Ainsworth William Harrison

# Preston Fight: or, The Insurrection of 1715

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**Ainsworth W.**

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# Содержание

# William Harrison Ainsworth
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## WILLIAM FRANCIS AINSWORTH, ESQ, Ph.D., F.S.A., F.R.G.S., Etc., Etc

The details of Preston Fight, given in the tale, which I have the gratification of inscribing to your name, may be new to you; inasmuch as you may not have seen DOCTOR Hibbert Ware's very curious historical collections relative to the great Jacobite movement of 1715, published several years ago by the Chetham Society, from which my materials have been derived.

But I am sure you will share my feelings of sympathy with the many gallant Roman Catholic gentlemen, who, from mistaken feelings of loyalty, threw away life and fortune at Preston; and you cannot fail to be struck with admiration at the masterly defence of the town made by Brigadier Mackintosh – the real hero of Preston Fight.

I hope I may have succeeded in giving you some idea of that valorous Highland commander.

Nothing can be better than the description of him given in the old Lancashire ballad:

"Mackintosh is a soldier brave,
And of his friends he took his leave;
Unto Northumberland he drew,
And marched along with a jovial crew."

What a contrast to the brave brigadier is General Forster, by whose incompetency, or treachery, Preston was lost! – as the same old ballad says:

"'Thou Forster hast brought us from our own home,
Leaving our estates for others to come;
Thou treacherous dog, thou hast us betrayed,'
My Lord Derwentwater thus fiercely said."

But the hero of my tale is the ill-fated Earl of Derwentwater – by far the most striking figure in the Northumbrian insurrection.

The portrait I have given of him I believe to be in the main correct, though coloured for the purposes of the story. Young, handsome, chivalrous, wealthy, Lord Derwentwater was loyal and devoted to him whom he believed his rightful and lawful sovereign.

His death was consistent with his life. On the scaffold he declared, "I intended wrong to none, but to serve my king and country, and without self-interest, hoping by the example I gave to induce others to do their duty."

"My Lord Derwentwater he is dead,
And from his body they took his head;
But Mackintosh and the rest are fled
To fit his hat on another man's head."

Lord Derwentwater was strongly attached to his ancestral mansion, and deeply mourned by his tenants and retainers. In the "Farewell to Dilston," by Surtees, he is made to say:

"Farewell to pleasant Dilston Hall.

My father's ancient seat;
A stranger now must call thee his,
Which gars my heart to greet.

"Albeit that here in London Tower,
It is my fate to die,
O, carry me to Northumberland,
In my father's grave to lie."

How few who visit Greenwich Hospital are aware that that noble institution, of which the country is so justly proud, has derived, for upwards of a century and a half, the immense revenue of six thousand a year from the ill-fated earl's forfeited estates!

Has not this effaced the treason?

I commend his story to you.

Your affectionate cousin,

W. Harrison Ainsworth.

Little Rockley, Hurstfierpoint,

May 19, 1875.

# *BOOK THE FIRST* – THE EARL OF DERWENTWATER

## I. – DILSTON CASTLE

A SPLENDID place was Dilston Castle in Northumberland, the seat of the young Earl of Dervventwater, in the early part of the last century.

Crowning an eminence, overlooking a most picturesque district, approached by a long avenue of chestnut trees, and surrounded by woods, extending to the banks of the Tyne, the mansion formed a conspicuous object from whichever side it might be viewed.

Dilston Castle could not boast antiquity, having only been built some sixty years prior to the date of our story, by Sir James Radclyffe, subsequently created Earl of Derwentwater by James the Second, but it occupied the site of an old Border fortress, called Devilstone – since modified to Dilston – that had often resisted the incursions of the Scots.

Of this stronghold, which dated back to the time of Henry the First, only a single memorial was left, in the shape of a grey stone tower – all the rest having been demolished.

The mansion formed a square, and enclosed a spacious court with a fountain in the centre. The principal entrance, approached by a large person, was inside the court, and faced a grand gateway, that terminated the chestnut avenue.

Close by, though screened by trees, was a little chapel, wherein the rites of Rome were performed – the Radclyffes being strict adherents to the old religion. Hereabouts, also, stood the grey stone tower, before alluded to, and some chambers within it were still used.

As may be supposed, from its size, the mansion contained some magnificent apartments, and these were sumptuously furnished. Large gardens, laid out in the formal French style, and ornamented with terraces, flights of stone steps, statues, and fountains, added to the attractions of the place.

Beneath the acclivity, whereon stood the castle, was a romantic and beautiful dell, the sides of which were clothed with brushwood. Through the midst of the ravine rushed a stream, called the Devil's Water – bright and clear, despite its name – that hurried on, unless checked by a huge rock, or some other impediment, when it spread out into a pool. In places, the glen had a weird look, and many strange legends were connected with it.

The picturesque beauty of the spot was materially heightened by a lofty bridge flung across the hollow, and leading from the castle to the deer-park.

From this bridge, the stately structure, with the charming and diversified scenery around it, could be contemplated to the greatest advantage.

The park boasted many ancient oaks and ash-trees, and was well stocked with deer; the neighbouring moors abounded with grouse, the smaller streams with trout, and the Tyne with salmon. Better shooting and fishing could not be had than at Dilston.

The noble owner of this proud mansion, and the extensive domains attached to it, had succeeded to the title and estates on the death of his father, the second earl, some five years previously. In addition to Dilston, Langley Castle, and Simonburn in Northumberland he had large estates in Cumberland, and one side of the lovely lake of Dervventwater, from which he derived his title, belonged to him. Moreover, he had lead mines at Alston Moor that produced a very large revenue.

Notwithstanding his immense wealth and importance in the county, the young earl led a very retired life. As a Roman Catholic, he laboured under disabilities that prevented him from taking part in public affairs. But he maintained a numerous establishment, and was extremely hospitable, and his chaplain and almoner, Father Norham, distributed a tithe of his large income in charity.

Loyal to the sovereign he recognised, firm in the faith he professed, devout, charitable, courteous, courageous – such was the Earl of Derwentwater at twenty-two, when we first meet him.

The young earl's personal appearance was extremely prepossessing. Tall, and well-proportioned, he had finely-formed features, with blue eyes and fair locks. He was fond of all manly exercises, a daring horseman, a master of fence, and a good shot. Several important alliances had been proposed to him, but he was still unmarried.

Charles Radclyffe, his only brother, and his junior by a year and a half, resided with him at Dilston. There was a great personal resemblance between them. Like his brother, Charles Radclyffe was an enthusiastic Jacobite, and ready to run any risk for the restoration of the Stuarts.

Viscount Radclyffe and Langley, as the Earl of Derwentwater was styled in his father's lifetime, had been brought up at the court of the exiled monarch, James the Second, at Saint Germains, as a companion to the young prince, James Edward, who was about his own age, and to whom he was nearly allied by consanguinity – Lord Radclyffe's mother being a natural daughter of Charles the Second.

Constantly together, and sharing the same studies and the same sports, the cousins, as they were called, became greatly attached to each other, and no change had taken place in their sentiments when James the Second breathed his last, dying, as those in attendance on him avouched, in the odour of sanctity.

By the express desire of Queen Mary of Modena, Lord Radclyffe remained at Saint Germains until after the death of William the Third, and the accession of Anne, mixed up in the various Jacobite plots, of which that court was then the hot-bed, until the decease of his own father in 1705, compelled him to return to England, in order to take possession of his estates.

On his departure the young earl renewed his professions of loyalty and devotion to the Chevalier de Saint George, as the prince was now designated, and promised to hold himself in constant readiness for a summons to rise. He also took an affectionate leave of the queen, who embraced him like a mother, and gave him her blessing.

Five years flew by, during which an attempt at invasion was made by Chevalier de Saint George with a squadron under the command of the renowned Forbin, but the prince was unable to disembark, and consequently Lord Derwentwater was not called upon to join him.

Discouraged by this ill-success, and receiving no further support from Louis the Fourteenth, the prince joined the French army under Villars, and fought bravely at Malplaquet.

Ever since his return from Saint Germains Lord Derwentwater had resided at Dilston. He lacked a mother's care, for the countess had long been dead, but he was watched over and counselled by Father Norham, an excellent man, who had been chaplain to the late earl. In anticipation of a sudden summons, Lord Derwentwater kept a large collection of arms concealed in the old tower previously described. He had plenty of horses in his stables and elsewhere, and with his servants and retainers, and the number of miners in his employ, he could at anytime raise two or three hundred men, and arm and equip them.

Until lately, a secret correspondence had been constantly kept up between the Earl and the Chevalier de Saint George, but for some months no letter had been received from the prince.

# II. – THE CHEVALIER DE SAINT GEORGE

One morning, at this juncture, the young earl, mounted on his favourite dapple-grey steed, rode out from the castle, and took his way down the chestnut avenue, accompanied by his brother, Charles Radclyffe.

The two young equestrians made a very gallant appearance, being attired in scarlet riding-coats, edged with gold lace, feathered hats, long neckcloth, laced ruffles, and boots ascending above the knee. The grooms wore green riding-coats laced with gold, and green velvet caps.

The earl, who was riding to Corbridge, which was not very far off, proceeded at a leisurely pace, and occasionally halted to examine some object in the grounds, or listen to an appeal to his charity. In the latter case the applicant was sent on to the castle to state his case to Father Norham.

The morning was bright and clear, and the country looked so charming that the earl determined to extend his ride along the banks of the Tyne as soon as his business at Corbridge was finished; but he had not quitted the avenue when a horseman entered it, who was evidently proceeding to the castle.

This person might be a courier, for he rode a posthorse, and was followed by a post-boy, who carried his portmanteau; and there was nothing in his grey riding-dress to indicate rank. He had pistols in his girdle, and a hanger by his side. But he rode well, though provided only with a sorry hack, and had a military bearing. In age he could not be more than three-and-twenty, if so much. He was rather above the middle height, and slightly built, and his features were handsome and expressive.

On seeing the earl and his brother the stranger immediately slackened his pace, and rode slowly towards them.

Lord Derwentwater gazed at him in astonishment, and as if he could scarcely believe his eyes.

At length he turned to his brother and exclaimed:

“By Heaven, ‘tis he!”

“He! who?” cried Charles Radclyffe.

“The Chevalier de Saint George,” replied the earl, under his breath.

“Impossible!” said the other. “He would never come here in this manner, and without giving us some notice of his design.”

“‘Tis the prince, I repeat,” cried Derwentwater; “I cannot be mistaken. But the greatest caution must be observed, or the postboy’s suspicions may be aroused.”

Next moment the stranger came up, and respectfully saluting the earl, told him he was the bearer of an important despatch, whereupon Lord Derwentwater invited him to the castle, and turning round, proceeded in that direction, keeping the supposed courier near him, while Charles Radclyffe, who had now recognised the stranger from his likeness to the portraits of the prince, rode at a little distance behind them.

The meeting was so cleverly managed that the grooms saw nothing extraordinary in it, and the post-boy was completely duped.

“I never had a harder task than to repress my delight at beholding your majesty,” said Lord Derwentwater. “You have indeed taken me by surprise.”

“Had it been possible I would have given you some intimation of my arrival and intended visit to you,” replied the prince, “but I only landed at Sunderland yesterday, and came on betimes this morning. Do not imagine I am come to summon you to arms, though my partisans in Scotland are ready to rise, and would at once join my standard were I to display it. No, cousin, my errand is pacific.”

“Pacific!” exclaimed the earl.

“My purpose is to obtain an interview with my sister, Queen Anne; and if I succeed, I believe no insurrection will be necessary, for I am persuaded she will agree to appoint me her successor. You must accompany me to London, cousin.”

"I will do whatever your majesty enjoins," replied Lord Derwentwater, greatly astonished by what he heard. "But it is my duty to tell you that you will run great risk, while I very much fear you will not accomplish your object. Did you consult the queen, your mother, before setting out on this expedition?"

"I did, cousin, and must frankly own that she endeavoured to dissuade me from the attempt; for, as you are aware, her majesty deems Anne an unnatural daughter, and destitute of all feeling for the brother whose throne she has usurped. It may be so. Yet, cold as she is, Anne cannot be insensible to the king, our father's dying message, which I propose to deliver to her."

"Nothing will move her, sire, depend upon it," said the earl. "Queen Anne is so strongly opposed to the Roman Catholic religion, that unless your majesty will consent to change your faith she will turn a deaf ear to your entreaties."

"We shall see," replied the Chevalier de Saint George. "At all events, I shall have an answer from her own lips, and shall then know how to act. As I have just told you, the queen, my mother, strove to combat my determination; but, finding I was not to be shaken, she entreated me to take you with me. To this I readily agreed, as I knew I could rely on your devotion. I embarked at Dunquerque without a single attendant, and in this disguise, and landed yesterday at Sunderland."

"And right glad I am to welcome your majesty to Dilston," said the earl. "But let me implore you to change your plans, and instead of supplicating Queen Anne for the crown, that of right belongs to yourself, snatch it from her brow! Should you decide thus – and I believe it will be for the best – I will undertake, within a week, to raise a large force – while thousands will flock to your standard in Scotland. Your majesty will do well to weigh my proposal ere setting out on a hazardous expedition to London. Here you have a mansion you can call your own – servants you can command – friends at your disposal – and in a few days you will have an army. Be advised by me, my gracious liege, and abandon this wild scheme. Suffer me to get together your adherents. Let me send off messengers without delay to Lord Widdring-ton, Tom Errington, of Beaufront, John Shaftoe, Swinbourn, Charleton, Clavering, and others in the county, to collect all their retainers."

"But they are unprepared," remarked the prince.

"Pardon me, my liege. The friends I have named are always prepared, and the news that your majesty is here would rouse them all to come at once. I ought to have added to the list Jack Hall, of Otterburn, and Tom Forster, of Bamborough. They are High Church Tories, and will bring many others with them."

"No doubt they would prove an important acquisition," said the prince. "But I will not try to dethrone Anne till I have given her the chance of acting fairly towards me. I am very sanguine as to the result of my interview with her."

"Heaven grant your majesty may not be disappointed!" rejoined Lord Derwentwater. "I will say no more. Whenever it shall please you to set out to London, I shall be ready to attend you."

"I will remain here till to-morrow, cousin," said the prince. "On some future occasion I hope to be your guest for a longer time; but though Dilston is a charming place, and I should like to see all its beauties, it must not detain me now."

They were at the end of the avenue, but, before passing through the gateway, Lord Derwentwater said to the prince, "Your majesty had best dismount here, and get rid of the postboy."

On this the prince sprang from his horse, while the gate-porter, by the earl's directions, paid the postboy, and took the portmanteau from him.

Having received a handsome gratuity for himself, the man then departed with his horses in tolerably good humour, though aware of the earl's hospitality he had hoped to be regaled in the servants' hall.

"Meanwhile, Lord Derwentwater and his brother having alighted, the party walked across the great quadrangular court – the prince pausing occasionally to look around, and express his admiration.

"By my faith! cousin, you have a splendid house," he cried. "'Tis quite a palace."

"Why not take possession of it, my liege?" replied Derwentwater.

"You tempt me greatly. But no! I must not be diverted from my purpose."

They then ascended the magnificent flight of stone steps, and entered a spacious hall – the door being thrown open by a butler and several other servants in the earl's rich livery.

"Little did I dream, when I set forth an hour ago, whom I should bring back as my guest," observed Lord Derwentwater.

"You have often told me at Saint Germains how rejoiced you would be to see me here," rejoined the prince; "and now you perceive I have taken you at your word. But you are very remiss, cousin – pray present your brother to me!"

The presentation then took place, but without any ceremony, on account of the servants, and the prince shook hands very heartily with Charles Radclyffe.

Just then, an elderly personage, with silver locks that fell over his shoulders, and wearing a priestly garb, entered the hall. It was Father Norham, who had come to see who the earl had brought with him. The good priest had a kindly and benevolent expression of countenance, and fixed his keen grey eyes inquiringly on the stranger, with whose appearance he was greatly struck.

After a few moments' scrutiny he consulted Lord Derwentwater by a look, and his suspicions being confirmed, he most respectfully returned the reverence made to him by the prince.

Having given some orders to the butler, Lord Derwentwater conducted his guest to the library which opened from the hall, and they were followed by Charles Rad-clyffe and the priest.

Further disguise was now unnecessary, and no inquisitive observer being present, the prince was treated by all with the respect that was his due.

The impression of the priest and Charles Radclyffe was that he was come to prepare a rising, and when they learnt his real design they could scarcely conceal their disappointment. Neither of them, however, ventured to offer a remonstrance, till Father Norham, being urged by the prince to speak out, said:

"I fear your majesty will find the queen impracticable. Moreover, she has already named the Elector of Hanover her successor."

"But she may change her mind, good father."

"Her ministers will not allow her to do so, my liege. They are resolved upon a Protestant succession – and so is she. Renounce your religion, and you will succeed – not otherwise."

"I have already said as much to his majesty," observed Lord Derwentwater. "But he entertains a better opinion of the queen than I do."

"I am unwilling to believe that she will disregard her father's dying injunctions," said the prince. "Bear in mind that she has never seen me. When we meet, the voice of natural affection will make itself heard. She will then become sensible of the great wrong she has done me, and hasten to make atonement. She will feel that by her wicked and unnatural conduct she has incurred Heaven's displeasure. Her own children have been taken from her. Other severe chastisements may follow, if not averted. These are the arguments I shall employ."

"And they will fail in effect, my liege, because her heart is hardened, and she is blind to her sinfulness," said the priest. "She would rather sacrifice her brother than help to re-establish our religion."

"Trust me, my liege, Father Norham has formed a just estimate of the queen's character," said Lord Derwentwater. "'Tis vain to appeal to good feelings, where none exist."

"But I do not believe she is so utterly devoid of natural affection as her conduct would seem to bespeak," said the prince. "You shall judge from what I am about to tell you. I have solicited a private interview with her in Saint James's Palace, and she has granted my request."

"Granted it!" exclaimed Lord Dervventwater in astonishment, that was shared by the others.

"Ay," replied the prince. "My letter was conveyed by a faithful friend, and the answer to it was that her majesty would see me. Nothing more. But that was all I asked. She felt compunction for her ill doing, or she would have refused my request."

"But how will you obtain admittance to her, my liege?" asked Lord Derwentwater.

"Easily," replied the prince. "The Earl of Mar will usher me into her presence."

"This certainly seems favourable, and alters my view of the matter," said the earl. "Yet it may be a device of Harley to ensnare your majesty. Are you certain that your letter reached the queen?"

"My emissary would not deceive me," replied the prince. "He is as loyal as yourself."

"If I may speak plainly to your majesty," remarked Charles Radclyffe, "I would say that I have still great doubts. The queen may delude you with false hopes to keep you quiet."

"Nay, she will keep her promise if she makes it. Of that I am convinced," said Father Norham.

At this juncture the butler entered to say that luncheon was served, upon which the earl conducted his guest to the dining-room, where a very substantial repast awaited them.

The Chevalier de Saint George had not breakfasted, and his early morning's ride having given him a good appetite, he did ample justice to the broiled trout from the Devil's Water, and the cutlets of Tyne salmon set before him.

As the servants were present during the repast, he was treated merely as an ordinary visitor, and the conversation between him and the earl was conducted entirely in French.

This circumstance excited the suspicion of Mr. Newbiggin, the butler, who from the first had been struck by the stranger's appearance and manner, and he soon became convinced that Mr. Johnson, as the prince was called, was a very important personage.

On quitting the dining-room, the butler found the earl's chief valet in the entrance-hall, and said to him:

"I can't make out this Mr. Johnson, Thirlwall. I should like to know what you think of him?"

"I'm puzzled, I own," replied the other. "He seems to me like a Frenchman."

"No more a Frenchman than his lordship is, Thirlwall. But I shouldn't wonder," said the butler, knowingly, "if he has been brought up at a French court."

"At the Court of Saint Germains?" cried Thirlwall.

"Precisely," said the butler.

"Why, you seem to insinuate that it's the Chevalier de Saint George in person, Newbiggin."

"I've my own idea on that point, Thirlwall," said the butler. "If it should turn out as I suspect, we're on the eve of an insurrection. The prince wouldn't come here on a trifling errand. But keep quiet for the present – this is mere conjecture."

The butler then returned to the dining-room, while Mr. Thirlwall hurried to the servants' hall, where he retailed all he had just heard, with some additions of his own.

In less than half-an-hour it was known among the whole household that his majesty, King James the Third, had arrived, in disguise, at the castle.

# III. – NICHOLAS RIBBLETON

If any confirmation were wanted of the suspicions now generally entertained by Mr. Newbiggin and the rest of the servants that a rising was imminent, it was afforded by the earl, who took his guest, as soon as luncheon was over, to see the arms stored in the old tower.

The inspection occupied some time, for three or four chambers had to be visited, each full of muskets, calivers, pistols, cartouche-boxes, powder-horns, shot-bags, belts, swords of various sizes and make, hatchets, pikes, halberts, black leather caps, drums, kettle-drums, trumpets, fifes, and other martial instruments. In a vault beneath the basement floor were bestowed several barrels of gunpowder.

When the examination was finished, the prince expressed himself delighted with the preparations made.

"You told me you could arm and equip two or three hundred men, cousin," he said. "And I now perceive you did not exaggerate. But where are the men?"

"I have but to ride to Alston Moor, my liege, to find them, and bring them back with me," said Charles Rad-clyffe.

"Men and arms are ready," said the earl. "Shall we raise the standard?" he added, lifting up the flag.

At this moment, as if in response to the appeal, shouts were heard outside, and several voices exclaimed:

"Long live King James the Third!"

"Is this premeditated, cousin?" said the prince.

"No, by my faith," replied the earl. "But it seems your majesty's presence has been discovered – how I know not. Shall I send away the troublesome varlets?"

"'Twere needless, since the discovery has been made," said the prince, who did not seem much displeased.

"Your majesty need feel no uneasiness," observed Father Norham, who formed one of the party. "There are no traitors at Dilston. All here are loyal, and would die rather than betray you."

"On that assurance I shall not hesitate to show myself to them," said the prince. "Attend me, I pray you, cousin."

The massive door being thrown open, a singular spectacle was seen.

In front of the tower was collected a large number of the household, with several out-door servants – grooms, gamekeepers, huntsmen, gardeners, and their assistants – most of them young and active-looking, though the coachman was old and stout, and there were three or four others, who must have lived in the family for half a century. But these were just as enthusiastic as their comrades.

When the prince appeared another loud shout arose, and would have been renewed had not the earl commanded silence.

"I thank you heartily, my good friends, for this manifestation of your zeal," said the prince. "Do not imagine, because I have come hither in disguise, that I am afraid to trust myself with you, or, in the slightest degree, doubt your fidelity. The Earl of Derwentwater, your master, is my best friend, and dear to me as a brother. No one can live with him without sharing his sentiments. I could not, therefore, have any distrust. But I feared that in the excess of your zeal you might not keep guard upon your tongues, and I am very desirous that my landing in England, and arrival at Dilston, should not be known for the present. Secrecy, as you will easily understand, is essential to the success of my projects."

A murmur of delight arose from the assemblage, but further shouting was checked by Newbiggin, who, stepping forward, made a profound obeisance to the prince, and said:

"Your majesty need fear no indiscretion on our part. I will answer for my fellow-servants. We know the importance of our trust."

"Ay, that we do," cried several voices.

"I am perfectly satisfied," said the prince; "and I shall feel easier now that this explanation has taken place. Again accept my thanks for your manifestation of sympathy and attachment to me. I cannot speak to you all, but there is one among you to whom I would fain say a word."

And he designated a tall, fine old man, standing at the back of the assemblage.

"That is Nicholas Ribbleton, my liege," said Newbiggin. "He lived with his lordship's grandfather."

"And was much liked by him, and by my father," added the earl. "Nicholas Ribbleton will always have a home at Dilston."

"Bring him to me," said the prince.

Summoned by the butler, old Ribbleton would have thrown himself at the prince's feet, but the latter prevented him, and gave him his hand, which the old man pressed devotedly to his heart.

"I never expected such an honour as this," he said. "Your majesty is too gracious to me. I have always been devoted to your royal house, and shall continue so to the last. It may sound boastful when I say that both King Charles the Second, and your august father, King James, deigned to notice me. Long have I desired to behold your majesty, and now the wish is gratified." Here emotion choked his utterance for a moment but he added, "If I live to see your majesty on the throne I shall die content Long have we looked for your coming, but now you *are* come, don't turn back till you have won the victory. You have right on your side. The crown belongs to your majesty and not to Queen Anne. If she won't surrender it, take it! Such is the advice that an old man, who has spoken to the king, your father, and your royal uncle, dares to give you. Pardon my freedom, sire!"

"I not only pardon it, but am obliged to you for speaking so freely," replied the prince, in a gracious and encouraging tone. "What will you say if Queen Anne should surrender the crown to me?"

"I shall say that a miracle has been worked," said Ribbleton. "But judging by her conduct, it seems very unlikely that she will act justly. Were I your majesty, I wouldn't trust her promises, however fair they may be."

"Thou art too bold, Ribbleton," interposed Lord Derwentwater.

"Nay, I am not offended," said the prince. "There is wisdom in the old man's words. I will have some further talk with you anon, my good friend," he added to Ribbleton, who made an obeisance, and retired highly pleased.

At the same time Newbiggin gave a sign to the rest of the household, and the place was quickly cleared.

# IV. – THE LITTLE CHAPEL

Lord Derwentwater then took his royal guest to the stables, and showed him his fine stud of horses, with which the prince was greatly pleased. After looking over the collection, his highness made choice of a strong hackney for his proposed journey. The earl offered him his own dapple-grey steed, but the prince would not deprive him of his favourite.

No precise orders were given, but two of the grooms were told that they might have to set out for London on the morrow, and must therefore make all needful arrangements. The men asked no questions, but promised that his lordship's injunctions should be attended to.

Father Norham had not accompanied the party to the stables, but proceeded to the little chapel before alluded to, where he was joined by the prince, and received his highness's confession.

Mass was afterwards performed, at which most of the household assisted – several of the female servants being present.

It was a pleasing sight to see the little place of worship on that interesting occasion. Doubtless, many of the persons there assembled thought more of the prince than of their devotions, but their behaviour was extremely decorous.

The chapel was not larger than an ordinary room, and very simply furnished. In a small oaken pew at the upper end, on the right of the altar, sat the Chevalier de Saint George – almost concealed from view. In a similar pew on the left were the Earl of Derwentwater and his brother. On wooden benches behind were collected the servants – the women sitting by themselves on the left. Many a curious eye was fixed on the prince whenever he arose. The solemn service was admirably performed by Father Norham.

Strange thoughts possessed Lord Derwentwater. In the family vault beneath the chapel lay his sire and grand-sire, both of whom had been devoted to the Stuarts. Might not their shades be hovering around? Exceedingly superstitious, the earl thought so, and so did Charles Radclyffe.

The congregation had dispersed – long to remember the event.

Before quitting the chapel, the prince said to the earl:

"Are not some of your family buried here, my lord?"

"My father and my grandfather," replied the other. "And if aught could rouse them from their slumbers it would be your majesty's presence."

The prince remained silent for a moment, looking very grave, and then said:

"You will scarce credit me when I tell you that I saw – or fancied I saw – two figures standing between me and the altar. Their mournful looks seemed to convey a warning. I saw them only for a moment. They pointed to you and your brother, and then disappeared. What think you of this? Were they phantoms?"

"I know not what to think," replied the earl. "No such appearances have ever been beheld before, but then no prince of your royal house has ever before knelt within this chapel. We will consult Father Norham anon. Meantime, let me take your majesty to the garden. You must banish these gloomy thoughts."

A stroll through the charming gardens quickly produced the desired effect. As yet the prince had seen nothing of the beauties of the place, and was unacquainted with the commanding position of the castle. The view from the terrace enchanted him, and he remained for some time contemplating the lovely scene in silence, and then broke out into raptures. By his own request he was next taken to the deer-park, and halted on the bridge to look at the castle. It has already been mentioned that this was the best point from which the stately structure could be surveyed, and the prince was of that opinion.

"How well the castle looks as it towers above us," he cried, "and what a striking picture it makes, combined with this deep glen, the rushing stream, and yonder woods, with the Tyne in the distance! You could not have a nobler residence, cousin."

"Undoubtedly, my liege, I ought to be content with it," rejoined the earl; "and so I am. Yet I must own I should prefer the old stronghold that once stood there, and of which you have just seen a relic; and had it not been demolished by my grandfather, Earl Francis, I would have preserved it. Imagine how well the stern old pile must have looked, perched on that height, and how completely it must have harmonised with this ravine, and with the woods. Its position and strength considered, it is not surprising that the Scottish marauders, though they often came in force, could never take it. The fortress might have stood a siege in our own time."

"Very true," replied the prince, smiling. "And on that account its destruction may be regretted. Otherwise, the modern building is most to my taste. I could desire nothing better."

"I trust, ere long, Windsor Castle may be yours, my liege," said Lord Derwentwater; "and then you will think little of Dilston."

"Dilston cannot vie with Windsor, that is certain, cousin. Nevertheless, it is a splendid place, and you are fortunate in possessing it. The mansion only wants one thing to make it perfect. You can guess what I mean. But I will tell you plainly. A lady ought to grace it."

"I shall wait till your majesty is restored before I take a wife," said the earl.

"Why wait?" said the Chevalier de Saint George. "Has no fair Northumbrian damsel caught your eye? I am told Tom Forster's sister, Dorothy, is marvellously beautiful. She may not be rich, but you do not want a dower."

"Dorothy Forster is a very charming girl, I admit, and has many agreeable qualities, but I never thought seriously of her."

"Strange you should have alluded to her in one of your letters to me."

"Your majesty reminds me that I compared her very advantageously with her brother, who is a mere country squire, and not remarkable for wit, whereas Dorothy is extremely lively and clever, besides being very pretty. But I didn't mean to intimate that I had fallen in love with her."

"You gave me that impression, I confess, cousin," said the Chevalier de Saint George. "I fully expected your next letter would tell me you were engaged to her. Is she very young?"

"About eighteen, I fancy."

"Just the age. And she rides well, I think you said?"

"Admirably. Tom Forster keeps the best pack of hounds in the country, and she goes out with them."

"I only see one objection. Her brother does not belong to our religion."

"But she does," rejoined the earl.

"Then you cannot do better than make choice of her."

"Even if I were to take your majesty's advice, it does not follow I should be accepted."

"Bah! the Earl of Derwentwater is not likely to be refused."

"Dorothy Forster will wed no one she does not love. Nor would I wed her unless certain I had won her heart."

"Have you any doubt upon the point, cousin?"

"Your majesty is pleased to rally me."

"I want an answer to the question."

Just then an interruption to their discourse was offered by Charles Radclyife, who came hurriedly down to the bridge to announce that some visitors had arrived at the castle.

"Newbiggin couldn't send them away, and was driven to his wit's end, for they would come in," said Charles.

"Who are they?" asked the earl.

"Mr. Forster of Bamborough, and his sister," replied Charles.

"Indeed!" exclaimed the prince. "This is a lucky chance."

"It would have mattered little if they had been alone, my liege," said Charles. "Unluckily, Sir John Webb of Canford, Lady Webb, and their daughter are with them, and the whole party evidently

intend to stay here till tomorrow. Sir John and Lady Webb have brought a great coach with them and a pack of servants, but the two girls and Tom Forster came on horseback. Forster wouldn't hear a word from Newbiggen, but told him he was sure his lordship would be glad to see them."

"And so I should, under other circumstances," said the earl.

"Heed me not," cried the prince. "I am pleased at this opportunity of meeting Mr. Forster and Sir John Webb, both of whom I know are my warm partisans."

"Since your majesty does not object, I feel quite easy," said the earl. "Where are the visitors?" he added, to his brother.

"I left them on the lawn," replied Charles. "I told them you had a friend with you – nothing more. Shall I prepare them, my liege!"

"No," replied the prince. "I will chose my own time for the disclosure."

"Haste back, then, and say I will be with them anon," cried the earl.

"And be careful to give them no hint."

"Your majesty may rely on me," replied Charles, as he bowed and departed.

"This is our North Country custom," said the earl. "We visit each other without the slightest ceremony – take friends with us – and stay as long as we please. In coming to me thus, uninvited, and bringing Sir John Webb and his family with him, Tom Forster is only doing what I should not hesitate to do, were I inclined to pay him a visit at Bamborough Castle."

"I am very glad he has come, for it will give me an opportunity of beholding the fair Dorothy," said the prince.

"Your majesty will also behold Anna Webb, who, in my opinion, is far more beautiful than the other."

"Then you have seen her?" cried the prince.

"I saw her only a few days ago at Bamborough, and admired her greatly. She is really very handsome. I think Tom Forster is *épris*. No doubt Sir John Webb is returning to Dorsetshire with his family, and Tom is escorting them on their journey. I dare say we shall hear of an engagement by-and-by."

"If she is as handsome as you describe her, Anna Webb ought not to be a rude fox-hunter's wife," said the prince. "But come! let us go and have a look at the two beauties. You have roused my curiosity."

# V. – ANNA WEBB AND DOROTHY FORSTER

How well the two beauties looked in their gay riding-dresses of scarlet and blue, trimmed with gold and silver lace, and plumed hats! Slight and graceful in figure, and nearly of an age, Anna Webb was a few months older than Dorothy, but she could not be more than nineteen.

Dorothy had cheeks like a blush-rose, tender blue eyes, and flaxen tresses, with features that could not be called regular, but were, nevertheless, excessively pretty; while Anna's locks were of a raven hue, her eyes large, black, and lustrous, and fringed with silken lashes, her tint pale, yet clear, and her face classically faultless in outline.

If the palm of beauty could not be assigned to Dorothy, it must be owned that she had a more agreeable expression than Anna, whose short curling upper lip gave her a somewhat disdainful look.

But they were both lovely creatures, and quite enchanted the Chevalier de Saint George, as he first beheld them standing near a marble fountain at the edge of the large, smooth-shaven lawn near the terrace.

Close beside them was Lady Webb – a fine, stately, middle-aged dame, richly dressed in damask, and having a hoop petticoat, long stiff bodice, and a lofty head-dress.

She had a few patches on her face, and a large fan in her hand. Lady Webb had a haughty manner, and did not forget that she came of a noble family.

Sir John Webb, who paid great deference to his lady, was about sixty, and had a marked countenance, dark eyes, and a large aquiline nose. His bearing was soldierlike, which is not to be wondered at, since he had served under James the Second. But there was nothing military in his attire, which consisted of a square-cut, claret-coloured coat, richly embroidered with lace, a laced waistcoat with long flaps, cream-coloured silk stockings, shoes with high red heels, a long neck cloth bordered with Brussels lace, lace ruffles at his wrist, a sword by his side, and a well-powdered periwig on his head, surmounted by a small three-cornered hat. He carried a gold-headed clouded cane in his hand, and occasionally produced a very handsome gold snuff-box.

The Webbs were strict Roman Catholics, and devoted to the House of Stuart. In fact, Sir John had followed the exiled monarch for a short time to Saint Germains.

Tom Forster, who was talking to him, and pointing out the beauties of the place with his riding-whip, looked exactly like what he was – a country squire, who rode hard, lived well, and drank hard.

In age, he could not be more than seven-and-twenty, and would have been considered very good-looking if the hue of his skin had not been somewhat too florid. Decidedly, he was like his sister, if a rather coarse man can be said to resemble a delicate girl. No one had better horses than Tom Forster – not even Lord Derwentwater – no one had better claret, and you might have plenty of it – perhaps, rather too much.

Tom Forster kept a pack of fox-hounds, and hunted regularly; and as he was hospitable, jovial, and good-humoured, he was exceedingly popular. Dorothy constantly rode to hounds, and was greatly admired for courage and skill, for she often gained the brush. But, as we have endeavoured to show, there was nothing masculine about her – nothing that could be objected to in her liveliness. On the contrary, her presence operated as a restraint upon her brother's guests, and kept them within bounds.

Sir John Webb and his family had been staying for some little time at Bamborough Castle, and had been delighted with the ancient structure, which, whether from its situation on a lofty and almost perpendicular rock, overlooking the Northern Ocean, or from its well-preserved walls and square massive keep, may be justly considered one of the grandest castles in the kingdom. Another opportunity may occur for describing it more fully. Meantime, we may say that Anna Webb, who was of a somewhat romantic turn, had been especially delighted with the place. She remained for hours upon the ramparts gazing upon the sea, there studded with islands, and had even mounted with Dorothy to the summit of the keep, whence Lindisfarne and its ancient churches could be clearly

descried. Luckily no shipwrecks occurred at the time on that dangerous and rock-bound coast, so that she was spared any such dreadful sight, and no half-drowned mariners were brought for shelter to the castle.

Though Bamborough Castle belonged to Mr. Forster, he did not inhabit the ancient structure. His residence, which was comparatively modern, was close at hand. But several of the old towers were furnished, and in one of these Anna and Dorothy were lodged, at the particular desire of the former, who thus escaped the racket of a great house full of company, as well as the attentions of the host, who had fallen in love with her, but whom she could not tolerate. Every day there was a large party at dinner, and at these entertainments Anna was forced to be present, but she was always glad to get back to the quiet old tower.

One day, an important visitor unexpectedly arrived at the castle. This was the Earl of Derwentwater. Dorothy having described him to her, and had painted him in glowing colours, she was prepared for a very distinguished-looking personage. But he was far handsomer than she expected, and she was greatly struck by his manner as well as by his personal appearance. To her surprise and mortification, however, he paid her very little attention, and devoted himself exclusively to Dorothy, next to whom he was placed at dinner. That evening there were cards and music in the drawing-room. Lord Derwentwater begged of Dorothy to sing, and she readily complied, and charmed him with a lively ditty. When she had done, Tom Forster came up, and made his sister relinquish her place at the harpsichord to Anna.

Piqued by Lord Derwentwater's indifference, and really possessing a splendid voice, Miss Webb exerted herself to the utmost. Never had she sung or played more brilliantly than on this occasion – never had she looked more lovely: Lord Derwentwater was electrified, and seemed suddenly conscious of her transcendent beauty. Hitherto he had scarcely observed her, but now she riveted his regards. Warmly applauding her performance, he prayed her to repeat it. Instead of doing so, she struck up a little French lay, with which he was familiar, but which he had never before heard sung with such liveliness and spirit.

At Lady Webb's instance, Anna gave some further proofs of her extraordinary vocal power. Her triumph was complete. She felt sure she had captivated the young earl, who remained by her side during the remainder of the evening. Indeed she fully expected a proposal on the morrow – but when the morrow came, Lord Derwentwater was gone. He had set off at an early hour, long before she and Dorothy came from the tower.

Why had he departed so suddenly? No one could tell. Anna was greatly put out; but she was not half so much disappointed as Lady Webb, who thought her daughter had secured a great prize. Good-natured Dorothy had manifested no resentment at being cut out by her friend. Tom Forster had felt rather jealous, but as he really had received no encouragement from Miss Webb, he could not complain.

The Webbs remained ten days longer at Bamborough Castle, and during this time nothing was heard of Lord Derwentwater.

But Lady Webb was determined not to give him up without another effort. So she told Tom Forster that she should like immensely to see Dilston, and he promised to take them all there, on their return to Dorsetshire.

The plan was carried out, as we have shown. Some on horseback, some in Sir John's great family coach, encumbered by an immense quantity of luggage, attended by a couple of female servants, the party left Bamborough Castle after an early dinner, supped and slept at Morpeth, and set out next morning for Dilston.

# VI. – LADY WEBB

ANNA Webb, who rode a capital horse, provided for her from the Bamborough stables, and was accompanied by Tom Forster and his sister, was greatly struck by the view of the castle at the end of the vista formed by the long avenue of chestnut trees; and if we may venture to reveal the secrets of her breast, we must state that she ardently desired to become the mistress of that stately mansion. Nor was this desire lessened when she entered the great quadrangular court and gazed around it.

Certain of a hearty welcome, Tom Forster rode in first, and cracked his hunting-whip loudly, as he passed through the gateway, to summon the servants. Newbiggin and three or four footmen rushed down the perron to meet him. He contented himself with announcing to the butler that he had come to dine with his lordship, and pass the night at the castle, and had brought Miss Forster and Sir John Webb and his family with him, and then jumping from the saddle, gave his horse to one of the servants. To his surprise, Newbiggin looked rather embarrassed.

"What! – not at home?" cried the squire.

"Oh, yes, his lordship is at the castle, but he is engaged on rather particular business," replied the butler. "Some one is with him."

"Oh, never mind!" cried the squire. "He'll get his business done before dinner-time. Mr. Charles Radclyffe will take care of us."

As he spoke, Dorothy and Anna rode into the court, and immediately afterwards the great lumbering coach followed.

After a moment's consideration, Newbiggin made up his mind to admit them. Aware that Mr. Forster was a Jacobite, and also aware that Sir John Webb was a Roman Catholic and a staunch adherent of the Stuarts, he thought he couldn't be doing wrong.

Accordingly, he flew to the carriage, and helped its occupants to alight, leaving the young ladies to the care of the grooms, and, by the time he had fulfilled his duties, Charles Radclyffe made his appearance with Father Nor-ham, and welcoming the party with great cordiality in his brother's name, led them to the garden. Having brought them to the lawn, he left them there with Father Norham, and went in search of the earl.

If Anna had been pleased with what she had seen of the castle, she was quite enraptured now.

Never, she declared to Dorothy, had she beheld anything finer than the prospect from the terrace. What charming scenery! what a lovely park! what brown moors! what woods! And how well the Tyne looked in the distance!

She next praised the romantic beauty of the glen, with its trees, and rushing stream, and, above all, the picturesque old bridge.

In short, everything delighted her. And though she said least about it, she was, perhaps, best pleased with the mansion itself. It was larger and more imposing than she expected, and she again thought what a fine thing it would be to be mistress of such a splendid place.

Lady Webb was just as much struck with the castle and its surroundings as her daughter, and fondly hoped that she might soon have a stronger interest in the place. Her ladyship was conversing with Father Norham, and all she heard about the young earl heightened her desire to call him her son-in-law. Father Norham spoke with the greatest warmth of his lordship's goodness of heart, noble qualities, and chivalrous character.

"He is like Bayard himself," he said; "a chevalier without fear and without reproach."

"With such a splendid mansion as this, and with such wealth as his lordship possesses, 'tis a wonder he does not marry," remarked Lady Webb.

"His lordship will never marry except for love," replied the priest.

"That is perfectly consistent with the noble and disinterested character you have given him," said Lady Webb. "But I should have thought," she added, glancing towards Dorothy, "that a very charming young friend of ours might have touched his heart."

"Apparently not," replied Father Norham. "I myself should have been well pleased if such had been the case. But I do not think Lord Derwentwater will marry till our rightful king is restored."

"Then he may have to wait long." said her ladyship.

At this moment Charles Radclyffe made his appearance.

Seeing him return alone, Lady Webb and her daughter began to have some misgivings, but they were quickly set at rest by Charles, and a few minutes later his lordship himself was seen at the end of the terrace.

Lord Derwentwater was, of course, accompanied by the prince, but he left him at the further end of the lawn, and went quickly on alone to welcome his visitors.

Oh! how Anna's heart fluttered as she beheld him.

His devoirs were first paid to Lady Webb, and then to the younger ladies. Dorothy was quite easy in her manner, and shook hands with him warmly, but Anna courtesied deeply to the formal bow he addressed to her. At the same time, the flush on her cheek betrayed the state of her feelings.

Lord Derwentwater could not fail to perceive this, and we doubt not he was much gratified by the discovery, but he was obliged to turn to the others.

Meanwhile, the prince had come up, and in compliance with the instructions he had received, Lord Derwentwater introduced him as Mr. Johnson – but without another word.

Sir John Webb bowed rather stiffly to the stranger, and Forster was scarcely more polite; indeed, very little notice was taken of him, except by the young ladies, both of whom were struck by his manner, and entered into conversation with him.

They soon found out that he was a person of distinction, and learning that he had only just come from France, felt sure he must be a messenger from the Chevalier de Saint George, and began to question him about the prince, displaying an interest in the cause, that could not but be agreeable to the hearer.

"I shall probably see the prince ere long," said the Chevalier, "and will not fail to tell him what warm partisans he has among the ladies of Northumberland."

"Tell him that Dorothy Forster, of Bamborough Castle, will do her best to aid him whenever he comes," cried that young lady.

"Tell him that Anna Webb begins to think he never means to come at all, and fears he has forgotten his friends," added the other.

"Both messages shall reach him, I promise you," said the prince. "And when he learns how surpassingly beautiful are the two damsels who sent them he will be doubly gratified."

"We need no compliments," said Anna. "For my part I am out of patience with the prince."

"Why so?"

"Because he neglects so many opportunities. He might be on the throne now, had he chosen."

"The prince has neglected no chance. But you are not aware of the difficulties he has had to encounter."

"I can partly guess them. But they are nothing. Were I in his place I would have made twenty attempts, and either have succeeded or perished."

"I admire your spirit. But to win a kingdom, you must have an army. And the prince has no army."

"He could have one very soon," cried Anna.

"Yes, that is certain," added Dorothy. "A small army could be raised in this county. Lord Derwentwater could bring five hundred men. And my brother, Mr. Forster could raise a troop."

"Tell this to the prince, when you go back," cried Anna. "Say that the Jacobite ladies of England are dying to behold him."

"That will bring him, if anything will," laughed the prince.

At this moment Lord Derwentwater came up, and said to Anna:

"May I ask what message you are sending to the prince?"

"That we are all tired of waiting for him," she replied. "We have been so often disappointed, that we begin to think he will never come."

"Then let me inform you that I have just received certain intelligence that his majesty is in England at this moment."

Dorothy and Anna uttered exclamations of surprise and delight.

"You hear that, papa?" cried the latter to Sir John Webb. "Lord Derwentwater says that his majesty, King James the Third, is now in England. Is not that good news?"

"Wonderfully good news!" exclaimed Sir John. "Where has he landed?"

"I can't tell you where he has landed," cried Tom Forster, scarcely repressing a joyous shout. "But I can tell you where he is now. Since none of you have discovered him, I'll be first to kiss hands."

And rushing forward, he bent before the prince, who graciously extended his hand towards him.

On this there was a general movement towards the prince, who had now entirely changed his deportment, and received them all with dignified affability.

To Lady Webb he showed marked attention, and to each of the young ladies he had something pleasant to say, and soon relieved any uneasiness they might feel as to the freedom with which they had spoken to him.

This little ceremony over, he took Sir John Webb and Mr. Forster apart, and remained in earnest conversation with them for a few minutes.

He then returned to the ladies, and proposed a walk in the garden, to which they delightedly assented.

# VII. – THE PROPOSAL

The gardens at Dilston, though somewhat formally laid out, as previously mentioned, were very beautiful, and were just then in perfection. The prince admired them very much, and of course everybody else was enchanted.

After wandering about for some time – now stopping to look at one object, now at another – the prince walked on with Lady Webb, and the party began to disperse, moving about in different directions.

Somehow or other, Lord Derwentwater found himself alone with Anna. He looked about for Dorothy, but she was a long way off with Charles Radclyffe, and no one was near them.

Close to where they stood was a rustic bench, shaded by a tree, and saying she felt a little fatigued, Anna sat down. Lord Derwentwater could not do otherwise than take a place beside her.

We will not say what thoughts agitated her breast, but she felt that the critical moment had arrived, and trembled lest any interruption should occur before the word was uttered that might decide her fate.

She did not look at the lovely parterre of flowers before her – nor listen to the plashing of the fountain – she heard nothing – saw nothing. But the accents she longed for were not breathed, and Lord Derwentwater remained silent. Why did he not speak?

Fearing the moment might pass, she raised her magnificent eyes, which had been thrown upon the ground, and fixed them full upon him.

Though he spoke not, he had been watching her, and the glance he now encountered pierced his breast. How much was conveyed in that long, passionate look! How eloquent was the earl's reply! An instantaneous revelation was made to each of the state of the other's heart. No longer any doubt. He knew she loved him. She felt he was won.

Yet, as if to make assurance doubly sure, he took her hand. She did not withdraw it, and still gazing tenderly at her, he said in a low voice, but which was distinctly audible:

"Can you love me, Anna?"

Her glance became even more passionate, as she answered:

"I can – I do."

"Will you be mine, then?" demanded the earl, passing his arm round her waist, and drawing her towards him.

Her reply must have been in the affirmative, yet it was almost stifled by the kiss imprinted on her lips.

He had only just released her from this fond embrace, when they became conscious that they were not unobserved.

So engrossed were they by each other that they had not hitherto noticed the prince and Lady Webb on the further side of the lawn.

Lord Derwentwater, in a moment, decided on the course he ought to pursue.

"Come with me," he said to Anna.

And, taking her hand, he led her towards her mother, whose feelings of pride and satisfaction may be easily imagined when the announcement was made, and her consent asked to their union.

But it was asked in a manner that does not belong to the present age, and her consent was given with equal formality, and accompanied by a blessing.

As they arose from their half-kneeling posture, the prince embraced the earl, and said to him:

"Accept my sincere congratulations, cousin. Lovelier bride you could not have found, and in every other respect she is worthy of you. And you, fair damsel," he added to Anna, who blushed deeply at the high compliments paid her, "you may likewise be heartily congratulated on your good fortune. You have won a husband as noble by nature as he is by birth. All happiness attend you!"

These gracious observations produced a strong effect on the young pair to whom they were addressed.

The prince did not, however, tarry for their thanks, but hastened away, saying he desired to be first to communicate the joyful intelligence to Sir John Webb.

The rest of the party were assembled on the terrace, and when they saw the prince approaching, and noticed the peculiar expression of his countenance, some suspicion of the truth crossed them.

Sir John, therefore, was not surprised, though secretly enchanted, when a sign was given them to come forward, and, on obeying it, he learnt from his highness's lips what had occurred. He did not attempt to disguise his satisfaction, and his loud exclamations soon let the rest of the party into the secret.

That the news was perfectly agreeable to all the others cannot be asserted. The hopes of Tom Forster and his charming sister were annihilated. But since the blow had fallen, it must be borne. So they concealed their disappointment with a smile.

We are not quite sure that Charles Radclyffe was anxious that the earl should marry, as his own position in the house might be changed by the event; but, at all events, he looked pleased. And Father Norham, who had an almost paternal affection for his noble patron, was certainly pleased, for he believed Lord Derwentwater had taken a wise step.

Sir John Webb, who had been made the happiest of men by the success of his wife's scheme, hurried off to embrace his daughter and the earl, and give them his blessing, and all the others followed to witness the scene.

Again certain painful feelings were stirred in the breasts of Forster and his sister, but these were controlled, and all went off very well.

A proposition was next made by the prince, that met with ready acceptance from all concerned. It was that the earl and his chosen bride should be solemnly contracted together on the morrow.

"Lord Derwentwater and myself were brought up together like brothers," he said. "Long ago, I promised to find him a wife. He has now found one for himself, and I entirely approve his choice. Since I can scarce hope to be present at his lordship's marriage, it will be specially agreeable to me to witness his betrothal."

This intimation was quite sufficient, and it was arranged that the ceremony should be performed by Father Nor-ham, and should take place, next morning, in the little chapel.

# VIII. – COLONEL OXBURGH AND HIS COMPANIONS

M eanwhile, another arrival had taken place at the castle.

A party of horsemen, all well mounted, and well armed, rode into the court-yard, and claimed the earl's hospitality, which could not be refused.

The party consisted of half a dozen Roman Catholic gentlemen – staunch Jacobites – who had banded together, and were in the habit of riding about the country to see how matters stood – sometimes stopping at one house, sometimes at another – and always heartily welcome, wherever they went.

The leader of the party was Colonel Oxburgh, who had fought and distinguished himself under James the Second. His companions were Captain Nicholas Wogan, Charles Wogan, and three other Jacobite gentlemen, named Talbot, Clifton, and Beaumont. They had pistols in their holsters, and swords at the side, and presented a very formidable appearance, as they rode together.

Colonel Oxburgh was an elderly man, but in possession of all his energies, and expected a command, if a rising should take place in favour of James the Third. He was tall and well-built, and though equipped in a plain riding-suit, had an unmistakable military air.

His companions were very much younger, and all of them looked like gentlemen – as indeed they were – the most noticeable being the two Wogans. Both of these young men were very good-looking, and graceful in figure. Captain Wogan had a very interesting countenance. As they had no servants with them, each carried a small valise attached to his saddle.

Colonel Oxburgh was an old friend of Sir John Webb – indeed, they had served together in Ireland – and, wishing to see him before he left the North, he was proceeding to Bamborough Castle with that object, when he learnt that Sir John and his family had just taken their departure, but meant to halt at Dilston. Thereupon, the colonel changed his course, and went to the latter place.

On his arrival, his first inquiries were whether Sir John was there, and, being quickly satisfied on this point by Newbiggin, he dismounted, and his companions followed his example. The horses were taken to the stables, and the bags ordered to be brought into the house, as if it had been an inn, and while this was being done, the colonel again addressed Newbiggin, and asked if there was any other company at the castle.

The butler smiled significantly.

"We have a very important person indeed here, colonel," he said. "I need keep no secret from you and your friends, because you are all loyal. What will you say, gentlemen," addressing the whole party, "when I tell you that the Chevalier de Saint George is here?"

"I should say the statement is scarcely likely to be correct, my good friend," rejoined the colonel, dryly. "You are jesting with us."

"'Tis true, I assure you, colonel," said Newbiggin. "His majesty is at Dilston at this moment. You will soon be convinced of the fact."

"I am convinced now," cried Colonel Oxburgh. "But you cannot wonder at my incredulity, and you see it was shared by all my friends. Since such is the case, gentlemen," he added, turning to the others, "we must remain where we are for a few minutes. We must not present ourselves to the king till we learn that it is his majesty's pleasure to receive us."

"I have no doubt upon the point, colonel," said the butler; "and I will venture to take you to his majesty at once, if you will allow me."

The punctilious colonel, however, could not be moved from his position, nor would he enter the house, so New-biggin was obliged to leave him and his friends in order to make the necessary announcement.

Ere long, Lord Derwentwater appeared, and welcomed them with the utmost cordiality, stating at the same time that his majesty would be delighted to receive them.

His lordship then conducted them to the garden, and presented them to the prince, who accorded them a most gratifying reception, shaking hands with Colonel Oxburgh, and treating him like an old friend.

“I have often heard the king, my father, speak of you, colonel,” he said; “and always with regard. He was deeply sensible of your attachment to him.”

“The attachment I ever felt towards his majesty is now transferred to his son,” replied the colonel, laying his hand upon his heart. “I only hope the time has come when I can prove my loyalty and devotion.”

“We will talk of that anon, my dear colonel,” replied the prince.

And he then addressed himself to the others, to each of whom he had something agreeable to say. His highness seemed particularly pleased with Captain Wogan.

While this was going on, Colonel Oxburgh exchanged a greeting with Sir John Webb and Forster, nor did he omit to pay his devoirs to Lady Webb and the younger ladies.

# IX. – CONFESSION

Feeling that their presence might be some restraint upon the meeting, the ladies soon afterwards withdrew, and entered the house, accompanied by Father Norham.

As soon as they were alone together, Lady Webb embraced her daughter with more than her customary warmth, and again congratulated her on her good fortune.

“You are now in the most enviable position in which a girl can be placed,” she said. “You have obtained as a husband one of the richest and most powerful nobles in the land, and who, in addition to these recommendations, has youth, good looks, and extreme amiability. Could you desire more?”

“No, dearest mamma,” she replied. “I ought to be grateful, and I *am* grateful. I do not deserve so much. I ought to return thanks to Heaven for its great goodness towards me. I should like to see Father Norham alone.”

“I entirely approve of your resolution, my dear child,” replied her mother. “Remain here. I will send the holy father to you.”

She then left her, and the interval between her departure and the good priest’s appearance was passed in prayer.

Father Norham found her on her knees before a small image of the Blessed Virgin, which was in the room, and did not interrupt her.

When she arose, he expressed his great satisfaction at finding her thus employed.

“I am now certain his lordship has chosen well,” he said.

“I hope he will never regret the step he has taken, father,” she rejoined.

“Strive earnestly to make him happy, dear daughter, and you cannot fail,” said the priest. “Have you aught to say to me?”

“I desire to disburden my conscience, father,” she replied. “I have not much upon it, but I shall feel easier when I have spoken.”

“You will do well, daughter,” he said.

He then sat down, and she knelt beside him, and cleared her breast of all that weighed upon it.

It was not more than many a maiden would have to avow, but the good father was strict, and imposed a slight penance upon her.

“You must debar yourself from the society of him you love till to-morrow,” he said.

She uttered an exclamation, but the priest went on:

“For the rest of the day you must remain in the seclusion of this chamber, so that your thoughts may be undisturbed. Part of the night must be passed in vigil and prayer. This will be a fitting preparation for the ceremony you are about to go through.”

“What will Lord Derwentwater think, father?” she asked uneasily.

“I will take care he receives such explanation as may be necessary,” he replied. “But I again enjoin solitude and reflection. Later on, I will take you to the chapel, where your vigils must be kept till midnight. Promise me not to quit this room, without my sanction.”

“I will obey you, father,” she rejoined.

# X. – A BANQUET

A GRAND dinner was given that day in the great banquet-ing-hall of the castle, at which the prince and all the guests assisted with the exception of her, whom the noble host would have preferred to all the others. Being told by Lady Webb that her daughter was rather overcome by the excitement of the morning, and deemed it best to keep her room, he submitted to the disappointment with the best grace he could.

The dinner was magnificent, though little time had been allowed for its preparation. Still with the resources at Lord Derwentwater's command, a great deal can be accomplished. The prince sat on the right of the earl, and on his lordship's left was placed Lady Webb. Next to her ladyship was Colonel Oxburgh, and next to the prince on the right, was Sir John Webb. Then came the Squire of Bamborough. We cannot record how the rest of the company was placed, but we must mention that the fair Dorothy was not very far from Charles Radclyffe, who sat at the foot of the table. Undoubtedly, the party lacked its chief attraction – at least in the eyes of Lord Derwentwater – but he was so much occupied by the prince that he had not much time to think of the fair absentee; and besides, Lady Webb assured him that there was not the slightest cause for uneasiness.

The Chevalier de Saint George was in high spirits. No contretemps of any kind had occurred since his arrival at Dilston. All the guests were devoted to his cause, and some of them were his warmest partisans. Of the attachment of Sir John Webb and Colonel Oxburgh, he had no doubt. Of Forster's loyalty he was not quite so sure, and he therefore paid him particular attention. But he had a gracious word for every one, and not a single person present could complain that the prince had over-looked him.

Moreover, his highness took care to make it understood that he desired his presence should be no restraint to the company.

The dinner therefore passed off admirably, and as the wine was not stinted, and bumpers were quaffed according to the good old custom, the enthusiasm of the guests rose to a very high pitch, and could scarcely be repressed. But it soon found vent when the cloth was drawn, and glasses were filled to the brim. The noble host arose and with him rose every guest – save one – and the hall rang with shouts of "Long live King James the Third."

Lady Webb and Dorothy then disappeared, and all the servants having left the room, except Newbeggin, whose discretion could be relied on, some serious discussion took place.

As yet the prince had not made known his design of seeking an interview with the queen, his sister; and it was now, at his highness's request, disclosed by Lord Derwentwater. A deep silence ensued.

"It appears that you do not approve my plan, gentlemen," remarked the prince after a short pause.

"My liege," replied Colonel Oxburgh, answering for the others, "we all hoped and believed that you were come to call us to arms, and we cannot conceal our disappointment when we find that, instead of making a determined attempt to recover the throne, which we are persuaded would be successful, your majesty is about to appeal to the queen, who has no sympathy or affection for you, and is hostile to our religion. Rest assured the attempt will be useless, if it does not lead to other ill consequences. Abandon it, therefore, I pray you. On the other hand, there is every reason to believe that an insurrection in your majesty's favour would be attended with success. That we are fully prepared for it, I will not assert. But a very short time will enable us to get ready a sufficient force to march towards London, and we shall gather strength as we go on. None can be better acquainted with the feeling of the country than myself and my friends, who have visited the houses of half the Jacobites and High Church Tories in the North of England, and I can state positively that a rising would be hailed by many influential persons with the greatest enthusiasm. Should your majesty decide

on leading the army in person – as I trust you will – thousands will flock to your standard, and you will find yourself resistless as well from the number of your followers as from the justice of your cause. That your majesty is the rightful King of England cannot be denied. Why then allow the crown to be kept from you – even for a day? Do not sue for it, but demand it; and if it be refused, take it!"

The exclamations that arose from the company made it evident that they all agreed with the speaker. But though stirred by the colonel's energetic language, the prince was not to be turned from his purpose.

"I have already explained to Lord Derwentwater my reasons for the course I am about to pursue," he said. "Like yourselves he has endeavoured to dissuade me from my design – but ineffectually. I propose to set out for London to-morrow, or next day, at the latest – and his lordship will accompany me."

"Without an escort?" cried Colonel Oxburgh. "That must not be. Since your majesty is resolved on this rash step, my friends and myself will attend you. Do I not express your wishes, gentlemen?" he added to the others.

"Most certainly," replied Captain Wogan, answering for the rest. "We shall be proud to escort his majesty, if he will permit us."

"I accept your offer, gentlemen," said the prince. "I did not calculate on such good company."

"We may be of use to your majesty on the journey," remarked Captain Wogan.

"I doubt it not," said the prince. "Will you go with me?" he added to Forster.

"I pray your majesty to excuse me," replied the squire. "I must frankly own I would rather not be engaged in the expedition."

"As you please, sir," said the prince, with affected indifference. "I can do very well without you."

"I see that I have not made myself understood, my liege," said Forster. "I am ready to fight for you, and if need be, die for you, but I will not be instrumental in delivering you to your enemies."

"Ah! I see I have done you an injustice," said the prince.

The conversation then took another turn, and a good deal of curiosity was manifested both by Sir John Webb and Colonel Oxburgh as to the prince's future plans, but his highness displayed considerable reserve on this point, and did not choose to gratify them. Indeed, he soon afterwards retired, and Lord Derwentwater went with him, leaving Charles Radclyffe to attend to the company.

Those were hard-drinking days, and the Jacobites were as fond of good claret as their predecessors the Cavaliers. We are afraid to say how many magnums were emptied on the occasion, but before the party broke up, which it did not do till a late hour, a general resolution was come to, that a more strenuous effort should be made on the morrow, to induce his majesty to forego his ill-advised journey to London, and instead of endangering his safety by such a senseless attempt, to set up his standard, and summon all his adherents to join him. Then he might proceed to London as soon as he pleased.

A loud shout, with which his majesty's name was coupled, concluded a vehement harangue made by Colonel Oxburgh, and the party broke up.

Some of them retired to rest, but Tom Forster and two or three others adjourned to a smaller room not far from the butler's pantry, where a bowl of capital punch was provided for them by Newbiggin.

# XI. – A MYSTERIOUS OCCURRENCE IN THE CHAPEL

Anna Webb submitted unrepiningly to the penance enjoined by Father Norham. She remained in her own room, and was not distracted by a visit either from her mother, or Dorothy. Some refreshments were brought her by a female servant, but they were untouched. Several hours were thus passed in solitude and prayer, and night had come on. She wondered when the priest would come, according to his promise, to take her to the chapel.

At length, he appeared, and desired her to follow him. Wishing to avoid the servants, who were crowded in the great hall, he led her down a back staircase to a small room on the ground floor, where he obtained a lantern. In another minute, they had crossed the court, and reached the door of the chapel.

The little structure, it has been said, was screened by trees, and the place was so dark, it would have been difficult to find the door, save with the lantern's aid.

A slight shiver ran through Anna's frame as she entered the building, but she attributed the feeling to the damp atmosphere. Meanwhile, Father Norham had lighted a couple of tapers at the altar, and their feeble glimmer enabled her to survey the place.

Its simplicity and diminutive size pleased her, and reassured her. Knowing she would have to remain there alone till midnight, she might have felt some misgivings had the room been large and sombre. Fortunately, she was not aware that there was a vault beneath, in which rested the earl's ancestors. Marble tablets were on the walls, but she did not read them.

After an exhortation, to which she listened devoutly, the priest withdrew. Thus left alone, she knelt down at the altar, and was soon engrossed in prayer.

For awhile she continued thus employed, but at length a feeling of drowsiness came over her, which she found it impossible to resist.

How long she slept she could not tell, but when she awoke the place was buried in darkness.

What had happened while she slumbered? And how came the tapers to be extinguished?

Very much alarmed, she started to her feet, and somehow – though she scarcely knew how – made her way to the door.

It was fastened. Father Norham must have locked it when he went out

She was thus to be kept in that dreadful place – for dreadful it now seemed to her – till his return at midnight.

She could not guess the hour, but she might have to wait long – very long! Moments seemed ages now. Her terror was insupportable.

Just then she heard the castle clock, and counted the strokes.

Eleven! Another agonising hour had to be borne! – another hour! – when five minutes had been intolerable!

Rendered desperate by terror, she went back to the altar, and kneeling down once more, prayed for deliverance.

Becoming somewhat calmer, she felt ashamed of her weakness, and tried to persuade herself that the tapers might have gone out by accident. The notion gave her momentary courage.

But her fears returned with greater force than before as she heard a deep sigh, seemingly proceeding from some one close beside her, and she fancied she discerned a dusky figure.

"Who is there?" she cried. "Is it you holy father?"

No answer was returned, but a slight sound was heard, and the figure seemed to retreat.

She heard and saw no more.

Uttering a cry, she fell senseless at the foot of the altar, where she was found shortly afterwards by Father Norham and her mother.

The former having brought the lantern with him, her situation was perceived at once, and the prompt application of a smelling-bottle by Lady Webb quickly restored her to consciousness. She was able to walk back to the mansion, but begged not to be questioned as to the cause of her fright till the morrow, when she should have quite recovered from its effects.

# XII. – A LETTER FROM THE EARL OF MAR

NEXT morning she related the mysterious occurrence to them both, but they treated it very lightly, though neither could understand how the tapers had been extinguished. All the rest they regarded as the effect of an over-excited imagination.

"No one could have entered the chapel," remarked the priest. "I locked the door, and took the key with me. However, you must dismiss all these thoughts from your mind, daughter. To-day the chapel will present a very different appearance from what it did last night."

"Yes – it will be the scene of your betrothal," said Lady Webb.

"I would rather the ceremony took place elsewhere," said Anna.

"It cannot be," said Father Norham. "His lordship has arranged the matter. The prince will be present, and it would be a great disappointment to the household to be deprived of the sight."

"It would also be a great disappointment to Sir John and myself," observed Lady Webb. "Besides there are several guests in the Castle who ought not to be excluded. For many reasons, therefore, there must be no change in the plan."

"Don't say a word, mamma," said Anna. "I am quite convinced. My objections were ridiculous. The morning is delightful, and a walk in the garden will set me quite right."

"You will find Lord Derwentwater, his majesty, and almost all the company assembled on the lawn," said Lady Webb. "Come, I will take you thither. Perhaps, Father Norham will accompany us."

"With the greatest pleasure," replied the priest.

On Anna's appearance, Lord Derwentwater, who was standing with the company on the terrace, came forward to meet her; and as he approached, he remarked that she looked very pale. This did not detract from her beauty, but rather gave interest to her countenance – at least, in his eyes. He made some slight allusion to the circumstance, but she laughed it off.

Not much passed between them, for the prince presently came up to offer her his greetings, and by this time her cheek was flushed.

"I have news for you, fair lady," said his highness, "and I desire to be the first to communicate it. I do not mean to rob you of your lover, so you may rest quite easy on that score. My proposed journey to London will not be undertaken. A messenger has just arrived at the castle bringing me a letter from the Earl of Mar, Secretary of State to Queen Anne. His lordship had engaged that I should see the queen, and led me to hope that great results would follow from the interview. These confident expectations are now at an end, and my project must be given up. Lord Mar writes that the queen, forgetful of her promises, refuses to receive me, and that if I should present myself at Saint James's Palace, he will not answer for my safety. Under such circumstances, it would be madness to make the attempt It is well that I arranged with the Earl of Mar to write to me here, as if I had not heard from him, I should have started on the journey. What might then have befallen me I know not. Perchance, imprisonment in the Tower, in hope of compelling me to relinquish my pretentions to the crown – but that I never would have done."

"Your majesty need not give us that assurance," cried Anna. "But imprisonment would have been grievous, and might have disheartened your friends."

"From the first I have been opposed to the scheme, as your majesty is aware," said Lord Derwentwater; "and I cannot, therefore, affect to regret its abandonment."

"I do not wonder you are better pleased to remain where you are, cousin," said the prince.

"I shall be far better pleased if your majesty will decide upon summoning all your partisans to arms," said the earl.

"Nothing would rejoice me more than to see ten thousand men assembled at the castle," said Anna with increased enthusiasm, "and eager for their king to lead them on to victory. That is how I should like to see your majesty march to London – and Lord Derwentwater with you."

"Ay, I will never be left behind," cried the earl.

Fire lighted up the prince's eyes as they spoke, but it faded away.

"It cannot be," he said. "It cannot be."

"What cannot be, my liege?" cried Anna, regarding him fixedly. "Not the insurrection? Not the march to London?"

"No," he replied. "The Earl of Mar, in his letter counsels me to make no immediate movement."

"For what reason?" demanded Lord Derwentwater in surprise.

"He gives no reason," rejoined the prince. "But Lord Mar knows the feeling of the clans, and evidently deems the present juncture unpropitious to a rising."

"I cannot tell what may be the state of the clans," said Lord Derwentwater, scarcely able to repress his impatience; "but I am certain the opportunity is favourable in the North of England – as can soon be shown, if your majesty will give the signal."

"I will not commit myself to any decisive step now, my lord," said the prince, who when thus urged, seemed to shrink from the enterprise. "Nor do I think it will be prudent for me to remain here long."

"What danger does your majesty apprehend?" cried the earl. "All are devoted to you. There are no traitors in the castle."

"But I have many enemies in the country, and the Earl of Mar bids me 'beware,'" said the prince.

"We will defend you against your enemies, my liege," said Lord Derwentwater. "You need not fear them. Immediate preparations shall be made."

"No haste is needful, cousin," said the prince. "I have a strong guard enough," he added, glancing at Colonel Oxburgh and his friends, who were standing at a little distance. "Let the day pass tranquilly – if it will. To-morrow we will consider what shall be done."

"Heaven grant your majesty may change your mind in the interim!" observed Anna.

"If you exercise your powers of persuasion, fair lady, there is no saying what you may accomplish," said the prince, gallantly.

At this moment a bell was heard, and Newbiggin came forth with two other servants in livery, and respectfully announced breakfast.

The prince offered his hand to Anna and led her to the house, and the rest of the party followed.

# XIII. – THE BETROTHAL

A profuse breakfast, served in the good old style, awaited them in the dining-room. The sideboard groaned with the weight of huge cold joints, hams, tongues, and pasties; and broiled trout and salmon in abundance appeared on the table. How many good things there were besides in the shape of cutlets and omelettes, we cannot tell, but nothing seemed wanting. Chocolate was handed to the ladies, but claret suited the gentlemen best, though in some instances a flagon of strong ale was preferred.

Breakfast over, the ladies withdrew to prepare for the ceremony appointed to take place in the chapel, while the prince again walked forth on the terrace, in company with Lord Derwentwater and Sir John Webb, and gazed with fresh delight at the prospect.

Colonel Oxburgh and his companions, with Tom Forster, adjourned to the stables. There was a good deal of conjecture among them as to the prince's plans, which now seemed quite undecided; but they came to the conclusion that no rising would take place. At the same time, they all rejoiced that the hazardous – and as they deemed it useless – journey to London had been abandoned.

"Something ought to be done," cried Forster. "But it puzzles me to say what."

"Have patience," said Colonel Oxbugh. "Depend upon it we shan't remain long idle. His majesty will be forced to make a move of some kind."

Long before the hour appointed for the betrothal, the little chapel was filled. All the household craved permission to witness the ceremony, and none were refused. The guests entered at the same time, and found places where they could. But little room was left, as may be imagined, when all these persons were accommodated. In the large pew were the prince with Charles Radclyffe, Mr. Forster and his sister – the latter looking bright and blooming as usual.

Lord Derwentwater was standing at the door of the little edifice in momentary expectation of the arrival of her to whom he was about to be affianced. She came, leaning on her father's arm, and attended by her mother – not decked in bridal attire – not draped in a bridal veil – for such adornments would have been unsuitable to the occasion, but arrayed in a charming costume of azure satin and lace.

After salutations had passed, Sir John Webb consigned his lovely daughter to the earl, and followed them with Lady Webb.

An irrepressible murmur of admiration burst forth as the youthful pair moved towards the altar, where they immediately knelt down, and a group was formed behind them of which the prince was the principal figure – his highness having come with the others from the pew.

Not till a prayer was recited could the spectators obtain a glimpse of the scene at the altar, and if this was quickly hidden from their sight they heard the vow pronounced that bound the pair together, and they likewise heard Father Norham's benediction.

Those near the altar saw the earl embrace his affianced bride as they rose together, and some of them remarked that she looked strangely pale. Only for a minute, for her colour quickly returned. The prince, however, noticed the circumstance, and so did Dorothy. But both attributed it to deep emotion.

Nothing whatever marred the ceremony, the sole fault of which, in the opinion of the majority of those present, was that it was too brief.

Several of the household grouped themselves on either side of the path leading to the gate to offer their good wishes to the newly-affianced pair as they passed by. Among these were old Nicholas Ribbleton, and an elderly dame who, like himself, had lived in the family for years.

"Eh! she's a bonnie lass!" cried this old woman, after scrutinising her sharply. "But I doubt if she'll make his lordship happy. He had better have chosen Dorothy F orster."

"Why, what ails her?" said Ribbleton.

"I cannot exactly tell – but there's a look about her I don't like."

"Well, it's too late to change now, Grace," observed Ribbleton. "The troth is plighted."

"Ay, that's the worst of it," rejoined the old woman. "But a time may come, when his lordship will wish what's done were undone."

This was the only discordant note uttered, and it reached no other ear but Ribbleton's, and him it made angry. So he walked off, and left the old prophetess of ill to herself.

# XIV. – THE SPY

T he rest of the day was spent in festivity and amusement.

Lord Derwentwater and his affianced bride did not stray beyond the garden, and seemed so perfectly happy in each other's society that no one went near them.

The prince explored the mysterious glen, and Charles Radclyffe acted as his guide, introducing him to all the beauties of the place, and relating all the legends connected with it. A large party accompanied his highness, including Lady Webb and Dorothy Forster – the latter of whom had often seen the place before, but was quite as much enchanted with it as ever.

The visit to this picturesque dell, which has been previously described, occupied some time, for there was a great deal to be seen. But neither the prince, nor any of those with him, were aware that, while they were tracking the course of the Devil's Water over its rocky channel, or standing near the pool, they were watched by a person concealed amid the brushwood on its banks.

This person was an emissary of Sir William Lorraine, of Bywell Park, high sheriff of the county, and a strong supporter of the Government. That very morning, Sir William had received the astounding information that the Pretender had arrived at Dilston Castle, and that a rising in his favour was imminent among the gentlemen of the county; but as the news came from a suspicious source, the high sheriff, though alarmed, did not entirely credit it, and, before taking any active measures – such as raising a posse-comitatus, or calling out the militia – he determined to send a couple of spies to Dilston to ascertain the truth of the report.

One of these emissaries was now concealed, as we have stated, among the trees overhanging the glen. Without betraying himself, he got sufficiently near the party to hear their discourse, and soon learnt enough to convince him that the plainly attired, but distinguished-looking young man, whom he beheld, and to whom so much attention was paid by Charles Radclyffe and the rest, was no other than the Chevalier de Saint George.

As soon as he had clearly ascertained this point, he stole away, mounted his horse, which he had left in a thicket near the moor, and galloped off to convey the important information to Sir William Lorraine.

On reaching Bywell Park, he found the high sheriff anxiously expecting him, and called out:

"I have seen the Pretender, Sir William – seen him with my own eyes."

"You are certain of it, Jesmond?"

"I saw him in the glen by the side of the Devil's Water. He had a large party with him, and I heard several of 'em address him as 'your majesty.'"

"Enough," cried the high sheriff. "You have done your work well, Jesmond. But where have you left Hedgeley?"

"I've seen nothing of him since we got to Dilston, Sir William. He went to the castle, and I went to the grounds. I took the right course it appears, for I soon found the person I was looking for, and without asking any questions, or letting myself be seen."

"I hope Hedgeley has not been seized as a spy," said the high sheriff.

"If he has, he'll tell nothing, Sir William. Don't fear him. If you want to take the place by surprise tomorrow, you can do it. His lordship has taken no precautions. With half a dozen mounted men I could have taken the Pretender prisoner myself, and have carried him off."

"I wish you had done so, Jesmond," laughed the high sheriff. "It would have saved me the trouble of getting a party of men together. I must set about the task without delay. You think all will be safe at Dilston till tomorrow?"

"Not a doubt about it, Sir William. Lord Derwent-water's guests seem to be amusing themselves. I think – from what I overheard – that his Lordship has a grand banquet to-day. Certainly, some festivities are taking place at the castle."

"It would be a pity to disturb them," said the high sheriff. "To-morrow I will present myself at the castle with sufficient force to render all resistance useless."

Hedgeley, the emissary to Dilston, had not fared so well as his comrade. Stopped at the gate, and unable to explain his business entirely to the porter's satisfaction, he was locked up in a strong room for the night. This was done by Colonel Oxburgh's order, who chanced to be in the court at the time, and interrogated him. Except detention, the spy had nothing to complain of, for he had plenty to eat and drink.

Jesmond had correctly informed the high sheriff, when he told him that a grand dinner would be given that day at the castle. A vast deal of handsome plate was displayed at the banquet, which was far more agreeable to the noble host than the dinner of the previous day, since it was graced by the presence of his affianced bride, who now sat next to him, and looked more charming than ever, being beautifully dressed, and in high spirits. The prince was likewise in a very lively mood, and contributed to the general gaiety at the upper end of the table.

In the evening there was music in the grand saloon, which was brilliantly lighted up for the occasion. Anna produced a great effect, and her magnificent voice enraptured the prince as much as it had enraptured Lord Der-wentwater when he first heard it.

Very different in style, but equally effective in their way, were some simple ditties sung with great taste and feeling by Dorothy Forster.

As we have intimated, the prince was in a very gay humour and seemed to take no thought of the morrow – though that morrow had much in store for him. He talked lightly with Anna and Dorothy, laughed and jested with Sir John Webb, Colonel Oxburgh, and Forster, but he talked seriously with no one.

So passed his last night at Dilston Castle.

# XV. – A GENERAL DEPARTURE

A BRIGHT day dawned on Dilston. Fair looked the garden with its lawn and terrace, inviting those within the mansion to stroll forth and enjoy the freshness of the morn. So calm and still was all around that the rippling of the hidden burn could be distinctly heard in the deep glen. Within the park, beyond the old grey bridge that linked it with the grounds, the deer could be seen couched beneath the oaks. The neighbouring woods, the dark moorland in the distance, over which hung a thin mist, the river glistening here and there through the trees – all completed a picture which was seen by more than one of the earl's guests, and often recalled by them.

The prince was amongst those who brushed the dew from the lawn, and gazed at the charming prospect. He likewise attended matins in the little chapel.

As he was returning from the service with Lord Der-wentwater, he met Colonel Oxburgh, and was struck by the grave expression of his countenance.

"Good morrow, colonel," he said, returning the other's military salute. "I fear, from your looks, that you have some bad news to give me."

"What I have to tell your majesty demands instant consideration and decision," replied Oxburgh. "By some means or other, your arrival has been discovered by Sir William Lorraine, the high sheriff of the county, and yesterday afternoon he sent a spy here to make sure that he had not been misinformed. The fellow was suspected and locked up for the night, but it was only this morning that I forced him by threats to confess his errand. It is certain from what he says that the sheriff will come here with a strong party of men to secure your majesty's person."

Lord Derwentwater looked aghast at this startling intelligence, but the prince did not seem much disturbed by it.

"Instant measures must be taken for the defence of the place," said Lord Derwentwater.

"It cannot be defended, my lord," rejoined Colonel Ox-burgh. "His majesty must not remain here."

"Do you counsel flight, colonel?" said the prince.

"Not flight – but a retreat, my liege," replied Oxburgh.

"No need to fly," said Lord Derwentwater. "I will undertake to conceal his majesty from any search that can be made for him."

"Better he should seek shelter in some fortified house or castle," observed Oxburgh.

"But where?" demanded the prince. "Where would you have me go?"

"If your majesty will not remain here, and trust yourself to me, I advise you to go to Bamborough Castle," said Lord Derwentwater.

"But is Forster to be relied on?" said the prince. "Is he thoroughly loyal?"

"I'll answer for him with my life," said the earl.

"And so will I, my liege," added Oxburgh.

"Then I'll trust him," said the prince.

"Shall I acquaint him with your majesty's determination?" inquired the earl. "No time must be lost."

"I'll go to him myself," rejoined the prince.

"Ah! here he comes!" exclaimed Colonel Oxburgh.

As he spoke, Forster was seen descending the steps with Sir John Webb, and immediately obeyed a summons given him by the colonel.

He was as much alarmed as the others when he learnt the prince's jeopardy, and before his highness signified his intention, offered him an asylum at Bamborough.

It was then decided that the prince's departure should take place forthwith, and it was likewise arranged that Lord Derwentwater with Colonel Oxburgh and his troop should escort his highness.

Some further arrangements were subsequently made, but these were sufficient in the meantime, and Colonel Oxburgh and Forster hurried off to the stables to give directions about the horses, while the prince and Lord Derwentwater entered the house.

As soon as the prince's intended departure became known all was bustle and confusion. The news was quickly communicated to the ladies, who very soon came downstairs, and another consultation was held in the library.

What was to be done? Anne and Dorothy were determined not to be left behind. Since the prince was going to Bamborough, and Lord Derwentwater, and almost everybody else were going with him, they would go too. Both were such perfect equestrians that they could be trusted to keep up with the fugitives, while their spirit was equal to any unforeseen difficulty or danger that might arise. So the proposition was acceded to.

Then came a suggestion from Lady Webb, to the effect that she and Sir John should drive back to Bamborough. This was likewise adopted.

Preparations for a general start were then made at once. Trunks and valises were packed up. Riding-dresses donned, horses brought round, Sir John Webb's carriage got ready, and in less than half an hour the prince and a large party consisting of Lord Derwentwater and his betrothed, Tom Forster and his fair sister, Colonel Oxburgh and his companions, were speeding down the chestnut avenue, with the intent of shaping their course to Bamborough Castle, which they hoped to reach before night.

Some quarter of an hour later, Sir John Webb's great lumbering coach took the same route.

Charles Radclyffe was left in charge of Dilston, and empowered to act as he deemed best, in his brother's absence.

Hedgeley, the spy, was detained for some time after the prince's departure, and then liberated.

## END OF BOOK THE FIRST

# *BOOK THE SECOND* BAMBOROUGH CASTLE,

## I. – THE HIGH SHERIFF

ABOUT ten o'clock on the same day, the high sheriff, accompanied by a score of well-mounted yeomen, armed with various weapons, arrived at Dilston Castle. The gate was open, and without saying a word to the porter, he rode into the court, followed by Jesmond and a groom, leaving the yeomen on guard outside.

Charles Radclyffe who was standing at the entrance of the mansion, came down the steps to meet him, and a formal salutation passed between them.

"You will not be surprised at my visit, Mr. Radclyffe," said the sheriff. "I have come here in the execution of a painful duty, and desire to discharge it as lightly as I can. Be pleased to tell your brother, Lord Derwentwater, that a certain important person, whom I am aware is his guest, must be delivered up to me."

"In reply to your demand, Sir William," replied Charles Radclyffe, firmly, "I have to inform you that there are no guests in the castle and that Lord Derwentwater himself is absent."

The sheriff looked confounded, and consulted Jesmond by a glance.

The latter shook his head to intimate that the assertion ought not to be credited.

"Excuse me, Mr. Radclyffe," said the sheriff, "I can understand that you consider yourself justified in denying that the Pretender is here. But I have proof to the contrary. This man beheld him yesterday."

"I saw him in your company, Mr. Radclyffe," said Jes-mond. "I heard you and several others address him as your majesty."

"What have you to say to this, sir?" said the sheriff.

"I might say that the man is mistaken, but I will not," replied Charles. "I will content myself with stating that the person he beheld, and whom he fancied was the Chevalier de Saint George, is gone."

"This will be vexatious, if it should turn out correct," muttered the sheriff.

"Don't believe it, Sir William," cried Jesmond. "Depend upon it, we shall find him."

"I have given you my positive assurance, which ought to be sufficient, Sir William," said Charles Radclyffe. "But if you still entertain any doubts, pray search the house – question the servants – take any steps you think proper.

"I intend to do so, sir," rejoined the sheriff dismounting, and giving his horse to the groom.

Jesmond likewise dismounted, and followed him.

On the steps the sheriff encountered Newbiggin, and some others of the servants, who corroborated Charles Radclyffe's assertions; and in the entrance hall he found Father Norham, with whom he was acquainted, and whom he respectfully saluted.

"Your reverence knows my business," he remarked. "Will you aid me?"

"You cannot expect me to do so, Sir William," replied the priest. "But I will tell you frankly, that no one is concealed here."

"Has the Pretender fled?" demanded the sheriff.

"The *Pretender* has never been here, Sir William."

"This is mere equivocation, sir," cried the sheriff. "I will not be trifled with. I will search the house from top to bottom, but I will find him. Come with me!" he added to Newbiggin.

Attended by the butler, and assisted by Jesmond, he then went upstairs, and peered into a great many rooms, but soon gave up the fruitless search.

"I told you how it would be, Sir William," observed the priest, amused by his discomfited air, as he returned to the hall. "This is a large house, and if you were to search every room in it you would find it a tedious business. Once more, I tell you the person you seek is not here."

"Will you tell me whither he is gone?"

"No; you must find that out for yourself, Sir William. You will act wisely if you abandon the quest altogether."

"No – no! that must not be," cried the sheriff.

"Certainly not, Sir William," said Jesmond. "Leave me to make further investigations. I warrant you I'll discover something."

Receiving permission to do as he pleased, Jesmond proceeded to the stables, and in about ten minutes came back to the sheriff, whom he found in the court-yard.

The smile on his countenance betokened success.

"I've found it all out, Sir William," he cried. "You won't be disappointed. A large party on horseback left this morning – but the Pretender was not one of them."

"Then he is here, still?"

"No, Sir William; he went away in Sir John Webb's coach."

"In a coach! – then we may overtake him!"

"Undoubtedly. The carriage is large and heavy, and doesn't travel more than three or four miles an hour. We shall catch him before he gets to Morpeth."

"Is he gone in that direction?"

"He is, Sir William. I told you I'd find out something, and you must own that I've managed to put you on the right scent."

"You have," cried the sheriff, jumping on his horse. "Follow me, gentlemen! – follow me!" – he called out to the yeomen, who had been waiting all this time outside the gate.

Next minute they were rattling down the avenue, with the sheriff at their head.

We may be sure Jesmond was not left behind.

# II. – PURSUIT

On arriving at Corbridge, the sheriff found that the carriage had taken the high road to Newcastle, the crossroad by Whittingham and Stamfordham being impracticable, and accordingly he and his troop galloped off in that direction; but when they reached the extensive moor that skirts the town, they discovered that a deviation from the direct course had been made on the left, and that the travellers had crossed, or attempted to cross the moor to Gosforth.

The road chosen was so bad, that it seemed almost certain the carriage would be found buried up to the axle-tree in a bog, and with that confident expectation the pursuers took the same route.

From appearances on the road, it was sufficiently clear that the heavy vehicle had been more than once partially engulfed, and could only have been extricated with difficulty – but it had reached firm ground at last, and had gone on to Gosforth.

About three miles further on the pursuers descried it slowly, rumbling on towards Blagdon Park. Cheered by the sight, they accelerated their pace, and shouting loudly as they went on, soon caused the carriage to stop.

Anxious to make the intended arrest without any appearance of violence, the sheriff ordered a halt of his followers, and rode up to the carriage, attended merely by Jesmond.

Lady Webb and the two women-servants inside had been greatly alarmed by the shouting of the pursuers and sudden stoppage of the vehicle, and Sir John thrust his head out of the window to see what was the matter.

Just then the sheriff came up, and saluting him formally explained his business. Sir John replied rather angrily, and declared in positive terms that there was no one in the carriage beside himself and Lady Webb and their two women-servants.

As the sheriff expressed a doubt, Sir John called to his man-servant to come down and open the door, and immediately got out.

“Now, Sir William – pray satisfy yourself!” he cried.

“I must trouble Lady Webb to alight – and the two women,” said the sheriff.

The injunction was obeyed by her ladyship, though not without strong expressions of displeasure.

As soon as they had all come forth, Jesmond got into the carriage, and looked under the seats, but found only trunks and boxes.

As he emerged with a crestfallen look, he was jeered by Sir John and her ladyship. The sheriff, too, blamed him for the blunder he had made.

“I am certain the Pretender is in the carriage, Sir William,” he said.

“Then find him,” cried the sheriff.

“Ay, find him, fellow, if you can,” added Sir John, derisively.

“He is here,” cried Jesmond, pointing to the footman, a tall, handsome young man.

An exclamation from Sir John was checked by her ladyship, who made a private sign to the footman to hold his tongue.

“You are not making a second blunder, I trust?” said the sheriff.

“No, no! rest easy, Sir William! All right now! I didn’t recognise him at first in his disguise. But now I’ll swear to him.”

“You will swear that I am the Chevalier de Saint George, whom you call the Pretender?” cried the footman.

“I will,” said Jesmond.

Again Sir John would have interfered, if a look from her ladyship had not kept him quiet.

“You need have no hesitation, Sir William,” said Jesmond. “I will take all consequences on my own head.”

"But your head is nothing," rejoined the sheriff.

After a moment's consideration, he told Sir John Webb he must turn back, and accompany him to Newcastle.

Sir John protested vehemently against the order, and declared it would put him to the greatest inconvenience.

"I cannot help that," said the sheriff. "I own I am somewhat perplexed, but a great responsibility rests with me, and I am afraid of committing an error."

"Then I warn you that you will commit a very great error indeed, if you take me to Newcastle," said Sir John.

"We are wasting time here," cried the sheriff. "Your ladyship will be pleased to re-enter the carriage," he added, in a polite, but authoritative tone to Lady Webb – "and you, Sir John."

The women servants followed, and the footman was about to shut the door, when the sheriff told him he must get in likewise.

Finding Sir John was about to resist the intrusion, Jesmond pushed the young man in, vociferating in a mocking voice:

"Room for his majesty, King James the Third!"

Irritated to the last point, Sir John would certainly have resented the insult if Lady Webb had not held him fast.

She could not, however, prevent him from putting his head out from the window, and shouting to the sheriff:

"Where is this farce to end, Sir William?"

"Most likely at the Tower of London," was the sarcastic reply.

"Make no rejoinder, Sir John," said Lady Webb. "You'll have the laugh against him by-and-by."

The coach was then turned round, and guarded by the troop of yeomen, proceeding slowly towards Newcastle.

# III. – LORD WIDDRINGTON

Very different was the progress of the prince and his party from that made by the occupants of the coach. While the latter were crawling along the highway, the others were flying across the country, as if chasing the deer.

Over broad wide moors they speeded – across valley, and through wood – past ancient castles, and along the banks of rushing streams – allowing nothing to stop them – not even the Piets' wall, through a gap in which they dashed – till after traversing many a wild and waste such as only can be seen in Northumberland, they came in sight of the great German Ocean, and the rugged coast that bounds it.

Sixteen miles and upwards had been accomplished in a marvellously short space of time, but then all were well mounted. Throughout this long stretch, Anna, who we have said rode splendidly, kept by the side of Lord Derwentwater, and as he led the way, she shared any risk he might run.

A pretty sight it was to see them together, and drew forth the admiration of those who followed in their course. Somehow or other, they got ahead, and the Prince and Dorothy Forster, who were next behind, made no effort to come up with them. The rest of the party kept well together.

At length a point was reached from which, as we have just mentioned, the broad expanse of the ocean could he surveyed. On the right was Camboise Bay, spreading out with all its rocky headlands as far as Tynemouth and South Shields. On the left was Druridge Bay with Coquet Island in the distance. Behind them a few miles off was Morpeth, with the ruins of its castle, and its old church, and beyond Morpeth lay the wild district they had traversed.

As yet they had made no halt, Lord Derwent water's intention being to stop at Widdrington Castle, which could now be descried about a mile off, beautifully situated near the coast. It was a picturesque structure, surrounded by fine timber, and though of great antiquity, seemed in excellent repair.

Lord Widdrington was a devoted partisan of the House of Stuart, and it was therefore certain that his castle would be thrown open to the prince, and that his highness might tarry there as long as he pleased if he deemed it as safe as Bamborough.

After contemplating the fine old structure with delight for a few minutes, the prince moved on, and followed by the whole party rode down the eminence, and entered the park.

They had not gone far, when they met the noble owner of the mansion.

Lord Widdrington chanced to be riding about his grounds at the time, and seeing the party enter the lodge-gate, he hastened towards them.

How great was his astonishment when he learnt who was his visitor! He instantly flung himself from his horse to pay homage to him whom he regarded as his king.

But the prince was as quick as himself, and anticipating his design, dismounted and embraced him, expressing the greatest delight at beholding him.

Lord Widdrington had quite the air of a country gentleman. About five and thirty, he was well-made, though somewhat robust, with good features, lighted up by grey eyes, and characterised by a frank, manly expression. He wore a blue riding-dress trimmed with silver, a blonde peruke and riding-boots.

By this time Lord Derwentwater had come up, and explanations were quickly given as to the position in which the prince was placed.

Lord Widdrington looked grave, and after a few moments' deliberation said:

"Your majesty must be certain that nothing would gratify me more than to receive you as my guest, but your safety is the first consideration. I am bound, therefore, to state, that in case of pursuit, you would not be as safe here as at Bamborough."

"Such is my own opinion," remarked Lord Derwentwater.

"There are a hundred hiding places in the old castle," pursued Lord Widdrington; "and besides, a boat can be always in readiness, so that your majesty could be taken to Lindisfarne, where you might be concealed for a month.

"Whatever course you advise, my lord, I will adopt," said the prince. "But I must not be deprived of the power of retreat."

"'Tis therein especially that Bamborough has the advantage over this mansion, my liege," said Forster, who had come up. "I will answer with my life that you shall not fall into the hands of your enemies."

"And I dare not assert as much, since I might not be able to make good my words," said Lord Widdrington.

"That decides me," cried the prince. "I shall take up my quarters at Bamborough."

"I trust your majesty will tarry awhile, and accept such hospitality as I am able to offer you," entreated Lord Widdrington.

"How say you, my lord?" cried the prince, appealing to Lord Derwentwater. "Shall I stay? I am in your hands."

His lordship thought an hour's halt might be risked, so the whole of the party dismounted, and were conducted to a large antique dining-hall, adorned with portraits of the family, commencing with Gerard de Widdrington, who flourished in the time of Edward the Third.

Here a goodly repast was served with remarkable promptitude. Of course, the viands were cold, but those who partook of them were too hungry to care for that – for they had breakfasted but slightly before starting, – and even the two fair damsels had gained a good appetite by the ride.

Claret there was in abundance, and a goblet was devoted to a young pair of whose recent betrothal Lord Widdrington had just heard. The health of King James was drunk at the close of the repast, which was not prolonged beyond an hour. At the expiration of that time the horses were brought round.

After glancing round the entrance-hall, which was panelled with oak, and decked with trophies of the chase and ancient weapons, and admiring the carved oak staircase, the prince went forth, and mounted his steed – Lord Widdrington holding the bridle. With graceful gallantry, his lordship next assisted the two fair equestrians to the saddle. This done, he mounted his own horse, with the purpose of attending the prince to Bamborough. Moreover, he had ordered half a dozen well-armed men to follow at the rear of the troop.

With this additional force the party proceeded on its way – though not at the same rapid pace as heretofore.

# IV. – DUNSTANBOROUGH CASTLE

No longer feeling any uneasiness, the prince greatly enjoyed the ride along this remarkable coast, which, besides being studded with ancient castles, commands unequalled sea-views.

The day was fine, with a fresh breeze blowing from the North Sea. Many vessels were in sight, giving life to the picture.

Before them lay Warkworth Castle, finely situated on a peninsula, at the mouth of the lovely river Coquet, and the sight of the tall grey towers of this imposing structure so full of historical recollections, greatly moved the prince.

"From that proud castle of the Percys I should like to be proclaimed," he cried aloud.

"Your wish shall be gratified, my liege, that we promise you," rejoined Lord Widdrington and Mr. Forster, who overheard the exclamation.

And they fulfilled their promise, but not till a later date.

An ancient stone bridge across the Coquet brought the prince in front of the castle, and he paused for a few minutes to gaze at it. Fain would he have visited the Hermitage, but the wish could not be gratified, and he rode on through the little town. No interference was offered to the party since Lord Widdrington and Mr. Forster were at its head.

To Warkworth quickly succeeded a still finer castle – Alnwick; and the prince was again lost in admiration of the second magnificent feudal structure reared on a height above the town, and lording it over the surrounding country.

Guessing his highness's thoughts, Lord Widdrington said:

"Had your majesty these two castles, with Dunstan-borough and Bamborough, and all four well garrisoned, you might hold your own till an army could be raised, that should win you your kingdom."

"Bamborough is yours already, my liege," added Forster. "And doubt not the others will be gained."

Several fresh objects interested the prince as he rode on. Amongst them was Howick Tower, now destroyed.

Soon afterwards Dunstanborough Castle could be descried on the right. As the prince advanced, it was easy to perceive that the enormous pile was in ruins, but it still looked strong, and its position on a ridge of rocks overlooking the sea was strikingly grand.

Several towers and a large portion of the walls were left; but that the castle could be rendered capable of defence seemed very doubtful to the prince, though both Lord Widdrington and Mr. Forster were of a different opinion.

"If your majesty had time to inspect the stronghold, I would convince you of its importance," said Lord Widdrington. "Ruined as it is, it is so immensely strong that I would undertake to hold it for a month, and with a few large guns it would command the sea."

"There are some extraordinary caverns beneath the castle, where any amount of arms and ammunition sent from France could be stored," observed Forster.

"Obtain possession of the place as soon as you can," remarked the prince. "It ought to belong to us."

"It *shall* belong to your majesty," said Lord Widdrington.

During the ride along the coast, Lord Derwentwater had not deemed it necessary to pay especial attention to the prince, since Lord Widdrington was better able than himself to furnish any information his highness might require.

The enamoured earl, therefore, felt at liberty to devote himself exclusively to the object of his affections. To enjoy greater freedom, the young pair separated themselves from the troop, and pursued their course along the turf that skirted the road – halting, occasionally, to gaze at the sea.

Attracted by Dunstanborough Castle, they galloped towards the grand old ruin, and after a brief survey of the gateway and towers were hastening back across the plain, when Anna's horse stumbled and fell. Before the earl could dismount and come to her assistance, she had regained her feet, but her horse had sprained his shoulder so badly that he could scarcely move.

Deeming it the best thing that could be done, Lord Derwentwater proposed to ride as quickly as he could after the party, and bring back another horse for her.

"Dare you remain here alone till I return?" he said.

"I am not in the slightest degree afraid," she replied.

"I shall not be away many minutes," he cried, dashing off at full speed.

By this time, the party had disappeared, but he soon overtook them, and in less than five minutes returned with one of Lord Widdrington's grooms.

But Anna was not there. The poor disabled horse had never stirred from the spot. But its mistress was gone.

Lord Derwentwater gazed anxiously in every direction, but could see nothing of her. Thinking she might have gone to the castle, he hurried thither, followed by the groom, dashed through the gateway, and through an inner gate into the court.

Here he gazed distractedly around, but could see no one. Nor was any answer returned to his cries.

# V. – HOW THE PRINCE WAS LODGED IN THE OLD FORTRESS

Meanwhile, the prince and his attendants had proceeded tranquilly on their way to Bamborough Castle, which is not more than an hour's ride from Dunstanborough.

But nearly double that time was consumed on the present occasion, for the prince made several halts, being greatly struck by the imposing aspect and commanding position of the old stronghold.

No uneasiness was felt at the non-appearance of the earl and his betrothed. It was known that an accident had befallen the young lady's horse – and all were aware that a groom had gone back with his lordship to Dunstanborough – but no importance was attached to this circumstance.

On his arrival at Bamborough the prince was ceremoniously received by Mr. Forster who had ridden on in advance with Dorothy. He was first ushered into the hall of the modern mansion which was thronged with servants, who bowed reverently as he appeared, and everything looked so cheerful and comfortable, and so like the abode of a country squire – all the doors were wide open – there were so many dogs about – and such an air of free and easy hospitality pervaded the place – that he would fain have taken up his quarters there, had it been judged prudent.

Mr. Forster would have readily acceded to his highness's wishes, and have assigned him the best rooms in the mansion, but Lord Widdrington and Colonel Oxburgh declared that he must be lodged in the old castle. There he might sleep in security – surrounded by lofty walls, and protected by strong gates. In the daytime there was comparatively little danger.

Quite reconciled to the arrangement, the prince was shortly afterwards conducted by his host to the lower ward of the castle, and thence to one of the towers, the chambers within which were comfortably furnished, and with this accommodation he was very well content.

As a guard to his highness, it was next arranged that Colonel Oxburgh should occupy the lower chamber of the same tower, and that the adjoining fortifications should be tenanted by Captain Wogan and the rest of the troop, together with some of Mr. Forster's retainers on whose courage and fidelity perfect reliance could be placed.

These arrangements made, the prince walked round the walls of the castle, attended by his host, Lord Widdring-ton, and Colonel Oxburgh, and was greatly struck by the strength of its position.

Though the sea was tolerably calm, the waves came dashing against the precipitous rock on which the edifice was reared. The Fame Islands looked close at hand, and Holy Island could be seen looming in the distance on the left.

Turning from the sea, the prince contemplated for awhile the square massive keep, and then descended to the court.

Here they were met by the butler, who brought the welcome intelligence that dinner was served. Though it was judged expedient that the prince should lodge within the castle, it was not thought necessary that he should dine there.

"If I am not able to entertain your majesty as well as I could desire," said Mr. Forster, "I trust you will excuse me on the ground that I have had little time for preparation. I cannot give you a banquet such as we partook of yesterday at Dilston."

"Make no apologies," said the prince. "I am no epicure, and care not how plain the fare may be. Apropos of the feast of yesterday! where is Lord Derwentwater?"

Mr. Forster could not answer the question, but the butler being applied to, said that neither his lordship nor the young lady with him had arrived.

"This is strange!" exclaimed the prince.

"Your majesty need not feel uneasy," laughed Forster. "They will be here presently. Is it your pleasure to wait dinner for them?"

His highness did not deem that necessary, but thought some one ought to go in quest of them.

“That will I,” cried Lord Widdrington.

And hieing at once to the stable, he called for his horse, and attended by a couple of grooms, set off towards Dunstanborough.

# VI. – ANNA'S ADVENTURE IN THE CAVERN

He had got more than half way thither, when he thought he descried them in the distance, but as night was now coming on, he did not feel quite sure. In another minute, however, all doubts were removed. The persons he beheld were Lord Derwentwater and his betrothed.

Presently, the parties met, and Lord Widdrington exclaimed:

"I am greatly rejoiced to see both of you safe and sound, for we began to fear that something must have happened."

"Something very extraordinary *has* happened," rejoined Lord Derwentwater.

"Your lordship will scarcely credit me when I tell you that I have been lost in a cavern underneath Dunstan-borough Castle," said Anna.

"Lost in a cavern!" exclaimed Lord Widdrington in astonishment. "How came that to pass?"

"You shall hear," she replied. "I was left by myself for a short time near the castle – Lord Derwentwater having ridden off to bring me another horse, my own having got injured by a fall – when I thought I would take a peep at the ruins which were close at hand. Foolishly acting upon the impulse, I flew thither – meaning to get back in a few minutes – and never stopped till I got into the court. After gazing at Queen Margaret's Tower and Lilburne's Tower, I looked round the walls, when my eye fell upon a cavity at a little distance from me. Within the hollow was a flight of steps, leading, as I fancied, to some vault or dungeon, and prompted by curiosity, I hastily descended them. The steps brought me to an arched passage, and still under the influence of curiosity I ventured on, and soon found that other passages branched off on the right and left. Into one of these I turned and advanced a few yards, and inadvertently stepping forward – for I could now see nothing – slipped down a rapid descent, that landed me in what I knew to be a spacious cavern. At first, I was not so much alarmed, because I fancied I could extricate myself from the difficulty. But I could not remount the place down which I had fallen, and being now greatly frightened, I endeavoured to find another exit. But the attempt was fruitless. My outstretched hand only encountered a wall of rock, and I soon became so perplexed and confused that I could not even find my way back to the spot I had just quitted."

"A terrible position to be placed in!" exclaimed Lord Widdrington. "I wonder you have recovered so soon from the effects of the fright."

"I thought I should have sunk at the time," she rejoined. "But fortunately my spirits supported me. I addressed a prayer to Saint Anna, and then felt easier. But deliverance did not come so soon as I expected, and there was an interval of dreadful suspense. You seemed long – long in coming," she added to Lord Derwent-water. "Ah! when I heard your voice, I knew I was saved."

"And your response gave me new life," he said; "for hope was almost extinct within my breast. That cavern was the last place I searched, for though I had noticed the stone steps, I never thought you would venture down them."

"I can guess all the rest," said Lord Widdrington. "It must have been a joyful meeting."

"The adventure was not an agreeable one," said Anna. "But it has tested his lordship's affection for me. However, I promise to be more careful in future."

"Yes, you have had a pretty good lesson, and will do well to profit by it," said Lord Widdrington.

"My unlucky steed is to blame for it all," she cried. "Had he not stumbled, nothing would have happened."

"You have left him at Dunstanborough, I suppose?" observed Lord Widdrington.

"Yes, in charge of your groom," she replied. "Your lordship's horse carries me capitally."

"Then pray use him as long as you will! And now let us on, and relieve the anxiety of our friends."

With this they quickened their pace, and made such good way that dinner was not quite over when they reached Bamborough.

Great rejoicing was manifested on their appearance, and when Anna's adventure became known, the feeling rose to excitement. Dorothy could not contain herself, but springing from her seat, rushed up to her friend and embraced her.

We need scarcely say that under such unusual circumstances another health was drunk, in addition to the grand toast, which was never omitted.

A great deal of claret was generally drunk at Mr. Forster's dinners, as we have already remarked, and the custom would probably not have been neglected on the present occasion if the prince had not risen early from table, and proceeded to the drawing-room, where there was music and singing.

The prince retired early, and proceeded to his lodgings in the old fortress, attended by his host, Lord Derwent-water, Lord Widdrington, and several others. It chanced to be a fine moonlight night, and the appearance of the massive keep, partly lighted up by the beams, partly in shadow, was so striking, that his highness remained for some time contemplating the massive pile.

He then mounted the walls to gaze at the sea, which was brilliantly illumined – a broad track of light leading across its unruffled surface to the Fame Islands, and producing a truly magical effect.

# Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.