrant, under the hands of its chief members, for your execution. I am now about to summon the headsman for the task.”

“Then your offer to liberate me was mere mockery,” observed the esquire.

“Not so,” replied the other; “and I again repeat it. Swear to abandon Cicely, and to maintain profound silence as to what you have just seen, and I will convey you by a secret passage underneath the Tower moat to a place of security, where you will be beyond the reach of your enemies, and will take the risk of your escape upon myself. Do you agree to this?”

“No,” replied Cholmondeley, firmly. “I distrust your statement, and defy your malice.”

“Obstinate fool!” growled the jailer. “Prepare to meet your

fate in an hour."

"Whenever it comes it will find me prepared," rejoined the esquire.

Nightgall glared at him fiercely for a moment from beneath his shaggy brows. He then strode sullenly away. But his departure was prevented by Cicely, who suddenly appeared at the mouth of the dungeon.

"You here!" he exclaimed recoiling, and trembling as if an apparition had crossed his path. "How have you obtained admittance?",

"It matters not," she answered. "I am come to purchase your prisoner's freedom."

"You know the terms?" rejoined the jailer, eagerly.

"I do," she replied; "and will comply with them when you have fulfilled your share of the compact."

"Cicely!" cried Cholmondeley, who had been to the full as much astonished at her unexpected appearance as the jailer. "Cicely!" he cried, starting to his feet, and extending his hands towards her. "Do not consent to his proposal. Do not sacrifice yourself for me. I would die a thousand deaths rather than you should be his."

"Heed him not," interposed Nightgall, grasping her arm, and preventing her from approaching her lover; "but attend to me. You see this warrant," he added, producing a parchment. "It is from the Council, and directs that the prisoner's execution shall take place in such manner as may best consist with despatch

and secrecy. If I deliver it to Manger, the headsman, it will be promptly obeyed. And I *shall* deliver it, unless you promise compliance."

"The villain deceives you, dear Cicely," cried Cholmondeley, in a voice of anguish. "The Council have not the power of life and death. They cannot – dare not order my execution without form or trial."

"The Council will answer for their actions themselves," rejoined Nightgall, carelessly. "Their warrant will bear me and my comrades harmless. Mauger will not hesitate to act upon it. What is your determination, Cicely?"

"Free him," she replied.

"Recal your words, sweet Cicely," cried Cholmondeley, throwing himself at her feet, "if you have any love for me. You doom me to worse than death by this submission."

"Cholmondeley," she replied in a mournful voice, "my resolution is taken, and even you cannot induce me to change it. The opening of our love has been blighted. My heart has been crushed, almost before it knew for whom it beat. It matters not now what becomes of me. If my life could preserve yours, or restore you to freedom, I would freely yield it. But as nothing will suffice except my hand, I give that. Think of me no more, – or think of me only as another's.'"

"That thought were madness!" groaned Cholmondeley.

"Master Lawrence Nightgall," continued Cicely, "you say you can conduct the prisoner beyond the walls of the Tower, Bring

me back some token that you have done so, and I am yours."

"Willingly," replied the jailer.

"Retire then for a moment, while I arrange with him what the token shall be."

Nightgall hesitated.

"Refuse, and I retract my promise," she added.

And the jailer, with a suspicious look, reluctantly left the cell.

"Cicely, my beloved," cried Cholmondeley, clasping her in his arms, "why – why have you done this?"

"To preserve you," she replied, hurriedly. "Once out of this dungeon, I can bring assistance to liberate you."

"Indeed!" ejaculated Nightgall, who, having placed his ear to the wall, lost not a syllable of their discourse.

"It will be unavailing," replied Cholmondeley. "No one will venture to oppose an order of the Council. You must make known my case to Lord Guilford Dudley. Take this ring. Explain all to him, and I may yet be saved. Do you hear me, Cicely?"

"I do," she replied "And I," added Nightgall.

"In case you fail," continued the esquire, "the token of my escape shall be" – And placing his lips close to her ear, he spoke a few words in so low a tone, that they escaped the jailer. "Till you receive that token treat Nightgall as before."

"Doubt it not," she answered.

"I am content," said the esquire.

"I see through the design," muttered the jailer, "and will defeat it. Have you done?" he added, aloud.

"A moment," replied Cholmondeloy, again pressing the damsel to his bosom, "I would sooner part with my life's-blood than resign you."

"I must go," she cried, disengaging herself from his embrace. "Now, Master Nightgall, I am ready to attend you."

"In an hour I shall return and release you," said the jailer, addressing the prisoner. "Your hand, Cicely."

"I will go alone," she replied, shrinking from him with a look of abhorrence.

"As you please," he rejoined, with affected carelessness. "You are mine."

"Not till I have received the token. Farewell!" she murmured, turning her tearful gaze upon Cholmondeley.

"For ever!" exclaimed the youth.

And as they quitted the cell, he threw himself despairingly on the ground.

Issuing from the outer door of the dungeon, Cicely and her companion took their way towards the Stone Kitchen. They had not proceeded far, when they perceived several persons approaching them, who, as they drew nearer, proved to be Dame Potentia, Xit, and the giants.

"What have you been doing, Cicely?" inquired her adoptive mother, angrily. "I have been searching for you everywhere!"

"You shall know anon," replied the maiden. "But come with me to the palace. I must see Lord Guilford Dudley, or the Duke of Northumberland, without a moment's delay."

"Warders," interposed Nightgall, authoritatively: "go to Master Manger's lodging in the Bloody Tower. Bid him hasten with two assistants, and the sworn tormentor, to the dungeon beneath the Devilin Tower. He will know which I mean. Justice is about to be done upon a prisoner."

"Oh no – no – do not go," cried Cicely, arresting the giants. "He does not mean it. He is jesting."

"Go home, then, and do not stir forth till I bring you the token," rejoined Nightgall, in a deep whisper.

"In Heaven's name, what is the meaning of all this?" cried Dame Potentia, in amazement.

"I will inform you," replied the jailer, drawing her aside. "Your daughter was about to elope with the young esquire. I detected them trying to escape by the secret passage beneath the moat, of which you know I have the key. Lock her within her chamber. Pay no attention to her tears, entreaties, or assertions. And, above all, take care no one has any communication with her."

"Trust me to guard her," rejoined Dame Potentia. "I know what these court-gallants are. They will venture anything, and contrive anything, when a pretty girl is concerned. But what has happened to the esquire?"

"He is safe for the present," answered Nightgall, significantly.

Cicely, meantime, had availed herself of their conversation, to whisper a few words to Xit.

"Take this ring," she said, placing the ornament given her by

her lover, in the hands of the dwarf, "and fly to the palace. Show it to Lord Guilford Dudley, and say that the wearer is imprisoned in the dungeons beneath the Devilin Tower. Assistance must be speedily rendered, as he is ordered for immediate and secret execution. Do you understand?"

"Most precisely, lovely damsel," replied Xit, kissing her hand, as he took the ring; "and I guess the name and condition of the prisoner, as well as the nature of the interest you take in him."

"Fly!" interrupted Cicely. "Not a moment is to be lost. You shall be well rewarded for your trouble."

"I desire no higher reward than your thanks, adorable maiden," replied Xit. "Your behests shall be punctually obeyed." So saying, he disappeared.

"Come, young mistress," cried Dame Potentia, seizing her adoptive daughter's arm, "you must to your chamber. You have led me and your father, and these worthy warders, a pretty dance. But you shall lead us all where you list, if I let you out of my sight in future."

And thanking the giants, who had looked on in speechless astonishment, she dragged Cicely along with her.

"Remember!" whispered Nightgall, as he walked a few paces by the side of the latter.

"I shall expect the token in an hour," she answered in the same tone.

"You shall have it," he rejoined.

With this, he halted, and retraced his steps. The others then

separated. Cicely was conveyed to the Stone Kitchen; and the giants, after looking in vain for Xit, and calling to him repeatedly but without effect, returned to the By-ward Tower. Just as they reached it, a shot was fired from the battlements, and was immediately answered from those of the Middle Tower. Other reports followed. And, alarmed by the sounds, the huge brethren hastily unlocked the door of their lodging, and entering it, to their infinite dismay, found the prisoner gone.

VIII. – HOW GILBERT ESCAPED FROM THE BY-WARD TOWER, AND SWAM ACROSS THE MOAT; HOW OG HUNG XIT UPON A HOOK; AND HOW LAWRENCE NIGHTGALL BROUGHT THE TOKEN TO CICELY

Gilbert having freed himself from his bonds, and clambered into the chimney in the By-ward Tower in the manner previously related, ascended without any inconvenience, except what was occasioned by the pungent smoke arising from the blazing fagots beneath, until he reached the level of the upper story, where another fire-place, connected with the passage up which he was mounting, so narrowed its limits, that it seemed scarcely possible to proceed further. The sound of voices in the chamber on this floor also alarmed him, and for some minutes he suspended his labour to listen. But as nothing occurred to disturb him, and it was evident, from the conversation of the speakers, that he had not been noticed, he presently resumed his task, and redoubling his efforts, soon vanquished all obstacles, and gained the opening of the chimney.

Here a fresh difficulty awaited him; and one for which he was wholly unprepared. The smoke found a vent through a small

circular opening or louver, as it was termed, – for there was no chimney-top to disperse it to the air, – in the battlements. Through this opening he must necessarily creep; and, provided he could accomplish the feat, he had to elude the vigilance of the sentinels stationed on the roof of the turret. Luckily, the night was profoundly dark; and the gloom, increased by a thick mist from the river, was so intense, that an object could scarcely be discerned at a foot's distance. Thus favoured, Gilbert resolved to hazard the attempt.

Watching his opportunity, he drew himself cautiously through the louver, and without being noticed by the sentinel, who was standing beside it, crouched beneath the carriage of a culverin. In this state, he remained for a short time, meditating what course he should next pursue, and nerving himself for some desperate attempt, when a door at the side of the southern turret suddenly opened, and three men-at-arms, the foremost of whom carried a torch, came to relieve guard.

Aware that he should now infallibly be discovered, Gilbert started to his feet, and drawing a dagger which he had picked up in the giants' chamber, stood upon his defence. The movement betrayed him. Though confounded by his appearance, the sentinel nearest him presented his partizan at his breast and commanded him to surrender. Gilbert answered by striking up the man's arm, and instantly sprang over the battlements.

A loud splash told that he had fallen into the moat. The men held the torch over the side of the turret. But it was too

dark to distinguish any object below. Presently, however, a noise was heard in the water that convinced them the fugitive was swimming for the opposite bank. One of the soldiers instantly discharged his caliver in the direction of the sound, – but without effect.

This served as an alarm to the guards posted on the western ramparts, as well as to those on the Middle Tower, both of which commanded this part of the moat, and other shots were immediately fired. A signal was then rapidly passed from tower to tower, and from portal to portal, until it reached the Bulwark-gate, which formed the only entrance to the fortress on the west, and a body of armed men carrying lights instantly sallied forth and hurried towards the side of the moat.

Gilbert, meanwhile, swam for his life. Guided by the torches, which served to discover his enemies rather than to betray him, he effected a secure landing, But before he had climbed the steep bank, he was observed by a soldier, who, making towards him, shouted to his comrades for assistance. In the struggle that ensued, the torch borne by the soldier was extinguished, and bursting from him, Gilbert darted at a swift pace up Tower-hill. His pursuers were close upon him. But, well acquainted with the spot, he contrived to baffle them, by flinging himself beneath the permanent scaffold, then standing upon the brow of the eminence, and thus eluded observation. As soon as his foes had passed, he struck off swiftly to the left, and leaping a low wall, skirted All-hallows Church, and speedily gained Tower-

street.

While Gilbert was flying in this direction, his pursuers finding themselves at fault, hastened back, and endeavoured to discover some trace of him. Some mounted the steps of the scaffold to see whether he had taken refuge on its blood-stained planks, – some crept under it, – others examined the posts of the neighbouring gallows, – while a fourth party flew to the postern gate, which defended the southern extremity of the city wall, in the hope that he might have been stopped by the watch. All, however, it is needless to say, were disappointed. And after some time had been fruitlessly expended, the whole party returned to the Tower to report the unsuccessful issue of their expedition.

Meanwhile, the report of the musquetry had reached the ears of Lord Clinton, the constable, who, attended by the lieutenant, the gentleman-porter, and a numerous patrol, chanced to be making the round of the fortifications at the time, and he descended to the gates to ascertain the cause of the alarm. On learning it, he immediately summoned the herald and the gigantic warders to his presence, and after sharply rebuking the former for neglect, ordered him into custody till the morning, when he proposed to take the duke's pleasure as to his punishment. He then turned to the giants, who tried to soften his displeasure by taking the blame upon themselves, and telling them he would listen to their statement when the herald was examined, and, in the interim, they would be answerable with their lives for any further dereliction of duty, he dismissed the assemblage, and

returned with his train to the ramparts.

Among those who had been gathered together in the guardroom near the By-ward Tower, – where the foregoing examination took place, – were Nightgall and Xit, – the latter having just returned from the palace, after a vain attempt to deliver his message to Lord Guilford Dudley, who, it has been already stated, was engaged at the time in secret conference with the Duke of Northumberland, and could not therefore be spoken with.

Ever on the alert, and suspicious of those around him, Night-gall overheard Og question the dwarf as to the cause of his absence; and perceiving, from Xit's manner, that he had some secret to communicate, he contrived to approach them unobserved. He then learnt the message with which the dwarf had been entrusted by Cicely, and enraged at her endeavour to overreach him, snatched the ring from him as he was displaying it to the giant, and threatened him with severe punishment, if he dared to meddle further in the matter.

As soon as he had recovered from his surprise, the affronted mannikin drew his rapier, and making several passes at Nightgall, would have certainly wounded him, if he had not dextrously avoided the blows by interposing the huge bulk of the giant between him and his assailant. The fury of the dwarf was so excessive, and the contortions into which he threw himself so inconceivably diverting, that Og could render him no assistance for laughing. Thrusting his sword between the giant's legs, – now

cutting on the right, now on the left, – Xit tried in every way to hit the jailer, and must have succeeded, if Og, who was by no means desirous to have blood shed in so ridiculous a fray, and who enjoyed the pastime too much to speedily terminate it, had not prevented him.

Gog, moreover, having on the onset disarmed Nightgall, he could not protect himself except by keeping under the shelter of the giant. Foiled in his attempts, Xit's indignation knew no bounds, and exasperated by the derisive shouts and laughter of the spectators, he threatened to turn his sword against Og if he did not deliver up the jailer to his vengeance. This only produced louder roars of merriment from the by-standers; and the dwarf, whose passion had almost deprived him of reason, uttering a shrill scream like a child robbed of its plaything, threw himself on Og's leg, and scrambled up his body, with the intention of descending on the other side, and exterminating his foe.

This feat raised the merriment of the spectators to the utmost. Og suffered the imp to ascend without opposition, and clinging to the points of the giant's slashed red hose, Xit drew himself up to his broad girdle, and then setting one foot on the circlet of raised gold thread which surrounded the badge on his breast, soon gained his shoulder, and would have leapt from thence upon his foe, if Og, who began to think it time to put an end to the sport, had not seized him by the leg as he was in the act of springing off, and held him at arm's-length, with his heels upwards.

After many useless struggles to liberate himself, and menaces of what he would do when he got free, which, as may be supposed, only provoked still further the laughter of the by-standers, Xit became so unmanageable, that Og fastened him by his nether garments to a hook in the wall, about fourteen feet from the ground, and left him to recover himself.

Thus perched, the dwarf hurled his rapier at Nightgall's head, and replied to the jeers of the assemblage by such mops and mows as an enraged ape is wont to make at its persecutors. After the lapse of a few minutes, however, he began to find his position so uncomfortable, that he was fain to supplicate for release, to which, on receiving his assurance of quieter conduct for the future, Og consented, and accordingly unhooked him, and set him on the ground.

Nightgall, meanwhile, had taken advantage of this diversion, to leave the Guard-room, and hasten to the Stone Kitchen.

Dame Potentia was just retiring to rest as the jailer reached her dwelling, and it was only by the most urgent importunity that he succeeded in obtaining admission.

"Your pardon, good dame," he said, as the door was opened. "I have that to tell Cicely, which will effectually cure her love for the young esquire."

"In that case, you are right welcome, Master Nightgall," she replied; "for the poor child has almost cried her pretty eyes out since I brought her home. And I have been so moved by her tears, that I greatly misdoubt, if her lover had presented himself instead

of you, whether I should have had the heart to refuse to let him see her."

"Fool!" muttered Nightgall, half aside. "Where is she?" he added, aloud. "I have no time to lose. I have a secret execution to attend before day-break."

"Yours is a butcherly office, Master Nightgall," observed Peter Trusbut, who was dozing in an arm-chair by the fire. "Those secret executions, to my mind, are little better than state murders. I would not, for all the power of the Duke of Northumberland, hold your office, or that of Gilliam Mauger, the headsman."

"Nor I yours, on the same fee, Master Pantler," rejoined Nightgall. "Tastes differ. Where is your daughter, good dame?"

"In her chamber," replied Potentia. "Ho! Cicely, sweetheart!" she added, knocking at a door at the end of a short passage leading out of the kitchen on the right. "Here is Master Nightgall desires to speak with you."

"Does he bring me the token?" demanded the maiden, from within.

"Ay marry, does he, child," replied the dame, winking at the jailer. "Heaven forgive me the falsehood," she added, – "for I know not what she means."

"Leave us a moment, dear mother," said Cicely, hastily unfastening the door. "Now, Master Nightgall," she continued, as Dame Potentia retired, and the jailer entered the room, "have you fulfilled your compact?"

"Cicely," rejoined the jailer, regarding her sternly, "you have not kept faith with me. You have despatched a messenger to the palace."

"Oh! he is free," exclaimed the maiden, joyfully, – "your plans have been defeated?"

Nightgall smiled bitterly.

"My messenger cannot have failed," she continued, with a sudden change of countenance. "I am sure Lord Guilford would not abandon his favourite esquire. Tell me, what has happened?"

"I am come to claim fulfilment of your pledge," rejoined the jailer.

"Then you have set him free," cried Cicely. "Where is the token?"

"Behold it," replied Nightgall, raising his hand, on which her lover's ring sparkled.

"Lost! – lost!" shrieked Cicely, falling senseless upon the floor.

The jailer gazed at her a moment in silence, but did not attempt to offer any assistance. He then turned upon his heel, and strode out of the room.

"Look to your daughter, dame," he observed, as he passed through the Stone-kitchen.

IX. – OF THE MYSTERIOUS MANNER IN WHICH GUNNORA BRAOSE WAS BROUGHT TO THE TOWER

Hurrying along Tower Street, and traversing Eastcheap and Watling Street – then narrow but picturesque thoroughfares – Gilbert, – to whom it is now necessary to return, – did not draw breath till he reached the eastern extremity of St. Paul's. As he passed this reverend and matchless structure – the destruction of which, was the heaviest loss sustained by the metropolis in the Great Fire – he strained his eyes towards its lofty tower, but the gloom was too profound to enable him to discern anything of it beyond a dark and heavy mass.

"Thou art at present benighted, glorious fane!" he cried aloud. "But a bright dawn shall arise for thee, and all thy ancient splendour, with thy ancient faith, be restored. If I could see Mary queen, and hear mass solemnized within thy walls, I could die content."

"And you shall hear it," said a voice in his ear.

"Who speaks?" asked Gilbert, trembling.

"Be at St. Paul's Cross to-morrow at midnight, and you shall know," replied the voice. "You are a loyal subject of Queen Mary., and a true Catholic, or your words belie you?"

"I am both," answered Gilbert.

"Fail not to meet me then," rejoined the other, "and you shall receive assurance that your wishes shall be fulfilled. There are those at work who will speedily accomplish the object you desire."

"I will aid them heart and hand," cried Gilbert.

"Your name?" demanded the other.

"I am called Gilbert Pot," answered the youth, "and am drawer to Ninion Saunders, at the Baptist's Head, in Ludgate."

"A vintner's boy!" exclaimed the other, disdainfully.

"Ay, a vintner's boy," returned Gilbert. "But, when the usurper, Jane Dudley, was proclaimed at Cheapside this morning, mine was the only voice raised for Queen Mary."

"For which bold deed you were nailed to the pillory," rejoined the other.

"I was," replied Gilbert; "and was, moreover, carried to the Tower, whence I have just escaped."

"Your courage shall not pass unrequited," replied the speaker. "Where are you going?"

"To my master's, at the Baptist's Head, at the corner of Creed Lane – not a bow-shot hence."

"It will not be safe to go thither," observed the other. "Your master will deliver you to the watch."

"I will risk it, nevertheless," answered Gilbert. "I have an old grandame whom I desire to see."

"Something strikes me!" exclaimed the other. "Is your grandame the old woman who warned the usurper Jane not to

proceed to the Tower?"

"She is," returned Gilbert.

"This is a strange encounter, in good sooth," cried the other. "She is the person I am in search of. You must procure me instant speech with her."

"I will conduct you to her, right willingly, sir," replied Gilbert. "But she says little to any one, and may refuse to answer your questions."

"We shall see," rejoined the other. "Lead on, good Gilbert."

Followed by his unknown companion, about whom he felt a strange curiosity, not unalloyed with fear, Gilbert proceeded at a rapid pace towards his destination. The whole of the buildings then surrounding Saint Paul's, it is almost unnecessary to say, were destroyed by the same fire that consumed the Cathedral; and, though the streets still retain their original names, their situation is in some respects changed.

Passing beneath the shade of a large tree, which then grew at the western boundary of the majestic edifice, Gilbert darted through a narrow entry into Ave Maria Lane, and turning to the left, speedily reached Ludgate, which he crossed at some fifty paces from the Gate – then used, like several of the other city portals, as a prison – and, entering Creed Lane, halted before a low-built house on the right. The shutters were closed, but it was evident, from the uproarious sounds issuing from the dwelling, that revelry was going on within. Gilbert did not deem it prudent to open the street door, but calling to his companion, he went to

the back of the tavern, and gained admittance through a window on the ground floor.

"They are having a merry rouse," he observed to the other, "in honour of the usurper; and my master, Ninion, will be too far gone to notice aught except his guests and his sack brewage, so that I may safely conduct your worship to my grandame. But first let me strike a light."

With this, he searched about for flint and steel, and having found them, presently set fire to a small lamp hanging against the wall, which he removed and turned, not without some apprehension, towards the stranger.

His glance fell upon a tall man, with an ample feuille-morte coloured cloak thrown over his left shoulder, so as completely to muffle the lower part of his features. Gilbert could see nothing of the stranger's face, except an aquiline nose, and a pair of piercing black eyes; but the expression of the latter was so stern and searching, that his own regards involuntarily sank before them. A bonnet of black velvet, decorated with a single drooping feather, drawn over the brow, added to the stranger's disguise. But what was revealed of the physiognomy was so striking, that Gilbert was satisfied he should never forget it.

Something, indeed, there was of majesty in the stranger's demeanour, that, coupled with his sinister looks and the extraordinary brilliancy of his eyes, impressed the superstitious youth with the notion that he was in the presence of an unearthly being. Struck by this idea, he glanced at the stranger's feet, in

expectation of finding one of the distinctive marks of the Prince of Darkness. But he beheld nothing except a finely-formed limb, clothed in black silk hose and a velvet shoe, above which hung the point of a lengthy rapier.

"I am neither the enemy of mankind nor your enemy, good youth," observed the stranger, who guessed the cause of Gilbert's apprehensions. "Bring your grandame hither, and take heed how you approach her, or your looks will alarm her more than mine do you."

It was not without reason that this caution was given. Gilbert's appearance was ghastly in the extreme. His countenance was haggard with the loss of blood; his garments torn and saturated with moisture; and his black dripping locks, escaping from the blood-stained bandage around his head, contrasted fearfully with the deathly paleness of his visage. Acknowledging the justice of the suggestion, Gilbert decided upon proceeding in the dark, that his appearance might not be observed.

Accordingly, he crept cautiously up stairs, and returned in a few minutes with his aged relative. Gilbert found the stranger in the same attitude he had left him, and his appearance startled Gunnora, as much as it had done him.

Crossing herself, she glanced uneasily at the mysterious stranger. From him her eye wandered to Gilbert; and terrified by his haggard looks, she cried in a tone of anxiety, "You have suffered much, my child. The ill news reached me of the shameful punishment with which you have been visited for your

loyalty to your true Queen. I heard also that you had been conveyed a prisoner to the Tower; and was about to make suit to the gracious lady, Jane Dudley, in your behalf. Was I wrongfully informed?"

"No, mother, you were not," replied Gilbert. "But heed me not. There stands the worshipful gentleman who desires to speak with you."

"I am ready to answer his questions," said Gunnora. "Let him propose them."

"First, let me tell you, dame," said the stranger, "that your grandsons devotion to Queen Mary shall not pass unrequited. Ere many days – perchance many hours – shall have passed, he shall exchange his serge doublet for a suit of velvet."

"You hear that, mother," exclaimed Gilbert, joyfully.

"Who are you that make him the offer?" asked Gunnora, stedfastly regarding the stranger.

"You shall know, anon," he replied. "Suffice it, I can make good my words. Your presence is required in the Tower."

"By the Lady Jane, – I should say by the queen?" rejoined Gunnora.

"By the Privy Council," returned the stranger.

"What do they seek from me?" demanded the old woman.

"To testify to the death of his late Majesty, King Edward the Sixth," replied the other.

"Ha!" exclaimed Gunnora.

"Fear nothing," rejoined the stranger. "The council will

befriend you. Their object is to prove that Edward was poisoned by Northumberland's order. Can you do this?"

"I can," replied Gunnora. "My hand administered the fatal draught."

"Yours, mother!" ejaculated Gilbert, horror-stricken.

"Prove this, and Northumberland will lose his head," said the stranger.

"Were my own to fall with it, I would do so," replied Gunnora. "My sole wish is to avenge my foster-son, the great Duke of Somerset, who fell by Northumberland's foul practices. It was therefore when all the physicians of the royal household were dismissed, and the duke sent messengers for empirical aid, that I presented myself, and offered my services. When I beheld the royal sufferer, I saw he had but short space to live. But short as it was, it was too long for the duke. A potion was prepared by Northumberland, which I administered. From that moment his highness grew worse, and in six hours he was a corpse."

"It was a cursed deed," cried Gilbert.

"True," replied Gunnora, "it was so, and Heaven will surely avenge it. But I did it to get Northumberland into my power. The king's case was past all remedy. But he might have lingered for days and weeks, and the duke was impatient for the crown. I was impatient too – but it was for his head. And therefore I did his bidding."

"Your vengeance shall be fully gratified," replied the stranger. "Come with me."

"Hold!" exclaimed Gunnora. "How will his testimony affect the Lady Jane?"

"It will deprive her of her crown – perchance her head," rejoined the stranger.

"Then it shall never be uttered," replied Gunnora, firmly.

"Torture shall wring it from you," cried the stranger, furiously.

The old woman drew herself up to her full height, and, regarding the stranger fixedly, answered in a stern tone – "Let it be tried upon me."

"Mother," said Gilbert, striding between them, and drawing his dagger, "go back to your own room. You shall not peril your safety thus."

"Tush!" exclaimed the stranger, impatiently. "No harm shall befal her. I thought you were both loyal subjects of Queen Mary. How can she assume the sovereign power while Jane grasps the sceptre?"

"But you aim at her life?" said Gunnora.

"No," replied the stranger, "I would preserve her. My object is to destroy Northumberland, and restore the crown to her to whom it rightfully belongs."

"In that case I will go with you," returned the old woman.

"You will fall into a snare," interposed her grandson. "Let him declare who he is."

"I will reveal my name to your grandame, boy," replied the stranger. And advancing towards Gunnora, he whispered in her ear.

The old woman started and trembled.

"Hinder me not, Gilbert," she said. "I must go with him."

"Shall I accompany you?" asked her grandson.

"On no account," replied the stranger, "unless you desire to be lodged in the deepest dungeon in the Tower. Be at the place of rendezvous to-morrow night, and you shall know more. Are you ready, good dame?"

Gunnora signified her assent; and, after a few parting words with her grandson, the latter unfastened a small door, opening upon the yard, and let them out.

They were scarcely clear of the house, when the stranger placing a silver whistle to his lips, blew a call upon it, which was instantly answered by a couple of attendants. At a signal from their leader they placed themselves on either side of Gunnora, and in spite of her resistance and remonstrances, dragged her forcibly along. The stranger, who marched a few yards in advance, proceeded at so rapid a pace, that the old woman found it utterly impossible to keep up with him. She therefore stood still, and refused to take another step. But this did not avail her, for the two attendants seized her in their arms, and hurried forward as swiftly as before.

Though bewildered and alarmed, Gunnora did not dare to cry out for assistance. Indeed, they did not encounter a single passenger in the streets, until, as they were descending Budge-row, they heard the clank of arms, and beheld the gleam of torches borne by a party of the watch who were approaching from

Can-wick-street, or as it is now called, Cannon-street.

Turning off on the right, the stranger descended Dowgate-hill, and gained Thames-street before he had been remarked. A short time sufficed to bring him to St. Mary-hill, up which he mounted, and entering Thames-street, and passing St. Dunstan's in the East on the right, and the ancient church of All Hallows Barking on the left, he reached Great Tower-hill.

By this time, the vapours from the river had cleared off. The stars had begun to peep forth, and the first glimpse of day to peer in the east. By this light, and from this spot, the stern and sombre outline of the Tower, with its ramparts – its citadel, and its numerous lesser turrets, was seen to great advantage. On the summit of the Hill appeared the scaffold and the gallows already noticed.

Pausing for a moment, and pointing to a range of buildings, the summits of which could just be distinguished, to the south of the White Tower, the stranger said – "Within that palace Northumberland now reposes, surrounded by a triple line of fortifications, and defended by a thousand armed men. But if you will only reveal all you know, ere another week has passed his head shall be laid on that scaffold."

"The last time I beheld that fatal spot," returned Gunnora, "my foster-son, the Duke of Somerset, was decapitated there. If I can avenge him upon his foe, I shall die content."

"Obey my directions implicitly, and you *shall* do so," rejoined the other.

"How are we to enter the Tower?" asked Gunnora.

"Not by the ordinary road," replied the other, significantly. "But we shall be observed if we linger here. Forward!"

Crossing the Hill in the direction of the City Postern, the stranger suddenly wheeled round, and, under cover of a low wall, approached the moat. Exactly opposite the Devilin Tower, and the bastion occupying the north-western anglo of the exterior line of fortifications, stood at this time, at a little distance from the moat, a small low building. Towards this structure the stranger hastened. As he drew near it, he glanced uneasily at the ramparts, to ascertain whether he was observed. But though the measured tread of the sentinels and the clank of arms were distinctly audible, he remained unperceived.

Unlocking the door, the whole party entered the building, which was apparently deserted. After a moment's search, the stranger discovered a spring in the floor, which he pulled, and a trap-door opened, disclosing a long and steep flight of steps, at the foot of which sat a man with a mask, bearing a torch.

No sooner did this person hear the noise occasioned by the opening of the trap-door, than he hastily ascended, and placed himself in readiness to guide the party. On gaining the level ground, it was evident, from the dampness of the arched roof of the passage, and the slippery surface of the floor along which they trod, that they were far below the bottom of the moat. Traversing this damp dark passage for more than a hundred yards, the humid atmosphere gave place to a more wholesome

air, and the ground became drier.

Hitherto, the passage had been about three feet wide and seven high, and was arched and flagged with stone. But they had now arrived at a point where it became more lofty, and their further progress was checked by a strong door plated with iron, and studded with nails. Taking a huge key from his girdle, the man in the mask unlocked this ponderous door, and, admitting the party, fastened it behind him. He then led them up another stone stair-case, similar in all respects to the first, except that it did not ascend to more than half the height. This brought them to a vaulted gallery, from which three passages branched.

Pursuing that on the right, and preceded by his masked attendant, the stranger strode silently along. As she followed him, Gunnora noticed several strong doors in the wall, which she took to be entrances to dungeons. After threading this passage, the party ascended a third short flight of steps, at the top of which was a trap-door. It was opened by the guide, and admitted them into a small stone chamber, the walls of which appeared, from the embrazures of the windows, to be of immense thickness. The roof was groined and arched. In the centre of the room stood a small table, on which some provisions were placed. A small copper lamp, suspended from the roof, threw a sickly light around, and discovered a little pallet stretched in a recess on the right.

"You are now in the Bowyer's Tower, in the chamber where it is said the Duke of Clarence was drowned in the butt of

malmsey," observed the stranger. "Here you will remain till your presence is required by the Council."

Gunnora would have remonstrated, but the stranger waved his hand to her to keep silence, and, followed by his attendants, descended through the trap-door, which was closed and bolted beneath.

X. – HOW THE DUKE OF NORTHUMBERLAND MENACED SIMON RENARD IN SAINT PETER'S CHAPEL ON THE TOWER-GREEN; AND HOW QUEEN JANE INTERPOSED BETWEEN THEM

It will now be proper to ascertain how far the Duke of Northumberland was justified in his suspicion of Queen Jane's conduct being influenced by some secret and adverse counsel. After the abrupt departure of Lord Guilford Dudley for Sion House, as before related, she was greatly distressed, and refused at first to credit the intelligence. But when it was confirmed beyond all doubt by a message from her husband himself, declaring that he would not return till she had acceded to his request, she burst into tears, and withdrew to her own chamber, where she remained for some time alone.

When she re-appeared, it was evident from her altered looks that she had suffered deeply. But it was evident also, from her composure of countenance and firmness of manner, that whatever resolution she had formed she would adhere to it.

Summoning the Earls of Arundel and Pembroke to her presence, she briefly explained to them that she had heard, with

infinite concern and uneasiness, that the council had proposed to raise her husband to the throne, because she foresaw that it would breed trouble and dissatisfaction, and greatly endanger her own government.

"Your highness judges rightly," replied the Earl of Pembroke. "It will be said that in thus elevating his son, Northumberland seeks only his own aggrandisement."

"And it will be truly said, my lord," rejoined Jane. "But if this is your opinion, why was your voice given in favour of the measure?"

"No man is bound to accuse himself," replied Pembroke.

"But every man is bound to speak truth, my lord," rejoined Jane. "Again I ask you, why your assent was given to this measure, which, by your own admission, is fraught with danger?"

"The Duke of Northumberland is my enemy," replied the Earl, sternly. "Had this step been taken it would have ensured his destruction."

"You speak frankly, my lord," rejoined the Queen. "But you forget that it must have ensured my destruction also."

"I am a loyal subject of your majesty," replied the Earl of Pembroke, "and will shed my last drop of blood in the defence of your crown. But I will not submit to the Duke's imperious conduct."

"And yet, my lord, you owe your own dignity to him," rejoined Jane, sarcastically. "Sir William Herbert would not have been Earl of Pembroke but for the Duke's intercession with our cousin

Edward. For shame, my lord! you owe him too much to act against him."

"*I* owe him nothing," interposed the Earl of Arundel, "and may therefore speak without risk of any such imputation as your majesty has thrown out against Lord Pembroke. If the overweening power of the Duke of Northumberland be not checked, it will end in his downfal, and the downfal of all those with whom he is connected."

"I thank you for your counsel, my lord," replied the Queen; "and, setting down much to your private animosity, will place the rest to loyalty to myself."

"Your highness will be speedily satisfied of the truth of my assertion, if you refuse compliance with Northumberland's demands," replied Pembroke. "But you will find it, unless you have recourse to strong measures, a difficult and a dangerous game to play."

"To one who, though so young in years, is yet so old in wisdom as your majesty," added the Earl of Arundel, "it will be needless to say, that on the first decisive movement of your reign – as on that of a battle – depends the victory. If you yield, all is lost. From this one step the Duke will estimate your character, and become either your servant or your master. From his conduct, also, you will know what to expect from him hereafter."

"My resolution is taken, my lords," returned the Queen.

"The course I have resolved upon in reference to the duke, you will learn when I meet you in the council-chamber, where he will

be present to speak for himself – and, if need be, defend himself. My desire is that my reign should begin and proceed in peace. And, if you hope for my favour, you will forget your differences with his grace, and act in concert with me. In asserting my own power, I trust I shall convince him of the futility of any further struggle with me, and so bring him to a sense of duty."

"Your majesty may depend upon the full support of your council," rejoined Arundel.

"I doubt it not, my lord," replied Jane. "And now to the business on which I summoned you. It may have reached you that my dear lord has departed this morning for Sion House, in great displeasure that I have refused to comply with his wishes."

"We have heard as much," replied both noblemen.

"My desire is that you hasten after him and entreat him to return with all speed," pursued Jane.

"Your majesty then consents!" exclaimed Pembroke, hastily.

"Not so, my lord," replied the Queen. "I will raise him to his father's rank. He shall have a dukedom, but not a kingdom."

"I would counsel your majesty to reflect ere you concede thus much," observed Arundel.

"I have already said that my resolution is taken," replied the Queen. "Repeat what I have told you to him, and entreat him to return."

"*Entreat* him!" echoed Pembroke scornfully. "It is not for your highness to entreat, but to command. Obedience sworn at the altar by the lips of the Queen of England, is cancelled as soon as

uttered. Your husband is your subject. Empower us to bring him to you, and he shall be at your feet within an hour."

"My pleasure is that you literally fulfil my injunctions, my lords," replied the Queen. "Lord Guilford Dudley was the husband of my choice. When I gave my hand to him at the altar, I had no thought that it would ever grasp a sceptre, Nor, till I obtained this unlooked-for – and, believe me, most unwished-for dignity, – did the slightest misunderstanding ever arise between us. But now that I am compelled to sacrifice my affections at the shrine of duty, – now that I am Queen as well as consort – and he is subject as well as husband – this disagreement has occurred, which a little calm reflection will put to rights."

"What if his lordship should refuse to return with us?" asked Pembroke.

"You will use your best endeavours to induce him to do so," replied Jane, a tear starting to her eye, and her voice faltering in spite of her efforts to maintain her composure. "But if you fail, I shall at least be satisfied that I have done my duty."

"Your majesty's commands shall be obeyed," replied Pembroke. "But we must have your licence to go forth – for we are detained as prisoners within the Tower."

"You shall have it," replied Jane. And she immediately wrote out the order.

"The passport must be countersigned by the duke," said Pembroke. "The gate-keepers will not hold this sufficient authority."

"How!" exclaimed Jane, reddening, "Am I not Queen? Is not my authority absolute here?"

"Not while the duke holds his high office, gracious madam," returned Pembroke. "His followers give you the *name* of Queen. But they look up to him as sovereign."

"My lord, I need no assurance that you are Northumberland's mortal enemy," replied Jane.

"I am your majesty's loyal subject," replied the earl. "And if your passport be respected, I will confess that I have wronged him."

"And if it be not, I will confess I have wronged *you*, my lord," rejoined Jane. "The royal barge is at your service. – An usher shall conduct you to it."

So saying, she motioned one of her train, to attend them, and the two nobles bowed and departed.

As soon as they had quitted the royal presence, Pembroke observed to his companion: —

"We have now effected a quarrel, which will end in Northumberland's destruction and Jane's dethronement. Simon Renard will so fan the flame, that it shall never be extinguished."

As the Earl anticipated, the Queen's pass was refused – the warders declaring that their instructions were to suffer no one to go forth without the Duke's written order. They then returned to the palace. It was some time before they were admitted to the Queen, as she was engaged in the angry conference previously-related with her mother-in-law. When the Duchess had departed,

they sought an audience.

"How, my lords," cried Jane, turning very pale; "do I see you again so soon?"

"It is as I informed your highness," replied the Earl of Pembroke, laying the order on the table. "The Duke is master here."

"Ha!" exclaimed the Queen, starting to her feet, "am I deserted by my husband – braved by the Duke – and treated like an infant by his imperious dame? I cry you pardon, my lords, you have *not* deceived me. You are my loyal subjects. Oh! I could weep to think how I have been deluded. But they shall find they have not made me queen for nothing. While I *have* power I will use it. My lords, I bid you to the council at noon tomorrow. I shall summon Lord Guilford Dudley to attend it, and he will refuse at his peril."

"Have a care, gracious madam, how you proceed with the Duke," replied Pembroke. "Your royal predecessor, Edward, it is said, came not fairly by his end. If Northumberland finds you an obstacle to his designs, instead of a means of forwarding them, he will have little scruple in removing you."

"I shall be wary, doubt it not, my lord," rejoined Jane. "To-morrow you shall learn my pleasure. I count on your fidelity."

"Your majesty may safely do so," they replied. And with renewed assurances of zeal, they departed.

"Her spirit is now fairly roused," observed Pembroke, as they quitted the palace. "If she hold in the same mind till to-morrow,

it is all over with Northumberland."

"*Souvent femme varie, bien fol est qui s'y fie*," observed Simon Renard, advancing to meet them. "Let me know how you have sped."

The Earl of Pembroke then related the particulars of their interview with the Queen.

"All goes on as well as I could desire," observed Renard. "But she must come to an open rupture with him, else the crafty Duke will find some means of soothing her wounded pride. Be that my task."

Taking their way slowly along the outer ward, the trio passed under the gloomy gateway of the Bloody Tower, and ascended a flight of steps on the left leading to the Tower Green. Here (as now,) grew an avenue of trees, and beneath their shade they found De Noailles, who instantly joined them. Renard then entered into a full detail of his schemes, and acquainted them with the information he had received through his messengers, in spite of all the Duke's precautions, of the accession in strength which Mary's party had received, and of the numbers who had declared themselves in her favour. He further intimated that his agents were at work among the people to produce a revolt in the metropolis.

As they proceeded across the Tower-green, the Earl of Pembroke paused at a little distance from the chapel, and pointing to a square patch of ground, edged by a border of white stones, and completely destitute of herbage, said —

"Two Queens have perished here. On this spot stood the scaffolds of Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard."

"And ere long a third shall be added to their number," observed Renard, gloomily.

Shaping their course towards the north-east angle of the fortress, they stopped before a small turret, at that time called the Martin Tower, and used as a place of confinement for state offenders, but now denominated the Jewel Tower, from the circumstance of its being the depository of the regalia.

"Within that tower are imprisoned the Catholic Bishops Gardiner and Bonner,'" remarked Arundel..

"Let Mary win the crown, and it shall be tenanted by the protestants, Cranmer and Ridley," muttered Renard.

While the others returned to the Green, Renard lingered for an instant to contemplate the White Tower, which is seen perhaps to greater advantage from this point of view than from any other in the fortress. And as it is in most respects unchanged, – excepting such repairs as time has rendered necessary, and some alterations in the doorways and windows, to be noted hereafter, – the modern visitor to this spot may, if he pleases, behold it in much the same state that it appeared to the plotting Spanish ambassador.

Rising to a height of nearly a hundred feet; built in a quadrangular form; terminated at each angle by a lofty turret, three of which are square, while the fourth, situated at the northeast, is circular, and of larger dimensions than the

others; embattled; having walls of immense thickness, exceeding fourteen feet, and further strengthened by broad flat buttresses, dividing the face of the building into compartments; lighted by deep semi-circular-arched windows; – this massive stronghold, constructed entirely of stone, – and now in some parts defaced by a coating of mortar and flints, – occupies an area of an hundred and sixteen feet on the north and south, and ninety-six on the east and west. At the south-east corner is a broad semi-circular projection, marking the situation of St. John's Chapel, already described. The round turret, at the north-east angle, was used as an observatory by the celebrated astronomer, Flamstead, in the reign of Charles the Second. The principal entrance was on the north, and was much more spacious than the modern doorway, which occupies its site.

At the period of this chronicle the White Tower was connected, as has already been mentioned, on the south-east with the ancient palace. On the south stood a fabric called the Jewel-house; while at the south-western angle was another embattled structure of equal elevation and dimensions with the By-ward Tower and the other gates, denominated the Coal-harbour Tower. These, with the Lanthorn Tower and the line of buildings extending in an easterly direction towards the Broad Arrow Tower, have totally disappeared, and the White Tower is now disconnected with every other edifice. For centuries it has stood, and for centuries may it continue to stand! Within its walls the old monarchs of England have held their councils, – within its

vaults prisoners have sighed, – from its gates queens have come forth to execution! – Long may it flourish as a fearful memento of the past!

On the present occasion, it presented a stirring picture. From a tall staff, planted on the roof, floated the royal standard. Cannon bristled from its battlements, and armed men were seen marching from post to post on its platforms. Before the principal entrance four warders were stationed; and in front troops of arquebusiers and archers were passing under the review of their leaders. The sound of martial music filled the air; pennons and banners fluttered in the breeze; and pikes, steel caps, and corslets glittered in the sunbeams. Amid these warlike groups, the figures of the gigantic warders and their diminutive attendant, Xit, caught the eye of Renard, and filled him with astonishment: – the former being taller by the head and shoulders than the mass of their companions, besides far exceeding them in bulk and size of limb; while the latter, with more than ordinary pretensions to the dignity of manhood, had scarcely the stature of a child. It must not be omitted in the description of the White Tower that the summits of its four turrets were surmounted by large vanes, each decorated with a crown, in the hollows of which, as in our own time, the jackdaws were accustomed to build.

After gazing at this magnificent structure for a few minutes, and indulging in the emotions which its contemplation inspired, Simon Renard followed his companions, and resumed his discourse. They had again adverted to Jane, when the door of

the principal entrance of the White Tower was thrown open, and, attended by the Duchess of Suffolk and the Ladies Hastings and Herbert, the subject of their conference issued from it and proceeded on foot towards St. Peter's Chapel. The road was immediately cleared by her attendants, and the three gigantic warders and their tiny companion marched before her, and planted themselves on either side of the chapel door. Glancing significantly at his companions, Renard motioned them to follow him, and hurried towards the sacred pile.

"What! you a rigid Catholic, M. Renard." observed Pembroke, "about to attend Protestant worship? Hopes may be entertained of your conversion."

"Stronger hopes may be entertained that I shall restore the ancient worship," muttered Renard, as he entered the chapel, and took his place unobserved by the Queen behind one of the columns of the aisle, while she advanced to the altar.

Erected in the reign of Edward the First, the little chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula (the parochial church – for the Tower, it is almost needless to say, is a parish in itself), is the second structure occupying the same site and dedicated to the same saint. The earlier fabric was much more spacious, and contained two chancels, with stalls for the king and queen, as appears from the following order for its repair issued in the reign of Henry the Third, and recorded by Stow: – "The king to the keepers of the Tower work, sendeth greeting: We command you to brush or plaster with lime well and decently the chancel of St. Mary

in the church of St. Peter within the bailiwick of our Tower of London, and the chancel of St. Peter in the same church; and from the entrance of the chancel of St. Peter to the space of four feet beyond the stalls made for our own and our queen's use in the same church; and the same stalls to be painted. And the little Mary with her shrine and the images of St. Peter, St. Nicholas, and Katherine, and the beam beyond the altar of St. Peter, and the little cross with its images to be coloured anew, and to be refreshed with good colours. And that ye cause to be made a certain image of St. Christopher holding and carrying Jesus where it may best and most conveniently be done, and painted in the foresaid church. And that ye cause two fair tables to be made and painted of the best colours concerning the stories of the blessed Nicholas and Katherine, before the altars of the said saints in the same church. And that ye cause to be made two fair cherubims with a cheerful and joyful countenance standing on the right and left of the great cross in the said church. And moreover, one marble font with marble pillars well and handsomely wrought."

Thus much respecting the ancient edifice. The more recent chapel is a small, unpretending stone structure, and consists of a nave and an aisle at the north, separated by pointed arches, supported by clustered stone pillars of great beauty. Its chief interest is derived from the many illustrious and ill-fated dead crowded within its narrow walls.

Here rested, for a brief season, the body of John Fisher,

Bishop of Rochester, beheaded in 1535, for denying the king's supremacy – "a prelate," says Holinshed, "of great learning and of very good life. The Pope had elected him a cardinal and sent his hat as far as Calais. But his head was off before his hat was on, so that they met not." Next to Fisher was interred his friend, the wise, the witty, the eloquent Sir Thomas More, whom Hall, the chronicler, hesitates whether he shall describe as "a foolish wise man, or a wise foolish man," – and who jested even on the scaffold. His body was afterwards removed, at the intercession of his daughter, Margaret Roper, to Chelsea. Here also was interred the last of the right line of the Plantagenets, Margaret, Countess of Salisbury, the mother of Cardinal Pole. The venerable countess refused to lay her head upon the block, saying (as Lord Herbert of Cherbury reports), – "'So should traitors do, and I am none.' Neither did it serve that the executioner told her it was the fashion: – so turning her grey head every way, she bid him, if he would have it, to get it as he could: *so he was constrained to fetch it off slovenly.*"

Here also was deposited the headless trunk of another of Henry the Eighth's victims, Thomas Lord Cromwell, the son of a blacksmith, who, having served as a common soldier under Bourbon, at the sack of Rome, entered Wolsey's service, and rose to be Grand Chamberlain of the realm. Here, in Elizabeth's reign, were brought the remains of Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, who aspired to the hand of the Queen of Scots. And here also were laid those of Robert Devereux, the rash and ill-

fated Earl of Essex. Under the communion-table was interred, at a later date, the daring and unfortunate Duke of Monmouth, who fell a sacrifice to his ambition. And to come down to yet more recent times, beneath the little gallery at the west of the chapel, were buried the three leaders of the rebellion of 1745 – Lords Kilmarnock, Balmerino, and Lovat.

There were four other graves, which, as being more nearly connected with the personages introduced in this chronicle, it will be proper to notice separately. Before the altar, on the west, a plain flag bore the inscription "*Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset, 1552*." On the next grave to that of the great Lord Protector was written "*Katherine Howard*," and on the adjoining stone, "*Anne Boleyn*" These two queens, – equally unfortunate, but not, perhaps, equally culpable, – perished within five years of each other – the latter suffering in 1536, the former in 1541. Close to the wall on the right, a fourth grave bore the name of "*Thomas Seymour, Baron Sudley*." Seymour was brother to the Duke of Somerset, and Lord High Admiral of England; and the only stain on the Protector's otherwise reproachless character is, that he signed his death-warrant, and declined to use the power he undoubtedly possessed, of procuring his pardon. The fiery and ambitious Admiral was beheaded in 1549.

Between this grave and that of Anne Boleyn intervened a plain stone, unmarked by any inscription, and indicating a vacant tomb. Beneath this flag, eighteen months after the execution of his victim, the Duke of Somerset – and barely six weeks from the

day on which this chronicle opens – was deposited the headless trunk of the once all-powerful and arrogant Northumberland.

The service over, as the Queen was about to depart, Simon Renard advanced to meet her. Returning his ceremonious salutation by a dignified greeting, Jane, with a look of some surprise, inquired the cause of his presence..

"I might have chosen a more fitting season and place for an audience with your majesty," replied Renard, in the low and silvery tone which he could adopt at pleasure. "But I have that to communicate which emboldens me to break through all forms."

"Declare it then, sir," replied the Queen.

Renard glanced significantly at her. She understood him, and motioning her attendants to withdraw to a little distance, they obeyed; and Lady Hastings seized the opportunity of despatching a messenger to her father to acquaint him with the circumstance, as already related.

What was the nature of the disclosure made by the wily ambassador to the Queen, it is not our present purpose to reveal. That it was important was evident from the deep attention she paid to it; and it was apparent, also, from her changing looks and agitated demeanour, that her fears were greatly aroused.

As Renard proceeded, her uneasiness increased so much that she could scarcely support herself, and her attendants were about to hasten to her assistance, when a gesture from the ambassador checked them.

Different inferences were drawn by the various witnesses of

this singular interview. But all were satisfied of the ascendancy which Renard had, in some manner, acquired over the youthful sovereign. While glances of triumph were exchanged between the conspiring lords, who watched them from their station in the aisle, the greatest misgivings were experienced by the Ladies Hastings and Herbert. Unable to comprehend the mystery, they were so much struck with the peculiar expression of Jane's countenance, which precisely resembled the look she wore after the mysterious occurrence in St. John's Chapel, that they could not help thinking the present conference had some relation to that event.

Renard's manner, indeed, was so extraordinary that it furnished some clue to the nature of his discourse. Casting off the insinuating tone and deferential deportment with which he had commenced, he gradually assumed a look and accent of command, and almost of menace. His figure dilated, and fixing his black flaming eye upon the trembling Queen, he stamped his foot upon the vacant grave on which he was standing, and said, in a voice so loud that it reached the ears of the listeners, "Your Majesty will never wear your crown in safety till Northumberland lies here."

Before any answer could be returned, the door of the chapel was suddenly thrown open, and the Duke presented himself. A momentary change passed over Renard's countenance at this interruption. But he instantly recovered his composure, and folding his arms upon his breast, awaited the result.

Unable to control his indignation, the Duke strode towards them, and flinging his jewelled cap on the ground, drew his sword.

"M. Renard," he exclaimed, "you are a traitor!"

"To whom, my lord?" replied Renard, calmly.

"To me – to the Queen," rejoined the Duke.

"If to be your grace's enemy is to be a traitor, I confess I am one," retorted Renard sternly. "But I am no traitor to her majesty."

"It is false!" exclaimed the Duke, furiously. "You are her worst and most dangerous enemy. And nothing but the sacred spot in which you have sought shelter, prevents me from taking instant vengeance upon you."

Renard smiled disdainfully.

"Your grace threatens safely," he said, in a taunting tone.

"Insolent!" exclaimed the Duke, roused to a pitch of ungovernable fury. "Draw and defend yourself, or I will strike you dead at my feet."

"Put up your sword, my lord," cried Jane, throwing herself between them. "You forget in whose presence you stand."

"No!" exclaimed Northumberland, "I do not forget. I am in the presence of one who owes her authority to me – and who holds it through me. The same power which made you queen, can as readily unmake you."

"Your majesty will now judge who is the traitor," observed Renard, sarcastically.

"I do," she replied. "I command your grace," she continued, authoritatively addressing Northumberland, "to quit the chapel instantly."

"What if I refuse to obey?" rejoined the Duke.

"Your grace will do well not to urge me too far," replied Jane. "Obey me, or take the consequences."

"What are they?" cried the Duke contemptuously.

"Your arrest," said the Earl of Pembroke, laying his hand upon his sword, and advancing. "If his grace will not submit himself to your highness's authority, we will compel him to do so."

"Jane!" said the Duke, suddenly controlling himself – "be warned before it is too late. You are in the hands of those who will destroy you."

"On the contrary," rejoined Renard, "her majesty is in the hands of those who will uphold her, and destroy *you?*

"No more of this," interposed the Queen. "If you are, what you profess yourselves, my faithful subjects, you will reconcile your differences."

"Never!" exclaimed the Duke. "Let M. Renard look to himself."

"Another such menace, my lord," said Jane, "and I place you in arrest."

"Threatened men live long," observed Renard. "I beseech your majesty not to place any restraint upon his grace."

"Will your highness grant me a moment's speech with you!" said Northumberland, sheathing his sword.

"Not now, my lord," replied Jane. "To-morrow, at the council, you shall be fully heard. And I charge you, by your allegiance, to cease all hostilities till then. Have I your knightly word for this?"

"You have," replied the Duke, after a moment's reflection.

"And yours, M. Renard?" continued the Queen, turning to him.

"Since his grace has passed his word I cannot withhold mine," replied the ambassador. "But I give it with reluctance."

"Your grace will not fail to attend the council to-morrow," said Jane.

"If your highness desires it I will not, undoubtedly," replied the Duke. "But since you decline to act upon my advice, there can be little need for my presence."

"My wishes – my commands are, that you attend," rejoined the Queen.

"Your wishes *are* commands," rejoined the Duke. "I will be there."

"Enough," replied Jane. "M. Renard, you will accompany me to the palace."

As the ambassador was preparing to depart, he perceived Northumberland's cap lying at his feet.

"Your grace's hat," he observed, pointing to it. And glancing significantly at Jane, he added, in an audible whisper, "Would the head were in it!"

"Ha!" exclaimed the Duke, laying his hand upon his sword. "But you are safe till to-morrow."

Renard made no reply, but with a smile of exultation followed the Queen out of the chapel.

XI. – HOW THE DUKE OF NORTHUMBERLAND WAS PREVAILED UPON TO UNDERTAKE THE ENTERPRISE AGAINST THE LADY MARY

At noon on the following day, the Council was held as appointed by the Queen. In the meantime, alarming intelligence having been received of the accession which Mary's party had obtained, it became absolutely necessary that immediate and decisive measures should be taken against her.

As soon as the Lords of the Council, including the two ambassadors, Renard and Noailles, were assembled, and the Queen had taken her seat upon the throne, the Earl of Pembroke stepped forward, and thus addressed her: —

"It is with infinite concern that I have to apprise your majesty that news has just been brought that Sir Edward Hastings, with an army of four thousand men, has gone over to the Lady Mary. Five counties also have revolted. Your highness is already aware that the Earls of Sussex, Bath and Oxford, Lord Wentworth, Sir Thomas Cornwallis and Sir Henry Jerningham, have raised the commoners of Suffolk and Norfolk. Lord Windsor, Sir Edmund Peckham, Sir Robert Drury, and Sir Edward Hastings, have now

raised those of Buckinghamshire. Sir John Williams and Sir Leonard Chamberlain have stirred up a party in Oxfordshire, and Sir Thomas Tresham another in Northamptonshire. These rebels with their companies are now marching towards Framlingham Castle."

"The revolt must be instantly checked," rejoined Jane. "An army must be sent against her."

"To whom will your majesty entrust its command?" inquired the Earl of Pembroke.

"To one well fitted for the office, – my father, the Duke of Suffolk," answered the Queen.

"My advice is, that it be given to the Duke of Northumberland," said the Earl of Arundel. "Wherever he has carried his arms – in Scotland and in France – he has been victorious. The recollection of the defeat sustained by the rebels at Dussindale will operate in his favour. His grace has every recommendation for the office. Having achieved the victory of Norfolk once already, he will be so feared that none will dare to lift up a weapon against him. Besides which, I need scarcely remind your highness, who must be familiar with his high reputation, that he is the best man of war in the realm, as well for the ordering of his camps and soldiers, both in battle and in the tent, as for his experience and wisdom, with which he can both animate his army and either vanquish his enemies by his courage and skill, or else dissuade them (if need be,) from their enterprise."

"My voice is for Northumberland," cried Cecil.

"And mine," added Huntingdon.

"We are all unanimous," cried the rest of the Council.

"Your grace hears the opinion just given," said Jane. "Will you undertake the command?".

"No," answered the Duke, bluntly. "I will shed my blood in your majesty's defence. But I see through the designs, of your artful council, and will not be made their dupe. Their object is to withdraw me from you. Let the Duke of Suffolk take the command. I will maintain the custody of the Tower."

"Do not suffer him to decline it," whispered Simon Renard to the Queen. "By this means you will accomplish a double purpose – insure a victory over Mary, and free yourself from the yoke he will otherwise impose upon you. If the Duke of Suffolk departs, and he is left absolute master of the Tower, you will never attain your rightful position."

"You are right," replied Jane. "My lord," she continued, addressing the Duke, "I am satisfied that the Council mean you well. And I pray you, therefore, to acquiesce in their wishes and my own.".

"Why will not your highness send the Duke of Suffolk, as you have this moment proposed?" rejoined Northumberland.

"I have bethought me," replied the Queen. "And as my husband has thought fit to absent himself from me at this perilous juncture, I am resolved not to be left without a protector. Your grace will, therefore, deliver up the keys of the Tower to the Duke

of Suffolk."

"Nay, your majesty," – cried Northumberland.

"I will have no nay, my lord," interrupted the Queen peremptorily. "I will in nowise consent that my father shall leave me. To whom else would your grace entrust the command?"

The Duke appeared to reflect for a moment.

"I know no one," he answered.

"Then your grace must perforce consent," said the Queen.

"If your majesty commands it, I must. But I feel it is a desperate hazard," replied Northumberland.

"It is so desperate," whispered Pembroke to Renard, – "that he has not one chance in his favour."

"The Council desire to know your grace's determination?" said Arundel.

"My determination is this," rejoined the Duke. "Since you think it good, I will go, – not doubting your fidelity to the Queen's majesty, whom I shall leave in your custody."

"He is lost!" whispered Renard.

"Your grace's commission for the lieutenantship of the army shall be signed at once," said Jane; "and I beseech you to use all diligence."

"I will do what in me lies," replied the Duke. "My retinue shall meet me at Durham House to-night. And I will see the munition and artillery set forward before daybreak."

A pause now ensued, during which the Duke's commission was signed by the whole Council.

"It is his death-warrant," observed Renard to the Earl of Arundel.

"Here is your warrant, under the broad seal of England," said the Earl of Pembroke, delivering it to him.

"I must have my marches prescribed," replied the Duke. "I will do nothing without authority."

"What say you, my lords?" said Pembroke, turning to them.

"Agree at once," whispered Renard – "he is planning his own ruin."

"Your grace shall have full powers and directions," rejoined Pembroke.

"It is well," replied Northumberland. "My lords," he continued with great dignity, addressing the Council, "I and the other noble personages, with the whole army that are now about to go forth, as well for the behalf of you and yours, as for the establishing of the Queen's highness, shall not only adventure our bodies and lives amongst the bloody strokes and cruel assaults of our adversaries in the open fields; but also we leave the conservation of ourselves, children and families, at home here with you, as altogether committed to your truth and fidelity. If," he proceeded sternly, "we thought you would through malice, conspiracy, or dissension, leave us, your friends, in the briars and betray us, we could as well, in sundry ways, foresee and provide for our own safety, as any of you, by betraying us, can do for yours. But now, upon the only trust and faithfulness of your honours, whereof we think ourselves most assured, we do hazard

our lives. And if ye shall violate your trust and promise, hoping thereby of life and promotion, yet shall not God account you innocent of our bloods, neither acquit you of the sacred and holy oath of allegiance, made freely by you to the Queen's highness, who, by your own and our enticement, is rather of force placed therein, than by her own seeking and request. Consider, also, that God's cause, which is the preferment of his word, and fear of Papists' entrance, hath been (as you have heretofore always declared,) the original ground whereupon you even at the first motion granted your good wills and consents thereunto, as by your handwritings appeareth. And think not the contrary. But if ye mean deceit, though not forthwith, yet hereafter, Heaven will revenge the same."

"Your grace wrongs us by these suspicions," observed the Earl of Arundel.

"I will say no more," rejoined the Duke, "but in this perilous time wish you to use constant hearts, abandoning all malice, envy, and private affections."

"Doubt it not," said Cecil.

"I have not spoken to you in this sort upon any mistrust I have of your truths," pursued the Duke, "of which I have always hitherto conceived a trusty confidence. But I have put you in remembrance thereof, in case any variance should arise amongst you in my absence. And this I pray you, wish me not worse good-speed in this matter than you wish yourselves."

"We shall all agree on one point," observed Pembroke aside

to Renard – "and that is a hope that he may never return."

"If your grace mistrusts any of us in this matter, you are deceived," rejoined Arundel, "for which of us can wash his hands of it. And if we should shrink from you as treasonable, which of us can excuse himself as guiltless. Therefore, your doubt is too far cast."

"I pray Heaven it be so," replied the Duke, gravely. "Brother of Suffolk, I resign the custody of the Tower to you, entreating you, if you would uphold your daughter's crown, to look well to your charge. I now take my leave of your highness."

"Heaven speed your grace," replied Jane, returning his haughty salutation.

"Farewell, my lord," said the Earl of Arundel, "I am right sorry it is not my chance to bear you company, as I would cheerfully spend my heart's blood in your defence."

"Judas!" muttered the Duke.

Upon this, the Council broke up, and Jane returned to the palace, accompanied by the Duke of Suffolk, the two ambassadors, and others of the conspiring nobles.

"We may give each other joy," said Pembroke to Renard, as they walked along – "we are at last rid of Northumberland. Suffolk will be easily disposed of."

"Queen Mary shall be proclaimed in London, before tomorrow night," rejoined Renard.

Meanwhile, the Duke, attended by the Marquis of Northampton, the Lord Grey, and divers other noblemen,

entered his barge, and proceeded to Durham House. On the same night, he mustered his troops, and made every preparation for his departure, As he rode forth on the following morning through Shoreditch, great crowds collected to see him pass. But they maintained a sullen and ominous silence.

"The people press to see us," observed the Duke, in a melancholy tone, to Lord Grey, who rode by his side; "but not one saith God speed us!"

XII. – HOW MAGOG BECAME ENAMOURED OF A BUXOM WIDOW, YCLEPED DAME PLACIDA PASTON; HOW HE WENT A WOOING; AND HOW HE PROSPERED IN HIS SUIT

ON the night of the Duke of Northumberland's departure, as the three gigantic warders and their dwarfish attendant were assembled in their lodging in the By-ward Tower, preparatory to their evening meal, the conduct of Magog, which had been strange enough throughout the day, became so very extraordinary and unaccountable, that his brethren began to think he must have taken leave of his senses. Flinging his huge frame on a bench, he sighed and groaned, or rather bellowed, like an over-driven ox, and rolling his great saucer eyes upwards, till the whites only were visible, thumped his chest with a rapid succession of blows, that sounded like the strokes of a sledgehammer. But the worst symptom, in the opinion of the others, was his inability to eat. Magog's case must, indeed, be desperate, if he had no appetite for supper – and such a supper! Seldom had their board been so abundantly and invitingly spread as on the present occasion – and Magog refused to partake of it. He must either be bewitched, or alarmingly ill.

Supplied by the provident attention of the pantler and his spouse, the repast consisted of a cold chine of beef, little the worse for its previous appearance at the royal board; a mighty lumber pie, with a wall of pastry several inches thick, moulded to resemble the White Tower, and filled with a savoury mess of ham and veal, enriched by a goodly provision of forcemeat balls, each as large as a cannon-shot; a soused gurnet floating in claret; a couple of pullets stuffed with oysters, and served with a piquant sauce of oiled butter and barberries; a skirret pasty; an apple tansy; and a prodigious marrow pudding. Nor, in this bill of fare, must be omitted an enormous loaf, baked expressly for the giants, and compounded of nearly a bushel of mingled wheaten flour and barley, which stood at one end of the table, while at the opposite extremity was placed a nine-hooped pot of mead – the distance between each hoop denoting a quart of the humming fluid.

But all these good things were thrown away upon Magog. With some persuasion he was induced to take his seat at the table, but after swallowing a single mouthful of the beef, he laid down his knife and fork, and left the rest untasted. In vain Og urged him to try the pullets, assuring him he would find them delicious, as they were cooked by Dame Potentia herself: – in vain Gog scooped out the most succulent morsels from the depths of the lumber pie, loading his plate with gobbets of fat and forcemeat balls. He declined both offers with a melancholy shake of the head, and began to sigh and groan more dismally than ever.

Exchanging significant looks with each other, the two giants thought it best to leave him to himself, and assiduously addressed themselves to their own meal. By way of setting him a good example, they speedily cleared the chine to the bone. The gurnet was next despatched; and a considerable inroad made into the lumber pie, – three of its turrets having already disappeared, – when, as if roused from a trance, Magog suddenly seized the marrow pudding, and devoured it in a trice. He then applied himself to the nine-hooped pot, and taking a long deep draught, appeared exceedingly relieved.

But his calmness was of short duration. The fit almost instantly returned with fresh violence. Without giving the slightest intimation of his intention, he plucked his cap from his brow, and flung it at Xit, who chanced at the moment to be perched upon a stool stirring a great pan of sack posset, set upon a chafing-dish to warm, with such force as to precipitate him over head and ears into the liquid, which, fortunately, was neither hot enough to scald him, nor deep enough to drown him. When he reappeared, the mannikin uttered a shrill scream of rage and terror; and Og, who could not help laughing at his comical appearance, hastened to his assistance, and extricated him from his unpleasant situation.

By the aid of a napkin, Xit was speedily restored to a state of tolerable cleanliness, and though his habiliments were not a little damaged by the viscous fluid in which they had been immersed, he appeared to have suffered more in temper than

in any other way from the accident. While Og was rubbing him dry, – perhaps with no very gentle hand, – he screamed and cried like a peevish infant undergoing the process of ablution; and he was no sooner set free, than darting to the spot where Magog's cap had fallen, he picked it up, and dipping it in the sack-posset, hurled it in its owners face. Delighted with this retaliation, he crowed and swaggered about the room, and stamping fiercely upon the ground, tried to draw his sword; but this he found impossible, it being fast glued to the scabbard. Magog, however, paid no sort of attention to his antics, but having wiped his face with the end of the table-cloth, and wrung his bonnet, marched deliberately out of the room. His brothers glanced at each other in surprise, and were hesitating whether to follow, when they were relieved from further anxiety on this score by Xit, who hurried after him. They then very quietly returned to the repast, and trusting all would come right, contented themselves with such interjectional remarks as did not interfere with the process of mastication. In this way they continued, until the return of Xit, who, as he entered the room, exclaimed, with a half-merry, half-mischievous expression of countenance, "I have found it out – I have found it out."

"Found out what?" cried out both giants.

"He is in love," replied the dwarf.

"Magog in love!" ejaculated Og, starting. "Impossible!"

"You shall be convinced to the contrary if you will come with me," rejoined Xit. "I have seen him enter the house. And, what

is more, I have seen the lady."

"Who is she?" demanded Gog.

"Can you not guess," rejoined Xit.

"The fair Cicely," returned the giant.

"You are wide of the mark," replied the dwarf – "though, I confess, she is lovely enough to turn his head outright. But he is not so moonstruck as to aspire to *her*. Had I sought her hand, there might have been some chance of success. But Magog – pshaw!"

"Tush!" cried Og, "I will be sworn it is Mistress Bridget Crumbewell, the Bowyer's daughter, who hath bewitched him. I have noted that she hath cast many an amorous glance at him of late. It is she, I'll be sworn."

"Then you are forsworn, for it is *not* Bridget Crumbewell," rejoined Xit – "the object of his affections is a widow."

"A widow!" exclaimed both giants – "then he is lost."

"I see not that," replied the dwarf. "Magog might do worse than espouse Dame Placida Paston. Her husband, old Miles Paston, left a good round sum behind him, and a good round widow too. She has a bright black eye, a tolerable waist for so plump a person, and as neat an ancle as can be found within the Tower, search where you will. I am half disposed to enter the lists with him."

"Say you so," replied Og, laughing at the dwarf's presumption, "then e'en make the attempt. And such assistance as we can render, shall not be wanting; for neither Gog nor I – if I do not

misapprehend his sentiments – have any desire that our brother should enter into the holy state of matrimony."

"Right, brother," rejoined Gog; "we must prevent it if possible, and I see not a better way than that you propose. If it does nothing else, it will afford us excellent pastime."

"Excuse me a moment," observed Xit. "If I am to play the suitor to advantage, I must change my dress. I will return on the instant, and conduct you to Dame Placida's dwelling."

So saying, he withdrew for a short space, during which he arrayed himself in his holiday garments. "Magog will have no chance," he observed, as he strutted into the room, and glanced at his pigmy limbs with an air of intense self-satisfaction; "the widow is already won."

"If she be as fond of apes as some of her sex, she is so," replied Og; "but widows are not so easily imposed upon."

The two giants, who, during Xit's absence had entirely cleared the board, and wound up the repast by emptying the nine-hooped pot, now expressed themselves ready to start. Accordingly, they set out, and, preceded by Xit, shaped their course along the southern ward, and passing beneath the gateway of the Bloody Tower, ascended the hill leading to the Green, on the right of which, as at the present time, stood a range of buildings inhabited by the warders and other retainers of the royal household.

Before one of these Xit stopped, and pointing to an open window about six feet from the ground, desired Gog to raise him up to it, The giant complied, when they beheld a sight that filled

them with merriment. Upon a stout oak table – for there was no chair in the domicile sufficiently large to sustain him – sat Magog, his hand upon his breast, and his eyes tenderly fixed upon a comely dame, who was presenting him with a large foaming pot of ale. The languishing expression of the giant's large lumpish features was so irresistibly diverting, that it was impossible to help laughing; and the lookers-on only restrained themselves, in the hope of witnessing something still more diverting.

Dame Placida Paston had a short plump (perhaps a little too plump, and yet it is difficult to conceive how that can well be,) figure; a round rosy face, the very picture of amiability and good humour; a smooth chin, dimpling cheeks, and the brightest and merriest black eyes imaginable. Her dress was neatness itself, and her dwelling as neat as her dress. With attractions like these, no wonder she captivated many a heart, and among others that of Magog, who had long nourished a secret passion for her, but could not muster courage to declare it – for, with a bluff and burly demeanour towards his own sex, the giant was as bashful as a shamefaced stripling in the presence of any of womankind.

With the tact peculiarly belonging to widows, Dame Placida had discovered the state of affairs, and perhaps being not altogether unwilling to discourage him, having accidentally met him on the Tower Green on the day in question, had invited him to visit her in the evening. It was this invitation which had so completely upset the love-sick giant. The same bashfulness that prevented him from making known his attachment to the object

of it, kept him silent towards his brethren, as he feared to excite their ridicule.

On his arrival at her abode, Dame Placida received him with the utmost cordiality, and tried to engage him in conversation. But all without effect.

"I see how it is," she thought; "there is nothing like a little strong liquor to unloose a man's longue." And she forthwith proceeded to a cupboard to draw a pot of ale. It was at this juncture that she was discovered by the observers outside.

Magog received the proffered jug, and fixing a tender look on the fair donor, pressed his huge hand to his heart, and drained it to the last drop. The widow took back the empty vessel, and smilingly inquired if he would have it replenished. The giant replied faintly in the negative, – so faintly, that she was about to return to the cupboard for a fresh supply, when Magog caught her hand, and flung himself on his knees before her. In this posture he was still considerably the taller of the two; but bending himself as near to the ground as possible, he was about to make his proposal in due form, when he was arrested by a tremendous peal of laughter from without, and, looking up, beheld Xit seated on the window-sill, while behind him appeared the grinning countenances of his brethren.

Ashamed and enraged at being thus detected, Magog sprang to his feet, and seizing Xit by the nape of the neck, would have inflicted some severe chastisement upon him, if Dame Placida had not interfered to prevent it. At her solicitation, the mannikin

was released; and he no sooner found himself at liberty, than, throwing himself at her feet, he protested he was dying for her. Perhaps it might be from a certain love of teazing, inherent even in the best-tempered of her sex, or, perhaps, she thought such a course might induce Magog more fully to declare himself; but whatever motive influenced her, certain it is that Dame Placida appeared by no means displeased with her diminutive suitor, but suffered him, after a decent show of reluctance, to take her hand.

Thus encouraged, the dwarf was so elated, that springing upon a chair, he endeavoured to snatch a kiss. But the widow, having no idea of allowing such a liberty, gave him a smart box on the ear, which immediately brought him to the ground.

Notwithstanding this rebuff, Xit would have persevered, had not Magog, whose feelings were really interested, begun to appear seriously angry. Seeing this, he judged it prudent to desist, and contented himself with entreating the widow to declare which of the two she preferred. Dame Placida replied, that she must take a few hours to consider upon it, but invited them both to supper on the following evening, when she would deliver her answer. Having given a similar invitation to the two giants outside, she dismissed the whole party.

XIII. – OF THE STRATAGEM PRACTISED BY CUTHBERT CHOLMONDELEY ON THE JAILOR

Several days had now elapsed since Cholmondeley was thrown into the dungeon, and during that time he had been visited only at long intervals by Nightgall. To all his menaces, reproaches, and entreaties, the jailor turned a deaf ear. He smiled grimly as he set down the scanty provisions – a loaf and a pitcher of water – with which he supplied his captive; but he could not be induced to speak. When questioned about Cicely and upbraided with his perfidy, his countenance assumed an exulting expression which Cholmondeley found so intolerable that he never again repeated his inquiries. Left to himself, his whole time was passed in devising some means of escape. He tried, but ineffectually, to break his bonds, and at last, satisfied of its futility, gave up the attempt.

One night, he was disturbed by the horrible and heartrending shrieks of the female prisoner, who had contrived to gain access to his cell. There was something about this mysterious person that inspired him with unaccountable dread; and though he was satisfied she was a being of this world, the conviction did not serve to lessen his fears. After making the dungeon ring with her cries for some time, she became silent, and as he heard no

sound and could distinguish nothing, he concluded she must have departed. Just then the unlocking of a distant door and a gleam of sickly light on the walls of the stone passage announced the approach of Nightgall, and the next moment he entered the cell. The light fell upon a crouching female figure in one corner. The jailor started; and his angry ejaculations caused the poor creature to raise her head.

Cholmondeley had never beheld anything so ghastly as her countenance, and he half doubted whether he did not look upon a tenant of the grave. Her eyes were sunken and lustreless; her cheeks thin and rigid, and covered with skin of that deadly paleness which is seen in plants deprived of light; her flesh shrunken to the bone, and her hands like those of a skeleton. But in spite of all this emaciation, there was something in her features that seemed to denote that she had once been beautiful, and her condition in life exalted. The terror she exhibited at the approach of the jailor proved the dreadful usage she had experienced. In answer to his savage ejaculations to her to follow him, she flung herself on her knees, and raised her hands in the most piteous supplication. Nothing moved by this, Nightgall was about to seize her and drag her away, when with a piercing scream she darted from him, and took refuge behind Cholmondeley.

"Save me! – save me from him!" she shrieked; "he will kill me."

"Pshaw!" cried the jailor. "Come with me quietly, Alexia, and you shall have a warmer cell, and better food."

"I will not go," she replied. "I will not answer to that name. Give me my rightful title and I will follow you."

"What is your title?" asked Cholmondeley, eagerly.

"Beware!" interposed Nightgall, raising his hand menacingly. "Beware!"

"Heed him not!" cried Cholmondeley; "he shall not harm you. Tell me how you are called?"

"I have forgotten," replied the terrified woman, evasively. "I had another name once. But I am called Alexia now."

"What has become of your child?" asked Cholmondeley.

"My child!" she echoed, with a frightful scream. "I have lost her in these dungeons. I sometimes see her before me running and clapping her little hands. Ah! there she is – coming towards us. She has long fair hair – light blue eyes – blue as the skies I shall never behold again. Do you not see her?"

"No," replied Cholmondeley, trembling. "How is she named?"

"She died unbaptised," replied the female. "But I meant to call her Angela. Ah! see! she answers to the name – she approaches. Angela! my child! – my child!" And the miserable creature extended her arms, and seemed to clasp a phantom to her bosom.

"Alexia!" roared the jailor, fiercely, "follow me, or I will have you scourged by the tormentor."

"He dare not – he will not," – cried Cholmondeley, to whom the wretched woman clung convulsively. "Do not go with him."

"Alexia," reiterated the jailor, in a tone of increased fury.

"I *must* go," she cried, breaking from the esquire, "or he will

kill me." And with a noiseless step she glided after Nightgall.

Cholmondeley listened intently, and as upon a former occasion, heard stifled groans succeeded by the clangour of a closing door, and then all was hushed. The jailor returned no more that night. When he appeared again, it was with a moodier aspect than ever. He set down the provisions, and instantly departed.

While meditating upon various means of escape, an idea at length occurred to the young esquire upon which he resolved to act. He determined to feign death. Accordingly, though half famished, he left his provisions untouched; and when Nightgall next visited the cell, he found him stretched on the ground, apparently lifeless. Uttering a savage laugh, the jailor held the light over the supposed corpse, and exclaimed, "At last I am fairly rid of him. Cicely will now be mine. I will fling him into the burial-vault near the moat. But first to unfasten this chain."

So saying, he took a small key from the bunch at his girdle and unlocked the massive fetters that bound Cholmondeley to the wall. During this operation the esquire held his breath, and endeavoured to give his limbs the semblance of death. But the jailor's suspicions were aroused.

"He cannot have been long dead," he muttered, "perhaps he is only in a trance. This shall make all secure." And drawing his dagger, he was about to plunge it in the bosom of the esquire, when the latter being now freed from his bondage, suddenly started to his feet, and flung himself upon him.

The suddenness of the action favoured its success. Before Nightgall recovered from his surprise, the poniard was wrested from his grasp and held at his throat. In the struggle that ensued, he received a wound which brought him senseless to the ground; and Cholmondeley, thinking it needless to despatch him, contented himself with chaining him to the wall.

Possessing himself of the jailor's keys, he was about to depart, when Nightgall, who at that moment regained his consciousness, and with it all his ferocity, strove to intercept him. On discovering his situation, he uttered a torrent of impotent threats and execrations. The only reply deigned by the esquire to his menaces, was an assurance that he was about to set free the miserable Alexia.

Quitting the cell, Cholmondeley turned off on the left, in the direction whence he imagined the shrieks had proceeded. Here he beheld a range of low strong doors, the first of which he unlocked with one of the jailor's keys. The prison was unoccupied. He opened the next, but with no better success. It contained nothing except a few rusty links of chain attached to an iron staple driven into the floor. In the third he found a few mouldering bones; and the fourth was totally empty. He then knocked at the doors of others, and called the miserable captive by her name in a loud voice. But no answer was returned.

At the extremity of the passage he found an open door, leading to a small circular chamber, in the centre of which stood a heavy stone pillar. From this pillar projected a long iron bar, sustaining

a coil of rope, terminated by a hook. On the ground lay an immense pair of pincers, a curiously-shaped saw, and a brasier. In one corner stood a large oaken frame, about three feet high, moved by rollers. At the other was a ponderous wooden machine, like a pair of stocks. Against the wall hung a broad hoop of iron, opening in the middle with a hinge – a horrible instrument of torture, termed "The Scavenger's Daughter." Near it were a pair of iron gauntlets, which could be contracted by screws till they crushed the fingers of the wearer. On the wall also hung a small brush to sprinkle the wretched victims who fainted from excess of agony, with vinegar; while on a table beneath it were placed writing materials and an open volume, in which were taken down the confessions of the sufferers.

Cholmondeley saw at once that he had entered the torture-chamber, and hastily surveying these horrible contrivances, was about to withdraw, when he noticed a trap-door in one corner. Advancing towards it, he perceived a flight of steps, and thinking they might lead him to the cell he was in search of, he descended, and came to a passage still narrower and gloomier than that he had quitted. As he proceeded along it, he thought he heard a low groan, and hurrying in the direction of the sound, arrived at a small door, and knocking against it, called "Alexia," but was answered in the feeble voice of a man.

"I am not Alexia, but whoever you are, liberate me from this horrible torture, or put me to death, and so free me from misery."

After some search, Cholmondeley discovered the key of the

dungeon and unlocking it, beheld an old man in a strange stooping posture, with his head upon his breast, and his back bent almost double. The walls of the cell, which was called the Little Ease, were so low, and so contrived, that the wretched inmate could neither stand, walk, sit, nor he at full length within them.

With difficulty, – for the poor wretch's limbs were too much cramped by his long and terrible confinement, to allow him to move, – Cholmondeley succeeded in dragging him forth.

"How long have you been immured here?" he inquired.

"I know not," replied the old man. "Not many weeks perhaps – but to me it seems an eternity. Support me – oh! support me! I am sinking fast!"

"A draught of water will revive you," cried Cholmondeley. "I will bring you some in a moment."

And he was about to hurry to his cell for the pitcher, when the old man checked him..

"It is useless," he cried. "I am dying – nothing can save me. Young man," he continued, fixing his glazing eyes on Cholmondeley. "When I was first brought to the Tower, I was as young as you. I have grown old in captivity. My life has been passed in these dismal places. I was imprisoned by the tyrant Henry VIII. for my adherence to the religion of my fathers – and I have witnessed such dreadful things, that, were I to relate them, it would blanch your hair like mine. Heaven have mercy on my soul!" And, sinking backwards, he expired with a hollow groan.

Satisfied that life was wholly extinct, Cholmondeley

continued his search for the scarcely less unfortunate Alexia. Traversing the narrow gallery, he could discover no other door, and he therefore returned to the torture-room, and from thence retraced his steps to the cell. As he approached it, Nightgall, who heard his footsteps, called out to him, and entreated to be set at liberty.

"I will do so, provided you will conduct me to the dungeon of Alexia," replied the esquire.

"You have not found her?" rejoined the jailor.

"I have not," replied Cholmondeley. "Will you guide me to it?"

Nightgall eagerly answered in the affirmative.

The esquire was about to unlock the chain, but as he drew near him, the jailor's countenance assumed so malignant an expression, that he determined not to trust him. Despite his entreaties, he again turned to depart.

"You will never get out without me," said Nightgall.

"I will make the attempt," rejoined Cholmondeley. And wrapping himself in the jailor's ample cloak, and putting on his cap, he quitted the dungeon.

This time, he shaped his course differently. Endeavouring to recall the road by which Nightgall had invariably approached, he proceeded for a short time along the onward passage, and presently reaching a spot where two avenues branched off – one to the right and the other to the left, – he struck into the latter, and found a second range of dungeons. He opened the doors of several, but they were untenanted; and giving up the idea of

rescuing the ill-fated Alexia, he began to think it time to attend to his own safety.

The passage he had chosen, which, like all those he had previously traversed, was arched and flagged with stone, brought him to a low square chamber, from which a flight of steps ascended. Mounting these he came to two other passages, and without pausing to consider, hurried along the first. In a short time he was stopped by a strong iron door, and examining the lock tried every key, but could find none to fit it. Failing to procure egress in this quarter, he was obliged to return, and choosing his course at random, struck into an avenue on the right.

Greatly surprised at the extent of the passages he had tracked, he could not help admiring the extraordinary solidity of the masonry, and the freshness of the stone, which looked as if it had just come from the chisel. Arriving at a gate which impeded his further progress, he applied to his keys, and was fortunately able to open it. This did not set him free as he had anticipated, but admitted him into a spacious vault, surrounded by deep cavernous recesses, filled with stone coffins. Broken statues and tattered escutcheons littered the ground.

Wondering where he could have penetrated, he paused for a moment to consider whether he should return; but fearful of losing his way in the labyrinth he had just quitted, he determined to go on. A broad flight of stone steps led him to a large folding-door, which he pushed aside, and traversing a sort of corridor with which it communicated, he found himself at the foot of a

spiral staircase. Mounting it, he came to an extremely narrow passage, evidently contrived in the thickness of the wall; and threading it, he reached a small stone door, in which neither bolt nor lock could be detected.

Convinced, however, that there must be some secret spring, he examined it more narrowly, and at length discovered a small plate of iron. Pressing this, the heavy stone turned as upon a pivot, and disclosed a narrow passage, through which he crept, and found himself to his great surprise in the interior of St. John's Chapel in the White Tower. At first, he thought he must be deceived, but a glance around convinced him he was not mistaken; and when he called to mind the multitude of passages he had traversed, his surprise was greatly diminished.

While he was thus musing, he heard footsteps approaching, and instantly extinguished the light. The masked door from which he had emerged, lay at the extremity of the northern aisle, and the parties (for there was evidently more than one) came from the other end of the chapel. Finding he had been noticed, Cholmondeley advanced towards them.

XIV. – HOW SIMON RENARD AND THE LORDS OF THE COUNCIL WERE ARRESTED BY LORD GUILFORD DUDLEY

The brief and troubled reign of the ill-fated Queen Jane was fast drawing to a close. Every fresh messenger brought tidings of large accessions to the cause of the lady Mary, who was now at the head of thirty thousand men, – an army trebling the forces of Northumberland. Added to this, the metropolis itself was in a state of revolt. Immense mobs collected in Smithfield, and advanced towards the Tower-gates, commanding the warders to open them in the name of Queen Mary. These rioters were speedily driven off, with some bloodshed. But their leader, who was recognised as the prisoner Gilbert, escaped, and the next day larger crowds assembled, and it was feared that an attack would be made upon the fortress.

Meanwhile, Northumberland, whose order of march had been prescribed by the council, proceeded slowly on the expedition; and the fate that attended him fully verified the old proverb, that delay breeds danger. An accident, moreover, occurred, which, while it greatly disheartened his party, gave additional hope to that of the lady Mary. Six vessels, well manned with troops and ammunition, stationed off Yarmouth to intercept Mary in

case she attempted to escape by sea, were driven into that port, where their commanders were immediately visited by Sir Henry Jerningham, who was levying recruits for the princess, and were prevailed upon by him to join her standard.

When the news of this defection reached the Tower, even the warmest partisans of Jane perceived that her cause was hopeless, and prepared to desert her. The Duke of Suffolk could not conceal his uneasiness, and despatched a secret messenger to Lord Guilford Dudley, who during the whole of this trying period had absented himself, commanding his instant return..

On receiving the summons, Dudley immediately answered it in person. Jane received him with the utmost affection, and their meeting, which took place in the presence of her father, the Duchess of Northumberland, and the Ladies Herbert and Hastings, was deeply affecting. Lord Guilford was much moved, and prostrating himself before the queen, besought her forgiveness for his ill-advised and ungenerous conduct – bitterly reproaching himself for having deserted her at a season of so much peril.

"I will not upbraid you, dear Dudley," rejoined Jane, "neither will I attempt to disguise from you that your absence has given me more anguish than aught else in this season of trouble. My crown you well know was your crown. But now, alas! I fear I have lost that which, though a bauble in my eyes, was a precious-jewel in yours."

"Oh, say not so, my queen," replied Lord Guilford,

passionately. “Things are not so desperate as you imagine. I have letters full of hope and confidence from my father, who has reached Bury Saint Edmund’s. He means to give battle to the rebels to-morrow. And the next messenger will no doubt bring news of their defeat.”

“Heaven grant it may prove so, my dear lord!” rejoined Jane. “But I am not so sanguine. I have despatched missives to the sheriffs of the different counties, enjoining them to raise troops in my defence, and have summoned the Lord Mayor and the city-authorities to the council to-morrow, to decide upon what is best to be done in this emergency.”

“Daughter,” said the Duke of Suffolk, “it is my duty to, inform you that I have just received letters from his Grace of Northumberland, very different in purport from that which has reached Lord Guilford. In them he expresses himself doubtful, of the result of the conflict, and writes most urgently for further succour. His men, he says, are hourly deserting to the hostile camp. And, unless he speedily receives additional force and munition, it will be impossible to engage the enemy.”

“This is bad news, indeed, my lord,” replied Jane, mournfully.

“Have we not troops to send him?” cried Lord Guilford Dudley. “If a leader is wanted, I will set forth at once.”

“We cannot spare another soldier from the Tower,” replied Suffolk. “London is in a state of revolt. The fortress may be stormed by the rabble, who are all in favour of Mary. The Duke has already taken all the picked men. And, if the few loyal

soldiers left, are removed, we shall not have sufficient to overawe the rebels."

"My lord," observed the Duchess of Northumberland, "you have allowed the council too much sway. They will overpower you. And your highness," she added, turning to Jane, "has suffered yourself to be deluded by the artful counsels of Simon Renard."

"Simon Renard has given me good counsel," replied Jane.

"You are deceived, my queen," replied her husband. "He is conspiring against your crown and life."

"It is too true," added Suffolk, "I have detected some of his dark practices."

"Were I assured of this," answered Jane, "the last act of my reign – the last exertion of my power should be to avenge myself upon him."

"Are the guards within the Tower true to us?" inquired Dudley.

"As yet," replied Suffolk. "But they are wavering. If something be not done to confirm them, I fear they will declare for Mary."

"And the council?"

"Are plotting against us, and providing for their own safety."

"Jane," said Lord Guilford Dudley, "I will not attempt to excuse my conduct. But if it is possible to repair the injury I have done you, I will do so. Everything now depends on resolution. The council are more to be feared than Mary and her forces.

So long as you are mistress of the Tower, you are mistress of London, and Queen of England – even though the day should go against the Duke, my father. Give me a warrant under your hand for the arrest of the council, and the ambassadors Renard and De Noailles, and I will see it instantly executed."

"My lord!" she exclaimed.

"Trust me, my queen, it is the only means to save us," replied Dudley. "This bold step will confound them and compel them to declare their purposes. If they *are* your enemies, as I nothing doubt, you will have them in your power."

"I understand," replied Jane. "You shall have the warrant. It will bring matters to an issue."

At this moment, the door of the chamber was thrown open, and an usher announced "Monsieur Simon Renard."

"You are right welcome, M. Renard," said Lord Guilford, bowing haughtily. "I was about to go in search of you."

"Indeed," rejoined the ambassador, coldly returning the salutation. "I am glad to spare your lordship so much trouble, – and I am still more rejoiced to find you have recovered your temper, and returned to your royal consort."

"Insolent!" exclaimed Lord Guilford. "Guards!" he cried, motioning to the attendants – "Assure yourselves of his person."

"Ha!" exclaimed Renard, laying his hand upon his sword. "You have no authority for this."

"I have the Queens warrant," rejoined Dudley, sternly.

"The person of an ambassador is sacred," observed Renard.

"The emperor, Charles the Fifth, will resent this outrage as an insult to himself."

"I will take the consequences upon myself," replied Lord Guilford, carelessly.

"Your highness will not suffer this wrong to be done?" said Renard, addressing Jane.

"Monsieur Renard," replied the queen, "I have reason to believe you have played me false. If I find you have deceived me, though you were brother to the emperor, you shall lose your head."

"You will have cause to repent this step," rejoined Renard, furiously. "The council will command my instant release."

"The order must be speedy then," replied Dudley, "for I shall place them all in arrest. And here, as luck will have it, are your friends the Earls of Arundel and Pembroke. They will attend you to the White Tower."

So saying, he motioned to the guards to take them into custody.

"What means this?" cried Pembroke in astonishment.

"It means that Lord Guilford Dudley, who has been slumbering for some time in Sion House, has awakened at last, and fancies his royal consort's crown is in danger," rejoined Renard with a bitter sneer.

"This is some jest surely, my lord," observed Pembroke. "The council arrested at a moment of peril like this! Will you provoke us to manifest our power?"

“I will provoke you to manifest your treacherous designs towards her majesty,” replied Dudley. “Away with them to the White Tower! Shrewsbury, Cecil, Huntingdon, Darcy, and the others shall soon join you there.”

“One word before we go, gracious madam’?” said Pembroke, addressing the queen.

“Not one, my lord,” replied Jane. “Lord Guilford Dudley has my full authority for what he does. I shall hold early council to-morrow – which you shall be at liberty to attend, and you will then have ample opportunity to explain and defend yourself.”

Upon this, the confederate nobles were removed.

“It is time to put an end to this farce,” remarked Renard, as they were conducted along the gallery towards the White Tower.

“It is,” answered Pembroke, “and my first address in the council to-morrow shall be to proclaim Queen Mary.”

“The hair-brained Dudley imagines he can confine us in the White Tower,” observed Renard, laughing. “There is not a chamber in it without a secret passage. And thanks to the jailor, Nightgall, I am familiar with them all. We will not be idle to-night.”

XV. – HOW GUNNORA BRAOSE SOUGHT AN AUDIENCE OF QUEEN JANE

Having seen the rest of the council conveyed to the White Tower, Lord Guilford Dudley returned to the palace. While discoursing on other matters with the queen, he casually remarked that he was surprised he did not perceive his esquire, Cuthbert Cholmondeley, in her highness's train, and was answered that he had not been seen since his departure for Sion House. Greatly surprised by the intelligence, Lord Guilford directed an attendant to make inquiries about him. After some time, the man returned, stating that he could obtain no information respecting him.

"This is very extraordinary," said Lord Guilford. "Poor Cholmondeley! What can have happened to him? As soon as this danger is past, I will make personal search for him."

"I thought he had left the Tower with you, my dear lord," observed Jane.

"Would he had!" answered her husband. "I cannot help suspecting he has incurred the enmity of the council, and has been secretly removed. I will interrogate them on the subject tomorrow."

While they were thus conversing, an usher appeared, and

informed the queen that a young damsel supplicated an audience having somewhat to disclose of importance.

"You had better admit her, my queen," said Dudley. "She may have accidentally learned some plot which it is important for us to know."

Jane having signified her assent, the usher withdrew, and presently afterwards introduced Cicely. The young damsel, who appeared to have suffered much, greatly interested the queen by her extreme beauty and modesty. She narrated her story with infinite simplicity, and though she blushed deeply when she came to speak of the love professed for her by Cholmondeley, she attempted no concealment.

Both Jane and Lord Guilford Dudley were astonished beyond measure, when they learned that the young esquire had been incarcerated by Nightgall; and the latter was about to reproach Cicely for not having revealed the circumstance before, when she accounted for her silence by stating that she had been locked within her chamber, ever since the night in question, by her mother. Her story ended, Dudley declared his intention of seeking out the jailor without delay. "I will first compel him to liberate his prisoner," he said, "and will then inflict upon him a punishment proportionate to his offence."

"Alas!" exclaimed Cicely, bursting into tears, "I fear your lordship's assistance will come too late. Nightgall has visited me daily, and he asserts that Master Cholmondeley has quitted the Tower by some secret passage under the moat. I fear he has

destroyed him."

"If it be so, he shall die the death he merits," replied Dudley. "You say that the gigantic warders, whose lodging is in the By-ward Tower, are acquainted with the dungeon. I will proceed thither at once, be of good cheer, fair damsel. If your lover is alive he shall wed you on the morrow, and I will put it out of Nightgall's power to molest you further. Remain with the queen till I return."

"Ay, do so, child," said Jane, "I shall be glad to have you with me. And, if you desire it, you shall remain constantly near my person."

"It is more happiness than I deserve, gracious madam," replied Cicely, dropping upon her knee. "And though your majesty has many attendants more highly born, you will find none more faithful."

"I fully believe it," replied Jane, with a sigh. "Rise, damsel. Henceforth you are one of my attendants."

Cicely replied by a look of speechless gratitude, while summoning a guard, Dudley proceeded to the By-ward Tower. The giants informed him they had just returned from Nightgall's lodging, and that he was absent. He then commanded them to accompany him to the entrance of the subterranean dungeons beneath the Devilin Tower.

"It will be useless to attempt to gain admission without the keys, my lord," replied Og; "and they are in master Nightgall's keeping."

“Has no one else a key? demanded Dudley, impatiently.

“No one, unless it be Gillian Mauger, the headsman,” replied Xit; “I will bring him to your lordship, instantly.”

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.